

‘FRIENDS AND FOES’ OF THE PAPACY AS RECORDED IN PAUL OF ALEPPO’S NOTES *

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This article presents the views of the Orthodox rulers, Church hierarchs, and local populations of Walachia, Moldavia, Ukraine, and Russia regarding the Latin Church and the Pope, as recorded by Paul of Aleppo, Archdeacon of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch, in the journal of his travels to Eastern Europe in 1652–1659, an outstanding piece of Christian Arabic literature of 17th century Syria.

Keywords: Orthodox views on the Latin Church, Paul of Aleppo, Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch, Walachia, Moldavia, Christian Arabic literature.

Būloṣ Ibn al-Za‘īm al-Ḥalabī, known as ‘Paul of Aleppo’ (1627–1669), an archdeacon of the Melkite Church of Antioch in Syria¹, travelled through the Levantine provinces of the Ottoman Empire, Constantinople, Eastern Europe, Russia, and Georgia, accompanying his father, Patriarch Makarios III (in office: 1647–1672). His rich notes, consisting of 622 pages in the most complete manuscript version, preserved at Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris (with several other manuscripts in London, St Petersburg, Moscow, and Damascus), primarily focus on Church history, rites and rituals, presented in detailed reports about services, Saints’ feasts, liturgical books, education of the clergy, etc. The first section of Paul’s notes, dedicated to the history and current situation of the Antiochian Patriarchate, is followed by a detailed report, not always chronological, of the foreign countries that he visited and events after his return, until mid 1661. An inquisitive and truthful writer, Paul provided a wealth of information about the peoples and the countries which he became acquainted with.²

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¹ The term ‘Melkite’ is used in this article to refer to the Greek Orthodox of the Levant before the split of the Antiochian Church in 1724, when a second Patriarch, Cyril VI Ṭānās, was elected in Damascus as head of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch.

² See Ioana Feodorov, *Ottoman Authority in the Romanian Principalities as Witnessed by a Christian Arab Traveller of the 17th century: Paul of Aleppo*, in *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam, Proceedings of the 20th Congress of L’Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Cracow, Poland, 2004*, Leuven, Peeters, 2006, pp. 307–321; eadem, *Images et coutumes des Pays Roumains dans le récit de voyage de Paul d’Alep*, in *Tropes du voyage. Les Rencontres*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2010, pp. 221–246.

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One of Paul's main concerns while abroad was the relationship between the ecclesiastic hierarchy of each country that he visited and the Holy See, whose activity in Central and Eastern Europe is frequently reported on. The Antiochian Christians' situation at the time of his notes made Paul particularly interested in the reaction of the Orthodox of Walachia, Moldavia, Poland, and Russia to the proselytising actions of Latin missionaries. After the Great Schism of 1054, the Antiochian Melkite See lost, in the perspective of the Latin Church of Rome, some of its prerogatives. During the Crusaders' rule over Syrian lands, Frankish princes of Antioch opposed the Melkite Patriarchs' authority mostly for political reasons, leaving the spiritual concerns to the Latin Pope (Korolevskij 1924: 622, 626). As a consequence of the strong presence of Latin prelates in Syria, especially after 1100, historical ties between the Patriarchate of Antioch and Byzantium grew stronger, supporting the Greek Orthodox Patriarchs' endeavours to maintain the unity of their Church. After 1375, the Latin Patriarchate of Antioch, established in Crusader times, remained a mere title and never regained its former importance.³ A Latin bishopric was newly established in Aleppo in 1644, officially supporting the activities of Papal missions in the realms of the Antiochian Church.

Elected in 1647, the Melkite Patriarch Makarios III continued the work of his illustrious predecessor Meletius Karme of Aleppo, struggling to preserve the Arab element in the Church of Antioch and the Syrian Christians' freedom from interference from the Ottoman authorities. He had inherited a terrible financial situation, which had been created during the second half of the previous century, when another Patriarch of the Antiochian Church, Yuwakim V Ɖaw'u (1581–1592), became indebted to the pashas of Damascus and Tripoli, so that he decided to travel to Poland and Moscow to get help from the Ruthenian princes and the Russian Tsar Fyodor I (1585–1587).⁴

Western missionaries (Jesuits, Capuchins, Carmelites, and Dominicans) were particularly dynamic in the Levant in the second half of the 17th century, after the foundation, in 1622, of the *Sacra Congregatia de Propaganda Fide* (Heyberger

³ "Il est à remarquer que, jusqu'à l'époque du concile du Vatican, les patriarches orientaux du titre d'Antioche, dont on avait déjà multiplié le nombre au détriment du patriarche melkite, seul véritable héritier de l'antique siège, ont été assimilés aux patriarches dits mineurs, à savoir ceux de Venise, de Lisbonne, des Indes occidentales etc." (Korolevskij 1924: 626).

⁴ In 1583, because of demands for money from the Ottoman authorities, Yuwakim had to escape Damascus and to hide in the Biqā'a valley, which was beyond Ottoman control (Panchenko 2009: 52–53). Yuwakim was in L'viv in January 1586, founding a Christian brotherhood, 'licensed to act as keeper of ecclesiastical order and decorum' (Gudziak 1998: 159), and then travelled to Moscow where he encouraged the Tsar's aspirations to declare Moscow a Patriarchal See, a goal accomplished in 1589 (idem: 157–164). Metropolitan 'Īsā, who accompanied the Patriarch, recorded the travels in a partially lost travelogue: see Hilary Kilpatrick, *Visions of distant cities. Travellers as poets in the early Ottoman Period*, in "Quaderni di Studi Arabi", n.s., Roma, 3, 2008, pp. 70–71; Panchenko 2009: 48, 51–53, 62; idem, *Mitropolit 'Īsā i pervoye arabskoye opisaniye Moskovii (1586)* (Metropolitan 'Īsā and the First Arabic Description of Muscovy), in «Moscow University Historical Journal», Seria 13, 2007, 4, pp. 87–95. For other Russian and Ukrainian sources, see Korolevskij 1924: 638.

1994: 556).⁵ In 1587, Leonard Abel was sent from Rome to Syria and Jerusalem to convince Eastern Patriarchs to embrace the Latin creed, as agreed at the Council of Florence (1439), to accept the *Filioque* and adopt the Gregorian calendar. As a result of consistent measures put into practice by Rome’s envoys, Levantine Christians were relentlessly drawn towards the doctrines of the Latin Church⁶, which led to a definitive separation in the Antiochian Church in 1724, in the aftermath of the demise of Athanasius III Dabbās, the last Syrian Patriarch who had opposed the presence of a Latin Patriarch in Damascus⁷. The methods that Latin missionaries, especially the Jesuits, employed were not exactly filled with fraternal spirit: “La tactique des missionnaires, principalement des jésuites, consistait à gagner petit à petit la hiérarchie sans rompre le lien extérieur qui la rattachait au patriarcat, pour faire ensuite déclarer l’union au moment opportun, et il n’est pas dit que cette tactique ne fut pas la bonne : c’est celle qui avait réussi en 1595 en Ruthénie” (Korolevskij 1924 : 645).⁸ During the office of Patriarch Athanasius Dabbās, Latin missionaries encouraged the Melkites to doubt the Melkite rite of the Sacrament, to stop attending church services and supporting the clergy, to disrespect the rituals of fast (Heyberger 1994: 398). As self-proclaimed agents of progress and modernity, ambassadors of the Holy See often addressed the practical needs of Syrian Christians in the three *pashaliks* of Damascus, Tripoli and Aleppo, who were considered by the Ottoman regime as second-rank citizens and were therefore deprived of essential civil rights. Ruling over the fringes of the Empire, Turkish pashas grew accustomed to extorting local populations and pointlessly quarrelling with each other, which often resulted in their swift replacement by the Sublime Porte. Their poor administration left the Syrian Christians with enormous debts and a precarious standard of life, barely able to answer the requirements of adapting to modernity. Under Ottoman rule since 1516, the Christians of Syria had to adapt to living in a Muslim society ruled by Turkish governors, who became increasingly oppressive and unable to support the Christians’ aspirations to social

⁵ For the role of this Papal institution and the ‘zeal’ of Jesuit missionaries in Syria, see Heyberger 1994: 228–239.

⁶ C. Panchenko defines these efforts thus: “During the reign of Pope Gregory XIII the Catholic Church tried to compensate the defeats it had to suffer in Northern Europe as a result of the Reformation by increased political and propagandist activities in the Eastern Christian world. One can remember such almost simultaneous events as the Unia of Brest in the Ukraine (1596), the Unia of Diamper which united the Indian Malabar Christians with Rome (1599) or the Council of Qannubin (1596), which confirmed the adoption of the Gregorian calendar by the Maronite Church.” (Panchenko 2012). For the Union of Brest as seen by Eastern Christians, see Gudziak 1998: 245–255.

⁷ See Antoine Dabbās and Nakhle Recho, *Tārīḥ al-ṭibā’a l-‘arabiyya fī l-Mašriq. Al-Baṭriyark Aṭanāsiyūs aṭ-tālīṭ Dabbās (1685–1724)* (A History of Middle Eastern Printing in Arabic. Patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās), Beirut, Dār al-Nahār, 2008, pp. 37–39.

⁸ “Ces principes eurent une influence considérable, car ils furent appliqués dans la suite aux colonies albanaises de l’Italie du sud et de la Sicile, aux éparchies ruthènes et roumaines de Hongrie, aux émigrés ruthènes d’Amérique, et on n’a commencé à s’en départir qu’à une époque tout à fait moderne, et même parfois contemporaine” (Korolevskij 1924: 622).

progress: “Nevertheless the Ottoman Empire was a polity guided by a militant Islamic ideology in which discrimination against non-Muslims was inherent.” (Gudziak 1998: 19). Moreover, following an old practice established in the times of the Abbasid Sultans (750–1258) and then continued by the Mamluk Sultans of Cairo and Damascus (1258–1517), the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, although elected by the local high clergy, was only appointed after receiving a *berat* (Ar. *barā’a*, ‘approval’) issued by the Ottoman sultan.⁹ As reported by the historian Iṣṭifān al-Duwayhī, Patriarch of the Syrian Maronites (1670–1704), church hierarchs were seized and imprisoned when disobeying the Ottoman governor’s summons¹⁰, while Christians saw their churches turned into mosques, and their religious foundations (*’awqāf*) confiscated, when they refused to pay unlawful taxes.¹¹ In 1619, having refused to pay the *harāğ* in full to the pasha of Damascus, the Melkite Patriarch Athanasius II Dabbās (1612–1620) was imprisoned. Faced with the fact that the Syrian Christians’ education and cultural progress came to depend on the Catholic missionaries’ assistance and Arabic books printed by the Latins, based on texts approved by the *Sacra Congregatia*, several Antiochian Patriarchs felt compelled to turn to the Greek-Orthodox of Europe and Russia in search of political, financial, and spiritual support.

Among the essential aspects of the new places and people he encountered, Paul recorded in minute detail the specifics of their religious beliefs and rites, focusing on the Orthodox Christians’ life in distant lands, some subjected to the Ottoman Empire, some beyond its rule.¹² His journal bears testimony to the attachment of Rumanian rulers and clergy to Greek culture and their aspirations to emulate the Byzantine emperors of old (*Imitatio imperatorum*)¹³, while Moscow is repeatedly described as ‘the New Rome, worthy of all praise and honour’. Paul commented quite freely on religions and creeds in foreign lands, with the exception of Islam – a predictable choice, considering the complicated political situation in Ottoman Syria.

⁹ See Gudziak (1998: 18–19) for a brief survey of the system and its consequences for the Eastern Churches.

¹⁰ Abdul-Rahim Abu Husayn, *Duwayhi as a Historian of Ottoman Syria*, in “Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies”, Amman, 1999, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 8.

¹¹ *ibidem*, p. 9.

¹² See Ioana Feodorov, *The Monasteries of the Holy Mountain in Paul of Aleppo’s Travels of Makarios, Patriarch of Antioch*, in RESEE, XLVIII, no. 1–4, 2010, p. 195–210.

¹³ ‘Because the [people’s] fervor in these lands in building monasteries is very great and they bequeath to them magnificent gifts such as villages, estates, vineyards, gardens, mills, Gypsy serfs, etc.’ (fol. 280v). Rumanian princes granted estates, revenues of *metochia*, relics, and works of art to the monasteries of the Holy Mountain, Constantinople, Alexandria, the Holy Land, and St. Catherine in Mt. Sinai. Vasile Lupu, the ruler of Moldavia, paid the debts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1652. See Marcu Beza, *Heritage of Byzantium*, London, 1947, pp. 39–42; Petre Ș. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIV^e siècle à 1654*, Rome, 1986; *The Romanian Principalities and the Holy Places along the Centuries*, E. Băbuș, I. Moldoveanu, A. Marinescu (eds.), București, 2007.

In some of the lands inhabited by Romanians, particularly in Transylvania, Latin missions were equally active at the time of Paul’s travels. As a consequence of the Catholic missions’ diligent work, in 1697 a part of the Transylvanian Orthodox embraced the Latin faith. The issues, as much as the terminology, were quite similar in the Levant and in the lands inhabited by Romanians (Moldavia, Walachia, and Transylvania). In a letter addressed in 1700 from Bucharest to Patriarch Adrian of Moscow, Metropolitan Teodosie of Ungrovlahia complained about the *Unia* in these terms: “And not from the part of impure pagans do matters of the Saint Church encounter hardship (as much as they torment and trouble the Christian people in political and national issues), but from the part of the Pope’s followers (*papistasi*), who act in all their lands with great power, temptation, and oppression, to convert them to their creed: that of the enemies of God’s Church of the East. For with much pain in our hearts and sorrow in our souls, and those of all the Christian people, we hear and learn that in the saint churches of Transylvania, and those of other Orthodox who live in Upper Hungary, many unspeakable cruelties are perpetrated, with much cunning and slyness, by Jesuits and others called ‘*barat*’¹⁴ who, like predatory wolves hiding in sheep skins, incessantly and tirelessly compete to deceive and lead astray the people, God’s truly Orthodox flock; and they lead astray and deceive many useless and ignorant people by the devious and worthless word they have connived, *unia*, leading like a blind man another blind man, so that both fall into a pit, as the true words of our Lord Jesus Christ say” (Luke 6: 39) (Dragomir 1912: 1137). In 1785–1800, when referring to Orthodox Christians in letters addressed to the Roman *Sacra Congregatia*, the Romanian United Church of Transylvania still employed the words *nonunio*, *nonuniti* and *disuniti* (Lat. for ‘nonuniate’, ‘nonunited’ and ‘disunited’), as a reflection of the doctrine of a ‘union in faith’ formulated at the Council of Florence.¹⁵

The choice of words in the *Journal* is significant: as customary in the Christian Arabic literature of the period, the noun *kāṭūlīk* refers to priests, be they Georgian, Armenian, or Antiochian (including Patriarch Makarios’s *locum tenens* in Damascus, during his absence), while the adjective *kāṭūlīkī* refers to a large *basilica* or cathedral, built according to a classical plan, and typically three-domed: “We went to the *Sobor*, i.e. ‘the Great Church’, for *sobor* in their language [i.e., Russian] means *kāṭūlīkī* [cathedral]” (140v)¹⁶. To name the Latin faithful, generally referred to as ‘Europeans’ (*Ifranḡ*), Paul uses the expression ‘followers of the Pope’ (*tābi ‘ūn al-bābā* – 66r, 255v). *Rōmānī* is seldom employed, usually to describe old churches of the first centuries of Christianity, such as that built by Porphyrius,

¹⁴ Hun. *baratok*, Calvin priests of Hungary.

¹⁵ See Daniel Dumitran, *Clerul secular și activitatea misionară în Biserica Română Unită în timpul episcopului Ioan Bob*, in “Annales Universitatis Apulensis Series Historica”, Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918”, Alba-Iulia, 6, 2010, p. 95.

¹⁶ ‘Great Church’ was the ‘name commonly used in the cities of the Greek-speaking part of the [Byzantine] Empire to designate the principal church in the city’ (Downey 1961: 656). Rus. *sobor* < Old Rus. for ‘gathering’ refers to a cathedral or the main church of a monastery.

metropolitan of Gaza¹⁷, or monasteries in the Toqat province (northern Asia Minor) that “were once ours, *Rōmāniyya* (Roman, i.e., Chalcedonian or Melkite), but are now in the hands of Armenians” (300v). The borrowed Arabic word *al-Ġūniyātī* (الغونياتي), ‘Uniate’, appears only once in the *Journal*, to name ‘the Russians, followers of the Pope’, who demolished a Greek-Orthodox church, using all its beautiful materials (pavements, mosaics, marble balustrades, etc.) for their own churches (85r). Except this one instance, the whole terminology attached to the idea of ‘union’ is missing from this text, reflecting the deeply rooted principle that the Church of Antioch still was, in mid 17th century, a single body, aspiring to remain as such. Fr. Samir Khalil Samir states: “Soulignons au passage que le mot ‘uniate’ n’existe pas dans le vocabulaire arabe. Si je ne me trompe, c’est un terme inventé par les Grecs (qui parlent de l’*ounia*), qui est utilisé de manière très dépréciative et qui est vécu ainsi chez les « uniates » orientaux.” (Samir 2003: 137)

All through his long voyages, Macarius III had contacts with Roman envoys and missionaries, met the French Ambassador Jean de la Haye-Vantelet in Constantinople, wrote a letter to Louis XIV on 19 November 1653, and, through his diligent work at the court of the Russian tsar Alexey Mihailovitch, supported a conciliatory attitude towards the Roman Church and its adherents, namely, the Poles. This and other controversial acts, such as a lost letter of allegiance¹⁸, encouraged comments on his inclinations towards a Union with Rome. However, Joseph Nasrallah, a renowned historian of the Eastern Churches, concluded that “son catholicisme n’était que simulation et tremplin pour arriver sur le trône patriarcal”.¹⁹ The sojourn in Ukraine in 1654–1655 and the resistance of its deeply devoted Orthodox people to the Polish Catholics’ pressure were interpreted as one of the reasons for the Patriarch’s refusal of the Union (Korolevskij 1924: 643). Paul’s resolute attachment to Byzantine Orthodoxy, as well as his father the Patriarch’s, is nevertheless evident throughout the journal. His remarks on the Roman Pope and the Latin Church reflect the on-going issues in the Patriarchate of Antioch between supporters of the Byzantine tradition and those of the Union with Rome.²⁰ Beside his education and position in the Church of Antioch, Paul’s

¹⁷ St Porphyrius ‘The Paralytic’ (4th c., Thessalonika – 421, Gaza) converted the people of Gaza to Christianity and built a Great Church for them, with 30 marble columns.

¹⁸ This letter was mentioned in 1658 by François Picquet, French consul in Aleppo (1652–1662), in a report to King Louis XIV about the promise that he had secured from three Eastern Patriarchs, among them Makarios III, to pledge allegiance to the Pope. See Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 134–137; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: the Roots of Sectarianism*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 82.

¹⁹ J. Nasrallah, *Église melchite et Union des Églises*, Paris, 1977, p. 62. Bernard Heyberger comes to a somewhat similar conclusion: “On peut s’interroger enfin sur la sincérité et la durée d’une adhésion au catholicisme, fondée sur la recherche de la protection.” (Heyberger 1994 : 260)

²⁰ Fr. Samir Khalil Samir argues that today self-definition has changed for the Eastern Christians: “...on se définit, non plus par les différences christologiques du Ve siècle, mais par rapport à la position face au rôle de l’évêque de Rome, selon qu’on est devenu catholique [...] ou qu’on est resté orthodoxe”. (Samir 2003: 137)

solidarity with all heirs of the Byzantine legacy was decisive in his endeavour to report back to the Syrian readers from an Orthodox viewpoint.

Paul’s attitude towards the Latin Church, influenced by the conflicts at home between the Antiochian Melkite Church and the missionaries of the Holy See, was therefore biased from the start. Especially while in Russia, he expressed open criticism of the Pope, his followers, and most of all his exceedingly eager ambassadors, the Jesuits. There are rare cases when he evokes the Pope or his followers without a certain aversion, like when he sees in Kiev, on the walls of the magnificent church of St. Sophia, beautiful frescoes representing “Gregory the Miracle-Worker, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostome, and Basil, while to the north, near the window, there are icons of Laurent the deacon, Nicholas of Myra, Gregory the Theologian, Clement, the Pope of Rome, and Epiphanius of Cyprus; all their icons are covered in golden mosaics, with Greek inscriptions” (86r). Much more numerous are the passages where papacy is condemned: absent in the first part of Paul’s notes, concerning his travels through Moldavia and Walachia during their first sojourn in Romanian lands, hostile remarks regarding the Pope multiply when they pass the border into the “Cossacks’ lands”.

Rather than deny the Pope’s claims to primacy directly, Paul employs the voice of his collocutors in all the foreign countries that he visited. While in the Russian city of Putivl’, Paul learns of the local people’s opposition to the Pope’s claim to pre-eminence: “For five hundred years, since we became Christian, we only knew of four Patriarchs worldwide: the Antiochian²¹, the Alexandrine, the Constantinopolitan, and the Jerusalemite. Lately, with the approval of all four, a fifth Patriarch was created, to stand for the Roman Pope.” (100r) This point is taken further in the story of ‘Father Elia’ (*Bābā ʿIlyā*)²², a ‘follower of Luther’ who asked the Pope, in two letters, about the grounds for his claim to primacy over the Church: “If the Pope claims that he is the successor of the St. Apostle Peter, the first to rightfully make this claim is the Patriarch of Antioch, for it was firstly here that Peter was a Patriarch, enjoying all the honours, while in Rome he was crucified” (85r).

The Antiochian Patriarch’s pre-eminence, in terms of seniority and authority, is made clear when discussing the established practice of granting ‘letters of absolution’ (Ar. *ʿawrāq al-istiġfār*, or *stīhōrīkōn* / pl. *stīhōrōhāt* < Gr.

²¹ Antioch is mentioned first in order to assert its pre-eminence, also proven by the inauguration in A.D. 341 of its Great octagonal Church, begun by Emperor Constantine in A.D. 327 and completed by his son Constantius, to reflect the important position that the Antiochian Church held in the Christian East (Downey 1961: 353, 358, 657).

²² This could be the diplomat Daniel Olivenberg, also known as ‘Daniel of Athens’ or ‘the Greek’, who lived in France and Sweden. See B. Knös, *Un délégué grec au service de la diplomatie suédoise au XVII^e siècle*, in *L’Hellénisme Contemporain*, 10, 2^e série, 1956, p. 418–454; Vera Tchentsova, *Восточная церковь и Россия после Переяславской рады. 1654–1658. Документы*, Moscou 2004, p. 10–12, 56–62, 135–136; eadem, *Le patriarche d’Antioche Macaire III Ibn al-Zaʿīm et la chrétienté latine*, in *Réduire le schisme? Ecclésiologies et politiques de l’Union entre Orient et Occident (XIII^e–XVIII^e siècles)*, Marie-Hélène Blanchet et Frédéric Gabriel (éds.), Paris, 2012.

συγχωρητικόν)²³: “The Patriarch of Antioch is the master of forgiveness and absolution, for he is the heir of Peter the Apostle, who was the first and foremost to whom the Lord Jesus granted the power to forgive and absolve, in Heaven and on Earth. Therefore, he is the most ancient of Patriarchs.²⁴ Hence, they took from him papers of absolution, in great faith and total confidence.” (41v) These letters are mentioned several times in Paul’s notes as one of the most valued gifts that Patriarch Makarios presented to princes and rulers of the countries that they visited, and as far as Sinope. As for this text, no suspicion of breach of any Greek-Orthodox traditions is apparent, and the comparable practices of the Latin clergy (or the ‘Franks’) are never mentioned.²⁵

The Pope’s followers mentioned in Paul’s notes are mostly Franks – *Ifranġ*, ‘Europeans’ and/or ‘Catholics’ – whom he often declares heretics (*‘arāṭīqa*). The heretics’ unacceptable beliefs and behaviour are commented upon in more detail while he was in the Ukraine and Russia, as a major concern of Paul’s. The phrase *millat al-Ifranġ* is employed in reference to the supporters of papacy, in passages where heretics are evoked and Latin priests are blamed for their pressure on Orthodox Christians. Pronouncing anathema on them during a church service is a ritual moment that Paul describes in detail: “Then they cast anathema against the heretics, the 8th Council²⁶, and the Pope” (181v), and again: “When mentioning the names of heretic Popes and priests, and the kings who opposed icons, they sang anathema on them thrice, cursing them together with all the Frankish and Armenian communities (167v).”²⁷ Drawing near to the end of his notes, Paul states that the Franks love the Pope dearly and have great faith in him, ‘as much as Moldavian, Walachian, and Moscow princes, dignitaries, and clergy direct prayers and praises, and show a deep gratitude and enormous confidence in their Patriarchs.” (101v)

Paul portrays in harsh terms the ‘malevolent’ actions of Jesuit priests who roamed the Moldavian, Polish, and Ukrainian lands, constantly working to turn

²³ Such a ‘letter of absolution’ is inserted in the Vatican manuscript *Cod. Ar. 618* of Meletius Karne’s *Euchologion*, dated 1643, a revised Arabic version, intended for the Orthodox Christians of the Levant (Charon 1908: 143–149).

²⁴ The Antiochian Patriarch’s claim to seniority is also symbolized on the Patriarchal seal, where St Peter the Apostle, as founder of this Church, is represented holding the keys and seating on the Patriarchal throne.

²⁵ See Charon 1908: 114–116 and 149–150 for the French translation of a ‘billet d’indulgence plénière’ and the circumstances in which it was allowed to grant it, according to the rites of the Melkite Church, after the Union with Rome of 1724 (especially *in articulo mortis*).

²⁶ The 8th council, an ‘unpopular’ one with the Melkites, was simply ignored at times: trying to shun a proposal of union with the Latin Church in spring 1584, the Antiochian Patriarch Yuwakim Ḍaw’u declared that he had not heard of the Council of Florence (Panchenko 2012). In Paul’s notes, this Council is seldom mentioned, and always in a negative light.

²⁷ Iconoclasm was a particularly evil heresy for the Antiochian archdeacon, especially where the Greeks were concerned: “[The Russians] are all saints, for we saw their icons and heard their stories. They are not like the emperors of the Greeks who deceived the King (may God have no mercy on them!) in their war against icons, heresies, innovations, and such. For God is our witness, we saw the pictures of the seven Councils: those heretic kings and the enemies of icons were portrayed as falling into hell.” (166v–167r)

local populations from Orthodoxy to the Latin Church and seize their monasteries and churches (77r). Paul’s attitude reflects the concerns of the Antiochian hierarchs regarding Latin proselytizing²⁸, for at home in Syria the Jesuit missionaries were spreading the Latin canons through schools and Arabic church books, carefully edited to avoid any deviation from the Latin creed, as required by the *Sacra Congregatia de Propaganda Fide*. After he edited the *Liturgikon*, the *Horologion*, and the *Euchologion* (1612–1643) based on old Arabic versions still in use in the Melkite churches of Syria (some dated in the 14th century²⁹), Meletius Karme’s efforts to obtain the help of the Holy See to print these and other church books did not succeed.³⁰ Having looked for clear instructions as to specific church rituals, Paul states: “We recently learned from trustworthy people that Europeans (*al-Ifranġ*) do not allow clear details to be printed neither on church consecration, nor on the myrrh formula” (257r). Still, these crucial indications were recorded in old Greek books that his father and he succeeded in finding and translating with great toil.

After they had read³¹ and heard so many stories about the court and the Patriarchal See of Moscow, Paul and his companions were greatly impressed with the city, the Russian Tsar Alexei Mihailovitch, and especially with Patriarch Nikon and his clock-work administration.³² The visit of Patriarch Makarios III was a good opportunity to reaffirm the position that the head of the Russian Orthodox Church held in the Christian world, as spiritual leader of the ‘New Rome’. A great celebration was soon organized, where Patriarch Makarios was requested to pronounce an allocution in honour of Patriarch Nikon. The anticipated outcome was also a diminishing of the pre-eminence that the Latin Pope claimed for himself: « Through our own accord, we have placed our brother, the Patriarch of Moscow, at the stead of the Pope of Rome, and the sign that we give for this is the white clothing. For in sign of your power, I have the honour to dress you as I myself am dressed: here are a head-dress and a mantle that I have made for you, all new ». The Tsar rejoiced greatly, for he loved the Patriarch [Nikon] very much, so he answered to our Master: *Batyushka, dobre!*, i.e., “Well done, father!” (232v).

People who embraced the Latin creed are always portrayed in unfavourable terms in Paul’s notes, sometimes likened to idolaters, the worst kind of pagans in

²⁸ On the Jesuits’ dissimulation practices (adopting the dress of Orthodox clergy, chanting the Eastern liturgy in Arabic, etc.), see Robert M. Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society. An Interpretation*, Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 48–49.

²⁹ Father Eliano, sent to the Levant by the *Sacra Congregatia*, collected these manuscripts, that he considered „filled with heresies”, in order to burn them. See Gerald Duverdier, *II. Livres pour le Liban. Défense de l’orthodoxie et lutte des influences*, in Aboussouan 1982: 265.

³⁰ See Cyrille Charon, *Le Rite Byzantin dans les Patriarcats Melkites. Alexandrie – Antioche – Jérusalem*, Rome, 1908, pp. 54–66, 89–90, 141–149.

³¹ Paul mentioned several times that he was familiar with Metropolitan ‘Īsā’s poetical travelogue. The comparisons that he makes between his own findings and ‘Īsā’s comments suggest that either he kept a copy of the poem with him while travelling, or he added these references after he had returned.

³² For Patriarch Nikon’s life and works see Ioann Shusherin, *From Peasant to Patriarch. Account of the Birth, Upbringing, and Life of His Holiness Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia*, trans. K. Kain and K. Levintova, Plymouth, 2007.

the Melkite archdeacons' opinion. While heading for Moscow Paul heard the story of a Polish prince who, having received the Pope's blessing, married his brother's ex-wife: "a horrible deed that not even pagans would have done, in their times" (174r)³³. Afterwards, he sent his brother's children to the Turks as hostages, and promised great fortunes to Tatar warlords, to help him in his plans of conquest. Paul evokes this story twice in his notes, as an example of the Latins' wickedness. Similarly doubtful is the morality of the Lutherans, as portrayed by Paul: an ambitious Polish ruler who had embraced Lutheranism asked the Hungarian king for help in conquering the two largest cities of Poland, Warsaw and Kraków, so that 'the two of us become one' (268r). While portraying the *Sas*, a 'group of Franks' (actually, Germans settled in the 14th century by the Hungarian king Louis I on the northeast border of Transylvania), he shows surprise at the spiritual inconsistency of non-Orthodox communities: "The father has one religion, his wife a different one, while each of their children believes in whatever he wishes. The governor and city officials are Calvinist, while the guards of the citadel are *Sas* [i.e., Lutherans]."

One particular circumstance that illustrates Patriarch Makarios's views on the Latin Church is his attitude towards the Poles who embraced Orthodoxy. When reporting on consultations held in Moscow with the Russian Patriarch Nikon and the entire Synod in order to decide about the requirement to re-baptize such Poles (April–May of 1656), Paul mentions the four communities (i.e., creeds) for whom a second baptism would be required, according to the Holy Scriptures: "The English, the Lutherans, the Calvinists³⁴, and the Paphlagonians, followers of Paul of Samosata, who inhabit 30 villages in the area of Tirnov [present-day Bulgaria]"³⁵ (255v). However, as repeatedly noted by Paul, Patriarch Makarios expressed his conviction that Poles did not need to be rebaptized because, as Catholics, "they believe in the [Holy] Trinity, they are [already] baptized, and they are not remote from us, like the rest of the heretics and Lutherans, such as the Swedes, the English, the Hungarians, and other Frankish communities (*milal al-Ifranġ*) who do

³³ For a detailed account on the powers of Patriarchs and Popes to grant marriage certificates and dispensations, see Cipriano Vagaggini, *Patriarchi orientali cattolici e dispense matrimoniali. Storia del loro potere di dispensare dagli impedimenti di consanguineità e di affinità*, Roma, 1959, especially pp. 1–4, 84–87.

³⁴ Makarios had expressed his severe views on the Calvinists when answering the questions addressed to him by Charles-Marie-François Olier, marquis de Nointel, ambassador of King Louis XIV to the Ottoman Empire (1670–1679). See *Perpétuité de la foi de l'Église catholique sur l'Eucharistie*, ed. Migne, t. II, col. 1247.

³⁵ Paul probably refers to the Manicheist sect of the 'Paulicians', not to the 'Paulianists' or 'Samosatenes', condemned at the Council of Nicaea, who were followers of the Monarchianist doctrine of Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch (260–268). Towards the end of the 10th c. A.D. the Bogomiles, a sect originating in the Paulician Manicheism, appeared in Bulgaria. See the article on *Paulicians* in John Henry Blunt, *Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, Ecclesiastical Parties, and Schools of Religious Thought*, London – Oxford – Cambridge, 1874, pp. 413–414. For details on the 'Samosatenes' see: *Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, 1913, s.v. 'Paul of Samosata'; Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1993, vol. 1, Ch. 16; Downey 1961: 351.

not fast, do not venerate icons or the [Holy] Cross, etc.”. Thus, it appears that Makarios thought of the Latins as “lesser offenders” than all other non-Orthodox believers, not to be included in the class of ‘heretics’.

Even if rebaptism was not required for Polish laymen who adopted Orthodoxy, their priests did need to be reordained and educated in the spirit of the Orthodox creed and rituals: “Wednesday, on the eve of Ascension, our master performed mass at the monastery church, he ordained a priest and a deacon, then he converted four priests from the country of the Poles (*Al-Lāh*) and ordained them, subsequently delivering them to one of the priests at the monastery so that he teaches them, for several days, the rites of Eucharist and rituals of [Orthodox] mass.”(197r) The Arabic verb *šarrafa*, ‘to convert’, ‘to ordain’ (a secondary meaning, the main ones being ‘to change’ or ‘to transfer’), is repeatedly employed when referring to the ordination of priests, in all the churches that welcomed the Syrian hierarchs. Confirmation by Patriarch Makarios III, a highly respected Patriarch of the Eastern Church who had become famous in the Orthodox world³⁶, was a prize coveted by many. For example, while in Kiev in January 1655, Makarios received the visit of a priest who wished to receive his blessing and, more importantly, a letter signed by him: « The deacon of the bishopric wrote for him a letter of confirmation in their language, on behalf of our master the Patriarch, in support and recommendation. We applied the [Patriarch’s] seal on it, and then he took it and departed, deeply satisfied.” (125v) Paul stated earlier that all through their journey innumerable people addressed the Patriarch with the request to be ordained priests or deacons, offering him all sorts of gifts (124r). Also, Sava Brancovici, Metropolitan of Transylvania (1656–1660, 1662–1680), a resolute defender of Orthodoxy³⁷, decided to travel to Moscow because he had heard that Patriarch Makarios and other Eastern hierarchs were there in 1666. (Dragomir 1912: 1100)³⁸

To conclude, while interested in all forms of religious life, Paul of Aleppo paid a special attention to relations between the Orthodox and the ‘Pope’s followers’, to the Jesuits’ missions in Central and Eastern Europe and the Orthodox population’s reaction to them. Paul’s notes ultimately prove that, though separated by many barriers – geographical, historical, ethnic, and linguistic – Orthodox

³⁶ His authority is confirmed by the request addressed to him by Tsar Alexis Mihailovitch to sign in Moscow, alongside two Moldavian envoys, the letter of allegiance of Gheorghe Ștefan, ruler of Moldavia. A Greek note bearing the Patriarch’s Arabic signature, dated 17 May 1656, was subsequently attached to this letter. See Dragomir 1912: 1094–1095; Vera Tchentsova, *L’Icône de la Vierge d’Ivion. Essai sur les relations de l’Église grecque avec la Russie au milieu du XVIIe siècle d’après les documents des Archives Nationales des Actes Anciens de la Russie*, Moscou, 2010, pp. 408–411 (This book is reviewed henceforth.)

³⁷ Metropolitan Sava Brancovici, a Serbian of Herțegovina (d. 1683, Alba-Iulia), was imprisoned by Michael Apaffi I, prince of Transylvania, for his fierce opposition to the spread of Calvinism. He was sanctified by the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1955. He is celebrated on April 24.

³⁸ Patriarch Makarios III of Antioch and Patriarch Paisius of Alexandria were convoked by Tsar Alexis Mihailovitch to the synod of Moscow where the deposition of Patriarch Nikon was pronounced (Nov.–Dec. 1666).

Churches sought, in their own way, to preserve the true Christian spirit of apostolic times. Considering that the Melkite Patriarchate of Antioch was fighting for survival while immersed in the predominantly Muslim society of the Ottoman Empire, I believe that Paul of Aleppo's journal can improve our understanding of current events in the Middle East, beyond the religious divide³⁹.

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³⁹ As stated by Sydney Griffith, “Now it is time for westerners to consider the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Christians who have lived in the world of Islam for centuries” (*ibidem*, p. 179).