

THE IMPOSSIBLE REFORMATION: PROTESTANT EUROPE AND THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH*

I

INTRODUCTION

During his tenure as Patriarch of Alexandria, the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastic Cyril Lucaris (1572–1638) dismissed any criticism of the alleged ignorance of Greek Orthodox Christians. On the contrary: in comparison to the rest of the Christian world, as he wrote in 1612 to the Dutch Protestant minister Johannes Uytenbogaert (1557–1644), his flock was not troubled by ‘those pestilent disputes that today pollute the ears of men’ in other places. Devoid of any innovations, the Greek Orthodox Church contented itself ‘with that unadorned faith which it had learned from the apostles and our forefathers’. Lucaris made it clear to Uytenbogaert that the Greek Orthodox Church ‘always remains the same; always keeps and preserves untainted orthodoxy’. Greeks were admittedly ‘oppressed with many miseries through the tyranny of the Turks’ and, true, they did not have any ‘opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge’ but this meant they were blissfully ignorant of the religious wars that had erupted elsewhere in the

* I have benefitted greatly from the input I received from Lorenzo Bondioli, Anthony Grafton, Sam Kennerley, Jan Machielsen, Hannah Marcus, Dirk van Miert, (online) audiences in Istanbul, Princeton, Utrecht, Cambridge and Oxford, as well as the four anonymous reviewers. I am particularly grateful for the support and encouragement I received from Adam Beaver when I first started to gather my thoughts on this material and from Madeline McMahan and Genie Yoo as I was finishing this piece.

Past and Present, no. 00 (2022) © The Author(s) 2022. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of The Past and Present Society, Oxford.

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtac003>

Christian world.¹ In other words: the epochal shifts and turbulent upheavals now known as the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, which caused so much disruption, displacement and suffering elsewhere in Europe, had according to Lucaris left the Greek Orthodox Church unscathed.

But had the Eastern Churches, one may wonder, really escaped the Reformations' enthusiasm for spiritual renewal and the early modern period's compulsion for institutional change? Lucaris's own turbulent life suggests a resounding no. His letter to Uyttenbogaert belonged to an animated exchange of ideas about religious reform: Lucaris collected the works of a great number of Protestant and Catholic authors — from Baronio and Bellarmine to Arminius and now lesser-known Protestant theologians — and discussed their views of Christianity not only with various Dutch Protestants but also with several high-ranking members of the Anglican Church. Moreover, as Greek Orthodox Patriarch first in Egypt and later in Istanbul, Lucaris had to confront what he deemed to be a militant Catholicism and an overt attempt by Tridentine Rome to proselytize among Greek Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire. The confession of faith that he produced in the 1630s reeked, according to his adversaries, of Calvinism and earned him the moniker of 'Protestant Patriarch'. In the end, Lucaris would even pay the highest price for his involvement with European Christians. Following an accusation by Jesuits living in Istanbul, who alleged that he was planning a rebellion against the Ottomans, Lucaris was arrested and convicted of high treason. He was subsequently strangled by the Janissaries aboard a ship

¹ Jean Aymon, *Monuments authentiques de la religion des Grecs, et de la fausseté de plusieurs confessions de foi des chrétiens orientaux: produites contre les théologiens réformez, par les prélats de France & les docteurs de Port-Royal, dans leur fameux ouvrage de la perpétuité de la foi de l'Eglise catholique* (The Hague, 1708), 130: 'videntur aliqui exprobare Ecclesiae Orientis τὴν ἀμάσθειαν (literarum ignorantiam) quod videlicet inde litterarum studia & Philosophia in alias partes migraverint. Sed certe ob hoc, quod nunc ἀμασθῆς (indoctus) sit Oriens, valde beatus reputari potest: etsi enim ob tyrannidem Turcarum multis sit oppressus miseris, neque sit ei ulla discendi commoditas, at inde magnum sumit emolumentum, quia non novit quaenam sint illae pestiferae quaestiones, quae hoc tempore hominum inficiunt aures; nova portenta monstraque sunt ei αἱ καινοτομίαι (innovations) metuendae magis quam amplectendae. Contentus est incompta fide Christi, quam ab Apostolis, majoribusque suis est edoctus, in illaqua usque ad sanguinem perseverat, nunquam demit, nunquam addit, nunquam mutat, semper idem manet, semper integram τὴν ὀρθοδοξίαν (rectam de Religione opinionem) tenet servatque'.

and his body thrown into the Bosphorus. His successor, Cyril Kontaris, who had been educated at the Jesuit College in Istanbul and was sympathetic to Rome's reform measures, quickly convoked a synod to have his predecessor condemned and his publications anathemized. So much for Lucaris's assertion that the Reformations had passed the Greek Orthodox world by.²

This article turns to Lucaris's interactions with the Protestant powers of his day to explore one of the great but unstudied paradoxes in the history of early modern global Christianity: that the stronger the desire for a uniform Christian way of life burned, the deeper the fractures between the different Christian denominations began to grow. Lucaris's exchanges with European Christians do not, I contend, amount to an entangled history that highlights the commonalities between one of the most notorious Patriarchs in the history of the Greek Orthodox Church and those Protestants who also looked to reform their religious life. Neither is this simply a story about ecumenism — the effort to establish Christian unity — in two overlapping cultural-religious zones. On the contrary: one salutary lesson that this episode in the history of the later Reformations offers us is that, although different Christian traditions shared a genealogy and boasted a common repertoire of texts, objects, symbols and rituals, the contingencies of their respective historical trajectories had impressed on them radically divergent ideas about what reforming Christianity ought to look like. By the seventeenth century there was no longer one universal notion of reform that could incorporate the particularities of all the transformations that different Christian denominations desired in this period. The kind of European spiritual renewal that worked elsewhere thus failed to root in the Greek Orthodox world — as we will see below and as Catholic and Protestant missionaries since the

² There is no shortage of scholarship on Lucaris, whose turbulent life has divided historians for centuries. For an overview of his life, see: George A. Hadjiantoniou, *Protestant Patriarch: The Life of Cyril Lucaris, 1572–1638* (Richmond, VA, 1961); Gunnar Hering, *Das ökumenische Patriarchat und europäische Politik, 1620–1638* (Wiesbaden, 1968); Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (London, 1968), esp. 259–88. For the best recent account, see Ovidiu-Victor Olar, *La boutique de Théophile: les relations du patriarcat de Constantinople Kyrillos Loukaris (1570–1638) avec la réforme* (Paris, 2019).

sixteenth century had repeatedly experienced — because it challenged the very premise upon which that church was founded. Lucaris and his European connections may at first sight appear to be sharing the same zeal for reform and to speak the same language of reform, but their understanding of what reform meant and how it could be attained was completely distinct — and to a large extent completely irreconcilable. The religious landscape of the Greek Orthodox Church, which prided itself on having never reformed, was simply a world of its own with a logic of its own and a belief system that was not easily dislodged.

Religious reform of the kind that Lucaris and his contemporaries aspired to is therefore, just like early modern Christianity writ large, best understood in its variety and specificity. Once we lose sight of this, we risk shoehorning non-European Christian experiences into frameworks that unwittingly measure success or failure by European standards. The two approaches that have so far dominated scholarship on Lucaris's interactions with European Christians are a case in point. On the one hand, an older body of scholarship has framed his exchanges with European Christians as an ecumenical rapprochement in which Christians of different denominations came together to heal the body of Christ and discuss a union.³ On the other hand, historians have often described Lucaris — and by proxy the Greek Orthodox Church — as a political pawn wielded by Catholic and Protestant powers alike. By the early seventeenth century, so this argument goes, the Ottoman capital had become yet another arena for Catholic–Protestant rivalry and one in which Lucaris tried to fight off the expansionist politics of the Roman Catholic Church by aligning with the Dutch and English presence in Istanbul. Lucaris was in the process allegedly won over by Calvinist beliefs.⁴ Yet neither of these explanatory paradigms suffices. To view interactions such as the one between Lucaris and Uyttenbogaert solely as a by-product of a Protestant–Catholic rivalry is too reductionist. It

³ For the most eloquent and influential articulation of this approach, see Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Church of England and the Greek Church in the Time of Charles I', in Derek Baker (ed.), *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian* (Oxford, 1978), 213–40.

⁴ Lucaris's adoption of 'Calvinist' beliefs is mentioned throughout the existing literature on Lucaris, but the trope is articulated most forcefully by Hadjiantoniou, *Protestant Patriarch* and Runciman, *Great Church in Captivity*.

denies Lucaris any meaningful agency and ignores the very real confessional motivations that he had for opening channels of communication with European Christians. Those who have considered this as an attempt to heal the body of Christ have — frequently influenced by twentieth-century discussions for Church union — exaggerated Lucaris's ecumenism and severed him from the Levant's confessional landscape. To put it more crudely: we have either read too much or too little into Lucaris's desire for spiritual renewal. Situating the Patriarch in the pluriform religious landscape of the early modern Middle East can prevent us from casting him as a helpless victim of a bitter religious controversy much larger than himself.

The ensuing discussion thus offers a model for writing Eastern Christians back into our histories of early modern global Christianity without reducing them to an offshoot of Europe's Reformations. It follows historians of global Catholicism who have argued that it is not enough to examine how Christianity spread across the globe and was implemented in different locales — for such an approach inadvertently reproduces the assumptions and politics that lay behind the period's missionary work. Instead, the globalization of Christianity in this period requires us to attend to both the local and the global and to acknowledge the participation of non-European communities and individuals.⁵ For our purposes, this means attending both to the local context in which Lucaris operated as Patriarch of Alexandria and later as Patriarch of Constantinople and to the broader currents of reform that wracked the world of European Christendom in the early seventeenth century. It also means recognizing that the Greek Orthodox Church inhabited a position in-between these two Christian spheres: steeped, on the one hand, in the world of the European Reformations and embedded, on the other, in the Christian landscape of the early modern Levant, Eastern Christians like Lucaris defy analytical categories readily available. It is thus imperative to resist any

⁵ Simon Ditchfield, 'Decentering the Catholic Reformation Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, ci (2010); Charles H. Parker, 'Languages of Salvation: Translating Christianity in the Global Reformation', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, cviii (2017); Karen Melvin, 'The Globalization of Reform', in Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen and Mary Laven (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham, 2014); Erin Kathleen Rowe, *Black Saints in Early Modern Global Catholicism* (Cambridge, 2019).

simple application to Middle Eastern Christianity of categories rooted in European Christian traditions. Our task should rather be to tease out how different Christian denominations defined reform differently.⁶ Only then can we make good on our commitment to explore early modern global Christianity as a pluriform and multi-centred phenomenon.

More broadly, the material examined here offers compelling evidence for narrating the history of the early modern globalization of Christianity not solely as a story about Christian missionaries confronting religious difference across the globe and of communication across highly complex linguistic, cultural and religious boundaries, but also as one calibrated by encounters between different Christian denominations in and beyond Europe — here between Protestants and Greek Orthodox Christians. Especially in the last few years, following the quincentenary of the publication of Martin Luther's theses, the Protestant Reformation and its global dimensions have received significant scholarly attention.⁷ Yet for all the attempts to decentre our histories of early modern Protestantism, our cultural geography of Reformation Europe is still strongly centred on a Protestant–Catholic binary. Eastern Christians, whose lives were evidently affected by the Reformations, have not figured prominently in this new literature on global Protestantism.⁸ On the contrary: Nabil Matar has recently called

⁶ For a comparable argument in the Venetian context, see Eloise Davies, 'Reformed but Not Converted: Paolo Sarpi, the English Mission in Venice and Conceptions of Religious Change', *Historical Research*, xcvi (2022).

⁷ For a selection of recent work on early modern global Protestantism, see: Ulinka Rublack (ed.), *Protestant Empires: Globalizing the Reformations* (Cambridge, 2020); Danny L. Noorlander, *Heaven's Wrath: The Protestant Reformation and the Dutch West India Company in the Atlantic World* (Leiden, 2019); Brad Gregory, Ute Lotz-Heumann and Randall Zachman, 'The Global Impact of the Reformations: Long-Term Influences and Contemporary Ramifications', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, cviii (2017); Philip Benedict, 'Global? Has Reformation History even Gotten Transnational Yet?', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, cviii (2017); Charles H. Parker, 'The Reformation in Global Perspective', *History Compass*, xii (2014); Charles H. Parker, 'Converting Souls across Cultural Borders: Dutch Calvinism and Early Modern Missionary Enterprises', *Journal of Global History*, viii (2013); and Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2009).

⁸ Early modern Eastern Christianity has received much scholarly attention of late. For some perceptive studies, see: Lucy Parker and Rosie Maxton, 'Archiving Faith: Record-Keeping and Catholic Community Formation in Eighteenth-Century Mesopotamia', forthcoming in *Past and Present* (available online, April 2022); Bernard Heyberger (ed.), *Les Chrétiens de tradition syriacque à l'époque*

(cont. on p. 7)

attention to the lack of scholarship on the Protestant movement and its confrontation with Eastern Christianity.⁹ Much the same could be said about the Catholic context, although important exceptions exist.¹⁰ This oversight is particularly unfortunate not only, as Simon Ditchfield has pointed out, because it suggests that ‘in this period the number and significance of non-European Christians was negligible’, but also because encounters between European Christians and those from the Middle East were as laden with expectation and disappointment as early modern interactions between Christians and non-Christian religions.¹¹ Exploring the early modern globalization of Christianity through these exchanges helps highlight how forms of irreconcilability that unfolded in moments of contact did not always have to be premised on radical difference but could also derive, paradoxically, from visions of unity, shared assumptions, and the hope — however frail and unfulfilled — of finding common ground.

To arrive at these conclusions, I examine two episodes in Lucaris’s life. Section II takes us to Ottoman Egypt, where we meet Lucaris as Patriarch of Alexandria in deep conversation with Dutch Protestants, including Uytenbogaert and the

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ottoman (Paris, 2020); Thomas A. Carlson, *Christianity in Fifteenth-Century Iraq* (Cambridge, 2018); John-Paul A. Ghobrial, ‘Migration from Within and Without: In the Footsteps of Eastern Christians in the Early Modern World’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, xxvii (2017); John-Paul A. Ghobrial, ‘The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory’, *Past and Present*, no. 222 (Feb. 2014); Marie-Hélène Blanchet and Frédéric Gabriel (eds.), *L’Union à l’épreuve du formulaire: professions de foi entre Églises d’Orient et d’Occident, XIII^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Louvain, 2016).

⁹ Nabil Matar, ‘The Protestant Reformation through Arab Eyes, 1517–1698’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, lxxii (2019).

¹⁰ Sam Kennerley, *Rome and the Maronites in the Renaissance and the Reformation: The Formation of Religious Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (London, 2022); Cesare Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie: communicatio in sacris, coesistenza e conflitti tra le comunità cristiane orientali (Levante e Impero ottomano, XVII–XVIII secolo)* (Rome, 2019); Ingo Herklotz, *Die Academia Basiliana: griechische Philologie, Kirchengeschichte und Unionsbemühungen im Rom der Barberini* (Rome, 2008); Alastair Hamilton, *The Copts and the West, 1439–1822: The European Discovery of the Egyptian Church* (Oxford, 2006). For Catholic interactions with the Greek Orthodox Church, Vittorio Peri, *Due date, un’unica Pasqua* (Milan, 1967); and Zacharias N. Tsiiranlis, *Το Ελληνικό Κολλέγιο της Ρώμης και οι μαθητές του 1576–1700: Συμβολή στη μελέτη της μορφωτικής πολιτικής του Βατικανού* (Thessaloniki, 1980) are still foundational.

¹¹ Ditchfield, ‘Decentering the Catholic Reformation Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World’, 187.

merchant David de Wilhem, about Reformed thought. A first reading of this exchange may lead to the impression that it belonged to some sort of ecumenical moment. Yet once examined in depth and connected to the changing religious landscape of the Ottoman Levant it appears more as an occasion to exchange preconceived ideas about what Christianity meant — and how it was supposed to look — than as an effort to achieve some sort of lasting accord. Section III reconstructs the incredible and incredibly infelicitous publication history of the first translation of the New Testament into the Greek vernacular: created in Istanbul, corrected by Lucaris, coordinated by the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga and his staff, paid for by the nascent Dutch Republic, eventually printed in Geneva, and little known outside a handful of specialists, this edition is a testament to the ways in which the Reformations touched the Greek Orthodox world but also failed to root there.

II

CAIRO, 1601–1620

By the time Lucaris started exchanging letters with Uyttenbogaert, he had become one of the rising stars of the Greek Orthodox Church. Born in Crete, then under Venetian rule, Lucaris had spent years in Padua and Venice studying under the guidance of Maximos Margounios, a Greek humanist with ecumenical sympathies. It has been alleged that in this formative period Lucaris also made his way to Geneva and the Low Countries and was introduced to the Reformed thought of Calvin and others. But no evidence has survived to locate him at any period in his life in these bastions of Calvinism. Following his ordination, Lucaris was sent to Brest as a special envoy of the then Patriarch of Alexandria — who happened to be his uncle — to oppose what the Greek Orthodox Church deemed the unwarranted intrusions of Roman Catholicism. Lucaris spent five years in Poland, running a school and setting up a printing shop to counter Rome's propaganda machine with books sanctioned by the Greek Orthodox Church. His mission remained ultimately unsuccessful, though: following the 1595–6 Union of Brest, the Orthodox Churches in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth agreed to subject themselves to Rome and the Pope as long as they were allowed to retain their

rites. In 1601, not long after leaving Poland, Lucaris was installed as Patriarch of Alexandria, undoubtedly because of his connections in the Church. He would remain in Cairo, where his seat was located, until 1620 when he became Patriarch of Constantinople.

Lucaris's correspondence with different Protestant scholars and theologians has not gone unnoticed. Nearly every study of Lucaris's life mentions them in more or less detail. In addition to the letters that he exchanged with Uytenbogaert, Lucaris corresponded with David de Wilhem, a Dutch merchant and orientalist, and Cornelis Haga, the Dutch ambassador to the Sublime Porte and one of the Patriarch's greatest supporters. He sent letters to the States General in The Hague thanking them for the support he received through their ambassador. George Abbot, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was one of his interlocutors. Dozens of Lucaris's letters to Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador in Istanbul, have also survived. Lucaris discussed Reformed thought with Marco Antonio de Dominis, the erstwhile Archbishop of Spalato, who had fled to James I's England following a dispute with Rome. He also exchanged letters with Giovanni Diodati, an Italian Calvinist theologian whose translation of the Bible would form the source text of the 1638 Geneva New Testament examined below. Numerous letters of Lucaris to Antoine Leger, a Calvinist pastor who would aid him in producing that translation, are extant. It is even possible that more letters will turn up in the future: the great nineteenth-century French historian Émile Legrand, who edited large parts of the aforementioned correspondence, once saw another bundle of letters now lost.¹²

Yet for a person of such high repute — more ink has been spilt on Lucaris than on any other early modern Greek Orthodox Patriarch — analyses of his letters are surprisingly few and far between. Often his correspondence appears only as evidence of his alleged Calvinist sympathies. Some letters do indeed suggest at first sight that Lucaris and his Protestant contacts found in each other like-minded souls with whom to discuss ecclesiastical reform. Several other letters, however, reveal that the Patriarch's interests in strengthening the faith of his flock through reforming

¹² Émile Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique: ou, Description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au dix-septième siècle*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1896), iv, 161; Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, 18–20, 22–3.

his Church were shaped by distinctly local events. The ensuing discussion thus situates these letters where they originated: not in Reformation Europe but in the pluriform Christian landscape of Ottoman Egypt. It starts with a basic but fundamental question: how did this Greek Orthodox prelate come to exchange ideas with Protestants in the first place?

The Patriarch's aforementioned letter to Uyttenbogaert reveals that he had first struck up a friendship with Cornelis Haga around 1602, not in Calvinist Europe, though, nor in Ottoman Egypt, but during a chance encounter in Istanbul where Haga had been travelling in the early 1600s.¹³ Nothing is known about the Dutchman's reasons for visiting the Ottoman capital, but it appears that the contacts he made there helped him ten years later to become the Republic's first diplomatic representative to the Sublime Porte, following the capitulations from Sultan Ahmed I in July 1612 that permitted the Dutch to trade in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ It was through Haga that Lucaris came to correspond with Uyttenbogaert. I suspect that Haga may also have introduced Lucaris to the merchant De Wilhem, whom we can locate in the region with some certainty in the period 1617–19, when he toured Syria and Egypt, and again in the 1620s, when he is mentioned as one of the merchants of the Dutch Nation in Aleppo. The letters that Lucaris exchanged with this Dutch merchant form the core of my analysis below.

De Wilhem is now all but forgotten, but this enigmatic character was a man of some importance during his lifetime. Born in 1588 in Hamburg to a noble family that had embraced Protestantism and to a mother who survived the St Bartholomew massacre, he was educated in Franeker and Leiden, where he read oriental languages, and later in Saumur and in Thouars, where he studied with the Huguenot theologian André Rivet. His time in Syria and Egypt is poorly documented, but two letters from Otto Heurnius, who oversaw the natural history collection of the *Theatrum Anatomicum* in Leiden, reveal that he bought all sorts of ancient artefacts — including an

¹³ Aymon, *Monuments authentiques*, 126.

¹⁴ For seventeenth-century Dutch–Ottoman diplomatic relations, see Alexander H. de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations, 1610–1630* (Leiden, 1978), esp. 247–60, for the text of the capitulations.

Egyptian sarcophagus and several mummies that still survive today — for his colleague in Leiden.¹⁵ The 1630s found De Wilhem back in Holland, where he started a successful career at court. He married Constantia, the sister of the renowned Dutch scientist Christiaan Huygens, and died in January 1658. His extant correspondence, which was donated to the University of Leiden, includes hundreds of letters to scholars such as Descartes, Golius, Vossius, Lopo Ramirez and the printer Menasseh ben Israel.¹⁶ De Wilhem's correspondence with Lucaris is unfortunately incomplete; fifteen of the Patriarch's letters to De Wilhem have survived but none of the latter's letters to Lucaris have remained.¹⁷ It is therefore not always easy to gauge whether Lucaris and De Wilhem were genuinely grappling towards new ideas and ecumenism rather than merely airing beliefs that they already held without regard to each other's opinions. Was this a deep intellectual friendship that changed both men or was it just an occasion to send pre-formed ideas back and forth?

Superficially, these letters seem to confirm that Lucaris was indeed deeply interested in the new ideas about the ideal Christian way of life that arose in the wake of the European Reformations. Nearly all of the letters are in some form or another about the zeal for reform that marked their generation and the ecclesiastical scholarship that had emerged in previous decades. The Patriarch, for instance, read John Rainolds's 1596 *De Romanae ecclesiae idololatria* and told De Wilhem that he 'was not displeas'd' by what this Puritan sympathizer said about the subject of 'idolatry', because Lucaris did 'not fall with that error'.¹⁸ In another letter he asked De Wilhem to supply him

¹⁵ B. H. Stricker, 'De correspondentie: Van Heurn — Le Leu de Wilhem', *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, xxix (1948).

¹⁶ For De Wilhem's life, see Aymon, *Monuments authentiques*, 165–71. Details mentioned in all subsequent biographies derive from Aymon's short biography. For archival evidence related to De Wilhem's stay in the Levant, see Klaas Heeringa, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1910), i, 527, 536, and ii, 921. Later in life De Wilhem continued to maintain ties with the Dutch merchant community in Aleppo, see Nationaal Archief, The Hague, Inventory Number 1.10.54.

¹⁷ Lucaris's letters to De Wilhem are kept in the Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fos. 5–36. For a brief survey of all existing editions, see Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, 116, n.132.

¹⁸ Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 6^v: 'Rainoldum legi, neque titulus Idololatriae potuit me offendere, qui per Dei gratiam huic errori non assentior'.

‘with some author who treats the topic of predestination, not incidentally, but formally’ since this was ‘a controversy . . . most difficult and hard to understand’.¹⁹ The Dutch minister Adolphus Tectander Venator, however, whose actions served as one of the catalysts for the Arminian Controversy — whether God’s election was unconditional — was rebuked by Lucaris in no uncertain terms:

Venator teaches perverse things. His doctrine is most pernicious, not only that of predestination, but much more that of the church. For he affirms that everyone may remain in his own religion and be safe. In this manner he takes away all reformation from the church and condemns it so long as he maintains that there is the same end and an equal reward to the blind and to the seeing, to the heretic and the orthodox.

From yet another letter we can infer that De Wilhem pushed back by referencing the Church Fathers’ position on predestination: ‘I assure you’, Lucaris countered,

that I am well aware that Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and very few Latin [authors] except for several heretics, have written as he [i.e. Venator] does on the subject of grace bestowed on idolatrous Gentiles. But, since that is not my opinion concerning grace, I cannot agree with him and much less on the doctrine of predestination, and the subject of the church, in which he includes all, and teaches that all must be saved, of whatever religion they may be, provided they believe in Christ.

In sum, although Lucaris considered Venator’s position on predestination ‘intolerable, because it is a point that does more mischief than others’, these letters reveal a deep and serious interest in Reformed thought.²⁰

¹⁹ Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 19^{r-v}: ‘Si tuae D. placuerit aliquem authorem, qui non ex occasione sed κατὰ σπουδὴν de praedestinatione tractaverit, gratam rem mihi praestabit. Solam enim, ex iis quae hoc tempore agitantur, istam ego controversiam arbitror difficiliorum et δυσκατανόητων, maximeque debebo tuae Humanitati si aliquo modo in hac materia meae opitulabitur imbecilitati’.

²⁰ Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 11^{r-v}: ‘Il Venatore οὐκ ὀρθὰ διδάσκει. La sua dottrina è pestilentissima, non solo quella de praedestinatione, ma molto più quella de ecclesia, puoiche ogn’ uno puoter star nella sua propria religione a puoter esser salvo conferma in questo modo, mi par che aufert omnem reformationem ab ecclesia, imo damnat dummodo eundem finem constituit aequalemque praemium caeco et videnti, haeretico et orthodoxo’. And Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 13^v: ‘Della dottrina del Venatore le dico che se Clem. Aless., Eusebio, et Latini molto puochi, oltra alcuni Haeretici, quanto à quel Articolo, de gratia erga Gentiles Idololatrās, habbino così scritto, lo so bene: ma io che della gratia non così sento, non puosso con lui convenire: e tanto più nella dottrina della praedestinatione, e nell’articolo de ecclesia, nel quale

(cont. on p. 13)

Other letters offer further reason to believe that Lucaris sought to understand the intricacies of the religious wars that plagued Europe in this period. Lucaris and De Wilhem exchanged the works of Franciscus Gomarus, a firm opponent of the Arminian rejection of predestination, and thus exactly the kind of author the Patriarch could mine for Reformed ideas about God's election. De Wilhem received from Lucaris a copy of the Byzantine monk Isaac Argyrus's *Canon Paschalis*, which had been edited by Joseph Justus Scaliger a generation earlier, suggesting that they may have talked about the correct date of Easter — a highly contentious matter in early modern Christianity. Even the confessional alliances of Justus Lipsius — the celebrated Flemish humanist who was born a Catholic, taught in Calvinist Leiden, and famously returned to Catholicism towards the end of his life — became a topic of discussion.²¹ Lucaris had always thought Lipsius had died a Protestant until he read a Calvinist take-down of the Flemish scholar's treatise on the shrine of Our Lady of Halle that De Wilhelm had sent him.

Lucaris and De Wilhem also talked more directly about what aspects of the Christian world ought to be reformed. One communication is particularly vocal about the Patriarch's desire for reform: 'I rejoice that we agree in the most necessary points . . . to reform the church', he wrote in an undated response to De Wilhem's suggestions on this front. 'I am of the opinion that all these points might be reduced to three; and that if they could be discarded, and their opposites introduced, reformation would be easy'. Lucaris wanted 'ambition, covetousness, and superstition' to be replaced by 'humility after Christ's example, contempt of earthly things, and the simplicity of the Gospel'. That would ensure that 'all our desires would be easily obtained'.²² Such

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abbraccia tutti, e tutti doversi salvare, sia di qualsivoglia religione, purché creda in Christo. Questo è intolerabile, perché è articolo che apporta più danno di quello che fanno gli altri'.

²¹ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 317.

²² Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 9^{r-v}: 'ringratio il signore che εις τὰ κείρια τῆς πίστεως συμφωνοῦμεν. Laudo totam illam rationem quam delineavit, quaeque posset servari pro reformatione ecclesiae. Ego omnia illa capita apte credo ad tria posse reduci, quae si missa fierent et opposita introducerentur, facilis esset reformatio. Explodatur ambitio, avaritia et superstitio; introducatur humilitas ad exemplum Christi Domini, contemptus temporalium et simplicitas evangelii et facillime obtinetur cupitum'.

language appears to suggest that Lucaris, as one historian has stated, saw ‘in the Reformation not only an ally against Catholicism but also a model and a challenge for the reconstruction of Orthodoxy’.²³

But that the Patriarch found in De Wilhem and his other Protestant correspondents something of an intellectual community that shared his interest in religious reform — and his critique of Rome — does not mean that Lucaris considered Protestantism a source of wisdom that could enlighten his own knowledge of the Christian way of life. Neither this document, nor any of the other surviving letters make it clear that Lucaris intended to reform the Orthodox Church along Calvinist doctrinal lines — as has been so often assumed — rather than purifying it by returning it to the simplicity of the original church. It is thus better not to try and determine to what extent Lucaris’s letters contain traces of Calvinist beliefs but to connect Lucaris’s letters with his pastoral duties as Patriarch of Alexandria. For once we recognize that Lucaris maintained his correspondence with De Wilhem and other Protestants in a world where the relationships between the various Eastern Christian denominations were redrawn, it becomes possible to see these conversations anew.

One of Lucaris’s more pressing concerns as Patriarch of Alexandria was that early seventeenth-century Ottoman Egypt was riven by forms of confessional rivalry. In the century after the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate (1516–17), Egypt’s Eastern Christian minorities continued to live side by side — as they had done in the past — but they also increasingly often began to articulate the differences between themselves and other religious groups by strengthening their communal ties and by cultivating their own religious traditions.²⁴ The Greek Orthodox Church was no exception: following the Ottoman

²³ Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘Orthodoxy and the West: Reformation to Enlightenment’, in Michael Angold (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, v, *Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge, 2006), 200.

²⁴ For Eastern Christians in Ottoman Egypt, see Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (Oxford, 2011); and Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London, 1992), 199–224. For the wider context, see Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures: The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces, 1500–1850* (Louvain, 2015); and Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge, 2001).

takeover of the Byzantine Empire, the Greek Orthodox Church had lost much of its independence, had seen some of its churches and monasteries confiscated, and had been forced to reinvent itself as a minority Church under Islamic legislation.²⁵ The consequences of this degradation were not lost on Lucaris. The Greek Orthodox Church, as he made clear to De Wilhelm on multiple occasions, was plagued by different forms of heterodoxy and sectarianism: ‘We live amongst barbarians’, he intimated in an undated letter, ‘and with barbarians we dwell in this corrupted state’.²⁶ Lucaris believed that the ‘Armenians, Copts, Maronites, and Jacobites, whose mode of worship is unsightly and their ceremonies even more brutish’, were heretics who had ‘sunk in such darkness that they scarcely know whether they believe or what they believe, but each of them is obstinately attached to his own superstitions and errors’.²⁷ Yet Lucaris also experienced single-handedly how groups such as these encroached on his diocese: the Nestorians, he reported, had recently been given a church close to Cairo and it was there that they would congregate on Saturdays and Sundays to celebrate their rites, right under his nose.²⁸

The Coptic Church in Egypt, which in the seventeenth century was one of the largest Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire with roughly ten thousand members, was guaranteed the same withering scorn.²⁹ One of their superiors was dismissed by Lucaris ‘as a ghost in a tragedy’ because, although he repeatedly visited him, the man ‘never opened his mouth’ — since according to the Copts for such a man to be speaking ‘was a sin’ — and never showed his face, ‘which was covered with a muslin’. Another Coptic priest who used to visit Lucaris in Egypt was simply perfidious: ‘He professes the errors

²⁵ Molly Greene, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1453 to 1774: The Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh, 2015), 57–86; Halil Inalcik, ‘The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans’, *Turcica*, xxi–xxiii (1991).

²⁶ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 313: ‘enim inter barbaros vivimus et cum barbaris in hac tam corrupta versemur πολιτείᾳ’.

²⁷ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 306: ‘Quatuor adhuc usque sunt sectae eorum, quibus ecclesia nostra non communicat: armenica, coptica, maronitica et jacobitica, quarum deformis est ritus plusque brutae caerimoniae . . . tot tenebris ignorantiae offusi ut vix sciant si credant vel quid credant: unaquaeque tamen obstinata est in propriis superstitionibus & erroribus’.

²⁸ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 324.

²⁹ For the Coptic community, see Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt*, 19.

of his own religion and reproves them'. Lucaris thus decided not to 'place too much faith in him, because if his conscience dictated what he says with his mouth, he would no longer want to be a Coptic priest'.³⁰ The delegation from the Coptic Pope of Alexandria, Gabriel VIII, which had been received in 1595 by Pope Clement VIII and which had offered to accept the reform measures taken at the Council of Trent, deserved similar condemnation:

That false and fake delegation of the Copts is mentioned in the sixth tome of Baronio's *Annales*, under the title 'delegation of the Alexandrian Church', and I am sending this volume to you so that Your Excellency may read it; that you will understand how much certain Coptic rogues can do to mislead that Clement, as they have done. But how much Baronio has said to flatter the Pope, Your Excellency will see in this tome on page 691. I have nothing else on this topic.³¹

Evidently, no love was lost between Lucaris and the various Eastern Christians who also called Ottoman Egypt their home.

The Patriarch's readings of early modern Catholic scholarship, which was not restricted to Baronio, cannot be separated from his life and work in Egypt either. 'I send you the doctrine of Bellarmine', Lucaris wrote to De Wilhem in one of his letters, not neglecting to mention that he believed Bellarmine — one of the most vocal advocates of Tridentine Catholicism — to be

³⁰ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 309: 'Habent isti superiorem, quem lingua vernacula vocant *iabuna*, quod interpretatur *dominus*. Iste venit ad me aliquando visitatu, in Aegypto: quoties venit, mutus venit, mutus abit. Pro se suorum aliquis loquitur; ille vero loquentis verba vel ἀνέσει, vel ἐπιτάσει capitis affirmat vel negat. Os vero nunquam aperit, quia dicit non licere multa extra domum suam loqui *iabunam*, imo peccatum esse . . . Quod autem in isto bono domino mihi magis displicet, hoc est quia nunquam mihi faciem, nisi oculos solos aperit, totum caput tectum sindone vel sursum, vel deorsum motum, faciem nunquam tibi dabit aspicere, sed dices larvam esse tragicam. Nolo tibi ulterius esse molestus, vir prudentissime, de tam absurdis scribens. Est apud illos Coptas quidam casis Petrus vocatus, *casis* interpretatur *presbyter*. Ille me saepius adire solet, fatetur se propriae religionis cognoscere errores, et reprehendit suos; at ego ei parum credo, quia si quod os profert et conscientia dictasset, non amplius vellet presbyter esse Coptarum'.

³¹ Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 26^r: 'La finta e falssa legatione delli Copti continetur in 6° tomo Annalium Baronii, sub titulo legationis ecclesiae Alexandrinae, egli mando il libro perchò V.S. la legga; che ben comprehenderà quanto han saputo fare certi manigoldi Copti a fare per agabbare esso Clemente, come l'hanno fatto. Ma puoi Baronio, per adular il papa, ha ditato quanto V.S. vederà in questo tomo, pagina 691. Altro non ho sopra questo'. For the broader context of this exchange, see Hamilton, *Copts and the West*.

‘false and heretical on many points’.³² The occasion had been a set of notes on a Greek edition of Roberto Bellarmine’s catechism, the *Dottrina Christiana breve*, which De Wilhem had sent to Lucaris and from which the latter concluded that they both did not approve of Bellarmine’s beliefs.³³ The marginalia that Lucaris left in his own copy of this work, which has survived, confirm this: the longer notes, which concern matters of doctrine that had for decades been a bone of contention among Catholics, Protestants and Greek Orthodox Christians, such as the *filioque* question — the old debate about whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the father or from the father *and the son* — predestination, the article of Justification, and purgatory, repeatedly protest against Bellarmine’s explanations of Tridentine Catholicism.³⁴

But for Lucaris this was no abstract theological discussion. He had witnessed single-handedly just how efficacious the implementation of Tridentine Catholicism could be. He knew, for instance, that Rome was purposefully producing religious manuals like Bellarmine’s booklet: ‘A catechism in the Arabic language, compiled by Bellarmine in Latin, and translated by some Arabic men, was printed in Rome in order to entice [*fascinar*] these people’.³⁵ It is also telling that the Patriarch read Bellarmine’s catechism in the Greek version that Rome had produced specifically to convince Greek-speaking Christians of the Tridentine truth. Lucaris also knew what the colleges that had been founded in Rome to win over different Eastern Christians could achieve: ‘The Maronite sect’, he wrote in a letter to Uyttenbogaert, ‘is semi-Roman. Indeed, it is becoming entirely Roman since many Maronites have gone to Rome to study . . . and in that way almost that whole tribe (*gens*) follows

³² Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 23^v: ‘Doctrinam Bellarmini falssam, et haereticam in multis locis, mitto tuae prudentiae. Est a me in quibusdam locis in margine notata; sed quia est in lingua graeca communi conscripta, nescio si tuae H. placebit. Bene valeat’.

³³ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 320.

³⁴ Bellarmino, *Διδασκαλία Χριστιανική* (Rome, 1616), Leiden University Library, 754 H 8, 28, 31, 33, 47, and 72–89. See also Keetje Rozemond, *Notes marginales de Cyrille Lucar dans un exemplaire du grand catéchisme de Bellarmin* (The Hague, 1963).

³⁵ Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 26^{r-v}: ‘Una Catechisi in lingua Arabica, composta dal Bellarmino in latino, e tradutta da alcuni Arabi, è stampata in Roma, a fine per fascinar questa gente, ma frustra ἀναλίσκουσι oleum et operam’.

the Roman religion, especially as their main bishop professes himself to be a papist'. Such heterodox beliefs, Lucaris feared, could easily contaminate other Eastern Christian communities: 'Because the diocese of the Patriarch of Antioch borders that of the Maronites, I am afraid they will infect their neighbours, especially because the precautions of myself and the Patriarch seem to have no effect'.³⁶ So just as Lucaris had feared the Nestorians encroaching on his flock in Cairo, so he feared the Maronites might inculcate Roman beliefs in other Eastern Christian communities.

Lucaris believed these unwarranted incursions of the Catholic Church to be worse than the vexation they experienced by being ruled by the Ottoman Sultan, whom he considered a trial sent by God. 'From them', he concluded in a letter to George Abbot from 1616, 'we fear nothing'. But the shock troops of Rome were an altogether different beast. Greek Orthodox communities did have reason to fear 'those dogs and deceitful workers, those hypocrites, who say one thing and mean another, and even dare to attack God Himself, as long as they are supported by the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff'. Not only did Lucaris fear Jesuit casuistry, he also knew of its efficacy: 'These emissaries', he continued, 'terrify us greatly, and impose on our simplicity, and use many machinations to bring us under their power, trusting heavily in the show of erudition and the sting of thorny disputations'.³⁷

There is no denying, then, that this was in part a story of the arrival of the Catholic and Protestant Reformations in the Middle East. Rome, according to Lucaris's impassioned remarks, was at least in part to blame for the forms of

³⁶ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 309: 'Maronitica secta est semiromana, imo incipit esse tota romana, quia multi Maronitae profecti Romam literis operam navarunt . . . et modo quasi tota gens illa sequitur romanam religionem. Cum maxime eorum primus episcopus se papistam profiteatur, et quia Antiocheni patriarchae dioecesis contigua est Maronitis, timeo ne incipiant et vicinos inficere, praesertim cum a parte patriarchae et a nobis admoniti, conveniens tamen non sit cautio'.

³⁷ Aymon, *Monuments authentiques*, 45: 'Ab his igitur nihil nobis timemus, sed a canibus potius & operariis subdolis, Hypocritis dico, quibus solenne est aliud clausum habere in pectore, aliud promptum in lingua, qui Deum ipsum projecta audacia impetere haud erubescunt, dummodò Romani Ponticis tyrannidi quoquo modo velificentur. Hi emissarii terrorem mirum in modum nobis incutiunt, nostraeque imponunt simplicitati, cui mancipandae varias admovent machinas, maximè freti eruditionis fucò, & spinosarum disputationum aculeis'.

confessional antagonisms that he experienced with other Eastern Churches. His apprehension about Maronites acting as agents of Roman proselytization is a case in point. Yet I caution against too hastily equating these conversations with the spread of the Reformations. For Lucaris's fears of Nestorians encroaching on his domains and his intense loathing of the doctrinal errors of the Copts seem more endemic. They remind us not to lose sight of the local confessional context in which Lucaris acted as Patriarch of Alexandria. Here it is also helpful to remember that Eastern Christians often had other options than simply aligning themselves with Catholics or Protestants. Sam Kennerley and Lucy Parker have recently argued for different contexts that some Eastern Christians in this period, facing similar pressure from Rome, 'chose a future conducted within the Ottoman Empire, rather than one in dialogue with the West' and were aware 'of a much wider range of religious possibilities, than modern scholars tend to acknowledge'.³⁸ Much the same could be said about Lucaris: however much he was in dialogue with different European Christians, in the end these conversations were maintained with an eye to the confessional landscape that he inhabited. To overlook that decidedly local context is to miss what made conversing with Protestants meaningful to Lucaris in the first place and invalidates the participation of Eastern Christians in the early modern globalization of Christianity.

III

CONSTANTINOPLE, 1620–1638

Lucaris's tenure as Patriarch of Constantinople, which started in 1620 and lasted with several interruptions until his death in 1638, is known to be fraught with political intrigue and marked by repeated conflict with the Catholic Church and the Jesuits in particular. Dénes Harai has calculated that between 1620 and 1638 different Protestant and Catholic groups paid a combined 54 million *akçe* in bribes to the Ottoman authorities to have Lucaris either deposed or reinstalled on the ecumenical

³⁸ Kennerley, *Rome and the Maronites in the Renaissance and the Reformation*, 93; Lucy Parker, 'The Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging: Catholicism and the Church of the East in the Sixteenth Century', *English Historical Review*, cxxxiii (2018), 1424–5.

throne.³⁹ Notorious is the history of the short-lived Greek printing shop that Nicodemos Metaxas set up in Istanbul with the support of the Patriarch and the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe.⁴⁰ This ill-fated press was shut down following an accusation by the Jesuits that it was a scheme devised by the Patriarch to incite a rebellion amongst the Cossacks. Once the confiscated material had been examined and it had become clear that there was no truth to these accusations, the Ottoman authorities, embarrassed by the whole affair and encouraged by the English ambassador, decided to expel the Jesuits. But in the end Rome won out: another accusation by the Jesuits, who had returned from exile, led to Lucaris's trial and eventual execution.

What was at stake here? One important battlefield concerned the realm of education. It was with genuine sorrow that Lucaris, as Patriarch of Alexandria, had watched the growing influence of the Nestorians and Maronites and the flirtations of the Copts with Rome. But the situation he faced as Patriarch of Constantinople was arguably more worrying: great numbers of Greek Orthodox children attended the school that the Jesuits had set up in Galata, where education was available in Greek and, importantly, free. These pupils learned not only about grammar and the liberal arts but also, much as Lucaris feared, about the Latin rite and the Christian martyrs that were venerated in the Catholic Church.⁴¹ Meanwhile, in Rome, the polyglot press of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith produced dozens of Greek books meant to 'instruct' Greek Orthodox Christians about Tridentine Catholicism in similar ways. They published their first Greek book for the Greek Orthodox community in 1628. Over forty editions, some of them reprints, would follow in the seventeenth century — one such book being the Greek edition of Bellarmine's catechism that Lucaris owned and annotated. Between 1628 and 1697 the

³⁹ Dénes Harai, 'Une Chaire aux enchères: ambassadeurs catholiques et protestants à la conquête du patriarcat grec de Constantinople, 1620–1638', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, lviii (2011).

⁴⁰ The history of this press has been told many times over. For some of the latest accounts, see: Nil Pektaş, 'The Beginnings of Printing in the Ottoman Capital: Book Production and Circulation in Early Modern Constantinople', *Studies in Ottoman Science*, xii (2015), with references to earlier literature; and Letterio Augliera, *Libri, politica, religione nel Levante del Seicento: la tipografia di Nicodemo Metaxas, primo editore di testi greci nell'Oriente ortodosso* (Venice, 1996).

⁴¹ Eric Dursteler, 'Education and Identity in Constantinople's Latin Rite Community, c.1600', *Renaissance Studies*, xviii (2004).

Congregation approved no fewer than twenty-three requests for books from Jesuit missionaries active in the Eastern Mediterranean, which amounts to roughly one shipment every three years.⁴²

Lucaris acknowledged that to some extent the Greek Orthodox Church lacked the means to thwart Rome's efforts. He had managed to establish a school to educate the clergy.⁴³ But he was not exaggerating when he intimated in his letter to Uyttenbogaert that the Greek Orthodox Church was 'in need of learned men who can fight these sophists on equal terms. For because of our sins we have become the most contemptible of all nations, and with the loss of the Empire have also lost the liberal arts'.⁴⁴ Lucaris did not object to having a flock that 'was simple and unlearned' by and of itself — for he knew 'that men may be saved, although their minds are uncultivated, since they are fighting the enemies of the faith' — but it did bother him that his 'pastors and bishops should be sunk in the darkness of ignorance'.⁴⁵ In other words: in a bid to secure the Dutch minister's support, Lucaris stressed the dire predicament in which his Church found itself.

Fighting the Jesuits on their own terms — through education and through printing his own materials for religious instruction — thus became a matter of utmost urgency for Lucaris. Metaxas's ill-fated printing press had been the Patriarch's first attempt to curb the Jesuits' proselytizing efforts. One of the first texts to be printed by Metaxas was an exposition, in vernacular Greek, of the main tenets of the Greek Orthodox faith drawn up by Lucaris himself and meant for the edification of his clergy. But through collaboration with various Dutch Protestants and the

⁴² Zacharias N. Tsirpanlis, 'Libri greci publicati dalla "Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" (XVII sec.)', *Balkan Studies*, xv (1974).

⁴³ Hadjiantoniou, *Protestant Patriarch*, 70–1; Hering, *Das ökumenische Patriarchat*, 158–60; Runciman, *Great Church in Captivity*, 271–2.

⁴⁴ Aymon, *Monuments authentiques*, 45: 'nos interea eruditorum penuria laboremus, qui cum sophistis istis aequo Marte congrediantur. Etenim propter peccata nostra despicabiles facti sumus prae omnibus gentibus & cum imperio artes quoque liberales amisimus'.

⁴⁵ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 311: 'hostis sum ignorantiae, et ut populum simplicem esse, ἀμαθῆ non moleste fero, cum sciam καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀμαθίᾳ καὶ ἰδιωτικῇ salvari posse homines adversus fidei hostes in dies quasi dimicantes, atque non armis, sed patientia certantes ut undequaque se Christi fideles probent; ita mihi displicet pastores et episcopos nostros tenebris ignorantiae obmergi; hoc est quod nostratibus exprobo, at nil proficio'.

financial support of the Dutch Republic more texts materialized. Both the 1633 Greek translation of Lucaris's *Confession of Faith* as well as the 1629 Latin version, on which it was based, had been made possible by the Dutch. Haga, to whom the 1629 edition had been dedicated, had single-handedly collated the copy text with Lucaris's original manuscript while the Dutch Republic had financed its publication in Geneva.⁴⁶

The most innovative project that the Dutch together with Lucaris initiated was a translation of the New Testament into the Greek vernacular.⁴⁷ One of the key figures responsible for this ambitious endeavour — never before had Scripture been translated into vernacular Greek — was a Swiss pastor by the name of Antoine Leger.⁴⁸ Leger had been sent to Istanbul in 1627, mainly to assist Haga in his activities but also, it was understood, to collaborate with Lucaris in purifying the Orthodox Church. This would come to include translating the New Testament into vernacular Greek: Leger helped the translator, Maximus of Gallipoli, to make sense of and render correctly complicated passages from the source text, which was an Italian translation by the Calvinist theologian Giovanni Diodati.

⁴⁶ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, i, 267. See also: Ovidiu Olar, 'Les confessions de foi de Cyrille Loukaris († 1638)', in Marie-Hélène Blanchet and Frédéric Gabriel (eds.), *L'Union à l'épreuve du formulaire: professions de foi entre Églises d'Orient et d'Occident, XIII^e-XVIII^e siècle* (Louvain, 2016), 271–310; Albert de Lange, 'Il Ruolo del pastore calvinista Antoine Léger nella genesi e redazione della confessione di Fede del patriarca ortodosso Cirillo Loukaris, 1629–1633', in Viviana Nosilia and Marco Prandoni (eds.), *Trame controverse: il patriarca 'protestante' Cirillo Loukaros* [Backlighting Plots: The 'Protestant' Patriarch Cyril Loukaris] (Florence, 2015); and Keetje Rozemond, 'De eerste uitgave van de belijdenis van Cyrillus Lucaris', *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, li (1971).

⁴⁷ Kiriakos Papoulidis, *Problèmes de traduction et d'interprétation du Nouveau Testament en grec moderne: le cas de Maxime de Gallipoli, 1638* (Thessaloniki, 2004). See also Anthony J. Khokar, 'The "Calvinist Patriarch" Cyril Lucaris and his Bible translations', *Scriptura*, cxiv (2015); and Ovidiu Olar, "'Un Trésor enfoui": Kyrillos Loukaris et le Nouveau Testament en grec publié à Genève en 1638 à travers les lettres d'Antoine Léger', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, lviii (2017). Important archival documentation is edited in Christiaan Sepp, 'Het Nieuw-Grieksche Testament van 1638', in Christiaan Sepp, *Bibliografische mededeelingen* (Leiden, 1883).

⁴⁸ Albert de Lange, 'Antoine Léger (1596–1661): Das Leben eines Waldenserpfarers zwischen Konstantinopel und Genf', in Andreas Flick and Albert de Lange (eds.), *Von Berlin bis Konstantinopel: Eine Aufsatzsammlung zur Geschichte der Hugenotten und Waldenser* (Bad Karlshafen, 2001). A total of thirty-one of the patriarch's letters to Leger have survived. They are preserved in the library of the University of Geneva, see Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, 22.

For nearly two years this unlikely team of collaborators — which also included Lucaris and Haga as well as at least three other Greeks — translated the text in a room in the Dutch embassy in Istanbul. In 1632, nearly three years after it was begun, their first draft was finished. Haga proposed to have it printed in two columns — ancient Greek facing the vernacular — ‘in order to deprive the Papists of any means’ with which to thwart the project or condemn the translation.⁴⁹

The Patriarch had been much involved in what had truly been a collaborative project. One telling piece of evidence comes in the form of a letter from Lucaris to Leger: ‘You have done well to collate the original texts with the vernacular [version]’, the Patriarch praised the Swiss chaplain. ‘I see that father Maximus has been very diligent in his translation. The text of Mr Diodati has been followed. Doubt about certain words matters little, while all [words] correspond to their meaning’. But the Patriarch nevertheless believed that certain words required more scrutiny than others. Finding the right Greek word for bread, for instance, demanded serious intellectual flexibility:

As for *artos*, I would rather call it by the more common *psoomi*, even though the Lord calls it thus. For if the Lord used the word *artos* both before and after the consecration, it is because correctness in language and the archaic way of speaking required that. But when speaking in the vernacular, in my opinion, writing the vernacular *psoomi* does not alter the meaning.⁵⁰

In declaring that Jesus spoke Greek — and not only that, but a kind of literary Greek — Lucaris inadvertently showed how disconnected his exegesis of the New Testament was from European biblical criticism. Most contemporary biblical scholars in the West thought that Jesus spoke Aramaic. Discussions about

⁴⁹ Sepp, ‘Het Nieuw-Grieksche Testament van 1638’, 203: ‘Gedaen zynde, is ons voornemen nae Genève te senden, om aldaer gedrukt te werden, in twe columnen, den ouwen ende vulgaren texten neffens malcander, om alsoo de Papisten alle middelen te benemen van yt iegens de translatie met recht te moegen seggen’.

⁵⁰ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, iv, 476: ‘Havete fatto assai bene haver fatto collatio del testo autentico con il volgare. Vedo che papa Maximo è stato dilligente nella tradutione; imitato il testo del signor Diodati, il dubio di alcuni vocabuli importa puoco, mentre che tutti rispondono all’istesso senso. Quanto per lo ἄρτος, io lo direbbe più comunemente ψομί, essendo anco dal signore così chiamato. Che se il signore se ne serve del vocabulo ἄρτος e prima e doppò la consecratione, ma la lingua così lo comportava e l’atticismo del parlare. Ma parlando volgarmente, a mio giudicio, non impedisce il senso volgarmente scriver ψομί?’.

the nature of New Testament Greek, which had begun with Scaliger, Serarius, Drusius and others, taught the European learned world ‘to see the New Testament as a body of writings that belonged to the historical and cultural world in which they had been written: the Hellenistic world of the first century AD’.⁵¹ None of this is the case here. Lucaris’s understanding of New Testament Greek and its relation to the Greek of his own time is more pragmatic: for words of great theological significance being precise mattered, but in the end practical concerns — no future reader would recognize the Biblical but archaic *artos* — defeated biblical attestation.

The States General eventually agreed to cover the costs for printing the translation. They had asked Jacob Golius, the famous professor of Arabic at the University of Leiden, to determine whether such a translation would give rise to disputes amongst the Greeks. I have not been able to locate any documentation by Golius on this matter, but from one of the States General’s next dispatches to Haga, dated October 1632, we can surmise that the professor’s opinion on the matter must have been favourable. The Dutch ambassador was to proceed with the publication and was told that Pieter Cornelis Brederode, a Dutch agent in Basel who had earlier arranged Leger’s appointment as Haga’s chaplain, had been appointed to oversee matters in Geneva. The decree further mentioned that the publication costs of no fewer than 1,500 copies would be covered. One hundred and sixty-eight of these — an odd number for which I have no explanation — had to be sent to the Netherlands to be kept by Haga and at the University of Leiden while the rest was to be shipped secretly to Istanbul where Haga had to distribute them further. Maximus of Gallipoli was also to go to Geneva and oversee the proofreading and typesetting.⁵²

But publishing the translation turned out to be more complicated than had been anticipated. First, additional funding was needed to cover Maximus’s travel expenses. Then the paper — estimated at 130 sheets — was more expensive than budgeted. The printer’s copy was initially lost and, when found,

⁵¹ Henk Jan de Jonge, ‘Joseph Scaliger’s Historical Criticism of the New Testament’, *Novum Testamentum*, xxxviii (1996), 178. For the broader context, see Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford, 2017).

⁵² Sepp, ‘Het Nieuw-Grieksche Testament van 1638’, 205, 207–8, 219.

turned out to be illegible because of the many abbreviations used. Brederode complained about not getting paid and kept urging the States General to release the required funds. Leger's successor, a man named Sartorio, died before he could complete his revision. And, finally, when it seemed the situation could not possibly get any worse, Maximus of Gallipoli passed away before the transcription and typesetting had been completed. Only after David Le Clerc, a professor of oriental languages in Geneva, was hired to do the proofreading, could they continue their efforts. Brederode drew up a contract between the printer and Le Clerc and then left Geneva to return to Basel. There he, too, died before the project was completed.⁵³

Thus by the time the translation of the New Testament was finally published in 1638 — for it did eventually see the light of day — little was left of the community that had fostered its creation. The Patriarch himself, suspected of organizing a rebellion, had been executed. Maximus of Gallipoli had passed away, as had Brederode. Leger had returned to his parish near Geneva, while Haga was making plans to round up his embassy in the Ottoman Empire and retire to his home in the Netherlands. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the translation's distribution was a complete disaster. It is reported that some copies, as initially agreed upon, were indeed sent to Leiden. Another four hundred books were sent in six cases to the house of Haga back in the Netherlands. The remainder was supposed to be shipped in eight cases directly from Marseille to the Ottoman capital. Yet only a small part of these arrived at their intended destination. The rest never left Geneva, having been confiscated by the printing house, because the rent for the attic where the books had been stored had not been paid. Nearly thirty years later, the Swiss theologian François Turretin contacted the direction of Dutch Levantine Trade and informed them that these New Testaments — a grand total of 1,130 copies — were still stored away in Geneva. Although he successfully negotiated their release, the books were still not shipped to the East. It was only when Jean Adolphe Turretin, the professor's son, contacted the States General again in the 1730s — about a hundred years after they had been printed — and notified them that the books were in his possession and

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 215–8.

ready to be shipped to Constantinople that these copies started on their journey.⁵⁴

It is no small irony that even the books that were shipped to Constantinople in the 1630s had not all reached their intended audience. Originally sent to Hendrick Cops, the embassy's secretary from 1638 to 1647, they were after his death entrusted to the English embassy. Cops's successor, Nicolo Ghisbrechti, also the official protector of the Dutch in the Ottoman Empire, received them into his care in 1647. Ghisbrechti wrote to the States General in 1650 informing them that he had distributed some of the books and assured them that he would do his best to assist their distribution further once a certain Greek monk had arrived in Istanbul from London.⁵⁵ But no evidence exists to determine whether this happened. There ended the dreams that brought men like Lucaris, Leger and Haga together, and which led to a remarkable collaboration on an ambitious project whose intentions were never fully realized.

And, yet, emphasizing the dreams that these adherents to different Christian denominations shared is to some extent misleading. For, ultimately, this episode in the history of early modern Christianity should not be taken for some ecumenical moment. It is evident that a shared fear of the Jesuits and the efficacy of their educational programme brought Lucaris and his Dutch aides together. It is also true that Rome's expansionist politics encouraged them to collaborate on several projects, including the 1638 New Testament, to curb the Curia's influence in Eastern Christian circles. But the confessional motives of the Dutch and those of Lucaris were arguably more important than the shared dislike of Catholicism for fuelling their collaborations. And once these motives are placed side by side, it soon becomes clear that these were completely irreconcilable.

One of the primary objectives of Haga's embassy had been to protect and expand Dutch commercial activity in the Levant and to ransom Dutch merchants and other Christians who had been taken captive.⁵⁶ But the promulgation of Reformed Christianity constituted another important dimension of his work: 'Our

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 219–30.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 249–50.

⁵⁶ Heeringa, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel*, Deel I, i, 186, 217–20, 264.

principal goal', he wrote to his superiors in January 1632, 'has always been and still is to make known the teachings of the Reformed churches . . . amongst Greek prelates and other educated clergy or people and thus to demonstrate that they agree with the teaching of Christ, the Apostolic Church, and the old Greek Fathers'. Haga even entertained the idea of setting up a school in Istanbul, where Greeks and others could learn about Calvinism, and entreated his superiors to support his effort to have Reformed materials translated into the Greek vernacular to ensure 'that young Greeks are kept out of Jesuit schools and are taught the foundations of the true Christian faith from their natural masters'. Having Reformed materials translated into Greek and distributed amongst Greek Orthodox Christians ensured, according to Haga, that 'the Greeks can see themselves the light of truth from God's Holy Word'.⁵⁷ Later he encouraged them to elect his successor so that the 'Evangelical religion and pure teachings' would be further known 'amongst the Greek nation' and to give the many Greek families the translation of the New Testament into the Greek vernacular 'that they so strongly desire'.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Sepp, 'Het Nieuw-Grieksche Testament van 1638', 202: 'op het point, off de saecken van de gereformeerde kercken hier meer voorwaerts gaen, sullen Uwe Hooge Moog. believen te weten, dat ons principaelste oochmerk altyd geweest is ende noch is om de leere van de gereformeerde kercken, daer van Heer Patriarch oock openbaere professie doet, onder de Griecxsche perlaten ende andere verstandige soo geestelycke als werltlycke luydens, bekent te maecken, ende te doen blycken dat deselve met de leere Christi, ende van de primitieve Apotolische kercke, ende ouwe Griecxsche vaders over eencompt, tot welcken fyne DO. Leger met goetvinden van den Heer Patriarch op de confessie van syne eerwaerdicheyt nu int Griecx van deselve geschreven en de in myne handen gestelt annotatien heeft gemaect van de principaelste texten van de heylige schrifture ende passagien van de ouwtvaders, waer van autentycke ende van den Heer Patriarch geteyckende exemplaren na Genève syn gesonden om gedruckt te worden, daerenboven opdat de Griecken het licht van de waerheyt self uyt Godts heilige woort moegen sien, soo hebben wy het nieuwe testament in de vulgare Griecxsche spraecke (twelk noyt voor desen geschiet it) doen translateren, ende syn daer mede oock soo verre gecomen, dat er niet anders aen manqueert, als een exacte revisie ende conferentie met den ouwden Griecxschen text, twelck van niemant beter als den Heer Patriarch selfs soude konnen geschieden, byaldien syne occupation sulcx toelieten'. Throughout this article I cite from Sepp's edition of the original documents, which are currently in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague.

⁵⁸ Rozemond, 'De eerste uitgave van de belijdenis van Cyrillus Lucaris', 200; Heeringa, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel*, i, 368: 'Tot dien sijne is nu al eenige jaeren geleeden van mij geinduceert geweest om een catechismus in de vulgare Griecxsche taele te concipiëren, waermede S.E. — die tot noch toe door de groote persecution ende swaericheden, hem door instigatie

(cont. on p. 28)

The States General heeded Haga's advice. Two hundred copies of a Greek translation of the Dutch Reformed Church's most important theological documents, which had been printed in 1627 under the title *Ecclesiarum Belgicarum confessio*, were bound with various canons from the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19), and sent to Istanbul at the expense of the States General. Several reprints were issued later in the century as was a vernacular Greek translation of these texts. This collection of Reformed materials, which was again financed by the States General, was printed by Leiden's Elsevier press in no fewer than a thousand copies.⁵⁹ At one point, the States General even provided for two Greeks to come to Leiden and learn about the Reformed Church so that they, once returned home, could 'spread and defend there the beatific truth that conforms to the Reformed religion against Popish errors'.⁶⁰ Evidently, winning over Greek Orthodox Christians mattered greatly to the nascent Dutch Republic — and it was willing to pay the price.

Other Calvinists back home also agreed with Haga. Professors from Leiden involved in producing these materials — including luminaries such as Heinsius, Golius and Revius — similarly hoped that the dissemination of this work amongst Eastern Christian communities would cause 'the propagation of the true

(n. 58 cont.)

van de Papisten bejegent, verhindert is geweest — jegenwoordich doende is, van meeninge zijnde deselvege met een explicatie symboli apostolici, inhoudende de confessie van sijn gelooff, in druck te lateen uuytgaen, deertoe seer wel te pas is gecoemen een Griecxsche typographie . . . reformatae religionis hier gebracht ende met licentie van den cahimacham opgeset is, waermede dan verhoepen, dat de Griecxsche jeucht uuyt de scholen van de Jesuyten gehouden ende in de fondamenten van de waere Christensche religie van haere naturele meesters onderweesen sullen kennen werden'; and *ibid.*, 408: 'Bij soeverre U.H.M. om dese ende meer andere redenen ende consideratiën goet soude moegen vinden om op de electie ende sendinge van een ander orateur te dencken . . . om op de goede fundamenten, die den vroomen patriarch Cyrillus, saliger gedachten, geleyt heeft van de Evangelische religie ende suyvere leere, de kercke Christi wijders onder de Griecxsche natie te bouwen, daertoe dan te passe sullen coemen de boucken van 't Nieuwe Testament, in de vulgaire Griecxsche tale tot Genève doen drucken, nae dewelcken veel familiën seer verlangen'.

⁵⁹ Vasileios Tsakiris, 'The "Ecclesiarum Belgicarum Confessio" and the Attempted "Calvinisation" of the Orthodox Church under Patriarch Cyril Loukaris', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, lxiii (2012).

⁶⁰ Keetje Rozemond, *Archimandrite Hierotheos Abbatis, 1599–1664* (Leiden, 1966), 53: 'ende sulx gedaen sijnde, als dan wederom tot de Griecxsche kercken weder te keeren, om de salichmaeckende waerheijt aldaer, in conformité vande Gereformeerde religie te verdedigen ende uijt te breijden tegens de pauselycke dwalinghen'.

Christian Reformed religion in those lands'.⁶¹ It is no coincidence that right in this moment the Dutch Reformed Church, with significant financial support from the States General, engaged some of these same theologians and scholars to produce the first authoritative Reformed translation of the Bible into Dutch — the so-called States Translation, which would eventually appear in 1637 — to define and patrol Reformed orthodoxy.⁶² Making Scripture available at home and spreading Reformed beliefs abroad were two sides of the same coin.

Lucaris, by contrast, had no desire for Reformed Christianity to root amongst Greek Orthodox Christians. His intentions were to improve the lot of his people. In the appendix to his *Confession of Faith*, he contended that all Christians ought to be allowed to read Scripture. It was in fact a crime to deprive Christians of reading Scripture. The Patriarch did not believe that readers had to know every part of the Bible, but they had to read at least enough to be saved. Some passages would undoubtedly present major difficulties in terms of the literal meaning of the texts as well as the terminology and expressions used. But none of that ought to prevent any reader from being guided by the Holy Spirit and finding therein the doctrines of the Christian faith. When faced with difficulties, readers had to compare and contrast, and search for analogies and meaning, because the Holy Scriptures would dispel the darkness that they were in.⁶³ The Patriarch's preface to the 1638 New Testament stressed a similar point: he emphasized that the faithful had to be able to read the Bible themselves and not only through the mediation of the clergy. This ought not to be frowned upon by the ecclesiastical elites: Had not the Apostles, Lucaris asked, written to all the faithful? Had the Old Testament not been written in Hebrew and translated into Greek? Had God not allowed his Word to be recorded in different languages and had it therefore not been his wish that all his sons and daughters read Scripture

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 62: 'vertrouwende dat het den Heere eene aengename offerhande is, ende eene bequame aenleydinge sal geven tot voortplantinge vande ware Christelycke Gereformeerde Religie in die landen'.

⁶² Dirk van Miert, 'Making the States' Translation (1637): Orthodox Calvinist Biblical Criticism in the Dutch Republic', *Harvard Theological Review*, cx (2017).

⁶³ Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fos. 50^v–51^r.

in their own language?⁶⁴ Lucaris's answer, premised upon the idea that access to Scripture was a way forward, was an emphatic yes.

One nevertheless wonders how the Patriarch envisioned the road ahead. Translating the New Testament into the vernacular inadvertently separated the language of that newly available New Testament from that of the liturgy, which retained — as in for instance the word for bread — more archaic forms. Did Lucaris have plans to change the liturgy as well? And if the learned clergy were his intended audience, why change the term for bread to a colloquial one? That quintessentially Reformation salvo in favour of making Scripture available in the local vernacular also quickly backfired in a context where such translations were controversial and the reading of the Bible a hotly contested issue. 'The Divine Scriptures', according to the Greek Orthodox Synod that convened in 1672 in Jerusalem to condemn Lucaris's translation, 'should not be read by all, but only by those who with fitting research have inquired into the deep things of the Spirit, and who know in what manner the Divine Scriptures ought to be searched, and taught, and . . . read'. The rest, 'who cannot distinguish, or who understand only literally, or in any other way contrary to Orthodoxy' should abstain from any such activity. Reading the Bible, the synod thus made unequivocally clear, was a dangerous endeavour when undertaken without the guidance of 'learned and divine men to search out their true meaning'.⁶⁵ So the 1638 New Testament, although embraced by Lucaris as a vehicle of reform, achieved nothing of the sort in a world where such a document was highly controversial.

Deep down Lucaris could have known that access to Scripture was indeed a dangerous affair that would not only highlight the difficulty of finding Scripture's true meaning but would also render visible its many inconsistencies. One of the most captivating letters that he sent to Leger in 1635 captures elegantly the deep questions about God's Word that reading Scripture could inspire. 'I wish to inform you', Lucaris began,

⁶⁴ Η Καινή Διαθήκη του Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ: Δίγλωττος, Ἐν ἧ ἀντιπροσώπως τό τε θεῖον πρωτότυπον καί ἡ ἀπαρλλάκτως ἐξ ἐκείνου εἰς ἀπλήν διάλεκτον, διά τοῦ μακαρίτου κυρίου Μαξιμου του Καλλιουπολίτου γενομένη μετάφρασις ἅμα ἐτυπώθησαν (Geneva, 1638), **3v–***2v.

⁶⁵ John H. Leith (ed.), *Creeeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, 3rd edn (Louisville, 1982).

‘that in the letters which I wrote to your Reverence, which were intercepted by those traitors’, by whom he meant the Jesuits,

I requested the solution of a doubt I have, which is the following: in reading the Epistle of James, I see that in the second chapter he speaks against Paul about Justification by Faith. Nor does he appear to me to agree with him when he says Was not Abraham our father justified by works [when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?; James 2:21]. Besides this, I noted that James, in writing to the twelve tribes dispersed abroad [James 1:1] does not preach the mystery of the Incarnation and makes no mention of it at all. On the contrary: he mentions the name of Jesus Christ only once or twice, and coldly. But of doctrine and mystery not a word, like the others had done. He only attends to morality. I also do not know who this James is, for I have found two Jameses: one the brother of John, who in the twelfth chapter of the Acts was killed by Herodes; the other James, the son of Alphaeus. I have found another James, the brother of our Lord, Gal. I. V.19. There were two disciples named James; and I doubt that this James, the son of Alphaeus, was the same as the brother of the Lord. I cannot clarify the matter since I do not have with me those authors who might explain to me the doubt. I shall expect your answer as soon as our messenger can come with safety.⁶⁶

Lucaris was raising no rarified question here. His reflections on James’s identity and the latter’s seeming contradiction with Paul were familiar to everybody who knew anything about the world of Catholic or Protestant exegesis. Since Luther’s famous dismissal of James’s letter as an epistle of straw, these issues had been central to early modern debates about salvation and involved every possible exegetical position from denouncing James to claiming that the two could be reconciled to using James as a proof text for Catholic or Protestant doctrine. Greek Orthodox tradition held that the letter of James was written by James, the brother of

⁶⁶ Aymon, *Monuments authentiques*, 85–6: ‘Di piu habia à sapere che nelle lettere che jo scriveva à Vostra Reverentia quelle che sono da quelli Traditori intercette scriveva è dimandavo solutione d’un dubio che ho quel è questo. Dimandavo solutione d’un dubio che ho quel è questo. Legendo l’epistola di S. Giacobbo, vedo che nel secondo Capitolo parla contra san Paolo, de Justicia fidei. Ne mi par consentir con lui, dove dice, Ἀβραάμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη. Oltre questo ho notato che san Jacobo scrivendo alle 12. Tribu ταῖς ἐν διασπορῇ, non predica il Mysterio dell’Incarnazione, ne di quello punto si ricorda. Anzi del nome di Jesu Christo à pena fa mentione una o due volte, è fredamente, ma della Dottrina e del Mysterio nada, come l’anno fatto gli altri; solo à la moralità attende. E puoi non so chi sia questo Giacobbo perche non trovo altri che duoi Giacobbi: uno il fratello di Gioanni, che nelli Atti C. 12 fù da Herode trucidato; l’altro Giacobbo di Alfeo. Truovo un altro Giacobbo Fratello del Signore, Gal. I.V.19. Duoi Giacobbi sono stati discepoli: è dubito che quel Giacobbo d’Alfeo non sii quel che è frater Domini. Non lo puosso dichiarare non havendo appresso di me quelli autori che mi potessero esplicare il dubio. Con primo sicuro veniva nostro huomo attendero sua risposta’.

the Lord, also known as James the Just. Lucaris's letters suggest that, although he did not want to go as far as Luther, he nevertheless questioned received wisdom. Ironically, back in the Dutch Republic, those theologians tasked with producing the first authoritative Reformed translation of the Bible into Dutch — some of whom were also consulted for the Geneva New Testament — were struggling with precisely this passage and the apparent contradiction between Paul and James.⁶⁷

It is clear beyond doubt, though, as the Greek Orthodox Synod that condemned the Geneva New Testament also recognized, that reading Scripture could lead exactly to these kinds of critical questions — readings that could threaten the mystery that was God's Word. Other Greek Orthodox ecclesiastics, too, feared such exegesis. Gerasimus, for instance, who was Lucaris's successor as Patriarch of Alexandria and another one of his rivals, believed that 'the recent attempts to make the Scriptures clearer than Christ left them, are by no means to be approved'. It had after all been the obscurity of Scripture that had always been professed by the Greek Orthodox Church. Those who looked to understand God's Word thus ought to turn to the approved commentaries.⁶⁸ Under no circumstances were they to read Scripture on their own. In other words, had the production and distribution of the 1638 Geneva New Testament been more successful, and had any more copies actually reached their intended audience, it is doubtful that their impact would have been as Lucaris had hoped. Reform, as Lucaris experienced again and again, was not something that could easily be acquired in a Church that prided itself on never having reformed: 'If I could reform my church', he intimated at one point, 'I would do so willingly, but God knows I am dealing with the impossible'.⁶⁹ Thus, however many thoughts he exchanged with his European Christians about what they deemed to be the true purest kind of Christianity, and however many books and manuscripts from the West he acquired and perused, in the end the kind of reform that worked elsewhere had little chance of rooting in the world that he desperately sought to improve.

⁶⁷ Van Miert, 'Making the States' Translation', 457–62.

⁶⁸ Cited in John Mason Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church: The Patriarchate of Alexandria*, 2 vols. (London, 1847), ii, 431.

⁶⁹ Leiden University Library, BPL 26 B, fo. 31^r: 'io se puotesse reformare la mia chiesa, lo farei molto volentieri, ma Iddio sa che tractator de impossibili'.

IV CONCLUSION

How do we evaluate the learned exchanges between Lucaris and his Protestant interlocutors? To formulate answers to this question, as my examination has aimed to show, is to recognize, first and foremost, the radically different notions of reform that shaped these interactions. It is on all accounts too easy — and erroneous, I contend — to frame their contact simply as an expression of ecumenism. For the Dutch, this episode was largely about inculcating Reformed principles among Eastern Christians. For Lucaris, by contrast, exchanging ideas with Dutch Protestants — and with Anglicans, for that matter, for the same story could be told for Lucaris's engagements with the Church of England — was motivated by his desire to emancipate his clergy and educate his flock. Others have examined how some of his ideas overlapped with Calvinist doctrine. But recognizing echoes of Protestant dogma in Lucaris's letters unwittingly reduces his zeal for reform to an inquiry into whether or not he had Calvinist sympathies — a problematic question since it is motivated predominantly by modern interests in impugning or salvaging Lucaris's religious beliefs. In many ways such reasoning says more about our own assumptions than that it leads to a deeper understanding of Lucaris's beliefs. It is much more fruitful to locate Lucaris's reform efforts where they belong: in the Christian landscape of the Ottoman Levant. Once seen in this light, his efforts appear not solely as a botched attempt at thwarting the Tridentine Church's expansion into these regions or as evidence of his Protestant sympathies, but as a lifelong though ultimately unsuccessful endeavour to protect Greek Orthodox Christians and improve their circumstances at a time when his Church experienced immense pressure from different groups — Catholics, Protestants, Ottomans and other Eastern Christian denominations.

Calling attention to the irreconcilability of different projects of religious reform in these moments of interaction runs the risk of emphasizing differences over similarities and separation over contact. One of the great insights of recent scholarship on forms of early modern connectivity is that it has illuminated how the contours of different religious groups were often articulated through contact and interaction as much as through antagonism and rivalry. Yet for all the apparent entanglements of the story

examined here, the actual results were shaped — and at the same time circumscribed — by deeply local circumstances. The kind of reform that worked in one religious world clearly faltered in another. Translating Scripture became the battle cry of the Protestant Reformation but acquired no such status among Eastern Christians. ‘Searching for unity’, Nicholas Terpstra has rightly reminded us, ‘was no guarantee of finding it, particularly when for many a parallel search for purity of faith and worship took precedence’.⁷⁰ Universal aspirations, in other words, could not always erase local differences.

Once understood as processes that reify boundaries as much as they sought to elide them, the exchanges between Lucaris and the Dutch, in which beneath the veneer of irenicism lay a world of fragmentation and divergence, thus illustrate how difficult it was for a Christian to convince another individual to move — even when all actors involved seemingly shared an intellectual and religious universe. Tracing how these moments took shape and developed, what fuelled them, and why the Protestant Reformation mattered to the Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church to the Protestant Reformation, thus offers fertile ground for understanding the contradictions and conflicts that came to define early modern Christianity and its expansion across the globe.

Richard Calis
University of Cambridge, UK

⁷⁰ Nicholas Terpstra, ‘Reframing Reformation: Framing, Mobilizing, and Transcending Religious Difference in Early Modern Europe’, in Terpstra (ed.), *Reframing Reformation: Understanding Religious Difference in Early Modern Europe* (Toronto, 2020), 17.

ABSTRACT

This article identifies one of the great but unstudied paradoxes in the history of early modern global Christianity: that the stronger the desire for a uniform Christian way of life burned, the deeper the fractures between different Christian denominations began to grow. It explores this issue by examining the learned exchanges between the infamous Greek Orthodox Patriarch Cyril Lucaris (1572–1638) and members of the Dutch Reformed Church. These efforts have often been seen as an expression of Christian ecumenism or as evidence that the early modern Middle East had become yet another arena for Catholic–Protestant rivalry. But once motivations on both sides are placed in the distinctly local religious climate that fostered them neither of these explanatory paradigms suffices. On the contrary: a decentred approach to this material reveals how Protestant and Eastern Christian understandings of what reform meant and how it could be attained were completely distinct and irreconcilable. It is thus imperative to resist any simple application to Middle Eastern Christianity of categories rooted in European Christian traditions and, instead, to tease out how different Christian denominations defined reform differently. Only then can we make good on our commitment to approach early modern global Christianity as a pluriform and multi-centred phenomenon.