



A JOURNAL OF ORTHODOX FAITH AND CULTURE

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ANTIOCH'S GOLDEN HOARD: THE CHALCEDONIAN ORTHODOX MANUSCRIPT TREASURY

From Balamand, Lebanon to Oxford, England, Antiochian Orthodox Monk Elia Khalifeh has embarked on the monumental project of locating and cataloguing the widely scattered manuscripts of the Antiochian Orthodox Patriarchate. From libraries and museums of the Middle East, Europe, and America, his patient, detailed search has unearthed a treasury of Chalcedonian Christian literature, sparking the recovery of our rich Antiochian heritage.

RTE: Father Elia, will you begin by describing your work at Oxford?

MONK ELIA: I am attempting to locate Antiochian Orthodox Chalcedonian manuscripts that have been acquired by libraries and museums throughout the world, mostly in Europe. These manuscripts can be anything from an entire codex to a small fragment. So far, I have collected information from more than 30,000 manuscripts that originated in the Patriarchate of Antioch, along with any relevant material from the Patriarchates of

Jerusalem and Alexandria, including Sinai; in Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA)¹ and Arabic.

RTE: Why did you decide on the term “Antiochian Chalcedonian Orthodox?”

MONK ELIA: As Antiochian Orthodox, we accept the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon in 451, along with the Greeks, Russians, Serbs, Georgians, Romanians, and other Orthodox who are in this lineage. Today, five hierarchs hold the title of “Patriarch of Antioch and all the East”; two are Orthodox and three are Catholic united with Rome. Among the Orthodox we have the Chalcedonian (commonly referred to as Rum or Melkite²), and the Syriac Non-Chalcedonian (commonly referred to as Jacobite or Monophysite).³ These last two Churches share a common Syriac or Syrian patrimony. So, this project concerns the patrimony of the Orthodox Chalcedonian Antiochian Patriarchate written in Syriac, CPA, and Arabic, along with any relevant material in Greek and Georgian.

RTE: And these are all hand-written manuscripts, or are there also printed materials?

MONK ELIA: In the Levant,⁴ we exclusively used hand-written copies of books until the early 18th century, when Arabic printing began in Antioch under Patriarch Athanasius IV. This was the first Arabic-type printing press in the Levant, given to the Patriarch as a gift during his visit to the Romanian Principalities in 1700. He brought it first to Aleppo, then to Balamand. We still have few copies of books printed on the original Arabic press. The first Syriac-type printing press was brought from Rome by the

¹ Christian Palestinian Aramaic: an Aramaic dialect used specifically among Orthodox Chalcedonians in Palestine, Sinai and southern Syria, particularly for written texts between the 5th and 14th centuries.

² “Melkite” and “Rum”: Orthodox do not use the term Melkite for themselves because it was originally an insulting term used by the Syriac Non-Chalcedonians towards the Chalcedonians. Melkite comes from the Syriac “royal” and meant that the Chalcedonians were aligned with the court at Constantinople. It is also misleading, because it is now freely used as a term for Eastern Catholic Uniates. Historically under the Ottomans, Chalcedonian Orthodox were called “Rum Orthodox”, that is, “Roman Orthodox”, because they were associated with the Roman Empire in Constantinople, the areas where the Ecumenical Councils were held. For all these reasons, we say Antiochian Orthodox Chalcedonian to clearly define this Church, its patrimony and its documents.

³ The Council of Chalcedon was the Fourth Ecumenical Council, held in 451. The Fathers of the Council condemned the monophysite heresy and taught that there are two natures in Jesus Christ. The Non-Chalcedonian Churches are five: Syriac, Copt, Armenian, Ethiopian and Indian.

⁴ Levant: The region occupied by Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the southern coast of Turkey.

Maronites⁵ in 1610. We still have copies of books printed on that original Arabic press.

RTE: Have these manuscripts remained in the Levant?

MONK ELIA: No, thousands of our manuscripts have been “acquired” and are now conserved in European libraries, universities and museums, as well as in the United States and Russia. After the 19th century only a few hundred manuscripts were left in the Levant by “overeager and acquisitive collectors.”

RTE: And you’ve worked on these throughout Europe?

MONK ELIA: The majority of our manuscripts in Europe are now in the Vatican, as well as in France, the U.K., and Germany.

My research is based on the manuscripts themselves or on their copies (microfilms, microfiches and CDs), also on their checklists, catalogues and on other published bibliographies. In working with different media we also need to look carefully at the originals when the microfilm or microfiche are of poor quality. The films are always in black and white, and sometimes, for example, you cannot differentiate whether a tiny mark is a pin-hole or a dot. Sometimes, even a small mistake can mislead you in reading a text, particularly in Syriac or Arabic, which are full of dots and vowel signs.

RTE: Do you collect copies of these documents?

MONK ELIA: Collecting copies is impossible for me working alone. Making copies of thirty thousand manuscripts would take funding and support. At present I am concentrating on locating the documents, looking them over to determine the Chalcedonian ones, making a description of their contents, and collecting any pertinent information.

My ultimate aim is to compile a catalogue of this corpus of manuscripts with repertories, inventories, indices, and bibliographies. I hope that the contents and the colophons of these manuscripts will help scholars in the study of the palaeography, history, topography, archaeology, theology, liturgy, hagiography, and biography of the Rum Orthodox (the Antiochian Chalcedonian) patrimony.

⁵ The Maronite Church was established after the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 680-81) as a monothelite Church. The Maronites first united with Rome during the Crusader period in the Levant in the 12th century, and more closely after the proselytism of Latin missionaries, from the 15th century.



Theotokos Monastery, Hamatoura, Mount Lebanon.

RTE: What is a manuscript colophon?

MONK ELIA: Traditionally, within or at the end of a manuscript the author or the copyist would write one line or a short text mentioning his name, the date and the place where he copied the manuscript (a monastery, church, or village). From the colophons of these manuscripts we can learn a great deal of helpful information, such as:

- Names of towns, villages, churches, and monasteries; many of which are now ruined or have totally disappeared;
- Names of copyists, laymen, monks, deacons, priests, bishops, and patriarchs;
- Additional historical information provided at a later date (e.g. earthquakes, invasions, famine, plagues...);
- Additional material on sociological and demographic changes;
- Also, we find additional information concerning the precise dates of births, deaths, marriages, the ordination of priests and consecration of bishops or patriarchs;
- Many other pieces of information not mentioned by previous historians.

Also, there are occasional errors in the descriptions and notes of these manuscripts in both old and modern catalogues and other bibliographies. So, I am trying to update the catalogues and checklists and add more information.

RTE: Besides the colophons, do you find manuscripts where copyists have made comments on the margins of the texts?

MONK ELIA: Yes, of course, we find many rubrics and margin notes written at a later date. For example, someone will say, “I read this book” or “I made this note.” Or, in the colophon, the copyist will say: “Please pray for me. No one is perfect; if you find a mistake, please correct it without blaming my weakness.” When I read something like that, I pray for them, really. But of course, in a museum or a library, we cannot make any corrections now.

Sometimes you also find that a copyist, because of his professional skill, his beauty and accuracy in writing, has been asked to copy a manuscript for another community – the Maronites, for example – and you can see the Orthodox influence in these manuscripts. Or you will learn that this church was Orthodox and now it’s Maronite, or that church was turned into a mosque.

RTE: At the end of newly published Russian books, if the authors are Orthodox, they write, “This book was written, compiled, printed by...” and

they list the names of all those who worked on the publication. Then they ask, "If you read this book, please pray for us, the unworthy servants of God."

MONK ELIA: Yes. That reminds me of the spirit of our fathers and ancestors.

RTE: Since there were different calendars in use in the early Christian world, how do you date these manuscripts?

MONK ELIA: The Eastern Christians used many systems to date their manuscripts: the Era of Adam, the Era of the World (i.e. Era of the Creation), the Era of the Greeks (i.e. Seleucid Era), the Era of the Incarnation, and also the Era of the Hijrah. So each era has its own calculation that must be used in converting it into our Christian year A.D. If there is no identifying colophon, we can only guess at the approximate date, sometimes through a comparison of scripts. For example, we may say, "this style of handwriting was used in Mount Lebanon in the 10th century." There were many schools of copyists in Lebanon and Syria; it was a highly respected and professional work.

RTE: Are these mostly theological writings, or do they include deeds, personal letters, chronicles?

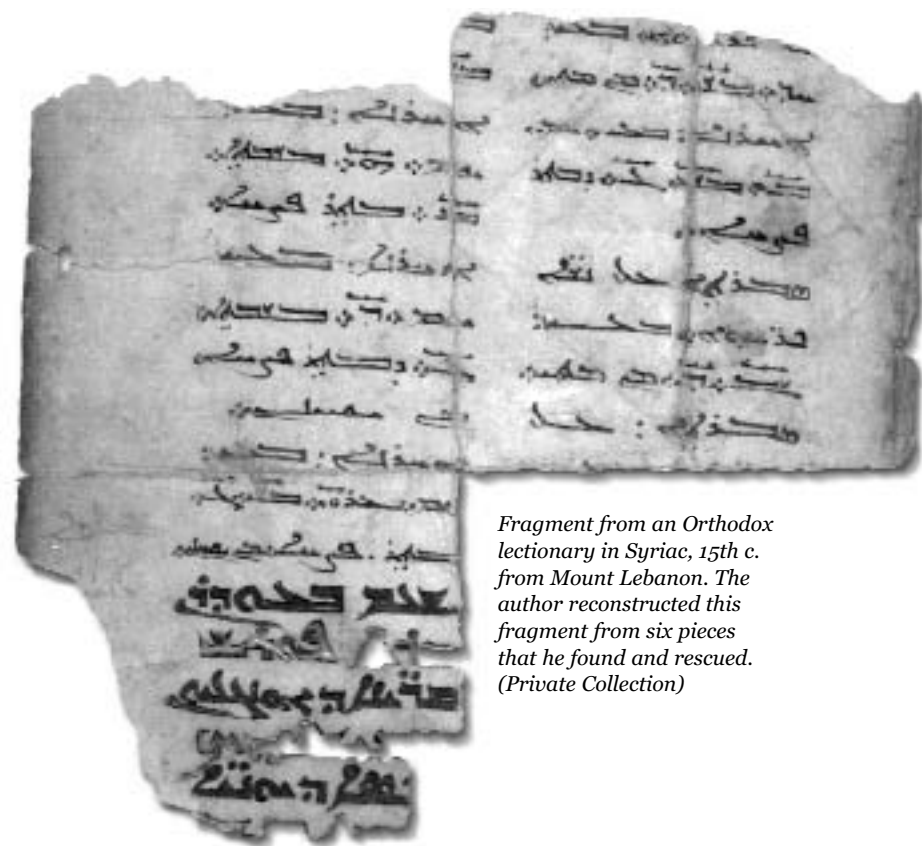
MONK ELIA: The manuscripts I work with are largely liturgical. These liturgical texts could help us to find the shape and the Typikon of the original Antiochian liturgy in some detail. This is very important because Antioch influenced all the other liturgical families: Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople.

RTE: Father, as a background for our western readers, would you give us a brief outline of Antioch's position in the early Church and her subsequent history?

MONK ELIA: St. Luke says, "It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians." (Acts 11:26)

Antioch was the capital of the Roman province of Syria Prima and therefore the most important city of the Eastern Mediterranean. Because of this, the apostles, especially St. Paul, and the disciples used it as a starting point for their preaching of the Gospel, moving along the Lebanese and Syrian coast.

The See of Antioch is considered one of the five historic apostolic sees of the Church, along with Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. It formerly included the entire East, all the way to India and China.



Fragment from an Orthodox lectionary in Syriac, 15th c. from Mount Lebanon. The author reconstructed this fragment from six pieces that he found and rescued. (Private Collection)

After the Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus, 431) a schism occurred with the Church of the East (commonly referred to as Nestorian or Assyriac). With the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon, 451) there was an even greater schism in Antioch between the Rum Orthodox and the Syriac. After the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 680-81) the Maronite schism occurred.

In 636, Arab Muslims first entered Syria and Lebanon; then Palestine (638) and Egypt (641). Their conquest inaugurated a succession of Muslim kingdoms that ruled these areas until 1918. During this time, Christians suffered from great persecutions and oppressions, and there were many new martyrs and confessors.

Between 1098 and 1296, the Crusaders attacked our region and persecuted both Muslims and Christians alike, founding Latin Patriarchates in



Street in Roman Bosra, Southern Syria.

Jerusalem, Antioch and Constantinople. In 1268 the Muslim Mamluk ruler Baibars destroyed Antioch and the patriarchal see then moved to Damascus (1375-1386).

In 1724 another schism occurred that produced the Uniate Catholic Church. Constantinople helped us then, but the Antiochian Holy Synod was given over to the Greeks. Before this time, the clergy and hierarchs were all local Syrian and Arab. This situation continued until 1899 when the Holy Synod returned to Arab hands.

After many years of persecution and ignorance, a transformation and reawakening took place in the Antiochian Orthodox Church when some young people founded the Orthodox Youth Movement (OYM) in 1942. One of the most important fruits of the OYM was the renewal of monastic life in 1958 and the foundation of the St John of Damascus Orthodox Theological Institute in Balamand in 1970. To this day, in the Near and Middle East, Orthodox Arabs and other Christians still bear witness to Christ, despite their decreasing numbers.

RTE: And when did the Antiochian liturgy begin to reflect Constantinople's usage?

MONK ELIA: It seems to me that Constantinople's influence on Antioch began to be felt liturgically after the 9th century when the usage was updated under Patriarch Germanos (+733), and again in the 10th century, when Constantinople's army came through Asia Minor and retook Antioch and northern Syria from the Muslims, who had occupied them in the 630's. However, it was during and after the Crusader period, in the 12th century, with Patriarch Theodore IV (Balsamon) – the great canon lawyer who was obliged to leave the see of Antioch for Constantinople – that the liturgy began to more closely follow the Typikon of Constantinople. But all of this needs to be studied in greater depth.

The final period of "Constantinopolitisation" came after the 17th century and radically after 1724, the year of the schism of the Uniate Catholics, when Syriac was abandoned almost completely and we began translating directly from Greek into Arabic. Before that, Arabic had been widely used in Antioch from the 8th and 9th centuries, along with the former Greek and Syriac. By the 18th-19th centuries, however, Syriac had completely disappeared from the liturgical usage of our Church.

RTE: You've mentioned liturgical texts. What else do the manuscripts contain?

MONK ELIA: These manuscripts contain different materials: historical, biblical, lectionaries, patristic homilies, theology and doctrine, apologetic debates, spirituality, hagiography and synaxaria (collections of lives of saints); secular literature, philosophy, medicine and other sciences. Here, I have to say that studies in the fields of Syriac, CPA, and Christian Arabic among scholars and the academic world are very important, but have been slow in coming. By working on these manuscripts we will be able to learn much more about the Antiochian patrimony and history. Early historical chronicles and sources are very important, but notes recorded in manuscripts by eyewitnesses are sometimes much more so. This is because you can read historical chronicles compiled from earlier sources and still maintain your own opinion about the validity of those chronicles, but when you have a manuscript by an eyewitness – someone who has seen something and records it – you cannot argue against this.

RTE: To a general reader, this close attention to manuscript detail might seem monotonous, but you obviously don't find it so. What kinds of things make it come alive for you?

MONK ELIA: Many manuscripts are unique, and in fact, even if you find many copies of the same text, a "family" of copies, sometimes they lead you back, step by step, to the original. Also, when you see a manuscript written by a patriarch, a saint, or a righteous monk, you know it is a "relic" and you feel very much in touch with them.

For instance, I have seen and touched a few manuscripts written or annotated by Fr. Joseph the New Martyr, who was killed on July 10, 1860 during the massacres in Damascus, and canonised in 1993 by the Antiochian Orthodox Holy Synod. Fr. Joseph played a very important role in revivifying the Church and also took part in the modern translation of the Bible into Arabic. Also, we still have manuscripts by the great Patriarch Macarios III (1647-72), who visited the Romanian Principalities and Moscow to collect money to pay the high taxes Christians owed the Ottoman authorities.

You also run across intriguing bits of information about which little else is known.

RTE: Do you have a favourite manuscript?



Folio from an Orthodox lectionary, in Syriac, Mount Lebanon, 15th c. – painted Cross with ornaments and decorations. Syriac inscription: "Through you we conquered our opponents and in Your name we trampled down those who rose up against us" (Psalm 44(43):5). (Private Collection)

MONK ELIA: Perhaps one of my favourites is a Syriac manuscript containing a collection of patristic homilies written in Edessa in 723, during the period of iconoclasm. Its colophon is a unique document that mentions the Icon of the Lord and the church where it was enshrined in Edessa, which brings to mind the tradition of King Abgar and the "Icon Made Without Hands" or the "Holy Mandilion."

Also, I very much like reading the homilies of Jacob of Saroug from the Syriac Non-Chalcedonian tradition, who was also widely read in the Chalcedonian patrimony; the spiritual writings of Sahdona-Martyrius, a Nestorian bishop who accepted the Council of Chalcedon and whose writings were accepted and read in the Orthodox Church; and above all, the wonderful writings of St. Ephrem the Syrian of Nisibis and St. Isaac the Syrian of Nineveh.

RTE: In the West we usually call him St. Isaac the Syrian.

MONK ELIA: Yes. This is a small nuance that is easier to make in Syriac, Arabic, and also in French. I use "Syrian" to speak about the ancient land of Syria, and "Syriac" to speak about language, patrimony and the Church. For example, St. Ephrem was born and lived between Edessa and Nisibis (+373) and wrote in Syriac, so he is both Syrian and Syriac. But because St. Isaac (7th c.) was from Qatar in the Persian Gulf, I would say that he is Syriac.



Theotokos Monastery, Saidnaya, Syria

Although he was Bishop of Nineveh for a few months in the Church of the East, he is still widely read in Orthodoxy and considered a saint.

Likewise, when we use the expression “the Greek Fathers” this does not mean that they were from the area of modern Greece or even Asia Minor; this is not a geographical or national term. The Greek language was used throughout the Roman Empire as the language of literature and philosophy. It was used in Antioch as well, but we also had the Syriac and Arabic languages.

We have many Syrian, Palestinian and Egyptian saints and fathers who spoke or wrote in Greek, and for that reason are often called “Greek Fathers”; for instance Ignatius of Antioch, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril and Leontius of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Andrew of Damascus (Bishop of Crete), Sophronios of Damascus (Patriarch of Jerusalem), Romanos and Cosmas the Melodists, Maximus the Confessor, Peter and John of Damascus, and many others.

A beautiful icon from the very early Theotokos Monastery in Kaftun, Northern Mount Lebanon, shows how the Greek, Syriac and Arabic languages were all used together in the Orthodox Chalcedonian Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East.

This icon is painted on both sides:

- On the first side is an icon of the Theotokos from the 11th century by an unknown icon painter.
- On the second side is an icon of the Theophany (the Baptism of Jesus Christ) from the 13th century, also by an unknown icon painter.

What is distinctive about the second side of this icon (the Theophany) is that the inscriptions are written in three languages:

1st – In Greek: we have: “*the Baptism*” and “*Jesus Christ*” (in the centre), “*the Prophet Isaiah*” (on the upper right corner), and “*the Prophet David*” (on the upper left corner).

2nd – In Syriac: on the open scroll that the Prophet Isaiah holds in his hand, we read a composite text taken from Isaiah 1:16, 55:1 and 12:3.

“Thus says the Lord: wash yourselves, purify yourselves and put away the evils of your doings from before my eyes. And all those who thirst go to the water and fill up with water from the spring of salvation.”



Double-sided icon of Theophany and the Theotokos, Kaftun, Northern Mt. Lebanon.

3rd – In Arabic: on the open scroll that the Prophet David holds, we read a composite text taken from the Psalms 114 [113A]: 3-5 and 77 [76]: 17 [16].

“The sea saw it and fled, and the Jordan turned back. The mountains feared like the ram, and the hills like the lambs [of the forest]. What ails you, O sea, that you fled, and you, O Jordan, that you turned back. The waters saw you O God, the waters saw you and were afraid.”

RTE: What is the oldest manuscript you’ve worked with?

MONK ELIA: The oldest dated Christian manuscript in Syriac that I know of is from 411, before the Chalcedonian schism. The oldest Arabic Christian manuscript that I’m aware of is a palimpsest⁶, from the 7th century in Kufi script, before Islam.

RTE: Have you found names of saints that had been canonised and forgotten?

MONK ELIA: Yes, many Antiochian saints that were unknown to me have come to light, as well as many new confessors and martyrs during the Mameluk and Ottoman rule, after the 13th century. Often you find only the

⁶ Palimpsests: Writing material (such as parchment), used again after the erasure of earlier writing.

name or a few lines about a saint’s life, but sometimes there are several pages. As I said, I deal with these manuscripts as I deal with relics. I have the privilege of working with them daily and I approach them prayerfully.

RTE: In what way?

MONK ELIA: I pray before I begin and while working on them, that God will enlighten me to understand and to study. I ask the prayers of those new saints or holy people that I find, and I also pray for the copyists who have asked for our prayers in their manuscripts. It is a great blessing.

When I don’t know the date of a newly discovered saint, I privately celebrate his feast on the day I found his name or story in the manuscript. I feel that they are real companions; I live with them. Many people have prayed with these liturgical manuscripts or have read and heard these sermons and lectionaries. Holy people have touched these books that are now lying in museums and libraries.

The Antiochian Manuscript Project

RTE: Can you tell us now about your work and your hope to find sponsors?

MONK ELIA: Yes. Of course, such a major project needs funding and support. My long-range hopes are to:

- Establish an academic centre for study and research on the Orthodox patrimony of the Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East, and to continue the research that I have already begun at Oxford.
- Collect a reference library of specialist works and to acquire copies of those manuscripts we already know about.
- Organise lectures and conferences with publications (e.g. a complete catalogue of this corpus of documents, manuscripts, articles, etc.) to promote this field and to interest scholars, researchers, and students.

At this point, if we want to read or write about Antiochian history, we can only copy and compile from existing books. We cannot really begin conclusive new research until we have catalogued the contents and location of these manuscripts, so that scholars can have access to them. Working on these primary

sources is the only thing that will help clear up the many black holes in our knowledge of the history of the Antiochian Church. It is a long-term project.

RTE: Particularly if you already have 30,000 manuscripts.

MONK ELIA: Yes. Every time I find one, I think, “maybe this is the last one,” then some time later I find another. God willing, I will make this project my life’s work. I hope that we will have professors and students interested in continuing the project, and as funds become available, that we can sponsor both lecturers and graduate students.

RTE: I know of two graduate students in Syriac studies now, both women, and interestingly, one is Russian and the other Russian-Australian.

MONK ELIA: Yes, Russia has a long tradition in these studies, and, in fact, the Antiochians had several centuries of close relations with Moscow.⁷ There has also been interest in Finland. A monk from New Valaamo Monastery in Finland who has studied Syriac and Arabic wrote a thesis comparing the Syriac and Arabic Christian spiritual tradition to Sufism.

RTE: What is your own educational background?

MONK ELIA: I studied theology at the St. John of Damascus Orthodox Theology Faculty at Balamand University in Lebanon and served in the Orthodox Archdiocese of Mount Lebanon, particularly with the Orthodox Youth Movement. I have been working on manuscripts and the history of the Antiochian Church for some time, and began this project seriously in the late 1990’s. In speaking of this project, I have to profusely thank the great scholar I’ve worked with, the world authority in Syriac studies, Professor Sebastian Brock, who has been a great support in all my studies and research at Oxford with his humble and enthusiastic spirit, his encyclopaedic knowledge, his enlightening supervision and his wise advice. He is a real father and friend. It is due to him that I have been able to continue my research in a place like Oxford where we have enormous resources.

⁷ The Antiochian Patriarch, Macarios III, visited Russia twice in the 1650s and in the 1660s when he helped solve problems surrounding the election of Patriarch Nikon (1667). After his visit Antioch had close relations with Moscow, particularly during the time of Tsar Nicholas II, who sent money to establish many schools in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine when we were still under the Ottomans. This was not only in cities and towns, but even in very distant villages. They were called Moscovian schools and were the foundation of modern public education in these three countries. However, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 put a stop to any further help. We have had an Antiochian metochion in Moscow since 1848, and in 1988, Antiochian Patriarch Ignatius IV assisted in the celebrations of the 1000 years of the Baptism of Russia.

RTE: I imagine that having these manuscripts identified and located would be an asset in other fields as well.

MONK ELIA: Yes, as I mentioned before, there are many seemingly small details that can help not only in studying theology, liturgy, or hagiography, but in sociology, general history, palaeography, and biography. For instance, discovering the year a comet appeared in the sky, when a hoard of locusts attacked the crops and there was famine, when a plague ravaged the villages – even boundary determinants such as, “the land of this monastery is from the road, to the well, to that certain tree.” You will not find these small notes and narratives in books, only in original manuscripts.

Manuscripts also have a very direct relation to archaeology and toponymy, the study of place names. For example, you may know from a manuscript that, “...in this village we have a monastery or a church dedicated to Saint...” An archaeologist can go there now and find only ruins, but with these details you can sometimes identify the ruins.

For this reason I always try to combine archaeology and toponymy with manuscript notes. This also helps us to see where the Orthodox were living, and if they lived alone or with Muslims, Syriacs, or Maronites. Or, “In this village we had Orthodox until this century, then they disappeared...,” and why. For example, the village of Hardin in northern Mount Lebanon was Rum Orthodox and Syriac until the beginning of the 17th century when the Maronites began to spread there. Such details help us know where certain communities lived, and how – in peace or under persecution.

This is an endless area of study and everyone could profit from it: the Church, historians, archaeologists, sociologists, economists, lawyers, even artists, as there are many illuminated manuscripts. I recall a 7th century illuminated manuscript from a village west of Damascus from before the iconoclast period. From this and other illuminations you can trace how icon painting evolved.

RTE: What keeps you inspired?

MONK ELIA: Finding things we don't expect, such as manuscripts that mention saints whom we know nothing about. There might be only one manuscript in which a particular saint is mentioned by a copyist or a reader. Also, it is very moving when I find a manuscript written by a saint or a holy man himself. Each manuscript though is unique in itself and has its own character.

Very important work is also being done on collecting materials from these documents on new Antiochian saints to be offered to the Holy Synod for possible canonisations; for example, Patriarch Gregorios IV (+1928), the new martyrs Father Nicolas (+1917) and his son Father Habib (+1948) Khashi, and many others. So far, seven large volumes of synaxaria have been published in Arabic.

RTE: I suppose these manuscripts are somewhat like icons, something material that has been used for such a high purpose that it almost touches the immaterial.

MONK ELIA: Yes, when you see these Horologions and Psalters you realize that these are the most used books in existence. They were read page by page at every service, every day, for centuries. You feel that hundreds of people before you have touched these books and hundreds have sanctified their lives through them. Saints have used them or even written them. As I said, I am really dealing with “relics.”

God willing, I hope I will have the opportunity to continue this project. It is a great opportunity, privilege and blessing to help the Patriarchate of Antioch, the Orthodox Church, and the scholarly world to uncover and clarify the Antiochian patrimony and tradition. ✦

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