



Research Article

Ruth B. Bottigheimer*

Hannā Diyāb (1688–1766): Early Life, French Fluency, and Storytelling

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Abstract: This article understands Hannā Diyāb’s father as a poor late seventeenth-century arrival in Aleppo, identifies his mother as a daughter of the wealthy Ghazālah family, positions Hannā Diyāb himself within his nuclear family, and introduces the friends of his childhood and youth. It accounts for Hannā Diyāb’s mastery of spoken and written French and describes his childhood employment from age 6 to 18, during some or all of which time he lived with his older brother Antūn. The article situates Hannā Diyāb within Aleppan commerce, Ottoman governance, histories of European fairy tales and the *Arabian Nights*, and the special status of Maronite Christians within late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Roman Catholic proselytization in the Eastern Mediterranean. Subjective descriptions inform Hannā Diyāb’s travel memoir, but little surviving information provides objective biographical detail about his personal life. Antoine Galland’s and Paul Lucas’s journals, secondary literature and forensic reading of Hannā Diyāb’s travel memoir augment available biographical information.

Keywords: Hannā Diyāb; *Arabian Nights*; forensic reading; French-Arabic bilingualism

1 Part I

1.1 Hannā Diyāb: A Christian Arab

1.1.1 Introduction: Why Care About Hannā Diyāb?

“Aladdin and the Magic Lamp” and “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” are the most familiar and best loved stories in Antoine Galland’s (1646–1715) 12-volume translation and edition of *Mille et Une Nuit(s)* (Thousand and One Nights, popularly known

*Corresponding author: Ruth B. Bottigheimer, Department of English, Stony Brook University, 100 Nicolls Road, Stony Brook, 11794-0701, NY, USA, E-mail: ruth.bottigheimer@stonybrook.edu

as *Arabian Nights*, 1704–1717). Although stories told by Hannā Diyāb comprise nearly 1/3 of Galland’s “*Contes Arabes*” (Arab Tales), his name appears nowhere in that *œuvre*. Sometime between 1800 and 1810 Michel Sabbāgh (1775–1816) forged a copy of the *Nights* and dated it “1703” to antedate Galland’s first published volumes and to re-affirm the anonymous Arab-ness of the entire collection. Thus, when Herman Zotenberg (1834–1909) discovered Antoine Galland’s journals in the Bibliothèque nationale de France and, within it, the words written on 5 May 1709: “Le matin, le Maronit Hanna d’Alep, acheva de me faire le recit du Conte de La Lampe.”¹ (In the morning the Maronite Hannā from Aleppo, finished telling me the Story of The Lamp), Zotenberg’s discovery electrified *Nights* researchers and revived Hannā Diyāb as a name. As a person, however, he was solely a Manonite named “Hanna” from Aleppo of unspecified age.

Scholars and journalists filled in blank spaces of Diyāb’s life with assumptions that a storytelling Maronite Christian from Aleppo must be illiterate and have told all of his stories to Antoine Galland (a knowledgeable scholar of Arabic) in Arabic, while the gripping plots of Diyāb’s stories suggested experience and thus a long life. Moreover, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century expectations for storytellers idealized illiteracy, an expectation that led to assumptions that Diyāb had learned his stories through his ears from other Arabic-speaking storytellers.

The documented presence of the plot of the Diyāb story “The Two Jealous Sisters”, in Giovan Francesco Straparola’s mid-1500s *Piacevoli Notti* meant – in the view of nineteenth-century literary scholars – that some unknown and necessarily bilingual storyteller had carried that story from the East to the West, where Straparola then created his “Ancilotto”. No-one then knew that “The Two Jealous Sisters” was not part of the *Nights* in the 1500s, not, in fact, associated with it until Diyāb told it to Galland in 1709.

In 1964 Mia Gerhardt reified a different proposition: the native-Arabic-speaking Diyāb must have taken this and other stories (the so-called “orphan stories”) from a never documented Arabic oral narrative tradition and have told it, along with other tales, to Antoine Galland. The accompanying expectation? The native Arabic-speaking Hannā told his “Arabic tales”, as Galland always called them, to Galland in Arabic.

All these propositions were called into question by articles such as “East Meets West” (2014), “Reading for Fun in Eighteenth-Century Aleppo” (2019) and “Hannā Diyāb’s Tales in Antoine Galland’s *MILLE ET UNE NUIT(S)*: I. New Perspectives ... (2020). In these articles I argued that its teller Hannā Diyāb had access to French-language books (including French translations of Straparola’s Italian tales) and Arabic-language manuscript-published popular tales.

1 Galland, ed. Bauden and Waller 2011 [1708–1709]: 1: 321.

The 2015 publication of *d'Alep à Paris*, Hannā Diyāb's 1763/1764 travel memoir, freed Diyāb from century-long allegations of illiteracy and monolingualism. With that, false truisms about his life story began to fall away. *D'Alep à Paris* and other translations demonstrate that Hannā Diyāb was not old and illiterate, but young, a ready reader, a traveler curious about his surroundings, and innocent as well as canny about his experiences in the world unfolding before him.

1.1.2 Adding Detail to Hannā Diyāb's Early Life Through Forensic Reading

Partial references scattered throughout Hannā Diyāb's travel memoir and other documents hint at facts of his early life. Gathering them into related categories produces interrelated semantic contents that overlap with and complement one another until a text-generated fact emerges. For instance, writing at the age of 75, Diyāb mentions a variety of household tasks he performed for a man called *khawājah* Rimbaud. At another point we learn that *khawājah* Rimbaud returned to Marseille. In other places we find that Diyāb worked for Rimbaud for twelve years, beginning at a young age and that his older brother Antūn also worked for the same employer. Initially unrelated, these and other facts coalesce into a coherent history of Diyāb's childhood employment by a sympathetic employer.

The emerging facts of Hannā Diyāb's life, a microhistory, are amplified by studies of daily life such as Alexander Russell's 1756 *Natural History of Aleppo* and Abraham Marcus's 1989 *Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*. Similarly detailed studies in other disciplines – such as lists of Marseille merchants – illuminate and extend the information assembled from detail-oriented readings of the travel memoir: eventually, disparate details aggregate into an image that has much the same standing as a citable fact.

Because this kind of reasoning duplicates that customary in courts of law, it is called forensic reading. Forensic reading of Diyāb's travel memoir yields footnoted components of each aggregate fact. Applying the same technique to Galland's journal recordings of Diyāb's stories yields similarly relevant results for the mechanics and dynamics of Diyāb's storytelling.

1.1.3 Hannā Diyāb's Name

When the 2015 Fahmé-Thiéry / Heyberger / Lentin translation of the Diyāb travel memoir included an inscription declaring “Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb” as the manuscript's owner and dated that claim with the notation “in the Christian year 1766”,

“Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb” was understood as Hannā Diyāb’s full and complete name.² However, much argues against that proposition.

1. During his entire life, Hannā used the patronymic “ibn Diyāb” when referring to himself. (See below, “Diyāb as Patronymic and Surname”.)
2. In terms of his given name, Diyāb refers to himself only as “Hannā” and never as “Antūn” or “Yoūsef”.
3. The discrepancy in naming outlined in 1. and 2. suggests that “Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb” refers to someone other than Hannā ibn Diyāb.
4. Thus, the inscription declares (new) ownership of the manuscript.
5. New ownership clearly implies the cessation of prior ownership. For Hannā Diyāb, who was 75 in 1763 (see below “Hannā Diyāb’s Probable Year of Death” and “Early 1688 as Hannā Diyāb’s Year and Season of Birth”) a death in 1766 at the age of 77 or 78 is a reasonable conjecture.
6. Cessation of ownership strongly implies death as having caused that cessation.
7. The ownership of family items is regularly transferred to a lineal descendant of the decedent Hannā ibn Diyāb.
8. It is reasonable to conclude that “Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb” is a surviving son of Hannā (ibn) Diyāb,³
9. and that “Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb” was Hannā ibn Diyāb’s first surviving son, because the given name “Antūn” may memorialize Hannā’s older brother Antūn, with whom he worked and lived during his his childhood and youth (see below, “Hannā Goes to Work” and “The ibn Diyāb Siblings”) and to whose house he returned home in 1710.⁴
10. The evident closeness between Antūn and Hannā may have inclined Hannā ibn Diyāb to name a son of his after that older brother. I have no explanation for the second given name “Yoūsef”.

The third forename, “Hanna”, gives pause. One possibility is that “Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb”, the book’s new owner, was called something different during his childhood and youth. After all, his father Hannā ibn Diyāb used a patronymic, and

² Full disclosure: I, too, was briefly misled into accepting this name as the full name of Hannā ibn Diyāb.

³ In terms of inheritance Feras Krimsti similarly assumes that a father’s book possessions passed to a son. See Krimsti 2019.

⁴ *Book of Travels* 2021 [1763–1764]: 2:247. It is possible that the son added “Hannā” to his name to identify himself as Hannā Diyāb’s son, as opposed to the son of any other Diyāb / Dyāb / Diab in Aleppo by the 1760s. In any case, the year-of-acquisition inscription by “Yūsuf Hannā Diyāb” gives evidence that supports both possibilities: In that inscription we see a given name and the final name positioned without an “ibn” which is therefore to be understood as a family name.

perhaps Antūn Yoūsef followed this habit during all or part of his father’s lifetime. In that case he would have been known as “Antūn Yoūsef ibn Hannā”. And then, because “Hannā”s was so common a name in Aleppo, Antūn Yoūsef, or others, may have added “ibn Diyāb” to distinguish him from other Aleppan “ibn Hannā”s. That would produce the lengthy name “Antūn Yoūsef ibn Hannā ibn Diyāb”. Dropping both “ibn”s would then yield the name as it appears in the 1766 inscription, “Antūn Yoūsef Hannā Diyāb”. Whatever its earlier form, the “Diyāb” name, as written by the travel memoir’s new possessor, marks a shift from “ibn Diyāb” as a patronymic to “Diyāb” as a henceforth stable family name. (See below, “A Word About Names”).

1.1.4 Hannā Diyāb’s Probable Year of Death

The “Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb” book ownership mark is dated 1766. For those who believe the bookmark was penned by Hannā ibn Diyāb, it would follow that Hannā ibn Diyāb was still living in 1766 and that the date of his death must be understood as “1766 or *after*”. If one holds that the book ownership mark was written not by Hannā ibn Diyāb but by an inheritor, then the date of death must be 1766 or *before*.

If we understand the person named in the post-memoir inscription as Hannā ibn Diyāb’s *son* rather than as Hannā ibn Diyāb himself, then the inscription changes from an unnecessary repetition of authorship to marking a *change in ownership* through which the book passed from Hannā ibn Diyāb’s possession to “Antūn Yoūsef Hanna Dyāb” genitives ownership. In this case, dating the change in ownership as 1766, the person writing the inscription inadvertently dates the year in which Hannā Diyāb’s ownership ceased by virtue of his death. Consequently, the year 1766 becomes the highly probable date of Hannā Diyāb’s death.⁵

1.1.5 1688 as Hannā Diyāb’s Year of Birth

About midway through his travel memoir, Hannā Diyāb notes: “As I now write this account of my voyage, it is the year 1763”.⁶ Twenty-four pages earlier, about halfway

5 It is theoretically possible that egregious conditions led to a delay in the disposal of a decedent’s property, for example, protracted litigation about which heir should inherit which possessions or a lengthy delay in inheritors’ learning of Hannā Diyāb’s death, either of which could have delayed property transfer. If that was the case, then the date of death might be earlier than 1766. Because we do not know the season of Hannā Diyāb’s death, it could be hypothesized that he died in the last few days of 1765, with disposition of his effects taking place early in 1766. The absence of a month and day from the memoir’s ownership statement leaves 1766 as the more probable year of Hannā Diyāb’s death.

6 Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2:11. The French translation reads: “J’ai en effet rédigé ce récit de voyage et cette chronique en l’année 1763 ...” (Dyāb 2015: 263. Note that the Arabic word here translated as

through the travel memoir manuscript, Diyāb announces his age: “I’m now seventy-five years old ...”⁷ The simple calculation – 1763 – 75 – yields 1688 as Diyāb’s year of birth.

If Hanna had just turned 75 when he stated his age in 1763, 1688 would unquestioningly be his year of birth. If, however, he had been 75 years old for nearly a year when he wrote these words, then, of course, he was about to turn 76 and thus his 76th birthday might still fall in 1763. That would change his year of birth to late 1687.⁸ In an appendix I use data established subsequently in this article to further explore the question of Hannā Diyāb’s season of birth. Although that exercise entails assumptions about probabilities, it has nonetheless led me to the working hypothesis that Diyāb was born in early 1688.

1.1.6 “Diyāb” as Patronymic and Surname

In transliterations of Arabic— here into the Roman alphabet – names, and words in general, may legitimately be transliterated according to their Arabic *spelling*, their *standard pronunciation*, or their *colloquial pronunciation*. That observation is relevant for the Diyāb name: it was the *forename* of Hannā ibn Diyāb’s father, which we know to be the case, because Hannā used “Hannā ibn Diyāb” as his own name during his life. (See below.) After his death, and possibly during his lifetime, however, Hannā ibn Diyāb’s descendants began using “Diyāb” as a family name. Whether used as a patronymic (ibn Diyāb), or as a family name (Diyāb) the name appears in the 1764 travel memoir as دياب (d-y-long a-b). The travel memoir’s *French* translators transliterate the name’s *spelling* as “Dyāb”, the spelling used here in citations from the French translation. In the *English* translation of the travel memoir, and in English popular and scholarly writing as a whole, the same Arabic name, دياب, is transliterated with an “i” – “Diyāb”. This apparently results from incorporating a barely audible sound that links the name’s initial “d” to the following “y”. To the best of my knowledge, this issue has not been directly addressed with reference to the transliteration of the Dyāb / Diyāb name. In the Roman alphabet, the *alif*, l, or long “a”, appears typographically either as “ā” or “ā̄”. Hence, commonly encountered transliterations include “Dyāb” and “Dyā̄b” as well as “Diyā̄b” and “Diyāb”. The same

“rédiger” is the Arabic verb *kataba*, “to write”. My thanks to Bernard Heyberger for clarifying the translation.

⁷ Dyāb 2015 231; Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1:247.

⁸ For recent accounts of Hannā Diyāb’s life, see Razzaque 2017, Marzolph and van Leeuwen 2004; Marzolph 2018; Teller 2021.

name also appears as “Diab”⁹ and “Diyab”, that is, without diacritical marks, with the latter often in articles written for general audiences.¹⁰ Since this article is in English, I follow the current English academic spelling, “Diyāb”.

The name “Dipy”, “Dipi”, or “Dippi” is associated with another person entirely, Pierre Dipy (birth date unknown–died February 1709). Born in Aleppo and widely but incorrectly identified in modern scholarship as a Maronite Christian, Dipy lived in Paris at least from the 1670s onward, rose from Arabic–French translator to keeper of Oriental manuscripts for Louis XIV’s library and eventually to holder of a chair in Arabic at the Collège Royal. In 1674, however, Dipy inscribed a reader’s mark onto a manuscript copy of *Kalila wa Dimna* in Louis XIV’s library, where he wrote his name and patronymic as “Butrus ibn Hajj Diyāb”¹¹ / “Diyāb”.¹² Galland’s acute awareness of Pierre Dipy¹³ may account for his mistaken reference to Hannā Diyāb (as he may have known him) as “Jean Dipy” in a 1711 journal entry¹⁴ that converted “Dyāb” into the name of his Syrian Melkite predecessor in the Chair of Arabic the Collège Royal.

As outlined above, the man we now know as Hannā Diyāb called himself “Hannā ibn Diyāb”, which is confirmed by several ownership marks in his personal library. Into one he marked his personal ownership six times as “Hannā ibn Diyāb”

9 For instance, Heyberger 1994: 3 mentions a surviving letter from the Maronite monk Arsenios Diab written from Aleppo in 1770, about Mount Lebanon and Jarmānūs Diab who was confessor to the 18th-century Maronite mystic Hindiyya (Heyberger 1994: 520; Heyberger 2013b).

10 Teller 2021: n.p.

11 The patronymic “ibn Hajj Diyāb”, signals a “Greek” religious identity (because making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem conferred the title “hajj”, a practice common among “Greek” Christians but unknown among Maronites. Dipy’s retention of the title at this early point of his life in Paris suggests that he was born into an observant “Greek” household and that he moved, or was moved toward and into the Maronite community, perhaps because of the upward mobility it offered in the form of educational and travel benefits for Maronite boys. Bernard Heyberger focalizes Butrus / Petrus / Pierre Dipy’s religious identity as Melkite (personal communication 17 December 2024). The reader’s mark is written out in Arabic in Akel 2017: 203n9 and was recently reproduced by Matthew Keegan in an X post.

12 The entire inscription, as translated by Matthew Keegan, reads “Buṭrus b. Ḥajj Diyāb al-Ḥalabī, translator of the French Sultan perused this copy in the year 1674”. For the inscription with its patronymic see Keegan, post on X. Pierre Dipy also wrote his name in Latin as “Petrus Dipy”. The spelling of the Dipy name as Dyāb might seem to suggest a possible relationship to Hannā Diyāb, but no existing evidence currently supports this speculation. According to Heyberger, the name Dyāb / Diyāb / Diab / Dyab does not appear in Maronite church records until the early eighteenth century (personal communication 4 January 2020).

13 It was Pierre Dipy’s February 1709 death that opened the Chair of Arabic at the Collège Royal for a new appointment. Galland alludes to his hope for the appointment repeatedly in 1709 journal entries up until his appointment in early June.

14 Galland’s faulty memory of Hannā Diyāb is first evident on Monday, 3 November 1710, when he names Damascus rather than Aleppo as his city of origin. On Sunday 10 January 1711 Galland remembers his name as “Jean Dipy” whom Monsieur Lucas had brought from the Levant.

(Hannā son of Diyāb).¹⁵ In the general absence of family names in Aleppo at the time (except for the wealthy or the highly placed), a patronymic was crucial. A sixfold repetition of his ownership also bespeaks a youthful joy at acquiring a book of his own, a delightful glimpse into Hannā ibn Diyāb's persona.

Before Hannā Diyāb's 1707–1710 journey to and back from France, he would have been known in Aleppo as “Hannā ibn Diyāb” within and outside of the Maronite community.¹⁶ Although necessary to distinguish one Aleppan boy named Hannā from another, in distant Paris, where no-one knew or had known the father named “Diyāb”, the patronymic-introducing “ibn” would be meaningless except for fellow Aleppan Maronites. Thus we may imagine that Paul Lucas (1664–1737) introduced Hannā to Antoine Galland and others as “Hannā Diyāb”, a naming pattern that fit into the Parisian social environment within which Paul Lucas circulated.¹⁷ Signatures on petitions in 1748, 1753 and 1763,¹⁸ in the colophon of a book he may have copied,¹⁹ and in his own *Book of Travels* show that he was once again “Hannā ibn Diyāb” when he returned to Aleppo in 1710.

For generations, scholars called the teller of the tales designated “orphan stories” in *Mille et une nuits* “Hannā”, his given name, while referring to the man to whom he told those tales as “Galland”. Because his own signature shows that he identified himself as “Hannā ibn Diyāb”, it seems appropriate to call him by the name that he used for himself, up to and including the completions of *The Book of Travels* in 1764. For that reason, I call him “Hannā” or “Hannā ibn Diyāb” in the context of his life in Aleppo but “Diyāb” or “Hannā Diyāb” in referring to modern scholarship. I do

15 Stephan 2021: 1: xxvii–xviii. Hannā expressed these joyous assertions of ownership with a statement that he had bought the book with his own money (Stephan 2021: 1: xxviii).

16 This is a surmise, since no documentary evidence survives to support the proposition.

17 If Lucas had introduced Hannā as “Hannā ibn Diyāb”, then it was Galland himself who later performed the cultural transformation from patronymic to family name. Galland initially referred to Hannā as “the Maronite Hanna” or “Anna”. References to Hannā with the family name “Diyāb” began only with Herman Zotenberg in the mid-1880s.

18 Personal communication from Feras Krimsti, Erfurt University, 20 March 2023.

19 “The name of the first owner has been inked out, presumably at the time the manuscript was purchased by Jibrā'īl ibn Yūsuf Qirmiz in 1817. When the manuscript was discovered in 1905, Rabbath read the original name below the smudge as “Çanna bin Diyāb al-marūnī fī Çalab” (see, Rabbath, al-Machriq [1905]: 823).” I suspect that the Aleppo MS may even have been copied by Diyāb himself, after having compared the handwriting in the Aleppo MS with that of the only known specimen of Diyāb's writing, Vatican MS Sbath 254. This manuscript contains Çanna Diyāb's own account of his journey to France in 1709, and a French translation of this fascinating work is currently being prepared under the direction of Bernard Heyberger, Paule Fahmé, and Jérôme Lentin. Whether Diyāb in fact modeled his own travelogue on Ilyās ibn Çanna's *Book of Travels*, therefore, is a question that deserves further exploration. At any rate, it suggests some intriguing connections between the afterlives of Ilyās' *Book of Travels*, the Ottoman sefaretnama (embassy/ambassador's report, R.B.B.) of 1719, and Diyāb's writings” (Ghobrial 2012: 263–264, footnote 8).

this to remind myself and others that the Hannā ibn Diyāb, whom we are still in the process of coming to know, often differs from the Hannā Diyāb depicted in scholarly and popular literature.

1.1.7 The Ghazālah Surname

Hannā's mother was a "Ghazālah". She herself is nowhere named on the surviving pages of *The Book of Travels*, and today we learn her family of origin only when Hannā names his maternal uncle, Shahīn Ghazālah, who supervised his entry into the cloth trade in Aleppo in 1710.²⁰ In the Muhanna translation this man is "my uncle Shāhīn Ghazzālah"²¹ and "mon oncle maternel Chahine Ghazāleh" in the Fahmé-Thiéry / Heyberger / Lentin translation (433). Differing spellings of the Ghazālah family name reflect the differences in French and English transliteration conventions discussed above. Contemporary variant spellings include "Gazalé", "Ghazalé", and "Gazaleh". I have settled on "Ghazālah" with one "z" as in the Fahmé-Thiéry / Heyberger / Lentin translation and "ah" as in the Muhanna translation.

1.1.8 The ibn Diyāb Siblings

Even without specific documentation, we may assume that a wedding united a man whose given name was Diyāb with a girl or young woman whose given name we do not know, but whose family name was Ghazālah. This marriage eventually produced Hannā ibn Diyāb, the youngest of at least five surviving siblings, a number based on Hannā's statement that his brothers and sisters came to welcome him on his return to Aleppo in 1710.²² Thus we may assume Hannā ibn Diyāb – 22 years old in 1710 – had two named brothers, 'Abdullāh and Antūn and at least two surviving sisters (whom he does not name).²³

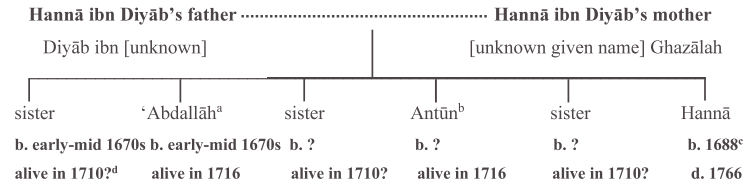
Throughout Hannā ibn Diyāb's travel memoir, his brother 'Abdallāh functions as head of the family. That does not necessarily mean that he was the oldest surviving child, but it does indicate that he was the eldest *son*. Readers may also note that one or both sisters may have been born before 'Abdullāh, and that the statistically high

²⁰ With respect to the uncle-nephew relationship, let us remember the strength of this familial affiliation in many walks of life in Syria (and far beyond) (Heyberger 1994: 130–137, esp. 132–133).

²¹ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2:249.

²² This also correlates with the most common number of surviving heirs in the mid-eighteenth century (Marcus 2001 and Marcus 1986: 172).

²³ The same passage appears to suggest that Hannā had more than two biological brothers: He was staying with his brother Antūn when he spoke of his "brothers and sisters" coming to see him (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2:247). Since Hannā mentions plural "brothers" who came to visit him at Antūn's dwelling, the fraternal relationship may include his brothers-in-law, that is, his sisters' husbands.



^a Dyāb 2015 [1763–1764]: 4.

^b Dyāb 2015 [1763–1764]: 4. Since Antūn already worked as a warehouseman for Rimbaud at the time Hannā began working, it is probable that Antūn was 3–6 years older than Hannā (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 225, 227). His position as warehouseman suggests that Antūn had worked long enough for Rimbaud to prove his responsibility.

^c Throughout the memoir ‘Abdallāh acts as head of the family. This implies that he was the oldest surviving brother. One or more sisters might have been born before or after ‘Abdallāh or Antūn. However, the trusted position that ‘Abdallāh enjoyed in *khawājah* Sauron’s employ by the time that Antūn and Hannā were employed by *khawājah* Rimbaud argues for an older age, i.e. earlier birth. This makes it more likely that ‘Abdallāh was at least six years older than Antūn.

^d Sisters in the plural welcome Hannā home in 1710 (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 247). ‘Abdallāh is alive in 1710 when Hannā’s maternal uncle helps establish Hannā in business (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 249) and is still living in 1716, when Hannā invites Paul Lucas to the home he evidently shares with ‘Abdallāh and Antūn (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 249, 251). The 2016 dating of this event is based on Lucas 2004 [1719]: 99–100, where Lucas details the 1716 Aleppo ceremonies that commemorate the 1 September 1715 death of Louis XIV (Lucas 2014 [1719]: 100–101) and describes the visit to the Cave of the Slave (also known as Castle of al-Tomātūn) that Lucas asked Hannā ibn Diyāb to organize (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2:253, 255,257, 259,261).

Figure 1: Hannā Diyāb’s Nuclear Family.

level of infant mortality in Aleppo in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries makes it highly likely that at least three or more children in addition to the three named brothers were born to Hannā’s parents.

In a sibling constellation like that in Figure 1, the closeness exhibited by Hannā toward his brother, Antūn throughout the memoir,²⁴ probably reflects a nearness in birth order that often produces a personal closeness and that is evident in Hannā’s travel memoir. The names of his mother and sisters, not included in the memoir’s surviving pages, may have appeared in the now-missing first five leaves.

Hannā mentions no younger brother or sister, although it is possible that one or more subsequently born siblings died in infancy or early childhood. With no mention of younger siblings, it is reasonable to conclude that his father died at the earliest during his wife’s final pregnancy in 1687–early 1688 and at the latest during Hannā’s infancy or early childhood. As a young child without a father and with a mother who was routinely debilitated by depression, it is equally reasonable to conclude that little

²⁴ On his return to Aleppo in late July 1710, Hannā went directly to Antūn’s house in Zuqāq al-Khall (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 247). Note transliteration into French as Zqāq al-Khall (Dyāb 2015: 432) “à la périphérie du faubourg de Jdaydé, rassemble la majorité des chrétiens” (ibid., 432 n2). Hannā appears to have lived in Zuqāq al-Khall with Antūn, until the three brothers moved in together into a larger residence sometime during the following year (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2:249).

Hannā was often in the care of one or more older sisters. In his first six years Hannā would have absorbed the domestic habits, tastes, and practices of his own and similar Aleppan households.

1.1.9 Hannā Goes To Work

Whatever the family's childcare arrangements, they changed suddenly when Hannā ibn Diyāb entered the workforce, around the age of six, not uncommon in Aleppo at that time.²⁵ His older brothers 'Abdallāh and Antūn were already employed – 'Abdallāh by *khawājah* Sauron and Antūn by *khawājah* Rimbaud (*khawājah* was a respectful form of address for both foreign and local merchants²⁶).

As Hannā approached the age of six, and, in particular when his brothers knew that he would be employed by the same French merchant for whom Antūn already worked, we may hypothesize that 'Abdallāh and Antūn began supplying their little brother with useful workaday information, like standard French phrases of courtesy and inquiry, such as the French equivalents for “May I bring you a cup of coffee?” and “What would it please you that I do now?” Young Hannā would also have needed to learn how to carry out oral instructions for simple housekeeping, as well as the kitchen tasks that he eventually took over from the household cook.²⁷

Here and there in *The Book of Travels* Hannā Diyāb refers to neighborhoods or buildings by name, references that show that he knew his way around the city on the streets where he lived and worked. He would also have known the souks at which he purchased foodstuffs for *khawājah* Rimbaud's meals as well as the *khans* of the French merchants to whom he would have delivered messages. Hannā does not state any of this in so many words, but such knowledge is consistent with the duties to which he alludes as part of his employment by *khawājah* Rimbaud.

The city in which Hannā ibn Diyāb spent his childhood and youth was described enthusiastically by Paul Lucas in Chapter XXIII of volume 1 of *Voyage du Sieur Paul Lucas dans le Levant juin 1699 – juillet 1703* (2 vols., 1704, Journey of the Gentleman Paul Lucas in the Levant [June 1699–July 1703]). It was August 1700 when Lucas reported that the city's well-constructed houses were built of dressed stone, its streets were paved, the level of its active commerce was high with a large number of caravans arriving from all over Asia, especially from Persia. Its merchants from England, France, and the Netherlands each had an established merchant colony and /

²⁵ Marcus 1989: 157, 181.

²⁶ Dyāb 2015: 66 note 1. Galland spelled the word as “*Cogia*” when he edited and expanded Diyāb's tales.

²⁷ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 177.

or consul and sent goods on to European markets. Local shops were in bazaars whose streets (*rues*) were closed and locked at night to deter theft.²⁸

Lucas's descriptions of his first visit to Aleppo furnish vivid images of the physical environment of twelve-year-old Hannā ibn Diyāb's urban environment, as he ran errands for *khawājah* Rimbaud, to whom Hannā later referred as Rimbaud the elder.²⁹

When Hannā ibn Diyāb entered Rimbaud's employ his life must have taken on a certain Frenchness. In Rimbaud's household, Hannā learned to cook, to serve food and drink in a manner that suited his French employer and eventually to manage the compact household in its entirety.³⁰ After twelve years, Hannā had mastered a range of domestic skills.

If *khawājah* Rimbaud lived like other French merchants in Aleppo, his living quarters would have been on the floor above the ground-floor-warehouse,³¹ where Antūn worked and was thus a close and ready guide as Hannā learned the habits and needs of his new employer upstairs. Young Hannā's employment put him under the care and protection of an older man. That Rimbaud regarded him warmly was shown in 1708, when they met in Marseilles and Rimbaud declared to Paul Lucas that he'd "raised" Hannā.³²

While Hannā and Antūn were employed by *khawājah* Rimbaud, their older brother 'Abdallāh was working as warehouse steward for one of Aleppo's most prominent French merchants, *khawājah* Sauron.³³ 'Abdallāh's responsible position made both Hannā and Antūn known among Aleppo's French community there and abroad, for in France Hannā was often recognized by someone who knew of him or his brother 'Abdallāh or who was personally acquainted with him in Aleppo and who made him welcome among French merchants and their Maronite employees. Hannā experienced this not only in the Levant, but also in North Africa, Marseille, and Paris. Such was the nature of the international French and Maronite merchant communities.

1.1.10 The Friends of Hannā ibn Diyāb's Childhood and Youth

As a child and youth, Hannā ibn Diyāb formed longstanding friendships with other boys in Aleppo. Many venues were available: Maronite social gatherings; group

²⁸ Lucas 1998 [1704]: 125.

²⁹ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 175.

³⁰ Dyāb 2015: 383; Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 175.

³¹ Russell 2021 [1756]: 133–134.

³² Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 269.

³³ Sauron's prominence is guaranteed by the fact that Paul Lucas lodged with him during his first and second voyages to the Levant (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 19; Dyāb 2015 [1763–1764]: 67). During his earlier stay in Aleppo, Lucas lodged with "Soron" and "Samatant" (Lucas 1998 [1704], ch. XXIII).

instruction in reading and writing Arabic; group religious instruction in Roman Catholic and / or Maronite beliefs and practices; shadow theater performances; snatched moments of free time during workdays; or informal gatherings to play games, such as stick and shield.³⁴ One friend from Hannā's youth was Hannā ibn Mikhāyil Mīro, who – when he accompanied his father to Aleppo – lodged at the Khān al-'Ulabiyya, where Hannā and his brother Antūn lived.³⁵ The closeness of the boys' relationship was expressed by his friend's salutation years later, when the two met unexpectedly far from Aleppo: "Brother Hannā ... [i]t's me, Hannā ibn Mikhāyil Mīro, your dear friend from Aleppo."³⁶

Hannā also lists three fellow novitiates, together with whom he went to, and subsequently left, the Maronite monastery of St. Elias. They were Dāwūd ibn Jabbūr al-Kwayyis, Mikhā'il ibn Tūmā Hawā, and Yūsuf ibn Shāhīn.³⁷ (Yūsuf was one of several Çelebi brothers, three of whom achieved eminent positions in later life: one in Ottoman administration, another in international commerce, and a third, Christofalo Çelebi, who rose in the service of the Roman Catholic church in Paris to the position of chief deputy to Cardinal Noailles (1651–1729) and was known as the Chevalier Maunier (?–1740).³⁸ Another friend was Yūsuf ibn al-Mukahhal,³⁹ also a

³⁴ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 67, 69, 73.

³⁵ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 243.

³⁶ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 243. N.B., "al-'Ulabiyya", transliterated in French as "al-Oulabiyyé" (Dyāb 2015 [1763–1764]: 429). Later in its history part or all of the Khān al-'Ulabiyya was designated the "Qaysaria al-'Ulabiyya", at a period when a greatly increased manufacturing was part of the *khān* building's economy. It had "vast workshops and in some cases provided cheap and modest lodging for workers" (footnote 9 in https://edit.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/aleppo-heritage-catalogue/site-and-urban-network?page_id=144014). "al-'Ulabiyya" refers to boxmaking, a trade in which Hannā's brother Antūn may or may not have been involved. If he were associated with boxmaking and was in partnership with Mikhāyil Mīro, he may have left Rimbaud's employ to do so. Alternatively, Antūn may have lodged there already and have taken his younger brother with him, when Hannā began working for *khawājah* Rimbaud. A possible reason for doing so could have been domestic overcrowding, if and when 'Abdullāh married and began to have children in a household that would also have included his sickly mother and possibly an as yet unmarried sister.

"al-'Ulabiyya" was one of three *khāns* in a complex constructed under early Ottoman rule in Aleppo. It comprised a mosque, "al-'Ulabiyya" *khān* (boxmakers), al-Farrayin *khān* (furriers), and al-Nahhasin (coppersmiths); one souk for each of the three *khāns*, as well as al-Jukj souk for broadcloth. See Dima Dayoub Website for Site and Urban Network Aleppo Heritage Catalogue ([https://edit.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/aleppo-he et al., ritage-catalogue/site-and-urban-network?page_id=144014](https://edit.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/aleppo-he-et-al.,-ritage-catalogue/site-and-urban-network?page_id=144014)).

³⁷ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 19.

³⁸ Diyāb encountered Christofalo Çelebi, "the brother of Paulo Çelebi in Aleppo" (Diyāb (2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 39) as Chevalier Maunier, who must have thoroughly integrated himself into French life and culture, because he was described in the year of his death, 1740, as a Frenchman, the son of a prominent Marseille family, who had been born in Aleppo where he had married a daughter of a premiere Syrian Catholic family (Akel 2017: 203).

³⁹ Dyāb 2015 [1763–1764]: 77; Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 243.

Maronite from Aleppo, whom Hannā unexpectedly encountered in Beirut and who took him to “see the cave of the dragon slain by Saint George”.⁴⁰ There was also Hannā ibn al-Zughbī, another Maronite from Aleppo, who persuaded Hannā to return to Aleppo from Istanbul rather than undertake further adventures abroad.⁴¹ We may assume that Hannā spoke his own native Arabic with all of these native-Arabic-speaking friends from his childhood, adolescence, and the early years of his adulthood. Nowhere does he explicitly say so, but it is a reasonable conclusion.

1.1.11 The Journey from Aleppo to Paris

The first precisely datable event in Diyāb’s young life is 24 March 1707, as Paul Lucas dates their departure from Aleppo. On that morning he rose early, packed up a few belongings, left the inn to go to *khān* al-Zayt, the gathering point for caravans setting out southwest to Tripoli and managed to avoid encountering Paul Lucas and the prominent Aleppo merchants accompanying him to his departure. In Hannā ibn Diyāb’s mind, his departure from Aleppo turned him back toward the contemplative life of Christian obedience and service that he had rejected months earlier, because he had concluded he had no vocation for that life. His joining the caravan going to Tripoli was meant to go only as far as Mount Lebanon, where he would ponder eternal questions. Little wonder, then, that he did not note the date.

Paul Lucas noted the date, however. In chronicling his second voyage to the Levant he was also justifying the use he made of the funds his monarch’s government invested in his expedition. The raw journal that his editor transformed into *The Second Voyage to the Levant* dated arrival and / or departure dates far more scrupulously than had been the case with the published account of his first voyage to the Levant. To be sure, Lucas noted the date obliquely, saying that he stayed in Aleppo “until the 24th” [of March].⁴²

1.1.12 Maronites within Eastern Christianities and Hannā Diyāb

In many areas of daily life Muslim-favoring governmental regulations reinforced Muslim political dominance. It was a fact of life. Under these conditions, the minority

⁴⁰ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 33, 35. It is pictured at <https://365daysoflebanon.com/2016/05/18/the-patron-saint-of-beirut/>.

Diyāb does not mention visiting the chapel associated with St. George, probably because Ottoman rulers had by then converted it to a mosque (<https://365daysoflebanon.com/2016/05/18/the-patron-saint-of-beirut/>).

⁴¹ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 179.

⁴² “D’Alepe, où je demeurais jusqu’au 24, j’allai à *Tripoli de Syrie* par les mêmes endroits que dans mon premier voyage” (Lucas 2002 [1712]: 164).

status of Maronites and other Eastern Christians⁴³ meant that they suffered from the Muslim governing and taxing structure. As a result, confessional differences remained relatively inconsequential between Christian communities and individual members of communities like the Eastern Christian “Greek”-oriented Ghazālāhs and the Eastern Christian but Western Catholic-oriented Maronites.

By the time Paul Lucas observed and recorded religious divisions in Aleppo in the first years of the eighteenth century, the Eastern Christian religious world he describes had begun to change from a generalized Eastern Christianity comprising internal groups of different coloration. In his view Eastern Christians in Aleppo consisted of three groups, whom he briefly identified as “Greeks”, “Armenians”, and “Jacobins” (Syrians). In contrast he described Aleppo’s Maronites as having familial and / or individual connections with the clerics of one or more of the four Roman Catholic orders in Aleppo: Jesuit, Carmelite, Capuchin, and the Fathers of the Holy Land.⁴⁴

When Paul Lucas first described Aleppo in August 1700 he was staying with his old friend Monsieur Sauron, and only two degrees of separation (Sauron and Sauron’s warehouse steward ‘Abdullāh ibn Diyāb) lay between him and Hannā ibn Diyāb. In August 1700 Hannā was a boy of 12. He had been working for *khawājah* Rimbaud for six years and was one of the Maronites whom Lucas described as being well acquainted with Western Catholic clerics. Details like these confirm the importance of the religious resources that Hannā made use of during his journey abroad when he needed reliable information about people and places. When the 36-year-old Lucas met the 19-year-old Hannā ibn Diyāb in March 1707 he had not only Hannā’s knowledge of French to recommend him, but also his participation in known and trusted commercial (the French merchant community) and religious (Maronite) networks. In Lucas’s mind these factors made Hannā a suitable choice for immediate employment as a dragoman and valet and eventual employment as royal librarian in Paris.⁴⁵

Much more can and will be written about the larger role of Maronite Christianity in the formation of the personal, workaday, and family experiences of Hannā ibn Diyāb’s life. That, however, will be addressed in a subsequent article.

1.1.13 Social and Economic Divides Between the Ghazālāhs and the ibn Diyābs

The striking absence of grandparents and first cousins that characterizes Hannā ibn Diyāb’s travel memoir invites scrutiny. Many causes may have contributed to the

⁴³ Note that Géraldine Chatelard (2003) understands some 19th- and 20th-century confessional differences as tribal in nature.

⁴⁴ Lucas 1998 [1704]: 125.

⁴⁵ Precisely these qualities – his knowledge of French, his religion, and his connections with Sauron – emerge from Hannā’s account of the interview that Lucas conducted with him soon after leaving Aleppo (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 21, 23.

evident separation between the Ghazālāhs and the ibn Diyābs during Hannā's childhood and youth. Ghazālāh family wealth, as exemplified in the seventeenth century by their palatial dwelling,⁴⁶ contrasts sharply with the cramped living conditions of their ibn Diyāb grandsons Antūn and Hannā in the al-'Ulabiyya *khān* (see above, "Hannā Goes To Work" and immediately below). The Ghazālāhs' prosperity continued robustly into the eighteenth century when they added an imposing and expensive reception space (*iwan*) to the Ghazālāh mansion in 1737.

The one dwelling that can be precisely located for the brothers Antūn and Hannā is the *khān al-'Ulabiyya*, where they lived when Hannā would have been working for *khawājah* Rimbaud. The *khān* may also have been the "house" to which Hannā returned, after he and three friends left St. Elias monastery in late 1706.⁴⁷ Hannā used the word *beit* for "house", but Aleppo's "houses" ranged widely in size from 900 square-meter multi-courtyard mansions to small cramped dwellings of only 83 square meters.⁴⁸ More humble still were apartment-like units in shared housing associated with workshops (*qaysaria*), like those attached to the *khān* al-'Ulabiyya where Hannā and Antūn lived sometime during the 1690s and / or early 1700s. The contrast between this *beit* and the grandeur of the Ghazālāh family house, even before its magnificent *iwan* was constructed, must have been stark.

By 1710, when Hannā returned to Aleppo from his travels through North Africa, France, and Turkey, his two older brothers each had his own dwelling. Antūn lived in a narrow street (alley) called Zuqāq al-Khall in the northern suburbs of Aleppo⁴⁹ and 'Abdullāh lived somewhere else.⁵⁰ A few years later, the three brothers lived together in a single house, probably outside the walls, since Hannā speaks of going "to the city" from their shared home.⁵¹ Thirty years after that, in 1740, Hannā was listed in a census report as the head of a 12-person household, six male and six female.⁵² With

46 David and Cristofoli 2019: 44, 62, 66, 110.

47 In this passage Hannā recounts hosting one of Antūn's business associates in their "house" (*beit*) in the early 1700s in the *Qaysaria* of the *khān* al-'Ulabiyya (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 19), a modest hostelry, where rooms could be rented. It would have been no place for Hannā's mother or one or more of his unmarried sisters, who would probably have been living with the head of family, Hannā's oldest brother 'Abdullāh. For more details about the *khān* al-'Ulabiyya, see footnotes 36 and 63.

48 Raymond also credits work by Jean-Claude David (Raymond 1984a: 77).

49 Raymond 1984b: 458.

50 Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 247.

51 Hannā alludes to comfortable living conditions in describing his hosting Paul Lucas for dinner and an overnight stay (Diyāb, 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 249. At that point the three brothers 'Abdallāh, Antūn, and Hannā apparently lived together ("our house") in a two-story house, in which Hannā had furnished a bachelor room for himself on the upper floor. His speaking of himself as a bachelor suggests that Antūn and 'Abdullāh were both married. The house was probably located outside the city walls, where a garden would have been a desirable amenity (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764] 2: 251).

52 Heyberger 2015: 9, note 2.

that many family members, he probably had a two-story courtyard house. But it would still have been a far cry from the splendor of the Ghazālāhs' mansion.⁵³

2 Part II

2.1 Hannā Diyāb's Knowledge of French Language and Culture

2.1.1 1694–1706: Childhood and Adolescence

Before Hannā ibn Diyāb went to work for *khawājah* Rimbaud, he would have lived at home and played with friends as a native Arabic-speaking child in a predominantly Arabic-speaking urban environment within the Ottoman Empire. As a child, he would have thought about his daily life in terms that affected him personally: the weather, playing with friends, and perhaps lessons of some sort. At some point in his childhood, he was also instructed to read and write Arabic.⁵⁴ Such teaching could have taken place in a formal setting with a small group of other Maronite youngsters or informally, possibly at home with his mother, his next older brother Antūn, and / or older sisters, perhaps even in Aleppo's Jesuit *collège*.

Once Hanna began to work for *khawājah* Rimbaud, both the dominant culture and the culture of dominance changed to French: He needed to understand requests, directives, and commands and to respond with appropriate actions. In the initial stages of learning how to work successfully for *khawājah* Rimbaud, Hannā could turn to his brother Antūn, working downstairs in the warehouse. The more French he learned, the more his employer could rely on him to fulfill the requirements of his working environment. As Hannā's fluency in French expanded and his knowledge of his employer's habits and needs increased, he would have been able to function with less guidance and a greater ability to observe intelligently and learn on his own.

Hannā Diyāb's learning French in the twelve years from 1694 to 1706 extended beyond Rimbaud's household and business, for in those years Hannā ibn Diyāb's "dearest friend"⁵⁵ was "Samatan" (=surname),⁵⁶ probably the son of the prominent

53 Pictured on the fold-out back cover of David and Cristofoli 2019 and described textually (David and Cristofoli 2019: 44, 62, 66, 110).

54 Schooling for Maronite children became regular in 1685 but was often interrupted by epidemics. Tuition was free for the poor (Heyberger 1994: 454). The Maronite school described here was run by Capuchins, which may be relevant to the frequency with which Hannā ibn Diyāb seeks out and / or refers to Capuchins in his travel memoir. For earlier schooling in Aleppo see Heyberger 1994: ch. 15 (453–478).

55 Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 2: 269.

56 Lucas spelled this name as "Samatant" (Lucas 1998 [1704]: 125).

French merchant of the same name in Aleppo at that time. Hannā might have met his dearest friend through his brother ‘Abdullāh, who had once worked for *khawājah* Samatan.⁵⁷ Young Hannā’s warm friendship with Samatan would have broadened his French vocabulary, unless Samatan’s spoke Arabic fluently, which was uncommon among French merchants in Aleppo. Unlike the merchants Sauron and Rimbaud, who seem to have been many years older than ‘Abdullāh, Antūn, and Hannā, Samatan must have been much closer in age to Hannā. Whatever his age, conversation with this dear friend would have broadened Hannā’s French vocabulary. Through connections like this, Hannā, ‘Abdullāh, and Antūn were close to sons of wealthy Marseille merchants,⁵⁸ most of whom represented their families’ interests in Aleppo for years at a time from the 1690s to the 1720s.⁵⁹ Personal convergences like these confirm the ibn Diyāb brothers’ close connections to the world of French Catholic commerce and culture in Aleppo.

Personal relationships with members of Aleppo’s French merchant community not only deepened Hannā’s knowledge of the French language; they also exposed him to the French spoken by southern Frenchmen from Marseille, the home city of nearly all of Aleppo’s French merchants in those years.⁶⁰ Provençal-tinged vocabulary, usage, and pronunciation apparently influenced Hannā’s French, witness Antoine Galland’s March 1709 statement that Hannā spoke Provençal.⁶¹ There is also considerable evidence of Provençal influence in the speech in which Hannā later told tales to Galland.⁶² To sum up: The linguistic evidence suggests that during his childhood and adolescence Hannā ibn Diyāb learned French from speakers who themselves spoke a Provençal-based French. This affected Hannā’s pronunciation of French, which occasionally shines through Antoine Galland’s recordings of his 1709 storytelling.

In the twelve years that Hannā worked for *khawājah* Rimbaud, he spent the greater part of each working day in the linguistic environment of speakers from Marseille. But at the end of each workday and on holidays, he returned to the linguistically Arabic and culturally Arab world that he shared with members of his nuclear family in their homes or at the *khān* al-‘Ulabiyya,⁶³ where he and his brother Antūn lived (see above, “Hannā Goes To work”). By his teenage years, Hannā knew how to live within both his natal world, as well as within Rimbaud’s individual and

57 Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 2: 139.

58 In the case of Hannā’s relationship with Rimbaud the elder, his close connection was not with the son, but with the father (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 175; 1: 267, 269).

59 Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 1: 291–292, note 2.

60 Hannā may have spoken Arabic with some of the European Roman Catholic clergy who befriended him, since some of them had achieved fluency in Arabic.

61 Sunday, 17 March 1709 (Galland 2011 [1708–1709]: 286).

62 Bottigheimer forthcoming.

63 The location of the *khān* al-‘Ulabiyya is shown in Raymond 1984a: 29.

French general linguistic habits and domestic order. The first world was lococentric, familial, filled with arabophone friends. The other, oriented westward, was commercial and francophone.

2.1.2 1706–1707: A Non-French Interval

During the spring to fall months that Hannā ibn Diyāb spent at the St. Elias monastery in 1706, he would have spoken Arabic conversationally and Syriac liturgically. Certain fixed prayers he would have heard and possibly spoken in ancient Syro-Aramaic. His memoir gives no evidence that he spoke French during these months.

In the autumn of 1706 Hannā left monastic life and returned to Aleppo. When he found no employment with any of Aleppo's French merchants, it is likely that his contact with French language and culture remained low for more months. By March 1707 he had determined to return to St. Elias monastery, knowing that its abbot would welcome him back.⁶⁴ He secretly booked passage with a caravan heading toward Tripoli, but within hours of the caravan's early morning departure, he became acquainted with Paul Lucas, the "Frank who was staying at the home of *khawājah* Sauron, my brother's master".⁶⁵

On the first evening of the caravan journey Hannā rendered Lucas a service, and Lucas invited him to eat dinner with him. The two "stayed up", smoking pipes, "chatting into the night".⁶⁶ Since Paul Lucas spoke no Arabic, he needed a translator (1:23) and their chat was in French. Having witnessed Hannā ibn Diyāb's fluency in both Arabic and French, and learning that he was literate in both languages, Lucas promised "a position for [him] at the Arabic Library [in Paris] ... [,] a salary" and lifelong royal protection (ibid.). Cautiously wishing to check Lucas's credentials in Tripoli, Hannā promised to deliver a decision within a few days. This moment effectively marked the beginning of daily French-language interaction between the two men.

2.1.3 Spring 1707 – Summer 1708: On the Road with Paul Lucas

Hannā ibn Diyāb was not part of a group migration and re-settlement.⁶⁷ He was an individual Christian, a native speaker of Arabic with a native experience of Christian Arab life in Aleppo, a commercial entrepôt in the Ottoman Empire that linked East, South, and Central Asia with European markets. As such, his experience was similar

⁶⁴ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 1: 19.

⁶⁵ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 1: 19.

⁶⁶ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 1:21.

⁶⁷ Such as those described in essays in Szkudlarek et al. 2020.

to that of a small number of other individual Eastern Christians who moved between the Levant and Europe.⁶⁸

When Hannā ibn Diyāb accepted Paul Lucas's 1707 offer of a permanent position in the Royal Library in Paris, he demonstrated an intention to leave Aleppo permanently and to begin a new life in Paris. At nineteen, the hopelessness of repeated failures to find employment turned into confidence in his competence in French language, culture, and social skills. His year and a half on the road with a native French speaker who had been born and raised in Rouen provided Hannā with a new experience of French, the French spoken in northern France and at the court of Louis XIV. His experiences as a guest of eminent French merchants in the Levant and North Africa, and his translations of long conversations between the Bey of Tunis and Paul Lucas imply an ever-expanding knowledge of French vocabulary about local commerce, social conditions, and medical practice. Under these conditions Hannā ibn Diyāb expanded his linguistic competence beyond commercial French and began to move toward functional bilingualism through his inquisitiveness as he and Lucas traveled along the southern shore of the Eastern Mediterranean, able to translate into and out of French, as it was spoken in both southern and northern France.

2.1.4 1710: Hannā Diyāb Uses French to Revise and Reverse His Identity

In France, Hannā Diyāb had been an Arab among Europeans. As he journeyed homeward through the Ottoman Empire, Diyāb reversed his identity and became a Frenchman among a varying population of Ottoman subjects and administrators and made use of his French-Arabic bilingualism to do so. He adopted the identity of a French-speaking physician traveling in search of medicinal plants in the service of the king of France. He dressed his hair in the French manner, dressed his body in French clothing, and spoke the French language. This disguise must have been comfortably familiar from his travels with Paul Lucas; it also gained him exemption from governmental levies he would have had to pay as an Ottoman subject. Passing as a Frenchman also enabled him to practice his Christian religion without arousing antagonism, which contrasts sharply with his wearing a white turban to pass as a Muslim on the outward journey from Aleppo to Tunis in 1707.

In Lucas's company in North Africa Hannā had learned how to turn outsiderdom to advantage among the populations through which he passed. As an Arab at the court of Versailles, Diyāb and his Aleppan dress-up clothes aroused curiosity. And in his amazement at theater mechanics in Paris he amused salon guests. On occasion he slipped smoothly into the entourage of a visiting Turkish ambassador. Genial, open,

⁶⁸ Note, however, the non-mass nature of such travels with only 5 in Paris, as opposed to 21 in Livorno (Heyberger 2009: 93).

and appealing, Hannā Diyāb seemed to know that he could turn outsiderdom into a useful alias. He did so in North Africa by wearing a white turban and passing as just another Muslim in a population hostile to Christians. In Paris he grew his hair, shaved his face, and dressed as a Frenchman. On the road, he continued to do so until he re-entered the city of his birth and childhood, but once there, he shaved his head, put on a blue turban, and returned to his life as a Maronite Christian in Muslim Aleppo.

3 Part III

3.1 “The Maronite Hannā”

It is a commonplace that Hannā ibn Diyāb was a Maronite Christian. This section explores what that religious identity meant in terms of his childhood and youth in Aleppo and what it later meant as a young man, when cosmopolitan opportunities opened before him.

He and his family were Christians living in the Ottoman Empire, where – as in most Muslim-governed areas of the early modern world – small enclaves of Eastern Christians and other tolerated religious minorities dotted the map. Beliefs and practices in these Christian communities often diverged from one another. Many church hierarchies were headed by local or regional patriarchs.

Christian communities within the Ottoman Empire, as a group, were subject to financial and legal burdens born of their minority position (more or less equally), and they lived (more or less amicably) with and among one another. This is a simplified but fair description of the general situation in the Ottoman Empire in the early 1670s, the period in which the marriage between Hannā ibn Diyāb’s mother and father was contracted.

In Aleppo, the city of Hannā’s birth, the four principal communities of Eastern Christians were the “Greeks”, the Armenians, the Jacobins (Syrians), and the Maronites. Each had a church on Churches Square⁶⁹ in the Judayda neighborhood, where the highest concentration of Christians lived. Until the 1670s, Maronites were the only Eastern Christians who recognized the Roman Catholic pope as their hierarchical head.

Within the general fluidity within Eastern Christianities we cannot identify Hannā’s father Diyāb as a Maronite, “Greek”, Syrian, or Armenian, because no religiously identifying information about him has apparently survived. He may have simply drifted among any or all of Aleppo’s Eastern Christian confessions, until his first son and he reflected on that child’s future and recognized the worldly benefits of aligning himself and that son with the Maronite community. We will probably never

⁶⁹ Burns and Knost (https://edit.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/aleppo-heritage-catalogue/english/list-of-content_144712.html, consulted 31 January 2025).

know the confession into which Hannā's father was born. What's important is that Diyāb appears to have moved each of his sons into Aleppo's Maronite orbit.

3.1.1 The "Greeks"

It is likely that Hanna's mother was born into a "Greek" family. For centuries the "Greeks" were a heterogeneous group, both of whose constituent groups had for centuries used the same Byzantine liturgy. The smaller of the groups forming the "Greeks" were the Melkites, whose liturgical language had originally been Syriac but subsequently became Arabic. They recognized the Patriarch of Antioch as the head of their religious community. In 1724 Melkites split into those who recognized the Roman Catholic Pope as the ultimate head of their church and those who continued to adhere to the Antiochian Patriarchate.⁷⁰

The larger group among the "Greeks" before the early 1670s was composed of those who used Greek as their liturgical language, who recognized the primacy of Patriarchate in Istanbul (the former Constantinople), and whose church eventually evolved into today's Greek Orthodox Church.⁷¹

3.1.2 Maronites within Eastern Christianity in Syria and Lebanon

Among Eastern Christians until 1724, that is, during Hannā ibn Diyāb's parents' marriage and during his childhood, youth, young adulthood, and the first fourteen years of his life as a cloth merchant in Aleppo, Maronites were the only Eastern Christians who recognized the primacy of the Roman Catholic papacy. Before the 1670s this difference was of little consequence to other Eastern Christians, since *all* Eastern Christians suffered similar legal and financial burdens, because of their minority religious status in the Ottoman Empire, where Muslim-favoring governmental regulations reinforced Muslim political dominance in many areas of daily life. It was a fact of life. All Eastern Christians in the Muslim Ottoman Empire suffered in common from repressive governance and extra taxation. As a result, confessional differences remained rather inconsequential

⁷⁰ The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (Ελληνορθόδοξο Πατριαρχείο Αντιοχείας), also known as the Antiochian Orthodox Church and legally as the Rūm Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (Arabic: بطريركية أنطاكية وسائر المشرق للروم الأرثوذكس, *Baṭṭirīyarkīyyat 'Anṭākiya wa-Sā'ir al-Mašriq li-r-Rūm al-'Urtūduks*, literally, 'Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East for the Orthodox Rum', is an autocephalous Greek Orthodox church within the wider communion of Eastern Orthodox Christianity that originates from the historical Church of Antioch. Headed by the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, it considers itself the successor to the Christian community founded in Antioch by the Apostles Peter and Paul. It is one of the largest Christian denominations of the Middle East, alongside the Copts of Egypt and the Maronites of Lebanon" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Orthodox_Patriarchate_of_Antioch#cite).

⁷¹ See Heyberger 1994 for a fine-grained analysis of Eastern Christianity.

between religious communities and individual members of those communities. That began to change when Roman Catholic missionaries began arriving in the 1670s.

3.1.3 Roman Catholic Proselytizing and Its Consequences Among Eastern Christians 1670s to 1724

The fifty years between the early 1670s and 1724 encompasses the years in which Hannā's parents, married and had children, he himself grew up (without mention of cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents in Hannā ibn Diyāb's memoir), traveled to France and back, and settled into commercial life in the cloth trade in Aleppo. In addition to coinciding with Hannā's childhood, youth, and early adulthood in Aleppo in these years, the course of the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic proselytization there also has the potential to illuminate opaque or puzzling aspects of Hannā ibn Diyāb's life.

The sixteenth-century Counterreformation, now more often called the Catholic Reformation, fostered a broad proselytizing movement to draw former Roman Catholics back to Roman Catholicism. In the Levant the same proselytizing impulse addressed Eastern Christians whose allegiance was also to geographically and religiously Eastern prelates and patriarchs. This movement emerged in the late sixteenth century, strengthened through the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century.

Maronites in the Levant, with their historic acknowledgement of the Roman Catholic Pope's primacy must have felt comfortable with – or at least unthreatened by – Roman Catholic proselytization. Other Eastern Christian churches in the Levant, however, lost communicants in this process, a situation that began to create a new and ever-widening divide between Maronites and other Eastern Catholics. It is within the realm of possibility that the Ghazālah and ibn-Diyāb families may have been caught up in and separated by religiously based hostilities.

Let us test this hypothesis against documented post-Tridentine Roman Catholic outreach to and conversion of Eastern Christians in the fifty years between the early 1670s and 1724, the period in which Roman Catholic proselytization attained its highest level. To repeat, these decades were also those during which Hannā's Ghazālah mother was married to Diyāb ibn [unknown], bore six or more children, suffered from "black humor"⁷² (with symptoms that modern psychiatry would characterize as major

72 Writing in 1764 about a conversation with Paul Lucas during his visit to Aleppo in 1716, Diyāb speaks of his mother's condition in the years before 1707: "I then remembered that I'd once told him about my mother's illness, and how the doctors had been unable to cure her" (Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 251). This citation effectively identifies his mother's condition as having been part of his childhood, adolescent, and young adult years, with the possibility of an even earlier onset. Heyberger annotates his translation of this phrase by identifying the Arabic phrase used by Diyāb *buhār sadāwī* ("vapeur noire"), a clear evocation of the then still current theory of the humors). Heyberger further gives the Arabic equivalent for "la mélancolie" as *mālihūlyā* (120n1). Widespread 20th- and 21st-century views

depression), was widowed, saw her older sons launched into the French sector of Aleppo's commercial world and the Roman Catholic Church's sphere of influence. She must have known that her youngest son Hannā began pursuing a religious calling at the Maronite monastery of St. Elias on Mount Lebanon,⁷³ but left it and subsequently set out for promised employment in distant Paris. Some of her daughters already were, or soon would be, married and living in other households, she was more alone.

3.1.4 The Proselytizers' Work

In the Levant four major Roman Catholic orders worked to win souls for the Roman Catholic Church. This meant persuading Eastern Catholics to convert to Western Catholicism.⁷⁴ Resistance, often fierce, inevitably arose within Eastern Christian communities when they lost communicants to Roman Catholicism: Hannā witnessed and reported one such instance of "Greek" hostility to a Franciscan missionary in Cyprus in 1707 and included it in his memoir decades later.⁷⁵

In the early years of proselytization, Western monks had apparently focused on religious differences between Christians and Muslims. But as the process continued and Western Catholic religious orders recorded their proselytizing successes among Eastern Christians, a different picture emerges. For instance, one Franciscan record lists the names of newly won souls for Roman Catholic Christianity throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, often listing the "nation" the converts had been persuaded to leave. This information reveals large numbers of former "Greek" adherents (which in this case referred to the "Rum" component of Eastern Christianity) in Aleppo converting to Roman

about the duration and physical symptoms of the malady suffered by Hannā ibn Diyāb's mother (loss of appetite, sleeplessness, withdrawal from social contact) understand this group of linked symptoms as corresponding to descriptions of persistent major depression rather than pinpointing an early modern shift in the understanding of "melancholy".

73 The Maronite monastic community on Mt. Lebanon was refounded in 1695 and was still a new Maronite institution when Hannā entered it: "The reform of the monastic life took place in the late seventeenth century onwards: four young Maronite men from Aleppo: Gabriel Hawwa, Abdullah Qaraali, Youssef al-Betn and Germanus Farhat, were received by Patriarch Estefan el-Doueihy (1670 – 1704) who gave them the monastic habit in Qannoubine on 10/11/1695." (<https://maronitefoundation.org/MaroniteFoundation/en/MaronitesHistory/66>, accessed 6 Feb 2025).

74 The process is clearly described in Heyberger 1988: 462–463. For Franciscan efforts in Aleppo in 1698 and 1699 see Civezza 1857–1895: 11: 595–608.

75 Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 1: 49, 51. The angry neighbor, identified as "Greek", spoke to Hannā in Greek and Turkish. This and other similarly detailed passages in the travel memoir are consistent with Hannā's having used surviving letters home to his family as his source for the passage in the travel memoir. The role of surviving letters in the composition of the 1763–1764 travel memoir will be explored in future research.

Catholicism in 1698 and 1699.⁷⁶ In this way, Western Catholics' proselytizing success among the "Greek" (i.e. "Rum"), Armenian, and Syrian Eastern Christians engendered "frontiers"⁷⁷ in religious identity. This further separated Maronite communities – who were already identified with Western Catholicism – from other Eastern Christian communities. On occasion, these frontiers also divided other Eastern Christians among themselves.⁷⁸ This overall movement coincided with an expansion of the influence of Western (i.e., Roman Catholic) missionaries among Maronites.⁷⁹ As chronicled in Hannā's travel memoir,⁸⁰ Roman Catholic individuals as well as Roman Catholic institutions became central in the formation of his youth and adolescence and during the peregrinations of his early adulthood. Nonetheless, a perception that Maronites were closely connected to a process that reduced the numbers of fellow Eastern Christian congregants may be understood as cause for hostility to them by other East Christians.

Maronites as a group had a second association with the West that brought real-world benefits: they had enjoyed financial, educational, and travel benefits that the Sun King Louis XIV had conferred on them in 1646. In the intervening years French merchants had also negotiated a series of tax benefits for their Maronite employees and their families.⁸¹

76 One hundred and two (Roman) Catholic souls in Aleppo in 1699 (Civezza 1857–1895: 7: 459): "Padre Antonio di Badolato, Curato e Lettore", whose name was appended to the Aleppo number, worked together with Padre Antonio di Monte Reale and Padre Alessandro di Monte Brandone, all three of whom were designated as "Predicatore" (Civezza 1857–1895: 7: 462). I mention their names, because they may have been known to young Hannā, who would have been 11 years old in 1699 and may have encountered them. The Franciscans' work in Aleppo, as in other towns and cities in the Eastern Mediterranean, was undoubtedly fostered by their active interest in teaching Arabic to rising young clerics, and indeed Padre Antonio di Badolato had two students learning Arabic in his "college" (Civezza 1857–1895: 7: 463). There were also schools where young Aleppan pupils between the ages of 6 and 12 were fed in body ("*alimentati*") and spirit ("*istuiti IN FIDE*"). In Aleppo Padre Vincenzo Pleino had 9 "*Scolari*" (Civezza 1857–1895: 464, 465). The padres' goal was winning adherents ("*reconciliati*") to the Holy Roman Catholic Faith (Civezza 1857–1895: 7: 467–472), which often meant drawing them away from the Eastern Christian confessions within which they had grown up. A large number of the *reconciliati* are identified as coming from the "*natione Greca*" (Civezza 1857–1895: 7: 467–472).

77 Heyberger 2013a.

78 Heyberger 2013a.

79 In the course of modern Lebanese politics, it became an article of faith among Maronites that Maronites had *always* recognized the Roman Catholic Church and its pope as the head of their church. This has recently been treated as a "myth" associated with Istifan al-Duwayhi (1630–1704) (Hojairi 2021: ch. 3).

80 That it was Maronite and Roman Catholic religion that underlay Hannā ibn Diyāb's circle of acquaintances is suggested by the trusting relationships he formed with Franciscan, Capuchin, Carmelite, and Jesuit clergy, in addition to Maronite clergy, in his youth and in his mature years. The strength of his Maronite / Roman Catholic identity also emerges from his seeking out and visiting Roman Catholic shrines and pilgrimage destinations during the travels that he recorded in his memoir.

81 Heyberger 1994: 388–389.

3.1.5 The Maronite Identity of Hannā ibn Diyāb's Father

No extant evidence documents the religious affiliation of Hannā ibn Diyāb's father and paternal grandparents. To ascertain their religious affiliation, we must return to existing information with a forensic approach. All Christian religious options are theoretically open as far as Hannā ibn Diyāb's paternal grandparents are concerned. However, working backward from what is known and documented about Hannā ibn Diyāb's Maronite religion we may arrive at his forebears' probable confession.

There is no doubt that Hannā himself was a Maronite in 1706, when he entered the Maronite monastery of St. Elias. He declared himself to be a Maronite Christian to Paul Lucas in 1707, when he was nineteen. Tellingly, he worked for French merchants from the age of six in a city where French merchants employed Maronites preferentially, and perhaps solely. Since his older brothers similarly worked for French merchants in Aleppo and would therefore also have been Maronites, that dates 'Abdallāh ibn Diyāb's Maronite identity at least as far back as the mid 1670s, when his father Diyāb ibn [unknown] was in the early years of his marriage to [first name unknown] Ghazālah. In a part of the world where sons' religion generally followed their father's, and in a city where French merchants employed Maronites almost exclusively, and as part of human sensibilities in which children aged six and under rarely if ever change their religious affiliation, we may conclude with a high degree of certainty that the first young Maronite employee, 'Abdallāh, was a Maronite because his father was a Maronite before him. But we do not know how long Hannā's father had been a Maronite.

Because we cannot identify Diyāb ibn [unknown]'s religious affiliation at the time of his marriage to a daughter of the Ghazālah family, we may conclude that Hannā ibn Diyāb's father was a Maronite at the time he married Hannā ibn Diyāb's mother. The wedding's date cannot be verified from surviving Maronite church or any other records.

The fact that the Diyāb name first appears in Maronite church records in the early eighteenth century (see note 18) suggests that Diyāb ibn [unknown] was not a sufficiently active or observant Maronite to be recorded in its official documents. Documents relevant to the religious affiliation of Diyāb ibn [unknown] may have perished over the centuries, or may never have existed.

In his writings about Eastern Christians in Aleppo and in the Near East as a whole, Bernard Heyberger posits a fluidity among Eastern Christians in terms of religion, before active Roman Catholic proselytization set "in the early 1670s". Long ingrained habits like these give way only slowly. On the other hand, it is notable that Hannā ibn Diyāb understands so many of his childhood friends as Maronites.

This article identifies Hannā ibn Diyāb's father, Diyāb ibn [unknown] as a Maronite from a point early in his first son's life. His son Hannā ibn Diyāb's residence with his brother Antūn in the *khān* al-'Ulabiyya aligns his orphaned sons with impoverished circumstances that bespeak the poverty that was common among

most seventeenth-century Maronites. In the countryside that poverty had impelled hundreds of Maronites, individually or in family groups, to leave the rural Mount Lebanon area and move to urban Aleppo.⁸² Such a migration, together with the fact that Hannā ibn Diyāb mentions no cousins on his father's side, suggests that if his father took part in that overall migration from country to city, he did so on his own rather than with family members. Hannā ibn Diyāb wrote much about Mount Lebanon and Cyprus. Although large numbers of Maronites migrated from both places to Aleppo in the seventeenth century, Hannā has no recognizable family associations with either place. His father's geographic origins are as unknown as early is his religious affiliation.

As far as the date of Diyāb ibn [unknown]'s death is concerned, simple logic tells us that Diyāb ibn [unknown]'s death must postdate the conception of his youngest child. That youngest child is probably Hannā, born in early 1688 and therefore conceived in the spring of 1687. Since Hannā survived, the likelihood is that his mother nursed him, which typically postponed a succeeding conception and birth for 2–3 years. If a subsequent child was conceived, when Hannā would have been 2–3 years old. It is even possible that another child was born 2–3 years later but did not survive. With no mention of Hannā's father anywhere in the travel memoir, we conclude that Diyāb ibn [unknown] died sometime between the second half of 1687 and the early 1690s.

3.1.6 Hannā ibn Diyāb's Mother and his Maternal Grandparents

We hear a great deal about Hannā ibn Diyāb's Ghazālah mother, whose church attendance Hannā mentions in passing. We assume from the laconic manner in which he mentions her church attendance that it was something familiar, and not a "Greek" church with Byzantine liturgy. Hannā principally writes about his mother in terms of her long-enduring depression.

3.1.7 Ghazālah Religious Identity

Theoretically, the Ghazālah family of Hannā's mother could have been part of either component of the "Greeks", as they existed in the 1670s. Ghazālah family tradition holds that their ancestors had always been members of the church that became today's Greek Orthodox Church.⁸³ In the 1670s, however, when the marriage contract for Hannā's parents was drawn up, the significant distinction appears to have been that the Ghazālahs were "Greeks" rather than Maronites. In any case, differences

⁸² An earlier such migration is reported having taken place in the last years of Mameluke rule (Salibi 1959: 51).

⁸³ Author's correspondence with May Gazalé Sikias (Geneva) and Mark Gazaleh (London).

between “Greeks” and Maronites would not have in themselves impeded the betrothal of the two young people of differing confessions, because in the 1670s Eastern Christians were still a relatively inclusive group, undeterred by their adherence to differing patriarchs and different liturgical languages.

3.1.8 Religious Discord Between Ghazālahs and Diyābs?

Let us try to place Hannā ibn Diyāb’s childhood and youth in Aleppo within that city’s late 17th- and early 18th-century religious history.⁸⁴ As mentioned before, friends named Ghazālah are notably absent, even though Hannā’s maternal uncle(s) could be expected to have produced a generation of first cousins and possible playmates for the ibn Diyāb boys – many or few depending on the number of his mother’s siblings.

The Ghazālahs’ place of residence, in the Judayda (New Town) quarter, a predominantly Christian area outside the western end of the north wall around Aleppo contrasts sharply with Antūn and Hannā’s humble *khān* al-‘Ulabiyya quarters. The Judayda’s Eastern Christian churches drew Christian residents to the neighborhood and undoubtedly fostered higher housing prices in the neighborhood. Antūn and Hannā’s dwelling in the *khān* al-‘Ulabiyya lay well inside the city walls but was still within walking distance of the Ghazālah mansion.

Wherever the children of Diyāb ibn [unknown] lived with his Ghazālah wife or his widow and her children lived after his death, the absence of Ghazālah cousins in the late 1600s and early 1700s must have been a separation of choice by the Ghazālahs, the ibn Diyābs or both. Only one instance of mutual acknowledgment can be found in the travel memoir – when Hannā ibn Diyāb’s uncle Shāhīn Ghazālah oversaw his entry into the cloth trade in 1710.⁸⁵

The near-total absence of Ghazālahs on the surviving pages of Hannā ibn Diyāb’s late-life memoir suggests that relations between the Ghazālahs on the one hand, and their daughter, her husband, and their children on the other hand, were slight or non-existent. In a memoir filled with accounts of affectionate connections between individuals, the absence of inter-family gatherings and the already discussed absence of Ghazālah playmates invites further study.

The growing confessional hostilities among Eastern Christians produced by Roman Catholic proselytization may have played a part in the absence of Ghazālah cousins from Hannā’s record of childhood friendships, as well as in the apparent absence of Ghazālah family members to care for the ailing Ghazālah daughter who married Diyāb ibn [unknown] and was the mother of ‘Abdallāh, Antūn, Hannā, and their sisters. If the

⁸⁴ For a succinct description of developing religion-based antagonisms in this period see Marcus 1989: 47.

⁸⁵ Diyāb 2021 [1763–1764]: 2: 249.

estrangement was felt strongly on the ibn Diyāb side, it may explain the five torn-out leaves at the beginning of Hannā ibn Diyāb's *Book of Travels*. The same post-Tridentine proselytization had drawn Hannā ibn Diyāb closer to the French language, literature in French, and his eventual storytelling to Antoine Galland in Paris, an episode that enriched and expanded the range of the *Arabian Nights*.

3.1.9 Concluding Thoughts and Further Research

Between the late seventeenth- and the early eighteenth centuries Hannā Diyāb was one of a small number of early modern native Arabic speakers who gained an intimate knowledge of French language and culture. His acquaintance with a broad variety of writings—Eastern Christian devotional writings in Arabic, Western ones in French, Arabic secular chronicles and entertaining books (such as *Thousand and One Nights* and Sindbad tales), French-language publications such as Straparola's *Nuicts Facétieuses* and Mme d'Aulnoy's *contes de fées* had a greater lasting impact on Western culture than did that of any other French-speaking Arab of his day.

Hannā ibn Diyāb's account of his travels with Paul Lucas from the time he left Aleppo on horseback in March 1707 until he arrived via coach in Paris in the late summer of 1708 has raised questions about memory and identity creation.⁸⁶ With evidence of family letter-writing at both the beginning and the end of *The Book of Travels*,⁸⁷ it seems more than likely that Hannā wrote additional letters to his family that communicated the remarkable details of freshly encountered things (like astonishing clockworks), places (like hospitals, churches and shrines), and people (like courtiers at Versailles). If such letters survived, they would have preserved the colorfully exact details that seem impossible to have been accurately remembered for over fifty years. The validity of this suggestion remains to be explored in detail.

Also awaiting further attention are the individual tales in the Diyāb *œuvre*, each with its own set of intra- and intertextual references, textual anomalies, and internal evidence of Hannā Diyāb's *quondam* performances. A rich resource awaits new research.

Appendix: Calculating the Season Hannā ibn Diyāb's Birth

Two simple statements in Hannā ibn Diyāb's travel memoir lead researchers to estimate Hannā Diyāb's *year of birth*. 1) He wrote, at a date calculated to have been 1763, 2) that he was then 75 years old. Those two facts yield 1688 as his highly likely

⁸⁶ See esp. Stephan 2015.

⁸⁷ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 1: 39 and 2: 247.

year of birth. However, this information does not exclude the possibility that he was born in 1687 (see above, “1688 as Hannā Diyāb’s Year of Birth”).

Establishing the *season* of Hannā ibn Diyāb’s birth is complex, because Hannā Diyāb did not specify the first fact used to calculate the year of his birth, namely, the month in 1763 when he penned the section about Versailles in his travel memoir. That fact is important, because it would establish a time period within which Hannā could have been 75 years old. In the paragraphs below that seek the beginning and end points of that period of time, the reasoning rests on estimates and probabilities that are themselves based on likelihoods. As such, the conclusions rank low as verifiable facts. However, the observations about the realities of daily life in eighteenth-century Aleppo, on which these conclusions are based, introduce many realities of Hannā ibn Diyāb’s daily life from childhood to old age.

The season of Hannā ibn Diyāb’s 1763 “now” is also central to calculating the year and season of his birth. It is highly unlikely that Hannā’s “1763” notation in conjunction with writing about Versailles was separated from his “1764” completion of his travel memoir by an entire year. However, *if* his 1763” notation was written as early as 1 January 1763 and *if* he had been 75 for 364 days at the time he wrote that it was “1763”, then he would have been born in early January 1687. This supposition pushes the calculation of Hannā’s year of birth to the extremes of possibility. This date also requires that Hannā wrote so slowly that he stretched the composition of his travel memoir out over so long a period of time. Even though we must acknowledge this extreme set of theoretical possibilities, we may dismiss it, because it is not plausible. If Hannā ibn Diyāb wrote about Versailles in late December 1763 and if he had been born 75 years and 364 days earlier, his date of birth would have been late December 1687, that is, nearly a year earlier than argued in this paragraph. A similar discrepancy results from calculating the other extreme, namely, using the 1763 date and the 75-year-old age, but with the possibility that he had been 75 for only one or two days, when he wrote about Versailles. It is evidently crucial to calculate the rate at which Hannā ibn Diyāb composed his travel memoir.

Factors Affecting Hannā ibn Diyāb’s Composition of his Travel Memoir

Estimating the rate at which Hannā ibn Diyāb produced his travel memoir in 1763–1764 underlies calculating the season of the 1763 “now” with reference to his age. It also takes us into the conditions under which he carried out the project.

“... la fièvre me quitta, et je n’en ai plus jamais eu jusqu’aujourd’hui, où j’ai soixante-quinze ans ...” (Diyāb, Sbath MS, 83^{v88})

“My chills went away. I’m now seventy-five years old ...”⁸⁹

“J’ai en effet rédige ce récit de voyage et cette chronique en l’année 1763, ...” (96^{r90})

“As I now write this account of my voyage, it is the year 1763.”⁹¹

“Achevé le troisième jour du mois de mars de l’année 1764 de l’ère chrétienne” (174^{r92})

Completed on the third of March in the year 1764 of the Christian era.⁹³

In order to calculate the month or season of his 75-year-old age (83^v) in the manuscript) with respect to Hannā’s writing about his 1708 visit to Versailles (96^r) 25 pages or 12 ½ leaves earlier, it is necessary to have some sense of the number of pages per day at which Hannā produced his travel memoir. If it were possible to know the rate at which Hannā produced his travel memoir text, that would give a sense of how far back into the early winter or fall of 1763 that he noted that it was 1763.

Seventy-eight leaves, or 156 pages were filled with small and regular writing between leaves 96^r and 174^r.⁹⁴ Could Hannā ibn Diyāb (or a scribe) have written those 156 pages in the 64 days between 31 December 1763, (the last day possible for writing that it was 1763) and 3 March 1764? If that is deemed possible, then he would have completed on average almost 2 ½ pages per day or a little more than 17 pages a week. For modern minds, with electric lights and central heating, that seems easy. What were the conditions under which Hannā ibn Diyāb produced his travel memoir?

Rhythms of several sorts would have affected the speed with which Hannā ibn Diyāb produced 156 pages of travel memoir text. He was an elderly man, in all probability living in an extended household, as would have been routine in eighteenth-century Aleppo for an elderly man with at least one surviving child. He would have lived according to the family’s daily rhythms, which would have included daily family meals with his immediate family and longer ones on occasion with visiting children and grandchildren. For an elderly man like Hannā ibn Diyāb, whose travel memoir shows him to have been sociable and who had retired after twenty years in the cloth trade in the early 1730s, additional visits from friends over a cup of coffee followed by a pipe, a pleasure often alluded to in his memoir, are likely to have

⁸⁸ For the 83v notation in the French translation see Dyāb 2015 (1763–1764): 231.

⁸⁹ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 1:247.

⁹⁰ For the 96^r notation in the French translation see Dyāb 2015 (1763–1764): 262.

⁹¹ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 2: 9, 11.

⁹² For the 174^r notation in the French translation see Dyāb 2015 (1763–1764): 440.

⁹³ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 2:261.

⁹⁴ If Leap Year was observed in Aleppo in 1764, 63 days passed between 1 January and 3 March, 1764.

continued into his 70s.⁹⁵ For a retired man who was active in the life of Aleppo's Maronite community (see below) meetings, discussions, organizing and signing petitions would be frequent. Active Christians like Hannā and his family may have attended mass several times a week. Other religious gatherings may have been frequent, and they too would have diminished the number of visits by a scribe, if Hannā dictated the memoir⁹⁶ or would have limited the time available to him, if he wrote the memoir himself. Taken together, these hypothesized daily habits would have limited the time for writing and slowed the pace of writing. It would have correspondingly increased the number of weeks and months required to complete the composition of those 156 pages.

Seasonal rhythms, especially those in January, the coldest time of the year, would also have had an impact on the writing of Hannā ibn Diyāb's travel memoir. Winter was commonly calculated to last an iconic forty days, from 12 December to 20 January, about which Diyāb's contemporary Aleppo resident, the English physician Alexander Russell, comments: "The air, during this time, is excessively piercing" with brutally chilling winter winds from the northwest and east.⁹⁷ Moreover, the thick masonry walls of the typical Aleppo house would have remained cold long after each day's lowest temperature in the morning between 7 and 8:30 AM. The walls would have warmed only slowly, probably remaining cold until the late morning.⁹⁸ Although Diyāb (or a possible scribe) might take advantage of mild periods that occurred during the cold winter days and work outdoors, even that respite from winter's indoor chill⁹⁹ was regularly diminished by brief and unpredictable rains in this, the wettest month of the year.¹⁰⁰ January days in today's Aleppo warm only to the low 50's Fahrenheit on sunny days¹⁰¹ and are unlikely to have been warmer in

95 Russell 2021 (1756): 81–82. Russell observed that tobacco and coffee were also used at night to lull wakeful men back to sleep (Russell 2021 [1756]: 90).

96 Heyberger documents a Margaret Dyab in the 1750s, who was a daughter of George Dyab and granddaughter of 'Abdallāh Dyab. Circumstantial evidence suggests that her grandfather 'Abdallāh was Hannā Diyāb's oldest brother: the family was known to have "had ties with the Franks and came from the devout milieu mentioned earlier". In terms of religious devotion, one of Margaret Dyab's brothers, Arsanyus, became a monk, while her paternal uncle Ignatius (another son of "Abdallāh Dyab" and therefore George's brother), also a monk, became director of a convent (Heyberger 2001: 78).

97 Russell 2021 (1756): 12.

98 Russell writes nothing on interior temperatures. Here I draw on experience of living through a winter in masonry housing. Heated by small coal stoves, the thick masonry walls shed cold air for 6–8 hours after the stoves were lighted.

99 Russell 2021 (1756): 148–149, 156–157. Russell notes that "the most delicate never make fires till the end of [November], and some few [pass the whole winter without them]".

100 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Aleppo>.

101 <https://weatherspark.com/y/100214/Average-Weather-in-Aleppo-Syria-Year-Round>.

the 1760s. Even worse, the highest incidence of rainfall was in the warmest hours of the day,¹⁰² so that even the prospect of outdoor writing to take advantage of outdoor sunlight and warmth was unreliable at best. Conditions in February were only marginally better: It was slightly warmer at night, and outdoor temperatures rose to 60° Fahrenheit when the sun was out.

The weather in January and February 1764, if that year was normal, would have been more likely to retard than to hasten the writing of the 156 pages in question. A south-facing winter room open to the sun – if Hannā’s household had a winter room – would have mitigated those drawbacks for a few hours each day. Once back inside the house, however, the winter months’ indoor chill and darkness would have reasserted themselves. Even if Hannā ibn Diyāb dictated his memoir, as Johannes Stephan suggests in his “Introduction” to Elias Muhanna’s translation of *The Book of Travels*,¹⁰³ his scribe could have taken dictation only when Diyāb was available and would have otherwise suffered from the same weather constraints that would have slowed Diyāb himself.

Considerations like those above lead me to conclude that Hannā ibn Diyāb began the 156 pages of his travel memoir that followed his mention that it was sometime during the autumn months, possibly as winter was imminent. Although it is an apparently arbitrarily chosen date, 1 November 1763 seems a not unreasonable date to assign to the day on which Hannā wrote on leaf 96^f that it was 1763. This nearly doubles the length of time for producing the final 156 pages, and of course, it halves the page output per day and per week during that period, but it “feels” right for the climate, weather, family, and Maronite community conditions under which Hannā ibn Diyāb can be thought to have had time available for his composition of the memoir, nearly 9 pages a week from 1 November 1763 to 3 March 1764.

In the more favorable weather of October, Hannā ibn Diyāb may have written slightly more each week. Instead of nearly 9 pages/week, the rate may have risen to 12 pages/week, in which case those 25 pages could have been produced in about 2 weeks. According to this hypothesis, Hannā would have announced his age as 75 sometime around 15 October 1763.

The follow-on question is this: How long had Diyāb been 75 when he wrote, “I’m now seventy-five years old . . .”? Hannā ibn Diyāb’s 75th birthday was clearly not on the day he wrote these words. If it had been, he would have expressed himself differently, perhaps writing the Arabic equivalent of “Today is my seventy-fifth birthday.” If the birthday had taken place in the previous few days or weeks, he might well have written something equivalent to “I’ve just had my seventy-fifth

¹⁰² Russell 2021 (1756): 148–157, esp. 148.

¹⁰³ Diyāb 2021 (1763–1764): 1: xxvii.

birthday". Since he did not write such words, we surmise that his 75th birthday fell at the latest date, sometime in late September 1763 and at the earliest *eleven* months before he announced his age, that is, in mid-November 1762. This calculation theoretically allows Hannā's date of birth to lie between late November 1687 at the earliest and September 1688 at the latest.

With a period of time for locating Hannā ibn Diyāb's birth that stretches over 10½ months from mid-November 1687 to September 1688, it is statistically unlikely to fall at either end of that period. Most of the statistically probable dates thus lie within 1688. The question then becomes this: Does information in other parts of the travel memoir suggest when in 1688 Hannā is likely to have been born?

Placing Hannā ibn Diyāb's birth in the late winter, i.e. in January or February 1688 would be consistent with events in Hannā's late adolescence. For instance, two important events, both datable to spring months – his decision in 1706 to leave Aleppo to devote his life to monastic service at the monastery of St. Elias¹⁰⁴ and in the spring of 1707, his determination first to return to the monastic life he had left the preceding autumn – fit with an impulse to change the direction of his life. That remained the case when he forsook the monastery for Paris as his goal in 1707, after he encountered Paul Lucas, a happenstance that eventually led to his three-year peregrination via the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa to Paris, Constantinople, Anatolia, and back to Aleppo.

Both the spring 1706 and the spring 1707 decisions can be understood as arising from Hannā's sense of the direction of his life. Because a birthday – whether approaching or having recently passed – often engenders or precipitates consequential life decisions, I propose that Hannā ibn Diyāb's season of birth lay in the late winter, that is, January or February of 1688.

Determining the season of Hannā ibn Diyāb's birth is also important, because it helps ascertain the age at which his family put him out to work – at five or at six. As evidenced by legal documents, six was the customary age at which Aleppo boys of all religions began to work outside their dwelling.¹⁰⁵ With six the customary age for a

104 1706 was a year of religious tension among Eastern Christians in Aleppo. An official letter prohibiting the performance of sacred rites affected some Catholic priests aligned with Rome. Maronites were mentioned in the letter in a way that suggests enmity between Syrian Christians and Maronites, but not between or among Melkites, Assyrians, and Maronites (Heyberger 1994: 388–389). The letter's July date intimates that the preceding months, including the spring months, would have been included in the process of these developing tensions. That leaves open the possibility that the same tensions may have affected the decision by Hannā ibn Diyāb and some of his friends to enter the Maronite monastery of St. Elias, perhaps impelled by a desire to express solidarity with fellow Maronites.

105 Marcus 1989: 157. See also Russell 2021 (1756) and John Bowring (1840). Exceptions existed among families whose wealth or high position destined their sons for education by tutors in history, literature, and calligraphy.

son's going to work, being put out to work at five would suggest unusually straitened or even desperate family circumstances. If that were the case during Hannā ibn Diyāb's childhood, it would be an important fact in a biographical study of Hannā's early years. Information that has emerged in the course of this article (see "Hannā Goes To Work") is that he must have begun to work in 1694. If Hannā had been born as late as November or December 1688 or the first months of 1689, he would have been five when his family placed him in Aleppo's child labor force. This atypically young age would suggest a deep family poverty. If he was born in early 1688, he would have been the customary age of six, when he began working outside his home.

Like the majority of Arab boys of his day— whether Muslim, Christian or Jewish — Hannā ibn Diyāb was born poor. Unlike most other poor boys in Aleppo, he entered his working life as a Maronite child with a beginning knowledge of French and the special benefits of working for Roman Catholic French merchants. These advantages eventually led to a series of French-language storytellings in Paris that added new stories to the *contes arabes* of Antoine Galland's *Mille et Nuit(s)*. Transformative additions to the *Thousand and One Nights*, his tales were immediately popular and continue to infuse modern literature with their characters and plots.

Hannā ibn Diyāb's life stands out today, because it connects so many dots, not only in literature, but also in the polyglot poly-religious world of the turn-of-the-eighteenth-century Ottoman, Mediterranean, and European worlds.

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