

Abstracts and Notes on Contributors

Introduction

(M. Garzaniti, V. Kontouma & V. N. Makrides)

The Republic of Letters was an extensive network of scholars, scientists, artists and many other actors, which was formed mainly in Western Europe during the early modern era as a space of communication, dialogue and controversy beyond confessional, socio-political, linguistic and other divisions. It had a lasting impact upon intellectual developments there, *inter alia* connected with the emergence of modern critical philology and historical research as well as the study of numerous non-European languages. However, recent studies have revealed the existence of an Eastern Republic of Letters too, which entered into a multifaceted dialogue with the Western one disseminating novel and important knowledge. This realization is extremely vital for a comprehensive and entangled intellectual history of East and West, with a particular focus on actors stemming from Eastern and Southeastern Europe as well as the Middle East and including their diasporic and transnational networks. No doubt, there was an asymmetry between East and West at that time, given that the Western Republic of Letters was stronger, established, institutionalized and widespread. Occasionally, this asymmetry led Western actors to look down upon the East overall and criticize its numerous deficits. Nevertheless, the Eastern “inferiorities” could be compensated by other factors, such as knowledge of new and unusual languages and the access to previously inaccessible sources and information. This multilingual and multidisciplinary volume combines the expertise of various scholars working on the Eastern Republic of Letters and its numerous entanglements with the Western one, and aspires to reveal the richness, the dynamics and the plurality of these encounters, thus contributing to overcoming geographical, cultural, political and religious segmentations across the entire European continent.

Keywords: Republic of Letters, East-West religious and cultural relations, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Middle East.

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The Greek Diaspora and its Sodalists between the Italian Peninsula and the
Grand Principality of Moscow from Sophia Palaiologina to Maximus the Greek
(M. Garzaniti)

In the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, the political and cultural elite of the Byzantine Empire, who had chosen the path of exile, did everything in their power to encourage Europe to oppose Ottoman expansion in arms. At the same time, the Greek diaspora undertook a complex operation to preserve the Byzantine cultural heritage. Their activity in the West gave a boost to the cultural renewal promoted by humanism through the rediscovery of the roots of classical thought and science, but also through an impulse to theological reflection eager to return to Christian roots. In this panorama, still far from being reconstructed in its entirety, mainly due to the fragmentation of knowledge and predominantly national historiographical perspectives, an important page of European cultural history remains in the shadows: the concomitant attempt to involve the Grand Principality of Moscow in the resistance to Ottoman expansion and the commitment of the Greek diaspora to the cultural and religious updating of the Eastern Slavic world, with which it shared the same Christian tradition.

Keywords: Greek diaspora, Humanism, Ottoman Empire, Grand Principality of Moscow, Sophia Palaiologina, Maximus the Greek.

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Reformation-influenced Antitrinitarianism in and between Religions:
Scholarly Communication Entangled between East Central Europe
and the Transottoman Space
(S. Rohdewald)

This paper attempts to introduce the transottoman mobility dynamics by explaining entanglements between and across religions and denominations in Poland-Lithuania. It does so within a larger European setting of a Republic of Letters that reaches out to the Ottoman Empire, i.e. the Near East. Focusing on affinities between Christian, Protestant antitrinitarian texts and Muslim positions and arguments, this study deals, among other things, with primary source texts by Muslim Tatars who embraced the Protestant antitrinitarian terminology and combined it at the same time with their own Muslim faith. These and other texts serve as an example of the integration of Poland-Lithuania and of the Ottoman Empire into cross-continental contexts of inter-religious competition that enhanced knowledge flows beyond denominational boundaries.

Keywords: Reformation, Antitrinitarianism, Islam, Eastern Europe, Denominational Polemics.

Stefan Rohdewald is Professor (Chair for Eastern and Southeastern European History) at the University of Leipzig since 2020. He focuses on Eastern European urban history, discourses of remembrance, transconfessionality and entanglements between Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Iconographic Cultures in the Ruthenian Lands between the 16th and the 18th Centuries in Relation to the Republic of Scholars and Artists

(L. Berezhnaya)

This paper examines selected icons and images from the Ruthenian (early modern Ukrainian and Belorussian) lands to explore forms of cultural and religious exchange, framed within the concepts of interconfessionality, transconfessionality, and confessional ambiguity. Key sources include Eastern Christian sacred icons, including *Theotokos* and festal icons. The central argument suggests that confessional ambiguity in the visual cultures of early modern Ruthenian lands can be identified through the adoption of iconographic patterns from other confessions; the integration of “foreign” iconographic elements and rituals; and, finally, the shared veneration of miraculous sacred objects. The paper argues that all these processes reflect a broader practice of confessional ambiguity. These forms of ambiguity emerged through direct exchanges with artists connected to the Western Republic of Letters.

Keywords: Eastern Christian sacral art, interconfessionality, Ruthenian lands, Republic of Letters, artistic networks.

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The Mediterranean of the Basilian Melkites in the 18th Century: Milestones for the Study of the Mobility of Eastern Catholic Monks

(A. Girard)

Recent historiography has presented some early modern Eastern Christians as transnational and transcultural subjects in a global world. This study focuses on the long-distance mobility of Greek Catholic Melkite monks from two congregations on Mount Lebanon after the Antiochian schism of 1724. These Shuwayrite and Salvatorian religious friars, often rivals, traveled to Egypt to accompany the Melkite diaspora, especially merchants in Damietta and Cairo. Some conducted alms-seeking missions for their congregation in Catholic Europe, particularly in Spain, despite a prevailing context of widespread mistrust toward such “vagabonds”. The orders sent monks to Rome where they hoped to obtain establishments to train their young friars, to facilitate fundraising, and to defend their order before the Roman Curia.

Keywords: Mobility studies, Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Basilian monks, alms quests, Rome.

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Damianus Paraskevas Sinopeus as a Member of the Republic of Letters
between East and West in the 18th Century: Mobility Dynamics of Greek
Orthodox Actors between the Ottoman Empire, Western Europe,
and the Russian Empire

(V. N. Makrides)

Research on the Greek Orthodox medico-philosophers (combining the expertise of both a medical doctor and a philosopher) in the early modern period must consider their great mobility outside the Ottoman Empire. A classic trajectory included pursuing medical studies in Western Europe and then moving to Russia, which offered them many employment opportunities. One such example is Damianus Paraskevas Sinopeus (1687-1776), who studied medicine in Germany and practised it at the highest level in Russia for many decades. While in Germany, he also published three philosophical treatises in Latin defending the philosophy of Christian Wolff (1679-1754) and participated in a creative way in the intellectual debates of the Western European world. He therefore enjoyed wider recognition at the time, because he contributed to the productive contacts between East and West in the context of an inclusive Republic of Letters across the whole European continent.

Keywords: Damianus Sinopeus, Greece, Ottoman Empire, Germany, Russia, European Republic of Letters

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Texts and Metatexts: Maximus the Greek and the Book of Psalms
between Rhetoric and Philological Reflection

(A. Alberti)

In the recent edition of Maximus the Greek's original works (2008-2014), editor N. Sinicyna identified 312 quotations from the Psalter. The present study considers the two texts that contain the largest number of quotations, one from the first period (the *First Missive to Karpov against Astrology*, c. 1523), and one from the second period (the *Didactic Chapters for Those Who Righteously Rule*, c. 1547), in order to capture the evolution and/or continuity in Maximus' use of the Psalter text as his scholarly activities were progressing. I have analyzed in detail the 16 quotations, in which significant lexical variation occurs, comparing them with the Church Slavonic tradition, particularly the translation of the Psalter made by Maximus himself in 1552.

Keywords: Textual criticism, Biblical quotations, Muscovy, Republic of Letters, communicative context.

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Transfer, Selection, Redefinition: The Grammar of George Amira (1596)
as a Place for the Construction of a Syriac-Latin Linguistic Identity
(M. Farina)

This chapter examines George Amira's *Grammatica syriaca* (Rome, 1596) in the framework of sixteenth-century humanistic studies and the development of Oriental Studies within the Republic of Letters. By investigating the grammar's multiple sources and models, both in earlier Western studies on Oriental languages and in the Syriac grammatical heritage, this study aims at revealing the pathway through which the first Maronite grammarian constructed a Syriac linguistic identity in the eyes of his European readers. A detailed analysis of Amira's Western antecedents, the didactic models available to him, as well as the Syriac manuscript sources that he used in the preparation of his grammar outlines a conscious process of selection and combination of elements from different linguistic traditions.

Keywords: Syriac grammar, George Amira, Maronite linguistics, Renaissance, Oriental Studies, *Typographia Medicea*.

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Materials for the Study of Multilingualism in the Ottoman Context:
The Case of Dositheos II of Jerusalem
(V. Kontouma)

The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos II (1669-1707), had no classical education and was largely self-taught. Yet, he is known for his important work as an author and editor and for his many exchanges with people of different backgrounds. In his various activities, his "own language", namely Greek, was certainly the one he used most often, but it was not the only one. Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Romanian and Georgian were also part of his linguistic landscape. On the other hand, he possessed no knowledge of Latin or other Western languages. Based on Dositheos' own account, taken from his *History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem* (Bucharest 1715 [1722]), this study seeks not only to examine Dositheos' multilingualism, but also to understand the authority he granted to the various languages, both learned and vernacular, with which he was confronted. More generally, the aim is to ask what paths a man like Dositheos might have taken to gain a place in the Republic of Letters.

Keywords: Multilingualism, varieties of Greek, sacred languages, Orthodox scholarship, Ottoman society.

Vassa Kontouma is Director of Studies in "Orthodox Christianity, 15th-21st Century", at the École pratique des Hautes Études, PSL (Paris). Her research focuses on three main areas: John Damascene and his work; circulation of Orthodox books, scholarly ecclesiastical networks and sacramental theology in the 15th-17th centuries; and popular theology in its late expressions (18th-19th centuries).

Everything New? The London and Halle Editions of the Modern Greek Translation of the New Testament (1703, 1705 and 1710) as Products of Interconfessional Discourse and Missionary Networks

(U. Moennig & S. Saracino)

This paper explores the nexus between the use of the modern Greek language and interconfessional transfer, focusing on the early modern vernacular Greek editions of the New Testament. The point of reference for later editions was the translation sponsored by Kyrillos Lukaris and completed by the monk Maximus Kalliupolitis, which was printed in Geneva in 1638. We take steps toward a preliminary analysis of the work done by the editors, who prepared revised versions of Kalliupolitis' translation printed in 1703/1705 and 1710 and who were strongly supported and influenced by the Halle Pietism. This topic of investigation proves to be connected to a discourse concerning the identity and normativity of modern Greek, as well as the missionary practices and goals pursued by the Ottoman Greeks and German Pietists involved in them.

Keywords: Modern Greek translations of the New Testament, modern Greek language, perceptions about Greek Orthodoxy in the Republic of Letters, Patriarch of Constantinople Kyrillos Lukaris (†1638), Synod of Jerusalem (1672)

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Stefano Saracino is Professor for Early Modern History at the University of Graz. His research is focused on confessional and missionary history and on Renaissance Studies. His latest project deals with skin color in the testimonies of Early Modern German speaking colonial agents in the Americas.

Maximus the Greek's *Narrative on the Sign of the Cross*:
Scriptural Exegesis and Orthodox Practice in Sixteenth-Century Muscovy

(F. Romoli)

The article is devoted to the *Narrative on the Sign of the Cross* by Maximus the Greek. The text belongs to the first half of the 16th century, a period when Muscovy definitively asserted itself on the European and Mediterranean chessboard as the third and last surviving Christian world power. The construction of the Russian Empire rested on the definition of Russian Christianity. The contribution Maximus made to this process consisted of revised translations and new translations of sacred texts, of religious essays, as well as of his engagement in the interconfessional and intercultural debates of the times. In all these fields, Maximus applied the tools and methods that he had acquired in Italy under the influence of Humanism. The *Narrative* offers a good example of Maximus' approach: Therein he defends the most ancient sign of the cross with two fingers by means of the medieval doctrine of the four senses of

the Holy Scriptures. In this way, Maximus not only participated in the definition of Russian Orthodoxy, safeguarding the local tradition, but also sought to raise Muscovy to a higher level of cultural and theological competence, creating the condition for its actual ecclesiastical autonomy.

Keywords: Maximus the Greek, “Narrative on the Sign of the Cross”, Russian Orthodoxy, medieval doctrine of the four senses of the Holy Scriptures, tradition and modernization.

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The Spread of the Practice of Confession in the East (17th-18th Centuries) between Catholic Expansion and Orthodox Confessionalization (B. Heyberger)

Penance in the form of confession became a strong marker of Catholic identity from the Council of Trent onwards. In terms of Scholastic theology, the “form” of the sacrament consists of the absolution given to the penitent by the priest. This becomes a judicial act, making the confessor a judge, requiring a secret and precise confession of sins, and imposing a penance proportionate to the fault. This conception is opposed to the Eastern tradition, in which sin was rather considered as a disease, and the confessor as a doctor, who did not judge or absolve, but interceded with God. In this tradition, a list of sins was proposed aloud to the assembled faithful, over whom the priest recited prayers. This Catholic pattern of penance began to spread in the Eastern Churches, especially among the Greek Orthodox, as their *Euchologion* / *Trebnik* and their manuals for confession attest, without however completely erasing the previous rituals. The “Greek” Melkite archbishop, later Patriarch of Antioch, Athanasius Dabbās, edited in Arabic a handbook for confessors and penitents in Aleppo in 1711, which will be scrutinized in this study. It follows the Latin pattern of confession, perhaps from a translation into Greek, nevertheless making sure to hide its dependency on a Catholic source by referring exclusively to Eastern ancient authorities. Penance is linked to questions of salvation and human destiny in the afterlife. Dabbās’ book provides a long excursus on the issue, shedding some light on his conception of Purgatory and indulgences – in fact, quite controversial topics hotly debated between the Catholics, the Protestants and the Orthodox of his time.

Keywords: Confession, indulgences, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Melkites.

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A Controversial Liturgical Practice in Sixteenth-Century Russia: Maximus the Greek's "Short Discourse" on the Alleluia

(M. C. Ferro)

This article focuses on a particular controversy that swept through Eastern Slavic Christianity between the 16th and 18th centuries: the so-called "alleluia dispute" (*spor ob allilue*), i.e. the problem of the performance of the hymn with the triple or double repetition of the Hebrew term 'alleluia' before the verse 'Glory to you, O Lord'. In this debate, one of the contributing voices was that of Maximus the Greek. This study presents and analyzes his short discourse to those who dared to say "alleluia" three times (*Slovco k" smějušim" triždy glagolati «allilua» črez predania cerkovnago, a četvertoe «slava tebě bože»*). Maximus' intervention took place in the context of the events that occurred in the political and religious history of Muscovy at a time when questions of liturgical practice also assumed importance in the broader context of the affirmation and identity development of Russian Orthodox Christianity in relation to the West.

Keywords: Maximus the Greek, debate on alleluia, Russian Orthodox Christianity, liturgical practices, East-West Christian relations.

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The Invention of a Liturgical "Tradition": The Rite of Consecration of the Wallachian Princes (17th-18th Centuries)

(R. G. Păun)

The aim of this study is to re-examine the question of the alleged Byzantine origin of the consecration ritual of the Wallachian princes and to reconstruct the liturgical scenario and the political context in which this ritual emerged. The first part provides an overview of the sources on the coronation of Byzantine emperors. The second part outlines the liturgical tradition of the coronation of monarchs in the South Slavic countries (Bulgarian and Serbian states). The third part aims at reconstructing the liturgical scenario of the consecration of the Wallachian princes, taking into account the main elements of the ritual, notably the liturgical gestures and words, but also the spatial dimension of the ceremony, i.e. the place where the liturgical act was performed. A thorough analysis of the sources shows that, contrary to common opinion, this scenario has nothing in common with the rite of the consecration of the *basileis*, but was inspired by and closely follows the rite of episcopal ordination as it appears in the *Archieratikon*. The theological-political significance of this choice is analyzed in the fourth and final part of the study. Finally, this study is accompanied by a documentary portfolio (originals and translations).

Keywords: Wallachia, coronation, liturgical tradition, royal anointing, theology of power.

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