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The First Arabic Translations of Enlightenment Literature: the Damietta Circle of the 1800s and 1810s

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The First Arabic Translations of Enlightenment Literature: the Damietta Circle of the 1800s and 1810s

The subject of this paper is a circle of translators working in the Egyptian port of Damietta in the 1800s and 1810s. Based around the household of a wealthy Syrian merchant, this circle translated scientific, fictional and historical works of the Enlightenment, from Greek and other languages into Arabic. The first section gives some background on Damietta, the Syrian Christian merchant community there, and the Fakhr family, including contemporary accounts of Bāsīlī Fakhr and his household. The second presents the biography of ʿĪsā Petro, the main translator of the Damietta Circle. I then consider the translations themselves, presenting a thematic list of the known translations. I examine three sets of influences on the project: the Modern Greek Enlightenment, contacts with Western Europeans, and the revival of Arabic letters among Christians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I also compare the Damietta project with similar translations being made into Arabic at the same time in Constantinople. I go on to analyse the diffusion of manuscript copies of the Damietta translations, and their influence on readers. Finally, in a conclusion I attempt to assess the general significance of the Damietta Circle for literary and cultural history, in the Arab and Mediterranean contexts.

Introduction

Historians and literary scholars of the Arab and Ottoman world have long been aware of the existence of a circle of translators of European writings into Arabic, in the early nineteenth century in the port of Damietta in Egypt.¹ Yet it has never yet been the subject of a dedicated study: it has not been recognised as the first substantial engagement with the Enlightenment in the Arabic-speaking world, and its significance for the later “nahḍa” or Arab cultural revival, has been largely unexplored. My purpose here is, firstly, to give as full an account as possible of the works translated by the Circle, and to present what information is available about its principal members. Secondly, I draw attention to some hitherto unnoticed aspects of the Damietta translation project, most obviously its relationship with the Modern Greek Enlightenment. Thirdly, I attempt to explain and situate it in its social context. What I do not attempt here is any detailed textual analysis of the actual manuscripts produced by the Damietta Circle. Quite apart from considerations of space, the fact that the manuscripts are scattered and sometimes lost, has prevented me from consulting more than a very few of them. Further study of the works of the Damietta Circle, of the Greek versions from which they were made, and of earlier and contemporary translations and original writings of the “Christian nahḍa”, is likely to be of great interest, however – particularly for the history of the Arabic language and vocabulary, of translation, and of the transmission of knowledge around the Mediterranean.

Damietta and the House of Fakhr

The port of Damietta, on a branch of the Nile near the Mediterranean coast, was one of the main centres of Levantine-European trade in the early nineteenth century. Damietta was then the principal port of Egypt, a prosperous town of around 30,000 inhabitants, very much centred on the sea.² It was known as a city of learning among both Muslims and Christians, as Mīkhā'il Mishāqa remarked when he arrived there in 1817.³ This is how a European traveller, the Baroness von Minutoli, saw it – from a slight Orientalizing distance – in 1822:

On leaving the boat, I was agreeably surprised with the most pleasing and diversified prospect. The city of Damietta is built on the right bank of the river; and its first appearance reminded me of some of the quarters of Venice; the houses, looking all on this side towards the Nile, and towards the country, with their balconies, terraces, and pavilions, have not such a dull monotonous effect as most of the houses in the East.... Every house at Damietta has its own little port, to facilitate the approach of vessels of all kinds: for the trade of this city in coffee, rice, beans, and linens, is very brisk, and extends into Syria, and all parts of the Levant. Numerous boats and gondolas, called canges, elegantly decorated, were sailing up and down the river: and not to leave this moving picture without some contrast to give it additional interest, groups of Turks were gravely seated before each of the houses, cross-legged, on rich carpets, smoking their long pipes, with the most unalterable composure.⁴

The Rise of the Syrian Christians in the Eighteenth Century

The main merchant community of the town was composed not of Egyptians but of Syrian Christians, established there from the eighteenth century – a precursor of the greater waves of Shāmīs who were to come to Egypt through the nineteenth century. A census of 1809 puts the number of Syrians at 671. The other main community of merchants in Damietta was the Greeks, numbering around 200. Greeks also controlled much of the shipping. Both communities belonged to extensive diasporic networks of trading and family connections, spread across the Eastern Mediterranean.⁵ Both of these “trading diasporas” had risen to prominence in the Levant trade from the early eighteenth century onwards, the Syrians displacing the existing “trading diasporas”, the Jews and Armenians.⁶

The rise of these diasporic Christian groups has often been linked to the growing European domination of the Levant trade – Christians could obtain consular protection from European powers, giving them tax exemption; and Europeans tended to favour Christians as trading partners.⁷ Thomas Philipp shows, however, that the link between local Christians and Europeans was a complex and variable one: for instance, the Syrian Christians and the French often worked as trading partners together; but were also at various points in direct competition – in the Damietta textile trade in the early eighteenth century, for instance.⁸ But if not necessarily tied to increasing European domination, undoubtedly the Syrians, like the other trading diasporas of the Levant, were dependent upon *contact* with Europe.

This is well demonstrated by the case of the Fakhr family, one of the wealthiest and most important Syrian families and patrons of the translation circle. The Fakhrs, like other Syrian Christian families, had risen to prominence in the Levant trade in the eighteenth century. Already in the early eighteenth century their trading network extended from Tripoli and Aleppo to Antalya in what is now southern Turkey, Damietta in Egypt and Livorno in Italy, with family members in both the British and the French diplomatic service.⁹ They had early on a reputation for letters: Ḥannā Fakhr, who seems to have been the first to move to Damietta, is referred to as the “teacher of the sons of Damietta”,¹⁰ while their most famous member, Ilyās ibn Fakhr of Tripoli (d. 1757), was a theological writer and translator; he also served as dragoman to the British consulate in Aleppo.

The Fakhrs of Tripoli were Melchite Christians; when the Melchite Church split into Catholic and Orthodox factions in the 1720s, the Fakhrs, like most Tripoli Melchites, opted for Orthodoxy: Ilyās ibn Fakhr, formerly sympathetic to Rome, now devoted his pen to anti-Catholic polemic.¹¹ The vast majority of the Melchites of Damietta, on the other hand, became Catholic – their community grew in size and strength until, in the second half of the eighteenth century, they came to dominate the Egyptian customs administration and the trade between the Levant and Europe, as well as between Egypt and Syria, displacing the Jews.¹² The Fakhrs shared in this: it seems reasonable to regard the Fakhrs, despite their Orthodoxy, as forming part of the “new Arabic-speaking middle class” which Philipp sees as emerging at the time of the Melchite schism. Thus Mīkhā’il Fakhr in 1748 had a monopoly of the Damietta rice trade, and in 1768, after some intriguing, secured the important position of head of the Damietta customs, destroying the fortunes of the Jewish merchants who had formerly held this post. He himself was *douanier* for only three years, however, before further intriguing by Greek Catholics forced him out, and he was exiled to Venice in 1773.¹³ From then on, Catholic families such as the Fir‘awns were the preeminent merchants of Damietta.¹⁴ The Fakhrs seem to have continued to trade at Damietta and other Levantine ports, however, for Bāsīlī Fakhr – apparently descended from another branch of the family, via Mīkhā’il’s grandfather Fakhr ibn Ilyās – emerges in the early years of the nineteenth century as a wealthy merchant.¹⁵

Bāsīlī Fakhr in the Early Nineteenth Century

When the French occupied Egypt in 1798, most of the Syrian Christians in Egypt associated themselves with the invaders.¹⁶ In Damietta, Bāsīlī Fakhr, then in his late twenties,¹⁷ acted as agent for the French commander Drovetti; his son Yūsuf and one of his cousins, Ilyās, apparently worked as interpreters for the French General Jacques-François (‘ Abdallāh) de Menou (1750-1810).¹⁸ When the French left in 1801 and Mehmet Ali rose to power, the Syrians of Damietta entered a period of stagnation and decline, due to their association with the French and for other reasons, explored by Thomas Philipp.¹⁹ The Fakhrs do not appear to have suffered unduly in the short term, however: Bāsīlī Fakhr was certainly prosperous in trade in the 1820s (though by 1834 his son Yūsuf was described in a consular report as poor, perhaps indicating a downturn in the family fortunes after Bāsīlī’s death).²⁰ Perhaps one reason for this was his continuing association with the French, for whom he acted as consular agent (as well as for perhaps for as many as five other European powers).²¹ In addition to his commercial success, he was a pillar of the local Orthodox community and Logothete (Chancellor) of the Apostolic See of Alexandria; he was evidently a respected person in the town, despite being an Orthodox Christian among a Syrian community that consisted largely of Greek Catholics.²² He wrote two works of theological polemic, of which the better-known, *al-Jawāhir al-Fakhriyya*, was later printed.²³ According to Asselin de Cherville, his knowledge of Arabic, Turkish and Modern Greek was perfect; he also spoke Italian, though he could not read it.²⁴ He was also widely renowned for his fine library and his patronage of the arts.²⁵ According to the Fakhr family tree, he was married twice, once to the daughter of Niqūlā Samīna and, then after her death, to the daughter of Niqūlā Ṣawāya; Yūsuf was his only child. The date of his death is not known, but seems to have been prior to 1834.²⁶

Bāsīlī Fakhr, as consular agent and intermediary, often played host to European travellers passing through Damietta. One of these, the aforementioned Baroness von Minutoli, described his palatial home in 1822. First she entered “a vast saloon, on the ground floor, paved with bricks, and ornamented in the Byzantine fashion. It was very lofty, and had no other covering but a lattice, over which an enormous vine spread its branches and thick foliage”. She was then received in “a cabinet adjoining a saloon, elegantly hung with draperies of Indian muslin, and the floor covered with a Persian carpet, and surrounded with a broad and very low divan, in the Eastern fashion, the only kind of furniture in the apartment.” But she herself stayed during her visit in a “pavilion” “which Mr. Faker had lately had built in the European fashion” and which the Baroness was agreeably surprised to find furnished with European-style tables and chairs. Thus “Byzantine”, “Eastern” and “European” styles were all present.²⁷

As for Signor Fakhr himself: “He was about fifty years of age, of a dignified figure and grave deportment; he wore the oriental dress, that is, an ample silk robe, a turban, and a cachemere sash. Notwithstanding the politeness and urbanity of his manners, I could not help experiencing a degree of restraint and embarrassment in his presence.”²⁸ She describes the variety of those who sat at his table (she herself being the only woman present): “The company at this table was pretty numerous, consisting of the secretaries, the physician, the dragoman, and some relations of the master of the house, as well as of strangers, who frequently came upon business, Mr. Faker having a large commercial establishment.”²⁹

With this combination of opulence, excellent connections with Europeans and other Levantine communities, and a taste for (largely Arabic) literature, it is unsurprising that Bāsīlī Fakhr should have been patron to this pioneering translation project.

‘Īsā Petro, Translator and Polymath

Fakhr's main collaborator in the translation project, the Greek Orthodox priest ‘Īsā Petro,³⁰ was also a remarkable man. A native of Jerusalem, he was – according to ‘Īsā Iskandar Ma‘lūf, who wrote a short biography of him in 1911 – drawn to Damietta, like other writers of the time, by the literary fame of the town, and particularly the Fakhr family with its reputation for literary patronage. He became a protégé of the Fakhrs (chiefly Bāsīlī and his cousin Ḥannā Mīkha‘īl), working for them as a secretary. They arranged his marriage to a wealthy Bulgarian woman, aided him in mercantile activities, and also assisted him to enter the priesthood. While at Damietta he became proficient in mathematics, physics and especially astronomy. He may also have acted as interpreter for General Menou (see below, p. 5). Between c. 1808 and 1818 much of his time must have been taken up by the translation project – he was the main translator, working chiefly from Greek (though he seems also to have known several other languages, at least in later life). He presumably worked on this through the plague and flood that afflicted Damietta in 1813.³¹ The end of the 1810s saw the end of the translation project, and for this reason perhaps he moved back to Jerusalem, which was his main place of residence during the 1820s and early 1830s, though he kept a house at Damietta.³² He seems to have had considerable difficulties in obtaining an ecclesiastical position in Jerusalem: this brought him into conflict with some Church authorities.³³ From 1822 onwards, he produced many translations for the British and American Protestant missionaries, including one of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*: he was once fined and bastinadoed by the Ottoman authorities for working with the missionaries.³⁴ He also assisted Europeans and especially Orientalists with locating manuscripts in Jerusalem, and wrote two works of his own, *Qatf al-azhār* and *Zubad al-ṭabī‘iyyāt*, probably during this period.³⁵ He died in Jerusalem during the summer war of 1834.³⁶

The Protestant missionaries left illuminating accounts of him. First that of the Englishman William Jowett:

I have just made the acquaintance ... of one of the most interesting characters in this place – Pappas Ysa Petros. He is a Priest of the Greek Communion: being a native, Arabic is his language. He is married, and has several children. He understands, besides his native language, Greek, Italian, and French; and he has studied Syriac, Ethiopic, and Armenian from his natural love of languages. I have seen no one in Syria, who unites so much simplicity and goodness of disposition, with such a compass of literary acquirements.³⁷

The American missionary Pliny Fisk gave a fuller account:

Papas Issa Petros, (the Priest Jesus Peter,) is an Arab Christian, but of the Greek rite. He is a man of more learning, probably, than any other Christian in Jerusalem. He speaks fluently in four or five languages; and reads more or less of about fifteen. He has, also, a considerable

knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, and constructs globes for his own use. Fifteen or twenty years of his life were spent in Egypt, principally in connexion with Signor Basil Fakher, one of the consuls at Damietta, an Arab Greek, who is distinguished for his love of learning, and has made a large collection of Arabic books and MSS. For him Papas Issa translated into Arabic Rollin's Ancient History and several other books. When the French were in Egypt, he acted as interpreter for one of their generals; and many of his opinions, both on religion and politics, were evidently borrowed from the French. This has served, in some measure, to free his mind from the narrowness and superstition, which prevail around him, and to leave his mind more free for investigation and research. He has often inquired very particularly about our doctrines and discipline, and expresses a full conviction, that the churches of America and England are more like the primitive Christians, than any other churches on earth. He was the first, whom I invited on the Sabbath to hear Italian preachings; and he afterwards invariably attended. Though he is fully sensible of the superiority, when his talents and learning give him over the other priests; though he is very self-sufficient and self-righteous, and accustomed to dogmatize magisterially in conversing with those around him; yet he often requested us to explain passages of Scripture, and to answer questions in theology, in a manner which showed that he was seriously investigating serious subjects, and that he sometimes felt his own deficiencies.³⁸

The impression one gets is of an independent, somewhat arrogant, argumentative man, with a great appetite for a polymathic range of knowledge.

The Damietta Translations, 1800s and 1810s

The documented translations of the Damietta circle were all made between 1808 and 1818 – the majority seem to have been commissioned by Bāsīlī Fakhr and actually translated by ʿĪsā Petro, but Bāsīlī himself also did some of the translation work. Others known to have been involved were: Bāsīlī's cousins the Priest ʿAbd al-Masīḥ Fakhr and Ḥannā Mīkhāʿīl Fakhr; ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Urshalīmī; one “Juwānī Lāwājītī” (Giovanni Lavagitti?); and possibly the French Orientalist Asselin de Cherville. Mīkhāʿīl Mishāqa and his uncle Buṭrus ʿAnḥūrī were associated with the project at one remove – the latter acquired some copies of its translations in 1814, and the former revised a copy of the translation of Volney's *Voyage* for Mīkhāʿīl Surūr, consul or consular agent of the British at Damietta.³⁹ None of the translated works was ever printed, but several manuscript copies were made of many of them, and these circulated among Syrian Christians beyond Damietta, in places such as Jerusalem, Beirut and Damascus, and in Europe (see below, pp. 10-11).

The translations cover a wide range of learning. There are two histories, Eugenios Voulgaris's history of Christianity in the first century AD (1805) and the first volume of Charles Rollin's *Histoire ancienne* (*Ancient History*, 1730-1738).⁴⁰ With these we can group the *Essai historique et critique sur les dissensions des Églises de Pologne* (*Historical and Critical Essay on the Dissensions of the Churches of Poland*, 1767), by Voltaire, dealing with the religious strife in Poland in the eighteenth century.⁴¹ There are two travel works: an *Introduction to Geography and the Globe* (1716) by Chrysanthos Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem; and the Comte de Volney's *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte* (*Journey through Syria and Egypt*, 1787).⁴² There are two works by the French astronomer Lalande, the *Abrégé d'astronomie* (*Condensed Astronomy*, 1774), and the *Histoire céleste française* (*French Celestial History*, 1801), an astrometric star catalogue.⁴³ Other natural sciences are represented by Benjamin Martin's *Philosophical Grammar* (1735), a general introduction to natural philosophy, and an *Anthology of Physics* (1790) by Rigas Velestinlis, the Greek poet and revolutionary.⁴⁴ Religious matters are represented – in addition to Voulgaris's history of Christianity – by a work on the duties of the priest and deacon, by an unknown author, and a refutation of Voltaire's Biblical criticism (1782) by the Abbé Joseph-Guillaume Clémence.⁴⁵ Of imaginative writing, there are two early French novels, Marmontel's *Bélisaire* (*Belisarius*, 1767) and a partial translation of Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque* (*The Adventures of Telemachus*,

1699).⁴⁶ There is also a literary oddity, the *Aḥādīth Abī Bakr*, apparently an Arabic compilation of fables which had been translated into French, then into Italian, then into Greek: the Greek version was then translated back into Arabic at Damietta.⁴⁷

A glance at this list – which is probably incomplete – reveals what a wide-ranging project this was. It can claim two “firsts” in Arabic literary history: the first engagement with the Enlightenment, and along with the contemporary work of Ilyās ibn Farajallāh Ḍāhir (see below, pp. 9-10), the first translations of modern European novels (*Télémaque* and *Bélisaire*). It was also an unusually concerted effort – other translations of the time appear to have been made far more sporadically. No other single project of the time appears to have made anything like this number of translations, or dealt with such a wide range of subjects. Let us now consider the factors that lay behind this remarkable project.

Influences 1: The Greek Enlightenment

Perhaps the first thing to note is the predominance of Greek influence. Almost all the translations were made from Modern Greek texts, printed in the second half of the eighteenth or the very early nineteenth century. This is the case even with works originally written in other languages (mainly French).⁴⁸ We are looking, to a great extent, at an outgrowth of the Modern Greek or Neohellenic Enlightenment, the revival of learning and letters among Greeks that took place from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards in the Ottoman lands and the Greek diaspora. Most of its products were printed in the latter, in centres such as Vienna and Venice. As Paschalis M. Kitromilides explains, its effects were spread through the Balkans and beyond, rather than being limited to territorial Greece or to Greeks. It covered a “geographical space far beyond the classical Greek heartlands which eventually were to make up Modern Greece,” being based in centres from the Aegean to Central Europe. It involved people from a “variety of ethnic backgrounds” across the Balkans: Bulgarian, Romanian and Serbian. Kitromilides emphasizes “the role its spokesmen played in the transmission of modern ideas and concepts to cultural contexts beyond that of the Hellenic-speaking society of the Balkans. Many intellectuals moved back and forth across the fluid linguistic and ethnic frontiers of the period....” Between these different contexts, Greek culture “acted as a homogenising force which created a shared intellectual universe, shared values and perceptions. In this the Enlightenment profited to a degree that has not been appreciated as it should have been, from the cultural heritage of the Orthodox Church.”⁴⁹

With the Damietta Circle, its influence reached as far as Arabic-speaking Orthodox Christians on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. The Damietta translators’ contacts with Greeks were probably through both the Orthodox Church and trade. Most of the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church was of Hellenic, rather than local origin; there was a large community of Greek-speaking merchants in Damietta – united with the Fakhrs by the Orthodox religion, and possessing networks which extended, like those of the Syrians, across the Eastern Mediterranean. As with other Orthodox peoples in the Balkans, the channels that already existed to transmit ecclesiastical knowledge from Greek into Arabic were now being used for a different kind of traffic.

A brief summary of the Greek authors translated at Damietta is in order. Eugenis Voulgaris (or Bulgaris: 1716-1806), author of the history of Christianity, was the greatest luminary of the Greek Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century. He was Bishop of Slavion and Cherson (Ukraine), spent time at the court of Catherine the Great of Russia, and was a prominent writer, translator and educator, best-known for his textbook on logic.⁵⁰ He was also responsible for the Greek translation of Voltaire’s *Essai historique et critique*, translated into Arabic at Damietta. Chrysanthos Notaras (c. 1663-1731), author of the travel narrative *Introduction to Geography and the Globe*, belonged to an earlier phase: he was a Patriarch of Jerusalem who travelled widely and wrote on theology, canon law, historical geography and astronomy.⁵¹ Alexandros Kagkellarios was a well-known translator of this earlier period. Daniel Philippidēs (1755-1832) and Anthimos Gazēs (1758/1764-1828), translators of Benjamin Martin and Lalande, were well-known as “translators,

commentators, editors... transmitters and exponents of ideas in very varied fields,” including the sciences, history, geography, and philosophy.⁵² Polyzōēs Lampanitziōtēs, translator of Marmontel’s *Bélisaire* and the *Aḥādīth Abī Bakr* (from the Italian), also translated other European works and co-authored a Church history and a work on archaeology.⁵³ Nikēphoros Theotokēs (1731-1800), translator of Abbé Clémence’s refutation of Voltaire, was another cleric and educator, who succeeded Voulgaris as Bishop of Slavinion and Cherson. He attacked Voltaire bitterly in the preface to his translation of Clémence’s work.⁵⁴ Rigas Velestinlis (1757-1798), the poet and revolutionary agitator, was known for his rousing patriotic poetry and his translation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man; his short work on physics, translated at Damietta, features his famous motto “He who thinks freely, thinks well”.⁵⁵ Apart from Rigas (and possibly Lampanitziōtēs), these were all churchmen, who often studied, worked and published their writing outside Greece, as well as teaching at Church-sponsored schools inside the Ottoman Greek territories.

As G. P. Henderson argues, the clerical links of the Modern Greek Enlightenment, in the late eighteenth century, lent it a particular character: “even the most freethinking of their works tend to preserve a certain theological aspect. Most of the writers, sooner or later, express a firm assurance of the existence of God, the immortality of the soul and the prospect of future reward for virtue. Many speak as if the ultimate tendency of their writings were and ought to be to show these things, and only occasionally does any doubt arise in one’s mind as to the sincerity of the argument which they employ in order to do so. At the same time, it is the rationalist strand in their works which provides their main interest....”⁵⁶ In many respects, it seems correct to see the Damietta Circle as partaking of this style and tone. We should not read too much into the presence of two works which featured on the Index of proscribed books – Voltaire’s *Essai historique et critique* and Marmontel’s *Bélisaire* – or of a work by the revolutionary republican Velestinlis.⁵⁷ Looked at as a whole, the list of translated works suggests the moderate rather than the radical Enlightenment. The presence of Christian “tags” such as the heading “bi-ism al-ab wa-l-ibn wa-l-rūḥ al-quḍus” (“In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost”), and the care with which the translators give ecclesiastical titles (the *Archbishop* Fénelon, the *Archimandrite* Anthimos Gazēs) in their prefaces, suggest an atmosphere similar to that described by Henderson.⁵⁸

At the same time, the Damietta project clearly stands out from previous translations into Arabic for its largely secular subject matter. Translation from Greek in itself was nothing new: Ilyās ibn Fakhr, among others, had translated a long list of works from Greek into Arabic earlier in the eighteenth century. Nor was the translation of “profane” or secular material: these lists included works of history and philosophy; Martin’s *Philosophical Grammar* or Gazēs’s History of Christianity could well be seen featuring in them. But in these lists of titles – translated under Church auspices, and invariably by clerics, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – such secular works would have been rare exceptions among a great mass of theological and devotional material.⁵⁹ It is not the presence but the preponderance of secular (or “profane”) writing here that is striking, along with the unusual coherence of the project. This concerted effort to get a range of secular knowledge into Arabic suggests a polymathism similar to that of Gazēs, Philippidēs, and other Greek Enlighteners.

Influences 2: The Franks

The other influence which clearly played a role was that of Western Europeans – Franks, to use the local term. This comes through in many ways. Much of the material translated via Greek was of course Western European – overwhelmingly French – in origin or inspiration. The Neohellenic Enlightenment, like its counterparts in Russia, the Balkans, and later the Arab and Ottoman world, looked for knowledge to those advanced countries of Western Europe, most obviously France.

But not all European influence came filtered through Hellenic transmitters; there was also much direct contact between Arab Christians and Franks. At Damietta Bāsīlī Fakhr played host to many

European travellers, including the scholarly Drovetti and Asselin de Cherville: one imagines that science and learning were not absent from the topics discussed at his table (described by Baroness von Minutoli). Indeed, he mentions such contacts in his introduction to his translation of *Télémaque*, as prompting his interest in the work: “I was always hearing from the European gentlemen who were lovers of study and reading, fulsome praise for the author of *Telemachus, son of Odysseus*”.⁶⁰

The translation circle itself was known among Europeans – Orientalists, missionaries and travellers – though their information about it was often imprecise. Baroness von Minutoli, for instance, refers to Bāsīlī Fakhr as having “translated into Italian several of the most esteemed Arabian authors” – a statement for which there is no support elsewhere, while she makes no reference to his translations from European languages into Arabic.⁶¹ The French Orientalists Silvestre de Sacy and Asselin de Cherville had an exchange over the circle in the early 1810s: de Sacy claimed that Fakhr had translated works by Voltaire and Rousseau; Asselin replied that he had never heard of these authors.⁶² (Perhaps he was correct that the circle had not heard of Voltaire by this stage (1811-1814), but they translated a work of Voltaire’s at some point before 1823.)

Contacts with Franks are likely to have been particularly intense during the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt from 1798 to 1801. It is perhaps in this event that we can find the reason why the translations should have been undertaken from the mid-1800s onwards, and not before. The Greek books existed, and were presumably available, prior to this, after all. Contact with French learning may have been a decisive catalyst: Mishāqa cites his uncle Buṭrus ‘Anḥūrī as saying that he had “learned the latest discoveries in astronomy, physics and geography” while at Damietta, from the French scholars who came with Bonaparte to Egypt.⁶³ Fisk also cites the effect upon ‘Īsā Petro of contact with the French at the time of the occupation (“many of his opinions, both on religion and politics, were evidently borrowed from the French. This has served, in some measure, to free his mind from the narrowness and superstition, which prevail around him, and to leave his mind more free for investigation and research.”)⁶⁴ Apart from intellectual contacts, though, one wonders whether the demonstration of French military power may have had some effect in turning the Damietta Circle’s thoughts to French writings.

Influences 3: The Arabic Literary Revival

To a large extent, then, the project was the result of a mixed and mixing linguistic and social context, in which Arabic-speaking Christians from Syria interacted with European merchants, travellers, and invaders, as well as, presumably – given the Greek presence in Damietta and the Greek provenance of most of the translated works – with Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians. One result of this mixing is the diversity of sources which refer to the circle: accounts by Frenchmen such as Asselin de Cherville, the Englishwoman Minutoli, and English and American missionaries; the Arabic writings of Mishāqa and ‘Īsā Iskandar Ma‘lūf; and the scattered surviving manuscripts themselves. (I have not found, however, any Greek accounts.)⁶⁵

Yet while the sources and inspirations for the translation project may have been Greek and Frank, we should not lose sight of fact that its aim was to get these works into Arabic. The translations were originally commissioned by Bāsīlī Fakhr to complement his existing library of Arabic writings (the contents of which are sadly unknown to us). Quite aside from the translation project, he was known as a patron of Arabic writers.⁶⁶ The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had of course seen both Catholic and Orthodox Syrians take a prominent part in the revival of Arabic letters: the “Christian nahḍa” associated with Bishop Jirmānūs Farḥāt of Aleppo, Niqūlā al-Ṣa’igh, and other “old pioneers”.⁶⁷ Although the precise links remain to be explored, it seems clear that this increase in cultural activity was bound up with the emergence of the new “Arabic-speaking middle class” in the Eastern Mediterranean over the same period. Another feature of the eighteenth century was the rise of Arabic-speaking Greek Catholic families of secretaries and litterateurs, like the Ṣabbāghs and the Baḥrīs, to positions of considerable power at the courts of local rulers such as Zāhir Āl

‘Umar of Acre.⁶⁸ By the early nineteenth century Damietta, along with centres such as Aleppo and Damascus and the courts of Lebanese princes such as Bashīr Shihāb II, was very much part of this literary scene: according to ‘Isā Iskandar Ma‘lūf, Bāsīlī and his cousin Ḥannā Mīkhā’īl Fakhr welcomed and perhaps patronized a number of poets and writers of the era, of different Christian denominations, including the Baḥrīs of Homs and Niqūlā al-Turk.⁶⁹

Besides this literary activity, Damietta was known as a centre of learning of other kinds, among both Muslims and Christians.⁷⁰ Without further information on the state of culture and education in Damietta at the time, it is impossible to say precisely how the translations fitted into these existing currents of learning in Arabic, but the example of Buṭrus ‘Anḥūrī is suggestive. He studied astronomy under the Muslim Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣabbāgh al-Mīqātī in Damietta; acquired copies of the Damietta translations of de Lalande’s works on astronomy; and wrote his own work on the eclipses of the sun and the moon.⁷¹ For astronomy at least, this suggests less a simple acquisition of new knowledge than an interplay between this new knowledge and learning that already existed locally – which then inspired ‘Anḥūrī to further creative efforts. The retranslation into Arabic of the *Aḥādīth Abī Bakr*, from a Greek version, seems to be an early example of the interest of Arabic translators in elements of their own heritage transmitted via European languages.⁷²

Similar Translations of the Period

The Damietta translators were not entirely isolated, in the 1810s, in their transmission of Enlightenment literature into Arabic: if theirs was the most ambitious project, others were not too far behind. Worthy of particular consideration are two translations made in Constantinople in the 1810s. The first is a translation of the *Histoire romaine* (*Roman History*, 1741) of Charles Rollin, whose *Histoire ancienne* was translated at Damietta. The *Histoire romaine* arrived in Arabic by a roundabout road: first it was translated into Italian; the Mechitarists (Armenian Catholic monks) of Venice then used this to make an Armenian version (revised from the French). Finally in 1822, the Armenian priest Krikor Far, originally from Aleppo and resident in Constantinople, made this Arabic translation.⁷³ The second is another translation of Fénelon’s *Les aventures de Télémaque* (1699), made in 1812 by Ilyās ibn Farajallāh Ḍāhir al-Ḥalabī al-Bizāntī, a young Syrian Catholic, originally from Aleppo but resident in Constantinople. Unlike Fakhr’s this was a full translation of the novel, and apparently made directly from the French text.⁷⁴

Ilyās ibn Farajallāh Ḍāhir appears to have been the son of Farajallāh ibn Ilyās Ḍāhir, who made a copy of Krikor Far’s translation of Rollin.⁷⁵ This suggests that the two translations were linked. Ilyās refers in his introduction to having read *Télémaque* in the original French, suggesting that he translated it from this language; but he also refers to its popularity in Italian, Greek, Armenian and Bulgarian translations.⁷⁶

There seems to be a common logic to these two Constantinople translations and those made in Damietta: they were all efforts by Syrian Christians, members of the emergent Arabic-speaking middle class; they were all made in diasporic centres outside Syria itself: Damietta the trading entrepôt and Constantinople the imperial capital; they were all linked to contacts with Christian groups of the region speaking other languages: not only the Franks but the Greeks, Armenians, and even Bulgarians. This suggests that the Damietta Circle was not an isolated occurrence, but a particularly active case of a more widespread trend. Syrian Christians elsewhere too, in these early decades of the nineteenth century, were seeking new forms of knowledge from Europe and the Balkans, through the channels available to them from Church or trade links.

The existence of two translations of the same work, *Télémaque*, within a few years of each other, is rather remarkable, and suggests the two translators may have been aware of each other – one possible link would have been through Bāsīlī’s cousin Ḥannā Mīkhā’īl, also noted as a patron of literature, who moved to Constantinople, apparently at some stage in the 1810s, and was a person of

some consequence there.⁷⁷ However, it must be said that if any work was likely to be translated twice by coincidence, it was the immensely popular *Télémaque*, which had a great Balkan vogue in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and was subsequently translated several times into both Arabic and Ottoman Turkish.⁷⁸

Diffusion and Reception of the Translated Works

1. *Circulation of Manuscript Copies*

As far as we know, none of the works translated at Damietta was ever printed – they circulated only in manuscript copies. Several copies appear, however, to have been made of most of them – some in Damietta by members of the circle itself, others later at other times and places. We can presume that a copy of each translated work would have been kept in Bāsīlī Fakhr’s library at Damietta, but it is not known what became of these. The evidence we have is certainly incomplete. Sbath’s survey (*al-Fihris*), which accounts for seven of the 22 documented copies, was essentially confined to Aleppo: even if Aleppo attracted a disproportionate number of copies, it is likely that many copies of Damietta translations were also possessed by inhabitants of Damascus, Beirut, Alexandria, and other Syrian Christian centres. In addition, there may well be other works which were translated at Damietta, of which no trace can now be found.

Of the 22 documented copies of the Damietta translations, nine were owned by Greek Orthodox individuals: four by members of the clergy and the rest by merchants, “notables” and people of unknown standing. Two can be traced to institutions of the Greek Orthodox Church. Eight were owned by Syrian Christians of other denominations (two of them clergymen). Two were owned by Franks; one is only traceable to a European academic institution.⁷⁹ It thus appears that half of the copyists and readers were found among the Greek Orthodox community in which the translations originated, followed by other Christian denominations. Nearly half of the manuscripts were owned by clerics or Church libraries; a few came into Western European hands. The five documented copies of Ilyās Dāhir’s translation of *Télémaque* present a similar pattern: two owned by Syrian Catholics (the denomination of the translator); two more by other Christians; and one by a Frenchman.

No copies of either this work or the Damietta translations are known to have been owned by Muslims. It is entirely possible that there were Muslim readers, but certainly the Christian “tags” in the translations, even of “secular” works, suggest that they were intended for a Christian readership. The readership, then, appears to have been similar to that which could be expected for earlier translations of theological and devotional material: the majority of copies were owned by private individuals from wealthy Syrian Christian families, and the libraries of Christian institutions. We can add that the most frequently copied works, on the evidence we have, were those which most closely fitted the pattern of the earlier translations: Voulgaris’s *History of Christianity* and Martin’s *Philosophical Grammar* have survived in seven and six extant copies respectively – of the others we can trace only one per work. (Ilyās Dāhir’s *Télémaque*, however, survives in five copies.) The apparently more radical works – Rigas on physics, Voltaire on toleration, Marmontel’s *Bélisaire* – seem to have been less widely appreciated.

Even allowing for the existence of undiscovered copies, the numbers remain small, certainly in comparison to those achievable later in the nineteenth century by printing. Some of the same works – *Télémaque* most obviously, but also Rollin’s *Ancient History* – were retranslated and printed later in the century, apparently without any knowledge of the Damietta translations. This suggests that the output of the Damietta Circle did effectively drop out of sight and were not known to later generations of translators and literati.

2. *Reception of the Translations*

So much for the patchy evidence of readership. As for what the readers made of the translated works, this is largely open to speculation. We do have the account of Mīkhā'il Mishāqa (1800-1888/1889), however. Mishāqa was a Greek Catholic from Damascus who later converted to Protestantism, a scholar and polymath in what seems a similar mode to that of 'Īsā Petro, but best known for his history-autobiography *al-Jawāb 'alā iqtirāh al-ahbāb* (*The Answer to the Friends' Suggestion*, 1873).⁸⁰ In this work he gives an account of the effect of some Damietta translations upon him in his youth:

When my uncle was rested from the travails of his voyage... he took out his books from his trunk, and I looked to see what was written on the covers. On the back of one book I found written "Lalande's Astronomy," on another "Lalande's Latitudes and Longitudes," on another "Commentary of the Archimandrite Anthimos Ghazi on the Physics of the Englishman Benjamin," on the fourth "The Science of Physics, by the Teacher Righa al-Balastinli," on the fifth "A New Approach for Calculating Eclipses by Buṭrus al-'Anhuri," my own uncle. There were more books too by him and others on various topics. I opened them and found them all written in Arabic. Those that were originally in a foreign language had been translated under the auspices of Bāsīlī Fakhr, the French consul in Damietta. When I realized what they were, especially the book on eclipses, I was overjoyed, for I believed that when I learned about them, the secrets of the universe would be unlocked to me. I thought that if the Prophet David's words were true that "the firmament showeth His handiwork," then astronomy would tell me everything the Creator had done and would do. My limited understanding and narrow learning led me to believe any such fables."

Mishāqa went on to study these books with his uncle: "every workday I had two lessons, morning and evening; and holidays were spent entirely, after going to Mass, on study."⁸¹ This account shows his initial surprise at finding that these works were in Arabic; then the sense of a new world of knowledge opening up, with the implication of "the firmament showeth His handiwork" that this would reveal the glory of God (though this, in his sceptical old age, he now dismisses as "fables"). Finally, there is the appetite for further learning and diligent study. Mishāqa, as well as engaging in trade, went on to become a doctor, and a noted historian and writer; like 'Īsā Petro, he was in contact with the Protestant missionaries, and himself became a Protestant.⁸²

For further evidence, we have Fisk's account of 'Īsā Petro and what we know of his original writings. Fisk attributes his opinions and openness of mind to contact with Frenchmen; but there is also the possibility that he derived some of these characteristics from his sustained contact with the French and Greek works he was translating. His two known original works may also be linked to his translations: *Qatf al-azhār*, a "compilation of several historical questions relating to the Old and New Testaments",⁸³ could be a development of the arguments found in Clémence's refutation of Voltaire's Biblical criticism; and *Zubad al-ṭabī'iyāt* may be related to the works on natural sciences and physics of Benjamin Martin and Rigas Velestinlis. It seems that 'Īsā, like the Greek Enlighteners, may have been paraphrasing and summarizing his foreign teachers. Buṭrus 'Anḥūrī's astronomical work, as we have seen, may have been inspired by the conjunction of the new translated knowledge and an existing tradition.

Conclusions

What was the true significance of this translation project? It may well be argued that it was negligible, particularly in view of later developments. Along with the more scattered translations produced at Constantinople and elsewhere, it was a small manuscript-based movement whose readership was restricted to the Arab Christian elite. Compared to the slightly later literary projects which had access to print technology and pedagogical institutions – the Protestant missionaries or the schools of Mehmet Ali – it can seem insignificant. The Arabic-reading public would have to

wait until the middle decades of the nineteenth century for printed translations of the French Enlightenment (*Télémaque*, Voltaire), for modern works on the natural sciences and astronomy. It was, we might say, an early, abortive attempt – a river that ran into the sand.

But was it a river that ran underground for a time, to burst out again a few decades later? Arguably it did have some influence on a generation which went on into the age of printing and larger-scale literary activity in the Arab Levant: the subsequent career of ʿĪsā Petro as translator for the Protestant missionaries, or the influence of the Damietta translations on Mīkhāʿīl Mishāqa, are significant. But in my view it is chiefly important for showing the state of mind of the most cultivated of the emerging Syrian Christian middle class, in these years before the main developments of the “nahḍa”. Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this “new Arabic-speaking middle class” had already played a part in the revival of Classical Arabic literature; in Damietta we see it obtaining, apparently for the first time, the products of the Enlightenment. It did this, like its counterparts in other Orthodox countries, largely through its Greek links – the channels already opened by the Orthodox Church now being used to transmit other material. Elsewhere, in Constantinople, the links were more various, with Armenian and even Bulgarian as well as Italian and Greek playing a role. We can thus see these Syrian Christians of the early nineteenth century as part of the Balkan Enlightenment dynamic described by Kitromilides, in which new forms of knowledge circulated among the Christian peoples of the Mediterranean via Church and trade connections.

This contrasts greatly with one persistent image we have of literary and intellectual contacts between the Arab and Ottoman world and Europe in the nineteenth century. This proposes a simple binary relationship between “the Arabs” and “the Westerners”: central to this picture is Rifāʿa al-Ṭaḥṭāwī setting out from Cairo to Paris, capital of modern Europe, in 1826, to acquire modern learning. But the image which emerges from these early translations is not that of two territorial nations entering into relations across a hitherto uncrossable gap. Rather, it is a model of the transmission of knowledge which is diasporic, like the communities of the Syrian Christians and the Greeks, who moved within networks that spanned the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Aegean. Indeed, if we look at the translations considered here, Arabic, Greek and Armenian, it is striking that *all* of them were produced in diasporas: the Greek and Armenian works printed at Vienna or Venice, the Arabic translations made at Damietta and Constantinople. The supposed “homelands” of territorial Greece and Syria hardly feature in the narrative.

With its extensive network across the Mediterranean, its prosperity, its easy commerce with Europe, the Fakhr family foreshadows the rise of such great Shāmī houses as the Ṭrāds and Sursuqs later in the nineteenth century (the Fakhrs were in fact connected by marriage to the Ṭrāds, along with other well-known Syrian families).⁸⁴ And here we must stress the fact that Bāsīlī – though also a French consular agent and an official of the Orthodox Church – was above all a merchant of the Levant trade. The House of Fakhr thus provided a new source of patronage for literati, in an age when this was dominated by religious institutions and courts such as that of the Shihābī emirs. In the relationship between Bāsīlī Fakhr and ʿĪsā Petro, the wealthy and cultured patron and the learned literary man, we can see a prefiguration of the kind of relationship which Fruma Zachs describes in Beirut in the latter half of the nineteenth century, between two strata in the new Syrian middle class: the wealthy merchant patrons and the “lower middle-class” of literary producers.⁸⁵ It was this configuration that produced, from the 1840s and 1850s, the independent presses and periodicals, Buṭrus Bustānī’s National School, the Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences, and other well-known features of the Beiruti nahḍa.

The Damietta Circle, despite its lack of print technology and a wide readership, can thus be seen as an important step towards establishing an independent middle-class culture among Arabic-speaking Syrian Christians: a culture distinct from, though still in contact with, the Church hierarchies, the princely courts, the reforming bureaucracies, and the Franks. The independent, autochthonous character of the Circle seems a likely explanation for the wide range of subjects included in its

translations. The translations printed at the Bulaq Press under Mehmet Ali were dominated by technical materials of “utilitarian” interest to a reforming bureaucracy.⁸⁶ The Protestant missionary translations were subject, in the early years, to a different set of priorities: evangelization and basic mass education.⁸⁷ The earlier translations made under Orthodox or Catholic Church auspices were, as we have seen, dominated by ecclesiastical interests. Princely courts such as that of Bashir Shihab, though important for the revival of literary Arabic, do not seem to have produced much in the way of translation from European languages: unlike the merchants of ports such as Damietta and Constantinople, they were perhaps too little in contact with other Levantine peoples and Europeans. The Damietta Circle, however, in constant contact with Franks and Greeks and under merchant patronage, was already in the 1810s “advancing knowledge on a wide front” (to borrow Henderson’s phrase for the Greek Enlighteners Philippidēs, Konstantas and Gazēs), apparently little affected by ecclesiastical, evangelical or bureaucratic priorities. The House of Fakhr thus offered space for a new kind of literary and scientific enterprise: wide-ranging in terms of topics covered, but with a narrow audience, due to its lack of access to printing or educational institutions.

Those who actually carried out this enterprise, finally, seem to me to be early examples of a figure who was later to become quite characteristic of the “nahḍa”: the independent, energetic, prolific savant, with encyclopaedic ambitions and a great appetite for new kinds of learning. In this respect ‘Īsā Petro and Mīkhā’īl Mishāqa were forerunners of such later figures as Buṭrus al-Bustānī, Fāris al-Shidyāq, and Jurjī Zaydān. Doubtless they had, in turn, their precursors among the “old pioneers” of the earlier Christian nahḍa, but it is with ‘Īsā Petro and Mishāqa that we first see their formidable energies unleashed on the materials of the Enlightenment, under the patronage of the emergent bourgeoisie of the Syrian Christian diaspora. However limited its direct effects may have been, it is significant as a sign of the way these groups of Levantine society were evolving, towards a cultural as well as an economic independence.

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Notes

- 1 □ Roper, “Arabic printing in Malta,” 136-7; Sadgrove, *Review of Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*; Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 58-9.
- 2 □ Ḍāhir, *Hijrat al-shawāmm*, 124.
- 3 □ Mishāqa, *al-Jawāb*, 62, 65.
- 4 □ Minutoli, *Recollections of Egypt*, 176-177. “Turks” probably meant anyone in Oriental dress.
- 5 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 1-54, 62 and passim; Ḍāhir, *Hijrat al-shawāmm*, 119-125.
- 6 □ Masters, “Trading Diasporas,” 345-346. Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 25-34.
- 7 □ Masters, “Trading Diasporas,” 357-358, 364.
- 8 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 16-18, 23-24.
- 9 □ Bernard Heyberger, “Sécurité et insécurité,” 154-159. Family tree of the House of Fakhr (Banū Fakhr min Ṭrablus al-Shām), dated 1869, reproduced in ‘Isā Iskandar Ma‘lūf, *Tārīkh al-usar al-sharqiyya* (ed. Fawaz Trabulsi, Beirut, 2007), II: 101-103.
- 10 □ Family tree, in Ma‘lūf, *Tārīkh al-usar al-sharqiyya*, II: 101-103.
- 11 □ Heyberger gives an interesting account of this shift: “Sécurité et insécurité,” 154-159. The work of Ilyās ibn Fakhr is also the subject of a forthcoming doctoral thesis by Ronney el Gemayel S.J. The schism has been interpreted convincingly, by Philipp, as an expression of the rise of the “new Arabic-speaking middle class”, wishing for local autonomy from an increasingly Hellenizing central Church hierarchy: *Syrians in Egypt*, 11-20.
- 12 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 35-48. Cf. Crecelius, “Damiette and Syrian-Egyptian Trade,” 156-159.
- 13 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 30-32, 40.
- 14 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 40-44
- 15 □ Family tree, Ma‘lūf, *Tārīkh al-usar*, II: 101-103.
- 16 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 45, 50-52.
- 17 □ Ḍāhir gives his year of birth as 1770: *Hijrat al-shawāmm*, 122.
- 18 □ Al-cAys, *al-Tarjama*, 30. My thanks to Ronney El Gemayel S.J. for this reference.
- 19 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 59-66.
- 20 □ Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 60.
- 21 □ There are conflicting accounts of his consular role. Many sources refer to him as French consul, but it seems that what was really meant was a consular representative or agent: see Asselin de Cherville, “Lettre de Mr. Asselin.” Minutoli claims he was consul for six powers: it seems more likely that at some point he rendered services as *agent*, to several – perhaps as many as six – powers.
- 22 □ A consular report stated that Bāsīlī “jouissait d’une considération générale”: Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 60.
- 23 □ Bāsīlī Fakhr al-Dumyati, *al-Jawāhir al-Fakhrīyya fī al-‘illa al-inbithāqiyya (The Fakhrian Jewels, on the Proof of Procession)*: Jerusalem, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Press, 1861, revised and introduced by al-Khūrī Spīrīdūn Sarkīs al-Dimashqī. (This concerned the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and/or the Son.) His other work was *Risāla bi-ta’yīd al-i’tiqād bi-l-ṭabī‘atayn ‘alā ruḡm usquf al-Ashmūnayn (Epistle Affirming the Tenet of the Two Natures, Despite the Bishop of al-Ashmūnayn)*. My thanks to Ronney El Gemayel S.J. for this reference.
- 24 □ Asselin, “Lettre,” 114-5.
- 25 □ Ma‘lūf, “‘Isā Bitrū,” 551-552; cf. Fisk, “Letter,” 10-11.
- 26 □ The aforementioned consular report on his son Yūsuf of 1834 refers to him in the past tense: Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 60.
- 27 □ Minutoli, *Recollections*, 177-181.
- 28 □ Minutoli, *Recollections*, 178.
- 29 □ Minutoli, *Recollections*, 186.
- 30 □ For other forms of his name, see note 64.
- 31 □ Ḍāhir, *Hijrat al-shawāmm*, 124.
- 32 □ Ma‘lūf, “‘Isā Bitrū,” 553. See the travel journal of Lieder: *Church Missionary Record*, July 1830, 160. According to Ma‘lūf, “‘Isā Bitrū,” 553, he returned to Jerusalem as part of a wave of Syrians resident in Egypt who returned to their homeland around this time, due to the favourable conditions produced by Ibrahim Pasha's government of Syria – but since this did not begin until 1833, a year before his death, it seems Ma‘lūf is mistaken.
- 33 □ Ma‘lūf, “‘Isā Bitrū,” 553.
- 34 □ Roper, “Arabic printing in Malta,” 136-7. Hill, “Early Translations.”
- 35 □ Ma‘lūf, “‘Isā Bitrū,” 551. These works were: (1) *Kitāb Qatf azhār raw at al-kā`ināt wa-mā qāsāhu Ādam min al-imtiḥānāt (Pickings of the Flowers in the Garden of Creatures, and The Trials Suffered by Adam)*. See Sbath, *al-Fihris*, no. 1121. (2) *Zubad al-ṭabī‘iyyāt (Quintessence of Physics)* was a work on natural philosophy. See Graf, *Geschichte*, III: 159-160.
- 36 □ Ma‘lūf, “‘Isā Bitrū,” 554; Bird, *Bible work*, 311. Bird adds: “He was taken off by a disease supposed to have been brought on by excess of labor in burying his chests and walling up his door at the beginning of the war.”
- 37 □ Jowett, *Christian Researches*, 220.
- 38 □ Fisk, “Letter,” 10-11.
- 39 □ Mishāqa, *al-Jawāb*, 62-3, 65.
- 40 □ Noulgaris, *Hekatontaetēris*. See Cheikho, *Catalogue raisonné*, no. 43; Vollers, *Katalog der Handschriften*, no. 1069. For copies see: Jubāra, *al-Makhtūṭāt*, nos. 201, 389; Ma‘lūf, “‘Isā Bitrū,” 555; Graf, *Geschichte*, III: 160; Sbath, *al-Fihris*, no. 1122. For Rollin see the BNF catalogue: Sauvan and Balty-Guesdon, *Catalogue des Manuscrits arabes*, no. 1564; Jowett, *Christian Researches*, 220. Greek translation by Alexandros Kangelarios: *Palaiá istoria*.

- 41□ See Jubāra, *al-Makḥṭūṭāt*, no. 187; Cheikho, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, 160. Greek translation by Voulgaris, *Peri tōn dichonoioōn*: see Henderson, *Revival*, 69-70.
- 42□ Mishāqa, *al-Jawāb*, 65. It seems this was Volney's *Voyage*, not his *Ruines*, as Philipp appears to have thought (*Syrians in Egypt*, 69).
- 43□ Mishāqa, *al-Jawāb*, 62; Asselin, "Lettre," 114-115. Greek translation of the *Abrége* by Daniel Philippidēs (revised by Anthimos Gazēs), *Epitomē astronomias* (Vienna, 1803).
- 44□ Martin: Cheikho, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, 55, 160; Sbath, *Bibliothèque de manuscrits*, no. 1307; Sbath, *al-Fihris*, no. 1123; Asselin, "Lettre," 114-5. Greek translation by Anthimos Gazēs, *Grammatikē tōn philosophikōn epistēmōn*. Rigas Velestinlis, *Phusikēs Apanthisma* (Vienna, 1790). See Mishāqa, *al-Jawāb*, 62. Cf. Theodossiou, "Rigas Velestinlis and Astronomy," 74; Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 202-204.
- 45□ Ma' lūf, "Īsā Bitrū," 556. Clémence, *L'authenticité des livres*; see Jowett, *Christian Researches*, 222-3. Greek translation by Nikēphoros Theotokēs, *Apodeixis tou kyrous*. See Henderson, *Revival*, 76-77.
- 46□ *Bélisaire*: Sauvan and Balty-Guesdon, *Catalogue*, no. 3922; Cheikho, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, 55. According to a BNF catalogue note, the translation was made "under the direction of" Asselin de Cherville. *Télémaque*: Khalifé, *Catalogue raisonné*, no. 1512.
- 47□ Ma' lūf, "Īsā Bitrū," 556; [Koikyliidēs](#), *Katalogos Aravikōn*, no. 157. Greek translation by Polyzōēs Lampanitziōtēs, *Nea chalima*.
- 48□ In many instances there is direct evidence that works originally written in other languages were translated via a Greek intermediary text: a note in the manuscript or a catalogue to this effect, sometimes indicating the name of the Greek translator. This is the case for, among others, Martin's *Philosophical Grammar* and Rollin's *Histoire ancienne*. In two instances (Lalande's *Abrégé d'astronomie* and Abbé Clémence's refutation of Voltaire) there is no such indication, but a Greek intermediary text seems probable: Greek versions of these works existed and we know that the Damietta translators generally worked from the Greek. On the other hand, the Damietta *Télémaque* was translated from an Italian version (according to a marginal note), and Volney's *Voyage* and Lalande's *Histoire céleste* may have been translated directly from the French, as no Greek versions apparently existed.
- 49□ Kitromilides, *Orthodox commonwealth*, 669-670. For examples of Greek influences on other languages, see Kitromilides, "Enlightenment in Southeast Europe, 45-53: see 50; Kitromilides, *Orthodox commonwealth*, II: 355-6.
- 50□ Henderson, *Revival*. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 43-47.
- 51□ Kraft, "Chrysanthos Notaras"; Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 91.
- 52□ Henderson, *Revival*, 172; Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 99-109.
- 53□ See the works listed under his name on WorldCat: [http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ALampanitziōtēs%2C+Polyzōēs.&qt=hot_author](http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ALampanitziotēs%2C+Polyzōēs.&qt=hot_author).
- 54□ Henderson, *Revival*, 76-77; Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 50-53.
- 55□ Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 200-229.
- 56□ Henderson, *Revival*, 4.
- 57□ For the controversies around Voltaire's and Marmontel's works, see Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 263; Reddaway ed., *Documents of Catherine the Great*, 19; Renwick, *Bélisaire affair*. The translation of Voltaire's *Essai* may even have had a role to play in Orthodox-Catholic polemic, as it attacks Catholic intolerance in Poland and supports the policy of Catherine II (the Great) of Russia, an Orthodox monarch. The hero of Marmontel's *Bélisaire*, too, was a Byzantine leader, so an Orthodox connection suggests itself.
- 58□ See the introductions to Bāsīlī Fakhr's translation of *Télémaque* and 'Īsā Petro's translation of Voulgaris's *History of Christianity*.
- 59□ For comparison, see, for instance, the translations in the library at the monastery of Shwayr: Walbiner, "Monastic Reading," 470-476, including much ecclesiastical history. Or compare the list of translations made by Ilyās ibn Fakhr in Graf, *Geschichte*, III, 137-140: it does include a *History of the Russians*, but "profane" works are very much in the minority. Much the same impression is gained from browsing through the other translations listed in Graf and in Cheikho's *Catalogue des manuscrits*. For an example of a philosophical work translated from French in the mid-eighteenth century, see Cheikho, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, 81. See also Strauss on the "Christian canon" translated into many languages of the Eastern Mediterranean in the eighteenth century: "Who Read What," 47-8.
- 60□ Fakhr, translation of *Télémaque*, 1.
- 61□ Minutoli, *Recollections*, 179.
- 62□ De Sacy in *Mines de l'Orient*, 2 (1811), 210; Asselin, "Lettre," 214-215 (1814).
- 63□ Mishāqa, *al-Jawāb*, 63; translation by Thackston, *Murder, Mayhem*, 97.
- 64□ Fisk, "Letter," 10-11.
- 65□ The many variants of the names of the principal members of the circle is another side-effect of this diversity: Fakhr is referred to as "Bāsīlī Fakhr son of Yūsuf Fakhr" in Arabic, and as "Signor Basil(i) Fakher" and Mr. Basil Faker in European languages (Fisk, "Letter," 10-11; Minutoli, *Recollections*, 179). 'Īsā Petro's name occurs as 'Īsā Bitrū or Bītrū al-Urshalīmī in Arabic; Papas (Greek for "priest") Ysa Petros, Pappas Issa, Ysa Pietro, Petrus Jesus and various other forms, in European languages (Ma' lūf, "Īsā Bitrū," 551; Jowett, *Christian Researches*, 220; Lieder, *Journal*, 160; Fisk, "Letter," 10-11; Wolf, *Missionary journal*, 241, 255).
- 66□ Ma' lūf, "Īsā Bitrū," 551-552.
- 67□ In a recent study, Abdulrazzak Patel argues for the importance of these earlier pioneers in preparing for the better-known movement of the nineteenth century: *The Arab Nahḍah*, 36-74. This movement had also been intimately linked to contacts between Arab Christians and Europeans, through both the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches: see for

instance Walbiner, “Monastic Reading”; Heyberger, *Les chrétiens de Proche-Orient*; Kilpatrick, “Makāriyūs Ibn al-Za‘īm and Būlus Ibn al-Za‘īm”.

68□Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 29, 65-67.

69□Ma‘lūf, “‘Īsā Bitrū,” 552.

70□Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 70; Mishāqa, *Jawāb*, 64-65.

71□Mishāqa, *Jawāb*, 62-63. For Buṭrus ‘Anḥūrī’s work on astronomy, see Sbath, *al-Fihris*, no. 1605.

72□A later example of this trend is Rifā‘a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s translation into Arabic of the French poems of the Egyptian-Levantine poet Joseph Agoub: see Tageldin, *Disarming Words*, 141-154.

73□Nasrallah, *Catalogue*, III: 213; Armenian translation by Manuēl Jakhjakhean: *Patmut ‘iwn hrovmeakan*.

74□E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, no. 6243; Sbath, *Bibliothèque*, no. 897; *al-Fihris*, no. 1570.

75□Farajallāh ibn Ilyās also produced many other manuscript copies now in the library of the Greek Catholic Seminary of ‘Ayn Trāz, between 1810 and 1822, including one of a translation of Cardinal Orsi’s vast *Storia Ecclesia*. See Nasrallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, II: 184-185, 204-215.

76□There were several translations of *Télémaque* into Italian and Greek by this date (1812). But it seems that the first published Armenian translation did not appear until 1826, and the first Bulgarian translation until 1845. There may have existed manuscript translations prior to this, or Ilyās may have been mistaken. See Adry, “Liste,” and Gosselin, “*Des Traductions*,” 54-64.

77□Ma‘lūf, “‘Īsā Bitrū,” 552.

78□See Arzu Meral, *Western ideas*, 75-81.

79□These figures refer to the earliest known owner of the manuscript.

80□For further details see Zachs, “Mikhā’īl Mishāqa”.

81□Mishāqa, *Jawāb*, 62-63; translation adapted from Thackston, *Murder, Mayhem*, 96-97.

82□See Zachs, “Mikhā’īl Mishāqa,” 67-87.

83□See Sbath, *al-Fihris*, no. 1121.

84□Family tree, in Ma‘lūf, *Tārīkh al-usar*, II: 101-103. Another great commercial dynasty of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the Fir‘awns, already well-established in the late eighteenth century: see Philipp, *Syrians in Egypt*, 40-44.

85□Zachs, *Syrian Identity*, 39-40.

86□Patel, *The Arab Nahḍah*, 165-166.

87□See Roper, “Arabic printing in Malta”, 126-8; Hill, “Early Translations”. Both the Bulaq and missionary translation projects shifted, later, to include a wider range of topics: in the case of the missionaries, I have argued that this was due to the rising influence of educated Syrians: “Early Translations”.

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Appendix 1

Works translated into Arabic by the Damietta Circle

A. Extant or reasonably certain works.

B. Works to which only a single reference can be found; may be doubtful.

A. Extant or reasonably certain works

A. 1. Eugenios Voulgaris, *Hekatontaetēris tōn apo Christou Sōtēros enanthrōpēsantos: hē prōtē kata chronikēn proodon en epitomē ektethe 'Isā (The First Hundred Years After the Incarnation of Christ the Redeemer*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hertel, 1805).

Arabic title: *Kitāb ta' rīkh al-mā'iyat sana al-ūlā min tajassud al-masīḥ al-mukhalliṣ (The First Hundred Years After the Incarnation of Christ the Redeemer)*. A history of Christianity in the first century AD. Eugenios Voulgaris (1716-1806) was Bishop of Slavonia and Cherson (Ukraine) and a prominent writer and educator of the Neohellenic Enlightenment (he was not, however, Archbishop of Bulgaria, as the translator's introduction states). Translated by 'Isā Petro, January 1817. (Cheikho/Khalifé no. 43; Vollers no. 1069).

Copies:

- Copy in the Bibliothèque Orientale, Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut: no. 43. Copied in 1825 by Jibrā'il Mūsā Maydānī, Orthodox of Damascus, protophaltes of the Mariamite Cathedral of Damascus. Cheikho notes: 'Ce Ms a été acheté à Beyrouth d'une famille orthodoxe.' (Cheikho/Khalifé no. 43).

- Copy in the library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus: no. 201. Copied by Ibrāhīm Ḥannā Sarrūf from a copy in the hand of the translator, 1851. From the collection of Patriarch Ghrīghūriyūs Ḥaddād; dedication from Tiyūdūr Barbūr to Patriarch Ghrīghūriyūs (1905) (Jubara 201; cf. Cheikho/Khalifé no. 43, Ma'lūf, “‘Īsā Bitrū,” 3: 555 – work no. 3).

- Second copy in the library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus: no. 389. Copied by Mīkhā'īl b. Khalīlallāh Wīrdī in 1819. From the collection of Patriarch Ighnātiyūs IV. (Jubāra no. 389).

- Copy in the Library of the College of the Three Hierarchs (al-Thalātha al-Aqmār), Beirut (Cheikho/Khalife no. 43; Graf, *Geschichte*, III: 160). Not mentioned by Joseph Nasrallah in his catalogue of the Three Hierarchs library, but he notes (III: 275) that the collection was much reduced from before when he made his catalogue, and also that he does not list about ten non-Melchite manuscripts.

- Copy in Leipzig University Library: no. 1069. Catalogue description: ‘Translated by the priest ‘Īsā Petro of Jerusalem for his “spiritual son” Jirjis Shaḥḥāda Ṣabbāgh al-Dimashqī in 1817’. Dated 25 Ab 1817. (Vollers no. 1069).

- Copy in collection of Constantin Anṭākī, Greek Orthodox notable of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1122).

- Copy in collection of Zakhariyyā Ḥamawī, Greek Orthodox priest of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1122).

A. 2. Benjamin Martin, *Philosophical Grammar* (London, 1735). Arabic title: *Taḥrīr ṣarf al-‘ulūm al-falsafīyya li-l-mu‘allim Binyāmīn al-injlīzī al-mukannā Martīnūs ‘alā sabīl al-su‘āl wa-l-jawāb* (*Grammar of the Philosophical Sciences by the teacher Binyamin Martinus the Englishman, in the form of questions and answers*).

It is in fact a work on ‘natural philosophy’ – i.e. the natural sciences – written in the form of a catechism. Translated into Arabic (1809), probably by ‘Īsā Petro, from the Greek version of Archimandrite Anthimos Gazēs (‘Anthīmūs Ghāzī al-Maghānī’), *Grammatikē tōn philosophikōn epistēmōn* (Vienna: Franz Antonio Schraimbl, 1799. This translation is online at:

http://echo.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/ECHODOCUView?url=/permanent/echo/hellinomnimon/Gazis-Gram_B/index.meta). (Cheikho 55 and 160).

Asselīn (“Lettre,” 114-5) claims that Bāsīlī undertook the translation at the request of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch (presumably of Alexandria), ‘mais la difficulté de rendre une foule de termes techniques, qui n’ont point de correspondants en arabe, lui a fait abandonner ce travail ingrat et rebutant.’ Possibly ‘Īsā Petro took up the work again later.

Copies:

1. Copy in the library of Murād Bey al-Bārūdī, examined by Louis Cheikho. Cheikho confusingly lists this under both Bāsīlī Fakhr (160) and ‘Īsā Petro (55), suggesting that each was responsible for the translation. However, under ‘Īsā Petro he appears to quote from the original introduction: ‘‘arrabahu al-qass ‘Īsā li-l-arkhūn lūghūthātī al-kursī al-Anṭākī Basil Fakhr’, suggesting that ‘Īsā was responsible (this also agrees with Sbath’s copy, below).

2. Copy in the collection of Paul Sbath: Sbath no. 1307 (probably now in the Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem, Aleppo). Missing 1st page. Copy made in 1816 (the catalogue gives 1716, presumably a misprint). The introduction states that the Greek-Arabic translation was made by ‘Īsā Petro at the request of Bāsīlī Fakhr.

3. Copy in the collection of Constantin Anṭākī, Greek Orthodox notable of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1123).

1. Copy in the collection of Louis Fāris, Maronite merchant of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1123).

5. Copy in the collection of Elias Khayyāt, Armenian Catholic merchant of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1123).

6. Copy in the collection of ‘Abdallāh Sā’igh, Greek Catholic merchant of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1123).

A. 3. Jean-François Marmontel, *Bélisaire* (*Belisarius*. 1767). Arabic title: *Kitāb Fālīṣāriyūs* or *Tārikh Balīzāriyūs*.

The source was a Greek version, probably Polyzōēs Lampanitziōtēs's translation *Ēthikē historia Belissariu Archistratēgu tu Meualu Ioistinianon Autokratos Rōmaiōn* (Vienna: Baumeister, 1783). Arabic translation by 'Īsā Petro, supposedly 'under the direction of' Asselin de Cherville. Date unknown (before 1812: extant copy dated 1812). (BNF no. 3922; cf. Cheikho 55).

Copies:

1. Copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: Arabe no. 3922. Copy dated 1812.

Catalogue description: 'Histoire de Bélisaire, traduite en arabe, sur une traduction grecque du roman français, par le prêtre 'Īsā Petro, de Jérusalem, sous la direction d'Asselin de Cherville.' (BNF no. 3922).

A. 4. François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, *Les aventures de Télémaque* (*The Adventures of Telemachus*. 1699) – Partial translation, Books 1 to 12. Arabic title: *Muṣādafāt Tīlīmākūs ibn Ūlīsah* (*What Happened to Telemachus, Son of Ulysse*).

According to a marginal note (p. 1) the source was an Italian translation (we don't know which: there were several by the 1810s). Translated by Bāsīlī Fakhr with the assistance of 'Kansīlīrī al-Sīnyur Juwānī Lāwājītī' (Signor Giovanni Lavagitti?), date unknown (pre-1813: the extant copy, in the hand of 'Īsā Petro, is dated 1813). Manuscript note claims only this 'first volume' was translated (Cheikho/Khalifé no. 1512; manuscript p. 4).

Copies:

1. Copy in the Bibliothèque Orientale, Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut: no. 1512. Copied by 'Īsā Petro in 1813. Dedication from Bāsīlī Fakhr to Frédéric Pisani, June 1818. (Cheikho/Khalifé no. 1512).

A. 5. Charles Rollin, *Histoire ancienne des Egyptiens, des Carthaginois, des Assyriens, des Babyloniens, des Mèdes et des Perses, des Macédoniens et des Grecs* (*Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Macedonians and Greeks*; 1730-1738, 10 vols.) 'Part 1' only was translated (presumably the first volume, on the Ancientians Egypt and Carthaginians). Arabic title: *Al-tawārīkh al-qadīma* (*Ancient Histories*).

Translated from the Greek version of Alexandros Kangelarios, *Palaiá istoría tōn Aigyptiōn, Karchīdoniōn, Assyriōn, Vavylōniōn, Midōn, Persōn, Makedōnōn, kai Ellīnōn, eis tōmous déka kai ex diīrīmēnī* (Venice: Pará Antōniō tō Vórtoli, 1750). Translated by 'Īsā Petro and 'Abd al-Masīḥ al-Ūrushalīmī in 1808 (BNF no. 1564). Jowett (*Christian Researches*, 220) states that 'Īsā claimed to have translated the whole work, over six years; he had with him in Jerusalem (1823) only 'the first rough translation, containing the History of Egypt and Carthage'.

Copies:

1. Copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: Arabe 1564. Incomplete, ends with the 3rd Punic War. Anonymous, no date. From the collection of Asselin de Cherville. (BNF no. 1564).

A. 6. Abū Bakr, *Aḥādīth Abī Bakr*. According to I. I. Maluf it appears from some marginalia that it was translated from Arabic into French, then into Italian, then into Greek, and from Greek back into Arabic, the Greek-Arabic translation being done by 'Īsā Petro at the behest of Bāsīlī Fakhr, in Damietta, 1813/1228. (Ma'lūf, "'Īsā Bitrū," 3: 556, work no. 5). The Greek version from which 'Īsā worked was probably *Nea chalima : ētoi mythologikon arabikon periechon diēgēseis, kai symbekēkota lian perierga kai hōraia* by 'Ampoumpekēr' (Abū Bakr), translated from an Italian version by Polyzōēs Lampanitziōtēs (4 vols., Vienna, 1791-4). The first volume is available online at: <http://www.mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn/resolver.pl?urn=urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10249801-8>. I have been unable to identify the Italian and French translations.

Copies:

1. Copy of the second volume, in the Library of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem: no. 157.

Catalogue description: 'ou to periechomenon "Paramuthia Chalimas hupo tou hierēōs Ēsa Petrou Hierosolumitou en etei 1228 apo Eguras" 'al-Mujallad al-thānī min kitāb al-Aḥādīth al-'arabī ta' līf Abū Bakr al-jazīl al-'ulūm wa-l-darwīsh al-fuṭūn' [1228=1813] (Koikylidēs no. 157). Classified in Koikylidēs's index under 'khourāfāt'/'muthologikai' – (Koikylidēs 158).

A. 7. Voltaire (under the pseudonym Joseph Bourdillon), *Essai historique et critique sur les dissensions des Églises de Pologne* (Historical and Critical Essay on the Dissensions of the Churches of Poland. Paris, 1767). Arabic title: *Khulāṣat al-qaḏyā al-tārīkhiyya wa-l-mushājarāt al-wāqi ‘a fī kanā’is Būlūniyā* (Summary of the historical issue and the current controversies in the churches of Poland).

The source was a Greek translation, presumably that made by Eugenios Voulgaris (see A.1), *Peri tōn dīchonoīōn tōn ‘en taīs ‘ekklīsiais tīs Polonias dokīmion historikōn kai kritikōn : ek tīs Gallikis ‘eis tīn koi, otéran tōn kath’hīmas Hellīnōn diálektonn metafrasthen metā kai sīmeiōmátōn tinōn historikōn kai kritikōn oīs en télei proseiéthē kai Skedisma perī tīs anexithrīskeías*, printed anonymously at Leipzig in 1768. This version contained extensive historical and critical notes by Voulgaris and his essay on religious toleration (Henderson, *Revival*, pp. 69-70) – it is not known if these were also translated into Arabic. Arabic translation by Bāsīlī Fakhr along with two of his cousins, the Priest ‘Abd-al-Masīh Fakhr and Ḥannā Mīkha’īl Fakhr. No date; the author’s name is given as ‘Fūltīrūs’. (Jubāra no. 187).

Copies:

1. Copy in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Damascus, no. 187. From the collection of Patriarch Ghrīghūriyūs Ḥaddād. Dedication from Tiyūdūr Barbūr to Ghrīghūriyūs Ḥaddād, while the latter was Bishop of Tripoli (1905). (Jubāra no. 187; cf. Cheikho 160).

A. 8. A work on the duties of the priest and the deacon. Author and title unknown.

Described by Ma‘lūf as follows: ‘Kitāb yashtamil ‘alā ta’līm al-kahanna wa-l-shammāsa fī kayfiyyat mā yajib ‘alā al-kāhin wa-l-shammās wa-irshādihimā ‘alā mā yukhīd bi-khidmatihimā al-muqaddasa wa-isti‘dādihimā al-sābiq li-ajl al-khidma al-sharīfa wa-l-quḏās al-ilāhī. Wa-kayfa yanbaghī la-humā an yudabbarā muqāwimat al-hawādith al-fujā’iyya wa-l-a’rāḏ wa-l-mashākil al-nātiya fī hādhihi al-khidma al-ilāhiyya al-sharīfa.’ ‘A book containing the teaching of priesthood and diaconry, on how to perform the duties of the priest and the deacon, directing them to what concerns their holy duties and preparing them beforehand for holy service and divine Mass. And how they should resist the sudden accidents, contingencies and troubles that arise in this holy and divine service.’

Translated from ‘al-lugha al-slāviyya (al-rūsiyya aw al-saqḷabiyya)’, ‘Slavonic (Russian or Slavic)’, into Greek by Callinicos, Patriarch of Constantinople, and thence into Arabic by ‘Īsā Petro, at the order of Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria. No date given. (Ma‘lūf, “‘Īsā Bitrū,” 3: 556 – work no. 6).

Copies:

1. Copy in the library of Jirjis Efendī Ḥannā al-Khūrī Siksik (the son of the copyist) in Jerusalem, examined (1911) by I. I. Ma‘lūf. The copy was made by Yūḥanna al-Khūrī Jirjis al-Qudsī from a copy in the hand of ‘Īsā Petro. (Ma‘lūf, “‘Īsā Bitrū,” 3: 556 – work no. 6).

A. 9. Joseph Jérôme Lefrançois de Lalande, *Abrégé d’astronomie* (1774. *Condensed Astronomy*). Referred to by Asselin (“Lettre,” 114-115) and Mishāqa (*Jawāb*, 62), who gives the Arabic title as *‘Ilm al-hay’a li-Dīlāland al-Faransāwī* (*The Science of Astronomy, by de Lalande the Frenchman*). De Lalande (1732-1807) was director of the Paris Observatory, taught astronomy at the Collège de France, and contributed to Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*. The source was probably the Greek translation by Daniel Philippidēs (revised by Anthimos Gazēs), *Epitomē astronomias. Metaphrastheisa eistēn Kathōmilēmenēn Hellēnikēn dialektion para D.D. tou Philippidou. Nyn prōton typois ekdotheisa, epistasia, Syndromē kai diorthōsei tou Archimēd. Anthimou Gazē* (Vienna: Georgios Vendotēs, 1803). Philippidēs (1755-1832) was an editor and translator of scientific, historical and geographical works, associated like Gazēs with the school at Melies. For Gazēs see also A.2. above.

Copies:

1. Copy owned by Buṭrus ‘Anḥūrī, 1810s. (Mishāqa, *Jawāb*, 62).

B. Works to which a single reference can be found; may be doubtful

B. 1. Chrysanthos Notaras, *Eisagogē eis ta Geōgraphika, kai Sphairika (Introduction to Geography and the Globe*. Paris, 1716 and Venice: Ant. Bortolis, 1718).

The sole reference is by Asselin (“Lettre,” 114-115): ‘Introduction a l’étude de la Géographie et du Globe’ by Chrysanthos Notar. A travel work by Notaras (c. 1663-1731), a Patriarch of Jerusalem. (Kraft, “Chrysanthos Notaras.”)

B.2. Joseph Jérôme Lefrançois de Lalande, *Histoire céleste française (French Celestial History*. Paris, 1801).

Referred to by Mishāqa (*Jawāb*, 62) as: *Dīlāland taqwīm al-kawākib (De Lalande, Star Calendar)*. Of Lalande’s works, it seems most likely to be the *Histoire céleste*, an astrometric star catalogue listing the locations and [apparent magnitudes](#) of 47, 390 stars.

Copies:

1. Copy owned by Buṭrus ‘Anḥūrī, 1810s. (Mishāqa, *Jawāb*, 62).

B. 3. Constantin François Chasseboeuf Comte de Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte, pendant les années 1783, 1784 et 1785 (Journey to Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784 and 1785*. Paris, 1787).

The sole reference to this is Mishāqa (*Jawāb*, 65): ‘Kitāb siyāḥat al-Mu‘allim Fūlnī al-Faransāwī ‘indamā yatakallam ‘an siyāḥatihi fi Lubnān wa-wuṣūlihi ila kharābāt Tadmur’, ‘Book of the journey of the Teacher Fulni the Frenchman, in which he speaks of his journey in Lebanon and his arrival at the ruins of Tadmur’. It thus appears that this was Volney’s *Voyage*, not his *Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires*, as Philipp appears to have thought (*Syrians in Egypt*, 69).

B. 4. Abbé Joseph-Guillaume Clémence, *L’authenticité des livres tant du Nouveau que de l’Ancien Testament, démontrée, et leur véridicité défendue, ou Réfutation de la Bible enfin expliquée de Vxxxx [Voltaire] (The Authenticity of the New and Old Testaments demonstrated, and their veracity defended, or, Refutation of the Bible Finally Explained by Vxxxx [Voltaire]*. Paris, 1782).

The sole reference to this is from the missionary William Jowett: ‘Another work which Ysa Petros translated was an answer to various infidel objections by Voltaire: I have not heard that any part of the works of Voltaire was ever translated into Arabic ; so that a refutation of his opinions, in that language, might seem premature....’ (Jowett, *Christian Researches*, 222-3). If this work existed it was probably a translation of Clémence’s work, via the Greek translation of Nikēphoros Theotokēs, *Apodeixis tou kyrous tōn tēs Neas kai Palaias Diathēkēs vivliōn, kai tēs en autois alētheias hyperaspisis ē anaskeuē tēs tou Voltairou Vivlou, tēs kaloumenēs teleutaion diermēneutheisēs Diathēkēs, ek tēs Gallōn phōnēs, metaphrastheisa, hēper prosetethēsan kai tines sēmeiōseis* (published anonymously, Vienna, 1794). This translation bore a preface by Theotokēs (1731-1800), attacking Voltaire strongly. (Henderson, *Revival*, 76-77).

B. 5. Rigas Velestinlis, *Phusikēs Apanthisma (Anthology of Physics*. Vienna: Trattner, 1790).

The sole reference to this is by Mishāqa (*Jawāb*, 62), who gives the title: *‘Ilm al-ṭabī‘iyyāt li-l-Mu‘allim Rīghā al-Balāstanlī (The Science of Physics, by the Teacher Riga al-Balastanli)*. This work is a popularizing manual of astronomy and natural history, written in the form of a dialogue (like Martin’s *Philosophical Grammar*). Its main source, according to Kitromilides, was the *Encyclopédie*, and it bears the motto for which Rigas became famous, ‘Whoever thinks freely, thinks well.’ (Theodossiou, “Rigas Velestinlis and Astronomy,” 74; Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 202-204).

Copies:

1. Copy owned by Buṭrus ‘Anḥūrī, 1810s. (Mishāqa, *Jawāb*, 62).

Works translated at Constantinople by ʿĪlyās ibn Farajallāh Ḍāhir and Krikor Far

1. François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, *Les aventures de Télémaque (The Adventures of Telemachus)*. 1699). Arabic title: *Qiṣṣat Tīlīmāk ibn Ūlīs al-Ḥakīm (The Story of Télémaque, Son of Ulysse the Wise)*.

Translation by ʿĪlyās ibn Farajallāh Ḍāhir al-Ḥalabī al-Bizāntī, at Constantinople, 1812. (Fihris no. 1570; manuscript p. 10).

Copies:

1. Copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: Arabe no. 6243. The manuscript comes from the collection of Adolphe Decourdemanche (1844-1915). (BNF no. 6243).

2. Copy in the library of Paul Sbath (probably now in the Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem, Aleppo). Transcribed in 1816. (Sbath no. 897).

3. Copy in the collection of ʿAbdallāh Ḥomsī Shawkatlī, Syrian Catholic notable of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1570).

4. Copy in the collection of Anṭūn Ḍāhir, Syrian Catholic notable of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1570).

5. Copy in the collection of Elias Khayyāt, Armenian Catholic merchant of Aleppo (Fihris no. 1570).

2. Charles Rollin, *Histoire romaine depuis la fondation de Rome jusqu'à la bataille d'Actium: C'est à dire jusqu'à la fin de la République (Roman History from the Foundation of Rome to the Battle of Actium, that is, to the End of the Republic)*. 1739-1741). Arabic title: *Kitāb al-tawārīkh al-rūmiyya (The Book of Roman Histories)*.

According to Joseph Nasrallah, it arrived in Arabic by the following route: first it was translated into Italian; the Mekhitarists of Venice translated it into Armenian (from the Italian, revised from the French); then in 1822, the Armenian priest Krikor Far, originally from Aleppo and resident in Constantinople, made the Arabic translation from the Armenian. (Nasrallah III: 213).

The Armenian translation was by Manuēl Jakhjakhean (author of an Armenian-Italian dictionary): *Patmut 'iwn hrovmeakan i himnarkut 'enē Hrovmay minch 'ew i Paterazmn Aktioni : aysink 'n minch 'ew i vakhchan hasarakapetut 'ean ; arareal Rōlēni Gaghghiats 'iots ' ; t 'argmaneal hitalakan barbaṛoy Vrt 'anēs Askērean ; ew zgushawor k 'nnut 'b. bazdateal ēnd gaghghiakan bnagrīn, hawelmamb tsanōt 'ets 'n. i Manuēl Jakhjakhean.* (Venice: I Vans Srboyn Ghazaru, 1816-1817; 6 vols; available online at: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/28289812.html>).

Copies: 1. Copy in the Library of the (Greek Catholic) Seminary of ʿAyn Trāz: Nasrallah ʿAyn Trāz no. 106. The copyist is not named, but the writing is that of Farajallāh Ḍāhir, who copied many of the manuscripts of the Library of ʿAyn Trāz. (Nasrallah III: 213). NB many of the manuscripts in this library were destroyed after Nasrallah's catalogue was made, in 1983.

References to Manuscript Catalogues Given in Appendices

For these catalogues, as for the other sources, a simple number (e.g. Cheikho 55) refers to a page number; 'no.' refers to a manuscript number (e.g. BNF no. 1512).

BNF = Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Accessible online at: <http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/cdc.html>. The sections referred to here are: Y. Sauvan, M. G. Balty-Guesdon, *Catalogue des Manuscrits arabes. Deuxième partie, tome 5 : nos 1465-1685* (Paris, 1985); and for nos. 4666-6753, E. Blochet, *Catalogue des Manuscrits arabes des nouvelles additions* (Paris, 1925).

Cheikho = Cheikho, *Catalogue des manuscrits des auteurs arabes chrétiens depuis l'Islam* (Beirut, 1924).

Cheikho/Khalifé = *Catalogue raisonné des manuscrits historiques de la Bibliothèque Orientale de l'Université Saint-Joseph*. Part 1 (nos. 1-792) by Louis Cheikho S.J. (Beirut, 1913-1929); Part 2 (nos. 793-1520, plus Syriac mss. 1-58) by Ignace-Abdo Khalifé S.J. (Beirut, 1951-1964).

Fihris = Paul Sbath, *al-Fihris (Catalogue des manuscrits arabes)*. 3 parts and suppl. (Cairo 1938-40).

Jubāra = [Ilyās Jubāra], *al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-‘Arabīya fī Maktabat Baṭriyarkīyat Anṭākiya wa-Sā’ir al-Mashriq li-l-Rūm al-Urthūdhuks* (Beirut, 1988).

Koikylidēs = Kleopas M. [Koikylidēs](#), *Katalogos Aravikōn cheirographōn tēs Hierosolymitikēs Vivliothēkēs* (Jerusalem: ek tou Typographeiou tou Hierou Koinou tou P. Taphou, 1901).

Nasrallah = Joseph Nasrallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits du Liban* (Beirut, 1960-1970).

Sbath = *Bibliothèque de manuscrits Paul Sbath. Catalogue*. 3 vols. (Cairo, 1928-34).

Vollers = Karl Vollers, *Katalog der Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek zu Leipzig*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1906).