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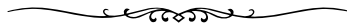
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OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST



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Editorial



The present thematic volume of the Historical Reporter is dedicated to the memory of the distinguished Russian Orientalist, Professor Constantin A. Panchenko (1968–2024), a representative of the scholarly trend of the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Lomonosov Moscow State University.

The volume *Worlds of the Christian East* opens with the publication of Professor Panchenko's unfinished article, on which he had been working during the final days of his life. The text develops a paper he presented on 2 April 2024 at the Institute of Asian and African Studies during the roundtable *The 7th Century as an 'Axial Age' of the Middle East: The Concept of the Birth of Islamic Civilization in Patricia Crone and Michael Cook's "Hagarism" – Pros and Cons* ("Lomonosov Readings," subsection "The Christian East"). The choice of subject is somewhat unexpected in light of the topics that occupied Professor Panchenko throughout his academic career. The article surveys modern Western historiography (since the 1970s) on the emergence and genesis of Islam in the 7th century. Panchenko justified his interest in the subject, despite his specialization in the study of Middle Eastern Christianity, by noting that "Islam predetermined the entire subsequent historical fate of the Christian East, while the Christian and other peoples of the Middle East contributed—indeed, decisively—to the formation of Arab-Muslim civilization."

As a result, readers will encounter the new scholarly paradigm of the Western "revisionist school" of Islamic origins. Early Islam is presented as a supra-confessional



Abrahamic movement of “believers,” comprising, alongside the followers of Muhammad, numerous Jews and Christians. This movement was characterized by pronounced eschatological expectations, which help explain its focus on the conquest of Jerusalem. In other words, early Islam was Palestine-centered. Only under the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705) did Muslims separate into a distinct religious community, initiating the formation of a specifically Arabian Islam, differentiated from other Abrahamic religions, with its center not in Palestine but in the Hijaz—the very Islam familiar to us from the Muslim historiography of later times.

Pavel Kuzenkov’s article (The Eschatological Background of the Islamic Conquests ...), addresses the “axial time” of the Middle East and situates itself within the framework set by Dr. Panchenko’s contribution. From its inception, Christianity anticipated the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God, which created a charged atmosphere and imparted a linear, eschatologically directed character to history. By the 6th century, eschatological tension had reached its peak, connected both with the fall of the Western Roman Empire and with the transition into the seventh (“Sabbath”) millennium (6000–7000 years from Adam) according to the Septuagint chronology at the turn of the 5th to 6th centuries. As a response, during the reign of Emperor Heraclius in the 7th century, the Byzantine (“Roman”) era (beginning in 5509 BC) was introduced and came into active use. This chronological system allowed contemporaries to assert that the sacramental threshold of the year

6000 had been successfully passed, and humanity had entered the Sabbath Seventh Millennium. This reckoning became part of imperial ideology, emphasizing Byzantium's role as the only true Christian empire. Yet in its claims to universal spiritual-political leadership, the Byzantine world quickly came across the rise of Islam, which had emerged within the same eschatological atmosphere.

The topic of sacred geography in the Christian cultures of the Middle East—already addressed in issue 48 of *The Reporter*—is further developed in the contributions of Sergei Brun and Ilya Popov. The general concept of “sacred geography,” which encompasses a wide spectrum of themes such as objects of worship, calendrical cycles of feasts, pilgrimage, and accompanying rituals across diverse peoples and civilizations, is described in Dr. Brun's article on the sacred topography of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch between the 10th and 14th centuries. The system of holy sites and the veneration of particular saints makes it possible to reconstruct the condition of a given culture or religious community. The fate of local sacred locations may reflect the historical trajectory of the community itself. In this case, the focus is on the Patriarchate of Antioch during the period between the so-called Byzantine “Reconquest” (the reintegration into Byzantium of Cilicia, northern and northwestern Syria, and western Mesopotamia) and the series of devastations inflicted by the Zengids, Mongols, and—most destructively—the Egyptian Mamluks in the 12th to 14th centuries. Through a kind of “topographical survey,” Dr. Brun systematizes the sacred sites and examines their functioning from local to universal levels. He identifies four stages of devastation that transformed what had once been a unified cultural space into

a collection of fragmented enclaves, deprived of most of their historical monuments.

The genesis of an earlier stratum of symbolic space, localized within the city of Joppa (Ioppe) in Palestine, is the focus of Ilya Popov's study. The author examines the competing "Joppa narratives" regarding Perseus and Jonah as a dialogical system—a call-and-response paradigm—between the pagan and the Jewish communities during the Hellenistic era. Dr. Popov concludes that societies construct their histories through their own re-interpretation of inherited mythological traditions, grounded in the "museumified" sacred space that remains relevant to their present.

The section devoted to intercultural interaction opens with the article by Dmitry Mishin. The text examines the rise of the primacy of the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon within the Sasanian Empire in the 3rd century and the key role played in this process by Bishop Papa bar 'Aggai. Drawing on a range of historical sources, including the Chronicle of Arbela, the Synodicon Orientale, and others, the author demonstrates that even in the earliest stages of church history, religious decisions were taken with political expediency in mind. Dr. Mishin shows with great clarity how legends and falsifications served as instruments of political strategy. Thus, the article is not merely a biography of a single figure, but rather an exploration of a complex, multilayered picture in which politics, religion, and historical memory intersect. It argues that the elevation of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was an inevitable process, driven by the need to centralize authority in order to interact effectively with the powerful Sasanian state. The article's conclusion reinforces its scholarly significance by highlighting the depth and critical rigor of the author's approach.

Mikhail Yakushev's first contribution addresses the journeys of Russian pilgrim-writers to the Ottoman Empire from the late 18th to the early 19th centuries. Following the peace treaties of 1774 and 1792, which enabled Russian subjects to visit the Holy Land in relative safety, the flow of pilgrims increased substantially, despite the many hardships involved. Travels across the Ottoman Empire remained long, exhausting, and dangerous. Pilgrims endured heavy physical strain, extended marches, climatic changes, malnutrition, and unfamiliar food. Many were forced to sleep in coffeehouses or under the open sky. Prior to the establishment of Russian consular representation, they often found themselves without shelter or protection in a foreign land. The diaries and travel notes analyzed by Dr. Yakushev constitute an important contribution to the literature of pilgrimage, bearing witness to the spiritual endeavor of Russian travelers who overcame immense difficulties along their way.

In a second contribution, Dr. Yakushev turns to the reconstruction of the little-known biography of the French traveler and artist Guillaume-Joseph Grelot. His *Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople* (1680) serves as the principal source, supplemented by the diaries of his contemporaries, such as Ambrogio Bembo and Jean Foy-Vaillant.

In 1672, Grelot managed to enter the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in secret and make sketches of its interior. The publication of his book, the first illustrated description of Hagia Sophia available to a European readership, brought him enormous popularity. His drawings and plans remain a highly valuable historical source, as they record the state of Hagia Sophia in the 17th century, including the details that have since been lost. Grelot's

work represents a significant contribution to cultural exchange between East and West, providing European audiences with unique images of one of the world's greatest monuments.

The section on religious conversions is represented by the articles of Anna Bochkovskaya and Evgeny Kopot'. The Punjab had remained beyond the reach of Christian missionaries longer than most other regions of the Indian subcontinent. By introducing new sources into scholarly circulation—such as annual mission reports, as well as the notes and memoirs of John Lowrie and John Newton—Dr. Bochkovskaya sheds light on the previously understudied aspects of missionary activity in northwestern India during the first half of the 19th century. Her analysis focuses on the first third of the century, when Christianity was only beginning to enter the region. This makes it possible to understand how missionaries—American Protestants in this case—developed methods and practices of work in what was for them an “unexplored” area along the southern bank of the Sutlej River. Missionaries recognized the importance of education as an instrument of evangelization, but they also faced the reality that graduates of their schools rarely accepted baptism. This observation is of wider significance for the study of Catholic missionary activity in the Middle East as well: the proliferation of schools did not automatically translate into significant conversions to Protestantism or Catholicism. Nevertheless, missionary schools played a crucial role in fostering a positive attitude among the Punjabi elite toward Europeans and Christianity, as well as in training personnel for government service.

Evgeny Kopot's article examines the history of the Uniate movement in the Church of Antioch in the second half of the 19th century. Its central thesis is that

the union (Unia) with Rome, as well as conversions to Protestantism (particularly Anglicanism), functioned primarily as instruments in the struggle over power, financial resources, and social status. Dr. Kopot' demonstrates that these conflicts were not rooted in doctrinal or theological disagreements, but driven by secular interests. This argument is reinforced by a comparative analysis of typologically similar processes within the Melkite Uniate community, which suggests the universality of the phenomenon across Middle Eastern Christianity. The author shows how regional rivalries between the established centers (Damascus) and the new ones (Beirut, Tripoli), as well as intra-elite struggles at diocesan and communal levels, became the primary sources of conflict. In the absence of secular forms of political self-organization, the religious sphere became the arena in which broader social contradictions were worked out. By applying Fernand Braudel's concept of the *longue durée*, the study frames the Uniate movements not as isolated episodes, but as part of long-term socio-economic and regional processes. This shifts the focus away from individual actors and events toward underlying structural factors, marking a significant advance in the historiography.

The article critically reconsiders traditional explanatory models, convincingly dismantling the myth of a "national" conflict (the Greek–Arab opposition) and of external intervention as the sole or primary causes of schisms. It demonstrates how, in contexts where the religious community (*millet*) performed certain functions of a state structure, confessional affiliation became an instrument for resolving strictly secular issues. The use of Russian diplomatic correspondence introduces new material into scholarly circulation, confirming and

deepening the conclusions of both contemporary Western (T. Philipp) and Russian scholars (C.A. Panchenko).

The section of this issue devoted to historical sources presents, for the first time, a document concerning the medieval history of the Patriarchate of Alexandria: an Arabic encyclical by the Orthodox (Melkite) Patriarch Athanasius III (Patriarch ca. 1275–ca. 1315). The translation and commentary by Professor Alexander S. Treiger (Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada) shed light on the daily life and liturgical practice of Egyptian Melkites, the process of Byzantinization of their worship, and the persecutions endured by Christians during the Mamluk era.

This issue of *The Historical Reporter* represents a continuation of the intellectual program established by Dr. Panchenko by providing a platform for scholarly engagement with the vast world of the Christian East. For the contributors, it is also a gesture of gratitude—a collective attempt to carry forward the ideas of a distinguished scholar, colleague, mentor, and friend.

Alexey E. Titkov

Editor-in-Chief of the Journal “Historical Reporter”.



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Original paper



Evgeny M. Kopot'


“For us, the necessity of studying the peoples of the Christian East is not a matter of debate”:¹

Towards an Understanding of the Scholarly Legacy of C.A. Panchenko (1968–2024)

Abstract

This article is dedicated to the memory of the outstanding Russian Orientalist, Professor Panchenko (1968–2024), whose scholarly legacy represents a significant contribution to the study of the Christian East. Dr. Panchenko regarded this field of inquiry to a considerable extent as part of Russia’s own cultural-historical self-understanding, emphasizing the profound connection between the Orthodox East and the Russian historical process. His publications encompassed a wide range of topics: from the history of Middle Eastern Orthodoxy in the Ottoman period to sacred geography and the everyday life of Levantine Christian communities.

¹ Панченко К.А. О Христианском Востоке в телеграмм-канале // https://t.me/Oriens_Christianus/2. It should be noted that the Russian text of the article contains two variants of the historical and geographical name *Christian East* – written both with lowercase (*христианский*) and uppercase (*Христианский*) initial letters. In all quotations, the author’s original usage is preserved. However, in recent years (at least since 2019), K. A. Panchenko has advocated for the use of the uppercase *Христианский Восток*, with both words capitalized.



Special attention is given to Panchenko's research method, which combined meticulous work with primary sources and a balanced engagement with contemporary historiographical trends, while rejecting the allure of superficial postmodernist interpretations. Among his key achievements were the discovery of unique Arabic manuscripts that challenged entrenched historical narratives, the reconstruction of obscure chapters in the medieval history of Middle Eastern Christians, and the creation of a comprehensive history of Orthodox Christianity in the Middle East during the Ottoman era.

Professor Panchenko also proved himself a gifted academic organizer, uniting researchers through conferences and collective projects. His teaching at the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University, as well as his international presentations—including his plenary lecture at the conference *The Orthodox Church of Antioch from the 15th to the 18th Century: Towards a Proper Understanding of History* (2023) at Balamand University—further strengthened the authority of the Russian school of Oriental studies. The publication underscores the continuity between Dr. Panchenko and the classical tradition of Russian Orientalists—Viktor von Rosen, Ignaty Krachkovsky, and Boris Turaev. The present essay serves both as a tribute to the scholar and as an invitation to further exploration of the Christian East within the research framework he helped to shape.

Keywords:

Christian East, sacred geography of the Middle East, Middle Eastern Christian elites, Dr. Panchenko, Patriarchate of Antioch, Jerusalem Patriarchate, Orthodox Arabs, Middle Eastern Orthodoxy, Russian Oriental studies.

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radiant and distinctive constellation of cultures of the Christian East, which flourished in the Early Middle Ages from Carthage to Lake Baikal, from the Caucasus to Ethiopia, and adorned Christian civilization with the deeds of hundreds of martyrs, ascetics, and thinkers” — thus Dr. Panchenko formulated the subject of his scholarly vocation, to which he remained faithful until the end².

His research gaze, filled with sympathetic attentiveness to his chosen field, was always accompanied by an awareness of the centuries-long unbreakable connection between the Orthodox East and Russia. As Dr. Panchenko wrote in 2010: “We ourselves are, in a certain sense, a part of the Christian East—at least if one looks from the West”³. Moreover, “for those of Russian culture, the study of the Christian East is almost a process of self-discovery”⁴. It was for this reason that Professor Panchenko found his kindred spirits and dearest

² The last recorded dialogue with *Dr. Panchenko* concerned the publication of photographs of Christian frescoes from the collection of the National Museum in Khartoum (Sudan).

³ *Панченко К.А.* Арабо-христианские исследования в современной зарубежной науке // Вестник Московского университета. Сер. 13: Востоковедение. 2010. № 2. P. 22.

⁴ *Панченко К.А.* О Христианском Востоке...

“co-authors” in the Russian pioneers of the Near East: Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, Ioann Lukyanov, Arseny Sukhanov, Archimandrite Porfirius (Uspensky), Hippolyt Vishensky, and others. The pages of his writings are richly interspersed with vivid quotations from these “wayfarers” and “watchers of the East”. With Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, in particular, he shared not only scholarly interests but also a love for graphic representations of the Christian East.

Dr. Panchenko made a major contribution to the development of historical scholarship. He authored nearly two hundred works, widely recognized not only in Russia but also abroad (his writings were translated into English and Arabic — a highly uncommon precedent in Russian Oriental studies)⁵. It is therefore not by chance that the introduction to the English translation of what remains the most significant study in global Oriental scholarship on the history of Middle Eastern Orthodoxy in the Ottoman period was written by John X (Yazigi), Patriarch of Antioch and All the East⁶. In his works, Panchenko examined the most important questions of the formation and crisis of Eastern Christian civilization, the flourishing and decline of social structures, the history of everyday life and regional elites, and the rise and fall of spiritual culture: “The Christian East deserves to be studied in the same

⁵ *Panchenko C.A. Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans: 1516–1831. New York, 2016; Panchenko C.A. Orthodoxy and Islam in the Middle East: The Seventh to the Sixteenth Century / B. Pheiffer Noble, S. Noble, trans. Jordanville, 2021. Bānšīnkū Q.A. [Panchenko C.A.]. Ittiḥād Flūrinsā wa-kanīsat Anṭākiya: Naḥra ilā at-tārīḥ // Al-Kanīsa al-urṭūduksiyya al-anṭākiyya min al-qarn al-ḥāmis ‘ašar ilā al-qarn at-tāmin ‘ašar: Naḥwa fahm daḡīq li-t-tārīḥ / ḥarrara an-naṣṣ al-aršimandrīt Ya‘qūb Ḥalīl = [Панченко К.А. Флорентийская уния и Антиохийская Церковь: взгляд на историю // Антиохийская православная Церковь с XV по XVIII в.: К более глубокому пониманию истории/ Под ред. архим. Иакова Халиля]. Balamand: Ġāmi‘at al-Balamand, 2025. P. 25–41.*

⁶ *Panchenko C.A. Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans: 1516–1831. New York, 2016.*



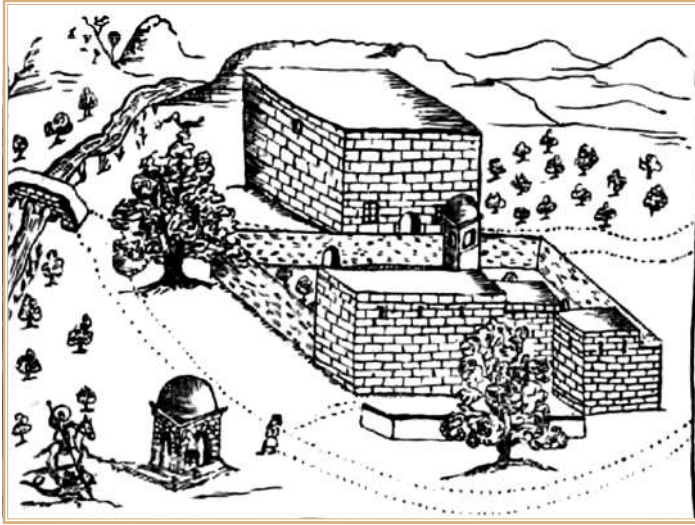
Professor Panchenko at the 3rd International Conference
 “Current Issues in the Study of the Christian East”. Sergiev Posad,
 Moscow Theological Academy, November 12, 2019.
From the archive of Professor Panchenko

perspectives as other cultural-historical worlds, including its material culture, its interaction with the natural environment, its economy, the dynamics of social ties, and demographic trends”⁷. He was particularly concerned with the asymmetry in the academic field, marked by a disproportionate attention to issues of Eastern Christian philology to the detriment of historical inquiry: “The Christian East is not only a subject for theology and philology. It represents almost as complete a civilization as the Muslim world or the Byzantine Empire”⁸. Nevertheless, Dr. Panchenko himself systematically contributed to the expansion of the source base for Arab-Christian studies, becoming the initiator and editor of the *Anthology of the Orthodox Arab Literature*⁹.

⁷ Панченко К.А. Арабо-христианские исследования... Р. 25.

⁸ Панченко К.А. Арабо-христианские исследования... Р. 25.

⁹ Антология литературы православных арабов. Т. 1: История / Под ред. К.А. Панченко. М., 2020.



The place where St. George slew the dragon.

From the publication *Travels of Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky to the Holy Places of the East from 1723 to 1747. Part 2.*

In recent years, Professor Panchenko's enduring passion for source-based research brought him particular professional successes. Unique information about the eventful history of the Christian East, its spiritual concerns, manuscript production, textual circulation, and cultural contacts among Arab Christians of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was discovered in Arabic manuscripts preserved in the library of the Jerusalem Orthodox Patriarchate. At a time when the narrative corpus of sources on the history of the Orthodox East in the Early Modern period appeared exhausted, scholarly attention turned to "the colophons and marginalia of these books (from the Holy Sepulchre collection — *author*), which had not yet received due attention from scholars". These materials revealed "unexpected episodes in the ecclesiastical history of the Christian East and the cultural interactions of Orthodox peoples who encountered one another in the monasteries of the Holy Land"¹⁰.

¹⁰ Панченко К.А. Православные арабы и лавра св. Саввы в XVI — нач. XVII вв. по данным арабо-христианских рукописей // Вестник ПСТГУ. Серия III: Филология. 2020. Вып. 65. Р. 71.

This helped to rescue from oblivion many pages of the history of Middle Eastern Orthodoxy. As the Professor remarked: “Whole centuries of the real history of Middle Eastern Christians remain unknown — [...] and not only the dates of reigns, but even the very names of many Middle Eastern patriarchs of the 14th and 15th centuries”¹¹. Yet sometimes his findings produced the opposite effect. An exemplary source-critical study, *The Parchment Gospel of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS, D-227: The Fate of a Manuscript in Historical Context*, allowed the removal from Joseph Nasrallah’s list of the hierarchs of Antioch (under the year 1344) of the “phantom”¹² Patriarch Joachim I, who in fact had never existed.

Archival discoveries and comprehensive studies by Dr. Panchenko make it possible to reestablish continuity in Russian historiography of the Christian East, summing up its rich experience from the final decades of the pre-revolutionary period. Reflecting on the trajectories of Russian and Western Oriental studies, he observed: “Russian scholars turned to this subject three hundred years later than their European counterparts, and within the span of just two generations have risen to the level of the leading Western schools. It is enough to recall the names of Rosen, Bartold, Krachkovsky, Bolotov, Marr, Turaev”¹³. To this list we may now add Professor Panchenko himself.

It is unlikely that the “ascetic Professor”¹⁴, renowned for his modesty, would have said it himself. Yet certain parallels can

¹¹ Паченко К.А. Арабо-христианские исследования... Р. 25.

¹² Паченко К.А. Пергаменное Евангелие ИВР РАН D-227: Судьба рукописи в историческом контексте // Вестник церковной истории. 2019. Т. 1. Вып. 53–54. Р. 382.

¹³ Паченко К.А. Арабо-христианские исследования... Р. 23.

¹⁴ Thus Archpriest *Nikolai Chukov* (the future Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, Gregory) called *В.А. Тураев*. (Чуков Н.К., прот. Слово пред отпением Профессора-Академика Б.А. Тураева 26/13 июля 1920 г. / Восток Христианский. Т.2 (VIII): Новая серия. СПб.: Алетейя, 2001. Р. 369).



Treatise by Macarius III al-Za'im on the Antiochian dioceses and bishops. Autograph manuscript of the Patriarch, completed in Georgia in 1665. Marginal notes by Macarius's grandson, Patriarch Cyril V al-Za'im (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. B 1227)

hardly be ignored. When the “Eastern ‘Prince of the Church”¹⁵ Gregory IV (Haddad)¹⁶ twice turned away the young Ignaty Krachkovsky, who sought access to his library, the latter could scarcely have imagined that in the distant future the Patriarch of Antioch would compose the preface to a monograph by a Russian Orientalist who had written the history of his own church, and would invite him to speak immediately after himself at a major international conference central to the Patriarchate. It may thus be concluded that continuity was not only restored but advanced yet another step.

¹⁵ Крачковский И.Ю. Над арабскими рукописями: Листки воспоминаний о книгах и людях. Изд. 2-е., доп. М., 1946. P. 33.

¹⁶ Gregory IV (Haddad) (1859–1928) – Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, 1906–1928.

A defining feature of Dr. Panchenko's scholarly workshop was a fine sense of measure. On the one hand, he strove to cover the centuries-long history of the rise and fall of the civilizational rhythms of the Christian East¹⁷. On the other, he devoted close attention to the smallest details of the subjects under study (down to questions of diet and daily life), seeking precise linguistic means of description. Despite his excellent familiarity with the achievements of modern historical scholarship, the Professor preferred to keep a respectful distance from the shifting fashions of historiographical trends: "Unfortunately, many researchers consider it beneath their dignity to dig into small facts. They are drawn instead to abstract analyses unburdened by factuality — some 'image of the Other,' 'perceptions of distance,' 'representations of innovation,' and so forth"¹⁸. His scholarly credo was grounded in work with primary sources and the principle of historicism: "It is difficult to understand the contemporary postmodernist enthusiasms of historians. Has historical science really exhausted itself, having fully grasped the whole of the real history, so that scholars have nothing left but to rummage in the consciousness and subconsciousness of past ages? Fortunately, this is not so. The 'positivist' science has yet to answer many questions, and without those answers any abstract generalizations will be premature"¹⁹.

At the same time, he could not accept, in Pierre Bourdieu's apt phrase, "positivist capitulation", when "instead of seeking the truth where it is to be found, one searches for it under the streetlight, where it is easy to see"²⁰. The well-trodden histo-

¹⁷ Панченко К.А. Ритмы истории христианского Востока: Попытка обобщения // Вестник Московского университета. Сер. 13: Востоковедение. 2012. № 4. Р. 3–19.

¹⁸ Панченко К.А. Арабо-христианские исследования... Р. 33.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Бурдьё П. О государстве: курс лекций в Коллеж де Франс (1989–1992). М., 2016. Р. 164.

riographical paths never inspired the Professor. This applied to every aspect of his work. Ambitious goals required a broad range of bold, at times provocative, research tasks.

His attention was drawn to the social structures of the Orthodox East, the ecological factors of the region's development, external relations with the Catholic West and the Orthodox North, Greco-Arab national interactions, monastic centers of cultural reproduction, and urban agglomerations that formed the Orthodox elite. Sacred geography, as a prism through which the vital forces of Middle Eastern society could be comprehended, became a distinct line of inquiry. And of course, he made enormous effort to reconstruct the biographies of a whole constellation of half-forgotten martyrs, patriarchs, and scribes — the work he carried out especially during his long-standing collaboration with the *Orthodox Encyclopedia* (since 2000). Nor did Dr. Panchenko neglect more traditional questions of geopolitics; he rarely approached them schematically. More often, he explored them via individual personalities set against the background of their epoch — Russian pilgrims to the East, or Arab travelers reaching the northern border of the Orthodox world. He also responded vividly to the issues of the present, drawing attention to historical parallels²¹.

Dr. Panchenko's scholarly and pedagogical activity was inseparably linked to the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University. It was here that he defended both his candidate and doctoral dissertations, and here that he worked as a faculty member in the Department of History of the Near and Middle East (from 2001 as Assistant Profes-

²¹ “One need not look far for an example of rivalry over holy places: one can point to the current situation around the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. This case, of course, goes beyond the geographical scope of this issue, but it vividly demonstrates what sacred geography is and the meaning it carries even in our secular age”. Панченко К.А. Сакральная география в истории авраамических религий Востока Т. 48. М., 2024. Р. 29.

sor, and from 2017 as Associate Professor). At his alma mater he read the courses *History of Middle Eastern Christianity*, *History of the Arab Lands in the Middle Ages*, *Modern History of the Arab Lands*, and *Source Studies and Historiography of the History of the Arab Lands*. These courses were consistently popular with students. His passion, vivid imagination, and brilliant command of material left neither freshmen — who traditionally heard their very first introductory lecture from him — nor experts indifferent.

Yet the Professor's special gift was his ability to unite researchers of the Christian East — often engaged in permanent debates with one another — and to inspire them toward new inquiries. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that there is not a single colleague in the field who did not experience this fruitful influence. Joint projects inspired by the Professor proved capable of transcending²² not only the geographical boundaries but also the disciplinary and institutional ones. In this regard, one cannot but recall the lines from a 1910 letter by the Orientalist Ahatanhel Krymsky, dedicated to Viktor von Rosen and Valentin Zhukovsky: “Your image and that of the late Baron Rosen served for me as a radiant beacon and support amidst the heavy, oppressive black darkness of barbarism that presses upon everything here”²³. For many contemporary scholars of the East, both in Russia and abroad, the living and written word of Dr. Panchenko was precisely such a “radiant beacon”.

As Head of the Subsection *Christian East*²⁴ at the “Lomonosov Readings”, Dr. Panchenko succeeded in conjuring up an atmosphere of mutual respect, scholarly tact, and creative

²² Often with great difficulty for the initiator himself, who had to act not only as editor but also as psychologist and motivator.

²³ Архив востоковедов ИВР РАН. Ф. 17. Оп. 2. Д. 30. Письма от А.Е. Крымского (1903–1917). Л. 14.

²⁴ Formally established within the “Oriental Studies and African Studies” section in 2019, though meetings on this subject had been held earlier on a designated day.



Participants of the III International Conference “Atambov Readings: Sacred Geography of the Near and Middle East through Centuries and Generations”.

Moscow, ISAA of Lomonosov Moscow State University, June 30, 2023.

K.A. Panchenko is standing in the center of the first row.

From the archive of K.A. Panchenko

exploration. His leadership in this intellectual space, concerned with the spiritual dimension of society’s life, was grounded in the traditions established by one of his own mentors, Feride Atsamba²⁵. Within the framework of the Subsection, it became a regular practice to hold the following round tables:

· *Why Did the Arab Conquests Succeed? An Analysis of the Military and Socio-Political Factors Behind the Success of Muslim Expansion in the Seventh Century* (2013);

· *The Birth of the Christian East: Ethno-Cultural Explosions of Late Antiquity* (2017);

· *Middle Eastern Empires of Late Antiquity: Identity, Ideological and Political Bonds, Imperial Continuity* (2018);

· *Saints and Sanctuaries as the Basis of Ethno-Confessional Identity in the Christian East, Fourth–Fifteenth Centuries* (2019);

· *The Birth of the Christian East: New Perspectives* (2020);

· *Church History and Regional Elites* (2021);

²⁵ More: Мейер М.С. Ф.М. Ацамба и ее ближнее окружение по истфаку МГУ в 1940–1955 гг. // Исторический вестник. М., 2019. Т. 29. Р. 240–247.



Professor Panchenko at the 12th Congress for Southeast European Studies.
Romania, Bucharest, 2019.

From the archive of Professor Panchenko

· *Christian Elites and Church History: A New Reading* (2022);

· *The Evolution of Sacred Geography of the Christian East* (2023);

· *The 7th Century as an ‘Axial Age’ of the Middle East: The Concept of the Birth of Islamic Civilization in Patricia Crone and Michael Cook’s Hagarism — Pros and Cons* (2024).

The discussions generated in this format laid the foundation for the collective monograph *The Christian East: The Diversity of Regional Elites from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (2025), as well as for two thematic issues of *The Historical Reporter*²⁶.

These projects were subordinated, in his view, to “our most important task” — “the creation and reproduction of a schol-

²⁶ Исторический вестник. М., 2017. Т. 20: Христианство на Ближнем Востоке / под ред. К.А. Панченко; Исторический вестник. М., 2024. Т. 48: Сакральная география Ближнего Востока / под ред. К.А. Панченко.

arly milieu, a circle of authors systematically engaged in the study of the Christian East”²⁷. While dreaming of a community of researchers capable of generating new ideas, he would emphasize in conversation that scholarly inquiry was inevitably linked to solitude—sometimes bordering on isolation. A balance rarely attainable in practice.

On the other hand, organizational efforts inevitably consume resources for research. At such moments the correspondence between Baron Rosen and Sergei Oldenburg often came to mind, in which the eminent Orientalist categorically rejected any initiatives to establish a Russian Oriental Society if these would require sacrificing his own scholarly pursuits to administrative tasks²⁸. For him, as for Dr. Panchenko, the priority always lay with science itself.

On the international stage, Professor Panchenko consistently represented Russian Oriental studies with dignity. He presented papers at such authoritative conferences as the IX Congress of Arab-Christian Studies (Malta, 2012); the III Syro-Arabic Symposium (Kaslik, Lebanon, 2015); the conference *Arab-Christian Cultural Semantics on the Eve of the Nahda* (St Andrews, UK, 2017); and the XII Congress of Southeast European Studies (Romania, 2019). In 2023, he delivered the plenary lecture *Unia of Florence and the Church of Antioch: A Retrospect* at the major conference *The Orthodox Church of Antioch from the 15th to the 18th Century: Towards a Proper Understanding of History*, convened on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Unia in the Patriarchate, held at Balamand University²⁹. Addressing more than

²⁷ Панченко К.А. Арабо-христианские исследования... Р. 38.

²⁸ Переписка В.Р. Розена и С.Ф. Ольденбурга: (1887–1907) / Публ.: Д.Е. Мишин и др.; прим.: А.А. Вигасин, Д.Е. Мишин, И.М. Смилянская // Неизвестные страницы отеч. востоковедения. Вып. 2. М., 2004. Р. 201–399.

²⁹ This topic is further developed in this special issue, largely thanks to friendly and inspiring dialogues between the author and *Professor Panchenko*, who offered his ideas and remarks.

five hundred participants—including the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Orthodox members of Parliament, and the heads of all Lebanese religious institutions—he remarked with characteristic modesty: “I have never before spoken before such an audience, and I suppose I never will again”³⁰. The honor of speaking immediately after the keynote address by John X (Yazigi), Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, confirmed Panchenko’s recognized status as a leading contemporary scholar of Eastern Christianity.

Another trait linking the Professor to the old school, and in particular to Ignaty Krachkovsky, was his love for his vocation and his desire to generously share it with others. “As far as I was able, I sought to show that in Oriental philology”, wrote Ignaty Krachkovsky, “people work not merely because they are drawn by what some suppose to be a strange personal taste, not only because it appeals to lovers of the exotic or hermits fleeing from life. Reflecting on my own experiences with manuscripts, I could not but speak of how the smallest detail of work here is connected with broader questions of cultural history, and how everything in the end flows into the powerful movement toward the highest ideals of humanity. This is what always filled my thoughts”³¹.

Dr. Panchenko must have written with a similar inner sense for the Russian State Library’s journal *Vostochnaya Kolleksiya* (*Oriental Collection*)³², shared his ethnographic observations in the journal *Khristianstvo na Blizhnem Vostoke* (*Christianity in*

³⁰ Панченко К.А. Антиохийская Церковь в попытке самопознания: впечатления от конференции *The Orthodox Church of Antioch from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Toward a Proper Understanding of History*, Баламанда, 16–18 октября 2023. // Вестник ПСТГУ. Серия III: Филология. 2023. Вып. 77. Р. 161.

³¹ Крачковский И.Ю. Над арабскими рукописями: Листки воспоминаний о книгах и людях. Изд. 2-е., доп. М., 1946. Р. 5–6.

³² Панченко К.А. Страна мертвых городов // Восточная коллекция. 2011. № 4(47). Р. 78–94; Панченко К.А. Вверх по долине Кадиша // Восточная коллекция. 2012. № 4(51). Р. 113–125; Панченко К.А. Мальга, почти Восток // Восточная коллекция. 2013. № 1(52). Р. 82–91 и др.



Professor Panchenko at the international conference “The Orthodox Church of Antioch from the 15th to the 18th Century: Towards a Proper Understanding of History”.

Lebanon, University of Balamand, October 16, 2023.

From the archive of Professor Panchenko

the Middle East)³³, and authored a number of publications in the Telegram channel @Oriens_Christianus. In this creative fervor one discerns a clear affinity with another one of his great predecessors, Boris Turaev. “He was a true beacon of knowledge, which shone all the brighter the more light was drawn from it; he never felt satisfied so long as his discoveries, searches, thoughts and conclusions remained only his own possession; he strove to embody them in print as quickly as possible, to share them with all who wished”³⁴, — thus Ignaty Krachkovsky characterized this trait of his teacher. All who heard Dr. Panchenko speak (especially in informal settings), would agree that no better description of his scholarly work could be offered.

³³ Панченко К.А. Опыт полевой этнографии христианского Востока (Баламанд, декабрь 2016) // Христианство на Ближнем Востоке. 2019. № 4. Р. 24–36.

³⁴ Крачковский И.Ю. Памяти Б.А. Тураева / Литература Востока. Сб. ст. Вып. 2. Петербург, 1920. Р. 169.

For him, visualization of images was of special importance, and with it came a particular attention to the expressiveness of the language he employed. One need only glance at the titles of some of his articles: “*Orthodox Atlantis...*”, “*Christian Intelligence in the Mamluk State...*”, “*From Flock to Pack (The Phenomenon of Social Degradation in the Christian East)...*”, “*Fragments of the Christian East...*”, “*The Umayyads and a Bit of Adrenaline...*”. All of them testify to the author’s desire to bring to life for the reader a world long since consigned to the abyss of oblivion. Here, too, one can detect an inner connection with Ignaty Krachkovsky’s cinematic quality of prose: “And through these lines, as if alive, I see hermits as though descended from the pages of Leskov’s apologues³⁵. A desert separates them, but it cannot hinder their friendly exchange of literature; the wild Bedouin tribes block the manuscript as it makes its way from Palestine to Sinai”³⁶.

A similar literary form was merely the result of a shared essence — love for the East. To paraphrase Ignaty Krachkovsky, one might say that a century and a desert of oblivion concerning the East-Christian tradition separated him from Professor Panchenko, yet this interval was powerless to disrupt the continuity of the finest scholarly traditions of Russian Oriental studies.

Academic disciplines often guard their intellectual independence no less jealously than states defend their territorial integrity. The boundaries between university departments and academic institutes can at times prove as insurmountable as well-fortified lines of defense. For Dr. Panchenko, a guiding value was the consistent struggle against this fragmenta-

³⁵ Symbolically, in his Telegram channel *Dr. Panchenko* signed his texts “The Enchanted Wanderer”.

³⁶ *Крачковский И.Ю.* Старый апокриф / Над арабскими рукописями: Листки воспоминаний о книгах и людях. Изд. 2-е., доп. М., 1946. P. 9.



Wondrous Mountain, drawing by Professor Panchenko, 2021.
From the archive of Professor Panchenko

tion of the scholarly domain, a “stitching together” of its parts through collaborative academic projects. This aspiration resembles the notion of Boris Turaev, who had formulated the idea of a “cloister of scholarly monks”, presented in 1917 to the Preliminary Council and the All-Russian Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church³⁷.

Service — “I have fought the good fight”³⁸ — to the East-Christian civilization, not only as a researcher but also as an organizer of academic teams, must be recognized as one of the most significant achievements of Professor Panchenko. The overall tenor is best expressed in the words of the scholar himself: “Many of us study the ascetics similar to those who once lived upon this mountain”³⁹. The diversity of our scholarly specializations is akin to a bouquet of the ethnoses and sub-

³⁷ Тураев Б.А. Проект обители ученых иноков. / Восток Христианский. Т. 2 (VIII): Новая серия. СПб.: Алетейя, 2001. Р. 370–374.

³⁸ Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, 4:7.

³⁹ Refers to the monastic brotherhood “The Wonderful/Wondrous/Admirable/Black Mountain”, which flourished near Antioch in the High Middle Ages.

cultures of the Wondrous Mountain dwellers. This monastic republic disappeared without a trace, just as our Christian East is disappearing, whose memory we endeavor to preserve”⁴⁰.

Summing up, it is essential to underscore the principal point: in theory, in practice, and in his system of values, the scholarly path of Professor Panchenko was a continuation of the best traditions of the Russian school of Oriental studies, established by Viktor von Rosen, Boris Turaev, Ignaty Krachkovsky, and Feride Atsamba. Just as “the inhabitants of Kalamun could not but perceive themselves as part of a broader spiritual space, a system of sacred geography stretching from Mount Sinai to the Wondrous Mountain on the Orontes”⁴¹, so too is it impossible for us — bound by countless scholarly ties — not to feel ourselves part of the intellectual space of Russian Oriental studies, from Krachkovsky and Turaev at the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries to the “good fight” of Professor Panchenko in the early 21st century.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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⁴¹ Панченко К.А. Христианская сакральная география плато Каламун в Средневековье и Новое время // Исторический вестник. Т. 48. М., 2024. Р. 119–120.

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Original paper



Constantin A. Panchenko

Destroying the Consensus: Interpretations of the Birth of Islamic Civilization in Modern Western Historiography

(prepared for publication by Elena Yu. Kovalskaya, priest Alexander S. Treiger)

Abstract

The last, unfinished article by Professor Constantin Alexandrovich Panchenko provides an overview of modern research on the origins of Islam from the 1970s to the present day, beginning with the provocative book *Hagarism* by Patricia Crone and Michael Cook and ending with the latest research by Stephen Shoemaker. The article is based on the professor's paper presented at the "Lomonosov Conference" in Moscow on April 2, 2024. The unfinished sections have been finalized by the editors based on the professor's notes as well as the new outline of the article prepared by him just prior to his death. In this outline, published in the appendix to the article, Constantin Panchenko accords a special place to Stephen Shoemaker's monograph *The Death of a Prophet*. Shoemaker accepts Fred Donner's theory, according to which early Islam was a supra-confessional Abrahamic movement of "believers," which included not only the followers of Muḥammad but also numerous Jews and Christians. This movement had a pronounced eschatological orientation, which explains its focus on the conquest of Jerusalem. Only during the reign of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705) did the Muslims become a separate religious community, and the impetus was given to the formation of an Arabian Islam, isolated from other Abrahamic reli-

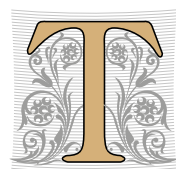
gions, with a center in Hijāz, rather than Palestine. It is in the works of the authors of the revisionist school and especially in Stephen Shoemaker's monograph *The Death of the Prophet* that Professor Panchenko found a scholarly paradigm based on which he hoped to forge a new consensus on the origins of Islam within the Russian academic community.

Keywords:

Origins of Islam, Modern Western Historiography, Qur'ānic Studies, Eschatology, Jerusalem

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The present article by Professor C.A. Panchenko is published here for the first time. It was the last project on which he worked during the final days of his life, though he did not live to complete it. The article is based on a paper with the same title, which Professor Panchenko presented on April 2, 2024, at the Institute of Asian and African Studies (Moscow State University) during the roundtable discussion “*The 7th Century as an ‘Axial Age’ of the Middle East: The Concept of the Birth of Islamic Civilization in Patricia Crone and Michael Cook’s “Hagarism” – Pros and Cons*” (“Lomonosov Readings”, subsection “*The Christian Orient*”). Professor Panchenko chaired both the subsection and the roundtable. In his opening remarks to the participants, he explained the reasons that had led him to propose for public discussion a topic seemingly unrelated to the Christian Orient:

“Today, we are focusing on the genesis of Muslim civilization and its interaction with surrounding peoples and cultures during the decisive decades of the new religion’s emergence. This was a liminal period when, it seems, the very course of history might have taken a different turn, if contingent events — such as the outcome of the Battle of Ṣiffin, which ‘Alī had nearly won, — had played out differently. Some of the colleagues objected that this topic did not fall within the purview of the Christian Orient. However, I believe that scholars of Middle Eastern Christianity must not confine themselves to narrow cultural frameworks. We must look to neighboring civilizations, especially considering that Islam determined the subsequent historical trajectory of the Christian Orient — and that Christians and other communities of the Middle East played a significant, perhaps even decisive, role in the formation of Arab-Muslim civilization. Indeed, the book around which our discussion is centered [Crone and Cook’s *Hagarism* — eds.]¹ is devoted largely to the interaction between the Hagarenes and the Syrians — an intercultural dialogue from which the civilization of classical Islam emerged. Having said that, the most radical and provocative part of the monograph is certainly the remaining quarter — specifically, the first 35 pages — which address the genesis of Islam and its first three generations head on...”².

Another reason on account of which Professor Panchenko proposed this topic for collective discussion was the evident neglect of modern Western scholarship on early Islam in contemporary Russian academia. In his words, the purpose of the roundtable was “to bring into scholarly discourse those uncomfortable questions posed by the “shakers of the foundations” Patricia Crone and Michael Cook”³. Here is what he said:

“We are gathered here to discuss a book published in 1977. At one point, I began to wonder whether we were making a mistake by focusing on Crone and Cook rather than on Fred Donner or Stephen Shoe-

¹ Crone P., Cook M. *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

² Audio recording of the roundtable “The 7th Century — the “Axial Time”...” April 2, 2024 // Archive of C.A. Panchenko.

³ Roundtable at the IAAS MSU on New Interpretations of the Birth of Islamic Civilization in Western Scholarship // Telegram channel Oriens Christianus, April 4, 2024.

maker. *Hagarism* is yesterday's news in European scholarship, though for us it is, at best, today's. The finest contribution currently available in Russian Islamic studies on early Islam remains Oleg Bolshakov's *History of the Caliphate*⁴. As you know, it is written with full confidence in the Arabic tradition and adheres closely to the views of medieval Muslim historiography. Bolshakov does acknowledge that the chronicles on which he relied are biased and possibly obscure or omit certain matters. However, his critical approach to sources is in no way comparable to the revisionist stance adopted by the aforementioned Western scholars. ... Over the past three decades, Russian scholarship has largely ignored these debates and continues to view early Islam through the eyes of [Jalāl al-Dīn] al-Suyūfī or Montgomery Watt. I see two explanations for this. One is fear — what earlier generations might have called “fear of the Hagarenes”. ... But science is sacred, and no ideology should influence academic inquiry. The last thing a scholar should worry about is offending someone. ... The second explanation for the rejection of revisionist approaches is the instinctive aversion to radical attempts at rewriting history. I confess that I too have sometimes had such a reaction when reading texts by authors who proclaim their predecessors to have been blind, and see themselves as discoverers of the “true” or “hidden” history. Such behavior is, by definition, characteristic of charlatans and amateurs. A true scholar must be free of exaltation and the naïve delight of a discoverer — he is already saturated with sources and more psychologically balanced. And yet, I think no one could accuse Crone and Cook of amateurism. Patricia Crone was 32 years old when *Hagarism* was published — an age well suited to revolutionary endeavors in scholarship. When I first read *Hagarism*, my response was not rejection but rather exhilaration at the authors' intellectual audacity and their capacity to read between the lines of well-known sources what others had failed to see. I wanted to share my reading experience with colleagues—and it is that wish that has ultimately led to our roundtable today”⁵.

⁴ *Большаков О.Г. История Халифата. М.: Восточная литература, 1998–2010. 4 т.*

⁵ Eight Russian scholars — Arabists and Byzantinists — spoke at the Roundtable. One participant expressed the view that Crone and Cook's book de-

Professor Panchenko's presentation was essentially a concise historiographical review of Western literature on the subject. He did not address the work of Stephen Shoemaker, as the latter's major contributions were covered by Fr. Alexander Treiger⁶. However, in preparing the text for publication, Professor Panchenko decided to supplement it with an analysis of Shoemaker's *The Death of a Prophet* (2012)⁷, Guy G. Stroumsa's essay "Jewish-Christians and Islamic Origins" (2015)⁸, and a fuller treatment of Fred Donner's publications. All he managed to do was to draft notes on these works and revise the article's structure accordingly⁹. On the eve of his passing, he remarked that he had finally finished reading Shoemaker and now knew exactly what the final version of the article should be.

In this publication, in addition to the author's late-stage revisions, we have included editorial summaries of the aforementioned works by Donner, Stroumsa, and Shoemaker, based on Professor Panchenko's notes. Editorial contributions are rendered in *italics*; minor insertions appear in [square brackets].

served translation into Russian, provided it is accompanied by scholarly commentary, including polemical in nature. Professor Panchenko supported the idea, noting that translating the first 35 pages — those dealing with the genesis of Islam — would suffice. In his summary, he emphasized: "... Most speakers were critical of the concepts of P. Crone and M. Cook, whose book was evidently an intellectual provocation that the academic community had to respond to. That response took place at yesterday's roundtable, which featured a lively and engaging discussion that, one would hope, has taken Russian Islamic studies a step further" (Round table at the IAAS of Moscow State University on new interpretations of the birth of Islamic civilization in Western scholarship // Telegram channel Oriens Christianus, April 4, 2024).

⁶ *Трейгер А. Палестиноцентричность раннего ислама: Гипотеза П. Кроне и М. Кука и ее развитие в исследованиях С. Шумейкера // Ломоносовские чтения. Москва, 2 апреля 2024 г. Доклад.*

⁷ *Shoemaker S.J. The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.*

⁸ *Stroumsa G.G. Jewish-Christians and Islamic Origins // The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Ch. 8. P. 139–158.*

⁹ See Appendix.



Constantin Panchenko's presentation at the roundtable discussion "The 7th Century as an 'Axial Age' of the Middle East: The Concept of the Birth of Islamic Civilization in Patricia Crone and Michael Cook's "Hagarism" – Pros and Cons", Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, April 2, 2024
From the archive of C.A. Panchenko

The 1970s revolution in Islamic studies

From their very inception, European Islamic studies have oscillated between trust and skepticism toward medieval Muslim historiography. A significant number of scholars accepted these texts as reliable sources on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad and the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs – despite the fact that the earliest surviving sources date only to the second half of the 8th and the 9th centuries. By the standards of historical inquiry, such material cannot serve as primary evidence for events of the 7th century. When Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī wrote about the Prophet's life, they were not describing what had actually happened, but rather what *ought* to have happened, based on the religious and political values of the 'Abbāsīd-era 'ulamā'. Certainly, 'Abbāsīd chroniclers drew upon earlier, now-lost works – traces of which can indeed be identified in extant Islamic historiography. But, to the best of our knowledge, the earliest of these lost, hypothesized proto-histories date to around the year 700. They could hardly have appeared earlier, due to the technical limitations of the early Arabic script, which had not yet been capable of conveying

complex meanings or expressing extended narratives. In other words, between the Hijra and the emergence of the first Muslim historians lies a gap of no less than 80 years — an intellectual space filled with competing versions of oral tradition.

Many of the revisionist ideas now gaining traction were first proposed in the 18th or 19th centuries. The hyper-critical approach to Islamic sources was already exemplified in the late 19th century by Ignác Goldziher (1850–1921), who demonstrated that the corpus of *ḥadīth* had been a product of later myth-making by various religious and political factions within the caliphate¹⁰. However, researchers at that time did not attempt to revise the broader historical narrative of the 7th century. It was only in the 1970s that a true breakthrough occurred, with the emergence of a number of alternative theories challenging the sanctified account of Islam’s origins¹¹.

The present article does not aim to provide an exhaustive review of the polemics surrounding these theories in contemporary Western Islamic studies — a task beyond the scope of a journal publication. Instead, it focuses on a few key figures and works.

Among the first monographs to launch the so-called “revisionist” trend in Islamic studies was *Über den Ur-Qur’ān* (1974)¹² by the German theologian and Semitist Günter Lüling (1928–2014). Lüling was the first to propose that the original Qur’ān was a composite text comprising several layers, including Christian hymns used liturgically

¹⁰ *Goldziher I. Muslim Studies* / Trans. C.R. Barber, S.M. Stern. Ed. S.M. Stern. London: Allen and Unwin, 1967–1971. 2 vols.

¹¹ *Donner F.M. The Qur’ān in Recent Scholarship: Challenges and Desiderata* // *The Qur’ān in Its Historical Context* / Ed. G.S. Reynolds. London: Routledge, 2008. P. 29–30.

¹² *Lüling G. Über den Ur-Qur’ān: Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion vorislamischer christlicher Strophenlieder im Qur’ān*. Erlangen: H. Lüling, 1974; Eng. trans.: *Lüling G. A Challenge to Islam for Reformation: The Rediscovery and Reliable Reconstruction of a Comprehensive pre-Islamic Christian Hymnal Hidden in the Koran under Earliest Islamic Reinterpretations*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003. See also: *Donner F.M. In Memoriam: Günter Lüling (1928–2014)* // *al-‘Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā*. 2017. Vol. 25. P. 229–234; *Gilliot C. Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qur’ān: Is the Qur’ān Partly the Fruit of a Progressive and Collective Work?* // *The Qur’ān in Its Historical Context* / Ed. G.S. Reynolds. London: Routledge, 2008. P. 88–108, esp. P. 96–97.

by a Judeo-Christian community in Mecca. He sought to identify and reconstruct these hymns — obscured by later Islamic reinterpretation — by drawing on scholarly methods developed for reconstructing early Christianity and Judaism. According to Lüling, the Qur’ānic text comprises four layers: the oldest stratum; Christian pre-Islamic (but later re-interpreted by Muslims) strophic hymns (which he believed made up nearly a third of the text); original Islamic material attributed to Muḥammad; and later editorial additions.

Another landmark in this revisionist trajectory was John Wansbrough’s *Quranic Studies* (1977)¹³, in which he argued that the Qur’ānic text had undergone a crystallization process lasting two centuries, and was finalized not in Arabia but in Iraq. Although Wansbrough’s provocative conclusion was rejected by almost all scholars, his work contained several important insights, the chief among them being the necessity of applying the critical methodologies of biblical studies to Qur’ānic scholarship¹⁴.

Yet the most influential contribution to this revisionist wave was undoubtedly *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (1977), co-authored by Patricia Crone (1945–2015) and Michael Cook (b. 1940)¹⁵. It is this work that warrants the most detailed examination.

Key theses of Hagarism by Patricia Crone and Michael Cook

The authors set aside the traditional Muslim historiographical narrative, deeming it both late and unreliable. Instead, they turn to authentic sources from the 7th and 8th centuries — predominantly non-Arabic due to the scarcity of early Arabic materials — including Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, and Armenian texts. The historical picture they reconstruct diverges significantly from the “canonical” version of the Arab-Muslim historiography.

¹³ Wansbrough J. *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

¹⁴ Adams C.J. *Reflections on the Work of John Wansbrough // Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*. 1997. Vol. 9. P. 78–81.

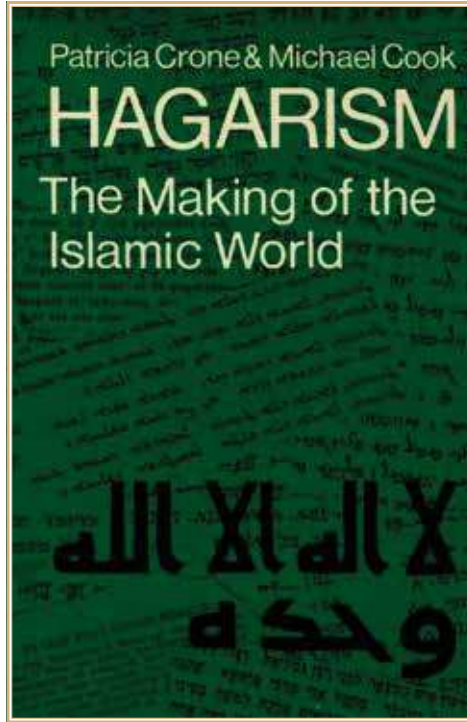
¹⁵ Crone P., Cook M. *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Crone and Cook begin by exploring the Jewish influence on the origins of Islam — a theme long present in scholarly discourse, dating back to the 7th-century Armenian chronicler Sebeos¹⁶, and later developed by the 19th-century Islamicist Abraham Geiger (1810–1874)¹⁷. Second Temple Judaism, much like Christianity or Manichaeism, had initially been a proselytizing religion with genuine potential to evolve into a global religion and civilization. However, the failure of Jewish revolts against Rome curtailed these ambitions. Rabbinic Judaism subsequently became insular, focusing on survival within the Roman imperial order. With the Christianization of the Empire, tensions between the two monotheistic faiths intensified, culminating by the early 7th century in open antagonism — reflected, for instance, in Byzantine anti-Jewish polemics, the stance of Jews and Samaritans during the Persian conquests of the Near East, and a surge in apocalyptic literature within Jewish circles. Drawing upon Christian sources and Jewish apocalyptic writings that initially viewed the Arab conquests in a positive light, Crone and Cook argue that a group of Jewish scribes in Arabia instilled in Muḥammad the idea that he was the successor to the prophetic mission of Moses, tasked with restoring the faith of Abraham. This marked the emergence of a primitive Arab monotheism, which the authors refer to as “Hagarism”¹⁸. Added to this was the

¹⁶ Себеос. История императора Иракла: Сочинение епископа Себеоса, писателя VII века. СПб, 1862. Ч. 30. С. 115–117; see also: *Hoyland R. Sebeos, the Jews and the Rise of Islam // Medieval and Modern Perspectives on Muslim-Jewish Relations / Ed. R.L. Nettle. Luxembourg, 1995. P. 89–102; Shoemaker S.J. A Prophet Has Appeared. The Rise of Islam through Christian and Jewish Eyes: A Sourcebook. Oakland: University of California Press, 2021. P. 62–72. According to this source, Arabs and Jews were united by their belief in a common Abrahamic origin, their rightful claim to the land promised to Abraham’s heirs, and their duty to liberate Palestine from the Christians (Romans) who had seized it unlawfully. Eds.*

¹⁷ *Geiger A. Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen: Eine von der Königl. Preussischen Rheinuniversität gekrönte Preisschrift. Bonn: F. Baaden, 1833; Eng. trans.: Geiger A. Judaism and Islam / Trans. F.M. Young. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970. Eds.*

¹⁸ The earliest Christian and Jewish sources on the rise of Islam have been translated and analyzed by Shoemaker in the anthology *A Prophet Has Appeared*. These are essentially the same texts referenced by Crone and Cook in *Hagarism*, as well as by Shoemaker himself in earlier works: *Doctrina Iacobi*,



Patricia Crone and Michael Cook: *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (1977)

messianic mission of the new prophet: like Moses, he was to lead his people to the Promised Land and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. According to the authors, this idea provided both the impetus and the direction to the Arab conquests¹⁹.

This Judeo-Hagarene symbiosis proved short-lived, ending shortly after the capture of Jerusalem. Referring again to Sebeos, Crone and Cook suggest a rupture occurred when Caliph ‘Umar erected

the Armenian chronicle of Sebeos, excerpts from St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, the Syriac *Khuzistan Chronicle*, and several others. The anthology also includes some lesser-known texts, such as a passage from the Georgian translation of *The Spiritual Meadow* by St. John Moschus. Each chapter begins with a short introduction in which Shoemaker offers an overview of the text, its dating, etc., followed by translated excerpts. Although not explicitly stated, in most cases — if not all — the translations are Shoemaker’s own (he is proficient in Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Latin, Armenian, and Georgian). At the end of each chapter, Shoemaker provides a detailed analysis of the text’s relevance to formative Islam, revealing new insights and discrepancies (if any) between these sources and the traditional Muslim historical paradigm. Eds.

¹⁹ Crone P., Cook M. *Hagarism*. P. 3–9.

a Hagarene mosque on the Temple Mount instead of rebuilding the Jewish Temple. Hagarism subsequently entered a phase of transformation, seeking to break free from its dependence on Judaism and to acquire the attributes of an autonomous religion. Through an appeal to the faith of Abraham, not only was monotheism presented as ancestral heritage, but the religious practices of Arab forefathers were also reinterpreted as monotheistic. This paved the way for a strong component of Arab ethnic identity to be integrated into Islam²⁰.

Christianity, too, had once sought to differentiate itself from Judaism, and this historical experience, it seems, intrigued the early Hagarenes. One may recall Mu‘āwiya’s prayer on Golgotha or the theological debates between Maronites and Jacobites at his court²¹. Nevertheless, the adoption of Christian elements was ideologically and politically unpalatable. Instead, Crone and Cook point to Samaritanism — another Abrahamic religion that had diverged from Judaism and was politically innocuous — as a more plausible source of influence. They argue that during the subsequent decades, the Hagarenes borrowed extensively from Samaritan doctrines as they constructed their distinct religious identity.

A central development in this process was the elevation of Muḥammad’s prophetic status. He was no longer seen merely as a restorer of monotheism and the ancient faith of Abraham, but, through a process of “nationalization of prophecy” (as the authors term it), was increasingly portrayed as a figure akin to Moses. This is evident in the Qur’ānic prominence of the prophet Mūsā, the narrative of the Exodus (mirrored in the Hijra), and the divine revelation delivered [to Muḥammad] on a holy mountain²². Just as the Samaritans distanced themselves from the Jerusalem cult and founded a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, so too did Islam establish Mecca as its sacred center. In both religions, pilgrimage patterns developed involving movement

²⁰ Ibid. P. 10–14.

²¹ See: Панченко К.А. Омейяды // Православная энциклопедия. М., 2018. Т. 52. P. 679. Eds.

²² This refers to Jabal al-Nūr near Mecca, where the cave of Hira’ is located — the site of Muḥammad’s first revelation, according to Islamic tradition. Crone and Cook suggest that both Jabal al-Nūr and Mount ‘Arafāt (the site of a key ritual of the Ḥajj) were influenced by Mount Sinai. Eds.

from a holy city to a sacred mountain. The Israelites' wait for Moses at Mount Sinai finds echoes in the Samaritan pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim and the Muslim standing at Mount 'Arafāt²³.

In this regard, the authors advance the hypothesis that Mecca did not immediately become the sacred center of Islam. They posit the existence of an earlier Hagarene sanctuary in northern Ḥijāz, identified in the Qur'ān as Bakka (let us note that the name "Mecca" appears only once in the Qur'ān, without clear indication of its cultic centrality)²⁴. This now-forgotten sanctuary — not Jerusalem — may have been the original *qibla* [direction of prayer]. Supporting this theory are early records suggesting that the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ in Fuṣṭāṭ and some early Iraqi mosques built under al-Ḥajjāj in the early 8th century were oriented in that direction²⁵.

With the relocation of the holy place to Mecca, the narrative of Exodus was reinterpreted. The conquest of the Promised Land gave way to the Prophet's flight from Mecca to Yathrib [later Medina], and the Jewish collaborators in the Palestinian campaign were recast as the Anṣār of Yathrib. Muḥammad's expulsion of the Jewish tribes from Medina is seen as a reflection of the post-Jerusalem rupture between the Hagarenes and the Jews²⁶.

A central issue, of course, is the canonization of the Holy Writ of the new religion. The Hagarenes had long resisted written scripture, favoring oral tradition. According to Crone and Cook, the final redaction of the Qur'ān occurred only during the reign of Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705), under the supervision of his Iraqi governor al-Ḥajjāj and his circle. The compilation process was evidently hasty and derivative, drawing from heterogeneous sources, resulting [according to the authors] in textual features such as unnecessary repetitions, contradictory verses, and fragmented phrases—elements that later commentators struggled to rationalize²⁷.

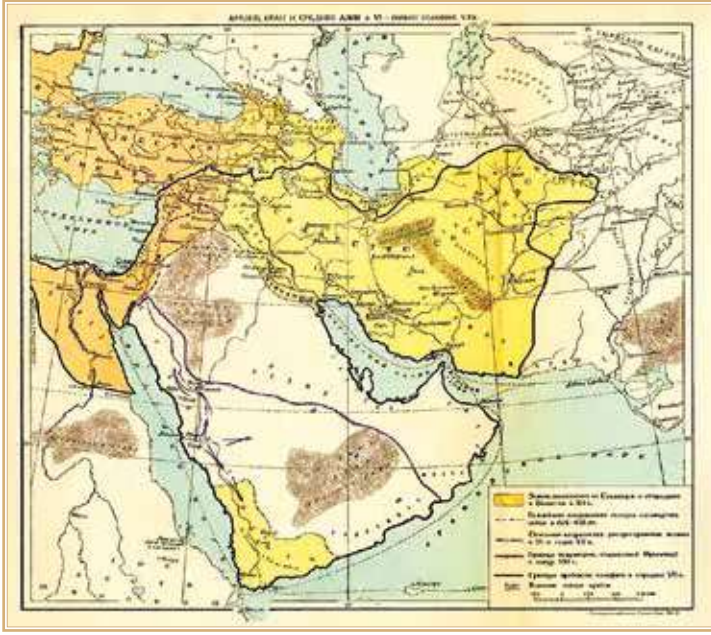
²³ Crone P., Cook M. Hagarism. P. 11–19, 25–26.

²⁴ Bakka: Qur'ān 3:96; Mecca: Qur'ān 48:24. Thus, Crone and Cook reject the traditional Islamic exegetical identification of Bakka and Mecca. Eds.

²⁵ Crone P., Cook M. Hagarism. P. 21–24.

²⁶ Ibid. P. 24–25.

²⁷ Ibid. P. 17–18.



The Arab conquests of the first half of the 7th century
Photo in public domain

Another possible borrowing from Samaritanism involved the sacralization of authority. Among the Samaritans, spiritual authority was hereditary, vested in the descendants of Aaron, who were viewed as bearers of esoteric knowledge and divine grace. The Muslim imamate, according to the authors, was modeled on this sacerdotal system — a theocratic structure where legitimate rule was based on both religious knowledge and sacred genealogy. This model is most evident among the ‘Alids (with Shi‘ī theologians noting the parallel between ‘Alī’s relationship to Muḥammad and that of Aaron to Moses). However, the idea of pontifical rule did not take root in [other forms of] Islam: Sunnīs did not attribute divine charisma to the caliph. Instead, supreme religious authority came to be vested in the *‘ulamā’*, a class of lay scholars whose legitimacy derived from formal education rather than lineage. The authors draw an explicit analogy between this group and the rabbinic tradition, frequently referring to the *‘ulamā’* as “rab-bis” and arguing that the institutionalization of this clerical class had occurred in ‘Abbāsīd Iraq, under the influence of Babylonian Judaism. Thus, Jewish influence re-entered the Hagarene religion after a long pause. In the same milieu, the Jewish messianic figure reemerged in



Slide from a presentation by Professor Panchenko, delivered at a roundtable during the Lomonosov Readings (Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, April 2, 2024)
From the archive of C.A. Panchenko

Iraq in the guise of the Muslim Mahdī — a political leader and savior modeled not on the Christian Christ, but on his Jewish counterpart²⁸.

Thus, the evolution of Islam can be divided into several key stages: an initial phase of Jewish messianism, centered on reclaiming the Palestinian heritage; followed by a Samaritan phase, in which the high priest replaces the messiah, and the Abrahamic sanctuary in Arabia supersedes Jerusalem. However, unlike Samaritanism, Islam ultimately severed the link between the high priest and the sanctuary: political exigency dictated that the seat of power be located on conquered territory²⁹.

The authors situate the emergence of recognizably Islamic forms during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik, at the turn of the 7th–8th centuries. Numismatic, architectural, and documentary evidence from this period reflects a new and confident religious identity. The reconstruction of holy places, disputes concerning the Mahdī and the imamate, and the birth of Islamic theology all belong to this transformative era. Yet what Crone and Cook describe as the “rabbinic tradition” in Islam (the institutionalization of the *‘ulamā*) and the formation of Islamic

²⁸ Ibid. P. 26–28.

²⁹ Ibid. P. 32.



Siege of a city by the Arabs.
 Miniature from the Madrid Skylitzes. 11th century.
Madrid National Library, MS Graecus Vitr. 26–2. Fol. 214 r.

law, emerged only in the subsequent classical phase, centered in Babylonia following the ‘Abbāsīd transfer of the capital to Baghdad³⁰.

The authors convey their ideas, *inter alia*, through striking metaphors. According to them, the transfer of the high priesthood [i.e., the Caliphate] to Iraq by the ‘Abbāsīds marked a further degradation of this institution, moving it toward becoming an exilarchate (drawing parallels with the Jewish “princes in exile”). Even the ‘Alids were taken from their “religious metropolis” (the holy cities of the Ḥijāz) into a kind of “Babylonian captivity”. The religious odyssey of Hagarism both began and ended with Judaism, discarding along the way the Samaritan-type holy place in Arabia and the Samaritan high priesthood in Syria (i.e., the Umayyad Caliphate). The atonement-based Judaism of Palestine gave way to the academic Judaism of Babylonia. The Hagarenes rejected the messiah—only to end up with an exilarch³¹.

All these ideas — the most important and controversial in the work of Patricia Crone and Michael Cook — constitute only the first quarter of the book. The remaining part is devoted to the historical fate of the peoples of the Near East and North Africa who were conquered by the Arabs and incorporated into the Caliphate. It examines models

³⁰ Ibid. P. 29–30.

³¹ Ibid. P. 32–33.

of their identity and the reasons for the weakness of these identities³², which made possible the subsequent Islamization and assimilation of the region's peoples — especially those of Greater Syria — and their contribution to the formation of the Arab-Muslim civilization.

Crone and Cook pose the age-old question of why the Caliphate did not follow the path of the barbarian kingdoms of the West, which assimilated into the framework of Christian civilization. The authors seek the answer to this question, among other factors, in the fact that during the first hundred years, the center of Islamic civilization — still malleable and unstable — was located in Syria, among a people who lacked a strong identity of their own and who, being unable to assimilate the conquerors, nevertheless enriched them with elements of classical culture (detached from their original context and reworked)³³.

Hagarism is written in vivid, metaphor-rich language, full of allusions. For example, at one point it claims that “Enkidu had once been seduced by a temple prostitute to [quit] his wilderness for civilisation; and for all its costs, the civilisation of Sumeria had been worth it. ... But by the seventh century after Christ the temples had been denuded of their prostitutes: it was monotheism that seduced the Arabs into leaving their wilderness, and the civilisation of Syria had lost its power to seduce”³⁴. The presentation is highly compressed and difficult to understand, requiring extensive commentary. In constructing bold, striking generalizations and contrasts, the authors, of course, cannot avoid numerous small factual errors. The question is whether these factual inaccuracies undermine the value of their broader generalizations.

As a specialist in the Christian Orient, I cannot ignore the authors' treatment of the Syrians. I am sympathetic to their claim that there was no unified Syrian ethnos, but rather a conglomerate of ethnic groups speaking Aramaic dialects and possessing various forms of self-identification. However, their assertion that the strongest identity among these groups belonged to the inhabitants of Adiabene, descendants of the Assyrians³⁵, seems rather unconvincing. There is no evidence

³² Ibid. P. 41–72.

³³ Ibid. P. 73–106.

³⁴ Ibid. P. 106.

³⁵ Ibid. P. 55–64.

that medieval East-Syriacs retained any memory of their pre-Christian past. The ancient Assyrians were seen only through the extremely negative lens of biblical narratives. Crone and Cook contrast the revival of Assyrian identity among modern Nestorians and Chaldeans with the Arab nationalism of Christian Syrians, who had abandoned their Aramaic roots and came to identify themselves as Arabs³⁶. However, this argument is problematic for at least two reasons: first, the Assyrian national idea is an artificial construct, largely shaped by Europeans, which replaced the traditional religious self-identification of East-Syriacs; second, among Arabophone Maronites of Greater Syria, one finds a parallel ideology of Phoenicianism, which likewise posits a non-Arab origin for its adherents.

Robert Hoyland: Seeing Islam as Others Saw It

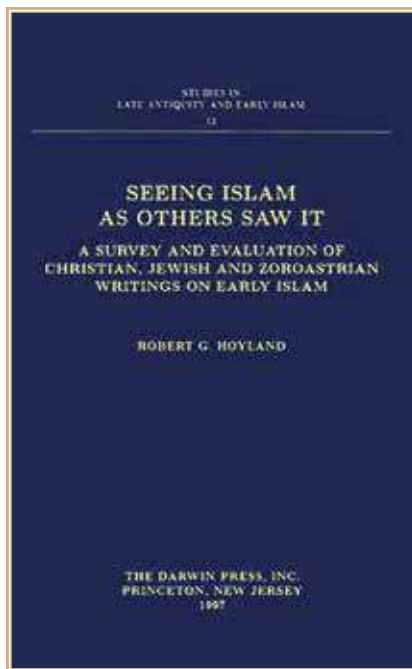
The so-called “revolutionary” books of the 1970s did not cause a major stir. Lüling’s work written in German faced a “conspiracy of silence” even within Germany, while the other two (Wansbrough’s monograph and the joint study by Crone and Cook), although written in English, were highly challenging to read³⁷. Nevertheless, these publications catalyzed a noticeable shift within Western Arabic and Islamic studies, provoking skepticism and debate that led to new approaches to the study of early Islam. In this context, Robert Hoyland’s 1997 monograph *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* stands out as a significant contribution³⁸. This nearly 900-page work presents a comprehensive view of early Islam based on non-Muslim sources — Christian, Jewish, and others — from the first centuries after the Hijra.

The critics of such an approach have argued that external observers could not possibly understand Islam better than its own adherents and inevitably interpreted it through the conceptual categories fa-

³⁶ Ibid. P. 87, 90–91.

³⁷ Donner F.M. The Qur’ān in Recent Scholarship. P. 30.

³⁸ Hoyland R.G. *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam.* Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997.



Robert Hoyland's *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (1997)

miliar to them, leading to distortion. In one of his later publications, Hoyland responded that contemporary Christian authors had written either from personal observation or based on direct communication with Muslims. Their accounts are generally precisely datable — something that cannot be said of the traditional Islamic historiographical material. Moreover, Christian authors of the 7th–8th centuries may have recorded stages in the evolution of Muslim doctrine that were, whether intentionally or not, omitted or forgotten by later Muslim theologians and chroniclers. Finally, one should not underestimate the extent of cultural contact and multifaceted interaction in the multiethnic society that was the caliphate, nor the level of interreligious knowledge that existed among its various religious communities³⁹.

Concluding his monumental study, Hoyland observes that while we have substantial evidence for the development of Muslim thought in the first half of the 8th century, there is a complete lack of data concerning the nature of Islam in the first century of the Hijra. Non-Mus-

³⁹ Hoyland R.G. *The Earliest Christian Writings on Muhammad: An Appraisal // The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources* / Ed. H. Motzki. Leiden: Brill, 2000. P. 276–295, esp P. 289–293.

lim sources (from as early as the 640s) provide a relatively clear picture of the religious practices of the Arab conquerors — practices that clearly distinguished them from other monotheistic traditions.

Yet prior to 72 AH (692 CE, the year the Dome of the Rock was constructed in Jerusalem), archaeological evidence is strangely silent regarding both Islam and the Qur’ān. Qur’ānic quotations and the name of Muḥammad appear in inscriptions rather suddenly. This abrupt emergence gives the impression that the Qur’ān likewise acquired canonical status suddenly and simultaneously. Had it circulated for an extended period in an uncanonized form, it would inevitably have undergone textual revision and substitution of obscure terms and concepts with clearer ones⁴⁰.

The earliest explicit Islamic formulas in coinage (*bismillāh* [“In the name of God”] and *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* [“Muhammad is the Messenger of God”]) appear in the 680s and, notably, do not originate from the Umayyads, but from the governors of Fārs appointed by the anti-caliph ‘Abdallāh ibn al-Zubayr (r. 683–692). The period of the Second Fitna in general produced many prominent religious figures who opposed the Umayyads: the enigmatic Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyya, the prophetic claimant Mukhtār ibn Abī ‘Ubayd and his devoted followers, as well as the Khārijite leader Qaṭarī ibn al-Fujā’a, who minted coins bearing the slogan “There is no rule other than God’s”. The collective presence of these figures, the total absence of Islamic declarations from the Sufyānid Umayyads (661–684), and, in contrast, their sudden proliferation under ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705) and his successors, suggest a strategic co-optation of religious slogans. The pressure from rebellious factions appears to have pushed ‘Abd al-Malik to adopt Islam demonstratively as the ideological foundation of the state⁴¹.

Hoyland also addresses the topic of the early Islamic *qibla* orientation, previously discussed by Crone and Cook. The change in direction from Jerusalem to Mecca is acknowledged in the Qur’ān; medieval commentators differed only in estimating [the duration of] the former practice. The earliest mosques in Kūfa were oriented westward, while in

⁴⁰ Hoyland R.G. Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. P. 545–550.

⁴¹ Ibid. P. 550–554.



A gold dinar of ‘Abd al-Malik. Syria, Damascus, 696/697.
 The shahāda in Arabic surrounds the figure of the caliph.
The British Museum

Fuṣṭāṭ they faced east. Only under caliphs ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd I (r. 705–715) were these mosques rebuilt and more precisely reoriented toward Mecca. Early Muslim leaders, when constructing mosques, settled for approximate orientation and did not engage in complex astronomical or mathematical calculations. However, beginning with ‘Abd al-Malik, the orientation of at least congregational mosques gained more attention, and by the end of the 8th century, determining the *qibla* from any location became a central task for Muslim astronomers⁴².

This raises the broader question: What was the religio-political nature of the caliphate before the Marwānid period? Hoyland traces its origins to Muḥammad’s so-called “Constitution of Medina”, which declared a commonwealth of people of various faiths under Muḥammad’s leadership for the purpose of *jihād* in God’s name⁴³. The early caliphate, in Hoyland’s view, was precisely this: a *jihād*-state, a coalition of warriors from different religious backgrounds engaged in religiously motivated military expansion. Consider, for instance, the participation of Arab Christian tribes in the Muslim conquests and their privileged status under the Umayyads. At this stage, the Qur’ān held significance only for Muslims and did not yet function as a universal

⁴² Ibid. P. 560–573.

⁴³ See: Lecker M. The “Constitution of Medina”: Muḥammad’s First Legal Document. Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004. Eds.

legal code. It was only under ‘Abd al-Malik that Islam was elevated to the status of state religion. Hoyland argues that the early caliphate — prior to ‘Abd al-Malik — was typologically closer to pre-Islamic Arab kingdoms such as those of the Ghassānids and Lakhmids than to what was later established by the (late) Umayyads⁴⁴.

Fred Donner: Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam

This section consists of excerpts from several works by Constantin Panchenko, supplemented with selected ideas from Fred Donner that are not documented in the professor’s notes but are found in Donner’s review of Robert Hoyland’s book In God’s Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire, for which no summary by the professor has been found⁴⁵. The excerpts were selected in accordance with Professor Panchenko’s instructions as part of the revised plan for the article: “Donner — on al-mu’minūn. See Donner’s review [of Hoyland’s] In God’s Path, 2015”. No conclusions are provided. The author’s notetaking style has been preserved (with minimal editing). References have been compiled by the editors.

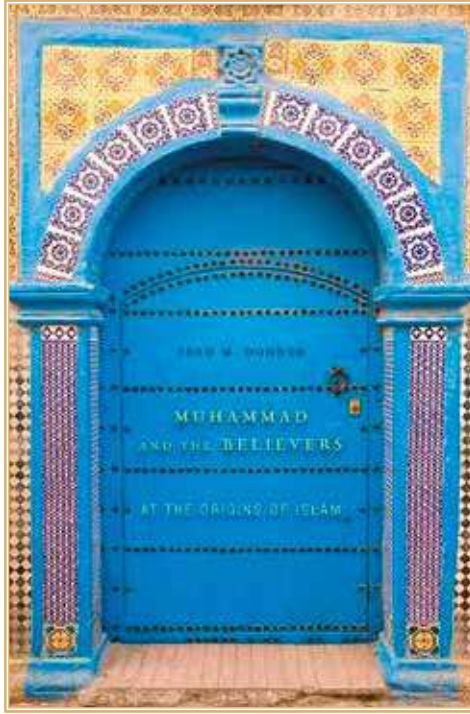
In early Islam, there is a marked absence of historical consciousness — a distinctly ahistorical perspective. The primitive Muslim tradition made no attempt to preserve the chronology of Muḥammad’s prophetic career⁴⁶. Only in the late 1st century AH do we find signs of a “historicizing impulse”⁴⁷, a tentative effort to structure the chaotic body of traditions chronologically. Dating by the Hijra appears in official documents from the 20s–30s AH. Al-Zuhrī was the first to establish a relative chronology of events; Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī later

⁴⁴ Hoyland R.G. Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. P. 554–559.

⁴⁵ Donner F.M. Review of: Hoyland R. In God’s Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015 // al-‘Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā. 2015. Vol. 23. P. 134–140.

⁴⁶ Donner F.M. Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010. P. 51–52.

⁴⁷ Donner F.M. Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing. Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998. P. 231.



Fred Donner's *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (2010)

supplemented it⁴⁸. Early Muslims were not interested in history, possibly due to eschatological expectations.

Donner challenges the notion that early Islamic history was falsified. He argues that the foundational narrative of Islam's origins is accepted by all Muslim sects, despite their theological divergences⁴⁹. This implies that the basic circumstances surrounding the birth of Islam were preserved accurately. Furthermore, who could have falsified them without leaving any trace of the original tradition? Later copyists likely did not intentionally distort the past or seek to erase it; rather, they assumed that the truth commonly accepted in their own era must have reflected the beliefs of the earliest Muslims⁵⁰. No external party deliberately fabricated the core ideas. Rather, the beliefs and experiences of the early community evolved over time, reshaping the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 26–28.

⁵⁰ Donner F.M. *From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-Identity in the Early Islamic Community* // *Al-Abḥāth*. 2002–2003. Vol. 50–51. P. 9–53, esp. P. 39.

narrative about Muḥammad. Collective memory, as Donner notes, naturally changes over time.

Donner puts forward the theory that the original movement was a confederation of Abrahamic communities who believed in the imminent Day of Judgment and sought to establish divine justice on earth. Muḥammad's movement was not a distinct religious confession, but rather a monotheistic reform emphasizing piety shared across the Abrahamic faiths: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and ritual purity⁵¹. Different communities may have had their own scriptures; thus, Christian and Jewish texts coexisted alongside Muḥammad's proclamations. The Qur'ān itself preserves traces of this interconfessional nature of the community of "believers"⁵². The "People of the Book" are repeatedly counted among the "believers". At the same time, the Qur'ān contains polemics against the Trinity. [The anti-Christian verses of the Qur'ān would seem to preclude any Christian participation in Muḥammad's early movement.] Donner attempts to explain this by suggesting that early Muslims had limited knowledge of the Qur'ān before its codification and [thus its influence was minimal]⁵³. Jewish involvement in Muḥammad's religious movement is documented in Islamic sources. In the *Constitution of Medina* (which Donner refers to as the *Umma Document*), [certain Jewish groups were granted full membership in the community; they were allowed to maintain their beliefs and customs]. Not all "People of the Book" within these communities were "believers"; there were also unbelievers among them. Thus, the community of "believers" lacked clearly defined confessional boundaries.

Muḥammad served as an arbiter within this interconfessional community, all members of which were destined for salvation⁵⁴. (7th-century Syriac sources do not portray Muḥammad as a prophet but rather as a leader or king.) The first caliphs presented themselves as leaders

⁵¹ Donner F.M. *From Believers to Muslims*. P. 10–11; Donner F.M. *Muhammad and the Believers*. P. 61–69; 87.

⁵² Donner F.M. *From Believers to Muslims*. P. 19.

⁵³ Donner F.M. *From Believers to Muslims*. P. 26–27; Donner F.M. *Muhammad and the Believers*. P. 77.

⁵⁴ Donner F.M. *From Believers to Muslims*. P. 17–24; Donner F.M. *Muhammad and the Believers*. P. 69–71, 74–77, 111–112.

of all their subjects, regardless of religious affiliation. This religious pluralism explains why no claims were made to an exclusive Islamic leadership, and why heads of state adopted neutral titles such as *amīr al-mu'minīn* (“Commander of the Believers”), positioning themselves as the ultimate arbiters for subjects of all confessions. Donner [emphasizes that the members of the early community did not refer to themselves as “Muslims” until around 700 CE]. He proposes that the term *al-mu'minūn*, “the believers”, in the 7th century referred to followers of monotheistic religions more broadly, and only later came to designate Muslims exclusively.

[Thus, this was a supranational movement. Donner writes that there is not a single inscription, papyrus document, or coin issued by the conquerors in the 7th century that referred to themselves as Arabs. (Such usage only appears in later Islamic chronicles.) To describe this movement as an “Arab conquest” is therefore deeply misleading, as it imposes modern nationalist terminology onto the distant past. The idea that Arab ethnogenesis was taking place at the time seems doubtful. Donner concludes that there is good reason to believe that the conquests were in fact driven by a religious (if not yet explicitly “Islamic”) impulse — i.e., by the movement of the *al-mu'minūn*⁵⁵.]

[Reasons for Jewish and Christian support of the new religious movement:] The Byzantine catastrophe of 614 CE⁵⁶ stimulated eschatological expectations among both Christians and Jews. Long dormant at the margins of religious consciousness, these expectations surged during this period of upheaval⁵⁷. There was widespread anticipation of the End Times. Early Islam was perceived by some as a kind of Jewish messianic movement, and Jewish eschatological hopes are traceable within the early Islamic community. For example, the caliph 'Umar's epithet *al-Fārūq* (“savior”) was likely given

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ In 614, the Byzantine Empire suffered a defeat by the Sasanids; Iranian troops captured Jerusalem. Eds.

⁵⁷ Donner F.M. *The Background to Islam // The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* / Ed. M. Maas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. P. 510–533. On 7th-century messianism, see: Stroumsa G.G. *False Prophet and False Messiah // The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Ch. 4. P. 72–85.

to him by the Jewish segment of the “believers”; they also promoted messianic ideas.

Donner notes Muḥammad’s strong and consistent interest in the territories to the north of Arabia. This is explained by eschatological expectations and Jerusalem’s role in apocalyptic drama as the site of the Last Judgment. According to Christian tradition, it is in Jerusalem that the “Last Emperor” will return worldly power to God⁵⁸. Muḥammad’s eschatological preaching was a key driver of the Arab conquests, which thus appear in a very different light. Donner reinterprets them as the “expansion of the authority of the believers”. Had the movement possessed a [unified, codified] religious doctrine and sought to impose it, it would likely have met with staunch resistance. But it was primarily a political expansion, demanding only the payment of taxes. [Its religious component was limited to a message of piety acceptable to all Abrahamic communities]—belief in the Oneness of God and in the Day of Judgment⁵⁹. The “believers” were not aiming to create a powerful empire to rival Rome, but rather to achieve salvation through piety and the destruction of impious political regimes⁶⁰. Their program resembled an effort to establish the “Kingdom of God on earth”⁶¹.

It was precisely the interconfessional nature of the “believer” community that explains the astonishing success of the Islamic conquests⁶² — their nonviolent character and the lack of substantial resistance. Later Muslim tradition (e.g., the anti-Jewish tone of the *Sīra* [the prophetic biography]) sought to obscure the absence of clear confessional boundaries within the community of “believers”. [Only later, presumably in the third quarter of the 1st century AH (ca. 670–690 CE), did the interconfessional community of *al-mu’minūn* reconceptualize itself as specifically Muslim, defining itself in opposition to Jews and Christians. How this transformation occurred remains a subject requiring further study⁶³.]

⁵⁸ Donner F.M. Muhammad and the Believers. P. 50, 81–82, 96–97, 125, 143–44.

⁵⁹ Ibid. P. 108–110.

⁶⁰ Ibid. P. XII, 80–82.

⁶¹ Ibid. P. 85.

⁶² Donner F.M. From Believers to Muslims. P. 50–51.

⁶³ Ibid. P. 12, 52.

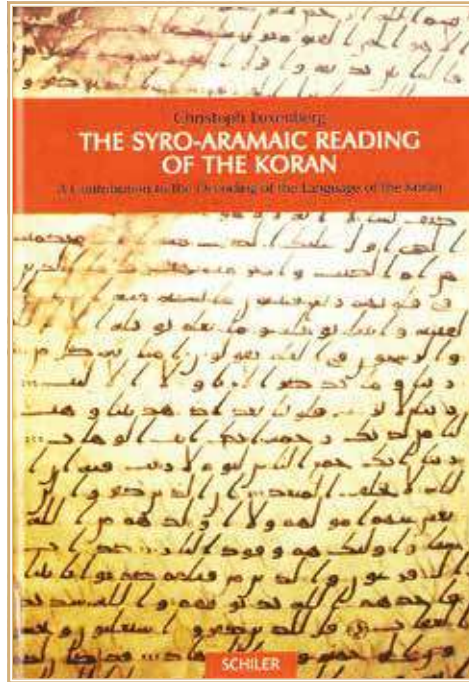
The main article continues below.

Christoph Luxenberg and Qur'ānic studies in the early 21st century

A notable development in contemporary Islamic studies was the publication of the controversial book by Christoph Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran* (2000)⁶⁴. According to some scholars, the book was not significantly more revolutionary than earlier works mentioned above; in essence, Luxenberg adopted the approach of Lüling, albeit in a more systematic fashion. He developed the hypothesis that many Qur'ānic passages had originally been composed in Syriac – the state language of the Umayyad Caliphate during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik – and that these passages can only be properly understood when read in Syriac, which often requires amending the Arabic text. Luxenberg identified 75 such obscure passages in the Qur'ān and devised a multi-layered methodology for their interpretation. Among the most provocative of his hypotheses were the claims of an Aramaic proto-Qur'ān and the suggestion that the Meccans had spoken a mixed Syro-Arabic dialect.

Many of Luxenberg's interpretations were criticized as arbitrary and unconvincing, and were met with sharp scholarly opposition. Nevertheless, a segment of the academic community argued that it would be inappropriate to focus solely on the book's weaker examples; instead, all the Syriac loanwords identified by Luxenberg should be subjected to critical scrutiny. In principle, it is not implausible to suggest a significant Syriac influence on Arabic vocabulary, given the Arabs' sustained contact with Aramaic-speaking communities – both Christian and Jewish – and their limited native lexicon for expressing abstract metaphysical concepts and religious practices. Indeed, bilingual Arabic-Aramaic epigraphic inscriptions are known, lending

⁶⁴ Luxenberg C. (ps.). *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*. Berlin, 2000; Eng. trans.: Luxenberg C. (ps.). *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran. A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran*. Berlin, 2007.



Christoph Luxenberg's *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran* (2000)

plausibility to the idea of Syriac elements embedded in the Arabic Qur'ānic text⁶⁵.

The main weakness of Luxenberg's theory lies in its strictly philological orientation; the scholar made no attempt to place the Qur'ān's evolution within a broader historical context. Nevertheless, his book gained wide notoriety and elicited strong negative reactions from Muslim audiences, posing a potential threat to its author. Personally, I find the book's fame difficult to comprehend, as its appeal is quite limited: it delves into highly technical linguistic material that is inaccessible without proficiency not only in Arabic but also in Aramaic.

Professor Panchenko had intended to revise this section. In the margins of the draft, he noted: "critique of revisionists, including from anti-Orientalist positions". The following section, Issues in Qur'ānic Stud-

⁶⁵ Donner F.M. *The Qur'ān in Recent Scholarship*. P. 33–34, 37–40; Baasten M.F.J. Review of: Luxenberg C. (ps.). *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*. Berlin, 2000 // *Aramaic Studies*. 2004. Vol. 2.2. P. 268–272. [See also: Jeffery A. *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān*. Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938. Eds.]

ies, was to include an analysis of Fred Donner's article *The Qur'ān in Recent Scholarship*⁶⁶, and Gilliot's *Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qur'ān*⁶⁷. He also planned to discuss methodologies for studying *Christianity and Judaism in the context of Islam*. Unfortunately, the professor did not live to complete these revisions, though he recorded several important ideas in his notes⁶⁸.

Guy Stroumsa: external influences on Islam

*Professor Panchenko managed to summarize Guy Stroumsa's essay "Jewish-Christians and Islamic Origins" from his monograph The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity (2015)*⁶⁹. Below we publish excerpts from the professor's notes. Authorial emphases have been rendered in **bold italics**. The original notetaking style has been preserved, with minimal editorial intervention. The footnotes and references have been added by the editors.

Hypotheses regarding the origins of Islam:

Over [the past 200 years], the search for *the roots* of Islam has oscillated between two *main paradigms*:

Judaism (Abraham Geiger, 1833)⁷⁰, followed primarily by Jewish scholars well-versed in the Rabbinic tradition;

[Christianity] (Theodor Nöldeke, who sought Christian sources for Islam; [his student Tor Andrae emphasized] the importance of con-

⁶⁶ Donner F.M. *The Qur'ān in Recent Scholarship*.

⁶⁷ Gilliot C. *Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qur'ān*.

⁶⁸ First note: "F. Donner's view: ... the Qur'ān (7th c.) predates the *hadīths*, most of which appeared after the 1st century AH". (Donner holds to the traditional view of the Qur'ān's formation and attributes its content to Muhammad. He believes the Qur'ān was compiled soon after Muḥammad's death and codified no later than the First Fitna [656–661]). Second note: "Claude Gilliot: the Qur'ān is a collective work. Particularly [important is] the role of Muḥammad's "informants"".

⁶⁹ Stroumsa G.G. *Jewish-Christians and Islamic Origins // The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Ch. 8. P. 139–158.

⁷⁰ Geiger A. *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen*; Geiger A. *Judaism and Islam*.

sidering alternative forms of Christianity, [especially Judeo-Christianity]⁷¹. Today, scholars such as Lüling and Luxenberg, following in this vein, look for Qur’ānic sources in Syriac Christian hymns (Arian, according to Lüling).

The topic of Gnosticism and Judeo-Christianity has become increasingly relevant. Key figures [include] theologian and historian of early Christianity Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930)⁷², Ernest Renan (1823–1892), and Daniel Chwolson (1819–1911)⁷³. Later contributions came from Adolf Schlatter (1918)⁷⁴, Hans-Joachim Schoeps (1909–1980)⁷⁵, and Shlomo Pines (1960s–80s), who published a series of articles on the survival of Judeo-Christian communities into the Islamic period⁷⁶.

It is essential to consider all Jewish and Christian — including heretical — traditions as potential sources of influence on Islam. There are *striking parallels* between Islamic and Judeo-Christian concepts: Ebionite views on Jesus and the Crucifixion (Docetism): Jesus was a prophet, not the Son of God. [According to Roncaglia], the Islamic prohibition of wine may appear “Elchasaitic”⁷⁷, [though this is unlikely], as no known Elchasaitic ban on wine exists, but Ebionite bans

⁷¹ See: Gilliot C. Les “Informateurs” juifs et chrétiens de Muhammad: Reprise d’un problème traité par Aloys Sprenger et Theodor Nöldeke // Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam. 1998. Vol. 22. P. 84–126.

⁷² Harnack A. Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte. Bd. 1. Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1888; Bd. 2. Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1909.

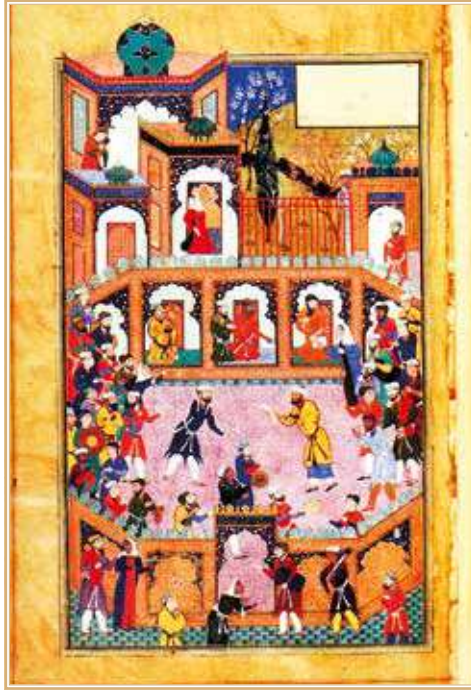
⁷³ Chwolson D. Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus. St. Petersburg: Buchdruckerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1856.

⁷⁴ Schlatter A. Die Entwicklung des jüdischen Christentums zum Islam // Evangelisches Missions-Magazin. 1918. Neue Folge 62. S. 251–264.

⁷⁵ Schoeps H.J. Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums. Tübingen: Mohr, 1949; Schoeps H.J. Jewish Christianity Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.

⁷⁶ Pines S. Studies in the History of Religion. The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines; 4 / Ed. G.G. Stroumsa. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996. [See also: Sánchez F. del Río. Jewish Christianity and the Origins of Islam: Papers presented at the Colloquium Held in Washington DC, October 29–31, 2015 (8th ASMEA Conference). Turnhout: Brepols, 2018; Crone P. Jewish Christianity and the Qur’ān (Part One) // Journal of Near Eastern Studies. 2015. Vol. 74.2. P. 225–253; Crone P. Jewish Christianity and the Qur’ān (Part Two) // Journal of Near Eastern Studies. 2016. Vol. 75.1. P. 1–21. Ed.]

⁷⁷ Stroumsa G.G. Jewish-Christians and Islamic Origins. P. 151.



Debate Between Jews and Muslims
 Miniature from Saadi's *Gulistan*, 1258 (The British Library)
The British Library

are documented. The Ebionite notion of scriptural corruption closely resembles Islamic views. The Ebionites had a “chain of prophets” (the idea of ongoing prophecy), as well as the belief that certain parts of the Holy Scripture had been interpolated by Satan and must be removed (a notion also found in Marcion’s teachings and in the Islamic concept of *tahrīf* [the corruption of the Scriptures ascribed by Muslims to Jews and Christians])⁷⁸. There are correlations between the Qur’ān and the 2nd-century Judeo-Christian text *Didache* [*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*], particularly regarding ritual and legal practices. [The *Didascalia Apostolorum* (4th c., based on the *Didache*) emphasizes ritual purity.] [Pseudo-Clementines] contain elements resembling the *shahāda*. The term *al-mu`minūn* [“the believers”] may derive from the Greek πιστεύοντες — Jews who believed in Jesus but followed Jewish law⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ Ibid. P. 153.

⁷⁹ Ibid. P. 154.

A problem persists: *there is no trace of Judeo-Christianity after the 4th century*. How could [it] have survived into the Islamic era? [Rabbinic opponents of the Ebionites] may have deliberately erased them from the record (“*damnatio memoriae*”), hence the scant information about them. [However,] indirect evidence suggests that some Judeo-Christian communities may have survived into the early Islamic period, possibly even in the Hijāz.

John of Damascus refers to the Elchasaites in his time⁸⁰. Chwolson, in his seminal monograph on the Šābians⁸¹, noted some Manichaean elements in Islam. The sect in which Mani was raised [is referred to in Arabic sources as *muğtasila*, “baptizers”]. This group was identified [as Elchasaites] following the discovery, in 1975, of the *Cologne Mani Codex* containing Mani’s biography. Parallels between Manichaeism and Islam gained renewed attention. Simon critiques the overemphasis on Jewish and Christian roots while underestimating Manichaean influences⁸². Parallels between Manichaeism and Islam include: a universalistic character of both religions, similar views of sacred scripture. The concept of the “Seal of the Prophets” is particularly striking. The prophetic model in both traditions derives from a shared Judeo-Christian substratum.

Choosing between the Jewish and the Christian influences as the sole source of Islam is methodologically flawed. *It is a mistake to choose only one option*. Ideas [circulated] freely, and religious structures were constantly reformulated — a “whirlpool” effect in which [it is impossible] to trace each individual element.

Arabia was not a periphery of Late Antique civilization. Hoyland calls it a “laboratory” for religious transformation⁸³. [This echoes] Max Weber’s description of ancient Hebrew prophets: they belonged to marginal societies, not too distant from political-religious centers, but

⁸⁰ Ibid. P. 142.

⁸¹ Chwolson D. Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus.

⁸² Simon R. Mani and Muhammad // Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam. 1997. Vol. 21. P. 118–141.

⁸³ Hoyland R.G. Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion // The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity / Ed. S.F. Johnson. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. P. 1053–1077, esp. P. 1069.

distinct enough to develop original forms⁸⁴. The same can be said of Late Antique Arabia — a hub of cultural influences from Iran⁸⁵, Byzantium, and Aksum, where religious ideas [circulated freely]. The eschatological fervor of the 7th century relates to a broader “prophetic movement” in Arabia. Epigraphic findings reflect a crisis in traditional Arabian beliefs and [the emergence of] a monotheism of indeterminate form. No evidence of Christian presence exists between ‘Aqaba and Yemen. The form of Judaism among Hījāzī Jews remains unclear.

A plausible hypothesis is that of a pre-Islamic Abrahamic trend: one or more groups identified themselves as followers of the “true religion of Abraham”, corrupted by Jews and Christians. Sozomen (5th c.) describes an interreligious Abrahamic festival in Mamre — attended by Christians, Jews, Arabs, and others⁸⁶. He notes that Arabs, instructed by Jews about their Abrahamic lineage, practiced circumcision, avoided pork, and followed other Jewish rituals⁸⁷. The same is attested by Sebeos (7th c.). Several studies have traced potential continuities from Abrahamic practices to Muḥammad, especially in connection to the Meccan sanctuary. In Late Antiquity, Abraham was a “cultural hero” for both Jews and Christians. Some scholars [have attempted] to identify an “Abrahamic cult” among the Negev Arabs in the 5th–7th centuries ([evident] in the Nessana papyri). However, this “Abrahamic identity” remains a hypothesis. In the Qur’ānic portrayal, Abraham is a *ḥanīf* — neither Jew nor Christian⁸⁸. This hypothesis differs from the one linking the Qur’ān directly to Judeo-Christian roots, but both theories associate the rise of prophetic activity in Arabia with the biblical tradition.

Concluding remarks: [Stroumsa] supports the idea that the survival of a peripheral Judeo-Christian group and its influence on

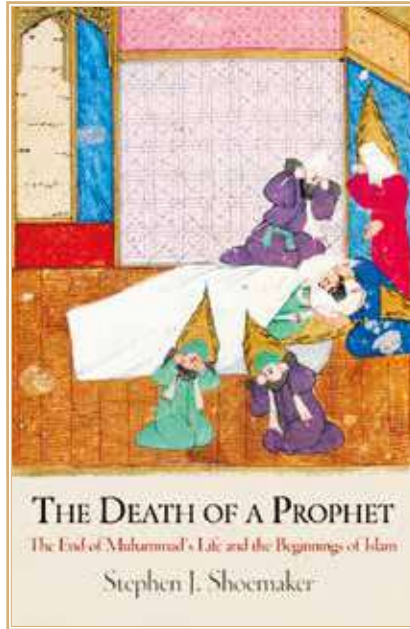
⁸⁴ Weber M. *Ancient Judaism*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1952.

⁸⁵ On the influence of Iranian-origin ideas on early Islam, see: Crone P. *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012; Wansbrough J.E. *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*. London: Oxford University Press, 1978.

⁸⁶ Созомен. Церковная история Эрмия Созомена Саламинскаго. СПб., 1851. Кн. II. Гл. 4. Р. 88–89.

⁸⁷ Созомен. Церковная история. Кн. VI. Гл. 38. Р. 470–471.

⁸⁸ Qur’ān 3:67.



Stephen Shoemaker's *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* (2012)

Muhammad's preaching is a plausible scenario. According to him, [Judeo-Christianity served] as the ideal "ferment" for Muhammad's message to develop within the rich humus of Late Antique religious traditions⁸⁹. But this was not the only source. The influence may have been indirect. The emergence of Islam was overdetermined and [shaped by numerous interlocking factors]. Clear-cut theories risk oversimplifying a complex historical process. The mystery of a religion's origin can never be entirely unveiled.

Stephen Shoemaker and *The Death of a Prophet*

Among the most recent contributions representative of what is often termed the "revisionist school" are Stephen Shoemaker's works. Over the past two decades, Shoemaker has assumed a position comparable to that once held by Patricia Crone, challenging foundational assumptions within Islamic historiography...

⁸⁹ Stroumsa G.G. *Jewish-Christians and Islamic Origins*. P. 158.



First page of Professor Panchenko’s notes
 on Shoemaker’s *The Death of a Prophet*, 2024
 From the archive of C.A. Panchenko

*At this point, the article by Professor Panchenko is once again interrupted. The following section consists of excerpts from his notes on Shoemaker’s *The Death of a Prophet* (2012)⁹⁰. In this monograph, Shoemaker re-evaluates key events of Islamic history of the 1st century AH: the formation of the early Muslim community, the death of Muhammad, the Arab conquest of the Holy Land, the construction of a religious complex in Jerusalem, and, later, the emergence of the Hijāz as the central Islamic sanctuary. His study is grounded in a critical analysis of both Muslim and non-Muslim sources.*

*For ease of comprehension, the notes have been divided into thematic sections. The author’s original notetaking style has been preserved. Emphases in the original are rendered here as **bold italics**. Connecting phrases are enclosed in [square brackets].*

⁹⁰ Shoemaker S.J. *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad’s Life and the Beginnings of Islam*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Survey of the sources

[Shoemaker points out that] the authorship of the [various components] of the corpus of Muslim oral tradition remains uncertain. (In his view, *isnād* analysis is insufficient for identifying when and by whom [particular] traditions were introduced.) There are no Muslim sources reliably datable to before the 2nd century AH⁹¹. Although the Qur’ān dates to the 1st century AH, it is “profoundly ahistorical” and thus offers little that is of value to historians. The canonical narratives of Islam’s origins were compiled in ‘Abbāsīd Baghdad, drawing on Medinan and Iraqi testimonies while ignoring the Syrian (pro-Umayyad) tradition⁹². [This] presents a fundamental challenge to reconstructing early Islamic history from Muslim sources alone.

[Shoemaker argues against] those scholars who regard the Qur’ānic text as a faithful transmission of Muḥammad’s preaching. First, [there is] ample evidence of textual instability in the Qur’ān — as seen in coins and, notably, in the inscriptions of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem — which suggests a later codification. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the presence of these “non-canonical” [not present in the canonical Qur’ān] inscriptions in such a sacred site⁹³. Second, [according to Shoemaker,] the time that elapsed between Muḥammad’s death and the final redaction of the Qur’ān (which is likely to have taken place at the end of the 7th century, according to Shoemaker) allowed for [substantial revision of the text]. Third, the Qur’ān’s prophetic pronouncements are cast in a polished, rhymed prose, yet it seems implausible that Muḥammad, [preoccupied as he was with proclaiming the imminent end of the world], would have given so much emphasis to literary style⁹⁴. The Qur’ānic text is frequently disjointed, exhibiting repetitions and abrupt breaks, indicating a patchwork composition. [Shoemaker concurs with Claude Gilliot that] the Qur’ān is a collective work⁹⁵.

⁹¹ Ibid. P. 74.

⁹² Ibid. P. 67.

⁹³ Ibid. P. 148.

⁹⁴ Ibid. P. 142.

⁹⁵ Ibid. P. 147.

[Shoemaker contends that] the Qur'ān was not canonized under 'Uthmān [(r. 644–656), as the Muslim tradition claims and as Donner maintains], but rather under 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705) and al-Ḥajjāj (governor of Iraq in 694–714). The legend of 'Uthmān's recension likely originated with the Umayyads to enhance their legitimacy ('Uthmān being one of their own) and was later canonized by al-Bukhārī [the author of the famous *ḥadīth* collection in the 9th century]. Given his short and unpopular reign, 'Uthmān is an unlikely candidate for initiating such a major codification project. The early Islamic polity was still rudimentary ([it remained so] even under Mu'āwiya), lacking coercive institutions and means of ideological dissemination (e.g., limited coinage, public buildings, and inscriptions). By contrast, 'Abd al-Malik had both the means and the incentive to undertake the canonization of the Qur'ān⁹⁶. The need for a fixed text only emerged once the anticipated End of the World failed to take place and the collective memory of Muḥammad began to fade. The now-canonical [Qur'ānic] text did not achieve dominance until the late 7th or early 8th century; it supplanted other versions through direct state intervention in a campaign to eliminate variant readings. Thus, the Qur'ān reflects the theological concerns of the late 7th – early 8th centuries. In societies undergoing rapid transformation (e.g., the Arab conquests [and the failure of] the Day of Judgment to occur as expected), oral tradition becomes less reliable, a fact reflected in the Qur'ānic revisions.

Lammens had already argued that the *Sīra* [the traditional biography of Muḥammad] was crafted to compensate for the Qur'ān's [lack of rich historical detail] and to insert it into a contextual narrative. Wansbrough, Crone, and others likewise approached the *Sīra* critically. [Shoemaker maintains that] early biographies of Muḥammad were compiled long after his death and portray an idealized version of the Prophet and his community that aligns more with early 2nd-century AH Islamic theology than with the realities of the 1st century AH. The earliest Muslim tradition did not aim to preserve a chronological account of Muḥammad's prophetic career. Information regarding his death in these early traditions is minimal. Even the date of the Hijra

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 149.

is not universally agreed upon, with alternate dates coexisting. [Shoemaker cites] Donner's conclusion that al-Zuhrī (d. 742) was the first to establish a relative chronology of events, and Ibn Ishāq (d. 767/68) later elaborated on it⁹⁷. Ibn Ishāq compiled a sequential narrative [of the life of Muḥammad] from fragmentary reports according to his own understanding. *Ḥadīths* are inherently unreliable, especially in their *isnād* references to the *Ṣaḥāba* [Companions of the Prophet] and the *Tābi'ūn* [Successors of the *Ṣaḥāba*]⁹⁸.

[Shoemaker agrees with] Wansbrough that historical knowledge of Muḥammad and his era has been lost and obscured by medieval Islamic imagination.

Nonetheless, traces of early historical memory — contrary to [established Muslim tradition] — can still be found in the Qur'ān and in a few early *ḥadīths*. These elements are unlikely to be later interpolations precisely because they conflict with the prevailing [later] orthodoxy and have likely survived out of respect for their antiquity. For instance, the so-called “Satanic Verses” could not have been inserted later, as they contradict the [later] idealized image of Muḥammad; rather, they are vestiges of a lost early tradition. If the Qur'ān is read in opposition to the traditional narrative of Islam's origins — [rather than in harmonization with it] — then Islam's most archaic strata may be uncovered⁹⁹. When such readings are corroborated by diverse evidence, especially when Muslim and non-Muslim sources converge, the likelihood increases that we are seeing remnants of an early tradition omitted from the canonical version¹⁰⁰.

Engagement with the non-Muslim sources is essential, given [as we noted before] the Qur'ān's “profoundly ahistorical” character. These sources must be used critically and in tandem with Muslim tradition, not in isolation. Early Christian history is reconstructed using

⁹⁷ Ibid. P. 102–103.

⁹⁸ Ibid. P. 73.

⁹⁹ Thus, the Qur'ān is a potential alternative to the information in the *Sīra* ([the latter reflects] 8th–9th-century Islam [and gives us no insight into 7th-century realities]).

¹⁰⁰ Like Wansbrough, Hoyland, and Donner, [Shoemaker] believes that non-Muslim sources alone are insufficient for a proper reconstruction [of early Islam].

the outside pagan and Jewish sources—why not apply the same method to early Islam? The temporal gap between Jesus and the Gospels is smaller than that between Muḥammad and the *Sīra*, and yet the Gospels themselves are inconsistent. We must interpret the emergence of Islam within the broader context of late antique Mediterranean culture, rather than restrict ourselves to the Hijāz. The critical methodologies developed in New Testament scholarship — studying the text apart from ecclesiastical tradition — should likewise be applied to the Qur’ān, independent of Muslim exegesis.

[Shoemaker endorses the methodology proposed by Hoyland] for assessing the evidentiary value of non-Muslim testimonies. What is the origin [of the report]? What is the nature of the observation? Who is the observer? Was the report heard from eye-witnesses? Are we dealing with rumors, factual records, apologetic narratives, or generalized explanations? Was the author reporting something readily observable? Something that concerned non-Muslims? Was it about Islamic beliefs or intra-Muslim matters? Next, these [non-Muslim] accounts must be compared with Muslim tradition to identify discrepancies and the interests that motivated them.

One of the key sources from Late Antiquity — especially on the supra-confessional character of the early Islamic community — is (pseudo-)Sebeos¹⁰¹. Some scholars have criticized Sebeos as anti-Jewish propaganda. However, the alliance between some Jews and Arabs around the idea of a shared monotheism and claims to the Holy Land is consistent with many other sources, including Muslim ones¹⁰². The main Jewish source on the interconfessional nature of the early Muslim community is *The Secrets of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai*, which describes the rise of the “Kingdom of Ishmael” in messianic terms, as an act of Divine Providence¹⁰³. A Palestinian Muslim text from ca. 640–650 [presumably

¹⁰¹ See: *Shoemaker S.J.* The Death of a Prophet. P. 199–203; *Себеос.* История императора Иракла. Гл. 30. С. 115–117; *Shoemaker S.J.* A Prophet Has Appeared. P. 62–72.

¹⁰² Hoyland also defends Sebeos, pointing to parallels in other sources, including Jewish ones. See: *Hoyland R.* Sebeos, the Jews and the Rise of Islam.

¹⁰³ *Shoemaker S.J.* The Death of a Prophet. P. 203–204; *Shoemaker S.J.* A Prophet Has Appeared. P. 138–143.

used by Sebeos] also provides insight into the emergence of Islam¹⁰⁴. Syrian sources from the 7th century are of further relevance.

One of the principal tasks, therefore, is to trace anomalies in Islamic tradition that align with the non-Muslim reports. Discrepancies between the non-Muslim accounts from the 7th–8th centuries and the traditional Islamic narratives from the late 8th–9th centuries must be subjected to critical scrutiny.

Inclusivity of the community of “believers”

[Shoemaker accepts Donner’s theory] that the early Islamic movement began as a confederation of Abrahamic communities united by belief in an imminent Day of Judgment and a shared commitment to justice on earth. [According to this theory, early Islam was] not a sect, but a supra-confessional movement grounded in biblical and para-biblical Jewish and Christian traditions, combined with some distinctively Arab elements. This was an interfaith community, all of whose members professed Abrahamic monotheism and anticipated salvation.

The “believers” [prayed together], for instance, in the Church of St. John the Baptist in Damascus. In Jerusalem, there is evidence of shared custodianship of holy sites and Muslim prayers conducted within Christian churches (e.g., the prayers of ‘Umar and later Mu‘āwiyā at the tomb of the Virgin Mary)¹⁰⁵. Muslims soon redirected their focus to the Temple Mount. ‘Umar’s building projects on the Mount were perceived by contemporaries as an effort to restore the Jerusalem Temple – a motif common in Jewish apocalyptic literature of the early Islamic era. Early Islam, in this sense, was seen as a kind of Jewish messianic movement. Traces of Jewish eschatological hope are discernible within the early Islamic community.

[The supra-confessional nature of the early community had endured roughly until the late 7th century, after which alternative currents were gradually suppressed.]

¹⁰⁴ *Shoemaker S.J.* The Death of a Prophet. P. 201–202.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* P. 215.

Eschatology

[Shoemaker, following Hoyland, further develops the theme of eschatology in early Islam, previously explored by Crone and Cook in *Hagarism*.] Early Islam was marked by strong eschatological expectations. Eschatology is the Qur'ān's second most prominent theme after monotheism¹⁰⁶. Of the 48 *sūras* classified by Nöldeke as early Meccan, most are eschatological in nature¹⁰⁷. A close reading of the Qur'ān and early *ḥadīths* reveals that Muḥammad was an eschatological prophet¹⁰⁸, preaching the return of control over the Promised Land to the children of Abraham in anticipation of the imminent Day of Judgment. Muḥammad and his Companions believed that the Day of Judgment would occur in their lifetimes. He did not designate a successor — political succession is absent from the Qur'ān — [precisely because he] expected the world to end soon. If Muḥammad were the pragmatic reformer imagined by [such scholars as] Montgomery Watt, how are we to explain the chaos and confusion following his death? A true organizer intent on building a just society would have made provisions for leadership. But if Muḥammad was an apocalyptic prophet, then concerns for social justice or equality would have been secondary — indeed, irrelevant in light of an imminent end.

When the End of the World failed to materialize and its expected timing was repeatedly postponed, the Muslim community was compelled to reinterpret the nature of its movement¹⁰⁹. This radical reshaping of early Islamic historical tradition occurred in the 2nd century AH. The ecstatic apocalyptic Meccan *sūras* that predicted an imminent end can hardly be late interpolations¹¹⁰ — unlike the Medinan *sūras*. Candidates for later additions include verses concerning the change of *qibla* and polemics with Jews and Christians.

The [later] reworking of Muḥammad's teachings was not the result of a conspiracy, but rather an almost unconscious re-reading of the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. P. 120.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. P. 131.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. P. 191.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. P. 192.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. P. 160.



Jerusalem on the Madaba Map, Jordan, 6th century CE
Photo in public domain

Qur'ān in light of evolving theological views concerning the delayed *Hour* [i.e., the Day of Judgment]¹¹¹.

Palestinocentricity of early Islam

[Following the arguments of Crone and Cook, Stephen Shoemaker also raises the question of] whether early Islam had a single sacred center. [While the authors of *Hagarism* pointed to the otherwise unknown Bakka, Shoemaker proposes an alternative hypothesis: according to him, it is Jerusalem that served as formative Islam's primary sacred focus.] Eschatological traditions across the Abrahamic religions identify Jerusalem as the site of the Last Judgment. This eschatological significance explains Muḥammad's desire to capture Jerusalem—the apocalyptic city *par excellence*—prior to the End of Times¹¹². According to Sebeos and other sources, Muḥammad's preaching emphasized the liberation of the Promised Land and its reclaiming by the sons of Abraham. At least eleven sources from the 7th–8th centuries assert that Muḥammad was still alive at the time of the conquest of Palestine.

¹¹¹ Ibid. P. 124.

¹¹² Ibid. P. 217.

Prior to the emergence of Muslim prophetic biography in the mid-8th century, no sources contradict this claim. These testimonies stem from diverse Christian sects, as well as Jewish and Samaritan communities¹¹³. Ibn Ishāq also recounts Muḥammad's military campaign in Palestine near the end of his life¹¹⁴. The convergence of these relatively independent sources suggests a [shared] early Islamic tradition. It is difficult to believe that such diverse witnesses all made the same error, especially given the absence of traces of the “correct” version [i.e., the one later endorsed by Islamic tradition] within them. [Furthermore,] most of these sources are free from overt polemical or apologetic agenda. The notion that Muḥammad died after the conquest [of Palestine] is presented neutrally, as an established fact. It appears that the tradition [locating] Muḥammad's death in Medina in 632 CE had not yet solidified until the early 2nd century AH. Reports that he lived to lead the conquest of Palestine likely reflect an authentic early Islamic narrative, later revised during the transformation of Islamic self-understanding, when the Prophet was dissociated from the conquest of the Holy Land.

[Shoemaker reinterprets] the Battle of Mu'ta (629) and the expedition to Tabūk (630) as [the opening stages of] a broader Palestinian campaign. These were aimed at Byzantine territories. The army assembled for the Tabūk expedition — reportedly 30,000 men — was unprecedented in size. This campaign marked the beginning of a far more ambitious northern offensive than traditionally assumed by most historians. The Arabs faced little resistance, with local populations submitting to their authority. It strains credibility to think that Muḥammad returned to Medina after such a show of force. Something important must have been omitted. Before his death, Muḥammad had reportedly planned another campaign across the Jordan and into Palestine, to be led by Usāma ibn Zayd. Whether or not Muḥammad personally lived to see the liberation of the Holy Land is ultimately less important than the desire to link his persona with its conquest. This tradition, portraying Muḥammad as leading the conquest of Palestine, survived into the 12th century and beyond.

¹¹³ Ibid. P. 217.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. P. 99.



The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, 691 CE

Photo in public domain

Upon capturing Jerusalem, Muslims elevated it to a major cultic center. The sheer weight of evidence pointing to Jerusalem's centrality in early Islam undermines later attempts to dismiss the Jerusalem *qibla* as incidental or short-lived. From the perspective of later Islamic practice, prayer facing Jerusalem appears so anomalous that it must stem from an ancient tradition¹¹⁵. Indeed, evidence exists of the Jerusalem *qibla* persisting into later periods; there were also attempts to reconcile competing prayer directions¹¹⁶. In addition to Mecca and Jerusalem, some early communities reportedly faced east or west in prayer¹¹⁷.

Sources suggest that the construction of a mosque on the Temple Mount began immediately following the Islamic conquest, while Patriarch Sophronius (†639) was still alive¹¹⁸. When 'Abd al-Malik commissioned the Dome of the Rock (691–692), many perceived it as a restoration of the Temple. Pilgrims circumambulated it like the Ka'ba; its architectural design clearly accommodates such rituals. Later legal prohibitions [of this practice] reflect attempts to suppress these early rites. Rituals performed at the Dome of the Rock [are recorded in Islamic

¹¹⁵ Ibid. P. 223.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. P. 228.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. P. 224–227.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. P. 233.

literature such as *Faḍā'il al-Quds* (“Merits of Jerusalem”)] and show parallels with the Jewish Temple cult. Evidently, this site was not simply [one among many] sacred locales, but a uniquely exalted sanctuary. Under the Umayyads, the Dome of the Rock was not a rival to the Ka‘ba, but a site with its own eschatological aura and distinctive rites. The Rock was considered intrinsically sacred, independent of its associations with the Jewish Temple¹¹⁹. The shrine’s architecture and decoration reflect an apocalyptic atmosphere¹²⁰. Far from representing a theological innovation, it marked the last flourishing of Jerusalem-centered piety among the early “believer” movement in the formative decades of Islam. The shrine’s original meaning differed [substantially] from the way it was later interpreted within the Islamic tradition.

The *Night Journey* tradition is another narrative linking Muḥammad to Palestine. The reinterpretation of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf [the Temple Mount] shifted its significance from the *Jewish Temple* to the site of Muḥammad’s *night journey* (*Isrā’*). Originally (in the 1st century AH), however, [this journey] was not associated with Jerusalem. [The term] *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* (“the farthest mosque”) was initially understood [to refer to] a celestial sanctuary. Notably, the Dome of the Rock’s inscriptions omit Qur’ān 17:1 — the verse of *Isrā’* and *Mi‘rāj* [the night journey and ascension of the Prophet]. Clearly, the Dome could not have been built as a memorial to that event.

References to pilgrimage to the three great mosques of Islam — Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem — in the first half of the 2nd century AH reflect debates about Jerusalem’s status and efforts to marginalize it¹²¹. [At that time,] was there even an established practice of an annual *hajj* to Mecca¹²²? There is no early evidence for pilgrimage to the Ka‘ba. The Qur’ān speaks only vaguely of pilgrimage to a *Bayt* [“house” or “sanctuary”, without specifying its location; in the earliest Islamic context, this may have referred to *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem)]. Pilgrimage to Mecca appears to be a later innovation. Mecca did not immediately displace Jerusalem as the primary site of pilgrimage. The

¹¹⁹ Ibid. P. 235–236.

¹²⁰ Ibid. P. 237.

¹²¹ Ibid. P. 229.

¹²² Ibid. P. 244.

Islamic tradition that elevates Mecca and the Ḥijāz is a later one¹²³. According to Wansbrough, the Qurʾān contains virtually no reference to the Ḥijāz. The veneration of Mecca emerged from sustained efforts by later commentators — the zeal of these efforts is noteworthy: it is as if they are expended in deliberate opposition to alternative views¹²⁴. This reorientation included attempts to integrate the Ḥijāz into biblical history, e.g., by modeling the *hajj* ritual on the sacrifice of Isaac. Following the Second Civil War (*fitna*), ‘Abd al-Malik took steps toward closer alignment with the Ḥijāz. It was during this period that the damaged Ka‘ba was restored. It is likely that this period also saw the formation of the specific rituals of *hajj* centered on the Ka‘ba¹²⁵.

An early, powerful tradition affirmed the sanctity of Jerusalem; later efforts sought to downplay this in favor of Ḥijāzī sacred geography¹²⁶. The holiness of the Holy Land and Jerusalem — so self-evident to the “believers” of the first Islamic century and to the Umayyads — is reinterpreted in later Islamic tradition as an Umayyad innovation detracting from the sanctity of the Ḥijāz. In traditional Islamic historiography of the 8th–9th centuries, Muḥammad’s religious focus is restricted to Mecca and Medina, with Jerusalem deliberately marginalized. By the end of the first Islamic century, Islam had shifted away from its original orientation toward the Holy Land and Jerusalem, *centering instead on a sacred geography of its own, the Arabian one. This shift* is a defining moment in the formation of Islam as a distinct religious tradition.

Part of this process may have included a *reimagining of Muḥammad’s death* to associate it with the Ḥijāz rather than Abrahamic eschatology or the Holy Land. Early Muslim graves were oriented toward Jerusalem, even during the Umayyad period. Burial in Jerusalem was [widely] regarded as spiritually meritorious. Might Muḥammad originally have been buried in Jerusalem¹²⁷? It would be strange if the culmination of his life had no connection with the liberation of the

¹²³ Ibid. P. 245.

¹²⁴ Ibid. P. 246.

¹²⁵ Ibid. P. 256.

¹²⁶ Ibid. P. 230.

¹²⁷ Ibid. P. 238.

Holy Land¹²⁸. As Islam developed its own sacred geography centered on the Hijāz, Muḥammad's death had to be radically reinterpreted.

The death of Muḥammad

The Prophet's death prior to the Last Judgment necessitated a rapid theological reevaluation among his followers. The *Sīra* includes strong refutations of the idea that Muḥammad would not die until the End Times, indicating how widespread that belief [initially] was. The delay in burial was due to the fact that part of the community denied his death, a fact confirmed by Christian sources as well. Early Christian polemics criticized the unfulfilled prediction of Muḥammad's bodily resurrection, which corresponds with Islamic traditions that report that 'Umar refused to allow Muḥammad's burial, expecting his resurrection¹²⁹.

The earliest sources offer minimal detail about Muḥammad's death. None describe its circumstances; information about its timing and location appears only in the first written biographies, circa the mid-8th century¹³⁰. Early Islamic tradition shows little interest in the specifics of Muḥammad's burial¹³¹, which are known only from Ibn Ishāq. Narratives about the Prophet's burial proliferated from the early 9th century onward, featuring increasingly elaborate details yet [lacking] historical context. The longer the interval from the actual events, the more "information" Islamic tradition acquired. Many details concerning Muḥammad's illness and death reflect sectarian struggles over his legacy rather than historical fact. [Most] sources converge on 632 CE as the date of his death, though some claim he lived thirteen years after the Hijra. Some Arab-Sasanian coins suggest dating the Hijra to

¹²⁸ Ibid. P. 239.

¹²⁹ Syriac versions of the Baḥīrā legend (8th–9th centuries) represent a counter-narrative of Islam's origins; see: *Roggema B. The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā. Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam.* Leiden: Brill, 2009. Eds.

¹³⁰ *Shoemaker S.J. The Death of a Prophet.* P. 75.

¹³¹ Ibid. P. 96.

624/625 CE. These variant chronologies imply that Muḥammad may still have been alive during the invasion of Palestine¹³².

It is possible that the Prophet's death was "relocated" to Medina later [in order to align with the shift in Islamic sacred geography from Jerusalem to the Hijāz]. Ibn Ishāq sets Muḥammad's death in an urban setting (i.e., not during a military campaign, a version that became canonical largely through his influence). In al-Zuhrī's account, Medina is not even mentioned¹³³. Theophanes the Confessor attempted to harmonize Christian and Islamic narratives, writing that Muḥammad died from a sword or wounds. The East Syriac tradition, which held that Muslims did not know the location of Muḥammad's grave, is evidently early and [predates] the consensus that he was buried in Medina. [The earliest accounts of the Prophet's mosque under Caliph al-Walīd I (705–715) also omit reference to his burial. The association between Muḥammad's tomb and the mosque in Medina was not firmly established until the mid-8th century, when the tradition of his death in 'Ā'isha's house had been introduced — nearly a century after the actual events.]

[Shoemaker suggests that Medina (and not Mecca or the Holy Land) was designated as Muḥammad's burial place not because he had actually been buried there, but because the earliest biographies were written and circulated by Medinan authors. Nearly all early Muslim biographers hailed from Medina and sought to enshrine its status as the birthplace of Islam and the "City of the Prophet" in collective historical memory.]

The narrative of Muḥammad's burial is an idealized memory, constructed to normalize Muslim funerary practices and distinguish them from others¹³⁴.

The transformation of Islam under 'Abd al-Malik

Following the Prophet's death and the deferral of the Day of Judgment—which dealt a critical blow to [early Islam's] eschatological ori-

¹³² Ibid. P. 105.

¹³³ Ibid. P. 90–93 (Ibn Ishāq on Muḥammad's death and burial), P. 93–99 (Muḥammad's death according to al-Zuhrī).

¹³⁴ Ibid. P. 98.

entation—a reconfiguration of its foundations became necessary. In the early reign of ‘Abd al-Malik, the interconfessional community of “believers” began to fragment, giving rise to a distinct “Islamic” variant of the movement. This version was characterized by rejection of [the Christian doctrine of] the Trinity and elevation of Muḥammad to a supreme prophetic status. The Qur’ān’s polemic against the Trinity can thus be read as a marker of an emerging Muslim communal identity. [A similar dynamic shaped the] evolution of the *shahāda*: its first half (“There is no god but God”) was universally acceptable, while the second (“Muḥammad is the messenger of God”) appeared later as part of confessional differentiation. Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 692) was the first to mint coins bearing the full double *shahāda* [with “Muḥammad rasūl Allāh”], signaling the emergence of a distinctly Arab monotheism¹³⁵.

The idea of Muḥammad as the “Seal of the Prophets” is a later development; the Qur’ān presents all prophets as equals. This concept emerged as part of the Muslim identity formation under ‘Abd al-Malik. [It also motivated] the codification of the Qur’ān as an exclusively Islamic Holy Writ in Arabic. The destruction of rival Qur’ānic versions attests to the success of the Islamic state¹³⁶. The standardization of Islam was the result of sustained efforts by the Umayyads and ‘Abbāsids.

As Islam began to take shape as a distinct religion, it required its own sacred geography (outside Palestine), its own prophet, scripture, and sacred language —each a marker of the emerging Islamic identity¹³⁷. It is likely that the Ḥijāz was only recognized as the [Islamic] Holy Land alongside Jerusalem in the early second Islamic century (8th century CE), as part of the Arabization of the new faith. The ‘Abbāsids undertook substantial efforts to sacralize the Ḥijāzī landscape¹³⁸, though these had likely begun under the Marwānids. The catalyst for this process was the Second Fitna (680–692). Competing

¹³⁵ Ibid. P. 254.

¹³⁶ Ibid. P. 158.

¹³⁷ Ibid. P. 250–251.

¹³⁸ The ‘Abbāsids completed the sacralization of the Ḥijāz by filling it with monuments to Muḥammad and his prophetic mission. Eds.



Professor Panchenko at the 3rd Syro-Arabic Symposium (Lebanon, Saint Joseph University of Beirut, February 2015). At this event, Panchenko's attention was particularly drawn to a presentation by an independent researcher from Germany, who appeared under the initials N.N. and dealt with one of Christoph Luxenberg's central themes: the interpretation of the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock.

From the archive of C.A. Panchenko

visions of pilgrimage and the sanctity of Mecca were central to this conflict. Ibn al-Zubayr's promotion of Mecca was a direct response to the Umayyad religious orientation toward Jerusalem. Advocates of a southern, Meccan sacred geography rallied around him. This conflict between Jerusalem and Mecca was not merely political, but fundamentally religious — [it was a struggle over] the very nature of Islam and the localization of its Holy Land. 'Abd al-Malik's strategy was to fuse Islam with Arab statehood.

In sum, the early decades of Islam witnessed a radical transformation of its very nature: shifts in self-identification — from “believers” to “Muslims” — and in sacred geography — from Jerusalem to the Ḥijāz. From an interconfessional monotheistic movement with a sharply foreshortened eschatological horizon — centered on Jerusalem and the Holy Land and open to a broad circle of “believers” within the Abrahamic tradition — Islam gradually transformed into an imperial religion with a well-defined confessional identity, grounded in Arab ethnicity and centered around a specifically Islamic sacred geography in the Ḥijāz.

Conclusion

Constantin Panchenko did not live to complete his article. Of what appears to have been planned as a fairly extensive concluding section, only two paragraphs were written for delivery at a roundtable discussion. They are presented below verbatim.

“There is no longer scholarly consensus concerning the nature of the Qur’ān and, more broadly, the origins of Islam. Already in the 2000s, conferences were held and collected volumes were published in the West on Qur’ānic studies¹³⁹ where the following questions were actively debated: What did the Qur’ān originally consist of? Was it a statement of Islamic doctrine, or of something else? In what language was the proto-Qur’ān recorded? Was it transmitted orally or in writing, and how much was the text altered through later redactions? When and how did the codification and canonization of the Qur’ān take place¹⁴⁰? As Fred Donner wrote in 2005, Qur’ānic studies lack a consensus — they are in a state of turmoil, and this is a good thing, for it is far better than the previous state of “false consensus,” which in fact meant an inability or unwillingness to raise pressing questions in a critical framework—perhaps for fear of negative reactions from the faithful¹⁴¹.

In other words, Western Islamic studies are undergoing a period of fermentation and exploration. In stark contrast, Russian Islamic studies remain largely unaffected by these new intellectual currents”.

The reader can infer Constantin Panchenko’s view of the state of Russian Islamic studies from the quotations presented in the Editors’ foreword. He saw it as his mission to dismantle that very “false consensus” that followed the traditional Muslim paradigm. This old consensus, he believed, must give way to a new one. The question is: What did the new consensus look like in his view?

Some insight into this question can be gleaned from a revised outline of the article that he drafted shortly before his passing (see Appendix).

¹³⁹ See, for example: *The Qur’ān in Its Historical Context* / Ed. G.S. Reynolds. London: Routledge, 2008.

¹⁴⁰ *Donner F.M.* *The Qur’ān in Recent Scholarship*. P. 31–43.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* P. 43.

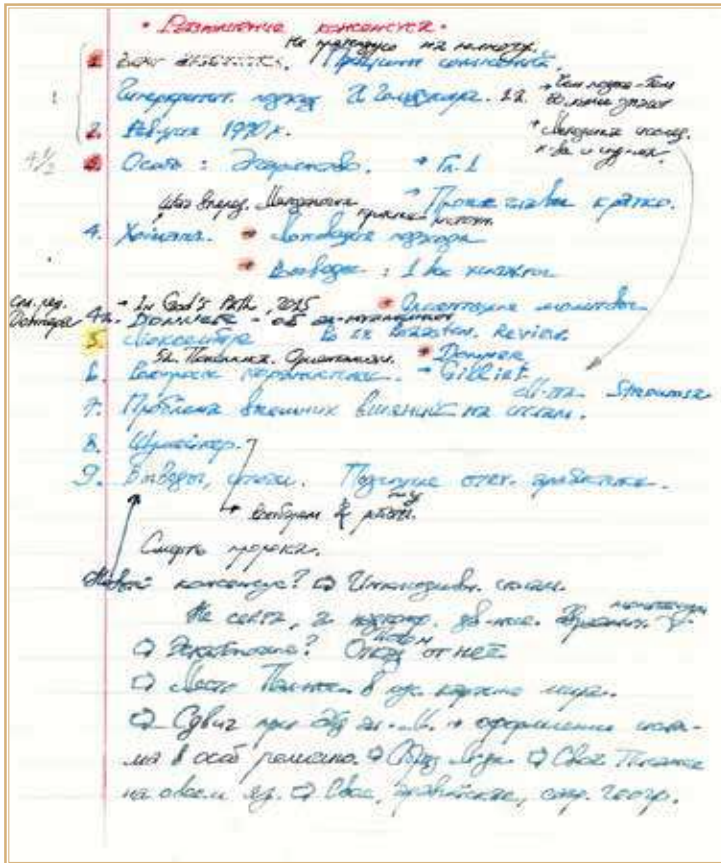
According to this plan, he intended to address the following aspects of the question:

- a. Islam as an inclusive, supra-confessional movement — Abrahamic monotheism, not a sect;
- b. Eschatology — initial emphasis, followed by its decline;
- c. The role of Palestine in the Muslim worldview;
- d. The shift under ‘Abd al-Malik: the formation of Islam as a distinct religion. The image of Muḥammad, a scripture in its own language, and a sacred geography centered in Arabia.

*It is clear that this outline reflects creative engagement with the conclusions of Stephen Shoemaker. In Shoemaker’s book The Death of a Prophet, Professor Panchenko must have found the **well-articulated and methodologically rigorous** new paradigm that he had long been seeking (in contrast to Hagarism, where that paradigm is only sketched out and presented in a deliberately provocative and polemical fashion). As already noted, it was only after reading Shoemaker’s monograph that he stated—on the eve of his death—that he finally realized what the concluding article should look like.*

Let us briefly summarize the key features of this new paradigm. The early Islam was a supra-confessional Abrahamic movement of “believers” (Shoemaker accepts Donner’s theory), which included not only the followers of Muḥammad but also numerous Jews and Christians. This movement was strongly eschatological in orientation, which explains its initial drive toward conquest — particularly of Jerusalem, where the apocalyptic events of the Last Judgment were expected to unfold. Thus, early Islam was centered on Palestine. It was there, not in Mecca or Medina, that the first Muslim holy sites arose.

In the Islamic historiographical tradition — formed about a century later, in the mid-8th century — these aspects were either forgotten or relegated to the background. (They can be reconstructed from 7th-century non-Muslim sources, the Qur’ān, and some “anomalous” Muslim traditions.) Since the End Times anticipated by Muḥammad’s contemporaries did not occur, the eschatological expectations gradually lost their relevance. Moreover, the Prophet’s biography was compiled primarily on the basis of memories from the inhabitants of Medina. Their worldview was overly focused on the Arabian context: all events — including



Revised outline of the present article by Professor Panchenko, 2024
 From the archive of C.A. Panchenko

apparently later ones, such as the redirection of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca — were situated exclusively within the Arabian framework of Muhammad’s life. As a result, the historical chronology was compressed (relative to actual events), and a historical paradigm emerged that systematically marginalized and suppressed the Palestino-centric Islam of Muhammad’s immediate followers and the early Umayyads.

The Second Fitna of 680–692 CE, in which the Umayyads faced off against the Zubayrids of Medina, ultimately led the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705) to shift his focus from Palestine — despite his initial alignment with Palestino-centric positions, as evidenced by his construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem — to the Hijāz. As Shoemaker argues, it was under his rule that the Qur’ān was codified. During this same period, Muslims definitively separated themselves into a distinct religious community, and the development of a specifically

Arabian form of Islam was set in motion — an Islam distinct from the other Abrahamic religions and centered not in Palestine, but in the Ḥijāz. This is the form of Islam familiar to us from later Islamic historiography.

Appendix

Revised outline of the article “Destroying the Consensus. Interpretations of the Birth of Islamic Civilization in Modern Western Historiography”:

1. Milestones in Arabic studies (non-exhaustive account)
 - a. Causes of skepticism
 - b. The hypercritical method of Goldziher
- 1a. The later the source, the more it claims to know
2. The 1970s scholarly revolution
3. Special case: *Hagarism*
 - a. Chapter 1
 - b. Summary of other chapters
4. Hoyland
 - a. A step forward: source-critical methodology
 - b. Approach and method
 - c. Conclusions regarding the first Islamic century
 - d. Prayer orientation
- 4a. Donner on the *al-mu'minūn*. See Donner's review of Hoyland's *In God's Path* (2015)
5. Luxenberg (including Baasten's review)
- 5a. Polemics. Orientalism
6. Questions in Qur'ānic studies: methods for studying Christianity and Judaism
 - a. Donner
 - b. Gilliot
7. External influences on Islam (Stroumsa)
8. Shoemaker: focusing on *The Death of a Prophet*
9. Conclusions and overview: the state of Russian Arabic studies
 - a. A new consensus? Inclusive Islam — not a sect, but a supra-confessional Abrahamic movement

- b. Eschatology, followed by its decline
- c. The role of Palestine in the Muslim worldview
- d. The shift under ‘Abd al-Malik: the formation of Islam as a distinct religion — Muḥammad as a religious figure, a scripture in its own language, and a sacred geography centered in Arabia

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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Original paper



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The Eschatological Background of the Islamic Conquests and the Statement of the Eras in the Christendom and the Judaism

Abstract

The Hijra era, in the context of Islam, begins the countdown of a new era in the history of mankind. But few people remember that in the same 7th century, two more eras came into use, which soon became the main ones for the eastern and western parts of the Christendom. There is reason to believe that both of these eras — from the creation of the world “according to the *Rhomaioi*” and after the Nativity of Christ according to Dionysius — came into use in order to respond to the “eschatological” challenge associated with the transition of the world to the 7th (“Sabbatical”) millennium (years 6000–7000 from Adam) according to the chronology of the Septuagint at the turn of the 5th–6th centuries and the subsequent period of instability. Both eras were based on the concept of the “Christian Millennium” — a period of world history dedicated to God, mystically comparable to the last day of Creation. A little later, already as a response to the Christian idea, the Jewish era of Creation came into use, based on the brief chronology of the Pentateuch, accepted in the Rabbinic tradition.

Keywords:

Chronology, Eschatology, Apocalyptic, Era, Christianity, Judaism

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Christian eschatological context of the 6th century

It is well established that Christianity is fundamentally an eschatological religion. According to the teachings of the Gospels, Christ — the Messiah, Son of God and God-Man — came to earth to proclaim the Good News (εὐαγγέλιον) of the imminent arrival of a new era characterized by the direct reign of God over a transformed humanity. The essence of this message is encapsulated in a succinct formula: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Essentially, Christ’s teaching centers on guiding humanity — initially the “chosen people” and, after their apostasy, the “New Israel” composed of Gentiles — towards this Kingdom. The First Coming of the Son of God, from the Incarnation to the Ascension, marked the beginning of this pivotal phase in world history, while the Second Coming will complete it and inaugurate eternal life in the Age to Come. Believing Christians, anticipating the Second Coming, lived in a state of heightened expectation for a sudden transition from the temporal (and temporary) final segment of world history to the supra-temporal meta-dimension of the Kingdom of God. This imbues the Christian epoch with a vectorial character, the terminal segment of which was traditionally understood as culminating in an imminent *eschaton* — and only

recently has this endpoint become conceptualized as an indefinite continuum. The attenuation of the intense eschatological spirit characteristic of ancient and medieval Christianity can be partly attributed to the “chronological temptations” inherent in the tradition. Despite Christ’s explicit prohibition (Acts 1:6–7), people across the centuries have repeatedly attempted to calculate the date of the eschaton (end of the world). When these predictions failed, the intense eschatological tension often gave way to skepticism and doubt, leading to a moral relaxation with profound consequences. Several such eschatological thresholds occurred in Christian civilization’s history, typically aligned with “round” dates such as the years 6000 and 7000 since Creation, or the *anni Domini* 500, 1000, 1500, and 2000.

It must be noted that Christianity, as a universal religion transcending ethnic and state boundaries, was arguably the first to confer a genuinely global dimension to human history. This enabled the construction of panoramic narratives of universal history “threaded” onto a unified chronological scale (era). This temporally oriented approach stood in stark contrast to ancient philosophies of history, which tended to be atemporal and typological in nature. One of the last pagan apologists, Eunapius of Sardis (d. ca 420), famously questioned the utility of chronology for wisdom: “What benefit will chronology bring to Socrates in wisdom, to Themistocles in genius?”¹ Indeed, outside the eschatological context and the associated vector concept of history, absolute dating tied to a single temporal scale may appear irrelevant or distracting, undermining the “eternal” wisdom of historiography.

However, within the Christian context, dates assume a critical and sometimes self-sufficient function. First, they impose a linear structure upon time, which otherwise tends to be cyclical, given the cyclical nature of astronomical and climatic phenomena used for its measurement. Second, they permit an understanding of “historical progress”: it must be remembered that the very notion

¹ Византийские историки: Дексипп, Эвнапий и др. Рязань: Александрия, 2003. С. 77.

of progress and developmental effort from worse to better has a Christian origin (and is actively employed, for instance, in ascetics). Humanity literally moves forward — towards the inexorable approach of the eschaton — and this approach is especially discernible when using two eras: from the creation of the world (or Adam) and from the Incarnation (or Nativity) of Christ.

It should be immediately noted that no era is explicitly used in the Biblical texts, and the chronological data they contain are fragmented and often contradictory among different manuscripts. This indicates that the Holy Scripture, as a divinely inspired text, does not confer mystical significance on chronology, and all calculations based on the Old Testament numerical data are subjective and speculative in nature. Nevertheless, the persistent human desire to predict the future, combined with the enthusiasm for systematic knowledge of the Late Antiquity, led from the 3rd to the 7th centuries to the production of numerous historical treatises on universal chronology based on biblical data. It was found that summing chronological intervals derived from the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), in conjunction with data on Persian and Ptolemaic reigns, yielded a total number of years from Adam to Christ of approximately 5500. This number was immediately ascribed mystical significance as the “midpoint of the sixth day of the Lord”, since according to the Apostle Peter, citing David the Psalmist, “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8–9). Given that the sixth — and final — day of creation was marked by the creation of man (Rev. 1:27), the sixth millennium “day”, punctuated (in its middle!) by the appearance of the Son of Man, was convincingly perceived as the world’s last day.

Already in apostolic times, the permanent expectation characteristic of early Christianity gave way to a more stable condition among Christian communities, oriented towards a longer perspective. The Apostle Paul, who encouraged the Thessalonians with the nearness of the Second Coming (“we who are alive, who remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who

have fallen asleep” — 1 Thess. 4:15), later clarified that the day of Christ would not come, “unless there comes a rebellion first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition”, who “sits in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God”; and though “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work”, the Anti-christ would not appear “until the one who now restrains is removed” (2 Thess. 2:3–4, 7).

This clarification appeased fervent minds. Although exegetes diverged on the meaning of the “restrainer” (ὁ κατέχων), most Christian writers inclined to identify it with the Roman Empire. “Who else but the Roman state [could it be] (*quis, nisi Romanus status*)?” — rhetorically asked the apologist Tertullian in the early 3rd century². A century later, Lactantius counseled: “while the city of Rome remains it appears that nothing of this kind is to be feared. [...] It is that city, that only, which still sustains all things”. Yet he was also convinced that the six-thousandth year had not yet been completed; “when this number was fulfilled, the end would inevitably come — and the human condition would improve”³.

In discussing the crisis of Antiquity, it must always be borne in mind that Christianity triumphed within the Roman Empire and spread extensively across the Near East precisely in the atmosphere of an impending eschaton. Neither the first Christian emperor Constantine the Great (a disciple of Lactantius), nor his successors — the Christian emperors of the 4th to 6th centuries — could fail to realize that their reign unfolded in a ‘countdown’ situation, as numerous chroniclers by that time had calculated that less and less time remained until the year 6000.

It was universally known that Christ had lived during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, whose historical eras had been well documented. In the Roman Empire, years were counted by consuls, but for longer periods, the so-called *Aera Augusti* was

² *Tertullianus*. De resurrectione carnis, 24 [PL. T. 2. Paris, 1879. Col. 876; *Тертуллиан*. Избранные сочинения / Общ. ред. А.А. Столярова. М., 1994. С. 208].

³ *Lactantius*. Divinae institutiones, VII, 14–15, 25 [PL. T. 6. Paris, 1844. Col. 779–784, 784–790].



Revelation of St. John the Theologian
(fresco, Osogovo Monastery, North Macedonia).
From open sources

sometimes used, beginning in 30 BCE (the conquest of Egypt)⁴. By this era, the founding of Constantinople — the first Christian capital in history — occurred in its 362nd year⁵. This date is attested by Hesychius of Miletus, a high-ranking official, theologian, and historian writing at the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries —

⁴ Traces of this era are preserved, in particular, in “Хронографии” Иоанна Малалы (кн. XVIII, гл. 8): *Ioannes Malalas. Chronographia* / Ed. H. Thurn. Berlin, 2000. (CFHB; 35). P. 357.

⁵ *Suda lexicon* / Ed. A. Adler. Pars III. Stuttgart, 1967. P. 176, 177.

precisely at the time when the era of Augustus had entered its 520s. Moreover, since the Nativity of Christ was reckoned to the 28th year of Augustus⁶, it was during these years that the five centuries separating the First Coming from the year 6000 — the beginning of the sacramental “seventh day of the Lord”, analogous to the last day of creation — were coming to an end. On the seventh day God “rested from all His works” (Gen. 2:2), and in remembrance, according to the fourth commandment of Moses, every Sabbath day is to be dedicated to the Lord God, “who blessed and sanctified it” (Exod. 20:8–11). Just as the appearance of the New Adam — Christ — in the sixth millennium inaugurated the renewal and redemptive healing of man created on the sixth day, so too the completion of the world’s creation on the seventh day was expected by the authors attempting to unveil the “mysteries of Providence” to manifest as a mystical renewal of the entire cosmos in the seventh millennium. The precise unfolding of these events was left to speculation, but the texts of the Revelation of John and apocryphal apocalypses warned of significant upheavals — primarily political⁷.

Table 1. Calculations of the sacramental date of the year 6000 of the world by writers of the 2nd–6th centuries (converted to CE).

Theophilus of Antioch (2nd century)	485
Clement of Alexandria (year 200)	406
Julius Africanus (212)	498
Hippolytus of Rome (235)	499

⁶ *Clemens Alexandrinus*. Stromateis, I 145 [Климент Александрийский. Строматы. Т. I: Книги 1–3 / Подготовка к изданию, пер. и коммент.: Е.В. Афонсин. СПб., 2003. P. 150].

⁷ See: *Magdalino P.* The Year 1000 in Byzantium // *Byzantium in the Year 1000* / Ed. P. Magdalino. Leiden, 2003. P. 233–269 (espec. P. 238). A fine overview of eschatological moods in the Middle East on the eve of the Hijra: *Shoemaker S.J.* The Apocalypse of Empire: Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam. Philadelphia (PA), 2018.

Anatolius of Laodicea (277)	500
Eusebius of Caesarea (326)	800
Andrew of Byzantium (353)	395
Panodorus (400)	506
Annianus of Alexandria (412)	507
Prosper of Aquitaine (455)	799
Andronicus (6 th century)	517
Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor (570)	589
Aeas of Alexandria (6 th century)	508/9

Jewish Eschatology in the Talmudic Era

It is important to remember that the Christian eschatological framework is rooted in the Hebrew Bible⁸. Jesus Christ Himself presents His mission as the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah (Yeshayahu), who lived in Judah at the turn of the 8th–7th centuries BCE. The biblical Book of Isaiah contains numerous prophecies concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God: “Thus says the Lord: Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed” (Isaiah 56:1); “In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established at the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isaiah 2:2); “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create” (Isaiah 65:17–18).

However, with regard to universal chronology, the rabbinic Jewish tradition — as codified in the chronicle *Seder Olam Rabbah* (2nd century CE) — diverges from the numerical data found in the Septuagint. It is based on an alternate recension of the Pentateuch in which the ages in the genealogies of both antediluvian and postdiluvian patriarchs are systematically

⁸ See: Daniélou J. *Théologie du judéo-christianisme*. Paris, 1958. P. 341–366.

shortened by 100 years. As a result, the total span of years from Adam to the era of Augustus is approximately 1,750 years shorter than in the computations of Christian chroniclers (alternative short chronologies are preserved in the Book of Jubilees and in Samaritan tradition)⁹. In the modern Jewish calendar, the year conventionally identified as the birth of Christ (1 BCE, or “year zero” in astronomical reckoning) corresponds to the year 3760 from creation. Thus, this approach undermines the Christian symbolic chronology: according to rabbinic reckoning, the sixth millennium began only in 1239/1240 CE (and is ongoing), while the first “Sabbatical” year — the year 6001 from creation — is expected to occur in the autumn of 2240. Accordingly, any mystical or chronological link between the historical Jesus and the Torah’s prophetic timetable is effectively severed, undermining Christian claims to messianic fulfillment in the person of Jesus. According to rabbinic teaching, the Messiah (*Mashiach*) is yet to come.

Nevertheless, the Old Testament contains another explicit chronological marker of the eschaton — found in Chapter 9 of the Book of Daniel¹⁰. The main figure of this book is a noble Judean named Daniel (*Dani’el*), famed for his wisdom at the courts of Babylon and Persia in the 6th century BCE. In addition to interpreting famous visions — such as the colossus with clay feet, the four beasts, and the conflict of the goat and the ram — Daniel was granted a vision concerning the end times and the resurrection of the dead. In this context, the archangel Gabriel conveys the following message:

“Seventy weeks (שְׁבַעִים שָׁבָעִים) are determined for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end

⁹ See: Кузенков П.В. Христианские хронологические системы. М., 2014. P. 33–39, таб. 1–2, сх. 1–2.

¹⁰ See: Рождественский А.П. Откровение Даниила о семидесяти седмицах. СПб., 1896; Сысов Д.А., *свящ.* Толкование книги пророка Даниила. М., 2013. A curious example of an actualizing “historicist” approach is found in: Бессонов И.А. Пророчества книги Даниила: происхождение, история экзегетики, толкование. Царство святых Всевышнего и мировая история. СПб., 2019.

of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince (עֲדָת־מָשִׁיחַ נְגִיד), there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. [...] And after the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off (יִכָּרֵת מָשִׁיחַ), but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come (עַם נְגִיד) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. [...]

Then he shall confirm a covenant (מְשִׁיחַ) with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate” (Daniel 9:24–27)¹¹.

Here, the Greek term *Christos* (χριστός) translates the Hebrew *Mashiach* (מָשִׁיחַ), meaning “anointed one” — a common biblical title for the king of Israel. It is not difficult to discern that the “weeks” refer to seven-year periods used in reckoning the so-called jubilees (*yobel*) — 49-year cycles after which mortgaged lands were returned and slaves were freed (Leviticus 25:9). The chronological countdown begins with the “command to restore Jerusalem”. The Bible records two such edicts issued by the Persian king Artaxerxes: the first to the Judean priest Ezra in the 7th year of Artaxerxes’ reign (1 Ezra 7:7–11), and the second to the Jewish nobleman Nehemiah in the 20th year (Nehemiah 2:1). Assuming Artaxerxes I reigned from 465 to 424 BCE, basic arithmetic confirms that the period of 70 weeks — 490 years — points to the first half of the 1st century CE. Calculating from the 7th year of Artaxerxes I (458 BCE) leads to the year 33 CE — the most probable historical date for the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth in Jerusalem under the Roman governor Pontius Pilate and the high priest Joseph Bar-Caiaphas¹².

¹¹ The Hebrew text is cited from: Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Stuttgart, 1997. P. 1404–1405.

¹² On the historical dates of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, see: Кузенков П.В. Христианские хронологические системы... P. 43–45.



Michelangelo. The Last Judgment.
 Sistine Chapel, Vatican Museums, Vatican.
From open sources

The authority of the Book of Daniel precluded the outright dismissal of its chronology, even though the book was later relocated in the Jewish canon from the “Prophets” to the “Writings” (*Ketubim*)¹³. However, the spiritual heirs of the scribes and Pharisees — those who delivered the King of the Jews to crucifixion with the declaration “we have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15) — could not accept its implications. As a result, considerable effort was devoted to reinterpreting the prophetic timeframes encoded in Daniel’s “weeks”¹⁴. Ultimately, the Babylonian Talmud (5th century CE) presents the following teaching (Gemara to *Megillah*, 3a):

¹³ On the basis that Daniel always communicated with God through angels.

¹⁴ See: Бессонов И.А. Деление седмиц в Дан. 9, 25: происхождение версии перевода Феодотиона и ее отношение к масоретскому тексту // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. Т. 52. 2017. № 3. С. 36–47.

“Rabbi Yirmeya said (some say it was Rabbi H̄iyya bar Abba): [...] Jonathan ben Uzziel¹⁵ composed the *Targum*¹⁶ of the Prophets.¹⁷ He sought to translate the Writings as well, but a heavenly voice called out and said: “You have done enough!” Why? Because in them is knowledge of the end and the coming of the Messiah (דְּרֵאִית בֵּיה קִץ מְשִׁיחַ)”. William Davidson’s English commentary explains that the Book of Daniel contains a veiled reference to the end times, and had it been fully translated, the time of the end would have been revealed to all¹⁸.

In the end, it was acknowledged that all the prophesied dates for the arrival of the *Mashiach* had long since passed, and that Israel must now wait patiently for his coming¹⁹.

In everyday life, Jews used the Seleucid Era (beginning in 312/311 BCE) and the era dating from the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE). However, from the 8th century CE onward, new dating systems emerged – counting years from the Creation or from Adam (differing by one year). Gradually, the Era of Creation became the most authoritative within the Jewish world, and it is officially recognized in modern Israel: the year 2025 corresponds to 5785 (with 5786 beginning on 23 September). The reasons for the adoption of this era in the 8th–9th centuries remain unclear. The prevailing theory cites the decline of Hellenistic traditions in the Middle East; however, this is questionable, as Syriac Christians continued using the Seleucid Era until the 19th century. It is plausible that the emergence of the Christian Era of Creation triggered the increased use of a Jewish equivalent – a topic that will be discussed in the following section.

¹⁵ Jewish scribe (*Tanna*) of the 1st century CE.

¹⁶ Translation into colloquial Aramaic.

¹⁷ The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) is divided into 3 parts: the Five Books of Moses (Torah), the Prophets (*Nevi'im*), and the Writings (*Ketuvim*).

¹⁸ Babylonian Talmud: The William Davidson Edition // Sefaria. URL: <https://www.sefaria.org/Megillah.3a.9?lang=bi> (accessed 01.07.2025).

¹⁹ Babylonian Talmud. Sanhedrin, Ch. 11. 97ab. Ibid. <https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.97a?lang=bi> (accessed 01.07.2025).

Mounting tension and attempts at resolution

By the 6th century CE — the time of the birth of Muhammad — eschatological tension in the Near East had reached an acute level²⁰. It was this atmosphere of apocalyptic expectation, rather than idle scholastic debates among theologians or the “national liberation struggles” of Eastern peoples against “Roman domination”, that underlay the drama of ecclesiastical schisms culminating in the so-called anti-Chalcedonian communities (Copts and Ethiopians, Syrian Jacobites, Armenians). In such a charged context, the unity of the Church could not be preserved — neither through repression, nor conciliatory dialogue, nor the theological initiatives of Emperor Justinian. The sackings of Rome by the Goths in 410 CE and the Vandals in 455 CE, followed by the disappearance of imperial authority in the West in 478 CE, resounded throughout the *oikoumene* as ominous “signs of the end”. While these events did not mark the fall of the Roman Empire (which would continue in New Rome — Constantinople — for nearly a millennium), the catastrophe that befell the “Eternal City” left a lasting impression. As noted above, Lactantius had linked the end of the world with the downfall of Rome.

Expectations surrounding the onset of the “Sabbatical” seventh millennium became intertwined with the eschatological vision of the Book of Revelation, where an angel binds Satan for a thousand years, and a millennial reign of Christ with the holy martyrs precedes the Last Judgment (Revelation 20:4). The concept of a thousand-year kingdom was interpreted in a variety of ways, only one of which — the vulgar and hedonistic doctrine of Cerinthus — was condemned by the Church as heretical chiliasm

²⁰ On the eschatological views of the Persian Shahanshah Khosrow II, see: Кузенков П.В. Эра Юбилеев у Бируни и пророчество Хосрова II у Феофилакта: астрология и эсхатология в эпоху хиджры // Ближний Восток и Северная Африка: от доисламской эпохи к Новому времени. История. География. Общество / Отв. ред. Д.Е. Мишин. М., 2023. P. 44–53. See also: *Shoemaker S.J.* The Apocalypse of Empire... P. 100–115.

(millenarianism)²¹. In more orthodox and ascetic forms, the idea gained broad traction in ancient Christianity²² and continues to be influential today²³.

The apocalyptic revelation of John could not be ignored, given the canonical status of the book and its attribution to St. John the Theologian. Thus, various Church Fathers offered competing interpretations of this mystical text in an effort to calm the faithful. In the West, St. Augustine felt compelled to compose a comprehensive treatise, *De Civitate Dei*, where he refuted both pagan superstitions and chronological-millenarian speculations. The great Latin Doctor of the Church asserted that the Kingdom of God (*Civitas Dei*) had existed on earth since the dawn of history, just as the opposing mundane state of the devil (*civitas terrena*) had had its origin with the Cain's fratricide, Cain being its first citizen. As for the reign of the saints with Christ, Augustine argued that it had begun at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit — sent by the Father at the promise of the Son — had descended upon the faithful disciples, offering *paraklesis* (παράκλησις, “consolation”) to them and all true members of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church²⁴. Interestingly, a similar interpretation of John's Apocalypse as a “Christian millennium” was proposed by Augustine's theological opponent, the Donatist Tyconius²⁵.

Closely linked to Augustine's concept was the idea of dating years from the beginning of the Christian era: initially from the Annunciation (March 25), and later from the Nativity (Decem-

²¹ *Евсевий Кесарийский*. Церковная история. СПб., 2013. Р. 148–149 (III 28).

²² See: *Войтенко А.А.* Идеи миллениаризма в Египте I–IV вв. // Диалог со временем. Т. 33. 2010. С. 86–109.

²³ It is notable that one of the latest apologies of chiliasm and a critique of these ideas were written by clergy and published by the same publisher (“Алетейя”): *Кирьянов Б., свящ.* Полное изложение истины о Тысячелетнем царстве Господа на Земле: Богословие Мужей Апостольских. СПб., 2001; *Ким Н., свящ.* Тысячелетнее Царство: Экзегеза и история толкования XX главы Апокалипсиса. СПб., 2003.

²⁴ See: *Амвросий (Полянский), еп.* Учение о Царстве Божиим по сочинению блаженного Августина “О Граде Божиим”. Тверь, 2003.

²⁵ *Небольсин А.Г.* Тихоний Африканский — толкователь Апокалипсиса // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2016. Вып. 3 (48). С. 102–107.

ber 25). Although several variants of the year of the Annunciation circulated²⁶, the Easter table of Dionysius Exiguus gained particular prominence. It dated Christ's birth and annunciation to the year 752 from the founding of Rome (1 BCE), and by the 7th–8th centuries, this system of Christian dating became the standard across Western Europe. From that point onward, Western Christian eschatology shifted its chronological focus from cosmic time to “round” numbers linked to Christ's life²⁷. One can easily identify dramatic and even pivotal historical events in the West tied to the years 1000/1033 and 1500/1533, while the apocalyptic intensity surrounding the years 2000/2033 can be assessed from the readers' personal experience.

In the Greek East during the 6th century, a new historiographical synthesis emerged. The idea of the apocalyptic thousand-year reign of saints inaugurated by Christ's First Coming was combined with mystical world chronology by situating Christ's Ascension in the year 6000 from Creation. This framework appears in the writings of Hesychius of Miletus and in the authentic *Chronographia* of John Malalas (preserved only in Slavic fragments)²⁸.

However, the apparent artificiality of this chronological scheme — which conflicted with known historical data — necessitated further refinement. And a more coherent solution was eventually found. On the eve of the Arab conquests, during the reign of Emperor Heraclius (610–640 CE), an anonymous author — whose name was lost with the first page of the manuscript — composed a detailed world chronicle. This text was synchronized not only with the historical data known at the

²⁶ For example, in the popular Latin universal chronicle of Jerome, the 1st year of the Lord (*annus Domini*) is taken as 2 BCE. In the continuation of Jerome's chronicle by Prosper of Aquitaine, the era from the Resurrection is used, where year 1 corresponds to the 30th year of Christ (28 CE).

²⁷ Regarding the calculation of the years of the world, Western medieval authors demonstrate a surprising variety of opinions. Thus, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle places the 6000th year of the world in 806, the Annals of Ulster in 1796, and Bede the Venerable in 2048 CE (!).

²⁸ See: Кузнецков П.В. Христианские хронологические системы... Р. 281–288.

time but also with the 19-year lunisolar cycle underlying the Alexandrian Paschal calendar. This work, later known in scholarly tradition as the *Chronicon Paschale*, dated the creation of the world to Sunday, March 18, 5509 BCE, placing the creation of the celestial bodies on Wednesday, March 21 — the spring equinox and the “natural” boundary of the year. Soon thereafter, based on this chronology, a new dating system emerged and took root: the so-called Byzantine Era, beginning on September 1, 5509 BCE²⁹.

This chronological system was known in sources as the *Roman Era*, reflecting its association with the Roman Empire — which survived the crises of the Augustan monarchy in which Christ had been born, lived, and resurrected, and was renewed by Constantine the Great as a Christian polity with a new capital. By the 7th century, this state — now conventionally referred to as the Byzantine Empire — bore little resemblance to Rome of the Julio-Claudian dynasty or even Diocletian’s dominion. Latin had largely fallen out of use and was replaced by Greek even in legal and military spheres. The title of emperor, rather than the classical *αὐτοκράτωρ*, had become the familiar Eastern *βασιλεύς* (king). The state’s administrative, financial, and military systems underwent substantial transformation. The West had largely fallen under Germanic rule, the Balkans were overrun by barbarians, and the prosperous eastern provinces had been ravaged by Persian invasions. Nevertheless, the Empire endured, even emerging victorious from what seemed a lost war with Iran. In February 628 CE, a coup in Ctesiphon resulted in the assassination of Khosrow II, and the weak new shahanshah, Kavadh II, hastily concluded peace with Byzantium. At the end of that year, Heraclius celebrated a triumph in Constantinople, bringing to a close the 27-year war. It was in this atmosphere that the author of the *Paschal Chronicle* composed his work (which breaks off in the manuscript precisely at the events of 628 CE). By 638 CE, we find the first attestation of the Era of *Rhomaioi* (Byzantines) in a paschal treatise by a cer-

²⁹ See: Кузенков П.В. Христианские хронологические системы... Р. 321–330.

tain monk and presbyter named George³⁰, who described it as the most popular and convenient chronological system³¹. However, the earliest known instances of its practical use date to the late 7th century: e.g., the 3rd canon of the Quinisext Council (January 15, 4th indiction, year 6199 = 691 CE), tomb inscriptions from Kerch (year 6200 = 691/692 CE), and Athens (October 15, Wednesday, 7th indiction, year 6202 = 693 CE)³².

What distinguished the Byzantine Era (of *Rhomaioi*) from other creation-based chronological systems was its incorporation into practical usage. Earlier systems — including the Alexandrian Era, popular among monastics and dating creation to March 25, 5492 BCE — remained largely confined to theological and historiographical works. Dates continued to be recorded by consular years and imperial reigns (mandatory from 537 CE)³³. Only in the 7th century did the Byzantine world begin to widely adopt a calendar reckoning years from Creation. Given the broader historical context, it may be inferred that this shift toward using creation-based dating was a societal response to the prevailing “eschatological hysteria” in Eastern Christian circles — much like the simultaneous Western move to reckon years from the birth of Christ. Both systems, in their own ways, aimed to neutralize apocalyptic anxiety. However, while the Western Christian era dispensed with any consideration of the world’s age, the Byzantine world era made it clear to all that the symbolic year 6000 had passed without cataclysm and that humanity had entered the seventh millennium — a “Sabbath” era, in which a special role was assigned to those devoted to God. The Christian emperors viewed this as a divine affirma-

³⁰ See: Кузенков П.В. Георгий (1-я пол. VII в.), монах и пресвитер // Православная энциклопедия. Т. 11. М., 2006. Р. 28.

³¹ Diekamp F. Der Mönch und Presbyter Georgios, ein unbekannter Schriftsteller des 7. Jahrhunderts // Byzantinische Zeitschrift. Bd. 9. 1900. S. 14–51.

³² See: Виноградов А.Ю., Кузенков П.В. Эпиграфические свидетельства введения эры “от сотворения мира” // Звучат лишь Письмена. К юбилею Альбины Александровны Мединцевой. М.: ИА РАН, 2019. Р. 89–100.

³³ See: Кузенков П.В. Концепт “царства” (βασιλεία) в 47-й новелле Юстиниана Великого (537 г.) // Византийский временник. Т. 107. 2023. С. 67–92.

tion of their rule³⁴. It is no coincidence that, beginning in the 7th century, imperial titulature adopted the formula πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ (faithful in Christ)³⁵, and Byzantine coins began to depict Christ as *Rex Regnantium* (King of Kings)³⁶. The Byzantine Empire, in effect, became the embodied representation of a new era, nearly reaching the year 7000 (1492 CE) and presenting itself as the world's only true Christian kingdom – leading faithful humanity toward the Second Coming.

However, the Byzantine claims to universal spiritual and political leadership soon encountered a new, even more striking expression of total societal devotion to God³⁷. The adherents of this movement, emerging from the sands of Arabia and within decades sweeping across Western Asia and North Africa, referred to themselves as *mu'minīn* (the faithful) and *muslimūn* (those who submit). Their faith and submission were directed toward the same one Creator God who had sanctified the seventh day and whose coming Kingdom had been foretold by the biblical prophets. Muslims also await the Day of Judgment – but the Qur'an forbids speculation on the exact timing of the End even more sternly than the Gospels³⁸.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

³⁴ The Byzantine “imperial eschatology” is explored in the monograph: Podskalsky G. Byzantinische Reicheschatologie: Die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Grossreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem Tausendjährigen Friedensreiche (Apok. 20): Eine motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung. München, 1972.

³⁵ This formula, already found in the Apostle Paul (Eph. 1:2; Col. 1:2), was introduced into the imperial title under Justinus II (565–578) and from the time of Heraclius became standard. See: Rösch G. Ὄνομα βασιλείας: Studien zum offiziellen Gebrauch der Kaisertitel in spätantiker und frühbyzantinischer Zeit. Wien, 1978. S. 62–63.

³⁶ Christ appears on the obverse of *Justinian II's* coins in 692. See: Бутырский М.Н. Христос – comes Augusti: к вопросу о нумизматической иконографии Юстиниана II // АДСВ. Т. 49. 2021. P. 55–69.

³⁷ See: Shoemaker S.J. A Prophet Has Appeared: The Rise of Islam Through Christian and Jewish eyes: A Sourcebook. Oakland (CA), 2021.

³⁸ Коран. Аль-Араф, 187.



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Original paper



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Essays on the History of Sacred Geography of Ancient Palestine: The City of Joppa and the Legends of Perseus, Andromeda, and Jonah

Abstract

As a result of several centuries of intellectual “restoration” work, the myth turns into a historically proven and even a kind of museumified event. The myth is historicized. We see that over many centuries, a certain system of features is constructed for an initially fictitious or self-evident story that should testify to the truthfulness, historicity, cultural and religious importance of its plot. Thus, a tradition of memory of this story or event arises. In this case, the initial falsity or reality of the event is not very important. What is important is that the culture wants to present this event as genuine and historical. That is, truth and falsity, historicity and fiction in this case depend on the opinion of people, society, and tradition, which acquires a self-sufficient meaning. Society itself constructs its history, and chooses to remember it in the form that is convenient for itself. There is a competitive struggle between different traditions (in this case, between the Greco-Roman and Jewish). The Jews promote a certain set of criticisms of the Greco-Roman tradition, but their criticism of the “pagan” “mythological thinking” in favor of “Jewish” (monotheistic) piety in this case does not consist in the rejection

of the myth or the struggle against it, but only in the creation of their own version of a similar myth. From this point of view, the monuments of the myths of Perseus, Andromeda and Jonah, which were shown to travellers in ancient Joppa, represent a typical model of the development of sacred geography. They are like many other monuments of Christian, Muslim and other religious traditions.

Keywords:

Cultural Memory, Historicization of Myth, Greco-Roman, Jewish Myth-Making Traditions, Palestine, City of Joppa, Perseus, Andromeda, Jonah

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ancient Palestine, as a sacred land of many religious traditions and sacred geography, has long been the subject of continuous study. It is well known that in antiquity, traditions of shrine veneration and pilgrimage developed among the Jews in Palestine and later among the Christians who followed them; in the Middle Ages, these were supplemented by the Muslims. These cultural traditions, themselves highly complex and multifaceted, are regularly discussed in various aspects by modern scholars, including in some of our own publications. Yet, alongside these traditions, in the history of Palestine's sacred geography there exists another one, conventionally defined as “pagan”, which to this day remains somewhat in the shadows of scholarly interest.

The multilingual culture of ancient Palestine had been shaped from early times under the strong influence of both Phoenicia and ancient Egypt. Later, in the Hellenistic era, the Greek world supplanted them. The Greeks and then the Romans were present in Palestine for a long time — over a millennium — and their religious views, tied to the local geography, left significant traces in the region. Certainly, for all these peoples — Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans — Palestine was always on the margin of their cultural spheres and interests. Within Palestine itself, the Hellenized population primarily occupied peripheral areas — the Mediterranean coast and Transjordan.

Nevertheless, in the context of Greco-Roman culture, several holy sites had emerged here, which were developed into significant temple complexes and attracted pilgrims. Among these sites, perhaps the most important are the following three:

1. The city of Paneas, or Caesarea Philippi—the site of a sanctuary to Pan and many related miracles¹;
2. Mount Carmel — a site of a centuries-old tradition of veneration of a solar supreme deity by the Phoenicians, Jews, and later the Greeks and Romans²;
3. The city of Joppa (modern-day Jaffa within Tel Aviv).

It was with this last city that the famous myth of Perseus and Andromeda became associated in ancient tradition. In the present study, we propose to examine in detail this vivid chapter of Palestine's culture, closely tied to classical antiquity.

Joppa was known in written sources beginning from the 15th century BCE³. It is first mentioned in the annals of the campaigns

¹ Тарханова Р.В. Кесария Филиппова // Православная энциклопедия. Т. 32. М., 2013. Р. 557–564; Πανιάς // Pauly's Realencyclopädie (*Pauly, Wissowa*). Hbd. 36. 1949. Col. 594–600; Wilson J.F. Caesarea Filippi: Baniyas, the Lost City of Pan. L.; N.-Y., 2004.

² Тарханова Р.В., Лисовой Н.Н. Кармил // Православная энциклопедия. Т. 31. М., 2013. С. 237–247; Karmel // Pauly's Realencyclopädie (*Pauly, Wissowa*). Hbd. 20. 1919. Col. 1957–1960.

³ Joppe // Pauly's Realencyclopädie (*Pauly, Wissowa*). Hbd. 18. 1916. Col. 1901–1902; *Tolkowsky S.* The Gateway to Palestine: A History of Jaffa. L., 1924; *Abel F.-M.* Geographie de la Palestine. Vol. 2: Geographie politique. Les villes. P., 1938². P. 355–356; *Schuerer E.* The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175BC–135AD). 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1973–1979. Vol. 2. P. 110–

of the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmose III among the places conquered by the Egyptians. In the 1st millennium BCE, Joppa was a colony of Tyre of Phoenicia. The primary deity of Joppa at that time was Dagon, widely worshipped along the Palestinian coast. The veneration of Dagon is attested by the inscription on the sarcophagus of King Eshmunazar (4th century BCE) and the stele of the Assyrian king Sennacherib from 701 BCE, which lists Beth-Dagon, a suburb of Joppa, among the lands subjugated by Assyria.

Joppa did not fall within the influence of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. In the Bible, it is mentioned in the description of the territorial boundaries of the tribe of Dan as a city clearly beyond the reach of ancient Judean tribal expansion (Joshua 19:46). It also served as a port used for transporting timber from Lebanon (Phoenicia) for the construction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 2:15; Ezra 3:7). A significant role is assigned to Joppa only in the relatively late *Book of Jonah* (4th–3rd centuries BCE).

During the Hellenistic era, Joppa began to be settled around the same time by Greeks and Jews, partially displacing the earlier Phoenician colonists. And it was during this period — between the 4th and 1st centuries BCE — that a remarkable encounter occurred between two (or even more) vastly different ancient cultures, giving rise to the enigmatic circumstances we will attempt to explore below.

The story of Perseus rescuing Andromeda from the jaws of the sea monster Cetus was in ancient times and remains to this day one of the most popular tales of Greco-Roman mythology⁴.

114; Keel O., Kuechler M. Orte und Landschaften der Bibel: Ein Handbuch und Studienteisefuehrer zum Heiligen Land. Bd. 2: Der Sueden. Zurich et al., 1982. S. 12–28; New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavation in the Holy Land (NEAEHL). Jerusalem, 1993. II. P. 655–659; Jafo // Neues Bibel-Lexikon. II / Hrsg. M. Goerg, B. Lang. Zurich; Dusseldorf, 1995. P. 256–257.

⁴ For the myth of Perseus and Andromeda, its possible interpretations, as well as the incredibly rich artistic tradition around this theme, have been widely discussed by scholars; see: Hartland E. S. The Legend of Perseus. 3 vols. L.,

It is worth briefly recounting the story. Perseus, the son of Zeus and Danaë, returns from the far western edge of the inhabited world on the winged sandals of Hades, carrying the head of the slain Gorgon Medusa. Flying past a seashore, he sees a bound maiden and soon learns that this is Andromeda, the daughter of the royal couple Cepheus and Cassiopeia. She had been offered as a sacrifice to the sea monster on the command of the oracle of Ammon, as retribution for Cassiopeia's boast that she was more beautiful than the Nereids, thus angering Poseidon. The sea god sent a flood and set a monster upon the land. Perseus secures a promise from Cepheus and Cassiopeia that if he defeats Cetus, Andromeda will be given to him as his wife, despite her prior betrothal to King Agenor, Cepheus's uncle (in Ovid's version, to Phineus, Cepheus's cousin). Perseus slays the monster with the help of the miraculous adamantite sickle sword previously gifted to him by Hermes.⁵ Afterward, a wedding is held in the royal palace for Perseus and Andromeda, though Cepheus and Cassiopeia agree reluctantly, foreseeing inevitable complications with Agenor. Indeed, Agenor soon arrives at the wedding with his court and army, demands Andromeda, and is supported by Cepheus and Cassiopeia. A battle ensues in which Perseus kills many of Agenor's warriors and turns Agenor himself, along with 200 others, to stone using Medusa's head. Perseus then returns to Greece with Andromeda and becomes king of Seriphos and later Argos.

Such is the myth. Its fullest versions are found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (late 1st century BCE), *Bibliotheca* of Pseudo-Apollodorus (1st century CE), and *Genealogiae (Fabulae)* of Pseudo-Hyginus

1894–1896; Woodward J.M. Perseus. Cambr., 1937; Langlotz E. Perseus. Heidelberg, 1951; Dugas C. Observations sur la légende de Persée // REG. Vol. 69. 1956. P. 1–15; Грейвс Р. Мифы древней Греции. Екатеринбург, 2005. P. 340–347; Тахо-Годи А.А. Андромеда, Кассиопея, Кефей, Персей // МНМ. 1988. Т. 1. P. 82, 626, 645; Т. 2. P. 304–305.

⁵ According to Nonnos (5th c.), Perseus showed the Gorgon's head to the monster and it turned to stone; see: Nonnos *Panopolitanus*. Dionysiaca / Ed. D. F. Graefe. Lipsiae, 1819–1826. XXV.80–84. Vol. 2. P. 80 (рус. пер.: Нонн Панополитанский. Деяния Диониса / Пер.: Ю. А. Голубец. СПб., 1997. P. 244).

(early 3rd century CE)⁶. Despite its popularity, this story is not among the oldest in Greek mythology⁷.

As observed by numerous scholars of antiquity, the tale of Andromeda's rescue shares many parallels with other Greek and Near Eastern myths, most of which are older in origin. For example, one of Heracles' labors involved freeing the Trojan princess Hesione, similarly offered as a sacrifice to Poseidon's wrath and exposed on the shore⁸.

Some resemblance to this feat can also be seen in Heracles' victory over the Lernaean Hydra. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, another hero, Bellerophon, similarly defeats the Chimera⁹. Here, it is worth noting a feature of these myths that will later prove important for our discussion. According to some versions of the stories about Greek heroes overcoming sea monsters, during the struggle, the heroes could find themselves inside the creature's stomach and destroy it only by tearing open its belly from within¹⁰. In the myth of Perseus's feat as

⁶ *Ovidii Nasoni. Metamorphoseon libri XV* / Rec. H. Magnus. B., 1914. IV.663–803, V.1–235. P. 157–177 (рус. пер.: *Овидий. Метаморфозы* / Пер.: Р. Шервинский // *Овидий. Собр. соч.* СПб., 1994. Т. 2. С. 93–104); *Apollo-dorus. The Library* / Ed. J.J. Frazer. L., 1921. II.4.3. Vol. 1. P. 158–160 (рус. пер.: *Аполлодор.* 1993. P. 43–44); *Iulius Hyginus Augustus. Fabulae* / Rec. I. Micyllus. Basel, 1535. 64. P. 24 (рус. пер.: *Гигин. Мифы* / Пер.: Д.О. Торшилов. СПб., 2000². P. 84).

⁷ Perseus is first mentioned in the "*Iliad*" (XIV.319–320) as the son of Danaë and Zeus and the most glorious of men. However, early Greek sources before the 5th century BCE are silent about Andromeda.

⁸ *Грейѳс.* 2005. P. 701–709.

⁹ *Грейѳс.* 2005. P. 356–359; *Hesiodus. Theogonia. 319–325* // *Hesiodi Carmina* / Ed. A. Rzach. Lipsiae, 1908. P. 19 (рус. пер.: *Гесиод. Полное собрание текстов* / РеД.: В.Н. Ярхо. М., 2001. P. 30).

¹⁰ The 12th-century Byzantine philologist John Tzetzes, in his scholia on Lycophron's poem, describes the myth of Heracles saving Hesione (Σχόλια εἰς Λυκοφρόνα. 34 // 1811. P. 327–329). Heracles was swallowed by a whale (Tzetzes identifies it with Typhon) and spent three days in its belly. After defeating the monster, he lost all his hair. (This version is also found in Hellanicus of Mytilene (second half of 5th century BCE: *Hellanicus. Fr. 136* // *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum* / 1841. Vol. 1. P. 64). The version where Jason is swallowed by a dragon guarding the Golden Fleece is known from Attic vase paintings but absent in mythographic texts (see: *Carpenter Th. H. Art and Myth in Ancient Greece.* L., 1991. P. 184–195, Pl. 277). Most frequently in this context, the red-figure cup painted by Douris from Cerveteri, ca. 470 BCE, is recalled.

we have recounted it, this motif of being swallowed seems absent, but, as will become clear, it existed somewhere in the shadow of the official versions recorded by mythographers¹¹.

The picture is no less fascinating in the myths of the Near East from the 3rd to the 2nd millennium BCE. Here, the earliest known versions of the hero's battle with a certain aquatic serpent-like creature are found in the Sumero-Akkadian tradition, where Marduk defeated Tiamat¹². In the Ugaritic epic, one of the deeds of the hero Ba'lu (Baal) was his victory over the seven-headed serpent Litanu (Lotan).¹³ Undoubtedly, the influence of the Ugaritic and, more broadly, Phoenician epic is reflected in the biblical depictions of Yahweh's struggle with the serpent Leviathan (*Book of Isaiah*, *Book of Job*, and *Book of Psalms*)¹⁴.

In its most general form, this narrative is defined as the "hero's battle with the serpent"¹⁵. In one variation or another, it is present in most of the world's folkloric traditions. The structural analysis of this narrative, most significant for shaping modern scholarly understanding of it, was conducted by V. Ya. Propp in the 1920s–1940s¹⁶. According to him, the most ancient form of this myth was the story of the hero being swallowed by a supernatural being, which was typically perceived as something fish-or serpent-like. Inside the belly of this creature, the hero acquired some

¹¹ This is alluded to by Lycophron in the poem *Alexandra* (III–II вв. до н. э.) (*Lycophron. Alexandra*. 837–839 // Ed. A. W. Mair. L., 1921. P. 562–564 (рус. пер.: *Ликофрон. Александра* // ВДИ. 2011. № 2. С. 247)). Lycophron's commentator John Tzetzes interpreted this passage in exactly this way.

¹² Когда Ану сотворил Небо: Литература древней Месопотамии. 2000. P. 41–47; МНМ. 1988. Т. 2. P. 505; *Грейвс*. 2005. P. 707.

¹³ О Ба'лу: Угаритские поэтические повествования / Пер., введ. и коммент.: И.Ш. Шифман. М., 1999 (ПГВ. Т. 105.2). P. 143, 157–158. This plot is most similar to the story of Heracles' victory over the Lernaean Hydra (*Day*. 1985).

¹⁴ Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 74:13–14 (God's victory over Leviathan); Book of Job 40.20 – 41.26 (man's inability to defeat the serpent); Psalm 103.25–26 (Leviathan as a creation of God, like everything else).

¹⁵ For the main bibliography, see: *Иванов В.В. Дракон, Змей* // МНМ. 1988. Т. 1. P. 394–395, 468–471.

¹⁶ *Пропп В.Я. Исторические корни волшебной сказки*. М., 2004 (Л., 1946). P. 183–241.

new higher knowledge or miraculous gifts. In the end, the monster would vomit the hero back out, without either him or the creature suffering any harm from their encounter. The reproduction of this myth is known in initiation rituals among various tribes across all continents¹⁷.

In later stages of development, the creature that swallows the hero begins to be perceived as an embodiment of evil, and the hero, finding himself in its stomach, starts to fight it by drawing a knife or sword to wound its innards or by kindling a fire inside. Gradually, the swallowed hero was supplanted by the hero who manages to defeat the devouring monster. Further still, the swallowing of the hero—now seen as an undesirable sign of his weakness — is replaced by the swallowing of some substitute. For instance, in battle, the hero begins to throw red-hot stones into the monster's belly or, optimally, the monster swallows a maiden whom the hero must rescue. In the final stage of the myth's development, according to Propp, the motif of swallowing disappears entirely, leaving only the description of the hero's duel with the monster to save a maiden doomed to die for some reason. It is in this stage that we encounter this myth among the classical Greeks. However, we have also seen that among the Greeks, alongside serpent-slaying, the idea of swallowing persisted, too, resurfacing repeatedly in various versions of myths. On the other hand, in the myths of Mesopotamia, which are significantly older than the Greek ones, the swallowing motif is expressed much more distinctly¹⁸.

Thus, given this extensive contextual development of the myth, it can be said that the myth of Perseus and Andromeda was formed on the basis of the motifs widely recurring in the folklore and literature of numerous ancient peoples. The classical form of the myth is the result of the Greeks borrowing from the Semitic peoples of

¹⁷ Propp (2004, pp. 191–192) gives as examples the initiation rites of Australian aborigines (according to Radcliffe-Brown), natives of New Guinea (according to Schürtz and Nevermann), Oceania (according to Frobenius), Indians of Queensland (Canada; according to Webster), as well as African tribes of Senegambia and the Poro (according to Leo Frobenius).

¹⁸ Пропп В.Я. 2004. С. 206.

Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine during the era of the great Greek colonization (circa 7th–6th centuries BCE).

One of the most intriguing questions related to the Perseus and Andromeda myth is its geographical dimension. Where exactly was Andromeda destined to be sacrificed and then rescued? As it turns out, ancient authors were also interested in it. Ovid, Pseudo-Apollodorus, and Pseudo-Hyginus point to the land of Ethiopia. However, many other authors were convinced that Perseus's feat took place near the city of Joppa, where King Cepheus ruled. Let us attempt to clarify this issue.

The earliest evidence of the Greeks' interest in the story of Andromeda's rescue is the depiction of Perseus's feat on a Corinthian black-figure amphora from the first half of the 6th century BCE (Berlin Museum, F 1652, Neg. No. 6959). The amphora had been created long before any surviving literary accounts of the myth. It depicts, from left to right, a monster labeled as *κῆτος* (something between a dog and a pig), Perseus fighting it, and Andromeda tied to something by her shoulders and elbows.

The first author known to have described this myth was Pherecydes of Athens (mid-6th century BCE), who composed the treatise *Heptamychos* ("Seven-Chambered Cosmos") on the origins of the gods. His treatise has not survived, but Pseudo-Apollodorus references it, asserting that the events took place in Ethiopia.¹⁹ Thus, what Pherecydes himself had thought remains unknown, as it is impossible to determine how accurately Apollodorus conveyed his version.

By the mid-5th century BCE, Perseus and Andromeda were well known to Herodotus and his Athenian audience. Herodotus does not retell the myth but repeatedly attempts to interpret it. Accord-

¹⁹ *Apollodorus*. II.5.9 / Ed. Frazer. Vol. 1. P. 204–208 (рус. пер.: *Аполлодор*. 1993. P. 55–56).

ing to his account, Perseus's lineage originated in Egypt, and in the city of Chemmis near Thebes, he was worshipped as a hero. At the same time, Perseus was also the ancestor of the Persians, since one of his and Andromeda's sons was named Perses. From Greek legends, it was known that Perseus's descendants were kings of Argos. In connection with this, Herodotus claims that during Xerxes' invasion of Greece, the Persians even made a peace agreement with the Argives, allegedly considering each other kin²⁰. Herodotus does not concern himself with the geography of the myth, nor does he mention Joppa, but his broad associations of Perseus with Egypt, Argos, and his clearly strained reasoning about Persian origins suggest that the historian knew of no specific location that could be linked to this myth.

In the 5th century BCE, the three greatest Athenian playwrights — Phrynichus, Sophocles, and Euripides — each wrote tragedies titled *Andromeda*; none of them have survived. Their content can only be inferred from a few fragments and indirect sources. There is Aristophanes' comedy *Thesmophoriazussae* (411 BCE), in which Euripides' lost work is parodied: the figure of Andromeda is transformed into a character played by Mnesilochus, who accidentally stumbles upon a women's gathering, is tied to a post like the ancient maiden, but then narrowly escapes the looming danger.

It is considered highly probable that Euripides was the first to specify Ethiopia as the setting for the myth. The Alexandrian astronomer Pseudo-Eratosthenes (1st century BCE) mentions Ethiopia as the location in Euripides' tragedy²¹. By "Ethiopia", we should likely understand not the known country in East Africa but rather a region of Libya somewhere on the southern Mediterranean coast, between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Apparently, neither Euripides nor his successors provided any more precise geographical coordinates. Why Euripides might have done this — why he needed the vague Ethiopia — remains impossible to determine. However,

²⁰ Геродот. История. II. 91; VI. 53–54; VII. 61, 150.

²¹ Pseudo-Eratosthenes. *Catasterismi*. 15 / Ed. A. Olivieri. 1897. P. 19.

Euripides' authority as a playwright and mythographer in antiquity had been so great that this possible innovation of his gained many adherents among the later writers. Meanwhile, Ovid renamed Agenor, Perseus's rival for Andromeda's hand, to Phineus, thereby clearly linking the events to Phoenicia. Among the early Byzantine writers, the Antiochene chronicler John Malalas (6th century CE) also touched upon the myth, mentioning that Andromeda had been rescued in Ethiopia²².

At the same time, by the end of the classical era, evidence emerges of an alternative interpretation of the myth, which unequivocally states that Cepheus and Cassiopeia ruled a land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, with their capital in the city of Joppa. To create this alternative interpretation — as it was often done — the common phonetic similarity between “Ethiopia” (Aithiopia) and “Joppa” (Ioppē) was exploited. It is evident that the idea of linking the myth to Joppa arose after the appearance of the “Ethiopian” version. Yet it cannot be denied that the unknown authors of the new “Joppa” localization demonstrated a very subtle knowledge of mythological tradition. The ancestral connections of Cepheus — son of Belus (king of Assyria) and nephew of Agenor (Phineus, king of Phoenicia) — pointed to the myth's original close ties with the Syro-Phoenician context. Cepheus was a close relative of several major mythical royal families of Tyre, Sidon, Assyria, and Cyprus. It was precisely these genealogical connections, it seems, that mythographers used as the main argument in favor of recognizing Joppa as Cepheus's domain. The phonetic similarity between “Ethiopia” and “Joppa” likely served only as a pretext for this decision.

By whom, how, and when was this version made public? For what purpose? It is currently impossible to say. It is clear, however, that in the ancient world, such speculations on religious-mythological themes usually had political undertones. The “Joppa” version evidently emerged after the staging of Euripides' tragedy in Athens in 412 BCE. The first author to mention Joppa as the site of Perseus's

²² *Ioannes Malalas. Chronographia / Ed. L. Dindorf. Bonn, 1831. P. 36.*

feat was the geographer Pseudo-Scylax, author of the *Periplus of the Mediterranean Sea* (late 4th–3rd century BCE)²³. Thus, the idea of linking Joppa to the myth could have arisen during the long and historically turbulent period between the late 5th and late 4th century BCE.

Later sources show that the idea of associating the myth with Joppa had gradually gained many adherents and became firmly established in the Hellenistic and Roman world. A decisive *terminus ante quem* for the history of the myth's veneration in Joppa is provided by Pliny the Elder (mid-1st century CE), who reports that in 58 BCE, by decree of the Roman aedile Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, the bones of the sea monster once slain by Perseus were transported from Joppa to Rome, where they had long been venerated as relics. According to Pliny, the skeleton measured 40 feet in length²⁴. Thus, by the mid-1st century BCE, the connection between Joppa and the myth of Perseus and Andromeda had already been widely accepted and even bolstered by “proof” in the form of relics in Joppa.

Meanwhile, apart from Pseudo-Scylax, we have no direct references to Joppa in Hellenistic literature. Of particular interest is the poet Lycophron of Chalcis, author of the eschatological poem *Alexandra*, who likely worked in Alexandria in the 3rd or 2nd century BCE²⁵. In the poem, Cassandra prophesies about the future of the world after the Trojan War. Among other things, she mentions that Menelaus, in his search for Helen, must visit the abode of Typhon (i.e., Mount Casius near Antioch), the place where an old woman was turned to stone (i.e., Cyprus, where Aphrodite petrified the old woman who had betrayed her hiding place to the giants), the jutting shores of the Erembi (most likely the Arabian

²³ *Pseudo-Scylax*. *Periplus*. § 104 (*Lipinski E. Itineraria Phoenicia*. Leuven; P., 2004. P. 268, 328).

²⁴ *Plinius Senior*. *Historia naturalis*. IX.4 (*Pliny*. *Natural History* / Eds. E.H. Warmington e. a. L., 1967. Vol. 3. P. 170); *Solinus*. *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*. 34.1 / Ed. Th. Mommsen. B., 1895. P. 153.

²⁵ *Lycophron*. *Alexandra*. 820–843 // Ed. A.W. Mair. L., 1921. P. 562–564 (рус. пер.: *Ликофрон*. *Александра* // ВДИ. 2011. № 2. С. 247).

lands)²⁶, which frightened sailors, the city of unhappy Myrrha (i.e., Byblos, already well known to us), the tomb of Gavanthus mourned by the goddess (i.e., Adonis in Afqa, here disguised under the epithet Gavanthus), the towers of Cepheus (i.e., most likely Tyre; see below), the place where the foot of Hermes²⁷ had once trod, and also the two rocks where a woman had been bound, freed by the golden-born eagle in winged sandals (i.e., Andromeda, rescued by Zeus's son Perseus)²⁸.

The text shows that Lycophron directs his readers to various locations in the Eastern Mediterranean, and it seems logical that in mentioning Perseus and Andromeda, he meant Joppa²⁹. The city is not directly named, but Lycophron rarely speaks plainly. On the other hand, the mention of two rocks to which Andromeda was tied is somewhat revealing. Twin rocks are a vivid symbol of Tyre. Thus, it is possible that Lycophron's "towers of Cepheus" referred specifically to Tyre. After all, Cepheus was considered an ancient king not so much of Joppa as of all Phoenicia. In the Hellenistic era, Tyre was perceived by the Greeks as the center of Phoenicia. These towers most likely stood on the island of Tyre.

Thus, in Lycophron, we encounter the "Joppa" version of the myth, most likely still in the process of formation. At this stage, it remains unclear whether Andromeda was chained to one rock or two, how exactly Perseus's battle with the sea monster (*cetus*) unfolded — whether the monster swallowed the hero or not — and, more

²⁶ The term "shore of Arabia" in the broad sense could refer to the entire southern part of the Syro-Palestinian coast.

²⁷ According to legend, Hermes, during his search for Io in Ethiopia, struck a spring from the ground with his foot. During her wanderings, Io visited Joppa (Graves, 2005, p. 279). Where exactly the footprint of Hermes was worshipped in this case is unclear. Nevertheless, its mention by Lycophron cannot be coincidental.

²⁸ *Lycophron*. Alexandria. 837–839 // Ed. A.W. Mair. L., 1921. P. 562–564 (рус. пер.: Ликофрон. Александра // ВДИ. 2011. № 2. С. 247).

²⁹ The Russian translator (Surikov) does not suggest linking the events to Joppa, referring instead in the commentary to the "Ethiopian" version of the myth. Nevertheless, considering the geographic context in which the myth is mentioned, correlating it with Joppa or at least with the Phoenician region as a whole seems logical and promising.

broadly, whether Perseus's feat should in some way be linked to the symbolism of Tyre's foundation myth. The obscurity of Lycophron's text, which clearly reflects second- or third-hand information about the sacred places of the Syro-Phoenician region, prevents us from resolving these ambiguities. Moreover, Lycophron himself may have been uncertain about many details. Unfortunately, no other sources exist that could clarify Lycophron's symbolism.

Another — euhemeristic — version of the myth was contained in Conon's *Narrations* (late 1st century BCE), preserved only in a summary by the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Photius (mid-9th century CE)³⁰. According to Conon, Cepheus ruled a land later called Phoenicia. Andromeda was courted by Phineus and Phoenix. The latter, in a secret agreement with Cepheus, abducted Andromeda on a ship named *Ketos* ("Sea Monster") while she was making a sacrifice to Aphrodite on a deserted islet. Andromeda cried out, and Perseus, who happened to be sailing by, intervened. Terrified of him, Phoenix and his companions nearly turned to stone. Perseus slaughtered them all and destroyed the ship.

This somewhat anecdotal version was likely Conon's own invention, influenced by rationalistic criticism of tradition, while also aware of the intense scholarly work on various versions of the myth conducted between the 5th and 2nd centuries BCE. For our purposes, it is significant that Conon confidently identifies Phoenicia as the setting, thereby implicitly endorsing the "Joppa" version of the myth.

Strabo (late 1st century BCE) is the first author after Pseudo-Scylax to directly link the myth to Joppa, though he treats the "Joppa" version with great skepticism. Strabo writes that the story of Andromeda's rescue in Joppa ranks among the most implausible tales propagated by mythographers³¹. Nevertheless, despite his disdain for such fables, Strabo can do nothing to counter the established veneration of Joppa as the site of Andromeda's rescue and dutifully records the existence of this cult there.

³⁰ *Photius*. Bibliothèque. Cod. 186 (138b) / Ed. R. Henry. P., 1962. T. 3. P. 29–30.

³¹ *Страбон*. География. I.2.35, XVI. 2.28.

Most authors of the Roman era (excluding Ovid, Pseudo-Apollodorus, and Pseudo-Hyginus) accept the connection between Joppa and the myth of Andromeda as an established fact. These include Pliny the Elder, Pomponius Mela, Josephus (all 1st century CE), Pausanias (2nd century), Gaius Julius Solinus (3rd century), and St. Jerome (late 4th–early 5th century)³².

The myth's rich ancient iconography³³ provides additional insights into its reception. Art historian Kim Phillips³⁴ partially analyzed this material.

All known depictions of Perseus's feat on the Greek vases from the 6th–5th centuries BCE show Andromeda tied between two posts. However, by the 4th century, images appear of Andromeda bound (or chained) in a cave or simply to a rock. The reason for this shift — from posts to a cave and then to a rock³⁵—remains unclear. The loss of the three great classical tragedies from the 5th century BCE once again leaves us without definitive answers.

³² *Plinius Senior*. *Historia naturalis*. V.14, VI.35, IX.4 (*Pliny*. *Natural History* / Eds. E.H. Warmington e. a. L., 1961–1967. Vol. 2. P. 272, 474; Vol. 3. P. 170); *Помпоний Мела*. *Хорография*. I.64 / Реда.: А. В. Подосинов. М., 2017. С. 58–61; *Josephus Flavius*. *The Jewish War*. III.9.3 // *Josephus*. 1956. Vol. 2. P. 694–695 (рус. пер.: *Иосиф Флавий*. 1991. P. 249); *Pausanias*. *Graeciae descriptio*. IV.35.9 (рус. пер.: *Павсаний*. 2002. Т. 1. С. 328); *Solinus*. *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*. 34.1–2 / Ed. Th. Mommsen. B., 1895. P. 153; *Hieronymi Commentaria in Jonam Prophetam*. I.3 // PL. T. 25. Col. 1123 (рус. пер.: *Блж. Иероним*. *Одна книга толкований на прор. Иону* // *Блж. Иероним*. *Творения*. Киев, 1898. Ч. 13. С. 208).

³³ *Carpenter*. 1991. P. 103–116, 248.

³⁴ *Phillips Jr. K. M.* *Perseus and Andromeda* // *American Journal of Archaeology*. Vol. 72. N. 1. 1968. P. 1–23. However, many of the scholar's conclusions raise questions and cannot be accepted uncritically.

³⁵ *Phillips*. 1968. P. 11. This refers to a krater from Caltagirone (380–e–370–e rr.; *Arias P.* *Una nuova scena del mito di Perseo e di Andromeda* // *Dionisio*. Vol. 36. N. 1–2. 1962. P. 50–57), a pelike from Apulia (mid-4th c. BCE; Würzburg, M. von Wagner-Museum. 885), and a loutrophoros from Apulia (last quarter of the 4th c. BCE; Bari Museum, No. 5591).

However, in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, Mnesilochus is tied to a post in a rocky cave, which likely corresponds to Euripides' staging and matches several vase paintings from the 4th century. Thus, by the late 5th century, the iconographic evolution had already begun.

The subsequent stages of this evolution are evident in Pompeian frescoes (2nd century BCE–mid-1st century CE), which replicate various early Hellenistic paintings. In all variants where landscape details are discernible, Andromeda stands chained to a rock by a body of water, while Perseus either flies toward her through the sky or fights the monster knee-deep in water³⁶. This later tradition clearly contradicts the classical vase depictions. The changes in iconography are likely connected to the same mythic reform that saw the competing “Ethiopian” and “Joppa” versions in the late 5th–4th centuries BCE.

The triumph of the “chained Andromeda” motif is also confirmed by literary sources. The first direct reference to Andromeda being chained to a rock comes from Lycophron, who places the princess between twin rocks³⁷. Later, Accius (mid-2nd century BCE), Proper-

³⁶ The main iconographic variants are seen in Pompeian frescoes. The iconography of images depicting Perseus flying through the sky is associated with Euanthes (frescoes from the Villa of Agrippa Postumus in Boscotrecase — New York, MMA, 20.192.16; from house no. 9.7.16 — German Institute, negative 53.493). Another step in the iconographic evolution is that Andromeda is no longer depicted inside a grotto but instead is chained to a rock or large stone. The earliest supposed depictions of Andromeda at a rock include: an Apulian amphora from Ruvo (third quarter of the 4th c. BCE; University of Halle — in reality the same grotto); a Campanian hydria (second quarter of the 4th c. BCE; Berlin Museum, No. 3238 — possibly the same cave, depicted as a light patch — but close to the Pompeian iconography, as Perseus fights a sea monster below); a terracotta figurine probably from Athens (likely 4th c. BCE; Berlin Museum, No. 7042), where Andromeda is also chained to a flat rock, possibly within a cave. The dating is unclear — why not the Roman period? The iconography of Andromeda undergoes a fundamental transformation when the image of her “between columns” is replaced with “between rocks” (Philips. P. 22).

³⁷ *Lycophron*. Alexandra. 836–839 // Ed. A.W. Mair. L., 1921. P. 562–564 (рус. пер.: Ликофрон. Александра // ВДИ. 2011. № 2. С. 247).

tius, Ovid (both late 1st century BCE), and Pseudo-Apollodorus³⁸ — all describe Andromeda chained to a rock or rocks. Thus, unlike the localization of the myth in Joppa, which long faced skepticism, the image of Andromeda chained to a rock achieved complete dominance, gradually displacing all other variations. Despite its apparent acceptance by classical dramatists, the motif of Andromeda tied between posts or to a single post was abandoned. Instead, she was placed in a seaside cave or grotto, between two rocks, or — most commonly — chained to a single rock, exposed to the sea monster and the approaching Perseus. These significant shifts in iconography reflect an intense, though now obscure, reworking of the myth by Greek mythographers and priests, likely centered on the “Joppa” version.

Thus, during the Hellenistic period, a tradition venerating Perseus’s feat took shape in Joppa. The city produced a class of intellectuals (priests, writers, possibly politicians) who narrated this memorable event to the local populace, stirring enthusiasm for their city’s newly rediscovered ancient glory. At the same time, “antiquarians” — early “archaeologists” — emerged, soon “discovering” evidence to substantiate the myth. Joppa developed a range of relics tied to the story, which were treated as attractions, shown to visitors, and accorded religious reverence, given Perseus’s divine lineage (he had been Zeus’s son) and the involvement of other gods in the myth.

The culmination of this process, as noted earlier, is marked by Pliny the Elder’s account of the sea monster’s bones (or a portion of them) being transported from Joppa to Rome in 58 BCE. But the bones were not the only relic.

³⁸ *Accius*. *Andromeda* // *Remains of Old Latin*. Vol. 2. 1936. P. 350; *Секст Проперциий*. ЭЛЕГИИ. I.3.3–4, III.22.29, IV.7.63–66 (2004. P. 18–19, 170–171, 206–207); *Ovidii Nasoni* *Metamorph.* IV.672–673. P. 158 (рус. пер.: *Обидий*. 1994. С. 93); *Apollodorus*. II.4.3 / Ed. Frazer. Vol. 1. P. 158–160 (рус. пер.: *Аполлодор*. 1993. С. 43).

What exactly did Roman-era visitors to Joppa see in connection with the myth of Perseus and Andromeda? Sources allow us to compile a substantial list of such attractions³⁹.

First, the aforementioned bones. Beyond Pliny's report, little else is known. They had evidently appeared in Joppa during the Hellenistic period and by the mid-1st century BCE were a recognized and widely known relic, even attracting interest in Rome. Pomponius Mela⁴⁰ mentions them in the 1st century CE, and Gaius Julius Solinus⁴¹ repeats the information in the 3rd century. After this, the relic disappears from record, having been possibly lost in the Great Fire of Rome under Nero in 64 CE.

The second notable attraction was the "Rock of Andromeda", where visitors were shown the marks of her chains. Ancient writers mentioning this rock and the chains include Pliny the Elder, Josephus, Solinus, and St. Jerome⁴². However, by the late 4th–early 5th century, Jerome no longer refers to the chains, only to the rock, which nevertheless continued to draw visitors.

Another curious object of veneration, noted by Pausanias (2nd century CE)⁴³, was a spring in Joppa whose water turned red at cer-

³⁹ A similar list concerning Joppa is partially found in the article by M. Mulzer, "Andromeda und Jona in Jafo" // *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*. Bd. 122. 2006. P. 46–60. Our arguments in this section are partly based on the rich material of this publication by Mulzer. However, it is not without significant flaws. Firstly, it does not consider the data presented here on the history of the development of the cult of Perseus and Andromeda in Joppa. Secondly, it neglects known temples and other cultic sites of the city, which, like relics, played a role in the system of city landmarks.

⁴⁰ *Помпоний Мела*. Хорография. I.64 / Ред.: А. В. Подосинов. М., 2017. P. 58–61.

⁴¹ *Solinus*. *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*. 34.1 / Ed. Th. Mommsen. B., 1895. P. 153.

⁴² *Plinius Senior*. *Historia naturalis*. V.14 (*Pliny*. *Natural History* / Eds. E.H. Warmington e. a. L., 1961. Vol. 2. P. 272); *Josephus Flavius*. *The Jewish War*. III.9.3 // *Josephus*. 1956. Vol. 2. P. 694–695 (рус. пер.: *Иосиф Флавий*. 1991. С. 249); *Solinus*. *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*. 34.1 / Ed. Th. Mommsen. B., 1895. P. 153; *Hieronymi Commentaria in Jonam Prophetam*. I.3 // PL. T. 25. Col. 1123 (рус. пер.: *Блж. Иероним*. Одна книга толкований на прор. Иону // *Блж. Иероним*. Творения. Киев, 1898. Ч. 13. С. 208).

⁴³ *Pausanias*. *Graeciae descriptio*. IV.35.9 (рус. пер.: *Павсаний*. 2002. Т. 1. С. 328).

tain times, believed to be the blood of the monster slain by Perseus. This closely resembles the well-known “Spring of Adonis” at Afqa in Lebanon and two similar springs near Tyre⁴⁴. No such spring exists in modern Tel Aviv, but there is no reason to doubt Pausanias’s account.

Joppa and its surroundings also housed several temples linked to the myth. According to Ovid, Perseus himself founded altars to Jupiter, Minerva, and Mercury — his divine patrons⁴⁵ — to commemorate his victory. No other records of such dedications survive. Nevertheless, other temples abounded. In the Roman era, a civic cult of Tyche, Perseus, and Athena existed. Their images against a to-story building (likely a temple) appeared on coins minted under Caracalla, Macrinus, Diadumenian, and Elagabalus (211–222 CE). The same iconography was used for city coins of Ptolemais (Akko) to the north, under Elagabalus.

It is plausible that the city goddess Tyche of Joppa was associated or even identified with Aphrodite-Atargatis, a major deity in nearby Ascalon. Joppa also had a large nymphaeum with a statue of Aphrodite (or Tyche, closely linked to her)⁴⁶, renowned for its miracles.

Melzer suggests that Joppa may have had a temple dedicated to the sea monster⁴⁷ (Ketos or Ceto). Pliny’s brief mention that “the Ceto celebrated in myth is worshipped there”⁴⁸ could indicate a religious cult, though it may simply refer to the monster’s bones as a local respected and venerated attraction. With no other evidence, the temple’s existence remains hypothetical.

Nevertheless, marine deities were undoubtedly venerated in Joppa. The Hellenistic era saw the worship of Poseidon, likely a Hellenized version of the Phoenician sea god Yamm. In the myth, Ce-

⁴⁴ For springs near Tyre, see: *Schmidt H. Jona. Eine Untersuchung zur vergleichenden Religionsgeschichte // Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Bd. 9. Göttingen, 1907. S. 16. Anm. 2.*

⁴⁵ *Ovidii Nasoni Metamorph. IV.753–756. P. 162 (рус. пер.: Овидий. 1994. С. 95).*

⁴⁶ *Ovadiab, Turnheim. 2011. P. 95–96.*

⁴⁷ *Melzer. 2006. Op. cit. P. 54–55.*

⁴⁸ *Plinius Senior. Historia naturalis. V.14 (Pliny. Natural History / Eds. E.H. Warmington e. a. L., 1961. Vol. 2. P. 272).*

pheus and Cassiopeia were Poseidon's devotees, and their disrespect for him triggered the need for Andromeda's sacrifice.

Thus, in the Roman Imperial period, Joppa functioned as a kind of open-air museum. The city and its environs boasted numerous landmarks commemorating Perseus and Andromeda for locals and visitors alike. The tradition of cultural memory surrounding the myth proved remarkably durable. Although most relics and sites are attested in sources from the 1st century BCE to the 2nd century CE, some persisted into the early 5th century.

The history of Joppa's relics is not confined to the Greco-Roman context. The pagan holy sites of Palestine had a formidable competitor — the Old Testament religion of the Jews.

Joppa features prominently in the *Book of Jonah* of the Old Testament⁴⁹. Structurally, the events in it are set during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (mid-8th century BCE)⁵⁰. However, linguistic analysis dates the book's composition to the 4th–3rd centuries BCE⁵¹, contemporary with the “Joppa” version of the Perseus myth.

As is known, in the book Jonah receives a command from Yahweh to go and preach in Nineveh. However, afraid, he flees “from the

⁴⁹ Ион. 1–2; Лебедев П.Ю., Петров А.Е., Эйделькин Я.Д., Мусеева Р.А., Макаров Е.Е., Журавлева И.А., Орецкая И.А. Иона // ПЭ. Т. 25. М., 2010. С. 372–392. As typical for the *Biblical Encyclopedia*, a somewhat conservative but well-balanced approach to analyzing the text and its tradition is demonstrated; dating: 5th–3rd c. BCE.

⁵⁰ The prophet Jonah is mentioned in “2 Kings” (2 Kings 14:25) as living during the reign of Jeroboam II and advising him. However, the author of the *Book of Jonah* does not mention Jeroboam and does not provide any clear dating, except for the story about Nineveh, which, as is known, was destroyed in 612 BCE. The author's position can be interpreted as an attempt to place the work within the chronology of the historical books of the Old Testament — unobtrusively, without insisting.

⁵¹ ПЭ. Т. 25. М., 2010. P. 374 (V — III вв.); Zenger E. Das Buch Jona // Zenger E. e. a. Einleitung in das Alte Testament. Stuttg., 1998³. S. 501 (IV–III вв.); Vanoni G. Jona, Jonabuch // LTK³. Bd. 5. 1996. 986–987 (IV в.).

presence of the Lord” to Joppa and boards a ship bound for Tarshish. At sea, a storm overtakes them, and Jonah, seeing this as punishment for his disobedience to the voice of God, asks the sailors to throw him overboard as a sinner in order to save the ship. In the water, Jonah is swallowed by a giant whale, and the prophet spends three days and three nights in its belly, as if in the underworld. There he prays to the Lord for salvation. He fully surrenders to God’s will, reminds the One God of his unwavering service, and begs for His mercy and forgiveness. Finally, by divine command, Jonah is expelled from the whale’s belly onto the shore, after which he obediently sets out for Nineveh⁵².

The structural parallels with the Greek myths — particularly the “hero vs. serpent” motif — are evident⁵³. The sea monster serves as a divine instrument, whether for Poseidon’s wrath towards Cepheus family (in Perseus’s myth) or Yahweh’s harsh discipline (in Jonah’s).

Naturally, the ideological weight of the myth of Jonah appears fundamentally different from that of the Greek legends. Perseus, Heracles, and other Greek heroes, although aided by the gods, strive to fight for their lives and destinies on their own. They rely on their own strength, courage, and intelligence and play an active role in

⁵² Ион. 1–2. Josephus Flavius, in his retelling of the Bible, claimed that Jonah ended up on the shore of the Euxine (Black Sea) (*Josephus Flavius. Jewish Antiquities. IX.10.2 // Josephus. 1958. Vol. 6. P. 110–112; рус. пер.: Иосиф Флавий. 1999. Т. 1. С. 618–619*). However, this detail is not found in the original *Book of Jonah*, and it is more plausible to assume the events took place on the coast of Palestine.

⁵³ It is difficult to determine who first drew attention to the similarity between the motifs of Perseus and Jonah; the idea was discussed as early as the late 19th century. Comparison of the stories: *Schmidt H. Jona: Eine Untersuchung zur vergleichenden Religionsgeschichte // Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Bd. 9. Göttingen, 1907. P. 12–22; Wolff H. W. Studien zum Jonabuch // Biblische Studien. Bd. 47. Neukirchen-Vlyun, 1965; Day. 1985; Harvey P.B. The Death of Mythology: The Case of Joppa // Journal of Early Christian Studies. Vol. 2. 1994. P. 1–14 (особ. 6); Hamel G. Taking the Argo to Nineveh: Jonah and Jason in a Mediterranean Context // Judaism. Vol. 44. N 3. N.-Y., 1995. P. 341–359 (347, 349); Пронн В. Морфология волшебной сказки. 1998. С. 312–313; Десницкий А.Р. Книга прор. Ионы — старая сказка? // Мир Библии. 1997. Вып. 4. С. 58–61.*

shaping their fate. Jonah, by contrast, assumes an overtly passive and weak position. He remains constantly in fear — of God, of the sea monster, and of death. His only recourse is to trust in divine will and salvation, which ultimately guides him, revealing to the reader the omnipotence of God, who is capable of rescuing a believer — one who has wholly surrendered to Him — even from the belly of a whale and the depths of the sea. Divine will thus emerges as the sole operative force behind all events. All the characters, active agents, and the cosmos itself are depicted as being entirely governed by the one true God, in accordance with the Judaic Old Testament doctrine.

Thus, Greek and Jewish traditions here present two diametrically opposed systems of religious and moral values: agency versus submission. This fundamental opposition between Hellenism and the ancient Eastern cultures — the so-called “Athens versus Jerusalem” — has long been acknowledged and extensively discussed by scholars⁵⁴. We are not inclined to absolutize such dichotomies, as it is well known that, alongside these differences, Greek and Eastern cultures also shared numerous common features. Nevertheless, in the case of the myths of Perseus and Jonah, as well as their clearly perceived rivalry in Joppa, the ideological chasm between Hellenism and Judaism is made especially evident.

In this light, the story of Jonah may be seen as a response by Palestinian Jews to the burgeoning religious-mythological creativity of the Greeks and Phoenicians centered around Joppa. The author of the *Book of Jonah* appears to have been struck by the emergence of this new cult of Perseus's heroic feat and the rapid formation of a culture of veneration surrounding him, and thus found it necessary to construct a counter-narrative. This new narrative included the geographical setting of Joppa and the motif of the sea monster, whose bones, even by that time, may have

⁵⁴ In our view, this issue is most comprehensively reflected in Russian scholarly literature in the following works: *Аверинцев Р.Р. Поэтика ранневизантийской литературы*. М., 1974; *Вейнберг И.П. Рождение истории: Историческая мысль на Ближнем Востоке середины I тысячелетия до н. э.* М., 1993.

attracted considerable public attention. Yet the Old Testament narrative conveyed a fundamentally different attitude toward the figure of the hero. The praying, suffering, and God-seeking Jonah is clearly set in opposition to the self-assured Perseus and his cunning, and therefore (in the eyes of devout Jews) unprincipled Olympian patrons.

Our current state of knowledge does not permit us to judge the precise dynamics of interaction between these two competing mythological narratives. Nor do we possess sufficient information regarding the lives and relations of the pagan and Jewish communities in Joppa. What is clear, however, is that the Joppian stories of Perseus and Jonah emerged in close proximity, in full view of one another; they contain implicit references to each other, although these can now only be partially discerned. It is also evident that the rivalry between Perseus and Jonah persisted not only during the Hellenistic period, when these figures confronted one another in Joppa, but also over the following centuries. During this time, visiting Greeks and Romans were shown the chains of Andromeda and the bones of the whale, while local and visiting Jews, gazing upon the same relics, would recall Jonah and his unshakable faith in the Almighty.

In light of this situation, Propp's explanatory model for the development of mythological motifs requires significant revision. We observe that the evolution of myth does not always conform to a simple linear development. Rather, it is driven not by abstract and logical stages of societal progression, but by a fragmented picture of interaction and dialogue within an infinite sea of diverse traditions. The forms that myths ultimately take reflect the memory of peoples concerning one another — the course and outcome of their interactions, whether friendly or hostile — and the ability of one group to persuade another of the superiority of its tradition, or else to recognize the value of the other's tradition and seek to improve, reform, or enrich their own.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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Terra Adusta*: the Sacred Topography of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in the 10th–14th Centuries

Abstract

The article is dedicated to the reconstruction of the sacred topography (the complex of venerated relics, cathedrals, churches, monasteries) of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in the 11th–14th centuries. The period in question can be seen as the last ‘golden age’ of this Middle Eastern Church, encompassing about three centuries, between the time of the so-called Byzantine Reconquest (the time when Cilicia, northern Syria and western Mesopotamia were brought back under the control of the Byzantine Empire) and a series of devastating punitive campaigns, undertaken by the Zengids, Mongols and especially the Egyptian Mamluks in the 12th–14th centuries. Relying on a vast array of sources (narrative, documentary, archaeological) the author not only provides references and descriptions of the many lost relics and shrines of Middle Eastern Orthodox Christianity (the majority of which was lost and destroyed) but also offers a systematic analysis of their dedication. Thus, shrines dedicated to the Apostles, to Old Testament Prophets, to Christ and the Holy Virgin, to women saints, are all brought into separate categories. The Melkite veneration of various warrior-saints and their shrines, as well as the balance between the veneration of local, Antiochian, and “ecumenical” (Constantinopolitan, Palestinian) saints is also thoroughly analyzed. In conclusion, the article provides a detailed analytical take on the crucial

* Scorched Earth.

factors that turned the Medieval Patriarchate of Antioch — a thriving Middle Eastern Church — into a Church of dwindling enclaves, bereft of the majority of its former shrines, relics and traditions.

Keywords:

Middle Eastern Orthodoxy, the Patriarchate of Antioch, Byzantium, Melkites, Marian Veneration, Veneration of the Apostles, Warrior-Martyrs, Syrian Saints, Sacred Topography

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When we talk about the three Orthodox Patriarchates of the Near East — Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem — these three local Churches often appear as a kind of “trio” of weak communities, small Christian enclaves under the rule of Muslims and entirely dependent on both secular and ecclesiastical authorities in Constantinople. A classic example of this view is presented in the pre-revolutionary Byzantine studies by Lebedev¹. Similar ideas are found in the classic works of the 20th century, even in those by Sir Steven Runciman². Who was very knowledgeable about the history of the Christian Orient. This same stereotype, despite a body of work dedicated to

¹ *Лебедев А.П.* Очерки внутренней истории Византийско-Восточной церкви в IX, X и XI веках. От конца иконоборческих споров в 842 г. до начала крестовых походов — 1096 г. СПб.: “Издательство Олега Абышко”, 2012. С. 108–117.

² *Рансимен Р.* Восточная схизма. Византийская теократия. М.: “Наука”, 1998. С. 19, 28.

the history of the area, has continued to resonate in Russian and foreign historiography in the last quarter-century. A clear example of this is the recent monograph *Colonizing Christianity* by Demacopoulos, published by Fordham University, which deals with the relations between the Latins and the Orthodox Church, all but neglects to mention³ the fundamental and distinctive processes that took place in Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and even Cyprus. And while the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and especially Alexandria did indeed fit these representations, covering relatively small canonical territories where Muslim (and, in Egypt, also Christian Coptic) populations increasingly dominated, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch was reduced to a similar diminished position only after the Mamluk ravages of the 13th – 14th centuries.

However, from the time of the so-called “Roman Reconquest”, that is, the Byzantine conquest of northern Syria and Cilicia in the 10th–11th centuries, up until the Mamluk and Mongol devastations of the Middle East in the 13th–14th centuries, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch had been a strong local Church, admittedly lesser than Rome and the Patriarchate of Constantinople but far more numerous and powerful than the fading Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Alexandria.

The dioceses and communities of the Church of Antioch, though often not populous and frequently tied to trade cities and small clusters of rural settlements, stretched from Cilicia in the west to the region of Shash (Chach) and the Amu Darya in the east, and from the Anatolian city of Erzurum (Theodosiopolis) in the north to the Hauran in the south. Despite the disappearance of dozens of small dioceses in the 7th–9th centuries, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch retained 13 great metropolises (to which, in the 10th–11th centuries, the autocephalous metropolitan sees of Adana, Pompeyopolis, and Latakia were added), as well as two catholicosate seats, in Irenopolis (Baghdad) and Romagira (Chach). The latter also included the metropolis of Merv and a number of unnamed episcopal sees in what is now eastern Iran and Uzbekistan.

A series of military and political catastrophes that shook the Near and Middle East (primarily, the Mamluk military campaigns against

³ Demacopoulos G.E. *Colonizing Christianity. Greek and Latin Religious Identity in the Era of the Fourth Crusade*. Fordham, 2019.

Christian states in the Levant, but also the Mongol campaigns and the invasions of Timur) reduced the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch to a small local Church composed of a few Syrian, Lebanese, and Turkish enclaves. Furthermore, for a number of political reasons—ranging from the Byzantine emperors’ having Syrian relics transferred to Constantinople to the punitive campaigns of the Zengids, Mamluks, and Mongols—the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch lost not only much of its material heritage (churches, monasteries, manuscripts, icons, relics) but even the very memory of these lost sanctities.

As is well known, the first person to attempt to restore the lost history of the Orthodox Church of Antioch was Patriarch Makarios III az-Za’im (1647–1672), whose efforts were supported by his son, Archdeacon Paul of Aleppo, and, in the 18th–19th centuries, by several Arab-Christian historians, both Orthodox and Greek Catholic⁴. In 20th-century historiography, a particularly important role in the study of Eastern Orthodox Christianity belongs to another Syrian hierarch, Melkite Archbishop Joseph Nasrallah, who served in France and sought to restore not only the history of literature but also information about the hierarchy, sacred objects and monasteries of the Melkites in the 7th–14th centuries⁵.

It is to Archbishop Joseph Nasrallah that we owe important studies on two “monasteries of St. Simeon”—the Monastery of St. Simeon the Elder at Qala’at Samaan and the Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites the Younger⁶. Fundamental studies of monasteries of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch were carried out by the Georgian archaeol-

⁴ See more in: Панченко К.А. Вспомнить прошлое: Антиохийский Патриарх Макарий III аз-За’им как историк. // *Miscellanea Orientalia Christiana*. М.: РГГУ, 2014. С. 359–384. Among the key figures in this context, one should name one of Makarios III’s closest successors—Patriarch Athanasius III Dabbas (1686–1694, 1720–1724), the author of the still unpublished Greek-language *History of the Patriarchate of Antioch from Saint Peter to 1202*, as well as the *List of the Patriarchs of Antioch* by the Damascene priest Michael Breik († after 1781). See: Список Антиохийских патриархов / Пер. еп. Порфирий (Успенский) // Труды Киевской Духовной Академии. 1874. № 6. С. 346–457.

⁵ Nasrallah J. *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l’église melchite du Ve au XXe siècle*. Vol. 3. T. 1 (969–1250). Leuven, 1983.

⁶ Nasrallah J. *Couvents de la Syrie du Nord portant le nom de Siméon* // *Syria*. 1972. T. 49 (1–2). P. 127–159.

ogist Wakhtang Djobadze, who conducted excavations in the Turkish province of Hatay and northern Syria in the 1970s.⁷

The overview of the communities of the Patriarchate of Antioch is provided in the studies of Todt, Panchenko, as well as the author of this article⁸. An updated list of Orthodox monasteries in Syria and Palestine from the Crusader period was published in 2020 by Hamilton and Jotischky in their monograph “*Latin and Greek Monasticism in the Crusader States*”⁹. A previously little-studied Syriac-speaking Melkite monastic center, located on the slopes of Mountain Tur Elaya (east of Antioch), was introduced into scholarly discourse through to the work of Glinias, *Syriac Melkite Monasticism at Mount Sinai in the 13th–14th Centuries*¹⁰.

The goal of this article is to provide a “topographical survey” of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch from the 10th to the 14th centuries based on surviving documentary and archaeological evidence, highlighting the main churches, holy objects, and monasteries of this local Church. An attempt has also been made to systematize the unique centers of veneration and dedication of churches to the apostles, Old Testament prophets, saints, warrior martyrs, holy women, angels, the Savior, and the Virgin Mary, as well as to analyze the relative veneration of the “ecumenical” vis-a-vis Syrian and Persian saints among the communities of the medieval Patriarchate of Antioch.

⁷ *Djobadze W.* Archeological investigations in the region West of Antioch-on-the-Orontes. Stuttgart, 1986. 234 p.

⁸ *Todt K.-P.* Region und griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit und im Zeitalter der Kreuzzüge (969–1204). Wiesbaden, 2005; *Todt K.-P.* Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen im Zentralen und Südlichen Syrien // *Le Muséon*. 2006. №119. P. 33–80; *Панченко К.А.* Ближневосточное православие под османским владычеством. М.: Индрик, 2012; *Панченко К.А.* Митрополиты и епархии православной Антиохийской Церкви в описании Патриарха Макария III аз-За’има (1665 г.) // *Вестник церковной истории*. 2012. №. 1–2 (25/26). P. 116–157; *Брюн С.П.* Ромеи и франки в Антиохии, Сирии и Киликии XI–XIII вв. К истории соприкосновения латинских и византийских христиан на рубежах Востока. М.: Маска, 2015. Т. I. P. 55–101.

⁹ *Hamilton B., Jotischky A.* Latin and Greek Monasticism in the Crusader States. Cambridge, 2020.

¹⁰ *Glynias J.* Syriac Melkite Monasticism at Mount Sinai in the 13th–14th centuries // *ARAM*. 2019. №31:7. P. 7–33.



Simeon Stylites the Younger, Simeon Stylites, and Alypius the Stylite.
*Theophanes the Greek. Fresco of the Church of the Transfiguration on Ilyina Street,
 Veliky Novgorod. Novgorod Museum-Reserve*

Veneration of the Apostles

Antioch, the city where “the disciples were called Christians first” (Acts 11:26), was historically connected to a series of saints who had played key roles in the history of the Christian world. Among these saints there are those native to Antioch itself: the Hieromartyr Martyr Ignatius the God-bearer, St. John Chrysostom, St. Simeon Stylites, and Luke the Evangelist, as well as the Supreme Apostles Peter and Paul, who came to preach in the capital of Roman Syria. For centuries, Antiochian archbishops, and then patriarchs, were proud of their direct succession from the Apostle Peter, since he had led the Christian community in Antioch before his departure to Rome¹¹.

Antioch, along with Rome, was one of the two main centers of veneration of the Apostle Peter in the Christian world, the seat of the East-

¹¹ For the beginnings of veneration and early mentions of “Peter’s succession” in Antioch and the Antiochian Church, see: *Downey G. A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest. Princeton, 1961. P. 583–584.*

ern Throne of the Prince of Apostles. The main shrines and the cathedral church of Antioch were linked to the Apostle Peter. In the center of the city stood the magnificent two-story or “hanging” Cathedral of Cassian, which was rebuilt during the Second Byzantine Period; in the 11th–13th centuries it was also known as the Cathedral of St. Apostle Peter. This cathedral possessed the most important sacred objects for the medieval Church of Antioch (and, more broadly, for Eastern Christianity) associated with the Apostle Peter: the chains and the cell where St. Peter was imprisoned, as well as the “Apostolic Throne”, a position for which Orthodox, Latin, and Syrian-Jacobite patriarchs of Antioch competed¹².

It is notable that in the early Byzantine period there is no mention of a single significant church dedicated to the Apostle Paul. Only during the Arab rule do we begin to hear about the Monastery of St. Paul or the Deir Baraghit, built at the north-western walls of Antioch¹³. Two opposite traditions have reached us regarding the connection of this place with the Apostle Paul. According to one, cited by the Coptic deacon Abu l-Makarem (late 12th century), the monastery was built above the prison where the apostles Paul and John were held¹⁴. The German pilgrim and bishop Wilbrandus de Oldenburg, who visited Antioch in 1210–1211, mentions, however, that the monastery was built over the grotto where, according to tradition, the “apostle of the tongues”¹⁵ sought refuge from the Syrian sun. In the early 12th century, the Orthodox monastery of St. Paul was handed over by Tancred, Prince of Antioch, to the Benedictines, becoming one of the most famous monasteries of this monastic order in the East. Later, presumably,

¹² For more on the Cathedral of St. Peter (the Church of Cassianus) in Antioch, see: Брюн Р.П. Ромей и франки в Антиохии... Т. II. С. 41–55.

¹³ An early mention of the monastery is found in the writings of the Arab geographer and traveler Al-Masudi (ca. 896–956). See: Le Strange G. Palestine under the Moslems. A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from AD 650 to 1500. London, 1890. P. 146.

¹⁴ Hacken P.E. ten. The description of Antioch in Abu al-Makarim's History of the Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some neighboring countries // East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality. — Leuven, 2006. С. XI. P. 200.

¹⁵ Wilbrandus de Oldenburg. Peregrinatio // Peregrinatores Medii Aevi Quatuor. Leipzig, 1864. P. 172.

at the turn of the 12th to 13th century, the catholicon of this monastery was reconstructed in the early Gothic style, as evidenced by the preserved seals of two abbots of the St. Paul Monastery¹⁶, which bore the new image of the temple. The cathedral dedicated to St. Paul was built in the apostle's hometown of Tarsus, which became the second most prestigious metropolis of the Church of Antioch. At the dawn of the 12th century, this dilapidated Byzantine cathedral was rebuilt by the Normans, who turned it into a Romanesque basilica.

With the Byzantine reconquest of the city, this basilica became the residence of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Tarsus, and in the 13th–14th centuries, the residence of the Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch and all the East¹⁷. In Damascus, in the Al-Ghuta district, there were also two monasteries during this period, one dedicated to the Apostle Paul and the other to the Apostle Peter¹⁸. Additionally, several parish churches dedicated to the Supreme Apostles are known: the Church of St. Peter in Latakia¹⁹ and the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul built during the Frankish rule in the Lebanese village of Bezbina, which was later destroyed by the Mamluks (its ruins still remain a pilgrimage site for Orthodox Christians from the Akkar diocese).

The veneration of the apostles within the Church of Antioch was not limited to the dedication of churches and the commemoration of Saints Peter and Paul. While Syrian and Armenian Miaphysites built cathedrals and monasteries in the Syro-Palestinian region in honor of the Apostles Thaddeus, Bartholomew, Thomas, James the Less, and James the son of Zebedee, the Melkites, the followers of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, were clearly keeping pace with their religious opponents.

Regarding the Orthodox communities of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, there are mentions of churches and cathedrals dedicated to the Apostles James, Thaddeus, Thomas, and Luke the Evange-

¹⁶ Caben P. La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des Croisades et la principauté franque d'Antioche. Paris, 1940. P. 131 (№17).

¹⁷ More on the origins and architecture of the Cathedral of St. Paul in Tarsus, see: Brown R.A. The Normans. Woodbridge, 1995. P. 161.

¹⁸ The beauty of these monasteries and surrounding lands was noted by the scholar Yaqut al-Hamawi (ca. 1178–1229). See: *Le Strange* G. Op. cit. P. 429.

¹⁹ Caben P. La Syrie du Nord... P. 165.

list. Although not every dedication can be precisely traced to one of the apostles (as opposed to saints of the same name) due to the fragmentary nature of the sources, we know for certain that in Antioch, near the Monastery of St. Paul, a large church was built in honor of Luke the Evangelist, where, before their transferal to Constantinople, the relics and marble sarcophagus of the saint were kept. The church was built on the site where, according to local tradition, the house of the Evangelist had once stood²⁰. The cathedral in Hierapolis/Manbij was dedicated to the Apostle Thaddeus, but whether this church was the unique wooden cathedral mentioned by the Muslim geographer Ibn Khordadbeh in his *Book of Roads and Kingdoms* (c. 820–912) remains uncertain²¹. In Saidnaya, north of Damascus, there was a monastery of St. Thomas, which fell into ruin during the Mamluk period and was later revived by the Melkites in the 20th century²². Procopius of Caesarea writes that the Cathedral Church of Laodicea in Syria (Latakia), erected in the Early Byzantine Period and restored after the Syrian earthquakes by Emperor Justinian I, was dedicated to St. John, but whether it was John the Baptist or John the Evangelist was not clarified by the author²³. A 13th-century colophon reveals the existence of a Melkite monastery of St. James in the village of Bashtudar²⁴. One of the last major urban churches built during this period was the Church and Hospital of St. James the Apostle, constructed with the funds of Empress Helena, wife of the Byzantine Emperor Theodoros II Laskaris in Adana. Nowadays, this surviving church is known as the mosque Yag Camii.

²⁰ Abu al-Makarim writes about the marble shrine on four columns, which once held the relics of Saint Luke. See: *Hacken P.E. ten*. The description of Antioch in Abu al-Makarim's History of the Churches and Monasteries of Egypt... P. 204. The location of the Church of St. Luke and its proximity to the Monastery of St. Paul is noted by Wilbrand of Oldenburg. See: *Wilbrandus de Oldenburg*. Op. cit. P. 173.

²¹ *Ибн Хордадбех*. Книга путей и стран. Баку, 1986. С.128.

²² *Betts R.B*. The Southern Portals of Byzantium. London, 2009. P. 85, 177.

²³ *Прокопий Кесарийский*. Война с готами. О Постройках. М.: Арктос, 1996. Кн. V. Гл. 9. С. 103–104.

²⁴ The monastery is mentioned in connection with a Psalter now kept in the library of St. Catherine's Monastery on Sinai (Sinai Syr. 225), copied in Classical Syriac in 1271 by the monk Anthony of the Monastery of St. James. See: *Glynias J*. Op. cit., P. 19.



St. Apostle Peter. Follis of the Principality of Antioch.
Reign of Tancred (1101–1112).
From the author's collection

The veneration of Old Testament prophets: Elijah and John the Baptist

When speaking about the veneration of biblical prophets by the faithful of the Patriarchate of Antioch, the foremost among them, understandably, was the prophet of the “fiery ascension”, St. Elijah, and the last prophet, St. John the Baptist. The first cathedral of Orthodox Christians in Damascus was the Church of St. John the Baptist, built on the foundation of the Temple of Jupiter, and divided between the Muslims and the Orthodox Melkite community during the Arab conquest. Today, part of the church’s narthex stands between the Umayyad Mosque and the Old Market. In 743, the remaining part of the church was confiscated from the Melkites by Caliph Al-Walid I. In compensation, the Muslim area of Al-Ghuta was restored to them²⁵. The history of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Damascus is well known, but a similar history of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Homs (pre-Islamic Emesa), also built in the Early Byzantine Period, is much less frequently encountered in the studies of Christian-Muslim relations. Since Emesa was surrendered to

²⁵ The division and confiscation of the church is described in detail by the 12th-century Arab geographer and traveler Ibn Jubayr. See: *Ибн Джубайр. Путешествие*. М.: Наука, 1984. С. 262–263.

the Muslims without a fight, the church was also divided, but this division (despite the three Roman invasions each resulting in the destruction of the city) survived until the Mamluk persecutions of the late 13th century. The division of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Homs was mentioned by the geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi²⁶. Another venerated place was the Cave Monastery (Speilaion) in Homs, which preserved the head of St. John the Baptist, found for the second time in the 5th century²⁷. Another monastery dedicated to St. John the Baptist existed from the 5th century in the Melkite village of Douma in northern Lebanon (it is unclear whether its existence was uninterrupted or whether it was revived during the Frankish rule)²⁸.

The prophet Elijah still remains one of the most revered saints among the Orthodox Antiochians and Melkite Greek Catholics, and many churches are dedicated to him. In the 11th–13th centuries, a monastery dedicated to “the prophet of fiery ascension” was located on the Black Mountain: the Monastery of St. Elijah. This monastery had a double dedication: to the prophet Elijah and St. Panteleimon the Healer, and it is known from a number of surviving Syrian manuscripts from the 11th–13th centuries²⁹. A monastery dedicated to the prophet Elijah (Elias) is located in the Lebanese village of Shwayya. It was revived in the 17th century and became the summer residence for the

²⁶ A description of this division was also left by the 10th-century Persian geographer Abu Ishaq al-Istakhri. See: *Le Strange* G. Op. cit. P. 353. For the account of Yaqut al-Hamawi, see: *Ibid.* P. 356.

²⁷ The history of the transfer of the head of John the Baptist from the Cave (Spelean) Monastery to the Cathedral of Emesa/Homs is recorded by the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes the Confessor (c. 760–818). See: *Феофан Исповедник. Летопись византийца Феофана*. М.: Университетская типография М. Каткова, 1884. С. 314.

²⁸ For more on the Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Douma, see: *Issa A.G. The Typological Classification of the Old Lebanese Churches, Batroun and Byblos, from the 8th to the 13th century // Lebanese Science Journal. 2020. Vol. 21. №1. P. 102, 113.*

²⁹ *Glynias J.* Op. cit. P. 16–17; *Khalife E. Orthodox Manuscripts Copied in Antioch // Antioch. 2013. P. 2; Брюн С.П. Феодосий III Хрисоверг и Илия Пророк: отражение почитания в византийской сфрагистике // Актуальные вопросы изучения христианского Востока. Материалы международной конференции 12 ноября 2019 года. Сергиев Посад: Изд. Московской Духовной Академии, 2023. С. 188–202.*

Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch. However, it is unknown whether it bore the same dedication in the 12th–13th centuries.³⁰ Medieval parish churches dedicated to the prophet Elijah are known in Latakia, the village of Cheikh Taba (now the cathedral of the Orthodox Diocese of Akkar), Safita (near Tartus), and Izra (the latter was restored in the 19th century by the local Greek Catholic community, which had lost control of the Church of St. George to the Orthodox community)³¹.

Warrior martyrs and their veneration in the Patriarchate of Antioch

An important place in the sacral topography of the medieval Patriarchate of Antioch is occupied by churches and monasteries dedicated to warrior martyrs. Despite the fact that medieval Melkites (except for the warlike and prone to brigandage inhabitants of Qara and Resafa) were not particularly renowned for belligerence, the special veneration of warrior martyrs distinguished the Orthodox Christians from other Christian communities in the Middle East. One of the thirteen major metropolises of the Patriarchate of Antioch was inseparably connected with the place of the martyrdom of St. Sergius: the city of Resafa or Sergiopolis on the Euphrates. This Roman garrison city grew and gained particular significance because of the martyrdom of St. Sergius, drawing large crowds of pilgrims. The Romans had transformed the city into an oasis, and it became the residence of the Umayyad Caliph Hisham ibn al-Malik. The Christian physician from Baghdad Ibn Butlan describes the monastery of St. Sergius (Deir ar-Rusafa) as a “great church, the outer side of which is covered with golden mosaics created under the orders of Constantine, son of Helena.”³² Monasteries dedicated to St. Sergius (more precisely, to

³⁰ *Parker K.S.* The Indigenous Christian of the Arabic Middle East in an Age of Crusaders, Mongols and Mamluks (1244–1366). London, 2012. P. 355.

³¹ For the history and monuments of parish churches of the Antiochian Patriarchate in Syria and Lebanon, see the online portal ARPOA (Architecture Religieuse du Patriarcat Orthodoxe d’Antioche): <http://home.balamand.edu.lb/ARPOA.asp?id=11306&fid=2025>

³² *Le Strange G.* Op. cit. P. 522.

the martyrs Sergius and Bacchus) sprang up in other parts of Syria and Lebanon. As early as the 4th century, a temple (later a monastery) dedicated to the warrior martyrs appeared in Maaloula, north of Damascus. This monastery, despite repeated destructions (the last occurring in 2014), has survived to this day and preserves in its northern and central chapels the oldest known and active altars in the Christian world³³. Another Melkite monastery of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus was built near Byblos. In the 12th century, it was laid to waste by the Saracens and then revived by Latin Cistercian monks before being ultimately destroyed by the Mamluks³⁴. Additionally, several Melkite churches dedicated to Sts. Sergius and Bacchus are known; the Melkite churches in the Lebanese Kaftoun and Syrian Qara have preserved unique fresco ensembles from the 13th century³⁵. The cult of St. Elian was unique to Emesa/Homs and the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch as a whole, and the church dedicated to him still survives in the old city of Homs, where either a sarcophagus with relics or a cenotaph of this warrior martyr is kept³⁶.

The early great martyrs were of special importance to Christians in the Middle East, especially to those who came under the rule of Arab-Muslim rulers. The confessors and martyrs who suffered at the hands of the Persian Zoroastrians held special significance, too. Since any Islam-chal-

³³ For more about the altars of the katholikon of the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Maaloula, see: *Di Bennardo A. Pietre orientate: la luce nelle chiese di Siria e Sicilia (V–XII secolo)*. Roma, 2005. P. 82–102.

³⁴ *Petit M.E. Chartes de l'abbaye cistercienne de Saint-Serge de Giblet en Syrie // Mémoires de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France. V. Vol. 8* Paris, 1887. P. 20–30.

³⁵ For the frescoes of the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Kaftoun, see: *Хелу Н. Фрески Кафтуну (Ливан). Соединение византийской и восточной традиций // Образ Византии. Сборник статей в честь О.С. Поповой. М.: Северный Паломник, 2008. С. 589–600; Helou N., Immerzeel M. Kaftoun 2004. The Wall Paintings // Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean. 2004. 16. P. 453–458. О фресках церкви в Каре, см.: Immerzeel M. Monasteries and Churches of the Qalamoun (Syria): Art and pilgrimage in the Middle Ages // Journal of the Canadian Society of Syriac Studies. 2007. №7. P. 74–98.*

³⁶ *Leroy J. Découvertes de peintures chrétiennes en Syrie // Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes. 1975. Vol. 25 (№1–2). P. 95–113; Candea V. Une oeuvre d'art melkite: l'icône de Saint-Elian de Homs // Syria. 1972. №49. P. 219–238; Koch G. Sarkophage des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts im Osten des Römischen Reiches // Studi di antichità cristiana. Mainz, 1998. P. 461.*

lenging debates were strictly prohibited in the caliphate and punishable by death, honoring those who suffered at the hands of other Oriental “infidels”, i.e., the fire-worshipping Persians, provided the clergy and the faithful with a clear and understandable example of steadfastness in faith.

In this context, the cult of Saint James the Persian, or James the Mutilated, became especially revered among the Orthodox Christians of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. James, a nobleman of Bahram V, initially renounced Christ but then became a firm believer and was dismembered alive into 29 parts for it.³⁷ During the period in question, at least two monasteries dedicated to this saint were established. The first was built in the village of Qara, north of Damascus³⁸. The second was located south of Tripoli, in the Lebanese village of Deddeh³⁹.

A similar story is associated with the conversion and subsequent martyrdom of a high-ranking Christian by the Persian Zoroastrians: Saint Eleutherius, a 4th-century martyr, whom some modern scholars, following Peeters, identify with the Persian eunuch Azat (Guhshtazad), a courtier of Shahanshah Shapur II⁴⁰. The monastery that kept the relics of Saint Eleutherius was located in Tarsus and attracted pilgrims from Asia Minor and Syria. It is unknown whether the monastery was destroyed during the Mamluk invasion of 1275 or if it continued to exist until the final conquest and destruction of Tarsus in 1359⁴¹. Unfortunately, we do not know how widespread the veneration of Saint James the Mutilated or Saint Eleutherius was in the lands of the Ortho-

³⁷ Колесников А.И., Зайцев Д.В., Саенкова Е.Н. Э.П.А. Иаков Персиянин // Православная Энциклопедия. Том 20. М.: изд-во “Православная Энциклопедия”, 2009. Р. 548–553.

³⁸ For more on the history of the monastery founded in the 6th century, destroyed in 1266, and revived at the end of the 20th century, see the website: <https://www.maryakub.net>. See also: Панченко К.А. Разорение селения Кара султаном Бейбарсом в 1266 г. Исторический контекст // Вестник Православного Свято-Тихоновского гуманитарного университета. Серия 3: Филология. Изд-во ПСТГУ (М.). 2012. № 3 (29). С. 32–45.

³⁹ Betts R.V. Op. cit. P. 81, 177.

⁴⁰ Зайцев Д.В. Елевферий // Православная Энциклопедия. Т. 18. М.: изд-во “Православная Энциклопедия”, 2009. С.278–279.

⁴¹ For more on the Tarsian Monastery of St. Eleutherius as one of the pilgrimage centers of Asia Minor, see: Foss P. Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*. 2002. Vol. 56. P. 133–144.

dox Catholicosates of Irenopolis and Romagira (which covered communities from the Tigris to the Amu Darya) or whether the emergence of monasteries dedicated to these martyrs in the Levant indicates the migration of Melkites to the west, to the lands controlled by the Romans and Franks in the Syrian-Lebanese region and Cilicia.

Since the migration of Orthodox Christians and Greek Catholics from southern Syria (Hauran) into the Beqaa Valley, Wadi al-Nasara, and Lebanon is clearly traceable in the 18th century, it would be tempting to assume that a similar movement of Melkites toward the Mediterranean, i.e., migration to or next to the lands under Christian rule, occurred in the 10th to 13th centuries. In this period, the scant sources only provide isolated mentions of natives of the Tigris River region appearing in northwestern Syria: the ascension of Christophorus, a native of Baghdad, to the Antiochian Throne in 960, and the activities of the learned monk Gabriel ibn Muqaifi, who moved from Martyropolis to the Antiochian Diocese in the 13th century⁴². In any case, the idea of migration would provide a historical context for the establishment of new churches and monasteries in honor of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, as well as the Persian martyrs Saint James the Mutilated and Saint Eleutherius, the first mentions of whom appear precisely in the 11th century, during the Byzantine Reconquest. However, we cannot objectively speak of such a migration in the 12th–13th centuries due to the lack of reliable sources.

Thanks to Al-Biruni, we know that one of the main church feasts for the Melkites, at least for those living in his homeland in the region of the Orthodox Catholicosate of Romagira, was the feast of the Seven Martyrs of Nishapur⁴³. It is possible that these martyrs could have churches dedicated to them in the territory of the Catholicosate of Romagira, especially since Nishapur itself was one of the most likely cathedral cities and residences for the Orthodox Catholicos. However, this remains speculative, as there is no archaeological or documentary record about the exact dedication or even the location of any of the once numerous churches of the Melkite Catholicosate of Romagira.

⁴² *Glynias J.* Op. cit. P. 16–17; Khalife E. *Orthodox Manuscripts Copied in Antioch...* P. 4.

⁴³ *Al-Biruni.* *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* // ed. & trans. P.E. Sachau. London, 1879. P. 298.

While the cult of Saint Sergius, Saint Elian, the Persian martyrs James and Eleutherius and the Seven Martyrs of Nishapur originates within the Church of Antioch, the veneration of Saint George holds no lesser importance among the Orthodox Christians of Antioch. This is despite the fact that the primary centers of veneration for this great martyr were Cappadocia, Nicomedia, and the Palestinian Lydda. The most famous monastery dedicated to the great Dragon-Slayer in the Middle East was the monastery of Saint George al-Humaira, built in Wadi al-Nasara (“Valley of Christians”). This still active monastery was founded in the Early Byzantine Period as a cave monastery, with new cells and a small catholikon built over it by the Franks (the modern monastery complex and new church were erected over the Crusader-era buildings)⁴⁴. Monasteries of Saint George were located in Cilician Tarsus⁴⁵, in the Daphne Valley near Antioch⁴⁶, on the Lebanese mountain of Hamatoura⁴⁷, and in Syrian Saidnaya⁴⁸. Among the many parish churches dedicated to the Cappadocian great martyr, the church of Saint George in the village of Izra (in Hauran), now one of the oldest active churches in the Christian world, founded in the early 6th century (according to tradition, in 515AD)⁴⁹, holds a special sig-

⁴⁴ *Slim S.*, ed. *Monasteries of Antiochian Orthodox Patriarchate*. University of Balamand Publications, 2007. Quotation from the English translation of the book; see online source: The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East [Офици. сайт]. URL: <http://antiochpatriarchate.org/en/page/146/>

⁴⁵ For more on the Monastery of St. George in Tarsus, see: *Foss P.* Op. cit. P. 133–144.

⁴⁶ “The Holy Monastery of Mar George the Great Martyr, known as Bet Maya (“Monastery of the Springs”) in Daphne”. See: *Khalife E.* *Orthodox Manuscripts Copied in Antioch...* P. 3.

⁴⁷ The text “Жития Св. Иакова Хаматурского” is available on the official website of the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos of Hamatoura. See [Online Resource]: <http://www.hamatoura.com>.

⁴⁸ The ancient monastery of St. George in Saidnaya — with only one monk living there — was still seen by the Little Russian pilgrim Grigorovich-Barsky. Shortly after his visit, the monastery became deserted, but it was revived at the end of the 20th century. See: *Григорович-Барский В.И.* *Странствование по Святым местам Востока*. М.: ИИПК “ИХТИОС”, 2005. Ч. II. С. 92.

⁴⁹ For more on the architecture of the Church of St. George in Izra, see: *Stewart P. Simpson.* *History of Architectural Development*. Vol. II. Early Christian, Byzantine, & Romanesque Architecture. 1954. P. 62–63.

nificance. Another cathedral worth mentioning was built during the Frankish period in the Lebanese town of Batroun, also dedicated to the Great Martyr George⁵⁰. A magnificent basilica of Saint George was also built in Antioch during the Second Byzantine Period, near the Persian Gates, which is why they acquired the name of the “Gates of Saint George”⁵¹. Traces of special Melkite veneration for Saint George have also been preserved in Cyprus, where waves of Syrians migrated since the Frankish conquest of the island (at the end of the 12th century) throughout the Mamluk-dominated 13th–14th centuries. The Melkite bourgeoisie of Famagusta played a significant role in the construction of Saint George’s Cathedral, with wealthy merchants and officials from the Syrian community donating substantial sums⁵².

Apart from the churches dedicated to Saint George (whose cult spread among the Antiochians from both the northwest and the south, i.e., from Cappadocia and Palestine), the construction of churches in honor of other warrior saints, whose veneration had come from the territory of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, naturally took place in the lands of the local churches. This primarily concerns the veneration of Saint Theodore Stratelates. It is known that churches dedicated to him were located in the citadel of Tarsus and near the citadel of Edessa⁵³. The latter possessed part of the relics of the great martyr, and it was dedi-

⁵⁰ *Betts R.B.* Op. cit. P. 81.

⁵¹ For more on the Basilica of St. George in Antioch, see: *Meyer G.* L’apport des voyageurs occidentaux (1268–1918) // *Les sources de l’histoire du paysage urbain d’Antioche sur l’Oronte.* Paris, 2012. P. 245; *Eger A.* Mapping Medieval Antioch // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers.* 2013. № 67. P. 95–134. During the rule of Prince Tancred of Antioch, this basilica and the lands belonging to it were transferred to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Daimbert, after which it passed to the Augustinian Canons. See: *Caben P.* La Syrie du Nord... P. 324–325.

⁵² Coureas cites the will of a certain Fetus Semitecolo, a subject of the Republic of St. Mark and a Melkite (or at least a member of the Orthodox Church married to a Melkite woman), who bequeathed significant sums of “white bezants” for his wife Maria to spend on maintaining three Orthodox churches in Famagusta: the Cathedral of St. George, the Monastery of St. Gerasimus, and the Church of St. Epiphanius (in which he was to be buried). See: *Coureas N.* The Syrian Melkites in the Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus (1192–1474) // *Chronos.* 2019. №40. P. 83.

⁵³ *Wilbrandus de Oldenburg.* Peregrinatio Op. cit. P. 176.

cated to both Saint Theodore and the Holy Cross⁵⁴. The cathedral of Erzurum, the See of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Theodosiopolis, which lasted until World War I, was also consecrated in honor of Saint Theodore Stratelates⁵⁵. Among the parish churches dedicated to this saint, special mention should be made of the church in the Lebanese village of Bahdeidat, known for its unique fresco ensemble created by Melkite artists in the Syrian iconographic tradition in the 13th century⁵⁶.

Thanks to the surviving Syrian Psalter of 1241, composed by a priest named Lazarus, son of Job, we also know of the existence of the Church of Saint Christopher the Martyr in the Lebanese village of Btouratij⁵⁷. The veneration of the Egyptian great martyr and wonderworker Mina (Menas) can be at least partially linked with Cilician Anazarbus. The great martyr is depicted on the surviving seal of Abraham, Metropolitan of Anazarbus, (11th century)⁵⁸. This suggests that Mina may have been an especially venerated saint in Anazarbus and that there could have been a church dedicated to this warrior-martyr in the city (although it is also possible that the placement of the image of this saint on the seal was related to the personal devotion of the Metropolitan). There are also records of the veneration of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. An ancient church in honor of these saints still stood in the center of Homs⁵⁹ in the 18th century.

⁵⁴ On the Church of St. Theodore in Edessa, see: *Segal J.B.* Edessa: The Blessed City. Piscataway, 2005. P. 250; *Moosa M.* Crusades: Conflict Between Christendom and Islam. Piscataway, 2008. P. 563–564. During an uprising by Armenian Miaphysites, a Chalcedonian governor, appointed by Philaretos Brachamios, was killed praying in the Church of St. Theodore. See: *Арутюнова-Фиданян В.А.* Византийские правители Эдессы в XI в. // Византийский временник. 1973. № 35. С. 149.

⁵⁵ On the Russian Conquests in Asia // The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine. London, 1830. P. 30.

⁵⁶ *Hunt L.-A.* The Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII (1261–1282) and Greek Orthodox/Melkite-Genoese Cultural Agency in a Globalised World: Art at Sinai, Behdaiat, of the pallio of San Lorenzo in Genoa, and in Mamluk Egypt // *Ambassadors, artists, theologians.* Mainz, 2019. P. 133–140.

⁵⁷ *Glynias J.* Op. cit. P. 19.

⁵⁸ *Cheyne J.-C.* Sceaux de la collection Khoury // *Revue numismatique*, 6. 2003. T. 159. № 23, P. 439; *Laurent V.* Le Corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin T. V (vol. 2). L'église. Paris 1965. № 1556.

⁵⁹ *Грузорович-Барский В.И.* Op. cit. T. I. P.103.

It's curious that in the extant sources, we find no mention of a monastery or church within the territory of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch dedicated to the Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica, although the veneration of this Balkan ascetic and myrrh-streaming healer spread even among the Copts of Egypt⁶⁰. The only exception in this regard is the hospital of St. Demetrius in Latakia, which served as a metochion of the Archbishop of Sinai⁶¹.

Female sanctity in the sacred topography of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

The history of warrior saints naturally raises the opposite theme of female sanctity and its veneration within the medieval Church of Antioch. A special place of veneration was held by the disciple of St. Paul the Apostle, the Equal-to-the-Apostles Thecla, who is associated with the founding of two ancient monasteries: one in Seleuceia of Isauria and another in Maaloula, north of Damascus⁶². Antioch itself is connected with the martyrdom of Saints Barbara and Margaret. The majestic church of St. Barbara was famous as one of the largest and most revered churches in Antioch. The Melkite writer of the 11th century, monk Mikhael, a member of the Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites the Younger and the author of the *The Arabic Life of St. John of Damascus*⁶³,

⁶⁰ Descriptions of miracles and the miraculous myrrh flowing from the relics of the Great Martyr Demetrios of Thessaloniki can be found in a 12th-century Arabic Coptic Synaxarion. See: *Tafrafi O.* Thessalonique au quatorzième siècle. Paris, 1913. P. 138 (№1); *Walter C.* The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition. Ashgate, 2003.

⁶¹ The Hospital of St. Demetrios in Latakia is known from the correspondence between Pope Honorius III and Archbishop Simeon IV of Sinai and Pharan. See: *Röbriht R.*, ed. Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani. Innsbruck, 1893. №897, P. 240–241.

⁶² *Edwards R.W.* Ayatekla // The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology. Grand Rapids, 2016. P. 151–152; *Betts R.B.* The Southern Portals of Byzantium... P. 81.

⁶³ Иеромонах Михаил. Предисловие к Житию Иоанна Дамаскина (предисл. Панченко К.А. и Моисеевой Р.А., пер. Моисеевой Р.А., коммент. Панченко К.А.) // Антология литературы православных арабов. Сост. К.А. Панченко. М.: ПСТГУ, 2020. С.160.

describes the grand patriarchal services held in the church dedicated to St. Barbara, where many “riders on camels and mules” arrived dressed in luxurious robes.

Also known place of veneration was the church of St. Margaret of Antioch, which passed to the Latins after the city was captured by the Crusaders⁶⁴. During the era of Frankish rule, the Orthodox women’s monastery of St. Margaret was located in Acre, the second capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and a southwestern outpost of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch⁶⁵. The veneration of St. Paraskeva Friday also left its mark on the history of medieval Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Thanks to 13th-century Melkite manuscripts written in Syrian Arabic, we know that there was a church in Antioch dedicated to St. Paraskeva⁶⁶.

Local Antiochian and “ecumenical” sanctity: the relationship between the veneration of Syrian and universal (Constantinopolitan, Palestinian) saints in the sacred topography of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

One can’t but wonder about the relationship between the veneration of saints of the Church of Antioch and the veneration of ascetics, bishops, and martyrs whose cults transcended the territories of the churches of Constantinople and other local churches.

The church built on the slopes of Mount Silpius in honor of the native of Antioch, Luke the Evangelist, has already been mentioned in this article. During the Middle Byzantine Period (969–1084), another church, dedicated to St. John Chrysostom, was built on the slopes of Silpius, but closer to the citadel⁶⁷. It is noteworthy that, with the exception

⁶⁴ *Wilbrandus de Oldenburg*. Op. cit. P. 173; *Caben P.* La Syrie du Nord... P. 131.

⁶⁵ *Hamilton B., Jotischky A.* Latin and Greek Monasticism in the Crusader States. P. 323.

⁶⁶ On the Church of St. Paraskeva in Antioch, see: *Rey E.G.* Les Colonies franques de Syrie aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles. Paris, 1883. P. 328; *Caben P.* La Syrie du Nord... P. 334; *Khalife E.* Op. cit. P. 3, 6.

⁶⁷ On the location of the Church of St. John Chrysostom, see: *Wilbrandus de Oldenburg*. Op. cit. P. 173; *Eger A.* Op. cit. P. 105.

of these two places, there are no records of the construction of churches, let alone monasteries, dedicated to these two great natives of Antioch, within the territory of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

Even more enigmatic is the fact that neither in Antioch nor in the whole Patriarchate's territory is there any monastery or church dedicated to the venerable Ignatius of Antioch. It is unknown whether there was a church dedicated to St. Romanos the Melodist in his hometown of Beirut, but the memory of this great hymnographer was immortalized by Georgian monks in the territory of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch: a monastery dedicated to St. Romanos was established on the Black Mountain by Georgian monks during the Second Byzantine Period and survived during the era of Frankish rule⁶⁸.

Meanwhile, two Syrian pillar saints, St. Simeon the Elder (St. Simeon of Aleppo) and St. Simeon Stylites the Younger of Antioch, gained widespread veneration. A great monastery dedicated to St. Simeon the Elder was founded at the site of his ascetic labors in the 5th century—the great monastery of St. Simeon, called Qala'at Semaan, located 30 kilometers northwest of Aleppo⁶⁹.

The site of the labors of St. Simeon the Younger, the Wonderful Mountain or Mount Al-Lukkam, was already crowned during the saint's lifetime not only with his pillar but also with the monastery of his disciples. This Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites, became famous during the Second Byzantine and Frankish periods as the wealthiest monastery of the Patriarchate, the properties of which, according to the Baghdad physician Ibn Butlan, “were comparable to half of Baghdad”⁷⁰. However, in addition to these two renowned monasteries, there

⁶⁸ *Djobadze W.* Archeological investigations in the region West of Antioch-on-the-Orontes... P. 126, 144–146; *Vorderstrasse T.* Archaeology of the Antiochene Region in the Crusader Period // East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality. Leuven, 2006. P. 329–330.

⁶⁹ For more on the monastery, see: *Nasrallah J.* Le couvent de Saint-Siméon l'Alépin // Parole de l'Orient. 1970. Vol. I. №2. P. 327–356.

⁷⁰ *Le Strange G.* Op. cit. P. 434. For more on the Lavra of St. Symeon the Stylite, see: *Брюн С.П.* Ромеи и франки в Антиохии... Т. II. P.122–131; *Nasrallah J.* Couvents de la Syrie du Nord portant le nom de Siméon // Syria. 1972. Т. 49 (1-2). P. 127–159.

existed at least three other ones dedicated to one of the saints named Simeon (unfortunately, it is not always clear from the surviving records whether they refer to Simeon the Elder or the Younger).

On the eastern borders of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, we find a third monastery of St. Simeon⁷¹. To the south, in the suburbs of Damascus, at least until the 14th century, there had also been a monastery dedicated to St. Simeon, where the caliph Umar II was buried in 720⁷². Finally, there was a monastery dedicated to St. Simeon in Cilicia, in the region of Anazarbus, close to the city, in the fortified settlement of Simanakala⁷³.

During this period, there were also monasteries dedicated to less famous ascetics of piety. The monastery of St. Barlaam of Antioch, a martyr from the era of the Diocletianic Persecution, was located south of the Wonderful Mountain, on Mount Cassius⁷⁴. Next to the eastern monastery of St. Simeon, there were two monasteries dedicated to other Antiochian ascetics: the monasteries of St. Palladius and St. Thalalaeus⁷⁵.

Among the “ecumenical” saints of eastern Antioch, one cannot omit the Holy Wonderworking Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian. A large church in honor of these saints was built by Emperor Justinian I and later restored and re-consecrated during the Second Byzantine

⁷¹ *Glyniias J.* Op. cit. P. 18.

⁷² *Медников Н.А.* Палестина от завоевания ее арабами до крестовых походов по арабским источникам // Православный палестинский сборник. Т. 17. Вып. 2. СПб.: 1897. Т. 2. С. 375–376.

⁷³ This monastery is known thanks to the Armenian Archbishop of Tarsus — St. Nerses of Lambron, who worked in the library of this monastery, rich in rare Greek books. See: *Weitenberg J.J.S.* The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain // East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality. Vol I. Leuven, 2006. P. 90.

⁷⁴ On Saint Barlaam, see: *Бузаевский А.В.* Варлаам // Православная Энциклопедия. Т. 6. М.: изд-во “Православная Энциклопедия”, 2009. С.581–582. On the Monastery of St. Barlaam on Mount Cassius near the Mountain of Wonders, see: *Djobadze W.* Archeological investigations in the region West of Antioch-on-the-Orontes... P. 5–6, 25–26, 50, 52–53; *Vorderstrasse T.* Archaeology of the Antiochene Region in the Crusader Period... P. 326–328.

⁷⁵ *Glyniias J.* Op. cit. P. 17–18.

Period in Antioch⁷⁶. The Orthodox metropolitans of Amida and their flock had continued to pray and conduct the liturgy in the church of Cosmas and Damian (which possessed the relics or cenotaph of the Holy Unmercenaries) until World War I, when the Orthodox community in the city was destroyed by Ottoman authorities⁷⁷. Parish churches of Sts. Cosmas and Damian can also be found in rural Melkite settlements, such as the Lebanese village of Btourram⁷⁸.

In the Early Byzantine Period (the second quarter of the 5th century), a magnificent three-aisled basilica was built in Mopsuestia, the floor mosaics of which have survived to this day. Surrounded by a wall, it was presumably dedicated to the local martyrs Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus⁷⁹. In the 12th century, another major church had been built in the city; its foundation was uncovered by archaeologists in the second half of the 20th century; however, it is unclear whether it belonged to the Orthodox archdiocese or the Armenian Church, and whether it had any connection to the veneration of the martyrs of Anazarbus⁸⁰.

It is entirely natural that, besides the saints who preached or earned the crown of martyrdom on the lands of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, we should also find a number of cathedrals, parish churches, monasteries, and monastic communities in honor of the “imperial”, Constantinopolitan saints, whose veneration was either inherited in the Early Byzantine Period or strengthened in the territory of the Church of Antioch after the Roman Reconquest.

Among such “imperial” saints, a special place is held by the Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helena. The magnificent domed Cathedral of St. Helena was the main Orthodox church in Aleppo; however, in 1124, after a raid by Joscelin I, Count of Edessa, on the

⁷⁶ Downey G. Op. cit. P. 525, 624. For more on the reconstruction of the Temple during Second Byzantine Period, see: Eger A. Op. cit. P. 105.

⁷⁷ For more on the Cathedral of Saints Cosmas and Damian (Mar Kosma) in Amida, see: Berchem M., Bell G., Strzykowski J. Amida: materiaux pour l'épigraphie et l'histoire Musulmanes du Diyar-Bekr. Heidelberg, 1910. P. 162–171.

⁷⁸ Further details: <http://home.balamand.edu.lb/english/ARPOA.asp?id=10118&fid=270>

⁷⁹ Попов И.Н. Мопсуестия // Православная Энциклопедия. Т. 46. М.: 2017. С. 749–750.

⁸⁰ Ibid. P.750.

suburbs of the city, the Muslims took this cathedral from the Melkites and converted it into Al-Khalawiya madrasa. Under this name, the rebuilt church has survived to the present day⁸¹. The church of Sts. Constantine and Helena, founded in the 4th century, has survived in the Syrian city of Yabroud, one of the largest Melkite enclaves in the territory of the Damascus metropolis. This church is claimed to be the oldest functioning church in Syria and one of the oldest in the world⁸². Another church dedicated to St. Constantine was also located in the suburbs of Homs. This church, with the Muslim refugees from nearby villages hiding inside, was burned by the Varangians of Emperor Basil II the Bulgar Slayer during his first Syrian campaign, as described by the Melkite chronicler Yahya of Antioch⁸³. However, veneration of the great Cappadocians, undoubtedly widespread among the Orthodox of Antioch, did not lead to the establishment of a significant number of churches and monasteries dedicated to these Fathers of the Church. The only exception was the monastery of St. Gregory the Theologian, founded on the Black Mountain. Considering that in the 12th century, this monastery was renowned for its rare Greek books (which included those sent from Constantinople by the Patriarch Athanasius VII of Antioch), it is most likely that it was a place of dwelling not of Syriac or Arabic-speaking monks, but of Greek monks⁸⁴.

At the same time, in the period under review, we find a number of churches dedicated to another Byzantine bishop, who, unlike the great Cappadocians, left no writings; naturally, this refers to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. It is entirely natural that churches in honor of the wonderworking Archbishop of Myra, the patron saint of sailors, should have begun to appear in coastal cities. In the 6th century, a church of St. Nicholas had been built in Latakia, where the saint was especially venerated; at least one of the Melkite bishops of Laodicea in the 11th

⁸¹ *Ecohard M.* Note sur un édifice chrétien d'Alep // Syria. 1950. T. 27 (3–4). P. 270–283.

⁸² *Betts R.V.* Op. cit. P. 84–85.

⁸³ *Яхья Антиохийский.* Хроника (фрагмент). / Пер. Т.К. Кораева // Антология литературы православных арабов. Сост. К.А. Панченко. М.: ПСТГУ, 2020. С. 109.

⁸⁴ *Weitenberg J.J.S.* The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain... P. 91.

century, Bishop Theodore, placed an image of St. Nicholas on his seal⁸⁵. During the era of Frankish rule, the Melkite Church of St. Nicholas was erected near the city citadel in Lebanese Saida (Sidon)⁸⁶. However, the veneration of St. Nicholas spread not only among the coastal Melkite communities but also worked its way inland. Thanks to one of the surviving Melkite Syriac manuscripts, compiled in 955, we know of a parish church of St. Nicholas in Damascus⁸⁷. The Wonderworker had also been venerated in a monastery near Kara, which was later converted into a mosque by Sultan Baybars during his punitive expedition against the local Melkites in 1266⁸⁸. One of the five altars of the Catholicon of the Monastery of Our Lady of Saidnaya was consecrated to St. Nicholas⁸⁹.

Among the saints of the Church of Constantinople, Saint Domitian, Archbishop of Melitene, a “forward post” of Constantinople, situated between the Antiochian dioceses of northern Syria and Anatolia, held particular importance for the Christians of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. Saint Domitian was known for his missionary work among the Persians and for his “tours” across the lands of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, during which he sought to convert Syrian heretics to Orthodoxy⁹⁰. During the Second Byzantine Period and Frankish rule, we find at least two churches dedicated to this Constantinople preacher, glorified in the lands of Persia and Syria. The first is the “Tower of Saint Domitian” in Antioch, a small Melkite monastery known for its scriptorium and manuscripts from the 12th and 13th centuries⁹¹. The second is the Grotto of Saint Domitian, a place of pilgrimage for Orthodox Christians in the Lebanese village of Douma.

It is also important to mention the veneration of the Palestinian ascetic, Saint Sabbas the Sanctified, whose monastery in the Judaeen Des-

⁸⁵ *Laurent V.* Le Corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin T. V (vol.2). №1550—1551.

⁸⁶ *Betts R.B.* Op. cit. P. 80—81.

⁸⁷ *Glynias J.* Op. cit. P. 20.

⁸⁸ *Панченко К.А.* Разорение селения Кара султаном Бейбарсом в 1266 г. ... С. 42.

⁸⁹ *Betts R.B.* Op. cit.

⁹⁰ *Грацианский М.В.* Дометиан // Православная Энциклопедия. Т. 15. М.: изд-во “Православная Энциклопедия”, 2009. С. 602—603.

⁹¹ *Rey E.G.* Op. cit. P. 328; *Cahen P.* La Syrie du Nord... P. 334; *Khalife E.* Op. cit. P. 3, 6; *Glynias J.* Op. cit. P. 20.

ert is rightly considered the cradle of Arab-Christian literature. It is well known that one particularly revered Church of Saint Sabbas was located in Alexandria, Egypt. Twice in history, this church turned out to be the only Orthodox church in the city, and since the Ottoman period, it became the cathedral church of patriarchal residence⁹². Yet, many of the patriarchs of Alexandria were Syrian Melkites, who came from the Church of Antioch; from the first Greek Patriarch of Alexandria in Dar al-Islam, Cosmas I (737–767), to Gregory V († 1503), the last Orthodox Arab to hold the See of St. Mark. In the lands of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, we find several parish churches dedicated to Saint Sabbas. One of them used to be located in Damascus, but this church is known only by name and has not survived to this day⁹³. A church of Saint Sabbas, decorated with magnificent 13th-century frescoes, still stands in the village of Edda in northern Lebanon. This is one of the few churches in the region that, during the period of Frankish rule, was used by both the Melkite and the Maronite communities⁹⁴. Also, during the Frankish period, in the 1230s, a monastery and guesthouse (hospital) in honor of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified were established in Acre, the capital of the Second Kingdom of Jerusalem and the southernmost coastal diocese of the Patriarchate of Antioch. This monastery was founded by Sava Nemanjić, the first Archbishop of Serbia, during his pilgrimage to the Middle East⁹⁵.

Thus, among the known churches and monasteries of the Church of Antioch from the 10th to the 14th centuries, we see more well-known urban cathedrals and parish churches dedicated to “ecumenical” saints. However, among the known monastic communities, there is a clear predominance of local Syrian ascetics. If we exclude the Old Testament prophets, apostles, Christ, and the Virgin Mary, and focus solely on the

⁹² For more on the Alexandrian patriarchal monastery of St. Sabbas, see the online resource: <https://www.patriarchateofalexandria.com/the-patriarchate/patriarchiki-moni-osioy-savva/?lang=en>.

⁹³ Известие о разрушении церкви Март-Марьям (пер., предисл. и коммент. Панченко К.А.) // Антология литературы православных арабов. Т. I. История. М.: изд. ПСТГУ, 2020. С. 354.

⁹⁴ Helou N. L'église de Saint Saba à Eddé Batroun // Parole de l'Orient. 2003. №28. P. 397–434.

⁹⁵ Hamilton B., Jotischky A. Latin and Greek Monasticism in the Crusader States... P. 322–323.

dedication of monasteries of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch dedicated to holy martyrs, bishops, and ascetics, we can observe the following ratio: in the territory of the medieval Church of Antioch, we see more than 17 monasteries dedicated to Syrian saints and fewer than ten – to “ecumenical” saints. Among the latter, five are dedicated to Saint George the Great Martyr, one to Saint Gregory the Theologian, one to Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, and two hospital monasteries (one founded by the Archbishop of Serbia and the other by the Archbishop of Mount Sinai) dedicated to Saints Sabbas the Sanctified and Demetrius of Thessalonica, respectively. There is a clear predominance of “ecumenical” veneration among urban/parish dedications and an Antiochian/Syrian dominance among monastic dedications, even taking into account the growing pressure and imperial investment in the spiritual life of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch following the Roman Reconquest.

The veneration of heavenly powers and the dedication of the Patriarchate churches to Angels

Interestingly, in the territory of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (unlike the Patriarchate of Alexandria), we find only a few well-known churches or monasteries dedicated to heavenly powers, the angels of the Lord. A large church dedicated to Archangel Michael was built in Antioch as a special gift from Empress Theodora, during the reconstruction of the city after two earthquakes and the Persian devastation of the 6th century. This gift to the “Theopolis” under restoration and the choice of Archangel Michael as the patron saint of the church can largely be explained by the Empress’s Alexandrian background, since in the Early Byzantine Period, the Alexandrian Church had been the center of angelic veneration in the Christian world. However, under Arab rule, this church disappeared and, unlike the churches of St. Luke or Sts. Cosmas and Damian, was never restored after the Roman Reconquest⁹⁶. One of the chapels of Cathedral the Nativity of Our Lady, the main church of the Saidnaya community, was dedicated

⁹⁶ Downey G. Op. cit. P. 525–526.



The Mother of God Orans. Folles of the Principality of Antioch.
 Reign of Prince Roger (1112–1119).
From the author's collection

to Archangel Michael. Meanwhile, the oldest monastery in Saidnaya was and still remains the Cherubim Monastery (a rare dedication in the Christian world); this monastery, built on top of a mountain at an altitude of 2,100 meters above sea level, fell into disrepair under the Ottomans and was revived at the end of the 20th century⁹⁷.

Marian monasteries and cathedrals of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

Despite the relatively weak veneration of Archangel Michael and other heavenly powers, the faithful of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch stand out (even among other Christian Churches) for their fervent devotion to the Most Holy Theotokos, to whom a series of monasteries in the Antiochian Patriarchal diocese and the Syro-Lebanese region were dedicated. A good half of the well-known medieval monasteries of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch were dedicated

⁹⁷ *Betts R.B. Op. cit. P. 85, 177.* The first narrative mention of the Monastery of the Cherubim (dating back to the early Byzantine period) in Saydnaya is found in the writings of the 14th-century Arab traveler Shihab al-Din al-'Umari (1301–1349). See the official website of the Patriarchate of Antioch: <https://www.antiochpatriarchate.org/en/page/cherubim-saydnaya-patriarchal-monastery/143/>

to the Most Holy Virgin. Among these monasteries, one can mention the Monastery of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos in Arshaya in Antioch⁹⁸, the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos in Dafnuna, and the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos in Castalia (both the Melkite Dafnuna⁹⁹ and Georgian Castalia monasteries were located in the Daphne valley)¹⁰⁰, the Monasteries of the Most Holy Theotokos in Kalipos¹⁰¹ and in Jarajima on Jabal Al-Lukkam (i.e., on the “Wonderful Mountain”, where the Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites stood)¹⁰², the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos (the “Bishopric”)¹⁰³, the Armenian-Chalcedonian Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos of the Pomegranate on the Black Mountain (which later became the refuge of Nikon of the Black Mountain after the destruction of the Monastery of St. Simeon by the Turks)¹⁰⁴, the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos in Seleucia of Isauria (the so-called “place of Mary”, where the local Greeks continued to gather and serve as late as the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, until World War I)¹⁰⁵, and the Lebanese monasteries of the Most Holy Theotokos on Mount Hamatoura¹⁰⁶, in the village of

⁹⁸ *Nasrallah J.* Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du Ve au XXe siècle. Vol. 3. T. 1 (969–1250). P. 308–309; *Treiger A.* The Beginnings of the Graeco-Syro-Arabic Melkite Translation Movement in Antioch // *Scrinium*. №16. 2020. P. 18, 23.

⁹⁹ *Nasrallah J.* Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du V eau XXe siècle. Vol.3, T. 1 (969–1250) ... P. 304–308; *Treiger A.* Op. cit. P. 15.

¹⁰⁰ For the Monastery of Kastalia or Kastana, see: *Безараишвили К.* Ефрем Мцире // *Православная Энциклопедия*. Т. 19. М.: изд-во “Православная Энциклопедия”, 2009. С. 76–77.

¹⁰¹ *Saminsky A.* Georgian and Greek Illuminated Manuscripts from Antioch // *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality*. Vol. I. Leuven, 2006. P. 19–21, 26, 36–47, 55–56, 64–65.

¹⁰² *Nasrallah J.* Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du Ve au XXe siècle. Vol. 3. T. 1 (969–1250)... P. 304–305.

¹⁰³ *Khalifeh E.* Op. cit... P. 4; *Glynias J.* Op. cit. P. 17.

¹⁰⁴ *Nasrallah J.* Un auteur antiochien du XIe siècle: Nikon de la Montagne Noire (vers 1025 – début du XIIe siècle) // *Proche-Orient Chrétien*. 1969. №19. P. 150–162; *Aerts W.J.* Nikon of the Black Mountain. *Logos* 31 (Translation) // *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality*. Leuven, 2006. P. 126, 136.

¹⁰⁵ *Langlois V.* Op. cit. P. 184–185.

¹⁰⁶ *Грузопович-Барский В.И.* Op. cit. Ч. II. P. 62; *Betts R.B.* Op. cit. P. 177.

Bkeftine, in the village of Btourram, in the village of Benehran, as well as the Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Kaftoun; the celebrated Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos in Saidnaya.

Luxurious cathedrals and parish churches dedicated to the Holy Virgin were also located in the cities. The cathedral churches of the Tyre and Damascus metropolises were dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos¹⁰⁷. The ancient cathedral of the Most Holy Theotokos in Tyre, the first archdiocese of the Antiochian Patriarchal Throne dates back to the early Byzantine period. It was occupied by the Franks in 1124 and rebuilt into the largest Gothic cathedral in continental Levant, becoming in the 13th century the coronation place for the kings of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, as early as the 12th century, the faithful of Tyre erected a new Greek Church of Mary, which served as the cathedral for their metropolitans¹⁰⁸. Two Melkite Marian churches were located near each other in Edessa¹⁰⁹. Magnificent churches of the Most Holy Theotokos are also known in Hierapolis (Manbij)¹¹⁰ and Aleppo¹¹¹.

One of the most beautiful churches from the reign of Justinian was the Round Church of the Most Holy Theotokos, built by the emperor in Antioch during the city's restoration and its designation as the "City of God" (Theopolis). This church had displayed a miraculous icon of the Theotokos, traditionally believed to have been painted by Luke the Evangelist, until both the church and the city were destroyed by the Mamluks. The procession of this icon around Antioch before harvests is described by Wilbrandus de Oldenburg¹¹². This church was the only

¹⁰⁷ For the Cathedral of the Mother of God in Damascus, see: Известие о разрушение церкви Март-Марьям (пер., предисл. и коммент. Панченко К.А.). P.45–54.

¹⁰⁸ The "Greek Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary" in Tyre is occasionally mentioned in Latin sources, for instance in the charter of *Marsilio Zorzi*, Venetian bailo in the Levant (1243). See: *Röbricht R.*, ed. *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani...* № 1114. P. 295–296.

¹⁰⁹ *Segal J.B.* Op. cit. P. 189–190.

¹¹⁰ *Панченко К.А., Попов И.Н.* Манбидж // Православная Энциклопедия. Т. 18. М.: изд-во "Православная Энциклопедия", 2021. С.302–304.

¹¹¹ *Tritton A.S., Gibb. H.* The First and Second Crusades from an Anonymous Syriac Chronicle // *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Cambridge, 1933. P. 94.

¹¹² *Wilbrandus de Oldenburg.* Op. cit. P. 172.

one left intact by the Seljuks in 1084. After the city's capture by the Crusaders (1098) and the establishment of the Latin Patriarchate of Antioch (1100), this church remained with the Roman and Melkite clergy (albeit under the Latin hierarchy), and in the 13th century, it became the residence of Orthodox patriarchs and "Greek" judges of the Commune of Antioch¹¹³. In Latakia, in the 9th century, the Byzantine merchants and local Melkite population restored the church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos on the ruins of a 5th-century early Byzantine temple. It still remains an active parish church of the Orthodox Patriarchate¹¹⁴.

Christocentric dedications in the sacred topography of the medieval Church in Antioch

The topic of Marian veneration naturally leads to the theme of the "Christocentric" dedication of churches and monasteries in the medieval Antioch. Among the well-known monasteries and churches dedicated directly to the Lord, one should mention the churches of the Savior in Edessa¹¹⁵ and Damascus¹¹⁶, the revered Monastery of Christ the Savior (Dair al Farus) in Latakia,¹¹⁷ the Cathedral Church in Corycus¹¹⁸, and the Catholikon of the Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites¹¹⁹

¹¹³ For more on Justinian's circular Church of the Blessed Virgin, see: Брюн С.П. Ромеи и франки в Антиохии... Т. II. С.105–109.

¹¹⁴ Брюн С.П. Ромеи и франки в Антиохии... Т. II. С.113.

¹¹⁵ The Edessan Cathedral of the Savior is known during the Arab period from the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa*, but it is not mentioned under the Franks. See: Segal J.B. Op. cit. P. 208.

¹¹⁶ For the Church of the Savior in Damascus, see: Известие о разрушение церкви Март-Марйам (пер., предисл. и коммент. Панченко К.А.). С. 53.

¹¹⁷ For the Monastery of Dayr al-Farus, see: *Le Strange G.* Op. cit. P. 491; *Nasrallah J.* Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite... P. 207; *Hamilton B., Jotischky A.* Latin and Greek Monasticism in the Crusader States. P. 335.

¹¹⁸ Близинок С.В. Леонтий Махера, "Повесть о сладкой земле Кипр". М.: Асадемия, 2018. С. 114–117.

¹¹⁹ *Mécérian J.* Monastère de Saint-Siméon-Stylite-le-Jeune, exposé des fouilles // Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. 1948. Vol.92 (№3). P. 323–328.

(both dedicated to the Holy Trinity), as well as the Georgian Monastery of the Life-Giving Tree of the Cross on the Black Mountain¹²⁰ and the Melkite Church of the Holy Light (Mar Nuhra) in the Lebanese village of Douma¹²¹.

Special mention should be made of the basilica of Hagia Sophia in Edessa, built in the 6th century, which the Arab geographer Al-Muqaddasi calls one of the four most beautiful churches of the Dar al-Islam¹²². It should be noted that this basilica had possessed one of the greatest Christian relics – the Image of Edessa (Mandylion)¹²³ – until 944.

Factors leading to the decline of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Antioch: a brief overview of the loss of key relics

The factors that led to the rapid decline of the Patriarchate in Antioch, the drastic reduction in its flock, the loss of relics and the transformation of its sacred space are well known and can be divided into four distinct stages.

The first of these stages was the campaign of the Byzantine Reconquest (944–1032), which paradoxically became the force that brought about the flourishing of the Church, with the mass conversion of Miaphysites and Muslims, the revival of its hierarchy and monastic life, and the construction of new churches and monasteries. However, despite these positive factors, the Reconquest was accompanied by the *de facto* (with the exception of the title and

¹²⁰ *Djobadze W.* Op. cit. P. 126, 144–146.

¹²¹ See the Internet resource APROA: <http://home.balamand.edu.lb/english/ARPOA.asp?id=13541&fid=270>

¹²² *Le Strange G.* Op. cit. P. 117.

¹²³ For more on the history and architecture of the Basilica of St. Sophia in Edessa, see: *Guidetti M.* The Byzantine Heritage in Dar al-Islam: Churches and Mosques in al-Ruha between the sixth and the twelfth century // *Muqarnas*. 2009. № 26. P. 1–36. For the translation and commentary of the Syriac *soghitha* for the consecration of Edessa's Hagia Sophia, see: *Palmer A., Rodley L., Trone R.H.* The inauguration anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa // *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*. 1988. №12. P. 117–167.

nominal status of an autocephalous Church) subordination of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch to the secular and ecclesiastical authority of Constantinople, initiated by Emperor Basil II the Bulgar Slayer (a subordination that lasted until the destruction of the Byzantine capital by the Crusaders in 1204). This was also accompanied by the confiscation of key relics of the Church by the Byzantine emperors.

This article will only endeavor to provide a brief list of the relics that were transferred to Constantinople after a series of agreements of the Byzantine emperors with the Arab and Turkish rulers of the Orient. It is also important to emphasize that these relics were handed over not upon the initiative of the clergy and faithful of the Church but due to the arrangements made by their more powerful Byzantine counterparts with the Muslims. Starting in 944 and continuing until the end of the 10th century, the following relics were taken from Syria to Constantinople:

- **The Holy Mandylion** was transferred from the basilica of Hagia Sophia in Edessa to the Imperial Church of the Pharos in Constantinople as part of the agreement between Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus and the Muslims of Edessa in 944¹²⁴;
- **The Holy Keramion** was transferred from the cathedral of Hierapolis (Manbij) to the Church of the Pharos as per the agreement between Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas and the Muslims in 966¹²⁵;
- **The sandals of the Savior** were taken by Emperor John I Tzimiskes after the conquest of Hierapolis (Manbij) in 972¹²⁶;
- **The hair of John the Baptist** was also taken from Manbij by Emperor John I Tzimiskes in 972.

¹²⁴ The sacred object was accompanied by Metropolitan Abraham II of Samosata (whose city had already submitted to the Romans). There is no surviving evidence of the reaction of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Edessa or the Melkites to the loss of the city's main relic. See: *John Skylitzes. A Synopsis of Byzantine History* P. 811–1057. Cambridge University Press, 2010. P. 223–224. For more information on Metropolitan Abraham II, see: *Le Quien M. Oriens Christianus in Quatuor Patriarchatus Digestus*. T. II. Paris, 1740. P. 936.

¹²⁵ *Лев Диякон. История*. М.: Наука, 1988. С. 40.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* P. 86.

- **The blood and myrrh-streaming icon of the Savior**, was taken by Emperor John I Tzimiskes from the Orthodox cathedral in Beirut in 975¹²⁷;
- **The relics of Luke the Evangelist** were taken by the Byzantines from Antioch to Constantinople after the city's conquest in 969 (exact date unknown).

Emperor John I Tzimiskes was clearly aware of the discontent that such confiscation of relics could provoke among the Orthodox of the Near East. It is no coincidence, then, that it was by his order that one of the major Constantinopolitan monasteries, Hodegon, which possessed the miraculous icon of the Theotokos Hodegitria, was granted to the Patriarchs of Antioch. This monastery served as the residence of the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East from 970 to 1204 and again from the 1290s to the 1360s, becoming a refuge for Syrian monks in the Byzantine capital. Thanks to this gift of the Emperor, Patriarch of Antioch received one of the great relics of the Orthodox world, the icon of the Theotokos of Hodegitria, without it ever actually leaving Constantinople¹²⁸.

Along with the imperial confiscation of sacred relics, the Byzantine Reconquest was accompanied by the rise of Islamic aggression against Christians that took different forms, from spontaneous Muslim mob riots and wartime terror episodes (when Christian monasteries were attacked Arab cavalry), to official anti-Christian military campaigns sanctioned by caliph al-Hakim.

Over a half-century period (967–1017), the list of losses of the Church of Antioch grew further.

- In 967, two years before the Byzantine conquest of Antioch, the local Muslim elite killed Patriarch Christopher I; the “patriarchal cell”, i.e., the Patriarchate of Antioch, was plundered by a crowd incited by

¹²⁷ A relic believed to contain a portion of blood from the Savior's icon of Beirut survives as part of the reliquary of Archbishop Dionysius of Suzdal (14th c.), unlike the icon itself, and is now part of the collection of regalia in the Moscow Kremlin Armoury. See: *Стерлигова И.А. Ковчег Дионисия Суздальского // Лидов А.М., ред. Христианские реликвии в Московском Кремле: Каталог. М.: Музеи Московского Кремля, 2000. №5. С. 50.*

¹²⁸ *Попов И.Н. Одигон // Православная Энциклопедия. Т. 20. М.: изд-во “Православная Энциклопедия”, 2023. С. 430–432.*

conspirators. According to the testimony of Protosphararius Ibrahim ibn Yohanna, the following relics were kept there: the Holy Lance, the relics of John the Baptist, the pastoral staff of St. John Chrysostom, the belt of St. Simeon Stylites the Elder, and a number of other relics¹²⁹;

- In 939, 989, and 1017, the cavalry of the Aleppo Emirate and the Fatimid Caliphate carried out three successive raids on the Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites (Qala'at Samaan), which resulted in the devastation of the monastery and extermination of the monks. These attacks, especially the Fatimid cavalry raid of 1017, marked the end of the history of Qala'at Samaan not just as the greatest Orthodox monastery in Syria but as a living community: no significant traces or testimonies of monastic life can be found after 1017¹³⁰;

- In 1009, the southern borders of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (the dioceses of Damascus and Bostra), controlled by the Fatimid Caliphate, were subject to the repressive, anti-Christian campaigns of caliph al-Hakim. Thus, the Mariamite Cathedral (Mart Maryam) in Damascus was completely razed; however, this church was rebuilt in the 11th-12th centuries, evidently with the help of Constantinopolitan masons¹³¹.

The second stage of devastation of the sacred space of the Church of Antioch was associated with the arrival of the Seljuks from the East and the Crusaders from the West, followed by a series of wars in the 12th century. The Seljuk conquest of Antioch and northern Syria, which began in December 1084, led to the devastation of the Patriarchal Church of Cassian (St. Peter's Cathedral), other churches of Antioch (except for the Church of the Holy Virgin Mary of the Justinian era, revered by the

¹²⁹ *Ибрахим ибн Юханна*. “Житие Антиохийского патриарха Христофора” (пер. С.А. Моисеевой) // *Арабы-христиане в истории и литературе Ближнего Востока*. М.: ПСТГУ, 2013. С. 57.

¹³⁰ For more details, see: *Nasrallah J.* Le couvent de Saint-Siméon l'Alépin. P. 341–342; *Buchet L., Sodini J.-P., Pieri D.*, etc. Massacre dans le monastère de Qalat'at Sem'an, Syrie // *Vers une anthropologie des catastrophes. Actes des 9e Journées Anthropologiques de Valbonne*. Valbonne, 2007. P. 317–332.

¹³¹ This second church of Mart Maryam was described in the 12th century by Ibn Jubayr, who noted that it was “beautifully constructed” and that “its astonishingly crafted frescoes overwhelm the mind and captivate the eyes”. See: *Ибн Джубайр*. Указ. соч. С. 284.

Turks), the Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites the Younger, and several other monasteries in the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. However, unlike the Fatimid destruction of Qala'at Samaan in 1017, these devastations cannot be considered irreparable losses for the Patriarchate.

Under the Franks, the Orthodox monasteries of Antioch and the Black Mountain sprang back to life, and despite the transition of some churches to the Latins (such as the Cathedral of St. Peter, the Basilica of St. George, the Monastery of St. Paul), the city's churches and rural communities of the Greeks, Syrians, and Georgians entered a new and final period of prosperity. Notably, during the Frankish rule, the Monastery of St. Simeon Stylites the Younger, located on the lands of the Prince of Antioch, was rebuilt four times (!) with the participation of Frankish architects, completely restoring its wealth after the Muslim devastations of 1084, 1149, 1164, and 1188. Nonetheless, the Crusader wars against the Saracens in the 12th century were accompanied by two new waves of violence, which further reduced the communities and sacred sites of the Church in Antioch.

The first such “outburst” occurred in 1124, when, after the raid by the Crusaders of Joscelin I, Count of Edessa, on the suburbs of Aleppo (during which the Franks destroyed two mosques), the Muslims of the city turned against the local Christians. Led by the Qadi Abu al-Hasan, the Muslims appropriated the Orthodox cathedral of St. Helena, converting it into Al-Khalawiya madrasa and also turning the Orthodox Church of the Holy Mother of God into a mosque. It is interesting that, by the 13th century, the Orthodox Christians of Aleppo had managed to construct a new cathedral of considerable size (it was there that both Muslims and Christians sought refuge from the Mongols in 1260); however, this cathedral, whose dedication is unknown, disappeared during the Mamluk period¹³². The second wave is associated with more significant losses for the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. It occurred between 1144 and 1151 and was characterized by the devastation of Edessa by the forces of Imad ad-Din Zengi in 1144, the punitive campaign against the city's Christians by his son and successor Nur ad-Din (1147), and the sub-

¹³² Tritton A.S., *Gibb. Op. cit.* P. 94.

sequent conquest of Samosata and the surrounding Christian settlements on the Euphrates by Nur ad-Din and his ally, the Seljuk Sultan Masud I, in 1151. These campaigns led to the complete destruction of two historical Melkite enclaves (the dioceses of Edessa and Samosata) along with all their churches and communities (including the famous Church of Hagia Sophia in Edessa)¹³³.

Two metropolitans of Edessa are mentioned after these events (c. 1150 and 1365, respectively), but the context of these mentions makes it clear that by this time it was purely a titular see¹³⁴.

The Zengid campaigns of 1144–1151 literally drove a wedge between the Melkite dioceses and enclaves, which lay on opposite sides of the “cleansed” bend of the Euphrates. To the south of the river, Melkite enclaves in Sergiopolis – Resafa and Hierapolis – Manbij remained until the 13th–14th centuries; to the north of the devastated Samosata, the Metropolis of Theodosiopolis – Erzurum stretched through the mountains of eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, with its subordinate Armenian-Chalcedonian dioceses and communities. Around Edessa and in the region between the Euphrates and Tigris, there emerged a zone free of any Orthodox presence. Only on the banks of the Tigris and further east could a traveler in the 12th–13th centuries re-encounter a chain of Orthodox communities and dioceses. These included the enclave and metropolis of Amida (survived until World War I), the metropolis of Martyropolis (whose community, without a bishop, survived until the time of Patriarch Macarius III az-Za’im), the Orthodox community of Baghdad (with its “Catholicosate of Irenopolis”),

¹³³ For the first devastation of Edessa and the destruction of the Orthodox churches of St. Theodore and St. Archangel Michael, see: *Segal J.B.* Op. cit. P. 250, 256. Also on the destruction of the aforementioned Melkite churches, as well as the destruction of Edessa’s Hagia Sophia, see: *Segal J.B.* Op. cit. P. 250, 256.

¹³⁴ This refers to Metropolitan John of Edessa, whose *molybdobull* (lead seal) dates to around 1150 – that is, during the brief annexation of the County of Edessa by Emperor Manuel I Komnenos – and also to Metropolitan Euthymius, mentioned in 1365. See: *Laurent V.* Le Corpus des sceaux de l’empire byzantin. T. V (vol. 1). L’église. Paris 1963. № 260; *Панченко К.А.* Забытая катастрофа. К реконструкции последствий Александрийского крестового похода 1365 г. на Христианском Востоке // *Арабы-христиане в истории и литературе Ближнего Востока.* М.: ПСТГУ, 2013. С. 215.

as well as the Catholicosate of Romagira, stretching from Persia to the Turfan Oasis, whose communities were still mentioned in the 13th–14th centuries by Guillaume de Rubrouck (Willem van Rubroeck) and Count Heyton of Corykos¹³⁵.

The third and decisive stage of the devastation of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and its sacred space occurred in the 13th century. It was a time of catastrophes not only for the devastated Constantinople (1204), Baghdad (1258), and Rus' (1237–1241) but also for the Eastern Orthodox Christianity. It was from the second half of the 13th century, after the Mongol invasion of the Middle East, that the Levantine Christians and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch lost much of their heritage, falling to the Egyptian Mamluks, who fought against the Mongols, Franks, and Armenians. The campaigns of Sultan Baybars I al-Bunduqdari led to the complete destruction of Antioch (taken on May 18, 1268) and all the monasteries of the Patriarchate (ruined and destroyed between 1262–1275), as well as the first Mamluk devastations of the cities of Cilicia (1266–1275), the Syro-Lebanese coast, and the extermination of the Mamluk-controlled Melkite settlement in Qara, with several churches and two monasteries (1266). Following these campaigns, the “dead zone”, completely devoid of any significant Orthodox presence (created by the Zengids in the bend of the Euphrates in the 1140s), spread to the very heart of the Church of Antioch, turning its patriarchal diocese, its “Syrian Athos”, into a barren desert.

The territory of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch was thus divided into several disconnected parts: to the north there were the dioceses of Cilicia and eastern Anatolia (the metropolis of Theodosiopolis), to the southwest the dioceses of the Syro-Lebanese coast (the northernmost of which, after the destruction of Antioch, was Latakia) and the nearer Syria (Aleppo, the Damascus metropolis, the metropolis of Bostra and Hauran); to east of the Tigris riverbed there survived the last eastern dioceses and catholicosates, of which only the dioceses of Amida and Martyropolis would survive until the Ottoman times.

¹³⁵ *Вильгельм де Рубрук*. Путешествие в восточные страны. СПб.: изд. А.С. Суворина, 1911. Гл. 13. С. 83–84; *Heyton*. La Flor des Estoires des parties d'Orient // RHC Arm. II. Paris, 1906. P. 124.

The Catholicosate of Irenopolis and the Orthodox community of Dar as-Salam disappeared, evidently shortly after the Mongol devastation of Baghdad in 1258. (...) Any archaeological evidence of the existence of an active monastery and Melkite enclave in Sergiopolis-Resafa also ceases by the end of the 13th century; in this part of Syria, the Melkite diocese evidently fell to the Mongols rather than the Mamluks.

With the disappearance of Antioch, the main residence of the Orthodox Patriarchs became the Cilician Tarsus (although Syrian-Lebanese bishops frequently ascended to the Eastern See of St. Peter, and the enthronement of one of them, Cyril III, took place in Tripoli, in the cathedral of the Orthodox Church of Kanisat ar-Rum)¹³⁶. The subsequent Mamluk campaigns of sultans Qalawun and al-Ashraf led to the devastation of Syrian-Lebanese cities and rural settlements, including the complete destruction of Tripoli and Akra, as well as the decline of a significant portion of the monasteries and settlements of Lebanon (revived only during the Ottoman rule or even in the 20th century). Relatively intact enclaves survived in Tyre, which gave the Church two contenders for the Patriarchate, Sophronius and Arsenius, and in Latakia, where the monastery of Dair al Farus still existed at the beginning of the 14th century. However, even these enclaves were doomed to slow extinction under the harsh policies of the Mamluk sultans.

The final stage of devastation occurred in the 14th century. Another fateful year in the history of the Church of Antioch was 1359, when the Karamanids took Tarsus and Adana. Stripped of support from the devastated Cilician center, Patriarch Ignatius II was deposed (under the pretext of rejecting the teachings of St. Gregory Palamas) and forced to yield the Patriarchate to his rival, Pachomius I, the Metropolitan of Damascus. Under these circumstances, the residence, and later the See of the Patriarchs of Antioch, moved to Damascus, which was later formalized under the successor of Pachomius I, Patriarch Michael I (1366–1373)¹³⁷.

¹³⁶ *Hamilton B.* The Latin Church in the Crusader States. London, 1980. P. 328.

¹³⁷ *Todt K.-P.* Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen im Zentralen und Südlichen Syrien. P. 86; *Панченко К.А.* Игнатий II // Православная Энциклопедия. Т. 21. М.: изд-во “Православная Энциклопедия”, 2009. С.133–134.

The last Orthodox enclaves in Central Asia, in the territory of the former Catholicosate of Romagira, disappeared in the 14th century after Timur's campaigns. The last known Catholicos of Romagira is mentioned in 1364–1365. He disappears during the Mamluk reprisals against Christians, a response to the Alexandrian Crusade of the Cypriot King Peter I de Lusignan¹³⁸. By the end of the 14th century, the Church had lost its Constantinople stronghold: the monastery of Hodi-gon and the miraculous icon of the Mother of God Hodegitria were confiscated by imperial order, after a series of scandals and a general state moral disrepute, of which Syrian monks were regularly accused¹³⁹.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, the lack of sources prevents us from fully reconstructing the sacred topography and history of the veneration of saints within the Church of Antioch. The cathedral churches of Anazarbus, Mamistra, Adana, Pompeiopolis, Hierapolis-Manbij, Samasata, Irenopolis-Baghdad, and the entire Catholicosate of Romagira (including the metropolis of Merv) remain nameless to us; we know nothing of their dedication, and we are also unaware of the names of parish churches and monasteries in these catholicosates and dioceses. However, this article's attempt to create at least a semblance of a list, a kind of "topographic survey" of the destroyed sanctities, churches, and monasteries of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch of the 10th–14th centuries will hopefully be useful to the reader.

After the Mamluk campaigns of 1262–1359, the Patriarchal diocese of Antioch, the dioceses of Cilicia, and much of the Syrian-Lebanese settlements became desolate lands. The catholicosates of Romagira and Irenopolis, along with the metropolis of Sergiopolis, fell into permanent oblivion. A significant portion of the flock of the Throne of Antioch, primarily Orthodox Sogdians and the Armenians who adhered

¹³⁸ Панченко К.А. Забытая катастрофа. К реконструкции последствий Александрийского крестового похода 1365 г. на Христианском Востоке...

¹³⁹ Попов И.Н. Одигон. С.431–432.

to the Eastern See of St. Peter, would disappear without leaving us any preserved written record; everything we know about these communities, dioceses, and metropolises was recorded by authors from other nations—the Romans, Arab Christians, Armenians—Miaphysites, Syriac Jacobites, Latins, and Muslims. A large number of relics of the Patriarchate also disappeared without a trace. During the Mamluk devastation, the See of St. Peter, the miraculous icons of the Mother of God from Antioch, and the Mother of God of Corykhus were destroyed. In the fires and mob looting of the Crusader-ruined Constantinople, the relics of the Church of Antioch transferred to the Byzantine capital were lost. And even when some of these important relics, such as the Mandylion and the Keramion, are mentioned in historical and art history literature, they are not associated with the centuries-old legacy of the Church of Antioch.

After the devastations and catastrophes of the 11th–14th centuries, the pilgrim routes, which once stretched to the shrines of the Euphrates (Edessa, Hierapolis, Sergiopolis), Cilicia (Tarsus, Seleucia of Isauria, Anazarbus) and the monasteries of the Black Mountain, fell into decay due to a complete lack of relics and the very goal of pilgrimage. A modern-day pilgrim, longing to touch the relics of the Antiochian Orthodox and Melkite Greek Catholic Churches, can make the journey only to the monasteries of Kalamun and northern Lebanon. At present, pilgrimages to Saidnaya provide the only opportunity to see the last medieval Marian icon under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church of Antioch.

Similarly, trips to the monasteries of Maaloula provide a unique opportunity to visit the monasteries of Mar Sarkis and Mar Thecla. However, even these sites in a tiny Christian enclave, rebuilt in the 20th century and destroyed by militants in 2014, will inevitably bring to mind the great monasteries of Sergiopolis and Seleucia of Isauria from the 13th century. This tragically illustrates the path of the Church of Antioch: once crowds of pilgrims used to flock to the monastery of St. Sergius on the Euphrates and the Equal-to-Apostles Thecla on the banks of the Saleph River, but today, tourist and pilgrim groups can find monasteries dedicated to these saints only in a small remote settlement, hidden from public view by a mountain canyon. The mod-

ern Damascus should have preserved no less artistic Christian heritage (churches, mosaics, frescoes, encaustic and tempera icons, manuscripts) than Rome. However, having arrived in this ancient, hospitable, and beautiful city, travelers are reduced to visiting new churches built on old sites, where, for centuries, the liturgy had once been performed. A bright exception in this black list of lost relics are the churches and monasteries of Lebanon, which were revived either during the Ottoman period or in the 20th century preserving their unique fresco ensembles created in the 12th–13th centuries.

The widespread destruction and loss of communities, monasteries, and relics led to the loss by the devout of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (as well as their Melkite Greek Catholic counterparts) of a whole complex of unique liturgical traditions. Under the simultaneous pressure of Muslims and the growing pressure from the church authorities of Constantinople, Eastern Orthodox Christians underwent “total liturgical Byzantinization”, having lost by the 14th century the Western Syrian liturgical rite (with the liturgies of St. James, the Brother of the Lord, and St. Peter), and by the 17th century, the Syrian language as such (which, however, has been preserved by the Syriac Jacobites and Maronites). At the same time, unique liturgical traditions, such as the celebration of the Second Consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem (Hanukkah), widespread at least among the Eastern flock of the Throne of Antioch, as well as the memory of many saints, such as the seven martyrs of Nishapur or Timothy of Kakhusha¹⁴⁰, disappeared.

It is telling that since the destruction of the Cathedral and See of St. Peter, the veneration of the Prince of the Apostles has never been revived in its former scale in the Orthodox Churches of Antioch or Melkite Greek Catholic Churches. New centers of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch have received and continue to receive different dedications: the summer residence of the patriarchs of Antioch in Shuwaya was consecrated in honor of the Prophet Elijah, Balamand —in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the Antiochian Cathedral Church in North America — in honor of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. Among the large

¹⁴⁰ Милакович Ж.В., Мусеева С.А. Забытый сирийский столпник Тимофей из Кахушты // Вестник ПСТГУ. Филология. 2014. Вып. 5 (40). С. 45–54.

cathedrals built in the 20th century in the South American dioceses of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (it should be noted that in South America, the Antioch Christians outnumber all other Orthodox communities), there is also no cathedral dedicated to St. Peter. The cathedral churches of the Orthodox Antiochians in Mexico City, Santiago, and Buenos Aires are dedicated to St. George the Great Martyr; the cathedral built in the mid-20th century in São Paulo, Brazil in the image of Hagia Sophia, was consecrated in honor of St. Paul. There is no significant cathedral or monastery dedicated to St. Peter in the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch; what used to be the patriarchal diocese of the Prince of the Apostles, remains a desolate territory, which pilgrims visit but rarely and where only small communities of Turkic-speaking Orthodox still remain. Under the guise of the “Cathedral of St. Peter”, since the second half of the 19th century, a cave temple has been demonstrated in Antakya, yet it was known during the time of Napoleon III (when it was revived by the Latin community) as the Church of St. John. A handful of relatively new churches that emerged in the 19th–20th centuries in Antakya and its diocese (i.e., the Turkish Sanjak of Hatay) were mostly destroyed or severely damaged in the 2023 earthquake, once again making this long-suffering land — once the cradle of Christianity and the jewel of the medieval Orthodox world — the scorched earth, *terra adusta*.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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Dmitry E. Mishin Patriarch Papā Bâr ʿĀggay and the Establishment of Seleucia-on-Tigris as the Centre of Christianity in the Sasanid Empire

(3rd century – early 4th century)

Abstract

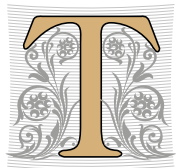
The rise of the initially peripheral chair of Seleucia-on-the Tigris is largely due to the activities of Papā Bâr ʿĀggay ordained its bishop in 246/7. Being closer to the Sasanid king than any other bishop, Papā became a representative of the whole Christian community before the government. That gradually made Papā the manager of the affairs of the whole Church. Papā's rise met with the opposition of a number of bishops, of whom some disapproved of his acts as interference into their affairs and others considered the primacy of the Seleucian chair as unfounded. At some stage in 313 to 318, Papā's opponents, at a meeting with him, dismissed him and replaced him with his archdeacon, Simeon Bâr šabbaʿē. Papā appealed to the Western church fathers. Those, in their answer, described any opposition to the church leader as unacceptable, but did not restore Papā in his position. Either party interpreted that answer as its victory and so long as Papā stayed alive (till about 325 to 330) the church had two leaders. But the head of the Seleucian church remained on the top of the church hierarchy because the necessity to deal with the government was always extant.

Keywords:

Sasanids, Ctesiphon, Papā Bar ʿĀggay, Simeon Bar šabbaʿē

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he mid-third century, the beginning of the period to be analyzed here, was a peculiar time for both the Sassanid Empire and the Christian communities dwelling there. The empire had come into being not long before, and some components of its structure were only in the process of taking shape. Ctesiphon, the Sassanids' capital, was not yet the magnificent agglomeration which it became later. West of the Tigris, the founder of the Sassanid state, Ardashīr I (225–240), founded a new city, Weh-Ardashīr, which was to become the capital of the state. The name of the city, to be translated as “Ardashīr has made better”, shows that it was intended to eclipse the earlier cities of the Ctesiphon agglomeration – the Greek Seleucia (Seleucia on the Tigris) and the Parthian Walakhshābād, but that position had not yet been fully achieved. At the same time, both Ardashīr and his successor Shāpūhr I (240–271) spent much of their time not in Ctesiphon, but in other cities or, during their numerous campaigns, in military camps; in addition, it is likely that they had already borrowed from the Arsacid Parthian kings the custom of going to the northern regions of the empire during the hot season.

Christianity had not yet spread across the territory of the Sassanid Empire as it did in the later centuries. Preachers of the Christian faith mainly arrived to the Sassanid lands through northern Iraq, going from northern Syria to the east, towards Nisibis (present-day Nusaybin in Turkey). By that route travelled Mar Mārī, a religious teacher and preacher, whose name is usually associated with the spread of Christian teaching in the Parthian Empire. According to the *Acts of Mar Mārī the Apostle*, he set out from Edessa, arrived in Nisibis, preached in the lands which today would be called “northern Iraq”, and from there went

to Ctesiphon¹. Many Christians who migrated to the East remained in northern Iraq, which later became an important centre of monastic life. The author of the *Chronicle of Arbela*² tells that at the time when the Sassanid Empire arose there were twenty bishops in the East, and lists seventeen dioceses many of which are located in the north of Iraq and Mesopotamia (Beth Zabdē, Kârḥā d-Bēth-Slōkh, Ḥârbât-Glal, Arzōn, Bēth Nīkaṭōr, Shahrkard, Ḥazza, Singara), although not all of those were under the Parthian, or Sassanid, power³. As for the Ctesiphon agglomeration, the spread of Christian doctrine there was complicated not only by its remoteness from northern Iraq, but also by the fact that the big communities which inhabited it stuck to their own religions, Hellenism and Zoroastrianism.

Under those conditions began the movement of the Seleucian see towards primacy. In the sources, it is associated with the activity of the bishop of Seleucia named Papā bâr Âggay. There are several stories about that in the sources, and the narrative focuses on the most striking episode, the dispute between Papā and the bishops who opposed him. The importance of those reports makes it necessary to provide their translation below.

¹ *The Acts of Mar Mārī the Apostle*. Ed. and tr. A. Harrak. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005. P. 12–43.

² Using the *Chronicle of Arbela* as a source for the purposes hereof, the present author is aware of the doubts as to its reliability, summarized, e.g., by S. Brock (see Brock S. Syriac Historical Writing: A Survey of the Main Sources. In: *Journal of the Iraqi Academy, Syriac Corporation*. Vol. 5, 1979. P. 23–25 (302–304)). No doubt, the *Chronicle*, as well as the history of its writing, shall be put to a critical study. However, the volume of such a study would probably be much larger than the size of this article would allow. Therefore, it would seem possible not to go beyond the following observation. The data supplied by the *Chronicle of Arbela* are, so far as the subject matter hereof is concerned, generally consistent with evidence yielded by other sources. Some divergences may be observed, as this text will also show, but they are not bigger than those between other sources. To a certain extent, the occurrence of such divergences is natural because the *Chronicle* is a local, not a general, history, and, therefore, presents events in a particular way, i.e., from the local point of view. Therefore, for the time being, no compelling reason to reject the data of the *Chronicle of Arbela* can be seen.

³ *Sources syriaques*. Ed. A. Mingana. Vol. I. Mšīḥa-zkha (texte et traduction), Bar-Penkayé (texte). Mosul, 1907. P. 30. The score will be even more in favour of northern Iraq and Mesopotamia if it is taken into account that the list includes some cities whose development took place during the Sassanid period (Bēth-Lapaṭ (Gondēshāpūhr, now ruins near Islamabad approximately 10 km southeast of Dezful), Hormuzd-Ardashīr (present-day Ahvaz), Prat-Māyshān (near present-day Basra)).



Coin of Shapur I (240–271).
From open sources

Synodicon orientale (written between 775 and 790)⁴

Then Bishop Agapetus⁵ stood up and asked the chief and leader of the bishops and the governor of the entire East⁶ for permission to speak before him and to read the letters with the commandments, which had been sent at various times from the governors of the West to our ancient fathers, and later, in the days of the Catholicoi Mar Isaac⁷ and Mar Yhābalahā⁸. Catholicos Mar Dadīshō⁹ gave Bishop Agapetus the permission, and he read the letters, and then began to speak about the previous troubles from which the persecution of the Church arose, especially because of the rebellious and disobedient bishops, who, due to their shameful deeds, were severely rebuked by the holy, brilliant leader of the clergy, the orthodox Catholicos Mar Papā. Then they turned to

⁴ The fragment presented in the text is part of the account of the council which took place in 423/4, during the ministry of Catholicos Dadīshō⁹ (421–456). The dates of Dadīshō⁹'s ministry as Catholicos are as suggested by the present author in an earlier work (Mishin D.E. *Xosrov I Anushirvan (531–579), yego epoxa i yego zbizneopisanie i pouchenie v istorii Miskaveyxa* [Khusraw I Anushirwan (531–579), His Epoch, and His Biography and Admonition in Miskawayh's History]. Moscow: IV RAN, 2014. (in Russ.). P. 139–140.

⁵ Bishop of Gondēshāpūhr, which was at that time the second episcopal see after Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

⁶ The reference is made to Catholicos Dadīshō⁹.

⁷ Catholicos in 400–411 (Mishin, 2014. P. 134). The Syriac word *mar* literally meaning a “lord” is an epithet which can be placed before a person's name to express respect for him, but this is not obligatory. Therefore, in the cited texts, this word is present in some cases and absent in others.

⁸ Catholicos in 415–420 (Mishin, 2014. P. 136).

Mar Mīlēs⁹ and the virtuous bishops like him and led them astray, and they, in their simplicity and ignorance, were carried away by the vain zeal [of them] and [followed] them. Of those rebellious men some acted as accusers, others as witnesses. Mar Miles and the virtuous men like him accepted, as judges, the testimony of the rebellious. And, having no authority as judges, they deposed Mar Papā. And Mar Papā saw that justice had departed from the assembly, wickedness had prevailed both among the virtuous and the wicked, and truth had departed from both the rebellious and the best. He noticed that the Gospel was placed in the middle, and there was no fair trial between him and those assembled. Then he became inflamed with great anger and struck the Gospel and said, turning to it: “Speak, Gospel, speak a word! You have been placed this way, in the middle, as a judge, so that one may resort to you. I see that truth has abandoned both the honest bishops and those who lead astray from the right path, but you remain silent, not making a call to justice”. And since Mar Papā turned to the Gospel without fear and reverence and laid his hand on it not as a man [trying] to find refuge [from adversity], he was, for his evil deed, exposed to a blow which became for him a corporal punishment. Then the chapters and accusations of tyranny, oppression and suppression, written by the rebellious bishops against Mar Papā, became credible to [the other] bishops. They composed a story about him with many accounts of his deeds, depicting him as a man who committed evil acts, and sent [it] to many lands. When that was subsequently learned by the Western Fathers and they carefully investigated the matter, the injustice of the rebellious ones was discovered, their wickedness came to light, and all those rebellious bishops, of whom some were accusers and others witnesses, were condemned and deprived of their ranks. And of the virtuous bishops who were at that meeting held against Mar Papā, some left this world through a beautiful martyrdom, others departed this life with a good name, and those who lived on were forgiven, not for their deeds, but because it turned out that they were people of little knowledge and simple-mindedness, because of which those who lead astray from the right path were able to mislead them so that, [using] their good name, the rebellious would carry out their evil intentions regarding the Patriarch. But what

⁹ Mīlēs is mostly known as a bishop of Susa (present-day Shush in Iran). His name which is written as *Mīlēs* or *Mīles* in Syriac sources and as *Mīlās* in Arabic, will, for the sake of simplicity, hereinafter be written as Miles.

they feared, namely, that he (Papā. — *D.M.*) would deprive them of their titles, came to them from the Western Fathers. They were mercilessly condemned, deposed and expelled. The Fathers cancelled and abolished everything which had been done against Papā.

For the glorious deeds [of Papā], his ardent zeal and piety, and especially for the fact that he conducted affairs more skillfully than those who were before him, whereas his disciples, who held an assembly against him without having the right to do so, received their retribution for him, the fathers commanded thus: “Let Mar Papā be named in the Book of the Living at the head of all, and those who were before him, let them be named after him. And Mar Simon¹⁰, who was appointed in place of Mar Papā at the time when the leadership [over the Church] was destroyed, since we know that he is virtuous and pious, and the assembly forced him to that¹¹, let him be archdeacon with Mar Papā and serve him with love and piety. We command that when Mar Papā departs from this world to his Lord, Simon shall sit on his throne and assume the patriarchal government. For with us, disciples cannot rise above their head, nor be to him judges, for they have not been given the right by the Lord [Jesus] Christ; such are the just laws that God has laid down in human nature...”¹²

Chronicle of Arbela

“In the East, Papā, the Bishop of the Cities,¹³ whom we have mentioned, as he lived in the capital (*mḏīnāt māl̄kūthā*)¹⁴ and the other bishops needed him for “extraneous affairs” (*sbawathā nūkrayathā*), wanted to gain power over the other bishops, as if it were fitting that they should have one head. That was opposed by the priests of the Cities and all the people. For that they wanted to depose him. Even his archdeacon Simon was indignant at those innova-

¹⁰ The reference is made to Simon Bār Šabbaʿē (on him see below).

¹¹ I.e., to the acceptance of the leadership over the Church.

¹² *Synodicon orientale*. Paris, 1902. P. 46–47.

¹³ The word “Cities” (*mḏīnathā*) as used in the fragment in question clearly denotes the Ctesiphon agglomeration, which the Arabs similarly called *al-Madāʿin* (literally meaning “the cities”).

¹⁴ Seleucia on the Tigris.

tions and reported them to Miles of Susa, Âḳibalahā of Kârḥā-d-Bēth-Slōkh¹⁵, and many others. Mar¹⁶ Papā became very afraid of that, for Simon's parents were close to the king and were held in high esteem by all people. He wrote to the bishops of the West and especially to the Bishop of Edessa named Sâ'dā. All the bishops answered him, considering him a strong and valiant man, and promised to assist him before the king of kings, Constantine¹⁷. They thought it would be better if the bishop of the capital had primacy over all the bishops of the East. They wrote him a letter about that, in their own name and in the name of the rulers and nobles of the West. They wrote to him that just as in the West, which is under the rule of the Roman Empire, there are several patriarchs, those of Antioch, Rome, Alexandria and Constantinople, so in the East, which is under the rule of the Persian Empire, there should be one patriarch.

God [...] arranged it so that Papā's plan was fulfilled. [Papā], without knowing it himself, was made the head of all the bishops and all the Christians of the East. So all the bishops [of the East] submitted to what was decided in the West, fearing those bishops [of the West], lest they should do so that they would find themselves between two powerful enemies, the rulers of the Christian Romans in the West, and the villainous kings of the Persians, in the East. But Simon, Papā's archdeacon, did not accept that arrangement in any way and wanted to achieve its cancellation through his parents. Papā, however, resorted to a trick and persuaded Simon's father, promising him that after his (Papā's. — *D.M.*) death his son (Simon. — *D.M.*) would be the next patriarch"¹⁸.

Martyrdom of Miles:

"Then a great schism occurred because of the bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, whose name was Papā, the son of Âggay. He (Miles. — *D.M.*) saw that he (Papā. — *D.M.*) [was attempting] to exalt himself above the bishops of the provinces who had gathered there to judge him. And he (Papā. — *D.M.*) was also trying to exalt himself above the priests and deacons of his cities. He (Miles. — *D.M.*) realized that he

¹⁵ Present-day Kirkuk in Iraq.

¹⁶ This word is only present in Kawerau's edition of 1985.

¹⁷ The reference is made to Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337).

¹⁸ *Sources...*, 1907. P. 44–45. Cf. *Die Chronik von Arbela*. Hrsg. P. Kawerau. Lovanii: In aedibus E. Peeters, 1985. S. 46–48.

(Papā. — *D.M.*) was arrogant toward them and had fallen away from God. Then he stood in the middle and said: ‘How dare you try to exalt yourself above your brothers and companions, having vain envy towards them, like the godless? Is it not written: ‘Whoever was a ruler among you, let him be your servant’¹⁹. Papā said to him: ‘Are you teaching me this, or are you just a fool? Do I not know this?’ Then he (*Miles. — D.M.*) came near and placed the Gospel, which was in his bag, on the pillow before Papā and said to him: ‘Since you do not want to accept a teaching from me, accept a judgment from the Gospel of our Lord, placed before your eyes, for you do not see its command with your eyes which have closed your thoughts!’ Then Papā, in a terrible anger, raised his hand, slapped it on the Gospel and said: ‘Speak, Gospel, speak the word!’ Saint Miles became afraid, took the Gospel, kissed it, placed it on his eyes and said loudly for all to hear: ‘Because you in your vanity have dared to raise your hand against the living words of our Lord, behold, an angel comes who will strike you in half your body and dry it up. Many will have fear and horror; but you will not die immediately and will remain alive, to the astonishment of others.’ And immediately, something like a lightning descended from heaven, struck Papā and dried up half his body. He fell on his side, suffering pain, and did not speak for twelve years. In such suffering he died. The assembled people were in fear and horror’²⁰.

Abridged History of the Church (Mukhtaṣar al-akhbār al-bīʿiyya, last quarter of the 10th or early 11th century)

“Then he (Papā. — *D.M.*) began to conduct affairs in a disorderly manner and somewhere appointed two bishops. Discord and schism increased in the Church. The fathers gathered to condemn him and persuade him to discontinue what they did not accept. Among them were Bishop Miles of Susa, Bishop Bōlīdāʿ of Dasht-Māyshān²¹, and a number of other fathers. They began to reproach him for what he had done, but he neither discontinued that, nor hear-

¹⁹ Cf. Luke 22, 26.

²⁰ *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*. Ed. P. Bédjan. T. II. Parisiis, Lipsiae, 1891. P. 266–268.

²¹ Dasht-Māyshān was a diocese with a capital at Prat-Māyshān. In the *Story of Simon Bār Šābbāʿē*, Bōlīdāʿ appears as the bishop of Prat (*Patrologia Syriaca*. Acc. R. Graffin. Pars prima. T. II. [Ed.] I(J). Parisot, F. Nau, M. Kmosko. Parisiis, 1907. Col. 831–832). Dasht-Māyshān is not identical with the diocese of Māyshān, the capital of which was Kārḡā d-Māyshān.

kened to them, and answered them in a rude manner; then they also began to speak rudely to him and accuse him of lying. Then he slapped his hand on the Gospel which was before him, not meekly, but arrogantly and haughtily, and said: ‘Speak a word for me.’ And then his right hand withered at the moment when he laid it on the Gospel; this became a common example. People, seeing that, heeded the warning and discontinued many of their practices; they also understood, from the punishment that had been inflicted on him, what power he had had under Christ. Papā discontinued his practices for which he had been blamed, and, in spite of his right hand having withered, remained for twelve more years.

At that time, it was a norm (*rasm*) for the Christians of the East (*ahl al-Mashriq*) to write to the Christians of the West (*ahl al-Maghrib*) about discords between metropolitans and bishops, so that they (the Christians of the West. — *D.M.*) would judge between them and condemn what was worthy of condemnation. The Christians of the West did the same with regard to the Christians of the East. When the letters of the Christians of the East about the discords which had occurred between Papā and the others were delivered to the Christians of the West, the latter, being in the number of three hundred and eighteen fathers, all condemned them; that took place six years after Constantine became a Christian²². They gathered and wrote an epistle, mentioning in it that the Christians of the East (*mashrikiyyūn*) originally had the right to establish Patriarchs of the East. They set that no one was allowed to gather [others] and oppose their leader, to whom the title of leader had been conferred in the church of Ctesiphon (*bīrat al-Madāʿin*), to complain about him or to address the Christians of the West, either in writing or orally. [They said:] ‘Let your Patriarch judge you, and let the Savior judge the Patriarch!’ They

²² The reference is to Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337). In speaking of his becoming a Christian, the author of the text seems to be referring to Constantine’s visions and actions on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (28 October 312). The circulation of such ideas in the East is attested by the report of Elijah (Elias) of Nisibis (wrote in 1019) that Constantine was baptized and became a Christian in the seventh year of his reign and that he defeated Maxentius in the same year (*Eliae Metropolitae Nisibeni Opus chronologicum*. Pars I. Parisii, Lipsiae, 1910. P. 98). The question of Elijah’s chronology is considered below; here it can be said that this “time six years after Constantine became a Christian” may be identified with the end of 318 or perhaps with the immediate following months. This is entirely consistent with the chronology of the events under consideration, as suggested below.



Shapur I receiving the surrender of Emperor Valerian (253–260).
Relief at Naqsh-e Rostam.
From open sources

forbade by the word of God that any of them (Christians of the East. — D.M.) should oppose him, condemn any of his deeds or compete with him.

Others said that the believing Helen²³ sent him valuable gifts and asked him to build her a church in the lands which were under his administration (*fī ‘amali-hi*), and to divide the money sent by her among the needy and poor. She addressed him as *Catholicos*, *Patriarch* and *Father*. The *Patriarch of Rome* addressed him in the same way, calling him ‘*Catholicos of the East and West*’²⁴.

Chronicle of Seert (written after 1036)

“He (Simon Bâr Şābba‘ē²⁵. — D.M.) was an archdeacon under *Catholicos Papā* and the manager of his affairs from the time his right hand withered. But according to some stories, there was a struggle between *Catholicos Papā* [on the one hand] and some bishops and part of the flock [on the other]. They (Papā’s

²³ Flavia Julia Helena (d. 330), the mother of Constantine the Great.

²⁴ *Mukhtaṣar al-akbbār al-bī‘iyya*. Ed. B. Ḥaddād. Baghdad: Sharikat al-Dīwān li-l-ṭibā‘a, 2000. P. 158–159.

²⁵ Bâr Şābba‘ē, although beginning with *bâr* (“son”), is not an indication of the name of Simon’s father, but rather a nickname for Simon, literally meaning “son of dyers”. It was given to Simon because his relatives were dyers of the clothes for the Sassanid king (see below).

opponents. — *D.M.*) seized Simon by force and made him Catholicos, whereas he was an archdeacon under Papā. When they did that, Papā said to Simon: ‘Christ will not forgive you for agreeing to this, unless your blood is shed and you steadfastly accept martyrdom.’ He (Simon. — *D.M.*) justified himself before him (Papā. — *D.M.*) by saying that he could neither choose nor influence [the matter]. Then Papā received letters from the Greeks, who asked him to forgive him (Simon. — *D.M.*), informed him (Papā. — *D.M.*) that he (Simon. — *D.M.*) was not guilty of what had happened, and [asked] that Simon be his servant and his deputy. And he (Papā. — *D.M.*) established that he (Simon. — *D.M.*) would be the Catholicos after him”²⁶.

Mārī Ibn Sulaymān (mid-12th century)

“Some say that he (Papā. — *D.M.*) conducted his affairs in a disorderly manner and placed two bishops on one see. Then the fathers among whom were Bishop Miles of Susa, and others gathered in an agreement [between them]. But he (Papā. — *D.M.*) did not discontinue [his practices], behaved in a rude manner, claimed that they were bringing senseless accusations against him, and boldly slapped his hand on the Gospel, calling on it to become a witness for him. And then his right hand withered, which became a common example. People became afraid, discontinued [what they did], and realized that that was because of the place he had with Christ, so that He soon punished him. The Western fathers were notified of what had happened, and they condemned it, recognized it as grave and confirmed what they had written: the companions of the Catholicos of the East are not allowed to speak out against him. And they made him (Papā. — *D.M.*) judge over them, whereas his own judge shall be Christ. The Western Fathers honoured him (Papā. — *D.M.*), and Helena sent him gifts and means for the building of the Church of the East and honoured his words. Jacob, the Metropolitan of Nisibis, famous for his miracles, honoured him, and in the letters of Mar Ephraim there are attacks on those who unjustly accused him”²⁷.

²⁶ Histoire nestorienne inédite (Chronique de Séert). Première partie (I). Pub. A. Scher. In: *Patrologia Orientalis*. T. IV. Ed. R. Graffin, F. Nau. Paris, 1908. P. 296.

²⁷ *Maris Amri et Slibae de patriarchis nestorianorum commentaria*. Ed. H. Gismondi. Pars I. *Maris textus arabicus*. Romae, 1899. P. 8–9.

Bar Hebraeus (1226–1286)

“Catholicos Papā was present at the Council of the Three Hundred and Eighteen, which met at Nicaea in the year 336 of the Greeks, fifty-nine years after his elevation to the rank. Some say that he was elevated to the rank at that Council, but this is not true. Others say that he did not go to the Council himself, but sent his disciple, Simon Bār Šābba‘ē. And nine years after the Council of Nicaea, the bishops of the East assembled and brought many charges against Papā, on account of the disorders which had befallen the affairs of the Church through his neglect. But he, being unable to defend himself against any of the charges against him, raised his hand, and struck it upon the venerable Gospel, which he had laid on the pulpit beside him, and said, ‘Speak thou, if thou hast anything to say, for I despair of speaking.’ And immediately his right hand withered. Some say that the bishops, seeing that, removed him, because the words of their accusations were found to be true. Others say that he was not removed, because the bishops said that God’s punishment was sufficient for him”²⁸.

The preceding events have less coverage in the sources, although the extant data are sufficient to make some observations. The first issue to be examined would naturally be when and how Papā received his rank. Here is what information we have about this. According to the *Chronicle of Arbela*, “...the inhabitants of Ctesiphon persistently asked him (the bishop of Arbela named Āḥḥādabūh. — D.M.) to ordain a bishop so that he would stay with them all the time. ‘There are many Christians now,’ they told him, ‘and the leaders, the lords bishops, are far from us and cannot come to us every time to satisfy our urgent needs and lead us along the path of righteousness, spiritually and physically.’ He heard their request and did what they asked for. He informed Bishop Ḥāyb‘il of Susa of that, and the two of them, with the consent of all the people, chose Papā, an Aramean and a man of knowledge and wisdom, and each of them returned to his place”²⁹.

The *Abridgement of the Church History* contains a paraphrase of a letter from Miles to the Metropolitan of Gondēshāpūhr, named Gāddayhāb. It shows that Papā was ordained in the year 557 of Alexander³⁰, without the consent of

²⁸ *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon ecclesiasticum*. Ed. J.B. Abbeloos, Th.J. Lamy. T. III. Parisiis, Lovanii, 1877. Col. 27–32.

²⁹ *Sources...*, 1907. P. 41. Cf. *Die Chronik...*, 1985. S. 43.

³⁰ The year of Alexander the Great, i.e. the year of the Seleucid era, covered the period from September of one year up to, and including, August of the

the community of the Fathers (*bi għayr riḏā djamāʿat al-abāʿ*). In the same book, but a line above and without reference to Miles, it is stated that Papā received the title of Patriarch from Dūday, Metropolitan of Basra³¹.

Bar Hebraeus states that Papā was ordained by David, Metropolitan of Mesene (Syr. Māyshān), in the year 577 of the Seleucid era³². This David is undoubtedly identical with Dūday of the *Abridgement of the Church History*. The mention of Basra, built much later, at the beginning of the Arab conquests, is an obvious anachronism and the reference is actually made to Prat-Māyshān, hence the reference to Mesene. A more complicated problem consists in the differences in the date, since Bar Hebraeus not only names 577 of the Seleucid era, but also states that the interval between the ordination of Papā and the Council of Nicaea is 59 years³³. So, the date of 577 belongs to Bar Hebraeus himself and cannot be attributed to some copyist's fault.

Bar Hebraeus also tells that “at the time of his (Papā's) election, a split occurred among the bishops, and the party of those who supported him prevailed”³⁴. This appears to be a reference to the lack of agreement among the fathers, mentioned by Miles. A later historian of the Church, ʿAmr Ibn Mattā (or Ibn Mattay, mid-14th century), states that Papā received the rank of Patriarch in Ctesiphon in 558 according to the Greek calendar³⁵.

next one (using the Greek calendar) or from April (sometimes from the end of March) of one year to the corresponding time of the next one (using the so-called Babylonian calendar). Accordingly, the 557th year of the Seleucid era corresponds to the period from September 245 through August 246 in the first of those cases, and to the period from the end of the first ten days of April 246 roughly to the same period of the following year in the second one. What calendar Miles used can only be said hypothetically (see below).

³¹ *Mukhtaṣar...*, 2000. P. 157.

³² *Gregorii Barhebraei...*, 1877. Col. 27–28. Since Bar Hebraeus uses the calendar of the Seleucid era in its Greek version, the year 577 covers the period from September 265 to August 266. On the calendar used by Bar Hebraeus see Mishin D.E. Protivostoyaniye nestorian i monofizitov v pravleniye Xosrova Parviza (591–628) [Struggle between Nestorians and Monophysites under the Rule of Khusraw Parwēz (591–628)]. In: *Xristianskiy Vostok: Mnogoobraziye regionalnyx elit: Ot pozdney antichnosti do Novogo vremeni* [The Christian East: Variety of Regional Elites: From the Late Antiquity till the Early Modern Era]. Ed. K.A. Panchenko. Moscow: Izdatelstvo PSTGU, 2025. P. 69. Note 3. (in Russ.).

³³ *Gregorii Barhebraei...*, 1877. Col. 29–30.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Col. 27–28.

³⁵ *Maris Amri et Slibae de patriarchis nestorianorum commentaria*. Ed. H. Gismondi. Pars II. *Amri et Slibae textus*. Romae, 1896. P. 13. It is difficult to say



Coin of Bahram II (275–292).
From open sources

The chronological indications of Miles and ʿAmr Ibn Mattā are very close to each other. Perhaps, the difference of one year between the dates which they specify may be explained by supposing that Miles indicates the date according to the Babylonian calendar, and ʿAmr, according to the Greek one; then, the ordination of Papā is likely to be put in the period from the beginning of October 246 to the end of March 247. It is much more difficult to reconcile those indications with the chronology of Bar Hebraeus. Apparently, the information of Miles and ʿAmr Ibn Mattā is to be preferred. According to Bar Hebraeus, the meeting between Papā and his opponents takes place nine years after the Council of Nicaea, i.e., in 334. But in the *Chronicle of Arbela* it is stated that after the meeting Papā applied for help to the Western hierarchs, one of whom was Sâḏā, the Bishop of Edessa. The latter seems to be identical with Shâḏ, who was Bishop of Edessa some time between 312/3 and 323/4³⁶. So, Bar Hebraeus's chronology is shifted forward by at least ten years. The dating of the beginning of Papā's service as the Head of the Seleucian church to the period 246–247 corresponds to the indications of the *Abridgement of the Church History* and Mārī Ibn Sulaymān that during Papā's

which calendar (Greek or Babylonian) is used in this case. The last date which ʿAmr mentions in his book is the night of Sunday, 13 *Tishrīn II* (November) of the Greek year 1629, i.e. 7 *Ramaḏān* 717 AH (Ibid. P. 126). This date corresponds to 13 November 1317 and is determined according to the Greek calendar. If it is assumed that ʿAmr also used it in his narrative about the Sassanid times, the year 558 shall cover the time from 1 September 246 to the end of August 247.

³⁶ *Chronica minora*. Pars I. Parisiis, Lipsiae, 1903. P. 4.

ministry as *Catholicos*, *Dākiyūs malik al-rūm*, i.e. the Roman emperor Decius, died (July 251)³⁷.

The extant sources contain some other important information on the early stages of Papā's career. According to the *Abridgement of the Church History*, he was initially an artisan engaged in the manufacturing of luxurious brocade for kings³⁸. This means, in particular, that Papā came not from the ecclesiastical, but from the artisan milieu. Another important detail is that Papā became a church hierarch at a relatively young age³⁹; this may also be inferred from the reports of Papā's long period of service to be examined below.

It may seem surprising that such a person became the bishop, although there were probably other candidates who were not inferior to him in theological knowledge and piety. This is in addition to the above-cited statements that the elevation of Papā to the rank was not supported by all the hierarchs. To make the confusion worse, it is unclear how Papā's ordination took place: according to one version, it was performed by the bishops of Arbela and Susa, and according to another one, by the bishop of Prat-Māyshān.

In the early church history of Bārḥād̄bshābbā 'Arabayā (c. 600) it is stated, with reference to the time immediately preceding the Council of Nicaea, that the bishops of Persia received ordination from Antioch⁴⁰. There has been preserved a letter which, according to its text, was from the Western church hierarchs to

³⁷ *Maris...*, 1899. P. 8–9.

³⁸ *Mukhtaṣar...*, 2000. P. 157.

³⁹ *Maris...* 1896. P. 13. It should be noted, however, that in the corpus of epistles usually termed as the "correspondence of Papā" there are indications that at the time of his address to the Western hierarchs (as will be shown below, that occurred in 313–318 or a little later) he was more than a hundred years old (*Braun O. Der Briefwechsel des Katholikos Papā von Seleucia. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der ostsyrischen Kirche im vierten Jahrhundert. In: Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie. 18-ter Jahrgang, 1894. S. 171, 180*). The epistles which the corpus consists of are, at least for the most part, forgeries, but they also contain references to events which actually took place. If, on the basis of that, the references to the age of Papā are to be accepted, the date of his birth should roughly be placed in the early 210-es. This would mean that Papā was elevated to his rank at the age of a little over thirty. Therefore, the words about the young age of Papā should most likely be interpreted as meaning that he had not yet reached forty years of age and in any case was not an old man.

⁴⁰ La première partie de l'histoire de Barḥadbešabba 'Arbaia. Ed. et tr. F. Nau. In: *Patrologia Orientalis*. Ed. R. Graffin, F. Nau. T. 23. Paris: Firmin-Didot et C^{ie}, 1932. P. 205.



Bahram II killing lions. Relief at Sar Mashhad.
From open sources

the Eastern ones and in particular to Bishop Agapetus of Gondēshāpūhr, i.e., obviously, to Agapetus, who, according to the above-cited fragment from the *Synodicon orientale*, delivered a speech at the council of 423/4⁴¹. According to that letter, following the death of a metropolitan of Seleucia and Ctesiphon his successor was to be confirmed in his rank by the Patriarch of Antioch, but it was no longer necessary to travel to him personally in conformity with an ancient custom, since due to the enmity between Rome and the Sasanid Empire, people making such journeys could be in danger⁴². If that evidence is correct, Papā was to receive ordination from the Patriarch of Antioch. But it is far from certain that the Patriarch would have agreed to the elevation of a craftsman, considered a young man, to the rank of primate of the Church. As shown in the Excursus, that gap was filled by a legend in which the Patriarch Demetrian of Antioch recognized Papā as the head of the Persian church.

Although the unknown author of the *Abridgement of the Church History* and ʿAmr Ibn Mattā claim that Papā was elevated to the rank of Patriarch, in 246–247 he probably became only a bishop. Until that time, Seleucia had

⁴¹ In the context of those times, Western hierarchs (or fathers) are understood to be church hierarchs from the Roman dominions, including those in Asia, while Eastern hierarchs are understood to be hierarchs from the Sasanid Empire.

⁴² *Assemanus (Assemani) J.S. Bibliotheca orientalis clementino-vaticana. T. III. Pars 1. Romae, 1725. P. 52–55.*

neither a Catholicos nor a Patriarch (as shown below, in church histories the bishops of Arbela are called the Heads of the church), nor, according to the above-cited passage from the *Chronicle of Arbela*, even a bishop. Whether Papā called himself a bishop or a Catholicos (and, if so, when exactly) is almost impossible to say due to the lack of documents from that time. Bishop Agapetus called Papā a Catholicos, but, as is evident from the history of the Council of 423/4, his main concern was to prove, with a convenient historical example, the illegitimacy of the opposition to Catholicos Dadīshō^s. Within that argument, Papā appeared as Dadīshō^s of past years and, therefore, was to be described as a Catholicos. In the sources reflecting the position of Papā's opponents (the *Martyrdom of Miles*, the *Chronicle of Arbela*), he is called only a bishop. In the apocryphal letter of Papā to the inhabitants of Nisibis, which is part of his correspondence (see below), he calls himself the Head of the Church of the East⁴³. Apparently, the actual author of the letter believed that Papā would have called himself exactly that way. The titles of Catholicos and Patriarch are mentioned in sources in connection with the response of the Western Fathers to Papā's letters. If, given the lack of other evidence, the information set forth above is accepted as reliable, two interpretations may be advanced. According to one, Papā received ordination as a bishop from the bishops of Arbela and Susa in 246/7, and afterwards, possibly on the date indicated by Bar Hebraeus (265/6), the bishop of Prat-Māyshān ordained him Patriarch. The second one is that Papā was officially called neither Patriarch nor Catholicos, which titles (or one of them) came to be used in relation to him because they appeared in answers of the Western Fathers to Papā's letters (see below). Papā's supporters interpreted them to mean that Papā was the Head of the Church of the East and its Patriarch; that interpretation is reflected in the above-cited fragment from the *Chronicle of Arbela*. Of course, a combination of those versions is also possible. In any case, it seems likely that Papā called himself the Head of the Church of the East and that was visible evidence of his desire for primacy among the bishops, which is mentioned in the sources (see above).

An important factor of Papā's rise was that he was a suitable person for solving certain problems. According to the sources, he had two important merits: in addition to Syriac, he also mastered Persian⁴⁴, and as a craftsman

⁴³ Braun, 1894. S. 174.

⁴⁴ *Maris...*, 1896. P. 13; *Maris...*, 1899. P. 8; *Mukhtaṣar...*, 2000. P. 157.

serving the king (probably, rather, the foreman of such craftsmen), he could be received at the court. This means that Papā was well, and apparently better than other church hierarchs, prepared to solve the problem of establishing relations with the state. In the 240-es, that problem was very important, for the Sassanid state had been established a little earlier, the Sassanids came from Fars, where the Christian faith was not yet widespread, and therefore relations between the state and the church were at the initial stage of their establishment. Given that, the best candidate for the leadership over the church was the one who could have good relationship with the Sassanid authorities. That seems to be the “extraneous affairs” for which, according to the above excerpt from the *Chronicle of Arbela*, the bishops needed Papā.

Little is known of Papā’s activities during the first decades of his ministry. When, during the reign of Sassanid king Warahrān II (275–292), the persecutions originally directed against the Manichaeans also affected Christians, Papā, according to the *Chronicle of Seert*, was overtaken by great calamities and severe sufferings⁴⁵. Probably, for the authorities, Papā, as the head of the Christian community, was responsible for everything which happened in it; therefore, all accusations concerning its members fell primarily on him.

We are now coming to the conflict between Papā and the church hierarchs, which is mentioned in the passages cited above. It is possible to reconstruct the chronology of these events only approximately, allowing for the possibility of an error of several years. Some of the data with which this can be done are presented above, but they should be repeated here. The conflict occurred between 312/3 and 323/4, i.e., during the period when Papā appealed to the Bishop of Edessa for help. The remaining evidence comes from the extant data on Papā’s life. As shown above, he became a bishop around 246–247. The authors of the sources believe that his service lasted a very long time – 67⁴⁶, 68 years⁴⁷, about 68 years⁴⁸, 69⁴⁹, 70⁵⁰ or 79 years⁵¹. The date of Papā’s death

⁴⁵ Histoire..., 1908. P. 238.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Braun, 1894. S. 171, 179.

⁴⁸ *Assemanus (Assemani) J.S. Bibliotheca orientalis clementino-vaticana. T. III. Pars 1. Romae, 1725. P. 346.*

⁴⁹ *Gregorii...*, 1877. 31–32.

⁵⁰ *Maris...*, 1899. P. 9.

⁵¹ *Maris...* 1896. P. 15.

is specified by two authors; Elijah of Nisibis places it around 328/30⁵², while ‘Amr Ibn Mattā’s dating most likely corresponds to the period between October 325 and 5 September 326⁵³. It is sometimes claimed that after the scandalous meeting with the hierarchs, Papā lived for twelve more years⁵⁴. If so, the meeting took place around 313–318.

The *Chronicle of Seert* contains a list of bishops of Papā’s times, including, among others, Gāddayhāb of Gondēshāpūhr⁵⁵, Ābdīshōs of Kashkar⁵⁶, John of Mesene, Andrew of Dayr Mikhrāk⁵⁷, Abraham of Shushtar, and Miles of Susa; it

⁵² To closely follow the text, in the twentieth year of the reign of Shāpūhr II (*Eli-ae...*, 1910. P. 45). The question of what time the authors of the Christian East counted the reign of Shāpūhr II (307/8–379/80) from requires a separate study, which the present author intends to present later; at this stage, it may be proceeded from the fact that Elijah attributed the beginning of Shāpūhr’s reign to 621 of the Seleucid era (*Ibid.* P. 89). How Elijah dated the events, and from whom he took his chronological indications, is unknown. The victory of Constantine the Great over Maxentius (see note 22 above) is attributed by him to the year 623 of the Seleucid era, which is possible only if the Babylonian calendar is used. But the death of Constantius II (337–361), which took place on 3 November 361, is placed in 673 (*Ibid.* P. 103), and this is only possible if the year began in September 361, according to the rules of the Greek calendar. Therefore, if Elijah’s chronology is translated into ours, Shāpūhr II came to power in the year of the Seleucid era from September 309 to August 310, or from the 20-
es of April 310 to roughly the same time in 311. If this is applied to the calendar adopted at the Sassanid court, the first year of Shāpūhr’s reign will be the year from 10 September 309 to 9 September 9 310, or from 10 September 310 to 9 September 9, whereas the twentieth year will be the year from 5 September 328 to 4 September 329, or from 5 September 329 to 4 September 330.

⁵³ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Shāpūhr II and in 637 of the Seleucid era (*Maris...*, 1896. P. 15). As shown above, ‘Amr Ibn Mattā used the calendar of the Seleucid era in its Greek version; therefore, his 637 year of the Greeks covers the period from September 325 to the end of August 326. That year as per the Seleucid era almost exactly coincides with the year of the reign of Shāpūhr II (6 September 325 to 5 September 326).

⁵⁴ *Acta...*, 1891. P. 268; *Mukhtaṣar...*, 2000. P. 159. Bar Hebraeus believes that the statement in question is a mistake, and that Papā died a year after his meeting with the bishops (*Gregorii...*, 1877. Col. 31–32). However, as shown above, Bar Hebraeus’ chronology of the events in question can hardly be trusted.

⁵⁵ The source text states *Djadhīmyahab*, but the reference is undoubtedly made to Gāddayhāb to whom, as shown above, Miles wrote.

⁵⁶ Kashkar (Ar. *Kaskar*) was located on the banks of the Tigris approximately 60 km southeast of present-day al-Kūt; in the Umayyad times, the city of al-Wāsiṭ was built opposite it.

⁵⁷ The text of the source has *Dayr F.ḥrāk*, which the editor corrects to be *Dayr M.ḥrāk* and reads *Deir Mabrāq*. This place is apparently identical with Dayr

then states: “these are those who gathered to reproach Papā”⁵⁸. It is noteworthy that the list only includes bishops from lands located relatively close to Seleucia; we do not see, e.g., anyone from northern Iraq. It may be conjectured that news of the actions of those bishops reached Papā more quickly and in greater volume, and, consequently, his reproaches which Bishop Agapetus spoke of, were directed primarily against them⁵⁹. Perhaps, those reproaches were at least partly based on real grounds. Several decades later, the “Persian sage” Aphrahat sharply criticized the state of affairs in the Church, and his critics were mainly directed against the hierarchs: “leaders arose among our people and abandoned the law and boasted, doing tyranny”⁶⁰.

It is worth noticing how the events in question are presented in the *Chronicle of Arbela*. In the account of Papā’s elevation to the rank he is presented as a famous and wise man, but his conflict with the bishops is explained by his

Makhrāk or Dayr Mikhrāk of the Muslim geographer Yāqūt (b. 1178–80, d. 1229), who, however, can only say about it that it is some locality Khuzestan (*Muʿdjam al-buldān li ... Yāqūt*. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1977. Vol. 2. P. 533). It is noteworthy that the bishop of Dayr Mikhrāk is never mentioned among the participants in the local councils of the church of the Sasanid empire. It seems that the bishopric of Dayr Mikhrāk ceased to exist, perhaps because it failed to survive the persecution of the church under Shāpūhr II.

⁵⁸ *Histoire...*, 1908. P. 236.

⁵⁹ As shown above, Bishop Agapetus related that Papā had rebuked some bishops for their “shameful” acts. In a letter from Papā to the people of Nisibis, which is part of his apocryphal correspondence (see below), there is a fragment describing those acts. According to that fragment, some declared themselves bishops without having received ordination, others, when the bishop of a large city died, abandoned their sees and went there (apparently to seize the vacant place. — *D.M.*), others expelled bishops in order to take their sees, and even resorted to murder, others were accused of heresy, others fathered children and put them to death (to avoid publicity. — *D.M.*), others presented themselves as temptation-proof zealots of purity, but participated in feasts, even in places where that was not allowed (Braun, 1894. S. 175). As shown below, the author of the letter was seemingly aware of the state of affairs in the dioceses of the Sasanid possessions, and the texts of the correspondence reflect the information which he had at his disposal. It may, therefore, be assumed that Papā brought such or similar accusations against his opponents. But it must not be forgotten that the actual author of the letter, as well as Papā himself, was interested in presenting his opponents in the most unfavourable light; therefore, here, as in no other fragment of the correspondence, there is a high probability of exaggeration.

⁶⁰ *Patrologia Syriaca*. Acc. R. Graffin. Pars prima. T. I. [Ed.] I(J). Parisot. Parisiis, 1894. Col. 577–578.

desire to rise, which caused rejection even with his closest associate, Archdeacon Simon. If this reflects the position of the Adiabene clergy⁶¹, it may be conjectured that they were on the side of Papā's opponents.

There seemingly was another important circumstance which influenced the position of the Adiabene clergy. Initially, the Adiabene bishops were the spiritual shepherds of the Christians of Seleucia and Ctesiphon. In the *Chronicle of Arbela* it is stated that the Adiabene bishops Shâhlūfā and then Âḥḥādabūh preached in Seleucia, with the former ordaining one priest and the latter five⁶². As shown above, according to the same source Papā received his ordination from Âḥḥādabūh, which happened after the inhabitants of Ctesiphon, wanting to have their own bishop, turned specifically to Adiabene. The special role of the Adiabene bishops is recognized by the authors of all church histories, where Shâhlūfā and Âḥḥādabūh appear as the predecessors of Papā and the heads of the Seleucian church⁶³.

In connection with the above, it is worth effort to read again the *Acts of Mar Mārī the Apostle* mentioned at the beginning of this study. It is to be remembered that Mar Mārī is the man to whom the sources assign a crucial role in the spread of Christian doctrine in Mesopotamia. Now, according to the *Acts Mārī* personally elevated Papā to an ecclesiastical rank. Here is how this is presented in the source: "The Blessed One (Mārī. — D.M.) travelled for many years through the countries of the East, consecrated churches and united them in harmony. He appointed a man to govern the church of Seleucia (*'idā d-Kōkē*), so that he would be the head of the bishops of the East, for it is the most ancient one as to spiritual teaching. For many years he taught and did good works in piety, and then he left Seleucia and Ctesiphon, where he then lived, and came to the church of Dūrā d-Ḳūnī, which had been built for him. He called to himself his disciple Papā before the whole church and made him manager (*mdābranā*) after himself"⁶⁴.

A speech by Mārī and Papā's answer are then quoted, and thereafter it is stated that Mārī died and was buried in the same church. The text continues as follows: "His commemoration in it, by order of Papā, the successor to his

⁶¹ Adiabene was a region the capital of which was the city of Arbela (present-day Erbil).

⁶² *Sources...*, 1907. P. 34, 38–39.

⁶³ *Eliae...*, 1910. P. 45; *Gregorii...*, 1877. Col. 23–28; *Maris...*, 1896. P. 5–13; *Maris...*, 1899. P. 6–8; *Mukhtaṣar...*, 2000. P. 151, 152.

⁶⁴ *The Acts...*, 2005. P. 76–77.



Coin of Shapur II (307/8–379/80).
From open sources

see (*yartā d-kūrseyeh*), continues constantly. And he (Papā. — *D.M.*) too, after the virtuous and most worthy Mar Mārī, appointed priests and administrators throughout the land of the East⁶⁵.

Those fragments cannot be accepted as reliable evidence because of their obvious inconsistency with the historical context. Mārī, whose activities fell, apparently, on the second half of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century, could not have met Papā, who was born later than his death. It is obvious that the author of the text seeks to justify the legitimacy of Papā's elevation among the church hierarchy. He does not claim that Mārī made Papā bishop of Seleucia (that was easy to refute), but at the same time presents Papā as the successor of Mārī, appointed by him. It is also noteworthy that, according to the *Acts*, Mārī baptized the king of Adiabene and all the local noblemen⁶⁶; this differs greatly from the narrative of the *Chronicle of Arbela*, where that episode is absent and the merits of spreading the Christian faith are attributed to the local bishops. Thus, in the *Acts*, the seniority of the church of Arbela is reduced to nothing, and the story is presented approximately as follows: the Christian faith was brought to both Arbela and Seleucia by Mārī, whose successor was not one of the Adiabene bishops, but Papā.

These observations, as well as the fact that the narrative in the *Acts* ends with the above-mentioned order of Papā, suggest that the text was originally composed during the time of the latter, apparently in connection with his confrontation with the opponent bishops.

⁶⁵ Ibid. P. 76–79.

⁶⁶ Ibid. P. 20–21.

We can now attempt to make a rough picture of the conflict. It is hardly correct to believe that the conflict arose because of Papā's ambitions for power. At the time when the events in question took place, Papā was at least about ninety years old (according to some indications, he was over a hundred), and it is unlikely that at such an age he would have become involved in political intrigues. But, having become, at least for the Sassanid government, the head of the Christian community, he had to govern it in one way or another and supervise its affairs. At first, Papā, as it seems, interfered little in the affairs of communities outside the region of Seleucia-Ctesiphon; as shown in the Excursus, the Christian captives settled in Gondēshāpūhr organized their church life and elected a bishop for themselves without any visible participation of his. But everyday life went on and time after time brought Papā into conflict with other hierarchs. Sometimes Papā considered actions of the local hierarchs unacceptable and condemned them. Somewhere Papā and the local hierarchs disagreed about who should be the bishop of a particular see, each side supported its own man, and it turned out that there were two bishops on the same see. The hierarchs, especially from sees which had a long history and high prestige, were hostile to the attempts of a former craftsman, who became the head of the church thanks to his abilities of a courtier, to interfere in their affairs and make management decisions. In order to achieve the results he wanted, Papā had to rise above the other bishops, which he tried to achieve in one way or another. That was regarded by his opponents as a manifestation of his power ambitions, and the creeping confrontation resulted in an open clash, which we read about in the sources.

The descriptions of that clash, quoted above, do not give a clear idea on how it ended. From the text of Bar Hebraeus it is clear that the results of the meeting of Papā with the bishops were presented variously. However, the extant chronological data appear to provide the clue for re-constructing the course of events. As shown above, Papā was elevated to the rank of Bishop of Seleucia around 246–247, and the term of his ministry is given in almost all sources as 70 years or slightly less. Moving forward from 246–247 by 67–70 years, we arrive at 313–317, i.e., exactly the time slot when Papā's meeting with his opponents took place. There is no room left for the twelve years which Papā reportedly lived after the meeting. Thus, in church histories, Papā's ministry ends following his meeting with the bishops.

Another line of reasoning may be based on the fact that, according to the only extant dating of the beginning of Simon Bâr Şābba'ē's ministry (in the

history of ʿAmr Ibn Mattā), he was appointed Head of the Church in the sixth year of the reign of Shāpūhr II⁶⁷. Together with the above-mentioned statement by the same writer that Papā died in the eighteenth year of Shāpūhr’s reign, that indicates that during the last twelve years of Papā’s life, Simon was the Head of the Church. Since Papā lived twelve years after his meeting with the bishops, it is to be concluded that during that time he was not considered the Head of the Church.

In the church history of Bārḥâdbshâbbā mentioned above, it is stated that “since all the bishops, both those who were and those who were not subjects [of the Emperor Constantine the Great], were invited, Saint Simon Bār Şâbbaʿē, who was Catholicos of the land of the Persians and resided in Seleucia-Ctesiphon⁶⁸, was also invited” to the Council of Nicaea. This shows that in the time immediately preceding the Council of Nicaea, Simon, and not Papā, was considered as the Head of the Church.

All that indicates that Papā’s meeting with the bishops ended with his deposition⁶⁹. In view of this, it appears that the “story” mentioned by Bishop Agapetus was, in the language of our time, a communiqué containing a declaration of the deposition and its causes⁷⁰; this is why Papā was depicted in it in the most negative tones.

It may be objected that since Papā was the representative of the Christian community before the Sassanid king, his removal was unreasonable at least because of an eventual negative response from the authorities. Under normal circumstances, this probably would have been so, but then the situation was peculiar. King Shāpūhr II was a minor and had little interest in church affairs, whereas the dignitaries were probably regarded by the church hierarchs as those with whom it would be possible to come to terms. The parents, or rela-

⁶⁷ *Maris...*, 1896. P. 15.

⁶⁸ *La première partie...*, 1932. P. 205.

⁶⁹ The author of the history of the Church of the Sassanid Empire, J. Labourt, also strongly asserts this, without, however, providing any justification for this opinion (*Labourt J. Le Christianisme dans l’Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide (224–632)*. Paris, 1904. P. 23).

⁷⁰ In the apocryphal letter of Mar Ephraim to Papā, which is a part of the latter’s correspondence (see below), it is said that the writings composed by the rebellious, whose destiny is destruction, were unable to remove Papā from his primacy in the Church (*Braun*, 1894. S. 172). Apparently, the author of the letter has in mind the aforementioned “story” and considers it a document with the help of which Papā’s opponents tried to prove that he could no longer be the Head of the Church.

tives, of Simon Bâr Şabba⁶ē were dyers of the clothes for the Sassanid kings⁷¹. So, Simon came from the same milieu of palace artisans as Papā. That gave the hierarchs the possibility to claim that the removal of Papā did not change anything, and the position of the Head of the Church was still occupied by a true servant of the Sassanids.

As can be seen from the above passages, the further development of events was such that Papā applied to the Western Fathers for help. A collection of letters from and to Papā is known (although in full so far only in the German translation by O. Braun), most of which concern the conflict in question. That the letters are apocrypha is evident from their first reading. In the so-called “Conciliar Epistle” (*Synodalschreiben*) of the Western Fathers to Papā, the first among its signatories is Patriarch Gāyūs of Rome, i.e. Pope Gaius (or Caius)⁷², but the latter died in 296, long before the events described. There appears, quite often, in the correspondence a man called Mar Ephraim, who, judging by some passages, should be identified with Ephraim the Syrian⁷³. But given the generally accepted dating of the latter’s birth in 306, in the period in question, i.e. in 313–318, and perhaps for several years after that, he was still too young for what is stated in the correspondence to apply to him. It should be borne in mind that the references to Mar Ephraim are not a few sporadic mentions here and there; on the contrary, one of the longest letters from the correspondence is the letter of Ephraim to Papā⁷⁴.

But the fact that the letters are forgeries does not mean that there were no letters from the Western Fathers at all. The appeal to the Western Fathers is mentioned by Bishop Agapetus and the author of the *Chronicle of Arbela*, who, as shown above, have different views on the events in question. Moreover, in the fragment cited above, the author of the *Chronicle of Arbela* reports that

⁷¹ *Histoire...*, 1908. P. 296; *Mukhtaşar...*, 2000. P. 186. This appears to be meant by the author of the *Chronicle of Seert* when he states that Simon’s parents were close to the king.

⁷² *Braun*, 1894. S. 178. Cf. Assemanus (Assemani), 1725. P. 56.

⁷³ This is indicated, on the one hand, by the respectful attitude towards Ephraim (in the letter of Bishop Jacob of Nisibis to Papā and the letter of Papā to the inhabitants of Nisibis, he is called a teacher, who is considered a prophet in the Church of God (*Braun*, 1894. S. 167, 176), and in the above-mentioned Conciliar Epistle, a saint, “who appeared in our race as a prophet” (Ibid. S. 178), and on the other hand, by the fact that Papā addresses him personally in his letter to the inhabitants of Nisibis (Ibid. S. 176). It is extremely difficult to find another person to whom such words could apply.

⁷⁴ Ibid. S. 169–174.



Coronation of the young Shapur II
(illustration to Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, 16th century).
From open sources

Papā wrote to the Western Fathers, in particular, to the Bishop of Edessa. The reliability of that evidence would hardly be put to doubt if we did not know from the texts of the letters that the correspondence is a collection of apocryphal writings. Moreover, the fact that the letters are apocryphal does not mean that the information contained in the extant texts is necessarily false. Their content appears to be a reflection of the information available to their author and his understanding of what the events in question were, or were to be presented as, rather than a mere fruit of his imagination. The letters, indeed, contain apparent errors regarding the Western Fathers, but their authors are much better informed about the Church of the Sasanid Empire. Some details in which the letters are in line with other sources are considered above (for instance, the estimate of the length of Papā's ministry as 68 years). Therefore, the information in the letters may be used, although with a constant understanding of the fact that their authors aimed at justifying the illegality of the actions of Church hierarchs against the Head of the Church with the help of an illustrative historical example. It is no coincidence that the accounts of Papā were most in demand in the cases when the Heads of the Church struggled against the hierarchs who opposed them. The "Conciliar Epistle", according to its manuscript, was copied by Bishop Agapetus⁷⁵, probably the one who

⁷⁵ Ibid. S. 163.

spoke at the Council of 423/4 which was devoted mainly to the struggle of Catholicos Dadīshō⁶ with the hierarchs who opposed him. According to Bar Hebraeus, some claimed that the author of the letters of Bishop Jacob of Nisibis and Mar Ephraim to Papā was in fact Catholicos Joseph, who fought against the hierarchs and was deposed by them in 569/70⁷⁶.

This leitmotiv of the letters is manifest in the “Conciliar Epistle”. Its authors faced a difficult task to show that the Western Fathers supported Papā even in spite of his chastisement which from the outside looked like God’s punishment, clear evidence of the Lord’s wrath against an unworthy clergyman. The authors solve this problem with the help of the following reasoning: undoubtedly, what Papā did with the Gospel is reprehensible, yet the Lord loves him and took into account his good deeds and worthy life, and therefore limited Himself to a mild punishment, whereas Papā’s opponents who spoke out against the highest Church authority, await a much more severe chastisement, and eternal torment is prepared for them⁷⁷.

Under this thick layer of forgeries and interpretations, the outlines of the events which actually took place are difficult to discern. However, the general course of events is suggestive and provides a good basis for their re-construction. It would be wrong to deny that Papā wrote to the Western Fathers. But it cannot be held that the response of the Western Fathers led to the restoration of Papā to the Seleucian See. As shown above, Papā’s ministry was considered to be over, and Simon Bār Šābba⁶ē was invited to the Council of Nicaea. This is a clear indication of the fact that for the organizers of the Council, Simon, and not Papā, was the Head of the Church of the Sassanid dominions. If all this is taken into account, the only possible explanation for the development of events will be the following. The response of the Western Fathers, set out in one or more letters, was generally that the Eastern Church was headed by its Primate, the hierarchs’ actions against him were unlawful, and the confrontation, including all accusations, the distribution of stories, etc., should be discontinued. This, apparently, was what contemporary and later supporters of Papā interpreted as the Western Fathers recognizing the accusations as unfounded and condemning those who made them. However, the Western Fathers did not make any decisions regarding Papā himself, which allowed

⁷⁶ *Gregorii...*, 1877. Col. 31–32.

⁷⁷ *Braun*, 1894. S. 179–180.

his opponents not to change anything and not to restore him to his rank. In that situation, both Papā and Simon could consider themselves heads of the Church. According to the *Chronicle of Arbela*, a new confrontation was beginning, and Simon was ready to use a weapon to which he had not resorted before, namely, his relatives' ties at the royal court. But there were also some circumstances which prevented the development of the conflict. On the one hand, Papā's old age and physical infirmity aggravated by the paralysis of a part of the body left little possibility for him to manage the Church's affairs, and there was no point in fighting to obtain it. On the other hand, the Western Fathers clearly spoke out against internecine strife within the Church, and renewing the struggle for the patriarchal throne amounted to going against their judgment. Therefore, the state of affairs quietly remained unchanged, and outside observers explained that by assuming that a compromise was reached, pursuant to which Papā appointed Simon as his successor.

The confrontation between Papā and his opponents is a colourful and fascinating, but still an episode in the history of the Church of the Sassanid Empire. As a matter of historical research, it cannot obscure a more important phenomenon, namely, the rise of the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon over the rest of the Church hierarchy, due to the need to interact with the Sassanid authorities. It is worth noting that neither side in the confrontation, including the bishops of more ancient churches than Seleucia, advocated moving the residence of the Head of the Church from the capital of the empire. The idea that the Head of the Church should be the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was preserved by the Church throughout the rest of the fourth century, when it was subjected to severe persecution under Shāpūhr II; it was adopted as a norm at the local council of 410.

Excursus. Papā and Demetrian

The relationship between Papā and Patriarch Demetrian of Antioch is, although connected to the subject matter hereof, a separate topic, which justifies its discussion in an excursus. Information on that mainly comes from Eastern church histories. According to them, the Sassanid king Shāpūhr, i.e. Shāpūhr I, campaigned in the west, went to Antioch and captured its inhabitants, including Patriarch Demetrian. The captives were driven into

the Sassanid lands and settled in Gondēshāpūhr. Then the following happened:

“When Patriarch Demetrian of Antioch and those whom Shāpūhr had taken captives were in the city of Gondēshāpūhr, Patriarch Demetrian was told: ‘Manage the captives who are with you.’ He replied: ‘God forbid that I should do that which the Holy Spirit has not given me, and for which He has not empowered me. For the office of the Head of the Church is not mine, but another man’s; he is Patriarch Papā.’ And when he thus refused, Papā asked him to be called Metropolitan, made him Metropolitan over Gondēshāpūhr and the first of the Metropolitans of the East, placed him at his right hand, and [established that] the Patriarch should be the one whom he would choose. This norm remains to this day. And the Zoroastrians treated Demetrian with respect and reverence for his dignity and nobility”⁷⁸.

This translation is given according to the earliest version of the original story, found in the *Abridgement of the Church History*. Mārī Ibn Sulaymān and ‘Amr Ibn Mattā narrate it in much the same way, whereby the most significant difference is that in their case Papā initially offers Demetrian to become patriarch (Mārī)⁷⁹ or to occupy the [patriarchal] throne (*kursī*) for the rest of his life (‘Amr)⁸⁰.

Shāpūhr I captured Antioch twice, in his campaigns of 251 or 252 and 260, and both times he took captives, whom he subsequently settled in his own domains⁸¹. It is difficult to choose between those dates solely on the basis of Ori-

⁷⁸ *Mukhtaṣar...*, 2000. P. 158.

⁷⁹ *Maris...*, 1899. P. 8.

⁸⁰ *Maris...*, 1896. P. 14.

⁸¹ The Naḵsh-i-Rustam inscription of Shāpūhr I, the official Sassanid history of his wars against Rome, reports that during the campaign in which he defeated Emperor Valerian (253–260), the king’s troops captured prisoners in the lands of the Romans and non-Iranians; those prisoners were taken to the Sassanid dominions and settled in various regions, including Khuzestan (*Back M.* Die sassanidischen Staatsinschriften. Téhéran, Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1978. S. 314, 324–326; *Maricq A.* *Classica et Orientalia*. 5. *Res gestae Divi Saporis*. In: *Syria*. Année 1958. Vol. 35, No. 3. P. 314–315). The captives from Antioch are not mentioned here, but Antioch itself was mentioned earlier among the cities captured by the Sassanid troops (*Back*, 1978. S. 321; *Maricq*, 1958. P. 312–313). On the other hand, Zosimus (late 5th century), while narrating about the reign of Emperor Trebonianus Gallus (251–253), reports that at that time the Persians, having attacked the Roman possessions in Asia, captured Antioch; one part of its population was put to death, whereas the other was taken captive. (*Zos. I. XXVII. 2.* *Zosime. Histoire nou-*

ental sources. Mārī Ibn Sulaymān states that the campaign took place at the beginning of Papā’s service as the Head of the Church (*fi awwal ri’āsati-hi*); it was carried out by the son of Ardashīr I, named Hormuzd or Shāpūhr⁸². It would seem natural to assume that the reference to the “beginning of Papā’s service” is an argument in favour of assigning the campaign to 251/252. However, a similar fragment in the earlier *Abridgement of the Church History* does not state more than that the campaign took place ‘in his (Papā’s – D.M.) days’⁸³; it cannot, however, be ruled out that Mārī Ibn Sulaymān had at his disposal a better or, in any case, a more complete copy of the original text. In the *Chronicle of Seert*, Shāpūhr’s campaign is dated to the eleventh year of his reign (25 September 250 – 24 September 251), but immediately after that it is stated that the king defeated and captured Emperor Valerian (253–260), which happened in 260⁸⁴. It appears that in the historical memory of the East, Shāpūhr I’s wars against Rome merged into one, crowned by the king’s main achievement, the victory over Valerian and his capture; everything else is a supplement to that. For instance, in al-Ṭabarī (839–922/3)’s history, Shāpūhr defeats Valerian not at Edessa, where that actually happened, but at Antioch; after that begins the story of the Antiochian captives in which the emperor himself is included⁸⁵.

The available data on Demetrian can be used as a starting point for the study, but here we are faced with some problems as well. According to Eusebius of Caesarea (b. 260-es, d. 339), whose information is known from the transmission of St. Jerome (b. 340-es, d. 419 or 420), Demetrian was elevated to the rank of bishop of Antioch in the first year of the 258th Olympiad, i.e. in September 251 to August 252⁸⁶. In the list of bishops of Antioch by Patriarch

velle. T. I (Livres I et II). Ed. F. Paschoud. Paris: Société d’édition “Les Belles lettres”, 1971. P. 27). The mention of Trebonianus Gallus shows that the campaign of 251, or 252, is referred to.

⁸² *Maris...*, 1899. P. 8.

⁸³ *Mukhtaṣar...*, 2000. P. 157.

⁸⁴ *Histoire nestorienne inédite (Chronique de Séert)*. Première partie (I). Pub. A. Scher. In: *Patrologia Orientalis*. T. IV. Ed. R. Graffin, F. Nau. Paris, 1908. P. 220.

⁸⁵ *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari*. Ed. M.J. De Goeje. Prima series. II. Rec. J. Barth, Th. Nöldeke. Lugduni Batavorum, 1881–1882. P. 826–827.

⁸⁶ *Evsepii Pamphili Chronici canones latine vertit, adavxit, ad sva tempora prodvxit S. Evsebivs Hieronymus*. Ed. I(J).K. Fotherignham. London: H. Milford, 1923. P. 301.

Nicephorus (b. circa 758, d. 828), Demetrian is assigned 4 years of service⁸⁷. On the basis of that, it has been suggested that the date of Demetrian's capture be 256⁸⁸. Although the dating of the capture of Antioch by Shāpūhr I in 256 was popular in the literature for a while⁸⁹, it is at variance with some important data. For instance the sequence of the bishops suggested by Nicephorus is as follows: Babylas – Fabius – Demetrian; the first of them testified [to his religious beliefs], for which he was thrown into prison, under Emperor Decius (249–251), and the second was a bishop for 9 years⁹⁰. Even if Babylas' acts are put, in terms of chronology, into the very beginning of Decius's reign (September 249), Demetrian became the bishop in 258 at the earliest. Therefore, if a combination of the chronologies of Eusebius and Nicephorus is possible at all, it requires strong arguments in support.

In the church history of Eusebius, a letter from Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria to Pope Stephen (254–257) is cited; Demetrian is mentioned in it as the current Head of the Antiochene church⁹¹. It follows that the campaign during which Demetrian was captured could not have taken place before 254; therefore, its dating to 251/2 shall be ruled out. Euty chius of Alexandria (877–940) states that Demetrian became Patriarch of Antioch in the first year of the joint reign of Ghaliyūs and Yūliyānūs, i.e., apparently, Trebonianus Gallus and his son Volusianus, and served in that capacity for eight years⁹². If the time from about June 251 to June 252 is taken as the first year of their reign, it turns out that Demetrian's service as Patriarch came to an end in 260, i.e., when Antioch was taken by the troops of Shāpūhr I. Of course, Euty chius' chronology requires critical study, but this piece of evidence has the merit of eliminating the need

⁸⁷ *Nicephori archiepiscopi constantinopolitani Opuscula historica*. Ed. C. De Boor. Lipsiae, 1880. P. 130.

⁸⁸ Peeters P. S. Démétrianus évêque d'Antioche? In: *Analecta Bollandiana*. T. XLII, 1924. P. 310.

⁸⁹ See, e.g.: Downey G. *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961. P. 260, 594; Honigmann E., Maricq A. *Recherches sur les Res Gestae divi Saporis*. Bruxelles: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1953. P. 141–142.

⁹⁰ *Nicephori...*, 1880. P. 130.

⁹¹ *Eusebius. Hist. Eccl. VII. V. 1* (Eusebius. *The Ecclesiastical History*. With an English translation by J.E.L. Oulton. II. London: William Heinemann Ltd, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942. P. 138–139).

⁹² *Euty chii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*. Pars I. Ed. L. Cheikho. Beryti, Parisii, Lipsiae, 1906. P. 112–113.

to prove the fact of another campaign of Shāpūhr I against Antioch, not mentioned in the sources. Finally, to return to the reports of Eusebius and Nicephorus, it should be noted that the latter calls Paul of Samosata Demetrian's successor⁹³. Eusebius indicates that Paul was appointed bishop of Antioch in the first year of the 260th Olympiad (September 259 – August 260) and in the seventh year of Valerian's reign. Next preceding that is the statement that [captured] Valerian was taken to Persia⁹⁴. Of course, it can be assumed that Demetrian had lost the ability to perform the duties of a bishop earlier, but the further back in time the date of that is pushed, the more difficult it becomes to answer the question of why such an important see as Antioch remained unoccupied.

All that indicates that the Antioch was captured by the troops of Shāpūhr I, and Demetrian was taken prisoner, in 260.

The *Chronicle of Seert* contains no mention of negotiations between Demetrian and Papā. Instead, it reports that the captives brought by Shāpūhr “began to live in Gondēshāpūhr and chose Azdaḡ of Antioch, making him their bishop, for the Patriarch of Antioch, Demetrian, fell ill and died of grief”⁹⁵. Even more important is the statement of Eusebius that Demetrian died in Antioch, after which Paul of Samosata became bishop⁹⁶. This statement is extremely difficult to reconcile with the above-cited fragment from the *Abridgement of the Church History*, according to which Papā spoke to Demetrian after the latter arrived in Gondēshāpūhr with the captives. It appears that in the Eastern sources a legend has come down to us, composed primarily to give the primacy of Papā greater legitimacy. It is important to observe that in the fragment in question Demetrian recognizes the primacy of Papā over the Christians of the Sassanid Empire, that is, gives him the consent of the Patriarch of Antioch, which he lacked. At the same time, the legend also served the interests of the hierarchs of Gondēshāpūhr, allowing them to claim that their see was rightfully the second in the Sassanid Empire, immediately following that of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

⁹³ *Nicephori...*, 1880. P. 130.

⁹⁴ *Evsebi...*, 1923. P. 302.

⁹⁵ *Histoire...*, 1908. P. 221.

⁹⁶ *Eusebius. Hist. Eccl. VII. XXVII. 1* (Eusebius, 1942. P. 208–209).



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Original paper



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Hagia Sophia in the “New Relation on a Voyage to Constantinople” book by Guillaume Grelot, which he presented to Louis XIV¹

Abstract

The article tells the story of Guillaume-Joseph Grelot, a French artist and traveler of no renown who, inspired by the book of his compatriot Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, decided to accomplish what others before him had not dared — to enter and describe the Hagia Sophia Mosque. King Louis XIV himself had encouraged his courtiers to undertake such journeys to the East. Upon arriving in the Ottoman capital, Grelot devised a plan that enabled him to gain access to the main Sultan’s mosque, which was closed to non-Muslims. By bribing a mosque official, Grelot not only described Hagia Sophia in detail but also created a series of drawings, which he later published in Paris in his book *Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople* (1680). He presented this monumental work as a gift to the French king, and it soon became known throughout Europe through translations into other languages. Thus, Grelot became the first European non-Muslim to enter the Hagia Sophia Mosque and to fulfill the cherished wish of his monarch. His illustrations of Constantinople’s Hagia Sophia laid the foundation for the emergence and development of Byzantine and Ottoman studies.

¹ The article continues the topic raised in the previous issue of *Historical Reporter*. It tells the story behind the writing of Guillaume-Joseph Grelot’s *Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople*, in which the author describes how he managed to enter the Hagia Sophia Mosque, forbidden to “infidels”.


Keywords:

Hagia Sophia Basilica, Hagia Sophia Mosque, Sultan Mehmed IV, King Louis XIV, Guillaume Grelot

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“Words that reach the ears do not sound
as convincing as what the eyes have seen”².
(author’s translation)
— Guillaume Grelot

 In 1680, the Parisian publishing house *Veuve Damien Foucault/Pierre Rocolet* released a book by an unknown Frenchman with the striking title: *Relation nouvelle d’un voyage de Constantinople: enrichie de plans levez par l’auteur sur les lieux, et des figures de tout ce qu’il y a de plus remarquable dans cette ville. PRESENTÉE AU ROI* (“A New Relation of a Voyage to Constantinople. Supplemented with Plans Drawn by the Author on Site and Illustrations of All That Was Found Most Remarkable in This City. PRESENTED TO THE KING”). Such a “calling card” was a bold bid for success. The truth is, there is little information about the life of the author — traveler, and artist Guillaume-Joseph Grelot — both during his lifetime and after his death. Neither his exact date or year of birth

² *Grelot Guillaume-Joseph*. *Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople. Enrichie de Plans levez par l’Auteur sur les lieux et des Figures de tout ce qu’il y a de plus remarquable dans cette Ville. Présentée au Roy par Guillaume Grelot*. Paris, 1680. P. 126.

(aside from “ca. 1630”) nor the year of his death (marked only with a question mark) are known. Nevertheless, we shall attempt to reconstruct his biography from the extant fragmentary episodes of his life.

The American scholar Bronwen Wilson, in her work *The Itinerant Artist and the Islamic Urban Prospect: Guillaume-Joseph Grelot’s Self-Portraits in Ambrosio Bembo’s “Travel Journal”*, notes that almost nothing is known about Grelot’s life before 1670. Information about him can only be gleaned from Ambrosio Bembo’s manuscript and Grelot’s own *New Relation* (1680).

On May 12, 1670, Grelot was in Rome, from where he set sail with Jean Foy-Vaillant³ to Smyrna (Izmir) and Constantinople (Istanbul). Foy-Vaillant does not name the draftsman in his papers but notes that this “young man” was originally from Melun. Foy-Vaillant’s mission, commissioned by the French king, was to collect coins, precious stones, and manuscripts for the Royal Chancery, as well as to gather intelligence on geography, customs, religious communities, and commerce for His Majesty’s government. The sensitive nature of this mission explains why Foy-Vaillant’s manuscripts were never published – and perhaps why this “young man” (Grelot) was not named in them. Artists, travelers, and merchants often served as intelligence agents, whether officially or unofficially. Grelot and Foy-Vaillant arrived in Constantinople on July 1 and departed on August 8, 1672, later returning to the Ottoman capital during their travels through the Aegean archipelago and Anatolia. Greek and Latin inscriptions they made were published in Jacob Spon’s⁴ *Voyage d’Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce du Levant* (1678) and in Grelot’s *New Relation of a Journey to Constantinople*. Yet, according to Antoine Galland, secretary to the French ambassador in Constantinople, Grelot was in the city from January 17 to June 28, 1672, where he was to meet Jean Chardin, who had been tasked by

³ *Jean-Foy Vaillant* – French numismatist (1632–1706). During his many years of travel through Italy, Sicily, England, the Netherlands, the Ottoman Empire, and Persia, he amassed one of the richest numismatic collections.

⁴ *Jacob Spon* (Jacob or Jacques Spon; appears as *James* in English dictionaries; 1647–1685) – French physician and archaeologist. A pioneer in the study of Greek monuments and a scholar of international renown.

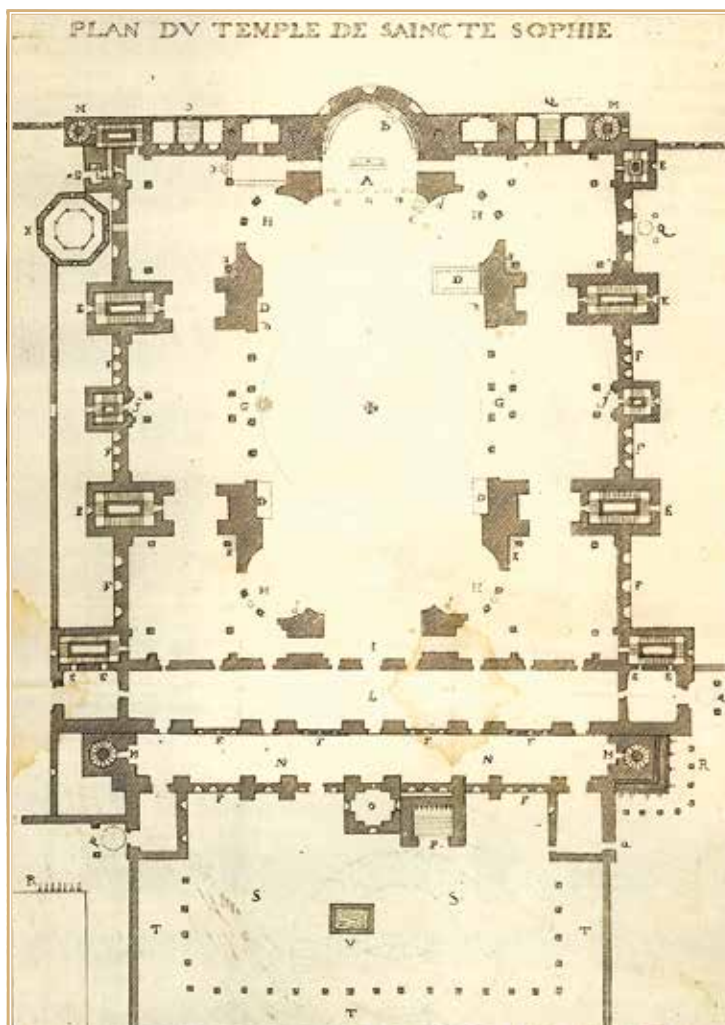


Fig. 1. Plan of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. 1672.

Grelot G.-J. *Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople. Enrichie de Plans levez par l'Auteursur les lieux et des Figures de tout ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans cette Ville. Presentee au Roy par Guillaume Grelot.*

Paris, 1680

the King with acquiring books for the French Royal Library⁵. Although Grelot was contractually bound to accompany Chardin to Persia as a draftsman, he instead traveled to the Levant, first to the Lebanese and then to the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

⁵ Wilson Bronwen. *The Itinerant Artist and the Islamic Urban Prospect: Guillaume-Joseph Grélot's Self-portraits in Ambrosio Bembo's *Travel Journal Artibus et Historiae*. Vol. 38. No. 76. Studies in Renaissance Art and Culture in Honour of Debra Pincus (2017). P. 157–180.*

When Grelot arrived in Aleppo, he was robbed of all his belongings, including his drawings, forcing him to write to Galland, pleading to continue his work under the contract with Chardin. Meeting in Tabriz, they proceeded to Isfahan, arriving on June 24, 1673.

Further information about Grelot comes from the diary of the Venetian aristocrat Ambrosio Bembo, a nineteen-year-old who, though he visited Aleppo while Grelot was still there recovering from the robbery, did not meet him. Their acquaintance would occur three years later, in 1674, at the Carmelite mission in Isfahan. There, Grelot had worked for Chardin for a year before deciding to part ways with his employer.

However, he lacked the means to break the strict contract, which stipulated that the artist would receive no payment unless he returned to Paris with Chardin. Bembo, arriving in Isfahan, offered Grelot employment, which the artist gladly accepted, forfeiting his wages and the drawings he had made for Chardin. The result was Chardin's *Travels of Sir Chardin into Persia and Other Parts of the Orient, 1673–1677*, published in 1686 as a four-volume work with a separate book of illustrations, none crediting Grelot, though sixteen engravings of Isfahan in the 1711 Amsterdam edition⁶ are his.

Bembo's diary records his arrival in Aleppo from Venice in 1671, where he stayed for fifteen months before departing for India. He writes that in 1674, from Goa he traveled to Persia, where he met Grelot.

The diary reveals that in Isfahan, the Venetian aristocrat hired this “brilliant Frenchman” to illustrate his journal of Oriental travels⁷.

From Isfahan, Bembo and Grelot traveled by caravan through Bisitun, and Baghdad to Aleppo, where they met Marco Bembo, Am-

⁶ *Chardin Jean. Voyage de monsieur le chevalier Chardin, en Perse, et autres lieux de l'Orient.* Amsterdam, 1711.

⁷ However, A. Bembo never dared to publish his manuscript journal, perhaps due to doubts about its literary quality. From Venice, the journal found its way to France and then to England, where it was likely published. Since 1964, it has been kept at the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota. Grelot created 51 drawings for Bembo's manuscript, including 4 self-portraits of the artist.



Fig. 2. View of Hagia Sophia from the northwest side, in the form of an allegorical dialogue between the “artist” and the “reader.” *Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople. Enrichie de Plans levez par l’Auteur sur les lieux et des Figures de tout ce qu’il y a de plus remarquable dans cette Ville. Presentee au Roy par Guillaume Grelot. Paris, 1680*

brosio’s uncle⁸. The three then sailed to Venice, arriving on April 15, 1675, after a brief stop in Crete. Grelot apparently stayed at Bembo’s villa, as Ambrosio would later place a drawing of the villa by Grelot on the diary’s cover. The grateful artist expressed his appreciation to the Bembo in his *New Relation*. The next mention of Grelot in

⁸ Ambrosio had two uncles who served as consuls: Orazio in Cairo and Marco, a military attaché, in Aleppo.

Bembo's diary dates to February 27, 1677, when the artist, then in Paris, received a royal privilege to publish his work⁹.

In composing his book, Grelot took note of the success of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's *New Relation of the Inner Part of The Grand Seignor's Seraglio*¹⁰,

presented to King Louis XIV¹¹ in 1675. He decided to emulate Tavernier, capitalizing on the "Most Christian King's" keen interest in the history of the Eastern Roman and Ottoman empires.

While still in Constantinople in the summer of 1672, Grelot learned from two compatriots that the "Sun King", in sending them to the East, had expressed a fervent desire for reliable information on the state of the former Basilica of Hagia Sophia, the Divine Wisdom. The monarch had asked them to attempt entry into Hagia Sophia and, if their lives were not endangered, to sketch its interior. However, Grelot knew that the king's envoys had left Istanbul without daring to fulfill this royal wish. This circumstance moved him to demonstrate his loyalty to the king.

According to Bembo, during his seven years of travel in the Levant, Grelot became fluent in Turkish and also spoke Latin, Spanish, vernacular Greek, Arabic, and Persian, moving comfortably in both Christian and Islamic environments. During his travels, he deliberately assimilated into local life, observing events and adopting the dress of the inhabitants: in the Ottoman capital, he dressed as an Ottoman subject (*Osmanli*); in Persia, as a Persian; in the Levant, as a local Arab. This was prudent for reasons of safety first of all, as European attire often aroused suspicion or hostility. Experienced Europeans preferred local dress to avoid unwanted attention.

Thanks to the publication of Grelot's *New Relation*, readers gained their first glimpse of the exterior and interior of Hagia So-

⁹ Wilson B. Op. cit. P. 159.

¹⁰ Tavernier Jean-Baptiste. *Nouvelle Relation de l'Interieur du Serrail du Grand Seigneur*. Paris, 1675.

¹¹ Louis XIV of Bourbon, named Louis-Dieudonné ("God-given") at birth, also known as the "Sun King" (*Louis XIV Le Roi Soleil*) and Louis the Great (*Louis le Grand*).

phia and the means by which a European traveler might enter it. His proposed method was a simple bribe (*rishve*), presented as a gift (*baksheesh*), and it remained effective well into the 18th and 19th centuries.

Grelot recounts that while working on the sketches of Hagia Sophia's interior, he was consuming pork and wine, an act of blasphemy that put his life in mortal danger. He felt this peril acutely when an unfamiliar mosque attendant approached him. After a moment's hesitation, the artist hid the wine and food among his papers and pulled out Pierre Gilles' *The Antiquities of Constantinople*, pretending it was his *Qur'an* of sorts. He wanted to pass off as a Christian pilgrim completing his prayers, terrified that he would be exposed and executed. The unfamiliar Turk, seeing the foreigner's utter horror, burst into laughter. He turned out to be one of the three mosque attendants Grelot had bribed for his "illegal" visit of Hagia Sophia. The incident ended on a light note for our protagonist.

One of Grelot's illustrations in the *New Relation* presents a variation on Hagia Sophia's exterior, depicting it from the same angle as Melchior Lorichs' 16th-century panorama. Grelot sought to convince readers that his drawing exactly matched the original. To this end, he rendered the cathedral in a somewhat allegorical manner, placing two figures in the foreground, with one seen from behind, with an open book on his lap. Their elevated position serves as a metaphor for a silent dialogue between the artist and the reader. The standing figure points to the mosque with his left hand, while the seated one indicates that what he sees on the page corresponds exactly to what Grelot observed in 1672 (Fig. 2).

Anticipating his work's success, Grelot carefully considered its title. Noting the acclaim of Tavernier's *New Relation* at Versailles, France and across Europe, Grelot employed a clever strategy that fully paid off. His title begins identically to Tavernier's, implicitly linking the two works while emphasizing what Tavernier's (a wealthy courtier traveler) book lacked: "plans drawn by the author on site and illustrations of all that was found most remarkable

in this city”¹². This idea is artistically encapsulated in the epigraph of this article.

Grelot’s field sketches of his Oriental travels were primarily valued for their documentary accuracy. They deeply impressed one of the era’s greatest librarians, Jacopo Morelli (1745–1819), who wrote that the quill drawings had been “executed with great skill and exceptional diligence”¹³.

Grelot depicted the exterior of Hagia Sophia from various angles, drawing the surrounding fence and people standing in front of it. He also marked a number of buildings included in the mosque complex, including the tombs of Ottoman sultans. On the western façade of Hagia Sophia, under the letter “H”, he drew a small structure reaching the height of the gynaeceum¹⁴, identifying it as “a tower which was once a bell tower and which now stands without bells, after the Turks took them to melt down for cannons”¹⁵. This bell tower may have appeared at Hagia Sophia during the Latin period of Constantinople’s history (1204–1261)¹⁶. The Russian historian of Byzantine art, Nikodim Kondakov, does not rule out the possibility that the bell tower was erected at a later time by the Turks themselves, serving a purely alarm-sounding function, such as alerting the city to fires¹⁷. Be that as it may, by the 19th century, the tower had completely disappeared¹⁸, including from travelers’ drawings.

¹² *Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople. ... (titre).*

¹³ *Morelli Jacopo. Ambrogio Bembo in Dissertazione intorno ad alcuni viaggiatori eruditi veneziani poco noti pubblicata nelle faustissime nozze del nobile uomo il Signore Conte Leonardo Manino con la nobile conta Signora Contessa Foscarina Giovanelli da Don Iacopo Morelli. In Venezia nella stamperia di Antonio Zatta, 1803. P. 50.*

¹⁴ *Кондаков Н.П. Византийские церкви и памятники Константинополя. Одесса: 1886. С. 120.*

¹⁵ *Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople. P. 124, 128, 143.*

¹⁶ *Виноградов А.И., Захарова А.В., Черноглазов Д.А. Храм Святой Софии Константинопольской в свете византийских источников. СПб., 2020. С. 20.*

¹⁷ *Кондаков Н.П. Византийские церкви и памятники Константинополя. С. 120.*

¹⁸ Ottoman authorities initially forbade church bells from ringing in the empire to prevent potential uprisings among the Christian population. By the late 18th century, they became more tolerant of bell ringing, which gradually became part of the festive traditions in the Orthodox millet, which received bells as gifts from the Russian Empire.

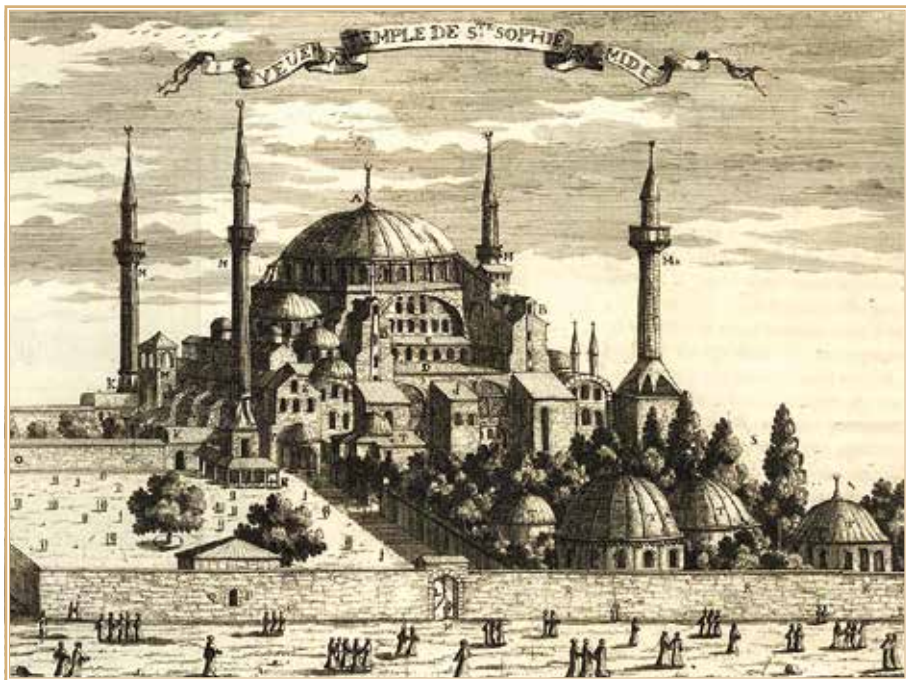


Fig. 3. View of Hagia Sophia from the south side.

Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople. Enrichie de Plans levez par l'Auteur sur les lieux et des Figures de tout ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans cette Ville. Presentee au Roy par Guillaume Grelot. Paris, 1680

Among Grelot's illustrations are a floor plan of Hagia Sophia, its interior, and depictions of its wall and ceiling decorations¹⁹. In his annotations, he marks the apex of the great dome with a cross, noting that it "is still covered in figurative mosaics, as shown in the drawing"²⁰.

He labels the former altar apse (with the capital "A"), where, he writes, the Byzantine emperor and patriarch once sat during services (the lower-case "a")²¹. After the basilica's conversion into a mosque, the Ottomans installed a *mihrab* ("B") in the apse wall, which Grelot calls the "Muhammadan altar", holding a Quran²². Flanking the mihrab are two massive candlesticks, each with a huge candle. To

¹⁹ *Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople. P. 107–109.*

²⁰ *Ibid. P. 109, 147.*

²¹ *Ibid. P. 109–110, 147.*

²² *Ibid. P. 109, 117, 146–147.*

the left stands the *minbar* (“C”), or preacher’s pulpit. The engraving also shows windows of the mosque and one of the four *muezzin mahfils* (platforms for the muezzin)²³, built by Sultan Murad III in the late 16th century. Grelot also notes the location of the *gynaeceum* (women’s gallery)²⁴, where (according to Grelot) Christian women had once prayed separately during services²⁵.

In the nave’s central northern side, Grelot depicts a giant “chair” (*la chaise*), used as the mosque preacher’s pulpit (“E”). The preacher ascended the high seat via small ladders, leaving his shoes below. Seated cross-legged, he addressed the congregation while remaining motionless²⁶. Grelot notes that sermons were typically delivered “on Wednesdays and Fridays”²⁷, in Arabic. This elevated pulpit had once served as the marble throne of Sultan Murad IV²⁸.

On his plan – the ichnography – of Hagia Sophia, Grelot marks with a small symbol the concealed sultan’s loge (prayer box), where the “Grand Sultan would sit during visits” (Fig.1)²⁹. This space, once a passage for clergy to the altar, was, after the conversion, fitted with a latticed “closet” (*la chambrette*), its walls adorned with intricate woodcarving with a panoramic view, allowing the sultan to pray and observe worshippers unseen³⁰.

What had been hidden during the Ottoman Empire’s zenith became a prominent feature by the 1730s. The closet (*maqsu-*

²³ These balconies, or tribunes, will be discussed later.

²⁴ Gynaeceum (Greek: “of a female”) – the galleries of the second tier intended for women, from which the term used here originates. In Byzantine churches, men and women prayed separately: men below, women above, in the galleries or *catechumena*. Different authors transcribed this Greek word in various ways: Grelot – *le Gynaikion*, *le Gynaitikion*; Muravyov – *gynaikion*; Begleri – *gynekonit* or *catechumen*; Kondakov – *gynaeceum*. To avoid inconsistency, we will use the unified form *gynaeceum* throughout the text.

²⁵ Grelot G.-J. *Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople*. P. 155–156.

²⁶ Grelot G.-J., *William Joseph, Monsieur. A late Voyage to Constantinople*. Published by Command of the French King. Made English by J. Philips. London, 1683. P. 122.

²⁷ *Ibid.* P. 147. Traditionally, the mosque’s sheikh preached in Arabic.

²⁸ Murad IV “*The Bloodthirsty*” (1623–1640) – 17th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The most powerful and cruel Ottoman padishah.

²⁹ Grelot G.-J. *Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople*. P. 109, 147.

³⁰ *Ibid.*



Fig. 4. View of Hagia Sophia from the south side. An engraving based on Grelot's drawing from another 18th-century edition, executed with higher quality than the 17th-century original.

From open sources

ra or *hünkâr mahfilî*), originally a protective enclosure for Islamic rulers, had a defensive rather than religious purpose. The necessity of this secure space for an Islamic ruler had become evident after eight assassination attempts on the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the villainous murders of most of his successors, the Rightly Guided Caliphs: Umar, Uthman, Ali, and Ali's two sons, Hasan and Husayn, the Prophet's grandsons. Only the Prophet Muhammad and Caliph Abu Bakr died a natural death, escaping violent ends.

The tradition of building a bayt al-maqsurâ in mosques was passed from the Arabs to the Seljuks, and later to the Ottoman Turks, who gave the sultanic prayer boxes Ottoman and Turkish names — *mahfil-i hümayun* or *hünkâr mahfilî*³¹. Europeans referred to them

³¹ These balconies also had other names: *Mahfil-i Hümayun*, *Hünkâr Ma'bedhanesi*, *Hünkâr Mahfil*, *Mahfil-i Hazret-i Hüdavendigar*. Architects and engineers understood *mahfil-i hümayun* or *hünkâr mahfilî* as the safest place in a mosque. In modern Turkish, they are known as "sultan" or "hünkâr" boxes.

as either “pavilions” or “tribunes”. The sultans of the Ottoman Empire would pray on Fridays and religious holidays in their “historic capitals”: Bursa, Edirne, and Istanbul. For this reason, imperial prayer boxes (*maqsura*, *mahfil-i hümayun*, *hünkâr mahfili*) became an essential feature of sultanic mosques in these cities. The presence of these architectural elements in a mosque symbolized the highest level of security for the “imperial pavilion”, access to which was strictly forbidden to outsiders and granted only by special invitation from the padishah³². The prayer boxes of the padishahs were often enclosed with railings and elevated above other parts of the mosque, built on special supports or even marble columns³³. Mosques also contained special mahfils — some for muezzins, others for women³⁴. Turkish historian Mustafa Çetinaslan writes that no information has been found in Ottoman or Turkish sources about who first built the *mahfil-i hümayun* for the padishah in Hagia Sophia,³⁵.

Continuing his description of the altar part of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, Grelot draws attention to the bema³⁶, at the very center of which, beneath a cylindrical barrel vault, the face of Jesus Christ is visible³⁷. According to the artist’s description, this is a mosaic image of the Mandylyon, the “Image Not Made by Hands” of Christ “impressed on the cloth (veil) of Saint Veronica”³⁸. Below, on the same vault of the bema, on either side of the face of the Savior, he depicts mosaic figurative images of the archangels with wings reaching the ground: Archangels Michael and Gabriel, marked with

³² Unfortunately, neither Ottoman nor Turkish sources preserved the name(s) of the craftsman (men) who made the latticed chamber for the sultan, which Grelot described but did not depict. It is also unknown under which sultan it was constructed and installed near the altar and mihrab.

³³ Çetinaslan Mustafa. Hünkâr Mahfillerinin Ortaya Çıkışı, Gelişimi ve Osmanlı Dönemi Örnekleri (The Emergence, Development of Hünkâr Mahfils and its Samples in Ottoman Empire). Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 29 / 2013. Sayfa 63.

³⁴ Ibid. P. 62

³⁵ Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople. P. 109, 147.

³⁶ Bema (Greek: *bēma*) or *hieration* – the space between the central dome area and the apse in cross-in-square type churches.

³⁷ In the 18th century, the mosaic image of Christ the Savior disappeared.

³⁸ Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople. P. 146–148.

the letter “M”. Behind the Mandylion, on the altar apse conch³⁹, which the French illustrator repeatedly refers to as the “Sanctum Sanctorum” (the Holy of Holies) of Hagia Sophia, Grelot notes a mosaic image of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child enthroned (marked with “N”) in the depth of the church, in the center of a semi-dome fully covered with golden mosaic and illuminated by sunlight streaming through five small windows⁴⁰.

Between the Mother of God with the Child and the mihrab, six windows are drawn, between which small round medallions are hanging. These medallions bear, written in Arabic from right to left, the first eight names in Islam: Allah⁴¹, His Prophet Muhammad, the four Rightly Guided Caliphs — Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali — and Ali’s two martyred sons, Hasan and Husayn, the grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad. These medallions are barely visible in Grelot’s engraving, yet he mentions them in the drawing’s explanation, mistakenly calling them “the eight great prophets of the Turkish law”⁴². Mistakenly, as, although in Islamic tradition, the first four caliphs are revered as “righteous” for being the direct and undisputed successors of Muhammad, none of them claimed the status of prophet, since in Islam only Muhammad is recognized and venerated as the Messenger of Allah. Medallions and panels with these eight names were traditionally placed on the walls of mosques.

As Turkish historian Semavi Eyice notes, Sultan Mehmed IV⁴³ in 1651 invited the renowned calligrapher Teknecizade Ibrahim Efendi, who, in addition to the eight small medallions above the mihrab, also inscribed large square and rectangular panels bearing the principal names in Islam, written in Arabic calligraphy,

³⁹ Conch (Greek for “shell”) — the vault of the altar part of a church, a semi-dome covering the semi-cylindrical portions of a building, such as an apse or a niche.

⁴⁰ Ibid. P. 152.

⁴¹ Allah, the Almighty and All-Great (Arabic) — typically used after mentioning Allah’s name to glorify Him.

⁴² *Grelot G-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople.* P. 148.

⁴³ *Mehmed IV* (1648–1687) — the 19th Ottoman padishah. Deposed in 1687. Died in 1693.

and installed them on the load-bearing piers around the central nave⁴⁴. However, in the black-and-white engravings of the French traveler, these larger panels are barely discernible and not described, while he does record the faintly visible small medallions between the windows above the mihrab, mentioning them in his account⁴⁵.

Continuing the visual survey of Hagia Sophia's interior through Grelot's eyes, the viewer encounters the massive (eleven-meter-tall-*author*) mosaic figures of a pair of six-winged seraphim on the eastern pendentives⁴⁶ (Fig. 5), and on another one of his engravings – their two counterparts on the western pendentives, which in fact were no longer visible at that time⁴⁷. J. Phillips, while translating Grelot's book from French into English, made a serious error by relying solely on the drawing where all four seraphim are depicted beneath the dome (Fig. 6)⁴⁸. Basing his interpretation on this image and ignoring the author's own textual description, Phillips even "corrected" Grelot, stating in his translation that there were "four large six-winged seraphim" on the pendentives⁴⁹ (marked "K"). However, in the original French edition, the author clearly notes that only two seraphim on the eastern pendentives had survived, and that he drew in the missing "mirrored" pair of these highest-ranking angels, closest to God, to complete the scene. In doing so, the French illustrator exercised his artistic freedom, allowing his imagination to run free. Nearly 169 years later, these artistic dreams would be realized by Gaspare Fossati, the architect of the Russian diplomatic mission in the Bosphorus, during the major restoration of Hagia Sophia, when he

⁴⁴ *Semavi Eyice*. Ayasofya. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi'nin 1991 yılında İstanbul'da basılan 4. cildinde, 208 (Исламская энциклопедия /TDV/, Стамбул, 1991, P. 208 <www.islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ayasofya?ysclid=19714ge6z3618721162>.

⁴⁵ The square panels by Teknecizade Ibrahim Efendi are not seen in the works of other European artists until 1710.

⁴⁶ Pendentive (also called *sail*) – an architectural element that transfers the weight of the dome to the supporting arches and piers beneath it.

⁴⁷ *Grelot G-J*. Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople. P. 146–155.

⁴⁸ *Grelot G-J*. A Late Voyage to Constantinople. P. 122.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*



Fig. 5. View from the Imperial Gate toward the central nave and the altar apse of Hagia Sophia with the mihrab. *Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople. Enrichie de Plans levez par l'Auteur sur les lieux et des Figures de tout ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans cette Ville. Presentee au Roy par Guillaume Grelot. Paris, 1680*

Painted the missing pair of seraphim on the western pendentives in the form of frescoes⁵⁰.

In the center of the eastern cylindrical vault, which supports the pendentives with the seraphim, Grelot depicted a mosaic image of the Mother of God; below it on both sides, mosaic figures of

⁵⁰ *Fossati Gaspard. Aya Sofia, Constantinople, as recently restored by order of H.M. the sultan Abdul Medjid / from the original drawings by Chevalier Gaspard Fossati; lithographed by Louis Haghe, esq. Description Historique de Planches de Ste. Sophie by Adalbert de Beaumont. London. 1852. P. 6.*

two Christian saints on the right and two saints on the left⁵¹ can be discerned. On the western cylindrical vault of the central nave, no figurative mosaics have survived. On the borders of all the vaults, ornamental patterns in the form of various geometric shapes resembling plants or small crosses, are noticeable.

Once, the entire upper section was covered with mosaic figures, which are still visible in a few places where they intertwine. However, most of them no longer exist, since the Turks had destroyed them, knocking them down — as they still did in Grelot's time — with large poles, or covering them under several layers of lime and whitewash. In doing so, they attempted to conceal the still emerging figurative images. Many of these figures had survived, both in the upper galleries and in the church proper. According to Grelot, this circumstance might serve as a good omen for Christians, since by Divine Providence, the images revealing the Sanctuary (Sanctuarium) of the church had been preserved in their entirety, despite being in a fairly accessible and crowded area. God grant (says Grelot) that these holy images be reunited and someday help revive Christian piety and sacrificial devotion. Beneath this image lies a balcony or upper balustrade, marked with the letter "O", while the lower part ends below the two large angels, in an opening that serves as a doorway⁵².

Above this upper balustrade, under the large dome (marked "G"), there were once seven open arches, which formed the gynaeceum, or women's upper galleries. These seven arches had been walled up and only their outlines and former locations remained visible. The Turks did not permit women in their mosques to prevent joint prayer. Having no further use for this once female-only section, it came to be used only by men. Above the sealed arches (marked "F"), windows are located on two of the church's facades. However, these windows are depicted but carelessly. The lowest ones are very small, but five larger ones are found above. The glazing throughout the church, except for the six windows in the Sanctum Sanctorum, consists of round glass panes set in simple wooden frames. As a result,

⁵¹ Grelot G-J. *Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople*. P. 146–148.

⁵² *Ibid.* P. 152.

the entire church appears dark and gloomy, despite the large number of windows. All the windows are low, letting in little light, and resembling ventilation holes in a cave⁵³ rather than windows of a sanctuary.

Grelot also marked on his plan of Hagia Sophia, with detailed notes accompanying the drawing, the second-story galleries, which had once housed the “imperial gynecium”, where the empresses and female members of the royal family⁵⁴ had prayed. He reports that the arcades of this gallery were blocked off. Above the catechumena are the balustrades of the third tier, encircling the church around its entire interior perimeter.

The French artist equally thoroughly sketched and described the western part of Hagia Sophia’s nave (Fig. 6). On the western wall of the central nave, above the Imperial Doors, there is not a single attribute that reminds one of Christianity. He depicted the Imperial Doors (“A”) and two smaller doors on either side (“B”). In the annotations to his drawing, Grelot states that upon exiting the central nave through the main doors, one enters the inner narthex, where, in the lunette above the Imperial Doors, one can see images of the Savior, the Blessed Virgin, and St. John the Baptist⁵⁵, at whose feet the emperor is shown prostrate⁵⁶.

Along the western wall of the cathedral and further along the entire inner perimeter, run high and low balustrades to which numerous oil lamps were attached. These were lit at night during major celebrations, such as the holy month of Ramadan or other Islamic holidays (Fig. 6)⁵⁷.

The French artist reports that the marble floor of the cathedral was covered with small mats interspersed with many large Turkish carpets, although these are not visible in his engraving⁵⁸.

⁵³ Ibid. P. 153.

⁵⁴ Ibid. P. 130.

⁵⁵ There is no mosaic image of John the Baptist in the lunette above the Imperial Gates.

⁵⁶ *Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople.* P. 155.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid. P. 146–147.

His drawing includes both large and small interior details, visible from the perspective of standing with one's back to the altar and mihrab. He also drew visitors wearing turbans and traditional long Ottoman garments.

In the corners of the central nave, in each of the four exedras of the first tier, stand pairs of porphyry columns from Thebes, arranged in semi-circles and topped with gilded capitals. Each pair of these dark-red columns supports a second-tier exedra, composed of six columns of dark green Thessalian porphyry (lat. *verde antico*), thus challenging the norms of traditional architecture.

The Theban porphyry columns ("D"), Grelot notes, are wrapped in several places with thick bronze rods, which prevent their ongoing deterioration⁵⁹.

Grelot also depicted the first-tier exedras. In front of both the southwestern and the northwestern exedras, each of which has a pair of porphyry columns, one large white Proconnesian marble urn stands, about seven feet in height⁶⁰. Both vessels are the same size, of a beautiful shape resembling a pumpkin. They appear to emerge from the center of polygonal basins, with water flowing from bronze spouts. It is believed that these urns were brought to Istanbul from Pergamon⁶¹ by order of Sultan Murad III⁶².

The carving on their tops, resembling turbans, Grelot writes, was done by Ottoman craftsmen, but the vessels themselves likely have a Byzantine shape and origin (Fig. 6)⁶³.

The first mention of these giant vases in Hagia Sophia comes from English traveler Fynes Moryson⁶⁴, who visited Constantinople

⁵⁹ Ibid. P. 155.

⁶⁰ Each urn holds about 1,200 – 1,250 liters (Essad. *Constantinople*, p. 111).

⁶¹ According to another version, they were brought from a region near the Sea of Marmara.

⁶² *Grelot G-J. Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople*. P. 144.

⁶³ *Lethaby and Swainson. The church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople: A Study of Byzantine Building*. P. 84.

⁶⁴ *Fynes Moryson (1566–1630) — English traveler and writer, author of the four-volume memoir *An Itinerary*, describing his travels in Europe and the Ottoman Empire.*

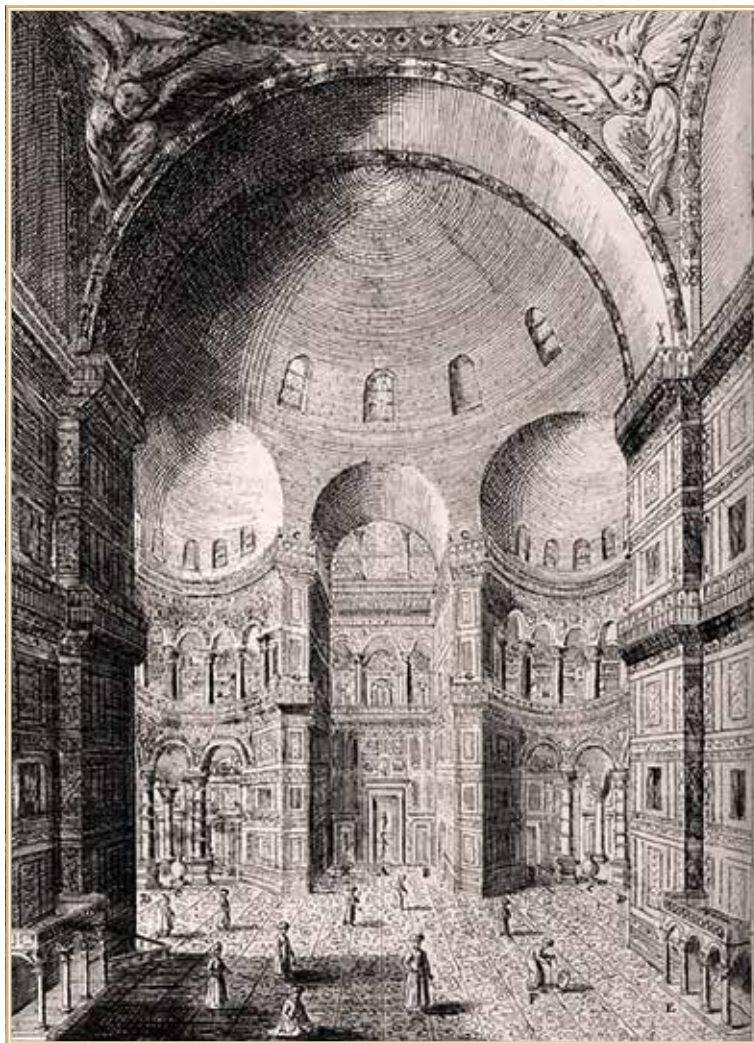


Fig. 6. View from the western balustrade of the altar apse toward the western side of the central nave and the Imperial Gate. *Grelot G.-J. Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople. Enrichie de Plans levez par l'Auteur sur les lieux et des Figures de tout ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans cette Ville. Presentee au Roy par Guillaume Grelot. Paris, 1680*

in 1595 and wrote: “I did indeed see two marble nuts of enormous size and extraordinary beauty”⁶⁵.

Here is what Grelot writes about these remarkable vessels: “Between two bronze-clad columns (“D”) (and their twins on the opposite side of the nave. –*Author*), there stands a pair of large marble

⁶⁵ *Lethaby and Swainson. The church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople: A Study of Byzantine Building. P. 85.*

pitchers, vases, or jars⁶⁶, equipped with spouts. Every morning, the vases are filled with water from a cistern, which, according to local attendants, lies beneath the mosque and feeds water through a small opening in the floor, marked with the letter “F”, covered by a bronze well lid. Even if these two enormous vases do not appear entirely antique, it can at least be assumed that they were placed in the same spot as those that once stood here during the times of the Greek emperors and served as reservoirs for *hagiasma* (holy water) for Christians who came to this church. A legend states that once there was a vast vase in the church filled with water, which the faithful would wash their faces with, or at least rinse their eyes, to demonstrate their exceptional purity before presenting themselves before the majesty of God, whom even angels dare not gaze upon⁶⁷. These vases resemble holy the water vessels in Catholic churches, and at the top, one can even discern an inscription in a beautiful retrograde gilded Greek script: “Wash my sins, not only my face.”

However, today these vases are used only for drinking⁶⁸. The most devout Turks stay in the mosque for extended periods and often fall into a trance during prayer, either from frequent kneeling and prostrations or from the constant strain of repeating the name of God or invoking his many epithets⁶⁹. They become so enflamed with religious ecstasy that they “can barely breathe while quenching their thirst with cold water from the giant urns, which they either draw themselves or receive from a dervish or some other mosque attendant, who stands ready with the *tuluk* (leather water bags) and clean glasses to serve those in need. But this only happens during major religious festivals when the mosque is so full that no one can rise to fetch water themselves”⁷⁰.

⁶⁶ These vases, referred to by G.-J. Grelot alternately as “urns” or “pitchers”, were constantly filled with water “to quench the thirst of those overheated during prayer” (*Grelot G-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople*. P. 148, 161, 162).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* P. 160–161.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* P. 162.

⁶⁹ Allah has 99 names, which a Muslim repeats while fingering prayer beads.

⁷⁰ *Grelot G-J. Relation Nouvelle d’un Voyage de Constantinople*. P. 162.

Around the perimeter of the central nave — on both its northern and southern sides — stand four small marble tribunes of identical shape and size, facing each other. Grelot reports: “Turkish craftsmen built them as platforms on four pillars, resembling the balconies used by Italian musicians; only the railings are placed much lower so that the worshipers can observe the gestures of those standing on them” (Fig. 6)⁷¹. These platforms are called *teblig* or *mahfil-i müezzîn* and are intended for muezzins, who act as “conductors” or “heralds” of the collective prayer (*namaz*)⁷². Grelot refers to them as “bellighlers”. Such balcony-like lodges — and the “bellighlers” on them — are found only in large congregational mosques, as they are unnecessary in smaller ones. In ordinary mosques, it is sufficient to have one preacher (*khatib*) or imam and his assistant. The functions of the khatib largely coincide with those of a parish priest (*curé*), and in rural mosques, a single imam often performs the duties of imam, muezzin, lamp-lighter (*muhtar*), and even janitor (*kapici*). But in large and busy mosques like Hagia Sophia, these balconies are essential. The interior of Hagia Sophia resembles a vast ship filled with Muslims, many of whom are too far from the imam praying in front of the mihrab to hear or understand his words, and thus do not know when to exclaim or kneel. This often leads to discord and confusion, or even embarrassing mishaps, such as when a *bostancı*⁷³ or other worshipers kiss the floor and, upon rising, hook the sharp tip of their conical caps into the garments of their fellow believers just beginning to kneel performing the rak‘ah⁷⁴, thereby disrupting the sacred order and peace of worship⁷⁵. The muezzins on these tribunes watch the imam or khatib and shout out to the crowd whatever he quietly utters, signaling when to exclaim “Al-

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Their role somewhat resembled that of theatrical prompters.

⁷³ *Bostancı* (from Turkish *bostancı*, “gardener”) – the Sultan’s imperial guard, protecting the padishah and the palace. They wore a special headdress with a tall, pointed conical cap (*külâb*), which changed shape in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

⁷⁴ Grelot G.-J. A late Voyage to Constantinople. P. 134.

⁷⁵ Ibid. P. 135.

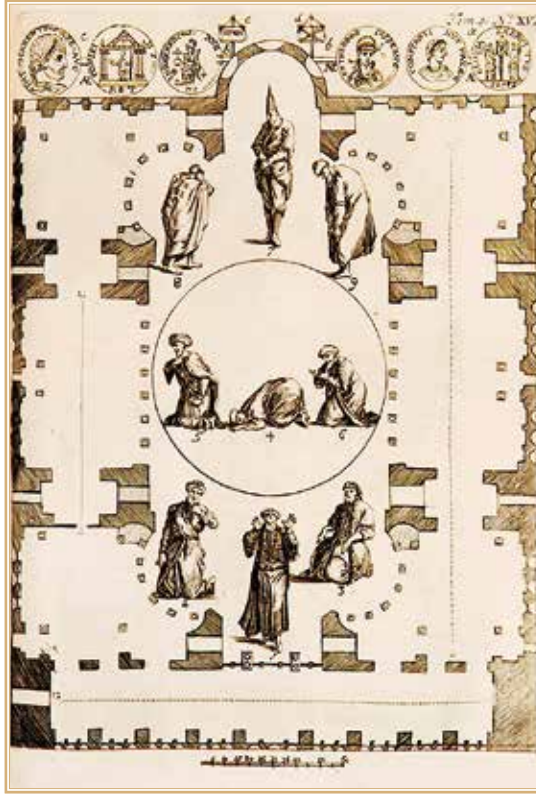


Fig. 7. Plan of the upper gallery of Hagia Sophia. Illustration showing the sequence of stages of a Muslim's prayer (namaz), with depictions of Byzantine coins at the top. Aubry de La Mottraye, 1727.

From open sources

lahu Akbar⁷⁶ at the end of each *rak'ah*⁷⁷, and when to prostrate, leading by example⁷⁸.

Another traveler of French origin, **Aubry de La Mottrey**⁷⁹, who was well acquainted with Grelot's book, arrived in Constantinople in 1699. In his book he writes:

⁷⁶ Praise of God with the exclamation: "Allah is the Greatest!" (Turkish: *Allah Ekber*, Arabic: *Allahu Akbar*).

⁷⁷ *Rak'ah* (Arabic: *rak'āt*) – the sequence of words and actions that make up Islamic prayer.

⁷⁸ *Grelot G-J. Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Constantinople*. P. 161–163; *Grelot G-J. A late Voyage to Constantinople*. P. 135.

⁷⁹ Mottraye, Aubry de La (1674–1743), a French traveler, writer, and diplomat of noble birth, a Huguenot. From 1699, he lived in the Ottoman Empire, then served as an agent of the Swedish King Charles XII, and after the king's death (1718), he worked for the British crown.

“The description of Hagia Sophia given by Mr. Grelot is so accurate that I will add nothing to what he has said, except for the plan of the **gynaecium**, which is presented in engraving No. XV in the French edition of Aubry de La Mottraye’s book (1727), where the sequential positions of praying Muslims during **namaz** are depicted, both in Hagia Sophia and in other mosques. In illustration No. 8 of this engraving, a Muslim of African origin approaching the prayer is shown with his two thumbs pressed to his ears and his eyes closed. This indicates that the worshipper’s senses are closed to all worldly matters. Following this position is another illustration, No. 7, showing a figure in the attire of an *alvâcî*, or palace confectioner (jam-maker). Next are figures No. 9, 4, 5, 6, and 2, dressed in traditional Turkish costumes; in illustration No. 3, a **bostanci** gardener, or *baseki* (personal bodyguard of the Sultan) of the Seraglio, is depicted (the long and pointed cap of which caused no small trouble to a fellow believer praying in front of him), as well as of other palaces and gardens of the Grand Seigneur. In illustration No. 1 is the *Kapudan Pasha* (admiral commanding the naval fleet), closing the circle of nine successive positions of praying Muslims during **namaz**. Each praying Muslim is to perform the described bodily movements in the order indicated in the engraving” (Fig. 7)⁸⁰.

Although Grelot allows himself some historical inaccuracies, misinterpretations and even artistic liberties, such as inventing the non-existing seraphim on the western pendentives, his book nevertheless marked a revelation of Hagia Sophia for not only the French court but all of Europe. In his dedication to King Louis XIV, Grelot, using the customary lofty language of such addresses, apologizes for offering neither pearls nor diamonds, as wealthy travelers often did upon returning from the East⁸¹, but instead presenting his illustrat-

⁸⁰ *Mottraye Aubry de La* (1674–1743). *Voyages du Sr. A. de Mottraye en Europe, Asie et Afrique en deux volumes*, vol. I, La Haye, T. Johnson & J. Van Duren, M DCC XXII (1727). P. 210, 210a.

⁸¹ G.-J. Grelot is referring to his predecessor, J.-B. Tavernier, who, upon returning from India in 1668, brought with him a large uncut blue diamond of triangular shape (with an original weight of 112–115 carats), which the merchant [sic] sold to King Louis XIV along with other large diamonds and smaller gemstones. As a reward for these unprecedented Indian treasures,

ed book, a humble subject's tribute to the King. In the end, this illustrated volume proved far more valuable than any Oriental treasure, becoming the most precious and truly royal gift not only for Louis XIV but for every reader of Grelot's work.

King Louis XIV became acquainted with the content of the work before its publication, for which the author was granted a special royal privilege in 1677. This privilege was officially registered by His Majesty's Council three years before the book's release. The author received the exclusive right to print, sell, and send the book to anyone he saw fit throughout the entire Kingdom of France. Grelot's rights were securely protected from any attempts by engravers, booksellers, or printers to reproduce, sell, or distribute the book's materials without the author's or his representatives' consent under threat of confiscation of counterfeit copies and additional penalties.

Due to financial hardship, Grelot was forced to transfer this privilege to the widow of the late printer and bookseller Damien Foucault, who provided printing services to the royal family. This

Tavernier received a noble title and a substantial sum of money from the king. In 1673, the court jeweler Sieur Pitau recut the diamond, giving it a symmetrical shape and reducing its weight to 67.125 carats. The stone became known as the "Blue Diamond of the Crown" (French: *Diamant Bleu de la Couronne*) or the "French Blue." Louis XIV wore the diamond as a pendant on a gold ribbon during ceremonial occasions. Later, the king set the diamond into the ceremonial decoration of the Order of the Golden Fleece. In 1792, during the French Revolution, the stone was stolen from the royal treasury along with other jewels. By 1812, the diamond resurfaced in London in a recut form, weighing approximately 47 carats. Thanks to the discovery of a lead model of the original in the Paris Museum of Natural History, modern research (2005) confirmed that it was indeed part of the "French Blue." Legend has it that the stone was stolen from a temple of the goddess Sita in India, supposedly placing a curse upon it. However, Tavernier's own fate contradicts this: he lived to the age of 83 and died in Moscow in July 1689, rather than being torn apart by dogs, as myths claim. A fragment of the original diamond made its way to Russia — a ring containing it belonged to Empress Maria Feodorovna (wife of Paul I) and is now preserved in the Kremlin Diamond Fund. A descendant of the "French Blue" — the Hope Diamond (45.52 carats) — has been held since 1958 at the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C., USA) as a gift from jeweler Harry Winston. .

was done as a compensation for the expenses that the publishing house had borne, including the financing of Grelot's sea voyage. This agreement had been a condition of the contract concluded between the illustrator and the publishing house. Without it, Grelot would not have been able to make his only maritime journey, from Rome to Constantinople, during which he acted not as a commissioned draftsman, but as an independent artist, unlike during the other stages of his Eastern journey. The transfer of the privilege for the remaining seventeen years was duly recorded in the register of the Community of Printers and Booksellers.

Grelot's book gained widespread recognition and popularity, not only in France but also in many other European countries, especially at royal courts, where it sparked a genuine interest in the East, in the Ottoman Empire, its capital, and above all, in its spiritual heart: Hagia Sophia of Constantinople. Its author left a unique historical document for posterity – a literary, artistic, and visual description of Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia Mosque in the 1670s, representing an important source for Byzantinists and Ottomanists.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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Original paper



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Travels to the Ottoman Empire of Russian Pilgrim-Writers in the Last Quarter of the 18th Century — the First Quarter of the 19th Century

Abstract

Pilgrimage diaries written by Russian Orthodox pilgrims during their journeys to the holy cities on the territory of the Ottoman Empire are a valuable and informative source of information about the socio-economic and ethnocultural life of the Near East. The monastic metochia of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in Jaffa and Ramle, as well as the Patriarchal monastery in Jerusalem, were responsible for accommodating of Russian Orthodox pilgrims. The Russian diplomatic mission in Constantinople provided all possible assistance to Russian worshippers in the Holy Land. The establishment of the Russian vice-consulate in Jaffa marked the first step toward the institutionalization and development of Russian Orthodox pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Keywords:

Russian pilgrims, Holy Land, Ottoman Empire, Sublime Porte, Ivan Veshnyakov, Ilya Sysoev, Pyotr Khostov, Kir Bronnikov, Yakim Vasilyev, Yakov Rahmanov

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In the first half of the 18th century, the Holy City of Jerusalem was visited by Russian pilgrim-writers, primarily members of the clergy: Ivan Lukyanov (1701–1703), Makariy and Seliverst (1704–1707), Andrey Ignatyev (1707–1708), Ippolit Vishensky (1707–1709), Varlaam (1712–1714), Matvey Nechayev (1721–1722), Sylvester and Nikodim (1722–1723), Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky (1723–1747), Serapion (1749–1751). Their pilgrimage diaries and travel notes belong to the genre of “*khozhdenie*” (pilgrimages or wanderings)¹.

In the second half of the 18th century, Hieromonks Ignaty (1766–1776) and Leonty (1763–1765) also visited Jerusalem.

From the last quarter of the 18th century, following the signing of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) and the Treaty of Jassy (1792) between Russia and the Sublime Porte, which granted Russian subjects the right to freely and safely visit the Christian holy sites of Palestine, the flow of Russian pilgrims to the Ottoman Empire began to increase, despite the numerous hardships and dangers encountered on such long journeys.

The pilgrimage literature of the last quarter of the 18th to the first quarter of the 19th century continued the *khozhdenie* tradition of Jerusalem travel narratives from the early 18th century, enriched by several vivid descriptions of journeys to the Holy Land.

Two notable pilgrimages to the Holy City of Jerusalem, composed by members of the clergy at the end of the 18th century, deserve special attention.

¹ Кириллина С.А. “Благочестивые путешествия” в Иерусалим: российские паломники-писатели XVIII столетия // Исторический вестник. 2019. Т. XXX (177). С. 164–185.

In 1793–1794, the Holy Land was visited by Hieromonk Meletiy² of the Holy Dormition Sarov Hermitage, “of merchant origin from Astrakhan”³. In 1794–1795, Hieromonk Nikanor Moskvitinov of the Kursk Root Hermitage⁴ made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land⁵.

In 1804–1805, Kaluga noblemen, ensigns Ivan and Vasily Veshnyakov⁶ and their companion, merchant Mikhail Novikov⁷ from the town of Medyn in the Kaluga Province, visited the Holy Land. In 1817–1818, it was visited by Second Lieutenant Ilya Stepanovich Sysoev from Staraya Russa in the Novgorod Province, accompanied by peasants from the village of Marfino in the Staraya Russa district: Pyotr Khostov, Zakhar and Ivan⁸.

² Кириллина С.А. “Приде мне неотступное желание видеть Град Иерусалим и поклониться тамо святым местам”: иеромонах россиянин во владениях османского султана // Исторический вестник. 2015. Т. XI (158). С. 38–77.

³ Мелетий. Путешествие во Иерусалим Саровския Общежительная Пустыни иеромонаха Мелетия в 1793–1794 годах / Российский государственный архив древних актов (РГАДА). Рукопись собрания Саровской пустыни (Ф. 357). Оп. 1. № 305. Л. 1–350 (черновой оригинал); М., 1800. Л. 10, 41.

⁴ Никанор (Москвитин). Путешествие во Иерусалим монаха Курской Коренной пустыни Никанора Москвитина в 1794–1795 годах (оригинал, поднесенный сочинителем Санкт-Петербургскому Митрополиту Гавриилу и переданный им в Валаамский монастырь) / Рукопись собрания Валаамского монастыря. Отдел 4 (рукописи). № 167. Л. 1–44; СПб., 1796.

⁵ One of Monk Nikanor's obediences was icon painting. He created an icon of the Korsun Mother of God for the Gethsemane church (“House of the Theotokos”), noting in the inscription that it was made “by iconographer Monk Nikanor, who came from Moscow”. He also drew a plan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which he attached to his pilgrimage diary.

⁶ Якушев М.М. Путешествие братьев Вешняковых и Кира Бронникова на Святую Землю в первой четверти XIX в. // *Восток*. 2014. № 5. С. 36–42.

⁷ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим и окрестности онога Калужской губернии дворян Вешняковых и медынского купца Новикова в 1804 и 1805 гг. М., 1813. Л. 5.

⁸ Сысоев И.С. Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим и окрестности онога Новгородской губернии города Старой Руссы подпоручика Ильи Степановича Сысоева и крестьянина Петра Хостова в 1817-м и 1818-м годах / Отдел рукописей (ОР) РНБ. Собрание Общества любителей древней письменности (ОЛДП). № 623. Л. 1–73.



Pilgrims at the walls of Jerusalem. Artist N.G. Chernetsov.
1831. Simferopol Art Museum

In 1818–1819, the peasant Yakim Vasilyev⁹ from the village of Lyakhovo in the Rostov District of the Yaroslavl Province visited Jerusalem and briefly described his pilgrimage. In 1819, Anna Alexeyevna, an unmarried woman from the village of Lezhnevo in the Vladimir Province, and the widow Praskovya Stepanovna¹⁰ made the journey; their pilgrimage was recorded by the local priest Father Kondrat, based on the account of a female parishioner¹¹.

⁹ *Васильев Я.* Путешествие во Святой Град Иерусалим из России ростовского крестьянина Якима Васильева в 1818–1819 гг. / ОР РНБ. Собрание А.А. Титова. № 889. Л. 1–32.

¹⁰ *Анна Алексеевна.* Путешествие во Святой град Иерусалим села Лежнева девицы Анны Алексеевны и вдовы Прасковьи Степановны в 1819 году / ОР РНБ. Собрание А.А. Титова. №. 1307. Л. 1–62; Предисловие: А. Титов. М., 1885; Государственный исторический музей (ГИМ). Собрание Е.В. Барсова. № 1785.

¹¹ Паломнические путешествия на Святую Землю: Путевые записки подпоручика Ильи Сысоева, Путешествие девицы Анны Алексеевны (подготовка текста и комментарии И.В. Федоровой). Библиотека литературы Древней Руси (БДР). СПб., 2020. Т. 20. С. 171–248, 353–392.

In 1820–1821, a pilgrim from the Smolensk Province, Yakov Ra-khmanov, visited the Holy Land with companions¹². Around the same time, Kir Ivanovich Bronnikov, a serf of Count Dmitry N. Sheremetev from the village of Pavlovo in the Gorbatov District of the Nizhny Novgorod Province, also traveled to the Holy Land, departing from Jaffa during the height of the Greek uprising in 1821¹³. It is noteworthy that the abovementioned Russian subjects were the last Russian pilgrims to document their journeys to Jerusalem before the onset of the tragic events in the Holy Land.

The first pilgrimage stop en route to Jerusalem was the Russian mission in Constantinople. From the first quarter of the 19th century, following the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest (1812) between the Russian Empire and the Sublime Porte, the Imperial Mission on the Bosphorus began to pay increased attention to pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Among the *khozhdenie* accounts of the early 19th century, one can identify numerous travel narratives to the Near East authored by noble and peasant pilgrim-writers¹⁴.

Particular attention should be given to pioneering pilgrims of the first quarter of the 19th century from the nobility who were in military service¹⁵. At the commercial chancellery of the mission, Russian pilgrims exchanged rubles for Ottoman piastres at a favorable rate. Impoverished or destitute pilgrims received financial assistance sufficient for subsistence in Constantinople and to hire a vessel from the Ottoman capital to Jaffa. Wealthier travelers, including renowned pilgrim-writers, financed their journeys independently.

¹² Рахманов Я. Описание путешествующего во Святой Град Иерусалим и во Святую гору Афонскую Смоленской губернии поклонника Якова Рахманова с товарищи в 1820 году и в 1821 году от портового города Одессы Российской державы. Российская государственная библиотека (РГБ). Музейное собрание (Ф. 178). № 9466.

¹³ Бронников К.И. Путешествие к Святым местам, находящимся в Европе, Азии и Африке, совершенное в 1820–1821 гг. села Павлова жителем Кирием Бронниковым. М., 1824. Л. 5.

¹⁴ Якушев М.М. Русское православное паломничество на Ближний Восток в контексте османо-российских отношений (1774–1847 гг.). М., 2018.

¹⁵ In 1857, the Holy Land was visited by the merchant Anisim Simochenkov from Zhizdra, Kaluga Province, who provided a detailed account of his pilgrimage / Russian National Library (RNL). Collection of P.N. Tikhonov. No. 827.

At the chancellery of the Russian Mission in Constantinople, pilgrims also received the most critical travel documents: the sultanic *firman* (an imperial decree issued in the pilgrim's name) and a foreign pilgrimage passport in Italian, which replaced the Russian-language passport and was registered in the passport ledger.

These documents granted the bearer the right to travel within the Ottoman Empire. The “sultanic decrees” carried by Russian pilgrims ensured safe and free passage within the Empire, functioning as both safe-conduct passes (*aman*) — issued to foreign nationals (*mustemin*) — and travel permits (*tezkere*) — granted by the Porte to Ottoman subjects for free and safe internal movement. Personalized *firman*s provided a higher level of protection, bearing the seal of the Sultan¹⁶.

The Ottoman government received from the heads of the Russian Imperial Mission in Constantinople an officially drafted request for *firman*s for Russian pilgrims. A few days later, it would issue personalized decrees signed by the Sultan, granting free and duty-free travel within the Ottoman Empire.

For instance:

- In 1793, Chargé d'affaires A.S. Khvostov, head of the Russian diplomatic mission on the Bosphorus, received a *firman* from Sultan Selim III for Hieromonk Meletiy of the Sarov Hermitage¹⁷;
- In 1794, Khvostov obtained a *firman* from Selim III for Hieromonk Nikanor Moskvitinov of the Kursk Root Hermitage¹⁸;
- In 1804, Extraordinary Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister A. Ya. Italinsky secured a *firman* from the Turkish government for the Kaluga noblemen I.I. Veshnyakov and his brother

¹⁶ The Sultan's seal, consisting of his names and titles, was placed on *firman*s, *berats*, and similar documents and had various names: *tugra-i garray-i ciban*, *tugra-i garray-i sami*, *nishan-i sharif-i alishan*, *nishan-i tamtal-i humayun*, *tevki-i refi-i humayun*, *mubr-i humayun*, *misal-i humayun*, *misal-i meymun*, *sitan-i haqqani*, *mekan-i haqqani*, *alamat-i sharife* / *Bayerle*, Gustav. Pashas, Begs and Effendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul, 1997.

¹⁷ Мелетий. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 10, 41.

¹⁸ Никанор. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 1–44.

V.I. Veshnyakov, as well as for their companion, merchant Mikhail Novikov¹⁹;

- In 1817, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary G. A. Stroganov obtained a *firman* from Sultan Mahmud II for nobleman I.S. Sysoev of Staraya Russa and the accompanying peasants, who paid “26 levs” (20 rubles 80 kopecks) for the decree²⁰;

- In 1818, Stroganov secured another *firman* from Mahmud II for Yakim Vasilyev, who paid “25 levs” for the sultanic decree²¹.

Some of the aforementioned pilgrims included translations of the *firman*s from Turkish into Russian in their travel accounts and diaries. The front of these decrees (e.g., those issued to Meletiy, the Veshnyakov brothers, and Kir Bronnikov)²² bore the Sultan’s seal, while the reverse side contained the signatures of two high-ranking Ottoman officials: the *Reis Efendi*²³ and the *Beylikçi Efendi*²⁴. The latter was responsible for registering the Sultan’s *firman*s and forwarding them to the *Nişancı Efendi*²⁵, who finalized their formal issuance.

In the early 19th century, due to the lack of a dedicated pilgrimage infrastructure in Constantinople, pilgrims faced significant difficulties in finding shelter. Many were forced to sleep in harbors or coffeehouses (*kahvehanes*) in the open. According to Ivan Veshnyakov, “in Turkish coffeehouses, which by custom across Turkey must

¹⁹ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим и окрестности оного. Л. 5.

²⁰ Сысоев И.С. Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 4об., 25.

²¹ Васильев Я. Путешествие во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 5, 20, 26.

²² Мелетий. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 42–43; Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 210–212; Бронников К.И. Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 285–287.

²³ Reis Efendi, Reis ül-Küttab – Deputy to the Grand Vizier, responsible for the foreign policy of the Porte.

²⁴ Beylikçi Efendi (Beylikci) – Deputy to the Reis Efendi, responsible for drafting and publishing the texts of decrees, described as “the first after the Reis Efendi, through whom all *firman*s (decrees) of the Porte are dispatched”.

²⁵ Nişancı Efendi, Tevkii – A high-ranking official responsible for authenticating decrees by affixing the “Sultan’s mark” (a stylized signature of the Padishah); the “inscriber of the Sultan’s tughra”. Until the 18th century, the Nişancı also oversaw the Porte’s foreign affairs.



Title page of a book by Hieromonk Meletius. Moscow, 1798

offer lodging to anyone regardless of faith — and free of charge — money is only taken for tobacco and coffee”²⁶, Sysoev²⁷ noted, “here, drinking coffee is an established custom, it is served without sugar or cream, Turkish style”. Hieromonk Meletiy reported that in Ottoman coffeehouses, “a cup of coffee is served for one *para*, together with a tobacco pipe”, and that “Turks drink coffee without sugar or milk²⁸, and only one cup”.

A comparative analysis of travel expenses from Odessa to Jerusalem, based on the early 19th-century pilgrim records, provides further insights. In addition to the listed costs, I.I. Veshnyakov paid 10 *para* (20 kopecks) to the ship’s cook and 2 *para* (4 kopecks) to Arab porters. I.S. Sysoev spent 8 *para* (16 kopecks) on similar services.

²⁶ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 28.

²⁷ Сысов И.С. Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 5.

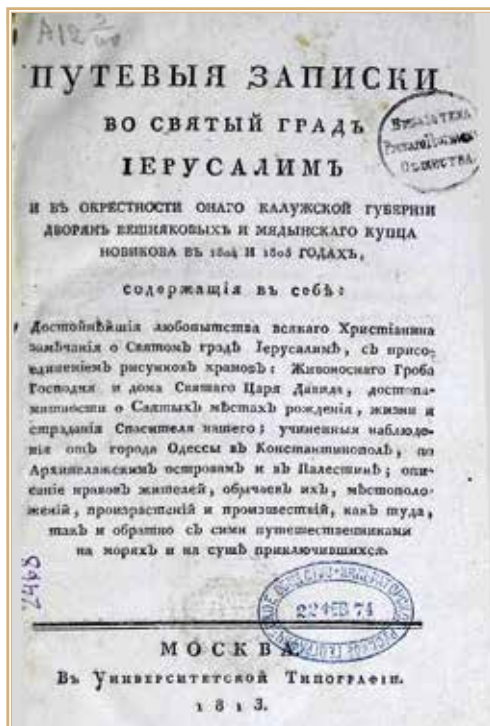
²⁸ Мелетий. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 45, 95.

Travel expenses from Odessa to Jerusalem: a case study of three pilgrims visiting the Holy Land in the early 19th century

Name of pilgrim	Travel expenses from Odessa to Constantinople	Payment to ship captain for passage to Jaffa	Payment to boatmen in Jaffa	Payment for lodgings to the hegumen of the Greek monastery	Travel expenses to Jerusalem/baggage fees
Veshnyakov (1804–1805)	25 rubles	35 piastres	20 para (40 kopeks)	5 piastres	8 piastres/—
Sysoev (1817–1818)	free	40 levs (32 rubles)	2 levs (1 ruble 60 kopeks)	“each according to their ability and desire”	18 levs /— (14 rubles 40 kopecks)
Bronnikov (1820–1821)	16 rubles	free	2 levs (1 ruble 80 kopeks)	“each according to their ability and desire”	8 levs (7 rubles 20 kopeks) /6 para (12 kopeks) per batman ²⁹

The first transit point on the main pilgrimage route from Constantinople to Jerusalem was the port city of Jaffa. Upon arriving at the shores of Jaffa aboard commercial sailing vessels, pilgrims would transfer to small rowing boats, in which local Arab boatmen would ferry them ashore. There, they were met by Arab porters and laborers who transported their luggage to the Greek Monastery of St. George the Trophy-Bearer, located near the local harbor.

²⁹ Pilgrim Stefan, who visited Jerusalem in 1830–1831, noted that the fare to Jerusalem was 3 rubles 60 kopecks, and the cost of transporting baggage was “35 kopecks per pud” (a Russian unit of weight) / *Стефан (Агеев)*. Путешествие во Святой Град Иерусалим Патриаршего Иерусалимского монастыря монаха Серапиона, именовавшегося прежде пострижения Стефаном 1830 и 1831 годов / ОР РНБ. Собрание Н.П. Тиханова. № 511. Л. 1–32; Два путешествия в Иерусалим в 1830 и 1831 и в 1861 годах / Составила Е.Л. Румановская. М., 2006. Р. 44–61.



Title page of a book by Ivan Ivanovich Veshnyakov. St. Petersburg, 1813.

From open sources

It should be noted that in both Jaffa and Ramla, the Monasteries of St. George served as hospices for Russian pilgrims. These establishments functioned as residencies (metochia) of the Patriarch of Jerusalem and were headed by a hieromonk bearing the title of hegumen or protohegumen.

Diplomatic documents and pilgrimage diaries from the late 18th and early 19th centuries indicate that, from the time of the Treaty of Jassy in 1792³⁰ until the establishment of the first formal Russian vice-consulate in the Holy Land³¹, the interests of the Russian Empire had been represented by three consular agents of Italian de-

³⁰ Переписка поверенного в делах в Константинополе Хвостова с вице-консулом в Яффе Дамиани / Архив внешней политики Российской империи АВПРИ. Ф. "Константинопольская миссия". Оп. 90/1. 1792–1793. Д. 1116. Л. 1–7.

³¹ Смелянская И.М., Горбунова Н.М., Якушев М.М. Сирия накануне и в период младотурецкой революции. По материалам консульских донесений" / Отв. редактор М.С. Мейер. М., 2015.

scent from the Damiani family. As Ottoman subjects, they simultaneously served as consuls for several European powers³².

In the 1790s, Pietro Damiani, who was also the consul of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Sicily and Naples. – *Author*)³³, was the first to conduct Russian consular affairs in Jaffa. In the 1800s, he was succeeded by his son, Antonio Damiani, who concurrently represented British interests³⁴. By the 1810s, Francesco Damiani, Antonio's brother, had assumed the position while simultaneously discharging the duties of the consul of France.

Pilgrims often mentioned the Damiani family in their writings. Ivan Veshnyakov offered a positive description of Antonio Damiani, stating³⁵ that “he is a very kind, gentle, and courteous man, though he does not know a single word of Russian”.

A similarly complimentary account of Francesco Damiani was later given by Ilya Sysoev, who wrote that “the Italian consul Franz invited all Russian male and female pilgrims to his home”, where he “welcomed them warmly, invited everyone to sit down”, served vodka, “offered sweets as appetizers, then had tablecloths laid down on the carpets and dishes brought out”, and entertained them “with a dinner, after which everyone was served a cup of coffee with sugar”³⁶.

Nevertheless, the Damiani agents could not provide full consular assistance to Russian subjects, not least because they lacked any knowledge of the Russian language. This situation changed in 1820 with the establishment of the Russian vice-consulate in Jaffa – the first official Russian consular mission in the Holy Land – headed by Georgy Mostras, a Greek by origin. Mostras not only spoke Russian and served the Russian Empire in an official capacity, but also devel-

³² The head of the family, Boutros Damiani, was born in Jerusalem in 1687. Four of his sons served as consuls for Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Tuscany/ *Fisk R. Pity of the Nation: Lebanon at War*. Oxford, 2001. P. 23–24.

³³ Переписка чрезвычайного посланника и полномочного министра графа Кочубея с консулом в Яффе Дамиани / АВПРИ. Ф. “Константинопольская миссия”. Оп. 90/1. 1797–1798. Д. 1298. Л. 1–3.

³⁴ *Fisk, Robert*. *Pity of the Nation*. P. 275–276.

³⁵ *Вешняков И.И.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 173.

³⁶ *Сысоев И.С.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 14 об.



Title page of a book by Kir Ivanovich Bronnikov. Moscow, 1824.

From open sources

oped a clear system for supplying Russian pilgrims with everything they needed during their pilgrimage.

Russian pilgrims held the vice-consul in high regard. In 1820, K.I. Bronnikov wrote³⁷ that he was “very satisfied with Mostras, and it is clear in every respect that he is a kind and honest man”.

Upon arrival in Jaffa, Russian pilgrims were required to register with the Russian vice-consulate, deposit part of their funds for safekeeping to be used on the return journey or in case of emergency, and surrender their passports. As a form of protective identification, they retained their *firmans*. The return-trip funds were stored in a government chest at the vice-consulate, sealed with an official stamp. In lieu of the passports, pilgrims were issued notes bearing the Russian coat of arms; in return for the deposited funds, they received signed receipts.

³⁷ *Бронников К.И. Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 28.*

According to Kir Bronnikov, Mostras would collect the Italian-language pilgrimage passports issued in Constantinople and “in place of them” issued each traveler “small slips with the Russian coat of arms, though he did not confiscate their Turkish *firmans*”. Upon learning that a Russian peasant intended to travel to Mount Sinai, he³⁸ “certified this intention and affixed the official seal”.

Brothers Ivan and Vasily Veshnyakov recounted their stays at the Patriarchal guesthouses en route to Jerusalem. In Jaffa, they were given “a fine lodging”, and in Ramla, “comfortable quarters furnished with carpets”³⁹.

Bronnikov highlighted the hospitality of the monks at the patriarchal metochion and the care shown by vice-consul Mostras, who requested that the hegumen provide a private cell for Bronnikov and his companion⁴⁰.

Pilgrims traveled to Jerusalem on pack animals — horses, mules, donkeys, and camels — or in wheeled vehicles such as carts and wagons; some went on foot. The primary route led through the transfer points of Ramla and Lod, from where they proceeded to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This same route was taken on the return journey. Ramla also served as a transit hub for those continuing on to Nazareth and Tiberias from Jerusalem.

Hieromonk Meletiy offered evocative names for the Greek monasteries: he referred⁴¹ to the monastery in Jaffa as “the Jerusalem wanderer-lodging” and the one in Ramla as “the Jerusalem hospitium”. He noted⁴² that nearly all the rooms in the “most splendid metochion” of Jaffa were designated for hosting “visiting pilgrims, of whom more than five hundred could be accommodated there”.

Meletiy, Ivan Veshnyakov, Sysoev, Vasiliev, Bronnikov, and other pilgrim-writers of the period described the gastronomic and culinary culture of the Middle East, giving special attention to ceremonial foods and beverages served in the metochia. According to

³⁸ Ibid. Л. 28–29.

³⁹ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 58, 66.

⁴⁰ Bronnikov К. И. Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 24.

⁴¹ Мелетий. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 75, 80.

⁴² Ibid. Л. 75–76.



Title page of a manuscript by Ilya Stepanovich Sysoev. 1817–1818.

From open sources

monastic protocol, guests were offered formal refreshments — coffee, grape wine, and vodka—alongside light snacks. The food and drinks usually included a cup of coffee, a shot of vodka (*gorelka*), sweet treats (*zaedki*), halva, candies, preserves, honey, pastries, rolls, fritters, dried fruits, figs, grapes, dates, and crackers⁴³.

Hieromonk Nikanor Moskvitinov⁴⁴ particularly noted the monastery meal, emphasizing that he had been well fed at the Greek patriarchal metochion in Jaffa: “a meal was prepared for the arrivals consisting of cheese and eggs, while laypersons were also offered meat dishes, and wine was provided in abundance”. Ivan and Vasily Veshnyakov, Ilya Sysoev, Kir Bronnikov, and their companions were hospitably received and generously fed in the dining halls of the Greek monasteries in Ramla and Jaffa. In Ramla, the hegumen treated Veshnyakov and his companions to coffee and vodka, followed by a plentiful dinner of “bread, Saracen millet (*rice-author*), and lamb”. After the meal, they

⁴³ Панченко К.А. К реконструкции материальной культуры Православного Востока XVI–XVIII вв. (на материале письменных источников) // *Вестник ПСТГУ*. 2008. Вып. 4 (14). С. 40–62.

⁴⁴ *Никанор*. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 223.

were served another round of coffee and a cup of vodka⁴⁵. Sysoev and his party were likewise treated to vodka in Ramla, followed by a meal during which “grape wine was served continuously in ladles, the dishes were rice with butter and scrambled eggs, and those who wished could eat lamb”, with coffee served afterward⁴⁶. In Jaffa, Bronnikov and his companion were served dinner on reed mats laid out on the floor, the food consisting of “pilaf with butter, rice, and cheese”. “White and red wine was served generously in ladles”, and in Ramla they were also offered a full meal with wine⁴⁷.

Meletiy spent the night in Ramla on two occasions: once on the way to Jerusalem, at the “Jerusalem metochion” near the Church of St. George, and once again on the return journey⁴⁸, “in a garden, under the shade of almond and other fruitful and fragrant trees”.

The Veshnyakov brothers likewise stayed in Ramla twice, both times at the patriarchal metochion—on the way to the Holy City and on the return journey⁴⁹. Fifteen years later, Bronnikov also stopped twice there: once en route to Jerusalem and once on his way to Gaza⁵⁰.

Heavy chests and crates brought by Arab coachmen and camel drivers to the Patriarchal Monastery of Jerusalem a day before the arrival of the pilgrims were placed by monastic novices into the specially designated storage rooms. Valuables and small items were carried by the pilgrims themselves, while surplus bags and bundles were left at the Monastery of Saint George the Trophy-Bearer.

Then, according to the recollections of the Veshnyakov brothers⁵¹, having left their excess baggage “in the monastic storage chamber”, they assembled into a caravan comprising “up to one and a half hundred people of both sexes”.

⁴⁵ *Вешняков И.И.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 66–67.

⁴⁶ *Сысоев И.С.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 15об.-16.

⁴⁷ *Бронников К.И.* Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 25, 32.

⁴⁸ *Мелетий.* Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 80, 309.

⁴⁹ *Вешняков И.И.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 66, 165.

⁵⁰ *Бронников К.И.* Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 32, 140.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* P. 64–65, 72.



Title page of a book by Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky. St. Petersburg, 1778.

From open sources

It is worth noting that in the first quarter of the 19th century, Jerusalem lacked the inns, hostels, or guesthouses familiar to subjects of the Russian Empire. Instead, there were khans and caravanserais, where pilgrims could spend the night before continuing their journey the next day, as well as Greek monasteries that served as lodging establishments and were outwardly indistinguishable from other urban buildings. The primary function of these structures should more accurately be described not as a monastery in the traditional sense, but as guest accommodations; they were entrusted to the supervision of hegumens appointed from among the monks of the Holy Sepulchre. A fixed sum was paid to the treasury of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, as the aforementioned quarters were primarily used for housing pilgrims.

The Patriarchal Monastery of Jerusalem was the first monastery of the Holy City where Russian pilgrims were received — with warmth and hospitality. They were welcomed in a spacious hall and accommo-

dated in available cells, after which the travelers were assigned to other monasteries in Jerusalem, including those of Abraham, Archangel Michael, Saint George, Saint Catherine, Saint Nicholas, Saint Theodore, and others.

Upon arrival in Jerusalem, pilgrims were received in accordance with ecclesiastical ceremonial either by the hegumen himself or by the *mirkhadji*, who escorted them to the monastery's chambers and cells designated for accommodation. Russian pilgrims described the *mirkhadji* in various ways: Meletiy referred to the *mirkhadji* as the "leader of the pilgrims"⁵²; Veshnyakov described him as "a monk knowledgeable in many languages, appointed to receive travelers"⁵³; Bronnikov⁵⁴ called the "merkhadzhiiy" a "monastic guide and host".

Pilgrim-writers provided detailed descriptions of the interiors of the guest chambers and the wall hangings. According to their accounts, the primary decorations consisted of floor and wall carpets, as well as mattresses, cushions, blankets, and other furnishings. Hieromonk Meletiy, for instance, was housed in "large guest halls"⁵⁵; Veshnyakov and his companions were accommodated "in an elongated chamber, carpeted and lined with cushions along the walls"⁵⁶. Sysoev and his companions also stayed "in an elongated guest chamber, which was carpeted and had cushions placed along the walls"⁵⁷; the peasant Bronnikov⁵⁸ described a "guest hall carpeted wall to wall, with mattresses, cushions, and blankets arranged around the edges".

In keeping with tradition, pilgrims in Jerusalem were also well-fed at the Patriarchal Monastery. According to Ya. Vasiliev⁵⁹, they were treated to "a rich repast in accordance with local custom", and

⁵² Мелетий Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 84.

⁵³ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 74.

⁵⁴ Бронников К.И. Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 37.

⁵⁵ Мелетий. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 83.

⁵⁶ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 74.

⁵⁷ Сысоев И.С. Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 20об.

⁵⁸ Бронников К.И. Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 44.

⁵⁹ Васильев Я. Путешествие во Святой Град Иерусалим... Л. 2, Л. 19.

for the celebration of Easter, “a lavish meal was served”. Pilgrims generally offered detailed descriptions of the monastery’s refectory interiors and table settings. According to their reports, at the first meal the dishes were made of red copper, the cutlery was silver, and the table was crafted from white marble. Veshnyakov noted in particular that he and his companions had been served “vodka and aged strong wines in small silver ladles continuously”⁶⁰, while Sysoev⁶¹ emphasized that “grape wines had been served in small silver ladles without interruption”.

The descriptions of the monastic meals provided by pilgrim-writers are remarkably consistent. Veshnyakov observed⁶²: “dishes stood on snow-white marble tables without tablecloths”, and “all the vessels were made of red copper, tin-plated all around”. Sysoev⁶³ recorded: “on snow-white marble tables, without tablecloths, a sufficient amount of food was already laid out”, and “all the dishes were made of red copper, tin-plated all around”. Bronnikov⁶⁴ noted that meals had been eaten “on plates using silver spoons of Russian craftsmanship, with tablecloths and napkins brought at various times by Russian pilgrims”.

Liturgies were usually followed by a communal monastic meal, also described by the pilgrims: Veshnyakov⁶⁵ wrote that dishes “were arranged on all the flat roofs of the monastery and church on long and narrow tablecloths laid over carpet”; Sysoev noted that “on the flat roofs, food was set out on spacious white tablecloth”⁶⁶; Bronnikov⁶⁷ reported that dishes “were laid out on the monastery and church rooftops on mats and tablecloths”.

Ivan Veshnyakov, Sysoev, and Bronnikov, along with their companions, were served wheat bread, (boiled) eggs, fried eggs, cheese,

⁶⁰ *Вешняков И.И.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 75.

⁶¹ *Сысоев И.С.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 21.

⁶² *Вешняков И.И.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 74–75.

⁶³ *Сысоев И.С.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 21.

⁶⁴ *Бронников К.И.* Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 81.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Л. 136, 153.

⁶⁶ *Сысоев И.С.* Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 58 об.

⁶⁷ *Бронников К.И.* Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 160.

olives, fruits, “pilaf made from rice with butter”, “soup seasoned with aromatic herbs”, “mandja, a type of porridge made from wheat groats”, and sometimes “from rice, boiled with butter of wood (i.e., olive. – *Author*) oil and other seasonings”, “rice boiled with seasonings”, “leblebi, a type of pea” (a dish made from chickpeas. – *Author*), “fried eggs with butter”, lentils, and others.⁶⁸ According to Sysoev⁶⁹, “the Greeks also ate lamb”, while Veshnyakov noted⁷⁰ that “there was neither meat nor fish”.

Pilgrims were often offered places to sleep in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem or the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, located next to the Patriarchal Monastery. Some of them spent several nights in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Hieromonk Nikanor Moskvitin stayed⁷¹ in the “Patriarchal guesthouse”. Meletiy and his companion lodged in the Church of the Resurrection, above Golgotha, in one of the three cells adjacent to the monastic refectory, next to two other cells located⁷² near the “kitchen with a water cistern”.

In the main churches of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the pilgrim-writers usually slept on mattresses and cushions covered with carpets and blankets. The brothers Ivan and Vasily Veshnyakov wrote⁷³ that in the Church of the Resurrection, “the beds consisted of mattresses and cushions stuffed with cotton wool, covered with carpets”, and in the Church of the Nativity they slept⁷⁴ “on cotton-filled mattresses, covered with carpets”. Ilya Sysoev and Pyotr Khostov stated that in the Church of the Resurrection, “the beds consisted of cotton-filled mattresses and cushions, covered with carpets”⁷⁵, and in the Church of the Nativity they slept “on

⁶⁸ Якушев М.М. Путешествие русских паломников дворян братьев Вешняковых и крестьянина Кира Бронникова на Святую Землю в первой четверти XIX в. // Восток (Orient). 2014. № 5. С. 36–42.

⁶⁹ Сысоев И.С. Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 21.

⁷⁰ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 74.

⁷¹ Никанор. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 240.

⁷² Мелетий. Путешествие во Иерусалим. Л. 257.

⁷³ Вешняков И.И. Путевые записки во Святой Град Иерусалим. Л. 92.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Л. 118.

⁷⁵ Сысоев И.С. Путевые записки во Святой Град Божий Иерусалим. Л. 35.

cotton-filled mattresses, covered with carpets, with cushions and blankets”⁷⁶. Kir Bronnikov and Monk Timofey spent the night in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre “in a large guest cell, carpeted with mattresses and blankets”⁷⁷.

It should be emphasized that prior to the establishment of consular missions, the pilgrimage of most Russian subjects to the Holy Land had resembled a chaotic and disorganized movement of the impoverished and destitute. The prolonged and exhausting journey from the Russian Empire to Constantinople, the equally difficult and wearying trek from the Ottoman capital to Jerusalem, severe physical exertion, multi-day marches and travels, changes in climate zones, numerous stressors and emotional strain, unsanitary conditions, dehydration, malnutrition and hunger, issues with drinking water, poor adaptation to unfamiliar food⁷⁸, domestic, linguistic, and ethnic barriers, financial and bureaucratic challenges, as well as the homelessness and absence of rights faced by most Russian pilgrims in the Middle East, turned their pilgrimage into a genuine spiritual feat.

The establishment of a Russian consular institution in Jaffa was intended to provide pilgrims with comprehensive support and protect their rights⁷⁹.

The travel diaries of Russian pilgrim-writers are vivid gems of Russian pilgrimage literature from the late 18th to early 19th centuries. Although these works do not fully conform to the traditional genre conventions of the Old Russian *khozhdenie*, they retain independent historical, cultural and scholarly significance, anticipating the “Golden Age of Travel” in Russian literature, and forming part of the treasure trove of global pilgrimage literature.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Л. 51.

⁷⁷ *Бронников К.И.* Путешествие к Святым местам. Л. 47–48.

⁷⁸ *Кириллина С.А.* “Очарованные странники”: арабо-османский мир глазами российских паломников XVI–XVIII столетий. М., 2010. Р. 83.

⁷⁹ *Якушев М.М.* Из истории русского паломничества. Консульство в Яффе и русские паломники в 1820–1838 годах // Свободная мысль. № 1 (1620). 2011. Р. 173–184.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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‘Converting to the Thought, Ideals and Principles of the Christian Religion’: Educational Activities of Protestant Missionaries in North-West India (First Half of the 19th century)

Abstract


By the 1830s, Punjab, or the Land of Five Rivers, in the northwest of the South Asian subcontinent, remained out of the reach of Christian missionaries. With the establishment of the Ludhiana Protestant Mission by American Presbyterians in 1834, their engagement with the local population focused on three domains: preaching the Gospel; preparing, translating into local languages, printing, and distributing books, primarily the Bible; and providing education options through specially established schools. All the steps taken by the missionaries were described in detail in their annual reports; the missionaries (J. Lowrie, J. Newton, E. Wherry, and others) provided detailed accounts in their notes and memoirs related to the activities of the Ludhiana mission and other stations in Punjab and in the neighboring regions of North India. Based on these sources, the article analyzes educational aspects of the missionaries’ activities at the initial stage of their work in Punjab: issues of the students’ ethno-religious and social background, the combination of secular and religious subjects in missionary schools, and the attitude of Punjab’s ruler Ranjit Singh (1780–1839) to the educational activities of the first missionaries.

Keywords:

India, Punjab, Christianity, missionary activities, Protestantism, educational activities

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Northwestern India had remained outside the sphere of activity of Christian missionaries longer than any other region of the Indian subcontinent. They appeared there only in the first third of the 19th century. Most of Punjab (the Land of Five Rivers)¹ — the core of this region — was part of the possessions of the “Lion of Punjab/Lahore” — the powerful Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780–1839; reigned 1799–1839), and the British were able to fully annex it only in 1849. However, part of Punjab — the lands on the southern (left) bank of the Sutlej River — had come under British control as early as 1809, when a treaty had been signed with the Maharaja, under which, in exchange for territorial concessions, the British had promised not to interfere in the affairs of his state.

The British outpost on the left bank became the station in Ludhiana (Lodiana), where the headquarters of the Political Agent for the affairs of Punjab and the North-West frontier was located. This position was held from 1823 to 1840 by Claude Martin Wade

¹ **Punjab** (Persian *panj āb* — “five rivers”) is the region of the Indus and its five major tributaries — Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej.

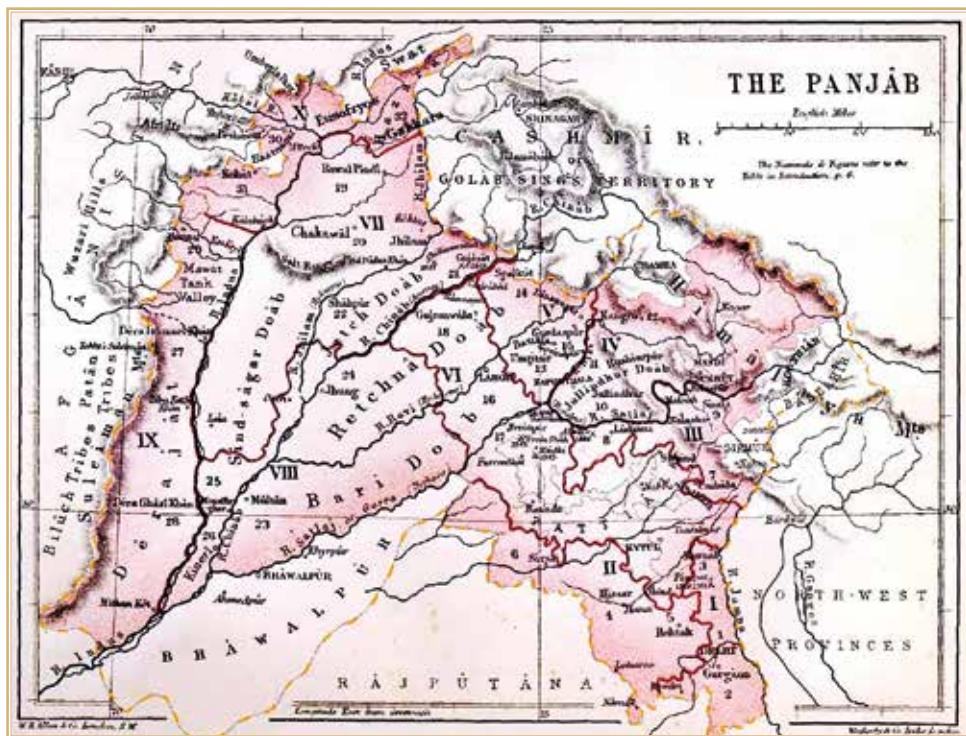
(1794–1861), who established good relations with Ranjit Singh. The British were primarily interested in solving military-strategic and trade issues; moreover, matters concerning the introduction and spread of Christianity in British India remained controversial at the turn of the 18th–19th centuries, and missionary activity was prohibited². However, the East India Company Act 1813 effectively allowed the proselytizing activities of Christian missions, and twenty years later, in 1833, further amendments to it fully opened the way for the evangelization of the natives by representatives of various denominations from both Great Britain and other countries. But by the early 1830s, Northwestern India still remained outside the attention of missionaries.

The first to reach there were American Protestants. Their activity in India began in 1812 in a number of cities on the western and eastern coasts of Hindustan, where the first representatives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had arrived; their movement toward the Land of Five Rivers began after the adoption of the aforementioned Act of 1833. The activity of American missionaries in South Asia and beyond was driven by the expansion of the educational trend within the Protestant movement of the early 19th century, as well as the rise of the “Second Great Awakening”, or “religious revival”, in the United States at the turn of the 18th–19th centuries, which led to the emergence of a number of Methodist and evangelical communities³.

Presbyterian missionaries John Cameron Lowrie (1808–1900) and William Reed (1802–1834) were the first to receive appointments to India from the American Western Foreign Mis-

² For more details, see Бочковская А.В. “Нести свет и избавлять от тьмы”: полемика по вопросу миссионерства в Индии (Великобритания, 1793–1813) // Христианство и традиционные ценности Южной и Восточной Азии: история и современность. М.: Ключ-С, 2021. С. 62–75.

³ On the religious movement in the United States from the 1790s to the 1840s known as the *Second Great Awakening*, see: Birdsall R.D. The Second Great Awakening and the New England Social Order // Church History, 1970. Vol. 39 (3). P. 345–364.



Punjab in 1880.

Pope G.U. Text-book of Indian History: Geographical Notes, Genealogical Tables, Examination Questions. London: W.H. Allen & Co, 1880. P. vii, 574

sionary Society⁴. In October 1833, they arrived in Calcutta, and a year later, in November 1834, Lowrie reached Punjab. It was the Land of Five Rivers – a “blank spot” on the map of Christian presence in India – that he identified as the target of the mission, which began its work in Ludhiana on the southern bank of the Sutlej⁵.

In 1835, missionaries James Wilson (1802–?) and John Newton (1810–1891) also arrived there. Wilson was soon sent to Allahabad in the neighboring Upper Provinces, where he headed another

⁴ Western Foreign Missionary Society – a branch of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; founded in 1813. John Lowrie’s mission was initially funded by this organization, and since 1837 – by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA.

⁵ On the activities of the Ludhiana Mission, see. *Бочковская А.В. “Восхождение утренней звезды”: американские пресвитериане в Панджабе (первая половина XIX в.) // Христианство и общество в странах Азии: история и современность. М.: Ключ-С, 2019. С. 82–90.*

American missionary station, while Newton continued his work in Ludhiana. After the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849, he founded a Presbyterian mission in Lahore, the capital of the former domains of Ranjit Singh; in total, John Newton spent 56 years in the Land of Five Rivers.

The religious landscape of the Land of Five Rivers differed from that of other regions of India: according to the 1881 census, just over half of the population — 51.4% — were Muslims, overwhelmingly Sunnis; 40.7% were Hindus; and 7.6% were Sikhs⁶. Followers of Islam dominated in the west and northwest of Punjab; Hindus — in the east, as well as in the northern mountainous regions; Sikhs mostly lived in the central part of the Land of Five Rivers (where Ludhiana was located), but there were also many Muslims and Hindus in that area.

In choosing Punjab — the “stronghold” of the Sikhs — missionaries took into account the prevailing view of Sikhs as people ‘more free from prejudice, from the influence of Brahmins, and from caste, than any other people in India’⁷. Defining them as ‘a distinct people, neither Mohammedans nor Pagans in their religion, though their manner of life differs but little from that of the pagan Hindus’⁸, Lowrie was initially convinced that he should begin his work specifically among the Sikhs, who at that time were unfamiliar with any Christian mission. However, in neither the annual reports on the mission’s work nor in his book *Two Years in Upper India* (1850) did he report much about Sikhs as a “flock”. They did not appear in

⁶ Report on the Census of the Panjáb Taken on the 17th of February 1881. Vol. I. Superintendent of Government Printing, 1883. P. 100–110. Historians of Punjab typically rely on religious statistics from the all-India Census of 1881 — the first to systematically account for religious affiliation. They assume that ‘the religious demographics and broad patterns of religious belief and practice [in Punjab] did not change very much between 1800 and 1881, even if some aspects of religious life did change’. See: Webster J.C.B. *A Social History of Christianity: North-west India since 1800*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018. P. 67.

⁷ Lowrie J.C. *Mission to Northern India* // *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle*. April 1934. P. 201.

⁸ Lowrie J.C. *Two Years in Upper India*. (By John C. Lowrie, one of the secretaries of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church.) New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1850. P. 45.

such a role in other missionary reports published in the following decades either.

The work of the first missionaries in Ludhiana proceeded in three main directions: preaching the Gospel; preparation, translation into local languages, printing, and distribution of books, primarily the Bible; education through specially established schools. All their actions were described in detail in the mission's annual reports; later, Lowrie and Newton gave detailed accounts in their notes and memoirs. These materials form the source base of the present article.

Education for “respectable natives” and orphans

Missionaries regarded educational activity — primarily aimed at the local elites — as an integral part of the evangelization of the population. As John Lowrie noted, through education it was possible to achieve real influence over the minds of people from the ‘influential classes, without awakening their religious prejudices, which were represented as peculiarly strong in provinces so lately brought under British rule.’⁹

At the same time, he pointed out that the close attention missionaries paid to this sphere would be important in establishing contacts with the officials of the East India Company in Northern India as ‘education was common ground for them and ourselves to stand on, until they could become acquainted with our views and plans of proceeding’.¹⁰

This was quite significant, since — let us reiterate — this was the first Protestant mission that planned to carry out activities in Northwestern India, and the Americans had to develop their working forms and methods on the fly in a foreign and unfamiliar region. For them, the “others” or the “foreigners” were not only the Indians/Punjabis, but also the English; in turn, the American missionaries were “foreign” to both.

⁹ Lowrie J.C. *Two Years in Upper India*. Op. cit. P. 49.

¹⁰ Ibid.

In Ludhiana, the first school with instruction in English had appeared even before John Lowrie's arrival. It had been organized 'under the auspices and generous support'¹¹ of Claude Martin Wade, and was supervised by Mr. Hodges — a clerk from his staff. Wade considered it important to create conditions for educating the children of the local Sikh elite and exiled Afghan rulers who had settled in Ludhiana and some other cities of Punjab as a result of internal conflicts, as well as during Ranjit Singh's conquest of Peshawar and Kashmir in 1818–1819. Therefore, he actively supported the educational activities of the American missionaries in "his" region and transferred the school to them immediately after Lowrie's arrival in Ludhiana. With his assistance, the mission received a convenient plot of land on the promising outskirts of the rapidly growing Ludhiana, and from 1837 the school continued its work there¹².

Lowrie noted that by the time of his arrival, in 1834, there were 14 to 16 boys in the school, mostly from prominent Afghan and Sikh families¹³; among them were children from the elite on the other side of the Sutlej as well — that is, from the domains of Ranjit Singh¹⁴. Teaching was initially carried out by a young instructor,

¹¹ Ibid. P. 229.

¹² In a letter dated December 1862, John Newton writes to Lowrie: 'You helped us to select a site for the Mission premises, where remains of some old brick kilns were still visible, on a small piece of land, which had been promised in 1834 by a native chief, for the use of the Mission. On his death, soon afterwards, without heirs, this land became subject to the disposal of the British authorities, and it was granted to the Mission by Captain Wade, Political Agent, early in the spring of 1835'. *Wherry E.M.* Our Missions in India 1834–1924. (By Rev. E.M. Wherry, M.A., D.D. Author of the Comprehensive Commentary on the Quran; Islam in India and the Far East; Islam in the Religion of the Turk; The Sinless Prophet of Islam. For Forty-Six Years a Missionary of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in India.) Boston, Massachusetts: The Stratford Company, 1926. P. 20, footnote.

¹³ *Lowrie J.C.* Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 134.

¹⁴ *Newton J.* Historical Sketch of the Lodianna Mission, From its beginning, in 1834, to the time of its fiftieth anniversary, in 1884 // Historical Sketches of the India Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Known as the Lodianna, the Farrukhabad, and the Kolhapur Missions; From the beginning of the work, in 1834, to the time of its fiftieth Anniversary, in 1884. Allahabad: Allahabad Mission Press, 1886. P. 27.



John Cameron Lowrie (1808-1900),
the first American Presbyterian missionary in India
<https://digital.history.pcusa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A8658>

Shahamat Ali, who had acquired some knowledge of the English language at the government college in Delhi¹⁵. According to the 1838 missionary report, during its first year, the Lodiana Mission School (as it became officially known) had 58 pupils, of whom 46 were Punjabis, including 28 from Ludhiana; two were Kashmiris, and the rest came from the areas southeast of Ludhiana¹⁶. More than half –33 students –were Muslims, 14 were Hindus, 5 were Sikhs, and another 6 referred to themselves as Christians¹⁷. The number of students varied depending on the season: it dropped to 40 during the hot months but later rose again with the return of former students and the arrival of new ones. This number –

¹⁵ Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 229.

¹⁶ [First] Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented May 1838. New York: Printed for the Board, 1838. P. 8.

¹⁷ Ibid.

about fifty students — remained practically unchanged over the decades. By the late 1840s, the school consistently had 45 boys and young men enrolled¹⁸, and in total, over the course of fifty years, no fewer than three thousand students passed through it¹⁹. However, against the backdrop of Punjab’s total population (approximately 17.5 million by the mid-19th century)²⁰, this was just a drop in the ocean.

The predominance of Muslims among the students, especially in the first decades of the school’s operation, was due both to the general religious makeup of the region and the following circumstance. The wives of the Ludhiana missionaries had established a private fund from which small monthly stipends were paid to those who wished to enter public service after their studies. These amounts had to be repaid later, which in the vast majority of cases was done, although the students were bound only by moral obligations — by a promise to reimburse the fund. Impoverished Kashmiri Muslims were particularly interested in such a career path for their sons and thus agreed to receive the stipend²¹. Later, Hindus and Sikhs began to follow their example, and the proportion of Muslims among the school’s students decreased somewhat, although it remained high.

From the very beginning, the Ludhiana school operated with two divisions: elementary and advanced classes. The curriculum offered by the missionaries was quite extensive. In the elementary classes, students studied Urdu in Latin script, practiced reading using English textbooks and books in Urdu (including, in particular, the New Testament and Aesop’s fables)²², writing, elements of grammar, and arithmetic. In the advanced classes,

¹⁸ *Lowrie J.C.* Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 231.

¹⁹ *Newton J.* Historical Sketch... Op. cit. P. 28.

²⁰ The first census of British Punjab (1855) reported a population of 17.6 million. About 3.5 million more lived in princely states still under local rule. See: *Krishan G.* Demography of the Punjab (1849–1947) // *Journal of Punjab Studies*. 2004. Vol. 11 (1). P. 77–79, 86.

²¹ *Wherry E.M.* Our Missions in India... Op. cit. P. 22.

²² Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. New York: Published for the Board, 1843. P. 15.

studies included reading in English, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, English history, Indian history, chemistry, political economy, surveying, physical geography, basics of Christianity, mental philosophy, logic, and the Bible; students also wrote translations and compositions²³. Admittedly, this was the ideal plan: in practice, no single class managed to master the entire program, since the student body was constantly changing.

In addition to Ludhiana, educational institutions soon appeared in two other settlements — Saharanpur and Subathu (Sabbathu), located in the Himalayan foothills. Like the missionary school in Ludhiana, they attracted the interest of the most “respectable natives”. In 1837, the school in Saharanpur had 40 students, most of whom attended classes daily, and at the mission in Subathu, 22 girls — daughters of Gurkha sepoys — came every day to be taught reading and sewing by the wife of James Wilson²⁴. Girls were always extremely few in these schools, since families were not interested in their education. Missionaries reported that Hindu parents perceived no benefit in female education, as they saw no positive examples or appropriate schools, and that the general influence of their social customs and their religion was directed not toward the elevation, but toward the degradation of the female sex²⁵. The same applied to wealthy Sikh and especially Muslim families.

Following Saharanpur and Subathu, schools were opened in Ambala and Jalandhar. All of these missionary educational institutions came to be called Anglo-vernacular: instruction was conducted in English as well as in Urdu or Hindi/Hindustani, and in addition, all schools taught Persian as one of the classical languages of India; in some, students also learned Arabic or Sanskrit²⁶.

²³ *Wherry E.M.* Our Missions in India... Op. cit. P. 22–23.

²⁴ [First] Annual Report... Op. cit. P. 9.

²⁵ The Foreign Missionary Chronicle: Containing the Proceedings of the Board of Foreign Missions and of the Board of Domestic Missions of the Presbyterian Church: and a General View of Other Benevolent Operations. January 1840. Vol. VIII. P. 158.

²⁶ *Newton J.* Historical Sketch... Op. cit. P. 28.

Over a period of a decade and a half, the number of students in these schools grew only slightly. By 1850, the statistics for schools under the supervision of the Ludhiana Mission were as follows²⁷:

Ludhiana	High (English) School	81 boys
	Persian School	100 "
	Gurmukhi School	45 "
	Orphan School	19 girls
Saharanpur	English School	33 boys
	Orphan School	6 "
Sabathu	English School	6 "
Ambala	English and Persian School	60 "
Jalandhar	English School	20 "
	Vernacular (Persian) School	60 "
In total		433 students

In addition to the English-language school, orphanages were established in Ludhiana in 1836, overseen by the wives of missionaries who had accompanied their husbands to assist John Lowrie. One housed and educated six boys, while the other was home to five girls. By 1837, the number of orphans had increased due to a severe famine in the neighboring region (the North-Western Provinces) which led to significant mortality. In response, large orphanages were established at various missionary stations, including Fatehgarh and Agra. Although Punjab was not significantly affected by the famine, a number of children who had lost their parents were transferred by magistrates of the North-Western Provinces to those Punjab-based missionaries willing to take them. Thus, in 1838, 30 boys arrived in Saharanpur from Agra and Mathura, and an orphanage was established at the

²⁷ Table presented in the 1850 missionary report.

^{The} Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented to the General Assembly in May 1850. New York: Published for the Board, 1850. P. 22.



Claude Martin Wade (1794-1861),
Political Agent for the Affairs of Punjab and the North-West Frontier
in 1832-1840.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/21239ef0-f322-0130-dc6e-58d385a7bbd0>

Saharanpur station. Two years later, the boys from Ludhiana were also relocated there. From 1847 onwards, it became a vocational school, where the boys were taught carpentry and horticulture²⁸. In these orphanages, labor was a mandatory part of the curriculum, and it was expected to be both practically useful and, ideally, profitable²⁹.

²⁸ Newton J. Historical Sketch... Op. cit. P. 34.

²⁹ In the Fatehgarh orphanage, which housed 110 children (50 girls and 60 boys) in 1839, girls, in addition to schoolwork, spun wool and cotton yarn. Boys were initially engaged in weaving white cotton cloth used to sew their clothes, but the school organizers later realized it was cheaper to buy fabric at local markets. Instead, the boys were trained in carpet weaving. For this purpose, several craftsmen from Mirzapur — a carpet weaving center in North India near Allahabad — were brought to Fatehgarh to remain there until the boys had fully mastered the trade. See: *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle: Containing the Proceedings of the Board of Foreign Missions and of the Board of Domestic Missions of the Presbyterian Church: and a General View of Other Benevolent Operations*. January 1840. Vol. VIII. P. 117.

The girls in the Ludhiana orphanage were taught to read and write in Urdu (using the Latin script), as well as to sew and do needlework. On Sundays, they received Bible instruction. They also attended daily services conducted in Hindustani and studied the catechism in the same language. As stated in the 1838 missionary report, ‘the progress of some is quite respectable, but others appear to be too dull to learn’³⁰. The number of female wards gradually increased to 40. Later, in 1871, this orphanage was merged with the Christian Girls Boarding School at Dehra³¹.

John Newton noted that the children in the Ludhiana and Saharanpur orphanages were primarily from Hindu or Muslim families. He assessed the outcomes of missionary work in this way: ‘... they were educated in the faith of Christianity; and a goodly number have become Church members. Some, it is true, have apostatized, and become Mahomedans; and some have become openly wicked, without renouncing the Christian name. Such have brought great disgrace on themselves, and injured the cause of Christ. Still the number, from both institutions, who have filled important places in the Church, or who have, at least, maintained an ordinarily fair Christian character, is sufficient to justify the money and time bestowed on them, — apart from the consideration that to take in children, when deprived of parental care, and to nourish them till they are able to provide for themselves, is an act of charity demanded of us as followers of Christ.’³²

By mentioning “important places in the Church”, Newton referred to the fact that at least six former wards of the Saharanpur orphanage were later ordained and continued their work with the Presbyterians in Punjab, while another ten became catechists or teachers in missionary schools. Moreover, the children of some of these individuals followed in their parents’ footsteps³³. Yet clearly, these numbers cannot be considered impressive, even given the

³⁰ [First] Annual Report... Op. cit. P. 9.

³¹ *Newton J. Historical Sketch...* Op. cit. P. 35.

³² *Newton J. Historical Sketch...* Op. cit. P. 36.

³³ *Ibid.*

very limited total number of orphans in Punjab's missionary institutions. Still less significant were the results of the missionary schools' attempts to promote engagement with Christian ideas.

The secular and the religious in missionary education

When discussing the issue of education for the natives with John Lowrie and his colleagues, British officials familiar with the Punjab region reacted with caution, or even disapproval, toward the integration of religious instruction with secular education. They emphasized that the situation in that part of India and the neighboring Upper Provinces differed significantly from Bengal, where religious schools already attracted a considerable number of young people from the upper castes³⁴. In the Upper Provinces and Punjab, it was believed, the inhabitants were more independent and difficult to govern, and thus, overly assertive religious initiatives could provoke hostility toward the British authorities and incite religious tensions. Nonetheless, after consulting with Claude Martin Wade, the American missionaries attempted to discreetly introduce religious education into their schools³⁵. Lowrie later recalled: 'No professions of our object were ostentatiously made, but on the other hand no concealment of our views was attempted, nor was there any withholding of religious instruction. No alarm was awakened among either Hindus, Mussulmans, or Sikhs; and the school, after a fair trial, was considered a successful effort.'³⁶

³⁴ Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 139.

³⁵ Of his support for the missionaries' efforts, Lowrie wrote: 'I esteemed myself highly fortunate in having to consult with a gentleman of such enlarged and correct views, and of such general zeal for the good of the natives, as were evinced by the Political Agent at Lodiana. With many other men it might have been impracticable for me to have had any connection with the English school at that place, as I could not consent to take the responsible charge of an institution from which our holy religion was to be utterly excluded. After mature reflection, the school was fully placed under my control, and its studies were directed by a settled plan.' Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 139-140.

³⁶ Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 140.

Despite being a missionary school, Ludhiana's institution saw almost no conversions among its students. Nearly fifty years later, John Newton admitted: 'We can hardly count any of them as converts to Christ; though very many have seemed to be *almost* Christians; and no doubt the Christian influence of the school, through its pupils, has been felt far and wide throughout the Punjab. Of some, very high hopes have at times been entertained; but instead of taking the final step into the kingdom, they have gone back; or, as is the case with some, they have continued to linger at the door almost saved, yet almost certain to be lost.³⁷

Clearly, one contributing factor was the broad curriculum offered in Punjab's missionary schools. The early missionaries soon realized that they could not attract students willing to study solely for the sake of learning the Bible. Therefore, to continue pursuing their religious goals, they also began introducing secular subjects.³⁸

In missionary schools at other Punjab stations, the results of Christianization were similar to those in Ludhiana, though attitudes toward religious instruction varied. In Saharanpur, for instance, missionaries had initially avoided Christian themes. But once the school became well-established, they began each day with Bible readings and prayers, at which point the enrollment virtually disappeared, although it was later fully restored³⁹. Conversely, the same religious ritual in Jalandhar provoked no negative reaction, and the Jalandhar school enjoyed considerable popularity⁴⁰.

The Anglo-vernacular schools came to offer a level of education sufficient for university admission, but only a handful of graduates were actually interested in continuing their studies⁴¹. From the outset, American Presbyterians faced the reality that native students viewed education in missionary schools primarily as a stepping stone to prestigious government employment and financial secu-

³⁷ Newton J. Historical Sketch... Op. cit. P. 28.

³⁸ Report of the Punjab Missionary Conference Held at Lahore In December and January, 1862–63. Lodiana: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1863. P. 47.

³⁹ Newton J. Historical Sketch... Op. cit. P. 28–29.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. P. 30.

rity —nothing more. The Ludhiana Mission report of 1841, when the middle school had around 70 students (only 16 of whom were in the upper grades), stated that the teachers feared ‘this will continue to be the case for many years to come. The only qualifications necessary for a young man, in order to obtain employment, are ability to write a good hand, and to read well enough to copy. The demand for those possessing such qualifications is so great that we cannot expect to retain them in our schools until that demand is in some measure supplied. It is a cause of great discouragement to us to think that we must be at the labour of teaching so many the mere elements of education, while we can retain none long enough to make them scholars. As an illustration of this remark, it may be stated that only two classes have studied any thing in Mathematics higher than Arithmetic, and none have finished the course prescribed, although the school has been in operation nearly seven years, and all the elder scholars have left the school.’⁴²

For the missionaries, this situation was not only a “great discouragement” but also a serious obstacle to their evangelical work. They naturally began to ask themselves: ‘Could it be possible that their lives were to be spent merely to provide *babus* (office clerks) to supply the needs of the Government? Was a service of this sort compatible with their calling as missionaries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? What possible good could proceed from a merely secular education of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muhammadans, thereby fitting them to become powerful antagonists of the Christian faith?’⁴³

Similar concerns regarding the purely secular education were voiced by John Lowrie, after his return from India: ‘The English language contains, with much that is evil, all that is good. Studying it, thousands of influential native youth will abandon the religion of their fathers, perceiving that it is altogether irreconcilable with the simplest rudiments of correct knowledge. But will they become Christians? Not necessarily. A large part of the in-

⁴² The Foreign Missionary Chronicle: Containing the Proceedings of the Board of Foreign Missions and of the Board of Domestic Missions of the Presbyterian Church: and a General View of Other Benevolent Operations. January 1842. Vol. X. P. 182.

⁴³ *Wherry E.M.* Our Missions in India... Op. cit. P. 23.

fluence that reaches the Hindu mind through the medium of our language has never received a Christian baptism. Many of these English ideas are engaged in demolishing the Hindu temple, but they do not build up the Christian church. Left to the guidance of their own depraved hearts, without any light from heaven to direct their minds, these Hindu English readers will become infidels, believers in no religion at all. Many of the natives, especially in the cities where Europeans reside, and natives whose English education gives them great influence with their countrymen, are now of this character'.⁴⁴

These reflections were shared by the first American missionaries with their more experienced colleagues in Calcutta, particularly with the renowned Scottish missionary Alexander Duff (1806–1878), who strongly supported and promoted English-language education. As a result, despite considerable doubts, the Presbyterians continued their educational work, idealistically viewing it 'as a principal means of converting India's people to the thought, ideals and principles of the Christian religion'.⁴⁵

“Lion of the Punjab”: The interest in the Ludhiana school on the left bank of the Sutlej

The educational activities of the missionaries attracted the attention of the Punjabi elite on both sides of the Sutlej. It is no coincidence that shortly after arriving in the Punjab region, Lowrie received an invitation from Maharaja Ranjit Singh to visit his capital, Lahore. The “Lion of the Punjab” had heard about the school recently established in Ludhiana and wished to learn more about it firsthand. Moreover, he proposed that Lowrie spend half the year in Lahore to educate the young sons of titled Sikh families⁴⁶. This came as no surprise: being, as Lowrie described him, ‘a man of superior mind, and

⁴⁴ Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 269–270.

⁴⁵ Wherry E.M. Our Missions in India... Op. cit. P. 23.

⁴⁶ Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 269–270.

of no ordinary character',⁴⁷ Ranjit Singh showed an active interest in a wide range of activities and regularly employed Europeans in his service. At the time of Lowrie's visit, his court already included three or four Englishmen, a similar number of Frenchmen, and one American⁴⁸.

John Lowrie replied with considerable regret that he had to decline the opportunity to reside in the 'Delhi of the Punjab'⁴⁹ for an extended period. Such a stay would have presented 'a fine prospect of obtaining a standing and influence, which would have been invaluable to a missionary'⁵⁰, but his health — undermined by a bout of malaria — did not allow him to remain in the hot lowland climate for long. John Newton, however, identified a different cause for the failure of the negotiations: 'the missionary principle of teaching the Gospel in connection with literature and science, was unacceptable to the Maharajah'⁵¹.

Upon arriving in Lahore, Lowrie first had several audiences with Ranjit Singh's close advisors — the minister (*fakir*) Nur-ud-din and his brother Aziz-ud-din, the chief *fakir* at the Maharaja's court. They cautiously inquired about Lowrie's missionary activities, focusing especially on the school. Lowrie recalls that Nur-ud-din skillfully raised the topic of the English school, asking how Lowrie, knowing so little of the local language, could teach English to the natives; and then — how he would proceed if the students wanted to study different subjects, and who would decide the matter. Lowrie's answers seemed to satisfy him and prompted the next

⁴⁷ Ibid. P. 192.

⁴⁸ Ibid. P. 162. See also: Демичев К.А. Опыт неуслышанных: круг общения и особенности социального взаимодействия христиан в Панджабе в первой половине XIX в. // Христианство и духовная культура в Южной и Восточной Азии: история и современность. М.: Ключ-С, 2025. С. 35–48.

⁴⁹ Thus Lowrie referred to Lahore, which impressed him with its vast number of ruins of palaces, tombs, mosques, and temples. Their grandeur and abundance reminded him of Delhi — the northern Indian capital, which by the 1830s remained the residence of the Mughal ruler, retaining nominal power, but clearly in decline. See: Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 164.

⁵⁰ Lowrie J.C. Two Years in Upper India... Op. cit. P. 143.

⁵¹ Newton J. Historical Sketch... Op. cit. P. 27.

question, which was the main purpose of the long conversation, though he posed it as if it were of little importance: “If a Government established a school, who should decide on the branches to be taught?” I [Lowrie — A.B.] answered, “The Government, certainly.” This was “very good,” he thought. I took care to add, however, that if a Government should establish a school, it would still be optional with persons proposing to take charge of its instruction, to do so or not, as they might approve or disapprove of its plan, to which he assented. The whole conversation was as abstract as if we had been sitting somewhere in the region of the north star; but its bearing on the points of interest here on the earth, and at Labor, is sufficiently obvious.⁵²

At the conclusion of the audience, Lowrie presented Ranjit Singh with an English-language Bible and a copy of the Pentateuch in Punjabi printed in the Gurmukhi script by the Serampore Mission Press⁵³. Clearly, the meeting left a favorable impression on the Maharaja and his entourage, as evidenced by the lavish gifts with which Lowrie returned to Ludhiana. The value of these gifts was recorded in the mission’s financial ledger under the section for income⁵⁴.

The visit was important for Lowrie not only because of the high-level contacts it afforded but also because he sought to assess literacy levels in Ranjit Singh’s domains with a view to future missionary expansion. He concluded that the situation on the left bank of the Sutlej was little different from that in the British-controlled territories, noting that scarcely one in a hundred of the Maharaja’s subjects could read⁵⁵. Of those who were literate, approximately 80% read only in Persian. These figures most likely referred to

⁵² Lowrie J.C. *Two Years in Upper India...* Op. cit. P. 165.

⁵³ The mission of the Baptist Missionary Society, founded in 1800 in Serampore (Bengal), was the first organization established by Christian missionaries. It contributed significantly to the study of local languages and the translation and publication of the Bible and other religious texts in vernaculars, including Punjabi. The Ludhiana Mission later continued this work and published the Bible and other texts in its own translations.

⁵⁴ Wherry E.M. *Our Missions in India...* Op. cit. P. 17.

⁵⁵ Lowrie J.C. *Two Years in Upper India...* Op. cit. P. 189.

Ranjit Singh's immediate circle, as Persian had been the language of the elite in Punjab since the medieval period. Lowrie also noted that some Sikhs could read Gurmukhi (i.e., Punjabi), and that a few Kashmiris also read Persian. He had no definite information on whether they could read in the Kashmiri language. He observed that very few schools existed in that part of Punjab, and those that did had virtually no appropriate books; the few texts available were unsuitable for instruction. In Muslim schools, senior students were taught to recite the Qur'an in Arabic, without any explanation of its meaning.

On the whole, based on his encounters with residents of the other side of the Sutlej, John Lowrie concluded that the large population of the Punjab was in no way inferior – either physically or intellectually – to any of the Indian peoples he had encountered, and was, in fact, ‘far superior to the great mass of Hindus, being energetic, inquisitive, and sagacious’⁵⁶. This was a source of great potential that missionaries had yet to fully tap, although access to the Maharaja's territories was, at that stage, still closed to them. Nevertheless, Lowrie, like many others, foresaw that ‘the moment Ranjit dies, it is highly probable that all this region of country will be in confusion, and a dozen of chiefs will declare themselves independent. Perhaps such a state of things will then follow as will bring the Panjab under British protection, and make the Indus, instead of the Sutlej, the frontier line.’⁵⁷

This is precisely what transpired: following the death of the “Lion of the Punjab” in 1839, his weak successors failed to maintain control over the left bank of the Sutlej River. After two Anglo-Sikh wars (1845–1846 and 1848–1849), the entire Punjab region was formally annexed by the British. The missionaries immediately expanded their field of activity: as early as November 1849, John Newton, together with his colleague Charles Forman (1821–1894) and six other missionaries, proceeded to Lahore, where they established a new mission station and school. In 1864, a Christian College was

⁵⁶ Ibid. P. 198.

⁵⁷ Ibid. P. 193.

founded in Lahore, which, from 1894 onward, bore the name of its founder Forman⁵⁸. As a result of the rapid expansion of missionary efforts, within just six to seven years a network of mission outposts emerged across the plains of the North-Western and Northern India, along the Himalayan foothills. This network included American and Scottish Presbyterian missions, as well as the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the Ludhiana Mission remaining the central hub of these activities.

However, Presbyterian educational efforts in the Punjab and neighboring regions remained almost exclusively directed toward the native elite. Although the missionaries did establish a limited number of elementary schools for the poor, where instruction was conducted in local languages, they saw little value in such endeavors. In most cases, pupils left school shortly after enrollment and did not return. A report from 1840, for instance, noted that as soon as the students reached the age when they could carry a small bundle on their heads or scare birds from the grain fields, their parents began to demand their labor⁵⁹. Among the lower social strata — more precisely, the lower castes — the missionaries began working intensively only in the 1870s and 1880s. This shift gradually led to a more visible, though still far from widespread, dissemination of Christian ideas in Punjab. In the earlier period, from the 1830s through the 1850s, their work had produced only limited, individual results: according to the 1881 census, Christians accounted for just 0.1% of the population of Punjab — approximately 20,000 individuals — while the total population of the region at the time was around 21 million⁶⁰.

Overall, the principal outcome of the missionary schools in Punjab was not an increase in the number of converts to Christianity. Rather, as John Newton observed, these institutions raised

⁵⁸ Forman Christian College, still under the management of the Presbyterian Church, remains one of the most prestigious liberal arts universities in modern Pakistan.

⁵⁹ The Foreign Missionary Chronicle: Containing the Proceedings of the Board of Foreign Missions and of the Board of Domestic Missions of the Presbyterian Church: and a General View of Other Benevolent Operations. January 1840. Vol. VIII. P. 158.

⁶⁰ *Krishan G. Op. cit.* P. 79.

up ‘thousands of influential men who entertain a life-long-respect, and even friendship, for the missionaries; and most of them look favorably on Christianity, as a religion which, if not exclusively a religion from God, is at least better than the other religions of the country.’⁶¹ Newton’s claim regarding the superiority of Christianity was likely an overstatement. Nevertheless, it is beyond doubt that the early missionary schools contributed to the development of a positive attitude among the Punjabi elite toward religious outsiders – those considered “foreign”, “other”, or just “different”.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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⁶¹ Newton J. Historical Sketch... Op. cit. P. 31.

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Catholic Unia in the Antiochian Church in the Second Half of the 19th Century: A Regional Approach

Abstract

One of the dramatic episodes in the life of the Antiochian Church in the 18th–19th centuries, traditionally attracting scholarly attention both in Russian and international historiography, is the issue of the Catholic Unia. Without delving into the well-studied questions of the formation of the Uniate community, the author seeks to go beyond the myth of total Greek dominance as the cause of the schism. Drawing extensively on archival materials (Archive of foreign policy of the Russian empire, State Archive of the Russian Federation, Russian State Historical Archive, Archive of orientalist of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences), the article reconsiders the traditionally passive portrayal of the Christian community as merely the object of proselytizing efforts by missionaries. By examining numerous documented conversions from Orthodoxy and back over a span of fifty years, the article aims to test both regional and national approaches. The main conclusion is that the dominant reason for leaving Orthodoxy was the internal struggle among the well-established socio-cultural and economic regions and the related groups of the Christian elite, for whom alternative forms of conflict resolution were unavailable. The author emphasizes the long-term historical development of this phenomenon. Furthermore, the research shifts its focus from the external causes of the genesis of the Uniate movement to the internal aspects of the devel-

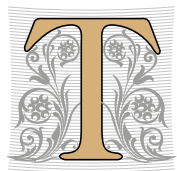
opment of the Antiochian Church in the 19th century. Paradoxically, this leads to a different interpretation of Russia's role — one equally applicable to France, England, Germany, or the USA — during this period. External factors, while significant, played only a supportive role against the backdrop of the society's internal development.

Keywords:

Patriarchate of Antioch, the Orthodox Arabs, Russia and the Orthodox East, Syria, Lebanon, Melkites, Uniates

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The history of the Catholic Unia in the Antiochian Church, which marked its tricentennial in 2024, remains one of the most actively studied topics among scholars of modern Middle Eastern Christianity. In addition to material factors¹ and cultural-religious motivations — most notably missionary activity, including among women² — the dominant explanatory model for the success of the Uniate movement has long rested on the notion of Greek *xenocracy* within the

¹ See: *Haddad R.* On Melkite Passage to the Unia: the Case of Patriarch Cyril al-Za'im (1672– 1720), in *B. Braude, B. Lewis* (eds.) *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, New York: Holmes & Meier Publ. Vol. 2. P. 67–90. *Haddad R.* *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: An Interpretation*. Princeton, 1970.

² See: *Heyberger B.* *Les Chretiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la reforme catholique*. Rome, 1994.

Antiochian Church during the Ottoman period³. Significant contributions to overcoming this historiographical framework have been made by C.-M. Walbiner and K.A. Panchenko⁴ in both Western European and Russian scholarship.

Without disregarding the multiplicity of factors that gave rise to the Unia, a fruitful line of inquiry appears to be the regional approach, which seeks to understand the development of the Uniate movement within the Antiochian Church as a phenomenon embedded in the *longue durée*.

One of the prevailing interpretations of the Unia's origins in contemporary historiography is the concept of regional rivalry between the major centers of 18th-century Orthodox Syria — Aleppo and Damascus — as well as between the provincial city of Damascus and the imperial capital, Constantinople. According to Thomas Philipp, if Arab Christians in Aleppo and Damascus embraced Catholicism, it was primarily a symbolic expression of their demand for local communal autonomy, aligned with their recently attained socio-economic status. Local autonomy, Philipp argues, was a key factor in the formation of the Greek Catholic community⁵. This concept, initially advanced by Philipp, has been substantially supported by K.A. Panchenko, who noted that it “does not contradict the obvious absence of national consciousness among the 18th-century Christians of Syria”⁶ while also helping to explain the support shown by Aleppines in 1726 for the Orthodox Greek

³ See: Лебедев А.П. История Греко-Восточной церкви под властью турок: От падения Константинополя (в 1453 г.) до настоящего времени. СПб.: Изд-во Олега Абышко, 2012. Лисовой Н.Н. Русское духовное и политическое присутствие в Святой земле и на Ближнем Востоке в XIX — начале XX в. М., 2006.

⁴ See: Walbiner C.-M. Bishops and Metropolitans of the Antiochean Patriarchate in the 17th Century // ARAM. №9–10 (1997–1998). P. 577–587. Walbiner C.-M. The split of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (1724) and the Emergence of a New Identity in the Bilad al-Sham as Reflected by some Melkite Historians of the 18th and 20th Centuries // Chronos. 2003. №7. P. 9–36 Панченко К.А. Ближневосточное Православие под османским владычеством. Первые три столетия. 1516–1831. М., 2012. С. 423–472.

⁵ Philipp T. Syrians in Egypt: 1725–1975. Stuttgart, 1985. P. 19.

⁶ Панченко К.А. Ближневосточное Православие под османским владычеством. Первые три столетия. 1516–1831. М., 2012. С. 470.

Sylvester. Agreeing with the interpretations of both Philipp and B. Masters⁷, Panchenko highlights the historical paradox that “the most pro-Catholic city in Syria willingly accepted a Greek Patriarch appointed by the Phanar. Once again, the same regional rivalry between Syria’s two major urban centers came into play: Aleppines refused to submit to a Patriarch from Damascus, elected by the Damascenes”⁸. By the end of the 19th century, the Russian Consul General in Beirut, K.D. Petkovich,⁹ offered a somewhat different interpretation that nonetheless aligned with the same regionalist model of the Unia’s genesis. In 1889, he reported that “the present Uniate Church in Syria originated [...] due to Patriarch Athanasius of Antioch’s desire to relocate from Damascus to Aleppo and appoint Metropolitan Gerasimos¹⁰ of that city as his vicar in Damascus. [...] At that time, the Aleppo [...] diocese was considered the wealthiest and most prosperous in Syria”¹¹.

A.E. Krymsky, drawing on the *Concise History of the Bishops Elevated to the High Office of the City of Beirut*, also reinforced the

⁷ Masters argues that as an alternative to the claim that the schism was the result of ethnic tensions, we should remember that the antagonism had a distinctly regional character. Although there were still supporters of the Catholics among the laity and clergy in Damascus, they remained a minority among the city’s Christians, at least until the twentieth century. *Masters B. Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World. The Roots of Sectarianism*. Cambridge, 2001. P. 92.

⁸ Панченко К.А. Ближневосточное Православие... С. 446.

⁹ Konstantin D. Petkovich (1827–1897) — Russian Consul General in Beirut from 1869 to 1896.

¹⁰ “It should be noted that, according to authoritative opinion, the story about Gerasimos is rather marginal within the larger context of the formation of the Catholic Unia. Even Arab authors of the 18th century did not assign any special role to this person. Catholic propaganda in Syria had begun long before, and in various cities — by the time Gerasimos appeared on the historical stage, a strong pro-Catholic lobby already existed in the Church of Antioch. It is more likely that the agenda relevant to late-19th-century Beirut was retrojected: it is curious why the dragomans of the Beirut consulate attributed such importance to Gerasimos. Perhaps they were skimming Trad’s chronicle (through which A. E. Krymsky later gained access to the text?), but overlooked most of it — they extracted the Gerasimos episode and presented it to K. D. Petkovich in a convenient form”. / From personal correspondence with K.A. Panchenko. 21.06.2022.

¹¹ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (АВПРИ). Ф. 180 Оп. 517/2. Д. 1337. ЛЛ. 77–77 об.

regionalist paradigm (alongside a nationalist interpretation): “In 1724, Sylvester, a Holy Sepulchre monk appointed to the Antiochian patriarchate by the Constantinopolitan Synod, arrived in Syria and, without ceremony, decided that it was more advantageous to live not in Damascus but in Aleppo, where the Orthodox flock was wealthy. Through his excessive extortion, despotism (he would beat and torture Arab clergy), and attempts to exclude Arabs from church offices while installing his predatory and debauched Greeks, Sylvester enraged the people of Aleppo to the point that they attacked him in a garden, and the Greek Patriarch escaped only by swimming across a river”¹².

Philipp’s methodological approach to the genesis of the Unia in 1724 deserves attention. To answer this question, he proposes examining the socio-economic development of the communities (of Damascus and Aleppo. — *Author*) during the century preceding the formation of the Uniate community, as well as the new economic opportunities provided by the early 18th-century French commercial presence¹³. Though Philipp does not explicitly use the term in this context, his approach closely parallels Fernand Braudel’s idea of the *long-term trend* (*trend séculaire*). In our view, this research strategy, with some modifications, also proves productive for later periods¹⁴.

While the rivalry between Aleppo and Damascus, so salient in the 18th and early 19th centuries, gradually faded¹⁵ following Aleppo’s decline, regional competition retained its significance. From the mid-19th century onward, Beirut (and to a lesser extent, Tripoli) emerged as a new center of gravity. The migration of Christians from inland regions to coastal cities under the protection of European consulates — particularly accelerated after

¹² Крымский А.Е. История новой арабской литературы. М., 1971. С. 118.

¹³ Philipp T. Syrians... P. 16.

¹⁴ The scholarly focus is uneven — most studies concentrate on the early phase of the Uniate movement. The 19th century has been much less examined, though conversions remained among the era’s most sensitive issues.

¹⁵ In 1822 the city was devastated by an earthquake; in 1827 by plague; in 1832 by cholera —leading to a population decline of more than four-fold.



View of Beirut. Artist Jules Coignet.
1844. *Metropolitan Museum*

the Damascus Massacre of 1860 — led to a more than tenfold increase in Beirut's population between 1830 and 1900¹⁶. In 1910, Russian diplomat N.V. Kokhmansky wrote: "Beirut is the largest city in Syria¹⁷, serving as its main port and geographical center. All inland trade passes through Beirut to the key parts of Lebanon, Damascus, and, recently, Aleppo, following the construction of the railway"¹⁸. A century and a half after the beginning of the Uniate schism, regional rivalry continued to fuel conflict within the Antiochian Patriarchate. The difference, however, was that by the latter half of the 19th century, Damascus had found itself competing for primacy not with Aleppo, but with a new center (Beirut) and in some cases, with the entire Patriarchate.

¹⁶ Up to 120,000 by the outbreak of World War I. (*Kassir S. Beirut*. London, 2010. P. 124.)

¹⁷ While the entire vilayet had 533,000 inhabitants in 1895, the capital alone exceeded 100,000.

¹⁸ Archive of Orientalists at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (АВ ИВР РАН). Ф.120. Оп. 1. Д, 178. Л. 2 об.

Regionalism as a source of conflict: Damascus versus the Antiochian Patriarchate

To grasp the overall framework of authority within the Antiochian Church, several observations are necessary regarding the limits of patriarchal power in this local church. The authority of the Antiochian Patriarch did not resemble that of an absolute monarch. As noted in a 1957 report from the head of a Moscow Patriarchate delegation to Patriarch Alexy I (Simansky): “The internal ecclesiastical life of the Antiochian Patriarchate is highly complex. This complexity is exacerbated by the absence of centralized spiritual authority in the person of the Patriarch. In essence, the Antiochian Patriarch is the ruling bishop of the Damascus diocese. [...] In each metropolis, the Metropolitan acts as the full administrator, operating according to his own judgment and without seeking sanction from the Patriarch”¹⁹. The delegate’s observation was echoed by Archpriest Boris Davydov: “The condition of the Antiochian Church is most unenviable. Patriarchal directives are ignored, and each Metropolitan sees himself as an independent and autonomous authority”²⁰. These assessments are credible. The patriarchal administration — already largely confined to the bounds of the Damascus diocese — was further constrained by the existence of a diocesan council responsible for managing financial and economic affairs²¹.

While these characterizations applied to the mid-20th century, they were even more accurate for the 19th century, when the head of the Church could rule for decades without convening a synod. The Patriarch exercised limited control over the metropolises and struggled to maintain authority over Damascus itself.

Thus, regionalism as a source of conflict manifested itself first and foremost in the Patriarch’s own seat — Damascus. Paradoxically, the capital region set the tone for separatist aspirations. The

¹⁹ State Archive of the Russian Federation (ГА РФ). Ф. Р-6991. Оп. 2. Д. 212. Л. 54.

²⁰ ГА РФ. Ф. Р-6991. Оп. 2. Д. 212. Л. 40.

²¹ Ibid. Л. 24.

Damascus lay community demanded independence from the central authority of the Patriarchate (represented by the head of the Church and the bishops of the Synod) and sought to enshrine its own preferential — primarily financial — rights. In this context, T.Yu. Kobishchanov's observation is particularly apt: "It would be fundamentally incorrect to view the laity of Middle Eastern churches as a passive mass of believers wholly dependent on their spiritual shepherds"²².

The first act in the Damascus community and its notables' struggle for its privileges occurred in 1850 following the death of Patriarch Methodius (1823–1850) on June 24. The ruling hierarchs of the Antiochian Church, representing the Patriarchate as a whole, opposed the ambitions of the Damascus elite. As N.N. Demerik reported to the Russian embassy in Constantinople in 1885: "Among the notable laymen of Damascus, as well as the Arab priests of the Damascus parish, strong opposition arose to the candidacies of local Bishops and their attempt to usurp the exclusive right to patriarchal elections, excluding community participation. Matters escalated to the point where Damascus elders appealed directly to the Ecumenical Throne, requesting the appointment of former Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory to the Antiochian See — or, failing that, another member of the Constantinopolitan Church at its discretion"²³ In response, five bishops of the See elected the Metropolitan of Beirut, Hierotheos, as their candidate and reported this to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for ratification by the Ottoman authorities. Demerik wrote: "The conflict threatened to bring serious harm to local Orthodoxy, but its escalation was averted by a circular letter from the Ecumenical Patriarch, who called both sides to peace and reconciliation, suggesting that the election be referred to the Constantinopolitan Synod and citing the procedure established in 1766 during the height of the Alpine Unia. The patriarchal encyclical had a calming effect, and

²² *Кобищанов Т.Ю.* Христианские общины в арабо-османском мире (XVII — первая треть XIX в.) М., 2003. С. 40.

²³ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1333. Л. 65–65 об.

the rival parties agreed on the Constantinopolitan candidate”²⁴.

Notably, while ceding the autocephalous rights of the Antiochian Church to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Damascus community imposed specific conditions: “The future Patriarch shall not retain for his own use even the smallest portion of alms and charitable donations given for the benefit of churches, schools, and the poor of the Antiochian flock from Russia and other countries, nor from revenues assigned to the Antiochian See. These funds must be distributed through a specially designated *epitropia* (board of trustees), with the knowledge of certain clergy and elders of the city, as is proper”²⁵. Clearly, under this scheme, all patriarchal revenues were to be redirected to the Damascus *epitropia*. In this way, the Damascus elders positioned themselves as the true custodians of the Antiochian Patriarchate, bargaining for economic privileges from the Phanar in exchange for the illusion of autocephalous rights.

The Patriarch elected under such circumstances in 1850 — Hierotheos (1850–1885) — faced the ambitions of the Damascus community again in 1874.

That July, the Damascus lay council demanded he pay 300,000 piastres and relinquish the exclusive ownership of a house in Beirut that had been purchased using Ottoman compensation funds following the Massacre of 1860²⁶. It was further proposed that interest income from this sum be used solely for the needs of Damascus Orthodox Christians²⁷. Soon after, the financial demands rose by another 100,000 piastres, and dissatisfied members began attending Protestant services. In the autumn of 1874, three Arab metropolitans²⁸ — Gabriel (Shatila) of Beirut, Sophronius (Najjar)

²⁴ АВПРИ Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1333. Л. 65–65 об.

²⁵ Ibid. Оп. 517/1. Д. 743. Л. 142 об. –143.

²⁶ The massacre of Christians in Damascus, 9–18 July 1860. (See: Кобищанов Т.Ю. Дамасская резня // Православная энциклопедия. М., 2006. Т. 13. С. 699–700).

²⁷ Russian State Historical Archive (РГИА). Ф. 797. Оп. 44. Д. 228. Л. 8 об.

²⁸ This is important to emphasize in view of Greco-Arab antagonism, which some researchers simplistically use as the main explanatory model for life in the Antiochian Church in the 19th century.

of Tripoli, and Meletios (Doumani)²⁹ of Latakia — issued an appeal for reconciliation, insisting that “the notables of the community use their good influence to eliminate discord and bring the discontented back into the fold of the Church”³⁰. The Damascus community, invoking its capital status, insisted on using patriarchal income for its exclusive benefit. The Arab diocesan hierarchs, who sided with the Greek Patriarch Hierotheos, understood this well. The Damascus Ayans³¹ consistently sought to replace the entire church with themselves. The final reconciliation was reached only in December 1874, following the Patriarch’s full concession to the demands of the notables — effectively marking the victory of the laity over the Primate. Temporary conversion to Protestantism was one of the tools employed to achieve this.

A similar conflict unfolded in the 1890s. After the six-year reign of Patriarch Gerasimos (Protopapas)³², who transferred to the Jerusalem Patriarchate in 1891, the Holy Sepulchre monk Spyridon (Euthymiou)³³ was elected to the Antiochian See. His final confirmation hinged on a promise to transfer 10,000 Turkish lira (100,000 rubles) to the Patriarchate, placing the funds under the control of the lay commission of the notables of Damascus³⁴. However, Spyridon was later reluctant to part with such a large sum, setting the stage for a long confrontation. Despite being recognized by all diocesan bishops — including those of Arab origin — the Damascus elite spent the next five years (1892–1897) staging protests against the Primate. Demanding the promised funds, the community boycotted Orthodox services and attended Anglican ones. In response, Spyridon forbade Orthodox priests from conducting funeral rites, depriving them of their income. The conflict continued until his deposition in 1898. In other words, despite

²⁹ РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 44. Д. 228. Л. 23 об.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Local notables.

³² Gerasimos (Protopapas) (1839/41–1897) – Patriarch of Antioch (1885–1891) and Patriarch of Jerusalem (1891–1897).

³³ Spyridon (Euphimiou) (1839–1921) – Patriarch of Antioch (1891–1898).

³⁴ АВГПР. Ф. 208. Оп. 819. Д. 323. ЛЛ. 90–93.

unanimous episcopal support, Spyridon could not maintain control over his own diocese. As this case demonstrates, “lay Christian leaders played an active role in church life, influencing the appointment and removal not only of metropolitans and bishops, but at times even of Patriarchs themselves”³⁵.

While the behavior of the Damascus community could, within the traditional framework, be attributed to the Holy Sepulchre origins of the Primate, subsequent events ultimately dispel these assumptions.

The life of Patriarch Meletios II (Doumani), who ascended to the Antiochian throne following Spyridon (Euthymiou), ended — according to Russian diplomatic sources — with his poisoning by the Damascene elite in 1906 via morphine. The motive, it was believed, stemmed from suspicions that the Patriarch was either withholding incoming funds or using them for the general needs of the Patriarchate rather than for the exclusive benefit of the Damascus community³⁶. This episode may be considered at least the fourth act in a protracted, half-century-long conflict between the Orthodox laity of Damascus and the higher clergy of the Antiochian Church. It is important to emphasize that, within this framework, the ethnic background of the Patriarch played no decisive role. This tragic end marked the culmination of an extraordinarily difficult reign — the first in a century and a half by an Arab Patriarch on the Antiochian throne. During his brief patriarchate (1899–1906), Meletios sought “to liberate himself from the guardianship not only of the bishops, but especially of his immediate flock”³⁷. The underlying causes remained the same as during the reigns of Greek Patriarchs Hierotheos, Gerasimos, and Spyridon.

³⁵ Кобищанов Т.Ю. Христианские общины в арабо-османском мире (XVII–первая треть XIX в.) М., 2003. С. 40.

³⁶ Quoting Consul in Damascus Prince B. N. Shakhovskoy: the Patriarch “was respected by all, but loved by no one, since he acted alone, listened to no one, and was very stubborn and persistent — so much so that eventually he was poisoned with morphine”. (АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 3439. Л. 175.)

³⁷ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1712. Л. 17.



Meletius II (Doumani), Patriarch of Antioch and All the East (1899–1906).
*Russian Institutions in the Holy Land and Deceased Figures
of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society. XXV. 1882–1907.*
St. Petersburg, Kirschbaum Publishing House. 1907

As reported in a confidential dispatch by A.P. Belyaev³⁸, the Russian consul in Damascus, to the embassy in Constantinople: “The Orthodox Damascenes have a national commission at the Patriarchate, whose responsibility is to deliberate on various current community affairs with the Patriarch. In reality, however, both the aforementioned bishops and the Commission focus primarily on the financial affairs of the Patriarchate. The Commission, in particular, makes broad use of a right it has assumed for itself – not only to supervise but even to veto any of the Patriarch’s decisions”³⁹.

³⁸ *Alexei P. Belyaev* (1859–1906) – graduate of the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages; Consul in Damascus, 1893–1903.

³⁹ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1712. Л. 16 об.

Undoubtedly, these structures and dynamics have deep historical roots. As noted by Archpriest Boris Davydov, a member of a Moscow Patriarchate delegation that visited Damascus in 1957: “The Patriarch is accompanied by a Patriarchal Council composed of laymen, who also do not always carry out the Patriarch’s will. Upon learning that the Moscow Patriarchate might provide assistance to the Antiochian Church, the Council decided that such aid should be directed to the Patriarchal Council, not to the Patriarch himself”⁴⁰. As we can see, a century after the election of Patriarch Hierotheos, little changed: the interests of the Damascus epitropia continued to override those of the wider Patriarchate.

It is worth noting that while in 1850 the Damascus community limited itself to veiled references to the conflicts leading to the Aleppine Unia, by 1874 and again in 1897, its struggle against the Patriarchate involved actual conversions of parts of the community to heterodox denominations (namely, Anglicanism). Thus, typologically, the Catholic Unia — or later, Anglicanism — functioned merely as a conventional form of protest, one that veiled the financial and political ambitions of the regional Christian elite in the familiar language of doctrinal divergence⁴¹.

Beirut versus Damascus

The death of Metropolitan Gabriel (Shatila)⁴² of Beirut brought into sharp relief the reality that the newly elected Arab patriarch from Damascus, Meletios II (Doumani, 1899–1906), was unable to appoint a new Metropolitan to one of the most important sees of the Patriarchate. The local elite, led by the Sursuq family, refused to accept any candidate other than their own — Gerasimos (Msarrah). In their confrontation with the Patriarch, the notables once again

⁴⁰ ΓΑ ΡΦ. Φ. Ρ-6991. Οπ. 2. Δ, 212. Α. 30.

⁴¹ *Philipp T. Syrians...* . P. 19.

⁴² *Gabriel (Jirji) Shatila* (1825–1901) — Secretary to Patriarch Hierotheos of Antioch; from 1861–1870 head of the Antiochian Metochion in Moscow; from September 1870 Metropolitan of Beirut.

resorted to the threat of conversion to Anglicanism. It is worth noting that by the second half of the 19th century, Anglicanism had often replaced Catholicism as a more “neutral” and socially acceptable form of confessional protest, being viewed as a less odious alternative to Roman Catholicism.

As reported by the Russian consulate in Damascus: “The Sur-suqs did not hesitate to threaten the Patriarch, suggesting that if he did not yield to their demands, he might meet the same fate as the late Patriarch Spyridon, or that the majority of the Orthodox community in Beirut would convert to Anglicanism”⁴³. To reinforce their threat, in early 1902 around 300 members of the Orthodox population submitted a petition to the Beirut pastor, requesting admission into the Anglican Church. Although neither the Pastor nor the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem fully trusted the sincerity of the conversion, they nevertheless allowed the applicants a contact with the Church of England. As the Russian Consul General in Beirut summarized: “The British General Consulate does not intervene in this matter officially, but unofficially it expresses approval of the Orthodox who now attend the local Anglican church”⁴⁴.

This situation made it abundantly clear that neither a Greek nor even an Arab patriarch could exercise effective control over what had become, in practice, an autocephalous Beirut. It is important to note that developments within the church mirrored broader regional transformations — especially following Beirut’s designation as the center of a separate vilayet in 1888. In February 1902, K.N. Lishin emphasized this regional sentiment among the Orthodox protestors, who had come to view Patriarch Meletios as “allegedly persecuting the people of Beirut while showing exclusive favor to the residents of Damascus”⁴⁵. The threat of confessional defection had become a standard motif in both interregional and intra-elite struggles — a tactic that was, it must

⁴³ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1713. Л. 24 об.

⁴⁴ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 3438. Л. 70.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Л. 69–69 об.



Beirut Archdiocese located opposite the Sursuq Palace
in the Achrafieh district.

Photo by the author

be admitted, often effective. This confrontation ultimately ended in Beirut's victory and the appointment of Gerasimos (Msarrah) as Metropolitan in 1902. In retaliation, the Patriarchate decided to fragment the Beirut diocese by creating a new Metropolis of the Mountains of Lebanon through a synodal decision dated December 22, 1901. Interestingly, the Greek Catholic community experienced similar jurisdictional transformations: in the final years of the patriarchate of Maximos III Mazloum (1833–1855), tensions emerged with Metropolitan Agapios (Riachi) of Beirut, from whose jurisdiction the patriarch attempted to remove the region of Jbeil (Byblos).

It is crucial to emphasize the internal nature of the forces driving these shifts in ecclesial allegiance, as well as the limited capacity of external actors to reverse or contain them. It is difficult to imagine any Russian consular agent capable of influencing the overall course of Beirut's development or of successfully issuing

orders to the powerful Sursuq, Trad, and other prominent families⁴⁶. Consequently, the recommendation of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to its consular agents in the Middle East seems both prudent and realistic. As stated in a memorandum from Deputy Foreign Minister D.I. Vestman to the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count D.A. Tolstoy, “the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not intend to issue any special instructions concerning the disputes that have arisen between the Antiochian Patriarch and the Orthodox Community of Beirut⁴⁷ [...] It does not allow our agents in the East to intervene in the religious affairs of our co-religionists, but instructs them to act with the utmost caution in all such matters, limiting themselves to an observational stance and, where possible, using moral influence to help eliminate certain unfortunate phenomena which, regrettably, are all too common among our co-religionists in the East”⁴⁸.

The Akkar–Tripoli alliance against Damascus

Parallel to Beirut’s struggle for autonomy, another power center emerged in the northern region of Lebanon in opposition to Damascus. Upon the death of Metropolitan Nicodemus (Zographopoulos)⁴⁹ of Arcadia (Akkar) on October 4, 1901, the question arose of filling the vacant See. Archimandrite Ephrem (Dibbs) was temporarily appointed as vicar to oversee the diocese, but was soon recalled to Damascus due to protests from the local population. Following Ephrem’s removal, Patriarch Meletios proposed that the Akkar faithful select a candidate for Metropolitan. Gathering at the Monastery of St. George in Humeira, the elders and local rep-

⁴⁶ Example: the scandalous yet fruitless attempts by V.N. Khitrovo, secretary of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, to intervene in the election of the Metropolitan of Beirut in 1901.

⁴⁷ Conflict between Patriarch Hierotheos and his Beirut flock over filling the metropolitan see occurred in 1865–1869.

⁴⁸ РГИА. Ф. 797. Оп. 39. 3 ст. 2 отд. А, 67. Л. 11–11 об.

⁴⁹ The only Greek hierarch remaining in the Patriarchate after 1899.

representatives unanimously nominated Archimandrite Germanos (Shehadeh), who at that time was in Brazil. Nevertheless, on April 22, 1902, the Synod of Bishops in Damascus — disregarding both the will of the laity and of Patriarch Meletios — confirmed Ephrem (Dibbs) as the candidate for the Arcadian See. This outcome was largely due to pressure from Metropolitan Gregory (Haddad) of Tripoli, who was preparing his own bid for the patriarchal throne and promoted his former deacon to the episcopacy⁵⁰. The population of Akkar was outraged and split into two factions. In November 1902, a delegation of Ephrem’s opponents traveled to the Russian General Consulate in Beirut to file complaints about the illegitimacy of his synodal election and about alleged “bribery by the Tripolitans, who wielded significant influence in Akkar through lines of trade credit extended to certain local notables. The deputies, claiming to represent the majority of the population, did not hesitate to reinforce their grievances with threats of conversion to Protestantism”⁵¹. In this dispatch, Russian diplomat N.N. Demerik drew attention to both the close economic ties between one segment of Akkar’s elite and Tripoli (operating as junior partners),

⁵⁰ Biographical details on Ephrem (Basil) Dibbs provided by Consul General N.N. Demerik in Beirut: “His Grace Basil is 35 years old; born in Beirut. In his youth, having no means of his own, he worked in his uncle’s shop, then became a typesetter in the Orthodox printing house in Beirut. About thirteen years ago, defending himself against several Muslim rowdies, he stabbed one of them with a knife and was jailed for a day. Following that incident, he entered Balamand Monastery in Lebanon and took monastic vows. Later he served as deacon under Archbishop Gregory of Tripoli; about seven years ago he was ordained priest, and last year elevated to archimandrite. In between he spent two years in the United States, but returned to Syria after quarreling with the local abbot Raphael Hawawini. By the time of his return, Bishop Nicodemus of Akkar had died; he presented his candidacy and was elected at the last session of the Damascus Synod thanks to support from Archbishop Gregory and the Tripolitans. He is not distinguished by education; aside from Arabic he knows Turkish and Greek. He is of a very determined character”. (АВПРИ. Ф. 180 Оп. 517/2.Д. 1351. ЛЛ. 11–11 об.). Slightly different details about the start of Ephrem Dibbs’s ecclesiastical career were provided in 1906 by Consul General A. A. Gagarin in Beirut: “In his youth, when he was still working in the printing house, the court tried him for involvement in a street fight that ended in the death of one of the participants; he escaped punishment by becoming a monk”. (АВПРИ. Ф. 180 Оп. 517/2.Д. 1353. Л. 68 об.)

⁵¹ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1350. ЛЛ. 109 об.

and the tactical use of threatened apostasy as a means of exerting pressure. At the end of November 1902, Demerik received “private notification from Patriarch Meletios stating that it had taken considerable effort to convince the delegation to withdraw their petition to the Anglicans, and that he had to personally guarantee he would not proceed with any decisions without the unanimous consent of the diocesan faithful”⁵². Nevertheless, Gregory (Haddad), “defending the inviolability of the Synod’s decisions”⁵³ (which he himself had orchestrated), pledged that no conversions would occur if the 1902 Antiochian Synod’s resolution was firmly upheld. Without delay, Patriarch Meletios instructed the Metropolitans of Tripoli, Epiphany (Hama), and Emesa (Homs) to proceed with Ephrem’s consecration. “The ceremony, due to quarantine restrictions, took place in Homs on February 2, 1903, where the new Bishop assumed the name Basil”⁵⁴.

The consecration sparked an immediate and severe escalation in the conflict. Leaders of the anti-Bishop Basil faction “promptly transitioned from threats to action, submitting requests for affiliation and support to representatives of the Greek Catholic and papal clergy. The latter, in turn, had already communicated with the Holy See in Rome, requesting financial aid to secure the loyalty of the secessionists. In a telegram to the Pope, Greek Catholic Bishop Joseph Doumani of Tripoli estimated the number of potential converts at 15,000 souls”⁵⁵.

According to Demerik, the Greek Catholic Bishop’s program of action followed a well-established pattern: he would “celebrate Mass upon the villagers’ request, appoint priests, advocate for his parishioners in property disputes with Orthodox neighbors, distribute loans secured by personal debt contracts for church and school construction, and so forth. His first task would be to tour the defecting villages to register the neo-Catholics in official Otto-

⁵² Ibid. АА. 109 об. –110.

⁵³ Ibid. А. 1351. А. 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ АВГПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. А. 1351. А. 13 об. –14.

man population rolls (*nüfus*)”⁵⁶. In response, the Russian General Consulate prepared to discreetly “impede the activities of Catholic proselytism by enlisting the cooperation of Ottoman authorities”⁵⁷. Demerik’s plan proved successful, and the Beirut vali, Reshid Pasha, instructed the Tripoli mutesarraf “to prevent Bishop Doumani’s tour of the dissenting villages and to halt any revisions to the population registers”⁵⁸. Despite the Patriarch’s orders to delay his entry into the diocese, Bishop Basil (Al-Debs) departed for Akkar in early March. By late May, after prolonged negotiations and the mediation of consular dragoman S. Shehadeh, events took a favorable turn. Russian diplomats reported optimism for a peaceful resolution: “Of the opposition, initially numbering 15,000 — constituting one-third of the Orthodox population of the three Akkar districts — the majority have come to their senses and recognized the Bishop, cutting all ties with representatives of the Catholic Church. Only a handful of dissidents remain — 20 individuals according to supporters of His Grace Basil, or 140 according to the Greek Catholic Episcopate in Tripoli”⁵⁹. According to the Consulate, the core of the pro-Catholic party “centered around the Yazigi family — powerful notables in the Hosn district — who continued their obstinate resistance despite the example set by other influential families formerly leading the movement”⁶⁰. The efforts of Russian diplomacy received additional support from the Beirut Governor-General: “The mass applications for conversion to Catholicism submitted to the Tripoli Greek Catholic Bishop promised a bountiful harvest for the Unia. It might have succeeded under different circumstances, but the local vali from the outset promised me he would restrain the movement and, remaining true to his word, instructed the Tripoli mutesarraf not to permit wholesale revision of the population registers — the very purpose for

⁵⁶ Ibid. A. 14.

⁵⁷ Ibid. A. 14 o6.

⁵⁸ Ibid. A. 22 o6.

⁵⁹ Ibid. A. 44–44 o6.

⁶⁰ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1351. А. 44 o6.

which Monsignor Doumani undertook his tour of the dissident villages”⁶¹.

This episode is marked by tensions in both vertical and horizontal dimensions. On one hand, the movement toward a unia with Rome may be interpreted as an attempt by segments of the Akkar elite (notably those from Hosn) to resist the growing influence of the geographically proximate Tripolitans. On the other, it also reflects their willingness to challenge the synodal authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Damascus.

Tripoli as an epicenter

Though the theoretical threat of a unia with Rome did not always translate into concrete conversions, the mere possibility — especially as a political tactic — sheds critical light on the mechanisms underlying confessional realignment. One such illustrative case was the crisis in the Tripoli diocese between 1887 and 1889. For three years, a fierce struggle took place between the coastal (al-Mina), including the Koura region⁶², and inland factions of Tripoli, over the succession of the aging Metropolitan Sophronios (Najjar). The coastal district of al-Mina, where Sophronios resided, became the stronghold of his supporters. This ecclesiastical conflict reflected an internal elite rivalry within Tripoli’s Orthodox community, directed largely by the Non-Staff Russian Vice-Consul in Tripoli, the Greek Alexander Katseflis, and his father-in-law, Nicolas Nofal. Katseflis’s hostility toward Metropolitan Sophronios⁶³ had long-standing personal roots: “Sophronios excommunicated him nearly 25 years earli-

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Koura — the Orthodox kaymakamlik in the northwest end of Lebanon, one of seven administrative districts established by the international commission for the autonomous Mount Lebanon Governorship in 1861. The district governor (kaymakam) and two of the three mudirs (sub-district heads) represented the Orthodox community. See: *Петкович К.Д. Ливан и ливанцы*. СПб., 1885. P. 106–111.

⁶³ Even after the death of Metropolitan Sophronios in 1889, hostility remained with Katseflis not attending his funeral.

er for marrying the sister of his deceased wife”⁶⁴. The opposing faction, hailing from the inland areas, was led by Metropolitan Agapios (Stavros) of Edessa, an Arab.

This geographical division of loyalties reveals how the struggle extended beyond individual antagonisms into a broader elite contest between historically distinct zones of Tripoli over influence in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. The Metropolitan controlled the epitropia, which managed the substantial *waqf* (endowed) properties of the diocese – amounting to approximately 40,000 francs by the turn of the 20th century⁶⁵. The inland faction aimed to shift the balance of power, repeatedly launching offensive efforts. Meanwhile, al-Mina and Koura, unwilling to relinquish their privileged positions (most financial resources came from Koura), even sought, according to Katseflis and Nofal’s followers, to secede and establish a separate metropolis. This economic and geographic autonomy of Al-Mina was institutionalized in 1882 when the Ottoman authorities established it as a separate municipality. The climax of the conflict came with Katseflis’s telegram to the Russian General Consulate in Beirut, warning that “the churches would be closed, and half the Orthodox community was prepared to convert to the Uniate Church if the Patriarch insisted on removing Agapios from Tripoli”⁶⁶. The context led K.D. Petkovich to observe that the message was somewhere between a report and a threat – especially since Katseflis was not only a Russian diplomatic representative but also an active participant in the conflict. The crisis was resolved only with third-party intervention by the Russian General Consulate in Beirut. On May 2, 1890, Gregory (Haddad), the candidate backed by Petkovich (and likely more so by the consular dragoon S. Shehadeh), was elected Metropolitan of Tripoli⁶⁷. On May 10, 1890, Patriarch Gerasimos consecrated him as the Archbishop⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1336. Л. 66 об.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Л. 42 об.

⁶⁶ АВПРИ Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1336. Л. 219 об.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Ф. 208. Оп. 819. Д. 322. Л. 65.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Л. 70 а) об.

In the end, the Beirut contender triumphed over the patriarchal creature from Damascus.

This resolution ended the Tripoli dispute — which nearly triggered a mass conversion to the Unia — but also set the stage for the ecclesiastical career of Gregory IV (Haddad), who would go on to serve as Antiochian Patriarch from 1906 to 1928⁶⁹.

Koura as a bastion of local autonomy within the Tripoli Diocese

Following the election of Metropolitan Gregory (Haddad) of Tripoli as Patriarch of Antioch in 1906, he delayed the appointment of a successor to the vacant Episcopal See. As had occurred nearly two decades earlier under similar circumstances, the issue of Koura resurfaced with renewed intensity in 1907. Conditions were ripe for a new phase of intra-regional conflict: “The absence of a Metropolitan led to the formation of a faction in Koura, a district within this diocese, that persistently demanded the creation of a separate diocese for their qaza”⁷⁰. As explained by the Russian Consul General A.A. Gagarin, “The people of Koura do not want Tripolitans interfering in their affairs and insist that the Metropolitan reside in Koura for part of the year. [...] All diocesan income is generated in Koura, from which the Metropolis in Tripoli is financially supported”⁷¹. However, this autonomist

⁶⁹ The relationship between the family of Vice-Consul Katseflis and the new Metropolitan were also tense. Katseflis’s son entered Russian service and was excommunicated by Metropolitan Gregory for marrying his cousin. Before the arrival of Patriarch Meletios (Doumani) in Tripoli, he had to request instructions from Beirut on how to “behave toward Patriarch Meletios and Metropolitan Gregory, as Russian Vice-Consul or as an excommunicated Greek. From Beirut he received instructions to receive the Patriarch with kawases (honor guards used with ambassadors and diplomatic agents. — *Author*) and to act as though the excommunication had not occurred”. See: АВПРИ. Ф. Российское Императорское Православное Палестинское Общество. Оп. 873/1. Д. 434. Л. 35 об.

⁷⁰ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1353. Л. 69.

⁷¹ Ibid. Д. 1354. Л. 346–346 об.

movement was soon eclipsed by a new internal conflict within Koura itself. The trigger was the 1907 election to the Lebanese Administrative Council.

During the electoral contest in the Koura District, Orthodox sheikhs — joined by the Maronite and some Muslim ones — gave 23 out of 33 votes to Sheikh George (Jurjus) Azar. His opponent, Dr. Khalil Hayek, received only ten. After his defeat, Hayek and his supporters sought to convert to Anglicanism, hoping thereby to secure the patronage of the British Consul General, Sir Robert Hay Drummond-Hay. Hayek and Ibrahim al-Aswad emerged as protest leaders. Sir Robert Hay assured them that if a sufficient number of Anglicans were found in Koura in the near future, he would ensure they received equal rights with other confessions under the Lebanese Regulations. He even implied that it might be possible to appoint an Anglican kaymakam in place of the current Orthodox one and secure several lower posts for the converts⁷². Simultaneously, an intermediary acting on behalf of Hayek informed the Russian Consul General Gagarin that Hayek would remain Orthodox if the current kaymakam of Koura were removed and replaced by himself with consular support. As Gagarin reported, this revealed “the true nature of the turn toward Anglicanism”⁷³. He continued: “All these promises, of course, greatly agitate the population, which remains attached to its faith only insofar as its observance is tied to certain advantages but is always ready, at least outwardly, to trade it for any other confession if such a change offers material benefits”⁷⁴. Only part of the village of Bishmezin, Hayek’s native village, demonstrated a serious inclination to convert. Their agenda was unmistakably secular: “The Bishmezinites wish for certain lands currently taxed at one-seventh of their income to be taxed at only one-tenth”⁷⁵. They also demanded that “the quarter-medjidieh per capita levy for the maintenance of Lebanese roads be removed and

⁷² АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1354. Л. 73 об. –74.

⁷³ Ibid. Л. 62 об.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Л. 74.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Л. 164.



Gerasimus (Yared), Metropolitan of Seleucia (Zahle).
*Russian Institutions in the Holy Land and Deceased Figures
of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society. XXV. 1882–1907.*
St. Petersburg, Kirschbaum Publishing House. 1907

that they be allowed to use the funds exclusively for roads leading to Bishmezin⁷⁶. A third demand was the reinstatement of the mudir in Enfeh, recently dismissed by Muzaffar Pasha^{77 78}.

Nonetheless, the Anglican clergy did not respond favorably to the appeal from some inhabitants of Koura, and failing to receive support from the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, George Blyth (1887–

⁷⁶ Ibid. А. 164 о6.

⁷⁷ *Muzaffar Pasha (Vladislav Chaikovsky, 1843–1907)* — Governor-General of the autonomous Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon from 1902 to 1907. Son of a Polish émigré aristocrat and independence fighter who entered Ottoman service and converted to Islam. Educated in France (Saint-Cyr Military School); participated in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. Married the daughter of the dragoman of the Russian embassy in Istanbul. (*Akarli E. The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1920. Berkeley, 1993. P.197–198.*)

⁷⁸ АВГРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1354. А. 164 о6.



Tomb of the Bustros and Sursuq-Cochrane family.

Photo by the author

1914)⁷⁹, Dr. Hayek and his party traveled to Tripoli to request that the Catholic Bishop authorize their joining the Unia. As Gagarin reported to the embassy: “Our Vice-Consul Katseflis tried to dissuade them from their intention; they promised to remain Orthodox, but nevertheless resumed negotiations with the Uniates”⁸⁰.

At the request of the Russian consulate in Damascus, Patriarch Gregory (Haddad) sent two senior hierarchs of the Antiochian Church to Koura — namely, the Metropolitans of Homs and Hama — who were “universally respected and tasked with restoring reason to the discontented faction”⁸¹. Thanks to the efforts of the

⁷⁹ The position of Bishop Blyth diverged from that of his predecessor, Samuel Gobat: “Until recently, Bishop Blyth reproached his twenty-four missionaries for not proselytizing among Muslims and for acting against Orthodoxy — an approach he firmly disapproved”. (Суворин А.А. Палестина. СПб., 1898. С. 116).

⁸⁰ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1354. Л.279 об.

⁸¹ Ibid. Д. 3439. Л. 180 об.



General view of St. Demetrius Cemetery.
Photo by the author

two Russian consulates and the mediating Metropolitans, reconciliation between the opposing parties was achieved, and plans for a unia with Rome were abandoned.

This case illustrates how political conflict, unable to find adequate expression within the Ottoman social framework, often assumed a confessional form.

From regional to local dynamics

Local elections of a far more modest scope had similar effects. In 1892, for instance, “three-quarters of the Orthodox inhabitants of the village of Bloudan (around 600 people)”, which belonged to the Seleucia (Zahle) Diocese, joined the Unia⁸². As reported by

⁸² АВГПРИ. Ф. 208. Оп. 819. Д. 322. Л. 338 об.



Villa of Nicolas Ibrahim Sursuq on the street of the same name,
now the Sursuq Museum in Beirut.

Photo by the author

K.D. Petkovich to the embassy in Constantinople: “The cause was a trivial dispute between two factions over the appointment of a village headman. The Metropolitan of Zahle, Gerasimos Yared, supported one faction’s candidate, while the other party, more numerous and influential, appealed to the Patriarch. Rather than proposing a neutral candidate to reconcile both sides, the Patriarch sided with Gerasimos, seeking to please him. Dissatisfied with this decision by Patriarch Spyridon, the Orthodox villagers turned to the Uniate Patriarch, expressing their readiness to join his flock”⁸³. Once again, it is clear that local political struggles, lacking institutional outlets, took the form of religious conversions.

⁸³ Ibid. A. 338 о6. –339.

Such regional conflicts frequently penetrated deep into the fabric of urban communal life. In Beirut in 1906, a segment of the Orthodox community dissatisfied with the bishop's decision concerning the "trivial", according to the Russian consulate, issue of "the placement of graves in the courtyard of St. Demetrius Church", declared to Metropolitan Gerasimos (Msarrah) their intention to convert to Anglicanism. After the Metropolitan's appeal to the Russian consul A.A. Gagarin, the conflict was resolved: "The matter was settled with the help of our dragomans, and peace was restored"⁸⁴. However, Gagarin's dismissal of the issue as "trivial" seems questionable. The Church of St. Demetrius and its cemetery were the burial site not only of Metropolitan Gabriel (Shatila) but also of leading figures of the Beirut Orthodox community — whose family mausoleums are striking even to modern observers. Burial in this cemetery symbolized elite status within the community. The placement of graves likely held social significance as well, thus creating the conflict. Converting to another faith at an Orthodox cemetery by the tomb of a deceased may seem aphoristic, but not impossible within the passion-driven Levantine social environment.

To sum up, it can be noted that the wave of conversions to Catholicism (or Anglicanism) intensified in regions already characterized by internal contradictions — Damascus, the traditional patriarchal center; Beirut, undergoing rapid development; the prosperous Koura kaymakamlik; Tripoli's internal factions; and the localities of Bishmezin and Akkar within Koura. Typically, Uniate conversion movements were catalyzed by contentious episcopal elections (e.g., Sophronios [Najjar], Gregory [Haddad] in Tripoli; Basil [Al-Debs] in Akkar; Gerasimos [Msarrah] in Beirut) and changes in the composition of diocesan councils managing the *waqf* property. These tensions were further aggravated during patriarchal successions — Spyridon (Euthymiou), Meletios (Doumani), and Gregory (Haddad). In Lebanon, the 1907 crisis stemmed in part from the region's autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire and the

⁸⁴ АВГПИИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1353. Л. 76.

regular elections of Orthodox representatives. Appeals to Catholic authorities were usually preceded by threats to convert to Anglicanism — a less provocative form of protest. In every case, conversion was a collective act by an entire community (or a significant segment thereof), driven not by doctrinal concerns but by socio-economic motivations. Importantly, in nearly all these conflict situations, the main actors were Arabs — significantly undermining the 19th-century narrative that framed the Uniate movement as a product of Greek-Arab antagonism.

Strikingly, threats of conversion centered on the triangle of the most economically and politically influential centers of the Patriarchate. Its base consisted of the coastal cities of Tripoli (along with Koura and Akkar) and Beirut, both transformed by new economic conditions. Its apex was the traditional Damascus, oriented eastward. Tensions between Beirut and Damascus steadily escalated, ultimately culminating in a formal schism in 1928.

Clearly, economic activity contributed to the prosperity of the coastal regions. However, the integration into global trade networks and the rise in conversions to other Christian denominations were not synchronous phenomena. The effect was indirect: economic and cultural development fostered elite self-awareness and a desire for increased control over ecclesiastical affairs (e.g., episcopal appointments, composition of the waqf board), which challenged the prerogatives of older centers like Damascus. Thus, uneven economic development only heightened the overall level of conflict, while a unia with Rome — or conversion to Anglicanism — provided a ready means of expressing protest.

Two communities, one people: Uniate parallels

Interestingly, typologically similar patterns of regional conflict occurred within the Greek Catholic (Melkite) community — despite the absence of any “Greek dominance” in the traditional Holy Sepulchre or Phanariot sense. Melkite conflicts unfolded along two axes: “between the Shami (Damascene) and Baladi (non-Dama-

scene) factions”⁸⁵, and in opposition to the Papacy (mirroring to some extent the Orthodox opposition to the Ecumenical and later Jerusalem Patriarchates)⁸⁶.

Following the long reign of Patriarch Gregory II (Youssef) (1865–1897), the Melkite Synod elected Bishop Peter (Butros) Geraigiry of Caesarea as Patriarch on 12 February 1898 in Lebanon. As a native of Zahle, he led the non-Damascene faction, drawing support from Beirut, Lebanon, and Egypt. His election met resistance from both the Papacy and the Ottoman authorities. The Damascene community favored Bishop Cyril (Geha) of Aleppo or Nicholas Kadi of Hauran⁸⁷. The newly elected Patriarch attempted to sharply limit the powers of the National Commission in Damascus. Immediately after his election, Peter abolished the office of Chief Patriarchal Vicar — held by Bishop Nicholas, a popular figure in Damascus⁸⁸ — and sought to fill vacant dioceses with fellow Zahle natives, often bypassing synodal consultation. This provoked a protest movement among the episcopate: eight bishops lodged a collective complaint with Rome. Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) supported the dissidents. Thus, fearing loss of influence, the Shami faction turned to external support — just as Orthodox dissidents (in 1850 and later) had once appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

After Peter IV Geraigiry died on 12 April 1902 in Beirut, the Melkite Synod met in June at the Ain-Tiraz Monastery and elected Cyril VIII (Geha) as Patriarch (1902–1916)⁸⁹. He was described as “weak and incapable, burdened by age and illness”⁹⁰, and functioned as an instrument of Vatican policy — satisfactory to the Damascene faction.

⁸⁵ АВГРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1350. Л. 90.

⁸⁶ Similar dynamics occurred in the Maronite community, where the leadership of the patriarchate was contested by regional parties from Kesrouan and Batroun in Lebanon.

⁸⁷ АВГРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1713. Л. 5 об.

⁸⁸ Ibid. ЛЛ. 7–7 об.

⁸⁹ Cyril VIII (Geha) (November 26, 1840 — January 11, 1916) — born in Aleppo; Melkite Archbishop of Aleppo (1885–1902); Patriarch (1902–1916).

⁹⁰ АВГРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1350. Л. 91.

Greek Uniates and Orthodox Christians of Yabroud: there and back again

Similar internal processes in both the Orthodox and Uniate communities led to analogous outward manifestations. Conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism were not a one-way street — as might sometimes appear from traditional historiography⁹¹.

As previously mentioned, the election of Peter IV (Geraigiry) encountered opposition from both the Papal See and the Ottoman government. The anti-Damascene (Baladi) faction, under pressure from the Vatican and the French consulate (which supported Bishop Cyril [Geha] of Aleppo), began threatening a “return to the bosom of the Orthodox Church should their preferred candidate not be elected”⁹². The idea of converting back to Orthodoxy arose following the deposition of the last Greek Patriarch of Antioch, Spyridon, in early 1898 and the subsequent campaign to fill the vacant patriarchal seat in Damascus: “The thought of returning to the Orthodox Church emerged among many Greek Uniates in view of the simultaneous elections being prepared for both the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Patriarchates and in the hope of seeing Geraigiry on the Orthodox throne of Antioch”⁹³. Just as the similarity of liturgical rites had previously facilitated conversions to Uniatism, that same ritual proximity made reverse conversion easier: “Despite all efforts, the Vatican has not succeeded in achieving among the Syrian Greek Uniates the gradual, almost imperceptible, yet inevitably complete unia with Latinism that it managed to secure in other Uniate churches through changes in rites and ecclesiastical structures”⁹⁴. In 1902, the secretary of the Russian Consulate General in Beirut, B.K. Arseniev, reported: “Deeply attached to the Orthodox liturgical

⁹¹ See: Хитрово В.Н. Православие в Св. Земле. Православный Палестинский сборник. Т. I. Вып. 1. СПб., 1881.

⁹² АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1350. Л. 28.

⁹³ Ibid. Л. 30–30 об.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Л. 31.

tradition, which they have preserved almost intact since entering into the Unia, the Greek Catholics remain partly misguided due to the material support they continue to receive abundantly from Rome and France”⁹⁵.

Following the death of the first Greek Catholic Archbishop of Hama, Homs and Yabroud, Gregory Atta (1849–1899), on December 3, 1899, a new ecclesiastical crisis erupted over succession. Dissatisfied with the patriarchal Vicar sent to temporarily govern the diocese, the people of Yabroud⁹⁶ filed complaints to Patriarch Peter IV (Geraigiry). In an attempt to appease the local community, the Patriarch sent his secretary, Father Michael Allouf — “a talented and educated cleric” — promising the community representatives that Allouf would soon be consecrated Metropolitan”⁹⁷. Shortly thereafter, the community unanimously petitioned the Patriarch to consecrate Michael Allouf as Metropolitan of Hama, Homs, and Yabroud.

However, the ongoing “cold war” between Patriarch Geraigiry and the Melkite episcopate quickly manifested itself. When Peter IV brought Allouf’s candidacy to the Synod for approval, the bishops categorically refused. The Patriarch was thus forced to withdraw Allouf from Yabroud and replace him with a Synod-backed candidate, Flavian (Kfoury).

Outraged by this disregard for their wishes, the Yabroud community declared its intention to convert to Orthodoxy and petitioned Patriarch Meletios II (Doumani). Recognizing this as part of the traditional tensions surrounding episcopal succession, he “initially rejected their appeals. However, when the requests became more insistent — and after the Yabroud Melkites swore a solemn oath to remain faithful to the Orthodox Church — he agreed to their reintegration. Patriarch Meletios dispatched a second Ortho-

⁹⁵ АВГПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1350. Л. 30 об.

⁹⁶ One of the largest villages on the Kalamun Plateau (elev. 1,500 m east of the Anti-Lebanon range). Подробнее: Панченко К.А. Христианская сакральная география плато Каламун в Средневековье и Новое время // Исторический вестник. 2024. Т. 48. С. 112–131.

⁹⁷ АВГПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1715. Л. 48 об.–49.

dox priest to Yabroud to assist the resident parish priest and soon after sent Metropolitan Paul of Mount Lebanon”⁹⁸. The Patriarch’s envoys were warmly welcomed by the local population. In spite of opposition from the Catholic clergy, the majority of Melkites were soon inscribed in the Orthodox community’s official registries. The Patriarchate allocated funds to support the newly converted: a new school was built, and the local church was expanded.

As reported by S.L. Zuev from Damascus to Constantinople⁹⁹: “Everything appeared to be going well: the new flock was content with their return to Orthodoxy; the number of Orthodox faithful continued to grow”¹⁰⁰. Melkite Metropolitan Flavian (Kfoury) was left with only a small number of supporters. Everything changed with the election of Metropolitan Cyril VIII (Geha) of Aleppo to the patriarchal throne on June 29, 1902. He authorized the anti-Flavian faction to disregard Kfoury’s authority and placed them under his direct patriarchal jurisdiction. As a result, the newly converted Melkites reverted to Catholicism. In Yabroud, two Catholic churches emerged: “In one, Monsignor Flavian is still commemorated as Metropolitan of Yabroud; in the other, he is not recognized, and the name of Patriarch Cyril VIII is commemorated during the liturgy”¹⁰¹.

Thus, within just three years, the Melkite community of the Diocese of Hama, Homs, and Yabroud had returned to Orthodoxy and reverted again to Catholicism – mirroring the broader regional struggle between Damascene and anti-Damascene factions within the Melkite Church.

The examples above, spanning a significant historical period, call into question conventional historiographical interpretations of Uniatism as either a product of Catholic proselytism or a reaction to Greek ecclesiastical domination. Clearly, the dynamics

⁹⁸ Ibid. А. 49 о6. –50.

⁹⁹ Sergey L. Zuev – Secretary of the Russian consulate in Damascus (January 8 (21), 1903 – January 8 (21), 1905).

¹⁰⁰ АВПРИ. Ф. 180. Оп. 517/2. Д. 1715. А. 50.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. А. 50–50 о6.

of uniate movements far exceeded the bounds of purely religious questions. In the overwhelming majority of cases, these processes did not originate in theological or dogmatic debates. Here, one can readily agree with K.A. Panchenko: “The history of Arab Orthodoxy is not merely a chronicle of ecclesiastical life or a collection of theological treatises penned by scholarly monks. The history of every Middle Eastern Church is, in fact, 90% the history of the people it unites”¹⁰².

The absence of political mechanisms for Orthodox self-organization within the Ottoman framework turned the religious sphere into a repository of protest — absorbing both interregional and intra-communal tensions: “in the absence of a native statehood and aristocracy among the Orthodox communities of the Levant, the Church assumed the role of cultural, sociopolitical, and to some extent economic center of Arab Christian life”¹⁰³. Conversion — or the threat thereof — to Uniatism (or sometimes Anglicanism) thus often reflected underlying socio-economic struggles between declining regional centers and emerging power contenders — all complex processes of intra-community evolution.

This internal causality casts doubt on the ability of external actors, including Russia, to meaningfully shape the nature of these conflicts. Russian diplomacy, having encountered these limitations in practice, proved most effective in its mediatory role — serving as a neutral arbitrator across the map of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Indeed, the conversion dynamics (in both directions) resist the explanatory framework favored by certain strands of Russian historiography (e.g., V.N. Khitrovo, N.N. Lisovoy), which portrayed Uniatism as a byproduct of Western Catholic interference in a socially degraded Levant under Greek ecclesiastical rule. This case affirms the “inadequacy of the ‘nationalist’ myth in Uniate historiography”¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰² Панченко К.А. Ближневосточное Православие... С. 14.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Панченко К.А. Арабо-христианские исследования в современной зарубежной науке // Вестник Московского университета. Серия 13. Востоковедение. М., 2010. № 2. С. 33.

Echoing Thomas Philipp’s argument that missionary activity merely created the conditions for conversions without predetermining them, we must avoid seeking direct causality. Instead, we should examine typologically similar factors that made departures from the Orthodox Church more or less likely — depending on geographic and socio-economic conditions. (After all, both the Uniates and Protestants of Greater Syria were originally part of the flock of the Antiochian Church.)

A recurrent source of conflict leading to conversion was the economic development of the Levantine coast (Beirut, Tripoli), which had been integrated into the global economic system, in contrast to the stagnating interior regions during the latter half of the 19th century. These growing disparities exacerbated the already mosaic-like structure of Syria and Lebanon.

If the Orthodox *millet*¹⁰⁵ has often been described as a “state within a state”, then another key conflict driver was the decentralized nature of the Patriarch of Antioch’s authority within that political-religious space. Factional struggles within this complex system often involved the search for external allies¹⁰⁶. Looking over more than half a century of internal conflict within the Patriarchate, one sees something akin to a fragile confederation of perpetually rivalrous entities — seemingly incapable of existing in any other form.

The deeply embedded ecclesiastical organization provided the social arena for elite rivalries among established economic and geographic blocs. These tensions were intensified by patriarchal and episcopal elections and the formation of waqf epitropies. Of particular importance were elections to the Administrative Council of the Lebanese Mutasarrifiyya after 1861, conducted on a confessional basis.

In a context where societal life was expressed in religious forms, and where political mechanisms for resolving conflict were

¹⁰⁵ Millet (*tur.*) — in Ottoman tradition, the term for a religiously defined community recognized by the imperial administration and granted internal self-governance.

¹⁰⁶ These communities operated within a multi-layered field of influence spanning Phanar and Rome, Moscow and Paris.

absent, competing social interests were inevitably cloaked in traditional “garments of doctrinal deviation”, though they had no real theological basis. Long-term statistical trends (though admittedly approximate) confirm these conclusions: conversion movements declined sharply¹⁰⁷ and nearly ceased with the advent of political pluralism in the 20th century, beginning with the Young Turk Revolution of 1908–1909, which integrated the Orthodox Christians of Syria into the secular political space of the Ottoman Empire.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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¹⁰⁷ Statistical proportions throughout the 20th century: Orthodox about 66%, Uniates about 30%, Protestants about 4%. See: Панченко К.А. В.Н. Хитрово и кризис ближневосточного православия: взгляд через столетие / Православные арабы. Путь через века: сб. статей. М., 2013. С. 434.

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Patriarch Athanasius III of Alexandria's Arabic Encyclical Epistle (ca. 1300 AD)

Abstract

The article presents, for the first time, an Arabic encyclical epistle by the Melkite Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria Athanasius III (sed. ca. 1275 — ca. 1315), written during his exile in Constantinople. It is preserved in the unicum 14th century manuscript Sinai ar. 451 and is addressed to Athanasius III's locum tenens archbishop Peter (otherwise unknown). In this epistle, Patriarch Athanasius shares his views on the proper order of church life and seeks to correct certain problematic practices that had become widespread among Orthodox Christians in Egypt. Patriarch Athanasius' recommendations include the following: the liturgy is to be celebrated at the third hour (9am in modern time-reckoning), the antidoron should be handled in a proper fashion, hot water must be added into the chalice towards the end of the liturgy, it is forbidden to rent candles for use at the church or to use oil from the church lamps for worldly purposes, and some others. The epistle sheds light on both day-to-day life and liturgical practices of the Egyptian Melkites, on the progressive Byzantinization of their church services, and on their struggles under Mamlūk rule; it adds important details to the portrait of this outstanding Alexandrian hierarch. If earlier we knew him only as a church official of the era of Emperors Michael VIII and Andronicus II Palaiologos, as the author of an epistle to the Russian Church, and as a bibliophile, the epistle published herein allows us to see him as a pastor caring for his flock. The article includes a critical edition and English translation of this important treatise.

Keywords:

Athanasius III of Alexandria, Patriarchate of Alexandria, Patriarchate of Constantinople, Mamlūks, Typikon, Arab Christian Literature

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I would like to begin this article, dedicated to the memory of the outstanding scholar of Middle Eastern Christianity and a true “passionarian of Eastern Christian studies”, my friend Constantin Panchenko, with his own words: “The world of Arab Christian manuscripts, fortunately for scholars, continues to conceal unknown names and texts”¹. Indeed, the deeper we delve into the study of Arab Christian manuscripts, the more documents we encounter that remain entirely unknown to scholarship, yet are of considerable importance — documents that challenge established interpretations of past events and key historical figures. To uncover and publish such texts is both our scholarly duty and an incomparable joy². Presented here is yet

¹ Панченко К.А. Review of: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (1) // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2014. Вып. 5 (40). P. 191–198, esp. P. 191. On the works of С.А. Panchenko, see: Меликян С.А., Трейгер А., свящ. Пассионарий восточно-христианских исследований: Памяти Константина Александровича Панченко (1968–2024) // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2024. Вып. 4 (81). P. 9–22.

² See the series of articles: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (1): On the Origins of the Term “Melkite” and On the Destruction of the Maryamiyya Cathedral in Damascus // *Chronos*. 2014. Vol. 29. P. 7–37; Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (2): Miracles of St. Eustratius of Mar Saba (written ca. 860) // *Chronos*. 2016. Vol. 33. P. 7–20; Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (3): The Paterikon of the

another newly discovered text: an Arabic circular letter by Athanasius III, the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria (patriarch ca. 1275–ca. 1315)³.

It is well known that upon coming to power in the mid-13th century, the Mamluk dynasty initiated large-scale persecutions of Christians⁴. To avoid the worst, Athanasius III of Alexandria went into exile and spent most of his tenure as patriarch (1275/6–1305, with a brief interruption) in Constantinople. It is likely that the letter published herein was composed there, in the capital of the Byzantine Empire. It is addressed to Archbishop Peter, the *locum tenens* of the Patriar-

Palestinian Lavra of Mar Chariton // Chronos. 2018. Vol. 38. P. 7–46; Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria to the Abbot George of Damietta // Chronos. 2020. Vol. 41. P. 1–35; Russian version of the last of these articles: *Трейгер А., свящ.* Послание патриарха Александрийского Марка III игумену Георгию Дамиееттскому // Библия и христианская древность. 2021. № 1 (9). P. 26–69. In addition to the review of the first article in the series (see previous note), С.А. Panchenko also wrote a review of the second and third articles: *Панченко К.А.* Рец. на: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (2) и (3) // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2019. Вып. 4 (61). P. 145–153.

³ On this patriarch (called Athanasius II in some publications), see: *Лебедев А.П.* Исторические очерки состояния Византийско-восточной церкви от конца XI до середины XV века: От начала Крестовых походов до падения Константинополя в 1453 г. СПб., 1998. P. 273–275; *Попов И. Н.* Афанасий III (II) Синаит // Православная энциклопедия. Т. 4. М., 2002. P. 50 (<https://www.pravenc.ru/text/76950.html>); *Панченко К.А.* Восточные патриархаты и Константинополь от крестоносцев до османов // Понятие первенства: Истоки и контексты: Коллективная монография / Ред. свящ. П.В. Ермилов, М.В. Грацианский. М., 2022. P. 491–538, esp. P. 503–505, 511; *Failler A.* Le séjour d'Athanase II d'Alexandrie à Constantinople // Revue des études byzantines. 1977. Т. 35. P. 43–71; *McKendrick S.* The Codex Alexandrinus or the Dangers of Being a Named Manuscript // The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text / Ed. S. McKendrick, O. A. O'Sullivan. London, 2003. P. 1–16, Fig. 1–5 (between P. 100–101).

⁴ On the persecutions of Christians in the early Mamluk period, see: *Панченко К.А.* Ближневосточное Православие под османским владычеством: Первые три столетия (1516–1831). М., 2012. P. 72–75; *Панченко К. А.* Будус аль-Хабис, коптский новомученик XIII в.: судьба на фоне эпохи // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2015. Вып. 5 (45). P. 61–69; *Панченко К. А.* Поджог Каира 1321 г. и проблема христианского терроризма в Мамлюкском государстве // Вестник ПСТГУ. Сер. III: Филология. 2011. Вып. 4 (26). P. 96–124. The situation became even more acute after the Alexandrian Crusade of 1365; see: *Панченко К. А.* Забытая катастрофа: К реконструкции последствий Александрийского крестового похода 1365 г. на Христианском Востоке // Арабы-христиане в истории и литературе Ближнего Востока. М., 2013. P. 202–219.



Patriarch Athanasius III's autograph note in Greek and Arabic
 Vat. Ott. gr. 452, fol. 1r.
https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Ott.gr.452

chal Residence (*nā'ib al-qillāya al-baṭrakiyya*), i.e., in modern terms, the acting patriarch during Athanasius's absence. Through him, the patriarch addresses all hierarchs and faithful of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

What is the significance of this document? In academic literature, it has long been assumed that Athanasius III showed little concern for the affairs of his flock. For example, the famous Russian Byzantinist Alexey Lebedev (1845–1908) gave him a rather unflattering characterization: “Athanasius of Alexandria represents a curious type: for a long time, he was considered to be Patriarch of Alexandria, yet he had no knowledge of the affairs of the Alexandrian Church. It must be assumed that such patriarchs often occupied the See of Alexandria, as residing in the capital [Constantinople]—especially without any particular responsibilities—was greatly favored by provincial hierarchs of that time”⁵.

Athanasius III's letter published herein allows us to correct this mistaken view. Patriarch Athanasius undoubtedly cared for his flock;

⁵ Лебедев А. П. Исторические очерки состояния Византийско-восточной церкви. Р. 275.

he maintained correspondence with the bishops under his authority (this letter is likely to be only a small surviving part of a broader correspondence) and strove, as much as possible, to govern the Patriarchate of Alexandria from the capital. As evident from the content of the missive, he was deeply concerned about the hardships that had befallen his flock—hardships that were, it seems, regularly reported to him from Egypt. The Mamluk persecutions were interpreted by him as manifestations of divine wrath, which, in his view, could only be averted by a return to correct faith and, most importantly, strict observance of church canons.

In his understanding of canonical norms, Athanasius III was guided by the Alexandrian liturgical tradition, though he sought to align it with Constantinopolitan practice. At that time, the Orthodox of Egypt still celebrated the Liturgy of St. Mark, distinct from the Liturgies of St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom used in Constantinople. Nevertheless, as we will see, Athanasius insists on the need to pour hot water into the chalice during the final part of the liturgy—i.e., on the addition of the “warmth” (Gr. ζέον) after the exclamation “The Holy Things for the Holy” and the breaking of the Lamb—an element likely more characteristic of the Constantinopolitan rite and not deeply rooted in Alexandria. In this respect, Athanasius’ letter constitutes another stage in the “Byzantinization” of Near Eastern Orthodox liturgical practice. As is well known, this process unfolded from the 10th to the 14th centuries and was at its slowest in the Patriarchate of Alexandria, due to its geographical remoteness from Byzantium and from the more heavily Byzantinized regions of Syria and Palestine⁶. Together with the writings of other Alexandrian primates—especially Patriarch Mark III (patriarch ca. 1180–ca. 1209), who visited Constantinople in 1195—the letter of Athanasius III allows us to reconstruct the main stages of this process among the Melkites of Egypt⁷.

⁶ See: *Galadza D.* Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem. Oxford, 2018.

⁷ On Mark III of Alexandria, see: *Treiger A.* Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria; *Панченко К.А.* Восточные патриархаты и Константинополь. P. 494–495; see also the responses of Theodore Balsamon to the questions of Mark of Alexandria: *Theo-*



Candles at the Annunciation Cathedral in Alexandria (photo taken in 2019)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Благовещенский_кафедральный_собор_в_Александрии._Свечи.jpg

The letter has survived in a single 14th-century manuscript, Sinai ar. 451, folios 34r–36v⁸. The title of the text aptly reflects its content: *Copy of the epistle received from Father Athanasius, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, for the entire See of St. Mark, Egypt, and Alexandria, wherein he exhorts them to preserve the ordinances contained therein*. The formula “copy of the letter” (*nushat kitāb*) indicates that this is not an autograph by Athanasius III, but rather a copy made by an unknown scribe, likely directly from the now-lost original, which at that time was kept in the chancellery of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

The letter contains a preface, seven sections (*fuṣūl*), and a conclusion. In the preface, as already noted, the Patriarch addresses his deputy, Archbishop Peter. Athanasius also explains the purpose of the letter: “*correction and rectification*” (*al-iṣlāḥ wa-t-tahrīr*) of certain

dorus Balsamon. *Interrogationes canonicae sanctissimi patriarchae Alexandriae domini Marci et responsa ad eas sanctissimi patriarchae Antiochiae domini Theodori Balsamonis* // PG. T. 119. Col. 1031–1092 (= PG. T. 138. Col. 951–1012); *Viscuso P.D.* *Guide for a Church Under Islām: The Sixty-six Canonical Questions Attributed to Theodōros Balsamōn*. Brookline (Mass.), 2014.

⁸ Manuscript available in open access: <https://sinaimanuscripts.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:%2F21198%2Fz1k94bwk>. On fol. 15r — a colophon dating the manuscript (part of it) to December 10, 6831 from the creation of the world, i.e., 1322 CE. Below the colophon there is a signature of Euthymius, Metropolitan of Nablus, apparently the manuscript’s owner, in both Greek and Arabic.

customs that had taken root in the Patriarchate of Alexandria⁹. He considers these customs to be “harmful” (*dār̄ra*), believing that they have provoked divine wrath upon the Orthodox Christians of Egypt. In advocating for their rectification, Athanasius references information received from certain “zealots of piety” (literally, “men of rectification”, *aṣḥāb at-tahr̄r* / *dawī at-tahr̄r*), most likely Byzantine canonists with whom the patriarch, like his predecessor Mark III, had consulted in Constantinople. On their advice, Athanasius urges the Alexandrian faithful to observe the “necessary order” (*an-nizām al-wāḡib*) in their church life.

The letter’s seven main prescriptions are as follows:

1. The liturgy must be celebrated only at the third hour of the day (i.e., 9 a.m. according to modern reckoning), neither earlier nor later¹⁰;

2. The two prosphora used in the liturgy (it is not the Eucharist but the *antidoron* that it is meant here) must not be taken outside the church, lest they fall into the hands of “external [*non-Christian*] nations and others” — i.e., Muslims, Jews, as well as non-Orthodox Christians (such as the Copts). They are to be consumed within the church. If the priest cannot consume them, they should be given to a child or an elderly woman to consume;

3. Hot water must be added to the Holy Gifts—as already noted, this refers to the addition of ζέον into the chalice during the final section of the liturgy¹¹;

4. Only one priest and one deacon may serve at the same liturgy. Athanasius thus prohibits concelebration of multiple clergy

⁹ It is important to note that the term *tahr̄r* in this context should be understood as “rectification” (not “liberation”).

¹⁰ Mark III of Alexandria also prescribes celebrating the liturgy at the third hour (=9 a.m.) and absolutely no later than the sixth hour (=noon), because “the Holy Gifts must be consumed no later than this [i.e., the sixth] hour” — see: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria. Chapter 3. §6. P. 15, 22–23.

¹¹ The same topic is addressed by Mark III of Alexandria in the 19th (according to *Patrologia Graeca*: 18th) question to Theodore Balsamon; see: Viscuso P.D. Guide for a Church Under Islām. P. 89–90. On the history of the “warmth” (ζέον), see: Taft R. F. A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Volume V: The Precommunion Rites. Rome, 2000. P. 441–502.



Pouring warmth into the chalice in modern liturgical practice
<https://azbyka.ru/teplota>

at a single liturgy, likely because he considers it to be “wasteful” (if two priests are able to serve two liturgies in different churches, why serve one and the same liturgy together?);

5. The oil in church lamps is a “sacrifice to the Lord”. The lamp must burn out, and its oil cannot be reused for other purposes;

6. Rented candles cannot be used in church, and candles lit within the church are likewise a “sacrifice to the Lord” and may not be reused elsewhere;

7. Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year are fast days, even if they coincide with major feasts (e.g., the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29 and the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15)¹². Like his predecessor Mark III, Athanasius allows only two fast-free weeks: the Bright Week (Pascha week) and the week following Pentecost¹³.

In the conclusion of the letter, Athanasius once more exhorts the faithful to observe these rules “*throughout the entire See of St. Mark*” (*al-kursī al-marquṣī*) and regards their observance as a necessary condition for the Lord’s protection for Egypt’s Orthodox Christians, “so that the Lord may preserve you from every misfortune, grant you His divine blessings, and keep you by the watchful care of His sleepless eye”.

¹² All the dates are indicated according to the Julian calendar.

¹³ See: Treiger A. Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (4): Canonical Responses of the Patriarch Mark III of Alexandria. Chapter 5. §12. P. 16, 24–25 (cf.: introduction, P. 8).

The final line of the letter presents some difficulty. A key term in the manuscript, written as *عل سي*, is here interpreted as *علامتي* - ‘*alāmati*, “my ‘*alāma*”. The term ‘*alāma* refers to an ornamental pious formula used by a ruler or high official (whether secular or ecclesiastical, as in our case) as a personal emblem or signature used to authenticate a document¹⁴. Athanasius’s chosen ‘*alāma* is the word “Amen”, which is reproduced by the scribe on the left side of the final line.

The Arabic encyclical of Patriarch Athanasius III adds valuable evidence to the portrait of this prominent church leader. Previously, we knew him primarily as a church diplomat during the reigns of Emperors Michael VIII and Andronikos II Palaiologos — adept at navigating between supporters and opponents of the Union of Lyons¹⁵; as the author of a letter to the Russian Church on the occasion of Metropolitan Maximus’s (metropolitan 1283–1305) election to the See of Kiev¹⁶, and as a bibliophile, thanks to whom the Patriarchate of Alexandria’s library was enriched with significant manuscripts, including the famous *Codex Alexandrinus* (a 5th-century Greek Bible)¹⁷. The

¹⁴ See: *Смирнов А.В. Логико-смысловые основания арабо-мусульманской культуры: семиотика и изобразительное искусство. М., 2005. P. 60. Note 1: “The word ‘*alāma* denoted the ruler’s signature on official documents, and some Arab states had a special office for an official who wrote such an ‘*alāma*. This term conveys the same idea of individual distinction, as the ‘*alāma*-signature served as the ruler’s personal mark”. See also: *Shawe-Taylor E. Document of the Month 1/25: An Early Calligraphic Signature. Nishān, ‘Alāma, or Ṭuḡhrā: A Case Study from the Firuzkuh Papers (22.01.2025) // https://invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk/article/document-of-the-month-1/25-nishan-alama-or-ughra-a-case-study-from-the-0.**

¹⁵ *Лебедев А.П. Исторические очерки состояния Византийско-восточной церкви. P. 273–275; Failler A. Le séjour d’Athanasie II d’Alexandrie à Constantinople. The letter against the Latins attributed to Athanasius III most likely does not belong to him; see: Laurent V, Darrouzès J. Dossier grec de l’Union de Lyon (1273–1277). Paris, 1976. P. 41–45, 336–345; Failler A. Le séjour d’Athanasie II d’Alexandrie à Constantinople. P. 46, 56.*

¹⁶ Edition and French translation: *Failler A. Le séjour d’Athanasie II d’Alexandrie à Constantinople. P. 58–63. St. Maximus of Kiev is venerated among the saints (feast days: December 6 and June 23).*

¹⁷ In the 17th century, it was taken to Constantinople by Cyril Lucaris (Patriarch of Alexandria: 1601–1620; Patriarch of Constantinople: 1620–1638, intermittently) and presented to King Charles I of England; it is now in London: London, British Library, Royal MS 1. D. V–VIII. On Athanasius III’s role in acquiring this manuscript, see: *McKendrick S. The Codex Alexandrinus. However, this view has now been challenged by*

letter published here allows us to see him as an archpastor who cared deeply for his flock.

The text of Athanasius III's letter is presented below in the original Arabic, accompanied by an English translation.

In the Name of God, the Living and Pre-Eternal	(١٣٤) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْحَيِّ الْأَزَلِيِّ
<p>A copy of the epistle received from Father Athanasius, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, for the entire See of Saint Mark, Egypt, and Alexandria, wherein he exhorts them to preserve the ordinances contained therein.</p>	<p>نسخة كتاب ورد من الاب اثناسيوس بابا وبطريك الاسكندرية الى ساير التوربه¹⁸ (؟) المرقصية ومصر والاسكندرية يحضهم على حفظ¹⁹ ما فيها من وصايا مضمونة</p>
<p>Let it be known to the beloved brother, the lord Archbishop Kyr Peter, <i>locum tenens</i> of the Patriarchal Residence (<i>nā'ib al-qillāya al-baṭraḳiyya</i>), and to the rest of the hierarchs and priests of the See of Saint Mark (<i>al-kursī al-marquṣī</i>)—may the Lord preserve you all by His mighty right hand, Amen!—that there are among you customs [lit. “sections”, <i>fuṣūl</i>] in need of correction and rectification (<i>al-iṣlāḥ wa-t-tahrīr</i>). Though by long-standing practice throughout the years they have come to be regarded as good, we have learnt that, in the opinion of the men of rectification (<i>aṣḥāb at-tahrīr</i>), they are harmful. Perhaps it is on account of these very things that you have been visited with continual sorrows and grievous afflictions, for divisions in the rites are exceedingly perilous. They remain hidden for a time, yet the wrath [of God] cometh at an hour we know not. Wherefore it seemed good unto me to remind you of these matters, that you might know them and observe the fitting order therein, even as it is upheld in all the churches of the Christians who are zealous for righteousness [lit. “men of rectification”] (<i>dawī at-tahrīr</i>).</p>	<p>ليعلم الاخ الحبيب السيد الارشبابيسقوبوس كبير بطرس نايب القلاية البطركية وبقية روسا كهنة الكرسي المرقصي والكهنة — صان الرب كافتكم بيمينه القوية، أمين — ان عندكم فصول تحتاج الاصلاح والتحرير واخذتها العادة بطول السنين بحيث كانت تظن انها جيدة وتعلمنا بروية اصحاب التحرير انها ضارة²⁰ وربما بسببها صارت هذه الاحزان المترادفة والتخلبات المهولة لان المخالفات الشرعية صعبة جداً وتتخذ الى وقت ما، ثم ياتي الرجز عنها في الوقت الذي لا نعلمه نحن، فلهذا ترجح عندي اذكركم بها لتعرفوها وتحفظوا²¹ فيها النظام (٣٤) اب) الواجب كما هو بكل كنايس المسيحيين ذوي التحرير .</p>

Mina Monier, who argues plausibly that the manuscript may have been in Egypt before Athanasius III; see: *Monier M. The History of Codex Alexandrinus: New Evidence from Arabic Paratexts // Novum Testamentum. 2025. Vol. 67. P. 501–526.*

¹⁸ The reading of the word is doubtful, but clearly refers to the patriarchal throne of St. Mark, i.e., to the Patriarchate of Alexandria (the term *الكرسي المرقصي* is later used with the same meaning). It is possible that the original word was *القلاية* (“cell”). In cursive handwriting, the letter ق is indistinguishable from ت, and the digraph لا can look like رر or ور. The expression *القلاية المقدسة البطريركية المرقصية* (“the holy patriarchal cell of St. Mark”) with a similar meaning, indicating the Patriarchate of Alexandria, appears in the autograph of Patriarch Athanasius III in manuscript Vat. Ott. gr. 452, fol. 1r (https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Ott.gr.452); see also: McKendrick S. *The Codex Alexandrinus. Fig. 4.*

¹⁹ MS. *حفض*.

²⁰ MS. *ظارة*.

²¹ MS. *وتحفظو*.

<p>Section <I></p> <p>The Divine Liturgy shall be celebrated at the third hour of the day [i.e., 9 o'clock in the morning], and at no other time—either at early dawn, or at sunrise, or at the ninth hour [i.e., 3 o'clock in the afternoon]. Let no one appeal to the pretext of Wednesday or Friday, or to great feasts, or to fear [of persecution?], or to any other excuse. Rather, if it should be impossible to serve it at the appointed time, then it is better to cancel it.</p>	<p>فصل</p> <p>القدّاس الالاهي يُعمل في الساعة الثالثة من النهار، وما عدى ذلك، اعني باكر او سحر او في التاسعة من النهار فلا يُعمل البتّة، ولا يحتجّ احد بالاربعاء والجمعة او الاعياد الكبار او الخوف او غير ذلك من الحجج بل اذا لم يمكن عمله في الوقت الواجب فتركه اولى²².</p>
<p>Section <II></p> <p>Let the first and second <i>qurbāna</i> (prospora) not be distributed outside the temple, on account of the external [=non-Christian] nations (<i>al-umam al-barrāniyya</i>) and others. But whosoever among the faithful desireth to partake thereof, let him receive it from the hand of the priest with fear and reverence, at the gate of the temple of offering (i.e., altar, <i>haykal at-taqdīma</i>), and let him consume it immediately, taking nothing out of the church. The portion shall be very small, so that it may be swallowed easily. These two prosphoras—the first and the second—shall be very small in size, so that the priest may without burden consume what remaineth thereof within the sanctuary. And if he be unable to consume them, let him give them to an innocent child or a pious elderly woman, that they may partake. Let this be consumed with great reverence and fear, within the church.</p>	<p>فصل</p> <p>القربانة الاولى والثانية لا تُعطى بزّا الهيكل بسبب الامم البرّانية وغيرها بل من أثر اخذها من المومنين فليأخذها من يد الكاهن بورع ونقّي²³ من باب هيكل التقديمه وياكلها لساعته ولا يخرج بها من الكنيسة، ولتكن قطعة لطيفة جداً حتى لا يتقل عليه اكلها، ولتكن هاتين القربانتين، اعني الاولى والثانية، صغاراً جداً حتى لا يتقل على الكاهن ما يتبقأ منها (١٣٥) داخل الهيكل ان ياكله، وان عجز عن اكله فليعطى لصبي طاهر او امرأة عجوز بازّة تتناولها، وهذا يوكل بغاية التقى والورع داخل البيعة.</p>
<p>Section <III></p> <p>Upon the completion of the Liturgy and the elevation of the Holy Gifts (<i>al-aḡyā = τὰ ἅγια</i>), a small amount of hot boiling water—if only a single drop—shall be poured in, according to the custom of the Christian churches. And let [the priest] diligently observe it.</p>	<p>فصل</p> <p>وعند تمام القدّاس ورفع الاجيا فليوضع قليل ماء حارّ مغلي ولو نقطة²⁴ واحدة حسب عادة الكنايس المسيحية وليهتم بهذا غاية الاهتمام.</p>
<p>Section <IV></p> <p>Let no more than one clergyman of each [ecclesiastical] rank serve at one and the same Liturgy, that is, only one priest and one deacon.</p>	<p>فصل</p> <p>لا يقّدس القدّاس الواحد سوى كاهن واحد من كلّ طغمة، اعني قسّ واحد او شماس واحد فقط.</p>

²² MS. اولاً

²³ MS. وتقا

²⁴ MS. نقطة

Section <V>	فصل
<p>The oil poured into the church lamps shall burn until it be wholly consumed. Yet if the one appointed over the lamps desireth, he may gather the remaining oil into one small lamp, and let it burn by night before the holy icons (<i>al-quwan al-muqaddasa</i>), until it be wholly consumed; for it hath become sanctified and an offering unto the Lord, and it is not permitted to use it for any other purpose.</p>	<p>الزيت الذي يوضع في قناديل البيعة فليوقد فيها الى ان يحترق²⁵ كله، واذا اراد القِيم على القناديل (٣٥ب) فالذي يبقى فيها من الزيت فليجمعه في قنديل صغير واحد وليقد بالليل امام القُون²⁶ المقدسة الى ان يحترق كله لانه صار مقدساً للرب وضحية وما يجب استعماله في شي آخر اصلاً.</p>
Section <VI>	فصل
<p>Rented candles should not be brought into the church at all, whether for baptism, or for the funeral, or for the wedding. Rather, everyone should bring what he can afford for any of these aforementioned occasions, even if it be a very thin candle. This is because candles lit in the church cannot be burned [afterwards] in the places of the nations (<i>amākin al-umam</i>). A candle lit during the Liturgy should not be taken out of the church at all; it should burn in [the church] because it has become an offering to the Lord.</p>	<p>شمع المُكْرَى²⁷ لا يُدْخَل البيعة اصلاً، لا في عماد ولا في جنازة ولا في اكليل بل ليُخْضِر كل واحد في هذه الاوقات المذكورة ما تصل اليه قدرته، ولو شمعة لطيفة جداً، لان الشمع الذي يوقد بالبيعة ما يجوز وقيدته ايضاً باماكن الامم، والشمعة التي توقد بالقداس فلا تُخْرَج ايضاً من (٣٦أ) البيعة اصلاً بل بها تحرق لانه صارت ضحية للرب.</p>
Section <VII>	فصل
<p>Let non-lenten food not be eaten on Wednesdays or Fridays during the Pentecost season [i.e., the seven weeks following Pascha], except only during the first week and the week of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. On all other Wednesdays and Fridays within the Pentecost season, fasting is to be observed, just as it is observed every week throughout the year. Likewise, on the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos [=August 15] and the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul [=June 29], if they fall on a Wednesday or Friday, non-lenten food shall not be eaten.</p>	<p>لا يوكل الزفر في الاربعاء والجمعة الخمسين الا في الجمعة الاولى وجمعة حلول روح القدس فقط، وبقيّة ايام الاربعاء والجمعة بالخمسين يحتفظ بها مثل ما يحتفظ بالاربعاء والجمعة طول السنة وكذلك نياح السيّدة وعيد بطرس ويولص ان صار في يوم اربعاء او جمعة فلا يوكل فيهما زفر.</p>

²⁵ MS. تحترق.

²⁶ The term *qūna* (pl. *quwan*) instead of *ayqūna* (*ayqūnāt*) is typical of Copts and Orthodox Christians in Egypt. This is a distinctive Egyptian textual “marker” (cf.: Sinai ar. 390, fol. 117r, 118r, etc.; Sinai ar. 561, fol. 454r; Sinai ar. 563, 301v). See: *Graf G. Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini*. Louvain, 1954. P. 94.

²⁷ MS. الكرى.

<p>Let every prudent person observe these customs [lit. “sections”] (<i>fuṣūl</i>), for their observance is very profitable to the soul, and their neglect is exceedingly harmful. Before the harm of [transgressing] them was made known, the punishment for [transgressing] them may have been light; but now that this has been revealed, the penalty for their violation has become more grievous. Observe them therefore throughout the whole See of Saint Mark (<i>al-kursī al-marquṣī</i>), so that the Lord may preserve you from every misfortune, grant you all of His divine blessings, and keep you by the watchful care of His sleepless eye. May it be so, by the intercessions of all the holy fathers. Amen.</p>	<p>هذه الفصول يحفظها محتكم فحفظها نافع للنفس جداً ومخالفتها ضارة الى الغاية القسوى. وقبل ان تُعرَف²⁸ (٣٦ ب) مضرّتها ربّما انّ عقوبتها كانت قليلة والان فاذا قد عُرفتْ فالعقوبة على مخالفتها صعبة فتحفظوا بها في كلّ الكرسي المرقسي يُحفظكم الرب من كل رزية ويُجلّ عليكم كلّ بركاته الالهية ويوقمكم بحراسة عينه التي لا تنام، يكون ذلك بوسائل كافة الابا الابرار، آمين.</p>
<p>These customs [lit. “sections”] (<i>fuṣūl</i>) shall be known to all hierarchs and priests, and they shall exhort and encourage [the faithful] to keep them—with their entire soul and body.</p>	<p>وسبيل هذه الفصول ان يعرف بها كلّ روسا الكهنة والكهنة ويندبوا الى حفظها والحثّ عليها بكلّ النفس والجسم.</p>
<p>I have inscribed my ‘<i>alāma</i> in confirmation [of the foregoing]. [‘<i>Alāma</i>]: “Amen”.</p>	<p>وضعتُ <علامتي>²⁹ للتاكيد عليها: "أمين".</p>

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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