

5 The Second Transfer of Printing Expertise to Greater Syria

5.1 Arabic Type Made in Bucharest: A ‘Secret Weapon’ of the Antiochian Orthodox

On the reasons for Patriarch Sylvester’s travels to the Romanian Principalities, we have information from that period both in Romanian sources and an unedited Arabic one: the collection of letters exchanged by the deacon Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, the patriarch’s secretary, with clerics and scholars of the Church of Antioch. From the patriarch’s letters, Mūsā selected some that were copied, by him and by others, to form the first section (f. 4r–52r) of a miscellany, MS no. 9/22, preserved today in the library of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus (formerly in Homs). The manuscript comprises several other Arabic texts on various topics, some Christian and some Islamic: educational stories, the *Life of Saint Simon the Stylite* by Theodoret of Cyrrihus, a brief story on the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a homily for the Feast of Transfiguration, an incomplete chronicle of the Omayyad and Abbasid caliphs, medical recipes, etc.¹ The manuscript was surveyed in 1968 by Rachid Haddad, who published a commentary on this section in a volume dedicated in 2006 to Mgr. Joseph Nasrallah, based on a selection of passages of the original manuscript, which he translated into French for this purpose.² Haddad arranged the letters in sections, according to the sender³. He principally followed Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī’s entourage and connections and mentioned many correspondents and events in Damascus, Tripoli, and Acre (Ar. ‘Akkā). MS nr. 9/22 also contains abundant information on Patriarch Sylvester’s activities in the Romanian Principalities and especially on his interest in the Wallachian and Moldavian printing. Having acquired in 2018 a digital copy of this section of the manuscript (97 pages – high-quality scans), I was able to comment on the content of the letters based on their original Arabic version, alongside Rachid Haddad’s excellent commentary of them.

¹ See the description in Dolabani, Lavenant, Brock and Samir (eds.), “Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Patriarcat Syrien Orthodoxe à Homs (auj. à Damas)”, p. 597.

² Haddad, “La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī”, p. 257–288. Haddad presented some of the information provided in these letters in volume IV.2 of *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l’église melchite du V^{ème} au XX^{ème} siècle (HMLÉM)*, to which he substantially contributed.

³ He referred to page numbers in a different system than the actual numbering of the manuscript.

Mūsā Nawfal Ṭrābulṣī (‘from Tripoli’, Lebanon) was a deacon of the Church of Antioch and secretary of the Patriarch Sylvester, working at the latter’s residence in Damascus. Some said that he was a relative of Patriarch Sylvester on the male line of the family, which would mean that Sylvester had family in Tripoli.⁴ Mūsā’s letters, copied by five different hands, include some that the patriarch or he himself received from friends and acquaintances, and some replies, all dated between 1732 and 1787, going beyond the period of Sylvester’s term (he died in 1766). Mūsā’s selection was directed by the literary quality of the messages: their authors were all acknowledged Arabic-speaking scholars who wrote elegantly, using rhymed and rhythmized prose (*sağ*), according to the oriental literary taste of the 18th century. Mūsā wished to keep a copy of the letters that were interesting for their literary style and the connections they reflected within the upper clergy, as well as with his closest friends, Syrian scholars with elaborate writing skills. Date and signature are often missing, and letters end with the expression *wa-bāqī l-qawl*, the Arabic version of *et cetera*. Rich in information about the Patriarch Sylvester and his entourage, these letters also provide details of a personal nature, such as the fact that he was “moody and suspicious”.⁵

Mūsā’s most cherished correspondent was the Syrian Yūsuf Mark, also born in Tripoli (d. ca. 1773). *Protosyncellos* of the Patriarchate of Antioch, Mark was an apprentice and spiritual son of the Patriarch Sylvester, whose rejection of the Catholics’ proselytism he embraced.⁶ Among others, he wrote an epistle against the papal primacy, *Collection of Chapters on the Battle against Madness with the Help of Light*.⁷ A letter from Yūsuf Mark to Mūsā on August 21, 1737, begins with two verses about friendship, while another, on June 29, 1740, begins with these verses: *Šifā al-qulūb / liqā al-maḥbūb*, “Your heart is healed/ when you meet your friend”. Yūsuf Mark’s letters number thirty-one in all, most of them addressed to Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, and many from Bucharest.

Another purpose was also considered when copying these particular letters: both Yūsuf and Mūsā taught Classical Arabic to children born in Greek Orthodox families. Yūsuf first taught in Lattakia in 1730–1740, to support his family. In 1742, after he was ordained a priest and moved to Tripoli, he wrote to Mūsā that he was teaching Arabic to some Christian children at the metropolitan residence, supervised by the Patriarch Sylvester, who took care of his salary from the funds

⁴ Haddad, “La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī”, p. 281.

⁵ Habib Ibrahim (CEDRAC, Beirut) is currently studying Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī’s letters, aiming to publish a commented translation.

⁶ *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 216.

⁷ Graf, *GAL* III, p. 148; *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 216–217.

of the diocese. He reports in a letter sent from Bucharest in 1747: “His Holiness [...] entrusted Mark with four Wallachian children to whom he is teaching the Arabic grammar *al-ʿAğurrūmiyya*”.⁸ Until Yūsuf Mark arrived, Mūsā’s brother Buṭros had been responsible for the education of the Wallachian pupils; but after he arrived, four of the most diligent of them were entrusted to him. According to Rachid Haddad,

En Roumanie, on assiste, à cette occasion, à un échange culturel important. D’une part, Yūsuf Mark et le diacre Parthenios fréquentent les écoles roumaines; d’autre part, des jeunes Roumains sont poussés vers des études arabes. C’est dans ce but, sans doute, que le Patriarche tenait à la présence de Mark.⁹

Teaching Greek and Arabic is a recurrent topic in the letters copied under Mūsā’s supervision. The Antiochian church leaders, as well as those of Wallachia, wanted young Christians to learn foreign languages that would be useful to them in their future as servants of the church. As part of their Arabic education, children were required to copy simple texts. This is probably the reason why sometimes the writing is shaky, uncertain or faulty. On ff. 8v–9v, for example, a letter of December 1743 is copied, uncompleted, with two blank pages at the end. This is a letter sent by Yūsuf Mark to Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī from Damascus, to let him know that the Patriarch Sylvester had left for Moldavia, where the weather was too cold for him to accompany His Holiness, much to Yūsuf’s regret. A section of a letter dated July 29, 1748, seems to have been copied by a beginner in the art of Arabic script, who left an entire phrase out at the end and copied it later, clumsily, in the margin. Another letter sent by Yūsuf to Mūsā in early October 1748 is copied unevenly, again, most likely by a pupil.

The letters exchanged by Yūsuf Mark and Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī reflect the high esteem that the Patriarch Sylvester enjoyed in the Romanian Principalities and

⁸ The Maghrebi grammarian Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Sanhaḡī (1273–1323), also known as Ibn al-ʿAğurrūm, ‘the Dervish’, was the author of a Classical Arabic manual called *Muqaddimat al-ʿAğurrūmiyya* (*Preliminary Discourse*), widely used in the Middle East for centuries. It was printed at the Būlāq press in Cairo in many editions; see B. Dorn and R. Rost, *Catalogue des manuscrits et xylographes orientaux de la Bibliothèque impériale publique de St. Pétersbourg*, Saint Petersburg, 1852, p. 169–170 (MS CLXXIX). On the popularity of *Al-ʿAğurrūmiyya* in the Christian Arabic-speaking communities (more precisely, among the Greek Catholics), see Walbiner, “Monastic Reading and Learning in Eighteenth-Century Bilād al-Šām”, p. 475. As I mentioned above, it was the Maronite bishop Germanos Farḡāt who first composed a grammar of the Arabic language, *Baḡt al-maṭālib*, where, unlike in Muslim handbooks, passages from Christian texts were the basis for teaching Arabic.

⁹ Haddad, “La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī”, p. 275.

his efforts to obtain the printing of Christian books in Arabic. While in Iași and Bucharest, he was often visited by boyars and notables, men and women who came to ask for his blessing and prayers. Both in Moldavia and Wallachia, princes showed him deep respect and affection. On Sundays and feast days, they invited him to serve the Divine Liturgy wherever they were present – at court or travelling across the country. Besides these events that he witnessed himself, Mark also relays a story told to him by a local. When the Patriarch arrived in Wallachia, the country was under a dreadful invasion of locusts. The voivod asked him to bless water and they sprinkled all the places that the locusts had covered. Spread all over the place for one month, the holy water miraculously drove away the pest and succeeded in ridding the entire country of them. Afterwards, the Wallachians believed even more that the Patriarch's prayers worked.

An explanation for the fact that early in 1747, not long after the Patriarch Sylvester's printing activity had started at the Monastery of Saint Sava in Iași, it ceased for good, is suggested in letters of MS no. 9/22: the Arabic type used there was completely worn out after printing several books in large print runs. On November 21, 1747, Mūsā Ṭrabulsī replied to his friend Yūsuf Mark, who was at the time at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest where the patriarch had been residing for some time, intent on securing a new set of Arabic type. According to Mūsā, the Syrian typographer Ğirġis Abū Ša'r, who had been well paid both by the Patriarch and by his lordship the Prince Ioan Mavrocordat, had cast lead types for a new Arabic set, but they were larger than the old ones used in Iași. The patriarch was not satisfied with this new set of type manufactured in Bucharest and, in October 1746, he left to look for Arabic type in Constantinople. His visits there are documented over several years of his pastoral rule. In his above-mentioned article of 2022, Archim. Policarp Chițulescu presents proof that the Patriarch Sylvester was in the Ottoman capital in 1748 and 1749.¹⁰

In Istanbul, Ibrahim Müteferrika had been printing with Arabic type since 1729 Turkish scientific books on geography, language, and state policy. By 1743, he had printed seventeen titles in 500 to 1,000 copies each. In 1743, he retired from the workshop on account of his poor health,¹¹ but the printing activity there did not stop all at once. The Patriarch Sylvester thought that perhaps he could find new Arabic type in Constantinople. It is not unlikely that even the first Arabic type-font had been obtained from the Ottoman capital.¹² Once acquired, the type

¹⁰ Chițulescu, "Le patriarche Sylvestre d'Antioche et son disciple spirituel Constantin César Dapontes et l'histoire de leurs icônes", p. 164.

¹¹ He died two years later, in 1745, and was buried in the Okmeydanı cemetery.

¹² There is no similarity, as far as I can ascertain, between the Müteferrika and the Iași typefaces.

would have been taken to Syria, away from the center of the Sultan's authority and the danger of being accused of conspiracy.

Before leaving Bucharest, the Patriarch Sylvester entrusted the management of the emerging printing press of Saint Spyridon Monastery to Yūsuf Mark. Yūsuf informed Mūsā in several letters of 1748 that the Patriarch had finished his affairs in 'these countries' (i.e., the Romanian Principalities) and that his lordship Grigore Bey would see him upon his departure the third day after the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God (i.e., on August 18).¹³

The deacon Yūsuf reached Bucharest in 1747, with some delay, and he stayed there until 1750, i.e., for nearly three years. He reported that upon his arrival he found the Patriarch Sylvester at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon, occupied with making Arabic type.¹⁴ Yūsuf informed his friend that he would stay on at Saint Spyridon after the patriarch left for Constantinople,¹⁵ as the monastery had recently been granted as a *metochion* by Constantin Mavrocordat, the prince of Wallachia, to the Patriarchate of Antioch.¹⁶ In another letter, Mark names other residents of the monastery in Bucharest: Miḥā'il of Kūrat al-Ḍahab (Lebanon), to whom he had referred in a previous letter as being a disciple of Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, the deacon Parthenios of Adana, kyr Makarios, the bishop of Akhaltsikhe in Georgia,¹⁷ and a Romanian servant. The deacon Theophanes, who had been ordained a priest, was the hegumen of the monastery.

According to his report to Mūsā, Yūsuf Mark was preparing to cast Arabic type, so that the press would be ready to work after Easter; he was doing his best so that the press would turn out as well as possible, hoping that it would be installed in a safe place, where it would work undisturbed.¹⁸ Therefore, the task that Yūsuf had received from the Patriarch Sylvester was to assimilate as much knowledge as possible from the Bucharest printers to become capable of later installing in Syria an Arabic press in Syria, like the one founded by the Patriarch

¹³ This information is presented in a fragment of a letter dated July 29, 1748 (f. 20r).

¹⁴ Letter to Mūsā, dated November 21, 1747 (f. 21r).

¹⁵ In the beginning of October 1748 (ff. 38r-v).

¹⁶ In the Arabic text: *waqf*, a word equally used by Muslims and Christians when referring to donations and bequests to religious establishments.

¹⁷ Therefore, around 1747–1748 the Georgian bishop of Akhaltsikhe, Makarios, lived in the Antiochian community settled at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest. The see of Akhaltsikhe was one of the Georgian sees under the authority of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch. Called in Turkish Ahıska, this city lies on the road linking Tbilisi to Batumi, 15 km from the present-day border between Turkey and Georgia. See Haddad, "La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī", p. 276, n. 20; *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 26 (where the city is not identified).

¹⁸ MS no. 9/22, ff. 20r-v.

Athanasios III in Aleppo. An additional point in support of this premise is the presence at the Saint Spyridon Monastery of the hieromonk Miḥā'il Bizzī of Kūrat al-Dahab, who had been a young apprentice in Dabbās's printing press. There is a suggestion in some letters that Patriarch Sylvester strongly insisted on his return to Bucharest, where he had worked in Antim the Iberian's workshop.

The letters sent in 1732–1777 by Sophronios of Kilis (*al-Kilisli*, c. 1700–1780) to several correspondents, including Patriarch Sylvester and Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, whom he calls 'his spiritual son', are a useful source not only for the topic that I am addressing here, but also for anyone interested in the history of the Eastern Christians. A deacon in Aleppo, Sophronios was ordained to the priesthood in March 1741, became the secretary of the Patriarch Sylvester, and then, in November, a bishop of Acre.¹⁹ Sophronios refused appointment to the Antiochian see, but he accepted in 1771 to be elected Patriarch of Jerusalem. His term lasted until December 24, 1774, when he was elected Patriarch of Constantinople as Sophronios II. From this position, he was being called to solve the conflicts that emerged in the Church of Antioch, as reflected in the correspondence discussed here. In a letter dated October 5, 1777, the answer to a letter addressed to his old friend Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, Sophronios promised to inform the Holy Synod about the Antiochian Christians' discontent with their patriarch, Daniel of Chios, and to support their point of view. However, his endeavors did not succeed.²⁰

Born in the Arab-Turkish milieu north of Aleppo,²¹ Sophronios knew Arabic and Turkish from childhood, and, due to the education he had received in his Orthodox family, he also knew Modern Greek. Nevertheless, he had a fervent desire to learn Ancient Greek. With this aim in mind, he decided to leave for Constantinople, writing to the Patriarch Sylvester on January 30, 1732: "Pray God for me, so that He helps me acquire the knowledge of Greek."

Among the patriarchs and bishops of the Church of Antioch there were many Greeks born in Constantinople, Chios, or Cyprus;²² in Levantine ecclesiastic circles, in the first half of the 17th century, Greek was still an important language of

¹⁹ For his life and works see, among other sources, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 95–99; Haddad, "La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī", pp. 260–269.

²⁰ Haddad, "La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī", p. 269, explains this by the autonomy that the Eastern Patriarchates enjoyed at the time, in relation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople.

²¹ Kilis (Ar. *Killiz*) is located on the border between Syria and Turkey, close to Gaziantep and Antakya.

²² Walbiner, "Bishops and Metropolitans of the Antiochian Patriarchate in the 17th Century", *ARAM*, 9–10 (1997–1998), 1998, p. 577–587; Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "The relations between the Greek Orthodox of Syria and Cyprus in the 17th and 18th Centuries", *Chronos*, 16, 2007, p. 113–128.

culture and communication. To learn Classical Greek was one of the purposes of Levantines who left for Constantinople, and later for Bucharest and Iași, aiming to take courses at the Princely Academies (in Bucharest after 1694, in Iași after 1707). The Eastern Church leaders, and among them the Patriarch of Jerusalem Chrysanthos Notaras (1707–1731), learned or taught there, and composed the curricula of these high colleges, which soon became famous and sought after.²³ In 1704, Patriarch Dositheos II Notaras, eager to improve the education of the clergy and common people of the Holy Land, founded, with money granted by the princes of the Romanian lands born in the Phanar neighborhood of Istanbul and from wealthy people there, several schools in Jerusalem, Ramla, and Kerak, in Gaza, etc. These schools offered Greek and Arabic courses based on a syllabus conceived by the Patriarch Dositheos.²⁴

On January 5, 1735, Sophronios asked Nektarios, the metropolitan of Tripoli, to take care of the works that he had left with him, his translations from Greek to Arabic, “lest they are lost, and I need to translate them a second time” (f. 7v). In August 1747,²⁵ Sophronios, bishop of Acre at the time, wrote to Mūsā that he wished he had the time and leisure to translate a book of Orthodox apologetics (*fī al-mahāmāt ‘an al-‘imān al-mustaqīm*), which he would then give to his Holiness the Patriarch [Sylvester] for the new printing press that he had recently established. He had heard about it from their common friend Haḡḡ Miḡā’il Ṭūmā, the Patriarch’s secretary, who praised Mūsā highly for his exemplary service to the Apostolic see of Antioch, which, in his words, saved the vicar of the metropolitan of Damascus half the trouble.

In the second quarter of the 18th century, the preoccupation of the leaders of the Antiochian Church with countering the Catholics’ theses was manifested through the translation of several polemical works from Greek into Arabic and their aspiration to print these new versions. A letter dated April 1740 refers to Sophronios’s efforts to translate soul-enriching books and to his joint work with Elias Faḡr of Tripoli, who had also worked with Athanasios Dabbās, translating

²³ For the aspiration of the Arab bishops to bring the Middle Eastern Christian communities closer to the Greek culture, whose influence was still significant in the Levant in the 17th century, see also Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 410ff.

²⁴ In the same spirit, he printed in Bucharest, in 1715–1719, *The History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* (Ἱστορία Περί Τῶν Εἰν ἹΕροσολυμοῖς Πατριαρχευσάντων), a large Greek-language in-folio book of 1,429 pp., rich in book art elements, including a splendid portrait of the Patriarch Dositheos. See Chițulescu (coord. ed.), *Antim Ivireanul. Opera tipografică*, p. 207–211. This is a rare book, with only two copies preserved in Romania, one at the B.A.R., the other at the Library of the Holy Synod of Bucharest.

²⁵ Letter addressed by Bishop Sophronios to Mūsā on August 11, 1747 (ff. 44 r-v).

the treatise *al-Tiryāq al-šāfī min samm al-Filādelḫī*, *The Curing Antidote to the Poison of the Philadelphian* [Archbishop]. Elias then revised the Arabic translation made in 1732–1733 by Sophronios of the Patriarch Nektarios's work *Qaḏā al-ḥaqq wa-naql al-šidq* (*The Rule of Justice and the Transmission of Truth*), printed in Iași in 1746. The Greek original, *Peri tis arhis tou papa antirrisis* (Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ πάπα Ἀντίρρησις / *Discourse against the Pope's Primacy*) had been printed by Patriarch Dositheos II of Jerusalem in July 1682 at the monastery of Cetățuia in Iași, with the title *Tou Makariōtatu patriarchou Nektariou, Pros tas proskomistheisas theseis para tōn en Ierosolymois fratorōn dia Petrou tou autōn maistoros peri tis arhis tou papa antirrisis*. Dositheos added to it several Greek texts: a eulogy of Emperor Iōannēs VIII Palaiologos, composed by Constantinopolitan bishops; several texts written by the Patriarchs Philotheos of Alexandria, Dorotheos of Antioch, and Joachim of Jerusalem against the Council of Florence, etc.²⁶

In the foreword to the book printed in 1746, Sylvester asserts (perhaps for his own protection) that the Arabic version had been achieved at the request of Ioan Mavrocordat, the prince of Moldavia, during the term of the Metropolitan Nikeforos of Moldavia ('the Greek', or the 'Peloponnese', 1739–1750).

Elias Faḥr states in his correspondence that he revised the Arabic version of Sophronios before printing, and, very proud of the outcome, he considered himself the actual translator. Rachid Haddad notes that the revision work on a translation from Greek into Arabic was so strenuous that the revisor sometimes assumed the paternity of the completed version as much as the translator.²⁷ Faḥr also states that he had translated another of the Patriarch Nektarios's works, the *Kitāb ḡālā' al-'abṣār min ḡiṣa' al-'akdār* (*The Book that Clears the Eyes from the Mire of Trouble*), another refutation of the papal primacy.

Writing to Yūsuf Mark in the spring of 1740, soon after he finished working on *Qaḏā al-ḥaqq wa-naql al-šidq*, Elias Faḥr asks if this text would not be helpful in Aleppo, as a weapon in the controversy that had recently intensified. On July 27, 1740, Yūsuf Mark wrote to Mūsā that he is working on two copies of this translation, one for Elias Faḥr and one for himself.

The conflict was so intense that Greek Orthodox scholars were afraid of becoming a laughingstock if the copies of their Arabic versions of Greek works that circulated were found to be faulty. In a letter addressed by Elias Faḥr to Mūsā

²⁶ See BRV I, p. 251–258; HMLÉM IV.1, p. 149–150; HMLÉM IV.2, p. 97. A Latin translation of Nektarios's book was published in 1729 in London: *De Artibus quibus missionari latini, praecipue in Terra Sancta degentes, ad subvertendam Graecorum fidem utuntur, et de quamplurimus Ecclesiae Romanae erroribus et corruptelis libri tres*.

²⁷ Haddad, "La correspondance de Trābulṣī", p. 282, 288.

Ṭrabulsī, his sister's son, in May 1740, he urges Mūsā to take care of the Arabic version of *Kitāb qaḍā al-ḥaqq*, and make a copy of this precious manuscript, but with all diligence, so that the content was not corrupted, on account that their opponents, especially 'Ibn Zāḥir al-Ḥalabī' ('Abdallāh Zāḥir), „who is well versed in the Arabic language and would mock us if this happens”.²⁸ On June 29, 1740, Yūsuf Mark wrote to his friend Elias Faḥr that the Arabic version of Patriarch Nektarios's work, *Kitāb ḡālā' al-'abṣār min ḡiša' al-'akdār*, was too important to be left in the hands of pupils, so he intended to copy it personally. Faḥr wrote to his nephew Mūsā Ṭrabulsī²⁹ that their pupils made a lot of orthographic mistakes, “for they are completely ignorant, and they do not even know the degree of their ignorance”.³⁰ Therefore, Mūsā was required to follow them closely when they copied such texts. Elias offered examples of mistakes that pupils usually made, a true witness to the defective education of the young Syrians of the time, who could speak the local language (the colloquial speech of Aleppo or Damascus) but were less proficient in literary Arabic and its classical orthography. Yūsuf Mark wrote to Mūsā that he had worked for a month and a half (probably during his stay at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest) on an epistle that backed the text written by Sophronios of Kilis which was criticized by a Catholic of Aleppo.³¹ He also states that he was afraid of the enmity of the Latin faithful of Aleppo, which made him hide his paternity of certain works where he defended Orthodoxy. In 1743, as a Bishop of Acre, Sophronios addressed two letters to the Patriarch Sylvester in which, after lengthy expressions of praise and admiration, he asks him to reach an agreement with the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Constantinople so that they form a common front against “God's enemies”, “the despicable faction of the Pope's servants”, i.e., the Jesuits, who preached the union with Rome to Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox communities. Thus, the wide picture of inter-confessional conflict, equally familiar to the Wallachians and Moldavians at the time, is revealed in the letters exchanged by the high and low clergy of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 282.

²⁹ This is the last letter in the collection (f. 49r), undated, but written most likely in June 1740. It begins with the phrase: *'Ilā ḥaḍarat al-walad al-'azīz al-šammās Mūsā*, “to my beloved son, the honorable deacon Mūsā”.

³⁰ Litt.: *Li-'anna-hum ḡuhhāl wa-ḡahlu-hum murakkab, 'ayy 'inna-hum ḡāhīlūna ḡahla-hum*. This is an undated letter on ff. 48r-v.

³¹ This is a letter copied on ff. 39v–40r, missing its introduction. It was apparently written after 1750, since Yūsuf had left Bucharest.

5.2 Beirut 1750, the Final Frontier of Arab Orthodox Book-Printing

Sophronios of Kilis mentions in his letters addressed to the Patriarch Sylvester in 1747 a press that the patriarch had recently installed, suggesting this was in Damascus. The first letter where this press is mentioned dates from August 11, 1747. As I mentioned before, Sophronios expressed his wish to be released of his functions so that he can devote his time and energies to translating edifying Greek works and hand them in for printing.³² No book printed in a Damascus press in the 18th century, or any other information about a Syrian print shop at the time, other than the one of Aleppo, is available to us.

In the string of letters in MS nr. 9/22 there is a hiatus of several years. Then follow letters from Yūsuf Mark to Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī sent from Beirut in 1754, around Pentecost, and one dated 1758, not mentioning the place of dispatch. We know from other sources that Yūsuf returned to Syria in 1750. He soon moved to Beirut, where he opened a school of Arabic and theological studies.³³ In an ecclesiastical chronicle of Beirut, Yūsuf Mark is called “the book-loving teacher”, “the first among priests, the light of theological science, and the glory of Arab writers”.³⁴

In the second half of the 18th century, outstanding historical works would be composed in Beirut, whose dissemination required the opening of a printing workshop. This was made possible by Yūsuf Mark’s important activities as a printer and a scholar, and the importation of the Arabic type manufactured by him and other monks, under his supervision, at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, the Wallachian *metochion* of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. This new Arabic type for which the Syrian monks had toiled and the Patriarch Sylvester had spent time and money was not used anywhere else. Moreover, it remained in Yūsuf Mark’s care after he left Bucharest in 1749–1750. No other destination was possible for them but a press to be opened in Ottoman Syria, as the patriarch desired. A happy coincidence of events allowed the foundation of the first Arabic-type press in Beirut.

The city of Beirut had a livelier intellectual environment than that of Damascus. Many Syrians who had travelled to Europe chose, when back home, to continue their work in Beirut, a metropolis that had turned into “a magnet for the

³² Haddad, “La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī”, p. 267.

³³ *HMLĒM* IV.2, p. 216–217.

³⁴ See “Iz beirutskoi tserkovnoi letopisi XVI–XVIII vv.”, p. 88; Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 472.

Orthodox intellectual elite”.³⁵ There is no certainty as to the date the monastery of the Greek Orthodox dedicated to Saint Georges was built, but Western travelers of the 17th century and an Ottoman manuscript of 1661 (1080 AH) mention its existence.³⁶ At the time, it only had one altar, but in the early 18th century two more were added to it, dedicated to Saint Nicholas and Saint Elias. The monastery buildings comprised the cathedral, administrative buildings, a garden, and a cemetery.³⁷

A learned *šayḥ* of the city, Yūnus Niqūlā al-Ġebeyli, also known as Abū ‘Askar and ‘al-Bayrūtī’ (d. 1787), who was a trustee (*epitropos*) of the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saint George in Beirut, installed in 1750 a press in a hall of the administrative building of this monastery. There is little information about this press.³⁸ The *šayḥ*’s mother was related to the emir Ḥaydar al-Šihābī, member of one of the great families which ruled Mount Lebanon. *Šayḥ* Yūnus also made important donations to the Monastery of Mār Elias Šuwayya, the Orthodox patriarchs’ summer residence in the mountains. After al-Ġebeyli’s death in 1787, the Beirut press did not do that well, until 1881, when new equipment was acquired.³⁹ Based on all the available sources, Joseph Nasrallah wrote a few phrases in *al-Masarra* about *šayḥ* Yūnus Niqūlā al-Ġebeyli (whom he calls “Yūsuf”) and the printing press that he established for the Orthodox at the Monastery of Saint George. Here, Nasrallah expresses his conviction that *šayḥ* Yūnus had manufactured the required Arabic type by copying Zāḥir’s typefaces (*wa-ṣabba ḥurūfa-hā ‘alā namaṭ al-ḥurūf al-zāḥiriyya*).⁴⁰ No proof is provided in support of this assumption. Later, Nasrallah included in his book *L’imprimerie au*

35 Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 475.

36 May Davie, *Atlas historique des Orthodoxes de Beyrouth et du Mont Liban (1800–1940)*, Balamand, 1999, p. 28ff.

37 May Davie, “Le couvent Saint-Georges de Bayrouṭ al Qadīmat”, *Chronos*, 1, 1998, p. 7–31.

38 *Al-Masarra*, 6, p. 253; Lūwīs Šayḥū, “Tārīḥ fann al-ṭibā’a fī al-Mašriq”, 3, 1900, 8, p. 501–502; Walbīner, “The Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* (Syria): Pioneers of Book-Printing in the Arab World”, p. 12; Dabbās and Raššū, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibā’a al-‘arabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, p. 126–129. The entry on ‘Maṭba’a’ of *Encyclopaedia of Islam* – 2, signed by G. Oman, G. Alpay Kut, W. Floor, and G. W. Shaw, does not mention this press. Basic information is given on the personal website of the Syrian historian Joseph Zeitoun, <https://josephzeitoun.com>, relying on the article of al-Ma’lūf published in 1911 and the book authored by A. Q. Dabbās and N. Raššū.

39 Partington, “Arabic Printing”, p. 65. I find, however, inappropriate the author’s assertion in this passage that: “The first press in Beirut was established [...] for the benefit of the Melkite sect” [sic].

40 Nasrallah, “Maṭābi’ al-Malakīyīn”, p. 462.

Liban a brief chapter (ten lines) with the title *Imprimerie Saint Georges*, with no comment about the Arabic type used there.⁴¹

Badly damaged by the earthquake of 1759, the Church of Saint George started to be repaired in 1767 but collapsed during the works. Eighty-seven people were buried under the debris, together with the whole printing workshop. The repairs continued and were completed in 1780. It was afterwards described by people who visited it as ‘la grande église des Grecs’ and ‘le plus beau temple chrétien de l’Empire Ottoman’.⁴²

Another reason for the inactivity of this press after 1753 circulated in Russia. Beirut was besieged twice during the Russo–Turkish war, in 1772 and 1773.⁴³ The press was said to have been destroyed by a Russian bombardment of the city, from warships on the Mediterranean Sea. In 1772, a Russian squadron bombarded and then occupied the city of Beirut, governed at the time by the Druze emir Yūsuf, an ally of the Ottomans. Then, having reached an agreement with the local Arab forces, the Russians withdrew. The blockade and the bombardment a year later, which were more intense, led to a new occupation of Beirut by the Russians. However, in 1772–1773, the press had already been non-functional for two decades, therefore the Russo-Turkish war could not have played a role in its shutting down.⁴⁴

It was later asserted that the press was recovered from the rubble and started working again, taking the name *The Saint George Press*. It seems that several books were printed there before 1878, when the workshop stopped working, as several modern Catholic and Protestant presses had opened in Beirut, created by Western missionaries. In the following century, presses multiplied in Beirut, especially because of the arrival of printers from the West. In 1834, the American press of Malta was transferred to Beirut, and in 1848 the Catholic Press (*Imprimerie catholique*) was founded there.⁴⁵ This became the most productive Lebanese

⁴¹ Nasrallah, *L'imprimerie au Liban*, p. 46.

⁴² Cf. H. Guys, *Beyrouth et le Liban*, Beirut, 2nd ed., 1985, p. 31, and Davie, *Atlas historique des Orthodoxes de Beyrouth et du Mont Liban*, p. 30, citing Giovanni Mariti, *Viaggio da Gerusalemme per le coste della Siria*, vol. 2, Livorno, 1787, p. 16.

⁴³ The Russo-Turkish war of 1768–1774, which ended with the peace of Küçük Kaynarca of July 21, 1774, was the first conflict where the Russian fleet entered the Mediterranean Sea. See Michael F. Davie and Mitia Frumin, “Late 18th Century Russian Navy Maps and the First 3D Visualization of the Walled City of Beirut”, *e-Perimetron*, 2, 2007, 2, p. 52–53.

⁴⁴ Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 473.

⁴⁵ Glass, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut again*, p. 9–34; Glass and Roper, “Arabic Book and Newspaper Printing in the Arab World”, p. 187ff.; Caesar E. Farah, “Awakening Interest in Western Science & Technology in Ottoman Syria”, p. 23–24; G. Roper, “The Arabic Press in Malta,

editing house and printing workshop. Between 1850 and 1900, fifteen presses would be opened in the Lebanese capital.⁴⁶ The first concern of the printers who worked in Lebanon in the second half of the 19th century was to print, in 1865, the entire Bible in a Protestant version. This translation was initiated in 1847 by Eli Smith and completed under the direction of Cornelius Van Alen van Dyck, assisted by major Lebanese intellectuals: Buṭrus al-Bustānī, Nāṣif al-Yāziḡī, and Yūsuf al-‘Aṣīr.⁴⁷ The Bible was also published at this press in 1876 in a Catholic translation prepared by Fr Augustin Rodet and Ibrāhīm al-Yāziḡī under the care of the Jesuit order, which was approved by the Holy See.

In a letter addressed to the Patriarch Maximos Maḡlūm in 1840, Fr Augustin Maḡṣūd reported that he had seen in Beirut two books printed in 1751: a Psalter and a Horologion.⁴⁸ He also asserts that the Patriarch Sylvester transferred the press from Aleppo to Beirut to be able to print anti-Catholic works, which did not happen. Other sources mention a second edition of the Psalter, in 1753,⁴⁹ and a Book of the Divine Liturgies.

I mentioned in my work published in 2016⁵⁰ an Arabic Psalter printed in Beirut in 1752, with no copies recorded in public catalogues, as far as I knew at the time. I later located a rare copy of this book at the Library of the University of Uppsala (Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek).⁵¹ I describe this Psalter of Beirut below, in the final section of Chapter VI.

Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, a German physician and scientist who journeyed through Syria, Palestine and Yemen in 1803–1811,⁵² was the first to mention

1825–1842: Its Influence on the Nineteenth-Century Arab Renaissance”, *ARAM*, 25 (2013), 2016, 1 & 2, p. 307–319.

⁴⁶ Boustany, “Les Libanais et le livre”, p. 146.

⁴⁷ The ‘Van Dyck Bible’ is accessible in PDF format: The Van Dyke Arabic in PDF Format - Arabic Bible Outreach Ministry.

⁴⁸ The letter was published by Fr Aṭanāsīyūs Ḥāḡḡ in *Al-Rahbāniyya al-Bāsiliyya al-Šuwayriyya fī tāriḡ al-Kanīsa wa-l-bilād*, t. I, Ġūniya, 1973, p. 549–550. It is also mentioned in Dabbās and Raššū, *Tāriḡ al-ṭibā’a al-‘arabiyya fī al-Mašriq*, p. 126–129, and Walbīner, “The Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* (Syria): Pioneers of Book-Printing in the Arab World”, p. 12.

⁴⁹ Nasrallah, *L’imprimerie au Liban*, p. 46.

⁵⁰ Feodorov, *Tipar pentru creștinii arabi*, p. 258.

⁵¹ I am grateful to Geoffrey Roper for indicating to me the Uppsala Library catalogue entry on a book printed in Beirut, which I found to be this Psalter of 1752.

⁵² Born in 1767, Seetzen travelled extensively in Syria and Palestine, where he learned Arabic, became familiar with the Arab way of life, and was the first to make a scientific survey of the Dead Sea. He did not return to Germany and died in Yemen in 1811. See Ulrich Jasper Seetzen’s *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten*, edited and commented by Professor Dr. Fr. Kruse, Berlin, 1854–1859, 4 vols.; Carsten

a Book of the Divine Liturgies. In his commented list of acquisitions from Aleppo, he mentions three books printed at a press in Beirut, which he connects to the press of Ḥinšāra. According to him, the latter was active for a brief time and, under the direction of the bishop of the non-united Greeks (*Bischof der nicht-unirten Griechen*), printed a Greek Catholic [sic] Horologion (which he names *Breviarium*), a “*Kundák*, ein *Missale*”, and the Psalms in two editions. He then states that, of all these books, he only succeeded in acquiring a copy of the first edition of the Psalms.⁵³

The information provided by Seetzen was repeated by Schnurrer and Nasrallah,⁵⁴ but data is always scarce, since only Seetzen actually saw these books. In 1811 Schnurrer recorded a copy of the Beirut Psalter with the same details given by Seetzen.⁵⁵ In 1846 Zenker repeated the same description, originally gleaned from Seetzen’s list.⁵⁶ Schnurrer also gives on p. 515a)–517a) of his *Addenda* an excerpt of the title page of a Psalter printed at Bucharest in 1747.⁵⁷ The copy he describes in this *Addenda*, most likely available to him later than Seetzen’s notes, belonged to Silvestre de Sacy, who believed that this was the only existing copy in Europe (“hoc exemplar Bucharesto ad me missum, *unicum* esse in Europa...”).⁵⁸ This book seems to have been later in the possession of Émile Picot, who mentions it in his *Notice*.⁵⁹ Apparently, it ended up in Yale University’s Beinecke Library, where it was recently identified by Samuel Noble. The first page of this unique book mentions *Būḥārist*, 1747, and Sylvester, the Patriarch of Antioch, as editor. An image of David the King and Prophet is present, printed with a woodblock and decorative elements created in the Metropolitan press of Bucharest, found by Archim. Policarp Chițulescu in a Slavonic Psalter of 1735. This means that in 1747, having created new Arabic type

Walbiner, *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen [in Aleppo (1803–1805)]*, in Neil Cooke and Vanessa Daubney (eds.), *Every Traveler Needs a Compass. Travel and Collecting in Egypt and the Near East*, Oxford, 2015, p. 197–204.

53 Seetzen, “Nachricht von den in der Levante befindlichen Buchdruckereyen von U. J. Seetzen in Haleb 1805”, col. 648.

54 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 383–384; Nasrallah, “Maṭābi‘ al-Malakiyyīn”, p. 462; Narallah, *L’imprimerie au Liban*, p. 46.

55 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 383–384, nr. 354.

56 This information was repeated by other historians of early printing. In Bucharest, Dan Simonescu used, in order to describe this hypothetical book, the data provided by Zenker.

57 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 515a)–517a) (*Addenda*), and p. 522, recorded as *Liber Psalmorum Davidis CL una cum 10 Canticis. Prima editio facta in urbe Buccuresch, anno Christi MDCCXLVII. Quart. min. [in 4o]. [...] Sylvester misericordia Dei summi Patriarcha Antiochiaie omnisque Orientis*. Schnurrer transcribed part of the Arabic foreword and translated it into Latin.

58 Daonou (ed.), *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, t. I, 1842, p. XLI–XLII and 289.

59 Picot, “Notice biographique et bibliographique sur l’imprimeur Anthime d’Ivir”, p. 544.

at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon, Sylvester printed a Psalter, also using typographic material from the Metropolitan press, possibly helped by Wallachian printers. He then transferred the type to Damascus, and later to Beirut. By comparing this type with that of the Beirut Psalter of 1752, we may find that the material used for printing both Psalters was manufactured in Bucharest. Al-Ma'lūf mentioned in 1911 that he had seen a Psalter at the Patriarchal Monastery of Mār Elias Šuwayya (Lebanon), with the first page dated earlier, which could be another copy similar to De Sacy's.⁶⁰ Aware of the Patriarch Sylvester's presence in the capital of Moldavia in 1747, al-Ma'lūf expresses his opinion that he had printed the Psalter in Iași. However, more research is required before 'Bucharest 1747' is placed on the map of early Arabic-type presses in the East. In any case, a *de visu* examination of the intriguing copy held at the Beinecke Library is mandatory for a clear understanding of the Patriarch Sylvester's printing activities at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest.

An unpublished source that I am fortunate to have in my possession is a letter sent on November 2, 1992, by Mrs Liliane Kfoury of Beirut⁶¹ to Virgil Cîndea in Bucharest,⁶² where she makes an account of her research in the financial records of the former press of the Greek Orthodox Archbishopric. According to Mrs Kfoury, only fourteen accountancy records for 1921–1923 are preserved, and only these records and a few scattered notes about the press attest that it ever existed in the 18th century, as nothing of a material kind is left of the initial workshop. The archive that she surveyed refers to the publication of the daily newspaper *al-Hadiyya* of the Greek Orthodox community. Her preliminary conclusions were that an essentially religious press turned, in the early 20th century, into a commercial venture, in social and cultural circumstances that she was planning to further discuss in a paper that she intended to write.

As for the type used by this new press of Beirut, predictably, Joseph Nasrallah declares that its founder "took as a model the type of Šuwayr".⁶³ As revealed by the collection of letters of Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, the source of the printing tools used in Beirut, not mentioned in the foreword of the Psalter (possibly, to avoid the Ottoman authorities' suspicions) is the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, where Yūsuf Mark supervised the cutting of punches and casting of Arabic type that he took with him in 1748 to Damascus and later to Beirut. Here, new sets of type could be cut

⁶⁰ Al-Ma'lūf, "Maṭba'a rūmāniyya al-urtūduksiyya al-'arabiyya al-an'ākiyyā", p. 55.

⁶¹ Liliane Kfoury defended her PhD thesis *Le commerce rural au Mont-Liban de 1894 à 1933 à partir de la comptabilité du magasin de Elias Kfuri à Khenchara* in 1997 with Université Paris VIII.

⁶² Preserved in my father's archive, now with me.

⁶³ "Il prit pour modèle les caractères de Šueir", *ibid.*

after their model, as had happened before in Aleppo, in 1705–1706, when Antim the Iberian's Arabic type and woodcuts were used as models for new ones created by Dabbās's apprentices. Ornamental elements in the Beirut Psalter are almost identical to those present in Romanian books. It seems impossible for the printing tools that Athanasios Dabbās took from Bucharest to have been preserved and reused in Beirut after four decades. Nevertheless, the common figurative and decorative elements shared by Antim's books and the Beirut Psalter reflect a direct connection, which is another outcome of the Syrians' typographic work in Wallachia.

Except for the brief mentions evoked above, there is no information on other books printed in Beirut. At this time, there are no known copies of a Horologion, a second edition of the Psalter of 1750, or a Book of the Divine Liturgies that were printed there.

On the other hand, an unknown book has recently turned up in Paris that could be a production of the Beirut press, if not of that of the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest. The book was brought to my attention in 2017 by its owner, a book collector who subsequently sold it in a Paris auction.⁶⁴ This is an Akathist to the Mother of God printed in Arabic, which follows the standard Arabic version. This text was included in the final part of the Horologion printed by Athanasios Dabbās in 1702 at Bucharest, only the one printed individually lacks the Greek references and the titles of the chanted sections. Arabic manuscripts of the Akathist are known to exist in Levantine libraries, but no text was known to have been printed separately in the 16th–18th centuries. As a section of the Byzantine Kontakion, it was, and still is, particularly appreciated by the Orthodox and the Greek Catholics.⁶⁵ As far as we know, the first Arabic Akathist to have been printed as a separate book is dated to 1857, at the press of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and the next edition was the one of Beirut in 1863.

I have included the description of this puzzling Arabic Akathist in Chapter VI, as I am convinced that future research will show its origin at the Beirut press of the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch. A single element in its description is worth

⁶⁴ A collection of rare books sold by Binoche et Giquelle at an auction on December 7, 2021, at Hôtel Druot in Paris. The Arabic Akathist, described in the catalogue based on the information published in my article "New Data on the Early Arabic Printing in the Levant and Its Connections to the Romanian Presses" (*RESEE*, 56, 2018, 1–4, p. 197–233, duly cited in the catalogue), sold for 29,066 euros. See the auction catalogue, directed by Dominique Courvoisier, expert of Bibliothèque nationale de France, item 92, on p. 59.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Névine Toutounji-Hage Chahine and Leina Bassil-Tanios (eds.), *Akathiste. Hymne à la Mère de Dieu*, French, Arabic, and English versions, Patriarcat Grec-Melkite Catholique, Raboueh, 2013 (with exceptional reproductions of Arab icons).

discussing here, as it is connected to the historical background of Arabic printing after the 1724 split in the Church of Antioch.

In order to establish the identity of the printer, editor, and sponsor of this book, the press, and the year of publication, several elements need to be considered. Among them, an important detail is the bishop's insignia (emblem, arms, *armoiries*) on the last page of the book. Examples of emblems used in creating this one could be the models of the bishops of Kyiv, Târgoviște and Bucharest, but those of patriarchs and bishops of Jerusalem or Constantinople were also a possible source.⁶⁶ Doru Bădără noticed that this is a heraldic construction which does not observe the rules of armorial composition as established by the conventions of European heraldry. Moreover, bishops' emblems from Eastern Europe show a certain freedom of design. He concluded that this particular emblem had been created in Eastern Europe or the Middle East, following European models.

Special-purpose woodcuts are a separate domain in the large area of studies of book art. Here, the true mastery of an engraver or typographer is revealed. As Waldemar Deluga pertinently remarks, while commenting on the woodcuts of the Pechersk Lavra in Kyiv:

Individual woodcuts can be placed somewhere between fine art and folk art. In some cases they are of better artistic standing than prints from Eastern Europe [and Western Europe – *my note*]. As in the Latin sphere, the engraver's technical and artistic abilities limited these works which were often resemblant of a story in pictures typical of book graphics. [...] Even while the first copies of medieval woodcuts are well valued by experts and very closely studied, the prints from the Orthodox Church milieu are difficult to date and to attribute to particular workshops, due to the scarcity of material available for study and the primitiveness of the workshop. The first woodcuts that are closely connected with a book have never raised much interest in theological discussions. Along with printing as a process, so the Orthodox religion took over devotional forms otherwise unknown to the Orthodox Church.⁶⁷

Emblems of patriarchs and bishops appear in the Romanian Principalities in the 17th century, mostly in printed books. Those of Petru Movilă (Mohyla) evolved chronologically, taking on several forms, as he was changing his status in the Orthodox hierarchy of Ukraine. If in the beginning several Polish-style elements were present, later the heraldry gained personal touches, proper to the Orthodox

⁶⁶ The Ukrainian art historian Alina Kondratjuk, a member of the TYPARABIC project team, is currently studying the possible models, influences, and alterations of this emblem, and others printed in Eastern European Orthodox presses.

⁶⁷ Waldemar Deluga, "The Ukrainian Prints from the Lavra Pecherska Monastery in Kyiv (17th and 18th Centuries)", *Acta Musei Apulensis, L. Series Historia & Patrimonium*, 2013, p. 18.

world. As Petru Movilă became a *mitrofor*⁶⁸ archimandrite of the Pechersk Lavra in Kyiv, an Orthodox miter is printed in the books that he supervised there, instead of a Catholic-style miter (Fr. *couvre-chef*). This heraldic composition was also present on the metal plate placed on his coffin on December 2, 1646, when he was buried in the church of the Lavra, dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God. The cross on the bishop's staff and the Orthodox crozier (*pateritsa*), which replaced the Latin-style crozier, were elements of Movilă's emblem after he was elected metropolitan of Kyiv in 1633. The Romanian historian Sorin Iftimi surveyed in detail several printed heraldic arms of Wallachian bishops that reflect the influence of Movilă's successive emblems:⁶⁹ those of the Metropolitan Ștefan of Hungro-Wallachia,⁷⁰ the one attributed to the Metropolitan Varlaam,⁷¹ and that of Antim the Iberian, dated to 1713, when he was metropolitan of Wallachia.⁷² A large part of the printing implements of Moldavia and Wallachia came from the Pechersk Lavra press in Kyiv (Fig. 16). Therefore, the matrices, molds, and dies that were used for Petru Movilă's emblems⁷³ could have been reused in creating new ones for the Moldavian and Wallachian bishops, having been adapted to the local style and personal preferences of each one of them.⁷⁴

For a patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch in open conflict with the Latin Church around 1740, a Catholic bishop's miter was not a symbol to include in a patriarch's emblem. In the Arabic Akathist, the Orthodox crozier and the cross are placed in an X shape under the Orthodox miter. Other decorative elements, such as the lambrequins and the crowned characters, are baroque in

⁶⁸ In Orthodoxy, an archpriest or archimandrite who has the right to wear the miter, like a bishop (< Ngr. *mitrofóros*).

⁶⁹ See Sorin Iftimi, "Influența lui Petru Movilă, Mitropolitul Kyivului, asupra heraldicii eclesiastice din Țările Române", in *Sinodul de la Iași și Sf. Petru Movilă (1642–2002)*, Iași, 2002, p. 190–199 (with illustrations).

⁷⁰ One in *Sacramentul (Mystirio)* printed at Târgoviște in 1651, another in *Îndreptarea legii*, Târgoviște, 1652, cf. Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș, and Dan Simonescu, *Bibliografia românească veche*, vol. I: 1508–1716, Bucharest, 1903, p. 191.

⁷¹ In *Cheia înțeleșului*, Bucharest, 1678.

⁷² See Dan Cernovodeanu, *Știința și arta heraldică în România*, Bucharest, 1977, p. 179 and ill. no. CXIV/3.

⁷³ Some of them are still preserved in the outstanding Museum of the Book and Printing at the Pechersk Lavra.

⁷⁴ Referring to Western and Central European heraldry, Sorin Iftimi notes that "the heraldic elements, established centuries ago, consisted of symbols that were specific to the Latin Church. Some of these elements were adapted according to the Orthodox symbolism"; see Iftimi, "Influența lui Petru Movilă, Mitropolitul Kyivului, asupra heraldicii eclesiastice din Țările Române", p. 191.

style, influenced by Western, or perhaps Ukrainian heraldic art. In the center of the emblem, one can read ‘Silvestros’ printed in Greek initials. Besides Sylvester of Cyprus, no other patriarch of Antioch is known to have held this name in the 18th century or later. In the Romanian lands, the monogram was included in the bishops’ emblems precisely in the 18th century, when a trend was set. We have, therefore, strong support for the hypothesis that the design of this particular bishop’s emblem was influenced by examples from Eastern European Orthodox lands, with novel elements resulting from the requirements of the confessional environment in Ottoman Syria. There are no documented contacts between the Patriarch Sylvester and the Orthodox Church of Kyiv, or any Ukrainian master printers. Therefore, we may posit with some degree of certainty that the press where this emblem was designed was located in the Romanian Principalities, at one of the Greek printing presses.

Finally, puzzling information that could refer to an Arabic book printed in Beirut in the mid-18th century comes from a German source, published in Leipzig in 1782: the *Repertorium für biblische und morgenländische Litteratur*.⁷⁵ Here, Joseph Friedrich Schelling states that “the knight [Johann David] Michaelis⁷⁶ expressed his wish to find more information on an Arabic Bible [i.e., Old Testament] that had presumably been printed in Bucharest in the year 1700”, but “professor Aurovillius of Upsal” (Pehr Fabian Aurivillius)⁷⁷ mentions in a dissertation an edition of this book containing a title page indicating 1753 as the printing date. This text contained sections of the Old Testament: the five Books of Moses, the Books of Joshua, the Judges, Ruth, four Books of the Kings, the Second Book of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Tobit. The book that Aurovillius described would require a thorough survey to place it – or not – alongside the books printed by the Greek Orthodox in Beirut.

Thus, Yūsuf Mark, a Syrian disciple of Sylvester, the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch, who had worked in the incipient press of the

⁷⁵ Joseph F. Schelling, “Joseph Friedrich Schelling über die arabische Bibelausgabe von 1752”, *Repertorium für biblische und morgenländische Litteratur*, 1782, 9, p. 154–155.

⁷⁶ Born in Halle to a Lutheran family, Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791), having received a solid religious education, became a theologian and translator of religious works in the field of biblical and oriental studies. He taught oriental languages at the University of Göttingen. Among other scholarly activities, he translated English commentaries on the Bible and composed text-critical studies of the Peshitta. He remains famous for having promoted the study of Hebrew antiquity for a deep knowledge of the ancient Eastern cultures. He was awarded the Knighthood of the Polar Star, a Swedish order of chivalry.

⁷⁷ Pehr Fabian Aurivillius (1756–1829), a Swedish librarian active in Uppsala, member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities.

Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, headed the first Arabic-type press of Beirut, the first printing workshop for Orthodox books in present-day Lebanon, and the only one for a long time after 1711. Mark continued in Beirut the creative typographic activity he had begun in Bucharest, applying the knowledge that he had acquired in contact with Wallachian printers. Thus, a circle closed that embraced the aspirations of several patriarchs and bishops of the Arabic-speaking Christians in the 17th and 18th centuries to freely disseminate the holy books of Orthodoxy, united in this mission with princes and bishops of the Romanian Principalities.