

The Involvement of Chrysanthos Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in Arabic Printing in the Early 18th Century*

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The article highlights the efforts of the renowned scholar Chrysanthos Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem, to articulate an Orthodox perspective through the printing of books in Arabic, as a response to the activities of missionaries sent by Rome to the Levant. Of particular significance are the discoveries regarding unknown or neglected editions published for this purpose with Notaras's support in England in the early 18th century.

Keywords: *Arabic Printing, Orthodox Church of Antioch, Translations from Greek, Polemical Literature*

In 1711, an Arabic book was published in Aleppo containing sermons by Saints Athanasius of Antioch and John Chrysostom. The foreword to the book, in Greek, as well as the colophon, revealed that the edition was sponsored by Chrysanthos, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. This study investigates his involvement in Arabic printing.

The printing of books for the Arabic speaking Christian communities was at an important turning point in the beginning of the 18th century. The change was initiated by Athanasios Dabbās, a former Patriarch of Antioch, who decided to print Arabic books. He printed in Arabic in three presses, always supervising the printing works personally. In Snagov and Bucharest, in Wallachia, Dabbās printed two books in 1701 and 1702, containing in part bilingual Greek and Arabic texts.¹ This initiative was financed by the Prince of Wallachia Constantine Brâncoveanu. The

* This research is part of a project that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant Agreement No. 883219-AdG-2019 – Project TYPARABIC). The following text reflects only the author's views. The ERC is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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¹ For the printing activity of Athanasios Dabbās in Wallachia, see Ioana Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands. The East-European Connection* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023), 157–60, 255–62.

technical aspects were skilfully solved by the then hieromonk and later Metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia Anthimos the Iberian.²

The former Patriarch Athanasios III then moved his printing activity to Aleppo, where his residence was at the time, thus establishing the first Arabic printing press in the East.³ Financing this endeavour was perhaps the most difficult part, as the books were not meant to be sold but instead they were produced in order to be distributed for free to Christian Arabic-speaking communities. To secure financial support, Athanasios Dabbās turned again to the Prince of Wallachia, and was granted a yearly allowance to be used expressly for book printing. Whether this sum was regularly paid and/or cashed in by Athanasios is unknown, given the geographical distance involved and the political and military unrest in the region. Other sponsors of the Aleppo printing press were the Ukrainian commanders Hetman Ivan Mazepa and colonel Danylo Apostol.⁴ The former Patriarch of Antioch also wrote to Peter the Great of Russia, sending him samples of the books he had printed and asking for financial support.⁵ For reasons unknown, however, the activity of the printing press in Aleppo was discontinued after 1711. The financial aid from Wallachia to the Church of Antioch was renewed under several subsequent ruling Princes but in later official documents no mention was made about book printing. In one document, a sum was allowed for copying books, mentioning in particular that printing was no longer possible, while in the last document, discussing the renewal of the grant, no condition was attached to the allowance.⁶

² The bibliography on Anthimos the Iberian and his activity is quite extensive: see Gabriel Ștrempel, *Antim Ivireanul* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1997); Archim. Policarp Chițulescu, ed., Doru Bădără, Ion Marin Croitoru, Gabriela Dumitrescu and Ioana Feodorov, *Antim Ivireanul. Opera tipografică* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2016); Antim Ivireanul, *Scrisori*, eds. Archim. Mihail Stanciu, Gabriel Ștrempel, (Bucharest: Basilica, 2016); Feodorov, *Arabic Printing*, 148–61; Mircea-Adrian Stanciu (Archimandrite Mihail), *Ο Ιερομόναχος Ανθίμος Ιβηρίτης, Μητροπολίτης Ουγγροβλαχίας (1708–1716). Ο βίος, η δράση και η ακτινοβολία του στην Ορθόδοξη Κοινοπολιτεία*, unpublished PhD thesis (Thessaloniki: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, 2018).

³ For the printing press in Aleppo, see Feodorov, *Arabic Printing*, 263–85.

⁴ See *ibidem*, 271–74, with the previous bibliography.

⁵ Vera Tchentsova, “La correspondance du patriarche d’Antioche Athanase IV Dabbās avec la cour russe: à propos de l’imprimerie arabe d’Alep,” in *Travaux du Symposium international “Le livre. La Roumanie. L’Europe”. Troisième édition. 20–24 septembre 2010*, Vol. 1 (Bucharest: Bibliothèque de Bucarest, 2011), 46–58; Vera Tchentsova, “Les documents grecs du XVII^e siècle: pièces authentiques et pièces fausses. 4. Le patriarche d’Antioche Athanase Dabbās et Moscou: en quête de subventions pour l’imprimerie arabe d’Alep,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 79 (2013), 1: 173–95.

⁶ Mihai Țipău, *Sylvester of Antioch. Life and Achievements of an 18th-Century Christian Orthodox Patriarch* (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, EAPE-3, 2024), 149, 162, 173.

Who was Chrysanthos Notaras? A nephew of the Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem, Chrysanthos, after studies in Padua and Paris, who became arguably one of the most cultivated Greeks of his time, with a wide range of interests such as Theology, Mathematics, Geography and Astronomy.⁷ He travelled extensively and corresponded with many scholars of the time, Greeks, Western European, and even Turks.

In 1707, he succeeded his uncle as Patriarch of Jerusalem and continued Dositheos's project of opposing Roman Catholic influence in the East, especially at the Holy Places. In this regard, one of his lines of action was book printing. Dositheos had established a Greek printing press in Iași in the 1680's, and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem continued to publish various books in the following decades in Wallachia.⁸ Chrysanthos definitely had a role in this publishing activity even before becoming Patriarch. A monumental achievement during this period was the edition of Dositheos's *Ἱστορία τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων* (*History of Those Who Were Patriarchs in Jerusalem*), a large folio of over 1,429 pages, adorned with the author's engraved portrait.⁹ The book was published in Bucharest and the year on the title page is 1715. However, archival sources indicate that printing was only completed later, in the early 1720's.¹⁰

⁷ On Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, see Πηνελόπη Στάθη, *Χρύσανθος Νοταράς πατριάρχης Ἱεροσολύμων, πρόδρομος του Νεοελληνικού Διαφωτισμού*, (PhD dissertation, Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, 1996) (Published at Athens: Σύνδεσμος τῶν ἐν Ἀθήναις Μεγαλοσχιολιτῶν, 1999).

⁸ The scientific literature on Dositheos's activity is extensive; see, e.g., Ἰωάννης Ντούρας, *Ὁ Δοσιθέος Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ ἡ προσφορά αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς Ρουμανικὰς Χώρας καὶ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν αὐτῶν* (Athens, 1977); Klaus-Peter Todt, "Dositheos II. von Jerusalem", in Carmello Giuseppe Conticello, Vassa Conticello (eds.), *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, Tome II (XIII^e–XIX^e s.) (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2002): 659–20; Ovidiu Olar, "«A Time to Speak». The Printing Activity of Dositheos Notaras, Patriarch of Jerusalem (†1707)," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 15/II (2011): 35–45; Vassa Kontouma, "Recherches sur Dosithée II de Jérusalem (1669–1707)," *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses*, 124 (2015–2016): 207–18; Klaus-Peter Todt, "Dositheos II of Jerusalem," in David Thomas, John A. Chesworth (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, Volume 14, *Central and Eastern Europe (1700–1800)* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2020): 262–71; Ioannis Kyriakantonakis, "Founding fathers of Greek history-writing in early modern Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 48, no. 2 (2023): 1–21.

⁹ For the portrait, ordered and printed most likely in Venice, see Vera Tchentsova, "La naissance du portrait dans l'espace orthodoxe. Représenter l'auteur dans les livres grecs du début du XVIII^e siècle", in Radu Dipratu, Samuel Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books Printed in Wallachia, Istanbul, and Beyond. First Volume of Collected Works of the TYPARABIC Project*, (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, EAPE-2, 2024), 145–75.

¹⁰ See, for this dating of the book, Κώστας Σαρρής, "Ὁ Χρύσανθος Νοταράς καὶ ἡ ἐκδοσὴ τῆς Δωδεκαβίβλου τοῦ Δοσιθέου Ἱεροσολύμων: μιὰ περίπτωσις ἀναληθούς χρονολογίας ἐκδόσεως (1715 / c. 1722)," *Μνήμων*, 27 (2005): 27–53.

As for the contents, beside its historical dimension, the book was a fierce polemic against the Roman Catholic influence and presence at the Holy Places. It was distributed among the Orthodox clergy and, as testified to by a document dated 1729 from the archives of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome, it was initially difficult for a Catholic to obtain a copy of it.¹¹

Let us now return to the Arabic book of sermons published in 1711 at Aleppo. The volume contains a collection of sermons to be delivered every Sunday throughout the year, as well as for the Lord's Feasts Days: one sermon was composed by Saint John Chrysostom, and sixty-six by Saint Athanasios, Patriarch of Jerusalem. This Patriarch Athanasios is either Athanasios II (before 1235-1244) or Athanasios IV (15th century).¹² In his Foreword, Chrysanthos mentions that the Arabic manuscript was brought to him in Jerusalem. Also, Chrysanthos wrote that due to other obligations he did not manage to find additional information on the author, but after learning the content of the manuscript from Patriarch Kyrillos V of Antioch and the former Patriarch of Antioch Athanasios, who had both mastered the Arabic language, he decided to publish it. Two hundred years later, there is no additional information on who this Athanasios of Jerusalem was. Apparently, as of today, no manuscript of the Greek original text of the sermons is known, although they were most likely composed in Greek, rather than Arabic. Further research on the text itself will provide more data for identifying the original, or its eventual sources.

The title page begins with a Greek text:

Ἐτυπώθη ἡ παρούσα ψυχοφελὴς βίβλος τοῦ αἰοιδίμου πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων κυρίου Ἀθανασίου, νῦν πρῶτον εἰς ἀραβικὴν διάλεκτον διὰ δαπάνης τοῦ μακαριωτάτου, σοφωτάτου καὶ ἁγιωτάτου πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ πάσης Παλαιστίνης κυρίου Χρυσάνθου, ἐν ἔτει ,αψια'.

¹¹ Joannes Baptista Martin, Lodovicus Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum Recentiorum Ecclesiae Universae*, vol. 10, *Synodi Melchitarum, 1716–1902* (Paris: Expensis Huberti Welter, Bibliopolae), 1911 (Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 46), c. 80–81.

¹² For Athanasios II, see Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Athanasios II, Patriarch of Jerusalem", in David Thomas, Alex Mallett, Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala et al. (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, Volume 4, (1200–1350) (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011) 325–30 (for the sermons, see 328–30). See also the considerations on the book's author of Yulia Petrova who also studied Chrysanthos's Preface: Yulia Petrova, "The Prefaces of the Christian Arabic Books Printed in Wallachia and Syria in the Early 18th Century", in Dipratu, Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books*, 274–76.

“The present soul-benefitting book of the late Patriarch of Jerusalem *kyrios* Athanasios was printed now for the first time in the Greek language at the expense of his Beatitude the most learned and most holy Patriarch of Jerusalem and all Palestine *kyrios* Chrysanthos in the year 1711.”

The Greek text is followed by the Arabic title of the book:

كتاب المواعظ الشريف لابينا الجليل في القديسين اثناسيوس بطريرك اورشليم طبع حديثاً بمحروسة حلب الشهباء من اعمال
سوريا بمصرف الاب الطوباني الاكرم كير خريسنطوس البطريرك الاورشليمي وكافة فلسطين وكان ذلك بسنة الف وسبعماية
واحدي عشر مسيحية

“The noble book of sermons by our venerable father among the saints Athanasios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, printed now in the God-protected city of Aleppo in Syria, at the expense of the most generous and blessed father *kyr* Chrysanthos, Patriarch of Jerusalem and All Palestine, in the Christian year one thousand seven hundred and eleven.”

In a bilingual Greek and Arabic foreword, Chrysanthos starts by praising his uncle and predecessor on the throne of Jerusalem for his zeal in defending the Orthodox faith. The Patriarch mentions that in pursuing this aim a central aspect of Dositheos's activity was writing and searching for relevant books in order to publish and distribute them among Orthodox Christians. Chrysanthos therefore followed his uncle's example and published the book with financial support from the alms of the faithful, for whom he encourages the readers to pray. He also advises the Orthodox Arabs to procure the book and to read it, to apply the teachings it contains, and also that clerics should read it to their congregations.

The book was one of the last published in the Aleppo printing press founded by Athanasios Dabbās.¹³

It should be mentioned that this moment was a significant one in the history of the Orthodox Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch. In Antioch, after a period of conflict, Kyrillos V, residing in Damascus, was confirmed as Patriarch, following a settlement with his contender Athanasios III Dabbās, who remained in Aleppo. Kyrillos V is even

¹³ See Feodorov, *Arabic Printing*, 276–77. Besides the four copies mentioned in this book, a complete copy is preserved in the library of the Séminaire Sainte-Anne in Jerusalem (shelfmark MS I.55) and another incomplete one, missing the first unnumbered 23 pages (the title page and the Arabic and Greek Forewords) is held by the library of the Ordre Basilien Alepin in Šarbā (Jūniyah) (shelfmark Codex 341bis). Both copies are available online on the Hill Museum and Library website (www.hmml.org). See also Țipău, *Sylvester of Antioch*, 174. Another copy belongs to the Austrian National Library in Vienna (Österreichische National Bibliothek) and it is available online at <https://sl1nk.com/a5wwbnq>, accessed July, 24, 2026.

mentioned on the title page of some of the books issued in Dabbās's printing press.¹⁴ Meanwhile, missionaries from at least four Roman Catholic monastic orders (Cordeliers, Carmelites, Capuchins and Jesuits) were conducting a very successful propaganda campaign in the Patriarchate of Antioch. Arabic books printed in Rome were distributed in the East in significant numbers.¹⁵ Patriarch Kyrillos was, if not openly favourable to this propaganda, at least tolerant of it. But the key figure in this success of the Roman influence was Euthymios Şayfi, the Metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon (Sayda),¹⁶ who was keen on asserting his Roman Catholic allegiance. Moreover, in 1710, an Arabic book with the title *Ecclesiae Graecae Orthodoxae Orientalis cum Romana Catholica Occidentali Concordia* was published in Rome at the request of Euthymios.¹⁷ The book supported the consonance between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Churches from a Catholic point of view and it circulated in the East.¹⁸

In 1720, Athanasios Dabbās was confirmed as Patriarch of Antioch for the second time. The Orthodox Patriarchs were decided more than ever to counter the Roman Catholic influence in their eparchies, and Chrysanthos of Jerusalem was one of the leading figures in this movement. In 1722, a synod was held in Constantinople which issued an official document addressed to the Christians in the Patriarchate of Antioch. The issue of the "Frankish" influence among the Orthodox was also brought to the attention of the Ottoman authorities, so they would deal with it from the state's point of view.

The new printing initiative of Chrysanthos may have been triggered by another fact. The Metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon Euthymios, using his connections and influence with the Ottoman local and central authorities, demanded the annexation of the Bishopric of Acre (Ptolemais, in Greek) to his eparchy. As the See of Ptolemais was under the jurisdiction

¹⁴ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing*, 275, 279.

¹⁵ Țipău, *Sylvester of Antioch*, 5.

¹⁶ For Euthymios see Joseph Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église Melchite du V^e au XX^e siècle. Contribution à l'étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne*, Vol. IV, *Période Ottomane 1516–1900*, tome 1, 1516–1724 (Louvain: Éditions Peeters / Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1989), 185–92.

¹⁷ *Ecclesiae Graecae Orthodoxae Orientalis cum Romana Catholica Occidentali Concordia* (Rome: Typis Sacrae Congreg. de Propaganda Fide), 1710. The book also has an Arabic title page mentioning Euthymios's contribution. See also Aurélien Girard, *Le christianisme oriental (XVI^e – XVIII^e siècles). Essor de l'orientalisme catholique en Europe et construction des identités confessionnelles au Proche-Orient* (PhD thesis, Paris: École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2011), 534–35. I thank Prof. Girard for allowing me to consult his unpublished PhD thesis.

¹⁸ For this book, see also Țipău, *Sylvester of Antioch*, 6–7.

of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the move was perceived by Chrysanthos as a direct attack. Since the Christian Orthodox population in Acre was mainly Arabic-speaking, influencing it was essential in asserting control over the area.¹⁹ A means to achieve this was through the printing and dissemination of books containing Orthodox teachings and ideas. And it was precisely this that the Patriarch of Jerusalem did: he intended to publish a book countering the Pope's primacy, and he had just the right text for the purpose, and even an Arabic translation of it.

In the early 18th century, Arabic printing in England was already a well-established tradition, both in London and in Oxford.²⁰ Editions of Arabic books benefited from the knowledge of scholars like the French professor John (Jean) Gagnier, or the native speaker Salomon Negri, born in Damascus, Syria.²¹

From the modern researcher's point of view, Arabic printing in England has been comprehensively studied during the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. As a consequence, it seemed that no new information could be added to that which was already known, or at least no significant data could emerge. But this is not the case. A recent evaluation of published and unpublished sources has allowed researchers to pinpoint the exact place and date of publication of Athanasios Dabbās's Arabic translation of Ilias Miniates's *Rock of Offence*, previously believed to have been printed in London (or even Aleppo) in 1721.²² A handwritten note by John Gagnier, as well as other archival data, reveals that the book was published in Oxford in 1726.²³ This note is present in the copy of the book *Rock of Offence* in the Beinecke Rare

¹⁹ For these events, see *ibidem*, 6.

²⁰ For Arabic printing in England, see Geoffrey Roper, "Arabic Printing and Publishing in England before 1820," *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin*, 12 (1985), 12–32; idem, "England and the Printing of Texts for Orthodox Christians in Greek and Arabic, 17th – 18th Centuries," in *Travaux du Symposium international "Le livre. La Roumanie. L'Europe". Troisième édition. 20–24 septembre 2010*, Vol. 1 (Bucharest: Bibliothèque de Bucarest, 2011), 440–43.

²¹ On Jean Gagnier and Solomon Negri, see Simon Mills, "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge's Arabic Bibles", in Oana Iacubovschi, Samuel Noble and Ioana Feodorov (eds.), *Icons, Ornaments, and Other Charms of Christian Arabic Books. Second Volume of Collected Works of the TYPARABIC Project* (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, EAPE-4, 2025), 87–88, 93–94.

²² For this book, see Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica* (Halle: I. C. Hendel, 1811), 274–75; Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire*, vol. IV/1, 142–43.

²³ The year and place of printing were established by Geoffrey Roper: see Roper, "England and the Printing of Texts", 439. See also Matthew Kilburn, "The Fell Legacy 1686–1755," in Simon Eliot, Ian Gadd (eds.), *The History of Oxford University Press*, Volume I, *Beginnings to 1780* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 107–38; Simon

Book and Manuscript Library of the Yale University in New Haven (CT), USA.²⁴ A similar note is apparently present in several copies preserved in Western libraries.²⁵ It was perhaps Gagnier's way of providing readers with important information about the place and year of the edition, as well as about his own contribution, as this data was missing from the Arabic title page. After the Latin translation of the title page, the note continues: "Oxoniae, anno 1726. Impensis dicti Patriarchae, a cura Johannis Gagnier A. M."

The Bodleian Library in Oxford holds the original manuscript of Dabbās's translation, as well as a copy of it by John Gagnier, possibly from the stage of preparation for printing.²⁶

It should be mentioned that a more careful study of this book allowed me to observe something that had apparently escaped some of the earlier bibliographers: the fact that it contains not one but two works. A few scholars, however, did notice this fact and carefully studied various aspects of both texts.²⁷ Besides Miniates's text, there is another one composed by the Metropolitan Gabriel (Severos) of Philadelphia, addressing the Pope's authority.²⁸ Its presence in the volume did not go unnoticed by the 18th century censors of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, who reported it, along with other anti-Catholic books published by the Orthodox.²⁹

Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge. Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire 1600–1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2020, 245.

²⁴ The copy has the call number Foc80 WAt3 1721. See <https://sl1nk.com/6dl53wd>, accessed July 24, 2026.

²⁵ As for example in a copy belonging to the Cambridge University Library, shelfmark S828.d.72.7. See Roper, "England and the Printing of Texts", 439.

²⁶ Alexander Nicoll, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium Catalogi*, Part II, Vol. 1. *Arabicos* (Oxford: E Typographeo Clarendoniano), 1821, 39–41, no. XXXIX, MS Bodl. 287.

²⁷ See Fr. Ronney El Gemayel, SJ, *Hāšiyat waḡīzat of 'Ilyās Fahr (d. 1758). An Arabic Byzantine Antiochian Ecclesiology Responding to Uniatism* (PhD diss., Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 2014), 75–78. I am grateful to Fr Ronney for the access to his thesis.

²⁸ Gabriel Severos was elected Metropolitan of Philadelphia by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. As the eparchy of Philadelphia (a city in ancient Lydia, in Asia Minor, now Alaşehir in Turkey) had only few Christians, Severos was a titular metropolitan, residing in Venice. On Gabriel Severos, see Gerhard Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453–1821). Die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens* (München: C. H. Beck, 1988), 117–37. See also the papers published in D. G. Apostolopoulos (ed.), *Gavriil Seviros, arcivescovo di Filadelfia a Venezia, e la sua epoca. Atti della Giornata di studio dedicata alla memoria di Manussos Manussacas (Venezia, 26 settembre 2003)* (Venice: Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia, 2004).

²⁹ Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 10 (Mansi, vol. 46), c. 237.

Thus, the book published in Oxford in 1726 has two distinct parts. The title page refers only to Miniates's work. It gives no place or date, except the mention of Aleppo and the year 1721, the place and the date of Athanasios Dabbās's translation, presumably as they appeared in the manuscript used for typesetting the edition. The Arabic title is:

كتاب يدعى صخرة شك اعني بيان بدء الانشقاق بين الكنيستين الشرقي والغربي وفي ان سبب هذا التشويش العظيم صار بحرص الاساقفة الرومانيين لاجل توسيع رياستهم، ثم تنبيه لجميع "عبيد الرب" علي الزوان الذي يزرعه "عبيد العدو" في هذه الكنائس الشرقية، ثم ذلك وبرز باللغة العربية في مدينة حلب المحمية بهمة الاب المكرم اتناسيوس البطريرك الانطاكي.

After a biblical quote (2 Corinthians 11, 2-3) follows the date:

(“In the Christian year 1721”).
 (في سنة ١٧٢٦ مسيحية)

The *Rock of Offence* extends to 184 numbered pages, followed by Gabriel Severos's work, occupying 81 pages, with separate numbering. There is no title page for the second work, but on its first page, after an invocation of the Holy Trinity, the following text appears:

بمنه تعالى وحسن توفيقه نكتب قول من تأليف غرييل مطران فيلادلفيه اي البندقيه يتضمن بيان التفاهه³¹ الكائنه ما بين الكنيستين الشرقيه والغربيه في رياسة البابا.

“By the grace of God and with His help, we are starting to write down a *Word* composed by Metropolitan Gabriel of Philadelphia, i.e. of Venice, which clarifies the differences between the Eastern and Western Churches regarding papal primacy.”

Which was the original Greek text used for the Arabic translation? A work by Gabriel Severos was published in the 1620's, without date or place, alongside other texts dealing with the divergences between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. In fact, Severos's text is divided in five parts, with separate numbering for the first part and the remaining four parts numbered together.³¹ Researchers established that Severos's treatise was printed most likely in London, at Eliot's Court Press, between 1624 and 1627, with the involvement of Nikodemos Metaxas.³²

³⁰ Sic. Correct: التفاهوت.

³¹ Émile Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique: ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au dix-septième siècle*, tom. I (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, éditeurs, 1894), 240–43, no. 168.

³² Letterio Augliera, *Libri, politica, religione nel Levante del Seicento. La tipografia di Nicodemo Metaxas, primo editore di testi greci nell'Oriente ortodosso* (Venice: Istituto

Comparing the length as well as the subject of the Arabic text with the Greek one, it became clear that the translator chose only the second part, entitled: *Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Γαβριὴλ τοῦ Φιλαδελφίας, Περὶ τῆς β' διαφορᾶς, τὴν ὁποῖαν ἔχει ἡ Ἀνατολικὴ Ἐκκλησία μὲ τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν· ἡγουν περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα* (*Of the Same Gabriel of Philadelphia, on the Second Difference which the Eastern Church Has with the Roman One, concerning the Authority of the Pope*). The printed text has 34 pages in the Greek version and 81 in the Arabic, a difference due to the book format and typesetting (41 lines per page *vs.* 24 lines). There is no mention about the translator; it may be the same Patriarch Athanasios of Antioch, as proposed by some researchers. However, a contemporary source of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, dating from 1729, names the English merchant Rowland Sherman as the translator of Severos's text.³³

Since the beginning of the TYPARABIC project, the research team had an opportunity to have a new scientific look to all the aspects of early Arabic printing, especially in the East. Very quickly, it became clear that previous research in the field was, if not altogether outdated, at least in need of fresh scrutiny. Previously unknown or missing books were discovered and studied by the project's team, revealing the fact that after more than two centuries of scholarly activity in the field surprises are still possible and new discoveries await the researcher.

This was also the case with the Arabic books published in England. Given the very different circumstances from the books published in the East, one would expect that no titles escaped the attention of researchers, book collectors, librarians, or bibliographers. In England, archives

Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti), 1996, 238; Nil Palabıyık, "Redundant Presses and Recycled Woodcuts: The Journey of Printing Materials from London to Constantinople in the Seventeenth Century", *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 110.3 (2016), 273–98; Ovidiu Olar, "«Libertà et licenza... di stampare mille heræsie et schismi». The Propaganda Fide and the Greek Printing Press at Constantinople (1627–1628)", in Dipratu, Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books*, 89–120 (for the dating, see 102). Other opinions place the printing of the polemical treatises in Constantinople in 1628; see Ἀνδρόνικος Κ. Δημητρακόπουλος, *Προσθήκαι καὶ διορθώσεις εἰς τὴν Νεοελληνικὴν Φιλολογίαν Κωνσταντίνου Σάθα* (Leipzig: Metzger & Wittig), 1871, 32. See also Feodorov, *Arabic Printing*, 87.

³³ "Gabriele Severo vescovo greco scismatico di Filadelfia, tra le altre opere perniciose che ha composte contro la dottrina della Santa Chiesa Romana, una ne intitolò: *Contro il primato del Romano pontefice*. E questo libro sì velenoso fu fatto pochi anni sono tradurre dal greco in arabo dal mercante inglese Charmèn o Charmèl, zelantissimo della setta protestante e nemico capitale de' cattolici, per opporlo al libro arabo, intitolato *Concordia utriusque ecclesiae*, stampato poco prima nella stamperia della Sagra Congregazione", in Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 10 (Mansi, vol. 46), c. 81.

and libraries were hardly ever scattered or disappeared; on the contrary, Arabic and other Oriental imprints were eagerly sought after and carefully collected for a long time. However, after a cursory look at the existing sources, I managed to identify a couple of titles printed in England in the beginning of the 18th century that either escaped altogether the attention of previous researchers, or no known copy of them was available for study, or both.

As previously mentioned, in the early 1720's, Chrysanthos Notaras decided that it was the right moment to publish Nektarios of Jerusalem's text on the Pope's primacy.³⁴ He had the manuscript of the Arabic translation of the Greek text achieved by the Archbishop Christodoulos of Gaza, whom he probably knew personally. Christodoulos was most likely a native speaker of Arabic, also known for other translations from Greek.³⁵

A key person in supporting such initiatives was Rowland Sherman, an English merchant active in Aleppo.³⁶ Sherman was no ordinary merchant: he had come to the East in the last decades of the 17th century and was a man of many interests, from Theology to music and Oriental languages. He was very influential in Aleppo, a friend of the Orthodox and a fierce opponent of the Roman Catholic missionaries and their influence over the Arabic-speaking community. He was fluent in Arabic and corresponded with both Greek and Arab scholars. Sherman is also credited with translating from Greek to Arabic, and even with composing treatises in Arabic.³⁷

It was through Rowland Sherman that Chrysanthos contacted another Englishman living in Pera, the *hodja* (Turkish word for "teacher") Dudley Foley.³⁸ The Patriarch gave Foley 100 gold coins (*ζιντζιλία*, Tk. *zincirli*) to cover the expenses of printing the book by Patriarch Nektarios

³⁴ On Nektarios of Jerusalem, see Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire*, vol. IV/1, 148–52; Kostas Sarris, "Nektarios of Jerusalem", in David Thomas, John A. Chesworth (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, Volume 10, *Ottoman and Safavid Empires (1600–1700)* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017), 307–18.

³⁵ On Christodoulos of Gaza, see Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire*, vol. IV/1, 147, 198–200.

³⁶ On Sherman, see Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, 229–47; idem, "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge", 90–100.

³⁷ See Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 10 (Mansi, vol. 46), c. 81: "Compilò esso medesimo [Charmèn, i.e., Sherman] un' altro libro contro il primato del Papa". See also Mills, "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge", 90–100.

³⁸ Dudley Foley was an English merchant related to the influential North family. He first established himself in Aleppo in 1699 and presumably there he became acquainted with Rowland Sherman. It appears that later he was based in Pera. On Dudley Foley, see Richard Grassby, *The English Gentleman in Trade. The Life and Works of Sir Dudley North 1641–1691* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 27–28, 116.

of Jerusalem in England. Notaras gave the manuscript of Nektarios of Jerusalem's book to Sherman in August or September 1722 in order to publish 500 copies in London.

All this data comes from Chrysanthos's travel notes, which he kept during his travels between 1720 and 1725 in various areas of the Ottoman Empire. It attests the meeting with Rowland Sherman, the contact with Dudley Foley and the sum paid for the book's publication. But was the book really printed? It appears that most modern scholars have either ignored it or found it difficult to locate a copy of it. The title is not mentioned in Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer's *Bibliotheca Arabica* (Hallae, 1811), and it is missing from most subsequent literature on Arabic printing in England. One might be tempted to assert that the book was never printed. However, there is plenty of evidence, even if only circumstantial, pointing in the direction that this book was printed. Perhaps a copy of it mislabelled or not catalogued waits to be discovered by researchers in some library.

First, there is a letter of Iakovos of Patmos addressed to his mentor Makarios of Patmos, a well-known and respected Greek scholar of the time:

There is a British man in Aleppo called Sherman, a very strong defender of us, who also translated into Arabic the book of Nektarios and that of Ilias called *The Rock of Offence*, printed them in Britain, and distributed them across Syria.³⁹

An inventory of Rowland Sherman's books seems to mention both the *Rock of Offence*, attributing it to the "Greek" Patriarch Athanasios, as well as the book of Gabriel of Philadelphia.⁴⁰

Even more convincing evidence comes from the previously mentioned archive of the Congregation De Propaganda Fide. In an extensive document dated 1732 describing various aspects of the religious life in the Patriarchate of Antioch in the first decades of the 18th century there is a chapter on books. The author describes several books published by the Orthodox, as well as manuscripts in Greek, Arabic and even Latin, which circulated at the time in the East. Among others, there is a mention of the

³⁹ M. I. Malandrakis, *Ἡ Πατμιαία Σχολή*, (Athens: Ἐκ τοῦ τυπογραφείου Παρασκευᾶ Λεώνη), 1911, 134: "ἔστιν ἐν Χαλέπῳ Βρεττανὸς Σέρμαν λεγόμενος ὑπερασπιστὴς τῶν ὑμετέρων εἰς τὸ ἀκρότατον, ὅστις καὶ τὴν τοῦ Νεκταρίου βίβλον καὶ τὴν τοῦ Ἠλία τὴν λεγομένην Πέτρα σκανδάλου εἰς τὴν ἀραβικὴν μεταβάλων καὶ τύπους ἐκδοῦς ἐν Βρεττανίᾳ διένειμε τοῖς ἐν Συρίαν πᾶσιν"; Tıpau, *Sylvester of Antioch*, 121–22.

⁴⁰ Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, 246. The passage is most likely a reference to either manuscript or printed works by Miniates and Severos.

Arabic translation of Nectarios's book by Christodoulos of Gaza that was printed by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. The above-mentioned document, written in Italian, is clear evidence of the book's existence. It partially and indirectly explains the reason why there is no available copy. According to the author, who seems to have seen the book, it was a "piccolo libretto", a small booklet or pamphlet, but no indication of the number of pages or the format is provided. Such booklets were usually distributed unbound, or were only bound in soft cover and were easily damaged, lost, or destroyed.

A clearer reason for the absence of copies is provided by the same report in the Roman archive. The document stated that polemical books published by the Orthodox should be found, bought and destroyed, by order of the custodian or guardian in Jerusalem.⁴¹ The destruction of the books echoed a letter from Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch addressed to the Patriarch of Alexandria, asking the latter to investigate whether the books sent to Egypt were destroyed by the merchant who transported them or not.⁴² In times of intense ideological polemics, book burning was not uncommon.

Still, there is a piece of evidence that is even more compelling. A British collection seems to hold the actual manuscript used for the edition, or at least a copy of it. The manuscript is preserved in the Hunterian Collection of the Library of the University of Glasgow.⁴³ It was owned at some point by William Hunter, an 18th-century scholar and book collector. Among the several hundred manuscripts that make up this collection, there are some Arabic and other Oriental codices. The manuscript mentions that the Arabic translation was made by Christodoulos of Gaza and that it was copied in 1722. An 18th-century note in Latin attached to the manuscript briefly mentions the title, author and translator of the book. The book was purchased by William Hunter as item 3558 in the sale of

⁴¹ Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 10 (Mansi, vol. 46), tom. 46, c. 236–37.

⁴² Țipău, *Sylvester of Antioch*, 183–84.

⁴³ T. H. Weir, "The Arabic, Syriac, and Hebrew Manuscripts in the Hunterian Library in the University of Glasgow," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 31 (1899), 4, 748, no. 34; John Young, Henderson Aitken, *A catalogue of the manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, Publishers to the University, 1908), 496, no. 286; Alexander Moffatt, "An oriental MS in the Hunterian Museum," *Glasgow University Oriental Society. Transactions*, 5 (1923–1928), 19–21.

Joseph Letherland's library in 1765. Its Reference Code is GB 247 MS Hunter 286 (U.6.4).⁴⁴

Further inquiry in order to locate a copy of the book printed in England at the request of Chrysanthos Notaras provided yet more results. The book that escaped von Schnurrer's thorough research into Arabic printing was known to at least two French Oriental scholars of the time. The first was Amable Jourdain (1788–1818), who published a review of von Schnurrer's work in 1812 in the French periodical *Le Moniteur universel*. Jourdain briefly described the book, published the translation of its Greek title and attributed it to a London printing press, based on its type.⁴⁵

In a book review published in 1814 in *Magasin encyclopédique*, Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), to whom Schnurrer dedicated his *Bibliotheca Arabica*, also mentioned and described this book. Silvestre de Sacy was aware of Jourdain's review. Both descriptions provide important data but also lack other equally significant information.⁴⁶ Silvestre de Sacy quotes in the original the extensive Greek note printed on the verso of one of the first folios of the book. From the note it is clear that the book was printed with the financial support of the Patriarch of Jerusalem “*kyrios* Chrysanthos Notaras the Peloponnesian” and was meant to be distributed for free to “all the Arab Christians in order to allow them to learn the truth and see the lie”. The text also mentions that the translation was achieved by Christodoulos, the Archbishop of Gaza. The year of printing, 1726, is also provided, but there is no mention of the place of publication, the same as in other Arabic books published in England at the time.

According to Silvestre de Sacy, the book was an *octavo* of 78 pages and was printed in London. This indication was based on the book's format and a comparison with the typefaces of the *Psalter* (1725) and *New Testament* (1727) also printed in London.⁴⁷ From the text it is suggested that the French scholar almost certainly saw and possibly also owned a copy of the book. He mentions that he had in his library all the books that he described as additions to von Schnurrer's *Bibliotheca Arabica*,

⁴⁴ Online at <https://sl1nk.com/sw5tw3f>, accessed April 10, 2026.

⁴⁵ Amable Jourdain, “Littérature Orientale” [book review of von Schnurrer's *Bibliotheca Arabica*], in *Le Moniteur universel*, no. 232 (August 1, 1812): 877 (see also 7–8 of the published offprint).

⁴⁶ Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, “Littérature Orientale” [book review of von Schnurrer's *Bibliotheca Arabica*], in *Magasin encyclopédique, ou Journal des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, I, 1814, 201–03 (see also 21–22 of the published offprint).

⁴⁷ Silvestre de Sacy, “Littérature Orientale”, 202.

“with some exceptions”.⁴⁸ However, a careful study of the catalogue of the French scholar’s library, published by Romain Merlin,⁴⁹ did not yield any result. It seems that the book, if Silvestre de Sacy did actually own a copy of it, was either misplaced or lost after 1814.

As I was just finishing this study, my search for a copy of the 1726 book was finally rewarded. I managed to locate the book in a major European library: the Sachsen-Anhalt University and Land Library (Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt) in Halle (Saale), Germany. The book belongs to the special collections of the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft). For the first time, this book will be available for researchers in order to be described and studied. At my request, the library digitized the book and made it freely available online.⁵⁰

The copy of the book largely confirms Silvestre de Sacy’s description. It has on the verso of its first folio the Greek text quoted by the French scholar:

Τὸ παρὸν κατὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Πάπα ἐγχειρίδιον, τοῦ μακαριωτάτου πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων κυρ(ίου) Νεκταρίου, ἐτυπώθη Ἀραβιστὶ δι’ ἐξόδων τοῦ μακαριωτάτου αὐθις Ἱεροσολύμων κυρ(ίου) Χρυσάνθου Νοταρᾶ τοῦ Πελοποννησίου, ἐδιωρίσθη καὶ νῦν δίδεται δωρεὰν παρὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ μακαριότητος ἀπλῶς πᾶσι τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς Ἀραβι, πρὸς διάγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ἀποφυγὴν τοῦ ψεύδους, ὅπερ μεταγλωττίσθη Ἀραβιστὶ παρὰ τοῦ Ἱεροτάτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Γάζης κυρ(ίου) Χριστοδούλου.

Ἐτυπώθη ἐν ἔτει ἀπὸ Χ(ριστο)ῦ ,αψκς’

Εὐσεβεῖν, καὶ εὐεργετεῖν, τοῦτο πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ἦτοι ὁ θεοειδής τε, καὶ τέλειος.⁵¹

⁴⁸ “Tous les articles que j’ai indiqués, si l’on en excepte un petit nombre, sont dans ma bibliothèque”; see *ibidem*, 210 (offprint, 30).

⁴⁹ *Bibliothèque de M. le Baron Silvestre de Sacy*, tome premier, *Imprimés. Philosophie, Théologie, Sciences Naturelles* (Paris: Imprimé par l’autorisation de M. le Garde des Sceaux à l’Imprimerie Royale, 1842).

⁵⁰ Original and digital version provided by the University and State Library of Saxony-Anhalt, Halle (Saale), call number D De 9389. Accessible at <http://dx.doi.org/10.25673/122744> (accessed on April 10, 2026).

⁵¹ “This handbook against the Papal authority, by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem *kyrios* Nektarios, was printed in Arabic at the expense of His Beatitude [the Patriarch] of the same Jerusalem, *kyrios* Chrysanthos Notaras of Peloponnese. It was also determined that it should be given freely by His Beatitude to all Arab Christians, for the discernment of truth and the avoidance of falsehood, which was translated into Arabic by the Most Holy Archbishop of Gaza, *kyrios* Christodoulos. To be pious and do good, this is what every human being, that is, the godlike and perfect one, [ought to do].”

The following folio contains the Arabic title:

هذا الكتاب الصغير الجرم الذي هو تعليم مختصر رثا على اللاتينيين في رئاسة البابا تاليف الاب الجزيل الغبطة كير
نكتاريوس البطريرك الاورشليمي المرحوم قد طبع الان حديثا باللغة العربية بمصرف الاب الامجد الكلي الغبطة كير
خريستوس نوطارا الموراوي البطريرك الاورشليمي حالا وقد سمح ان يعطى مجانا لجميع المسيحيين ابنا العرب لاجل
استفهامهم الحق وابتنادهم من التعليم الباطل.
اخرجه من اللغة اليونانية الى اللغة العربية الاب المرحوم كير خريستودولس مطران غزة.
طبع ذلك في سنة ١٧٢٦.

“This book, small in volume, which is a concise teaching in response to the Latins about papal primacy, written by His Beatitude father *kyr* Nektarios, the late Patriarch of Jerusalem, has recently been printed in Arabic, at the expense of the glorious father, His Beatitude *kyr* Chrysanthos Notaras from Morea,⁵² the current Patriarch of Jerusalem, and he authorized it to be freely distributed to all Arab Christians,⁵³ so that they may learn the truth and turn away from the false teaching.

It was translated from Greek into Arabic by the late father *kyr* Christodoulos, Metropolitan of Gaza.”⁵⁴

On the same page there are also two biblical quotes (Acts 20, 28 and 1 Corinthians 3, 10-11) and the indication, in Arabic:

طبع ذلك في سنة ١٧٢٦ (“Printed in the year 1726”).

The place of printing is not given, but a comparison with both the London and the Oxford Arabic imprints of the time clearly indicates a similarity with the ones printed in the former city. This is what Amable Jourdain also concluded in 1812, and Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy in 1814. The only other possible place of printing was Oxford, where the Arabic translation of Miniates’s book had been published the same year.

The copy in Halle has a handwritten note in French: “Nectarius patriarche de Jérusalem, Traité de la suprématie du Pape traduit du grec en arabe par Christodule, Londres, 1726, 78 pag.”. Another note inside the book cover provides a possible clue on the book’s provenance: “Langles, 2688”. After some research, the meaning of this note became clear. The

⁵² Lit., *al-Mūrāwī*, “the Morean,” from *al-Mūra*, Morea, the medieval name of Peloponnese.

⁵³ Lit., “all Christians, sons of Arabs.”

⁵⁴ I thank Dr. Yulia Petrova for her help in transcribing and translating these Arabic texts.

book was mentioned in the catalogue of the library of Louis-Mathieu Langlès, a famous French librarian and Oriental scholar.⁵⁵ The library was auctioned in 1826 in Paris, and under no. 2688, its catalogue mentioned the following title: “Traité de la suprématie du Pape, par Nectarius, patriarche de Jérusalem, trad. du grec en arabe, par l’archevêque Christodoule. Londres, 1726, in-8, d.-rel.”⁵⁶

It is possible that both Amable Jourdain and Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy studied Langlès’s copy of the Arabic edition of Patriarch Nektarios’s book when they wrote their respective reviews of von Schnurrer’s *Bibliotheca Arabica* in 1812 and 1814. Whether the copy in Halle is the same one sold in Paris in 1826 is not clear at this point. Given the book’s rarity, this would be plausible, but there is no definite proof for that. Someone may have identified the book in Langlès’s library catalogue and transcribed the French note into the Halle copy. Other handwritten notes (a short list of numbers and names, in pencil, older catalogue numbers, a mention “Arabe, Nectarius”) do not provide additional clues. Another note in French seems to read “ce 2^e fructidor ou 9^e.” If the reading is correct, then it is proof for the presence of this copy in France before 1805, when the French republican calendar (containing the month of Fructidor) was abolished. This provides, therefore, strong evidence that the volume could be the copy studied by the two French scholars.

As for the content, considering the number of pages, Nektarios of Jerusalem’s book published in Arabic in 1726 is undoubtedly a different work both from the one published in the Greek original in Iași in 1682⁵⁷ and from a Latin version published in 1729, which will be mentioned further on. The Iași edition was also translated into Latin by Pierre Allix and published in London twice, in 1702 and 1717. The Arabic text of the 1726 book is also different from the one published in 1746 in Iași, at the printing press established by the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ For Langlès, see Emanuele Giusti, “Translating Orientalism. Louis-Mathieu Langlès as editor and translator of English literature between Oriental studies, commerce, and popularization,” *Diciottesimo Secolo*, 9 (2024): 161–82.

⁵⁶ *Catalogue de livres, imprimés et manuscrits composant la bibliothèque de feu M. Louis-Mathieu Langlès* (Paris: Chez J.-S. Merlin, libraire, 1825), 307, no. 2688.

⁵⁷ The book published in Iași has 255 numbered pages and it is composed as an answer to a certain Peter, the “Magister” of the “Friars” in Jerusalem. Its complete title is: Τοῦ Μακαριωτάτου καὶ Σοφωτάτου Πατριάρχου τῆς Μεγάλης καὶ Ἀγίας πόλεως Ἱερουσαλὴμ κυρίου Νεκταρίου, Πρὸς τὰς προσκομισθείσας θέσεις παρὰ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις φρατόρων διὰ Πέτρου τοῦ αὐτῶν μαΐστορος περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ πάπα ἀντίρρησης (Iași: Cetățuia Monastery), 1682.

⁵⁸ For these books, see Policarp Chițulescu, “Livres polémiques imprimés en arabe, en Moldavie et en Valachie, au milieu du XVIII^e siècle,” *Scrinium* 20 (2024), 117–23. See

According to its Foreword, the Arabic edition of 1746 is a translation “from Greek and Latin” and is similar to the text of the Latin edition (*De Artibus*). Since for the Latin translation published in 1729 there are no known Greek manuscripts containing the original text, there is no way to determine the relation of the Arabic text with its Greek original.

The translator seems to have been Christodoulos of Gaza, as stated in the Greek note preceding the Arabic text. There is no knowing whether Rowland Sherman had any involvement in translating or correcting the text. Even if this was the case, he would probably not have been mentioned, in order to avoid suspicions that the book contained Protestant ideas.⁵⁹

As my research went on, I managed to locate yet another copy of the book in Cambridge University Library, in Saint John’s College Library. It is catalogued as a “Collection of Christian sermons in Arabic, with Greek introduction”, dated 1726, with 4 unnumbered and 74 numbered pages, format 8^o (22 cm.). The copy has the College’s bookplate (dated ca. 1850) and marginal annotations in Latin.⁶⁰

Chrysanthos had also, to some degree, a role in the publishing of another of Nektarios of Jerusalem’s books, the one detailing the methods used by Latin missionaries in the East. This book, translated into Latin, was primarily meant to be distributed in Western Europe, although there are sources that suggest that it was also circulating in the East. The book, known as *De Artibus* or *Contra Latinos*, was published, as already mentioned, in London in 1729 and it is a bibliographical rarity.⁶¹ The title page mentions that it was translated into Latin “ex autographo Graeco”. If accurate, this information would explain why no copy of the Greek original text is available today, as the unique autograph manuscript of the Patriarch was used to produce the Latin translation and its location is currently unknown. According to a report of the Propaganda Fide, the book

also Țipău, *Sylvester of Antioch*, 205–06.

⁵⁹ It appears that Rowland Sherman himself wanted his contribution to remain anonymous. See Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, 247; idem, “The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,” 100–01.

⁶⁰ The shelfmark is St John’s College, Special Collections, 10.35.22. The book is accessible at <https://l1nq.com/io0f46s>, accessed April 10, 2026).

⁶¹ The full title of the Latin book is: Reverendissimi in Christo patris ac domini d(omi)ni Nectarii nuper Patriarchae Hierosolymitani, *De artibus quibus missionarii Latini, praecipue in Terrâ Sanctâ degentes ad subvertendam Graecorum fidem, utuntur, & de quâ plurimis Ecclesiae Romanae erroribus corruptelis, libri tres, ex autographo Graeco Latine reddit* (London: Typis J. Tonson and J. Watts, 1729).

was financed by Chrysanthos.⁶² However, a note by William Reading in a copy of this book held by Christ Church Library in Oxford records the payment of £21 by the Archbishop of Canterbury (at the time, William Wake) for the printing of 250 copies.⁶³ Whether that accounts for all the print run remains unknown. The sum was provided through “Rev. Dr. Lisle”, a person of interest in the relations with the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs.⁶⁴

These discoveries offer a fresh insight into the activity of Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, revealing his efforts to publish and spread books for the benefit of Arab Christians. They also offer a wholly new perspective on the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs’ programme of books to be published in England. Firstly, the book of Ilias Miniates’s *The Rock of Offence*, translated by Athanasios Dabbās in 1721, was published the same year, 1726, as Nektarios of Jerusalem’s Arabic compendium about the Pope’s primacy, most likely both of them in Oxford. Secondly, bound together with Miniates’s book there is another book which has remained almost unnoticed: Gabriel Severos’s treaty on the Pope’s authority. There are, thus, three Arabic books on roughly the same topic, printed in England and meant to be distributed among the Christian Arabs in the East. This equates with a well-thought-out programme aimed at countering the Roman Catholic influence and the many imprints distributed in the East by the missionaries. It is unlikely that the London Arabic *Psalter* and *New Testament* were part of the same program, since their publication was an earlier initiative of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, financed from other sources, which also included an allowance from the

⁶² Martin, Petit (eds.), *Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 10 (Mansi, vol. 46), c. 238, mentioning that the book “fu fatta stampare da Crisanto ultimo patriarca di Gerusalemme di concerto coll’ ambasciadore d’Inghilterra, e col animo di dispensarla”. According to a report by the Conventual Minor Priest Giuseppe Danè, Chrysanthos “almost repented” of having published it and “almost decided” to discontinue its distribution (“era quasi pentito d’averla data alla luce, e quasi risoluto di non continuare a pubblicarla”).

⁶³ For the involvement of William Wake in the printing of the *Arabic Psalter* and the *New Testament*, see Mills, “The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge”, 88, 93. William Wake exchanged letters with Chrysanthos of Jerusalem and received books from the Greek Patriarch. See Jacques Bouchard, “Les relations épistolaires de Nicolas Mavrocordatos avec Jean Le Clerc et William Wake,” *Ο Επαισιος* 11 (2016): 67–92 (the mention is at 84).

⁶⁴ The note is in the copy of *De Artibus*, shelfmark Oxford, Christ Church Wb.7.23, available online at <https://sl1nk.com/j98rc0g>, accessed April 10, 2026. The person mentioned is most likely Samuel Lisle; on this character, see Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, 28–29, 228–29; idem, “The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,” 86.

British monarch.⁶⁵ Sources show that Athanasios Dabbās and Rowland Sherman were involved in various degrees in their publication.⁶⁶ The newly-found data will allow researchers to have a new understanding of Chrysanthos of Jerusalem's activity in supporting Arabic printing and his connection with the patriarchs of Antioch Athanasios III and Sylvester.

⁶⁵ Țipău, *Sylvester of Antioch*, 175; Mills, "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," 83. For the printing of the London Arabic *Psalter* and *New Testament*, see Paula Manstetten, "...for the Benefit of the Poor Christians of the Eastern Nations..."—Printing the Psalter and New Testament in Arabic in Eighteenth-Century London", at <https://11nq.com/a94nn7w>, accessed April 10, 2026; Mark Häberlein and Paula Manstetten, "The Translation Policies of Protestant Reformers in the Early Eighteenth Century. Projects, Aims, and Communication Networks," in Antje Flüchter, Andreas Gipper, Susanne Greilich, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (eds.), *Übersetzungspolitiken in der Frühen Neuzeit / Translation Policy and the Politics of Translation in the Early Modern Period* (Berlin–Heidelberg: J.B. Metzler, 2024) (*Übersetzungskulturen der Frühen Neuzeit*, 3), 316–27; Mills, "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," 83–110.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

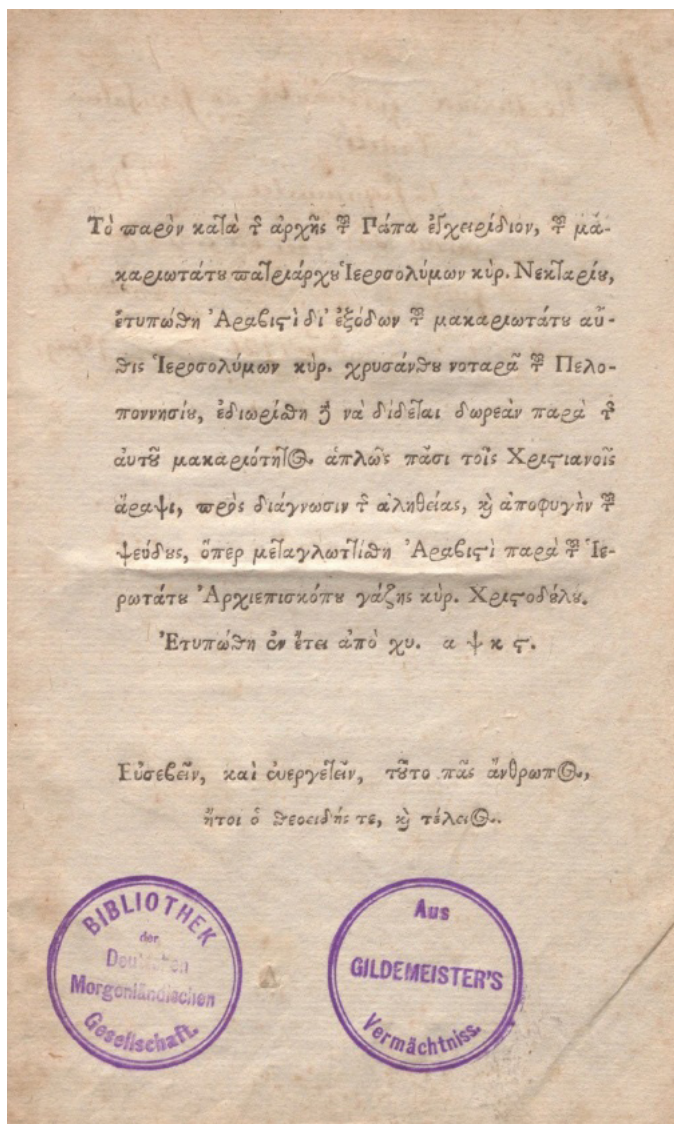


Fig. 1. Greek title of the book published by Chrysantos of Jerusalem in London in 1726. Original and digital version provided by: University and State Library of Saxony-Anhalt, Halle (Saale).

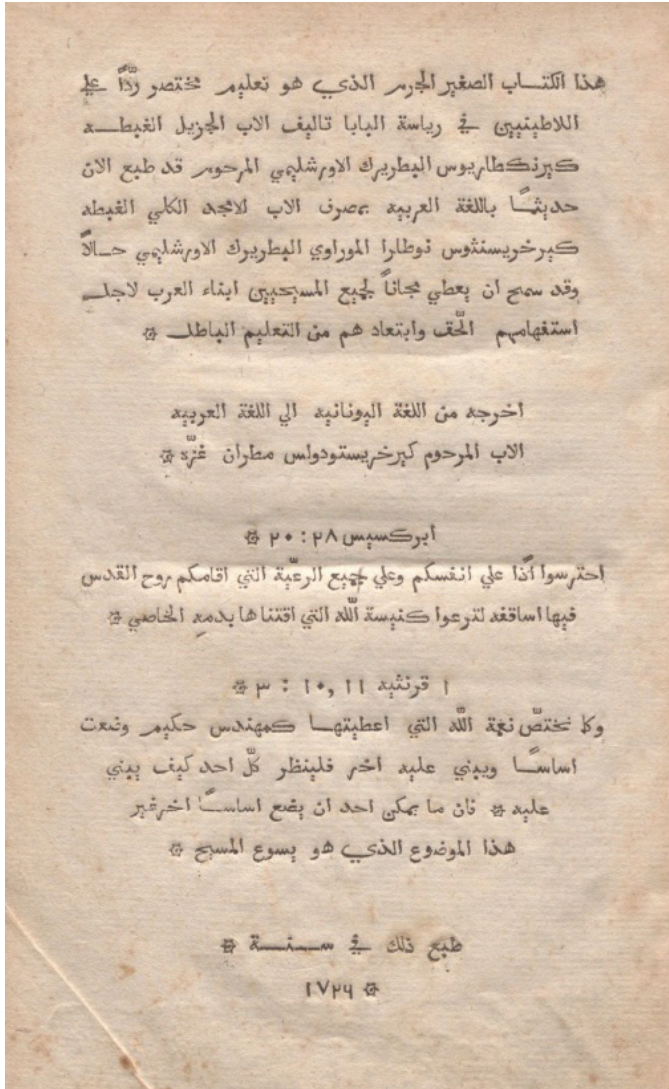


Fig. 2. Arabic title of the book published by Chrysantos of Jerusalem in London in 1726. Original and digital version provided by: University and State Library of Saxony-Anhalt, Halle (Saale).

7 Liber dictus / Petra Scandali //
 Historia Schismatis inter duas Ecclesias, Ori-
 entalem sc: et Occidentalem; et qd istius diffidii
 ingenti causa fuerit Episcopi Romani ambitio
 ad amplificandum Principatum suum.

 Paroeresis seu Adhortatio ad Servos Domini;
 ut caveant a vizania, quam disseminant ferri
 inimici in lince Ecclesiarum Orientalibus.

 Atq; hoc demum prodeunt in Arab: Edicula
 translata, cura patris venerabilis Athanasii
 patriarchae Antiocheni, in Halebo, urbe a Des-
 custodita. Anno Xli 1721.

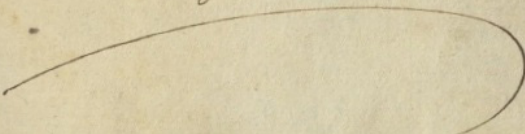
 2 Cor. 11; 2, 3. Ζηλωταρ υμης — εις τον Χριστον
Oxonis, anno 1726.
 Impensis dicti Patriarchae, a cura
 Johannis Gagnier A. M.


Fig. 3. Note by John Gagnier on the copy of the Arabic book published in Oxford in 1726 (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven, CT). Public domain.