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### In Between Dār al-Islām and the 'Lands of the Christians': Three Christian Arabic Travel Narratives From the Early Modern/Ottoman Period (Mid-17th-Early 18th Centuries)

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**Abstract**  
In Between *Dār al-Islām* and the ‘Lands of the Christians’:  
Three Christian Arabic Travel Narratives  
From the Early Modern/Ottoman Period  
(Mid-17<sup>th</sup>-Early 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)

Iraj Sheidaee

2021

This study analyzes closely the Arabic travel narratives of three Christians from the Ottoman Levant and Near East, who travelled to what they called the ‘lands of the Christians’—*i.e.* Europe. Paul of Aleppo (Būluṣ al-Ḥalabī), an archdeacon of the Orthodox Church, travelled from 1652 to 1659 to South-eastern and Eastern Europe: the Danubian Principalities (modern Romania), the ‘lands of the Cossacks’ (Ukraine), and Muscovite Russia. Paul’s travels were part of an Arab Orthodox ecclesial mission in the company of his father, Patriarch Makarios III ibn al-Za‘īm of the see of Antioch. He recorded his travel experiences in one of the most extensive Arabic travelogues: the *Safrat al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs* (‘Travels of Patriarch Makarios’). Elias of Mosul (Ilyās al-Mawṣili), an East Syriac ‘Uniate’ priest, travelled throughout Western Europe from 1668 to 1675, then sailed from Spain across the Atlantic to the ‘New World’ (Tk. *Yenki Dünya*). There he toured Spain’s American colonies for another eight years until 1683, penning later the very first Arabic account of the Americas: the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* (‘Book of Travels’). Ḥannā Diyāb, a young Maronite from a textile merchant family in Aleppo, travelled in Ottoman territory as *tarjumān* (‘interpreter’) for a French antiquities-collector named Paul Lucas—joining him eventually to Paris between 1709 to 1710. Decades later he wrote the engaging account of his youthful travel adventures, which has only quite recently become known to scholars.

None of these Arabic texts are unknown, although they remain understudied. In the case of Paul of Aleppo’s *Safra*, no complete Arabic edition has been attempted to date; the only existing English translation is an inaccurate and outdated one, published in three volumes between 1829-1836. This study

aims therefore to address a lacuna in our understanding of Arabic travel literature from a long period—between the ‘classical’ medieval and the modern—which has suffered in the past from scholarly neglect due to its characterization as a period of decline, or ‘decadence’ (*inhiṭāṭ*). These travelogues written by Ottoman Christian *ra‘āyā* who called *dār al-islām* home reveal in fact some of the diversity and richness of Arabic literature from this period. The unique travel experiences they record, as Eastern Christians “in between *dār al-islām* and the ‘lands of the Christians’ (*bilād al-masīḥīyīn*)”, in many ways defy the conventional dichotomies (*eg.* East/West, Muslim/Christian) with which we often approach historic travel between the Islamic world and Europe. The modern period famously saw Christian intellectuals in the Arab world take a central role in the region’s cultural *Nahḍa*. A major contributing factor to this were Eastern Christians’ renewed and deepened contact, beginning in the Ottoman period, with the Christian world of Europe—East *and* West. This contact had a transformative impact on their identity—one which, more often than not (paradoxically perhaps) consolidated their sense of belonging to their Ottoman homeland. The three travellers in this dissertation were among the growing number of Arabic-speaking Christians who took new opportunities to travel abroad and see the ‘lands of the Christians’ for themselves. Their accounts—approached here not as historical primary sources, but as literary works in their own right—tell an important part of this story of transformation.

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From the Early Modern/Ottoman Period  
(Mid-17<sup>th</sup>-Early 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)

A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
Of  
Yale University  
In Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

By  
Iraj Sheidaee

Dissertation Director: Robyn Creswell

June 2021

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In Eternal Memory:  
Archim. Ephraim Moraitis  
(1928-†2019)

Τίμιος ἐναντίον Κυρίου ὁ θάνατος τῶν ὁσίων αὐτοῦ

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## Acknowledgements

This dissertation was a long period in gestation—far longer than I expected. This fact can partly be attributed to the nature of work on Arabic texts in their unwieldy manuscript form, composed within literary milieus that are still little-understood, and for which there exist few scholarly guideposts. Partly it can be attributed to the less-than-ideal circumstances under which I (like many others) often worked over the past years. The greatest part however is to be attributed to none other than my own deficiencies—for which I take full responsibility. That this dissertation has come to fruition at all, is due to the generous assistance I received from a number of people whom I take the opportunity to acknowledge here.

I must pay tribute first of all to the late Professor Wolfhart P. Heinrichs (1941-2014), with whom I completed my Master's degree at Harvard's NELC department before coming to Yale. I consider myself indeed *privileged* for the chance I had to learn from a scholar of his unmatched calibre—as anyone who knew him would attest. Heinrichs represented a bygone era of scholarship. He embodied the best tradition of European philological study of Arab-Islamic civilization. His erudition was of a breadth that contemporary education and life circumstances no longer foster. The relatively short time I spent studying with him was formative for me, and has continued bearing fruit over the years. I am not yet a scholar; I may never attain that stature in my lifetime. But I have met and studied with a real scholar.

Any study of pre-modern Arabic texts is impossible without a sound philological grounding: this I received, thankfully, from my time at Harvard with Professor Heinrichs. I came to Yale's Comparative Literature department however, in order to learn to read literature in



what I consider to be a more hermeneutical way: one that attempts not only to correctly understand, but also interpret the many layers of meaning which human texts contain. This is of course, as anyone knows, a less circumscribed, and far more potentially hazardous venture. The excesses which it can, and all too often leads to, are painfully apparent.

In this endeavor I was fortunate to have the expert guidance of my dissertation advisor, Robyn Creswell. Robyn was in a way cornered into becoming my advisor: he arrived at Yale during a low ebb there for Arabic studies, when there was virtually no one else I could approach to take on the role. He graciously accepted—much to the betterment of this dissertation's outcome. As my advisor, Robyn had to read chapters from this dissertation when they were in a form not yet fit to be read by anybody. The accomplished literary critic that he is, he steered me away from excesses in textual interpretation which I frequently committed, highlighted major flaws and lacunae in my arguments, and he helped me overcome some of my worst habits as a writer. What coherence and readability this dissertation has attained now in its final form, is nearly all the result of his advising.

Many others have assisted me during my time at Yale. David Quint, Katie Trumpener, Ayesha Ramachandran, Rudiger Campe, were all sources of support and encouragement for this project. Aaron Butts (now at CUA), who taught me Syriac, was an unfailing ally and mentor. The entire Arabic teaching team at the NELC department—especially Sarab al-Ani—always ensured I had a place among them. Stephen Davis and Gerhard Böwering are two eminent scholars who both gave me generously of their time during the earliest stages, while I brainstormed possible topics for research. Shawkat Toorawa arrived at Yale, unfortunately just as I

had to leave: I will not forget his kindness during our brief overlap, and I regret sincerely that I could not benefit more from his presence—likewise Samuel Hodgkin, who came to Yale well after I had already left, and who quite unexpectedly became a strong source of support for this project in its final stages.

The idea for this project was first conceived during an extensive trip through Romania and parts of the Ukraine in the summer of 2015. As regular reading for the road, I carried with me Paul of Aleppo's *Safrat al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs*; in it were described, in copious and fascinating detail—from the highly unique vantage-point of two 17<sup>th</sup> century Arab Christian clergymen from Aleppo, on their way between Ottoman Syria and Muscovite Russia—the same towns, monuments and landscapes which I now encountered. During that same trip, at the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, I met with Ioana Feodorov, the scholar who has done more research and published more than anybody else on Paul of Aleppo, as well as more broadly on the fertile spiritual/cultural links formed in the early modern/Ottoman period between the Arab Orthodox of Syria and the Romanians of the Danubian Principalities. At our meeting (and later *via* correspondence), Ioana shared liberally with me not only her expertise on Paul and his world, but she also alerted me to the publication that same year—with potential relevance to my research—of the ground-breaking French translation of Ḥannā Diyāb's travelogue, *D'Alep à Paris*. The latter tip proved to be pivotal. Diyāb's text then had yet to make the waves that it has among scholars in the years since: immediately I read its pages, I knew it would become central to my project, alongside Paul's *Safra*.

Of course, without the generous financial assistance of Yale University, none of this project would have been possible. In the three and a half years since I left the United States to live in Australia, not having access here to any library whose collection and resources can be compared to those at Yale, the SML library staff have been a boon: not once did they fail in promptly delivering a scanned copy of *any* book-chapter or article from a periodical which I requested from them.

More than all these, I must thank my family, especially my parents, whose love and support have carried me all these years since the womb and who instilled in me a thirst for learning since childhood. And most important of all, I must thank my beloved wife, Maria. She, more than anyone else, has together with me borne the full burden of this dissertation's completion. May she, and everyone else who has helped me reach this point—both those whom I have mentioned here, and those whom I have failed to mention—find repayment for their kindness one hundred-fold!

## List of Abbreviations

### *References:*

- GCAL* Graf, G. *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*. 5 vols. Studi e Testi 118, 133, 146, 147, 172. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–53.
- EI* *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, P.J. Bearman (Volumes X, XI, XII), Th. Bianquis (Volumes X, XI, XII), et al.
- HMLEM* Nasrallah, J. *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du Ve au XXe siècle*, 3 Vols. Louvain: Peeters, 1979-1996.

### *MSS. collections:*

- BnF Bibliothèque nationale de France  
 BL British Library  
 Vat. Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana

### *Main Texts:*

- Safra* MS. Ar. 6016 (BnF)  
*Kitāb Siyāḥa* MS Oriental 3537 (BL)  
 Sbath 254 ———(Vat.)

### *Languages:*

- Ar. Arabic  
 Mid. Ar. Middle Arabic  
 Tk. Turkish  
 Gk. Greek  
 Syr. Syriac  
 Pers. Persian  
 Rom. Romanian

## Introduction

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Aleppo emerged as the main Ottoman caravan city along the spice and silk trade routes linking Asia with Europe, East with West. It became a hub not only of intense international commerce, but of cultural activity and exchange: The early modern roots of the modern Arab *Nahḍa* ('renaissance') can be traced here—as can many of the socio-economic transformations that heralded modernity across *dar al-islām*.<sup>1</sup>

Ottoman Aleppo stood out for its large, diverse and thriving, mostly Arabic-speaking Christian *ra'āyā* population.<sup>2</sup> The city's make-up was a reflection of how Eastern Christian<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A great deal of historical research into life in Ottoman Aleppo has been done by Bruce Masters; see "Trading Diasporas and 'Nations': The Genesis of National Identities in Ottoman Aleppo." *The International History Review* 9, no. 3 (1987): 345-67; *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600-1750* (New York: New York University Press, 1988); "Aleppo: The Ottoman Empire's Caravan City" in Edhem Eldem, Daniel Hoffman, and Bruce Masters, eds., *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 17-78. Hilary Kilpatrick has explored Aleppo's early modern cultural and literary milieu in "From Literatur to Adab: The Literary Renaissance in Aleppo around 1700," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 58 (3-4), (2006): 195-220. An excellent collection of scholarly essays on all aspects of Ottoman Aleppo has also recently appeared, see Stefan Winter and Mafalda Ade, eds., *Aleppo and its Hinterland in the Ottoman Period / Alep et sa province à l'époque ottoman* (Brill: Leiden, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Due to the city's mercantile importance in this period, Aleppo saw a large-scale influx of both local Christians from surrounding Syrian and Anatolian villages, and of Catholic merchants and missionaries from Europe. The migrants swelled the city's Christian *ra'āyā* population and, as Bruce Masters writes, "created a more diverse mixture of Christian sects than could be found in any city of the empire before the late eighteenth century." see "The Millet Wars in Aleppo, 1726–1821: An Ottoman Perspective" in *Aleppo and its Hinterland*, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I have adopted the term 'Eastern Christian' to refer collectively to Christians living within *dār al-islām*—in Jean-Paul Ghobrial's words a heterogenous "set of communities with a complicated relationship to each other", who had no single term to refer to themselves collectively; see "Migration from within and without: The Problem of Eastern Christians in Early Modern Europe", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (2017): 159-160, n. 7. The term 'Eastern Christian' of course includes other 'non-Western' Christians who weren't living within *dār al-islām* or the Ottoman empire—eg. Ethiopian Orthodox *Tāwahaḍo* Christians, St Thomas/Malankara Christians of Kerala, India; and even Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox Christians. It includes also the diversity of European Christian ethnic groups who lived in the Ottoman empire's Balkan provinces and principalities. When referring to the authors of the texts I am studying, I have avoided using the other obvious term 'Arab Christian'—even though they all spoke and wrote

communities emerged in the Ottoman period from a prolonged period of demographic/cultural decline and retreat to the margins of the Islamic polity during the previous Mamluk period. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as is well-known, Christian intellectuals—starting in Aleppo—re-entered the mainstream of Arab-Islamic cultural life on a large scale, taking a leading role in the Arabic *Nahḍa*. This modern movement was preceded however by a particularly Christian Arabic *nahḍa* ('renaissance') which begins much earlier in time, with the Ottoman annexation of Syria in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries—what is called the 'early modern' period—Aleppo was the regional focal point of an Eastern Christian religious/cultural 'renaissance' expressed entirely in Arabic. This Christian Arabic *nahḍa* cut across confessional lines.

A main catalyst for this Christian Arabic *nahḍa* was the renewed contacts Christians in *dār al-islām* made with the wider 'European' Christian world: the 'lands of the Christians (*bilād al-masīḥīyīn*)'. Eastern Christians were in the front line in the major cultural encounters that shaped the 'modern Middle East': they experienced the encounter with Europe mostly locally—especially in cities like Aleppo—long before European ideas and cultural forms were imported *en masse* into *dār al-islām* and assimilated by educated and upwardly-mobile Muslims. The encounter radically altered Eastern Christians' sense of their identity. From early on, they found themselves frequently navigating a volatile ideological frontier region between their

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in Arabic—because this implies an ethno-cultural affiliation. The Eastern Christian communities of the Near East were never uniform in their adoption of Arabic, whether as a vernacular, literary, or liturgical language. With the exception of the Melkite Orthodox of the Levant (whom I do refer to as 'Arab Orthodox'), who adopted an 'Arab' identity quite soon after the first Arab-Islamic conquests of their homeland, most other communities did not—and continue in many cases not to. The term 'Christian Arabic' on the other hand refers in a more limited way to literature in Arabic written by Christians, for a primarily Christian reading audience.

ethnolinguistic kinship with the Arab-Islamic world, and their renewed spiritual ties to the European ‘lands of the Christians’; between their political loyalty as *ra‘āyā* to the Ottoman Muslim sultans, and their natural affection for Christian kings in Europe, who posed as champions of their minority rights, and whom they saw as living icons of Christian sovereignty (*mulk*)—an ideal that remained consistently inaccessible for Christians in the Near East since the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

An important part of this story is told in the travel narratives of those Eastern Christians in this period who travelled in increasing numbers beyond the Ottoman empire to the ‘lands of the Christians’. These made direct contact with European society and recorded their transformative observations and experiences in their native language: Arabic. Their perspectives on Christian European society were highly unique as Christians from *dār al-islām*: in some ways similar to, but in more ways different from those of contemporary Arab Muslim travellers who travelled the same routes.

This dissertation will analyze closely three of the most prominent—and significant from a literary perspective—Christian Arabic travelogues from this period: Paul of Aleppo’s *Safrat al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs* (‘Travels of Patriarch Makarios’), Elias of Mosul’s *Kitāb Siyāḥa* (‘Book of Travels’), and Ḥannā Diyāb’s untitled travelogue/memoir from Aleppo to Paris.<sup>4</sup> These three

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<sup>4</sup> Besides these three texts there are a number of other Christian Arabic travel narratives from this period, although they are all much shorter in length and of lesser literary significance. A list of some of the known ones include:

—Muṭrān ʿĪsā’s account of his journey to Russia with Orthodox Patriarch Joachim (Yuwākīm) ibn Ḍaw’ in 1585-86, recorded in verse; MSS.: Ar. 312 (BnF), Beirut 133 (AUB); Graf, *GCAL*, Vol. III, 89; Hilary Kilpatrick, ‘Visions of Different Cities: Travellers as Poets in the Early Ottoman Period’, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi, Nuova Serie*, Vol. 3 (2008): 67-71.

travel-authors came from different confessional communities; yet they shared in common a strong connection with Ottoman Aleppo. Even though each traveller took a quite different travel route, all three texts are accounts of the ‘lands of the Christians’. What the term ‘lands of the Christians’ meant to each traveller depended, as we will see below, on which Christian community he belonged to. To date these three travelogues remain—while not unknown to scholars—still understudied as Arabic literary texts, for reasons that will be discussed at the end of this Introduction. The texts are introduced individually below.

### I. *Paul of Aleppo’s Safrat al-Baṭṭriyark Makāriyūs (‘Travels of Patriarch Makarios’)*

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—Ra’d’s account of his journey to Venice in 1655-6; MS.: Sbath 89 (Vat.); Carsten-Michael Walbiner, ed., “Rihlat Ra’d min Ḥalab ilā ’l-Bunduqīya”, in Nagi Edelby and Pierre Masri, eds., *Mélanges en mémoire de Mgr Néophytos Edelby (1920-1995)* (Beirut: CEDRAC, Université St. Joseph, 2005), 367-383; Graf, *GCAL*, Vol. III, 157; Hilary Kilpatrick, “Between Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī: Arabic Travel Accounts of the Early Ottoman Period” *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 11:2 (2008): 241-242.

—Yuhannā Naqqāsh and Tūmā Kurbaj, two monks’ account of their journey to Rome in 1775; MS.: Ṣarbā 261.1 (Archives of Couvent de Saint-Saveur [*Dayr al-Mukhalliṣ*] Ṣarbā, Lebanon); Michel Abras, “Le voyage de deux moines melkites en Italie de Nord en 1775”, in eds. Bernard Heyberger and Carsten-Michael Walbiner, *Les Européens vus par les Libanais à l’époque ottoman* (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2002), 59-65.

—Khiḍr al-Mawṣili’s account of his journey to Rome; Louis Cheikho, ed., “Rihlat al-Qass Khiḍr al-Mawṣili al-Kaldānī min al-Mawṣil ilā Rūmiya wa mā jarā lahū fi ṭarīqihī wa fi ’l-madīna al-muqaddasa”, *Al-Mashriq*, Vol. 13 (1910): 581-592, 656-668, 735-744, 835-843.

—Monk Afrām (Ephraim)’s pilgrimage from Damascus to Mount Sinai in 1635-6; MSS.: Beirut 133, 134, Ar. 286 (Vat.), Ar. 312 (BnF), Balamand 181; Louis Cheikho, ed., “Sharḥ ‘an Dayr Ṭūr Sīnā al-Muqaddas”, *Al-Mashriq*, Vol. 9 (1906): 736-43, 794-99; French Translation: Guidi, I. *Une description arabe du Sinaï*, in *Revue biblique* N.S.3 (1906): 433-42; Carsten-Michael Walbiner, “Ein Christlich-Araber Bericht über eine Pilgerfahrt von Damaskus zum Berge Sinai in den Jahren 1635/36”, *Parole de l’Orient*, Vol. 24 (1999): 319-337.

—Khalil Ṣabbāgh’s caravan pilgrimage from Cairo to Mount Sinai in 1753; MS.: Ar. 313 (BnF); Louis Cheikho, ed. “Rihlat Khalil Ṣabbāgh ilā Ṭūr Sīnā”, *Al-Mashriq*, Vol. 7 (1904): 958-968, 1003-1012.

—Metropolitan Simon’s account his journey to India in 1701; Khalil S. Khalil, “La relation du voyage en Inde en 1701 du métropolitain chaldéen Simon, 16 Août 1720”, *Parole de l’Orient* 9 (1979-1980), 277-303.

—Anonymous account of a journey to Palestine, Egypt, Rome, Constantinople; MS.: Ar. 286 (Vat.); French Translation: Lébédew, Olga. *Codex 286 du Vatican. Récits de voyages d’un Arabe. Traduction de l’arabe* (St. Petersburg, 1902); according the Graf, who compared it with the MS., the latter translation is highly flawed, cf. *CCAL*, Vol. III, 155.



While making their arduous way home to Syria from Muscovite Russia, the Arab Orthodox delegation headed by Makarios (Mākāriyūs) III ibn al-Za‘īm, Patriarch of Antioch, and his travel-companion, secretary and son, Paul of Aleppo (Būluṣ al-Ḥalabī)<sup>5</sup>, sojourned in Wallachia for the second time in their journey during the Paschal period in late March of 1657. Here news reached them of an imminent Turkish-Tatar advance through the region, forcing them to take temporary refuge in the nearby southern Carpathian mountains.<sup>6</sup> These mountains were significant for the renowned and historic Orthodox convents that were nestled in them; Paul and his father seized the opportunity for a minor pilgrimage. Setting out from Târgoviște, their first major stop was the famous Cozia Monastery built on the Olt river near Călimănești. While soaking in the idyllic monastic surroundings, Paul learns of the existence, in a nearby library, of a ‘hidden treasure’ awaiting discovery: a rare 10<sup>th</sup> century exposition of the Psalms in Greek,

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<sup>5</sup> I use the English, rather than the Arabic version of his name throughout this dissertation, since this is the name by which he has already become known and recognized outside the field of Arabic studies.

<sup>6</sup> Another chilling piece of news reached them at this same time: On March 24, 1657, Patriarch Parthenios III of Constantinople—one of Makarios’s senior brother-hierarchs in the Orthodox *millet-i-Rûm*—was executed in Istanbul on order of Sultan Mehmed IV. The official accusation against Parthenios was political treason, based on his intercepted correspondence with the Russians Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich—with whom Makarios himself had recently enjoyed warm relations in Russia. The news brought home to the Arab clergymen, on an even more personal level, the political dangers of their travels outside of Ottoman territory; see Chapt. 2, Sect. VI; *Safra*, fols. 268<sup>v</sup>-269<sup>r</sup>; Paul din Alep, *Jurnal de călătorie în Molodova și Valahia*, ed. and trans. Ioana Feodorov (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2014), 341, n. 833. Parthenios’s execution was politically, not religiously motivated; however, he entered the Orthodox Church’s hagiography as a ‘neomartyr’, for his conscientious refusal, when given the chance by the Ottoman authorities, to have his life spared by converting to Islam; see Nomikos Michael Vaporis, *Witnesses for Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000), 114-115.

compiled by Niketas David Paphlagon<sup>7</sup> not found in any European library. I quote below at some length from Paul's travelogue, the *Safraṭ al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs*<sup>8</sup>, where he records:

We heard that in the possession of Kyr Tsi [sic] Constantine, the Katakozinos, Bostanik (بوستانيك) of the late Matthei Beg of Wallachia, there was a large and most precious book, from the imperial collection of St. Sophia; being an Exposition of the Psalms of the Prophet David; which St. Nicetas, Metropolitan of Syrus, had amassed, with great labour, from all the writings of the holy doctors of the Church, and others, by extracting the explanation given by each of them, and making the whole into one large volume in Greek, consisting of three hundred of the largest-size folio pages. We were told by that eminently learned man, Kyr Païsius, the Sciot, (who during our absence in these countries had come from Jerusalem to Aleppo, and preached a sermon in the church there, as he afterwards informed us,) that he had travelled into all the European countries, and resided in the great city of Rome for a length of time; — that he went up into the Pope's Library, the number of religious and pious books in which amounts to seventy-two thousand copies, each single; and this is a thing well known; — that, among them all, he was unable to find a second copy of this book (the Exposition of the Psalms), which is therefore unique in the world. To the same effect we were told by many. There are indeed to be found small and singular books in explanation of the Psalms, by Theodorus Bishop of Corsica (قورص) and other doctors; but this St. Nicetas made a collection of all the expositions, and united them all in one volume, as we said before [...] This valuable compilation, not likely to found in any but such an imperial library whence it was taken, many had been desirous of copying; but it came not within their power, for two reasons; the first, because its master and owner would not leave it in their hands, being unwilling that there should exist a second copy; the second reason was, its being of so large a size, and such extensive matter: so that some persons had actually begun to copy it; but after having done a part, they grew tired: and of this we saw some proofs.

As soon as I, the poor writer of these memoirs, heard the eulogium of this valuable book, I exerted my whole endeavour, and, by the power of the Lord the Messiah, the assistance of my father and the blessing of his prayers, I got it home to our lodgings. By the guidance of the Almighty, we found a Priest, named Baba Yani, from Scio, a fine Greek writer, versed in all the depths of language, and possessed of boundless science, whom we engaged to make a copy. As the love wine is an innate propensity of the true-born Greek, I did not cease at the present juncture to steal away his senses, till we carried him up with us to this convent, where we forced him to stay and write. Each day we appointed him an allowance of two okkas of wine, for his dinner and supper; and

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<sup>7</sup> A prolific Byzantine writer from the late 9<sup>th</sup> to early 10<sup>th</sup> century; see Alexander Kazhdan, "Niketas David Paphlagon" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); on the Psalms commentary that Paul and Makarios discovered, see G. Dorival, "Le Commentaire sur les Psaumes de Nicétas David (début du 10<sup>e</sup> siècle)", *Revue des Études Byzantines*, Vol. 39 (1981): 272-300.

<sup>8</sup> From here on in this dissertation, I will refer it as *Safra*.

his sense was sobered, and his powers of mind shone forth in all their brightness, and by the power of God he finished the book; at the beginning and the end of which, the aforesaid Metropolitan of Gaza placed a title-page, giving this account and explanation; viz. That, under circumstances, when this invaluable treasure was hidden, &c., the Creator sent the Father and Lord Patriarch, Kyr Macarius of Antioch, with his son, to discover it and bring it forth, to the attainment of their own premium and reward in heaven, and to the benefit of the whole Christian Church, &c. — The expense of which we incurred with this book, till the completion of the copy, was above one hundred rials. Afterwards, when we returned to our own country, to Aleppo, whither we took with us the aforesaid Baba Yani, I made him write a second copy, handsomer than the first: for it was our intention, with the will of God, some time during the course of our life, to send the book to be printed in the country of the Franks, as well for our own benefit, as that for that of the whole Church of Christ. Should this, please God, be accomplished, we intended to begin translating the book into Arabic; and for this purpose we beseech the Almighty to grant us peace and tranquillity of mind! A reason also for copying it a second time, was, a fear of its being lost at sea, or meeting with any accident whilst printing; and thus so valuable a gem should perish: which God forbid! No; it was much better, in that case, that a second copy should remain safe in our possession

We obtained moreover, from the aforesaid Metropolitan of Gaza, another book in Greek, the contents of which he had gathered from every country and from many authors. He named it the *Χρησμός*, or Book of Oracles; and it was perfectly unique, there being no other copy of it whatever in existence...Of this book I had two copies taken by the same writer; but it was after encountering great difficulty in persuading the proprietor to give it us to copy; for he, that is, the Metropolitan of Gaza, was altogether unwilling, until we gained his consent by several presents, and shamed him into the liberality of allowing us to do so...Afterwards, the said prelate sent us a letter from this country informing us, that when he was in the country of the Majars, they had plundered him, and taken every thing he had; and among other things, that they had robbed him of this very book. Praise be to God, who was pleased to inspire us with His grace, to exert our diligence in taking a copy of it! for otherwise it would have been lost to the world, and the Metropolitan's labour on it would have been uselessly expended. He sent to intreat us that we would get him a copy of it written, to supply his loss; and to God be all glory, always and for ever, in all circumstances, Amen!<sup>9</sup>

This is a remarkable passage from Paul's *Safra*. Reading it closely gives us a fitting introduction into this understudied text's richness, and helps us understand some of the features of

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<sup>9</sup> Paul of Aleppo, *The Travels of Macarius: Patriarch of Antioch: written by his attendant archdeacon, Paul of Aleppo, in Arabic*, Vol. II, trans. F.C. Belfour (London: Oriental Translation Committee, 1836) 342-344. The choice of translation here is deliberate (see below). From this point onwards, all other translations from the *Safra* in this dissertation will be my own, made directly from MS. Ar. 6016, preserved at BnF (referred to as *Safra*). For the original Arabic text of this translated passage, see *Safra*, fol. 270.

the Arab Orthodox cultural renaissance that forms the background to Paul and Makarios's travels—what some scholars have called the 'Melkite *nahḍa*' of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup>

The ambience in this passage is overall late medieval. Paul displays his literary skill at 'mixing styles', moving seamlessly between gravity and humor, between edifying and entertaining his readers. Within the wider traditional framework of a pious pilgrimage to a holy place, Paul weaves an amusing secondary tale of cunning subterfuge, of roguery. The way Paul and Makarios acquire their copy of the manuscript, even if "by the guidance of the Almighty" as Paul affirms, is not much different from the way a pair of *tufaylīs*, or *schnorrers*, would procure their free meal from an unsuspecting host. This is familiar territory to readers of late medieval narrative genres like the European picaresque novel or the Arabic *maqāmāt*. Paul doesn't shrink, for the sake of humor, from emphasizing the irony in the fact that these two senior clergymen are leading a fellow priest into (minor) sin for the sake of accomplishing a very holy task, "to the attainment of their own reward in Heaven and to the benefit of the whole Christian Church." This humor is cleverly balanced by the gravity and magnitude of the holy task which Paul and Makarios are performing on behalf of their Orthodox coreligionists in the recovery of this lost "invaluable treasure." What has seemed until this passage in Paul's narrative like a series of unlucky coincidences that brought these two Syrians on this unplanned pilgrimage through the remote mountains of Oltenia, is discovered to have been the guiding hand of "the Creator"

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<sup>10</sup> cf. Constantine A. Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians Under the Ottomans 1516-1831*, trans. Brittany Pfeiffer Noble and Samuel Noble (Jordanville, NY: Jordanville Seminary Press, 2016), 440.

Himself all along; the same hand which now also silently blesses from above even this innocent beguiling of a fellow priest.

Just below the surface we may observe the encroachment of early modern elements on the late medieval ambience of this passage. Paul's *Safra* has been rightly described by Hilary Kilpatrick as a 'Journeying Towards Modernity'.<sup>11</sup> This passage, in fact, "proves the *Safra* belongs to different world from that of classical Arabic literature."<sup>12</sup> Central here is another theme familiar to all students of classical Arabic civilization: the 'journey in search of knowledge (*riḥla fi ṭalabi 'l-'ilm*)'—a seminal concept to the Arabic *Riḥla* genre and to medieval Arab-Islamic intellectual culture as a whole—echoed here in the entire story of clergymen's discovery of the rare manuscript and the pains they take to procure a copy and preserve it for future generations. Immediately we recognize Paul's as something more than a medieval-style *riḥla fi ṭalabi 'l-'ilm*. There, 'knowledge (*'ilm*)' was typically embodied in the living persons of masters or 'scholars (*'ulamā'*)' who transmitted it—at whose feet the candidate scholar (*ṭālib al-'ilm*) journeyed the length and breadth of *dar al-islām* in order to sit and receive instruction. *'Ilm* was still vital and dynamic; not something rare, hidden away and neglected, at risk of extinction. As such, textual knowledge came a distant second in terms of emphasis to what was transmitted orally: a book in the hand meant little if one couldn't study it with somebody who had already mastered and

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<sup>11</sup> Kilpatrick is alone among scholars who have read Paul's travel narrative as a work of Arabic literature in its own right and perceived its importance as a transitional 'missing link' between the late medieval and early modern Arabic literary eras. She called it "an important monument of post-classical, pre-modern Arabic literature, *bayn al-'aṣrayn*, as it were." see "Journeying Towards Modernity: The '*Safra* al-Baṭrak Makāriyūs' of Būlus ibn al-Za'īm al-Ḥalabī", *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 37, Issue 2 (Jul. 1997): 156 – 177.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

assimilated its contents—of whom there was never a lack of supply. Paul and his father however are seeking *‘ilm* which comes in the novel form of a rare manuscript, rather than a living person. We find ourselves already in a much later epoch, looking backwards to a past ‘golden age’ for renewed inspiration. *‘Ilm* is now something which was alive centuries ago, but is now in a decayed state and in need of being recovered and preserved by all necessary means lest it be lost forever: a “treasure” which their Church had once in its firm possession, but for whatever reason lost and allowed to suffer for long the corruption of the elements, to lie hidden under layers of dust in this remote mountain region. Paul’s ‘journey in search of knowledge’—his manuscript-hunt—represents the moment of rediscovery and revival. Without knowing it, Paul in this passage has moved away from the medieval Arabic *riḥla fī ṭalabī ‘l-‘ilm* to resemble more closely the *ad fontes* impulse of early Renaissance Humanism in Europe: an impulse that sent humanist scholars scouring all the manuscript libraries of the Mediterranean in hopes of recovering their lost classical Greek heritage—similarly in search of “treasures lying hid”—and often acquired by similar panhandling means as used here by Paul and Makarios.<sup>13</sup>

Let us take a moment to consider the passage’s geographical setting. Cozia Monastery, as has already been pointed out above, overlooks the Olt river that cuts north-south through

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<sup>13</sup> Of course, the search for rare manuscripts was not unknown to medieval Islamic intellectual culture, especially in places that were remote from the main cultural centers. Biographical collections from medieval Muslim Spain for instance, regularly feature praise for scholars who brought back rare books, considered as “precious jewels”, from their travels to the Eastern lands of Islam; see. M.K. Lenker, “The importance of the *Riḥla* for the Islamization of Spain” (Ph.D. diss.: University of Pennsylvania, 1982), 120. There was a difference however: The rare book’s value was derived from the problem of geographic distance, not the end of a ‘golden age’ and a break in continuity with traditions. The problem of distance could be easily and regularly overcome by travel (*riḥla*), however hazardous; with some effort, contact with the living tradition could be maintained uninterrupted. Furthermore, emphasis was always placed on the particular *men* of learning with whom travelers to the East studied, over the *books* of learning they brought back with them.

the southern Carpathians before descending into the plains, where it joins the Danube: the well-known river that marked the symbolic frontier between the Ottoman empire proper and its semi-autonomous Christian vassal-states—the Danubian (Moldo-Wallachian) principalities; between the ‘house of islam (*dār al-islām*)’ on the one side, and the ‘lands of the Christians (*bilād al-masīḥīyīn*)’ on the other.

This is not necessarily where we expect to be, as contemporary Arabic readers. Most of us do not know Moldo-Wallachia as an historic destination for many Arabs’ *riḥla fi ṭalabi ’l-’ilm*, whether Christian or Muslim. When the Syrian delegation set out five years earlier from Ottoman-ruled Damascus on July 9, 1652, their stated destination was, as Paul termed it, the ‘lands of the Christians (*bilād al-masīḥīyīn*)’. For even the most broad-minded and informed contemporary reader, this phrase immediately conjures up a vague, antiquated image of ‘Christendom’, whose cultural and geographic space was roughly equivalent to Western (*i.e.* Catholic) Europe. Yet here we are in this passage, neither in Paris, nor in Madrid; neither in Rome, nor Venice. In fact, Paul and Makarios’s travel route steered mostly clear of Western Europe’s geographic and cultural orbit, and thus well off the main track of modern Arabic travel literature. We are in Europe, but *another* Europe: Eastern (*i.e.* Orthodox) Europe. Here was taking place a highly productive cultural and literary encounter between Arabs and Europeans, in which the conventional ‘East-West’ divide was barely relevant.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> To demonstrate how productive was this encounter, it is worth mentioning here one little-known piece of trivia: contrary to what many might assume, the first Arabic-language printing press established in the Ottoman Arab world did not come *via* Western Europe, but Eastern Europe—from Wallachia (modern-day Romania). Many histories cite the printing press established by Maronites in 1610 at Mār Anṭūniyūs Monastery in Qozḥayā, Lebanon (one of many monasteries in the Qādishā valley; *cf.* below, n. 37) using a *Karshūnī* (*i.e.* Arabic written in Syriac letters) type, as the first in the Arab world. But truly the first Arabic-language

For these two Arab Orthodox clergymen the ‘lands of the Christians’ referred instead to the cultural heartlands of post-Byzantine Orthodox Christianity: the Balkans, Southeastern and Eastern Europe, starting from between the Adriatic and the Black seas, continuing all the way to the Russian northern expanse. These were the lands of the ‘Orthodox commonwealth’: a geography defined by a common Orthodox religious culture shared by the overwhelming majority of Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Georgians, Albanians, Moldo-Wallachians, Ukrainians and Russians who inhabited them. As Arab Orthodox Christians from the Ottoman Levant, Paul and Makarios may have been in a foreign land here in Moldo-Wallachia, but they were also in a religious-cultural space as familiar to them as home.

This region of Oltenia has one of the densest concentrations of monasteries in the world: More than twenty monasteries and hermitages are clustered within a thirty-mile stretch of

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printing press in the Arab world, using *Arabic* letters, was established in Aleppo in 1701, as a gift from Prince Constantine Brîncoveanu of Wallachia to the Orthodox metropolitan of Aleppo and former Patriarch of Antioch, Athanāsīyūs al-Dabbās (d. 1724). Only a few scholars have investigated this hidden segment in the history of Arabic printing—among them are: Carsten-Michael Walbiner, “The Christians of Bilad al-Sham (Syria): Pioneers of Book-printing in the Arab World”, in ed. Klaus Kreiser, *The Beginnings of Printing in the Near and Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims* (Wiebaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 11-29; A.C. Debbas and N. Récho, *Tārīkh al-ṭibā‘a al-‘arabiyya fī l-Mashriq: al-Baṭriyark Athanāsīyūs al-thālīth Dabbās (1685-1724)* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 2008). Ioana Feodorov has been by far the most prolific scholar in this area, and is currently heading a new ERC-funded team research project (*TYPARABIC. Early Arabic Printing for the Arab Christians. Cultural Transfers between Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Near-East in the 18th Century*)—some of Feodorov’s recent publications include: “The Romanian Contribution to Arabic Printing”, in *Impact de l’imprimerie et rayonnement intellectuel des Pays Roumains*, eds. Elena Siupiur and Zamfira Mihail (Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2009), 41-61; “Beginnings of Arabic Printing in Ottoman Syria (1706-1711): the Romanians’ Part in Patriarch Athanasios Dabbas’s Achievements”, *Aram* 25: 1&2 (2103), 231-260; “Livres arabes chrétiens imprimés avec l’aide des Principautés Roumaines au début du XVIII siècle. Un répertoire commenté”, *Chronos: Revue d’Histoire de l’Université de Balamand* 34 (2016), 7-49; *Tipar pentru creștinii arabi. Antim Ivireanul, Atanasie Dabbās și Silvestru al Antiohiei* (Editura Istros: Brăila, 2016); “Recent Findings Regarding Early Arabic Printing in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces”, *Revue des études sud-est européennes* (RESEE) / *Journal of South-East European Studies*, LVIII, 1-4 (2020), 91-105.



mountain range, many of which are described in detail by Paul in the *Safra*.<sup>15</sup> Among these, Cozia is one of the oldest and most culturally important. Cozia's imposing 14<sup>th</sup> century architecture—even today after successive later renovations—is unmistakably Byzantine: Especially when viewed from the river, it bears resemblance to some of the monastic fortresses of Mount Athos, with its high and solid stone walls topped by cupolas—built as if to guard the treasures lying behind them. Monasteries like Cozia were “citadels of Orthodox education, literature, and art”<sup>16</sup> in the post-Byzantine Orthodox Balkans: places where traveling clergymen, hierarchs, scholars from different corners of the ‘Orthodox commonwealth’ regularly met each other and exchanged ideas. We can see this as it were taking place before our very eyes in this passage—the cross-fertilizing and dissemination of Orthodox culture among the Ottoman empire’s *millet-i-Rūm*. “The Metropolitan of Gaza was staying at the convent,” Paul writes, as of some casual,

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<sup>15</sup> A beautifully-presented and well-researched photographic/art-historical survey of these monasteries was printed in Romania in 2014, which frequently cites Paul’s descriptions of them; see Elisabeta Negrău and Vlad Bedros, *Mănăstirile Olteniei: artă și spiritualitate* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> see Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Bulgarians in the Seventeenth Century: Slavic Orthodox Society and Culture under Ottoman Rule* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1993), 89. Mircea the Elder (r. 1386-1418), one of Wallachia’s most celebrated princes, built Cozia in 1388, while waging a bitter struggle against the Ottomans for Wallachia’s survival as a political entity. At a time when the Ottoman war machine was rapidly liquidating the surrounding Orthodox kingdoms and incorporating them within *dār al-islām*, the Romanian lands managed to preserve some form of semi-independence as Ottoman vassal-states, never directly ruled by the Sublime Porte; see Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History*, trans. Alexandra Bley-Vroman (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 53. Monasteries like Cozia were thus symbolic testaments to the Romanians’ commitment to their self-preservation and to the pan-Byzantine heritage of Southeastern Europe. The same obtained throughout the rest of the Balkans, where large Orthodox Christian populations who became Ottoman *ra’ayā* looked to their local monasteries as guardians of their identity and heritage. We read, for instance, in the Serbian memoirs of Prota Matija Nenadović (d. 1854), a major leader in the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813) against Ottoman rule: “We should...be grateful to our monks, since they have preserved the monasteries where our priests have been taught and have kept intact our faith and our customs, so that we have not gone over to Islam or Rome, as in Bosnia.” see *The Memoirs of Prota Matija Nenadović*, trans. and ed., Lovett F. Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 181-182.

everyday occurrence, “and he wrote a title-page” for their copy of the Greek manuscript they discovered. This Metropolitan of Gaza was none other than Paisios Ligarides (d. 1678), called “one of the most brilliant Greek intellectuals of that era,”<sup>17</sup> a theologian and historian—albeit “with a dark past”<sup>18</sup>—whose fame preceded him throughout the Orthodox commonwealth. Ligarides’s works were already well-known to Paul and Makarios. Unknown to any of the three clergymen at the present time, their paths would overlap again in Moscow less than a decade later—outside the *Safra*’s seven-year time-frame.<sup>19</sup> Prior to their meeting at Cozia, Paisios “the Sciot” (*al-Sāqizī*, i.e. ‘from the island of Chios’) travelled from Jerusalem to Aleppo, and from there “into all the European countries, and resided in the great city of Rome for a length of time”, where he probed the “Pope’s library” in search of other “lost treasures”. Paul and Makarios meanwhile were returning from Moscow. All their paths now briefly overlapped at this Romanian monastic citadel, where they traded in ideas and Byzantine manuscripts.<sup>20</sup> That the paths

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<sup>17</sup> see Panchenko, *Op. cit.*, 424.

<sup>18</sup> An outline of Ligarides’s somewhat shadowy career is provided by Panchenko in *Ibid.*, 320-326. Ioana Feodorov lists an extensive bibliography of up-to-date scholarship on Ligarides, see *Jurnal de călătorie*, 346, n. 853.

<sup>19</sup> Seven years after they arrived home in 1659, Paul and Makarios embarked on second journey to Russia, not recorded in the *Safra*—from which Paul never returned, but died *en route* home in Tbilisi, Georgia in 1669; cf. Graf, *GICAL*, III, 110; Carsten-Michael Walbinger, “The second journey of Macarius Ibn az-Za’im to Russia (1666-1668),” in *Rūsiyā wa Urthūdhuks al-Sharq* (Tripoli, Lebanon: Manshūrat Jami‘at al-Balamand, 1998), 99-114. The second journey was undertaken so that Makarios would take part in the infamous ecclesial trial that deposed Patriarch Nikon of Moscow and all Russia in 1666. That trial was organized and presided over principally by Paisios Ligarides; see Panchenko, *Op. cit.*, 323-327.

<sup>20</sup> Also in Wallachia, and later again in Russia, Paul and Makarios’s path crossed that of a prominent learned Russian Orthodox figure sent on an important manuscript-gathering mission funded by Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich: This was Arseny Sukhanov (d. 1668), who travelled from 1651-53 through the entire Orthodox commonwealth—including Syria, “our country (*bilādna*)”, Paul proudly adds—in order to minutely record (just like Paul does frequently in *Safra*) the variations in Orthodox ritual he observed everywhere. From 1654-55, Arseny was sent to Mount Athos to gather Greek Byzantine manuscripts from its libraries. Arseny

of these three senior traveling Orthodox clergymen and intellectual figures from different parts of the Ottoman empire could overlap so casually across a wide geographic spectrum, on both sides of the Danube divide; that they all shared a common interest in copying, preserving, and printing Byzantine manuscripts for dissemination, indicates that we are witnessing a genuine cultural renewal movement: a *nahḍa*, or ‘renaissance’, if we may call it such.<sup>21</sup> This *nahḍa* was not confined to the Arab Orthodox community, but encompassed the whole ethno-linguistic diversity of the Ottoman empire’s Orthodox *millet-i-Rūm*—of which the Arabs had become the newest members.

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returned to Russia from his travels, Paul tells us, with a great quantity of manuscripts (500-700 in total)—for which many Greek *Rūm* scribes from Ottoman lands were employed in Russia to help edit them for printing and for subsequent translation into Church Slavonic (*Safra*, fol. 180<sup>r</sup>). The manuscripts were vital to the Russian Orthodox Church’s efforts at the time to ‘correct’ their own liturgical books and bring their ritual practice more in line with the rest of the Orthodox world. For a synopsis of Arseny Sukhanov’s travels, see Theofanis G. Stavrou and Peter R. Weisensel, *Russian Travelers to the Christian East from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Century* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1986), 48-50; for a short biography and bibliography, see Galina Yermolenko, “Arseny Sukhanov”, in eds. David Thomas and John Chesworth, *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500-1900* (Leiden: Brill Online, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> William Medlin and Christos Patrinelis write on the applicability of the term ‘renaissance’ to this same process of religious-cultural renewal which occurred concurrently in 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia: “While historiographic tradition thus ascribes Renaissance and Reformation to western countries and normally excludes Eastern Europe, in particular Russia, from its focal range, the definition of these terms can be broadened to include the kinds of process associated with rebirth (cultural renewal, development) and also reformation (religious regeneration, institutional change). It is in this sense that we turn our gaze to examine the processes of change in medieval cultural institutions and social values in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia.” see *Renaissance Influences and Religious Reforms in Russia: Western and Post-Byzantine Impacts on Culture and Education (16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> centuries)* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1971), 9. We might make the broad-brushstroke observation here that the Western European Renaissance and the Eastern European renaissance were both inspired by a renewed cultural dynamic *ad fontes* (‘to the sources’)—only the ‘sources’ differed fundamentally, sought out for achieving vastly differing purposes. Renaissance humanists sought out the Greek classics of Antiquity; Orthodox ‘reformers’ like Paisios Ligarides, Arseny Sukhanov, and Makarios al-Za’im sought out the Byzantine-era Greek ‘classic’ liturgical, hagiographical and patristic writings. Renaissance humanists aimed to revive an ideal classical eloquence and learning; Orthodox reformers aimed at religious revival according to a Byzantine ideal they all shared in common.

This passage—and the same can be said of the *Safra* as a whole—affords us a window into the wider story of cultural renaissance (*nahḍa*) in the Arab Orthodox community in the early modern/Ottoman period. In fact, Paul of Aleppo and even more so his father, Patriarch Makarios, were the leading figures in their generation of this Arab Orthodox *nahḍa*;<sup>22</sup> their travels formed a significant part of this *nahḍa*; and Paul wrote the *Safra* with the express ‘mission’ of lending support to the process of this *nahḍa*. Relatively few in Paul’s community had the opportunity, like him, to travel so extensively within the Orthodox commonwealth at large and witness its glories first-hand. By writing about what “we saw with our own eyes (*ra’aynāhu ‘iyānan*)” in the ‘lands of the Christians’, Paul hoped to bring “abundant benefit (*jamm al-fawāyid* [sic])” to his community members’: through strengthening their ties of faith and kinship with their European Orthodox brothers—and, in the same process, solidify their own uniquely Arab Orthodox identity.<sup>23</sup>

This story of *nahḍa* could be called the story of the Arab Orthodox community’s own ‘voyage to Byzantium’—or rather, to ‘Byzantium after Byzantium’.<sup>24</sup> It represents a significant detour from the mainstream of Arabic literary history: a story that remains unknown to most

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<sup>22</sup> A succinct biographical sketch, complete bibliography, reference list, and summary of the father-son team’s literary contribution has been put together by Hilary Kilpatrick; see “Makāriyūs Ibn al-Za‘īm and Būlus Ibn al- Za‘īm (Paul of Aleppo)” in eds. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart, *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350-1850* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 262-273.

<sup>23</sup> *Safra*, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Byzantium after Byzantium’ (*Byzance après Byzance*) was the term famously coined in 1935 by the eminent Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga, to describe the forms of historic cultural continuity between the Byzantine and Ottoman eras throughout Asia Minor, Southeastern and Eastern Europe—*i.e.* how Byzantium survived well after May 29, 1453, not as a polity, but as a set of cultural forms and ideas. We will speak more on how this theme features in the *Safra* in Chapt. 2; see Nicolae Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance: continuation de l’Histoire de la vie byzantine* (Bucharest: Editions de l’Institut d’études byzantines, 1935).

students of Arabic literature. If the *Safra* is a ‘Journeying Towards Modernity’, it is a journeying off the beaten path, towards an unfamiliar modernity, not predicated on the East-West cultural encounter. This encounter in the early modern period, between the Arab Orthodox of Ottoman Syria and the diverse Orthodox populations of the Southeastern and Eastern Europe, was one that took place on wholly different ground—and yielded wholly different results. This mostly untold story of Arabic literature—viewed through the broad and animated lens of Paul of Aleppo’s *Safra*—will be the analytical focus of Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

## II. *Elias of Mosul’s Kitāb Siyāḥa* (‘*Book of Travels*’)

Elias of Mosul (Ilyās ibn al-Qissīs Ḥannā al-Mawṣilī)<sup>25</sup>, was born into the community of the East Syriac ‘Church of the East’—better-known historically as the ‘Nestorian’ church.<sup>26</sup> As his *nisba* suggests, he was a native of the city of Mosul in the Nineveh plains region in northern Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq): the heart of the ‘Assyrian triangle’. Like Paul of Aleppo, Elias was a clergyman—a priest. As an adult, Elias formed also a strong connection with Aleppo, Paul’s native city.<sup>27</sup> Paul and Elias would have been contemporaries, although no evidence

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<sup>25</sup> Here too I use an English, rather than the Arabic version of the name. As Ghobrial’s painstaking research into Elias’s “secret life” has revealed, he was known throughout Europe and the Spanish Americas as ‘Elias of Babylon’—a toponymic likely formulated to conjure up and enhance his exotic ‘Oriental’ origins in their eyes. For this reason, I prefer the direct translation of the Arabic, ‘Elias of Mosul’, similar to ‘Paul of Aleppo’. Both in this introduction and in Chapt.3 (where I discuss his findings in detail, see Sect. II), I make extensive use of the findings in Ghobrial’s groundbreaking article, “The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory,” *Past & Present*, Volume 222, Issue 1 (February 2014): 51–93.

<sup>26</sup> cf. Sebastian P. Brock, “The ‘Nestorian’ Church: A Lamentable Misnomer”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, lxxviii (1996): 23-35.

<sup>27</sup> A branch of Elias’s family—the only one to follow him into the Catholic Unia—was known as the Ḥalabī family (*bayt al-Ḥalabī*); see Ghobrial, “The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon”, *Op. cit.*, 86.

suggests they ever met or knew each other. They belonged to different communities, different worlds, having little in common other than the fact that both they were both Eastern Christian clergymen who travelled long distances outside the Ottoman empire and wrote travelogues in Arabic. Elias's travels took him much farther afield than Paul, in almost the very opposite direction—geographic and cultural.

Elias's impressive itinerary speaks for itself: Setting out from Baghdad in 1668, Elias passed through Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo; then headed to the port of Iskanderun. From there he boarded a ship to Venice, stopping briefly at sea on the Greek islands of Cyprus, Crete, Zante, Cephallonia, and Corfu. Arriving in Venice, Elias began a crisscrossing tour of Catholic Western Europe that included virtually every major and minor economic and cultural center on the continent: Rome, Livorno, Genoa, Naples, and Palermo in Italy; Marseilles, Avignon, Lyons, Paris, Orleans, Poitiers, Bordeaux, and Toulon in France; Lisbon in Portugal; Barcelona, Zaragossa, and Madrid in Spain.

Elias's tour of Europe was by itself an impressive feat for any Ottoman subject in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, it was the next phase of Elias's travels that has earned him a name and place in Arabic literature as a second Ibn Baṭṭūṭa: From Cádiz on the southernmost tip of Spain, Elias set sail on a royal galleon across the Atlantic to the New World: *Yenki Dün̄ya* in Ottoman Turkish.<sup>28</sup> The year was now 1675. Elias would spend the next eight years touring the Spanish

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<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, Paul of Aleppo uses the same term *Yenki Dün̄ya* in the *Safra* while he was in Russia, to refer to the remoter regions of Siberia which the Muscovite Russians were beginning to colonize in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He claims, in Moscow, to have met a delegation of natives from *Yenki Dün̄ya*: the “third”, farthermost Siberia; see *Safra*, fol. 155<sup>r</sup>.

colonies in the Americas, from Chile in the south to Mexico in the north, becoming in all likelihood the ‘first Easterner’<sup>29</sup> to ever do so—or at least the first to do so and write about his experiences. These experiences he compiled in his now moderately well-known travel-narrative, the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* (‘Book of Travels’): the subject of Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

The *Kitāb Siyāḥa* is an ‘easier’ text than the *Safra*—not least for being much shorter in length. Penetrating the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*’s world and atmosphere requires less philological effort than the *Safra*. With Elias of Mosul the contemporary Arabic reader is in more familiar literary territory than with Paul of Aleppo: Elias heeded the ‘call of the West’, which began beckoning Christians in the Ottoman Near East at least a century before it began also to seriously beckon their Muslim neighbors. Indeed, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the ‘journey to the Europe and the West’ dominates Arabic travel literature, whether written by Christians or Muslims.<sup>30</sup> If nothing else, Elias’s narrative from the late 17th century sets an earlier beginning to a story that has become perhaps too well-known.

Elias heeded the ‘call of the West’ in the deepest sense possible for Eastern Christians in this period: Some time in his early twenties, under the influence of European Catholic missionaries in Mosul, Elias made the personal decision to convert to Catholicism. He broke rank from his ancestral East Syriac church and community and became a ‘Uniate’: *i.e.* a non-Roman rite,

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<sup>29</sup> Anṭūn Rabbāt, the Jesuit scholar who discovered the first manuscript of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* in Aleppo, published it as “Riḥlat Awwal Sharqī ilā Amrikā” [*i.e.* ‘The Journey of the First Easterner to America’], *Al-Mashriq*, Vol. VIII (1905): 821–34, 875–86, 974–83, 1022–33, 1118–29; and a year later in book form, *Riḥlat Awwal Sharqī ilā Amrikā* (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1906).

<sup>30</sup> Rifā‘a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz* (‘Refining of Gold in the Short Description of Paris’) first published in Cairo in 1834 is often cited as an historical beginning-point for this new direction; see the discussion in Chapt 4, n. 77.

'Eastern' Catholic. The fateful choice determined the course of the remainder of his life. Becoming a Uniate brought Elias obvious material benefits: It provided the pretext and context for his extraordinary travels; it gave him open access to Catholic Europe's expanding global imperial network—an access which he took full advantage of. Elias travelled throughout the Catholic world with Papal endorsement, as a kind of VIP, known and respected—even feared to an extent—by high and low everywhere, all of whom called him 'Elias of Babylon'.

For these benefits however, Elias paid a price: His conversion to Catholicism set him at permanent odds with his East Syriac kinsmen and community in Mesopotamia, who saw his decision as an act of treason. They dealt with Elias accordingly, as with a renegade: It has been suggested that in traveling abroad, Elias was actually fleeing his kinsmen's wrath. He indeed never returned home to the Ottoman empire after his travels in the Americas, ending his life instead as an *émigré*, a 'stranger' (*gharīb*) in Spain.<sup>31</sup> Seen from this perspective, penning the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* in Arabic—a language Elias likely no longer used or heard often—can be interpreted, as Jean-Paul Ghobrial does, as an exile's painful act of remembering his home.<sup>32</sup>

The *Kitāb Siyāḥa* is a fast-paced and entertaining narrative. Arabic readers would have been drawn to an eye-witness account of the New World in order to be enchanted by tales of faraway adventure and exotica (*'ajā'ib/gharā'ib*)—and Elias certainly doesn't disappoint on this score. But the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* is more importantly Elias of Mosul's 'testament of faith'<sup>33</sup>, his

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<sup>31</sup> Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon", *Op. cit.*, 93.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-93.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.



*apologia pro vita sua* as a Uniate, a Catholic convert who broke with his primordial kinship and confessional ties and paid a dear price for it. As Ghobrial has convincingly demonstrated, the text is first and foremost a piece of Catholic propaganda. “In the post-Reformation struggle for the hearts and minds of Eastern Christians,” Ghobrial writes, Elias’s “stories about the New World under Catholic rule represented a powerful form of propaganda, and this is how the Book of Travels would have been read by his contemporaries.”<sup>34</sup> Like Paul of Aleppo, Elias wrote about his travels with the aim of ‘benefitting’ his former East Syriac brethren in the Ottoman empire: He hoped his account would help convince some of them to also heed the ‘call of the West’; to make the same decisive step towards the ‘Unia’ that he had made, despite the hazards it involved.

Elias’s most powerful pro-Unia ‘argument’ was simply to showcase to his readers Spain’s indisputable achievements on the world stage and on behalf of the Catholic church. Elias arrived in the Spanish New World barely a century and a half after Cortes and his motley band of *conquistadores* had arrived on the same shores to conquer with devastating efficiency, perhaps unparalleled in human history. Though the Spanish crown was no longer enjoying its ‘golden century’, it was still master of the most expansive sea-borne empire in the world—with the American colonies as its crowning jewel. The colonies, as described in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, were an efficiently-run, thriving commercial network of cities, towns, villages, and estates; where cash crop plantations and mineral mines extracted the *fat of the land* to Spain and the church’s

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

glory. Interwoven with this commercial network was a parallel spiritual network of Catholic bishoprics, parishes, and large monastic holdings or ‘missions’. On these ‘missions’ lived the multitudes of Catholic proselytes from among the New World’s native, formerly pagan ‘Indian’ population. These were the spoils of the Catholic church’s spiritual conquest of the New World, accomplished by missionaries in the wake of its physical conquest, with similarly astonishing speed and success. Elias saw these Indian proselytes—new converts to Catholicism, just like him—as beneficiaries of Spain’s imperial project in the Americas.<sup>35</sup>

What was obvious to Elias—and what he hoped to make obvious to his readers through his narrative, without resorting to learned theological arguments—was that the secret, the creative force behind Spain’s miraculous achievements in the New World was its Catholic faith, in whose name it conquered. It followed therefore, that by adopting the Spaniards’ Catholic faith, by entering the Unia, through affirming “obedience to the Roman church and its head and its director (*mudabbirihā*), the Supreme Pontiff (*al-ḥabr al-a‘zam*) and universal shepherd of shepherds”,<sup>36</sup> Eastern Christians now had the historic opportunity to enter into their achievements and thrive alongside them—just as Elias had himself done.

### III. *Ḥannā Diyāb’s Travels from Aleppo to Paris*

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<sup>35</sup> Elias’s attitude towards and portrayal of these ‘Indians’ is highly contradictory and complex—parsing it will be a priority in Chapter 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>.

Before the dawn, on the eve of the Lenten fast period in the Christian calendar, in the year 1707, Ḥannā Diyāb, a young Maronite Christian, also of Aleppo, left his family home in secret and walked towards Khān al-Zayt, the point of embarkation for caravans taking passengers between Aleppo and Tripoli.

From Tripoli, Diyāb's projected path led along the short mountainous way towards the Qādīshā valley in northern Lebanon—a Maronite stronghold—perched within one of whose promontories, close to the town of Bsharrī, stood the Monastery of Mār Alīsha' (Saint Elisha, the Prophet).<sup>37</sup> Diyāb was heading there in order to 'leave the world' and become a 'novice'—*i.e.* a postulant for the monastic life. In fact, this was Diyāb's second time making this same journey from Aleppo—this was to be his second trial as a novice at Mār Alīsha'.<sup>38</sup> His first trial had not lasted long: three months. That short experience of life in the newly-formed Maronite brotherhood led by Abbot Jirmānūs Farḥāt was generally positive<sup>39</sup>; nevertheless, he quickly decided, like many novices do, that monastic life was not for him. Taking the Abbot's final blessing, he returned his novice's cloak and took back his civilian clothing to return to the world he knew.

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<sup>37</sup> Mār Alīsha' is one of several old and scenic Maronite monasteries in the Qādīshā valley. Diyāb likely chose it for his novitiate because it was known at the time as a site of Maronite monastic renewal, led by a young, dynamic, and highly educated crew of founders—among them 'Abdallah Qarā'alī (d. 1742) and Jirmānūs Farḥāt (d. 1732); see Chapt. 4, n. 21-22.

<sup>38</sup> It is here, during his novitiate at Mār Alīsha', that Diyāb's travel narrative abruptly begins in mid-action (and in mid-sentence). The first five folios of the MS. (Sbath 254) have gone missing.

<sup>39</sup> see Chapt 4., n. 17.

Diyāb's return to the world was equally brief: again, three months. Now he was on his way back to Mār Alisha'. In those three months at his home in Aleppo, he had experienced not so much a new kindling of religious fervor as the gloomy realization that the world he knew had even less to offer him than the monastery. Rémuzat, the French resident textile merchant in Aleppo whom Diyāb worked for, refused to receive him back as an employee. Diyāb had to rely financially on his family, unable to earn his keep. Three months can feel like a long time for someone forced into unemployment and into an infantile state of dependence, alienated from participation in socio-economic life. "For three months," he writes, "I wandered without occupation or work. The world began to oppress me (*dāqet* [sic] *el-dinyāfiya*).<sup>40</sup> I made up my mind to return to the monastery."<sup>41</sup> Rather than remain thus in Aleppo, subject to the "world's oppression", Diyāb chose to return to the monastery and be subject to the will of its Abbot: In voluntarily submitting to monastic discipline, there was at least an act of independent will. For the moment Diyāb knew of no better alternative. Before the modern era (and after it, to an extent), monasticism was often a viable and attractive option for any Christian hit hard by the "world's oppression". Provided one accepted its rigors, monasticism offered a legitimate existence outside the 'daily grind' of conventional family and socio-economic life. By choosing for

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<sup>40</sup> This is a difficult expression to translate, for which I have deliberately chosen here a more literal rendering than the more figurative French rendering of Fahmé-Thiéry et al.: "Mes perspectives se réduisaient" (*D'Alep à Paris*, 66). The verb *dāqa* (Mid. Ar.: *dāq*), literally means "to become narrow", and is frequently used to express a personal state of "oppression", "depression", or "annoyance" caused by external circumstances. For "the world (*el-dinyā*)" to "become narrow/oppressive (*dāqet*)" for someone, means that he has become hard-hit by circumstances.

<sup>41</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 7<sup>r</sup>.

the second time voluntary confinement at Mār 'Alisha', Diyāb was already beginning to plot his own course.

On his way to the monastery, Diyāb could not have foreseen how drastically his course would be redirected, through a chance meeting with a fellow passenger on the caravan from Aleppo to Tripoli: a Frenchman, named Paul Lucas. Diyāb had noticed Lucas from the time he boarded the caravan, but refrained from making his acquaintance. At a stop *en route*, a dispute arose between the 'Frankish' passenger, Lucas, and the caravan's driver. As the dispute grew more heated, the other passengers called on Diyāb to arbitrate: They all knew he was a Maronite—*i.e.* somebody who knew the language of both parties in the dispute, French and Arabic—and could therefore mediate between them. Indeed, no sooner had Diyāb entered the fray, then the dispute was resolved. "At that moment," writes Diyāb,

The Frank (*al-Franjī*) became exceedingly happy and thanked me. Finally, he asked me:

—Are you a Christian?

—Yes. By the grace of God Almighty.

—No offense, but when I saw you wrapped in a white cloth (*shāsh*), I took you for a Muslim.

He then constrained me to sit and join him for supper, but I declined. He kept pestering me to sit, so I sat at last. He then ordered his servant to prepare the supper; he had with him ample provisions of fine wine (*nabīdh*) from Aleppo. We took our supper. After we finished, we drank coffee, while the young servant (*al-ghulām*) brought us tobacco pipes. We began to converse: he asked me,

—To which community (*tāyfa*)<sup>42</sup> do you belong?

—I am of the community of the Maronites. I know of you already from Aleppo, when you were lodging at the house of *Khawāja* Sauron, the Frenchman. My brother is his storeman (*makhzanī*).

—His storeman is your brother?

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<sup>42</sup> *tā'yfa*, pl. *ṭawā'if* (Mid. Ar.: *tāyfa*)—translated often as 'faction', 'party', or 'sect'. Historically the term has taken on a complex socio-political significance within different local contexts (*eg.* medieval Muslim Spain, modern Lebanon). I have opted for the neutral term 'community'. Fahmé-Thiéry et al. render it in their text in French as "*nation*"—Lucas asks Diyāb: "De quelle *nation* es-tu?" *D'Alep à Paris*, 69, n. 1.

—Yes.

He was surprised that my brother didn't mention that I would be travelling together with them. I then told him that my brother wasn't informed of my departure from Aleppo. He asked me,

—For what reason was he not informed?

—If he had been informed, he wouldn't have let me travel.

Then he asked me:

—Where are you travelling?

I was embarrassed to tell him my story (*qiṣṣati*); so instead I said,

—I am off to roam about the world and explore and such...until I become lost to it! (*anā rāyeh besūh fi 'd-dinyā wa betfarraj wa hādihā...hattā 'aḏī 'alayh*)

In this way he got it into his head that I was roaming.

And so God arranged things.

He said:

—If you want to roam, you couldn't have found anyone better than me.

He related to me how he was sent by the King (*sulṭān*) of France, “to roam about the lands and write down whatever I see”, to search for ancient chronicles (*tawārikh qidam*) and medallions—I mean money—of ancient kings, and for some of the herbs (*ḥashāyish*) that are found in these lands. He then asked me:

—Do you know how to read Arabic?

—Yes, and ‘Frankish’ as well.

—If you come with me, I will secure a position for you at the Arabic Library. You will receive a stipend from the King, and will live all your life under the King's protection. I have a charge from the minister to bring back with me a man from these countries who knows to read Arabic. This man can bring you many benefits. Do you want to come with me?

—Yes.<sup>43</sup>

Only half a century separates Ḥannā Diyāb's untitled travel narrative—the main of subject of Chapter 4 in this dissertation—from Paul of Aleppo's *Safra*, from which we quoted at

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<sup>43</sup> Sbath 254, fols. 8<sup>v</sup>-9<sup>r</sup>. All of my translations from Sbath 254 have benefited to a high degree from the French translation published in 2015 by Paul Fahmé-Thiéry, Bernard Heyberger, and Jérôme Lentin *D'Alep à Paris: les pégrinations d'un jeune Syrien au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Sinbad, 2015). It was Jérôme Lentin who discovered the MS. in 1993, and it was this translation which made Diyāb's narrative known to the wider scholarly world for the first time. This translation was for me an indispensable reference guide to rendering the text's obscure phrases, as well as on questions of style. I have adopted for instance its editorial convention of ‘modernizing’ the format the text's extended dialogue passages—as in this passage: Quotation marks (and punctuation generally) are unknown and line-breaks are uncommon in MSS. Authors instead indicated speech within a text by repeatedly interjecting “he said” or “I said”. These I have stripped away and introduced line-breaks for clarity: the result, I believe, brings the contemporary reader into a more direct contact the narrative's astonishing freshness and realism.

length earlier. Yet in terms of literary style and content, we have travelled far away in the present passage, from Paul's world. If with Paul of Aleppo we were 'Journeying Towards Modernity', then with Ḥannā Diyāb we have seemingly arrived at modernity's threshold. We are no longer '*bayn al-ʿaṣrayn*'<sup>44</sup>; we are in the modern era itself. Here, the contemporary reader is right at home.

The first thing we notice in this passage is a certain 'novelistic' quality absent from the passage we read from Paul. Gone are any didactic concerns or any rhetorical conventions inherited from either classical medieval Arabic literature or ecclesiastical literature. Diyāb is a story-teller foremost: a *ḥakawātī* in the popular folk tradition, but a highly original one. In fact, he is *the* story-teller—the "secret author" of some of the modern world's most beloved *Arabian Nights* tales—the so-called 'orphan tales'; he is the "Man Who Made the *Nights* Immortal".<sup>45</sup> Here we see him taking pains to set up a scene, fleshing it out with 'mundane' details that serve no other obvious purpose than to make the scene more vivid and believable for his audience: "We took our supper. After we finished, we drank coffee, while the young servant (*al-ghulām*) brought us tobacco pipes. We began to converse..." All of these 'meaningless' details, free of

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<sup>44</sup> Kilpatrick, "Journeying Towards Modernity", *Op. cit.*, 159.

<sup>45</sup> see Ulrich Marzolph, "The Man Who Made the *Nights* Immortal: The Tales of the Syrian Maronite Storyteller Ḥannā Diyāb", *Marvels & Tales*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 2018): 114-129. This dissertation will not address the question that has piqued many scholars' interest in Diyāb's narrative: his 'secret' authorship of the *Arabian Nights* 'orphan tales' in Antoine Galland's 18<sup>th</sup> century *Mille et Une Nuits* collection. Others, in addition to Ulrich Marzolph, have done so; among them are Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "East Meets West: Ḥannā Diyāb and *The Thousand and One Nights*", *Marvels & Tales*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (2014): 302-324; and notably Paulo Lemos Horta, *Marvellous Thieves: Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 17-54.

artifice, allow us to imagine vividly the setting of their conversation. The conversation seems to take place before us in ‘real’ time. Even the content and flow of their conversation feels ‘real’, as if drawn from everyday life: This is how everyday ‘real’ people casually converse with each other. Nowhere in either the *Safra* or *Kitāb Siyāḥa* do we find this kind of extended, face-to-face dialogue that isn’t staged, that isn’t carefully directed towards the author’s rhetorical aims.

More strikingly modern is the central figure of Diyāb himself. Unlike both Paul of Aleppo and Elias of Mosul, Diyāb is not a clergyman, but a regular, moderately-educated, ‘middle class’ Maronite layman.<sup>46</sup> His travels are not part of any ecclesiastical mission. His motivations are personal and private—part economical and part existential: “I am off to roam about the world and explore and such...until I become lost to it!” as he himself put it awkwardly to Lucas. These words were of course a lie, spoken in a moment of panic, to cover up the truth of which Diyāb was “embarrassed”—but they also partially expressed the truth. The truth was that Diyāb was on his way to Mār Alisha‘ to become a monk for the second time after enduring disappointment in the ‘world’; but the truth was also that he possessed no genuine vocation for the monastic life. When “the world” in Aleppo “began to oppress” him, he did indeed take to “roaming about the world and exploring”—just as far as the Qādīshā valley. Entering cloistered life was his way—the only one he knew of so far—to “become lost to it [*i.e.* the world]”. From these words

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<sup>46</sup> In this way, Diyāb foreshadows a modern trend of cultural laicization in Eastern Christian communities: a trend that would truly begin apace in the next century. With the further spread of Western European missionary education among the laity, cultural and intellectual leadership would soon be no longer in the exclusive hands of the clergy—but the opposite, would become largely the prerogative of lay-people.



the contemporary reader instantly recognizes in Diyāb a familiar, sympathetic figure from many *Bildungsromane*: He is a young man on a quest to realize his adult place in the world. His youthful desire to “roam about the world and explore” is part of this quest—modern somehow both in its self-determination, and in its lack of focus and definition. Travel in Paul Lucas’s company—through Ottoman North Africa, then across the Mediterranean to the ‘lands of the Christians’—will become for Diyāb a novel means of supplying the strange demands of this youthful desire.

We get a glimpse in this scene into the way Diyāb experiments in the narrative with his clothing and physical appearance—another important means of “exploring”. Before taking to the road, Diyāb wrapped a “white cloth” around his head, which made him unknown to Paul Lucas as a Christian, until they spoke: “No offense, but when I saw you wrapped in a white cloth (*shāsh*), I took you for a Muslim.” Lucas had by now spent enough time in Ottoman Syria to understand on a basic level how clothing and color cues formed a code by which a local individual’s religious identity could be readily deciphered by someone else, setting the parameters for social interaction across religious communities (*tawā’if*). Diyāb’s choice of identifiably Muslim headgear was deliberate: He wanted to remain incognito while travelling. As he moves further with Lucas across the East-West Mediterranean divide, we witness Diyāb constantly and very consciously changing into various types of clothing, colors, coiffures—assuming with each minor physical change a new public identity. These changes are an essential part of Diyāb’s personal “exploration”; they amount to a minor theme in the narrative which will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 4.

The shift of emphasis in Diyāb's narrative, away from primarily communal/confessional concerns to more private ones, is decisive. Unencumbered by the religious duty to edify, instruct, or convert, Diyāb's travel narrative becomes, as Bernard Heyberger described it, "une sorte de grand tour initiatique, d'un jeune homme qui cherche sa voie."<sup>47</sup> It is a young man's 'narrative of formation', realized through travel—something with elements similar to both the European *Grand Tour* and the *Bildungsroman*. Less important for us readers is the amount of detail or the accuracy in Diyāb's descriptions of foreign lands he visits; more important is the unfolding drama—as agonizing as it will be exhilarating—of his adult identity formation.

The degree of freedom Diyāb enjoyed from confessional concerns was not won personally by him: it was his birth-right as a Maronite. Maronites had a unique 'head-start' over all other Eastern Christian communities when it came to familiarity with the world and culture of Western Europe. As a Maronite, Diyāb did not have to grapple personally with the big question of the Catholic Unia—which overshadowed Elias of Mosul's whole adult life and travels: Being

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<sup>47</sup> *D'Alep à Paris*, 18. Heyberger's description of the narrative as a 'grand tour' is worth reflecting on. The 'Grand Tour' as a genre of European travel writing in fact reached its climax during Diyāb's lifetime in the eighteenth century. Its hallmark was the rise of a new approach to travel in early modern Europe, wherein travel became something ideally undertaken "for reasons unconnected with work or business." see Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 14. qtd. in Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 12. Travel became primarily "a form of personal adventure, holding out the promise of a discovery or realization of the self through the exploration of the other" (Chard, *Op. cit.*, 11). Diyāb's travels do not qualify fully as a 'Grand Tour' in this European sense, however they do come significantly closer to it than those of the other two travelers introduced already. Unlike them, Diyāb did not travel on 'church business'; he was on the other hand pursuing, in part, a work opportunity in Paris with Lucas. I argue however—against some others who have read Diyāb's narrative—that the "form of personal adventure" takes precedence in his travels over the economic/'business' aspect. See my short discussion on this question in Chapt. 4.

Catholic was a bedrock of Maronite collective identity long before Diyāb was born.<sup>48</sup> This freed him to “explore” more private questions in his narrative, in a way that Elias of Mosul, a convert and outcast from his community, could not have hoped to.

Being a Maronite was also the basis for the extraordinarily rapid bond Diyāb formed with the Frenchman, Paul Lucas, which we witness in this scene. “I am of the community of the Maronites,” Diyāb tells Lucas, “I know of you already from Aleppo, when you were lodging at the house of *Khawāja* Sauron, the Frenchman. My brother is his storeman (*makhzanjī*).” Not only does Diyāb speak the Frenchman’s language proficiently; he knows intimately, and to some extent, belongs already to his social world. The Maronites’ ‘special relationship’ with their French patrons in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century was already one of close economic and cultural symbiosis. The relationship was not an equal one—but it was characterized by considerable familiarity, even intimacy. An ‘average’ young Maronite like Diyāb, whose family was in the Aleppo textile trade, would have already assimilated a great deal of French culture and modes of thinking in his hometown without ever having travelled to France. Diyāb was already a man

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<sup>48</sup> The first ties between the Maronites and Catholics from Europe were forged probably during the period of the Crusader kingdoms in Palestine and greater Syria (late 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries). When Catholic missionaries and French merchants established themselves centuries later in the Ottoman Levant, their ties with the Maronite community were the first to be solidified among all other local Christians. Most historians date the Maronites’ formal entrance into Roman communion to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They quickly became the *protégés* of the French *par excellence*. Maronite clergy were the first Eastern Christians to be educated in Rome, where a Maronite college was created expressly for this purpose by Pope Gregory XIII in 1584. By Diyāb’s time, the Maronites’ Catholic identity had solidified to the point that a myth already prevailed of their community’s ‘perpetual orthodoxy (*i.e.* communion with Rome)’ since ancient times. On the history of the Maronite community, see Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Mouannes Mohamad Hojairi, “Church Historians and Maronite Communal Consciousness: Agency and Creativity in Writing the History of Mount Lebanon” (PhD. diss., Columbia University, 2011).

‘in between’ two worlds. In him Lucas had found his perfect ‘native informant’ for his continued travels in Ottoman lands. A new and productive partnership was born.

For all this scene’s ‘realism’, it is hard to believe its true-to-life quality. On the surface little occurs, yet we the readers sense that we are witnessing some high drama, larger than ‘real’ life, the birth of something new and spectacular. This is not a run-of-the-mill meeting between two regular travellers. An omniscient Author must have arranged for this meeting and conversation to take place: “And so God arranged things.” Diyāb had been searching for Lucas, and vice-versa. By the end of the short conversation, Diyāb is already a different person than at its beginning. From a youth “roaming about” with no prospects except the monk’s life, he has begun already to grow into a man with a sense of purpose, prepared to risk it all for an uncertain promise. All he needed to do was attach himself to this *Khawāja* whom he had just now met, to set his life on a radical new course.

The scene contains also an element of dramatic irony. We, the audience, fear for young and orphaned Diyāb and what lies in store for him in Lucas’s company, the same way we fear for young and orphaned Oliver Twist when he joins company with Fagin and the Artful Dodger. We, unlike him, recognize the dubiousness of Lucas’s character, the emptiness of his promises, the pseudo-scientific nature of his ‘royal mission’ to “search for ancient chronicles (*tawārikh qidam*) and medallions—I mean money—of ancient kings, and for some of the herbs (*hashāy-ish*) that are found in these lands.”

Yet to view Diyāb as a guileless Oliver for even a moment is to underestimate him. Lucas asks him: “Do you want to come with me?” Diyāb gives no indication he paused to consider the

consequences of accepting Lucas's invitation. He recognized the extraordinary opportunity that descended on the scene of his wayward life like a *deus ex machina*. He realized that if he didn't seize it now, a second opportunity was unlikely. Any reader not yet convinced at the end of this scene by Diyāb's "Yes" to Lucas, will be convinced by his words which he records a little later in the narrative: The new pair, Lucas and Diyāb, continue on from their first meeting to Tripoli to make preparations for their upcoming journey together. From there they proceeded to Şaidā (Sidon), on the way to Beirut, to board a ship there for Alexandria. Barely were Diyāb's new adventures with Luas beginning, when a 'cease and desist' order arrived for him in Şaidā, sent from Aleppo by his older brother, Anṭūn. The latter demanded that Diyāb at once abandon his new travel plans with Lucas and return home. This, the appeal of filial authority, was Diyāb's test: Was his yea, really yea?

—I am a man directing my own path (*anā rajul murshid ṭarīqī*),<sup>49</sup>

is Diyāb's brief, but exceedingly bold reply. With these words Diyāb declares his determination to blaze his own personal trail and 'explore' the wider Mediterranean world in Lucas's company. They contain a hint of a youthful rebellious spirit. These may very well be some of the first such words recorded in Arabic literature.

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<sup>49</sup> S bath 254, fol. 13<sup>r</sup>.

In the background of these three texts introduced are two seismic historical geopolitical shifts which occurred in the world between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: (1) The expansion of *Pax Ottomania* from Asia Minor and the Balkans into the Arab-Islamic Near East and North Africa; (2) the rise of the major Western European powers and the expansion of their imperial, commercial, and missionary interests across the globe.

(1) The Ottoman imperial expansion brought a new era of political unity and centralized rule to the traditional heartlands of *dār al-islām*, after long centuries of political fragmentation and waves of foreign invasions. Christian minorities of *dār al-islām* experienced a marked change in fortunes for the better under Ottoman rule. Prior Mamluk rule had been distinguished by excessive religious intolerance of *dhimmīs*, resulting in a sharp cultural and demographic decline during that period.<sup>50</sup> Compared with the Mamluks, the Ottomans were tolerant towards *dhimmīs*. Their strong, centralized imperial administration brought increased security of travel along the old trade and communication routes of the Islamic *oikoumene*—an historical development which benefitted Christians along with Muslims. No other Eastern Christian community of the Levant stood to gain as much from this new Ottoman order as did the Arab ‘Melkite’ Orthodox—Paul of Aleppo’s community. More on this point below.

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<sup>50</sup> Panchenko explains the background to the bleak situation for *dhimmīs* during the Mamluk period: “Foremost among the reasons for this [the Mamluks’] intolerance was the psychological effects of the Crusades and the anti-Christian sentiment that they caused, which constantly was stirred up by the sermons of Muslim theologians and found many supporters among the common people who were dissatisfied with the dominance of Christian officials...In the period from 1279 to 1447, such public sentiment prompted the Mamluk government eight times to organize large-scale persecution of non-Muslims in Egypt and Syria. This included dismissal of non-Muslim officials from public service, the introduction of distinctive clothing for *dhimmīs*, various domestic constraints, and the destruction of newly built churches.” *Op. cit.*, 49-50.

(2) The Christian minority communities of the Levant were the first in the Arab-Islamic world to feel deeply the effects of Western European commercial and cultural encroachment into the region. This period saw the balance of world geopolitical power begin shifting in Western Europe's favor at the expense of the Ottoman empire—still the world's largest contiguous land empire with the most formidable military machine.<sup>51</sup> Western powers—in particular France at this early stage—sought to consolidate their foothold in the main Ottoman trading ports by forging close links with the local Christians.<sup>52</sup> The idea of the Western powers was to offer commercial, cultural, and religious aid to their 'oppressed' Eastern co-religionists; the latter in turn would eagerly serve as their local agents and native informants. The strategic approach was modest, but effective. It can hardly be overstated what a metamorphosis took place within the corporate life of virtually every Eastern Christian community as a result.

Western (Catholic) missionary interests proceeded in lockstep with political and economic interests. Along with the French diplomats and merchants came Catholic missionaries,

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<sup>51</sup> There is a wealth of historical literature on the growing Western European-Ottoman imperial rivalry in the early modern period. Good starting resources are Virginia Aksan, *Ottomans and Europeans: Contacts and Conflicts* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2004); Idem, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (Harlow, England: Longman/Pearson, 2007); Andrew Wheatcraft, *The Enemy at the Gate: Hapsburgs, Ottomans, and the Battle for Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2009).

<sup>52</sup> The Russian Tsardom would enter this same arena significantly later on, only after it radically remodeled itself as a Western-style imperial power between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the pre-Petrine period, when Paul of Aleppo and Patriarch Makarios traveled to Russia, the Muscovite Tsars' involvement with the Ottoman *millet-i-Rūm* was indirect, limited mostly to generous and tactical financial backing. The Tsarist involvement became more hands-on after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (July 21, 1774), which guaranteed the Tsar the right to interfere directly in Ottoman affairs on behalf of all Orthodox *ra'āyā*. For a historical study of later Russian involvement in the life of the Arab Orthodox community, see Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine 1843-1914: Church Politics in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

who established headquarters in every major Ottoman city where there was a significant Christian *ra'āyā* population. The diplomats and merchants recruited interpreters, agents and employees; the missionaries recruited converts from among the various communities of Eastern 'schismatics'. These two efforts were well-coordinated and mutually reinforcing: A local Christian in the Ottoman empire often became a Catholic convert and an employee of a European consul or trading company by a single process.

This new missionary effort by the Catholic church targeting the 'schismatic' Christians of *dār al-islām* for conversion was described by Robert Haddad as a "side-ward thrust of the Counter-Reformation."<sup>53</sup> As the church renewed its battle against Protestantism, it simultaneously launched its vigorous *Drang nach Osten* in its hope to "recoup losses in Northern Europe by calling Eastern Christians to union."<sup>54</sup> The goal of winning new converts for Catholicism was facilitated through the 'Unia': a mechanism specially conceived for this very purpose, which allowed non-Roman rite Christians to become 'Catholic' without becoming 'Roman'—*i.e.* to unite ecclesiastically with Rome, while keeping their own distinct liturgical rites and traditions.<sup>55</sup> Becoming a 'Uniate' required only an *inward* allegiance to the Pope of Rome and to the ecclesiology and doctrinal formulations of the Latin church; *outwardly* (*i.e.* ritually) one could remain mostly loyal to the Eastern faith of one's fathers. To many believers—and higher

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<sup>53</sup> *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: An Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 17.

<sup>54</sup> Panchenko, *Op. cit.*, 366.

<sup>55</sup> The Unia was first conceived in Ruthenia (Ukraine) with the Union of Brest-Litovsk (1596), aimed at the local Orthodox population which lived at the time under Catholic rule by the Polish-Lithuanian alliance.



clergy—eager to reap the benefits of Unia, theological subtleties mattered little in any case; the ‘deal’ offered by Rome simply made too much practical sense to be passed over. From the perspective of these, as Haddad wrote, the Unia meant that “for the first time the Syrian Christian in search of an added measure of security and material advantage possessed an alternative to conversion to Islam”.<sup>56</sup>

The benefits of Unia are on full display in the trans-imperial career of Elias of Mosul. Elias’s East Syriac community, centered in Iraq, was one that was especially hard-hit in the centuries between Mongol Ilkhanate rule in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and the Ottoman period. Their intellectuals had once been luminaries of the Greco-Arabic translation movement of the early Abbasid era<sup>57</sup>; their missionaries had spread Christianity across the entire Silk Road between Baghdad and Beijing, establishing bishoprics and communities representing all the Persianate and Turkic ethnic groups of the Central Asian plateau.<sup>58</sup> By Elias’s time, all of that former glory

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<sup>56</sup> *Op. cit.*, 30.

<sup>57</sup> By far the best-known of these was Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq al-ʿIbādī (d. 873), the East Syriac scholar who became the chief physician to the court of the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil (d. 861) and who translated an immense number of Greek texts on a range of subject matters (*cf.* G. Strohmaier, “Ḥunayn B. Ishāq Al-ʿIbādī”. in *EI*). On the Greco-Arabic translation movement generally, see Dimitri Gutas, *Greek thought, Arab Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries)* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>58</sup> To give an idea of the breadth of the Church of the East’s expansion: At the zenith of this expansion in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, two Turkic (*Öngüt*) East Syriac Christian monks travelled west from Beijing across the Silk Road to the church’s headquarters in Baghdad. Along the entire way they visited with local East Syriac communities who never failed to send them off loaded with provisions. One of the travelling monks, Rabban Markos (renamed Yahballaha III, d. 1317) was elected when they reached Baghdad as the church’s Patriarch (Catholicos); the other, Rabban Ṣawma (d. 1294), was sent onwards on a diplomatic mission on behalf of the Mongol Ilkhanate (prior to their conversion to Islam) to Western Europe. Ṣawma visited Constantinople, Rome (where he met Pope Nicholas IV), Genoa, and Paris, before returning to the East. He wrote a ‘history (Syr. *tash ʿithā*)’ of his travels in Middle Persian, which has come down to us only in a heavily-abridged Syriac version, *The History of Mar Jab-Alaha and Rabban Sawma*, ed. Paul Bedjan (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007); English translation: *The Monks of Kublai Khan Emperor of China: Medieval Travels from China through*

was gone: What remained were “mountain Nestorians”, as they were called by Western travelers who encountered them, who lived a tribal lifestyle—mostly unfavorable to intellectual pursuits—confined to the mountains of Kurdistan.<sup>59</sup> From this perspective, we can easily see how becoming a Uniate for Elias offered a clear path to self-improvement—one that he became eager to advertise to all his East Syriac brethren. The former ‘mountain Nestorian’ pursued his higher studies at Rome’s *Propaganda Fide*, then travelled as a clerical VIP through Europe and the Americas, made a fortune, met with kings and bigwigs, and became maybe the most well-travelled Ottoman subject of his time.<sup>60</sup> Uniates obviously enjoyed the closest relations with Western European missionaries, diplomats, and merchants. They enjoyed readier access than others to new educational and economic opportunities in Western Europe’s major cities: Among the growing numbers of Christians from *dār al-islām* who made the journey West to the ‘lands of the Christians’, the overwhelming majority during this period were Uniates like Elias of Mosul and Ḥannā Diyāb.

These benefits were counterbalanced by the disruption and polarization which the Unia’s introduction caused in the life of every Eastern Christian community—something which we

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*Central Asia to Persia and Beyond*, trans. Sir E.A. Wallis Budge (London: I.B. Taurus, 2014); see also for an historical contextualization and analysis: Morris Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu: Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London: Routledge, 2003), 105.

<sup>60</sup> Another East Syriac churchman, Metropolitan Simon, who joined the Unia slightly later than Elias was sent by Rome on a mission to southern India, where they hoped he could preach the Unia to the small East Syriac community there; see S.K. Samir, *Op. cit.*

again see played out in Elias of Mosul's personal story. Debate over whether or not to collectively enter the Unia created new intracommunal rifts and rivalries: Those in favor of Unia ended up creating separate, alternative 'Uniate' ecclesiastical bodies in communion with Rome, drawing away a sizeable portion of the community—often the more upwardly-mobile and educated. Schisms formed during this period remain to this day. Both sides went on the bitter polemical attack against the other, each with their own propaganda. One side believed in Unia as the path towards collective Western-backed renewal (*nahḍa*); the other side stood for fidelity, inward *and* outward, to ancestral faith. The conflict became at times violent (*cf.* Chapt. 3, Sect. II). The stakes were high: the outcome of the controversy would determine a community's whole future historical course. Hanging in the balance were many things: communal identity, historical memory, social patterns and cultural values; relationship to homeland, to the majority-Muslim Arab society of the Levant, and to the ruling Ottoman authorities.<sup>61</sup>

Eastern Christians who hoped likewise to profit from the changing historical circumstances, but were unwilling to convert to Catholicism, were generally at a disadvantage. The exception to this rule in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were the Arab Orthodox—Paul of Aleppo's community. For them the Ottomans' rise and expansion created historical circumstances that were extremely favorable, providing them with a robust alternative to Unia as a source of *nahḍa*: the Byzantine/Orthodox commonwealth. The Arab Orthodox 'Melkite *nahḍa*' of the 17th century, discussed already above, was made possible by the reopening of lines of

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<sup>61</sup> Since the Western European powers were their chief imperial rivals, the Sublime Porte was understandably wary of their attempts to make allies among its Christian *ra'āyā* through the Unia, thus achieving influence in its territory. New Uniate ecclesial bodies usually had a difficult time in this early period gaining official recognition from the Porte as a *millet*.

communication between the Levant, Asia Minor, and Southeastern Europe—all Ottoman-controlled territories with sizeable Orthodox populations. *Pax Ottomania*'s expanded territories included now within it all of the four ancient Patriarchal sees of the Orthodox Church: Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch. For the first time since the heyday of Byzantium, these sees were all incorporated within a single polity, albeit a non-Christian one—which included even all the southern Slavic lands baptized later by the Byzantines, but never incorporated politically. All of this meant that the Arab Orthodox could turn East, instead of West—to their fellow Orthodox Christians, whom they had recently joined as Ottoman *ra'āyā* and members of the empire's multi-ethnic *millet-i-Rūm*. For needed cultural (and financial) support, the Arab Orthodox—like all the other Orthodox ethnicities of *millet-i-Rūm*—travelled not (primarily at least) across the Mediterranean to Rome; but across the Danube river to the semi-autonomous

Romanian Principalities; and from there to Muscovite Russia.<sup>62</sup> Their ‘lands of the Christians’ were in Eastern Europe, not Western Europe.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The first Arab Orthodox patriarch of Antioch to travel that route and initiate contact with Muscovite Russia was Joachim (Yuwākīm) ibn Ḍaw’ (d. 1592), whose journey in 1585-86 was recorded in the form of an Arabic poem (*qaṣīda*) by his travel-companion Muṭrān ʿĪsā (see above, n.4). Paul of Aleppo makes repeated mention of this poem in the *Safra* (see Chapt. 2). From what we know, Greek *Rūm* clergy were the most common visitors from the Ottoman empire in this time to the Russian north—many of whom spent long periods there. Among these visitors were some of the most outstanding intellectual clergymen of the Greek-speaking Orthodox world. Besides the aforementioned Metropolitan of Gaza, Paisios Ligarides, they include—but are certainly not limited to: Maximos ‘the Greek’ (born Michael Trivolis, 1475-†1556), see Jack Haney, *From Italy to Muscovy: The Life and Work of Maxim the Greek* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1973); Eugenios Voulgaris (1716-1806), see Stephen K. Batalden, *Catherine II’s Greek Prelate: Eugenios Vougaris in Russia, 1771-1806* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); Nikephoros Theotokis (1731-1800), see Gregory L. Bruess, *Religion, Identity and Empire: A Greek Archbishop in the Russia of Catherine the Great* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). The trend of Greek Orthodox clerical visits to Russia continued to a lesser extent into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the Greek revolution of 1821: A major intellectual figure in the Church of Greece, Konstantinos Oikonomos (1780-1857), spent ten years in Russia from 1822 to 1832, where he became a member of the St Petersburg Academy of Science; see Lewis J. Patsavos, “Konstantinos Oikonomos of the Oikonomoi”, in ed. Nomikos Michael Vaporis, *Post-Byzantine Ecclesiastical Personalities* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1978), 69-85; Ada Dialla, “Thinking Europe on Europe’s Margins: Alexander Sturdza, Konstantinos Oikonomos and Russian-Greek Orthodoxy in the Early Nineteenth Century”, *The Historical Revue/La Revue Historique*, Vol. 16 (April 2020): 141-166.

<sup>63</sup> This is not to say that Western Europe did not feature at all on their map as a major cultural hub: It did indeed—only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it remained still a secondary one to Eastern Europe. On Western Europe’s importance, we recall from the long passage quoted above from the *Safra*, where Paul speaks of Paisios Ligarides having “travelled into all the European countries, and resided in the great city of Rome for a length of time”, where he “went up into the Pope’s Library”; or where Paul discusses his own intention “to send the book to be printed in the country of the Franks.” Most likely this “country of the Franks” was Venice. The Greek island of Crete remained a Venetian possession until 1669—much longer than any other Greek island—opening the way for a large-scale Greek settlement in the city-state itself. Venice became a major hub of Greek learning and Greek printing—crucial as a conduit for the dissemination of Byzantine Greek learning to Western Europe, and of Renaissance European ideas to the Greek *Rūm* of the Ottoman empire; see Ersie C. Burke, *The Greeks of Venice, 1498-1600: Immigration, Settlement, and Integration* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2016); Deno John Geanakoplis, *Byzantium and the Renaissance: Greek Scholars in Venice; Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1973).

Whichever direction of the cultural-religious compass one turned, West or East; or whichever side of the Uniate fence one stood, it was contact with the Christian world outside of Ottoman *dār al-islām* which became a catalyst for Eastern Christian renewal and transformation of identity. In this light the significance and appeal of travel narratives becomes obvious: Increasing numbers of Arabic-speaking Christian *dhimmīs* were coming in regular contact—as pupils, concelebrant clergy, employees, business partners—with resident or visiting Europeans in the Ottoman empire; but a still relatively small proportion had the opportunity to travel to the ‘lands of the Christians’, to be transformed through a personal, direct experience of life there. The ‘eye-witness (*‘iyān*)’ of the traveller carried great weight therefore: Indeed, all three whom we are studying—Paul of Aleppo, Elias of Mosul, and Ḥannā Diyāb—emphasize this theme of *‘iyān* repeatedly in their narratives.<sup>64</sup> Each understood their representative role as pioneering ‘eye-witness’ travellers, as well as the power latent in the vision of the ‘lands of the Christians’ which they were creating in their narratives for their readers’ consumption. In each case this vision was formed against a background of controversy and debate over communal identity—even in Ḥannā Diyāb’s case, the least didactic, apologetical, or overtly ‘sectarian’ of the three; the only one of them who didn’t travel on ‘official’ church business. In the *Safra*, the vision of the ‘lands of the Christians’ is thoroughly Orthodox: Paul of Aleppo enthusiastically presents his own Arab Orthodox community as spiritually united with

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<sup>64</sup> Among them, Paul does this the most repeatedly and effectively. One particularly striking example from the *Safra* is when he receives some fine church vestments as a gift in Russia: In trying to convey to his readers their incomparably superior quality over their native vestments, he finally addresses them directly: “If I live [i.e. to return home], then you will see for yourself!” *Safra*, fol. 193<sup>r</sup>.

all other Orthodox Christians spanning from the Levant to Russia. They did not need so much the Catholic Unia, since they had mighty Orthodox brethren across the Danube and farther north, whose rising “empire (*mulk*)” was beginning to rival even that of the Ottomans. In both Elias of Mosul’s and Ḥannā Diyāb’s travel narratives, the vision is thoroughly Catholic: the former contains at its core an ‘argument’ in favor of Unia; the latter depicts more of a complete, unifying Catholic vision of the Mediterranean and Europe, centered culturally in Paris.

The travel narrative as a literary form has a broad and enduring appeal. It is limitless in its versatility and its applicability to new rhetorical needs: Nearly all the best examples of the form in world literature are a confluence of genres, styles, themes, and linguistic registers, elite and popular; where religious and secular aspirations, believable and unbelievable elements easily comingle—as we saw in the individual introductions to the texts above. They are ‘factual’ narratives—*i.e.* based on ‘real life events’—but they borrow, to varying degrees, from the archetypical structures of fictional narratives.<sup>65</sup> The travel-writer does not wander aimlessly: he is on

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<sup>65</sup> Percy G. Adams describes eloquently the age-old structural connections between travel narratives and various forms of fictional narratives:

It is obvious that much of fiction results from, or is molded by, this tension between two extremes, two modes of man’s mind, the realistic and the romantic, and that the same tension in great measure shapes the *récit de voyage*. But the architects of the many houses of fiction are related to those of travel literature by more than concern with a common tension: The structural principles of their two forms are often remarkably alike and always have been, each drawing on a common tradition and each inspiring or learning from the other. By perhaps universal agreement the journey plot, whether real or allegorical, is the most nearly basic in imaginative literature. And yet the fictional journey of whatever sort surely came after and, for its inspiration, depended heavily on those prior real journeys experienced vicariously or directly and passed on orally by the earliest forms of humankind, whether they were watching flights of birds or animals, engaging in short or extended hunting trips, riding on logs in a rushing river, or simply walking to the top of a hill.

“Chapter Five / Structure: The Hero and His Journey”, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 148.

a quest— to “seek knowledge (*ṭalab al-‘ilm*)”, gather religious “blessings (*baraka*)”, collect ‘alms’ or money; or in pursuit of some other form of self/communal realization. His journey is either a foreign reconnaissance into enemy territory, or a reunion with distant relations, friends, or allies abroad. His recorded impressions of life abroad, positive and negative, will become representative for his intended readers—made up mostly of members of his own group, whether religious or ideological or ethnolinguistic. The traveller invariably encounters challenges: hunger, illnesses, rough terrain, bad weather, storms at sea, attacks by robbers, *etc.*—but these are all imbued with a teleological meaning within the framework of the journey, to be endured for the hope of reaching, figuratively or literally, the longed-for “great city”.<sup>66</sup> Travel narratives speak to a variety of basic human proclivities: they satisfy curiosity about the unknown or exotic ‘other’, they introduce variation into monotonous and static life, they entertain, they educate, they edify, they present fleshed-out and meaningful visions of the world which help their readers ideologically orient themselves, especially in times of major transition. It might be argued that the travel narrative was in some respects a more effective platform for Eastern Christians, during their own time of transition, to debate the pressing new questions of their religious identity, than the theological or apologetic tract. A well-executed literary work can be far more persuasive, having more power to influence opinion on a larger scale, than the most brilliantly-argued learned treatise. In any case, these three texts provide us with an unusually perspicacious view into how the central questions of Eastern Christian identity were presented and

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<sup>66</sup> In the *Safra*, Moscow is Paul of Aleppo’s “Great City (*al-madīna al-‘uzmā*)”, see Chapt. 2, Sect. VI; in Ḥannā Diyāb’s narrative, the “Great City (*al-madīna al-‘azīma*)” is Paris, see Chapt. 4.



debated, consciously or unconsciously, in a popular literary form in this critical early modern/Ottoman period. Through recording his particular journey—his “hero’s quest”—in between *dār al-islām* and the ‘lands of the Christians’, each Eastern Christian travel-writer ‘argued’ a different orientation, a different way, a different vision of their own and their community’s identity going forward into the future. In the main chapters of this dissertation, each text will be read closely in order precisely to delineate its main ‘argument’ from this point of view.

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Our three Christian Arabic travel narratives are not wholly unknown to students of Arabic literature, medieval and modern; nor are they particular well-known among those who do not specialize in Christian Arabic.<sup>67</sup> They remain however understudied. In general, our knowledge of Arabic travel literature in the long period *bayn al-‘aṣrayn*—between the genre’s late-medieval ‘golden age’ ending spectacularly with the *Rihla* of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1368-9 or 1377) and its mid-19th ‘revival (*nahḍa*)’ by Rifā‘a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d. 1873)—remains to this day piecemeal

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<sup>67</sup> Two recent important studies bring together all three of these same texts. Both studies are by eminent specialists in the field of Christian Arabic studies, and both uncover untold life-stories of Eastern Christians migrants in Europe in the early modern period. They take a more historical, less textual approach than I take in this dissertation: (1) Hilary Kilpatrick and Gerald J. Toomer, “Niqūlāwus al-Ḥalabī (c.1611-c.1661): A Greek Orthodox Syrian Copyist and his Letters to Pococke and Golius” *Lias: Journal of Early Modern Intellectual Culture and its Sources*, 43 (2016), 1-159; (2) John-Paul Ghobrial, “Migration from Within and Without: The Problem of Eastern Christians in Early Modern Europe”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (2017): 153-173.

at best.<sup>68</sup> For a long time scholars referred to his period as the ‘age of decadence (*‘asr al-inḥitāt*)’, considering its voluminous, but little-understood literature as unworthy of study.<sup>69</sup> Thankfully, the scholarly landscape has changed. As Hilary Kilpatrick wrote already in 2008: “One of the most exciting developments in recent research on Arabic literature has been the growing interest in what was for a long time labelled the ‘Age of Decadence’.”<sup>70</sup> More than a decade later this new development remains in its incipient phase: a plentiful harvest, yet with still relatively few

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<sup>68</sup> So far there has not yet appeared a comprehensive overview of Arabic travel literature in the early modern/Ottoman period—only preliminary surveys. Monographs are scanty, and most crucial texts remain unedited. Hilary Kilpatrick, whose articles are cited all throughout this dissertation, has done probably the most amount of work in this particular area. Other scholars who have explored this *terra incognita* are John-Paul Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*; Nabil Matar, *Op. cit.*; Ralf Elger, “Arabic Travelogues from the Mashrek 1700-1834: A Preliminary Survey of the Genre’s Development” in Christian Szyska und Friederike Pannewick, eds. *Crossing and Passages in Genre and Culture* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003), 27-40; Hala Fattah, “Representations of Self and Other in Two Iraqi Travelogues of the Ottoman Period”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Feb., 1998): 51-76.

<sup>69</sup> The ‘decadence’ schema of post-classical Arabic literary history—for a long period considered as axiomatic in Arabic studies—went roughly as follows: Beginning with the late-medieval Mamluk period, Arab-Islamic literature and intellectual life began by stages to lose its former vitality and to stagnate—to ‘decay’: Poets no longer innovated, instead they slavishly imitated; by turns that clarity and concision that had once characterized the best Arabic literary prose was forgotten, to be universally replaced by mannered and shallow rhymed prose (*saj’*); form came to be emphasized at the almost total expense of substance, as *udabā’* competed with each other in meaningless displays of virtuosity and verbal pyrotechnics; soon almost no original treatises were written anymore on any subject—instead, the intellectual life of the ‘*ulamā’* became dominated by a scholastic culture epitomized in the sterile ‘commentary’ (*sharḥ*) and ‘super-commentary’ (*sharḥ ‘alā sharḥ*). The descent continued steadily and unabated under the convulsions of a fragmented *dār al-islām* no longer dominated culturally by Arabs; with the coming of the Turkish Ottomans, it entered into a virtual free-fall—into an abyss of undifferentiated ‘decadence’. In this state Arabic literature was condemned to remain until the mid to late nineteenth century, when a loose cohort of Arab ‘reformist’ writers and scholars (a disproportionate number of whom were Christians) returned to study the Arabic ‘classics’ of the medieval ‘golden era’ with renewed vigor and a fresh perspective, acquired (ironically perhaps) from their study and engagement with the literature and intellectual culture of Western Europe. Here begins the *Nahḍa*: the miraculous raising of Arabic literature and intellectual life from the dark tomb of decay, where it had lain for more than half a millennium.

<sup>70</sup> “Between Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī”, *Op. cit.*, 233.

workers ready to roll up their sleeves to perform the hard scholastic labor.<sup>71</sup> This dissertation takes up this challenge and aims to contribute in a modest way to this collective endeavor, by shedding light on (what I hope I have already demonstrated are) three very important Arabic texts from the early modern/Ottoman period—towards the tail-end of the ‘age of decadence’. Indeed, “there is a wealth of travel writing in this period.”<sup>72</sup> This study aims to help make some of this “wealth” known, not through a broad survey of texts, but an in-depth literary/philological analysis of these three key texts—chosen from among others of their category (Christian Arabic travelogues) on the basis of their outstanding literary merit. Indeed, an in-depth study of texts most effectively reveals this “wealth”—as well as just how problematic and misleading was the old blanket term ‘decadence’ when measured up against the real data. The unique travel experiences and cross-cultural encounters which these narratives record—of Ottoman-era Eastern Christians “in between *dār al-islām* and the ‘lands of the Christians’ (*bilād al-masīḥīyīn*)”—challenge many of our conventional dichotomies (*eg.* East/West, Muslim/Christian) with which we often approach historic travel between the Islamic world and Europe. To my knowledge, this dissertation is the first attempt at a literary study of these three texts taken together—and by literary study, I mean a close study of the texts’ layers of meaning using appropriate methods of

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<sup>71</sup> Work on ‘age of decadence’ literature presents a number of formidable challenges—not least among them the lack of printed editions for many, if not most texts; the linguistic anomalies which these texts often represent, arising from our lack of knowledge of the linguistic situation of written Arabic as practiced among variegated strata of society; and the challenges of approaching a literature whose aesthetic values are far removed from our own.

<sup>72</sup> Kilpatrick, *Op. cit.*, 233.

philological and rhetorical analysis: one that approaches the texts not as primary sources for writing history, nor as linguistic source-texts, but as works of literature in their own right.

Although the bulk of scholarly literature for each text will be engaged in their designated chapters, a few general words must be said on the current state of scholarship for all three of them: Of the three, Paul of Aleppo's *Safra* has been known to us the longest, but has also suffered the most from scholarly neglect. There is no more persuasive illustration of this fact than to simply call the reader's attention again to the long passage from the *Safra* quoted above. The outdated Victorian idiom and stilted diction of the English translation—used deliberately for this purpose of demonstration—is the work of the little-known English Orientalist F.C. Belfour, executed between 1829 and 1834, “under the auspices and expense of the Oriental Translation Committee.” Belfour deserves credit for being still the only scholar to translate this long and difficult text; yet the fact remains that his work was flawed and in many places plainly inaccurate.<sup>73</sup> To date, no other English translation has been attempted or published for this, the

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<sup>73</sup> We can generously attribute some of Belfour's inaccuracies to the fact that he worked from a single, imperfect manuscript. His efforts to obtain a better manuscript were unsuccessful: “I became desirous to provide myself with other copies, for the purpose of collation; and, in my progress through the Eastern Countries, sought for them, but without success, at Constantinople, Smyrna, and Cairo. Reduced, therefore, to the employment of my single copy, I have had to contend with great difficulties, amidst the erroneous and diversified readings continually presenting themselves, both in the narrative and in the names of places.” Belfour's “single copy”, purchased in Aleppo is preserved today in the collection of the British Library (OMS Add 18427-30; for an evaluation of this MS., as well as of all six other extant MSS. of the *Safra*, see *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 29-35). More problematic for Belfour's reliability as a translator was the set of biases under which he worked. Like many scholars of his generation, when confronted by a universe of ideas, symbols and rituals alien to his own, Belfour's knee-jerk reaction was haughty dismissal. He took the liberty to omit entire passages from the text dealing with what he called “superstitious ceremonial.” He writes of the “difficulty” he faced in this regard: “Another, and more serious difficulty, which has much retarded me in my prosecution of the work, is the perpetual recurrence of Church Ceremonies, repeated, nearly all, with little variation, and serving to mark the Calendar of the Archdeacon's Journal. To neglect them altogether, would have been to interrupt the thread of the narrative, and sometimes to lose sight of the Clerical travellers for periods of weeks together. I have, therefore, been compelled to give such as seemed absolutely necessary to the continuation of the

“longest travel account in early modern Arabic.”<sup>74</sup> Three partial Arabic editions have been published—but no complete edition.<sup>75</sup> Innumerable area historical studies, especially to do with pre-Petrine Muscovite Russian history, cite the *Safra* as an important ‘primary source’—all of which invariably make use of Belfour’s highly flawed translation.<sup>76</sup>

Elias of Mosul’s *Kitāb Siyāḥa* was first discovered and made known more recently, in 1905, but it has generated a good deal more scholarly attention as an Arabic literary text than Paul of Aleppo’s *Safra*.<sup>77</sup> It is of course, as we have said, a much easier and shorter text than the latter.

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history; but much, I fear, to the weariness of those who shall undertake to read them, from the aversion, which our English habits and pure practices of religion produce in us, to the tedious forms of unmeaning and superstitious ceremonial.” (*Op. cit.*, Vol. I, Part the First, 1829, v-vi). Ioana Feodorov has compiled a summary list of some of Belfour’s characteristic mistranslations and important omissions; see *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 39-43.

<sup>74</sup> Nabil Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), xxiv.

<sup>75</sup> Qunṣṭanṭīn al-Bāshā’s edition published in 1913 covered just the first 11 folios, which contain Paul’s survey of the history (*tārikh*) of the Antiochian Patriarchate (*cf.* Chapt. 2, Sect. I). Al-Bāshā also followed a common editorial convention of the time, of ‘tidying up’/standardizing the Middle Arabic elements; see *Nu-khba min Safrat al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs al-Ḥalabī bi-qalam waladihī al-shammās Būlus* (Harīṣā, Lebanon: Maṭba’at al-Qiddis Būlus, 1913). Basile Radu’s edition (and French translation) was significantly more complete and more accurate, covering 86 (out of 311) folios; see *Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d’Antioche*, in eds. R. Graffin and F. Nau, *Patrologia Orientalis* XXII, fasc. 1 (1930); XXIV, fasc. 4 (1933); XXVI, fasc. 5 (1949). Ioana Feodorov’s newest edition (and Romanian translation) published in 2014 (*Op. cit.*) is the most complete to date, covering all parts of the text to do with Romania—amounting still to less than only half the *Safra*’s length. Feodorov’s is also the most faithful to the idiosyncratic orthography of the original, as well as the most well-researched and thoroughly-annotated. It contains a critical examination of the previous two editions (35-39).

<sup>76</sup> A list here of all historical studies in English that cite Paul’s *Safra* would become too long and superfluous. Suffice it remark that virtually all these studies cite either Belfour’s translation or, even more commonly, a single-volume abridged version of it by Lady Laura Ridding, *The Travels of Macarius, Extracts from the Diary* (1936; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1971).

<sup>77</sup> For a thorough review of the scholarship on the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, in Arabic and in European languages, since its publication, see Ghobrial, “The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon”, *Op. cit.*, 53-55.

No doubt, the fact that the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* has already been twice translated recently and competently into English can be attributed in part to this disparity.<sup>78</sup> However, it likely has to do also with Elias's travel itinerary—more impressive in breadth than Paul's, and undoubtedly of greater general interest to a wider section of readers. Elias's narrative takes us right to the 'center of the action' as it were, to the epicenter of global transformation in the modern era: Western Europe and the Americas. Paul's narrative by comparison takes us through what many would consider a cultural backwater: the Balkans and Eastern Europe and the cultural sphere of 'Byzantium after Byzantium'—a part of the world moreover that has been subject to 'othering' in the past, similar to 'orientalism'.<sup>79</sup> The disparity in interest, certainly not justified on the two texts' respective merits alone, becomes understandable in this light.

Ḥannā Diyāb's travel narrative has potentially the broadest scope for scholarly and general interest of all the three texts. It is a very recent discovery, made widely known only in 2015 with the publication of its superb French translation, entitled *D'Alep à Paris*. Diyāb had been known before this to an extent by those who study the *Arabian Nights* as the 'secret' author behind familiar *Arabian Nights* stories like *Aladdin* and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*<sup>80</sup>: the so-

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<sup>78</sup> Both translations appeared in the same year: (1) *An Arab's Journey to Colonial Spanish America: The Travels of Elias al-Mūsili in the Seventeenth Century*. trans. Caesar E. Farah (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003); (2) "Europe and South America: "Kitab Siyahat al-Khoury Ilyas bin al-Qisees Hanna al-Mawsuli (The Book of Travels of the Priest Ilyas, Son of the Cleric Hanna al-Mawsuli)", in ed. and trans. Nabil Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians*, 45-111. Farah's translation was made from 1905 Rabbāt edition (see above, n. 29); Matar's was made from IO Islamic 3537 (BL), the same MS. which I use in Chapt. 3.

<sup>79</sup> On historical Western exoticizing (even 'orientalizing') stereotypes of Southeastern Europe and the Balkans, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>80</sup> Ulrich Marzolph writes of these tales: "Through the translations and adaptations of Galland's work, and particularly through its numerous editions addressing a juvenile audience, many of Diyāb's tales have become the darlings of Western audiences." Indeed, these are the only *Arabian Nights* tales most Western

called ‘orphan tales’, not traced to any MS. tradition<sup>81</sup>, which were included by Antoine Galland in his ‘best-selling’ French translation/adaptation published between 1704 and 1717.<sup>82</sup> In the years since its discovery became known, *Nights* scholars have already been quick to probe Diyāb’s narrative for its implications on the authorship of these ‘orphan tales’. The past year, 2020, saw the publication furthermore of an English translation, with yet another English translation and Arabic edition forthcoming this year, in 2021.<sup>83</sup> These developments look promising, although it remains to be seen how much further interest they will generate.

The reasons why these texts have remained understudied, besides the more general problem of ‘decadence’ already discussed, are twofold: (1) the longstanding marginality of ‘Christian Arabic literature’ within Arabic studies generally; and (2) the problem of ‘Middle Arabic’, the idiom in which the bulk of Christian Arabic literature down the ages is written—including these three texts.

(1) The ‘Christian Arabic’ corpus comprises for the overwhelming part literature written by Christians for exclusively Christian reading audiences. Christians in *dār al-islām* wrote in

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audiences know, which have entered the “international narrative tradition” (see “The Man Who Made the Nights Immortal”, *Op. cit.*, 120). This is due to the startling ‘originality’ of these orphan tales (and to their archetypal quality)—which Paul Lemos Horta has traced to Diyāb’s formation as a storyteller through his unique trans-imperial travel experience in Paul Lucas’s company; see *Marvellous Thieves*, 54-87.

<sup>81</sup> These tales’ origins are traced instead to a series of meetings between Diyāb and Galland at the home of Paul Lucas in Paris in 1709 (*cf.* Sbath 254, fol. 128<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>82</sup> *Les mille et une nuits: contes arabes*, eds. Aboubakr Chraïbi and Jean-Paul Sermain, 3 vols., (Paris: Flammarion, 2004). This is the most recent of countless editions of Galland’s collection since its first publication.

<sup>83</sup> (1) *The Man Who Wrote Aladdin: The Life and Times of Hannā Diyāb*, trans. Paul Lunde (Edinburgh: Hardinge Simpole, 2020); (2) forthcoming in May 2021, from New York University Press’s Library of Arabic Literature series, is an English translation (and Arabic edition) by Elias Muhanna and Johannes Stephan.

Arabic on a variety of subjects: theology, apologetics, scriptural exegesis, hagiography, church history, liturgy, to name some of the most prominent. Relatively few Christian authors, especially in the later periods, wrote anything with a non-Christian reading audience in mind. They wrote to edify, to instruct, to persuade, or even to amuse their fellow Christians, deriving all the central questions to which they spoke from their own community's concerns—almost wholly outside, or barely on the margins, of the mainstream of Arab-Islamic literary and intellectual life. Paul of Aleppo, Elias of Mosul, and Ḥannā Diyāb all typify this reality.<sup>84</sup>

Given this partially sealed-off nature of Christian Arabic literature from the wider Arab-Islamic milieu, we can understand why few of its texts have interested the majority of Arabists. Just as the student of Dante or Milton is logically interested in the mainstream European Christian religious concepts that inform their poetry, so the student of Arabic literature looks

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<sup>84</sup> Judging from his writing, Ḥannā Diyāb's formal education appears to have been rudimentary—although he might be considered, in another respect, a literary master within the non-elite and ecumenical storytelling milieu of Aleppo's cafés and summer gardens. As churchmen, both Paul of Aleppo and Elias of Mosul were highly literate in their respective churches' ecclesial literature—but not in the *adab* of the Muslim literati. There is no evidence furthermore that any of them—Paul, Elias, or Diyāb—read any works of the Arabic *Riḥla* genre (a branch of *adab*) which was made famous by late-medieval Maghrebi luminaries like Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217) and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1368-9 or 1377), and which remained very much alive among traveling Arab Muslim *ulamā'* and *udabā'* at this same time in the early modern/Ottoman period. As Christians, both their literary milieu was separate from that of the latter, and more importantly their travels took place within very different contexts. The two travel literatures in fact had little directly to do with each other during this time. Of the three travelers, only Paul gives evidence of his reading of Muslim authors to some extent, on subjects that interested him, such as notably history. Occasionally in the *Safra* we get an actual citation of a Muslim author—*eg.* on his way home to Syria through central Anatolia, while stopping briefly in the town of Elbistan (Ar. al-Bustān), Paul cites a well-known work for historical background on the location: *Durrat al-Aslāk fi Dawlat al-Atrāk*, by Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 1377), a famous Mamluk-era jurist (*faqīh*) and historian (*mu'arrikh*) from Aleppo (*Safra*, fol. 301<sup>v</sup>); for al-Ḥalabī's biography/bibliography, see Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Durar Al-Kāmina fi A'yān al-Mi'a wa 'l-Thāmina*, ed. Sālim al-Karnakawī, Vol. II (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1993), 79.



primarily to gain an understanding of the foundational Islamic religious ideas that permeate it—not those ideas that were marginal within Arab-Islamic civilization.

Paul of Aleppo, Elias of Mosul, and Ḥannā Diyāb were all typical of their early modern/Ottoman time, in that the worldview of each was thoroughly religious and ‘enchanted’<sup>85</sup>—with not a hint of the modern ‘secularizing’ tendency associated typically with the intellectuals of the *Nahḍa*. This is important to note. The fact is that traditionally, Christian Arabic authors have only interested most Arabists during two brief periods of “transmission”, when they assumed the vital role of ‘transmitters’ to the Islamic world of secularizing, “profane learning from the ‘West’.”<sup>86</sup> The first period of transmission occurred at the zenith of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, during the “great formative phase of Islamic civilization” between the 8th and 10th centuries—when East Syriac (‘Nestorian’) and West Syriac (‘Jacobite’) scholars rose to prominence as translators of classical Greek and Hellenistic learning into Arabic (via Syriac).<sup>87</sup> The second period of transmission was the so-called ‘Arab Awakening’ of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Nahḍa*, when Levantine Christians’ familiarity with European languages, literatures, and ideas, put them in a unique position to become harbingers of Western ‘secular’ modernity in the Arab world.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> This is in reference to Max Weber’s classic (and quite contentious) idea of ‘disenchantment’, associated with ‘secularization’ and the loss of an integral religious (or mythical/magical) worldview, as a hallmark of modernity.

<sup>86</sup> Haddad, *Op. cit.*, 3.

<sup>87</sup> This was the famous Greco-Arabic “translation movement (*ḥarakat al-tarjama*)”.

<sup>88</sup> Haddad, *Op. cit.*, 3-6.

(2) All three authors wrote in an Arabic *koine* which philologists call ‘Middle Arabic’—an umbrella term embracing the immense regional and historical continuum of pre-modern written Arabic, in a linguistic register which mixes to varying degrees ‘classical’ *Fuṣḥā* with ‘colloquial’ or *vulgarische Sprache*.<sup>89</sup> In the past, this Middle Arabic has been a stumbling block for many. The problem of Middle Arabic is related to the problem of ‘decadence’: the linguistic register existed for the Arabic language’s entire history as a world language, but it rose to greater prominence in the ‘age of decadence’, when ‘*ulamā*’ and *udabā*’—the guardians of the classical tradition—seem to lose some of their traditional monopoly on literary production. As later modern Arab ‘reformist’ intellectuals saw it, the ‘decadence’ coin had two sides: On one side was the sterile, overwrought, and obscurantist *Fuṣḥā* of elite authors in this period; on the other side was the undignified Middle Arabic of non-elite authors, whose numbers rose.<sup>90</sup> Neither side was to be taken seriously.

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<sup>89</sup> For a short comparison of the Middle Arabic features of these three authors (with Diyāb’s ranking as by far the most colloquial), see Kilpatrick and Toomer, “Niḡlāwus al-Ḥalabī”, *Op. cit.*, 34.

<sup>90</sup> We are only beginning to understand how Mamluk and Ottoman literature often defy our notions of a strict division between ‘elite’ and ‘popular’, ‘high’ and ‘low’. Thomas Bauer writes on the characteristic “*blurring of the boundaries between popular and educated literature*” in the Mamluk Period:

The ulama were as much at home in the *sūqs* as the craftsmen were in a madrasah. And as long as no concerns about scholarly prestige were involved, little prevented the ulama from displaying their interest in everyday affairs and in popular literature. Though the popular epics seem to have remained rather outside their horizon, popular poetry in dialect as well as in standard language (sometimes deficient) by poets like Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār and Ibn Sūdūn were held in great esteem by the leading ulama as well as by the ‘people of the street.’ ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Mawṣilī even bothered to adorn the *dīwān* of al-Mi‘mār with a colorful example of his *inshā*’. The poems and *maqāmahs* of these popular poets, as well as other texts like the shadow plays of Ibn Dānyāl, provide insight into the life of the crafts and the lower classes incomparable to what we know from earlier periods. Even in the *dīwāns* of ulama-poets, scenes of everyday life turn up from time to time.

see “Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches”, *Mamlūk Studies Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2005): 110-111.

Whatever attitude one takes as a modern Arabic reader towards Middle Arabic, one thing is true: The idiom never failed any of its users—either Christian or Muslim—in conveying the meanings or concepts, sometimes very complex and subtle, they wished to express. In the case of these three texts which I am studying, I would argue the opposite: that the authors' Middle Arabic idiom—which more easily than classical *Fuṣḥā* expressed their inchoate thoughts and spontaneous reactions to phenomena they encountered—contributes in fact to the refreshing vividness of these narratives in their best moments; to that sense we have when reading them that we are indeed 'Journeying Towards Modernity'. This is of course a large topic that is beyond the scope of this dissertation.<sup>91</sup>

Middle Arabic was nearly always, long before 'decadence', the idiom of choice for Eastern Christian authors who wrote in Arabic.<sup>92</sup> Exceptions to this rule—*i.e.* authors who adhered to

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<sup>91</sup> The problem of 'Middle Arabic' raises a multitude of complex questions. By its very nature, Middle Arabic follows more closely than *Fuṣḥā* the patterns of 'real' contemporary speech; it possesses a more organic link to the less structured trains of thought, the spontaneous reactions to stimuli that our modern tastes tend to value higher in literary composition—and which a more classically-minded writer never permitted to remain on the written page without subjecting them to an editing process according to prescribed norms of grammar and *adab*. Rifāʿa al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's descriptions of his correspondence with the renowned French Orientalist, Silvestre de Sacy, contain an anecdote that potentially sheds much light on this. Having submitted a draft of his travel diary to de Sacy for pre-publication review, the French Orientalist replied to Ṭaḥṭāwī in a letter that contained the following evaluation: "However, it does not always comply with the rules of Arabic grammar. This may be due to the fact that the author wrote down things in a hurry, and he will probably correct his mistakes in the fair copy." Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, a cultivated *Azharī* scholar, had reverted to Middle Arabic when composing his diary—a register which perhaps helped him to more easily capture *in a hurry* his live observations and experiences in Paris. Now he had to edit those raw observations and experiences—captured in Middle Arabic—to make them *comply with the rules of Arabic grammar* and a more classicizing style; see *An Imam in Paris: Account of a Stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826-1831)*, trans. Daniel L. Newman (London: Saqi, 2004), 281.

<sup>92</sup> 'Middle Arabic' features are, with some notable individual exceptions, universal in 'Christian Arabic' literature from its early 'Abbāsid-era beginnings in the Melkite monasteries of Palestine. Joshua Blau codified a grammar of this early Christian Middle Arabic from the Arabic manuscript collection at St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai; see *A grammar of Christian Arabic, based mainly on south-Palestinian texts from the*

the classical ideals of *faṣāḥa* (lit. ‘eloquence’)—are few and far between, before Jirmānūs Farḥāt (see above) led the way in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century for Christians to embrace *en masse* the classical Arab-Islamic literary tradition. Prior to that, the fact remained that their widespread use of Middle Arabic never helped Christian Arabic authors, culturally marginal already, reach a broader educated Arabic reading audience outside their communities—nor for that matter among modern-day Arabists. Until very recently, attitudes among the latter were almost unanimously purist.<sup>93</sup> Many have expressed their profound displeasure when meeting with the “indignities to which the Christians habitually subjected literary Arabic.”<sup>94</sup> Many have interpreted Middle Arabic usage as evidence of literary deficiency, and even intellectual poverty, on the part of pre-*Nahḍa* Christian authors. It is hoped, that if the inadequacy of this interpretation has not yet been established by now, it will be over the course of the next four chapters of this dissertation.

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*first millennium*, 3 Vols. (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1966–7). On Christian Middle Arabic in the later periods, Jérôme Lentin is the undisputed leading authority; see for instance, *Recherches sur l’histoire de la langue arabe à l’époque moderne* (PhD diss.: Université de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1997).

<sup>93</sup> Modern, purist disdain for Middle Arabic runs deep in a way that is difficult to convey to someone unfamiliar with the highly unique linguistic history of Arabic. The language’s modern history is characterized by an unresolved tension between an immutable ideal of ‘pure’ *Fuṣḥā* and the realities of a living world language in constant flux, subject to the same historical-linguistic processes as all languages. A conservative, ‘elitist’ attitude towards language is commonly found even among many who would otherwise never identify as culturally conservative or elitist. Non-native students of Arabic typically assimilate some of this attitude early in their studies of the language and its literature. Devotion for ‘pure’ *Fuṣḥā*, demonstrated in the labor required for its mastery, is seldom found compatible with generosity towards those who does not demonstrate the same.

<sup>94</sup> Haddad, *Op. cit.*, 17, n.12.



**Chapter 1:**  
*Crossing the Border*

The travels of Paul of Aleppo, Elias of Mosul, and Ḥannā Diyāb, all took place within a world conceptually divided between the ‘house of Islam (*dār al-islām*)’ and the ‘lands of the Christians (*bilād al-masīḥīyin*)’.<sup>1</sup> Whether the latter, ‘lands of the Christians’, referred to Western (Catholic) Europe or Eastern (Orthodox) Europe, depended—as we discussed previously in the Introduction—on which community the Eastern Christian traveler belonged to. The divide was thus not always an East-West one.

Neither *dār al-islām* nor *bilād al-masīḥīyin* were unified entities; both were internally divided—politically, as well as religiously. The frontier dividing them was however both political and religious: *dār al-islām* corresponded roughly to wherever a Muslim local dynasty ruled, affording privileged status to Islam as the ‘official’ religion of that territory<sup>2</sup>; ‘Christendom’, or

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘lands of the Christians’ was used by Ottoman-era Arab Muslim travelers to Europe as well, though they called it *bilād al-naṣārā* (*naṣārā*, sing. *naṣrānī*, lit. ‘Nazarenes’, being the attested Qur’ānic term for Christians); see Nabil Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians*, xiii-xxxviii. The division of the world, which Eastern Christian travelers inherited, corresponded more or less to the traditional binary in Islamic jurisprudence between *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* (‘the house of war’). Technically, *dār al-ḥarb* meant any non-Muslim territory; historically however, the most important religious line of demarcation was that between Muslim territory and Christian territory, whether the latter was Western ‘Frankish (*ifranj*)’ or Eastern Byzantine (*Rūm*).

<sup>2</sup> In political practice, this was the most commonly-accepted definition throughout history. It was this definition which Paul of Aleppo operated within, when, crossing the Danube, he writes of leaving behind the territory belonging to the ‘rule of Islam (*ḥukm al-islām*)’; see below in this Chapter. In terms of theory however, there were (as always) differences of opinion between the different Islamic juridical ‘schools (*madhāhib*)’, on whether or not Muslim political rule and the official application of the Islamic *sharī‘a* were prerequisites for a territory being considered as part of *dār al-islām*; see Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities: the Juristic Discourse On Muslim Minorities From the Second/Eighth To the Eleventh/Seventeenth Centuries”, *Islamic Law and Society* 1, 2 (1994): 141-187.

*bilād al-masīhīyin*, corresponded in turn roughly to the opposite. Historically the frontier was constantly shifting with the ebb and flow of conquests; the division between them was never a ‘clean’ one: Christians were always native residents of *dār al-islām*—in some places they were even the majority population—as well as vice-versa. However, this division of the world was inherited, considered as ‘real’, taken for granted by Muslims and Christians alike. When Paul, Elias and Diyāb each travelled outside *dār al-islām* into the ‘lands of the Christians’, they crossed the same ‘border’ that Muslim travelers from *dār al-islām* crossed.<sup>3</sup> Their experience of this ‘border crossing’ differed from theirs however in substantial ways.

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<sup>3</sup> The whole question of whether or not Arab Muslims crossed this border—*i.e.* traveled to and wrote about Europe—in significant numbers before the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been a source of bitter contention among scholars in the past. On the one side was Bernard Lewis, who argued that pre-modern Muslim society as a whole, being (over)confident in its cultural superiority, lacked curiosity vis-à-vis Europe—for which reason relatively few Arab Muslim travel accounts survive; see *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982). Lewis’s thesis was compelling and was reiterated afterward by many scholars writing both in European languages and in Arabic. On the other hand, it has been challenged, most notably by Nabil Matar, citing evidence of more recently-unearthed early modern travel-accounts to Europe written mainly by Western (*Maghrebi*) Arab Muslims; see *Op. Cit.*; Idem, *Europe Through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). Two facts remain uncontested however: (1) As a genre, the Arabic *Rihla* (as opposed to travel generally) was dominated by the twin themes of ‘pilgrimage (*ḥajj/ziyāra*)’ and the ‘search for knowledge (*ṭalab al-‘ilm*)’, both of which entailed journeys mostly limited to within *dār al-islām*, not outside its borders; and (2) the number of pre-19<sup>th</sup> century Arab Muslim travel accounts to Europe, even taking into account lesser-known ones that have come to light more recently, does not come close to the number of post-19<sup>th</sup> century Arabic accounts. However, we can safely assert that medieval Muslims’ ‘lack of curiosity’ as posited by Lewis, cannot fully account for this disparity. For general studies and taxonomies of the pre-modern Arab-Islamic travel and travel literature (*Rihla*), see I.R. Netton, ed., *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Mediaeval and Modern Islam* (London: Routledge, 1995); D.F. Eickelman and J. Piscatori, eds., *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1990); Shawkat Toorawa, “Travel in the Medieval Islamic World: The Importance of Patronage as Illustrated by ‘Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi”, in *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travellers, 1050-1550*, ed. Rosamund Allen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 57-70; M.K. Lenker, “The importance of the *Rihla* for the Islamization of Spain”; for the ‘post-classical’/early modern period, see See Ralf Elger, “Arabic Travelogues from the Mashrek 1700-1834”, in *Op. cit.*; also Hilary Kilpatrick, “Between Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī”, *Op. cit.*

The Eastern Christian traveler's experience of the 'lands of the Christians' was unique: Unlike Arab Muslim travelers to Christian Europe, or conversely European Christian travelers to the 'Oriental' Arab-Islamic world, travelers like Paul, Elias and Diyāb were not traveling to lands and societies which they viewed as wholly foreign, exotic or 'other'—let alone religiously inimical or rival. Though their ancestral home was in Ottoman Islamic territory, as Christians they saw their journey to the 'lands of the Christians' as a kind of religious home-coming. Each were relieved when they arrived on Christian shores, to see for the first time the symbols of their own religion triumphant everywhere, to live and move and pray freely for the first time in lands where Christians were not only in the numerical majority, but had *mulk* ('sovereignty'; see Section I below); where they weren't subject to the humiliation of paying the *kharāj* tax as *dhimmi*s, or *ra'āyā*—*i.e.* 'second-class' subjects.<sup>4</sup>

Eastern Christians' collective impression on arrival in the 'lands of the Christians' was far indeed from that of the famous medieval Muslim *raḥḥāla* Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217), who crossed briefly in his day what he called the "border between security and danger (*ḥaddun bayna 'l-amni wa 'l-khawf*)" from *dār al-islām* into Christian-held territory.<sup>5</sup> When Ibn Jubayr disembarked in

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<sup>4</sup> The *kharāj*, which in the Ottoman period came to replace the older term *jizya*, was a special per head poll-tax levied exclusively on non-Muslim Ottoman *ra'āyā* ('subjects')—a term which became likewise synonymous with *dhimmi* ('client'); see Cahen, Cl., İnalcık, Halil, and Hardy, P. "Djizya". In *EI*. The hardship caused by the *kharāj* makes its appearance as a theme, most prominently in Paul of Aleppo's *Safra*. As recognized ethnarchs, or *millet başı*, Christian head-clergy in the Ottoman empire were made responsible for ensuring payment of *kharāj* by all eligible tax-payers in their respective communities. It was in large part their inability to raise enough funds locally for their own community's *kharāj* due to the Sublime Porte, that prompted Makarios and Paul to travel and seek financial aid abroad, in the 'lands of the Christians'; see Chapt. 2., Sect. I.

<sup>5</sup> *Rihlat Ibn Jubayr* (Beirut: Dār Beirūt li 'l-ṭiba'a wa 'l-nashr, 1974), 315.



Messina in Norman-ruled Sicily, he wrote that its skies were “gloomy because of unbelief”; that it is was city where “a Muslim finds no rest...Packed with worshippers of the Cross, it chokes its residents more than they can bear. It is full of stench and filth.”<sup>6</sup> For Ibn Jubayr, the ‘lands of the Christians’ were a land of temptation (*fitna*)—which, he counselled, a Muslim traveler (unlike himself) would do best to avoid, if at all possible. Entering those lands as a Muslim meant exposing oneself to *fitna*, to “absence of purity (*‘adam al-ṭahāra*) and mixing with the pigs.”<sup>7</sup> “There is no excuse in the eyes of God,” he writes, “for a Muslim to stay in one of the lands of the infidels (*bilād al-kufr*), except when passing through it, while he has a clear path to the lands of the Muslims (*bilād al-muslimān*).”<sup>8</sup> After departing finally for safety, Ibn Jubayr summed up his final warning to any other would-be *raḥḥāl*: “Beware, beware of entering their lands (*al-ḥadhara ‘l-ḥadhara min dukhūli bilādihim*)! We ask God, the Most High, to graciously overlook and forgive this sin in which our feet have slipped.”<sup>9</sup>

Arab Muslim travelers to the ‘lands of the Christians’ did nevertheless routinely express a degree of openness and admiration for aspects of life there. The same Ibn Jubayr made a detailed survey of Palermo’s main Catholic cathedral, after which he acknowledged—even after

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 296. Ibn Jubayr’s visceral revulsion in this passage was not unrelated to the fact that only decades before his arrival in Sicily, the island had passed from Arab Muslim to Norman Christian rule, ending a 250-year period as the Arab Muslim ‘emirate’ of Sicily.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* On the question of whether or not it was permissible for a Muslim to live in non-Muslim territory, Ibn Jubayr, being from Muslim Spain where the *Mālikī* school of jurisprudence (*madhhab*) predominated, took the *Mālikīya*’s traditionally ‘hard’ stance, imposing emigration (*hijra*) to *dār al-islām*. Other schools, notably the *Shāfi‘ī* and *Ḥanafī*, were not so strict in this regard; see Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Op. Cit.*, 172.

<sup>9</sup> *Riḥlat Ibn Jubayr*, 280.

having recently toured the whole Islamic East and beheld its architectural wonders—that it was “beyond dispute the most marvelous edifice in the world (*aʿjabu maṣāniʿi ʿl-dunyā*).” His admiration was tempered however: As a Muslim, whose undivided loyalty was to *dār al-islām*, Ibn Jubayr saw in the Christian cathedral’s splendor also an ideological challenge—which he confronted with the improvised prayer, that “God soon honor it with the *ādhān*.”<sup>10</sup>

Ibn Jubayr’s may be an extreme example, yet it serves our purpose here of highlighting the difference between the overall Arab Muslim traveler’s approach to the ‘lands of the Christians’ and the Arab Christian traveler’s: The former’s allegiance almost always belonged to one side of the political/ideological divide unequivocally. His journey to the other side was never more than a foreign reconnaissance for him. For it to have become more would have meant to risk becoming lost to the other side. Ibn Jubayr’s admiration of the Christians’ architectural achievements can be understood somewhat like that of a parent admiring the achievements of a stranger’s child: However sincere and unbegrudging the admiration, it could never equal the native pride taken in one’s own child’s achievements. For Ibn Jubayr, expressing admiration for Christians’ achievements was intended rather as a call to action for his fellow Muslims to, as we say colloquially in English, ‘*up their game*’.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 306. Imprecations of this sort are a stock feature in Arab Muslim accounts of visits to Christian-held territories, from the medieval to the early modern. The common need felt by Muslim travelers to neutralize their praise for Christians’ achievements with condemnation, has been attributed (not entirely convincingly) by Nabil Matar to self-censorship due to political fear: Muslim travelers, Matar writes, “knew that outright praise for the Europeans could not be easily tolerated by their rulers”; likewise they “knew that they had to temper exhilaration with denunciation”; see *In the Lands of the Christians*, xxxvi-xxxvii.

By comparison, the Eastern Christian traveler's allegiance became conflicted and divided as he crossed over and spent significant time on the other side. Paul of Aleppo, Elias of Mosul and Ḥannā Diyāb, all took a conspicuous kind of religious/patriotic pride in the cultural and socio-political achievements of the European Christian societies they visited, as the achievements not of a foreign or rival or 'other' civilization, but of their own civilization. None of them were blind to those societies' shortcomings—they all even highlighted these shortcomings when necessary; yet they all nevertheless took at the same time a recognizably 'utopian' approach to the 'lands of the Christians'. A Christian-majority society, ruled over by a Christian king—a Christian earthly kingdom, or empire (*mulk*)—was the supreme embodiment of an ideal that was unobtainable for Eastern Christians in *dār al-islām*. The other side was thus a site of pilgrimage for them.

Each traveler focused in his text on a different particular achievement or quality in which their European Christian society appeared to have the edge over Ottoman society: In Paul of Aleppo's *Safra* it is the *tadbīr* ('good management') and Orthodox religious piety of the Moldo-Wallachians and Muscovite Russians (see Chapt. 2); in Elias of Mosul's *Kitāb Siyāḥa* it is Catholic Spain's wealth acquired from its New World possessions (see Chapt. 3); Ḥannā Diyāb, like many Arab intellectuals in the modern era, admired above all the well-planned, rational *niẓām* ('order') of Paris's urban life (see Chapt. 4).<sup>11</sup> For Paul and Elias especially, touting these achievements was a central feature of their message to their Christian readers at home: to instill

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<sup>11</sup> In expressing admiration for Paris's 'order (*niẓām*)', Diyāb prefigured by more than a century one of the major themes of Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's ground-breaking account of his stay in Paris. See Chapter 4 for a non-detailed comparison of the two travellers' utopian visions of Paris.

in them pride, along with a new sense of belonging, as Christians, to European empires whose global power and achievements rivalled those of the Ottoman empire. In doing so, Paul, who unlike Elias planned on returning from the ‘lands of the Christians’, had to sometimes walk a fine line—lest his political loyalty as an Ottoman subject become dangerously suspect.

To all three of them the question loomed over their travels: To which side of the divide did they belong? Which side did they consider as their real ‘home’? Only Paul of Aleppo traveled from the outset with the firm intention—from which he never once wavered—of returning to Ottoman Aleppo. Many other Christians from the Ottoman empire travelled to the ‘lands of the Christians’ (mainly Western Europe) not with the intent of visiting, but of making their new home and life there, of becoming permanent *émigrés*. When Ḥannā Diyāb left with Paul Lucas for France, his plan was to remain there forever—like many Maronites and other Christians from the Levant (mostly uniates) before him had already done. They all left seeking new education, work and business opportunities in the emerging Western European markets.<sup>12</sup> Not until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century would Arab Muslims do the same in serious numbers. The migrant’s—as opposed to just the traveler’s—experience of Europe, with all its ups and

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<sup>12</sup> Students during this period were mostly uniate clergymen, like Elias of Mosul, seeking theological training at the *Propaganda Fide*. The bulk of laymen pursuing economic opportunities were aspiring merchants of some type (eg. the *Suryānī* uniate featured in Section II in this chapter). A smaller ‘academic’ category of migrants was also emerging in this period, invited to the continent for their native Arabic proficiency, to assist in the growth of European Oriental studies. Ḥannā Diyāb was ostensibly in this category; cf. Hilary Kilpatrick and Gerald J. Toomer, “Niḡlāwus al-Ḥalabī”, *Op. cit.*

downs and psychological vicissitudes, was something which Christians from *dār al-islām* were acquainted with much earlier than their Muslim neighbors.<sup>13</sup>

Making their new ‘home’ in the European ‘lands of the Christians’ was not easy for Eastern Christians. The venture was not always successful, but quite often met rather with profound disappointment. Of the three travelers, only one of them—Elias of Mosul—never returned to *dār al-islām*, but made his new permanent home in the ‘lands of the Christians’—based on what we know, in Spain. How ‘successful’ Elias was as a European *émigré* is a complex question that will be explored in detail in Chapter 3.<sup>14</sup> Paul of Aleppo and Ḥannā Diyāb on the other hand both returned, after a period in Europe, to their home in Ottoman Aleppo. Paul did so after (quite vehemently) turning down a generous offer to stay and work in Moscow as an imperial civil servant for Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich (see Chapt. 2, Sect. VI); while Diyāb decided to do so only after a traumatic episode that left him disillusioned altogether with Parisian society (see Chapt. 4, Sect. III). Both of them record in their travel narratives, alongside their many positive experiences, their painful and oppressive experience of *al-ghurba* (‘alienation’, ‘homesickness’ or ‘rootlessness’) during their stay in the ‘lands of the Christians’. *Al-ghurba*, with its

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<sup>13</sup> Jean-Peaul Ghobrial has more recently done an extensive and revealing study on the lives of Eastern Christian migrants to Europe in the early modern period, whose numbers—while they do not come close to modern migration waves—were enough to make them a visible ‘minority’, portrayed in contemporary European literature; see “Migration from Within and Without: In the Footsteps of Eastern Christians in the Early Modern World”, *Op. cit.*, 153–73.

<sup>14</sup> As mentioned already in the Introduction, documentary evidence uncovered by Ghobrial indicates that Elias of Mosul died in Spain not as a voluntary *émigré*, but as an involuntary exile—one who longed to return to his ancestral home to Ottoman Mesopotamia, but couldn’t; who wrote his *Kitāb Siyāha* partially as a means to reminisce about home in *al-ghurba*; see “The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon”, *Op. cit.*, 51–93.

concomitant ‘longing for home (*al-ḥanīn ilā ’l-waṭan*)’ was an experience shared universally by Arab Muslim and Christian travellers in Europe.<sup>15</sup> The experience, by nature intricate and perplexing, was made even more so for Christians who came over time to view both *dār al-islām* and *bilād al-masīḥiyyīn* in different respects as their homeland, their *waṭan*.

Returning ‘home’ was not a straightforward process either. Neither Paul of Aleppo nor Hannā Diyāb were the same person when they returned, as they were before they left. Travel, always a transformative process, had changed them. As Christians, witnessing and experiencing life in the ‘lands of the Christians’ altered their perspective on life in *dār al-islām*. Both of them had to readjust themselves to the status quo of the Ottoman *millet* system, to life as a religious minority—as *dhimmīs*. Each in very different ways, experienced also a new desire—as well as newfound confidence—to renegotiate their status under that system.<sup>16</sup>

The three texts studied here all reveal how the ‘border’ dividing *dār al-islām* and *bilād al-masīḥiyyīn* became, for each of the travelers in their own unique way, a dividing-line within their own bi-partite personal identities as Eastern Christians. In the chapters which follow this one,

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<sup>15</sup> The theme of alienation and longing for home (*al-ghurba* and *al-ḥanīn ilā ’l-waṭan*) is an ancient one in Arabic literature, with antecedents in the earliest pre-Islamic Bedouin poetry. In the medieval period, it is associated most of all with the Arab-Sicilian poet Ibn Ḥamdīs (d. c.1133); see William Granara, “Ibn Ḥamdīs and the Poetry of Nostalgia”, in María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells, eds. *The Literature of al-Andalus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 388–403. Ibn Ḥamdīs, like other medieval Arabic litterateurs who complained of *al-ghurba*, experienced displacement that was mostly local—*i.e.* within *dār al-islām*; the ancient theme therefore took on new meaning within the modern experience of migrants to Europe from the Arab-Islamic world, whose geographic and cultural displacement was more pronounced.

<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, neither of them dreamed of calling that system fundamentally into question, let alone of calling for its abolition like later modern-era ‘reformers’ did—or such as happened in the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856.

we will read each text separately, in order to examine how each traveler, through the journey he records as a whole, navigated that dividing-line differently. In the remainder of the present chapter, we will look more closely at some of the precise moments recorded in the different texts, when the travelers, as it were, ‘cross the border’. Elias of Mosul’s *Kitāb Siyāḥa* records no such moment—at least not any noteworthy enough for us to examine. Paul of Aleppo’s *Safra* and Hanna Diyab’s travelogue on the other hand, both record seminal episodes of ‘border crossings’ that disclose, when analyzed, the layers of complexity which their travels to the ‘lands of the Christians’ as a whole involved. Some of these episodes are analyzed below.

*I. Paul of Aleppo’s two border crossings between dār al-islām and the ‘lands of the Christians’*

Paul of Aleppo’s *Safra* records two ‘border crossings’ between *dār al-islām* and the ‘lands of the Christians’ (*bilād al-masīḥiyyīn*). These are separated in real time by almost six years; geographically they occur quite close to each other, in the small Danube delta region within modern-day Romania, now called ‘Dobrogea’.<sup>17</sup> The Danube river itself stood for the border to be crossed, the dividing-line—symbolic more than geographic—between the two worlds. The division, seemingly arbitrary—even imaginary—was nevertheless very real to Paul. Both crossings brought to the fore the question, implicit throughout the entire text: To which of these two worlds did he, Paul, a lifelong Ottoman imperial subject, an Arabic-speaking member of the

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<sup>17</sup> This is the only part of modern-day Romania that was officially part of the Ottoman empire, ruled directly by the Sublime Porte, rather than indirectly as a suzerain principality.

*Rūm millet*, an archdeacon of the Orthodox Church, properly belong? To which side of the Danube divide did he primarily subscribe? Paul's six years of travel, his personal experience of life on both sides of the divide, added obvious layers of complexity to the question.

We will look first at the second border crossing, occurring towards the end of Paul and his father Makarios's road 'home', to Ottoman Aleppo. After loading their cargo on a merchant vessel at the Moldavian river-port of Galați, the two set out with their travel company down the Danube. After running for a while north, the river soon makes an abrupt turn west in the direction of the Black sea. It is somewhere here, on this shifting frontier between Moldavia, the Ukraine and the Ottoman empire, that the two finally enter Ottoman territory. The actual 'border crossing' takes place at Kiliya—a strategic river-side fortress recently captured by the Ottomans from the Cossack 'Ukrainians' to the north—where their vessel lands briefly. It is signaled by a distinct sound heard by Paul here in Kiliya. Paul hears the *ādhān*, the Muslim call to prayer, as it were for the first time. Paul records only: "For six years we hadn't heard the *ādhān*, only bells."<sup>18</sup> The transition, the contrast in soundscape, is as jarring as it is understated. In not so many words, Paul gives expression to the paradox of his present situation. On one hand the *ādhān* would have reminded him of the 'home' he longed now to reach after six grueling years on the road. Yet this familiar sound evokes in him no clear exclamation of joy; just a terse statement—disinterested, or perhaps ambivalent—of fact.

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<sup>18</sup> *Safra*, fol. 293<sup>v</sup>.



Until this point on their homeward journey, Paul's longing for Aleppo has been building to a crescendo. Moldavia contained much in it to remind Paul of his Ottoman homeland. Situated right at the imperial/civilizational crossroads, and being a *beglik* of the Sublime Porte, Ottoman cultural influences were strong in this Christian land. One of the first things Paul and Makarios did on arrival in Moldavia from Ukraine was to take a soothing bath at a local *ḥammām* ('public bath')—an Ottoman-style luxury of which the Arab clergymen had been deprived for twenty-seven whole months in Spartan Russia!<sup>19</sup> Anything Paul saw or heard *en route* that reminded him even vaguely of Aleppo and its environs only stoked his enthusiasm. Like a love poet, he saw signs of his beloved Aleppo everywhere and in everything. When passing through the copper mines of Wallachia, Paul saw in their color scheme, where white quarried stone was set against surrounding red soil, "the very land of Aleppo!"<sup>20</sup> Where his earlier descriptions of monasteries took up several folios, his more recent descriptions, written with his thoughts fixed already on 'home', were to-the-point—like the following of Balamuci monastery: "Oh happy those who live near it, for its river is just like the river of Aleppo!"<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 262<sup>r</sup>. Other Muslim Ottomans returning from farther Europe also took their first available opportunity to visit a *ḥammām* on the way home. Quite often this opportunity came in one of the Christian cities of Southeastern Europe where Ottoman cultural influences were strong like in Moldavia. When Osman Aga passed through Buda on his way home from Germany (where he had been a captive) in 1699, he—like Paul and Makarios—made his way straight towards one of "the magnificent baths of the town"; see Osma Aga, *Der Gefangene der Giauren: die abenteuerlichen Schicksale des Dolmetschers 'Osman Aga aus Temeschwar, vom ihm selbst erzählt*, eds. Richard F. Kreutel and Otto Spies (Graz: Verlag Styria: 1962), 150. cited in Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 286.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 274<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 282<sup>v</sup>.

The *ādhān* at Kiliya arrives as an abrupt anticlimax. The sound signaled that Paul was now in Ottoman territory again. Here his feet were now standing again within *dār al-islām*—or *ḥukm al-islām* ('the rule of Islam') as Paul calls it. He was closer to Aleppo, to 'home', now than ever he was since they started out homewards from Moscow two years earlier. Did not this sound too remind him of his beloved city? Surely at this very same moment, the *mu'adhdhins* of Aleppo were ascending the minarets to fill the air with the same sound proclaiming Islam's ascendancy over the realm. Yet relief becomes mingled perhaps with regret; longing for home with the dread of being once again in the minority, as a Christian. Compared with the daily the sound of Church bells which Paul heard for the last six years on the other side of the Danube, in *bilād al-masīḥīyīn*, the *ādhān* was at best a neutral sound.

Let us look now at the first 'border crossing', six year earlier, in the opposite direction. It occurred a little to the southwest of Kiliya. The day was Wednesday, January 12. From the Ottoman Black sea port of *Köstence* (Rom. Constanța), the party set out by carriage towards the Danube. This small, highly fertile area between the Black sea and the Danube was of primary geopolitical strategic importance and therefore highly contested; the Sublime Porte controlled it now directly rather than through local tributary Christian *Begs*, or 'Princes', like in the neighboring Danubian 'Principalities'. Dobrogea's once entirely Christian population, Paul duly informs his readers, had very recently been forcibly relocated elsewhere by the Ottomans, who in order to create a militarized buffer-zone for themselves, repopulated the area with Muslim Tatar irregulars from Qaramanli – "a people" according to Paul, "who hated Christians" (*qawm*

*mubghiḏīn li 'l-naṣārā*).<sup>22</sup> Here was a reminder that the border Paul was approaching now in order to cross did not exist solely in his and others' imaginations—it was very real.

The suspense builds as they approach the Danube, the 'border'. They were now leaving behind the Ottoman empire for the first time in their lives; they were about to cross into the 'lands of the Christians'—a world at once unknown to them, yet deeply familiar already. It was as though the present road lead also to 'home'. They arrive on Saturday at the village of Igliṭa, located on an island as it were right on the very dividing line, "in the middle of the Danube river."<sup>23</sup> Formally the village still lay "within the rule of Islam (*min ḥukm al-islām*)"; yet its remote frontier location seemed to have emboldened the entirely Christian population to flout the 'rule' by erecting crosses everywhere along all the village road-sides. The crosses are a consoling sight for Paul and Makarios. Strangely perhaps, so are Igliṭa's many pigs, kept openly in herds by the villagers—an unfamiliar sight to natives of Ottoman Aleppo. In Igliṭa we sense that the air has already changed. The smell of freedom already beckons the Christian travelers from the opposite river-bank.

Still, we have not yet crossed the 'border'; we are not yet in the 'lands of the Christians'. If the second border crossing was rather abrupt, this first one occurs by stages. These villagers' crosses, of wood like the Savior's, are still too meagre and humble, too low to the earth; they bore the mark of humiliation, not the Church's glory that would soon be unveiled before Paul's eyes a little farther on.

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 27<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 28<sup>r</sup>.

At Măcin, they reach what Paul declares to be the “end of the rule of Islam (*ākhir ḥukm al-islām*).” At Galați, brass church bells, rung in honor of Patriarch Makarios, triumphantly greet their landing on Orthodox soil. This is Paul’s very first acquaintance with this new sound, overwhelmingly pleasant to his ears. He relishes the moment of euphoria, recording: “May God never again deprive us of their graceful melodies (*lā awḥasha ’llāh min liṭāfat naḡhamātihim*)!”<sup>24</sup> For as long as Paul remained on this side of the Danube, this petition would be fulfilled.<sup>25</sup> We have finally arrived in the ‘lands of the Christians’ proper. Like at Kiliya, the arrival here is signaled by a distinctive, iconic sound, carrying as it were a message. For Paul, the sound of church bells was that of Christianity appearing on earth in glory, as sovereign over the urban soundscape, having put off wearing the disguise of a captive, or ‘client (*dhimmi*)’. The message is reinforced by Galați’s skyline: For the first time Paul sees resplendent golden crosses in all the highest places, enthroned atop the gilded domes of the city’s countless churches.

To Paul it seemed like all of Galați, high and low, clergy and laity, had come out with lighted candles, banners and icons to the river-bank to greet them on their arrival and pay reverence to his father. From the river the crowd formed a giant procession to escort them to the nearby Church of St Demetrios, to read prayers of thanksgiving for the Arab Patriarch’s arrival.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 28<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> According to universal custom in Orthodox ‘lands of the Christians’, bells were rung in every church or monastery whenever a senior hierarch visited or passed by. By contrast, bell-ringing by Christians was strictly forbidden in most parts of the Ottoman empire—a fact which explains Paul’s euphoria at hearing their sound, for the first time in his life.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 28<sup>r</sup>. Like bell-ringing, public religious processions by Christian *ra’āyā* were generally forbidden in Ottoman lands.

Here at Galați the two Arab clergymen from the Ottoman empire had their first taste of the prestige they would enjoy universally from this point on in their travels throughout ‘lands of the Christians’.

All of this is merely the beginning; a foretaste of what is yet to unfold by stages in the *Safra*. Over the next six years, Paul will grow thoroughly familiar with the sound of church bells—to the point of forgetting entirely the sound of the *ādhān*. As the journey progresses, the bells will grow only larger and louder; the crosses taller, more numerous, more resplendent in glory. Around midway, Paul will exclaim: “This is the blessed land! Here the Christian religion thrives without doubt.”<sup>27</sup>

In the end, what sort of dividing line did the Danube river represent? What manner of ‘border’ had Paul crossed? To call it ethno-linguistic or cultural makes little sense given its fluidity, the extent of relatively free movement, of cultural traffic and trade across the divide; or the fact that Paul, an Arabic-speaker from Aleppo mingled freely and easily during his travels among Turkish, Greek, Slavic and Romance-speakers on both sides. Nor was it strictly a religious dividing line between lands with majority Muslim or Christian populations: Four of five

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 97<sup>v</sup>. Hilary Kilpatrick notes correctly that among Paul’s significant literary achievements—despite his ‘imperfect’ Arabic grammar and style (from a standpoint of *adab*)—was his success at conveying vividly “the relief of members of a religious minority when they arrive in a country where their religion is the dominant one”; see “Journeying towards Modernity”, 165. It was not only Arab Orthodox travelers who experienced this sensation of relief when they arrived in Moldo-Wallachia or Russia. We find a similar example in the Slavonic *Autobiography* of Paisy Velichkovsky (1722-†1794), a Ukrainian monk and pivotal Orthodox theologian of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Paisy traveled through Catholic-controlled western Ukraine in order to settle permanently in the Principality of Moldavia, where he writes upon arrival: “When we crossed the Dniester by boat...and arrived in the land of Moldavia, we were filled with inexpressible joy. For by the grace of God we had been deemed worthy to come to an Orthodox country” see *The Life of Paisij Velyčkovs’kyj*, trans. J.M.E. Featherstone (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 68.

Orthodox Patriarchal sees—the first four in terms of ecclesial rank and antiquity—were located geographically on the ‘wrong’ side of the divide, within Ottoman territory, where a Christian like Paul, if never afforded the opportunity of foreign travel, could live an entire lifetime without knowing what church-bells sounded like—but know intimately the sound of the *ādhān*. Furthermore, almost the entire Balkans and Southeastern Europe, the traditional heartlands of Byzantine Orthodox culture with their majority Orthodox Christian populations, were also politically subject to the Sublime Porte. That is not to say of course that this border didn’t have a strong religious component. Was it a political border? In part it was—namely between Ottoman imperial territory proper and the Danubian semi-autonomous ‘Principalities’, ruled nominally by local suzerain Christian Princes, or *Begs*. Yet we get the sense that for Paul it was still deeper than merely political.

The Danube divide had mostly to do with an important term that Paul uses frequently in his travelogue: *mulk*. Normally translated as ‘dominion’ or ‘sovereignty’, the way in which Paul uses it we might best translate instead as ‘empire’. Paul, along with all members of the Ottoman empire’s multi-national *millet-i-Rūm*, lived on that side of the Danube in which Orthodox Christians, even where they formed a local majority and enjoyed many administrative benefits, nevertheless had no *mulk*. *Mulk* belonged here instead to the Muslim Ottomans, under whom they lived as *dhimmīs/ra‘āyā*, paying the *kharāj* in exchange for their continued religious rights. It was across the Danube, in lands to the north and farther northeast, where Orthodox Christians appeared to still possess *mulk* of some sort; where the old idea—presumed to have expired

on May 29, 1453, with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans—of Christian empire (Rome/Byzantium), seemed to enjoy a form of afterlife.

The ‘border’ Paul crossed was thus not so much one between empires as between imperial ideas. Two distinct imperial ideas emerged and co-existed—sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary—within the collective consciousness of Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman empire in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; the difference between them lay in the understanding of how Christians, both individually and collectively as a church, related to the powers that be: to Caesar, to *mulk*. The one idea accepted fully, even embraced as divinely sanctioned, the reality of Ottoman *mulk*, which had after all united Orthodox Christians—Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, most recently Arabs<sup>28</sup>—within a single polity for the first time in nearly a millennium, resulting in a neo-Byzantine cultural renaissance. Within this idea, *mulk* was understood to have passed like a torch from Christians’ hands into the hands of the Muslim Ottomans. By conquering Constantinople, the Ottoman Sultan, who now ruled from the “city of Constantine”, inherited also the mantle of Byzantine emperor, protector of the Church. Orthodox Christians, even with their rights severely curtailed, could continue to render fully unto Caesar—even though he had become a Muslim.<sup>29</sup> It was within this idea that Paul, a lifelong

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<sup>28</sup> On the ethnolinguistic diversity of the Ottoman *Millet-i Rûm*, Richard Clogg has written: “The *Millet-i Rum*, or ‘Greek’ millet, in the Ottoman Empire, embracing as it did all the Orthodox Christian subjects of the sultan, reflected in microcosm the ethnic heterogeneity of the empire itself. It contained Serbs, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Orthodox Albanians, and Arabs, while the strictly ‘Greek’ element itself...was by no means homogeneous.” see “The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire”, in eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Vol. I (New York: Holmes and Meyer Publishers, 1982), 185.

<sup>29</sup> After Mehmet II’s conquest of Constantinople, Ottoman sultans eagerly adopted for themselves the royal title *kayser-i Rûm* (‘Caesar of Rome’), along with many Byzantine imperial symbols and trappings. In

Ottoman subject, was naturally at home. Indeed, for much of Paul's life prior to his travels, the idea of Christians having *mulk* was a foreign one to him; before he crossed the border and saw it for himself, the question of whether or not Christians even had the innate capacity to administer (*tadbīr*)<sup>30</sup> an empire, remained an open one in his mind.

At the same time members of the *millet-i-Rūm* increasingly looked also across the Danube in persistent hope and longing for the continuation of the old Christian empire. It was thought that even though the Church could survive, even enjoy some modicum of health under a benevolent Muslim Caesar, she could never fully prosper. For Orthodoxy to really “thrive without doubt”, it still required the patronage of a pious and right-believing Christian Caesar. This was the other imperial idea, according to which Christian *mulk*, the mantle of imperial Byzantium, instead of having passed to the Muslim Ottoman Sultan, had translated itself north from Constantinople across the Danube. The Moldo-Wallachian ‘Principalities’ directly across the ‘border’ were one focal centre for this idea. As the only part of Southeastern Orthodox Europe that managed to avoid direct Ottoman rule, its ‘Princes’ often fancied themselves as half-emperors, ruling from their new cultural capitals in Iași, Bucharest and Târgoviște.<sup>31</sup> Paul and

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their documents issued in Greek, they even used the title βασιλεύς (‘emperor’)—thus consciously conferring on themselves legitimacy in the eyes of their *Rūmī* subjects. See Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, “Khan, Caliph, Tsar and Emperor: The Multiple Identities of the Ottoman Sultan” in Peter F. Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, eds. *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 181-186.

<sup>30</sup> This was another important word for Paul; see Chapt. 2.

<sup>31</sup> see William Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 365.



Makarios, following in the footsteps of many other Orthodox clergymen from the Ottoman empire, flocked to them first of all for financial support and patronage—for help in their paying their crippling *kharāj* payments to the Porte, and for cultural reinforcement.

But it was much farther to the north, in the newly-emerging and expanding Muscovite Russian kingdom, that this imperial idea found its most robust—as well as most eccentric—embodiment. As the fame, power and territory—the *mulk*—of the Orthodox Russian Tsars steadily grew, beginning to even rival that of the Ottomans, many Orthodox in the Ottoman empire increasingly regarded him, rather than the Turkish Sultan, as their universal sovereign, their patron and protector.<sup>32</sup> From the court of Vasile Lupu, *Beg* of Moldavia, it was to the Muscovite court of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, second in the Romanov line, that Paul and Makarios would head next in their quest.

## II. *Ḥannā Diyāb crosses the 'East-West' Divide in Livorno*

Ḥannā Diyāb's 'border crossings' were very different from Paul of Aleppo's. Diyāb, unlike Paul, headed 'west'—geographically and culturally. He crossed the infamous 'East-West' divide. In his border crossings, this cultural contrast becomes more prominent than the imperial change manifested in public symbols and rituals. Diyāb was also more self-consciously 'exploring' and experimenting with his own identity as he traveled. This fact, together with his more

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<sup>32</sup> This culminated famously in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, which gave the Russian Tsars the right to intervene directly on behalf of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire.

‘novelistic’ style of narration, gives us more ready material for analysis. We will look below only at one of the Diyāb’s crossings: his first one, in the direction West. Diyāb’s account of his landing in Smyrna—*i.e.* his return to Ottoman territory—will be analyzed in Chapter 4 (see Sect. IV).

Livorno was Ḥannā Diyāb’s entry point into Christian Europe—in his words, “the first city I entered in the lands of the Christians (*bilād al-masīḥīya*).<sup>33</sup> He was by no means the first Maronite to disembark at the northern Italian commercial port, which in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century was a melting pot of Mediterranean cultures.

Like all arrivals in Livorno from Ottoman lands, Ḥannā Diyāb and Paul Lucas had to first pass through the health quarantine station, the *Lazaretto* (Ar. *al-nazārūt*), spending there a mandatory twenty days.<sup>34</sup> The lengthy medical process was at the same time like a rite to mark their passage from *dār al-islām* to the ‘lands of the Christians’. Even though this was Ḥannā’s first time setting foot on Catholic European soil, it was nevertheless for him a kind of homecoming (as it was no doubt for Lucas, who was from Rouen, France). Diyāb was a Maronite and therefore a cradle Catholic like Lucas. Though he was a native of Ottoman Aleppo and thought of himself as a “son of the East”, European (particularly French and Italian) culture was not foreign to him, having been intimately exposed for most of his life to the languages, ways and thought-habits of the expatriate Catholic European community in his hometown. Before being

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<sup>33</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 70<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 68<sup>v</sup>. Elias of Mosul too passed through Italy’s *Lazaretto* at Venice; see *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fol. 4<sup>v</sup>. Both the etymology of the term *Lazaretto*, as well the reason behind its Arabization as *Nazaret*, are explained by Caesar E Farah, translator of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* into English; see *The Travels of Elias al-Musili in the Seventeenth Century*, 7, n. 14.

released into the city of Livorno, the pair underwent one last inspection by the chief doctor (*ḥakūm-bāshī*), were fumigated, then walked through customs to be searched for contraband.<sup>35</sup> Once they passed customs, officially they were now free men in Europe. The cleansing ritual, the rite of passage—the ‘border crossing’—was not yet over however; it continued unofficially at their place of lodging.

Their host in Livorno was a resident Frenchman and personal friend of Lucas, who immediately congratulated the latter’s “safe arrival in the lands of the Christians (*wuṣūluh ilā bilādi ‘l-masīḥīya bi l-salāma*).” At this point, significantly, Lucas finally shed his Oriental costume which he had worn since leaving Beirut, reassuming his ‘native’ European-style dress.<sup>36</sup> To complete the transition, a barber (*ḥallāq*) was called in to provide Lucas with a clean shave, eliminating any resemblance to a woolly Oriental. Once shaven, Lucas ordered the barber to immediately shave Diyāb likewise. Diyāb does not seem to have been expecting this. Until this point, he had been a spectator; now, at Lucas’s order, he stepped forward to the barber’s chair, about to pass through his own European makeover, a seminal event in Diyāb’s journey of self-exploration:

I sat on the chair. After he washed my face and my beard, he took the straight-razor (*mūs*) and ran it over my beard. By the same stroke the razor took off half of my moustache (*akhad niṣfshawāribī*). When I realized he’d taken off half of my moustache, I let out a cry, frightening the barber. He stood still, startled. He said:  
— What’s the matter with you? I didn’t wound you (*anā mā jaraḥtak*)!  
I told him:

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<sup>35</sup> Diyāb tells us that he managed to smuggle a large quantity of very fine Tunisian tobacco (*tutun qawī ṭayyib*) past the Italian customs inspectors; Sbath 254, fols. 68<sup>v</sup>-69<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> In Diyāb’s words, Lucas “put on clothing of a different style than our country (*labis thiyāb ghēr kāsm bilādnā*)”; *Ibid.*, fol. 69<sup>v</sup>.

— If only you'd wounded me (*yā laytak kunt jaraḥṭanī*), and not shaved off my moustache! Don't you know the sons of the East don't shave their moustaches like you people do (*a-mā bta'rif awlādi l-sharq mā byeḥlaqū shawāribhum mitlkum*)?

In the end, though against my will, I let him shave the other half. After all, in these lands all shave both their beards and moustaches, even priests, except for Capuchin *Padres*.<sup>37</sup>

We had a glimpse already in the Introduction at how important and essential people's physical appearances were to Diyāb. In this scene it comes to the fore. Bernard Heyberger comments in this regard: "La thème de l'opposition entre l'Orient et l'Occident du point de vue de l'aspect physique et du costume est un stéréotype très souvent traité par les auteurs occidentaux et orientaux...Sous la plume de Hanna, ce n'est pas un simple cliché littéraire. C'est au contraire une composante essentielle de sa personnalité, qu'il ressent très profondément."<sup>38</sup> As he travels, Diyāb's identity is in flux; changes, however subtle, in his mode of dress or hairstyle are like signposts all throughout his narrative, usually signalling in him a profound inward transition from one mode of being to another. In Diyāb's worldview, his moustache was not just an appendage, but an integral part of who he was, of his identity as an adult male in Ottoman society—as a "son of the East". Losing it meant losing his identity as such: "Don't you know the sons of the East don't shave their moustaches like you do?" The procedure he undergoes in this scene could therefore almost be compared to being circumcised. In fact, cutting away his moustache hurt him more profoundly, he claims, than if the barber had been cutting into his flesh: "If only you had wounded me, and not shaved off my moustache!"

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *D'Alep à Paris*, 42.

Yet Diyāb knew that to complete his ‘border crossing’, he had to go through with it. From the time he first met Paul Lucas and agreed to follow him here to Europe, Diyāb took an earnest plunge into a transformative process, an experiment with his own identity and place in the world, whose outcome he could not know for sure. Were he to refuse now what was being demanded of him by Lucas—had he not let go and instead held tenaciously to being a “son of the East”—this experiment would have come to an abrupt end. Diyāb therefore goes ahead willingly; he steps forward to the barber’s chair, somewhat like to a surgeon’s operating table, knowing full well what he was submitting to—having moments earlier watched the same makeover performed on Lucas. While he protests—after the fact—that he did so “against my will”, this protest strikes the reader as not wholly sincere. Yet even if Diyāb was indeed a willing patient, the operation was no less painful and traumatic.

Like many painful procedures, dreaded beforehand, this one was over quickly. The second ‘incision’ by the barber on Diyāb was already practically painless: “In the end...I let him shave the other half.” Having mentally adjusted himself to the loss, to his new reality, Diyāb could look only ahead to the potential gain. From the barber’s chair, Diyāb emerged a new man, no longer fully a ‘son of the East’—in appearance, but more significantly in heart and in mind. By shaving his beard and moustache, he had as it were, on a psychological level, crossed over the infamous ‘East-West’ divide. To an extent, Diyāb was now a ‘Frank among Franks’. To the same extent, with his new appearance/outlook/identity—taken together with his Catholic faith—Diyāb could now explore and experience Europe from the inside, as a European.

Ceremonial rites of passage conferring entry into a new community are—however invested with *real* symbolic power—only an earnest of a promise that has yet to be *realized*. Diyāb's fate was far from being already decided. Having made the momentous crossing, his *real* work still lay ahead of him: that of determining his ultimate place, whether on this side or that of the divide—or rather in some undefined and undetermined space 'in between'. Diyāb did experience now a certain psychological cleavage with his former identity, yet this cleavage was not a clean break: It would take more than shaving his moustache (which would soon enough grow back!) to completely erase his past. He had not yet ceased being a "son of the East", even if the borderline separating the two—East from West, Ottoman *dār al-islām* from European 'lands of the Christians'—had begun to blur in him, to become confused and in need of redrawing.

Moreover, the full extent of his new membership within Catholic Europe remained yet to be seen. To what extent was Diyāb's new European appearance more than just an ill-fitting outer garb, more than just a disguise that would forever fail to convince others—no less himself? To what extent in the early 18th century world could a lay Maronite Catholic from the Ottoman empire, an 'Oriental', ritually cleanshaven on arrival, fully belong within the Western European Catholic 'lands of the Christians'?

Diyāb, as noted above, was not alone in facing these questions. Not long after his 'border crossing', while taking a stroll in Livorno, Diyāb was greeted in Arabic by somebody "wearing the dress of our country (*lābis libs bilādnā*)", who spotted him in the crowd as a fellow countryman:

He asked me which was my country, so I answered him:

— I am an Aleppan.

He offered me a big-hearted welcome. I told him,

— Perhaps you know me (*la'allak bta'rifni*)?

— In truth, I don't know who you are, but since you're a 'son of our country (*ibn bilādna*)', I feel like you're a friend already.

He then said:

— Come along with me, my brother, so we can take a stroll together while I narrate to you all about the misfortune that has befallen me.<sup>39</sup>

This meeting reveals some of the comfort experienced by Eastern Christian migrants to Europe whenever they met on the other shore with a fellow 'son of our country' from the Ottoman empire, with whom they found friendship and support amidst the "misfortune (*balā*)" of *émigré* life.

This *émigré*, on whom 'misfortune had befallen', was from Damascus, not Aleppo. He was not a Maronite, but a member of the West Syriac *Suryānī* community.<sup>40</sup> He was however a Catholic convert, a uniate—*i.e.* he was "Catholic by faith" (*kātūlikī 'l-īmān*) and a "son of the church (*ibn al-kanīsa*)", just like Diyāb. As they took their first stroll together along Livorno's seaside, the *Suryānī* narrated to Diyāb about his "misfortune". Its root cause was his conversion to Catholicism: He had arrived in Livorno with his wife and children only three months before Diyāb, because "heretics (*harāṭīqa*)"—*i.e.* his non-uniatic relatives—"were persecuting me (*kānū yaḍṭahidūnī*)," he told Diyāb, to the point that "it became no longer possible for me to remain in Damascus." We hear tragic echoes here of the "secret life" story of Elias of Mosul—also a uniate forced into exile by his family (see Chapt. 3, Sect. II). In secret, the *Suryānī* had settled

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<sup>39</sup> S bath 254, fol. 70<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> *i.e.* a member of the West Syriac 'Jacobite' Church.

all his debts at home, made as though he were only “taking his family on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,” but determined rather on making his flight with them to safety and freedom of worship in the “lands of the Christians”.<sup>41</sup>

The *Suryānī*'s road, or rather sea-route, to Europe was not smooth. He told Diyāb: “My plan (*nīyatī*) was to go and live in the city of Rome with my family.” From Şaydā (Sidon), they had boarded a vessel to Smyrna, where he purchased “Persian merchandise (*baḍā‘at al-‘ajam*)”—*eg.* cotton fabric (*jīt* < Pers. *čīt*) from Isfahan, rhubarb from Khorasan, etc.—all known to be popular in Europe’s markets. With these he hoped to make his new start on arrival as a merchant. Out of pious generosity he also bought in Smyrna some fine Persian carpets (*tanfasa ‘ajamīya*) and crateloads of beeswax candles, intending them as thanksgiving offerings to churches in Rome.<sup>42</sup> These goods he loaded on a French merchant ship sailing to Rome *via* Marseilles.

The family never reached Marseilles—let alone Rome. Close to Malta their ship met face-to-face with English corsairs. In the unequal cannon-fire exchange that ensued—the corsairs were armed with forty cannons against their ship’s twenty cannons—the family took refuge in the lower cabin. The *Suryānī* described to Diyāb the scene of terror below the deck: “Just picture a woman caught in a battle like that! We despaired of life (*ayasnā mina ‘l-ḥayāt*); mother began to weep over her children, children over their mother; meanwhile I remained like one who had lost all orientation and sense.” Thankfully, the ordeal did not last long. It ended well, relatively

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 71<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



speaking: The captain of their ship, realizing that sustained resistance meant doom, surrendered to the corsairs; the latter, after emptying the vessel's cargo, transported all the passengers safely to Livorno.<sup>43</sup>

Livorno was not Rome; nonetheless, it was as good a starting point as any for a fresh arrival in Europe from the Ottoman empire. With six hundred piasters in his pocket, resourcefulness and—most of all—hope, the *Suryānī*, together with his family, could initiate the same process which Hannā Diyāb recently began: crossing the 'border', the East-West divide—*i.e.* becoming Europeans.<sup>44</sup>

This process was being stalled by a sole factor, one which none of the *Suryānī*'s pre-departure planning took into account: His wife's *sitār*, or veil. His wife remained conditioned by the dress codes and *mores* of her native Ottoman society, where sexes were strictly segregated and where respectable women—whether Christian or Muslim—never appeared in public without a veil. She found it impossible to re-condition to the scandalous new situation in Livorno, where women walked the streets and market-places unveiled and unchaperoned.<sup>45</sup> For three months, rather than follow their example she chose self-isolation at home. Here was the

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<sup>43</sup> As far as pirates went, these were the honorable sort: They 'took pity' on the man's wife by allowing her to keep her private trunk, seeing that it was a "woman's trunk (*sandūk* [sic] *hurma*)." What the pirates certainly didn't know was that it contained her spending money (*khirjaya*) and jewellery amounting to some six hundred piasters' worth—enough for the family to live on during their first weeks in Livorno. See *Ibid.*, fols. 71<sup>v</sup>-72<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Exemplifying the now well-known 'immigrant' work ethic, he tells Diyāb that even his sons had found jobs (*kārāt*) in Livorno to help support their family. *Ibid.*, fol. 72<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Even Diyāb admits he found this shocking at first sight in Livorno: "I saw women in the shops, buying and selling as if they were men; wandering the streets with their faces uncovered, without veils. I thought I was dreaming (*qāshi' manām*, lit. 'chasing away sleep')." *Ibid.*, fol. 70<sup>v</sup>.

cruX of her husband's "misfortune": Try as he might to convince her to change her stance, she would not budge. Diyāb listened to his lament: "I've been unable to convince her (*'ajazt 'anhā*)...My wife has been sitting in the home for three months now. She hasn't gone out once into the city, since she can't leave without a covering and veil (*mā bteqdar takhruj min ghēr ghiṭā wa sitār*)."<sup>46</sup> With her veil, the wife remained with her mind immovably in the 'East'. The husband wanted to gallop in the direction of 'West'; yet his wife's veil was a deadweight, handicapping his progress.

More ink has been spilled in the last century over discussions (from the insightful to egregiously uninformed) surrounding the female 'Islamic veil' (in modern parlance, the *ḥijāb*) than over any other historical article of clothing.<sup>47</sup> To generations of Western European observers of the 'Orient', the *ḥijāb* meant *everything*: it was the most immediately visible, the most jarringly exotic and regressive feature of 'Oriental' society. Likewise, for Muslim societies in the modernizing period, partly as a reaction, the *ḥijāb* meant *everything*: it came to symbolize the battle between tradition vs modernity, Islamic morality vs Western immorality, *etc.* To both sides the *ḥijāb* became a flashpoint. The present scenario recorded by Diyāb adds the unique and full-bodied perspective of a family of non-Muslim, Christian 'Orientals', caught right 'in between', on the 'border'. The *ḥijāb* meant *everything* to them too in their new situation—at least from

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 72<sup>r</sup>

<sup>47</sup> The modern debates over the *ḥijāb* are too well-rehearsed to be included here. A by-now classic foray into gender issues in Islam throughout history—including the 'discourse of the veil'—is Leila Ahmed's *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

the husband's perspective. If his wife failed to discard her veil—if he, as her husband, failed to convince her—he would be hamstrung forever, without hope of making the transition to European life.

It turned out the *Suryānī's* motive all along in soliciting Diyāb's friendship was this: To enlist his help with his wife. "You, being another 'son of our country'," he reasoned, "she may listen to you, and will finally venture out and get a breath of air (*tashumm hawā'*) and be released from this delusion (*wahm*)." Diyāb agreed to lend his help. The following Sunday, after church, the two would proceed directly to the *Suryānī's* home, where Diyāb could invite the latter's wife to "take a little stroll (*tantazih shwayyeh*)" with them in the city's outskirts. Diyāb describes the remarkable scenario inside the home when he arrived:

After we attended the Divine Mass, I went with him to his house. When I entered, I saw a partition (*sitār*) set up inside; she was behind it. I greeted her, and she returned my greeting from behind the partition, not willing to appear before me (*mā rādat taḥḍur amāmī*).<sup>48</sup>

Diyāb then cut to the chase, rebuking her:

I told her, 'What craziness is this (*mā hādhā 'l-junūn*)?' Go outside and see all the women as they walk about without a veil (*min ghēr sitār*), and not one person even looks at another. These are Christian lands (*bilād masīḥīya*) — the veil is no longer required here (*al-ḥijāb minhā marfū'*, lit. 'the veil has been lifted from them').<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The *mores* of the Arab-Islamic Ottoman world (backed to a large extent by Islamic law) forbade the 'mixing (*ikhtilāf*)' of unrelated adult males and females—at least among the more 'respectable' classes. Christians in *dār al-islām* obviously shared this practice to a great degree. The curtain/partition (*sitār*) in this scene was set up to enforce gender segregation while they spoke to each other. The practice of *istitār* extended from the domestic realm to the civil realm: *eg.* Caliphs and other rulers in the Islamic world regularly concealed themselves behind a partition (*sitāra/sitr*) from both their subjects, and their own households; see Chelhod, J., "Ḥidjāb", in *EL*.

<sup>49</sup> Diyāb makes the argument here that the veil was intrinsic to Islam, not Christianity: a Christian woman from *dār al-islām* should theoretically be able to easily shed her veil when she crossed the border to the 'lands of the Christians'. This woman's behavior gives the lie to this whole notion.

With these words, and many others, Diyāb was unable to prevail on her; obviously she had heard similar words before from her husband. Perceiving the brick wall before him, Diyāb quickly conceived a novel strategy:

— Do you have a *khimār*<sup>50</sup>? he asked her.

— Yes, she replied.

— Put it on and come outside with us.

She agreed to carry out my suggestion, and went to take out from her luggage an elaborate full-length robe and a decorated *khimār*. Having put them on, veiled (*taghaṭṭat*) in that *khimār*, she came out with us together with her children. We proceeded outside the city-gate.<sup>51</sup>

So far things looked promising. The *Suryānī* had done well, it seemed, in enlisting Diyāb's help. The latter had succeeded until now, in one sitting, where the former had failed for three months: The woman finally broke her voluntary house-arrest. Even though she was covered from head to toe in her *khimār*, she was taking her very first steps outside her dwelling into Livorno's streets.

None of them had anticipated what a spectacle an 'Oriental' woman fully-veiled in a *khimār* would cause on the streets of a European city. The walkways were crowded with people, men and women, out for a pleasant stroll. "When they saw the veiled woman," Diyāb relates, "everyone began coming towards us, stretching their heads out trying get a look at her face.

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<sup>50</sup> *Khimār* was the traditional Arabic term for a woman's head-covering worn in public (attested in the Qur'ān, cf. XXIV: 31); according to E.W. Lane: "a woman's muffler, or veil, with which she covers her head and the lower part of her face, leaving exposed only the eyes and part or the whole of the nose", see "جَمَارٌ" in *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. II (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1956), 809.

<sup>51</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 72<sup>r</sup>.

They asked us, ‘Why is this woman veiled (*limādhā hal-ḥurma mghaṭṭāya*)?’ We didn’t know what answer to give them—especially to the women.”<sup>52</sup>

A permanent crowd of spectators quickly gathered around them. The target of their collective gaze—a mixture of curiosity and reproach—was the ‘veiled woman’ in their company. “We took refuge,” Diyāb writes, “in the cave of a hill near the sea.” In that cave, Diyāb confronted the woman whose veil prevented them from walking freely in the city: “If you want me to continue to walk in your company, then take (*irfaʿi*, lit. ‘lift’) that veil off your head, and walk in the same fashion as the other women (*bi-ziyy al-nisā al-sāyirāt*).”<sup>53</sup> This was his ultimatum to her: She had to choose, right now, whether she wished to remain with her mind permanently in *dār al-islām*, or if she wished to follow both her husband and Diyāb over the border into the ‘lands of the Christians’. Her veil was the border.

“When I saw that she was firm in her resolve, I left them both, and returned to the city. I do not know what became of them,” writes Diyāb. He would not allow his own progress to be impeded any further like the *Suryānī*’s. Now he understood well that as a young Christian man from the Ottoman empire, intent on making his home in Christian Europe, it was better not to be bound by marriage to a woman from back home: “It became clear to me,” he writes, “that the women of our country, having been raised in concealment (*rabbīyū fi ’l-khabā*), are not capable

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 72<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

of adopting the manners (*sulūk*) of the women of these lands.”<sup>54</sup> For the remainder of his time in Europe, Diyāb’s world was strictly a bachelors’ world.

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The border between *dār al-islām* and the ‘lands of the Christians’ was the primary and most important one—but it was not the only border which the Eastern Christian travelers knew of or crossed in their journeys. Paul of Aleppo and Ḥannā Diyāb traveled to two different ‘lands of the Christians’, two different ‘Europes’—one Eastern, the other Western. Between these two Europes there existed also an historical confessional/ideological dividing-line as well as a geographic border. At some stage in their travels, they each either came near, or briefly crossed, this border: Paul came near it when he passed through the Ukraine *en route* between Moldo-Wallachia and Russia; Diyāb crossed it when he stopped in Cyprus *en route* to Alexandria from the Levantine coast.

Contact with the border between the two ‘lands of the Christians’—between Orthodox East and Catholic West—elicited on a whole a more visceral and emotionally-charged response in both Paul and Diyāb. Both travelers’ reactions at seeing the *other*, rival Christendom was universally negative—to the point of open hostility and belligerence at times. These border contacts produced no conflicting loyalties, no crises of identity, like the other one—the very opposite. We are reminded of Ibn Jubayr’s above-cited reaction to crossing the “border between security and danger.” Like him, both Paul of Aleppo who was Orthodox, and Ḥannā Diyāb who

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

was Catholic, experienced the *other* 'lands of the Christians' primarily as a land of temptation for their own Christian confessional conscience. This may come as a surprise to readers of their travelogues unfamiliar with how acrimonious was the polemical battle between the two sides, 'Greek East' and 'Latin West' in this period<sup>55</sup>—a battle which had recently spread into the Arabic-speaking Levant with the arrival of Catholic missionaries from Europe aggressively preaching the Unia.<sup>56</sup> Inter-religious polemics among Muslims and Christians, between whom the lines more clearly drawn, rarely became as uncompromisingly hostile. In the passages from Paul of Aleppo and Ḥannā Diyāb analyzed below, we will see how in each instance, contact with the 'other' side had only a galvanizing effect on the traveler's own particular confessional identity. Crossing the border made the sectarian fault-lines more, rather than less pronounced; made attitudes towards the 'other' harden, rather than soften.

### III. *Paul of Aleppo in the 'Lands of the Cossacks' (i.e. Ukraine)*

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<sup>55</sup> For an historical, and even philosophical, exploration into this division, see Philip Sherard, *The Greek East and the Latin West: A Study in the Christian Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959). The Eastern Orthodox-Western Catholic division had a theological basis to it; however, it was polemically hardened through the historical memory of events like the Crusaders' sacking of Constantinople in 1204, through what the Orthodox perceived as the Latins' repeated bad faith in their 'interfaith' dealings [*eg.* the Council of Florence/Ferrara (1431-1449), the Union of Brest-Litovsk (1596), *etc.*]. This led to an ever-widening cultural division between the two sides, reinforced through geopolitical division: *i.e.* the Ottoman conquest of nearly all the Orthodox lands of Southeastern Europe. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as we have already said, intellectual and cultural resources in the Orthodox commonwealth were still channelled mostly towards recovering/reviving the Byzantine foundations of Orthodoxy—a movement in which the Arab Orthodox higher clergy were now also becoming involved—rather than adopting the culture of the Western European Renaissance. Fernand Braudel called this early modern cultural movement the 'Great Refusal' to the West by the Greek East; see *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), Vol. II, 769-770. cited in Paschalis Kitromilides, *Op. cit.*, 11-12.

<sup>56</sup> The tensions caused by the Unia between the two sides occasionally erupted in violence, such as in 1818, when a riot broke out in Aleppo between Orthodox and uniates, resulting in the death of eleven people; *cf.* Richard Clogg, *Op. Cit.*, 191.

What Paul describes as the ‘lands of the Cossacks (*bilād al-qazaq*)<sup>57</sup> lay within a large part of modern-day Ukraine. Paul and Makarios traveled through this region on their way between Moldo-Wallachia and Muscovite Russia. Theirs was perhaps not so much a ‘border crossing’ as it was a visit to a conflict-zone. Ruled at the time formally by the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, the Ukraine was—as it remains today—a highly contested and fought-over territory, a major battleground in the political and ideological confrontation between Eastern and Western Slavdom, between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. It was here in the former heartland of Kievan *Rus*’ and cradle of Orthodoxy among the northern Slavs that the dreaded Catholic Unia was first formulated and imposed by the government on the Orthodox population—with results that were less than peaceful, to say the least.<sup>58</sup> We can therefore hardly expect to find a nuanced or ‘balanced perspective’ in the *Safra*’s portrayal of the contemporary Ukrainian conflict as witnessed by Paul.

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<sup>57</sup> The term *qazak* came from Türkic, meaning ‘free men’. Ukraine’s other designation, used less often by Paul, was ‘Little Russia’ (*al-Rūs al-Ṣuḡhrā*)—a direct translation either from Greek (*Μικρά Ρωσία*), or from Russian (Малороссия).

<sup>58</sup> This was the Union of Bresk-Litovsk (1596). In support of this Union, the Polish-Lithuanian government declared Eastern Orthodoxy illegal in Ukraine from 1596 to 1632, sparking sectarian strife for the foreseeable future. For a history that is sympathetic to the project of the Union, written from examination of the Vatican’s archives, see Oscar Halecki, *From Florence to Brest (1439-1596)* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1968); for a recent, more thorough and balanced history, see Borys Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform: the Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); also Robert O Crummey, “Eastern Orthodoxy in Russia and Ukraine in the Age of the Counter-Reformation” in Michael Angold, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Eastern Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 302-324.



Paul and Makarios were traveling through these parts amidst a general, violent uprising by the Orthodox population against their Polish Catholic overlords, being led by the Cossacks<sup>59</sup>—a semi-tribal northern Slavic Orthodox militarized society, who lived permanently by raiding (*ghazw*). The Cossacks were, in Paul’s own formulation, Christian *mujāhidīn*. Indeed, Paul saw in them an Orthodox Christian counterpart to the semi-nomadic Muslim Tatar raiding societies (*ghuzāh*) used commonly as irregulars by the Ottomans.<sup>60</sup> Theirs too was a ‘frontier’ ethos: warlike and fiercely independent—traits which they combined with an equally fierce loyalty and attachment to their chosen creed, Orthodoxy. Paul never shies from expressing his admiration for the Cossacks’ martial prowess and zeal for Orthodoxy, their firm resolve to live free and unsullied by the Catholic Unia. They were all of them, he says, “brave men” (*rijāl shuj‘ān*), waging a “*jihād*, just like the *jihād* of the martyrs in their time.” Their martial-religious spirit becomes apparent immediately Paul and Makarios enter the Cossacks’ country: They are warned not to travel here except under the improvised banner of a cross raised atop a long spear: a signal to any Cossack raiding company that this was an Orthodox episcopal convoy, not to be harassed.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The famous Cossack Revolt, begun in 1648, led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky (d. 1657); see below.

<sup>60</sup> Paul writes: “As the Tatars are a scourge to the Christian inhabitants of the surrounding lands, so the Cossacks are a scourge to the Tatars” (*Safra*, fol. 176<sup>v</sup>). This Cossack-Tatar connection has not been lost on modern historians of the Ukraine either—as Andrew Wilson writes: “It has also been argued that the Cossacks absorbed the residual influences of Iranian and Turkophone culture on the open steppe and were in many ways similar to their Islamic enemies in dress, vocabulary and methods of military organisation”; see *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 59.

<sup>61</sup> *Safra*, 64<sup>r</sup>.

Seen through Paul's eyes, the hallmark of Catholic rule in the Ukraine was violent, even malevolent religious persecution, accompanied by excessive economic oppression against the local Orthodox populace. Any hardships experienced by *ra'āyā* under the Muslim Ottomans paled in comparison. 'Better the Sultan's turban than the Pope's tiara', was the common saying among members of the *millet-i-Rūm*. Paul will echo this sentiment frequently in the Ukraine, reaffirming his Ottomanist loyalty—his *Osmanlılık*—with the improvised prayer, "God grant victory to the Turk!"<sup>62</sup>

Here in this 'Ukrainian' segment of the *Safra* are concentrated all of the text's most beligerent passages—all directed against the 'cursed' Catholic Poles (*al-Lāh*). Paul writes:

Why do I call these [Poles] accursed? Because they have shown themselves as more unclean (*anjas*), more wicked than accursed, hypocritical idolaters...May God preserve the empire of the Turks unto eternity without end! For whereas those [Turks] demand the *kharāj*, they demand no account from the religion itself, whether it be from Christians, Nuṣayris<sup>63</sup>, Jews, or Samaritans; however these accursed [Poles] are not content merely with the *kharāj*, with tithes, with subjecting Christ's brethren...they forbid them even from building churches, from having priests who know the mysteries of their faith; even more, they violate their pure, believing wives and daughters!"<sup>64</sup>

The Ukrainians, in Paul's view, were "sharers with Christ, their Lord, in His passion (*sharakū 'l-masīḥa sayyidahum fī ālāmihi*)"<sup>65</sup>; their innocent suffering carried a meaning for the

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<sup>62</sup> The idea, expressed by Paul here, that Ottoman imperial rule was a providential 'shield' protecting the majority of Orthodox believers "against the moral and spiritual dangers stemming from the Catholic West" was commonly held by Orthodox believers throughout this period; see Paschalis Kitromilides, *Op. Cit.*, 7.

<sup>63</sup> These are known today as 'Alawīs, a *Shī'ī* sect whose population stronghold is in the northern Levantine coast, between Turkey, Syria and Lebanon.

<sup>64</sup> *Safra*, 70<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 69<sup>v</sup>.

entire Orthodox commonwealth, the entire Church. The local confrontation between Orthodoxy and Catholicism was a universal one. The Ukraine was a contemporary battleground between perennial Biblical forces of good and evil: between God's 'chosen people' and their ancient enemies.<sup>66</sup> The Poles' manifest hatred for the Orthodox placed them, in Paul's view, not only outside the marked boundary between Orthodoxy and heterodoxy, but together with the very worst category of pagan non-believers, with the Old Testament 'gentiles' (*al-umam*, lit. 'nations')—sworn, bitter enemies of God's chosen people, the Israelites. Paul also calls the Catholic Poles 'idol-worshippers' (*'ibād al-aṣnām*), 'unbelievers' (*kuffār*), hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*). The evil deeds of the Jesuits, who led the religious campaign to force the 'Unia' on the Orthodox, are likened by Paul (rather curiously) to those of the 'Yazidis'.<sup>67</sup> Like in *Exodus*, the Ukrainians were enslaved by the Poles, who "made them work day and night, building fortresses, digging trenches and lakes, levelling earth."<sup>68</sup> Like during the Babylonian captivity, the Orthodox Ukrainians were being coerced into worshipping foreign gods by their Catholic oppressors, whose ultimate goal was "to annihilate them, to make them into 'Franks', followers of the pope, like themselves."<sup>69</sup> The Cossacks, Paul explains, were the "clever among them (*al-shāṭir man fihim*)",<sup>70</sup> who, to preserve their souls and their freedom, had fled Polish slavery into

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 66r.

<sup>67</sup> Paul makes a pun here on the rhyming words in Arabic *'Aysū'īya* ('Jesuits') and *Yazīdīya* ('Yazidis')—although what exactly he meant by the latter term is unclear.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 69v.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 66r.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

the sparsely-populated frontier region between the Dnieper and the Black Sea. Here the fugitive slaves regrouped and rebranded themselves as *ghuzāh* ('raiders'), becoming a formidable military scourge for both the Ottoman empire and the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth.

The current Cossack uprising, or *jihād*, was being led by their military chief, or hetman, Bohdan Khmelnytsky (d. 1657).<sup>71</sup> Khmelnytsky, within Paul's Biblical perspective of local events, was the Ukrainians' latter-day Moses. "And when God saw their [the Poles'] pride, their haughtiness and treachery, He was angered," writes Paul, "and so He raised up His servant, the righteous Ikhmil [Khmelnytsky], to avenge them [the Ukrainians] and to save His chosen people (*li-yastanqidha sha'bahu 'l-khāṣṣ*) from their slavery and captivity."<sup>72</sup> Paul's description of his and his father's meeting with Khmelnytsky—one of the most lively in the entire *Safra*—will be related in Chapter 2 (see Sect. V).

From the beginning the Ukraine would be only a short stopping-point for Paul and Makarios in their further travels, never a major destination. Nonetheless their three months in the 'lands of the Cossacks' made a lasting impression on Paul. He saw it as an important task to

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<sup>71</sup> Paul obviously took an Orthodox partisan view strongly in favor of Khmelnytsky and his Cossack uprising, which lasted from 1648 to 1654, and liberated Eastern Ukraine from Polish rule. Ukrainian national myth has similarly portrayed him as a founding hero. Yet both the figure of Khmelnytsky and the historical episode of the Cossack uprising are legacies that continue to be fiercely debated between competing national and ethnic historiographies in the region. For the most recent scholarly treatment in English of Khmelnytsky and his many legacies, see Amelia M. Glaser, *Stories of Khmelnytsky: Competing Literary Legacies of the 1648 Ukrainian Cossack Uprising* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

<sup>72</sup> *Safra*, fol. 66<sup>v</sup>. Paul was almost certainly taught to view Khmelnytsky as a Moses-figure by the Orthodox Ukrainians themselves. The Metropolitan of Kiev, Sylvester of Kosiv (r. 1647-57), himself hailed Khmelnytsky as 'the new Moses', who was both Ukraine's deliverer from foreign domination and defender of Orthodoxy; see Robert Paul Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), 203. cited. in Andrew Wilson, *Op. cit.*, 61.

report at length in the *Safra* on this local conflict which he witnessed, to impart to his Arab Orthodox readers a stirring image of the suffering endured there by their Slavic Orthodox brethren at Catholic hands. Catholic missionaries were already making inroads among the Arab Orthodox flock with the Unia; in this context Paul's polemicized account of the Ukrainian conflict can be understood, in part at least, as an attempt to protect the latter from the missionaries' zeal, by exposing to them the Unia's dark underbelly at the Orthodox-Catholic frontier.<sup>73</sup>

#### IV. *Ḥannā Diyāb in Ottoman Cyprus*

Not being a clergyman like Paul of Aleppo, Ḥannā Diyāb was less actively involved in sectarian polemics. They did nevertheless bear directly on his travels, in ways that affected his outlook considerably. Diyāb's meeting with the *Suryānī* Catholic refugee in Livorno which we discussed above brought him in contact with the bitter controversy of the Unia; it also led him to emphasize more his universal *Catholic* (<Gk. *καθ'*, 'with respect to', *ὅλου*, 'whole'; *i.e.* 'universal'), as opposed to his more narrowly sectarian Maronite identity. We observe this solidifying

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<sup>73</sup> This interpretation is not without its problems. Paul's hard anti-Catholic stance in Ukraine—echoing many Greek Orthodox polemicists—is countered by his more generous stance vis-à-vis Catholicism elsewhere in the *Safra*. Catholics, Paul writes while in Russia, “are not far from us [Orthodox], unlike other heretics [*i.e.* Protestants]” (*Safra*, fol. 183<sup>v</sup>). On the question of Catholics converting to Orthodoxy, Paul's father, Makarios, argued the ‘soft’ position at a local Russian church council (*majma'*) that he attended: *i.e.* that they shouldn't undergo baptism (*Ibid.*, fols. 183<sup>r</sup>-183<sup>v</sup>, fols. 259<sup>v</sup>-260<sup>r</sup>). This position went against the ‘harder’ anti-Catholic ecclesiology prevalent in the Greek-speaking Orthodox world at that time. Documentary evidence reveals moreover that Makarios maintained a correspondence with the *Propaganda Fide* in Rome, and that he supported Catholic missionaries who preached and heard confessions among his Orthodox flock; see Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger, eds., *The Orthodox Church in the Arab World 700-1700: An Anthology of Sources* (De Kalb: NIU Press, 2014), 37. The Vatican archives even reportedly preserve Makarios's “Confession of faith” sent to Rome in secret, recognizing Papal supremacy. Hilary Kilpatrick however rightly advises caution in interpreting this contradictory evidence; see “Makāriyūs and Būlus Ibn al-Za'im” in *Op. cit.*, 268.

of Diyāb's Catholic identity almost from the moment he and Paul Lucas set sail together from Beirut. This was Diyāb's first sea-voyage, as well as his first trip outside of the Ottoman Levant where Maronites had their traditional stronghold in *dār al-islām*. The need for Catholic solidarity became paramount.

In Ottoman-ruled Cyprus, their ship's first stop *en route* to Alexandria, Diyāb witnessed life in another conflict-zone—less volatile than the Ukraine—between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Anti-Catholic sentiment was seemingly strong among Cyprus's majority *Rūm* Greek Orthodox population who had lived under Catholic Venetian rule until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the island passed to its present Muslim Ottoman rule. Like nearly all other Greek-speaking members of the *millet-i-Rūm*, the Orthodox Cypriots much preferred the latter to the former. A Catholic Cypriot local explained their attitude to Diyāb: "They always say, better a Muslim than a Roman Catholic (*musulmān wa lā rūmān*)."<sup>74</sup> Diyāb, a Catholic, encountered this attitude directed at him in tangible ways, which he describes. This experience made Cyprus into alien, hostile territory for him. It also reinforced his Catholic identity in ways that living in a Muslim-majority society had never done. Indeed, Diyāb felt far less safe, less at ease in Orthodox-majority Cyprus than in Muslim-majority Egypt and North Africa, which he would visit right after Cyprus (see Chapt. 4, Sect. II).

Orthodox Cypriots were people with whom Diyāb felt he shared no common ground, neither religious nor ethno-cultural or linguistic, on which even rudimentary human

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<sup>74</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 16.

understanding could occur. In place of such a void, there was only suspicion, hostility, and “bitter feeling”. He describes his first encounter with some of them in Larnaca, at the home of a resident French merchant:

All their domestic servants were *Rūm* [i.e. Orthodox] Greeks (*Krikīya*), who spoke no other language than *Rūmī*. I was among them like the deaf person at a wedding (*ka 'l-atrash fi 'l-zaffa*); I didn't understand their language, nor did they understand my language. When I tried speaking to them in the Frankish language—even though they understood, they still responded to me only in *Rūmī*, out of sheer derision. It was because these people harbor a deep-seated hatred for the Catholic faction (*byebghuḏū qismi 'l-kātūlīkī alā khaṭṭan* [sic] *mustaqīm*, lit. ‘on a straight line’). I had a bitter feeling among them.<sup>75</sup>

Catholics, who once ruled Cyprus, were now a despised minority on the island. In such an inhospitable environment, they needed more than elsewhere to band together for mutual support. The Catholic convent in Nicosia, where he and Paul Lucas stayed, provided the city's embattled Catholic community—a mix of ‘Frankish’ (i.e. European ‘Roman’) Catholics, Greek (Uniate) Catholics, and Maronites—with a common place they could rally around. Diyāb at one point strikes up a conversation with a frail and elderly local Catholic who resided permanently in the convent's grounds, being cared for by its *Padre*. The elderly local turned out to be a Maronite: “He started talking to me in the *Rūmī* language,” Diyāb writes,

And when he saw that I don't understand *Rūmī*, he spoke to me in Turkish. He asked after my country and community (*jinsī*, lit. ‘my race’)<sup>76</sup>. I told him:  
— I am an Aleppan, from the community (*ṭayfa*) of the Maronites.  
He then answered me in Arabic:

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 14<sup>v</sup>. It is difficult to determine the extent here to which these Greek Cypriots' perceived “deep-seated hatred” of Catholics was based in objective reality or in Diyāb's own (mis)reading of the cross-cultural encounter.

<sup>76</sup> Contemporary usage of the word *jins*, when relating to humans, tends to mean ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’. Here instead it is synonymous with *ṭā'ifa*; cf. Intro., n. 42; also Chapt. 2, n. 9, on the Greek word, γένος, which we translate there also as ‘community’, rather than its more common ‘race’. The words are likely linked etymologically: Ar. جُنْسٌ < Syr. جِنْفَع < Gk. γένος.

— Greetings to a son of my own community (*ibn jamā'ati*)<sup>77</sup>!  
 — Are you a Maronite?  
 — Yes. I am a remaining descendant of the Maronites who used to live on this island when it was a *mulk* ('dominion')<sup>78</sup> of the Venetians. They were then more than five hundred families. There are still some left, but they don't make themselves known, for fear of the Greek heretics (*khīfatan mina 'l-krikīya 'l-harāṭīqa*). Me, I've taken refuge here with the *Padre* who of his charity provides me with a morsel of food for my sustenance. For a long time, I used to serve this convent, but now have no more power to serve.<sup>79</sup>

The convent was like a Catholic island-refuge in the malevolent *Rūm* Greek sea; “fear of the Greek heretics” had driven this old Maronite to find refuge here with other Catholics, as it had driven most other remaining Cypriot Maronites to conceal their religious identity in public. Diyāb soon experienced this same “fear of the Greek heretics” for himself while staying at the convent.

Walking onto the roof of the convent, Diyāb out of curiosity removed a screen (*sitāra*) which concealed an open view into the neighbors' private domestic life. His gaze fell suddenly on a group of women, and a man who looked like he was ‘master (*ṣāhib*)’ of the household. They were *Rūm*. “Soon as he saw me,” writes Diyāb, “he started cursing at me in both the *Rūmī* language and in Turkish.” Diyāb's curiosity had gotten the better of him: in removing the screen, which was placed there for a reason, he had unwittingly committed a crime against male honor, through spying on another man's unveiled women (*ḥarīm*). By the same stroke he provoked also the *Rūmī*'s anti-Catholic religious hatred.

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<sup>77</sup> Diyāb here uses another term, *jamā'a*, for ‘community’. Paul of Aleppo uses this word extensively when traveling in Anatolia, referring to its Orthodox inhabitants (both Greek and Turkish-speaking) as being “from our community (*min jamā'atnā*)”; see Chapt. 2.

<sup>78</sup> The same word used by Paul of Aleppo above, though it is far less central to Diyāb's worldview and concerns.

<sup>79</sup> Sbath 254, fols. 15<sup>v</sup>-16<sup>r</sup>.



There came the violent clanging sound of a stone against the convent's door. "Open, you dog, open!" Diyāb heard in Turkish. From outside, the enraged *Rūmī* breathed curses and threats. Diyāb pleaded with him that he was a *gharīb*, a stranger, in Nicosia—his transgression had therefore been committed out of ignorance: "I didn't know that behind the screen there were women." The *Rūmī* would hear none of it, but "only increased his abuse, yelling and beating against the door." Both the convent's *Padre* and Paul Lucas were gone out on excursions that day; Diyāb was alone there, unprotected from this *Rūmī* outside the door who craved no less than his blood.

At that moment, another Greek (*Krīkī*)—this one not a *Rūmī*, but a Greek uniate—passed outside the convent's door. Speaking in Greek, the uniate managed to calm the *Rūmī* down. "It was as if God sent him to save me from that vicious man," Diyāb writes. After sending the *Rūmī* on his way, the Greek uniate addressed Diyāb in Italian, a *lingua franca* for Catholics in the Mediterranean: "Don't fear, I'm a friend." Diyāb, still terrified, refused at first to open the convent door. The other then told Diyāb from behind the door: "I am like you, a Catholic Christian (*anā mitlak masīhī kātūlikī*)." These were the 'magic' words he needed to hear. "When I heard him say those words," Diyāb relates, "I opened the door for him at once." Once inside, the Greek Catholic quickly became Diyāb's close friend and local guide in Nicosia. He confirmed what Diyāb already suspected: that the *Rūmī*'s attack had not been motivated by male "jealousy (*ghayra*)", but by sectarian "diabolical hatred" for the "Roman Catholic faith (*al-īmān al-kātūlikī al-rūmānī*)" for which the convent stood in Nicosia.<sup>80</sup> Diyāb had just passed through his own

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 16.

hard and ‘practical’ lesson in the urgent need for Catholic solidarity in an alien, hostile environment—a lesson he would not easily forget.

Diyāb’s view of Greek Orthodox Cypriots as a hostile ‘other’ subsequently colored his reaction to nearly all aspects of their society. His reaction to Orthodox Cypriot women’s ‘indecent’ public behavior in Nicosia is a case in point. He describes a street scene in Nicosia as he witnessed it:

We went touring the city, and I saw in the streets women who were selling wine. Each one had in front of her a leather receptacle filled with wine, advertising loudly its superior quality and age. Each jug went for an *’uthmānī*. Some of these women sold pork; others went around with their wine loaded on asses selling it from house to house. All of them had their faces uncovered, without a veil (*kulluhum awjāhuhum kashaf min ghayr sitār*). When I saw this immodest scene (*al-maḍār* [sic] *al-qalīl al-iḥtishām*), I said to the young man [who was with me]...‘Look now at their women, sitting with faces uncovered, without shame or modesty (*bi-ghayri ’stihyā wa lā ’ḥtishām*) out in the alleys before all comers and goers!’<sup>81</sup>

Diyāb’s reaction to this ‘immodest’ street scene in Nicosia bears similarity at first glance with reactions we typically read in Arab Muslim travel accounts of sexual *mores* in Christian-dominated, especially Western or ‘Frankish’, cities.<sup>82</sup> We could assume on the one hand that this was because Diyāb, though a Christian, shared the conservative *mores* of Muslims from the Ottoman empire: like them, he was prone to being offended in Cyprus by their women’s

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 16<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> Reports and ‘ribald tales’ about ‘Frankish’ Christian women’s lack of modesty and decency compared with Muslim women, and about their husbands’ lack of male ‘jealousy (*ghayra*)’ over them, were a stock feature in extant medieval Muslim Arabic writings about life in Christian territory. We might call it a prominent feature within a *reverse*-Orientalism. The most well-known, and likely the earliest example, comes from Usāma ibn Munqidh (d. 1188) of Shayzar in Syria, who reported extensively on life within the Crusader-controlled parts of the Levant in his *Kitāb al-’Itibār* (‘Book of Contemplation’); see Niall Christie, “Just a Bunch of Dirty Stories? Women in the ‘Memoirs’ of Usamah Ibn Munqidh”, in *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travellers, 1050-1550*, 71-87. I thank Shawkat Toorawa for this bibliographical reference.

comparably ‘indecent’ public behavior. This reading fails however soon as we juxtapose the present scene from Nicosia in which Diyāb condemns female ‘immodesty’, with the scene from Livorno which we read earlier—in which he acted on the contrary as a spokesperson for apparent female ‘liberation’: the ‘lifting’ of the *ḥijāb*. Instead, it was the surrounding sectarian context which determined his stance, either way: Whether Diyāb saw unveiled women as symbols of moral degradation or liberation, depended on which side of the Eastern Orthodox-Roman Catholic ‘border’ he was on—whether he felt he was among hostile *Rūm* ‘others’, like in Cyprus; or, as in Livorno, among his own Catholic kin.

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Crossing the border between *dār al-islām* and the ‘lands of the Christians’, or between different and competing ‘lands of the Christians’, was just one component in the transformative journeys undertaken by these Eastern Christian travellers. The ‘border crossing’ scenes and passages which we have analyzed in this chapter, however revealing, are just snapshots into some of the complexities the travellers faced as they navigated what was for them a mostly bi-partite, or tri-partite world. To gain a deeper understanding of these complexities, we must look at each text as a whole, separately. This we will do, beginning with Paul of Aleppo’s *Safra*, in the next chapter. Each traveller’s journey will be followed closely, more or less in chronological fashion, from geographic starting-point to destination—and the return back, where appropriate. This will be the best method for tracking each traveller’s ‘progress’—*i.e.* the ways

in which travel in the 'lands of the Christians' came to alter significantly their identities as Christians from *dār al-islām*.

**Chapter 2:**  
*Paul of Aleppo's Safrat al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs:*  
*An Arab Orthodox Christian's Voyage*  
*Through the Orthodox Commonwealth\**

Paul of Aleppo's *Safra* is a long, densely-packed, unwieldy and chaotic text—311 folios in manuscript; 25 compact lines (give or take) on each page, written in copyists' hands that are generally skilled and legible. A single page from the *Safra* typically contains, within the larger narrative framework of travel, Paul's minute descriptions and spontaneous impressions on *everything* under the sun that caught his interest *en route* between Syria and Russia. His interests were surprisingly encyclopedic: from Orthodox church ritual, iconography, architecture, and music primarily, to history, economy, local flora and fauna and agricultural methods, folk customs, cuisines, *etc.* Paul wrote, like the other two authors in Middle Arabic<sup>1</sup>; though he also knew fluently Ottoman Turkish, had a working command of Byzantine Greek<sup>2</sup>, and picked up a

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\* In writing this chapter I have used MS. Arabe 6016, housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), identified as the most authoritative of extant MSS. of Paul of Aleppo's *Safrat al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs* (referred to as *Safra*). For a complete scholarly evaluation of the text's MS. tradition, its editions, and previous translations into European languages, see Paul din Alep, *Jurnal de călătorie în Molodova și Valahia*, ed. and trans. Ioana Feodorov (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2014), 29-52. I have used this most recent and excellent edition by Ioana Feodorov (based also on MS. Arabe 6016) in writing parts of Sect. III of this chapter, which deals with Paul and Makarios's first sojourn in Moldo-Wallachia.

<sup>1</sup> Paul's Arabic, like that of his father, has been almost universally denigrated by Arabists who have read him in the original (on the general problem of Middle Arabic, see this dissertation's Introduction).

<sup>2</sup> Paul had an imperfect, but fully functional command of Greek, the lingua franca of learning and commerce in the Orthodox commonwealth. It was both his and his father's most common vehicle of communication during their travels. Passages from Orthodox church hymnography in Byzantine Greek occur frequently in the *Safra*, transcribed with spelling mistakes (*eg.* Ἐπι σὺ χέρι, *recte* Ἐπι σοὶ χαίρει, 'In thee rejoices...'; see *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 514); and often rendered in bewilderingly imprecise Arabic transliterations: *eg.* *ṣūfiyā ūrti akūšūmin tū ājiyū afankāliyū* (Gk. Σοφία. Ὁρθοί. Ἀκούσωμεν τοῦ ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου, 'Wisdom.

smattering of Romanian and Russian on his travels<sup>3</sup>—all of which languages make their appearance in the MS.<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, a single-chapter analysis of the *Safra*—such as this one—will be necessarily reductive of its ‘wealth’.

Patriarch Makarios of Antioch and his son Paul the Archdeacon were not the only traveling Orthodox clergymen in the Ottoman empire. The route that led between the Levant, Anatolia, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia, saw increased traffic—especially clerical—in this period; itinerant, or ‘wandering (*taxidiot*)’ Orthodox clerics became common within this constellation. Some of these, like Paul, left lengthy diaries of their travels—in Greek and Slavic

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Arise. Let us hear the Holy Gospel’; *Safra* fol. 142<sup>v</sup>); *dhukṣā sī kīriyeh dhukṣā sī* (Gk. Δόξα σοι, Κύριε, δόξα σοι, ‘Glory to Thee, O Lord, Glory to Thee’; *Safra*, fol. 71<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>3</sup> Paul never fully learned to speak either Romanian or Russian, although he freely incorporated words from both languages within his working vocabulary in the *Safra* to describe phenomena unknown to him (eg. *qubṭūr* <Rom. *cuptor*, ‘hearth/oven’—to which Paul assigned, instead of its Romanian plural, *cuptoare*, an Arabic broken plural of his own devising: *qabāṭīr*, after the *fu‘lūl-fa‘ālil* morphological pattern; see *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 58). Aspects of the *Safra*’s eclectic foreign vocabulary, which baffled previous translators, have been discussed at length by Ioana Feodorov; see “Notes sur les mots non arabes dans le Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d’Antioche aux Pays Roumains, au ‘Pays de Cosaques’ et en Russie,” in *A Festschrift for Nadia Anghelescu* (Bucharest: Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti, 2011), 193-214; see also *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 52-62. Charles Halperin, going after Ignaty Krachkovsky, made a poor assessment of Paul’s Russian (and Slavonic) abilities; see “In the Eye of the Beholder: Two Views of Seventeenth-Century Muscovy”, *Russian History* 24, 4 (1997): 413, n. 12. Paul on the other hand, towards the end his stay in Russia, claims to have himself translated (*fassartuhā*, ‘I translated/interpreted it’), from Russian into Greek, a letter received by Patriarch Makarios from Tsar Alexei (*Safra*, fol. 260<sup>v</sup>). If true, then his Russian certainly exceeded their assessment.

<sup>4</sup> Hilary Kilpatrick writes on the linguistic difficulties presented by the MS.—a major factor, among others, that deterred her from consulting it when writing about the *Safra*: “What chiefly deterred me from consulting the Paris MS. (arab. 6016) was my recognition that I was not in a position to read it properly. It demands a knowledge not only of classical Arabic and Syrian dialect, but also of Ottoman Turkish, Byzantine Greek, Rumanian, Russian, and perhaps Church Slavonic and Ukrainian. Familiarity with the history of Russia, Ukraine and Romania in the 17th century and the organisation and worship of the Orthodox Church is also an asset.” See “Journeying Towards Modernity”, *Op. cit.*, 158-159, n.9. As a low-level apprentice-scholar, I make no claim to be in a more qualified position than Kilpatrick to read the MS. properly—only more a foolhardy one perhaps.

languages for the most part—all of which, taken together, provide a complete, panoramic record of the multi-ethnic Ottoman-era ‘Orthodox commonwealth’.<sup>5</sup> Paul’s *Safra* is the only major text of its kind written in Arabic, by an Arab Orthodox clergyman.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter’s focus, like that of the other chapters that follow in this dissertation, will be on the Eastern Christian identity of the travel-writer. Broadly put, the main question that will be asked is: In what ways did travel in the European ‘lands of the Christians’ transform the identity of the Eastern Christian traveller from *dār al-islām*? Specifically, in Paul of Aleppo’s case

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<sup>5</sup> The list of exemplary texts is much longer than can be given here. Most prominent on this list are: (1) *Garden of Graces* (Κήπος Χαρίτων) by Constantine (Caisarios) Dapontes (d.1784); see Émile Legrand, ed., *Bibliothèque Grecque Vulgaire*, Vol. III (Paris: Maisonneuve: 1881). Dapontes came from Skopelos, an island on the Aegean, spent his earlier adult life working in Phanariot circles between Constantinople and the Danubian Principalities, before finally taking vows as a monk at the Monastery of Xeropotamou on Mount Athos. Athonite monasteries typically sent out chosen monks into the outside Orthodox world on alms-gathering missions (much like Paul and Makarios’s mission, taking similar advantage of the safety of travel afforded by *Pax Ottomana*): With his Phanariot connections, Dapontes was an ideal candidate for the job. The *Garden of Graces*, in its frame-work, is Dapontes’s record in verse (15-syllable couplets) of his nine-year tour of the entire Balkans. Dapontes’s experience as a traveller bore similarity to Paul’s: he felt “completely at ease within the whole of South-Eastern Europe, which was not sundered by political or ethnic divisions...was defined primarily in his awareness by the symbols and palladia of the Christian faith, particularly the places of pilgrimage and worship Dapontes encountered continually on his incessant travels”; see Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth*, 5-6.

(2) *The Travels of Vasilii Grigorovich-Barskii in the Holy Lands of the East*; see T. G. Stavrou and P. R. Weisensel, *Russian Travelers to the Christian East from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Century* (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1986), 70–3. Vasilii Barskii (d. 1747), a native of Kiev, was probably the most impressive of all Orthodox ‘wandering monks’ in the Ottoman era. His travels were not part of any ecclesiastical mission, but an ongoing personal pilgrimage that lasted more than twenty years (1723-1747), which took him from Ukraine to Italy, the Balkans, Aegean islands, Asia Minor, the Levant and Egypt. His travel-diary, even more copious and carefully detailed than Paul’s, is another window into the ethnically diverse, but ideologically unified Orthodox commonwealth in the Ottoman era; see Alexander Grishin, “Bars’kyj and the Orthodox community” in Michael Angold, ed., *Eastern Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 210-228.

<sup>6</sup> The only other Arabic text to mention here is the short, versified travel-account of Metropolitan (Muṭrān) ʿIsā, who accompanied Antiochian Patriarch Joachim (Yuwākīm) ibn Ḍaw’ (d. 1592) to Moscow from 1585-1586—the first such trip made by an Arab Patriarch (see Intro., n. 4). Its scope and significance pales in comparison with the *Safra*, although Paul certainly had read the poem and referred to it on isolated occasions while in Moscow in order corroborate some of his own descriptions of the city—eg. *Safra*, fol. 161<sup>r</sup>, fol. 177<sup>r</sup>.

this question becomes: What observable effects did travel in the Southeastern and Eastern European ‘lands of Orthodoxy’ have on Paul’s Arab Orthodox identity?

In considering this question, it is worth rehearsing one more time quickly some of the surrounding historical circumstances that made Paul of Aleppo’s travels recorded in the *Safra* unique: Before they were masters of the Arab-Islamic Near East, the Ottomans made their rise as an imperial power first by conquering Anatolia and the Balkans—the entire geographic space of the late medieval ‘Byzantine Commonwealth’.<sup>7</sup> Before they became Caliphs, the Muslim Ottoman khans were Caesars, ruling from the former Byzantine imperial capital of Constantinople, over a large and diverse number of loyal subjects (*ra‘āyā*) who were Orthodox Christian in faith and who shared a common Byzantine cultural legacy. These became the new *millet-i-Rūm*, a unified ‘common system’<sup>8</sup> or ‘community/race (γένος)’<sup>9</sup>, an *imperium in*

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Byzantine Commonwealth’ was a term famously coined by Dimitri Obolensky, referring to the political reality of Eastern Europe in the period before the final fall of Byzantium (500-1453)—that of a politically-divided ‘commonwealth’ held together by a common Byzantine religious/cultural inheritance; see *The Byzantine Commonwealth: East Europe, 500-1453* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971). The term ‘Orthodox Commonwealth’ has been used by scholars of the region to refer to the commonwealth’s adaptation to the new political reality of unified Ottoman imperial rule.

<sup>8</sup> The Pontic Greek scholar from Trebizond, Sebastos Kyminitis (d. 1703), wrote of the “common system of the Orthodox”, referring to the collective identity that all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire (and outside) shared; see Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth*, 3-5.

<sup>9</sup> In modern (and ancient) times, the term γένος takes the ‘secular’ meaning of ‘race’—*i.e.* a collective formed on the basis of common ancestry, language, *etc.* During the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods, γένος instead meant usually something quite close to Ottoman *millet*, in that its primary basis was shared religious, not ethnolinguistic affiliation; see *Ibid.*, 9, n. 24. Byzantine Greek Orthodox Church literature often speaks thus of the “community/race (γένος) of the Christians”—*eg.* from one of the well-known Orthodox prayers addressed to the Theotokos: Σύ γάρ εἶ ἡ σωτηρία τοῦ γένους τῶν Χριστιανῶν (‘for you are the salvation race/community of the Christians’). The anthropology underlying the term γένος τῶν Χριστιανῶν fit quite smoothly within the Ottoman *millet* system, in the era of ‘Byzantium after Byzantium’.



*imperio*<sup>10</sup>—for whom early Ottoman rule was characterized by a remarkable degree of cultural continuity with late Byzantium.<sup>11</sup>

In 1516, when Ottomans annexed Syria as an imperial province, the local Arab Orthodox community were joined to the empire's multi-ethnic *millet-i-Rūm*. The Arabs, after a long period of isolation from their Orthodox brethren elsewhere, were now the newest members of the 'Orthodox commonwealth', whose cultural heartland was the Balkans and whose symbolic capital was Constantinople/Istanbul. This renewed contact proved highly productive culturally for the Arab Orthodox; its direct result was what scholars have identified as the 'Melkite *nahḍa*' (see Intro., Sect. I). The *Safra* is in many ways a chronicle of this renewed contact, and the *nahḍa* which accompanied it: Patriarch Makarios al-Za'īm and his son Paul was two of the main initiators of this contact and were both leading figures in the Melkite *nahḍa* of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The cultural encounter—at the heart of the *Safra*—between Arab Orthodoxy and the Ottoman-era world of Southeastern and Eastern European Orthodoxy, took place on very different terms than the more well-known encounter between Eastern and Western Christianity. The former encounter was characterized by a greater equality and reciprocity than the latter: The Arabs nearly always met their European Orthodox brethren—who more often than not, were like them, Ottoman subjects—on familiar cultural ground. In many of the *Safra*'s scenes abroad, Makarios, as Patriarch of the ancient and universally-revered See of Antioch, can be

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<sup>10</sup> see Timothy Ware, *Eustratios Argenti: A study of the Greek Church under Turkish rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Hence the term, famously coined by Nicolae Iorga, 'Byzantium after Byzantium (*Byzance après Byzance*)'.

seen enjoying the upper hand in terms of spiritual authority over his fellow Orthodox bishops. This greater equality and reciprocity can be attributed partly to the ‘common denominator’ of Ottoman imperial rule under which the majority of Orthodox believers, European and non-European, lived equally as *dhimmi*s. To a larger extent however, they had their cause in the supranational, ecumenical (*i.e.* ‘universal’) character of Orthodoxy: The geographic space of the Ottoman-era ‘Orthodox commonwealth’ was characterized by a remarkable level of ethnolinguistic plurality and fluidity, held together by a shared cultural heritage dominated by the beliefs, values, symbols and rituals of the Orthodox Church.<sup>12</sup> Within this Orthodox geographic and cultural space, Arab Orthodoxy fit relatively easily and seamlessly. Paul was alert all throughout his travels to changes in the linguistic environment, to local variations in Orthodox ritual practice and usage (which he noted down without fail, sometimes in staggering detail); yet nowhere did he encounter forms unrecognizable or alienating to him as to exclude

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<sup>12</sup> Many authors, in writing about the *millet-i-Rûm*, have emphasized the hegemony, cultural and ecclesiastical, of Greeks over the other ethnicities, and the Greek language over the other languages. Certainly, the core textual sources and prototypical forms of the shared Orthodox culture were all Greek-Byzantine. Greek (and those who spoke it) held an undisputed cultural pre-eminence—as *primus inter pares*—evidenced for instance in the establishment of important Greek academies across the Danube in Moldo-Wallachia; see Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, *Les Academies princières de Bucarest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974). This pre-eminence of the Greek sources however, did not negate the concurrent emphasis placed on their translation and adaptation—carried out with remarkable success—within a wide variety of cultural-linguistic contexts. Local traditions and variants on Orthodox worship proliferated in the *millet-i-Rûm* and beyond—which Paul minutely recorded in the *Safra*. The degree to which a plurality of liturgical languages was actively preserved is further seen in the initiatives taken by the Orthodox Church in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to print religious and liturgical books in Turkish (written in Greek letters) for *Karamlides*—Turkophone Orthodox Christians in Asia Minor—whom Paul also encountered (see below in this Chapter). The hegemonic drive to ‘hellenize’ only took root later on historically, as a distinctly secular Greek national idea (inspired by Western European nationalism), in direct opposition at first to the Orthodox Church’s supranational religious outlook. This new Hellenism came to a head in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was followed by a proliferation of nationalisms in the Balkans; see Kitromilides, *Op. cit.*, 181-182; Richard Clogg, *Op. cit.*, 185-207.

him from participation; nowhere did he encounter Orthodox Christians who didn't speak his 'language'—even in faraway Russia.

Cultures which claim 'universality' often subsume the individual, 'lesser' cultures they come in contact with as they spread their 'message'. This was not the case here, as Paul's *Safra* demonstrates. The Arab Orthodox did of course feel a need to 'catch up' with their European brethren—mostly through initiating a widescale translation of new textual sources imported from abroad.<sup>13</sup> Paradoxically however, this would have not a deleterious effect on the distinctive Arab-ness of Paul and Makarios's Orthodox cultural tradition and identity, but an edifying one. This point will become evident particularly towards the end of this chapter.

Paul's account of Muscovite Russia is the *Safra's* centerpiece. It is also the text's main locus of tension. The whole Russian Eurasian expanse formed an integral part of the Orthodox commonwealth, yet Russia was also by far the commonwealth's most eccentric member. The Russians were not members of *millet-i-Rūm*—they were not, like the majority of Orthodox Christians, *ra'āyā* or vassals of the Ottomans.<sup>14</sup> Russia was the only Orthodox land which still retained fully its Christian *mulk*, its empire. And in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, this *mulk* was steadily

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<sup>13</sup> *cf.* the long passage quoted from the *Safra* in the Introduction, detailing Paul and Makarios's discovery of a valuable Byzantine Greek manuscript, followed by their efforts to have it copied, printed, then translated into Arabic.

<sup>14</sup> Russia's 'eccentricity' had obviously deeper historical roots. Between the baptism of Kievan Rus' and the rise of Muscovy, Russia's Orthodox culture was formed in relative isolation from the rest—due partly to more than two centuries of Mongol rule. Cultural prototypes received from Byzantium were transformed in Russia in far more dramatic ways than elsewhere. As one art historian put it: Byzantine culture's "transformation in Russian hands has left a spectacle of such diversity and intensity that is often seen as the crowning achievement of the Byzantine tradition." see Roderick Grierson, ed., *The Gates of Mystery: The Art of Holy Russia* (Fort Worth: Intercultura, 1993), 8.

expanding into a formidable global power that rivalled the Ottomans. The *Safra*'s overall vision of Russia is utopian and messianic: Russia was the bastion, the Noah's ark of the True Orthodox Faith, lived to its fullest; it was 'holy Russia', a land filled only with Christians saints and ascetics; it was the 'new Rome' (*Rūmīya al-jadīda*)<sup>15</sup>, which surpassed even the old Byzantine Rome.

Yet this same triumphalist vision of Russian *mulk* becomes the source of *al-ghurba* for Paul. It clashes with the imperial vision shared in common at the time by all members of *millet-i-Rūm*—for whom loyalty to the Ottoman empire was based on their wholehearted acceptance of Muslim Ottoman imperial rule (*mulk*) as part of the divinely-sanctioned order of things. If Muscovite Russia was 'new Rome', then 'old Rome' was the Ottoman empire. And it was ultimately in 'old Rome' where Paul was at home: In all his travels, only in Russia did Paul begin to feel himself a 'stranger (*gharīb*)'.

The Arab Orthodox, like other members of *millet-i-Rūm*, needed the Russians and their *mulk*. For their communal renewal, or *nahḍa*, the Antiochian Patriarchate needed the financial and cultural sponsorship which only a wealthy Orthodox ruler like the Tsar could provide. Yet to turn their backs completely on the Ottoman empire, on their home in *dār al-islām*, remained out of the question all throughout. Paul embraces the Russian imperial vision of 'New Rome', but always with reservation. The co-existence and interplay between these two visions, these

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<sup>15</sup> Technically, Constantinople was already the 'New Rome'—Paul's historical memory evidently did not extend back to ancient Rome in Italy. For this reason, Russian churchmen themselves developed the well-known idea, at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century after the fall of Constantinople, of Moscow as the 'Third Rome'. Paul seems not to have encountered the latter term in Russia—in fact, how widespread its use ever was in Russia has been a matter of debate among historians; see Donald Ostrowski, "Moscow the Third Rome' as Historical Ghost" in Sarah T. Brooks, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 170-179.

two imperial ideas, these two loyalties within Paul's own Arab Orthodox identity—to the Muscovite 'New Rome' and the old Ottoman/Byzantine Rome—will become a focal point in this chapter.

I. *Historical starting-point: Makarios as long-awaited shepherd for a scattered flock*

The *Safra* begins with Paul's 11-folio presentation of the 'history' (*ta'riḫh*) of the Patriarchate of Antioch, concentrating on the four centuries immediately preceding his own lifetime. Many have previously read this preliminary *ta'riḫh* as little more than routine, medieval-style *discursus* from the main travel narrative, easily omitted in a modern edition or translation.<sup>16</sup> This is a mistake. The *ta'riḫh* sets the all-important groundwork and context for Paul's father's messianic ascendancy to the Patriarchal throne. In Paul's historiography, Makarios's Patriarchal tenure is the central event, the *fullness of time*, foreshadowed clearly by previous events in the life of the Patriarchate. Paul's own role was to be his chief eye-witness and record-keeper and hagiographer; to be the historian of this new, still unwritten history, in which Makarios was the main hero. It is a difficult task, approached by Paul with trepidation and feelings of personal inadequacy; as he writes, "no new historian (*muwarriḫh* [sic] *jadīd*) has appeared to continue the histories written by the scholars (*ulamā'*) of the Christian community (*milla*)."<sup>17</sup> He, Paul, of course had to now become that 'new historian'. The role would, for the moment, place him happily in his father's shadow. The time would surely come however, as we will witness at the

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<sup>16</sup> It was included only in Qustantin al-Basha's very short edition, *Nukhbah min Safrat al-Baṭriyark Makāriyūs al-Ḥalabī bi-qalam waladihi al-Shammās Būlus* (Ḥarīṣā: Maṭba'at al-Qiddīs Būlus, 1913),

<sup>17</sup> *Safra*, fol. 3<sup>r</sup>.

end the *Safra*, when Paul would, having attained full stature in his own right, seasoned through his travels, step forward from that shadow as the main inheritor and continuator of Makarios's legacy.<sup>18</sup>

Paul's new *ta'rikh* begins with an account of the historical transfer of the Patriarchate's ancient headquarters in Antioch to its present location in Damascus. The transfer followed after unprecedented tragedy and loss for the Arab Orthodox community: the sack of Crusader Antioch by Mamluks under Sultan Baybars. The Mamluks who laid siege to the 'great city' (*al-madīna al-ʿuzmā*), Paul writes, committed atrocities that "defy normal description, which no other city ever experienced...they killed more than forty thousand of its inhabitants, set fire and lay total waste to its Churches that were famous in all the world, and took captive the remaining population." Antioch never recovered after, was lost forever to the Church and community that would continue nonetheless to bear the city's name. Antioch's fall set the history of the See on a new, tragic course; the transfer to Damascus being seen by Paul as an aberration, a rupture in its apostolic continuity.<sup>19</sup> The stage was thus set for the appearance Makarios, as a light shining

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<sup>18</sup> Had Paul not died in Tbilisi, Georgia, prematurely in 1669, while returning from a second trip to Russia, he would have likely succeeded Makarios as Patriarch of Antioch. Instead, one of his two sons became Patriarch, Kirillūs V; see Hilary Kilpatrick, "Makāriyūs Ibn al-Zaʿīm and Būlus Ibn al-Zaʿīm", in *Op. cit.*, 269.

<sup>19</sup> A cloud of darkness seems to cover the period around the transfer itself, during which Paul says, he could not find the names for some of the Patriarchs. Either they were not recorded by anybody, he says, or the throne remained vacant during that time, "due to the many sorrows, afflictions and tribulations that befell the children of baptism (*banī al-maʿmūdīya*)." *Safra*, fols. 2<sup>v</sup>-3<sup>r</sup>.

in the darkness, a savior-figure who would finally restore that broken continuity and set the community's history back on its right course.<sup>20</sup>

Travel is central to Makarios's pastoral mission from the very outset. Before he can travel abroad, he must first travel the length and breadth of the spiritual territory entrusted to him. Makarios's first action as chief shepherd is to embark on an extensive tour of his diocese, to "gather together and inspect the conditions of his flock,"<sup>21</sup> scattered as they were throughout the 'lands of the Arabs' (*bilād al-'arab*).<sup>22</sup> It is the sad "conditions of his flock" witnessed during

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<sup>20</sup> The final appearance of Makarios among the scattered Antiochians is prefigured by various local events related by Paul in succession: (1) A local Church council (*majma' muqaddas makānī*) is convened during the Patriarchate of Yuwākīm ibn Jumu'a, whose decisions are confirmed by all three other Patriarchs: Jerusalem, Alexandria and Constantinople. The reintegration of the Arab Orthodox within the universal Orthodox Christian *millet* is already beginning. (2) Patriarch Yuwākīm ibn Ḍaw' makes the first visit of any Antiochian Patriarch to the 'lands of the Christians' in 1585, becoming a forerunner of Makarios (see above, n. 6). "He passed into the lands of Christians," writes Paul, "where we also went and saw his picture (*naẓarnā ṣūratahū*)" (3) The Arab Orthodox appeal to the legendary Lebanese Druze emir of Lebanon, Fakhr al-Dīn Ma'nī, for help in healing ruinous factional strife within their community. Under the emir's protection, another local Church council (*majma'*) is convened; like a Byzantine emperor, Fakhr al-Dīn shows an active interest in the Christian council's proceedings; he even brings his executive power to bear against one recalcitrant Orthodox bishop in his territory, who refused at first to attend the council. Fakhr al-Dīn, fondly remembered by Paul as a "great lover of Christians (*kāna muḥibban jiddan li 'l-masīḥiyyīn*)", becomes strangely a prototype in his later search for an ideal Christ-loving monarch, working in 'symphony' with the Church. (4) Makarios's spiritual mentor, Meletios (Euthymios) Karma, becomes first Metropolitan of Aleppo, then ascends the Patriarchal throne. Meletios's career, marked by personal sanctity, administrative prowess and intellectual breadth, provides a blueprint for Makarios's. Meletios makes the first attempts to initiate contact with the 'lands of the Christians', by dispatching one of his bishops, Metropolitan Jeremiah of 'Akkār, to Moscow: Jeremiah dies *en route* in Potivl, leaving it providentially to Makarios to complete this crucial journey and mission on behalf of the community. On his deathbed, Meletios designates his chief disciple, Makarios—whom he had already raised to his former episcopal throne of Aleppo—as his chosen successor, the continuator of his legacy and tradition. Not long after, by a rare unanimous consensus of all the voting bishops of the diocese—as it were by "true divine inspiration (*bi-ilhām ḥaqīqī rabbānī*)"—Makarios is elevated as Patriarch of Antioch. *Safra*, fols. 5<sup>r</sup>- 8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> *Safra*, fol. 9<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 8<sup>v</sup>. Paul's 'Arab' identity as expressed in the *Safra*, "firmly rooted in the Arabic language and Syria, as integral complements to his Melkite and generally Orthodox Christian identity", has been explored at some length by Charles Halperin; see "Friend and Foe in Paul of Aleppo's Travels of Patriarch Makarios",

these local travels, that make Makarios's travels to the 'lands of the Christians' an urgent necessity.

On the face of it the diocese's woes were principally financial. *Pax Ottomanica*'s many new benefits for the Arab Orthodox did not come free of charge. Paul describes in detail how the Sublime Porte levied exorbitant tax burdens on the Antiochian Patriarchate in far excess of its modest regular income, resulting in accumulating arrears. Most ruinous and demoralizing of all was the *kharāj* levied per capita on each local eparchy—which extortionate, rogue Pashas regularly inflated by playing foul with their community population figures.<sup>23</sup> Struggling, poor (*masākīn*) families among the faithful Arab Orthodox bore the brunt of this *kharāj* racket. Large numbers of them, according to Paul, were "leaving the faith, following each other in abandoning their religion, because of the *kharāj* being demanded of them." The financial threat to the community thus assumed also a significant spiritual, even existential dimension. The burden of paying an inflated *kharāj* carried the threat of yet another major wave of apostasy and defection from the faith and community—of 'islamization'—in a flock already scattered and dwindling after the 'dark' period of Mamluk rule.

Yet the same Ottomans who posed the threat to the Arab Orthodox, at the same time provided the way out. Syria's incorporation as an Ottoman imperial province in 1516 had made

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*Modern Greek Studies Yearbook: A Publication of Mediterranean Slavic and Eastern Orthodox Studies* 14/15 (1998/1999): 99-101.

<sup>23</sup> Paul explains how even where people had left their Orthodox faith—converted presumably to Islam—their names were never stricken from the Pashas' records for the Orthodox community: taxes were still demanded collectively from the local eparchy where those names were registered. *Safra*, fol. 10<sup>v</sup>.



it possible, as explained already, for the Arab Orthodox to re-establish lines of spiritual-cultural communication—broken during the Mamluk period—with their more numerous Orthodox brethren who lived in the empire’s Southeastern European provinces. Makarios’s spiritual mentor and predecessor as Patriarch of Antioch, Meletios (Euthymios) Karma, had begun the process of Melkite cultural renewal (*nahḍa*) through large-scale translation into Arabic of Byzantine Greek source texts newly-received; it would remain however Makarios’s historic and messianic task to not only continue and expand on Meletios’s cultural legacy, but to establish direct contact with their Orthodox brethren abroad, to fully exploit the new ease and security of travel through Orthodox lands afforded by *Pax Ottomania*’s expansion and regional hegemony. Right around this time, writes Paul, Makarios received an invitation and offer of financial support from Vasile Lupu, Prince of Moldavia (see below, Sect. III). From his princely ‘throne’ right across the Danube, Lupu was already styling himself as a universal patron of Orthodox bishoprics and sacred establishments suffering under the Ottoman taxation yoke.<sup>24</sup> Thus, for the Arab Orthodox, a new, secure road to financial, spiritual and cultural reinforcement was opened for them—facilitated by *Pax Ottomania*—that went first through the central hearths of Orthodox spiritual culture in Ottoman Asia Minor and the Balkans, then farther north-east, across the Danube border and far beyond. The flock only awaited the final arrival of their good shepherd, Makarios, to lead the way geographically, conceptually, symbolically, spiritually. To stem the tide of apostasy, of islamization in his community, Makarios—accompanied by his

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<sup>24</sup> Paul mentions there being present at one of their meals with Vasile Lupu, bishops from Sofia in Bulgaria, from Nafaktos in Greece, and from Georgia. All these had come to dine with the Prince presumably for the same reason as them; see *Jurnal de călătorie* 470.

son Paul—set out from their home to visit the Orthodox ‘lands of the Christians’. Makarios and Paul became the first Arab Orthodox clergymen to spend a long period of time across the Danube ‘border’ in Moldo-Wallachia and Muscovite Russia. They understood their journey, not as a personal one, but as a representative mission undertaken on behalf of their entire community. The two would forge lasting links that would alter the cultural-religious life of the Arab Orthodox for generations to come.

## II. *Journey into the ‘Orthodox Commonwealth’*

Paul and Makarios set out from Damascus on July 9, 1652, heading north-west towards their first major stop: Constantinople, the imperial ‘City’ *par excellence*, the Ottomans’ administrative capital and symbolic center of their claims to the Byzantine imperial mantle. Some of the strength and legitimacy of those claims becomes evident already when Paul points out that the road their company took between northern Syria and Constantinople was the “ancient Roman road”. Once the main thoroughfare connecting ancient Rome’s metropolis with its eastern provinces, it languished virtually untrodden for centuries before being only recently reopened and restored to full functionality by the Ottomans.<sup>25</sup> Like the ancient pagan Romans, who in unifying the ancient world politically and connecting its cities with secure roads set the scene for the initial spread of Christianity, the Ottomans had unwittingly now done the same: they

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<sup>25</sup> Around midway along this “ancient Roman road”, Paul and Makarios pay a visit to the leftover ruins of what was a major pilgrims’ attraction during late antique times: the monastery complex erected around the pillar of St Symeon the Stylite; *Safra*, fol. 12<sup>r</sup>.

had paved the way for Makarios to blaze this new spiritual trail for his community, to re-forge cultural links between the Arab Orthodox and the wider ‘Orthodox commonwealth’.

Their road led them from northern Syria into the mountainous Anatolian countryside. A definite change in the linguistic environment takes place—the first of many—as Arabic gives way slowly to a mixture of Turkish and Greek, two languages in which both Paul and Makarios were conversant. Two things strike us already here: (1) The facility with which the Arab Orthodox travellers traverse apparent ethno-linguistic and cultural boundaries within the *millet-i-Rūm*, and (2) the degree to which they are able, even as they move in Ottoman territory, to remain almost exclusively within a Christian spatial framework.

As far as was possible, their company by-passed predominantly Muslim population areas, plotting its course deliberately through Anatolia’s clusters of Orthodox villages, whose inhabitants unfailingly extend them hospitality.<sup>26</sup> In terms of ‘national’ affiliation, these Orthodox Anatolian villagers, whether they spoke principally Greek or Turkish, were, according to Paul, *Rūm*. Besides expressing admiration for their piety, Paul gives the reader no impression that he is witnessing anything novel among them, or that he has entered an unfamiliar cultural orbit, a ‘foreign’ land; he refers to them most often simply by the term, *jamā’atnā* (‘our community’). He had little to report concerning their customs: ‘They’ were basically the same as ‘us’.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Only once, after traveling through a long stretch of country without any Christian villages, are they forced instead lodge with local Muslims whom Paul refers to as “Turkmen”.

<sup>27</sup> Six and a half years later, on his return home via the same region – his perception radically altered by his experiences in the ‘lands of the Christians’, Paul will report more at length on the life and customs of these Anatolian *Rūm*.

It is quite startling just how thoroughly Christian is the cultural and religious landscape of the Ottoman empire's heartland as experienced by Paul. Few scattered signs in his descriptions indicate that we are still within the territory of *dār al-islām*. This was a land in which the past remained always present: Names of places they pass through or visit are everywhere associated with events from ecclesiastical history, from prominent Saints' *vitae* as contained in the *Synaxarion* which Paul read daily. Every village, town, or city, is almost invariably referred to by its Arabicized old Greek name in preference to its contemporary Turkish derivative.

Moving swiftly north, passing through Bursa, they board a vessel to cross the Sea of Marmara that will take them to the 'Great City'. Midway at sea, they encounter their first obligatory *furtūna*, or storm.<sup>28</sup> Despairing of his life, Paul calls on the Saints commemorated on that particular day in the *Synaxarion*, to whom he credits the subsequent calming of the waters, enabling their tempest-tossed ship to dock safely in harbor.<sup>29</sup>

### *Constantinople*

Paul and Makarios arrive in Constantinople on the morning of Wednesday, October 20—exactly three months since they left Aleppo. The two headed straight for the Phanar district to

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<sup>28</sup> see Henry Kahane, *The lingua franca in the Levant: Turkish nautical terms of Italian and Greek origin* (Urbana: university of Illinois, 1958), s.v. "305. *fortuna* (Venet.) 'storm'", 225-228.

<sup>29</sup> Kitromilides has attempted to identify, through a study of major texts from the period, what he called the universal 'Orthodox mentality' or outlook on life common to members of the *millet-i-Rūm*. Two of six components in this mentality which he identified are apparent here: (1) "a sense of time defined by the ecclesial calendar, and (2) "the active presence of the supernatural in daily life"; see Kitromilides, *Op. cit.*, 177.

lodge and await an audience with then Patriarch Paisios I of Constantinople. The latter was already expecting them.<sup>30</sup>

Even in the ‘Great Church’ of the imperial City, an Arab Orthodox clergyman was no less the equal of his Greek-speaking *Rūmī* confrère. Paul happily reports how at the Patriarchal headquarters, the two patriarchs, Makarios and Paisios, sit side by side, on thrones equal in honor. At every ceremony or function, Makarios is hailed by the chief deacon as “All-blessed Patriarch of Antioch, the great city of God, and of all the East.” It was true, the Arab Orthodox could learn a thing or two about pious conduct from the Constantinopolitan *Rūm*, who, Paul says, “possess great reverence and piety (*lahum tawarru‘ wa khushū‘ kathīr*)”, made evident from their “many prostrations to the ground (*miṭānīyāt li’l-arḍ ghazīra*)”<sup>31</sup> in church. Otherwise ‘they’ too, for Paul, were still little or no different from ‘us’; they were simply “our *Rūm* brothers” (*ikh-watnā ‘l-rūm*).<sup>32</sup>

The *Safra*’s first detailed description of any church is that of the Patriarchal cathedral of St George in the Phanar.<sup>33</sup> Far more interesting and thematically relevant however, if less

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<sup>30</sup> From Bursa, Makarios had sent word to Paisios requesting from him formal permission to enter the latter’s ecclesial territory. This traditional courtesy extended from one senior bishop to another was performed by Makarios, Paul notes, “according to ancient custom (*ka-ḥasab al-‘āda al-qadīma*)”—inspiring universal admiration among the Constantinopolitan clergy. Among contemporary hierarchs, only his father still kept this custom, Paul says: “For he fulfilled what was obligatory, unlike the others who preceded [him]”. *Safra*, fol. 15<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 16<sup>r</sup>. For ‘prostration’, Paul uses here and elsewhere throughout the text, the word *miṭānīya*, (<Gk. μετάνοια, lit. ‘repentance’).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> The description of the cathedral takes up one and a half folios. Paul is able already to identify the icon panels on the doors of the *iconostasis* leading into the sanctuary as Muscovite (*Mūskūfyat*); the brass-work of the central chandelier, the *polyeleon*, he determines on the other hand to be Venetian handiwork (*shughl*

detailed, is Paul's account of their visit to Hagia Sofia, the former crowning Byzantine Cathedral-turned-mosque—the universal symbol of the 'Great Church in captivity'. "On Tuesday, 2 November, on the day of 'Eid al-Aḏḥā," Paul writes,

All of us went along to the gate of the *Sarāy* and looked on as his Eminence, Sulṭān Muḥammad (Mehmet)—may God preserve him—entered Hagia Sofia with his retinue and guard, then left. After this, we entered inside to take a look at Hagia Sofia, with all its chambers and rooms. We ascended the second gallery, then the third gallery. Here we saw its pillars made of green, white and purple porphyry, and marble of every brilliant color; marble balustrades connected pillar with pillar, on which the remnants of crosses could still be seen; they could be seen also on the church's marble and precious stone tiles, on its water fountain, its translucent marble doors. We saw the icon of Christ the Lord blessing from the tallest point of the church's nave and sanctuary...and icons of the different feasts of the Lord along the tallest dome, made of a variety of colors and types of golden mosaic. The church's many doors and windows are also adorned with large crosses made of brass. What more can I say? The human mind cannot describe even a small part of the church's splendors.<sup>34</sup>

At first glance this description of Hagia Sophia is unremarkable—especially when compared with some of the *Safra's* lengthier descriptions of cathedrals and monasteries. When read more closely however, we see a microcosm of Paul's entire experience of the post-Byzantine Ottoman imperial capital. At the heart of this experience—first and foremost as a member of *millet-i-Rūm*—there is what seems like a glaring contradiction: on the one hand an unnaïve, unreserved acceptance of the reality of Ottoman *mulk*, along with his own inferior *ra'āyā/dhimmī* status within it, as part of the natural, even providential, order of things. Paul's benediction on the Muslim Sultan in this passage is sincere and unhypocritical: "May God preserve him!" He, as a *dhimmī*, must give precedence, show due deference to the Cathedral's new

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*al-bunduqīya*), due to its similarity to the brass-work found in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. *Safra*, fol. 16<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 17<sup>v</sup>-18<sup>r</sup>.

owners, to the City's new masters. Only when the Ottoman Sultan has entered and left the Cathedral can he himself steal inside for a glimpse—not to pray, but only to “take a look”—at its beauty, its splendor which had once been his Orthodox Christian birthright prior to May 29, 1453.

On the other hand, what Paul sees once inside the mosque gives grounds for the nurturing of a strangely defiant, yet subdued hope in the face of this reality: “The remnants of crosses could still be seen,” he writes. He saw the “icon of Christ”, and of the “different feasts of the Lord”; he saw “large crosses made of brass.” Two centuries after the Christian Cathedral was converted into a mosque, its original form was obscured, but not yet erased entirely; there remained the kernel of its original character miraculously unaltered. For the *millet-i-Rûm*, for the Orthodox, the past remained present—both here within the Hagia Sofia Cathedral, and throughout the City at large.

It is worth considering at this moment how Paul's Orthodox Christian *ra'âyâ* attitude to Hagia Sophia and the City more generally—a complex mixture of resigned realism and resilient hope, of adaptability to the Ottoman present and continuity with the Byzantine past—differed in substance from the one-sidedly negative attitude typically expressed by contemporary Western European Christian visitors to the Ottoman imperial capital. Edward Browne, who arrived in 1667—fifteen years after Paul—as chaplain of the Sublime Porte's English embassy, famously wrote: “It doth go hugely against the grain to see the crescent exalted everywhere, where the Cross stood so long triumphant: and I could wish this mighty tyrant turned upside down, but that 'tis only a silly wish and hath nothing in it: but really it would grieve any Christian in the

world to see this grand empire in such hands as it is, and the Stately Church of Santa Sophia so abused, and a most pleasant fruitful country possessed by infidells.<sup>35</sup> Other European Christians wrote in a similar vein on Constantinople as Browne. They tempered none of their apparently shocked Christian sensibilities on arrival with Paul's more nuanced and balanced outlook as an Ottoman *ra'āyā*—which included within it his unreserved praise for Ottoman imperial rule and statecraft (see below). In doing so, their eyes also remained blind to the more subtle remnants of the Christian past, which Paul saw clearly, beneath the City's contemporary surface—the 'hidden' Christian city.

Much of the remainder of Paul's account of Constantinople is an elaboration on this same theme, a description of Paul's own personal search for the surviving, 'hidden' Orthodox City. The *Synaxarion* is again his primary textual guide in this search,<sup>36</sup> supplemented more importantly by the living collective memory of the local *Rūm* Constantinopolitans. There remained, it seems, a clandestine City mostly hidden from view, away from the gaze of the Ottoman overlord: Only inquire of the city's local Orthodox *Rūm*, and they will narrate to you in detail the names and locations of all the city's many mosques that had been Byzantine churches until relatively recently; they will direct you to which rooftops to climb in the city, to stand and catch an unknown vantage-point of a remnant cross that marked the location of a former Christian shrine; where to go to find some Saint's relics lying secretly hidden; to drink from a sacred

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<sup>35</sup> qtd. in Timothy Ware, *Op. cit.*, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Paul does mention once, in connection with the Church of Pammakaristos, having learned of its existence not from the *Synaxarion*, but from "a Greek history which we translated into Arabic". *Safra*, fol. 20<sup>v</sup>.



spring still flowing with holy water, despite repeated attempts to dry it up. From this section of the *Safra* we can get an idea of just how meticulously was preserved this conceptual map of the city's pre-Ottoman sacred geography, the living memory of the past.

Most of the city's prominent Byzantine churches had shared a similar fate to Hagia Sophia. Some had become also mosques, others were relegated for secular use—often as storage facilities of various kinds. Paul tracks down a number of their locations to discover how much of their “original state” could still be recognized. Amidst the ravages of time, disuse, even outright abuse, a surprising number had preserved much of their pre-Ottoman form. A subdued triumph can be sensed each time he is able to inspect the condition of a former church and declare that it “remained in its original state (*baqiya ‘alā ḥālhā*)”. He found the frescoes and mosaics of one former church dedicated to St John the Baptist to be in state of preservation, miraculous given its present use as an *aşlan-khāneh*—*i.e.* a shelter for lions and other exotic wild animals.<sup>37</sup> Another former church, used now as a weapons arsenal (*silāḥ-khāneh*) had “not one part of it destroyed.”<sup>38</sup> In other cases the “original state” was less apparent. Paul's local *Rūm* informants tell him of a church-turned-mosque in the neighborhood of Çarşı, above which apparently “sometimes a cross appears...then disappears.” Paul heads there at once verify the report: “I saw the cross myself!” he writes.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 18<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> This refers no doubt to the church's exterior. They were not able to enter and attest to the state of preservation in the interior, as “its doors were locked”, he says. *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 20<sup>v</sup>.

By far Paul's most extensive investigation of this kind was into the fate and state of preservation of the famed church of the Holy Apostles. "We asked the *Rūm* regarding the Temple of the Holy Apostles," he writes,

They answered that it was inside Eski Saray (Old Palace), designated for women exclusively. We had seen the Holy Temple from the sea near Galata, as well as from around the neighborhood of Üsküdar. It was tall, revealing twelve domes, in the vicinity of Süleymaniye mosque—thus we were able to distinguish it. When I went there to look for it myself, I couldn't find it—the walls of the aforementioned Saray being exceedingly tall, with the temple located within them.<sup>49</sup>

The *Sarāy*, within whose walls the church was located, was off-limits to Paul. To enter it, one needed an imperial "proof of authorization (*dalil ma'rifa*)"—something likely impossible for him to obtain. Paul's desire however to know the church's fate and current condition—did it also "remain in its original state"?—is too strong to be stopped easily in its tracks. He solicits the imperial tailor (*khayyāt*) employed within the *Sarāy*, presumably a Muslim, to investigate the matter on his behalf and provide him with a second-hand report:

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 18<sup>v</sup>-19<sup>r</sup>. Not being an art historian, I will not comment extensively on the inaccuracies this passage contains, obvious to anyone in the least familiar with both the topography of Istanbul and the history of the Ottomans' post-conquest reconfiguring of the city. The famed Byzantine Church of the Holy Apostles for one was never located in Eski Saray—Mehmet II's first palace built in his new capital (which later, as Paul accurately relates, became exclusively a royal women's palace). Furthermore, the Church of the Holy Apostles was completely demolished in 1461 (nearly two centuries before Paul's arrival in the city), replaced by Fatih Mosque. That being said, we must keep in mind when judging this passage Paul's otherwise general reliability throughout the *Safra* when it came to architecture especially—*i.e.* he was not normally one to 'make things up from nothing', like an entire church, simply for a good story. Eski Saray was in fact built on the site of a former monastery and church—although I, for one, cannot determine if the church survived, since Eski Saray no longer exists as a structure, and I am not familiar with the sources contemporary with the *Safra* that describe its features. Paul, we may assume *did* see some church from a distance—though it certainly wasn't the Holy Apostles church, and it may or may not have been within Eski Saray. Paul either heard from his local *Rūmī* informants mistakenly; or they were providing him with their accurate historical memory mingled with their lore and legend—hard to disentangle. Getting to the bottom of this particular passage, along with a more general art-historical appraisal of Paul's survey of Byzantine monuments in Istanbul, would be a project for another essay or article, by somebody more qualified than me. We are mainly interested here in this passage's thematic content: that of a surviving, hidden Byzantium underneath the Ottoman overlay.

After investigating thoroughly, the tailor of the *Sarāy* returned to me with his report: The church's interior indeed remained still in its original state (*bāqī 'alā ḥālḥā ba'd*). The frescoes, icons, mosaics—all still remain on the walls, as they were.<sup>41</sup>

The report satisfies Paul; he has no more need to enter and see the Church for himself. Now he knows that it too “remained in its original state.” Real faith after all comes through hearing—and blessed are those who not seeing, yet believe!

Paul's walk down the city's pre-Ottoman ‘memory lane’ however was not an escape from its present reality. On the night of Wednesday, November 10, Paul reports on a great fire that broke out in the city. The resulting destruction was colossal, which Paul witnessed first-hand, describing how he watched the fire “whirl from place to place like a bird (*taṭūf min makān li-makān ṣifata ṭā'ir*)”.<sup>42</sup> According to him, fifty thousand shops and twenty-five thousand dwellings burned down in a single day. Paul's horror however was quickly eclipsed by his astonishment and personal admiration for what he saw in the disaster's direct aftermath: “Immediately the builders were called for,” he writes, “not a month's time passed, and everything was back in its original place—as though there had never even been a fire, or anything else for that matter. And how could it be otherwise, the city being under the Sultanate's authority?”<sup>43</sup> The Ottoman administration managed the city's post-disaster reconstruction with awe-inspiring efficiency. Here was irrefutable evidence to Paul of their universal legitimacy, of their divine right to rule, as Muslims, over this once proudly Christian City of cities. The Ottomans

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 19<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

possessed *tadbīr*—a term that encompasses administrative and governing skill, efficiency, even wisdom. *Tadbīr* was the key, the cornerstone of Ottoman legitimacy in Paul’s mind, the secret of their success, the main explanation for why their present *mulk* included “more than half the world.” The Orthodox on this side of the Danube border, members of the *millet-i-Rūm*, clearly did not possess this *tadbīr*; had they possessed it, as Paul will later on reflect, they would have remained till today masters of this Great City; they would retained their *mulk*. A central question that will preoccupy Paul throughout his later travels across the Danube is: Did there exist somewhere in the world any Orthodox Christians who still possessed *tadbīr*? Or was *tadbīr* somehow a quality which they were innately deprived of, relegating their eternal fate to be *ra‘āyā*, governed by non-Christians?

This was the *précis* of Paul’s *Osmanlılık*: The Ottomans’ *tadbīr* was what allowed them to inherit Rome and become the new Muslim Byzantine emperors. The imperial rule, the *mulk*, of the Ottomans—established, legitimized, and maintained through their *tadbīr*—would remain forever the golden standard in Paul’s eyes. When he did much later encounter, in Muscovite Russia, a genuine Christian empire, or *mulk*, he would judge its comparative merits by this golden Ottoman standard.

By mid-December, Paul and his father were ready to wrap up their Constantinopolitan sojourn. After taking ceremonious leave of Patriarch Paisios, they set sail on the Bosphoros Strait towards the Black Sea, from where they hoped to make their way northwest along the coast to cross the Danube ‘border’ into the semi-autonomous Orthodox Principality of Moldavia—their first stop in the ‘lands of the Christians’ proper.

IV. *The Danubian Principalities: Moldavia and Wallachia*

A giddiness seizes Paul, already described in the previous chapter, as they take their first steps outside of the Ottoman empire into the ‘lands of the Christians’. “Blessed are our eyes for what have seen!” Paul will exclaim many times from here all the way to Muscovy. It was his first taste of a peculiar kind of social freedom he had never known in his life: of having one’s religion not only in the majority, but in power as well. What set fire first of all to Paul’s religious imagination was the immediate vision here of the Church in apparent glory, of crosses atop tall steeples and shining domes, of resounding church-bells, of public processions with relics, crosses and icon-banners, of conspicuous displays of public piety among the exceedingly devout Christian populace. Here, it seemed, Orthodox Christians were not just ‘tolerated’ like at home; they ruled also the public sphere: they had *mulk*—or at least the semblance of *mulk*.

If they had *mulk*, then what about its prerequisite *tadbīr*? Paul’s initial observations of Moldo-Wallachia seemed to provide him a ready answer to the question posed to himself earlier in Constantinople: Were Christians capable of ruling effectively, of *tadbīr*, like that of the Ottomans? After observing the disciplined and sober deportment of Wallachian soldiers who patrolled the Principality’s capital, Paul writes as one whose wounded self-esteem has just been vindicated: “Where are those in our country who say that Christians are not worthy of *mulk*, that they are all drunkards and criminals who are incapable of keeping order in their lands?”<sup>44</sup> Again, seeing how the night patrol of Tîrgoviste enforced the city’s curfew with strictness and

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<sup>44</sup> *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 492.

severity worthy of an Ottoman imperial guard, Paul repeats the exclamation: “So where are those in our country who say that Christians know neither to keep order nor to rule?”<sup>45</sup>

Another paradigm-shifting revelation for Paul came through witnessing how the tide of religious conversion here in the Danubian Principalities flowed in the opposite direction from what he knew all his life in the Ottoman empire. We remember that it was in large measure the threat of ‘islamization’, of conversion *out* of the Arab Orthodox community for financial reasons, that led Paul and Makarios to leave home. Here the opposite obtained: For Moldo-Wallachia’s resident Muslim minority, most of them ethnic Turks, conversion *into* the locally dominant religion, Orthodox Christianity, was their clear and accessible path to upward social mobility. This side of the Danube, *they* were the *ra‘āyā*, the *dhimmīs*. A steady stream of them indeed took this path, volunteering to be baptized, as Paul observed. It was something akin to the Ottoman *millet* system Paul knew well, turned on its head.

Meeting some of these ex-Muslim converts was a moving experience for Paul, as a Christian from the Ottoman empire. No doubt he believed that reporting on these meetings in the *Safra* would edify his Arab Orthodox readers at home—some of whom may or may not have at one time been tempted to abandon their Christian faith. Paul describes his first acquaintance with an ex-Muslim convert, Basilios—prior to baptism, Muṣṭafā—whom he met in Iași, the Moldavian capital. “We saw in him devotion and great, burning zeal for the faith,” Paul writes,

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 493.

as if to dispel any doubts about the sincerity of his conversion.<sup>46</sup> More importantly, Basilios's case was not a one-off exception; not an exotic rarity, a *nādira*: "Like him there are thousands throughout Moldavia and Wallachia," Paul assures his readers.<sup>47</sup>

Another convert makes a particular impression on Paul, though he never met him while alive. Paul and Makarios are invited to serve one day in Iași at the funeral of a former Muslim Ottoman janissary originally from Konya who was well-known and beloved in the city. Prince Vasile Lupu's own brother was his godfather. "He possessed piety and diligence in his prayers, such as is not found among any of us!" Paul reports concerning him, having heard presumably from those who knew him. The funeral is a solemn affair. A large crowd bearing candles escorts the coffin in a long, maybe even deliberately winding procession through the streets of Iași, on their way to the central church. Along their way, Paul describes how, as a "rebuke to the Turks who were present...each time they came near to a Turkish residence, there they set down the coffin and prayed over it with a loud voice."<sup>48</sup> Conversions like this one, of a prominent person, always touched a raw nerve in inter-faith relations—on both sides of the Danube border. Yet to turn a prominent conversion into a public triumphal 'victory' procession (which this solemn funeral procession clearly became) was the privilege of that party which enjoyed power, which possessed *mulk*. Here in Iași, unlike in Paul's home city of Aleppo, it was the Christians. For his

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<sup>46</sup> Basilios's Christian zeal in fact, like that of many religious converts generally, reached the point of excess—even for Paul—to the degree of expressing "hatred for any religious community but our own (*li-ghayr millatnā*)." *Ibid.*, 452.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 472-473.

own part Paul seems to relish the novel experience, the rare opportunity for him to be marching on the winning side.

Nothing in the Principalities made a deeper and more lasting impression on Paul than his meeting and acquaintance with Vasile Lupu, Prince of Moldavia (r. 1634-1652). Lupu's personal invitation to Makarios and pledge of financial patronage had brought them across the Danube in the first place. Below is a selection from one of the many enthusiastic encomiums Paul composed for Lupu:

The Beg's reverence, his perfect knowledge, his sound mind, his mastery of books both ancient and new and even in Turkish, his skill in logical disputation—all of these cannot be encompassed by the human mind. Truly he is like one of the kings of old Rome! In fact, he has surpassed them, for his fame [lit. 'his word'] has penetrated into all the world. He performs his charity and good works not only on Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Priests, monks and laymen, churches and monasteries; but even on Turkish Aghas, dervishes and merchants—all of whom swear their oaths by his head.<sup>49</sup>

Inflated, formulaic praise of this kind was typical of course in pre-modern writers enumerating the virtues of their patron—or potential patron in this case. But there is more to Paul's adulation of Vasile Lupu. Full of hyperbole no doubt, the above passage contains nonetheless the ring of earnest, youthful imagination having been set aflame through an encounter with some brand new, powerful experience or idea—embraced without due caution. Before meeting Lupu, Paul had never seen a Christian ruler. He had wondered if such a thing even existed. “Vassals though they were,” as Steven Runciman wrote, the Danubian Princes “were the only lay Christian rulers left within the sphere of the old Byzantine world. They saw themselves as being in some way the heirs of Byzantine Caesars. Some of the more ambitious even took the title of

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.



*Basileus*; and all of them modelled their courts on the lines of the Old Imperial Court.”<sup>50</sup> Lupu was certainly among the “more ambitious”: he styled himself, according to Runciman, the “chief patron of Orthodoxy and even dreamed of renewing Byzantium.” Before Paul and Markarios came to him, he was already paying the debts and yearly taxes of the ‘Great Church’ (Constantinople Patriarchate) and all the monasteries of Mount Athos; and like a Byzantine emperor, he had convened a pan-Orthodox Church council in Iași, his capital, in 1642.<sup>51</sup> In Lupu, Paul was coming face to face, for first time, not just with a mortal person, but an object of quasi-religious longing and devotion: an icon of Christian *mulk*. By all appearances, set amidst neo-Byzantine imperial trappings, Lupu was “truly like one of the kings of old Rome!” Before such a mythic, larger than life presence, Paul could not but bow in humble reverence and awe, being carried away momentarily with the conviction that this Moldavian Prince, who projected a combination of piety, power and most importantly *tadbīr*, was the very embodiment of a longed-for Christian *mulk*.

In a notable scene, Paul describes a ritualized interaction between Makarios and Lupu—in his eyes, two supreme representatives of Christian authority, one spiritual, the other temporal: The Prince bows low to kiss the Patriarch’s hand, seeking a blessing; the Patriarch blesses the Prince in turn by kissing his head. Copious tears of joy are shed on both sides.<sup>52</sup> Paul too is

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<sup>50</sup> *The Great Church in Captivity*, 365.

<sup>51</sup> On Vasile Lupu as a Byzantine ‘emperor’, see *Ibid.*, 241-342, 70; see also Nicolae Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, 163-181; “Vasile Lupu ca următor al împăraților de răsărit în tutelarea Patriarhiei de Constantinople și a Bisericii Ortodoxe”, *Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, S. II, t. XXXVI (1913), 207-236.

<sup>52</sup> *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 452.

clearly moved by what he was witnessing. Here was what must have looked like a real-life, contemporary reenactment of ideal Byzantine church-state 'symphony': *i.e.* perfect cooperation between spiritual and temporal authority—with the latter subordinated slightly to the former. For the time being it seemed, Paul and Makarios had already obtained the objective of their travels, their quest. At their meeting, the Prince already pledged in word to Makarios that he would personally assume the whole burden his diocese's arrears to the Sublime Porte. From Iași they might be able to cross the Danube again and return home triumphant.

Such a hope was set up to fail. It is dashed swiftly, violently. While still living in Iași as Vasile Lupu's honored guests, Paul and Makarios watch the city suddenly plunge into civil conflict and chaotic factional street-fighting all around them. The Moldavian Prince's own nobles mount a successful coup against him, backed by his political archrival, Prince Matei Basarb (r. 1632-1654) of the neighboring Principality of Wallachia. Lupu is forced finally to flee his own capital in disgrace, setting the seal on his pitiful fall from power and grace.

Vasile Lupu's downfall is a serious setback for the Arab clergymen. Not only was the Prince's liberal financial pledge to them, made only shortly before, now voided; far more disappointing than the financial loss for Paul was the loss of what Vasile Lupu had come to represent for him, if only for a brief moment. No other Danubian Prince could have possibly filled Lupu's

shoes in Paul's eyes.<sup>53</sup> Vasile Lupu's fall was iconoclastic; it was the shattering—for the time being—of the new imperial idea, the 'icon' of the anointed Christian ruler, of Christian *mulk*.<sup>54</sup>

Still, their time spent in the Principalities was not a complete loss. This was their first taste of life in the 'lands of the Christians', and—despite major setbacks—there already was much for Paul to report in the *Safra* to edify his Arab Orthodox readers. "Oh, if only you could have seen them, dear reader, standing there like flowers," he wrote after seeing pious Moldavian noblemen line up in church to be blessed by his father.<sup>55</sup> The Principalities lay technically outside of Ottoman imperial territory and the *millet-i-Rūm*; yet their religious culture was squarely within the Ottoman-centered orbit of 'Byzantium after Byzantium'. Turkish and Greek were widely spoken among the Moldo-Wallachian clergy and nobility, alongside Romanian.<sup>56</sup> The Arab clergymen had no less difficult time 'fitting in' here than in Anatolia. They, Paul and Makarios had been welcomed by all without exception here as guests of honor, brothers in faith,

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<sup>53</sup> When Paul and Makarios arrive in Tîrgoviște, the Wallachian capital (before it was moved to Bucharest in 1654), they are received warmly by Mattei Basarab, Lupu's archrival. Political realists that they were, they accept his overtures. Yet not long after their arrival, when Mattei suddenly dies, Paul is swift to conclude that "God took him" as just punishment for his leading role in plotting Vasile's downfall.

<sup>54</sup> Paul laments later over the failed attempt by Timothy, Lupu's son-in-law, to take back Lupu's throne in Iași with a Cossack force; his words here would seem to apply by proxy to Lupu himself: "Oh what a loss was this courageous man! For he had told our lord, the Patriarch [Makarios] when he entered Moldavia the first time: 'I did not come only to take back the throne of my father-in-law; I came even more to save the Great Church from the hands of her enemies!' Let the reader understand the intent of his words." *Ibid.*, 487.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 496.

<sup>56</sup> A good example of the polyglot nature of the Danubian Principalities: In Tîrgoviște, Paul and Makarios met Ignatios Petritzis, a learned bishop who was fluent, according to Paul, in Greek, Turkish, and even Persian, in addition to Romanian; *Ibid.*, 490. Ignatios both founded in 1646, and was the leading teacher of Tîrgoviște's Greek college; see A. Camariano-Cioran, *Op. cit.*, 21-22; Kitromilides, *Op. cit.*, 137, n. 8.

on equal footing; they had formed a close affinity with this country, its peoples, its culture—thus laying the groundwork for future cultural cooperation that would prove long-lasting and particularly fruitful for the Arab Orthodox into the coming century.

Here in the Principalities they caught their first glimpse of Orthodoxy, not in humiliation, but in some measure of the power and glory, of *mulk*. It was however only a partial measure. Having remained stuck in Iași for almost an entire year as virtual prisoners of the volatile political conflagration, it was impossible for Paul and Makarios not to reach the obvious conclusion, that this country was simply too politically unstable to ever become the real Orthodox Christian sovereign power, or *mulk*, which they sought. It was not just the incessant threat of Muslim Tatar raids that made civic life in the Principalities dangerously brittle<sup>57</sup>; the main cause of the chaos was the constant fratricidal feuds and treacherous intrigues which they witnessed between the neighboring rival Christian princes. Paul had no bad words to say about the fallen Lupu; on the other hand, Prince Matei, his arch-nemesis's perceived un-Christian behavior during the Iași coup came under his sharp censure: Matei, Paul says, cynically slaughtered many fellow Orthodox *Rūm* (who supported Lupu), right “after giving them communion of the Sacraments (*ba‘da an nāwalūhum al-asrār*)”.<sup>58</sup> He also reportedly beheaded fellow Orthodox

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<sup>57</sup> The devastation caused by Tatar raids is a recurrent theme in Paul's Moldo-Wallachian sojourn. An example is when news of an imminent Tatar raid spreads among the inhabitants of Iași. Paul and Macarios flee to Focșani, in Wallachia, where they found the city a ghost town—all had fled into the surrounding mountains and forests; see *Jurnal de călătorie* 488.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 486. So much for the rulers of the Principalities. When it came on the other hand to evaluating the respective morals and Christian piety of the inhabitants, Wallachia came out on top over Moldavia; see Charles Halperin, “Friend and Foe”, 104-105.

Cossacks (who also supported Lupu) in the presence of a Turkish Āghā, saying: “I hate these [*i.e.* Cossacks], and I love Hagarenes [*i.e.* Muslims].”<sup>59</sup>

Under such conditions, a genuinely aspiring Orthodox Christian ruler, like Lupu, could only achieve so much; he could never enjoy the political hegemony, the *mulk*, necessary for maintaining stability and unity among Orthodox.<sup>60</sup> Here in the Principalities was maintained mostly the pretense, the semblance of Christian *mulk*; a symbol signifying a reality, but not the reality itself. To find that reality, Paul and Makarios would now set their sights deeper into the ‘lands of the Christians’, towards Muscovite Russia.

To reach Muscovy, Paul and Makarios had to travel north-east through a Moldavia no longer ruled by Vasile Lupu. Stephen, the new Prince, disregarding Makarios’s previous friendship with Lupu, provides generous provision for their company’s continued journey, including a bodyguard of *qalarāshīya* (<Rom. *calarași*, ‘horsemen’) to escort them through unsecure frontier regions beyond Iași. Here, between Moldavia and Muscovy, lay the territory of the Cossacks.

#### V. *Ukraine: ‘Lands of the Cossacks’*

The *Safra’s* account of Ukraine has been discussed already in the last chapter. Here we will discuss only Paul and Makarios’s meeting on their way to Kiev with Bohdan Khmelnytsky,

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<sup>59</sup> *Jurnal de Călătorie*, 505.

<sup>60</sup> In Paul’s mind, peace and security, like in the Ottoman empire, reigned in Moldavia only so long as Lupu ruled there. He says: “During the time of Vasile...a woman could wear gold and go wherever she liked without fear; however, during the time of this one [Matei], fear reigns in the middle of the cities.” *Ibid.*, 486.

the Cossack rebel-leader against the Polish-Lithuanian government.<sup>61</sup> The meeting occurs near a village on the bank of the Dnieper river, where Khmel'nitsky was encamped with his soldiers. Paul's description of the meeting is, as we have said, one of the most lively in the entire *Safra*. Like many Orthodox Ukrainians, Paul saw in Khmel'nitsky a prophetic Moses-like figure, sent by God to lead His suffering chosen Orthodox people out of their bondage to their cruel Polish-Catholic masters (see Chapter 1, section III). Khmel'nitsky presents Paul with a new, very different model of a Christian leader, in stark contrast with Prince Vasile Lupu's neo-Byzantine imperial aspirations. After Paul and Makarios are led inside Khmel'nitsky's encampment—expecting perhaps to see another larger-than-life personality—they are unable at first to tell the rebel-leader from the rest of his troops: “None of us knew to distinguish him from them,” writes an astonished Paul.<sup>62</sup> Khmel'nitsky personified Christian humility: If something did distinguish the rebel-leader, it was his noticeably meaner attire and appearance when compared with his subordinates. “All of them were in fine clothing and carried expensive weapons,” writes Paul, “but as for him [Khmel'nitsky], he wore mean and lowly garb and was girded with weapons of meagre value.”<sup>63</sup> The interior of Khmel'nitsky's personal tent brings his modesty into sharper focus. The leader's tent, Paul writes, was “small and wretched (*ṣaghīra wa ḥaqīra*)”; inside, on a “lowly spread” devoid even of carpets, the Arab clergymen were invited to share Khmel'nitsky's daily meal: an ascetic, frugal table “containing nothing but dishes of cooked fennel.” The regular

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<sup>61</sup> On Bohdan Khmel'nitsky's contested legacy, see Chapt. 1, n. 72.

<sup>62</sup> *Safra*, fol. 74<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

soldiers' meal, Paul observes meanwhile, was far more sumptuous and nourishing than the hetman's, which included fish freshly caught from the nearby lakes. "Behold such modesty!" Paul exclaims.<sup>64</sup> We are far away indeed from neo-Byzantium splendor.

Khmelnitsky's example leads Paul to reformulate his previous opinion of Prince Vasile Lupu. For all the pomp and imperial splendor of Lupu's court, Paul reflects now on how he never won a single battle against his enemies; whereas victory upon victory followed the humble and modest Khmelnitsky and his rag-tag band of Cossack *mujāhidīn*. In order for his rule to be crowned with success, a Christian ruler needed not only Ottoman-like power (or its semblance), wealth, and *tadbīr*; but Christ-like humility were demanded of him as well. Lupu lacked the latter quality, leading to his eventual downfall. The humility of Khmelnitsky from now on becomes another new yardstick by which Paul judges a genuine Christian ruler.

Khmelnitsky however was not one in whom the Arab Orthodox could place any of their hopes. He had neither power nor wealth; was the leader of a small tribal-like band, on a small territory of earth—in Ottoman parlance, a *khan*, not a *sultan*. The Ukrainians' lot moreover was far worse their own. In the end, as was apparent already from a considerably earlier point in their travels, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, the 'God-protected King' (*al-malik al-mahfūz min Allāh*)<sup>65</sup> of Moscow, was the only real candidate for the role of patron of the Arab Orthodox community. The Russian Tsar was the only living Orthodox ruler with a genuine claim to the Byzantine imperial inheritance—a claim based in real substance rather than symbol; in real

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 93<sup>v</sup>.

power, real prestige, real wealth, real territory, real *mulk*. To all members of the Orthodox commonwealth who appealed to him, the Tsar lent free aid solely “for the sake of the bond of Orthodox faith.”<sup>66</sup> This was the near-universal experience of Orthodox clergymen from the Ottoman empire with whom Paul and Makarios spoke, who travelled to the Tsar’s realm in ever-increasing numbers. It was the experience also of Khmel’nitsky and his Cossacks: Having recently received military aid from Russia against the Poles, the Cossacks were already commemorating the name of Tsar Alexei in all their churches.<sup>67</sup>

And so to Moscow Paul and Makarios now set their sights. Moscow all along had been the real object of their quest, their final destination. They too, like so many others from the *millet-i-Rūm* before them, would appeal to the Orthodox Tsar.

#### VI. *Muscovite Russia: The ‘New Rome’*

Paul and Makarios reach the town of Potivl, the entry-point into Muscovite territory for all foreign clergymen and merchants, in the year 1654, on the morning of Thursday, July 20—the feast of the Prophet Elijah.

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 65<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Just like he and his father had done, Paul explains, the Cossacks had appealed at first for material aid in their desperate *jihād* to both the Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia—to no avail. By contrast, when the Cossacks turned next in their hope to the Russians, the latter responded by immediately sending them much-needed material and military aid—motivated solely, Paul says, by “their genuine zeal for the Orthodox religion (*li-ghayratihim li ’l-dīni ’l-urthudhuski*)” (*Ibid.*, fols. 65<sup>r</sup>-67<sup>v</sup>). Paul was in Ukraine when the Cossacks, led by Bohdan Khmel’nitsky, had just pledged loyalty to Tsar Alexei in return for military protection at the Pereslavl Council of January, 1654. This paved the way in turn for Ukraine’s eventual absorption by Russia as a territory.



It is difficult to reproduce Paul's exhilaration at his first up-close encounter with Muscovite Russia's special brand of total, all-pervasive Orthodoxy. None of what Paul previously saw in his travels had prepared him for what he saw here. Nowhere had he seen a crowd show reverence to his father like on this day of their arrival in Potivl: Heavy rainfall that day turned the town's unpaved roads to mud, yet it seemed all the city, including its nobles, came out in unison to kneel in the open ground before Makarios, happily soiling their fine clothes in the process.<sup>68</sup> Paul's Arabic prose relapses for some pages into *saj'* ('rhyming prose') to better rhetorically reflect the grandeur of the moment.<sup>69</sup>

From Potivl, after passing through the notoriously strict Muscovite customs, the Arab clergymen slowly make their way by land and river towards Moscow, via Kolomna. The terrain was frequently uneven, making travel by horse-drawn carriage an ordeal for Paul. Yet the route affords him his first vantage-point on Russia. The grand vision that opened up directly before him was that of a vast Orthodox utopia, a panorama of holiness. Christian sanctity even pervaded the Russian natural environment: Russia's trees appeared to Paul taller and more plentiful than in other lands, its fruits sweeter-tasting, its flowers more fragrant.<sup>70</sup> "Their summer nights," Paul writes, "were like spring days in our country at the time of the Feast of Annunciation."<sup>71</sup> This Russian 'holiness'-effect bordered on the miraculous: Despite the

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 94<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>69</sup> The *saj'* is maintained, though imperfectly, for approximately three folios (fols. 95<sup>r</sup> – 98<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 103<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 102<sup>v</sup>.

oppressive summer heat in which they travelled, neither Paul nor his father ever perspired; and while the rigors of the road afforded them scarcely an opportunity to bathe, their hair, far from becoming coarsened or soiled, takes on an increasingly refined, silken texture.<sup>72</sup> Paul claims he didn't see a single leper or disabled person in Russia; at most, he saw only a few elderly men with gout.<sup>73</sup> All of these phenomena were for him tangible, eschatological signs of God's special blessing on this 'New Rome' in the north.

Size and scale were key factors in the intoxicating new vision of Orthodox Russia. Churches, cathedrals and monasteries suddenly increased exponentially in magnitude and number across the northern expanse. "Surely there were never even in Constantinople or in Antioch this many thousands of churches?" Paul wonders.<sup>74</sup> The resounding church bells likewise grew and multiplied, dwarfing those of the Danubian Principalities. Compared with the "graceful melodies" that first greeted them in Galați (see Chapt. 1, Sect. I), the ringing of Russia's giant-sized bells were turbulent, "earth-rattling" eruptions, "rising like lightning in the heavens."<sup>75</sup> As if to accompany the Russian bells' seismic percussion, there was literally everywhere and at all times to be heard the violent thumping sound of a Russian believer "striking his head

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 104<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Until this point in the *Safra*, Paul followed the approach common to Arab geographers, of providing an inventory and tally of every city's prominent public buildings, with priority given to places of worship. When Paul reaches Moscow this approach fails: the 'Great City' contained more churches than could be humanly counted (he later puts it at more than 4000 churches, with more than 10,000 altars on which Liturgy was served daily); *Ibid.*, fols. 161<sup>v</sup>-162<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 113<sup>v</sup>.

to the ground in prostration (*ḍaraba ra'sahu li 'l-arḍi sājidan*).<sup>76</sup> Wherever he saw an Icon—omnipresent in Muscovy's cities—or wherever the name of the Virgin Mary was spoken within earshot; whether indoors or outdoors; standing knee-high in snow during winter or in mud caused by summer floods—there where he stood, a Russian believer's head unfailingly struck the ground with the same startling thumping sound. Even after two years spent in their midst, this ubiquitous manifestation of Russians' maximalist piety never ceased to amaze and startle Paul.

A more single-mindedly Orthodox—admittedly by Paul, even excessively so—people could not have been imagined by these Arab Christians from *millet-i-Rūm*. Russians, from the *voivode* down to the *muzhik*, possessed according to Paul a “total religiosity (*diyāna kullīya*)”; they were “pure Orthodox (*ṣāfi urthudhuksīyīn*)”,<sup>77</sup> who knew “nothing but the way between home and church”<sup>78</sup>; who tolerated no deviation, no laxity, no abbreviation from the prescribed pattern of Orthodox sanctity. Russian infants, breastfed seemingly “on the milk of faith and piety,” knew to cross themselves better than Patriarchs from *millet-i-Rūm*.<sup>79</sup> Even the Romanians, whose religiosity he had recently admired, were “cattle (*bahā'im*)” in comparison.<sup>80</sup> “Oh,

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 94<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 71<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 98<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> Paul reports on how a group of Russian children laughed at the lackadaisical manner in which the Arabs crossed themselves, asking them, “Why do you only scribble on your chests and not strike your foreheads and chests with the fingers the way we do?” *Ibid.*, fol. 97<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 122<sup>v</sup>.

that we could be like them!” Paul exclaims, having quickly reached the conclusion that, “without a doubt, God has given them the *mulk* for their exceeding worthiness; for all their work is spiritual and not material.”<sup>81</sup>

Paul now had the final answer to his lingering question in the *Safra*, of whether or not Christian *mulk* still existed anywhere in the world—not just in symbol, but in reality. Here, opening up before his eyes was the Christian “New Rome (*Rūmīya al-jadīda*)” of Moscow. Paul had heard others tell of it before; but now his eyes saw. Christian *mulk* neither ceased wholly to exist after the fall of Constantinople, nor was its after-life confined to a mere ‘idea’, a set of elaborate symbols and ceremonies without real substance, as in the Danubian Principalities. It was translated here instead, unknown to most people, to the far north, where it continued uninterrupted among a people whose unmatched Christian ‘holiness’ singled them out as its worthy new bearers.

“If the *Rūm*,” Paul concludes further, “had the [churchly] discipline of these people, they would have until now still retained their *mulk*.”<sup>82</sup> The immediate vision of the Russian ‘New Rome’ solved another persistent problem for Paul: he could see now that possession of *mulk*—at least for a Christian nation—had less to do with having *tadbīr* like that of the Ottomans, as he had previously thought, than it did with ‘worthiness’ from a Christian standpoint. By far outdoing the *millet-i-Rūm* foremost in their religious piety, zeal, and fidelity to Orthodoxy, the Russians’ made themselves singularly ‘worthy’ of the mantle of Rome, of Christian *mulk*. Their

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 168<sup>v</sup>-171<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 95<sup>v</sup>.

‘worthiness’ was the main reason why they now had *mulk*, whereas the *Rūm*—having proven themselves clearly ‘unworthy’ by comparison—had lost it. This was an extension of New Testament ‘replacement theology’: Through their failing to live worthily of the gift of God, the *Rūm*, like the Jews of old, relinquished their former ‘elect’ status—made visible through their *mulk*—to be replaced swiftly by their more worthy proselytes, the Russians.<sup>83</sup> Building on this theme, Paul reflects at one time on how most of the Saints’ relics which they venerated in Russia’s churches had been brought there originally from the ‘East’, from ‘our lands’, from ‘old’ Rome. “God willed and enlightened patriarchs, bishops, abbots and monks to bring these relics to Muscovy”, he concludes. It was only fitting that these holy treasures should travel here and remain with people who knew better to safeguard them.<sup>84</sup>

And not only did Christian *mulk* continue among the Russians, it prospered seemingly like never before. Church history had never witnessed such a surpassing vision of rigorous ascetic holiness blended with imperial power, pious austerity with luxurious wealth. Not even Constantinople at its height, reckons Paul, could have competed with Moscow on its terms. The Russian ‘New Rome’ had clearly even surpassed the Byzantine ‘old’ Rome.

When Paul and Makarios finally reach Moscow’s walls, they prostrate themselves like pilgrims entering Jerusalem, thanking their Creator for the joy of beholding the “Great City (*al-madīna al-‘uzmā*)” in their lifetimes. They had reached the object of their quest.

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<sup>83</sup> cf. D.B. Rowland, “Moscow—Third Rome or the New Israel?” *The Russian Review* 55 (October 1996): 591-614.

<sup>84</sup> *Safra*, fol. 115<sup>v</sup>.

*Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich:*

All of what Russia represented for Paul was summed up in the person of the Russian Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. The Tsar wore an “imperial cloak (*hillat al-mulk*)” dyed with “purple (*barfir* < Gk. πορφύρα)”, iconic of Byzantine emperors; yet it resembled also in Paul’s eyes the *sakko* of a Priest.<sup>85</sup> On his head was a king’s bejewelled “crown (*tāj*)”, but in his hand he carried a monk’s black staff.<sup>86</sup> In him was united both the commanding royal majesty of Vasile Lupu and the unassuming, Spartan humility of Bohdan Khmelnytsky; from him there radiated blinding power both temporal and spiritual, imperial and priestly.

Paul and Makarios catch their first glimpse of the Tsar during a solemn procession staged in the capital to greet his triumphal return from the Polish warfront.<sup>87</sup> The Tsar appears on horseback, bare-headed despite the February frost, flanked by raised icon-banners. He is unaccompanied by military drums or music—only church hymns chanted *acapella*. They watch the priestly-royal procession pass in front of the Icons over the gate of Moscow’s Annunciation Convent—and then, behold! The Tsar dismounts in order, like an ordinary Russian believer, to make three full prostrations right in the snow.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 134<sup>r</sup>. Muscovy was, as some historians have remarked, a “liturgical state”, in which the Tsar’s power—to an even greater extent than the Byzantine emperors—was seen as priestly or ‘hieratic’, approached with an attitude of fervent devotion; see Mark Raeff, *Understanding Imperial Russia: State and Society in the Old Regime*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 4-9.

<sup>86</sup> *Safra*, fol. 134<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> Earlier than expected, we are told. According to Paul, the Tsar cut his war campaign short solely out his great longing return to Moscow and meet with Makarios. *Ibid.*, fol. 130<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 129<sup>v</sup>.

Fear and suspense seize both the Patriarch and his son as they enter the Tsar's presence for their first meeting in his palace, three days after his arrival in Moscow.<sup>89</sup> These feelings give way to reverence, as when in the presence of sanctity: "We felt as if we were in a monastery," writes Paul of their first imperial Russian banquet. The table of the "greatest king on earth" exceeded all others not in opulence, but austerity. The fare was strictly monastic: No meat was served at table, only fish. Just like in a monastic refectory, a deacon read aloud from the *Vita* of the Saint commemorated that day in the *Synaxarion* while the Tsar and his guests took their modest meal in sobriety, *sans* merrymaking. "Where is the table of Vasile?" Paul now asks. The imperial Russian meal was closer to Khmel'nitsky's "lowly spread" than to Lupu's royal gourmandizing—and yet here was not a Cossack field-tent, but the Tsar's palace! The Tsar served the Patriarch with his own hands, bare-headed all the while in deference to Makarios; while he himself hardly ate.<sup>90</sup> This was "humility beyond description (*al-tawāḍu' al-fā'iḳ al-waṣf*)".<sup>91</sup> Alexei was clearly no ordinary Tsar, or King, but an "all-holy King (*al-malik al-kullī al-qaddāsa*)". "Behold what things we witnessed in this King—no, this contemporary Saint (*qiddīs*)!" writes Paul.<sup>92</sup> The meal, solemn as a church service, lasts four hours—a marathon for the Arab clergymen, who promptly retire at its conclusion to their quarters for rest. Not so the Tsar.

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<sup>89</sup> Other Eastern Patriarchs who visited Moscow had waited two weeks for a royal audience, Paul claims. This first meeting with Tsar Alexei occurs on February 12, 1655—an auspicious day, for it was the commemoration of St Meletios, Archbishop of Antioch. *Ibid.*, fols. 132<sup>v</sup>-133<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 137<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 164<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

Immediately the banquet concluded, he, accompanied by his nobles, headed from the refectory straight to Church to attend an all-night vigil! Paul is dumbfounded. He writes: “You who surpass in your way of life and constant vigils all the desert-dwelling ascetics: If our Lord—glory be to His name—should not give you victory, then to whom should he give it?”<sup>93</sup>

Paul saw in the Tsar something more than just a financial patron for the Arab Orthodox, but a kind of messianic savior-figure for the *millet-i-Rūm*—that section of the Orthodox commonwealth which was currently deprived of its *mulk*. Alexei was anointed King, marked out from birth for final, quasi-eschatological victory on behalf of the Orthodox. Paul was far from alone in seeing Tsar Alexei—and Russia more generally—this way. Russia’s recent geopolitical rise as an Orthodox power was accompanied by rife rumor and expectation throughout *millet-i-Rūm*: messianic ‘prophecies’ circulated, even among the Arab Orthodox community, foretelling of a mighty Christian northern ‘fair-headed race (ξανθόν γένος)’, or ‘yellow king (*al-malik al-asfar*)’ who would soon reconquer Constantinople from the Ottomans and restore universal *mulk* to the Orthodox.<sup>94</sup> Paul reports that even pagans in faraway Qara Khitai (*bilād al-khitā*) had similar visions: while in Moscow he apparently witnessed the arrival of a delegation of Khitans to the Tsar’s court, come like the Magi from the East to make obeisance to their

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<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> see Richard Clogg, *Op. cit.*, 190. The main point of difference to point out, between the millenarian expectations which members of *millet-i-Rūm* projected onto the Russian empire, and the Russians’ millenarian vision of their own empire as ‘Third Rome’ is this: The former saw the Russians’ empire as a temporary incubator, as a means for restoring ‘old’ Rome—after which its function would presumably cease. The Russians, in their turn, saw their empire as the final messianic ‘New Rome’, replacing the ‘old’ forever.



prophesied “white king who will rule the world.”<sup>95</sup> Makarios’s benediction for the Tsar at their first meeting indicates his future promise: “May you be like Constantine the Great, not only *autokrator*, but *monokrator*—ruler of the world!”<sup>96</sup>

Important for Paul was that his own ‘saintly’ father, Patriarch Makarios, had first place next to the Tsar in his coming kingdom. Saints are normally recognized by fellow saints; naturally, the ‘saintly’ Tsar and the ‘saintly’ Patriarch saw in each other a ‘saintly’ partner.<sup>97</sup> The euphoric scene from Moldavia described above, depicting an image of ideal church-state ‘symphony’ between Makarios and Vasile Lupu, is replayed on several occasions in Russia between Patriarch and Tsar: The two saints prostrate in each other’s presence, aware of the other’s worth—the Tsar bare-headed, the Patriarch wearing his mitre, signifying once again the ultimate deference of temporal power to spiritual. “May God grant before I die,” Paul reports the Tsar as saying, “to see him [Makarios], along with the four Patriarchs, liturgizing in Hagia Sophia—with our Patriarch Nikon as their fifth.”<sup>98</sup> To gain ultimate victory as prophesied, the Russian Tsar needed to secure God’s favour; like the Old Testament kings, he needed to come and be blessed by a genuine man of God, to have the continual prayers of a saintly Patriarch—whom he rightly (in Paul’s mind) recognized as none other than Makarios. “Stay here and pray for me,” the Tsar tells Makarios at one of their meetings, hoping to keep him for longer by his

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<sup>95</sup> *Safra*, fols. 156<sup>v</sup>-157<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 134<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>97</sup> Paul records Alexei’s alleged assessment of Makarios: “Truly this Patriarch is a saint!” *Ibid.*, fol. 254<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 254<sup>r</sup>.

side in Russia: “By your prayers, and my sword, I will defeat my enemies.”<sup>99</sup> But alas, this was not to be. Makarios’s place was not in Russia, to remain there conquering the world alongside Tsar Alexei. His apostolic mission, for which he came to Russia, was to the lost sheep of the Church of Antioch; to complete it, he had to return to his Arab Orthodox flock in Ottoman Syria.

### *Christian mulk vs Ottoman mulk*

The account of Muscovite Russia is, as we have said at the beginning of this chapter, the *Safra*’s centerpiece.<sup>100</sup> It is a treasure-house of material on pre-Petrine Muscovy in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century—viewed through Paul’s unique perspective as a visiting Arab Orthodox clergyman—when two men reigned there who significantly shaped Russia’s future: Alexei Mikhailovich on the imperial throne as Tsar, and Nikon on the ecclesial throne as Patriarch of the Russian church.<sup>101</sup> The long Russian segment is also that part of the *Safra* which has been quoted most

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 173<sup>r</sup>. There were larger considerations at work in Alexei’s apparent deference to Makarios’s authority, which Paul could have hardly understood. In their effort to establish their own religious primacy in the Orthodox world, the Russians—both Tsar Alexei and Patriarch Nikon—regularly invoked the spiritual authority of Orthodox patriarchs from the Ottoman empire for various internal Russian religious affairs; cf. “Introduction” in Ioann Shusherin, *From Peasant to Patriarch: Account of the Birth, Upbringing, and Life of His Holiness Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia*, trans. Kevin M. Kain and Katia Levintova (New York: Lexington Books, 2008), 7. As an Arab—*i.e.* the only non-Greek Patriarch with revered name of an ancient ‘Eastern’ Patriarchate—Makarios may have been seen by Alexei as an alternative, a more honest (or compliant) broker whose seal of approval on various Russian religious projects was more easily obtained.

<sup>100</sup> It occupies roughly half of the text in MS., fols. 93<sup>r</sup>-255<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>101</sup> These two men, Tsar Alexei and Patriarch Nikon, began as friends, but ended up in a personal conflict that was symbolic of the conflict between Church and State authority in 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia (*cf. From Peasant to Patriarch*, 6-8). Paul recognized the conflict, and took sides unequivocally with the Russian Tsar, even accusing Nikon of usurping authority: “They do not fear the Tsar; but far more, they fear this Patriarch,” Paul wrote regarding Moscow’s nobility” (*Safra*, fols. 178<sup>v</sup>-179<sup>r</sup>). Paul also sympathized with Russia’s clergy, who suffered under the heavy-handed clerical discipline of the “great butcher (*jazzār* ‘*azīm*)”, Nikon (*Ibid.*, fols. 148<sup>v</sup>-149<sup>r</sup>). In fact, Nikon became for Paul a universal scapegoat in Russia, on whom he could lay all his criticisms of the country—allowing Tsar Alexei to conveniently escape all blame.

frequently (in its faulty English translation) by historians, but analyzed the least by scholars familiar with its Arabic original. To do it justice would require for it alone to be the subject of a monograph, or several monographs—not a mere subsection of a dissertation chapter. Our narrow focus here will be on the interplay between the triumphal vision Paul embraces of Russian Orthodox empire (*mulk*) as messianic ‘New Rome’, and his identity as an Arab Orthodox member of *millet-i-Rūm*, whose primarily political loyalty remained to the Sublime Porte.

It should be obvious already that Paul’s attitude towards Russia, as he encountered it, was on a whole positive and enthusiastic. This fact alone again sets the *Safra* apart from contemporary accounts of Muscovy by Western European travellers, most of whom, whether Catholics or Protestants, took an uncompromisingly negative stance on all aspects of Muscovite Russian society—not least of all its pervasive church life.<sup>102</sup> Yet Paul’s positive attitude was not without its internal conflicts.

The ‘New Rome’, if it was to be at all embraced by an Ottoman *ra‘āyā*, needed to successfully compete with old (Ottoman) Rome which Paul had visited earlier. Ever since they conquered Constantinople, the sultans took seriously their inherited title as *kayser-i-Rūm*; and by symbolically emphasizing their empire’s continuity with Byzantium/Rome (*Rūm*), they actively cultivated the loyalty of their numerous Orthodox Christian subjects. The latter overall

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<sup>102</sup> A well-known example is the travel-account by the German diplomat to Muscovy in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, Adam Olearius, printed in English translation as *The Travels of Olearius in Seventeenth-Century Russia*, trans. and ed. Samuel H. Baron (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967). Charles Halperin made a detailed comparison of Olearius’s account of Russia with that of Paul of Aleppo, demonstrating clearly how each author’s individual vantage-point, shaped by their respective religion and culture, resulted in such divergent visions of the same country visited; see “In the Eye of the Beholder”, *Op. cit.*, 409-423.

responded in kind, seeing how many benefits their new Muslim Caesars' rule brought for them—to the point of developing, as has been explained more than once already, an imperial idea which theologically justified their continued Ottoman loyalty. The Ottomans legitimately ruled the old Rome with *tadbīr*, as Paul acknowledged and had himself witnessed; they therefore set the imperial 'Roman' standard against which any *mulk*, even a Christian one, would be measured in Paul's eyes. In setting up the Orthodox Russians as worthy contenders against the Muslim Ottomans for the 'Roman' mantle<sup>103</sup>, Paul—whether consciously or unconsciously—paints an image of a Christian *mulk* that bears some striking resemblance to the Ottoman model. The *Safra*'s vision of Russian Orthodox *mulk* is in many respects a mirror image of Ottoman Islamic *mulk*.

Russia's territorial gains on its western front and its continued eastern expansion into Siberia were transforming it into a 'universal' empire like the Ottoman one, with jurisdiction over an increasingly diverse human spectrum. Many of the Orthodox Tsar's new subjects were Muslims from Central Asia: Tatars, Turks, Uzbeks, Circassians, *etc.* A substantial number were also indigenous tribes from the incorporated Siberian regions, whose languages and cultures and religious systems were a complete novelty for Paul.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> The Russians themselves, according to Paul, saw the Ottomans, as their archrivals. Ottoman Turks, Paul reports, were the only nation whose merchants were barred entry into Muscovy for trade. And if you made the mistake of paying a Muscovite merchant with an Ottoman dinar, he would spit on the Sultan's image it bore—so deep did the antipathy and rivalry run; see *Safra*, fol. 96<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>104</sup> The *Safra* contains some lively and naïve (and almost certainly embellished) descriptions of Paul's encounters with delegations of Siberian natives arriving in Moscow to deliver to the Tsar their annual tribute, or *kharāj*. Paul describes meeting a delegation of Lapps (fols. 151<sup>r</sup>-152<sup>r</sup>), and another delegation from what he calls the "third", farthestmost Siberian 'New World', or *Yenki Dūnya* (fol. 155<sup>r</sup>).

Russian imperial religious policy—as Paul describes it in the *Safra*—mirrored the well-known Ottoman *millet* system: Non-Orthodox Christian subjects, like *dhimmīs* in Islamic lands, paid an annual *kharāj* to the Orthodox Tsar; in return they received the Tsar’s political protection and were guaranteed their continued freedom of worship. Here was ‘tolerance’, just like Paul knew at home. *Kharāj* was paid to the Tsar, Paul reports, as a quota in valuable foods, cash crops or resources unique to each particular conquered region. Tatar subjects from fertile Astrakhan paid their annual *kharāj* to the Tsar in the form of wine produced from the region’s vineyards—the finest and purest wine in all Russia, according to Paul—which was then distributed across the empire exclusively for Orthodox sacramental use.<sup>105</sup> From Russia’s Siberian ‘New World’ the annual *kharāj* came in the form of ‘golden fleece’: the famed Siberian sable which was already Russia’s principle international trade commodity.<sup>106</sup> Despite having borne himself the brunt of the *kharāj* at home, its implementation by the Russian Tsars—thus mirroring the Ottoman sultans—added greatly to their world-wide prestige in Paul’s eyes.

A cornerstone of the Ottomans’ universal legitimacy for Sunni Muslims worldwide was their breath-taking, indisputable success on the Islamic *jihād* front, by which they extended considerably the borders of *dār al-islām* at Christian Europe’s expense. In like manner the Orthodox Tsars’ legitimacy became linked, in Paul’s vision, with their successful Orthodox *jihād*,

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<sup>105</sup> Russia’s acquisition of the wine-producing region of Astrakhan from the Tatar Khanate was particularly providential, according to Paul, for it ended the Russians’ prior dependence on imports of ‘Frankish’ wine for liturgical use. Frankish wine, though admittedly of high quality, was apparently being defiled by the Franks prior to shipment to Muscovy—with the express intent, Paul alleges, of nullifying the Russians’ Orthodox divine services; *Safra*, fol. 153<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>106</sup> Paul even attributes semi-miraculous qualities to the sable; *Ibid.*, fol. 154.

waged mainly on the western Ukrainian front at the Polish Catholics' expense.<sup>107</sup> Cities captured from the Poles by the Muscovite army are referred to in the *Safra*—just as in Islamic chronicles—as *futūḥāt* ('conquests', lit. 'openings'); Orthodox soldiers killed during campaigns were to be commemorated as *shuhadā'* ('martyrs'), who “waged *jihād* out of love for the correct faith (*jāhadū 'an ḥubbi 'l-īmāni 'l-mustaqīm*)”.<sup>108</sup> During their successful siege, or *fath*, of Smolensk, Paul describes the Russian military command adhering to procedure modelled directly as it were on early Islamic *futūḥāt* chronicles: Having surrounded Smolensk and cut its supply routes, the city is first given a choice between *amān* ('security') and *al-sayf* ('the sword')—*i.e.* between peaceful capitulation to the Orthodox Tsar (involving payment of the *kharāj*) and total siege. Smolensk's non-Orthodox inhabitants obstinately chose the latter, and suffered the grisly consequences. Paul relates the event to his readers in a tone that barely masks his hearty approval. Was this vengeance for the innocent Orthodox suffering he had witnessed earlier in the Ukraine? Or was it perhaps that Russia's Orthodox army, by “conquering many lands through the sword and security (*fataḥū bilādan kathīran [sic] bi's-sayfi wa'l-amān*)”,<sup>109</sup> was finally now reversing the perennial Ottoman tide of *jihād*, in which Christians in previous centuries had lost their entire *mulk*?

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<sup>107</sup> The Orthodox Ukrainian cause remained ever close to Paul's heart: News received periodically in Russia from the Tsar's western *jihād* front evokes again some of his most belligerent outbursts (see Chapt 1, Sect. III).

<sup>108</sup> *Safra*, fol. 169<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 211<sup>v</sup>.

The Tsars' policy of levying the *kharāj* on all conquered non-Orthodox, functioned as it did in the Ottoman empire, both to generate wealth and to encourage conversion.<sup>110</sup> The ranks of Russia's Orthodox converts were being currently swelled with both former Catholics and with former Muslims—mostly Tatars. Coming from a community chronically threatened by defection to Islam, Paul was more interested in the latter group. We remember that Paul had already encountered baptized Turks in Moldavia: in Russia, their presence was only more numerous, more ubiquitous. The stream of conversion, flowing steadily in the opposing direction, matched the Ottoman empire in scale. Paul reports seeing in Russia waves of Turkic Muslims, former *kharāj*-paying subjects of the Tsar, embracing Orthodox Christianity in mass communal baptisms.<sup>111</sup> “We saw with our own eyes,” he writes, as if anticipating his readers' doubts.<sup>112</sup> “Blessed are our eyes for what they have seen, and our ears for what they have heard! For who would believe that sons of Satan could become sons of God?”<sup>113</sup>

By accepting Orthodox baptism, a Muslim—be he a Tatar, Uzbek, or even an Arab—became fully integrated within Muscovite society. Like converts to Islam in the Ottoman empire, the Christian convert in Russia could potentially climb the heights of social and material

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<sup>110</sup> Paul was not the only Orthodox clergyman from the Ottoman empire who saw in this a good thing. Patriarch Dositheos II Notaras of Jerusalem (d. 1707) saw Russia too “as a mirror image of the Ottoman state, with Christianity and Islam switching places.” In order to mirror the process of islamization in the Balkans which he observed, Dositheos urged Tsar Peter I to convert his non-Orthodox (mostly Muslim) subjects who were unable to pay an “Orthodox *jizya*”; see Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians*, 334.

<sup>111</sup> A local archbishop in Tula whose diocese included large areas of Tatar-inhabited lands tells Paul that he once personally baptised as many as 4400 Tatars in a single mass baptism; *Safra*, fol. 127<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 153<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 171<sup>v</sup>.

success, sometimes with astonishing speed.<sup>114</sup> Paul narrates a number of such ‘success stories’ of converts whom he met personally in Russia. One stand-out ‘success story’ was that of the *Voievode* of Kolomna, a former Muslim Arab originally from Damascus. Taken captive as a young man, he wound up eventually being sold into the service of Tsar Mikhail, first Romanov and father of Tsar Alexei. Recognizing his new servant’s talents and potential, Mikhail offered him freedom and social promotion—with baptism as a condition. He assented, rising quickly afterwards to his current high position as *Voievode*.<sup>115</sup> Noteworthy also is the story related by Paul of two Tatar brothers who were prominent in Moscow’s administration. They were sons of a prominent Tatar chieftain; after becoming Christians, they rose speedily in Muscovite society to become two of the Tsar’s “closest confidants.”<sup>116</sup>

We might ask: were not some, if not many of these conversions—just like in Paul’s homeland—motivated by convenience rather than conviction? The question does not seem to occur to, or else to bother Paul. All converts whom he met, he maintains, chose baptism “with all their heart”. All of them were zealous, model Christians: diligent in fulfilling not only the externals of their adopted faith, but cognizant moreover of the inner “mystery of religion (*sirr al-dīn*)”.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Similarly, Orthodox conversion among Catholics in the conquered Western lands were rewarded materially and socially. Local Catholic nobles who became Orthodox not only retained their old lands and titles, but were even awarded new ones (*Ibid.*, fol. 239<sup>v</sup>). Newly-converted Catholic clergy were immediately re-educated and re-ordained as Orthodox clergy. At the Holy Trinity Lavra near Moscow, Paul meets four former Catholic priests who ‘converted (*ṣarraḥū*)’ to Orthodoxy, and were being apprenticed at the monastery in Orthodox rites, in preparation for their re-ordination as Orthodox priests (fol. 200<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 107<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>116</sup> Their names, when Paul befriends them in Moscow, are John and Alexios; prior to baptism, they were Muhammad and Ahmad; *Ibid.*, fol. 171.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 101



Besides, not a small number of them, he says, spurned all opportunities for enhanced status and wealth, choosing to become Christian monks instead.<sup>118</sup> Others, such as the two Turkish brothers—Anastasios and Theodoros in baptism, who became two of Paul’s closest friends in Moscow—fled on their own from the Ottoman empire for the express purpose of converting and being able to live out their lives freely as Christians. They were both former Ottoman *su-başı*s, sons of a *Pasha*, and were baptized *en route* in Georgia, before settling in Russia.<sup>119</sup>

The next question we might ask is: Why did Paul not choose to do the same as the latter two? Why did Paul not choose, like his two Turkish Christian friends, to leave the Ottoman empire behind and make his new home here in the Russian Noah’s ark of Orthodox Christians? For all the social perks a permanent life in Russia might have offered him as a senior Orthodox clergyman, Paul never once remotely considers it. On this question his attitude becomes clear when, towards the end of his stay, his linguistic talents having been noted by Moscow officials, he is made the lucrative offer of working in Russia as a *tarjumān* in the Tsar’s official

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 195<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> The overall pleasant picture created by these conversions is complicated each time Paul attempts to speak with the converts in the common language between them: Turkish. Turkish carried an evident stigma in Muscovy. Every attempt made by Paul to engage the converts in Turkish produced an awkward embarrassment, followed by their refusal to speak the language. Paul attributes this refusal to pious fear—an apparently endemic feature of contemporary Russian religiosity—of being “ritually polluted (*yatanajjasū*)” (*Ibid.*, fol. 197<sup>v</sup>). It may have been also that being addressed in their native Turkish—even by a Christian clergyman—was for such converts an unwanted reminder of their life, identity and social status prior to baptism: To have engaged with Paul in Turkish would have psychologically meant risking their good-standing in Muscovite society as Christians. Paul records numerous examples of such failed attempts to speak with converts in Turkish (*eg.* fol. 98<sup>r</sup>; fol. 195<sup>v</sup>; fol. 197<sup>v</sup>). Paul and Makarios were themselves warned never to speak Turkish in any Russians’ presence: On one occasion, in the Tsar’s presence, when Makarios’s command of Greek began to fail him in, he suggested switching to Turkish—a language he knew far better. “God forbid that this holy man should defile his tongue with that unclean language!” was the Tsar’s reply (fol. 135<sup>r</sup>).

employment. Paul records his brutally honest reply: “Even if you give me half of Moscow, I won’t stay.”<sup>120</sup> This refusal insinuated more than just Paul’s desire to return to the Ottoman empire out of sense of duty to his father’s flock; it revealed, in a moment of candor, the undercurrent of *al-ghurba* which belied the *Safra*’s triumphalist vision of Muscovite Russia as the ‘New Rome’.

The truth is that Paul has all the while been growing increasingly uneasy. His Russian travel-diary entries express a growing, gnawing, acute feeling of exile, or alienation: *al-ghurba* in Arabic. The discomfort begins strangely from the moment he sets foot on Muscovite territory. A sorrowful visit in Potivl to the gravesite of another Arab clergyman whom they knew—who tragically perished there as a *gharīb* while *en route*, like them, to Moscow<sup>121</sup>—occasions Paul’s first anguished outburst: “We drowned the earth with our tears from how much we cried, firstly over our own condition—for we were ourselves ‘strangers (*ghurabā*)’.”<sup>122</sup> “*Al-ghurba* has torn our hearts!” Paul complains surprisingly soon after arriving in Moscow, even while he and his father were receiving daily lavish welcome, gifts and honors from the city’s elite clergy and nobility.<sup>123</sup> Being treated everywhere in Russia like royalty did little to mitigate in Paul this

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 248<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>121</sup> This was Metropolitan Jeremiah of ‘Akkār, who was sent by Patriarch Euthymius (Meletios) Karma, Makarios’s predecessor and mentor, to lead an Arab Orthodox embassy to Moscow in 1646—six years before Paul and Makarios’s journey. Jeremiah died tragically *en route* to Moscow, in Potivl in 1647; see Panchenko, *Op. cit.*, 308.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 99<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 138<sup>v</sup>.

abiding sense of *al-ghurba*. “Even if we live here like kings,” he writes, “it can never compare with living among one’s own people.”<sup>124</sup> In Russia, he observes, “the stranger (*gharīb*) remains a stranger, though he were Alexander the Great!”<sup>125</sup>

Only in Russia does this oppressive feeling surface in Paul, of being not “among one’s own people”, of being a *gharīb*. Only in Russia does Paul begin to pray: “Lord, forgive and have mercy on the stranger in a strange land (*al-gharīb fi bilād al-ghurba*)!”<sup>126</sup>; “O God, clear away the path for our return home!”<sup>127</sup> Nowhere in Paul’s travels prior or after did this sentiment surface; nowhere in Anatolia, Moldo-Wallachia, or Ukraine, does a sense of *al-ghurba* appear in his diary entries. Russians were of course Orthodox like Paul, just as were the *Rūm*, Romanians and Cossack Ukrainians; yet some quality set Russia apart from other ‘lands of the Christians’, from the rest of the Orthodox commonwealth. Russia is in a sense the first really ‘foreign’ land Paul visits.<sup>128</sup> This would place the border at Potivl between Ukraine and Muscovy at a higher

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 138<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 99<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 99<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 138<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>128</sup> Russia’s ‘foreignness’ in the Orthodox commonwealth has been noted by many historians. In his study of the Russians’ historic presence on Mount Athos—the monastic peninsula which was a kind of microcosm of the Orthodox commonwealth, made up of monks from every Balkan/Eastern European ethnicity—Nicholas Fennel observes that the Russians stood somehow apart from the rest. “Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians had more-or-less the same lifestyles and customs”, Fennel writes, partly because “as natives of the Balkans, they were strongly affected by the Ottoman Empire, and shared a common peasant lifestyle and mentality.” Against this common lifestyle and mentality, the Russians—proud subjects of an Orthodox emperor who had frequently defeated the Ottoman empire—“seemed superficially out of place on Mount Athos”; see *The Russians on Athos* (Bern, Germany: Peter Lang, 2001), 72.

significance than the Danube border between Ottoman territory and the 'lands of the Christians'.

This fact becomes doubly apparent when the Arabs finally leave Russia to return home *via* the Ukraine again. In a memorable passage, Paul describes their arrival on the bank of the Dnieper at Kiev, with the grand view of the city's famous Lavra complex before them, like some long-awaited home-coming. The acute feeling of *al-ghurba* that had accompanied him throughout Russia, like an oppressive weight borne for two whole years, is lifted in an instant, vanishing like fog:

We slept there on the bank of the river in utmost contentment and peace. Even while we were approaching Pecherska Lavra from afar, as its domes came within sight and the fragrance of this country emanated everywhere, already our joy and delight leapt upwards, our hearts rejoiced. We thanked our Lord God, because for the past two years in Muscovy, our hearts were as if locked up. We were in the worst possible confinement and anguish of soul. In that country no person can rejoice or be at ease, except its own people and sons. For a person like us, even if he were to become king there, his heart remains forever afflicted. But as for this country of the Cossacks, it felt to us like our own country; its people were like our close kin and companions. They were people like us.<sup>129</sup>

What made Ukraine, in contrast to Russia, feel to the Arab clergymen "like our own country"? What made the Ukrainians, unlike the Russians, into "people like us"? Clearly it was not the cultural or ethno-linguistic difference between the two northern Slavic peoples who shared a common cultural ancestry in medieval Kievan *Rus'*; whose languages—as distinct as they were from each other—were both equally far removed from Arabic. Can we put our finger on the precise cause for why Paul's gnawing feeling of *al-ghurba* suddenly dissipates the moment he moves from Russia over to the Ukraine? Why was Paul a *gharib* only in Russia? And

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, fols., 262<sup>v</sup>-263<sup>r</sup>.

why should Paul have felt himself a *gharīb* of all places in Russia, in the ‘New Rome’, the last Christian *mulk*, the land of promise for all the Orthodox, whose praises he has all the while been singing in the *Safra*? These are questions Paul himself never poses directly, let alone answers. The modern reader of the *Safra* must cautiously interpret.

It was indeed strange that Paul should so rejoice—his “joy and delight leapt upwards”—at leaving behind the supposed object of his and his father’s whole quest; that he was unable to “rejoice or be at ease” among a ‘holy’ people like the Russians; that, in spite of the unprecedented social prestige which he and his father enjoyed in Russia, they nonetheless experienced life there as the “worst possible confinement”, their “hearts...as if locked up”.

Ironically, one of the major identifiable sources of Paul’s feeling of “confinement”, of *al-ghurba*, among the Russians was the very quality he admired most about them: their ‘worthiness’, their ‘holiness’. “As for their customs (*ādāt*) in Church, we were in awe,” he typically writes: “All of them, from their rulers to their paupers, we saw exceeding what is prescribed by the ‘law (*nāmūs* < Gk. νόμος)’, the canons and the *typikon*<sup>130</sup>, through constant fasts, unceasing prayers, and full prostrations to the ground without end.”<sup>131</sup> Paul’s “awe” remains undiminished throughout his two years in Russia. “No doubt this entire nation are all saints!” he exclaims, seeing regular Russians’ stamina at another all-night vigil in church. “As for us,” he continues, “we left [from the vigil] destroyed by fatigue and hunger.”<sup>132</sup> Awe mingles with aversion. Who

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<sup>130</sup> The *typikon*, as Paul uses the term here, is the complex set of rubrics for Orthodox Christian worship that are followed universally—with local variations—by all Orthodox Churches.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 113<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 226<sup>v</sup>.

can bear for very long living among ‘saints’? Not presuming himself a candidate for sainthood, Paul frequently chafes under the restrictions of being surrounded by ‘saints’ constantly. Living in Russia meant having to always act the part of a ‘saint’ before the sustained gaze of all; it meant having to constantly constrain himself to keep pace with the Russians’ continual feats of ‘saintly’ ascetic endurance; having to stand on end alongside them through prolonged vigils, though his own feet, unlike theirs, were not “clearly made of iron.”<sup>133</sup> He complains, “We went through terrible torments among them in order to resemble them.”<sup>134</sup> In a moment of weariness, right after enduring yet one more all-night vigil on his feet, he tells his readers that had it not been for the presence of the Tsar and Tsarina in church that particular night, he would have fled the sanctuary!<sup>135</sup> On the one hand, Paul saw the Russians’ ‘holiness’ as setting the high religious bar, if impossible, for the rest of the Orthodox to reach; on the other hand, he often wonders: Was not some of their zeal rather excessive, fanatical, pharisaical—zeal *not according to knowledge*?

It was all strict fasting in Russia, with little joyous feasting to follow; strain and exertion with few moments for much-needed human rest and recreation; long, furrowed faces, with hardly ever a smile to soften their strain. He writes, “We walked as if among dead saints, with neither joy, nor delight, nor mirth.”<sup>136</sup> At the conclusion of the Russians’ Spartan Lenten regime,

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 187<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 165<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 235<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 122<sup>v</sup>.

Paul is disappointed to find little of the anticipated joy in their subsequent Easter celebrations. Their feasting seemed muted, joyless, compared with what he knew from home, among the *millet-i-Rūm*: “How far it is from the prayer of the *Rūm*,” he writes, “from that jubilation which occurs in our country—the dust, the joy, the clamor!”<sup>137</sup> Easter ‘Bright’ week, normally a week of Church-sanctioned merrymaking and communal indulging in non-Lenten fare, was here in Russia transformed into a period of physical recovery from the rigors of the fast: “We awoke debilitated from pain in our backs and legs for days,” Paul writes on his first Russian Easter morning.<sup>138</sup> No wonder when it came finally time for the Arabs to return home, Paul did all he could to ensure their flight occurred in time to escape yet another Russian Easter!<sup>139</sup>

Paul’s admiration of the Russians’ ‘holiness’ was sincere; he was proud, and he believed that by writing about it in the *Safra*, all Arab Orthodox in Ottoman Syria could take pride, knowing of the existence of such a large, ‘holy’ Orthodox nation, full of town-dwelling lay ‘saints’ who “surpassed the ascetics of the desert.”<sup>140</sup> Yet knowing of these saints’ existence sufficed; living among them, on the other hand, was not to be recommended. These ‘saints’ were better admired from a suitable distance.

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 192<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>138</sup> What was worse, the Russians continued unabated with their prostrations in Church, contrary to universal Orthodox canons, throughout the 50-day interval between Easter and Pentecost. Though it was Eastertide, he writes, it felt “as though we were still fasting.” He concludes: “This is their custom—and what an awful custom (*bi’sa l-’āda*)!” *Ibid.*, fols. 192<sup>v</sup>-194<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>139</sup> When advised to postpone their travels due to the flood risk from the spring thawing, Paul would hear none of it, replying: “Let us drown!” *Ibid.*, fols. 255<sup>r</sup>-255<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 226<sup>r</sup>.

Russian Orthodox 'holiness' was the mainspring of Russian Orthodox *mulk*—which set them apart from the rest of the Orthodox commonwealth. The Russians' sole possession of *mulk* among the Orthodox gave credence to the idea that their 'Great City', Moscow, had replaced Constantinople as the Christian 'New Rome' (or 'Third Rome' in their own terminology). This involved a transfer not only of worldly imperial power, but also of primary religious authority and legitimacy in world Orthodoxy—an idea which the Russian state and church worked hard to promote, beginning precisely in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Paul can be observed in the *Safra* loyally embracing this idea, but never without reservation. It conflicted with his sense of belonging to *millet-i-Rūm*, to the world of 'Byzantium after Byzantium' and the 'old' Rome of Constantinople—which remained also, as he had discovered while there, hidden below the surface at its heart a Christian city: *the* 'Great City'. *Mulk* there was in the hands of a Muslim sultan whom Paul too considered as a 'God-protected' defender of the Church, like the Russian Tsar. For as long as Paul was in Russia, he remained pulled in two directions; the tension between these two ideas, these two cultural gravitations within Orthodoxy, was never absent from him. Perhaps this drove his feelings of *al-ghurba*: Russia's contemporary Orthodox religious culture, separated from *millet-i-Rūm* by its possession of *mulk* and its novel claims to primacy of religious authority, was as alienating for Paul as it was exhilarating, being distinctly out of tune with his native religious world. Paul accepted Moscow as the 'New Rome'; though he himself could find no rest there. During the whole two years he spent there, he was a *gharīb*.

To return to our earlier question of what made Kiev different from Moscow; Ukrainians different from Russians for Paul? We might suppose now that it was because Kiev, unlike



Moscow, made no similar claim to be on par with, or even to replace old Rome: Constantinople. The dispossessed Ukrainians, at this point in their history, had not quite yet entered the new Russian imperial orbit; their beleaguered church was technically still within the *Rūm* Constantinopolitan ecclesial orbit—the ‘mother’ church from which they had originally received their Orthodox faith.<sup>141</sup> They were not members of *millet-i-Rūm*, but they were closer to it than the Russians. It is not surprising that compared with their far more powerful northern Slavic neighbors, an Arab Orthodox clergyman saw in the Ukrainians “people like us.”

Paul’s home was not—and never would be—in the ‘New Rome’ of Muscovy. His home remained in Ottoman Syria, tending to the Arab Orthodox flock alongside his father. After two years of ‘confinement’, Paul and Makarios bid farewell to the ‘New Rome’, in March of 1656<sup>142</sup>, to return to Aleppo and take their regular place once more as *kharāj*-paying *ra‘ayā* within the Ottoman ‘house of Islam’. It would take another two years before they would finally reach home again.

Their home however would be forever altered by their stay in Muscovite Russia. They were returning home with an entire caravan loaded with Siberian sable and other material valuables—Tsar Alexei’s personal gifts to them—enough to pay their arrears to the Sublime Porte several times over; with precious Church utensils and priestly vestments of the finest Russian

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<sup>141</sup> Not for much longer. In 1686, the Orthodox Metropolis of Kiev would be transferred formally from the jurisdiction of the ‘Great Church’ of Constantinople to the Patriarchate of Moscow.

<sup>142</sup> Paul’s hopes of escaping another Russian Orthodox Easter do not fully materialize. Easter finds them that year in Bolkhov, near the border with Ukraine. From there they are recalled once more the Moscow by the Tsar for an emergency Church synod, and are only able to leave again at the end of May.

quality; with holy relics and icons, to enhance the beauty of their local temples and liturgical life. They were returning home with all of what they had seen and heard in their travels across the Orthodox commonwealth; with their eye-witness testimony of 'holy' Orthodox Russia, of Christian *mulk*, of 'New Rome'.

### VII. *The Journey Home*

We will focus in this section on only one key segment in the Arab clergymen's journey home: the re-crossing of the Black sea. It occurs a little after the second 'border-crossing' at Killiya described in the Chapter 1. The Black sea would be the travellers' final testing ground; as Paul wrote of it, "The Black sea deserves its name, as it is truly all black!"

Paul and Makarios sail first south along the ports of Constanța, Mangalia, Kavarna, Varna, Sozopol; then east—bypassing Constantinople this time—across the northern coast of modern-day Turkey, docking finally in Sinope. Paul probably doesn't exaggerate when he describes vividly the perils their company faced during a total of fifteen days spent at sea, wedged between the volatile waves and the rocky coastline, being prey alternatively to *firtūna* and *ghalīna* (<Gk. γαλήνη, 'calm'). Bouts of violent rocking caused them many a sleepless "black night (*layla sawdā'*)"—at the end of which, as Paul describes, "nothing remained in our entrails (*mā baqiya fi im'āninā shay'*). When their drinking water supply ran out off the coast of Heraclea, all aboard had to quench their thirst by eating watermelon and pomegranates.<sup>143</sup> So unbearable was the

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 295<sup>v</sup>.

whole ordeal that after a brief respite on shore at Kavarna, returning to the ship felt to Paul “like going off to be killed (*ka’annanā rāyḥīn li ’l-qatl*)”.

In the midst of their travails, Paul notes the sacred significance of many of the late-ancient Byzantine cities and landmarks that came within view along the northern Anatolian coast on their ship’s right side. Once again the *Synaxarion* becomes his guide. Off the coast of Bythynia, Paul identifies the location of the former monastery of the “Unsleeping Ones (*alladhīna la yanāmūn*; Gk. τῶν Ἀκοιμήτων)” —mentioned, he remembers, in the *Vita* of St John “the Hutterdweller (*al-Kūkhī*; Gk. ὁ Καλυβίτης)”. A little farther along was the town of Ereğli, the site of St Theodoros Statelates’s martyrdom.<sup>144</sup> The port of Amasra Paul immediately associates with the *Vita* of St George of Amastris, the 9<sup>th</sup> century bishop whose feast he remembers fell on February 12.<sup>145</sup> By now it would seem that any negative feeling evoked earlier by their arrival in Ottoman territory has been completely forgotten as Anatolia’s Christian sacred geography comes to vivid life before Paul’s very eyes. The fact they were in Ottoman political territory made these lands after all no less Christian than the ‘lands of the Christians’ which they have left behind.

Daybreak on Sunday, November 14, the final day before the beginning of the forty-day Nativity fast, found their company about midway between Amasra and Inebolu, making satisfactory progress. Paul and Makarios rejoice prematurely at the thought that by nightfall they will already have put down anchor at Sinope, where they would enjoy a meal with meat one

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<sup>144</sup> Paul refers to the city by an Arabized form of its Byzantine Greek name, Būnḏū Īrākliyā (<Gk. Ποντοηρακλεία). This is the ancient city of Heraclea Pontica (Ἡράκλεια Ποντική). *Ibid.*, fol. 295<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>145</sup> Paul slightly mistakes the date of St George of Amastris’s commemoration—February 21, not 12.

last time before the fast began. The winds willed otherwise. “All day there was *ghalīna* on the sea,” Paul complains. They finally take their awaited evening meal at sea; in place of the meat they had hoped to savor in Sinope, they dined on Morena eel: a Mediterranean and Black sea delicacy. Not long before Paul raved about the Morena’s unrivalled taste, as well as its supposed miraculous qualities<sup>146</sup>; now it tasted bitter, of disappointment and despondency.

Around midnight a *furtūna* blew so hard that by dawn on Monday the ship had already entered the “white lagoon (*āq līmān*)” of Sinope, a mere nine miles’ distance from the city itself—so close that they could already see Sinope’s *qal’a*, or citadel. Before they could take courage however, the same *furtūna* suddenly turned against them, battering their ship on every side, almost swallowing it up entirely. Paul watched the sea “split open like a valley”, into whose abyss they looked poised to descend. What a misfortune to have survived a fifteen-day ordeal at sea, only to suffer shipwreck in sight of harbor! And yet considering the magnitude of their historic mission, how could the seas have possibly remained calm and not risen up with fury at the final moment, as if to thwart their purpose?

For situations like these, the two clergymen were not without their provisions, not without special means of emergency appeal to divine aid. Earlier on, when violent waves had threatened to send their ship colliding against some of rocky cliffs, Patriarch Makarios had entered the captain’s cabin to perform an *aghiasmos* (lit. ‘sanctification’): an Orthodox prayer

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 294<sup>r</sup>.

service for blessing of waters. It worked. The waves, having been blessed—or rather *rebuked*—became calm for some time.<sup>147</sup>

This time, instead of repeating the *aghiasmos*, Makarios performs an act of even greater ritual power and significance. From his personal effects he produces a treasured loaf of bread, from which he breaks off a morsel and tosses it overboard into the waves, as it were to appease the sea's wrath. This was of course no ordinary bread. Referred to as the *Panaghia* (lit. 'all-holy'), it was a liturgical bread—sanctified, Paul says, "according to the rite of the 'lands of the Christians'."<sup>148</sup> Paul had seen and described the rite of the *Panaghia* performed on a number of occasions throughout his travels. This ancient Orthodox rite had been somehow forgotten in the local liturgical tradition of the Arab Orthodox; both Paul and Makarios had an interest therefore in reviving its use among them. The bread, the *Panaghia*, tossed to the waves, thus represents their entire mission, their travels in the 'lands of the Christians'. It is the discovery—or rather recovery—of lost sacred knowledge, through renewed spiritual contacts with their European Orthodox brethren. It is all of what Patriarch Makarios has gone and retrieved from the 'lands of the Christians' beyond the Danube; all of what he is now bringing back to share with his needy flock; all of what was needed to seal his mission—the spiritual and material renewal of his flock—with success. Makarios had been carrying this *Panaghia* since they left Moscow, as if reserving it for this very moment of temptation. He had no stronger weapon with

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 295<sup>v</sup>.

him, no offering more precious to appease the sea's fury. And behold! the waves calmed, subdued almost immediately by the power of the gift offered to it.<sup>149</sup>

Setting foot on land at Sinope, Paul is as one resurrected. Being received warmly into the “Christians’ homes (*manāzil al-masīḥīyīn*)” there—Sinope had a sizeable *Rūm* Orthodox population— they “spent a happy night, like ones who lived after having died”.<sup>150</sup> The feeling of resurrection was enhanced by the vernal sight of familiar Mediterranean flora: figs, pomegranates, eggplants, olives, carnations—all of which, Paul says, “we hadn’t laid eyes on in over six years.” Paul is home already, in a very real sense. Not a shred of doubt seems to remain as to his identity, his purpose, his place—on this side of the border, this side of the ‘black’ abyss over which he has just passed. The fact that Sinope’s Christians paid the *kharāj* to the Ottomans without murmuring and beat muted “wooden bells” instead of resounding brass ones seemed rather like a return to normality.<sup>151</sup> Sinope’s moving Theophany celebrations three weeks later, Paul even asserted were “more beautiful than in the lands of the Christians (*aḥsan min bilād al-masīḥīyīn*)”.<sup>152</sup> A long and treacherous trek south through the mountain passes of Pontus and Cappadocia<sup>153</sup> still lay between them and Aleppo, but Sinope felt already like a foretaste of their longed-for destination, of home.

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<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 296<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 295<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 296<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 297<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>153</sup> Just how treacherous was the mountain road can be seen from the fact that one of their company slipped and fell down the valley to his death right before they reached Kayseri. *Ibid.*, fol. 299<sup>r</sup>.

## V. *Return to Ottoman Syria*

When Paul and Makarios arrive in the northern Syrian town of Kilis<sup>154</sup>, the Arab Orthodox faithful there are surprised to see them, having heard rumors that they had perished in Wallachia. The false rumors were spread by the then reigning bishop of Aleppo, Mitrophanes, a usurper who exploited Makarios's prolonged absence to his own personal advantage and to the great spiritual detriment of the Arab Orthodox flock. If the flock was Makarios's bride to which he was returning from his odyssey, then Mitrophanes was chief among her unworthy suitors.<sup>155</sup> He would soon enough meet his deserved end.<sup>156</sup> Now, as news of Makarios's arrival in Kilis spread quickly across the diocese, Mitrophanes, the unfaithful steward, "trembled" already at the master of the house's unexpected return.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Around fifty miles directly north of Aleppo, Kilis fell already within the spiritual territory of the Antiochian Patriarchate. The town, still mostly Arabic-speaking, is located today directly over the border, within Turkey.

<sup>155</sup> Paul calls him an "unbeliever, bereft of God (*kāfir mab'ūd min Allah*)", an "accursed, Godless, rapacious wolf who scattered God's sheep." *Ibid.*, fol. 303<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>156</sup> While they were celebrating the Feast of the Cross at Ṣaydnāyā monastery, unexpected news reaches Paul and Makarios of Mitrophanes's premature, ignoble death: like the arch-heretic Arius, the Aleppan bishop had suddenly given out his entrails! The Aleppan faithful were thus "saved from his evil deeds" (fol. 305<sup>v</sup>). The other chief 'suitor' was the Metropolitan of Ḥimṣ, Athanasios (Ibn 'Umaysh), the "second Judas" according to Paul, whom Makarios had appointed to act as patriarchal *wakīl* in his own absence. Instead, Athanasios attempted to usurp Makarios's office (fol. 304<sup>r</sup>). Divine retribution followed Athanasios in a milder manner than Mitrophanes: At a later Church council convened by Makarios, attended by all the hierarchs, clergy, and lay *a'yān* ('notables') of the community, he was condemned, defrocked and excommunicated, according to "Christian law (*sharī'a al-masīḥīya*)" (fols. 308<sup>v</sup>-309<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 304<sup>r</sup>.

Makarios then makes his triumphal entry into Aleppo, to enthusiastic cheering of crowds representing all of Syria's sectarian communities (*tawā'if*).<sup>158</sup> Here Mitrophanes finally appears before the returning travellers: the pitiful spectacle of the strongman subdued, withered away already by the awareness that his time had expired, his house soon to be plundered by the appearance now of the one stronger than him.<sup>159</sup>

Soon after followed Makarios's triumphal entry into Damascus, the Patriarchal headquarters. It becomes evident as Makarios sets about putting his diocese—his house—in order, that his travels abroad have endowed him not only with new financial means, but with new authority and power. Makarios's first order business is naturally to settle all of the Patriarchate's arrears with the Ottoman Pasha of Damascus. A shrewd and wise steward, with a liberal hand he furthermore distributed monetary gifts among the city's lesser Muslim officials and 'notables (*a'yān*).<sup>160</sup> Life for Ottoman *ra'āyā* was also a game of intelligence, of wits: To continue living in relative peace one had to make peace with the *mammon of unrighteousness*—*i.e.* secure through payment of bonus 'gifts' the continued good will of one's overlords.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Some have read this event—of Orthodox Patriarch Makarios's return being greeted by representatives from all Aleppo's Christian communities—as evidence of generally warm ecumenical inter-Christian relations in the city. I do not think this reading is justified. Diplomatic demonstrations of 'unity' in public life often take place precisely to conceal real tensions that exist.

<sup>159</sup> "God is witness that due to the change in his appearance and face, we hardly could recognize him," Paul writes. *Ibid.*, fols. 303<sup>v</sup>-304<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 304<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>161</sup> The same God who supplied Makarios with the financial means, had also laid the favorable political groundwork for his reform work before his arrival home: Damascus's former corrupt Ottoman officials and tax-collectors who extorted the Church, were all scattered just like the Black sea storm: all had been already either executed by higher Ottoman authorities, or had "fled and scattered in the lands of Yemen, Egypt, and among the 'Arabs'." *Ibid.*, fol. 310<sup>r</sup>.



Their first-hand vision of the 'New Rome' gave both Makarios and Paul a new confidence in their official dealings with the representatives of the Sublime Porte. The latter for their part, as it were sensing this, cede ground accordingly. When it came time for paying the community's annual *kharāj* upon their return, not only was the demanded rate not inflated as it had always been previously, but Paul—who now took responsibility for its collection and payment—succeeded where he had been unable before, in wrangling Ottoman tax-collectors into significantly reducing the number of names on their lists of eligible tax-payers in the Orthodox community.<sup>162</sup> This was no mean feat. Reducing the financial strain of the *kharāj* was a matter of communal survival, of spiritual life and death: it meant that an unspecified number of Christian souls would now be saved from taking the desperate recourse of conversion to Islam.

To illustrate how high were the stakes in this matter, Paul gives the example of Gaza's Christian population—nearly all of whom, he says, had recently converted to Islam *en masse* to be relieved from the unbearable burden of *kharāj* payment. A mere 141 names remained on the Gazan Orthodox community's official *kharāj*-paying list. The Gazans, being within the Patriarchate of Jerusalem's territory, were not part of Makarios's official flock; nevertheless he took pity on those remaining 141, paying the entire sum of their *kharāj* for that year.<sup>163</sup> Freely he had received, freely he gave.

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 309<sup>v</sup>-310<sup>r</sup>.

As his father's newly-appointed official deputy (*wakīl*), Paul's personal attention became focused on renovating—or rather rebuilding—the Church's Patriarchal headquarters in Damascus. From the funds acquired in Russia, Paul spared no expense in fitting the new building out in grand style, with marble floors and mosaic wall decorations, a *salsabīl* ('fountain'), Roman columns joined together by *ablaq* arches, doors made from mulberry wood.<sup>164</sup> It seems Paul had in mind to replicate, to recreate a localized architectural image of some of the imperial Orthodox splendor he saw in the 'lands of the Christians'. The building was his own project, in which he took immense personal pride. Apart from the *Safra* itself, it was his own legacy—semi-independent even of his father's.<sup>165</sup> When speaking of the process of construction, for the first time we see Paul referring to himself, rather than Makarios, as the primary agent: *eg.* "I built...". Lesser miracles accompanied his own work as well: The building's whole construction was completed at record speed—just 80 days, with a team of 60-70 workers—an achievement which astonished all Muslim onlookers, who, Paul says, would have taken two years to complete the same work.<sup>166</sup> Paul was now emerging from his father's shadow as a leader in his own right. Learning that a nearby *khān* owned by the Patriarchate was being used covertly as a house of ill-repute (*ma'wā li'l-zawānī*, lit. 'refuge for fornicators'), Paul took decisive, uninstructed charge

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 304<sup>v</sup>-305<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>165</sup> We get an idea of the personal importance the building project had for Paul when he writes: "I ask my God to make worthy every reader or hearer of this pathetic narration, both to make a visit to Holy Jerusalem, and to come and see this place [that I have built]. I knew that the destiny of any financial treasure is to eventually leave our hands; yet this building will be like a memento (*tidhkār*) for generations to come, so that we may ask a reward from the generous King." *Ibid.*, fol. 305.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 305<sup>v</sup>.

in having the edifice razed and rebuilt to house shops.<sup>167</sup> Paul's travels to the 'lands of the Christians' in Makarios's company have molded him too into the full measure of a man, capable of one day taking his father's place at the spiritual helm of the Arab Orthodox community.

The personal change effected in Paul by his travels—embracing finally both sides of the Danube 'border'; both Christian *mulk* and the lack thereof; both 'New Rome' and *millet-i-Rūm*—was subtle, not revolutionary. It was focused primarily inward, towards a renewal of the community's internal spiritual and cultural life, rather than outward at improving its wider socio-political standing. His return from the 'lands of the Christians' is not accompanied by any noticeable new resentment at his life as a *ra'āyā* in *dār al-islām*. What we do notice in him is a newly-acquired self-confidence in renegotiating the minor terms of his 'contract' as a 'client (*dhimmi*)'. Perhaps strangely, he appears not to feel less at home within the Ottoman social structure, but in fact more so; not resentful at having to pay the *kharāj*, but prepared rather to bargain for its reduced rate. His travels have given birth in him to a deeper sense of being Orthodox, linked spiritually and culturally with the entire Orthodox commonwealth and its universal Byzantine heritage. One part of this deeper sense involved a strong desire to 'catch up' with the rest, to emulate 'foreign' models by helping to bring his own community's practices in line with more 'authentic' practices preserved elsewhere.<sup>168</sup> The other part however involved

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<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> Paul mentions just some of the changes introduced into diocesan life directly upon their return, modelled on the best of what they saw abroad: Priests were to be stopped from competing with each other to perform sacraments for a fee, instead all sacraments would from now on only be performed with the express permission of the *wakil*; confession was introduced as a prerequisite for Communion; community-members who were known to make their gains illicitly through corruption were to be barred from any the Church's sacraments, etc. *Ibid.*, fol. 310<sup>v</sup>.

a revival of local, native tradition—of all that was unique to the heritage specific to the Arab Orthodox, to the Patriarchate of Antioch. Upon returning from their travels, Paul tells us, Patriarch Makarios was inspired by renewed zeal to retrieve the lost “ways of our fathers”, to revive those venerable local Arab Orthodox customs and traditions that had been for some reason discontinued “from the time of the patriarchal forebears (*min zaman al-baṭārika al-sālīfīn*)”.<sup>169</sup> Thus through their travels in the ‘lands of the Christians’, Paul and Makarios—and by extension the Arab Orthodox community their represented—had become for the time being, both more fully Orthodox, more fully Ottoman, and more fully Arab.

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 305<sup>v</sup>.

### Chapter 3

#### *Elias of Mosul's Kitāb Siyāḥa*<sup>\*</sup>

#### I. *Elias in Yenki Dūnya, the New World*

Near the end of his *Kitāb Siyāḥa* ('Book of Travels'), Elias of Mosul reports on his journey north-east through Central America, between Guatemala and Mexico. The year was 1682. Mexico City, the capital of what Elias called *Yenki Dūnya*<sup>1</sup> would be the last major stop in his tour of colonial Spanish America, begun seven years earlier in 1675. During this time—as will become evident in the passages from the text quoted below—Elias had built up an impressive personal network of New World 'friends' that spanned all the colonies' higher administration and clergy.

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<sup>\*</sup> In writing this chapter I have used the MS. held at the British Library in London (IO Islamic 3537), originally from the collection of Arabic MSS. acquired by the India Office Library (Loth Arabic MS 719). It is referred to throughout as *Kitāb Siyāḥa*. It is the older (dated 1751) of two extant MSS. of the text—the other being the one originally discovered by Antoine Rabbath in Aleppo in 1905, now held at the Vatican Library (Sbath 108). All translations of passages from the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* in this chapter are my own. Occasionally, I have consulted Caesar E. Farah's translation, *An Arab's Journey to Colonial Spanish America: The Travels of Elias al-Mūsili in the Seventeenth Century*. trans. Caesar E. Farah (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), which was based however on Rabbath's 1905 edition, not the MS. Rabbath, like other Arabic editors of his generation, 'cleaned up' (*i.e.* standardized) many of Elias of Mosul's Middle Arabic features. As I have already indicated on several occasions: My reading of this text depends heavily on the findings of John-Paul Ghobrial into Elias of Mosul's biography and historical personality—*i.e.* his 'secret life'; see "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory", *Past & Present*, Volume 222, Issue 1, (February 2014), 51–93.

<sup>1</sup> The Ottoman Turkish term *Yenki Dūnya* ('New World') generally referred to the American continent, although Elias uses it here more specifically to refer to North and Central America (the original New World) beginning with Mexico. Paul of Aleppo, we remember, used the same term *Yenki Dūnya* in the *Safra*, to refer to the farthest Eastern, or "third" Siberia, newly conquered by the Muscovite Russians (see Intro., n. 28). That the single term was used by a Uniate and Orthodox clergyman respectively to refer to two different 'New Worlds' is not surprising: as Nabil Matar has shown, Orthodox-Catholic polemics in Arabic ranged from theological topics, to arguments over which faith was being more widely diffused in the world—a contest in which Catholics proudly declared their lead; see "Ürubba in Early Modern Arabic Sources" in eds. Florian Kläger and Gerd Bayer, *Early Modern Constructions of Europe: Literature, Culture, History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 47.

This was Elias's first time travelling in Spain's North American colonies, yet he already had a considerable number of highly-placed 'friends' here too. In fact, Elias himself traveled as some kind of clerical VIP—somebody whom prominent colonial men everywhere were eager to befriend, to sycophantically please in every way they could, as he passed through their town or region.<sup>2</sup> On his way to Mexico City Elias stayed for fifteen days in the southern Mexican town of Oaxaca, where, he writes,

There lived a noble man (*rajulan sharif* [sic]) from Spain who had a brother in Lima who served the viceroy (*wazīr*)—my friend who had been deposed. The latter had given me a letter for his brother in Oaxaca. When I was approaching the town, I sent the letter to him, so this noble man came forth outside the town, received me with joy and led me into the town. He then lodged me in a house which he had prepared for me.<sup>3</sup>

Oaxaca's bishop—also one of Elias's friends—likewise, "honoured me exceedingly (*akramanī ghāyata 'l-ikrām*)", he writes. Concerning the town of Oaxaca itself, Elias had only the following to report:

The town is eminent in buildings and churches, especially the monastery of St Dominic (Mār 'Abd al-Aḥad, *i.e.* 'belonging to the Dominican order'), as well as other monasteries for monks and nuns, and hospitals (*maristānāt*) for the sick. Its cathedral is extremely magnificent, besides which there are many other churches. I had with me spending money (*khirjaya*) in the amount of eight hundred piasters. I entrusted it to

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<sup>2</sup> Elias carried with him everywhere letters of introduction from both the Pope and the Spanish crown; some commentators have speculated whether he may or may not have been travelling in some kind of official ecclesial or royal capacity. In any case, New World officials, both secular and religious, were universally eager to please him. Elias even writes of disputes breaking out in some places between different local parties vying for his 'friendship'. Dominicans in the city of Quito in Ecuador for instance, took the lead in securing Elias's friendship, by sending some friars to greet him before his arrival outside the city, escorting him promptly to their monastery for lodging. This provoked the anger of Quito's governor, who protested that Elias should have lodged at his own residence. After negotiations, the two parties, Elias writes, finally "agreed that I would spend the whole day and have lunch with the governor, but at evening I would have dinner with the abbot of the monastery and sleep there in my cell"; *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fols. 18<sup>v</sup>-19<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 56<sup>v</sup>-57<sup>r</sup>.

my aforementioned friend, whose name was Don Francisco de Castro, so he could buy *qirmiz* for me.<sup>4</sup>

Directly we notice in this typically terse report from his narrative some distinguishing temperamental features of Elias: (1) Elias is foremost a ‘practical’ man of the world, not a travel-writer by vocation or training. The *Kitāb Siyāḥa* contains none of the elaborate descriptions typical in more ‘literary’ travelogues. Elias has no eye for the finer points of ecclesial art and architecture: where Paul of Aleppo filled folios with his descriptions of churches, Elias sums up the combined exterior and interior of Oaxaca’s Cathedral in two words: “extremely magnificent.” (2) Though his stated motives were loftier, Elias is traveling mostly for the sake of business. This orientation is made plain from his characteristic precision in this passage regarding money matters—exactly “in the amount of eight hundred piasters” which he had with him in Oaxaca. Elias is a Christian priest who only occasionally acts the pilgrim’s part while making his fortune in the New World.

Farther on his way, at a distance of only twenty-four *farsakhs* from Mexico City, stood the town of Puebla, where lived another contact from Elias’s colonial network—another friend on whom he could call. Elias’s report on Puebla mirrors in many ways his above report on Oaxaca.

He writes,

I passed through the city and lodged with one of my friends. The city is large, its palaces delightful, its buildings joyful, its churches distinguished—like the cathedral, which is very rich in construction, in silver and gold and sacred treasures (*al-dakhāyir* [sic] *al-muqaddasa*). There resides in this city a bishop whose name was Emanuel de Santa Cruz, a learned man (*rajul ‘ālim*) who fears God, and has a yearly income of eighty thousand piasters.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 57<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 57<sup>v</sup>.

Not surprisingly, Puebla's cathedral stood out exclusively for its riches, its "silver and gold and sacred treasures." Elias, like so many others who sailed across the Atlantic from Spain in the early modern period, had spent much of his time in the New World gathering precious metals. By now he was even something of a connoisseur, having inspected with great interest and described (in more detail than any churches or monasteries) many of the colonies' gold and silver and mineral mines. Elias's capitalist book-keeping instincts reveal themselves again in his appraisal of Puebla's bishop—who besides being learned and God-fearing, more importantly perhaps had "a yearly income of eighty thousand piasters."

After just two days in Puebla, Elias departed for Mexico City. On his arrival in the New World capital, he is cared for by friends during a ten-day bout of sickness. Having recovered, Elias calls one-by-one on all of Mexico City's 'notables':

I entered the city and lodged with one of my friends for whom I was bringing a letter from Guatemala. He received me with fondness and honor. A day later I fell ill and remained for ten days in bed. The viceroy (*wazīr*) of this country—since I was bringing him a letter from his relative, my friend the viceroy, who was in Peru—kept sending to his doctors (*hukamā'*) to look after me. After the ten aforementioned days I recovered by God's help and went to visit the viceroy and also his wife. They received me with love and smiling faces. The viceroy offered me to stay with him in the palace (*ṣarāya*), but instead I rented a house for three hundred and sixty piasters a year. I rented also a carriage with four mules for six hundred and fifty piasters. Then I began going out to visit the nobles (*ashrāf*) first; then I visited the bishop of the city, then all the other notables (*a'yān*). The bishop granted me permission (*dastūr*) to celebrate mass wherever I desired. So every night at the time of sunset I went to chat with the viceroy for two hours, then returned home.<sup>6</sup>

On Mexico City's many churches Elias had slightly more to say than in either Oaxaca or Puebla. Mexico City had been the starting point in the well-known story of Spain's

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 57<sup>v</sup>-58<sup>r</sup>.



breathtakingly—and brutally—efficient conquest of the central and southern American mainland. Its churches were representative both of the “excessive wealth” craved and seized here by the Spanish conquistadores, and also of the aims of the missionaries—members of different Catholic mendicant and monastic orders—who arrived in the conquistadores’ train to complete the New World’s ‘spiritual’ conquest on behalf of Roman Catholicism. Elias writes,

What can we even begin to say about the churches in this city, their noble and handsome edifices, their excessive wealth? It is something indescribable. In this city are three monasteries for the monks of St Francis, two for the monks of St Dominic, two for the Jesuits (*al-Yasūṛīya*), three for the monks of St Augustine, two for the monks of Mercy, two hospitals for the sick, seventeen monasteries for nuns, and a monastery for the Carmelite monks. There is the cathedral, as well as numerous other churches.<sup>7</sup>

One particular church in Mexico City however made a rare impression on Elias. This was the church of the miraculous Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, located half a mile outside the city, reached *via* a walkway specially built for pilgrims. Elias discusses it for an entire two folios in the manuscript—by far the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*’s longest description of any single church.<sup>8</sup> What made this church special among the myriad others Elias saw and barely took note of? Like the Cathedral in Puebla, this one too displayed wealth and glitter enough to impress even a connoisseur of precious metals like Elias: It was, he says, “very rich in silver, gold, and precious robes.” The church’s liberal use of silver stood out: “Even the stairs of the great altar—nine steps in number—were all worked from silver,” he writes. So too were the pillars that held up the altar—all made from solid silver.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 58<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 58<sup>v</sup>-60<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 60<sup>r</sup>.

Yet what drew Elias's attention in this church, even more than its silver, was the legend told him by locals about how it came to be built in its present location. Elias's retelling of this pious local legend deserves to be quoted at length. "We were told," recounts Elias,

That after the Spaniards had entered this land by a few days, an Indian named Juan Diego was wandering outside the city when suddenly a noble woman (*imra'a sharifa*) adorned with great radiant beauty appeared to him and said: 'Go to the bishop of the country and tell him to build for me a house in this place.' The aforementioned Indian trembled at the effulgence of the light from her face and went hurriedly, as the lady (*al-sitt*) had instructed him, to tell the bishop about everything that she ordered. When the bishop contemplated this Indian, in his miserable state and awful clothes, he ordered him humiliated and thrown out. The poor man (*al-miskin*) returned, unsuccessful and cast out, to the place where that noble lady had spoken to him. She appeared to him a second time in the same place and repeated to him her first order, to return to the bishop to tell him what she had commanded. He obeyed her order and went a second time to the bishop and laid before him what the lady had commanded. Again the bishop derided him (*aḥqarahū*) and ordered him thrown out. He returned again, sorrowful and cast out, to the same place. The lady appeared to him for the third time and said to him: 'Why did you not do as I ordered you to do?' He replied to her saying: 'My lady (*yā sittī*)! I carried out your instructions and went twice to the bishop and laid before him all that you ordered me, but he humiliated me and did not believe me!' She said to him: 'Go to him for the third time and tell him all that I ordered, and here—take with you this rose to the bishop and he will believe you.' She then handed him the rose, though it was not its season [*i.e.* for roses]. The Indian took the rose and put it in the cloak that he had wrapped around him, and headed for the home of the bishop. When the servants saw him and recognized him, they humiliated him and threw him out. He said to them: 'For God's sake, allow me to speak with the bishop, because I have a present from the Spanish lady, so that I can deliver it to him'. They informed the bishop of this and he ordered them to let him in. Standing in his presence he said to him: 'My lord, the lady sent me to you three times and says to you to build for her a house in such and such place. Here, she has sent you this rose so that you believe my words and be certain that she has sent me to you.' When the Indian detached the rose from his cloak, the bishop understood the miracle, since it was not the season for roses. He also perceived that the image (*ṣūra*) of the Virgin Mary had imprinted itself on the Indian's cloak, which was of thick wool. At that moment the bishop fell to his knees in front of the Indian and begged his forgiveness. Quickly they snatched away the rose from the Indian. The bishop then stripped him of the cloak on which the image of the Virgin was imprinted and had it paraded in a procession (*zayyāh*) to the ringing of bells and placed it on the great altar with much rejoicing and celebration. They then went out to the designated place and the bishop ordered a church be built there, where she appeared to the Indian, and called it the Church of

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the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. As for the Indian, the aforementioned Juan Diego, spent the rest of his life serving the Virgin in that church, wailing like one of the blessed ones (*al-ṭūbānīyīn*).<sup>10</sup>

The modern reader of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* can easily miss this passage's significance, distracted as much by its fanciful, almost 'fairy-tale' quality, as by Elias's apparent lack of scepticism when relating it.<sup>11</sup> Reports of apparitions of the Virgin Mary were, and remain today, a prominent feature of popular Catholic piety. No doubt Elias had heard and read many reports similar to this one in all its stock features. He had no trouble accepting it as factual—'fanciful' elements and all—although these were not primarily what impressed him about it and moved him to retell it unabridged.<sup>12</sup> This particular story struck a chord with Elias; it spoke to his narrative's central theme—which had less to do with the report's miracles *per se*, than it did with

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 58<sup>v</sup>-59<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Elias quite likely sourced this legend from written Spanish sources which he read instead of having heard it directly from Mexico City locals as he claims. Ghobrial has traced some of Elias's other 'fanciful' stories and anecdotes "scattered like pearls" throughout the narrative—all of which he likewise claimed to have heard or witnessed personally—back to their written sources in Spanish. "Like Don Quixote," Ghobrial writes, Elias lived "as much through the stories he encountered in the pages of books as through the real world he encountered in the Americas"; *Op. cit.*, 67-71.

<sup>12</sup> 'Nestorians' (the name formerly given to members of the East Syriac 'Church of the East' by other Christians) were best-known for their historic rejection of the theological title Θεοτόκος ('God-bearer') for the Virgin Mary—accepted by virtually all other Christian communities, east and west, before the Reformation. Elias however, a committed Uniate, thoroughly assimilated Catholic Marian veneration. He refers to Mary in the narrative as "daughter of my country (*bint bilādī*)", since she too after all came from the Near East and spoke, like him, a dialect of Aramaic! He frequently invokes Mary's aid in times of trouble and recounts personal miracles he experienced through her intercessions: *eg.* his account of his crossing the dangerous Bay of Fonseca between Nicaragua and El Salvador: "I was waiting for a barge (*sunbūk*), called 'canoe', to cross this narrow sea, which is around thirty-four *farsakhs*. The bishop had warned me not to cross this narrow sea because there was great danger in it, and many ships sink. But I relied on the Virgin Mary's assistance, whom I called on as 'daughter of my country (*bint bilādī*)', and rode on the barge!" The question could be asked, whether stories like these constituted one aspect of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s pro-Catholic propaganda? *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fol. 53<sup>r</sup>.

the unlikely hero at its centre: Juan Diego, the no-account, poor (*miskīn*) ‘Indian’ who, only days “after the Spaniards entered [ \*conquered ] this land,” rose to become the Virgin Mary’s chosen vessel.

Juan Diego was among the vanquished inhabitants of the city that was formerly Tenochtitlan. He happened on this auspicious day to be “wandering outside the city”—presumably the new one, Mexico City, erected rapidly over Tenochtitlan’s ruins—when the noble queen mother of the Spaniards’ God suddenly appeared to him, with a message for him to carry to the city’s Catholic bishop. Why did “the lady” appear to Juan Diego and not to the bishop directly, who was a Spaniard and supposed man of God? Or why did she not appear to another lower-ranking Spaniard at least, whose appearance—of less “miserable state and awful clothes”—would have been less offensive to the bishop? Why complicate things, by making this “poor” and “despised” Indian endure rounds of insults and mistreatment as the bearer of her message? Herein of course lies this story’s entire appeal for Elias. Juan Diego, the Indian chosen deliberately as the Virgin’s chosen messenger, was also the message itself.

In this story’s ‘original’ context this message was directed primarily at the high-minded bishop of Mexico City: Lowly Juan Diego, the Indian, was in no way one to be despised by him, or by others of his circle—for just as in Apostolic times, *God chose what is low and despised in the world...so that no one might boast in the presence of God.*<sup>13</sup> This message is delivered in the final moment of revelation, when the scales of avarice fall from the bishop’s vision at seeing the

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<sup>13</sup> *cf.* Cor. I, 1:28.

miraculous image of the Virgin Mary imprinted on Juan's woollen garment—the very same “awful clothes” he had three times despised. The humbled bishop promptly “fell to his knees in front of the Indian and begged his forgiveness.”

Elias, following contemporary Catholic writers, framed Spain's discovery and conquest of the New World for Catholicism as an Apostolic endeavor, in which the conversion of the Indians was to be seen as a re-enactment of the early Church's mission extended outside of the small ‘elect’ Jewish nation to the multitude of the Roman empire's non-Jewish pagan ‘gentiles’. Its latter-day spiritual fruit was the very likes of Juan Diego. As his name suggests, Juan was an Indian who had adopted the religion of the Spanish conquerors. He was a newly-baptized convert to Roman Catholicism—one of many in the New World, who until recently were the last of far-off pagans. Now he was enjoying the full perks as part of God's elect: After all, how many Spanish ‘cradle’-Catholics, bishops included, were deemed worthy in their lifetimes, like Juan, of multiple visions of the Virgin Mary?

For Elias's rhetorical purposes Juan Diego's story contained another more relevant message, whose application went far beyond its original context. This was in fact the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s central message, directed at Elias's East Syriac brethren in the Ottoman empire. Put simply, this message was this: Conversion to Catholicism was what brought a demonstrable improvement in Juan Diego's life—in his spiritual *and* social status: It followed therefore, that if Elias's brethren hoped similarly to improve their life, then they needed only to do like Juan: convert to Catholicism—*i.e.* join the Unia being preached by European missionaries in their region. One of their own brethren—a very prominent and visible member of their community—had

already led the way for them: the author of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, Elias of Mosul. Here was perhaps the main reason for Elias's interest in the Juan Diego legend: the Indian's success story signified his own remarkable success story, as a convert to Catholicism.

Despite the disparity in their circumstances, Juan Diego the Indian and Elias of Mosul the 'Chaldean'<sup>14</sup> priest had significant things in common: Both were adult converts to Catholicism; both were unlikely heroes in their own right. Elias, like Juan, came from a vanquished people: the East Syriac 'Nestorian' Church of the East, whose spiritual territory had once spanned the entire Silk Road from Eastern China to Mesopotamia, but had been reduced during more recent history to a forsaken corner of the Ottoman empire.<sup>15</sup> Elias was moreover an exile from his own community, rejected by them for his conversion to Catholicism, forced to flee his home in Ottoman Mesopotamia, cursed now to "wander outside" it (see below, Sect. II). Yet Elias's degradation, like Juan's, had been turned into distinction—made possible solely by his conversion: In the 'New World', as the passages cited above demonstrate well, Elias now travelled as a *somebody*, a man of repute who was eagerly sought out as a friend wherever he went—even feared to an extent—by viceroys, governors, bishops and abbots alike. From his exile, Elias

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<sup>14</sup> Ar. *Kaldānī*, Syr. *Kaldāyā*; the designation is used by Elias several times in the narrative to describe his own ethno-linguistic affiliation. In later times, the term 'Chaldean' became used—mostly by Europeans—exclusively for Uniates: *i.e.* members of the 'Chaldean Catholic church', to distinguish them from 'Nestorians'.

<sup>15</sup> The standard history for the East Syriac church in English, covering each period from the Sasanian, the Arab, through the community's dramatic rise then devastation in the Mongol period, all the way to modern times, remains, Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

became perhaps the most impressive Arabic-speaking world traveller of his generation. He was in the midst of penning the first eye-witness account of the Americas in Arabic.

Juan Diego was not the only Indian in whom Elias showed interest. Juan was paradigmatic: Elias's keen interest, expressed in very complex ways throughout the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, extended to the whole New World indigenous 'Indian' population—whom he saw as the main beneficiaries of Spain's New World colonial/missionary project. In fact, the figure of the New World 'Indian', I argue in this Chapter, dominates the narrative; he is at the heart of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s pro-Catholic propagandistic message. Unpacking Elias's portrayal of the Indians in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* will be a major focus in this chapter.

#### *The Problem: Elias and the Indians*

By the time Elias arrived in the colonies, through the sustained efforts of missionaries, many Spanish American Indians—like Juan Diego—had already opted for conversion to Roman Catholicism and were living alongside the Spaniards in cities, towns, or on mission-communes, integrated within the colonial economy. Besides these, a substantial number of Indian tribes remained—from Elias's standpoint—recalcitrantly pagan. Elias encountered both groups in his eight-year tour. As a Catholic convert himself, his natural sympathies were with the former group. Elias furthermore could not resist seeing in the New World Indian division between Catholic converts and pagan refuseniks a reflection of the bitter division obtaining in his own community: between Uniates like himself and the stalwart traditionalists who opposed him (see below). The choice which the Indians faced in the New World was the same choice which confronted the East Syriac community at home: Conversion or non-

conversion—to join the Catholic Unia, or remain stubbornly opposed to it. Those who chose conversion became beneficiaries in Elias's mind, spiritually *and* materially; they became *grafted like wild olive branches* into the living body of God's elect.<sup>16</sup> Those on the other hand who refused, who chose prideful rebellion, remained cut off from that living body and cast away like deadwood. Portraying the Indians' situation in this light—as a mirror in which his East Syriac readers could see themselves and the choices they faced—was a large part of the reason why Elias took up his pen in the first place to write about his New World experiences.

In analyzing Elias's portrayal of the Indians in the New World, we must keep in mind something which is perhaps intuitive: that his portrayal has less to do with the Indians themselves—whom he *did* in fact encounter—than with Elias's own idiosyncratic set of personal and ideological concerns. In this fact there is nothing surprising or intrinsically offensive. Nowadays, as relates broadly to the study of travel literature, it is considered axiomatic knowledge that portrayals of 'foreign' peoples, or 'others', in travel narratives—whether positive or negative, regardless of what language they are written in, or to which 'national' literature they belong—are equally if not more self-portrayals as they are objective portrayals. A robust body of scholarship has grown over several decades which elucidates this convoluted relationship—in travel literature, as well as in literature more broadly—between representations of the foreign, the exotic/familiar, noble/savage, hostile/benevolent 'other', and the 'self'.<sup>17</sup> Even the best

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<sup>16</sup> *cf.* Rom. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Analyses of European 'orientalist' perceptions of the Eastern/Islamic 'other', which have proliferated ever since Edward Said first published his spirited denunciation, are too exhaustive to list here. Some more recent penetrating studies into this theme going in both directions between East and West are, Ahmed Idrissi Alami, *Mutual Othering: Islam, modernity, and the Politics of Cross-cultural Encounters in Pre-colonial*



travel-writers are regularly proven guilty of this: of portraying foreign peoples whom they encounter abroad, in a manner which contains necessarily an element of projection—of either their own private, or their collective society's, ideals, preoccupations, concerns, prejudices, shortcomings, insecurities. The 'other' is a mirror for the private or collective 'self'. This mirror can be useful—such as when the other's perceived virtues are routinely held up as a rebuke to the indolent self, as a means of goading it into greater action towards the better. Too often however, it proves the opposite: a warped image of one's own or society's unacknowledged vices, disingenuously deposited onto the other, to be borne by him like a scapegoat—a hindrance to greater understanding of either self *or* other, bearing real resemblance to neither.

When it comes to encounters between European colonizers and non-European colonized peoples, as a general rule the second type of representation is observed to predominate—from the European side. And it is true that Elias saw mostly from the European side. He may have seen a version of himself in Juan Diego in the legend above, yet the reader of Elias's narrative cannot fail to note that his actual position in the colonial social order resembled more closely that of the bishop in the story. Elias's 'New World' was in a real sense the bishop's world, not Juan Diego's: Was not this bishop just like one of Elias's so many wealthy and powerful Spanish

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*Moroccan and European Travel Writing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013); Roxanne Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). A classic work in Arabic exploring aspects of this theme in modern Arabic travel literature remains, Nāzik Sābā Yārid, *al-Raḥḥālūn al-'Arab wa-Ḥaḍārat al-Gharb fi 'l-Naḥḍa al-'Arabīya al-Ḥadītha: al-Ṣirā' al-Fikrī wa 'l-Ḥaḍārī* (Beirut: Nawfal, 1992); for an even more historically-comprehensive study, see Ḥusayn Naṣṣār, *Adab al-Riḥla* (Cairo: Maktabat Lubnān, al-Sharika al-Miṣriya al-'Ālamīya li'l-Nashr-Lūnjmān, 1991).

'friends' with whom he regularly hobnobbed and who sought his favor? Indeed, most of Elias's recorded interactions with actual Indians in the narrative are with subordinates and servants—who in turn regard him, a foreigner from the Ottoman empire, like any other Spanish overseer. Some of these interactions feature the violence normally associated with unequal colonial master-servant relations (see below, Sect. V).

Elias saw the New World mostly from the European side—*mostly*, but never completely. He travelled with his better foot as an insider to the world of the Spanish colonizers, but all the while kept his other foot deliberately outside of it. Elias never lost sight of his 'Eastern' origins: he even learned to use them cynically to his advantage in Europe and the New World (see below). He remained always closer to the Spaniards' world than the Indians'—but his outsider status allowed him occasionally to act as a mediator between them. The ways in which Elias related to the Indians often bore resemblance to those of his Spanish friends, yet were never wholly identical with them. The set of concerns underpinning Elias's portrayal of Indians in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*—connected almost entirely to his own semi-tragic personal history, his strained relationship to his East Syriac community in the Ottoman empire, and the question of the Unia—was unique and dissimilar to those of Spanish Catholic clergy.

Elias's way of relating generally to the Indians in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* is complicated and contradictory, difficult to parse—notwithstanding the clear-cut division he made among them between Catholic converts and pagans. We can get a foretaste of some of this complexity if we continue again the thread of the Juan Diego legend where we left it above: The Spanish bishop, we remember, having been humbled, fell on his knees before the Indian whom he had

previously despised—thus rendering him finally due honor as the Virgin Mary’s chosen vessel. But did the bishop really do so? The story continues: “Quickly they snatched away the rose from the Indian. The bishop then stripped him of the cloak on which the image of the Virgin was imprinted and had it paraded in a procession to the ringing of bells.” This hardly sounds like due honor. Like the conquistadores who helped themselves to Mexico’s gold and silver, the bishop took possession of Juan’s s miraculous rose and cloak without apparently bothering to ask his consent. Due honour was rendered to these sacred items, but not to their original owner. The Virgin’s message was heeded, her instructions obeyed—a church was quickly erected by the bishop at the place designated by her; the bearer of her message on the other hand was tossed aside. What became in the end of Juan Diego the Indian Catholic convert, the supposed hero of this story? “He spent the rest of his life,” we are told, “serving the Virgin in that church, wailing like one of the blessed ones.” Only the most monkish devout would aspire to such a blessed outcome. Most readers of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* likely were not in this category. Elias of Mosul most certainly wasn’t himself.

This contradiction logically extends to the person of Elias of Mosul. Elias takes pains throughout his narrative to highlight the benefits he received as a direct cause of his own conversion to Catholicism: He had made it far indeed in the world for an East Syriac Christian from Mosul, a *dhimmī* from the Ottoman empire. He had done so by taking full advantage of opportunities for personal advancement which his non-Uniate brethren at home never dreamed of—a fact which none could dispute. However, a nuanced and historically informed reading of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, which takes into account more recent findings (see below, Sect. II), reveals a

different picture: Behind the convert success story is a hidden story of pain and loss, associated with exile. Elias paid a dear psychological, and even existential, price for all the supposed benefits he received.

These are some of the unresolved thematic, even moral complexities, that plague this text and have baffled many of its readers. These complexities reflect ultimately the elusive, shape-shifting, enigmatic personality and identity of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s author, Elias of Mosul—a man who within his own narrative takes on at various times the discordant roles of priest, healer, missionary, fortune-seeker, soldier, peacemaker, ransomer of captives, ruthless slave-driver; who traversed more political and cultural borders, who travelled farther probably than any other Ottoman subject during his time; who belonged to many worlds, yet simultaneously to none.<sup>18</sup>

Disentangling the complex way in which Elias related to the Indians he encountered, dissecting some of his scattered textual portrayals of them in the narrative, can provide a key to elucidating some of the enigma surrounding Elias's identity and personality. Conversely, a query into key distinguishing elements of Elias's biography helps us better understand aspects of how he approaches and portrays the Indians in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*. This becomes possible however only in light of what we now know of Elias of Mosul's 'secret life'—uncovered relatively recently by the Oxford historian and authority on Eastern Christianity, John-Paul Ghobrial. The

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<sup>18</sup> Ghobrial writes concerning Elias's multiplicity of contradicting identities in the text: "At one time or another, I have thought him to be a victim, a charlatan, a genius, even a murderer. All are possibly true"; *Op. cit.*, 55.

latter's findings, on whose foundations much of this chapter has been written, are discussed in the section which follows.

## II. *Elias of Mosul's 'Secret Life'*

Rev. Antoine Rabbath's first discovery and publication the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* in 1905 was considered to be a milestone in the study and historiography of Arabic travel literature. Translations into various European languages quickly followed; scholarly commentaries continued to be published in both Western and Arab scholarly journals over the century since.<sup>19</sup> Till recently however, Elias of Mosul's identity and personality—his real life—remained mostly shrouded in mystery, the subject of little more than informed guesswork by historians and philologists. Lacking the most basic biographical knowledge of the author, any closer reading of the text suffered from an impediment by default.

The problem was that the text of the narrative itself provides few useful or reliable leads. Like many from his part of the world, Elias had a penchant and native talent for telling 'fanciful' stories, or *ḥikāyāt*—part of the secret behind the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s enduring appeal. Elias filled many of the text's 65 folios<sup>20</sup> with enchanting *Arabian Nights*-like 'eye-witness' reports on his encounters with New World '*ajā'ib/gharā'ib*—eg. giants' bones, blood-sucking vampire bats,

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<sup>19</sup> For a multi-lingual survey of translations and scholarship on the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* since its original publication, see *Ibid.*, 53-55.

<sup>20</sup> The complete British Library MS comprises 140 folios—of which Elias's travel narrative takes up the first 65. The remaining 55 folios contain Elias's 'History (*tārīkh*)' of the spread of Christianity in South America: a *mukhtaṣar* put together from Spanish chronicles made available to him in his travels. Ghobrial has written a separate analysis of Elias's 'History'; see "Stories Never Told: The First Arabic History of the New World", *Osmanlı Aras tırmaları / Journal of Ottoman Studies*, xl (2012), cited in *Op. cit.*, 71, n. 50.

lethal projectile weeds, man-devouring alligators, etc. Yet when it came to his private life and motivations, his family background, his past prior to traveling, Elias is taciturn to a fault. Who was Elias of Mosul really? What life did he lead prior to setting out on the impressive travels he describes? What became of him after those travels? What motivated him in the first place to travel so far from his Ottoman home? And more importantly, what motivated him to write about his travels? To questions like these, Elias erected as it were a wall of silence. The text's fragmented clues are mostly misleading—as though Elias, hoping to keep his real life and identity a closely-guarded secret, deliberately threw his more curious readers off his scent. “The more we search for answers to such questions,” Ghobrial writes, “the more it seems that the Book of Travels was inscribed on a palimpsest of silences, a secret life that Elias chose not to divulge to his readers.”<sup>21</sup>

In 2014, Ghobrial published an article with his new findings on Elias's biography in the historical journal *Past and Present*, entitled “The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory.” The article is a *tour de force* of dedicated and insightful scholarship, of meticulous archival research and global detective work. For readers of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, its publication performed a groundbreaking feat, second to none: It solved much of the mystery that has surrounded Elias's identity for more than a century. Ghobrial followed Elias's elusive historical-documentary trail across three continents—in every place where Elias “left traces of himself scattered across archives and chanceries in the Middle East, Europe, and South

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<sup>21</sup> Ghobrial. *Op. cit.*, 76.

America.<sup>22</sup> He dug for traces of Elias in the memoirs of European missionaries and clergymen who crossed paths with him on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as in the unofficial communal histories of the 'Chaldean' church. From the scattered clues which he painstakingly pieced together, Ghobrial was able to sketch a fresh and convincing outline of Elias's biography, his background, his motivations: his 'secret life'. From this there emerges a fuller, less dim portrait of Elias—one that is both more intriguing and more tragic than previously known. Elias's 'secret life' had little to do in fact with his celebrated activities as a trans-imperial traveller, and far more with the little-understood local, even parochial dissensions and rivalries within the East Syriac community which he left behind.<sup>23</sup> Elias's 'secret life' becomes the key to a new understanding his narrative; it opens up the very possibility of a more nuanced literary reading of the *Kitāb Sīyāḥa*. Here is an exemplary instance of literary analysis finding its stimulation in the findings of historical research.

Here is not the place to summarize all the many facets of Ghobrial's findings. What concerns our purposes in this present chapter are the following broad elements of Elias's 'secret life':

(1) Where previous commentators unanimously assumed Elias to have been a Uniate 'Chaldean' already from birth, Ghobrial firmly establishes Elias's identity as a 'convert' to Catholicism. Elias of Mosul was a former East Syriac 'Nestorian turned Catholic', through a

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

conscious adult choice—not by birth.<sup>24</sup> This is a crucial point of distinction. In a world that set a high premium on tradition, continuity and communal/confessional solidarity, a convert to the Catholic Unia was someone who made a decisive break with the past and with prescribed norms. Such a break could be traumatic: It was in Elias’s case. It is difficult nowadays for us to appreciate just how precarious psychologically, and even physically, was often the situation of ten of such early converts. Ghobrial’s European missionary sources paint a picture of Elias which is in many ways an “archetypal image of countless Eastern Christians whose support for the Catholic Church left them isolated within their own communities.”<sup>25</sup> This picture can be interpreted as tragic-heroic: As a convert, Elias was something of young pioneer; he plotted his own course and thus braved considerable internal and external obstacles, crises, dislocations, even dangers.<sup>26</sup> Conversion was by no means the ‘safe’ choice for him. On the contrary, it brought him isolation and marginalization within his own family and community.

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<sup>24</sup> Ghobrial found an account of Elias’s ‘conversion story’ related by Girolamo Sebastiani, a Carmelite missionary who met Elias for the first time in 1658—ten years before he left on the journey described in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*. According to Sebastiani, Elias had made another trip to Rome prior this one, where he witnessed Pope Alexander VII publicly wash the feet of the poor during the Maundy Thursday ritual. The spectacle moved him, after which he enlisted himself in the Catholics’ efforts to bring the ‘Nestorian heretics’ of his nation into the Roman fold; see Girolamo Sebastiani, *Prima spedizione all’Indie Orientali del P. F. Giuseppe di Santa Maria, Carmelitano Scalzo, delegato apostolico ne’ regni de’ Malavari* (Rome, 1666), 275. cited in Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 80.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>26</sup> It would not be until more than a century after Elias’s death—a long, painful period filled with interne-cine fighting between pro-Catholic and anti-Catholic factions of the East Syriac community—that the majority of East Syriacs finally joined the Unia, establishing what became known as the ‘Chaldean Catholic Church’ with its headquarters in Baghdad. Although during Elias of Mosul’s time, the Ottoman government heavily favored the traditionalist faction over the Uniates, radically changed circumstances caused them to recognize the Chaldean Catholics as a separate *millet* in 1846; see Anthony O’Mahoney, “Syriac Christianity in the Modern Middle East” in ed. Michael Angold, *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 511-536.



(2) Elias was not just any convert to Catholicism; he was a *key* convert. Indeed, his travels only take on real significance when viewed within “his role as a key figure in a wider story about the spread of Catholicism in the Middle East.”<sup>27</sup> Elias in fact was a member of the East Syriac community’s most prominent patriarchal family: the Abūnā clan of Mosul, which enjoyed a monopoly on the office of Patriarch going back at least two centuries.<sup>28</sup> Elias moreover was nephew to Eliya VIII Shim‘ūn (r. 1617-60)<sup>29</sup>, the long-reigning East Syriac Patriarch who remained till his death an obstinate opponent of the Unia, who rebuffed repeated Western missionary efforts to court him and other members of his family.<sup>30</sup> The picture of Elias comes into yet bolder relief: “As a man from within the patriarchal family who stood out in his community for his pro-Catholic inclinations.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 89.

<sup>28</sup> Solving the mystery of Elias’s family name and origins was one of Ghobrial’s most significant breakthroughs. In the MS., his name reads: *al-Khūrī ʿIlyās ibn Qissīs Ḥannā al-Mawṣilī min ʿilat [sic] bayt ʿAmmūn (Kitāb Siyāḥa, fol. 3<sup>v</sup>)*. Based on this apparent lettering, previous scholars rendered his family name as either ʿAmmūn, ʿAmūnā or ʿAmūdā—none of which names ever turned up in community records. Ghobrial puts forward his very credible assertion, based on contemporary testimonies, that ʿAmmūn is in fact a corruption of Abūnā—the name of the most prominent East Syriac patriarchal clan. The Abūnā, also known as Bār Māmā clan, dominated the patriarchate headquartered near Alqosh (northern Iraq) at the monastery of Rabban Hormizd since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century; see Helleen H.L. Murre-van den Berg, “The Patriarchs of the Church of the East from the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries”, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies*, ii (1999), 237. That Elias was a member of this patriarchal clan explains also why he would have been a primary target for Catholic missionaries at the time. The question of how Abūnā became morphed into ʿAmmūn in the MS. has not been determined. Simple misspelling can be ruled out, since their respective shapes (عمون vs أبونا) are too disparate; see Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 77-79.

<sup>29</sup> see Murre-van den Bern, *Op. cit.*, 245.

<sup>30</sup> In general, Catholic missionary efforts among Eastern Christians took a ‘top-down’ approach, targeting first of all each community’s leadership for conversion—with the assumption that the flock would readily follow their shepherd if he took the lead for them in the Unia.

<sup>31</sup> Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 88.

(3) Elias's 'lone-wolf' conversion, his close relations maintained with Catholic missionaries, his cooperation with their sustained efforts to convert members of his family and community—these became a flash-point within the Abūnā clan, and more broadly in the “growing rivalries between pro- and anti-Catholic factions in the community” at large.<sup>32</sup> Elias quickly found himself anathematized and suspended as a priest by his uncle, the Patriarch. His rivals spread the politically-charged and dangerous rumor that Elias had ‘turned Frank’.<sup>33</sup> The feud took a deadly turn; Elias’s life may have been threatened. In 1668, when Elias finally left Baghdad to embark on the world travels that would one day make his name famous, he was likely not leaving voluntarily. Elias arrived in fact on Europe’s shores as a fugitive, an exile.<sup>34</sup>

(4) To Ghobrial we owe also our definite knowledge of Elias’s fate after his travels in the New World. Elias never did return home to the Ottoman empire as most readers had assumed, but lived out the final years of his life, in Spain: in ‘exile’. Whether by choice or not, Elias became one of the growing cohort of Eastern Christians who made Europe their permanent new home as *émigrés*.<sup>35</sup> The rupture with past, with ancestral home, family and faith, was final. It was here, from his permanent Spanish exile, that Elias “put the finishing touches to his tale of the triumph of the Catholic faith in both the East and the West.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>34</sup> In the least, this was the story Elias himself told that same year in Rome, claiming upon arrival there before Papal authorities that he had “been driven out by ‘Nestorian heretics’.” *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>35</sup> This theme will be taken up in earnest in the next chapter.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

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All of this newly-uncovered information helps us answer the central question of why Elias of Mosul wrote about his travels. The *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, as Ghobrial convincingly argues, must be understood first and foremost as a piece of Catholic propaganda aimed by Elias at an Eastern Christian, more specifically East Syriac, readership. It is Elias of Mosul's 'testament of faith', written within the wider context of confessional polemical writings in Arabic by Eastern Christians—a diverse genre which, though not well-understood and little-studied by scholars, proliferated with the advent of the Catholic Unia.<sup>37</sup> Elias's primary reason for writing about his New World travels was to convince more of his brethren to convert to Catholicism, to take the same bold step forward into the Unia which he had. "In the post-Reformation struggle for the hearts and minds of Eastern Christians," Ghobrial writes, Elias's "stories about the New World under Catholic rule represented a powerful form of propaganda, and this is how the Book of Travels would have been read by his contemporaries."<sup>38</sup> The success of Spain's imperial project in the Americas—material *and* spiritual—was cast as a vindication of the Catholic church's claims to being the 'elect' church, which exclusively embodied full, universal Christian truth and apostolicity. Against this background, Elias's own impressive *curriculum vitae* could be set forth as a model, an inspiration for those contemplating conversion like him. Though the road

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<sup>37</sup> According to Ghobrial, many such 'testaments of faith' exist in MS. form—a "wild assortment of confessional polemic—nearly all unpublished and unstudied, deposited in libraries across Europe; *Ibid.*, 89-90.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

was hazardous, the rewards (again, material *and* spiritual) were many, as he hoped to demonstrate to them.

Elias had also more purely personal reasons for writing about the New World. The *Kitāb Siyāḥa* was his *apologia pro vita sua*. As somebody who had suffered persecution and even permanent exile for his conversion, writing the book offered him a chance to ‘set the record straight’, even to “settle old scores back home.”<sup>39</sup> On a more basic level, as Ghobrial further argues, the act of writing was a powerful way for Elias, an exile, a *gharīb* in *al-ghurba*, to remember home.<sup>40</sup> The New World could become for him a canvas for his own musings about his home, his past; for navigating through some of the painful dislocations he had experienced throughout his life.

Whether primarily confessional or personal in nature, or an interweaving of both, at the centre of the story Elias wished to tell, the argument he wished to make about the New World, were its original inhabitants: the ‘Indians’—those who, like his own East Syriac people in the Ottoman empire, faced the all-important choice of whether to convert to Catholicism or not. On this choice hung the future of both peoples. As his ‘secret life’ has revealed to us, Elias had staked his own personal future irreversibly on one side of the debate. In large part through the example of the New World Indians, Elias hoped to prove to his readers that his choice—conversion—was the only correct one his community could take.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>40</sup> Ghobrial writes: “For a man nearing the end of his life, writing such a work, and doing so in Arabic in particular, could simply have offered him a powerful way of remembering the past, remembering his family, even remembering his own language after so many years spent wandering the world.” *Ibid.*, 92-93.

### III. *The Kitāb Siyāḥa's Preface (dībāja)*

The centrality of the New World Indians within Elias's project can be seen nowhere more clearly than in the text's short, semi-classical, quasi-theological preface (*dībāja*). Here Elias lays out his overall confessional, apologetical 'case' in the plainest terms before proceeding to the main travel narrative. He presents his readers with his idiosyncratic take on Christian salvation history, in which the Indians of the New World—in step with the East Syriac Christians for whom he was writing—took the contemporary center-stage. Elias saw in the on-going mass conversions which he witnessed, of pagan Indians to the Catholic faith—a people previously “concealed from sight and mind” and unknown to world history—a miraculous, apostolic event. It was comparable in significance and scope only to the early spread of Christianity throughout the pagan Roman world. This new event, Elias believed, contained important instruction for his East Syriac brethren at home.

The preface begins as routine and run-of-the-mill, with a paean to the Creator followed by a brief recap of Christian salvation history from the standard Roman Catholic perspective—*i.e.* with emphasis laid on the early appointment of Peter the Apostle (and by extension his Roman papal successors) as the Church's supreme “head and manager (*rāsuḥā* [sic] *wamudabbiruhā*)”. Jesus's original disciples, Elias highlights, were all (perhaps just like him) “despised, oppressed, cast out, despised...” They were commanded to “tour the whole world and

spread the good news through the preaching of the Gospel”; some “went to the Eastern lands, some went east, others to the south (*al-qibla*)<sup>41</sup> and some to the north.”<sup>42</sup>

The world-evangelizing work of these original disciples continued in history “generation after generation (*jīl ba‘da jīl*)”, so long as the collective church remained firm in its foundations on the exclusive “rock (*al-ṣakhra*)” of Peter’s successors, united in “obedience to the Roman church.” So long as they had Rome as their center of command, Christians continued to spiritually conquer the world, to spread and expand “until not a place or clime (*iqīm*) in all four corners of the inhabited world (*al-maskūna*)<sup>43</sup> remained free from the preaching of the gospel and the soundness of the correct faith (*al-īmān al-mustaqīm*).”<sup>44</sup>

So far we are still within a more or less standard Catholic understanding of church history, with the Roman papacy as its chief unifying and guiding principle. It is in the next part of the preface that Elias’s formulation becomes uniquely his own. He describes the tragic falling or “driving away”—the breaking off from the good olive tree of some of its original branches:

But that cursed slanderer [*i.e.* ‘the devil’], the enemy of good and piety, never ceases striving and keeping vigil in order to rattle the consciences of the faithful, to mislead them (*yutghūhum*), driving them away from the bosom of the Church, their mother. He sets up his nets and his traps and sows in some of their hearts seeds of envy, pride, and rebellion, with the result that some sects (*tawāyif* [sic]) had departed from obedience to the Roman church and its head and manager, the Supreme Pontiff (*al-ḥabr al-a‘zam*) and shepherd of shepherds (*rā’i ‘l-ru‘āt*). They appointed for themselves different

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<sup>41</sup> *i.e.* in the direction of the Ka‘ba, in the Ḥijāz, to which Muslims turn when praying—south from the point of view of most parts of the Ottoman empire.

<sup>42</sup> *Kitāb Siyāha*, fols. 1<sup>v</sup>-2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> A translation of the Greek term *οἰκουμένη*, the term *al-maskūna* is found commonly in the writings of Arab Christians.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 2.

leaders, each opposing the other, so that God, may He be blessed and exalted, gave sovereignty over them to nations and rulers without any mercy (*sallaṭa ‘alayhim milalan wa ḥukkām lā rahmatan* [sic] *lahum*). They became their slaves, captives and servants. Thus the saying of our Lord Jesus in the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke the Evangelist was confirmed, where addressing the Jews He says...Behold the first are last and the last first.<sup>45</sup>

This is a crucial passage—one which Ghobrial looks at closely as well.<sup>46</sup> If the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* had been written in a European language, as he explains, then we would understand this passage as merely parroting talking-points of Counter Reformation polemics against Protestant ‘reformers’, who “departed from obedience to the Roman church”—thus splintering into “sects”. The “sects” intended in this passage however—and here is the key difference—were not Europe’s Protestants, but Elias’s East Syriac brethren for whom he was writing in Arabic. If they would be receptive to Elias’s message to them, they were to perceive themselves now within a new light: as castaways from “the bosom of the Church, their mother,” separated for centuries already from the one true flock united under the Papal “shepherd of shepherds.” Painful and dislocating as this new perception was, it would help them nevertheless understand their present state of cultural and geo-political disenfranchisement as Christian *ra‘āyā* under the Ottoman Turks. For having supposedly renounced their “Supreme Pontiff” appointed by God—the Roman pope—God had renounced them in turn; “gave sovereignty over them to nations and rulers without any mercy”.

Explaining long-term Muslim rule to Christians who lived under it as a form of Divine punishment, ‘for their sins’, was nothing new: this was one of the ‘standard’ explanations

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 2<sup>v</sup>-3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> *cf.* Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 71-72.

Eastern Christians gave ever since the first great wave of Arab-Muslim conquests in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> Elias was nevertheless adding a new element to this standard formulation: by identifying his community's collective 'sin'—which brought on the disaster—with their rejection of the Roman church and of Papal authority. Their sin was on a doctrinal level, resulting in their fall. If one accepted the implied argument—present all through the narrative—that wealth and geopolitical power were the valid measuring instruments of sound Christian doctrine, then it was hard for any East Syriac Christian to deny the validity of Elias's assertion. Was there a more convincing, more compelling way to explain the Church of the East's territorial, numerical and cultural decline on the one hand, contrasted by the Roman Catholic church's robust and expanding global imperial machine on the other?

With peculiar Pauline logic, Elias goes on to explain how the Eastern Christians' tragic fall was the new cause for the salvation of faraway pagans: the New World 'Indians'. The breaking off of the former, 'natural' branch, was the new occasion for the supernatural grafting in of the latter, 'unnatural' one.<sup>48</sup> Or as Ghobrial puts it, "For Elias, the spread of Christianity in the

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<sup>47</sup> Similar explanations were and continue to be frequently used by Christians (and other religious groups) when confronted with military and territorial losses. The theme has roots in the Hebrew Bible, which records innumerable occurrences of God punishing the people of Israel 'for their sins', by incited surrounding nations to attack them militarily and prevail against them. In the context of Christian-Muslim relations in the Near East, we find perhaps the earliest expression of this theme in the festal sermons of Orthodox Patriarch Sophronios of Jerusalem (†639), delivered in the period when his Patriarchal See fell to Caliph Umar I (r. 634-44) and his Arab Muslim army. He wrote of the Saracens who, "on account of our sins have now risen up against us unexpectedly and ravage all with cruel and feral design"; see Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on early Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1997), 69, cited in Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church In the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims In the World of Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), 25.

<sup>48</sup> *cf.* Rom. 11.



New World was directly linked to the refusal of the Eastern Churches to accept the supremacy of Rome. The consequence was that the newly converted populations of the Americas threatened to replace the Eastern Christians in the providential history of the world.<sup>49</sup> Nowhere is Elias's vision of salvation history more unconventional than here, in his direct linking of the soteriological fates of these two dissimilar, unconnected peoples who inhabited opposite ends of the globe. He writes,

When the aforementioned sects scattered from the bosom of the Holy Church, the Lord Christ willed to lead in other peoples in their stead, of differing races (*ajnās*) and natural dispositions (*aṭbā*), of strange tongues and languages, who inhabit the peaks of hills and mountains, living a savage life (*ʿīshīya waḥshīya*) not differing from cattle, without knowledge of the true God, enslaved and led along by the cursed devil's error. One tribe of them worshipped stones, some of the worshipped beasts, others worshipped trees. Another offered their own members as sacrifices to the cursed devil. They inhabit the fourth clime (*al-iqlīm al-rābiʿ*) which was concealed from sight and mind. Even the great saint and teacher of the Holy Church, St. Augustine, used to believe that this clime was uninhabited by humans. Our intention is to give proof for and demonstrate the return of the aforementioned sects to the true faith and into the bosom of the Holy Church, to the point that many of them [*i.e.* the 'Indians'] after entering the faith of Christ were numbered among the ranks of the saints (*ḥusibū min jumlati 'l-qiddīsīn*).<sup>50</sup>

The 'Indians' of the "fourth clime" were a new 'elect' people, chosen by God recently to replace Eastern Christian "sects" who had fallen from their original Godly calling, had "scattered from the bosom of the Holy Church"—in the same way that Roman gentiles replaced Jews in the early Church. And behold the great wonder! Not only were the Indians returning "to the true faith and into the bosom of the Holy Church"; but "indeed many of them after entering the faith of Christ," Elias affirms, "were numbered among the ranks of the saints."

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<sup>49</sup> Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 72.

<sup>50</sup> *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fol. 3<sup>r</sup>.

Elias makes even more clear his propagandistic ‘case’ in the final part of the above-quoted passage. By writing about the New World, he hopes “to give proof for and demonstrate the return of the aforementioned sects [ *i.e.* the Eastern Christians] to the true faith and into the bosom of the Holy Church.” By narrating to Eastern Christians—Elias’s own brethren *after the flesh*—the story of how these faraway, low-born, utterly savage and pagan ‘Indians’ were preceding them into first place, “into the bosom of the Church,” Elias hoped he might *provoke them to jealousy*. The Indians’ beatification would be the main “proof” Elias offered to his readers, to “demonstrate [their] return” to the true faith. This conversion or “return” of Eastern Christians to the Roman fold would be linked mystically with that of the New World ‘Indians’; the former would recover their lost first place, alongside the latter. We will look now at how Elias builds his case, by following the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*’s narrative sequence from start to finish.

#### IV. *The Journey to Europe*

That there is a marked dissonance between the preface and the main narrative of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* is undeniable. A sudden shift takes place in terms of register, diction, genre, and content. To an extent, this dissonance is a normal feature in Arabic literary works. From discussing theology and salvation history in the preface, Elias plunges his unsuspecting readers as it were headlong into a fast-paced *Arabian Nights* world of desert travel, danger and adventure, of ‘*ajā’ib* and *gharā’ib*, not to mention pious pilgrimage. The transition is apparent already in the narrative’s opening lines. “I, the lowly one in priesthood,” Elias writes,

Declare that in the year the Lord Christ 1668, I left from Baghdad with the intention of visiting the tomb of the Lord Christ in the company of the *Topci Bashi*, Mikhā’il Āghā. We took the desert road. Halfway on the road, Bedouin bandits (*luṣūṣ a’rāb*) came out

against us numbering around one hundred men. A battle ensued between us and we defeated them. That was on the day of the Feast of the Resurrection (*'ayd al-qiyāma*, i.e. 'Easter'). We were only twelve souls, but by the power of God and with the instruments of war (*ālāt al-ḥarb*)—our muskets—which we were carrying, we were victorious over them. We took back to the road, traveling to Damascus. From Damascus, I continued on to Jerusalem and was honored by visiting the holy places.<sup>51</sup>

From Jerusalem Elias made his way to the seaport of Iskanderun, from where he sailed to Venice, the starting point of his subsequent tour of Catholic Europe. The rapid pace of narration from these opening lines is maintained for the whole European stage of Elias's travels; within just five folios<sup>52</sup> of sparse reporting, Elias covers nearly every major city and cultural center in Italy, France, Portugal and Spain; he visits every noteworthy site and makes friends with men of repute: kings, princes, viceroys, governors and senior clergy. By the time Elias boards the galleon at Cádiz to cross the Atlantic, we can hardly believe that the year is already 1675, a whole seven years from the time he left Baghdad—roughly the equivalent length of time he will later spend in the Americas. The 'journey to Europe' was clearly not the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s centerpiece, but a stepping-stone, a prelude.

What little Elias does report on Europe gives us our first look at some of his puzzling temperamental and moral contradictions. If we got the impression from the preface of Elias as someone mostly interested in religious questions, our impression here is of somebody more mercenary in his dominant thoughts and motivations. In Venice Elias spent twenty days, "strolling around and visiting the churches." Of these he writes: "The wealth which I saw there,

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 3<sup>v</sup>-4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> Elias's tour of Europe begins at *Ibid.*, fol. 4<sup>v</sup> and continues until his departure for the Americas, fol. 9<sup>r</sup>.

especially in the church of St Mark the Evangelist, is something which cannot be enumerated (*lā yuḥṣā*)!”<sup>53</sup> Already gold and glitter are all that seem to hold Elias’s sustained interest; nothing else does he find worth describing. Of Geneva for instance, Elias found nothing worth noting down, other than it was a city “distinguished in architecture, rich in capital.”<sup>54</sup>

One of the most striking features of the travel narrative as a whole is the almost indelicate precision with which Elias writes about matters pertaining to money. Elias encounters some ‘Nuns of Charity’ in Paris—seventeen virgins and widows from among the nobility (*al-ashrāf*)—who impress him as much (if not more) by their financial acumen as by their “philanthropy and charity”: They secured all their endowments through profitable investments, “earning a profit (*yarbaḥū*) each year of two million, or twenty *karras*.”<sup>55</sup>

It becomes clear quite soon that collecting money was the main reason why Elias was wandering through Catholic Europe and meeting with members of its high society. In this endeavor Elias was far from alone as a Uniate from the Ottoman empire; indeed, he already had many colleagues and ‘competitors’—on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>56</sup> For that matter, Paul of Aleppo and Patriarch Makarios, we remember from the previous chapter, were far from being

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> Elias was not the only Eastern Christian wandering the New World in order to ‘raise funds’. He was however the only one who has left us an extensive personal record. Apparently, they were common enough for their “unacceptable behavior (*malos modos*)” to become a concern for Spanish colonial authorities; see Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 63.

aloof from money matters during their travels in Orthodox Europe. In their case however, the money was openly being collected on behalf of their struggling community, thus deflecting suspicions of avarice. To what end was Elias collecting money? Was he raising funds for the Uniate missionary cause in the East, or was he lining his own pockets? Nearly every commentator on the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* has speculated on this question—a major facet of Elias’s ‘enigma’.<sup>57</sup>

The question, in any case, does not concern us here; the important thing to note is that Elias made a lot of money in Europe; and that later, in the Americas, he made even more money.<sup>58</sup> He also—even more importantly—made it a deliberate point of not hiding this fact, but rather emphasizing it for his readers: in Europe, and even more in the New World. It is not Elias’s interest in money which is unique, but its preponderance. Money is central in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, in a way that it wasn’t in Paul of Aleppo’s *Safra*. Elias never says so outright, but the possibility of making money—lots of money—was undeniably one of the major, if not *the* major attractions of the Unia for which he was ‘arguing’.

The strong case can be made (discussed at the end of this chapter) that Elias’s conversion to Catholicism had mercenary motives. To invite others to the Unia, Elias preached a crude, unarticulated version of what is today, within the context of American Protestantism, called the

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<sup>57</sup> Ghobrial explores this question in detail. He was able, from Vatican archival records, to establish that Elias received official permission in Rome to travel around Europe as an ‘alms-collector’ (*Op. cit.*, 82). From the record of a petition which Elias filed in Mexico City, Ghobrial uncovered a sample of the kinds of stories Elias told in order to elicit donations: Elias was raising money, the petition claimed “for the ‘rescue of his Holy Church and of 4,000 families and 20,000 Catholics suffering under the cruel oppression of the barbarous Muslims (*bárbaros mahometanos*)’”; *Op. cit.*, 84.

<sup>58</sup> Although at no point in the text does Elias provide any figures, even approximate ones, for how much money he made in total during his travels. Elias reveals his bookkeeper’s fiscal precision in the text when only when appraising the income, capital and assets of everybody around him—not his own.

'Prosperity Gospel': Material prosperity, as one of the manifest signs that accompany spiritual election—which for Elias meant membership in the correctly-believing Roman church. Elias begins making his case already in Europe; but America, the new land of promise, would be the real bonanza.

The story of how Elias fatefully departed from southern Spain to the New World provides us with the pattern, repeated continually throughout the narrative, of how this itinerant Uniate East Syriac priest earned his fortune and favors with the high and mighty in the Catholic world. He writes:

I returned to the aforementioned city of Madrid and dwelled in the house of one prince (*amīr*) called the Duke de Obro. From him and from the rest of my 'friends' I received exceedingly favorable treatment. A certain lady [who had reared the king], named Marquesa de Losobles, asked the king to grant me permission to celebrate mass for him (*dastūr an uqaddis lahū*). I had with me a Roman deacon (*shammās rūmī*) whom I had taught to serve in my mass. I entered the church of the king and conducted mass in front of him and his mother. Then, afterwards the queen called for that same lady who had reared the king and told her to ask me what I wished for, so that she would grant it to me.<sup>59</sup>

This was Elias of Mosul's trade, which he had honed by now: the art of turning his Eastern cultural-religious 'exoticness' in Europeans' eyes into a profit. Wherever he travelled, Elias performed his 'Chaldean rite' East Syriac mass before assembled notables—in this scene, the king and queen. This liturgical novelty, combined with Elias's exotic vestments and 'Oriental' appearance<sup>60</sup>, caused a sensation in Europe's higher Catholic circles<sup>61</sup>—one that had great

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<sup>59</sup> *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fol. 8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> Uniate priests were not required to adopt Roman liturgical rites and vestments.

<sup>61</sup> There are many examples in the narrative that illustrate how Elias very consciously 'played up' his exotic 'Oriental' credentials: *eg.* when he performs one of his masses before another assembly, leaving them "in awe because of the beard (*daqn*) and change of vestments (*taghyr al-thiyāb*)" (*Ibid.*, fo. 25<sup>r</sup>). Elias understood well

potential (as can be seen from this anecdote) for eliciting generosity among the powerful and wealthy.<sup>62</sup> Elias's clientele included sometimes, like now, royalty. In this passage he tells us that he had even trained an unnamed "Roman deacon" to be his travelling apprentice in his lucrative sacerdotal trade.

To anyone familiar with Christian scripture, the scene above oddly recalls the scene of Herodias's daughter dancing for King Herod and his assembled guests on his birthday.<sup>63</sup> Elias is like the dancing girl, skilfully performing his exotic ritual in the king's presence, hoping for a royal favor at its conclusion. Elias, again like her, managed to please his royal audience exceedingly with his performance: the queen immediately gifts him an apparent blank cheque for making any royal request of his bidding. Recognizing the magnitude of the offer, Elias tells us he "asked for some time to consider (*muhla*), then went to seek counsel with friends (*shāwartu ilā ba'ḍi 'l-aṣḥāb*)." Thankfully, these friends' counsel contained none of the grimness of Herodias's to her daughter. They advised Elias to request from the king a 'golden' ticket: *i.e.* a permit to journey to Spain's faraway colonies in the Americas, or "Indies (*al-hind*)". Rare was the non-

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what a striking figure he cut among Spanish Catholic society: "When he was spotted in Mexico City in 1682, for example," Ghobrial informs us, "a Spanish chronicler wrote in his diary that he was dressed like a 'Turk' in a long black cassock and the white collar of a priest"; *Op. cit.*, 52.

<sup>62</sup> It helped also that Elias's money-collecting enterprise had Papal endorsement. When he reached Madrid, Elias presented Queen Mary-Anne, wife of King Phillip IV, with "letters from Pope Clement IX and so she issued orders for them to pay me a thousand piasters in Sicily and another thousand in Naples" (*Kitāb Siyāha*, fol. 6<sup>v</sup>). Elias travelled next to Italy in order to make good on the Queen's orders. Not every venture ended in success: Both Sicilian governor and Neapolitan viceroy, described by Elias as "hard-hearted (*qāsi 'l-qalb*)", refused to pay him the money requested. Elias had to return to Spain, having lost, he says, four hundred piasters in travel expenses—an unsuccessful business trip! *Ibid.*, fo. 7<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> *cf.* Mk. 6:21-28.

Spanish foreigner, let alone Ottoman subject, who received such a royal permit—something impossible to obtain moreover, Elias tells us, “without a direct order (*amr*) from the king.”<sup>64</sup>

On February 12, 1675, Elias’s galleon “raised sails and put to sea” from Cádiz on the open Atlantic, in triumph as it were “to the firing of cannons and the peal of trumpets, with flags and banners raised.”<sup>65</sup> The galleon was one of sixteen vessels that made up the Spanish royal armada which set sail only once every three years to the New World colonies to replenish the king’s treasury. Elias reminds his readers of how rare a privilege it was to be a passenger: “As we already mentioned earlier,” he writes, “They allow no foreign person (*insānan gharīban*)<sup>66</sup> not belonging to the race of the Spaniards (*jins al-spanyūlī*)<sup>67</sup> to accompany them, neither merchant nor priest, without a direct order from the king.”<sup>68</sup>

On the other side of the Atlantic, Elias’s narrative pace will decelerate finally from its previous gallop into a more comfortable trot. He begins to share with his readers more

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<sup>64</sup> Not only was Elias the recipient of the very rare royal order—but, as he tells us, the royal order even “contained a personal directive (*waṣīya*) to viceroys, archbishops, bishops, and governors in all the ‘lands of India’ (*bilād al-hind*), to lend me every assistance.” *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fols. 8<sup>v</sup>-9<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 9<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> Here we see an occurrence within this text of the word *gharīb* (declined in the accusative: *gharīban*). Elias was to the Spaniards a *gharīb*, a foreigner, to whom they granted the privileges of a member of their race. *Al-ghurba* is not an explicit theme of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, as it is in the *Safra* of Paul of Aleppo. Nevertheless, in light of the fact that Elias wrote the work from his permanent exile in Spain, both *al-ghurba* and *al-ḥanīn ilā ’l-waṭan* (‘longing for homeland’) become central implicit themes: Elias’s writings are, as Ghobrial expressed it, “the musings of a man who never stopped thinking of home”; *Op. cit.*, 59.

<sup>67</sup> The word *jins* is used differently here by Elias than how Ḥannā Diyāb uses it in the passage we read from his sojourn in Cyprus (see Chapt. 1, Sect. IV). There it signified religious-sectarian, not ethno-linguistic or ‘racial’ affiliation.

<sup>68</sup> *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fol. 10<sup>r</sup>.



observations and impressions from his novel surroundings. The New World, not Europe, was after all the site of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s central events. Here was where the new drama in universal salvation history was supposedly being played out, whose stage was set by the Catholic church. Here was where we will finally meet with our main character, the Indian.

After forty days (a symbolic number?) of open sea sailing, Elias's galleon landed on the coast of Venezuela.

#### V. *Touring the 'New World'*

If we were expecting Elias's tour of the Americas to be a religious pilgrimage through Catholicism's new promised land, then we are in for disappointment. The shift which we—having read the preface—may have been waiting to see in Elias's primary orientation, from money gathering to the salvation of souls, never occurs. Elias, with his bookkeeper's precision, explained to readers already while *en route* to America how his ship would return to Spain, "laden with spoils (*ghanāyim*), silver and gold, in the amount of twenty or twenty-five million, with each million at the value of ten *karats*."<sup>69</sup>

With Elias's arrival in America, his focus on finances only intensifies. The first New World city which he visited was Cartagena, the seat of the king's royal agencies (*dīwānāt al-malik*). The city's governor was already one of his friends. Elias enjoyed there generous hospitality for forty days while awaiting the arrival of letters from Lima, the Peruvian capital of "rich merchants

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

(*tujjār al-aghniyā*).<sup>70</sup> Not far away, in Portobelo, Elias met some of these rich merchants, who “brought with them silver and gold in the amount of twenty-five *Lacs*.” During his stay there Elias was personally called to inspect the king’s treasury which landed at the port: It amounted to an exact sum of “twenty-five million and every million is ten karats; each karat, 100,000 piasters.” He writes: “I was overawed by the vast treasure of silver and gold.” Portobelo was Elias’s kind of town: a hub of New World commercial exchange, a port of intensive “selling and buying (*al-bī‘ wa ’l-sharā*).” We, the readers, have also our long-awaited first meeting with some Indians in Portobelo—not in church at prayer, as we might have expected of people who had joined the “ranks of the saints”, but in the market-place handling money: “Buying and selling between Indian merchants (*tujjār al-hunūd*) and Spanish merchant (*tujjār al-spanyūliya*) went on for forty days,” Elias observed.<sup>71</sup>

Between the mercenary interests and missionary ideals of the Spanish American imperial project, Elias unambiguously privileges the former. The dominant feature in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*’s exotic New World landscape is not its spiritual harvest, but its manifold material treasures: gold and silver, coveted everywhere with insatiable greed. America was a bonanza: a place where men—of the cloth as well—could strike rich. Visits to precious metal, stone and mineral mines are described in far greater detail by Elias than visits to churches, monasteries or mission centers—of which there were many. Elias took a keen interest in all the various means by which New World wealth was generated and spent. “I observed all the mechanical processes (*ṣanāyi*)

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 12<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 12.

through which they extract the gold from the rocks,” Elias writes after one of his visits to a gold mine in Ecuador.<sup>72</sup> Elias typically had far less to report about his visit to a nearby Carmelite convent—other than that its founder, the bishop of Quito, a “righteous man...spent 225,000 piasters on its building and endowments (*awqāf*).”<sup>73</sup> “I met in this town four very rich men (*rijāl aghniyā jiddan*)”, reads a standard description of a New World town in the *Kitāb Siyāha*.<sup>74</sup>

So too Elias describes colonial men of the church—clergymen like himself—primarily in terms of their income or net worth. One bishop in Lima, he says, “has an income (*madkhūl*) each year of a thousand piasters”<sup>75</sup>—a paltry amount when compared with another Bolivian bishop whom Elias befriended, who “has an income each year of 120,000 piasters.”<sup>76</sup> The bishop of Aguamanga in Peru, a man of power and wealth, being “head of the Inquisition”, demonstrated his worth to Elias by gifting him “a gold chain worth two hundred piasters.”<sup>77</sup>

The wealth being generated in the New World made it also a lucrative market for Elias to peddle his unique sacerdotal wares, according to the pattern which he developed already in Europe (see above). No less than in Europe, demand was high for Elias’s novel liturgical services—for the spectacle of a swarthy, bearded, luxuriously-vested Eastern rite priest. Elias

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 22<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 18<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 42<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 27<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 43<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 31<sup>v</sup>.

describes the simple but effective protocol he followed everywhere: “They would invite me to all the churches and monasteries so that I could conduct mass (*ḥattā uqaddis*), then they would lavish me with honours.”<sup>78</sup> In Lima’s central diocesan church, before all the city’s assembled clergy, Elias describes how,

To honor me, they sat me in the seat beside the archdeacon, which is next to the seat of the archbishop. Then they asked me to celebrate mass, so I sent for my liturgical instruments (*ālat al-qaddās*). I celebrated the mass in the Chaldean language (*lisān al-kaldānī*), meaning East Syriac (*suryānī l-sharq*), and they were exceedingly delighted hearing my mass. On the next day they held a council (*dīwān*) and sent me a thousand piasters. Thus, in the same manner I celebrated mass in the rest of the city’s churches, monasteries and convents, and they in return would send me gifts.”<sup>79</sup>

Elias performed his masses not only for the colonies’ who’s who, but for its humbler masses as well—accepting no less gladly their widows’ mite offerings. For the enterprising, many farthings made a fortune as well. Elias describes a mass he performed in in a Peruvian town which was attended by all of its four thousand Indian inhabitants. Their penury permitted them to cast at the end only a few small offerings each into his collection tray. With his characteristic (and often unflattering) pecuniary exactness, Elias writes of this occasion:

On the next day I served mass and all the Indians, numbering four thousand, attended my mass. At the conclusion of the mass, I sat on a chair and made a blessing (*‘amaltu baraka*)—meaning blessed bread (*khubz mubāarak*). People kept coming to kiss my hand and take the blessing and to throw offerings into the tray. In the end, the gathered offerings were in the amount of two hundred and eighty piasters.<sup>80</sup>

Mercenary though Elias was, he also did not believe in unbridled acquisition, in “wealth gathered unjustly.” He was uncomfortable clearly with some of the naked greed he witnessed

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 28<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 29<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 23<sup>v</sup>-24<sup>r</sup>.

around him. The accumulation of wealth in the New World, a divine blessing upon those of correct (*i.e.* Catholic) faith, needed still to be legitimized, to be regulated somehow by the dictates of religion. Otherwise, the abundant flow could dry up, the rich mine could turn unproductive overnight. Failure to temper greed with piety in the New World led eventually to riches being tragically squandered. This important lesson was illustrated by a local legend Elias heard concerning some pearl-divers from the island of Marguerita, off the coast Venezuela:

The people there told us that for twenty years divers used to dive in the sea near the island and extract pearls (*lu'lu'*) impressive in size and distinguished in color. One day as they went diving for pearls, they vowed upon their souls that the first pearl extracted on that day would be donated to the church of the Virgin. When they saw that they had extracted a very large pearl of costly value, they regretted themselves and said that tomorrow's dive would be in the name of the Virgin. The second day the same occurred, and again they said 'Tomorrow'. When the third day came, yet again they did the same, not fulfilling (*mā awfū*) their vow. On the fourth day the divers descended according to their custom to extract pearls but came up with absolutely nothing. Until today still no more pearls have been found in that sea.<sup>81</sup>

A similar cautionary tale, told from Bolivia, carried yet more personal meaning for Elias, since it involved directly one who was like him, a priest, now deceased. Elias claimed even to know both the deceased priest's surviving brother and sister—a claim which lent more poignancy to the tale. The deceased priest in question was for twenty-two years secretly consumed by greed unbecoming his calling. He amassed a treasure of silver and gold unknown to anyone but himself (*let the reader of the tale understand*). By not purifying his wealth through almsgiving or church-building, the priest's end became as ruinous as (it seems to us) unbelievable:

The people told us about one priest (*qissīs*) who lived in this country, who had died four years ago. This departed one was the only priest with an income in that town for twenty-two years. He had gathered lot of money through wrongdoing (*mina 'l-ẓulm*). Before his death he confessed (*i'tarāfa*) to a priest and made a testament (*waṣīya*)

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 10<sup>v</sup>-11<sup>r</sup>.

saying: ‘Under my bed are buried two casks, one filled with silver, the other with gold. He made another testament with the judge designating his money as an inheritance for his brother and sister. I knew his brother, a priest named Don Joseph—*i.e.* Yūsuf—and his sister named Dona Inez. After he died, they removed him from the house, locked the door, and sealed it. After they buried him, law and government representatives came to dig out the aforementioned money. When they dug in the place, they found the two casks filled with blood—and not a single *dīnār*. All who were present marvelled at the miracle, because the equity (*‘adāla*) of God was made so clear in this case of wealth gathered unjustly.’<sup>82</sup>

The New World’s ‘elect’, the Indians, were also prone to this same temptation of the land, which led often to their financial, not to mention spiritual, ruin: greed for gold. Elias relates the proverbial story—told in the true spirit of the *Arabian Nights*—of a wealthy and noble Indian named Kasiki, who hoarded a secret treasure of gold in a hidden cave somewhere near the town of Piura in Peru. Kasiki had an only daughter with a more compassionate heart and more developed Christian conscience than him. Once when Kasiki had gone to another town, she met a poor Franciscan monk in beggar’s attire, whom she led blindfolded to her father’s secret cave in order to load him with alms from its treasures. Had Kasiki only learned to put a small bridle on his avarice, then these alms made by his daughter on his behalf might have ensured him continued prosperity—not to mention salvation. As the story tragically goes, after returning from his trip, Kasiki “made his way one day to the cave and noticed a footprint at the door of the cave. He knew that this discovery was caused by his daughter, so he gave her poison to drink and she died. He too died suddenly (*māta ‘alā ghafla*). Until today they search for this cave but have not been able to find it.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 39<sup>v</sup>-40<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 24.

This theme's recurrence in the narrative leads us to believe that Elias himself experienced acutely the same temptation. Amidst the manifold opportunities for turning a profit in the New World, Elias genuinely feared his priestly conscience one day failing him: that, if he was not vigilant, he might emerge at the end of all his traveling, like the central character in each cautionary tale, empty-handed—or worse. Indeed, no reader of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* can avoid for very long the question: Did Elias never once consider that his own New World earnings may have also constituted “wealth gathered unjustly”?<sup>84</sup>

### *The Indians*

We will finally take our close look now at Elias's relationship with and portrayal of the Indians in the New World. It is difficult to reconcile at first what looks like a glaring contradiction between the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s preface and its main narrative as regards the position of the Indians. The text's central ‘argument’, laid out in the preface, doesn't appear to hold. The Indians of the main narrative are far indeed from the elect people whom we expected to encounter. It is as if they retreated from the main stage, cast down from their erstwhile place of honor. While their presence throughout the colonies was ubiquitous, their textual presence in Elias's narrative is shadowy, obscure, elusive despite their frequent mention, omnipresent yet hidden

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<sup>84</sup> If Elias's conscience never bothered him on this point, it may have been because he, unlike the divers of Marguerita, never reneged on vows he made to the Virgin. Unlike them, he understood that pious offerings made regularly from one's earnings were not financial loss—on the contrary, they secured a continued prosperous yield. Here is one example of how scrupulously Elias fulfilled any vow he made to the Virgin: He spent nineteen whole days in a certain town in Nicaragua, home to a famous church of the Virgin Nostra Señora del Viejo, for the sole purpose of fulfilling an earlier vow he had made to her during a perilous moment at sea: “I had vowed on my soul (*alā rūḥī*),” he writes, “that if I were to arrive at her church, I would serve mass for her (*uqaddis lahā*) for nine days”; *Ibid.*, fol. 53<sup>r</sup>.

all the same. First, we will lay out this discrepancy; then, at the end of this section, we will attempt to explain it.

Elias's very first interaction with an American native comes when the local Spanish governor in Panama generously supplied him for the road ahead with his own "brown [*i.e.* Indian] servant (*khādimuhu aşmar* [sic])."<sup>85</sup> Of this Indian servant's name and personality we learn nothing. In fact, the majority of Elias's subsequent interactions are with similarly nameless, faceless servants—footmen and guides who do little else than perform Elias's bidding. Armed Indian guards protected Elias wherever danger lurked: He took with him "twelve Indian companions fitted out with weapons" to verify a report he heard in Santa Elena of a nearby cave, where "giants (*jabābira*)" were supposed to have once lived.<sup>86</sup> Elias's attitude towards all of these was by no means inherently hostile. Some of his Indian subordinates proved extremely useful to him: one Indian boy in Elias's company even saved his life. During a dangerous night trek through some mountains, the boy secretly alerted Elias to a murder plot being hatched against him by his mestizo muleteer. Yet even this boy remained nameless, characterless, referred to only as "one of the Indian boys (*min awlādi 'l-hunūd*)", whose knowledge of Spanish—which made him privy to the murder plot—became the saving factor for Elias.<sup>87</sup>

At first glance we might judge Elias as having quickly assimilated the well-known 'colonial mentality' in his dealings with the Indians. We assume this came by way of his many friends

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 14<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 16<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 23<sup>r</sup>.



among the Spanish colonial elite. The following anecdote, from an Indian village in Bolivia where Elias hired mules, reads at first like the commentary of a typical colonialist—one who didn't shrink from brutality on occasion when he had to tame an impertinent 'native':

During the first stage of the journey we spent the night in an Indian village. I had with me an order that mules be given to me from village to village. I would make orders for the mules as would the king. I called for the chief of the Indians (*shaykh al-hunūd*) and ordered him to give me the riding animals, handing him the money on the condition (*shart*) that he would bring them to me one hour after midnight. The time came, and he did not bring the animals for us to travel. Meanwhile the sun dawned, daylight began. I sent out a party to search for him, and they brought him to me drunk. I spoke to him in Spanish, and he answered me in the Indian language. I ordered that they tie him to the pillar of the house and flog him (*yujallidūhū*). At the first lash (*ṣiyāṭ* [sic]), he asked to be let go and spoke in Spanish, saying that the mules were haltered at his house. I asked him the reason why he did not speak Spanish until the moment he tasted the lash. He replied: 'We Indians do not comply (*lam nuṭāwi*) with Spaniards until they beat us.'<sup>88</sup>

If we can go beyond the horrifying brutality of this encounter, we get a closer look at a relationship between Elias and the Indian that is more complicated, more difficult to parse, than what is apparent to us at first glance. Those final words spoken by the Indian chief, right after being flogged at Elias's orders, are among the few quotes in the narrative placed directly in the mouth of an Indian. They leave us on an ambiguous note. On the one hand, they place Elias squarely on the side of power in the colonial American division between Spanish colonizers vs. Indian natives. From the Indian chief's perspective, Elias was indistinguishable from any other Spaniard with authority to flog him, an insubordinate native. For him, the Indian, Elias's non-Spanish Eastern origins (and darker complexion?) made no difference. From his own part on the other hand, Elias has given the Indian chief here as it were the last word in the story. The

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 40<sup>v</sup>.

Indian's response to Elias's final question revealed calculated non-compliance, defiance, even wit—at which Elias falls silent. He records no final response from himself in turn. Whether his silence concealed an inner response of indignation, bafflement—or possibly even assent and admiration—remains up to interpretation.

Nor was Elias's 'friendship' with the colonies' Spanish elite as unreservedly close as we might presume. All the while Elias maintained a sense of being an outsider to their circle, revealed to us by turns in statements he made to different Spaniards. When a Spanish bishop reproves Elias for not dissociating himself from Peru's viceroy—his friend of many years who had been recently deposed and disgraced—Elias responds with a sermon on Christian ethics mingled with patriotic contempt for the Spaniard's perfidy: "In our country (*fi bilādnā*), and according to our customs, we defend and give assistance to the fallen man, in this way fulfilling God's commandment to 'love thy neighbor as thyself'. Thus I love the viceroy, as I love you—just as I love my relatives."<sup>89</sup> Elsewhere Elias's 'outsider' status placed him in the more positive role as peacemaker between quarreling Spaniards: "Blessed be the name of the Lord," the bishop of Chiapa in Guatemala declared after Elias successfully mediated a reconciliation (*ṣulḥ*) between him and the town's governor, "A priest from the city of Baghdad has come to make peace between us."<sup>90</sup>

Elias's outsider status positioned him occasionally in between the Spaniards and the Indians. At the request of a local "priest of the Indians (*qissīs al-hunūd*)" from the area near Lake

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 49<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 56<sup>r</sup>.

Titicaca, Elias used his established friendship with the Spanish governor to intercede for seven Indians who were wrongfully languishing in prison. Elias writes of the occasion, gladly assuming a hagiographic role as champion of the wronged, ransomier of captives: “I went down to the prison holding a paper on which were written their names and called on the jailer to open the gate. He opened it, and I called them one by one out of the prison and I set them free (*‘ataq-tuhum*). Before long the governor heard of what had happened, and he said to me: ‘May it be to your own redemption, for you have honored us by your coming’.”<sup>91</sup>

A conversation Elias records with a rich Indian miner in Chile invites us to further speculate about where his sympathies really lay. The Spaniards of one town told Elias about a rich local Indian who owned an exceptionally productive silver mine, but kept its location closely hidden from them, mining it only at night secretly. Elias, ever alert to new business opportunities, writes: “When they informed me also that he [the Indian miner] had offered charity (*ḥasana*) for a mass in the amount of forty thousand piasters,

I sent for him and invited him to my place, saying to him: ‘Tell me, for what reason did you not reveal this mine to the king, so he would bestow favors on you and on your children, and grant you all estate shares (*farā’iḍ*) and government positions (*maratib al-ḥukm*) in this country?’ He replied to me, saying: ‘I saw Indians older than me who had made revelations to the Spaniards only in the end to die under tortures (*mātū mina ‘l-‘adhābāt*). That is the reason.’ I believed his words about injustice (*ẓulm*), which I myself had witnessed Spaniards committing against Indians.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 39<sup>r</sup>. Ghobrial understands stories like this one in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* as being influenced by Elias’s reading of European missionary literature, in which ideal missionaries were regularly depicted as peacemakers and healers who intervened in local affairs. However, as he suggests, Elias’s rhetorical goal, in depicting himself as an ideal missionary, may have been to appeal to the Church of the East’s own past missionary achievements: “When Elias emphasized his acts as a missionary, therefore, he could also have been invoking local memory of the historic role played by the Church of the East in the spread of Christianity to China in the seventh century”; *Op. cit.* 66-67.

<sup>92</sup> *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, fol. 46.

Elias's final statement here neither negates his sympathy with the Spaniards, nor does it establish it definitely with the Indians instead. It does however demonstrate Elias's outsider privilege in Spanish America to sometimes skirt the boundary lines of the established colonial social order. From his regular position on the Spanish side, we witness Elias in this passage reaching across to the other side, in order to pose a question to his Indian interlocutor which perhaps no Spaniard could pose. The Indian then gives Elias a truthful, non-dissimulating answer—such as he wouldn't perhaps give an inquiring Spaniard. Elias's foreignness has inspired trust in the Indian. Elias was forced to concur with the Indian's statement, which contained only plain truth—which furthermore matched the evidence of what Elias had truthfully seen with his own eyes: The Spaniards were regularly unjust in their dealings with the Indians.<sup>93</sup> Moments like these, rare in the narrative, are significant: the mask briefly comes off from Elias's 'propagandistic' agenda, thwarted by his own truthful words let slip here and there. The Catholic Spaniards were supposed to be the Indians' supreme benefactors, as facilitators for their entry "into the bosom of the Holy Church"—the same Roman bosom into which Elias hoped all his East Syriac brethren would also enter after the Indians' example which he was holding up to them. Yet what bright future could his East Syriac brethren really hope for by choosing benefactors like these, the Spaniards? What kind of benefactors handled their beneficiaries so unjustly, as Elias was himself at such rare times prepared to admit?

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<sup>93</sup> Elias himself took part occasionally in the Spaniards' injustice and brutality towards the Indians, as we saw in the 'flogging' story cited above; *Ibid.*, fol. 40<sup>v</sup>.

Belief in the praiseworthy goals, from a religious-moral standpoint, of the Spanish American imperial project is nevertheless a cornerstone of Elias's narrative. Without this belief, the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* fails—in all its aims. And formerly pagan Indians who converted to Catholicism were the shining proof that this belief was justified: Elias does take some pains in the narrative to illustrate this. He reminds his readers that “before the Spaniards took possession of this land, no one knew the true God. Some worshipped idols (*aṣnām*), others worshipped the sun, the moon, and the stars.” Besides being spiritually destitute, the pre-colonial Indians also possessed none of the recognizable rudiments of civilization: “They did not know handicrafts (*aḥruf*), nor did they know reading and writing,” according to Elias. They “had no livestock, I mean for example horses, mules, donkeys, oxen, cows, sheep, or chicken—except for species of animal resembling a camel, though small like a donkey, with its hump on its chest...and cannot travel far.”<sup>94</sup> Now however, the Indians knew the true God, practiced crafts, and acquired cattle as well. Not a few of them—such as the owner of a secret silver mine from the passage above—had (just like Elias) figured out ways to grow rich within the new colonial economy created by the Spaniards. We will return to discuss these Indians below.

Not all of the Indians were grateful recipients of the gifts brought by the Spaniards. A remnant remained who stubbornly refused all the new perks offered them: stiff-necked pagan Indians (*hunūd kafara*, lit. ‘Indian unbelievers’), determined on clinging to their old, ‘savage’ ways, and on sabotaging the Spaniards’ advance. These posed a serious problem for Elias—one

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 27<sup>v</sup>-28<sup>r</sup>.

which preoccupied him continually, almost to the point of becoming a personal obsession. They were “numerous and strong,” he claims. Like a sinister spectre in Elias’s colonial vision, they haunted virtually all the remaining unexplored and unconquered ‘dark’ areas on the Spanish American map; like packs of wolves they roamed the inaccessible mountain ranges and virgin forests lying in between colonized outposts, where they lived according to their alternate pagan code and diabolically rigid social hierarchy. “The Spaniards,” explains Elias, “are not able to resist them (*yuqāwimūhum*) because they inhabit high mountains and have a commander (*amīr*) and ringleader (*mudabbir*) who rules over them.”<sup>95</sup> It is clear Elias exaggerated their menace and the magnitude of the threat which he believed they posed to the success of the colonial project: “The unbelievers [Indians] descend on the road where they ambush and kidnap as many Spanish men, women, and children as they can, taking them to their land to enslave them (*yasta’bidūhum*),” he writes. “When they have a feast or guest party, they slaughter one of the Spaniards and grill and eat him. Those Indians also have a type of grass (*hashīsh*) which, when they chew it, makes them drunk (*yuskirhum*) and gives them courage and strength, like wine. This grass is called ‘Coca’.”<sup>96</sup> He describes their inhuman savagery in even more shocking detail elsewhere: “They ride horses with spears, resembling Bedouins (*shibha’l-‘arab*), and make war incessantly with the Spaniards. When they capture one of the Spaniards, they

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 35<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 34<sup>v</sup>-35<sup>r</sup>.

roast him over fire and eat his flesh (*yākulū laḥmahū*). As for the head, they gouge the skull and make it a cup, and drink from it the wine of their country.”<sup>97</sup>

Elias viewed these unconverted Indians with uncharacteristic rancor and vindictiveness—as if their intransigent paganism was some kind of personal insult directed against him. He gives his chilling views on what he believed the Spaniards had to do to neutralize them. He relates the fate of one particular obstinate band of Indians, whose paganism took the form of “worshipping a mountain that stood high before them, called the Red Mountain (*jabal al-aḥmar*),”. These had inhabited an island on Lake Titicaca, from where, according to Elias, they regularly terrorized the local Spaniards: “They would go out on open land, take as captive (*yastaysarū*) Spaniards and steal male mules to slaughter and eat them.” The Spaniards, paralyzed by fear and dread of the Indians’ weapons and ferocity, could never defeat them. It was not until, shortly before Elias’s visit to the area, the viceroy of the country (another of Elias’s friends) resolved to do what was brutal but necessary. Elias describes the final confrontation:

My friend the viceroy gave an order to the governors of the villages in those districts to gather their forces. They gathered four thousand men, and built forty rafts, in which they placed sacks filled with dirt and horses. They then took up arms and crossed the lake with the rafts. As they came near land, the Indians of the island lined up opposite them for battle and pelted them with arrows. The Spanish soldiers began firing bullets at them. They then threw the sacks of dirt onto the shore of the island to allow the horses to cross over onto the land—it being extremely muddy. Once on land, they mounted the horses with their guns and charged at the Indians, routing them (*kasarūhum*), killing many and taking the rest captive—three hundred Indians in number, excluding women and children. Six hundred of them were killed in battle. They removed them from the island and brought them to the town of Cuzco. The viceroy then requested the bishop of that town to allow clergy to instruct those Indians in the principles of the faith of Christ (*qawā'id imān al-masīḥ*), to baptize them (*yu'am-midūhum*) and then to distribute them throughout the country.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 44<sup>v</sup>-45<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 38.

Defeating the pagan Indian threat, as Elias saw it, required feats of hardy resolve, brutality and daring, like this one. These qualities had to also be combined, as they were in this example, with commitment to the original Christianizing/civilizing (ultimately capitalist) ideals of the Spanish imperial project. It was this combination which made possible Spanish America's staggering foundational achievements, performed by men like Cortes and Pizarro. And it was needed again now if the Spanish were to set the final seal on their American conquest in the name of Catholicism. However, Elias repeatedly found himself confronted with the reality that it was in short supply: Most Spanish colonialists nowadays seemed content to rest on their laurels and to favor the status quo; they took a more *laissez faire* stance, allowing the pagan Indians to remain at large as an omnipresent scourge to the colonies' aims. Elias comes close at one point to openly criticizing the contemporary colonial authorities' faint-heartedness and lukewarm ideological commitment on this point. The following passage, describing Elias's voyage along the southern shore of Costa Rica on his way north-west to Mexico, is one of the most often-referenced from the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*:

The Lord sent us wind, and we set out sailing. Three days later we arrived at a port called Golfo Dulce, which means 'sweet shore' (*ḡurf al-ḥilw*), because a river with fresh (*ḥilw*, lit. 'sweet') water flows there and mixes with the sea. We anchored there and the sailors got out to fill up water. I went out on land with them due to the intense heat, hoping to bathe in the cold waters of the river and freshen up my body. This river is not deep, only about an arm's length in depth. I noticed that its sand had gold mixed in it. I showed it to the captain of the ship, who was born in that country, and he was astonished and amazed. Apparently, all these lands and rivers contained gold, but on account of the pagan Indians (*al-hunūd al-kafara*) who inhabit the mountaintops here, the Spaniards do not dare come and extract this gold.<sup>99</sup>

The scenario is basically repeated a week later a little farther up the Costa Rican shore:

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 51<sup>v</sup>-52<sup>r</sup>.



After staying there for three days, we set out sailing, arriving after six days at a port called Caldera, which means ‘casserole’. We anchored there. I asked the soldiers on the ship if they could gather for me some shells (*şadař*) from the sea. They brought me nine shells, and I opened them one by one so that we could eat their contents. Opening one of them, I found inside it a pearl kernel the size of a chickpea. I said to the general: ‘What infamy and idleness is this? (*ēsh hādhihi ’l-nadhāla wa ’l-kasal*) How can there be pearls in this sea and yet you [2nd pers. pl., *i.e.* ‘Spaniards’] make no attempt to extract them?’ He replied: ‘This too is from our fear of pagan Indians.’<sup>100</sup>

Two features stand out in these two well-known passages: (1) Elias’s attitude to ‘pagan Indians’ was considerably more belligerent than that of most colonial Spaniards. The pagan Indians’ continued existence in the New World bothered Elias, more than it bothered any of his sailing companions—all Spaniards presumably. As Catholics, they too in theory would have hoped for the eventual eradication of paganism in the Americas; only they were not zealous, like Elias, to hasten its fulfillment. Elias’s stance had the truculence of either a religious fanatic or someone with a vendetta, a personal score to settle. (2) Elias’s intolerance had less, if really much at all, to do with the Indians’ pagan religious beliefs *per se*, and far more to do with how their recalcitrance caused disruption in the colonial economy. His many tirades against the Indians’ idolatry and ‘savagery’ concealed the truth, revealed in these passages: Their real sin was that they stood as an obstacle to further exploitation of the New World’s riches—*i.e.* they blocked revenues. Because they remained at large around Golfo Dulce, the gold in its sand which Elias saw and handled had to be left unextracted; the many more pearls which Caldera’s waters likely contained, comparable in size to the one Elias found, had to be left undiscovered. Elias is forced to accept with resignation these losses, for his own coffers and those of the

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 52<sup>r</sup>.

Spanish crown—something which caused him more umbrage than any religious offence which the pagan Indians were guilty of.

This was not the only time in Elias's New World tour that the specter of hostile pagan Indians directly cost him money. In the Tucumán region of Argentina, Elias had to decline an offer to travel with a thousand mules into a nearby virgin mountainous country "rich with mines of silver, gold, and precious stones", yet haunted by many pagan Indians.<sup>101</sup> Pagan Indians disrupted revenues not only from mining, but also from harvesting cash crops. Near the city of Quito in Ecuador lived some pagan Indians who gathered a local species of cinnamon which, Elias complains, they "do not want the Spaniards to discover, so as not to take their lands (*ḥattā lā yākhudūn* [sic] *bilādhum*)."<sup>102</sup> They also gathered local nutmeg, with which they waged a form of financial guerrilla warfare against the Spaniards, by selling it in Caracas exclusively to English and Dutch merchants—the Spaniards' heretical archrivals in the Americas.<sup>103</sup>

If the pagan Indians' cardinal sin was not really their unbelief (*kufṛ*) but resistance to the financial goals of the Spanish American colonial enterprise, then conversely the cardinal virtue of baptized Catholic Indian converts was not really their religious devotion, but economic

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 44<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>102</sup> Elias unwittingly gives an indication of just how closely the missionary and mercenary goals of the Spanish colonial project coincided in his mind, when he tells us that "priests who had gone there to preach Christ's faith brought back with them buds from cinnamon trees." *Ibid.*, fols. 20<sup>v</sup>-21<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>. Protestant 'heretics' (*harāṭīqa*) from England presented the most formidable new challenge to Spain's colonial dominance in the Americas. When Elias does direct his ire at these 'heretics', it is again not for their heresy *per se*, but for the financial menace they posed. He complains for instance of 'heretical' pirates (*qurṣān*) who plundered Mexico's Catholic monasteries, holding monks captive for exorbitant ransoms of up to 150,000 piasters! *Ibid.*, fols. 60<sup>r</sup>-61<sup>r</sup>.

cooperation. The latter were the elect referred to in the preface, newly grafted into the good olive tree of the colonial economy.

For many, if not most of these, cooperation involved only menial work and servitude. Among them were the unnumbered multitude of uncredited, faceless, nameless Indian guides, interpreters and carriers—supplied to Elias everywhere by his Spanish ‘friends’—who accompanied him on every segment of his American tour, and without whom he could never have traveled as extensively as he did. Cooperative (*i.e.* converted) Indians supplied needed labor quotas for the colonies’ mines and plantations, within a forced labor arrangement that resembled forms of European serfdom, even slavery. Elias describes how the arrangement worked at one highly lucrative silver mine he visited:

Seven hundred Indians work inside the mountain at cutting stone for people who bought the rights (*hiṣṣa*) to the mine from the king. These Indians are obligated to work (*mulzamīn ilā ’l-‘amal*) by royal decree. Every shareholder is assigned some Indians to work his share of the mine. The royal decree further stipulates that all Indian villages (*qurā ’l-hunūd*) must offer men for working the mines—by the law, one out of five men must be sent to perform the aforementioned work. If any of the local rulers refrains from sending them, the viceroy may depose them.<sup>104</sup>

Not all cooperative Indians became coolies like these. Far from it. A significant number of them prospered. Many of the towns Elias visited had mixed populations, more or less equally divided between Indians and Spaniards. In some of these, the Indians were in fact richer than the Spaniards. Lombayaque for example, was a large Peruvian town “inhabited by rich Indians (*hunūd aghniyā*) and some Spaniards.”<sup>105</sup> For an Indian who converted to Catholicism, spoke

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 41.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 25<sup>r</sup>.

Spanish, and had enough private ambition and wits, there was seemingly nothing standing in the way of him growing wealthy by his own enterprise in the New World economy. We already saw individual examples of this in Kasiki, the wealthy Indian with the cave of gold, and in the Indian silver miner in Chile who kept secrets from Spaniards. There were many other examples. In Guatemala Elias discovered that local enterprising Indians monopolized the lucrative cacao industry and trade. These were “exceedingly rich Indians (*hunūd aghniyā jiddan*)” who even tried to have their appointed Spanish governor (also Elias’s friend) removed from office with official charges; whose deep pockets permitted them to “set aside four thousand piasters as a pledge, so that in any disputes with the governor or priest of the village, this money would be spent in legal fees and paperwork.”<sup>106</sup> Perhaps these rich Indians were those very ones whom Elias had in mind when he wrote in the preface, that “many of them after entering the faith of Christ were numbered among the saints”?

Joining the ‘elect’ meant to become a cog in the wheel of a robust and ever-expanding colonial economy; sanctification—*i.e.* becoming a ‘saint’—meant to become a colonial entrepreneur oneself, a major New World economic player in one’s own right. Were this not the case, then we would look in vain through the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*’s pages to find any ‘saints’ among the Indians whom Elias describes.

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 55<sup>r</sup>.

In the end, how do we make any sense of Elias's extremely peculiar, perplexing, blatantly contradictory ways of relating to the Indians whom he encountered in the Americas, whose portrayal in the narrative was supposed to be the crux of the pro-Catholic 'case' he wished to make? This is the main question which this chapter has posed. To begin answering it we need to recall an important point made towards the beginning of the chapter: Portrayals of foreign peoples, or 'others', in travel literature are almost always to an equal, if not greater extent, self-portrayals. The 'other' is both a mirror for the self, and a screen on which the self, private and collective, can project its aspirations, preferences, values, prejudices, fears. Elias saw such a mirror and screen in the New World Indians. The Indians were recently presented with the choice by the arrival of the Spaniards, whether or not to accept the Spaniards' Catholic religion—the same all-determining choice, as Elias saw it, that his East Syriac community now faced with the arrival of Catholic missionaries in the Ottoman Near East. His was not a 'disinterested' ethnographical description of the Indians, but a portrayal that had strong personal motive behind it, quite unrelated to the Indians themselves. Keeping this in mind, we can then begin the work of parsing Elias's portrayal of the Indians.

Elias's own conversion to Catholicism, we recall, threw a major log into the fire of a bitter division obtaining in his East Syriac community at home, between its pro-Uniate and anti-Uniate factions. This division naturally weighed heavily on Elias's psyche; it had after all been the cause of his leaving home for Europe in the first place, never to return. The *Kitāb Siyāḥa*'s hard division of New World Indians into two opposing camps—willing and compliant Catholic converts on the one hand, stiff-necked pagans on the other—can thus be understood as a

representation also of Elias's native East Syriac communal division that continued to affect his life until its very end. If Elias's appraisal of the specter cast by the pagan Indians over the whole Spanish American colonial project seems to us grossly exaggerated, this is because it was. This faulty appraisal was instead a reflection of the fact that during Elias's own lifetime the traditionalist, strongly anti-Uniate, 'heretical Nestorian' faction within his East Syriac community, predominated within his community. The 'Chaldean' movement towards the Unia was by comparison still nascent and scattered, harassed on every side. For his conversion Elias had endured years of persecution, alienation, and finally exile at the hands of the more powerful traditionalist faction. It becomes understandable then that he believed firmly in the threat they posed—and that he was prone even to a paranoid overestimation of its extent. His 'mistake', if we can call it such, was to conflate two completely unrelated and distant peoples, and by the same token transfer the personal grudge he held against one onto the other.

It might appear strange to us at first why Elias would repeatedly lash out with personal rancor against pagan Indians in the New World, whom he bitterly accused of being "intractable (*'āṣīyīn*), cruel, merciless of heart (*qāsīyīn al-qalb*)"; and claimed that they "opposed (*muḏāddīn*) the Spaniards as a testament (*waṣīya*) from their fathers and their grandfathers."<sup>107</sup> His rancor makes better sense, however, if we understand it as being obliquely directed at his former brethren who had driven him into his current exile. Lashing out at pagan Indians in the New World was in large part Elias's own way of 'settling scores' at home. Likewise, Elias's repeated frustration expressed at the seeming inability or unwillingness of Spanish colonial authorities to do

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 45<sup>r</sup>.

what was necessary to neutralize the pagan Indian threat, is really just frustration directed at his own inability—despite his best efforts—to persuade more of his fellow East Syriac Christians into joining the Catholic Unia with him.

What do we make of the peculiar, singularly financial prism through which Elias viewed just about everything, including the New World confessional division between converted Catholic and unconverted pagan Indians? In the end, the reader of Elias's narrative can hardly believe that the actual Indian Catholic converts whom Elias portrays—or rather does *not* portray—can really be same elect Indians intended in the narrative's preface. We find no visible sign of their 'election', except for the obvious economic opportunities made available to them by conversion. Conversion seems to Elias most of the time like nothing more than a (classically American) 'get rich quick' scheme. If we accept, based on this, that Elias, even unconsciously, really did prioritize mercenary goals above religious ones; that the whole Spanish imperial project in the New World became for him—like for so many other colonialists—really just about silver and gold, with the soteriological aims serving as a pretext—then what conclusion can we draw concerning the sincerity of his conversion to Catholicism in the first place?

No modern reader of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* can, or should, attempt any such judgement concerning the sincerity of Elias's conversion. What can be said however, is that other than the large amounts of money he made—in Europe, and even more in the New World—Elias likely had little else to show personally; to boast of in the end to his former brethren, for a conversion that had cost him just about everything else of human value. If we think of the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* primarily, as Ghobrial has suggested, as a work of pro-Catholic propaganda, then promoting the

financial perks of conversion to the 'Unia', as an incentive for other would-be converts, was really the only line of argument Elias could convincingly make. He himself, alongside the Indian Catholic converts of the New World, were the living proof of this argument. We might then legitimately ask: how convincing was this argument really? After all, how many Eastern Christian readers, seeing plainly the personal human price Elias, as well as the Indians, had paid for those financial perks, would choose to follow his and their example?

Nowhere in whole narrative does Elias ever refer to a fellow Indian Catholic convert as his 'friend', like he does with so many of the Spaniards. With the notable exceptions of Kasiki and Juan Diego, none of them are honored even with individual names. None attain in Elias's eyes the full depth and dignity of a human personality, to be represented as such in the narrative. Their textual presence in the narrative remains instead elusive and obscure. Many of them were rich, but nothing more. Yet what good were riches to one deprived of voice, agency, human personality and identity?

Here is indeed a tragedy. We cannot ascribe as motive to Elias, without any evidence, the well-known European colonialist impetus to dehumanize 'natives' and thus reinforce their continued subjugation. Elias's sub-human portrayal of the New World Indians is instead a tragic self-portrayal. After all, no presence in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* is more elusive and obscure than that of the author himself. For all his projected certitude in the Uniate cause he has embraced, Elias is in actuality a man deep in crisis. Exile, as a direct outcome of his conversion, has robbed him of his personal moorings. This dislocation he then projects onto the Indians whom he portrays.



“For a man who had left his home, his family and his faith behind,” Ghobrial writes, “the act of writing offered a chance for permanence, stability and certitude in a moment of personal crisis and dislocation.”<sup>108</sup> Deeper than propaganda, writing the *Kitāb Siyāḥa* was for Elias an ill-fated attempt to put the broken pieces of his identity back together. In railing against the hostile pagan Indians in the New World, Elias was really ‘settling old scores’ with his family at home, who had rejected him and forced him into permanent exile; by showcasing Indian Catholic converts who had made good financially, he was vindicating his own fateful decision to strike out on his own from his community.

Elias’s personal gains had come at a heavy price—heavier perhaps than his act of writing could compensate for. We may conclude either that Elias’s abilities as a writer were simply not up to the task of attaining the “permanence, stability and certitude” sought after in the act of writing; or even more tragically, that the personal crisis and dislocation in which this former East Syriac priest from the Ottoman Near East found himself late in life, in a ‘foreign’ land, alone and alienated from all that he once knew, was simply too deep to be overcome.

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<sup>108</sup> Ghobrial, *Op. cit.*, 60.

**Chapter 4:**  
*Young Ḥannā Diyāb ‘Explores the World’\**

We begin this chapter on Ḥannā Diyāb’s travel narrative by recalling an important episode from it related in Chapter 1: The shaving of Diyāb’s moustache on arrival in Livorno, Italy—his point of entry as an Aleppan Maronite into Catholic Europe, the ‘lands of the Christians’. In view of the importance Diyāb placed on clothing and coiffure as communal identity-markers, we wrote that he experienced the ‘operation’ as a kind of initiation rite into Europeanness. On a psychological level the process was painful: cutting his moustache meant cutting away his identity as a ‘son of the East’ from the Ottoman empire. On the positive side, Diyāb, becoming reborn as a European, could now experience Europe as an insider.

Diyāb’s present position as a new arrival in Europe from the Ottoman empire can be usefully compared with that of Elias of Mosul from the previous chapter. Elias too had landed in

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\* This chapter was written using the single extant MS. for the text (Sbath 254) housed at the Vatican Library. This MS. was first discovered by Jérôme Lentin in 1993, who later collaborated with Paul Fahmé Thiéry and Bernard Heyberger on a French translation of the text; see *D’Alep à Paris: les pérégrinations d’un jeune Syrien au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Sinbad, 2015). Three more qualified scholars could not have been found for this project: their collaborative translation combines readability with unequalled erudition and familiarity with Ḥannā Diyāb’s world and its historical, literary, and linguistic circumstances. I have freely used their French translation as a reference guide for my own English translations of passages from Sbath 254 in this chapter. I remain grateful to Ioana Fedorov, who alerted me to the publication of *D’Alep à Paris* during my meeting with her in Bucharest, Romania, in the summer of 2015. At the time, I was still in the planning stages of this dissertation; immediately I read the then newly-published translation, I ordered my own facsimile of Sbath 254 from the Vatican, and altered my dissertation plans to provide a very prominent place in it for Ḥannā Diyāb’s narrative. In the five years since *D’Alep à Paris*’s publication, scholarly interest around its author, Ḥannā Diyāb, has grown steadily, though perhaps not the extent that this text really merits (see Intro., n. 45). An English translation of the narrative has appeared in early 2020 which I have not been able, in my own place of *al-ghurba* from which I write, to assess or consult; see *The Man Who Wrote Aladdin: The Life and Times of Ḥannā Diyāb*, trans. Paul Lunde (Edinburgh: Hardinge Simpole, 2020). Another English translation, along with an edition, is forthcoming in May 2021, with the collaboration of Elias Muhanna and Johannes Stephan, as part of New York University Press’s Library of Arabic Literature series.

Italy, in Venice—not too many years prior to Diyāb; he too passed through the *Lazaretto* before being released into Europe. In strictly geographic terms, Elias saw far more of Europe than did Diyāb; he also spent significantly more time there—even settled there permanently. Elias however never passed through the same barber's chair as Diyāb, never experienced his own ritual 'shave'. On the contrary, Elias, we recall, magnified his luxurious, exotic beard; he consciously defined himself in Catholic European society—both sides of the Atlantic—by cutting a figure everywhere with his exotic 'Oriental' appearance. By catering to the growing demand in Europe for Oriental spectacle, Elias kept himself psychologically separate from his new surroundings. Real 'integration' became difficult, if not impossible.

If Diyāb appears in this regard as the more 'successful', to have come farther along than Elias already at the start of his European sojourn, this was not solely by his own merit. The playing-field between them was not even. Even before leaving Aleppo, Diyāb was, to a far greater extent than Elias, a person living genuinely, *successfully*—to an extent—'in between' two cultural worlds. In this, by virtue of his confessional belonging as a Levantine Maronite Catholic, Diyāb had the advantage over Elias, the lonely East Syriac 'Chaldean' convert to the Catholic Unia.<sup>1</sup> The nature of this advantage will be made clear in the next section.

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<sup>1</sup> As an adult convert to Catholicism, Elias's contacts with Europeans, with their languages, cultural ways and thought habits, began much later in life than for Diyāb, who was a 'cradle' Catholic. Elias had far less groundwork already laid in place, ready to be built upon, that would have helped him more easily acclimatize to Europe. His was also, we remember, a 'lone wolf' conversion to the Catholicism—one which made him a permanent renegade from his East Syriac ancestral community. If for Diyāb passing through the barber's chair 'operation' was traumatic and *painful* as we read in Chapter 1, how much more then would it have been for Elias, who arrived in Europe having passed already through the trauma of rejection from his kin?

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Diyāb barely began to explore Livorno's streets when he heard somebody from behind calling out to him in his native Arabic. He turned round to see a man inside a coffee shop (*duk-kān qahwa*)<sup>2</sup>, who beckoned him enthusiastically, saying:

—Welcome, son of my country. Enter my shop, so that I can smell the fragrance of my country!

When I entered, he greeted me in Arabic, and I returned his greeting. I then asked him:

—Who are you, my brother, and from which country are you?

—I'm an Aleppan, from the community (*tāyfa*) of the Maronites.

—I too am an Aleppan, I told him.

We embraced, shook hands, and he bade me to sit with him. After receiving me hospitably, he offered me coffee to drink and brought me a *ghalyūn* ('smoking water-pipe') for tobacco. We sat down for a pleasant chat, a feeling of close familiarity (*'ishra*) forming between us. I went afterwards to visit him each day to ask him about the customs (*tuqūs*) of these lands, and he would tell me about all that was prevalent among them.<sup>3</sup>

This encounter illustrates an important feature that sets Ḥannā Diyāb's travel experience apart from both those of Elias of Mosul and Paul of Aleppo. First, we notice that neither Diyāb nor his new Maronite acquaintance are clergymen of any rank: These are ordinary 'middle class' Maronite laymen, not members of their community's clerical and cultural elite.<sup>4</sup> Neither of them were in Europe presently to 'collect alms', study at the *Propaganda Fide*, or on any other

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<sup>2</sup> Livorno was the first European city where the 'Oriental'-style café, or 'coffee house' (*qahwa-khāneh*), was introduced into Europe in 1632. The first proprietors were predominantly Armenians; see *D'Alep à Paris*, 203-204, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 70<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> With the spread of schools run by missionaries in the next century, lay people would gradually replace clerics as the dominant cultural elite within most Eastern Christian communities—as the vanguards of their collective engagement with European culture.

official ecclesiastical business. Their travels here to the ‘lands of the Christians’ had as their main goal not the conversion or edification of other members of their confessional community, but to improve their own personal lot in some way or other. Their motivations were private, not communal; secular, not sectarian.

Being a Maronite meant Diyāb enjoyed a ‘headstart’ in Europe—made apparent also in this scene—over other uniates from the Ottoman empire. Diyāb went to Europe not as a pioneer, but was as one who walked along trails marked out and trodden by many other young Maronites who were migrating to Catholic Europe’s cities in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century seeking out new commercial and employment opportunities there. When Diyāb arrived, Maronites already had a considerable presence and economic foothold on the continent: the nucleus of a nascent, largely non-clerical *émigré* community, or ‘trading diaspora’.<sup>5</sup> On arrival in a major port city like Livorno, Diyāb could not wander very far without running into another Maronite.

Diyāb, like any new arrival from the Ottoman Levant, was happy when he did so. Both he and his new Maronite acquaintance, the café proprietor, rejoiced at the opportunity to breathe in the familiar “fragrance of my country,” to enjoy a “pleasant chat” in Levantine Arabic over a convivial cup of Turkish-style coffee and a bubbling, sweet-smelling *ghalyūn*. Europe was still a foreign land to both of them. Diyāb was fluent in Italian and French, yet his working knowledge of European customs (*tuqūs*) still had large gaps—gaps which could be readily filled by consulting fellow Maronites with longer *émigré* experience: “I went afterwards to visit him

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<sup>5</sup> See Bruce Masters, “Trading Diasporas and ‘Nations’: The Genesis of National Identities in Ottoman Aleppo”, *Op. cit.*

each day to ask him about the customs (*tuqūs*) of these lands, and he would tell me about all that was prevalent among them.” For Diyāb, the Maronite *émigré* presence in Europe was like a buffer which helped mitigate for him many of the normal rigors of being away from home. He was neither completely at home in Europe; nor was he completely a *gharīb*, or stranger.

Café proprietors, jewel merchants, textile merchants, clergymen—these were among the available socio-economic positions in which Maronites had established themselves in many French and Italian cities. Between Livorno and Paris, Diyāb will meet with and form friendships with representatives from all of these. At some point each of these established European ‘career paths’ will present themselves as viable options to him.

On the face of it, Diyāb had come to Europe for same, primarily economic reasons as the other Maronites. He was attracted by a newly-created academic niche market in France. Under Louis XIV, French general interest in things Oriental was giving birth already to the French academic discipline of Orientalism: the philological study of the textual culture of Islamic civilization in its original languages—Arabic being the central one. This created a new employment demand for native speakers of Arabic—preferably Christians—who could assist French orientalists in acquiring, copying, and understanding literary texts in Arabic.<sup>6</sup> At their first

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<sup>6</sup> Hilary Kilpatrick and Gerald J Toomer’s article, “Niḡlāwus al-Ḥalabī (c.1611-c.1661): A Greek Orthodox Syrian Copyist and his Letters to Pococke and Golius”, *Op. cit.*, sheds abundant light on the lives of such Eastern Christian academic ‘laborers’ in Europe during this period. There were those however who weren’t limited to performing scholarly drudgery for European Orientalists, but became first-rate and respected Orientalists in their own right. These tended, not surprisingly, to be Maronites. The immediate example comes to mind of the Assemani family, most prominent among them Joseph Simon Assemani (Yūsuf ibn Sim‘ān al-Sim‘ānī) (d. 1768), who was educated at Rome’s Maronite College and became the foremost Vatican scholar on Arabic and Syriac manuscripts (*cf.* Graf, *GICAL*, III, 444-445). Another noteworthy example is Abraham Ecchelensis (Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāqilānī, d. 1664), also educated at Rome’s Maronite College, who taught Arabic and Syriac in Rome and Paris and made outstanding contributions to early European Orientalist scholarship (*cf.*

meeting *en route* between Aleppo and Tripoli, Paul Lucas had told Diyāb that he had “a charge from the minister to bring back with me a man from these countries who knows to read Arabic.”<sup>7</sup> Once in Paris, he promised to have Diyāb installed as chief librarian of the Royal library’s expanding Arabic collection.<sup>8</sup> The position came supposedly with a lifetime French royal stipend: Diyāb seized the lucrative offer.

That being said, Diyāb’s narrative, as any reader of it will readily attest, is more—far more in fact—than just a business journey log or jobseeker’s diary in Europe, in which case it would not contain much literary material for us to analyze.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the financial incentive accounts for just one part of what motivated Diyāb to follow Paul Lucas to Europe; to an even lesser extent does it explain what motivated him five decades later to perform the unpaid labor of writing down so painstakingly—and skilfully, from a (non-classical) literary point of view<sup>10</sup>—the memoirs of his youthful travel adventures. Compared with the other two travellers we read,

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Graf, *GCAL*, III, 354-359); see also Bernard Heyberger, “Abraham Ecchellensis dans la République des Lettres”, in ed. Bernard Heyberger, *Orientalisme, science et controverse. Abraham Ecchellensis (1605-1664)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> S bath 254, fol. 9<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> The scene of Diyāb’s first meeting with Paul Lucas was analyzed in the Introduction.

<sup>9</sup> Early modern business trip diaries in Arabic do exist—*eg.* the journey of Ra’d and his companion ‘Abd al-Masīh to Venice in 1656; see Intro., n. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Diyāb’s literary culture was the strictly non-classical folk narrative culture of the cafés and summer-gardens of his home town, Aleppo—the literary world of the *Arabian Nights*. Within this literary culture he was highly adept, as Paulo Lemos Horta writes: “One can imagine a young Diyab sitting in one of Aleppo’s cafés, absorbing the storyteller’s words and learning his tricks for enthralling his audience. Judging by the memoir he penned when he was in his seventies, Diyab learned the storyteller’s lessons well and continued to hone this art throughout his life.” see *Marvellous Thieves*, 35.

making or ‘collecting’ money appeared in fact to matter the least to Diyāb: Money is scarcely ever spoken of in Diyāb’s narrative, in marked contrast with Elias of Mosul’s *Kitāb Siyāḥa* for example. The narrative begins with Diyāb’s failed novitiate in a secluded Christian monastery setting<sup>11</sup>—historically sometimes an institution of refuge for debtors and tax-evaders and those down on their luck financially, hit hard by the “world’s oppression”<sup>12</sup>, but almost never a mecca for the acquisitive. And while Diyāb, we remember, was quick to abandon his plans for becoming a monk, he remained from a monetary perspective the most monkish of the three travellers we are studying: unmercenary and aloof from money matters, even to the point of naïveté.

This naïveté has to do in large part with Diyāb’s tender age at the time of his travels.<sup>13</sup> Bernard Heyberger characterized Diyāb’s travel narrative aptly as, “un grand tour initiatique, d’un jeune homme qui cherche sa voie”.<sup>14</sup> It does indeed bear some resemblance to the European *grand tour* travel narrative, and even to the classically modern ‘coming of age’ narrative: the *Bildungsroman*. It is a young man’s narrative of personal formation through travel. The young hero, Diyāb, embarks on his travels in a personal quest for ‘initiation’, or formation—*i.e.* to discover his place, his identity, in the ‘adult’ world. One facet of this formation was

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<sup>11</sup> Sbath 254 begins in mid-action (and mid-sentence) during Diyāb’s novitiate at the Monastery of Mār Alisha’, situated in the northern Qādishā valley, near the town of Bsharrī in northern Lebanon. Some initial folios are obviously missing from the MS., in which Diyāb likely described his arrival and first days at the monastery. His time as a novice occupy the MS.’s first seven folios.

<sup>12</sup> *cf.* Intro., n. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Although Diyāb’s exact date of birth is unknown, Horta places his age around twenty at the time of his travels; see Paulo Lemos Horta, *Op. cit.*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> *D’Aleps à Paris*, 18.



undoubtedly economic: Growing into an adult involved establishing a means of financial viability and independence. Commentators have rightly pointed out the fact that Diyāb begins his travels as a youth in Aleppo who had spent three months in unhappy unemployment, reduced to humiliating financial dependence on relatives after being dismissed by his former French employer, the merchant Rémuzat. To this young man stuck at the bottom rung of his community's socio-economic hierarchy, Lucas's assurances of financial security in Paris were enticing.

Yet such a reading only gives us one part of the story of Diyāb's formation, realized through travel. Unemployment is an economic state, when viewed from a sociological perspective; but it is also an existential one, experienced primarily on a personal level. It is a state akin to *al-ghurba* ('alienation'), which we have discussed at length in the previous chapters—a state of crisis or confusion regarding one's place in the world. I would argue that Diyāb was less anxious about not having an income or about remaining at the bottom of the economic pecking order, than he was about the frightful prospect of not having a place in that order.<sup>15</sup> Diyāb's unemployed state made him into an alienated and uprooted 'stranger': a *gharīb*, in his home town of Ottoman Aleppo, even before he travelled to Europe.

However, Europe and the wider East-West encounter did have something to do with Diyāb's *al-ghurba* in Aleppo at this early stage: Successful apprenticeship with a local resident European merchant had become the main available and recognized avenue to success in the world for many young Maronites in Aleppo by Diyāb's time. When the French Rémuzat

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<sup>15</sup> Here it is admittedly a matter of interpretation. As to which concern was preponderant in Diyāb—the economic or the existential—the textual evidence is sparse. Diyāb was a gifted storyteller in the Arabic folk tradition, but he is never very introspective. Concerning his inner state he normally he gives us only the bare bones.

dismissed Diyāb and stubbornly refused to reemploy him, he cut off not just his cash-flow, but his means of attaining social acceptance and respectability in his own community: He turned him into a *gharīb*, ready to “roam and explore” in search of some new, as yet unknown place (or person) to anchor himself in. Taking to the road was a means of escape from *al-ghurba*, from the “world’s oppression” as he put it, as existential as it was economic: “Roaming about the world and exploring”.<sup>16</sup>

This process of exploration began locally for Diyāb, before he met Lucas, at the Monastery of Mār Alīsha‘ near Bsharrī, in northern Lebanon.<sup>17</sup> Europe, if we remember, was not on Diyāb’s

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<sup>16</sup> Diyāb himself explains to us that he came up with this story of “roaming about the world and exploring” off the cuff, apparently quite innocently, because he was in fact “embarrassed to tell him [Lucas] my story (*qiṣṣati*)”—*i.e.* that he was really on his way back to Mār Alīsha‘ to take up his novitiate for the second time after abandoning it just three months prior (Sbath 254, fol. 8<sup>r</sup>). Horta’s reading here is quite different, making Diyāb appear shrewder in his fabrication. He writes: “For Diyab, Lucas’s appearance represented an exciting opportunity to pursue a fortune of his own, and he was anxious to show off the abilities he had developed by working within the merchant class of Aleppo...Taking this chance to establish his own value to his new ‘master,’ Diyab portrayed himself as a sophisticated traveller who had explored the world. This lie was only the first deception in a relationship in which both Lucas and Diyab assumed a series of masks as they made their way through the fluid world of the Mediterranean.” see *Op. cit.*, 56-57.

<sup>17</sup> We might again read Diyāb’s decision to try out the monastic life, as either a means of escaping unemployment primarily, or as part of his youthful “exploration” in search of his identity and adult place in the world. ‘Leaving the world’, as monks called it, remained in every generation an option that attracted substantial numbers of young Christian men and women—certainly not all of them for economic motives. I would argue that, before meeting Paul Lucas, “exploring” the monastic life was perhaps the only socially-acceptable alternative to conventional life in Aleppo which Diyāb knew of. It is worth considering here for a moment Diyāb’s attitude towards his short monastic experience, as he himself expresses it in his narrative. In many modern European ‘narratives of formation’, boarding institutions with strict regimens—such as are monasteries—tend to be portrayed as dark and stifling environments, from which a typically young male hero wrestles to unfetter himself (*eg.* Salem House in Charles Dickens’s *David Copperfield*; a less extreme example would be Stephen Dedalus at the Jesuit-run Belvedere College in Dublin in James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*). Horta’s reading of Diyāb’s account of Mār Alīsha‘ bears traces of this familiar theme: “Donning the habit of a monk,” he writes, “Diyab found he could not recognize himself and immediately regretted his decision. He reacted with revulsion to the skulls of deceased priests that lined the hall and watched with horror as the abbot of the monastery abused an elderly monk, turning him away from the dining hall with kicks and blows. The shock of the conditions in the monastery seems to have been too much for Diyab’s spirit, and he was seriously ill during two of the three months he spent there. He finally obtained permission from the abbot to go home” (*Op. cit.*, 37). This I consider respectfully to be a severe misreading.

original travel itinerary. Meeting Lucas simply widened the scope significantly for Diyāb's "roaming and exploring". Travel with Lucas to Paris offered the possibility not only of a novel means of livelihood, but a new mode of living—an exciting one at that, which would provide the future author of the famous *Arabian Nights* 'orphan tales' with plenty of literary raw material for spinning his yarns.<sup>18</sup>

"If you want to roam, you couldn't have found someone better than me," Lucas assured Diyāb. It was this offer, as much as the promise of a prestigious academic job, which Diyāb accepted from Lucas. From the moment Diyāb joined Lucas, the latter became the main guide for the young Maronite's explorations and experiments with his own identity in the world, defined by the encounter between the two cultural poles, East and West.

Agency remained with Diyāb: He chose the unknown road to Paris with Lucas, as it were in the *twinkling of an eye*, over the road he knew already, which led back through the Lebanese

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The cited "abuse" was in reality right afterwards carefully and patiently explained within its context to Diyāb, as monastic training in humility, not motivated by personal rancor—a point which Diyāb understood well and even positively appreciated, much as it contrasts with our contemporary sensibilities (*cf.* Sbath 254, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>). The "abusive" abbot of Mār Alisha' was none other than Jirmānūs Farḥāt, the famously open-minded Maronite *adīb* (see below, n. 21-22), whom Diyāb sincerely revered as a sagacious 'Abba'. Overall, Diyāb portrays the monastic communal atmosphere at Mār Alisha' instead as warm and nurturing, albeit rigorous—too rigorous for one like him, whose resolve for becoming a monk was not firm enough, as he himself knew. In choosing the road to Paris with Paul Lucas over the cloistered life, Diyāb was making a personal choice in favor of continued youthful exploration—not a categorical rejection of monasticism. In fact, he revered the monastic order, considering himself unworthy of it. He reflects generally on his time at Mār Alisha': "This lowly one saw many things at this holy monastery: monks whose way of life was angelic (*sīrathum sīra malāyikiya*). What things I have mentioned here is only a small part of what I saw—indeed, I mentioned them to my shame (*khajalan lī*), and also as a warning to others not to go into monasticism without having prepared themselves for this holy rank (*bi-ghayri 'sti'dād li-hādhihi 'l-darajati 'l-muqaddasa*)" Sbath 254, fol. 5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Here Horta's analysis of Diyāb's narrative is extremely insightful and valuable: In elucidating how Diyāb's impressive story-telling craft was the unique product not only of Aleppo's folk-narrative culture in which he grew up and participated, but of even more importantly, of his "immersion in a particular story-telling culture as he travelled for nearly two years at Lucas's side." see *Op. cit.*, 56.

mountains to Mār Alīsha' convent. His narrative, his travel itinerary, and his identity formation would continue to be defined by the choices which he makes—at times displaying admirable resolve in the process. These choices however cannot be understood apart from his defining relationship to Paul Lucas, which we will explore in depth in the following section.

### I. *Diyāb's Relationship to Paul Lucas*

No other factor defines Diyāb's travel narrative as does his unequal relationship with Paul Lucas. In this section, we will examine the components of this relationship in detail. Through tracking this relationship's development, we can track also Diyāb's identity formation.

Diyāb, as we meet him at the start, was only free to “explore” as a young man under an authority. He could not possibly “roam about the world” on his own, without the protecting hand of an older, more experienced paternal-like authority figure.<sup>19</sup> “Il est jeune,” Bernard Heyberger writes about Diyāb, “il a besoin de quelqu'un pour l'initier au monde, et le *khawāja* Lucas replit cet office.”<sup>20</sup> Paul Lucas quickly became that authority for Diyāb. Theirs was at no point a symmetrical relationship between two travellers who meet on the road and agree to proceed together. From their first meeting, Diyāb agreed to travel onwards through Ottoman territory with Lucas as his *tarjumān* (‘interpreter’) and personal assistant—a relationship that involved some degree of remuneraton; however, the tie that bound them was deeper than a modern

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<sup>19</sup> There is no mention of Diyāb's actual father anywhere in the narrative. Horta writes that he lost his father early in life (*Op. cit.*, 20). The original surrogate ‘father-figure’ role in Diyāb's life in Aleppo was shared between his French employers, Rimbaud and later Rémuzat, and his two older brothers, Anṭūn and ‘Abdallāh.

<sup>20</sup> *D'Alep à Paris*, 18.

employer-employee contract. From the first young Diyāb begins to call Lucas *mu'allimī*—*i.e.* ‘my master’ or ‘my teacher’. Diyāb became attached and duty-bound to Lucas, as an apprentice to his master, as a *protégé* to his patron.

The only other serious candidate for the role of ‘master’ whom Diyāb meets on his journey prior to Lucas, was Jirmānūs Farḥāt, the famous Maronite churchman and prolific *adīb* of the early Arabic *Nahḍa*.<sup>21</sup> Farḥāt was abbot (*rayīs* [sic]) of the Mār Alīsha‘ cloister at the time when Diyāb went there to “explore” a possible monastic vocation. Diyāb referred to Farḥāt as a “wise, efficient, and expert guide (*murshid fahīm ‘āmil wa mu'allim*)”. The time he spent under Farḥāt’s mentorship was exceedingly brief however. We can only surmise about what Diyāb would have become had his monastic vocation more solid internal conviction behind it; had he stayed the longer course at Mār Alīsha‘ and been formed as a churchman—perhaps even as an Arabic writer?—under the paternal care of one like Farḥāt.<sup>22</sup> Under Farḥāt’s tutelage, Diyāb might have learned to refine his Middle Arabic prose and oral folk narrative style to conform to classical Arabic models of *adab*. Might he have nevertheless, *via* this route, made his alternative

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<sup>21</sup> Jirmānūs Jibrīl Farḥāt (d. 1732). For biographical and bibliographical on Farḥāt, see Graf, *GCAL*, III, 408-428; Nuhād Razzūq, *Jirmānūs Farḥāt: Ḥayātuhū wa 'Āthāruhū* (Kaslik: Jām'iat al-Rūḥ al-Quds, 1998); Kristen Brustad, “Jirmānūs Jibrīl Farḥāt” in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350-1850*, ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 242-251.

<sup>22</sup> Jirmānūs Farḥāt was one of the first early modern Eastern Christian writers who dedicated himself to mastery and dissemination of Classical Arabic literature and its idiom within his community. He was a more prolific classical *adīb* and grammarian than he was an ecclesiastical writer, whose career “helped spark an important rapprochement between Christians and [classical] Arabic”; see Kristen Brustad, *Op. cit.*, 248.

way to Europe following in Farḥāt's footsteps?<sup>23</sup> Perhaps. In that case the world would have never known of the *Arabian Nights* 'orphan tales'.

Diyāb's fate was to fall into the hands of Paul Lucas. It is easy indeed to understand what made the latter eager to bring Diyāb under his wing. Lucas knew well his 'scientific' work as an Oriental antiquities-hunter<sup>24</sup>; yet he knew next to nothing (and did not seemingly care to know) about the society in which his work was to be performed. This ignorance was a liability: in better cases it caused inconveniences and misunderstandings with locals; in worse cases it created dangerous, even potentially fatal situations. That Diyāb's presence was extremely helpful to Lucas in this regard is clear from the outset: As the stage-setter for their first meeting, Diyāb easily resolves a flareup between Lucas and their caravan's coachman, created by nothing more than the fact that "one didn't understand the other (*al-wāḥid mā byifham min al-ākhar*)."<sup>25</sup>

To nearly all 18th and 19th century European travellers to the Ottoman 'Orient', its contemporary society remained impenetrable. The prevailing attitude among such travellers—an attitude we identify today as 'orientalism', *i.e.* belief in the intrinsic cultural superiority of Western European civilization, reinforced through the 'othering' of the 'Orient'—placed an insurmountable barrier between them and that society. Very few travellers were willing and/or

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<sup>23</sup> Farḥāt travelled to Rome in 1711, while still abbot of Mār Alisha', the year after Diyāb returned to Aleppo from Paris. see Brustad, *Op. cit.*, 247.

<sup>24</sup> As an antiquities-collector Paul Lucas was appreciated by contemporaries for his practical *savoir-faire*, but his scientific credentials—*i.e.* his knowledge of ancient languages and archaeology—were universally disparaged by real French scholars of repute; *cf. D'Alep à Paris*, 22-23; Horta, *Op. cit.*, 60-61.

<sup>25</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>.

able to break through that barrier and acquire an accurate working knowledge of Ottoman languages and cultures.<sup>26</sup> Paul Lucas was not among them. The extent to which Lucas could acclimatize was to occasionally dress up in ‘Oriental’ garb.<sup>27</sup>

An incident related by Diyāb from al-Ḥammāmāt, a village close to Tunis, is symbolic of Lucas’s inhibiting ‘orientalist’ stance. The pair were lodging at a *khan* (‘inn’) outside the village, when Diyāb wandered off alone to explore a nearby hot spring (*qablūja* < Tk. *qaplija*<sup>28</sup>), well-known locally for its healing properties. When Diyāb arrived, the *qablūja* was full of local men bathing; some of them were neck-deep in the naturally-heated waters. He didn’t think twice about joining them: “I took off my clothes and sat down next to one the other bathers.” Yet Diyāb hadn’t anticipated the waters’ “intensity of heat”: “I stretched out my leg to feel the water,” he describes, “but when I felt it’s heat, I recoiled in flight, certain that my leg had burned up.” Bathing in this hot spring required from any inexperienced newcomer two things: First, to overcome his inhibitions; second, and more importantly, a humble willingness to learn from the experienced locals. Seeing Diyāb’s initial struggle, one local offered help: “Sit next to me, and I will teach you how to bathe.” He instructed him how to accustom his body to the heat,

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<sup>26</sup> One exceptional example of such was Edward William Lane (d. 1876), the English Orientalist who travelled to Egypt from 1825 to 1828. During that time Lane immersed himself in local daily life and penned his classic and monumental description of the country; see *An Account of the Manners and the Customs of the Modern Egyptians: The Definite 1860 Edition* (Cairo, Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press, 2003); on Lane’s career, see Jason Thompson, *Edward William Lane: The Life of the Pioneering Egyptologist and Orientalist, 1801-1876* (Cairo, Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Lucas dressed normally as a ‘Frank’, though occasionally he ‘went native’ in his dress. When they reached Beirut together, Diyāb reports that Lucas “now wore the clothing of our country (*lābis thiyāb bilādna*), while on his head he wore a *qalbaq*.” Sbath 254, fol. 11<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> *D’Alep à Paris*, 169, n. 3.

“gradually (*ruwaydan ruwaydan*)”, one limb at a time. “I did as he instructed me,” Diyāb writes. Before long, Diyāb was up to his chest in the water; an entire half-hour passed like that, without him even noticing the boiling heat anymore. In this way he reaped waters’ healing benefits: “I could see my body being rid of the aqueous humours (*ruṭūbāt*, lit. ‘fluids’) which had accumulated in my members.”

Diyāb, the model pupil, ran back to their *khan* to tell Lucas of the *qablūja* and its healing properties. “When he heard my report,” Diyāb writes, “he desired to come and bathe as well.” The waters’ scalding heat naturally presented an obstacle for Lucas as well. Was it even humanly possible to bathe in such heat? Lucas asked. Diyāb explained to him in detail the ‘gradual’ process of descent (*nuzūl*), as he had learned it from a local. Lucas doubted: He put one hand into the water and concluded that it was humanly impossible to bathe in it. The pair returned to the *khan*, neither having stepped into the waters this time. According to Diyāb, Lucas remained afterwards “mystified (*muta’ajjib*)” at how anybody could bathe in those waters and not boil to death. The *qablūja* was one of those sealed-off areas of Oriental life, whose ‘secrets’ were beyond the orientalist ken of a European traveller. It marked the limit of Lucas’s cross-cultural adaptability: a boundary which Lucas could not, and would not trespass.<sup>29</sup>

Lucas, like other European travellers, happily relied instead on someone like Diyāb to mediate his surroundings. Diyāb’s personal credentials fit the job description perfectly: He was bilingual in Arabic and French and, to a great extent, bicultural; and though he too was an ‘Oriental’, he was a Christian (and also a Catholic)—a factor which helped to demystify and render

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<sup>29</sup> Sbath 254, fols. 53<sup>r</sup>-54<sup>r</sup>.



accessible his ‘Oriental’ character. Diyāb quickly proved himself an indispensable asset for Lucas—at least so long as their travels together remained this side of the Mediterranean.

In the upper Egyptian town of Fayyum, Diyāb’s presence made all the difference for Lucas. Here, securing the favor and protection of the local Ottoman *sanjaq* (‘governor’) was vital for Lucas’s ability to freely conduct his ‘scientific’ field research. It was Diyāb who broke the ice in the cultural divide that initially separated the *khawāja* and the *sanjaq*. Through Diyāb’s brokering, the two fraternized and formed a camaraderie.

The narrative records this memorable scene in Fayyum: Lucas hesitated at first to accept the *sanjaq*’s generous invitation to dine with him at his own private residence. The *sanjaq* was on the brink of taking offense: “What is the matter with you, master (*mā lak yā mu‘allim*)? You don’t want to eat from our food?” Here Diyāb inserted himself with his cross-cultural dexterity. He conveyed to the *sanjaq* the real reason behind Lucas’s seeming rudeness: It was not his food *per se* that made Lucas reluctant, but the expectation—knowing Islam’s prohibition on alcohol—that it would be served unaccompanied by wine. A well-bred Frenchman would sooner go hungry than sit for a meal without wine.<sup>39</sup> This led to an unexpected breakthrough: “Not to worry about a thing, master,” the *sanjaq* reassured Lucas through Diyāb: “Tell him what he wants will be available.” Not all Muslims, it turned out, were teetotalers; some, including the *sanjaq*, were devoted winebibbers! The ice was broken. The *sanjaq* and the *khawāja* had found their common ground in shared devotion to wine.

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<sup>39</sup> “We cannot eat without drinking (*mā mniqdar nākul min ghēr shurb*),” Lucas tells Diyāb; *Ibid.*, fol. 51<sup>v</sup>.

Bonding afterwards became easy, even across the significant cultural divide—so long as Diyāb interpreted, and wine freely flowed. At that evening’s intimate dinner, hosted by the *sanjaq* in his residence’s inner *ḥaram* (‘sanctuary’), “they ate and drank from that good wine (*al-khamr al-jayyid*) until it was all finished...remaining until the evening was spent.” From the next day on, “it became known to all that we were under the *sanjaq*’s special protection. No harm would ever come to us from that city’s inhabitants.”<sup>31</sup>

Lucas’s weakness for wine caused trouble another time near Sūsā, south of Tunis. This time the situation deteriorated rapidly, to the point that it would have become fatal for Lucas—had not Diyāb again skilfully, even courageously intervened, placing himself right in harm’s way between his European *mu‘allim* and a roused mob of locals.

Their driver from Tunis had warned them ahead of time about Sūsā’s inhabitants: They were *arfāḍ*<sup>32</sup>—*i.e.* heretics/schismatics, “who shun all association with Sunni Muslim, Christian, and Jew alike (*mā biyrīdū yujānisū lā muslim sunnī wa lā naṣrānī wa lā yahūdī*).” They had to enter the town nevertheless to hire animals to carry their luggage. Predictably, a dispute arose between them and the local animal-leaser, who began to violently hurl all their luggage to the ground. Among these was a box belonging to Lucas which contained twenty-four bottles of “fine wine (*nabīdh ṭayyib*)” supplied by the French consul in Tripoli. Thinking that his wine-bottles had shattered with the impact, Lucas “went out of his mind, cried out loud, and began

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 30<sup>r</sup>-31<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Sing. *rāfiḍī*. The term is polemical and derogatory, used most often by Sunni Muslims when referring to Shiites. see *D’Aleps à Paris*, 164, n.1.

to curse the man in Turkish, Arabic and French, having learned to say in Turkish *kebek* and in Arabic *kalb*.<sup>33</sup> Lucas even assaulted him physically, “pushing him, so that he almost fell on his face.” The man quickly ran in the direction of the town gates to find reinforcements, crying out: “O my forefather (*yā jaddāh*)! Save me! A *Rūmī*<sup>34</sup> has insulted me and beat me (*qatalnī*)<sup>35</sup>!”

Things quickly escalated: A whole crowd of locals came rushing out from the city gates “like killer locusts” to defend their fellow villager. Lucas fled the scene and hid himself in a crevice in the the town’s nearby rampart, leaving Diyāb alone to fend off the crowd’s fury: “Seeing no one else but me there, they grabbed hold of me, intent on murdering me,” he writes, “It was with great effort that I broke loose from their clutches (*irtakhēt min ayādihum*).”

Realizing that Diyāb wasn’t their man, the crowd went off in search of Lucas. But before they could find him and do him any harm, Diyāb intervened again: “I promised the owner [of the animal] that we wouldn’t load anything on his mount, and that I alone would ride it completely unloaded. I also promised to give him two gold pieces on top of his regular fee. Soon as he heard of the two gold pieces, his indignation subsided; he began dispersing the crowd.”

Once the crowd had dispersed, Diyāb and the driver inspected Lucas’s wine-box—the cause for the whole commotion: They discovered that “not a single bottle had broken; all were

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<sup>33</sup> *i.e.* ‘dog’, in both languages.

<sup>34</sup> The term *Rūmī*, as we have seen in the other chapters of this dissertation, was versatile. Here it used somewhat imprecisely, referring to Lucas, a Frenchman and neither a ‘Roman’ nor a member of *millet-i-Rūm*— similar to the way the word ‘Turk’ in Europe often referred imprecisely to any Muslim, regardless of ethnicity.

<sup>35</sup> In colloquial Levantine dialects, the verb *qatala*, whose standard meaning is ‘to kill’ or ‘to assassinate’, can also mean ‘to beat’, *i.e.* to give somebody a thrashing.

intact (*ṣāgh*). Not a bit of wine had spilled.” They then went riding along the town rampart to look for Lucas. Diyāb writes: “We couldn’t find him at first, and became worried. Seeing us from behind the straw, he at last came out of his hole and joined us, still visibly terrified, his face turned completely pale (*makhtūf*, lit. ‘abducted’). I began reassuring him, saying: ‘Don’t be afraid. All those people are gone. All is secure. The case of wine didn’t break, and none of the wine spilled out’.”<sup>36</sup>

Situations like these make it almost appear as if Lucas was more dependent on Diyāb than vice-versa. The opposite was true: Lucas retained the uncontested upper hand. Diyāb was the apprentice, the *protégé*; Lucas was the *mu‘allim*. This hierarchy would be maintained from start to finish, through every stage in the development of their relationship; it would survive even Diyāb’s final and dramatic casting off of Lucas’s authority over him much later on in Paris (see below). In this hierarchy was reflected no doubt the wider hierarchy obtaining on an official level between the French in the Ottoman Mediterranean and their local Maronite clients.

Lucas was not the one in need of guidance on a basic personal and professional level: Diyāb was. Lucas knew no Arabic or Turkish, but he held all the French consular and clerical connections, as well as the royal French financial line that made their continued travel together through the Ottoman empire possible. And even if Lucas depended on Diyāb for finding his way safely around an Ottoman town or city, Lucas, unlike Diyāb, knew his place in world. His personal identity was firmly rooted in his French national origins; his professional identity as an antiquities-gatherer was well established. Lucas’s need for Diyāb’s unique skill-set as a

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<sup>36</sup> Sbath 254, fols. 51<sup>r</sup>-52<sup>r</sup>.

*tarjumān* was contingent on his being a temporary traveller in Ottoman lands; it would end the moment he returned to his French home after fulfilling his royal ‘scientific’ mission in the Orient.

Diyāb, by contrast, was uprooted and unsettled, his identity in flux. He had only recently severed (at least partially) his traditional ties to family and home in order to join Lucas in “roaming about the world and exploring”. The degree to which Diyāb felt himself dependent on Lucas in his new situation can be seen from an episode he records in Tunis, when the latter of a sudden falls ill, coming “within the brink of death (*shārif ‘alā ’l-mawt*)”. Diyāb dutifully tends to Lucas’s sick-bed; but as death loomed for his *mu‘allim*, he contemplates with anxiety the prospects of his immediate future without him:

That night I slept beside his bed, [\*full of] sadness that this man would soon die. I became plunged into a sea of thoughts: [\*What would become of me] after he died? Here I was in *al-ghurba*, with no one to turn to for refuge (*maljā*), and far away from my country (*ba‘īd ‘an bilādi*).<sup>37</sup>

We note in this passage Diyāb’s significant use of the term *al-ghurba* to describe his present state—a term which we saw in Chapter 2, used extensively by Paul of Aleppo in his *Safra* while he was in Russia. What Diyāb’s use of the term has in common from Paul’s is its association with the state of being “far away from my country (*bilādi*)”—for both them the very same city: Aleppo. Here ends the similarity between them however. Diyāb’s *al-ghurba*, his sense of being a *gharīb*, is very different from Paul’s. For one, it is never expressed in his narrative with the same clarity as in the *Safra*. Paul frequently expresses, in almost classical Arabic fashion,

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<sup>37</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 58<sup>r</sup>. An ink blot on the folio obscures the parts of this passage enclosed in brackets.

his “longing for the homeland (*al-ḥanīn ilā l-waṭan*)”: Aleppo, its landmarks and environs. His *al-ghurba* had its roots, as we saw in Chapter 2, in an ideological/cultural divide in which he found himself while in Russia on the opposite side for the first time. Diyāb’s *al-ghurba* on the other hand is not expressed here as *al-ḥanīn ilā l-waṭan*; nor does it appear to contain any ideological or cultural content like Paul’s. Only while he was among the Greek *Rūm* in Ottoman Cyprus, we remember, did Diyāb feel himself a ‘stranger’ (*gharīb*) in the cultural/ideological sense (see Chapt. 1, Sect. IV). Unless specific incidents reminded him of it (like the ‘shaving’ episode in Livorno), Diyāb was normally unconscious of the East-West divide. As Bernard Heyberger comments: “Hanna ne sent pas constamment ‘étranger’ ou ‘oriental’. Ce sont des situations qui le renvoient à la différence entre lui et les ‘Francs’.”<sup>38</sup> Diyāb’s state of *al-ghurba* here in this scene is mostly personal: his feeling of *al-ghurba* is triggered only by the prospect of losing his *mu’allim*, Lucas. While on the road, “far away from my country,” without a stable identity of his own, Lucas was his anchor, his “refuge (*maljā*).” Losing him now would mean relapsing into a state of unprotected orphanhood—a terrifying prospect for young Diyāb.

Diyāb’s relationship to Lucas was not just contractual, or based on *quid pro quo*. It was deeper than that, as we can already see. In his new travelling mode of life, Lucas became a genuine role model for Diyāb: The *khawāja*, even while far away from his home and his cultural-linguistic comfort-zone, appeared to move about with supreme self-assurance, with freedom to “roam about the world and explore”—guaranteed by his French royal patronage. Diyāb hoped

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<sup>38</sup> *D’Alepp à Paris*, 43.

to inherit this mode of life from Lucas. To this end he followed Lucas, attached himself to him like an apprentice to a master craftsman, voluntarily submitting to his near-total authority.

Through hands-on practice rather than any formal academic training, Lucas had become proficient at his trade as a gatherer of Oriental antiquities and of rare minerals and gems.<sup>39</sup> To Diyāb, Lucas's knowledge (or rather, his confidence) in this field seemed prodigious, even quasi-esoteric: "This man possessed a knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of gems that were still raw," he writes, "he would often buy a precious stone whose true value was unknown to anyone else."<sup>40</sup> Lucas's 'knowledge' extended to the medicinal healing properties, sometimes miraculous, of the minerals and herbs which Lucas collected. This medical 'knowledge' allowed Lucas to travel in the Ottoman empire under the guise of being a 'Frank doctor (*hakīm franj*)'—a revered figure by locals, whose philanthropic services were everywhere in demand.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Lucas made a total of three successful French royally-funded 'scientific' voyages to the Ottoman 'Orient'—this one, on which he was joined by Diyāb on the way to Tripoli from Aleppo, was his second voyage (1704-1708). For every journey, Lucas published a travelogue, each of which became hugely popular in France: according to Horta, he was "the most popular French travel writer of the early eighteenth century"; *Op. cit.*, 59.

<sup>40</sup> The following anecdote exemplifies Lucas's 'knowledge' as Diyāb perceived it: In Egypt, the pair pass by a peddler in a market selling what looked to Diyāb like worthless trinkets (*qarāqī*). Of a sudden, Lucas stops in his tracts and orders Diyāb to go back and buy out the peddler's entire display. Diyāb objects: "What do you need those trinkets for? You'll make everyone take us for fools (*betkhallī killī 'l-nās yetḍahkū 'alēnā*)!" Lucas merely repeated his order to Diyāb: Buy them! He obviously saw something in the display which nobody else could see. Only after reluctantly carrying out the order does Diyāb realize: "He, however, knew what was in that display. It had a rough stone, which contained a raw gem worth a great sum of money...He wrote down the date [of his finding] in his diary (*yawmīya*)." Sbath 254, fol. 29.

<sup>41</sup> Heyberger writes, "Sa qualité de 'médecin', portée sur son passeport, n'était qu'une couverture" (*D'Alep à Paris*, 22). Diyāb however, had sturdy faith in Lucas's medical 'knowledge': in his narrative, Lucas's remedies—all home-made decoctions of the various minerals and herbs which he collected—worked without fail when applied to the sick. The latter included Diyāb's own mother, whom Lucas almost miraculously 'healed' (Sbath 254, fols. 29<sup>v</sup>, 137, 171<sup>r</sup>-172<sup>r</sup>). Diyāb's hopes, on the other hand, of being initiated by Lucas into this 'knowledge' were continually disappointed: "I, on the other hand, do not have this knowledge; nor did I ever become privy to it (*lā ittāla't alayhum*) during our travels" (*Ibid.*, fol. 29<sup>v</sup>).

All of these were qualities which Diyāb lacked at the moment—but which he hoped to acquire by ‘anchoring’ himself in Lucas’s person for the time-being and clinging to his coattails all the way to Paris.

\*                     \*                     \*                     \*                     \*

In Lucas’s company, Diyāb’s identity undergoes a gradual transformation. This transformation can be most easily tracked through changes he records in the external markers of his social identity: his clothing and physical appearance. Throughout the narrative, Diyāb consciously experiments with his identity through these—a major theme which we explored at some length in Chapter 1 (see Sect. II).

In Diyāb’s worldview there existed an essential link between a person’s clothing/physical appearance and his social identity. This link is made explicit in anecdotes like the one he relates of a Cypriot Greek (*Krīkī*) fugitive who swam after their vessel just as it was leaving Limassol for Alexandria and begged the crew for passage. Diyāb observed how he had “his shirt wrapped around his head”: a mark of his fugitive status. To admit such a fugitive on board was risky; but the captain—himself an Ottoman Christian *ra‘āya*—assented finally. However, he placed on him one absolute condition of passage: He needed to undergo a complete physical makeover.

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The fugitive had to let his beard and moustache be shaved, put on a wig and a cap, and be dressed like a sailor, “so that it none would know he was Greek (*ḥattā lā yen‘arifinnuh krīkī*).”<sup>42</sup>

Before he leaves for Europe, Diyāb’s experiments are subtle, not dramatic. They begin even before he meets Lucas, from the moment he first took to the road: As he joins the caravan to Tripoli, Diyāb wraps himself in a white cloth (*shāsh*) which made him publicly unrecognizable as a Christian. Lucas, as his fellow passenger, mistook Diyāb in fact for a Muslim at their first meeting: “Are you a Christian (*hal anta masīḥī*)?” are Lucas’s first recorded words addressed to Diyāb.<sup>43</sup>

Later, in Beirut—already joined at this point to Lucas—Diyāb decides to replace his white cloth with the blue one normally worn by Christians: Travelling incognito along the roads was one thing; wearing identifiably Muslim clothing in a major urban centre was another—it could bring on trouble for a Christian. His local Beirut Maronite friend, Yūsuf ibn Mukāḥḥal, prevented him however from making the change: “If you want, go ahead and wear a green cloth!” Yūsuf advised, to Diyāb’s shock. Wearing green headgear was the normally the exclusive

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 19.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 8<sup>r</sup>. The same question is recorded again almost *verbatim* not long afterwards in the narrative, addressed to both Diyāb and Lucas—by now a pair—just outside of Tripoli in the Kasrawān mountains. The mountains were a Maronite stronghold, dominated politically by the local Khāzin clan. “Are you Christians (*hal antum masīḥīya*)?” some locals asked them. It wasn’t the travellers’ clothing that elicited the question this time. It was during the first week of Lent (*ṣawm al-kabīr*, *i.e.* ‘great fast’), and the two weary travellers (otherwise observant Catholics) were eating an early morning meal of fried fish, bread and wine, in full public view of the devout locals—all of whom fasted either till noon or till the “ninth hour (*al-tāsi‘a*, *i.e.* 3:00 pm)”. “Yes,” Diyāb and Lucas insisted, they *were* Christians. “We are travelling,” they explained: “All night we’ve been on the move, so we’re not required to fast (*mā ‘alaynā ṣawm*).” Canonically, travellers had a dispensation from the normal fasting rules. Their mode of living, as “travellers...on the move”, placed them apart from established norms and categories, even from the regular Church liturgical calendar; *Ibid.*, fo. 10<sup>v</sup>.

privilege of a *sharīf* (*i.e.* a descendant of Muhammad): Nearly anywhere in *dār al-islām*, a Christian would not hazard such a seemingly impudent, even sacrilegious act in public.<sup>44</sup> But in Beirut, a city where Ottoman administrative control was more tenuous, and where Christians—especially Maronites with their French sponsorship—were uncharacteristically numerous and powerful, the situation was different: “In this city,” Yūsuf further explained to Diyāb, “there are no restrictions for a Christian (*mā fi qayd ‘ala ’l-naṣrānī*) in what he can wear.”<sup>45</sup> Diyāb tells us that he just couldn’t bring himself to follow Yūsuf’s suggestion to wear green headgear: “I couldn’t do it in end, so I put on finally my blue cloth.”<sup>46</sup> He needed a longer time on the road perhaps before he was ready for such a brazen act.

Diyāb’s instinctive reluctance to follow Yūsuf’s advice was justified—as can be seen from the following episode. Diyāb’s headgear of choice while in Ottoman territory was the inconspicuous *qalbak*. Only once, in Tripoli, does he exchange his *qalbak* for the more ceremonious *qāwūq*, wrapped in a fine *shāsh*. The exchange was deliberate and calculated: “The idea came to me (*qallī ‘aqlī*, lit. ‘my mind told me’),” he writes.

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<sup>44</sup> *D’Aleps à Paris*, 77, n.2.

<sup>45</sup> Ottoman imperial control was always more tenuous in Lebanon than elsewhere. The uncharacteristic freedoms enjoyed by Christians in Beirut at this time were a result of the fact that the Maronite “house of Khāzin (*bayt Khāzin*)” held sway also over the city. The extent of their dominance is seen in the following anecdote which Diyāb records: While touring the Beirut’s central area, Diyāb saw a group of *aghās* sporting colorful red and green turbans (*sarbandāt*), and armed with swords and bejewelled daggers (*khanājir muja-whara*). Diyāb instinctively tensed up and tried to steer clear of them, thinking that they were members of the city’s ruling faction (*hukkām al-balad*)—*i.e.* ruling-class Muslims who might attack any *ra‘ayā* like him with impunity. His friend, Yūsuf, noticed his fear: “What are you frightened for, my brother? Don’t you know who these *aghāwāt* are?” Yes, they *were* members Beirut’s ruling faction—but though they dressed like Muslim *aghās* do elsewhere, they were in fact Maronites: members of *bayt Khāzin*. Here in Beirut, Yūsuf explained to him, a *dhimmi* had nothing to fear; Sbath 254, fol. 11.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 11<sup>r</sup>.

That particular day, the Jesuits were celebrating a feast at their convent. All of Tripoli's small but influential French-Catholic expatriate community would be in attendance. Like we saw Elias of Mosul do frequently in the *Kitāb Siyāḥa*, Diyāb put on his most colourful and exotic 'native' costume (the *qāwūq* and *shāsh* were part of it) to attend the feast, hoping to impress the elite French crowd. He was a success at the feast. Diyāb writes: "When the consul saw me in that costume, he was delighted by me." He understood his target audience well, giving them with his costume the kind of arabesque-embellished 'Oriental' spectacle they craved.

What he understood less well was how Tripoli's local code of headgear signifiers differed in subtle, but substantial ways from Aleppo's: Whereas a high *qāwūq* and *shāsh* were acceptable headgear for a Christian in the Levant, in Tripoli only an imperial Ottoman ambassador (*ilī* < Tk. *ilçi*) had the right to wear those. While walking home from the feast, Diyāb, still in full costume, encounters armed janissaries (*injikārīya* [sic]) who react violently to Diyāb's *qāwūq* and *shāsh*: "They started cursing me in their own language and growling at me like they wanted to kill me." Diyāb escaped the scuffle with his life, but the janissaries confiscated his offending headgear.

The incident in Tripoli surrounding Diyāb's *qāwūq* and *shāsh* didn't end there, with their confiscation by the janissaries. When Diyāb later arrived at the French consulate without his headgear, Lemaire, the French consul, became furious. The headgear became a matter of honor for the latter: Diyāb was staying in Tripoli as Lemaire's personal guest, and he therefore should have enjoyed consular protection like a 'Frank'—not a *ra'āya*, subject to confiscation of belongings. Lemaire demanded from local Ottoman authorities that they find whoever took the

*qāwūq* and *shāsh* wrongfully “from the head of our guest (*min rās ḍayfnā*)” and return them without delay. The matter was not simple: Janissaries were an irregular and semi-independent military force over whom the local Ottoman *Bek* never had full control. In the ensuing diplomatic tug-of-war, Diyāb found himself caught awkwardly in the middle. The *qāwūq* and *shāsh* were at last retrieved and returned. Lemaire insisted thereafter that Diyāb, as his consular guest, had nothing to fear from anyone in Tripoli, and he ordered him to wear them at all times in the city. Diyāb on the other hand instinctively knew better. He obeyed Lemaire’s command only in his presence, as a pretence: “Whenever I left outside the consulate house,” he writes, “I removed the *shāsh* and wore the *qalbak*.”<sup>47</sup>

We can detect also an internal change take place in Diyāb, beginning in earnest after he and Lucas leave the Levant for their trek across North Africa, starting from Egypt.<sup>48</sup> This change has to do with the attitudes Diyāb adopts in his dealings with the locals—the ‘natives’. We might say that Diyāb was already making good progress towards becoming more European in his thought habits, in anticipation of his arrival in Livorno: In passages like the one quoted below, it appears at first glance like some of Lucas’s ‘orientalism’ had rubbed off on him. Diyāb describes of some locals in Fayyum in the following terms:

The people of this land are vile and savage (*waḥshīyīn*). Some of them are Copts, others are country-dwellers (*rīfīyīn*). Their dress in an outer loose tunic (*jubba*), nothing else, worn directly on the skin (*‘alā ’l-laḥm*, lit. ‘on the flesh’). They go bare-footed and bare-headed. All their faces are distorted and repulsive; the Copt cannot be distinguished from the country-dweller (*mā byen‘arīf al-qibṭī mina ’l-rīfī*).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 46<sup>v</sup>-48<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> The route from Beirut to Egypt by sea passed through the island of Cyprus; see Chapt. 1, Sect. IV.

<sup>49</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 28<sup>v</sup>.

As Diyāb saw them, all of Fayyum’s inhabitants—its ‘natives’—whether Christian Copts, or (presumably) Muslim ‘country-dwellers’, were the same: indistinguishably “vile and savage”, equally “distorted and repulsive.”<sup>50</sup> His stance vis-à-vis the locals here was not one of hostility or suspicion as it had been in Cyprus, but superiority. Unlike the *Rūm* of Cyprus, these Upper Egyptians, both Copts and Muslims, harboured no special hatred for his Catholic identity; they were simply inferior if benign ‘savages’.

The Fayyum inhabitants were not the only ‘savages’ Diyāb encountered in North Africa. Farther west, in the desert of the Gulf of Syrte, about half-way between Alexandria and Tripoli<sup>51</sup>, Diyāb enters a dwelling within a local Bedouin settlement (*buyūt al-‘arab*, lit. ‘houses of Arabs’), whose owner, he says, had the unflattering appearance of a “devil (*shayṭān*) with eyes like the eyes of an ape, wrapped in a black blanket—he being black himself. His visage was terrifying (*rūyetuh btfazza*).”<sup>52</sup>

Had these passages been written in a European language and not Arabic, they could have easily been excerpted from the diary of some second-rate European travel-writer in the ‘Orient’— in which case we would blithely and routinely condemn that writer for trading in ‘orientalist stereotypes’. Should we apply fairness here and condemn Diyāb for the same

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<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note here: In Fayyum, Egypt, Copts could not be distinguished by their dress from Muslims—a situation vastly different from the Levant, where strict sartorial codes clearly marked sectarian membership in public.

<sup>51</sup> On the coast of modern-day Libya, its modern Arabic designation is *Khalīj Surt*. Diyāb refers to this area as *Kūlfā di Sīdrā*, likely derived from its Italian name *Golfo di Sidra*. see *D’Alepp à Paris*, 130, n.2.

<sup>52</sup> Sbath 254, Fol. 36<sup>v</sup>.

offense? Bernard Heyberger cites passages like these as examples of how “l’altérité et l’exotisme n’y sont pas l’exclusivité de l’Europe chrétienne.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the question of how to approach these passages requires from us readers a deeper, more nuanced consideration of the issue of *altérité*, or ‘otherness’, and how it applies to Diyāb’s highly unique human situation.

On the one hand, Heyberger is no doubt correct: The tendency to ‘other’, to exoticize, to ‘orientalize’, to adopt an *a priori* attitude of superiority when coming into contact with select ‘other’ groups of people, is a trait neither exclusive to *l’Europe chrétienne*, nor to any other geographic or cultural collective. The tendency—a negative one—is universally present in the history of human cross-cultural encounters, going in every direction, on all axes on the compass—certainly not just ‘East-West’. The present case is exemplary: Diyāb, a self-described ‘son of the East’, an ‘Oriental’, is seen here applying classically crude ‘orientalist stereotypes’ to fellow ‘Orientals’—to people whose culture and language were not the same as his, but not extremely different either when viewed in the wider human spectrum.

A possible alternative interpretation to ‘orientalism’ as the source here of *altérité* is this: What separated Diyāb from Fayyum’s ‘savages’ was not so much culture, as *level* of culture. Diyāb, who was from a ‘developed’ cosmopolitan urban centre, experiences shock here at encountering rural ‘underdevelopment’ in Upper Egypt—a shock comparable to that experienced by upper class Victorian Londoners who ventured among their metropolis’s urban poor and witnessed their squalid living conditions first-hand. In both bases, the experience is described

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<sup>53</sup> *D’Alep à Paris*, 39.

with condescending, derogatory, or exoticizing language. And in this case, Diyāb is not to be understood here as operating under the influence of European ‘orientalist’ categories, but within an old anthropological dichotomy which he inherited from *within* classical Arabic thought: *ḥaḍar* vs *badw*—*i.e.* settled/‘civilized’ urban dwellers vs nomadic/‘primitive’ desert-dwellers.<sup>54</sup>

On the other hand, we cannot dismiss the possibility that Diyāb’s adopted stance towards locals in Fayyum and Sirte was influenced, at least in part, by the company he was keeping. Diyāb always had extensive contacts with Europeans in Aleppo; but after joining Lucas on the road, those contacts deepened, became more prolonged and intimate. An inevitable consequence of this was that their (*i.e.* Europeans’) thought habits would increasingly influence his own thought habits—and as a corollary, their attitudes towards locals would become increasingly a filter for his own dealings with them. We can as it were empirically observe this process take place in the narrative: Not long after Diyāb overhears Alexandria’s French consul warn Lucas against sailing on a boat filled with local “barbarians (*barābira*) whose companionship would be extremely burdensome for a man like you”, we then hear Diyāb complain about the “utmost displeasure” he experienced being stuck out at sea together with “those barbarian people (*tilk al-awādim al-barābira*).”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> I am grateful to Robyn Creswell, my dissertation advisor, for pointing this dichotomy out to me, and its applicability to Diyāb’s situation in Upper Egypt. By far the most famous medieval Arab thinker who expanded in depth on this *ḥaḍar/badw* dichotomy was the Maghrebi historian/sociologist Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1382). Within his *Muqaddima*, Chapter 2 is a study of *‘umrān badawī* (‘primitive civilization’), while Chapter 4 is a study of *‘umrān ḥaḍarī* (‘urban civilization’); see M. Talbi, “Ibn Khaldūn”. In *EL*.

<sup>55</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 34<sup>r</sup>.

Regular, casual exposure to attitudes such as that expressed by Padre Giovanni, the local Italian Jesuit who lodged Diyāb in Fayyum, might have played their part. Padre Giovanni was another ‘Frank doctor’ who practiced a “strange medicine (*ḥikma gharība*)” on the locals—both Copts and “[Muslim] peasants (*fallāḥīn*)”—who flocked to him in large numbers for treatment. Diyāb describes the Padre’s “strange medicine”, and the condescending attitude lying behind it:

He would place in a burning stove some small hot-irons, and with these he cauterized the ailing, some on their foreheads, some on their necks, some on their chests, others on their thighs, and so on. One day I finally asked him:

— Father, doesn’t your heart pain you (*a-mā yūja’ak qalbak*) for those fellow human beings (*awādim*) whom you torture (*bt’addibhum* [sic]) with those hot-irons whose pain cannot be withstood?

He answered me:

— My child, these human beings whom you see have the nature of savages (*ṭab’ al-wuḥūsh*). Conventional remedies have no effect on their bodies and bring them no benefit. That is why I’m forced to treat them using treatments reserved normally for animals (*ḥay-awānāt*).<sup>56</sup>

We see from this report that Diyāb remained uncomfortable with Padre Giovanni’s extreme attitude. He hadn’t completely embraced it as his own. “Savage and vile” as they appeared to Diyāb as well, the poorly-clad Copts and *fallāḥīn* of Fayyum remained fellow human beings (*awādim*) in his eyes. Nevertheless, he has without doubt moved much closer to Padre Giovanni’s point of view than he was before he quit home in Lucas’s company. As a prelude to his awaited arrival on Europe’s shores, Diyāb has already entered the Europeans’ thought-world in a profounder way.

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 33.



### III. *Into the 'Lands of the Christians'*

Human trafficking was rampant in the Mediterranean in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The trade in captives was an extension of the dominant regional geo-political rivalries—a proxy war conducted by pirates, or corsairs, in the partial employ of either Europe's Christian powers or the Muslim Ottoman empire. Coastal and island populations, whether Christian or Muslim, remained always vulnerable to captive raids. Muslim corsairs took Christian captives for sale as slaves or for ransom; and vice-versa. Sailing with Diyāb on his sea-voyage between Tunis and Livorno were eight Christian captives (*yasāra* [sic]) who had been ransomed in Tunis by benevolent Catholic *Padres*. Diyāb took a special interest in one of these: an elderly Corsican who had spent twenty years as a captive in the Ottoman *Maghreb*. When their ship docked in Corsica *en route* to Italy, Diyāb watched this man being reunited with his wife and children. The scene he describes brings to life for us the personal tragedy so often caused by geo-political conflict, in a way that chronicles rarely do:

This man kept asking about his wife and children—Were they alive and well (*hal hinne taybīn*)? So they brought them. When they appeared in front of him, and he saw his wife and children alive and well, he began to weep from his intense joy. His wife and children also began to weep. Finally they implored him to leave the ship and make the quarantine in his country—meaning, to enter the place where any passengers arriving from the lands of the East or West (*bilād al-sharq aw al-gharb*) had to remain for forty days.<sup>57</sup>

Despite his family's fervent pleas, the elderly captive stayed aboard the ship. His new life of freedom had to be forestalled only a little while longer: "I'm going to Livorno," he told them, "to take care of some important affairs and will come back to be with you soon." He and Diyāb would continue to sail together to Livorno.

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 62.

At mid-sea, their ship was ransacked by French corsairs. Diyāb took a personal risk to save the old captive's money-belt by hiding it with his own clothing from the pirates. After the ordeal was past, Diyāb cheerfully restored to him his belt. "When he saw the belt," he writes, "he fell with his face to the ground, unable to rise again from joy. Then I went up to him, grabbed his hand; he arose and started kissing my hands, thanking me. I told him: 'My brother, thank God Almighty who blinded them from [seeing] your belt...This occurred due to our Lord's care for your children's welfare.'"<sup>58</sup>

Diyāb arrived in Paris with Lucas in February (Shabāt) 1709.<sup>59</sup> The plan was to head straight for Versailles for an audience with King Louis XIV. Preparations were made for a full-scale 'Oriental spectacle' at the royal residence, in which Lucas would showcase all the exotica he had gathered on his royally-funded adventure in the East. These included antique trinkets, coins and medallions, rare gems, healing herbs and minerals. Lucas had also bought a pair of *jerboas*<sup>60</sup> in Tunis, for which he now ordered a fitting new cage to be carved from wood. The spectacle's planned centrepiece however was Ḥannā Diyāb: No animal, plant, or mineral specimen was a more exotic diversion than a human one.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 64<sup>r</sup>-66<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> Since we have already discussed Diyāb's time in Livorno extensively, at the beginning of this chapter and in Chapter 1, we will bypass it now (along with his short stay in Marseilles) to discuss directly his stay in Paris—Diyāb's most important European destination.

<sup>60</sup> Ar. *jarbū*: a small rodent of the family Dipodidae, with long hind legs and jumping powers, native to the North African deserts. Since they were unknown in Europe, Paul Lucas bought them to be showcased as 'exotic' animals from the 'Orient'.

Lucas had earlier ordered Diyāb's shaving in Livorno as a means of helping him blend in European society. In Paris, if Diyāb hoped to further blend in on arrival, Lucas had other thoughts. Lucas's choreography at Versailles demanded that that the East-West difference be not diminished as in Livorno, but accentuated and fetishized—far beyond reality to the level of spectacle. He ordered Diyāb be fitted in *faux*-Oriental costume: an amorphous, inauthentic medley of clothing-articles and props collected from different parts of the Ottoman empire. This costume included: a long Aleppan robe, a Damascene *alāja*, a “costly girdle (*zunnār*)” fitted with a “silver-hilted dagger”, and a sable-fur *qalbak*— a “beautiful *qalbak*” in Diyāb's own assessment, which Lucas bought specially in Cairo for this occasion. For heightened effect, Diyāb's moustache was allowed to fully grow back by now.<sup>61</sup> “Once I had put on my costume,” writes Diyāb, “then we finally rode in a carriage and headed towards the village of Versailles, where the *ṣarāya* of the sultan of France is located, at a distance of about an hour and a half from the city of Paris.”<sup>62</sup>

Versailles embodied like no other place in France the intellectual, artistic and political aspirations of Louis XIV's *ancien régime*. On full, opulent display there were pre-revolutionary French royal wealth, conspicuous consumption, repressive power, and cultural refinement. It was a fitting starting-point for Diyāb's Parisian experience: with a vision of human rational

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<sup>61</sup> This becomes apparent at Versailles: The Princess Madame de Bourgogne—King Louis XIV's daughter—asks Lucas at once point concerning Diyāb's appearance: “Why does he have a beard—I mean, a moustache?” Lucas then explains to her that it was “the custom in their lands, not to shave their moustache (*mā byeḥluqū shawāribhum*).” *Ibid.*, fol. 96<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 93<sup>v</sup>-94<sup>r</sup>.

order (*niẓām*) boldly asserting itself over the surrounding chaos of nature. Diyāb was particularly impressed by an account of how Louis XIV, against the advice of nearly all his “experts (*mu‘allimīn*)”, had ordered the flow of the Seine river—according to him “a river as large as the Euphrates river”—to be redirected through Versailles. Through his determination, the French king accomplished what seemed like the impossible task of taming elemental natural forces. The redirected river supplied the palace’s verdant gardens, abundant orchards and flowing fountains, which helped turn Versailles into a self-contained world, giving it its famed ‘otherworldly’ feel.<sup>63</sup> Like other contemporary visitors to the royal palace grounds, Diyāb was enchanted by what he witnessed: King Louis XIV, he says, “built a palace with no peer in all other climes...with all types of orchards, gardens and promenades that defy description, whose fame is celebrated by all other Christian kings.”<sup>64</sup> He was like a child at an amusement park: The fact that Diyāb had been brought into Versailles by Lucas meant that he enjoyed clearance to freely explore the royal grounds, unobstructed. “I, the lowly one (*al-faqīr*), stayed for eight days in the royal palace”, he writes: “During those eight days I freely roamed about the royal place with nobody obstructing me (*mā aḥad yata‘āriḍnī*).”<sup>65</sup>

Yet there was an admission price to pay. “Who is this youth (*mā hādhā ‘l-ghulām*), and what is that in his hand?” Pontchartrain, the French royal “minister of the Orient (*wazīr al-*

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 100<sup>r</sup>-101<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 100<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 101<sup>v</sup>.

*sharq*)” questioned Lucas concerning Diyāb, as the two first sought entry into Versailles.<sup>66</sup> Diyāb was made by Lucas to carry the cage with the two *jerboas*. Everywhere and all times in Versailles, at every royal audience, Diyāb and the *jerboas* remained an ensemble spectacle: Two exotic wild animals from the Orient, carried around by an Oriental in full costume. Diyāb describes how they were typically ‘examined’ by Madame de Bourgogne and her princely companions: “She turned to take a look at the wild animals. The princes too came up and looked. Then they began to look at me and my costume and to make fun (*yetḍaḥkū*) of me.”<sup>67</sup>

The two *jerboas* and Diyāb became something of a ‘hit’ at Versailles—especially in the palace’s female apartments. Lucas received endless requests from different royal women to “send over the cage with the wild animals along with the Oriental carrying the cage (*qafaṣa ’l-wuḥūsh wa ’l-sharqī ḥāmila l-qafaṣ*)” to their quarters for a viewing. Here is how Diyāb describes one such viewing, and how each viewing led to yet another viewing:

When I arrived at her quarters, I saw a whole group of princesses gathered around her to have a look at the animals and the one carrying them [*i.e.* himself]. When they had already looked at the animals, and at me as well (*lammā tfarjū ’alā ’l-wuḥūsh wa ’alayya aiḍan*), they sent me over to another princess. And from there, to yet a different princess. They continued taking me from place to place until two hours past midnight.<sup>68</sup>

There were also some more encouraging moments at Versailles for Diyāb. At his first audience with Louis XIV, Lucas played up his credentials as a fellow Christian and Catholic. Lucas introduced Diyāb before the king as being “from the lands of Syria in the Holy Land, of

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 94<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 96<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 97<sup>v</sup>.

the community (*ṭāyfa*) of the Maronites who have remained firmly in the Church of Peter since the time of the Apostles (*istaqāmū fi 'l-kanīsati 'l-buṭrusīya min 'ahdi 'l-rusul*), having never separated from it until now.”<sup>69</sup>

Diyāb had an opportunity also, in the king’s presence, to exhibit his polyglot skills as a *tarjumān*. The king unexpectedly queried Lucas about the name of the exotic animals in the cage: the latter, at a loss, pointed instinctively in Diyāb’s direction: “This young man here with me knows their name,” Lucas affirmed. Here came a moment of triumph for Diyāb. “At that moment,” he writes,

The king and all his government dignitaries (*akābir al-dawla*) turned towards my direction. One of them asked me the name for the wild animals. I told them:  
— In their land they are called, *jarbū*.  
The king then ordered them to bring me a pen and sheet of paper so that I could write down the name in my language. When they brought the sheet of paper, I wrote their name in the Arabic language; I also wrote it in the French language, since I know how to read and write in French.<sup>70</sup>

These encouraging moments for Diyāb were overshadowed by other failures. His ignorance of French polite matters in particular caused him to commit a few memorable gaffes in royal company—necessitating heavy-handed correcting from Lucas. The first of these gaffes occurred in king’s presence, who at the time was holding a candelabra. Diyāb thought nothing

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 95<sup>v</sup>. Historically, this statement is obviously false: The earliest possible time at which Maronites would have entered into communion with Rome was during the Crusader period—although historians generally believe it to have actually occurred much later than that, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Maronites themselves however quickly adopted the idea of their ‘perpetual orthodoxy (*i.e.* communion with Rome)’ as a bedrock of their identity. The formation and consolidation of this communal myth has been explored in detail in Mouannes Mohamad Hojairi, “Church Historians and Maronite Communal Consciousness: Agency and Creativity in Writing the History of Mount Lebanon” (PhD. diss., Columbia University, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 95<sup>v</sup>.

of taking the candelabra directly from the king's hand. He explains, "Standing next to the king, from my ignorance (*qillat 'aqlī*, lit. 'deficiency of mind') and naïveté, I took the candelabra from out of his hand—which the king, in his exceeding forbearance (*ḥilm*), permitted me to do."<sup>71</sup> Later on, in private, Lucas chided Diyāb severely for this act of "immense impudence" with the king.<sup>72</sup>

Diyāb's other major gaffe at Versailles caused even more disquiet. "Come and take a look at the sword of the Muslim!" one young princess, admiring Diyāb's silvered dagger, called out to her relatives. Diyāb again thought nothing of correcting her mistake—not concerning his religious identity<sup>73</sup>, but his weapon, which she had misidentified: "No my lady, it's not a sword (*sayf*) which you see; it's a dagger (*sikkīna*)." At the word 'dagger', he noticed "her colour changed."<sup>74</sup> It was obvious he had uttered some forbidden word. Once they arrived back in their chambers, Lucas grabbed the dagger from Diyāb's belt and hurled it at the ground: Didn't he know? In Louis XIV's France, Lucas explained to him in a paroxysm of rage, daggers were taboo. Since a dagger, unlike a sword, was easily concealed by an assassin, owning or carrying one anywhere

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 97<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 98<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> The princess mistook Diyāb for a Muslim, even after Lucas had already introduced him at the royal court as a Catholic Christian—a message which apparently did not sink well in the minds of everyone present. The clothing/appearance made the man after all: Removing entirely the established association between Diyāb's exotic costume and Muslims in the minds of his French royal 'audience' could not be accomplished in a single viewing.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 98<sup>r</sup>.

in Paris was, by royal decree, a crime punishable by imprisonment, or even death. How much more did that decree apply at king's own palace!<sup>75</sup>

These failures highlighted the fact that Diyāb's knowledge of French ways and customs, however impressive for a 'son of the East', still had critical gaps. He still had a long way to go before he could become fully integrated as a Parisian—if such a thing were even possible—equipped to settle there permanently into the new social and professional position which Lucas had promised him at their first meeting. These failures also further highlighted Diyāb's heightened dependency on Lucas while in France. Thus far their relationship had become more, not less, unequal than it had been before. From having been Lucas's *tarjumān* in Ottoman territory, here in France Diyāb was becoming even more a vulnerable and unseasoned “youth (*ghulām*)” in need of the guiding authority of his French *mu'allim*.

*In Paris, the 'Great City' (al-madīna al-'aẓīma)*

Paul of Aleppo's 'Great City' was Moscow in Russia (see Chapt 2, Sect. VI), a city that features moderately in the Arabic literary horizon of the modern period. Ḥannā Diyāb's 'Great City' was Paris, France.<sup>76</sup> Diyāb spent approximately a year in Paris between 1708 and 1709, writing his account of his stay more than a century before Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d. 1873) wrote his foundational account, the *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz* — whose first publication in Cairo in 1834 made Paris

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 98<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> Both Paul of Aleppo and Ḥannā Diyāb spent time in another 'great city'—for both of them a secondary one: Istanbul, the Ottoman imperial capital. On the way home to Aleppo from Paris, Diyāb passes through Istanbul and explores the city as a possible as a place where to settle and make his life as the household employee of a Venetian merchant; see below in this chapter.



into the European metropolis *par excellence* for later generations of Arab intellectuals.<sup>77</sup> The two Arabic-language accounts of Paris differ from each other in as many fundamental ways as their authors' historical circumstances, personal backgrounds and literary temperaments differed. Nevertheless, we find Diyāb already 'prefiguring' some of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's major themes. Diyāb paints an image of Paris which al-Ṭaḥṭāwī later held up to a far wider audience of Arabic readers: that of a dazzling, well-regulated utopia, governed by a characteristically European-style rational "order (*niẓām*)". 'Enlightened' Paris was a 'city of lights' which could be seen shining from afar as Diyāb and Lucas approached it for the first time:

Our arrival in the great city (*al-madīna al-'azīma*) was around mid-evening. As we were approaching the city, I saw in front of me a large open space extending as far as the eye could see. This immense space was filled up with lights resembling torches. I asked my *mu'allim* what those lights and torches were; he told me: 'That is the city of Paris (*hādhīhi madīnat Barīs*).'

When seen from closer, Diyāb noticed that all of Paris's 'lights and torches' were arranged and kept lit in every street with methodical regularity:

When we entered the city and travelled along its lanes and its broad, spacious streets, I saw that all the shops were aligned on both sides, and that each shop was lit by two or three candles. At every twenty to thirty feet was hung a glass lantern in which was a long, burning candle. Oh, what can we possibly say about the city of Paris, about its immensity and greatness!

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<sup>77</sup> Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz* ('Refining of Gold in the Short Description of Paris') is traditionally seen within Arabic literary historiography as a major beginning-point for modern Arabic literature, by virtue of its novel themes, literary style and linguistic features. Its influence was certainly considerable—not least on modern Arabs' literary image of the West. After al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, the trip to Paris became *de rigueur* for aspiring modern Arab *litterateurs*. However, as Ralf Elger has pointed out, the traditional position that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's account marks a decisive 19<sup>th</sup> century break with what came before it, is problematic—precisely because "the "18<sup>th</sup> century texts are not very well known until now, most of them are not edited, let alone analyzed...so it is difficult to say what is new in the text of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī"; see "Arabic Travelogues from the Mashrek 1700-1834: A Preliminary Survey of the Genre's Development" in *Op. cit.*, 28. This problem ties in of course to the more generally problematic *inḥitāṭ* vs. *Nahḍa* cultural/literary paradigm (see Introduction). It is hoped therefore that the recent discovery of Diyāb's narrative, with its fascinating 18<sup>th</sup> century account of Paris, will prove useful towards creating a more nuanced picture of Arabic travel literary development between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Perfect regularity and symmetry further characterized Paris's whole urban layout—a visual delight for the rational faculty:

Their houses' number cannot be counted...Each house is built five levels high, each level at five or six stairs (*darajāt* [sic]) higher than the one below...The rooms all have large windows that look onto the street, and if you were to ascend to the third, fourth, or fifth level, you will see that they are all built uniformly (*'alā nasaq*).

Yet more impressive was the city's well-oiled system of urban management:

All the lanterns are arranged and lit entirely at the city's expense. Candles are provided to the residents of each quarter (*ḥāra*) for lighting them in their places. Near every lantern is a money-safe nailed to the wall; each resident of the quarter is responsible for lighting the candles for an entire month. Also, by the ruler's decree, every home-owner (*ṣāḥib bayt*) has the obligation early on each day to sweep in front of the door of his house. An hour after sunrise, a *subaṣi* ('police officer') appointed by the ruler for [policing] this task makes the rounds: A fine of one piastre is given to any house whose front part hasn't been swept—to be paid either by the one in charge of sweeping, whether it be a male or female employee, or the owner of the house himself. There are people who [daily] collect the waste-piles in the streets, load them in containers on carts, and dump them (*beykibūhā*) in the city's outskirts. An hour after sunset, you can see all of Paris's streets swept and clean and completely free of all filth and rubbish (*min kill wasakh wa zbāla*). This was the first time I witnessed the organized system (*nizām*) of the flourishing city of the Paris.<sup>78</sup>

Diyāb's account of Paris is rich and multi-layered, filling 45 complete MS. folios in the narrative.<sup>79</sup> Within these folios, he records in lively, sometimes naïve detail, his impressions of pre-revolutionary Parisian civic, intellectual, and artistic life; of iconic cultural institutions like Paris's Opera; and of course, of the city's Catholic cathedrals, churches, religious foundations and ecclesiastical life generally. Indeed, a scholarly essay or article devoted exclusively to an analysis of Diyāb's account of Paris is in order. Another separate, though no less worthwhile study would then be needed to compare Diyāb's account in detail with al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's, in order to

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<sup>78</sup> S bath 254, fol. 93.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 93<sup>r</sup> -138<sup>r</sup>.

properly place the former within the literary-historical context of modern Arabic accounts of Paris. What we can usefully do within this chapter sub-section is to highlight broadly some the ways in which the two accounts of Paris both resemble each other and differ from each other.

Both Arabic-speaking ‘sons of the East’, Diyāb and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, perceived Paris as a utopia: a city which embodied for them aspects of an ideal civic life. Its defining feature was its “order (*nizām*)”—a word that occurs frequently in both accounts. Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, a more cultivated and systematic thinker than Diyāb, had significantly more to say about Paris’s *nizām*. He observed and described it with a more refined sense of purpose, as a soon-to-be leading reformer of Egyptian society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He also approached it as a Muslim cleric—an Imam. As such, his approach was highly original: his adopted attitude, as a Muslim observer of Parisian society—a Christian society—has been universally noted, deservedly, for its degree of intellectual openness. Using the city of Paris and its civic *nizām* as his prototype, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī formulated a new religious idea that was taken up by other Muslim reformers of his generation: the ‘West’ as a utopian land of ‘Islam without Muslims’—*i.e.* that Western European society, with Paris as a shining example, was more ideally Islamic in some important ways than contemporary Muslim societies in the East.

This is not to say that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī had no criticisms to make of Parisian society’s ‘manners and customs’: he did—notably when it came to facets of its cultural life that were unreconcilable with Muslim norms, like gender relations and sexual *mores*. Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, as a committed Muslim, also took a markedly unfavorable view of the Parisians’ Catholic religiosity (or lack

thereof, as he saw it)—and of their Catholic Christian religion itself.<sup>80</sup> In al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's view, the Parisians' admirably rational *nizām* and their inherited Catholic faith (nominal anyways) had nothing to do with each other. The former was not an outgrowth of the latter, but had come about in spite of it, in opposition to it, as a secular (or in al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's formulation, an Islamic) principle.

Diyāb took an opposing view to this. Himself a Maronite Catholic, Diyāb was *ipso facto* predisposed to look more positively on Paris's Catholic religious life than al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. He even took a strong 'sectarian' pride in it. His Paris was the same 'city of lights', governed through *nizām*; but it was also capital of the 'lands of the Christians'—a *Catholic* utopia. Paris was the city that contained "eight hundred churches, not counting the convents for monks and nuns"<sup>81</sup>; that encompassed "seven districts, each of those districts named after a saint (*'alā 'sm qiddīs*)" — each of whose feast was marked in turn by seven days of public celebration.<sup>82</sup> It was the city that incarnated supreme Christian charity and Catholic piety; it was a holy city, a place of pilgrimage, of endless religious processions attended by tens of thousands through its streets<sup>83</sup>, of myriad good works performed daily in God's name.

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<sup>80</sup> The Imam's rather cursory and dismissive views on the Parisians' (lack of) religiosity are recorded in the Twelfth Section (*bāb*) of the Third Essay (*maqāla*) of his account of Paris; see *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz* (al-Qāhirah: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1958), 203-205.

<sup>81</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 104<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 131<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> This was a procession dedicated to St Genevieve, the patron-saint of Paris.

And for Diyāb, these two aspects of Paris—its *nizām* and its essentially Catholic character—were not opposed to each other, but frequently interlapping. Diyāb describes for instance the systematic and ‘orderly’ method by which charity funds were collected in Paris’s churches and then distributed—with special allocations for every category of poor and indigent. This *nizām* worked so efficiently, that he claims not to have encountered in all of Paris a single street beggar.<sup>84</sup> Part of the “good order (*ḥusn nizām*)” of Paris’s hospitals, was that they were equipped with their own churches and employed their own priests who heard the patients’ confessions and gave them absolution prior to their receiving any medical treatment from doctors.<sup>85</sup> Paris’s churches were not just places of prayer and charity: they were centers of learning, where philosophic disputes were staged between priests as a form of systematic catechism.<sup>86</sup> At Paris’s art schools, Diyāb saw how painters learned to make realistic religious art depicting biblical holy figures by methodically practicing from live nude models who posed for them.<sup>87</sup> This is the key difference between Diyāb and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. It was a difference in perception, rooted in their different personalities—and more importantly, their different religious identities.

Lest we forget also: more than a century separated Diyāb and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s Parisian sojourns. The two men saw different Parises. In historical terms, pre-revolutionary Paris in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century was not yet the unrivalled bastion of secular European ‘Enlightenment’ values

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 104<sup>v</sup>. Similarly, Paul of Aleppo claimed that Muscovy was beggar-less because of the sanctity that pervaded it as an Orthodox Christian *mulk*; see Chapt. 2, Sect. VI.

<sup>85</sup> Sbath 254, fol. 107.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 115<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 116<sup>r</sup>-117<sup>r</sup>.

which al-Ṭaḥṭāwī encountered in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Diyāb saw Paris at the height of Louis XIV's monarchic *ancien régime*, in which the Catholic church held firmly its traditionally dominant role in the nation's cultural life—soon to let go of it forever during Louis XVI's tumultuous reign. Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī saw Paris after it had gone through the radical de-Christianizing of the French Revolution. The Catholic church had regained some ground after Napoleon, but its public role remained still a shadow of what it had been.

What this difference did was allow Diyāb to approach Paris as an insider to an extent, on the basis the Catholic faith he shared with Parisians. Paris was the 'Great *Catholic City*': a universal cultural capital, not just for French Catholics, but for all Catholics—including Maronites and other Eastern Catholic uniates. Diyāb came there with the original plan of staying there forever. Paris from the beginning had the potential of becoming, *was already* his home.

Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, by comparison, approached Paris as an outside observer, albeit a very sympathetic one. His sojourn in the city was a reconnaissance mission from which he always planned to return home to Egypt, having obtained what he needed. He never strove to become more than an outsider in Paris while a resident there for five years, from 1826 to 1831—much longer than Diyāb. Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī saw Paris always with an eye to reform in his native land: The city contained a utopian message aimed at his readers among Egypt's Muslim cultural elite; it was a mirror, which he held up to them in *Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz*, in which they could see their own shortcomings and realize how far behind they had fallen in the cultural contest of civilizations;

it was a model they should emulate and recreate in their own Arab-Islamic context.<sup>88</sup> Yet Parisian society remained nevertheless, in a positive sense, the ‘other’ for al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. For him to have blurred that line between ‘self’ and ‘other’ in Paris, as Diyāb did, would have meant compromising his stable identity as an Egyptian Muslim—and by the same token abandoning his mission as a cultural reformer in Egypt.

Diyāb’s identity, as we have said already, was in a state of flux between East and West, *dār al-islām* and the lands of the Christians; the line between ‘self’ and ‘other’ had been blurred long before his arrival in Paris. He was no reformer like al-Ṭaḥṭāwī: he came not in order report on a model ‘Great City’ for anyone, but to explore the possibility of finding his own place in the ‘Great City’ and making it his own alternative home. Being a Catholic made this not only a possibility, but an attractive one for him. It also made it possible for Diyāb, even though he spent less time in Paris than al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and was less an astute observer of its manners and customs, to partake of the city’s life in a more profoundly personal way.

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<sup>88</sup> We do occasionally witness this instinct in Diyāb—not the *reformer’s* instinct, but simply that of making negative comparisons between features of the host country with one’s own country. During a visit to Livorno’s historic citadel, Diyāb admires how the disused display-cannons were carefully maintained and kept always clean and well-oiled. To Diyāb, this was a demonstration of the care which Europeans had for preserving their heritage—which he contrasts with Aleppo’s citadel, allowed to become derelict by locals who obviously didn’t value their heritage to the nearly same degree; see *Ibid.*, fols. 75<sup>v</sup>-76<sup>r</sup>.

Between Paris's image and the reality Diyāb encountered daily; between the city's—and Lucas's—erstwhile promise and its fulfillment, there fell a shadow. Seen from one perspective, Paris offered Diyāb a wider scope for “roaming and exploring” than anywhere else: a metropolitan playground which, he says, was “seven times the size of the city of Istanbul.”<sup>89</sup> Most of his time in Paris, when he was not needed by Lucas, was free time for himself, which he used to fully explore the city's districts and all their well-known landmarks—to ‘get a feel’ for life there.

At the same time, in Paris Diyāb's bondage to Lucas, his *mu'allim*, became more total than before. Lucas began rapidly to make the rounds among the city's “notables (*akābir*)”, taking Diyāb along with him like one would a dependent: “He took me with him,” Diyāb writes, “so that I could see their palaces with their luxurious settings and their good order (*ḥusn niḏāmhum*).”<sup>90</sup> At least until Lucas could fulfill his original promise to set Diyāb up independently with his own stipend, the latter was reduced to a state of complete dependence. Lucas's authority over Diyāb began to reach even into his private life: “Wait for a moment, while I ask permission from my *mu'allim*,” Diyāb tells his Armenian friend in Paris, Yūsuf the jeweller, who asked him for a personal favor.<sup>91</sup> The extent of this authority is made clearer when Iṣṭifān al-Shāmī, a long-term Maronite Parisian resident, offers to Diyāb the hand in marriage of his pretty, though disabled daughter. Iṣṭifān owned and operated two highly successful ‘Oriental’ cafés: one in Paris, the other in Versailles. As dowry for the bride he offered Diyāb full ownership

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 105<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 101<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 129<sup>v</sup>.



of his Paris café. It was a tempting offer; but Diyāb turned it down swiftly. The reason, he writes: “My *mu‘allim* didn’t consent to me becoming engaged to the girl because she was a cripple (*mkarsaḥa*).”<sup>92</sup>

Only one time in Paris did Diyāb’s knowledge of Arabic—his main asset—prove useful to Lucas. The episode is worth quoting in full below. The pair were watching a major religious procession from their window, in which the Cardinal of Paris passed by with the sacred host (*jasad*) on a moving dais. Lucas noticed that the satin pavilion which covered the dais had on it an embroidered Arabic inscription. “Read that inscription!” he ordered Diyāb. Obeying the command, Diyāb made a scandalous discovery:

When I looked at the inscription, I saw a red-colored cotton drape on which there were letters embroidered in white fabric: “There is no god but God (*lā ilāha illā ‘llāh*)’ and rest of the formula.<sup>93</sup> I was perplexed by the inscription, especially since it was covering the dais. My *mu‘allim* asked me what the inscription said, so I told him what was written. He was shocked and didn’t believe me (*mā ṣaddaq*). He then ordered me to proceed ahead to the neighbors’ house to better examine the inscription from their windows. I did as he ordered. I looked again at the inscription saw it was just as I had seen it the first time. I returned and confirmed the matter to him. I said to him:

— There is no way that I’m mistaken! The drape is red, while the letters (*aḥruf*) are embroidered white: How could I have made a mistake?

Once my *mu‘allim* became convinced of the correctness of my reading, he ordered me immediately to go the Cardinal to tell him about what I saw.<sup>94</sup>

It was later revealed that the red drape being used to cover the most sacred relic in the procession, the host, was a repurposed Turkish military banner (*bayraq*) that had been seized by French forces in North Africa, who then made an offering of it to the Church. No one, until

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 132<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> *i.e.* the Islamic *shahāda*, or creed.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 106<sup>r</sup>.

Diyāb, knew to read the Arabic inscription on it. Once the Cardinal's deputy (more on him below) confirmed Diyāb's reading, the drape was promptly and unceremoniously burned.

Otherwise, in Paris, Diyāb all but lost the function he had in Ottoman territory as Lucas's *tarjumān*, his 'native informant'. What then was to be his function? Lucas had promised to secure him employment in Paris based on his knowledge of Arabic—and yet that knowledge seemed hardly ever needed; and no substantial talk of his employment ever materialized. Diyāb writes that Lucas, "was always telling me: 'The minister's mind is right now occupied with what's going on these days; but when things settle down, I will fulfill my promise to you and get you into the Library.' So I remained with this hope (*ḍallēt fi hal amal*)."<sup>95</sup> At the same time, Diyāb did not hold his breath, but turned elsewhere for help.

Just like in Livorno, Diyāb frequently ran into fellow Maronites and other uniate *émigrés* from the Ottoman empire while in Paris. These had arrived before him; most were already well-established there, within the socio-economic niches that Eastern Christian *émigrés* typically occupied within the city's *nizām*. In their examples Diyāb could see the possible pathways available to him—in the likelihood that Lucas's promise proved empty.

High up in the city's Catholic church hierarchy, there was Cristofalo Zamariya, deputy to the Cardinal, another native of Aleppo.<sup>96</sup> In his high position, Cristofalo acted as a sponsor to

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 133<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> Diyāb met and befriended Cristofalo at the Cardinal's residence, when he went there to notify the bishop about the inscription on the drape used in the procession. He at first took Cristofalo for a Frenchman, until the latter unexpectedly addressed him "in the classical Arabic language (*bi-lisāni 'l-'arabi 'l-faṣīḥ*)."<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 106.

new arrivals like Diyāb. There was also Iṣṭifān al-Shāmī, the café owner who offered to Diyāb his daughter in marriage. Iṣṭifān was so successful at his Parisian enterprise that he “became well-known by distinguished men of state (*akābir al-dawla*).” His was a ‘rags to riches’ tale which epitomized the usefulness of the *émigré* mutual support network: Iṣṭifān had arrived in Paris penniless and been forced to beg. He enjoyed no success as a beggar at first, until Cristofalo obtained for him a permit signed by the Cardinal to beg in front of Notre Dame cathedral: after which the alms poured in—enough for Iṣṭifān to make his start in the café business.<sup>97</sup>

Iṣṭifān entered the café business when there were no cafés yet in Paris—*i.e.* his was the first of its kind in the city whose inhabitants famously craved any kind of novelty. In Paris, “everything new is good (*kill shī jdīd ḥilw*),” writes Diyāb. From a cultural standpoint, this Parisian ethos created potential alienation (*al-ghurba*) for people who came from more tradition-oriented societies (*cf.* Chapt 1; Sect. II); but from an economic perspective, it became a potential gold-mine for the “Eastern stranger (*gharīb*)” who learned how to market his own novelty to the Parisians. According to Diyāb, this had been the main factor in Iṣṭifān’s success: “Because he was an Eastern stranger (*sharqī gharīb*), his customers accumulated.” In fact, the idea of becoming a *qahwātī* had not been his own: It was given him by some local Parisians who “loved poor people and strangers (*muḥibbīn al-fuqarā wa ’l-ghurabā*),” and who, knowing well their own city’s novelty-craze, foresaw his potential success in such a venture.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 132<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 131<sup>v</sup>.

Finally, there was Yūsuf the Armenian jeweller (*al-jawharjī*), also from Aleppo. In typical fashion, Diyāb met Yūsuf one day on Paris's streets; realizing they knew many people in common, they formed yet another quick friendship.<sup>99</sup> Diyāb suspected none of the trouble that would ensue. His friendship with Yūsuf became the only one formed with an *émigré* to his disadvantage. Indeed, it led to a traumatic event: Diyāb's run-in with the *ancien régime*'s repressive police and surveillance forces. In a moment this would alter his entire perspective on life in Paris as an "Eastern *gharīb*".

One day, two Parisian policemen—members of what Diyāb called "the authorities' gang (*jamā'at al-ḥākim*)"—apprehended him in the street. They gave him no reason for his arrest, nor did they tell him where they were leading him away to by force. "Fear and trembling rose up within me," writes Diyāb, "such that I was moving along with them completely unconscious." They happened to pass in front of Iṣṭifān al-Shāmī's café. Iṣṭifān tried, but could do little for his fellow Maronite. The policemen did however explain to Iṣṭifān why they were arresting Diyāb: Yūsuf 'the jeweller' had recently absconded from Paris after defrauding many of his business partners in the city. Diyāb came within their surveillance radar as one of Yūsuf's known "associates (*'ishrāt*)" from among Paris's small but visible 'Oriental' community.<sup>100</sup> They suspected he had knowledge of Yūsuf's whereabouts: and they declared that if he didn't divulge this knowledge of his own during interrogation, "he would be tortured at length."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 120<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>100</sup> We could even call this a case of early modern 'racial profiling' by a metropolitan police force.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 131<sup>r</sup>-132<sup>v</sup>.

Enter Paul Lucas, *deus ex machina*, another time to Diyāb's rescue. Someone meanwhile had run to Lucas's home and told him what was happening here on the street with Diyāb and the police. When Lucas appeared, he succeeded in an instant where Iṣṭifān had failed all this time. "This young man (*ghulām*) is with me," Lucas told the police, "I vouch for him. If necessary, I will answer for him to the authorities." It was clear that Parisian police put little stock in the testimony an 'Eastern *gharīb*'— not even a wealthy and reputable long-term Paris resident like Iṣṭifān; however, they feared the word of a Frenchman from the upper classes who addressed them in a commanding tone. "Right at that moment they let me go and went their way," Diyāb tells us.<sup>102</sup>

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Here is another interesting point of comparison between Ḥannā Diyāb's experience of Paris and that of Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī a century later: Al-Ṭaḥṭāwī left Paris, after staying there five whole years (more than enough time to observe its blemishes) with his utopian image of the city, while not completely unsullied, but more or less intact—fit still to be used, as mentioned earlier, as a model for his program of cultural reform in Egypt. Diyāb's utopian image of Paris, on the other hand, cracked irreparably under the trauma of his encounter with the city's police. "As for me," he writes, "the terror had made its mark on me (*assarat* [sic] *fīya 'l-ru'ba*)." In a

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

matter of moments, the image disintegrated. We might suggest that it was precisely *because* Diyāb hoped for more from Paris than al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, that he set himself up for disappointment. Diyāb was not primarily interested in taking his image of Paris back home with him; he hoped to live in Paris and make it his home. For Diyāb, reality in the end meant more than the image: thus he inevitably experienced a moment of iconoclastic disenchantment. What good was Paris's "good order (*ḥusn niẓām*)", if he discovered that as an "Eastern *gharīb*" he had no dignified place in it? In that moment, writes Diyāb, "I felt exceeding revulsion towards these lands (*tḍajjart bi 'l-zāyid min tilka 'l-bilād*), and I determined on leaving Paris."<sup>103</sup>

Diyāb quickly conceived a plan for leaving Paris and returning home to the Ottoman empire—a plan which involved inevitably a direct challenge to Lucas's authority over him as his *mu'allim*. The two, Paris and Lucas, were connected for Diyāb. Lucas after all had brought him to Paris: He couldn't repudiate the one without the other.

Some time before Diyāb's run-in with the police, he had been introduced—by Antoine Galland, without Lucas's knowledge—to a Parisian prince who wished to finance another antiquities-gathering expedition to the Orient. It was to be an expedition just like the one Diyāb had accompanied Lucas on. This prince however wanted Diyāb this time, not Lucas, to lead it. He reasoned rightly that it was Diyāb, not Lucas, who had the linguistic and cross-cultural skill set needed for the role. Lucas's role as 'middle-man' would be effectively cut out; Diyāb would take center-stage. He would travel, just like Lucas had, with a royal *firmān* and

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

recommendation letters to all French embassies and consuls in Ottoman lands. The prince minced no words in his offer to Diyāb: “Go, sort yourself out (*ḥaḍḍar ḥālak*), leave your *mu‘allim*, and come over to me. I will direct you.”<sup>104</sup> At the time, Diyāb turned the offer down, not wanting to undercut Lucas, to whom he felt bound by loyalty. It was the “exceeding revulsion towards these lands” welling up inside Diyāb from the police incident which broke that loyalty finally, sending him back to the prince—whose offer still stood.

The dramatic confrontation with Lucas that followed was difficult for Diyāb. At first, when he seeks Lucas’s “permission (*idhn*)” to quit Paris and return home, Lucas nearly succeeds in pulling the rug from under him. Lucas lectures him on the existential stakes in the choice he was making:

Have you so far lacked anything? Are you not satisfied with your life with me? I have gone through great pains over you, to bring you to these lands so that I could do you a good deed by securing you an honorable position (*wazīfa sharīfa*) under the patronage of the king of France. You would have lived all your life in prosperity and contentment. And you want to now reject such happiness and return to being a captive of the Muslims (*yasīr li ‘l-muslimīn*) like you were before?<sup>105</sup>

Lucas’s words were well-aimed not just at Diyāb’s cultivated sense of gratitude towards his ‘benefactor’; but more incisively, they touched what was surely a raw psychological nerve: Diyāb’s still unresolved identity and conflicted loyalty as an Eastern Christian, caught in between Ottoman *dār al-islām* and European ‘lands of the Christians’. By framing Diyāb’s choice as being one between Eastern Muslim captivity vs Western Christian freedom, Lucas succeeded

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 128<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

in making him waver in his new resolve. Was Lucas correct now in warning him, that by giving up on Paris and returning home, he was giving up on freedom in Christian lands to return once more to being a *kharāj*-paying “captive of the Muslims”? Diyāb writes: “His words made an impression on me, and I changed my intention of returning home.” Lucas had indeed “gone through great pains for me,” he reflects. “He brought me to these lands...to save me from the captivity of the barbarians [*i.e.* Muslims] (*yukhalliṣnī min asri ’l-barābira*).”<sup>106</sup>

The period of Diyāb’s wavering did not last long. Soon Diyāb returned to convey to Lucas in clear terms his final decision to leave Paris—and by the same token, his final rejection of his *mu’allim*’s authority. Lucas realized now he had to let him go: The aura of superior rank and devotion which once bound pupil to master, had been broken. What he perceived as Diyāb’s insolence and ingratitude only served as confirmation for what he surely always believed about the character of ‘Orientals’: “You sons of the Orient (*wlād al-sharq*) are unreliable people. Go wherever you like. Go in safety!” To this last apparent blessing for the road, Lucas added also a parting curse for Diyāb: “But you will regret this (*sawfa tandam*). And by then, regret will be of no use to you.”<sup>107</sup>

This is the second and final scene from the narrative, in which we witness Diyāb, normally diffident, stand unexpectedly firm in the face of an authority figure.<sup>108</sup> Here he reveals himself one more time to be not just a “youth (*ghulām*)”, but a “man directing [his] own path.”

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 133<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> The first scene, in which Diyāb defied his brother who ordered him to cease and desist from his travels with Lucas, was covered in the Introduction.



III. *Diyāb's departure from France, from the 'lands of the Christians'*

Marseilles was Diyāb's first stop along the way to realizing his new plans for his future. He was instructed by his new patron, the prince, to wait there for his promised royal *firmān* to speedily arrive from Paris by post. This was the document which would allow Diyāb to re-enter and travel through the Ottoman empire, not as a *ra'āya*, but effectively as a 'Frank' with diplomatic protection. The *firmān* failed to arrive on time, and Diyāb quickly developed a bad feeling. The *firmān* was in fact never to arrive. Weeks passed in Marseilles, and Lucas's parting prophecy—"you will regret this"—resounded in his conscience: "I was like someone drunk without wine. I regretted what I had done. But of what use was regret now?"<sup>109</sup>

A supposedly "passing traveller"<sup>110</sup> from Paris finally laid bare to Diyāb what had become of his *firmān*: "It was your *mu'allim*'s fault," the traveller explained. Diyāb had left without telling Lucas anything of his new arrangement with the prince, but Lucas meanwhile caught wind of it. Immediately he stepped in to warn the prince that Diyāb couldn't be trusted: "All the sons of the East (*awlād al-sharq*) are treacherous," he told him, from his own bitter experience. With a royal *firmān* in his hand, Lucas further warned, Diyāb would withdraw cash at every French consul in the Ottoman empire, then disappear with it. Lucas then suggested to the prince: "Out of respect for you, I will take his place; I will render you this service." The prince was swayed.

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 136<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>110</sup> Diyāb writes later that he supposed that this "passing traveler (*ābir ṭarīq*)" was in fact a messenger sent on purpose by the prince; *Ibid.*, fol. 137<sup>v</sup>.

He “changed his mind (*tghayyar ‘aqluh*)” and chose Lucas instead of Diyāb to become the bearer of his *firmān*.<sup>111</sup>

At last Diyāb learned the truth of the matter: If he had played just now against Lucas ‘for keeps’ and lost ultimately, this was not due to his youthful lack of experience or wits, but because the present European game was rigged against him as a “son of the East”, an “Eastern *gharīb*”. Whether he lived in Paris or Aleppo, in the European ‘lands of the Christians’ or Ottoman *dār al-islām*, accepting some form of inferior social status as an Eastern Christian was an inevitable part of his identity. Diyāb’s plans for returning home needed now to be recalibrated, but he was determined to return nonetheless. Soon enough, he was aboard a French merchant vessel that took him from Marseilles to the Ottoman port of Izmir (Smyrna).

An important scene follows Diyāb’s disembarkation at Smyrna. He feels momentary regret at having returned to the “captivity of the Muslims”. Lucas’s prophetic parting words echo again in his conscience. He writes:

We arrived safely in the port of Izmir...When I left the boat and placed my foot on land, and I saw the Muslims who were there at the customs (*gumruk*), my heart shuddered. I began to imagine that I had fallen into captivity (*yasr*). I regretted what I had done: How could I have left the lands of the Christians and returned to the captivity of the Muslims (*kayf annī tarakt bilāda ‘l-masīḥīya wa raja’t ilā yasri ‘l-muslimīn*)?<sup>112</sup>

In this passage it becomes clear that Diyāb’s road home to Aleppo will not be smooth; his days of “roaming about and exploring” and experimenting with his identity, were far from over. Whether or not he would reach home was still uncertain. As of now, Diyāb still had no

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 136<sup>v</sup>-137<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 141<sup>v</sup>.

'home'. He belonged still to neither side of the East-West divide. Landing in Izmir, he imagined himself on the one hand to have "returned to the captivity of the Muslims"; yet conversely he hadn't found 'freedom' in the 'lands of the Christians'. A formidable internal struggle still lay ahead of him.

All the way between Smyrna and Aleppo, Diyāb would maintain an adopted 'Frankish' outward appearance: He wore European-style dress, styled his hair after European fashion, and kept his face always cleanly-shaven like a European. As he travelled, all who saw him—even members of his own Maronite community—took him not for a local, but for a 'Frank'.<sup>113</sup> To the reader it appears as if Diyāb were wavering on the cultural brink, keeping his distance from his surroundings in order to delay his inevitable re-entry into the Ottoman social order. In his present state, returning to business as usual, to his old 'normal' life and assigned social role—or rather, lack thereof—was out of the question. He preferred to remain for now within a no man's land.

At Istanbul, Diyāb finds what seemed like an opportunity to create an improvised home and *modus vivendi* for himself on this side of the divide. Here, in the Ottoman capital, he reconnected with the world of French diplomats, merchants and missionaries into which Lucas had introduced him in North Africa. A well-placed Jesuit acquaintance helped arrange Diyāb's

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<sup>113</sup> Diyāb recognized many Maronites whom he knew from Aleppo, who had stalls as merchants at Galata's main *khān*. Due his Frankish 'disguise', they did not recognize him in turn. He writes: "I saw Aleppans (*Ḥalabīya*) there who didn't recognize me, although I recognized them (*mā 'arafūnī wa lākin anā 'arafthum*). Nor did I want them to recognize me." *Ibid.*, fol. 146<sup>r</sup>.

employment in the domestic service of a kind and wealthy Venetian merchant (*bāzargān bunduqī*) residing in the Imperial city.<sup>114</sup>

For a time Diyāb appears to find his element in this new role: He quickly proved himself singularly capable, honest and efficient in all his assigned tasks. His new European employer for his part—a more honest broker than Lucas—immediately recognized Diyāb’s worth, took a genuine liking to him, and duly promoted him. Barely had a month passed when the merchant made Diyāb first his chef (*tabbākh*), then set him, still a *ghulām*, as sole manager over his household affairs and other domestic servants. “The entire house was in my control (*fi yadī*, lit. ‘in my hand’),” writes Diyāb, “to command and forbid the others to do his [*i.e.* my employer’s] will.”<sup>115</sup> A new career path had opened before him.

At church one Sunday in Istanbul, Diyāb by chance met an old friend from Aleppo, also a Maronite, named Ḥannā ibn al-Zoghbi. Al-Zoghbi was not one like Diyāb, given to “roaming about and exploring”, but knew where he belonged. He was in the textile trade (like Diyāb’s family) and came to Istanbul in order to learn a local method of fabric-glazing (*sqāl al-qumāsh*). Having already finished learning it, al-Zoghbi told Diyāb he was now “awaiting the first caravan travelling to Aleppo.” He urged Diyāb to abandon what he was doing now and come with him. Aleppo was home: Living anywhere else, including Istanbul, meant living as a lost *gharīb*: “Don’t lose yourself in this exile (*al-ghurba*)!” al-Zoghbi counselled him. Al-Zoghbi’s was the voice appealing to the part of Diyāb’s psyche which craved no doubt the stability of ‘home’. Not many

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 148<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 149<sup>v</sup>.

can remain for long in a suspended state of uncertainty, insecurity—*al-ghurba*—and not be enticed by a timely offer of respite. Diyāb held out for a while; for now at least, he liked where he was, having seemingly found his professional niche at last in the Venetian merchant's home. He writes: "I refused (*abayt*); I didn't want to obey his advice. He kept coming back to me, relentlessly insisting that I go with them; and I kept refusing."

Diyāb's speedy promotion in the Venetian merchant's household meanwhile roused the envy his other domestic servants, all of whom came from the Orthodox *Rūm* community in Istanbul.<sup>116</sup> Their resentment towards Diyāb, a Maronite Catholic, mixed professional jealousy with sectarian ill-feeling: a deadly mixture. In their eyes the chief reason for Diyāb's promotion over them was the fact that he, unlike them, shared their Venetian employer's Catholic faith. This resentment erupted one evening: While making his rounds in the kitchen, one of the *Rūmī* servants suddenly lunged at Diyāb with a kitchen-knife. Diyāb says he was filled with "diabolical rage (*ghaḍab shayṭānī*) and was intent on killing me". He survived the scuffle (with the help of his guardian angel, he says)—however it marked him. He no longer felt secure where he was: "I couldn't sleep that night," he writes. The Venetian merchant sided with Diyāb in the conflict and vowed to dispatch the violent *Rūmī* servant<sup>117</sup>, but this did little to assuage his growing sense of insecurity. Diyāb reflected: "What if one night he meets me in the street and stabs me with that knife, killing me? After all, for the *Rūm* in these lands, it easy to murder someone."<sup>118</sup> This

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<sup>116</sup> Again, like in Cyprus, the Greek *Rūm* become Diyāb's principal hostile 'other'.

<sup>117</sup> The Venetian employer clearly took sides on a sectarian basis. He tells Diyāb: "I know the race of these Greeks (*jins hal-Krikīya*). They're a vile and rancorous people, who have no conscience." *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 150<sup>r</sup>.

city was their home, not Diyāb's.<sup>119</sup> Here in Istanbul, he realized, he would always be a *gharīb*. Like in Paris, he would always be vulnerable. It took again one dangerous encounter to make Diyāb reach this conclusion. He ran back to his friend al-Zoghbi: "That very moment," Diyāb writes, "I made firm my intention (*šammamt al-nīya*) to proceed to Aleppo in their company."

At this crucial juncture, Diyāb was nearly thrown off-track one more time by a new opportunity which came his way *via* his European diplomatic connections: A "Swedish prince" recently arrived in Istanbul, who they said, "intended to tour around and see (*yedūr wa yetfarraj*) the region," and was "looking for people from these lands who knew the Italian and Turkish languages"—*i.e.* someone just like Diyāb—to be his *tarjumān*. The opportunity meant essentially resurrecting Diyāb's pre-Europe role alongside Lucas. Who knows, he may have ended up also accompanying this new European *mu'allim* to Sweden! Still clinging perhaps to some of his former ambitions, Diyāb agreed to the offer initially. Luckily, he had his friend al-Zoghbi at hand to deter him this time: "He preached to me (*yū'azni*)," Diyāb writes, "employing all his efforts to block me from going ahead." Diyāb yielded at last to his friend's saving advice. The two set out for Aleppo together in the middle of the month of June (Ḥazīrān), 1710.<sup>120</sup>

On one of Diyāb's last days in Istanbul, eight French royal galleons, armed with cannon, sailed into the Golden Horn. These had been sent by King Louis XIV to load up on wheat to

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<sup>119</sup> The Greek-speaking Orthodox *Rūm*, the heirs of Byzantine Constantinople, were by far the most numerous and established Christian residents of Istanbul, who enjoyed the closest relationship to the Sublime Porte; *cf.* Chapt. 2, Sect. III.

<sup>120</sup> Sbath 254, fols. 152<sup>v</sup>-153<sup>r</sup>.

supply France's shortage that year. Even though they fired the customary "cannons of peace", many native residents of Istanbul on seeing them fled their homes in terror, "thinking that the Franks had taken the city (*ḍannū bi-anna 'l-afranġ akhadati 'l-madīna*)." Yet among the city's large population of Christian captives, many saw the French ships' arrival in a different light: They saw the mighty king of France, now displaying his superior naval power before the Ottomans, as their Christian liberator. Diyāb watched hundreds of them make a run for their freedom by "plunging into the sea and climbing into the galleons." Any captive who managed to "cling with his hand to the side of a galleon was saved, and no one could take him anymore." He reports that, "About two hundred captives were rescued from captivity (*khulliṣa mina 'l-yasrā naḥw māytēn yasīr*)." <sup>121</sup>

If Diyāb still regretted, like he did earlier in Izmir, his having "left the lands of the Christians and returned to the captivity of the Muslims", then he should have taken a dive in the Bosphoros with those hundreds of Christian captives. Instead, he had his intent firm on moving in the opposite direction: deeper into Ottoman territory, into *dār al-islam*. He was returning to his original place of "captivity"—or, more likely, he had by now long discarded as unpractical and unrealistic the whole binary of European Christian freedom vs Ottoman Muslim captivity, imposed on his thinking temporarily by Lucas.

*Diyāb travels in Anatolia as a "Frank doctor (ḥakīm franġ)"*

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 152.

Ironically, it is here, on this last homestretch that Diyāb shows himself a model pupil of his former *mu'allim*, Paul Lucas. He had cast off Lucas's authority, but he had inherited his gifts. In his early days of travelling with Lucas in Ottoman lands, Diyāb observed how doors opened everywhere once Lucas declared he was a *ḥakīm* ('doctor')—a testimony to locals' universal faith in a European doctor's superior healing powers. This knowledge proved unexpectedly useful to Diyāb along the mountainous route that led back to Syria through Anatolia—a region where no Maronites lived. We remember when Paul of Aleppo and Patriarch Makarios passed through this same region, they, as Orthodox clergymen, found warm welcome in its many Orthodox *Rūm* villages (see Chapt. 2, Sect. II). Here Diyāb and al-Zoghbi were by comparison strangers, *ghurabā'*, and had to appeal instead for their lodging to local Muslim peasants (*fallāḥīn*).

When they arrived at evening under torrential rains in the village of Gavur Köy, they faced the problem of finding nobody there willing to take the group of Maronites in. Diyāb was still wearing the same 'Frankish' costume he had on since France: "I was wearing Frankish clothes (*libs franj*); my hair hung loosely from my head, and on my brow I wore a fur *qalbaq*." One young local, noticing his odd appearance among their group, inquired after him. Diyāb's self-consciousness about his appearance became as crucial now as it ever was in all his travels: "Tell him that I'm a doctor (*qūlū luh bi-annī ḥakīm*)," he instructed his travelling companions.

Diyāb's statement was not true, of course—but Lucas had never been a doctor, either. What mattered in both cases—and Diyāb astutely perceived this—was that the external, physical appearance of being a 'doctor' was convincing. "Hearing that I was a doctor," he writes,



“[the young man] rejoiced and implored them to ask me to go along with him to treat a sick person at his home.” Diyāb named his visitation fee directly in Turkish: “If you lodge us for this night, then I will come and treat your sick person (*marīḍak*).”<sup>122</sup>

Diyāb next had to perform a work of ‘healing’ on the elderly sick person to whose bed he was led—who turned out to be not only their young host’s father, but the village master (*ṣāhib*). Lucas never *taught* Ḥannā his ‘healing’ method; yet Diyāb somehow *caught* just enough to replicate it successfully. With a confidence worthy of his French *mu‘allim*, Diyāb diagnosed the old man’s suffering as being due to “an abundance of humor which had congested in his stomach” — for which he prescribed a treatment of drinking chicken broth. “It’s nothing dangerous, don’t worry,” Diyāb reassured the sick man: “Tomorrow...you will feel at ease again and will rise from your bed.”<sup>123</sup> Indeed, he rose from his bed the next day, according to Diyāb’s word, spoken with confidence inherited from Paul Lucas—and mingled no doubt with the patient’s naïve faith in the ‘Frank doctor’.

Word that Diyāb was a ‘Frank doctor’ spread rapidly in the surrounding region: “From that day, my reputation as a doctor went out in the land (*tala‘ khabarī fi ‘l-arḍ bi-annī ḥakīm*).”<sup>124</sup> Peasants and Pashas with their ailments soon flocked to Diyāb for treatment; everywhere they called him ‘*mu‘allim*’, just as he had once called Lucas. Diyāb was forced for now to continue playing the part. When the *capigi* of the town of Afyonkarahisar questioned Diyāb about his

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 154.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 155<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 156<sup>v</sup>.

personal background and reason for travelling, he produced, on the spot, an alternate account: “I am from Aleppo,” he said, “my father was a doctor (*ḥakīm*) named Baydāy. When he died, I was still a small boy, so they me sent to my uncle who lived in the city of Marseilles, in the lands of the French (*fī bilādi ʿl-firansāwīya*). After I studied medicine (*al-ḥikma*) over there, I requested to return my lands.”<sup>125</sup> What is astonishing is how well Diyāb performed in his new and latest identity, so that *literally* (if we are to believe Diyāb’s own word) as many as came to him seeking healing, found it; not one went away disappointed. As a ‘Frank doctor’, Diyāb had even surpassed Lucas.

Travelling as a ‘Frank doctor’ in Ottoman lands had its perks. Rather than being treated again as a regular Christian *dhimmi*, Diyāb was this time round respected and revered by all, even by government officials. A ‘Frank doctor’ was above the law: Twice, in Konya and in Adana, Diyāb was exempt from paying the *İспенçe*: a land-tax levied exclusively on non-Muslim Ottoman subjects—similar to, but separate from the *kharāj*. The following is Diyāb’s revealing exchange with the tax-collector at Konya who at first demanded from him payment of the *İспенçe*, like he did from the rest of his Maronite companions. Diyāb told him:

— Only if I [*i.e.* as non-subject] am liable to pay the *kharāj* to the Sultan, will I pay you the *işbanj* (<Tk. *İспенçe*).

He scrutinized me (*tfarras fīya*), then asked those who were with me:

— Who is this man?

They answered:

— He is a Frank doctor (*ḥakīm franj*)

He believed them, since he saw my clothing, the hair on my head, and my different overall appearance. He then welcomed me warmly and bade me sit down, saying to me:

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 163<sup>v</sup>.

— I didn't know who you were. Please excuse me.<sup>126</sup>

The problem with Diyāb's new identity as a 'Frank doctor' was that it was a charade. However convincing was the appearance of it—as we saw in the passage above—it was a false appearance. Diyāb was living a lie—one which became more difficult the longer he continued in it. It was only a matter of time before his deception would be exposed: Diyāb knew this deep down. He experienced at least one 'close call': During a casual conversation with one of his Ottoman official 'patients', it was revealed that he knew both Diyāb's former French employer in Aleppo, Rémuzat, and even his brother, Anṭūn! He writes, "I turned pale (*tghayyaret alwānī*, lit. 'my colors changed'). I thought that he knew who I was, and that he realized I was a liar."<sup>127</sup>

Being a 'Frank doctor' had been less problematic for Lucas than for Diyāb: Lucas, for one, was genuinely a 'Frank', cutting Diyāb's lie already in half. More significantly, masquerading as a 'doctor' was just a temporary expediency for Lucas while he was travelling in the 'Orient'—from which he was relieved after returning to the safety of home, in France. Diyāb, on the other hand, had just left behind France after determining he had no 'home' there. To which 'home' then, would he return for safety from his present charade?

Nevertheless, Diyāb continued to travel as a 'Frank doctor'. He even agreed to the request of one senior Ottoman administrator—another 'patient'—to travel in his official company between Konya and Damascus as his private physician. It was al-Zoghbī who one more time

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 166<sup>r</sup>; a similar exchange occurs later between Diyāb and a tax official in Adana, see *Ibid.*, fo. 167<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 163<sup>v</sup>-164<sup>r</sup>.

intervened as the voice of reason and sense of belonging to primordial ‘home’ and ‘community’. In the process he rescued Diyāb from choosing a path that would have led to sure exposure and ruin. What would he do, al-Zoghbī asked him, when the envious doctors in Damascus put his actual knowledge of medicine to the test? “Don’t you fear the doctors there examining you, seeing that you don’t really know a thing about medicine?”<sup>128</sup> Wearing a stage-costume and acting like a ‘Frank doctor’ may have convinced the ignorant masses; real doctors on the other hand would surely discern the truth with ease. Diyāb realized al-Zoghbī was right: It was time, while he still could, for him to give up the latest act, throw off the sham costume, and resume his original road home to Aleppo.

From Adana, Diyāb’s caravan travelled its last stretch through modern Turkey’s Hatay province, through the town of Payas and the city of Antioch, to arrive in Aleppo at the end of July (Tammūz), 1710. Diyāb arrived ‘home’ still in his Frankish costume. Here, however, it felt even less authentic than elsewhere. Here, where most people knew him, it would also make a less favorable impression: In order “not to become a spectacle (*furja*)” to anyone, Diyāb headed straight for the home of his family in Zqāq al-Khall.<sup>129</sup>

To Diyāb’s family—particularly his two older brothers, Anṭūn and ‘Abdallah—his return home was like that of the prodigal son. *For this our brother was dead, and is alive again*—literally: Having heard no news from their brother since he left Marseilles, they had assumed him to

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 165<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 170<sup>v</sup>.

be among those who perished at sea on a ship bound for Iskandarun which sunk.<sup>139</sup> Finding him alive, the entire Diyāb family rejoiced. In place of the fine robe, ring and sandals to wear, they brought Diyāb his regular ‘Oriental’ clothing to change back into. This would be Diyāb’s final physical/psychological transformation: “They brought me my clothing, to put them on. I shaved the hair on my head (*ḥalaqt sha‘r rāsī*), and wrapped a *shāsh* around it, with a *qāwūq*.” Thus marked the end of Diyāb’s ‘grand tour’. Now he was at last putting off his ill-fitting Frankish costume and identity, putting behind him all his days of “roaming about and exploring” in a *far country*, in the company of strangers, serving strange masters. Now, after his short stint on the stage of world-wide travel, Diyāb was ready once more to be a brother to Anṭūn and ‘Abdallah, a regular Maronite son of Aleppo. Diyāb’s travels appeared now like an aberration: an intense fever which had gripped him for a two-year period in his youth, reached its climax, then subsided, leaving him now to pick up again from where he had left off.

Now that they had at last found their lost brother, Diyāb’s family did all they could to ensure they wouldn’t lose him again. Their first order of business was to make him feel secure at home by solving his previous unemployment problem: “My brother was afraid that I might return to travelling,” writes Diyāb, so he “installed me in a shop selling broadcloth (*jūkh*) under the supervision of my maternal uncle Shāhīn Ghazāla.” Weary of life on the road, Diyāb assented readily. The plan worked: Diyāb remained thereafter established in the family textile business, as a broadcloth-seller (*jūkhji*), for twenty-two years, he says, at the time of writing his

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<sup>139</sup> In that time, Diyāb writes, his family had even “had a mass served for [the repose of] my soul (*qaddasū ‘alā rūhī*).” *Ibid.*

memoir-narrative. There were no subsequent travels—just the stories of his youthful adventures, with which he probably regaled many audiences in those twenty-two years, honing his story-telling craft in the process. To lock him in yet further, Diyāb’s brothers quickly arranged his marriage to a (presumably Maronite) woman who later bore him two sons.

“It was clear,” writes Diyāb, “that the Almighty was the One who called me to marriage.” All the events of Diyāb’s recent past now finally made sense to him in hindsight, as the design of Providence: “For when I had left Aleppo in secret, my intention was to return to the monastic life (*al-rahbana*). Then I unexpectedly met with the aforementioned traveller [Paul Lucas] in the village of Keftine, and I turned aside from monasticism. This is how destiny (*al-naṣīb*) played out.”<sup>131</sup> From his fateful first meeting with Lucas, to his travels across North Africa, his sojourn in the ‘lands of the Christians’—in short, all his “roaming about and exploring”—had occurred solely to deflect the youthful Diyāb from his original (if half-baked) intention to become a monk, and to bring him back round to the present point, to the settled, married life in Aleppo—his home.

*Reunion in Aleppo with Paul Lucas*

A year after settling into his new life in Aleppo, Diyāb received word that his former *mu’allim* was in town again and staying at the French consul. Diyāb went there to greet him. He endured some initial reproaches from Lucas for having left Paris the way he did; otherwise, the reunion was wholly amicable. Lucas was in Aleppo this time on a new royally-funded

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 170<sup>v</sup>-171<sup>r</sup>.

‘scientific’ expedition—that very expedition which Diyāb was meant to lead. Now Lucas’s past intrigues no longer mattered however: Diyāb had no lingering interest in such a role for himself—he was happy with his new outcome. The two men easily forgave each other; neither of them wished to end their relationship, to throw it to the ‘dust-heap of history’. Both rather possessed willingness to maintain their mutually-beneficial relationship into the future, albeit in an altered form from what it had been.

While in Aleppo this time, Lucas became a frequent guest at Diyāb’s family home, and at his broadcloth shop in Aleppo’s textile *sūq*. As in former times, Lucas frequently enlisted Diyāb’s help as a guide and *tarjumān* throughout Aleppo and its environs. “He often came to see me at my broadcloth shop,” Diyāb writes. “I would sometimes go around with him, as was his habit, to look for ancient things (*ashyā qadīma*) like money, books, rare and precious gems.”<sup>132</sup> The narrative ends curiously with Lucas and Diyāb embarking on a brand-new adventure to explore some caves in Aleppo’s outskirts, rumored by locals to be haunted.<sup>133</sup> Was this their new beginning together?

The form that their relationship took now was based on a new dynamic: Diyāb was no longer the wayward and deracinated youth he had been when Lucas met him the first time. If his previous time spent travelling with Lucas, his experiences in the ‘lands of the Christians’ had had any effect on him, it was to make his feet more firmly planted where he was, at ‘home’, in Aleppo, in his native soil, his ‘normal’ life. Diyāb had lost all desire for anything different. For

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 171<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 172<sup>r</sup>-174<sup>r</sup>.

his part, Lucas had given up any grand designs to take Diyāb with him far away, or to radically re-mould him according to a novel image of his own devising. A new tentative equilibrium was set. And while they no longer met as pupil and *mu'allim*, nevertheless, the hierarchy between them remained intact, with Lucas in the uncontested superior position.



## Conclusion

Ḥannā Diyāb's narrative was a fitting place to conclude this study, not least because his travels were in chronological terms the latest of the three whom we have studied. In Diyāb, as we have said earlier, we have seemingly arrived at the very threshold of Arabic literary modernity in our successive 'Journeying Towards Modernity'. He is the first among the three travellers who was a layman, not a hierarch, priest, or deacon—pointing the way forward thus to increased laicization, and even 'secularization' in the future. Diyāb gave us the first Arabic literary account of Paris: the modern Western European metropolis *par excellence*, which became a primary place of formation for later generations of Arab writers and intellectuals. Due in large part to the unique circumstances of his *ad hoc* formation as a storyteller/writer, Diyāb's text comes quite close in structure, in substance, and in some of its stylistic features, to the modern novel. The formula which produced Diyāb, the master 'secret' narrator of *Aladdin* and *Ali Baba*, contains many of the elements of which Arabic literary modernity was born: the unequal encounter between East and West, giving birth to both creativity and 'alienation' (*al-ghurba*). Placing Diyāb's narrative more precisely within the history of modern Arabic literature will be the future work of scholars in the field.

The genesis of literary modernity in Arabic however was not the focal point of the chapters in this dissertation. Christian communities in the Arab-Islamic world, who were native to *dār al-islām*, underwent a transformation in their identity starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with both the Ottoman territorial expansion and the Western European economic expansion into the Levant and Near East. The focus of this dissertation was to trace some of

these transformations, through the close study of these three important travel narratives written in Arabic by three Christians representing different communities. During the early modern/Ottoman period, Eastern Christians travelled in increasing numbers outside *dār al-islām* to the ‘lands of the Christians’—*i.e.* Europe. Renewed contact with Christian societies in Europe—East *and* West—became the catalyst for religious-cultural renewal, *nahḍa*, within each Christian community. As we saw in the chapters, this *nahḍa*—with all the bitter debates about communal identity which it involved—is well-reflected in all the texts we studied. It is this *nahḍa* which we were primarily interested in, occurring at a time when all cultural life in Arabic was thought previously to have still remained deep in the pit of ‘decadence (*inhiṭāt*)’.

There were broadly two directions, two orientations for Eastern Christian travel—and, as a corollary, cultural alignment—during this early modern/Ottoman period. The better, even perhaps all too well-known one, was in the direction of Western Europe—represented by Elias of Mosul (Chapt. 3) and Ḥannā Diyāb (Chapt. 4). Certainly, the winds were already changing in Western Europe’s favor in this period, yet neither of these travellers would have known at the time that they were aligning themselves with *the* culture that would soon enjoy uncontested global hegemony. Indeed, the transition to modernity *everywhere* in the coming centuries would be determined, almost exclusively, by the dominant factor of different local cultures’ engagement with the culture of Western Europe. We could say that Elias and Diyāb—and the communities they represented—were getting a ‘head-

start'. The engagement, as we saw, however was not an equal one. It produced many gains; yet it also yielded painful losses—especially in the example of Elias.

The other, far less-known direction was the one which we saw in Chapter 2, represented by Paul of Aleppo and his father, Patriarch Makarios al-Za'im. As Arab Orthodox Christians, they looked and headed East, instead of West. Ottoman expansion meant that they joined the empire's *millet-i-Rūm*, in which were included all the diverse Orthodox populations in Asia Minor, the Balkans and Southeastern Europe. The latter all formed part of the former 'Byzantine Commonwealth' and shared in common the cultural patrimony of Byzantium—which enjoyed (perhaps ironically) a revival under the Ottomans. This world of Orthodoxy extended beyond the Ottoman empire's borders as well: into the Danubian Principalities, and more significantly, into Muscovite Russia—Paul's 'lands of the Christians'. It was into this neo-Byzantine cultural sphere that Paul and Makarios—along with their Arab Orthodox community—were absorbed for the time being, in which they could travel and feel mostly right at home. In many ways, as we saw in Chapter 2, this unknown encounter between Arab Orthodoxy and 'European' Orthodoxy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was a much more equal and reciprocal one. It involved far less threat, if any at all, to the Christians' uniquely Eastern or Arab identity.

In whichever direction they travelled, each of the narratives we read demonstrated something which is perhaps a paradox: Contact with the European 'lands of the Christians' did not weaken these Eastern Christian travellers' sense of belonging to their homeland in Ottoman *dār al-islām*; but on the contrary, affirmed it. We saw this most clearly in the case

of Paul of Aleppo, whose sense of belonging to his native land encompassed not just its physical and sacred geography, but also his affirmed loyalty, even on religious grounds, to its Ottoman Muslim administration. Ḥannā Diyāb, who attempted at the outset to leave Ottoman Aleppo behind him forever and settle in Europe, ended up returning forever—and never wanting to visit Europe again. Even Elias of Mosul, who never returned to the Ottoman empire, but died in *al-ghurba* in Spain—even he longed to return to Mesopotamia, to affirm his connection with his Eastern homeland, in *dār al-islām*, through writing down his account of his travels in the language he tried not to forget: Arabic.

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