

## 5 A New Decade and New Travels, 1730–1740

### 5.1 Sylvester on Mount Athos in 1730?

Copies of two documents pertaining to Sylvester of Antioch have been preserved in the collections of the Old Dillenburg Archive, a section of the Hessen Federal State Archives in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Both documents are in Greek and are accompanied by a Latin translation.

The first is a letter of recommendation issued by the Patriarch of Antioch for Theoklytos Polyeidis, an archimandrite on Mount Athos. The letter is dated February 13, 1730, and was issued at Protaton on Mount Athos. It follows the conventions of the genre, providing a lot of information about the beneficiary's position in the clergy, the dates of his clerical ordination, and the specific insignia he was allowed to wear during Church services. The aim of the letter was to request its beneficiaries, foreign rulers and Church officials, to provide support to Polyeidis during his travels.<sup>2</sup>

The second document is another letter of recommendation for the same person, this time issued by representatives of the 20 monasteries of Mount Athos, mentioning, in addition to the information provided in the letter by the patriarch, that the aim of his travel was to collect money to free Christian prisoners captured by the Ottomans. The document bears not only the signatures of the aforementioned representatives (as well as those of some other monastic foundations) but also that of Sylvester of Antioch and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, and it also mentions that its content had been approved by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The letter was issued on January 6, 1730 (1730 or 1731 in the Latin translation) at Protaton, Mount Athos. The text mentions that it was written there and then validated in Constantinople.

The two letters seem to attest to the presence of Patriarch Sylvester on Mount Athos in January and/or February 1730, confirming at the same time his ties with the Holy Mountain. However, at a closer inspection, the two documents seem to be

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1 Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (HHStAW), Fonds 171 No C 239. Digital copies of the microfilmed documents are accessible online at <https://arcinsys.hessen.de/arcinsys/detailAction?detailid=v2759461>.

2 S. Saracino, "The *Album Amicorum* of the Athonite Monk Theoklitos Polyeidis and the Agency of Perambulating Greek Alms Collectors in the Holy Roman Empire (18<sup>th</sup> c.)", in C. Zwierlein (ed.), *The Power of the Dispersed. Early Modern Global Travelers Beyond Integration*, Leiden/Boston, 2022, p. 74; S. Saracino, *Griechen im Heiligen Römischen Reich: Migration und ihre wissenschaftliche Bedeutung*, Berlin/Boston, 2024, p. 148.

problematic. Their beneficiary, Theoklytos Polyeidis, is a well-known Greek scholar born in Adrianople who traveled extensively in Central and Western Europe for more than two decades. Polyeidis is the author of an oracular text, quite popular in the Greek world, known as *The Vision of Agathangelos*, attributed to a 12<sup>th</sup> century author who allegedly predicted the fall of the Turkish Empire.

In Germany, Polyeidis published a book in Latin on the Orthodox Church, adorned with his portrait. His *Album Amicorum*, preserved at the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos, is a valuable testimony to his extensive contacts in Europe, mainly in Protestant countries.<sup>3</sup> In the 1750s, Theoklytos returned to Athos, where he met Evgenios Voulgaris, then director of the Athonias Academy. During his journeys in Europe, Polyeidis also left a trail of documents in local archives, which provide researchers with more information about his actions and shed light on how his contemporaries perceived his personality and the credentials he carried. In brief, the documents carried by Polyeidis and his initial travel companions (one of whom, Athanasios, is mentioned by name in the second letter) raised suspicions from their contemporaries.<sup>4</sup>

The two documents in the Hessen Archive were used by Polyeidis during the early stages of his travels to certify his social status and his role as alms collector for the liberation of enslaved Christians.<sup>5</sup> At some point, Polyeidis was arrested on the suspicion that at least some of his documents were forgeries. Although he succeeded in proving that his claims were genuine, this issue of suspected forgery requires historians to judge his situation, which is not straightforward.

The two letters are, as mentioned before, copies of the Greek originals made by a Western scribe. Some inconsistencies appear in the texts themselves. For example, the phrase “and All the East” is missing from the title of Sylvester of Antioch. The signature, however, present only in the Latin translation and not in the Greek transcription, seems to be consistent with his signature as it appears on texts which are genuine beyond a doubt. Without access to the original letters, it is difficult to assess with certainty if these documents were genuine and whether they testify to the presence of Sylvester on Mount Athos in the early 1730s. In any case, the information they contain should be used with caution.

Even if Sylvester’s letter of recommendation for Theoklytos Polyeidis is authentic, there is little proof that its beneficiary was officially sent by the patriarch to collect money for the Church of Antioch. Certain modern authors even supposed

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<sup>3</sup> Saracino, “The *Album Amicorum*”, p. 63–97.

<sup>4</sup> For Polyeidis, see Saracino, *Griechen im Heiligen Römischen Reich*, especially p. 25–26, 55, 67, 76, 78–80, 82, 141–167.

<sup>5</sup> The Latin translation is dated December 19, 1731.

that Polyeidis was sent by Sylvester to Protestant lands, in the same way his contender Kyrillos Tanās had sent Joannes Abdallah Phaad (probably Yūḥannā ‘Abdallāh Fādh) to Catholic areas, and that the two emissaries were in some sort of competition.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the truth is, the two documents in question do not attest to an official mission from Sylvester to Polyeidis. At present, there is no information indicating anything about later contacts between the two clergymen. The documents in question are therefore of limited value for Sylvester’s biography, but they could be an interesting source attesting to the patriarch’s prestige.

In February 1730, Sylvester was in Ioannina, having spent the winter there.<sup>7</sup> It is difficult to know whether he could have validated Polyeidis’s letters at a later moment in Constantinople, as mentioned in the second letter. Also, there is no explanation why the first letter, apparently issued by Sylvester, was written in Protaton in February 1730. This could have been possible only if the patriarch had left Ioannina earlier the same month and traveled to Mount Athos before heading to Wallachia later that year.

## 5.2 After 1730, in Wallachia, Cyprus, and Asia Minor

In 1730, Sylvester visited Wallachia and secured the financial and political support of Prince Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, a former grand dragoman and influential figure at the Ottoman Porte (Fig. 5).<sup>8</sup>

Established in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Danubian Principalities were a relatively late addition to what was called the “Orthodox Commonwealth”.<sup>9</sup> Wallachia and Moldavia soon began to take an active part in the post-Byzantine cultural world.

<sup>6</sup> Saracino, “The *Album Amicorum*”, p. 63–97 (for Phaad, see p. 75, n. 24); Saracino, *Griechen im Heiligen Römischen Reich*, p. 137. The same individual, “Jean Abdoulla Faad, natif de Seyde”, is mentioned as a representative of the patriarch (Kyrillos VI) in French diplomatic correspondence; see Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 354, n.1.

<sup>7</sup> Letter of Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, February 1730, Ioannina, in Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Επιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας τοῦ Κυπρίου πρὸς Χρύσανθον Ἱεροσολύμων”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Κήρυξ*, 1, 1911, 1, Larnaka, Cyprus, p. 136–137. See also MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 19v, in Phirippidēs, “Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 117–118.

<sup>8</sup> For Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, see Țipău, *Domnii fanarioți în Țările Române*, p. 128–135, and J. Bouchard, *Nicolae Mavrocordat domn și cărturar al Iluminismului timpuriu (1680–1730)*, Bucharest, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> This is a paraphrase of the title of a book on the Byzantine cultural and political influence in the Balkans and Eastern Europe: Dimitri D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, Oxford, 1971. For the “Orthodox Commonwealth”, see Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth*, Study II, p. 131–145.

Romanian princes and sometimes private individuals provided financial help to religious institutions and monastic foundations across the Orthodox East. Granted as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this aid intensified after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453. The Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, the monastic communities of Mount Athos, the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, as well as other monasteries in continental and insular Greece were financially supported by Moldavian and Wallachian princes for a long time. The meaning, extent, and other aspects of this support are the subjects of a rich scientific literature. The scope of the present book does not allow theoretical considerations on this topic. The fact is that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century Wallachia and Moldavia, mostly ruled by Greek-speaking Phanariot princes, were seen as places which could provide the increasingly needed financial support for church institutions such as the Patriarchate of Antioch.

The presence of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch in Wallachia and Moldavia is a topic that has interested Romanian historians to some extent. The lack of sources, however, and their diverse and often fragmentary nature did not allow researchers to obtain significant results for a long time. It was even claimed that the patriarch traveled as many as ten times in the Romanian Principalities, for various periods, and that he stayed there for a longer period in the mid- and late 1740s.

The study of Sylvester's printing activity in Iași and Bucharest as one of the main themes of the TYPARABIC project offered a new opportunity to re-examine the available evidence on this topic. Previously, it was assumed that this printing activity was performed under the direct and permanent supervision of the patriarch, and that the printing dates of the Arabic books reflect the dates of his presence in the respective cities.

In fact, as all evidence shows, Sylvester traveled only three times in the Danubian Principalities, twice in Wallachia and once in Moldavia. The printing activity was initiated by the patriarch in these countries, but its continuation does not presuppose his continuous presence. Exceptional situations, including a most dangerous challenge to his position as patriarch of Antioch, demanded his presence in Constantinople soon after, or even before the printing activity began in Iași. Even a few years after his election and after returning to Constantinople, when the Aleppo crisis of 1725–1726 was over, there were speculations and rumors that Sylvester would go to Wallachia and Moldavia to secure funds to maintain his position as patriarch of Antioch.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Letter of the French ambassador to the king's minister, February 18, 1727, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 379–380. See also Ch. 4.2 above.

The project of a visit to Wallachia was put in practice in 1730, when Sylvester was a guest of Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia (1716, 1719–1730). Mavrokordatos was one of the major intellectual figures of the Greek culture of his time and was, at the same time, highly influential in the Ottoman administration. As a former grand dragoman and the son of the famous Alexander Mavrokordatos, a member of the emerging Phanariot élite, Nikolaos had twice been *bey* or ruling prince of Moldavia, in 1703–1709 and in 1711–1716.<sup>11</sup>

An important role in facilitating the patriarch of Antioch's visit to Wallachia must be attributed, with a high degree of probability, to Chrysanthos Notaras, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who was close to both Sylvester and Mavrokordatos.

The Romanian chronicler Radu Popescu mentioned that Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, when learning that patriarch Athanasios III of Antioch had asked that his successor be his *protosynkellos* Sylvester, helped to secure his appointment by the Porte.

And [Athanasios] wrote to his Highness the Prince of our country that efforts should be made at the Porte, through his Highness's friends, so that no other [patriarch] would be appointed but this one, whom his Holiness left as his successor. And in this way, with the letters of his highness the *voivod*, Sylvester was installed [patriarch], as the one named by his Beatitude kyr Athanasios.<sup>12</sup>

The information is of utmost importance, because Mavrokordatos's intervention in favor of Sylvester was not known from other sources. Among others, it is known that Sylvester was supported by the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem and the grand dragoman Gregory Ghikas.

Radu Popescu's text was included by Axinte Uricariul in his *Parallel Chronicle of Moldavia and Wallachia* written at the request of Mavrokordatos.<sup>13</sup> Axinte was an official chronicler, writing at the prince's request, and the information is most likely accurate. Details, such as the fact that Sylvester was Athanasios's *protosynkellos*,

11 See Țipău, *Domnii fanarioți în Țările Române*, p. 128–135.

12 “Și au scris și la măriia sa, domnul țării noastre ca să se nevoiască la Poartă cu priiatenii mării sale să nu se pue altul, ci să fie acesta, carele l-au lăsat sfinția sa diadoh. Și așa, cu scrisorile mării sale lui vodă, ce au scris pe la priiateni, s-au așezat să fie acel Silvestru care au zis preafericitul patriarh, chir Athanasie”; cf. R. Popescu, *Istoriile domnilor Țării Rumânești*, in *Cronicari Munteni*, ed. M. Gregorian, vol. I, Bucharest, 1961, p. 544. See also A. Uricariul, *Cronica paralelă a Țării Românești și a Moldovei*, ed. by G. Ștrempel, 2, Bucharest, 1994, p. 342. Axinte also wrote that he had seen Patriarch Athanasios in Wallachia and mentioned the books printed with Arabic type; cf. Uricariul, *Cronica paralelă*, p. 342–343. See also Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 194.

13 Uricariul, *Cronica paralelă*, p. 342.

prove that the information was obtained from official documents of the time, such as the letter of Jeremias III of Constantinople.<sup>14</sup>

There is little data on Sylvester's visit to Wallachia in 1730. Most likely, he did obtain the most urgently needed financial support from the prince to repay the debts of his Patriarchate. Sylvester recalled his visit to Wallachia in at least two letters sent later. In one of them, addressed to the metropolitan Neophytos of Ungro-Wallachia, the patriarch mentioned that he had met the metropolitan's predecessor during his first brief visit, in the reign of prince Nikolaos:

[...] διατρίψαντες ὀλίγον ἐν Βουκουρεστίῳ διὰ τὰς κατεπιγούσας ἀνάγκας καὶ χρείας τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου μετὰ του πρὸ αὐτῆς αἰοδήμου μητροπολίτου Οὐγκροβλαχίας, ἐγνωρίσθημεν [...].<sup>15</sup>

[...] having spent a little time in Bucharest due to the urgent needs and necessities of our Apostolic Throne, we met with the late metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia [...].

Sylvester's visit to Wallachia was also recorded in a panegyric discourse written after the death of Nikolaos Mavrokordatos by hieromonk Parthenios of Athens, possibly the future patriarch of Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> The text mentions that Sylvester of Antioch was received by the prince "graciously and with all reverence and patriarchal benevolence".<sup>17</sup> Mavrokordatos gave him alms and urged his subjects to do the

14 MS Jerusalem 124, f. 1r–2r, in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ανάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, t. 2, p. 385–389.

15 Letter of Sylvester to the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia [Neophytos], February 10, 1739, in MS 124, Jerusalem, f. 102r–102v; cf. M. Beza, "Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios", *ARMSL*, S. III, VIII, 1936, p. 7–8. See also Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 217, no. 66.

16 The title of the discourse is "[Λόγος] εἰς τὸν μακαρίας μνήμης σοφώτατον καὶ ὑψηλότατον αὐθέντην καὶ ἡγεμόνα πάσης Οὐγγροβλαχίας κύριον Ἰωάννην Νικόλαον Ἀλεξάνδρου βοεβόδαν, συντεθεὶς παρὰ τοῦ ἐν σπουδαίοις ἐλαχίστου Παρθενίου ἱερομονάχου τοῦ ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν" ("[Discourse] for the most wise and most high prince and ruler of blessed memory lord John Nikolaos Alexandrou Voevodas, composed by the least among the studios Parthenios, a hieromonk of Athens"). It was published in D. G. Kampouroglou, *Μνημεῖα τῆς ἱστορίας τῶν Ἀθηναίων. Τουρκοκρατία*, 1, Athens, 1891, p. 244–251. For Parthenios, see C. A. Panchenko, "Иерусалимский Патриарх Парфений (1737–1766 гг.) и Россия: непонятый союзник", *Вестник церковной истории*, 3–4 (19–20), 2010, p. 271–285.

17 Kampouroglou, *Μνημεῖα τῆς ἱστορίας τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, 1, p. 246: "ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ κατὰ τινα χρόνον καὶ τὸν τῆς Ἀντιοχείας Πατριάρχην κύριον Σίλβεστρον, ἐκεῖσε προσδράμοντα δι' ἔλεον [...] ἀσμένως καὶ μεθ' ὅσης τῆς εὐλαβείας καὶ πατριαρχικῆς πομπῆς αὐτὸν ὑπεδέξατο, καὶ ἐξαρκεῖ μὲν αὐτὸς τῷ ἐλέει χρησάμενος [...]" ("but also at some point in time he joyfully and with all the reverence and patriarchal protocol received *kyrios* Sylvester, the Patriarch of Antioch, who came there for alms [...], and he granted him sufficient alms [...]").

same.<sup>18</sup> The prince described the patriarch as “modestly dressed, walking modestly, and sacerdotal” (“σεμνὸς τὴν ἀναβολὴν, σεμνὸς τὸ βάδισμα, ιεροπρεπής”).<sup>19</sup>

A later French source seems to confirm the support Sylvester received from Nikolaos Mavrocordatos after his visit to Wallachia.<sup>20</sup>

On October 2, 1730, Sylvester was issued a new *berat*. The reason for issuing a new confirmation was the onset of a new reign, that of sultan Mahmud I (1730–1754), and the reattachment of the Metropolis of Aleppo to the Patriarchate of Antioch.<sup>21</sup>

The events that took place in 1730 in Constantinople and the beginning of the reign of Mahmud I gave a new impulse to the efforts to obtain the appointment of Kyrillos VI as patriarch of Antioch instead of Sylvester. A report of the French ambassador in Constantinople, Marquis de Villeneuve, made it clear that the recent decrees of Rome did not help the situation:

Si la Cour de Rome avait usé de plus de ménagement et qu'elle n'eût pas fait publier en Syrie les décrets dont j'ai eu l'honneur de vous rendre compte dans mes précédentes lettres, il ne serait presque pas douteux que cette affaire ne fût suivie d'un succès tel que nous pouvons le désirer.<sup>22</sup>

If the Court of Rome had been more careful and had not had the decrees distributed in Syria which I had the honor of reporting to you in my previous letters, there would be almost no doubt that this affair was followed by the success that we could have wished for.

However, Kyrillos's party could count on the support of the pasha of Sidon. According to Marquis de Villeneuve, Kyrillos lacked the necessary funds to act efficiently towards obtaining the appointment as patriarch, while “son concurrent qui est riche en distribue [d'argent] de tous les côtés” (“his competitor who is rich is distributing [money] in all directions”).<sup>23</sup>

18 Kampouroglou, *Μνημεία τῆς ἱστορίας τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, 1, p. 246–247.

19 Kampouroglou, *Μνημεία τῆς ἱστορίας τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, 1, p. 247.

20 “Histoire des différentes persécutions exercées contre les catholiques d'Alep et de Damas”, in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, p. 473. See also Ch. 4 above.

21 H. Çolak, *The Orthodox Church in the Early Modern Middle East: Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria*, Ankara, 2015, p. 155–159. See also C. Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, p. 76–77. For the text of Sylvester's 1730 *berat*, see Çolak, Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 99–101 (transcribed Ottoman text), 226–228 (English translation).

22 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve, the French ambassador in Constantinople, to Count de Maurepas, state secretary of the Navy, February 18, 1731, in Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 469.

23 Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 569.



In 1732, the Porte issued another order prohibiting proselytism and commanding the Ottoman *Rhomaioi* subjects not to embrace the “religion of the Franks”, mentioning especially Damascus, Aleppo, Sidon, Tripoli, and Ptolemais. The order had been requested by Patriarch Meletios of Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup>

In 1733, the situation in Aleppo was again troubled as the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide declared Kyrillos the legitimate Catholic patriarch and prohibited the clerics to have any contacts with the Orthodox bishops. The pro-Latins were forced to choose sides, while the local Ottoman authorities became involved in the situation. The pasha questioned the metropolitan whether there were individuals in his Church who followed the religion of the Franks. The metropolitan tried to appease the situation, but the authorities took advantage and threatened with sanctions those who opposed the official orders to refrain from attending the missionaries’ services.<sup>25</sup> Two years later, in June 1735, Patriarch Neophytos VI of Constantinople wrote to the residents of Aleppo, asking them to accept the priests driven out for their Orthodox faith.<sup>26</sup>

In 1733, Sylvester was in Damascus, and he faced, according to Rowland Sherman, the troubles provoked by the pro-Latin party (the “Pervertiti”, as the English merchant, who did not lack imagination, called the patriarch’s opponents).<sup>27</sup>

In a letter written on March 22, 1734, the Jesuit Le Camus complained that the missionaries were not defended by de Villeneuve with the same force as the former ambassador, d’Andrezel. The Ottomans were threatening with persecutions “at the instigation of the heretic Patriarch Sylvester”.<sup>28</sup>

A visit of Sylvester to Moldavia in the 1730s, seemingly mentioned in a letter to Kosmas II of Alexandria (1712–1714, 1723–1736) or Kosmas III (1737–1746), did not take place.<sup>29</sup> The original text indicated Παῖσιον (Paiasios) and not τὸ Ἰάσιον (Iasi).<sup>30</sup> The undated letter attests to the patriarch’s presence in Paiasios and in

<sup>24</sup> See the Greek translation of the order in A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Γεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, vol. 4, Saint Petersburg, 1897, p. 428–430; [Chrysostomos Papadopoulos], *Ἡ Ἐκκλησία Γεροσολύμων κατὰ τοὺς τέσσαρας τελευταίους αἰῶνας (1517–1900)*, Athens, 1900, p. 253–254, notes. See also Karnapas, “Ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 4, 1906, p. 436.

<sup>25</sup> Letter of the consul of Aleppo to the French ambassador in Constantinople, June 12, 1733, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 402–404.

<sup>26</sup> Letter of Neophytos of Constantinople to the residents of Aleppo, June 1735, in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Γεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 395–397.

<sup>27</sup> See Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 241.

<sup>28</sup> Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 566, n. 1 (letter of March 22, 1734).

<sup>29</sup> The fact was mentioned as unlikely by Panchenko, “Сильвестр, патриарх Антиохийский”, p. 353.

<sup>30</sup> Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Ἀλεξανδρινὰ σημειώματα ΙΕΤ’”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος*, 5, 1912, vol. 9, no. 52, p. 224–230.



Alexandretta/İskenderun (“εις Σκενδερώνα”) as he was travelling towards his “throne”, probably to Damascus.<sup>31</sup>

In November 1734, Sylvester left Damascus for a tour, presumably of his eparchy: “On November 1, 1734, we went out of Damascus for a peregrination” (“Τῷ αψλδ’ Νοεμβρίου α’ ἐξήλθομεν τῆς Δαμασκοῦ χάριν περιηγήσεως”).<sup>32</sup> Several notes recording sums of money sent from various places in Damascus, Aleppo, Tripoli, and Constantinople in 1734–1739 reveal valuable information about the patriarch’s itinerary. His presence in Tripoli in May 1735 is confirmed by a letter of Rowland Sherman.<sup>33</sup> According to these notes, Sylvester went to Tripoli, Hama, Homs, Cyprus, Diyarbakır, Sparta (in Pisidia, now Isparta in Turkey), and Gümüşhane. It is more difficult to identify the place named “Mesopotamia”, which he visited before Gümüşhane, in December 1736. Maybe it was a reference to the broader region of Diyarbakır, which could be considered as located in historical Mesopotamia.

The sums of money recorded may offer an idea about the size of the debts of the Patriarchate for a relatively brief period: 7,400 *groschen* for Damascus, 2,286 for Aleppo, 800 for Tripoli, 10,850 for Constantinople (for the period May 1735 – September 1737). Another 3,500 *groschen* were also sent in 1737–1739 to the *kapıkehaya* Markos and as payments to *sior* Lukakis.<sup>34</sup>

On December 27, 1735, Sylvester travelled by sea from Laodicea to Cyprus (“1735 μηνὶ Δεκεμβρίου κζ’ ἐπλεύσαμεν ἀπὸ Λαοδικαίαν εἰς Κύπρον”).<sup>35</sup>

The missionaries kept asking the French ambassador Marquis de Villeneuve for the reinstatement (in fact, the appointment) of Kyrillos as patriarch, or at least the exile of Patriarch Sylvester’s representative (*wakīl*) in Damascus, Mikhā’īl ibn Ṭūmā (“Ebn Thoma” in the sources).<sup>36</sup> In his report on the state of the local religious communities, the French ambassador wrote that although he had secured an order to arrest ibn Ṭūmā, he recommended the consul in Sidon to discuss the matter with the missionaries and not to enforce this order, as he was convinced that such an attitude would bring tranquility.<sup>37</sup>

31 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 104v–105r (105v–106r).

32 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 140v–141r. See A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ανάλεκτα Γεωργοπολιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, vol. 1, Saint Petersburg, 1891, p. 218, no. 72.

33 See Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 241.

34 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 140v–141v.

35 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 8v.

36 For Mikhā’īl ibn Ṭūmā and the position of *wakīl* in the Patriarchate of Antioch, see Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 156.

37 Memorandum of Marquis de Villeneuve about religion, 1740, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 568–571.

In a letter written on July 25, 1735, the French ambassador in Constantinople pointed to Mikhā'il ibn Ṭūmā, Patriarch Sylvester's representative (*procureur*) in Damascus, as the main person responsible for the difficulties faced by the Catholic missionaries in the city. However, obtaining an order to exile him would have been difficult.<sup>38</sup> According to the ambassador, the appointment of Kyrillos Ṭanās as patriarch, defined in the letter as a "reestablishment" (*rétablissement*), could be obtained only by means of a petition sent by the local residents. And although this was the plan, it was difficult to implement, because it would have cost a lot of money, since "one can do nothing in Turkey without money" ("on ne fait rien en Turquie qu'avec de l'argent").<sup>39</sup> Other plans were made by the French to obtain the arrest of "Ebn Thoma", as a first step in the process of the replacement of Patriarch Sylvester.<sup>40</sup> Subsequent plans in this direction show that, at the time, the French were determined to act towards replacing the patriarch, or at least to give this impression to Rome and the missionaries.<sup>41</sup>

A note in a manuscript currently held in the Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)<sup>42</sup> mentions: "Εἰς τὰς ἀψλς' μηνὶ Μαίῳ ἦλθεν εἰς τὸ νησί ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σὺλβεστρος καὶ ἐπέρασεν εἰς τὸ Ἀκσεχέρη" ("In May 1736 came to the island the patriarch of Antioch Sylvester and he went on to Akşehir").<sup>43</sup> Since Akşehir is an inland city in Asia Minor, if our reading of the note is correct, most likely it refers to a similar place name in or near an Aegean island, or the island was on a lake.

On November 1, 1737, Sylvester was in Trebizond, from where he sent a written ὁμολογία to "Sīnior Lukakis",<sup>44</sup> certifying the sums of money the patriarch had borrowed from him. Notes on the lower part of the document, detailing the repayment

38 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve to Count de Maurepas, July 25, 1735, in Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, vol. 3, p. 454–455.

39 Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, vol. 3, p. 455.

40 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve to Count de Maurepas, November 23, 1735, in Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, vol. 3, p. 531: "Je suis persuadé que l'emprisonnement d'Ebn-Thoma, si nous l'obtenons, nous facilitera beaucoup les moyens de parvenir à la déposition du Patriarche Silvestre".

41 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve to Count de Maurepas, December 22, 1735, in Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, vol. 3, p. 538.

42 MS 281, I, f. 17.

43 S. Lampros, "Ενθυμήσεων ἤτοι χρονικῶν σημειωμάτων συλλογὴ πρώτη", *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων*, 7, 1910, p. 223; W. Studemund, L. Cohn, *Verzeichniss der griechischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, vol. I, Berlin, 1890, p. 155, no. 281.

44 Also "sior Lukakis" elsewhere in the text.

of the debt, offer important information concerning the whereabouts of the patriarch during the following years.<sup>45</sup>

In 1737, Sylvester issued a document in Arabic containing the conditions for priests and laymen to be considered as attached to the Orthodox Church. The conditions were composed by the patriarch's representative in Damascus, Michael, son of Thomas Ḥomṣī (Mikhā'il ibn Ṭumā of Homs). The terms, probably agreed upon with the patriarch, addressed the principal points of divergence with the Latin Church. Several priests and lay people returned to the Orthodox Church that year on December 6, the day of Saint Nicholas.<sup>46</sup>

In February 1739, the patriarch of Antioch was in Caesarea of Cappadocia, in Asia Minor.<sup>47</sup> This statement seems contradicted by a different document which states that it was issued in Damascus at the same time. However, there are good reasons to assume that the place (or the date – as the case may be) on that document is incorrect.<sup>48</sup> Another document which indicates that Sylvester was in Caesarea of Cappadocia in February 1739 is a letter which he wrote on the 10<sup>th</sup> of that month to the prince of Moldavia Gregory II Ghikas, asking for financial aid.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, he wrote to the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia<sup>50</sup> and to the Metropolitan Iōannikios of Stavroupolis (Stavropoleos), who was in Bucharest at the time.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>45</sup> MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 32.

<sup>46</sup> Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 650–651.

<sup>47</sup> He signed there, on February 1, 1739, an ὁμολογία certifying that he borrowed 1,400 groschen from “Hatzi Spandonakis” of Constantinople, cf. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 31v. See also Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 859.

<sup>48</sup> Document issued by Sylvester of Antioch, February 1, 1739, Damascus, in the National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, shelfmark *Achiziții Noi*, MMMXL/3. Most likely, the place of issue of the document is mistaken. See also M.-D. Ciucă, S. Vătafu-Găitan, et al. (eds.), *Colecția Achiziții Noi. Indice cronologic nr. 25*, vol. II. 1686–1760, Bucharest, 2008, p. 164, no. 1812.

<sup>49</sup> MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 101. See Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 857; Păcurariu, “Legăturile Țărilor Române cu Patriarhia Antiohiei”, p. 610; Panchenko, “Сильвестр, патриарх Антиохийский”, p. 353 (states that the letter was written in Damascus).

<sup>50</sup> MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 101r–101v.

<sup>51</sup> MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 101v–102r.