

THE ARABIC VERSION OF DIMITRIE CANTEMIR'S *DIVAN*: A SUPPLEMENT TO THE EDITOR'S NOTE

IOANA FEODOROV

The following remarks are additions to the information and comments included in the *Editor's Note* that accompanies the Arabic version of Dimitrie Cantemir's *Divan* (Iași, 1698), which I edited and translated in 2006. They are the result of a comprehensive survey of the most important historical and literary elements that define the translation achieved in 1705 by Athanasios III Dabbās, Patriarch of Antioch. The purpose of this research is to shed more light on the specific features of this little known version of Cantemir's *Divan* and on its significance for the history of the connections between Romanians and Christian Arabs.

The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy released in 2006 a new contribution to the research devoted to the Moldavian prince and humanist scholar Dimitrie Cantemir: the Arabic version of his *Divan*, translated in 1705 by Athanasios III Dabbās, Patriarch of Antioch, as *Ṣalāḥ al-ḥakīm wa-fasād al-'ālam al-damīm*, i.e. *The Salvation Of The Wise Man And The Ruin Of The Sinful World* (henceforth the *Arabic Divan*).¹ The volume encloses an edition of the Arabic text that I established based on two manuscripts (*MS Arabe 6165*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and *MS Sbath 337 (no. 2)*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), and an English translation introduced by the comprehensive comments of Virgil Căndea, an expert in Cantemir's works. Following models provided by Arabic Mediaeval manuscripts edited and annotated by a large number of foreign specialists, I addressed in the *Editor's Note* (pp. 55–78) the major problems raised by the edition and translation of Patriarch Athanasios's composition. I devoted special chapters to the historical circumstances of its coming into being, the Arabic title, authorship, existing manuscripts, editing principles, salient features of the text (Arabic language variety, spelling, grammar and lexical peculiarities), and the translation principles that I followed in preparing the English version. However, the reduced space that an *Editor's Note* is allowed to cover in a manuscript edition did not permit me to detail important aspects characteristic to the transfer of this Romanian ethical work, through Greek, into Arabic. I intend to complete hereafter the information and the

¹ Dimitrie Cantemir, *The Salvation Of The Wise Man And The Ruin Of The Sinful World* (*Ṣalāḥ al-ḥakīm wa-fasād al-'ālam al-damīm*), Arabic Edition, English Translation, Editor's Note, Notes And Indices by Ioana Feodorov, Introduction and Comments by Virgil Căndea, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, 381 p. + 23 illustrations.

comments presented in the *Editor's Note* regarding those issues that deserve special attention from future readers of the *Arabic Divan*.

The main point that any survey of a translation is likely to concentrate on is the extent of the translator's interference with the text, *i.e.*, in what way he altered the original work. Between adapting and rewriting, shades are plentiful. Variations may refer both to the 'quantity' of the resulting text, depending on omissions and additions, and to the 'quality' of the new version, revealed by the particular choice of words in transferring abstract notions, theological terms, fresh or foreign concepts, etc. All the elements of originality in the new version can then be interpreted from the point of view of the translator's position towards the transferred text and his prospective readers.

The purpose of my research – presented hereafter – was a general survey of the variations enclosed in the *Arabic Divan* as compared to the Greek original used by Patriarch Athanasios², which would allow me to find suitable answers to two questions. First, how far did Patriarch Athanasios go in modifying the text of Cantemir's *Divan*? Second, can any conclusions be drawn from this work about the Patriarch's personality and convictions (religious, moral, political, etc.) and the public that he addressed?

Considering the breadth of the Arabic text which covers 141 folios in the basic manuscript, in order to illustrate the main features of the edited text I only selected a minimal number of suggestive examples.³ A brief survey of the circumstances that brought about the conception of the *Arabic Divan* seems appropriate at this point.

Cantemir's first book, *Divanul sau Gâlceava Înțeleptului cu Lumea sau Giudețul Sufletului cu Trupul* (*The Divan or the Wise Man's Dispute with the World or the Litigation between Soul and Body*), was printed in Romanian and Greek in 1698 in Iași (chief city of the Principality of Moldavia). The basic text of Dabbās's Arabic translation is the Greek version, *Κρίτηριον ἢ Διάλεξις τοῦ Σοφοῦ μὲ τὸν Κόσμον ἢ Κρίσις τῆς Ψυχῆς μὲ τὸ Σῶμα*, achieved by Jeremiah Kakavelas at the author's request. Patriarch Athanasios (Būlos Dabbās, b. 1647, Damascus) came from a very old family of Hawrān, the Christian heart of Syria. Elected as Patriarch of Antioch around 1685, in competition with Cyrill al-Za'īm, he temporarily backed down in 1694 to avoid the division of the Christian community and resumed his office in 1720, until his death in 1724. In March 1700 Dabbās, a Metropolitan of Aleppo, came to Bucharest as a guest of the ruling Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu. The Syrian hierarch found Cantemir's *Divan* while travelling in Romanian lands and by 1705 he had translated it into Arabic, asking Ġibrā'īl (Gabriel)

² I am grateful to Mihai Țipău for kindly helping me insert the Greek citations based on the edition prepared by Maria Marinescu-Himu in 1974 (see *References*). I also used the Romanian translation of the Greek version, achieved in 1990 by Virgil Cădea.

³ I follow hereafter the same conventions applied in the volume: square brackets [] enclose the lacunae that I restored, while < > stand for the Arab translator's additions. Information already included in the *Arabic Divan* is seldom repeated here and only for the sake of clarity.

Farhāt, a Maronite monk (appointed Bishop of Aleppo in 1725, as Germānūs)⁴, to review it. After studies of classical Arabic with a Muslim šayḥ (Haddad 1970: 52), Farhāt wrote a ground-breaking grammar of this language, using examples from the Gospels. He was an erudite, an expert on poetical meters, and famous for his mastery of Arabic, alongside Greek and Syriac.⁵

A general remark is useful to begin with: the translator was very careful in his work, always trying to convey the meaning rather than transfer the form, to the extent that corrections are noticeable in the Arabic version. *E.g.*, in an obvious attempt to reveal Cantemir's thoughts with more clarity, in II, 62 (part 2) the Arabic title goes "God's secrets are concealed", Ar. ان اسرار الله مستتر, although 'unveiled' appears both in Romanian ("Dumnezeieștile taine sunt descoperite") and in Greek ("Τὰ μυστήρια τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀποκεκαλυμμένα"). The Arabic version restores the appropriate word as inferred from the text thereafter, where Cantemir explains that divine mysteries are concealed to Man.

The first issue to be addressed is that of lost passages. To start with the most extensive parts that are absent from the Arabic version, three *Introductions* to Cantemir's *Divan* were disregarded by Patriarch Athanasios. A brief outline of these texts is necessary in order to grasp Dabbās's reasons to overlook them.

First, a *Dedicatory Letter* is addressed by Dimitrie Cantemir to his brother Antioch, where he expresses his brotherly love and his reverence. The gesture was diplomatic as well as political: on the one hand, this was a way of making up for the fact that Dimitrie had not asked either the blessing or the financial help of Antioch, ruling Prince of Moldavia at that time (He ruled 1695–1700 and 1705–1707); on the other hand, this message of harmony was addressed to the political enemies of the Cantemir family, who claimed that there was fierce competition between the two brothers.

Cantemir's second epistle is addressed *To the Reader*. After praising the benefits of reading his book (described as 'food for the soul', holding up 'three clear and untainted mirrors', 'a glass of life-giving water'), the author gives indications for a correct understanding of the text, and the customary apologies for inevitable mistakes.

The third text belongs to Jeremiah Kakavelas, Cantemir's master of Greek who, according to Maria Marinescu-Himu (editor of the Greek version in 1974), translated Cantemir's Romanian original in a mixture of vernacular and literary Greek. Kakavelas praises his former pupil's first literary production, the Orthodox

⁴ For the biography and works of Gabriel Farhāt see Joseph Féghali, *Germānos Farhāt, Archevêque d'Alep et arabisant (1670–1732)*, in "Melto. Recherches orientales", Université Saint-Esprit, Kaslik-Jounieh, Liban, 2nd year, no.1/1966, pp.115–129; Nahhād Razzūq, *Germānūs Farhāt - ḥayātu-hu wa-'āsāru-hu (Germanos Farhāt – his life and works)*, Al-Kaslik, Lebanon, 1998.

⁵ Farhāt spent most of his life in Lebanon. Patriarch Athanasios asked him to return to Aleppo repeatedly, to revise several of his works. See Féghali 1966: 117–118, 128; Nasrallah 1979: 137; 139–140; 144.

theme he had chosen, his good plan and elegant style, and the wide-ranging citations from the Holy Scriptures and Classical works.

Obviously, all three texts were to be avoided if the Patriarch intended to conceal the author's name. His gratitude to Prince Brâncoveanu, who was in long-lasting conflict with the Moldavian Prince Cantemir, must have persuaded him not to allow such a clear connection to be made between himself and Cantemir's philosophical thought. Besides, Patriarch Athanasios was surely concerned by the ban that the Ottoman authorities could put on his translation, preferring to remove the elements that were likely to disturb them. We should bear in mind that in order to be elected, patriarchs of the Oriental Churches needed a *barā'a* ('licence') and a *firman* issued by the Porte, which depended on the outcome of the struggle between competitors supported by the different forces at play in Constantinople: Ottoman high officials, foreign ambassadors, and the Greek and Armenian patriarchs.

Cantemir's introduction to *Book III*, an abstract of the following chapters, is also missing. While transferring part of Cantemir's title and an entire book written by the Unitarian Protestant Andreas Wissovatius, *Stimuli virtutum, fraena peccatorum, ut et alia eiusdem generis opuscula posthuma* (Amsterdam, 1682), the Arab translator overlooked Cantemir's brief survey, possibly considered redundant. Wissovatius is mentioned once in the Arabic version (end of I, 84), unlike Cantemir, whose name is absent from the *Arabic Divan*.

The habitual words of the printers – 'Athanasie and Dionisie, together with their apprentices' – were replaced by an Arabic colophon (fol. 141r), most informative for the genesis of the *Arabic Divan* since it indicates the year of the completion, 1705, and the contribution of 'the humble servant, priest Ġibrīl Farḥāt, the Maronite monk of Aleppo', who 'drafted it, gave it an Arabic form and wrote it down in his mortal hand'. The two closing *Indices* (Rom. *Scara*), the first referring to chapter titles in *Books I* and *II*, the second to those in *Book III*, do not accompany the Arabic translation. Considering that Cantemir had inserted them in order to help the reader find a particular chapter, the fact that they were overlooked suggests that the *Arabic Divan* was not intended to be printed, but rather more to circulate in manuscript copies.

Instead of the introductions, both Arabic manuscripts considered begin with a text that was seemingly composed by Farḥāt. From the very first words, this addition reflects the environment and the literary style particular to Christian Arabs. Whilst mentioning the three Holy Hypostases, the preliminary *basmala* (repeated later) – 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit of the only God, Amen!' – highlights the concept of a single God. This emphasis suggests that the author wished to deny the Muslims' claim that Christians worshipped more than one God. Together with the colophon, this introduction is worth comparing with similar ones enclosed in Gabriel Farḥāt's other works (Féghali 1966: 115–129; Razzūq 1998), which would allow an assessment of his actual contribution to Patriarch Athanasios's translations from Greek, particularly the *Arabic Divan*.

As mentioned on p. 70–71 of the *Editor's Note*, three absent passages evoke the notion of *purgatorium*. This seems to reflect the Patriarch's wish to prevent a rejection of his work both by readers inclined towards the union with the Catholic Church and by the Ottoman authorities, careful to prevent religious strife. The overlooked passages could also have attracted unpleasant comments from European missionaries, very active in Syria since the 1660's. It is reported that Patriarch Athanasios received his first Greek lessons at the Jesuit school in Damascus and that later on, during his office as a higoumen of the monastery of Bethleem, he was on very good terms with his neighbours the Franciscans (Nasrallah 1979: 132; Heyberger 1994: 145).

Other *lacunae* are accountable to the theological views of the translator, both theoretical and practical. *E.g.*, in I, 84 the word 'drink' (Gr. *τὸ ποτόν*) is overlooked, while the expression 'food and drink' is rendered through one Ar. word, *ma'āš*, 'living':

διατι ἐν πρώτοις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι ἴδιον νὰ γνωρίζῃ τὴν πίστιν, τὸν νόμον, τὰ δόγματα, τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ κακὸν, νὰ ἐβγάνη τὴν τροφήν τοῦ καὶ τὸ ποτόν του, (...) ἤγουν νὰ γνώρῃ ἀπὸ τι ἔχει νὰ φεύγῃ, καὶ τι νὰ φυλάττῃ· τρίτον, τὴν τροφήν καὶ τὸ ποτόν (...)

لكون الانسان من ذاته ان يعرف الايمان، والشريعة والعقائد والخير والشر وان يحصل معاشه (...)
واما تحصيله ضروريات المعيشه ...

"Because Man, by essence, knows faith and law, creeds, good and evil, and how to earn his food [and drink]. (...) As to his control of the requirements of earning his food [and drink]..."

The Patriarch may have believed that the moral lesson of this passage would be enhanced by omitting the word 'drink', a constant concern with him, revealed by this other addition in III, 12:

فانهم اسكروا اولاد مماليكهم واحضروهم امام اولادهم ، ليروا فيهم قباحة السكر الشنعاء، > ويتخذوهم
< يتخذوهم > عبرة يتادبون بها <

"They made their servants' children drunk and then brought them in front of their own children, so they could see in them the ugliness of drinking too much. <Thus, they used them as an example for education.>"

Incidentally, in a pastoral epistle addressed to his congregation, endorsed by the succeeding hierarchs, Patriarch Athanasios forbids men and women to take wine or 'araq to church lest they turn it into a tavern, Ar. *hānūt* (Heyberger 1994: 151).

Addressing a public who did not have a good mastery of Latin, the translator simplifies the discourse. Latin words are missing from the description of the "band of thugs, like those [called *philetēs latrones* in Latin], who pretend to be some kind of friends greeting travellers along the road..." (I, 57). Also, Cantemir's etymological explanation for the word *pubertas* – 'as derived from *pubes*, the name of the hair that grows at first in the moustache and the beard' – was dropped from the passage referring to the age of seventeen (I, 84).

The translator left out certain Biblical passages.⁶ This one in II, 63 may have seemed to him irrelevant, as unconnected to the topic under discussion, which is summed up by the title of the chapter, *Man's life and happiness in the world are like a spinning wheel*:

Εἰς τοῦτο ἤθελε νὰ παρομοιωθῆ ἡ κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν αὐτοῦ κατὰρα τοῦ Δάβιδ, λέγουσα· ὁ Θεός μου θοῦ αὐτοὺς ὡς τροχόν. Ψαλμ. πγ' στιχ. ιδ

“[Similar to this could be David’s curse on his enemies: ‘O my God, make them like whirling dust!’ (*Ps* 83, 13)]”

This other passage in II, 66 was probably deemed unnecessary because the story had been told in detail two lines before:

καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ἤκουσαν τὴν ἀνάστασιν τῶν νεκρῶν, ἐγελοῦσαν ἕνας μὲ τὸν ἄλλον· κεφ. ιζ', στιχ. λβ

“[And especially ‘when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.’]” (*Acts* 17, 32)

References to Classical works that were not accessible in Arabic, or not readily available to the great public in their original are often missing. Thus, in support of the idea that “the world does not praise you for your benefit, but for your ruin”, II, 78 ends in citations from Seneca, *Epistola XIX* and *Quaestiones naturales ad Lucillum*, from the Biblical *Proverbs* (6, 27) and *The Book of Jeremiah* (9, 8), all disregarded in the Arabic translation. References are especially missing from *Book III*, the translation of Wissovatius’s *Stimuli virtutum*. Thus, Epictetus, cited in III, 31, is absent from the Arabic text, as well as the allusion to Sallustius and Cato in III, 50. Iacobus Acontius (Giacomo Aconcio), referred to in connection with his interpretation of Chapter 11 of *The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians* (“It is no wonder for Satan to disguise himself as an angel of light”) enclosed in his work *Stratagemata Satanae*, is absent from III, 56. Plutarch’s works, repeatedly cited by Wissovatius (III, 64, 65, 71, etc.), are left out of the Arabic translation. Latin authors and scholars like Cicero, Musonius, Tacitus, Juvenal, Ausonius, etc. are not mentioned in the Arabic version. Homer’s and Hesiod’s works are cited in III, 25 without any indication to the author:

Εἶναι βέβαια ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς ἀρετῆς εἰς κάποιον τρόπον σκληρά, καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἀδοκίμους δύσκολη, ὁμως ὕστερα γίνεται εὐκολη, ὡς μαρτυρεῖ ὁ Ἡσίοδος
ان طريق الفضيلة من جهة الغير محنكين ومختبرين صعبه جدا ، لكن اخره ينتهي الي سهولة ظاهرة

“The road to virtue is very hard for the inexperienced and the untried, but then it becomes easy [, like Hesiod stated (*Works*: 288–292)]”

However, the assertion in III, 31 that Seneca was ‘an infidel’ (Lat. *Ethnicus*, translated by Cantemir with Rom. *păgân*, Gr. *ἔθνικός*) is left aside by Patriarch Athanasios: “...as the scholar Seneca [, although an infidel,] said: “Let us live a

⁶ Biblical citations hereafter follow the 1975 edition of *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, revised standard edition* edited by *The Bible Societies in association with Oxford University Press*.

visible life, not a hidden one...” Cited again in III, 76, the Roman Stoic is portrayed by the translator as “<The natural philosopher> [Seneca]”, Ar. *al-faylasūf al-ṭabīʿī*, an expression used by Classical Arab writers such as Al-Ġazālī (Algazel, 1058–1111).⁷

Extensive changes occur in III, 23, where Wissovatus evokes several emperors and heroes of the Classical Age:

Ἀκόμη καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦς ἐθνικοὺς διάλεξε τὰ τῶν ἀρετῶν παραδείγματα, χάριν λόγου, τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀριστείδην, τὸν Καμίλλον, καὶ τὸν Φαβρίκιον τῆς πτωχείας τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἀπὸ τὸν Κούριον, τὸν Μενένιον, καὶ τὸν Κουῖντιον Κινκινάτον τὸ τῆς ἐγκρατείας καὶ σωφροσύνης, ἀπὸ τὸν Βελλεροφόντην, τὸν Ξενοκράτην, τὸν Σκιπίωνα καὶ τὸν Τιβέριον τὸ τῆς ὑπομονῆς, καὶ τῆς τοῦ θυμοῦ ἐγκρατείας ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀρχύταν, τὸν Σωκράτην, τὸν Πλάτωνα, τὸν Φωκίωνα, τὸν Περικλῆ, τὸν Φίλιππον, τὸν βασιλέα τῆς Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀντίγονον τὸν πρῶτον τὸ τῆς νηφαλιότητος ἀπὸ τὸν Ἡράκλειτον, τὸν Στίλωνα καὶ τὸν Ζήνωνα τὸ τῆς φιλαληθείας καὶ τὸ νὰ μὴ ψεύδεται τινὰς μὲ τὰ μέτωρα ἀπὸ τὸν Ἐπαμεινώνδα, καὶ τὸν Ἀττικὸν Πομπόνιον.

اتخذ (اتخذ) لك نموذجًا من الكفار الوثنيين

اتخذ من اريستيدي عدله ، ومن فريبكييس صبره ، ومن كوريون عفته ، ومن طرفيرون امهاله ، ومن ارشيتين وداعته ومن فيلبس المكدونني تيقظه وحرصه ، ومن ايركليطس صدقه . ومن اتيكوس عدم كذبه في مزحه . ومن تيطس صدقته ورحمته

“Take example from the heathen infidels

Take from Aristides his fairness; from Fabricius, his patience; from Curius, his abstinence; from Tiberius, his serenity; from Archytas, his gentleness; from Philip of Macedon his watchfulness and endeavour; from Heraclitus, his truthfulness; from Atticus, the absence of lie and jest; <and from Titus, his sincerity and charity.>”

When recalling the Roman and Byzantine emperors (I, 35), the translator alters their order, possibly in order to highlight those characters that he considered most exemplary.

ἀλλὰ διὰ τούτους τοὺς μεταγενεστέρους, ποῦ εἶναι ὁ Μέγας Κωνσταντῖνος ὁποῦ ἔκτισε τὴν Πόλιν; Ποῦ ὁ Ἰουστινιανός, ἐκεῖνος ὁποῦ τὸν θαυμαστὸν καὶ ἀπὸ ὄλον τὸν κόσμον ἐπαινεμένον καὶ εἰς ὅλα τὰ ἄκρα τῆς γῆς περίφημον ναὸν ἔκτισε, ὁποῦ Ἁγία Σοφία ὀνομάζεται; Ποῦ εἶναι ὁ Διοκλητιανός, ὁ Μαξιμιανός καὶ ὁ Ἰουλιανός, ἐκεῖνοι οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ δυνατοὶ τύραννοι; Ποῦ εἶναι ὁ μικρὸς καὶ μέγας Θεοδώσιος; Ποῦ εἶναι Βασίλειος ὁ Μακεδὼν μὲ Λέοντα τὸν Σοφόν, τὸν υἱὸν του, καὶ ὄλοι οἱ ἄλλοι μεγάλοι δυνατοὶ καὶ περιβόητοι βασιλεῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων; Ποῦ εἶναι οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς Ῥώμης, ἐκείνης τῆς πόλεως ὁποῦ τὸν κόσμον ὄλον ἐνίκησε; Ποῦ εἶναι Ῥωμύλος ἐκεῖνος, ὁποῦ τὴν ἔκτισε καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἕως τοῦ Αὐγούστου Καίσαρος, τὸν ὁποῖον ἐπροσκύνησαν ὄλοι οἱ ἀθένηται

⁷ See *Al-Munqid min al-[d]ālal (Erreur et délivrance)*, in Jabre, 1959: 51 (Arabic text), 117 (French text).

اين ملوك روميه العظمي قاهرة العالم. اين روميلس الذي وطد دعائمها وشيد اركانها. اين ديوكلتيانوس ومكسيميانوس الظالمان المتعاضمان . اين افغسطس قيصر الذي سجدت له الاراكنه والولاة . ولما لي اسالك عن ملوك اليونان المتقادمي الازمان والاعضاء . بل هات اخبرني عن ملوكهم المحدثين ، اين قسطنطين العظيم الذي شيد القوسطنطينيه بالصفاح والعمد اين يوليانوس العاصي المغتصب. اين يوستينيانوس الذي رفع الهيكل الموشي وفاق بزخرفه علي مرتفعات المسكونه باسرها وسماه اجيًّا صوفيًّا حتي غدا فتنة للعالمين . اين تاودوسيوس الكبير والصغير ، اين باسيلوس المكوني مع ابنه لاون الفايق الحكمة

“Where are the kings of Rome the Great, conqueror of the world? Where is Romulus who set its pillars and strengthened its foundations? Where are Diocletian and Maximian, the great tyrants? Where is Caesar Augustus, to whom all [archons and] rulers bowed down? Not to ask of the ancient kings of the Greeks. Tell me though about their more recent kings: where is Constantine the Great, who built Constantinople, < all roofs and pillars? Where is Julian the offender and apostate?> Where is Justinian who built the church that he adorned, surpassing in its decoration all buildings in the world, // and he called it Saint Sophia, so that it became a delight to both worlds? Where are Theodosius the Great and the Young? Where is Basil of Macedon with his son Leon the Wise?”

The inversion of words, so as to agree with the translator’s own scale of values, also reveals a theological concern. The Patriarch changes the order of two phrases in I, 23, obviously because he considered the first assertion more important than the second:

ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς εἶναι φῶς, ὁ δὲ κόσμος σκότος. Τὸ λοιπὸν, ὄντας ἐσὺ σκότος, πῶς νὰ μὴν σέ μισήσω, καὶ ὄντας Αὐτὸς φῶς, πῶς νὰ μὴν Τὸν ἀγαπήσω.
فمن حيث ان الله نور يجب لي ان احبه ، ومن حيث انك ظلام ، ينبغي لي ان ابغضك.

“And since God is light, I must love Him; and since you are darkness, I must hate you.”

In I, 1, the World is declared ‘transitory, deceiving and haughty’ instead of ‘haughty, deceiving and transitory’ (Gr. ‘ὡ μεγάλαυχε, πλάνε καὶ πρόσκαιρε’). In the Patriarch’s opinion, consistent with Christian Orthodox tradition, the most loathsome feature of the world was its temporal nature.

Occasionally, additions occur in the Arabic text, suggesting an effort towards clarity and precision. Expressed in brief comments, the translator’s views are generally either theological or ethical. A firm position against polytheism is reflected by the closing phrase inserted in III, 56, where the Greek gods Proteus and Vertumnus are presented:

τοῦ ἔτι μυθεύοντος ὅτι εἰς εἴ τι εἶδος ἤθελαν μεταβάλλουνταν.
وكانا يتشاكلان في ظهورهما باي شكل اراداه <وهذا من جملة خرافات الوثنيين >

“When becoming apparent, they could take whatever shape they wanted. <This is one of the idolaters’ fancies>.”

Here and throughout the *Arabic Divan* the word ‘idolater(s)’ (Ar. *wataniyy(ūn)*) refers to the heathen and (often) the Greek.

Another insertion at the end of III, 61 allows a glimpse of a personal belief expressed by the translator:

< واتعظ بما قاله الحكيم جراحات الصديق خير من تقبيلات العدو المصنعة >

“Take the advice of the wise man: ‘A friend’s wounds are preferable to an enemy’s false embraces’”.

In I, 3, where Cantemir evokes Adam’s sin and his punishment by death, the Arab translator adds the word ‘temporal’ above the written line, to underline the concept of Resurrection:

ثم اخشي الا تكون اثمار اشجارك كثمار تلك الشجرة المنهي عنها ، تلك التي امر الله ادم الا ياكل منها . وهو اذ تعدي امر الله باريه متخطيًا واكل منها مات موتًا زمنيًا

“Then I fear that the fruit of your trees is the same as that of the forbidden tree, the one that God commanded Adam not to eat of. And he, sinfully disobeying the commandment of God his Maker, ate of it and died a <temporal> death.”

In I, 69, the translator adds a long paragraph in order to support one of Cantemir’s arguments directed against the falsity of the World:

ثم بعد انك افتريت بامرین كاديين (كاذبين) > وهما تساوي الانفس الناطقه بالغير ناطقه وانكار الثواب الابدي، اوردت كذبًا اخر اشني واشنع وهو قولك ما جانا مخبر من بعد الموت، ولست انكر هذا عليك لكون الكذب هو من جملة خواصك <

“Afterwards you devised two false arguments, < one that states the equality between articulate souls and inarticulate ones, the other denying the eternal reward. I have revealed another lie of yours, more hateful and repulsive, i.e., your assertion that we have no inner nature after death. I do not contest that this came to you because lying belongs to your general features >”

Another special feature is the insertion of notes placed between the words *hāṣiya*, ‘Note’, and *al-naṣṣ*, ‘The Text’ (Brackets were not used in Arabic until recently). The translator considered that the following words, probably deemed unfamiliar to the ordinary Arab reader, required an explanation.

I, 35: Chersonese

... في مضيق الثغر الكاين في شرسونيص . > حاشية معني هذه اللفظه في اللغة الغريبيه (العربية) ، الجزيره الباييره ويسمي هذا المواضع في اللغة التركيه بوغاز حصارى النص <

“...at the port that lies at Chersonese. < Note: This word means in Arabic ‘the barren island’, while in Turkish these parts are called Bogaz Hisari. The Text: >”

I, 59: The sirens

شهوآت العالم تشبه السيرنس اللواتي يلهين الناس ثم يزجهن في بحر التهلكه ه
حاشية السيرينس هو من جملة خرافات اليونانيين، لانهم // كانوا يزعمون انه في جهة من جهات البحر موضعًا يسمع فيه اصوات شجيه رخيمه، من غير ان يري لها مصوت فاذا مر بهده (بهذه) الاصوات اللذيده سفينه ، وتبت (وثبت) للحال نوتيه تلك السفينه وتهافتوا في لجة البحر متساقطين من شجوههم وصبابتهم بتلك النغمات الجاذبة القوي النفسانيه، والخالية الحواص (خواص) العقلية ويهلكون غرقًا النص

“Worldly desires are like sirens that sing to people and then throw them in the sea of ruin

< Note: The siren is one of the mythical creatures of the Greeks. They claimed that, in some part of the sea, sad and melodious voices were heard, without the singers to be seen. And when a ship went past those sweet voices, the sailors on that ship jumped without delay and sank down to the bottom of the sea, falling in

pain and longing for those tempting and very sentimental songs that lacked all reasonable touch. Thus, they were ruined by drowning. *The Text* >”

Along with a comment on the sirens’ skill, the translator removed from the story the reference to ‘the Moldavians’, a possible lead to the original author. Another reference to them was discarded from III, 9:

وينجذب الرجا اليها كما يجذب (ينجذب) المغناطيس موجهاً نحو القطب الذي تدور السما حوله وهو ثابت في مركز واحد

“Hope is attracted to it as a magnet oriented towards the pole⁸ [the pole is a star that Moldavians call ‘the spindle’], around which the sun turns while it remains fixed in a single place.”

I, 76: The Cretan jail

استشعر بذاتي كان عقلي مسجون داخل السجن الاقريطشي حاشية هذا السجن المذكور في مدينة اقريطش من الحكماء اليونانيين وتكوينه بقناطر متداخله بعضها في بعض، واسع جدًا وليس له باب حاجز ولا حايط مانع، بل داخله زوايا ملتوية بصناعه هندسية، حتى لا يقدر الداخل فيها ان يجد له طريقًا يخرج منه فاذا سجن احد فيه يطرح من كوة في اعلاه محكمه في وسطه فيدور المسجون فيها ملتصقًا طريقًا يخرج منه فلا يجد غير طرقات ملتوية تعترضه دعائم القناطر وزوايا اركانها، فيقضي ايامًا دابر فيه من جهه الي اخري الي ان يهلك جوعًا، ويسمي الان عند العامه بحبس سليمان النبي

“I feel as if my mind was imprisoned inside the Cretan jail⁹. < Note: This famous jail was mentioned in the city of Crete by the Greek governors, and it was made of arched walls built one inside the other, very wide and without any gate or defence wall. Instead, inside it the angles were twisted with engineering skill, so that the one who entered could not find a way out. And if someone was imprisoned in it, he was thrown in its midst from a skylight high above the tribunal, and the prisoner would turn inside it looking for a way out and finding nothing but winding roads obstructed by the pillars and the corners of the angled walls. He would spend days on end inside it, moving back and forth, until he died of hunger. Nowadays it is called by the ordinary people ‘Prophet Solomon’s prison’. *Text* >”

II, 85, part 3: The scarab

اعلم ان الثمر المتكون جديدًا هو حيوة الانسان في الشباية التي هي بمنزلة الثمر الذي ما استتم نضجه ، فيجب عليك حينئذ ان تذب عنها بالملاحظة، لئلا يفسدها الخازباز > حاشية الخازباز بخا معجمة وزاي وبا موحدة وزاي هو ذباب يتراكم علي العشب والثمار فيفسده ويسميه العامه العريجة النص <

“Learn that a ripe fruit is man’s life when in his youth, which is like fruit that has not yet matured completely. Then you must defend it with care, lest it is attacked by the scarab < Note: *Al-hāzibāz*, [‘the scarab’] with dotted *hā*, *zāy*, single-dotted *bā*, and *zāy*, are beetles that roam in the grass and the fruit, ruining it. They are commonly called *al-‘arīḡa*, *text*: >”

Some of the Patriarch’s choices in adding or deleting passages reveal his opinion of particular Biblical figures and the message that their deeds convey. This is the case for the following passage in III, 22:

⁸ This explanation is added by Cantemir between brackets. He used the same parallel in his introductory epistle to his brother Antioch (absent from the *Arabic Divan*) and in II, 77.

⁹ In Cantemir’s *Divan*, both in Romanian and in Greek, ‘the Cretan Labyrinth’.

Ἔτζη λοιπόν, ὁποῦ αἱ ἱστορίαι περιγράφουσι, μερικοὺς βάλε ἐμπρός, εἰς τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ νοός σου, διὰ τὰ τοὺς μιμηθῆς, χάριν λόγου ἀπὸ τὴν Ἁγίαν Γραφήν, τὸν Ἀβραάμ εἰς τὴν ἐξοχώτατην πρὸς Θεὸν πίστην, καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐξ αὐτῆς προερχομένην ὑπακοήν, τὸν Ἰωσήφ εἰς τὴν σωφροσύνην, τὸν Ἰώβ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονήν, τὸν Μωϋσῆ εἰς τὴν τοῦ πλοῦτου καὶ τῶν θησαυρῶν τῆς Αἰγύπτου καταφρόνησιν, τὸν Δαβίδ, εἰς τὴν πραότητα, τὸν Ἐζεκιάν, τὸν Ἰωσίαν, τὸν Δανιὴλ καὶ τοὺς συντρόφους αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἄκραν εὐσέβειαν, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς, οἱ ὅποιοι κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἀπὸ τοιούτην φανεράν καὶ βεβαίαν ὑπόσχεσιν τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, τὴν ὁποίαν ἡμεῖς τώρα ἔχομεν, ὑστερημένοι ἦτον.

صنع بازا حديقتي عقلك اولايك القديسين الذين تصور لنا اساطير المورخين صورة فضائلهم واقتدي بهم ، خذ من ابراهيم ايمانه الذي بلغ حد الكمال من الطاعة والتسليم . ومن يوسف عفته // ومن ايوب صبره ، ومن موسي زهده (زهده) ومن داود دعتة . ومن حزقيا ويوسيا ودانيال ورفقته، امساكلهم وعبادتهم ومن صمويل طاعته ومن ايليا غيرته ، ومن يوحنا نقشفه وتصونه ومن كل متق فضيلته ، هولاي الذين احكموا مثل هذه المناقب السامية وما كان اذ زك (ادراك) موعد الحيوه الابديه الذي هو الان لنا

“Place before the eyes of your mind and follow those saints whose virtues are reflected in the chroniclers’ writings. Take from Abraham his faith (...); from Joseph, his abstinence; // from Job, his patience; from Moses, his asceticism, his indifference to the riches and treasures of Egypt; from David, his gentleness; from Ezekiel, Joshua, Daniel and his companions, their restraint and devotion; <from Samuel, his obedience; from Elijah, his fervour; from John, his simple way of life and his chastity, and from all devout, their virtue.>”

A survey extended to all citations is likely to lead to other interesting findings. Considering the Patriarch’s wish to obtain an accurate translation, some of the passages inserted in the *Arabic Divan* are possibly his own – or Farhat’s – work. The *Index of Authors and Works* enclosed at the end of the edition of 2006 provides a list of titles which, checked against an inventory of the Arabic translations of these texts available at the end of the 17th-beginning of the 18th century, should help identify the translations that are to be attributed to the two scholars.

Bearing in mind that Gabriel Farhāt was also a gifted poet, verses occurring in the *Arabic Divan* hold special interest.¹⁰ The following stanzas were added in I, 84 and III, 16:

> دفن الجسم في الثرى ، ليس في الجسم منتفع
انما النفع في الذي ، كان فيه فارتمع
اصله جوهر نفيس ، والي اصله رجع <

“Flesh was buried in the ground; there is no gain in the flesh.

The benefit is in that which is inside it and was risen.

His source is a precious gem and to his source he will return. >”¹¹

¹⁰ As indicated by Alphonse Mingana in the catalogue of his collection of Christian manuscripts preserved in Birmingham (Mingana 1936: 162), Farhāt’s *Dīwān* encloses verses written between 1695 and 1720.

¹¹ Farhāt wrote poetry on these same themes before and after Cantemir’s book was translated into Arabic; see Razzūq, 1998: 189–226, *Farhāt al-šā‘ir* (*Farhāt the poet*).

> وما الموت الا رحلة

غير انها ، من المنزل الفاني الي المنزل الباقي <

“< What is death unless a journey,

But [a journey] from the ephemeral abode to the eternal one? >”

Four other poetic passages (two in II, 85; one in III, 4 and III, 28) are much more elaborate in the Arabic version than in the Greek one. Here is just one of those enclosed in II, 85:

Ἀκατάπαυστος ἔσται ἡ τιμωρία,

Ὅτι ἐν Ἄδῃ οὐκ ἔσται ἐλευθερία.

Διὰ τοῦ λόγου σου τί θέλεις νὰ εἰπῆς

Ἄνθρωπε δίκαιε; Πάντα εὐτυχῆς.

“Ask yourself if you search for an answer,

You will be given the gift of knowledge about the end of the thread.

For there is a captivity that does not untie its chastisement,

And the hell of a prison ruled by total darkness.

<Feed yourself with truth, O devout, and rejoice

In your Lord’s mercy, for you levelled with the kingdom>.”

Nevertheless, most additions reveal an intention to simplify and illuminate the text. Firstly, the translator offers indications whenever he feels that the reader may get confused, as in this addition in I, 62:

اما غلّل بعض البحر بالسلاسل والاعلال كارتخشنتسا ،

“Did not some bind the sea in chains and locks <as Artaxerxes (*Sic!*)?>”

Secondly, most of the passages of the Holy Scriptures that Cantemir cites and refers to (within brackets) are inserted by the translator in plain words in the beginning of the citation, as if in a Sunday sermon, *e. g.* in II, 70: “And thus it is impossible that we miss anything (*Mt* 6, 31–33), for < like David said in *Psalms* 33: > ‘Those who seek God lack no good thing.’”

Thirdly, where Biblical texts are merely referred to, the Arabic version often provides the whole passage. The translator’s concern about a good understanding of the Scriptures is evident especially in *Book III*, where many citations are curtailed or only referred to. *E. g.*, in III, 15 where the *Divan* mentions: Ἄν ἔχεις καιρόν, ἰδέξ τὸν 4ε΄ Ψαλμ. στιχ. ζ΄ (“If you have time, search *Ps* 95, 7”), the Arabic version gives:

> كقول المرتل في المزمور الخامس والتسعين ان سمعتم صوته فلا تقسوا قلوبكم <

“< Thus spoke the Psalmist in *Psalms* 95: ‘If you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’>”

The Patriarch’s wish to educate his public drove him to complete the more significant *lacunaria*, like in III, 28:

αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· Ματθ. κεφ. ζ΄, στιχ. ζ΄, κεφ. κα΄, στιχ. κβ΄

كقوله تع في الراس السابع من متي ، من يسأل ياخذ (ياخذ) ومن يطلب يجد ومن يقرع يفتح له

“As the Almighty says in chapter 7 of *Matthew*: “He who asks shall receive; <he who seeks shall find; and he who knocks, it will be opened to him.>”

The choice that Patriarch Athanasios made in adding Biblical passages suggests a wish to present his readers with familiar images, such as in this reference to the 'cedar of Lebanon' (III, 18): "...as the Psalmist said in *Psalm* 39: < "I have seen a wicked man, overbearing and towering like a cedar of Lebanon. Again I passed by, and, lo, he was no more...> (*Ps* 37, 35–36)" He removes 'the bear' from the list of animals in I, 52 (originally, Gr. *εις ένα σπήλαιον λέοντος, η άρκουδας η πάρδου*, 'next, to the lair of the lion [, the bear] and the panther'). The reference to 'comedies', a form of entertainment unfamiliar to most Christian Arabs before the end of the 18th century, and not advisable from an educational point of view¹², is absent from III, 4: "Thus does the world with us, for its wealth, while seeming to be golden to the eye, in fact is a vain lie. It is like the sight of a shining piece of glass that easily breaks and gets smashed, [or like comedies that end so soon]..."

An effort to adapt is also visible in considering the date when the Arabic version was created. In I, 2, to update his text, the translator changes the number of years since Genesis so as to agree with the year when his work was finished, 1705 (mentioned in the colophon, closure of *Book III*):

ولي منذ صنعني الرب سبع الاف ومايتان واثننا عشرة سنة . وبهذا الشكل الحسن الجميل الذي كونت به

"Seven thousand and two hundred and twelve years have passed since the Lord made me in this beautiful and handsome shape..."

Yet in I, 64 he proves to be inconsistent in his choice and preserves, perhaps by mistake, the original date:

لي منذ تكونت الي الان نحو سبعة الاف ومايتي وسبعة اعوام

"Since the day I was created and until now, almost seven thousand two hundred and seven¹³ years have passed".

The above-mentioned passages show the interest of a comprehensive survey of Biblical citations in the *Arabic Divan*. New data for the general discussion about the Bible in Arab Christianity could be brought to light. Variations occurring in the Arabic version of the Scriptural texts could be recorded and conclusions could be drawn as to the specific translation of the Bible that Patriarch Athanasios referred to in his work. As known, Gabriel Farhāt achieved an Arabic version of the Gospels, intended for the use of the Maronites.

Besides being a source for the study of Patriarch Athanasios's theological views and literary style, the *Arabic Divan* holds considerable interest for language specialists. Language features best reflect the translator's intention to provide an adapted version that is not merely readable, but also attractive. Since this paper is not aimed at a language study, I am only evoking the main points that allow a glimpse of the language features of the *Arabic Divan* and the readers that Patriarch Athanasios was addressing.

¹² Virgil Căndea noted that "As products of imagination, i.e., a faculty that was condemned by mediaeval thinking as a source of misconceptions and false ideas, comedies were despised by most thinkers of the time." (*Arabic Divan*, n. 80, p. 225)

¹³ Misspelled 'seventy' in the English translation, *Arabic Divan*, first print.

It is commonly accepted by language specialists that Christian Arabs wrote their works in a particular variety of Arabic. Though it seems to be less studied at the moment¹⁴, the variety of Arabic specific to Eastern Christians (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt) in the 17th–18th centuries is duly recognized as showing particular features. ‘Christian Arabic’ – as used, according to Blau (1966: I), in ‘literature written by Christians for Christians’ – was included among the varieties of ‘Middle Arabic’¹⁵ and ‘Christian Middle Arabic’.¹⁶ Most of the consistent features of this variety of Arabic, expertly recorded and defined by Jérôme Lentin in his *Recherches sur l’histoire de la langue arabe au Proche-Orient à l’époque moderne* (see Feodorov 2005-a), are well represented in the *Arabic Divan*. A comprehensive survey of the language forms enclosed in this new and valuable text-source would certainly bring new data to the discussion on Middle Arabic.

In a Christian text, particularly one rich in Scriptural citations, the inclusion of Greek words in Arabic form is no surprise (e.g., Ar. اَجْيَا, *Aǧiyā* < Gr. *‘Αγία*). The ecclesiastic vocabulary enclosed in the *Arabic Divan* is a rich source for the survey of Christian Arabic words, especially those of Greek origin, as recorded in Georg Graf’s *Verzeichnis arabischer Kirchlicher Termini* (Louvain, 1954) and Manfred Ullmann’s *Wörterbuch zu den griechisch-arabischen Übersetzungen des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Wiessbaden, 2002).

Naturally, the translator transferred Cantemir’s abstract thoughts and ethical principles by tapping into the vast resources of Arabic translations from the works of major Greek philosophers. As documented in many editions of such manuscripts¹⁷, the Arabic philosophical vocabulary was formed before the 12th century through lexical borrowing from Greek or word-coining according to specific Arabic patterns. E.g., the two notions of ‘macrocosm’ and ‘microcosm’ are simply transferred into Arabic as ‘the large(r) world’ and ‘the small(er) world’ (Ar. العالم الاكبر, العالم الاصغر). Certain terms refer to rituals and creed: in III, 59, Ar. *qurbān*, usually defined in connection with *taqarraba* = ‘to offer a sacrifice’, is used both for ‘offering’ in general and for ‘Eucharistic offering’, Gr. *προσφορά* (Coquin 1966: 436). This is just one of the Arabic words similarly used by

¹⁴ In his recent review of the *Arabic Divan* (“Archives en Sciences Sociales des Religions”, Paris, 2007, no. 140, pp. 173–175), Aurélien Girard refers to Christian Middle Arabic as “une hypothèse controversée et aujourd’hui écartée comme objet de recherche autonome, malgré d’incontestables particularités”.

¹⁵ In Blau’s opinion, this “<missing link> between Classical Arabic and modern Arabic dialects” (Blau 1966: I) is characterized by “the almost free alternation of classical, post-classical, pseudo-correct, and vernacular Neo-Arabic elements” (*idem* 1995: 11). See Clive Holes, Ch. 1. 4, *Middle Arabic, the modern dialects and the evolution of Modern Standard Arabic*, in his *Modern Arabic. Structures, Functions and Varieties*, London and New York, 1995, pp. 30–38; Kees Versteegh, Ch.8, *The Definition of ‘Middle Arabic’*, in *The Arabic Language*, Edinburgh, 1997, pp. 114–129.

¹⁶ The ‘Moyen arabe chrétien’ (MAC) was defined by Jacques Grand’Henry, who indicated a number of typical features of this variety of Arabic (1988: 225).

¹⁷ See the closing *Bibliography – Edited and Translated Manuscripts* – in the *Arabic Divan*.

Christians and Muslims that also entered the Turkish language (Tk. *Qurban Bairam*, 'The Feast of the Sacrifice').

Several notes are inserted to explain complicated language issues by using a detailed description of the form of Arabic words and particular verbal forms (E.g., *tabannā*, 'to give birth', 'to engender', in I, 61: *tağaddada*, 'to be renewed', a verbal form derived from the Adj. *ğadīd*, 'new', in I, 65). In I, 84, the Greek names of Man's seven ages were a real challenge for the Arab translator, compelling him to insert a lengthy note, actually a paraphrase of the original passage.

The translator also inserted in his version a number of words, phrases and structures that are specific to Classical Arabic and other Semitic languages. The text displays frequent cases where a synonymic word or phrase was added in order to create a repetitive structure, a typical style pattern of Classical Arabic (Feodorov 2003: 288–289), e.g. "I feel like laughing at you <and scorning you>" (I, 24), or "paved with floors of marble <and sandstone> (I, 39)". The use of '*ʾitbāʾ*', intensification by repeating a word with one consonant changed, is another specifically Semitic feature used herein, e.g. *farāha wa-marāha*, 'liveliness and loveliness' (I, 64). Colloquial phrases were deemed necessary to transfer Cantemir's free dialogue between the World and the Wise Man: as an example of metaphorical expression particular to Classical Arabic, the traveller is called *ibn al-ṭarīq* and *ibn al-sabīl*, 'son of the road' (I, 23; I, 40).

The presence of Arabic words used in Muslim Scriptures (Ar. *Iblīs* for 'Satan', *ğinn* for 'spirit', *širk* for 'polytheism', etc.) is not unexpected, considering the common inventory of terminology particular to the Holy Books of Near Eastern religions. However, certain Arabic words in the *Arabic Divan* are reminiscent of the Muslim vocabulary, possibly indicating their higher frequency in ordinary speech. Thus, *Al-Šarīʿa*, the most usual word naming the Law founded on the Qurʾānic precepts, is a term that frequently occurs in the *Arabic Divan* to name God's laws and righteous path, as outlined in the *Gospels*. Several words belonging to the semantic family of *ğihād* occur in the *Arabic Divan*, in their first and foremost meaning relating to the fight against temptation and weakness, towards a pure and righteous life. E.g., in the Introduction placed before *Book I*, the Ar. *muğāhid* occurs in the following context: "Turn your eyes towards its meanings, to find them among the most virtuous, if you are earnest (*muğāhid*)." A special chapter could focus on the divine names (names and attributes of God), for which the Arabic version gives a surprising collection of terms similar to those on the Muslim authors' lists of the '99 most beautiful names of 'Allāh', e.g.: *Al-Qadīr*, 'God Almighty' (I, 23), *Al-Wahhāb*, 'the Giver of all perfect gifts' (I, 63), etc.

Having surveyed the missing passages, additions, reversals, adjustments and language features particular to the Arabic version of Cantemir's *Divan*, I concluded that this text provides sufficient data to answer the questions formulated at the outset.

Firstly, Patriarch Athanasios produced an accurate translation close to the original, showing minor interventions that do not alter Cantemir's ideas and ethical message. On the contrary, most changes and comments bring to light and emphasize the Romanian scholar's thinking, enriching it with the original outlook of the Arab translator.

Secondly, Patriarch Athanasios intended his translation of the *Divan* to circulate among the Christian Arab communities of the Near East, with a clear purpose that it penetrated all circles. Considering that this new version of Cantemir's *Divan* was not offensive from a Muslim perspective¹⁸, but enclosed wise thoughts and useful moral teachings, the public that Patriarch Athanasios was addressing may have been much wider than expected. Except for the closing texts mentioned above, considered irrelevant in the Arabic version, the other missing texts were most likely overlooked for political and diplomatic reasons accountable to the local situation at the time. Furthermore, the Patriarch consistently tried to provide a clear and comprehensible text, appealing to the common Arab reader. The vocabulary and language structures that he used, rich in colloquialisms and Semitic constructions, were familiar both to Christians and Muslims, so that his creation can be considered an example of a text written in Modern Literary Arabic.

Answers concerning the public that Patriarch Athanasios was hoping to reach can also be found in other texts that he wrote, especially those composed in Wallachia. Among these are the *Forewords* to the Greek-Arabic church books, a *Missal* and a *Book of Hours*, printed at Snagov and Bucharest in 1701–1702¹⁹ with the help of the scholar and printer Antim Ivireanul, a monk from Iberia (Georgia, in the Caucasus) who became Metropolitan of Wallachia. Patriarch Athanasios refers there to the same readers as in subsequent books printed in 1706–1711 in Aleppo, after he received the Arabic printing implements as a farewell gift from Prince Brâncoveanu. Moreover, while Church books were given for free and were meant for priests and hierarchs who would spread the Christian teachings, Patriarch Athanasios seems to have hoped that Cantemir's *Divan*, an ethical dialogue of a more pragmatic kind, was going to reach the general public. To define the reading society of Ottoman Syria, a comprehensive survey of the local teaching system, monastic learning and the general level of education is required (see Heyberger 1994: 142–149, 474–477; *idem*, 1999). The case of Aleppo, chosen host of the first Arabic printing-press in the Near East, is very significant since this city enjoyed a privileged situation due to its prosperity and its opening to all the Orient (*ibidem*: 144).

¹⁸ In composing his first book, Cantemir must have considered his position as an envoy of his country, Moldavia, to the Ottoman court: attacking the Muslims' beliefs would have put him in an even more dangerous position.

¹⁹ See *Kitāb al-quḍusāt al-ṭalāṭa al-'ilāhiyya*, Snagov, 1701, described by I. Bianu and N. Hodoș in *Bibliografia românească veche*, I, 1903, pp. 423–432, and *Kitāb al-'Ūrūlūḡiyūn 'ayy al-ṣalawāt al-mafrūda*, Bucharest, 1702, *ibidem*, pp. 442–447.

Incidentally, the modern *Nahda* ('Arab Renaissance') originated in Aleppo in the 18th century, mainly promoted by men of the Church (Samir, 1997: 98).

Third, conclusions can also be drawn as to Patriarch Athanasios's motivations and intentions as a Christian hierarch and a creative scholar. The very fact that Patriarch Athanasios decided to translate Cantemir's *Divan* though he was aware of the enmity between the author and his own protector indicates that he found this book useful for his congregation in the Levant. As shown above, the *Arabic Divan* reflects the author's theological, political and moral convictions. It would be interesting to compare the ethical principles and moral guidelines comprised in the *Arabic Divan* with the Patriarch's sermons and the *Regulations* that he issued in July 1716, engraved by his order on a marble slab in the church of Aleppo. Odds are that at least some of his teachings concerning the ways to live a righteous life, inspired by Christian integrity and decency²⁰, echo Cantemir's ideas, based on readings from the Scriptures and Classical authors.

Having suggested answers to the questions formulated to begin with, one task still needs to be achieved by this paper: to emphasize the importance of future research on the *Arabic Divan*, both from a theological perspective and from a literary one. The conclusions of such studies would shed more light on this remarkable case of intercultural communication: the fascinating process that allowed Christian Orthodox and Unitarian views to receive an Arabic expression. Furthermore, they would help us comprehend the part that Patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās played in the circulation of the *Divan* in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, a cultural area that neither Andreas Wissovatius nor Dimitrie Cantemir had expected to reach.

REFERENCES

- Camille Aboussouan (ed.), *Exposition: Le Livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, UNESCO-AGECOOP, Paris, 1982.
- Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millenium*, vol. I-III, in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Louvain, 1966.
- Joshua Blau, *Vernacular Arabic as Reflected by Middle Arabic (Including Judaeo-Arabic)*, in *Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the UFAI*, Part Two, "The Arabist. Budapest Studis in Arabic", 1995, no.15-16, pp. 11-15.
- Dimitrie Cantemir, *Divanul sau gâlceava Înțeleptului cu Lumea sau giudețul Sufletului cu Trupul* ["The Divan or the Wise Man's Dispute with the World or the Litigation between Soul and Body"], introduction, edition, comments by Virgil Căndea, Greek text ed. by Maria Marinescu-Himu, Editura Academiei R.S.R., București, 1974.
- Dimitrie Cantemir, *Divanul sau gâlceava Înțeleptului cu Lumea sau giudețul Sufletului cu Trupul*, original Romanian text and translation of the Greek version into Romanian, Editura Minerva, București, 1990.

²⁰ "Déjà en 1716, Athanase Dabbās leur interdisait d'entrer dans l'église et au bain décorées de bijoux et de vêtements orgueilleux, et aspergées de parfum." (Heyberger 1994: 521, see also p. 151)

- Dimitrie Cantemir, *The Salvation Of The Wise Man And The Ruin Of The Sinful World* (*Ṣalāḥ al-ḥakīm wa-fasād al-‘ālam al-ḍamīm*), Arabic Edition, English Translation, Editor's Note, Notes And Indices by Ioana Feodorov, Introduction and Comments by Virgil Căndea, Bucharest, 2006, Romanian Academy Publishing House.
- René-Georges Coquin, *Les Canons d'Hippolyte*, édition critique de la version arabe, introduction et traduction française, in *Patrologia orientalis*, t.XXXI, fasc. 2, Paris, 1966.
- Joseph Féghali, *Germānos Farḥāt, Archevêque d'Alep et arabisant (1670–1732)*, in “*Melto. Recherches orientales*”, Université Saint-Esprit, Kaslik-Jounieh, Liban, 2nd year, no.1/1966, pp.115–129.
- Ioana Feodorov, *Exprimarea gradației în limba arabă. Studiu comparativ* [“The Expression of Grading in Arabic. A Comparative Study”], Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003 (with English *Summary and Contents*).
- Ioana Feodorov, *The Edition and Translation of Christian Arabic Texts of the 17th–18th Centuries Referring to the Romanians*, in “*Revue des études sud-est européennes*”, Bucarest, XLIII, 2005(1–4), p.253–273. (Cited 2005-a)
- Ioana Feodorov, *The Arabic Version of Demetrius Cantemir's Divan by Athanasios Dabbās: an Unusual Case of Unitarian Ideas Travelling to the Near East*, in “*Chronos, Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand*”, no.12/2005, p.79–107. (Cited 2005-b)
- Aurélien Girard, review of Dimitrie Cantemir, *The Salvation Of The Wise Man And The Ruin Of The Sinful World*, in “*Archives en Sciences Sociales des Religions*”, Paris, 2007, no. 140, pp. 173–175.
- Jacques Grand'Henry, *La version arabe du Discours 34 de Grégoire de Nazianze, édition critique, commentaires et traduction*, in *Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca*, 20, *Corpus Nazianzenum*, Turnhout, 1988.
- Robert M. Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society. An Interpretation*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1970.
- Bernard Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle)*, Roma, 1994.
- Bernard Heyberger, *Livres et pratique de la lecture chez les chrétiens (Syrie, Liban) XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles*, in “*Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*”, no. 87–88, *Livres et lecture dans le monde ottoman*, Aix-en-Provence, 1999, pp. 209–223.
- Farid Jabre, *Al-Ghazālī, Al-Munqid min a[l]-ḍālal (Erreur et délivrance)*, traduction française avec introduction et notes, Collection UNESCO d'oeuvres représentatives, *Série arabe*, Beyrouth, 1959.
- Jérôme Lentin, *Recherches sur l'histoire de la langue arabe au Proche-Orient à l'époque moderne*, Ph. D. thesis, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III, 1997, distributed by Atelier national de reproduction des thèses, Lille.
- Alphonse Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, vol. II, Cambridge, 1936.
- Joseph Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du Vème au XXème siècle*, Louvain – Paris, vol. IV, t. I, 1979.
- Nahhād Razzūq, *Germānūs Farḥāt – ḥayātu-hu wa-‘āṭāru-hu* (‘Germanos Farḥāt – his life and works’), Al-Kaslik, Lebanon, 1998.
- Samir Khalil Samir, *Les communautés chrétiennes, membres actifs de la société arabe au cours de l'histoire*, in “*Proche-Orient Chrétien*”, 47, 1997, pp. 79–102.