

DE GRUYTER



Mihai Țipău

SYLVESTER OF ANTIOCH

LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF AN 18TH-CENTURY
CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH



EARLY ARABIC PRINTING
IN THE EAST

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افسلیقسطاوی کی قیماو خدر یسطوی ایون
افتنضوی کی ییوناس باسیس مواضو
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Sylvester of Antioch

Early Arabic Printing in the East

Edited by
Ioana Feodorov

Volume 3

Mihai Țipău

Sylvester of Antioch



Life and Achievements of an 18th-Century
Christian Orthodox Patriarch

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Preface

On September 24, 1724, in the Saint George Patriarchal Cathedral in Constantinople, the *protosynkellos* Sylvester was ordained bishop and then elected Patriarch of Antioch and All the East. Antioch was a famous Orthodox Church with a respectable tradition dating back to the first years of Christianity. It was the beginning of Sylvester's long and varied activity in the service of the Orthodox Church. It marked the starting point of his struggles to defend Orthodoxy in his eparchy, confronted at the time with the most intense challenges ever. Sylvester's election as Patriarch also marks the beginning of the story in this book, as it provides the first written evidence about him. The Patriarch's journeys, alongside his actions and multiple interests, will unfold over the course of the next chapters, revealing his largely unknown personality. The following pages are just an attempt to present it in its various aspects.

The historian's work is like that of a detective: he assembles pieces of information to form an image, like a large jigsaw puzzle. For some historical periods or geographical areas, especially those further removed from the present, not all the pieces of the puzzle are readily available. However, this is another subject altogether. The issue with the sources for the topic of this book is not so much a lack thereof, as their extremely diverse nature. The fact that not all sources have yet been found complicates the historian's work.

Who was Sylvester of Antioch? Concise answers to this question, found in encyclopedias and general histories, in both printed and online versions, inform the reader about his personality.¹ But the next question is whether these short biographies are reliable and complete. Apart from two scholarly articles published more than a century ago and an unpublished PhD thesis, no serious attempt has been made yet to write a monograph about this important leader of the Church

1 "Σίλβεστρος, πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας", *Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, vol. 21. *Ραβέννα-Σκούδον*, Athens, 1938, p. 838; G. D. Metallēnos, "Σίλβεστρος, Πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας", *Θρησκευτική και Ήθική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, vol. 11. Σβάιτσερ – Φυλακτήριον, Athens, 1967, col. 150–151; V. Pheidias, "Σίλβεστρος (; -1766). Πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας", in *Εκπαιδευτική Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια. Παγκόσμιο Βιογραφικό Λεξικό*, vol. 9A, Athens, 1988, p. 257; P. M. Kitromilidēs, *Κυπριακή λογοισύνη 1571–1878. Προσωπογραφική θεώρηση*, Nicosia (Lefkosia), 2002, p. 252–254; K. Kokkinoftas, "Οι Κύπριοι Πατριάρχες Αντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος (1724–1766), Ανθέμιος (1791–1813) και Σπυρίδων (1891–1898)", *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου*, 3, 1996, p. 311–329; C. A. Panchenko, "Сильвестр, патриарх Антиохийский", in *Православная энциклопедия*, vol. LXIII, Moscow, 2021, p. 351–355.

of Antioch.² Some may argue that such monographs or historical biographies are nowadays obsolete, but this is another discussion, surpassing by far the aim of this introduction. And as long as such books are produced about other individuals in world history, there is no reason to consider this scientific approach as outdated. The following pages will hopefully prove that both professional historians and the public may find it useful. Theologians, historians of printing, and art historians could also benefit from the new data provided henceforth.

In some aspects of the research of Sylvester's activity, progress was made in recent years, in areas such as his institutional relations with the Ottoman authorities or his printing activity. Nevertheless, there is a lot more to be done, as proven by new and previously unknown sources and by material that has not yet been fully explored. A lot of open questions remain concerning the topic of the printing presses established by Sylvester; on which there are a lot of unknowns. What books were printed, and do we have a complete list? Was there a printing press in Bucharest, and if so, which books were published there? And most importantly, where are the copies of the books printed by Sylvester now? Is there an explanation for the fact that they are so rare, and, in many cases, there is only one known copy?

For most of the modern scholars dealing with this topic, the year 1724 marks a turning point in the history of the Church of Antioch. Encyclopedias and general histories consider this date as the starting point of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch. Some patriarchal lists for both the Melkite and the Orthodox Church begin with this year, and the date is considered of paramount importance by both Antiochian Churches.³ It is also stressed that this year marked the beginning of a succession of ethnic Greek patriarchs on the throne of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, continuing until the late 19th century, with all the implications of this fact, especially during the “century of the nations”. On the 300-year anniversary of the

² The two articles are: K. Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος ὁ Κύπριος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 2, 1905, p. 191–206, 525–541; 3, 1906, p. 28–43, 364–389, 471–485, 602–617; 4, 1906, p. 49–67, 290–313, 429–444, 498–513; 5, 1907, p. 54–69, 361–378, 638–652, 846–867; and I. Sokolov, “Ἀντιοχειακὸς πατριάρχης Σιλβέστρ (1724–1766 γ.). Ἱστορικεὸς ὄψαρκ”, in *Сообщения Императорского православного палестинского общества*, XXIV, 1913, 1, p. 3–33. The PhD thesis is V. Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας (1724–1766) κατὰ τις ἀραβικὲς καὶ ἐλληνικὲς πηγές*, Thessaloniki, 1992 (unpublished). See <http://hdl.handle.net/10442/hedi/2014> (accessed June 15, 2024). See also Phōtios, Episkopos Palmyras, “Ο Πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Ὁρθοδοξία*, 29, 1954, 1, p. 49–57.

³ It should be noted that the term “Melkite” was used before 1724 for the entire Patriarchate of Antioch, sometimes called by Western sources “Greek”.

separation, in 2024, the two Churches prepared several books and organized conferences in order to collect scholarly opinions on the related topics.⁴

For most contemporaries, the events of 1724 were neither new nor unheard of. Contested hierarchs and even patriarchs were a reality in the previous decades and centuries. The most recent was the quarrel and the disputations between Athanasios Dabbās and Kyrillos V ibn al-Zaʿīm, which ended in 1694 with a compromise, the former deciding to recognize the latter's patriarchal claims in exchange for the Metropolitan throne of Aleppo and guaranties that in due course he would be acknowledged as Kyrillos's successor.

Not new either was the struggle, often fierce, among different factions, clans, and even influent families inside the Antiochian Orthodox Christian community. This struggle was reflected in the choice of persons representing the community in relation with the local and central authorities. Local factions also played a part in the 18th century, as in the previous period. Every one of the most important centers of the community, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut, and Tripoli had its particularities that had to be considered by any leader who wanted to impose his authority over the Church of Antioch. There were also the smaller communities in the villages across modern-day Syria and Lebanon. Merchant Antiochian Christian diasporas existed in Egypt and Constantinople.

Another phenomenon, easy to notice in the events of 1724, was the involvement of foreign actors such as the French and English diplomats in Aleppo and Constantinople and Roman Catholic missionaries. The fact was also customary, as the various factions had often tried to enlist foreign help in their disputes.⁵

Catholic influences were not new, and Rome had made considerable efforts in the past centuries to obtain some sort of formal allegiance from the Antiochian Church. In fact, after Kyrillos Ṭanās's election in 1724, the Pope was reluctant at first to send him a *pallium*, and thus, his official recognition as Patriarch of Antioch.

The reasons were not as much confessional or ideological, as Kyrillos seemed more devoted to Rome than his opponent, the Orthodox Sylvester, but rather the

4 For example, the conference “The Orthodox Church of Antioch from the 15th to the 18th century: towards a proper understanding of history” was convened by the Saint John of Damascus Institute of Theology of the University of Balamand, Lebanon, on October 16–18, 2023. The Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome and the Arab Christian Documentation and Research Center at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut have prepared a book and an academic event on the topic “The Split in the Greek Patriarchate of Antioch Three Centuries Later (1724–2024). Retrospective and Prospect”, forthcoming.

5 For the general situation of the time, see C. Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie. Comunicatio in Sacris, coesistenza e conflitti tra le comunità cristiane orientali (Levante e Impero ottomano, XVII–XVIII secolo)*, Rome, 2019, p. 65–88.

result of a realistic evaluation of the situation on the ground. It was not clear how much Kyrillos was in control of the Antiochian Church and, even with his powerful supporters, what his perspectives of maintaining his position were. For long periods, he was away in the mountains, far from the urban centers, and, except for a short period of time, he failed to secure from the Ottoman authorities a *berat*, the official document confirming his office.

After all, the Roman See was eager to obtain the allegiance of the Melkite Church of Antioch as a whole and it was not its intention, at least in the beginning, to create a smaller, dissenting, Greek Catholic Church. Such an institution would have proven difficult to defend and support in the established Ottoman system, as its members, while being Ottoman subjects, were no longer Orthodox (*Rūm*) and they were not Catholics (Latins) either. Eventually, Rome accepted the *status quo* and the creation of a new, dissident Church, and therefore, it sent the *pallium* to Kyrillos. The condition imposed by Rome to its Catholic missionaries was to respect the “Greek” rite of the new Church of Antioch and not impose the Latin one.⁶

The Ottomans eventually recognized *de facto* the existence of the Greek Catholic group. The *de jure* recognition from the Ottoman authorities came much later, in the 1830s.⁷

However, as previously stated, the year 1724 did not bring about sudden changes in the religious life of the Christian communities of the ancestral Church of Antioch. Changes took place over long decades, and they were influenced and determined by various historical, political, and cultural circumstances. Among these, the production and distribution of printed books played a significant part.

As for Sylvester, it is not certain that he considered himself a “Greek”, let alone the first Greek patriarch in centuries, as opposed to the rest of his community, composed for the most part of “Arabs” or Arabic-speaking Christians. When considering the 18th century realities, the question of identity is far more complex, especially in those geographical areas. Yet again, the diverse sources can provide some answers to rather difficult and sometimes anachronistically formulated questions. The aim

6 For Rome’s attitude towards the Oriental Churches, see Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, p. 169–198.

7 H. Petermann, *Reisen im Orient*, 1, Leipzig, 1860, p. 112; C. Charon, “L’émancipation civile des Grecs Melkites (1831–1847)”, *Échos d’Orient*, 9, 1906, 60, p. 270–277, and 61, p. 337–344; J. Nasrallah, R. Haddad, *Historie du mouvement littéraire dans l’Eglise Melchite du V^e au XX^e siècle. Contribution à l’étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne*, vol. IV. *Époque Ottomane 1516–1900*, 2, 1724–1800, Louvain/Paris, 1989 (henceforth Nasrallah, Haddad, HMLÉM IV.2), p. 45; B. Masters, “The Establishment of the Melkite Catholic Millet in 1848 and the Politics of Identity in Tanzimat Syria”, in P. Sluglett, S. Weber (eds.), *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule. Essays in Honour of Abdul Karim Rafeq*, Boston/Leiden, 2010, p. 455–473, especially p. 459–464.

of this book is to provide answers, as much as possible, to some of the more relevant questions about Sylvester's life and activity. However, its purpose is not to challenge or try to demolish historical considerations dating back decades, or even centuries. Nevertheless, a return to the period reports is always useful for the historian. Reading again more or less known sources, while trying to find new ones, is also helpful in most cases.

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John Spurlock, Registrar and Assistant Curator at the Huntington Museum of Art (Huntington, WV) provided me, at the request of Dr. Joseph B. Touma, with an image of an icon of Sylvester and other related information, as well as bibliographical references. Kōnstantia Kephala kindly offered me information and sent me images of an icon in Patmos. I thank them all for their help.

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1 Before 1724

1.1 The Patriarchate of Antioch

The election of a new patriarch of Antioch in Constantinople was not unusual for the Orthodox Church. For the Ecumenical Patriarchate, even if in theory the other three Patriarchates – of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem (in order of precedence) – were autocephalous, i.e., self-governed, in practice, the situation was somewhat different. The Great Schism between the Western and Eastern Churches in 1054 had caused the *de facto* abolition of the Pentarchy (i.e., the system of the five Patriarchates). The result was that the patriarch of Constantinople held the “primacy of honor” (τὰ πρωτεία τῆς τιμῆς) in the Orthodox Church. This new position and the title of “Ecumenical Patriarch” meant that he became a kind of authority to which the other Churches could apply in case of disputes. Another patriarch who had a similar title was the one of Alexandria, referred to as “pope and patriarch of the great city of Alexandria and judge of the world” (πάπας καὶ πατριάρχης τῆς μεγάλης πόλεως Ἀλεξανδρείας καὶ κριτῆς τῆς οἰκουμένης). Unlike the patriarch of Constantinople after 1453, the patriarch of Alexandria had not been able to make use of any of the powers such a title could provide. Therefore, “judge of the world” remained just a title, although it continued to be used until late in the Ottoman period.

After the Arab conquest, the Orthodox patriarchates of the East became somewhat less relevant in the Orthodox Church as a whole. The Byzantine system meant that the Church organization followed the political one closely. Even before the Arab conquest, the Eastern Churches had often been divided. Dogmatic disputes had led to the formation of Monophysite and Nestorian Churches, of the Coptic Church in Egypt, and the Jacobite, Maronite, and Nestorian churches in Syria and Lebanon. There was also the ancient Armenian Church, with an important population in Cilicia and a diaspora in the major urban centers of the East. A language barrier also separated many Oriental Churches from the Greek-speaking Byzantine Church. The Coptic and Syriac languages used in the Oriental Churches were progressively replaced by Arabic. The people who were attached to the Orthodox Church were often in a difficult position. They were called by the other religious denominations “Melkite”, meaning “those who sided with the (Byzantine) emperor”. No matter what their native tongue was, they were also called *Rūm*, after the ethnic name Ῥωμαῖοι, or Romans, assumed by the Byzantines. The Byzantines (the term itself is

a modern invention) always considered themselves Romans, as their capital city was the New Rome.¹

The Crusades disrupted the life of the Patriarchates, replacing the Greek Orthodox hierarchy with a Latin one in Antioch and Jerusalem, for various periods. Sometimes, the Byzantines appointed titular patriarchs who resided in Constantinople. An example is Theodore Balsamon, a renowned legal scholar, who was appointed patriarch of Antioch in 1193.

During the last centuries of its history, the Byzantine Empire itself became less and less relevant in the geopolitical world system. In contrast, the Church of Constantinople did not lose its prestige and position in the areas culturally influenced by Byzantium. Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (the so-called Orthodox Commonwealth),² areas of the Caucasus, Asia Minor, Egypt, and large parts of the Middle East remained in Constantinople's sphere of influence. Moreover, in the 14th–15th centuries new eparchies were established in areas which had not previously been controlled by Byzantium, such as the Metropolis of Ungro-Wallachia and that of Moldavia.

The Ottoman conquest changed the whole ideological system built by the Byzantines but, as a paradox, some of the patterns of the Byzantine way of administration survived (as they were, or in an adapted form). The Ottomans allowed for the Church organization to be maintained in the territories they gradually annexed to their empire. The Patriarchate of Constantinople was reinstated shortly after the conquest of the city in 1453. After the conquests of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine in the early 16th century, three other historical Orthodox Patriarchates came under Ottoman control. Therefore, the Ottoman authorities had to face the questions arising from this situation and find ways to manage their relations with these institutions.

The question of the role of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the position of the patriarch in the Ottoman Empire is a topic that generated much debate in modern historical writing over the course of decades. Ottoman and Modern Greek historians were involved in discussions and controversies. Older and more recent sources were used to support or reject specific points of view. Sometimes,

1 The bibliography of the subject is very rich and even an attempt to give some orientation would surpass the aim of this book. For a general idea see C. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome*, London, 1980.

2 For this term, see P. M. Kitromilidēs, “Από την ορθόδοξη κοινοπολιτεία στις εθνικές κοινότητες. Το πολιτικό περιεχόμενο των ελληνορωσικών πνευματικών σχέσεων κατά την Τουρκοκρατία”, in *Χίλια χρόνια Ελληνισμού – Ρωσίας*, Athens, 1994 p. 139–165; P. M. Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth. Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe*, 2nd ed., Abingdon/New York, 2007.

projections of modern ideas on ethnicity were applied to late medieval or early modern realities. It is not the place here to present, repeat, or discuss the various theories on this subject. Generally speaking, a purely theoretical approach to the sources can obscure their meaning, or the value of the information they provide. As a rule, long theoretical discourses do not improve the understanding of historical facts, but they often have the opposite effect. The reader will not find them in this book.

To complete this brief historical presentation, it should be added that all the considerations above are relevant for a clear understanding of the situation of the Church of Antioch in the 18th century.

Starting with the 19th century, many modern historians identified the election of Kyrillos Ṭanās as patriarch of Antioch, followed by the election of Sylvester within less than a month (even if, as we shall see, he was officially appointed as patriarch by the Ottoman authorities earlier), as a turning point in the history of the Church of Antioch. As we mentioned above, the year 1724 is considered the birth date of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch, celebrated – or commemorated – as such three centuries later, in 2024. At the same time, Sylvester is considered as the first “Greek” patriarch of the Church of Antioch after centuries of Arabic-speaking leaders. He is seen as the first in a long line of Greek-speaking patriarchs that ended only in the late 19th century. As usual, the reality of the historical facts is more complex than general statements such as these can reveal. The way contemporary witnesses perceived these events is yet another issue. To fully understand their development, a return to the sources is definitely necessary.

1.2 Athanasios III Dabbās

The aim of this book is not to present a biography of Athanasios III Dabbās, nor the history of the Patriarchate of Antioch in the period before Sylvester became patriarch. The events that took place before this date are presented here only to help the reader better understand what followed. Of course, all historical data considered essential, for the same reason, is also provided henceforth.

Athanasios Dabbās became patriarch of Antioch for the second time in 1720, after the death of Kyrillos V. According to an agreement made to end a long dispute between the two, Dabbās, who resided in Aleppo and had for a while been *proedros* of the Church of Cyprus, followed Kyrillos on the Antiochian throne.

Athanasios Dabbās had not been archbishop or metropolitan of Cyprus, but his title from 1705 and 1708 was *proedros* (πρόεδρος), “president”, i.e., leader of the

Church of Cyprus.³ This term was used for a metropolitan who also had administrative responsibility over another Church.⁴ There is a document issued by Patriarch Gabriel III of Constantinople recording the deposition of Archbishop Germanos of Cyprus and the election of Athanasios, the former patriarch of Antioch, by the Cypriot clergy, “presidentially” (προεδρικῶς). The document records Athanasios’s election as archbishop of Cyprus, mentioning that the former patriarch accepted “the presidency of the Archbishopric in Cyprus” (τὴν προεδρίαν τῆς ἐν Κύπρῳ Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς). The patriarch of Constantinople asked for Athanasios to be recognized as “president and protector of the Most Holy Archbishopric of Nea Justiniana of Cyprus” (πρόεδρον καὶ προστάτην τῆς αὐτόθι ἁγιωτάτης Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς Κύπρου).⁵ The document is undated, but a time clue is that Gabriel III had been patriarch from 1702 to 1707. According to other opinions, Athanasios was *proedros* of the Archbishopric of Cyprus until 1710.⁶ Others have suggested that Athanasios, although appointed, did not actually occupy the office of archbishop of Cyprus.⁷

The position of patriarch of Antioch came with a lot of challenges that Dabbās was aware of. The period of Dabbās’s second term as patriarch coincides with an increase in the level of activity of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem. Western monastic orders were very active, and the zeal of the missionaries bore fruit. Many of the faithful of the Church of Antioch declared themselves Catholics or were considered as such by others. They

3 Διοικητική συγκρότηση της Εκκλησίας Κύπρου και των λοιπῶν Ορθόδοξων Εκκλησιῶν. Έτος 2018, Nicosia, 2017, p. 31.

4 For the meaning of the term *proedros* (πρόεδρος), see “Περὶ τῶν τίτλων “προέδρου” καὶ “τόπον ἐπέχοντος”, *Νεολόγος Εβδομαδιαία Επιθεώρησης. Πολιτική, φιλολογική, ἐπιστημονική*, 2, 28, 1893, p. 541–546 (three studies on the subject by various authors). The Romanian version: C. Erbiceanu, “Studii literare asupra cuvintelor πρόεδρος = președinte și τόπον ἐπέχοντος loco-țitior, ce se întâmpină în Practicalele Sântelor Sinoade și în praxa Bisericii Orthodoxe”, *BOR*, 17, 1893, 5, p. 326–332, 6, p. 435–442. See also A. P[apadakis], “Proedros”, in A. P. Kazhdan, A.-M. Talbot, et. al. (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 3, New York/Oxford, 1991, p. 1727–1728.

5 K. Delikanēs, *Τὰ ἐν τοῖς κώδιξι τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκοπικοῦ σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικά ἔγγραφα τὰ ἀφορόντα εἰς τὰς σχέσεις τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου πρὸς τὰς Ἐκκλησίας Ἀλεξανδρείας, Ἀντιοχείας, Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ Κύπρου (1574–1863)*, Constantinople, 1904, p. 566–570.

6 Delikanēs, *Τὰ ἐν τοῖς κώδιξι τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκοπικοῦ σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικά ἔγγραφα*, p. 571. See also I. Hakkett, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κύπρου*, 1, Athens, 1923, p. 284–285.

7 C.-M. Walbiner, “Die Bischofs- und Metropolitensitze des griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchats von Antiochia von 1665 bis 1724 nach einigen zeitgenössischen Quellen”, *Oriens Christianus*, 88, 2004, p. 50; C.-M. Walbiner, “The Relations between the Greek Orthodox of Syria and Cyprus in the 17th and 18th Centuries”, *Chronos*, 16, 2007, p. 120.

professed allegiance to the pope at the missionaries' entreaty. Among them, there were priests and even bishops.

During his second time in office (1720–1724), Athanasios Dabbās mostly resided in Aleppo, home to a large Christian community (some 40,000 people, according to a 1730s estimate).⁸ The city was also a thriving commercial center with an active merchant community, both Ottoman subjects and foreigners. Consuls of England and France also resided in the city, as well as Roman Catholic missionaries.

The latter belonged to at least four monastic orders, as mentioned in sources of the time: Cordeliers, Carmelites, Capuchins, and Jesuits of various nationalities. Their zeal in accomplishing their mission was in many cases remarkable and results were often beyond expectations. However, such an approach often implied high risks and could be dangerous for themselves and for others. As stated in a source of the time that mentions the instructions given to the French ambassador Marquis de Villeneuve in 1728 by the central authorities, their main task was to convert Turks to Christianity and unite the Orthodox and the Armenian Christians with the Church of Rome.⁹ If the first objective was easier to formulate theoretically than to implement practically, the second was producing some tangible results, after a period of intense activity.

Missionaries traditionally had had the support of the king of France in their actions in the East, so they were confident in their actions, as they could count on his (almost) unconditional backing. They were supported by the French ambassador in Constantinople and the consuls in the main cities. The king of France considered himself to be the protector of the Catholic faithful in the Ottoman Empire, based on the historically good relations between the two states. These relations were confirmed by the so-called “capitulations”, dating back centuries, renewed from time to time and with every new reign. Among other clear provisions, the capitulations contained chapters on the extent of the authority of the consuls, the jurisdiction and the rights of Latin missionaries in the Ottoman Empire.

The most active of the Melkite bishops who embraced Catholicism and supported the union of the Melkite Church with Rome was Euthymios (Aftūmiyūs) Şayfī, metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon.¹⁰

⁸ Letter of the Jesuit priest Pierre Fromage to a German Jesuit, April 25, 1730, in A. Rabbath, *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire du Christianisme en Orient (XVI–XIX siècle)*, vol. II, Paris/Leipzig/London, 1910, p. 397. See also Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 34.

⁹ Instructions given to the French ambassador Marquis de Villeneuve, August 11, 1728, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 328–329.

¹⁰ Walbiner, “Die Bischofs- und Metropolitensitze”, p. 80–82.

Information about Euthymios Şayfî can be found in a 1731 memorandum of Jean-André du Bellis, chancellor of the French consulate in Sidon (Şaydâ). Du Bellis wrote that Euthymios wanted to obtain the annexation of the Bishopric of Acre from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem by paying 1,000 *piasters* to Osman, the pasha of Sidon. His actions attracted the attention of the Orthodox patriarchs. According to Jean-André du Bellis, Euthymios had studied in Rome and was a man of action. In 1720, after the death of Patriarch Kyrillos V, Euthymios tried to obtain the patriarchal throne of Antioch.¹¹ His attempt was not successful, as Athanasios succeeded Kyrillos, based on the agreement the two had made. Euthymios wanted to appoint a bishop in Acre (also known in the Greek sources as Ptolemais) who would promote the pro-Latin innovations he had implemented in his eparchy. He was allegedly supported by Thomas of Campaya, a Franciscan monk of *Terra Sancta* residing in Damascus. The only problem was that the Bishopric of Acre was dependent on the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and not on the Patriarchate of Antioch. In Euthymios's project, the See of Acre was prepared for his nephew Seraphim, the future patriarch of Antioch Kyrillos ʿAnās.¹² Eventually, with help from the English in Aleppo, the patriarch of Jerusalem succeeded in recovering the Bishopric of Acre.¹³

In 1710, Euthymios Şayfî printed an Arabic book about the “Concordia” of the Western and Eastern Churches in Rome, with the title *Kitāb al-dalāla al-lāmi'a bayna quṭbay al-Kanīsat al-jāmi'a*.¹⁴ The book, which supported the main teachings

11 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 593. Du Bellis states that after 1720 no election took place for the Patriarchate of Antioch and that the information that Athanasios remained on the See of Aleppo must be taken with caution. Dabbās was officially appointed Patriarch of Antioch by the Ottomans in 1720. About Athanasios's berat issued on February 17, 1720, see H. Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria: 16th–18th Centuries*, PhD thesis, Birmingham, 2012, p. 95, 263–265 (the text and translation of the berat).

12 Du Bellis mentions an anecdotic episode about Seraphim, who, while in Rome, learning about his new intended position, ordered a portrait of himself as a cleric. The portrait remained in Rome, while Seraphim returned to Euthymios. Apart from the anecdotic aspect, this episode is an interesting source on portraits among the Antiochians. See Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 592. For painted portraits in the Antiochian Church, see B. Heyberger, “From Religious to Secular Imagery? The Rise of the Image among Christians in Syria and Lebanon in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries”, in B. Heyberger, *Middle Eastern and European Christianity, 16th–20th Century. Connected Histories*, ed. by A. Girard, C. Santus, et al., Edinburgh, 2023, p. 199–224.

13 A. Rabbath, *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire du Christianisme en Orient (XVI–XIX siècle)*, vol. I, Paris/Leipzig, 1905, p. 591. On Euthymios, see also P. Bacel, “Les innovations liturgiques chez les Grecs Melkites au XVIII^e siècle”, *Échos d'Orient*, 9, 1906, 56, p. 5–10.

14 *Ecclesiae Graecae Orthodoxae Orientalis cum Romana Catholica Occidentali Concordia*, Rome, 1710. C. F. von Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, Hallae, 1811, p. VIII, 274, no. 272; Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 186–188. On the 2nd edition, published in Jerusalem, 1863, and a Latin

of the Roman Catholic Church, reached the East and, as expected, generated reactions from the opposite side. Ideas in the book were criticized by Orthodox scholars of the time. Patriarch Sylvester addressed its salient points in a letter to the inhabitants of Aleppo, as did Patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem (Fig. 3).

Euthymios became known as one of the leaders of the *Latinophrones*, “Latin-minded”, as they were called by the Orthodox.¹⁵ This was not new in the history of the Patriarchate of Antioch. The existence of opposing parties was an ordinary phenomenon, and each side usually tried to enlist all the foreign help it could get to reach its goals. Appeals to Rome, directly or through Catholic missionaries, were also not new in the region.

In 1722, however, the Orthodox patriarchs, assembled in Constantinople, decided to act against what they considered the excessive zeal of the Latin missionaries.¹⁶ Athanasios Dabbās joined the patriarch of Constantinople and the patriarch of Jerusalem in this combat. Of these three, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Chrysanthos Notaras, was perhaps the most experienced in dealing with the Roman Catholic missionaries. Having studied in Western Europe, he knew his opponents well. He was part of a succession of patriarchs of Jerusalem who had faced the challenges posed by Western missionaries in their eparchy. One of them, Chrysanthos’s uncle Dositheos, had supervised the printing of several books in Moldavia and Wallachia, which presented differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Chrysanthos continued his uncle’s editorial work by printing Dositheos’s monumental *Ιστορία τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχουσάντων* (*History of Those who Were Patriarchs in*

translation achieved in 1711, see J. L. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. by J. B. Martin, L. Petit, vol. 37, Paris, 1905, col. 120. See also R. Haddad, “Sources hellènes de la controverse dans l’Église melkite au XVIII^e siècle”, in C. Todorova, E. Sarafova (eds.), *Actes du premier Congrès international des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes*, vol. IV. Histoire (XVIII^e – XIX^e siècles), Sofia, 1969, p. 501. The Latin translation of the Arabic text was done by Joseph Simon Assemani, then a student in the Maronite College of Rome. The Latin text is preserved in MS 66 of the Institute of Byzantine Studies in Paris. See A. Binggeli, M. Cassin, V. Kontouma, “Inventaire des manuscrits de l’Institut français d’études byzantines”, *Revue des études byzantines*, 72, 2014, 66, p. 97, no. 66. For the Jerusalem edition of 1863, see G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*. Vol. III: *Die Schriftsteller von der Mitte des 15. bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts, Melchiten, Maroniten*, Vatican City (henceforth Graf, GCAL III), p. 182.

15 In a letter to the French king dated September 28, 1706, Euthymios signed: “Aftimos, Archevêque de Tyr et Sidon, fils de l’Église Romaine”. See Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 409–410.

16 For the Synod of 1722, see G. Vendotès, *Προσθήκη τῆς Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Ἱστορίας Μελετίου Μητροπολίτου Ἀθηνῶν*, vol. 4, Vienna, 1795, p. 59–60; A. K. Dēmētrakopoulos, *Ὁρθόδοξος Ἑλλάς ἦτοι Περί τῶν Ἑλλήνων γραψάντων κατὰ Λατίνων καὶ περὶ τῶν συγγραμμάτων αὐτῶν*, Leipzig, 1872, p. 170–171.

Jerusalem) in Bucharest.¹⁷ Among other topics, the book reported on the disputes of Orthodox patriarchs with Latin missionaries.

Chrysanthos of Jerusalem was also a learned theologian and there are strong indications that the document issued by the Synod of Constantinople in 1722 was composed by him. The document was addressed to the faithful of the Antiochian Church and defined the main points of divergence between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches.¹⁸

Finally, his extensive correspondence demonstrates that Chrysanthos of Jerusalem was well connected with the rich and influent Phanariot aristocracy. Among this élite group, grand dragomans of the Ottoman Empire and princes of Moldavia and Wallachia were selected by the Sublime Porte. This also helped Chrysanthos hold a position of influence. He even resided for long periods of time in the Ottoman capital.

Athanasios Dabbās tried to avoid being overtly in conflict with Latin missionaries during his second term in office. He had close relations with some of them, and the general impression of the missionaries active in Aleppo was that Dabbās was, if not a “Catholic” or a sympathizer, at least not opposed to them. This explains the generally positive attitude of the Latin friars in Aleppo towards Athanasios and, at first, even towards Sylvester, the successor commended by the late patriarch. This confident attitude was strongly criticized by the missionaries in Damascus.

17 The year of publication on the title page is 1715, but archival documents reveal that the printing of the book (an in-folio with over 1,429 pages) took longer and was finished only in the 1720s. For the book, see G. P. Kournoutos, “Η Δωδεκάβιβλος τοῦ Δοσιθέου εἰς τὴν τυπογραφίαν τοῦ Βουκουρεστίου”, *Θεολογία*, 24, 1953, 2, p. 250–273; Th. Papadopoulos, *Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλιογραφία (1466 ci. –1800)*, 1, Athens, 1984, p. 331, no. 4442 (dated 1714); K. Sarrēs, “Ὁ Χρῦσανθος Νοταρὰς καὶ ἡ ἐκδοσις τῆς ‘Δωδεκαβίβλου’ τοῦ Δοσιθέου Ἱεροσολύμων: μιὰ περίπτωσις ἀναληθοῦς χρονολογίας ἐκδοσῆς (1715/c. 1722)”, *Μνήμων*, 27, 2005, p. 27–53. The book includes a copperplate engraving of Patriarch Dositheos’s portrait, ordered in Western Europe. For the portrait, see V. Tchentsova, “La naissance du portrait dans l’espace orthodoxe. Représenter l’auteur dans les livres grecs du début du XVIII^e siècle”, in R. Dipratu, S. Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books Printed in Wallachia, Istanbul, and Beyond. First Volume of Collected Works of the TYPARABIC Project*, Berlin/Boston, 2024, p. 145–175.

18 Published in Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 127–208, from the MS 239 of the Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem, f. 3–69, and the MS Vallicellianus Allatianus 202 (LXXIV), f. 1–43. See also I. Karmiris, *Τὰ δογματικά καὶ συμβολικά μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, 2nd ed., vol. II, Graz, 1968, p. 822 [922]–859 [939]. See also M. Gedeōn, “Ἡ κατὰ Λατίνων Σύνοδος τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἱερεμίου Γ’”, *Κωνσταντινούπολις. Ἐφημερίς τῶν λαῶν τῆς Ανατολῆς*, 6, 1872, 1177, p. 2–3. For the synod, see also Haddad, “Sources hellènes de la controverse dans l’Église melkite”, p. 505; J. Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l’Église Melchite du Ve au X^e siècle. Contribution à l’étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne*, vol. IV. *Période Ottomane 1516–1900*, tome 1. 1516–1724, Louvain/Paris, 1989 (henceforth Nasrallah, *HMLÉM* IV.1), p. 141.

While in Constantinople, there were no ambiguities in Athanasios's behavior. He signed the letter to the Antiochians issued by the Synod of 1722 alongside Jeremias III of Constantinople, Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, and seven metropolitans.

The same year, the Orthodox patriarchs also made another move, trying to enlist the support of the Ottoman political power. Apparently, they asked for and obtained an imperial decree: an old French translation of this Ottoman document mentions Jeremias (III) of Constantinople and Athanasios of Antioch "and Damascus".¹⁹ The decree was issued by sultan Ahmed III (1703–1730) on September 14, 1722, and prohibited the Latin missionaries' proselytism among Ottoman subjects. It also ordered the Christian Ottoman subjects to retain their ancient religion and not to adhere to that "of the pope". The decree was especially addressed to the viziers and pashas of Aleppo, Sidon, Diyarbakır, Tripoli, and Damascus, and to other major government and justice officers in these cities.²⁰ The reason for issuing the decree was the fact that Latin monks had succeeded in converting to Catholicism Christian subjects of the sultan (priests, monks, and lay people). The Orthodox patriarchs mentioned the example of the island of Chios.²¹ The decree intended to guarantee that Christians that observed their ancient religion were not to be disturbed. After the implementation, the new document was to stay in their possession. The decree also mentioned a previous document issued by the former sultan, Mustafa II (1695–1703). The sultan's decree of 1722 triggered a lot of reactions, and even years later it was mentioned and used in disputes between the two groups.

The effects of the decree were mitigated by the intervention of French diplomatic representatives and the way it was applied by the local authorities. For example, a decision to exile seven Catholics of Damascus and Sidon alongside Euthymios, the metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon, was annulled after the pasha of Sidon appealed to the central authorities.²²

¹⁹ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 546.

²⁰ The document was published in an old French translation which survives in the French archives; see Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 546–547.

²¹ "Scio", in the old French translation. In Chios, there was a Roman Catholic community even before the Ottoman conquest, when the island was governed by the Genoese family of Gattilusio. For the Gattilusio family, see A. P. Kazhdan, A.-M. Talbot, et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2, New York/Oxford, 1991, p. 824.

²² Letter of the French ambassador in Constantinople, Jean-Louis d'Usson, Marquis de Bonnac, to the king of France's minister, June 9, 1723, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 547–549. De Bonnac was ambassador in the Ottoman capital between 1716 and 1724. See also Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 592. Apparently, Osman, the pasha of Şaydā (Sidon) was at the time pasha of Damascus, while his son Ahmet governed Sidon.

To prevent the potentially dangerous effects of the decree for the missionaries, the French ambassador Marquis de Bonnac decided to meet with the Greek patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch. The meeting seemed to have had good results. De Bonnac secured the word of Chrysanthos not to pursue the provisions of the decree against the Latin monks. It seems that in his turn, the ambassador promised to moderate the missionaries' zeal. He also decided to write to Rome "not to abandon the missionaries to their zeal, not to send such a great number of monks, and to better choose the topics".²³ Athanasios also wrote a letter in Greek to his representatives in Aleppo and one in Arabic to those in Damascus, with the intention to calm the situation.²⁴ The French minister conveyed to the missionaries in Aleppo, through the French consul there, the request to act more discreetly.²⁵

The subject of Euthymios of Tyre and Sidon was a topic for yet another meeting of the French ambassador with the Patriarch Athanasios of Antioch, in June 1723. The ambassador wrote a letter to the *gérant* of the French consulate in Sidon reflecting on this conversation. He included a description of Dabbās's ideas on the unity of the Christian communities. The patriarch had expressed the view that efforts were to be made on both sides to avoid strong and offensive language towards each other. He mentioned that although the missionaries were generally moderate in their attitude, their converts were not, and neither were the "Greeks". Sources of the time use the term "Greeks" to refer to the Orthodox Christians in general, regardless of their ethnicity or language.

Concerning Euthymios, the patriarch told the ambassador that he had joined the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem in requesting an order to exile the metropolitan and his nephew Seraphim to a monastery. However, he was willing to refrain from applying this order, issued by the Ottoman authorities, and he was not ready to appoint a successor for Euthymios. Once again, the French ambassador

23 "J'écris à Rome qu'il me paraît absolument nécessaire de ne pas abandonner les missionnaires à leur zèle, de ne plus envoyer un si grand nombre de religieux, et de mieux choisir les sujets", cf. Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 548–549. The information is contained in the letter of Marquis de Bonnac to the minister and his correspondence with the French consul in Aleppo, Gaspard de Péleran. De Bonnac also had definite ideas about the way the missionaries should not insist, at first, that the new converts recognize the pope's supremacy, and that this topic should be left for later, or at least be discussed with delicacy. See Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 548–549.

24 Athanasios' representative, an *epitropos* (*ἐπίτροπος* in the Greek texts), "vicaire" in the French sources, was Leontios, a close collaborator, also maintained in this role by his successor Sylvester; cf. Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 549, n. 2.

25 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 551 (minister's letter to the French consul in Aleppo, August 25, 1723).

warned that if the Catholics were expecting the patriarch to act in their favor, it could lead to a situation beyond reconciliation.²⁶

After the order against him was revoked, Euthymios of Tyre and Sidon went to Damascus, where he died on October 8, 1723.²⁷

The missionaries in Aleppo did not share the French ambassador's conciliatory attitude. They considered Dabbās a dangerous heretic, as he sometimes openly pretended to be a Catholic. A letter of the Synod attacking the Latin positions, most likely the one approved in 1722, had already been circulating. Although it had no signature or seal, the catholic missionaries ascribed it to Athanasios.²⁸ Marquis de Bonnac reminded the missionaries that they were only tolerated in the Ottoman Empire and recommended them to befriend Patriarch Athanasios.²⁹ The ambassador's attitude of moderation was approved by the king of France.³⁰ However, a few days later, Louis XV asked de Bonnac to do his best to have the Sultan's decree of 1722 against the missionaries revoked.³¹

Marquis de Bonnac replied to the king's order in February 1724 with a long letter describing the Catholics' situation in the Ottoman Empire and the missionaries' status. Historically, Catholic communities had existed only on Mount Lebanon, in Galata, Chios, and some other islands of the Greek Archipelago. The missionaries came later in the Ottoman Empire, to places where French communities lived. They tried to convert the "Greeks" (Orthodox) and the Armenians to Catholicism. The first decree against the Catholic missionaries was issued in 1696, followed by the one of 1722. De Bonnac attributed the renewal of the decree to the trouble caused by two bishops converted to Catholicism, Abraham, an Armenian, and Euthymios Şayfî. The French ambassador expressed his view that having the decree revoked would be a difficult task and described to the king the actions he had taken in that direction so far.³²

26 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 551–553 (letter of Marquis de Bonnac to Bertrand, the gérant of the French consulate in Sidon, September 3, 1723).

27 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 559.

28 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 553–554 (letter of Marquis de Bonnac to the French consul in Aleppo, September 7, 1723).

29 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 554, n. 1.

30 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 555 (letter of the king's minister to the ambassador in Constantinople, October 13, 1723).

31 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 555–556 (king's letter to Marquis de Bonnac, October 30, 1723).

32 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 560–564.

In November 1723, Athanasios travelled from Constantinople to Aleppo, and avoided meeting the Latin missionaries and the French consul.³³

The French then appointed a new ambassador in Constantinople, Jean-Baptiste Louis Picon, Viscount d'Andrezel (1663–1727) (Fig. 4). On January 5, 1724, he received the instructions for his diplomatic mission. He was asked to continue the policy of moderation, exhorting the missionaries to be prudent, but at the same time offering to protect them.³⁴

In 1724, when a meeting was convened with the French consul in Aleppo, Catholic missionaries of four religious orders participated: Franciscans of *Terra Sancta*, Capuchins, Carmelites, and Jesuits.³⁵ The fact is indicative for the situation of the Roman Catholic missions in this city.

As the pope was a traditional enemy of the Ottomans, the Latin element was sometimes viewed with circumspection by the governing authorities. Missionaries generally used their skills to convert the “schismatic” Armenians or “Greeks” to the Latin rite.

The Roman Church understood that creating a group of Roman Catholics of the Latin rite, in Syria, for example, involved a potential conflict with the Ottoman authorities. After adopting another rite, or the “pope’s religion”, as it was formulated in the sultan’s decree of 1722, they remained Ottoman subjects. But in changing their religion, did they become “Franks”?³⁶ Could the new community give European powers a pretext for intervening in Ottoman state affairs? However, the intentions of the Roman Church at home were interpreted in different ways by the missionaries in the field. Supported, at least in theory, by the French ambassador, missionaries sometimes crossed the boundaries set by the official documents. They visited the houses of the Orthodox Ottoman subjects trying to convert them to Catholicism and the Latin rite.

The decision of Rome was therefore to allow the converts to preserve their Eastern rite. It was not a new idea: it had already been introduced at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–1439, when an attempt was made towards the union of

33 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 556–557.

34 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 558–559.

35 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 555–565.

36 On the use of “Frank” in Arabic sources, see I. Feodorov, “Ifranğ/Ifranğiyi: what language was Paul of Aleppo referring to in his travel notes?”, *Romano-Arabica*, New Series, 12, 2012, p. 105–116; I. Feodorov, “The meaning of Ifranğ and Ifranğiyi in Paul of Aleppo’s journal”, in R. G. Păun and O. Cristea (eds.), *Istoria. Utopie, amintire și proiect de viitor. Studii de istorie oferite profesorului Andrei Pippidi la împlinirea a 65 de ani*, Iași, 2013, p. 177–188; I. Feodorov, “Les Firanğ – Francs, Européens ou catholiques? Témoignages d’un chrétien syrien du XVII^e siècle”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 82, 2016, p. 1–32.

the Roman and the Greek Churches. In practice, maintaining the Greek rite while declaring to be Catholic and recognizing the pope's primacy (this was the point on which the missionaries insisted the most) meant to create a new Church.

At first, the intention of the Roman Catholic Church was to attract the whole Patriarchate of Antioch to Rome's sphere of influence. There was no intention to split the Antiochian Patriarchate and to establish a separate Greek Catholic Church. The official goal was not, at any time, to "convert Greeks" (who were in fact mostly Arabic speaking) to the Latin rite. The tactful attitude of some of the previous patriarchs of Antioch and, in part, even that of Athanasios Dabbās had left the impression that the plan had almost succeeded. The zeal of certain converts ultimately made the initial plan impossible. The other Orthodox patriarchs, led by the most influential of them, the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, took action. They condemned the converts' leaders and issued a Symbol of Faith at the Synod of 1722, particularly addressing the elements that divided them from the Roman Church. Leaders and lay people were forced to take a position and choose sides. Gradually, over the course of several decades, a Greek Catholic Arabic-speaking Church emerged, with its own hierarchy.

Creating a new religious identity was not an easy task. Especially for the more isolated communities, such as those on Mount Lebanon, things seemed not to have changed much. However, their remoteness contributed to the eventual success of the new Church. Evidence of this success was the fact that Greek Catholic communities started to appear in large cities too. But the problem of the new Church was its name that was to be recorded in Ottoman official documents. When in 1745 Kyrillos Ṭanās succeeded for a brief time in holding a *berat* that confirmed him as patriarch of Antioch, he was still considered *Rūm*, without any mention of his Catholic allegiance.³⁷ While aware of the differences, the Ottoman authorities preferred for a long time, all through the 18th century, to ignore, at least in official documents, the specific identity of the new community.

Western sources, especially French ones, usually name the members of the new community "Catholic", or, less often, "Greek Catholic". Later, the word "Melkite", which had previously been attributed to the entire Chalcedonian Church of Antioch, came to be used to refer exclusively to the Greek Catholics of the Eastern Mediterranean regions.³⁸

37 For the circumstances of Kyrillos Ṭanās's appointment as patriarch in 1745, see H. Çolak, "When a Catholic is invested as the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch: Serafim/Kyrillos Ṭanās and the Ottoman central administration in 1745", *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia*, 20, 2023, p. 29–55.

38 For the Melkites, see, among other sources, A. d'Avril, "Les Grecs Melkites", *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 3, 1898, 1, p. 1–30, and 3, p. 265–279; I. Dick, *Les Melkites. Grecs-Orthodoxes et Grecs-Catholiques des Patriarcats d'Antioche, d'Alexandrie et de Jérusalem*, Turnhout, 1994.

As we shall see, Greek sources preferred the term *Λατινόφρωνες*, “Latin-minded”, or the newly coined name *Κατόλικοι*, modeled on the existing word *Καθολικοί* (“universal”). Another form, with “τ” instead of “θ”, meant that the user ignored the “universal” pretention of the Roman Church. A pun with the similarly pronounced *κάτω λύκοι* (“lowly wolves”) might have been intended at times. The term *παπισταί* (“papists”) was also employed pejoratively. *Λατινόφρωνες*, or “Latin-minded”, used by Sylvester in many of his letters, is a Byzantine word, commonly used in late Byzantine literature.³⁹

Athanasios Dabbās died on July 13/24, 1724, in Aleppo.⁴⁰ He was most likely buried in Aleppo, as the inscription on his tomb is not among those of the former patriarchs recorded in Damascus and published in 1876 by Porfirii Uspenskii.⁴¹

The assessment of Athanasios’s personality among his Catholic contemporaries is different from one source to the other. Some missionaries in Aleppo considered him a “Catholic” because he eventually rejected the anti-Latin letter of the Synod of Constantinople in 1722 and the condemnation of the pro-Catholic letter composed by ‘Abdallāh Zākhir, and of the latter’s person.⁴² Other Latin sources mentioned his anti-Latin actions.⁴³ A report written by the French ambassador Marquis de Bonnac offers an objective evaluation of Athanasios’s actions towards maintaining a peaceful situation despite the activities of the missionaries, who repeatedly stirred trouble and forced the patriarch to take sides.⁴⁴

The French diplomatic correspondence presented above offers a general idea of the situation in the major cities of the Patriarchate of Antioch, as far as the Roman Catholic element and its relationship with the Orthodox communities are concerned, a few years before the election of Sylvester as patriarch, in 1724.

39 For the use of the word *Λατινόφρων*/*Λατινόφρωνες* in late Byzantine sources, see V. Laurent, *Les «Mémoires» du grand ecclésiastique de l’Église de Constantinople, Sylvestre Syropoulos, sur le concile de Florence (1438–1439)*, Paris, 1971, p. 428, 556.

40 Nasrallah, *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 132; I. Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians. The East European Connection*, Berlin/Boston, 2023, p. 131.

41 P. Uspenskii, *Восток Христианский. Сирия. Список антиохийских патриархов*, Kyiv, 1876, p. 10–11.

42 H. de Barenton, *La France catholique en Orient durant les trois derniers siècles. D’après des documents inédits*, Paris, 1902, p. 179–180. For Zākhir’s writing rejecting the Synod of 1722, see Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 568, n. 2; Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 117–119.

43 “Letter of a Capuchin Father of Damascus” dated October 30, 1724, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 567–569.

44 “Mémoire sur l’état actuel où se trouvent les affaires de la religion en Levant”, in C. Schefer (ed.), *Mémoire historique sur l’ambassade de France à Constantinople par le marquis de Bonnac publié avec un précis de ses négociations à la porte Ottomane*, Paris, 1894, p. 189–190.

The overall good relations between France and the Ottoman state, legally secured by the capitulations, allowed the former to intervene in favor of the Catholic Church across the empire. But during the 1720s, the Catholic missionaries took their zeal to higher levels. The fact attracted unwanted attention from the Ottoman authorities and a stronger reaction of the Orthodox higher clergy. The Orthodox Patriarchs of Constantinople, who had the “primacy of honor” (τὰ πρωτεῖα τῆς τιμῆς), and those of Jerusalem united their efforts against the Latin propaganda. Soon, Sylvester, the newly elected patriarch of Antioch, joined them. His attitude in this matter proved to be constant over the course of four decades. In the territories under the authority of the Church of Antioch, the Latin influence was the most intense. Priests and even bishops pronounced Catholic professions of faith and were acknowledged by the Roman Church. The phenomenon was not new in the 18th century.

They succeeded to convert some laymen, priests, and even a few bishops. As is often the case with converts, their zeal surpassed that of their mentors. The most active of these “Greek Catholics”, as they were increasingly called in European sources, was by far Euthymios Şayfî, the metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon. In 1710, the printing press of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome published his Arabic book about the union with Rome. He was soon excommunicated by the Patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, who also rejected Euthymios’s book and advised against reading it.⁴⁵

As the most senior of the Arabic-speaking clerics sympathizing with Rome, Euthymios Şayfî also wanted to promote his nephew Seraphim Ṭanās to a metropolitan See. When Euthymios died in 1723, Seraphim remained the obvious choice as the leader of the pro-Latin faction.

In August 1724, after patriarch Athanasios Dabbās’s demise, Seraphim tried to take his place. Supported by the Western missionaries and by the faithful who were favorable to the union with Rome, he succeeded in securing the help of Osman Pasha, the governor of Damascus, in exchange, as customary, for an important sum of money. The pasha promised to obtain the Patriarchal *berat* from the central Ottoman authorities, but the affair ended in Sylvester’s favor.

45 B. Heyberger, “Réseaux de collaboration et enjeux de pouvoir autour de la production de livres imprimés en arabe chez les chrétiens (XVII^e-début XVIII^e siècle)”, in A. Girard, B. Heyberger, V. Kontouma (eds.), *Livres et confessions chrétiennes orientales. Une histoire connectée entre l’Empire ottoman, le monde slave et l’Occident (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles)*, Turnhout, 2023, p. 403–404.

2 Letters and Codices as Sources on Patriarch Sylvester's Life and Works

Sylvester of Antioch's correspondence has partly survived. A few original letters are preserved, and some more were included in manuscripts of mixed content. This is not uncommon for Eastern European and Eastern Mediterranean regions in the 18th century. Letters were preserved by copying only if they were important from a theological, philosophical, or literary point of view. The original letters were usually discarded, while in some rare cases miscellaneous manuscripts containing original letters, bound together with copies, are preserved.

Important official documents were more often conserved in the original and transcribed in institutional registers. Some of them lost their relevance in time and were discarded or neglected. The most important reason for transcribing letters was their use as templates for future letter-writing. The so-called *ἐπιστολάρια* (*epistolaria*, collections of letters) contained many types of letters. Towards the end of the 18th century, *epistolaria* were even published in Venice and Vienna.¹

Even in its fragmentary condition, Sylvester of Antioch's correspondence, consisting of both private and official letters, offers a glimpse of his personality in a way no other source can.

The recipients of Sylvester's letters came from a wide range of social backgrounds. First, there are his fellow patriarchs, of Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem. He also wrote a letter to the *katholikos* of Upper Iberia in Georgia. The Patriarchs of Constantinople are by far the most numerous, as many different patriarchs occupied this See during Sylvester's life. The correspondence reflects that relations with them were sometimes difficult, but in most cases correct. During Sylvester's time in office, there were only three patriarchs of Alexandria: Kosmas II, Kosmas III, and Matthaïos, and three of Jerusalem: Chrysanthos, Meletios, and Parthenios. Relationships with them were usually good. There are also letters to metropolitans and ordinary clerics.

The correspondence with the Phanariots, usually princes of Moldavia and Wallachia, and their families, is equally important, as is that with the *archontes*, dignitaries in the Danubian Principalities and Constantinople.

In the 18th century, constant efforts were made to keep a record of inbound and outbound correspondence. In the case of Patriarch Sylvester, he was personally involved in selecting and, in some cases, transcribing his official and personal

1 T. E. Sklavenitēs, “Τα έντυπα επιστολάρια της Βενετίας (1757–1832)”, *Μεσαιωνικά και Νέα Ελληνικά*, 8, 2006, p. 151–168.

letters in several codices. Maybe it is not a coincidence that around the same time systematic registers of official documents were kept in the Romanian Principalities. The first complete records of official documents issued by the Patriarchate of Constantinople also date from this century. Of course, such codices existed already in previous centuries and in Byzantine times, but it is from the 18th century onwards that they were constantly kept and preserved in Orthodox milieus.

This measure that Sylvester adopted provides the modern historian with direct access to a wealth of information covering most of his Patriarchal term. The fact that personal letters are mixed with official documents just adds to the value of this type of sources.

While both the archives of the Greek Orthodox and the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchates were supposedly destroyed, according to Joseph Nasrallah, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus may preserve some 18th-century documents, especially from the Şaydnāyā Monastery.² Further research in this archive may reveal additional documents connected with Sylvester of Antioch.

It is generally assumed that the old library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus was destroyed by fire in the 1860 events in Syria. There are no records as to what was lost in terms of manuscripts and printed books – Greek, Arabic, or other. Invaluable material for Sylvester's times was probably lost. It is also possible that books printed by the patriarch in Iași, Bucharest, and Beirut were held by the Damascus library. The library of the Patriarchate of Antioch recovered in the following decades and additions to the manuscript collections were achieved until the late 20th century.

Given these circumstances, there is still good news for researchers. No less than three manuscripts produced by or under Sylvester's personal care, containing both private and official correspondence, personal notes, and other Greek, Arabic and Ottoman documents, are preserved in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Ḥarīṣā. The collections also contain texts in the Patriarch's own handwriting. Chronologically, they cover large periods of Sylvester's time in office. Certain decades are less documented than others, especially the first and the last years. Nevertheless, these three miscellanies provide altogether an almost complete image of the challenges faced by Sylvester during his time in office, as well as an unexpected insight in his other interests, such as printing and painting. The next sections of this chapter are dedicated to each of these sources.

2 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 329.

2.1 The Manuscript of Damascus

The first manuscript is the one held by the Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus.

The Damascus manuscript is somewhat elusive. It was first mentioned in the 1930s by two scholars: Gennadios Arabatzoglou, metropolitan of Hēlioupolis (1883–1956), and the Romanian diplomat and writer Marcu Beza (1882–1949).³ Each one of them discovered and surveyed the manuscript independently, at unknown moments in time. During the 1930s and 1940s, Arabatzoglou published an important number of texts from the manuscript in a book and several periodicals. In his *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη* (*Photieios Bibliothēkē*) published in two volumes in 1933–1935 in Constantinople, Gennadios Arabatzoglou stated that he had borrowed the manuscript from the library in Damascus. He presumably took it with him and studied it in Constantinople, where he lived. There are no indications as to when he borrowed it or when he returned it. Marcu Beza wrote about the manuscript and its contents in several of his books and articles. While he sometimes mentioned metropolitan Gennadios's publications, there is solid evidence that he did study the actual manuscript. Beza published three photographs of one of the documents in the manuscript and an even more interesting image of the then Patriarch of Antioch, Alexander Ṭahhān, holding two codices: the first contained Sylvester's correspondence, the second – the *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch* written in Greek around 1700 by Athanasios Dabbās for Constantine (Constantin) Brâncoveanu (1688–1714), the prince of Wallachia (Fig. 58). Beza's photographs are the only published images of this manuscript.⁴

The content of the codex, as far as it can be reconstructed from its published parts, consists mostly of letters written by and addressed to Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch between 1748 and 1753, covering the last part of his sojourn in Wallachia, the period he lived in Constantinople, and his return to Damascus. According to Gennadios Arabatzoglou, the codex was quite large, covering a few hundred pages, and there is a strong possibility that it contained other materials such as personal notes, recipes, official documents, as well as older and unrelated letters kept as templates for future correspondence.

Marcu Beza apparently did more than writing brief notes about this codex. He photographed several pages of it that contained documents related to Romanian history. While Beza's photographs cannot be located today, they were offered for

³ For Marcu Beza, see I. Feodorov, "Beza, Marcu I.", in V. Spinei, D. N. Rusu (eds.), *Enciclopedia reprezentanților scrisului istoric românesc*, vol. I. (A-C), Suceava, 2021, p. 235–236.

⁴ M. Beza, *Urme românești în Răsăritul ortodox*, 2nd ed., Bucharest, 1937, p. 164–165.

publication to the great Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga, who published 27 Greek documents extracted from the Damascus manuscript, followed by a Romanian translation, in the second section of his book *Textes post-byzantins*, I. *Chronique de Constantin Mavrocordato et de son fils Alexandre*, and II. *Lettres des patriarches d'Antioche aux princes roumains du XVIII^e siècle* (Bucharest, 1939).⁵ The book also contains a chronicle of Constantine Mavrokordatos and his son Alexander published from other images provided by Beza.⁶

After the 1940s, the Damascus manuscript remained unstudied. Confusion arose, and for some time it was referred to as a “folder” of letters instead of a codex containing copies of letters. According to certain sources, it was registered in the library records under the inventory number 71. When the Arabic manuscripts in the library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus were catalogued, and many, including Sylvester’s codex, were discussed by Joseph Nasrallah and Rachid Haddad in their *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l’Église Melchite du V^e au XX^e siècle. Contribution à l’étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne* (vol. IV, t. 2), it remained untraceable and apparently no number was assigned to it in the new catalog.⁷ The same is true of the manuscript containing Dabbās’s *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch*, and presumably of other Greek manuscripts. The two manuscripts were not identified by Ronney el Gemayel, Léna Dabaghy and Mona Dabaghy, the authors of the recent concordance of Nasrallah’s inventory with that in the catalogue compiled by Ilyās Jibāra, published in 1988.⁸ Jibāra’s manuscript catalogue holds a few bilingual Greek and Arabic manuscripts. An unknown number of Greek manuscripts in the library are still uncatalogued.

In 1967, Virgil Căndeia visited the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus and mentioned the manuscript in an article. Therefore, it must have been still there.⁹

5 N. Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, I. *Chronique de Constantin Mavrocordato et de son fils Alexandre*, II. *Lettres des patriarches d'Antioche aux princes roumains du XVIII^e siècle*, Bucharest, 1939, p. 31–55 (the original Greek text), p. 57–82 (Romanian translation).

6 Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 7–18 (Greek text), p. 19–30 (Romanian translation).

7 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 86.

8 R. el Gemayel, with L. Dabaghy and M. Dabaghy, “Les manuscrits du Patriarcat grec-orthodoxe de Damas dans l’Histoire de Joseph Nasrallah: Index et concordance avec le catalogue d’Élias Gebara”, in Ž. Paša, S. J. (ed.), *Between the Cross and the Crescent. Studies in Honor of Samir Khalil Samir, S. J., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, Rome, 2018, p. 271, no. 1,1 and p. 272, no. 14.

9 V. Căndeia, “Sources roumaines et grecques dans les bibliothèques du Proche-Orient”, *Association Internationale d’Études du Sud-Est Européen. Bulletin*, 8, 1970, 1–2, p. 66–78 (republished in V. Căndeia, *Histoire des idées en Europe du Sud-Est (XVII^e–XVIII^e siècle)*, eds. I. Feodorov, M. Țipău, Brăila, 2018; here, p. 295).

Only a direct survey of the Patriarchal library in Damascus will enable researchers to rediscover this codex, and possibly other Greek manuscripts, and place them in the spotlight of the academic community. All the available information gleaned from it was used as a source in our research presented in this volume.

2.2 The Manuscript of Jerusalem

The second codex related to Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch is manuscript 124 in the library of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, catalogued by Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus in the first volume of his *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη* (Saint Petersburg, 1891).¹⁰ Some of its texts appeared in the second volume of his *Ανάλεκτα Ιεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, published in Saint Petersburg in 1894.

The manuscript was also consulted by Klēmēs Karnapas for his series of articles on Sylvester of Antioch published in the periodical *Νέα Σιών* (*Nea Sion*) in 1905–1907.¹¹ Documents from the codex were also published by Kallinikos Delikanēs in his book on Patriarchal documents, *Τὰ ἐν τοῖς κώδιξι τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκοπικοῦ σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικά ἔγγραφα τὰ ἀφορόντα εἰς τὰς σχέσεις τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου πρὸς τὰς Ἐκκλησίας Ἀλεξανδρείας, Ἀντιοχείας, Ιεροσολύμων καὶ Κύπρου (1574–1863)* (Constantinople, 1904). Some of the Patriarch's notes in the codex were later published by Nikolaos Phirippidēs. Apparently, Marcu Beza also saw the manuscript, as he refers to it in his works.

Papadopoulos-Kerameus's catalogue is thorough, but he excluded some of the notes and texts considered of lesser importance, and he only briefly mentioned the presence of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish texts.

Chronologically, this codex seems to be the earliest of the three connected with Sylvester of Antioch. It contains the first source in Greek reporting Sylvester's election in 1724, i.e., a document issued by Patriarch Jeremias III of Constantinople. Its contents are revealing for the beginnings of Sylvester's patriarchate.

The rest of the documents seem to have been written mostly in the 1730s and 1740s. Earlier documents used as models, prayers, other religious texts, and notes on various subjects complete the codex. The beginning of some of the documents

¹⁰ A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη ἤτοι Κατάλογος τῶν ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου ἀποστολικοῦ τε καὶ καθολικοῦ ὀρθοδόξου πατριαρχικοῦ θρόνου τῶν Ιεροσολύμων καὶ πάσης Παλαιστίνης ἀποκειμένων ἐλληνικῶν κωδίκων*, 1, Saint Petersburg, 1891, p. 203–218, no. 124.

¹¹ Karnapas, "Ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σύλβεστρος ὁ Κύπριος", *Νέα Σιών*, 2, 1905, p. 191–206, 525–541; 3, 1906, p. 28–43, 364–389, 471–485, 602–617; 4, 1906, p. 49–67, 290–313, 429–444, 498–513; 5, 1907, p. 54–69, 361–378, 638–652, 846–867.

contains the note: “κατεστρώθη εις τὸν νέον κώδικα” (“it was written down in the new codex”) or “ἀντεγράφη” (“it was copied”). As none of the other two codices contain duplicates of the documents contained here, there were presumably one or more “new” collections of official documents produced to conserve the important texts. The Jerusalem manuscript presents the characteristics of a personal or unofficial notebook of the patriarch, rather than an official codex of the Patriarchate.

2.3 The Manuscript of Ḥarīṣā

The third codex related to Sylvester of Antioch was discovered and identified as such by the author of this book in 2021, shortly after we had begun the systematic search for available sources on the subject. The discovery was facilitated by online access to the digital version of the manuscript on the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library website (vHMML).¹²

The manuscript is held in the Library of the Society of Saint Paul’s Missionaries (Société des Missionnaires de Saint Paul) in Ḥarīṣā, Lebanon. At the time, the online description of the codex was only basic, without any reference to its contents. The discovery that it contained Greek letters connected with Sylvester of Antioch, many of them related to Wallachia and Moldavia, is of utmost importance. For the first time in almost a century, a codex connected with the patriarch of Antioch had become accessible for research.¹³

The phrase on the first page of the manuscript, Ἐπιστολαὶ αὐθεντικαὶ εἰς τοῦ πατριάρχου περὶ τῆς ἐκεῖσε ἐπελεύσεως μας (“Princely letters to the patriarch about us going there”) provided a clue about the fact that the documents related to the Romanian princes. The beginning of the first letter confirmed the supposition: Εὐσεβέστατε ὑψηλότατε σοφώτατε καὶ ἐκλαμπρότατε αὐθέντα καὶ ἡγεμῶν (“Most pious, highest, most wise and most brilliant prince and ruler”). The content of the manuscript is nothing less than a treasure trove. Uncertain aspects of Sylvester’s life and activity were clarified for the first time. The documents also offer a glimpse into the patriarch’s project to print and distribute Arabic books. The codex also

¹² At the time, the manuscript was catalogued with little or no information on its content. The manuscript description in the database was recently improved.

¹³ The search for relevant material in connection with the TYPARABIC project in the vHMML was considerably improved thanks to the training sessions offered to the project team in September 2022 by Joshua Mugler, the HMML expert cataloguer of Arabic and Eastern manuscripts, during a brief visit to Bucharest at the invitation of the Principal Investigator and the Host Institution, the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy.

revealed new data on Sylvester's efforts to maintain his position and on his network of collaborators.

There is no title page. The codex contains 183 folios, thus numbered in pencil by a later hand. The numbering is faulty: the total number of folios is 184, as page 166 is numbered twice. The pages were rearranged at some point, so that a few texts are now divided into sections that are placed in two different parts of the codex. The manuscript also contains texts in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, and one in Armenian.

MS 124 of Jerusalem seems to be the earliest of the three currently known codices, containing mainly documents from 1734–1739. Earlier documents were also transcribed, but this was probably done also in the 1730s. The latest document is a *chrysoboullous* issued by John Mavrokordatos of Moldavia on May 3, 1745, most likely transcribed in a blank space, probably when most of the manuscript had already been written.¹⁴ The next is Ḥarīṣā MS 210, written in 1742–1750. It also contains older documents transcribed as writing templates or for their content. The last is the Damascus codex, holding documents from 1751–1754.

The Ḥarīṣā manuscript, like the Jerusalem codex, contains some documents which mention the formula *ينقل* / *yunqal* (“was transcribed”), in Arabic, or “ὡς γράφθη” (“to be written”), in Greek, indicating that they are transcripts of documents. This leaves the impression that there may have been other codices covering the first and the last decades of Sylvester's patriarchate. There is also a mention of the “Holy Codex of the Patriarchate of Antioch”. Based on an analogy with known codices with a similar title (for example, the Holy Codex of the Metropolis of Ungro-Wallachia, or the examples from Greek regions, such as the codex of the Metropolis of Sisanion, or that of Kastoria), this codex most likely contained the metropolitans' ordination documents. None of the three manuscripts described here seems to have been the official codex, as at least two of them also contain personal notes.

2.4 Other Sources

A few other Greek manuscripts contain letters connected with Patriarch Sylvester. Among them are a manuscript preserved at the Great Lavra on Mount Athos and manuscript 233 in the library of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem, with texts related to Iakovos of Patmos, the teacher who was invited by Sylvester to establish a Greek school in his eparchy. A few original letters were preserved in the archive

¹⁴ MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 138r–138v.

of the *metochion* of the Holy Sepulcher in Constantinople, but this collection is now located in Athens, Greece.

The correspondence with Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky and Patriarch Sylvester's letters of recommendation for him are preserved in MS 602, which belonged to Count Alexei Sergeevich Uvarov (a renowned Russian archaeologist) in the 19th century.¹⁵

Some patriarchal documents are comprised in the codices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. The Acts of the Synods of 1722, 1725, and 1727 were also issued in Constantinople. Some of these were published later by Sylvester in Arabic translation. The Acts are preserved in Greek manuscripts in various locations. In a manuscript in the library of the monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai there are copies of four letters by Sylvester to Dionysios, the metropolitan of Kition in Cyprus, in the first decade of his patriarchate. A copy of these letters is also a section in the manuscript Cod. gr. 71B (Cod. Tischendorf IX) in the University Library in Leipzig (Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig).¹⁶ It is unclear why these letters were copied twice, but this ensured their preservation, as the originals are lost. Greek letters and documents related to Sylvester can be found in other manuscripts and sometimes surface on the antique book market.

There are a few Greek narrative sources mentioning Sylvester of Antioch which were composed decades after the events. Their late date, together with the presence of sometimes unexplained errors, make them quite unreliable. For example, the *Political and Ecclesiastical Events in Twelve Books* by Athanasios Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs (Ipsilantis), published in 1870 in Constantinople by Archimandrite Germanos Aphtonidēs Sinaitēs, inexplicably places Sylvester's election in 1728.¹⁷ The four years of Athanasios's second tenure are also moved to the period 1724–1728, and the error is repeated twice in chapters composed years apart. The chronological errors made by Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs perpetuated for decades in the Greek historical writing. In spite of such mistakes, Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs

15 Archim. Leonid, *Систематическое описание славяно-российских рукописей собрания графа А. С. Уварова*, vol. 3, Moscow, 1894, p. 327, no. 1762 (381) (602). After 1917, the Uvarov collection was distributed among various institutions. Our research on the website catalogue of the State Historical Museum in Moscow, holder of many manuscripts of the Uvarov collection, including another manuscript of Barsky's journal, yielded no results. We are not aware of the current location of this MS.

16 V. Gardthausen, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig*, Leipzig, 1898, p. 87.

17 A. Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs, *Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν καὶ Πολιτικῶν τῶν εἰς δώδεκα. Βιβλίον Η', Θ' καὶ Ι' ἤτοι Τὰ μετὰ τὴν Ἄλωσιν (1453–1789) (Ἐκ χειρογράφου ἀνεκδότου τῆς ἱερᾶς μονῆς τοῦ Σινᾶ)*, ed. by Archim. Germanos Aphtonidēs Sinaitēs, Constantinople, 1870, p. 325–326.

was not only a reliable source in terms of chronology, most times, but he probably also knew Sylvester personally and was able to learn more about him in Aleppo, where he lived when his protector Mehmet Ragıp Pasha was governor of the city.¹⁸ Anecdotic stories about the patriarch included in his account might originate in reports the historian had heard in the Syrian city.

Sergios Makraios's account in the *Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ιστορίας* (*Memoirs of Ecclesiastic History*) concerning the period 1750–1800 is accurate, but it was written much later, in the early 1800s. This work written in Greek is an important source for the history of the Patriarchate of Constantinople during this period. The author had access to various sources and added his personal memories of the events in the last years. For Sylvester of Antioch, Makraios most likely based his account on other sources. His work begins with a report on the Latin propaganda in the Greek Orthodox Church, which intensified around 1750. The author underlines the efforts made by Matthaïos of Alexandria and Sylvester of Antioch to defend and support Orthodoxy. According to Makraios, the two patriarchs “πολλὰ διεργάσαντο ἀποσοβοῦντες τῆς ἰδίας ποιμνῆς τοὺς λιμεῶνας, οὐ μικρὰ δ' ἔπαθον τῇ ἐκείνων ἀντιστάντες κακομηχανία” (“They worked a lot to drive away the demolishers from their own community, but they suffered not a little from the injury of their opponents”).¹⁹ Their efforts annoyed the Latins but did very little to affect their plots. Makraios's text shows how Sylvester's endeavor in favor of the Orthodox Church was remembered decades later.

Another later Greek source, Kōnstantios I of Constantinople, writing in the first decades of the 19th century, follows Athanasios Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs's dating and places Sylvester's election in 1728. Nevertheless, the author provides useful information about the situation in the Patriarchate of Antioch during Sylvester's tenure.²⁰

Arabic narrative sources are also late and mostly provide general information on Sylvester of Antioch for the first decades of his patriarchate, being based on previous oral or written sources. Also, they tend to be, as expected, somehow influenced by their authors' religious allegiance. Such is the case of Yūḥannā al-'Ujajmī (Jean Agemi) and Mikhā'il (Michael) Brayk.²¹

¹⁸ Later, between 1757 and 1763, Mehmet Ragıp Pasha was grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁹ S. Makraios, “Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ιστορίας (1750-1800)”, in K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 3, Venice, 1872, p. 204–205.

²⁰ Th. M. Aristoklēs, *Κωνσταντίου Α' τοῦ αὐιδίμου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Βυζαντίου Βιογραφία καὶ συγγραφαὶ αἱ ἐλάσσωνες ἐκκλησιαστικαί, καὶ φιλολογικαὶ καὶ τινες ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ*, Constantinople, 1866, p. 141–142.

²¹ For a presentation of their works from the perspective of the events after 1724, see C.-M. Walbiner, “The Split of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (1724) and the emergence of a new

Some episodes mentioned in certain sources seem anecdotic and give the impression that the aim was to discredit their protagonists, in this case, Sylvester of Antioch. For example, Sylvester's public condemnation of the pope is mentioned in some French sources. Another example is the alleged destruction, on Sylvester's orders, of an image (painted or sculpted) of Saint Joseph placed on an altar, also recorded in Catholic sources. Athanasios Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs reports extensively on Sylvester's arrival in Aleppo on a fasting day, when the new patriarch was received with a table laid out with fish dishes. According to the Phanariot historian, Sylvester overturned the table and was angry with the notables of Aleppo who had organized the feast. Such episodes were narrated for their presumptive appeal to the public, but at second glance they reflect the opposing ideological and confessional approaches of the two parties involved in the events. Fasting was a significant issue in the reflection on the adherence to one or the other party, as Latin missionaries recommended more permissive rules of fasting (for example, allowing fish) to attract new supporters.²²

Other sources reveal their aim more directly, often already in the title. There is a text dedicated to the "Persecutions by Patriarch Sylvester" preserved in a later manuscript, but surely reflecting the events of 1725 as witnessed by a contemporary source.²³

Having thus provided a brief survey of the available sources, we can remark that the patriarch's letters and notes remain the most reliable sources, as they reflect his side of events, often in a personal tone, alongside official Ottoman documents and foreign diplomatic reports. In addition to the sources described above, the forewords of the books printed by Patriarch Sylvester in the Romanian Principalities and Beirut provide important data on Sylvester's life and activities as a patriarch of the Church of Antioch.

identity in Bilād al-Shām as reflected by some Melkite historians of the 18th and early 20th centuries", *Chronos*, 7, 2003, p. 9–36. For more on the two historians, and generally on the historiography of the 18th century, see Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 309–311, 314–316; C. A. Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans 1516–1831*, transl. by B. P. Noble and S. Noble, Jordanville, New York, 2016, p. 478–484.

22 On this topic, see also a later Greek source, written in 1844: N. Kyprios, "Περὶ Ἀραβοκατολίκων ἢ Οὐνίτων", in A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας ἢ Συλλογὴ ἀνεκδότων καὶ σπανίων ἐλληνικῶν συγγραφῶν περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἐῶαν ὀρθοδόξων ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ μάλιστα τῆς τῶν Παλαιστινῶν*, 2, Saint Petersburg, 1894, p. 469–472.

23 For the same rendering of the events, see P. Bachel, "La Congrégation des Basiliens chouérites. III. La Persécution de Sylvestre, 1724-1730", *Échos d'Orient*, 1904, p. 156–163. See also Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 45.

3 In Search of Sylvester's Origins

3.1 Sylvester's Origins and Family

Sources seem to be unanimous about the fact that Sylvester's origin was Cyprus, although the surname "the Cypriot", in the Arabic form *al-Qubruṣī*, mainly occurs in Arabic sources, and especially in later ones. Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, the traveler from Kyiv who knew the patriarch well, calls him "Силвестръ Кипрскій" ("Sylvester the Cypriot").¹ It is open to debate whether the term "Cypriot" is to be read as meaning that he was born on the island of Cyprus, or whether it was merely a geographical indication of his family's place of origin. Later historians perceived the term "Cypriot" as meaning "Greek Cypriot" or "Greek from Cyprus", creating more confusion. The issue of his ethnic origin proved to be rather complex, and it will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

As there are no sources to the contrary, it can be assumed that the future patriarch of Antioch was born in Cyprus. Documents are silent on the place or the region of his birth. There are, however, some clues that point in a specific direction. Two Greek manuscripts preserve a series of four letters written by Sylvester and addressed to Dionysios, the metropolitan of Kition and Lemessos in Cyprus.² The letters were copied as models for future scribes, not so much for the importance of their content but as templates for various styles. It was common practice at the time to use such models for writing exercises.

One of the manuscripts, in particular, contains hundreds of epistles in various styles and from different periods.³ It is their interest from this point of view that enabled Sylvester's four letters to be preserved. Nonetheless, they provide otherwise unknown data, useful to historians and researchers of Sylvester's biography.

Although the dates of the four letters are not preserved, the content reveals that they belong to the early stage of Sylvester's patriarchate, when he was trying

1 N. Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского по святым местам Востока с 1723 по 1747 г.*, 2, Saint Petersburg, 1886, p. 154; V. Grigorovitch-Barski, *Pérégrinations (1723–1747)*, translated by M. Odaysky, Geneva, 2019, p. 389.

2 Manuscript Cod. gr. 71B (Cod. Tischendorf IX) in the Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, cf. Gardthausen, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig*, p. 87; Manuscript 1605 (531/532) in the library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai.

3 Manuscript 1605 (531/532) in the library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai. See V. N. Beneshevich (ed.), *Описание греческих рукописей монастыря св. Екатерины на Синае*, 1, Saint Petersburg, 1911, p. 392–545; for Sylvester's letters, see p. 399.

to establish a Greek school in his eparchy and was in search of pupils. This can be placed in the 1720s–1730s.

Alongside other useful information, which will be evaluated in the next chapters, these letters demonstrate some degree of familiarity of the patriarch with the metropolitan. The most important, however, is the reference to Sylvester's brother, who lived in Cyprus, and maybe even in the proximity of the metropolitan, whose headquarters were in Lemessos. The patriarch asked Dionysios to trust his brother (κατὰ σάρκα ἀδελφόν) and to employ him as an intermediary in their contacts and exchanges. The formula leaves no doubt that the word "brother" is used in its literal sense, referring to family relations and not figuratively. The text seems to imply that the patriarch's brother was living in the same city, or quite close to it.

The surprise comes when one reads the name of Sylvester's brother: "τὸν ἀδελφόν μας Σολοιμάνην".⁴ The unusual form "Soloimanis", recorded as such in both manuscripts, seems to render an Arabic name, "Sulaymān". Moreover, to avoid any confusion concerning the meaning of the term "brother", in another letter to the same metropolitan of Kition Sylvester mentions "τὸν κατὰ σάρκα ἡμῶν ἀδελφόν" ("our brother in the flesh").⁵ The name Σολωμών or Σολωμός was not, and is not, unusual even today among the Greeks of Cyprus, either as a given name or as a surname. Scribes and learned Greeks, in general, often adapted foreign proper names in their texts to render them more "Hellenic". This is not the case here, even if it would have been easy for the author of the letter or the subsequent copyists to write Σολωμών instead of Σολοιμάνης. It is therefore clear that Sylvester aimed to render a specific form of a non-Greek, Arabic name. The relevance of this fact will be further discussed in this chapter.

For the moment, the region, or even the city of Lemessos in Cyprus, can be considered as a possibility for Sylvester's birthplace, given the fact that his brother was residing there decades later. There is no other information concerning Sylvester's brother Soloimanis. Apparently, he was not a member of the clergy, and he exchanged letters with his brother, who trusted him, but there is no further knowledge on his occupation and activities.

Lemessos was a region in Cyprus belonging to the historical Metropolis of Kition (or Kiteon) and Kitrus. Several codices from the Library of the Metropolis survive in the Library of the University of Cyprus. One is a collection of letters and deeds of the metropolitans of Kition dating from the 17th and the 18th centuries. Some of the

4 A. K. D[ēmētrakopoulos], "Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας", *Ἐθνικὸν Ἡμερολόγιον τοῦ ἔτους 1870 ἐκδοθὲν ὑπὸ Μαρίνου Π. Βρετοῦ*, 10, 1870, p. 368.

5 D[ēmētrakopoulos], "Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας", p. 371.

documents are issued by Dionysios, but none of them provide data about Sylvester, or about the relationship with the Patriarchate of Antioch.

As a patriarch of Antioch, Sylvester visited Cyprus on at least two occasions, one of them documented by the traveler Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, who met him there in 1735.⁶ The patriarch paid special attention to the monastery of Kykkos, one of the most celebrated monastic foundations on the island. There are indications that he personally secured financial aid for the monastery from the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia. This is a topic to which we shall return.

More information on Sylvester's family was provided by the patriarch himself in several dedicatory inscriptions and a document describing his donation to a church in Asia Minor. The inscriptions are written in Arabic and record, among others, the names of Sylvester's parents: جرجس (Jirjis) and فتّين (Fotīni, Gr. Phōteinē).

The first of these inscriptions dates from 1747 and is recorded in a long Arabic inscription on an old icon of Saint Spyridon, on which Patriarch Sylvester painted, inside a frame, fourteen scenes of the saint's life and veneration. The icon was placed in the Saint Spyridon ("the Old") church in Bucharest until its demolition in 1987 and was subsequently lost.⁷ It was displayed in the first exhibition of Melkite icons in Beirut in 1969 and became the most widely known icon painted (even if only partially) by Patriarch Sylvester⁸ (See Ch. 19.5 below).

Two more inscriptions mentioning the same names of Sylvester's parents are recorded twice on icons preserved in the Monastery of Saint Thekla in Ma'ūla, in Syria. The inscriptions were mentioned by Vasileios Nassour in his unpublished PhD thesis defended in Greek in 1992 at the Theological School of the University of Thessaloniki, where he also provided photographs of these icons.⁹ The inscription on the two icons is referred to in the legend of an illustration placed at the end of the thesis. It is apparently written in Arabic and dates from 1756, but the author only provided a Greek translation of its content.¹⁰ The quality of the images available in the online version does not allow any other clues, nor a reading of the inscriptions (For more details, see Ch. 19.8 below).

⁶ Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 2, p. 326; Grigorovitch-Barski, *Pérégrinations (1723–1747)*, p. 509.

⁷ V. Căndea, "Une icône melkite disparue", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux-Arts*, XXVIII, 1991, p. 59–61.

⁸ For the exhibition of 1969, see Ch. 19.2.

⁹ The thesis is accessible online in two Greek databases: Εθνικό Αρχείο Διδακτορικών Διατριβών (National Archive of Doctoral Theses) and Εθνικό Κέντρο Τεκμηρίωσης (National Center of Documentation).

¹⁰ Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 218–219.

There is another document which records, in Greek, the names of Sylvester's parents. The text has been preserved in a codex of documents of the Metropolis of Argynopolis and may have been written by the patriarch himself (or at least signed by him). It reports on his visit to the city and the donations he made to the church. In this document, which is an important source for Sylvester's travels and works in Asia Minor, his parents' names are recorded with the Greek forms Γεώργιος and Φωτεινή (Phōteinē/Fotini; the text gives Φωτινή, with a spelling error).¹¹

A Romanian source published in 2020 by Mihai-Bogdan Atanasiu also records the names of Patriarch Sylvester's parents, in the Romanian forms "Gheorghie" and "Fotini".¹² The source is the diptych of the Saint Nicholas Monastery in Botoșani (also known as "Popăuți", the name of the area outside Botoșani at the time of its construction). The monastery was dedicated in the 18th century to the Patriarchate of Antioch, as a *metochion*.¹³ The document also notes other names that could refer to Sylvester's relatives, among them "Solomon", a name resembling that of the patriarch's brother.¹⁴

The two names are quite common for Orthodox Christian populations in the Ottoman Empire and beyond. Φωτεινή is more likely to be used in Greek-speaking communities or by Greek-speaking individuals, but there is no proof that this is exclusive.

In the patriarch's case, "Sylvester" is a monastic name, quite popular among the clergy of the Orthodox Church. It was common as a given name for lay people as well, even in Byzantine times (for example, Sylvester Syropoulos, the chronicler of the Council of Florence). The name became famous with Saint Sylvester, the pope of Rome (314–335), and although a Latin name and that of an outstanding Roman pontiff, it was in constant use in the Greek Church. In the 16th century, Sylvester was the name of an Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria (1569–1590), and in the early 18th century, another Sylvester became archbishop of Cyprus (1718–1734). The name of this Cypriote archbishop may have some relevance for the name that Patriarch

11 A. A. Papadopoulos, "Ἱστορικά σημειώματα ἐκ τοῦ κώδικος τῆς ἐπαρχίας Χαλδίας", *Ἀρχαίον Πόντου*, 8, 1938, p. 34.

12 M.-B. Atanasiu, "Un pomelnic al Mănăstirii Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc din Popăuți (Botoșani)", in M.-B. Atanasiu, M. Mirza (eds.), *Mari familii boierești din Moldova în veacurile XVII–XIX. Referințe identitare și manifestări de putere*, Iași, 2020, p. 216, 241.

13 For more on the Saint Nicholas Monastery in Botoșani, see G. Diaconu, "Relațiile Patriarhiei din Antiohia cu Țările Române și închinarea Mănăstirii Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc Popăuți (II)", *Teologie și viață*, XXVII (XCIII), 2017, 1–4, p. 181–240; Arhim. L. Diaconu, *Mănăstirea "Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc" din Popăuți, importantă ctitorie a Moldovei închinată Patriarhiei din Antiohia*, vol. II, *Mănăstirea "Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc" Popăuți în perioada 1750–2018*, Iași, 2018.

14 Atanasiu, "Un pomelnic al Mănăstirii Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc", p. 241.

Sylvester chose when he became a monk. It is worth noting that, before being elected archbishop, Sylvester of Cyprus was metropolitan of Kition, the region in which the future patriarch of Antioch might have been born. The sources do not allow more than an assumption in this respect. In many Orthodox lands, monastic names preserve the first letter of the new monk's given name. But this was by no means a universal rule. Two examples, in the proximity of Sylvester of Antioch, suggest otherwise.

First, Seraphim Tanās, when elected patriarch of Antioch in Damascus in 1724 (which also required him to become a monk), took the name Kyrillos, made famous by several of his predecessors.

The second example involves Sylvester of Antioch himself, who granted Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, when tonsuring him into monachism, the name he received at baptism, i.e., Vasily.

According to some sources, in 1765, the patriarch wanted to renounce his throne in favor of his nephew, metropolitan Sylvester of Laodicea (Latakia),¹⁵ who had received the same name, "Sylvester", when ordained metropolitan, possibly in connection with his uncle.

Thus, at this point, there is no certainty as to Sylvester's initial given name. It is possible that his lay name was Spyridon. Several clues are pointing in this direction.

1. Retaining the same first letter of the lay name when attributing a monastic one is customary in many Orthodox Churches.
2. Saint Spyridon was a 4th-century bishop of Trimythous in Cyprus, who became one of the most venerated saintly figures of the Greek lands, and beyond.
3. The *metochion* in Bucharest granted to Sylvester by Constantine Mavrokordatos, the prince of Wallachia, for the Antiochian Christians' benefit, was dedicated to Saint Spyridon. However, the foundation of this monastery and its dedication to this saint preceded its reconstruction under the supervision of Sylvester in 1746–1747.
4. The patriarch placed in the church of this monastery the icon of Saint Spyridon to which he had added a border with scenes from the saint's life and veneration (mentioned above).

¹⁵ Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 85; R. Haddad, "La correspondance de Trābulṣī, secrétaire du Patriarche d'Antioche Sylvestre de Chypre", in P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais (eds.), *Mémorial Monseigneur Joseph Nasrallah*, Damascus, 2006, p. 281; С. А. Панченко, *Ближневосточное православие под османским владычеством. Первые три столетия. 1516–1831*, Moscow, 2012, p. 305.

Of course, all this is only circumstantial evidence. The question of Sylvester's lay name remains for the moment without an answer.

Greek sources render his name as Σίλβεστρος, with an accent on the iota. Greek renderings of the name as Σύλβεστρος or Σιλβέστρος are rare, and they are mostly present in modern bibliography. Both are orthographical mistakes. The rendering in Arabic is either سلبستروس or سلفستروس, with a preference for the first form, especially in texts directly connected to the patriarch, such as the documents issued by him, or the printed books he supervised. French sources of the time refer to him as *Sylvestre* or *Silvestre*. English bibliography uses mainly the form *Sylvester* and sometimes *Silvestros*. The correct transliteration (Romanization) of the Greek original name would be *Silvestros*, as there is no “y” in the Greek form (neither in the Latin name *Silvestrus* that the Greek name was derived from).

Once Sylvester's connection with Cyprus was established with some degree of confidence, another question emerged, which seemed essential for those who dealt with his biography in the past: the issue of the patriarch's ethnic and linguistic background. Most of the later sources and secondary literature, mainly from the middle of the 19th century onwards, suggested or implied that his “Greek” origin had an essential influence on his ideas and actions, as well as on the relationship with other Antiochian Orthodox Christians, and on the history of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch for over a century afterwards, as he was considered (and still is, in many general reference works) as the first “Greek” patriarch of Antioch.

While most of these ideas concern a later period and therefore largely exceed the purposes of this chapter, or even of this book, some aspects are worth mentioning. The use of ethnic and linguistic names in the Orthodox lands, mainly those under direct Ottoman rule, during the 18th century should not be interpreted in a modern, 19th-century perspective. In a pre-modern society, as was, in many respects, the one in question, such ethnic designations had other connotations and purposes. To read and understand them in 19th- or early 20th-century terms would be anachronistic and could distort the outcomes of historical research.

In the 18th century, both Arabic-speaking and Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians of the Patriarchate of Antioch defined themselves as *Rūm*. The same counted for those of a mixed family heritage, as may have been the case of Sylvester himself. Naturally, they were aware of the linguistic and cultural differences, as well as of local identities in the same linguistic area, but the essential criterion for defining the group was their *confessional* identity as Orthodox Christians, or *Rūm*. Later, the Melkite Greek Catholics, who followed the Byzantine rite, were also considered *Rūm*. The same is true for even more remote areas of Orthodoxy, such as the Romanian Principalities, the Ukrainian lands, and Russia. And even if in these cases the ethno-linguistic realities were much different and easier to grasp, the group affinities of the Antiochian Orthodox with the populations in other Orthodox areas were clearly present.

An example will eloquently illustrate this idea. In the Romanian-speaking Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, an increasing number of Greek-speaking individuals from various parts of the Greek world settled during the 16th–18th centuries, mainly in urban areas. Among other occupations, they were clerics and merchants. Some of them gradually obtained higher or lesser offices in the state administration. In the first stage of their residence in the Principalities, they were perceived as “foreigners” or “Greeks”. Family alliances with local individuals, especially the local aristocracy, gradually changed this perception. In some cases, after a few generations, they totally blended into Romanian society, and even became representatives of “local” political factions, in contrast with the newcomers “Greeks” of Constantinople or elsewhere, a case best illustrated by the Kantakouzēnos family.

Once the reader is aware of the necessary caution in considering 18th century ethnic and linguistic identities, Patriarch Sylvester's background can properly be investigated. As in many aspects of his early life, sources are scant, if they do not lack entirely, and those available are late, contradictory, and often biased. For many modern authors, the fact that he was from Cyprus automatically meant that he was a Greek. The fact that his mother tongue was Greek may be accurate, but proof should be provided of his ethnicity. In addition to this, there is evidence that suggests a more complex situation.

It is evident from his later texts and activities that Sylvester was well educated in the Greek letters, i.e., he had a classical education. Whether this education was achieved in Cyprus or in another center of Greek learning of the time is difficult to establish with certainty at this time. He could have studied in Chios, or in Patmos with Makarios Kalogeras, a teacher he held in great esteem during the early years of his patriarchate. Mount Athos and Constantinople cannot be excluded either, as places where Sylvester may have received some of his education.

Returning to Sylvester's family, a source for much later information on the patriarch's origin is the second volume of the work *Oriens Christianus* by the Dominican theologian and historian Michel Le Quien (1661–1733), published in 1740. According to the editors of his work, the information on Sylvester (and on Kyrillos VI) comes from letters received in 1733, presumably from the Levant (*Ex litteris anno 1733*). The reader learns about Sylvester “the Cypriot”, characterized as *schismaticus*, that his father was a Greek and his mother a Maronite (*Sylvester autem Cyprius patre Graeco et matre Maronita*).¹⁶ The text, although contemporary

16 M. Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus in quattor Patriarchatus digestus; quo exhibentur Ecclesiae, Patriarchae, caeterique praesules totius Orientis*, vol. II, Paris, 1740, col. 776. See also Q. al-Bāshā, *Tārīkh ṭāʾifat al-Rūm al-Malakiyya wa-l-rahbāniyya al-Mukhalliṣiyya*, 2, Ṣaydā, 1939, p. 102 (the author mentions the lack of evidence for most of the information on Sylvester's early period).

with Sylvester, is obviously biased, characterizing the Patriarch as *schismaticus*, and based on incomplete documentation at best.¹⁷ This view is supported by the fact that it distinguishes Seraphim (“Seraphinus” in the text) from Kyrillos VI, not realizing these names refer to one and the same person. But is Le Quien’s source also wrong about the ethnic background of Sylvester’s parents? Or is it mainly one more way to denigrate him? He was half “Greek”, thus, “schismatic”, and half Maronite, i.e., not Orthodox.

The presence of an Arabic speaking population in Cyprus in the 18th century, and for many centuries before that, is a well-documented fact. Population movements were facilitated by the proximity of the island to the mainland.¹⁸ Many Arabic-speaking Cypriotes were Maronites, and some degree of assimilation with the Greek-speaking Orthodox population is also plausible. Relations between the Orthodox communities in Cyprus and Syria are also well-documented.¹⁹

The theory of Le Quien’s informant might be true if one keeps in mind that such an intermarriage required the conversion of the Maronite partner to Orthodoxy. As a result, the individual would not be considered a Maronite anymore, because “Maronite” was a confessional denomination, not an ethnicity. Linguistically, the Maronites were, by the 18th century, an Arabic-speaking community. Maronite scholars like Germanos Farḥāt were known and respected in Melkite (Orthodox and, later, Greek Catholic) communities.

It is interesting to observe that no other independent source mentions the Maronite connection and neither did any of Sylvester’s many detractors, among his contemporaries, use this information in their polemics against the Patriarch. The Roman Catholic missions in the East had strong relations with the Maronites, as the Maronite Church at the time was in communion with Rome.

Another contemporary source of primary importance was frequently neglected by modern historians who were eager to present Sylvester as a “Greek”, the first Greek patriarch of Antioch in a series ending only in the late 19th century. The source is a letter of the French ambassador to Constantinople, Jean-Baptiste Picon, Viscount d’Andrezel,²⁰ dated July 23, 1725, in which he describes a meeting with

17 G. D. Metallénos, “Σίλβεστρος. Πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας”, in *Θρησκευτική καὶ Ἠθική Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία*, vol. 11 *Σβάϊτσερ – Φυλακτῆριον*, Athens, 1967, col. 150.

18 For the history of the Maronites in Cyprus, see S. Paturel, “Reconstructing the History of the Cypriot Maronites”, *Journal of Cyprus Studies*, 15, 2009, 37, p. 18–39; Dr. Maria G. Skordi, *The Maronites of Cyprus. History and Iconography (16th-19th centuries)*, Limassol, 2019; R. Jabre Mouawad, *Les Maronites. Chrétiens du Liban*, Turnhout, 2019.

19 Walbiner, “The Relations between the Greek Orthodox of Syria and Cyprus”, p. 113–128.

20 D’Andrezel was ambassador of France in Constantinople from September 1724 to 1728. See <https://tr.ambafrance.org/Ambassadeurs-de-France-depuis-1525>.

Sylvester of Antioch at the French embassy.²¹ The aim of the meeting was to solve the issues arising from the activity of the Latin missionaries in the Patriarchate of Antioch and to find a *modus vivendi* between the Orthodox and the Latin clergy. The French ambassador states in the letter that the former patriarch (Athanasios Dabbās) was Sylvester's uncle. While other letters mention that Sylvester was Athanasios's "relative", the information provided by d'Andrezel is unequivocal.²² Other sources, however, such as a letter of Sylvester addressed to the Russian Holy Synod in 1725, mention that Athanasios was Sylvester's γέρων ("elder", or старец, in the Russian translation).²³ The same term appears in a letter of the representatives of the Saint Catherine Monastery at Mount Sinai to the patriarch of Antioch.²⁴

The suggestion that Sylvester was a nephew of Athanasios Dabbās changes the perspective on the former's ethnic and linguistic background. Athanasios was certainly a member of an Arabic-speaking family from Damascus. At the same time, he had acquired a solid Greek education, since he was able to translate several works in Greek and write in Greek a *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch* dedicated to Constantine Brâncoveanu, the prince of Wallachia,²⁵ who supported his printing

21 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 584.

22 See Ch. 4.2.

23 *Описание документов и дел, хранящихся в архиве Святейшего правительствующего синода*, vol. V, 1725, Saint Petersburg, 1897, col. 628–633; L. A. Gerd, O. E. Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия в XVIII – начале XX вв.: Исследования и документы*, Moscow, 2023, p. 109–111 (Russian translation).

24 MS 210 Șariřā, f. 178r–178v.

25 The Greek *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch* by Athanasios Dabbās dates from 1702 (as mentioned in the foreword) and it is preserved in at least two manuscripts. One is now in the Austrian National Library in Vienna (MS Supplementum graecum 85), the other in the Library of the Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus. The original Greek text with a Romanian translation was published in A. Dabbas, "Istoria patriarhilor de Antiohia", ed. and transl. by Fr. V. Radu and C. Karalevsky, *BOR*, 48, 1930, 10, p. 851–864, 961–972, 1039–1050, 1136–1150, and 49, 1931, 2–3, p. 15–32, 140–160. On Dabbās's work, see Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 128; Nasrallah, *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 133–135. For the Vienna manuscript, see N. Iorga, "Manuscripte din biblioteci străine relative la istoria românilor. Întâiul memoriu", *AARMSI*, S. II, XX (1897–1898), p. 224–234; V. Căndeia, *Mărturii românești peste hotare. Creații românești și izvoare despre români în colecții din străinătate*, New Series, I. *Albania – Etiopia*, ed. by I. Feodorov, A. Pippidi, et al., Bucharest, 2010, p. 86, no. 411. See also the online catalogue of the National Library in Vienna at <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC14007890>. For the Damascus manuscript, see Beza, *Urme românești în Răsăritul ortodox*, p. 162–164; Căndeia, *Mărturii românești peste hotare*, New Series, V. *Serbia – Turcia*, ed. by I. Feodorov, A. Timotin, et al., Bucharest/Brăila, 2014, p. 130, no. 15. The foreword of this work was also copied in another manuscript in the Austrian National Library in Vienna (MS Latinus 9746); see Iorga, "Manuscripte din biblioteci străine", p. 224. See also <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC14001180>.

activity in Snagov and Bucharest in 1701–1702.²⁶ Dabbās was well educated in Greek and even had a passion for translating from Greek into Arabic.

As for Athanasios Dabbās's ethnic background, there are no indications that he had relatives belonging to the Greek speaking community of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Evidently, there were Greek-speaking individuals in cities like Aleppo, Damascus, Tripoli, and Beirut. They were, however, part of the Church of Antioch. As we mentioned before, one should not research the topic of ethnicity in the 18th century Ottoman Empire with the tools of the late 19th century historian.

Communities were primarily religious, and their defining features were related to their confession, not to their ethnic or linguistic particularities. Divisions in the same community could of course be established based on other distinctions, like the linguistic or ethnic background or place of origin (such as the rivalry between Aleppo and Damascus), but for the ecclesiastic and state authorities only the religious identity of a group was relevant. Sylvester's letters contain references to individuals as "Arabs", and to "Arabia", as well as references to the *Rhomaioi*, but it is not clear if he placed himself in one group or the other. The over-all impression from his texts is that he might not have considered himself as Arab, but rather as *Rhomaios*, and as an Orthodox who defended his Orthodox brethren whatever language they spoke.

While it is not the aim of this book to deal with the history of the Antiochian patriarchate beyond Sylvester's time, it should be noted that Greek-speaking individuals among its higher clergy were not an exception in the 17th and early 18th century.²⁷ The opposite was also true: capable Arabic-speaking individuals could reach the highest positions in the Orthodox Church. Perhaps the most brilliant example of this is Sophronios of Kilis. He was elected metropolitan of Aleppo during Sylvester's time, he was later elected to the patriarchal See of Jerusalem, and then to the ecumenical See in Constantinople. His Arab origins were irrelevant in obtaining the highest position in the Orthodox Church, which one would think was reserved for Greeks supported by the powerful Phanariot élite.

Sources do not provide further information on how exactly Sylvester was related to Athanasios. Modern historians proposed that Sylvester was the son of Athanasios's sister.²⁸ This is not proven; he could as well be the son of Dabbās's

²⁶ See Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 143–162, 255–262.

²⁷ C. Walbiner, "Bishops and metropolitans of the Antiochian Patriarchate in the 17th century: their relations to the Muslim authorities, their cultural activities and their ethnical background", *ARAM*, 9–10, 1997–1998, p. 577–587.

²⁸ Al-Bāshā, *Tārīkh ṭā'ifat al-Rūm al-Malakiyya*, 2, p. 102 (the author expresses his doubts, based on the lack of evidence); Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 192.

brother, or even a more distant relative, as it is possible that the sources interpreted the uncle/nephew relation in a loose sense (see also Fig. 62).

This family relation explains with more clarity why the former patriarch recommended in writing that his successor be Sylvester. It also explains the sudden change in attitude of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which had already nominated a different successor of Dabbās, and the subsequent election of Sylvester on the Antiochian See.

A nephew succeeding his uncle on the episcopal See was not an unusual event at the time. And even if it was not ratified by the Church in any official way, it could happen. One of the reasons for this could have been the wish of a respected former bishop, knowing best who his most appropriate successor would be, and even preparing him in advance with the skills necessary for this office. An outstanding example of such a succession to the patriarchal throne in the early 18th century was Chrysanthos Notaras, an archimandrite of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and nephew of the patriarch Dositheos, who succeeded his uncle as patriarch of Jerusalem in 1707. One of the most learned Greeks of his time, Chrysanthos, who often resided in Constantinople, was very influential in the formulation of all the doctrinal documents issued by the Orthodox Church in the 1720s and 1730s.²⁹ He sternly supported Sylvester's battle against the Latins' influence over the Church of Antioch.

Until recently, there was no proof of Sylvester of Antioch's Arab roots. His family connections with the Arabic-speaking community are reflected in the correspondence between Ilyās Fakhr, a distinguished scholar of the time, and his nephew Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, Sylvester's secretary, where he mentions that Mūsā was a relative of the patriarch.³⁰ If correctly interpreted, the information in a letter addressed by Ilyās to Mūsā could change the previously known facts about Sylvester's ethnic origin. This letter is part of a collection of Arabic correspondence assembled by Mūsā, or by someone else who had access to his archive. Composed by different individuals, including Patriarch Sylvester, the letters were extracted from an archive in a kind of epistolary collection, possibly for their philological value. First presented and commented by Rachid Haddad in 2006, this collection is a valuable source of information about Sylvester's entourage in his times and some decades later.³¹

²⁹ For more information on Chrysanthos Notaras, see Ch. 9.2 below.

³⁰ Haddad, "La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī", p. 281. For Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, see Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 281.

³¹ The information provided in Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī's letters about Sylvester's printing activities in Moldavia and Wallachia was commented by I. Feodorov in "New Data on the Early Arabic Printing in the Levant and its Connections to the Romanian Presses", *RESEE*, 56, 2018, p. 201–208; Feodorov,

In one particular letter, Mūsā Ṭrābulsī is reminded by Ilyās Fakhr that he should earnestly do his duty as the patriarch's secretary because he was also related to Sylvester by family ties.³² If Rachid Haddad's interpretation is correct, the letter is proof of Sylvester's Arabic roots, as Mūsā was a member of an Arab family from Tripoli (in Lebanon). This might explain Sylvester's periods of residence in that city, especially during the early years of his patriarchate. There is no indication in the letter as to the way the two individuals were connected. It should be noted that Mūsā was also related to Ilyās Fakhr.

Sylvester's linguistic choices in his writings and documents are of little relevance in identifying his native tongue. His correspondence is mainly in Greek, but there are also letters in Arabic (little explored so far). He usually signed in Greek, even on documents written in Arabic or Romanian.

The fact that Sylvester sometimes used Arabic, even in Church services, as well as the patriarch's knowledge of this language are attested by Kōnstantinos (Kaisarios) Dapontes in his *Κατάλογος ιστορικός (Historical Catalogue)*: “ἐλειτουργοῦσε δὲ καὶ Ἀραβικά, ὅτι ἤξευρεν” (“He celebrated the Liturgy also in Arabic, because he knew [the language]”).³³ Dapontes was an official at the Moldavian court in 1744 when Sylvester sojourned in Moldavia.³⁴

Dedicatory inscriptions are sometimes bilingual, Greek and Arabic. On the icons painted by Sylvester there are predominantly Greek inscriptions, sometimes with supplementary texts in Arabic. The books printed under his supervision are only in Arabic, just like the translations he ordered, revised, and supervised. Sylvester of Antioch showed a predilection for the use of Arabic superior to that of all other Greek-speaking or ethnic Greek members of the Orthodox high clergy of his time. Maybe it was merely a concern for good communication with the Arabic-speaking communities in the Patriarchate of Antioch. The fact is nonetheless remarkable.

Keeping in mind the considerations formulated above concerning the proper understanding of “ethnicity” and language in the Orthodox Church in the 18th century, we may conclude that Sylvester was born in Cyprus, most likely in a bilingual (Greek and Arabic) family; he studied Greek at a high level, as a requirement

Arabic Printing for the Christians, p. 235–243. Habib Ibrahim is preparing an Arabic edition of these letters, with an annotated English translation, forthcoming in 2025 with De Gruyter (EAPF-6).

³² For Ilyās Fakhr, see B. Heyberger, “Security and Insecurity: Syrian Christians in the Mediterranean (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)”, in Heyberger, *Middle Eastern and European Christianity*, p. 112–115.

³³ K. K. Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς χρηματισάντων ἐπισήμων Ῥωμαίων, καὶ τινων μεγάλων συμβεβηκότων καὶ ὑποθέσεων, ἀρχομένος ἀπὸ τοῦ χλαιοστοῦ επτακοσιοστοῦ ἔτους, ἕως τοῦ ἔνεστῶτος ὀδοηκοστοῦ τετάρτου”, in Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 3, p. 89.

³⁴ See Ch. 7.

for the access to important theological, historical, and canonical writings; he was most likely proficient in Arabic; and he could write letters and correct translations from Greek. However, he did not translate books from Greek to Arabic, as Athanasios Dabbās did.

3.2 Sylvester's Age when Elected Patriarch

Almost nothing is known about Sylvester's early life prior to his appointment as patriarch of Antioch. A few of the references to his activities before 1724 seem to be of a later date and not particularly reliable. Modern historians also made a lot of conjectures about his early years.

To begin with, the year of his birth is not mentioned in any of the early sources. Here, too, later suppositions took the place of facts based on primary sources, often with divergent and even paradoxical results. Some secondary literature mentions that he was born in 1680, thus making him 44 years old at the time of his election as patriarch. Other modern authors state that he was 27 in 1724. Both suppositions are probably wrong, for a number of reasons.

First, it is unlikely that Sylvester was 27 at the time of his ordination as bishop, as the standard minimum age for occupying this position in the Orthodox Church is 30. In practice, exceptions were made. A notable example in the Church of Antioch is Kyrillos V ibn al-Za'im, who became patriarch for the first time in 1672 at the age of about 18, most likely 20.³⁵ However, his election was immediately contested on grounds of his age. It led to the election of a new patriarch, and a schism in the leadership of the Patriarchate of Antioch.³⁶ If Sylvester was ordained based on such an exception, the fact would certainly have been mentioned by his adversaries in their disputation of his patriarchal right.

The French ambassador d'Andrezel likewise did not mention the patriarch's age in the account of his meeting with Sylvester. This could also be seen as indirect supporting evidence that Sylvester was not younger than 30 at the time of his ordination.³⁷ But again, the evidence is only circumstantial.

35 С. А. Panchenko, "Кирилл V", *Православная энциклопедия*, vol. XXXIV, Moscow, 2014, p. 568–571.

36 For the general circumstances in the Orthodox Church of Antioch in the late 17th century, see С. А. Panchenko, "К истории Антиохийской Православной Церкви конца XVII в.: патриарший престол и клановая солидарность", *Вестник церковной истории*, 1–2 (41–42), 2016, p. 159–196.

37 For the meeting which took place on July 23, 1725, see Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 579–581. See also Ch. 4.2 below.

Thorough research might produce additional data relevant for this area, as there are indications that documents exist which mention the new patriarch's age. In a document written in 1729 by Roman Catholic authorities, the question of Sylvester's age at the time of his ordination was discussed. The document specifies that Sylvester did not meet the age requirements, as he was 24 or 28 years old when ordained, based on two letters of Monsignor Mauri, the Roman Catholic patriarchal vicar in Constantinople.³⁸ Presumably, this was the source used by modern authors who mentioned that Sylvester was born in 1696.³⁹

The only contemporary reference that accurately indicates, in days, the duration of Sylvester's office does not provide any information about his age or his birth date. It is an inscription that once existed in the *parekklesion* of the patriarchal church in Damascus, which contained chronological data concerning several patriarchs of Antioch. The inscription, probably in Arabic, can no longer be located. It may be still there, if it was not lost in the successive reconstructions and renovations of the church. The text of the inscription was preserved in an Arabic source translated into Greek in the 19th century by request of Porfirii Uspenskii, who published it.⁴⁰ Klēmēs Karnapas republished the text from Uspenskii's edition.⁴¹

The future patriarch was presumably born some years before 1694 (but perhaps not as early as 1680) to be at least 30 when ordained bishop. The year 1680 seems to be an estimate by modern scholars, without any documentary basis. For example, could Sylvester, when he was around 20 years of age, have traveled with his uncle Athanasios Dabbās to Wallachia in 1700–1704? This is not the case, as it is well established that Sylvester made his first visit to Wallachia in 1730.⁴² It is therefore most likely that Athanasios was accompanied by his nephew later, when he was *proedros* of the Church of Cyprus, or after 1720, when he became again patriarch of Antioch. Sometime before 1724, Sylvester was made *protosynkellos* of the Patriarchate of Antioch, the title attributed to him in documents issued by the Patriarchate of Constantinople after his election.⁴³ The title *protosynkellos*

38 J. B. Martin, L. Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum Recentiorum Ecclesiae Universae*, Vol. 10. *Synodi Melchitarum, 1716–1902*, Paris, 1911, col. 44.

39 M. Păcurariu, "Legăturile Țărilor Române cu Patriarhia Antiohiei", *Studii Teologice*, 2nd series, XVI, 1964, 9–10, p. 610; Nassouf, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 66 ("1696"); Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 192 ("in the 1690s"); Panchenko, *Ближневосточное православие под османским владычеством*, p. 445 ("around 1696").

40 Uspenskii, *Восток Христианский*, p. 11.

41 Karnapas, "Ο πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος", *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 864.

42 See Ch. 5.2.

43 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ανάλεκτα Ιεροσολυμιτικής Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 386 (document issued by Patriarch Jeremias III of Constantinople in December 1724).

meant that he was already a monk and very close to the patriarch. Literally, the term means “the first who shares a cell (with someone)”.⁴⁴

In a recently discovered Greek letter dating from May 1, most likely 1746, sent from Constantinople, Sylvester of Antioch was writing to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia (Fig. 7): “We run back and forth, from church to church and from house to house, although we are old and weak, to receive modest alms, to confront the danger that our Most Holy Church is facing”.⁴⁵ While no definite moment is mentioned, the text could demonstrate that Sylvester's birth date was more likely in the 1680s than in the 1690s. Yet again, all this is only circumstantial evidence. In the absence of additional information, it is difficult to establish Sylvester's birth year, which remains unknown.⁴⁶

3.3 Sylvester in 1724

In parallel with his theoretical formation, Sylvester also acquired the necessary skills to become an accomplished icon painter. His first dated icons were painted in 1726, two years only after he was elected patriarch of Antioch.⁴⁷ Maybe he learned to paint at an earlier age, before he knew he could become a member of the higher clergy. It was not common for metropolitans and even patriarchs to work at the same time as icon painters, but there are some examples, even in the Patriarchate of Antioch and among Sylvester's contemporaries.⁴⁸

Certain modern authors asserted that Athanasios Dabbās intended to appoint Sylvester as metropolitan of Aleppo, but this information cannot be verified in any available sources.⁴⁹ Another issue which is not revealed by documents is where Sylvester was shortly before his election. The “conventional” opinion in modern

44 For the title, see A. P[apadakis], “Synkellos”, in A. P. Kazhdan, A.-M. Talbot, et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 3, New York/Oxford, 1991, p. 1993–1994.

45 “τρέχομεν ἔνθεν κάκειθεν ἀπὸ ἐκκλησίαν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ἀπὸ οἶκον εἰς οἶκον, μὲ ὄλον ὀποῦ εἶμεθα γηραιοὶ καὶ ἀδύνατοι, νὰ λάβομεν ὀλίγην ἐλεημοσύνην νὰ ἀπαντήσωμεν τὸν κίνδυνον τῆς ἀγωγιάτης μας Ἐκκλησίας”. Letter of Sylvester of Antioch to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia, May 1, [1746?], [Constantinople], in MS 210 Ἡριῶσα, f. 63v–64r. See Addenda 3, no. 8.

46 Kitromilidēs, *Κυπριακὴ λογιόσύνη*, p. 252; Panchenko, “Сильвестр, патриарх Антиохийский”, p. 351.

47 The two icons, dated 1726, were once located in the Church of Saint George in Tripoli, Lebanon.

48 For more on this topic, see Ch. 19. Examples of other members of the high clergy who painted icons include Euthymios III (1634–1647), patriarch of Antioch, and Metropolitan Parthenios of Tripoli.

49 Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 68.

sources is that he was on Mount Athos. Some authors believe that he had been a monk there for a longer period. This is contradicted by the fact that when Athanasios III Dabbās died (1724) Sylvester was a *protosynkellos* of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Others have expressed the view that he travelled to Mount Athos for a short visit before his election as patriarch.⁵⁰ The information is found in an Arabic letter addressed to Sylvester, which seems to confirm it.⁵¹ The letter was addressed to the patriarch while he was in Wallachia (probably in 1747–1748 and not during the earlier brief stay in 1730). The author of the letter was Ni'ma ibn Ṭūmā, a former secretary of Athanasios Dabbās.⁵² The aim of the letter, as well as of others in the same collection, was to provide an answer to the accusations made by Sylvester that Ni'ma was not supporting him and had aligned himself with the opposite party. Ni'ma ibn Ṭūmā reminded the patriarch that he was the one who actually wrote the letter summoning him back from Mount Athos in 1724.⁵³ There is evidence here for the fact that he was on Mount Athos, but sources shed little light on the duration and nature of his stay there. He may have been visiting, or he may have resided there for some time. Whatever the case may be, having received the news of Athanasios's death, Sylvester went to Constantinople.

According to a contemporary French source, he was already in the capital of the empire when the news reached him.⁵⁴ However, the fact that two months passed between the death of Athanasios and the election of Sylvester and the little-known episode of the (intended) election of another candidate in Constantinople (Joachim, the former metropolitan of Drama) suggest that Sylvester was not yet in the city at the moment the previous patriarch passed away. Sylvester's supporters succeeded in obtaining a *berat* appointing him patriarch of Antioch on August 29.⁵⁵ He was ordained bishop and appointed patriarch of Antioch on September 24, 1724.

50 See the discussion in Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 2, 1905, p. 195–197.

51 See another letter of Ni'ma ibn Ṭūmā in al-Bāshā, *Tārīkh tā'ifat al-Rūm al-Malakiyya*, 2, p. 160–173; for Mount Athos, see p. 161.

52 For Ni'ma ibn Ṭūmā, see Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 307–309. For Ni'ma ibn Ṭūmā and a manuscript copy of his letters, see also H. Boustani, “Les évêques de Sidnaïa”, *Échos d'Orient*, 7, 1904, 47, p. 214, n. 1.

53 I thank Dr. Habib Ibrahim for this information.

54 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to Maurepas, the king's minister, April 5, 1725; cf. Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 573.

55 See Ch. 4.2.

4 Sylvester as Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

4.1 The Election of 1724 and a Neglected Document

In 1904, in the second volume of his book dedicated to the documents of the patriarchs of Constantinople, Kallinikos Delikanēs published an interesting document that reports on the metropolitans of the Synod of 1724 in Constantinople, who, at the request and with the permission of Patriarch Jeremias III, proceeded to elect a new patriarch of Antioch.¹ The motive was the urgent need of an intervention from the Ecumenical See as “first before the other (patriarchal thrones)” (“ὡς τῶν λοιπῶν προκαθήμενος”),² because the Patriarchate of Antioch was threatened by the “erroneous Latin beliefs”. The person elected, among the three candidates, was Joachim, former metropolitan of Drama. The other two candidates are not mentioned in the document.

Joachim is also mentioned in other documents. In August 1723, he signed the ruling of Jeremias III of Constantinople against Methodios Anthrakitis (the document was also signed by Athanasios III Dabbās, the patriarch of Antioch).³ As a former metropolitan without an eparchy, Joachim probably resided in Constantinople in 1724 and was thus available to be elected as patriarch of Antioch.

The document might be a draft, written after news of the vacancy of the Antiochian throne had reached Constantinople. Nevertheless, it illustrates the fact that Sylvester’s election in September 1724 was not something unusual. It also demonstrates that the Patriarchate of Constantinople was determined to enforce its solutions and assert its authority when it came to Antiochian matters. Delikanēs believes that Athanasios’s letters recommending Sylvester as successor had reached the Ottoman capital in the meantime, and that Joachim’s election did not take place after all. Sylvester’s arrival in person in Constantinople, perhaps from Mount Athos, as some sources suggest, and the initial support he received from the inhabitants of Aleppo were probably instrumental in his election.

The document draft concerning the election of another candidate as patriarch of Antioch was neglected by the researchers who discussed the events of

1 Delikanēs, *Tà én toĩs kῶdixi toũ Patriarxikoũ Arxioφυλακείου σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικά ἔγγραφα*, p. 185–188, from *Codex Kritioui*, [f.] 34, Library of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. The document was also published in K. Delikanēs, “Ἀντιοχικά”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια*, 26, 1906, 8, p. 95–96 (8, p. 93–101; 9, p. 115–120; 10, p. 127–134).

2 Delikanēs, *Tà én toĩs kῶdixi toũ Patriarxikoũ Arxioφυλακείου σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικά ἔγγραφα*, p. 188.

3 Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 231–246, and “Ο πρῶν Δράμας Ἰωακείμ”, col. 245.

1724. Although corrected in the errata of the book, the wrong date (1732–1733) in Delikanēs’s edition was an important deterrent for researchers to seriously consider the information provided by the document. The error, as the editor remarked in the *Errata*, came from the confusion between Patriarch Jeremias III’s first term in office (1716–1726) and the second (1732–1733).⁴ From the document itself, it is clear that it was written at some point after July 1724 and before Sylvester’s election later that year (in September 24), and even before August 29, when a *berat* was issued for Sylvester. The absence of a reference to Kyrillos Tanās’s election by the Latin party does not necessarily mean that it preceded it, as the document refers to the “Latin” influence in the area.

The document mentioning the election of Joachim provides information that is not repeated in the one about Sylvester and offers new insight into the involvement of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Antiochian election. The document reveals that the Ottoman state became aware of the overt “deviation” of the Christians in the Patriarchate of Antioch towards the Latin creed. The result was that the “supreme *epitropos*” (i.e., the grand vizier) issued “a formidable, powerful and obligatory commandment”, by a “written decree”. The order required the Patriarchate of Constantinople to elect, “exactly and literally”, a person from their circles, an authentic supporter of the “old and ancestral dogmas of the Eastern Church”, “not having any involvement whatsoever with the Latin erroneous belief”. The order also sternly prohibited the election as patriarch of Antioch of any person from the area, even if he would be proposed, requested, and supported by the people under the jurisdiction of that See. Any resident of the Patriarchate of Antioch was considered dubious and without guaranties as to the correctness of his opinions, because of the wrong Latin beliefs spread among much of the common people and the nobles in the area.

[...] φανεράς γενομένης τῆς εἰς λατινισμόν ἐκτροπῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν τῷ ὑπερτάτῳ Ἐπιτρόπῳ, ἐπροστάχθημεν προσταγῇ φοβερᾷ τε καὶ ἰσχυρᾷ καὶ ἀπαραιτήτῳ διὰ θεσπίσματος ἐγγράφου ἐπὶ βασιλικῷ λευκώματος ῥητῶς ἐπὶ λέξεως διοριζομένου καὶ κελεύοντος ἡμᾶς, εὐρεῖν καὶ ἐκλέξεσθαι ἐντεῦθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἡμετέρου κλίματος ἄξιον καὶ ἀρμόδιον πρόσωπον ἐπὶ τὸ ἀναλαβεῖν τὴν Πατριαρχικὴν προστασίαν τοῦ Θρόνου τῆς Ἀντιοχείας, ἀντεχόμενον μὲν γνησίως τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ πατρίων δογμάτων τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἀμέτοχον δὲ εἰς τὸ παντελὲς τῆς λατινικῆς κακοδοξίας, καὶ ἀπαγορεύοντος σφοδρῶς μηδένα προχειρίσασθαι ἐκ τοῦ ἐκεῖσε τῆς Ἀντιοχείας κλίματος, κἂν ὅτι μάλιστα εἴη ὑπὸ τοῦ Θρόνου ἐκείνου Χριστιανῶν προβεβλημένος, ζητούμενος τε καὶ στεργόμενος, ἅτε παντὸς οὐτινοσοῦν τῶν ἐκεῖθεν προβληθισομένου καὶ ζητηθισομένου ὑπόπτου τυγχάνοντος, καὶ τὸ ἐχέγγυον καὶ γνωστὸν περὶ τῶν δογμάτων

⁴ Delikanēs, *Tà ἐν τοῖς κώδιξι τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἀρχιεποφυλακείου σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικά ἔγγραφα*, p. 668–669.

ὀρθότητα οὐκ ἔχοντος διὰ τὴν πλεονάσασαν ἤδη καὶ σχεδὸν τὸ πλεῖστον τῶν ἐκεῖ ἀρχόντων διαφθείρασαν λατινικὴν κακοδοξίαν.⁵

[...] Since the deviation of the Christians into Latinism has become manifest to the grand vizier, we have been instructed by a formidable, powerful and obligatory commandment, by a written decree in the imperial register, which word for word ordered and commanded us to find and to elect here a worthy and competent person from our eparchy to take up the patriarchal protection of the Throne of Antioch, truly supporting the ancient and ancestral doctrines of the Eastern Church, but not involved at all in the Latin erroneous opinion, and strictly forbidding to promote anyone from that eparchy of Antioch, even if it was put forward, asked for, and desired by the Christians of that Throne, because everyone put forward and asked for from there is suspect and lacks the guarantee and the assurance of the righteousness of his doctrines, because of the now wide-spread Latin erroneous opinion that corrupted almost the majority of the nobles there.

The information provided by this document offers a new basis for understanding the involvement of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the election of the patriarchs of Antioch. The Ottoman imperial order, even if solicited by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, provided the official endorsement of the election by the central authority. As had often been the case, the Ottoman administration's decision to issue this order was motivated by the intention to avoid any disturbance of the established order. As we mentioned above, if part of the *Rūm* or Greek Orthodox population became "Latins" (Catholics), the traditional order would have been disrupted, and the status of these converts would have been unclear, because they would have been neither technically nor administratively "Franks" (Western Europeans) but remained Ottoman subjects.

Once established, the election of the patriarchs of Antioch in Constantinople became a rule. This had already happened in the case of other patriarchal elections. The patriarch of Alexandria had also been elected in the imperial city on certain occasions. For example, on September 14, 1723, Kosmas II was elected patriarch of Alexandria in Constantinople. The document is also signed by the grand dragoman Gregory Ghikas (Fig. 8).⁶ In 1746, Matthaios, the metropolitan of Libya, was elected patriarch of Alexandria in Constantinople while he was travelling in Wallachia.

Although the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch were autocephalous (i.e., independent), they became over time more and more dependent on the Ecumenical See. The "Ecumenical" ("universal") dimension was even more strongly asserted

⁵ Delikanēs, *Τὰ ἐν τοῖς κώδιξι τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκοπικοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκοπικοῦ σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικὰ ἔγγραφα*, p. 187–188.

⁶ A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, "Σημειώσεις περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀλεξανδρείας Σαμουὴλ Καπασούλη", *Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορικῆς καὶ Ἐθνολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, 3, 1889, p. 512–517; Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 245–246.

with the annexation of the former autocephalous Patriarchates of Ohrid and Peć (functioning since the time of the Bulgarian and the Serbian medieval states) in the second half of the 18th century.⁷

Sylvester's election becomes clearer considering the information provided by this document. In fact, Sylvester did not exactly match the profile of the person requested by the Ottomans. He was not from the circle of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, he was suggested by and was the *protosynkellos* of Athanasios III, and, according to some sources, he was his nephew (or a more distant relative). Moreover, at the time he belonged to the Patriarchate of Antioch (even if he was born in Cyprus). However, the Ottoman authorities were apparently convinced that he will observe the Orthodox path. Sylvester's subsequent actions should be understood in this light. If upon his election in 1724 he was reminded that as patriarch he would have to strictly observe Orthodox faith, he certainly did so during the four decades of his patriarchate.

The document of 1724, published in 1904 but neglected by historians, provides a new basis for understanding Sylvester's election and the attitude of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Ottoman central authorities in matters related to the Church of Antioch. Far from being uninterested in the situation in the field, in the eparchy of Antioch, the Ottoman authorities were actively involved in these issues. This concern is in line with their general anti-Latin attitude at the time, also noticeable in other imperial decrees. The extent to which the Ottoman authorities' decisions were influenced by the Patriarchate of Constantinople is a topic that needs further research, particularly in the Ottoman archives.

The information of the Greek document of 1724 is confirmed by an Ottoman source, the *berat* issued the same year for Sylvester of Antioch. After a petition made by the Patriarch Jeremias III of Constantinople about the "Frankish" influence in Antioch, Damascus, and Aleppo, the sultan issued an order about the election of a new patriarch of Antioch. The *berat* states:

My order was that, if the aforementioned ones who follow the Frankish rite demand the Patriarchate by sending petitions with a plan to make someone from those places a patriarch, their rite shall never be allowed, their petitions shall be presented to my Gate of Felicity, and you shall give the Patriarchate to an imperially-trusted person who follows the ancient rite.⁸

7 P. M. Kitromilides, "Orthodox Culture and Collective Identity in the Ottoman Balkans during the Eighteenth Century", *Oriente Moderno*, 79, 1999, 1, p. 129–145; Kitromilides, "An Orthodox Commonwealth", Study II, p. 131–145.

8 H. Çolak, E. Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church as an Ottoman Institution. A Study of Early Modern Patriarchal Berats*, Istanbul, 2019, p. 92 (transcribed Ottoman text), 218 (English translation).

4.2 Sylvester in Constantinople, Aleppo, Tripoli, and the Balkans, 1724–1730

After a brief period of confusion concerning the election, or only the projected election of Joachim, the former metropolitan of Drama, as patriarch of the Church of Antioch, the Ecumenical Patriarchate decided to act according to the wishes of the late patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās. In December 1724, a patriarchal and synodal letter was issued by Patriarch Jeremias III mentioning the election of Sylvester as patriarch of Antioch. It also reported in detail on the way Seraphim/Kyrillos Ṭanās had been ordained and appointed to the same position by the Latin party.⁹ This detailed report included references to the *kathēresis* (defrocking) of the clerics responsible for Ṭanās's ordination, as well as to the excommunication of some of the laymen that played a part in it. Among them was 'Abdallāh Zākhir, one of the scholars of the Greek Catholic community, a former collaborator of Athanasios III and, later, his adversary.¹⁰

On an ideological level, Zākhir provided an input to the pro-Latin faction, unexpectedly substantial, since it was the work of a single individual. This individual was, however, particularly active. Apart from his polemical writings, such as the one against the decision of the 1722 synod of Constantinople, 'Abdallāh Zākhir introduced a new and "revolutionary" way to promote aspects of the Latin beliefs to the Arabic-speaking population: the printing press.¹¹ From the late 1720s, he was engaged in establishing a private press, eventually located in the Saint John the Baptist Monastery in Ḍūr al-Shuwayr, village of Khinshāra (Mount Lebanon). The origin of the type and the initial funding of the new printing press were subject to much debate between Zākhir and his contemporaries, and in later scholarship.¹²

⁹ MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 1r–2r. See Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 385–389.

¹⁰ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 388. For the biography of 'Abdallāh Zākhir, see P. Bacel, "Abdallah Zakher. Ses premiers travaux (1680–1722)", *Échos d'Orient*, 11, 1908, 71, p. 218–226; P. Bacel, "Abdallah Zakher et son imprimerie arabe", *Échos d'Orient*, 11, 1908, 72, p. 281–287; P. Bacel, "Dernières années d'Abdallah Zakher", *Échos d'Orient*, 11, 1908, 73, p. 363–372; J. Nasrallah, "Les imprimeries melchites au XVIII^e siècle", *Proche-Orient Chrétien*, XXXVI, 1986, fasc. III–IV, p. 231–241; Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 111–137.

¹¹ For 'Abdallāh Zākhir's epistle against the document of the synod of 1722, see Haddad, "Sources hellènes de la controverse dans l'Église melkite", p. 505.

¹² Bacel, "Abdallah Zakher et son imprimerie arabe", p. 281–287. For Abdallāh Zākhir's press, see E. Conidi, *Arabic Type in Europe and the Middle East, 1514–1924: Challenges in the Adaptation of the Arabic Script from Written to Printed Form*, unpublished PhD thesis, Reading, 2018, p. 489–499; E. Conidi, "An approach to the study of Arabic foundry type", in T. Nemeth (ed.), *Arabic Typography. History and Practice*, Sallenstein, 2023, p. 42–43; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*,

He printed the first book there in 1734, and the press remained active for more than a century, publishing a great number of books, some in several editions.¹³

The news of Sylvester's election as patriarch of Antioch was conveyed by the Viscount d'Andrezel, the French ambassador in Constantinople, to Jean Frédéric Phélypeaux, Count de Maurepas,¹⁴ on October 22, 1724. The letter contained interesting information about Sylvester, who had seemingly contacted the ambassador to announce his election:

As the former patriarch of Antioch had died, the Great Lord appointed in his place Sylvester, whom the departed had designated as his successor. The latter announced me of his nomination and assured me that he was inclined to ensure the peace with the Catholics, to follow the example left to him by the late patriarch, his relative, close to whom he had been raised.¹⁵

This excerpt of d'Andrezel's letter refers to Sylvester's nomination as patriarch and his appointment by the sultan. This seems to indicate that he wrote it after Sylvester's *berat* had been issued. D'Andrezel's letter contains several interesting details, not found in other sources, on the new patriarch, whom he calls "Silvestrio". He describes his intention to follow the conciliatory policy of his predecessor and to maintain a relationship with the ambassador. The fact that the appointment was recommended by Athanasios also featured in the patriarchal letter mentioned above. Interesting enough, the French ambassador does not refer to the election of Seraphim/Kyrillos in Damascus. For him, the situation was clear: the rightful patriarch was the one recommended by Athanasios III Dabbās and later confirmed by the Ottomans.

p. 209–226; Heyberger, "Réseaux de collaboration et enjeux de pouvoir", in Girard, Heyberger, Kontouma (eds.), *Livres et confessions chrétiennes orientales*, p. 408–409.

13 For the books published in al-Shuwayr in the 18th and early 19th century, see *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, vol. I, *Imprimés. Philosophie, Théologie, Sciences Naturelles*, Paris, 1842, p. 412–414. The press started its activity in 1733 and the printing of the first book was finished on February 26, 1734. See C. Walbiner, "The appearance of Nieremberg's *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* in Arabic (1734): A turning point in the history of printing and publication in the Arab world?", in Girard, Heyberger, Kontouma (eds.), *Livres et confessions chrétiennes orientales*, p. 427–440.

14 Count de Maurepas was minister of the royal household ("ministre de la maison du roi").

15 Rabboth, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 566: "L'ancien patriarche d'Antioche, Athanase, étant mort, le Grand Seigneur a nommé à sa place Silvestrio, que le défunt avait désigné pour son successeur. Ce dernier m'a fait donner part de sa nomination et assurer qu'il était porté à assurer la paix avec les catholiques, pour suivre l'exemple que lui avait laissé le feu patriarche, son parent, auprès duquel il avait été élevé".

According to Ottoman archival sources, Sylvester's *berat* was issued on August 18/29, 1724,¹⁶ a little over a month after Athanasios Dabbās had died. The discovery of a copy of this document shows clearly that the moves, by Sylvester and his supporters, to secure his official appointment by the sultan preceded any action taken by Seraphim Ṭanās. Also, the *berat* was obtained nearly a month before Sylvester's ecclesiastical ordination on September 24, 1724. According to its text, Sylvester of Antioch's *berat* was requested by Patriarch Jeremias III of Constantinople, who mentioned the danger that the Latin clergymen in the Patriarchate of Antioch will attract the sultan's subjects into the "Frankish" rite (*Efrenc*, in the Ottoman text).

Sylvester's *berat* of 1724 provides a highly interesting detail, as it reveals that the recipient was the "chief warden" of Athanasios, and that he resided at the time on Mount Athos, confirming thus the information available from other sources. The cities under Sylvester's authority mentioned in the *berat* were "Antioch, Damascus, Aleppo, Adana,¹⁷ Çıldır,¹⁸ Ahiska,¹⁹ Erzurum and their dependencies."²⁰ Compared with the *berat* granted to Athanasios Dabbās on February 17, 1720, Sylvester's *berat* is more detailed. Athanasios's *berat* does not mention the patriarch of Constantinople. Instead, it explains that the patriarch of Antioch was appointed at the request of the inhabitants of Damascus. It does not mention the Latin influence either.²¹

French officials were informed of the events in Damascus by letters and reports sent by missionaries. One of these letters, written in Latin by a Capuchin of Damascus on October 30, 1724, was sent to France five months later, attached to a letter of the consul in Aleppo dated April 5, 1725.²² Among other topics, it describes the patriarchal election of Seraphim Ṭanās, who had recently arrived in Damascus. The pasha of Damascus, who intended to obtain financial gains from the situation, was eventually appeased. A letter signed by more than 400 persons was presented to him in support of Seraphim. As most of the bishops had been summoned to a synod in Aleppo by the late patriarch, Ṭanās's ordination posed a new challenge for his supporters. The only bishop who was not in Aleppo at the time was "in the mountains" and reluctant to come. As known from other sources, this was Basilios (Vasileios) Fynān, metropolitan of Caesarea Philippi (Banyas). Any delay could

16 Sylvester's *berat* of 1724 was published in Çolak, Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 92–93 (transcribed Ottoman text), 218–220 (English translation).

17 Adana (in Greek, Ἀδανα) is a city in Southern Turkey, in the historical province of Cilicia.

18 Çıldır is a town in the Ardahan Province of north-eastern Turkey.

19 Spelled Ahisha in the *berat*, this is Akhaltsikhe, a city in south-west Georgia.

20 Çolak, Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 92, 218.

21 See Athanasios's *berat* of 1720 in Çolak, Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 91 (transcribed Ottoman text), 217 (English translation).

22 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 566–569.

undermine the objective of the pro-Latin faction. Finally, the letter of the Capuchin reveals, the bishop (metropolitan) of Şaydnāyā²³ returned from Aleppo to his See. Together, the two bishops ordained a third one and the three of them ordained Seraphim as patriarch and named him Kyrillos, on October 1, 1724.²⁴ Then, continued the Capuchin's letter, the new patriarch pronounced a profession of faith mentioning the pope as the head of all the Church.²⁵ The account of these events is broadly the same in the Greek letter of the patriarch and the synod.²⁶

The events and the election of Seraphim/Kyrillos and Sylvester are presented in a memorandum written in 1731 by a French diplomat in Sidon, Jean-André du Bellis. He remarks that Sylvester was appointed in Constantinople only eleven days after Cyril's election in Damascus.²⁷

Another letter, written in December 1724 by Ambroise de Rennes, *supérieur* (superior) of the Capuchins in Damascus, presents the situation after Sylvester's election.²⁸ Assemblies were held in Aleppo in favor of Sylvester, while the validity of Kyrillos's ordination was contested. Kyrillos was also accused of changing the rite (i.e., from the Greek to the Latin one). According to Ambroise de Rennes, the residents of Aleppo (and presumably some of the missionaries) were in favor of Sylvester. He wonders how this could be possible, as he was a known "heretic", although he assured the "ambassadors" of the opposite, while Kyrillos was a "good Catholic". The idea that Osman, the pasha of Damascus, will soon depart the city, leaving Kyrillos without support, was also wrong, according to the superior of the Capuchins. This letter also offers some insight into a lesser-known aspect of Kyrillos's attempt to obtain the Ottoman endorsement of his election, namely his *difter*, or record of the money spent to attain his goal. Up to that date, Kyrillos had already spent 43 "purses". Twenty of them had been presented by a French merchant, who had also offered to give the remaining sum required for Kyrillos's confirmation.²⁹ As the value of a "purse" was 500 *piasters* (a large silver coin like the

23 His name, not mentioned in the Capuchin's letter, was Neophytos.

24 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 566. The date is rendered in the Latin text "kal. Octobris", corresponding to October 1, according to the Gregorian calendar.

25 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 566. The letter adds that Seraphim/Kyrillos was "a disciple of Rome, a student of the Holy Congregation" (*discipulum Romae, Sanctae Congregationis alumnum*).

26 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ανάλεκτα Ιεροσολυμιτικής Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 385–389.

27 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 592.

28 Letter of Ambroise de Rennes to a Capuchin priest of Aleppo, December 1724, Damascus, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 569–571.

29 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 571.

European *thaler*), the amount was around 21,500 *piasters*.³⁰ Du Bellis mentions this merchant's name: François Porry from Sidon, who was at the time in Damascus. The account refers to only ten “purses”, provided as a loan to Seraphim by Porry and paid in nature (fabrics and other goods).³¹

Sylvester's letters often mention the large sums of money needed for obtaining or renewing *berats*. Most of them were directed towards unofficial payments to the Ottoman dignitaries. The additional information about Kyrillos's spending confirms this practice.

The situation of the two factions (Sylvester's and Kyrillos's) was objectively evaluated by the French consul in Aleppo in a letter of April 5, 1725, addressed to the king's minister.³² According to the consul, the “Greeks” of “Syria” were divided, some of them supporting Sylvester, while others, Seraphim. Sylvester had the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, the grand dragoman and “almost all” the “Greeks” of Aleppo on his side. In turn, Seraphim was only supported by the “Greeks” of Damascus and the Catholic missionaries. The pasha of Damascus took 5,000 *piasters* from Seraphim's supporters and promised to obtain the *berat* that confirmed him as patriarch of Antioch. Sylvester, with the help of the ecumenical patriarch and of the grand dragoman, was in a better position in Constantinople to secure his position. A *kapıcıbaşı*³³ was sent to find Seraphim and escort him to the capital. The latter left Damascus and found refuge in Kesruwān. According to the French consul's letter, Seraphim/Kyrillos was extremely critical towards the missionaries. He blamed them for placing him in a difficult position, as in his view, they exhorted him to borrow and spend large sums. The letter confirms the information from other sources that Ṭanās borrowed 10,000 *écus*³⁴ from a French merchant in Sidon.

The consul's report also blamed the missionaries for taking Seraphim's side too actively and inconsiderately, which led to a hostile attitude towards Sylvester. Certain missionaries had even wanted to declare Sylvester and all who acknowledged him as patriarch as heretics.³⁵

Even without considering the Latin missionaries' zeal, Seraphim Ṭanās's position was delicate. Elected and ordained patriarch in a questionable manner, he and

30 For the value of a “purse”, see Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 571, n. 2.

31 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 593.

32 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 573–574.

33 In the 18th century, a *kapıcıbaşı* (“chief of the gatekeepers”) was a court official whose mission was to convey messages and orders, and execute orders issued by the sultan or the Divan.

34 At the time, the *écu* was a large French silver coin equivalent to a *thaler* or an Ottoman *piaster*. The 10,000 *écus* correspond to the 20 “purses” mentioned by Ambroise de Rennes.

35 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 574.

the bishops who ordained him, and some of their followers, were condemned by the ecumenical patriarch and the Synod in Constantinople, the highest authority in the Orthodox Church. Also, for the Ottoman central authorities, the legitimate patriarch of Antioch, holder of an imperial *berat*, was Sylvester. Thus, the sultan declared the election in Constantinople valid and the one in Damascus null and void.

In the following years, Kyrillos/Seraphim was compelled to find refuge in remote areas, difficult to reach by Ottoman officials. Nevertheless, his faction succeeded in maintaining an important voice and surprisingly became stronger in Aleppo, formerly the stronghold of Athanasios and Sylvester, than in Damascus. This was due to events in Aleppo after Sylvester's arrival.

In 1726, a certain “Jean Abdalia, député des Grecs de Syrie”, named in another document “Jean Abdoulla Faad, natif de Seyde, depute du patriarche et de la nation Melchite”, was sent by the pro-Latin party to Rome, and from there to France, to ask for the reinstatement of Kyrillos as patriarch instead of Sylvester.

Well informed by his diplomats about the situation in the field, Louis XV could not promise to the envoy anything except that he would write to his ambassador to do his best and try to reinstate Kyrillos, or at least to stop the persecutions against the pro-Catholic party. The French, however, put no pressure on their ambassador to achieve the first goal, and asked for prudence and non-interference in the measures he took for reconciliation. The king was unwilling to grant the financial assistance to Kyrillos that the envoy asked for. Jean Abdalla received only a small sum from the French king, as “gratification”, because there were doubts about his mission, which had not been announced by any of the French consuls.³⁶ Later, Abdalla asked to go to Constantinople instead of Syria and requested the French ambassador's protection.³⁷ The reply of the French consul in Aleppo proved that he had not been informed of Abdalla's mission.³⁸

The missionaries continued to support Kyrillos Ṭanās despite the hesitations of the French diplomatic representatives and even those of the pope, who delayed Kyrillos's recognition for years. Despite this delay, the Greek Catholic faction became a new Church, with its own hierarchy. However, the history of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch, as it was later called, exceeds the scope of this book.

³⁶ Letter of Count de Maurepas to the French ambassador in Constantinople, May 27, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 353–354.

³⁷ Letter of Count de Maurepas to the French ambassador in Constantinople, July 31, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 364–365.

³⁸ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 375.

In 1745, Kyrillos, who had received the *pallium* a year before with his supporters' financial help, succeeded in obtaining a *berat* that appointed him patriarch of Antioch. Yet, he never tried to go to Constantinople, where he could potentially face arrest, based on previously issued official orders. He remained on Mount Lebanon, in the Saint Saviour Monastery (Dayr al-Mukhalliṣ) near Jūn (Joun).

Some historians accused Sylvester of mishandling the situation in Aleppo, where many of the “Greeks”, although initially his supporters, were strongly influenced by the Latin propaganda. The new patriarch had no other choice but to continue following the Orthodox path, aligned with his allies, the patriarchs Paisios II of Constantinople and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. Sylvester could not afford to lose their support on suspicion that he was leaning towards Catholicism. Since the contradictions between the two parties had deepened, Sylvester was not in a position to continue the strategy of moderation of his predecessor Athanasios III Dabbās. He had to choose sides and demanded his followers to do the same. Claiming, or pretending to be a Catholic would have served nothing. As far as the missionaries were concerned, in this respect, Kyrillos was a far better candidate than Sylvester.

In the meantime, the Viscount d'Andrezel, the French ambassador, had to face a new issue. The missionaries, already threatened by the imperial decree of 1722 that prohibited them from making proselytes among the sultan's subjects, openly supported Ṭanās's election. “By the power of money”, they had obtained his confirmation from Osman, the pasha of Damascus.

The ambassador presented again the circumstances of Seraphim's patriarchal election in a letter to the king's minister on May 6, 1725.³⁹ D'Andrezel wrote that he did not play any part in Seraphim's election and that the recent events disturbed the agreements he had made with the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch. He added that he had only learned about the Damascus election after the Porte had appointed Sylvester as patriarch of Antioch. As for the decree of 1722, the French ambassador thought that it was not opposed to the capitulations, which gave the right to Catholic priests to officiate in their ancient places of worship but not to visit the houses of the sultan's subjects, to convince them to change their religion. However, d'Andrezel appealed the order concerning Seraphim's arrest and that of his followers because it specified that the persons named should be surveyed until “the destruction of the Frankish religion” (“jusqu'à la destruction de la religion franque”). This provision could have been interpreted as contravening to the capitulations. He added that he would try to obtain a meeting with Sylvester, the new patriarch, via the dragoman of the Porte. Also, the French ambassador was

³⁹ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 574–577. The following comments are all based on this part of the report.

informed that Osman pasha of Damascus had been deposed because he had supported the election of Seraphim without the Ottoman court's approval.

While in Constantinople, Sylvester of Antioch took part in the decisions of the local synod. In 1725, there were two important decisions taken by the Patriarch Jeremias III. The documents in which these decisions were expressed were also signed by Sylvester. One of these, in June 1725, is a document restoring Methodios Anthrakitēs as a member of the clergy. In 1723, he had been judged by the synod for ideas deviating from the Orthodox faith, which he had formulated in some of his philosophical writings. With this document, the patriarch of Constantinople and the synod notified the patriarch of Nea Justiniana Ohrid and the *proedros* of Sisanion (former patriarch of Ohrid), as well as other metropolitans in the region, that Methodios Anthrakitēs was restored in his previous position after admitting his errors. The document also contained the signatures of both the current and the former patriarch of Ohrid.⁴⁰

The events that followed in Aleppo and Damascus, but also in Constantinople, can be traced with a fair amount of accuracy in the French diplomatic correspondence.

The *karıcibaşı* sent to seize Seraphim and his supporters returned to the capital only with the metropolitan of Aleppo Gerasimos, whom the envoy had taken by surprise. Gerasimos was subsequently exiled on the island of Lemnos. Viscount d'Andrezel mentions that the "bishop of Aleppo" was "a Greek of Latin rite" ("Grec du rite Latin"), meaning perhaps that he had Catholic tendencies, even if he did not take part in the ordination of Seraphim.

The ambassador had the intention to visit Sylvester, the Orthodox patriarch of Antioch. He had learned from the grand dragoman that for such a meeting to take place, Sylvester had to ask for the permission of the grand vizier.⁴¹ The grand dragoman of the Porte was Gregory Ghikas, who held this office between 1717 and 1726.⁴²

40 The text is preserved in the MS no. 2753 of the National Library of Greece, the Codex of the Metropolis of Kastoria. See E. Pelagidēs, "Η συνοδική απόφαση για την όριστική «άποκατάσταση» του Μεθοδίου Ανθρακίτη", *Μακεδονικά*, 23, 1983, p. 134–147; E. Pelagidēs, *Ο κώδικας της Μητροπόλεως Καστοριάς, 1665–1769 Εθνικής Βιβλιοθήκης Ελλάδος 2753*, Thessaloniki, 1990, p. 43, 71–73. See also the mentions in Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 1021–1022; A. P. Péchayre, "Zosime d'Ochrida et de Sisanion. Ses relations avec l'Autriche et ses différents séjours à Ochrida", *Échos d'Orient*, 37, 1938, 189–190, p. 152.

41 Letter of d'Andrezel to the king's minister, June 26, 1725, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 578.

42 E. I. Stamatiadēs, *Βιογραφία των Ελλήνων μεγάλων διερμηνέων του Όθωμανικού Κράτους*, Athens, 1865, p. 117–121, 191 (see also the Romanian translation: E. I. Stamatiade, *Biografie marilor dragomani (interpreți) greci din Imperiul Otoman*, trans. C. Erbiceanu, Bucharest, 1897, p. 67–70, 109); C. M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire. Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution*, Berkley/Los Angeles/London, 2011, p. 183. The two books give the period in office as 1717–1727, but as Gregory

The meeting between Viscount d'Andrezel and Sylvester of Antioch finally took place on July 23, 1725. The account of the meeting conveyed by d'Andrezel to the French king's minister, Count de Maurepas, is a very important source for the beginning of Sylvester's patriarchate and his ideas at the time. The ambassador also added a memorandum to the letter, presenting the main points of the conversation and the topics the two agreed on.⁴³ The value of this source, dating from the day on which the meeting took place, is given by the fact that it is written by one of the participants and it is contemporary with the events.⁴⁴ We have commented on the relevance of this information in the previous chapter dealing with Sylvester's origin and family. Other insights provided in the ambassador's letter and memorandum are no less significant. It reveals that the two men were aware of the situation on the ground, in Aleppo and Damascus, and although they were compelled by their position to defend their ideas, they were willing to reach an agreement favorable to both parties.

Sylvester came to the meeting accompanied by a metropolitan and eight to ten priests. This is an indication that he was already surrounded by some of the clergy of the Church of Antioch while he was still in Constantinople. For the ambassador, an agreement of some sort needed to be made with Sylvester to enable him to continue his interventions to the Ottoman officials on behalf of the missionaries, who were threatened by the previous anti-Latin decrees and the recent troubles surrounding Kyrillos's election. D'Andrezel asserted in the letter that he had asked the grand dragoman in the meantime not to tell Sylvester that the missionaries of Damascus, after two days of imprisonment by the pasha of the city, had succeeded in reversing the order that prohibited them from visiting the Christians' houses. They had even publicized the new order, favorable to them, by means of a herald. The news had reached the metropolitan Leontios ("l'évêque Léondios" in the letter), who had requested a copy of the 1722 decree of the sultan. Leontios, metropolitan of Hama, was Sylvester's representative in Damascus, defined in the text as "grand vicaire".⁴⁵

Ghikas was appointed prince of Moldavia on September 26/October 7, 1726 and entered Iași on December 18/29, 1726, the position of great dragoman, requiring his presence in Constantinople, was probably occupied by someone else. For Gregory Ghikas, see also M. Țipău, *Domnii fanarioți în Țările Române. Mică enciclopedie*, Bucharest, 2008, p. 70–74.

⁴³ For the letter, or the memorandum ("mémoire"), see Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 579–581, p. 581–586.

⁴⁴ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 584. In previous letters, written before the meeting, Sylvester is defined as Athanasios's "relative".

⁴⁵ For Leontios (Ar. Lāwundiyūs), see Walbiner, "Die Bischofs- und Metropolitensitze", p. 64.

The memorandum of the meeting between the French ambassador and Sylvester presents the main points of their discussion, giving the utmost attention to the topic of the Latin missionaries and their activities. The ambassador presented the privileges the missionaries in Syria and Palestine had been granted by the sultans, mentioning that the French missionaries were under the protection of the king of France. An intense persecution of the missionaries had started after Sylvester's election, when the "Greek" bishops and priests used the 1722 Ottoman decree to irritate the French missionaries in Damascus. Metropolitan Leontios had called a *kapıcı*⁴⁶ in Damascus who, persuaded by the metropolitan, applied harsh treatments to the French monks. The ambassador knew at that point that the monks' imprisonment had only lasted for two days and that the measures against them had already been reversed. He added that the *rayas* embracing the Latin rite do not become subjects of the pope, but remain subjects of the Grand Lord, continuing to dully pay the *haraç*. D'Andrezel also mentioned that among the Christians, excommunication and public criticism had to be avoided, in order not to give unbelievers the opportunity to destroy one community by means of the other. He added that it was not fair to prohibit the French missionaries from visiting local Christians and from having schools where they teach children for free. He recognized that the Greek patriarchs had the right to forbid their own nationals to go to Latin chapels, but it would be unjust to place the responsibility for this on the Latin clergy. He also stated that he had written and asked the Roman Catholic superiors in Pera to write to the monks in Syria and Palestine to abstain from acid speeches against the Greek religion or the Greek Orthodox patriarchs, bishops, and priests.

D'Andrezel asked Sylvester to present his objections in a memorandum, for them to be solved. He also demanded the patriarch to take measures against those who created enmity by calling the pope an idolater, as in the "libel of 1723" (most likely, the letter of the Synod of Constantinople) and in daily sermons.

The ambassador let Sylvester know that he did not support Seraphim in any way and reminded him that he had been the first to congratulate him after his appointment as patriarch of Antioch by the Porte. He added that if Sylvester had refused the meeting, he would have appealed to the sultan, in the name of the king, to send another *kapıcı* in the field, to investigate the facts. The patriarchs of Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem needed to work together with the ambassador to reestablish peace and punish the troublemakers.⁴⁷

46 For the term *kapıcı*, see E. V. Gatenby, "Material for a Study of Turkish Words in English", *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, XII, 1954, 3–4, p. 91.

47 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 581–584.

The Sylvester's key ideas were recorded in the memorandum in a concise manner. He asserted that the troubles in Damascus were caused by the Latin monks who supported Seraphim when they realized that Sylvester was appointed to succeed his uncle Athanasios. According to the patriarch, the Latin missionaries were spreading their beliefs through their schools and by visiting Christians' homes.

In the order received by the *kapıcıbaşı* sent to Damascus there was no mention of the "destruction of the religion of Franks". Likewise, the Ottoman decree of 1723 was issued to prevent the French monks from visiting the houses of the sultan's subjects (*rayas*), not to expel or dismiss them.⁴⁸

Sylvester also assured that he wanted to be on good terms with the ambassador, as his predecessor had been with de Bonnac. This was his primary motivation for attending this meeting, overcoming all obstacles in his way.

The patriarch of Antioch stressed that the Greeks uphold the conviction that they are as Orthodox as the Latins, following the primary Church and its dogmas, and that no council had condemned or disapproved of their rite. The missionaries could exercise their zeal on the Armenians, Nestorians, Copts, Maronites, and others who were on a wrong path. As for the education the missionaries provided, he mentioned that there were Greek priests in Palestine equally skilled and enlightened who could teach Greek children, so that they did not have to attend the schools of the Catholic missionaries.

The patriarch added that he was compelled to defend his people, and if a conflict burst out, the Latin monks would be responsible. Sylvester mentioned that he had the authority to forbid the Greeks to go to the missionary schools. In case of disobedience, extreme punishments could be ordered, but he preferred to avoid them. He asked the ambassador to prohibit the missionaries from receiving Greeks in their schools as the simplest way for securing the Christians' tranquility.⁴⁹

As a result of the meeting, promises were made by both parts. The ambassador promised to write to the monks not to visit the Greeks' houses anymore and to make clear to them not to receive Greeks in their schools until they had met with Patriarch Sylvester himself, when he arrived in Damascus. On his side, Sylvester promised to prohibit Metropolitan Leontios and others from bothering the missionaries, provided they did not visit the Greeks' houses and did not admit Greek children in their schools. The ambassador's meeting with Sylvester ended "after the

⁴⁸ The decree is most likely the same as the one issued in 1722, which appears in some sources as issued in 1723.

⁴⁹ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 584–586.

sorbet and perfume, with a lot of demonstrations of mutual esteem and the wish to live together well”.⁵⁰

As presented in this source, Sylvester’s attitude in the conversation with Viscount d’Andrezel reflects a person well prepared for his position, ready to defend his ideas but willing to maintain good relations with the opposite side, on condition that they would also make steps in this direction.

The king’s minister, Count de Maurepas, approved d’Andrezel’s initiative to meet the patriarch and commented that the ambassador will see in future if Sylvester acts in good faith.⁵¹ At the same time, he recommended the French consul in Aleppo to act according to the lines agreed upon in the patriarch’s meeting with the ambassador, to secure tranquility.⁵²

Patriarch Sylvester arrived in Aleppo from Constantinople on November 9, 1725.⁵³ Thus, after leaving Constantinople, he first went to the city that Athanasios had chosen as his preferred residence, a city he was also familiar with. Details of the events which followed his arrival are provided in a primary source, a letter of the French consul of Aleppo to the king’s minister, de Maurepas, dated December 20, 1725.⁵⁴

There is also an Arabic source which sheds light on this early stage of his patriarchal office. It is preserved in two manuscripts of the 20th century, recorded with the shelfmarks MS 1133 and MS 1175 in the library of the Basilian Order of Aleppo (Ordre Basilien Alepin) in Şarbā (Jūniya).⁵⁵ They contain “A statement of the conditions and persecutions that the Catholic Rūm community in Aleppo was faced with, and the crimes they suffered only to protect the sacred Catholic faith”. The Arabic title of this text is:

بيان المواقع والاضطهادات التي جرت على طائفة الروم الكاثوليكين بحلب والجرائم التي وزنها
لأجل حماية الايمان الكاثوليكي المقدس فقط

50 “La visite a fini, après le sorbet et le parfum, par beaucoup de démonstrations d’estime réciproque et d’envie de bien vivre ensemble de part et d’autre”; cf. Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 586.

51 Letter of Maurepas to d’Andrezel, November 17, 1725, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 335. On April 10, 1726, Maurepas wrote to the ambassador that his meeting with Sylvester was also approved by the king. See Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 333–334.

52 Letter of Maurepas to Péleran, consul in Aleppo, November 14, 1725, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 336.

53 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 586.

54 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 587–589.

55 The manuscripts are accessible in digital format on the vHMLL: MS 1133, HMLL Project Number OBA 01152 (<https://w3id.org/vhml/readingRoom/view/506167>), and MS 1175, HMLL Project Number OBA 01170 (<https://w3id.org/vhml/readingRoom/view/506186>).

There are also later Greek accounts, such as that of Athanasios Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs in his *Political and Ecclesiastical Events in Twelve Books*.⁵⁶ Another source is a 19th-century text of Neophytos of Cyprus (Νεόφυτος Κύπριος), *Περὶ Ἀραβοκατολίκων ἢ Οὐνίτων* (*About the Catholic Arabs or Uniates*). Neophytos's text is preserved in MS 297 of the Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem (on f. 253–287). The text was written in 1844, more than a century after the 1725 events involving Sylvester of Antioch. Although it is presumably based on earlier sources and it was used by later researchers such as Klēmēs Karnapas, its information should be considered with caution. The chronology of the events in this account, especially, is predominantly inaccurate.⁵⁷

The consul's letter has the advantage of being a contemporary source, based on accounts from the same city and, although not entirely objective, composed, at least, by someone not directly involved in the events.

Consul Péleran reports from hearsay that on Sunday, the day after his arrival in Aleppo,⁵⁸ Sylvester pronounced forty or fifty excommunications against “four Catholic priests of his nation from Aleppo, against an entire monastery of Greek monks called Belmend,⁵⁹ near Tripoli of Syria, against all those who wear the scapular or the cord of Saint Francis, or who are from the brotherhood of the Rosary among the Maronites, against his entire diocese of Damascus and all those of his nation who, everywhere else, would recognize as patriarch Seraphim, whom he himself excommunicated, etc.”⁶⁰

The consul's information seems to come from a source in conflict with the Orthodox patriarch, such as a Latin convert or a missionary. In this text, as elsewhere in the sources, “Greek” should be read “Orthodox”, in a confessional, not an ethnic meaning.

Also, the new patriarch asked every priest to sign a *statikon* containing the profession of faith composed by the Synod of Constantinople (presumably, the text

56 Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs, *Εκκλησιαστικῶν καὶ Πολιτικῶν*, p. 326.

57 N. Kyrios, “Περὶ Ἀραβοκατολίκων ἢ Οὐνίτων”, in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 464–478.

58 November 10, 1725, however, was a Saturday, according to the Gregorian calendar.

59 The Monastery of Balamand.

60 “[...] quatre prêtres catholiques de sa nation à Alep, contre tout un couvent de Religieux Grecs, appelé Belmend, près de Tripoli de Syrie, contre tous ceux qui porteraient le scapulaire, le cordon de St. François, ou qui seraient de la confrérie du Rosaire chez les Maronites, contre tout son diocèse de Damas et tous ceux de sa nation qui, partout ailleurs, reconnaîtraient pour patriarche Séraphim, qu’il a excommunié lui-même, etc.”; cf. Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 586–587.

issued in 1723). This profession of faith is also mentioned by the French consul in Aleppo in a letter to Count de Maurepas.⁶¹

The so-called “Besserné”, a community of “fierce villagers” who had allegedly embraced Catholicism, strongly reacted against the patriarch. One of their priests was imprisoned by the *mutasallem*⁶² who governed Aleppo in the absence of the pasha, because he refused to sign the above-mentioned document. As a result, Sylvester was compelled to take measures for his personal security, and he was always accompanied on his way to church by eight to ten janissaries.

Péleran writes that he assembled the missionaries and recommended them to keep a low profile. While promising to maintain a neutral stance in the conflict within the “Greek” community, the missionaries did not hide their opposition to the patriarch.

The French consul also tried to meet Sylvester, and so did one of the missionaries, the superior of the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land (*Custodia Terrae Sanctae*). The patriarch answered that he considered all the missionaries his brothers but requested that they come not all together to see him. As a result, none of the missionaries went to visit the patriarch.

Sylvester sent the metropolitan of Hama, his patriarchal vicar, the metropolitan of Laodicea (Latakia) and three priests to the consul, assuring him that he wanted to be on good terms with the French, as he had promised to the ambassador in Constantinople. In the meantime, Péleran wrote that he had learned that the patriarch had registered with the *qadi* four orders against “Greeks” accused to be “Franks”. Péleran immediately summoned the missionaries, presenting to them the dangers for the Greek Catholics and asking them to stop any visits to them for the time being.⁶³

A *kapıcı* arrived in Aleppo from the Porte with an order for the pasha and the *qadi* to identify the people who had embraced “the religion of the Franks”. The pasha of Aleppo ordered the patriarch of the “Greeks”, the patriarch of the Syrians, the bishop of the Armenians, and the archbishop of the Maronites to find these individuals.⁶⁴ The incident ended with the temporary imprisonment of a few members of the Greek and Syrian communities, accused to be “Franks”.

61 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to Maurepas, the king’s minister, April 16, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 345–346. A translation of the profession of faith was annexed to the letter.

62 For the word *mutasallem*, from the Arabic مُتَسَلِّمٌ, “lieutenant of a pasha”, see H. Lammens, S. J., *Remarques sur les mots français dérivés de l’arabe*, Beirut, 1890, p. 171.

63 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 589.

64 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to Maurepas, the king’s minister, March 26, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 341–342.

An interesting document preserved in the French archives in an Italian translation (the original written most likely in Greek) reveals the Orthodox party's perspective on these events. This is a letter dated April 3, 1726, from the metropolitan Leontios, vicar of the Patriarchate of Antioch, to the grand dragoman of the Porte, Gregory Ghikas. Leontios describes the situation in Damascus, where there were mixed families with some members following the Latin rite and others the Greek. The metropolitan also wrote that the missionaries who were temporarily imprisoned were freed with the Greeks' help. He mentions the conditions for peaceful relations with the Latin missionaries: not to accept ("Greek") Christians in their churches, not to visit their houses, and not to teach their children.⁶⁵

Claude Gerin, a Jesuit priest in Damascus, mentioned in a letter in 1726 that whereas in Aleppo the "schismatic" patriarch decidedly acted against the "Catholics", the situation in Damascus was somehow better for them.⁶⁶

On May 22, 1726, Count de Maurepas noted in a letter to the French consul in Aleppo that Patriarch Sylvester was not keeping his promises to act mercifully and moderately towards the missionaries and those who followed their rite.⁶⁷ The same remarks were made about Sylvester a few days later by the king's minister in a letter to the French ambassador in Constantinople.⁶⁸ The answer of the French consul in Aleppo to Count de Maurepas was along the same lines: Sylvester did not keep his promise to ensure peace among the Christians of the region, and he was "vigorously acting against the missionaries".⁶⁹

From the mountains of Kesruwān, 'Abdallāh Zākhīr continued his writing activity for the benefit of the pro-Latin party. He composed a response to the profession of faith publicized by Patriarch Sylvester.⁷⁰ Using one of the Catholic missionaries as an intermediary, Zākhīr even asked the French consul to dispatch the text to Sylvester with a dragoman and to ask him for a reply. The consul refused this

65 Letter of Metropolitan Leontios to the dragoman of the Porte (fragments), April 3, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 342–343.

66 Letter of May 17, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 350.

67 Letter of Maurepas, the king's minister, to the French consul in Aleppo, May 22, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 352–353.

68 Letter of Count de Maurepas to the French ambassador in Constantinople, May 27, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 354.

69 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king's minister, June 6, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 355.

70 A. Girard, "Quand les 'Grecs-Catholiques' dénonçaient les 'Grecs-Orthodoxes': la controverse confessionnelle au Proche-Orient Arabe après le schisme de 1724", in C. Bernat, H. Bost (eds.), *Énoncer/dénoncer l'autre. Discours et représentations du différend confessionnel à l'époque moderne*, Turnhout, 2012, p. 157–170, especially p. 160–162.

request, to avoid any conflict with the Orthodox patriarch. Without even reading it, it was clear to him that the text composed by ‘Abdallāh Zākhir, who had condemned in strong words even the more moderate patriarch Athanasios, was undoubtedly extremely critical towards Sylvester. The consul characterized the “chammas”⁷¹ ‘Abdallāh ibn Zākhir as “quite a good Catholic, but utterly zealous” (“assez bon catholique, mais fort empressé”).⁷²

In Constantinople, with the approval of the grand vizier, Viscount d’Andrezel obtained a meeting with Chrysanthos, the patriarch of Jerusalem.⁷³ The patriarch had returned to the city after two years of absence. According to the French ambassador, one of the main topics of conversation was the patriarch of Antioch and the measures he was taking against the “Catholics”. In d’Andrezel’s opinion, Sylvester was following the “bad advice” of a “certain Léondios”, referring of course to Metropolitan Leontios, Sylvester’s vicar in Damascus. It is interesting to note that the ambassador avoided making direct accusations against the patriarch of Antioch, blaming Leontios instead. This was in line with the policy of conciliation agreed upon in the meeting with Sylvester.

Chrysanthos of Jerusalem replied by presenting to the ambassador a memorandum drafted in Italian by the missionaries of Aleppo. This document was delivered to the patriarch by the grand dragoman and contained accusations against Sylvester. Chrysanthos expressed his conviction that accusations such as the one that Sylvester publicly excommunicated the pope were false. In d’Andrezel’s opinion, if the Greeks refused to recognize the pope as head of the Universal Church, they should at least respect him as a pontiff and a prince. Chrysanthos agreed and stated that in his view, although the Churches were divided, he viewed them as one, and he made no difference between the primary Church and the present one. He also mentioned that he did not know exactly Patriarch Sylvester’s opinion, but he did not consider him capable of talking about the pope the way he was accused to have done.⁷⁴

In Aleppo, Patriarch Sylvester was held responsible by the French consul for having sent a *chaoush* to the door of the Latin church to identify the “Greeks” who attended the Catholic service. The fact was reported by the French consul to the pasha of Aleppo, who summoned the patriarch and the *chaoush*. Sylvester denied

71 From the Arabic شماس, “deacon”. Apparently, Abdallāh Zākhir was not a deacon, but remained a layman to his death.

72 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 355.

73 Letter of the ambassador of France to the king’s minister, June 26, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 357–360.

74 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 359.

any knowledge of the *chaoush's* actions, and the latter invoked in his defense the orders he had received from the Porte. The pasha imprisoned the *chaoush* for a short time, while the French consul reported the rumor that the patriarch had to pay six thousand *écus* to avoid being imprisoned himself.⁷⁵

The event is also recorded in another letter of consul Péleran to the minister of the king of France, dated July 2, 1726. The consul's conflict with the patriarch continued, while the *chaoush* of the Porte left Aleppo for Constantinople. The pasha asked the consul for proof in support of his claims. Witnesses of the events at the Latin church testified in the presence of the pasha and the patriarch. Sylvester defended himself by saying that the *chaoush* acted without his knowledge. But the dragoman of the French consulate, named Drapery, produced eight "Greek" witnesses who testified that the patriarch employed a "spy" who had told him about the celebration of the "Franks" the next day at their church, which would possibly also be attended by "Greeks". According to them, Sylvester sent the same man to announce this to the *chaoush* and give him the patriarch's order to intervene. Sylvester denied the accusations and said the witnesses were "Franks", a fact he could prove by a hundred witnesses. A report with all the findings of the enquiry was prepared by the pasha, to be sent to the grand vizier, but it was not immediately sent. According to Péleran, Sylvester secured the delay by offering some "purses" of money to the *kehaya* and the pasha. After that, according to the consul's account, the patriarch obtained a document from the *qadi* containing testimonies that the consul's witnesses were thieves, and they followed the religion of the "Franks". According to Péleran, the *qadi* received one thousand *écus* for this service. When he found out about this, the pasha allegedly asked for more money from Sylvester, as he pretended that his appeal to the *qadi* was an offence to his authority. The French consul estimated that the patriarch spent overall twelve thousand *piasters*.⁷⁶ The French consul's account must be read keeping in mind that it came from a source representing one of the two sides involved in the conflict.

A very similar report of the events was presented by the French ambassador in Constantinople in a letter to Count de Maurepas. He added that the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople intervened to rally the grand dragoman to their cause. They also requested to have Drapery, the dragoman of the French consulate

⁷⁵ Letter of the consul of Aleppo to the king's minister, June 27, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 360–362.

⁷⁶ Letter of the consul of Aleppo to the king's minister, July 2, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 362–364. In a letter to the Metropolitan Dionysios of Kition, Sylvester wrote about spending fifteen "purses" (7,500 piasters) because of the pasha. D[ēmétrakopoulos], "Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας", p. 371.

in Aleppo, removed from his position, blaming him for generating the conflict.⁷⁷ The attitude of Péleran, the French consul in Aleppo, was not criticized in the correspondence consulted here. He received a letter from the king's minister in which the king expressed his approval for his actions.⁷⁸

The judicial procedures in Aleppo presented above in detail are interesting because they offer an insight into the sort of challenges the patriarch of Antioch had to face after his arrival in the city. The financial challenge generated by the corruption of the local officials was only one of them. The French consul entered in direct confrontation with the patriarch of Antioch, despite the precise orders he had received from the French ambassador in Constantinople to maintain peaceful relations. It is also interesting to note that the patriarch was talking directly to the pasha and the *kehaya*, presumably in Ottoman Turkish or Arabic.

Another report mentions that Sylvester escaped imprisonment in the Aleppo citadel thanks to the intervention of the English consul and he had to pay 15 “purses” of money.⁷⁹ This course of events is plausible, as Sylvester's good relations with the English consulate have also been attested by other sources. A letter written by Viscount d'Andrezel contains another addition to the events described by the French consul in Aleppo, namely, the role of an individual known for his connections with Sylvester: Rowland Sherman.⁸⁰ Sherman (“Scharmen” in the letter) was held responsible for the patriarch's refusal to be reconciled with the French consul. The viscount also identified Sherman as a declared enemy of the Latin rite, siding with the “Greeks” in their disputes with the French monks.⁸¹

The events in Aleppo are also mentioned briefly in Jean-André du Bellis's memorandum of 1731. Du Bellis wrote about Sylvester: “He was accompanied by a *chaoush* of the Porte. He first went to Aleppo, where the Catholic and heretic Christians were so dissatisfied with the patriarch that they recorded a complaint with the *qadi* about the extortions he was pressing on them, so he would send their complaint to the Porte, and they finally forced him to leave Aleppo.”⁸²

77 Letter of the French ambassador in Constantinople to the king's minister, September 1, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 364–365 (in this edition, the year is 1725).

78 Letter of the king's minister to the consul of Aleppo, December 26, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 377.

79 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 364, n. 1.

80 The English merchant Rowland Sherman had resided in Aleppo from the late 18th century. He was well trained in the Arabic language and had wide-ranging interests, including theology and music. He will feature in more detail in Ch. 9.3.

81 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 366.

82 “Il était accompagné d'un chaoux de la Porte. Il alla d'abord à Alep, où les chrétiens catholiques et hérétiques furent si mécontents du patriarche qu'ils prirent acte, par devant le Cadi, des

The moment of Patriarch Sylvester's departure from Aleppo was presented in an almost theatrical way in a letter of the French consul Péleran to the king's minister.⁸³ The patriarch left the city "stealthily" ("furtivement", in Péleran's words) on August 19, at nightfall. In this account, Sylvester decided to leave Aleppo after receiving letters from the patriarch of Jerusalem, who was then in Constantinople. Presumably, the letters had informed him that reports from the pasha of Aleppo had reached the Porte. Péleran's account goes as follows:

In any case, on the 19th of last month, while visiting a garden near the city with two or three of his friends under the pretext of having supper there, Patriarch Sylvester disguised himself and quietly left through a gate that opened towards the countryside, where he found horses and an escort, which an English merchant named Sherman, his zealous supporter, or rather a chimeric enemy of the pope, had sent to take him to Latakia, from whence he went to Tripoli.⁸⁴

Again, we need to consider that the account is not impartial, and the author belongs to one of the parties involved in the conflict with the patriarch. Sylvester's own account of the events can be found in some brief notes written in 1735 or 1736, possibly based on earlier records:

Καὶ τῶ ἡφικς' ἑορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Λαμπρὰν εἰς Χαλέπιον. Καὶ διὰ τὰς ἀνωμαλίας καὶ τὰς καταδρομὰς τῶν ἐκεῖσε Λατινοφρόνων Χριστιανῶν (συνυπουργούντων αὐτῶν καὶ τὸν ἐν Χαλεπίῳ ὅτε κόνσολος τῶν Γάλλων, καὶ οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν φρατόρες), ἐξήλθομεν τῆς 19' Αὐγούστου ἑσπέρας καὶ ἤλθομεν εἰς Λαοδίκειαν, καὶ εἰς τὰς 4' τοῦ Δεκεμβρίου πάλιν ἐπεστρέψαμεν εἰς Βασιλεύουσαν.⁸⁵

And in 1726 we celebrated Holy Easter in Aleppo. And because of the irregularities and the attacks of the Latin-minded Christians there (in collaboration with the then consul of the French in Aleppo and the friars around him), we went out on August 6 in the evening and went to Laodicea, and on December 4 we returned to the Imperial [City].

concussions qu'il exerçait sur eux, afin d'en porter leurs plaintes à la Porte, et l'obligèrent enfin de sortir d'Alep"; cf. Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 593.

⁸³ Letter of the consul of Aleppo to the king's minister, September 6, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 367–371 (in this edition, the year is 1725).

⁸⁴ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 367–368: "Quoiqu'il en soit, le 19 du mois passé, le patriarche Sylvestre ayant été dans un jardin près de la ville avec deux ou trois de ses amis sous prétexte d'y souper, s'y travestit et sortit sans bruit par une porte de derrière qui donnait dans la campagne, où il trouva des chevaux et une escorte qu'un marchand Anglais, nommé Sherman, son zélé partisan, ou plutôt ennemi chimérique du Pape, y avait envoyés pour le prendre et le conduire à Lattaquié, d'où il s'est rendu à Tripoli". On these events, see also Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 86.

⁸⁵ MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 19v. See also N. S. Phirippidēs, "Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου", *Ἡπειρωτικὰ Χρονικά*, 5, 1930, p. 118.

The patriarch's account largely confirms the general information in the French consul's letter. Sylvester left Aleppo in the evening (there is an error somewhere in the date of August 6 in the Julian calendar, corresponding to August 17 and not 19 in the Gregorian), and the main reason were the troubles stirred by the consul and the missionaries.

After the patriarch left the city, four to five hundred inhabitants went to the *qadi* asking to testify against Sylvester and accusing him of the extortion of large sums of money and other injustices. The *qadi* wrote a document signed by 48 Turks and 13 "Greek" priests. They also accused "the metropolitan of Damascus" Timothy, appointed vicar by Sylvester a few days earlier, who allegedly embezzled from the church treasury items and vessels amounting to 9,000 *piasters*. According to other sources, this vicar was in fact the metropolitan of Hama.⁸⁶ Summoned by the pasha, he testified that he had taken the items and handed them to the patriarch, who in turn delivered them to "Mister Sherman", an English merchant, as collateral for some money he had borrowed from him, allegedly for personal needs. The pasha sentenced the metropolitan to prison, alongside 20 individuals from the Orthodox party.⁸⁷ The pasha and the *qadi* sent documents to Constantinople asking that Patriarch Sylvester be punished. Three representatives of the "Greeks" were also chosen to go to the capital and ask for another patriarch to be appointed, one who would be elected by them, or Sylvester go to Damascus and the metropolitan of Aleppo Gerasimos be recalled from exile.

The French consul's account of Sylvester's itinerary after leaving Aleppo is based on information sent from Tripoli, and it is no less "theatrical" than his presentation of how Sylvester fled from Aleppo, cited earlier.

[...] Reaching Latakia on August 25, Patriarch Sylvester rented a boat there to take him to Cyprus, which a privateer, after chasing him half through the canal, had taken and then returned with it, landing at Gebely (Jabāli), from where the patriarch, escorted by four horsemen, arrived in Tripoli three days ago, and took lodgings with the English Consul.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 369, n. 1.

⁸⁷ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 369.

⁸⁸ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 371: "(...) le Patriarche Sylvestre, étant arrivé à Lattaquié le 25 août, y avait nolisé un bateau pour le passer à Chypre, qu'un corsaire lui ayant donné chasse à demi-canal, il l'avait pris et ensuite renvoyé avec le bateau qui avait abordé à Gebely, d'où le patriarche, escorté par quatre cavaliers, était arrivé à Tripoli depuis trois jours, et avait été loger chez Monsieur le Consul d'Angleterre".

In the same account, the French consul mentioned that Sylvester appeared in public in Tripoli and preached in the “Greek” church, and he intended to go to Sidon, but was prohibited by the city’s authorities to do so without a bail.

According to a different source, the memorandum written by du Bellis in 1731, which we have cited several times in this chapter, Sylvester went from Aleppo to Tripoli, intending to go to Sidon to present Osman Pasha with the official order to arrest Kyrillos Ṭanās, the metropolitan of Sidon, and other supporters of his, as well as orders for limiting the missionaries’ actions.⁸⁹ Du Bellis also revealed that at the time “Kyrillos, who was at the monastery of Saint Saviour”, built by Euthymios of Tyre and Sidon, “located in the land of the Druses, three hours away from Sidon, was secretly followed and hid in the mountains”.⁹⁰ The metropolitan of Sidon sought refuge with the French consul. The pasha of Sidon sent the *chaoush* back to Constantinople with letters describing Sylvester as a troublemaker. After meeting the *chaoush*, Sylvester changed his plans of going to Sidon and went to Constantinople instead.

The French ambassador was planning to take advantage of the situation in Aleppo by obtaining the appointment of a “Catholic” patriarch of the Church of Antioch. In a letter to Maurepas, Viscount d’Andrezel remarked that such appointments were made only by the sultan, or the grand vizier, and those positions were always given to the person who was the last to offer the highest sum of money. He added that “the schismatics” (i.e., the Orthodox) had the advantage of having “infinitely more money” than the Catholics. By Catholics, he most likely meant the converts to the Latin Church from among the Orthodox.⁹¹ The remark was that of an outsider; of course, and the reality was somehow different. Even a partial reading of Sylvester’s correspondence shows the efforts he made to cover the financial expenses for securing and renewing his *berat* as patriarch of Antioch. He had to borrow money from different individuals and then try to obtain the necessary funds to repay the debts and interests.

The fact that replacing Sylvester with Seraphim in 1726 was almost an impossible task was mentioned in a letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister.⁹² Seraphim’s character was deemed “too haughty and violent”, and he was not at all suited for conciliating and calming the situation. The consul added

⁸⁹ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 593.

⁹⁰ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 594.

⁹¹ Letter of the French ambassador in Constantinople to the king’s minister, October 17, 1726 (fragment), in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 374.

⁹² Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister, November 20, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 375–376.

that Seraphim was even more vehement than his uncle Euthymios, the metropolitan of Şaydā (Tyre and Sidon), who had brought about “the troubles which still reign among the Greeks”.⁹³ Péleran added that Seraphim was known at the Porte for having been a student in Rome, and the orders sent against him obliged him to stay in hiding in the mountains of Kesruwān, while the French envoys could not support him without endangering the missionaries. He also mentioned that Sylvester’s party had the sultan’s orders on its side and was still the strongest.

After Sylvester reached Constantinople in December 1726, there were rumors that he was deposed by the sultan. This information (later proven false) was offered by the French ambassador to the king’s minister.⁹⁴ The delegation from Aleppo also arrived in the capital and requested for their eparchy to be detached from the Patriarchate of Antioch, or at least for an independent metropolitan to be appointed for it. At the same time, d’Andrezel conveyed the information that the patriarch of Constantinople was also deposed and had died in prison. The usually well-informed ambassador was wrong again, at least partially. There had been changes on the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in November 1726, Jeremias III was deposed and exiled on November 19, and his successor Kallinikos III died after only one day as patriarch, but not in prison. Kallinikos III was succeeded by Paisios II on November 20. These dates are only indicative, because the process of election and obtaining the official appointment by a *berat* usually took time. Perhaps the lack of accuracy in the French ambassador’s information at this time was related to the absence from Constantinople of Gregory Ghikas, the former grand dragoman, who had just become prince of Moldavia in October 1726.⁹⁵

The news about Sylvester’s deposition was repeated by the French consul in Aleppo, apparently provided to him by one of the delegates returning from the capital. Péleran’s information about the changes of patriarchs in Constantinople was more accurate. He also added that when the grand vizier asked the delegates from Aleppo to nominate a successor for Sylvester as patriarch of Antioch, they answered that it is a question for the inhabitants of Damascus, where the See of the Patriarchate was. The vizier had approved the autonomy of the metropolitan of Aleppo from the Patriarchate of Antioch.⁹⁶ According to Ottoman sources, Aleppo

⁹³ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 376.

⁹⁴ Letter of the French ambassador to the king’s minister, December 20, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 376–377.

⁹⁵ See Țipău, *Domnii fanarioți în Țările Române*, p. 71.

⁹⁶ Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister, December 21, 1726, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 378–379.

was attached to the Patriarchate of Constantinople by an official order dated January 10, 1727.⁹⁷

While seemingly an easy administrative decision for the Ottoman authorities, the issue of the ecclesiastical “autonomy” of Aleppo was not so easily applicable, according to the canon laws of the Orthodox Church. Detaching Aleppo from Antioch and making it an “autonomous” metropolitan see, or “autocephalous”, in Church terminology, was almost impossible. After they were explained the facts, the Ottomans settled for the transfer of Aleppo to the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. From the ecumenical patriarch’s point of view, this measure also secured him a more direct control of an eparchy disturbed by the Latin influence.

Viscount d’Andrezel was better informed two months later. He maintained that Sylvester was deposed but noted the efforts of the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem to reestablish him. According to the ambassador, rumors had Sylvester hiding in the imperial capital. As for the Aleppo eparchy, it was transferred to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. A solution had also been found for the economical requests of the inhabitants of Aleppo. The church items and vessels were to be returned, and in three years’ time Sylvester would pay everything he owed to the inhabitants of Aleppo. The agreement was guaranteed by “important Greeks of Constantinople”, presumably from the Phanariot élite.

In the same report, d’Andrezel provides interesting information about Sylvester. The patriarch of Antioch could easily succeed in collecting the money needed to repay the debts by travelling for alms in Wallachia and Moldavia. The ambassador also expressed the concern that Sylvester would be installed in Damascus and would become a source of new “troubles and persecutions”. The English connection that allegedly helped Sylvester escape from Aleppo was also presented by the French ambassador to the minister. The patriarch was supported by the English consul in Tripoli, a good friend of the English consul in Aleppo, acting in concert with the merchant Sherman, “who had lent money to Sylvester”. Sherman was considered a threat to the Catholic party, as he was allied to the “schismatic Greeks”. Forcing him to return to England would be a “big success” (“un grand coup”).⁹⁸

97 Çolak, Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 99 (transcribed Ottoman text), p. 226 (English translation).

98 Letter of the French ambassador to the king’s minister, February 18, 1727, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 379–380.

Sherman wrote to England about Sylvester in April 1727, mentioning the difficulties caused to the patriarch by the “Romanists”, the pro-Latin party.⁹⁹

The change in the status of Aleppo was also reported by the French consul there. He added that a new bishop was appointed, who by a *statikon* (“a sort of pastoral letter”) reinstated the priests demoted by Sylvester and suspended those ordained by him.¹⁰⁰

By June 1727, the French diplomats finally renounced to pursue any action in support of Seraphim, admitting that he “has none of the real means that his competitor Sylvester employed to maintain himself as patriarch of Damascus”.¹⁰¹

The situation of Sylvester, who remained patriarch of Antioch, also became clear for the French as the time passed. However, they did not foster any illusions for a more favorable attitude of the patriarch towards the missionaries.¹⁰²

Meanwhile, an attempt was made to reconcile the inhabitants of Aleppo with Sylvester. An Orthodox priest wrote to the patriarch of Constantinople that all the “Greeks” of Aleppo, except for a few “papists”, were ready to make peace with the patriarch of Antioch if he would return the church items and repay what he owed them. The patriarch of Constantinople also tried to mediate in favor of Sylvester.¹⁰³

It took almost a year for the French diplomats to realize that Sylvester was never deposed and that he had remained patriarch of Antioch. If the situation were different, someone else would have replaced him and a new *berat* would have been issued. There are no archival traces of the appointment of another patriarch for the See of Antioch. The only consequence of the incidents of Damascus in 1726 was the attachment of the eparchy of Aleppo to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Consul Péleran described the situation in Aleppo in a letter to Maurepas, the French king’s minister. According to him, the new metropolitan of Aleppo sent from Constantinople brought with him a profession of faith given by the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem by request of the patriarch of Antioch. The order was to convince ten to twelve “Catholic” priests named by Sylvester to sign the

99 S. Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, c. 1600–1760*, Oxford, 2020, p. 241.

100 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister, March 24, 1727, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 380.

101 Letter of Fontenu, manager (gérant) of the embassy, to the king’s minister, June 19, 1727, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 381: “... il n’a aucun des moyens réels qu’a employé son compétiteur Sylvestre pour se maintenir dans le patriarcat de Damas”.

102 Letter of the king’s minister to Fontenu, manager (gérant) of the embassy, July 2, 1727, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 381–382.

103 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister, August 2, 1727, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 383.

profession of faith. Apparently, the metropolitan, wishing to appease the situation, made them read an earlier profession of faith formulated by the patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās. When he was requested to obtain their signatures on the text itself, the metropolitan proposed another compromise, asking them to only write and sign a general statement. The priests consulted the Maronite bishop of Aleppo and then the Catholic missionaries. As their advice differed, divisions appeared in the Catholic-oriented party.¹⁰⁴ However, the moderate attitude of the new Orthodox metropolitan of Aleppo attracted a very low office attendance and an increase in numbers of the “Greek Catholic” party. Many of its supporters attended the services at the Maronite church, where they could listen to the sermons of the famous Maronite bishop Germanos Farḥāt. Nonetheless, they were duly paying their taxes to the “Greek” metropolitan.¹⁰⁵

The concessions made to the Catholics by the new metropolitan sent by the patriarch of Antioch, such as the suppression of the celebration of Saint Gregory Palamas, generated the vehement reaction of the great scholar Ilyās Fakhr.¹⁰⁶ He subsequently proved to be one of Sylvester’s supporters and collaborators in both administrative and spiritual matters. In 1728, he was dragoman of the consul of England in Aleppo. According to Péleran, missionaries in Tripoli thought that Fakhr was a Catholic and he had even received a distinction, the Order of the Golden Spur, from Pope Clement XI.¹⁰⁷

The instructions on religious issues that the new ambassador to Constantinople, Louis-Sauveur de Villeneuve, Marquis de Forcalqueiret and baron de Saint-Anastaze, received on August 11, 1728, are of great importance for understanding the official attitude of the French crown in matters related to the Ottoman Empire. The objectives were the conversion of the Turks, the reunion of the Greek and Armenian Churches, and the removal of the “errors” in the beliefs of these communities, deriving from “ignorance”. While converting the Turks was deemed almost impossible, and the pope had prohibited the missionaries even from talking to them, the attitude towards the Greeks and the Armenians was to be different.

104 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister, October 20, 1727, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 383–385.

105 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister, March 19, 1728, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 386–387.

106 For Fakhr, see Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 202–215, and Heyberger, “Security and Insecurity”, in Heyberger, *Middle Eastern and European Christianity*, p. 105–123 (especially 109–116). Richard Pococke met Ilyās Fakhr in Antioch. See R. Finnegan (ed.), *Richard Pococke’s Letters from the East (1737–1740)*, Leiden/Boston, 2020, p. 216.

107 Letter of the French consul in Aleppo to the king’s minister, April 1, 1728, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 387–388.

There were two recommended measures: to appeal to the Porte, and to win over the leaders of these Churches to the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁰⁸ These instructions are interesting, as they explain certain of the French diplomats' attitudes during Sylvester's lifetime.

Meanwhile, Kyrillos's election was examined by a commission in Rome, and on August 13, 1729, Pope Benedict XIII (1724–1730) recognized Kyrillos's election as patriarch. A papal legate was sent to get the patriarch's signature on the profession of faith and to confirm his promise that he would not change the rite. The legate officially recognized Kyrillos as patriarch on the pope's behalf on April 25, 1730.¹⁰⁹

Confronted with Rome's insistence on obtaining the Porte's recognition of Kyrillos as patriarch of Antioch, Marquis de Villeneuve, the new French ambassador in Constantinople, wrote a rather long letter to the king's minister on January 15, 1730, offering a realistic presentation of the situation.¹¹⁰ The ambassador pointed out that the right to appoint a patriarch for Antioch belonged to the patriarch of Constantinople (which was not totally accurate), but the sultan had to confirm such nominations in order for them to be considered valid.¹¹¹ De Villeneuve mentioned that after the Aleppo troubles, the sultan deposed Sylvester and ordered him to repay the money he allegedly took. His friends in Constantinople succeeded in reestablishing him as patriarch by offering money to the Porte's ministers. Given these circumstances, any effort to establish Kyrillos as patriarch would be hopeless.

Even if Sylvester was an enemy of the Latins and Kyrillos a "good Catholic", his zeal for the religion was known among the "schismatic Greeks" and it would always remain a reason for them to oppose him. Also, the Orthodox, supported by the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, could easily collect thirty or forty thousand *écus* to distribute (most likely to the Turkish officials), while the Latins were lacking such resources. Moreover, there was always the danger that the Porte would issue orders against the missionaries, as it had done in the past.¹¹²

The French ambassador makes an interesting remark about Chrysanthos Notaras. According to Marquis de Villeneuve, although the patriarch of Constantinople was the first in rank, the prestige acquired by the patriarch of

108 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 388–389.

109 C. A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923*, London/New York/New Rochelle/Melbourne/Sydney, 1983, p. 202.

110 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve, the French ambassador in Constantinople, to Germain Louis Chauvelin, garde des sceaux of France, January 15, 1730, in S. Kunalalp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve Ambassadeur du Roi de France auprès de la Sublime Porte Ottomane (1728–1741)*, 1, Istanbul, 2020, p. 210–213.

111 Kunalalp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 211.

112 Kunalalp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 212.

Jerusalem made him the “absolute master” of the Greek Church. De Villeneuve also mentioned that the patriarch of Jerusalem was a peaceful man and had not caused any trouble to the missionaries during the fifteen months since the arrival of the ambassador. Even in Damascus and in Diyarbakır (ancient Amida), a city dependent of the Patriarchate of Antioch, where there was a metropolitan appointed by Sylvester, the situation was peaceful.¹¹³

New troubles appeared in Aleppo when the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide prohibited the Catholic priests from celebrating alongside their bishop as long as he did not send his profession of faith to Rome, and he kept mentioning the “heretic or schismatic” patriarchs at Mass. At the same time, the Sacra Congregatio declared Kyrillos the true and legitimate Greek patriarch of Antioch, urging all Catholics not to recognize another. The Greek Catholic priests stopped celebrating with the metropolitan. The information reached the pasha of Aleppo, who ordered a few arrests. Then, he summoned the “Greek” metropolitan, asking him if he was the ecclesiastical superior of the “Greeks” in Aleppo. He answered that he had this quality as he had been sent by the patriarch of Constantinople, as mentioned in his *berat* obtained from the Porte. The pasha asked him why he tolerated people attached to the “religion of the Franks” in his “nation”. The metropolitan defended his people, and the situation was partially solved. Some of the priests returned and celebrated with the metropolitan. The French consul assumed that such troubles could help the return of Sylvester, and that the patriarch’s party was fortified day by day.¹¹⁴

The same events were reported by Marquis de Villeneuve in a letter to the king’s minister. He pointed out that Kyrillos, elected patriarch by the “Catholics” of Syria, was rejected by the Porte, and that the “Catholic” priests in Aleppo, whom Rome had prohibited from recognizing their metropolitan, were subjects of the sultan.¹¹⁵ He implied that they had to obey the orders of their sovereign and the persons appointed by him.

113 Letter of the French ambassador in Constantinople to the king’s minister, June 13, 1730, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 405–406.

114 Letters of the French consul in Aleppo to the French ambassador in Constantinople, June 1, 1730, and June 13, 1730, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 402–404 (the second letter with the wrong year 1733).

115 Letter of the French ambassador in Constantinople to Count de Maurepas, the king’s minister, June 13, 1730, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 409–410. See also the same letter in Küneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 304–306.

A critical account of the events, reflecting the position of the Latin missionaries, with the title *History of the various persecutions carried out against the Catholics of Aleppo and Damascus*,¹¹⁶ described the situation as follows:

He went to Wallachia, where he found his former protector, Prince Scaltatogli [i.e. Nikolaos Mavrokordatos], son of Mauro Cordato [Alexander Mavrokordatos], first interpreter of the Great Lord. He gave him a vivid and touching picture of his misfortunes, secured the compassion of this prince, and succeeded in ensuring his protection. He sent him back to Constantinople with the most pressing recommendations. There, he began his maneuvers again: he asked for a review of his trial. The prince's protection caused his request to be approved; the Great Lord even issued an order in his favor by which, reversing everything that had been done against him, he reinstated him to all the rights of his patriarchate, resubmitted Aleppo to his jurisdiction, authorized him to appoint a bishop there and to be reimbursed for all the sums he had not received during his seven years of exile. The reinstated patriarch hurried to disseminate this order from the Great Lord. He went to Tripoli and Damascus, and the latter city was chosen, by preference, to be the scene of the new persecution that he conceived.¹¹⁷

In August 1730, the French ambassador Count de Villeneuve warned that the pope's decision to recognize Kyrillos as patriarch and Rome's orders to prohibit any contact between Catholics and Orthodox could have consequences for the missionaries and for the Catholics in general, as the Porte was more likely to support the Orthodox. De Villeneuve wrote:

Il est d'autant plus facile aux Patriarches de l'Église grecque de s'attirer la protection de la Porte en pareilles occasions, qu'outre qu'ils ont un fondement légitime de réclamer l'autorité

116 "Histoire des différentes persécutions exercées contre les catholiques d'Alep et de Damas", in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères. Nouvelle édition, ornée de cinquante belles gravures. Mémoires du Levant*, 1, Lyon, 1819, p. 469–480. The account is undated but, based on its content, it must have been written after 1746. It could also be a later report, using information from contemporary sources.

117 "Il alla en Valachie, où il trouva son ancien protecteur, le prince Scaltatogli, fils de Mauro Cordato, premier interprète du Grand-Seigneur. Il lui fit une peinture vive et touchante de ses malheurs, surprit la compassion de ce prince, et parvint jusqu'à s'en assurer la protection. Il le renvoya à Constantinople muni des recommandations les plus pressantes. Là il recommença ses manèges: il demanda la révision de son procès. La protection du prince fit admettre sa requête; le Grand-Seigneur lui donna même un commandement par lequel anéantissant tout ce qui s'étoit fait contre lui, il le rétablissoit dans tous les droits de son patriarcat, soumettoit de nouveau Alep à sa juridiction, l'autorisoit à y nommer un évêque, et à se faire rembourser de toutes les sommes qu'il n'avoit pas touchées pendant les sept années de son exil. Le patriarche rétabli se hâta de notifier cet ordre du Grand-Seigneur. Il vint à Tripoli et à Damas, et cette dernière ville fut choisie de préférence, pour être le théâtre de la persécution nouvelle qu'il méditoit" (the spelling of the original is preserved); cf. "Histoire des différentes persécutions", in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, p. 473.

du Grand Seigneur en qualité de sujets, ils sont d'ailleurs en état de répandre beaucoup d'argent.¹¹⁸

It is all the easier for the Patriarchs of the Greek Church to attract the protection of the Porte on such occasions, because, apart from the fact that they have a legitimate basis for claiming the Great Lord's authority, as subjects, they are also able to spend a lot of money.

Such assertions were true from the perspective of the judicial basis of the Orthodox Patriarchs' authority in the Ottoman state system. As for the sums of money needed to find justice in the Ottoman administration, as Patriarch Sylvester's example proves, they were on many occasions borrowed with high interest rates, and intense efforts and travels were needed in order to repay them. Sylvester's correspondence and his manuscript codices contain numerous examples of the patriarch's efforts to secure the funds required for responding to the attacks of his "Latin-minded" opponents.

In September 1730, in Damascus, Patriarch Sylvester's vicar was a "Greek monk" named Christophoros. At the time, there were troubles in the city, involving the Spanish Franciscan priest Thomas of Campaya, who was asking the Greeks to leave the rite and the vestments of the Greek Church, contrary to the orders of Rome. Thomas of Campaya was acting as "grand vicar" of the patriarch of Antioch, evidently, Kyrillos.¹¹⁹ In a letter of the French ambassador, he is mentioned as "le Sieur Thomas de Campaya, Religieux espagnol qui fait les fonctions de Vicaire du Patriarcat d'Antioche" ("Sir Thomas of Campaya, a Spanish monk who serves as vicar of the Patriarchate of Antioch").¹²⁰ The fact that Thomas served as Kyrillos's "grand vicar" illustrates the extent to which the missionaries were involved in supporting the pro-Latin patriarch's claims.

According to the Greek Catholic patriarch's reports, Thomas of Campaya went further and allowed the "Greek" Catholics to practice the Latin rite, in disregard

118 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve, the French ambassador in Constantinople, to Germain Louis Chauvelin, garde des sceaux of France, August 2, 1730, in Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 329–330. See also similar ideas in the letter of Marquis de Villeneuve to Count de Maurepas written the same day, August 2, 1730, in Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 330–331.

119 For the events in Damascus, see the letter of the French ambassador in Constantinople to the minister, Cardinal of Fleury, September 30, 1730, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 412–415. See also the letter of Marquis de Villeneuve, the French ambassador in Constantinople, to Count de Maurepas, state secretary of the Navy, September 15, 1730, in Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 339–345.

120 Kuneralp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 339.

of Rome's orders. He even tried to usurp Kyrillos's authority.¹²¹ Rome's decisions to recognize Kyrillos and to discipline the Greek Catholic faithful had unpleasant consequences for the Latin missionaries.¹²²

Despite the insistence of Rome before the French court, reports from Constantinople were clear: the Ottomans were not willing to appoint Kyrillos as patriarch.¹²³ The pope's interventions and decrees in favor of Kyrillos and against the Orthodox only made the situation worse for the Latin missionaries. The French ambassador Marquis de Villeneuve wrote to the king's minister:

Le Drogman de la Porte me dit, il y a quelques jours, qu'il était fait des plaintes journellement à la Porte contre nos missionnaires de Syrie et de Palestine au sujet de l'exécution des derniers décrets rendus par le Pape en faveur du Patriarche Cyrille, et contre les Grecs Schismatiques, et qu'il craignait qu'il n'en survint des suites fâcheuses pour la Religion.¹²⁴

The Dragoman of the Porte told me a few days ago that complaints were made daily to the Porte against our missionaries from Syria and Palestine concerning the execution of the latest decrees issued by the pope in favor of the Patriarch Kyrillos and against the Schismatic Greeks, and that he feared that there would be unpleasant consequences for the Religion.

The idea was also mentioned in other French reports from Constantinople: the decrees of the Sacra Congregatio against the Orthodox could not promote the objective of Kyrillos's appointment as patriarch. The French ambassador de Villeneuve considered that Rome showed little caution towards the Orthodox. As for Kyrillos's request to own a boat under French pavilion, this idea was considered against the customs of the kingdom of France and was rejected.¹²⁵

121 Kunalrp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 341.

122 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve to count de Maurepas, September 17, 1730, in Kunalrp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 352.

123 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve to Germain Louis Chauvelin, garde des sceaux of France, November 11, 1730, in Kunalrp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 373.

124 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve, the French ambassador in Constantinople, to Germain Louis Chauvelin, November 11, 1730, in Kunalrp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 377.

125 Letter of Marquis de Villeneuve to Count de Maurepas, November 16, 1730, in Kunalrp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 392.

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.¹ 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.²

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

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 Theoklytos Polyeidis and the Agency of Perambulating Greek Alms Collectors in the Holy Roman Empire (18th 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 12th 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.³ 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.⁴

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.⁵ 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

³ Saracino, “The *Album Amicorum*”, p. 63–97.

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

⁵ 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.⁶ 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.⁷ 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).⁸

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

⁶ 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.

⁷ Letter of Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, February 1730, Ioannina, in Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Επιστολαί Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας τοῦ Κυπρίου πρὸς Χρῦσανθον 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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 14th 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 18th 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.¹⁰

¹⁰ 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 1711–1716.¹¹

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.¹²

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.¹³ 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 măriei sale să nu se pue altul, ci să fie acesta, carele l-au lăsat sfinția sa diadoh. Și așa, cu scrisorile măriei 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.¹⁴

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 αἰοιδίμου μητροπολίτου Οὐγκροβλαχίας, ἐγνωρίσθημεν [...].¹⁵

[...] 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.¹⁶ The text mentions that Sylvester of Antioch was received by the prince "graciously and with all reverence and patriarchal benevolence".¹⁷ Mavrokordatos gave him alms and urged his subjects to do the

14 MS Jerusalem 124, f. 1r–2r; in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα 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 σπουδαίους 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' ὄσης 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.¹⁸ The prince described the patriarch as “modestly dressed, walking modestly, and sacerdotal” (“σεμνὸς τὴν ἀναβολὴν, σεμνὸς τὸ βάδισμα, ιεροπρεπής”).¹⁹

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

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.²¹

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.²²

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 in distributing [money] in all directions”).²³

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 Kunalp (ed.), *Les rapports de Louis-Sauveur Marquis de Villeneuve*, 1, p. 469.

23 Kunalp (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.²⁴

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.²⁵ 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.²⁶

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).²⁷

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”.²⁸

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.²⁹ The original text indicated Παῖάσιον (Paiasios) and not τὸ Ἰάσιον (Iași).³⁰ The undated letter attests to the patriarch’s presence in Paiasios and in

²⁴ 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.

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

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

²⁷ See Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 241.

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

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

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

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

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”).³² 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.³³ 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 *kapik-haya* Markos and as payments to *sior* Lukakis.³⁴

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

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).³⁶ 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.³⁷

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

32 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 140v–141r. See A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ανάλεκτα Γεωροσολυμιτικῆς 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.³⁸ 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").³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹

A note in a manuscript currently held in the Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)⁴² mentions: "Εἰς τὰς ἀψλς' μηνὶ Μαίῳ ἦλθεν εἰς τὸ νησί ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρος καὶ ἐπέρασεν εἰς τὸ Ἀκσεχέρη" ("In May 1736 came to the island the patriarch of Antioch Sylvester and he went on to Akşehir").⁴³ 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",⁴⁴ 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, "Ἐνθυμήσεων 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.⁴⁵

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 (Mikh'īl ibn Ṭūmā 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.⁴⁶

In February 1739, the patriarch of Antioch was in Caesarea of Cappadocia, in Asia Minor.⁴⁷ 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.⁴⁸ Another document which indicates that Sylvester was in Caesarea of Cappadocia in February 1739 is a letter which he wrote on the 10th of that month to the prince of Moldavia Gregory II Ghikas, asking for financial aid.⁴⁹ At the same time, he wrote to the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia⁵⁰ and to the Metropolitan Iōannikios of Stavroupolis (Stavropoleos), who was in Bucharest at the time.⁵¹

45 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 32.

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

47 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.

48 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.

49 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).

50 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 101r–101v.

51 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 101v–102r.

6 From 1740 to 1748, in Moldavia, Constantinople, and Wallachia

6.1 Moldavia

In several of his letters sent in the early 1740s, Sylvester repeatedly expressed the wish to visit Wallachia. In December 1741, while in Damascus, Sylvester wrote to Michael Rakovitzas (Mihail Racoviță) to congratulate him on obtaining the throne of Wallachia (Fig. 10).¹ He also expressed his wish to visit the country, “as we have long treasured and preserved it in our soul”.² In another letter written at the same time to the grand *logothetes* Constantine Dudesco (Ντουτέσκογλου in the text), the patriarch asked him to intervene in order to obtain from Michael Rakovitzas the permission to visit the country. Sylvester seems to remember even more vividly the earlier visit to Wallachia, when results were seemingly not the expected ones in terms of the financial aid. The patriarch wrote that the visit would be useful “in order for us to receive some relief and comfort for the debt, by going to Moldavia, because your excellency knows well that in the time of the blessed *voivod* Nikolaos we were not given any spiritual comfort, only just [to cover] the trouble we took [to go there]”.³

It is not clear whether during Sylvester’s visit in 1730 Mavrokordatos issued an official document (Gr. *χρυσόβουλλος*, Rom. *hrisov*) granting an annual donation to the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch. He had done this previously for patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās. In 1739, in a letter addressed to Iōannikios of Stavroupolis, who was in Bucharest, Sylvester asked for the three *chrysoboulloi* that he had left with the metropolitan to be sent to him. A renewal of the earlier annual grants was obtained only in 1741, during the reign of Michael Rakovitzas in Wallachia.

In this period, before what was probably his second visit to Wallachia and Moldavia, sources attest to Sylvester’s actions required by his pastoral mission as patriarch of Antioch. Several documents preserved in the Ottoman archives reveal

1 This was Michael Rakovitzas’s second reign in Wallachia, from September 5/16, 1741, to July/August 1744. See M. Țipău, *Domnii fanarioți în Țările Române*, p. 155–160.

2 Letter of Sylvester to Michael Rakovitzas, prince of Wallachia, December 15, 1741, from Damascus, in MS 210 Șarișă, f. 166r–166v: “καθώς πρό πολλοῦ τὸ εἶχμεν τεταμειμένον, καὶ πεφυλαγμένον εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν”.

3 Letter of Sylvester to the great *logothetes* Constantine Dudesco (Ντουτέσκογλου in text), December 15, 1741, in MS 210 Șarișă, f. 166bisr–166bisv: “διὰ τὰ τύχωμεν καὶ καμίας ἀνέσεως, καὶ παραμυθίας τοῦ χρέους, διερχόμενοι εἰς Μολδοβίαν, ἐπειδὴ ἐγνωρίζει καλῶς ἡ ἐνδοξότης τῆς ὄτι εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ μακαρίτου Νικολάου βοεβόνδα, δὲν μᾶς ἔγινε καμμία ψυχαγωγία, τόσον μόνον ὅπου ἐπήραμεν τὸν κόπον”.

that he appointed Nikēphoros as metropolitan of Paiasios (Payas) in 1741.⁴ Later on, in 1746, the same Nikephoros of Paiasios was appointed as Sylvester's representative in Damascus, replacing Mikhā'il ibn Ṭūmā.⁵

In February or March 1742, Sylvester was still in Damascus, where he intended to stay and celebrate Holy Easter at the request of most of the local Orthodox population.⁶ In April 1744, Sylvester was in Adrianople, preparing to travel to Bucharest. He wrote to Vasily Barsky to send his letters to him to the capital of Wallachia.⁷ We have no information on how the patriarch travelled from Adrianople, but it was probably by land. It is also unclear whether he also went to Bucharest, and if so, if he remained there for some time. The prince of Wallachia was the same Michael Rakovitzas whom Sylvester had intended to visit since 1741. On his way to Moldavia, the patriarch either passed through the capital of Wallachia, or took another route.

On June 24, 1744, he was already in Iași, from where he wrote letters to the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem and the Metropolitan Ananias of Cyzicus (Kyzikos),⁸ mentioning that he was well received by the prince. At the time, the prince of Moldavia was John Mavrokordatos, son of Nikolaos (Fig. 6).⁹ Presumably, he had invited Sylvester to Moldavia, thus fulfilling his wish to visit the Romanian lands to secure financial aid for his Patriarchate. It is possible that Sylvester already had in mind his project to print Arabic books. A proof in this direction could be a manuscript of the Arabic *Book of the Divine Liturgies* published in Iași in 1745. The manuscript belongs to the library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus (MS 251) and is available in digital format on the website of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (vHMML).¹⁰ It contains the text of the printed book, and the foreword is dated 1744.¹¹ A comparison we made

4 Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 208.

5 Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 208–210.

6 Letter of Sylvester to Paisios II of Constantinople, February 9, 1742, from Damascus, in MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 171r–171v.

7 Sylvester's letter to Vasily Barsky, April 6, 1744, [Adrianople], in N. Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василия Григоровича-Барского по святым местам Востока с 1723 по 1747 г.*, vol. 4, Saint Petersburg, 1887, p. 56–59 (Greek text and Russian translation).

8 Sylvester's letter to the Metropolitan Ananias of Cyzicus, June 24, 1744, from Iași, in MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 93r–93v.

9 For John Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia from July 20/31, 1743, to April 1747, see Țipău, *Domniî fanarioți în Țările Române*, p. 125–127.

10 <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/607542>.

11 For the manuscript, see also I. Jubāra, *Al-makhṭūṭāt al-'arabiya fī maktabat Baṭriyarkīyat Anṭākiya wa-sā'ir al-Mashriq li-l-Rūm al-Urthūdhuks*, Beirut, 1988, p. 43.

of the text of the foreword in the manuscript with that in the printed book revealed one single difference: the reference to John Mavrokordatos's assistance is missing from the manuscript.¹² The manuscript could have been the prototype used when printing the book, or the copy of a prototype.

Sylvester traveled to Iași with a retinue of several people, but only a few of them are known with any degree of certainty. His travel companions may have included Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, Buṭrus Nawfal, and Yūsuf Mark. The patriarch also brought with him several books, both printed texts and manuscripts, such as the one of 1744 mentioned above, or other manuscripts intended for printing. He may have had with him MS 210, now in Ḥariṣā, in which he transcribed some texts that he read during his stay in Moldavia. The twelve *Menologia* printed in Venice that he donated in 1745 to the Saint Sabbas Monastery in Iași were either brought over by him or acquired in Moldavia.¹³

In the foreword of a book published in 1746, Patriarch Sylvester states that he entered the land of *Bughdān*¹⁴ in the Christian year 1745:¹⁵

دخلنا بلاد البغدان في سنة ١٧٤٥ مسيحيه

The same year was mentioned in other sources, such as Sylvester's notes on the Greek *Menologia* donated to the Saint Sabbas Monastery in Iași and the patriarch's Greek letters. However, Sylvester was already in Iași in June 1744, as revealed by his letters addressed from Iași to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem and Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople.¹⁶

A Greek chronicle written in the Romanian Principalities recorded Sylvester's visit in Moldavia during the reign of John Mavrokordatos:

Τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἦλθεν εἰς Μπογδανίαν καὶ ὁ Ἀντιοχείας Σύλβεστρος, ἀγιώτατος πατριάρχης καὶ εὐλαβείας ἄγιος. Ὅστις διατρίψας ἱκανὸν καιρὸν ἐνταῦθα, ἔλαβεν ἱκανὴν βοήθειαν, τόσον παρὰ τοῦ Ἰῶν βόδα, ὅσον καὶ παρὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ὅπου προσέτρεχον πρὸς αὐτὸν

¹² On the foreword of the printed edition, see I. Feodorov, "The Arabic Book of the Divine Liturgies Printed in 1745 in Iași by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch", *Scrinium*, 16, 2020, 1, p. 170.

¹³ For these *Menologia*, see Arhim. P. Chițulescu, "Patriarhul Silvestru al Antiochiei și dania sa de carte către mănăstirea Sfântul Sava din Iași. O reevaluare necesară", in M. Lazăr (ed.), *Mărturii de istorie și cultură românească*, vol. I, Bucharest, 2022, p. 53–64.

¹⁴ *Bughdān* was the name of Moldavia in Arabic and Ottoman sources, derived from its second founder, prince Bogdan I (14th c.).

¹⁵ And not in 1735, as has been perpetuated in certain Romanian academic publications. The error was due to the unusual script of the Arabic numeral 4 in the printed text: ١٧٤٥ instead of ١٧٤٥.

¹⁶ Sylvester's letter to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem, June 23, 1744 (Iași), in MS Ḥariṣā 210, f. 93r; and from Sylvester to Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople, June 23, 1744 (Iași), in MS Ḥariṣā 210, f. 93-93v.

μέ προθυμίαν μεγαλωπάτην, κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ αὐθέντου ὅπου εἶχε πολλήν εὐλάβειαν εἰς τὸ ἱερατεῖον.¹⁷

At this time, Sylvester of Antioch, a most holy patriarch and worthy of reverence, also came to Bogdania [= Moldavia]. He spent a sufficient time here, received sufficient help both from the *voivod* Ioan and from the Christians, who ran to him with great eagerness, in imitation of the prince, who treated the clergy with deep respect.

The fact that he received financial support for settling some of the debts can be illustrated with several examples. On February 11, 1745, while he was still in Moldavia, the patriarch sent the final installment of a loan contracted in 1737, or even earlier, to “*sinior* Lukakis”, one of his creditors.¹⁸ The amount was 1,500 *groschen* in coins of various denominations and it was sent with the former (great) *komisos* Constantine Fakas.¹⁹ On the same date, Sylvester sent via the same Constantine Fakas the amount of 500 *groschen* (also in various denominations) “for the expenses of our Markos” (“διὰ τὰ ἔξοδα τοῦ ἡμετέρου Μάρκου”), probably Yūsuf Mark, one of his disciples involved in his printing projects.²⁰

Sylvester stayed in Moldavia until August or September 1745, when the issue of Kyrillos Ṭanās’s appointment as patriarch of Antioch forced him to go to Constantinople, to be reinstated as patriarch, based on a new *berat*.

6.2 Constantinople

In September 1745, Sylvester was already in Constantinople, where he had arrived from Galați, a port city on the Danube River, as indicated by a letter he received from the *spatharios* Aristarchos.²¹ Most likely, he did not pass through Wallachia and travelled to the Ottoman capital either by sea or by land. The event that forced him to leave Moldavia was an important one and his presence in Constantinople was certainly mandatory. This event was the greatest challenge to Sylvester’s position as patriarch. From his refuge in Mount Lebanon, his adversary Kyrillos Ṭanās had

17 See N. Camariano, A. Camariano-Cioran (eds.), *Cronica Ghiculeștilor. Istoria Moldovei între anii 1695–1754*, Bucharest, 1965, p. 602.

18 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 32r.

19 Maybe the same as Constantine (of Zagora), attested as great *komisos* (Rom. *comis*) in Moldavia on November 30, 1743, and in 1745; see M.-B. Atanasiu, “Lista marilor dregători din Moldova veacului al XVIII-lea”, in M.-B. Atanasiu, M. Mîrza (eds.), *Mari familii boierești din Moldova în veacurile XVII–XIX. Referințe identitare și manifestări de putere*, Iași, 2020, p. 449.

20 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 31v.

21 Letter of the *spatharios* Aristarchos to Sylvester of Antioch, September 1745, in MS Ḥariṣā 210, f. 26v.

somehow succeeded in obtaining what he had desired for more than two decades: the official confirmation of the Ottoman authorities as patriarch of Antioch. It came in the form of a *berat*, the imperial document allowing him to act in this capacity.

The *berat* appointing Kyrillos as patriarch of Antioch was issued in May or June 1745. A translation was sent by the French ambassador to Count de Maurepas.²² In July 1745, Sylvester had already been reinstated, and the Porte had issued an order against Kyrillos.²³ The French ambassador in Constantinople provided details about Kyrillos's appointment and Sylvester's reinstatement in a letter to Count de Maurepas dated August 17 of the same year. Count de Castellane obtained Kyrillos's appointment and the exile of Sylvester's representative. The ambassador also mentioned that Sylvester, after he arrived in Constantinople, succeeded in obtaining Kyrillos's dismissal as a "Frank and a subject of the pope". De Castellane blamed Rome entirely for this failure caused by its obstinacy in trying to restore Patriarch Kyrillos to the throne and pushing Patriarch Sylvester, "whom we had always spared", to the limit.²⁴

Another letter from the French ambassador to the same addressee provides even more details, reflecting his disappointment in the rushed actions. He announced that in future he will await the king's orders before dealing with the Porte. He acted "out of a spirit of circumspection" in helping the execution of the Jesuits' project to restore Kyrillos as patriarch of Antioch and to obtain Sylvester's exile. The Jesuits conveyed to the pope and the king of France insults allegedly uttered by the opposite party, thus making it a matter of state. He also mentioned the actions he took alongside two agents of Rome, "Dom Salomon" and the Greek "Sibrail Guberni", to obtain Kyrillos's *berat*. De Castellane acted in accordance with his orders and not based on Kyrillos's merits. He also tried to defend himself regarding the issue of the expenses incurred in this matter.²⁵ Addressing Count de Maurepas again, de Castellane wrote about the support Sylvester had received from the grand dragoman and "the Greek nation".²⁶

22 ANF, MS AE/B/I/422, f. 171r–174v.

23 Letter of Count de Castellane to Count de Maurepas, July 1745, ANF, MS AE/B/I/423, f. 9r–13v.

24 "[...] fermeté à vouloir rétablir absolument le patriarche Cyrille et à pousser à bout le patriarche Sylvestre qu'on avoit toujours ménagé". Letter of ambassador de Castellane to Count de Maurepas, August 17, 1745, ANF, MS AE/B/I/423, f. 82r–92v

25 Letter of ambassador de Castellane to Count de Maurepas, March 26, 1746, ANF, MS AE/B/I/424, f. 146r–153v.

26 Letter of ambassador de Castellane to Count de Maurepas, January 24, 1747, ANF, MS AE/B/I/426, f. 56r–63v.

More details on the events of 1745 are provided in a letter written in 1752 by the new French ambassador in Constantinople, Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs.²⁷ The names of the two emissaries from Rome are rendered as “Dom Salomon” and “Giabbour Koubeïrsi”, the latter a former representative of the Greek Catholic “nation” in Aleppo. With the support of Count de Castellane and a money payment, they secured a *berat* in favor of Kyrillos. After the revocation of the *berat* by the grand vizier, Kyrillos found refuge in the Druze Mountains.²⁸

Another account of the events is provided by Giovanni Battista Bavestrelli, apostolic vicar in Constantinople. He mentions that the following people were involved in obtaining a “firman” (i.e., a *berat*) for Kyrillos: “a certain Salomon Ruma, Melkite Greek”, the French ambassador Count de Castellane, the apostolic vicar in Constantinople, Francesco Girolamo Bona,²⁹ and “two very influent Greeks, renowned for their acumen”. According to Bavestrelli, the sum at their disposal was 15,000 *piasters*, offered in part by the congregation and in part by Kyrillos himself. The *berat* was secured but remained in force for only forty days. After that, as the “Greek” patriarch was reestablished, an order was issued for Kyrillos to be arrested and sent into exile.³⁰ In reality, both the sum of money spent and the theoretical validity of the *berat* were different. However, the actual number of days Kyrillos’s representative controlled the See in Damascus was close to the figure reported by Bavestrelli.

Officially, Kyrillos was the Orthodox (*Rūm*) patriarch. Did the Ottoman authorities know that he acted for the last two decades as a Catholic? The answer can only be affirmative. And even if they wished to “forget” it, there were petitions from the other Orthodox Patriarchs and even orders issued to apprehend Kyrillos. Then why was he appointed? Maybe the authorities yielded to a French request, or they only intended to show good will towards it. Besides, it was the incentive of money, difficult to refuse. Most likely, the Ottomans expected Sylvester’s counteroffer to decide who would finally be patriarch. Such an oscillating attitude was sometimes applied in appointing patriarchs of Constantinople or *beys* (ruling princes) in Wallachia and Moldavia. It is also possible that the Ottoman authorities had no intention to allow Kyrillos to be patriarch of Antioch for a long period of time.

27 Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs, was ambassador of France in Constantinople between 1747 and 1754.

28 Letter of Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs, to Antoine Louis Rouillé, state secretary of the Navy, September 15, 1752, ANF, MS AE/B/1/430, f. 328r–335v.

29 For Francesco Girolamo Bona, see Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, p. 158, 187.

30 D’Avril, “Les Grecs Melkites”, 3, 1898, 1, p. 11–12.

Kyrillos took control of the See of Damascus, although not in person, but through a representative. His tenure as officially recognized patriarch of Antioch lasted only a little over a month.³¹ After its failure, it became increasingly clear that Kyrillos was not able to occupy the patriarchal see in Damascus. He would only be the head of a Greek Catholic or Uniate Church, like the ones of Eastern Europe. This was Kyrillos's request in his letters to the king of France and to the Dauphin in 1750.³² He asked for an intervention before the Ottoman authorities to be recognized as patriarch of the Catholic *Rūm*, independent of the "Greek" patriarch of Antioch.

How did Sylvester succeed in fighting back? He returned at once from Moldavia, probably by sea (since a letter testifies to his presence in Galați) and asked the support of his friends and allies in Constantinople. With their help and the right sums of money, he succeeded in reversing the decision and obtaining his reinstatement as patriarch of Antioch. As mentioned above (see Ch. 6.2), Sylvester moved quickly. He also had to borrow huge amounts of money. In trying to obtain the most favorable terms, the patriarch strove to enlist all the help he could get. Two issues especially needed to be solved in a satisfactory manner.

The first issue was the so-called *miri*, the tax Kyrillos had promised to pay to the public treasury yearly.³³ As this tax was a recent invention, Sylvester wanted it annulled. However, the new yearly tax could not be avoided. His counselors recommended him to accept it in order not to jeopardize the success of the whole endeavor. This implied, of course, new expenses for the already very limited budget of the Patriarchate. Sylvester used all his influence at the Ottoman court to discontinue this payment obligation but, according to his letters, it was all useless, and he was forced to accept the new tax, to avoid bigger troubles. This tax was only a part of his debts, which he had incurred during his attempts to counter the influence of the Latinizing party, to secure his throne, and to regain it in 1745.

31 Letter of Fr. Rousset, September 15, 1750, Antoura, in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, p. 169: "[...] de nos jours, nous avons vu le patriarche catholique s'emparer du siège patriarcal de Damas, par un commandement de la Porte, qui excluait le schismatique appelé Sylvestre; mais il ne tint le siège qu'un mois, encore fut-ce par procureur" ("[...] in our days, we have seen the Catholic patriarch seize the patriarchal See of Damascus, by order of the Porte, which excluded the schismatic called Sylvester; but he only held the See for a month, and even that by procurator". Rousset was the superior of the Jesuits in Damascus; see the letter of Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs, to Jean Frédéric Phélypeaux, Count de Maurepas, state secretary of the Navy, May 16, 1749, ANF, MS AE/B/1/428, f. 73r–74v.

32 See Ch. 7 below.

33 For the name of the tax in Ottoman and Arabic sources (*mâl-i maktû* and *mâl mirî*, respectively), see Çolak, "When a Catholic is invested as the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch", p. 36.

The second issue was the status of the Aleppo eparchy. The patriarch wanted to take advantage of the situation and obtain the reattachment of the Metropolis of Aleppo to the Patriarchate of Antioch. In the new *berat*, Sylvester succeeded in including Aleppo as one of the eparchies of the Patriarchate. In the beginning of December 1745, the question of Aleppo was favorably solved: the Metropolis was reattached to the Patriarchate of Antioch. He certainly was very proud of the restoration of Aleppo to the jurisdiction of the See of Antioch, as he mentioned it in at least three letters to his prominent supporters Constantine Mavrokordatos, then the prince of Wallachia, Parthenios of Jerusalem, and the *megas postelnikos* Constantine Sulutzaroglou (Sulutziaris). The patriarch of Jerusalem had signed a petition addressed to the Ottoman authorities in support of Sylvester on December 5, 1745, alongside Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople.³⁴

An important element in this process was that, acting wisely, Kyrilos did not dare show up in Constantinople, nor in Damascus. Thus, the Orthodox patriarch of Antioch succeeded in reversing the situation in his favor. In less than a month, Kyrilos's *berat* was revoked and a new document was formulated for Sylvester.

Having thus secured his position, there is no evidence that Sylvester returned to Moldavia in 1746. He stayed in Constantinople and supervised the printing activity in Iași from a distance. A colligated volume of two polemical treatises was printed there in 1746, containing Arabic translations by Mas'ad Nashū and Sophronios of Kilis, with a total of 600 pages. The activity of the press in Iași continued in early 1747 with the publication of another polemical book, an Arabic translation of the *Lord's Supper* by Eustratios Argentis. Its printing was completed in February 1747, while Sylvester was still in Constantinople.

The patriarch's letters to John and Constantine Mavrokordatos reveal that Sylvester's new *berat* had been written by September 1745. The text of this document has not yet been located in the Ottoman archives, but the fact that it was issued is supported by several Greek sources.

In December 1745, Sylvester ordained new metropolitans to several Sees in the Patriarchate of Antioch: Aleppo, Tyre and Sidon, Emesa (Homs) and Hēlioupolis (Baalbek). The new metropolitan of Aleppo was Gennadios, who had been a teacher in the house of the *megas postelnikos* Constantine Sulutzaroglou (Sulutziaris). For each ordination, Sylvester secured a written permit from the patriarch of Constantinople. The new metropolitan of Aleppo was ordained in the church of Saint Nicholas in Agia, Constantinople, on December 2, 1745, as mentioned in the permit issued to Sylvester by the Patriarch of Constantinople. Jeremias of Tyre

34 Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 152; Çolak, *The Orthodox Church in the Early Modern Middle East*, p. 149.

and Sidon was ordained on December 7 in the church of Saint Nicholas in Agia,³⁵ and Philotheos of Edessa on December 9 in the church of Saint John Prodromos in Palatas.³⁶ Seraphim was ordained as metropolitan of Hélioupolis on December 17 in the church of Saint George of the *metochion* of Panagios Taphos.³⁷

A look at the list of new metropolitans shows that Sylvester ordained them for some of the eparchies where the Greek Catholics also had a parallel metropolitan. For example, the existence of Greek Catholic metropolitans of Tyre and Sidon and of Hélioupolis was attested based on their signatures on a letter addressed in 1751 to the king of France.

The new metropolitans, especially Gennadios of Aleppo, had to obtain the necessary official documents before heading to their respective eparchies. In his letters, Sylvester mentioned that he prepared the new metropolitan for his departure to Aleppo by providing him with all he needed. The patriarch also expressed his fear that the new metropolitan would be rejected in Aleppo. Information from the city mentioned that the *Latinophrones* were collecting money and were writing petitions to reject Gennadios. The efforts to obtain from the central and local administrations the documents required for the new metropolitans can be traced in the Ottoman archives. Several documents are related to new metropolitans appointed in 1745, such as a document of March 8, 1746, related to Jeremias of Tyre and Sidon (Şaydā),³⁸ and a document of May 2, 1746, which mentions Seraphim of Hélioupolis.³⁹

For Aleppo, there were well founded concerns that the new Orthodox metropolitan would encounter a certain opposition from the pro-Catholic party in the city. Sylvester had to enlist all the help he could get to ensure Gennadios's success in Aleppo. Several letters illustrate this effort. For example, on April 20, 1746, Sylvester wrote to John Mavrokordatos⁴⁰ and his brother Constantine, as well as to Parthenios of Jerusalem,⁴¹ about the fact that the *Latinophrones* of Aleppo asked for Maximos Hākīm to be their metropolitan. Sylvester wrote to Constantine Mavrokordatos, the prince of Wallachia, that he will try to prevent this from happening by the power of

35 MS 210 Hārişā, f. 69v.

36 MS 210 Hārişā, f. 70r.

37 MS 210 Hārişā, f. 70v.

38 Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 208–209.

39 Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 209.

40 April 20, 1746, Sylvester to John Mavrokordatos, in MS 210 Hārişā, f. 62r.

41 April 20, 1746, Sylvester to Parthenios of Jerusalem, in MS 210 Hārişā, f. 62v.

money.⁴² On February 9 [1746 or 1747], he addressed a letter to prince Constantine asking his help against the *Latinophrones* in the form of recommendations to the patriarch of Constantinople, the archpriests, and the *archontes*.⁴³ In the *pittakion* (a short message attached to a letter) of the same letter, the patriarch mentioned that the people of Aleppo were not willing to accept the new metropolitan. They were collecting money and writing reports (*arzia*) to stop him.⁴⁴ He also asked for financial support from the prince, as the creditors were pressuring him, and he appealed to the patriarch of Constantinople to allow him collect *ziteia* (alms) in the city and elsewhere.

On March 1, 1746, Sylvester sent to Constantine Mavrokordatos a letter in Turkish addressed to the Ottoman court by the patriarch's enemies in Constantinople, to help Mavrokordatos better understand the plots devised against him. Also, he warned him that it was necessary to be careful, lest the enemies attain their goal by paying money. Sylvester also asked the prince to write to the *archontes* and his friends to take care of the patriarch of Antioch's situation, for the sake of their faith.⁴⁵ He was also asking him to intervene to the patriarch of Constantinople to counter the attacks of the *Latinophrones*.

Paisios II of Constantinople wrote at least twice to the inhabitants of Aleppo.⁴⁶ In the second letter, sent on June 26, 1746, after Gennadios's arrival in the city, Paisios wrote that Metropolitan Gennadios had informed him about their return to Orthodoxy. The Patriarch asked that the *fermanlides* not be harmed. The *fermanlides* were supposedly the inhabitants of Aleppo expressly mentioned in a *firman* so that measures would be taken against them. The new metropolitan asked the inhabitants of Aleppo to pardon these *fermanlides*, to reestablish peace in the city. Paisios II of Constantinople asked the city residents for a written profession of faith, signed by all clerics and lay *archontes*, and stamped with their seals.

The patriarch wrote again about this issue. He obtained an order (*igzari*) for the *fermanlides* to be pardoned.⁴⁷ They had to sign the confession "to clear themselves from the slander that they were 'Franks' and show that they were *Romaioi*, subject to the dogmas of the Eastern Church, and to its four Patriarchates" ("διὰ τὰ ἁθωώσιν

42 April 20, 1746, Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia, in MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 63r.

43 MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 32v.

44 MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 32v–33r.

45 MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 34r.

46 First letter in MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 125r–127r.

47 For the term "ἰγζάρι φερμάνι", explained as "προσκλητική προσταγή" ("invitation order", "summons"), see D. Phôteinos, *Ιστορία τῆς πάλαι Δακίας τὰ νῦν Τρανσυλβανίας, Βλαχίας, καὶ Μολδαβίας*, vol. 3, Vienna, 1819, p. 372.

ἐαυτοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς συκοφαντίας ἐκείνης πῶς εἶναι Φράγγοι, καὶ νὰ φανερωθῶσι πῶς εἶναι Ῥωμαῖοι, ὑποκείμενοι εἰς τὰ δόγματα τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ εἰς τοὺς τέσσαρας αὐτῆς π(ατ)ριάρχας”⁴⁸

In July–August 1746, while he was in Constantinople, Sylvester was involved in the election of Matthaios of Libya as patriarch of Alexandria. Matthaios was at the time in Bucharest.

The patriarch also continued to exchange letters with Prince John Mavrokordatos, who entrusted him with a sum of money to be distributed to all the churches of Constantinople. In January 1746, Sylvester drafted a list of the churches in the Ottoman capital, an interesting document that provides rare information on the 18th century Constantinople.⁴⁹

The prince also sent gifts to Sylvester and asked him to buy gold foil (βαράκι) for him, which he needed for the works on a church (probably Frumoasa, in Iași), and to ask his representatives in the Ottoman capital to send a courier especially for that purpose.

Sylvester also mediated in the relation of John Mavrokordatos with Parthenios of Jerusalem, who was expecting the annual aid from Moldavia, which apparently was delayed, for some reason. In several letters exchanged with Mavrokordatos, Sylvester and Parthenios deal with this issue. In the meantime, in January 1746, Parthenios of Jerusalem was in Wallachia and intended to travel to Moldavia. Eventually, John Mavrokordatos was deposed and replaced by Gregory II Ghikas as prince of Moldavia in May 1747. Under these circumstances of political instability, Sylvester, who was in Constantinople, decided to travel to Wallachia.

6.3 Wallachia

In August 1746, Sylvester received an invitation from Prince Constantine Mavrokordatos to visit Wallachia. He wrote to him that because he had received the message on short notice, he could only leave five or six days after the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, August 15. He also needed an imperial permit to travel to Wallachia and asked for the prince’s representatives (*kapıkehaya*) to facilitate his access to the Porte. Sylvester probably left Constantinople after the end of August 1746.

In a letter Sylvester sent to the prince of Moldavia John Mavrokordatos, dated August 6, 1746, the patriarch mentioned that Constantine Mavrokordatos had

⁴⁸ MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 6v-7r.

⁴⁹ MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 62-62v.

invited him to visit Wallachia. The invitation was unexpected and found the patriarch unprepared, as he needed an imperial order for traveling. In the same letter, he thanked the prince for the aid provided to the patriarchal See and informed him that he had sent the requested gold foil (βαράκιον), but also mentioned the unrelenting creditors and the great debts of the Patriarchate.⁵⁰

A request for a permit to travel to Wallachia to collect alms without any hindrance was submitted to the Ottoman authorities on October 20, 1746.⁵¹ It is possible that Sylvester's journey to Wallachia began after this date.

The first clear indication that Sylvester had reached Bucharest is a letter dated February 10, 1747, addressed to Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople, mentioning that the former was with the prince of Wallachia (Constantine Mavrokordatos).

Sylvester's presence and activity in Wallachia is documented by several sources. Mavrokordatos offered him financial support and, most importantly, endowed the Patriarchate of Antioch with a *metochion*. The official document dedicating the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest to the patriarchate of Antioch dates from December 8, 1746.⁵² It might prove that at this date the patriarch was already in Wallachia. The monastery was renovated, and its church and buildings were rebuilt under Sylvester's supervision, in 1746 or 1747. The monastery also owned land and real estate, which provided annual revenue. Most of the documents about the monastery that are preserved in Romanian archives concern real estate transactions. Also, most of them are dated later, in the second half of the 18th and 19th centuries. Only a few documents date from the time of Patriarch Sylvester.⁵³

The story of the *metochion* is mentioned, among others, by Kōnstantinos (Kaisarios) Dapontes in his *Κατάλογος ιστορικός* (*Historical Catalogue*):

[...] ὁ μὲν Κωνσταντῆν βόδας αὐθέντευσεν εἰς Βλαχίαν καὶ Μπογδανίαν δέκα φοραῖς, ἔκτισε δὲ καὶ τὸ εἰς Βουκουρέστι ἱερὸν μοναστήριον τοῦ Ἁγίου Σπυρίδωνος, ἀφιέρωσας αὐτὸ εἰς τὸν τῆς Ἀντιοχείας θρόνον, διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Σίλβεστρον Ἀντιοχείας εὐλάβειαν, καὶ ἀγάπην, ὁ ὁποῖος ἀπὸ τὸ Γιάσι ὑπήγεν εἰς Βουκουρέστι.⁵⁴

50 MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 64v-65r.

51 Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 244.

52 V. Gh. Ion, *Actele secției Bunuri Publice – București. Mănăstirile: Slobozia lui Enache și Apostolache, Snagov, Spîrea din Deal, Sf. Spiridon Nou și Sf. Spiridon Vechi*, Bucharest, 1954, p. 116, no. 15.

53 National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, Fond Sfântul Spiridon Nou.

54 Dapontes, "Κατάλογος ιστορικός", p. 164–165.

[...] *Könstantin voivod* ruled in Wallachia and Bogdania [Moldavia] ten times, and he also built the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, dedicating it to the Throne of Antioch, because of the reverence and love he had for Sylvester of Antioch, who from Iași went to Bucharest.

According to recent research, Sylvester relocated the printing activity of Iași to this monastery. The theory is plausible, but it also raises certain questions. When was the typographical material moved from Moldavia to Wallachia? Were there additional implements, such as printing presses, acquired from Wallachia? Could Arabic books have been printed elsewhere in Bucharest, in an already established printing press? While punches, matrices, and even cast typefaces were easier to transfer, moving presses was a more difficult task. New data from the sources offers answers to a part of these questions.

Constantine Mavrokordatos supported Sylvester's printing activity in Bucharest. In 1747, two books were produced in Arabic: *The Book of Psalms* and the *Acts of the Synods of Constantinople*. At the present stage of research, no other Arabic book is known to have been printed in Bucharest. However, an Arabic *Akathistos* recently emerged, without any indication of the printing place or year, which could prove to be a book printed in Bucharest. Based on its illustration and typographical decorations, the book may be attributed to a printing press in Wallachia. For the production of this book, an entirely different type set was used, much different from the one employed for Sylvester's books and the later one used in Beirut. Because no known Arabic book was printed in Bucharest in 1748, when Sylvester's press was still there, it is still possible that one or more additional titles were printed, such as smaller books or booklets. The Arabic *Akathistos* may well be one of them, printed with a new set of typefaces manufactured by Sylvester's collaborators.

As attested by a brief note on a manuscript, during his stay in Wallachia, Sylvester also visited places outside Bucharest. Around the same time, in the summer of 1747, Neophytos, the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia, traveled for the second time in his eparchy. The patriarch of Antioch also officiated marriage ceremonies for boyars and became immersed in Wallachia's social and religious life.⁵⁵ He may have delivered sermons in the prince's presence, as some texts in his codices suggest, although there is no way to attribute them to him with any degree of certainty. On August 4, 1747, the patriarch was again in Bucharest.

55 G. Diaconu, "Relațiile Patriarhiei din Antiohia cu Țările Române și închinarea Mănăstirii Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc Popăuți (I)", *Teologie și viață*, XXVI (XCII), 2016, 9–12, p. 182. For Sylvester in Wallachia, see Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 207.

In 1748, Constantine Mavrokordatos was replaced with an old acquaintance of Sylvester, Prince Gregory II Ghikas. Curiously, the patriarch decided to leave Wallachia after residing there for more than two years. In an undated letter, probably written in the first months of 1748, Sylvester expressed his intention to meet Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople after Holy Easter that year.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ G. M. Arampatzoglou, *Φωτεινός Βιβλιοθήκη, ήτοι επίσημα και ιδιοτικά έγγραφα και άλλα μνημεία σχετικά προς την ιστορίαν του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου μετά γενικών και ειδικών προλεγομένων*, 2, Constantinople, 1935, p. 167–168, no. ΣΤ' α/1.

7 Back to Constantinople and “Arabia”

On October 25, 1748, Sylvester secured from the new patriarch of Constantinople, Kyrillos V, the permission to travel to the Ottoman capital.¹ It was, as the patriarch of Antioch noted, “the first letter we received when we came from Wallachia” (“πρώτη ἐπιστολή ποῦ ἐλάβαμε ἐρχόμενοι ἀπὸ τὴν Βλαχία”).² In a letter to Kyrillos V in October 1748, Gregory II Ghikas, the prince of Wallachia, acknowledged the efforts made by Sylvester, who had just left the country, to defend the Orthodox faith and print Arabic books.

[...] ὅπου νὰ εἰρηνεύσῃ Θεία τῇ βοήθειά ὁ ἀποστολικὸς ἐκεῖνος θρόνος ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τῆς μακαριότητός του, οὕτινος τὸν περὶ τοῦτου ἀγῶνα καὶ κηδεμονίαν καὶ ἐνταῦθα εἶδομεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ὧδε δὲν ἔπαυσεν ὑπεραγωνιζόμενος τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου, ἀλλὰ δι’ οὐκ ὀλίγων ἐξόδων ἐτύπωσε τὰς ἐκκλησιαστικὰς βίβλους ἀραβιστὶ πρὸς κήρυξιν τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ σύστασιν τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου ἡμῶν πίστεως.³

[...] until that Apostolic throne is pacified by the Divine help in the presence of his Beatitude, whose struggle and concern for it we also saw here, because even here he did not stop fighting for the right path [i.e., Orthodoxy], and with no small expense he printed church books in Arabic for the proclamation of the truth and the support of our Orthodox faith.

After his arrival in Constantinople in late October or November 1748, Sylvester visited the island of Chalki, where he met Paisios II, the former patriarch of Constantinople, and Kōnstantinos Dapontes, who had recently been released from prison. Sylvester knew Dapontes from Moldavia, where the latter held the office of *grand căminar* (senior official, member of the Divan, the state council). The patriarch took an interest in Dapontes’s work, as witnessed by the fact that he copied one of his compositions, a *kanon* written in 1741 at the Moldavian court.⁴ Sylvester and Paisios also convinced Dapontes to get married.⁵ Dapontes recalls Sylvester vividly in several of his writings, including the *Garden of Graces* and the *Historical*

1 Paisios II resigned on September 30, 1748. See M. D. Chamoudopoulos, “Πατριαρχικαὶ πινακίδες”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια*, 2, 1882, 15, p. 230.

2 Letter of Kyrillos V of Constantinople to Sylvester, October 25, 1748, in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 168, no. ΣΤ’ α/2 (MS Damascus).

3 Letter of Grigorios II Ghikas of Moldavia to Kyrillos V of Constantinople, October 1748. See Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 166–169; Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 11–12.

4 The *kanon* is dated December 12, 1741, “at the court of Moldavia”, cf. MS 210 Șarișă, f. 9r–10v.

5 C. Dapontès, *Éphémérides Daces ou Chronique de la guerre de quatre ans (1736–1739)*, ed. by É. Legrand, vol. III, Paris, 1888, p. XXX.

Catalogue. The “Kōnstantinos *meḡas kaminaris*”, recipient of a letter written by Sylvester on August 9, 1746, might well be Dapontes. Sylvester replied to a letter written by this Constantine on July 2.⁶

The reason for Sylvester’s visit to Constantinople was the attempt to solve the question of Aleppo and to calm the “scandals” there “by the force of the powerful empire” (“μὲ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς κραταιᾶς βασιλείας”). In the Ottoman capital, with written permit from the patriarch of Constantinople, Sylvester officiated marriages such as the one of Anastasis and Zoitsa.⁷ Sylvester resided for a while in the palace of Gregory II Ghikas. In September 1749, he decided to head to his See in Damascus, so, he informed the prince about his departure. He moved to Kadıköy, where he “took *konakion*” (found a host) and prepared to travel to Damascus by land. From the known sources it is difficult to say when Sylvester left Constantinople. Apparently, in March 1750 the patriarch was still in the capital. In July 1751, he was in Smyrna.

In 1749, the issue around who was the rightful patriarch of Antioch could have surfaced again, as Pope Benedict XIV (1730–1748) demanded for Kyrillos to be reinstated, but the French diplomats chose not to act further in this matter.⁸

The situation in Aleppo did not develop as established in the new *berat* that reinstated Sylvester in 1745. In a letter of Count des Alleurs, the French ambassador in Constantinople, dated October 10, 1749, he mentions secret negotiations to detach Aleppo from the patriarchate of Antioch, to reestablish the privileges of the Metropolis of Aleppo lost five years before, and the return of Metropolitan Maximos of Aleppo, exiled in the Kesruwān.⁹

Later, news was spread from Damascus and Aleppo that there were troubles because of the schism. This is attested, for example, in a letter from Metropolitan Dionysios of Santorini to the Patriarch of Constantinople dated July 13, 1750. The metropolitan asked the patriarch to provide his help and support for “these small

⁶ MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 66. If Sylvester’s correspondent is Dapontes, he was already in Crimea, seeking refuge in Bakhchysarai, at the court of Khan Selim II Giray, who received him on July 31, 1746. See K. K. Dapontes, *Κατρέπτης γυναικῶν*, vol. II, Leipzig, 1766, p. 290.

⁷ Permit of April 6, 1749, issued by the patriarch of Constantinople [Kyrillos V]. See Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεῖς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 170, no. ΣΤ´ α/4.

⁸ Letter of Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs, French ambassador in Constantinople, to Jean Frédéric Phélypeaux, Count de Maurepas, state secretary of the Navy, May 16, 1749, ANF, MS AE/B/I/428, f. 73r–74v. See also the Pope Benedict XIV’s letter dated January 27, 1749, ANF, MS AE/B/I/423, f. 160–161v.

⁹ Letter of Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs, to Antoine Louis Rouillé, October 10, 1749, ANF, MS AE/B/I/428, f. 150r–153v.

remainders of Orthodoxy” in the Patriarchate of Antioch.¹⁰ Other requests for support were addressed to Kyrillos V of Constantinople at about the same time by the Metropolitan Nikēphoros of Piasios (letter of July 15, 1750).¹¹

In 1750, Kyrillos V of Constantinople elected Sophronios of Ptolemais (also known as Sophronios of Kilis) as metropolitan of Aleppo, replacing the *Latinophron* Maximos, after deliberating in the Synod and with Sylvester of Antioch to find a “worthy and capable and competent person” (“πρόσωπον ἄξιον καὶ ἱκανὸν καὶ ἀρμόδιον”). Kyrillos V wrote to the Aleppo residents to accept Sophronios, “who is also familiar to you by being from the neighboring parts of your city, and he is almost your compatriot, and he knows your manners and your condition, and your Arabic language” (“ὁ ὅποιος εἶναι γνώριμος καὶ εἰς ἐσᾶς μετὰ τὸ νὰ εἶναι ἀπὸ τὰ πλησιόχωρα μέρη τῆς πολιτείας σας καὶ σχεδὸν συμπατριότης σας, καὶ ὅπου ἤξεύρει τὰ ἦθη σας καὶ τὴν κατάστασίν σας, καὶ τὴν διάλεκτόν σας τὴν Ἀραβικὴν”).¹² Sergios Makraios mentions that Sylvester sent from Jerusalem to Aleppo, as metropolitan, “ἄνδρα αὐτόχθονα τὸν ὀσιότητι καὶ σοφία λαμπρὸν κύρ Σωφρόνιον” (“kyr Sophronios, a native, outstanding in holiness and wisdom”).¹³ The election of Sophronios was also approved by the Ottoman authorities following a joint petition of Kyrillos V of Constantinople and Sylvester of Antioch recorded on April 17, 1750.¹⁴

Before 1750, while Sylvester was in Constantinople, a dispute broke out in the capital concerning the re-baptism of Roman Catholics and Armenians who became Orthodox. The events are presented by Sergios Makraios, but Sylvester’s part in them is unclear. Most likely, he kept himself outside the dispute. The conflict became quite serious, leading to street protests and the Ottoman authorities’ intervention.¹⁵

Sylvester was involved in another dispute, this one between the metropolitan of Amida, under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch, and the metropolitan of Chaldia, dependent on the Patriarchate of Constantinople (with the see in Argyroupolis/Gümüşhane). It apparently concerned the boundaries of the two eparchies, and Sylvester defended the rights of his Patriarchate. He also asked for the help of two members of the local synod in Constantinople, the metropolitan

10 Arampatzoglou, *Φωτεινός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 170–171, no. ΣΤ’ α/5.

11 Arampatzoglou, *Φωτεινός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 171–172, no. ΣΤ’ α/6.

12 Delikanēs, “Ἀντιοχικά”, p. 98, and the entire document on p. 97–99.

13 Makraios, “Ὑπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 217.

14 See Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 202.

15 Makraios, “Ὑπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 203–212.

of Nicomedia¹⁶ and the metropolitan of Cyzicus.¹⁷ This issue of jurisdiction was later solved in favor of the metropolitan of Chaldia, who obtained an imperial *berat* attaching the province to his eparchy. Sylvester turned again to the metropolitan of Nicomedia, asking him to obtain at least a decision that the metropolitan of Chaldia, now that he controlled most of his eparchy, paid the debt of the metropolitan of Amida, amounting to eight “purses”. If the revenues of the eparchy had been distributed equally to each metropolitan, the situation would have been different. But with the new arrangement, the metropolitan of Amida could not pay his share from the “ten houses” he still had in his eparchy. Sylvester also called the new arrangement illegal (“παράνομον”) and mentioned that the empire does not like the oldest records to be annulled (“εις τὴν κραταιοτάτην βασιλείαν δὲν στέργεται νὰ παραγραφοῦν τὰ ἀρχαιότατα κιοιτούκια”).¹⁸

In July 1751, at the time of the dispute between these two metropolitans, Sylvester was in Smyrna. After spending some time there, he went to the island of Chios, from where he wrote in February 1752 to the *megas spatharis* Manolakis, in Wallachia or Moldavia, asking about the princely donations for the monastery dedicated to the patriarchate of Antioch.¹⁹ Sylvester’s relations with the island of Chios are attested by a number of letters written or addressed to him in 1751–1753, conserved in the Damascus manuscript.²⁰ He wrote letters to the *didaskaloi* (teachers) of the island: Meletios, Theodosios [Skylitzis], and Kyrillos.²¹ The patriarch was also acknowledged as a member of the brotherhood of Saint Victor in Chios.²² The brotherhoods (ἀδελφάτα) were a form of local organization representing the quarters of the main city on the island.

In November 1752, Sylvester was in Adana, where he had arrived from Smyrna. In a letter sent from this city he appointed a new representative in Constantinople (*καπουκεχαγιάς, καρικεհaya*), the *protopsaltis* Ioannis.²³

16 Letter of Sylvester to the metropolitan of Nicomedia, July 13, 1751, [Smyrna], in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεὶος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 185–186, no. ΣΤ’ γ/1.

17 Mention of a letter sent to the metropolitan of Cyzicus on July 13, 1751, similar in content to the letter sent to the metropolitan of Nicomedia. See Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεὶος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 186.

18 Letter of Sylvester to the metropolitan of Nicomedia, undated (perhaps after July 1753), in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεὶος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 186–187, no. ΣΤ’ γ/2.

19 Letter of Sylvester to the *megas spatharis* Manolakis, February 1, 1752, Chios, in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεὶος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 189, no. ΣΤ’ δ/2.

20 G. Hēlioupoleōs, “Ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου (1752–1753)”, *Ἑλληνικά*, 8, 1935, p. 239–245. For the Damascus manuscript, see Ch. 2.1 above.

21 Hēlioupoleōs, “Ἐπιστολαὶ”, p. 242–243.

22 Hēlioupoleōs, “Ἐπιστολαὶ”, p. 244.

23 Letter by Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople, November 1752, Adana, in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεὶος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 172–173, no. ΣΤ’ α/7.

In April 1753, Sylvester was “εις τὸν θρόνον μας” (“at our throne”), probably meaning in his eparchy, in the broad sense, or in Antioch, the historical See of the patriarchate, but he had not reached Damascus yet. He wrote to Kyrillos V of Constantinople to ask for help for Sophronios of Ptolemais in the event that he went to the capital to try to solve the issue of Aleppo.²⁴ Sylvester’s new representative in Constantinople, the *protopsaltis* Ioannis, kept the patriarch informed of the news in the capital by sending him letters. He sent them in different ways, to keep them safe. More news came from travelers such as the *protosynkellos* Makarios, who travelled from Constantinople to Damascus. The patriarch and the synod in Constantinople asked for Sylvester’s presence in the city to solve the problem of Aleppo, because the pro-Latin faction was trying to reinstate Maximos as metropolitan.²⁵

Another letter sent to Patriarch Sylvester by the *protopsaltis* Ioannis with a Tartar envoy reveals more details. It confirms that the presence of the patriarch of Antioch was needed to solve the issue of Aleppo. The supporters of Maximos were trying to establish him as an autocephalous metropolitan, independent from both Antioch and Constantinople. The pro-Latin metropolitan was supported by his brother “Mehmet effendi” and the French ambassador (“ὁ ἐλτζής τοῦ Φράντζα”).

Sophronios of Ptolemais also came to Constantinople to solve the issue with the document of his debt. He was encouraged by Ioannis, who told him that the whole story of the debt was created to make him leave Aleppo, and he should not be afraid. Apparently, the patriarch’s new representative was an active person who took care of many unsolved issues of the patriarchate. He repaid debts and interests, recovered pawned items belonging to the See of Antioch, and took care of the miter ordered in the city, most likely for the patriarch. He also informed the patriarch that the *protosynkellos* Makarios, who travelled by sea, will bring a sum of money, financial aid from the “αὐθέντης” (*authentēs*), one of the ruling princes of Wallachia or Moldavia, either Constantine Rakovitzas or Matthaios Ghikas. He also wrote about the metropolitan of Amida, who was trying to solve the dispute he had with the metropolitan of Chaldia.²⁶ Ioannis also mentioned that he had enlisted the help of a certain *mullah* Mustafa (“ὁ Μουλλᾶ Μουσταφᾶς”), who was influential at the Ottoman court.

²⁴ Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεῖος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 172–173, no. ΣΤ´ α/7.

²⁵ Letter of the *protopsaltis* Ioannis to Patriarch Sylvester, June 9, 1753, [Constantinople], in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεῖος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 174, no. ΣΤ´ β/1.

²⁶ Letter of the *protopsaltis* Ioannis to Sylvester, June 28, 1753, [Constantinople], in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεῖος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 175–176, no. ΣΤ´ β/2. See another letter from Ioannis to Sylvester, dated July 14, 1753, in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειεῖος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 176–177, no. ΣΤ´ β/3.

While on his tour in the eparchies of the Patriarchate of Antioch, Sylvester continued the correspondence with his contacts in the Romanian Principalities. On July 9, 1753, probably from Homs or on his way to this city, he wrote to the *megas spatharis* Nikolaos Rossetos (Nikolakis Rossetis), who had moved from Wallachia to Moldavia alongside the prince Matthaïos Ghikas (Fig. 9). The letter mentions the Monastery of Saint Nicholas in Botoșani (Popăuți), dedicated to the Patriarchate of Antioch, and its *hegumenos* Anthimos.²⁷

Sylvester of Antioch wanted to solve the problem of Sophronios of Ptolemais and was ready to spend as much money as necessary to save him from the calumnies of the residents of Aleppo. Sophronios's actions after he left Aleppo can be traced from one of Sylvester's letters addressed to Kyrillos V of Constantinople. He went to Patmos instead of joining Sylvester in Smyrna, as the patriarch wished. In the same letter, Sylvester mentioned a peace offer from the residents of Aleppo, who sent messengers while the patriarch was in Piasios and Antioch. They offered to give him presents if he would appoint Maximos as metropolitan of Aleppo, but Sylvester replied asking them to return to the faith of their ancestors.²⁸

The patriarch of Antioch also replied to a letter from Kyrillos V of Constantinople and the synod asking again for their support in the issue of Aleppo. He explained that he could not return to the capital because all the eparchies of the Antiochian See required his presence, and especially Damascus. The letter was sent from Homs (“ἀπὸ Ἐμέσης”) on July 13, 1753.²⁹

The correspondence with the *protopsaltis* Ioannis reveals the efforts made by the patriarch in solving the question of Aleppo. To leave Damascus, he needed an order from the grand vizier mentioning that his presence was required in the capital for matters pertaining to the *Rhomaïoi*. He also tried to obtain the exile of Maximos from Aleppo and to regain the control of the city through a representative.³⁰

Sylvester's correspondence also provides insight into how the distribution of letters functioned at the time. It often took months for a letter to reach their recipient, and in some cases they were lost. Sometimes duplicate letters were sent. This was the standard practice, for example, for the French embassy in Constantinople.

27 Letter of Sylvester to *megas spatharis* Nikolakis Rossetos (Rossetis), July 9, 1753, in Arampaatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 189–190, no. ΣΤ' δ/3. See also Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 47–48.

28 Letter of Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople, July 10, 1753, in Arampaatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 177–178, no. ΣΤ' β/4.

29 Letter of Sylvester to Kyrillos V and the synod of Constantinople, July 10, 1753, from Homs, in Arampaatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 178–180, no. ΣΤ' β/4.

30 Letter of Sylvester to Giannakis (most likely the *protopsaltis* Ioannis), July 14, 1753, from Homs (“ἀπὸ Ἐμέσης”), in Arampaatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 180–181, no. ΣΤ' β/6.

In the letter to his representative in Constantinople, Patriarch Sylvester mentioned three ways for the correspondence to be delivered safely: in Paiasios, to Hotza Mūsā Apostolis, in Antioch, to kyr Anastasis *sarafis*, and in Tripoli, to kyr Ilias, *kiatipi* of the pasha.³¹ The letters for the ruling prince of Wallachia and the boyars were also sent through the *protopsaltis* Ioannis.

The patriarch received news from his representative in Constantinople again in a letter written on August 28, 1753.³² The conflict between the metropolitans of Amida (dependent on the patriarchate of Antioch) and Chaldia (dependent on the patriarchate of Constantinople) ended with a settlement. The metropolitan of Amida (Diyarbakır) even received a permit to travel in the entire eparchy of Chaldia to obtain alms so he could repay his debts. The dispute between the metropolitan of Chaldia and the metropolitan of Amida left a paper trail in the Ottoman archives as well.³³

As for Sophronios of Ptolemais, he was at the time together with the patriarch of Alexandria, Matthaios, in Mega Revma, near Constantinople. They took refuge in the mansion of Constantine Mavrokordatos (“εις τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου Βόδα”) due to an epidemic that was ravaging the region.

The situation of the Metropolitan See of Aleppo turned again in favor of Maximos, who was officially appointed as metropolitan with the help of his brother, a renegade named Mehmet *effendi*, and of the French ambassador (“μὲ τὸ μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ του Μεχμέτ ἐφέντη και ἐλτζή τοῦ Φράνζα”). Even the Patriarchate of Antioch’s influential man in the Ottoman system received a payment of a thousand *groschen*, according to his own statement.³⁴

In a reply to the *kapikehaya* Ioannis written in October 1753,³⁵ Sylvester insisted on two main issues. The first was solving the problem of Sophronios of Ptolemais, who had to be released from prison, as he had been forced to acknowledge in writing a fictitious debt and had been forced to flee Aleppo. The second issue was that of the control of the Metropolitan See of Aleppo. Sylvester insisted to enlist the help of the patriarch of Constantinople on both issues, offering to cover any necessary expenses. For the moment, the *berat* confirming Maximos could not be recorded in Aleppo. The new governor of the city, who had served in Egypt and

31 Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 181.

32 Letter of *protopsaltis* Ioannis to Sylvester, August 28, 1753, [Constantinople], in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 181–182, no. ΣΤ’ β/7.

33 See the discussion and the references to the documents of 1749–1753 in Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 211–212.

34 Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 182.

35 Letter of Sylvester to the *protopsaltis* Ioannis, October 1753, [Tripoli], in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 182–184, no. ΣΤ’ β/8.

opposed the Latin-minded there (“τοὺς Λατινοφρονοῦντας”), was favorable to the Orthodox position.

In October 1753, Sylvester was in Tripoli and intended to reach Damascus to spend Christmas there. The patriarch was pleased by his tour of the eparchies of the Church of Antioch, as he found the people there were Orthodox and peaceful, and only very few had become Catholics (“τοὺς βρήκαμεν ὀρθοδοξοῦντας καὶ ἡρεμοῦντας καθὼς ἀγαποῦσαμε καὶ ὀλίγους τοὺς ἐν αὐταῖς ἅπαξ φθάσαντες γένεσθαι κακολύκους”).³⁶ The patriarch estimated that a third of the Christians of Aleppo were Orthodox, while the rest were Catholics. He also mentioned that they expected him and met him in Idlib (“εἰς Ἰτλίπιον”), near Aleppo. The patriarch asked Ioannis to send him the silver items that had been pawned. He also asked that the miter be decorated with multicolored glass instead of precious stones.

The two major issues, that of Sophronios and that of Aleppo, also featured in Sylvester’s letter to Kyrillos V of Constantinople of October 1753. He explained that it was impossible to return to Constantinople at the time and asked the ecumenical patriarch’s help in solving these issues.³⁷

In January 1754, Patriarch Sylvester was still in Tripoli, from where he sent letters to Dionysios, the metropolitan of Chios,³⁸ and to Neophytos, the metropolitan of Smyrna.³⁹

By 1750, the crisis provoked by the appointment of Kyrillos Ἰανᾶς in 1745 as patriarch by the Ottoman authorities was largely over. Ἰανᾶς, who had in practice been patriarch only for a month or so, although officially a little longer,⁴⁰ posed no longer a real threat to Sylvester’s position, confined as he was in his headquarters on Mount Lebanon. Although acknowledged by the pope and supported by numerically consistent and economically influent communities, especially in Aleppo, as well as by Western missionaries, Kyrillos Ἰανᾶς succeeded only in creating a Greek

³⁶ The text contains a pun, as it refers to “κακολύκους” (“bad wolves”) instead of “Καθολικούς” (“Catholics”). Many Orthodox texts of the period avoided the use of the term “καθολικός” (“universal”) in connection with the Roman Catholic Church, thus rejecting its universal dimension.

³⁷ Letter of Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople, October 1753, in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 184–185, no. ΣΤ´ β/9.

³⁸ Letter of Sylvester to Dionysios, metropolitan of Chios, January 1753, [Tripoli], in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 187, no. ΣΤ´ γ/3. Before the letter is the title “1753, μηνὶ Ἰανουαρίῳ ἐπέψαμεν τὰ παρόντα γράμματα ἀπὸ Τρίπολιν εἰς Χίον καὶ εἰς Σμύρνην” (“In the month of January 1753, we sent the present letters from Tripoli to Chios and Smyrna”). Because the second letter is dated January 31, 1754, the year 1753 must be a mistake.

³⁹ Sylvester to Neophytos, metropolitan of Smyrna, January 31, 1754, in Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 187–188, no. ΣΤ´ γ/4.

⁴⁰ See Çolak, “When a Catholic is invested as the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch”, p. 29–55.

Catholic dissident Church, instead of securing the full control over the Church of Antioch, as Rome had wished.

In 1751, Kyrillos apparently changed his tactics. He seemed to renounce his claim to become the only patriarch of Antioch. Instead, he demanded to be recognized as patriarch of Antioch for the Catholics in Syria. He expressed his intention in a letter addressed that same year to the king of France and signed by metropolitans and other clerics and notables.⁴¹ He asked the king to secure a *berat* for him (*brévet*, in the text of the old French translation), which would establish him as Catholic patriarch of Antioch, different from the patriarch of the “schismatic Greeks” and independent of him. He added that securing such a document from the sultan would be an easy task for the king, through his ambassador.

Kyrillos’s original letters and French translations of them are preserved in two manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (henceforth, BnF), MS Arabe 6100⁴² and MS Arabe 6635.⁴³ MS Arabe 6635 also contains a “Mémoire de la députation de Cyrille VI Patriarche d’Antioche et des Églises de Syrie” composed by “Jean Agemi” (Yūḥannā al-‘Ujajmī) in May 1752. In MS Arabe 6100, there is also a letter addressed by Kyrillos VI to the Dauphin, son of Louis XV, dated 1751.⁴⁴

This new attitude meant, at least in theory, that Kyrillos, now styled Kyrillos VI, no longer contested Sylvester’s position, recognizing him as the patriarch of the “schismatic Greeks”. The two Churches within the Patriarchate of Antioch were established, in theory, as the Melkite Greek Catholic and the Greek Orthodox. In practice, the king of France would not or could not grant Kyrillos’s request. The position of a Greek Catholic patriarch was not recognized by the Ottoman state at the time.

Echoes of Kyrillos’s interventions to the king of France are present in a 1752 letter of the French ambassador in Constantinople, Count des Alleurs. He reviewed all the events of the 1745 appointment of Kyrillos and expressed his conviction that new efforts in this direction would only disturb the peace. Kyrillos’s interventions to the court of France would only endanger the present situation. His request for a portrait of the French king to be placed in the monastery where he resided, replacing an older one, was also initially deemed as inopportune, as it

41 MS Arabe 6100, BnF, accessible online at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52501251z>. The translation is in MS Arabe 6635, BnF, accessible online at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10030487j>.

42 <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc33125n>.

43 <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc33591t>.

44 MS Arabe 6100, BnF, accessible online at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52501251z>.

would be inconvenient to place the portrait in the hands “of these Asians” (“de ces Asiatiques”).⁴⁵ Eventually, a portrait of Louis XV was sent to him through the French ambassador.⁴⁶

Ṭanās died in 1760, not before attempting to resign his position and impose a candidate of his choice as “Latin” patriarch of the Church of Antioch. He faced strong opposition from his bishops, many of whom were appointed by him, because they wished the new patriarch to be elected by a local synod. Ṭanās tried to impose his will, but the conflicts revealed the weaknesses in the Greek Catholic community.⁴⁷

The printing press established by ‘Abdallāh Zākhir continued to produce new books and editions of the previously published titles, becoming the main instrument in the transmission of Roman Catholic ideas among the Arabic-speaking population. Of course, new books were also provided by the printing press of the Propaganda Fide in Rome.

In Sylvester’s letters from 1750 onwards, he expresses his confidence that the situation was heading into the right direction. He could return to Damascus in a stronger position than before. To counteract the printing activity of the Latinizing party on Mount Lebanon, he planned to establish a new printing press in “Arabia”. This most likely refers to the one that functioned in Beirut in 1751–1753, supported by the *sheikh* Yūnus Nīqūlā.

The latest Greek documents in Sylvester’s codices date from 1753–1754. As a result, direct information is scarce for the last period of his patriarchate. However, an image of events after this date can be formed by supplementing the available texts with Greek documents preserved in other manuscripts, and with other sources.

Around 1756, Sylvester was asked by the Patriarch of Constantinople to take a position on the issue of re-baptism (ἀναβαπτισμός), referring to whether and how Catholics were to be re-baptized when they embraced the Orthodox faith. According to those in favor of re-baptism, the Latin-rite baptism by aspersion was considered invalid, and baptism by immersion was required.

The issue generated widespread controversies in Constantinople, leading to the emergence of rival groups among the Greek Orthodox. The patriarch of Constantinople decided in favor of re-baptism but apparently lacked the support of

⁴⁵ Letter of Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs, to Antoine Louis Rouillé, September 15, 1752, ANF, MS AE/B/1/430, f. 328–335v. For the request of a portrait, see MS Arabe 6635, BnF, Paris, accessible online at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10030487j>.

⁴⁶ Letter of Roland Puchot, Count des Alleurs, to Antoine Louis Rouillé, January 17, 1753, ANF, MS AE/B/1/431, f. 27r–32v.

⁴⁷ See P. Bacel, “Une période troublée de l’histoire de l’Église melkite (1759–1794)”, *Échos d’Orient*, 14, 1911, 91, p. 340–351.

the metropolitans in the local Synod. Therefore, the ecumenical patriarch secured the support of the patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem.

Sylvester of Antioch wisely took a moderate position and refused to sign the document before it was endorsed by the Synod of Constantinople. On April 28, 1755, a local synod of 18 metropolitans disagreed with the need for re-baptism. The fact is referred to in a letter of Matthaïos of Alexandria to Kyrillos V of Constantinople written on March 22, 1756. It also mentions that Sylvester refused to sign the decision concerning re-baptism.⁴⁸

It seems that before deciding on this issue Sylvester and Parthenios asked the opinion of Iakovos of Patmos, who was in Jerusalem at the time.⁴⁹ It is not clear whether Iakovos advised them not to get openly involved in the matter. Whatever the case was, the choice of the experienced patriarch of Antioch to remain neutral proved to be a good one. As we mentioned, the controversy produced riots in Constantinople, something the Ottoman authorities had tried to avoid. The requirement of re-baptism would also have made it more difficult for the Greek Catholics to return to the Orthodox Church and would also have had a negative effect on the relations between the Orthodox and the Latins.

⁴⁸ The original letter, also mentioning a letter of Sylvester, was offered for sale at an auction in Athens in 2014. See <https://vergosauctions.com/auctions/detail/category/4/auction/283/item/16516>.

⁴⁹ Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Ανέκδοτος ἀλληλογραφία τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀλεξανδρίας Ματθαίου Ψάλτου (1746-1166)”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος*, vol. 17, 1918, 142–144, p. 421.

8 Patriarch Sylvester in Damascus after 1760

Sergios Makraios summarized the activity of Sylvester in the 1750s as follows:

Διαπραξάμενος τοίνυν ἐν τῇ Κωνσταντινουπόλει τὰ δυνατὰ καὶ ὁ μακαριώτατος Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος πρότερον, ἐπανῆκεν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον κλῆρον ἐπισκεψόμενος αὐτοπροσώπος ὡς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τὰ ἴδια· καὶ δὴ ἐπανιών συντονότερως ἐκαλλιέργει τὴν ἄμπελον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ πάντα ἐποίει ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ ποιμνίου.¹

His Beatitude Sylvester of Antioch, having done at first what was in his power in Constantinople, returned to his clergy, visiting in person his eparchy for the first time. And when he was back, he cultivated the vineyard of Christ more carefully and did everything for the salvation of his flock.

The attachment of the Metropolis of Aleppo to the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the consent of Patriarch Sylvester and the election of Philemon as metropolitan are also recorded by Sergios Makraios in his historical work. According to this author, Sylvester asked Patriarch Samuel and the local Holy Synod in Constantinople to place the Metropolitan See of Aleppo under their protection. The reasons for this decision were the continuous attacks from the pro-Latin party and the Catholic missionaries.

By 1759, troubles arose in the Greek Catholic hierarchy. Kyrillos VI, in his refuge on Mount Lebanon, wanted to renounce his throne in favor of his nephew Ignatios Jawhar, but was opposed by the bishops. Only after considerably pressuring the hierarchs did he succeed in proclaiming Ignatios patriarch, under the name of Athanasios. Kyrillos died in 1760 and the dispute about who was to succeed him on the patriarchal throne continued. Some of the bishops preferred Maximos Ἡκῆμ, the metropolitan of Aleppo, who was eventually appointed patriarch by Rome. In 1762, Maximos was succeeded by Theodosios V, also supported by Rome, who continued to be contested by Athanasios Jawhar. The dispute in the Greek Catholic hierarchy ended only in 1768, when Jawhar finally accepted Rome's choice.²

Four documents concerning the appointment of Anthimos as metropolitan of Eirenoupolis are preserved in a manuscript of Matthaïos of Alexandria in the library of the Koutloumousiou Monastery on Mount Athos.³ In the first of these documents, dated February 1765, Sylvester of Antioch, alongside Makarios of Tyre

¹ Makraios, “Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 250.

² See Bachel, “Une période troublée de l’histoire de l’Église melkite”, p. 340–351; Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, p. 205. For Athanasios Jawhar, see Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM IV.2*, p. 67–69.

³ See Ch. Papadopoulos, “Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἐγγραφαὶ περὶ τοῦ Εἰρηνοπούλεως Ἀνθίμου”, *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμάς. Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν περιοδικόν*, 2, 1918, p. 124.

and Sidon and Ierotheos of Şaydnāyā, ordained archimandrite Anthimos as metropolitan of Eirenoupolis in the church of the Most Holy Mother of God in Damascus. The position of titular metropolitan of Eirenoupolis was granted to him in recognition of his merits and services to the Patriarchate of Antioch. The ancient city of Eirenoupolis was located “in the East near the Euphrates River” (“έν Ανατολή έγγής του Εύφράτου ποταμού”), where the Orthodox Christian presence was very limited at the time. According to the document, “once, this city was under a shepherd and [had a] flock, but now it is dominated by the local Arabs of the desert” (“Έν ποτε αὕτη ή πόλις ύπό ποιμένος και ποιμνίου, τὰ νῦν δέ έξουσιάζεται παρά τῶν έκεισε έρημίτων Αράβων”).

Locating this city “near the Euphrates River” is not very easy. In Late Antiquity, there were two cities named Eirenoupolis (Irenopolis), one in Cilicia (also called Neronias) and the other in Isauria.⁴ However, neither of them was located near the Euphrates. A work written in the 12th century by Neilos Doxapatrēs, *The Order of the Patriarchal Thrones* (Τάξις τῶν Πατριαρχικῶν Θρόνων), provides different information, stating that a *katholikos* of Eirenoupolis used to be appointed by the patriarch of Antioch for “Babylon, which is now called Baghdad” (“Βαβυλώνα, τήν νῦν καλουμένην Βαγδά”).⁵ The Greek name Ειρηνούπολις renders in this case the old Arabic name of Baghdad, *Madīnat al-salām* (مدينة السلام), the “City of Peace”.⁶ It was this, or a similar source, that was used in Sylvester’s time, and it is clear that in the 1765 documents Eirenoupolis meant Baghdad.

Anthimos received the act of his ordination together with a patriarchal letter of recommendation where his service for the Patriarchate was also mentioned, and it was indicated that he was allowed to collect alms.⁷ On his request, the Patriarch granted him permission to go wherever he wished in his role as metropolitan of Eirenoupolis. He was thus a titular metropolitan.

This practice of appointing titular metropolitans (nominally appointed to famous ancient eparchies) was common in the Orthodox Church in the 18th century.⁸ Many of the titular metropolitans settled in the Romanian Principalities,

4 For Eirenoupolis in Cilicia, see K. Panagopoulou, “Eirenoupolis”, *Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor*, at <http://www.ewh.gr/l.aspx?id=12369>. For the bishops of the two cities in Late Antiquity, see Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, t. II, col. 897–900 (Eirenoupolis or Irenopolis in Cilicia), and col. 1029–1030 (Eirenoupolis or Irenopolis in Isauria).

5 Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, t. II, col. 1087–1088; N. Doxapatrēs, “Τάξις τῶν Πατριαρχικῶν Θρόνων”, in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca*, vol. 132, Paris, 1864, col. 1088.

6 Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, t. II, col. 1088.

7 Papadopoulos, “Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας Έγγραφα”, p. 122.

8 See M. Țipău, “Titular Metropolitans of Asia Minor in Walachia (17th–19th C.)”, *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, IV, Iași, 2001, p. 319–325.

where they often acted as superiors of monasteries (*hegoumenoi*). One well-known example is that of Iōannikios of Stavroupolis, whom Sylvester met in Bucharest in 1730. The practice was also common in the Roman Catholic Church.

Another of the four documents in the manuscript at the Koutloumousiou Monastery is a fragment of a letter from a patriarch (most likely Sylvester) requesting help for Anthimos of Eirenoupolis and allowing him to officiate bishop's services.⁹

More information about Anthimos and Sylvester is provided by a fourth, undated letter. The text was written after February 1765, when Anthimos was ordained metropolitan of Eirenoupolis. According to this text, the patriarch of Antioch, probably Sylvester and not his successor Philemon,¹⁰ was at the time in Constantinople because of conflicts in his eparchy. Learning that peace was finally achieved, he wished to return before Easter, but he was required by the ecumenical patriarch and the local Synod to stay in the imperial city to participate in a "commission of the community" ("ἐπιτροπική τοῦ κοινοῦ"), which he did unwillingly. Instead, he sent Anthimos of Eirenoupolis to his eparchy.¹¹

This commission, also attested in other sources, was instituted by Patriarch Samuel Hantzeris (1763–1768 and 1773–1774) to manage the finances of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The fact that Sylvester was asked to participate illustrates the relations of trust and understanding between the two Patriarchates in the 18th century, offering a new perspective on the elections for the See of Antioch that were conducted in Constantinople.

Sylvester of Antioch returned to Damascus in 1765 or early in 1766. He died on March 13, 1766, in Damascus. He was buried in the place dedicated to the late patriarchs outside the walls of Damascus. An Arabic inscription on the walls of the *parekklēsiōn* of the Holy Archangel Michael in the cathedral of Damascus recorded the duration of his tenure: 41 years, 5 months, and 26 days.¹² The inscription was translated into Greek at the request of the Russian scholar Porfirii Uspenskii sometime before 1874 and published by him (in Greek). The current location of the inscription is unknown. At an indefinite date, the tombs of the Patriarchs were moved to the Maryamiyya Cathedral in Damascus, as proven by a surviving inscription where the patriarch Makarios III ibn al-Za'im is mentioned.¹³

⁹ Papadopoulos, "Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἐγγραφα", p. 123.

¹⁰ See the discussion in Papadopoulos, "Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἐγγραφα", p. 126–127.

¹¹ Papadopoulos, "Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἐγγραφα", p. 123–124.

¹² Uspenskii, *Восток Христианский*, p. 11; Karnapas, "Ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβεστρος", *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 864.

¹³ É. Zayyat, "Stèle de la tombe du patriarche d'Antioche Makarios III (al-Za'im)", in Canivet, Rey-Coquais (eds.), *Mémorial Monseigneur Joseph Nasrallah*, p. 364–366 (with the Arabic

The other Orthodox Patriarchs reacted quickly and tried to find a successor for Sylvester. The new Patriarch of Antioch was the metropolitan of Aleppo, Philēmon,¹⁴ who had been metropolitan of Aleppo since 1757, according to Athanasios Komnēnos Hupsēlantēs,¹⁵ or since 1763, according to Sergios Makraios.¹⁶ Philemon was elected patriarch of Antioch on April 28 or 29, 1766, in Constantinople.¹⁷

The date of April 29, 1766, for this election has been recorded by Sergios Makraios. According to his *Memories of Ecclesiastical History*, the election of the new patriarch was entrusted by the local bishops, the clergy and the *epitropos* of the entire Orthodox nation in the Patriarchate of Antioch to the Patriarchs Samuel of Constantinople, Matthaïos of Alexandria, and Parthenios of Jerusalem, and to the Synod of Constantinople.¹⁸ Makraios mentions this when discussing the placing of the Orthodox Churches of Peć and Ohrid under the authority of Constantinople in 1766–1767, during Samuel’s patriarchate.¹⁹

The centralization of the ecclesiastical authority in the Orthodox Church by the patriarch of Constantinople, although not entirely new, became apparent in the second half of the 18th century. The progress of the Latin propaganda in the Patriarchate of Antioch, and especially in Aleppo, and the increasingly evident separation of the Melkite Greek Catholics from the Greek Orthodox were just catalyzing factors in this development. During Sylvester’s time in office, the need for a swift response to various challenges from the opposing party became clear. Only someone who had good connections with the central authorities in the Ottoman capital, including the patriarch of Constantinople, could act with the necessary speed and determination to face such challenges.

inscription). The Arabic text of the inscription corresponds with the Greek translation published in Uspenskii, *Восток Христианский*, p. 11.

14 For Philēmon, see G. S. Iōsēfidēs, “Φιλῆμων πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας”, *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς. Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν περιοδικόν*, 1, 1917, p. 732–733; Darontes, “Κατάλογος ἱστορικός”, p. 89; Komnēnos Hupsēlantēs, *Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν καὶ Πολιτικῶν*, p. 409.

15 Komnēnos Hupsēlantēs, *Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν καὶ Πολιτικῶν*, p. 377.

16 Makraios, “Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 250.

17 Delikanēs, *Τὰ ἐν τοῖς κώδιξι τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἀρχειοφυλακείου σωζόμενα ἐπίσημα ἐκκλησιαστικὰ ἔγγραφα*, p. 208; Makraios, “Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 253.

18 Makraios, “Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 252–253.

19 Makraios, “Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 251–252. For this measure, see Kitromilides, “Orthodox Culture and Collective Identity in the Ottoman Balkans”, in Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth*, Study II, p. 131–145.

9 Sylvester of Antioch's Network of Collaborators

9.1 The Phanariots

The familiarity with the political and economic Greek Orthodox élites of Constantinople, the so-called Phanariots¹ played an important part in a successful relationship with the Ottoman authorities. The few Phanariot families, often related among them, which provided candidates for the positions of great interpreter (drogman) and *beys* or princes for Moldavia and Wallachia, had reached a position of political influence in the first half of the 18th century. The Phanariots' involvement in Church matters, especially in the Patriarchate of Constantinople, was not unusual, as noted by Church historians such as Athanasios Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs and Sergios Makraios.

For a patriarch of Antioch like Sylvester, well-educated in the Greek culture but essentially an outsider in the Constantinopolitan society, good connections in the Ottoman capital were critical. The patriarch even resided in the city for extended periods of time, following the example of the patriarchs of Jerusalem, who had as their residence in the imperial city a *metochion* in the Fener quarter, close to the Ecumenical See. During his stays here, Sylvester's residence was sometimes in palaces belonging to the Phanariotes. This is attested, for example, in a letter of the patriarch to Gregory Ghikas, prince of Wallachia at the time, where he informed him that, as he was preparing to leave the capital, he left Ghikas' palace and was in the process of moving his belongings (Gr. *ροῦχα*) to a *konakion*.² It is not clear whether the Patriarch did this at his own initiative or whether the prince had asked or suggested to him to move out, after a long stay in his residence. Although this is not explicit, it seems a plausible interpretation, considering that the patriarch did not leave the city right away, but only changed his residence.

Having high-rank acquaintances and supporters also came with a high risk, as was often demonstrated in Ottoman society. On February 9, 1742, the ecumenical Patriarch Paisios II announced Sylvester in a letter that, following the death of Alexander Ghikas, his belongings went to the state (*miri* for the imperial treasury). Among his assets was a document attesting to the debt of a significant sum of money, along with interests amounting to 350 *groschen*, which the patriarch owed to Ghikas. The Ottomans requested the patriarch of Constantinople, as a representative of

1 From the Gr. Φανάρι < Tk. *Fener*, a quarter of Constantinople located in the eastern part of the city.

2 Letter of Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia, September 3, 1749, in MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 140v.

the Orthodox, to pay this debt. After paying it, the ecumenical patriarch asked the amount of money from Sylvester and sent him the bill. He insisted that the return of the document without a payment of the debt would be interpreted by the Ottoman authorities as an act of insubordination. Sylvester's answer came quickly but was not exactly the one expected in Constantinople. He did not remember borrowing any money from Ghikas and admitted that if such a debt existed, it was contracted by his *epitropoi* in Constantinople at some point during his patriarchate. Moreover, the financial state of the Antiochian See did not allow him to pay the debt immediately and in full. Instead, he was asking to pay in installments for a period of several months, from the modest income of the Patriarchate.³

The precarious financial situation of the Patriarchate is a reoccurring theme in Sylvester's letters, especially during the 1730s and 1740s. Also, in many letters from and to the Phanariot princes of Wallachia and Moldavia, their economic and political support for the Church of Antioch is alluded to, or openly requested. Among these princes were John and Constantine Mavrokordatos, Gregory II Ghikas, and Michael Rakovitzas. The most constant support from the Danubian countries came in the form of revenues from the assets of the two *metochia* granted to the Church of Antioch by the Phanariot princes: Saint Nicholas (Popăuți) near Botoșani, in Moldavia, and Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, Wallachia. The Monastery of Popăuți was in northern Moldavia (nowadays in the city of Botoșani), and it was a *metochion* of the Patriarchate of Antioch since 1751. The monastery was endowed with lands, producing revenue.⁴

It is not clear for how long some other revenues, solemnly instated by the princes in official documents (*chrysoboulloi*), such as the percentage received yearly from certain local revenues, were collected. The two *metochia* were a very small number if compared with those dedicated to the other Patriarchates, or to other famous Holy Places and monasteries of the Orthodox world. They remained dependent on the Antiochian See until the confiscation of the monastic properties by the Romanian government in 1863.⁵ Their abbots were sent from or approved by the Antiochian Patriarchate. Significant collections of documents related to these "dedicated" monasteries and their land and other assets have been preserved in

³ Both letters are preserved in MS 210 Șarișă, f. 170r–171v.

⁴ See Diaconu, *Mănăstirea "Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc" din Popăuți*, cited above.

⁵ For the relations of the Romanian Principalities with the Orthodox East, see E. Băbuș, I. Moldoveanu, A. Marinescu (eds.), *The Romanian Principalities and the Holy Places along the Centuries*, Bucharest, 2007. For the 1863 act, see M. Popescu-Spineni, *Procesul mănăstirilor închinate*, București, 1936; K. Hitchins, *The Romanians 1774–1866*, Oxford, 1996, p. 313–314; *Secularizarea averilor bisericești (1863). Motivații și consecințe*, Bucharest, 2013.

Romanian archives.⁶ Many have not been published yet. They provide important data for the history of Romanian relations with the Patriarchate of Antioch. However, the history of these *metochia* after 1766 is beyond the scope of this book.

Sylvester's role in establishing these *metochia* as permanent links of the Church of Antioch with the Romanian lands should be noted. Sylvester had already met Gregory II Ghikas in 1724 or 1725 in Constantinople, while the latter was grand dragoman. As we mentioned, there are indications in the sources that Ghikas, together with the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, supported the appointment of Sylvester as patriarch of Antioch. In 1725, Ghikas facilitated a first meeting between the French ambassador in Constantinople, Jean-Baptiste Louis Picon, Viscount d'Andrezel, and Sylvester of Antioch. In his letters, Sylvester makes frequent allusions to the support Gregory II Ghikas granted him, presumably during the first years of his office. He calls him *κατ' ἐξωχίην ὑπερασπιστῆς καὶ κηδεμῶν* ("defender and protector *par excellence*").⁷

9.2 Patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem

Sylvester's relations with Chrysantos Notaras, the patriarch of Jerusalem between 1707 and 1731, were consistent during the first years of the newly elected patriarch of Antioch. Chrysanthos had succeeded his uncle Dositheos in office. Both were prominent figures of the Greek culture of their time, with a solid theological education. Chrysanthos of Jerusalem was well connected with the Phanariots, the Greek élite in Constantinople.

There are reasons to suppose that Chrysanthos influenced Sylvester in several ways during the first years of the latter's patriarchate. At the time, the patriarch of Jerusalem was mostly residing in Constantinople and had a major influence in the Orthodox Church. It is believed that he composed the dogmatic decisions issued by the Synods held in Constantinople in 1723 and 1727, formulating the Orthodox Church doctrine in opposition to the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. The *Acts* of these Councils, which were signed, among others, by Athanasios III Dabbās

⁶ The status of the "dedicated" monasteries was a subject of intense debate especially in the mid-19th century with the Romanian authorities asserting that the "dedication" meant the right of usufruct for the revenues of the monasteries, and not full ownership.

⁷ Letter of Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia, April 6, 1750, in MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 45v ("κατ' ἐξωχίην ὑπερασπιστῆς καὶ κηδεμῶν").

and Sylvester of Antioch, were published by the latter in 1747 in Bucharest, in Arabic translation.⁸

The patriarch of Jerusalem's experience in dealing with Latin missionaries might also have been of real help for Sylvester. Chrysanthos was well connected with the West Europeans of Constantinople, as documented by his visits to the French embassy. During such a visit, he discussed Sylvester's actions with the French ambassador, seemingly defending him.⁹

Chrysanthos had published several books on various subjects, many printed in Wallachia. It is possible that the project of printing books in the Danubian Principalities, later achieved by Sylvester, was also influenced by his conversations with Chrysanthos. Several of these Greek works printed by Chrysanthos are mentioned in a list of books preserved in one of Sylvester's collections of documents and personal notes.¹⁰

It is also possible that Chrysanthos facilitated Sylvester's contact with personalities such as Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia at the time, whom Sylvester met in Bucharest in May 1730, on his first visit to the Romanian Principalities,¹¹ as he reported in a letter to Chrysanthos on May 23 of that year.

Eight letters addressed by Sylvester to Chrysanthos survive, suggesting that there were more sent in both directions. The letters were sent in 1728–1730 from various places during the travels of the patriarch of Antioch: Constantinople, Philippopolis, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, and Wallachia.

In a letter sent from Constantinople on March 4, 1728, Sylvester mentions that “we also wrote in Arabic the explanation of the Orthodox Confession”.¹² It is most likely the text composed and agreed upon at the Synod of 1727 in Constantinople. The Arabic text was published two decades later by Sylvester in Bucharest, as mentioned above. The letter might suggest that the patriarch prepared the Arabic translation himself. In another letter sent from Philippopolis (nowadays, Plovdiv in Bulgaria), on August 2, 1728, Sylvester wrote to Chrysanthos (then in Bucharest, preparing to travel to Moldavia) about the disappointing results of his attempt to collect money to pay his debts. On December 6, 1728, he echoed the complaints

⁸ For this edition, see Ch. 16.5.

⁹ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 359.

¹⁰ In MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 18–19. For the text, see Addenda 3.

¹¹ Chrysanthos of Jerusalem and Nikolaos Mavrokordatos exchanged dozens of letters that reflect a close relationship between the two. For the list of letters from Mavrokordatos to Chrysanthos, see: P. Stathē, *Χρύσανθος Νοταράς πατριάρχης Ιεροσολύμων, πρόδρομος του Νεοελληνικού Διαφωτισμού*, PhD dissertation, Thessaloniki, 1996, p. 212–213.

¹² Papadopoulos, “Επιστολαί Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 135: “ἀνεγράψαμεν ἀραβιστί καὶ τὴν ἐκθεσιν τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ὁμολογίας”.

of the Christians in his eparchy against the persecutions of the “modernizers” (νεωτερισταί, *neōteristai*), asking Chrysanthos’s support for the patriarchal See of Antioch. These “modernizers” are, of course, the supporters of the emerging “Greek Catholic” party, or the *Latinophrones*, as he names them on other occasions. In February 1730, Sylvester wrote to Chrysanthos from Ioannina, where he had spent the winter, about the difficulties of his “wandering” (“περιπλάνισις”).¹³

9.3 Rowland Sherman

Rowland Sherman was an English merchant who took residence in Aleppo towards the end of the 17th century. He learned Arabic well enough to be able to translate theological works into this language. He had an interest in theology beyond the average English merchant in the Levant at the time.¹⁴

Sherman’s relations with the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch had been strong from the time of the patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās.¹⁵ There is also evidence that Sherman was involved in supporting the printing activities in England by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), especially by disseminating their books in the Levant.¹⁶ A pamphlet published in 1725 mentions him as somebody who can help with the distribution of Arabic books from Aleppo to England. The Arabic books published by the SPCK in London were the *Psalter* (1725) and the *New Testament* (1727).¹⁷

Perhaps at Patriarch Athanasios’s initiative, Sherman was involved in the publishing and distribution of the Arabic translation of Ilias Miniatis’s polemical book *Πέτρα σκανδάλου* (*The Rock of Offence*). Sherman’s role in publishing this book in England is not yet confirmed by archival documents.¹⁸ The translation was fin-

13 Papadopoulos, “Επιστολαί Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας”, p. 136–137.

14 For Rowland Sherman, see Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 229–231, 238–247; R. Finnegan (ed.), *Richard Pococke’s Letters from the East (1737–1740)*, Leiden/Boston, 2020, p. 200, 202–204, 209, 210; M. Häberlein, P. Manstetten, “The Translation Policies of Protestant Reformers in the Early Eighteenth Century. Projects, Aims, and Communication Networks”, in A. Flüchter, A. Gipper, S. Greilich, H.-J. Lüsebrink (eds.), *Übersetzungspolitiken in der Frühen Neuzeit/Translation Policy and the Politics of Translation in the Early Modern Period*, Berlin/Heidelberg, 2024, p. 317, 325–326.

15 Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 230–232.

16 Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 237, 239–243.

17 See S. Mills, “Athanasios Dabbās and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge’s Arabic Bibles”, forthcoming in O. Iacubovschi, S. Noble, I. Feodorov (eds.), *Icons, Ornaments, and other Charms of Christian Arabic Books*, Berlin/Boston, 2024.

18 Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 245.

ished by the Patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās in 1721 in Aleppo, while the book was printed in 1726 in Oxford without mentioning the place or the publisher, but with Athanasios's *Foreword*. The editor was an eminent Arabic scholar, the Frenchman John (Jean) Gagnier.¹⁹ A major part of the print run was sent from England to the Levant and reached Ottoman Syria after Sylvester took over the Patriarchate. It can be assumed also that Sherman and Sylvester collaborated in distributing this book.

Sylvester's relationship with Rowland Sherman is attested by a series of letters addressed by the patriarch to the English merchant, preserved in the Arabic manuscript 348 in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of the Yale University. The manuscript contains unpublished Arabic letters from 1732 and 1734 exchanged by Sylvester with Ilyās al-Ṭrābulṣī, *lūghūtātī al-kursī al-rasūlī al-Anṭākī* (probably Ilyās Fakhr), and by Patriarch Sylvester with Rowland Sherman.²⁰ The letters contain, among other, theological explanations of the Orthodox dogmas on fasting and icons. At the end of the letters, there is a pronouncement of the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, alongside several metropolitans, dated October 1718, against Euthymios Ṣayfī, the metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon. It is a translation of the Greek original issued by the Patriarch Jeremias III, signed by the former patriarchs of Constantinople Athanasios V (1709–1711) and Kyrillos IV (1711–1713), by Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, and by ten metropolitans.²¹ The signature of Kyrillos IV of Constantinople is missing from the Arabic text. The letter is addressed to the patriarch of Antioch (then, Kyrillos V), the clergy and the faithful of the Church of Antioch.

A letter of Makarios of Patmos to Rowland Sherman, dated March 28, 1731, is preserved in a manuscript that was once on the Greek island of Symi.²²

Interesting information on Rowland Sherman is provided by a letter of Iakovos of Patmos: "There is a British man in Aleppo called Sherman, a strong defender of us, who also translated into Arabic the book of Nektarios and that of Ilias called *The Rock of Offence*, printed them in Britain, and distributed them across Syria".²³ There is some difficulty in assessing the value of the information provided by Iakovos

¹⁹ Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 245. I shall discuss this book in more detail in Ch. 15.1.

²⁰ For a description of this part of the manuscript in the library catalog, see <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/3770264>.

²¹ Delikanēs, *Tā en toīs kōdixi tou Patriarchoy Arxeiophylakeiou swzōmena epishma ekklesiastika ēγγραφα*, p. 638–642 (published from the MS 622 of the *metochion* of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople, p. 394).

²² A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, "Anékδοτα Συμαϊκά", *Ανατολή. Σύγγραμμα περιοδικόν*, 1, 1880, 7–8, p. 210–214. For the letter's content, see Ch. 12.1.

²³ M. I. Malandrakis, *Η Πατριὰς Σχολή*, Athens, 1911, p. 134: "ἔστιν ἐν Χαλέπιον Βρεττανὸς Σέρμαν λεγόμενος ὑπερασπιστὴς τῶν ὑμετέρων εἰς τὸ ἀκρότατον, ὅστις καὶ τὴν τοῦ Νεκταρίου βίβλον καὶ

of Patmos about Sherman's translation. Maybe Sherman worked together with Dabbās in translating Miniatis's Greek text, or simply Iakovos, who arrived later in Aleppo, was not well informed. What may be accurate is that Sherman distributed the book across Syria. It is also plausible that he was involved in sending the manuscript and arranging for its printing in Oxford. As for Nektarios's book, Michaēl Malandrakis thought this was the book against the pope's primacy written by the patriarch Nektarios of Jerusalem (1602/1605–1676, patriarch of Jerusalem 1661–1669).²⁴ Though it is possible that Sherman translated this book, there is no known Arabic edition of it before the one published in 1746 in Iași by Sylvester of Antioch.

However, Chrysanthos of Jerusalem's travel notes, where he mentions his visit in Aleppo in 1724, bring clarity to this topic. The patriarch wrote: “Ὁ Ρουλάνδ Σερμὲν Ἄγγλος πραγματευτῆς γνωστός καὶ φίλος μας, οὕτινος σύντροφος ἐν τῷ Γαλατᾷ εἰς τὴν Πόλιν ὁ χοτζᾶ Ντουῦτλεῖ Φοῦλε, Ἄγγλος εἰς τὸ Σταυροδρόμι” (“Rowland Sherman [is] an English merchant known to us and our friend, whose companion in Galata, in the City [of Constantinople], is *hotza* Dudley Foley, an Englishman in Stavrodromi”).²⁵ Notaras also declared in his notes:

Ἐνταῦθα ἐδώκαμεν καὶ τῷ ἄνω εἰρημενῶ Ρούλανδ Ἄγγλῳ τὸ κατὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ πάπα ἐχειρίδιον τοῦ κύρ Νεκταρίου, μεταγλωτισμένον ἀραβιστί, νὰ τὸ πέμψῃ νὰ τυπωθῆ εἰς τὸ Λοντίνι, καὶ νὰ γενουν 500 βιβλία, διὰ τὸ ὅποῖον μᾶς ἐγραψε καὶ δώκαμεν εἰς τὴν Πόλιν τῷ συντρόφῳ του Ντουῦτλεῖ Φοῦλε Ἄγγλῳ εἰς τὸ Σταυροδρόμι ζιντζιρλία 100.²⁶

Here [in Aleppo] we gave to the above-mentioned Englishman Rowland the manual against the authority of the pope by kyr Nektarios translated into Arabic, to be printed in London in 500 copies, for which he wrote to us, and we gave in the City [Constantinople] to his companion the Englishman Dudley Foley in Stavrodromi 100 *zintzirlia*.

Chrysanthos's text is clear and allows no differing interpretations. An Arabic book was sent by the patriarch through Rowland Sherman to be printed in London, and it is the same book mentioned by Iakovos. From other sources we learn that the translation was made by Christodoulos, the metropolitan of Gaza, and the text is preserved in two manuscripts, both in libraries of Great Britain. The book was printed either in London or in Oxford in the 1720s.

τὴν τοῦ Ἠλία τὴν λεγομένην Πέτρα σκανδάλου εἰς τὴν ἀραβικὴν μεταβαλὼν καὶ τύπους ἐκδοῦς ἐν Βρετανία διένειμε τοῖς ἐν Συρίαν πᾶσιν”.

24 Malandrakis, *Η Πατριὰς Σχολή*, p. 134.

25 P. Stathē, “Το ἀνέκδοτο οδοιπορικό του Χρύσανθου Νοταρά”, *Μεσαιωνικά καὶ Νέα Ἑλληνικά*, 1, 1984, p. 228.

26 Stathē, “Το ἀνέκδοτο οδοιπορικό του Χρύσανθου Νοταρά”, p. 228–229.

9.4 *Sheikh Yūnus Nīqūlā*

One of Patriarch Sylvester's collaborators in Beirut was *sheikh* Yūnus (or Yūnis) Nīqūlā al-Jabaylī. As his title suggests, he was a member of a rich and respected family of the city.²⁷

In 1751, he was the representative (*wakīl*) of the patriarch of Antioch in Beirut and the person who provided essential support for the printing activities in the new press established in the city at the patriarch's initiative. He was deemed important enough to be mentioned on the title page of at least one book printed there, the *Book of Hours* (1751). It is not clear what this meant in practice. Based on the analogy with books printed in Moldavia and Wallachia, this could be a mark of respect for a local notable, or for someone who sponsored the book-printing.

That the initiative of establishing the press in Beirut belonged to Sylvester of Antioch is a well-established fact. He had the typographic tools delivered to him from Wallachia and later wrote that he intended to establish a printing press in "Arabia".

Sylvester wrote in a letter to patriarch Matthaïos of Alexandria in 1749:

[...] αὐτὴν τυπογραφίαν ἐπειδὴ καὶ μᾶς ἠκολούθησαν πολλὰ καὶ βαρύτατα ἔξωδα, τὴν ὁποίαν καὶ ἐσυκώσαμε ἀπὸ Βλαχίαν, ἔχοντες σκοπὸν νὰ τὴν συστήσωμεν εἰς τὸν ἀποστολικὸν μας θρόνον, καὶ διορθώσαμε βάζοντες τὴν εἰς τάξιν καλὴν καὶ θέσιν τριῶν τύπων.²⁸

[...] this printing press, for which great and heavy spending was required, since we have taken it from Wallachia and we intend to install it at our Apostolic Throne, and we have fixed it and have put it in good order, having place for three presses.

He also asked for paper to be sent from Venice for the new press.²⁹ It is not easy to determine what the "printing press" (τυπογραφία, *typographia*) meant. He was probably referring to cast type, matrices, punches, and other typographic tools.

The printing press was eventually established in Beirut. Yūnus Nīqūlā's involvement must have been primarily financial, as he supported the initiative

²⁷ For Yūnus Nīqūlā, see L. Shaykhū, "Tārikh fann al-tibā'a fi al-Mashriq. Fann al-tibā'a fi al-Shām. 4. Al-Maṭābi' fi Bayrūt", *Al-Mashriq*, 3, 1900, p. 501–502; S. Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges. Exposition organisée par le Musée Nicolas Sursock du 27 septembre au 29 octobre 2000*, Beirut, [2000], p. 5; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 245.

²⁸ MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 112v.

²⁹ Letter of Sylvester to the (Greek) *archontes* of Venice, August 1751; Arampatzoglou, *Φωτιεῖος Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 188–189, no. ΣΤ' δ/1. See also Ch. 15.4.

with money and the influence of his position in the local society.³⁰ Yūnus Nīqūlā is also attested as a local benefactor in Beirut in 1783, when he sponsored the painting of two icons and of the *templon* (*iconostasis*) of the city's Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George, rebuilt in 1772–1780. His contribution is attested by two inscriptions, one in Greek, the other in Arabic, on the *iconostasis* of the church.³¹

9.5 Spandonis

Spandonis, whose full name may have been Geōrgios Spandonis, was the son of a Geōrgios Spandonis of Constantinople. In a letter written by Sylvester of Antioch in 1744, Spandonis is mentioned as “(son) of Dimitrios”.³² He was for a while a secretary (γραμματεὺς or γραμματικὸς) in the service of Samuel, the patriarch of Alexandria. Spandonis was a learned Greek scholar. Before 1732, he went to Constantinople, while continuing to render services to the patriarch of Alexandria. In September 1732, Samuel granted him the title of *meḡas rethor* of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, one of the first five *klērikata* (κληρικάτα), offices generally held by lay people.³³

Spandonis was the brother of Theophanis, an archdeacon of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Already in 1726, Geōrgios was employed as a contact person of patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem with the Russian representative in Constantinople. The letters from Russia sent by metropolitan Arsenios of Thebais were to be directed to Hatzi Spandonis in Constantinople.³⁴ In a letter to Chrysanthos Notaras dated 1728, Sylvester of Antioch mentions Spandonis as “a spiritual son and faithful servant”.³⁵ In another letter, he calls him “our Spandonis”, meaning that he was somehow rendering services to the Patriarchate of Antioch too. He sometimes uses

³⁰ For the press of Beirut, see Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 244–250, and Ch. 15.2 below.

³¹ Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 5.

³² Gerd, Petrunina, *Αντιοχειαῖσκυῖ πατριαρχατ υ Ροσσυα*, p. 138–139.

³³ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ανάλεκτα Τεροσολυμικηῖ Σταχυολογίασ*, 1, p. 481–483.

³⁴ Letter of Sylvester to Metropolitan Arsenios of Thebais, May 2, 1726, in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 8, D. 84, f. 1–2v. See Gerd, Petrunina, *Αντιοχειαῖσκυῖ πατριαρχατ υ Ροσσυα*, p. 114–115 (Greek text), 115–115 (Russian translation), no. 7.

³⁵ Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Addenda et corrigenda περι τὸν Σπαντωνή”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάροσ*, 2, 1909, vol. 4, no. 23, p. 429–436.

the diminutive “Spandonakis”. This person is also called “Hatzi Spandonis”, having completed pilgrimages to Jerusalem in 1722 and 1732.³⁶

In a letter sent on January 27, 1733, Theophanis wrote to Patriarch Sylvester, who had returned to his See (presumably, in Damascus) after a journey in the Aegean islands during the previous year, that he was aware the two brothers had supported Sylvester financially in the past. At the time, Spandonis was heading towards Patriarch Sylvester to recover the money he had lent to him.³⁷ On February 1, 1739, while residing in Caesarea of Cappadocia, Patriarch Sylvester wrote an “ὁμολογία” to certify that Hatzi Spandonakis of Constantinople had lent him 1,400 *groschen* (γρόσια) for a period of one year, for the needs of the Patriarchate of Antioch.³⁸ However, there is a problem in the documents. On the same day, an official document was issued in Damascus, signed by the patriarch and with his seal applied in ink on the upper part of the paper, which granted to “Spandonis, the pilgrim” the office of *logothetes* of the Patriarchate of Antioch, for services rendered. The document is preserved in the National Archives of Romania in Bucharest and is one of the few original documents issued by Sylvester that are accessible for study.³⁹ The different location of the two documents issued on the same day might be explained either by the fact that the *omologia* was copied later in the surviving manuscript and a mistake was made as to the date or the location, or that the date or place of the second document is mistaken.

In 1744, Spandonis was appointed as Sylvester’s representative to collect the financial aid from Russia. The patriarch was in Adrianople, on his way to Bucharest, while Spandonis was already in Russia. Sylvester sent letters to the Russian ambassador to certify that Spandonis was the patriarch’s representative, sent to collect aids from Russia.⁴⁰

36 Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Ἀλεξανδρινὰ σημειώματα ΙΖ’ . Ἐπιστολὴ Θεοφάνους πρῶτην Ἀρχιδιάκονου Ἀλεξανδρείας πρὸς Σίλβεστρον Πατριάρχη Ἀντιοχείας”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φῶρος*, 5, 1912, vol. 10, no. 56, p. 191.

37 Papadopoulos, “Ἀλεξανδρινὰ σημειώματα ΙΖ’ ”, p. 188–192.

38 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 31v.

39 Document issued by Sylvester of Antioch, February 1, 1739, Damascus, in the National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, shelfmark *Achiziții Noi*, MMMXL/3. See Ciucă, Vătafu-Găitan, et al. (eds.), *Colecția Achiziții Noi*, vol. II, p. 164, no. 1812. I thank Archim. Luca Diaconu for kindly providing me a digital copy of this document.

40 Letter of Patriarch Sylvester, then in Adrianople, to Vasily Barsky in Constantinople, April 6, 1744. See Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, vol. 4, p. 56–59 (Greek text and Russian translation).

10 The Patriarchate of Antioch in Sylvester's Times: "Greeks" and "Latins"

10.1 The "Greeks" of Damascus

A report by the Jesuit priest Pierre Fromage written in 1730 estimated the number of Christians in Aleppo at 40,000, while in Damascus there were around 25,000, three quarters of which were allegedly "Catholics". In Tripoli, the residents were "stubborn heretics" (meaning Orthodox), while in Sidon "the heretics do not dare to move anymore".¹

A memorandum about the situation in Damascus, dated June 31, 1731, written by Jean-André du Bellis, chancellor of the French consulate in Sidon, contains news of the Christian population of the city.² The author estimated that the Christians of Damascus: Maronites, "Greeks" (Orthodox), Syrians, and Armenians, were altogether fewer than 6,000. The "Greeks" represented most of the Christian population. This estimate, based on 4,000 receipts of taxpayers, was most likely well below the real number.³ Du Bellis mentioned disputes among three missionary orders in Damascus: the Franciscans of *Terra Sancta*, the Capuchins, and the Jesuits. He also referred to something the Patriarch Kyrillos (probably Kyrillos Tanās) had said, namely that "at the time, missionaries were needed for the missionaries" ("aujourd'hui, au langage du patriarche Cyrille, il faudrait des missionnaires pour les missionnaires").⁴ Du Bellis also makes an estimation of the revenue of the Patriarchate of Antioch, which he defines as "significant" ("considérable") but less than thirty "purses".⁵ According to his source, every bishop delivered a large part of his income to the patriarch. Sylvester had a deputy or vicar ("grand vicaire") in Damascus, called *vekil* (Ar. *wakīl*).⁶

1 Letter of the Jesuit priest Pierre Fromage to a German Jesuit, April 25, 1730, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 397.

2 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 590–596.

3 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 590, n. 2.

4 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 591.

5 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 595. Thirty "purses" are equivalent to 15,000 *piasters* or *groschen*. It is not clear from the text, but that was most likely the annual revenue of the Patriarchate.

6 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 595.

10.2 Aleppo

Aleppo was perhaps the richest city in the Patriarchate of Antioch, and the one with the largest number of Christians. In his second term in office as patriarch (1720–1724), Athanasios III Dabbās often preferred Aleppo over Damascus as his city of residence. He traveled to Constantinople whenever necessary, for example, to participate in and sign the Acts of the Synod of 1722. He also had allies in Aleppo, such as the English consul, and especially Rowland Sherman.

There were also potential opponents in Aleppo: the French consul, Latin missionaries of several orders and nationalities, and their converts. Dabbās chose to be cautious and did not overtly provoke anyone. He even succeeded in being on somewhat friendly terms with certain missionaries. It was a wise move, not uncommon in the history of the Patriarchs of Antioch. In Constantinople, as mentioned, Athanasios signed the Acts of the 1722 Synod that strongly rejected Latin practices. A condemnation of this document written by ‘Abdallāh Zākhir, one of his former collaborators, was also strongly rejected by the Patriarch.

The role of Aleppo in the election of Sylvester was considerable. Not only did the Orthodox community intervene on his behalf, but also certain missionaries were well disposed towards him. Athanasios’s choice for his successor seemed the best solution. The initiative of Seraphim Ṭanās’s supporters in Damascus to elect him as patriarch only encouraged the Aleppo party to insist in their choice. Local rivalries between the residents of the two cities may have played a role in this.

Damascus was the See of the Patriarchate of Antioch and remained so throughout the Patriarchate of Sylvester (and to this day). In his letters, he refers to the city as “our See” even if he spent long periods of time far from it. The ancient city of Antioch was at the time little more than a village with a small Christian population.⁷

After his election, Sylvester spent several months in Constantinople before going to Aleppo. At the time, Aleppo seemed to be the right choice of residence for the new patriarch. The events that unfolded there are difficult to reconstruct in an objective way. The fact is that part of the Aleppo residents manifested a lot of animosity towards the new patriarch. Some sources suggest that the reason was his vehement opposition to their Latin practices.⁸

7 R. Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries*, 2, part 1, London, 1745, p. 188–193. According to Pococke, there were 300 Orthodox Christian (“Greeks”) in Antioch in the 1740s; cf. Pococke, *A Description of the East*, 2, part 1, p. 192. See also R. Finnegan (ed.), *Richard Pococke’s Letters from the East (1737–1740)*, Leiden/Boston, 2020, p. 216. For a description of Antioch, see Grigorovitch-Barski, *Pérégrinations (1723–1747)*, p. 372–374.

8 Komnēnos Hypsēlantēs, *Εκκλησιαστικῶν καὶ Πολιτικῶν*, p. 325.

In 1726, as we mentioned, Sylvester left Aleppo by night, as he himself mentioned, perhaps with the English consul's help. He reached Sidon and then he went to Constantinople.

Even when the patriarch resided in the city, Aleppo had its own metropolitan, as did Damascus. After their conflict with Sylvester, the inhabitants of Aleppo requested a resolution, so the eparchy of Aleppo was removed from under the jurisdiction of the Church of Antioch and became independent, like Cyprus. Obviously, this process was not straightforward, considering the canons and customs of the Orthodox Church. The patriarch of Constantinople assumed his ecumenical role and proposed another solution, or maybe the solution was proposed by the Ottoman administration, which could deal more easily and more directly with the patriarch of Constantinople. Anyway, the transfer was approved, and the eparchy of Aleppo became part of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Sylvester accepted the compromise, as he could not have solved the situation by himself. It is difficult to understand how the solution worked in practice. Most likely, the *status quo* was maintained, with the Melkite Christians divided into two communities, the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Catholic.

Even if the situation was accepted for the moment, Sylvester did not renounce the idea to recover Aleppo for the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch. As we have mentioned above, the opportunity to recover it came in 1745, when Kyrillos Ṭanās, helped by his supporters and intermediaries, succeeded in obtaining the *berat* of patriarch of Antioch for a brief period. Sylvester's new *berat* was obtained on December 2, 1745. One of the first things Sylvester did in his newly recovered function was ordaining a new metropolitan of Aleppo, a learned priest called Gennadios.

The idea of the separation of Aleppo from the Patriarchate of Antioch might have had its origin in the period after the agreement between Athanasios III Dabbās and Kyrillos V ibn al-Zaʿīm. After several years of conflict, the two contenders to the Antiochian throne had reached an agreement that Athanasios would remain in Aleppo, presumably as metropolitan of the city, and former patriarch. According to the agreement, Kyrillos was acknowledged as patriarch of Antioch, and Athanasios was going to succeed him. During this period, Athanasios used the title *πρώην Πατριάρχης*, former patriarch of Antioch. He is referred to with this expression in the forewords of the books he printed.

After being re-appointed patriarch of Antioch in 1720,⁹ Athanasios maintained his residence in Aleppo and traveled to Constantinople to participate in synods, like in 1723–1724. The See of the patriarchate was still in Damascus, but Athanasios

⁹ See the *berat* of 1720 for Athanasios III Dabbās in Çolak, Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 91 (transcribed Ottoman text), 217 (English translation).

seemed to have visited the city only rarely in the period 1720–1724. Perhaps this “neglect” of Damascus determined, in a way, the election of Seraphim/Kyrillos VI as patriarch in this city in 1724.

In Aleppo, the period of separation from the Church of Antioch possibly helped the emergence of a separate Christian identity. Of course, in time, this was only one factor, and maybe not the most significant, in explaining the “dissidence” of some of the residents of Aleppo during Sylvester’s patriarchate.¹⁰

10.3 Sylvester and the Metropolitan of Şaydnāyā

One of the bishops involved in Kyrillos Tanās’s election and ordination as patriarch of Antioch was Neophytos, the metropolitan of Şaydnāyā. Neophytos had been a monk at the monastery of Balamand and then at the monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Shuwayr, before being appointed metropolitan by Athanasios Dabbās.

An Arabic source about Neophytos’s *Life* written by Ignatios, a priest close to him, provides useful information about the events after Kyrillos’s election and Sylvester’s actions.¹¹

Ignatios describes “the persecutions” of the “Catholic” party by Sylvester’s supporters, a topic often found in pro-Latin sources. When a *kapıcı* bearing a *firman* against Neophytos and his group was sent over, they were warned in a letter from the missionaries, and they succeeded in escaping. The *kapıcı* was accompanied by the metropolitan Leontios, Sylvester’s vicar. After a period of hiding on Mount Lebanon, Neophytos succeeded in returning to Şaydnāyā, with the help of missionaries who secured an order from the pasha of Aleppo authorizing him and his retinue to return to the monastery without fear of persecution.¹² According to the source, after the return of Neophytos, Leontios wrote to Sylvester, who was in Constantinople at the time. Allegedly, the patriarch of Antioch and the patriarch of Constantinople asked the sultan for a new *firman*. A document was issued ordering

¹⁰ For the issue of Aleppo, based on evidence from documents in the Ottoman archives, see Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 197–203. For Aleppo during the Ottoman rule, see also A. Raymond, “An expanding community: the Christians of Aleppo in the Ottoman era (16th–18th centuries)”, in A. Raymond, *Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period: Cairo, Syria, and the Maghreb*, Aldershot, 2002, p. 83–100.

¹¹ “Vie de Neophytos, métropolitaine de Saidnaya par son prêtre Ignace”, in Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 597–608 (Arabic text), p. 609–621 (French translation). For Neophytos of Şaydnāyā, see also H. Boustani, “Les évêques de Sidnaïa”, *Échos d’Orient*, 7, 1904, 47, p. 214.

¹² Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 613–614.

the execution of Neophytos and his group. Neophytos succeeded once again in escaping to the mountains before the *kapıcı* arrived with the *firman*.

Neophytos's *Life* composed by Ignatios is an interesting source for Sylvester's attitude towards the dissident metropolitan of Şaydnāyā. Apparently, the patriarch repeatedly tried to reach a consensus with him. According to Ignatios's account, Sylvester asked Neophytos to excommunicate the pope. He also offered to appoint him vicar in Damascus, but he refused. The patriarch insisted and sent other messengers. He promised in a letter not to surrender the metropolitan to the Ottoman governor, signed the letter, and applied his seal. However, Neophytos's *Life* mentions that the letter also contained threats from the notables of the city of Tripoli, who again requested that the metropolitan excommunicate the pope. Neophytos again refused to comply and asked Sylvester in return to submit to the sovereign pontiff.¹³ He eventually succeeded in escaping from Sidon by sea with the French consul's help, reaching Rome in 1730 by way of Marseille.¹⁴

Ignatios's *Life* of Neophytos emphasizes the religious side of the issue. It does not explain whether Sylvester's solemn promises not to harm the metropolitan of Şaydnāyā were deemed sincere. It is very plausible that Sylvester sought reconciliation with the metropolitan to appease the disputes and to further weaken Kyrillos Ṭanās's party. After all, the reestablishment of order was something Sylvester, as the legitimate patriarch, would wish for, and it was also the main concern of the Porte.

At some point, Sylvester ordained a new metropolitan of Şaydnāyā, most likely Ierotheos, documented in 1744.¹⁵

10.4 Rome and Kyrillos VI

Kyrillos remained at the monastery of Saint Saviour and he rarely visited Sidon, only for the services of Christmas (1730) and Easter (1731), taking advantage of the favorable attitude of Soliman, the pasha of Sidon, towards him.

After the 1743 decree and Kyrillos's solemn plea to submit to it, he was given the *pallium*. The papal document of 1743 reached Beirut in October of the next year, probably through the legates sent to deliver the *pallium* to Kyrillos. It was deemed important enough to be translated into Greek and copied in one of the codices in which Sylvester collected interesting texts. The translation was made most likely from the Latin version. As the pope's letter was addressed, among others, to the

13 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 616.

14 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 617–618.

15 Ḥ. Zayyāt, *Khabayā al-zawāyā min tārikh Şaydnāyā*, Ḥarīṣā, 1932, p. 233.

patriarch of Antioch, the Orthodox patriarch thought that it also concerned him. This recognition by the pope was followed in 1745 by a more determined attempt of Kyrillos's supporters to secure the official Ottoman validation of his position.¹⁶

The Latin policy in the Patriarchate of Antioch had two main aspects. One was the intention to control the Patriarchate itself. The other was supporting a pro-Latin metropolitan in Aleppo. At times, the Latin policy in Aleppo was successful, due to the cooperation of the local authorities. By its attempts to control the Church of Antioch, Rome was not doing anything different than the Patriarchate of Constantinople when it intervened in the patriarchal election in Antioch, or when it acted in support of the Orthodox patriarch.

After a period of hesitation, Rome endeavored to obtain the recognition of Kyrillos as patriarch of Antioch from the Ottoman authorities. It is unclear whether Pope Benedict XIII was persuaded (perhaps by the missionaries' reports) that such attempts could be successful, or whether just responded to requests sent by Kyrillos for him to show support for the leader of the emerging "Greek Catholic" party. Anyway, the sovereign pontiff decided to delegate the matter to King Louis XV of France. In a letter written in Latin on August 12, 1729, the pope asked the king, among other things, to obtain Kyrillos's recognition.¹⁷ The French officials, well informed of the situation in the field by their diplomats, conveyed the request, but put no pressure on the latter to try to get Kyrillos appointed as patriarch, a rather unrealistic goal at the time.

According to a memorandum written in 1731 by Jean-André du Bellis, an official of the French consulate in Sidon, Pope Benedict XIII appointed father Dorotheos, a Capuchin missionary in Sidon, as his envoy, in a letter dated August 13, 1729. He was asked to receive Kyrillos's profession of faith and confirm his election. The patriarch had to take an oath that he would observe the Greek rite in its genuine form. On April 25, a synod was held at the monastery of Saint Saviour, Kyrillos's refuge, with the participation of the metropolitans of Caesarea Philippi (Banyas, Πανεάς) and Şaydnāyā. Kyrillos recognized the pope's primacy and his infallibility, pledged to preserve the "Greek" rite, and was confirmed by the pope's envoy as "patriarch of the Greeks' nation".¹⁸

Rome's apparent reluctance to fully recognize Kyrillos as patriarch was not due to doubts about his Catholicism. It was based more on the issue of whether he was the right person to facilitate the success of the Latin policy concerning the

¹⁶ See Ch. 6.2.

¹⁷ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 391, n. 1.

¹⁸ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 594. The information provided by du Bellis is based on the documents of the synod he could have access to at the (French) chancellery in Sidon.

Church of Antioch. In the decree *Demandatam caelitus humilitati nostrae* issued on December 24, 1743 (generally known as *Demandatam*, after its first word), Pope Benedict XIV expressly asked Kyrillos and all the bishops and clergy to observe the Greek rite and to renounce the Latin alterations to the services, introduced by Euthymios Şayfi. The decree was printed in Rome in a leaflet with parallel texts, Latin original and Arabic translation. Two other decrees followed, one in 1745 and the other in 1746. Both were published in similar bilingual editions. The 1746 decree was addressed to the metropolitan (bishop) of Hierapolis, the ancient name for Aleppo. A rare copy of these three decrees is preserved in the Bavarian State Library in Munich.¹⁹

The question of observing the “Greek” rite was important for Rome for several reasons. New “Latin” converts, subjects of the sultan, were difficult to protect, as their community was not among the older ones recognized by the Ottomans. Maintaining the “Greek” rite also had the advantage of having the potential to attract, in time, other “Greek” Orthodox. However, in practice, some of the missionaries did not always accept the orders issued from Rome and tried to make “Latin” converts, as in Damascus.²⁰

As for the revenues, in 1731, Kyrillos could only count on those from Sidon and from “the mountains”. He also sent envoys to collect alms in the Christian lands.²¹

According to du Bellis, there was always the fear that Sylvester, as the legitimate patriarch, could obtain an order of the Porte to arrest Kyrillos. The French author of the memorandum of 1731 understood the official view of the Ottoman state that Kyrillos was an intruder, affecting the authority of Sylvester, who had been appointed by the sultan.²²

Kyrillos succeeded in achieving a very significant breakthrough when he obtained in 1745 the berat recognizing him as patriarch of Antioch. It is unclear what changed after that, but Kyrillos had Rome and the Latin missionaries' support, especially that of the Jesuits. A French diplomat, namely the consul of Damascus, also intervened on his behalf. For the Catholic party, the immediate pretext to act were a series of events in Damascus, involving a French merchant and Jesuit missionaries who suffered abuses and extortions from the local authorities. The Orthodox inhabitants of the city were blamed for the troubles and the French consul in Sidon, François de Lane, asked the French ambassador in Constantinople,

¹⁹ Accessible online in digital form: <https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/details:bsb10627741>.

²⁰ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 595.

²¹ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 595. For Kyrillos' envoys, see Saracino, “The *Album Amicorum*”, p. 75.

²² Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 594–595.

Michel-Ange, Count de Castellane,²³ to request the Porte to dismiss Sylvester.²⁴ The French diplomatic correspondence, partially unpublished, offers a glimpse of the whole issue of Sylvester's temporary replacement with Kyrillos as patriarch of Antioch in 1745.

The plan was to act within the frame of Ottoman bureaucracy. A petition was sent denouncing the absence of Patriarch Sylvester, accused of being in Moldavia and Wallachia, or even in an "enemy country", an insinuation that he could have been in Russia.²⁵ Therefore, claimed the petition, he neglected his eparchy. The request was made to appoint in Sylvester's place Kyrillos, who had been acting as a patriarch without a *berat* for the last two decades. Attempts were also made by French diplomats to secure an order for the exile of Mikhā'il ibn Ṭūmā, Sylvester's vicar in Damascus, considered responsible for the troubles against the Jesuits.²⁶

Many factors contributed to Ṭanās's achievement. The pressure from Rome and the behavior of Jesuit missionaries forced the somewhat reluctant French diplomats to act for the appointment of Kyrillos by the Porte, although they were aware of the disadvantages of such a project. A document mentions that the actions began during de Villeneuve's time in office (1728–1741), by securing an order for Kyrillos to return to his "homeland".²⁷ The French ambassador most likely provided the financial support to pay the official and unofficial sums of money requested by the Ottomans. Rich merchants in Aleppo and elsewhere were also influenced by Rome's ideas and supported Kyrillos. Another important factor were the Latin missionaries in present-day Syria and Lebanon, who were directly interested in having as leader of the Church of Antioch an ally, not an opponent.

It seems that Kyrillos's most convincing argument was of a financial nature. Beside the *pîškeş* of 15,000 *akçe* (eventually, the amount reached 20,000), he offered to pay an unheard-of annual tax of 30,000 *akçe* to the public treasury, to convince the Ottoman authorities to appoint him. As we mentioned before, Sylvester of Antioch refers to this tax in his Greek letters as *miri* (μῖρι). Kyrillos thus paid for the *berat* the huge sum of 50,000 *akçe* only in official taxes, plus the usual unofficial payments to various Ottoman dignitaries and clerks. Moreover, it appears from the

²³ Michel-Ange, Count de Castellane, was ambassador of France in Constantinople from 1741 to 1747.

²⁴ "Histoire des différentes persécutions exercées contre les catholiques d'Alep et de Damas", in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, 1, p. 478–479.

²⁵ Çolak, "When a Catholic is invested as the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch", p. 42.

²⁶ Letter of Count de Castellane to Count de Maurepas, June 28, 1745, ANF, MS AE/B/I/422, f. 277r–278v.

²⁷ Letter of Count de Castellane to Count de Maurepas, April 14, 1745, ANF, MS AE/B/I/422, f. 164r–167v.

sources that the amounts proposed by Kyrillos were raised by the authorities. The amount of 50,000 *piasters* paid by Kyrillos to replace Sylvester is also confirmed by another source, Alexei Veshniakov, the Russian resident in Constantinople.²⁸

Comparing this sum with the 10,000 *akçe* paid by Sylvester in 1724, the difference is evident. It is thus clear that the Ottoman central authorities' main motivation in granting Kyrillos the *berat* was financial. After two decades of attempts, the governing bodies were aware of the situation on the ground. They knew that Kyrillos lived in a monastery in the mountains, that orders had been issued against him in the past, and that he was repeatedly accused of following the religion of the "Franks", i.e., of the pope. It is plausible that, although they issued the *berat*, the authorities were determined not to enforce it and just waited for Sylvester's offer to be reestablished on the throne of Antioch. Or, perhaps, the whole issue was a scheme to obtain money from both parties.

Where did Kyrillos find such sums of money to support him and his host monastery, when in 1730 he was denied even the request to have a ship placed under the French flag? Most likely, French merchants had lent the money to him, as they had done in 1724. If he was successful, the money could have been recovered from a rich eparchy, as the Latin missionaries believed.

Eventually, the pro-Latin Maximos was forced to leave the city, although he continued his attempts to return to his Throne. In 1759, Maximos became involved in the disputes surrounding the election of Kyrillos's successor as Greek Catholic patriarch and was supported by one of the factions. In practice, these attempts were equally challenges for Sylvester, who had to find ways to counter them. He enlisted the help of his supporters, such as Gregory II Ghikas, the patriarch of Constantinople, and the Ottoman authorities.

In conclusion, a Catholic became Orthodox patriarch of Antioch in 1745, in the person of Kyrillos.²⁹ But there was more to it. Nowhere in the official documents, neither in the petition nor in the *berat*, was there any mention of Catholicism or the "Franks' religion".

²⁸ Panchenko, "Иерусалимский Патриарх Парфений (1737–1766 гг.) и Россия", p. 37.

²⁹ For this formulation, see Çolak, "When a Catholic is invested as the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch", p. 29–55.

11 Sylvester's Schools

After Sylvester succeeded in getting back to “Arabia”, as he often called his eparchy, i.e., the region of Greater Syria and Lebanon, he strove for the establishment of a “Hellenic” school in Tripoli or Damascus. The fact that establishing a school was one of Sylvester’s main concerns as a patriarch is revelatory of his cultural aims. It also supports the theory that he had a thorough classical and Byzantine Greek education, regardless of whether his native language was Arabic or Greek.

In Ancient and Medieval Greek culture, education was defined as a good knowledge of literature, both ecclesiastical and secular, alongside grammar, philosophy, and rhetoric. This sort of education could be achieved at the time in some of the great centers of Greek learning in the Ottoman Empire (Constantinople, Patmos, Mount Athos etc.), as well as in the semi-autonomous principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Superior learning, however, greatly depended on the teachers and the students. Competent professors were few and much sought after. Ambitious students sometimes continued their education at Western European universities.

While it is unknown where Sylvester studied, his written texts, reading, and cultural interests prove that he had enjoyed a superior Greek education, which served him well in his position. Nothing less was expected of an Orthodox patriarch at the time, as is illustrated also by the cultural level of his predecessor, Athanasios Dabbās, and that of the patriarchs of Jerusalem Dositheos and Chrysanthos.

As we mentioned before, Sylvester may have studied in his native island of Cyprus, could have pursued his higher education while he was metropolitan of Aleppo, on Mount Athos, as some modern historians conjectured, or in another major teaching center such as Patmos, where he had connections as patriarch. One should not forget that along with his philological training, Sylvester had acquired an artistic formation: the art of painting Byzantine icons. This dual training was rather rare, as painting was considered more of a craft than as a form of fine arts.

Even before he was acquainted with Kaisarios Dapontes,¹ Patriarch Sylvester wrote about the school on the island of Skopelos in a letter addressed to its sponsor, the former metropolitan of Arta, Neophytos Mavromatis.² In this letter dated May 3, 1725, a short time after he was elected to the patriarchal throne of Antioch, Sylvester mentions the “Academy” in Skopelos, praising the importance of education. The passage is very significant for Sylvester’s ideas about instruction in general, and

1 For Dapontes, see Ch. 7.

2 For Neophytos Mavromatis, see Kallianos, “Εξι ανέκδοτες επιστολές”, p. 159–160, n. 5, with the earlier bibliography.

the school of Skopelos might have been a model for the patriarch's initiatives in the field of education.

Ἐμάθομεν ὅτι πῶς ἐσύστησε καὶ τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν εἰς τὴν Σκόπελον καὶ ὄχι μόνον ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσοι ἄλλοι τὸ ἤκουσαν ἔδωσαν δόξαν τῷ Θεῷ ὅπου εὐρίσκονται καὶ εἰς τοὺς καιροὺς μας τοιοῦτοι ζηλωταὶ καὶ ἔργον θεάρεστον ὑπερασπισταὶ καὶ συμπράκτορες, ἐπειδὴ καὶ οὐδὲν ἐστὶ τῶν τῆδε Θεῷ τε καὶ ἀνθρώποις ἐπαινετώτερον, ὡς ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς σπουδῆς καὶ ἡ ταῦτης ἀνέκτιστος.³

We learned that he also established the Academy in Skopelos, and not only we, but also those who heard it, gave glory to God that in our times there are such zealous and devout defenders and collaborators of a work that pleases God, because there is nothing more praiseworthy to God and men, as the path of study and to obtain it.

For the school Sylvester established in “Arabia”, he turned to a well-known scholar of the day, Makarios Kalogeras of Patmos. Sylvester's connection to Kalogeras, who was a professor at the school in Patmos, is well documented through letters dating from the 1720s and 1730s.⁴ The future patriarch of Antioch may have studied with Makarios. In any case, from the correspondence it seems that they knew each other. Kalogeras also held Sylvester in great esteem. In one of his letters, he mentioned to the patriarch that his students were learning the laudatory style (ἐγκωμιαστικός) by writing texts dedicated to the patriarch of Antioch.⁵

Kalogeras recommended one of his students, Iakovos of Patmos, to the patriarch. Iakovos went to Syria, became the head of the Hellenic school established

3 Cf. S. Eustratiades, “Ἱεροθέος Πελοποννήσιος ὁ Ἰβηρίτης καὶ Μεθόδιος Ἀνθρακίτης ὁ ἐξ Ἰωαννίνων”, *Ρωμανὸς ὁ Μελωδός*, Paris, 1, 1933, p. 290, n. 37, apud K. N. Kallianos, “Ἐξι ἀνέκδοτες ἐπιστολές του Ἱεροθέου Ἰβηρίτη στον μητροπολίτη πρ. Ἄρτης Νεόφυτο Μαυρομάτη για την σύσταση Σχολῆς στη Σκόπελο”, *Θεσσαλικό Ἡμερολόγιο*, 57, 2010, p. 163, n. 18. The letter was probably published from MS M 100 of the Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos. See Spyridon of the Laura, S. Eustratiades, *Catalogue of the Greek manuscripts in the library of the Laura on Mount Athos with notices from other libraries*, Cambridge, 1925, p. 321, no. 1791, accessible at: <https://archive.org/details/catalogueofgreek00monm/page/n5/mode/2up>. For the text, see also A. P. G. Eumorphopoulos, “Νεόφυτος ὁ Μαυρομάτης”, in *Ἐταιρεία τῶν Μεσαιωνικῶν Ἐρευνῶν. Δελτίον τῶν ἐργασιῶν τοῦ Α΄ ἔτους*, 1, Constantinople, 1880, p. 86.

4 Nine letters sent by Makarios of Patmos to Sylvester, dating from 1726 to 1736, are preserved in MS 233 of the Patriarchal Library in Jerusalem. See Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 305–309, no. 233. More letters, no. 164, 205 (ρξδ´, σε´), are part of Makarios' correspondence while in Patmos. See Malandrakis, *Ἡ Πατμιάς Σχολή*, p. 100, 134; Archim. N. Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοῦ διδασκάλου Μακαρίου Καλογερά ἐπιστολές πρὸς τῆ Συρία”, *Κληρονομία*, 19, 1987, 1-2, p. 277–289.

5 Letter of Makarios of Patmos to Sylvester, August 7, 1726. See Malandrakis, *Ἡ Πατμιάς Σχολή*, p. 147–148, n. 95; Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοῦ διδασκάλου Μακαρίου Καλογερά ἐπιστολές”, p. 280–282.

by Sylvester, and taught there. A letter by Makarios to Iakovos mentions that the *didaskalos* (Iakovos) was forced to leave Aleppo with Sylvester (in 1726) and the school moved to Tripoli.⁶

A note by the patriarch in a manuscript record of the sums of money that were spent for the school states that he was pleased with the results, as the school succeeded in training a certain number of good students. Sylvester also mentions that he took care of the school finances until he left the region in 1728, when the managing position was transferred to the *didaskalos* Iakovos.⁷ The manuscript report continues, on the same folio, with the information that Sylvester sent Iakovos, various sums of money, from Philippopolis, Thessaloniki, Kastoria, Tripoli, and Aleppo. The patriarch also recorded the sums he had sent for the school in 1728–1732 from various places while he was travelling. On the same page, all these sums were added, and the total amounted to 2,165 *groschen*. From these, 1,200 *groschen* were given to Iakovos “when he wanted to go to his native place, for his effort” (“ὅταν ἤθελε μισεύσει εἰς τὴν πατρίδα του διὰ τὸν κόπον του”). Sylvester also presented Iakovos with a watch when they met in Patmos: “καὶ εἰς τὴν Κύπρον ὅταν ἀνταμώθημεν τοῦ ἐδώσαμεν ἓνα ὠρολόγι παντόλη”.

After the foundation of the school, Sylvester asked Makarios of Patmos for a new teacher. After a first reluctant answer, Makarios sent the priest Anastasios as an “associate professor” (“συνδιδάσκαλος”). Anastasios was considered equal to Iakovos both in terms of education and morals (“δὲν θέλει φανῆ δεῦτερος τοῦ κυρ Τακώβου, οὔτε κατὰ τὴν παιδείαν, οὔτε κατὰ τὰ ἦθη”).⁸ In a letter to Sylvester, Makarios Patmios mentions that he insisted that Anastasios go and teach in the patriarch’s school. He mentioned that the new teacher was not beyond the level of Iakovos. Makarios also stated that Sylvester knew Anastasios.⁹ He had also persuaded another of his disciples to teach in the same school, the priest Athanasios, but this one did not go after all.

6 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 306, no. 233 (4).

7 MS 210 Ἡριῶ, f. 169: “Ἐξοδα τοῦ σχολείου τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ ὅπου ἐγκροτήσαμεν εἰς Ἀράβιαν, ἀπὸ τοῦς 1728 ἕως τοῦς [17]32 μηνὶ Ὀκτωβρίῳ, ὄντος μᾶς εἰς Ἀράβιαν μέχρι τοῦ Ἰουλίου τὸ ἐκυβερνούσαμεν, καὶ μισεῦντός μας εἰς Βασιλεύουσαν ἀφήκαμεν τὴν ἐπιστάσιαν τῷ διδασκάλῳ Τακώβῳ Πατιῳ, καὶ τοῦ ἐπέμαμεν διὰ κυβέρνησιν τῶν μαθητῶν” (“Expenses of the Greek school that we established in Arabia, from 1728 until [17]32, October; while we were in Arabia, until July, we supervised it, and when we went to the Imperial City, we left the administration to the teacher Iakovos of Patmos, and we sent him [money] for the administration of the students”).

8 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 305, no. 233; Malandrakis, *Ἡ Πατμιάς Σχολή*, p. 91, n. 84.

9 Karnapas, “Ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 851–852.

The school had as head teacher and manager Iakovos of Patmos, considered as one of the most cultivated people of his time and the best alumnus of the Patmos school.¹⁰ Eventually, around 1736, Iakovos of Patmos left for Jerusalem, where he continued his work as a teacher.¹¹ It is unknown if the school or schools founded by Sylvester in “Arabia” continued.

At some point, Sylvester was searching for yet another teacher for his school. He asked the same Makarios to send another one of his disciples. The latter’s answer was somehow confusing, as he said the island had pupils who knew to recite well, but few or no true scholars. So, if the patriarch wanted one of the less prepared pupils, he could send one.

The school moved from Aleppo to Tripoli. Then, in March 1732, it moved again to Damascus because of an epidemic. The patriarch had returned to the city after his long voyages.¹² Soon, the conflicts in Damascus between the Orthodox and the pro-Catholic factions also affected the activity of the school. The fact was noted by Vasily Barsky, who was a student there at the time.¹³

Sometime after 1732, the patriarch expressed his satisfaction regarding the outcome of the school. He noted that a lot of pupils attended and some of them even became bishops (“ἀρχιεράτευσαν” in the text): “Ἐπρόκοψαν καὶ μαθηταὶ πολλοὶ καὶ τινὲς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀρχιεράτευσαν” (“Many students also made progress and some of them became archpriests”).¹⁴

One of these students who reached high positions in the Church could have been Sophronios of Kilis, an Arabic-speaking clergyman who received a good Greek education and distinguished himself as metropolitan of Aleppo, patriarch of Jerusalem, and patriarch of Constantinople. In 1766, he was invited to take over the patriarchal throne of Antioch, which he refused.¹⁵

When he was in Wallachia, Sylvester also assured that two of his collaborators (Yūsuf Mark and Parthenios of Adana) attended a school to learn Greek. It has been suggested that he also established a school of Arabic in Bucharest: the same Yūsuf Mark and Buṭrus, Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī’s brother, were teaching Arabic to four Wallachian

10 Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 852.

11 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Τεροσολυμικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 4, Sankt Petersburg, 1897, p. 291, a text of Kyrillos Athanasiadēs about the libraries of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, written in 1874–1881.

12 Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 853

13 Grigorovitch-Barski, *Pérégrinations (1723–1747)*, p. 435.

14 MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 169.

15 P. Uspenskiĭ, *Александрійская Патриархия. Сборник материалов, исследований и записок относящихся до истории Александрійской Патриархии*, ed. by Hr. M. Loparev, Saint Petersburg, 1898, p. 57.

children.¹⁶ No information is available about this Arabic school after Sylvester left Wallachia in 1748.

Given the difficult financial circumstances and the frequent threats to his position, the patriarch's success in logistically and financially supporting one or more schools means that he had made it one of his priorities. In these circumstances, Sylvester of Antioch essentially increased the cultural level of his eparchy.

¹⁶ Haddad, "La correspondance de Trābulṣī", p. 275; Feodorov, "New Data on the Early Arabic Printing", p. 202; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 237.

12 Sylvester's Books

12.1 Sylvester as a Reader

Patriarch Sylvester had a passion for reading. Thanks to his habit of leaving “historical” notes on books, on personal and official documents, as well as on icons, many of the texts he read are identifiable.

In the 1720s, he asked the metropolitan of Kition on Cyprus for a three-volume Western European edition of the works of Saint John Chrysostom, inviting his correspondent to mention the price of the book, which he was ready to pay. Apparently, the metropolitan sent him the volumes, but only as a loan.¹

In one of his manuscript codices, the patriarch included a list of books “that we have in two chests”. The list offers an unexpected insight into the interests of the patriarch. It contains theological, patristic, and liturgical books, but also Ancient Greek classics and Byzantine authors. Among them, there are 20 volumes of the *Patria Constantinoupoleos* (most likely a part of the *Corpus Byzantinae Historiae* published in Paris in 42 volumes between 1645 and 1711, or the second edition printed in Venice in 1729–1733), with the mention that one volume is missing. The missing volume contained the work of the Byzantine author Glykas: “Τὰ Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τόμοι εἴκοσι ἕκτος τοῦ Γλυκᾶ” (“The *Patria of Constantinople*, twenty volumes except Glykas”).

The record does not mention many Arabic books, probably because the list itself is in Greek. In the same manuscript there are lists of Arabic books, some of them in relation with Ilyās Fakhr, the secretary of the Patriarchate and, for a time, its representative in Constantinople. A well-known intellectual of the time, he was also a close collaborator of the patriarch in cultural and literary projects.

Most of the books in the list are printed editions, many of them easily recognizable. The list also contains Greek editions printed in Moldavia and Wallachia in the late 17th and early 18th century, including books published by Dositheos and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, such as the *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* (Bucharest, 1715 on the title page, but published in the 1720s). Some of the titles were printed in several volumes, others are recorded in more than one copy.

In 1745, Sylvester donated a Greek *Menologion* in twelve volumes, printed in Venice in 1729–1732, to the Monastery of Saint Sabbas in Iași. Sylvester's contact with this monastery includes several aspects: it probably was his residence during his stay in Moldavia, and he certainly printed several Arabic books there. When he

1 D[ēmētrakopoulos], “Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 368–369.

prepared his donation, he added a manuscript note identifying him as the donor of each of the twelve volumes. The notes were written in Greek, with a shorter version in Arabic. There are minor differences in the content of the notes in the various volumes. It cannot be determined whether they were handwritten by the patriarch or by one of his secretaries. They were, however, written by the same person, or possibly one for the Greek text and another for the Arabic. All the notes were personally signed by the patriarch with the abridged form of his signature.² Over the course of nearly three centuries since his donation, some of the volumes were misplaced or lost, with the result that at present only eight of them survive, in the University Library in Iași.³ A facsimile of the manuscript note on another volume, nowadays missing, is reproduced in an academic article published in 1934.⁴

Sylvester's notes provide important historical data, such as the time of the patriarch's arrival in Moldavia in May 1744, during the reign of John Mavrokordatos.⁵ The Arabic notes mention the year 1745, when the notes were written.

A note written by Sylvester of Antioch on a manuscript in the library of Saint John the Theologian in Patmos is particularly interesting. The manuscript contains the *Memories* of Sylvester Syropoulos about the Council of Ferrara–Florence, as well as the Greek text of the Acts of the council.⁶ At the time of the council (1438–1439), Syropoulos was the great ecclesiarch of the Great Church (the Patriarchate of Constantinople). If his identification with Sophronios Syropoulos is correct, he was later one of the first patriarchs of Constantinople, after the conquest of the city by the Ottomans in 1453.⁷ Syropoulos recorded the events of the council in detail, which makes his work one of the most precious sources on this topic. The author expressed the position of the Orthodox Byzantines who opposed the concessions made to the Roman Catholic Church by the Union-inclined Greeks and by the emperor John VIII Paleologos. These concessions, and the Union itself, were considered by many Byzantine Greeks as adopted for political and strategic reasons and were consequently considered invalid.

2 Chițulescu, “Patriarhul Silvestru al Antiochiei și dania sa de carte”, p. 53–64.

3 Chițulescu, “Patriarhul Silvestru al Antiochiei și dania sa de carte”, p. 56.

4 Chițulescu, “Patriarhul Silvestru al Antiochiei și dania sa de carte”, p. 54–57.

5 See Diaconu, *Mănăstirea “Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc” din Popăuți*, vol. II, p. 24–26; Chițulescu, “Patriarhul Silvestru al Antiochiei și dania sa de carte”, p. 57–60.

6 This is the Patmos MS no. 423. See I. Sakkeliōn, *Πατμιακή Βιβλιοθήκη, ήτοι Αναγραφή τῶν ἐν τῇ βιβλιοθήκῃ τῆς κατὰ νήσον Πάτμον γεραρὰς καὶ Βασιλικῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Αποστόλου καὶ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου τεθεσσαυρισμένων χειρογράφων τεύχων*, Athens, 1890, p. 187, no. 423; Laurent, *Les “Mémoires” du grand ecclésiarque*, p. 78, no. 16.

7 Laurent, *Les “Mémoires” du grand ecclésiarque*, p. 16–19.

Sylvester of Antioch could have read Syropoulos's manuscript work in Patmos, during a visit he may have made there in the 1730s. At the end of the Act of Union issued by the council, he wrote and signed a note condemning it. The decree is considered as “Ὅρος ἀσεβέστατος καὶ ἀπάδων ὅλως τῆς ὀρθοδόξου ἡμῶν πίστεως, τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς φημὶ Ἁγίας Καθολικῆς καὶ Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας” (“A most impious decree utterly differing from our Orthodox faith, of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church”).⁸

Sylvester's note is not without relevance, as it illustrates that the patriarch had read historical sources about the issues that concerned him at the time, such as the Orthodox-Catholic relations and the dogmatic distinctions between the two Churches.

It has been suggested that the entire manuscript was copied by Sylvester. If this is the case, it means that the patriarch not only read, but also copied Syropoulos's work.⁹ In any case, his note became part of the manuscript tradition of the text and it was transcribed in another manuscript now held in the Public Library of Zagora, Greece. That manuscript was further enriched with the comments of the metropolitan of Philippopolis.¹⁰

In 1732, Vasileios Grimanis of Patmos probably copied a manuscript at Sylvester's request while traveling with the patriarch in Samos.¹¹ Grimanis identified himself as a *grammatikos* (secretary) and “spiritual son” of the patriarch. The manuscript contained an alphabetical index of the Greek text of Saint John Chrysostom's works printed in Eton.¹² The eight-volume edition either belonged to the patriarch, or he had found it in a library during his travels. In any case, the manuscript, once in a library on the Greek island of Symi, reflects Sylvester's interest in the works of this important Church Father.

⁸ Sakkeliōn, *Πατμιακὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, p. 187, no. 423; Laurent, *Les “Mémoires” du grand ecclésiarque*, p. 78.

⁹ A. N. Diamantopoulos, “Σὺλβεστρος Συρόποθλος καὶ τὰ Ἀπομνημονεύματα αὐτοῦ τῆς ἐν Φλωρεντία συνόδου”, *Νέα Σιών*, 18, 1923, p. 596; Laurent, *Les “Mémoires” du grand ecclésiarque*, p. 51, 78, n. 4.

¹⁰ Laurent, *Les “Mémoires” du grand ecclésiarque*, p. 78, no. 17.

¹¹ “Πίναξ ἀκριβῆς κατὰ στοιχεῖον ἐν εἶδει συμφωνίας, τῶν σοπράδην ἐμφορομένων ἐν ἅπασι τοῖς τόμοις τῶν Χρυσοστομικῶν τῶν τυποθέντων ἐν Ἐτώνῃ ἐλληνιστὶ μόνον κατὰ στοιχεῖον” (“Precise alphabetical table in the form of a concordance of the [matters] referred to throughout the [works] of Chrysostom printed in Greek only, in Eton, alphabetically”), cf. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Ἀνέκδοτα Συμιαῖκά”, p. 191.

¹² The edition is undoubtedly the one in eight volumes published by Sir Henry Saville in 1613, a masterpiece of Greek printing in England: S. Ioannis Chrysostomi, *Opera Graecé*, vol. VIII, Eton, 1613.

The same manuscript contains two other texts: a letter of Patriarch Paisios I of Constantinople to the Patriarch Nikon of Moscow, dating from ca. 1652–1653,¹³ and a letter of Makarios Patmios to Rowland Sherman, dated March 28, 1731.¹⁴ The content of both texts is theological, discussing and explaining various issues. Whereas the first text was several decades old at the time it was copied by the patriarch of Antioch's secretary, the second was a contemporary one. The sender and the addressee were two persons familiar to Sylvester: the *didaskalos* Makarios Patmios and Rowland Sherman, the English merchant in Aleppo, who were both interested in theology.

In his letter, Makarios explains to Sherman the position of the Orthodox Church concerning the Holy Mysteries, the icons, and the canonical books of the Bible, apparently in response to a letter addressed to him by the latter. In the end, Makarios asks Sherman to keep an open mind and not abstain from seeking the truth, while saying goodbye to the “modernizers” and searching for the truth about Calvin and Luther, who were supported by the “British” Church.¹⁵

12.2 Writing and Supervising

Sylvester of Antioch was not a writer in the classical sense of the word. He produced nonetheless a significant written corpus in several categories of works. First, he wrote an important number of epistles of which only a portion has been preserved. Most letters are in Greek, some in Arabic. Certain letters are personal in style, while others are official, but they all provide a unique insight into the patriarch's personality. Some are of outstanding interest, mainly the circular letters (*ἀπανταχοῦσαι*, *apantachousai*) addressed to his eparchy. In some of them, Sylvester presents his theological ideas, especially concerning the distinctions between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches.

13 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Ἀνέκδοτα Συμαϊκά”, p. 195–209.

14 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Ἀνέκδοτα Συμαϊκά”, p. 210–214.

15 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Ἀνέκδοτα Συμαϊκά”, p. 214: “ἡ δὲ σὴ τιμιότης ἐρρωμένη εἶη παρὰ Θεοῦ, καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν μὴ ἀποκάμη ποτὲ ἀνιχνεύουσα, χαίρειν εἰποῦσα τοῖς νεωτερισταῖς, ἀλλ’ ἀείποτε ἀπαθῶς διώκουσα ἢν ἐπρεσβευσεν ἀλήθειαν περὶ Καλβίνου καὶ Λουτέρου ἢ Βρεττανικῆ Ἐκκλησία, καὶ ἡμῖν σύγγνωθι τῆς ὀλιγομάθειας” (“and may your honesty be loved by God, and never abandon your search for the truth, saying farewell to the modernists, and always following without passion the truth about Calvin and Luther accepted by the British Church, and forgive our little knowledge”).

Other texts composed by Sylvester, or attributable to him, are the forewords to some of the Arabic books that he printed in Iași, Bucharest, and Beirut.¹⁶

Another important category contains the translations of theological, liturgical, and canonical works from Greek into Arabic. Many of them remained in manuscript, but even the later copies mention Sylvester's role (see below, Ch. 12.3).

An inventory of Rowland Sherman's library in Aleppo drawn in 1748 mentions two "epistles" written by Sylvester, spelled "Salvestro" in the Italian text. One is an epistle (it. *epistola* in the text) about "the Sacrament of the Eucharist". The other epistle (*ditto*) concerns the Calvinists. The data is too scarce to enable any comment on these two texts. It is also unclear if they were written in Greek or Arabic, or what their extent was – brief texts or books, manuscript or printed.¹⁷

12.3 Translations

In several Arabic manuscripts, Sylvester of Antioch is credited with a series of translations from Greek. Whether these translations were made by the patriarch himself or whether he only ordered the translation is a matter of debate that exceeds the scope of this book and would require a special survey. It is possible that Sylvester found the Greek material and prepared a first translation that was later revised by others. In some of the forewords of these works, Sylvester is mentioned as the translator.

An important work attributed to Sylvester is a corpus of canon law with the title *Kitāb al-nāmūs al-sharīf*, which has been preserved in several Arabic manuscripts.¹⁸ The text was published in 1992 by the University of Balamand.¹⁹ The title in the MS 434 in the Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus is *Al-nāmūs al-muqaddas al-sharīf wa-l-sirāj al-sāmī al-munīf al-jāmi' qawānīn al-rusul al-qiddīsīn*.²⁰

The text of the *Kitāb al-nāmūs al-sharīf* is also preserved in the Arabic MS no. 1 in the Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, copied in 1886 from an earlier manuscript. It mentions that the translation was made by Patriarch

16 Yulia Petrova and Ioana Feodorov are preparing for the EAPE series of De Gruyter the forewords of the Arabic books published in Eastern presses included in the TYPARABIC project corpus: Y. Petrova (with I. Feodorov), *Forewords of the 18th-Century Arabic Books Printed in the East. Texts and Translations*, Berlin/Boston, forthcoming in 2025.

17 Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 246 and n. 204.

18 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM IV.2*, p. 86, 212–214.

19 *Kitāb al-nāmūs al-sharīf*, vol. 1–3, Kalhat, Al-Koura, 1992.

20 El Gemayel, Dabaghy, Dabaghy, "Les manuscrits du Patriarcat grec-orthodoxe de Damas", p. 229.

Sylvester of Antioch from Greek and Latin.²¹ As there are no indications that Sylvester knew Latin, apart from a few words and common phrases noted in one of his manuscripts,²² this might again point to Ilyās Fakhr, who was able to translate from Latin, and to whom modern authors attribute the translation.²³ One of the older manuscripts (MS no. 517 of the Bibliothèque Orientale in Beirut) dates from 1751 and its foreword was composed by Patriarch Sylvester.²⁴ A note mentions Ilyās Fakhr as the translator of this work.²⁵

Canon collections were very common in Byzantine and post-Byzantine literature. In the Orthodox world, one of the most popular was the *Nomokanon* of Manuel Malaxos (16th century), in two versions, one in the vernacular, the other in Byzantine Greek.²⁶ Sylvester's collection, however, does not seem to be a copy of any of the existing Greek models, and it could be a collection of texts prepared by the patriarch himself.

One of the 19th-century manuscripts stands out by the fact that it was lavishly decorated in 1866 with figurative and nonfigurative miniatures by the copyist Qusṭanṭīn ibn al-Khūrī Dāwūd al-Ḥomṣī, who obviously also had painting skills.²⁷ Does it reproduce a manuscript made by Sylvester himself? The idea is appealing but cannot be proven at this time.

The assertion made by Geōrgios Zaviras that Sylvester translated from Greek into Arabic the book *On the Jews* (*Περὶ Ἰουδαίων*), written in 1743 by Eustratios Argentis, and then printed it is less credible.²⁸ No such book by Argentis is known

21 K. M. Koikyliδēs, *Κατάλογος ἀραβικῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης*, Jerusalem, 1901, p. 1–8, no. 1. For the manuscript, see also Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 214.

22 In MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 97r, the title is “Λατινα” (“Latin”), and the Latin words are in Greek letters.

23 H. Kaufhold, “Sources of Canon Law in the Eastern Churches”, in W. Hartmann, K. Pennington (eds.), *The History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law to 1500*, Washington, DC, 2012, p. 238.

24 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 213–214.

25 L. Cheiko, “Catalogue raisonné des manuscrits historiques de la Bibliothèque Orientale de l'Université St. Joseph”, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 11, 1926, p. 220–221, no. 517.

26 For the *Nomokanon* of Manuel Malaxos, see A. Siphōniou-Karapa, M. Tourtoglou, S. Trōianos, “Μανουὴλ Μαλαξοῦ Νομοκάνων”, *Ἐπετηρίς τοῦ Κέντρου Ἑρευνῆς τῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Δικαίου τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν*, 16–17, 1969–1970, p. 1–39. For Manuel Malaxos, see G. di Gregorio, *Il copista greco Manouel Malaxos. Studio biografico e paleografico-codicologico*, Città del Vaticano, 1991; G. M. Ṭipău, *Identitate post-bizantină în sud-estul Europei. Mărturia scrierilor istorice grecești*, Bucharest, 2013, p. 84–102; M. Ṭipău, “Manuil Malaxos și Constantinopolul”, in C. Luca, C. Neagoe, M. Păduraru (eds.), *Miscellanea historica in honorem Professoris Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă septuagenarii*, Brăila/Pitești, 2013, p. 199–216.

27 HMML Project Number BALA 00047, accessible at: <https://www.vhmm.org/readingRoom/view/537908>.

28 G. I. Zaviras, *Νέα Ἑλλάς ἢ Ἑλληνικὸν Θέατρον*, ed. by Geōrgios P. Kremos, Athens, 1872, p. 301.

to exist²⁹ and the information might be entirely based on a confusion with the two texts by Argentis translated into Arabic at Sylvester's initiative and printed in Iași: *Brief Epistle against the Pope's Infallibility* and the *Lord's Supper* (see below, Ch. 16.2 and 16.3). Zaviras was usually well informed and owned a rich library with manuscript copies of many unpublished Greek texts of the 18th century. One of the two manuscripts of Argentis's work about the pope was preserved in Zaviras's library. The title of the Greek original work is *Περὶ τῆς ψευδοῦς ἀψευδίας τοῦ πάπα Ῥώμης* (*About the False Infallibility of the Pope of Rome*).³⁰

29 See the list of Argentis's works in T. Ware, Eustratios Argenti. *A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule*, Oxford, 1964, p. 177–179.

30 For the manuscript in Zaviras's library, see V. Todorov, *Catalogue of Greek Manuscripts and Printed Books (17th–19th century). The Collection in Nyiregyhaza, Hungary. Contribution to the History of the Greek Diaspora*, Athens, 1999, p. 171; V. Seirēnidou, *Το Εργαστήριο του λογίου, αναγνώσεις, λόγια παραγωγή και επικοινωνία στην εποχή του Διαφωτισμού μέσα από την ιστορία της βιβλιοθήκης του Δ. Ν. Δάρβαρη (1757–1823)*, Athens, 2013, p. 289, no. 6.

13 Travels in Europe and Asia

13.1 Sylvester's Travels in Epirus and First Visit to Wallachia

Patriarch Sylvester recorded the dates of his voyages in various places: in one of his manuscripts, in the codex of Gümüşhane, in the forewords of some of the books he published in the Romanian Principalities, on the icon of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, and on the volumes of *Menologia* donated by him to a monastery in Iași.

In 1728, Sylvester of Antioch traveled “in the parts of Epirus [...] for alms” (“εἰς τὰ μέρη τῆς Ἠπείρου [...] χάριν ἐλέους”). The details of this journey are known from the letters he sent to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem and from his brief personal notes preserved in a manuscript.¹ For this journey, he obtained the permission of the Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople (1726–1732).² Sylvester spent a year in Constantinople, visiting the churches there and trying to obtain donations for the Patriarchate of Antioch. On March 4, 1728, he was still in Constantinople, but on March 20 he reached Adrianople. He spent the Easter of 1728 (May 2) in Lititza, formerly Ortaköy (nowadays, Ivaylovgrad in Bulgaria), about 35 kilometers from Adrianople.³

Later that year, on August 2, he was in Philippopolis, from where he wrote a letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem presenting the difficulties of his journey. The alms he had obtained were insufficient even to pay the interests for the debts.⁴

On January 17, 1729, the patriarch of Antioch was in Thessaloniki, where he stayed for a while, spending Easter there (April 17).⁵

In February 1730, Sylvester was in Ioannina, in the Epirus. In a letter to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, he mentioned the reason for his presence in the city, asking him to explain it to the patriarch of Constantinople. Apparently, the latter was not pleased that the patriarch of Antioch was in the region asking for alms at the same time with a mission from the Constantinopolitan church of Eḡrikapı

1 In MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 19v, cf. Phirippidēs, “Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 117-118. The notes seem to be recorded later, in 1735, from memory or from earlier notes.

2 Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 135.

3 Phirippidēs, “Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 118.

4 Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 136.

5 Phirippidēs, “Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 118.

(Εγρικαπί).⁶ Sylvester assured that he would not ask for any support while the mission was there, as he simply intended to spend the winter in the city.

After his experience in 1728–1730 touring Thrace, parts of Macedonia, and Epirus, where the outcome was not as fruitful as expected, Sylvester found another destination where he could look for help for the Patriarchate: the Romanian Principalities. He established contacts with the ruling princes, the Ghikas, the Mavrokordatos, and the Rakovitzas, and succeeded in reactivating the support gained by former heads of the Church of Antioch from these countries.

In 1730, Sylvester spent Easter (April 9) in Ioannina and then left for Wallachia.⁷ There is no information on the route he followed. Most likely, he went by land, a rather long and trying journey. It is not clear whether on his way back he first spent time Constantinople. On May 23 he was in Wallachia, where he was well received (“άσπασίως καί χαρμονικῶς”) by Nikolaos Mavrokordatos.⁸ It is possible that the visit was intermediated by Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, who had visited Bucharest in 1728.⁹

The reason for Sylvester’s presence in Wallachia was most likely the same as for the rest of his tour in the European provinces of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, namely, to get financial support to repay the debts of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Undoubtedly, Nikolaos Mavrokordatos helped Sylvester, since the patriarch mentioned him later. In the forewords of the Arabic books that he published and in certain notes, Sylvester refers to Mavrokordatos’s sons Constantine and John as “the sons of Niqūlā bey”.

Sylvester later reported on his visit to Wallachia in 1730 in a letter to the Metropolitan Neophytos of Ungro-Wallachia written on February 10, 1739: “We stayed for a short while in Bucharest” (“διατρίψαντες ὀλίγον ἐν Βουκουρεστίῳ”) during the reign of Nikolaos Mavrokordatos.¹⁰ He mentions that while he was there, he also met the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia.¹¹

Nikolaos Mavrokordatos had reconfirmed the sum of 300 *groschen*, granted by the princes Constantine Brâncoveanu and Stephanos Kantakouzēnos (Ștefan

6 The church of Egrikapi, Panagia tēs Soudas, was affected by a fire in 1728 and this was probably the reason for the fundraising. See K. Andrianopoulou, “Εγρί Καπού”, *Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World*, Constantinople, 2008, accessible at: <http://www.ehw.gr/L.aspx?id=11076>.

7 Phirippidēs, “Ἐπισκεψίς τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 118.

8 Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 137.

9 He was there on June 12, 1728. See Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 136.

10 Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 7–8. Neophytos had recently been elected metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia (1738). In the manuscript, the name of the metropolitan is omitted.

11 Named Daniel (1719–1731). His name is not mentioned in Sylvester’s letter.

Cantacuzino) to Sylvester's predecessor Athanasios Dabbās, as annual financial aid for the Patriarchate of Antioch. It is possible that this annual aid was offered to Sylvester during his visit in 1730. The aid of 300 *groschen* was certainly paid in 1737, when it is mentioned in a note as “αὐθεντικὸν ἔλεος” (“princely alms”).¹²

This annual contribution was initially offered for the Arabic press founded by Athanasios Dabbās in Aleppo. Later, its destination was changed to producing manuscript copies of books. No conditions were imposed when the financial support was reconfirmed by Mavrokordatos during a later visit of Athanasios to Wallachia, date unknown. The support was granted by Mavrokordatos although the source of the revenue, the salt mines in the Gorj region, was lost, as it had become a part of the province of Oltenia, temporarily annexed by the Habsburgs (1718–1739).

In 1731, Michael Rakovitzas issued a new *chrysoboullōs* confirming the annual financial aid to the Patriarchate of Antioch, which mentioned the former rulers' decrees. Again, as in Nikolaos Mavrokordatos's text, no condition for the use of the grant was specified. Apparently, the 1731 document was issued at the request of Patriarch Sylvester. A Greek translation of the Romanian *chrysoboullōs* of Rakovitzas was copied in a manuscript collection of documents and notes belonging to Sylvester of Antioch.¹³ It is possible that the content of the document, transcribed by Sylvester or at his initiative, influenced the patriarch to some degree. Later, when he had the opportunity, he enlisted the help of the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia for printing Arabic books, as Athanasios Dabbās had done in the past.

For the moment, in June or July 1730, Sylvester returned to Constantinople, apparently after more than two years of absence from the city.¹⁴ The patriarch remained there for some time and spent the Easter feast of 1731 (April 29) in the “imperial city” (“εἰς βασιλεύουσάν”).¹⁵

12 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 141r.

13 *Chrysoboullōs* of Mihail Rakovitzas, prince of Wallachia, mentioning the previous princes' donations to the Patriarchate of Antioch, in MS 210 Ἡριῖσᾶ, f. 21r–21v.

14 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 19v: “Καὶ τῷ ἁπλ' ἑορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν εἰς Ἰωάννινα καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐπήγαμεν εἰς Βλαχεῖαν, καὶ ἐπιστρέψαμεν εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν” (“And in 1730 we celebrated the Holy Resurrection in Ioannina and from there we went to Wallachia, and we returned to Constantinople”). See also Phirippidēs, “Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 118.

15 Phirippidēs, “Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 118.

13.2 The Aegean Islands

Sylvester of Antioch left Constantinople in 1731, sometime after Easter. He presumably secured a permit from the patriarch of Constantinople to collect financial aid from the eparchies of Asia Minor and the islands of the Aegean. He spent Easter of 1732 (April 20) in Kuşadası.

According to the patriarch's own notes, in 1732 he traveled from Kuşadası to the islands of Samos and Chios. Sylvester's presence on Samos is confirmed by a note written by Vasileios Grimanis of Patmos, the patriarch's secretary. The note was recorded on May 4, 1732, in the village of Pagon (or Pagontas) on the island of Samos.¹⁶ Grimanis's note in the manuscript is followed by Sylvester's autograph signature: “Σίλβεστρος Πατριάρχης τῆς Μεγάλης Θεοῦ πόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάσης Ἀνατολῆς” (“Sylvester, Patriarch of the Great City of God, Antioch, and of All the East”).¹⁷ The presence of the signatures of both individuals one after the other means that the patriarch and his retinue were on Samos at the time.

The same manuscript contains the copy of a letter of Makarios Patmios to Rowland Sherman dated March 28, 1731. Probably, the letter itself had been sent to Sherman, and Sylvester obtained a copy from Makarios, either in person or by correspondence. He may have met Makarios sometime between March 28, 1731, and May 4, 1732, as it seems that the patriarch visited Patmos during this period. A confirmation of this visit could be Sylvester's autograph signature on the above-mentioned manuscript containing the *Memoirs* of Sylvester Syropoulos about the Council of Florence now in the library of the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian in Patmos.¹⁸ Also in Patmos, an icon of the *Holy Mandylion* painted by Sylvester has been preserved, as mentioned in a publication of 1997 (see below, 19.4).¹⁹

16 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Ἀνέκδοτα Συμαϊκά”, p. 191–192: “Ἐλαβε πέρας ἡ παροῦσα βίβλος διὰ χειρὸς ἐμοῦ Βασιλείου Πατμίου Γρημάνη, τοῦ καὶ γραμματικοῦ καὶ κατὰ πνεῦμα υἱοῦ τοῦ μακαριωτάτου, ἀγιωτάτου, καὶ θεοτιμῆτου πατριάρχου τῆς μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάσης Ἀνατολῆς, κυρίου, κυρίου Σιλβέστρου ἐν τῇ νήσῳ περινοστοῦντες τῆς Σάμου εἰς χωρίον Παγόντα κατὰ ἀψλβ' ἔτος, Μαΐου δ' ” (“This book was finished by my hand Vasileios Grimanis of Patmos, secretary and spiritual son of his Beatitude, Most Holy and God esteemed patriarch of the great City of God Antioch and All the East, kyrios kyrios Sylvester, traveling around in the island of Samos in the village Pagon [Pagontas] in the year 1732, May 4”).

17 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Ἀνέκδοτα Συμαϊκά”, p. 192.

18 Laurent, *Les “Mémoires” du grand ecclésiarque*, p. 78, no. 16.

19 M. Chatzidakēs, E. Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωση (1450–1830)*, vol. 2. *Καβαλλάρως – Ψαθόπουλος*, Athens, 1997, p. 349.

In September 1732, Sylvester reached “Tripoli of Syria”, a major city of the Patriarchate of Antioch (nowadays, Tripoli in Lebanon).²⁰

The patriarch’s tour of the Aegean islands is also attested in a letter addressed to him by Theophanis, a former archdeacon of Alexandria, on January 29, 1733.²¹ He wrote that Sylvester “passed through the cities and islands and villages of all the Cycladic islands and the White Sea, for charity and the faith”.²² He is most likely referring to the patriarch’s travels in 1732.

13.3 The Archbishopric of Chaldia

Patriarch Sylvester visited the region of Chaldia at least two times, as recorded on two occasions in the codex of the church of Argyroupolis. During his first documented visit in Argyroupolis in 1735, Patriarch Sylvester celebrated the Christmas service in the church of Saint George and visited the other parish churches and the mines (ματένια). The first indication is a note which mentions his arrival on December 24, 1735.²³ The second is an official document signed by the patriarch that records his presence there during the Christmas of 1737. It also mentions his gifts to the church.

The Archbishopric of Chaldia is also relevant in the relations with the Patriarchate of Antioch and Patriarch Sylvester’s projects in another way. From 1717 to 1734, the archbishop of Chaldia was Ignatios Fytianos,²⁴ a renowned Greek scholar of the time. Fytianos founded a “school of Hellenic teaching” in his Archbishopric, a project very similar to the schools opened by Patriarch Sylvester in Damascus and Tripoli. Fytianos had yet another connection with the Patriarchate of Antioch, and especially with the printing works of the former patriarch, Athanasios III Dabbās. This connection dated from around 1701, in Bucharest, when Ignatios Fityanos was appointed as proofreader of the Greek and Arabic books printed by Athanasios.

²⁰ See the note on the year 1732 in MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 19v: “καὶ τὸ ἀψλβ’ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασις εἰς Κουσαντάσι, καὶ ἀπὴλθομεν εἰς Σάμον καὶ Χίον, καὶ τὸν Σεπτέμβριον μῆνα, ἀνῆλθμεν εἰς Τρίπολιν τῆς Συρίας” (“and in 1732 we celebrated the Holy Resurrection in Kuşadası, and we went to Samos and Chios, and in the month of September we went to Tripoli in Syria”). See also Phirippidēs, “Ἐπίσκεψις τῶν Ἰωαννίνων ὑπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 118.

²¹ Ms 233 Jerusalem, f. 92v, in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 309, no. 233.

²² Karnapas, “Ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 859: “διήρχετο ταῖς πόλεις καὶ τὰς νήσους καὶ κόμας πασῶν τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων καὶ τῆς Ἀσπρης Θαλάσσης, ἐλεημοσύνης καὶ πίστεως ἕνεκα”.

²³ Papadopoulos, “Ἱστορικά σημειώματα”, p. 31.

²⁴ Papadopoulos, “Ἱστορικά σημειώματα”, p. 20.

Important data on this topic is preserved in a Greek letter contained in a miscellany consisting of fragments of manuscripts brought by Mynas Mynoides to Paris from libraries in Trebizond (and perhaps other areas of the Pontos) and currently held by the BnF in Paris. The letter is addressed to Anthimos the Iberian (Rom. Antim Ivireanul), the renowned typographer who supported Dabbās's initiative of Arabic printing in Wallachia. It is undated, but mentions the fact that Constantine Brâncoveanu, the prince of Wallachia, approved the printing of Arabic books requested by the patriarch of Antioch. This means that the letter dates from around 1700 or 1701, before the printing of the first Arabic book in Snagov.

Anthimos was the *hegumen* or superior of the Snagov Monastery, located on a lake island some 15 kilometers from Bucharest. The printing press was in the monastery and the Greek-Arabic *Book of the Divine Liturgies* was completed there in January 1701.²⁵

The author of the letter is unnamed, but the fact that the document is preserved among other texts connected with Sevastos Kyminitis makes it possible that it was written by him.²⁶ The writer mentions that he met the former patriarch Athanasios (presumably in Bucharest) and that he would send a person competent in correcting books. He adds that books without printing mistakes are a cause of pride for typographers. The text also suggests that Dabbās resided close to Anthimos, perhaps at the monastery of Snagov, which makes sense, since the two were involved in starting the printing activity there. Anthimos's correspondent was located elsewhere, in the proximity of the court. At the time, Sevastos Kyminitis was a professor at the so-called Princely Academy, a higher education school in Bucharest.

The book corrector is not named in the letter, but books printed at Snagov at the time, such as the Greek-Arabic *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, identify *hieromonk* Ignatios Fytianos from Chaldia as the proofreader.²⁷ Kyminitis, a native of

25 See Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 143-162, 256-260.

26 Its editor suggested that the letter was written by Chrysanthos Notaras, based on his rich correspondence with Anthimos. See Sfântul Antim Ivireanul, *Scrisori*, ed. by Archim. M. Stanciu, Acad. Dr. G. Ștrempel, Bucharest, 2016 (2nd ed.), p. 47–48 (the Greek text), p. 49–50 (Romanian translation). See also M.-A. Stanciu (Archim. Mihail), *Ο Ιερομόναχος Ανθιμος Ιβηρίτης, Μητροπολίτης Ουγγροβλαχίας (1708–1716). Ο βίος, η δράση και η ακτινοβολία του στην Ορθόδοξη Κοινοπολιτεία*, unpublished PhD thesis, Thessaloniki, 2018, p. 599–600. As the connection of the letter and the manuscript with Kyminitis are not traceable in Chrysanthos's correspondence, it is safer to suppose that they were not written by him, but by Kyminitis.

27 “Διορθώσει δὲ κατὰ θατέραν μόνην τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων διάλεκτον, Ἰγνατίου Ἱερομοάχου Φιτυάνου [sic] τοῦ ἐκ Χαλδίας” (“[The book was printed] with the correction in the two [languages], only for the language of the Greeks, by Ignatios Fityanos from Chaldia”), in the Greek and Arabic *Book of Liturgies*, *Kitāb al-quddāsāt al-thalātha al-‘ilāhiyya*, Snagov, 1701, p. σνγ´ (253). The name Fytianos

Trebizond in Pontos, a region close to Chaldia, was the most likely person to have recommend Fytianos to Anthimos.²⁸ Although, based on the information in the books, Fytianos only corrected the Greek text, it is likely that he interacted with the former patriarch of Antioch while the latter was supervising the printing of Arabic books at the monastic press in Snagov.²⁹

At the time of Sylvester's visits in 1735 and 1737, the archbishop of Chaldia was another Ignatios, whose surname was Kouthouris.³⁰

According to another document in the codex of the church of Saint George in Argyroupolis, the patriarch reached the eparchy again on December 24, 1737, to receive alms and aid for the "Apostolic and Patriarchal" throne of Antioch. He was well received by the archbishop Ignatios and the clergy, the notables, and the common people. The document also suggests that he visited the nearby villages. In any case, he succeeded in collecting a fair amount of alms.³¹

Sylvester made a donation of 250 *groschen* to the church, to be used for the mural paintings of the "Holy Prothesis, inside the Holy Altar".³² As we previously mentioned, the names of Sylvester and his parents Geōrgios (Γεώργιος) and Phōteinē (Φωτεινή, as spelled in the text, instead of Φωτεινή) were added on a special panel (παράρτησις) in the church, so they would be remembered for as long as the church would stand.³³

Like other notes left by Sylvester in various places he visited, the document offers precious chronological information on the patriarch's stay in the region. As

is misspelled "Fytianos". See also *BRVI*, p. 432–433 (full description of the book, based on the Greek texts, on p. 423–433).

28 For the idea that Fytianos was recommended to Anthimos the Iberian by Chrysanthos Notaras, see also C. Papacostea-Danielopolu, L. Démeny, *Carte și tipar în societatea românească și sud-est europeană (secolele XVII–XIX)*, Bucharest, 1985, p. 175.

29 Fytianos appears as corrector in another Greek book printed in Snagov in 1701 (foreword dated in May), the *Proskynitarion of the Holy Mountain* by Ioannis Komninos, cf. p. 150: "Ἐπιμελεία καὶ διορθώσει Ἰγνατίου Ἱερομονάχου τοῦ Φυτιάνου" ("[The book was printed] with the care and correction of the hieromonk Ignatios Fytianos"). See *BRVI*, p. 422–423. For Fytianos, see also D. Bădără, *Tiparul românesc la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea și începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, Brăila, 1998, p. 120, 167.

30 Papadopoulos, "Ἱστορικά σημειώματα", p. 20. Ignatios Kouthouris was archbishop of Chaldia from 1734 to 1749.

31 Papadopoulos, "Ἱστορικά σημειώματα", p. 31.

32 Codex of the church of Saint George in Argyroupolis, p. 47. See Papadopoulos, "Ἱστορικά σημειώματα", p. 34: "καὶ ἐδώθησαν εἰς τὰ ἔξοδα τῆς ἱστορίας τῆς ἀγίας προθέσεως, ἔνδοθεν τοῦ ἱεροῦ βήματος, καὶ ἐγράφησαν τὰ ὀνόματα ἡμῶν ἐκεῖσε" ("and [the money] was given for the expenses of the Holy Prothesis inside the Holy Altar, and our names were written there").

33 The ruins of the church of Saint George in Gümüşhane are partially preserved, with some walls, including the altar's apse, still in place, but no traces of the frescoes.

the document is dated at the end of July 1737, it is probably safe to suppose that an error occurred at the beginning of the text and the date of the patriarch's arrival should be corrected to December 24, 1736. The error could be explained as a confusion with the Byzantine era used in the Church calendar, where the year begins on September 1.

The text suggests that Sylvester stayed in Argyroupolis for a long time, six to seven months, maybe due to the fact, mentioned above, that some of the workers in the area originated in the Patriarchate of Antioch and they were part of his flock.

On June 10, 1736, Sylvester had secured from Patriarch Neophytos VI of Constantinople a letter intended for three categories of addressees in the Pontos: two metropolitans (the one of Neokaisareia and Ineou, the other of Trebizond), the Archbishop of Chaldia, and the residents under their jurisdiction. The letter presented Sylvester's efforts to save the faithful in his eparchy from the enemies of the Church. The patriarch of Antioch is praised as "an ardent supporter of the Orthodox faith and a fervent defender of the holy doctrines of the Eastern Church of Christ" ("περὶ τὸ ὀρθόδοξον σέβας διάπυρος ζηλωτῆς καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν δογμάτων τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας δεφεντευτῆς προθυμότατος").³⁴ Even if one assumes that these appreciations were written in the beneficiary's circles and were only ratified by the Patriarchate and the Synod of Constantinople, they prove the extent of the support provided by the Ecumenical See to Sylvester's efforts. The ecumenical patriarch urged the recipients of the letter to provide every necessary support to the Patriarch of Antioch and allow him to lead church services in these eparchies. Such a permit was always requested for a bishop to travel and hold religious services in areas of another bishop's canonical jurisdiction. The surviving documents attest that Sylvester secured such permits for his travels, sometimes recording them in his notebooks.³⁵

Earlier in 1735, Patriarch Sylvester was asked by the same Patriarch Neophytos VI of Constantinople and the Synod, in two letters, to allow the collection of alms in the Patriarchate of Antioch for the benefit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was in a difficult financial situation. The emissary charged to collect the financial aids was Kosmas, the metropolitan of Pisidia and *exarchos* of Side, Myra, and Attaleia.³⁶

34 A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, "Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Ὄρους Σινᾶ, ἐκδιδομένα μετὰ προλόγου", *Πравославный Палестинский Сборник*, 58, 1908, 1, p. 239.

35 See, e.g., in MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 67r–70v, a series of permits for services in several churches which Sylvester had obtained from the patriarch of Constantinople during his stay in the city.

36 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, "Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Ὄρους Σινᾶ", p. 241–250, no. 3 (dated 1735) and 4 (dated May 15, 1735). The two documents were therefore written before Sylvester's first voyage in Argyroupolis.

Returning to the relations between Patriarch Sylvester and the Archbishopric of Chaldia, several petitions lodged by both parties with the Ottoman government suggest that a dispute broke out between them, perhaps concerning the overlapping canonical jurisdictions. The dispute, which involved the metropolitan of Amida (dependent of the see of Antioch) and metropolitan Paisios of Chaldia, ended in a settlement.³⁷

In 1755, a metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon whose name is not recorded visited Argyroupolis and collected alms, with the knowledge of the metropolitan of Chaldia.³⁸ The Metropolis of Tyre and Sidon was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch, so the good relations between the two eparchies were restored.

13.4 Sylvester and Cyprus after the Patriarchal Election

Sylvester remained in contact with the people on his native island after becoming patriarch. He exchanged letters with his brother Soloimanis and Dionysios, the metropolitan of Kition.³⁹ He asked the latter to procure books for him and asked his support in recruiting pupils for the school he had opened in Aleppo.

Sylvester visited Cyprus at least once as patriarch of Antioch. He recorded his travel in one of his codices (MS 124 in the library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem).⁴⁰ He sailed from Laodicea (Latakia) on December 27, 1735, and returned to the city in February 1736, on board of an English ship. The patriarch visited Alikas, Agios Lazaros, Nicosia (Lefkosia), Paphos, and other places on the island. He collected alms and received financial aid from the Archbishop of Cyprus. Sylvester also presented gifts to the Archbishop of Cyprus: among other items, a cloak (“ράσον”), a “κερμεσουτίον” (*kermesoution*),⁴¹ a crozier, and Holy Chrism. Gifts were also presented to the metropolitans of Kition and Paphos. Also in Cyprus,

³⁷ See Çolak, *Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates*, p. 211–212.

³⁸ Mentioned in the codex of the church of Saint George in Argyroupolis (p. 8); see Papadopoulos, “Ιστορικά σημειώματα”, p. 33.

³⁹ Dionysios was metropolitan of Cyprus from 1718 to 1726. See K. Kokkinoftas, “Το Πατριαρχείο Αντιοχείας και η Κύπρος”, in E. Balta, G. Salakides, T. Stavrides (eds.), *Festschrift in Honor of Ioannis P. Theocharides*, vol. I. *Studies in Ottoman Cyprus*, Istanbul, 2014, p. 139–158. If this chronology is correct, Sylvester’s letters to the metropolitan may be dated in 1725 or 1726.

⁴⁰ MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 8v.

⁴¹ Probably a kind of vestment; see P. Stathē, “Το ανέκδοτο οδοιπορικό του Χρυσανθου Νοταρά”, *Μεσαιωνικά και Νέα Ελληνικά*, 1, 1984), p. 222, n. 166. Less likely, it could be an *engolpion*.

Sylvester met Iakovos of Patmos, the teacher and head of the schools founded later by the patriarch in Aleppo, Tripoli, and Damascus. Sylvester's visit to Cyprus in 1735 is attested by the traveler and pilgrim Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky of Kyiv, an older acquaintance.⁴² Barsky mentions that his former teacher, Iakovos of Patmos, accompanied Sylvester. Based on Barsky's account, they probably met somewhere in, or in the vicinity of Larnaka. There is some confusion either in Barsky's notes or in Sylvester's. The traveler notes that he met Sylvester in November 1735, while the patriarch recalled that he reached Cyprus on December 27, 1735. Sylvester probably sailed to Cyprus.

The visit of the patriarch of Antioch to the monastery of Kykkos is also mentioned in the description of this monastery by Ephraim of Athens, published for the first time in Venice in 1751.⁴³ The patriarch's interest in this important monastery on his native island is proven by a document of a prince of Wallachia or Moldavia granting the sum of 500 *groschen* to the patriarchate of Antioch and 100 *groschen* to the Kykkos Monastery.⁴⁴ Both amounts were sent to Sylvester, who probably played a part in the prince's decision to send money to the monastery. It was probably a gift made by the prince, at Sylvester's request, for one of the most revered monasteries of the latter's native island. The proof that the patriarch was directly involved in securing the aid for the Cypriot monastery is that, at least on this occasion, the sums for the Patriarchate of Antioch and for the Kykkos Monastery were delivered together. Sylvester's reply to the prince was copied in MS 124 in Jerusalem, one of the miscellanies composed by the patriarch for his personal and institutional use. Other sources confirm the information and indicate that the aid was granted by John Mavrokordatos. It was decided that the sum would be paid from the customs' revenues. The official document establishing this arrangement was issued on May 3, 1745.⁴⁵

42 Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 2, p. 326; Grigorovitch-Barski, *Pérégrinations (1723–1747)*, p. 509.

43 *Η περιγραφή τῆς Σεβασμίας καὶ Βασιλικῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Κύκκου ἢτοι Δίγησις περὶ τῆς ἐν Κύπρῳ ἀποκομίσσεως τῆς Θαυματουργοῦ Ἁγίας Εἰκόνας τῆς Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τῆς λεγομένης Κυκκίωσης*, Venice, 1751, p. 43.

44 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 82r. For the document, see Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Τεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 212, no. 124/46 (the prince is presumed to have been Gregory II Ghikas). See A. Camariano-Cioran, "Contributions aux relations roumano-chypriotes", *RESEE*, XV, 1977, 3, p. 506.

45 N. Iorga (ed.), *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor*, II. 1716–1777, Bucharest, 1917, p. 1118, no. MLXXXIII; Păcurariu, "Legăturile Țărilor Române cu Patriarhia Antiohiei", p. 610.

Two other documents granting financial aid to the Kykkos Monastery were issued by Constantine Mavrokordatos as prince of Moldavia and Gregory II Ghikas as prince of Wallachia on June 5, 1748,⁴⁶ and October 5, 1749,⁴⁷ respectively.

The annual grant from Wallachia was 50 *groschen* from the revenues of the princely Customs, while the annual grant from Moldavia was also 50 *groschen*, from the revenue of the salt mines. Again, these grants were most likely intermediated by Sylvester of Antioch.⁴⁸ The princely document specified that the grant from Wallachia should be collected by the superior (ἡγούμενος) of the Saint Spyridon monastery in Bucharest, further proof of Sylvester's role. The grant from Moldavia was renewed in 1750 by Constantine Rakovitzas, and in 1753 by Matthaïos Ghikas.⁴⁹

The Romanian original document is missing, but it may be preserved somewhere in Cyprus or in Romania, while a copy was probably transcribed and conserved in the official registers of the *great logothetes* of Wallachia.⁵⁰ As Romanian documents of the 18th century have not been published systematically, there is a good chance for the original documents to be found.⁵¹

13.5 The Metropolis of Ahiska

Several documents issued by Sylvester concern the Metropolis of Ahiska in Georgia, a metropolitan See dependent on the Patriarchate of Antioch. Ahiska (Ahiska in Turkish, Αχίσκα in Greek), nowadays Akhaltsikhe (in Georgian, ახალციხე), was an important border city with a fortress controlled by the Ottomans from 1578 to 1828. The Metropolitan See was not among those dependent on the Patriarchate of

⁴⁶ MS 210 Ἡριῶ, f. 37v. See also G. Cioran, “Σχέσεις τῶν Ρουμανικῶν Ἡγεμονιῶν πρὸς τὰ Κυπριακὰ μοναστήρια Κύκκος καὶ Μαχαιρᾶ”, *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher*, 13, 1935–1937, p. μθ´.

⁴⁷ Ἡ περιγραφή τῆς Σεβασμίας καὶ Βασιλικῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Κύκκου, p. 68–71; M. Beza, “Biblioteci mânăstirești în Palestina, Chipru și Muntele Sinai”, *ARMSL*, series III, VI, 1932, p. 210–211; Cioran, “Σχέσεις τῶν Ρουμανικῶν Ἡγεμονιῶν πρὸς τὰ Κυπριακὰ μοναστήρια”, p. ν´.

⁴⁸ K. Kokkinoftas, *Ἡ Μονὴ Κύκκου στο Ἀρχεῖο τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Κύπρου (1634–1878)*, Nicosia (Lefkosia), 2011, p. 56, 58–59, 61–62; Camariano-Cioran, “Contributions aux relations roumano-chypriotes”, p. 506; Kokkinoftas, “Το Πατριαρχεῖο Ἀντιοχείας καὶ ἡ Κύπρος”, p. 139–158.

⁴⁹ Cioran, “Σχέσεις τῶν Ρουμανικῶν Ἡγεμονιῶν πρὸς τὰ Κυπριακὰ μοναστήρια”, p. ν´–να´.

⁵⁰ By the 18th century, Romanian official documents were generally issued in Romanian, even if they concerned Patriarchates, monasteries, or churches in the Greek speaking areas of the Ottoman Empire. Old Slavonic was no longer in use as in the previous centuries. Greek translations of the official documents survive, as well as private correspondence in Greek.

⁵¹ The Romanian diplomat and historian Marcu Beza, who visited Cyprus in the 1930s to find documents and manuscripts related to Romanian history, presumed that John Mavrokordatos's grant act to the Kykkos Monastery was lost.

Constantinople. It was an Ottoman-ruled territory that the Georgian Church could not control. Therefore, the patriarch of Antioch and All the East was entitled by tradition to have canonical jurisdiction over it.⁵²

According to a document written by Kosmas, the metropolitan of Pisidia, and issued on April 24, 1733, fifteen years earlier Kallinikos had held for a brief time the position of metropolitan of Ahiska. During that period, he paid off a debt of 90 *groschen* by pawning some old church artefacts and vestments pertaining to his ecclesiastical dignity (“μερικά ἀρχιερατικά παλαιά”). His sons, Ilias and Geōrgios, paid Kallinikos’s debt and recovered the items, listed in the document. They gave them to Kosmas of Pisidia in Trebizond, and he decided to send them with his deacon to Patriarch Sylvester in Constantinople, given that Kallinikos had been a metropolitan under the jurisdiction of the See of Antioch. In case the patriarch was in his eparchy of Syria, the deacon was instructed to give these objects to Sylvester’s representative in Constantinople (*kapikehaya*), the “wise teacher” Kritias. The document was deemed relevant enough to be copied in Sylvester’s multi-purpose codex for that period, the Greek MS 124 of the Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which possibly meant that the patriarch had indeed received the items.⁵³ The “wise teacher” Nikolaos Kritias was the representative of John Mavrokordatos at the Porte and, in 1733, also Patriarch Sylvester’s one.⁵⁴ In 1736–1737, Kritias was in charge of the financial affairs of the Patriarchate of Antioch in Constantinople.⁵⁵

Patriarch Sylvester’s attention towards the Metropolis of Ahiska might well have related to the events described in the metropolitan of Pisidia’s letter. Shortly after that document was issued, the patriarch ordained at least two successive metropolitans of Ahiska. The first, also named Kallinikos, whose surname was Mantaris, different from the Kallinikos in the previously mentioned document (appointed around 1718), was ordained by Sylvester in 1733 in Damascus. A *berat* was obtained

52 For Ahiska, see H. Grégoire, N. A. Bees (Βέης), “Sur quelques évêchés suffragants de la Métropole de Trébizonde”, *Byzantion*, 1, 1924, p. 122 (117–137), based on the references by Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus to the documents discussed here.

53 “Τσον τοῦ γράμματος τοῦ Πισσιδίας ὅπου ἔδωκε διὰ τὰ ἀρχιερατικά τοῦ Ἀχίσκας Καλλινίκου” (“Copy of the letter of [the metropolitan of] Pisidia who delivered the “archieratic” [items] of Kallinikos of Ahiska”, MS Gr. 124, Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem, f. 16v. The document was published, without all the signatures and a different title than the one in the manuscript, in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Ὀρους Σινᾶ”, p. 250–251, no. 5. See also Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 206–207, no. 12.

54 E.-N. Angelomati-Tsongaraki, “Νικόλαος Κριτίας βιογραφικά καὶ ἐργογραφικά”, *Μεσαιωνικά καὶ Νέα Ἑλληνικά*, 1, 1984, p. 297.

55 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 141r.

from the Ottoman authorities by Sylvester's representatives in Constantinople for his appointment as metropolitan of Ahiska.

In 1734, Kallinikos of Ahiska⁵⁶ was one of the three metropolitans to whom Patriarch Sylvester addressed a letter recommending them to avoid any contact with the *fratores* or “Frankish priests” (Φραγκοπατέρες) in their provinces and to advise the faithful not to listen to their words. The other two addressees were Parthenios of Mesopotamia and Azarias of Theodosiupolis. At the same time, the patriarch sent the monk Agaprios to collect the *nuri* (“ἐφειτεινήν νουρίαν”) and the residents' donations.⁵⁷

Later, this metropolitan proved to be an impostor from a village around Trebizond, banished by the local metropolitan and illiterate. He used falsified documents as recommendation letters from the locals in Ahiska and, after his appointment as metropolitan, he had an abusive behavior. As a result, Kallinikos was deposed by Sylvester on February 2, 1737, most likely during his visit in the Pontic eparchies of Asia Minor, as revealed by the two signatories of the document, the *oikonomos* and the *logothetes* of [the Metropolis of] Chaldia.⁵⁸

The next metropolitan of Chaldia, Makarios, was ordained by the patriarch of Antioch on July 17, 1737, in the church of the village of Karmut (historical province of Koas, today, Kocapınar, in the province of Gümüşhane, Turkey). The service was officiated by the patriarch alongside Azarias, the metropolitan of Theodosiupolis, and Sylvester, the bishop of Methone.⁵⁹

The next mention of the metropolitan of Ahiska in connection with Sylvester of Antioch comes a decade later (1747–1748), when its metropolitan Makarios is attested as living in the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, in Wallachia.⁶⁰ The monastery was, as we mentioned above, a *metochion* of the Patriarchate of Antioch since 1746. There is no evidence regarding the length of Makarios's residence in Wallachia, and it is not clear whether it was just a visit, or a longer stay.

Information on the Christian Orthodox population in the Metropolis of Ahiska in the early 18th century is scarce. The two documents mentioned above prove

⁵⁶ Spelled Ἀκήσκα.

⁵⁷ MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 3r–5r. See Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 204, no. 2; Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ιεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 389–395.

⁵⁸ MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 85r–85v. Parts of the document were published in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 212–213, no. 48.

⁵⁹ MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 86r–86v. See also the note in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 213, no. 49.

⁶⁰ The fact is mentioned in a letter of Yūsuf Mark to Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī, both close collaborators of Sylvester. See Haddad, “La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī”, p. 276; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 239.

beyond doubt that a Christian population did exist in this eparchy. The metropolitan was not only a titular one, as in other cases when metropolitans were ordained for historical ecclesiastical provinces with no Christian population at the time of the ordination.⁶¹ It may be assumed that the Orthodox population in the region of Ahiska was mainly Georgian-speaking and that Greek-speaking Christians were a minority, if any at all.

⁶¹ For the titular metropolitans, see Țipău, “Titular Metropolitans of Asia Minor in Wallachia”, p. 319–325.

14 Sylvester and Russia

As the greatest independent Orthodox Christian state, the Russian Empire had a strong influence on the Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire for centuries. The Russian sovereigns and the Moscow Patriarchate turned to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and to the other Orthodox Patriarchates when it needed to validate important and sometimes controversial decisions. Such decisions included the elevation of the Metropolis of Moscow to a Patriarchate in the 16th century, the revision of the translations of liturgical books in the 17th century, and the instatement of the Synod authority in the Russian Church in the 18th century.

The patriarchs of Antioch had a special connection with Russia. Patriarch Makarios III ibn al-Za'im traveled to Russia in 1654–1656. His journey was described by his son, the archdeacon Paul of Aleppo (ibn al-Za'im), in his famous *Journal*.¹ Patriarch Makarios's portrait was included in the official Russian *Tituliarnik*, alongside those of other high-ranking clerics, envoys, and rulers.² Apparently, during his stay in Moscow he was granted, among other presents, an annual sum of money as aid for the Patriarchate of Antioch. An official document was seemingly issued for the patriarch, but the original was lost, most likely during the troubles in the Patriarchate of Antioch in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

Unlike the help from the Danubian Principalities, the financial aid from Russia was more difficult to obtain by Orthodox Patriarchates and monasteries, for several reasons. First, there was a greater geographical distance from the Levant to Moscow. For letters sent to and received from Russia, the average time of delivery was between four and six months. Traveling in Russia was more complicated, as the climate made moving about during the winter months quite difficult. Moreover, Moldavia and Wallachia, governed by Christian princes appointed by the sultan, were somewhat connected to the Ottoman Empire from a juridical point of view, so that going there was not seen as traveling "abroad". For a patriarch, an official permit was necessary for such a travel. Travelling inside the Ottoman Empire meant, in practice, to make use of whatever facilities were available. For a Christian patriarch, it could require a military escort of janissaries.³ Furthermore, Russia was a rival, often an enemy power at war with the Ottomans, time and again. High

1 For Paul of Aleppo, see *Paul of Aleppo's Journal. Syria, Constantinople, Moldavia, Wallachia and the Cossacks' Lands*, introductory study by Ioana Feodorov, Arabic edition and English translation by Ioana Feodorov, with Yulia Petrova, Mihai Țipău, Samuel Noble, Leiden/Boston, 2024.

2 B. Heyberger, "Le renouveau de l'image de religion chez les chrétiens orientaux", *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 183, 2018, p. 199.

3 Patriarch Sylvester made use of such an escort during his stay in Aleppo in 1725–1726.

Church leaders travelling there could be accused of treason by the Ottoman authorities. However, individuals with lesser positions and merchants did travel in both directions.

In 1708, while he was in Aleppo, the former patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās wrote a letter to Peter the Great asking for financial help, especially to produce Arabic books in the printing press he had established at the Metropolitan residence of the city. The original letter, preserved in the Russian archives, and in a copy in a manuscript codex at the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, is a veritable “manifesto” of Athanasios’s views on his printing activity.⁴ The letter was accompanied by samples of books printed in Aleppo.

It is not clear whether and how Moscow responded to the patriarch’s attempt to obtain help for his printing press. In any case, the military conflict of 1711 between Russia and the Ottoman Empire made contacts more difficult. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the printing activity in Aleppo stopped. The last book from Athanasios’s press was published in 1711. The impossibility of continuing the printing activity “due to the circumstances” was confirmed in a *chrysoboullos* of prince Stephanos Kantakouzēnos of Wallachia (1714–1716).⁵ Although the press was supported by an annual grant from Wallachia, there is no proof either that such help ever came from the Russian Empire, or that printing ended because of the absence of funding during the military conflict.

During his second time on the patriarchal throne of Antioch (1720–1724), Athanasios III Dabbās tried to obtain the annual aid that had been granted by the Russians to Makarios ibn al-Za’im. On September 26, 1723, Athanasios wrote a letter to the Holy Synod of the Russian Church.⁶ As the original document issued to Patriarch Makarios had been lost and no copy could be found in the Russian archives,⁷ there is no indication that the patriarch’s request was answered.

Following his predecessor’s strategy, Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch resumed the correspondence with the Russian sovereigns, with the Holy Synod of the

4 The letter was published in V. Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVII^e siècle: pièces authentiques et pièces fausses. 4. Le patriarche d’Antioche Athanase Dabbās et Moscou: en quête de subventions pour l’imprimerie arabe d’Alep”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 79, 2013, 1, p. 173–195. The copy is in manuscript 1605 (531/532), f. 201v–203v, in the library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. For the manuscript, see Beneshevich (ed.), *Описание греческих рукописей*, 1, p. 392–545; for Athanasios’s letter, see p. 421.

5 MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 21r–21v. The *chrysoboullos* is mentioned in a subsequent letter written by Prince Michael Rakovitzas.

6 RGIA, F. 796, Op. 5, D. 211, f. 11r–11v. See L. Gerd, “Russian Sacred Objects in the Orthodox East. Archive Evidence from the 18th to the Early 20th Century”, *Museikon*, 4, 2020, p. 235, n. 2.

7 Gerd, “Russian Sacred Objects”, p. 227.

Orthodox Church in Russia, and the Russian ambassadors in Constantinople. The Greek text of several letters sent by Sylvester and a few Russian translations survive in manuscripts.

Sylvester also continued the attempts made by Athanasios Dabbās to obtain the annual financial support promised to the Patriarchate of Antioch by the Moscow court in the 17th century. He wrote several letters on this topic to the Holy Synod and to the Empresses Catherine I (1725–1727) and Anna Ioannovna (1730–1740).

The first surviving letter addressed to the Russian Holy Synod was written by Sylvester in June 1725 from Constantinople. The letter contained a veritable elegy dedicated to the emperor Peter the Great. It was delivered to the Holy Synod in Saint Petersburg on October 15, 1725, by Arsenios, the metropolitan of Thebais, who had arrived from Moscow. A copy of the Greek text could be the one in a manuscript once belonging to Iakovos of Patmos.⁸ A Russian translation of the letter is preserved in the archives of the Holy Synod of Russia.⁹

In 1725, Sylvester wrote a letter to the Empress Catherine I and other Russian officials,¹⁰ asking for the renewal of the charter granted to the Patriarch Makarios III by Tsar Alexei I Mikhailovich (1645–1676). The original charter was lost in the times of Patriarch Kyrillos V ibn al-Za’im, as mentioned in Sylvester’s letter written to the Russian Holy Synod on September 29, 1725, which survives in a Russian translation.¹¹

As he usually did in his letters, the patriarch mentioned the “attacks of the Latin schismatics” in his eparchy, the great debts of the Patriarchate, and the desire to establish schools with capable teachers in Damascus and “Antioch”, to promote Orthodoxy.¹² He suggested that a copy of the charter granted to Makarios III was preserved in the “Holy Registers”. Sylvester designated Metropolitan Arsenios of

⁸ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Τερσολυμικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 309, no. 233, on MS 233 Jerusalem, f.80–82.

⁹ RGIA, F. 796, Op. 6, D. 328. See *Описание документов и дел*, vol. V, col. 628–633; Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 109–111 (Russian translation).

¹⁰ Namely, the state chancellor Gavriil Ivanovich Golovkin and Pyotr Andreevich Tolstoy, a member of the Supreme Privy Council.

¹¹ Letter of Sylvester to the Russian Holy Synod, September 29, 1725, in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 7, D. 133, f. 2–4. See Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 112–114 (Russian translation).

¹² The archival material related to Sylvester’s letter is in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI), F. 52, Op. 1, 1726, no. 5. See N. P. Chesnokova, “Жалованные грамоты греческим иерархам в контексте конфессионально-политических связей России и православного Востока в XVIII в.”, *Каптеревские чтения*, т. 17, Moscow, 2019, p. 195. More archival material most likely related to the same letter is preserved in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 6, D. 328 (documents dated October 15–October 22, 1725). See <https://fgurgia.ru/object/5810507>.

Thebais as his representative in Russia.¹³ Arsenios was still in Saint Petersburg on June 13, 1726, when he wrote a letter to patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, whom he most likely also represented in Moscow.¹⁴

The charters mentioned in Sylvester's letter were not found at the time.¹⁵ They did exist, however, but drafts of them were discovered only in the early 20th century.¹⁶ The charters were issued by the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich in 1656 for the Patriarchate of Antioch and the monasteries of the Nativity of the Theotokos in Ṣaydnāyā and Saint George al-Ḥumayrā' (Dayr Mār Jirjis al-Ḥumayrā'). The content was similar for both monasteries, so there is only one draft. However, the charters did not contain any indication of the exact amount of the financial aid.

A similar letter was addressed by Sylvester to the Holy Synod in Moscow on September 29, 1725, from "Antioch".¹⁷ As known from other sources, Sylvester reached Aleppo on November 9 (Gregorian calendar),¹⁸ therefore, "Antioch" meant "Aleppo", or more generally the province of Antioch. Alternatively, as Antioch (Antakya) itself was part of the jurisdiction granted by his *berat* of appointment, a

¹³ Chesnokova, "Жалованные грамоты греческим иерархам", p. 196–197. Thebais was a metropolis attached to the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

¹⁴ Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, "Addenda et corrigenda περί τὸν Σπυριδωνί", *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος*, 2, 1909, vol. 4, no. 23, p. 433. Metropolitan Arsenios of Thebais was in Russia since 1717. See Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 114, n. 55.

¹⁵ See the order (указ) of Empress Anna Ioannovna dated December 3, 1731, for research in the archives of the documents granted to the patriarch of Antioch: RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434, f. 5r–5v; see Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 118–119, no. 9. As a result of this search, only one document issued for Patriarch Paisios of Alexandria was found: RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434, f. 17–18; cf. Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 122–123, no. 11. For further research in the Russian archives in 1732 for the old charters granted by the tsar Alexei Mikhailovich to the patriarch of Antioch, see also RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434, f. 19–22v; cf. Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 123–125, no. 12.

¹⁶ The drafts are published in Chesnokova, "Жалованные грамоты греческим иерархам", p. 205–210. See also N. P. Chesnokova, *Христианский Восток и Россия: политическое и культурное взаимодействие в середине XVII века (По документам Российского государственного архива древних актов)*, Moscow, 2011, p. 108.

¹⁷ RGIA, F. 796, Op. 7, D. 133, f. 2–4 (protocol of February 11, 1726). See Gerd, "Russian Sacred Objects", p. 235, n. 2; *Описание документов и дел, хранящихся в архиве Святейшего правительствующего синода*, vol. VI, 1726, Saint Petersburg, 1883, col. CXXIX–CXXII; Chesnokova, "Жалованные грамоты греческим иерархам", p. 196 (AVPRI, F. 52, Op. 1, 1726 г., № 5, f. 6.). For other archival material most likely related to the same letter see RGIA, F. 796, Op. 7, D. 133 (documents dated February 9–April 30, 1726). See <https://fgurgia.ru/object/5810517>. A letter of Sylvester to the Russian Holy Synod, September 29, 1725, survives in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 7, D. 133, f. 2–4, cf. Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 112–114 (Russian translation).

¹⁸ Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. I, p. 586.

patriarchal residence in this city might be considered. Presumably, the letter was written by Sylvester shortly before leaving Constantinople.

In 1726 or 1727,¹⁹ in a letter addressed to the Metropolitan Arsenios of Thebais, Sylvester asked the support of the empress and the Holy Synod of Moscow. He was informing the metropolitan that he had opened “two schools of Hellenic learning in Damascus and Aleppo” (“δύο σχολεῖα τῆς ἑλληνικῆς παιδεύσεως εἰς Δαμασκὸν καὶ Χαλέπτιον”), he had hired professors and accepted students. From this it follows that the students were provided with some sort of scholarship. Sylvester also wrote about the considerable amounts of money spent, leading to a debt of over 80 “purses”.²⁰

The Russian policy of granting financial aid changed in the 1730s, during the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna (1730–1740),²¹ possibly due to the great number of requests not only from the Orthodox Patriarchates, but also from monasteries in the Ottoman Empire. The aid was centralized, and a certain sum was fixed for every kind of institution. Collecting alms on Russian territory was prohibited, except with the approval of the Holy Synod. There were small sums of money, 100 rubles for the Patriarchates and 35 rubles annually for a long list of monasteries, to be collected from Moscow every five years by an appointed representative. The expenses for these representatives’ stay in Russia were covered by the state.²²

In June 1731, Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch wrote another letter to Empress Anna Ioannovna.²³ It was followed in the same month by a letter to the Holy Synod of Russia.²⁴ In these letters, the patriarch asked for help for the school established in Tripoli “in Syria”. At the time, Sylvester’s representatives in Russia were archimandrite Athanasios and the *logothetes* Spandonis. The delegation of four (Athanasios, Spandonis, a servant, and a translator) arrived at the Holy Synod, presumably in

¹⁹ RGIA, F. 796, Op. 8, D. 84, letter of Sylvester, possibly dated March 7, 1727. See <https://fgurgia.ru/object/5760849>.

²⁰ Letter of Sylvester to Metropolitan Arsenios of Thebais, May 2, 1726, in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 8, D. 84, f. 1–2v; cf. Gerd, Petrunina, *Анτιοχειαῖκου ἡμερωπῆματὸς καὶ Ρωσσία*, p. 114–115 (Greek text), p. 115–115 (Russian translation), no. 7.

²¹ Gerd, “Russian Sacred Objects”, p. 227.

²² Gerd, “Russian Sacred Objects”, p. 228.

²³ Letter of Sylvester to Empress Anna Ioannovna, June 1731, Constantinople, in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434, f. 7r–12v; cf. Gerd, Petrunina, *Анτιοχειαῖκου ἡμερωπῆματὸς καὶ Ρωσσία*, p. 119–122 (Russian translation), no. 10. See also Gerd, “Russian Sacred Objects”, p. 235, n. 2. For other archival material most likely related to the same letter, see RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434 (documents dated November 12, 1731, to October 11, 1734). See <https://fgurgia.ru/object/5810551>.

²⁴ Letter of Sylvester to the Holy Synod of Russia, June 1731, Constantinople, in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434, f. 1r–3v; cf. Gerd, Petrunina, *Анτιοχειαῖκου ἡμερωπῆματὸς καὶ Ρωσσία*, p. 116–118 (Russian translation), no. 8.

Saint Petersburg, in November 1731, and in Moscow in January the next year. They were provided for their expenses during their stay in Russia and the return journey.²⁵ The state bureaucracy was moving slowly, and in the meantime archimandrite Athanasios asked for permission to officiate holy services during his stay in Moscow, a permission that he was seemingly granted.²⁶

From Russian archival documents it results that Sylvester of Antioch received at some point in 1732 from the resident Nepliev in Constantinople the amount of 1,000 rubles in order to cover his expenses. Sylvester's representative Kritias acted as a mediator.²⁷

In another letter sent to the Russian Holy Synod on August 1, 1733, Patriarch Sylvester asked for the renewal of the charters for the support granted to the Patriarchate and for the monastery of Şaydnāyā, a foundation of the emperor Justinian I, which received a separate charter,²⁸ seemingly, in the times of Patriarch Joachim.²⁹ In this letter, the patriarch mentions that in May 1732 he sent archimandrite Athanasios with letters asking the empress to grant a new charter to the Patriarchate. Sylvester also refers to the attacks of the “pagan and corrupted” Arabs. In the event the archimandrite Athanasios left Russia, the patriarch appointed as his representative the *hierodiakonos* Gennadios, the metropolitan of Thebais.³⁰ The letter mentions also as sending place “Antioch”, in this case, most likely, Damascus.³¹ The reason for mentioning “Antioch” as the place of expedition was perhaps the intention not to raise suspicions with the Russians, who expected a letter from the

25 Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 125–127.

26 Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 130–131.

27 Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 132.

28 Letter of Sylvester to the Holy Synod of Russia, August 1, 1733, Antioch, in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 15, D.427, f. 3r–6v. See Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 134–135 (Greek text), p. 135–137 (Russian translation), no. 26.

29 Probably Joachim VI (1593–1604) and not Joachim V (1581–1592), because a letter of the first to the Tsar Feodor Ivanovich, dated 7102 (1594), is preserved in the Russian archives. See *Описание документов и дел, хранящихся в архиве Святейшего правительствующего синода*, vol. XIV. 1734, Saint Petersburg, 1910, col. 660–662; cf. Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 137.

30 Archival documents mention the arrival in 1734 in Saint Petersburg of archimandrite Athanasios, the envoy of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch, archdeacon Makarios, envoy of patriarch Kosmas of Alexandria, and hierodiakonos Gennadios, envoy of Arsenios, metropolitan of Thebais. See RGIA, F. 796, Op. 15, D. 50 (documents dated February 6 to July 12, 1734). See <https://fgurgia.ru/object/2485539544>.

31 RGIA, F. 796, Op. 15, D. 27, f. 3–4. See Gerd, “Russian Sacred Objects”, p. 235, n. 2; *Описание документов и дел*, vol. XIV, col. 659–660.

patriarch of Antioch sent from this particular location. In general terms, Antioch was understood as “the Patriarchate of Antioch”.

In 1735, an order was issued to release five hundred rubles from the treasury every five years for the Patriarchate of Antioch. The amount could be collected by a clergyman accompanied by a servant. If they travelled through Kyiv, they would also receive transportation and an allowance for food. The payment method was to be chosen by the patriarch and included the possibility of issuing a bill of change, or a payment via English or Dutch merchants.³²

In April 1744, while he was in Adrianople on his way to Bucharest, Sylvester appointed Hatzi Spandonis as his representative to collect the financial aid from Russia. From the letter that indicates this appointment, it results that the period for receiving the aid was drawing near the end (probably, a second expected payment, as the five years period was set in 1735). As Spandonis was already in Moscow at the time, Sylvester sent letters to the Russian resident in Constantinople to certify that Spandonis was entitled to receive the aid.³³ Patriarch Sylvester’s letters of 1744 survive in translation in Russian archives.³⁴

On December 25, 1744, while he was in Iași (Moldavia), Patriarch Sylvester wrote to the empress Elizaveta (Elisabeth) Petrovna, asking for financial aid for the Arabic press in Iași, but the request was seemingly denied.³⁵ The document is significant, as it shows that Sylvester had to rely in his printing activity mainly on the support provided by the prince John Mavrokordatos of Moldavia.

Another letter written on the same day, preserved in Russian archives, provides certain details unknown from other sources.³⁶ At first, Sylvester presents the recent pleas for Russian help that he had made starting with 1731, when he

³² Chesnokova, “Жалованные грамоты греческим иерархам”, p. 198.

³³ Letter of Patriarch Sylvester, then in Adrianople, to Vasily Barsky, in Constantinople, April 6, 1744. See Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, vol. 4, p. 56–59 (Greek text and Russian translation).

³⁴ RGIA, F. 796, Op. 25, D. 355 (July 6 to November 5, 1744). The figures represent most likely the date when the letter was written and the date when it was received or translated. See <https://fgurgia.ru/object/2429895285>.

³⁵ L. Gerd, “Russia and the Melkites of Syria: Attempts at Reverting into Orthodoxy in the 1850-s and 1860-s”, *Scrinium*, 17, 2021, p. 137, n. 11. See RGIA, F. 796, Op. 26, D. 159, f. 1–2. See also the entire file RGIA, F. 796, Op. 26, D. 159 (documents between May 1–December 19, 1745).

³⁶ Letter of Sylvester to the Holy Synod of Russia, December 25, 1744, Iași, in RGIA, F. 796, Op. 26, D. 159, f. 1, 2, 9–12. See Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 137–139 (Greek text), p. 139–140 (Russian translation), no. 28. The date in the edition (December 25, 1745) is obviously mistaken, since Sylvester was already in Constantinople at the time. The most compelling evidence is the fact that the Russian translation was registered with the date May 1, 1745, i.e., before the supposed date of the letter.

had sent archimandrite Athanasios from Constantinople to the Empress Anna Ioannovna and the Holy Synod. In May 1736, the empress granted an annual amount of 100 rubles to the Patriarchate of Antioch, to be collected every five years by an archimandrite. Athanasios left Russia in 1734 and destroyed the documents attesting to the Russian help, “for fear of the governing pagans” (“δέει τῶν κρατοῦντων ἔθνικῶν”). He died during this journey. Apparently, the financial aid was no longer collected afterwards because of the long, dangerous, and expensive voyage it would have required and the incursions and invasions of the foreign powers that took place.

In another letter written in 1744 from Iași, Sylvester addressed Alexei Veshnyakov, the Russian resident in Constantinople. The letter indicates that the patriarch appointed as his representative (*epitropos*) in Russia Alexandros (son) of Andreas (Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀνδρέου) instead of Hatzı Spandonis (son) of Dimitrios. Alexandros delayed his departure for Russia, and he arrived in Iași on December 20, 1744. So, the patriarch wrote to the Holy Synod of Russia in November that the money should be sent to “Nizhyn of Ukraine” (“Νίζναν τῆς Οὐκρανίας”), to Vouktos kyr Petros (son) of Sterios, and to kyr Samuel (son) of Theodoros. If the money had not yet been sent at the time Alexandros of Andreas arrived, it was to be given to him.

The most interesting component of the letter to the Holy Synod is Sylvester’s information about the Arabic printing press (“τὴν Ἀράβικὴν τυπογραφίαν”) that he had established in Iași. The patriarch asked for a double amount of the grant because of the urgent need “of the above-mentioned Arabic printing press, which we started with much effort and heavy expenses” (“τῆς ῥηθείσης Ἀραβικῆς τυπογραφίας, ὅπου μετὰ πολλοῦ μόχθου, καὶ ἐξόδου βαρυτάτης ἠρξάμεθα”).³⁷ In response to this request, the decision was made to grant the annual amount of 100 rubles for the period from 1732 to 1745, but not to award additional money for the printing press.³⁸ The money was paid to Alexandros of Andreas, along with a sum for travel expenses. Alexandros was also the representative of a monastery in Pogoniana in “Macedonia” (Epirus).³⁹

Another person mentioned in Russian archival documents of this period is a certain *sheikh* Nasser of Beirut, who arrived in Saint Petersburg in 1746 carrying letters of recommendation from the Patriarchs Paisios II of Constantinople, Kosmas III of Alexandria, Sylvester of Antioch, and the Metropolitan Iōannikios of Beirut. Nasser, also presenting himself as Nikōn (the Greek form of his name), was part of an

37 Gerd, Petrunina, *Ἀντιοχειαῖς πατριαρχαὶ καὶ Ρωσσία*, p. 138.

38 Gerd, Petrunina, *Ἀντιοχειαῖς πατριαρχαὶ καὶ Ρωσσία*, p. 141–143.

39 Gerd, Petrunina, *Ἀντιοχειαῖς πατριαρχαὶ καὶ Ρωσσία*, p. 143–144.

important family of his city and was asking permission to obtain alms from Russian cities, due to his economic situation. Considered a nobleman (шляхтич, *shlyakhtich*), he was granted permission to collect alms in various cities of the empire.⁴⁰ It is interesting that *sheikh* Nasser is the same person referred to in a letter of the patriarch of Alexandria, which was copied in one of Sylvester's codices.⁴¹ It mentions a letter of Sylvester of Antioch describing Nasser's situation. The patriarch of Alexandria refers to the nobleman's name as “Σὲχ Νάσερ, τὸν διερμηνευόμενον Νίκων ονόματι” (“sheikh Naser, whose name is translated Nikōn”).

In 1760, Patriarch Sylvester wrote again to the Russian Holy Synod, stating that the document issued in 1735 had burned in the fire of Constantinople in 1756 and, therefore, it needed to be renewed.⁴² The information is significant, as it shows that important documents were kept in Constantinople, perhaps by the representative of the Patriarchate of Antioch in the Ottoman capital.

The answer to Sylvester's letter could be a document issued by the Russian Holy Synod on April 7, 1763, mentioning a yearly donation of 100 rubles for the Patriarchate of Antioch. The document was seen by Porfirii Uspenskii in Damascus in 1843.⁴³ It was presumably destroyed in the incidents of 1860, which also damaged the patriarchal library.

Further research in Russian archives may procure other results on the topic of the patriarch's relations with Russia and could even lead to the discovery of Sylvester's original letters, many of them never published.

One of the manuscripts used by Sylvester as a personal and official register also offers interesting information about the patriarch's relations with Russia.⁴⁴ The beginning of a letter addressed to Alexei Veshnyakov, the Russian resident in Constantinople,⁴⁵ proves that they were in correspondence in the period 1742–1745.⁴⁶

40 See the documents related to Nasser in Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 145–148.

41 MS 210 Ғариṣā, f. 4r.

42 Chesnokova, “Жалованные грамоты греческим иерархам”, p. 198.

43 Uspenskii, *Восток Христианский*, p. 120.

44 MS 210 Ғариṣā.

45 Alexei Andreevich Veshnyakov was a diplomatic representative in Constantinople in 1734–1739 and from 1741 on, then he was appointed ambassador, a position he held from May 1742 to June 1745. For his biography, see <http://www.rusdiplomats.narod.ru/veshnyakov-aa.html>; M. V. Amelicheva, *The Russian residency in Constantinople, 1700–1774. Russian-Ottoman diplomatic encounters*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Washington, DC, 2016, p. 123–127, 146–148. The thesis is accessible online at https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/1041841/Amelicheva_georgetown_0076D_13417.pdf

46 MS 210 Ғариṣā, f. 8r.

The most extensive texts on this topic in the same manuscript are four letters dated March 1750.⁴⁷ The first is a letter addressed to another Russian resident in Constantinople, Adrian Ivanovich Nepliev (1746-1750).⁴⁸ The letter, of utmost interest for the insight it provides into Sylvester's thinking, begins by mentioning the situation of the Orthodox people's servitude after the conquest of Constantinople. Weak and burdened by the yoke of slavery, they were also persecuted by the papacy and the Latins, who took advantage of the situation. They corrupted the Orthodox with their learning. By means of bribes, they separated the throne of Antioch from the eparchies and expelled the Orthodox metropolitans, to replace them with Latin ones. They succeeded twice in severing Aleppo from the throne of Antioch. Nevertheless, Patriarch Sylvester restored Aleppo to the throne of Antioch with the ecumenical patriarch's help, as reflected in the imperial decisions. To counter the attacks of the papists, he had to borrow 50 "purses" of *aspra*.

Another issue that Sylvester brought to the ambassador's attention was the trouble stirred by a certain "Tzortzos, son of Aite", a dragoman of the English merchants in Aleppo.⁴⁹ He was an "Arab by nation" and used to belong to the Eastern Church, and then he became a *Latinophron* and started attacking the Orthodox. His position granted him influence and power with "the English nation" ("νατζιόνε τῶν Ἄγγλων"). Therefore, the patriarch asked Nepliev to talk to the English ambassador⁵⁰ to remove him from the position of dragoman and appoint someone else from the Orthodox *Rhomaioi*, as among them there were people better suited than Tzortzos for the position of dragoman.

This rather long letter mentions one of the achievements Sylvester was proud of, the printing of books in the Arabic language. The recently printed books contained "the Orthodox confession and the customs and laws of the true ecclesiastic thinking". They brought light to the Orthodox, helping them learn the truth. The patriarch also narrates how he appointed a new metropolitan for Aleppo, a

47 MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 113v–115r.

48 For Nepliev, see A. Polovtsov (ed.), *Русский биографический словарь*, vol. 20, Saint Petersburg, 1914, p. 227–229; <http://www.rusdiplomats.narod.ru/nepliev-ai.html>; Amelicheva, *The Russian Residency in Constantinople*, p. 113–118, 146–148.

49 Most likely, the dragoman of the English consulate in Aleppo, as the letter indicates that it was an official position. Tzortzos (Τζόρτζος) renders the Arabic name جرجس (Jirjis). This was Jirjis Aida or George Aidé, first dragoman of the English consulate in Aleppo from 1747 to 1778. See B. Lewis (ed.), *A Middle East Mosaic. Fragments of Life, Letters and History*, New York, 2007, p. 151; M. H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System. Qadis, Consuls and Berathis in the 18th Century*, Leiden/Boston, 2020, p. 139–140.

50 At the time, Sir James Porter (ambassador between 1747 and 1762), known to have had good relations with Adrian Ivanovich Nepliev.

wise person who mastered Arabic and Greek, but who was prevented from acting because of Tzortzos.

Finally, Sylvester asked Nepliev to convey his request for the empress's help to pay the great debts of the patriarchal Throne. He stated that he had sent archimandrite Ignatios to Russia and asked the ambassador to write to the empress accordingly.⁵¹

Three other letters were written at about the same time, in March 1750, each with its own particularities but with a common theme, namely the great debt of the Patriarchate and a request for financial aid. The first letter is addressed to empress Elizaveta (Elizabeth) Petrovna (1741–1762),⁵² the second to Simon, archbishop of Pskov (Πισκοβία), president of the Holy Synod of Russia,⁵³ and the third to Alexei Petrovich Bestuzhev-Riumin, first chancellor and minister of the Russian Empire (1744–1758).⁵⁴

An undated letter of Patriarch Sylvester to the Russian Holy Synod about the problems in Aleppo, the *protosynkellos* “kyr Ignatios” appointed as representative of the patriarch, and a request for financial help, seems to belong to the same period.⁵⁵ These letters are an important source for the patriarch's familiarity with Russian culture and customs, as well as for his intentions.

Apparently, Sylvester's appeals for financial aid in 1750 bore some fruit. His representative, the archimandrite Ignatios, received from the Russian authorities the aid for the period 1745–1753 and an additional sum of 3,000 rubles because of the letter written by Sylvester to the Empress Elizaveta Petrovna.⁵⁶

In 1765, the archimandrite Anthimos, Sylvester's envoy, received the aid due for the period 1753–1761 but failed to secure the grant for another five years in advance.

51 Letter of Sylvester of Antioch to Adrian Nepliev, March 12, 1750 (Constantinople), in MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 113v–115r.

52 MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 115r–117v.

53 MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 117v–118v. However, sources mention that between 1745 and 1753 Archbishop Stephan of Novgorod was president of the Synod. Simon Todorsky was bishop (from 1745) and then archbishop of Pskov, Izborsk and Narva (1748–1754). He was a polyglot (he also knew Greek) and a respected figure at the imperial court. It appears that Sylvester was well informed when he decided to write to him. For Simon of Pskov, see A. Polovtsov (ed.), *Русский биографический словарь*, vol. 18, Saint Petersburg, 1904, p. 498.

54 MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 118v–119v.

55 MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 130r–130v.

56 Panchenko, *Ближневосточное православие под османским владычеством*, p. 417; Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 359.

He succeeded, however, in obtaining another 1,000 rubles from the Russian Holy Synod for paying the debts of the Patriarchate.⁵⁷

Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch requested again, in July 1765, that the allowance for five years be handed to Hatzi Nikolaos Angelos, a Greek merchant. Apparently, this aid was not paid after all. Requests and emissaries were also sent by later patriarchs of Antioch, Philemon and Daniel.⁵⁸ Oddly enough, for several decades, the sums from Russia in aid to the Patriarchate of Antioch were no longer provided.⁵⁹ The explanation of this situation might be the international situation, especially the wars between the Russian Empire and the Sublime Porte. Travels became more difficult and any relations with an enemy power could be dangerous for the Ottoman subjects.⁶⁰

57 Decree of February 28, 1763; see Panchenko, *Ближневосточное православие под османским владычеством*, p. 417.

58 Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 148–151.

59 The next payment was made in 1800 for the period since 1761. See Panchenko, *Ближневосточное православие под османским владычеством*, p. 417.

60 See for example Makraios, “Υπομνήματα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας”, p. 230–231: the participation of the Russian representative in Constantinople to a religious festival was considered as suspect. The same source mentions the persecutions of the Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire during the military conflicts with Russia.

15 Sylvester of Antioch's Printing Works

15.1 Athanasios Dabbās's Printing Press in Aleppo. The English Connection

As a prolific translator and writer, Athanasios Dabbās had a special interest in books. He was the first who succeeded in printing Arabic books for the Byzantine-rite Christians, first in Wallachia (1701–1702) and then in Aleppo (1706–1711). The number of titles published, two in Wallachia and ten in Aleppo, was important, considering the short period the press functioned, and the limited resources Athanasios had at his disposal. The print run of the books (as witnessed by the surviving copies), especially for those printed in Wallachia, seems to have been quite large. The printing activity in Wallachia and the onset of that of Aleppo were financed by Constantine Brâncoveanu, the prince of Wallachia. He issued an official document (*chrysoboullos*) granting an annual allowance for book-printing in the Patriarchate of Antioch.¹

Later, Athanasios turned for help to the Cossacks' lands, obtaining the support of the hetmans Ivan Mazepa and Danylo Apostol for binding the remaining sheet blocks in his printing press. As a result, their coats of arms appear on the very few copies of the *Gospel* printed in Aleppo by Dabbās in 1706 and bound in 1708 with their assistance, in two versions.² The copies published during the first print run of the same book display Constantine Brâncoveanu's coat of arms. This proves that the patriarch secured financial support for his printing activity from multiple sources.

At about the same time, during the early years of printing Arabic books in Aleppo, Dabbās wrote a letter to the Russian Tsar Peter the Great. In the letter, an invaluable source on the (then former) patriarch's ideas about his printing activity, he asks the Russian monarch for assistance in pursuing it. As we mentioned above, he also sent Tsar Peter some of the Arabic books he had printed (most likely from the Aleppo press).³ It is not clear whether the Russians offered their support, and

1 Brâncoveanu's *chrysoboullos*, renewed by two of his successors (Stephanos Kantakouzēnos and Nicholas Mavrokordatos), was mentioned in a later document issued by prince Mihail Rakovitzas in 1731, during the patriarchate of Sylvester of Antioch; see MS 210 Șariřa, f. 21r–21v.

2 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 271–274.

3 The original letter, with Athanasios's autograph signature and his seal, is preserved in the Russian archives. The letter was published by Tchentsova, "Les documents grecs du XVII^e siècle: piéces authentiques et piéces fausses. 4", p. 173–195. See also V. Tchentsova, "La correspondance du patriarche d'Antioche Athanase IV Dabbās avec la cour russe: à propos de l'imprimerie arabe d'Alep", *Travaux du Symposium international "Le livre. La Roumanie. L'Europe". Troisième édition. 20–24 septembre 2010*, 1, Bucharest, 2011, p. 46–58. A little-known copy of the letter is preserved at the

if so, if it was enough to ensure the continuation of the printing press. Although Dabbās was the initiator and the manager of the Aleppo press, some of the books mention on their title page the name of the patriarch of Antioch of the time, Kyrillos V ibn al-Zaʿīm, who supported Dabbās in this project.

Athanasios printed another book in collaboration with the Patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, who financed the edition and wrote a foreword in Greek.⁴ The book contains one sermon by Saint John Chrysostom and sixty-six sermons by Athanasios of Jerusalem. The author, Patriarch Athanasios of Jerusalem, was either Athanasios II (before 1235–1244) or Athanasios IV (15th century).

After 1711, the printing activity in Aleppo ended. In the *chrysoboullos* of 1731, mention is made of an earlier document issued by the prince Stephanos Kantakouzēnos. It contains a reference to the impossibility of continuing to print Arabic books and stipulated that the annual financial support from Wallachia should be used for copying books in manuscript form. No sources have been found that explain why Athanasios stopped printing books in the Aleppo press. Perhaps his editorial program was complete, the printing material was worn out, or there was some opposition to the idea of printing Arabic books locally. A few suppositions can be formulated, but the lack of sources does not allow exploring the question further.

However, Athanasios Dabbās did not abandon the idea of having Arabic books printed for the Antiochian Christians. There are strong indications that he turned elsewhere to achieve this objective. New opportunities arose when he resumed his patriarchal office in 1720. The English Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was eager to help. Athanasios's efforts to print were known in London:

The present patriarch at Aleppo (a person never to be named without honour), endeavouring to relieve, as much as in him lay, these necessities of his people, did formerly procure a printing press from Europe, which he erected in his own house, and began to print copies of their *Liturgy*. But it soon appeared that this was a work of too much expence and burthen, even for the magnanimity of this extraordinary person to support it; insomuch that he was forced to

Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai, in MS 1605 (530/531), f. 201v–203v. See Beneshevich (ed.), *Описание греческих рукописей*, 1, p. 421.

⁴ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 276–277. Besides the four copies mentioned in the above book, a complete copy is preserved in the library of the Séminaire Sainte-Anne in Jerusalem (shelfmark MS I.55), and another incomplete one, missing the first unnumbered 23 pages (the title page and the Arabic and Greek forewords), is in the library of the Ordre Basilien Alepin in Şarbā (Jūniya) (shelfmark Codex 341bis).

desist from that undertaking. And as the press has lain still for some years; so it does not seem to me ever likely to be set on work again.⁵

The SPCK was involved in the printing of an Arabic *Psalter* and a *New Testament*.⁶ A pamphlet was issued in two editions to promote the idea that such books were necessary for the Arabic-speaking Christians (*An extract of several letters relating to the great charity and usefulness of printing the New Testament and Psalter in the Arabick Language*, 1721 and 1725). The patriarch of Antioch's involvement in the project is almost certain.⁷ Most likely, he provided the Arabic manuscripts to be used for printing the two books. A 1721 letter of Henry Newman to Charles, Viscount Townshend, contains "a reminder of the promise of the King's support of £500 for the work of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, particularly for the Patriarch of Antioch". The same letter contains information on the manuscripts of the *Psalter* and *New Testament* ready for printing and distribution. There is also "a copy in Arabic of the letter to be distributed together with free copies of the Psalter and New Testament to poor Christians in Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, etc."⁸ The sovereign's support for the project is also mentioned in a letter addressed by the SPCK to George I in 1724.⁹

The editions were supervised by Salomon Negri (Sulaymān ibn Ya'qūb).¹⁰ The books were printed in London in 1725 and 1727, respectively, and the print runs

5 Letter of Reverend Dr. Samuel Lisle to the secretary of the SPCK, May 26, 1720, in *An extract of several letters relating to the great charity and usefulness of printing the New Testament and Psalter in the Arabick Language*, London, 1725 (1st ed., London, 1721), p. 14–16 (the passage is on p. 16; the original orthography was respected).

6 P. Manstetten, "...for the Benefit of the poor Christians of the Eastern Nations..." – Printing the Psalter and New Testament in Arabic in Eighteenth-Century London", at <https://biblia-arabica.com/for-the-benefit-of-the-poor-christians-of-the-eastern-nations-printing-the-psalter-and-new-testament-in-arabic-in-eighteenth-century-london>; Häberlein, Manstetten, "The Translation Policies", p. 316–327. For Arabic printing in England, see G. Roper, "Arabic Printing and Publishing in England before 1820", *BRISMES Bulletin*, 12, 1985, p. 12–32, online at <http://www.ghazali.org/articles/bsmes-12-1-85-gr.pdf>.

7 Häberlein, Manstetten, "The Translation Policies", p. 317–318.

8 Letter of Henry Newman to Charles, Viscount Townshend, July 12, 1721, Middle Temple, The National Archives, Kew, MS SP 35/27/77, f. 281–284. See <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C17213708>.

9 Letter from the SPCK to King George I, May 13, 1724, The National Archives, Kew, MS SP 35/49/55B, f. 134–135. <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C17213991>. For the king's involvement, see also Häberlein, Manstetten, "The Translation Policies", p. 318.

10 For Salomon Negri, see J.-P. Ghobrial, "The Life and Hard Times of Salomon Negri. An Arab Teacher in Early Modern Europe", in J. Loop, A. Hamilton, C. Burnett (eds.), *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden/Boston, 2017, p. 310–331; P. Manstetten,

were impressive: 6,250 copies for the Arabic *Psalter* and 10,000 for the Arabic *New Testament*.¹¹ According to a pamphlet published in London on May 26, 1725, there were already “6,250 Psalters printed from a copy, sent from Aleppo, as approved by the Patriarch of Antioch; of which 2,025 were bound, and sent by the last Turkey fleet to Scanderoon”.¹²

The intention was for the books to be published without any preface or recommendation, to avoid the readers' suspicions and to secure a broader distribution.¹³ A book printed in a Protestant country could be considered suspect both by Orthodox and by Catholics.

The plan was that the books be shipped to the Levant with the help of English merchants. Rowland Sherman, based in Aleppo, was especially interested in achieving this goal. His relations with the Patriarchate of Antioch have already featured in an earlier chapter.¹⁴ In November 1725, when Sylvester was in Aleppo, Sherman mentioned in a letter to the secretary of the SPCK Henry Newman that he had sent the patriarch 1,500 Psalters and had shared the plans of the SPCK with him.¹⁵

Both the London Psalter and the London New Testament were printed during Sylvester's patriarchate, and he must at least have been aware of their distribution. Dabbās would likely have wished for Patriarch Sylvester to be directly involved in it, but the known sources do not shed any light on this matter.

Another printing project of Athanasios Dabbās would have been even more controversial if widely known at the time. In parallel, or even before plans were made for Arabic books to be published in London, the patriarch of Antioch translated from Greek into Arabic Ilias Miniatis's *Rock of Offence* (Πέτρα σκανδάλου).

“Kultureller Vermittler, homme de lettres, Vagabund? Zur Selbstdarstellung arabischer Christen in Europa am Beispiel Salomon Negris (1665–1727)”, in R. Toepfer, P. Burschel, J. Wesche (eds.), *Übersetzen in der Frühen Neuzeit. Konzepte und Methoden/Concepts and Practices of Translation in the Early Modern Period*, Stuttgart, 2021, p. 427–453; P. Manstetten, “Solomon Negri. The Self-Fashioning of an Arab Christian in Early Modern Europe”, in C. Zwierlein (ed.), *The Power of the Dispersed: Early Modern Global Travelers beyond Integration*, Leiden/Boston, 2022, p. 240–284; Heyberger, *Middle Eastern and European Christianity*, p. 66, 143.

11 Manstetten, “...for the Benefit of the poor Christians of the Eastern Nations...”.

12 *An extract of several letters*, p. 30.

13 *An extract of several letters*, p. 17: “without any manner of Preface or recommendation: which last circumstance is necessary for its being received readily by the Christians of the East”.

14 See Ch. 9.3.

15 Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 241. For the number of Psalters and New Testaments sent in the Levant, see G. Roper, “The Vienna Arabic Psalter of 1792 and the Role of Typography in European-Arab Relations in the 18th Century and Earlier”, in J. Frimmel, M. Wögerbauer (eds.), *Kommunikation und Information im 18. Jahrhundert. Das Beispiel der Habsburgermonarchie*, Wiesbaden, 2009, p. 79.

Miniatis's work was a polemical treatise against the innovations of the Roman Catholic Church, from an Orthodox perspective. It was first published in the original Greek version in Leipzig in 1718.¹⁶ Other editions followed, some of which were bilingual, Greek and Latin. The treatise thus found readers not only in Greek speaking areas but also in Western Europe.¹⁷ Dabbās's Arabic translation of this work was finished in 1721 in Aleppo and the manuscript was prepared for printing.¹⁸ Although sources do not provide many details, they do shed light on some aspects. The patriarch of Antioch, presumably Athanasios III and not Sylvester, paid for the edition. The book was eventually published in England, but in Oxford, not in London, as some researchers believed. There, the process of editing the manuscript sent from Aleppo and preparing it for printing was supervised by one of the leading Arabic scholars of the time, John Gagnier.¹⁹

For the Arabic speaking Christians in the Ottoman Empire, it was acceptable to have books printed in England or other Western countries, but there were also considerations which obstructed this solution, for example, the distance. In addition, books printed anywhere in the West, especially in a Protestant country, would have been suspected of containing dogmatic errors. The fact is illustrated by the absence of any indication of the place or the date of printing in the book of Ilias Miniatis published in Oxford in 1726. The book was a faithfully reproduced manuscript, including the date and place of the translator's foreword (patriarch Athanasios Dabbās, dated 1721 in Aleppo). The absence of the date and place of publication was not motivated by an intention to deceive the readers. It was simply omitted, as in the case of the two books mentioned previously, to enable its distribution in the Arabic-speaking world. However, the absence of this information confounded many modern researchers. They attributed the edition to the SPCK in London, where the Psalter and the New Testament were published in 1725 and 1728, and they considered the year of the translation, mentioned in the foreword, as the year of printing. The edition supervisor, John Gagnier, perhaps aware of the implications of the absence of the place and year of publication, added manuscript notes

16 Ἐ. Μένιατις, *Πέτρα σκανδάλου, ἥτοι διασάφησις τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ αἰτίας τοῦ σχίσματος τῶν δύο Ἐκκλησιῶν Ανατολικῆς καὶ Δυτικῆς μετὰ τῶν πέντε διαφωνουσῶν διαφορῶν*, Leipzig, 1718. See Papadopoulos, *Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλιογραφία*, 1, p. 315, no. 4250.

17 After the first edition of 1718, the book was published in 1743 (Leipzig), 1752 (Bratislava), 1760 (Amsterdam), 1762 (London), and 1783 (Vienna). See Papadopoulos, *Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλιογραφία*, 1, p. 315.

18 See Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 132.

19 John (Jean) Gagnier, a Frenchman, was deputy and then full Laudian professor at Oxford. See M. Kilburn, "The Fell Legacy 1686–1755", in S. Eliot, I. Gadd (eds.), *The History of Oxford University Press*, Vol. I. *Beginnings to 1780*, Oxford, 2013, p. 135.

containing this information on several copies (Fig. 29). The data was confirmed by modern archival research and sheds new light on this project of Athanasios Dabbās. The book was thus printed during Sylvester's patriarchate, and he was most likely notified when the print run reached the Middle East. As for the content, the new patriarch would only have approved it. It probably was a useful resource to him in his polemics with the *Latinophrones*.

Possible references to the book identified by researchers in sources dating before 1726 may have been misinterpreted, or they refer to manuscript copies. Except for John Gagnier's statement that most of the print run was sent to the Middle East, there is almost no information about the reception of the book at the time. There is not much data available on the number of copies of the London Arabic books that were distributed in the Middle East. There do not seem to be any copies in libraries in the Levant and the only surviving books have been found in Western libraries. There are indications that they never left Europe in the 18th century but were instead collected as book rarities. A possible explanation for the lack of surviving copies in the Levant is that the book, because of its intensely polemical content, had a high risk of being destroyed by the opposite party.

The original manuscript of Dabbās's translation, as well as a copy of it by John Gagnier, possibly in preparation for printing, are held today in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.²⁰ A copy of the printed book in the same library (as well as other copies elsewhere) has a manuscript note in Latin by John Gagnier himself, providing information on the date and place of the edition: Oxford, 1726.²¹ Additional archival information confirms Gagnier's role²² and mentions the involvement of Richard Mayo or Mayow, a fellow of the Pembroke College, as the sponsor of the editing project.²³

Patriarch Sylvester may have received the print run of the book ordered by Athanasios III and printed in 1726 in Oxford. A note by Gagnier in the above Oxford manuscript mentions that most of the copies, with a few exceptions probably required for Western scholars and libraries, were sent to Aleppo.²⁴

20 A. Nicoll, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium Catalogi*, Part II, Vol. 1. *Arabicos*, Oxford, 1821, p. 39–41, no. XXXIX, MS Bodl. 287.

21 The shelfmark of the book is Cambridge University Library S828.d.72.7. See G. Roper, "England and the printing of texts for Orthodox Christians in Greek and Arabic, 17th–18th centuries", in *Travaux du Symposium international "Le livre. La Roumanie. L'Europe"*. Troisième édition. 20–24 septembre 2010, 1, Bucharest, 2011, p. 439.

22 Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 245.

23 Kilburn, "The Fell Legacy 1686–1755", p. 135.

24 H. Carter, *A History of the Oxford University Press*, vol. I. *To the Year 1780*, Oxford, 1975, p. 309; G. Roper, *Arabic Printing in Malta 1825–1845. Its History and its Place in the Development of Print*

The title page of the book mentions the date and place of the translation, as well as the patriarch's name and title: "Athanasios, by the grace of God, patriarch of Antioch and All the East" (اثناسيوس برحمة الله تعالى البطريرك الانطاكي وسائر المشرق). In the Arabic text, a mistake was made in the word *sā'ir*, سائر, erroneously printed ريس.

Since the book was not printed until 1726, after Sylvester's election to the patriarchal Throne, it is possible that the manuscript was sent to England after 1724. An argument in favor of this could be the fact that Athanasios Dabbās was at times reluctant to attack the Latins overtly, in his effort to keep the concord among the various groups.

There were also some Arabic texts printed in England without Athanasios Dabbās's involvement, including an Arabic catechism and a *Compendium of the Holy History* translated from the *Abrégé de l'Histoire Sainte* by Jean-Frédéric Ostervald.²⁵ They were printed around the same time as the Psalter and the New Testament. Sources also mention a "letter" to be distributed with this Psalter, probably a pamphlet of unknown content.

The history of Arabic books printed in the West with the aim of distribution in the East has not yet been surveyed in all its aspects. The same counts for the history of Arabic books printed in the East, although in this area progress has been made recently within the TYPARABIC project, of which the present monograph is a part.

15.2 Sylvester and Book Printing

All the books printed on Sylvester of Antioch's initiative are bibliographical rarities, as the number of surviving copies is extremely limited. In fact, many of them survive in one or two copies only, sometimes incomplete. The implications of this issue are visible in the earlier research on these printed books. Many authors relied on incomplete descriptions found in secondary sources. Major bibliographies, such as *Bibliotheca Arabica*, an annotated catalogue published in 1811 in Halle by Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer (1742–1822), only mentions one of the ten titles printed by Sylvester of Antioch that are known so far.

Culture in the Arab Middle East, unpublished PhD thesis, Durham, 1988, p. 70–71; Roper, "England and the printing of texts for Orthodox Christians", p. 439; G. Roper, "Printed in Europe, Consumed in Ottoman Lands: European Books in the Middle East, 1514-1842", in D. Bellingradt, P. Nelles, J. Salman (eds.), *Books in Motion in Early Modern Europe. Beyond Production, Circulation and Consumption*, London, 2017, p. 267-288.

25 Häberlein, Manstetten, "The Translation Policies", p. 318.

Based on the existing data for other titles and on the technical limitations, such as the degree of wear of the type and plates, we may deduct that the print run for each book was about several hundred, maximum a thousand copies. Exceptionally, the book published by Sylvester in Iași in 1746 mentions a print run of 1,500 copies. Other factors which might limit print runs, such as the costs or the availability of paper, are not applicable, considering the support of the ruling princes and the role of the printing activity in the Romanian Principalities in the 18th century.²⁶

In 1745, while struggling to preserve his position, challenged more strongly than ever by Kyrillos Tanās, Sylvester succeeded in finding time, energy, and money to pursue his printing project. When facing the danger of losing the patriarchal Throne or being put in jail by creditors (as Sylvester mentions in one of his letters), book-printing would not be a priority for most people, but it was for Sylvester. In fact, the activity of printing Arabic books which he started in Moldavia in 1745 seems to have been of paramount importance for the patriarch of Antioch.

Sylvester's letters from this period, many of them unknown and unstudied until recently, shed light on the patriarch's ideas about printing books for the Orthodox Arabs. In a letter to Constantine Mavrokordatos, then prince of Wallachia, Sylvester wrote that he received messages from his eparchy that the *Latinophrones* had disseminated many books that spread their errors in the region. The measure he took was to initiate the printing of Orthodox books to raise the level of knowledge of that nation in difficulty" ("έκεῖνο τὸ ἐξηπορημένον γένος") about their faith. The letter was written most likely in late 1745, after the printing of the *Book of the Divine Liturgies*. It offers a rare glimpse into the patriarch's thinking and his motivation for the project of printing Arabic books.²⁷ Other letters complete the image, even though they only contain fragments of information on this topic. The overall image that can be reconstructed from the sources is that Sylvester of Antioch had a very determined plan to print books for the Arab Christians.

In the same letter of late 1745, he informs Constantine Mavrokordatos, the prince of Wallachia, that he sent "his typographers" to Moldavia, where the printing press was located. It is interesting that he presented all this information to him. It is possible that the two had already discussed the possibility of relocating the

²⁶For the printing activities in Wallachia and Moldavia in the 18th century, see Papacostea-Danielopolu,

press to Wallachia or opening a second one there. The Arabic press in Bucharest started functioning in 1747. It is not difficult to discover who Sylvester's typographers were. They identified themselves in the books printed in 1746 as the monk Mikhā'il of Kūrat al-Dhahab and the *shammās* Jirjis al-Ḥalabī.²⁸ Another typographer employed by Sylvester of Antioch was Jirjis Abū Sha'r; if this was a different person from Jirjis al-Ḥalabī.²⁹ The fact that they were already "typographers" leads to the question of where they learned their craft. The idea that typesetting entire books could be done by a non-native speaker of Arabic, in this case a Romanian, must be discarded from the start. Sylvester's letter is proof enough that this was not the case. Other more technical processes, such as type casting (but not the design of typefaces), inking, and the printing itself could be done in theory by non-Arabic-speaking workers. But the whole process needed a native speaker's supervision for typesetting control, typeface positioning, page order, etc.

At the current level of knowledge, it cannot be determined where Sylvester's typographers were trained.³⁰ It is clear, though, that they did not acquire these skills in Moldavia. They could have learned the printing craft somewhere in the Ottoman lands, but it is unlikely that they worked in the printing press of 'Abdallāh Zākhir in Khinshāra or that of Ibrahim Müteferrika in Istanbul.³¹ The theory that at least one of the people employed by Sylvester had previously worked in Athanasios Dabbās's press in 1706 is promising, but evidence from sources is needed to establish it.³² The last book printed in Aleppo is dated 1711. There is no evidence that the printing activity continued after this.

We may suppose that the people involved in the printing activity at the Aleppo press until 1711 were still available in 1745, but this requires proof. 'Abdallāh Zākhir himself was surely involved in the activity of Aleppo. He opened his own printing press decades later, starting to print around 1733. Typographical skills such as typesetting were not difficult to learn in a reasonable amount of time. The most laborious step in the printing process was one of the first: cutting punches. Done in hard metal, such as iron, it took a lot of time and required a skilled craftsman. Creating the matrices and casting the typefaces (known as "sorts") was time-consuming but feasible. The process continued with the typesetting of pages and the printing itself.

28 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 89; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 184.

29 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 238.

30 See V. Căndeă, "Beginning with 1701. The Romanian – Lebanese Dialogue through Books and Printing", *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, 11, 1983, p. 31.

31 For Ibrahim Müteferrika, see O. Sabev, *The Müteferrika Press. Arabic Typography in an Ottoman Context*, Berlin/Boston, forthcoming in 2025.

32 For the opinion that the person who worked with Dabbās and Sylvester as a typographer was the monk Mikhā'il of Kūrat al-Dhahab, see Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 184.

Documents from 1747-1750 (almost the entire period in which Sylvester printed Arabic books in Bucharest) provide an image of the printing activity in the capital of Wallachia. They present information about the number of persons involved, their skills, the overall costs of printing a book, the number of presses, wages, etc.³³

There is one difference between Zākhir's printing activity and Sylvester's. Zākhir and the subsequent printers in his press sold the books, while Sylvester presented them as gifts. All of them made financial investments, and selling the books could allow the continuity of the printing business. Whereas printing was relatively cheap but binding the printed sheets, and especially luxury binding, was more expensive. Thus, the printed books were not expensive, and sources provide some information on the prices of the first books printed by Zākhir. The information comes from a rather intense exchange of letters between 'Abdallāh Zākhir and Pierre Fromage, a Jesuit priest who pretended that he had financed the establishment of the press. In his letters, Zākhir answered that his initial investment was far larger than that of Fromage and he had repaid in printed books whatever financial aid he had received with Fromage's help.

Why are the print runs relevant? Is the relatively small number of copies preserved today indicative of limited print runs? Not necessarily. Several other causes may be responsible. A possible factor is the book distribution. What happened to the Arabic books printed in Moldavia and Wallachia at Sylvester's initiative? The intention was to send the bulk of the print run to "Arabia" or "Syria", as Sylvester names the Arabic-speaking regions of his eparchy in his letters. Sending hundreds of books by land or sea at a considerable geographical distance was a real challenge. Proper packaging was required. Although traveling between vassal states and inside Ottoman borders meant they were not dealing in "imported" goods, any indiscretion could cause trouble. While not sharing the opinion that Christian Arabic books were suspected or banned by the Ottoman authorities, the overall bureaucratic system could always attract new and unexpected issues and additional financial costs.

Did Sylvester's books reach the Levant? The answer is affirmative, as can be deduced from letters of the patriarch of Antioch sent to the Patriarchs Matthaïos of Alexandria and Parthenios of Jerusalem. Sylvester sent "a coffer with Arabic books" to the first mentioned. He also suggested to the patriarch of Alexandria that he could print books for him. He does not specify that he means Arabic books, but it is implied by the context. This information can be obtained from a letter to Matthaïos in which Sylvester mentions that he had previously sent "a coffer

33 T. Sîmedrea, "Țiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească în anii 1740–1750", *BOR*, 83, 1965, 9–10, p. 932–934, 936–942.

with Arabic books of kyr Eustratios and other, according to the catalogue we had inside” (“ἐν σεντούκιον ἐκ τῶν ἀραβικῶν βιβλίων τοῦ κύρ Εὐστρατίου καὶ ἄλλων κατὰ τὸν κατάλογον ὅπου εἶχομεν μέσα”). The books were sent with Hourmouzis, a merchant from Rhodes, sometime before December 16, 1749.³⁴ Sylvester mentions in the letter that two letters were previously sent to the patriarch of Alexandria, which remained unanswered, and he is not aware if the patriarch received the books.

A letter from Sylvester to Parthenios of Jerusalem reveals the following:

Τῆς φανερόνουμε δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν τυπογραφίαν, ὅτι τὴν τελειώσαμεν καὶ ἐδιορθώσαμεν καὶ ἐκαλλωπίσαμεν, ἔχοντες σκοπὸς σὺν Θεῷ νὰ τὴν ἀποκαταστήσωμεν εἰς τὸν ἀποστολικὸν θρόνον μας, καὶ ἐλπίζομεν νὰ γενῆ κάποιον πολὺ ὄφελος, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὅπου τῆς στέλνωμεν καὶ τυπώματα διὰ νὰ τὰ στοχασθῆ, ἐπειδὴ γνωρίζομαστε ὅτι τὸ χαίρεται.³⁵

And we let you know also about the printing press, that we have finished it and fixed it and improved it, aiming, with [the help of] God, to install it again at our Apostolic Throne, and we hope that it will become something very useful, and behold, we are also sending you printed books to peruse, because we know that you would enjoy it.

Some of the Arabic books printed in Wallachia and Moldavia never left the Romanian lands. Even if the bulk of the books was intended to be shipped to the Ottoman-ruled provinces of present-day Syria and Lebanon, there is some logical explanation for the copies left behind. It is possible that they belonged to different categories. Some of them were most likely presentation copies sent to the prince who helped print them, members of his family, and notable local scholars. Others could have belonged to some sort of legal deposit, perhaps intended to enrich the collections of the few emerging libraries in Wallachia.

The study of some of the copies confirms these suppositions and provides even more surprising data about their readers and owners. A small number of books may have remained in the *metochia* of the Patriarchate of Antioch in Wallachia and Moldavia, for the use of the Arabic-speaking clergy residing there. It is worth remembering that Sylvester of Antioch presented a full set of Greek *Menologia* printed in Venice to a Moldavian monastery.

Sylvester himself had no illusions about what could happen to the books he printed. He was well aware that they might end up being burned. In the letter to Patriarch Matthaïos of Alexandria, he formulated this hypothesis about a shipment

³⁴ Letter of Patriarch Sylvester to Matthaïos of Alexandria, December 16, 1749, [Constantinople], in MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 112v.

³⁵ MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 112r.

of Arabic books intended for the Antiochian merchants in Egypt. As the books did not reach their destination, Sylvester suspected that they were hidden or destroyed by the captain of the ship that carried them. Sylvester asked the patriarch of Alexandria to find out who was responsible and what happened to the books. If they were destroyed, Sylvester would order a replacement. The letter provides some important information. First, the books were at risk of being destroyed by ideological opponents, in Sylvester's case, the "Latin-minded", or *Latinophrones*. Second, the books may have been deposited somewhere in the Levant, probably in Damascus, Beirut, or Tripoli, not in Constantinople, where the patriarch was at the time, nor in the Romanian Principalities.

The conflict between Sylvester's supporters and those of Kyrillos manifested itself also in book publishing. The printing press founded by 'Abdallāh Zākhir in Shuwayr was mass producing Arabic books promoting the Latin dogmas. Some of the books were translations from Western works by Latin missionaries such as Pierre Fromage. Other books contained much-needed liturgical texts for the Church services. As proven by the books that survive, the print runs and the quality of type and paper reveal the substantial Western support for the Shuwayr press. This does not diminish Zākhir's merits, as he was well known as a skillful person both in practical matters related to printing and in learned disputes with the Orthodox.

At the same time, in 1745, Sylvester began his first dated experiment with Arabic printing. The first book printed in Iași was the *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, using only the Arabic text of the bilingual edition printed by Dabbās in 1701 in Snagov. Sylvester did not import the type from Western Europe, nor did he have at his disposal a skillful engraver like Zākhir, who was able to replicate Arabic fonts. Although Iași and Bucharest were centers of typographical activity, the Arabic type used in the books published by Sylvester was both original and innovative. The outcomes, in terms of the quality of the printed text, were mixed. Period sources confirm that Sylvester's team experimented with at least two sets of typefaces. From Sylvester's notes it is evident that he took interest in the printing process. He made notes of a recipe for typographer's ink and its components, like *negrofumo*. At the time, preparing ink was part of the typographical process. Sylvester may have been familiar with the preparation of ink from his work as a painter.

An important source for the Arabic printing activity in Iași in 1746 is a list of expenses of the printing press.³⁶ The list was written in Arabic by one of the supervisors of the press at the Saint Sabbas monastery in Iași.³⁷ The document was later

³⁶ MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 150v.

³⁷ For the presence of Yūsuf Mark in Bucharest, see Haddad, "La correspondance de Ṭrābulṣī", p. 274; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 201–202.

transcribed in one of the codices used by Sylvester of Antioch to record texts of personal and official interest.³⁸ At first glance, the list does not look so important. It is a rather repetitive enumeration of sums of money spent on various items and activities related to the functioning of the printing press. However, a thorough examination reveals all kinds of interesting details, as we shall explain henceforth.

The amounts spent are listed for every month from January to December 1746. It shows the items needed for the press and the workers, such as cartloads of firewood, as well as other goods needed in the technological process. The sums are recorded in silver and divisionary coins. The printers' wages amounted to twelve coins per month, for an unknown number of workers. At least two typographers and several workers were employed.³⁹ When necessary, additional work force was enlisted and paid. Also, there were several boys as apprentices. This was a common practice in the printing presses of the time, as has been attested for example in Wallachian records from around that time.⁴⁰ The sums spent on the typographers' food are also recorded. Other sums were spent on equipment repairs. The list confirms the data which was recorded in a book printed during this period, containing the works of patriarch Nektarios of Jerusalem and Eustratios Argentis, bound together. In the printers' note at the end of both works it is mentioned that the printing was completed in July 1746. The entry for the month of July includes the amount of the *baksheesh* for the workers as a reward for the printing completion, a small sum paid in divisionary coins.

There are two records that stand out as especially interesting in the rather repetitive list. The first refers to a sum for carving a woodblock with the prince's emblem, no doubt the coat of arms of Moldavia with Prince John Mavrokordatos's initials. For the wood-carved emblem, a sum of twelve divisionary coins was paid. The craftsman was probably a local master, as the prince's initials are printed in Cyrillic.⁴¹ It should be noticed that the quality of the workmanship for the respective woodblock was lower than most similar examples found in Romanian books at the time. The presence of the prince's coat of arms in the book printed in July 1746 in Iași was a request from Patriarch Sylvester as a form of expressing his gratitude for the help he had received. The *Foreword* mentions that the book was printed at the prince's request. Similar, and even more elaborate coats of arms, are present

38 MS 210 Șariřã.

39 For the two typographers, see Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 89; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 184–185.

40 Simedrea, "Șiparul bucureřtean de carte bisericeascã", p. 932–934, 936–942.

41 *BRV* IV, p. 63–64; D. Simonescu, "CãrȘi arabe țipãrite de romãni în secolul al XVIII-lea (1701–1747)", *BOR*, 82, 1964, 5–6, p. 557, 559; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 290.

in the two books printed by Athanasios Dabbās in Snagov (1701, 1702) and in the *Aleppo Gospel* (1706).

The book printed in Iași in 1746 contains another unusual feature: a text in Greek printed in Arabic type mentioning the official title of Prince John Mavrokordatos.⁴² Interestingly enough, at the present state of knowledge no other Arabic book printed by Sylvester in Moldavia and Wallachia contains a coat of arms of the country's ruling prince, either John or Constantine Mavrokordatos. Future discoveries may change this picture, considering that the title page is missing from both the *Book of the Divine Liturgies* printed in 1745 in Iași and the Arabic *Akathistos* printed at an unknown date and location.

The second interesting issue mentioned in the list of expenses is a sum of eleven coins given to the *daskalos* Niqūlā Wafā (الدسكله نقولا وفا) in July 1746. There is no mention about the services rendered by this *daskalos*. The Greek δάσκαλος meant “teacher”, a man of letters, but at the time it was also used for a master typographer. As the name is probably Arabic and only one Romanian typographer named Necula (“zățariul”, the “compositor”) is known at the time, the identity of the individual remains unknown.⁴³ Maybe this was a collaborator from Syria who corrected the proofs, as it is logical that proofreading was required. It is also possible that his payment was not related to the printing activity.

What was the activity of the Iași press from August to December 1746, after the first book (a colligate) was finished? The list of monthly expenses mentions the price of binding, an activity that was probably externalized. The price is relatively small. Possible explanations are that either not all the books were bound, or that a cheap “paperback” binding was preferred. The continuation of the list for the following months, with the printers' wages and other expenses recorded, indicates that work on a new book started. The next book printed in Iași was the *Lord's Supper* by Eustratios Argentis. The printing of this 240-page book was finished in February 1747, so it is logical to suppose that it had started some months before, most likely in August 1746.

After printing Argentis's book, the Arabic press, or only the typographers, moved to Wallachia, where Sylvester also arrived in 1746 or 1747.

⁴² BRV IV, p. 63; Simonescu, “Cărți arabe tipărite de români”, p. 557.

⁴³ E. Chiaburu, *Carte și tipar în Țara Moldovei*, 2nd ed., Iași, 2010, p. 71; E. Mârza, F. Bogdan (eds.), *Repertoriul tipografilor, gravurilor, patronilor, editorilor cărților românești (1508–1830)*, 2nd ed., Sibiu, 2013, p. 211.

Bucharest was a well-established printing center in the mid-18th century.⁴⁴ At least three presses had functioned in the city in the previous decades: the first belonged to the Metropolitan See of Ungro-Wallachia, the second worked at the Saint Sabbas Monastery, a *metochion* of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the third was supported by the prince of Wallachia. Among those mastering the art of printing, a key person was Stoica Iacovici (Iakovich, Iakovitzēs in Greek), an Orthodox priest who had probably started as an apprentice of Anthimos the Iberian.

In 1747, metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia was Neophytos the Cretan, a close collaborator of prince Constantine Mavrokordatos. Neophytos had an interest in publishing most of the liturgical books in use in the Orthodox Church in Romanian editions, to replace the Slavonic books which had become obsolete. The aim was to publish all liturgical books in the spoken language of the country. The metropolitan's notes prove that he was keen on supervising and managing all printing-related activities: supplies of printing material, type, paper, workers' wages, etc.⁴⁵

There is no doubt that Sylvester met Neophytos in Bucharest. It is likely that the two hierarchs exchanged ideas on various topics. They continued to write to each other sporadically, as testified by a couple of letters sent by the patriarch to the metropolitan.

In 1747, Sylvester went to Wallachia, where Constantine Mavrokordatos had granted a *metochion* to the Patriarchate of Antioch. The Arabic printing activity was relocated to Bucharest. Two books were printed in the capital of Wallachia, both in 1747: a *Book of Psalms* and the *Acts of the Synods of Constantinople*, most likely in this order. The two books were printed with the same type used in Iași. At the patriarch's request, the printers were also manufacturing a new type, as attested by a letter of Musa Țrăbulși dated 1747.⁴⁶ According to his report, the outcome of the type-manufacturing activity was not satisfactory, which makes it probable that the new type was not used. We do not know which books were printed with the new typefaces.

Although no books are known to have been printed on Sylvester' initiative between 1748 and 1751, there is one, the Arabic *Akathistos*, that could be attributed to this period. The fact that the title page is missing from the only copy known so far makes it impossible to determine its date or place of printing. The book encloses a full-page engraving of the *Annunciation* that is present in many books printed

⁴⁴ For the printing activities in Bucharest see Simedrea, "Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească", p. 845–942.

⁴⁵ Simedrea, "Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească", p. 921, 932–942.

⁴⁶ Haddad, "La correspondance de Țrăbulși", p. 274–275; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 238–239.

in Bucharest from the early 18th century onward, as well as in those printed in Buzău, a bishop's see in Eastern Wallachia. The engraving resembles the one in a Romanian *Akathistos* printed in Buzău in 1746 so closely that it is almost sure that the same woodblock was used for both books. Perhaps this is not a coincidence. Other typographical ornaments also point towards Wallachia as the printing place of this Arabic *Akathistos*. Further research is bound to provide an answer to this question.

The next question is why did Sylvester's printing activity stop. The patriarch of Antioch's printing works in the Romanian Principalities depended on the support and financial aid from the ruling princes. In Moldavia, printing stopped at the end of January 1747, when the patriarch decided to move his residence to Wallachia. The reasons are not revealed in any sources, but a few suppositions can be made. John Mavrokordatos's position was already weakened, internally, by the revolt of the boyars, and externally, by a complaint addressed to the Porte by a resident of Moldavia. These issues required all the attention and financial resources of the prince.

Why did the printing activity not continue in Bucharest? Constantine Mavrokordatos was appointed prince of Moldavia in April 1748, and the throne of Wallachia was occupied by Gregory II Ghikas. Once again, due to these rapid political changes, the patriarch of Antioch decided to leave Wallachia and move the printing activity to another location, even though Ghikas was a longtime acquaintance of Sylvester, and they were on good terms. The frequent political changes made Sylvester think that maybe the Romanian Principalities were not the most suitable place for his printing projects. An additional factor was the effort of the Metropolitan Neophytos of Ungro-Wallachia to secure the control over the ecclesiastical books printed in his eparchy. The metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia had the control over all printing activities, especially of ecclesiastical books. Printing presses also functioned elsewhere in Wallachia, run by the two Bishoprics of Râmnic and Buzău.

It might not be related, but around this time, the printing press of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem also stopped its book production. The typographic implements were stored and some of them were reused later. The distance from Bucharest to his eparchy in Ottoman Syria might have been another factor in Sylvester's decision to move the printing press to another location.

It is possible that the three presses mentioned in a letter of Sylvester, as well as the press transferred from Wallachia that was "fixed" and put in good order, were a gift from the metropolitan or the ruling Prince of Wallachia.⁴⁷ In a letter

⁴⁷ See Ch. 9.4.

to Neophytos, Sylvester expressed his gratitude for the metropolitan's support. Although the content of this support was not mentioned, it may be suggested that it referred to the typographic implements.

In 1750, Sylvester asked an *archōn* of Wallachia, the son-in-law of Gregory Ghikas, to send the *typographia* ("printing press") to him in a *mukaniko* carriage. The adjective *mukaniko*, from the Romanian noun *mocan* (Adj. *mocănesc*) means "related to a transhumant shepherd". Sylvester may have referred to a sort of covered carriage able to protect the transported goods. What exactly was the "typography" sent from Wallachia? Perhaps sets of punches, matrices, and cast sorts, although these were more fragile and likely to be damaged during transportation. The transport may also have included the presses, maybe the three ones just mentioned. To fit into the carriage, they could have been disassembled, thus explaining the need to be fixed and put in good order.

Was the printing press with three presses that Sylvester moved from Wallachia repaired, put in good order, and installed elsewhere, as mentioned in the patriarch's letters? Maybe the patriarch printed one or more books in Constantinople, where he spent almost three years after he left Wallachia. The presence of a Greek press in the capital meant that qualified printers were available, with whom Sylvester could have collaborated. Further research could solve this and other issues, as recent discoveries have revealed. The bibliography of Arabic books of the 18th century is far from being complete at present.

Sylvester's decision to move the printing press from the relatively risk-free environment of the Romanian Principalities to an area directly controlled by the Ottomans may seem strange. Modern historical writing has not come to a clear conclusion regarding the Ottoman attitude towards printing in the languages of the Christian subjects of the empire. A significant contribution to the subject was made in the volume resulting from the first conference of the TYPARABIC project, published as the second volume of collected works of the De Gruyter series *Early Arabic Printing in the East (EAPE-2)*.⁴⁸

The fact that Sylvester decided to establish the printing press "in his See" (i.e., the eparchy of Syria), as he repeatedly declared, indicates that he did not expect difficulties from the central or local authorities. Most likely, no official permit was required or, if needed, it was easy to secure. In the 1750s, books in Greek started to be printed in Constantinople, more than a century after a first attempt. These books were printed in connection with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and addressed polemical subjects. As long as they challenged Latin dogmas and not the Ottoman rule, they were not considered a threat to the system.

⁴⁸ Dîpratu, Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books Printed in Wallachia, Istanbul, and Beyond*, Berlin/Boston, 2024.

This brings us to the question of *where* in his “See” Sylvester established his press. Generally, the term “See” was used to refer to the residence of a Patriarchate, in Sylvester’s case, Damascus. But it could mean, in a broader sense, the whole area under the jurisdiction of the patriarch.

In a letter to leaders of the Greek community in Venice, Sylvester asked for paper for the printing press he established “in Arabia”. Sylvester’s letters are not clear on where this press was located. Was it first in Damascus, and then in Beirut? This question is not answered in full in the existing sources.

The most plausible opinion is that the printing press was installed in Beirut, where it was supervised by the *sheikh* Yūnus Nīqūlā, Sylvester’s *wakīl* or representative in the city.⁴⁹ Three books were printed in Beirut between 1751 and 1753, and after that all activity stopped. A later source connects the end of the printing activity with the effects of an earthquake in 1759.⁵⁰ While the existence of yet unknown books printed in Beirut is not excluded, for now, only two are known to survive in a few copies, the 1751 *Book of Hours* and the 1752 *Book of Psalms*. The scarce information on two more titles, the *Book of the Divine Liturgies* and a second edition of the *Book of Psalms*, relies on the fact that they were mentioned in secondary sources. The *Book of the Divine Liturgies* is mentioned only in an article of Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811), who may have come across the book during his travels in the East. Seetzen was a German explorer and scientist who travelled extensively in the East and had an interest in printed books and manuscripts.⁵¹ It is possible that Seetzen referred to one of the Iaṣi books, or one of those printed by Zākhīr’s press at Shuwayr. But it is also possible that the *Book of the Divine Liturgies* was printed in Beirut, and copies of it are still waiting to be discovered. Such discoveries are possible, as recent research on Sylvester’s books has repeatedly demonstrated. Although collecting early Arabic printed books had its enthusiasts, such as Silvestre de Sacy, the 5th Earl of Guilford, or the 2nd Earl Spencer, it was not as popular as collecting manuscripts. In important libraries in the East, early Arabic printed books were generally neglected, and undoubtedly surprises await the researcher in many book collections.

49 For Yūnus Nīqūlā al-Jabaylī, also known as Abū ‘Askar and ‘al-Bayrūtī’, see Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 245.

50 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 245–256.

51 For Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, see “Seetzen, Ulrich Jasper”, in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, vol. XXIV, 11th ed., New York, 1911, p. 581; Walbiner, “Ulrich Jasper Seetzen”, p. 197–204; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 247–248; C. Walbiner, “The Collection, Perception and Study of Arabic Incunabula from the Near East in Europe (17th–early 19th Centuries)”, in Dipratu, Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books Printed in Wallachia, Istanbul, and Beyond*, p. 191–208, especially p. 199–200.

According to all available sources (most of them dating from the 19th and the 20th centuries), the Beirut printing press functioned in the Monastery of Saint George in Beirut. Some authors suggested a connection between the 1751–1753 press and the Printing Press of Saint George active in the second half of the 19th century, almost a hundred years later. While the earthquake of 1759 provoked extensive damage in Beirut, including to the church of Saint George, the end of the printing activity in Beirut apparently occurred before that, in 1753. Some sources claim that the 19th-century printing press used some of the recovered pieces of the 18th-century press.⁵²

Sheikh Yūnus Niqūlā continued to have a preeminent role in the city and financed the repairs of the Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George. In 1756, Patriarch Sylvester painted for the Cathedral two, or possibly three large icons.⁵³

A printing press “of the Rūm”, *maṭba‘at al-Rūm al-kā‘ina fī madīnat Bayrūt* (مطبعة الروم الكائنة في مدينة بيروت), is documented to have existed in Beirut in the 19th century. A book was published there in 1846 with the title *An Epistle Containing Various Benefits Translated from Greek by As‘ad bin Jibrā‘il Sursock*.⁵⁴

Was Patriarch Sylvester’s printing program complete? It is difficult to ascertain. Sources suggest a negative answer. In the letter sent to Venice, Sylvester wrote that he intended to print Psalters and Menologia. While the Beirut Psalter was printed in 1751–1752, only five years after the Bucharest one, the Menologia were an entirely different endeavor. Printing twelve large volumes was not an easy task. In Wallachia, with far more resources (in terms of financing and typographic facilities), printing the *Menologia* in Romanian was only achieved in the second half of the 18th century.⁵⁵ While this episode is probably not connected with Sylvester’s activity, it attests to a parallel activity of printing liturgical books in the spoken languages of the Orthodox world. Sylvester’s donation of the Greek *Menologia* printed in Venice to the Monastery of Saint Sabbas in Iași could have been related to a project of translating and printing them in Arabic. Sylvester seems to have developed a project to publish, beside polemical literature, a series of liturgical books in Arabic, the spoken language in the Patriarchate of Antioch. He mentioned this

52 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 245–256, with bibliography. For the Beirut press, see also Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 489.

53 See Ch. 19.11.

54 <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10572786>; <https://archive.org/details/risalamotargama>.

55 An attempt at printing a Romanian edition of the Menologia was undertaken in October 1747 by the head of the merchants’ guild (“staroste”) Constantin Boltașul (Κωνσταντίνος Μολτάσης). He rented a press from the Metropolitan See of Ungro-Wallachia to print the *Menologia*. He eventually abandoned the project. See Sîmedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească”, p. 892–894.

intention in at least one letter, addressed to the leaders of the Greek community in Venice. The project was similar with the efforts made at the same time by metropolitans such as Neophytos of Ungro-Wallachia to publish a series of liturgical books in the Romanian language.⁵⁶

15.3 Printing Techniques

The aim of the current section is to shed more light on the issue of the typographical process and the types of activities which are likely to have taken place in the printing presses established by Sylvester. The first step was the production of the sorts (typefaces), following the system punch/matrix/sort used since Johannes Gutenberg's times. It involved cutting (engraving) the punch in a hard metal, such as iron, as a negative letter. The second step was the production of the matrices as positives in a softer metal like copper, using the punches. Casting the type sorts or type was the third step, leading to the final product, a negative letter in relief, of a specific height. Additional smoothening or improvement of the cast sorts was sometimes necessary to ensure a clear print.⁵⁷

In the 18th century, the composition for the alloy necessary for the letters was standardized, and Patriarch Sylvester, after encountering it, noted the recipe down in one of his manuscripts. The metal was usually an alloy of lead, tin, and antimony. Quantities were variable. Usually, the lead was around 80%, the rest being antimony and a smaller amount of tin. Several sources survive that confirm the use of such an alloy for casting the printing sorts. The interesting fact is that in Sylvester's note with the title "Μίγμα τῶν χαρακτῆρων" ("The alloy for the type"), his alloy is composed of a hundred "litres" of lead (μολίβι), ten "litres" of antimony (ἀντιμόνιον), and four "litres" of copper (χάλκωμα). Thus, the alloy had approximately 87.7% lead, 8.7% antimony, and 3.5% copper.⁵⁸

The presence of copper in the alloy and the absence of tin are difficult to explain. Maybe there is a mistake in the manuscript and copper was written instead of tin (κασσίτερος). However, alloys containing copper are possible, although unusual.

⁵⁶ This letter is discussed in Ch. 15.4. For similar projects in printing Arabic and Romanian books, see V. Căndea, "Une politique culturelle commune roumano-arabe dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle", *Association Internationale d'Études du Sud-Est Européen. Bulletin*, 3, 1965, 1, p. 51–56.

⁵⁷ For the functioning of a printing press in the 1740s in Bucharest, see Sîmedrea, "Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească", p. 875–887.

⁵⁸ MS 210 Șarișă, f. 103v.

This type of alloy was more durable than the usual composition, provided the quantity of copper was small.⁵⁹

If copper was used for the type employed for printing Arabic books in the Romanian Principalities, that would be an interesting fact. The more durable alloy could explain the greater number of books and copies apparently printed with the same type in Iași and Bucharest. Of these metals, antimony was the most difficult to find. It was suggested that antimony was not used in Wallachia at the time.⁶⁰ It is still possible that Sylvester followed the composition of the alloy he noted in his manuscript, as the metal could have been imported.

The decorative elements, borders and full-page illustrations were carved in woodblocks or engraved in metal. The same was done for the large size chapter titles. When enough sorts were cast, typesetting could begin. In theory, it was highly skilled work and it required knowledge of the language of the text to be printed. Certain researchers have suggested that this was not always the case, and typesetting could be done in a language unknown to the typesetters. This theory is disputable, especially if one considers that the time needed for typesetting in an unknown language was longer than when the typesetting was made in a known language. A longer time would make no sense in terms of economic profitability and would render the whole printing process more difficult. Another argument against this suggestion is the high risk of typographical mistakes resulting from typesetting in an unfamiliar language, requiring more time for correction and undermining the quality of the book. It was thus much more efficient to find people who knew the language, to train them as typesetters, if they did not already possess the required skills, and to put them to work quickly and efficiently.

Most of the other tasks within the printing process did not require expert skills. Applying the ink and the pressing was largely unskilled manual labor. Some attention was needed in printing the folios on both sides in the right direction.

In the books printed by Sylvester, four different sets of typefaces are discernable. Chronologically, the first one was used in all the five or six books published in Iași and Bucharest. In the foreword of the *Acts of the Synods of Constantinople*, the patriarch mentions that the letters were wrongly connected, as the typesetting had been done by people not familiar with the Arabic language. Moreover, the type was worn out after being used for the printing of six books. The letters preserved in Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī's collection provide additional data.

⁵⁹ Fry's *Printing Metals*, [London], 1972, p. 43, 56. Accessible online at https://www.metatype.co.uk/downloads/fry_typemetal.pdf (accessed on April 9, 2024).

⁶⁰ Simedrea, "Țiparul bucuureștean de carte bisericască", p. 879. See also Chiaburu, *Carte și tipar în Țara Moldovei*, p. 21–22, 30.

All books known to have been printed in Bucharest and Iași seem to have used the same typefaces. The impression of the letters in the last book, printed in 1747, shows a certain degree of wear, as Sylvester also mentioned in his preface to the *Acts of the Synods of Constantinople*.

In Bucharest, a new type was manufactured in the beginning of 1747 or 1748. This is also mentioned in the same foreword, alongside the intention to print many new books. One of Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī's letters contains the assertion that the patriarch did not like the new type and searched for a new one. It is unclear what this search meant.

The information that new Arabic type was cast in Bucharest in 1747 or 1748 is also mentioned in a German source. On May 9, 1748, two Greek brothers, Diamantēs and Iōannēs Petalas, arrived in Leipzig from Bucharest to study at the Halle University. Johann Heinrich Callenberg (1694 – 1760), a Halle professor, reported that: „Es sey ietzo in Buckarest der Patriarch von Antiochien zugegen, und habe lassen Arabische Buchstaben giessen. Derselbe habe ihm, da er sein Vorhaben, hieher zu reisen, entdeckt, die Benediction ertheilet” (“The Patriarch of Antioch was present in Buckarest and had Arabic letters cast. When he discovered his intention to travel here, he gave him [Petalas] the blessing”).⁶¹

It is possible that in 1748 one or more different leaflets or brochures were produced in the Arabic press in Bucharest using the new typeface. Some of these could have been small prayer books (*Eὐχολόγια*). Sources mention that a Greek *Euchologion* was printed in Bucharest around the same date, but no copy of it survives.⁶² The reason for the lack of available copies is the same for all leaflets. Due to their small format, brochures and leaflets deteriorate quicker than bound books.

The second set of type is more interesting, as it has some characteristics not found at the time in any other press in the West or the East. One such characteristic is the lack of inclination to the left in many typefaces and the equal vertical lines in *lām alif*. This is the type that was used for printing the Arabic *Akathistos* of unknown date and place. It is interesting to note that no other book was printed with this set of types. The unusual typeface is thus a particular feature of this book. The typeface is neatly carved and entirely different from the one used in the known Arabic books printed in Iași and Bucharest, and from the one in the two books printed in Beirut. A feature which this *Akathistos* shares with many books printed in Wallachia is the impression of a woodblock depicting the Annunciation. Is this enough to suggest that the Arabic *Akathistos* was also printed in Wallachia? And

⁶¹ J. H. Callenberg, *Einige Fürsorge für die alte orientalische Christenheit überhaupt*, 2, Halle, 1754, p. 12; Saracino, *Griechen im Heiligen Römischen Reich*, p. 249.

⁶² Simedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească”, p. 873, 933–934.

if that was the case, could its typeface be the one the patriarch disliked? In our opinion the new typeface is superior to the one used in the Arabic books printed earlier in Moldavia and Wallachia. This typeface was not used for other Arabic books. It is difficult to conceive that a new typeface was produced to print a single book.

The two other sets of types were used to print the Psalter and the *Book of Hours* published in Beirut. While the first book uses a new type, the second has some distinctive features. The first of them is a very special frame which appears on every page, more complex and elaborate than in other books. Second, the text impression is smooth and equal on the whole page. Although direct observation of the only known copy of this book would be required to provide more details, a study of the available images suggests the use of a printing technique which differs from that used in other books.

It was assumed for a long time that all the books printed after Gutenberg developed the movable-type press were produced in the same way. The traditional punch/matrix/sort technique was at some point challenged by some researchers of Gutenberg's books.⁶³ For the early printed Arabic books, a reexamination of the printing techniques can also provide surprising results. Museum items from the area of Lebanon related to the Shuwayr press offer an interesting glimpse into the printing process. Some of the pages were not typeset with movable type, used in printing and then undone and reused, but were produced by plate-printing. Although the exact technical process is not known, in plate-printing, instead of using copper matrices to produce the sorts, the punches were pressed into a softer material such as *papier maché* or plaster.⁶⁴ Then, the entire plate corresponding to a page was cast in the typographical alloy. The advantage was that a plate was produced that could be stored and re-used for later editions of the same book. At first glance, the Beirut *Book of Hours* printed in 1751 could have been produced in this way, but further research is needed, only possible after the discovery of other copies of the book.

Printing did not require the patriarch's presence in the city where the press functioned. Once all the legal, logistical, and technical preparations were made, the press could start working. Skilled craftsmen, typographers, and unskilled

⁶³ See P. W. Nash, "The 'first' type of Gutenberg. A note on recent research", *The Private Library*, 7, 2004, 2, p. 86–96.

⁶⁴ Conidi, *Arabic Type in Europe and the Middle East, 1514–1924*, p. 497. The author mentions the existence of metal letterpress plates for whole pages in the museum of the Saint John Monastery in al-Shuwayr; where members of the TYPARABIC team have also seen them. These plates were made by shallow casting or etching, a technique different from the traditional mobile type.

apprentices usually worked under the supervision of a master typographer, who sometimes called himself a “teacher” (Gr. δάσκαλος, Rom. *dascăl*).⁶⁵ The number of people involved in the functioning of a press in Bucharest in the 1740s is accurately known from the notes of Metropolitan Neophytos of Ungro-Wallachia. These notes contain the overall costs of the printing process, with details about wages, the cost of food and other supplies for the workers, printing materials, and paper. The print runs, the cost of printing books, and the selling price were also noted.⁶⁶

Metropolitan Neophytos's notes reveal that a master printer could work with two skilled and two unskilled workers, and a couple of “boys”, perhaps apprentices employed for simpler jobs. It is possible that the responsibilities of the master typographer included some initial proof-reading, or at least supervising the correct page setting. Proofreading was not typographic work *per se* and was preferably ascribed to individuals with a solid knowledge of the language the book was printed in.

15.4 Paper

As we mentioned above, in a letter to the leaders of the Greek community in Venice, the so-called *archontes*, Sylvester asked for paper for book-printing, because good quality paper was not available in the Levant.⁶⁷ Indeed, quality paper was not readily available in the Middle East at the time Patriarch Sylvester relocated his printing activity to Beirut. He was therefore compelled to enlist the help of the Greek community in Venice in order to obtain the necessary supplies of good paper for book-printing. In fact, Italian, and especially Venetian paper was imported by Wallachian printers for the needs of the presses there, although paper was also produced locally. Books printed in Bucharest, for example, were sometimes printed on Italian paper.⁶⁸ In Istanbul, Ibrahim Müteferrika also printed his books on paper imported from Venice, most likely due to its superior quality.⁶⁹

The letter was probably addressed to each of the *archontes* separately, but the text was copied in the Damascus codex only once. The recipients of the letters were

65 Sîmedrea, “Tiparul bucureştean de carte bisericească”, p. 899–920; D. Lupu, “Barbu Bucureşteanul, un tipograf din epoca domniilor fanariote”, *Bucureşti. Materiale de istorie şi muzeografie*, XXIII, 2009, p. 46–54.

66 Sîmedrea, “Tiparul bucureştean de carte bisericească”, p. 932–934, 936–942.

67 Letter of Sylvester to the (Greek) *archontes* of Venice, August 1751; cf. Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 188–189, no. ΣΤ´ δ/1.

68 Sîmedrea, “Tiparul bucureştean de carte bisericească”, p. 895.

69 W. Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie: évolution de l'environnement culturel (1706–1787)*, Tunis, 1985, p. 207.

sior Panos Marositzis, *sior* Zaharias Maroutzis, Stefanis Karaioannis, and Tzortzis Karaioannis. All the above recipients can be identified on the list of the presidents (*guardiani*) of the Greek Brotherhood in Venice: Pano Maruzzi (*guardiano* in 1747, 1750, and 1761), Zaccaria Maruzzi (*guardiano* in 1749), Steffano Caraggiani (*guardiano* in 1755), and Giorgio Caraggiani (*guardiano* in 1745, 1752).⁷⁰

Sylvester, who was at the time (August 1751) in Smyrna, requested the paper as a donation, to be able to print books in his newly established press in “Arabia”, presumably the one in Beirut. He wrote: “ἔχομεν τύπον ἀραβικὸν εἰς Ἀραβίαν καὶ μελετοῦμεν νὰ τυπώσωμεν καὶ Ψαλτήρια καὶ Μηναῖα καὶ μᾶς χρειάζεται χαρτί” (“We have an Arabic press in Arabia, and we plan to print Psalters and Menologia, and we need paper”).⁷¹ The number of available copies of the books produced in the Beirut press was very limited, but further research could reveal if Venetian paper was used. Sylvester asked the paper to be sent in “Tripoli of Syria” (“εἰς Τρίπολιν τῆς Συρίας”), to the English consul (“πρὸς τὸν κόνσολο τῶν Ἑγγλέζων”), from whom it could be collected. The reason was that “in those places one cannot find good paper” (“εἰς ἐκεῖνα τὰ μέρη δὲν εὐρίσκεται καλὸν χαρτί”).⁷² The letter is of great importance in finding the sources of paper for the Beirut printing press. It is possible that the Psalter of 1751–1752 was printed on paper received from Venice, if the patriarch’s appeals for aid were answered favorably by the Greek *archontes* of Venice.

In the list of expenses of the printing press for the year 1746 mentioned above, paper is mentioned only once, in January, for printing some essays. Since the cost amounted to only two coins, it could not have been the price for the entire quantity of paper used in the printing activity. The price of paper usually represented an important percentage of the overall price of printing a book. The fact that it is not mentioned means that paper was provided from another source. It could have been donated by the prince, or Sylvester obtained it from another source, such as the Greek community in Venice. It is known that later, when he had established his printing press in Beirut, he asked them for paper. The fact that the paper price was not part of the expenses recorded in the 1746 list explains the relatively small cost of printing the 1,500 copies of the book. The total expenses for the year 1746 were 267 silver coins, probably in piasters or in *groschen*. From the 267 coins, 40 were spent on the bookbinding. The larger part of the sum of 264 silver coins was provided by the patriarch in two installments of 100 coins. For the rest of 64 coins,

⁷⁰ Archive of the Greek Institute in Venice (AEIB), A'. Οργάνωση - λειτουργία, 3. Πρακτικά Συνεδριάσεων, Κατάστιχο 33, f. 311v (p. 588).

⁷¹ Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 188.

⁷² Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, 2, p. 189.

there is a mention about printing a letter of absolution, the sum obtained from its copies being probably the source for obtaining this sum. There is no indication as to how many letters of absolution were distributed. At about the same time, in Wallachia, the overall production price of printing a book in 500 copies was 750 *gro-schen*. The difference is important, even when considering the price of paper and the difference in book format.

The print run of 1,500 copies stated in the foreword of the 1746 colligate book of Iași was exceptional. Records of books printed in Bucharest in 1747–1749 mention print runs of around 500–700 copies.⁷³ By comparison, ‘Abdallāh Zākhir printed his first book in al-Shuwayr in 1,000 copies.⁷⁴

The larger print run of this book printed by Sylvester also explains the long period that was needed for its production (six months, from January to July). It is possible that the printing of the next book, *The Lord's Supper*, started in August. The book was finished in February 1747, so the production also required six or seven months.

Based on the distinguishable watermark, a *lion rampant*, the paper used for the Arabic *Akathistos* could also have been produced in a Western factory, most probably in Italy.⁷⁵

15.5 Locating Copies of Sylvester's Books

Why are the books printed by Sylvester in Iași, Bucharest, and Beirut so rare? It seems that considerably fewer copies survive of Sylvester's books than of other Arabic books printed in the same period, and those printed by Athanasios Dabbās in Snagov, Bucharest, and Aleppo.

Before the research of the TYPARABIC project set off, many important works dedicated to the Arabic printed books ignored the printing activity supervised by Patriarch Sylvester in Iași, Bucharest, and Beirut in 1745–1753, or presented it in a very inadequate manner. During our research for this book, it became increasingly clear that the major priority was to present, in as much detail as current knowledge allows, the whole extent of Sylvester's printing works. Finding all available copies of the rare books was, therefore, considered important. Some of them had been hidden in plain sight for years, on platforms such as Google Books or in the digital

⁷³ Sîmedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească”, p. 895, 898, 937.

⁷⁴ Walbiner, “The appearance of Nieremberg's *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* in Arabic”, p. 437.

⁷⁵ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 306.

repositories of major libraries, available on the internet. Some were miscataloged, with mistaken or missing data in their descriptions.

The *Book of the Divine Liturgies* printed in Iași in 1745 is preserved in three incomplete copies in libraries in Lebanon and Syria. For the colligate of 1746, only four copies are known. For the 1747 *Lord's Supper* there is only one known copy, with another one documented as existing somewhere in Lebanon, but inaccessible. The book containing the *Acts of the Synods of Constantinople*, printed in Bucharest in 1747, survives in two copies.

Two of the Arabic books printed by Sylvester of Antioch in Moldavia and Wallachia and preserved in the Austrian National Library belonged to Giovanni Marghich, who acquired them in 1763 in Constantinople. In the same library in Vienna there are three Christian Arabic manuscripts with notes written by him.⁷⁶ One manuscript was received by Giovanni Marghich in Pera in 1762, a short time before the convent where it was kept was destroyed by fire.⁷⁷

Who was Giovanni Marghich, and why was he interested in Arabic books? A note in a manuscript dated 1774 in Adrianople reveals that Giovanni Marghich was a *giovane di lingua della ecc(ellen)t(issi)ma Republica di Ragusa*.⁷⁸ This information explains his interest in the Arabic language. The institution of the “Youths of Language” served European states involved in various activities in the Levant by training individuals as translators and interpreters of Oriental languages. Young people were regularly sent to Pera, a suburb of Constantinople where Western embassies and Roman Catholic institutions were historically located, to learn Oriental languages. They were granted a state scholarship. Venice was the first to establish such an institution in the 16th century, Ragusa followed, and then France.⁷⁹

Giovanni Marghich seems to have been successful in learning Arabic. Not only did he collect books and manuscripts, but he also took notes about their contents.

76 G. Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, vol. 3, Vienna, 1867, p. 5, no. 1543, p. 21, no. 1562, p. 22, no. 1563.

77 Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften*, vol. 3, p. 22, no. 1563.

78 Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften*, vol. 3, p. 5, no. 1543.

79 For the “Youths of Language”, see H. Dehérain, “Jeunes de Langue et interprètes français en Orient au XVIII^e siècle”, *Anatolia moderna. Yeni Anadolu*, 1, 1991, p. 323–335; F. Hitzel, “Les Jeunes de langue de Péra-lès-Constantinople”, *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, 28, 1996, p. 57–70; R. Mantran, “L'École des jeunes de langue. L'exemple vénitien”, in F. Hitzel (ed.), *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, Paris, 1997, p. 105–108; A. Pippidi, “Drogmans et enfants de langue. La France de Constantinople au XVII^e siècle”, in F. Hitzel (ed.), *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, Paris, 1997, p. 131–140; C. Villain-Gandossi, “Giovani di lingua, drogmans auprès du baile de Venise et la Porte ottomane au XVI^e siècle”, in G. Buti, M. Janin-Thivos, O. Raveux (eds.), *Langues et langages du commerce en Méditerranée et en Europe à l'époque moderne*, Aix-en-Provence, 2013, p. 33–56.

He made notes on the books, indicating that he either understood Arabic or enlisted the help of someone who helped him understand the content of the books. This is visible in his copy of the *Acts of the Synods of Constantinople* printed by Sylvester of Antioch at Bucharest. Marghich was not part of the intended readership of Sylvester's books, but the fact that he owned some of the few preserved copies is illustrative of their circulation. It is also interesting to note the availability of these books in Constantinople in 1763.

For the *Acts of the Synods of Constantinople*, the copy in Vienna is the only one accessible of the two known copies, although mentions of other copies do appear in secondary literature. The explanation is that the book was highly polemical against the Roman Catholic Church and many copies were presumably destroyed or discarded.

The Arabic *Psalter* of Bucharest is preserved in only two copies, one in Yale (formerly, Silvestre de Sacy's copy), the other in Manchester (library of the 2nd Earl Spencer). Several other copies are mentioned in bibliographies, but their locations still need to be confirmed.

Of the Beirut *Psalter* of 1751–1752 there is only one known copy, located in Uppsala. The same is true for the *Book of Hours* (1751), known only from a fragmentary copy that surfaced in 2023 in an antiquarian bookshop in the United States of America. Acquired by a private person, its present location is unknown.

The Arabic *Akathistos* printed by Sylvester of Antioch in an unknown press is equally known in one copy, surveyed by Ioana Feodorov at the owner's request, before he sold it at an auction in Paris.⁸⁰ The book had belonged to the well-known bibliophile Frederick North, 5th Earl of Guilford.

No copies are known of the *Book of Liturgies* printed at Aleppo that Ulrich Jasper Seetzen mentioned.

The auction of the 5th Earl of Guilford's library holds other surprises for the researchers of early Arabic printed books. The English aristocrat had some other rare copies of 18th century Arabic printed books in his famous collection, some of them unknown to modern research.

Besides the known titles mentioned in this book, there is always the possibility of new discoveries, as recent research has repeatedly proven.

Several reasons could be advanced to explain why only a few copies survive despite the large print runs. First, the distribution of the books was not possible because of unfavorable circumstances such as the conflicts between the Orthodox and the Catholic factions and the intervention of the Latin missionaries. A small number of the books printed by Sylvester was kept and even sought after in

⁸⁰ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 250 and n. 64.

Catholic environments to be informed about the book production of the opposite party and be ready to give the appropriate reply, if needed. Distribution problems also arose in the case of the two books printed in London in the 1720s, the *Book of Psalms* and the Arabic *New Testament*. These books arrived in the Levant, but many copies remained in storage there, because their distribution was difficult, or even impossible. The idea was at some point for the books to be sent back in England or to be redirected to Persian prisoners in the Russian Empire.⁸¹ The fact that a larger or smaller number of books remained in storage for a longer period could explain the surviving pages used as binding waste.

A second explanation could be the destruction of the books, very likely during Sylvester's life.⁸²

A third reason is the natural wear of the books. Many liturgical books of the period used in churches were subject to wear and tear, and new editions were often needed at regular intervals of time. By analogy, many Romanian editions of liturgical books printed in the 18th century are preserved in one copy, or just a few. For some books, such as a small Greek prayer book printed in Bucharest in 1748, there are archival records but no known copies.⁸³

Until the early 20th century, no books printed by Sylvester were known to have belonged to Romanian libraries. In the 1900s, a book printed by Sylvester in Iași in 1746 was obtained by the Library of the Romanian Academy from Rome.⁸⁴ Most major European libraries (with some notable exceptions) do not own copies of the books printed by Sylvester. No library anywhere in the world owns a complete series. The process of identifying, locating, and describing them is a work in progress, often rewarded by discoveries. At this stage, it is safe to say that even the number of titles printed by Patriarch Sylvester is still unknown.

The research on the books printed by Sylvester of Antioch offered once again surprising results. Pieces are falling into place, but more research is needed for a complete image of his printing activity to emerge.

⁸¹ Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 242–243.

⁸² S. E. Assemanus, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum mms. orientali-um catalogus*, Florence, 1742, p. 65; Roper, “The Vienna Arabic Psalter of 1792”, p. 79; Häberlein, Manstetten, “The Translation Policies”, p. 325.

⁸³ Simedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericască”, p. 873.

⁸⁴ See Ch. 16.2.

16 Books Printed by Patriarch Sylvester in Moldavia, Wallachia, and Beirut

16.1 *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, Iași, 1745

Kitāb al-Qundāq | *Book of the Qundāq*, or *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, Iași, 1745, in-4^o, 126 p. (Fig. 12).¹ The title page, if one existed, is missing from the known copies.

The *Book of the Divine Liturgies* seems to have been the first Arabic book printed by the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch.² It contains an Arabic text and a foreword. The text is based on the Arabic version of the bilingual Greek-Arabic book printed by Athanasios Dabbās, the former patriarch of Antioch, with Anthimos the Iberian in Snagov in 1701. The manuscript was prepared in 1744, and the text was revised by the patriarch himself, as he states in the foreword. He made several corrections and additions to the text of Athanasios's edition. The book is thus not a mere reprint of the (Arabic part of) Athanasios Dabbās's bilingual book. The Greek text of the previous edition was not reprinted. The new *Book of the Divine Liturgies* was necessary as this liturgical text was used almost daily. Many copies of the 1701 edition had become unusable, and replacement books were scarce. Evidently, the 1701 edition had become rare.

In the foreword, Patriarch Sylvester mentioned that a new edition was needed especially to correct the textual mistakes of the previous version. A further comparative study of the Arabic text of the 1701 text with that of the 1745 edition will provide additional elements regarding the alterations made by Sylvester, or by his collaborators, to Dabbās's text.³

The Arabic liturgical books published in Rome by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide were considered suspect and were usually rejected by the Orthodox, and by Sylvester himself. Even if they were accepted, it is unlikely that they could be obtained by the patriarch, given his relations with Rome. The information that Sylvester asked the Sacra Congregatio in 1725 to print books in Rome is doubtful and should be verified.⁴

1 Feodorov, "The Arabic Book of the Divine Liturgies", p. 285–290.

2 Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, p. 182; Feodorov, "The Arabic Book of the Divine Liturgies", p. 158–176.

3 Some of the differences between the two editions are mentioned by Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 286.

4 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 277.

Using the books printed in Shuwayr by ‘Abdallāh Zākhir, a prominent figure of the “Latin” party, would also have been out of the question. In fact, the activity of the Shuwayr press seems to have been one of the motivations for Sylvester to start his printing activity.

The *Book of the Divine Liturgies* printed in Iași in 1745 is accessible only in incomplete copies. The title page is missing from all of them. Several other copies have been mentioned in secondary literature, but for various reasons their locations cannot be confirmed. The missing pages of the incomplete copies are usually added in manuscript form. This is proof of their intensive use as liturgical books for long periods.

Sylvester’s decision to print this book was successful: the books reached their intended public, and they were surely used in churches. Several manuscript copies of this book survive. In areas where printed books were difficult to obtain, copying printed editions was a common phenomenon. Apart from the manuscript dated 1744 that may have been used in printing the edition of Iași (MS 1674 = MS 251 of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus, discussed above), some of the manuscripts seem to be copies of the printed book. The manuscript of Damascus dates from the 18th century and contains the Psalms.⁵

Although Pope Benedict XIV, by the document *Demandatam caelitus humilitati nostrae* issued in December 1743, established the “Greek” rite as mandatory for the Arabic-speaking Melkite Catholic Christians, and projects to publish a new edition of the *Book of the Divine Liturgies* for them were consequently initiated, this book was never printed in Rome. The basis for the new Arabic edition in Rome should have been Athanasios Dabbās’s Snagov text of 1701, as proven by a copy of the book, with annotations preparing the new edition, preserved in the library of the Greek College in Rome.⁶ The first Arabic Catholic *Book of the Divine Liturgies* was printed only in 1839, in Rome, by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide.⁷

The Arabic Orthodox *Book of the Divine Liturgies* of 1745 was first described by Ioana Feodorov based on the incomplete copy within MS no. 15 of the Monastery of Balamand.⁸ Before that, some authors merely mentioned the book, without provid-

5 Gemayel, Dabaghy, Dabaghy, “Les manuscrits du Patriarcat grec-orthodoxe de Damas”, p. 252; Jubāra, *Al-makhtūṭāt al-‘arabiya fī maktabat Baṭṭriyarkiyat Anṭākiya wa-sā’ir al-Mashriq li-l-Rūm al-Urthūdhuks*, p. 43, no. 251. See the HMML Project Number MARI 00251 at <https://w3id.org/vhmmml/readingRoom/view/607542>.

6 C. Charon, *Le rite byzantin dans les Patriarcats Melkites Alexandrie – Antioche – Jérusalem. Adoption – Versions – Pratique – Particularités*, Rome, 1908, p. 90-92 [562-564].

7 Charon, *Le rite byzantin*, p. 93 [565].

8 Feodorov, “The Arabic Book of the Divine Liturgies”, p. 158–176; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 285–290.

ing commentaries or details. Examples include Kaisarios (Kōnstantinos) Dapontes in his *Historical Catalogue of the Learned Greeks* (Ιστορικός κατάλογος).⁹ However, Dapontes's information is misleading, as he mentions that it was a bilingual edition in Arabic and Greek: “ἐτύπωσε καὶ Λειτουργίαν Ἀραβικὴν καὶ ἑλληνικὴν ἀντάμα εἰς τὸ Γίασι, καὶ Ἀντιμίσια” (“He also printed a Liturgy in Greek and Arabic, together, in Iași, and *antimensia*”).¹⁰ This demonstrates the low reliability of narrative sources, often written, as in this particular case, decades after the events. Dapontes's account is nonetheless relevant for the impact the printing of Arabic books had on the contemporaries as a remarkable event. Mentioning only the *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, Dapontes was probably unaware of the other books printed on Sylvester's initiative in Iași and Bucharest, as he himself left Moldavia in 1745.

The printing of the book was finished on July 19, 1745,¹¹ while Sylvester was still in Moldavia. He left a couple of months later for Constantinople to obtain his new patriarchal *berat* after Kyrillos's attempt to replace him. According to the patriarch's foreword, the printing expenses were covered by Prince John Mavrokordatos of Moldavia. Like his brother Constantine (who owned a copy of the 1702 Arabic *Book of Hours* printed in Bucharest), he knew about the books printed by Dabbās in Wallachia and wished to emulate the cultural patronage of the previous rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia.

Known copies:

1. Library of Dayr Sayyidat al-Balamand, in MS no. 15. This is a fragmentary copy missing the title page.¹²
- 2–3. Two copies in the monastery of Ma'lūla, Syria. One of them contains an inscription from 1762, in the time of Sylvester of Antioch, attesting that the books printed by the patriarch were distributed in his eparchy.¹³ The inscription mentions Gregorios Qarbā, the metropolitan of Ḥawrān. The second copy, mentioned by 'Īsā Iskandar al-Ma'lūf, seems to be a manuscript dating from 1783, copied from another manuscript of 1744, with a foreword by Sylvester mentioning his corrections to the text. The manuscript of 1744 was probably like the one used for the printed edition.

⁹ Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, p. 89; C. Erbiceanu, *Cronicarii greci cariți au scris despre români în epoca fanariotă. Textul grecesc și traducerea românească*, Bucharest, 1888, p. 103.

¹⁰ Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, p. 89.

¹¹ 'Ī. I. al-Ma'lūf, “Maṭḥa'a rūmāniyya al-urthūdhuksiyya al-'arabiyya al-anṭākiyya”, *al-Ni'ma*, 1911, 3, p. 55; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 285.

¹² HMML Project Number BALA 00010, at <https://w3id.org/vhmdl/readingRoom/view/107680>; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 285–290.

¹³ al-Ma'lūf, “Maṭḥa'a rūmāniyya al-urthūdhuksiyya”, p. 55; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 289 (presumes, based on recent events, that these copies are lost).

4. A copy in the monastery of Şaydnāyā.¹⁴ It contains a note indicating that the Orthodox Metropolitan Ierotheos of Şaydnāyā donated it to the monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā in 1751. Ierotheos's term as metropolitan of Şaydnāyā started before 1744 and finished after 1765.¹⁵
5. A copy in the library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus.¹⁶
6. A copy in MS no. 4 of the Parish Church in Muḥrada, Syria. The printed pages missing in the beginning and the end were replaced with manuscript pages.¹⁷

16.2 Polemic Treatises, Iași, 1746

In the known copies, the book is a collection of two texts bound together (a colligate).¹⁸

- A. Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Kitāb qaḍā al-ḥaqq wa-naql al-ṣidq / Book of the Rule of Justice and the Transmission of Truth*, Iași, 1746, in-4^o, [3] blank + [11] + 249 p. (Fig. 13, 14, 15).
- B. Eustratios Argentis, *Risāla mukhtaṣara fī al-radd 'alā 'adam ghalat bābāwāt Rūmiya / Brief Epistle against the Pope's Infallibility*, Iași, 1746, in 4^o, [3] + 60 + [3] p. (Fig. 16).

The book was printed by Sylvester of Antioch to explain to the Arabic-speaking Orthodox Christians the dogmatic and ritual distinctions between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

The first work is an Arabic translation “from Greek and Latin”, achieved in 1733, of a book written by Patriarch Nektarios of Jerusalem. The original text was composed in Greek and remained unprinted. Apparently, no manuscript of the original Greek text is available for study. A Latin translation was published in London in 1729. The title of the Latin edition is: *Reverendissimi in Christo patris ac domini d(omi)ni Nectarium nuper Patriarchae Hierosolymitani, De artibus quibus missionarii Latini, praecipue in Terrā Sanctā degentes ad subvertendam Graecorum fidem, utuntur, & de quamplurimis Ecclesiae Romanae erroribus corruptelis, libri tres, ex autographo Graeco Latinè redditi*.

¹⁴ al-Ma'lūf, “Maṭba'a rūmāniyya al-urthūdhuksiyya”, p. 55; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 289.

¹⁵ Zayyāt, *Khabāyā al-zawāyā min tāriḫ Şaydnāyā*, p. 233.

¹⁶ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 289.

¹⁷ HMML Project Number MHAR 00004, at <https://www.vhmm.org/readingRoom/view/537908>.

¹⁸ Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, 1985, p. 183. For the first, brief description of this book, see *BRV IV*, p. 61–67. For an improved description, see Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 290–294.

The version of Patriarch Nektarios's *Book of the Rule of Justice and the Transmission of Truth* published in Arabic by Patriarch Sylvester differs in content from another version which was printed in Greek in Iași in 1682.¹⁹ The number of chapters is different, and although there are common ideas, clearly, these are two different works. The Arabic text published in 1746 closely follows the 1729 Latin edition. The difference between the two texts (the Greek one of 1682 and the Arabic one of 1746) has already been noticed by other researchers, e.g., Dan Simonescu, who wrote that they present the same ideas, but the Arabic one is a shortened form of the Greek one.²⁰

The name of the translator is not mentioned but the translation was attributed to Sophronios of Kilis, metropolitan of Ptolemais (Acre).²¹

The translation was revised by Ilyās Fakhr, the logothetes of the Patriarchate, who considered himself the real translator.²² It is not improbable that the patriarch himself revised the text. In previous research, two aspects of the Arabic version of this work have been neglected. The first is the fact that the translation was made in 1733 “from Greek and Latin”. The Greek text of this work is difficult to locate today, the Latin edition published in 1729, although rare, is available for comparison.²³ There is no information if Latin was one of the languages mastered by the polyglot Sophronios. As we mentioned before, Ilyās Fakhr worked in Rome, and it is probable that he knew Latin.²⁴ If the translation from Greek was made by Sophronios, maybe Ilyās Fakhr revised it based on the Latin edition.

The second element is the role of Rowland Sherman who, according to a letter of Iakovos of Patmos, translated one of Patriarch Nektarios's works into Arabic, alongside with the *Rock of Offence* of Ilias Miniatis, then printed them in England and distributed them in the East. While the passage in Iakovos's letter might sound ambiguous, it offers interesting information on Sherman's role in the translation

19 Τοῦ μακαριωτάτου καὶ σοφωτάτου πατριάρχου τῆς μεγάλης καὶ Ἁγίας πόλεως Ἱερουσαλήμ κυρίου Νεκταρίου, *Πρὸς τὰς προσκομισθίσας θέσεις παρὰ τοῦ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις φρατόρων διὰ Πέτρου τοῦ αὐτῶν μαῖστόρος περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ πάπα ἀντίρρησις*, Τυπωθεῖσα νῦν πρῶτον ἐν τῇ Σεβασμίᾳ Μονῇ τῶν Ἁγίων Ἐνδόξων καὶ Πρωτοκορυφαίων Ἀποστόλων, τῇ καλουμένῃ Τζετατζούια κατὰ τὸ ἀχπβ' ἔτος τὸ σωτήριον, ἐν μηνὶ Ἰουλίῳ, Ἐν Γιάσιω τῆς Μολδαβίας.

20 Simonescu, “Cărți arabe tipărite de români”, p. 545.

21 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 97 (the author also mentions four manuscripts of the Arabic text); Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 291.

22 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 242.

23 There are four known copies: 1. Christ Church, University of Oxford, shelfmark Christ Church Wb. 7.23; 2. Westminster Abbey; 3. Institut Néohellénique de la Sorbonne, Paris, France; 4. Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece.

24 Heyberger, “Security and Insecurity”, p. 112–115.

of patriarch Nektarios's book. Rowland Sherman could very well have translated the book from Greek into Latin and have it printed in London in 1729. Is he also the author of the 1733 Arabic translation, not mentioned on the title page of Sylvester's edition? Further research could provide additional data on this subject. In any case, Sherman was able to bring copies of the 1729 London edition to the Levant and present them to his acquaintances, such as Ilyās Fakhr.

The second text in the book is a treatise composed by Eustratios Argentis against the Pope's infallibility.²⁵ The Greek text of Argentis's work was translated by Mas'ad Nashū in Cairo.²⁶

There are four copies of the book preserved in various libraries. All of them contain both works, thus indicating that they were intended to be bound together. The lack of a title page or foreword for the second text suggests the same, despite the individual pagination.

Known copies:

1. Library of the Romanian Academy; the book once belonged to the Roman church of San Pietro in Vincoli, bought in Rome from Libreria Antiquaria Silvio Bocca, and donated to the Romanian Academy by Kyril Korolevsky (Cyrille Charon).²⁷
2. Austrian National Library; the book was bought in Constantinople by Giovanni Marghich. He also bought other manuscripts and printed books now in the same library. This volume has been digitized and is available on the institution's website and on Google Books.
3. National Library of Israel, unknown provenance. The copy was unknown to previous scholarship. Its existence illustrates that copies of the book did reach the Middle East, although it may have arrived in Israel from Europe or North America and well after Patriarch Sylvester's time.
4. Library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, in Alexandria, Egypt, Early Printed Books Collection, no. 1831. The bibliographical note refers only to the Arabic version of Eustratios Argentis's book, so it is

²⁵ Graf, *GICAL* III, p. 140-141; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 292.

²⁶ Born in Damascus in a Coptic family that subsequently embraced Greek Orthodoxy, Našū left for Egypt, where he became the *oikonomos* of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. He is known for his translations from Greek and several original works. See Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 293.

²⁷ *Libreria Antiquaria S. Bocca, Roma*, Catalogo num. 256, p. 32, no. 523. See D. Simonescu, "Impression de livres arabes et karamanlis en Valachie et en Moldavie au XVIII^e siècle", *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, V-VI, 1960, p. 64, n. 53; D. Simonescu, "Monumente ale culturii noastre de vânzare la o licitație publică din Londra", *Apulum. Arheologie – Istorie – Etnografie*, VIII, 1970, p. 215; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 292, n. 143.

possible that in this case only the second part of the colligate was preserved.²⁸ It may be one of the copies sent to Egypt by Sylvester of Antioch, which he mentioned in his above-mentioned letters to the patriarch of Alexandria.

16.3 *The Lord's Supper* by Eustratios Argentis, Iași, 1747

Eustratios Argentis, *Fī al-'ashā al-Rabbānī / The Lord's Supper*, Iași, 1747, in-4^o, [12] + 231 [228] p. (Fig. 17, 18).²⁹

Argentis's book was translated by Mas'ad Nashū in Cairo in 1740.³⁰

The Arabic version of *The Lord's Supper* by Eustratios Argentis printed in Iași in 1747 had for a long time not been available for study. Comments in earlier sources were mostly based on indirect information.³¹ At present, a brief presentation is available, due to Ioana Feodorov's survey of the copy in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.³²

The work was printed in Greek in Leipzig in 1760, and it contains a note on the Arabic printed version. The title of the Greek edition is:

Σύνταγμα κατὰ ἀζύμων εἰς τρία διαιρεθὲν τμήματα. Ἐν τῷ μὲν πρῶτον ἐστὶ, περὶ ὕλης τοῦ Μυστηρίου τῆς Ἁγίας Εὐχαριστίας. Τὸ δὲ δεύτερον, περὶ ἀγιασμοῦ τοῦ Μυστηρίου. Τὸ δὲ τρίτον, περὶ χρήσεως τοῦ Μυστηρίου. Συντεθὲν παρὰ τοῦ φιλοσοφωτάτου, καὶ ἐν ἰατροῦς ἀρίστου μακαρίτου Εὐστρατίου τουπίκλην Ἀργέντη τοῦ Χίου. Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν εἰς ἀραβικὴν ἐρμηνεύθη γλώσσῃ καὶ εἰς τύπον ἐδόθη παρὰ τοῦ Μακαριωτάτου Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας κυρίου κυρίου Σιλβέστρου. Νῦν δὲ δι' ἐξόδων συμπατριωτῶν τινῶν καὶ φίλων καὶ συζηλωτῶν τοῦ μακαρίτου Εὐστρατίου, τῇ ἰδίᾳ φράσει ἐτυπώθη, ἀκριβῶς τε καὶ ἐπιμελῶς διορθωθὲν παρὰ τοῦ ἐν ἱερομονάχοις κυρίου Γεδεῶν Ἀγιοταφίτου τοῦ Κυπρίου, Ἐν Λιψία τῆς Σαξωνίας, Παρὰ Ἰωάννη Γόττλοπ Ἐμμανουὴλ Βρεῖτσκοπφ, αψξ'.

Treatise against the unleavened bread divided into three parts. Of which the first is about the substance of the Holy Eucharist, the second, about the sanctification of the Mystery, and the third, about the use of the Mystery. Composed by the most distinguished in philosophy and

28 P. Tzoumerkas, "Arabic heritage via rare editions found in the Patriarchal Library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa", *Ανάλεκτα*, 11, 2011, 2nd period, Alexandria/Athens, p. 84–85.

29 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 294–295; I. Feodorov, "Sylvester of Antioch's Arabic Books Printed in 1747 at Bucharest. Recent Findings", *Scrinium*, 19, 2023, 1, p. 24–25. See also <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002554985>.

30 Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 141.

31 Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, p. 182.

32 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 294–295; Feodorov, "Sylvester of Antioch's Arabic Books", p. 24–25.

the best among physicians, the late Eustratios called Argentis of Chios. And first, it was translated into the Arabic language and printed by his Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch, *kyrios kyrios* Sylvester. And now, with the expense of compatriots and friends and sympathizers of the late Eustratios, it was printed in its proper language, precisely and diligently corrected by the monk Gedeōn Agiotaphitēs of Cyprus. In Leipzig of Saxony, by Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf, 1760.

Sylvester is mentioned again in the *Foreword*: [...] καὶ ταῦτα ἀναγνοὺς ὁ τῆς Ἀντιοχείων Πατὴρ καὶ Πατριάρχης κύριος Σίλβεστρος τὰ ἐμεταγλώττισεν εἰς ἀραβικὴν γλῶσσαν, καὶ εἰς τύπον τὰ ἔβαλε, διὰ τῶν εἰς τὴν ἐπαρχίαν αὐτοῦ Ἀράβων Χριστιανῶν ὠφέλειαν (“[...] and having read these, the father and patriarch of the Antiochians, kyr Sylvester, translated them into the Arabic language and printed them for the benefit of the Arab Christians in his eparchy”).

This information reveals the fact, also confirmed by other sources, that the patriarch of Antioch was not the person who commissioned Argentis to compose this book.

Sylvester knew Argentis personally and it is probable that he received his book from him. Argentis was in Egypt at the time he composed his work on the variances between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. The translation was also made in Egypt. It is interesting that a copy of Argentis's text of the *Σύνταγμα κατὰ ἀζύμων* (“Treatise against unleavened bread”), in two volumes, survives in the library of the Metropolis of Kition in Cyprus, a place Sylvester had connections with and may have been his birthplace.

Known copies:

1. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
2. A copy mentioned in a 1986 advertisement of the Brill Antique Bookshop in Leiden, published in the American periodical *AB Bookman's Weekly* (September 8, 1986).³³ The book was presented by the bookshop at the Venice Book Fair in 1986. It was described as “an extremely rare Arabic Iași printed text (1747)”. The only book which corresponds to this description is the *Lord's Supper* by Argentis. Its present location is unknown. It may be the copy now in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. In the same advertisement, Brill mentioned a copy of “The Arabic Bucharest Horologion (1702)”, also presented at the Book Fair in Venice.
3. Leaves of the book were used as binding waste in MS no. 11 in the Dayr Sayyidat al-Balamand. Among the preserved pages are 16 and 77. It demonstrates that copies of the book did reach the Middle East.³⁴

³³ *AB Bookman's Weekly*, September 8, 1986, p. 810.

³⁴ <https://w3id.org/vhmmml/readingRoom/view/107679>.

4. A photograph in a tourist guide published in 1969 in Beirut shows one page from a copy of the book, probably in a private collection. The present location of other copies in Eastern libraries mentioned by various authors cannot be confirmed.³⁵

16.4 *Book of Psalms, Bucharest, 1747*

Kitāb al-Zabūr al-Sharīf / The Holy Book of Psalms, Bucharest, 1747, in-4^o, 250 p. (Fig. 20, 21, 22).³⁶

Although mentioned in scholarly bibliographies,³⁷ no copy of the Arabic *Book of Psalms* printed in Bucharest had been available to researchers since the early 19th century, when it was surveyed by Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy and Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer. Owing to the TYPARABIC project, recent research has revealed the existence of two copies of this book. We have identified them in an American collection, the Beinecke Library, and a British library. Both books formerly belonged to famous book collectors: Silvestre de Sacy and the 2nd Earl Spencer. Recently, Ioana Feodorov published a short presentation of the copy in the USA.³⁸

I shall describe henceforth the interesting and fruitful quest for locating the copies of Sylvester's Arabic *Book of Psalms*. In addition to the discovery of the two books, it provided a lot of information on the western book collectors' interest in early Arabic printing in the early 19th century.

In 1747, Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch printed an Arabic *Book of Psalms* in the recently established press of Bucharest, located in the Monastery of Saint Spyridon. This is the monastery which prince Constantine Mavrokordatos had granted to the Patriarchate of Antioch as a *metochion* in 1746.

The *Book of Psalms* was translated into Arabic already in the 11th century by Abū l-Faṭḥ 'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī.³⁹ An edition of this translation was published in London in 1725 by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. It was supervised by Salomon Negri and, according to sources, the print run

35 Feodorov, "Sylvester of Antioch's Arabic Books", p. 25.

36 Feodorov, "Sylvester of Antioch's Arabic Books", p. 11, 12, 16, 22, 26.

37 Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, p. 182.

38 Feodorov, "Sylvester of Antioch's Arabic Books", p. 11–16.

39 For 'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl, see Al. Treiger, "'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī'", in D. Thomas, A. Mallett, J. P. Monferrer Sala et al. (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, Volume 3. (1050–1200), Leiden/Boston, 2011, p. 89–113; S. Noble, "'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī'", in S. Noble, Al. Treiger (eds.), *The Orthodox Church in the Arab World 700–1700. An Anthology of Sources*, DeKalb, IL, 2014, p. 171–187; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 98.

was large, about 6,000 copies (four times the 1,500 copies of a book published by Sylvester in Iași).⁴⁰

Before 1747, two other editions of the *Psalter* were published by the Shuwayr printing press run by ‘Abdallāh ibn Zākhir. The first of these was printed in 1735, the second in 1739. In this case too, there were concerns about the content of the books, as the Roman Catholic influence on the book production of the Shuwayr press was well known.

In this context, in 1747, Sylvester decided to publish an edition of the *Book of Psalms* in Arabic, endorsed by him as the Patriarch of the Greek-Orthodox Church of Antioch. He printed it in the new Arabic press in Bucharest. Although the print run is not indicated, based on similar editions, it can be tentatively estimated at 1,000–1,500 copies. There is no information about how and when the copies of the *Book of Psalms* were shipped to present-day Syria and Lebanon, to reach their intended public.

In less than a century, the *Book of Psalms* published by Sylvester became a bibliographical rarity. Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer mentioned the 1747 Bucharest edition in the *Addenda* of his *Bibliotheca Arabica* published in 1811.⁴¹ His description includes the full title and a part of the foreword in Arabic and in Latin translation. The information is published as a note to the bibliographical description of another *Psalter*, published in 1751 in Beirut.⁴² The author does not mention where he surveyed the copy of the 1747 book he described, nor where it was located.

Not long after the publication of the *Bibliotheca Arabica*, the origin of the information about the Bucharest *Psalter* was revealed. Schnurrer’s book was dedicated to the leading French Oriental scholar of the time Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy. De Sacy published a review of Schnurrer’s book in 1814, which included some details about the *Book of Psalms* of 1747. He mentioned that he owned the book described by the German scholar.⁴³ Silvestre de Sacy also stated that he had received from Rousseau, the French consul in Aleppo, two rare books printed in Aleppo, the *Evangeliarium* of 1706 and the *Liber Prophetiarum* of 1708. He adds that he compared the type of the books with the *Liturgikon* printed in 1701 in Bucharest and found them entirely different.

⁴⁰ BRV IV, p. 65; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 291.

⁴¹ Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 515a)–518a).

⁴² Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 383–384, no. 354.

⁴³ A. I. Silvestre de Sacy, “Littérature Orientale” [book review of Schnurrer’s *Bibliotheca Arabica*], in *Magasin encyclopédique, ou Journal des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, I, 1814, p. 201: “(...) le Psautier de 1747 que je possède, Psautier dont M. Schnurrer a donné la notice dans ses *Addenda*”. See also the same text in Silvestre de Sacy, *Notice de l’ouvrage intitulé Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 21.

The Bucharest Arabic *Psalter* remained in the French scholar's library, as can be deduced from the presence of the book in the *Catalogue* of his library composed by Romain Merlin before the sale of the books at an auction in Paris in 1843.⁴⁴ This *Catalogue* includes a useful bibliographical description of the Arabic *Book of Psalms* of 1747, which was intended to be an academic source, not a simple sale list.⁴⁵ For the Arabic titles, Merlin enlisted the help of two Arabic scholars, and the result was a well-documented catalogue in the field of early Arabic printing, as illustrated, e.g., by historical data and a list of books printed at the Shuwayr press.⁴⁶ The catalogue provided an excellent contribution to the development of Arabic bibliography.

Among the over 1,800 books described in the first volume of this catalogue, the Bucharest *Book of Psalms* printed by Sylvester of Antioch attracted the editor's attention. He mentioned it in the opening of the *Catalogue* as one of the rarest books in the collection and one that is of interest to every book lover: "Which cabinet would close itself before the Bucharest Psalter, 1747, which Mr. de Sacy thought was the only one in Europe (no. 1348)?"⁴⁷ Indeed, in his note inside the book cover, de Sacy mentioned: "This copy, sent to me from Bucharest, I suspect, not without reason, is unique in Europe" (Fig. 23).⁴⁸

Merlin's description of the book is thorough, and he was the first scholar, after Silvestre de Sacy, to see the book, since it is not sure that Schnurrer actually saw de Sacy's copy. He may have described it from notes sent to him by the French scholar. Several elements of Merlin's description are relevant for the later identification of this copy: the mention of de Sacy's note written in Latin, the number of pages and the four missing pages, as well as the binding in red half-marouquin.⁴⁹ Merlin considered this copy of the book, "even if incomplete", a "precious curiosity".⁵⁰ He also praised the esthetic qualities of the type, affected, however, by the poor quality of the printing.⁵¹

44 *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, vol. I. *Imprimés. Philosophie, Théologie, Sciences Naturelles*, Paris, 1842.

45 On this topic, see R. Merlin's "Avertissement" in the first volume of *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, vol. I, p. XXXI-XL.

46 *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, vol. I, p. 412–414.

47 "Quel cabinet se fermerait au Psautier de Boukharest, 1747, que M. de Sacy croit être le seul en Europe (n° 1348)?"

48 "Hoc exemplar Bucharesto ad me missum, unicum esse in Europa non sine causa suspicor", cf. *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, vol. I, p. 289.

49 *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, vol. I, p. 288–289, no. 1348.

50 "Tout incomplet qu'il est, ce volume est une précieuse curiosité".

51 "Les caractères en seraient assez beaux si le tirage qui a les mêmes imperfections que celui d'Alep (voyez le n° 1337) ne leur ôtait pas une partie de leur netteté".

Another book, the fourth edition of the *Manuel du Libraire* of Jacques-Charles Brunet (1839, followed by several reprints), mentions the 1747 *Book of Psalms* printed in Bucharest. He also (mistakenly) identifies an edition printed in the same city in 1751, by erroneously citing Schnurrer's information.⁵² Brunet's errors were reproduced by Julius Theodor Zenker in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, as well as by other authors in later works.⁵³

After 1842, the trail went cold, and this copy of the *Book of Psalms* printed in Bucharest by Sylvester of Antioch was nowhere to be found. It can be assumed that it was sold at the auction of 1843 and found its way to an unknown private library. While recording the book, publications like the French *Manuel du libraire* give no indication about its price at the de Sacy auction.⁵⁴ In this book there is, however, a mention of the price obtained at the auction for the 1735 *Psalter* printed by Zākhir.

The information provided by Émile Picot in his study about Anthimos the Iberian published in 1886 left the impression that he owned a copy of the 1747 *Psalter* printed in Bucharest. An inspection of Picot's text demonstrates that he only quotes a passage of Silvestre de Sacy's article published in 1814 in *Magasin Encyclopédique*.⁵⁵ The 1747 Arabic *Book of Psalms* was never in Picot's hands.

After Picot's quote from de Sacy's article, there was no mention of the Bucharest *Psalter* from any independent source, nor any based on previous publications. The book was referred to in several studies, based on previous descriptions. And while some of the authors could even have located copies of the book, no description was provided.

In the 20th century, references to the Bucharest Arabic *Book of Psalms* were mentioned in several publications. Most of them drew on previous secondary literature. On two occasions, a copy of the Bucharest *Psalter* was mentioned as

52 J.-C. Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*, 4th ed., t. III, Paris, 1838, p. 603.

53 J. Th. Zenker, *Bibliotheca Orientalis. Manuel de Bibliographie Orientale*, I, Leipzig, 1846, p. 186, no. 1529. However, the author mentions this non-existing 1751 Bucharest *Psalter* only in a comment in his description of the 1747 edition, and adds the reference to the Beirut *Psalter* of 1751 from Schnurrer (p. 187, no. 1530).

54 J.-C. Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*, 5th ed., t. IV, Paris, 1863, col. 922.

55 É. Picot, "Notice biographique et bibliographique sur l'imprimeur Anthime d'Ivir, métropolitain de Valachie", *Nouveaux Mélanges Orientaux. Mémoires, textes et traductions publiées par les professeurs de l'école spéciale des langues orientales vivantes*, Paris, 1886, p. 542–544. Picot states: "Nous empruntons à une notice publiée par Silvestre de Sacy sur la *Bibliotheca Arabica* de Schnurrer (*Magasin encyclopédique*, 1814, I, 198–203) la description détaillée de ce volume" (p. 522).

being held by the library of the Monastery of the Holy Prophet Elias Shuwayyā in Lebanon.⁵⁶

Without access to the book itself, the *Book of Psalms* printed in Bucharest remained an enigma. It was not even clear whether Sylvester's printing activities in the capital city of Wallachia had really produced any books.

Online databases provide a large amount of information and are very useful for researchers to locate rare books. This was also the case for the Psalter published by Patriarch Sylvester in Bucharest in 1747. In 2021, using online resources, we discovered a copy of the book in the Beinecke Library of the Yale University in New Haven, CT (USA). Shortly afterwards, an electronic copy was provided to me by this institution. The surprise was that this turned out to be the same book once owned by Silvestre de Sacy, the one described by Schnurrer and Merlin. The provenance of the book was clear beyond doubt due to de Sacy's handwritten note on the first page, which was also mentioned in the above-mentioned *Catalogue* of his library.

The Beinecke Library holds a copy of Sylvester's Arabic *Psalter*, also recently discovered. According to the stamp on a typewritten note pasted inside the front cover, the book was acquired by the library in 1961 with funding provided by the Library Associates. It is kept in the Rare Book Room, under shelfmark MLf400 747A. There is no information regarding the whereabouts of the book between 1842 and 1961. Further research for copies in auction sales catalogues and library archives may provide additional data on the previous owners.

Similarly mysterious is the earlier phase in the book's travels. Silvestre de Sacy provided contradicting accounts with respect to the copy of the Bucharest Psalter he owned. The mystery originates in the contradictory reports provided by the French Oriental scholar regarding the place from where he had received the Psalter. In the book itself, there is an indication written by de Sacy in Latin "*exemplar hoc Bucharesto ad me missum*", "this copy sent to me from Bucharest". However, as we shall see, de Sacy wrote elsewhere (in a letter) that he received a copy of the Psalter from Aleppo. There are two persons of interest in solving this enigma. Both were consuls of France, the one in Aleppo, the other in Bucharest. The renowned French scholar exchanged letters with both. Some of these letters are kept in the library of Institut de France in Paris (MS 2376, no. 533–539). Nevertheless, there is no guaranty that all the letters exchanged by de Sacy with the two consuls are preserved in this collection.

56 al-Ma'lūf, "Maṭba'a rŭmāniyya al-urthūduksiyya", p. 55; D. Simonescu, E. Muracade, "Tipar românesc pentru arabi în secolul al XVIII-lea", *Cercetări literare*, III, 1939, p. 7; Simonescu, "Cărți arabe tipărite de români", p. 542; Căndea, *Histoire des idées en Europe du Sud-Est*, p. 345.

The French consul in Aleppo, Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Jacques-Joseph Rousseau (1780–1831), a member of the same large family as the famous French philosopher, started exchanging letters with Silvestre de Sacy in 1806. De Sacy asked him to try to find Arabic books printed in Aleppo in 1706 for the Imperial (Royal) Library in Paris.⁵⁷ Rousseau's answer was, at least at first, negative. He asked some learned people, and no one knew about any books printed in Aleppo, so, he thought there might be a confusion with the editions printed on "Mount Lebanon".⁵⁸ In his answer dated January 14, 1808, de Sacy assures Rousseau that the printing press in Aleppo did exist and that two or three Arabic books were printed there, one being a Psalter. There is no other reference to these books, at least in the published correspondence of Silvestre de Sacy with Rousseau. However, Rousseau clearly remembered the French scholar's request. He eventually found several books printed in Aleppo (and maybe elsewhere, as we shall see), as can be deduced from the books he sent to Silvestre de Sacy sometime after 1808. As mentioned above, in 1814, de Sacy wrote that he had received from Rousseau the *Evangeliarium* of 1706 and the *Liber Prophetiarum* of 1708, both printed in Aleppo.⁵⁹ In a collection of manuscripts that Rousseau tried to sell in 1817 there were, according to de Sacy, who acted as an intermediary, "several books printed in Aleppo in the first years of the 18th century".⁶⁰ The books were part of Rousseau's collection that was eventually bought by Count Uvarov for the Russian Empire. These books, currently preserved in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in Saint Petersburg, are two copies of the Psalter, the Gospels, and the Lectionary, all printed in 1706, and the *Sermons of Saint John Chrysostom* printed in 1707.⁶¹ No book printed by Sylvester of Antioch was present in Rousseau's collection.

57 "Il a été imprimé à Alep en 1706 plusieurs ouvrages en arabe soit liturgiques, soit autres livres de piété à l'usage des chrétiens. Aucun de ces livres n'existe ici, et si vous pouviez en procurer pour la Bibliothèque impériale, vous lui rendriez un vrai service". He also mentions that the German Seetzen might have found some of these books and acquired them for the Weimar library. See H. Dehérain, *Silvestre de Sacy et ses correspondants*, Paris, 1919, p. 2.

58 Dehérain, *Silvestre de Sacy*, p. 3.

59 Silvestre de Sacy, *Notice de l'ouvrage intitulé Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 21.

60 Dehérain, *Silvestre de Sacy*, p. 14: "Dans sa collection de manuscrits, il se trouve plusieurs livres arabes imprimés à Alep dans les premières années du XVIII^e siècle".

61 See S. A. Frantsouzoff, "Les vieux livres imprimés en écriture arabe dans la collection de Rousseau, père et fils, conservée à Saint-Petersbourg", in I. Feodorov, B. Heyberger, S. Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, Leiden/Boston, 2021, p. 255–266.

The second person of interest in this matter is the French consul in Bucharest, Joseph Charles Ledoulx.⁶² Silvestre de Sacy exchanged letters with him in 1811–1812, asking for information on and copies of Arabic books printed by Athanasios and Sylvester of Antioch in Bucharest. While Ledoulx's answer provided the French scholar with little useful data, and the consul was not able to find any Arabic printed book in Bucharest, de Sacy's letter is interesting. He mentions that he had just received from Aleppo, from Mr. Rousseau, the French general consul, a copy of the Arabic Psalter printed in 1747 in Bucharest.

At first, the whole image seems to be clear. In 1811 or shortly earlier, de Sacy obtained a copy of Sylvester's *Book of Psalms* from Rousseau, who was then in Aleppo. This is apparently the copy he used to share information with Schnurrer for his *Bibliotheca Arabica*, and the one he refers to in his 1814 book review. There is a problem, however, in identifying it with the copy described by Merlin in the *Catalogue* of de Sacy's library and with the copy in the Beinecke Library of the Yale University. We shall try to shed some light on this issue.

First, there is the note written and signed by de Sacy, stating that the book was sent to him from Bucharest and that he thought it was the only one in Europe.⁶³ In 1811, the French scholar definitely had only one copy of the book, which had been sent to him from Aleppo by Consul Rousseau. However, de Sacy described the same copy as being in "very poor condition" ("en fort mauvais état"), while the book in the Beinecke Library appears to be in very good condition, compared with other similar books. Apart from some partial discoloration on the title page and four missing pages (i.e., two missing folios from two sections of the book), already noted by de Sacy in his handwritten note and by Merlin in his *Catalogue*, there are no significant issues with its condition. Another discrepancy seems easier to solve: the red half-marouquin binding mentioned in the *Catalogue* is in fact a narrow strip of leather, while the rest of the book cover was made of red cardboard.

There is no simple explanation for de Sacy's contradicting information regarding the provenance of his copy of the 1747 Psalter. Maybe in the note written later the French scholar made a mistake and wrote Bucharest instead of Aleppo, being surprised by the printing place. Another possibility is that eventually, after 1812, he received another copy, in a better condition, from his other correspondent, consul

⁶² De Sacy's correspondence with Ledoulx is part of the MS 2377 held by Institut de France in Paris. It does not seem, however, to contain more data about the books printed in Bucharest than that published in T. Holban, "Tipografia și cărți armenesti [sic] în Țările Românești", *Arhiva. Revistă de istorie, filologie și cultură românească*, 43, 1936, p. 111–115.

⁶³ "Hoc Psalmorum editio Bucharesti a(nn)o 1747 prodiit. De quam vid. *Bibliotheca arab.* Schnurreri, p. 515. Exemplar hoc Bucharesto ad me missum, unicum esse in Europam, non sine causam, suspicor. Desunt in eo 4 pagine. S. de Sacy".

Ledoulx in Bucharest, who had promised him further enquiries in local monastic libraries. And if so, why did he state that it was the only one in Europe? In the end, the solution might be that he had only one copy of the book, which he received from Aleppo, and it initially had some binding issues (in connection with the missing pages) that de Sacy repaired. As a passionate bibliophile, he might have defined the book as “in poor condition” because of the few missing pages.

There is, however, another possibility which, even if remote, would explain the book’s provenance. The advantage of this theory is that it does not contradict the note de Sacy wrote on the book. In his letter to Ledoulx, he mentions that he did not know him personally, but that he had information on him from other persons, among them, Count d’Hauterive.⁶⁴ It is possible that the French scholar *did* receive the copy of the book from Bucharest, but he was unwilling to share with Ledoulx the information on the person involved or the circumstances surrounding this affair. Instead, he tried to obtain a new, better copy from the consul in Bucharest. Further research of de Sacy’s correspondence held at Institut de France in Paris, especially that with Rousseau, could reveal more details on these matters.

As for the book itself, according to the description in the library catalogue, it is a small in-4^o (21 cm) of 249 pages, with four missing pages. The pages are not numbered, but they have signatures. There is page numbering in pencil at the beginning and a numbering of the Psalms, probably done by de Sacy or another European owner. As for decorations, apart from the woodblock for the word *Kitāb* on the title page, some frontispieces and tailpieces, the most important is the illustration representing David the King and Prophet. The woodcut illustration resembles the representations used in Romanian Psalters printed in Bucharest in the 1740s and earlier, and it is almost identical with that in the 1745 Psalter of Bucharest. The same woodblock might have been used, or a very similar one was manufactured for the Arabic Psalter. In any case, this proves that the Arabic press in Bucharest collaborated with other presses in the capital of Wallachia.⁶⁵

The quest for Sylvester’s *Book of Psalms* did not end here. As it continued, it led to another important discovery. During the research for the present book, we were able to locate and study another copy of the book, this time a complete one located in the UK. It thus turns out that Silvestre de Sacy’s statement that he owned the only copy of the Arabic Psalter of Bucharest preserved in Europe was not correct after all. At some point in the late 18th or early 19th century, a copy of the same book was

⁶⁴ Alexandre Maurice Blanc de Lanautte, count d’Hauterive (1754-1830), was a French diplomat. He travelled in Moldavia and Wallachia in 1787 and wrote an account of his journey and a description of Moldavia.

⁶⁵ Feodorov, “Sylvester of Antioch’s Arabic Books”, p. 11-16.

acquired by George Spencer, 2nd Earl Spencer (1758–1834). Spencer was a bibliophile with a particular passion for rare editions of printed books. The main part of his library and the fine art collection were located at Althorp, the family residence. In 1814–1823, the reverend Thomas Frognall Dibdin published the Althorp library catalogue in four volumes as *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, followed by two more volumes of *Aedes Althorpiane*, and a supplement. The first volume of *Aedes Althorpianae* mentions an Arabic Psalter, an in-4^o published “in urbe Jassy”.⁶⁶

The main part of Earl Spencer’s rare book library, some 40,000 books, was acquired in 1892 for the John Rylands library in Manchester, now part of the University of Manchester. A search in the Special Collections online catalogue revealed the existence of a *Psalterium Arabicum* at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library Special Collections, in-4^o, published in Iași “in 1690”.⁶⁷

Intriguingly, the information provided does not correspond with any known Arabic printed book. Therefore, only a direct study of this item could solve the mystery. The TYPARABIC project was able to acquire a scan of this book, so that team members have access, for the first time, to a complete copy, including the beginning of the text, after the engraving of David the King and Prophet missing from the book in the Beinecke Library. The book turned out to be a copy of the 1747 Arabic *Book of Psalms*, in very good condition, without missing pages, bound in red leather, with gilded leaves.

16.5 Acts of the Synods of Constantinople, Bucharest, 1747

*Risāla min al-majma‘ al-muqaddas al-Qusṭanṭīnī al-kā’in fī sanat 1723. A’māl al-majma‘ayn al-kanīsiyayn al-mun’aqīdayn fī al-Qusṭanṭīniyya bi-sha’n zuhūr al-kāthūlik bayna ṣufūf al-masīhiyyīn al-anṭākiyyīn / Epistle from the Holy Synod of Constantinople in the Year 1723. Acts of the Two Church Synods Convened at Constantinople concerning the Advent of the Catholics among the Antiochian Christians, Bucharest, 1747, in-8^o, [2] + 271 + [6] p. (Fig. 15).*⁶⁸

66 T. F. Dibdin, *Aedes Althorpianae or an account of the mansion, books, and pictures, at Althorp; the residence of George John Earl Spencer, K.G., to which is added a Supplement to the Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, London, 1822, p. 99: “Psalterium. Arabicè. In Urbe Jassy. Quarto. In a loosely composed large character, upon paper of very indifferent quality. A fine copy; in Russia binding, gilt leaves”.

67 The link to the catalogue entry of the book is: https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma9913050184401631. Its reference number is 10916. The identifier of the book is (OCoLC)644136749, MMS ID 9913050184401631.

68 Feodorov, “Sylvester of Antioch’s Arabic Books”, p. 26.

The second book printed by Sylvester of Antioch in Bucharest has unnumbered pages, with no signature marks. The fact that the books printed in Bucharest do not have page numbers probably indicates a lack of professional printers in the newly established press.

The book was mentioned in bibliographical research, but for a long time no copy was accessible for study.⁶⁹ Because the book does not (and most likely did not) have a proper title page, and as the title is rather long and difficult to transcribe, the book has been catalogued in various ways. Ioana Feodorov recently published a preliminary general description, having examined the only copy of this book known today,⁷⁰ held in the collection of the Austrian National Library in Vienna (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek).⁷¹

The book contains the acts of three synods that took place in Constantinople in 1723 (actually, 1722), 1725, and 1727, with an introduction written most likely by Sylvester of Antioch. As the documents of the Synods were issued in Greek, the material contained in the book was at some point translated into Arabic either by Sylvester, or by an unknown translator, at the patriarch's request. One of the first interesting endeavors related to this book would be to identify the Greek originals of the texts. For one of the texts, the Greek original can easily be located. It has been published several times. For the others, only the Arabic version is available, as well as a French translation.

An Arabic text of the decision of the Synod of 1722, with the mention that it was transmitted in Greek and Arabic to the "Greeks" of the Antiochian diocese, is recorded in the MS Arabic XIX of the Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana.⁷²

An Arabic text of unknown date with the title *History of the Schism* preserved in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Orientale of the Saint-Joseph University in Beirut contains a description of the causes of the "papal heresies and the schism"

69 H. Petermann, *Reisen im Orient*, 2, Leipzig, 1861, p. 403–404 (mentions the edition of Bucharest, with the wrong date 1727); Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, p. 182.

70 Feodorov, "Sylvester of Antioch's Arabic Books", p. 20–24.

71 On Google Books it is described as "Polemik gegen das römische katholische Dogma von Standpunkt der griech. Kirche. arab. Bukurest 1747"; see <https://books.google.ro/books?id=n-s1WAAAACAj>. See also the entry in the online catalogue of the Austrian National Library at <http://data.onb.ac.at/rep/10885266>.

72 J. S. Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana in qua manuscriptos codices Syriacos, Arabicos, Persicos, Turcicos, Hebraicos, Samaritanos, Armenicos, Aethiopicos, Graecos, Aegyptiacos, Ibericos, et Malabaricos, jussu et munificentia Clementis XI Pontificis Maximi ex Oriente conquisitos, compratos, avectos, et Bibliothecae Vaticanae addictos*, vol. III, 1, Rome, 1725, p. 639, no. XIX. For the Greek text, see Ch. 1.2.

from the Greek Orthodox point of view.⁷³ Chapter 9 contains a brief historical presentation. Patriarchs Kyrillos V ibn al-Za‘īm and Athanasios III Dabbās are blamed for having approached the Roman pope to obtain his help towards the Union. The text was attributed by Joseph Nasrallah to Michael Brayk, based on the fact that the manuscript also contains a work which is known to have been written by him.⁷⁴ Its Arabic title is *Sharṭūniyāt alladhīn tamadhabū awwal^{an} bi-madhab al-Lātīniyīn*.⁷⁵ The role of Euthymios of Tyre and Sidon is also mentioned, as well as his rebellion against Kyrillos V ibn al-Za‘īm, who wanted to force him to return the patriarchal insignia sent to him by the pope. The causes for the Latin influence in Aleppo are mentioned in the 1725 text, starting with the missionaries’ “trick” when they pretended that the dogmas of the Greeks and the Latins were similar. They frequented the houses of the “Greek nation” and distributed erroneous commentaries of the Holy Books and falsified texts of the Holy Fathers’ works. In this way, they won over the clergy and the leaders of the “Greek nation”. Patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās’s “weakness” was also blamed. This is an interesting point, as a similar attitude was expected by the Latins from the new patriarch. When Sylvester acted in a different manner than anticipated, conflict arose. Later, when pressured by the patriarch of Constantinople and the Synod, Athanasios decided to oppose the missionaries. The text is also unappreciative of Gennadios, the metropolitan of Aleppo, for being influenced by the Latins. This led to his exile to the citadel of Baalbek for his false beliefs. Some of the “Greeks” were discontent with the punishments against them and their bishops by the Synod of Constantinople. In Lebanon, the teachings of the priest Nicolas Sāyegh and those of ‘Abdallāh Zākhir were responsible for spreading the Latin influence. In Beirut, Kyrillos VI secured the help of the Dahhān family by appointing one of its members, Joasaph, a monk from Shuwayr, as metropolitan of the city.⁷⁶ Chapter 9 of the 1725 work contains the *Acts* of the Synod of Constantinople of that year. Most likely, they were translated from the Greek original. The text provides the names of all the individuals excommunicated from the Church of Antioch, beginning with Seraphim Ṭanās.⁷⁷ The document published by Rabbath corresponds with the text in the book published by Sylvester of Antioch in Bucharest in 1747.

73 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 416–417, with the French translation of two chapters. The editor states that the manuscript is “of recent date”, but the information comes undoubtedly from 18th-century sources.

74 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 50–51.

75 HMML Project Number USJ 00014, at <https://www.vhmml.org/readingRoom/view/504446>.

76 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 415–418.

77 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 418–420.

The text is, in fact, a letter of the synod of Constantinople of 1725 signed by Jeremias III of Constantinople, Sylvester of Antioch, and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem.⁷⁸ There is no known Greek text available of this letter, which contained a great number of Arabic names, but the Arabic text is preserved, for example in MS no. 14 of Bibliothèque Orientale in Beirut.⁷⁹ A French translation was published by Antoine Rabbath, as previously mentioned, while the Arabic text was partially published by Qusṭanṭīn al-Bāshā.⁸⁰

The Greek Acts of the Synod of February 1727 are preserved in several Greek manuscripts: the Kritiōi (Kritias) codex in the patriarchal library in Constantinople, MS no. 622 (122), f. 7r–13v; MS no. 28, f. 212–217, in the library of the *metochion* of the Holy Sepulcher in Constantinople,⁸¹ and Gr. MS 82 at Christ Church College in Oxford.⁸² Another copy, identifying Chrysanthos of Jerusalem as author of the text, was preserved in a manuscript of the 19th century on the Greek island of Leros.⁸³ The same attribution is made by Nikolaos Karatzas in his *Πανδέκτη* (*Pandects* or *Digest*).⁸⁴ There is also a copy of the text on f. 20–23 in MS no. 124 of the library of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The text was first published by Manouēl I. Gedeōn *et al.* as a letter of Jeremias III of Constantinople.⁸⁵

The original title is:

Ἐκθεσις σύντομος καὶ κεφαλαϊώδης τῶν ἱερῶν ὄρων τε καὶ δογματῶν τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας ἣτοι ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ὁμολογία τῆς εὐσεβοῦς καὶ ἀμωμήτου πίστεως τῶν Χριστιανῶν, καθὼς ὁμολογεῖ καὶ φρονεῖ καὶ δοξάζει αὐτὴν ἡ Ἀνατολικὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

⁷⁸ Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 50–51.

⁷⁹ For a description of the manuscript, containing two works, most likely written by Michael Brayk, copied in 1885 from a manuscript in the library of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus, see L. Cheiko, “Catalogue raisonné des manuscrits historiques de la Bibliothèque Orientale de l’Université St. Joseph”, *Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph*, 6, 1913, p. 221–222, no. 14.

⁸⁰ Al-Bāshā, *Tārīkh tā’īfat al-Rūm al-Malakiyya*, 2, p. 156–167.

⁸¹ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 4, p. 41–44. The manuscripts are now in the National Library in Athens.

⁸² Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 889–890.

⁸³ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 889; M. I. Gedeōn, “Αἰ μετὰ τὴν Ἄλωσιν σχολαὶ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς μουσικῆς”, in *Ἐταιρεία τῶν Μεσαιωνικῶν Ἐρευνῶν. Δελτίον τῶν ἐργασιῶν τοῦ Α΄ ἔτους*, 1, 1880, Constantinople, p. 88, n. 3; Karmiris, *Τὰ δογματικά καὶ συμβολικά μνημεία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. II, p. 861 [941].

⁸⁴ Karmiris, *Τὰ δογματικά καὶ συμβολικά μνημεία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. II, p. 861 [941].

⁸⁵ M. I. Gedeōn, “Ἀνέκδοτος ἐγκύκλιος τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἱερεμίου Γ΄ (1727)”, *Πανδώρα*, 21, 1871, 504, p. 560–565; 21, 1871, 505, p. 15–20; M. I. Gedeōn, *Ἀνέκδοτος ἐγκύκλιος τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἱερεμίου Γ΄ (1727) ἐξ ἀνεκδότου κώδικος τοῦ Κριτίου*, Constantinople, 1872.

Ἐκκλησία, ἦντινα ὀφείλουσι πάντες οἱ ἀπανταχοῦ Χριστιανοί, ὅσοι τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἰσὶ γνήσια τέκνα, ἀποδέχεσθαι καὶ πιστεῦναι καὶ ὁμολογεῖν ἀπαρallάκτως, καθὼς ἐνταῦθα ἐκτίθενται”.⁸⁶

Brief presentation in chapters of the sacred decrees and doctrines of the Eastern Church of Christ, that is, the Orthodox Confession of the pious and unblemished faith of the Christians, as the Eastern Church of Christ confesses and believes, that all the Christians from everywhere, those who are true children of the Eastern Church, are bound to accept and believe and confess without alteration, as they are presented here.

The text has an introduction and 16 chapters. It was issued in February 1727 and signed by Paisios II of Constantinople, Sylvester of Antioch, Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, and twelve metropolitans.⁸⁷ It was published by Manouël Gedeōn (1871 and 1872), then, by Jean Baptiste Martin and Louis Petit in the Mansi collection (1905),⁸⁸ and again by Ioannis Karmiris (1953 and 1968).⁸⁹

The *Acts* of the 1727 Synod are the most significant part of this work, as they discuss the main points of the faith of the Greek Orthodox Church. The decision of the Synod of 1725 was only of local interest, addressing questions related to the Patriarchate of Antioch, which may explain why it was not copied repeatedly.

Known copies:

1. A recently discovered copy in the Austrian National Library, in Vienna (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek).⁹⁰ It belonged to the Ragusan Giovanni Marghich,⁹¹ who purchased it on March 6, 1763, in Constantinople, according to a note in Italian on the first page: “Di Giovanni Marghich comprato in Cos(tantino)poli 6 marzo 1763”.⁹² He also applied his seal on several pages. Marghich tried to translate or to abridge the title of the book: “Libro di Silvestro Patriarca d’Anthiochia Greco scismatico contro il dogma Latino-Chattolica stampato in Bukoreste capital di Vallachia”.⁹³ He also wrote several notes in the book, mainly to mark the beginnings and the content of the sections and the chapters. These notes present him as a Roman Catholic who disagreed with the content of the book. The notes also reveal that he had a good knowledge of

⁸⁶ Karmiris, *Tà dogmatikà kai simbolikà mnimèia tῆs Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. II, p. 861 [941]; Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, col. 889–892.

⁸⁷ Metallēnos, “Σὺλβεστρος. Πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας”, col. 150.

⁸⁸ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, col. 889–910.

⁸⁹ Karmiris, *Tà dogmatikà kai simbolikà mnimèia tῆs Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. II, p. 861 [941]–870 [950].

⁹⁰ Shelfmark 30439-A ALT MAG, see <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC10320457>.

⁹¹ For Giovanni Marghich, “giovane di lingua” of the Republic of Ragusa, see Ch. 15.5.

⁹² First blank page of the first folio before the text.

⁹³ In transcribing the Italian text, the original spelling was retained.

the Arabic language. For example, the last part, containing a letter of Jeremias III of Constantinople, is marked as “Specie di lettera Sinodale scritta dà Jeremia Patriarca Cos(tantino)politano al popolo d’Antiochia ad ricevere il Patriarca loro [...] Silvestro”.⁹⁴

2. A second copy is preserved in the Cambridge University Library (Cambridge, UK). The book is mentioned in the library’s *Bulletin* of 1887: “14. 43. 28. Silvester, *patriarch of Antioch*. Writings put forth by two councils held at Constantinople (1723–27) against the Romanizing party in the Levant, with other pieces (Arabic). 8vo. *Bucharest, 1747*”.⁹⁵
3. Several pages of the book were found in the binding of a manuscript preserved in a monastery in Romania.⁹⁶

16.6 *Akathistos*, Bucharest or Beirut, 1747–1753?

Tartīb khidmat al-madīh alladhī lā yajibu al-julūs fī-hi / *Order of the Service of the Hymn during which it is not Allowed to Sit*, small in-8^o (10 x 17 cm, described also as “close to in-16^o”), 54 numbered pages (52 in the only known copy) (Fig. 24, 25, 26).⁹⁷ A folio (two pages), containing most likely the title page, is missing.

The only known copy of this book was sold at an auction in Paris by a major European auction house. The book was surveyed for the first time by Ioana Feodorov, who had the privilege to briefly study it personally and later obtained a digital copy from the owner, before the auction sale.⁹⁸ It contains illustrations and graphic elements also used in the printing presses in Wallachia (Buzău and Bucharest). At the same time, the Arabic typeface is unique and unlike any other typeface used anywhere in the East in the 18th century that we know of. At the present stage of research, a comparison with Arabic typefaces used in Western presses did not identify a similar one either. If this is the new typeface mentioned in Mūsā Ṭrābulṣī’s letter as manufactured in Bucharest, why was its usage discontinued? The typeface used in the new printing press in Beirut, active since 1751, looks completely different.

⁹⁴ Note at f. 116v–117r (the pagination is the modern one in pencil).

⁹⁵ *University Library Bulletin*, vol. III, January–December 1887, Cambridge, 1888, p. 157.

⁹⁶ Feodorov, “Sylvester of Antioch’s Arabic Books”, p. 24.

⁹⁷ I. Feodorov, “Conexiunile românești ale primului Acatist arab tipărit”, *Philologica Jassyensia*, XVIII, 2022, 1 (35), p. 15.

⁹⁸ See the description of the book in Feodorov, “Sylvester of Antioch’s Arabic Books”, p. 8, 26; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 304–307.

The only clue that connects the Arabic *Akathistos* with Sylvester of Antioch is the Greek name Σίλβεστρος on the emblem at the end of the book.⁹⁹ As this emblem represents an Orthodox bishop's insignia, an entirely new element for Arabic book art, and in the 18th century no other bishop of the Church of Antioch was called Sylvester nor was involved in printing Arabic books, there is little doubt about its owner's identity.

The Arabic *Akathistos* belonged to Frederick North, 5th Earl of Guilford (1766–1827), and bears the *ex libris* of the well-known bibliophile, with his coat of arms and his motto “La vertu est la seule noblesse”.¹⁰⁰ Starting from this information, research in the Earl of Guilford's library catalogue published in 1835 has led to the identification of the book as one of the three mentioned under number 1896: “A school book, Proverbii Arabi etc. 1788. Office of Devotions in Praise of Saint Mary, together 3 vol.”¹⁰¹ These books are listed alongside the in-8^o “Arabic printed books”. The Arabic *Akathistos* is the third of the three books offered for sale as one lot in 1835. At the present stage of research, it is not known whether the book was acquired by someone at the 1835 sale and where it was located until it resurfaced in Paris in 2017.

16.7 *Book of Hours*, Beirut, 1751

Kitāb mukhtaṣar al-sawāʿī / *Abridged Book of Hours*, over 368 pages, unknown format, Beirut, 1751 (Fig. 30, 31, 32).

Although mentioned in earlier sources, the *Book of Hours* printed in 1751 in Beirut was not accessible for study for a long time. In fact, not even the title page, or the book's complete title, were available. We have located and obtained images of a few pages of a unique copy of this book offered for sale on eBay by a bookshop in Westport, CT. It had already been sold to an unknown buyer at the time of the

⁹⁹ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 305.

¹⁰⁰ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 307.

¹⁰¹ [Robert H. Evans], *Catalogue of the remaining portion of the library of the late Earl of Guilford, removed from Corfu [...]. Which will be sold by auction, by Mr. Evans, at his house, No. 93, Pall-Mall, on Monday, November 9th, and seven following days (Sunday excepted)*, [London], 1835, p. 98, no. 1896. The number 1896 was also mentioned in the description on the website of the seller, Giquello (<https://www.giquelloetassocies.fr/lot/116936/16636419>), and that of the Hôtel Drouot, where the book was sold in 2021 (<https://drouot.com/fr/1/16636419>), and in the auction catalogue: Binoche et Giquello, *Collection d'un amateur. Reliures – manuscrits – impressions rares sciences – économie – les Outre-mer*, expert Dominique Courvoisier, [Paris], 2021, p. 59, no. 92. For the Paris sale, see also Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 250.

discovery.¹⁰² The images available on the website provide valuable information about this rare book, probably the first one at the Beirut press.

The discovery of a copy of the *Book of Hours*, even fragmentary, is a confirmation of the indication given in various studies that the printing activity in Beirut started in 1751. It also confirms the information present in sources about Sylvester's intention to set up a printing press in "Arabia". As a result of the discovery, a brief note about the book was published, based on a study of the available images.¹⁰³

The book preserves its original binding, but it misses an undetermined number of pages, possibly because it survived a fire. The last page in the recently identified copy is 368.

The book also offers a solution to the question on who initiated the Arabic printing activity in Beirut. According to the available pages, although *sheikh* Yūnus Nīqūlā is mentioned on the title page, he acted as a representative (*wakīl*) of Patriarch Sylvester, who signs the foreword of the book. The information both confirms and clarifies the already known data regarding the involvement of these two persons in the printing activity in Beirut. In the foreword, Patriarch Sylvester explains the reasons for printing the book.

The complete title of the *Book of Hours* is:

Kitāb mukhtaṣar al-sawā'ī farḍ al-'ammī al-mushā'ī ṭubi'a ḥadīth^{an} bi-mulāḥaẓat waladi-nā al-rūḥī al-shaykh Yūnus Nīqūlā wakīli-nā al-mukarram bi-madīnat Bayrūt al-maḥrūsa fī sanat 1751 masīḥiyya.

كتاب
مختصر السواعي فرض العاتي المشاعي
طبع حديثاً بملاحظة ولدنا الروحي
الشيخ يونس نقولا وكيلنا المكرم
بمدينة بيروت المحروسة في
سنة ١٧٥١ مسيحيه

For a comparison of the number of pages, we should consider the Arabic *Horologion* of 732 pages printed by Anthimos the Iberian with Athanasios Dabbās, Bucharest, 1702 (Greek and Arabic), and *Kitāb al-Ūrūlūjyūn aw al-Sawā'ī* printed in Shuwayr in 1764, which holds a total of 717 pages in the copy preserved at the Bavarian State Library in Munich.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² The find was presented by the author of this book in a conference of the TYPARABIC project in 2023.

¹⁰³ Feodorov, "Sylvester of Antioch's Arabic Books", p. 25.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10249433>.

16.8 *Book of Psalms, Beirut, 1751–1752*

Kitāb al-Zabūr al-Sharīf al-manṭūq bi-hi min al-Rūḥ al-Qudus ‘alā fam al-nabī wa-l-malik Dāwūd wa-‘iddatu-hu mi‘at wa-khamsūna mazmūr^{an} / The Holy Book of the Psalms inspired by the Holy Spirit, speaking through the mouth of David the Prophet and King, and their number is one hundred and fifty, Beirut, 1752, in-8°, 25 + [3] + 367 p. (Fig. 27, 28).¹⁰⁵

Wahid Gdoura mentions three books printed in Beirut in 1751–1753: two editions of the *Book of Psalms*, in 1751 and 1753, and a *Book of Hours* in 1753.¹⁰⁶ Gdoura based his information on Schnurrer’s *Bibliotheca Arabica*,¹⁰⁷ on a study of Louis Cheiko¹⁰⁸ and one by Athanāsiyūs Ḥājj.¹⁰⁹ In the Arabic edition of Gdoura’s book (p. 237), the printing press is located at the Monastery of Saint George, Beirut.

The first accurate description of this book was provided by Ioana Feodorov after she discovered in the Uppsala University Library the only copy known today.¹¹⁰ In 1805, Ulrich Jasper Seetzen had consulted a copy of this book in Aleppo. He provided a brief description: “*Msamihr, die Psalmen*”, printed in 1751. This is clearly the *Book of Psalms* of 1751/1752. Seetzen saw the book while visiting the Greek Orthodox metropolitan of Aleppo (“Bischof der nicht-unierten Griechen”, in the text).¹¹¹ He did not own the book, and most likely the book he saw is not the copy now in the Uppsala University Library.

Gdoura also discussed the roles of Sylvester and Yūnus Niqūlā in organizing the printing press in Beirut, referred to by the author as “the printing press of Saint

¹⁰⁵ Feodorov, “New Data on the Early Arabic Printing”, p. 208–216; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 296; Feodorov, “Sylvester of Antioch’s Arabic Books”, p. 26.

¹⁰⁶ Gdoura, *Le début de l’imprimerie arabe*, p. 185, 260. See also Walbiner, “The Collection, Perception and Study of Arabic Incunabula”, p. 203.

¹⁰⁷ Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 383–384, no. 354. The information about the three books is from Seetzen.

¹⁰⁸ Shaykhū, “Tārīkh fann al-ṭibā‘a fī al-Mashriq”, p. 502.

¹⁰⁹ Fr. A. Ḥājj, *Al-Rahbāniyya al-Bāsilīyya al-Shuwayriyya fī tārikh al-kanīsa wa-l-bilād*, vol. I, Jūniya, 1973, p. 550.

¹¹⁰ Feodorov, “New Data on the Early Arabic Printing”, p. 208–216; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 296–304. See also I. Feodorov, “Was Peter Movilā’s Confession of the Orthodox Faith a Source for the Teachings on the Orthodox Faith Printed in the 1752 Beirut Psalter?”, in Feodorov, Heyberger, Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, p. 193–223.

¹¹¹ U. J. Seetzen, “Nachricht von den in der Levante befindlichen Buchdruckereyen”, *Intelligenzblatt der Jenaische allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, 1805, no. 76, col. 648 (states that the book had XXXII chapters and 367 pages, and its format was *in-octavo*).

George”. He also mentions the letter of Augustinus Maksūd of 1840, and the information provided by Louis Cheiko about Yūnus Nīqūlā.¹¹²

It is interesting to note that a new edition of the *Psalter* was needed only a short time after the publication of the one in Bucharest. A possible explanation is that the text was corrected, and the Beirut book also included new material. A careful comparison of the two texts is required to determine if this is indeed the case.

16.9 *Book of the Divine Liturgies, Beirut, 1751–1753?*

There are no copies available of this book, but the fact that it is mentioned in the secondary sources makes it plausible that it was printed. Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, in his “Nachricht von den in der Levante befindlichen Buchdruckereyen”, mentioned an Arabic “*Kundák*, ein Missale” that he learned about while travelling in the Levant.¹¹³

Consequently, the number of books printed in the Beirut press would be three or four, of which only two are accessible in complete or fragmentary copies. Of the books printed at the Beirut press, this last one and the presumed second edition of the *Book of Psalms*, reportedly printed in 1753, are the ones we know the least about.

¹¹² Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, p. 183–185. For the letter of Augustinus Maksūd, see Feodorov, “New Data on the Early Arabic Printing”, p. 208–209; Feodorov, “Was Peter Movilā’s Confession of the Orthodox Faith a Source”, p. 194–195.

¹¹³ Seetzen, “Nachricht von den in der Levante befindlichen Buchdruckereyen”, no. 76, col. 648; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 307–308; Feodorov, “Sylvester of Antioch’s Arabic Books”, p. 26.

17 Other Printed Items

17.1 *Antimensia*

Among the liturgical items that usually (but not necessarily) involved printing were the *antimensia*. A piece of cloth printed with images and text, consecrated by a bishop, and containing pieces of holy relics (attached to it), an *antimension* was necessary for a priest to celebrate the Divine Liturgy outside the consecrated altar of a church.¹

Many *antimensia* from the 18th century have survived. They were commissioned by bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs across the entire Orthodox world. Usually, the printing was done on their request and their names were inscribed on the typographic plate. The year was also mentioned, although usually this was the first year of their office, not the year of printing. In some cases, both the first year of office and the year of printing were indicated. It was not unusual to also inscribe the names of the sponsors who had paid to print the *antimension*. Later, non-personalized *antimensia* were printed for the Orthodox clergy both in Eastern and in Western Europe (Venice, Mount Athos, etc.). When consecrated, these were provided with a handwritten note mentioning the consecration date and the bishop's name.

The printing plates were in copper or woodcut, each with a different aspect when printed on cloth.² The cloth itself could be white or colored (for example, yellow). The ink was in most cases black, but sometimes red ink was used. The printing plates were often made with replaceable parts to allow changes in the position or content of the text, or even the images. This was done to ease the printing of similarly looking items for different bishops, with different sponsor names or dates and inscriptions in various languages. A new print run, often with a different design, was always done when a change of bishop occurred, and even by the same bishop when considered necessary.

Antimensia were printed in large numbers, especially at the initiative of patriarchs. A source mentions that for the Metropolitan See of Ungro-Wallachia, in

1 For *antimensia* in general, see P. S. Agathōnos, *Tò Antimίνσιον. Συμβολή εις την μελέτην τῆς λατρείας τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας*, Nicosia, 2003; Diacon Dr. N. M. Tuḡă, *Sfântul Antimis. Studiu istoric, liturgic și simbolic*, Bucharest, 1943 (2nd ed., Bucharest, 2014); Pr. Dr. V.-I. Roșu, *Antimisul. Origine, istorie și sfințire*, Bucharest, 2023.

2 A source mentions two printing plates for *antimensia*, one in copper and the other in wood, used by the metropolitans of Ungro-Wallachia in Bucharest in the first half of the 18th century. See Simedrea, “Tiparul bucureștean de carte bisericească”, p. 858, 922.

the 1740s, after some troubles generated by wars in the region, at least 100 new *antimensia* were needed. Engraving a new plate required a considerable expense, but after it was ready, the cost of the *antimensia* would have been moderate. The amount of work and the price of materials used were nowhere near those required for typesetting and printing a book. However, special typographic skills and a press were necessary for printing *antimensia*.

Identifying where *antimensia* were printed, if the place is not mentioned, is rather difficult. The use of certain plates can relate to specific places and periods, but the lack of a complete database of such images makes this research a pioneering work.

Sylvester of Antioch printed *antimensia* since the beginning of his pastoral office. His frequent travels and keen interest in printing must have facilitated this activity. As a result, *antimensia* printed at his order at different times, and of various types, survive in several collections.

At least four of Patriarch Sylvester's *antimensia* are known to have been preserved on Mount Athos. It is possible that there are more, as the information about all the monastic collections there is incomplete. We briefly describe henceforth each of these four *antimensia* on Mount Athos.

Patriarch Sylvester's *antimension* at the Karakallou Monastery is dated 1738. A different printing plate was used for this item than for two other *antimensia* printed in the same year, which will be discussed further on. It was printed most likely with a woodblock, not with a copperplate. In its current shape, the artefact is bordered with yellow cloth (sized 40 x 45 cm).³ Its most important feature is the inscription with intricate epigraphic qualities (letters inside letters, etc.), and the mistaken use of the word Παναγιώτατος (*Panagiōtatos*) to refer to Sylvester. This title was reserved for the patriarch of Constantinople. The correct term for referring to the other Orthodox patriarchs was Μακαριώτατος (*Makariōtatos*). After the year, there is the word "month" and an empty space. These features add up to suggest that the printing plate was previously used for an *antimension* of a patriarch of Constantinople whose name and title were replaced with Sylvester's. The printing place was most likely the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Further research on the *antimensia* of the ecumenical patriarchs will probably confirm this supposition.

Another *antimension* of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch, preserved at the Stavronikita Monastery,⁴ seems to have September 1738 as its production date, but the reading of the year is not certain: it might also be 1724. It is printed with an

³ <https://repository.mountathos.org/jspui/handle/20.500.11957/75545>.

⁴ <https://repository.mountathos.org/jspui/handle/20.500.11957/145978>. On the website it is dated inadvertently September 1791, evidently outside the period of Sylvester's patriarchate.

entirely different copperplate than the one at the Karakallou Monastery. Its size is 50 x 64 cm. In the lower part, the name of the sponsor is indicated, but it is now unreadable. The letter “N” in the inscription looks like it was repeatedly printed in a mirror image.

The Simonos Petras monastery holds an *antimension* of Sylvester printed in red ink from a copperplate.⁵ Its size is 48 x 61 cm. The center field with figurative representations is identical to that of the one preserved at the Stavronikita Monastery. Some of the inscriptions are also the same: e.g., the inscription in the lower part, mentioning the consecration by Sylvester in September 1738. The text is not clearly visible, and the date might be September 1724. Other marginal inscriptions are different but share the particularity of the mirrored letter “N”. The inscription mentions once again the year 1738. A handwritten note indicates that it was consecrated (καθιερώθη). There is no mention of a sponsor, which seems to be the reason for a different design of the border inscription than the one used for the Stavronikita *antimension*. The central part was clearly printed with the same plate used for that item.

A fourth *antimension* of Sylvester is attested in the Vatopedi Monastery. From the description, it resembles the one in the Stavronikita Monastery. The inscription mentions the date “September 1724” (the starting point of Sylvester’s patriarchate), while the sponsor’s inscription, “Diamantis Moysis Mazlis, son of Antonios”, gives the year 1731.⁶

In addition to these four, several other *antimensia* printed for Patriarch Sylvester are known to exist.

One item, dated 1724, is preserved in the collections of the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens, transferred there from the Christian Archaeological Museum.⁷

In Cyprus, two *antimensia* of Sylvester of Antioch are connected to the two major monasteries on the island, Kykkos and Machaira.⁸ Sylvester’s visit to the Kykkos monastery in 1735 is attested in the patriarch’s notes and a few other sources. The *antimension* was apparently a gift for the Iereōn Monastery in Paphos,

5 <https://repository.mountathos.org/jspui/handle/20.500.11957/100555>.

6 I. E. Tavlakis, “The Engravings”, *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi. Tradition. History. Art*, 2, Mount Athos, 1998, p. 555–556. See also <https://pemtpousia.com/2011/11/the-engravings>.

7 [G. Lampakēs], “Ἐκθεσις τοῦ Διευθυντοῦ τοῦ Χριστιανικοῦ Ἀρχαιολογικοῦ Μουσείου Γ. Λαμπάκη περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸ ἔτος 1891 πεπραγμένων”, *Δελτίον Ἀῶν περιέχον τὰς ἐργασίας τῆς ἐταιρείας ἀπὸ ἰδρύσεως αὐτῆς μέχρι τῆς 31 Δεκεμβρίου 1891*, Athens, 1892, p. 114.

8 Kokkinoftas, “Οἱ Κύπριοι Πατριάρχες Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 311–329; Kokkinoftas, “Το Πατριαρχεῖο Ἀντιοχείας καὶ ἡ Κύπρος”, p. 139–158.

a *metochion* of Kykkos.⁹ Sylvester's *antimensia* at the Machaira Monastery is dated 1728 and it is printed from a woodblock.¹⁰ A third *antimensia* of Sylvester, also printed from a woodblock and dating from 1728, is mentioned in Sotira, Famagusta (Σωτήρα Αμμοχώστου).¹¹

The inscriptions on another of Sylvester's *antimensia* were published twice by the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga, without information on the location of the artifact.¹² The editor only mentions the word "expositie" ("exhibition"), meaning, as explained in the introductory notes, that the artifact was displayed at an exhibition in Sibiu in 1905, without further explanations.¹³ The current location of this item is unknown. The *antimensia* was described for the first time by Iorga in a series of comments on similar items "found in Transylvania". According to him, the *antimensia* had two different inscriptions, one in Romanian and the other in Greek. The Greek text mentioned Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch and was dated April 1748. The year is relevant, as Patriarch Sylvester was in Bucharest at the time. The Romanian inscription points to the fact that the *antimensia* was printed in the capital of Wallachia in 1748.¹⁴ The same year, Sylvester printed (most likely also in Bucharest) a "letter of absolution".¹⁵

Another *antimensia* dating from April 1748 and printed most likely from the same plate is preserved in the *skeuophylakion* (the special place for storing the liturgical objects) of the Saint John the Theologian monastery in Patmos, Greece. Its size is 65 x 50 cm, and it has Greek and Romanian inscriptions.¹⁶

Another copy of the *antimensia* printed in 1748 by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch was identified in 1909 as being preserved in the church of the Holy Trinity in Karpeneisi (Greece).¹⁷

9 Kokkinoftas, "Το Πατριαρχείο Αντιοχείας και η Κύπρος", p. 139–158.

10 Kokkinoftas, "Οι Κύπριοι Πατριάρχες Αντιοχείας", p. 320; Agathōnos, *Τὸ Αντιμίνσιον*, p. 310, n. 77.

11 Agathōnos, *Τὸ Αντιμίνσιον*, p. 310, n. 77.

12 N. Iorga, *Scrisori și inscripții ardeleni și maramureșene*, I. *Scrisori din archiva grecilor Sibiului din archiva protopopiei neunite a Făgărașului și din alte locuri*, Bucharest, 1906, p. 299, no. XII; Iorga (ed.), *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 1121, no. MLXXXVIII.

13 Iorga, *Scrisori și inscripții ardeleni*, p. LXV–LXVII.

14 Păcurariu, "Legăturile Țărilor Române cu Patriarhia Antiohiei", p. 612. For the *antimensia*, see also Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 228–229.

15 Arhim. P. Chițulescu, "Câteva foi volante necunoscute Bibliografiei Românești Vechi", *Apulum*, LVII, 2020, series *Historia & Patrimonium, Supplementum*, p. 152–153.

16 S. A. Papadopoulos, "Ἐπιγραφές Ἰ. Μονῆς Ἰωάννου Θεολόγου", *Ἐπιγραφές τῆς Πάτμου*, Athens, 1966, p. 42, no. 81.

17 P. E. Poulitzas, "Ἐπιγραφαί, ἐνθυμήσεις καὶ συγίλλια ἐξ Εὐρυτανίας", *Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, 3, 1926, p. 257.

The printing of *antimensia* by Sylvester of Antioch is also mentioned by Kōnstantinos (Kaisarios) Dapontes in his *Κατάλογος ιστορικός* (*Historical Catalog*), alongside the printing of the Arabic *Book of the Divine Liturgies* in Iași.¹⁸ It is not clear from Dapontes's text where Sylvester of Antioch printed these *antimensia*, but the patriarch may have printed *antimensia* in Iași in 1744–1745.

Antimensia with Romanian and Greek inscriptions were not unusual among those printed in Wallachia and Moldavia. An earlier example is the one printed in 1724 for the Metropolitan Daniel of Ungro-Wallachia, sponsored by the *hieromonachos* Joasaph Vlachos (“the Wallachian”) and printed by the master typographer of Bucharest at the time, the priest Stoica Iacovici. It is preserved at the Stavronikita Monastery on Mount Athos.¹⁹ It contains Romanian text, except for the donor's and the typographer's names and a note on the metropolitan, all printed in Greek.

The elaborate copperplate used for printing Metropolitan Daniel's *antimension* was the same as the one used in May 1701 to print a similar item for patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem, a copy of which is preserved at the Dionysiou Monastery on Mount Athos.²⁰ The Greek inscriptions of the 1701 *antimension* were replaced with Romanian ones in 1724.

A letter of Anthimos the Iberian while bishop of Râmnic refers to the printing of *antimensia* for the Patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem by using a woodblock which had been previously used for the *antimensia* of the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia. Here, Anthimos mentions that producing a copperplate was expensive and would take much time.²¹

The print run of Sylvester of Antioch's *antimensia* cannot be determined with certainty, but sources about the Metropolitan See of Ungro-Wallachia suggest that the regular demand was in excess of one to two hundred copies.²²

¹⁸ Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, p. 89.

¹⁹ <https://repository.mountathos.org/jspui/handle/20.500.11957/146134>.

²⁰ <https://repository.mountathos.org/jspui/handle/20.500.11957/137821>. On the website, the date is erroneous, 1730 instead of 1701, a mistake justifiable by the fact that the last Greek character of the year looks like a Λ (*lambda*) and not an A (*alpha*), thus allowing for a reading of the numerical values of the letters as 30 instead of 1. The fact that the Prince Constantine Brâncoveanu is mentioned as the sponsor would not allow for this later date.

²¹ See Sfântul Antim Ivireanul, *Scrisori*, ed. by Archim. M. Stanciu, Acad. Dr. G. Ștrempele, p. 53–54 (the Greek text), p. 55–57 (Romanian translation); Stanciu, *Ο Ιερομόναχος Ανθιμος Ιβηρίτης*, p. 603.

²² In 1776, Patriarch Avramios of Jerusalem ordered 200 *antimensia* from Wallachia: cf. the letter of Archimandrite Germanos to the Patriarch Avramios of Jerusalem, September 28, 1776, in Iorga (ed.), *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 1243, no. MCCXLIX; Arhim. P. Chițulescu, “Completări și îndreptări la *Bibliografia Românească Veche*”, *Libraria. Anuar. Studii și cercetări de bibliologie*, XIV–XV, 2015–2016, p. 148.

17.2 Letters of Absolution

In February 1727, the Synod of Constantinople discussed the question of the right to issue “letters of absolution”, known in the West as “indulgences”.²³ The decision was that the right to issue such documents was not reserved to the Roman pontiff, but belonged to every one of the four Orthodox patriarchs – of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The *Ἐκθεσις* (*Exposition*) of the Synod of Constantinople (1727) also mentions that such documents should be granted with spiritual caution as to whom and when they are issued. The text also mentions how the issue had been approached by the Latins and the results for the Western Church.²⁴ It was the first official, synodal document about the topic of “letters of absolution”, but similar documents issued by individual Orthodox patriarchs were attested before. The aim of the Synod was to formulate a *Profession of Faith* of the Orthodox Church addressing many of the points of divergence from the Catholic Church, including the issue of letters of absolution. The text was most likely composed by Chrysanthos of Jerusalem.²⁵

Letters of absolution could be handwritten or printed. The printed versions were forms intended to be filled in with the name of the beneficiary.

In Sylvester of Antioch’s text collections there are several such συγχωρητικά (*synchoōrētika*), formulated in a similar manner. The term συγχωρητικόν (*synchōrētikon*) most likely stood for “συγχωρητικὸν γράμμα” (“letter of absolution”). The presence of these texts in surviving manuscripts attests to the importance the patriarch attributed to this type of document.

In one of the manuscripts belonging to Sylvester, there is also an Armenian translation of a Greek letter of absolution issued by the patriarch of Antioch. The Armenian text is undated, but it was written most likely in the 1740s. The Armenian text is written with double line spacing, so, it can be assumed that an interlinear translation was intended. The text is followed by a transcription of the Armenian alphabet in Greek letters and a few lines of Armenian text written in Greek alphabet.²⁶ The existence of this Armenian letter is not easy to explain. There could have been Armenian-speaking Christians attached to the Orthodox Church of Antioch, either in Syria or in the Eastern eparchies. The reality of Armenians converted to

²³ For a comment on the significance and purpose of issuing letters of absolution from the Orthodox point of view, see Chițulescu, “Câteva foi volante necunoscută”, p. 144–145.

²⁴ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 903–904; Karmiris, *Τὰ δογματικά καὶ συμβολικά μνημεία τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας*, vol. II, p. 867–868 [947–948].

²⁵ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, vol. 37, col. 889.

²⁶ MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 137r–138r (letter), f. 138r (Armenian alphabet), f. 138v (Armenian text in Greek letters).

the Orthodox Church is attested by a Greek *typikon* for Armenians who embraced Orthodoxy included in the same manuscript.²⁷

The linguistic variety of Sylvester of Antioch's printed συγχωρητικά include specimens printed in Greek, Arabic, and Romanian with Cyrillic letters.

Sylvester's Greek "letters of absolution" are not mentioned in the earlier sources, but parts of them were found in two Arabic manuscripts, where they were used as binding waste for the initial and/or the final part of the manuscript. With the pieces found in one of these manuscripts, we were able to reconstruct ca. 90% of the printed text of a Greek "letter of absolution" (Fig. 37).²⁸

The landscape-oriented page is divided into three areas. The upper one has the image of the Holy Apostle Peter on a throne and the Greek inscription "Ὁ Ἅγιος Ἀπόστολος Πέτρος" located on both sides of the image. The remaining fragments of at least three copies of the printed text do not preserve a complete image, but from the available details, the image resembles the one on Athanasios Dabbās's patriarchal seal.²⁹ The rest of the upper field displays a floral decoration and the title of the patriarch in two cartouches distributed on the left and the right of the central image. The inscription reads: "Σίλβεστρος ἐλέω Θεοῦ π(ατ)ριάρχης τῆς μεγάλης Θε(ο)υπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάσης Ἀνατολῆς" ("Sylvester by the mercy of God patriarch of the great City of God Antioch and All the East").

The central area contains the main text, reproducing the form known from Romanian and Slavonic "letters of absolution" of other Orthodox patriarchs, such as Dositheos or Parthenios of Jerusalem, starting with: "Ἡ μετριότης ἡμῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ χάριτος, δωρεάς τε" ("Our humility by the grace and the gift"), and ending in: "τοῦ Ἁγίου ἐνδόξου καὶ [πανευφήμου] Ἀποστόλου Πρωτοκορυφαίου Πέτρου καὶ πρώτου ἱεράρχου τῆς μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάντων τῶν Ἁγίων. Ἀμήν. .αψκδ´" ("of the Holy Glorious and [All Praised] First and Supreme Apostle Peter the Great the first hierarch of the great City of God Antioch and of all the Saints. Amen. 1724"). The initial letter "H" is placed in an ornate square.

The lower area of the document contains Sylvester's very elaborate signature, rendered in the characteristic way of Greek patriarchs of the time, and containing the same text as the title.

²⁷ MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 108r-109v.

²⁸ MS no. 9, Dayr Sayyidat al-Balamand, HMML Project Number BALA 00003, at <https://w3id.org/vhmmml/readingRoom/view/107673>; MS no. 87, Dayr Sayyidat al-Balamand, HMML Project Number BALA 00083, at <https://w3id.org/vhmmml/readingRoom/view/108235>.

²⁹ For the image of Athanasios Dabbās's seal, see Tchentsova, "Les documents grecs du XVII^e siècle: pièces authentiques et pièces fausses, 4", p. 173–195, il. 2.

The document could have been printed either with a single or a composite woodblock (or, less likely, a metal plate).³⁰ The text was carved on the woodblock and does not seem to have been typeset and printed with movable type.

The year on Sylvester's Greek "letter of absolution" is 1724, meaning that it was most likely printed between September (the month of Sylvester's election) and December 1724. There are no indications about where the letter was printed. At that time, Sylvester was in Constantinople. It is possible, in analogy with some of the *antimensia*, that "letters of absolution" were printed with the year of Sylvester's election as patriarch rather than the year of printing. Likewise, Sylvester's patriarchal seal mentions the year 1724. The same is true for the seal of Kyrillos VI, the Greek Catholic patriarch who applied his seal with the year 1724 (the year he claimed to have become patriarch) even on later documents, although officially he had only held this position briefly in 1745. Interestingly, the seal used in the correspondence with the Ottoman authorities is different from the seal used for the letters sent to France.³¹

An Arabic "letter of absolution" of Patriarch Sylvester also survives (Fig. 36).³² The overall design is different from the Greek letter just described, but the text is nearly the same. The top area contains two icons with Greek inscriptions. The icon on the right portrays the Theotokos and the one on the left, the Holy Apostle Peter. In between them, two angels hold an open scroll with the inscription "Glory to God always" (*al-majd li-l-Lāh dā'im^{am}*) above Sylvester's patriarchal title. The middle area contains the Arabic text, very similar in content to that of the Greek letter of 1724.³³ The lower area bears the patriarch's signature, also resembling the one in Greek copies.

An unusual feature of this Arabic letter is that its main text appears to be printed with movable type rather than a woodblock, as in the Greek letter. The location of this copy of the Arabic letter is not known, and the only available illustration does not provide much information. If it were printed in 1724 in Constantinople (as could have been the case for the Greek letter), it would be the first document printed with Arabic type in the city. There are two other possibilities. The first is

³⁰ A copper plate for a later "letter of absolution" issued by the patriarch of Jerusalem Athanasios (1827–1844) is mentioned in A. Philadelphus, "Συγχωρητική εὐχή τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων Ἀθανασίου", *Δελτίον Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας*, 2nd period, vol. 3, 1926, p. 90–91.

³¹ Kyrillos VI's letter to the king of France and to the Dauphin, in MS Arabe 6100, BnF, Paris, at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52501251z>, and MS Arabe 6635, BnF, Paris, at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10030487j>. See also Çolak, "When a Catholic is invested as the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch", p. 42, 54.

³² See the image of the letter in Nassour, *Σύλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 221.

³³ A Greek translation of the text is provided in Nassour, *Σύλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 222.

that it was printed in Aleppo. This is unlikely, as there is no documented printing in this city after 1711. The second possibility is that it was ordered in a Western European country, presumably in England, from where either the entire print run or only the typeset plate was shipped to the patriarch. Further research in comparing the Arabic typeface of the letter with others used in the same period may provide more clues, or even an answer, to this question.

Issuing “letters of absolution” in languages other than Greek was not unusual for the Eastern patriarchs. There are a few examples of such documents printed in Slavonic and in Romanian with Cyrillic type, mostly issued by patriarchs of Jerusalem. Based on elements such as language, typeface, and decoration, it has been suggested that at least some of these documents were printed in Wallachia and Moldavia.³⁴ The *pittakia* (πιττάκια) mentioned in a letter by Anthimos the Iberian were also letters of absolution. They had been sent to Wallachia in 1707 by patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem to be translated into Romanian and Slavonic, and then printed.³⁵

In Wallachia, and perhaps also in Moldavia, Sylvester printed and maybe distributed “letters of absolution” in Romanian, as proven by some rare surviving copies.³⁶

Four types of letters of absolution printed in the Romanian language by Sylvester of Antioch’s are known. They are different in typographical decoration but similar in content. Most likely, three types correspond with the three periods when Sylvester visited the Romanian Principalities: in Wallachia, in 1730 and 1747–1748, in Moldavia, in 1744–1745.

The first letter has the year 7230 according to the Byzantine calendar, in Cyrillic numerals (×3CJ), corresponding to the year 1721/1722, before Sylvester’s election as patriarch. The explanation is that, as in other documents, the units digit has been

34 In addition to the documents issued by Sylvester of Antioch, the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest holds “letters of absolution” of Gerasimos of Alexandria (Greek, 1693, Slavonic, dated between 1700 and 1710), Cosmas of Alexandria (Greek, 1736), Parthenios of Jerusalem (Romanian, 1740, 1742, Slavonic, 1749, Greek, 1764), Matthaïos of Alexandria (Slavonic, 1747), and Avramios of Jerusalem (Romanian, 1782 and 1784). A Greek “letter of absolution” of Avramios of Jerusalem dated 1783 is in the library of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Bucharest. See Chițulescu, “Completări și îndreptări la *Bibliografia Românească Veche*”, p. 147; Al. T. Dumitrescu, *Foi volante din colecțiunea Academiei Române 1642–1866*, [Bucharest], 1912, p. 86 (350)–87 (351). Another letter issued by Avramios in Romanian in 1789 (1780/1781) is preserved in the collections of the Municipal Museum of Bucharest (Muzeul Municipiului București); see Ș. Ionescu, *Bucureștii în vremea fanarioților*, Cluj, 1974.

35 See Sfântul Antim Ivireanul, *Scrisori*, p. 53–54 (the Greek text), p. 55–57 (Romanian translation).

36 Chițulescu, “Câteva foi volante necunoscute”, p. 152–153, il. on p. 159; Ciucă, Vătafu-Găitan et al. (eds.), *Colecția Achiziții Noi*, vol. II, p. 195, no. 2153.

left blank, to be filled in later. Thus, it could be filled in with numbers from 2 to 9, to be dated between 1724 and 1731. In the previous sources, the document was dated between 1724 and 1729, based on the statement that the date mentioned was noted as 172 followed by a blank space. Most likely, the letter of absolution was printed in Bucharest in 1730, during Sylvester's visit to the capital of Wallachia.³⁷ A copy of this letter is preserved in the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest (Fig. 33).³⁸

Concerning its structure, we note that the upper area contains images of Christ, the Theotokos, and the Holy Apostle Peter, with Greek inscriptions, as well as the images of two cherubs. The patriarch's title is given in Romanian: "Silvestru cu mila lui Dumnezeu patriarh al marii și dumnezeieștii cetăți a Antiohiei, și a tot Răsăritul" ("Sylvester by the grace of God patriarch of the great and Godly city of Antioch and All the East").

In the central part is the text in Romanian, with the same content as in the Greek and Arabic versions. Both the title and the text were printed with movable Cyrillic type. The lower area contains the patriarch's elaborate signature in Greek, alike but not identical with the ones in the Greek and Arabic letters of absolution. It appears that the signature was drawn by the patriarch especially for this document and then carved on a woodblock or a metal plate to be printed. The Greek text of the signature is the same as the Romanian one: "Σίλβεστρος ἐλέω Θεοῦ π(ατ)ριάρχης τῆς μεγάλης Θ(εο)υπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάσης Ἀνατολῆς" (Sylvester by the mercy of God patriarch of the great City of God Antioch and All the East).³⁹

The second type of letter of absolution issued by Sylvester of Antioch in Romanian is dated according to the Byzantine calendar in the year 7253 (corresponding to 1744/1745). During most of this period, Sylvester was in Moldavia at the invitation of the ruling prince, John Mavrokordatos. The letter of absolution was most likely printed in Moldavia in 1744 or 1745, while the patriarch resided there.⁴⁰ A copy of the 1744/1745 letter is preserved in the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest (Fig. 34).⁴¹

37 For the attribution of the document to a printing press in Bucharest, based on similarities in decoration with books printed in 1723-1729, see Chițulescu, "Câteva foi volante necunoscutе", p. 147-148.

38 Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, shelfmark *Colecția Foi Volante* 1323. The dimensions are 34 x 28 cm. See Dumitrescu, *Foi volante din colecțiunea Academiei Române*, p. 86 (350).

39 Dumitrescu, *Foi volante din colecțiunea Academiei Române*, p. 86 (350).

40 For an analysis of the similarities in the decorations of the letter compared with those in books printed in Iași in the same decade and particularities in the text suggesting a printing press in Moldavia, see Chițulescu, "Câteva foi volante necunoscutе", p. 148.

41 Library of the Romanian Academy, shelfmark *Colecția Foi Volante* 1327. The dimensions are 38 x 24.3 cm. See *BRV* II, p. 84, no. 239; Dumitrescu, *Foi volante din colecțiunea Academiei Române*, p. 87 (351).

The third type of Romanian letter of absolution printed for Sylvester of Antioch is dated according to the Byzantine calendar in the year 7255 (corresponding to 1746/1747) (Fig. 35).⁴² There are several similarities with the one dated 7253 (1744/1745). The upper part is printed with the same plate, as is the patriarch's signature. The text itself, printed with mobile type, is positioned in a different way but is similar in content. The letter was probably also printed in Moldavia, or in Wallachia with plates brought from Moldavia.

The fourth type of Romanian letter of absolution issued by Sylvester of Antioch is dated 7256 according to the Byzantine calendar (corresponding to 1747/1748). The upper area contains the images of the Christ, the Theotokos, and the Holy Apostle Peter, with Greek inscriptions. The style of the images is different from the one in the 1730 letter. The text is the same, and the patriarch's signature is similar but not identical with any of the other letters.⁴³ Once again, the timeframe of the printing coincides with Sylvester's presence in Bucharest at the end of 1747, or during the first half of 1748, a supposition supported by the typographical decoration.⁴⁴ Like the other two Romanian letters of absolution issued by Sylvester, the text is printed with movable type, while the Greek signature is printed with a woodblock or a metal plate.

The print run of such letters could be quite large, in the range of several thousands of copies. For example, patriarch Avramios of Jerusalem ordered 4,000 letters to be printed in Wallachia in 1776.⁴⁵

According to the data now available, Sylvester of Antioch printed five different forms of letters of absolution: one in Greek, one in Arabic, and three in Romanian. There are no indications about where the Greek and Arabic versions were printed. The Romanian ones were most likely printed in Bucharest (1730 and 1747/1748) and Iași (1744/1745). Further research on this topic will provide additional information concerning the press of the Greek and Arabic versions, possibly new copies of these documents, and even other unknown versions.

⁴² Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, shelfmark *Colecția Foi Volante* 1329. The dimensions are 36.4 x 26 cm.

⁴³ A copy of the document, previously held in the Central Library in Blaj (Biblioteca Centrală Blaj), is preserved in the collections of the National Archives of Romania in Bucharest (shelfmark *Achiziții Noi*, MDCCCXCV/8). The size of the document is 20 x 35 cm. Another copy of this document was displayed at the General Exhibition of Bucharest in 1906 (no. 3863).

⁴⁴ Chițulescu, "Câteva foi volante necunoscute", p. 148.

⁴⁵ Letter of Archimandrite Germanos to Patriarch Avramios of Jerusalem, September 28, 1776, in Iorga (ed.), *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 1243, no. MCCXLIX; Chițulescu, "Completări și îndreptări la *Bibliografia Românească Veche*", p. 148. For the difficulty in estimating print runs, see Chiaburu, *Carte și tipar în Țara Moldovei*, p. 176.

Interesting, though almost neglected information about Sylvester's printing activities was provided by Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky in the journal of his voyages. The traveler from Kyiv was tonsured a monk in 1734 in Damascus by Patriarch Sylvester and then ordained priest. Sylvester greatly appreciated Barsky for the knowledge of Greek he had acquired while studying with Iakovos of Patmos and for another service he rendered to the patriarch, related to Barsky's artistic skills. According to his own account, the traveler carved for the patriarch of Antioch, "with great effort and care", two woodblocks for letters of absolution. The original text is "разрѣшительнихъ грамотъ", which the French translator of Barsky's work thought it referred to another kind of document.⁴⁶

This kind of imprint, also used in the Romanian lands, was a form certifying the ordination of a priest. The forms were printed and when used, they were filled in with the name of the ordained person.

Barsky's information is significant as it reveals a new type of printed document issued by Sylvester. Although the text only mentions the manufacturing of the woodblocks and not the printing itself, it is probable that such documents were eventually printed. Why was Barsky commissioned to carve the two woodblocks? It is difficult to give a definitive answer, but there is a possibility that the form was conceived as to be printed in two different languages, Greek and Arabic. In any case, Barsky's text demonstrates that there are potential discoveries to be made in relation to the material printed under Sylvester's supervision.

⁴⁶ Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 2, p. 219; Grigorovitch-Barski, *Pérégrinations (1723–1747)*, p. 435 (the translation is "documents d'ordination").

18 Glimpses of Sylvester of Antioch's Patriarchal Activities

18.1 Preparation of the Myrrh

One of the patriarchal prerogatives was the preparation and consecration of the Myrrh, or Holy Chrism. The whole procedure was quite elaborate; many ingredients were needed, and the resulting composition had to boil for a long time.¹ For the Patriarchate of Antioch, we know, for example, how patriarch Makarios III ibn al-Za'im prepared and consecrated the Holy Myrrh in 1660.²

According to the 18th-century historian Michael Brayk, Patriarch Sylvester prepared the Holy Chrism in 1754 in Damascus in the presence of two bishops, 17 priests, and nine deacons.³

Evidence in one of Sylvester's manuscript codices (MS 124 in the Patriarchal Library in Jerusalem) suggests that he had searched for information about the preparation of the Holy Chrism earlier, in the 1730s. He recorded the necessary ingredients, mostly spices and aromatic herbs, in Greek and Arabic (with Greek letters). He also transcribed from the *Holy Codex of the Great Church* (the Patriarchate of Constantinople) a procedure for preparing the Holy Chrism dating from 1709. Most likely, Sylvester prepared Holy Chrism in the 1730s, probably in Damascus. This is demonstrated by his statement that his presents to the metropolitans of Cyprus in 1735 included Holy Chrism (Ἁγίον Μύρον).⁴

1 For a description of the preparation and consecration of the Holy Myrrh in the Patriarchate of Constantinople, see <https://www.goarch.org/-/the-sanctification-of-the-holy-chrism>; Archim. P. Menevisoglou, *Tò Ἅγιον Μύρον ἐν τῇ Ὀρθοδόξῳ Ανατολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ*, Thessaloniki, 1971; Metropolitan P. Menevisoglou, *Μελετήματα περὶ Ἁγίου Μύρου*, Athens, 1999; A. Nikiforova, "The Consecration of Holy Myron in the Near East. A Reconstruction Attempt of the Greek-Melkite Rite (with the edition of Sinai Greek NF/ E 55 + Fragment E sine numero, A.D. 1156)", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 85, 2019, 1, p. 167–216.

2 Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 103. A text about this event is also recorded by Paul of Aleppo in his *Journal*. See Feodorov, *Paul of Aleppo's Journal. Syria, Constantinople, Moldavia, Wallachia and the Cossacks' Lands*, p. 68.

3 Panchenko, *Антология литературы православных арабов*, 1, Moscow, 2020, p. 345; Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 95–96.

4 Ms. 124 Jerusalem, f. 8 v.

18.2 The *Sakkos* in the Benaki Museum

Among the exhibits in the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture in Athens there is a *sakkos* that has been associated with Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch. The liturgical garment was part of the Church items and archives brought to Greece after the exchange of population with Turkey in 1924, following the treaty of Lausanne. At first, the cultural objects which the Greeks from Asia Minor had brought with them were managed by a special institution, the Exchangeable [Items] Fund (Ταμείο Ανταλλάξιμων). Later, the items were distributed among various Greek institutions.

The *sakkos* in question belonged to the Metropolitan See of Argroupolis in Pontos (in the north-west of Asia Minor). According to the description on the museum's website, the vestment is made of "Persian silk woven with gold thread".⁵ Pieces of an older ecclesiastic garment, identified as a *phelonion*, were reused in making the *sakkos*. They bear an iconographic representation of the *Deisis* with Christ, the Holy Mother of God, and a winged Saint John the Baptist, as well as other figures of saints, mostly hierarchs. It also has an inscription in Georgian dated 1701–1702, which mentions that the *phelonion* was donated to the Georgian monastery of Saint John the Baptist in the desert of Sagarejo.⁶

The connection with Sylvester is more complex to prove, as no inscription on the *sakkos* mentions the patriarch. The Benaki Museum's website assures the visitor that it "belonged to Silvestros, patriarch of Antioch, who donated it to the archiepiscopal church of Saint George at Argroupolis in the Pontos in 1736". The source of this information is indicated in the exhibition catalogue published in English and French in 2011: it is the "codex or church register from Saint George in Argroupolis" where it is apparently mentioned that "the *sakkos* was dedicated to the church in 1737 by Sylvester Patriarch of Antioch". The same publication adds that: "In the same year he signed the inauguration document together with the metropolitan of Trebizond and the archbishop of Chaldia, creating the

⁵ https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_collectionitems&view=collectionitem&id=143087&lang=en. The museum inventory number of the *sakkos* is 33708.

⁶ For a description of the Georgian component of the *sakkos*, the iconography, the inscription, and the context, see I. Nikoleishvili, E. Akhveldiani, "A Medieval Georgian Textile in the Benaki Museum (Athens): the *sakkos* of the Antiochene Patriarch with Georgian Embroidery", in C. Gilles, M.-L. B. Nosch (eds.), *Ancient Textiles. Production, Craft and Society. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Ancient Textiles, Held at Lund, Sweden, and Copenhagen, Denmark, on March 19–23, 2003*, Oxford, 2007, p. 150–157. See also A. Ballian (ed.), *Relics of the Past. Treasures of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Population Exchange. The Benaki Museum Collections*, Milan, 2011, p. 112.

Archbishopric of Ahiska (Akhaltseke) in Georgia (...).⁷ The catalogue also offers additional bibliography about the *sakkos*.⁸ While the first data provides an important clue (to be checked), for the second piece of information there is no source provided.

Ahiska was a Metropolis and not an Archbishopric; it had existed well before 1737, and at the time it was under Ottoman rule. The codex mentioned is the official register of the Metropolitan church of Saint George in Argyroupolis, covering the period from 1723 to approximately 1906.⁹ The manuscript currently belongs to the Benaki Museum in Athens, after it was held for a period by the Exchangeable [Items] Fund. Among others, it provides information on the *sakkos* offered by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch to the Church of Saint George in Argyroupolis. From a document issued by Sylvester and recorded in the manuscript, the reader learns that the patriarch offered to the church “an archieratic *sakkos*, sewn with gold thread, with a neck piece also embroidered with gold thread” (“ἔν σακκόν ἀρχιερατικόν, χρυσοῦφαντον, ἔχων καὶ τραχηλίαν χρυσοκέντητην”).¹⁰

From the description in Sylvester's document and the provenance note of the Benaki Museum's *sakkos*, i.e., the same church in Argyroupolis, it is safe to identify this item with the one dedicated by the patriarch of Antioch to this church. At the same time, Sylvester gave to the church the sum of 250 *groschen*.¹¹ The church of Saint George in Argyroupolis in Pontos was the Cathedral of the Archbishopric (later, the Metropolitan See) of Chaldia. The region was under the canonical jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, but there was a close connection with the Patriarchate of Antioch's nearby Metropolis of Ahiska, because many residents of the eparchy of Ahiska were working in the silver mines of Argyroupolis (which gave the city its Greek name).

The *sakkos* from Argyroupolis, now in the Benaki Museum, seems to be the one donated by Sylvester to the main church of the Archbishopric of Chaldia. It was mentioned and studied in several scholarly publications, and it may be considered, even in its reworked condition, one of the important church vestments surviving from the 18th century. The earlier Georgian inscription preserved on the *sakkos*, which contains information on the older *phelonion*, even if unrelated to

7 Ballian (ed.), *Relics of the Past*, p. 112.

8 D. Fōtopoulos, A. Delēvorias, *Η Ελλάδα του Μουσείου Μπενάκη*, Athens, 1997, p. 312–313, ill. 510–512.

9 V. Chatzopoulou, *Κατάλογος ελληνικών χειρογράφων του Μουσείου Μπενάκη (16ος-20ος αιώνας)*, Athens, 2017, p. 669–671, no. 373 (TA 327). For the manuscript, see also Ballian (ed.), *Relics of the Past*, p. 102–103.

10 Papadopoulos, “Ιστορικά σημειώματα”, p. 34 (18–58).

11 Papadopoulos, “Ιστορικά σημειώματα”, p. 33–34.

Sylvester or the Patriarchate of Antioch, is of special interest. It is not known how it came into Sylvester's possession, how it was transformed into a *sakkos*, and who donated it to the church in Argypolis. Maybe it was part of the old archbishop's objects that had belonged to the metropolitan of Ahiska and were recovered by the Patriarchate of Antioch after 1733. The list of these objects includes "a *sakkos*" ("σάκκος ἔν") but it is not possible to identify it with the goldthread *sakkos* now in the Benaki Museum. No additional information can be obtained from the remark that the items of the former metropolitan of Ahiska were "all old (used) objects" ("ὄλα πεπαλαιωμένα πράγματα").¹²

Of the objects associated with Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch, the *sakkos* from Argypolis in Pontos, currently in the Benaki Museum, is one of the items which have received the most attention from scholars.¹³

Another vestment associated with Sylvester of Antioch was much less known and studied: an *omophorion* ("ὠμοφόριον") signed by Sophia, Sophronia "μοναχή", and Maria "μοναχή", embroidery masters of the 18th century, probably in Constantinople. The item is now preserved in the collections of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul.¹⁴

18.3 Sylvester of Antioch's Portraits, Painted and Literary

No painted portrait of Sylvester is known to survive. However, it is possible that a physical portrait of the patriarch did exist. Many of the churches in the Patriarchate of Antioch were renovated or reconstructed, and thus, most of the old frescoes were lost. Collections of books and other historical items were damaged by earthquakes, fires, and wars in the region. In the more remote areas of Syria, churches and monasteries were affected by conflicts even in the 21st century. Old artefacts, among them icons painted by Sylvester, were destroyed or damaged as recently as the 2010s, as were Sylvester's icons in the church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya in Homs and the icons in the monastery of Saint Thekla in Ma'lūla, damaged because of the Syrian War. So, if a portrait existed in a church mural or as a painting, it could have been destroyed.

¹² See the list in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, "Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Ὁρους Σινᾶ", p. 250.

¹³ For illustrations of the *sakkos*, see Fōtopoulos, Delēvoriās, *Ἡ Ελλάδα τοῦ Μουσείου Μπενάκη*, p. 312–313, ill. 510–512; Nikoleishvili, Akhveldiani, "A Medieval Georgian Textile", p. 151–153; Ballian (ed.), *Relics of the Past*, p. 113.

¹⁴ M. S. Theocharē, "Ἐκ τῶν μεταβυζαντινῶν ἐργαστηρίων τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Ἡ κεντήτρια Εὐσεβία", *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, 35, 1966–1967, p. 241.

It is even possible that during the four decades of Sylvester's patriarchate, in Constantinople or elsewhere, a Western artist depicted him and the painting or drawing still exists somewhere in a private or public collection. Sylvester of Antioch arrived in Moldavia three years after the visit of the famous Swiss painter Jean-Étienne Liotard who, while he was in Iași, painted portraits of several prominent individuals, among them Constantine Mavrokordatos (Fig. 7).¹⁵ In Moldavia, according to the biographical account written by his son, Liotard also painted a portrait of the patriarch of Jerusalem, most likely Parthenios (1737–1766).¹⁶ The surprises in finding unknown documents and manuscripts related to Sylvester of Antioch and the state of the research of his biography prove that further discoveries are possible. So, the quest for a painted portrait of Sylvester of Antioch is not over, considering the existence of portraits of other Church personalities of the time.

In Wallachia, portraits of metropolitans of Ungro-Wallachia were painted. An example is Neophytos of Crete, who met Sylvester. Portraits of several successive Patriarchs of Jerusalem from the 18th century have been preserved: Dositheos, Chrysanthos, Ephraim, and Avramios. In contrast, there are only a few portraits of Patriarchs of Constantinople dated in the 18th century. Some of these are engravings, others are frescoes. Portrayed patriarchs include Seraphim and Samuel. There are also some portraits of Patriarchs of Constantinople in books published in Western Europe, without mentioning their name (see, e.g., Fig. 1 and 2). No portraits of 18th-century Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch have been preserved, for the above-mentioned reasons. It is worth noting that several portraits of clerics of the Greek Catholic Melkite Church, including abbots, were painted, revealing the influence of Western models. There is even a mention of a portrait of Kyrillos VI Țanās, the claimant to the patriarchal throne of Antioch.¹⁷ A portrait of Euthymios Șayfî, the metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon, is also known, though

15 For Liotard's activity in Moldavia, see R. Niculescu, "Jean-Étienne Liotard à Jassy 1742–1743", *Genava. Revue d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie*, 30, 1982, p. 127–166; R. Niculescu, "Portretul unui domn din Epoca Luminilor. Constantin Mavrocordat văzut de Jean-Étienne Liotard", *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică*, XLI, 1994, p. 43–54.

16 "Le prince de Moldavie ayant entendu parler de lui à Constantinople, où il était, s'y fit peindre d'abord par lui et ensuite le fit venir à sa Cour, à Jassi, et lui fit faire son portrait, ceux de sa fille, de sa femme et du patriarche de Jérusalem. Il y était arrivé le 15 octobre 1742; il y resta dix mois et demi, qu'il employa à faire pour le prince les dessins de tous les Vodas qui avaient régné précédemment en Valachie; celui-ci se nommait Constantin Mavrocordato, prince doux et bon; il aimait les sciences", in L. Gielly, "La biographie de Jean-Étienne Liotard écrite par son fils", *Genava. Revue d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie*, 11, 1933, p. 196. See also Niculescu, "Jean-Étienne Liotard à Jassy", p. 164.

17 See Ch. 1.2.

it may be of a later date. There is also a portrait of 'Abdallāh Zākhir, believed to have been painted by himself, but there are doubts about this.

No literary portrait of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch is known either, although there are some reports on his personality and moral features, composed both by his supporters and his opponents.

Eustratios Argentis wrote about “the truly apostolic man and divine father and patriarch *kyrios* Sylvester, whom, if someone names the new Athanasios the Great, or compares him with his predecessor the divine Meletios, will not be wrong in the face of truth” (“ὁ ὄντος ἀποστολικὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ θεῖος πατὴρ καὶ πατριάρχης κύριος Σίλβεστρος, τὸν ὁποῖον ἂν ὀνομάσῃ τινὰς νέον μέγαν Ἀθανάσιον ἢ αὐτὸν παραβάλλῃ μὲ τὸν ποτε προκάτοχόν του θεῖον Μελέτιον, οὐκ ἂν διαμάρτοι τῆς ἀληθείας”). Argentis draws a literary portrait of Sylvester:

Ἦλεγξεν, ἐπετίμησεν, παρεκάλεσεν, ἐπέστη εὐκαίρος, ἀκαίρως ἔργον ἐποίσεν, εὐαγγελιστοῦ τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτοῦ πεπληροφόρηκεν, ἔπαθεν, ὑπέμεινεν, ἔφυγεν, ἦλθεν, ἐδίωχθη, ἐζημιώθη, ἐκινδύνευσεν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, καὶ λόγῳ εἰπεῖν, ἐδοκίμασεν ὅσα περιγράφει ἡ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἱστορία περὶ τῶν μεγάλων ἐκείνων πατριάρχων, Ἀθανασίου καὶ Μελετίου.¹⁸

[...he] admonished, rebuked, prayed, stopped at the right moment, did a work at the right time, set his mind as an Evangelist, suffered, endured, left, returned, was persecuted, was damaged, was in danger in every way, and for the sake of saying it, he experienced what the ecclesiastical history reports about those great patriarchs, Athanasios and Meletios.

Neophytos VI of Constantinople wrote in 1736 about the patriarch of Antioch:

Ὁ πνευματικὸς ποιμὴν καὶ προστάτης τοῦ πατριαρχικοῦ αὐτοῦ θρόνου μακαριώτατος καὶ ἀγιώτατος πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας κύριος Σίλβεστρος, ὁ ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι ἀγαπητὸς καὶ περιπόθητος ἀδελφὸς ἡμῶν καὶ συλλειτουργὸς καὶ περὶ τὸ ὀρθόδοξον σέβας διάπυρος ζηλωτὴς καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν δογμάτων τῆς Ανατολικῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας δεφεντευτὴς προθυμότητος, μεγάλως ἠγωνίσθη καὶ ἐκοπίασε καὶ ὑπέφερε περιστάσεις καὶ καταδρομὰς καὶ κινδύνους καὶ ἐπροσπάθησε λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ νὰ φυλάξῃ καὶ νὰ συστήσῃ ὅσον τὸ δυνατόν ἀνεπιβούλευτον καὶ ἀνόθευτον τὴν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ποιμαινομένην λογικὴν τῶν προβάτων ποιμνὴν, καὶ νὰ ὀρθοτομήσῃ τὸν λόγον τῆς εὐσεβείας κατὰ τὸ χρέος τῆς ποιμαντικῆς ἐπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ.¹⁹

The spiritual shepherd and protector of his patriarchal throne, his Beatitude and Most Holy Patriarch of Antioch *kyrios* Silvestros, our beloved and longed-for brother in the Holy Spirit,

¹⁸ Letter of Eustratios Argentis to *hieromonachos* Eusebios, April 1751, Egypt (“ἀπὸ Μισίρι”); Uspenskiĭ, *Александрійская Патриархия*, p. 342.

¹⁹ Letter of Neophytos VI of Constantinople to two metropolitans, two archbishops, the clergy, and the lay people of their eparchies in north-western Asia Minor, asking for support for the Patriarchate of Antioch, June 10, 1736, in Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Ὁρους Σινᾶ”, p. 239.

and zealous for the Orthodox faith and the holy doctrines of the Eastern Church of Christ, most diligent defender, he very much labored and toiled and suffered trials and raids and dangers and endeavored by word and deed to preserve and to reunite as far as possible without treachery and falsification the rational flock shepherded by him, and to rightly speak the word of piety according to the duty of his pastoral mission.

In addition, a contemporary note in MS 187 of the Library of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem declares Sylvester “a confessor of Orthodoxy in our times” (“τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας ἐφ’ ἡμῶν ὁμολογητῆς”).²⁰

During his journeys in the Romanian Principalities, Sylvester of Antioch met two of the major figures of what was to become the “Renaissance” of the Orthodox ascetic movement in the 18th and early 19th century. Sylvester is mentioned in the *Life* of Paisios Velichkovsky (Rom. “Paisie de la Neamț”, 1722–1794),²¹ in the context of efforts made to persuade a group of “Old Believers” to return to Orthodoxy. The event took place during Sylvester’s presence in Moldavia in 1744 or the first half of 1745. Later, in Bucharest, the *starets* (elder) Vasile of Poiana Mărului (1692–1767) met the patriarch of Antioch and asked his advice, as recorded in a book published in the early 19th century.²² The meeting took place in Bucharest, in the presence of prince Constantine Mavrokordatos. The year mentioned in the source, 1749, should be corrected to 1747 or 1748, when Sylvester was still in Wallachia. Mavrokordatos was ruling prince of Wallachia only until April 1748.

On the other hand, Peter IV Jarayjiri’s remarks illustrate how Sylvester was presented by the Greek Catholics. In 1879, before he became patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, he described Sylvester as “an apostate Latin priest” who “obtained from the Porte, through the protection of the English agents, to be acknowledged as patriarch, and he issued an interdiction for the Sultan’s subjects to embrace the union wherever there was no consul of the

²⁰ Karnapas, “Ο πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 3, 1906, p. 32.

²¹ For Paisios Velichkovsky, see A.-A. Tachiaos, *Ο Παΐσιος Βελιτσκόφσκι (1722–1794) και η Ασκητικοφιλογολογική σχολή του*, Thessaloniki, 1964; A.-A. Tachiaos, *Ο Όσιος Παΐσιος Βελιτσκόφσκι (1722–1794). Βιογραφικές πηγές*, Thessaloniki, 2009; S. Joantă, *Treasures of Romanian Christianity – Hesychnast Tradition and Culture*, Whitby, Ontario, 2013; G. Speake, *A History of the Athonite Commonwealth. The Spiritual and Cultural Diaspora of Mount Athos*, Cambridge, 2018, p. 213–233; H. I. Groza, *Saint Paisius Velichkovsky of Neamts and Paisianism*, Citrus Heights, 2019.

²² *Întrebătoare răspunsuri adunate din Sfințita Scriptură, pentru depărtarea de bucatele ceale oprite făgăduinții călugărești*, [Neamț], 1816, p. [7]–[8] (unnumbered pages in the Foreword). See also V. Radu, “Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei”, *Revista istorică română*, III, 1933, 1, p. 27; K. Kenneth (ed.), *Lebensbuch des Basil von Moldawien*, Freiburg Switzerland, 2009, p. 15; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 205.

French nation”.²³ As Joseph Nasrallah remarked, the point of view on Sylvester’s personality and achievements depended on the authors’ stance in the Orthodox-Catholic disputes.²⁴

18.4 Sylvester of Antioch’s Seals

There are two seals of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch that we know about. The first one is small and does not have a figurative element. It only bears the Greek and the Arabic inscription. It was used for the patriarch’s correspondence with the Ottoman authorities (Fig. 61).²⁵

The second seal is larger and bears, in addition to the Greek and Arabic inscriptions, the image of Saint Peter enthroned (Fig. 60). This resembles Patriarch Athanasios Dabbās’s seal, which was probably used as a model.²⁶ Both of Sylvester’s seals indicate in Arabic and Greek numerals the year 1724, when Sylvester was elected patriarch. It is very likely that the seals were manufactured in Constantinople in September 1724, or shortly after, because they were liable to be used immediately for social interactions.

The Greek inscription on the first seal is “Σίλβεστρος ἐλέω Θεοῦ Π(ατ)ριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας, αψκδ’ ” (“Sylvester by God’s mercy Patriarch of Antioch 1724”), inscribed in capital letters. It is an abbreviated form of Sylvester’s official title, probably because the space was limited. The Arabic inscription is: *Silfastrūs Baṭriyark al-Anṭākī 1724*, i.e., “Sylvester Patriarch of Antioch 1724”, in Arabic:

سلفستروس بطريك الانطاكي ١٧٢٤

It is interesting to note the form سلفستروس instead of سلبستروس, which occurs more frequently in texts. The small seal resembles Athanasios Dabbās’s equally small seal used on official documents addressed to the Ottoman administration.

On the larger seal, the image of Saint Peter in the center is accompanied by the Greek name Ὁ Ἅγιος Πέτρος (“Saint Peter”). There are also two inscriptions, an Arabic

²³ D’Avril, “Les Grecs Melkites”, p. 11.

²⁴ Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 89.

²⁵ The seal is present on many petitions registered by Sylvester with the Ottoman authorities, sometimes alongside those of other patriarchs.

²⁶ For the image of Athanasios III Dabbās’s seal, see Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVII^e siècle: pièces authentiques et pièces fausses, 4”, p. 173–195, il. 2. Sylvester’s seal is present on a document issued on February 1, 1739, Damascus, in the National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, shelfmark Achiziții Noi, MMMXL/3. For another image of the seal, see Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 223–224.

one placed around the image and a Greek one on the outer circle. The two inscriptions render the patriarch's entire title, as there was enough space on the seal.

The Greek inscription is inscribed in capital letters:

“Σίλβεστρος ἐλέω Θεοῦ πατριάρχης τῆς μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάσης Ἀνατολῆς ,αψκδ´” (“Sylvester with God's mercy Patriarch of Antioch and All the East 1724”).

The Arabic inscription is:

سلفستروس برحمة الله تعالى البطريرك الانطاكي وسائر المشرق ١٧٢٤

Sylvester of Antioch's seals are an important element in researching the patriarch's works. Apparently, they were not changed during his term in office. It was common for patriarchs to keep using the same seal, as this demonstrated reliability and consistency. Documents imprinted with these seals are rare, at least among the letters that were published. They should be studied in the broader context of the Orthodox Patriarchs' seals of the 18th century, a study that could lead to interesting outcomes.

19 Sylvester of Antioch as an Icon Painter

19.1 Learning the Art of Painting in the 18th Century: *The Painting Manual*

In the 18th century, for the first time in the history of Byzantine and post-Byzantine artistic education, an aspiring icon painter could, in addition to learning as a pupil of a master painter, make use of a textbook to improve his craft.¹

There are many misconceptions about the handbook of painting written by Dionysios of Fournas (Διονύσιος ὁ ἐκ Φουρνάς, approximately 1670–after 1744), a hieromonk and painter active in Karyes, Mount Athos. One is that it is based on Byzantine written sources, or at least it reflects knowledge transmitted from Byzantine times. This seems unlikely, as there are hardly any Byzantine texts dedicated to painting, with two known exceptions. The one that could have served as inspiration for Dionysios's work consists of a few concise indications to icon painters by Elpius the Roman. The second exception survived in the form of less than a page of notes found in folio 284v of MS Vaticanus Palatinus Graecus 209. Based on paleographical features and on the watermark of the paper, the notes were dated after 1355. The text holds technical information for applying the layers of color on wood panel painting.² These indications resemble some of those of Dionysios of Fournas, indicating that there was a certain continuity in painting techniques, despite the absence of a literary tradition.

Dionysios's 18th-century handbook was written in vernacular Greek, which made it accessible to a wide readership. It was structured in two parts. The first part is of a technical nature, with recipes for colors and their use, applying gold foil, preparing the wood for painting, etc. A strong Western influence is evident here. The second part consists of iconographical models accompanied by brief indications, perhaps intended to be used when copying the models from ancient

1 Dionysios of Fournas's work was published by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus in *Dionysios ho ek Phournas, Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης καὶ αἱ κύριαι αὐτῆς ἀνέκδοτοι πηγαί, ἐκδιδομένη μετὰ προλόγου νῦν τὸ πρῶτον πλήρης κατὰ τὸ πρωτότυπον αὐτῆς κείμενον*, Saint Petersburg, 1909. See also A. Didron, *Manuel d'iconographie chrétienne grecque et latine*, transl. by Paul Durand, Paris, 1845; *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fournas. An English Translation with Commentary of Cod. Gr. 708 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad*, transl. by P. Hetherington, London, 1974; G. Kakavas, *Dionysios of Fournas (c. 1670–c. 1745). Artistic Creation and Literary Description*, Leiden, 2008; M. J. Ferens, *Dionysius of Fournas. Artistic Identity Through Visual Rhetoric*, Etna, California, 2015; P. and L. Muray, *A Dictionary of Christian Art*, Oxford/New York, 2004, p. 147.

2 G. R. Parpulov, I. V. Dolgikh, P. Cowe, "A Byzantine Text on the Technique of Icon Painting", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 64, 2010, p. 201–206.

icons or *antivola*, working drawings, and cartoons. Special attention is given to the inscriptions on the icons. The models are recurrent representations of previous centuries, along with some new compositions. As the title indicates, this work provides a description of the painter's art that is post-Byzantine by date and conception, rather than Byzantine. Dionysios of Fournā refers in his text to the Byzantine painter Panselinos, whose works were dispersed in monasteries on Mount Athos.³

Among the many interests of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch reflected in his manuscript codices there are a series of recipes related to the techniques of painting, like the ones in the *Manual of painting* of Dionysios of Fournā. As we have mentioned above, MS 124 in the Patriarchal Library in Jerusalem includes several notes about preparing substances used in painting.⁴ For example, there are recipes and indications for “ἀμπόλι διὰ μαλάτωμα” (“*ampoli* for gilding”), “βερνίκιον τοῦ ἰσκίου” (“varnish for shadows”), “τὸ βερνίκιον τοῦ ἰσκίου γίνεται μὲ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον” (“the varnish for shadows is done this way”), “ἔψησις βερνικίου τοῦ ἰσκίου” (“frying the varnish for shadows”), “τοῦ ἀλτοῦν χαζίου ἢ κατασκευὴ” (“preparation of the *altin hazi*”), “πῶς γίνεται τὸ μουρδέντον διὰ κόλλημαν τοῦ βαρακίου εἰς ἀτλάζεν καὶ εἰς πέτραν” (“how to prepare the *mourdenton* for sticking gold foil on atlas and stone”), “νὰ ψήσεις λάδι γιὰ παυνί” (“[how] to fry oil for *pavni*”), and “νὰ κάμησ ἀμπόλι διὰ μαλάτωμα” (“[how] to make *amboli* for gilding”).

The language of these notes is popular, with a lot of foreign and technical words familiar to the artists of the time. They are an interesting source for Sylvester's artistic activities.

19.2 Sylvester of Antioch as a Painter

While members of the higher clergy who painted were not unheard-of, and Antioch had had another painter patriarch, Euthymios III (1634–1647), a native of Chios,⁵ Sylvester was among the few Church leaders known to have been interested in this artistic activity. Contemporary with Sylvester of Antioch, there was also a metropolitan who painted, Parthenios of Tripoli.⁶

3 Modern research places Manouël Panselinos in the period of Palaiologan art (14th c.). See K. Nikolaou (ed.), *Ο Μανουήλ Πανσέλινοσ και η εποχή του*, Athens, 1999.

4 MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 79r-84v.

5 For Euthymios III of Antioch, see Nasrallah, *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 86–87; S. Agémian, “Les icônes melkites”, in *Lumières de l'Orient Chrétien. Icônes de la collection Abou Adal*, Beirut/Geneva, 1997, p. 139–140.

6 Agémian, “Les icônes melkites”, p. 143.

Sylvester's ability as a painter did not go unnoticed among his contemporaries, or even in later times. Kōnstantinos Dapontes began the note about the patriarch in his *Κατάλογος ιστορικός (Historical Catalogue)* as follows: “Σίλβεστρος Κύπριος, ἐνάρετος, ἐλεήμων, ζωγράφος” (Sylvester from Cyprus, virtuous, merciful, a painter”).⁷ Dapontes also mentions Sylvester as a painter in other works, in connection with the icon of the Theotokos of Prince George Doukas of Moldavia, copied by the patriarch, and the icon of the Holy Mandyion painted by Sylvester.⁸

Decades later, another major personality of the Orthodox world of the 18th and early 19th centuries, Saint Nikodēmos of the Holy Mountain, or Aghiorites (ὁ Ἅγιος Νικόδημος ὁ Ἀγιορείτης, Nikodēmos Agiōreitēs), declared that Sylvester of Antioch used to paint three hours daily.⁹ In his *Spiritual Exercises (Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά)*, Nikodēmos stated that it was Sylvester's habit to paint at least three hours a day: “καὶ ὁ Ἄντιοχείας δὲ Ἀγιώτατος Πατριάρχης Σίλβεστρος, τρεῖς ὥρας εἶχε διορισμένας νὰ δουλεύῃ τὴν ζωγραφικὴν τέχνην” (“and His Holiness Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch had three hours assigned to work on the art of painting”).¹⁰

Any assessment of Sylvester of Antioch's paintings could not be made without creating a comprehensive catalogue of his icons. Curiously, this has not been done before by any of the art historians who specialize in 18th-century post-Byzantine painting. The rare studies of Sylvester's life and activity mention his paintings only in a few lines, if at all. No substantial monograph was written about his painted works. The researchers who dealt with his paintings succeeded in locating only a few of his icons.

In a book published in 1969¹¹ and an earlier, undated letter addressed to the Romanian historian Virgil Căndea in the context of the preparation of the icon exhibition at the Surssock Museum in Beirut,¹² Sylvia Agémian attempted to compose a repertory of Sylvester's works, identifying eleven icons dated from 1726 to 1766 that were preserved in Syria, Lebanon, and Romania. The repertory provides

7 Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, p. 89.

8 George Doukas (Gheorghe Duca) was a Greek who managed not only to obtain the throne of Moldavia, but also to be recognized by the Ottomans as hetman of the Cossacks' lands.

9 Nikodēmos [of the Holy Mountain], *Βίβλος τῶ ὄντι ψυχοφελεστάτη καλουμένη Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά*, Venice, 1800, p. 259. See also Ch. 11.

10 Nikodēmos [of the Holy Mountain], *Βίβλος τῶ ὄντι ψυχοφελεστάτη καλουμένη Γυμνάσματα Πνευματικά*, Venice, 1800, p. 259.

11 V. Căndea (ed.), *Icônes melkites. Exposition organisée par le Musée Nicolas Surssock du 16 mai au 15 juin 1969*, Beirut, [1969], p. 115.

12 The letter was addressed by Sylvia Agémian to Virgil Căndea in the 1970s. The list of Sylvester's works is an annex to the letter. The list was kindly provided to me by Dr. Ioana Feodorov. It is cited henceforth as Agémian, *List of Icons*.

additional information, such as the chronology, materials, dimensions, and a minimal bibliography.

The exhibition was the first one where Melkite icons were presented. It was an important event in the history of icon painting with the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic communities in Syria and Lebanon. The exhibition catalog, published under Virgil Căndea's direction, proposed the term "Melkite" to name the church art of these communities and defined a previously little-known area of post-Byzantine art.¹³ Melkite art should be acknowledged as a part of the tradition of post-Byzantine art. It is a local art form connected with other centers of post-Byzantine art by its models, influences, and even by the artists.

Sylvester's works were considered at least in part as belonging to the so-called "Melkite" art, due to his position as patriarch of Antioch, their Arabic inscriptions, and (for the most part) their location. His icons are preserved in churches in present-day Syria and Lebanon.¹⁴ It is difficult to formulate a definitive opinion on this issue on stylistic grounds, especially given the present condition of many of his works and the unavailability of good quality images. Some icons attributed to Sylvester were heavily restored or damaged or are inaccessible at this time. Even on the definition of "Melkite art", historians and art experts are divided, after more than five decades of studies, although they have used it as a standard definition for decades. It was contested mainly because the word "Melkite" was used after the schism in the Church of Antioch to refer specifically to the Greek Catholic community. Although the art style was the same in the two communities before and after they parted ways in 1724, it was suggested that other terms were more appropriate. Beyond any terminological debate, the art of the Arabic-speaking communities that observe the Greek rite remain a post-Byzantine form of art with strong local influences.¹⁵

Patriarch Sylvester's iconographic style does not reflect local influences, suggesting an artistic formation related to one of the major Greek centers of the period. Based only on his surviving works, it is almost impossible to identify the

13 Ch. Nassif, "Cinquante ans d'études sur l'art melkite (1969–2019). Essai d'historiographie", in Feodorov, Heyberger, Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, p. 229–336; I. Feodorov, "Through the Looking-Glass. Remembering the First Exhibition of Melkite Icons at the Sursok Museum in Beirut, May-June 1969", in Feodorov, Heyberger, Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, p. 339–358; R. Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient. De l'Euphrate au Nil*, Paris, 2022, p. 510.

14 Heyberger, "Le renouveau de l'image de religion chez les chrétiens orientaux", p. 197.

15 Ch. Nassif, "Ottoman and Arab influences on Melkite art in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries", in D. Thomas (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 12. *Asia Africa and the Americas (1700–1800)*, Leiden/Boston, 2019, p. 15–28.

place where Sylvester learned the art of painting. We should keep in mind that the learning process was based on the master/apprentice system and, therefore, a fixed place was not required. In most cases, the so-called schools of post-Byzantine painting are the modern art historians' attempts to find common stylistic features. For instance, Sylvester could have learned the art from a Cretan painter working in Cyprus, Patmos, or Mount Athos.¹⁶ Byzantine painting was considered a form of sacred art, because the icons have always had their specific place in Orthodox worship. This conferred a clear spiritual dimension onto icon painting.

The icons painted by Sylvester of Antioch puzzled art historians. Should they be considered as belonging to "Melkite" art or not? The position of the artist as patriarch of Antioch and the Arabic inscriptions on some of the icons would suggest an affirmative answer. However, the artist's Cypriot or "Greek" origin assumed by many historians, as well as stylistic considerations, indicate otherwise. In addition, most of Sylvester's icons have Greek inscriptions. That Sylvester's artistic style was in general different from the local "Melkite" post-Byzantine style characteristic of painters from Arabic-speaking communities is evident for anyone who studies his works. He was influenced by the artistic milieus of the Greek-speaking areas of the time. The Cretan influence is strong, the icon art of his native Cyprus might have had an impact too, but also Mount Athos, suggested by some, or Patmos. Russian icon painting traditions also influenced Sylvester. The patriarch acquired icons from the Russian Empire, and made copies of Russian icons, such as the *Holy Mandylion*, which he painted in at least two versions after a Russian prototype.

An interesting document is a letter addressed by Sylvester to the *archōn* Samuel on August 10, 1746 from Nizhyn (Νίζνη, in the Greek original, a city nowadays in Ukraine).¹⁷ The letter mentions several icons the patriarch ordered from Russia, an icon of the *Holy Mandylion* and two "despotic" icons (δεσποτικά εικόνες, the main icons of the *iconostasis*, better rendered in English as "sovereign" or "imperial" icons, as in the Romanian tradition). The icons he had ordered in Nizhyn were to be sent to Wallachia, where the patriarch resided in 1747–1748. Icon import from Russia was not uncommon in the Romanian Principalities in the 18th century. Nizhyn was an important center for commerce with the Romanian Principalities. It was also home to an important Greek community, to which Samuel, Sylvester's

¹⁶ For the opinion that Sylvester learned the art of painting on Mount Athos, see al-Bāshā, *Tārīkh ṭā'ifat al-rūm al-malakiyya*, 2, p. 104. For Sylvester's painting, see also D. Z. Mreich (Fr. Damaskēnos), *Οι φορητές εικόνες του Χαλεπιανού εργαστηρίου των αγιογράφων της οικογένειας Musawwir (17ος, 18ος αι.)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Athens, 2018, p. 23–31.

¹⁷ MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 50v.

correspondent, probably belonged.¹⁸ Four icons that were preserved in Romania and relate to the patriarch based on an undocumented tradition could also have been imports from Russia. Three of them are in the museum of the Sinaia Monastery, while a fourth is in the Colțea church in Bucharest.¹⁹ They could even be the “despotic” or imperial icons mentioned in the letter to Sylvester’s correspondent in Nizhyn.

During his residence or brief visit to Mount Athos, Sylvester could have met Dionysios of Fournā, theoretically. In any case, he could have seen the works of Panselinos at Protaton. Panselinos, a 14th-century master, was Dionysios of Fournā’s source of inspiration for his *Manual of Painting*. Inscriptions on Sylvester’s icons, such as that on the book in the icon representing Christ as King of Kings and Archpriest, now in the Saint George Church in Homs, are the same as those mentioned in Dionysios’s work.²⁰ Since that book was only a late account of century-old traditions, the inscriptions by themselves do not demonstrate that Sylvester used it.

The patriarch painted even during his journeys. Sylvester continued his painting work while he resided in Moldavia and Wallachia. Dapontes’s account of the patriarch making a copy of an icon he owned can be placed in Moldavia. Sylvester’s painting activity in Wallachia is attested by the icon of Saint Spyridon to which the patriarch added, at least, scenes of the saint’s life.

After Agémian, another attempt at compiling a list of Sylvester’s works was undertaken in the second volume of the dictionary of Greek painters of Manolēs Chatzidakēs and Evgenia Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση (1450–1830)* (Athens, 1997).²¹ It contains some additions to Agémian’s finds, especially from the Greek areas. Compared with the earlier list, some items are not mentioned, whereas other items, unknown to Agémian, feature here. As a native of Cyprus, of Greek origin and presumably Greek-speaking, Sylvester was listed in the dictionary as Σιλβεστρος (3) [Silvestros (3)]. A short biography of the patriarch was also provided, and the list contains eight icons, as well as a ninth, the Holy Mandyllion in Skopelos, added outside the list.

18 For the Greeks in Nyzhyn, see I. Carras, “Community for Commerce. An Introduction to the Nezhin Greek Brotherhood Focusing on its Establishment as a Formal Institution in the Years between 1692 and 1710”, in V. N. Zakharov, G. Harlaftis, O. Katsiardi-Hering (eds.), *Merchant Colonies in the Early Modern Period*, London/New York, 2016, p. 141–156.

19 See Addenda 1, B.6, B.7, B.8, and B.9.

20 The translation “Emperor of Emperors” seems to us more appropriate, as a better rendering of the Greek βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων. However, “King of Kings” is the standard name of this theme, present in many publications, and we have therefore kept it here.

21 Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349.

At this stage of research, creating a new catalogue, or at least a more comprehensive list of Sylvester's paintings, was a necessary step to allow for a comprehensive assessment of his art. Establishing a timeline of his paintings can also provide useful information for his biography.

Based on our research and previous literature, we succeeded in identifying 18 icons attributable to Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch with a fair degree of certainty. They are collected in the catalogue of Sylvester's works in the *Addenda 1* below, the first detailed and systematic catalogue of the patriarch's icons. We have endeavored to identify as many of the icons painted by Patriarch Sylvester as possible. However, many of them were out of reach, in private collections, or in places where travel is problematic. In some cases, even obtaining images was a challenge. As always in the research of Sylvester's activity, surprises are possible and new icons may be discovered in future.

These 18 icons form the first part of the catalogue. The second part of the Catalogue presents another 16 icons which are copies of icons painted by Sylvester and icons mentioned only in written sources or attributed to him. Another 15 icons in the church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya in Homs are in the latter category.

Recent investigations by Fr. Spyridon Fayad have revealed that Patriarch Sylvester also created mural paintings, the fresco of *The Mother of God* in the apse of a church in Homs, Syria. The fresco is attributed to Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch by a 19th-century historian of the city of Homs in his work preserved in manuscript form *Kitāb tāwārīkh Ḥomṣ al-‘ādiyya dākhil^{an} wa-khārij^{an}*. This manuscript is held by the BnF in Paris (MS Arabe 5936).²² This is the only occurrence of a reference to mural paintings by Sylvester. Fr. Spyridon Fayad included this information in his communication *Unknown Icons of the Iconographer Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch* presented at the conference *The Orthodox Church of Antioch from the 15th to the 18th century: towards a proper understanding of history* convened by the Saint John of Damascus Institute of Theology of the University of Balamand on October 16–18, 2023 (forthcoming in *Proceedings*).²³

22 É. Blochet (ed.), *Catalogue de la collection de manuscrits orientaux, arabes, persans et turcs formée par M. Charles Schefer et acquise par l'état*, Paris, 1900, p. 27, no. 5936.

23 I express my deep gratitude to Fr. Spyridon Fayad for sharing the information with me and giving me access to this manuscript.

19.3 The Icons of Tripoli

Patriarch Sylvester painted two icons presumably for the Church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas in Tripoli. These were large icons of the kind known in the Orthodox tradition as “sovereign (despotic, royal, or imperial) icons”, placed in a central position on the *iconostasis*, to the right and left of the Royal Doors (or Holy Doors) leading to the altar.²⁴ The first icon represents Christ enthroned and the second, the Theotokos enthroned. An Arabic inscription on each icon mentioned that they were painted by Sylvester, the patriarch of Antioch, in 1726.

In 1811, the icons underwent a restoration, which may have included the repainting of some areas. This work was carried out by Michael Polychronis, a Cretan icon painter active in various areas of present-day Syria and Lebanon between 1809 and 1821.²⁵ He painted over a hundred icons, with others attributed to him, and he was also known for repairing and repainting older works. The two icons painted by Sylvester received inscriptions mentioning the repairs by Michael Polychronis. After restoration, they were moved from the *iconostasis* to the lateral walls of the church.²⁶ They were placed in the church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas in Tripoli until the 20th century. In 1969, the two icons were displayed in the exhibition of the Surssock Museum in Beirut. They were reproduced in black and white and described in the exhibition catalogue, alongside another icon representing the Holy Archangel Michael, with an inscription mentioning Patriarch Sylvester (although not painted by him), and the Bucharest icon of Saint Spyridon, with its border with scenes of the Saint’s life painted by the patriarch. For the first time, three of Sylvester of Antioch’s icons were presented as part of a broader artistic environment. They certainly belonged to the historical context of the region and were part of the artistic context in which the art of the Arab Christian communities had developed.

The two icons in Tripoli were returned to the same church after the exhibition. Due to their publication in the catalogue, they were among the few known icons painted by Sylvester, alongside the Bucharest icon. What followed was unexpected, and it is nothing short of a detective story.

²⁴ For the *iconostasis*, see Muray, Muray, *A Dictionary of Christian Art*, p. 255–256.

²⁵ For the activity of Polychronis, see S. Agémian, “Un peintre crétois en Syrie au début du XIX^e siècle: Michel Polychronis”, in *Πεπραγμένα του Γ’ Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου*, vol. 3, Athens, 1975, p. 3–7; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 301–302; S. M. Fayad (π. Σπυρίδων), *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος από την Κρήτη. Τα έργα τους στη Συρία και στο Λίβανο κατά το χρονικό διάστημα 1809–1821*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Thessaloniki, 2013.

²⁶ Agémian, “Les icônes melkites”, p. 143.

At some point in the first decade of the 21st century, the icons were studied for conservation and restoration purposes by Fr. Spiridon Fayad, a Syrian icon restorer, conservator, and art historian. The results of his research were astonishing, and they were presented for the first time in Fr. Fayad's unpublished PhD dissertation defended at the University of Thessaloniki in 2013. His conclusion was that the two icons, dated by their inscriptions to 1726, were in fact recent copies that had perhaps replaced the original works.²⁷ A few pieces of evidence pointed in that direction. The materials used, such as the wood panels, were leveled with modern tools not available in the 18th century. The gold on the background was modern golden paint and not the gold foil traditionally used by iconographers at the time these icons were supposedly painted. As for the stylistic features, the icons seem different both from Sylvester's other known works (such as the recently restored icons in Homs) and the known works restored by Michael Polychronis. Moreover, the two icons in Tripoli presented signs of artificial ageing meant to make them look older.

If the two icons were forgeries, where were the originals? Or did they really exist? And if so, when did they go missing? During our research for this book, while we endeavored to identify and locate as many of Patriarch Sylvester's icons as possible, we made a significant discovery.

In June 2007, at a London sale of Christie's Auction House themed *Icons and artefacts of the Orthodox world* (Auction no. 7522), two icons painted by "Silvestros patriarch of Antioch", both dated 1726, were offered.²⁸ When comparing the photos of these two icons with the photos of the icons of Tripoli in the 1969 catalogue, the similarities were evident. There was no doubt that the high-quality icons offered at the Christie's auction were the originals after which the two icons now in Tripoli were copied. Christie's website mentioned an inscription without quoting it entirely or indicating its language. As the images provided there did not offer any clues about the inscriptions, we do not know whether they mention Polychronis. In the images on the website, we clearly see that the two icons were subject to some sort of restoration process, and they were in very good condition. Better quality pictures obtained later from Christie's (via Bridgeman Images), thanks to the TYPARABIC project grant, confirmed that the Arabic inscriptions are not visible

27 See Fayad, *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 386–388; S. Fayad, "Īqūnatāni min Īqūnāt Kanīsat al-Sayyida wa-l-ḡiddis Nīqūlāwus fī Ṭarābulus al-Balad Lubnān tunsabu kitābatu-humā sanat 1726 ilā al-Baṭriyark Silfastrūs", *Ḥawliyat*, 13, 2022–2023, p. 99–124.

28 Christie's London, *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World. Monday 11 June 2007*, London, 2007, p. 62–63. See also <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4930097> and <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4930098>.

(Fig. 38 and 39). Greek inscriptions mentioning the year they were painted, and Sylvester of Antioch, are present on the two icons.

The discovery was significant, but it generated more questions than answers. As the icons in Tripoli were proven to be forgeries, i.e., replicas of the ones sold by Christie's, it was almost certain that we were dealing with the missing originals painted by Patriarch Sylvester in 1726. But when and how were they removed from and replaced in the church in Tripoli? Who had the means, time, and opportunity to make the (almost exact) copies and then replace the originals with them?

The auction house website offers the beginning of an answer when it states the provenance of the icons, which were accompanied by a letter stating that they were bought by the owner (the one who offered them for sale) in 1964 in Beirut. The information, if accurate (the website does not provide a photo of the letter), suggests a *terminus ante quem* for the replacement.

The rediscovery of the 1726 originals is an excellent chance to compare them with the 20th century copies. Even if they were meant as almost exact replicas, the differences in style and details are evident, as is the quality of the originals. Sylvester's icons were cleaned and restored at some point. This more recent restoration work may have removed the Arabic inscriptions mentioning Michael Polychronis's earlier restoration, and it may also have discovered the original Greek signature and date. The copies preserved the Arabic inscriptions, but there is no mention of the Greek signature and date, probably not visible anymore at the time when the copies were made (Fig. 40, 41).²⁹

In Sylvester's times, other painters were active in the same area. In 1726, Ḥannā al-Qudsī painted an icon representing the Holy Archangel Michael following the model of an ancient Cretan icon dated 5022 (1514), as mentioned in an Arabic inscription. The icon was donated by the Metropolitan Makarios of Tripoli to the city Cathedral at the time of Patriarch Sylvester. This icon was also repainted in 1818, probably by the same Michael Polychronis.³⁰ It is interesting to note that Ḥannā al-Qudsī worked at the same time with Patriarch Sylvester, presumably for the same church in Tripoli.

As for the context, if the dates of the inscriptions are accurate, Sylvester most likely painted the two icons during his stay in Tripoli from late August to late November 1726, before returning to Constantinople. The patriarch resided for a time in the English Consul's house.³¹ The inscriptions on the icons, mentioning the repainting in 1811, even if they are of a later date, most likely reproduce information from the earlier ones.

29 For similar examples of recent copies, see R. Abu Ackl, "Forged or copied icons? The icons of the church of the Dormition in Aleppo", *Chronos*, 43, 2022, p. 1–15.

30 Căndea (ed.), *Icones melkites*, p. 182–183, il. 44; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 511.

31 Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. II, p. 371.

19.4 The *Holy Mandylion*

The *Holy Mandylion*, or the *Holy Face of Christ*, was a well-known theme in Byzantine iconography, especially after the 10th century, when the relic on which the theme is based was taken from the Syrian city of Edessa to Constantinople.³² The theme was transferred from Byzantine art to Russian icon painting in the style of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art. It is from this tradition that Sylvester of Antioch took his inspiration, and even his model, when painting two or possibly three versions of the Mandylion.

The first version, signed and dated by the Patriarch, is now located in the church of Hypapantē, Chora, Patmos, Greece (Fig. 42). The signature is “Παρὰ Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας” (“By Sylvester of Antioch”) and the year – 1746. During that year, Sylvester was in Constantinople, where he succeeded in regaining his throne after it was challenged by Kyrillos VI. The icon in Patmos closely follows the Russian style. It is likely that Sylvester used as a model an icon he had received from Russia, maybe the one he mentions in a letter written on August 10, 1746, to his correspondent in Nizhyn.³³ The icon has a metal attachment, perhaps of a later date.

An icon of the *Holy Mandylion* painted by Sylvester of Antioch is mentioned in certain sources as being preserved in the Andreadakēs’s House in Patmos, Greece. The information was provided by deacon Chrysostomos Phlorentēs to the art historian Manolēs Chatzidakēs and reflects a reality of the 1980s or 1990s.³⁴ The icon is different from the one in Skopelos, and it is a second representation of the *Holy Mandylion* by Sylvester of Antioch. Most likely the information refers to the same icon mentioned above. The presence of an icon painted by Sylvester of Antioch in Patmos has special relevance by further proving the patriarch’s connections with the island. Further research on the icon in Patmos as well as archival research may help clarify the issue.

The second *Holy Mandylion* painted by Sylvester was mentioned by Kaisarios Dapontes, who met the patriarch in Moldavia during the reign of John Mavrokordatos. Kaisarios wrote about Sylvester’s artistic abilities and states that he had in his possession one of his icons, a *Mandylion*, which is located today in the Monastery of Panagia Evangelistria (Παναγία ἡ Εὐαγγελίστρια) on the island of Skopelos. This monastery was a dependence of the Xeropotamou (Ξηροποτάμου) monastery on Mount Athos, where Dapontes was a monk. He donated the icon to it,

³² For the Holy Mandylion, see N. P. Sh[evčenko], “Mandylion”, in A. P. Kazhdan, A.-M. Talbot et al., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2, p. 1282–1283.

³³ Letter of Sylvester of Antioch to Samuel in Nizhyn, August 10, 1746, in MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 50r–50v.

³⁴ Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Ελληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Αλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 3.

along with another one in his collection, representing the Mother of God and Child, which had belonged to the wife of the ruling prince of Moldavia George Doukas and then to the Cetățuia monastery near Iași. Decades later, this icon came into the possession of Dapontes, then an official at the Moldavian court. Stylistically, the icon also belongs to the Russian school of post-Byzantine painting. It has also a connection with Sylvester. Dapontes mentions that having seen the original icon, the patriarch made a copy of it. Except for this assertion, there is no information on the whereabouts of the copy made by Sylvester. The original is, as mentioned, in the monastery in Skopelos, Greece. It bears on its back Greek inscriptions of the 17th century mentioning its history, as well as an 18th-century inscription by Dapontes. The original at the monastery in Skopelos has on the back a Greek inscription of the 17th century that tells its story, as well as an 18th-century note by Dapontes.³⁵

The *Holy Mandylion* in Skopelos is also covered in metallic decorations and has a wooden frame. In the present state, no signature or date is visible on the icon. It is however possible that some inscriptions do exist behind the frame and the metallic decorations.

Dapontes describes the icon of the *Holy Mandylion* as follows: [...] ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ Ἁγίου Μανδηλίου ἡ περιηργυρωμένη, καὶ ἴση κατὰ μῆκος καὶ πλάτος μὲ τῆς Παναγίας θαυμαστή καὶ αὐτή, ὅπου τὴν ἐζωγράφησε Σίλβεστρος ὁ Ἄντιοχείας, ὄντας ζωγράφος, ὡς γέγραπται (“[...] the silver-decorated icon of the Holy Mandylion, equal in length and width to that of the Panagia, [is] also wonderful, having been painted by Sylvester of Antioch, who was a painter, as it is written”).³⁶

The history of the Skopelos icon is not entirely revealed by Dapontes's literary works. However, important information comes from the registers of donations kept by Dapontes while traveling on behalf of his Athonite monastery. They reveal that he did not obtain the icon directly from the patriarch: it was given to him as a donation for the monastery in the 1750s. In 1757–1765, Dapontes toured the Romanian Principalities, Constantinople, and the islands of the Aegean to obtain alms for the Monastery of Xeropotamou.³⁷ Dapontes received the icon in Constantinople from Marioritza, the sister of the *spatharios* Iakovos (Iakovakis) Rizos, who was a high official of the Moldavian court and its representative in Constantinople. He was

35 Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, p. 149–150; M. Polyviou, “Ταύτιση ανυπόγραφης εικόνας Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας”, *Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία. Δέκατο Πέμπτο Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης. Πρόγραμμα και περιλήψεις εισηγήσεων και ανακοινώσεων*, Athens, 1995, p. 66–67; Chatzidakēs, Drakoroulou, *Ἕλληνες ζωγράφοι μετὰ την Ἀλωση*, 2, p. 349; Archim. P. Chițulescu, “Le patriarche Sylvestre d’Antioche, son disciple spirituel Constantin César Dapontes et l’histoire de leurs icônes”, *Museikon*, 6, 2022, p. 157–168.

36 Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, p. 149–150.

37 Polyviou, “Ταύτιση ανυπόγραφης εικόνας Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας”, p. 66.

also a member of the so-called Phanariot élite of Orthodox Greeks. It is possible that Sylvester painted the icon for Iakovos Rizos or his sister in Moldavia or in Constantinople. Marioritza also donated 33 *groschen* for adding silver decoration to the icon, “τὰ περβάζια καὶ τὸ στεφάνι” (“the frames and the nimbus”). The overall cost of the silver decoration was 160 *groschen*.³⁸ The inscription on the silver frame of the icon has the date August 4, 1762.³⁹ Dapontes probably donated the icon to the Monastery in Skopelos later. All information comes from Dapontes’s unpublished registers in the archive of the Monastery of Xeropotamou on Mount Athos.⁴⁰

The icons painted by Sylvester currently in Patmos and Skopelos share some features, as they were both influenced by the Russian-style model.

19.5 The Icon of Saint Spyridon

The church of Saint Spyridon “the Old” in Bucharest (Rom., Sfântul Spiridon Vechi)⁴¹ used to contain a large icon representing Saint Spyridon, with an added border depicting scenes of his life. The icon had a long Arabic inscription written in 1748 by Buṭrus Nawfal (a scribe in the service of the monastery) at the request of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch. Buṭrus Nawfal was the brother of Musa Ṭrābulṣī,⁴² and he is probably identifiable with Petros, the patriarch’s *grammatikos* mentioned in a letter sent by Sylvester to Matthaïos of Alexandria.⁴³ Based on the content of the inscription, researchers attributed to Sylvester the painted scenes on the border.

The icon attracted the historians’ attention in the first decades of the 20th century. The first to publish, in 1933, a transcription of the original text of the Arabic inscription, accompanied by a Romanian translation, was the Romanian priest and scholar Vasile Radu, one of the first major Romanian Oriental scholars.⁴⁴

38 Information from the registers of Dapontes in the archive of the Xeropotamou Monastery. See Polyviou, “Ταύτιση ανυπόγραφης εικόνας Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας”, p. 66–67.

39 Polyviou, “Ταύτιση ανυπόγραφης εικόνας Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας”, p. 67.

40 Polyviou, “Ταύτιση ανυπόγραφης εικόνας Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας”, p. 66.

41 For the church of Saint Spyridon “the Old”, see N. Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic al monumentelor feudale din București*, 3rd ed., Bucharest, 2017, p. 475–478. In 1767–1768, a new church of Saint Spyridon was built in Bucharest by the princes Skarlatos and Alexander Ghikas, and Sylvester’s church and monastery became known as Saint Spyridon “the Old”, while the recently built one was “the New”.

42 For Mūsā Nawfal Ṭrābulṣī and his brother Buṭrus, see Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians*, p. 236–237.

43 MS Ḥariṣā 210, f. 112v.

44 Radu, “Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei”, p. 20–22.

He also published the Greek and Arabic inscription that was placed in 1747 above the church door, correctly transcribing and translating both texts (Fig. 11).⁴⁵

The inscription on the icon, an important historical source, was transcribed, translated, and published several times. The best transcription, alongside a French translation, is the one published in 1933 by Fr. Vasile Radu.⁴⁶ Radu's transcription and the published photograph remain the only witnesses of the Arabic inscription (Fig. 44). Later photos of the icon, taken in the late 1960s or the 1970s, show the inscription still readable, but partially damaged, with blank spots where the painting layer is lost.

Two more transcriptions of the text were made. The first, published in 1965 in a corpus of inscriptions of Bucharest,⁴⁷ is a handwritten transcription of the Arabic text accompanied by a transliteration into the Latin alphabet following the orthographic rules of Ottoman Turkish. This edition also included a Romanian translation. The second was included in the Sursock Museum exhibition catalogue of 1969, where the Arabic text was accompanied by a French translation.⁴⁸ Virgil Căndea published another version of the text in 1991, when he wrote about the disappearance of the icon from the Monastery of Cernica, where it had been preserved.⁴⁹ We are not aware of the degree to which the texts published in 1965 and 1969 depend on Vasile Radu's text published in 1933.⁵⁰

After Radu's publication, the icon was restored at least twice. One of these restorations dates from 1947 and was done by a painter under the supervision of the great Romanian art historian Ion D. Ștefănescu. The documentation of the restoration is conserved in the archives of the Romanian Commission of Heritage Monuments. The documents refer to losses in the paint layers during the transport to the restorer's workshop. The second restoration took place at the National Museum of Art of Romania at some point between 1962 and June 1966.⁵¹ Apparently, by the time the icon disappeared, the inscription was not entirely legible anymore.

Considered as belonging to the Melkite art due to the addition it received during Sylvester's residence in Bucharest, the icon of Saint Spyridon featured in the

45 Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei", p. 15–17. For the inscription, see also A. Elian, C. Bălan, et al. (eds.), *Inscripțiile medievale ale României. Orașul București*, vol. I. 1395–1800, Bucharest, 1965, p. 394–395, no. 418.

46 Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei", p. 11–31.

47 Elian, Bălan, et al. (eds.), *Inscripțiile medievale ale României*, vol. I, p. 396–398, no. 420.

48 Căndea (ed.), *Îcônes melkites*, p. 189–190 (Arabic text), p. 190–191 (French translation).

49 Căndea, "Une icône melkite disparue", p. 60 (Arabic text), p. 60–61 (French translation).

50 Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei", p. 20–22.

51 G. Zidaru, "Probleme în restaurarea temperei vechi", *Prima sesiune de comunicări științifice a muzeelor de artă*, Bucharest, 1966, p. 375, 380.

1969 exhibition at the Sursock Museum in Beirut and was described in the catalog. Consequently, it became one of the most famous of Sylvester's works.

The icon returned from Lebanon and was placed back in its historical location, the church of Saint Spyridon the Old in Bucharest. When the church, the last remnant of the monastic complex dedicated in 1747 to the Patriarchate of Antioch, was demolished in 1987 by the communist regime to make room for a new boulevard, the icon was transferred to the Cernica Monastery near Bucharest together with other art and architecture elements saved by the parish priest. It disappeared from its storage place there in 1990 and was never recovered. Having learned of its disappearance, Virgil Căndeă immediately published an article to draw the attention of the Western art historians on the disappearance of the icon and warn about its possible sale abroad.⁵² He investigated there the most recent phase of its history. The icon is still missing, but fortunately, several black and white photographs of the icon survive, as well as a recently recovered color photo that was preserved in the archive inherited by Ioana Feodorov from her father, Virgil Căndeă (Fig. 43).

The overall size of the icon is 111 x 76 cm, while the central panel is 63 x 48.5 cm. It presents certain interesting features. The central part, representing Saint Spyridon, and the border with scenes of his life seem to be made from different pieces of wood. According to the inscription, this was to be expected. If it was correctly translated and read, the text states that an "older" icon of the Saint was placed in the center, covered in silver, and the border painted by Sylvester was added later. Older photographs of the icon show a silver plate covering the hands of Saint Spyridon. Some metal-sheet decorations were possibly placed on the nimbus and over the Greek inscriptions.

The data provided by the inscription does not seem to be contradicted by stylistic features, although the central icon does not seem to be much older than the border. An interesting detail is that the Arabic inscription was written on the central, supposedly "older" icon, covering about 20% of its lower part. The inscription on the main icon is in Greek, while the inscriptions on the border scenes are in Romanian with Cyrillic letters, as expected for the 18th century. In the lower part of the icon there is a long Arabic inscription written by Buṭrus Nawfal in 1748 by order of Sylvester of Antioch.

The text of the Arabic inscription is:

بسم الاب والابن والروح القدس. اعلم ايها القارئ، لما كان في سنة الف وسبعمان وسبعة واربعين مسيحية اتينا الى هذه البلاد الافلاخية فكان حينئذ جالس على كرسيها وضابط زمام امريتها حضرة قسطنطين بك ابن نقولا بك سكارلط زاده، رجلاً ورعاً عالماً متقى الله دارساً الكتب الالهية واداً للكنائس موقراً الكهنة. فلما نظر ان كرسينا

52 Căndeă, "Une icône melkite disparue", p. 59–61.

الرسولي دون الثلاثة الكراسي البطريركية ليس له دير وقف مخصص باسمه كباقي الكراسي في هذه البلاد، اوقف له هذا الدير المقدس الذي هو على اسم الجليل في القديسين سبيريدونس العجايب، موقعه شرقي النهر الجاري في البلد ملاصقاً للجسر. وقد عمره جديداً ذكراً له ولوالديه بناء يسكنوه روسا ورهبان ابنا العرب. والعمائر التي داخله وكافة القلالي قد تعمرت بحضورنا. وله خارج اوقاف وارضيه وهي مسطرة في دقتر الدير. فالمأمول بالأ يصير إهمال بذكران اسم البك المذكور ووالديه على الدوام لانه فرض علينا. وربنا، بشفاعته صاحبه القديس سبيريدون العجايب، يقويكم على خدمته وصيانته ويجعله عامراً الى انقضاء الدهر. واذكرونا بما اننا سعينا بهذا الوقف بساير الصلوات والطلبات والقداست الالهية، الفقير سيلبيسترس البطريرك الانطاكي ووالديه جرجس وفوتين. اساله تعالى يوهلنا واياكم في ملكوته السموية. وذاك في سنة ثمانى واربعين بعد السبعماية والـ الف صورنا هذه الايقونة المباركة ووضعنا ايقونته الاصلية المزينة بالفضة في وسطها لاجل زيادة جمال ووقار صاحبها عليه افضل السلام. محرر ذلك بطرس نوفل ابن جرجس الطرابلسي الكاتب بخدمة الدير المقدس سنة ١٧٤٧ مسيحية في شهر نيسان المبارك

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Know, dear reader, that when we came to this country of Wallachia in the Christian year one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven, at that time was sitting on its throne and ruling its affairs Constantine Bey, son of Nicolas Bey Scarlatzade, a pious, learned, God-fearing man, who studied the divine books, revered the church and respected the priests. When he saw that our Apostolic See, unlike the three Patriarchal Sees, did not have in this country a monastery dedicated to, like the rest of the Sees, this holy monastery, which is named after the venerable Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker, was given to it as an endowment (*waqf*). Its location is east of the river running through the area, adjacent to the bridge. He raised a new building in his [i.e., the prince's] memory and his parents', where prelates and monks of Arab descent reside. The buildings inside it and all the cells were built in our presence. It has other endowments (*waqf*) and lands, which are recorded in the monastery's register. What is hoped for is that the mention of the aforementioned bey's name and his parents' will not be neglected, because this is our commitment. May our Lord, through the intercession of its patron, Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker, strengthen you in serving and preserving it and making it flourish until the end of times. And commemorate us, the humble Silvestros, patriarch of Antioch, and our parents Jirjis and Fotīni, in all prayers, supplications, and Divine Liturgies, as we secured this endowment. I ask the Almighty to grant us and you access to His Heavenly Kingdom. And in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-eight, we painted this blessed icon and placed [the Saint's] original icon decorated with silver in the middle of it to increase its beauty and the veneration of its owner, peace be upon him. This was written by Buṭros Nawfal, son of Jirjis of Tripoli, a scribe in the service of the holy monastery, in the Christian year 1747, blessed month of April.

There are fourteen scenes on the border of the icon.⁵³ Such representations are common not only for Melkite art but for post-Byzantine art in general.⁵⁴ There is no real reason to doubt that at least the border scenes were painted by Sylvester. As the icon was intended to be placed in a church in the Romanian capital city, it was decided that scene titles should be in Romanian. It is also possible that the

53 Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei", p. 14.

54 For the iconographic cycle of Saint Spyridon, see M. Vassilaki, *Working Drawings of Icon Painters after the Fall of Constantinople. The Andreas Xyngopoulos Portfolio at the Benaki Museum*, Athens, 2015, p. 370–378

Romanian texts were added later, perhaps during a restoration (that would also explain their faded appearance in the surviving images).

Another icon of Saint Spyridon is still located in the church today. It has a silver coating, donated in 1745 by Sultana Mavrokordatos, a sister of prince Constantin.⁵⁵

The long Arabic inscription is unusual on an icon but is in keeping with other “historical” texts left by Sylvester in various places he visited and on items he donated (such as the codex of Argyroupolis and the *Menologia* donated in Iași). This interest in providing details about his actions is also evident in the forewords of some of the books he published in Moldavia and Wallachia.

As for the central icon representing Saint Spyridon, the “older” icon mentioned in the inscription, there is no proof that it was also painted by Sylvester. The central position alluded to in the inscription might refer to the position inside the church. If this supposition is correct, the icon of Saint Spyridon might also have been painted by Sylvester of Antioch, who reserved a special place to the inscription later added by Butrus Nawfal. The editors of the 1969 catalogue of the exhibition of Melkite icons supposed that the central icon was brought to Wallachia by the patriarch, and that he added the border during his stay in Bucharest. It is also possible that the icon belonged to the previous church of the monastery, rebuilt by Mavrokordatos during the months of Sylvester’s presence in Wallachia in 1747 and 1748, after the monastery had been granted as a *metochion* to the Patriarchate of Antioch. A new transcription of the Arabic text from the available pictures and a study of its meaning would shed additional light on these issues.

19.6 The Icon of the *Holy Martyr Christina of Tyre*

While researching Sylvester of Antioch’s painting works, a discovery came from an unexpected location: the Huntington Museum of Art in Huntington, WV (Fig. 45). The museum’s collections hold an icon of the *Holy Martyr Christina of Tyre* painted by Patriarch Sylvester. Christina was a 4th-century martyr born in a rich family, daughter of the general Urbanus. She was executed by the governor of the city after refusing to present sacrifices to the idols.⁵⁶

The icon is part of a collection of Oriental artifacts, mainly metalwork, donated to the museum by Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Touma and their family. The initial provenance of the icon is unknown: it may have come from Syria or Lebanon. The fact that many of Sylvester’s works were initially located in Lebanon suggest it

55 Elian, Bălan et al. (eds.), *Inscripțiile medievale ale României*, vol. I, p. 396, no. 419.

56 The Roman Catholic Church reveres another Saint Christina, from Bolsena, Italy.

as the origin. Joseph B. Touma was born in Lebanon but began to collect artifacts later, after he moved to the United States. He purchased the icon from an important auction house in the 1990s.⁵⁷

On the icon, the Holy Martyr is represented holding her head in her right hand, an allusion to her martyrdom. The inscription with the Saint's name is in Greek "Ἡ Ἁγία Χριστίνα" ("Saint Christina"). The halo around the martyr's severed head that she holds in her hand contains an Arabic inscription mentioning the painter's name, Sylvester patriarch of Antioch, and the year of completion, 1757. Sylvester was at the time in his eparchy, most likely in Damascus. An inscription on the back of the icon mentions a later owner, Nasrallah Suleyman.⁵⁸

Of relatively small dimensions (39.6 x 28.9 cm), this icon of the *Holy Martyr Christina* could have been created for display in a church or a private owner in Tyre. The subject is not very common, but representations of the Holy Martyr Christina of Tyre do exist in post-Byzantine painting. Tyre was an old and important center in Southern Lebanon and the Metropolis of Tyre and Sidon was dependent of the Patriarchate of Antioch.

After it reached the Huntington Museum of Art, the icon of the *Holy Martyr Christina* was included in several Eastern art exhibitions and traveled to various locations in the United States.

19.7 Icons for Private Owners in Wallachia, Moldavia, and Constantinople

Patriarch Sylvester's fame as a painter was so widespread that he received commissions to paint icons for members of the Phanariot aristocracy in Moldavia, Wallachia, and Constantinople. Two letters dated 1752 testify to such commissions.

The first letter dates from May 1752. It is addressed to a certain *postelnikos* Dimitris, who had commissioned an icon from Sylvester. The letter was sent to him, probably in Moldavia, on the same day as an "icon of the *Mother of God*" (Θεομητορικὴ εἰκόνα) painted by Sylvester.⁵⁹ At the time, the patriarch was in Chios.

57 Information kindly provided to me by Dr. Joseph B. Touma, to whom I express my deep gratitude. I also thank John Spurlock, Registrar/Assistant Curator at the Huntington Museum of Art, who sent me, at the request of Dr. Touma, an image of the icon and other related information, as well as a bibliographical reference.

58 <https://hmoa.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/C047E2E5-6F01-41A6-91E8-417191841940>.

59 Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 36.

The second letter, dated November 1752, was addressed to a *spatharessa* Mariora (i.e., the wife of a *spatharios*), who commissioned three icons from the patriarch, one of *Saint Nicholas*, one of the *Holy Mandylion*, and one of the *Baptism of Christ*. Sylvester declared in the letter that he intended to paint them all.⁶⁰

Another icon painted for a member of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy was the *Holy Mandylion* now in Skopelos, which we have described above.

19.8 The Icons of Ma'lūla

In 1756, Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch painted four icons for the monastery of Saint Thekla in Ma'lūla. The four large icons were arranged in two pairs, forming a *Deisis* composition in the church of Saint John the Baptist of this monastery (Fig. 56, 57).⁶¹ They were placed in the upper tier of the *iconostasis*, two on the right side (the icons of Christ and Saint John the Baptist) and two on the left side (the icons of the Mother of God and Saint Thekla). Previous scholarship indicated that the icons had not yet been properly studied. It is not clear whether each pair was painted at the same time, on the same wooden panel.

The icons held Arabic inscriptions mentioning the painter, his parents, and the date of donation, September 1756. The inscriptions, in a Greek translation, are recorded in the PhD thesis of Vasileios Nassour defended in 1992.⁶²

From the photos of the icons in their former location it appears that they were repainted. The monastery was occupied by armed forces during the Syrian War (after 2011) and the church was devastated and damaged by fire, including the *iconostasis*. The four icons of the *Deisis* were touched by smoke and possibly fire. Of the four icons in photos taken on April 20, 2014, two appear to be in a better condition than the other two, who look smeared by smoke and apparently damaged by the flames.⁶³ The restoration of Patriarch Sylvester's icons in Ma'lūla could provide additional data on the painter's technique and style.

⁶⁰ Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 41–42.

⁶¹ <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-syria-maaloula-greek-orthodox-monastery-of-santa-teclataqla-the-church-48028101.html>; <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/the-frescoes-in-the-church-of-the-greek-orthodox-convent-of-news-photo/480273367>; <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/photo/santa-tecla-monastery-maaloula-royalty-free-image/180548368>.

⁶² Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 218–219.

⁶³ <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/general-view-of-ruined-convent-of-saint-takla-and-the-news-photo/485756283>.

When he painted these icons, Sylvester had returned to his eparchy. In 1753 he was in Tripoli and in 1754, probably in Damascus. It is possible that Sylvester visited monasteries such as Ma'lūla and Şaydnāyā and donated icons he had painted.

The present location of the four icons is unknown, as they do not appear in the recent photographs where the restored *iconostasis* is visible. They may be conserved in the monastery storage.

19.9 The Icons of Homs

There are three icons painted by Sylvester of Antioch in the church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdīya in Homs, Syria (Fig. 48–53). Two of them are dated 1759. The *iconostasis* and the icons were restored after the church was damaged by an explosion in 2014, during the war in Syria. The *iconostasis* comprised 15 icons in the upper tier, which some sources have attributed to Patriarch Sylvester. Many of them were damaged during the battles. The recent restoration offered researchers an image of Patriarch Sylvester's exquisite work for the first time.

The icons were first restored in 2010 at the request of Fr. Michael Rabahia, the parish priest, with the blessing of the metropolitan of Homs, George Abou Zakhm. The second restoration took place in 2017. The icons were restored by the Saint Luke the Evangelist Center for Byzantine Painting and Icon Restoration in Latakia under the supervision of Father Dr. Spyridon Fayad and his assistant Dr. Hala Nassar.⁶⁴

The first of the three icons is an icon of *Christ King of Kings and Great Archpriest* (“Ο Βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ Μέγας Ἀρχιερεὺς”) that seems to have similarities with icons of the Cretan school, such as an icon by Andreas Lambardos (mid-16th century) in the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture in Athens (ΓΕ 2990).⁶⁵

The second icon represents the *Mother of God with the Divine Child*, with an angel on the right holding the Passion symbols. The arrangement follows a composition frequently encountered on icons of the Cretan school, such as an icon by Emmanouēl Tzanphournarēs (1570–1731) now in the collection of Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini in Venice (Italy).⁶⁶ Another similar icon, now in a private collection, is attributed to the circle of Andreas Ritzos (15th century).⁶⁷ Two

⁶⁴ I am grateful to Fr. Spyridon Fayad for this information.

⁶⁵ https://www.benaki.org/images/collectionitem/280985/sizes/280985_490575_1000_1000_watermarked.jpg.

⁶⁶ http://eib.xanthi.ilsp.gr/scanned/icons/57_8bit_PE-IC8-DS2-Q2.jpg.

⁶⁷ https://gcp-la8-storage-cdn.lot-art.com/public/upl/3/ANDREAS-RITZOS-1921-CandiaCrete-1492-Circle-of-A-VERY-IMPORTANT-AND-MONUMENTAL-ICON-SHOWING-THE-MOTHER-OF-GOD-OF-THE-PASSION-_1602116172_6876.jpg; https://static.wixstatic.com/media/d449e6_447fb12cf90840fd

further examples are a 15th century icon in the Rena Andreadēs collection⁶⁸ and another that is part of a triptych in the church of Saint Nicholas in Bari (Italy), also attributed to Andreas Ritzos.⁶⁹ The difference is that in Sylvester’s icon there is only one angel instead of the two in the other ones.

The icons in Homs were painted and donated by the patriarch to churches of the same city, the Church of the Forty Martyrs and the Church of Saint Elian.⁷⁰ They were later transferred to the Church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya.

19.10 The Icons of Ṣaydnāyā

There are two icons painted by Sylvester of Antioch in the church of the Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Ṣaydnāyā, in Syria, hanging one above the other on a column in the nave (Fig. 54, 55).⁷¹ The first represents *Saint George* and the second is *Jacob’s Dream*, also called *Jacob’s Ladder* (Ἡ Κλίμαξ τοῦ Ἰακώβ).⁷² The theme of the second icon was misidentified in the past as the *Ladder of Saint John* (“Échelle spirituelle de Saint Jean Climaque”).⁷³

The two icons were donated by the patriarch in 1765. At the time, Sylvester was in Damascus, where he issued, in February 1765, two documents for Anthimos, the metropolitan of Eirenoupolis.⁷⁴

19.11 The Icons of Beirut

In the Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George in Beirut there are two icons on the nave columns that are attributed to Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch (Fig. 46, 47). However,

91d93221cd75ea5e~mv2.jpg/v1/fill/w_616,h_827,al_c,q_85,usm_0.66_1.00_0.01,enc_auto/d449e6_447f-b12cf90840fd91d93221cd75ea5e~mv2.jpg.

68 A. Dardanakē, *Εικόνες 14^{ης}–18^{ης} αιώνας. Συλλογή P. Ανδρεάδη*, Milan/Athens, 2002, p. 72–75.

69 N. Chatzidakis, “The Legacy of Angelos”, in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *The Hand of Angelos. An Icon-Painter in Venetian Crete*, London/Athens, 2010, p. 125, il. 28.

70 The information was presented by Fr. Spyridon Fayad in a paper in 2023 at a conference at the University of Balamand, Lebanon.

71 Cândia (ed.), *Ιcônes melkites*, p. 115. I thank Professor Nada Hérou for sending me recent photos of the two icons.

72 Information provided by Dr. Rand Abou Ackl to Dr. Charbel Nassif, whom I thank for sharing it with me.

73 Cândia (ed.), *Ιcônes melkites*, p. 115; Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 9.

74 Papadopoulos, “Συμβέστρον Ἀντιοχείας Ἐγγραφα”, p. 121–122; Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 10, col. 849–850.

their style is that of 19th-century works. Unless they were heavily repainted in the 19th century, they cannot have been painted by Patriarch Sylvester. It is possible that they replaced older icons which were painted or donated by the patriarch. Although uncommon, the Arabic inscriptions mentioning Sylvester's name, that were reported on the lower part of the panels some time ago, may also have been copied from the earlier icons.

A similar story with the two icons in Tripoli that were replaced, possibly in the 1960s, could also be considered here, but there is no proof to support it. In the case of the icons in Beirut, the existing icons are not copies of older ones, but original works. The absence of the previously mentioned inscriptions could be explained by the replacement of the icons at some point.

Addendum 1: Catalogue of Icons Painted by Sylvester of Antioch or Attributed to Him

This is a catalogue of all the icons painted by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch or attributed to him that we know of at this time and we have had access to, accompanied by descriptions and sources (if available). Full references to the sources cited here are included in the *Bibliography*. Figure numbers are indicated at the end of each description, wherever a reproduction was accessible to us.

A Icons painted by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch

A.1 *The Mother of God Hope and Shelter of the Christians*

Description: The Mother of God enthroned, with Christ child and two angels holding scrolls.

Dimensions: 103 x 79.75 cm.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field of the icon, in Greek: “ΜΡ ΘΥ”, “Η Ἐλπίς καὶ Σκέπη τῶν Χριστιανῶν”, “ΙΣ ΧΣ”, “Ο ΞΩΝ”, Μ[ιχαήλ], Γ[αβριήλ]. Words from the *Akathistos Hymn* are inscribed on the scrolls held by the angels: “Χαῖρε ὅτι ὑπάρχεις”, “Χαῖρε ὅτι βαστάζεις”. A better-quality photograph obtained from Christie’s auction house proves that the inscription is in Greek and the year is 1726. The Greek inscription can be reconstructed as: “Χεῖρ Σιλβέστρου ἐλέω Θεοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας ἀψκς’” (“By the hand of Silvestros, by the mercy of God, Patriarch of Antioch”). The auction catalogue states: “By the hand of Silvestros, with the mercy of God, Patriarch of Antioch, 1727” and does not mention the language of the inscription – Greek. The photograph shows no trace of the Arabic inscription placed in the lower part of the 20th-century copy of the icon.

Provenance: The icon used to be in the church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas (al-Balad), Tripoli, Lebanon, where an almost identical copy of it, dating from the 20th century, is preserved.¹ In the beginning of the 19th century, it was transferred from the iconostasis to one of the lateral walls of the church. It was sold by Nicolas C. Vafopoulos on September 29, 1964, in Beirut, Lebanon, to an unknown buyer. The icon was accompanied by a certificate of expertise written by the dealer Nicolas C. Vafopoulos when he sold it in 1964. It was sold again as item no. 90, at Christie’s

¹ The copy has been identified as a 20th-century painting by Fayad, *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 386–388.

auction no. 7522, *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World*, in London, on June 11, 2007, for £66,000.

Present location: Private European collection, location unknown.

Sources: S. Agémian, “Les icônes melkites”, in *Lumières de l’Orient Chrétien. Icônes de la collection Abou Adal*, Beirut-Geneva, 1997, p. 143; Christie’s, *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World*, p. 62; <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4930097>.

Illustration: Christie’s, *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World*, p. 62. See Fig. 39.

A.2 Jesus Christ Pantokrator

Description: Jesus Christ enthroned, with an open book and two angels holding scrolls.

Dimensions: 103 x 79.75 cm.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “ΙΣ ΧΣ”, “Ο ΩΝ”. The angels’ scrolls contain texts from the Doxology of the Orthodox Church services: “Υμνοῦμεν Σε [...]”² “Κύριε Βασιλεῦ”. The inscriptions on the book are: “Εγώ εἰμι ὁ Ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν ὁ ἐκ τοῦ Οὐρανοῦ καταβάς· ἐάν τις” (John 6, 51: “I am the living Bread which came from Heaven: if any [man]”), “Εγώ εἰμι τὸ Φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν Ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ [...]” (John 8, 12: “I am the Light of the World: he that followeth me shall not [...]). No trace is visible in the available photograph of the Arabic inscription present in the lower part on the 20th-century copy. A better-quality photograph obtained from Christie’s auction house proves that the inscription is in Greek and the year is 1726 (see B.1 below). The Greek inscription can be reconstructed as: “Χεῖρ Σιλβέστρου ἐλέω Θεοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας ἀψκς’” (“By the hand of Silvestros, by the mercy of God, Patriarch of Antioch”). The auction catalogue states: “By the hand of Silvestros, with the mercy of God, Patriarch of Antioch, 1727” and does not mention the language of the inscription – Greek. The photograph shows no trace of the Arabic inscription placed in the lower part of the 20th-century copy of the icon.

Provenance: The icon used to be in the church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas (al-Balad), Tripoli, Lebanon, where an almost identical copy of it, dating from the 20th century, is preserved.³ In the beginning of the 19th century, it was transferred from the iconostasis to one of the lateral walls of the church. It was sold by Nicolas C. Vafopoulos on September 29, 1964, in Beirut, Lebanon, to an unknown buyer. The icon was accompanied by a certificate of expertise written by the dealer Nicolas C.

² Another three letters, probably “EYB”.

³ The copy is identified as a 20th century painting, see Fayad, *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 386–388.

Vafopoulos when he sold it. It was sold again, as item no. 91, at Christie's auction no. 7522, *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World*, in London, on June 11, 2007, for £54,000.

Present location: Private European collection, location unknown.

Sources: Agémian, “Les icônes melkites”, p. 143; Christie's, *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World*, p. 63; <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4930098>.

Illustration: Christie's, *Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World*, p. 63; <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4930098>. See Fig. 38.

A.3 *The Mother of God Hodēgētria*

Description: The Mother of God *Hodēgētria*, with Christ child and two angels holding scrolls, on a blue background.

The icon is attributed to Sylvester of Antioch, but in the present form it presents features of the Russian school, or one influenced by it, at the beginning of the 19th century. It is possible that Sylvester's icon was repainted or replaced by the present one. The icon was restored in the 20th century.

Dimensions: 110 x 80cm (according to Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 10).

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “MP ΘΥ”, “Η Ὁδηγήτρια” “ΙΣ ΧΣ”, “Ο ΩΝ”, and in Arabic: يسوع المسيح, والدة الله. On the angels' rolls it is written: “Χαῖρε δι' ἧς ἡ χαρὰ ἐκλάμψει” (“Rejoice through whom the joy will shine”), “Χαῖρε τῶν δακρύων τῆς Εὔας ἡ λύτρωσις” (“Rejoice the redemption of Eve's tears”). No inscription is visible at present in the lower area, but (Arabic?) dedicatory inscriptions mentioning the name “Sylvester, patriarch of Antioch” were read by the *Protopresbyteros* Konstantinos Moraitakis sometime between 1947 and 1958.⁴ The information was provided to Sylvia Agémian by Emmanuel Kondekakis in 1973. The icon is undated but attributed to Sylvester of Antioch.

Provenance/Present location: Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George, Beirut, Lebanon.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 10; S. Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges. Exposition organisée par Le Musée Nicolas Sursock du 27 septembre au 29 octobre 2000*, Beirut, [2000], p. 17, il. 7; <http://home.balamand.edu.lb/english/ARPOA.asp?id=15485&fid=270>; A. Haby, *Al-ṣuwar al-muqaddasa aw al-iqūnāt*, Jūniya, 1989, p. 88; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 520, 521, 524.

⁴ For the Protopresbyteros Konstantinos Moraitakis, see E. C. Moraitakis, *Preotul Constantin E. Moraitakis. Arhon Mare Presbiter al Patriarhiei Ecumenice din Constantinopol 1890–1964. Viața și opera sa după documente inedite publicate și comentate*, Bucharest, 2004.

Illustration: Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 17, il. 7; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 522. See Fig. 47.

A.4 *Christ Pantocrator*

Description: Christ *Pantokrator*, with two angels holding scrolls, on a blue background. The icon is attributed to Sylvester of Antioch, but in the present form it contains features of the Russian school, or one influenced by it from the beginning of the 19th century. Possibly, Sylvester's icon was repainted or replaced by the present one. The icon was restored in the 20th century.

Dimensions: 110 x 80 cm (according to Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 11).

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “ΙΣ ΧΣ”, “Ο ΞΩΝ”, “Ο Παντοκράτωρ”, and in Arabic: الضابط الكل, يسوع المسيح. The inscription on the open book is in Greek: “Ο πιστεύων εἰς Ἐμὲ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ Ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς ἐάν τις φάγη ἐκ τούτου τοῦ Ἄρτου ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ ὁ Ἄρτος ἡ Σὰρξ Μου ἐστὶ” (“He that believes in Me has eternal life. I am the Bread of life, if someone eats this Bread he shall live forever, and the Bread is My Body”). No inscription is visible at present in the lower part, but (Arabic?) dedicatory inscriptions mentioning the name of Sylvester, patriarch of Antioch, were read by the *Protopresbyteros* Konstantinos Moraitakis sometime between 1947 and 1958. This information was provided to Sylvia Agémian by Emmanuel Kondekakis in 1973. The icon is undated but attributed to Sylvester of Antioch.

Provenance/Present location: Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George, Beirut, Lebanon.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 11; Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 17, il. 8; <http://home.balamand.edu.lb/english/ARPOA.asp?id=15485&fid=270>; Haby, *Al-suwar al-muqaddasa*, p. 62; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 524.

Illustration: Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 17, il. 8; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 520, 521, 523;

<http://home.balamand.edu.lb/common/images/photogallery/ARPOA/Beyrouth/Beyrouth/StGeorgesCat/18.jpg>. See Fig. 46.

A.5 *The Holy Mandyllion (1)*

Description: The Holy Mandyllion, painted on wood in a style influenced by the Russian tradition. A decorated metal (most likely silver) ornament, in relief, was applied on the halo.

Dimensions: 59 x 42.5 x 2.8 cm.

Inscriptions, signature and date: “Θεοῦ Θέα Θεῖον Θαῦμα” (“God’s sight divine miracle”),⁵ “Τὸ Ἅγιον Μανδήλιον” (“The Holy Mandyllion), “,αψμς’” (1746), “Παρά Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας” (“By Sylvester of Antioch”). The last part of the inscription can be interpreted as a signature rather than a dedicatory text. In the present state of knowledge about Sylvester’s work, the icon in Patmos is one of the few icons preserving the patriarch’s signature in Greek.

Provenance: Unknown. It may have painted by the patriarch for a private individual. Stylistically, the icon resembles the one with the same subject in Skopelos and it is very much influenced by the Russian school of icon painting.

Present location: Church of Hypapantē, Chora, Patmos, Greece.⁶ The icon was also attested in Patmos in the 1990s.⁷

Sources: M. Chatzidakēs, E. Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι μετὰ την Ἀλωση (1450–1830)*, vol. 2. *Καβαλλάρως – Ψαθόπουλος*, Athens, 1997, p. 349, no. 3; <https://nationalarchive.culture.gr/el/exhibits/explore/view?id=852972>.

Illustration: <https://nationalarchive.culture.gr/en/exhibits/explore/view?id=852972>. See Fig. 42.

A.6 *The Holy Mandyllion (2)*

Description: Depiction of the Holy Mandyllion in a style influenced by the Russian tradition. The icon presents similarities with the icon in Patmos.

Dimensions: Unknown.

Inscriptions, signature and date: The icon was painted before 1760, probably before 1757. No inscriptions, signature, or date are visible. This could be due to the presence of its frame, which is a later addition, possibly hiding inscriptions. On the silver frame there is an inscription with the date August 4, 1762.⁸

Provenance: The icon belonged to Marioritza, sister of Iakovos Rizos. It was donated to Kaisarios Dapontes for the Monastery of Xeropotamou or for the Monastery of Panagia Evangelistria (Παναγία ἡ Εὐαγγελίστρια) on the island of Skopelos, Greece, a *metochion* of the Monastery of Xeropotamou.

Present location: Monastery of Panagia Evangelistria (Παναγία ἡ Εὐαγγελίστρια), island of Skopelos, Greece.

5 This is one of the texts used in Byzantine and post-Byzantine art, often in the shortened form (acronym) ΘΘΘΘ.

6 I thank Mrs. Kōnstantia Kephala for providing me this information.

7 According to information provided by the Deacon Chrysostomos Phlorentēs to Manolēs Chatzidakēs, the icon was at some point located in the Andreadakēs house, Patmos; see Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι μετὰ την Ἀλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 3.

8 Polyviou, “Ταύτιση ανυπόγραφης εικόνας Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 67.

Sources: K. K. Dapontes, „Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, in K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 3, p. 149–150; M. Polyviou, “Ταύτιση ανυπόγραφης εικόνας Σιλβέστρου Αντιοχείας”, *Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία. Δέκατο Πέμπτο Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης. Πρόγραμμα και περιλήψεις εισηγήσεων και ανακοινώσεων*, Athens, 1995, p. 66–67; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349; Chițulescu, “Le patriarche Sylvestre d’Antioche”, p. 157–168.

Illustration: Chițulescu, “Le patriarche Sylvestre d’Antioche”, p. 157–168.

A.7 *The Holy Martyr Christina of Tyre*

Description: The Holy Martyr Christina of Tyre (3rd century). The technique is, according to the museum’s description, “gesso, pigment, and burnished gold leaf on canvas mounted to panel”.

Dimensions: 39.6 x 28.9 x 3.8 cm (15 5/8 x 11 3/8 x 1 1/2 in).

Inscriptions, signature and date: Inscribed in Greek on the front: “Saint Christina (“Ἡ Ἁγία Χριστίνα”). An Arabic inscription on the halo around the head in the saint’s hand mentions Patriarch Sylvester and the date. The inscription reads:

القديسه خريستينا الشاهده حامله هامتها المكرمه صورها سيلبسترس البطريرك الانطكي في ١٧٥٧
 “Saint Christina the Martyr holding her honorable head, painted by Sylvester, the patriarch of Antioch, in 1757”.

The museum’s description also mentions an inscription on the back which identifies “Nasrallah Suleiman” as owner of the icon.

Provenance: Syria or Lebanon. The icon was bought from a major international auction house in the 1990s.

Present location: Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington, WV, USA, inventory no. 1991.2.157. Gift of Drs. Joseph and Omayma Touma and family.⁹ The icon was included in the exhibition *Reverent Ornament: Art from the Islamic World* organized by the Huntington Museum of Art and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC, from September 2021 to October 2024.¹⁰

Sources: M. Schiavone (ed.), with W. B. Denny, S. D’Auria et al., *Touma Near Eastern Collection, Huntington Museum of Art*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 74.

⁹ I thank Dr. Joseph B. Touma and John Spurlock, Registrar/Assistant Curator, Huntington Museum of Art, for the information on the icon.

¹⁰ For the exhibition, see <https://www.artsandartists.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Reverent-Ornament-Prospectus.pdf>.

<https://hmoa.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/C047E2E5-6F01-41A6-91E8-417191841940>.

Illustration: Schiavone (ed.), with W. B. Denny, S. D'Auria et al., *Touma Near Eastern Collection*, p. 74. See Fig. 45.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_1067/057/19912157.jpg.
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CrGYCPNOaMu>. See Fig. 45.

A.8 *Scenes from the Life of Saint Spyridon*

Description: Frame around an older icon of Saint Spyridon. The frame contains scenes from the saint's life and cult, some of which are miracles he performed. The icon had silver ornaments on the aureole and the Saint's hands, visible in surviving photographs. According to the inscription, only the images on the frame were painted by Sylvester, while the icon in the center is older.

Dimensions: 111 x 76 cm, central panel 63 x 48.5 cm. According to another source, the size is 127 x 92 cm, possibly the dimensions of the framed icon.¹¹

Inscriptions, signature and date: Painted by Sylvester of Antioch in 1747 or 1748, according to the Arabic inscription. The main area of the icon had a long Arabic inscription written by Buṭrus Nawfal at Patriarch Sylvester's orders, which is visible on a color photograph taken in the 1970s.¹² On the upper part of the icon, in Greek: "Ο Άγιος Σπυρίδων" ("Saint Spyridon"). The inscriptions on the frame scenes are in Romanian in Cyrillic script, probably written in paint later, and possibly repainted.

Provenance: Church of the Monastery of Saint Spyridon "the Old" in Bucharest, since 1747 or 1748.

Present location: Until 1987 in the Church of Saint Spyridon "the Old" in Bucharest. Present location unknown.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 3; Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiochiei", p. 18–22; Zidaru, "Probleme în restaurarea temperei vechi", p. 372–380; Căndea (ed.). *Icones melkites*, p. 115, 189–192, il. 50; Căndea, "Une icône melkite disparue", p. 59–61; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 4; I. Bitha, "Παρατηρήσεις στον εικονογραφικό κύκλο του Αγίου Σπυρίδωνα", *Δελτίον Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, 19, 1996–1997, p. 264; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 510–511; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands*, p. 206–207.

¹¹ Elian, Bălan et al. (eds.), *Inscripțiile medievale ale României*, vol. I, p. 396.

¹² See Ch. 19.5.

Illustration: Radu, “Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei”, p. 19; Bitha, “Παρατηρήσεις στον εικονογραφικό κύκλο του Αγίου Σπυρίδωνα”, p. 265; Color image in Virgil Câdea’s archive. See Fig. 43.

A.9 Christ King of Kings and Great Archpriest

Description: Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Great Archpriest, with a Byzantine crown (miter) and an open book. The icon was restored and repainted in the 19th century by Athanasios al-Qudsi. The repainting was removed during the restoration after 2010 by Fr. Spyridon Fayad. The iconographic type is very similar to icons of the Cretan school of post-Byzantine painting, like the one by Michael Damaskinos (16th century) in the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens¹³ and the one by Petros Lambardos (16th century) in the Benaki Museum, in Athens, Greece (inv. no. 2990).¹⁴

Dimensions: 114.5 x 91.5 cm (according to Fr. Spyridon Fayad); 106 x 86 cm (according to Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 6).

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “ΙΣ ΧΣ”, “Ο ΞΩΝ”, “Ο Βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ Μέγας Ἀρχιερεύς” (“King of Kings and Great Archpriest”). On the book: “Ἡ Βασιλεία ἡ Ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου· εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου” (*John* 18:36: “My Kingdom is not of this world: if [my Kingdom were] of this world”), and “Λάβετε, φάγετε, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ Σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν” (*1 Corinthians* 11:24: “Take, eat: this is My body which [is broken] for you”). Arabic inscription in the lower part, mentioning the name of Sylvester of Antioch and the date, 1759.

قد صورها بيده الفانيه الفقير سيلبسترس البطريرك الانطاكي ووقفها على كنيسة القديسين الاربعين
شاهد في مدينة حمص سنة ١٧٥٩ مسيحيه

“It was painted by the mortal hand of the humble Sylvester, the patriarch of Antioch, and he gave it as an endowment [*waqf*] to the church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in the city of Homs in the Christian year 1759”.

Provenance: Painted for the church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Homs as one of its main icons (“despotic”, “imperial” icon, “δεσποτική εἰκόνα”) and later transferred to the church of Saint George, Homs, Syria.

Present location: Church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 6; Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 17; “Église Saint Georges (Mar Girgis) de Homs”, in *Architecture religieuse du Patriarcat*

¹³ <https://russianicons.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/megasarkhierbyzantinemuseum.jpg?w=768&h=1199>.

¹⁴ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d0/Petros_Lambardos_Christ_High_Priest.png.

d'Antioche ARPOA, University of Balamand, <http://193.227.187.44/english/ARPOA.asp?id=9937&fid=270>; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 510.

Illustration: Fayad, *Oi ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 415, no. 33, 35; Fayad, “Īqūnatāni”, p. 116; <http://www.balamand.edu.lb/IOT/PublishingImages/IconOfChrist.jpg>. See Fig. 48, 50.

A.10 *The Mother of God with Symbols of the Passion*

Description: The Mother of God holding the Child, with an angel on the right side, holding symbols of the Passion. The icon was restored and repainted in the 19th century by Athanasios al-Qudsi. The repainting was removed during the restoration after 2010 by Fr. Spyridon Fayad.

Dimensions: 115.5 x 90.6 cm (according to Fr. Spyridon Fayad); 106 x 86 cm (according to Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 5).

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “MP ΘΥ”, “ΙΣ ΧΣ”, “Ο ΞΩΝ”, and two longer inscriptions in the field on the right, one in Greek, the other in Arabic. The Greek inscription states: “Ο τὸ Χαῖρε πρὶν τῇ Πανάγνω μὴνύσας, τὰ σύμβολα νῦν τοῦ Πάθους προδεικνύει, Χριστὸς δὲ θνητὴν σάρκα ἐνδεδυμένος πότμον δεδοικῶς, δειλιᾷ τοῦτο βλέπων” (“The one who before had announced the Most Pure ‘Rejoice’, now shows the symbols of the Passion, and Christ, vested in mortals’ flesh, fearing death, hesitates seeing it”).

Under the Greek inscription, the Arabic one mentions Sylvester of Antioch (يكاظن ال كرى رطبلا سورطس بل س) and the year 1759.

قد صوّرها بيده الفانيه الفقير سيلبسترس البطريرك الانطاكي ووقفها على كنيسة القديسين الاربعين شاهد في مدينة حمص المحروسه سنة ١٧٥٩ مسيحيه

“It was painted by the mortal hand of the humble Sylvester, the patriarch of Antioch, and he gave it as an endowment [*waqf*] to the church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in the God-protected city of Homs in the Christian year 1759”.

Provenance: Painted for the church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Homs as one of its main icons (“despotic”, “imperial” icon, “δεσποτικὴ εἰκόνα”) and transferred to the church of Saint George, Homs, Syria.

Present location: Church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 5; Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 17; “Église Saint Georges (Mar Girgis) de Homs”, in *Architecture religieuse du Patriarchat d'Antioche ARPOA*, University of Balamand, <http://193.227.187.44/english/ARPOA.asp?id=9937&fid=270>; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 510.

Illustration: See Fig. 49, 51.

A.11 *The Great Martyr Saint George (1)*

Description: Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon. On the upper right side there is an angel holding a palm leaf and crowning the Martyr. The background is a mountainous landscape. The icon's repainting, probably dating from early 19th century was removed during the restoration after 2010 by Fr. Spyridon Fayad.

Dimensions: 87.7 x 62 cm (according to Fr. Spyridon Fayad).¹⁵

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the upper part, in Greek: “Ο Ἅγιος Μεγαλομάρτυς Γεώργιος” (“The Great Martyr Saint George”). An Arabic inscription in the lower part on the left mentions Patriarch Sylvester and the date 1759.

قد صوّرها [...] سيلبسترس البطريك الانطاكي ووقفها على دير القديس مار اليان بمدينة حمص سنة ١٧٥٩ مسيحية

“It was painted by [...] Sylvester, the patriarch of Antioch, and he gave it as an endowment [*waqf*] to the monastery of Saint Elian in the city of Homs in the Christian year 1759”.¹⁶

Provenance: Probably painted for the church of Saint Elian, Homs, Syria.

Present location: Church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria.

Sources: No references in the available bibliography.

Illustration: See Fig. 52, 53.

A.12 *The Great Martyr Saint George (2)*

Description: Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon, a boy holding a jug behind him, on his horse. On the upper left corner, a blessing hand appears, while on the right side an angel holding a palm leaf is crowning the Martyr. The background is a mountainous landscape. In the lower right corner, a crowned figure is running towards a building resembling a portico and pointing to it.

Dimensions: 113.5 x 83 cm.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the upper part, in Greek: “Ο Ἅγιος Μεγαλομάρτυς Γεώργιος” (“The Great Martyr Saint George”). In the lower part, an Arabic inscription mentions Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch and the year 1765. The Arabic inscription is:

قَدْ صَوَّرَ هَذِهِ الْأَيْقُونَةَ الْمَقْدَسَةَ الْفَقِيرُ سِيلِبِسْتَرُسُ الْبَطْرِيكُ الْانْطَاكِي وَاقْفَهَا عَلَى دَيْرِ سَيِّدَتْنَا وَالِدَةَ الْآلَةِ الْكَلْبِي طَهَّرَهَا فِي دَيْرِهَا الْمَقْدَسِ فِي سَنَةِ ١٧٦٥

¹⁵ The information on this icon and the previous ones were first presented by Fr. Spyridon Fayad in a communication in 2023 at a conference at the University of Balamand, Lebanon. I thank Fr. Spyridon for providing me digital images of the icons and kindly allowing their publication.

¹⁶ Some words of the inscription are illegible. I thank Dr. Yulia Petrova for helping me reading, transcribing and translating the Arabic inscriptions of the icons A.9, A.10, A.11, A.12, and A.13.

“This holy icon was painted by the humble Sylvester, the patriarch of Antioch, and he gave it as an endowment [*waqf*] to the Monastery of Our Lady, the All-Pure Mother of God, in her holy monastery in the year 1765”.¹⁷

Provenance: Probably painted and donated by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch to the Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, Syria.

Present location: Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, Syria. In 1987, the icon featured in an exhibition organized in Damascus by the Syrian Ministry of Tourism.¹⁸

Sources: Căndeia (ed.), *Icones melkites*, p. 115; Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 7; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 6; Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 220; *Icones de Syrie. Exposition et Symposium*, Damascus, 1987, no. 20.

Illustration: Zayyāt, *Khabāyā al-zawāyā min tārikh Şaydnāyā*, p. 56; Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 220. See Fig. 54.

A.13 *Jacob’s Dream (Jacob’s Ladder)*

Description: The traditional post-Byzantine composition of Jacob’s Dream, also called Jacob’s Ladder (Η Κλίμαξ τοῦ Ἰακώβ).¹⁹ The presence of a ladder has led in the past to its misidentification as the Ladder of Saint John (“Échelle Spirituelle de Saint Jean Climaque”).²⁰

Dimensions: No available information. It looks as if the icon was trimmed to the right and to the left by a few centimeters. Initially it had the same dimensions as the icon of Saint George, 113.5 x 83 cm (A.12).

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the upper, in Greek: “Η Κλίμαξ ἣν εἶδεν ὁ Πατριάρχης [Ἰακώβ]” (“The ladder that the Patriarch [Jacob] saw”). The last part of the inscription is missing because of the panel trimming. Arabic inscriptions can be seen in the center and lower part. Above the city represented at the right is written: قرية سوخار (Sūkhār village). To the right of the Prophet Jacob’s head there is written:

¹⁷ I thank my colleagues Nicholas Bishara and Dr. Yulia Petrova for their help in transcribing, transliterating, and translating the inscription of this icon and the next one.

¹⁸ On this exhibition, see Nassif, “Cinquante ans d’études sur l’art melkite”, p. 306–307.

¹⁹ For this iconographic type, see Dionysios ho ek Phournas, *Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης*, p. 52, § 34: “Ὁ Ἰακώβ ἀρχιγένης κοιμώμενος καὶ ἐπάνωθέν του σκάλα ἀκουμπίζουσα εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, καὶ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀναβαίνουν καὶ καταβαίνουν εἰς αὐτήν”; *The ‘Painter’s Manual’ of Dionysius of Forna*, p. 20: “Jacob, with an incipient beard, asleep; above him a ladder leads up into heaven, and angels of God go up and down on it”. The composition is based on *Genesis* 28:12. See also P. and L. Muray, *A Dictionary of Christian Art*, p. 266.

²⁰ Căndeia (ed.), *Icones melkites*, p. 115; Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 9.

راقداً (‘‘The Father of Fathers Jacob sleeping’’). There is also another long Arabic inscription above Prophet Jacob’s head.

السلم التي راها اب اليا بعقوب الملايكة صاعدين الي السماء ونازلين تضاهي سر تجسد كلمة الله من مريم البتول

‘‘The ladder that the Father of Fathers Jacob saw, the Angels ascending to Heaven and descending, which resembles the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary’’.

The Arabic inscription in the lower part of the icon is:

قَدْ صَوَّرَ هَذِهِ الْأَيْقُونَةَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الْفَقِيرُ سِيلِبِيسْتَرُ سِ الْبَطْرِيَرِكُ الْإِنْطَاكِي وَأَوْقَفَهَا عَلَى دَيْرِ سَيِّدَتِنَا وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ الْكَلِيِّ طَهْرُهَا فِي دَيْرِهَا الْمُقَدَّسِ فِي سَنَةِ ١٧٦٥

‘‘This holy icon was painted by the humble Sylvester, the patriarch of Antioch, and he gave it as an endowment [*waqf*] to the Monastery of Our Lady, the All-Pure Mother of God, in her holy monastery in the year 1765’’.

Provenance: Painted and donated by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch to the Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, Syria.

Present location: Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, Syria.

Sources: Cāndea (ed.), *Icōnes melkites*, p. 115; Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 9; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 7.

Illustration: Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 221. See Fig. 55.

A.14 *Jesus Christ Pantokrator*

Description: Icon of Jesus Christ represented as *Pantokrator*, blessing and holding a closed book.

Dimensions: No information. Based on the scale of the existing photographs, each of the four icons from the Deisis composition were over 100 cm in height. They were probably used at some point as the main icons of an *iconostasis*, as ‘‘despotic’’ or ‘‘imperial’’ icons (‘‘δεσποτικὲς εἰκόνες’’). One of four icons placed in the upper part of the *iconostasis*.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: ‘‘ΙΣ ΧΣ’’, ‘‘Ο ΩΝ’’. An Arabic inscription mentions the painter, Sylvester of Antioch, his parents, the donation to the monastery, and the date, September 1756.

Provenance: Painted by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch and dedicated by him to the Monastery of Saint Thekla in Ma’lūla, Syria, together with three other icons.

Present location: Church of Saint John the Baptist, Orthodox Monastery of Saint Thekla, Ma’lūla, Syria. Damaged by fire before April 2014, the icon is probably largely destroyed, as shown in press photographs. Until 2014, it was in the upper part of the *iconostasis*, on the right side (near the icon of Saint John the Baptist). According to press photographs and videos, the icon is displayed in a room in the same monastery.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 4; Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 206, 218; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 8 (“Δέηση”); Cândia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 115.

Illustration: Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 218 (il.); <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-syria-maaloula-greek-orthodox-monastery-of-santa-tecla-taqla-the-church-48028101.html>. <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/the-frescoes-in-the-church-of-the-greek-orthodox-convent-of-news-photo/480273367>; <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/photo/santa-tecla-monastery-maaloula-royalty-free-image/180548368>. See Fig. 56.

A.15 *The Mother of God Hodēgētria*

Description: Icon of the Mother of God, *Hodēgētria* iconographic type.

Dimensions: Same as A.14.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “ΜΡ ΘΥ”, “Ο ΞΝ”. An Arabic inscription mentions the painter, Sylvester of Antioch, his parents, the donation to the monastery, and the date, September 1756.

Provenance: Painted and dedicated by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch to the Monastery of Saint Thekla Ma’lūla, Syria.

Present location: See A.14. Until 2014 it was located in the upper part of the *iconostasis*, left side.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 4 (dated 1756); Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 207, 219; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 8 (“Δέηση”); Cândia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 115.

Illustration: Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 219 (il.). See Fig. 55.

A.16 *Saint John the Baptist*

Description: Saint John the Baptist, turned to the left, blessing and holding a scroll.

Dimensions: See A.14.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “Ο [Άγιος] Πρ(ό)δρο(ο)μ(ο)ς Ἰω(άννης)”. An Arabic inscription mentions the painter, Sylvester of Antioch, his parents, the donation to the monastery, and the date, September 1756.

Provenance: Painted and dedicated by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch to the Monastery of Saint Thekla Ma’lūla, Syria.

Present location: See A.14. Until 2014 it was placed in the upper part of the *iconostasis*, on the right side.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 4 (dated 1756); Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 207, 218; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 8 (“Δέηση”); Cândia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 115.

Illustration: Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 218 (il.). See Fig. 56.

A.17 *Saint Thekla*

Description: Saint Thekla, the First Martyr.

Dimensions: See A.14.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek: “Ἡ Ἁγία Πρωτομάρτυς Θέκλα” (“Saint Thekla, the First Martyr”). An Arabic inscription mentions the painter, Sylvester of Antioch, his parents, the donation to the monastery, and the date, September 1756.

Provenance: Painted and dedicated by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch to the Monastery of Saint Thekla Ma'īlūla, Syria.

Present location: See A.14. Until 2014 it was located in the upper part of the *iconostasis*, on the left side.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 4 (dated 1756); Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 207, 219; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Ἀλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 8 (“Δέηση”); Câdea (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 115.

Illustration: Nassour, *Σίλβεστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας*, p. 219 (il.). See Fig 55.

A.18 *Deisis*

Description: No information.

Dimensions: No information.

Inscriptions, signature and date: No inscriptions. No mention of a signature. Dated 1765 in the sources below.

Provenance: Unknown.

Present location: Collection of Metropolitan Elia Karam, Beirut, Lebanon (according to Sylvia Agémian). Present location unknown.

Sources: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 8; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Ἑλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Ἀλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 5 (private collection, Beirut); Câdea (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 115.

Illustration: No information.

B Icons Attributed to Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch and Copies

B.1 *Christ Pantokrator*

Description: Almost identical copy of A.2.

Dimensions: 102.3 x 77.3 cm or 101.5 x 76.5 cm.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek. In the lower part there is an Arabic inscription that mentions the date 1726 and Patriarch Sylvester of

Antioch. According to Sylvia Agémian and Fr. Spyridon Fayad, the original icon was restored in 1816 by Michael Polychronis.

Provenance: Copy, probably 20th century, before 1964.

Present location: Church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas (al-Balad), Tripoli, Lebanon.

Sources: Cândia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 115, 185–186; Fayad, *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 28, 78, 378, no. 9, 386–388; Fayad, „Īqūnatāni”, p. 108, 120; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 510; Jabre Mouawad, *Icônes et églises de Tripoli*, p. 98–99.

Illustration: Agémian, *List of Icons*, no. 2; Cândia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, il. 46; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 2; Fayad, *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 415, 453, il. 403, 408; Jabre Mouawad, *Icônes et églises de Tripoli*, p. 99. See Fig. 40.

B.2 The Mother of God Hope and Shelter of the Christians

Description: Almost identical copy of A.1.

Dimensions: 102.3 x 77.3 cm or 101,5 x 76,5 cm.

Inscriptions, signature and date: In the field, in Greek, and an Arabic inscription that mentions the date 1726 and Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch, and the restoration in 1816 by Michael Polychronis.

Provenance: Copy, probably 20th century, before 1964.

Present location: Church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas (al-Balad), Tripoli, Lebanon.

Sources: Cândia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 183–185; Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 349, no. 1; Fayad, *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 28, 78, 378–379, no. 10; Fayad, „Īqūnatāni”, p. 111; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 510; Jabre Mouawad, *Icônes et églises de Tripoli*, p. 98–99.

Illustration: Cândia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, il. 45; Fayad, *Οι ζωγράφοι Μιχαήλ Πολυχρόνιος και Μιχαήλ Ελευθέριος*, p. 453, il. 404; Jabre Mouawad, *Icônes et églises de Tripoli*, p. 99. See Fig. 41.

B.3 Saint George the Great Martyr

Description: Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon, a boy holding a jug on his horse. In the upper left corner, the figure of Jesus Christ in glory, His hands blessing. On the right, crowned female figure running and pointing towards a tower. On the city walls, a crowned king and other figures. In the rear plan, a city, identified by researchers with Beirut.

Dimensions: 126 x 93 cm.

Inscriptions, signature and date: Inscriptions in Greek on the front: signed by Antonis Grigorakis, known as Zorzis of Chios, and dated 1746. On the back, an Arabic inscription mentioning Sylvester and the year 1749, when the icon was donated to the cathedral of Beirut. The inscription was probably copied from another icon.²¹

Provenance: Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Beirut.

Present location: Reserves of the Greek Orthodox Archbishopric, Beirut, Lebanon. The icon featured in the exhibition at the Surssock Museum in Beirut in 2000.

Sources: Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 18–20; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 526.

Illustration: Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 18; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 518, 527.

B.4 The Annunciation

Description: Icon attributed to Sylvester of Antioch, located in the church of Saint John the Baptist in the Orthodox Monastery of Saint Thekla, Ma'lūla, Syria. No further information.

Sources: G. Nahas, S. Slim (eds.), *Monasteries of the Antiochian Orthodox Patriarchate*, Kalhat, Al Koura, 2007, p. 88–97; <https://www.antiochpatriarchate.org/en/page/the-convent-of-st-thecla-ma-lula/149>.

B.5 The Holy Martyr Sebastian

Description: An icon of the Holy Martyr Sebastian in the Abou Adal collection in Beirut dated 1719 and signed by a “Σιλβεστρος ιερομόναχος” (“Silvestros hieromonachos) could be attributed to Sylvester before becoming patriarch. The painter is not attested in other sources. The information about the icon was taken from the notes of Manolēs Chatzidakēs for the repertory of Greek artists, where the painter is listed as different from the patriarch.

Sources: Chatzidakēs, Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, 2, p. 348, Σιλβεστρος (2).

B.6 Christ Archpriest with the Mother of God and Saint John the Baptist (Deisis)

Description: The icon may belong to the Russian school, dating from the first half of the 18th century. The inscriptions on this icon and three others belonging to the same set are in Slavonic, except for a few abbreviations. The icon has an unusual frame decorated with mother of pearl. It belonged to a group of four icons (**B.6**, **B.7**,

²¹ Agémian, *Les icônes de Saint-Georges*, p. 19; Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient*, p. 526.

B.8, and B.9) with similarly decorated frames, which used to be in a *parekklesion* of the Colțea Monastery in Bucharest. A connection with Sylvester of Antioch cannot be excluded, since the patriarch ordered icons from the Russian Empire²² and he also copied Russian icons.²³ In the letter to Samuel from Nizhyn, dated August 10, 1746, Sylvester mentioned some “despotic” or “imperial icons” (“Δεσποτικές εικόνες”) that he had ordered, which were to be sent with Dēmētrios Kromidis to Bucharest, where the patriarch was also heading to.

Present location: Museum of the Sinaia Monastery, Romania.

B.7 *The Enthroned Theotokos with the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel*

Description: See B.6.

Present location: Museum of the Sinaia Monastery, Romania.

B.8 *The Dormition of the Theotokos*

Description: See B.6.

Present location: Museum of the Sinaia Monastery, Romania.

B.9 *Saints Kosmas and Damianos*

Description: See B.6.

Present location: Colțea Church, Bucharest, Romania.

B.10 *The Mother of God Hope and Shelter of the Christians*

Description: Copy dated 1771 by Metropolitan Parthenios of Tripoli of an icon painted by Sylvester, formerly in Tripoli (see A.1).

Present location: In 1969 it was in the Orthodox church of Our Lady in Hama, Syria. As churches in Hama were damaged during the war in the 1980s, the present location of the icon is unknown.

Sources: Cândea (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 186.

B.11 *Jesus Christ Pantokrator*

Description: Copy dated 1771 by Metropolitan Parthenios of Tripoli of an icon painted by Sylvester, formerly in Tripoli (see A.2).

²² Letter of Sylvester of Antioch to Samuel in Nizhyn, August 10, 1746, MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 50v.

²³ Dapontes, “Κατάλογος ιστορικός”, p. 149–150.

Present location: In 1969 it was in the Orthodox church of Our Lady in Hama, Syria. As churches in Hama were damaged during the war in the 1980s, the present location of the icon is unknown.

Sources: Cândeia (ed.), *Icônes melkites*, p. 185.

B.12 *The Mother of God (1)*

Description: Copy by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch of the icon of the *Mother of God*, formerly belonging to George Doukas, prince of Moldavia. Mentioned by Kaisarios Dapontes.

Present location: Unknown.

Sources: K. K. Dapontes, *Κήπος Χαρίτων*, in É. Legrand, *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire*, t. III, Paris, 1881, p. 34; Chițulescu, “Le patriarche Sylvestre d’Antioche”, p. 165, 167.

B.13 *The Mother of God (2)*

Description: Icon of the Mother of God (“Θεομητορικὴ εικόνα”) mentioned in a letter dated May 1752 from Sylvester to the *postelnikos* Dimitris. Most likely it is an icon painted by the patriarch. It was sent to the abovementioned *postelnikos*, probably in Moldavia, at the same date.

Present location: Unknown.

Sources: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 36.

B.14 *Saint Nicholas*

Description: Icon of Saint Nicholas, which Patriarch Sylvester declared he intended to paint, as mentioned in a letter to *spatharessa* Mariora in November 1752. Present location unknown.

Sources: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 41–42.

B.15 *The Holy Mandylion*

Description: Icon of the Holy Mandylion, which Patriarch Sylvester declared he intended to paint, as mentioned in a letter to *spatharessa* Mariora in November 1752. If Mariora is identifiable with Marioritza, sister of Iakovos Rizos, this icon might in fact be A.5.

Present location: Unknown.

Sources: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 41–42.

B.16 *Baptism of Jesus Christ*

Description: Icon representing the Baptism of Jesus Christ, which Patriarch Sylvester declared he intended to paint, as mentioned in a letter to *spatharessa* Mariora in November 1752.

Present location: Unknown.

Sources: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 41–42.

B.17 *Christ, the Twelve Apostles, and Two Archangels*

Description: Fifteen icons in the upper row of the *iconostasis* in the church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, representing Christ, the twelve Apostles and another two figures, probably two Archangels. The icons were attributed, at least in part, to Sylvester of Antioch. Many of them were totally or partially damaged in 2012, during the war in Syria, by an explosion. The remaining icons were placed again in their former position on the *iconostasis*. The icons were probably painted for the church of Saint Elian in Homs. According Fr. Spyridon Fayad, these icons were not painted by Sylvester of Antioch.²⁴

Sources: “Église Saint Georges (Mar Girgis) de Homs”, *Architecture religieuse du Patriarcat d’Antioche*. ARPOA, University of Balamand, <http://193.227.187.44/english/ARPOA.asp?id=9937&fid=270>.

Illustration: <http://193.227.187.44/common/images/photogallery/ARPOA/Homs/Homs/MarGeorges/16.jpg>.

²⁴ Personal correspondence with the author, May 2024.

Addendum 2: Inventory of Documents and Correspondence

This is a catalogue of all the known and accessible letters and official documents issued by or addressed to Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch, accompanied by information on their content and sources (if available). Full references to the sources mentioned here, previously cited in the footnotes, are included in the *Bibliography*.

Documents and Correspondence

1. December 1724, Constantinople, Jeremias III of Constantinople, patriarchal and synodal letter about the election of Sylvester as patriarch of Antioch. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 1r–1v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 203–204, no. 124 (1).
2. Undated (after January 28 / February 8, 1725), Sylvester to the Russian Holy Synod. Ms Jerusalem 233. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 309, no. 233 (21).
3. May 8, 1725, Sylvester to Neophytos Mavromatis, former metropolitan of Arta. Manuscript M 100 of the Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos. *Ref.*: K. N. Kallianos, “Ἐξὶ ἀνέκδοτες ἐπιστολές του Ἱεροθέου Ἰβηρίτη”, p. 163, no. 18 (dated May 3). *Publ.*: A. E. Lauriōtēs, „Ἀνέκδοτα πατριαρχικά γράμματα ἐκ τῶν ἀρχείων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Μ. Λαύρας καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀλληλογραφίας τοῦ Ἄρτης Νεοφύτου Μαυρομμάτη”, *Ἐκκλησιαστική Ἀλήθεια*, 24, 1904, p. 351–352 (dated May 8).
4. July 1725, Constantinople, Sylvester to the Russian Holy Synod. RGIA, F. 796, Op. 6, D. 328, f. 2–3. *Publ.*: Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 112–114, no. 6 (Russian translation).
5. September 29, 1725, Antioch, Sylvester to the Russian Holy Synod. RGIA, F. 796, Op. 7, D. 133, f. 2–4. *Publ.*: Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 109–111, no. 4 (Russian translation).
6. April 1726, Sylvester to Leontios. Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide, Congregazioni Particolari, Greci Melchiti, Parte II, Anno 1729, tom. 76, f. 292–294. *Ref.*: Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 345.
7. May 1726, Sylvester to Leontios. Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide, Congregazioni Particolari, Greci Melchiti, Parte II, Anno 1729, tom. 76, f. 292–294. *Ref.*: Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 345.

8. May 2, 1726, Sylvester to Metropolitan Arsenios of Thebais. RGIA, F. 796, Op. 8, D. 84, f. 1–2v. *Publ.*: Gerd, Petrunina, *Αητιοκχιϋκκιϋ παμριαρχαμ υ Ροσσια*, p. 114–115, no. 7 (Greek text), 115–116 (Russian translation).
9. June 12, 1726, Sylvester to the grand dragoman [Gregory Ghikas]. Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide, Congregazioni Particolari, Greci Melchiti, Parte II, Anno 1729, tom. 76, f. 298–298v. *Ref.*: Nasrallah, Haddad, *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 345.
10. August 7, 1726, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233, f. 4v–5v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμικη Βιβλιοθηκη*, 1, p. 306, no. 233 (3); Malandrakis, *Η Πατμιας Σχολη*, p. 147–148, n. 95. *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοϋ διδασκαλου Μακαριου Καλογερα επιστολες”, p. 280–282, no. 2.
11. August 17, 1726, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233.
12. August 20, 1726, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233.
13. Undated (1725/1726), Sylvester to Metropolitan Dionysios of Kition. *Publ.*: D[ēmētrakopoulos], “Σιλβεστρος πατριαρχεις Αντιοχειας”, p. 367–369.
14. Undated (1725/1726), Sylvester to Metropolitan Dionysios of Kition. *Publ.*: D[ēmētrakopoulos], “Σιλβεστρος πατριαρχεις Αντιοχειας”, p. 369–370.
15. Undated (1726), Aleppo, Sylvester to Metropolitan Dionysios of Kition. *Publ.*: D[ēmētrakopoulos], “Σιλβεστρος πατριαρχεις Αντιοχειας”, p. 370–372.
16. Undated (1726), Aleppo, Sylvester to Metropolitan Dionysios of Kition. *Publ.*: D[ēmētrakopoulos], “Σιλβεστρος πατριαρχεις Αντιοχειας”, p. 372.
17. February 1727, *Short Exposition* (“Εκθεσις σύντομος”) of the 1727 synod in Constantinople. Signed by Paisios II of Constantinople, Sylvester of Antioch, and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. MS Jerusalem 124, f. 20r–23r.
18. Undated (probably 1727), Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS *Metochion* of Panagios Taphos 67 (now in the National Library of Greece, Athens), f. 67v–68r. *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοϋ διδασκαλου Μακαριου Καλογερα επιστολες”, p. 282, no. 3.
19. Undated (probably 1727), Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Patmos 850, f. 132v, no. σλη´; MS Patmos Phlorentēs, no. σλη´; MS National Library of Greece 2310, f. 376v; MS Iviron 4256, f. 77v; MS Sinai 1605 (530), f. 409r; MS *Metochion* of Panagios Taphos 567 (now in the National Library of Greece, Athens), f. 93v. *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοϋ διδασκαλου Μακαριου Καλογερα επιστολες”, p. 284–285, no. 5.
20. June 20, 1727, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233, p. 14v–15v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμικη Βιβλιοθηκη*, 1, p. 305, no. 233 (7). *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοϋ διδασκαλου Μακαριου Καλογερα επιστολες”, p. 282–284, no. 4.
21. Undated [1727?], Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233, f. 18v–20r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμικη Βιβλιοθηκη*, 1, p. 307, no. 233

- (10). *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοῦ διδασκάλου Μακαρίου Καλογερά ἐπιστολές”, p. 277–279, no. 1.
22. Undated [1727?], Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Patmos 850, f. 111v–112r, no. σε´; MS Patmos Phlorentēs, no. σε´. *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοῦ διδασκάλου Μακαρίου Καλογερά ἐπιστολές”, p. 285–286, no. 6.
23. Undated [1727?], Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233, f. 37r. *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοῦ διδασκάλου Μακαρίου Καλογερά ἐπιστολές”, p. 286–287, no. 7.
24. Undated [1727–1733?], Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 308, no. 233 (12).
25. Undated [1727–1733?], Iakovos of Patmos to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 308, no. 233 (12).
26. January 13, 1728, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, mentioning four earlier letters of Sylvester to Chrysanthos. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 135; K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 3, p. 532; Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Addenda et corrigenda περὶ τὸν Σπαντωνή”, p. 433.
27. March 4, 1728, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 135.
28. August 2, 1728, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 135–136.
29. December 6, 1728, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 136.
30. January 17, 1729, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 136.
31. April 16, 1729, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, mentioning three earlier letters of Sylvester to Chrysanthos. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 136.
32. February 1730, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 136–137.
33. April 1730, Sylvester, on the election of Parthenios of Loftzou, f. 98v–99v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 217, no. 124 (62).
34. May 23, 1730, Sylvester to Chrysanthos of Jerusalem. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos, “Ἐπιστολαὶ Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας”, p. 137.
35. March 23, 1731, Sylvester to Neophytos Mavromatis, former metropolitan of Arta. *Publ.*: Lauriōtēs, „Ἀνέκδοτα πατριαρχικὰ γράμματα ἐκ τῶν ἀρχείων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Μ. Λαύρας”, p. 351–352 (fragment).
36. June 1731, Constantinople, Sylvester to the Holy Synod of Russia. RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434, f. 1–3v. *Publ.*: Gerd, Petrunina, *Ἀντιοχειΐσκυ ἡ πατριαρχατ u Россия*, p. 116–118), no. 8 (Russian translation).

37. June 1731, Constantinople, Sylvester to the Empress Anna Ioannovna. RGIA, F. 796, Op. 12, D. 434, f. 7–12v. *Publ.*: Gerd, Petrunina, *Αντιοχειύσκυϊ πατριαρχατ υ Ροσσυα*, p. 119–122, no. 10 (Russian translation).
38. June 15, 1731, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for June 16 and 17 to celebrate in the church of Panagia Kafatiani in Galata. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 67.
39. 7239 (1731), translation of *chrysoboulla* of princes of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 21r–21v.
40. 1732, Sylvester to an unknown addressee (Rowland Sherman?), in Arabic. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Arabic MS 349, f. 160r–165v.
41. 1733, Sylvester to an English merchant, most likely Rowland Sherman, in Arabic. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Arabic MS 349, f. 159r–160r.
42. January 27, 1733, Theophanis, former archdeacon of Alexandria, to Sylvester. Ms Jerusalem 233. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 309, no. 233 (25). *Publ.*: Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Ἀλεξανδρινὰ σημειώματα ΙΖ΄. Ἐπιστολὴ Θεοφάνους πρώην Ἀρχιδιάκονου Ἀλεξανδρείας πρὸς Σίλβεστρον Πατριάρχην Ἀντιοχείας”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος*, 5, 1912, vol. 10, no. 56, p. 188–192.
43. February 1733, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233.
44. August 1, 1733, Antioch, Sylvester to the Holy Synod of Russia. RGIA, F. 796, Op. 15, D. 427, f. 3–6v. *Publ.*: Gerd, Petrunina, *Αντιοχειύσκυϊ πατριαρχατ υ Ροσσυα*, p. 134–135, no. 26 (Greek text), 135–137 (Russian translation).
45. August 17, 1733 [Sylvester] to the faithful of the Patriarchate of Antioch. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 77v–79r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 211, no. 124 (42).
46. September 6, 1733, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233, f. 84r (original letter). *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοῦ διδασκάλου Μακαρίου Καλογερά ἐπιστολὲς”, p. 287–288, no. 8.
47. Undated [1733?], Sylvester to a prince of Wallachia or Moldavia [Gregory II Ghikas] about a donation of 500 *groschen* and 100 *groschen* for the Kykkos Monastery. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 82r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 212, no. 124 (46).
48. April 26, 1734, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. Ms Jerusalem 233. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 309, no. 233 (22).
49. 1734, Sylvester of Antioch to the Metropolitans Parthenios of Mesopotamia, Azarias of Theodosioupolis, and Kallinikos of Ahiska. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 3r–4v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 204, no. 124 (2). *Publ.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 389–395.

50. Undated [1734?], Seraphim of Constantinople to Sylvester, MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 5v–6r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 204, no. 124 (3).
51. [1734?] Sylvester to the Metropolitans Parthenios of Mesopotamia, Azarias of Theodosiupolis, and Kallinikos of Ahiska. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 48–49v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 204, no. 124 (2).
52. 1734, May 15, Sylvester, letter of recommendation for Vasily Barsky, in Arabic. MS no. 602 in the Count Uvarov collection.¹ *Ref.*: Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 4, p. 91–94 (Arabic text and Russian translation, signed in Greek).
53. Undated [1734–1744?], Sylvester, letter of recommendation for Vasily Barsky, in Greek. MS no. 602 in the Count Uvarov collection. *Ref.*: Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 4, p. 94–96 (Greek text and Russian translation).
54. 1735, Constantinople, Neophytos VI of Constantinople to Sylvester of Antioch. MS Jerusalem 124, f. 27r–28r, 31v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 207–208, no. 124 (15). *Publ.*: A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Ὁρους Σινᾶ”, p. 241–246.
55. 1735, May (15?), Constantinople, Neophytos VI of Constantinople to Sylvester of Antioch. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 208, no. 124 (17). *Publ.*: Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, “Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Ὁρους Σινᾶ”, p. 246–250.
56. February 22 (or 20), 1736, Makarios Patmios to Sylvester. MS Jerusalem 233, f. 88r. (original letter). *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 309, no. 233 (24). *Publ.*: Tsoulkanakēs, “Τοῦ διδασκάλου Μακαρίου Καλογερά ἐπιστολές”, p. 288–289, no. 9.
57. June 10, [1736], Constantinople, Neophytos VI of Constantinople, letter about Sylvester of Antioch. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 15r–15v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 206, no. 124 (11).
58. February 2, 1737, on the deposition of the metropolitan of Ahiska. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 85r–85v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 212–213, no. 124 (48).
59. July 17, 1737, on the election of Makarios as metropolitan of Ahiska. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 86r–86v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 213, no. 124 (49).

¹ For more on the manuscript, see Leonid, *Систематическое описание славяно-российских рукописей*, p. 327, no. 1762 (381) (602).

60. November 1, 1737, Trebizond, document about the debt to Sior Loukakis, which was to be paid in installments. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 32r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 208, no. 124 (20).
61. January 19, 1738, Sylvester to the village of Soumela. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 83v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 212, no. 124 (47).
62. Undated [1738 or 1739?], Sylvester a sermon or speech (Λόγος κατανουκτικός) [to the faithful of the Patriarchate of Antioch]. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 105r–105v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 217, no. 124 (67).
63. Undated [after 1737, 1738/1739], Alexandretta/İskenderun (“εις Σκενδερώννα”), Sylvester to Kosmas III of Alexandria, recommendation for χούρι Μιχαήλ (*chouri Michaēl*). MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 104v–105r (105v–106r). *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 217, no. 124 (68). *Publ.*: Archim. Ch. A. Papadopoulos, “Αλεξανδρινά σημειώματα ΙΣΤ’”, *Ἐκκλησιαστικός Φάρος*, 5, 1912, vol. 9, no. 52, p. 228–230.
64. January 1 or 10, 1739, Sylvester to Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 102v–103r.
65. 1739 [January?], Sylvester to Ιωαννίκιος of Stavroupolis. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 103r–103v.
66. February 1, 1739, Caesarea of Cappadocia, patriarchal promissory letter (πατριαρχική ὁμολογία) about 1,400 *groschen* borrowed from Spandonis. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 31v.
67. February 1, 1739, Damascus, document issued by Sylvester of Antioch. National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, shelfmark *Achiziții Noi*, MMMXL/3. *Ref.*: Ciucă, Vătafu-Găitan, Comănescu, Niculescu (eds.), *Colecția Achiziții Noi*, p. 164, no. 1812.
68. February 10, 1739, Caesarea of Cappadocia, Sylvester to Prince Gregory II Ghikas of Moldavia. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 102r–102v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 217, no. 124 (65). *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 8–9.
69. February 10, 1739, Sylvester to the metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia [Neophytos]. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 102r–102v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 217, no. 124 (66). *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 7–8.
70. February 10, 1739, συστατικόν (recommendation). MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 171v–172r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 218, no. 124 (74).
71. February 10, 1739, Sylvester to Mihalakis [Rosetis], *stolnic* or *postelnic* in Ungro-Wallachia. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 172v–173r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ιεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 218, no. 124 (75). *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 9.

72. February 10, 1739, [Sylvester] to Dometios, *katholikos* of Upper Iberia. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 173r.
73. February 11, 1739, Sylvester about archpriest Damaskinos. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 173v–174r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 218, no. 124 (76).
74. February 12, 1739, Sylvester to *oikonomos* Dēmētrios. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 174r–174v.
75. Undated [1739?], Sylvester to Kōnstantinos, *epitropos* of the Throne of Antioch. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 103v–104r.
76. February 18, 1739, Sylvester to Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 172r–172v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 218, no. 124 (75).
77. Undated (1739?), “Ἐνταλτήριος τοῦ παπᾶ Πέτρος” (“Mandate for Priest Petros”). MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 104r.
78. December 15, 1739, Sylvester of Antioch, circular letter (ἀπανταχοῦσα) for building the church of Saint Nicholas in Adana. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 11v–12r. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 206, no. 124 (8). *Publ.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Γεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας*, 2, p. 397–399.
79. December 15, 1739, [Sylvester of Antioch] to the metropolitan of Crete. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 12. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Γεροσολυμιτική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 206, no. 124 (9).
80. 1741, ending of a Greek document, probably issued by Sylvester. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 163.
81. October 9, 1741, Sylvester to Patriarch Kosmas III of Alexandria. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 163r–163v.
82. October 9, 1741, Sylvester to Metropolitan Ananias of Trebizond. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 163v–164r.
83. November 9, 1741, Sylvester to *archōn* Panos. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 164r–164v.
84. November 9, 1741, Sylvester to the Metropolitans Agathangelos of Amida, Azarias of Theodosioupolis, and Makarios of Ahiska. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 164v–165r.
85. November 1741, Sylvester to his eparchy, ἀπανταχοῦσα (*apantachousa*) for the Monastery of Pelement (Balamand). MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 165r–165v.
86. December 15, 1741, Damascus, Sylvester to Michael Rakovitzas, prince of Wallachia. Congratulation for taking the office. Expresses his desire to visit him and the country in person, something he wanted for a long time. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 166r–166v.
87. December 15 (?), 1741, Sylvester to *megas logothetes* Kōnstantinos Teskoglou. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 166bis–166bisv.

88. December 15, 1741, Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, no office at the time. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 166v–167r.
89. December 15, 1741, Sylvester to *archōn kyritzēs* Philodoros. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 167r–167v.
90. December 15, 1741, Sylvester to *megas kapikehaya*, *megas spatharios* Manolakis. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 167v–168r.
91. [December 15, 1741?], note mentioning Stavrakis, the second *kapikehaya* of Michael *vodas*, and Philodoros, the third *kapikehaya*. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 168r.
92. December 20, 1741, Sylvester to *archōn* Hatzi Kyriakis. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 168v, 170r.
93. Undated [1741?], [Sylvester] to Constantine Mavrokordatos. Letter of recommendation for Dionysios, an *ieromonachos* at the Monastery of Saint Paul on Mount Athos. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 56v.
94. February 9, 1742, [Paisios II of Constantinople] to Sylvester. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 170v.
95. Undated, answer to the precedent, Sylvester to Paisios II of Constantinople. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 170r–171v.
96. 1742, letter of absolution for the village Sotiras tou Zagora. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 171v–172v.
97. April 2, 1742, Sylvester to Kallinikos, *protosynkellos* of the Great Church. Mentions that he received a letter from Spandonis, sent the letter of absolution for the *sympatriotes*. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 172v–173r.
98. April 3, 1742, Sylvester to *archōn* Kōnstantinos. Mentions that he received a letter from Hatzi Spandonis, sent the letter of absolution for the *sympatriotes*. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 173r.
99. April 1742, Sylvester for aid to Michael and Iousef (Yūsif?) from Beirut. They suffered a lot for the faith, were beaten and imprisoned, and spent more than 800 *groschen*. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 173v.
100. July 1, 1742, Sylvester to the *archontes* of Ioannina and other *archontes* from other cities, who are in Venice. Before the letter, a title: “Ἐπιστολαὶ περὶ ἐλεημοσύνης” (“Letters for alms”). MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 174r–175r.
101. July 1, 1742, Sylvester to *archōn* Simon Maroutzis. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 175r–175v.
102. Undated [July 1, 1742], Sylvester to *archōn* Michael Karaioannis. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 175v.
103. July 1, 1742, Sylvester to *archōn* Ioannis Athineos Dekas. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 175v–176r.
104. July 1, 1742, Sylvester to *archōn* Thomas Karaioannis. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 176r–176v.
105. July 1, 1742, Sylvester to *ierodidaskalos* Katiforos. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 176v.
106. July 1, 1742, Sylvester to *archōn* Nikolaos Kornaros Kritikos from the province of Sitia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 177r. All the above seven letters were given to

- grammatikos* Hatzı Vasileios in 1742 in Damascus and he was sent to Venice on July 1, 1742.
107. Undated [1742?], the monks of Sinai to Sylvester. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 178r–178v.
108. 1742, Sylvester to Nikēphoros of Paiasios, the clerics, and the lay people. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 179r–180r.
109. Undated [1742], ἀπανταχοῦσα (*apantachousa*) for Gianis Sklavonas from Tripoli. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 180v.
110. July 15, 1742, Sylvester to the clerics and lay people in the eparchy of Antioch. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 181r–182r.
111. July 17, 1742, Sylvester to Nikēphoros of Paiasios, the clerics, and the lay people. Asks financial support for the Monastery of Mount Sinai. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 182r–183r.
112. April 24, 1743 (1753?), the votes for the election of the (metropolitan) of Tripoli. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 87v.
113. 1743, Sylvester to Iakovos of Patmos. Manuscript in the Archive of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, *Ὀμιλίαι καὶ ἐπιστολαὶ διάφοροι, 1707–1763*. Ref.: K. Karnapas, “Ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος ὁ Κύπριος”, *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 857.
114. April 6, 1744, [Adrianople], Sylvester to Vasily Barsky. MS no. 602 in the Count Uvarov collection. Ref.: Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 4, p. 56–59 (Greek text and Russian translation).
115. April 20, 1744, a patriarch [of Jerusalem?] to Sylvester. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 73.
116. May 1744, [Constantinople], Vasily Barsky to Sylvester. MS no. 602 in the Count Uvarov collection. Ref.: Barsukov (ed.), *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 4, p. 59–61 (Greek text and Russian translation).
117. June 23, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 93r.
118. June 23, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 93r–93v.
119. June 24, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to Metropolitan Ananias of Cyzicus. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 93r–93v.
120. December 17, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 12r.
121. December 17, 1744, [Iași], Sylvester to Metropolitan Ananias of Cyzicus. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 13r.
122. December 17, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 14r.
123. December 18, 1744, Sylvester to Metropolitan Dionysios of Adrianople. MS 210 Șarıřā, f. 15.

124. December 25, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to the Holy Synod of Russia. RGIA, F. 796, Op. 26, D. 159, f. 1, 2, 9–12. *Publ.*: Gerd, Petrunina, *Антиохийский патриархат и Россия*, p. 137–139, no. 28 (Greek text), 139–140 (Russian translation).²
125. Undated [1744? after September 1741, before June 1743], Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas (not ruling at the time). MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 2r.
126. Undated [1744? before June 1743], Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 2v.
127. Undated [1744? before May/June 1743], Sylvester to Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 3r.
128. Undated [1744? before June 1743], Sylvester to Metropolitan Gerasimos of Heraclea. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 3r–3v.
129. Undated [1744?], recommendation letter of the Patriarch of Alexandria *περὶ ζητείας* (“for requesting [alms]”), about a letter from Sylvester to “*sheikh* Naser, which is named Nikōn, from [...] Beirut” (Σὲχ Νάσερ, τὸν διερμηνευόμενον Νίκων ονόματι, ἐκ [...] Βηρυτοῦ). MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 4.
130. May 3, 1745, Greek translation of a *chrysoboullos* of the prince of Moldavia [John Mavrokordatos] for the Patriarchate of Antioch, mentioning Sylvester. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 138r–138v. *Ref.*: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Τεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1, p. 217, no. 124 (71) (f. 137). *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mânăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 10.
131. August 8, 1745, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for August 11 to celebrate in the church of Saint Demetrios in Kouroutzesme. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 68r.
132. August 14, 1745, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for August 15 to celebrate in the church of Saint John in Galata. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 67v.
133. August 27, [1745?], Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 22v–23r.
134. September 22, [1745?], Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 23r–23v.
135. September 22, [1745?], Sylvester to John Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia. MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 23v–24r.
136. Undated, probably September 1745, [Constantinople?], Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas (not ruling at the time). MS 210 Ҳарішā, f. 25v.
137. September 1745, Aristarchos *spatharis* to Sylvester. He received the letter from Galați and another one from Constantinople, announcing the restoration on

² The date in the edition (December 25, 1745) is mistaken, since Sylvester was already in Constantinople at the time. The Russian translation was registered with the date May 1, 1745, i.e., *before* the supposed date of the letter.

- the throne and the exile of the *kakodoxos* (“the one who had a bad opinion or belief”). He did not meet the patriarch’s envoys who left from there because he was in the countryside. Hopes the *miri* question will also be solved. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 26v.
138. September 22, [1745?], John Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia to Sylvester. Mentions three letters of Sylvester to him. Congratulations for the success, except the *miri*. Also mentions “the question of money for Jerusalem”. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 27v–28r.
139. November 4, 1745, a patriarch [of Jerusalem?] to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 74r.
140. November 23 [probably 13], 1745, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for November 14 to celebrate in the church of Saint Nicholas in Agia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 68v.
141. December 1, 1745, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for December 2 to ordain Gennadios as metropolitan of Aleppo in the church of Saint Nicholas in Agia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 69r.
142. December 1, 1745, the votes for the election of the [metropolitan] of Aleppo. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 84v–85v.
143. December 7, 1745, the votes for the election of the [metropolitan] of Tyre and Sidon. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 86r.
144. Undated [December 1745], the votes for the election of the [metropolitan] of Emesa. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 86v.
145. December 16, 1745, the votes for the election of the [metropolitan] of Hēlioupolis. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 87r.
146. Undated [after December 1, 1745], a patriarch [of Jerusalem] to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 74v.
147. December 6, 1745, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for December 7 to ordain Jeremias III as metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon in the church of Saint Nicholas in Agia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 69v.
148. December 9, 1745, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for December 13 to ordain Philotheos as metropolitan of Edessa in the church of Saint John Prodromos in Palatas. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 70r.
149. December 17, 1745, the patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester. Permit for December 18 to ordain Seraphim as metropolitan of Hēlioupolis in the church of Saint George of the *metochion* of Panagios Taphos. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 70v.
150. April 6, 1745, Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 72v.
151. 1745, a patriarch [of Jerusalem?] to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 73v.
152. Undated [1745?], document issued by Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia, to his *archontes*, with recommendations to help the Throne of Antioch in every way. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 28v.

153. Undated [1745?], *pittakion* addressed to Sylvester of Antioch mentioning the precedent letter. Promises help in the future, with *chrysoboullous*. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 28v.
154. Undated, [1745/1746], Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 29r.
155. Undated, [after September 1745, or 1746], *pittakion*, Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 29r–29v.
156. Undated, [December? 2, 1745, or 1746], Sylvester to the princes [of Wallachia and Moldavia]. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 29v–30r.
157. Undated, [December? 1745, or 1746], Sylvester to the patriarch of Jerusalem [Parthenios]. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 30r–30v.
158. Undated, [December? 1745, or 1746], Sylvester to the *megas postelnikos* [in Wallachia or Moldavia]. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 30v.
159. December 20? [1745/1746], Sylvester to the patriarch of Jerusalem [Parthenios]. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 31r.
160. December 20? [1745/1746], Sylvester to the patriarch of Jerusalem [Parthenios]. *Pittakion* to the precedent. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 31r.
161. 1745, [Paisios II] the patriarch of Constantinople, Sylvester of Antioch, and Parthenios of Jerusalem. πατριαρχικὸν συγχωρητικὸν γράμμα (“patriarchal absolution letter”) for the inhabitants of Plomari, province of Mitilini. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 5r–6r.
162. Undated [1745?], [Paisios II] the patriarch of Constantinople, Sylvester of Antioch, and Parthenios of Jerusalem. ἕτερον συγχωρητικὸν (“another absolution [letter]”). MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 6r–7r.
163. January 3, [1746/1747], Sylvester to the patriarch of Jerusalem [Parthenios]. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 31v.
164. January 3, [1746/1747], Sylvester to the prince of Wallachia [Constantine Mavrokordatos]. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 31v–32r.
165. January 5, [1746/1747], Sylvester to the *megas postelnikos* of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 32r.
166. January 25, 1746, a patriarch [of Jerusalem] to Sylvester. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 75r.
167. January 1746, document (*praxis*) of the metropolitan of Emesa. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 96v.
168. Undated [January 1746?], document (*praxis*) of the metropolitan of Veroia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 97r–97v.
169. January 1746, list of sums sent by John Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia, to be donated to the churches of Constantinople. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 60r–60v.
170. February 9, [1746 or 1747], Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 32v.

171. [February 9], [1746/1747], [Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia]. *Pittakion* to the precedent. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 32v–33r.
172. February 14, 1746, Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 71v.
173. March 1, 1746, Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 34r.
174. March 13, 1746, Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 72r.
175. April 20, 1746, Sylvester to John Mavrokordatos. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 62r.
176. April 20, 1746, Sylvester to Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 62v.
177. April 20, 1746, Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 63.
178. May 1, 1746, Sylvester; another [letter] to [the prince] of Ungro-Wallachia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 63v–64r.
179. June 24, 1746, Metropolitan Ananias of Trebizond to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 6r.
180. June 26, 1746, Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople to the residents of Aleppo. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 6v–7r.
181. July 26, 1746, Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople and the Synod to Matthaïos, Metropolitan of Libya, to be elected patriarch of Alexandria. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 53v.
182. July 25, 1746, Sylvester to Michael Rakovitzas. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 35r.
183. July 28 [?], 1746, [Parthenios] of Jerusalem to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 76v–77r.
184. August 3, 1746, Sylvester to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 27r.
185. August 6, 1746, Sylvester to John Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 64v–65r.
186. August 8 [6/20?], 1746, Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 64v–65r.
187. August 9, 1746, Sylvester to *domna* Smaragda (wife of Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia). MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 65r.
188. August 9, 1746, Sylvester to Kōnstantinos *meḡas kamīnaris* (in Moldavia?; possibly, Kōnstantinos Dapontes). MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 66r.
189. August 10, 1746, Sylvester to Samuel in Nizhyn. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 50v.
190. August 16, 1746, Sylvester to Neophytos VI, former patriarch of Constantinople. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 127r.
191. August 18, 1746, Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople to Matthaïos, metropolitan of Libya, candidate for the position of patriarch of Alexandria. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 54r.
192. August 30, 1746, a patriarch [of Jerusalem] to Sylvester. MS 210 Ғарішā, f. 75v–76r.

193. August 30, 1746, Parthenios of Jerusalem to Sylvester. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 61r.
194. [1746?]. Beginning of a letter of the patriarch [of Constantinople] to Sylvester. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 61v.
195. September 11, 1746, Sylvester to Matthaïos of Alexandria. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 76r.
196. September 29, 1746, Damascus, report of the inhabitants of Damascus to the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople Paisios II. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 51r–52r.
197. August 4, 1747, Sylvester to Vasily Barsky. Sent to the Monastery of Saint John in Focșani and then to Kyiv. MS no. 602 in the Count Uvarov collection. *Ref.*: Barsukov (ed.), *Странствованиа Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 4, p. 71–74 (Greek text and Russian translation).
198. September [after 20], 1747, Kyiv, Vasily Barsky to Sylvester. Received the patriarch's letter of August 4 sent from Bucharest to Focșani, in Kyiv, on September 20. MS no. 602 in the Count Uvarov collection. *Ref.*: Barsukov (ed.), *Странствованиа Василья Григоровича-Барского*, 4, p. 71–74 (Greek text and Russian translation).
199. February 10, 1747, Sylvester to the patriarch of Constantinople (Paisios II). MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 81r.
200. Undated [beginning of 1748? from Wallachia?], Sylvester to Patriarch Paisios II of Constantinople. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 167–168, no. ΣΤ' α/1.
201. June 5, 1748, document issued by Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia. It establishes that the prince grants to the monastery of Kykkos, Cyprus, 50 *groschen* yearly from the revenue of the princely Customs taxes. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 37v.
202. July 15, 1748, Sylvester of Antioch buys from the *vornic* Constandin Strâmbeanu two properties in Bucharest. National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, shelfmark *Mănăstirea Sfântul Spiridon Vechi*, pachetul 1, no. 6.
203. October 25, 1748, Kyrillos V of Constantinople to Sylvester, “πρώτη ἐπιστολή ποῦ ἐλάβαμε ἐρχόμενοι ἀπὸ τὴν Βλαχία” (“the first letter we received when we came from Wallachia”). MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 10–11; Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 168, no. ΣΤ' α/2. *Ill.*: Beza, *Urme românești în Răsăritul Ortodox*, p. 165.
204. October 1748, Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia, to Sylvester. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 12–13.
205. October 1748, Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia, to Kyrillos V of Constantinople, mentioning Sylvester and his Arabic printed books. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 168–169, no. ΣΤ' α/3; Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 11–12. *Ill.*: Beza, *Urme românești în Răsăritul Ortodox*, p. 165.

206. Undated [1748–1750?], Sylvester to Constantine Rakovitzas, prince of Moldavia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 141r.
207. January 25, 1749 [corrections to the year], Constantinople, Sylvester to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 39r.
208. 1749 [January?], letter of absolution of the patriarch of Constantinople and Sylvester, patriarch of Antioch. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 39v–40v.
209. March 15, 1749, Sylvester to the English consul in Aleppo. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 106r.
210. April 5, 1749, Sylvester to the *megas logothetes* Kōnstantinos. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 136r.
211. April 5, [1749], Sylvester to the *hygoumenos* Makarios. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 136v.
212. April 23, 1749, Ilyās Fakhr (Ἠλίας Φάχρης), *logothetes* of the Antiochian Throne, to Kyrillos V, patriarch of Constantinople. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 107r.
213. April 6, 1749, the Patriarch of Constantinople to Sylvester, permit (ἐκδοσις ἄδειας). MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 170, no. ΣΤ' α/4.
214. September 3, 1749, Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 140v.
215. September 1749, Gregory Ghikas, prince of Wallachia, to Sylvester. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 31–32.
216. November 20, 1749, Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 63v–64r (letter begins on f. 64r and ends on f. 63v).
217. November 1749, Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 44r.
218. [November 1749], Sylvester to *beizade* Matei Ghikas, son of Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 44v.
219. [November 1749], Sylvester to *beizade* Skarlatos Ghikas, son of Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 44v.
220. [November 1749], Sylvester to the *megas kamarasis* Dēmētrios, husband of one of Gregory II Ghikas's daughters. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 45r.
221. December 16, 1749, Sylvester to Constantine Rakovitzas, prince of Moldavia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 111v.
222. December 16, 1749, Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, who was exiled. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 111v–112r.
223. December 16, 1749, Constantinople, Sylvester to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 112r.
224. December 16, 1749, [Constantinople], Sylvester to the metropolitan of Prousa. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 112v.
225. December 16, 1749, [Constantinople], Sylvester to Patriarch Matthaïos of Alexandria. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 112r–112v.

226. 1750, Sylvester to Patriarch Matthaïos of Alexandria. *Publ.*: G. H. [Arampatzoglou], “Δύο ανέκδοτα έγγραφα τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, *Ὁρθοδοξία. Περιοδικὸν Ἡθικοθρησκευτικόν*, 15, 1940, p. 159–163.
227. March 12, 1750, [Constantinople], Sylvester to Adrian (Andrianos) Nepliuiev, the ambassador of Russia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 113v–115r.
228. March 1750, [Constantinople], Sylvester to Elizaveta, the empress of Russia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 115r–117v.
229. Undated [March 1750], [Constantinople], Sylvester to Simon, the archbishop of Pskov (Πισκοβία), president of the Holy Synod of Russia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 117v–118v.
230. March 1750, end of a letter, probably written by Sylvester. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 130r.
231. Undated, [March 1750?], Aleppo. [Sylvester] to the Holy Synod of Russia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 130r–130v.
232. March 1750, [Constantinople], Sylvester to Alexei Petrovich Bestuzhev-Riumin, first chancellor of the Russian Empire. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 118v–119v.
233. Undated [March 1750?], Sylvester to *beizade* Skarlatos, son of Gregory II Ghikas. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 94.
234. March 1750, Sylvester to *beizade* Matthaïos (Ματτέϊ), son of Gregory II Ghikas. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 94r.
235. March 1750, Sylvester to *domna* Zoē (Ζωή), wife of Gregory II Ghikas. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 94v.
236. March 23, 1750, Sylvester to the prince of Wallachia (or Moldavia). At the top of the page, the title: “Γράμματα διὰ τὸν Ἅγιον Τραπεζούντος” (“Letters for his Holiness of Trebizond”). MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 90v.
237. [1750?], Sylvester to Metropolitan Neophytos of Ungro-Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 90v.
238. Undated [1750?], circular letter (ἀπανταχοῦσα/*apantachousa*) for help to Ilias *logothetes* (Ilyās Fakhr or his son) and his relative Hana, an Arab (Ἀραβας / Arabas) of Tripoli. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 91r.
239. Undated [1750?], letter to a prince of Wallachia or Moldavia related to the ἀπανταχοῦσα (*apantachousa*) for help to Ilias *logothetes* of Tripoli (Ilyās Fakhr or his son). Ending missing. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 91; the text continues on f. 90v.
240. Undated [1750?], Sylvester to *mezas vistiaris* Barbul (perhaps in Moldavia). MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 91v.
241. Undated [1750?], Sylvester to Metropolitan Nikēphoros of Moldavia. Recommends Ilias *logothetes* to him. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 91v–92r.
242. Undated [March 1750?], Sylvester to Matthaïos of Alexandria. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 94v–95r.
243. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥariṣā, f. 45v.

244. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to the prince of Moldavia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 45v–46r.
245. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to *domna* Zoē. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 46r.
246. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to *kamarasis* Dimitraskos. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 46v.
247. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to *beizade* Matthaios Ghikas, son of Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 46v.
248. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to *beizade* Skarlatos Ghikas, son of Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 46v–47r.
249. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to *megas postelnikos* Georgakis. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 47r.
250. April 6, 1750, Sylvester to the metropolitan of Moldavia Nikēphoros. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 47r–47v.
251. April 30, 1750, Sylvester to Constantine Rakovitzas, prince of Moldavia. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 104–104v.
252. May 8, 1750. Sylvester to the residents of Thessaloniki, letter of recommendation for aids for Ilias *logothetes* (most likely, Ilyās Fakhr) and Ioannis, his relative. Damascus manuscript. *Publ.*: Gennadios Hēlioupoleōs [Arampatzoglou], “Ένα γράμμα τοῦ Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου πρὸς τοὺς Θεσσαλονικεῖς (1750)”, *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς*, 33, 1950, 391–392 (11–12), p. 265–267 (text, p. 267).
253. May 1750, Sylvester to Gregory Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 32–33.
254. May 1750, Sylvester to *archontissa* Anna. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 33.
255. May 1750, Sylvester to *domna* Zoē of Ungro-Wallachia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 34.
256. June 1750, Sylvester to the prince of Moldavia [Constantine Rakovitzas]. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 34–35.
257. May 1750, Sylvester to the prince of Moldavia [Constantine Rakovitzas]. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 35–36.
258. July 13, 1750, Dionysios of Santorini to the Patriarch of Constantinople, about Aleppo. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 170–171, no. ΣΤ´ α/5.
259. July 15, 1750, Nikēphoros of Paiasios (Παΐασίου) to the Patriarch of Constantinople. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 171–172, no. ΣΤ´ α/6.
260. July 13, 1751, Sylvester to the metropolitan of Nicomedia (εις Σμύρνην). MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 185–186, no. ΣΤ´ γ/1.
261. July 13, 1751, Sylvester to the metropolitan of Cyzicus (ὄμοιον ἐστάλη καὶ εἰς τὸν Κυζύκου). MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 186.

262. Undated [1751?], Sylvester to the metropolitan of Nicomedia. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειείος Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 186–187, no. ΣΤ´ γ/2.
263. August 1751, Smyrna. Sylvester to the *archontes* of Venice. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειείος Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 188–189, no. ΣΤ´ δ/1.
264. July 3, 1751, the *epitropoi* of the brotherhood of Saint Victor in Chios to Sylvester. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Hēlioupoleōs, “Ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ πατριάρχῃ Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 239–245.
265. 1752, Sylvester to archbishop Philotheos of Cyprus. *Publ.*: Hēlioupoleōs, “Δύο ἀνέκδοτα ἔγγραφα”, p. 159–163.
266. February 1, 1752, Sylvester to *kyritzēs* Manolakis *spatharis*. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειείος Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 189, no. ΣΤ´ δ/2.
267. May 1752, Chios, Sylvester to Constantine Rakovitzas of Moldavia. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 13–14.
268. May 1752, Sylvester to *mise* Dimitris, *postelnikos* [in Moldavia]. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 36.
269. May 1752, Sylvester to *megas postelnikos kyritzis* Georgakis. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 37–38.
270. June / July 1752, list of objects of Markos, *kapikchaya* of Sylvester. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 14.
271. August 1752, Sylvester to *megas postelnikos* Antiochos. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 38–39.
272. August 1, 1752, Sylvester to the *didaskaloi* of Chios Meletios, Theodosios [Skylitzis], and Kyrillos. *Publ.*: Hēlioupoleōs, “Ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ πατριάρχῃ Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 242–243.
273. November 1752, Sylvester to Smaragda, the new *domna* of Ungro-Wallachia. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 39–40.
274. November 1752, Sylvester to Smaragda, wife of Matthaïos Ghikas of Wallachia. *Publ.*: Beza, “Biblioteci mănăstirești în Siria, Atena și Insula Hios”, p. 9 (partially).
275. November 1752, Sylvester to *archontissa* Euphrosynē in Wallachia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 39–40.
276. November 1752, Sylvester to *spatharessa* Mariora [in Wallachia or Constantinople]. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 41–42.
277. November 1752, Sylvester to *megas postelnikos* Antiochos [probably in Constantinople]. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 42–43.
278. November 1752, Sylvester to *megas postelnikos kyritzis* Georgakis. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 43–44.
279. November 1752, Sylvester to *kyritzis* Manolakis. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 44–45.
280. November 1752, Adana. Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειείος Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 172–173, no. ΣΤ´ α/7.

281. Undated (January 1753), Sylvester to the *epitropoi* of the brotherhood of Saint Victor in Chios, Pantoleon, Dimitris Karydias, and Ioannis Negrepontes. *Publ.*: Hēlioupoleōs, “Ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ πατριάρχῃ Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 244.
282. Undated (January 1753), Sylvester to the “*oikonomos*” of the metropolitan of Chios, Papa Nikolas Klonaris. *Publ.*: Hēlioupoleōs, “Ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ πατριάρχῃ Ἀντιοχείας Σιλβέστρου”, p. 244–245.
283. Undated (1753), Sylvester to Iakovos of Patmos. *Publ.*: Hēlioupoleōs, “Δύο ἀνέκδοτα γράμματα”, *Ὁρθοδοξία. Περιοδικὸν Ἡθικοθρησκευτικόν*, 18, 1943, 3, p. 101–102.
284. February 1753, Sylvester of Antioch, document for Makarios of Edessa. MS 210 Ἡριῶ, f. 105r–105v (ending on f. 105r).
285. April 24, 1743 [1753?], the votes for the [metropolitan] of Tripoli. MS 210 Ἡριῶ, f. 87v.
286. April 1753, Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 173–174, no. ΣΤ´ α/8.
287. June 9, 1753, Ioannis Protopsaltis to Sylvester. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 174, no. ΣΤ´ β/1.
288. June 28 [1753], *pittakion*, Ioannis Protopsaltis to Sylvester. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 175–176, no. ΣΤ´ β/2.
289. July 9, 1753, Sylvester to the *megas spatharios* Nikolakis Rossetos. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 189–190, no. ΣΤ´ δ/3.
290. July 14, 1753, *pittakion*, Ioannis Protopsaltis to Sylvester. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 176–177, no. ΣΤ´ β/3.
291. July 10, 1753, Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 177–178, no. ΣΤ´ β/4.
292. July 13, 1753, Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople, Emesa/Homs (ἀπὸ Ἐμέσης). MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 178–180, no. ΣΤ´ β/5.
293. July 14, 1753, Sylvester to Giannakis (maybe the same as Ioannis Protopsaltis), Emesa/Homs (ἀπὸ Ἐμέσης). MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειὸς Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 180–181, no. ΣΤ´ β/6.
294. July 1753, Sylvester to Matthaios Ghikas, prince of Moldavia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 45–46.
295. July 1753, Sylvester to *domna* Smaragda of Moldavia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 46–47.
296. July 9, 1753, Sylvester to the *megas spatharis* Nikolakis Rossetos (Rossetis). *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 47–48.
297. July 1753, Sylvester to Constantine [Rakovitzas], prince of Wallachia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 48–49.

298. July 1753, Sylvester to the *megas postelnikos* Georgakis Tzanetos. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 49.
299. August 28, 1753, Ioannis Protopsaltis to Sylvester. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 181–182, no. ΣΤ' β/7.
300. October 1753, Sylvester to Ioannis. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 182–184, no. ΣΤ' β/8.
301. October 1753, Sylvester to Kyrillos V of Constantinople. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 184–185, no. ΣΤ' β/9.
302. November 6, 1753, votes for the election of the [metropolitan] of Tripoli. MS 210 Ηαῖσᾶ, f. 87v.
303. November 1753, Sylvester to Constantine [Rakovitzas], prince of Wallachia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 49–50.
304. November 1753, Sylvester to the *megas postelnikos* Georgakis Tzanetos. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 51.
305. November 1753, Sylvester to the *megas postelnikos* Antiochos. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 51–52.
306. December 1753, Sylvester to Constantine [Rakovitzas], prince of Wallachia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 52–53.
307. Undated, *pittakion*, Sylvester to the prince of Wallachia [perhaps Constantine Rakovitzas], maybe related to the letter of December 1753. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 53.
308. December 1753, [Tripoli], Sylvester to the *spatharios* Nikolakis Rosetis. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 53–54.
309. December, [1753?], Sylvester to Constantine [Rakovitzas], prince of Wallachia. *Publ.*: Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, p. 55.
310. Undated [1753], Sylvester to the *megas logothetes* Michalakēs. *Publ.*: Hēlioupoleōs, “Δύο ανέκδοτα γράμματα”, p. 102–103.
311. January 1753 [or 1754], Sylvester to Dionysios, metropolitan of Chios. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 187, no. ΣΤ' γ/3.
312. January 31, 1754 [or 1753], Sylvester to Neophytos, metropolitan of Smyrna. MS Damascus. *Publ.*: Arampatzoglou, *Φωτειός Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2, p. 187–188, no. ΣΤ' γ/4.
313. Before March 19, 1756, Sylvester to Matthaïos of Alexandria. Referred to in a letter of Matthaïos of Alexandria to Kyrillos V of Constantinople, mentioning that Sylvester refused to sign the document of July 1755 on the decision concerning the re-baptism. *Ref.*: <https://vergosauctions.com/auctions/detail/category/4/auction/283/item/16516>.
314. June 20, 1758, Matthaïos of Alexandria to Sylvester of Antioch. *Ref.*: Uspenskiĭ, *Александрійская Πατριαρχία*, p. 50.

315. February 1765, Damascus, patriarchal act (πράξις ἀρχιερατική), Sylvester of Antioch, alongside Makarios of Tyre and Sidon and Ierotheos of Şaydnāyā. They propose to ordain Archimandrite Anthimos as metropolitan of Eirenoupolis. *Publ.*: Papadopoulos, “Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἔγγραφα”, p. 121–122; Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 2, col. 849–850.
316. February 1765, Damascus, Sylvester of Antioch, patriarchal letter for Archimandrite Anthimos, validating the patriarchal act (πράξις ἀρχιερατική). *Publ.*: Papadopoulos, “Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἔγγραφα”, p. 122; Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 2, col. 849–850.
317. Undated [after February 1765], Sylvester of Antioch, a plea for Anthimos of Eirenoupolis. *Publ.*: Papadopoulos, “Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἔγγραφα”, p. 123.
318. [1765 or 1766], [Constantinople], Sylvester of Antioch, letter to his eparchy about Anthimos of Eirenoupolis. *Publ.*: Papadopoulos, “Σιλβέστρου Ἀντιοχείας Ἔγγραφα”, p. 123–124.

Addendum 3: Greek Sources on Sylvester’s Life and Works

This addendum contains a selection of Greek sources related with Sylvester of Antioch: official documents and letters that the patriarch addressed to various correspondents, with information on his travels to the Romanian Principalities and his printing activities, as well as notes on the Arabic books he printed or supervised.

1. Undated [1744, or before June 1743], Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Moldavia. Sylvester is preparing for his journey [to Moldavia]. MS 210 Ἡριῶσα, f. 2v.

Εὐσεβέστατε ὑψηλότατε σοφώτατε καὶ ἐκλαμπρότατε αὐθέντα καὶ ἡγεμὼν μεγαλοπρεπέστατε πάσης Μολδοβλαχίας κύριε κύριε Ἰωάννη Κωνσταντίνε Νικολάου βοέβοδα, ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι ἀγαπητὲ περιπόθητε τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, τὴν ὑμετέραν θεόστεπτον ὑψηλότητα εὐχόμενοι εὐλογοῦντες νοερώς ἀσπάζομεθα.

Δεόμενοι ἐνθέρμος τοῦ Παναγάρχου Θεοῦ ὅπως διατηροῖ τὸ ὕψος τῆς σῆς ἐκλαμπρότητος ἐν ὑγείᾳ ἀδιασείστω, καὶ εὐημερεῖα εἰς ἐτῶν πολλῶν περιόδους ἐπὶ τὸν ὑψηλὸν θρόνον τῆς, ὑποτάττων ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας τῆς πάντα ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον. Λαμβάνοντες τὴν ἐκλαμπρον καὶ πεφιλημένην τῆς ἐπιστολῆν, ἐχάρημεν ὑπερφερόντως καὶ διὰ τὴν ὑγείαν τῆς, καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς πνευματικὴν ἀγάπην τῆς, ἐπειδὴ ὡς χριστιανικοτάτη, καὶ φιλελεήμων ἐκλινεν εἰς τὴν αἴτησιν ὅπου προλαβόντως ἐπαρεκαλέσαμεν συμπονοῦσα καὶ συμπάσχουσα ὑμῖν τε καὶ τῷ ἀποστολικῷ θρόνῳ μας. Διότι καὶ μᾶς ἔλυσε τὸ πυκρὸν νέφος τῆς ἀθυμίας μὲ τὸ γλυκὺ ἔαρ τῆς πανσόφου τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, προσκαλοῦσα ὀλοψύχως καὶ παραμυθοῦσα ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἐξαποροῦντες καὶ μὴ ἔχοντες μετὰ Θεὸν τὸ ποῦ προσδραμεῖν, ὅθεν καὶ ἐξ ὄλης ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ τὴν εὐλογήσαμεν καὶ εὐχήθημεν ὡς μετὰ Θεὸν κηδεμόνα καὶ ἀντιλήπτορα τούτου τοῦ ἐξηγορημένου θρόνου, καὶ τέκνον μας πνευματικόν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ χωρὶς τινὸς ἀναβολῆς καιροῦ μᾶς ἐθεράπευσε τὸ πάθος μὲ ταχίστην ἀπόκρισιν τε καὶ πρόοσκλησιν, διὸ σὺν Θεῷ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐτοιμαζόμεθα πρὸς ὁδοιπορίαν, καὶ εἴτε νὰ μᾶς ἀξιῶσῃ ὁ τῶν ὄλων Κ(ύριος) διὰ πρεσβειῶν τοῦ πρωτοκορυφαίου τῶν Ἀποστόλων Πέτρου νὰ τὴν ἀπολάσωμεν καὶ σωματικῶς καὶ νὰ τὴν εὐλογήσωμεν μὲ ἅπασαν τὴν εὐλογημένην τῆς τζάραν. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος. Τὰ δὲ ἔτι τῆς ὑμετέρας ὑψηλότητος εἰκίησαν παρὰ Θεῷ πολλὰ τε καὶ εὐδαίμονα.

2. December 17, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Ἡαῖΰῃ, f. 12r.

Γράμμα πρὸς τὸν Τεροσολύμων

Μακαριώτατε σοφώτατε καὶ ἀγιώτατε πατριάρχα τῆς Ἁγίας Πόλεως Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ πάσης Παλαιστίνης κύριε κύριε Παρθένιε, κατὰ Πν(εύμα) τὸ Ἅγιον ἀγαπητὲ περιπόθητε ἀδελφὲ καὶ συλλειτουργγὲ τῆς ὑμῶν μετριότητος. Τὴν ἡμετέραν μακαριότητα ἐν Χ(ριστῷ) τῷ Θεῷ ἀσπαζόμενοι, ἀδελφικῶς προσαγορεύομεν, οὗ καὶ δεόμεθα ἐκτενῶς τοῦ διατηρεῖν, καὶ περιφρουρεῖν αὐτὴν ἐν παντελεῖ ὑγείᾳ, μακροζωίᾳ, καὶ γήρατι βαθυτάτῳ, ἀξιῶσαι αὐτὴν ἐορτάσαι καὶ προσκυνήσαι γηθοσύνως, τὴν κοσμοσωτήριον Αὐτοῦ Γέννησιν. Τὰ τε Ἅγια Θεοφάνεια καὶ τὸ ἔτος εἰς ἔτη ἐπιμήκηστα καὶ πανευφρόσυνα. Σεβασμίαν αὐτῆς ἐπιστολὴν μετὰ πλείστης χαρᾶς ἐλάβομεν ἔγνωμεν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ περιεχόμενα, καὶ ὅσον μὲν διὰ τὴν περιποίησιν, καὶ εὐλαβικὴν φιλοξενίαν καὶ ἀγάπην, ὅπου δείχνει πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ ὑψηλότατος καὶ φιλόχριστος ἡμῶν αὐθέντης πολλάκις ἐγράψαμεν τῇ ἀδελφικῇ αὐτῆς ἀγάπῃ καὶ δὲν ἀμφιβάλλομεν πῶς τὸ χαίρεται καὶ ἡ μακαριότης τῆς, καὶ τὸ εὐκτῆριον¹ διὰ τὴν τυπογραφίαν, ὅπου θεῖα συνάρσει ἐπιχειρήσθημεν διὰ τὴν ὁποῖαν ὅσον τὸ ἐφικτὸν ἀγωνιζόμεθα διὰ νὰ τὴν φέρομεν εἰς ἀγαθὴν ἐκβασιν, καὶ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ διὰ τῶν θεοπειθῶν τῆς εὐχῶν νὰ νεύσῃ εἰς τὰς καρδίας τῶν ὑψηλοτάτων καὶ φιλοχρίστων αὐθέντων καὶ νὰ τοὺς ἐνισχύσῃ ἀπὸ τὰ ἀλλεπάλληλα βάρη εἰς τὸ νὰ βοηθήσουν εἰς τὸ θεῖον τοῦτο ἔργον, καὶ ὅτι μὲν πάσχει καὶ ἡ ὑμετέρα μακαριότης ἀπὸ τὰ συνεχῆ βάρη καὶ χρέη τοῦ Ἁγιοτάτου αὐτῆς θρόνου εἰς αὐτὸ ἀμφιβολίαν δὲ ἔχομεν, καὶ ἡ παναλκεστάτη δεξιὰ τοῦ Ὑψίστου Θεοῦ νὰ τὴν ὑπερισχύσῃ νὰ ἀντιπαλαίῃ τὰ χρέη, ὁμοίως καὶ ἡμᾶς. Παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ τὴν ἀδελφικὴν αὐτῆς ἀγάπην νὰ μὴ διαλείπονται καὶ αὐτὶς τὰ σεβάσματα αὐτῆς γράμματα πρὸς δὴλωσιν τῆς ἀγαθῆς αὐτῆς ὑγείας καὶ ἡμῶν ἐφετῆς. Ἦς τὰ ἔτη ἐπιβραβεύθήσαν παρὰ Κυρίου, πλείστα, καὶ πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν γέμοντα. ἄψιδ' Ἐκεμβρίου ιζ' η'. Ἐκ Γασιού.

3. December 17, 1744, Iași, Sylvester to Paisios II, patriarch of Constantinople. MS 210 Ἡαῖΰῃ, f. 14r.

Γράμμα πρὸς τὸν οἰκουμενικόν.

Παναγιώτατε, καὶ σεβασμιώτατε ἀρχιεπίσκοπε Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Νέας Ῥώμης καὶ οἰκουμενικὲ πατριάρχα κύριε κύριε Παῖσιε, ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πν(εύμα)τι ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφὲ καὶ συλλειτουργγὲ τῆς ὑμῶν μετριότητος. Τὴν ἡμετέραν θεοφροῦρητον παναγιώτητα ταπεινῶς ἀσπαζόμενοι ἀδελφικῶς προσαγορεύομεν, δεόμενοι ἐνθέρμως τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ, ὅπως διαφυλάττῃ καὶ περιφρουρῇ τὸ ἔνθεον αὐτῆς ὕψος

¹ Uncertain reading.

μέ ἄκραν ὑγείαν, μακροζωίαν, καί γῆρας λιπαρόν καί ἀτάραχον μεθ' εἰρηνικίας καταστάσεως. Σεβάσιμον γράμμα τῆς ὑμετέρας παναγιότητος, μετὰ πλείστης θυμηδείας ἐλάβομεν, καί ὑπερβαλόντως ἐχάρημεν διὰ τὴν πολυτίμητον ἡμῖν ὑγείαν τῆς, ἣν ὁ Ἅγιος Θεὸς διαφυλάττει καί εἰς τὸ ἐξῆς ἀμετάπτωτον, καί ἀξιῶσαι αὐτὴν προσκυνήσαι γηθοσύνως καί πανευφροσύνως τὴν κοσμοσωτήριον Αὐτοῦ Γέννησιν. Τὰ τε Ἅγια Θεοφάνεια, καί τὸ νέον ἔτος εἰς ἔτη πλείστα, καί γλυκύθυμα μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἱερῶν αὐτῆς καταθυμί(ων). Χάριτας οὐκ ὀλίγας ὁμολογοῦμεν τῇ ὑμετέρα παναγιώτητι διὰ τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀδελφικὴν συμπάθειαν, καί ἀγάπην. Διὰ δὲ τὴν περιποίησιν, καί εὐλαβητικὴν περίθαλψιν, καί εὐνοϊκὴν καλοκαγαθίαν τοῦ ὑψηλοτάτου, καί πολυχρονίου ἡμῶν αὐθέντου ὁποῦ δείχνει εἰς τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγιότατον καί ἀποστολικὸν θρόνον δὲν δυνάμεθα γραφῇ παραδοῦναι, μὲ ὄλον ὁποῦ ἢ φιλόχριστος αὐτοῦ ὑψηλότης πάσχει καί ἀπὸ ἀλλεπέλληλους ἀνάγκας δὲν διαλείπει ὅσον τὸ ἐφικτὸν νὰ μᾶς περιθάλψῃ ταῖς ἀνάγκαις μᾶς καί νὰ παρηγοροῦμεθα ἀμφοτέρω. Ὁ Ἅγιος Θεὸς νὰ διατηρῇ τὴν θεοφροῦρητον αὐτοῦ ὑψηλότητα μὲ πανευδαιμονεστάτην στερέωσιν, καί εἰρηνικὴν κατάστασιν. Παρακαλοῦμεν τὴν παναγιώτητάν τῆς καί αὐθις νὰ μᾶς χαροποιῇ διὰ τῶν σεβασμίων τῆς γραμμάτων τὴν περιπόθητον ἡμῖν ὑγείαν τῆς, καί νὰ μὴν διαλείπῃ ἢ διὰ λόγου καί ἔργου δυνατὴ τῆς περίθαλψις καί βοήθεια. Ἀπὸ τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀγιώτατον θρόνον. Τὰ δὲ ἔτη τῆς ἡμετέρας θεοσηρῆτικου παναγιότητος εἶψαν παρὰ Κυρίου, ὅ τι πλείστα καί πανευδαίμονα. ἄψμδ' Δεκεμβρίου ιζ' ἡ. Ἐκ Γασιίου.

4. August 27, [1745?], Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Χαρισῆ, f. 22v-23r.

Γράμμα αὐθεντικόν

Εὐσεβέστατε, ὑψηλότατε, καί χριστιανικότατε αὐθέντα καί ἡγεμῶν μεγαλοπρεπέστατε πάσης Οὐγγροβλαχίας, κύριε κύριε Ἰωάννη Κωνσταντίνε Νικολάου βοεβόδα, κατὰ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον υἱὲ ἀγαπητὲ περιπόθητε τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, τὴν ὑμετέραν ὑψηλότητα εὐχόμενοι εὐλογοῦντες, νοερῶς περιπτυσσόμεθα τὴν πανυπερέκλαμπρον τῆς καί σοφὴν κορυφῆν.

Δέομενοι τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ νὰ τὴν στερεώνη εἰς τὴν ὑψηλοτάτην τῆς καθέδραν ὑγιᾶ εὐημερημένην καί ἀκράδαντον, μετὰ καί τῆς κατὰ Πνεῦμα ἡμῶν θυγατρὸς ἐκλαμπροτάτης κυρίας δόμνας καί φιλτάτων ὑμῶν κλάδων.

[Το] πανέκλαμπρον καί περιπόθητον αὐτῆς γράμμα ἐλάβομεν, καί ἐχάρημεν τὴν μυριοπόθητον ἡμῖν ὑγείαν, εἰς τὸ ὁποῖον καί μᾶς συγχαίρεται μάλιστα διὰ τὴν εἰς τὸν ἀποστολικὸν θρόνον μας πάλιν ἀποκατάστασιν, ἢ ὁποία καί δὲν ἠϋφρανεν ἡμᾶς, ὑψηλότατε αὐθέντα, ἐπειδὴ καί νὰ στέκῃ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν τὸ προστεθὲν ἐκεῖνο μηρί,, διὰ τὸ ὁποῖον καί ἀγωνιζόμεθα ἐπιπόνως μὲ δόσιν χρημάτων πολλῶν νὰ ἀποτινάξομεν, καί θαρροῦμεν εἰς τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς αὐτὰς τὰς ἡμέρας νὰ τελειώσῃ, καί τότε νὰ χαροῦμεν καί ἡμεῖς ἀληθῶς καί νὰ χαρῆ καί ἡ ὑψηλότης τῆς.

Ἐπειδὴ ἐν ὄσῳ στέκει αὐτὸ, εἶναι ὁ ἀφανισμὸς τοῦ θρόνου ἐκείνου καὶ ἀπώλεια. Ὡσάν ὁποῦ ποτὲς δὲν θέλομεν ἰδῆ ἄνεσιν καὶ παρηγορίαν, ἂν καλὰ καὶ τὸ φορτίον ὁποῦ ἐπιφορτιζόμεθα τοῦ βαρυτάτου χρέους εἰς τὸ νὰ θεραπεύσωμεν τοῦτο τὸ τραῦμα εἶναι δυσχερὲς καὶ δυσφόρητον, ἐπειδὴ δανειζόμεθα μὲ βαρυτάτους τόκους καὶ μὲ πολλὰς παρακλήσεις πρὸς τοὺς δανειστὰς, ἀλλ' ἔχομεν τὰς ἐλπίδας πάσας καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔλεος ὑμῶν τῶν χριστιανικοτάτων αὐθέντων, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν εὐσεβῶν, νὰ μᾶς βοηθήσουν καὶ νὰ ἐλέησουν τὸ ἀγιότατον καὶ ἐξηπορημένον θρόνον τὸν ὁποῖον παρακαλοῦμεν καὶ πάλιν τὸ θεοσεβὲς ὕψος τῆς νὰ ἐπισκέπτεται καὶ νὰ παρηγορῇ μὲ τὴν δυνατωτάτην τῆς συνδρομῆν βοήθειάν τε καὶ ἔλεος, διότι ἡμεῖς ἀτομήσαμεν κατὰ πάντα καθὼς ἐφημεν, τόσον ἀπὸ τὰ πολυάριθμα χρέη, ὅσον καὶ ἀπὸ τὰς πολλὰς καταδρομὰς τῶν ἐναντίων, ἐπειδὴ ἐξ ὄτου ἐπατριαρχεύσαμεν οὔτε μίαν ἡμέραν ἢ ὥραν ἀνεπαύθημεν, λοιπὸν μετὰ Θε(εὸ)ν εἰς αὐτὴν ἔχομεν τὸ θάρρος, καὶ αὐτὴν εὐχόμεθα καθ' ὥραν καὶ στιγμὴν νὰ στερεώνῃ ὁ Πανάγαθος Κύριος, καὶ νὰ τὴν στηρίξῃ καὶ νὰ διαφυλάττῃ ἀνωτέραν πάσης ἐναντίας περιστάσεως, ὡς ζηλωτὴν τῆς εὐσέβειας θεμιότατον, καὶ παντὸς τοῦ χριστιανικοῦ γένους καύχημά τε καὶ πρωνίδα. Θέλωμεν δὲ τῆς φανερώσει καὶ τί τὸ μεταταῦτα τῆς ὑποθέσεως, ὅταν σὺν Θε(ε)ῷ ἤθελε λάβῃ καλὸν πέρας. Παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ νὰ μᾶς γράφῃ ἀείποτε καὶ νὰ παραμυθῇ νὰ χαρῶμεθα καὶ τὴν ἀγαθὴν ὑγείαν τῆς. Ἦς τὰ ἔτη εἶησαν παρὰ Θεῶ πολλὰ τε καὶ πανευδαίμονα. Αὐγούστου κζ'.

5. Undated [after September 1745], letter and *pittakion* of Sylvester of Antioch to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. In the *pittakion*, Sylvester mentions the need for books and explains that he has sent typographers to print books in Iași, where the printing press was located. MS 210 Ἡριζᾶ, f. 29r–29v.

Πρὸς τὸν αὐθέντην

Τὴν πανεσέβαστον καὶ πανέκλαμπρον αὐτῆς ἐπιστολὴν ἐδέχθημεν καὶ ἐχάρημεν λίαν τὴν μυριοπόθητον ὑγείαν τῆς, ἐξ ἧς ἔγνωμεν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἀγιώτατον ἡμῶν ἀποστολικὸν θρόνον, καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεφένδουσιν καὶ ὑπεράσπισιν, ἢ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν τὸν χριστιανικὸν καὶ διάπυρον ζῆλον τῆς, καὶ ὑπερευχαριστοῦμεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ δὲν ἔλλειψεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν οὐ μόνον ἀπὸ τοῦ νὰ μᾶς συστήνῃ καὶ νὰ στηρίξῃ δι' ἐκλάμπρων τῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ νὰ μᾶς παραμυθῇ ὡς φιλευσεβῆς καὶ χριστιανικωτάτη εἰς τὸν παρόντα καιρὸν ὁποῦ πλέον καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀτονίσαμεν καὶ δὲν εἶχομεν ποῦ μετὰ Θε(εὸ)ν προσδραμεῖν. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐξ ὄλης ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας τὴν εὐχῆθημεν εὐλογοῦντες τὴν τῆ χάριτη τοῦ Παναγίου καὶ Τελεταρχικοῦ Πν(εύματος) ς, ὡσάν ὁποῦ καὶ μᾶς ἐχαροποίησε καὶ ἐνεδυνάμωσεν ὡς ἐξηπορημένους λόγῳ τε καὶ ἔργῳ. Κύριος ὁ Θε(εὸς) διὰ πρεσβειῶν τοῦ Πρωτοκορυφαίου Ἀποστόλου Πέτρου νὰ τὴν στερώνῃ καὶ νὰ διαφυλάττῃ ἐκ παντὸς ἀνιανοῦ συναντήματος, ὑποτάττων ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας τῆς πάντα ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον, καὶ νὰ τὴν χαροποιῇ μέχρι γήρους βαθυτάτου καὶ λιπαροῦ, ἀνταποδίδωντάς τῆς τὴν βασιλείαν Του τὴν οὐ(ρά)νιον,

καὶ τὰ ἀνεκκλάλητα Αὐτοῦ ἀγαθὰ, ἐπεδὴ καὶ δὲν ἔχομεν ἄλλο τί ὑψηλότατε ἡμῶν αὐθέντα νὰ ἀνταποδώσωμεν τῇ θεοφρουρήτῳ αὐτῆς κορυφῇ παρὰ εὐχὰς ταπεινὰς καὶ εὐλογίας, καὶ πάντοτε νὰ δεώμεθα ἡμεῖς καὶ ὅλον μας τὸ ἐξηπορημένον καὶ φιλευσεβὲς ποίμνιον ὑπὲρ τῆς ἄκρας ὑγείας τῆς καὶ γαληνιαίας διαμονῆς. Ἐνεγχειρίσαμεν καὶ τὸ γράμμα πρὸς τοὺς εὐγενεστάτους αὐτῆς ἄρχοντας, καὶ ἄς ἔχουν τὴν εὐχὴν μας, δὲν θέλουν λείψει καὶ αὐτοὶ κατὰ τὴν προσταγὴν τῆς εἰς εἴτι χρεῖῶδες πρὸς σύστασιν ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου. Παρακαλοῦμεν ὁμως καὶ αὐθις νὰ μὴν μᾶς ἀπολείπουν τὰ πανέκλαμπρα τῆς νὰ χαρώμεθα καὶ τὴν ὑγείαν τῆς καὶ νὰ παραμυθούμεθα. Ὡσὰν ὁποῦ ξεχειμάζομεν ἐντεῦθεν διὰ κάθε μας κυβέρνησιν καὶ ἀνάγκην. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος.

Τὸ πιτάκιον.

Καὶ αὐθις τὴν ὑψηλότητά τῆς εὐχόμεθα

Ἡ μεγάλη ἀνάγκη, καὶ τὸ θαρρὸς μᾶς ἔκαμε νὰ γενοῦμεν αἰτηταὶ τοῦ εὐσπλαγχνικοῦ τῆς ἐλέους καθὼς ἐπροεγράψαμε, ἐπειδὴ ἐγνωρίζομεν καὶ τὰς ἀνάγκας τῆς ἐκλαμπροτάτης αὐθεντίας, καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν νὰ ἔχωμεν συγγνώμην ὑπερευχαριστοῦντες, καὶ ὁπότεν ὀρίζει καὶ ἀγαπᾷ ἄς μᾶς ἐνθυμηθῇ. Τῆς δηλοποιοῦμεν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ὅτι ἀπὸ τὸν θρόνον μᾶς γράφουν οἱ τε ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ λοιποὶ ὀρθόδοξοι, παρακαλοῦντες καὶ ζητοῦντες νὰ τοὺς τυπώσωμεν καὶ μερικὰ βιβλία ἀναγκαῖα τοῦ τε Νεκταρίου καὶ ἄλλα πρὸς ἀντιπαράταξιν τῶν ἐναντίων /f. 29v ἐπειδὴ καὶ νὰ ἐγέμισαν ὅλα ἐκεῖνα τὰ μέρη οἱ ἐπάρατοι βιβλία τῆς αὐτῶν αἰρέσεως, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐπέμψαμεν τοὺς τυπογράφους μας εἰς Γιάσιον ἐπειδὴ καὶ νὰ εἶχομεν ἐκεῖ τὴν τυπογραφίαν, δίδοντές τους καὶ χαρτίον καὶ μελάνην διὰ νὰ τυπώσουν, καὶ ἄμποτε νὰ εὐδοκιμήσουν διὰ νὰ γενῇ κανένα καλὸν εἰς ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἐξηπορημένον γένος. Ἡ δὲ εὐχὴ τῆς (...).

6. March 1, 1746, Sylvester to Constantine Mavrokordatos, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ἡριζᾶ, f. 34r.

Εὐσεβέστατε, ὑψηλότατε, καὶ φιλόχριστε αὐθέντα καὶ ἡγεμῶν μεγαλοπρεπέστατε πάσης Οὐγκροβλαχίας, κύριε κύριε Ἰωάννη Κωνσταντίνε Νικολάου βοεβόδα, υἱὲ κατὰ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ἀγαπητὲ περιπόθητε τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, χάρις καὶ ἔλεος εἴη σου τῇ ἐκκλάμπρῳ κορυφῇ ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Κυρίου Παντοκράτορος, παρ' ἡμῶν δὲ εὐχὴ εὐλογία καὶ συγχώρησις.

Τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ δεόμεθα νὰ τῆς χαρίζη ἄκραν ὑγείαν, εὐρωστίαν, καὶ πολυχρόνιον στερέωσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ὑψηλὸν θρόνον τῆς, ὑποτάττων ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας τῆς πάντα ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον. [Τὴν] πανέκλαμπρον καὶ πεφιλημένην τῆς ἐπιστολὴν ἐλάβομεν Φεβρουαρίου δεκάτῃ πρώτῃ γεγραμμένην, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς μαθόντες τὴν πολυέραστον ἡμῖν ὑγείαν τῆς ὑπερεχάρημεν. Ἐγνωμεν δὲ καὶ ὁποῦ μᾶς ἐπεύχεται νὰ διέλθωμεν καὶ τὸ στάδιον τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλῃς Τεσσαρακοστῆς, καὶ νὰ πανηγυρίσωμεν καὶ τὴν λαμπροφόραν Ἀνάστασιν τοῦ Κυρίου μας καὶ ὑπερευχαριστοῦμεν

ὑπερβαλλόντως, ὡσάν ὁποῦ ὄχι μόνον μᾶς ἐπεύχεται καὶ χαιρετᾶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶς παραμυθεῖ καὶ παραθαρρύνει, ὡς κατὰ Πν[εῦ]μα υἱὸς ἡμῶν περιπόθητος. Διὰ τοῦτο χρέος ἔχομεν ἀπαραίτητον νὰ παρακαλοῦμεν τὸν Θε(εὸ)ν ἀδιαλείπτως καθὼς πολλάκις ἐγράψαμεν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀγαθῆς αὐτῆς ὑγείας καὶ στερεώσεως διὰ νὰ ἔχομεν τὸ σκέπος καὶ διαφενδέειν της, ἔπειδὴ καὶ πολεμοῦμεθα ἀπὸ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς καὶ ἐναντίους τῆς Ἁγίας μας Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ ἐπαράτους Λατινόφρονας, οἱ ὅποιοι τὰ ὅσα νεωστὶ καθ' ἡμῶν πάλιν ἐπλεξαν τὰ προεγράψαμεν τῆς ὑψηλότητός της. Ὅθεν ἰδοὺ ὁποῦ στέλνομεν τουρκιστὶ τὸ ἴσον τοῦ γράμματος ὁποῦ ἔστειλλαν ἐντευθεν, διὰ νὰ καταλάβῃ σαφέστερον καὶ νὰ βεβαιωθῇ τὴν κακίαν καὶ ἀνυποταξίαν τους καὶ χάριτι θεῖα δὲν ἴσχυσαν, ἀλλ' ἐσκεπάσθησαν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος, ἔχομεν ὅμως τὴν ἔννοιαν μὴν τύχη μὲ δόσιν χρημάτων πολλῶν μετὰ ταῦτα ἤθελαν ὑπερισχύσει, καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν νὰ γράφῃ τὰ δέοντα καὶ πρὸς τοὺς εὐγενεστάτους ἄρχοντάς της, καὶ εἰς τοὺς λοιποὺς φίλους νὰ μᾶς ἐγνοιάζονται καὶ νὰ στέκωνται πρὸς διαφένδευσιν τῆς εὐσεβείας, καὶ θέλει εἶναι ὁ μισθὸς της πολὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐ(ρα)νοῖς. Εἶθε δε καὶ ἡ ὑψηλότης της νὰ διέλθῃ τὸ στάδιον τῆς Ἁγίας Τεσσαρακοστῆς θεοφιλῶς καὶ θεαρέστως καὶ νὰ πανηγυρίσῃ λαμπρῶς καὶ γηθοσύνως καὶ τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν. Τὰ δὲ ἔτη αὐτῆς εἶησαν παρὰ Θεῶ πολλὰ τε καὶ εὐδαίμονα. ,αψμς' Μαρτίου α' η'.

Τῆς ὑμετέρας ὑψηλότητος πρὸς Θε(εὸ)ν εὐχέτης διάπυρος.

7. July 25, 1746, Sylvester to Michael Rakovitzas. MS 210 Ἡριῶ, f. 35r:

Εὐσεβέστατε, ὑψηλότατε, καὶ χριστιανικότατε αὐθέντα κύριε κύριε Μιχαὴλ Ρακοβίτζα βοεβόδα, υἱὲ ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πν(εύματ)ι περιπόθητε τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, τὴν ὑμέτεραν ὑψηλότητα ἐν Κ(υρί)ῳ ἀσπαζόμενοι εὐχετικῶς προσαγορευόμεν.

Τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ δεόμενοι νὰ τῆς χαρίζῃ ὑγείαν εὐρωστίαν καὶ πᾶν ἐφετὸν καὶ σ(ωτή)ριον. Δὲν ἐγράψαμεν πρὸ πολλοῦ καιροῦ τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ ὑψηλότητι μὲ τὸ νὰ ἐπεριπέσαμεν καὶ ἡμᾶς εἰς μεγάλους κινδύνους καὶ διωγμοὺς ἀπὸ τοὺς ἐπαράτους Λατινόφρονας. Ἡ παράκλησίς της ὅμως δὲν ἔλειψεν ἀπὸ τὴν μνήμην μας ἐν ἑσπέρα καὶ πρωῖ καὶ μεσημβρία, ἔπειδὴ καὶ ἡ ἐκλαμπροτάτη κυρία δόμνα καὶ κατὰ Πν(εῦμ) α ἡμῶν θυγάτηρ δὲν ἔλειψεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νὰ μᾶς καλέσῃ ἀπαξ καὶ δις νὰ ἐκτελέσουμεν καὶ ἱεράς μυσταγωγίας ὑπὲρ ἐλέους, ζωῆς, εἰρήνης, ὑγείας ἀπολυτρώσεως αὐτῆς, καὶ ἄμποτε παρακαλοῦμεν Κ(ύρι)ον τὸν Θε(εὸ)ν νὰ εἶναι εὐπρόσδεκτος ἡ ταπεινὴ μας δέησις ὁποῦ σήμερον ἐκτελέσαμεν δι' αὐτὴν, ἵνα μᾶς ἀξιῶσῃ νὰ τὴν ἀπολάβωμεν εἰς τὸ ἐκλαμπρὸν της παλάτιον ὑγιᾶ καὶ καλοκαρδισμένην νὰ χαρόμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἔπειδὴ καὶ ἐγνωρίζει ὅτι ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὴν ἀγαποῦμεν καὶ τὴν εὐχόμεθα διὰ παντός. Παρακαλοῦμεν νὰ ἔχομεν καὶ ἐκλαμπρὸν της νὰ χαρόμεθα τὴν ὑγείαν της. Ἦς τὰ ἔτη εἶσαν παρὰ Θε(ε)ῶ πολλὰ τε καὶ πανευδαίμονα. Ἰουλίου κε' η', αψμς'.

8. November 20, 1749, Constantinople, Sylvester to Gregory II Ghikas, prince of Wallachia. MS 210 Ἡραῖσᾶ, f. 63v–64r.

Ἔτερον τοῦ Οὐγγροβλαχίας

Πρὸ ὀλίγων ἡμερῶν ἐγράψαμεν τῇ ὑμετέρα ὑψηλότητι φανερώοντές της τὰ καθ' ἡμῶν πάντα καὶ ὅτι οἱ ἐπάρατοι Χαλεπλίδες καὶ ἐχθροὶ τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας μὲ δόσιν χρημάτων πολλῶν ἐπῆραν ἄρζια πρῶτα καὶ δευτέρα ἐκ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος αὐτῶν κλαιόμενοι παρ' ἡμῶν εἰς βασιλείαν τὸ πῶς τοὺς κατατρέχομεν, ἀκόμι παρακαλοῦντες την νὰ ἀφήσῃ τὸν αἰρεσιάρχην αὐτῶν, τὸν ὁποῖον ἐχειροτόνησαν οἱ ἐκεῖσε Λατινόφρονες κακοαρχιερεῖς [in text κακοῖαρχιερεῖς], πλὴν ἡμεῖς χριστιανικώτατε αὐθέντα θεῷ ζήλω κινούμενοι διὰ νὰ μὴν ἀφήσωμεν νὰ συστήσῃ τὴν πλάνην τους, καὶ τὸν αἰρετικὸν ἀρχιερέα τους, μάλιστα νὰ συστήσωμεν τὸν ὀρθόδοξον ἀρχιερέα μας ὅπου ἐχειροτονήσαμεν, καὶ νὰ λυτρώσωμεν τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τὸν λαὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὅπου εὐρίσκεται μέσα εἰς Χαλέπιον ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν ὅπου τὸν τυρανοῦν καὶ βιαζοῦν νὰ ἀπαρνηθῇ τὴν πατρῶν εὐσέβειαν, καὶ νὰ ἀκολουθήσῃ τὸ παπικὸν δόγμα, ἐδράμαμεν μετὰ θερμῶν δακρῶν εἰς τὴν βοήθειαν καὶ ὑπεράσπισιν τῆς κραταιᾶς βασιλείας, φανερώοντες πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν ἀποστασίαν αὐτῶν συμβοηθοῦντος μας τοῦ τε παναγιωτάτου δεσπότη καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς Ἁγίας Συνόδου, δίδοντές μας ματζάριον καὶ φανερώοντες εἰς πλάτος τὴν ἀποστασίαν τους, διὸ καὶ χάριτι θεῷ εἰσηκούστημεν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἐκεῖνοι, καὶ ἐγράφησαν ὀρισμοὶ ἰσχυροὶ ζητοῦντες τινὰς τῶν ἐκεῖσε ἀρχόντων Λατινοφρόνων ἐξ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸ νὰ ἔλθουν νὰ παρασταθοῦν εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν ντιβάνιον καὶ εἰ μὲν καὶ εἶναι Ρωμαῖοι νὰ ἀθωωθοῦν, εἰ δὲ καὶ εἶναι Φράγγοι νὰ παιδευθοῦν, διορισθεῖς καὶ βασιλικὸς ἄνθρωπος νὰ πεμφθῇ ὁμοῦ εἰς Χαλέπιον διὰ νὰ συστήσῃ τὸν νεοχειροτόνητον Χαλεπίου, καὶ νὰ φέρῃ τὸν ἐκεῖσε αἰρεσιάρχην κακομάξιμον καὶ λοιποὺς κακοῖερεῖς καὶ λαικοὺς, ὅθεν καὶ ἐλάβομεν μεγάλην χαρὰν ἡμεῖς τε καὶ πάντες οἱ Χριστιανοὶ διὰ τὴν κατὰ τῶν αἰρετικῶν νίκην, οἵτινες ἤλπιζον ἐπὶ τῷ πλῆθει τοῦ πλοῦτου αὐτῶν καὶ πολυαριθμοῖς ταλάντοις, ἡμεῖς δὲ εἰς τὸν Θεόν, ὑψηλότατέ μου αὐθέντα καὶ εἰς τὴν βοήθειαν τῆς Μεγάλῃς Ἐκκλησίας. Μᾶς ἔτρεξαν ὁμως ἄσπρα ἱκανά, τὰ ὁποῖα συμποσοῦνται τὰ πρῶτα μὲ τὰ νέα ἐγγὺς τῶν εἴκοσι πούγγιων, νὰ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν χριστιανικώτατε αὐθέντα, καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην Χριστοῦ τρέχομεν ἐνθεν κάκεῖθεν ἀπὸ ἐκκλησίαν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ἀπὸ οἶκον εἰς οἶκον, μὲ ὄλον ὅπου εἴμεθα γηραῖοι καὶ ἀδύνατοι, νὰ λάβομεν ὀλίγην ἐλεημοσύνην νὰ ἀπαντήσωμεν τὸν κίνδυνον τῆς ἀγιωτάτης μας Ἐκκλησίας. Ὅμως δὲν προφθάνομεν, καὶ ἐπιφορτίσθημεν ὑπὲρ τὴν δύναμίν μας, ὅθεν προστρέχομεν μετὰ θερμῶν δακρῶν καὶ γονυκλιτῶς ζητοῦντες παρ' αὐτῆς βοήθειαν καὶ ἔλεος διὰ νὰ ἡμπορέσωμεν νὰ ἐλαφρωθῶμεν ὀλίγον, καὶ Κύριος οἶδεν ὅτι ἐντρεπώμεθα πῶς τῆς γράφομεν ζητοῦντες μὲ αὐθάδειαν ἔλεος, ὁμως ἢ ἀπαίτησις τῶν χρεοφειλετῶν μᾶς βιάζει νὰ δράμωμεν εἰς τὸ ἔλεος της, φοβούμενοι νὰ μὴν μᾶς γενῇ καμία /^{f.} 64 περιφρόνησις, γνωρίζοντες ἐξ αὐτῶν τινὰς σκληροῦς, καὶ ἡ χαρὰ μας μετατραπῇ

εις λύπην. Ναί παρακαλοῦμεν νὰ ἀνοίξη τὰ σπλάγγχνα αὐτῆς καὶ νὰ εἰσακούσῃ τῆς δεήσεώς μας καὶ θέλομεν δέεσθαι ἐνθέρμως τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ νὰ τῆς χαρίζη ὑγείαν, μακροημέρευσιν, εὐημερείαν καὶ καλὴν στερέωσιν. Καὶ ταῦτα ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος, τὰ δὲ ἔτη (...). Μαίω α΄.

9. Undated, Sylvester to Matthaios of Alexandria. Letter sent with Petros grammaticos of Tripoli. MS 210 Ἡρῆσᾶ, f. 94v–95r.

Γράμμα πρὸς τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας ὁποῦ ἐστείλαμε μὲ τὸν Πέτρον γραμματικόν

Μακαριώτατε καὶ ἀγιώτατε πάπα καὶ πατριάρχα τῆς μεγάλης πόλεως Ἀλεξανδρείας, καὶ πάσης γῆς Αἰγύπτου, κύριε κύρ Ματθαίε, ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ ὦ ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφὲ καὶ συλλειτουργῆ περιπόθητε τῆς ὑμῶν μετριότητος. Τὴν ἡμετέραν μακαριότητα ἀδελφικῶς ἐν Κ(υρίῳ) ἀσπαζόμενοι, ἡδέως καὶ προσφιλῶς προσαγορεύομεν. Δέομενοι τὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν τριημέρῳ ἀναβιώσει ἀναστάντος Χ(ριστο)ῦ τοῦ Θε(ο)ῦ ἡμῶν, νὰ τὴν διαφυλάττῃ ἐν ἄκρα ὑγείᾳ καὶ διηνεκεῖ εὐημερίᾳ μετὰ μακροβιότητος καὶ ἐπιτυχίας τῶν ἐφετῶν καὶ καταθυμιῶν. Τὸ ἀδελφικὸν γράμμα τῆς μακαριότητός της ἐλάβομεν, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ μαθόντες τὴν ἐφετὴν ἡμῖν ὑγείαν της λῖαν ὑπερεχάρημεν, ἔγνωμεν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ γεγραμμένα, καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἔτυχε νὰ πέμπομεν αὐτόθι εἰς Αἴγυπτον τὸν ἡμέτερον γραμματικὸν Πέτρον Τριπολίτην, δὲν ἐλείψαμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νὰ δώσωμεν μὲ τὸ παρὸν τοὺς ἀδελφικοὺς ἀσπασμοὺς τῇ αὐτῆς μακαριότητι, καὶ πρῶτον μὲν νὰ τὴν χαιρετήσομεν διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν κυριώνυμον ἑορτὴν τοῦ Ἁγίου Πάσχα καὶ τῆς δεσποτικῆς τοῦ Κ(υρίου) ἡμῶν Ἀνασταστάσεως, παρακαλοῦντες καὶ δεόμενοι νὰ τὴν ἀξιώσῃ ὁ Ἅγιος Θε(ο)ς νὰ ἑορτάζῃ φαιδρῶς καὶ χαρμοσύνως αὐτὰς τὰς πανσέπτους ἡμέρας, καὶ ἐφέτος καὶ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ εἰς πολλὰς ἡλίου κυκλοφορίας μὲ πνευματικὴν ἀγαλλίασιν τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου ποιμνίου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου π(ατ)ριαρχικοῦ καὶ ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου αὐτῆς, δεύτερον δὲ νὰ τὴν φανερώσωμεν / ὅτι ἡ κατάστασις τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγιωτάτου π(ατ)ριαρχικοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῆς μ(ητ)ροπόλεως Χαλεπίου, θείω ἐλέει καὶ εὐδοκίᾳ καὶ χάριτι τοῦ φιλαγάθου Θεοῦ ἔλαβαν τὴν πρέπουσαν διόρθωσιν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ διὰ κραταιοτάτου βασιλικοῦ ὀρισμοῦ ὁ μὲν παράνομος τοῦ Χαλεπίου κακομάξιμος ἐξώσθη καὶ ἀπεβλήθη παντελῶς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἡ δὲ μ(ητ)ρόπολις Χαλεπίου ὑπετάγη καὶ συνηνώθη τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς π(ατ)ριαρχικῷ θρόνῳ, διὰ προσπαθήσεως καὶ συνδρομῆς τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ συναδελφοῦ ἡμῶν παναγιω(τά)του καὶ οἰκουμενικοῦ π(ατ)ριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, καὶ ὄλης τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου, καὶ τοῦ εὐαγοῦς κλήρου καὶ κοινῆ ψήφῳ καὶ γνώμῃ ἀπάντων ἐξελέξαμεν καὶ ἀποκατεστήσαμεν μ(ητ)ροπολίτης Χαλεπίου τὸν ἱερώτατον μ(ητ)ροπολίτην Πτολεμαῖδος κύρ Σωφρόνιον λόγῳ μεταθέσεως, ὅσῳ ὁποῦ ἦτον καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐδικὸς μας, καὶ προκωμῆτος, καὶ ἄξιος διὰ νὰ ποιμάνῃ καὶ νὰ κυβερνήσῃ τὸ ἐκεῖσε τεταραγμένον τῶν Χριστιανῶν ποιμνιον. Καὶ ἄμποτες ἡ χάρις τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ δι' εὐχῶν τῆς μακαριότητος της νὰ εὐοδόσῃ τὰ πράγματα μὲ τέλος ἀγαθὸν καὶ σωτήριον ὅμως πολλὰ ἐκοπιᾶσαμεν, ἀφ' οὗ ἤλθομεν ἀπὸ Βλαχίαν εἰς Βασιλεύουσαν, καὶ

ἔξοδα ὑπερβολικὰ μᾶς ἠκολούθησαν ἐξ αἰτίας τῆς ἐπαρχίας ταύτης, διὰ νὰ μὴν τὴν ἀφήσωμεν ἀπρονόητον, καὶ σχεδὸν αἰχμάλωτον εἰς τὰς χεῖρας τῶν μιαρῶν Λατινοφρόνων, ἐπειδὴ καὶ οἱ περισσότεροι Χριστιανοὶ τῆς ἐπαρχίας ταύτης εἶναι Ὅρθόδοξοι, παρέξ οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀρχόντων ἐκλινον εἰς τὴν αἵρεσιν τοῦ παπισμοῦ σὺν τοῖς μιαιοῖς αὐτῶν ἱερεῦσι, καὶ οἱ ἐπάρατοι ἐπιπόνως ἀγωνίζονται διὰ νὰ κρατήσουν τὴν ἐπαρχίαν, καὶ νὰ στερεώσουν τὸν παπισμόν, ἐφέτο ἀφ' οὗ τὴν ἀπηλλάξαμεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν, πάλιν τὸν Αὐγουστον μετὰ δόσεως πολλῶν ἄσπρον τὴν ἀπεξένωσαν τοῦ θρόνου, τὰ νῦν δὲ θεῖω ἐλέει ἐλπίζομεν νὰ μὴν ἰσχύσουν πλέον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ κοινῇ γνώμῃ τῆς συνόδου ἔγινεν ἡ ἀπόσπασίς της καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πτολεμαῖδος μετάθεσις εἰς αὐτὴν. Βλέποντες δὲ τὸν ἑμαυτὸν μας βεβουθισμένον εἰς τὸ ὑπερβολικὸν χρέος, μᾶς ἐφάνη εὐλογον νὰ πέμψωμεν πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἐπαρχίωτας μας ἐντίμους πραγματευτὰς παρακινουῦντές τους νὰ βοηθήσουν τὸν ἀγιώ[τα]τόν μας θρόνον εἰς τὴν ἀνάγκην του, ἐπειδὴ καὶ οἱ ἐν Ἀράβια ἀπὸ συχνὰς ἀδικίας τῶν ἡγεμόνων τελείως ἠφανίσθησαν, ἐπέμψαμεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ζητοῦντες βοήθειαν, καὶ ἀντὶς νὰ μᾶς παρηγορήσουν μᾶς ἐπίκραναν ἐκτραγωδόντες μας τὰς δυστυχίας αὐτῶν, μάλιστα οἱ τῆς Τριπόλεως. Γένοιτο ἡμῖν καὶ αὐτοῖς ἴλεως ὁ Κ[ύριος]. Ὅθεν παρακαλοῦμεν τὴν σὴν ἀδελφότητα νὰ τὸν δεχθῆ φιλοφρόνως ὡς ἡμετέρον πρόσωπον καὶ πν[ευματι]κὸν μας τέκνον, καὶ νὰ προστάξῃ τοὺς πραγματευτὰς νὰ ποιήσουν ὡς γράφομεν, διὰ νὰ ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τάχιον, μὲ πλουσιοπάροχον βοήθειαν, διὰ νὰ ἀποδώσωμεν τῶν χρεοφιλετῶν ἐκάστῳ τὸ δίκαιον, καὶ νὰ κατεβοῦμεν εἰς τὸν ἀγιωτάτον μας θρόνον καὶ θέλομεν τῆς γνωρίσει εἰς τοῦτο μεγάλην χάριν. Τὰ ἀράβικα βιβλία ὅπου τῆς ἐπέμψαμεν καθὼς ὑπολαμβάνομεν νὰ τὰ ἔλαβαν οἱ μιαιοὶ Λατινόφρωνες, καὶ νὰ τὰ ἔκαψαν, πλὴν ἐπαρραγγεῖλαμεν τὸν γραμματικὸν μας ἐρχόμενος ἐκεῖ ὁ καπιτάνος νὰ τὸν πιάσῃ καὶ νὰ μάθῃ ἐξ αὐτοῦ εἰς ποῖον πραγματευτὴν τὰ ἔδωκε, τὸν ὅποιον ἐξετάζοντάς τον ἡ μακαριότης της τί τὰ ἔκαμεν, καὶ εἰ μὲν τὰ ἔχει κρυμμένα θέλει τὰ δώσει, εἰ δὲ τὰ ἔκαψεν θέλει τὸν παιδεύσει μὲ τὴν κρίσιν. Ἐπέμψαμεν εἰς Ἀράβιαν νὰ στείλουν ἄλλα καὶ νὰ μοιρασθοῦν ἀντὶς ἐκεῖνα ὅπου ἐχάθησαν εἰς τοὺς πρατευτὰς.

10. Recipe for a typographic alloy. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 103v.

Μίγμα τῶν χαρακτήρων

Μολίβι λίτραις	ἐκατόν
Ἀντιμόνιον λίτραις	δέκα
Χάλκωμα λίτραις	τέσσαρες

11. Preparation of the typographic ink. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 103v.

Κατασκευὴ τῆς μελάνης τῶν τυπογράφων

Λινόλαδον λίτραις	ἐκατόν εἰκοσι
Βερνίκι λίτραις	σαράντα

Βάλε τα ὁμοῦ εἰς σκεῦος χάλκινον ἀπάνω εἰς τὴν φωτίαν, ἄφησέ τα νὰ βράσουν ὡς τρία τέταρτα τῆς ὥρας ἢ καὶ μίαν ὥραν δοκιμάζωντάς το συχνὰ μὲ τὰ δύο σου δάχτυλα, ἀνίσως καὶ [μετροῦν, deleted in text] κολνοῦν μετρίως, καὶ ἀνακατώνωντάς τα συχνὰ πρόσεχε νὰ μὴν ἀνάψη, καὶ ὅταν ἔλθῃ εἰς ἰκανὴν σύστασιν κολιτικὴν κατέβασέ το ἀπὸ τὴν φωτίαν, ἀφίνωντάς το νὰ κριώσῃ ἕως οὗ νὰ μείνῃ χλυαρὸν, ἐπίχεε τὸν νεγροφοῦμον, ἤγουν τὴν καπνίαν, λίτραις πενήντα, καὶ ἀφ' οὗ ἐπιχῆσης ὅλον, ἀκολοῦθως ἀνακάτωσαί την, ἰκανὴν ὥραν, διότι, ὅσον περισσότερον ἀνακατωθῇ, τόσον γίνεται καλλίτερη. Πρόσεχε ἀκόμη ὅταν ἀνακατώσης τὸν νεγροφοῦμον νὰ μὴν καίῃ τὸ λάδι, ὅτι καίεται καὶ τὸ νεγροφοῦμον, καὶ δὲν γίνεται καλὴ ἢ μελάνη.

Τίνες βάλουσι λινόλαδον μόνον, καὶ ἀνάπτωντές το τὸ ἀφίνου νὰ καίῃ, ἕως οὗ νὰ ἔλθῃ εἰς μετρίαν σύστασιν, καὶ οὕτω γίνεται ἓνα εἶδος βερνίκης, καὶ χωρὶς νὰ προσθέτουσιν ἄλλην βερνίκην εἰς αὐτὸ βάνουσι τὸ νεγροφοῦμον, καὶ κάμνουσι τὴν μελάνην, ὥστε μὲ λινόλαδον μόνον ψημένον, χωρὶς βερνίκην, γίνεται μελάνη, ἀμὴ μὲ βερνίκην χωρὶς λινόλαδον δὲν γίνεται.

Εἰς τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον βράζωντας τὸ λινόλαδον, ἀνακάτωσαι κινάβαρην, καὶ γίνεται ἡ κόκκινη μελάνη.

12. Another recipe for typographic ink. MS 210 Ἡαῖῖῖῖ, f. 103v–104r.

Ἄλλος

Βάλε τὸ λάδι εἰς τὴν φωτίαν ἕως νὰ ζεσταθῇ καλὰ, ὁποῦ νὰ ἀρχίσῃ νὰ βράσῃ καὶ τότε ἀνάπτωντάς το μὲ ἓνα δαβλὶ νὰ κάμῃ φλόγα, κατέβασαί το ἀπὸ τὴν φωτίαν ἀφίνωντάς το νὰ ἀνάψη ὡς ἓνα τέταρτον τῆς ὥρας, ἢ καὶ περισσότερον δοκιμάζωντάς το συχνάκις εἰς τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον, βάψε ἓνα ξύλον καὶ στάλαξέ το εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἢ κάλλιον ἀπάνω εἰς μίαν πέτραν, καὶ ἀφ' οὗ κριώσῃ ὀλίγον, ἄλειψε τὴν ἄκρην τοῦ δακτύλου, καὶ τρίψε το μὲ τὸν ἀντίχειρα, ἕως οὗ / f. 104 νὰ ἰδῆς πῶς κολνᾷ ὀλίγον, κρατῶντας μάλιστα τὸ δάκτυλον εἰς τὸ ἀφτὶ πρόσεχε ἂν τρίζῃ, ὅταν ἀνοιγοσφαλῆς τὸν δάκτυλον, ὅτι πριχοῦ νὰ καῖ, γλυστρᾷ καθὼς κάθε λάδι. εἶτα σκεπάζωντας διὰ νὰ σβύσῃ ἄφησαί το νὰ κρυώσῃ, καὶ τότε πέρνωντας ἀπὸ τὸ νεγροφοῦμον βάλε ἀπάνω εἰς τὸ μάρμαρον, καὶ τρίβωντάς το ὀλίγον, χύσε ἀπὸ τὸ βρασμένον λάδι, καὶ ἀνακάτωσέ το νὰ γένη σὰν συροῦπι, καὶ πάλιν τρίψε το καλὰ, ὡς μισὴν ὥραν, ἕως ὁποῦ νὰ τὸ ἰδῆς τραβῶντας το μὲ τὸ τριφτῆρι, πῶς μένει ἴσον χωρὶς νὰ ἔχῃ ἀνισότης, καὶ τότε εἶναι τελειομένον. Ὅμως ὅταν εἶναι χρεια νὰ τυπωθοῦν φυγοῦραις καλαῖς ἄς ψηθῇ τὸ λάδι κάτι τι περισσότερον, διὰ νὰ γένη πυκτότερον καὶ ὅταν βαλθῇ ἡ μελάνη ἀπάνω εἰς τὸ χάλκωμα, πρέπει νὰ εἶναι ὑποκάτω κάρβουνα ἀναμένα διὰ νὰ ζεσταθῇ τὸ χάλκωμα.

13. Recipe for black pigment. MS 210 Ἡραῖσᾶ, f. 104r.

Τὸ νεγροφοῦμο γίνεται εἰς ἐτοῦτον τὸν τρόπον

Ἐπαρε τὴν τρύγα τοῦ μουσχάτου κρασίου, καὶ κάμνωντας κομμάτια βάλε τα νὰ στεγώσουν εἰς τὸν ἥλιον. Εἶτα βάλε τα εἰς τὴν φωτίαν νὰ καοῦν, καὶ ὅταν γένουν ὡσὰν κάρβουνα ρίξε τα μέσα εἰς τὸ νερὸν, καὶ ὅταν κατακαθίσουν χύσε τὸ νερὸ, τὸ δὲ καταλειφθὲν βάλε νὰ στεγνώσῃ καλὰ, καὶ τρίβωντάς τα πέρασέ το ἀπὸ τὴν σίταν ἀπάνω εἰς σκεῦος μὲ νερὸ, καὶ ἀφ' οὗ κατακάθισῃ ἔπαρέ το μὲ τὸ χουλιάρι καὶ ἀπλωσαί το ἄπάνω εἰς σανίδι νὰ στεγνώσῃ, καὶ οὕτω γίνεται τὸ νεγροφοῦμο. Οἱ τυπογράφοι ὁμῶς τὸ κάνουν ἀπὸ ῥέζινι καίοντές το συνάγουσι τὸν καπνὸν, μεταχειρίζοντας τινὲς καὶ κόκαλα ζῶων, τὰ ὅποια καίοντες τὰ ἀνακατώνουσι μὲ τὴν τρύγα. Καλύτερα ὁμῶς εἶ τὰ κουκουτῆζια ῥοδακίνων, καὶ πλέον ἀξιότερον ἀπ' ὅλα ὁ καπνὸς ἀπὸ δαδί.

14. December 16, 1749, Constantinople, Sylvester to Patriarch Parthenios of Jerusalem. MS 210 Ἡραῖσᾶ, f. 112r.

Μακαριώτατε καὶ ἀγιώτατε π(ατ)ριάρχα τῆς Ἁγίας πόλεως Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ πάσης Παλαιστίνης, κύριε κύριε Παρθένιε ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πιν(εύματι) ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφὲ καὶ συλλειτουργγὲ τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, τὴν ὑμετέραν μακαριότητα ἀδελφικῶς ἀσπάζομενοι, ἡδέως προσαγορεύομεν. Ἄπαξ καὶ δις ἐγράψαμεν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ μακαριότητι, καὶ τώρα πάλιν ἔχοντες λαβὴν τὴν ἐγγίζουσαν σεβάσμιον καὶ δεσποτικὴν ἐορτὴν τῆς κατὰ σάρκα Γεννήσεως τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χ(ριστοῦ), τοῦ νέου ἔτους, καὶ τῶν Ἁγίων Αὐτοῦ Θεοφανείων, δὲν ἐλλείψαμεν νὰ ἀποδώσωμεν τὸν ἀδελφικὸν ἀσπασμὸν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ μακαριότητι, χαιρετοῦντες καὶ παρακαλοῦντες τὸν ἐν σπηλαίῳ τεχθέντα Κύριον νὰ τὴν ἀξίωσῃ νὰ ἐορτάσῃ καὶ νὰ πανηγυρίσῃ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ καὶ ἀγαλλιάσει ἐφέτος, καὶ καθεξῆς εἰς ἄλλα ἔτη ἐπιμήκιστα μετὰ πάντων τῶν λοιπῶν ἐφετῶν. Εἰ βούλει μαθεῖν καὶ τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν ἢ ὑμετέρα μακαριότης, λίαν ἔχωσιν ἀλγεινῶς διὰ τὰ ἐπακολουθήσαντα νέα κακοεπιχειρήματα τῶν ἐπαράτων Λατινοφρόνων Χαλεπλίδων, οἵτινες καὶ δὲν ἔπαυσαν ἐκ τῆς προτέραν αὐτῶν κακίας, ἀλλὰ μὲ δύναμιν ταλάντων πολλῶν ἀπέσπασαν τὸ Χαλέπιον ἐκ τοῦ Ἀποστολικοῦ ἡμῶν θρόνου, συστήνοντες τὸν ὁμόφρονά τους κακομάξιμον, καὶ κατατρέχοντες καὶ διώκοντες τοὺς εὐσεβεῖς καὶ ὀρθοδόξους Χριστιανούς, διὰ τοὺς ὁποίους καὶ πάλιν πάσχομεν ὅσον τὸ ἐφικτὸν νὰ λυτρώσωμεν ἐκ τῆς τυραννίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ νὰ φυλάξωμεν τὸ ἐμπιστευθὲν ἡμῖν λογικὸν ποιμνιον, καὶ ἄμποτε Κ(ύριος) ὁ Θε(εὸς) δι'εὐχῶν τῆς μακαριότητός της νὰ ἐξομαλίσῃ πάντα τὰ δυσχερῆ, καὶ νὰ λυτρώσῃ τὴν Ἁγίαν Αὐτοῦ Ἐκκλησίαν ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν τους, ἐνισχύων ἡμᾶς καὶ καθοπλίζων τῇ πανελκεστάτῳ Αὐτοῦ χειρί. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος, ἃς ἔχωμεν δὲ καὶ ἀδελφικὸν της νὰ μάθωμεν τὰ περὶ τῆς ἐφετῆς ἡμῖν ὑγείας της. Τῆς φανερώνομε δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν τυπογραφίαν, ὅτι τὴν τελειώσαμεν καὶ ἐδιορθώσαμεν καὶ ἐκαλλωπίσαμεν, ἔχοντες σκοπὸς σὺν Θεῷ νὰ τὴν ἀποκαταστήσωμεν εἰς τὸν ἀποστολικὸν θρόνον μας, καὶ ἐλπίζομεν νὰ γενῆ κάποιον πολὺ ὄφελος, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὅπου τῆς στέλνωμεν καὶ

τυπώματα διὰ νὰ τὰ στοχασθῆ, ἐπειδὴ γνωρίζομαστε ὅτι τὸ χαίρεται. Τὰ δὲ ἔτη αὐτῆς εἶψαν παρὰ Θεοῦ πολλά τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ. ,αψμθ' Δεκεμβρίου ις' ἠ, ἀπὸ Βασιλεύουσαν.

15. December 16, 1749, [Constantinople], Sylvester to Patriarch Matthaios of Alexandria. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 112v.

Μακαριώ(τα)τε, ἀγιώ(τα)τε πάπα καὶ π(ατ)ριάρχα τῆς μεγάλης πόλεως Ἀλεξανδρείας κριτὰ τῆς οἰκουμένης καὶ πάσης γῆς Αἰγύπτου, κύριε κύριε Ματθαίε, ἐν Ἀγίῳ Πν(εύματι) ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφὲ καὶ συλλειτουργῆ τῆς ὑμῶν μετριότητος, τὴν ἡμετέραν μακαριότητα ἀδελφικῶς ἀσπαζόμενοι ἠδέως προσαγορεύομεν. Με δύο μας γράμματα προκαιροῦ ἠσπάσθημεν ἀδελφικῶς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀδελφότητα δηλοποιούντες τῆς τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐόδοσιν μας εἰς Βασιλεύουσαν πέμποντάς τῆς καὶ ἐν σεντούκιον ἐκ τῶν ἀραβικῶν βιβλίων τοῦ κύρ Εὐστρατίου καὶ ἄλλων κατὰ τὸν κατάλογον ὅπου εἶχομεν μέσα διαχειρὸς τοῦ κύρ Χουρμούζη πραγματευτοῦ Ροδίου, διὰ τὰ ὅποια δὲν μας ἀποκρίθη ἡ μακαριότης τῆς ἂν τὰ ἔλαβε. Νῦν δὲ πάλιν με τὸ νὰ ἔρχεται ὁ ἡμέτερος γραμματικὸς κύρ Πέτρος εἰς Ταμιάθιον πρὸς ἀπόλαυσιν τῶν συγγενῶν του, δὲν εἰλείψαμεν γράφοντες καὶ τρίτην φοράν, πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν μακαριότητα, χαιρετοῦντες τὴν, καὶ προσαγορεύοντες, ἀπποδίδοντές τῆς καὶ τὰς ἐλευσομένας δεσποτικὰς ἀγίας ἑορτὰς τῆς κατὰ σάρκα γεννήσεως τοῦ Κ(ύριου) μας, τοῦ νέου ἔτους, καὶ τῶν Ἀγίων Του Θεοφανείων, παρακαλοῦντες Τὸν ἐν σηλαίῳ τεχθέντα Κ(ύριον) νὰ καταξιώσῃ καὶ τὴν μακαριότητά τῆς νὰ ἐορτάσῃ καὶ ἐφέτω καὶ εἰς ἄλλα πολλὰ ἔτη ἐπιμήκηστα με ὑγείαν εὐφροσύνην, καὶ χαρὰν ἐπὶ τὸν ἀποστολικὸν θρόνον καὶ ἀγιωτάτον θρόνον τῆς, γράφομεν δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ἐρισκομένους ὀρθοδόξους τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου, εὐχόμενοι εὐλογοῦντες τοὺς πέμποντες τοὺς καὶ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν βιβλίων ὅπου ἔτυπώσαμεν, παρακινούντες τοὺς νὰ βοηθήσουν καὶ αὐτοὶ διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν τυπογραφίαν ἐπειδὴ καὶ μᾶς ἠκολούθησαν πολλὰ καὶ βαρῦτατα ἔξωδα, τὴν ὁποίαν καὶ ἐσυκώσαμε ἀπὸ Βλαχίαν, ἔχοντες σκοπὸν νὰ τὴν συστήσωμεν εἰς τὸν ἀποστολικὸν μας θρόνον, καὶ διορθώσαμε βάζοντες τὴν εἰς τάξιν καλὴν καὶ θέσιν τριῶν τύπων, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὅπου τῆς πέμπομεν καὶ τυπώματα διὰ νὰ τὰ στοχασθῆ καὶ ἡ μακαριότης τῆς, καὶ ἂν ἀγαπᾷ νὰ τυπώσῃ κανένα βιβλίον νὰ μᾶς γράψῃ καὶ ἄς μᾶς τὸ πέμψῃ νὰ βαλθῆ εἰς τύπον. Τὰ καθ' ἡμῶν δὲ εἰ βούλει μαθεῖν, πάσχομεν λίαν παρὰ τῶν ἐπαράτων Χαλεπλίδων οἱ ὅποιοι καὶ πάλιν διὰ τὴν δόσιν τῶν πολλῶν τοὺς χρημάτων ἀπέσπασαν τὸ Χαλέπιον, καὶ κατατρέχουν τοὺς ὀρθοδόξους βιάζοντάς τοὺς εἰς τὴν πεπλανημένην τοὺς πλάνην, πλὴν θαρρόμεν εἰς τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Θε(ο)ῦ ὅτι δὲν θέλουν ὑπερισχύσει, ὡς διώκται τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ἀπατεῶνες, ὅθεν ἐμποδίσθημεν εἰς βασιλεύουσαν καὶ τὸν παρόντα χειμῶνα, καὶ δυνατὸς ὁ Κ(ύριος), νὰ βοηθήσῃ καὶ ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν Ἀγίαν Του Ἐκκλησίαν. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος. Ἄς ἔχομεν δὲ καὶ ἀδελφικὸν τῆς νὰ μάθομεν τὰ περὶ ἐφετῆς ὑγείας τῆς. Ἦς καὶ τὰ ἔτη εἶψαν παρὰ Θε(ο)ῦ πολλά τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ. ,αψμθ' Δεκεμβρίου ις' ἠ.

16. Letter of Patriarch Sylvester to the ambassador of the Russian Empire, Adrian (Andrianos) Nepluev, March 12, 1750 [Constantinople]. MS 210 Ḥarīṣā, f. 114v.

Τῷ ἐξοχωτάτῳ πρέσβει τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς μεγαλειότητος πάσης Ρωσίας, κυρίῳ κυρίῳ Ἀνδριάνῳ Νεπ[λιουέ]φ, υἱῷ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀγαπητῷ καὶ περιποθῆτῳ τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, ταῖς ἀπὸ βάθῃ καρδίας, καὶ ὀλοψύχους πατρικὰς καὶ πνευματικὰς εὐχὰς καὶ εὐλογίας φιλοστόργως προσφέροντες, δεόμεθα τοῦ τῶν ὅλων Θεοῦ τοῦ διαφυλάττειν τὴν αὐτῆς ἐξοχότητητα ἐν ἄκρα ὑγείᾳ καὶ διηνεκεῖ εὐημερίᾳ.

Μὲ τὸ νὰ ἐπληροφορήθῃμεν καλῶς καὶ βεβαίως τὴν ἄκραν θεοσέβειαν, καὶ τὴν ὑπερβολικὴν εὐλάβειαν καὶ τὸν ἐνθεον ζῆλον τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐξοχότητος, ὅπου ἔχει εἰς τὸ χριστιανικώτατον καὶ ἀγιώτατον σέβας τῆς ὀρθοδόξου ἡμῶν πίστεως τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὡς τέκνον αὐτῆς γνησιώτατον, ἐπαρακινήθῃμεν μὲ θάρρος τῆς πατρικῆς καὶ πνευματικῆς ἀγάπης, πρῶτον μὲν νὰ ἀποδώσωμεν αὐτῇ κατὰ τὸ ἀπαραίτητον χρέος ἡμῶν, τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πνευματικὰς εὐχὰς καὶ εὐλογίας καὶ νὰ τὴν εὐχηθῶμεν ἀπὸ βάθους ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας ὡς υἱὸν ἡμῶν ἐν Πνεύματι περιπόθητον, δεύτερον δὲ νὰ προσφέρωμεν εἰς αὐτὴν καὶ τὴν πατρικὴν ἡμῶν δέησιν καὶ παράκλησιν, τὴν ὁποίαν δὲν ἀμφιβάλλομεν ὅτι θέλει γενῆ εὐπρόσδεκτος εἰς τὴν θεοσεβεστάτην αὐτῆς ψυχὴν, καὶ περὶ τὰ θεῖα εὐλαβεστάτην προαίρεσιν, μὲ τὸ νὰ ἀποβλέπῃ τὸ παρακαλεστικὸν ἡμῶν ζήτημα τοῦτο εἰς τὴν σύστασιν καὶ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ στερέωσιν τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγιωτάτου ἀποστολικοῦ καὶ πατριαρχικοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας, ὁ ὁποῖος ἂν καλὰ καὶ νὰ ἐχρημάτισε ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ' ἀρχῆς ἐπισημώτατος τῇ ἀρχαιότητι καὶ ἀγιότητι ἐξ' αὐτῆς τῆς πρώτης χριστιανικῆς προκατάρξεως, ἐπειδὴ καὶ καθὼς μανθάνομεν ἐξ' αὐτῶν τῶν θείων λογίων ἐστάθη ἡ πρώτη καθέδρα τοῦ Πρωτοκορυφαίου τῶν Ἀποστόλων Πέτρου, καὶ πρῶτον εἰς αὐτὸν ἐξεφωνήθη καὶ ὠνομάσθη τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ, μὲ ὄλον τοῦτο δὲν ἔλειψε πώποτε κατὰ καιροὺς ὁ χαιρέκακος καὶ μισόχριστος δαίμων νὰ διεγείρῃ πολέμους καὶ καταδρομὰς εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν ἀγιώτατον θρόνον. Καὶ ἀφήνοντες νὰ διηγούμεθα τὰ παλαιὰ ὡσὰν εἶναι γνωστὰ καὶ εἰς τὴν θεοσεβεστάτην αὐτῆς σύνεσιν, ἀρκούσι τὰ μεταγενέστερα τὰ μετὰ τὴν ἄλωσιν καὶ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον τῆς δουλείας τοῦ ζυγοῦ ὅπου εὐρισκόμεθα συμβάντα, ὅσα καὶ οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν ἀγιώτατοι πατριάρχαι τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου θρόνου, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰσλετι ἐπάθομεν καὶ πάσχομεν, τὰ ὅποια εἶναι σχεδὸν ἀριθμῶ ἀπερίληπτα. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲν εἶναι θαυμαστόν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ κατὰ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀνάγκη ἐστὶ τὰ σκάνδαλα γίνεσθαι, καὶ οἱ εὐσεβεῖς νὰ διώκωνται καὶ νὰ ταλαιποροῦνται μεγάλως οἱ ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀγωνιζόμενοι προεστῶτες. Ἡ γὰρ δύναμίς Μου, λέγει ὁ Δεσπότης Χριστὸς μὲ τὸ στόμα τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου ἐν εὐσεβείᾳ τελειοῦται. Δὲν ἀμφιβάλλομεν ὅτι γνωρίζει καλῶς ἡ ἐξοχότης τῆς πόσον διωγμὸν καὶ πόσους ἀλλεπαλλήλους καταδρομὰς ὑπέμενεν καὶ ὑπομένει συνεχῶς ὁ ἀγιώτατος θρόνος οὗτος ἀπὸ τὸν παπισμὸν, καὶ τοὺς ἑτεροδόξους Λατίνους, οἱ ὁποῖοι εὐρίσκοντές μας ἀδυνάτους, καὶ ὑπὸ τὸν ζυγὸν τῆς δουλείας, μυρίας ἐπιβολὰς τεχνεῦνται καθ'

ἡμῶν, ποτὲ μὲν διαφθείροντες τοὺς Ὀρθοδόξους μὲ τὰς πεπλανημένας διδασκαλίας αὐτῶν, ποτὲ δὲ μὲ δύναμιν χρημάτων ἀποσπῶνται ἀπὸ τὸν θρόνον τὰς ἐπαρχίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ διώκοντες τοὺς ὀρθοδόξους ἀρχιερεῖς, καὶ ἀντεισάγοντες τοὺς ὁμόφρονας αὐτῶν Λατίνους, καὶ ἂν καλὰ εἰς ὄλον τὸ ὕστερον τῇ δυνάμει καὶ χάριτι τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀνατρέπονται καὶ διαλύονται αἱ κακομηχαναίαι καὶ ἐπιβουλαὶ αὐτῶν, καθὼς καὶ τώρα προσεχῶς ἐσυνέβη εἰς τὸ Χαλέπιον, τὸ ὁποῖον ἀφ' οὐ ἅπαξ καὶ δις ἀπέσπασαν ἀπὸ τὸν ἀγιώτατον ἡμῶν θρόνον, πάλιν εὐστοκία Θεοῦ τὸ ἀνελάβομεν καὶ τὸ ὑπετάξαμεν ὡς καὶ πρότερον εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγιώτατον μᾶς θρόνον καθὼς θέλει βεβαιωθῆ ἀπὸ τὰ ἔγγραφα τῶν βασιλικῶν ὀρισμῶν ὅπου θείῳ ἔλεει μας ἐδόθησαν τώρα διὰ τῆς καλῆς συνδρομῆς, καὶ κοινῆς ἀναφορᾶς καὶ παρακλήσεως τοῦ παναγιωτάτου συναδελφοῦ καὶ οἰκουμενικοῦ πατριάρχου, καὶ ὄλης τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου ὅπου ἔκαμαν εἰς τὴν κραταιὰν βασιλείαν, μὲ ζημίαν ὅμως βαρυτάτην καὶ μεγαλωτάτην δαπανημάτων πολλῶν, ἐπειδὴ σχεδὸν ἀπὸ πέρισυ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἐπιφορτίσθημεν ἡμεῖς τε καὶ ὁ ἀγιώτατος θρόνος ὑπὲρ τὰ πεντήκοντα πουργία τῶν ἄσπρων διὰ νὰ ἀπαντήσομεν τὰς τοιαύτας καταδρομὰς τῶν παπιστῶν. Αἴτιος δὲ καὶ προστάτης τῆς τοιαύτης καταδρομῆς εἶναι τῇ σήμερον ὁ Τζόρτζος ὀνόματι υἱὸς τοῦ Ἄϊτε δραγουμάνος τῶν ἐν Χαλεπίῳ πραγματευτῶν Ἀγγλων, ὁ ὁποῖος ὄντας κατὰ τὸ γένος Ἄραψ, καὶ πρότερον εἰς τὸ ῥητὸν τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὕστερον μετεβλήθη, καὶ ἀθετῶντας τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν ἐγένετο Λατινόφρων, καὶ συμβοηθῶντας τοὺς ὁμόφρονας αὐτοῦ κακοῖερεῖς καὶ λοιποὺς πεπλανημένους ἀπὸ τοὺς παπιστάσιδες, ἐνεργεῖ τὰς καταδρομὰς κατὰ τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου ἡμῶν θρόνου, καὶ ὀρθοδόξου γένους τῶν Χριστιανῶν, καὶ εἶναι μέγας ἐχθρὸς καὶ διώκτης τῆς ἀμωμῆτου ἡμῶν πίστεως, δυναμούμενος μὲ τὴν πρόφασιν τῆς ἐπισκέψεως ὅπου ἔχει εἰς τὴν νατζιόνα τῶν Ἀγγλων. Λοιπὸν παρακαλοῦμεν θερμότερα τὴν θεοσεβεστάτην τῆς ἐξοχότητα, πρῶτον μὲν νὰ ἐλευθερώσῃ ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν ἀγιώτατον ἡμῶν θρόνον ἀπὸ τὴν καταδρομὴν τοῦ ῥηθέντος Τζόρτζου, καὶ δὲν ἀμφιβάλομεν ὅτι θέλει εἰσακουσθῆ κατὰ τὸ εἰς τὸν ἐνταῦθα ἐξοχώτατον πρέσβυν τῶν Ἀγγλων, ὅπου νὰ συκώσῃ αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τὴν δραγουμανίαν, καὶ νὰ καταστήσῃ ἄλλον ἀπὸ τοὺς ὀρθοδόξους Ῥωμαίους ὅπου εὐρίσκονται ἐκεῖ, χρησιμώτεροι καὶ καλιώτεροι ἀπὸ αὐτὸ[ν] τὸν Τζόρτζον εἰς τὸ ἔργον τῆς δραγουμανίας, ὥστε νὰ γίνεταί ἐντελεστάτη καὶ πληρεστάτη καὶ ἡ χρεία τῶν ἐκεῖσε τιμίων Ἀγγλων πραγματευτῶν, καὶ νὰ μὴν κατατρέχεται καὶ ὁ θρόνος ἀδίκως καὶ παρανόμως ἀπὸ ἓνα τοιοῦτον ἀνόσιον καὶ κακοῦργον μὲ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πρόφασιν τῆς δραγουμανίας αὐτῆς, καὶ μάλιστα ὕστερα ἀπὸ τόσους κόπους καὶ μόχθους καὶ κινδύνους καὶ ἔξοδα ὑπέρμετρα ὅπου ὑπεμείναμεν διὰ τὴν διόρθωσιν τοῦ θρόνου τούτου, τὰ ὁποῖα εἶναι γνωστὰ καὶ πασίδηλα.

Καὶ κοντὰ εἰς τὰ ἄλλα τὰ βιβλία ὅπου ἐτυπώσαμεν εἰς ἀρραβικὴν διάλεκτον τώρα νεωστὶ πρὸς κοινὴν ἀνάγνωσιν καὶ ὠφέλειαν τῶν ἐκεῖσε ὀρθοδόξων Ἀρράβων, τὰ ὁποῖα μὲ τὸ νὰ περιέχωσι τὴν ὀρθόδοξον ὁμολογίαν τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ ἄλλα ἔθιμα καὶ νόμιμα τοῦ ὀρθοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ φρονήματος, ἔδωκαν μέγαν

φῶς εἰς τοὺς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ὀρθοδόξους εἰς τὸ νὰ γνωρίσουν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ νὰ ἐλευθερωθοῦν καὶ νὰ ἐπιστραφοῦν ἀπὸ τὴν πλάνην τῶν ἑτεροδόξων.

Καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἀποφασίσαμεν καὶ ἐδιωρίσαμεν νὰ στείλωμεν εἰς Χαλέπιον ἀρχιερέα γνήσιον ὀρθόδοξον καὶ ζηλωτὴν τῆς εὐσεβείας, καὶ σοφὸν καὶ ἐπιστήμονα εἰς τὴν ἀράβικην διάλεκτον, καὶ ἑλληνικὴν, καὶ ἱκανὸν καὶ ἀξιὸν εἰς τὸ νὰ ποιμάνῃ εὐαγγελικῶς τὸ ἐκεῖσε χριστῶνυμον πλήρωμα, ὁ ὅποιος δὲν ἔμπορεῖ νὰ ἐνεργίσῃ ἐκεῖ τὰ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης εἰρηνικῶς καὶ ἡσύχως, καὶ νὰ φυλάξῃ τὸ ὀρθόδοξον πλήρωμα, ἂν δὲν λείψῃ ὁ ρηθεὶς δραγουμάνος Τζόρτζος, ὁ ὁποῖος θέλει κατατρέχει καὶ αὐτὸν καθὼς καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους μὲ τρόπους ἐξωτερικοὺς καὶ χρηματικά δαπανήματα.

Δεύτερον παρακαλοῦμεν ὅτι ἐπειδὴ διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀδυναμίαν τοῦ ἀγιοτάτου τούτου θρόνου καὶ τὰ βαρρύτατα χρέη ὅπου ἐπιφορτίσθησαν δὲν εἶναι καμία ἄλλη ἐλπίς διορθώσεως, ἐπειδὴ οὔτε σιτηρέσια ἔχομεν οὔτε καμίαν ἄλλην βοήθειαν ἀπὸ τὸ ποιμνιον τοῦ θρόνου μὲ τὸ νὰ διεφθάρῃ ὁ ἀγιώτατος οὗτος θρόνος κατὰ τὸ περισσότερο μέρος ἀπὸ τοὺς Λατινόφρονες, ἀπεφασίσαμεν νὰ προσδράμωμεν εἰς τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν βοήθειαν τῆς ἀγιοτάτης αὐτοκρατορικῆς μεγαλειότητος τῆς θεοφρουρήτου βασιλείας ἀπάσης Ῥωσίας, καὶ νὰ στείλωμεν ἐκεῖσε τὸν ἡμέτερον ἀρχιμανδριτὴν κύρ Ἰγνάτιον χάριν ἐλέους καὶ βοηθείας τοῦ ἀγιοτάτου ἡμῶν θρόνου, τὸ ὅποῖον ἐγγεῖρημα ἡμῶν διὰ νὰ εὐδωθῇ σὺν Θεῷ Ἀγίῳ χρειάζεται ἀναγκαίως τὴν σύστασιν τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐξοχότητος. Δεόμεθα λοιπὸν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν νὰ φανερώσῃ μὲ γράμμα τῆς ἐκλαμπρον εἰς τὴν ἀγιοτάτην αὐτοκρατορικὴν μεγαλειότητα τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀνάγκην καὶ βαρυτάτην δυστυχίαν καὶ τὰ πολλὰ πάθη καὶ τοὺς διωγμοὺς τῶν κακοδιώκτων, καὶ τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐσέβειας ἀγῶνας ὅπου πάσχει καὶ ὑπομένει ὁ ἀγιώτατος ἡμῶν θρόνος, καθὼς ἡ ἐξοχότης τῆς τὰ ἐπληροφορήθη ἐδῶ καὶ τὰ ἐβεβαιώθη σαφέστατα διὰ νὰ κινήσῃ τὰ φιλοικτήριμονα σπάγγνα τῆς χριστιανικοτάτης καὶ ἀγιοτάτης αὐτοκρατορικῆς μεγαλειότητος εἰς τὴν βοήθειαν καὶ ἀντίληψιν ἡμῶν τε καὶ τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγιοτάτου τούτου θρόνου. Καὶ ἡμεῖς εἴμεθα εἰς Θεὸν εὐχέται θερμότατοι καὶ ἀδιάλειπτοι νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας καὶ ἐν πάσαις ἡμῶν ταῖς πρὸς Θεὸν ἐντεύξεσι καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικαῖς ἀκολουθίαις διὰ τὸ κράτος καὶ τὴν στερέωσιν τῆς ἀγίας αὐτοκρατορικῆς μεγαλειότητος, καὶ διὰ τὴν πολυχρόνιον ζωὴν καὶ ὑγίαν καὶ εὐτυχίαν ἀνέκλειπτον τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐξοχότητος. Ἡ δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάρις καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον ἔλεος, καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ καὶ εὐλογία τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, εἶη μετὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐξοχώτητος, ἧς καὶ τὰ ἔτη εἶσαν παρὰ Θεοῦ πλεῖστα καὶ εὐτυχέστατα.

ἰψν' Μαρτίου ιβ'

17. Letter of Patriarch Sylvester to Elizaveta, Empress of Russia, March 1750 [Constantinople]. MS 210 Ἡρισᾶ, f. 115r–116r.

Τῇ Ἀγίᾳ Θεοστέπτῳ καὶ Θεοφρουρήτῳ αὐτοκρατορικῇ μεγαλειότητι τῆς σεβαστῆς καὶ ἀγίας αὐτοκρατορίσεως, καὶ ἱμπερατρίτζης κυρίας κυρίας Ἐλισάβετ, τῆς Μοσικῆς βασιλείας, καὶ ἀπάσης Ῥωσίας, καὶ παντὸς τοῦ ὑπερβορείου μέρους

ἐπευχῶμεθα ὑγείαν, κράτος, στερέωσιν καὶ διαμονὴν καὶ τῶν ἐφετῶν ἀπάντων ἀγαθῶν τὴν παρὰ Θεοῦ χορηγίαν, εἷη δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ ἔλεος παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ τῷ Θεοστεφῆ αὐτῆς κράτει σὺν ταῖς παρὰ τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος ἀπὸ βῆθους ψυχῆς πατρικαῖς καὶ πνευματικαῖς ἐυχαῖς καὶ εὐλογίαις.

Ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χ(ριστὸς), Υἱὸς καὶ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Δημιουργὸς ἀπάσης τῆς κτίσεως τάχειος Θεὸς ὢν, εὐδόκησε δι' ἄκραν του ἀγαθότητα νὰ κατέβῃ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ νὰ ἀναλάβῃ τὴν ἀν(ρωπ)ίνην φύσιν, γενόμενος τέλειος ἀν(θρωπ)ος διὰ νὰ σώσῃ τὸν ἀν(θρωπ)ον, διὰ τοῦ Ὁποίου τὴν σ(ωτη)ρίαν ἠδούκησε νὰ χύσῃ καὶ τὸ Πανάγιον Αὐτοῦ Αἷμα, καὶ ἀφ' οὗ ἐσύστησε τὸ χριστώνυμον Αὐτοῦ πλήρωμα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ τὸ ἔκαμε λαὸν περιούσιον καὶ ποιμνιον ἐδικόν Του, ἐδιώρισε καὶ διέταξεν ἐπάνω εἰς τὴν ποιμαντικὴν ταύτην, τότε μὲν τοὺς Ἁγίους Αὐτοῦ Μαθητὰς καὶ Ἀποστόλους, οἱ δὲ Μαθηταὶ ἀκολούθως τοὺς διαδόχους αὐτῶν ἐπισκόπους καὶ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ πατριάρχας, καὶ ἔκτοτε συνεκροτήθησαν τῇ τοῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ χάριτι καὶ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Ἁγίου Πν(εύματος) οἱ ἀρχιερατικοὶ καὶ πατριαρχικοὶ θρόνοι κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅπου ἐκηρύχθη τὸ Ἱερὸν καὶ Θεῖον Εὐαγγέλιον, ὥστε μὲ τὴν ἀποστολικὴν ἐκείνην ἐξουσίαν καὶ χάριν, καὶ μὲ τὴν ἀρχιερατικὴν προστασίαν καὶ διδασκαλίαν νὰ σώζονται χάριτι Θεοῦ καὶ νὰ κυβερνῶνται τὰ ἀπανταχοῦ λογικὰ ποιμνία τοῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ εἰς τὴν ὀρθόδοξον Αὐτοῦ ὁμολογίαν καὶ πίστιν, τὴν ὁποίαν μᾶς ἐπαρέδωκεν ἡ ἄκρα Αὐτοῦ ἀγαθότης διὰ μέσον τῶν Ἁγίων του Μαθητῶν καὶ Ἀποστόλων. Καὶ ἰδοὺ χάριτι Θεοῦ διασώζονται καὶ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν, καὶ ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος αἱ Ἁγίαὶ Ἐκκλησίαι καὶ μὲ ὄλον ὅπου ὑπομένουσι κατὰ πάντα καιρὸν/f.115ν πολλοὺς διωγμοὺς κατὰ τὴν ἀψευδευστάτην φωνὴν τοῦ Σ(ωτη)ρ(ο)ς ἡμῶν, ὅτι καὶ πύλη ἄδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς. Δὲν λανθάνει τὴν ἀγίαν καὶ θεόστεπτον αὐτῆς αὐτοκρατορικὴν μεγαλειότητα ὅτι ὁ ἀγιώτατος ἀποστολικὸς θρόνος τῆς Μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας νὰ ἐχρημάτισεν ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπισιμώτατος τῇ ἀρχαιότητι καὶ ἀγιότητι ἐξ' αὐτῆς τῆς πρώτης χριστιανικῆς προκατάρξεως ἐπειδὴ καὶ καθὼς μανθάνομεν ἐξ' αὐτῶν τῶν θείων λογίων ἐστάθη ἡ πρώτη καθέδρα τοῦ πρωτοκορυφαίου τῶν Ἀποστόλων Πέτρου. Καὶ πρῶτον εἰς αὐτὸν ἐκεφωνήθη καὶ ὠνομάσθη ττὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ, μὲ ὄλον τοῦτο δὲν ἔλειψε πώποτε κατὰ καιροὺς ὁ χαιρέκακος καὶ ισόχριστος δαίμων νὰ διεγείρῃ πολέμους καὶ διωγμοὺς καὶ καταδρομὰς εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν ἀγιώτατον θρόνον. Καὶ ἀφήνοντες νὰ διηγούμεθα τὰ παλαιὰ ὡσὰν ὅπου εἶναι γνωστὰ εἰς τὴν αὐτοκρατορικὴν αὐτῆς μεγαλειότητα, ἀρκούσι τὰ μεταγενέστερα δηλαδὴ τὰ μετὰ τὴν Ἄλωσιν συμβάντα καὶ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον τῆς δουλείας τοῦ ζυγοῦ ὅπου εὕρισκόμεθα, ὅσα καὶ οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν ἀγιώτατοι πατριάρχαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀγιωτάτου, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰσέτι ἐπάθομεν καὶ πάσομεν τὰ ὅποια εἶναι σχεδὸν ἀπερίληπτα. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲν εἶναι θαυμαστόν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ κατὰ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀνάγκη ἐστὶ τὰ σκάνδαλα γίνεσθαι, καὶ οἱ εὐσεβεῖς νὰ διώκονται, καὶ νὰ ταλαιπωροῦνται μέγας οἱ ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐλσεβείας ἀγωνιζόμενοι προεστώτες. “Ἡ γὰρ δύναμις Μου”, λέγει ὁ Δεσπότης Χ(ριστὸς), μὲ τὸ στόμα τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου “ἐν ἀσθενίᾳ τελειοῦται”. Δὲν ἀμφιβάλλομεν ὅτι νὰ ἠκούσθησαν καὶ εἰς τὰς βασιλικὰς ἀκοὰς τοῦ θεοστέπτου αὐτῆς κράτους, πόσον

διωγμὸν καὶ πόσους ἀλλεπάλληλους καταδρομὰς ὑπέμεινε καὶ ὑπομένει συνεχῶς ὁ ἀγιώτατος θρόνος οὗτος ἀπὸ τὸν παπισμὸν καὶ τοὺς ἑτεροδόξους Λατίνους, οἱ ὅποιοι εὐρισκόντες μας ἀδυνάτους καὶ ὑπὸ τὸν ζυγὸν τῆς δουλείας μυρίας ἐπιβουλὰς ἀδιακόπως τεχνεύονται καθ' ἡμῶν, ποτὲ μὲν διαφθείροντες τοὺς Ὁρθοδόξους μὲ τὰς πεπλανημένας διδασκαλίας αὐτῶν, ποτὲ δὲ μὲ δύναμιν χρημάτων ἀποσπῶντες ἀπὸ τὸν θρόνον τὰς ἐπαρχίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ διώκοντες τοὺς ὀρθοδόξους ἀρχιερεῖς, καὶ ἀντεισάγοντες τοὺς ὁμόφρονας αὐτῶν Λατίνους. Καὶ ἀγκαλὰ εἰς ὄλον τὸ ὕστερον τῇ δυνάμει καὶ χάριτι τοῦ Χ(ριστοῦ) ἀνατρέπονται καὶ διαλύονται αἱ κακομηχαναὶ καὶ ἐπιβουλαὶ αὐτῶν, καθὼς καὶ τώρα προσεχῶς ἐσυνέβη εἰς τὸ Χαλέπιον, τοῦ ὁποίου τὰ συμβάντα καὶ οἱ πρότεροι διωγμοί, καὶ ἡ παροῦσα θείω ἐλέει ἐλευθερία ἀπὸ τὰς τῶν Λατινοφρόνων καταδρομὰς, καὶ ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκατάστασις ὀρθοδόξου πεπαιδευμένου καὶ ἀξίου ἀρχιερέως καὶ εὐαγγελικοῦ ποιμένος, εἴμεθα βέβαιοι ὅτι νὰ ἐδηλώθησαν εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν τῆς βασιλείαν ἐκ μέρους τοῦ ἐξοχωτάτου πρέσβευς αὐτῆς. Καὶ πρὸς τοῦτοις καὶ ὁ τύπος ὁποῦ ἐκατασκευάσαμεν νεωστὶ εἰς ἀρραβικὴν διάλεκτον μὲ πολὺν ἀγῶνα, κόπον καὶ δαπανήματα βαρέα, ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖον Θεοῦ εὐδοκοῦντος ἐτυπώσαμεν βιβλία ἱκανὰ εἰς ἀρραβικὴν διάλεκτον. Καὶ ἐλπίζομεν σὺν Θεῷ μεγάλον καρπὸν, καὶ πολλὴν ψυχικὴν ὠφέλειαν νὰ γενῆ εἰς τοὺς Ὁρθοδόξους, μὲ τὸ νὰ περιέχουσι τὴν ὀρθόδοξον ὁμολογίαν τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ ἄλλα ἔθιμα καὶ νόμιμα τοῦ ὀρθοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ φρονήματος, καὶ θέλουσι δώσει μεγάλον φῶς εἰς / ^{f. 116r} τοὺς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ὁρθοδόξους εἰς τὸ νὰ γνωρίσουν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ νὰ ἐλευθερωθοῦν καὶ νὰ ἐπιστραφοῦν ἀπὸ τὴν πλάνην τῶν ἑτεροδόξων. Ὅμως διὰ νὰ ἡμποροῦμεν νὰ ἀπαντῶμεν εἰς τὰς τοιαύτας καταδρομὰς τῶν ἑτεροδόξων, καὶ νὰ δεφενδεύωμεν καὶ νὰ φυλάκτωμεν τὸν ἀγιώτατον αὐτὸν θρόνον, καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ χριστῶνυμιον ποιμνιον εἰς τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χ(ριστοῦ) Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, μὲ τὸ νὰ χρειαζώμεθα καθ' ἡμερινὰ καὶ πολλὰ δαπανήματα, τὰ ὅποια μὴ ἔχοντες ἐξ' ἰδίων νὰ ἀπολογηθῶμεν, ἀναγκαζόμεθα νὰ περιπίπτωμεν εἰς βαρῦτατα χρεὴ καὶ φρορτία δυσβάστακτα δανειακῶν ἄσπρων, τὰ ὅποια ἂν δὲν διορθωθοῦν, κινδυνεύομεν ἡμεῖς τε καὶ ὁ ἀγιώτατος οὗτος θρόνος. Διὰ τοῦτο μὴ ἔχοντες πλέον ἄλλην ἐλπίδα μετὰ Θε(εοῦ) ν, καὶ ἀσφαλεστέραν καταφυγὴν εἰ μὴ τὸν κοινὸν τοῦ χριστων[ύμου] πληρώματος σωτήριον λιμένα, καὶ τὴν παγκόσμιον παραμυθίαν τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου λαοῦ. Ὡσάν ὁποῦ οὔτε σιτηρέσια ἔχομεν οὔτε καμίαν ἄλλην βοήθειαν ἀπὸ τὸ ποιμνιον τοῦ θρόνου μὲ τὸ νὰ διεφθάρη ὁ ἀγιώτατος αὐτὸς θρόνος κατὰ τὸ περισσότερον μέρος ἀπὸ τοὺς Λατινόφρονας, ἀπεφασίσαμεν νὰ προσδράμωμεν εἰς τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν βοήθειαν τῆς ἀγιωτάτης αυτοκρατορικῆς μεγαλει' ἑθτος τῆς θεοφρουρήτου αὐτῆς βασιλείας, καὶ δὴ πέμπομεν εἰς τὰ φιλάνθρωπα σπλάγχνα καὶ τὴν σκέπην καὶ τὴν ἀντίληψιν τοῦ θεοστέπτου αὐτῆς κράτους τὸν ἐπιφέροντα τὸ παρὸν ἡμέτερον ἀρχιμανδρίτην κύρ Ἰγνάτιον χάριν ἐλέους καὶ βοήθειας τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου ἡμῶν θρόνου, δεόμενοι καὶ καθικετεύοντες ἐνθέρμως καὶ ἀπὸ βάθους ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας νὰ σπλαγχνισθῇ ἡμᾶς τε καὶ τὸν ἀγιώτατον αὐτὸν θρόνον, καὶ μὲ τὴν συνήθη μεγαλοπρεπεστάτην καὶ χριστιανικωτάτην ἰλαρὰν αὐτῆς προαίρεσιν νὰ θεραπεύσῃ καὶ νὰ παρηγορήσῃ

τὸν ἀγιώτατον αὐτὸν θρόνον, καὶ ἡμᾶς ὅπου πάσχομεν καὶ κινδυνεύομεν καθ' ἐκάστην διὰ τὴν σύστασιν τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ χριστονύμου λαοῦ τῶν τοσοῦτων ὀρθοδόξων Χριστιανῶν. Ὁ δὲ πλούσιος μισθοποδότης Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χ(ριστὸς) νὰ σκέπη καὶ νὰ περιφρουρή τὴν θεόστεπτον αὐτῆς κεφαλὴν μὲ ἄκραν ὑγείαν καὶ κράτος καὶ στερέωσιν τῆς ἀγίας τῆς βασιλείας καὶ αὐτοκρατορικῆς μεγαλειότητος εἰς ἔτη πάμπολλα καὶ πανευδαιμονέστατα.
 ,αψν' Μαρτίου.

18. Letter of Patriarch Sylvester to Michael Rakovitzas, prince of Wallachia. December 15, 1741, Damascus. MS 210 Ἡριῶα, f. 166r–166v.

Εἰς τὸν ὑψηλότατον Μιχαὴλ Ρακοβίτσα βοεβόδα

Εὐσεβέστατε ὑψηλότατε καὶ ἐκλαμπρότατε αὐθέντα καὶ ἡγεμῶν μεγαλοπρεπέστατε πάσης Οὐγκροβλαχίας, κύριε κύριε Ἰωάννη Μιχαὴλ Ρακοβίτзи βοεβόδα, υἱὲ ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι ἀγαπητῆ περιστόθητε τῆς ἡμῶν μετριότητος, τὴν ὑμετέραν θεόστεπτον ὑψηλότητα εὐχόμεθα εὐλογοῦμεν, ἀσπαζόμενοι νοερῶς τὴν πανυπέρεκλαμπρόν της κορυφὴν.

Δεόμενοι τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοῦ, ὅπως διατηροίη αὐτὴν ἐν ἄκρα ὑγείᾳ, καὶ γαληναία διαμονὴ ἐπὶ τὸν ὑψηλὸν θρόνον της, ὑποτάττων ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας της πάντα ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον, χαρίζωντάς της τοὺς ἐκλαμπροτάτους μπειζατέδες, καὶ ἐκλαμπροτάτην δόμναν τὴν καταφαιδρὰ ἀγγελία τοῦ ἐπαναβιβασμοῦ τῆς ὑμετέρας θεοφρουρήτου ὑψηλότητος ἐπὶ τὴν ὑψηλὴν καθέδραν Οὐγκροβλαχίας, οὐ μόνον μᾶς ἐχαροποίησεν τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀλλὰ μᾶς ἔδωσε καὶ λαβὴν νὰ γράψωμεν καὶ νὰ συγχαροῦμεν, καὶ νὰ στεφανώσωμεν τὴν πανυπέρεκλαμπρόν της κορυφὴν μὲ εὐχὰς καὶ εὐλογίας πατριαρχικάς, τὰς ὁποίας καὶ δὲν ὑστερήσαμεν ποτές ἐξ αὐτῆς, ἀφ' οὗ τὴν ἐγνωρίσαμεν. Ἀλλὰ νοερῶς τὴν ἐπευχόμεσθα, ἔχοντες χρηστὰς τὰς ἐλπίδας, ὅτι νὰ τὴν ἀπολαύσῃ καὶ ὁ ἀποστολικὸς καὶ ἀρχαιότατος τοῦτος θρόνος τῆς Ἀντιοχείας βοηθὸν καὶ δεφένδρα. Ἐπειδὴ καὶ πάσχει λίαν τόσον ἀπὸ τὴν λύτταν τῶν αἰρετικῶν, καὶ σχισματικῶν Λατινοφρόνων, ὅσον καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀφορήτου χρέους, καὶ τὸ πᾶν διὰ νὰ μὴν προδώσωμεν τὸ ἀμώμητον σέβας τῆς εἰλικρινοῦς καὶ ἀκυβδήλου ἡμῶν πίστεως ἀλλ' οὔτε νὰ παραβλέψωμεν καὶ νὰ παρασαλεύσωμεν τὶ τῶν ὅσα παρελάβομεν ἐκ τῶν Ἱερῶν καὶ Θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἡμῶν. Τοῦτου ἔνεκα καὶ φέρωμεν γενναίως εὐσεβείας χάριν, ἔχοντες τὰς ἐλπίδας, πρῶτον μὲν εἰς τὸν Σ(ωτ)ήρα καὶ ἐλευθερωτὴν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ δευτέρον εἰς τὸ ὕψος τῶν γαληνοτάτων ἡμῶν αὐθεντῶν, τοὺς ὁποίους εἶθε νὰ στερεώνη ὁ Πανάγαθος Κύριος διὰ πρεσβειῶν τοῦ Πρωτοκορυφαίου του τῶν Ἀποστόλων Πέτρου, διὰ νὰ τοὺς ἔχωμεν προπύργια, καὶ ὑπερασπιστὰς τούτων τῶν ἀποστολικῶν θρόνων. Προσέτι δὲ νὰ ἀξιῶσῃ καὶ ἡμᾶς σωματικῶς νὰ ἀπολαύσωμεν, καὶ νὰ εὐλογήσωμεν τὴν ἐκλαμπρόν της κορυφὴν μὲ ἅπασαν τὴν εὐλογημένην της τζάραν, καθὼς πρὸ πολλοῦ τὸ εἶχομεν τεταμιευμένον, καὶ πεφυλαγμένον εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ καθὼς ἡ ἄνωθεν πρόνοια ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος εἰς τέλος ἤγαγε. Πα

ρακαλοῦμεν δὲ νὰ ἀξιωθοῦμεν τῆς πανεκλάμπρου τῆς νὰ εὐφρανουῦμεν τὴν ὑγείαν τῆς. Ἦς τὰ ἔτη εἶσαν παρὰ Θεοῦ πολλά τε καὶ πανευδαίμονα.
αἴψμα Ἐκεμβρίου ιε´. Ἐκ Δαμασκοῦ.

19. Amounts spent for the school in "Arabia" from 1728 to 1732. MS 210 Ἡαῖῖῖῖ, f. 169r.

Ἐξοδα τοῦ σχολείου τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ ὁποῦ ἐγκροτήσαμεν εἰς Ἀράβιαν, ἀπὸ τοὺς 1728 ἕως τοὺς 32 μηνὶ Ὀκτωβρίῳ, ὄντος μᾶς εἰς Ἀράβιαν μέχρι τοῦ Ἰουλίου τὸ ἐκυβερνούσαμεν, καὶ μισεύοντός μας εἰς Βασιλεύουσαν ἀφήκαμεν τὴν ἐπιστασίαν τῶ διδασκάλῳ Ἰακώβῳ Πατμίῳ, καὶ τοῦ ἐπέμπαμεν διὰ κυβέρνησιν τῶν μαθητῶν.

„ἀπὸ Φιλιππούπολιν γρόσια ἑκατὸν δέκα.

„ἀπὸ Θεσσαλονίκη γρόσια πενήντα.

„ἀπὸ Καστορίαν γρόσια ἑκατόν.

„διὰ τοῦ πατῆ Γρηγορίου γρόσια πενήντα.

„διὰ τοῦ δραγουμάνου Ἀναστασίου Σπέλτου γρόσια διακόσια 55.

„ἐδιορίσαμεν νὰ λάβῃ ἀπὸ τοὺς ἄρχοντας Τριπόλεως γρ. ἑκατὸν δέκα.

„ἀπὸ Τριπόλεως διὰ τοῦ κονσόλου τῶν Ἐγκλέζων γρόσια πενήντα.

„καὶ ὅταν ἐξήλθομεν ἀπὸ Χαλέπιον ἐδώσαμεν του ἐπὶ χεῖρας γρ. ἑκατὸν δέκα.

„ἐπιστρέφοντός μας ἀπὸ ξενιτεῖαν τοῦ ἐδώσαμεν ὄντος του ἐν Τριπόλει γρ. ἑκατὸν τριάντα.

„καὶ ὅταν ἤθελε μισεύσει εἰς τὴν πατρίδα του διὰ τὸν κόπον του γρ. χίλια διακόσια.

„καὶ εἰς τὴν Κύπρον ὅταν ἀνταμώθημεν τοῦ ἐδώσαμεν ἓνα ὠρολόγι παντόλη ἐγιναν καὶ ἔτερα ἔξοδα ὅμως τόσον ἐνθυμούμεθα. Καὶ ὡς εἶναι εἰς τὸν Θεὸν εὐπρόσδεκτα. Ἐπρόκοψαν καὶ μαθηταὶ πολλοὶ καὶ τινὲς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀρχιεράτευσαν.

110

50

100

50

255

110

50

110

130

1200

2165²

2 Total of the amounts listed.

20. List of books possibly belonging to Patriarch Sylvester. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 18r–19r.

Ἔχομεν εἰς δύο σεντούκας τὰ κάτωθεν γεγραμμένα βιβλία
 Εἰς τὴν μίαν [deleted in the text]
 Τὰ Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τόμοι εἴκοσι ἑκτὸς τοῦ Γλυκᾶ κ
 καὶ ἔν Ἐτυμολογικὸν α
 καὶ ἔν Λεξικὸν α
 καὶ Τὰ Διονυσιακά τοῦ Νόνου τοῦ Πανοπλίτου τόμος εἰς α
 εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν [deleted in the text]
 Διάφοροι τόμοι τῶν Ἁγίων Πατέρων
 Περί τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις Πατριαρχευσάντων τόμοι δύο β
 Ἀρμενόπουλος γραικολατίνος α
 Κυρίλλου Ἀλεξανδρείας εἰς τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην τόμος εἰς α
 Εὐσέβιος Παμφύλου τόμος εἰς α
 Ἡ Παλαιὰ καὶ Νέα Διαθήκη τόμος μέγας εἰς α
 Τόμοι Ἀγάπης δύο β
 Τόμος Χαρᾶς εἰς α
 Γεωγραφία Μελετίου α
 Νίλου Λόγοι ἀσκητικοὶ τόμος εἰς α
 Τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου τόμοι τρεῖς γ
 Εἰς τὴν Ἐξήγησιν τῶν Ψαλμῶν ὁ εἷς, ὁ ἕτερος εἰς τὰς ἐπιστολάς Παύλου, καὶ ὁ τρίτος
 ὁμοίως
 Τόμος Καταλλαγῆς, εἰς α
 Συμεὼν Θεσσαλονίκης τόμοι δύο β
 Ἐπιστολῶν συλλογὴ διάφορος Μελετίου Ἀλεξανδρείας χειρίσιον τόμος εἰς α
 Εὐσεβίου Παμφύλου Εὐαγγελικὴ Προπαρεσκευὴ τόμος εἰς α
 Γεωγραφία Χρυσάνθου τόμος εἰς α
 Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ Ἐκδοσις τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως τόμος εἰς α
 Λεξικά συρικὰ φράγκικα τόμοι δύο β
 Δημοσθένους Τμῆμα τρίτον τόμος εἰς α
 Ἀριστοτέλους Περί ζώων ἱστορίας τόμος εἰς α
 Ἀρχιερατικὴ μεγάλη α
 Βίοι διαφόρων Ἁγίων τόμος μικρὸς εἰς α
 Εὐαγγέλιον ἐξηγητόν, ἔν α
 Πινδάρου βιβλιάριον, ἔν α
 Γραμματικὴ γραικολατῖνα, μία α
 Δημοσθένους βιβλιάριον, ἔν α
 Σωκράτους Λόγοι πρὸς Δημονικὸν βιβλία, ἔν α
 Ξενοφῶντος βιβλιάρια τρία γ

Ἀριστοφάνους Κωμοδορίωριόν, ἔν α
 Συναξάρια χειρίσια ἀραβικά τρία γ
 Ἀριστοτέλους Νικομάχια βιβλάριον ἔν α
 Ἐπιστολή Βασιλείου Μακεδῶνος ἔν α
 Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων βιβλιάριον ἔν α
 Τοῦ Ἁγίου Διονυσίου βίος βιβλιάριον ἔν α
 Ἔτερα βιβλία εἰς σεπέτιον [deleted in the text]
 Περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων τόμοι δύο ἀστάχωτοι β
 Ἐτυμολογικὸν ἔν α
 Τοῦ Μεγάλου Βασιλείου Ἀσκητικὸν ἔν α
 Γαληνοῦ ἔν α
 Δημοσθένους Βίος εἷς α
 Πλουτάρχου παράλληλα εἷς α
 Μαξίμου του Πελοποννησίου Κατὰ Λατίνων ἀραβικὸν ἔν α
 Μελετίου Συρίγου ἔν α
 Δίωνος Ῥωμαϊκαὶ Ἱστορία ἔν α
 Βίβλος Ἀριστοφάνους εἷς α
 Ὅρος Μοναχῶν χειρόγραφον ἔν α
 Γεωγραφικὸν ἀραβικὸν ἔν α
 Ὁρολόγια ἀστάχωτα ἕξ ζ
 Γρηγορίου Νύσσης Περὶ Παρθενίας ἔν α
 Ἀρμονία Γερασίμου Βλάχου δύο β
 Ἀριστοφάνους Κωμοδίαι τόμος μέγας εἷς α
 Λογικαὶ δύο β
 Νομοκανῶν χειρίσιος εἷς α
 Περὶ σφαιρῶν δύο β
 Περὶ τῶν καθηκόντων εἷς α
 Εἰς ἐγκαίνια ναοῦ α
 Βιβλία φράγκικα ἕξ ζ
 Εὐαγγέλιον ἔν α

21. Notes about Patriarch Sylvester's celebration of Easter from 1724 to 1736. MS 124 Jerusalem, f. 19v.

Ἀνάμνησιν ποιοῦμεν τῶν ἐτῶν τῆς πατριαρχείας μας καὶ ποῦ ἐδιατριψάμεν, καὶ εἰς ποίας πολιτείας, Ροῦμέλης τε καὶ Ανατολῆς, περιήλθωμεν, καὶ εἰς ποίας ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Λαμπρὰν.

Εἰς τῷ ἀψκδ' μηνὶ Σεπτεμβρίῳ κζ ἡμέρα Κυριακὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Μεγαλομάρτυρος Καλίστου γέγονεν ἡ χειροτονία μας ἐν τῇ Ἁγίᾳ καὶ Μεγάλῃ Ἐκκλησίᾳ τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, πατριαρχευσοντος τοῦ παναγιωπάτου καὶ οἰκουμενικοῦ

πατριάρχου κυρίου Ἱερεμίου. Εἶχε δὲ συλλειτουργοὺς τὸν Καισαρείας κύρ Νεόφυτον, καὶ τὸν Ἡρακλείας κύρ Καλλίνικον.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψκε´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Λαμπρὰν εἰς Βασιλεύουσαν. Καὶ τὸν Ὀκτώμβριον μῆνα, ἀπήλθομεν εἰς Χαλέπιον διὰ ξηρᾶς.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψκς´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Λαμπρὰν εἰς Χαλέπιον. Καὶ διὰ τὰς ἀνωμαλίας καὶ τὰς καταδρομὰς τῶν ἐκεῖσε Λατινοφρόνων Χριστιανῶν (συνυπουργούντων αὐτῶν καὶ τὸν ἐν Χαλεπίῳ ὄτε κόνσολος τῶν Γάλλων, καὶ οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν φρατόρες), ἐξήλθομεν τῆ ς´ Αὐγούστου ἐσπέρας καὶ ἤλθομεν εἰς Λαοδικεῖαν, καὶ εἰς τὰς δ´ τοῦ Δεκεμβρίου πάλιν ἐπεστρέψαμεν εἰς Βασιλεύουσαν.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψκζ´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Λαμπρὰν, καὶ ἐδιατρίψαμεν ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν διερχόμενοι τὰς ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως χάριν βοήθειας τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ τῆ α´ Μαρτίου ἐδιάβημεν εἰς Ἀδριανούπολιν, καὶ τῷ ,αψκη´

Καὶ τῷ ,αψκη´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Λαμπρὰν εἰς Λίτιτζα.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψκθ´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψλ´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν εἰς Ἰωάννινα, καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐπήγαμεν εἰς Βλαχίαν, καὶ ἐπιστρέψαμεν εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψλα´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Λαμπρὰν εἰς βασιλεύουσαν.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψλβ´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν εἰς Κουσάντασι, καὶ ἀπήλθομεν εἰς Σάμον καὶ Χίον, καὶ τὸν Σεπτέμβριον μῆνα ἀνήχθημεν εἰς Τρίπολιν τῆς Συρίας.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψλγ´ καὶ τῷ [αψ]λδ´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν εἰς Δαμασκόν, καὶ διὰ τὰ ἀδιάκοπα σκάνδαλα τῶν Λατινοφρόνων τῆ α´ Νοεμβρίου ἐξήλθομεν καὶ ἤλθομεν εἰς Λαοδικεῖαν.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψλε´ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν εἰς Τρίπολιν.

Καὶ τῷ ,αψλς´ ἀνήχθημεν ἀπὸ Τρίπολιν εἰς Λαοδικεῖαν, καὶ ὕστερον εἰς Κύπρον καὶ ἐκεῖθεν εἰς Ἀτάλειαν καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐορτάσαμεν τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν.

22. Notes on Patriarch Sylvester's voyage in Cyprus in 1735. Ms 124 Jerusalem, f. 8v. See also K. Karnapas, "Ὁ πατριάρχης Ἀντιοχείας Σίλβεστρος ὁ Κύπριος", *Νέα Σιών*, 5, 1907, p. 858–859.

,αψλε´ μηνὶ Δεκεμβρίου κζ´ ἐπλεύσαμεν ἀπὸ Λαοδικεῖαν εἰς Κύπρον καὶ ἐορτάσαμεν τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Λάζαρον, καὶ τῆ α´ Φεβρουαρίου [correct Φεβρουαρίου] ἐπλεύσαμεν ἀπὸ Ἀλικὰς εἰς Ἀτάλειαν. Μᾶς ἐδώθη ἐλεημοσύνη ἀπὸ μὲν τὴν Λευκοσίαν γρόσια ἑπτακόσια, καὶ ἕτερα διακόσια ἑκατὸν ἀπὸ τὸν ἀρχιεπίσκοπον, καὶ ἑκατὸν διὰ νὰ μὴν γυρίσωμεν ἔξωθεν εἰς τὰς χώρας.

Καὶ ἀπὸ Λάρνακαν καὶ Ἀλικὰς καὶ Ἀπάνω καὶ Κάτω Λευκάρια καὶ Κάτω Δρὶν καὶ Κοιλάνι, καὶ Ἅγιον Παντελεήμονα καὶ Τρόδος γρόσια ἑπτακόσια

Καὶ ἀπὸ τὸ Μοναστήριον τῆς Παναγίας τοῦ Κύκκου ἐξήκοντα

Καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν Κιτέον ὀγδοήκοντα. Ἐφιλοδωρήσαμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸν Ἀρχιεπίσκοπον ῥᾶσον καναβάτζον ῥαμμένον, καὶ κερμεσοῦτιον, καὶ μίαν πατερίτζαν καὶ Ἅγιον

Μύρον, καὶ τοῦ Κυτέον ὁμοφόριον ἔν καὶ μίαν πατερίτζαν, καὶ ἔν κερμεσουτίον, ὁμοίως καὶ τοῦ Πάφου.

Καίειςτὰχίλια[ἑπτακόσια]τριάνταἔξι,μηνὶΦεβρουαρίου[correct Φεβρουαρίου] α' ἄφεςπερε καράβην ἐγκλέζικον τοῦ καπιτὰν Τούλεμ ἐβαρκαρίστημεν ἀπὸ Ἀλικὰς διὰ τὴν Ἀτάλειαν.

23. Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch grants the office of [*megas*] *logothetes* to Spandonis, February 1, 1739, Damascus. National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, shelfmark *Achiziții Noi*, MMMXL/3 (Fig. 59).

[Patriarchal seal]

Σίλβεστρος ἐλέω Θεοῦ πατριάρχης τῆς μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάσης Ἀνατολῆς

Καὶ στεφνηφόροις αὐτοκράτορσιν ἄναξι, τοῖς ἀλουργίδι καὶ σκήπτρω μεγαλυνομένοις βασιλικῶ, τοῖς τ' ἐν ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσης καθιδρυμένοις πολιτικαῖς, ἡγεμόσι τε, καὶ τοπάρχαις, πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἴδιον, εὐεργετήμασιν ἀναλόγοις, καὶ τιμητικοῖς ἀξιώμασι κατακοσμεῖν, τοὺς ἐν εἰλικρινείᾳ πίστεως, καὶ σταθερότητι ψυχῆς ἐξυπηρετοῦντας, ἀγάπη τε καὶ προθυμίᾳ αὐτοῖς διακονοῦντας. Ὅπερ καὶ τοῖς θείω ἐλέει π(ατ)ριαρχικὴ ὑπεροχῇ καθισταμένοις, περιωπῆς τε ὑψηλοτάτης μεγαλειότητι σεμνυομένοις, καὶ οἶακας τοὺς πν(ευματ)ικοὺς θρόνων ἀγιωτάτων κατεψηφισμένοις πηδαλιουχεῖν [...] ³ ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς φιλοτιμῆμασι, καὶ δωρεαῖς ἀρμοδίους πν(ευματ)ικαῖς εὐεργετεῖν καὶ εἰς τιμὴν ἔχειν, τοὺς τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησίας τροφίμους, συνηγόρους τε καὶ πιστοὺς ὑπηρετάς, καὶ τούτους τῶ εὐαγεῖ κλήρω τῆς ἑαυτῶν Ἀγιωτάτης π(ατ)ριαρχικῆς καθέδρας, κατ' ἀξίαν συγκταλέγειν, ὀφικίοις τε ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς φιλοφρόνως εἰς βαθμὸν προβιβάζειν τάξεώς τε καὶ στάσεως, ἔν τε συνελεύσεσι συνοδικαῖς, καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικαῖς παρρησίαις καὶ παρατάξεσιν. Ἐνθὲν τοι καὶ ἡ μετριότης ἡμῶν, τὴν πν(ευματ)ικὴν πηδαλιουχίαν τοῦ Ἀγιωτάτου καὶ ἀποστολικοῦ τῶν Ἀντιοχέων π(ατ)ριαρχικοῦ θρόνου οἰακοστροφεῖν θεόθεν ἐλεηθεῖσα, τὴν τε προστασίαν τούτου ἀναδέξασθαι λαχοῦσα, καὶ τὴν οἰκονομίαν ἐγχειρισθῆναι κληρωθεῖσα, κατ' εἰρμὸν καὶ λόγον τὸν ἀνωτέρω βαδίζειν ἔξεστι, καὶ ὑπήκειν ἐξόν. Καὶ δὴ πρὸ χρόνων ἱκανῶν ὁ τιμώτατος καὶ λογιώτατος ἄρχων κύρ Σπαντωνῆς προσκυνητῆς, ἐπὶ τῆς πατριαρχείας ἡμῶν ἐνεφάνη ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δόκιμος καὶ πιστός, ὑπήκοός τε, καὶ τῶ ὄντι προθυμώτατος, σεμνότητι μάλιστα καὶ εὐηθείᾳ αἰδεσίμω, εἰς προκοπὴν δὲ βίου καὶ σεμνότητι αὐξανόμενος, καὶ κατὰ πάντα εὐάρεστος, ἡμῶν τε καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐπόπταις ἀνυποκριτως φαινόμενος, καὶ ἡμῶν ποικίλαις ὑποθέσεσι, καὶ χρεῖαις ἀναγκαίαις τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγιωτάτου θρόνου ἐκεῖ συμπεριφερομένων, προστάτου

3 Two illegible words.

τε πιστοῦ δεομένων, εἰς ἐπίτροπον ἡμέτερον π(ατ)ριαρχικὸν ἐκψηφισάμεθα τοῦτον, ὀλοψύχως ἀποδεχθέντα τὴν προστασίαν, καὶ μετὰ πάσης τῆς προθυμίας προαιρεθέντα τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν δωρεάν, εὐλαβείας καὶ μόνης ἔνεκα ταῖς τυχοῦσαις ἡμῶν τε, καὶ τῷ ἀγιωτάτῳ καθ' ἡμᾶς θρόνῳ χρείαις ἀόκνως προϊστασθαι. Ὅθεν ἀμοιβαίῳ χρησάμενοι φρονήματι, ἐκρίναμεν εὐλογον, τῇ τῶν τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀγιωτάτης τοῦ Χ(ριστ)οῦ Ἐκκλησίας τροφίμων ὁμηγύρει, τοῦτον συγκαταλέξασθαι [...]⁴ ὀφικίῳ ἀναλόγῳ τοῖς τοῦ περὶ ἡμᾶς εὐαγοῦς κλήρου τοῦ π(ατ)ριαρχικοῦ συγκαταριθμισάσθαι, δωρεᾶς χάριν πν(ευματ)ικῆς, καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς φιλοτιμίας. Καὶ [...]⁵ χάριτι δωρεᾶ τε καὶ ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦ Παναγίου καὶ Τελεταρχικοῦ Πν(εύματος), διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς διατάξεως, ἱερολογίας τε, καὶ κανονικῆς χειροθεσίας προεχαρισάμεθα καὶ εἰς τὸ ὀφικίον τοῦ [μεγάλου]⁶ λογοθέτου ἐσφραγίσασθαι. Ὡστε εἶναι τοῦτον τὸν τιμιώτατον προσκυνητὴν κύρ Σπαντωνὴν, καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι, καὶ λέγεσθαι, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι γνωρίζεσθαι [μέγαν]⁷ λογοθέτην τούτου τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγιωτάτου καὶ ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου, τῆς μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας, ἔχοντα τὴν ἀνήκουσαν στάσιν καὶ τιμὴν, τῆς πρώτης πεντάδος, τοῦ περὶ ἡμᾶς εὐαγοῦς κλήρου, τοῦ π(ατ)ριαρχικοῦ. Ἄλλ' ἐπειδὴ τοὺς εἰς σφραγίδα ἐκκλησιαστικὴν προβεβιβασμένους, καὶ φιλοτιμία ἱερὰ τετιμημένους, γράμμασιν ἐφοδιάζεσθαι συστατικοῖς, παρὰ τῶν αὐτοῦς προχειρισμένων, ἀποστολικὴ διαταγὴ ἐστὶ, καὶ παραγγελία, εἰς παράστασιν τῆς ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ δωρηθείσης σφραγίδος καὶ χάριτος, ἢ μετριότης ἡμῶν τῷ τοιούτῳ ἐπακολουθοῦσα ἀποστολικῶ παραγγέλματι, διὰ τοῦ παρόντος αὐτῆς πατριαρχικοῦ, ἐνταλτηριώδους τε καὶ συστατικοῦ σφραγιστηρίου γράμματος συνιστώσα παρίστησι πᾶσιν αὐτὸν τοῦτον τὸν τιμιώτατον μέγαν λογοθέτην, τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγιωτάτου καὶ ἀποστολικοῦ θρόνου Ἀντιοχείας, κύριον Σπαντωνὴν προσκυνητὴν, υἱὸν αὐτῆς ἀγαπητὸν ἐν Κυρίῳ, ᾧ τίνι καὶ ἐπεδίδοται τούτῳ, εἰς διηνεκὴ μνήμην ἔνδειξόν τε ἀσφαλῆ, καὶ βεβαίαν παράστασιν. Ἐν Δαμασκῶ. Ἐν ἔτει σωτηριῶ ἀψλθ' μηνὶ Φευρουαρίου [correct Φεβρουαρίου] α' ἡ.

Ὁ ἐλέω Θεοῦ πατριάρχης τῆς μεγάλης Θεουπόλεως Ἀντιοχείας καὶ πάσης Ἀνατολῆς Σίλβεστρος.

4 One illegible word.

5 One illegible word or two.

6 Deleted from the text.

7 Deleted from the text.

Abbreviations

ANF = Archives Nationales de France.

AARMSI = *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, Bucharest.

ARMSL = *Academia Română. Memoriile Secțiunii Literare*, Bucharest.

AVPRI = Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (АВПРИ, Архив внешней политики Российской империи).

BnF = Bibliothèque nationale de France.

BOR = *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Bucharest.

BRISMES Bulletin = *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin*, London.

BRV I = Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche, 1508–1830*, Vol. I. 1508–1716, Bucharest: Stabilimentul grafic J. V. Socec, 1903.

BRV II = Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș, *Bibliografia românească veche, 1508–1830*, Vol. II. 1716–1808, Bucharest: Atelierele Socec & comp., Societate anonimă, 1910.

BRV III = Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoș, Dan Simonescu, *Bibliografia românească veche 1508–1830*, Vol. III. 1809–1830, Bucharest: Atelierele grafice Socec & Co., Soc. Anonimă română, 1912–1936.

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Chronos = *Chronos. Revue d'histoire de l'Université de Balamand*, al-Kurah.

Graf, GCAL III = Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*. Vol. III *Die Schriftsteller von der Mitte des 15. bis zum ende des 19. Jahrhunderts Melchiten, Maroniten*. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1949 (*Studi e Testi*, 146).

Nasrallah, HMLÉM IV.1 = Joseph Nasrallah, *Historie du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église Melchite du V^e au XX^e siècle. Contribution à l'étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne*, Vol. IV. *Période Ottomane 1516–1900*, tome 1. 1516–1724, Louvain/Paris: Éditions Peeters – Chez l'auteur, 1989.

Nasrallah, Haddad, HMLÉM IV.2 = Joseph Nasrallah, with Rachid Haddad, *Historie du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église Melchite du V^e au XX^e siècle. Contribution à l'étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne*, Vol. IV. *Époque Ottomane 1516–1900*, t. 2. 1724–1800, Louvain-Paris: Éditions Peeters – Chez l'auteur, 1989.

MS 124 Jerusalem = MS 124, Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Jerusalem.

MS 210 Ȧarișă = MS 210, Library of the Society of Saint Paul's Missionaries (Société des Missionnaires de Saint Paul), Ȧarișă.

MS Damascus = MS (unnumbered Greek manuscript), Library of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Damascus.

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RESEE = *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, Bucharest.

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Figures



Fig. 1: Georg Friedrich Schmidt, *The Greek Patriarch of Constantinople*, in Jacob Elsner, *Neueste Beschreibung derer Griechischen Christen in der Türrkey*, Berlin, Druckts Christian Ludwig Kunst, 1737, plate after p. 62. Philadelphia Museum of Art. <https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/14825> (Public Domain).



Fig. 2: Georg Friedrich Schmidt, *The Patriarch on Horseback*, in Jacob Elsner, *Neueste Beschreibung derer Griechischen Christen in der Tūrckey*, Berlin, 1737, plate after p. 72. Philadelphia Museum of Art. <https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/14828> (Public Domain).



Fig. 3: Chrysanthos Notaras, patriarch of Jerusalem (1707-1731), portrait in Chrysanthos Notaras, *Εισαγωγή εις τὰ γεωγραφικά και σφαιρικά*, Paris, 1716.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chrysanthos_Notaras.JPG (Public Domain).



Fig. 4: François Chéreau, portrait of *Jean-Baptiste-Louis Picon Viscount d'Andrezel*, after Hyacinthe Rigaud. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1716_-_Jean-Baptiste-Louis_Picon_d%27Andrezel_\(gr-Ch%C3%A9reau\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1716_-_Jean-Baptiste-Louis_Picon_d%27Andrezel_(gr-Ch%C3%A9reau).jpg) (Public Domain).



Fig. 5: *Nikolaos Mavrokordatos and his family*, fresco, Stavropoleos Monastery, Bucharest.
 Photo Daniel Mihail Constantinescu (By permission of the Stavropoleos Monastery).



Fig. 6: *John Mavrokordatos*, fresco, Stavropoleos Monastery, Bucharest. Photo Daniel Mihail Constantinescu (By permission of the Stavropoleos Monastery).



Fig. 7: Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Constantine Mavrokordatos*, miniature portrait on ivory (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest).



Fig. 8: Theodor Aman, portrait of *Gregory II Ghikas*.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theodor_Aman_-_Grigore_Ghica_II.jpg (Public Domain).



Fig. 9: *Mattheios Ghikas*, anonymous portrait, 19th century. National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%D0%9C%D0%B0%D1%82e%D1%96_%D0%93%D1%96%D0%BA%D0%B0_%D0%92%D0%B2_%C3%AE_n_An%C8%A2%D0%BB_1753.JPG (Public Domain).



Fig. 10: Theodor Aman, portrait of *Michael Rakovitzas*. <https://clasate.cimec.ro/Detaliu.asp?tit=pictura-de-sevalet--Aman-Theodor--Mihai-Racovita&k=5730D106AF514779AABCB923A2E7AA5F> (Public Domain Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0.).



Fig. 11: Greek and Arabic inscription above the door of the Saint Spyridon church in Bucharest, 1747. Photo in Vasile Radu, “Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei”, *Revista istorică română*, III, 1933, 1, p. 17 (Public Domain).



Fig. 12: *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, Iași, 1745, p. 9, beginning of the text (By permission of the Library of the Monastery of Balamand).

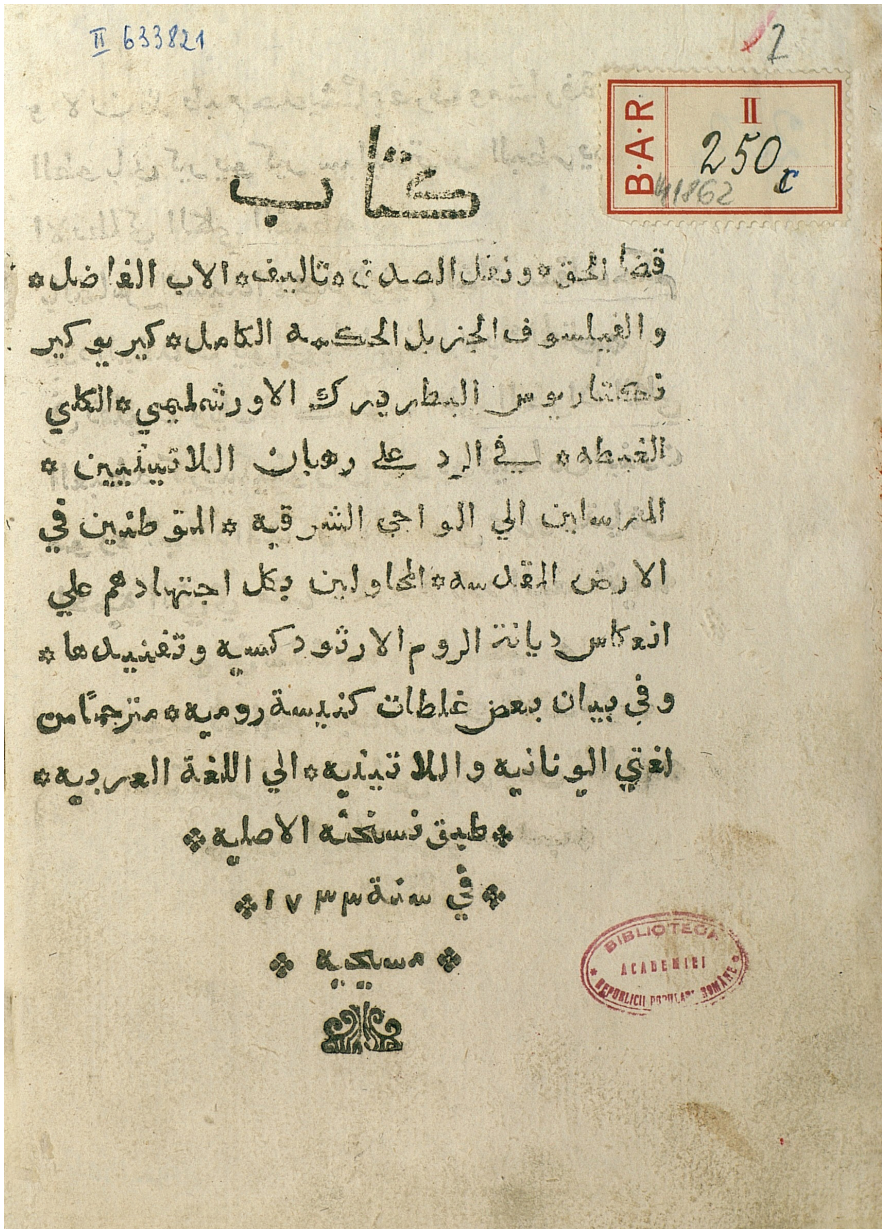


Fig. 13: Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Kitāb qaḍā al-ḥaqq wa-naql al-ṣiḍq*, Iași, 1746, title page (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest).

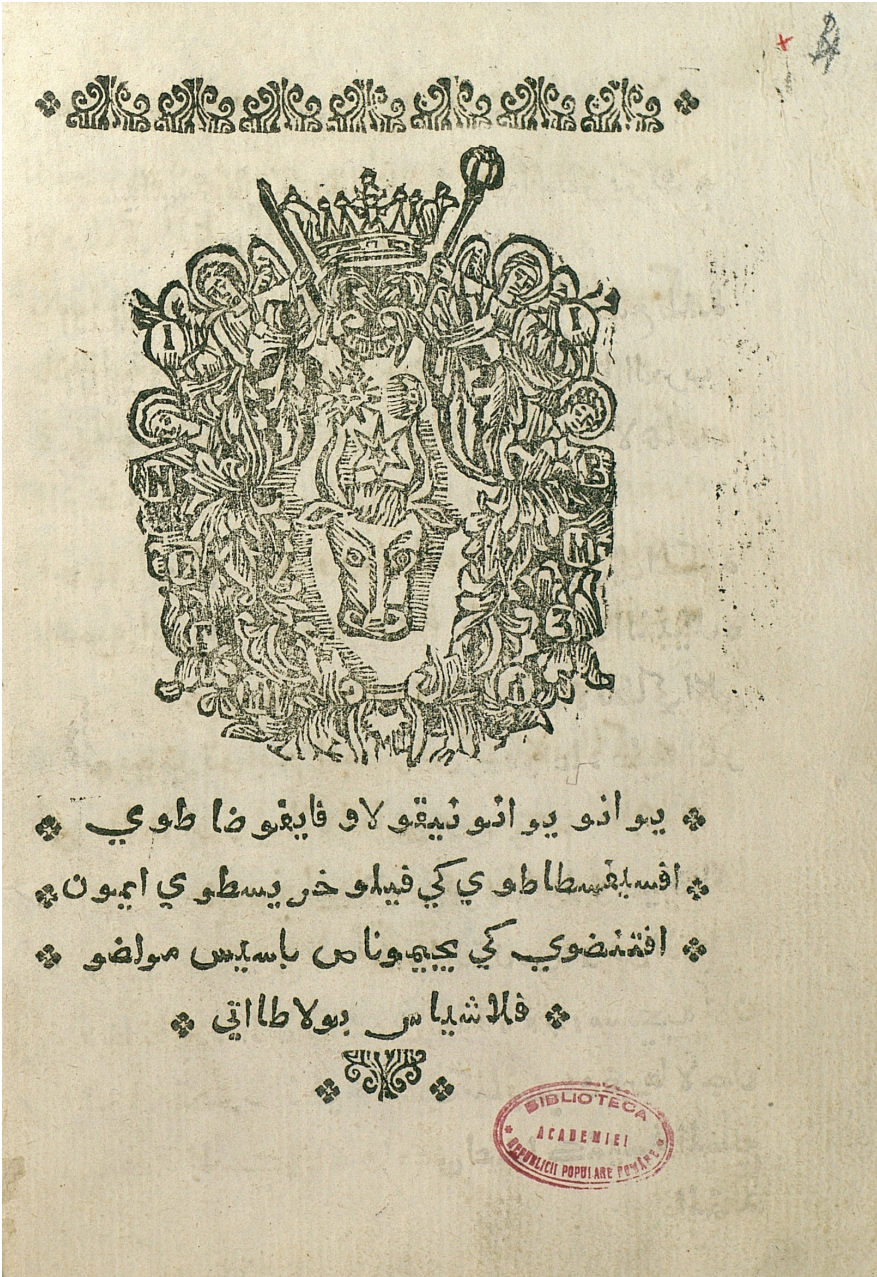


Fig. 14: John Mavrokordatos's coat of arms in Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Kitāb qaḍā al-ḥaqq wa-naql al-ṣiḍq*, Iași, 1746 (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest).

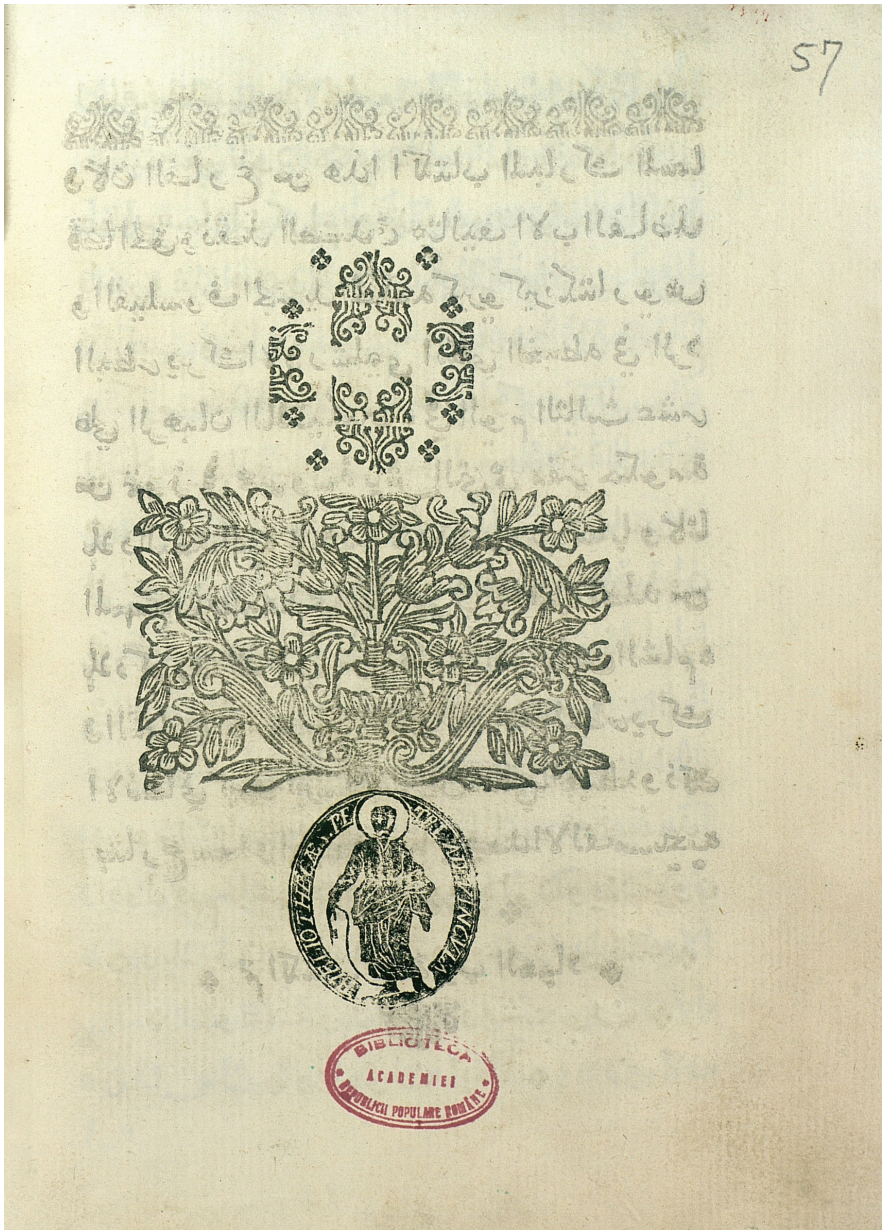


Fig. 15: Nektarios of Jerusalem, *Kitāb qaḍā al-ḥaqq wa-naql al-ṣiḍq*, Iași, 1746, last page (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest).

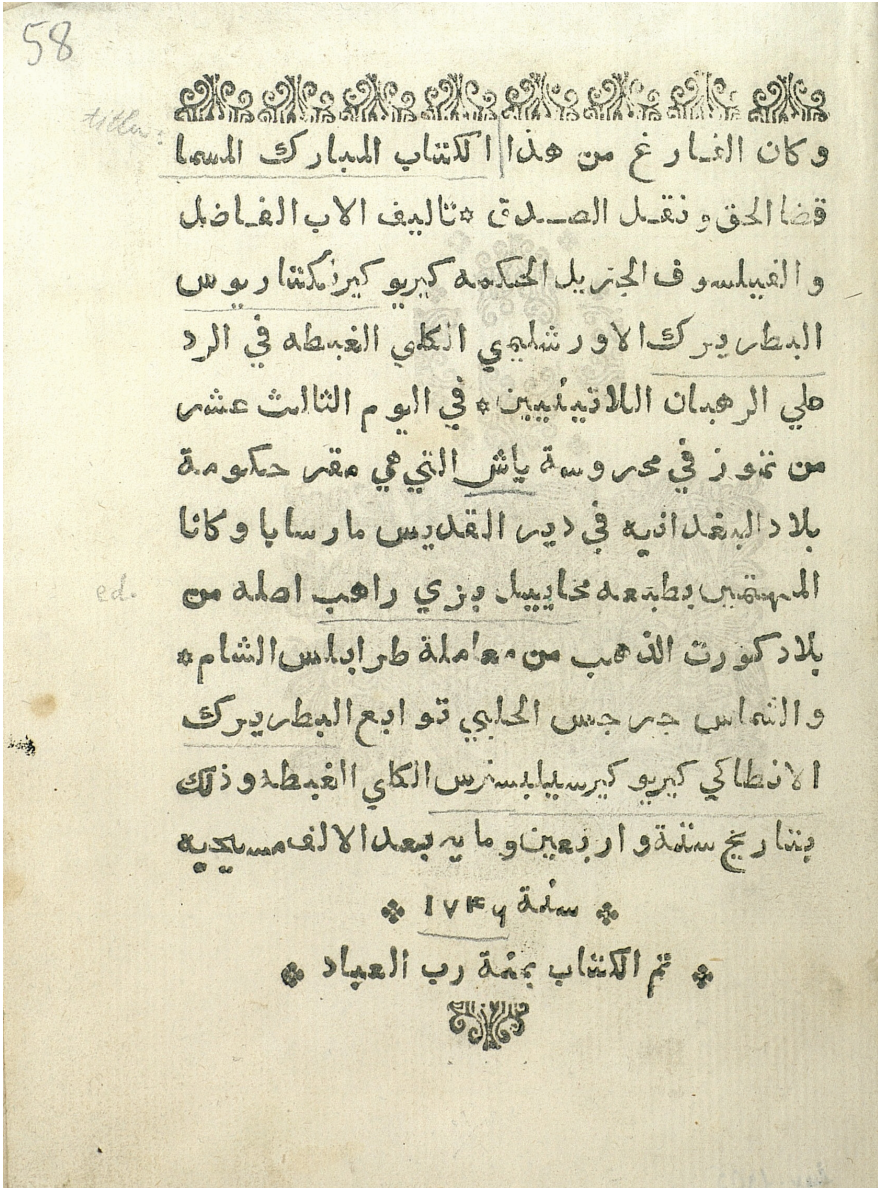


Fig. 16: Eustratios Argentis, *Risāla mukhtaṣara fī al-radd ‘alā ‘adam ghaḷaṭ bābāwāt Rūmiya*, first page (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest).

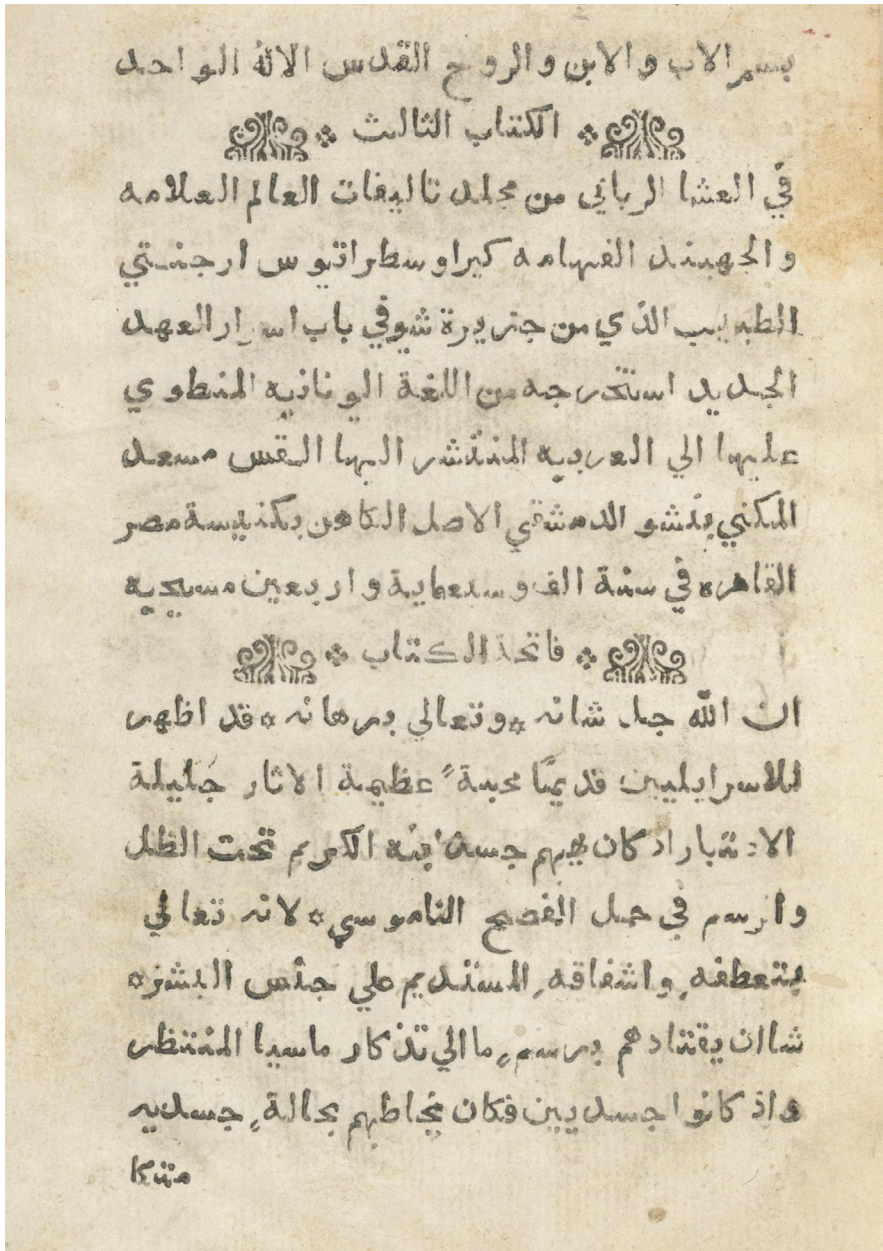


Fig. 17: Eustratios Argenti, *Fi al-'ashā al-Rabbāni*, Iasi, 1747, first page. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <https://tile.loc.gov/image-services/iiif/service:rbc:rbc0001:2023:2023gen554985:0010/full/pct:100/0/default.jpg> (Public Domain).

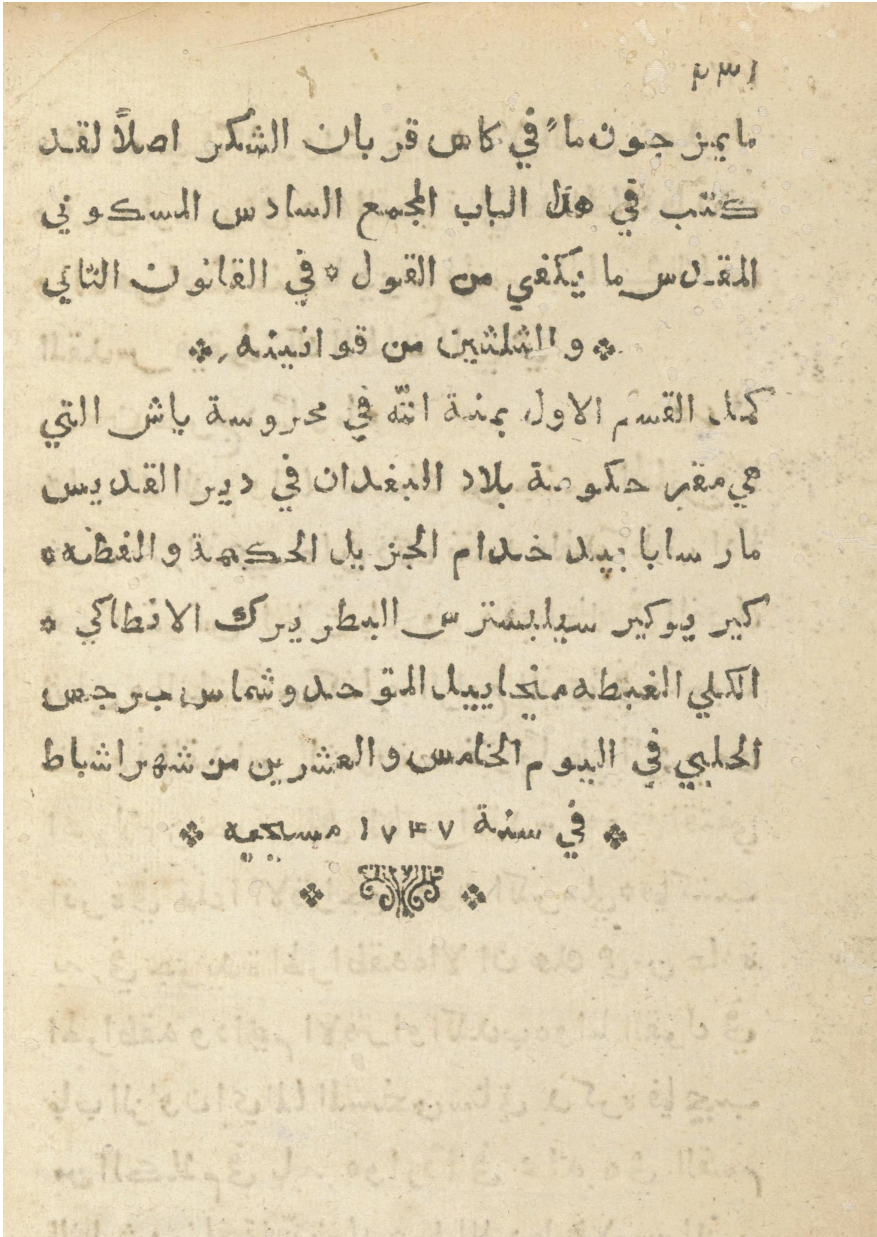


Fig. 18: Eustratios Argentis, *Fi al-'ashā al-Rabbānī*, Iași, 1747, last page. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbc0001.2023gen554985/?sp=249> (Public Domain).

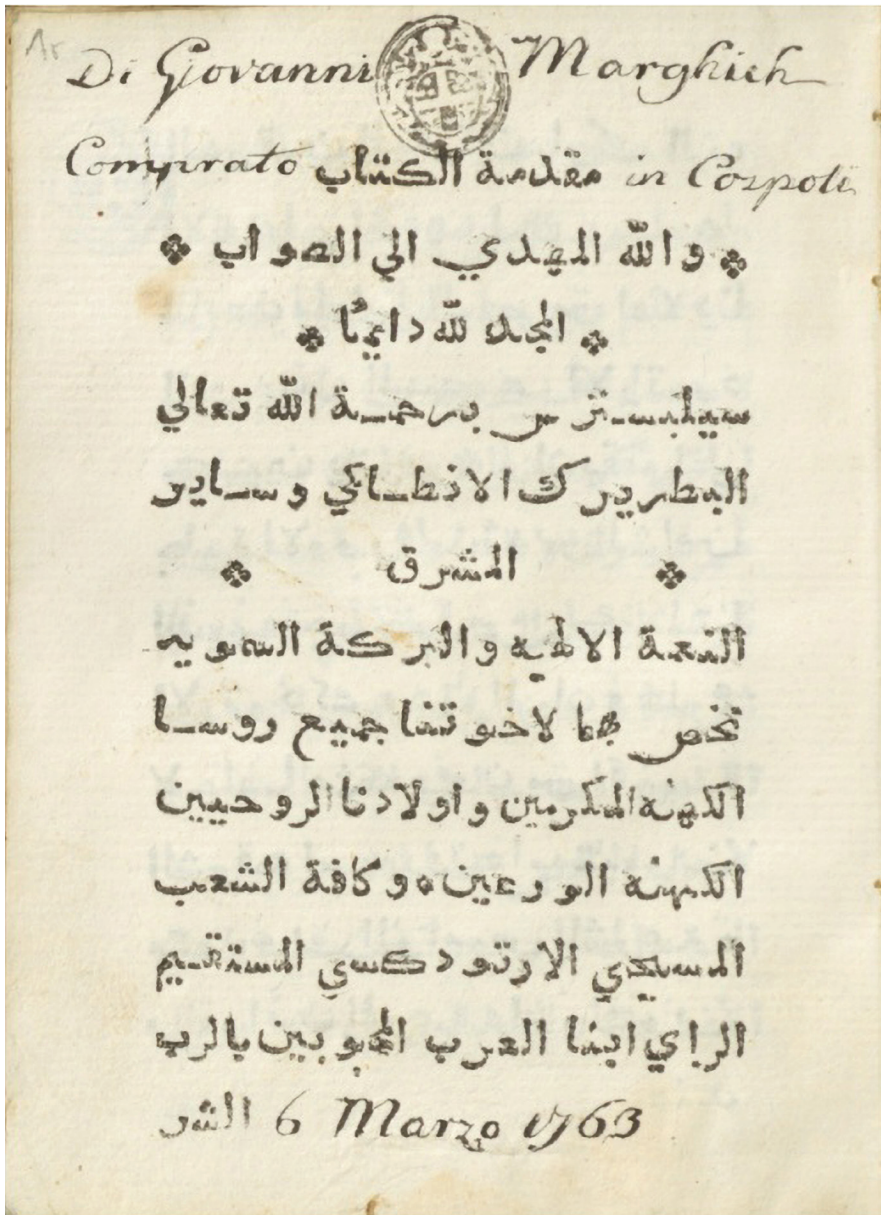


Fig. 19: Acts of the Synods of Constantinople, Bucharest, 1747, first page. Austrian National Library, ÖNB Vienna: 30.439-A.Alt Mag, fol. 1r (By permission of the Austrian National Library).

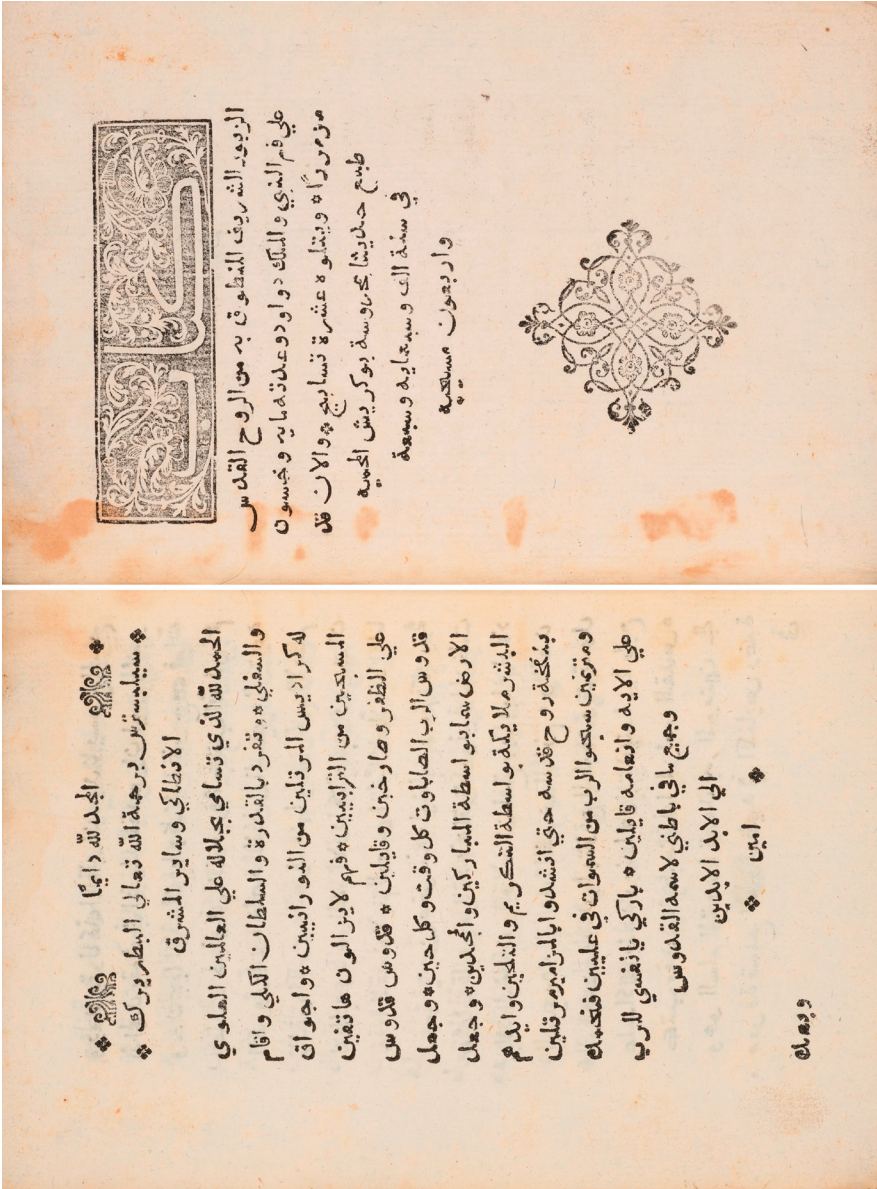


Fig. 20: *The Book of Psalms*, Bucharest, 1747, title page and first page. The John Rylands Research Institute and Library, The University of Manchester (Image provided by the John Rylands Research Institute and Library, The University of Manchester).



Fig. 21: David the King and Prophet in *The Book of Psalms*, Bucharest, 1747. The John Rylands Research Institute and Library, The University of Manchester (Image provided by the John Rylands Research Institute and Library, The University of Manchester).

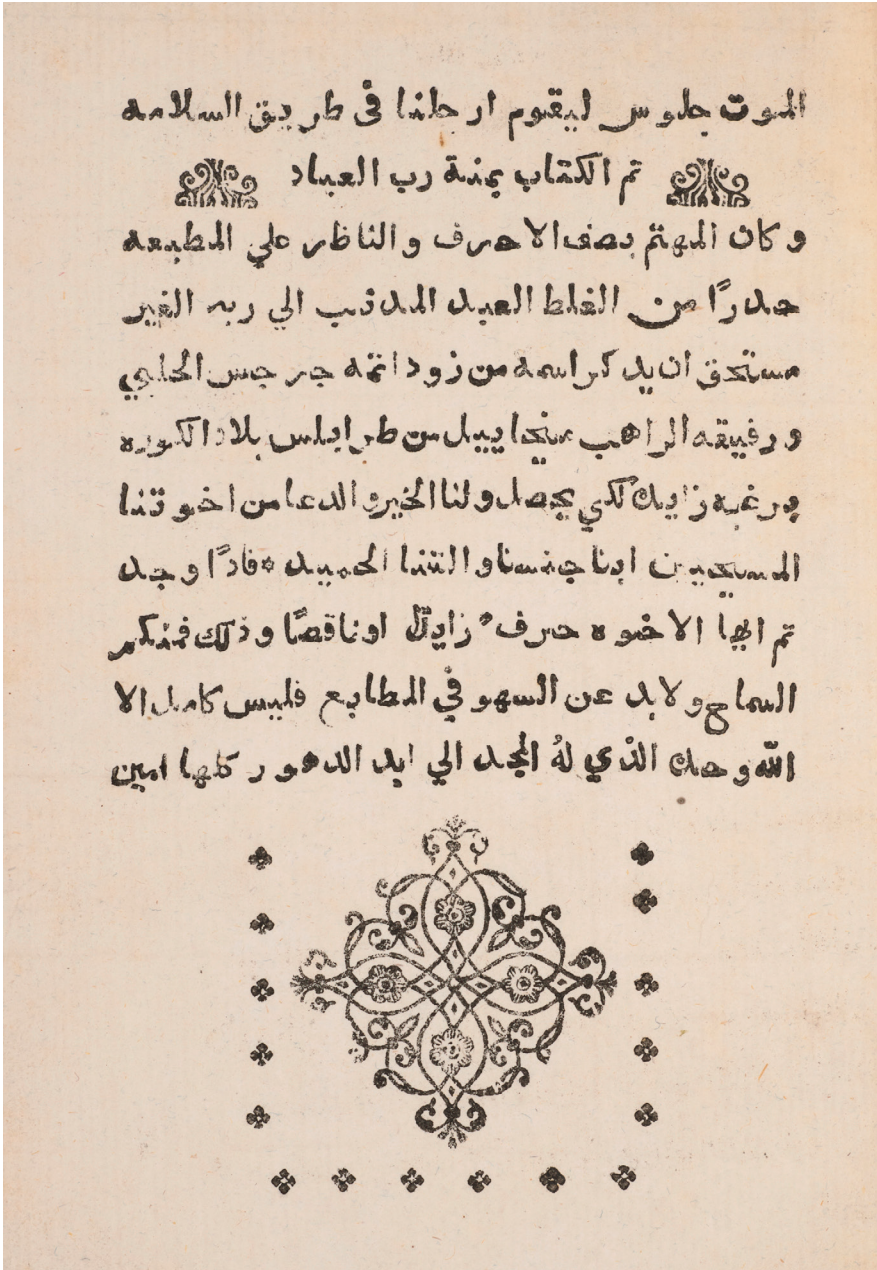


Fig. 22: *The Book of Psalms*, Bucharest, 1747, last page. The John Rylands Research Institute and Library, The University of Manchester (Image provided by the John Rylands Research Institute and Library, The University of Manchester).

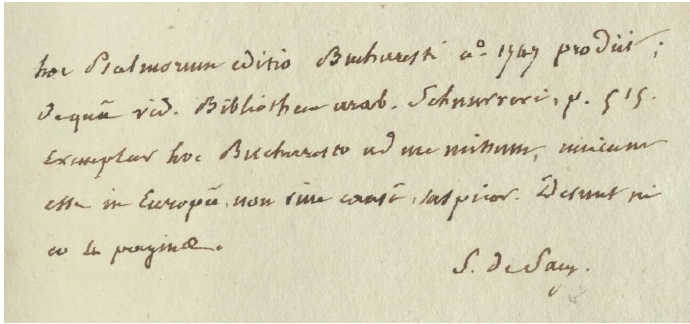


Fig. 23: Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, handwritten note in Latin in *The Book of Psalms*, Bucharest, 1747. Beinecke Library of the Yale University, New Haven, CT (Public Domain).

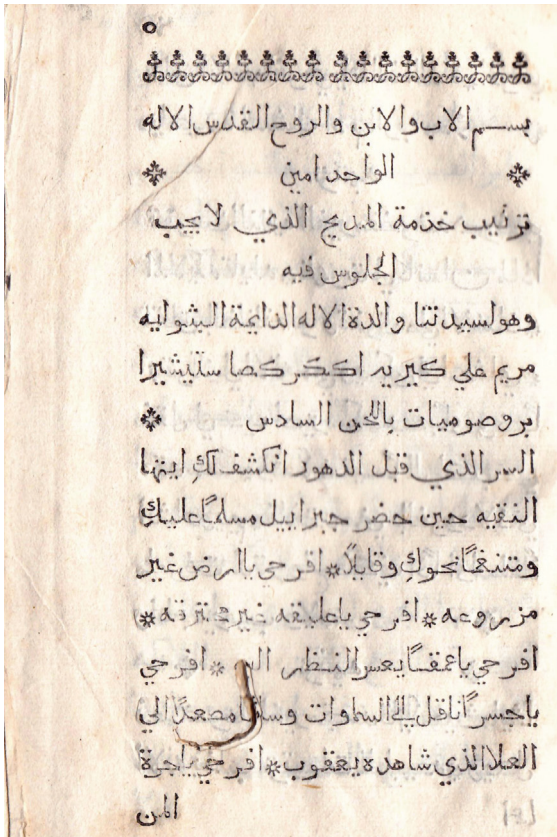


Fig. 24: *The Arabic Akhastos*, page 5. Private collection (Ioana Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands. The East European Connection*, Berlin/Boston, 2023, p. 418).



Fig. 25: *The Annunciation* in *The Arabic Akathistos*, page 4. Private collection (Ioana Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands. The East European Connection*, Berlin/Boston, 2023, p. 420).

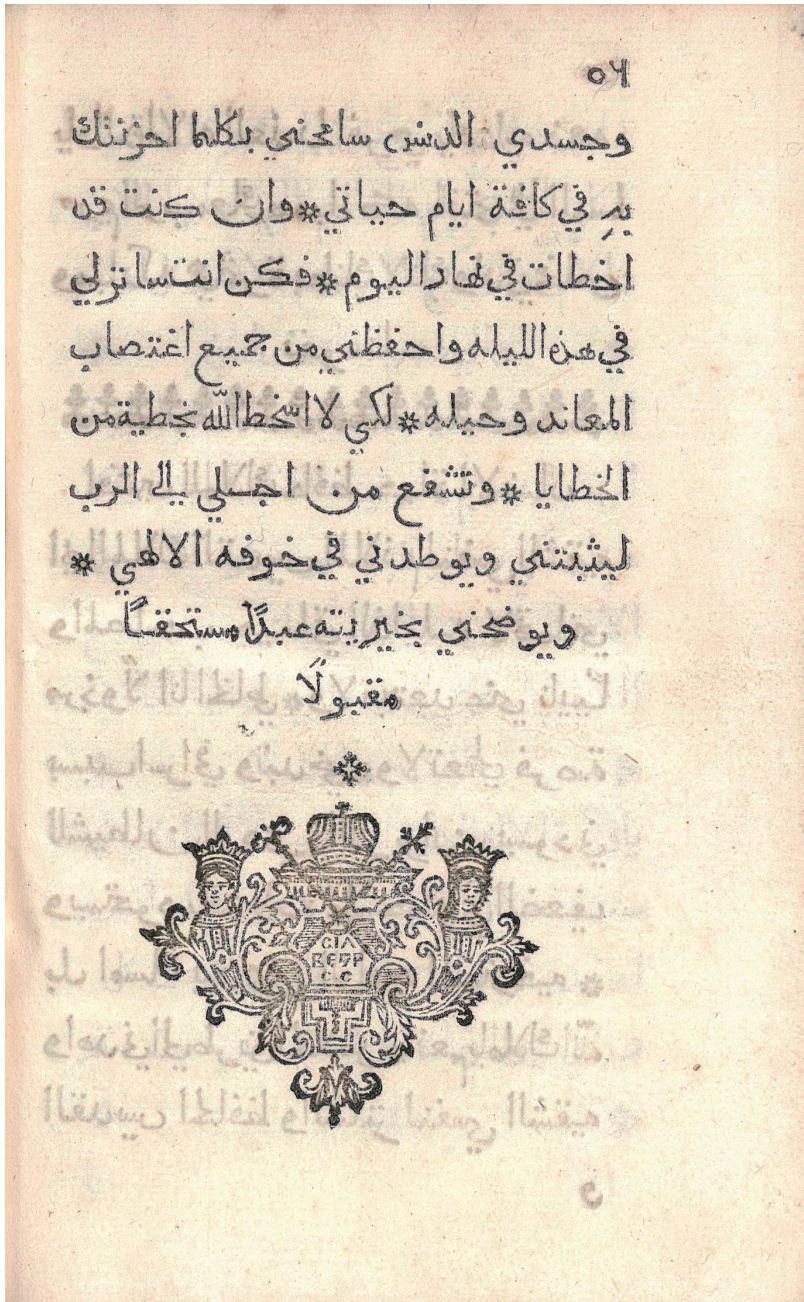


Fig. 26: *The Arabic Akathistos*, page 56. Private collection (Ioana Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands. The East European Connection*, Berlin/Boston, 2023, p. 424).

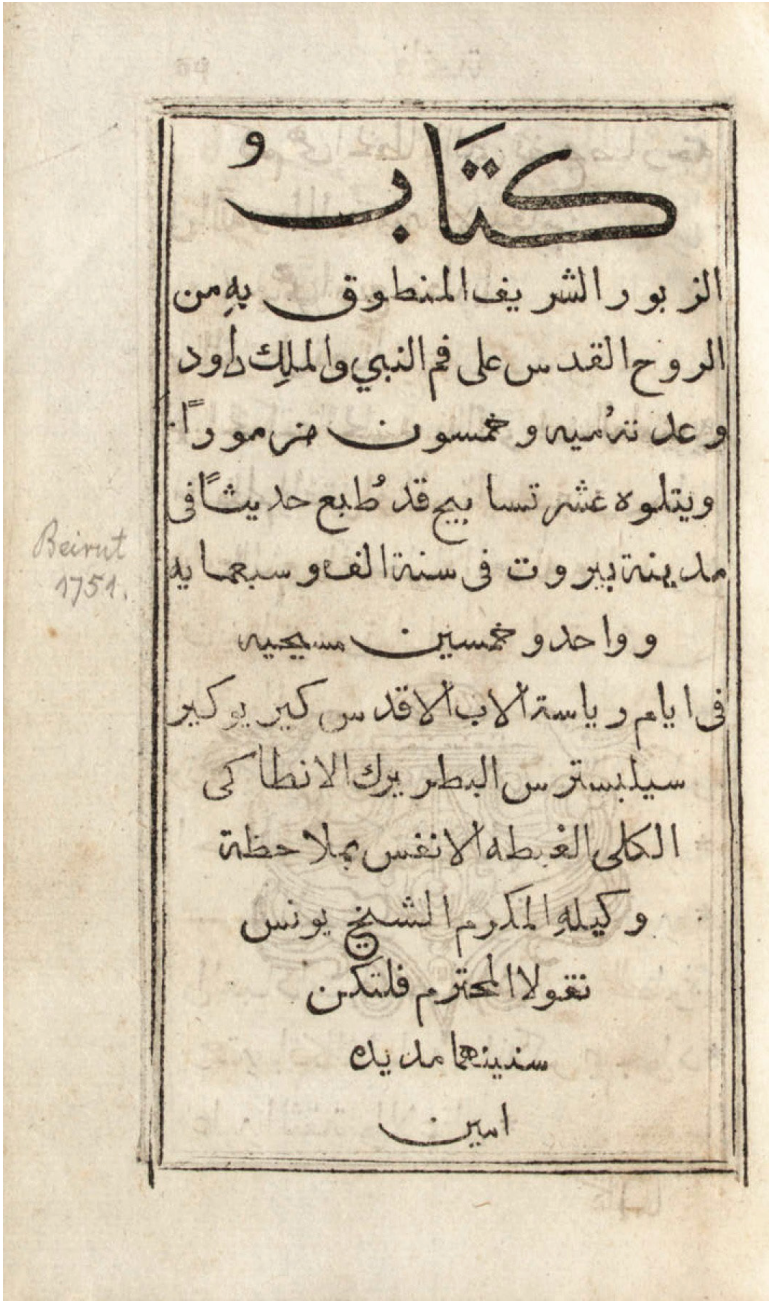


Fig. 27: The Book of Psalms, Beirut, 1751–1752, title page (By permission of the Uppsala University Library).

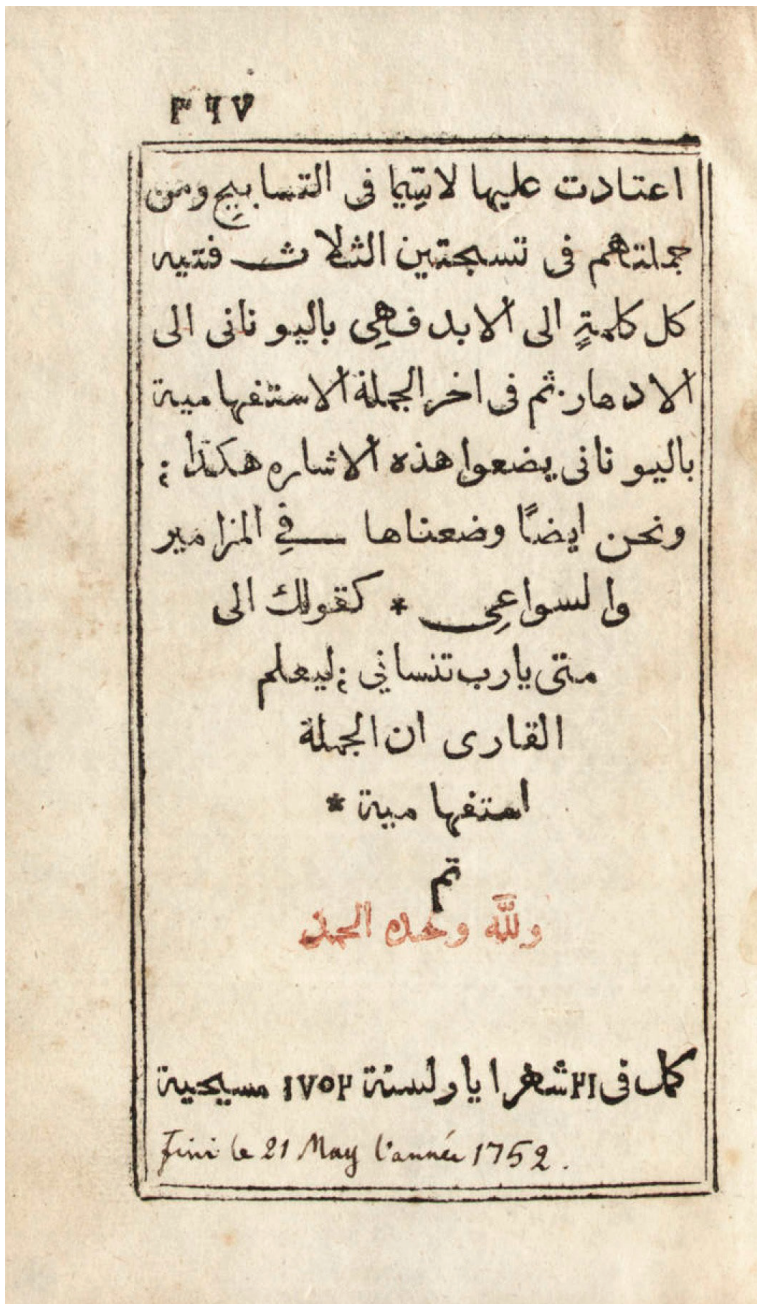


Fig. 28: *The Book of Psalms*, Beirut, 1751–1752, last page (By permission of the Uppsala University Library).

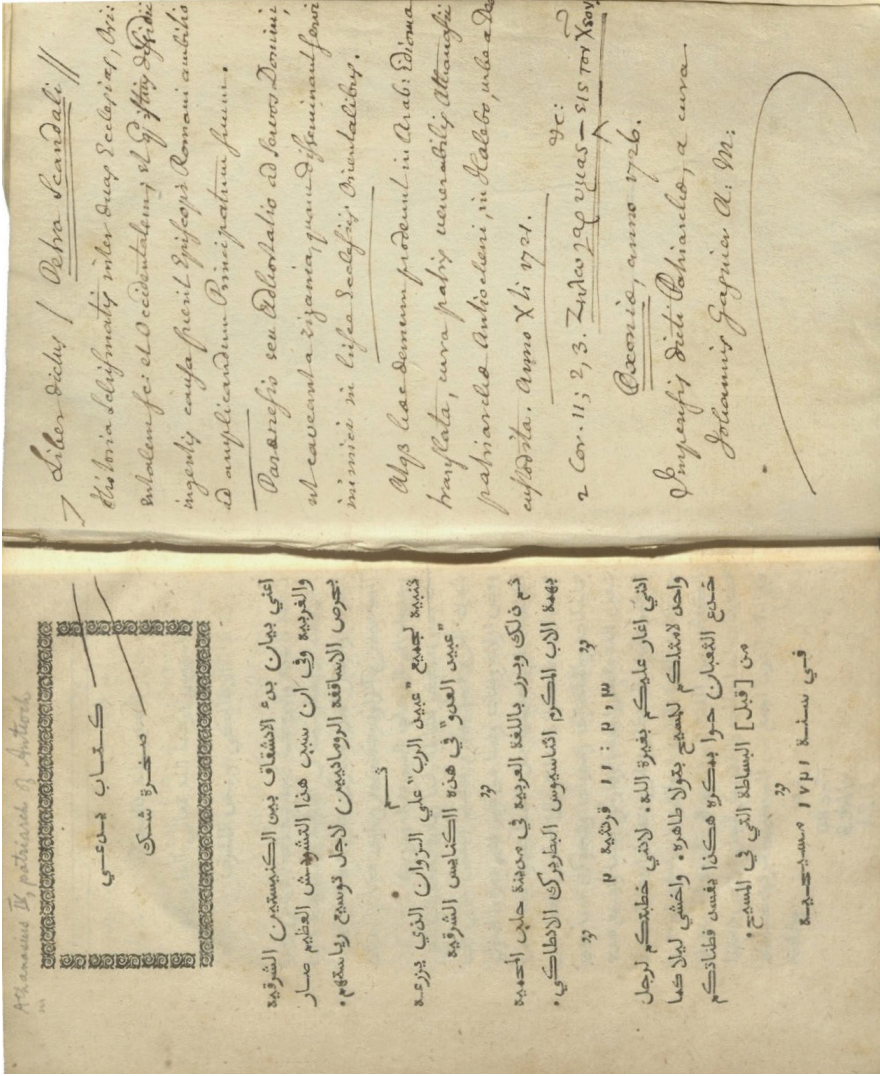


Fig. 29: Ilias Miniatis, *The Rock of Offence*, Oxford, 1726. Title page and handwritten note, probably by John (Jean) Gagnier. Beinecke Library of the Yale University in New Haven, CT (Public Domain).



Fig. 30: *The Book of Hours*, Beirut, 1751, title page. Private collection.

https://www.ebay.com/itm/192682478139?nma=true&si=OjpOcXiTL8uUddzRSwln%252F4XVsQ%253D&orig_cvip=true&nordt=true&rt=nc&_trksid=p2047675.l2557 (Public domain).



Fig. 31: *The Book of Hours*, Beirut, 1751, p. 194–195. Private collection. https://www.ebay.com/itm/192682478139?nma=true&si=OjpOcXiTL8uUddzJRswln%252F4XV%253D&orig_cvip=true&nordt=true&rt=nc&_trksid=p2047675.l2557 (Public domain).



Fig. 32: *The Book of Hours*, Beirut, 1751, p. 208–209. Private collection. https://www.ebay.com/itm/192682478139?nma=true&si=OjpOcXiTL8uUddzJRswln%252F4XV%253D&orig_cvip=true&nordt=true&rt=nc&_trksid=p2047675.l2557 (Public domain).

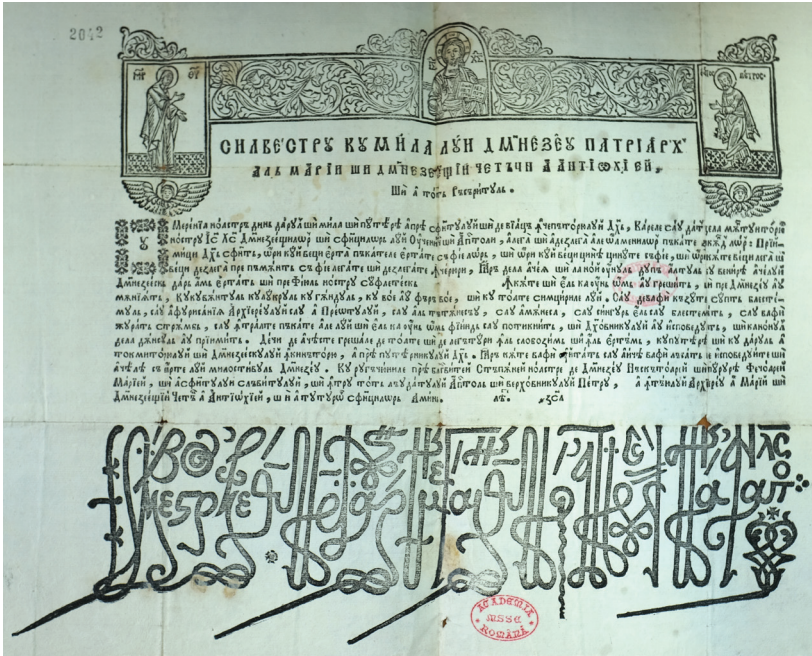


Fig. 33: Sylvester of Antioch, letter of absolution in Romanian, probably Bucharest, ca. 1730. *Colecția Foi Volante* 1323, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest. Photo Oana Iacubovschi (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy).



Fig. 34: Sylvester of Antioch, letter of absolution in Romanian, probably Iași, 1744/1745. *Colecția Foi Volante* 1327, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest. Photo Oana Iacubovschi (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy).



Fig. 35: Sylvester of Antioch, letter of absolution in Romanian, probably Bucharest, 1746/1747. *Colecția Foi Volante* 1329, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest. Photo Oana Iacubovschi (By permission of the Library of the Romanian Academy).



Fig. 36: Sylvester of Antioch, letter of absolution in Arabic, 1724 (Vasileios Nassour, *Σιλβέστρος πατριάρχης Αντιοχείας (1724–1766) κατά τις αραβικές και ελληνικές πηγές*, unpublished PhD thesis, Thessaloniki, 1992, p. 221).



Fig. 37: Sylvester of Antioch, letter of absolution in Greek, 1724. Composite image based on sections of MS no. 87, Dayr Sayyidat al-Balamand (By permission of the Library of the Monastery of Balamand).



Fig. 38: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *Jesus Christ Pantokrator*, 1726. Private collection (© Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images).



Fig. 39: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Mother of God Hope and Shelter of the Christians*, 1726. Private collection (© Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images).



Fig. 40: *Jesus Christ Pantokrator*, copy of Sylvester's icon, probably 20th century. Church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas (al-Balad), Tripoli, Lebanon (Ray Jabre Mouawad, *Icônes et églises de Tripoli – Liban*, Beirut, 2023, p. 99).



Fig. 41: *The Mother of God Hope and Shelter of the Christians*, copy of Sylvester's icon, probably 20th century. Church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas (al-Balad), Tripoli, Lebanon (Ray Jabre Mouawad, *Icônes et églises de Tripoli – Liban*, Beirut, 2023, p. 99).



Fig. 42: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Holy Mandylion*, 1746, church of Hypapantē, Chora, Patmos. Photograph of Kōnstantia Kephala (By permission of Kōnstantia Kephala).



Fig. 43: Sylvester of Antioch, border with scenes from the life and veneration of Saint Spyridon, 1747/1748. Formerly in the Church of Saint Spyridon “the Old” (Sf. Spiridon Vechi), Bucharest. Unique color slide in Virgil Căndea’s archive, ca. 1969 (By permission of Ioana Feodorov).

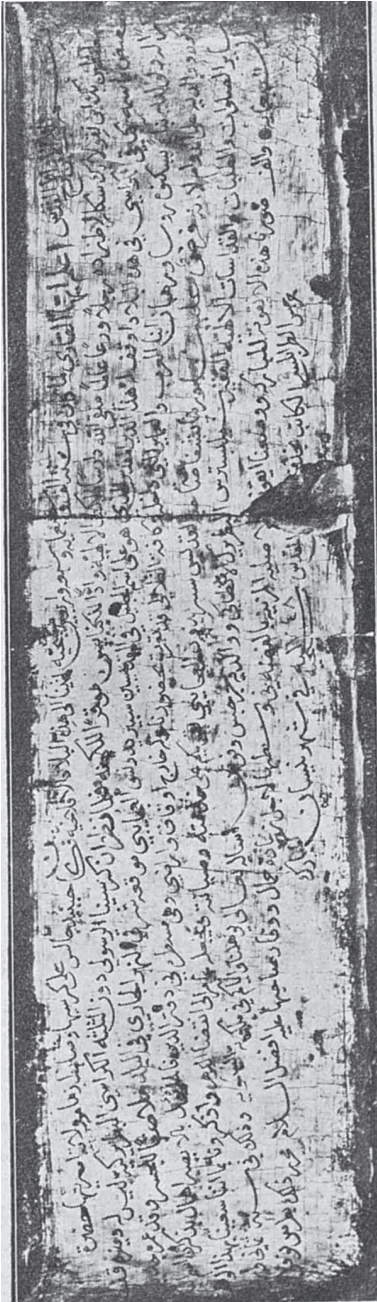


Fig. 44: Arabic inscription, 1748, on the icon of Saint Spyridon (Vasile Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei", *Revista istorică română*, III, 1933, 1, p. 22).



Fig. 45: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *Saint Christina of Tyre*. Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington, WV (Photo courtesy of Joseph B. Touma and The Huntington Museum of Art).



Fig. 46: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *Jesus Christ Pantokrator*, Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George, Beirut, Lebanon (Raphaëlle Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient. De l'Euphrate au Nil*, Paris, 2022, p. 522. By permission of the author).



Fig. 47: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Mother of God Hodēgētria*, Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George, Beirut (Raphaëlle Ziadé, *L'art des chrétiens d'Orient. De l'Euphrate au Nil*, Paris, 2022, p. 524 . By permission of the author).



Fig. 48: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *Jesus Christ King of Kings and Great Archpriest*, 1759, before restoration, church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 49: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Mother of God with the Passion Symbols*, 1759, before restoration. Church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 50: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *Jesus Christ King of Kings and Great Archpriest*, 1759, after restoration. Church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 51: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Mother of God with the Passion Symbols*, 1759, after restoration, church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 52: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Great Martyr Saint George*, 1759, before restoration, church of Saint George al-Ḥamīdiya, Homs, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 53: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Great Martyr Saint George*, 1759, after restoration, church of Saint George al-Ḥamidiya, Homs, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 54: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Great Martyr Saint George*, 1765, Greek Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, Syria (Photo courtesy of Prof. Nada Hélou).



Fig. 55: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *Jacob's Dream* (*Jacob's Ladder*), 1765, Greek Orthodox Monastery of Our Lady of Şaydnāyā, Syria (Photo courtesy of Prof. Nada Hélou).



Fig. 56: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *Jesus Christ and Saint John the Baptist*, 1756, church of Saint John the Baptist, Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saint Thekla in Ma'lūla, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 57: Sylvester of Antioch, icon of *The Mother of God and Saint Thekla, the First Martyr*, 1756, church of Saint John the Baptist, Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saint Thekla in Ma'lūla, Syria (Photo courtesy of Fr. Dr. Spyridon Fayad).



Fig. 58: Patriarch Alexander Țaḥḥān holding the collection of Sylvester of Antioch's letters and the Greek *History of the Patriarchs of Antioch* by Athanasios Dabbās (Marcu Beza, *Urme românești în Răsăritul ortodox*, 2nd ed., Bucharest, 1937, p. 164).

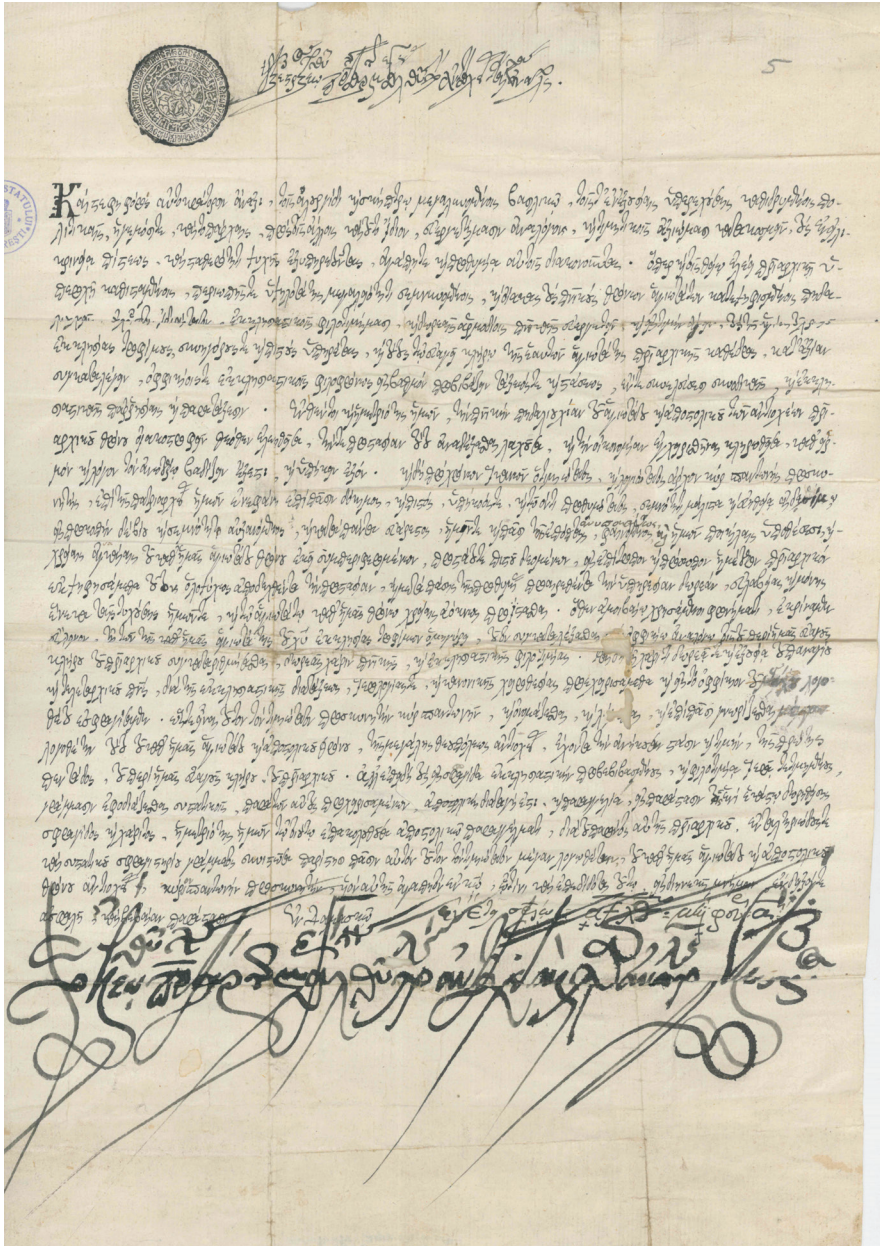


Fig. 59: Document issued by Sylvester of Antioch on February 1, 1739, Damascus. National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, *Achizitii Noi*, MMMXL/3 (By permission of the National Archives of Romania).



Fig. 60: Sylvester of Antioch's seal. National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, *Achiziții Noi*, MMMXL/3 (By permission of the National Archives of Romania).



Fig. 61: Sylvester of Antioch's seal on an Ottoman document. C.ADL.00035.02074.001, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, İstanbul (Public Domain).

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