

## 3 In the Wake of Parting: Christian Arabic Printing to Suit All Needs

### 3.1 The Great Divide: 1724, the Year when (almost) Everything Changed

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, the Christians of the Church of Antioch strived to replace Greek and Syriac, the old liturgical languages, with Arabic, a language understood by the majority of the people. One reason was the increasing awareness of Arab identity in the Middle Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, in a population which lived in the midst of Turkish speakers, under a Muslim administration. First the Greek language, then Syriac lost ground before Arabic, and thus, the necessity arose to have all liturgical books available in this language, in versions revised by the theologians and scholars of the Church of Antioch. An effort to unify the existing texts that circulated in inconsistent versions filled with copyists' errors and doctrinal variations was becoming urgent. Standardized liturgical texts in a sufficient number of printed copies were required. Unified church books would provide the clergy, especially its upper ranks, with a feeling of consistency and harmony of the theological expression. This would be a strong support for the unity of the Byzantine-rite communities in their prayer and communion. There was no opposition to the use of Arabic in church life and liturgy among Arabic-speaking Christians, as there often was in Western Europe to the use of the vernacular. Arabic versions of the essential liturgical books had been in use to some degree since the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> They circulated in beautifully copied manuscripts, some decorated with splendid miniatures.<sup>2</sup> In Damascus in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Psalms were read in Arabic, and the Epistles and Gospels in Greek, Arabic, and Turkish.<sup>3</sup> However, a movement towards standardization was absent from the Arabic-speaking churches for a long time. Referring to the early period of Arabic liturgical literature, Ronny Vollandt sums it up as follows:

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1 *HMLÉM* III.1, p. 216, n. 126.

2 A relevant example is the manuscript of the Arabic Psalter of IMO in Saint Petersburg, comprising several tens of colored miniatures created by Yūsuf al-Muṣawwir, a good friend of Paul of Aleppo. A facsimile was published by Val. V. Polosin, N. I. Serikoff and S. A. Fransouzoff (eds.): *The Arabic Psalter, facsimile edition of Manuscript A 187, The Petersburg Arabic Illuminated Psalter from the collections of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg Branch)*, Saint Petersburg and Voronezh, 2005. See my presentation of this book in *RESEE*, 46, 2008, 1–4, p. 481–484.

3 Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 150.

Furthermore, textual standardization was never brought into effect, also as Arabic never reached the status of an official church language, as did Syria and Coptic. Although it appears that especially those translations that are attested in great numbers had a preferred, popular standing within their respective communities, none of them underwent a process of becoming canonically or liturgically binding. With regard to both their biblical texts and liturgical traditions, Arabic-speaking Christian churches have demonstrated and also cultivated, in a certain way, great variety over the course of history.<sup>4</sup>

The difficult situation of the Christian communities living in the Eastern Mediterranean lands pushed the patriarchs of various churches to seek the help of the upper clergy and powerful rulers of Western European countries. The priest Sauma was sent in 1287 by the Catholicos Yapalaha of the Nestorian Church of the East (1282–1317) to ask for support from the Pope Honorius IV and the European princes for the Mongol Khan Argun (1284–1290), who was purportedly preparing to drive the Mamluks out from Jerusalem, Palestine, and Syria, restoring these places to Christian rule. Fr Sauma was granted an audience by Phillippe le Bel, the king of France, and Edward I, the king of England. He passed through Genoa and, in 1288, before Easter, met with the pope and handed him a message from the Khan Argun and a collection of Syriac manuscripts.<sup>5</sup>

The Greek College founded by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 and the Maronite College founded in 1584 were assigned the mission of educating the clerics who arrived in Rome from the Middle East.<sup>6</sup> This education observed the Latin teachings and helped strengthen the ties between the Vatican and the Eastern Churches that were attached to them, through the successive series of graduates who were granted diplomas in Theology and Philosophy.<sup>7</sup>

The first series of graduates from the Maronite College consisted of twenty students from Lebanon. The special relations that some of the Eastern Christians, especially the Maronites, enjoyed with the Church of Rome required a strict observance of its dogmas and rites. Among other restrictions, all printed books produced there needed approvals that were carefully considered so that no “doctrinal error” proper to other creeds would sneak into the texts prepared for distribution in Eastern churches.<sup>8</sup> The liturgical books presented by Catholic missionaries to

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<sup>4</sup> Vollandt, “1.4.11. Arabic (Christian) Translations”, previously cited. See also R. Vollandt, “2.5.8. Arabic Translations”, in the same Brill collection of essays.

<sup>5</sup> See the report of this episode in Boustany, “Trois chroniques syriaques”, p. 88–90.

<sup>6</sup> On the few Greek Catholic students of the Greek College in Rome, see Carsten-Michael Walbiner, “Monastic Reading and Learning in Eighteenth-Century Bilād al-Šām: Some Evidence from the Monastery of Al-Šuwayr (Mount Lebanon)”, *Arabica*, 51, 2004, 4, especially p. 468–469.

<sup>7</sup> Duverdier, “Du livre religieux à l’orientalisme”, p. 159.

<sup>8</sup> Id., “Défense de l’orthodoxie et lutte d’influences”, p. 265.

the Arabic-speaking clergy in the Ottoman provinces would have replaced the ancient manuscripts that generations of local priests had used.

The *Biblia Arabica* had been envisioned by the Levantine scholars as a version that preserved the liturgical traditions of Syriac and Arabic liturgical texts, relying on old local revisions. However, as I have mentioned before, the theologians of the Roman Church decided to print an Arabic translation of the Vulgate instead.

In these circumstances, the patriarchs of the Church of Antioch Makarios III ibn al-Za'im, Athanasios III Dabbās, and Sylvester of Cyprus took upon themselves the same task: to preserve the Byzantine spirit in its Arabic expression. This state of affairs was similar for both the people of the Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman provinces of the Middle East, although the degree of the hold of the Sublime Porte over them differed. One of their common aspirations was related to the liturgical language of the Christian churches. Wallachians and Moldavians, all speakers of Romanian, struggled to move from church Slavonic, the liturgical language they had inherited from their forefathers, to Romanian. Here, the same need to print liturgical and spiritual books in the vernacular had developed. In the foreword to the *Cazania lui Varlaam*, Vasile Lupu, the prince of Moldavia, a supporter and sponsor of the printing of this important Romanian book, declared:

From whatever God allowed to us and gave us, in his mercy, we give in turn this gift to the Romanian language, a book in the Romanian tongue, first – to praise God, then – to educate and benefit the faithful souls. And even if it is not an expensive [gift], welcome it not as a worldly thing, but as a heavenly gem, and while reading it, remember our names, do not forsake us in your prayers, and stay healthy.<sup>9</sup>

In Wallachia (Rom. *Țara Românească*, Ar. *al-Fallāḥ*), the first book was printed in 1508, and the fame of local printers soon spread to the Middle East. They started early on with printing in Slavonic and Greek, and then later expanded to Romanian. Printing in several scripts (types) and languages was common after 1700, when the presses of the Romanian Principalities produced books in many languages, including Serbian, Bulgarian, and Turkish (with Greek type).<sup>10</sup> Coming from Western and Central Europe, the first typographers who worked in

<sup>9</sup> Vasile Lupu, “Cuvânt împreună către toată semenția românească pretutinderea ce să află pravoslavnic într-această limbă”, in *Carte românească de învățătură*, Iași, 1643, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> In the Romanian lands, Armenian type was used for the first time in Iași, in a press established by the Moldavian scholar Gheorghe Asachi, where two Armenian books were printed in 1847: *A Key to Reading*, a handbook for children, and *Confession of the Faith of the Holy Armenian Church for the Use of Small Children*. See Claude Mutaḫian, *La saga des Arméniens de l'Ararat aux Carpates*, Paris, 2018, p. 347. I am grateful to David Neagu for this reference.

Târgoviște – the famous Serbian monk Makarij,<sup>11</sup> Demetrios and Moses Liubavich, found there the freedom to pursue their work on Wallachian soil, where no monopoly was imposed on printing.<sup>12</sup> Printers from other areas inhabited by Romanians joined them in this activity: in Sibiu, Filip Moldoveanul, in Braşov, Diaconul (the Deacon) Coresi, in Iaşi, the Metropolitan Varlaam.<sup>13</sup> In 1640, during the term of the metropolitan of Moldavia Varlaam, the hieromonk Sophronius Pochasky was dispatched to Iaşi by Petru Movilă (Petro Mohyla), the metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia (1633–1647), with a press and master printers to run it, installing them at the prince’s monastery of the Three Holy Hierarchs (“Sfinţii Trei Ierarhi”).

Petru Movilă was born in Suceava (northern Moldavia) on December 21, 1596, into a Moldavian family of boyars and princes.<sup>14</sup> He was the son of the prince

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11 On the Serbian monk Makarij, see Mitar Pešikan, Katarina Mano-Zisi and Miljko Kovačević (eds.), *Pet vekova srpskog štamparstva: 1494–1994. Razdoblje srpskoslovenske štampe: XV–XVII v.*, Belgrade and Novi Sad, 1994, especially p. 138–139.

12 As I already explained, in contrast with other European countries, in the Romanian Principalities printers were most often the owners of their typographic implements, presses, and book production. See, for example, the cases of Dimitrie Liubavich, Diaconul Coresi, and Antim the Iberian presented by Doru Bădără on p. 393–396 in his article “Ceva despre monopolul asupra tiparului din Țările Române, 1508–1714”.

13 For an English-language overview of printing in the Romanian Principalities in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (including a list of titles), see Dennis Deletant, “Rumanian Presses and Printing in the Seventeenth Century”, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Part I, 60, 1982, 4, p. 481–499, and Part II, 61, 1983, 4, p. 481–511.

14 On Metropolitan Petru Movilă, see: *Arkhivŭgo-zapadnoi Rossii*, Part I, t. VII, Moscow, 1887 (Peter Movilă’s *Memoirs* – fragments); E. Ternovskii, “Pëtr Mogila, Biograficheskii ocherk”, *Kievskaiia starina*, 2, 1882, 4, p. 1–24; S. I. Golubev, *Kyivskii mitropolit Pëtr Mogila i ego spodvizhniki*, Kyiv, I, 1883; Ghenadie Enăceanu, “Din istoria bisericească a românilor. Petru Movilă”, *BOR*, 7, 1883, 7, p. 431–453; Ghenadie Enăceanu, “Petru Movilă (Biografia)”, *BOR*, 7, 1883, 12, p. 734–772, and 8, 1884, 1, p. 4–39 (cont.); P. P. Panaitescu, “L’influence de Pierre Mogila, archevêque de Kiev, dans les Principautés roumaines”, *Mélanges de l’École roumaine en France*, 5, 1926, 1, p. 3–97; I. Negrescu, “Mitropolitul Petru Movilă, înfăţişat de noua literatură teologică rusă”, *Orthodoxia. Revista Patriarhiei Române*, 4, 1952, 1, p. 135–160; Igor Shevchenko, “The Many Worlds of Peter Mohyla”, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Special Issue, *The Kiev Mohyla Academy: Commemorating the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its Founding (1632)*, 8, 1984, 1/2, p. 9–44; Matei Cazacu, “Pierre Mohyla (Petru Movilă) et la Roumanie. Essai historique et bibliographique”, in *ibid.*, p. 188–222 (reprinted in Emanuel Constantin Antoché and Lidia Cotovanu (eds.), *Des Balkans à la Russie médiévale et moderne: hommes, images et réalités*, Brăila, 2017, p. 461–486); “Mitropolitul Petru Movilă la 340 de ani de la moartea sa, 1647–1987” (collection of essays), *Mitropolia Ardealului*, Part One, 32, 1987, 6, p. 49–77, and Part Two, 33, 1988, 1, p. 7–36; Virgil Căndea, “Quelques notes sur Pierre Movilă et la culture roumaine ancienne” *Nouvelles études d’histoire*, 1995, 9, p. 31–40; P. P. Panaitescu, *Petru Movilă. Studii*, ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely, Bucharest, 1996; Rev. Dr. Stephan Jarmus (ed.), *Faith and Culture. Special Issue on Petro Mogyla*,

Simion Movilă<sup>15</sup> and his wife Marghita (Margaret). In September 1607, Petru fled to the Cossacks' lands with his mother, after his father was murdered. From 1608 to 1620 they resided in the castle of Stanisław Żółkiewski, military commander of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1547–1620).<sup>16</sup> He was educated by the Brotherhood of L'viv (Lemberg), the Bratstvo monks, then at the academy founded by the Polish Crown chancellor Jan Zamoyski.<sup>17</sup> He succeeded in mastering several languages and cultures: Polish, Slavonic, Belorussian, Latin, and Greek. He was tonsured a monk at the Pechersk Lavra in Kyiv, the chief religious and cultural center of Ukraine, a *stavropegiion* of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. He was soon elected head of the monastery, and, in 1633, he was elected metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia. He soon initiated an ambitious plan of spiritual revival and national liberation for the Orthodox of present-day Ukraine. One of his most passionate projects was to print as much as possible and disseminate theological and spiritual knowledge to Orthodox readers. From 1616 on, at the press he had set up at the Pechersk Lavra, he worked side by side with the typographers in printing books in Greek, Polish, and Latin. He then extended a helping hand to the princes and metropolitans of the Romanian Principalities, by sending over printers and tools: to Govora, in the Vâlcea region, in 1637, to Dealu (Târgoviște) and Câmpulung, in the 1630's, to Iași, before 1643.<sup>18</sup>

One of the first texts printed in Iași, in 1643, is a masterpiece to this day: *Carte românească de învățătură, Dumenecile preste an și la praznice împărătești și la svenți mari*, commonly known as *Cazania lui Varlaam* (*Varlaam's Book of Teachings*), a Romanian-text book of homilies and readings for Sundays and feasts of the entire year, in 1,012 pages, composed in 1637 by Varlaam, the metropolitan of Moldavia.<sup>19</sup> Sent from the Pechersk Lavra in Kyiv to help the Moldavians with

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1997–1998, 11; *Sinodul de la Iași și Sf. Petru Movilă, 1642–2002*, Iași, 2002; Vera Tchentsova, “Pour un corpus des inscriptions grecques de l'église Saint-Sauveur de Berestovo”, *Museikon*, 2017, 1, p. 77–94, especially p. 78–80. Several books and collections of essays were dedicated to Petru Movilă by the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA).

15 Prince of Wallachia (Oct. 1600 – July 1601, Aug. 1601 – Aug. 1602) and Moldavia (July 1606 – Sept. 1607).

16 He was also castellan of L'viv, voivod of Kyiv and great chancellor of the Polish Crown, later appointed great hetman.

17 *Hippaeum Zamoscianum*, or the Zamoyski Academy.

18 For a brief presentation of early printing in the Romanian Principalities, see Doru Bădără, “The Beginning of Printing and Print Culture in the Romanian Principalities”, forthcoming in Dîpratu and Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books Printed in Wallachia, Istanbul, and Beyond*, Berlin, 2023.

19 See the new edition by Stela Toma (ed.), *Carte românească de învățătură, Dumenecile preste an și la praznice împărătești și la svenți mari*, t. II, Bucharest, 2011, and Dan Zamfirescu, *Carte*

printing, the famous printer and engraver Ilya, a disciple of Petru Movilă, the metropolitan of Kyiv, who had worked in L'viv and Kyiv, was among the most productive typographers of his age.<sup>20</sup> Metropolitan Varlaam's book was illustrated by Ilya with countless engravings and decorative elements that represent biblical scenes, icons of saints, floral initials, page ornaments, etc.

Since the rule of Suleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566), Wallachia and Moldavia had enjoyed a special status relative to that of other principalities that were not completely engulfed by the Ottoman power.<sup>21</sup> They were considered lands within the *Dār al-ḍimma*, the 'House of the tribute-payers'. This status secured to them a certain autonomy and various rights, including religious freedom. Paul of Aleppo remarked while sojourning in Moldavia and Wallachia during his trip in 1653–1658 that there were no mosques anywhere in the Romanian Principalities, there were churches, crosses, and loudly-ringing bells everywhere, no regular Ottoman army stationed in any major city, and, for six years in a row, he never heard the *ezan* (the Muslim call to prayer).<sup>22</sup>

Christian Arabs travelled to Constantinople, Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and Sinai, learning everywhere about the abundant donations and political assistance at the Sublime Porte that the rulers of the Romanian Principalities granted to Christians of the former Byzantine Empire. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, patriarchs of the Church of Antioch turned their eyes toward Eastern Europe. The welcoming answer they received from rulers and upper clergy of the Romanian Principalities, the Cossack lands, and the Russian Tsardom inspired them to embark on long, perilous journeys. News about the freedom in the Orthodox countries of Eastern

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românească de învățătură, *Dumenecile preste an și la praznice împărătești și la svenți mari*, pre-amble and introductory study, t. I, Bucharest, 2012–2013.

<sup>20</sup> See the thorough presentation of this famous engraver's works recently published by Oksana Yurchyshyn-Smith: *The Monk Ilia (fl. 1637–1663). Catalogue. Ukrainian and Romanian Baroque Engraving*, Kyiv, 2021. See also: Oksana Yurchyshyn-Smith, "Dated Ukrainian Print of the Seventeenth Century", *Print Quarterly*, 18, 2001, 2, p. 190–199; Oksana Yurchyshyn-Smith, "Development of Byzantine Iconographic Tradition in Ukrainian Antimensia of the XVII<sup>th</sup> Century", *Byzantinoslavica*, 1998, 59, p. 320–324.

<sup>21</sup> See Viorel Panaite, "The Legal and Political Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in Relation to the Ottoman Porte", in Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (eds.), *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Leiden and Boston, 2013, p. 9–42; Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace. The Ottoman Empire and Its Tribute-Payers from the North of the Danube*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., Leiden and Boston, 2019, p. 344–374; Viorel Panaite, "Watching over Neighboring Provinces in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of Tributary Princes from the north of the Danube in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in Gábor Kármán (ed.), *Tributaries and Peripheries of the Ottoman Empire*, Leiden and Boston, 2020, p. 7–23.

<sup>22</sup> Paul din Alep, *Jurnal de călătorie în Moldova și Valahia*, p. 430ff.

Europe reached the Patriarchate of Antioch and encouraged the heads of the Arabic-speaking faithful to travel to Iași, Târgoviște, and București after 1580, in search of assistance of many kinds – financial, spiritual, and diplomatic. Their hopes relied, first of all, on the Christian solidarity and well-known munificence of the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia, who were famous for having paid the debts of the Eastern Patriarchates many times, and having sent all forms of help to Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Mount Athos.<sup>23</sup> This was especially important as the rulers of the Romanian Principalities were devout Christians whose purpose was to support the Byzantine-rite faithful of the lands under Muslim rule all through the Ottoman era.

The Romanian Principalities were not unfamiliar to Arabic-speaking Christians. The Byzantine influences over their cultures, Orthodox spirituality, common traditions, the struggle to preserve the church rites and rituals in the dire circumstances of being governed by a Muslim power, and the commercial links between merchants of the Eastern Mediterranean coast and Southeastern Europe, all these brought the Arab Christians close to the Greek Orthodox in Moldavia and Wallachia. The latter were also aware of the life of Christian communities in the Eastern countries that they visited when going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land or Sinai. They brought from there not only memories and souvenirs but also inspiration for religious foundations at home. Thus, the Monastery of Sinaia in the Carpathian Mountains north of Bucharest was built by Mihail Cantacuzino the *spătar*<sup>24</sup> after he returned from Mount Sinai, with the intention to celebrate

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**23** On the substantial help that Wallachian and Moldavian princes granted to the Eastern Christians for several centuries, see: Nicolae Iorga, “Vasile Lupu ca următor al Împăraților de Răsărit în tutelarea Patriarhiei de Constantinople și a Bisericii Ortodoxe”, *AARMSI*, S. II, t. 36, 1913, p. 207–236; Marcu Beza, *Heritage of Byzantium*, p. 39–42; Teodor Bodogae, *Ajutoarele românești la mănăstirile din Sfântul Munte Athos*, Sibiu, 1940; Paul Lemerle and Paul Wittek, “Recherches sur l’histoire et le statut des monastères athonites sous la domination turque”, in *Archives du Droit oriental*, t. III, Paris, 1948; Petre Ș. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle à 1654*, Rome, 1986; Constantin Șerban, *Vasile Lupu, domn al Moldovei (1634–1653)*, Bucharest, 1991, p. 188–193; Boško I. Bojović, “Chilandar et les Pays Roumains. Continuité liturgique et institutionnelle dans les actes princiers (XV<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)”, in Ionel Cădea, Paul Cernovodeanu and Gheorghe Lazăr (eds.), *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, Brăila, 2003, p. 141–150; Florin Marinescu, “Cu privire la metoacele Sfântului Munte în România: cazul mănăstirilor Vatoped și Ivir”, in idem, p. 627–629; Emilian Băbuș, Ioan Moldoveanu and Adrian Marinescu (eds.), *The Romanian Principalities and the Holy Places along the Centuries*, Bucharest, 2007; Pr. dr. Ioan Moldoveanu, *Contribuții la istoria relațiilor Țărilor Române cu Muntele Athos (1650–1863) în întâmpinarea a 1045 de ani de la fondarea Muntelui Athos (963–2008)*, Bucharest, 2007.

**24** This was the officer of the court who carried the prince’s sword and cared for his weapons.



that extraordinary place. This eagerness to found holy churches and monasteries upon returning from the Holy Places had started much earlier: around 1512, back from a journey east, a certain Iosif (Joseph) founded on a hill near the Moldavian Monastery of Bistrița, with the support of Ștefăniță voivod, the prince of Moldavia (1517–1527) and a grandson of Stephen the Great, a hermitage named *A Besericanilor*, later named the ‘Bisericiani Monastery’ (i.e., ‘of the monks who celebrate the Divine Liturgy without interruption’). Ostrich eggs, sometimes beautifully adorned, are hung from the great chandelier before the Royal Doors of monastic churches all across Romania, a tradition that dates back to the late Middle Ages, when pilgrims travelled to the Holy Land and Mount Athos and, once home, imitated the particularities of ritual and church life they had witnessed there. This is connected to the early monastic use of ostrich eggs in the desert of Sketis in Egypt, as a reminder of the requirement to stay awake, especially if you were a monk seated in the narthex. As ostriches (male and female) untiringly guard their eggs, never allowing themselves to fall asleep before they hatch lest they be stolen by desert jackals or snakes, or be harmed and hatch no more, Christians should never let their mind stray when praying at church. The most splendid example is the row of ostrich eggs hanging from the main chandelier in the church at the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos.<sup>25</sup>

The upper clergy of the Eastern Churches received from the rulers of the Romanian Principalities donations and *metochia* every time they presented themselves to their courts. A single example, that of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Dositheos II Notaras, is enough to illustrate the relations between the Romanian Principalities and the Eastern Churches. Elected in January 1669 by a council convened in Constantinople, he left for the Romanian Principalities in February 1670. There, he was welcomed with great joy and respect at the princely courts of Bucharest and Iași, where he was granted significant monetary donations for the Holy Sepulcher both from the princes – Antonie of Popești in Wallachia<sup>26</sup> and Gheorghe Duca in Moldavia<sup>27</sup> – and from the nobility, upper clergy, and hegumens of monasteries.<sup>28</sup> Back in Bucharest in May 1673, he received from the Prince Grigore

<sup>25</sup> See Virgil Căndea, “Les oeufs d’autruche et la vigilance”, *RESEE*, 31, 1993, 3–4, p. 301–303, and Ioana Feodorov, “Ouăle de struț din bisericile ortodoxe: înțeles duhovnicesc și tradiție decorative”, in Manuela Nevaci, Irina Floarea and Ioan-Mircea Farcaș (eds.), *Ex Oriente Lux. In honorem Nicolae Saramandu*, Alessandria, 2021, p. 481–504.

<sup>26</sup> He ruled from 1669 to 1672.

<sup>27</sup> He ruled intermittently in Moldavia and Wallachia from 1665 to 1678.

<sup>28</sup> Boris L. Fonkich has published a letter dated April 11, 1670, preserved in Moscow, which was sent by Dionysios, the future metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia (since 1672, as Dionysios I) to Paisios Ligarides, metropolitan of Gaza, who was residing in Moscow at the time. The writer



Ghica two *metochia*, the Monastery of Căluui and the Ungurei Skete. In 1683 and 1686, Dositheos travelled again to Bucharest and Iași, and he was appointed as an advisor to the Wallachian prince Șerban Cantacuzino. The prince then granted him diplomatic assistance with the Sublime Porte, so he succeeded in securing from the Ottoman authorities the necessary firmans to repair churches within the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Later, he was in a close relationship with the prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, a resolute supporter of the Middle Eastern Christians. The foundation of the printing press for Greek books in Iași in 1682 was, again, an act of munificence from the prince of Moldavia Gheorghe Duca, a benefactor of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem by means of gifts of money, political support, and spiritual assistance.

The first patriarch of the Church of Antioch to visit the Romanian Orthodox was Joachim V ibn ʿAwwā. Bishop of Tripoli in Lebanon from 1576 (named Dorotheos), he was elected patriarch of the Church of Antioch in 1581 with the support of the Damascene faithful, adopting the name Joachim (Yuwākīm).<sup>29</sup> A complicated battle over the patriarchal see ensued between him and Michael Sabbāḡ, for several years. Having secured a *firman* of confirmation in June 1583, Joachim V occupied the see of the Church of Antioch until 1592, when he was murdered in obscure circumstances.<sup>30</sup>

Joachim V travelled to L'viv and then Moscow in 1586–1587, and on his way to the Russian Tsardom he was invited by the bishop Gheorghe II Movilă to visit him in Rădăuți, northern Moldavia. He presented his host with two items that later reached the Monastery of Sucevița, a foundation of the Movilă family: a splendidly copied Slavonic Gospel (probably received as a gift while in L'viv), now exhibited in the museum of the monastery, and an icon of the Holy Virgin

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reports on the welcome that Patriarch Dositheos received at the princely courts of Bucharest and Iași, where he arrived before Lent, and the gifts that were presented to him. The patriarch was preparing to go to Iași, as “the Prince [Gheorghe] Duca is a great friend of the Holy Sepulcher and His Beatitude”. See Boris L. Fonkich, “Pis'mo Dionisiia Ivirita Paisiju Ligaridu”, in id., *Grecheskie rukopisi i dokumenty v Rossii v XVI – nachale XVIII v.*, Moscow, 2003, p. 433–444. I am grateful to Vera Tchentsova for the information above. For the collections of Greek letters preserved in the Moscow archives, see Vera Tchentsova, “The Correspondence of Greek Church Leaders with Russia”, in *CMR* 10, p. 485–491.

<sup>29</sup> On patriarch Joachim V and the troubles that occurred on his election, see Assad Rustum, *Kanīsat madīnat Allāh 'Anṭākiya al-'Uẓmā*, t. 3, Beirut, 1928, p. 23–37; Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 126; Robert M. Haddad, “Constantinople over Antioch, 1516–1724: Patriarchal Politics in the Ottoman Era”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41, 1990, 2, p. 220–222; Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, especially p. 134–135, 254–255, 369–371.

<sup>30</sup> Paul of Aleppo reports that Yuwākīm died a martyr's death while journeying across the Hawrān, in present-day southeastern Syria; cf. MS Arabe 6016, BnF, f. 5r.

with the Child Jesus and Saint Nikita (currently missing, possibly misplaced).<sup>31</sup> Paul of Aleppo reports in his *Journal* that his father Patriarch Makarios III and himself saw the Patriarch Joachim's portrait when visiting the Pechersk Lavra in 1656. After him, Jeremiah of Aleppo, the Antiochian metropolitan of Acre, visited Moldavia and, according to Arabic chronicles, died in Iași and was buried there.<sup>32</sup>

During his journey to the Romanian Principalities in 1653–1654 and 1657–1658, Patriarch Makarios III and his son Paul resided among the Moldavians and Wallachians for almost four years. Afterwards, Makarios composed several miscellanies (among them, the *Mağmu' laṭīf* and the *Mağmu' mubārak*) where he included chapters about them, gleaned from Greek sources or resulting from his own observations. Only two of these have been edited and translated so far: I have published the section on the life of Saint Paraskevi the Young, whose relics the patriarch and his son venerated in Iași (Arabic edition, English, then Romanian translations), and the chronicle of the Wallachian princes (Arabic edition and French translation).<sup>33</sup> While hosted by Wallachian and Moldavian princes, bishops, and boyars, the Syrians acquired and copied works written by Greek scholars and church fathers that they would translate, abridge and adapt for the

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31 Orest Tafrali, "Le monastère de Sucevitza et son trésor", in *Mélanges Charles Diehl*, Paris, t. II/2, 1930, p. 225. The text of the icon inscription was published by Arhim. Melchisedec [Ștefănescu] in "O vizită la câteva mănăstiri și biserici antice din Bucovina", *Revista de istorie, arheologie și filologie*, Iași, 1, 1883, t. II, fasc. 1, p. 50–51, and Dimitrie Dan, *Mănăstirea Sucevița*, Bucharest, 1923, p. 58–59.

32 Information given by 'Īsā Iskandar al-Ma'lūf in *Al-Ša'la*, Damascus, II, 8, March 1922, p. 383, cf. Haidar, "Aleppo: The First Ground for Arab-European Cultural Encounters", p. 31, n. 3.

33 Ioana Feodorov, "La Chronique de Valachie (1292–1664). *Tawārīḥ wa 'aḥbār muḥtasira 'an afandiyyat al-'Aflāḥ*. Texte arabe du Patriarche Macaire Za'im", introduction, edition of the Arabic manuscript and French translation, *MUSJ*, 52 (1991–1992), 1995, p. 3–71. A Romanian translation via a French intermediary, with commentary, was published by Virgil Căndea in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 8, 1970, 4, p. 673–692, with the title "Letopisețul Țării Românești (1292–1664) în versiunea arabă a lui Macarie Zaim". For the second text, see Ioana Feodorov, "The Unpublished Arabic Version of the Life of Saint Paraskevi the New by Makarios az-Za'im al-Ḥalabi", introduction, Arabic edition of the manuscript copy, and English translation, Kinga Dévényi (ed.), *Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the UEAI, The Arabist. Budapest Studies in Arabic. Part One*, 2002, 24–25, p. 69–80; Ioana Feodorov, *Viața Sfintei Cuvioase Parascheva după versiunea arabă a Patriarhului Macarie al Antiohiei (sec. XVII)*, Romanian translation of the Arabic text, introduction and notes, Iași, 2006.

faithful back home. Among them were Paisios Ligaridis,<sup>34</sup> Matthew Kigalas,<sup>35</sup> Agapios Landos, and Damascene of Studion (the *Physiologus*).<sup>36</sup> Considering the efforts of the Arab Christian travelers to bring home to Greater Syria manuscripts useful for the soul and mind of their brethren, the new catalogues published over the last twenty years by monastic and public libraries of Syria and especially Lebanon will reveal the extent of the connections between Eastern Europe and the Arabic-speaking Christians of the Ottoman provinces. By studying these collections, new data on the circulation of ideas and written works between European and the Arab East will be obtained.

Among Patriarch Makarios III's main objectives while journeying in Eastern Europe was to collect many Greek works, whether manuscript or printed, and to convince the rulers of all countries on his way to print liturgical books in Arabic for the faithful of the Church of Antioch. Naturally, all the heads of this church who ever passed this way were interested in acquiring Orthodox liturgical books printed in Greek in the Romanian Principalities: The Book of the Divine Liturgies, the Horologion, the Gospels, the Psalms, the Acts of the Apostles, the Oktoechos, etc. Anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant texts circulating in Eastern Europe and the Balkans were also of the utmost interest to them: Maximos of Peloponnesus' *The Manual against the Schism of the Pope's Followers* (printed at Bucharest in 1690),<sup>37</sup>

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34 Patriarch Makarios III included in his work *Kitāb al-naḥla* (*Book of the Bee*) the history of the Byzantine Empire since its foundation to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by the Ottomans, which he adapted from the unique copy of the Greek monk Paisios Ligaridis's composition *Chrismologion Kōnstantinoupoleōs neas Rōmīs parōchimenōn enestotōn kai mellontōn* (*Collection of Prophecies about the Past, Present, and Future of Constantinople, the New Rome*). According to Paul of Aleppo (BnF MS Arabe 6016, f. 270v), the Greek manuscript was copied by a clerk at Makarios's command while they resided in Wallachia. See Graf, *GCAL* I, p. 89, n. 2; Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 97–99; *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 90.

35 His *Synopsis* (*Chronograph*) published in Venice in 1637, which relies on pseudo-Dorotheos of Monemvasia, was translated into Arabic by patriarch Makarios III together with his son Paul: *Al-Durr al-manẓūm fī 'aḥbār mulūk al-Rūm* (*The Well-Strung Pearls of Stories about the Rūm People's Emperors*). Several manuscript copies of this work are preserved in monasteries across Mount Lebanon, in Saint Petersburg, at Duke University (USA), etc. See Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 106–107; *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 95; A. I. Mikhaylova, "An Illustrated Arabic Manuscript of a Translation of a Seventeenth-Century Greek Chronograph", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 4, 1998, 1, p. 57–64.

36 Gérard Troupeau, "Une version arabe du Physiologus", *Parole de l'Orient*, 1975–1976, 6–7, p. 237–250; Cătălina Velculescu, "Ein Tierbuch aus dem Jahrhundert 16–20 (Zwischen Damaskenos Studites und C. N. Mateescu)", *RESEE*, 39, 2001, 1–4, p. 133–141.

37 Yūwāsāf al-Muṣawwīr, the metropolitan of Sidon and Tyr and a famous icon painter, contributed in 1696 to the translation of this work into Arabic. He worked alongside the bishop Christodoulos of Gaza and composed a preface for the Arabic version. See Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 123.

Meletios Syrigos' *Argument against Calvin's Principles and Cyril Lukaris's Claims*,<sup>38</sup> bound with the Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem's *Manual against the Calvinist Confusion* (Bucharest, 1690), and Simon of Thessaloniki's *Against Heresies* (Iași, 1683).

Seen, at the time, as a strong weapon in the confrontations between the Christian denominations, printing was especially coveted by the heads of the Eastern Churches. In the Church of Antioch, under siege from the Catholic missionaries since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, there circulated Latin-rite catechisms and liturgical books, imported from Italian presses. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, it was no longer possible to serve the Divine Liturgy and read the Psalter at church or at home without standardized texts. Consequently, as recorded in a letter dated December 14, 1663, Patriarch Makarios III wrote to request the Propaganda Fide to keep sending Arabic books useful to the Antiochian clergy and faithful.<sup>39</sup>

After Makarios III, another Antiochian metropolitan and scholar resided in Wallachia intermittently between 1698 and 1704: Athanasios Dabbās, in between his two tenures as patriarch of Antioch. I shall be discussing his activities later in connection with his special relationship with the printer Antim the Iberian and the outstanding printing work that he carried out both in Wallachia and the Ottoman provinces of Syria.

A subsequent momentous sojourn in the Romanian Principalities was that of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch, intermittently between 1735 and 1748. His scholarly and typographic work in Bucharest and Iași had consequences reflected in books that crossed the '1724 divide'. Direct contacts between the Antiochian clergy and the rulers and metropolitans of the Romanian Principalities were shaped by the major (and unhappy) event in the life of the Church of Antioch: the division of 1724, when the Greek Catholic community of Syria succeeded in electing a second patriarch, after Sylvester, who had been recommended as a successor by Athanasios III Dabbās on his deathbed. Thus, the new Greek Catholic Melkite Church of Antioch was born, and together with it, a tough dialogue, often devoid of brotherly love, between the two Churches of Antioch and their 'champions', theologians and scholars who would use the printed book as a support and weapon in debates. Nevertheless, transferring the printing technology to Greater Syria in the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a major achievement for

<sup>38</sup> See Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, p. 328–331.

<sup>39</sup> This was considered proof of his inclination towards the Union with the Church of Rome (cf. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 141). Another point in his "indictment" was that he had expressed his gratitude to a Jesuit medical doctor who had cared for him while in Aleppo (ibid., p. 393).

all faithful, a triumph of modernity over conservative tendencies in society, and an opportunity for all communities to have access to education and intellectual progress. The joint work of clerics, printers, translators, book editors, and authors of theological and polemical works all through the 18<sup>th</sup> century produced a rich harvest of works that, whether published or not, helped the Arabic-speaking communities of the Middle East stay in contact with their Christian brethren outside the Ottoman Empire.

The connections that the Patriarchate of Antioch established and preserved with countries in Eastern Europe were an important element in their awareness of the fact that they belonged to a civilization deeply rooted in the early Christian spirituality. Naturally, Lebanon, a multiconfessional region where many ethnic communities coexisted for centuries (and 42% of the population was Christian in 1992),<sup>40</sup> placed itself in the avantgarde of the Arab Renaissance of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Nahḍa*, born in Aleppo.<sup>41</sup> The recent testimony of Alexandre Najjar, a Lebanese intellectual who emigrated to France without parting with his familiar universe back home, is revealing in this respect.

Situé dans une région qui fut le berceau des trois religions monothéistes, le Liban est, comme chacun le sait, un pays multiconfessionnel qui réunit dix-huit communautés religieuses: les maronites, les sunnites, les chiites, les Druzes, les grecs-orthodoxes, les grecs-catholiques (melkites), les arméniens-orthodoxes, les arméniens-catholiques, les syriens-orthodoxes (jacobites), les syriens-catholiques (syriaques), les chaldéens, les catholiques latins (directement rattachés à Rome), les protestants, les coptes, les assyriens (nestoriens), les juifs (une centaine a peine depuis l'exode provoqué par la guerre), les alaouites et la communauté ismaélite. Cette diversité a toujours suscité la curiosité ou l'admiration.<sup>42</sup>

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**40** Harry Norris and David Taylor, *The Christians*, in R. Tapper (ed.), *Some Minorities in the Middle East*, London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1992, p. 29. See also Philip Fargues, "The Arab Christians of the Middle East: A Demographic Perspective", in Andrea Pacini (ed.), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East. The Challenge of the Future*, Oxford, 1998, p. 48–66; "Chrétiens du Moyen-Orient, des Ottomans à nos jours", in Aurelien Girard, Sylvain Parent and Laura Pettinaroli, *Atlas des chrétiens. Des premières communautés aux défis contemporains*, Paris, 2016, p. 72–73. For more recent figures in terms of Christian denominational repartition in the Middle East, see Pierre Blanc, Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, *Atlas du Moyen-Orient. Aux racines de la violence*, Paris, 2016, p. 10–11.

**41** For the lively intellectual life of Lebanon and the role of the journals printed there in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Caesar E. Farah, "Awakening Interest in Western Science & Technology in Ottoman Syria", in id., *Arabs and Ottomans: A Checkered Relationship*, Istanbul, 2002, p. 23–27, and, in the same volume, "Syro-Egyptians and the Literary Revival Movement", p. 29–35, and "Censorship and Freedom of Expression in Ottoman Syria and Egypt", p. 51–76.

**42** Alexandre Najjar, *Dictionnaire amoureux du Liban*, Paris, 2014, p. 197 (s.v. "Confessionnalisme").

In the Ottoman period, Beirut was the capital of a vilayet and the third largest city in the empire, with a hundred thousand residents and a rising Christian population in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>43</sup> Aleppo and its surroundings had hosted colonies of French, English, Venetian, and Dutch merchants since the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In this area, foreign missions from Western Europe found a welcoming climate for the foundation of schools and presses, which substantially contributed to the birth of modern movements dedicated to social and cultural progress.<sup>44</sup> Literacy, helped by the dissemination of printed texts, encouraged a rise of the national feelings of Arabs living in Ottoman societies.<sup>45</sup> Albert Hourani described the effect that printing had in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when newspapers started to be published in various provinces of the Ottoman Empire:

These currents of thought were to have their echoes far beyond the Christian communities, because of an important change which took place in the 1860's: the growth of the periodical press. Until then, the only important newspapers had been those published by the government, in Cairo and Constantinople, and containing mainly (although not exclusively) official news. There had also been a few papers published in French, Greek, and Armenian, but virtually nothing in Arabic, until in the 1860's the increase in the number of printing-presses, of Arabic writers and of the reading public, as well as the comparative liberalism of the Turkish and Egyptian regimes, made possible the creation of private newspapers and periodicals.<sup>46</sup> For the next thirty years these were to be mainly in the hands of Lebanese Christians, whether they were published in Beirut, Cairo, or Constantinople.<sup>47</sup>

It is also the opinion of Thomas Philipp in his commentaries that precede the edition of Ġurġi Zaidān's autobiography edited by him in 1979:

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**43** According to Constantin Panchenko in his book *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, on p. 96, "In Ottoman lists of *jizya* payers (i.e., able-bodied adult men), in 1640 there were 2,500 Aleppo Christians, in 1695 there were 5,391 and in 1740 there were 8,120." For further details on all the Patriarchates of the Christian East in Ottoman times, see the entire chapter *Geography and Demographies* in *ibid.*, p. 88–119.

**44** The testimony of European travelers to the Ottoman province of Syria in the 18<sup>th</sup> century are relevant in this respect. See a comprehensive record of travelogues and memoirs written by Westerners about the Ottoman territories that are now Syria and Lebanon with Hasan Kujjah, *Ḥalab fī kitābāt al-mu'arriḥīn wa-l-bāḥiṭīn wa-l-zuwwār wa-l-'udabā'*/Aleppo in the Writings of Historians, Travelers, and Authors (in Arabic), Leiden and Boston, 2023, p. 223–228.

**45** For the theme of Arab national identity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the background of its emergence, see Tamari, "Arab National Consciousness in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Syria", p. 309–321.

**46** For a selective list of "Revues et journaux libanais dans le monde (1852–1900)", see Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 330–332. Of the entire list, twenty-one journals were initiated in Beirut between 1852 and 1899.

**47** Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 97.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the press had become for the Arab *Nahḍa* the most important instrument of expression. Almost everyone of the new intelligentsia in the Arab world was at some time in his life involved in editing, publishing, or writing for a magazine or newspaper. When Zaidān began the publication of his magazine, some 170 magazines and newspapers had been published in Egypt.<sup>48</sup>

Zaidān founded in 1891 a printing press which he baptized in 1896 *Dār al-hilāl*. The magazine that he printed there, with the same title of *al-Hilāl*, declared itself a “scientific, historical and literary magazine”, in which articles were dedicated to social, historical and cultural questions. This enterprise was highly successful, reaching a wide audience of Arabic speakers, from Egypt to New Zealand.<sup>49</sup>

As Elizabeth Eisenstein notes, “typography endowed scholarship with new powers.”<sup>50</sup> To all these transformations, the Romanians contributed directly and generously, in support of the Orthodox Christian communities, the heirs of Byzantine civilization.

This discussion should also encompass the elements of unity and cohesion that using the same printed liturgical and prayer books secured for the Christian Arabic-speaking communities living under Muslim rule. Speaking the same language, serving the Divine Liturgy, praying, and learning with the same books kept the faithful of the Eastern Churches together in a predominantly Muslim society, whose laws and regulations they had learned to observe, for the sake of their own survival. Elisabeth Eisenstein comments on the situation in Europe when liturgical languages diversified.

In the form of the Lutheran Bible or the King James Version, the sacred book of Western civilization became more insular as it grew more popular. It is no accident that nationalism and mass literacy have developed together. The two processes have been linked ever since Europeans ceased to speak the same language when citing their Scriptures or saying their prayers.<sup>51</sup>

The first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were marked by dissensions in the Church of Antioch, fueled by the Latin missions, which had gained significant influence on Syrian Christian society, and the constant pressure from the Ottoman governors who were eager to tax the *ḍimmīs* as efficiently as they could. As soon as Patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās died on July 13, 1724, a part of the faithful declared their attachment to Rome, after years of internal strife in the Church of Antioch. Thus,

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48 Thomas Philipp, *Ḡurḡi Zaidān. His Life and Thought*, Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1979, p. 39.

49 Ibid., p. 39-40.

50 Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, p. 124.

51 Ibid., p. 162.



several centuries after the Great Schism of Europe in 1054, a Catholic segment separated from the body of the ancient Church of Antioch, without fully embracing the Latin creed and rite.<sup>52</sup> While preserving the Greek rite and Arabic-language liturgy, they took over exclusively the name “Melkite” in their title: the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch.<sup>53</sup> Derived from the Syriac word *melek*, “emperor”, up until 1724 the name “Melkite” had referred to all the Chalcedonian Christians, who adopted the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council convened in Chalcedon in 451, under the Byzantine emperor’s control. Apparently, the word had been coined by the adversaries of the Byzantine rite and doctrine to denigrate the faithful of the Middle Eastern provinces who had adopted them, calling them “the emperor’s servants”.<sup>54</sup>

The reasons for the split in the Church of Antioch so long after the Great Schism of 1054 is explained by historians of the Eastern Churches in various ways. In recent years, Hasan Çolak has identified several opinions about this.<sup>55</sup> One assumption is that this movement was meant to lead to the autonomy of the local clergy.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the election of Cyril VI as a Melkite Greek Catholic patriarch was a reaction on the Syrian faithful’s part to the Greek domination conducted from Constantinople over the clergy of the Church of Antioch.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, for the two centuries before 1724, for the next two centuries, the patriarchs of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch were mostly locally born and bred, but they had a solid education in Greek language and Byzantine culture. According to another opinion, this was the conclusion of a personal battle between two heads of the Antiochian Church for the patriarchal see, both giving it their best political shot.<sup>58</sup>

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52 On the way these Catholics, who do not consider themselves Latins, define their theological and liturgical options as opposed to the Greek Orthodox, see Korolevskij, “L’Uniatisme. Définition. Causes. Effets. Étendue. Dangers. Remèdes”, p. 185.

53 For the history of the ‘Melkites’, in their various Churches and communities, see Ignace Dick, *Les Melkites Grecs-Orthodoxes et Grecs-Catholiques des Patriarcats d’Antioche, d’Alexandrie et de Jérusalem*, Turnhout, 1994; “Melkitische Kirche” and “Melkitischen Mönchtum”, in Hubert Kaufhold (ed.), *Kleines Lexikon des Christlichen Orients*, Wiesbaden, 2007, p. 346–351.

54 See Sidney H. Griffith, “‘Melkites’, ‘Jacobites’ and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in the Third/Ninth-Century Syria”, in David Thomas (ed.), *Syrian Christians under Islam: The First Thousand Years*, Leiden, 2001, p. 9–55. See also Cyrille Korolevskij, “Antioche”, in *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, t. III, Paris, 1924, cols. 563–703; Cyrille Charon, “L’origine ethnographique des melkites”, *Échos d’Orient*, 11, 1908, p. 82–91.

55 Çolak, “Catholic Infiltration in the Ottoman Levant”, p. 85–95.

56 Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt 1725-1775*, Stuttgart, 1985, p. 19.

57 Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, London and Berkeley, CA, 1988, p. 42–50.

58 Carsten-Michael Walbiner, “The Split of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (1724)

Whatever the case, the Christians' attachment to one church or the other in Ottoman Syria became so vague that sometimes not even the local bishops could tell if the faithful or the head of a certain community had embraced union or not.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, support from the Eastern European Christian peoples became even more desirable after 1724, when the two co-existing Churches of Antioch, the Greek Orthodox and the Melkite Greek Catholic, were caring for the spiritual needs of communities who resided in the same Ottoman-ruled provinces. Shaped by a similar imperative to survive, the needs of these divided communities were presented to different traditional supporters, east and west – for the former, in the lands of European Orthodoxy, for the latter, in Rome. Naturally, they received solutions that differed in form and degree. After the dust settled on the Antiochian Churches of the Ottoman province of Syria – now *two* instead of *one* – Arabic presses and the printing of liturgical and spiritual books became one of the grounds where the battle was fought between followers and opponents of union.

### 3.2 Looking for Relief in Eastern Europe: The Romanian Connection

The Romanians' connection to Arabic printing is due to Athanasios Dabbās, metropolitan and patriarch of the Church of Antioch, who was the guest of prince Constantin Brâncoveanu at the Wallachian court in Bucharest.

Būlos (Paul) Dabbās was born in Damascus in an old Christian family rooted in the Ḥawrān,<sup>60</sup> where two previous patriarchs had been born: Athanasios II (1611–1618) and Cyril IV (1619–1628). The predominantly Greek education that the young Paul received at home also included studies of Classical Arabic, Syriac, Latin, and Italian. He was ordained a monk at the Monastery of Saint Sabbas near Bethlehem, given the name Procopius, and then ordained a hieromonk and elected abbot. While living in monasteries of Jerusalem and its surroundings, he had close ties with monks of the Franciscan order and other Catholic missionaries.

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and the Emergence of a New Identity in the Bilād al-Shām as Reflected by Some Melkite Historians of the 18<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries”, *Chronos*, 2003, 7, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> See details in Çolak, “Catholic Infiltration in the Ottoman Levant”, p. 88–89.

<sup>60</sup> This region of south-west Syria (which includes part of the territories of present-day Syria) is among the first to have had a majority of Christian population from the earliest times. Bernard Heyberger described it thus: “Une zone comme celle du Ḥawrān reste en dehors de tout changement. Au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, elle apparaît comme une sorte de conservatoire des traditions et des coutumes”; cf. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 559.

Made metropolitan of Aleppo, he was elected in 1685 as patriarch of the Church of Antioch and confirmed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on August 25, 1686, as Athanasios III.<sup>61</sup> At the time, the Damascene Christians preferred a patriarch born in the capital of the elayet of Damascus.<sup>62</sup> However, a competitor from the al-Za'im family was challenging this election: the Patriarch Cyril V.<sup>63</sup> To avoid the division of the Church of Antioch, Dabbās accepted to renounce his seat, with the understanding that he would return to the patriarchal see after Cyril V's demise. A grand-son of Patriarch Makarios III ibn al-Za'im, Cyril was aged 15 when elected to the patriarchal see for the first time, with the support of the pasha of Damascus but in the absence of a consensus in the Christian community of the city. A stern opponent to the papal authority and a heir of his forefathers' love for theological studies, he composed several works preserved in manuscripts.<sup>64</sup>

Patriarch Athanasios III remained on the see of Antioch between June 25, 1685, and October 1694, and then from January 1720 until his death on July 13, 1724. The agreement signed by the two competitors to the see in 1694 stipulated in Article 6 that upon Cyril's death, Athanasios would return to office. In the meantime, he would serve as a metropolitan of Aleppo – the rank that he had when travelling to Wallachia, from 1698 on.<sup>65</sup> Between 1705 and 1707, Athanasios was also archbishop of Cyprus, appointed by Gabriel III, the Patriarch of Constantinople. He was in Cyprus briefly in 1705 but the following year he was back in Aleppo, at the metropolitan residence.

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<sup>61</sup> The name 'Athanasios' was preferred by members of the Dabbās family. Another Athanasios, of a later generation (d. 1797), is mentioned in *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 339. This one, though, was not Athanasios IV, as he is mentioned in old sources such as Alexander George Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, London, 1894, on p. 328. Although initially Cyrille Charon took this information from Ellis (Charon, *Histoire des Patriarcats Melkites*, passim), he corrected it later in his entry "Antioche" of *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, III, Paris, 1924, col. 563–703. The error was repeated by Romanian and foreign authors until recently. For example, Simonescu and Muracade, "Tipar românesc pentru arabi în secolul al XVIII-lea", p. 1–32; Râpă-Buicliu, *Bibliografia românească veche. Additamenta*, I. 1536–1830; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World. The Roots of Sectarianism*, Cambridge, 2004.

<sup>62</sup> Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, p. 85. For the discussions that preceded his election, see p. 85–86. On the competition between the two contenders, see: Haddad, "Constantinople over Antioch, 1516–1724", p. 230ff.; Walbiner, "Bishops and Metropolitans of the Antiochian Patriarchate in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century", p. 584; Çolak, "Catholic Infiltration in the Ottoman Levant", p. 90–96.

<sup>63</sup> See Charon, *Le Rite byzantin dans les Patriarcats melkites*, p. 539–540.

<sup>64</sup> *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 130–131; Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 456.

<sup>65</sup> *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 129, 132.

Letters preserved in the Vatican Archive reveal that Athanasios Dabbās was supported by the Latin Church and considered a Catholic-inclined cleric until 1718. In his correspondence with Rome, Dabbās asked for help and expressed his hope that Rome would not abandon the Arabic-speaking Christians of the Antiochian Church.<sup>66</sup> During his time, there were voices that accused him of inclining towards union with Rome, like other patriarchs and bishops of the Church of Antioch before him. One of the more credible contemporary testimonies to this effect is that of Germanos Farḥāt, the Maronite bishop of Aleppo, who included in his work *Kitāb dīwān al-badi'* a portrait of Athanasios, claiming that:

This Athanasios was from the city of Damascus and was raised since he was young in the Roman creed. He was a student of the Jesuit monks, acquired from them the knowledge of the holy faith, and its truths and doctrines were deeply rooted in him.<sup>67</sup>

The complex situation of the relations between the Church of Antioch and the Church of Rome cannot be detailed here. It is useful, however, to cite an enlightening passage of Bernard Heyberger's above-mentioned book.

La supériorité de l'Église tridentine sur les autres est tellement évidente pour les Occidentaux, qu'ils interprètent le moindre signe de bonne volonté d'un prélat envers eux comme le premier pas vers l'"union". Inversement, les manifestations d'agacement des Orientaux face à la chasse aux "abus" menée par les Latins ne peuvent être que des preuves de leur attachement au "schisme" ou à l'"hérésie". Dans ces conditions, se demander, comme certains le font encore aujourd'hui, si Malātyūs Karma, Makāryūs al-Za'im ou Athanāsīyūs Dabbās étaient catholiques, ou même si dans le secret de leur conscience seulement ils l'étaient, c'est encore se placer du point de vue du missionnaire latin.<sup>68</sup>

Cyril V died on January 5, 1720, not before signing a Latin confession of faith (in 1716). In the meantime, the climate in Aleppo was not calm, as the contradictions were building up between those inclined towards union with Rome and those opposed to it. Bruce Masters paints this picture of Aleppo in 1709:

<sup>66</sup> See the letter from Pope Innocent XII to Dabbās published in 1794 by Joannes Dominicus Mansi and reedited in F. Labbeus and G. Cossartius (eds.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, t. 46, col. 117, n. 1. Mansi published several letters from Rome to Dabbās, dated until 1717, where he is treated as Catholic.

<sup>67</sup> See Fā'iz Freijate, "Al-Baṭṭariyark Aṭanāsīyūs Dabbās bi-qalam al-Muṭṭrān Girmānūs Farḥāt (+ 1732)", *Al-Waḥda*, 13, 1974, 3, p. 203.

<sup>68</sup> Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 391.

The Jesuits claimed that between 5,000 and 6,000 individuals were already taking communion from them in Aleppo by 1714.<sup>69</sup> If that figure were true, it would mean that almost half the city's Christians were Catholic. [...] Whatever the total number of communicants, alarm at these defections caused the hierarchy of the established churches to petition the Sultan for redress. In an order received in 1709, the Porte informed Aleppo's governor that he was to forbid local Christians from attending Latin mass that was regularly being offered at the Shaybani Khan, ostensibly for the French merchant community. Subsequent arrests, resulting in imprisonment for those apprehended, occurred. Similar orders would be received throughout Syria for the next century.<sup>70</sup>

Back at the head of the Church of Antioch, Athanasios Dabbās reverted its course to the path of Orthodoxy, whose teachings he acknowledged and professed with more conviction during his second tenure. He resumed the spiritual mission of his forefathers Meletios Karma and Makarios III ibn al-Za'im, in line with the heritage of Byzantium. Its doctrine and teachings are reflected in his sermons and theological works, his comments on repentance and confession, and his translations of Greek ascetic and ethical texts. In the chronicles of the Church of Antioch, Athanasios Dabbās is remembered first for his good guidance as a metropolitan of Aleppo. Among other feats worth remembering, he issued in July 1716 a code of conduct that he placed, carved in marble, inside the cathedral of Aleppo. In it, he addressed several moral and administrative issues: how a good Christian ought to dress<sup>71</sup> and behave when entering the church to avoid all impropriety and extravagance; how priests should be ordained based on their ascertained virtues ("pour eviter les ordinations 'par corruption, par simonie, par recommandation, ou par la force des puissants'.");<sup>72</sup> that all Ottoman officers of the court or notables be removed from the high levels of decision-making in the Church of

<sup>69</sup> Citing Bernard Heyberger, "Les chrétiens d'Alep (Syrie) à travers les récits des conversions des Missionnaires Carmes Déchaux (1657–1681)", *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*, 1988, 100, p. 461–499.

<sup>70</sup> Bruce Masters, "Aleppo: The Ottoman Empire's Caravan City", in Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters (eds.), *The Ottoman City between East and West. Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, Cambridge, 2005, p. 54. Here, the author cites the Damascus and Aleppo Court Records, vol. II, p. 27, and vol. LI, p. 95.

<sup>71</sup> Including that Aleppo women should not wear green clothes, cf. Būlus Qarāli, "Manšūr<sup>an</sup> li-l-baṭriyark Athanāsiyūs Dabbās wa-l-muṭrān Iḡnātiyūs Karbūs", *Al-maḡalla al-sūriyya*, 1928, 1, p. 8, cited by Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 53, n. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Būlus Qarāli, "Manšūr<sup>an</sup> li-l-baṭriyark Athanāsiyūs Dabbās", p. 6–7, cited by Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 92–93. See also Būlus Qarāli, "Manšūr baṭriyarki qadīm", *Al-maḡalla al-sūriyya*, 4, 1929, 6, p. 374–378.

Antioch, etc.<sup>73</sup> At a close inspection of these precepts, echoes from the teachings and sermons of the bishop Antim the Iberian come to mind, as well as the spiritual advice contained in Dimitrie Cantemir's ethical treatise *The Divan*, which Dabbās translated in 1705 from Greek into Arabic.

Dabbās is also known for other translations from Greek and especially for his compositions in Arabic, which enriched the Christian Arabic literature of his time. He composed an *Epistle on Repentance and Confession* that he printed in his press in 1711. In 1719, Dabbās wrote a collection of *Sermons for the Sundays and Feasts of the Year*. In 1715, he translated from Greek into Arabic the Triodion, which I shall return to below. He also translated a book on Rhetoric composed by Frangiskos Skoufos (1644–1697), Τέχνη ρητορικῆς (Venice, 1681), in Dabbās's Arabic version: *Kitāb fī šinā'at al-faṣāḥa*.<sup>74</sup>

In 1721, Dabbās completed the Arabic translation of the famous book on the Great Schism *Petra skandalou ētoi diasafēnēsis tēs archēs kai tōn alēthōn aitiōn tou schismatos tōn dyo Ekklesiōn Anatolikēs kai Dytikēs* (*The Rock of Scandal or Clarification of the Onset and the True Causes of the Schism between the two Churches, the Eastern one and the Western one*)<sup>75</sup> by Ēlias Mēniatēs (1669–1714).<sup>76</sup> Dabbās's Arabic version, where he only included the first part of the book (56 chapters), was printed at Oxford in 1726 as *Kitāb yud'ā Ṣaḥrat al-šakk: fī bayān bad' al-inšiqaq wa-asbābi-hi wa-suqūṭ al-Kanīsa al-Ġarbīya min al-Šarqīya wa-fī al-aḥlāqīya al-kullīya bayna-humā* (*The Book Called the Rock of Scandal, which Reveals the Origin and Sources of the Division and the separation of the Two*

<sup>73</sup> Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 135, 151, 162, 533.

<sup>74</sup> Stefano Di Pietrantonio is preparing a PhD thesis dedicated to this text, which he will defend at the Université Catholique de Louvain in 2025. He has presented the preliminary outcomes of this research in his study “Le *Kitāb fī šinā'at al-faṣāḥa* du patriarche Athanasios III Dabbās: enjeux littéraires et linguistiques d'un texte de rhétorique gréco-arabe inédit”, in Feodorov, Heyberger and Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, p. 132–192.

<sup>75</sup> *Petra skandalou, ētoi Diasaphēsis tēs archēs kai tōn alēthōn aitiōn tou schismatos kai dichonoīōn tōn dyo ekklesiōn, anatolikēs kai dytikēs, meta tōn pente diaphōnousōn kyriōn diaphorōn*, Leipzig, 1718. For Rowland Sherman's involvement in this enterprise, see Simon Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, c. 1600–1760*, Oxford, 2020, p. 244–245.

<sup>76</sup> Who, incidentally, also composed a book of *Sermons on Repentance and Confession*. See Stylianos G. Vayanos, *Elias Meniates: Biography & Translation of his Sermons on Repentance and Confession. A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology*, Brookline, MA, 1998 (unpublished PhD thesis).

*Churches, the Western and the Eastern, and their Dissimilar Morality*).<sup>77</sup> Writing about this book, Ġibrāʾil Farḥāt states that Dabbās paid for its printing from his own pocket. C. Levenq asserts, without producing proof, that two editions of this book were printed, one in London, the other in Aleppo.<sup>78</sup>

The strained relations between the Catholics and the Orthodox reached a boiling point in 1722–1723: while travelling to and from Istanbul, where he participated in the council convened by the Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremias II, Chrysanthos Notaras, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, witnessed the progress made by the Catholic missions in Damascus and Aleppo.<sup>79</sup>

Athanasios Dabbās's works reflect the conflictual relations in Aleppo and Damascus, generated by the activities of the Jesuit missionaries, who identified there the erudite scholars capable of polemizing with the Greek Orthodox theologians. Thus, the Arabic version of the decrees of the Council of Constantinople of 1722, prepared one year later by the Patriarch Athanasios III, who was present there, was criticized by ʿAbdallāh Zāḥir in his epistle *Muḥtaṣar al-taf-nīd li-l-maḡmaʿ al-ʿanīd* (*Brief Denunciation of the Hostile Council*) written at the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Ḥinšāra. Zāḥir's reaction, which may seem exaggerated, was probably prompted by the fact that the clergy in attendance at this council addressed a complaint to the Sultan's court against the Catholics, which convinced the Ottoman administration to ban the missionaries' activities.<sup>80</sup> The measures taken by the local governors were drastic. The Latin missionaries were forbidden from any contact with the Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians under the false pretense of dispensing education to them. The bishops of Aleppo and Sidon were imprisoned and many priests in these cities, as well as Damascus and Tripoli, were threatened with exile if they did not revert to their patriarch's creed.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> See Roper, "England and the printing of texts for Orthodox Christians", p. 439; *HMLĒM* IV.1, p. 142–143.

<sup>78</sup> C. Levenq, "Athanase", in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, t. IV, 1930, p. 1369–1376. An Aleppo edition is also mentioned in Dabbās and Raššū, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibāʿa al-ʿarabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, on p. 80, in the legend of the second page of this book: "imprimé à Alep en 1721", but, again, no proof is given for this assertion.

<sup>79</sup> According to a letter addressed to the Jesuit monk Fleuriau on July 21, 1723, published in the collection edited by Gobien, cf. Çolak, "Catholic Infiltration in the Ottoman Levant", p. 89.

<sup>80</sup> Çolak, "Catholic Infiltration in the Ottoman Levant", p. 87.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89, n. 31. An effort was also made by the heads of Eastern Churches to recover their flock. See, For example, Anaïs Massot, "Patriarch Maksīmūs Maḡlūm's Reverse Missionary Enterprise during the *Tanzīmāt* Period: Bringing the Greek Catholics back into the Greek Rite", in Vanessa R. de Obaldía and Claudio Monge (eds.), *Latin Catholicism in Ottoman Istanbul. Properties, People & Missions*, Istanbul, 2022, p. 109–120.



After 1694, in search of financial and political assistance for the Syrian Christians, Athanasios Dabbās journeyed to Constantinople and from there to Wallachia, where, as he had heard, Christians enjoyed more freedom than in the Ottoman-ruled lands. He was also aware of how generous the prince Constantin Brâncoveanu was towards the Christians of the Ottoman Empire: among other feats, in January 1692, he had signed an endowment of 109,000 *ban* (ca. 840 thalers) to seventeen churches and monasteries of the East.<sup>82</sup>

Dabbās's visits to Bucharest happened in dire times for the Syrian Christians, who had been living under Ottoman rule since 1516, the year Sultan Selim I conquered the territories inhabited by many faithful of the Eastern Churches. The books printed for the Antiochian priests reflect the situation of the Christian communities in the Middle East. Dabbās asserts in his foreword to the Aleppo Psalter of 1706: "Our brethren in faith in Arab lands who have kept their devotion are living in misery because of the oppression to which the Ottomans have subjected them.

Dabbās, then metropolitan of Aleppo, was in Bucharest in March 1700. At Constantin Brâncoveanu's court he was treated as an honored guest, he became the prince's advisor, heard his confessions and ordained bishops and priests. The Romanian chronicles mention that on May 12, 1700, he officiated at the wedding of the prince's daughter Safta to the Great Logothetes (Rom. *vel logofăt*) Iordache Crețulescu.<sup>83</sup> On July 11, 1703, he participated in a liturgical service to celebrate the receipt by Brâncoveanu of the *firman* of confirmation from the Sublime Porte. On September 20, 1702, the Wallachian prince signed a document of annual donation to the Church of Antioch amounting to 500 thalers, as long as the prince would live. Resulting from the income produced by the salt mines of Wallachia, the donation was going to be collected annually by an envoy of the Syrian patriarch, on October 26, the feast of Saint Demetrios. The prince's decision was explained in the donation act in these terms:

Having learned that the holy and divine Patriarchate of Antioch [...] is weakened and devoid of support, and seeing that the holy father Athanasius, who was formerly a patriarch of this church, came and brought blessing and prayer for us, asking us to assist and give something

<sup>82</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Studii și documente*, t. V, Bucharest, 1903, p. 363.

<sup>83</sup> Ștefan D. Grecianu, *Viața lui Costandin Vodă Brâncoveanu de Radu Vel Logofăt Grecianu*, Bucharest, 1906, p. 98–100; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Bisericii românești și a vieții religioase a românilor*, Vălenii-de-Munte, t. II, 1909, p. 10–11; Dinu C. Giurescu, "Anatefterul. Conдика de porunci a vistieriei lui Constantin Brâncoveanu", in *Studii și materiale de istorie medie*, t. V, Bucharest, 1962, p. 367.

to his holy patriarchate, from our gain, [...] we made this merciful donation to the patriarchate so it stays strong, unwavering, and untouched, as long as my lordship is alive.<sup>84</sup>

According to confirmation documents preserved at the National Archives of Romania in Bucharest, the amount was regularly paid until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A beautiful portrait of Athanasios Dabbās, composed shortly after his death, was included by the *vornic*<sup>85</sup> and chronicler Radu Popescu in his *Histories of the Princes of Wallachia (Istoriile domnilor Țării Românești)*:

And then again, we saw this holy patriarch kir Athanasius, as he came here in our lands in the days of Costandin Vodă<sup>86</sup> and those of his lordship Nicolae Vodă.<sup>87</sup> He was a godly man, good, kind, humble, avoiding doing harm, and surpassing in gentleness anyone else whom we have seen in our life. He also made Orthodox church books in Arabic type, printing them here in our country. And then, taking them and spreading them to the churches, everyone was filled with happiness and thanked his holiness for the thing that they had never seen before books printed with Arabic characters.<sup>88</sup>

Seeing the desire of the Wallachian prince to better understand the church life of Syria before and after the Ottoman conquest, Athanasios Dabbās compiled in 1702, in Greek, a *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch (Synopsis peri tōn hagiōtatōn patriarchōn Antiocheias)* that he dedicated to his protector Constantin Brâncoveanu.<sup>89</sup>

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**84** This act was published by Teodor G. Bulat in his article “Daniile lui Constantin-vodă Brâncoveanu pentru Orientul orthodox”, *BOR*, 82, 1964, 9–10, p. 940. See also *Condica Marii Logofeții (1692–1714)*, Bucharest, 2009, p. 362–363.

**85** The *vornic* was charged with internal affairs and he was the supreme judge of the court and country.

**86** Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu.

**87** Prince Nicolae Mavrocordat. As he ruled in Moldavia in Nov. 1709 – Nov. 1710 and 1711 – Jan. 5, 1716, the implication is that Dabbās returned to the Romanian Principalities, visiting Moldavia this time, after he left Wallachia in 1704. No other source mentions this visit.

**88** Constantin Grecescu (ed.), *Radu Popescu, Istoriile domnilor Țării Românești*, Bucharest, 1963, p. 273–274, reprinted as Radu Popescu, *Istoriile domnilor Țării Rumânești*, in Mihail Gregorian (ed.), *Cronici munteni*, t. 1, Bucharest, 1961, here, p. 544.

**89** Athanasios Dabbās, “Istoria patriarhilor Antiochiei – *Synopsis peri ton hagiōtatōn patriarchon Antiocheias*”, translation by Fr Vasile Radu and Cyril Karalevsky, *BOR*, 48, 1930, 10, p. 851–864, 961–972, 1039–1050, 1136–1150; 49, 1931, 2–3, p. 15–32, 140–160. The original manuscript containing 46ff. (r/v) is preserved at the National Library of Austria in Vienna (Ms. Suppl. Graec. LXXXV, Coll. Kollár LXXI, col. 451–460). Dabbās’s preface was translated into Latin and published in *Kaiserlich-Königliche Hofbibliothek Petri Lambecii Hamburgensis Commentariorum de augustissima Bibliotheca Caesarea Vindobonensi liber primus(-octavus) ... Editio altera. Opera*

Another important work that owes its existence to Athanasios Dabbās's sojourn at the Wallachian court is the Arabic translation of the Greek version of Dimitrie Cantemir's work *Divanul sau gâlceava înțeleptului cu lumea sau giudețul sufletului cu trupul* (*The Divan or the Wise Man's Dispute with the World, or the Litigation between Soul and Body*), only seven years after it was printed at Iași (1698), at the press of the Monastery of Trei Ierarhi (Three Holy Hierarchs). *Book One* and *Book Two* of Cantemir's work are his own creation, while *Book Three* is Cantemir's translation from Latin of a book by Andreas Wissovati, a major theologian of the Polish Unitarians (Fig. 8). Having probably started while still residing in Bucharest, Dabbās translated into Arabic the Greek version of the *Divan* made by Jeremiah Cacavelas, Cantemir's Greek tutor, whose original title was: *Κρίτηριον ἢ Διάλεξις τοῦ Σοφοῦ μὲ τὸν Κόσμον ἢ Κρίσις τῆς Ψυχῆς μὲ τὸ Σῶμα*. Cacavelas had translated the original Romanian text sent to him by the author into a mixture of literary and vernacular Greek, the common style of Cretan literature at the time.<sup>90</sup> The Arabic translation was given the title *Salāh al-ḥakīm wa-fasād al-‘ālam al-ḍamīm* (*Salvation of the Sage and Ruin of the Sinful World*). Dabbās indicates in the foreword that he was the translator of this book, not the author. The Syrian metropolitan was very careful about accurately rendering the content of Cantemir's work, rather than its form. Therefore, the Arabic text includes improvements to its content.

However, Cantemir's name is absent, as well as all reference to the original work. Therefore, for a long time, the presumed author of the *Divan* was either Dabbās himself or Saint Basil the Great, alternatively mentioned in the catalogues of the few collections that held manuscript copies of this work. The connection between this translation and Cantemir's original work was established in 1970 by the Romanian historian Virgil Cândea while surveying the collections of monastic libraries across Lebanon.

Copies of Dabbās's work circulated in the Ottoman territories of Greater Syria until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both in the Orthodox and the Catholic milieus.

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et studio A. F. Kollarii, *Supplementorum liber primus posthumus*, Vindobonae (Vienna), 1766. See also Korolevskij, "Antioche", col. 697. The Romanian diplomat Marcu Beza brought to Romania copies of fragments of a copy preserved in Damascus, which he saw around 1936. He states in his work *Heritage of Byzantium*, on p. 72: "He [the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch – my note] showed me, and left at my disposal for a few days, two eighteenth-century Greek manuscripts: one by Athanasius Dabbas, *History of the Antioch Patriarchs* [...]". Nicolae Iorga translated and commented the fragments brought by Beza in "Manuscripte din biblioteci străine relative la istoria românilor", *AARMSI*, S. II, t. 20, 1897–1898, p. 224–234.

<sup>90</sup> Dimitrie Cantemir, *Divanul* (*Opere complete*, vol. I), ed. Virgil Cândea, Bucharest, 1974, p. 44–46.

Eleven copies were identified, and among them the longest one is seemingly the one preserved at the BnF in Paris, dated 1705, which covers 281 recto/verso folios, copied in *nashī* script.<sup>91</sup> The monk *Ġibrāʾil* (Gabriel) Farḥāt, who in 1725 became the Maronite bishop of Aleppo, revised Dabbās's translation. *Ġibrāʾil Farḥāt was born in Aleppo on November 20, 1670, in the rich Maronite family Maṭar (d. Aleppo, June 10, 1732).*<sup>92</sup> He took the name 'Germānūs' (Germanos) when appointed bishop of Aleppo in 1725.<sup>93</sup> Several works of Patriarch Athanasios III passed through the expert hands of Farḥāt, himself the author of an outstanding series of works and translations from Greek to Arabic. The most famous, along with a *Diwān* of poetry, is his Arabic grammar *Baḥṭ al-maṭālib*, composed for a Christian audience. Another work of his, *Iḥkām bāb al-i'rāb min luġat al-a'rāb*, completed in 1718, comprises a large number of words taken from the terminology employed by the Arabic-speaking Christians.

<sup>91</sup> I have edited and translated into English the Arabic version of Cantemir's *Divan* based on the two manuscripts of BnF Paris and the Vatican Library. In 2006, I published with the Editing House of the Romanian Academy the book: Dimitrie Cantemir, *The Salvation of the Wise Man and the Ruin of the Sinful World* (*Ṣalāḥ al-ḥakīm wa-fasād al-'ālam al-damīm*). In 2008, I was granted the 'Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki' prize for text editions by the Romanian Academy, for this book. I subsequently prepared the revised edition with Yulia Petrova (Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Ukraine, Kyiv), and published it with Brill in 2016: *Dimitrie Cantemir, Salvation of the Sage and Ruin of the Sinful World*.

<sup>92</sup> For his biography and works, see Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 406–428; Ignatiî Iu. Kratchkovskîi, "Farḥāt", in *Akademik I. Iu. Krachkovskîi. Izbrannye sochineniia*, t. III, Moscow and Leningrad, 1956, p. 247–250; Joseph Féghali, "Germānos Farḥāt, Archevêque d'Alep et arabisant (1670–1732)", *Melto. Recherches orientales*, 2, 1966, 1, p. 115–129; *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 137, 139–140, 144; Nuhād Razzūq, *Germānūs Farḥāt – ḥayātu-hu wa-'ātāru-hu*, Kaslik, 1998; Ignatiî Kratchkovsky and A. G. Karam, "Farḥāt", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al., Brill online, s. v.; Hayat el-Eid Bualuan, "The Contribution of Eighteenth-Century Christian Historians of Bilād al-Shām to the Arab Renaissance", *ARAM*, 25 (2013), 2016, 1 & 2, p. 267–268; Elena Sahin, "Jirmānūs Farḥāt", in *CMR* 12, p. 135–142; "Jirmanus Farhat (1670–1732)", introduced by Kristen Brustad and translated by Anthony Edwards, from *Issues Desired by Students Required*, in Tarek El-Ariss (ed.), Anthony Edwards and Anna Ziajka Stanton (assist. eds.), *The Arab Renaissance: A Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda*, New York, 2018, p. 71–82; Stefano Di Pietrantonio, "Le *Kitāb fī ṣinā'at al-faṣāḥa* du patriarche Athanase III Dabbās: enjeux littéraires et linguistiques d'un texte de rhétorique gréco-arabe inédit", in Ioana Feodorov, Bernard Heyberger and Samuel Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, Leiden and Boston, 2021, p. 136–137.

<sup>93</sup> See the edition prepared by Ruṣayd al-Daḥdāḥ: *Bāb al-i'rāb 'an luġat al-a'rāb: mu'ḡam luġawī 'āmm: zā'id masrad luġawī 'ām/al-'allāma Ġirmānūs Farḥāt. Dictionnaire arabe par Germanos Farhat, maronite, évêque d'Alep. Revu, corrigé et considérablement augmenté sur le manuscrit de l'auteur par Rochaid de Dahdah, scheick maronite*, Marseille, 1849.

Athanasios Dabbās's connections with Antim the Iberian are not much revealed in surviving documents. It is probable that the copy of Cantemir's *Divan* reached the metropolitan of Aleppo through Antim, who constantly received from the presses of Iași, and other cities of Wallachia and Moldavia, whatever they printed. Moreover, there is historical proof that Antim received a copy of this book from Iași.

More important than the works that he composed at the court of Bucharest, Dabbās scored a victory that many of his predecessors had only dreamed of: he received the assistance of Antim the Iberian, the printer of the Wallachian prince, to print Arabic liturgical books for the Syrian Christians.

### 3.3 Snagov and Bucharest, Home of the First Arabic Books Printed in Eastern Europe

In the old days, in the cities of Christian Syria, the Divine Liturgy was officiated in Greek, as revealed by the numerous manuscripts of the Liturgy of Saint Jacob, the hymns of Saint Roman the Melodist, some composed in Beirut, and the canons of Saint John Damascene, still preserved today. In the first Christian centuries, in the dioceses where Syriac was the vernacular of the faithful, there were interpreters who would translate for them from Greek during the services.<sup>94</sup>

The center of Greek culture was Antioch, a city strongly attached to the Byzantine culture, where the great scholars and theologians expressed themselves and wrote in Greek. Born here, Saint John Chrysostom apparently had no knowledge of Syriac, the vernacular of the residents of villages in the city's periphery, who had little access to Greek education. Conquering terrain after the Islamic conquests of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Arabic gradually replaced Greek in the liturgical rituals of the Church of Antioch. Nevertheless, the transfer was intermediated by Syriac. Liturgical texts were first translated from Greek into the vernacular, more accessible to the masses, so that between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century the church language of these regions was almost exclusively Syriac. Even in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, manuscript copies of the Book of the Divine Liturgies used in monasteries and rural churches across the lands of present-day Syria and Lebanon were, for the most part, still written in Syriac. This epoch was defined by Cyrille Charon as "the Syro-Byzantine period."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Charon, *Histoire des Patriarcats melkites*, p. 137–138.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

Recently promoted to a research domain in its own right,<sup>96</sup> the Arabic spoken and written by Christians living in territories on the eastern Mediterranean coast contradicts the widespread idea that Arabic is only the language of Islam and the Qur'an. Revealing a comprehensive historical vision, it is thus defined by the erudite Catholic scholar Joseph-Marie Sauget (1926–1988).

Et comme du reste les chrétiens avaient appris à parler l'arabe avant de savoir l'écrire, quand ils commencèrent à l'écrire, ils ont eu inmanquablement tendance à reproduire la langue qu'ils parlaient, c'est-à-dire avec, d'une part, les particularités empruntées aux dialectes arabes locaux, lesquels, nous l'avons dit, avaient déjà de leur cote subi l'influence des anciens parlers, et d'autre part avec des réminiscences des anciennes langues de culture: grec, syriaque et copte. C'est en tout cas ce qui ressort à l'évidence des documents écrits parvenus jusqu'à nous. Malgré toutefois les particularités distinctives qui peuvent permettre de déceler l'origine géographique ou même l'époque de rédaction de ces textes, il n'est pas question pourtant de les définir comme des langues différentes et il s'agit bien d'une seule et unique langue: et c'est elle que nous appelons l'*arabe chrétien*. Nous sommes en mesure désormais d'en proposer une définition: l'arabe chrétien est la langue utilisée par les chrétiens arabisés, soit quand ils exécutent des traductions à partir du grec, du syriaque ou du copte, soit quand ils écrivent immédiatement en arabe.<sup>97</sup>

If, in the pre-Islamic period Arabic-speaking communities already inhabited parts of the Middle East, after the Muslim conquests of the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries the

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<sup>96</sup> Especially due to language scholars who continued, on a larger corpus and wider temporal interval, the research that Joshua Blau initiated in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It continued with the groundbreaking work of Jacques Grand'Henry (Catholic University of Louvain), the father of this domain: For example, see his works "Le moyen arabe occidental: Problèmes de caractérisation et de périodisation", in Rudolph Peters (ed.), *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants (Amsterdam, 1–7 septembre 1978)*, Leiden, 1981, p. 89–98, and "Le moyen arabe de la version arabe du discours 40 de Grégoire de Nazianze, premiers éléments d'analyse", in Frederic Bauden (ed.), *Ultra Mare: Mélanges offerts à Aubert Martin*, Louvain, 2004, p. 1–9. Jérôme Lentin devoted his PhD thesis to the inventory and description of Middle Arabic features in a vast corpus of manuscript texts from the Middle Ages to pre-modernity: *Recherches sur l'histoire de la langue arabe au Proche-Orient à l'époque moderne, Thèse d'état*, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, 1997, Lille. The interest for this research field quickly grew, with articles, books, and conferences dedicated to 'Middle Arabic'; For example, Pierre Larcher, "Arabe moyen et moyen arabe", *Arabica*, 2001, 48, p. 578–609; Jérôme Lentin and Jacques Grand'Henry (eds.), *Moyen arabe et variétés mixtes de l'arabe à travers l'histoire. Actes du Premier Colloque International Louvain-la-Neuve, 10–14 mai 2004*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 2008; Jérôme Lentin, "Middle Arabic", in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, vol. 3, Leiden and Boston, 2007, p. 215–224; Liesbeth Zack and Arie Schippers, *Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic*, Leiden and Boston, 2012; etc.

<sup>97</sup> Joseph-Marie Sauget, *Littératures et manuscrits des chrétientés syriaques et arabes*, articles collected by Louis Duval-Arnould and Frédéric Rilliet, Vatican City, 1998, p. 155.

Arabic language slowly conquered the whole region, engulfing the entire population. When the Ottoman troops conquered the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, most of the locals, both Muslims and Christians, were Arabic-speakers (with the obvious exception of Armenians and Greeks in the area of Jerusalem). Towards the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Arabic, in its Christian usage, was already a literary language, used in the translation of holy books and patristic texts from Greek and Syriac, as well as in original theological works.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, having translated into Arabic several texts by Saint John Chrysostom, the Syrian deacon ‘Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl prepared, probably by revising an earlier version according to the Greek originals, an Arabic translation of the Holy Scriptures that became classical.<sup>98</sup> Arabic manuscripts are preserved which contain the Book of the Divine Liturgy, the Synaxarion, the Psalter, the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, etc.<sup>99</sup>

The Orthodox Christians of the Romanian Principalities also strived to move from Church Slavonic to the vernacular, Romanian, the language spoken both in Moldavia and Wallachia, named by the Arab travelers *al-fallāḥī* (‘Wallachian’). Romanians were the first Eastern European Christians who started, at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the long process of replacing the old church language, already

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**98** On the early translations of biblical texts and the Arabic-speaking scholars who prepared them see: Ebied and Teule (eds.), *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir S. J. at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, Leuven and Paris, 2004; Paul Féghali, “Les Épitres de Saint Paul dans une des premières traductions en arabe”, *Parole de l’Orient*, 2005, 30, p. 103–130; David Thomas (ed.), *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007; Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic. The Scriptures of the “People of the Book” in the Language of Islam*, Princeton and Oxford, 2013; Hikmat Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels. The Manuscripts and their Families* Berlin and Boston, 2012; Ronny Vollandt, “1.4.11. Arabic (Christian) Translations”, in Armin Lange (gen. ed.), *Textual History of the Bible*, Brill online, s.v.; Ronny Vollandt, “Beyond Arabic in Greek Letters: The Scribal and Translational Context of the Violet Fragment”, in Ahmad al-Jallad (with a contribution by Ronny Vollandt), *The Damascus Psalm Fragment. Middle Arabic and the Legacy of Old Hīgāzī* (Series LAMINE, 2), Chicago, IL, 2020, p. 93–110. Anyone researching this domain will greatly benefit from accessing the database supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft *Biblia Arabica. Bibliography of the Arabic Bible*, directed by Ronny Vollandt (general editor) and Nathan P. Gibson (associate editor).

**99** See Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, p. 50ff.; Ronny Vollandt, “Some Historiographical Remarks on Medieval and Early-Modern Scholarship of Biblical Versions in Arabic: A *Status Quo*”, *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 2013, 1, p. 25–42; Alexander Treiger, “The Earliest Dated Christian Arabic Translation (772 AD): Ammonius’ Report on the Martyrdom of the Monks of Sinai and Raiṭhu”, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*, 16, 2016, p. 29–38; Habib Ibrahim, “Some Notes on Antonios and His Arabic Translations of John of Damascus”, in Barbara Roggema and Alexander Treiger, *Patristic Literature in Arabic Translations*, Leiden and Boston, 2020, p. 158–179.



incomprehensible to the common people, with the Romanian vernacular, as revealed by the Psalter copied at Șcheii Brașovului, the *Sbornic* of Voroneț, or *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki*. Romanians then replaced the old Slavonic manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures, filled with errors and inaccuracies, with standardized printed versions that relied on translations revised against the Greek versions. Liturgical texts became more accessible to the clergy through the addition of Romanian notes in the margins.

The first complete version of the New Testament in Romanian, composed by the monk Sylvester under the supervision of Simion Ștefan, the metropolitan of Transylvania, was printed in Alba Iulia in 1648 (*Noul Testament de la Bălgrad*). The process continued into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Romanian liturgical texts started to be produced in Wallachia and Moldavia, beginning with those of prince Șerban Cantacuzino's rule. In 1682–1683, the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were published in Romanian at Bucharest, while in 1688 the *Bible of Bucharest* was printed. This event, marked by the significant addition of a foreword composed by Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem, reflected a major development in the assertiveness of Romanian as a liturgical language.<sup>100</sup> The place of Romanian in the liturgy was especially strengthened during Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's rule, owing to the visionary and tireless work of Antim the Iberian.<sup>101</sup>

Besides the canonical liturgical books, secular texts were also printed in Romanian in Wallachia, from the times of prince Matei Basarab (1632–1654), for the benefit of the nobility and common people, such as the *Pravila* (*Law Book*) of the Govora Monastery, in 1640. As I mentioned, Varlaam, the metropolitan of Moldavia, printed in 1643 in Iași his composition *Cazania lui Varlaam* (*The Homiliary of Varlaam*), also known as *Carte românească de învățătură* (*Romanian Book of Teachings*). In 1646 and 1652, two other *Law Codes* (*Pravile*) were printed in Romanian: *Carte românească de învățătură de la pravilele împărătești și de la alte giudeațe* (*Romanian Book of Teachings about the Prince's and Other Judges' Laws*), at Iași, and *Îndreptarea legii* (*Guidebook to the Law*), at Târgoviște.

The Romanian liturgical and spiritual books printed between 1680 and 1720 were not only a fulfillment of the needs of the churches in the Romanian

<sup>100</sup> Virgil Cândea, “Semnificația politică a unui act de cultură feudală (Biblia de la București, 1688)”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 16, 1963, 3, p. 651–671 (reprinted in Virgil Cândea, *Stolnicul între contemporani*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Bucharest, 2014, p. 181–208); Virgil Cândea, “Les Bibles grecque et roumaine de 1687–1688 et les visées impériales de Șerban Cantacuzène”, *Balkan Studies*, 10, 1969, 2, p. 351–376.

<sup>101</sup> George Ivașcu, *Istoria literaturii române*, Bucharest, t. I, 1969, p. 93–94; Mircea Tomescu, *Istoria cărții românești de la începuturi până la 1918*, Bucharest, 1968, p. 11; Gabriel Ștrempel, *Antim Ivireanul la 250 de ani de la moartea sa*, Bucharest, 1966, p. 681.

Principalities – they were part of the defense strategy of the Orthodox faith against the pressure of Catholicism. The Union of Brest – Litovsk of 1596 had provided the missionaries new ways of convincing large groups of Christians in the present-day territories of Poland and Ukraine to adopt the Latin creed. After the Emperor Leopold I approved, by issuing two successive Diplomas in September 4, 1691, and March 19, 1701, the forced (and enforced) attachment of the Transylvanian Orthodox to the Catholic Church, the prince Constantin Brâncoveanu grew even more eager to assist the anti-Latin actions of the other Greek Orthodox Churches.<sup>102</sup> On September 20, 1703, Brâncoveanu wrote to David Corbea, his envoy to the tsar's court in Moscow:

Soon, a book will be printed here against those who claim to be Orthodox, but in truth are attached to the creeds of the Pope's followers. [...] We shall then have it translated into Serbian [i.e., into Slavonic] and, as scholars assure us, it will be very useful to all the Orthodox.<sup>103</sup>

In 1709, Constantin Brâncoveanu wrote to the Patriarch Chrysanthos Notaras about a new printing press that he had in mind to set up at the Monastery of Saint Sava in Bucharest. In 1713, Antim promised to send tools and his apprentice Mihail Ștefan to set up a Greek press in Jerusalem, which Patriarch Chrisantos was keen on installing there.<sup>104</sup>

A precious testimony was brought by Edmund Chishull in his account *Travels in Turkey and Back to England* (London, 1747). The author reported on his journey from Constantinople to England in 1702, crossing the lands of Wallachia and present-day Bulgaria. Among the remarkable people he met and portrayed, here are his recollections of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu.

The name of the prince is *Joannes Constantinus Bassarabas*, who has enjoyed the principality about thirteen years, having succeeded *Serbanus Cantacuzenus*, brother of the above mentioned *Constantinus Stolnichus*. He is a promoter of good order and discipline in the province,

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**102** In a letter addressed in 1708 to Andrew, the patriarch of Moscow, the *stolnic* Constantin Cantacuzino called Atanasie, the head of the Church of Transylvania after the union with Rome, “bishop Satanasie of Ardeal” (in Romanian, “vlădica Satanasie dă Ardeal”). On Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem's opinion of this figure, see Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, p. 337.

**103** Alexandru A. C. Stourdza, *Constantin Brancovan, prince de Valachie, 1688–1714, son règne et son époque*, Paris, 1915, t. III, p. 49, cited by Andrei Pippidi, “À propos des débuts de l'imprimerie en Géorgie”, in *Impact de l'imprimerie et rayonnement intellectuel des Pays Roumains*, Bucharest, 2009, p. 39.

**104** Doc. no. LXVI in Nicolae Iorga, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor, volumul XIV al Colecției „Hurmuzaki”, Partea III, c. 1560 – c. 1820*, Bucharest, 1936, p. 107.

a reviver of architecture, and encourager of learning both at *Bucurest* and other places of the principality; into which he has introduced two or three printing presses, and from thence published several books useful for the instruction and edification of the Greek church. He is about forty-seven years of age, and has ten children, four of them sons; the second of whom, being about fourteen years of age, is well-instructed in the Latin and Greek languages. He is of an affable, mild and courteous temper; generous, careful of the education of his family and a great encourager of religion; and therefore liberal in his disbursements for printing and giving away books, erecting of monasteries, adorning of churches, and other acts of piety.<sup>105</sup>

Although not exactly enchanted by Wallachia in terms of its society and culture,<sup>106</sup> Chishull notes on April 27, 1702, that he visited a printing press where Christian Arabic books were being printed under the supervision of the Patriarch of Antioch (no doubt, Athanasios Dabbās, a former patriarch of the Church of Antioch and metropolitan of Aleppo at the time). He also mentions that he watched the typographers print a Greek book, the *Kiriakodromion*, and acquired several books while there. The passage is worth recollecting.

#### APRIL XXVII

I visited the press of this place, where I found them printing some pieces of devotion in Arabic, under the care of the Patriarch of *Antioch* to be distributed by him about his dioceses. Beside this, they were undertaking to print a large *folio* of the famous *Maximus Hieromonachus*, called *κηριακοδρομιων* or the course of the several Sundays throughout the year. On this occasion I there bought several books, among which one containing all the Liturgies, *Hymns, Rituals, Lessons*, and other devotional tracts, used on all occasions in the Greek church through the course of the whole year. [...] The same day I was favoured with a present of several Greek books, lately printed in this province [...].<sup>107</sup>

We do not know precisely how the consultations happened at the Wallachian court concerning the manufacture of Arabic type and the printing of books for the Arabic-speaking Christians of Ottoman Syria. It is, however, clear that Antim the Iberian took upon himself this difficult task helped by the bishop and scholar Athanasios Dabbās, the best advisor he could have as to the Arabic script on which he intended to model his type on.

Born around 1650 in Georgia and baptized Andrei, Antim Ivireanul called himself ‘the Iberian’<sup>108</sup> in the books that he printed, to remember and celebrate

<sup>105</sup> Edmund Chishull, *Travels in Turkey and back to England*, London, 1747, p. 78–79.

<sup>106</sup> “[...] *Wallachia*, a country which on this side is exactly level, and luxuriantly rich, but desolate for want of culture and inhabitants.”, cf. *ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>108</sup> I.e., from ‘Iberia’, Gr. Ἰβηρία, Rom. ‘Ivir’. ‘Ivireanul’ is an exonym for the Georgian kingdom of Kartli, not to be confused with the Spanish and Portuguese peninsula called ‘Iberia’. The Georgian ‘Iberia’ gave its name to the monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos.

his distant roots. As a true son of Eastern lands, he remained watchful to the events in his country of origin and a supporter of all who, in one way or another, were connected to it. Thus, not enough attention has been given until today to the fact that his special relations with Athanasios Dabbās relied on the ties between the Church of Antioch and that of Georgia, which had depended on it for a long time. The official title of patriarch of “the Church of Antioch and All the East” (*Kanīsat Anṭākiyya wa-sā’ir al-Šarq*) includes the Church of Georgia.<sup>109</sup>

Today, the path that Antim took from Georgia to Wallachia is known with more certainty owing to certain Greek documents discovered by church historians of the Church in the last decade. The Patriarch Chrysantos Notaras gave precise information on the first part of Antim’s life in a letter sent in December 1709 from Constantinople,<sup>110</sup> which was published in Romanian translation by Archimandrite Mihail Stanciu and Gabriel Ștrempel in 2013.<sup>111</sup>

Born in the city of Ude in Iberia, a province that included the eastern and southern lands of present-day Georgia, Andrei (later, Antim) was captured by Ottoman troops during a raid. Rescued by the Patriarch Dositheos Notaras who paid his captors a ransom, he was taken to Jerusalem. As a captive of the Ottomans and then a resident in Jerusalem, Andrei became acquainted with the local society and, gifted in language-learning, he acquired Greek and Turkish, and the Muslims’ ways. Reaching Moldavia before 1688, already tonsured a monk,<sup>112</sup> he started acquiring the craft of printing in Iași, at the Cetățuia Monastery,<sup>113</sup> whose press had been founded by Mitrophanes, the bishop of Huși, a disciple of the Metropolitan Dosoftei.<sup>114</sup> Here, Andrei became the hegumen of the monastery. In

**109** For the relationship between the two Churches, see Carsten-Michael Walbinder, “Die Beziehungen zwischen dem griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchat von Antiochia und der Kirche von Georgien vom 14. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert,” *Le Muséon*, 2001, 114, p. 437–455.

**110** Published in Pēnelopē Stathē, *Chrysanthos Notaras Patriarchēs Hierosolymōn. Prodromos tou Neoellēnikou Diafōtismou*, Athens, 1999, p. 297–305.

**111** In Antim Ivireanul, *Scrisori*, Bucharest, 2013, p. 43–65 (specially p. 49–54).

**112** In the note 95, on p. 54 of *Scrisori*, Archim. Mihail Stanciu expresses his opinion that Antim was already a hieromonk when he left Jerusalem for Iași.

**113** On this period of Antim’s life, see Arhim. Mihail Stanciu, “Descoperiri recente referitoare la venirea Sfântului Antim Ivireanul în Țările Române”, *Ortodoxia. Revista Patriarhiei Române*, 66, 2014, 1, p. 132–142.

**114** Concerning the foundation of the Greek printing press in Iași and the role of Mitrophanes, see the account by Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem reproduced in Picot, “Notice biographique et bibliographique sur l’imprimeur Anthime d’Ivir”, p. 557–559, and Vera Tchentsova, “La naissance du portrait dans l’espace orthodoxe: représenter l’auteur dans les livres grecs du début du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle” (forthcoming).

1688, after the Metropolitan Dosoftei left on his exile to Poland,<sup>115</sup> Mitrophanes moved to Bucharest, where he directed the metropolitan press. There, several printers who had accompanied him from Iași, and among them the Georgian Andrei, were employed. The Bucharest press had been brought from Târgoviște in 1678, in the times of the Metropolitan Varlaam and the Prince Gheorghe Duca and was initially placed in the palace of the Metropolitan see of Ungro-Wallachia.<sup>116</sup> The printers' names are not mentioned in the first books printed there. Other sources reveal that Mitrophanes worked on the printing of the *Bible of Bucharest*, commissioned by none other than the future prince of Wallachia Constantin Brâncoveanu. Mitrophanes then continued his activity in Buzău, in a new press that he opened after he was elected bishop in June 1691. Some sources attest that Andrei worked there until 1696,<sup>117</sup> although in 1694 he is mentioned as hegumen of the monastery of Snagov, where he was known as 'the monk Antim'.

Antim the Iberian's first participation in a typographic project in Wallachia was identified by the Romanian historian of early printing Dragoș Morărescu on the basis of style (as his name is not present in the book), in connection with the preparation of the Bible of 1688 alongside the apprentices of Mitrophanes.<sup>118</sup> Antim may be the printer mentioned by the name 'Andrei' at the end of the second volume of the *Saints' Lives* translated by the Metropolitan Dosoftei and printed in Iași in 1682–1686. 'Antim the hieromonk' is indicated as the typographer of the book *Guiding Chapters* by Basil of Macedon printed in October 1691, a translation from ancient to modern Greek achieved by Chrysanthos Notaras, the nephew of Patriarch Dositheos II, a stern defender of Orthodoxy against the Latins' missionary activities and himself a future patriarch of Jerusalem.<sup>119</sup> Afterwards, Antim is indicated by his monastic name in the *Service of Saint Paraskevi* published in 1692

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**115** The Metropolitan of Suceava Dosoftei (Dositheos) fled to Poland in 1686 because of King John III Sobieski's retreat from Moldavia after his failed expedition against the Ottomans. Dosoftei lived in Poland until his death in 1693. See Vera Tchentsova, "L'exil pour dernière demeure: le métropolitain Dosithée (Dosoftei) Barilă à Stryi", *Analele Putnei/The Annals of Putna*, 16, 2020 [2021], 1, p. 111–138.

**116** Barbu Teodorescu, "Cultura în cuprinsul Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei, A. Cărturari, tipografi, biblioteci, școli", *BOR*, 77, 1959, 7–10, p. 839–840.

**117** Păcurariu, *Geschichte der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche*, p. 274–279, 330–331.

**118** Dragoș Morărescu, "Xilografii Bibliei lui Șerban Cantacuzino (1688)", *Dacoromania*, 1988, 7, p. 337.

**119** According to a Catholic missionary who was writing in 1723, Patriarch Chrysanthos was, at the time, "the most zealous partisan of schism"; cf. Çolak, "Catholic Infiltration in the Ottoman Levant", p. 89, citing a letter in the collection published by Gobien.

in Greek, where a note placed at the end mentions that the book was printed by ‘the humble monk Antim from Ivir’.

A master engraver and printer, well-known for his erudition and knowledge of Greek, Slavonic, and Romanian, Antim became, in 1694, abbot of the Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God on the island of Snagov near Bucharest. There, he installed a press financed by Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, which was active until 1701, while the Bucharest press was not active yet. He also worked on a second press that belonged to him. Coming to Bucharest at the end of 1701, he worked in the prince’s press until 1705, when he was appointed bishop of Râmnic.<sup>120</sup> From Bucharest, where he had transferred the printing implements used in Snagov, the press accompanied him to Râmnic,<sup>121</sup> where the activity continued until 1708, when Antim was elected metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia and returned to the capital. From Râmnic the press moved to Târgoviște, where it was active between 1709 and 1715 and then it was transferred to the metropolitan residence in Bucharest. In 1715, a short while before being taken by janissaries to the Sublime Porte, only to be later assassinated, Antim opened a new press within the monastery that he built not far from the metropolitan church and palace, which he dedicated to the Feast of All Saints (Fig. 3).

The period when Athanasios Dabbās worked together with Antim the Iberian covered the latter’s typographic activity in Snagov and Bucharest and ended in 1705, when both of them moved out of the Wallachian capital, heading for a new life of pastoral guidance and spiritual works – Antim, in Râmnic, and Dabbās in Aleppo.

The attribution of the type necessary for the books printed in Snagov and Bucharest to Antim the Iberian relies, first of all, on the forewords that the two wrote together.<sup>122</sup> Signed by Dabbās, the texts indicate that Antim was charged by the Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu to manufacture Arabic type and print these two books, which implies more than this one endeavor. The technical details of printing in a non-Latin script were explained in detail by Doru Bădără in the preface to my book *Țipar pentru creștinii arabi. Antim Ivireanul, Atanasie*

<sup>120</sup> Meanwhile, he remained the hegumen of the monastery of Snagov, a title given to him in several documents written between 1702 and 1704; cf. N. Șerbănescu, *Istoria Mănăstirii Snagov*, Bucharest, 1944, p. 112.

<sup>121</sup> For the period Antim printed in Râmnic and the endowment of his press there, see Doru Bădără, “Originea materialului tipografic din prima tiparniță de la Râmnic”, in Cândea, Cernovodeanu and Lazăr (eds.), *Închinare lui Petre Ț. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, p. 605–608.

<sup>122</sup> A complete reedition of the Arabic text and English translation of these forewords will be published in the volume that is being prepared by Yulia Petrova (with Ioana Feodorov and Mihai Țipău) in the EAPE series of De Gruyter.

*Dabbās și Silvestru al Antiohiei* (Brăila, 2016). According to him, Antim possessed the required competencies and skill to make this first Arabic-type set in a country with no such printing tradition. He knew Ottoman Turkish and he had already mastered the technology of printing in several alphabets: Greek, Cyrillic, and Latin,<sup>123</sup> developing in his printing workshop the necessary tools for this. Anton-Maria del Chiaro, Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu's Italian secretary, witnessed that Antim used in his press 'wood and brass types.'<sup>124</sup> On a censer belonging to the Monastery of Snagov that Antim had repaired in 1694 after becoming abbot, his apprentices inscribed, at his order, the donation inscription in Latin script. Antim was able to draw, carve, engrave, and polish with mastery the matrices for icons, as the saints' images in his books reveal. He also made splendid engravings of typographic elements that copied manuscript ornaments, characters, and vignettes. He was aware of what was being printed in Western presses and how, and received books that sometimes inspired him in his own creations. For example, a few decorative elements on the title page of *Dello scherno degli Dei, poema piacevole del Sig. Francesco Bracciolini* (Florence, 1625) appear, slightly altered, in several of his books. Later, we find them in books printed in Aleppo by Athanasios Dabbās, who in 1704 was presented with Antim's woodblocks, financed by the Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu.<sup>125</sup> However, most ornamental features in Antim's books found their model in the Greek and Slavonic books that made up the libraries of the Wallachian and Moldavian boyars and metropolitans.

In Antim's press, the lead-alloy casting technique was also used, as he mentioned in a letter, dated to July 1714, addressed to the Patriarch Chrysanthos Notaras: "More than 50 oka of lead have been used to cast the new types, for the old ones were broken when [the press was] moved from Târgoviște to Bucharest."<sup>126</sup> The opinion that the types of Savary de Brèves were the model for others, including "the monastic presses of 18<sup>th</sup> century Romania, Syria, and Lebanon,"<sup>127</sup> cannot apply to the Romanian Principalities: there is no proof that this might have happened, neither documents, nor similarities with the books printed by Antim in Snagov and Bucharest. This could be established, though, for books printed in the Greek Catholic community of Hînșăra, where Jesuit missionaries

<sup>123</sup> He had Latin type in his workshop and used it for a few words in his books.

<sup>124</sup> For explanations on these typographic pieces, see Bădără, *Tiparul românesc la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, p. 64ff.

<sup>125</sup> I owe this example to Oana Iacubovschi, who is preparing, as one of the outcomes of the ERC TYPARABIC project developed in Bucharest, a database of ornaments and type in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Arabic books printed in the East.

<sup>126</sup> Iorga, *Documente „Hurmuzaki”*, 14, III, Doc. no. LXXII, p. 115.

<sup>127</sup> Roper, *Early Arabic Printing in Europe*, p. 145.



circulated Catholic books printed in Western presses. Catholic books printed in Western Europe for the Arabic-speaking Christians were seldom brought to the Romanian lands.<sup>128</sup>

Undoubtedly, working with material to be printed in languages that they did not master was a challenge for the printers of that time, who were aware of the mistakes that crept into their books. In the forewords to his Greek and Arabic books, Antim begged the readers' pardon for the mistakes they could find, as he was "a stranger to the Arabic language" (*ġarīb min al-luġa al-'arabiyya*). This was not the first case where books were printed in languages that the typographers did not master. This happened in Western presses, as much as in the Eastern ones. In 1698, the printer who worked on several Greek books of anti-Catholic polemics had no knowledge of Greek, but he was aware of the 'signature' usage: a semicircular groove was carved at the bottom of each type (letter) and the rule said that it was placed so as to make a continuous line with the preceding and following characters. Thus, if a letter was placed upside down, the master printer, when revising the page, would see the mistake and reverse its position.<sup>129</sup>

The case of Mihail Ștefan,<sup>130</sup> Antim's apprentice whom he sent in 1709 to his home country Georgia to open the first press there, is also revealing. Upon leaving Wallachia, he received from Antim punches, matrices of book ornaments, and type cast in the *nuskhuri* and *mrglovani* (or *asomtavruli*) scripts.<sup>131</sup> The next year, assisted by the Georgians in his newly installed press of Tbilisi, he succeeded in manufacturing new punches and cast type in another style of Georgian script, *mkhedruli*.

Antim's books were printed in black and red ink (Fig. 2) and adorned with elegant decorative elements such as icons of saints, initials, intricate borders, arches, flower garlands, vignettes, etc. (Fig. 4). Antim replicated some of the ornamental elements in his books when building the church of his Monastery of All Saints in Bucharest (Fig. 5). This is not a unique idea, but the other examples come from far-away cultures, which could hardly have inspired Antim the Iberian in Wallachia. Anton D. Pritula (curator and lead researcher in the Oriental Department at the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia) has explored the Syriac Lectionary manuscripts illumination of the 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries where

<sup>128</sup> For instance, the Library of the Holy Synod in Bucharest only holds a dozen such titles.

<sup>129</sup> Bădără, *Tiparul românesc la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, p. 55.

<sup>130</sup> He was called by the Georgians Mikhael Stephaneshvili Ungrovlakheli, a name preserved in documents and printed books.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Dan Dumitrescu, "Activitatea tipografică a lui Mihail Ștefan în Gruzia", *Studii*, 11, 1958, 4, p. 138.

architectural elements are replicated in beautiful miniatures. Here, ‘decorative’ poetry is written in monumental estrangela script. Pritula mentions “a geometrical composition, reminiscent of an architectural portal, which most commonly features at the beginning of a work (fol. 1v)”, present in the Gospel lectionary Borg. Sir. 169 [22] of the Vatican Library.<sup>132</sup>

Antim personally printed 42 books in Wallachia: twenty-seven in Greek, eight in Romanian, three in Romanian and Slavonic, two in Arabic and Greek, one in Greek and Romanian, and one in Slavonic.<sup>133</sup> Printed in numbers large enough to satisfy the need of Orthodox clergy locally and beyond Wallachia’s borders,<sup>134</sup> these books were equally destined to priests and common people, and they were easy to read. Antim composed and printed two books of sermons and teachings addressed to the clergy, which he then presented to them. Ever since the rule of Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–1688), it was customary to give printed books away, not to sell them. As Doru Bădără notes in his study, the act of presenting books to those who needed them was similar to an act of foundation, rich in significance and outcomes for the spiritual and cultural progress of society at large.

Antim the Iberian translated from Greek into Romanian all the essential liturgical books for the priests, including the Liturgikon, Hieratikon, Oktoechos, and Horologion. He was one of the most determined supporters of the imperative to serve the Divine Liturgy not in Church Slavonic but in Romanian, the language that all the faithful understood. Gabriel Ștrempel, one of the Romanian experts in the history of early printing,<sup>135</sup> remarked that in the foreword to the Prayer Book (Rom. *Molitvenic*) printed in 1706 at Râmnic, Antim challenged the dogma of the sacred character of certain languages, “evoking the assertions of the doctors of the church who declared that it is not forbidden to serve the Divine Liturgy ‘for each believer in his own language’”.<sup>136</sup> He also intended to help the clergy enrich their knowledge, especially the confessors, who were responsible for the spiritual guidance of the common people. His apprentice and disciple Mihail Ștefan, who worked on the Prayer Book, praised him in these terms:

<sup>132</sup> See Anton Pritula, “East Syriac Poetry Embedded in the Manuscript Illumination: 16<sup>th</sup> Century”, *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 26, 2020, 1, p. 26–36, here, p. 28. See also Anton Pritula, “East Syriac Poetry Embedded in the Manuscript Decoration: 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries”, *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 26, 2020, 2, p. 4–11.

<sup>133</sup> Arhim. Policarp Chițulescu (coord. ed.), Doru Bădără, Ion Marin Croitoru, Gabriela Dumitrescu and Ioana Feodorov, *Antim Ivireanul, Opera tipografică*, Bucharest, 2016, especially p. 31–34.

<sup>134</sup> Teodorescu, “Cultura în cuprinsul Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei”, p. 841.

<sup>135</sup> Director of the Library of the Romanian Academy from 1993 to his death in 2020.

<sup>136</sup> Gabriel Ștrempel, *Antim Ivireanul la 250 de ani de la moartea sa*, p. 681.

And with the devout Arabs, at this same enlightened prince's expense, you shared the joy of this glorious craft of typography by also printing Orthodox books in their language, such as their people had never seen before.<sup>137</sup>

Since I have stated that the welfare of the faithful was one of Metropolitan Antim's main concerns, it is worth evoking here his instructions for the typographers who worked in the Bucharest press, which he recorded in the *Typikon of the Monastery of All Saints* (Rom. *Așezământul Mănăstirii Tuturor Sfinților*) issued on March 24, 1716, the day the church building started.

*Chapter 17. Concerning the Printing Press*

When the presses work, either the Greek one or the Romanian one, be it with foreign money or the house's own, the typographer who works together with his apprentices, whatever their number, will be entitled to receive as a wage three thalers per sheet and ten books printed on the press master's paper, and his apprentices – one book; each sheet will be paid six thalers, half for the typographers' wages and half as income of the house. And if anything at the press gets broken, the house will be responsible for mending it. And when there is no work to be done, neither foreign, nor the house's own, and the typographer would wish to print a book at his own expense, he will be allowed to do so, provided he informs the hegumen and the *epitropos*; and out of any amount he earns from this book, he should give the church the fourth part.<sup>138</sup>

In Antim's vision, the printing craft had to endure, and progress from one generation to the next, as a heritage of knowledge useful to the church and the good Christians. Thus, he included in the foundation document of the Monastery of All Saints clear provisions concerning the master printers' duty to train apprentices.

I also leave this as a pledge:<sup>139</sup> printers have the duty to teach the printing craft one after the other, so that this craft does not get lost in the country, nor book-making ever get abandoned, for the benefit of the country and the support of the house.<sup>140</sup>

The transmission of the printing knowledge was, therefore, one of the Metropolitan Antim's main concerns, worthy of 'a pledge' (or 'a curse', in case of infringement). In the same spirit, he did his utmost to transmit the competencies

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**137** Și pre cei pravoslavnici arapi, cu a acestuiași luminat domn cheltuială, i-ai făcut părtași bucuriei acestui slăvit meșteșug al tipografiei, tipărindu-le și în limba lor cărți, carii bucurii nice odinioară nu s-au învrednicit neamul lor a vedea despre pravoslavie, cf. BRV I, p. 542.

**138** Arhim. Sofian Boghiu, *Sfântul Antim Ivireanul și Mănăstirea Tuturor Sfinților*, Bucharest, 2005, p. 160.

**139** Rom. *blestem*, lit. 'curse'.

**140** Ibid.

that he acquired over a lifetime by continuously working in several presses across Wallachia, to other Christian peoples: the Arabic-speaking Christians and the Georgians.

Antim's works brought immense benefits to the Romanians, the people who had adopted him, and the Georgians, the people of his birth. They also helped all the Orthodox Christians whom his spiritual, creative, and printing works reached. Nevertheless, his demise was violent and tragic. In 1716, two years after the Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu was executed in Istanbul alongside four of his sons and his trustworthy counselor Ianache Văcărescu, on August 15, 1714, Antim faced a similar fate. Having refused to accompany the Prince Nicolae Mavrocordat when leaving the country, Antim had taken over a ruling mission and, together with the boyars' assembly, they elected a local prince, the *vornic* Pătrașcu Brezoianu. They were hoping to secure a better government than that of the Phanariot princes chosen for Wallachia by the Sublime Porte. In September 1716, the Metropolitan Antim was seized by the prince's Ottoman guards and imprisoned at court. From his pastoral position as metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia, Antim defended the Romanians' interests until the last day of his residence in Bucharest. In a "public" trial that took place in the presence of the Wallachian upper clergy around September 23, Antim was accused of conspiracy, witchcraft, and "devilish complicity" (Satanism). He was excommunicated<sup>141</sup> and exiled to the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai. He never reached this presumed destination, as the prince's guards killed him at Çanakkale (Gallipoli). They threw his body in the river Tunca (Tundzha) that crossed Adrianople,<sup>142</sup> as reported by Anton-Maria del Chiaro, Brâncoveanu's secretary, or in the Enos Gulf on the Aegean Sea, according to the Greek scholar Mitrophanes Grigoras. The terrible death of the great scholar and metropolitan Antim the Iberian is reflected with dismay in the *Anonymous Chronicle of Brâncoveanu's Times*.<sup>143</sup> It is remembered until today as an example of the martyrdom of many Wallachian and Moldavian Orthodox figures in the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>141</sup> Certain historians claimed that his excommunication was proclaimed in a document issued by Jeremiah III, the Patriarch of Constantinople, but this document has never been found.

<sup>142</sup> Modern-day Edirne in Turkey.

<sup>143</sup> An anonymous composition bearing the title *The History of Wallachia from October 1688 to 1717*, this work is preserved in five manuscript copies in libraries of Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca. It was attributed in turns to Radu Popescu, Teodor Corbea, and *spătar* Preda Buzescu (Pârscoveanu). The author, who seems favorable to Constantin Brâncoveanu, reports on the events during his rule, then that of Ștefan Cantacuzino, Nicolae Mavrocordat, and the first years of Ioan N. Mavrocordat's rule.

A different version of the events is revealed by a single document that was presented and commented by the Romanian historian Matei Cazacu, who suggests that Antim died a martyr's death in Snagov, where he was drowned in the lake sometime during the second half of the month of September 1716.<sup>144</sup>

By request of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in 1966, the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras overturned the excommunication pronounced against the Metropolitan Antim the Iberian. In 1992, Antim was declared a saint of the Romanian Orthodox Church, commemorated on September 27. He is widely considered in the Eastern Church as a model of spiritual righteousness, pastoral guidance, and scholarly work.

When meeting Antim, the metropolitan of Aleppo Athanasios Dabbās, who had just stepped down from the office of patriarch, must have felt a spiritual connection to this great father of the church, all the while a humble servant of the Wallachian Orthodox, working relentlessly for both the soul and the wellbeing of his flock. Dabbās must also have been impressed with the capacity to print in many languages and types that he witnessed at the Wallachian court, also owing to Antim's genius as a typographer and engraver. Among other things, he succeeded in training quite a few apprentices, whose names are mentioned at the closing of fourteen of his books printed at Snagov.<sup>145</sup>

As reported by Athanasios Dabbās in the final paragraph of the second foreword to the 1701 Greek and Arabic *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, Brâncoveanu instructed Antim “to manufacture an Arabic press with great care”. Dabbās addressed to the Wallachian prince a plea that included the same points invoked by printers all over Europe: manuscript copies of the holy scriptures were difficult to get, costly, and filled with errors inserted by copyists who had minimal theological education. Thus, with the Antiochian metropolitan by his side, Antim carved punches and cast the Arabic type necessary for the printing of two bilingual books – Greek and Arabic – in 1701, the *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, at Snagov, and 1702, the *Horologion*, at Bucharest. These books contain Greek texts previously printed by Antim, placed in parallel columns with the medieval Arabic texts translated from Greek and Syriac that had been revised by Meletios Karma<sup>146</sup> and Athanasios Dabbās, as the latter declares in his forewords. The books were prepared for printing by Dabbās himself, as revealed by the use of the expressions *bi-ltimās wa-mušārafa*, “at the entreaty and under the supervision of [Metropolitan Athanasios]”. All the ornamentation of the books – frontispieces,

<sup>144</sup> Matei Cazacu, “Cine l-a ucis pe Antim Ivireanul?”, *Magazin istoric*, 3, 1969, 4, p. 47–49.

<sup>145</sup> Boghiu, *Sfântul Antim Ivireanul și Mănăstirea Tuturor Sfinților*, p. 17.

<sup>146</sup> Charon, *Histoire des Patriarcats melkites*, p. 47–49, 96.

images of saints, Christian symbols, borders, and vignettes – were created by Antim and his apprentices.

Considering the needs of the clergy and the common people, the editorial plan that Athanasios Dabbās devised began with the Book of the Divine Liturgies and the Horologion. These were also the two first choices of Antim when he started printing. The Antiochian metropolitan would later observe the Wallachian editorial model after opening his own press in Aleppo: Psalter, Gospel, Epistles, Oktoechos, etc.<sup>147</sup> After the Melkite Greek Catholic Church separated from the main body of the Church of Antioch in 1724, the Christians of Greater Syria, notwithstanding their doctrinal views, continued to celebrate the Divine Liturgy for another century using Dabbās's editions of Snagov, Bucharest, and Aleppo.

The language of the books that would be printed in Antim's press was an element that Athanasios Dabbās seemingly discussed with all the parties concerned.

When your lordship learned how miserable we were and he was explained in detail about the custom of the devout priests of our country who serve in the churches of the Savior, i.e., that they read the secret prayers of the Divine Liturgy in Arabic, while the *ekfonises* and the *ektenia* they generally say in Greek, you ordered, in your great mercy and with God's will, that not only the *ekfonises* but all the prayers of the service and the hymns be carefully printed in both languages, so they can be easily used by priests of our people. Thus, this book would be useful not only to those who master Arabic, or those who know both languages, but also to the Greek priests, so that the good reaches as many people as possible. Moreover, your lordship decided that when the book is finished, by God's will, it would be distributed as a gift to the Arab priests to your everlasting memory, so they can serve with ease the Divine Liturgy in both languages, as ordered [...].<sup>148</sup>

Since in the Western European presses casting a whole set of Arabic type could take between four and six months, the preparation of punches and other Arabic typographic material in Snagov must have started in 1700, several months before the first Greek and Arabic book was completed on January 1, 1701. We find a confirmation of this timeline in the letter addressed in 1700 by the Metropolitan Theodosios of Ungro-Wallachia to Adrian, the Patriarch of Moscow, where

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<sup>147</sup> They were all reprinted, some in numerous subsequent editions (revised or not). See Charon, *Histoire des Patriarcats melkites*, p. 55–96; Al-Ma'lūf, “Maṭba'a rūmāniyya al-urtūduksiyya al-'arabiyya al-anṭākiyyā”, p. 44–56.

<sup>148</sup> Athanasios Dabbās, first preface to the *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, Snagov, 1701.

he informs him that “the prince is overseeing the affairs of the church: he has ordered the printing of books in Greek, Romanian, Slavonic, and Arabic”.<sup>149</sup>

In the foreword to the Horologion, Dabbās compares Brâncoveanu to King David, praising him for having had first printed the Book of the Divine Liturgies and now this second book, and expressing his deep gratitude in the name of the Christians of the Church of Antioch. As revealed in the fragment cited above, the considerable sums necessary for the printing of the Greek and Arabic books were covered by the Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu.<sup>150</sup> As they were produced in the prince’s press, the two books were financed by the prince and presented to Athanasios Dabbās as gifts for the Antiochian clergy. In the first preface of 1701, addressed to Brâncoveanu, Dabbās states: “For you acquiesced at once and ordered that this Horologion dedicated to the service of the Divine Mysteries be printed in Arabic at your expense, from your overflowing munificence.” In both forewords, that of the Book of the Divine Liturgies and that of the Horologion, Dabbās thanks Prince Brâncoveanu for his generosity, as he gave Antim “a free hand in spending” for the Arabic type and “his lordship ordered” that the expenses required by the book-printing “to be covered from his own purse”.

In the second foreword to the Book of the Divine Liturgies, addressed to the faithful of Syria, Dabbās explains in detail the circumstances that helped the printing of this book.

And his highness immediately ordered the skilled master printer who resided at his court, the respected father kyr Antim [the Iberian], to start working, giving him free hand in spending so he would carefully set up an Arabic press and print the service of the Divine Liturgy in the two languages, i.e., Greek and Arabic. And his highness ordered that they be presented as gifts to the faithful priests of our Arab lands, for the salvation of his soul and those of his late parents’.

According to Fr Cyril Charon, Constantin Brâncoveanu also covered the cost of the beautiful brown leather binding of the item in the collections of the B.A.R. Bucharest, adorned with a silver plate on the front cover that represents the Savior on the Cross.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Silviu Dragomir, “Contribuții privitoare la relațiile Bisericii românești cu Rusia în veacul XVII”, *AARMSI*, S. II, t. 34, 1912, p. 1138.

<sup>150</sup> For an estimate of the costs of book-printing in Wallachia at the time, see Bădără, *Tiparul românesc la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, p. 556.

<sup>151</sup> Charon, *Histoire des Patriarcats melkites*, p. 56, and *Le rite byzantin dans les Patriarcats melkites*, p. 556.



The information provided in the forewords of the two books is confirmed in a handwritten note on the title page of the copy that belonged to the *stolnic* Constantin Cantacuzino, now in the collections of the B.A.R. Bucharest: “These *Liturgies* in Greek and Arabic, his holiness the father *Proin Antiochias* asked the Prince Constantin-voivod and he had them printed.”

The consistent contribution of the Wallachian prince is also mentioned in the opening text of the *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch* composed by Dabbās for his protector.

Therefore, I believe that your ability as a ruler, enlightened by God, was guided by your innate generosity towards the mercy and honor of this see, so that, through your munificence agreeable to God, Arabic type was manufactured for the benefit of the many, which is in praise of God the Lord of all things. Maybe because you continually obey the wise Solomon, who said: “Honor the Lord by all your righteous toil, give Him from the harvest of your righteous governing, and never stop doing good for he who needs it, as long as your hand can help”.<sup>152</sup> [...] For none other, of the righteous princes from before, ever honored this patriarchal see [of Antioch] by such a great sign of munificence – i.e., the Arabic type for book-printing – except your highness, who are crowned by God.<sup>153</sup>

Dabbās’s statements have been read by all previous historians as the most valid proof that the two books were printed at the expense of the court of Wallachia. However, having carefully searched the archival records and correspondence of the time,<sup>154</sup> I have not found any mention of sums spent on printing these two Greek and Arabic books by the prince’s treasury – nor on printing any other books, for that matter. It is therefore possible that these expenses were covered by Brâncoveanu from his own fortune, not from the court treasury. Antim the Iberian also personally financed some of the books that he printed: two at the

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<sup>152</sup> *Proverbs*, 3: 9.

<sup>153</sup> Dabbās, “Istoria patriarhilor Antiohiei – *Synopsis peri ton hagiotaon patriarchon Antiocheias*”, 1930, 10, p. 861–863. See also Iorga, *Manuscripte din biblioteci străine*, p. 234.

<sup>154</sup> Constantin D. Aricescu (ed.), “Condica de venituri și cheltuieli de la leatul 7202–7212 (1694–1704)”, *Revista Istorică a Arhivelor României*, 1878, p. 1–750; Nicolae Iorga, *Documente privitoare la Constantin vodă Brâncoveanu*, Bucharest, 1901; Grecianu, *Viața lui Costandin Vodă Brâncoveanu*, Bucharest, 1906; Nicolae Dobrescu and Constantin Giurescu, *Documente privitoare la C. Brâncoveanu*, Bucharest, 1907; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Bisericii românești și a vieții religioase a românilor*, t. I, Vălenii-de-Munte, 1907; Nicolae Iorga, *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor*, t. 14, III, Bucharest, 1936; Giurescu, *Anatefterul*, p. 353–493 (the years 1695–1702); Constantin Șerban, “Contribuție la repertoriul corespondenței Stolnicului Constantin Cantacuzino”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 19, 1966, 4, p. 683–705; Paul Cernovodeanu, *În vâltoarea primejdiilor. Politica externă și diplomația promovate de Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688–1714)*, Bucharest, 1997; *Condica Marii Logofeții (1692–1714)*, etc.

monastery of Govora, while he was a bishop of Râmnic, and ten after he became metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia. This could explain, at least to some extent, his poor financial situation in 1712: he had a total debt of about 4,496 thalers, at a time when land estates cost several hundred thalers.<sup>155</sup> In some of the books that Antim printed, the name of the sponsor is mentioned. One of the first books printed at Govora was paid for by the archimandrite Ioan of Hurezi, a hegumen dear to the Prince Brâncoveanu, while the Oktoechos and the Antologion of 1705 were printed at the expense of the *spatar* Mihail Cantacuzino. In the last book, the mark of patronage is clear: the Cantacuzino family coat of arms is present on the title page.

It is possible that Antim was in the habit of keeping records of the expenses required by his printing works, since he wrote to the Patriarch of Jerusalem Chrysanthos Notaras on August 9, 1714, in connection with the books he had printed for him: “As for the expenses that we incurred for the types that were recast and the printers’ wages, I have not recorded them, nor do I need to say more about them to you; great or small, we humbly present them to your holiness.”<sup>156</sup>

There is no information on the magnitude of the print runs of the two Greek and Arabic books of Snagov and Bucharest. An indication that Dabbās’s books did not reach far, geographically speaking, could be the information given by Vassili Grigorovitch-Barski when journeying in the Holy Land in 1726. Attending the service at a church in Jaffa where he sees chanters singing in Greek in a pew and Arabic in the other, Barski remarks: “Les habitants chantent toujours en arabe [...], ils ne connaissent point d’autre langue. Leurs livres pieux ne sont pas imprimés mais manuscrits et leur alphabet est semblable à celui des Turcs. Ils observent la règle des Grecs.”<sup>157</sup>

Antim the Iberian printed a sufficient number of copies as to have his books circulate in all the territories inhabited by Romanian-speakers.<sup>158</sup> A precise indication is only documented in 1746, in the first foreword of another book printed in Moldavia for the Arabic-speaking Christians of the Church of Antioch: *Qaḍā al-ḥaqq wa-naql al-ṣidq* (*The Rule of Justice and the Transmission of Truth*), by

<sup>155</sup> Cazacu, *Cine l-a ucis pe Antim Ivireanul?*, p. 48.

<sup>156</sup> Iorga, *Documente “Hurmuzaki”*, t. 14, III, Doc. no. LXXIII, p. 116.

<sup>157</sup> Grigorovitch-Barski, *Pérégrinations (1723-1747)*, p. 189-190.

<sup>158</sup> This is the conclusion of research conducted by Nicholas Bishara of the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy, who extracted from the new series of *Mărturii românești peste hotare* (*Romanian Traces Abroad*) the information on all the copies of books printed by Antim the Iberian preserved in foreign collections. This seven-volume collection of descriptions of cultural items created by Romanians that are not within the borders of Romania anymore covers 58 countries.

Nektarios, the patriarch of Jerusalem. Here, a figure of 1,500 copies is mentioned, printed “so they are disseminated freely among Christians.”

### 3.4 The Aleppo Press, a Visionary Metropolitan’s Audacious Project

Antim the Iberian’s press did not produce any other book in Arabic type after Athanasios Dabbās left Bucharest for good in 1704. There are no documents that reveal the fate of the Arabic printing implements manufactured in Antim’s presses. The accepted theory, based on Dabbās’s assertions, is that, when leaving, he was presented with the Arabic type and other typographic tools that had been used in printing the two books of Snagov (1701) and Bucharest (1702). It is unthinkable that he took with him on his journey home the entire inventory of a printing press, which, according to a list of the endowments of the prince’s press in Bucharest, comprised dozens of items, some of large dimensions. These included the press itself, type, galleys, forms (or frames), the padded balls, pins, friskets, tympan, not to forget the metal bars for the alloy used in the manufacture of type, as well as the punches and matrices (for various alphabets). Carrying all this in his bags would have been impossible for a metropolitan of the Church of Antioch, especially since he was first heading for Cyprus, where, as the archbishop of this island, he was expected to pay a pastoral visit. Of all these items, one was essential to him in his intention to continue printing in Arabic in Aleppo: the Arabic type.

The technology of movable printing requires three essential elements: the type made from a metal alloy, the press, and ink appropriate for printing.<sup>159</sup> The expertise accumulated by working alongside Antim could help Athanasios Dabbās recreate a press in Aleppo, while ink was a commodity that he could purchase either in Ottoman Syria or in Constantinople. Thus, while the second and third items could be procured outside Wallachia, the Arabic type was difficult to make rapidly, without help from the skilled printers and apprentices of Antim’s presses. This must have been the most precious gift of Antim to Dabbās: the set of Arabic type and the Arabic-script woodcuts, which he had manufactured himself. Obviously, after Dabbās’s departure, Antim had no intention to use the Arabic typographic items again. The enterprise had to move somewhere else, in the distant lands where the Arabic-speaking readers of these books lived.

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<sup>159</sup> Simedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească în anii 1740–1750”, p. 875–876, citing A. [Charles] Mortet, *Les origines et les débuts de l'imprimerie d'après les recherches les plus récentes*, Paris, 1922, p. 8–10.

An idea most remote from the truth was proposed by Joseph Abou Nohra, who asserted that Antim the Iberian accompanied Patriarch Athanasios to Aleppo, to help him install the press that they had brought over from Bucharest and initiate the Syrian apprentices in the art of printing.<sup>160</sup>

In terms of the *location* of this first Arabic press in the Ottoman province of Syria, it is worth mentioning that the Christians of Aleppo enjoyed a certain freedom in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that may have helped the birth of the art of the Arabic printed book there. In his book, referring to the Christian community of Syria in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, André Raymond evoked “the favourable circumstances in which it found itself in Aleppo”. This is how he described the situation, while referring to “the important part the Christians played in the Aleppine textile industry and [...] the prominent position they secured themselves in the great commerce of Aleppo”.

The Christian community [of Aleppo] could not have known such a development without the tolerance shown them by the Ottoman authorities. [...] Aleppo did not differ on this point from other Arab Cities, but the situation of the Christians seems to have been particularly favourable in the Syrian city, as indicated by Alexander Russel who lived in Aleppo around 1750 [...].<sup>161</sup>

Unfortunately, no documents are available that could help us understand the local authorities' view of Dabbās's intentions to print Christian Arabic books in the city they ruled. Whatever the case was, beginning in 1706, at the metropolitan residence of Aleppo,<sup>162</sup> Dabbās printed eleven books in Arabic, including one – the Psalter – with a second edition. It does not seem possible that he learned in Wallachia the art of printing from A to Z, like a professional printer,<sup>163</sup> or mastered the highly technical operation of setting movable type on the page form, not to mention the complicated task of creating new type. It is more plausible that his press was joined by skilled young people, goldsmiths, and handy apprentices. They brought their craftsmanship from various other fields of work, just like in Gutenberg's case, and joined it with the printing expertise transferred to Aleppo from Wallachia by Athanasios Dabbās and the Syrian monks who accompanied him there.

The books that Athanasios Dabbās printed at his Aleppo press are described below, in Chapter VI, where titles and comments are provided for each of the books.

**160** Abou Nohra, “Les origines et le rayonnement culturel de la première imprimerie à caractères arabes au Liban (1733)”, p. 221.

**161** Raymond, *Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period*, p. 89.

**162** *Fī makān 'iqāmati-hi bi-Ḥalab*, “at the place where his residence of Aleppo was” cf. Dabbās and Raššū, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibā'a al-'arabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, p. 89.

**163** As Walbiner suggests, see “Melkite (Greek Orthodox) Approaches to the Bible”, p. 58–59.

Here follows a brief inventory, useful for the comments on the overall production of this first Arabic-printing enterprise inside the Ottoman Empire's margins.

Of the three books printed in 1706, the first one seems to have been the Psalter, *Kitāb al-Zabūr al-Šarīf*, selected as a logical continuation of the standard editorial plan of any Orthodox press, as witnessed in Wallachia by Prince Brâncoveanu's Syrian guests. A reprint was required in 1709, as the print-run of the first edition was probably insufficient for clergy's needs. The Psalter held a special place in the inventory of essential books for the Christian readers: used by the clergy daily, it was also the ordinary reading book in monasteries and in private homes, a manual for teaching and individual learning (Arabic, in this case), the choice spiritual guide for any Christian, from an early age. This accounts for its printing in the Monastery of Qozhaya, the first – and only – book produced there, but also for the many editions of *Ḥinšāra* – fifteen by 1900. As Basile Aggoula notes, this also reveals the increasing interest of the local Christian populations in acquiring a good knowledge of the Arabic language:<sup>164</sup>

Le *Psautier* de Šueir n'était pas seulement un livre de prières destiné à la récitation liturgique, mais un manuel de lecture pour les chrétiens. Il y a dans les éditions successives de ce livre, depuis Qazḥayyā jusqu'à Šueir où les éditions se sont répétées (15 en 166 ans, c'est-à-dire une chaque 12 ans à peu près), l'indice d'un intérêt grandissant des populations chrétiennes, depuis la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, pour la langue arabe.<sup>165</sup>

Soon after the Psalter, the first complete Arabic Gospel (Tetraevangelion) was printed in Aleppo: *Kitāb al-Inḡīl al-Šarīf al-Ṭāhīr wa-l-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr al-Ẓāhir*, *The Book of the Noble and Pure Gospel, the Shining and Brilliant Lamp*. In its time, the 1706 Arabic Gospel of Aleppo was distributed all over Greater Syria and reached churches and monasteries where copies are still preserved today. Later, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, copies would enter the collections of the great libraries of Western Europe, and beyond.

A third book was printed in 1706, a liturgical Gospel, i.e., a Gospel book with the same title, but with a double-sized content, comprising the four Gospels with additional commentary for each pericope. Instead of the 243 pages of the previously published text, this book contains 584 pages. Called by some researchers "a Lectionary",<sup>166</sup> it bears a certain resemblance to the Latin lectionaries, but the comments inserted for the use of the altar-serving priests of the Church of Antioch

<sup>164</sup> Aggoula, "Le livre libanais de 1585 à 1900", p. 308.

<sup>165</sup> Id.

<sup>166</sup> Serge Frantsouzoff, "Le premier lectionnaire arabe orthodoxe imprimé", in *Istorie și cultură. In honorem academician Andrei Eșanu*, Chișinău, 2018, p. 461.

are definitely Orthodox in content and style. Moreover, the book is addressed to a Byzantine-rite readership consisting of priests who could benefit from the Gospel commentaries when preparing their sermons for Sundays and major feasts.

It is worth mentioning that after 1706 no Arabic Orthodox printed Gospel was printed until a new version was produced in 1863 at the press of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, under Patriarch Cyril II (1792–1877).

Dabbās's editorial plan continued in 1707 with *Kitāb al-Durr al-Muntaḥab min Maqālāt al-Qiddīs Yūḥannā Famm al-Dahab*, *The Book of the Chosen Pearls from the Sermons of Saint John Chrysostom*, reprinted several times in Beirut and Cairo in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This contains thirty-four sermons of this great theologian and father of the church born in the city of Antioch, much loved by the Syrian Christians. In 1708, Dabbās printed the *Kitāb al-Nubū'āt al-Šarīf*, *Holy Book of the Prophecies* (Rom. *Paremiar*), another text required in churches and monasteries across Greater Syria.

In 1708, the Aleppo press produced an important liturgical book, the first Arabic printed *Apostolos*: *Kitāb al-'Abraksīs wa-huwa 'a'māl al-Rusul al-Qiddīsīn ṭumma al-Rasā'il al-muḥtaṣṣa bi-Būluṣ al-Rasūl ṭumma Ya'qūb wa-Buṭrus wa-Yūḥannā wa-Yahūdā*, *Book of the Apraksis, which is The Acts of the Holy Apostles and the Epistles of Paul the Apostle, Jacob, Peter, John, and Jude*.

The same year, the remaining blocks of printed sheets of the 1706 Tetraevangelion and the liturgical Gospel with commentary needed to be bound so they could be distributed to clergy and churches. Dabbās needed financial support for his enterprise, and any amount was useful. First, Dabbās succeeded in acquiring the funds necessary for the binding of one of the Gospels from the Hetman Ivan Mazepa, an ally of Constantin Brancoveanu, who may have recommended him.<sup>167</sup>

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**167** A manuscript note about the hetman Mazepa composed by the military historian Lt. Col. Dimitrie Pappazoglu, dated 1862, is attached at the end of the 1708 Gospel preserved at the B.A.R. On hetman Mazepa, see Demetrius Dvoichenko-Markov, "Hetman Ivan Mazepa in Romanian Literature", in Stephen Fischer-Galați, Radu R. Florescu and George R. Ursul, *Romania between East and West. Historical Essays in Memory of Constantin C. Giurescu*, New York, 1982, p. 147–158; K. A. Kochegarov, "Rol' Ivana Mazepy v russko-turetskikh otnosheniakh pervoi poloviny 1708 g.: poezdka Zgury Stilevicha k seraskeru Iusufu-pashe", in *Ukraina v Tsentral'no-Skhidnii Ievropi*, t. 9–10, 2010, p. 152–192; Teofil Rendiuk, *C. Brâncoveanu și I. Mazepa: pagini inedite de istorie în memoria remarcabilului domnitor al Munteniei Constantin Brâncoveanu și ilustrului hatman al ucrainei Ivan Mazepa*, Bucharest, 2014. This last book, devoted to Ivan Mazepa and his connections with Wallachia, was published in Romanian, Ukrainian, and English by Teofil Rendiuk, after he published in 1991 two studies on Mazepa in a brochure in Kyiv (in Ukrainian).

Born in 1640 in Podolia (d. 1709), Ivan Mazepa was elected great hetman of the Cossacks in 1687. At first an ally of the Moscow court, he changed his options around 1708 and became an opponent and soon “a traitor” in the tsar’s eyes. In the Romanian Principalities, he was known for his alliance in 1709 with the king of the Swedes Charles XII against the tsar of Moscow Peter I, and for his support of cultural works. He contributed to the erection of the wall enclosure of the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra: one of the gates, built with his financial support, still preserves his coat of arms (Fig. 6), identical with that placed on the front page of the Arabic Tetraevangelion bound in 1708 (Fig. 7). After the defeat of the Swedes by the Russians at the Battle of Poltava on July 8, 1709, Mazepa retreated to Bender (Tighina), where he continued to seek support from the Moldavians and the Wallachians. Apparently, he was in contact and cooperation with Constantin Brâncoveanu for twenty-one years. When Mazepa died in September 1709 in Bender (possibly of exhaustion, after the battle of Poltava),<sup>168</sup> he was first buried in the small rural church of Varnița, a church that was later demolished. The next year, his earthly remains were brought by his companions to Moldavia and buried on March 18, 1710, in the church of Saint George in Galați.<sup>169</sup>

Mazepa was only able to help with the binding of the first version of the Aleppo Gospel. For the second, Dabbās was advised to appeal to Colonel Daniel Apostol, one of Mazepa’s comrades in arms, who had taken the side of Tsar Peter I. Thus, the Gospel with commentary was bound with the financial assistance of Colonel Daniel Apostol.

In 1709, a second edition of the Psalter was printed, apparently identical to the first Aleppo edition of 1706.<sup>170</sup> Nothing more happened afterwards, for two years. In 1711, after a gap that could be explained by a lack of funding, four texts were printed, completing the necessary collection of liturgical books considered by Dabbās as essential for any Christian priest: *Kitāb al-Bāraklitikī, ‘ayy al-Mu‘azzī al-Ḥāwī* (*Book of the Paraklitiki, or ‘The Comforter’*), also known as the Oktoechos; *Mawā‘iz ‘Aṭanāsiyūs al-Baṭriyark al-Ūrašalimiyy* (*Sermons of Athanasios, the Patriarch of Jerusalem*), containing sixty-six sermons by Athanasios preceded by a *Maqāla li-l-Qiddīs Yūḥannā Famm al-Ḍahab fī ‘Īd al-Faṣḥ* (*A Sermon by*

<sup>168</sup> The Battle of Poltava on July 8, 1709, was the last great clash of the Great Northern War between the Swedes and the army of Peter the Great, which he commanded himself. After the defeat of King Charles XII of the Swedes (Carl Gustaf Rehnskiöld), the Muscovite court increasingly extended its pressure and influence over Northern Europe.

<sup>169</sup> Unfortunately, this church was completely ruined in 1962 and only an approximate location of the hetman’s burial place is now known.

<sup>170</sup> A comparison between the two editions is under way, as one of the tasks of the TYPARABIC project team.



*Saint John Chrysostom for the Easter Feast*) and a eulogy dedicated to the author by Chrysanthos Notaras.

Finally, in 1711, a book composed by Athanasios Dabbās himself, *Risāla waḡīza tūḍīḥu kayfiyyat al-tawba wa-l-ʿitirāf* (*Brief Epistle on How to Repent and Confess*), was printed at the Aleppo press, the only personal composition that he succeeded in printing.<sup>171</sup> This last work of his printing press deserves special attention. To support his comments and advice, the author cites Saint John Damascene (Part One, Ch. 1), passages from the Old Testament (p. 40–42), the episode of David the Prophet and Nathan (p. 55), and the Book of Numbers (p. 56–57). He evokes the Patriarchs of Alexandria Basil, Peter, and Dionysius, Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, and John Chrysostom (p. 52–53), Solomon the Wise (p. 81), the Holy Apostle Paul, and the Prophet Malachi (p. 85).

To understand the foundations of Dabbās's theological thinking and spiritual teachings contained in this book, his other works and the history of his contacts need to be considered. The first question that comes to mind is why did Dabbās feel the need to address the topics of repentance and confession in a personal writing. The answer to this question can be gleaned by surveying some other actions that he took in his metropolitan eparchy of Aleppo after returning from his long sojourn in Wallachia.

Back in Aleppo, Dabbās resumed his pastoral control of the diocese that he agreed to lead after he had temporarily relinquished the patriarchal see of the Church of Antioch. In 1716, when more than a decade had passed since his return from Wallachia, Metropolitan Athanasios issued a directive to the Christians of the Antiochian Church, teaching them how to lead a righteous life and to behave in church and at home. Among others, he forbade the christening of infants later than forty days after birth, stating that the death of an unbaptized infant was a mortal sin for the parents.<sup>172</sup> The definition of mortal sins is one of the main topics that Dabbās discusses in his *Risāla waḡīza*, in such minute detail that the reader is left with the impression of his awareness of a pervasive ignorance on the part of the common people of his eparchy. According to Louis Cheikho, Dabbās also wrote a *Catechism of the Orthodox Faith*.<sup>173</sup> This would have been another

<sup>171</sup> I have presented this book in my article “Recent Findings Regarding the Early Arabic Printing in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces”, *RESEE*, 58, 2020, 1–4, p. 91–105.

<sup>172</sup> Paul Carali (Būlus Qarālī) edited one chapter of Dabbās's directive in “Manšūrāni li-l-baṭriyark Aṭanāsiyūs Dabbās wa-l-muṭrān Iḡnātiyūs Karbūs”, *al-Maḡalla al-sūriyya*, 3, 1928, Part 1, p. 6–8 (commentaries), and Part 2, 77–79 (texts). See also Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, p. 524.

<sup>173</sup> He was contradicted by Joseph Nasrallah, in the absence of a copy of this work. See *HMLÉM* III.1, p. 135.

attempt at improving the religious education of the Orthodox in the Patriarchate of Antioch, at a time when Latin propaganda, organized by diligent Jesuit missionaries, was most active. Dabbās also worked together with Elias Faḥr (Ilyās ibn Faḥr al-Ṭrābulṣī) and Rowland Sherman (in French and Italian sources, ‘Chairman’), an Anglican merchant residing in Aleppo, on the Arabic translation of the first part of the trilogy *Ekthesis* by Gabriel Severus.<sup>174</sup> This book discusses the main points of contention between the Byzantine-rite Church of Antioch and the Latin Church.<sup>175</sup> All these works and preoccupations prove Dabbās’s continuous efforts to raise the theological knowledge of his flock, both clergy and ordinary faithful, with a focus on the Orthodox rites, rituals, and conduct.

The second important question concerns the sources of Dabbās’s opinions of sin, repenting, and confession. I suggested in my survey of this book two possible answers, both connected to his Wallachian journeys.

In 1711, at the time the *Risāla waḡīza* was printed, Dabbās had already translated Dimitrie Cantemir’s *The Divan or the Wise Man’s Dispute with the World, or the Litigation between Soul and Body*, whose title he adapted in Arabic as *Ṣalāḥ al-ḥakīm wa-fasād al-‘ālam al-ḍamīm*.<sup>176</sup> The final version of this text, revised by Gabriel Farḥāt,<sup>177</sup> was apparently ready in 1705.<sup>178</sup> Cantemir’s work contains pas-

<sup>174</sup> ‘Abdallāh Zāḥir later wrote a polemical epistle against this work: *Al-tiryāq al-ṣāfī min samm al-Filādelfī*, *The Curing Antidote to the Poison of the Philadelphian* [Archbishop].

<sup>175</sup> See Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 476; *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 115–116.

<sup>176</sup> Dabbās translated the Greek version of Cantemir’s book, which was prepared in 1697–1698 by the Romanian prince’s Greek teacher Jeremiah Cacavelas, with the title: *Kritirion i dialexis toy sofoy me ton kosmon i krisis tis psychis me to sōma, dia mochtou kai filoponias Iōannou Dimītriou Kōnstantinou Boeboda*. The Arabic translation is a fairly accurate transfer of the Greek version of Cantemir’s text.

<sup>177</sup> See Feodorov and Petrova, *Dimitrie Cantemir, Salvation of the Sage and Ruin of the Sinful World*, p. 64–70; Ioana Feodorov, “The Arabic Version of Dimitrie Cantemir’s Divan: A Supplement to the Editor’s Note”, *RESEE*, 46, 2008, 1–4, p. 195–212.

<sup>178</sup> A grandson of Fausto Sozzini, Andrzej Wiszowaty (1608–1678) was a theoretician of the Socinian movement and a professor at the Rakówian Academy of the Polish Brethren. The Socinians became, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the most active Unitarians of Central and Eastern Europe. Wiszowaty studied in Raków until 1629, then at Leiden and Amsterdam, and travelled extensively across Europe. A disciple of Johannes Crellius, he appreciated the works of Kepler, Galileo, and Campanella. He is the author of the *Racovian Catechism* (1605), on which he worked with Joachim Stegmann (1595–1633), and the *Religio rationalis* (published posthumously in Amsterdam in 1684–1685). After the Socinians were expelled from Poland in 1639, he lived in exile, residing after 1666 in Amsterdam. He directed the publication of the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant, instructua operibus omnibus Fausti Socini* (Amsterdam, 2 eds., 1665, 1668).

sages that refer the reader to the same spiritual citations as the *Risāla waḡīza*. In *Book One*, Chapter 43, the same examples of sinners and repentance are offered:

[David] finally liberated himself from your [i.e., Satan's] grip, realized the filthy mischief that you did to him, decided to confess his sin truthfully, as the Prophet Nathan explained to him. So, the penitent Prophet chanted, saying: 'Have mercy upon me, Lord, by thy great mercy' (*Ps* 51:1), or when he says: 'I know my faults, and my sins are permanently in my sight' (*Ps* 51:3).<sup>179</sup>

Moreover, repentance and confession came up when the translator (or translators, if we count Farḥāt in) added comments concerning the reality of the 'Purgatory'.

O you! Do not imagine that after the ruin of the framework of your body and the separation from your soul, and if you die without repentance, your sins would be forgiven, in a hell where there is no repentance and no acknowledgment of mistakes. (For no imaginary Latin *purgatorium*, or even one hundred of those, would do any good to you, since there is no confession and no repentance in hell).<sup>180</sup>

This work is entirely devoted to teachings on the way to attain Salvation and acquire a place in Heaven. Naturally, repentance and confession come up in the flow of Cantemir's (and Wissovatius's) discourse. Repentance and admonition to atone appear (sometimes in strong words) more than twenty-four times in the *Ṣalāḥ al-ḥakīm*, in *Book One* and *Book Two*, the ones that were composed by Cantemir, not by Wissovatius. In *Book Three*, at least twenty passages refer to repenting and confessing one's sins early in life, and regularly. The wisdom and the tone of Wissovatius's work are also perfectly aligned with the one in Dabbās's *Risāla waḡīza*:

You, who used God's grace for evil deeds, should you also be granted by God time to repent? This rarely happens. Beware not to give the flower of your life to Satan, and present to God the dry stalks. Beware not to fall into the pit of despair with sin, for we have been given many examples of repentance and remorse. Do not rest at all, because the end of your life is unknown. Do not think that you will abandon sin when it abandons you.<sup>181</sup>

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After 1724, his grandson Andrzej Wiszowaty Jr was a teacher at the Unitarian Academy of Cluj (Transylvania), in present-day Romania.

**179** Feodorov and Petrova, *Dimitrie Cantemir, Salvation of the Sage and Ruin of the Sinful World*, p.143.

**180** *Ibid.*, p. 307.

**181** *Ibid.*, p. 385, 387.

While translating Cantemir's book, Dabbās may have encountered passages where the Latins' claims were briefly mentioned, including the ones on the 'Purgatory', which are closely related, in a theological perspective, to the discussion about sin and atonement. This was an incentive for him to address, in his own *Risāla waḡīza*, the sensitive issues of repentance, confession, and sin. His intention in writing this work was to enlighten the potential Arabic-speaking readers of Ottoman Syria who were also facing the forceful Jesuit pressure towards union with the Latin Church. In any case, a comparison of the two texts, Cantemir's *Ṣalāḥ al-ḥakīm* and Dabbās's *Risāla waḡīza*, bears a great probability of discovering similarities between them, both in content and in form.

Another book, written by Antim the Iberian – a very important person in several of Dabbās's projects –, reveals a close similarity to Dabbās's *Risāla waḡīza*. During his long residence in Bucharest, the latter was in close contact with the brilliant Georgian scholar, whose rise to the dignity of metropolitan of the Wallachian Orthodox Church he witnessed while there. In 1705, Antim, already a bishop of Râmnic, printed at his press installed there when moving from Bucharest a book of 50 pages, his own work: *Brief teachings on the mystery of repentance* (*Învățătură pre scurtu pentru taina pocăinții*). The small book, an in-8° format, is composed in Romanian, and printed in Cyrillic script.<sup>182</sup> Its structure is not far from Dabbās's epistle *Risāla waḡīza*. Antim addressed his discourse to the clergy and laity alike. The declared purpose of his book was to contribute to the improvement of the Christians' conduct and to teach priests how to advise the faithful, during confession, on ways to rectify their bad conduct. Antim wrote and printed this text in Romanian to give it a wide circulation. Among his works, this was one of the most appreciated by the Romanian readership.<sup>183</sup> But since Antim's text was never translated, Dabbās could only have become acquainted with his thought during their conversations, which must have been frequent, for several years, as they often met at court and worked together in two of Antim's presses. They seem to have had a similar outlook on many theological and spiritual points. Here is just one relevant example, out of the many available.

Part Three of the *Risāla waḡīza*, Ch. 1, "On How He Needs to Be and Behave", starts with: "On How He Has to Be". Here, Dabbās defines the confessor and his required features, from all points of view:

<sup>182</sup> See the description in Chițulescu (coord. ed.), Bădără, Croitoru, Dumitrescu and Feodorov, *Antim Ivireanul. Opera tipografică*, p. 132–133.

<sup>183</sup> One single copy is preserved today, at the B.A.R. in Bucharest.

Be aware that the priest entrusted with hearing confession, which is a great authority over all kingdoms in the world, its glories, nations and worlds, needs to be endowed with all the holy virtues and have all spiritual and bodily qualities together. He must be righteous, pious, pure, intelligent and chaste in his conduct, have a pure mind and a humble heart, be mild-tempered in his interactions, embody perfection to its utmost degree and in all aspects, have a good reputation, be agreeable, resourceful, well-spoken, strong-minded, stern in his assertions, to avoid banter, mockery, and idle talk, be pleasant to talk to and the best possible educator, in order to tend to his flock. For if he cannot discipline himself, how would he be able to discipline others?<sup>184</sup>

In Antim's *Brief Teachings on the Mystery of Repentance*, the definition of the confessor is placed in Part Two: "How the confessor must be, and how he must hear confession, and how he must set people straight".<sup>185</sup> This is the part that closely resembles Antim's text:

The priest who accepts the difficult and challenging task of hearing confession has to be elderly, or at least 40 years of age, honest, devout, leading a good life, well-spoken, a well-doer; he must not be a drunkard, nor a tavern-goer, nor an irritated man, nor someone who utters profanities or swears, and, in short, he must avoid, as much as possible, to be a source of scandal or a bad example for the common people. Second, he has to be enriched with education and good deeds, and to understand the Holy Books and the canons of our Church, which will help him rectify the people who confess to him.<sup>186</sup>

Dabbās's *Risāla wağīza* was printed in 1711 with the last funds available for his enterprise, just before closing down for good. It seems plausible that the metropolitan of Aleppo intended to print his Arabic version of Dimitrie Cantemir's *Divan, or the Dispute between the Sage and the World by Demetrius Cantemir*, which he finished in 1705. There are several elements that point to his intention of placing the Arabic *Divan* on the priority list of the Aleppo press.<sup>187</sup> As I already

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**184** Athanasios Dabbās, *Risāla wağīza tūđīhu kayfiyyat al-tawba wa-l-ʾitirāf*, Aleppo, 1711, p. 73–75. I am grateful to Fr Charbel Nassif for kindly suggesting improvements to the passages of this book that I translated from Arabic.

**185** Antim the Iberian, *Învățătură pre scurtu pentru taina pocăinței*, Bucharest, 1705, p. 32–35.

**186** *Despre taina Pocăinței (On the Mystery of Repentance)*, in Sfântul Antim Ivireanul, *Despre păstorirea credincioșilor*, text selection, introduction and comments by Fr Adrian Agachi, Bucharest, 2016, p. 203. The English translation is mine.

**187** For quotations from the Arabic version that support this idea, see Feodorov, *Dimitrie Cantemir, The Salvation of the Wise Man*, p. 51, 60; Ioana Feodorov, "The Arabic Version of Dimitrie Cantemir's *Divan*: A Supplement to the Editor's Note", p. 195–212; Ioana Feodorov, "Intervențiile traducătorului în textul versiunii arabe din 1705 a *Divanului* lui Dimitrie Cantemir", in *Revista de istorie și teorie literară. Actele Colocviului Național "Literatura română veche. Priorități ale cercetării actuale"*, București, 27–28 iunie 2013, 7, 2014, 1–4, p. 135–142.

mentioned, Athanasios Dabbās appealed in 1705 to Ǧibril (Gabriel) Farḥāt for the revision of his translation of Cantemir’s *Divan* from Greek into Arabic. He had removed, in his version, the author’s name, the forewords and any references to the Moldavians, which could have revealed the origin of the work.<sup>188</sup> These choices of the translator, as well as other aspects of the text, led me to the conclusion that the Arabic version of the *Divan* was meant to be printed in Aleppo, perhaps among the very first books in Dabbās’s editorial program. The urgency of printing liturgical books must have convinced him to leave this book for later. Dabbās was acutely aware of the Antiochian clergy’s needs, which must have determined him to postpone printing his works until the very last of the editorial program he had in mind at first, when insufficient funds forced him to put an end to his printing activities.

Dabbās also prepared an Arabic version of the Triodion, which, I presume, he also intended to print at the press that he so painstakingly kept functioning as long as he could secure the necessary funding. The text is preceded by a preface where Dabbās explains that the manuscripts of the Triodion in circulation were filled with mistakes and lacked some services. According to Joseph Nasrallah, this version was prepared by Dabbās and revised by Gabriel Farḥāt.<sup>189</sup>

In the current state of research, it seems that other texts composed by Athanasios Dabbās, listed in the subsection *al-Našr* (“Publications”) of the book signed by Anṭuwān Qayṣar Dabbās and Naḥla Raššū, were not printed at the Aleppo press.<sup>190</sup> The information is, however, incomplete and uncertain (here, as well as in previous works), so it is possible that further research uncovers some other books printed by Dabbās. For example, Dabbās and Raššū added to the list of productions of the Aleppo press a book named *Fuṣūl min al-’Inǧīl al-muqaddas* (*Chapters from the Holy Gospel*), apparently printed in 1708. According to them, the book contains “a selection of scriptural texts for the feasts around the year, with explanations on the readings for Sundays and feast days”.<sup>191</sup> No copy of this book is known to exist, nor any other information about it, but a manuscript with

**188** See Feodorov and Petrova, *Dimitrie Cantemir, Salvation of the Sage and Ruin of the Sinful World*, p. 64, 67–68, 71–72.

**189** *HMLÉ* IV.1, p. 143–144. Nasrallah recorded a good number of manuscripts where the Arabic Triodion in Dabbās’s version is preserved: MS Ḥarissa 66, two in Dayr el-Šir, one in the library of the Syrian Patriarchate of Beirut, one in Dayr al-Muḥalliṣ, one in Tyre, and two in private collections of Syria.

**190** Dabbās and Raššū, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibā’a al-’arabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, p. 105.

**191** *Ibid.*, p. 104.

this title and content was located by Louis Cheikhō in the Bibliothèque Orientale of Beirut.<sup>192</sup>

It is worth recalling that Athanasios Dabbās wrote several works that only circulated in manuscript form. One of the most interesting is *Mawā'iz 'āḥād wa- 'a'yād al-sanat* (*Sermons for the Sundays and feasts of the entire year*), which comprises teachings concerning priesthood, marriage, baptism, and funerals, composed by means of adapting certain patristic writings, not yet identified, which Dabbās had translated from Greek and Latin and from “old Oriental languages”, probably Syriac.<sup>193</sup> It is probable that in some of these teachings Athanasios Dabbās was inspired by writings that he came across or acquired while in Wallachia. Dabbās's work was publicized in Aleppo in the form of an edict after he occupied the metropolitan see in July 1716.

It has been noted that Dabbās's entire editorial program at the Aleppo press comprised liturgical books, with no polemic intention.<sup>194</sup> The only exception, which is not attributable to Dabbās, is the assertion of Patriarch Chrysantos Notaras in *Mawā'iz 'Aṭanāsiyūs* (1711) that the “enemies of faith” (probably, the Catholic or Protestant missionaries) were spreading in the Levant “false and deceitful beliefs” (Foreword, p. 6).<sup>195</sup>

The Aleppo press ceased its activity at the end of 1711, most probably because Dabbās had run out of money. According to the testimony of a contemporary of Dabbās, the monk Ya'qūb Ṣāḡātī, who was living in Ḥinšāra when 'Abdallāh Zāḥir settled there, the costs of printing were prohibitive and the Aleppo press must have stopped because of a lack of funding.<sup>196</sup> Metropolitan Athanasios was not able to cover the expenses required by the continuation of this activity, as the Bishopric

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**192** Louis Cheikhō (with Louis Ma'louf and Constantin Bacha), *Vingt traités théologiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens, IX<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Beirut, 1920, p. 34. The manuscript is now available through the vHMML database (Project no. US.J. 01337), but the title, *Fuṣūl min al-'Inḡīl al-muqaddas*, is apparently an early description of its contents (a manuscript that has some chapters from the Gospels), rather than its title.

**193** Dabbās and Raššū, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibā'a al-'arabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, p. 105.

**194** Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie*, p. 146; Nasrallah, “Les imprimeries melchites au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, p. 231, note 4.

**195** Chrysantos Notaras declared, referring to the book collection of his uncle, Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem (1669–1707): “These writings serve as weapons by means of which any attack on Orthodoxy can be overturned, for it may be threatened by teachers who pretend to be grace-given prophets [...]” (*ibid.*).

**196** Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie*, p. 152. See also Carsten-Michael Walbinder, review of Eva Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass and Geoffrey Roper (eds.), *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution. A Cross-Cultural Encounter*, Westhofen, 2002, in *Oriens Christianus*, 88, 2004, especially p. 285.



of Aleppo was poor. He could not secure the help of the Patriarch Cyril V anymore, although he had previously financed from the patriarchal treasury the printing of two books: the Book of Prophecies and the Oktoechos.<sup>197</sup> In Wallachia, in the second decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Phanariot princes' rule was just beginning. The political circumstances were not favorable to Eastern cultural projects like the ones that had been supported by the munificent Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, deposed from his throne and executed by order of the Sultan in 1714.<sup>198</sup>

Dabbās sent messages to Moscow too, asking for help in keeping the Arabic press active for the benefit of the Christians attached to the Church of Antioch across the Middle East. Vera Tchentsova studied the letters sent by the metropolitan of Aleppo to the Tsar Peter I in December 1706 and February 1707. Dabbās presented his plea in the same terms as he had previously done before Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu.<sup>199</sup> He subsequently addressed Piotr Tolstoi, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, whom he asked to intervene with the tsar in favor of his request and assist his emissary, Leontios, in reaching the court of Moscow, where he would present to the tsar a copy of the recently printed Arabic Psalter. In the second epistle addressed to the tsar, which reached Moscow in March 1707, Dabbās informs him of the death of Patriarch Dositheos II of Jerusalem (on February 7) and the election of his nephew Chrysanthos Notaras as the new patriarch (1707–1731). According to the hypothesis of Vera Tchentsova, based on the watermark of the paper used for writing the message addressed to Fiodor A. Golovin, these messages, endorsed by the ambassador Tolstoi, were written at the *metochion* of the Holy Sepulcher in Constantinople.<sup>200</sup> The two letters received a polite reply from Gabriel Golovkin, the Russian chancellor for Foreign Affairs, but the tsar did not offer any consistent support. The Syrian delegation left Moscow in April 1710, having received from the tsar a small donation of around 90 rubles. This only helped Dabbās carry on his printing activities for a short while.

<sup>197</sup> *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 146.

<sup>198</sup> According to Tit Simedrea, the press also declined in Wallachia after the Phanariot princes sat on the throne of Bucharest, because “although some of them were inclined to book-reading, they did not care much for printing”; see Simedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească în anii 1740–1750”, p. 865.

<sup>199</sup> Vera Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: pièces authentiques et pièces fausses. 4. Le patriarche d’Antioche Athanase IV Dabbās et Moscou: en quête de subventions pour l’imprimerie arabe d’Alep”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 2013, 1, p. 173–195. Dabbās’s letters dated December 1706 and February 1707 were published in Greek on p. 185–194, with a French translation and comments.

<sup>200</sup> Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, p. 183.

In the meantime, Dabbās had contacted the two Cossack hetmans, Ivan Mazepa and Daniel Apostol, who in 1708 financed the binding of the remaining print-run of the 1706 Gospel, in the two above-mentioned versions. In 1708, Constantin Cantacuzino mentioned the Arabic books printed at Snagov and Bucharest in a letter sent to Zgura (Zgur Stilou),<sup>201</sup> the hetman's diplomatic envoy. However, Mazepa soon died at Tighina, in 1710, and in 1711 the Russo-Turkish war started, which absorbed the attention and resources of all the regional powers, drawing them into the political and military turmoil of those days.

After the Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu was taken to the Sublime Porte in chains, Dabbās lost all hope of ever receiving financial aid from Wallachia. On August 5, 1714, he wrote again to Tsar Peter I, counsellor Golovkin, and Prince Dmitri Golitsin, asking for support in resuming the printing work at the Aleppo press. This repeated plea seems to have remained unanswered. The court in Moscow had no interest in getting involved in the problems that the Christians of Ottoman Syria were facing. Dabbās's relations with the Cossacks surely did not help his case before the tsar either.

The most reliable source for the research on the books printed in Aleppo consists in the corpus formed by their forewords.<sup>202</sup> Most of the books printed by Athanasios Dabbās include a foreword signed by him where the lofty aspirations that stirred him are clearly expressed. First of all, his intention was to spread the word of God in Arabic, the language spoken by the Christians of Greater Syria. One of the reasons that Dabbās evoked for his resolve to painstakingly pursue on Syrian soil the printing work that he had started in Wallachia was his mission to enlighten the Christians of the Church of Antioch, clergy and laymen alike. He inherited this mission from his predecessors, the Patriarchs Efthimios II Karma (bishop Meletios of Aleppo in 1612–1634) and Makarios III ibn al-Za'im. This declaration is an echo of Karma's statement in the foreword to the Arabic Horologion that he prepared for printing: "The greatest need [of the Christians] is to understand the prayer and to say it."<sup>203</sup> Likewise, in the foreword to the Arabic Psalter published in London in 1725 by Salomon Negri (Suleymān al-Aswad), who worked together with the Patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās, the latter explains:

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**201** I am grateful to Vera Tchentsova for identifying this character.

**202** A collection of these forewords – edited Arabic texts and English translations – is being prepared by Yulia Petrova and me for De Gruyter, within the same series EAPE.

**203** *Inna ḥāḡati-him al-quṣwā hiya 'ilā fahm al-ṣalāt wa-l-qiyām bi-hā*, cf. MS 46 of the library of the monastery of Ṣaydnāyā in Siria; see *Waṣf li-l-kutub wa-l-maḥṭūṭāt. Dayr Sayyida Ṣaydnāyā al-baṭriyarkī*, Damascus, p. 48.

The priest Suleymān [al-Aswad] prepared this Arabic translation without adding or deleting anything from it, only guided by the science of grammar and the depths of the Arabic language. And more so, for it to be largely distributed and provide more benefits to all who believe in Christ in these Eastern lands, he endeavored to rewrite the said book, as you see it in this translation, to which we added the contents of the common Psalter and the contents of each and every Psalm, to ease the understanding of its meaning.<sup>204</sup>

Salomon Negri had worked under the supervision of Athanasios III Dabbās before leaving for Western Europe.<sup>205</sup> He received his early education at the Jesuit school of Aleppo and there he was persuaded to go to Paris. The Jesuit fathers were hoping that thus, he would embrace Catholicism.<sup>206</sup> After he followed classes at the Sorbonne for a while, he was invited by the Anglican Church Missionary Society in London to revise, against the canonical Greek texts, the Psalter and the Gospel printed in Aleppo in 1706. His versions were published in London: in 1725 – the Book of Psalms, and in 1727 – the New Testament.<sup>207</sup> The publication of these books was done under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), the oldest Anglican mission organization in the world, founded in 1698 by Thomas Bray.<sup>208</sup> The Arabic Psalter of London was printed in 6,000 copies, and the New Testament in 10,000 copies. As revealed by the letters exchanged by Salomon Negri with the SPCK,<sup>209</sup> the intention of the

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**204** *Book of Psalms of David the King and Prophet (Kitāb Zabūr Da'ūd al-Malik wa-l-Nabī)*, London, 1725, preface by Athanasios Dabbās.

**205** See Di Pietrantonio, “Le *Kitāb fī ṣinā'at al-faṣāḥa* du patriarche Athanase III Dabbās”, p. 139–140.

**206** Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 103–104.

**207** *Al-'Ahd al-Ġadīd li-Rabbi-nā Yasū' al-Masīḥ*, London, 1727. See Roper, “England and the Printing of Texts for Orthodox Christians”, p. 437–438.

**208** The Anglicans' assistance to the Middle Eastern Christians continued in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), founded in 1804, which aimed to procure Bibles to the Christian population living under Ottoman rule (in Greek and Karamanlidika). See Richard Clogg, “Enlightening ‘a Poor, Oppressed, and Darkened Nation’: Some Early Activities of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the Levant”, in Stephen Batalden, Kathleen Cann and John Dean (eds.), *Sowing the word: the cultural impact of the british and Foreign Bible Society 1804–2004*, Sheffield, 2004, pp. 234–250; Richard Clogg, “Publishing for ‘the poor, ignorant, and oppressed Christians of Lesser Asia’: early ‘Greco-Turkish’ translations of the British and Foreign Bible Society”, in Evangelia Balta and Mehmet Ölmez (eds.), *Between religion and language: Turkish-speaking Christians, Jews and Greek-speaking Muslims and Catholics in the Ottoman Empire*, Istanbul, 2011, p. 225–244 (both republished in Richard Clogg, *Miscellanea Graeco-Turcica. Essays on Greek and Turkish History*, Istanbul, 2015, p. 65–80 and 81–96, respectively).

**209** See *An Extract of Several Letters Relating to the Great Charity and Usefulness of Printing the New Testament and Psalter in the Arabick Language; For the Benefit of the Poor Christians in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, and Other Eastern Countries, with a Proposal*

Anglican society was to “preserve and propagate the Christian Faith among our Brethren in Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and other Eastern Countries from whence We first received it”.<sup>210</sup>

In London, Negri also contributed to the Arabic version of a *Brief History of Christianity* written from a Protestant perspective, useful to the Anglican missionaries sent to the Middle East. Negri also worked on the Arabic version of the Bible revised by Meletios Karma, and his version was preferred by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide.<sup>211</sup>

After printing the Book of Psalms in 1706, Dabbās continued to rework its text, unhappy with the version that he had hurriedly printed, the first book of his new press. In MS Cambridge 1041 (Add. 257), a Book of Psalms in Greek and Arabic with text written in two columns, it is stated in the foreword that it is a version of the Aleppo Psalter by Athanasios Dabbās together with the Orthodox priest Suleymān al-Aswad, known in Europe as Salomon Negri. The Psalms are seemingly followed by two Greek versions of the Creed, whereas only the first one is also translated into Arabic. This revised version is the one published in 1725 in London, where Negri was working at the time, an edition sponsored by the SPCK.<sup>212</sup>

Some commentators have expressed their surprise at Dabbās’s wish that the Arabic Gospel be widely distributed not only to churches but also the homes of laypeople. Indeed, in the foreword to the Gospel of 1706 (p. 2–3), Dabbās declares that every Christian should have a copy at home, as it contains enough meaning to benefit all kinds of people, be they scholars (*‘ulamā*) or uneducated. Therefore, he resolved to have the Gospel printed, so that his readership, whom he addresses in this foreword, could easily come into the possession of a copy and be able to ascertain its truths. This led Walbiner to express his surprise thus:

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*for Executing so Good an Undertaking*, London, 1725, p. 3. Publishing extracts of the letters exchanged by Salomon Negri with prominent members of the SPCK was meant to attract sponsors for the Society’s printing projects.

**210** Paula Manstetten, “...for the Benefit of the Poor Christians of the Eastern Nations...” – Printing the Psalter and New Testament in Arabic in Eighteenth-Century London”, online at *Biblia Arabica. The Bible in Arabic among Jews, Christians and Muslims. Bibliography of the Arabic Bible*, posted on November 4, 2021. See also the online information on the project directed by Prof. Dr Mark Häberlein and developed by Paula Manstetten at the University of Bamberg: *Transfer Processes between East and West from an Actor-Centered perspective. Salomon Negri as Translator and Cultural broker between the Arab World and Latin Europe in the Late 17<sup>th</sup> and Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century*.

**211** *HMLĒM* IV.1, p. 85.

**212** See Roper, “England and the Printing of Texts for the Orthodox Christians in Greek and Arabic, 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries”, p. 436–439.

One can only speculate about the reasons for al-Dabbās' obvious aim to make the Bible a book read by all strata of people, an approach that contradicted not only Orthodox conceptions but the reality in early modern Syria. The idea sounds very Protestant, and such an impact cannot be excluded totally as al-Dabbās had come in contact with Protestant thinking – although perhaps unconsciously – while in the Balkans.<sup>213</sup>

There is a remark to be made after reading this passage: a good part of the Christian education in countries with an Orthodox majority was historically based on reading the Gospel and the Psalms. Dabbās's intention, possibly at odds with that of the upper clergy of other Churches,<sup>214</sup> was to place the Arabic Gospel in the hands of people of all walks of life. To some extent, this echoed the Wallachian and Moldavian princes' and bishops' belief that the education of Christian people should be based on the sound foundation of the word of God. This is why, starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Wallachian and Moldavian rulers encouraged printing in Slavonic, Greek and, later, in the vernacular – Romanian – by financing presses throughout their territories. Moreover, Dabbās's aims resemble those expressed in several works composed by Antim the Iberian, who nourished the same desire to spread the teachings of the Holy Apostles as far as possible, even to Georgia – which he also undertook.

Moreover, who could be the Protestant visitors to Brâncoveanu's court capable of altering the Syrian metropolitan's reception of the Orthodox way of life that he enjoyed while in Bucharest? He does not seem to have encountered in Bucharest any great Protestant cleric or scholar capable of changing the opinions of a former patriarch of the Church of Antioch. For someone who is aware of the

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**213** Walbiner, "Melkite (Greek Orthodox) Approaches to the Bible", p. 60–61.

**214** For example, the Confession of Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem issued by the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672 states: "QUESTION I. *Ought the Divine Scriptures to be read in the vulgar tongue by all Christians?* No. For that all Scripture is divinely-inspired and profitable (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16) we know, and is of such necessity, that without the same it is impossible to be Orthodox at all. Nevertheless they should not be read by all, but only by those who with fitting research have inquired into the deep things of the Spirit, and who know in what manner the Divine Scriptures ought to be searched, and taught, and in fine read. But to such as are not so exercised, or who cannot distinguish, or who understand only literally, or in any other way contrary to Orthodoxy what is contained in the Scriptures, the Catholic Church, as knowing by experience the mischief arising therefrom, forbiddeth the reading of the same. So that it is permitted to every Orthodox to hear indeed the Scriptures, that he may believe with the heart unto righteousness, and confess with the mouth unto salvation; (Romans 10:10) but to read some parts of the Scriptures, and especially of the Old [Testament], is forbidden for the aforesaid reasons and others of the like sort". Cf. J. J. Overbeck (ed.), *Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem. The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church Drawn up in the Year 1640 by Peter Mogila, Metropolitan of Kieff*, London, 1899, p. 152–153.

spiritual life of Wallachia in the days of Constantin Brâncoveanu (as before and after his rule), Dabbās's Orthodox thinking cannot be put to doubt. Besides, he was known to have had contacts with Protestant communities in the Holy Land and Aleppo, before deciding to leave for Wallachia. Certain ideas that reached Eastern Europe and the Middle Eastern Christians were a sign of modernity and an appreciation of the human spiritual and intellectual powers, such as the need to read more – for a better education of the general public. This was, in fact, one of the points in favor of promoting printing, wherever modernity was struggling to take hold. If the Reformation was in favor of a large-scale effort of education, which implied reading, this was not held against it either by an enlightened prince of Moldavia such as Dimitrie Cantemir, or by a patriarch of the Church of Antioch like Athanasios Dabbās. The following remarks of Frédéric Barbier illuminate this discussion:

La doctrine réformée se donne donc aussi à lire à travers les mutations dans l'ordre des livres. Les idées développées à Wittenberg synthétisent une réflexion d'ordre théologique et politique, et donnent un rôle central au couple éducation / lecture: même en dehors de sa dimension chrétienne, la qualité de la formation relève de l'intérêt public et passe par la fondation et l'entretien de bibliothèques mises au service des collectivités.<sup>215</sup>

In Wallachia, Athanasios Dabbās experienced the period of determined work towards the adoption of Romanian as the liturgical language of the church and the faithful. While a guest of the court, he saw how church texts were being translated and printed, and the access of every Christian to the profound spiritual meanings of the Divine Liturgy was becoming easier for everyone. This particular point featured among the reasons for Dabbās's return to Bucharest after his first visit around 1698. To read in Dabbās's attitude an influence of Protestant thinking is to ignore the reality of his long sojourns in Wallachia, in an Orthodox milieu where the life and works of the Byzantine fathers of the church were still present as spiritual and inspirational models. And this, not only for the upper clergy or monastic communities, but for every Christian man and woman.

The books that Athanasios Dabbās printed in Aleppo were intended to be presented to parish churches and institutions, to be used by bishops and serving priests, unlike other books printed for the Levantine Christians (especially those coming from Rome, Paris, or London), which were mostly intended for sale.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Frédéric Barbier, "L'éthique luthérienne et les bibliothèques (1517–1572)", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 84, 2022, 2, p. 247.

<sup>216</sup> Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie*, p. 149; Nasrallah, "Les imprimeries melchites au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", p. 233.

The connection between the Arabic-text books printed in Wallachia in 1701–1702 and those produced soon after in Aleppo has been discussed ever since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Émile Picot described Antim the Iberian's books in his article “Notice biographique et bibliographique sur l'imprimeur Anthime d'Ivir, Métropolitain de Valachie”. The identity between the Arabic type used in Snagov and Bucharest and that used at the Aleppo press was first suggested by Schnurrer, who was later supported by Cyril Charon<sup>217</sup> and Georg Graf.<sup>218</sup> Without having surveyed these books in depth, Dabbās and Raššū repeat the improbable theory that the Arabic type could not be manufactured in Aleppo because of unsurmountable technical difficulties. Therefore, they express their definite opinion that the type must have come from Wallachia.<sup>219</sup>

However, having studied the type of the two books printed in Snagov and Bucharest and compared them to those of the Aleppo Gospel of 1706 and the *Holy Book of the Prophecies* printed in 1708, Picot concluded:

Ayant été assez heureux pour trouver à la Bibliothèque du roi ce Bréviaire grec et arabe de Bucharest, dont les caractères sont incontestablement les mêmes que ceux du *Missal*, et pour recevoir d'Alep, par la complaisance du consul général de France, M. Rousseau, deux des livres arabes imprimés en cette ville, savoir: l'*Evangeliarium* de 1706 [...] et le *Liber Prophetiarum* de 1708 [...], je puis assurer que les caractères d'Alep sont totalement différents de ceux de Bucharest et leur sont fort inférieurs [...].<sup>220</sup>

Silvestre de Sacy, Louis Cheikho and, several decades later, Miroslav Krek<sup>221</sup> and Basile Aggoula also noticed considerable differences between the type of Snagov and Bucharest and that of Aleppo. The opinion that the type used in Dabbās's press was that created by Antim, supported by some historians of early printing in Romania who were not acquainted with the Arabic language and script, was recently reconsidered as part of the research of the corpus surveyed by the TYPARABIC project team in Bucharest. By simply placing a page of the Snagov book beside one of a book printed at the Aleppo press in 1706, the differences of type are clearly discernable. The appearance of the Aleppo type is visibly inferior to the one created by Antim, both technically and aesthetically.

<sup>217</sup> “Les autres livres imprimés, soit en Valachie, soit à Alep, avec les caractères fondus en Valachie”, cf. Korolevskij, “Antioche”, col. 692. See also Dabbās, “Istoria patriarhilor Antiochiei – *Synopsis peri ton hagiotaion patriarchon Antiocheias*”, p. 169.

<sup>218</sup> Graf, *GICAL* I, p. 117.

<sup>219</sup> Dabbās and Raššū, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibā'a al-'arabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, p. 68–73.

<sup>220</sup> Picot, “Notice biographique et bibliographique sur l'imprimeur Anthime d'Ivir”, p. 544.

<sup>221</sup> Miroslav Krek, *Typographia Arabica: The Development of Arabic Printing as Illustrated by Arabic Type Specimens. Exhibition Catalogue*, Waltham, 1971, p. 27, 31.



In 1982, Aggoula declared with certainty: “Les caractères d’Alep qui se rapprochent de ceux de l’*Horologion* imprimé à Bucarest en 1702, c’est-à-dire de ceux d’Anthimos, diffèrent largement. Ils sont dessinés dans la ville-même par des calligraphes autochtones.”<sup>222</sup>

Indeed, as for the Aleppo type, it is evident that the characters belonged to several sets, with those first used in 1706 of a lower quality than the ones used in Snagov and Bucharest. Two other Arabic typesets used later, from 1707 on, imitate the *nashī* script and look more gracious and balanced. The titles are printed either in a larger type or with carved woodblocks, a technique imported from the Wallachian presses.<sup>223</sup>

Dabbās seems to have taken with him, when leaving Bucharest, neither punches nor matrices for manufacturing Arabic type, but only a complete set of somewhat used type, which accounts for the manufacture of a few new characters, to secure a complete usable set. Thus, a combination of old (Wallachian) and new (Aleppo) types were used in printing the first books, while after 1707 an entirely new set became available, owing to the skillful work of the local apprentices. In his list of the books that he had bought in Aleppo and brought to Germany, now in the University Library of Gotha, Seetzen states that, since these printed books had an unattractive appearance, they did not sell much and, therefore, new type was procured from Bucharest in Wallachia and two printers were brought over who mastered the art of bookbinding.<sup>224</sup> Seetzen drew his conclusions based on four books printed by Dabbās, recorded in the beginning of his list, which he composed while he was still residing in Aleppo, having arrived there in November 1803.<sup>225</sup>

Dagmar Glass and Geoffrey Roper cite two other sources, Suhayl al-Malādī<sup>226</sup> and the Aleppine scholar [Yūsuf al-Ṣā’iḡ] al-Būlusī, a historian of the Church of

<sup>222</sup> Aggoula, “Le livre libanais de 1585 à 1900”, p. 300.

<sup>223</sup> See Nasrallah’s comments in *L’imprimerie au Liban*, p. 21.

<sup>224</sup> “Da diese gedruckten Werke, wegen ihres wenig empfehlenden Aeusseren, nur wenig Absatz fanden: so verschaffte man sich neue Lettern von Bukurescht in der Wallachey, und ließ zu welche die Buchbinderkunst verstanden [...]”; see Ulrich J. Seetzen, “Nachricht von den in der Levante befindlichen Buchdruckereyen von U. J. Seetzen in Haleb 1805”, *Intelligenzblatt der Jenaischen Allgem. Literatur-Zeitung*, 1805, 76, col. 643.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 199. Book titles were printed in the German journal in Arabic script, with mistakes accountable either to Seetzen’s manuscript, or to the press-workers’ poor knowledge of this language (if any at all).

<sup>226</sup> Suhayl al-Malādī, *Al-ṭibā’a wa-l-ṣaḥāfa fī Ḥalab*, Damascus, 1996. Here, the Aleppo press of Athanasius Dabbās is discussed on p. 18-20, repeating information gleaned from the same old sources: Levenq, Graf, Charon, Cheikho, Schnurrer, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, etc.

Antioch, who asserted that ‘Abdallāh Zāḥir made the type of Dabbās’s press in Aleppo from the start.<sup>227</sup> The metropolitan of Aleppo did not like the result, so he asked the Maronite monk Gabriel Farḥāt, who travelled to Rome in 1711–1712, to bring back a complete Arabic cast type set and other printing implements.

For the time being, before an in-depth comparison of all the books in the TYPARABIC corpus project is complete, the most plausible explanation is that Athanasios Dabbās brought with him to Aleppo the Arabic type cast by Antim the Iberian and then a less skilled engraver, perhaps ‘Abdallāh Zāḥir, used them as a model to cast a new, less beautiful set of types. The printing technology in Dabbās’s press did not reach the level of performance that he had witnessed while working in the Wallachian presses. As noted by de Sacy based on the few Arabic books that he surveyed, in Aleppo “the printing was done in almost dry conditions, on poorly dampened sheets”.<sup>228</sup>

An important element escaped the historians of early printing in the East: the comparison of the books printed by Antim the Iberian in Greek, Slavonic, and Arabic demonstrates that engraving matrices and woodcuts created at Wallachian presses migrated to Ottoman Syria. Thus, the coat of arms of Wallachia in the Aleppo Psalter of 1706 (Fig. 9) is a slightly modified version of that of *The Orthodox Confession* of 1699 (Snagov) (Fig. 10), reprinted in the Book of the Divine Liturgies of 1701 (Snagov) (Fig. 11), and the New Testament of 1703 (Bucharest).<sup>229</sup> In the Greek and Arabic Book of the Divine Liturgies of 1701, the icon of Saint Basil the Great (Fig. 12) is identical to the one created in 1698 by the monk Dimitrios on a model of 1652 (before Antim’s printing activity started) and signed in Greek characters. This woodcut would be used for the Book of Divine Liturgies of Buzău (1702) (Fig. 13), Râmnic (1706), and Târgoviște (1713). Some of the icons present in the second book printed in Aleppo, the Gospel (1706), are inspired from Antim’s. In 1694, shortly after he moved to the Monastery of Snagov, Antim opened there a school for engravers and printers where, among others, Gheorghe Radovici, Dionisie Floru, and Mihail Ștefan received their professional training. Among the fourteen books printed at Snagov, one bears the signature of Mihail Ștefan and another, that of Gheorghe Radovici.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>227</sup> Glass and Roper, “Arabic Book and Newspaper Printing in the Arab World”, p. 179. Here, the two Arab historians’ opinion is repeated, that “these Aleppo types were manufactured in the city itself and were most likely cut from wood by the Syrian ‘Abdallāh az-Zāḥir”, which may suggest that in Aleppo printing was done at first with woodcuts (block printing), which was not the case.

<sup>228</sup> Pierre-Claude-François Daonou (ed.), *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, Paris, 1842, t. I, p. 286.

<sup>229</sup> Ana Andreescu, *Cartea românească în veacul al XVIII-lea*, Bucharest, 2004, p. 22, 24.

<sup>230</sup> The vast and fascinating domain of engravings in the early printed books of the Romanian

While preparing to transfer his press to Râmnic, in his new function as bishop of this diocese, Antim presented Athanasios Dabbās with woodcuts of frontispieces and text borders, floral decorations, and vignettes from his old press, which adorn the books printed in Aleppo. The origin of the Greek type in the Aleppo books was never addressed: for example, in the *Oktoechos* of 1711. Was there any Greek type included in Antim's gift of printing tools? Antim often presented other printers with material created by him or in his presses. For example, he manufactured new typographic implements for the press founded at the request of the Patriarch Chrysanthos Notaras at the Monastery of Saint Sava in Bucharest.<sup>231</sup> The journey of models and woodcuts of icons of saints between typographic workshops of various countries was a reality in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Engravings from Kyiv and L'viv travelled to Govora and Câmpulung in Wallachia, as Gabriel Ștrempel first explained in his classic work *Romanian-Russian Relations in the Field of Printing*.<sup>232</sup> Master printers and apprentices who journeyed from Kyiv to Iași and Târgoviște, from Montenegro to Wallachia, from Bucharest to the Holy Land and Greater Syria carried with them printing knowhow, technical expertise, editorial competencies, and tools: woodcuts, matrices, punches, type, etc.<sup>233</sup>

A thorough survey of the visual art elements in the Arabic books printed in Wallachia and Greater Syria in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is under way within the TYPARABIC project developed in Bucharest. Three art historians – Oana Iacubovschi (Romania), Alina Kondratiuk (Ukraine), and Fr Charbel Nassif (Lebanon) – are currently inventorying and describing together the iconography and ornaments of the Arabic books included in the project corpus (48 titles). The outcomes of their research will become available to the academic public in printed works and

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Principalities and neighboring countries has been comprehensively surveyed by Oana Dimitriu (B.A.R. in Bucharest) in her PhD thesis, which she is preparing for publication under the aegis of the Institute for South-East European Studies in Bucharest (with a great number of illustrations).

**231** The press at the Monastery of Saint Sava in Bucharest was primarily aimed to produce Greek theological and polemical books necessary for counteracting the Latin proselytism in the Holy Land. See Simedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească în anii 1740–1750”, p. 859–860; Chițulescu (coord. ed.), *Antim Ivireanul. Opera tipografică*, p. 29.

**232** Gabriel Ștrempel, *Relații româno-ruse în lumina tiparului*, Bucharest, 1956, especially p. 10–11.

**233** Hilary Kilpatrick notes: “Printers were often nomadic. They followed itineraries from Venice to Montenegro and Serbia, from Serbia to Wallachia, from Wallachia to Transylvania, from Muscovy to Lithuania and Ukraine, from Ukraine to the Romanian principalities, even, in Metaxas's case, from England to Constantinople”; see Hilary Kilpatrick, “From Venice to Aleppo: Early Printing of Scriptures in the Orthodox World”, *Chronos*, 2014, 30, p. 49–50. This situation was not limited to a particular ethnic group: Gershom Soncino wandered continuously, opening printing workshops in Soncino, Casamaggiore, Brescia, Barco, Fano, Pesaro, Ortona, Rimini, and Cesena in Italy, then in Salonica and Constantinople, where he died in 1534.

a database in Open Access before the end of the project term in 2026. This effort has recently become possible due to the ERC Advanced Grant that the TYPARABIC project secured, which will allow the team members access to more collections and libraries that hold copies of these books, scattered in many countries.

It is not out of the question to imagine that Antim the Iberian sent an apprentice from his Bucharest press to Syria. The Romanian historian Alexandru Papadopol-Calimach maintained with certainty that before sending one of his best disciples to Georgia, Antim sent an apprentice of his to work at the Aleppo press.<sup>234</sup> In 1709, Mihail Ștefan reached Tbilisi in Georgia, carrying printing tools and implements manufactured in Wallachia by his master Antim the Iberian. Was he sent beforehand to Syria, to help install the Arabic press of Aleppo and cast new Arabic type? Although this belongs to another research path, its relevance in painting the general picture of Antim's willingness and exertion in helping the Christians of the Middle East, especially his people in Georgia, persuaded me to present in *Addenda I* the life and works of this most cherished apprentice, Mihail Ștefan (or Iștvanovici). Again, these Christian books were freely distributed to the clergy and reached the devout readership as presents from the king and patriarch, a gift made possible by Antim, the brilliant Georgian-born printer, and his worthy disciple Mikhael Stepaneshvili (as the Georgians named him).

The accompanying texts of several books printed in the Romanian Principalities reveal that one of the Arab apprentices who travelled to Bucharest together with Athanasios Dabbās was the monk Miḥā'il of Kūrat al-Ḍahab (near Tripoli, Lebanon), named by some authors Bizzī (Ar. 'Miḥā'il Bizzī rāhib'). Ordained a hieromonk by Dabbās, he apparently worked at the Wallachian presses where Arabic books were produced, the only Arab apprentice with continuity in the printing activity.<sup>235</sup> He also worked as a printer under the direction of Sylvester, the Patriarch of Antioch, and may even have returned years later to Bucharest, accompanying that patriarch alongside another apprentice, the *šammās* Ğirġis al-Ḥalabī (deacon George of Aleppo).

Regarding the name and identity of the monk Miḥā'il, conflicting opinions were expressed in the 1980s in the academic circles. First, his Arabic name was transliterated differently by various historians: Bazzī, Bizzī, or Bezi. The formula ميخائيل بزي راهب placed at the end of several books printed in Iași was read in multiple ways: *der Mönsch Michael Bazzī* by Georg Graf,<sup>236</sup> *Editore Michaele Bezi*

<sup>234</sup> Papadopol-Calimach, "Un episod din istoria tipografiei în România", p. 150.

<sup>235</sup> Dabbās and Raššū, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibā'a al-'arabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, p. 122; Haddad, "La correspondance de Trābulsi", p. 276.

<sup>236</sup> Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 141.

*Monacho* by an anonymous author in a note on the copy of the *Risāla muḥtaṣara fī l-radd ‘alā ‘adam ḡalaṭ bābāwāt Rūmiya* (Iași, 1746) at the B.A.R. Bucharest, *Mihail Bezi* and *Michel Démètre Bezi* by Dan Simonescu<sup>237</sup> and, having consulted the Syrian priest Emil Murakade, *le moine Michel Démètre* and *Michel Bezi*, by the same Simonescu.<sup>238</sup> Virgil Căndea repeated the reading of Georg Graf, whom he trusted completely, as he was (and still is) acknowledged as a great authority on Christian Arabic literature.<sup>239</sup> Joseph Nasrallah held a different opinion: “Le texte arabe porte *Miḥā’il bi-zaï rāheb* = Michel, moine par l’habit”.<sup>240</sup> Indeed, *bi-zayy rāheb*, “in the habit of a monk”, is an expression of humility that copyists often added to their names when signing their work in manuscripts colophons.<sup>241</sup>

It is worth mentioning that Joseph Nasrallah, who presented at first as decisive the role of the Syrian and Lebanese Catholics, supported by the Church of Rome, in the transfer of the printing technology to the Ottoman provinces, finally admitted the value of the pioneering activity of Athanasios Dabbās.

Le patriarche melkite Athanase Dabbās (1647–1724) entretenait depuis 1685 d’excellentes relations avec Constantin Brancoveanu, voïvode de la Valachie. Il intéressa le prince au sort de ses prêtres d’Orient qui manquaient de livres pour la récitation de leur office ou pour l’accomplissement de leurs charges pastorales. Sur ses instances<sup>242</sup> le prince fit installer à Sinagovo [sic], en Valachie, une imprimerie arabe qui édita plusieurs livres de liturgie. Lorsqu’en 1704 Athanase regagna la Syrie,<sup>243</sup> il tint à installer une imprimerie dans sa ville patriarcale, Alep. L’initiative de cette création revient certainement au seul patriarche; personne n’émet un doute à ce sujet. Quant à l’origine de l’imprimerie, elle est discutée.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>237</sup> Simonescu, “Impression de livres arabes et karamanlis”, p. 63, 65, 74–75.

<sup>238</sup> Simonescu and Muracade, “Tipar românesc pentru arabi în secolul al XVIII-lea”, p. 8, 26.

<sup>239</sup> Căndea, “Une politique culturelle commune roumano-arabe dans la première moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, p. 54; Căndea, “Dès 1701: Dialogue roumanolibanais par le livre et l’imprimerie”, p. 288.

<sup>240</sup> After he first included Virgil Căndea in a group of authors of ‘*bèvues cocasses*’ (‘funny blunders’), in the company of Fr Ignace ‘Abdo Ḥalife, [Giuseppe] Cozza-Luzi (abbot of the Basilian monastery of Grottaferrata near Rome), [Jean-Baptiste] Chabot, and G[ustav] Bickell, all guilty of similar blunders, which he listed in the footnote 157 in *HMLÉM* IV.2, on p. 89, Nasrallah soon admitted that the mistake originated in Graf’s *GCAL*, III, p. 141, line 5 (*HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 221, n. 234).

<sup>241</sup> The issue is debatable, since in Ottoman Syria (as well as today) there was a family called Bizzī. For example, Vincent Mistrih mentions a copyist active around 1859, called “Mikhā’il Bizzī, moine du Monastère Général du Balamand, de la ville de Lattakieh, fils du prêtre Samuel Istibrian”; cf. Vincent Mistrih, “Notes sur une collection privée de manuscrits arabes-chrétiens en Syrie”, *Studia Christiana Orientalia. Collectanea*, 23, 1990, 2, p. 101.

<sup>242</sup> Probably, “insistances.”

<sup>243</sup> Actually, in 1705. He travelled to Cyprus in 1704, after leaving Bucharest.

<sup>244</sup> Nasrallah, *L’imprimerie au Liban*, p. 17.

However, Wahid Gdoura is quite clear in his *Conclusion*:

Les imprimeurs d'Alep eurent le mérite d'implanter la première typographie arabe au Proche-Orient des 1706. [...] Elle servit de modèle pour l'imprimerie de Shuaïr et de Beyrouth et forma les imprimeurs et les graveurs qui allèrent travailler au Mont-Liban. L'art d'imprimer obtint le droit de cité en Syrie grâce à elle.<sup>245</sup>

The question of the origin of the printing implements used in Aleppo can receive a single answer today: the Arabic type and tools used by Antim and Athanasios Dabbās in printing two books in Wallachia in 1701 and 1702 were taken to Aleppo, where it was partially used as such, and partially replaced with new type for the first books printed in 1706. In 1707, new fonts were manufactured, but all the other typographic items presented by Antim, less easy to reproduce, were still used: frontispieces, vignettes, text borders, floral decorations. They became models for the apprentices of the Aleppo press and especially for 'Abdallāh Zāḥir.

The need for more copies of the first books printed by Dabbās remained strong after he ceased his printing activities. In 1716, Cyril V, the patriarch of Antioch, asked the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide for a reprint of the Book of the Divine Liturgies of 1701 and the Horologion of 1702, as they were required by the local clergy. He even offered to cover the costs of their reedition. His request received no answer.<sup>246</sup>

By printing in Wallachia with Arabic script the first two Arabic books for the Christians attached to the Church of Antioch, which were then widely distributed in the Ottoman provinces of the Middle East, Athanasios Dabbās opened the path for a transfer of the art of printing to the East. His endeavor was also instrumental in establishing Arabic as *the* liturgical language in the Church of Antioch and spreading standard versions of the chief liturgical texts of the Arabic-speaking Christians.

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<sup>245</sup> Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie*, p. 152–153.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.