

JOHANNES PAHLITZSCH  
FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

## Mediators Between East and West: Christians Under Mamluk Rule

In this article, I do not intend to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of Latin and Greek Orthodox Christians in Mamluk Egypt and Syria, be they pilgrims, clerics, monks or traders, natives or immigrants. Rather, the focus will be on describing the position of these Christians between Orient and Occident, between Islam and Christianity, from concrete case studies. This intermediate position shows the wide variety of connections and dependencies that existed between the different peoples, religious communities, and state organizations, but at the same time provides a key to understanding the unity of the eastern Mediterranean region. In this sense this article may be seen as a contribution to the writing of "a human history of the Mediterranean Sea expressed through the commercial, cultural and religious interaction that took place across its surface" that David Abulafia has called for to supplement the *longue durée*, ecological approach of Fernand Braudel and more recently of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell.<sup>1</sup>

### CHRISTIANS IN PALESTINE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Latin and Greek Orthodox Christians in the Mamluk Empire did not form a coherent group by any means. While Greek, Georgian, Russian, or Serbian monks and priests, Franciscans, Melkites (i.e., Arabic-speaking Orthodox), or Latin merchants on the one hand lived permanently or at least for long periods in the region, on the other hand many Latin and Orthodox pilgrims and travellers visited

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<sup>1</sup>David Abulafia, "What is the Mediterranean?" in *The Mediterranean in History*, ed. idem (Los Angeles, 2003), 26; cf. also idem, "The Impact of the Orient: Economic Interactions between East and West in the Medieval Mediterranean," in *Across the Mediterranean Frontiers: Trade, Politics and Religion, 650–1450: Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 10–13 July 1995, 8–11 July 1996*, ed. Dionisius A. Agius and Ian Richard Netton (Turnhout, Belgium, 1997), 1–40; Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 2nd rev. ed. (Paris, 1966); Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2000). For the Early Middle Ages cf. Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300–900* (Cambridge, 2001).



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the Mamluk empire only temporarily. However, the relationships of the Christians in Syria and Egypt to the Mamluks cannot be seen in the isolation of a purely internal perspective. The Christian protecting powers such as Byzantium and the papacy, or various powers such as France, the kingdom of Aragon, the kingdom of Cyprus, or the Italian trading cities, looked after their own interests in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> Between all these different groups a complex network emerged, and these relationships have always to be kept in mind when one tries to determine the respective political environment and the motives of the protagonists involved.

Using the example of the Georgian community in Jerusalem it can be demonstrated how domestic and foreign policy are frequently interlinked so that it is sometimes hard to tell what formed the basis for Mamluk policy with respect to their Christian subjects. Did the Mamluks show consideration towards the Muslim religious establishment, which took generally a more anti-Christian position and from time to time stirred up the animosity of the Muslim population against the Christians,<sup>3</sup> or were foreign policy interests their primary concern? When and for what reason did the respective protecting powers intervene with the Mamluk court?

After Georgia had acknowledged the supreme rule of the Mongol Great Khan in 1243 it was directly involved in the continual conflicts of the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids, the Mongol rulers of Persia. In this conflict both parties were always on the lookout for allies and tried to create a second front in order to gain a tactical advantage over their opponent. Georgia also formed a part of this system of alliances.<sup>4</sup> In the beginning of 1268, after intensive diplomatic activities, the kings

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<sup>2</sup>The study of Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Ilkhanid War, 1260–1281*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (Cambridge, 1995) gives a good impression of the complex foreign relations of the Mamluks. Cf. also Werner Krebs, "Innen- und Aussenpolitik Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter, 741–784/1341–1382" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 1980); and Albrecht Fuess, *Verbranntes Ufer: Auswirkungen mamlukischer Seepolitik auf Beirut und die syro-palästinensische Küste (1250–1517)*, Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, vol. 39 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2001).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. the examples given by Donald P. Little, "Communal Strife in Late Mamluk Jerusalem," *Islamic Law and Society* 6 (1999): 69–96.

<sup>4</sup>Christian Müller and Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Sultan Baybars I and the Georgians—In the Light of New Documents Related to the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem," *Arabica* 51 (2004): 276–80. For the early history of the Georgians in Jerusalem cf. Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Die Bedeutung Jerusalems für Königtum und Kirche in Georgien zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge im Vergleich zu Armenien," in *L'idea di Gerusalemme nella spiritualità cristiana del medioevo: atti del Convegno internazionale in collaborazione con l'Istituto della Görres-Gesellschaft di Gerusalemme, Gerusalemme, Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center, 31 agosto–6 settembre 1999*, Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche, Atti e Documenti, vol. 12 (Vatican City, 2003), 104–31.



of the then-divided Georgia sent letters to the Mamluk sultan Baybars in which they declared that they had seceded from the Mongols because of the Mamluk sultan.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, however, Mamluk-Georgian relations underwent a drastic change, since very shortly afterwards, probably in the summer of 1268 or 1269, Baybars gave in to the pleading of the Shaykh Khaḍir ibn Abī Bakr al-Mihrānī, his spiritual guide, and handed the Georgian Monastery of the Holy Cross near Jerusalem over to him—who turned it into a *zāwiyah*, a Sufi convent.<sup>6</sup>

The Monastery of the Holy Cross could be regarded as a royal foundation and was one of the most prominent Georgian monasteries outside of Georgia. Thus, the relationship of the Mamluks to Georgia had certainly reached its low point by this time. The reasons for the sudden and somewhat unexpected expropriation of the Monastery of the Holy Cross are quite obscure. Evidently, it was very difficult for Baybars to refuse to grant the wishes of his increasingly influential adviser and spiritual guide, Shaykh Khaḍir, who had built up a network of Sufi settlements under his control by confiscating churches and synagogues. When, for a period of time, the tension in foreign affairs eased during 1268, it seems that Baybars thought he was no longer in need of the alliance with the Georgians and eventually yielded to his adviser's pressure and allowed the Monastery of the Holy Cross to be taken over. So both domestic and foreign policy as well as personal reasons obviously influenced Baybars' decision.<sup>7</sup>

The significance of the Monastery of the Holy Cross for Mamluk-Georgian relations is particularly evident in the fact that the monastery was returned to the Georgians when relations between the two sides were resumed at the start of the fourteenth century.<sup>8</sup> However, the purpose this time was not to forge a military alliance, since the Ilkhans of Persia had dropped their aggressive policy of expansion directed at Syria, at least for the time being. Rather, the issue at hand was that the Mamluks had begun to import more and more Circassian military slaves, causing

<sup>5</sup>Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 299. It is not known if a true alliance came into being.

<sup>6</sup>Müller and Pahlitzsch, "Sultan Baybars I and the Georgians," 271–75.

<sup>7</sup>However, Shaykh Khaḍir had some very powerful enemies among the Mamluk amirs, who regarded his influence on the sultan's political affairs as being harmful. His anti-Christian attacks, with their damaging effect on foreign policy, most likely were a considerable factor in this. For this reason, it is perhaps no coincidence that the same amir who was later responsible for the overthrow and arrest of the shaykh had earlier supported the indigenous Christians; Müller and Pahlitzsch, "Sultan Baybars I and the Georgians," 281.

<sup>8</sup>For a detailed analysis of the Mamluk chronicles that report these events cf. Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem (1099–1310)," in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, Confrontations III*, ed. Krijnie N. Ciggaar and Herman Teule, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, vol. 125 (Leuven and Dudley, MA, 2003), 42–46.



increasing concern about the safety of the trading routes in the Caucasus.<sup>9</sup> The restitution of the Monastery of the Holy Cross was effected with the participation of the Byzantine Empire. Byzantium obviously wanted to use this opportunity to again assume the role of protector of the Orthodox Christians in Syria and Egypt which it had lost as a consequence of the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204.<sup>10</sup>

In the fifteenth century as well, the status of the Georgian community in Jerusalem played an important role in the relations between the Mamluks and Georgians, which still were influenced by trading interests. In 844/1440, the sultan Jaqmaq (842–54/1438–53) complained to the Georgian king that a levy of 1000 dinars had been imposed by the Georgian authorities on one of his traders charged with the purchase of military slaves. If the Georgian king would not reimburse the amount, the monks “in charge of Georgian churches and the Golgotha in Jerusalem” would have to raise the money and the sultan would “issue instructions to use the sword of justice and equity to take vengeance upon the Christians and Georgians in the Muslim countries according to what they deserve.”<sup>11</sup> In his response, the Georgian king complained about the destruction of a church in Damascus and added that, in his country, the Muslims were treated well and could freely practice their religion.<sup>12</sup> Interpreting this as a hidden threat certainly does not seem farfetched. In the end, however, the two seem to have come to an amicable agreement. Because the Mamluks were aware that an undisrupted supply of military slaves from the Caucasus depended on their good behavior in their dealings with the Georgian residents of Palestine, the Georgians were even able to further expand their position in Jerusalem in the course of the fifteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Andrew Ehrenkreutz, “Strategic Implications of the Slave Trade between Genoa and Mamluk Egypt in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century,” in *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900: Studies in Economic and Social History*, ed. Abraham L. Udovitch (Princeton, 1981), 335–45; Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Georgians in Jerusalem in the Mamluk Period,” in *Egypt and Palestine: A Millennium of Association (868–1948)*, ed. Amos Cohen and Gabriel Baer (Jerusalem, 1984), 108.

<sup>10</sup>Pahlitzsch, “Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem (1099–1310),” 49. For another instance where Byzantium acted as advocate of the Oriental Christians in the fourteenth century cf. below, note 22; and Peter Schreiner, “Byzanz und die Mamluken in der 2. Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts,” *Der Islam* 56 (1979): 302.

<sup>11</sup>Abu-Manneh, “The Georgians in Jerusalem in the Mamluk Period,” 111, where a translation of Jaqmaq’s still unpublished letter can be found.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 108–9.

<sup>13</sup>For the further history of the Georgians in Jerusalem cf. Richard Janin, “Les Géorgiens à Jérusalem,” *Echos d’Orient* 16 (1913): 32–38, 211–19; Gregory Peradze, “An Account of the Georgian Monks and Monasteries in Palestine as Revealed in the Writings of non-Georgian Pilgrims,” *Georgica* 1, no. 4/5 (1937): 181–246; Elene Metreveli, *Masalebi Ierusalimis K’art’uli*



Looking at the development of Georgian-Mamluk relations from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century one comes to the conclusion that not only was the situation of the Georgians in Jerusalem influenced by mutual political and economic relations but that the way the Mamluks behaved vis-à-vis the Georgians in the Holy Land also had an influence on the relationship. Indeed, one could even say that the condition of the Georgian community was a kind of gauge for the state of these relations.

More or less the same holds true for the significance the Franciscan Custodia di Terra Santa had for the relationship of the Mamluks to the Latin West. Various diplomatic efforts of the kings of Aragon and Naples eventually led to the foundation of a Franciscan settlement in Jerusalem in 1335. Political and economic interests played a role here as well. Thus, one important aspect of the continuous rivalry between the kings of Aragon and Naples over domination in the Mediterranean region was the competition for the role of protector of the holy sites and of the Christians living in the Holy Land. Furthermore, the Angevins claimed the title of King of Jerusalem for themselves, while the Catalonians and the Mamluks pursued tangible trade interests.<sup>14</sup> The Venetians, who were conducting trade with Alexandria and the Levantine coast, were another party committed to championing the concerns of the Christians in the Orient. Providing the Western pilgrims with transportation was a very profitable business, thus they were natural partners for the Franciscans

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*Koloniis Istoriasat'vis* (Materials for the History of the Georgian Colony in Jerusalem) (Tbilisi, 1962); Donald S. Richards, "Arabic Documents from the Monastery of St. James in Jerusalem Including a Mamluk Report on the Ownership of Calvary," *Revue des études arméniens* 21 (1988–89): 455–69.

<sup>14</sup>Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* (Florence, 1923), 4:1–73; Leonhard Lemmens, *Die Franziskaner im Heiligen Land I: Die Franziskaner auf dem Sion (1335–1552)*, Franziskanische Studien, Beiheft 4 (Münster, 1925); Kaspar Elm, "La Custodia di Terra Santa: Franziskanisches Ordensleben in der Tradition der lateinischen Kirche Palästinas," in *I Francescani nel trecento: Atti del XIV Convegno Internazionale della Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani, Assisi 16–17–18 ottobre 1986*, Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani, Convegni, vol. 14 (Assisi, 1988), 130–66; repr. in idem, *Vitasfratrum: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Eremiten- und Mendikantenorden des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts: Festgabe zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Dieter Berg, Saxonia Franciscana, vol. 5 (Werl, 1994), 241–62. For the unsuccessful efforts of James II of Aragon (1291–1327) to establish a Franciscan settlement in Jerusalem cf. Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* (Florence, 1919), 3:309–18; Aziz Suryal Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon: Embassies and Diplomatic Correspondence between 1300 and 1330 A.D.*, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. 23, no. 7 (Leipzig, 1938). For the relations of the Franciscans in Palestine with the Latin West cf. *La custodia di Terra Santa e l'Europa: I rapporti politici e l'attività culturale dei Francescani in Medio Oriente*, ed. Michele Piccirillo (Rome, 1983); David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms 1200–1500: The Struggle for Dominion* (London, 1997), 53–56, 118–19.



in the Holy Land, who were responsible for the Western pilgrims during their stay in Palestine.<sup>15</sup> So here as well the Christians in Jerusalem, in this case the Latins, served as a point of reference for international relations.<sup>16</sup>

#### POLITICAL MEDIATION BY REGIONAL CHURCH INSTITUTIONS AND LAYMEN

The Greek Orthodox patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch functioned as the primary links between the Mamluks and the Orthodox world. The career of the patriarch Lazaros of Jerusalem serves as an example for the intermediary position and the dependence of the patriarchs on the sultan and on the Byzantine emperor. Lazaros was elected to the office of patriarch sometime before 1341 in Palestine.<sup>17</sup> As had long been the custom, it was incumbent upon the sultan to express his approbation by issuing a document (*tawqī'*). The fixed language of these documents of approbation obliged the new patriarch not only to conscientiously serve the believers entrusted to him, and to do so in accordance with their own laws, but also forbade him to establish contact with foreigners, and more specifically with foreign rulers, without the knowledge of the sultan. Every letter and all emissaries were to be promptly disclosed to the sultan.<sup>18</sup> Thus, in the eyes of the

<sup>15</sup>Eliyahu Ashtor, "Venezia e il pellegrinaggio in Terra Santa nel basso Medioevo," *Archivio storico italiano* 153 (1985): 197–223; David Jacoby, "Pèlerinage médiéval et sanctuaires de Terre Sainte: La perspective Vénitienne," *Ateneo veneto* 24 (1986): 27–58; repr. in idem, *Studies on the Crusader States and on Venetian Expansion*, Collected Studies Series, vol. 301 (Northampton, 1989); Marie-Luise Favreau-Lilie, "The German Empire and Palestine: German Pilgrimages to Jerusalem between the 12th and 16th Century," *Journal of Medieval History* 21 (1995): 321–41, here 327–31.

<sup>16</sup>Donald P. Little, "Christians in Mamluk Jerusalem," in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Zaidan Haddad (Gainesville, 1995), 213, states that the Franciscans' "repeated petitions for concessions and favored treatment became factors in the Mamluks' relations with foreign Christian powers." Nevertheless Little, "Communal Strife in Late Mamluk Jerusalem," 87–94, does not refer to the state of Mamluk relations with the West in his dealing with the conflict of the local Muslim establishment with the Franciscans over the Tomb of David on Mt. Zion in 894–95/1489–90, during which both sides appealed to the sultan. Mamluk documents from the archive of the Custodia di Terra Santa are published in Norberto Risciani, *Documenti e firmani* (Jerusalem, 1930).

<sup>17</sup>Marius Canard, "Une lettre du sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan à Jean VI Cantacuzène (750/1349)," *Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales* 3 (1947): 29; repr. in idem, *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient*, Collected Studies Series, vol. 18 (London, 1973).

<sup>18</sup>Al-Qalqashandī (756–821/1355–1418), *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā'* (Cairo, 1917; repr. Cairo, ca. 1970), 11:392–95; Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "Christian and Jewish Religious Dignitaries in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria: Qalqashandī's Information on their Hierarchy, Titulature, and Appointment," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972): 199–203. Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 4:194, mentions the Melkite patriarchs as office bearers of the *niyābah* of Damascus. This probably refers only to the patriarchs of Antioch, who had resided in Damascus since the



Mamluks, the patriarch was fully dependent on the sultan, even in his contacts with the Church of Constantinople and the Byzantine emperor.

When a monk from Jerusalem by the name of Gerasimos objected to the election of Lazaros, it would thus have been the sultan's obligation to resolve the dispute. But since Lazaros was at that moment in Constantinople—be it as a Mamluk emissary or in order to be confirmed as patriarch by the Byzantine emperor<sup>19</sup>—Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328–41) was involved in this conflict. Having sent an embassy to Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (d. 741/1341) to obtain additional information, he died before the issue could be resolved. In the following civil war between the supporters of the underage heir to the throne Joannes V Palaiologos, and Joannes VI Kantakouzenos, the patriarch Lazaros—still being in Constantinople—had pledged his support to the latter early on. Consequently, the supporters of Joannes V Palaiologos declared Lazaros discharged from his office. Gerasimos was elected patriarch of Jerusalem and approved by the sultan, probably in 1342.<sup>20</sup> Joannes VI Kantakouzenos for his part overturned

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election of Michael I Bishārah in about 1366: Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh* (Cairo, 1932), 14:319; cf. below, note 29. Thus the patriarch Mikhā'il whose *tawqī'* is given in al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 12:424–26, confirming him as Melkite patriarch "*bi-al-Shām wa-a'mālihi*" is either Michael I or Michael II (1395–1404), in contrast to Bosworth, "Christian and Jewish Religious Dignitaries," 203, n. 1, who identifies him with a Melkite archbishop of Damascus from the thirteenth century. Obviously, the *nā'ib al-saltānah* of Syria was responsible for issuing the document of approbation for the leaders of the Syrian non-Muslim communities, although according to al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā*, 4:194, the sultan sometimes confirmed the designations by the *nā'ib* and sometimes even issued a *tawqī'* before the *nā'ib*. Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des Mamelouks d'après les auteurs arabes: Description géographique, économique et administration gouvernementale*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, vol. 3 (Paris, 1923), 168–69, sees in this the attempt of the sultan to exert direct control over the *dhimmi*s. For the role of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate of Alexandria in the relations between Constantinople and Cairo, especially with regard to the translation of their diplomatic correspondence, cf. Dimitri A. Korobeinikov, "Diplomatic Correspondence between Byzantium and the Mamlūk Sultanate in the Fourteenth Century," *Al-Masāq* 16 (2004): 66–67; cf. also his work on the lists of the metropolitan sees, the *notitiae episcopatum*: idem, "Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: Part 1: The Two Patriarchates: Constantinople and Antioch," *Al-Masāq* 15 (2003): 199–200.

<sup>19</sup>Against the statement of Joannes Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, ed. Ludwig Schopen, *Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae*, vol. 13 (Bonn, 1832), 3:91, Canard, "Une lettre du sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan à Jean VI Cantacuzène (750/1349)," 40–41, holds the opinion that it is unlikely that a patriarch would have gotten the sultan's permission to travel to Constantinople only for his confirmation.

<sup>20</sup>In the letter of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan to Joannes VI from 750/1349 it is stated that a certain Malik Nāṣir (Μελέηκ Νάσσαρ) has deposed Lazaros: Joannes Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, 3:97; French translation in Canard, "Une lettre du sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan à Jean VI Cantacuzène (750/1349)," 50. This is obviously al-Nāṣir Aḥmad, who reigned for only about three



this decision and after having seized power in 1347 saw to it that Lazaros was confirmed by the patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>21</sup> It was, however, the sultan's decision who was to officiate as patriarch in Jerusalem. It took two more years before Joannes VI sent Lazaros, together with an emissary, to Cairo to ask for his reinstatement. The answer of the new sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan to this plea has come down to us in the chronicle written by Joannes Kantakouzenos himself. After Kantakouzenos' victory, the Mamluks showed little interest in supporting the candidate of the defeated party and the sultan consented to reinstate Lazaros in office. Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan also granted the request to rebuild a church in Cairo and promised that all pilgrims, priests, and monks at the holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as all Byzantine merchants in the Mamluk empire, would be under his protection.<sup>22</sup> The deposed Gerasimos decided to appeal to the sultan but died on his way to Cairo.<sup>23</sup> The course of events shows paradigmatically how, in the case of the Greek Orthodox churches in the Near East, Byzantine and Mamluk interests were intertwined. What was initially a regional and essentially internal Mamluk conflict over the patriarchate of Jerusalem became part of the Byzantine civil war.

Despite assurances of protection, Lazaros found himself exposed to Muslim assaults shortly afterwards in 1357. Assaults against Christians often occurred in the fourteenth century on the initiative of individual influential amirs or ulama, who were able incite the populace to violence. The rulers were thus forced to tolerate these assaults, against their will and in opposition to the interests of the state.<sup>24</sup> In this case, the anti-Christian excesses were immediately stopped after the

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months in 742–43/1342 (Canard, *ibid.*, 50, n. 3). It might be no coincidence that al-Nāṣir Aḥmad tried to govern the Mamluk empire from Kerak and ordered the caliph to be sent from Cairo to Jerusalem; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages* (London and Sidney, 1986), 129.

<sup>21</sup>For the date of this confirmation cf. Peter Wirth, "Der Patriarchat des Gerasimos und der zweite Patriarchat des Lazaros von Jerusalem," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 54 (1961): 319–20.

<sup>22</sup>Joannes Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, 3:95–98; Canard, "Une lettre du sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan à Jean VI Cantacuzène (750/1349)," 49–51. The letter is dated Sha'bān 15, 750/October 30, 1349.

<sup>23</sup>The story of the conflict between Lazaros and Gerasimos is told by Joannes Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, 3:90–99. Canard, "Une lettre du sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan à Jean VI Cantacuzène (750/1349)," 29–31, 39–42; Wirth, "Der Patriarchat des Gerasimos und der zweite Patriarchat des Lazaros von Jerusalem," 320–23; Krebs, *Innen- und Aussenpolitik Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter*, 260–62; Klaus-Peter Todt, *Kaiser Johannes VI. Kantakouzenos und der Islam: Politische Realität und theologische Polemik im palaiologenzeitlichen Byzanz*, Würzburger Forschungen zur Missions- und Religionswissenschaft Abteilung 2, Religionswissenschaftliche Studien, vol. 16 (Würzburg and Altenberge, 1991), 69–70. For Joannes VI cf. in general Donald M. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295–1383* (Cambridge, 1996).

<sup>24</sup>Already Etienne Quatremère, "Mémoire historique sur l'état du Christianisme sous les deux



death of the amir responsible, and Lazaros was sent to Constantinople as an emissary of the sultan only a few months later.<sup>25</sup> This sudden transition, from a persecuted individual to an emissary traveling on official governmental matters, is surprising and poses the question whether Lazaros would have been able to refuse this assignment. What this event clearly illustrates, however, is how patriarchs had to fill a double function. They were not only the representatives of the emperor and the Orthodox Church in the Orient, but also served as intermediaries of the Mamluks vis-à-vis Byzantium, whether they wanted to or not.

The further fate of Lazaros illustrates once again the extent to which the Christians in the Levant were integrated into supra-regional relations and their development. When Peter I, the king of Cyprus, conquered and destroyed Alexandria in 1365, the resulting war with the Mamluks, lasting until 1370, had devastating consequences for the Christians in the Mamluk Empire. Copts, Syrian Orthodox Christians, Franciscans, Venetians, and Genoese, as well as Greek Orthodox clerics, were arrested and maltreated, and some of them were even executed.<sup>26</sup> This time,

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dynasties des princes Mamlouks," in *Mémoires géographiques et historiques sur l'Égypte et sur quelque contrées voisines* (Paris, 1811), 2:220–66, gives a list of persecutions of Christians under the Mamluks according to al-Maqrīzī and the *Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum*; Canard, "Une lettre du sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan à Jean VI Cantacuzène (750/1349)," 34–38; Donald P. Little, "Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Bahrī Mamluks, 692–755/1293–1354," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39 (1976): 552–69; Urbain Vermeulen, "The Rescript of al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ against the *Dimmīs* (755 A.H./1354 A.D.)," *Lovanensia Periodica* 9 (1978): 182–84; Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "The 'Protected Peoples' (Christians and Jews) in Medieval Egypt and Syria," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 62 (1979–80): 11–36, especially 27–36; repr. in idem, *The Arabs, Byzantium and Islam: Studies in Early Islamic History and Culture*, Collected Studies Series, vol. 529 (London, 1996). Cf. also for the Ayyubid period Emmanuel Sivan, "Notes sur la situation des chrétiens à l'époque ayyubide," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 86 (1967): 117–30.

<sup>25</sup> Joannes Kantakouzenos, *Eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, 3:99–104. Canard, "Une lettre du sultan Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan à Jean VI Cantacuzène (750/1349)," 31–32, 42–45; Timothy S. Miller, "A New Chronology of Patriarch Lazarus' Persecution by the Mamluks (1349–1367)," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41 (1975): 474–78; Peter Schreiner, "Bemerkungen zu vier melkitischen Patriarchen des 14. Jahrhunderts," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 45 (1979): 392–95, who corrects Miller's chronology of Lazaros' persecution.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh*, 14:320, speaks of "the disgrace, exemplary punishment and offense (*al-khazā wa-al-nakāl wa-al-jināyah*)" that befell the Melkites because of Peter's assault on Alexandria; for a Russian report of the persecution of the Christians cf. Schreiner, "Byzanz und die Mamluken in der 2. Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts," 296–304; for persecutions of Franciscans cf. Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francescano* (Florence, 1927), 5:113–16, 143–44; Lemmens, *Die Franziskaner im Heiligen Land I*, 61–63.



Lazaros was not prepared to tolerate the persecution and fled to Constantinople.<sup>27</sup>

This war disrupted the *modus vivendi* that Christians and Muslims, Orthodox and Latins, Arabs, Greeks, and western Europeans had found in the Levant, and various parties made attempts to end the war and thus put a stop to the persecution of the Christians. The Italian mercantile cities in particular, which saw their economic interests endangered, endeavored to pressure the Cypriot king, and the pope also called for an end to this war. The Mamluks, for their part, conducted direct negotiations with the Cypriot king, which, however, failed to yield results.<sup>28</sup> According to the historian Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), the governor of Syria in 767/1366 appointed the Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, Michael I Bishārah, as mediator, he having been spared from persecution for this reason. In return he was obliged to write not only to Peter, but also to the Byzantine emperor (*malik Iṣṭanbūl*), in order to impress upon them the suffering that the attack on Alexandria had brought upon the Christians.<sup>29</sup>

Apparently the Mamluks hoped that the Byzantine emperor would be able to use his influence on the Greek population of Cyprus to influence its king to make peace, which is interesting because no political relationships are known to have

<sup>27</sup>The Confession of Paulos Tagaris, ed. Herbert Hunger, "Die Generalbeichte eines byzantinischen Mönches im 14. Jahrhundert," in *Studien zum Patriarchatsregister von Konstantinopel II*, ed. Herbert Hunger and Otto Kresten, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, vol. 647 (Vienna, 1997), 195 (German translation, 200).

<sup>28</sup>Peter Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191–1374* (Cambridge, 1991), 166–71; Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580: From Lyons to Alcazar* (Oxford, 1992), 39–42; Peter Edbury, "The Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus and its Muslim Neighbours," in *Kypros apo tin proistoria stous neoterous chronous* (Nicosia, 1995), 235–39; idem, "Christians and Muslims in the Eastern Mediterranean," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 6, c. 1300–c. 1415, ed. Michael Jones (Cambridge, 2000), 880–81; Fuess, *Verbranntes Ufer*, 24–30, 384–86. For the good relations between Cyprus and the Mamluks before Peter's attack on Alexandria cf. Jean Richard, "L'état de guerre avec l'Égypte et le royaume de Chypre," in *Cyprus and the Crusades: Papers Given at the International Conference 'Cyprus and the Crusades,' Nicosia, 6–9 September, 1994*, ed. Nicholas Coureas and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Nicosia, 1995), 90–92; for the events after the capture of Alexandria and the diplomatic efforts to come to a peace agreement cf. Krebs, *Innen- und Aussenpolitik Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter*, 285–334.

<sup>29</sup>Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh*, 14:320; Schreiner, "Bemerkungen zu vier melkitischen Patriarchen des 14. Jahrhunderts," 391–92. For the very confused chronology of the patriarchate of Antioch in the 1360s and '70s cf. Otto Kresten, *Die Beziehungen zwischen den Patriarchaten von Konstantinopel und Antiocheia unter Kallistos I. und Philotheos Kokkinos im Spiegel des Patriarchatsregisters von Konstantinopel*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse Jahrgang 2000, no. 6 (Mainz and Stuttgart, 2000), 51, n. 172, 59, n. 197, 66–67, 73, who corrects Joseph Nasrallah, "Chronologie des patriarches melchites d'Antioche de 1250 à 1500," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 17 (1967): 210–12. Cf. also above, n. 18.



existed at this time between Cyprus and the rest of the Byzantine empire. Indeed, it would be mistaken to view Cyprus only in terms of its orientation to the West since diverse cultural, social, and economic connections linked the Cyprus of the Lusignans to the Levant. It was certainly no coincidence that the Mamluks availed themselves of the Orthodox patriarch of Antioch; close relationships between Cyprus and the Syrian mainland still existed in the fourteenth century. The *Suriens*, the Arabic-speaking Christians of Cyprus who belonged partially to the Greek Orthodox faith and partially to the Syrian Orthodox faith, comprised a large group on the island. In Famagusta, they may have even constituted the majority. After Greek, Arabic was the language spoken most on the island.<sup>30</sup> There was even an exchange going back and forth between Cyprus and the mainland of disputations between Christian and Muslim scholars published as pamphlets.<sup>31</sup>

Beside high ranking clerics, laymen served as intermediaries as well. Emmanuel Piloti (ca. 1371–after 1441), a Venetian merchant of Cretan origin, had lived at the beginning of the fifteenth century for 22 years in Egypt, in addition to visiting Damascus and ports in Syria and Asia Minor.<sup>32</sup> On the basis of this long experience he wrote a treatise on how to reconquer the Holy Land. Piloti argued, not very originally, that the Crusaders—under the leadership of Venice—should first occupy Alexandria and Cairo. Having achieved this the conquest of the Holy Land would follow without difficulty. But Piloti’s treatise is confused, and includes besides his

<sup>30</sup>Jean Richard, “Le peuplement latin et syrien en Chypre au XIIIe siècle,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7 (1979): 157–73; Laura Balletto, “Ethnic Groups, Cross-Social and Cross-Cultural Contacts on Fifteenth-Century Cyprus,” in *Intercultural Contacts in the Medieval Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of David Jacoby*, ed. Benjamin Arbel [= *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10 (1995)], 34–48. For the relations of the Greek Orthodox population of Cyprus and Palestine in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries cf. Johannes Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani im Palästina der Kreuzfahrerzeit: Beiträge und Quellen zur Geschichte des griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchats von Jerusalem*, Berliner Historische Studien, vol. 33, Ordensstudien, vol. 15 (Berlin, 2001), 165, 229–30.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Thomas F. Michel, *A Muslim Theologian’s Response to Christianity: Ibn Taimiyya’s Al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (New York, 1984), and *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The Letter from the People of Cyprus and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī’s Response*, ed. Rifaat Y. Ebied and David Thomas, *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 2 (Leiden and Boston, 2004). These two treatises are answers to an apology composed by the Melkite Paul of Antioch, bishop of Sidon, that was later circulated by Christians of Cyprus in an expanded version. For the possibility of dating Paul of Antioch to the early thirteenth century cf. Johannes Pahlitzsch and Dorothea Weltecke, “Konflikte zwischen den nicht-lateinischen Kirchen im Königreich Jerusalem,” in *Jerusalem im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter: Konflikte und Konfliktbewältigung—Vorstellungen und Vergegenwärtigungen*, ed. Dieter Bauer, Klaus Herbers, and Nikolas Jaspert, *Campus Historische Studien*, vol. 29 (Frankfurt and New York, 2001), 133–35.

<sup>32</sup>Emmanuel Piloti, *Traité d’Emmanuel Piloti sur le passage en Terre Sainte (1420)*, ed. Pierre-Herman Dopp, *Publications de l’Université Lovanium de Léopoldville*, vol. 4 (Louvain, 1958), 63. For his life cf. the introduction of Pierre-Herman Dopp, *ibid.*, XVIII–XXVI.



ideas for a new crusade *inter alia* information on commerce in Alexandria, extremely interesting episodes of his life under Mamluk rule, and a comparison between the sultan's court in Cairo and the papal curia—to the disadvantage of the latter.<sup>33</sup>

During his long stay in Egypt Piloti had established very good relations with his Muslim neighbors and colleagues.<sup>34</sup> Thus, it is no surprise to see him on several occasions acting as a mediator between Western Latin Christians and Muslims. In 1403, at the news that a Genoese fleet threatened to attack Alexandria, he withdrew like many of the Muslim inhabitants to Cairo while most of the Latin merchants preferred to leave Alexandria by sea. In response to this threat by the Genoese the Mamluk sultan Faraj decided to send a Muslim spice merchant who was experienced in doing business with Christian merchants to offer them the enormous amount of 500,000 ducats for their peaceful retreat. Since this merchant was very fond of Emmanuel Piloti (*“ledit marchand me portoit grant armour”*) he asked him if would accompany him in this task, to which Piloti agreed. However, as the two friends arrived in Alexandria the Genoese fleet had already left the Egyptian coast due to the outbreak of the plague.<sup>35</sup> The journey of these two merchants from the court of the sultan to the camp of the Genoese could well be viewed as a paradigm for the life of merchants in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Aziz Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1938), 208–12; Antony Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land: The Crusade Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2000), 198–200. For manuals of merchants that contributed to the knowledge of the Muslim world in Western Europe as well cf. John E. Dotson, “Perceptions of the East in Fourteenth-Century Italian Merchants’ Manuals,” in *Across the Mediterranean Frontiers: Trade, Politics and Religion, 650–1450: Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 10–13 July 1995, 8–11 July 1996*, ed. Dionisius A. Agius and Ian Richard Netton, International Medieval Research, no. 1 (Turnhout, Belgium, 1997), 173–86.

<sup>34</sup>Emmanuel Piloti, *Traité*, 187, admonishes the Crusaders to treat the Muslims well during the projected conquest of Alexandria to win their minds and hearts (*“ . . . ne soit fait aucune guaste ne desplaisir, mais honneur et courtoisie. Et cest la voye de consoler et confermer tous lez paysans et endoulchiera la leur mente et lez leurs cuers, et si prendront, amour et charité à l'estat de la crestienté.”*). He also stresses the fidelity of the Muslims to their belief (*“ilz observent la leur foy bestielle, que jamais ne la faillent”*) as well as their justice and philanthropy (*“ilz aront prestement justice et charité du proximo”*), *ibid.*, 188. According to Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, 211, the Crusade was not regarded by him as a war of revenge but as a means towards the assimilation of the Muslims into the following of Christ. For the situation of Western merchants in Egypt cf. also in general Mohamed Tahar Mansouri, “Les communautés marchandes occidentales dans l'espace mamlouk (XIIIe–XVe siècle),” in *Coloniser au Moyen Âge: Méthodes d'expansion et techniques de domination en Méditerranée du XIe au XVIe siècle*, ed. Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris, 1995), 89–101, 107–11.

<sup>35</sup>Piloti, *Traité*, 196.

<sup>36</sup>John Pryor, “At Sea on the Maritime Frontiers of the Mediterranean in the High Middle Ages: the Human Perspective,” in *Oriente e Occidente tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna, studi in onore di*



In 1408, Piloti again was chosen to mediate between the Latins and the Mamluks. A pirate had seized a Muslim ship and sold the crew of 150 men to the duke of Naxos, Jacopo Crispo I (1397–1418). Since the sultan considered Naxos to be subordinate to Venice he confiscated the cargoes of four Venetian galleys, consisting of spices, and demanded that the Venetian merchants in Alexandria ask Jacopo Crispo to free these Muslim captives. Thereupon, the council of the Venetians chose Piloti to negotiate with the duke of Naxos and the sultan, since he was on good terms with the Muslims and especially with the Greeks, being himself of Greek origin. Although the Crispo family was of Venetian origin, the council obviously considered it useful to send somebody who had good relations with the Greeks to Naxos. And indeed Piloti succeeded in his mission and returned with the captives to Alexandria, where the Muslim population celebrated the liberation of their brothers in faith. As a reward the sultan allowed Piloti to import each month five barrels of Malvasia wine from his native island of Crete.<sup>37</sup>

By writing a treatise on the recovery of the Holy Land Emmanuel Piloti tried in another way to mediate between West and East. All his detailed descriptions of life in Alexandria and Cairo aimed at giving Western rulers, and especially the pope, an idea of the Mamluk state,<sup>38</sup> and indeed Ulrich Haarmann has demonstrated the value of Piloti's texts as a source for the social structure and the ruling system of the Mamluk state.<sup>39</sup> However, in his attempt to influence the Latin rulers Piloti was unsuccessful. His work fell into oblivion and was rediscovered only in the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> But it belongs to a broad tradition of works written in the

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*Geo Pistarino*, ed. Laura Balletto, *Collana di Fonti e Studi*, vol. 2 (Geneva, 1997), 1033, has described the situation for merchants and travellers in the Levant adequately: "The Mediterranean Sea was open to all with few restrictions. Beyond demands that taxes and customs duties be paid, states did not impose restrictions on the movement of their subjects. As a consequence, Byzantines, Muslims, and Latins moved freely upon the seas. This openness produced integrated relationships at both private and governmental levels. It is remarkable how frequently political or religious differences proved to be no obstacle at all to international or interfaith relationships." The major obstacles to movement were not political or religious but rather geographical and technical with the exception of times of war or political tensions.

<sup>37</sup>Piloti, *Traité*, 201–9. Piloti was not the only merchant with good relations with the Mamluks. For a Genoese slave-trader who even entered the service of the Mamluks cf. Benjamin Kedar, "Segurano-Sakrān Salvaygo: un mercante genovese al servizio dei sultani mamalucchi, c. 1302–1322," in *Fatti e idee di storia economica nei secoli XII–XX: Studi dedicati a Franco Borlandi* (Bologna, 1976), 75–97.

<sup>38</sup>So explicitly in Piloti, *Traité*, 118.

<sup>39</sup>Ulrich Haarmann, "The Mamluk System of Rule in the Eyes of Western Travelers," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 11, states that Piloti "as an expert in long-distance trade, . . . was better informed than any of the other European reporters of the late middle ages."

<sup>40</sup>Dopp, Introduction to Piloti, *Traité*, V–XII, XLV–XLVIII.



fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries which dealt with the Orient. Treatises on the recovery of the Holy Land and pilgrim's reports were often copied together and circulated round the courts of western Europe.<sup>41</sup> These works testify to continued European interest in the East in the later fourteenth century and beyond, even if the recovery of Jerusalem was little more than a dream of enthusiastic nobles who tried to live up to their knightly ideals.<sup>42</sup>

### INDIVIDUALS CROSSING BOUNDARIES

In this section how individuals moved between various political, social, and cultural groups will be illustrated. The previously mentioned patriarch Lazaros had always remained loyal to the emperor and his politics with respect to the Church—despite the Mamluks' view that patriarchs were subject to the sultan's authority. However, this was hardly a stance shared by all Orthodox dignitaries in the Orient. Because the Christians in the Levant were ruled by various authorities existing within a complex network of relationships, this also resulted in what could be called an "open-space situation" for them, in which several options for taking action existed. In the following, two examples of how the diversity of the eastern Mediterranean created niches, thus facilitating the pursuit of politically deviant or even entirely individual goals, will be presented.

The patriarchate of Antioch experienced a disagreement with the Church of Constantinople in the middle of the fourteenth century, on the subject of the

<sup>41</sup>Without a doubt, the Latin pilgrims to Syria and Egypt on their return decisively influenced the Western image of the Orient. Especially the later, more detailed, pilgrim's reports like the one of Bernhard of Breidenbach contributed to the creation of the image of an exotic Orient; Michael Herkenhoff, *Die Darstellung aussereuropäischer Welten in Drucken deutscher Offizinen des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1996), 145–212. Since most of the pilgrims, in contrast to Emmanuel Piloti, stayed only for a short time in the Near East and did not speak Arabic their descriptions of the Muslims were quite often marked by old prejudices. At length, they dealt with the treachery of the Muslims and how they were maltreated by the Mamluk authorities. Thus they did not promote tolerance but kept the religious and cultural conflict alive. And they did so not only in their native countries but also in the Near East where they were viewed as representatives of Latin Christianity; Folker Reichert, "Pilger und Muslime im Heiligen Land: Formen des Kulturkonflikts im späten Mittelalter," in *Kritik und Geschichte der Intoleranz*, ed. Rolf Kloepper and Burckhard Dücker (Heidelberg, 2000), 3–21. Cf. also Andrew Jotischky, "Mendicants as Missionaries and Travellers in the Near East in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travellers in the Medieval Mediterranean, 1050–1500*, ed. Rosamund Allen (Manchester and New York, 2004), 88–106, who describes the view that Dominican and Franciscan travellers to the East had of Oriental Christians. According to Jotischky (*ibid.*, 100), it was a prominent feature of the travel reports of these friars to categorize peoples by their deviant religious practices.

<sup>42</sup>The manuscript of Piloti's treatise was acquired by the Duke of Burgundy Philippe Le Bon (1419–67); Dopp, Introduction to Piloti, *Traité*, VIII–X; Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, 193–202.



mystical teachings of Gregorios Palamas. Despite the fact that these had been sanctioned officially at the synod of Blachernae in 1351 under the emperor Joannes VI Kantakouzenous, a good number of theologians continued to oppose them. One of the anti-Palamites was Arsenios, the metropolite of Tyre, which was the highest-ranking bishopric in the patriarchate of Antioch. After having agitated against the Palamites, he was forced to flee the city and came to Cyprus before Peter's Crusade. At the time, the Latin-ruled island was a stronghold for anti-Palamism and a place of refuge for dissidents.<sup>43</sup> Several times, letters from Constantinople addressed to the autonomous Orthodox Church of Cyprus warned the clergy of the doings of Arsenios and others. Furthermore, Arsenios may have contacted the papal legate resident there at the time. It was not least thanks to these political controversies within the church that when an election for the office of patriarch was held in Antioch around 1364, Arsenios was one of three candidates simultaneously elected. Arsenios left Cyprus after the election to resurface, at the end of the Cypriot-Mamluk war, in Turkish-controlled Asia Minor, using the powers of the office to which he laid claim to consecrate bishops, ordain priests, and collect funds from the parishes.<sup>44</sup>

Arsenios was something of a wanderer between worlds. He had no reservations about associating with Latins and Muslims, taking advantage of the religious and political diversity in the Levant in order to pursue his own ends in church policy. The Byzantine emperor's inability to maintain church discipline in the Mamluk Empire or the Turkish amirates gave him the opportunity to do so. Arsenios is not an isolated case. In fact, he himself consecrated one of the most colorful personalities of his time as bishop, a man who was to surpass him by far where flexibility and mobility were concerned. The bishop in question is the swindler and confidence man Paulos Tagaris, who presented his unusual path in life in a general confession to the patriarch and the synod of Constantinople in 1394.

After an unhappy marriage, Paulos had become a monk. As small-time swindles, in which he used an icon that supposedly worked wonders, were discovered, he had to leave Constantinople for Jerusalem, where he was safe from the grasp of the Byzantine authorities. There, the patriarch Lazaros took him under his wing and supported him until 1365, when persecution by the Mamluks forced Lazaros to flee to Constantinople. Without backing from Lazaros, Paulos could no longer

<sup>43</sup>Jean Darrouzès, "Lettre inédite de Jean Cantacuzène relative à la controverse palamite," *Revue des études byzantines* 17 (1959): 9; Kresten, *Die Beziehungen zwischen den Patriarchaten von Konstantinopel und Antiocheia*, 14, n. 30; cf. also Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor*, 145, 154–55.

<sup>44</sup>Ioannis D. Polemis, "Arsenius of Tyrus and his Tome against the Palamites," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 43 (1993): 242–45; Hunger, "Die Generalbeichte eines byzantinischen Mönches," 215–17; Kresten, *Die Beziehungen zwischen den Patriarchaten von Konstantinopel und Antiocheia*, 75–82.



remain in Jerusalem. However, he was able to befriend Michael I of Antioch, who brought him to Damascus. He was ordained a priest and took on a decisive role in the administration of the patriarchate. In this position, he was able to give free rein to his greed, ensuring that only those candidates who paid him sufficiently became bishops. When he came upon the vestments of a metropolitane who had recently died, however, he donned them and declared himself patriarch of Jerusalem. From that point on, he traveled throughout Asia Minor, performing consecrations of metropolitans and bishops in exchange for payment. Whenever a bishop refused payment, Paulos denounced him to the local amir and thus forced him to pay. In his efforts to set Paulos on the right track, the above-mentioned Arsenios of Tyre sought him out and consecrated him bishop in order to, at least retroactively, legalize the consecrations he had performed in clear breach of canonical rules. Paulos resolved to give up his godless conduct—but not for long. Upon learning that the Church in Constantinople was intent on arresting him and Arsenios, he made a daring decision. He traveled to Rome via Hungary and converted to Catholicism. Pope Urban VI was so taken with this move that he honored Paulos by appointing him as the Latin patriarch of Constantinople, whose seat was in Negroponte.<sup>45</sup> But there too he exploited his congregation to such an extent that he soon became unpopular and had to flee to Cyprus, where he received 30,000 ducats for his services in crowning the Cypriot King Jacob I. Finally, he returned to Rome. Since, however, it had in the meantime become common knowledge in the curia that Paulos was a swindler, he was forced to defect to the rival pope in Avignon, who gladly took in the victim of his political adversary, later referring him to the court of the French king Charles VI. The king rewarded him richly for his promise to send relics of Saint Dionysios Areopagites from Greece to France. Paulos promptly left—and was never heard from again at the French court.<sup>46</sup> At the end of his life, however, he was overcome by the desire for salvation and asked the synod in Constantinople for absolution, making a comprehensive confession of his misdeeds. The synod's decision, however, has not been preserved.<sup>47</sup>

With Paulos, we have left the Mamluk Empire and the eastern Mediterranean far behind us. Self-assuredly he transcended all political and cultural boundaries while traversing the entire Christian world, from Georgia to Paris. What Paulos

<sup>45</sup>Herewith ends the confession of Paulos Tagaris, who obviously told the synod only what concerned the Orthodox Church; Hunger, "Die Generalbeichte eines byzantinischen Mönches," 193–99 (German translation, 199–204).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 211–14.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 197–99 (203–4). For the life of Paulos cf. also Donald M. Nicol, "The Confessions of a Bogus Patriarch: Paul Tagaris Palaiologos, Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and Catholic Patriarch of Constantinople in the Fourteenth Century," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 21 (1970): 289–99.



and Arsenios share is that they both demonstrate the possibilities for individual agency in the world of the eastern Mediterranean. They were moving between the cultures as though this were a matter of course and they could do so because of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character of the individual states in the eastern Mediterranean. The close interconnection between these numerous ethnic and confessional groups created a certain unity of space regardless of political boundaries.<sup>48</sup>

The case studies presented in this article demonstrate the complex network of relationships in which Christians operated in the Levant, showing how supra-regional external factors and developments determined their actions, while also demonstrating how their actions could in turn influence those supra-regional developments. In doing so, the focus has not been only on political relationships. It was rather the closer examination of the conditions within the Orthodox Church in Syria and Palestine in the middle of the fourteenth century that provided an opportunity to illustrate the complexity of the social reality in the Levant and the opportunities resulting for the individual. The model of reciprocal compartmentalization, of antagonism between cultures, be they Islam, Latin Christianity, or the Eastern Church, does not stand up to closer examination. Only a micro-historical, interdisciplinary approach makes it possible to show differences as well as connections.<sup>49</sup> The example of the Christians in the Levant is especially suited to show this kind of unity in diversity. Thus, a historical, and above all cultural and social historical, treatment of the *Oriens Christianus* should be an essential part of any research done on the eastern Mediterranean region in the Middle Ages.

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<sup>48</sup>Norman Housley, "Frontier Societies and Crusading in the Late Middle Ages," in *Intercultural Contacts*, ed. Arbel, 107–8, points out that because of these intensive cross-cultural contacts the Latin states of the eastern Mediterranean could not be called frontier societies in the strict sense of the term. Charles J. Halperin, "The Ideology of Silence: Prejudice and Pragmatism on the Medieval Religious Frontier," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984): 465, however, demonstrates that in medieval frontier zones between Christianity and Islam a pragmatic attitude prevailed only as long "neither side in the struggle had the ability to eliminate the other. The transience of the frontier derived from its intrinsic instability."

<sup>49</sup>Cf. the similar results of Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Modern Greek studies series (Princeton, 2000), 6, who states that "a focus on Crete in the seventeenth century renders visible the common world that Latins, Eastern Christians, and Muslims shared for many centuries, despite wars and considerable cultural hostility."

