

MOVING STORIES AND WHAT THEY TELL US: EARLY MODERN MOBILITY BETWEEN MICROHISTORY AND GLOBAL HISTORY*

When you're strange,
Faces come out of the rain,
When you're strange,
No one remembers your name.

The Doors, 'People Are Strange' (1967)

'Well, in our country' said Alice, still panting a little, 'you'd generally get to somewhere else — if you run very fast for a long time, as we've been doing'. 'A slow sort of country!' said the Queen. 'Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!'

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871)

I begin with a shipwreck. On 28 February 1694, a Portuguese 'zumaca', or small sailing ship, called the *San Sebastián* ran aground somewhere near the port of Buenos Aires in the Spanish province of Río de la Plata. Buenos Aires

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had long been a haven for smugglers, so news of the boat's arrival naturally caught the attention of colonial officials who rushed to the site. When they arrived, they were confronted with an eclectic group of passengers of diverse origins. Among the people on board were two Servite friars, one from Seville, the other from Naples, two African slaves, both named Francisco, and two clerics, one from England and the other from Portugal. As for the captain and self-proclaimed owner of the vessel, his name was Joseph Georgirenes. He claimed to be the Archbishop of Samos, the Greek island in the eastern Aegean Sea renowned since antiquity for its sweet wines.

As Georgirenes told it, the *San Sebastián* had been travelling along the coast from Brazil in an attempt to leave the Colônia do Sacramento, a Portuguese settlement established across the river from Buenos Aires in today's Uruguay. With tears in his eyes, the archbishop told of having been poorly treated by the Portuguese authorities in Sacramento. What he could not explain, however, was what exactly he and his companions were doing in the Americas in the first place. Travel to the New World was regulated by Spanish officials, and the Atlantic crossing required an individual to have obtained a special document, or '*licencia*', issued by the king. Georgirenes claimed to have lost his licence somewhere in Brazil. Instead, as proof of his identity, he presented documents that the notary would later describe as 'two bulls on parchment with many letters written in gold, all in Arabic in the shape of a crescent moon'. Faced with this situation, the governor of Buenos Aires, Don Agustín de Robles, told Georgirenes that he and his companions had no right to stay in Buenos Aires and so they would have to return to Sacramento. If not, the *San Sebastián* and everything on board would be confiscated. When Georgirenes refused, Robles appointed his deputy Juan de Palacios, along with twelve armed soldiers, to escort the *San Sebastián* back to the settlement. Better the Portuguese rather than he himself should deal with the paperwork likely to result from the presence of such mysterious and almost certainly illegal wayfarers.

Robles did not have his way in the end. The next day, when the *San Sebastián* took to the sea, the ship was caught in a sudden storm and cast back onto land. This time, the boat was so badly damaged — and the archbishop himself had nearly drowned — that the governor had no choice but to allow the group to remain in Buenos Aires. He decided to keep Georgirenes as a guest in his own house until he could obtain further guidance from his superiors in Lima and Madrid. It was in this way that the Archbishop of Samos found himself at the mercy of bewildered locals who were anxious to know who this man was, how he had got there, and what was his story.

I

MOVING STORIES

People on the move, globetrotters, *gens de passage*: at first glance, the story of the Archbishop of Samos seems an ideal case study for one of two approaches to the study of human mobility in the early modern world. The first is captured in the way I have chosen to treat the archbishop in the opening passage of this article, that is, mobility viewed through a microhistorical study of individuals who are, or appear to be, far from their place of origin.¹ The second approach is more typically associated with global history. It invokes the language of diaspora, networks and circulation to explain the movement of specific groups across regional and global geographies of space.² Where the first approach concentrates on individuals about whom we know more than usual, often owing to the discovery of an exceptional set of sources, the second approach concerns itself with the general processes that carried these people across the world, for example, long-distance trade, the spread of religion, and inter-imperial competition in the age of early modern globalization.

Both of these characterizations, I admit, are caricatures of what remains a diverse and sophisticated range of approaches to the study of human mobility.³ Even so, they provide us with two distinct ways of understanding

¹ For some examples, see Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, A Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe* (Baltimore, 2003); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (London, 2007); Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (London, 2007); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, Mass., 2011); Giuseppe Marcocci, 'Tra cristianesimo e islam: le vite parallele degli schiavi abissini in India (secolo XVI)', *Società e Storia*, cxxxviii, 4 (2012); Nile Green, *The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen's London* (Princeton, 2015).

² See, for example, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Iranians Abroad: Intra-Asian Elite Migration and Early Modern State Formation', *Journal of Asian Studies*, li, 2 (1992), 340–63; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (Yale, 2009); Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Oxford, 2012); and Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (University of California, 2014).

³ In addition to the references in n. 1 and n. 2, see Amy Stanley, 'Maidservants' Tales: Narrating Domestic and Global History in Eurasia, 1600–1900', *American Historical Review*, cxxi, 2 (April 2016); Liat Kozma, Cyrus Schayegh and Avner Wishnitzer (eds.), *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London, 2015); Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalization in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge, 2013).

someone like the Archbishop of Samos and his movements in the early modern world. Despite their apparent differences, the two approaches also share some important things in common. First, in elevating mobility to a subject of analysis, both have sometimes had the effect of exaggerating its incidence in the early modern world.⁴ Secondly, both approaches conceive of mobility primarily in a geographic sense. Whether it is an Arabic coin found in Iceland or an English merchant in Istanbul, the study of mobility has traditionally been a story of things moving, or being found, *where* they do not belong.

What I want to consider in this article is whether moving stories could tell us about something other than movement. I use the term ‘moving stories’ here to refer to historical narratives about the process of mobility in the early modern world. Specifically, I am interested in a set of questions that are less about movement in and of itself than about understanding the mechanics and meaning of mobility as they were experienced by contemporaries. What is it exactly that renders individuals ‘out of place’, and how does this sort of ‘unbelonging’ vary across different historical contexts? When is a moving story simply a cover for other types of experiences, stories about conversion, exile, or even the quest for political or economic gain? Answering such questions requires us to navigate the space between microhistory and global history. For if global history emphasizes general patterns of migration, microhistory obliges us to decide what to do with cases that do not appear to conform to those patterns. Given what we know about Spanish attempts to control migration to the Americas, what explains how (and why) a Greek archbishop from the Ottoman empire — indeed, this particular Greek archbishop — has cropped up in Buenos Aires in 1694? Microhistory also enables us to challenge simplistic ideas about the ease of mobility in the past, making it possible to see it as a process that had its own agents, opponents and beneficiaries.

Moving stories have also played an important role in a separate historiography about the transformations of identity that historians sometimes associate with the movement of individuals. In this way, the study of mobility is intertwined with a wider literature on renegades, converts and other ‘people in between’ whose movement across space also involved movements of

⁴ On the ‘fetishization of mobility’ in certain strands of global history, see Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, 2016), 225–6; see also Stefanie Gänger, ‘Circulation: Reflections on Circularity, Entity and Liquidity in the Language of Global History’, *Journal of Global History*, xii (2017), 303–18.

identity.⁵ Microhistory and global history approach this issue in different ways, neither without its own problems. On the one hand, microhistorical approaches have tended to emphasize the agency of individuals in fashioning their own identities.⁶ The result has been an exaggerated view of the ability of early modern individuals to transform their identities as easily as if changing a hat — literally in some cases. Within this literature on dissimulation, perhaps the purest expression of this approach is the idea of the archetypal figure of the ‘trickster’.⁷ But as Sanjay Subrahmanyam has warned us, the type of dissimulation connoted by the figure of the trickster was, in practice, rather difficult to achieve. We must, therefore, be careful not to exaggerate the ‘protean nature of identity’.⁸ On the other hand, global history has sometimes imagined that religious, ethnic or racial identities were fixed, immutable categories of lived experience. The model of the trade diaspora is the classic example: in this context, an ‘Armenian merchant’ in Livorno is perceived to

⁵ For some examples, see Kim Siebenhüner, ‘Conversion, Mobility and the Roman Inquisition in Italy around 1600’, *Past and Present*, no. 200 (Aug. 2008); Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeil (eds.), *Hommes de l’entre-deux: parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVI^e–XX^e siècle)* (Paris, 2009); Giuseppe Marcocci et al. (eds.), *Space and Conversion in Global Perspective* (Leiden, 2014); Tobias Graf, *The Sultan’s Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575–1610* (Oxford, 2017); Liesbeth Corens, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (Oxford, 2018); and on the state of the field for the Mediterranean in particular, see Robert John Clines, ‘The Converting Sea: Religious Change and Cross-Cultural Interaction in the Early Modern Mediterranean’, *History Compass*, xvii, 1 (Jan. 2019).

⁶ The classic work is Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980); see also John Martin, ‘Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe’, *American Historical Review*, cii, 5 (1997).

⁷ For one example, see Davis, *Trickster Travels*, 110–13, although the tradition has a much wider genealogy: see Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: How Disruptive Imagination Creates Culture* (Edinburgh, 2008). On dissimulation more generally, see Carlo Ginzburg, *Il Nicodemismo: Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell’Europa del ‘500* (Turin, 1971); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); Jon Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Oakland, Calif., 2012); and the collection of essays in Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzog (eds.), *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2015).

⁸ Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien*, 13–14; for another view of constraints on agency, see Jan de Vries, ‘Playing with Scales: The Global and the Micro, the Macro and the Nano’, in this volume, 31.

share a common identity with an 'Armenian merchant' in the Philippines, despite the great distance that separates them in both geographic and contextual terms.⁹ Even when this approach acknowledges the creation of hybrid, creole, or cosmopolitan identities, there remains an assumption that primordial identities can simply be transplanted into new places over the course of an individual's movement — as if people carried their identities with them like precious jewels locked away in a chest.

In this way, microhistory and global history differ in the relative importance they give to agency and structure in the process of identity formation. Moreover, neither approach has given enough attention to the way in which individual identity in the early modern period was rooted in concrete, local processes of *identification*. Scholars such as Valentin Groebner, Wolfgang Kaiser, Claudia Moatti and others have taught us how an individual's identity was determined, in practice, by specific constellations of legal rules, social practices and documentary traditions that were mired in complicated bureaucratic and institutional regimes.¹⁰ As such, the fashioning of identity, inasmuch as such a thing existed, was never an individual affair in the early modern world. Rather, it was a process that involved collaboration, complicity and sometimes even the duplicity of a host of individuals who acted either to confirm or to reject an individual's identity claim.¹¹ Moreover, these local actors were often linked to one another through complicated networks of kinship, sociability, sacramental ties, patron–client relationships and much more.

Mobility made this process even more acute: for individuals far from their homes, the act of proving an identity placed them at the mercy of foreign, and

⁹ The classic work is Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, 1984); for a more recent approach, see Francesca Trivellato, 'The Historical and Comparative Study of Cross-Cultural Trade', introduction to Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi and Cátia Antunes (eds.), *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000–1900* (Oxford, 2014), 1–23.

¹⁰ Valentin Groebner, *Who Are You?: Identification, Deception and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Mark Kyburz (Boston, 2007); Wolfgang Kaiser and Claudia Moatti (eds.), *Gens de passage en Méditerranée de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne: procédures de contrôle et identification* (Paris, 2007); Keith Breckenridge and Simon Szreter (eds.), *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* (Oxford, 2012); Hilde Greefs and Ann Winter (eds.), *Migration Policies and Materialities of Identification in European Cities: Papers and Gates, 1500–1930s* (London, 2018).

¹¹ For one of the best known cases, see Davis, *Return of Martin Guerre*, as well as the exchange that followed it: Robert Finlay, 'The Refashioning of Martin Guerre', *American Historical Review*, xciii, 3 (June 1988); and Natalie Zemon Davis, 'On the Lame', *American Historical Review*, xciii, 3 (June 1988).

often suspicious, regimes of power. Even the most seemingly unstable identities were, at various points, fixed in a process of identification that took place in the local context of everyday life wherever individuals happened to find themselves. Therefore, understanding the relationship between mobility and identity in the life of someone like Georgirenes requires us to navigate between global processes of movement and local processes of identification. It obliges us to focus as much on the worlds that people left behind as the new worlds in which they found themselves.

In the pages that follow, I present a case study of the Archbishop of Samos as a way of rethinking the lived experience of mobility and identification. Foreignness, displacement and unbelonging are conditions, I argue, that are best uncovered through the practice of microhistory. In this article, I take microhistory to mean three things. First, my approach consists of ‘following’ a single name through the archives in a way that recalls the ‘nominative methodology’ that Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni first proposed in 1979.¹² I depart from their approach in one important respect: whereas they advocated the tracking of names mainly in a local, regional context — Italian archives — my research necessarily pulls me into the orbit of global history because of the way in which Georgirenes straddled multiple traditions of record-keeping that stretched from the Mediterranean to Europe to the Americas. Secondly, my approach in this article is to analyse the case of Georgirenes as a specimen of what microhistorians have called the ‘exceptional normal’. Indeed, what is exceptional here is not Georgirenes’ moving story itself, but rather the extraordinary range of documentation that allows us to reconstruct his experience of mobility and identification in great detail as it developed in several different contexts.¹³ Lastly, I use my analysis of Georgirenes to challenge the triumphalism of grand narratives of mobility. I do so in a way that seeks to build upon the seminal contributions of a recent study of mobility, namely Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s *Three Ways to Be Alien*:

¹² Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, ‘Il nome e il come: scambio ineguale e mercato storiografico’, *Quaderni storici*, xl (1979), 181–90; here I cite the English translation, ‘The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace’, in Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (eds.), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, trans. Eren Branch (Baltimore, 1991), 1–10.

¹³ On the ‘exceptional normal’, see Edoardo Grendi, ‘Micro-analisi e storia sociale’, *Quaderni storici*, xxxv (1977), 512; see also Francesca Trivellato, ‘Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History’, *California Italian Studies*, ii, 1 (2011), 3–4, <<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq>> (accessed 19 July 2019); Matti Peltonen, ‘Clues, Margins, and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research’, *History and Theory*, xl, 3 (Oct. 2001).

Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World. Through the close study of three lives, Subrahmanyam develops the idea of being 'alien' as a powerful alternative to facile celebrations of early modern cosmopolitanism.¹⁴ For my part, the documentation makes it impossible for me to offer Georgirenes as a sort of 'fourth way' of being alien: we simply do not know enough about how he viewed himself in relation to the wider worlds in which he travelled. Instead, I am interested in the separate issue of how he actually navigated mobility in his time — in other words, his story of survival.

In this article, therefore, I reject the idea that being out of place was the inevitable outcome of an individual's mobility. Instead, I argue here that foreignness was ultimately a local affair. Belonging or unbelonging, native or alien, local or stranger: these were conditions that were decided, in the first instance, by local actors using local processes of identification. These processes had their own logics, their own methods and their own priorities and preoccupations. Knowing whether or not someone was out of place requires us to look beyond the ether of some sort of imaginary global context and to focus instead on the concrete level of everyday life in a specific place. To give a sense of what I have in mind, let us return to our Greek archbishop stranded on the banks of the Río de la Plata.

II

AN UNORTHODOX ARCHBISHOP?

I am not the first person to write about Joseph Georgirenes. In the 1950s John Barron, a classicist based at Oxford, while carrying out doctoral research on Samos in the Archaic period came across a fascinating account of life on the island published in London in 1677: *A Description of the Present State of Samos, Nicaria, Patmos and Mount Athos*.¹⁵ At the time, Barron found the book to be a useful guide to the geography and landscape of Samos. Forty years later, Barron turned his interests to the study of the actual author of the work, a man identified on the title page as the 'Arch-Bishop of Samos, Now living in London'. He spent the last years of his life meticulously tracking down every single document about Georgirenes that he could lay his hands

¹⁴ Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien*, 22 and 173. The book brings together three case studies: that of Miyan Ali (d. 1567), a Muslim prince held captive in Portuguese Goa; Anthony Sherley (1565–1633), an English merchant and entrepreneur; and Nicolò Manuzzi (1638–1720), a Venetian who spent the greater part of his life in India.

¹⁵ Joseph Georgirenes, *A Description of the Present State of Samos, Nicaria, Patmos, and Mount Athos* . . . Translated by One that Knew the Author in Constantinople (London, 1677). For the doctoral thesis, see John Penrose Barron, *The History of Samos to 439 BC*, 2 vols. (Univ. of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1961).

on. In 2006, he published a first article on the subject as part of the proceedings of a conference celebrating the three-hundredth anniversary of the 'Greek College' in Oxford.¹⁶ By the time of his death in August 2008, Barron had completed eight of nine chapters of a biography of the Archbishop of Samos. This book was given new life in 2017 through the efforts of his wife, the medievalist Caroline Barron, who reviewed and prepared the nearly finished typescript for publication under the title *From Samos to Soho: The Unorthodox Life of Joseph Georgirenes*.¹⁷ Because Barron left no stone unturned as he sifted in person through archives in Oxford, London, Ikaria, Samos, Patmos, Mount Athos, Volterra and Brussels, *From Samos to Soho* remains, quite simply, one of the fullest and most stimulating studies of Eastern Christianity in this period. Here I will only summarize the bare bones of Georgirenes' life as presented in Barron's careful reconstruction.

Born on the Greek island of Milos, little can be known about Georgirenes' youth before he became a monk on Mount Athos and subsequently was elevated to the archbishopric of Samos in 1666. He served as archbishop for some four years until he decided that the Ottoman conquest of Crete had made life on Samos unbearable, at which point he retired to a life of asceticism at the church of the Holy Grotto of the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos. A few years later, at some point between 1672 and 1676, Georgirenes travelled first to Tuscany, then to Rome, Marseilles, Paris, and ultimately to London in 1676 in circumstances that still remain unclear. Georgirenes' experiences in London are the best documented chapters of Barron's book, especially his fascinating account of the archbishop's efforts to establish a Greek church in the heart of Soho. Soon after his arrival, not only was he given permission to collect alms to help with the construction of the church, but he even secured a plot of land on which construction was begun with the support of royal patronage from Charles II and his brother James, Duke of York. The question of Georgirenes' religious identity was a particular subject of concern for contemporaries who saw in him an opportunity to bring Orthodoxy into communion with the Church of England. For his part, Georgirenes did all he could to persuade them that he had the same goals in mind.

¹⁶ John P. Barron, 'Archbishop Joseph Georgirenes and the Prehistory of the Greek College', in Peter M. Doll (ed.), *Anglicanism and Orthodoxy: 300 Years after the 'Greek College' in Oxford* (Oxford, 2006).

¹⁷ John Penrose Barron, *From Samos to Soho: The Unorthodox Life of Joseph Georgirenes, A Greek Archbishop* (Oxford, 2017). I am grateful to Caroline Barron for her support throughout this research, and for her permission to reflect on *From Samos to Soho* in this way.

These efforts, however, ultimately came to nothing. In a series of mishaps, compounded by pure bad luck, he fell out of favour in the tense political climate of the Popish Plot and lost the support of his royal patrons. His fate was sealed when authorities in London learned that the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople himself had disavowed Georgirenes and his alleged Anglican leanings. Plans for the Greek church fell apart, and Georgirenes published his complaints and grievances in a broadside in 1682.¹⁸ This is where *From Samos to Soho* comes to an end. At the time of his death, Barron had not yet managed to find out what had happened to Georgirenes after 1682. He speculated that the archbishop may have returned to Patmos after the failure of his endeavours in London.

Clearly, Barron regarded Georgirenes as an extraordinary individual in his time. His was the story of an 'unorthodox' and 'ecumenical' figure living in the fractious post-Reformation world. As he saw it, the key to understanding Georgirenes' religious identity lay in the fact of his upbringing on the island of Milos between 'two cultures', Greek and Latin. As he writes:

We know only that his early years were passed against the background of a society always uneasy with itself, sometimes torn apart by confessional loyalties, sometimes rising above them in their consciousness of a shared Christian community, within an empire whose masters showed little interest in the niceties of sectarian distinction among infidels.¹⁹

Likewise, in her introduction to the book, Caroline Barron emphasizes Georgirenes' exceptional position.

One may view him as an unstable believer, willing to bend with the strongest wind, whether that was Orthodox, Catholic or Anglican. Others may believe that his commitment to the Christian faith transcended differences in religious practice, and that Joseph considered the threat from insurgent Islam as more serious than the varying practices that divided Christians from one another. Was he, perhaps, an ecumenist ahead of his time?²⁰

¹⁸ Joseph Georgirenes, *From the Arch-Bishop of the Isle of Samos in Greece, An Account of His Building the Grecian Church in So-hoe Feilds, and the Disposal thereof by the Masters of the Parish of St Martin's in the Feilds* (London, 1682).

¹⁹ Barron, *From Samos to Soho*, 22.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3. For another example of such ecumenism, see W. B. Patterson, 'The Peregrinations of Marco Antonio de Dominis, 1616–24', *Studies in Church History*, xv (1978). I am grateful to Peter Marshall for bringing this article to my attention.

Had he lived longer, Barron might have perhaps seen in Georgirenes a specimen of the 'religious refugee' written about by Nicholas Terpstra or an example of the 'confessional mobility' described more recently by Liesbeth Corens.²¹ As it stands, *From Samos to Soho* presents Georgirenes' mobility as a narrative of exceptions and idiosyncrasies, a moving story about a religious entrepreneur let loose to roam the world.

III

THE VIEW FROM BUENOS AIRES

I knew nothing of Barron's research when I first encountered documents about Georgirenes in 2012 in the Archive of the Indies in Seville. At the time, I had been working systematically through records related to Ottoman Christians in the Spanish empire, especially the paper trail left behind by Elias of Babylon, an alms-collector from Mosul whom I have written about elsewhere in the pages of this journal.²² I came across a file of documents that referred to the shipwreck of one '*Don José Georgerini griego*' and his servants in 1694. The enquiry took the form of a considerable collection of correspondence, testimonies and interviews conducted with local officials and residents in Buenos Aires.²³ Alongside this material, I have also consulted royal decrees issued in Madrid and the record of an Inquisition investigation into Georgirenes.²⁴ In total, hundreds of folios of

²¹ Nicholas Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: An Alternative History of the Reformation* (Cambridge, 2015); Corens, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics*.

²² John-Paul Ghobrial, 'The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory', *Past and Present*, no. 222 (Jan. 2013), 51–93.

²³ The file is preserved in the Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), in Seville: see Charcas 133, 'Autos obrados en virtud de la arribada en naufragio al puerto de Buenos Aires de la zumaca titulada San Sebastián con el Arzobispo de Samos, sus criados y dos religiosos y fuga que hicieron. Don José Georgerini griego, y religiosos servitas de la orden de San Agustín de la provincia de Nápoles. 1694–1703'. The latest document appears to be dated 20 July 1703 (fos. 545^r–548^v), and it contains a summary of the case and papers in the file. Interestingly, a complete copy of the documents found in fos. 42^r–195^r is included in fos. 271^r–516^v: the order for making this copy was dated 26 June 1694 and it was completed by the scribe Juan Castaño Becerra. The entire file was probably dispatched from Buenos Aires to Madrid as part of Georgirenes' case as described below. I am grateful to Esther González for her assistance in transcribing parts of this file and the documents in n. 24 below.

²⁴ For the relevant *reales cédulas*, see AGI, Buenos Aires, 4, l. 11, fos. 242^v–243^v (19 December 1695); AGI, Buenos Aires 4, l. 12, fos. 1^r–5^r, 5^r–7^v (11 May 1697); AGI, Buenos Aires 4, l. 12, fos. 72^r–73^r, 73^r–^v, 73^v–74^r (12 July 1699). The Inquisition report is preserved today in the Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter AHN) in Madrid: Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, 'Proceso de fe de José Georgerini, natural de Grecia y vecino

documentation survive about this single case, although there are only a handful of documents written by Georgirenes himself. In the pages that follow, therefore, I present only a preliminary account of the progress of the investigation into Georgirenes' identity as it unfolded in the months and years that followed the shipwreck. Space does not allow me here to offer a complete account of Georgirenes' experiences in the New World, which will be the subject of a more detailed study in the future.

Here is the version of the Archbishop of Samos as I came to know him in the Spanish archives, some twenty years after the experiences that Barron had described in London. Following the shipwreck, Don Agustín de Robles, the governor of Río de la Plata, spent several days trying to find out all he could about the passengers of the *San Sebastián* and the circumstances of their arrival. On 2 March, Treasury officials immediately seized and inventoried all goods on board the ship including any documents in the passengers' possession.²⁵ The same day, the eight passengers were initially identified as follows: 'Don Fray Joseph Georgerini', Archbishop of Samos, aged 54, who claimed to be a national of Venice; Don Joseph de Endon, described as Georgirenes' servant (*paje*), aged 18 'more or less'; Manuel Guedes, aged 26, from São Paulo in Brazil, also described as Georgirenes' servant; two Servite friars, Juan de La Seca, aged 44, from Seville, and Francisco Guarino, about 50 years old, of Naples; Francisco de Acosta, the boatswain ('*contramaestre de la zumaca*'), aged 44 from Lisbon; and two black slaves belonging to Georgirenes, namely Francisco of Mina ('*Francisco . . . natural de Mina*'), aged 30, and 'Francisco Novo', aged 28.²⁶ On 3 March, Robles asked for sworn testimonies from those who had first encountered the archbishop, his deputy Juan de Palacios, as well as several soldiers who had been first at the

de Constantinopla (Turquía), Obispo de Samos, seguido en el Tribunal de la Inquisición de Lima, por celebrante sospechoso, al seguir el rito ortodoxo. 1688–1696'.

²⁵ For the earliest inventory of the goods, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 90^r–92^r; a description of the documents on the ship by the scribe Juan Castaño Becerra is on fos. 79^v–85^f. On the documents, see the detailed discussion in section IV below.

²⁶ See the 'lista de la gente de la zumaca', in AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 89^r–^v, which describes each passenger according to his position, age and place of origin. Georgirenes' claim of Venetian status would have been meaningful inasmuch as Samos had been under Venetian rule during his youth. As we see below, new information would be uncovered about the individuals in the months that followed, for example about Miguel Joseph de Endon who was revealed later to be English — Michael Joseph of Hendon? — and not from Andalusia.

scene of the ship's arrival.²⁷ Over the next few days, a wider circle of local officials, priests and residents were also asked what they knew of the archbishop's arrival and whether they had known him previously. By 6 March, each of the passengers had also been interviewed. Throughout this period, Robles kept Georgirenes in his own household, while arrangements were made for the clerics to be housed in the nearby convent of Nuestra Señora de la Merced.²⁸

Documentation from the case suggests that Robles's investigation focused on three main issues over the next few months. First, there was the matter of the obligatory licence needed for travel to the New World. On the day of his arrival, Georgirenes had claimed that he had lost his somewhere in Brazil.²⁹ Among Georgirenes' papers, there was in fact a copy of a *real cédula*, or royal decree, issued in November 1682, which permitted him to collect alms in Spain for a period of a year.³⁰ Even so, the document made little difference to the fact that as a foreigner Georgirenes had no right to be in the New World. The second issue concerned how to treat the possessions on board the *San Sebastián* that had been confiscated by Treasury officials. Setting aside the breviaries and religious items seized from the friars, officials were especially concerned about an array of textiles and fabrics that Georgirenes brought with him to Buenos Aires, ostensibly for the purpose of smuggling. On 8 March, Robles also requested Georgirenes to hand over the keys to several lockboxes that had been found on the ship. Initially, the archbishop refused, invoking some notion of an 'ecclesiastical immunity' that made it unlawful to seize the goods of an archbishop. He also insisted that whatever he had in his possession was 'personal property', comprising donations collected for the purpose of ransoming a brother who had been taken captive in Barbary. None

²⁷ The soldiers interviewed on 3 March included Juan de Palacios, Juan Ramírez, Francisco de Lagos, Andres Rodríguez and Diego Clemente (AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 48^v–57^f). Robles suspected that Palacios had not escorted the *San Sebastián* back to Colônia do Sacramento as instructed (AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 47^r–48^r).

²⁸ For interviews of the passengers, see fos. 94^r–117^v. The order for lodging La Seca and Guarino in the convent is referred to in AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 47^r–48^v.

²⁹ Georgirenes' version of the story was recorded by Castaño Becerra in AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 43^v–45^f. I cannot find any reference to Georgirenes in the *Catálogo de pasajeros a Indias*, the register of official migrants to the New World.

³⁰ A full description of the document is in AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fos. 16^v–17^v. The decree makes reference to Georgirenes' travels in England where, the document suggests, he had been trying to establish a Catholic church ('y habiéndolo ejecutado y dado principio a la fundación de una iglesia católica'), on fo. 17^r. Barron has Georgirenes in London for the last time in 1682, meaning that the archbishop must have travelled almost immediately from England to Spain.

of these arguments were persuasive, and Georgirenes finally acquiesced a day later — even then, he claimed that he had lost the keys for two of the lockboxes.³¹ This issue of Georgirenes' possessions would rumble on for another year.

But for Robles, there was a third question that ultimately took precedence over everything else. Was Georgirenes in fact who he claimed to be? If he was indeed a foreigner, what right did he have to be in the New World? And if he was a Catholic archbishop, then should he be released or sent back to Spain? From the very beginning of the investigation, therefore, the treatment of Georgirenes' mobility was linked to deeper questions about his identity. Indeed, settling the issue of his ecclesiastical status might help Robles determine the matter of how to treat his possessions. In this way, Georgirenes' fate depended on a wider set of rules, processes and contexts related to how movement and identification were controlled in the Iberian world.³² In Spain, for example, baptismal records and parish registers played an important role as proofs of identity. But as Tamar Herzog has shown, most people were rarely called on to certify their identities through the use of actual documents, particularly when it came to those who had lived in the same community all their lives. The situation was somewhat different in the New World. In theory, legal norms involving immigration to the Americas required individuals to be 'natives of the kingdoms of Spain' and 'pure of blood', a proof that was certified by the issuing of a licence by the Council of the Indies in Madrid and the House of Trade (*Casa de Contratación*) in Seville.³³ In practice, however, contemporaries realized that licences could be obtained through fraudulent means, hence the various changes in emigration legislation that characterized the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁴

³¹ La Seca and Guarino were also asked to provide keys to their own lockboxes. AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fo. 120^v–125^v, gives a full account of the matter. An inventory of the possessions in the lockboxes was made two days later on 10 March (fos. 125^v–140^v). The documents in the lockboxes were later delivered to the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Antonio de Azcona Imberto, presumably for safekeeping.

³² In addition to works in n. 10 above, see Karoline Cook, *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America* (Philadelphia, 2016); on the New World, Tamar Herzog, 'Naming, Identifying and Authorizing Movement in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America', in Breckenridge and Szreter (eds.), *Registration and Recognition*; Tamar Herzog, 'Identities and Processes of Identification in the Atlantic World', in Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World: 1450–1850* (Oxford, 2011), 480–95; and especially her *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven, 2003).

³³ Herzog, 'Naming, Identifying and Authorizing Movement', 201.

³⁴ Cook, *Forbidden Passages*, ch. 3.

What this meant is that for people faced with the threat of expulsion from the New World, the presentation of a licence alone was not always sufficient to prove their identity. Instead, such individuals responded to their particular situation by providing other forms of written documents and oral testimony. The process of identification could even become a matter for public debate with individuals appealing to their public reputation while also presenting witnesses who had known them before they migrated to the New World. In such a system, as Herzog has argued, 'success [in proving an identity] often depended not on the facts of the matter but on the question of whether individuals on expulsion rolls had local rivals who were willing to invest time, energy and money to be rid of them'.³⁵ Needless to say, these processes were subject to a wide range of contingencies: which documents an individual could actually produce, what an immigrant actually knew or understood about the process itself, and what was the context of interpersonal relationships that connected local actors. When it came to deciding whether or not Georgirenes was really a Greek archbishop in communion with Rome, therefore, the question was as much a function of local processes of identification and how Georgirenes responded to them as it was a reflection of his actual identity, whether real or fashioned.

When we look closely at the case, we can just barely perceive the way in which locals played an important role in the formal process of identification from the very start. In his initial interview of local residents, for example, Robles learned that some people claimed to have known the archbishop several years before. The priest Fernando Ruiz Corredor, for example, claimed to have seen Georgirenes at various consecrations of archbishops in Spain in 1685 and 1686. Another witness, Fernando Tello, originally from Seville, testified that he had himself seen the archbishop travelling in a coach (*en una caleza*) accompanied by his servants in Seville, the assumption being that Georgirenes had been recognized in public as having the ecclesiastical status that he claimed for himself. Juan de Zamudio told of rumours that he had heard in Madrid to the effect that Georgirenes had been robbed of everything in his possession.³⁶ These few details give only a small sense of what must have been a much larger debate taking place in Buenos Aires. One cannot help but wonder what else about the local context of the enquiry we

³⁵ Herzog, 'Naming, Identifying and Authorizing Movement', 197–8.

³⁶ For Ruiz Corredor's testimony, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 75^r–76^v; Tello's testimony is on fos. 77^v–78^v, and the reference to the coach is on 78^r. Juan de Zamudio, knight of the Order of Santiago, was interviewed on 4 and 5 March, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 78^v–79^v.

are unable to grasp from the extant documentation. Perhaps the archbishop's arrival in Buenos Aires was not as accidental as it may have seemed?

Beyond these testimonies, Robles also turned to the paperwork in the archbishop's own possession. On the day of the shipwreck, three people had been involved in the review of the documents on board the *San Sebastián*: Pedro Fernández Castro, the Treasurer who had inventoried all goods on the ship, Miguel Castellanos, his assistant, and Clemente Rodríguez Carrillo, the public notary.³⁷ First, the two 'bulls' with Arabic writing on them, probably a reference to Georgirenes' original Ottoman letters of investiture (*berât*), were sent off for translation to a local Jesuit.³⁸ Georgirenes also carried with him several documents that described him in the same terms in which he had presented himself on the day of the shipwreck, that is, as the Vicar General ('vicario general') of Benamejí, a town located today in the province of Córdoba in Spain.³⁹ When reviewed by the Inquisition, these same documents would paint a rather worrying picture about Georgirenes' actions in Benamejí. More suspicious for Robles, however, would have been several documents that had been issued to various Greeks under different names.⁴⁰ They included licences to travel to the New World, the implication being that Georgirenes might have been travelling under other identities. No wonder then that he had refused to hand over the keys to the very lockboxes which contained these letters.

³⁷ AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 79^v–85^r gives only a list of the documents, not a full copy of their texts. A more detailed record of a few of the documents, however, can be consulted in AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, discussed in detail below.

³⁸ This Jesuit was identified as Father Gregorio Cabral 'de la Compañía de Jesús, siendo rector de este colegio y que hoy para en el de Córdoba, provincia del Tucumán', AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fo. 4^r.

³⁹ See the 'título de Vicario del marquesado de Benamejí', AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 79^v–81^v.

⁴⁰ The documents were all related to one Esteban de Médicis, a Greek who, the case revealed, acted as Georgirenes' secretary during his travels in Brazil. Among the documents in Georgirenes' lockbox, see the *licencia* issued to Esteban de Médicis, son of Demecio de Médicis, who had been given permission on 22 August 1684 to collect alms to raise money to ransom his family from the Turks (AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 143^r–145^v); a separate document, dated 9 March 1685, mentions the case of Atanasio Marino de Médecis [*sic*], who had been given permission to collect alms in the New World but, having died, the permission was transferred to Esteban de Médicis (fos. 145–147^r); and a further *real cédula* issued to Esteban de Médicis to collect alms in Naples (fos. 147^r–148^v). The second document must be a copy of AGI, Indiferente, 430, l. 42, fos. 336^v–338. For the reference to the inventory of the letters in the lockboxes, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 141^r–143^r.

In early June, the case against Georgirenes appeared to gain momentum. On 12 June 1694, a summary of the laws that apply in the case of shipwrecks was prepared.⁴¹ Two weeks later, local officials published their decision about the case. Put simply, the archbishop and his companions did not possess the requisite licence to enter as foreigners. Everything else proceeded from there: the goods on the *San Sebastián* were deemed to have been intended for illegal commerce, hence they would be auctioned off; Georgirenes and his companions were all to be sent back to Seville; and Robles himself insisted that the supposed archbishop did not have the ecclesiastical status he claimed for himself.⁴² It appears that Georgirenes and his companions appealed the case, because a second judgment was handed down weeks later on 13 July.⁴³ In this second decision, Treasury officials agreed that Georgirenes' appeal should be referred to a higher authority given the possibility of his status as an archbishop. For his part, Robles referred to his earlier judgment but agreed that an appeal should be heard. It was on this basis, it seems, that Georgirenes' case was referred to the Viceroy in Lima.⁴⁴

At this point, a flurry of documentation reveals the extent to which this case developed into a public affair involving officials in both Buenos Aires and Lima. On 7 August, Georgirenes petitioned the King of Spain himself, asking that he be permitted to travel overland to Lima and from there to Spain; he also complained that he was being treated in Buenos Aires like a criminal. A week later, Georgirenes appealed to the Viceroy in Lima, Melchor Portocarrero, Count de la Monclova, complaining of his mistreatment and again of the long wait he would have to endure for the arrival of a ship. He asked instead for permission to travel to Lima and from there to follow the usual route of travel to Spain via the port of Portobelo.⁴⁵ In this same period,

⁴¹ This included restrictions on the arrival of passengers to the New World via Buenos Aires, restrictions on foreigners travelling to the New World, and the relevant royal decrees that laid out the rules about illicit commerce. For the full summary, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 158^v–164^r.

⁴² The judgment was communicated to Georgirenes on the same day. See AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 171^r–180^r.

⁴³ In an undated petition submitted by La Seca and Guarino, the two men argue that they had wanted to return to Colônia do Sacramento from the start but that the storm had stopped them from doing so. In other words, they claimed they were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 181^r–182^v.

⁴⁴ For the second judgment, see the sentence dated 13 July 1694 in AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 184^r–190^v. Robles finally wrote to the viceroy on 15 August and again on 18 August (fos. 530^v–535^v).

⁴⁵ The letter to the king is in AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 523^r–525^r (7 August 1694); for the letter to the viceroy, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 535^v–537^r (15 August 1694). La

there is a sense of if not confusion, then at least disagreement, between Spanish officials over Georgirenes' case. On 5 July, for example, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Antonio de Azcona Imberto, wrote to the Viceroy of Lima in support of Georgirenes. This reflects a general sense across the documents that the archbishop was one of his supporters, having permitted him to celebrate Mass in Buenos Aires during his detainment.⁴⁶ It is less clear what the viceroy made of the case. Judging from his decision in December 1694, however, it seems he took a softer position with regard to the treatment of Georgirenes. Like Robles, he worried that if permitted to travel to Lima, Georgirenes and his crew might try to escape. Yet, at the same time, he also seemed to want Robles to reach a compromise of sorts. In light of the uncertainty surrounding Georgirenes' ecclesiastical status, Portocarrero encouraged Robles to treat him as if he *were* an archbishop until he could be sent off to Spain. Like the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, the viceroy even went so far as to suggest that Georgirenes should be permitted to celebrate Mass.⁴⁷

At stake here was not only what to do with this individual until a ship should arrive to take him back to Spain, but also what to do about his goods that had been confiscated. In accordance with the original judgment, the local authorities in Buenos Aires went ahead with plans to auction off all of the goods, not just the textiles but also the slaves. The documentation for late 1694 and early 1695 depicts a complicated series of events wherein Georgirenes and his companions tried to obtain as best they could either, in the case of La Seca and Guarino, their possessions or, in the case of Georgirenes, the proceeds from the public auction.⁴⁸ Throughout this process, it is clear that different parties appeared to take different positions with

Seca and Guarino also wrote to the viceroy, insisting that they would now travel to Colônia do Sacramento if they were allowed to do so: AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 525^r–526^v (9 July 1694).

⁴⁶ For the Archbishop of Buenos Aires' letter to the viceroy, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 517^r–520^r (5 July 1695). The reference to the permission to celebrate Mass is in AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fo. 1^r.

⁴⁷ For the viceroy's decision, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 209^v–211^v (6 December 1694).

⁴⁸ To this end, Georgirenes appointed one Joseph Rendon to act as his representative in dealing not only with local authorities but also with his secretary, Esteban de Médicis, who wrote from Colônia do Sacramento in November 1694 insisting that the goods on the *San Sebastián* were actually his own belongings, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 248^r–249^v. On Rendon's appointment and the details related to the auction, which probably took place in June 1695, see the long trail of documents stretching over 1695.

regard to Georgirenes: whereas local Treasury officials sought ways to claim the proceeds from the public auction, the viceroy argued that at least some of the proceeds should go back to Georgirenes and, indeed, that he should retain ownership of his slaves. For his part, Robles appeared to seek to uphold the viceroy's decision, despite his own initial doubts about the stranger's identity.⁴⁹

It was this ongoing dispute over Georgirenes' possessions, rather than poor health, that probably explains why he prepared two wills, first in August 1695 and then again in September of the same year.⁵⁰ Interestingly, the wills reiterate many of the claims that Georgirenes had been making to Spanish officials at the time. They speak, for example, of his having been given permission by the Pope to celebrate Mass, and of his firm belief (*crehemos firmemente*) in the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and his desire to 'live and die' as a Catholic.⁵¹ In the later will, he insisted that all that he had owned had been given to him as charity. He also reiterated his claim to the proceeds from the public auction, mentioning explicitly that this was by command of the viceroy himself.⁵² At the same time, Georgirenes requested that he be treated, at his death, with the same respect and honour given to Catholic bishops in the New World. In other words, he wished to be buried in the crypt reserved for bishops in the cathedral of Buenos Aires. He also bequeathed some goods to his four brothers, named in the wills as Lawrence, Martin, Nicholas and Peter, although there is no evidence that any of them were at any time in their brother's company in Buenos Aires.⁵³

⁴⁹ On Robles, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 257^r–258^v.

⁵⁰ The wills are dated 18 August and 26 September 1695, and they are now in the Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter AGN), Buenos Aires. See José María Pico, 'Testamentos y codicilos porteños de los siglos XVII y XVIII. 1643–1750', *Genealogía: Revista del Instituto Argentino de Ciencias Genealógicas*, xxii (1987), 213ff. I am grateful to Gabriela Ramos and Guillermo Wilde for their assistance in obtaining digital copies of the wills. For Georgirenes' signature, see fos. 176^v and 272^r.

⁵¹ Georgirenes refers to one Don Alexo de Baldivia y Brizuela as his confessor.

⁵² The relevant passage is in 'Yten declaramos por dichos nuestros vienes todo lo que se vendio en almoneda publica con pretesto de que heran de nuestro secretario y por ello no se nos han entregado aviendose mandado por el señor virrey conde de la Moncloa se nos volviesen a entregar todos los que pareciesen ser nuestros', see 'Segundo testamento de fray don Joseph Georgerini', Buenos Aires, 26 September 1695, AGN, Buenos Aires, sala IX, legajo 48-8-2, fos. 267^v–272^r, with citation from 269^r. In the same document, he still claims ownership of his two slaves.

⁵³ Of the four brothers mentioned, Lawrence appears to have accompanied Joseph to England: see Barron, *From Samos to Soho*, 172–3. A website kept by Juan Luis Naval Molero, a local historian in Chipiona, north of Cádiz, refers to one Martín Georgerín,

At this point, the archival trail begins to grow cold. It is likely that Georgirenes survived for at least six or seven more years. He was still in Buenos Aires in December 1698 when La Seca and Guarino hatched a plot to fool the local authorities. The two men told Robles that they had secured permission to travel to Lima, and they provided official letters purporting to have been issued by the viceroy himself. When Robles wrote to Lima to check the authenticity of the letters, he learned that they were in fact forgeries. It did not matter: at the beginning of September 1699, La Seca and Guarino escaped from the convent in which they had been housed, triggering a complete search of the local area and warnings of an anathema on anyone who was found to be hiding them.⁵⁴ It is not clear what role, if any, Georgirenes played in this escape. Whatever the case, the archbishop seems to have remained in Buenos Aires. On 8 April 1700, a local chronicler noted that a baptism was performed in the Cathedral in Buenos Aires by the 'Arzobispo de Padmos', almost certainly a garbled reference to Georgirenes.⁵⁵ Less clear is how the suspect cleric remained so long in Buenos Aires despite the fact that orders had been sent from Madrid demanding his return to Spain in May 1697 and again as late as 1699.⁵⁶ One can only speculate as to how he survived in this state of limbo: perhaps he managed to win over the locals in Buenos Aires, maybe even the governor himself. At any rate, we do not know when, or where, he died. If ever he was buried in the Cathedral, as was his wish, it is impossible to verify this

'brother of the Archbishop of Samos', who appears as mayor of the town in 1696 and 1701: Juan Luis Naval Molero, 'Cronista Oficial de la Villa de Chipiona, Archivo Municipal, Edificio San Fernando, Cádiz'. I have not been able to find any further information about Martin Georgirenes.

⁵⁴ For details of the escape, see AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 24–30. The friars were reported to have been sighted in 1702, not far from Buenos Aires. See the letter from the viceroy in AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 549^r–553^r (30 November 1702).

⁵⁵ Guillermo Furlong, *Manuel Querini, S. J., y sus 'Informes al Rey'* (Buenos Aires, 1967), 14; see also Bruno Cayetano, *Historia de la Iglesia en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1968), iv, 88. Interestingly, the confusion of Patmos with Samos is a common enough feature in the contemporary sources related to Georgirenes.

⁵⁶ See, for example, AHN, Buenos Aires, 4, l. 12, fos. 5^r–7^v (11 May 1697), 'Real Cédula al gobernador de las provincias del Río de la Plata. Aprueba lo ejecutado por el virrey del Perú sobre la arribada al puerto de Buenos Aires del arzobispo de Samos, religiosos y pajes, y ordena que los envíe a estos reinos en los primeros navíos de registro que pasaren a ese puerto'; AHN, Buenos Aires, 4, l. 12, fos. 73^r–^v (12 July 1699), 'Real Cédula al gobernador de las provincias del Río de la Plata. Manda que ejecute a la brevedad el envío del arzobispo de Samos, don José Giorgerino, de nacionalidad griega, a los reinos de España'.

today on account of renovations to the church and the crypt that took place in the eighteenth century.

IV

MOBILITY UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

What does a microhistory of the Archbishop of Samos offer to our understanding of the world in which he lived? This is a question that contributors to this volume would probably answer in different ways. Jan de Vries, for example, rejects the ‘distorted view’ of the past offered by what he calls ‘unusually cosmopolitan individuals’ who appear to ‘overcome barriers, dissolve misunderstandings, exhibit resilience and create spaces of tolerance’.⁵⁷ In contrast, Filippo de Vivo argues that case studies can ‘be used not just to verify, but also to correct general interpretations and, if necessary, to propose new ones’.⁵⁸ The disagreement here is in part a function of what exactly we are trying to learn from such a microhistory. In one way, De Vries is correct if we mean that the case of Georgirenes reveals very little about the wider world of Eastern Christianity. Given the nature of the sources, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to generalize about patterns of Orthodox belief and practice in this period from Georgirenes’ example. He would also be a strange keyhole through which to explore wider aspects of the relationship between Eastern and Western Christianities in this period. Georgirenes does not offer us the world in a grain of sand.

At the same time, de Vivo’s optimism makes perfect sense if we restrict our focus to a set of specific questions about mobility and identification in the early modern world. On the most basic level, the practices Georgirenes used to accomplish movement help us reassess long-standing debates about the relationship of the old world of the Mediterranean to the new worlds of the Atlantic. Specifically, his case reveals the existence of truly global networks of alms-collecting in this period.⁵⁹ It is clear, for example, that Georgirenes’

⁵⁷ De Vries, ‘Playing with Scales’, 28.

⁵⁸ Filippo de Vivo, ‘Microhistories of Long-Distance Information: Space, Movement and Agency in the Early Modern News’, 182.

⁵⁹ For some examples of the growing body of work on this subject, see Karen Melvin, ‘Charity Without Borders: Alms Collection in New Spain for Captives in North Africa’, *Colonial Latin American Review*, xviii, 1 (2009); Kenneth Mills, ‘Diego de Ocaña, Holy Wanderer’, in Kenneth J. Andrien (ed.), *The Human Tradition in Colonial Latin America* (Lanham, Md. and Boulder, Colo., 2013); Matthias B. Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land: The Sephardic Diaspora and the Practice of Pan-Judaism in the Eighteenth Century* (Stanford, 2014); Sebouh Aslanian, ‘“Many have come here and have deceived us”: Some Notes on Asateur Vardapet (1644–1728), An Itinerant Armenian Monk in Europe’, *Handes Amsorea* (2019); for a later

travels to America drew momentum from his earlier experiences as an alms-collector in the Ottoman empire. We see this in his own account in the *Description of the Present State of Samos* where he includes a lengthy description of how alms-collecting was organized at Mount Athos. He describes, for example, how monks were chosen each year to carry out this task in designated regions, travelling in groups of two or three for a period of a few years.

When they go abroad, they first apply themselves to the *Metropole* of the Diocese, and shew him their Letters of Obedience from their Superiors. Whereupon the Metropolitane gives them Letters of Permission to ask Charity, and confess Penitents throughout his Diocese. Where they Confess any, they exact nothing of them by way of pecuniary Penance, but only receive what in charity they freely bestow.⁶⁰

Georgirenes' reference to letters of recommendation betrays his own consciousness of the important role documents played in facilitating mobility, which explains why he carried these documents with him wherever he travelled. Documents mattered to him as much in the Mediterranean as in the Atlantic, a reminder of the important continuities of practice that existed across the early modern world.

Secondly, Georgirenes' case reveals just how far an individual could go in actively trying to manage his identity abroad. We can see this in a fascinating piece of evidence taken from his time in London. At some point in late 1679 or early 1680, while trying to collect funds to build his church, Georgirenes learned that another person was in fact travelling around England collecting alms in his name. As such, he published a short note in the *London Gazette* in February 1680 warning readers not to be duped by someone claiming to be the Archbishop of Samos. It is worth including the advertisement in full:

Whereas a Grecian Minister of a high Stature, with black bushy hair and a long black beard, whose name is Joachim Cicileano, on the Isle of *Ceffalonia*, has gone up and down the Country under the name of the Bishop of *Samos* in *Greece*, and hath been assisted with Christian Contributions towards building the Grecian Church, which he hath lewdly spent, to the prejudice of the said Church and the scandal of the said Bishop. Now to prevent any farther abuse to the Country,

period, see Andrew MacDonald, 'The Thieves of the Cross: Assyrian Charity Collectors and World History, 1860s–1940s', *Past and Present*, no. 229 (Nov. 2015).

⁶⁰ Georgirenes, *Description of the Present State of Samos, Nicaria, Patmos, and Mount Athos*, 100–1.

these are to give notice that the said Bishop of *Samos* [i.e. the real Archbishop, Georgirenes himself] is an indifferent tall man and slender, with long black hair, having a wart on the right side of his nose just against his eye, a Cut under his right eye, and black whiskers with very little Beard; which said Bishop wrote the History of *Samos*, and with the Assistance of good Christians hath built and almost finished the Grecian Church in *Sohoe* Fields, by License from His Majesty.⁶¹

This is the only physical description we have of Georgirenes, one that he himself provided in an effort to authenticate his identity in a situation where another person — Joachim Cicileano, apparently a Greek from Cephalonia — was impersonating him. In this remarkable incident, we obtain one of the few glimpses of the sort of agency that microhistorians have privileged in the study of mobility. What is important to note, however, is that Georgirenes' advertisement reflects just how little control he had over his own identity when faced with the reality of other individuals pretending to be him. When confronted by the very real challenges of having to prove his identity in the context of mobility, the prelate was forced to take refuge in the most basic proof possible: a description of his physicality.

Thirdly, a microhistory of Robles's investigation into Georgirenes' identity reveals that there was in fact nothing extraordinary about the mobility of Eastern Christians to America in and of itself. In other words, contemporaries did not see Eastern Christians as the 'unusually cosmopolitan individuals' imagined by De Vries. Instead, the enquiry reveals something much more important about Eastern Christian mobility, namely that it was fiercely contested by those who regarded such movement as a source of potential danger. There is evidence, among some Spanish officials, of anxieties related specifically to Eastern Christians as a group. The *Book of the Laws of the Indies*, for example, includes a set of rules prohibiting the collection of alms by 'Greeks', 'Armenians' and 'monks of mount Sinai'.⁶² Despite this regulation, we know that some Eastern Christians managed to overcome the legal restrictions placed on their movements, for example through the forgery of Arabic letters of recommendation.⁶³

⁶¹ *London Gazette*, no. 1485v, dated '1679', also cited in Barron, *From Samos to Soho*, 213.

⁶² The full text of the law can be found in volume 1 of *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reynos de las Indias* (Madrid, 1681), book 1, chapter 21, law 10.

⁶³ See John-Paul Ghobrial, 'Migration from Within and Without: In the Footsteps of Eastern Christians in the Early Modern World', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, xxvii (2017); John-Paul Ghobrial, 'The Archives of Orientalism and its Keepers: Re-imagining the Histories of Arabic Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe',

Lastly, and most importantly, microhistory reveals that contemporary concerns about the moving story of Georgirenes had less to do with his mobility per se than with the problem his identity posed. Indeed, the immense trail of documents produced by Robles's case is a testament to just how seriously contemporaries took the work of identification. We find traces of this same seriousness of purpose in the Inquisition report that survives about Georgirenes. It was in May 1694 that Robles had written to the Inquisition in Lima to request an investigation into the suspect's identity. In October 1694, Francisco Valera, head of the Inquisition in Lima, appointed two local priests to carry out the enquiry: they were Sebastian Crespo Flores, head canon (*canónico magistral*) of the cathedral in Buenos Aires, and Jacinto Ladrón de Guevara, a priest in the town of Santa Cruz de los Quilmes. Strangely enough, the two men delayed over a year before actually starting the investigation. (Given the potential connection they had with the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, had they been procrastinating?) At any rate, Valera charged Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara with finding out whether Georgirenes was a schismatic, that is, an Eastern Christian believer in Orthodoxy, or whether in fact he really was a Catholic.⁶⁴ Answering this question would keep the two priests busy for a period of about ten days in October and November 1695.

Like Robles, the two priests carried out their investigation with the consideration of both oral and written evidence. In the first instance, they sought clues to Georgirenes' identity in interviews with other passengers on the ship. On 28 October 1695, Juan de La Seca testified that although he could not know for sure whether or not the suspect really was the Archbishop of Samos, he believed him to be so, and he had treated him as such from the first moment he had met him over twenty years ago in Valencia. Since then, La Seca had encountered Georgirenes a second time in a monastery in Lisbon where the archbishop had been celebrating Mass according to the Latin rite.

in Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters and Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *The Social History of the Archive: Record-Keeping in Early Modern Europe* (Past and Present Supplement no. 11, Oxford, 2016); John-Paul Ghobrial, 'The Life and Hard Times of Solomon Negri: An Arabic Teacher in Early Modern Europe', in Jan Loop *et al.*, *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe* (Brill, 2017). On forged letters, see Ghobrial, 'Archives of Orientalism and its Keepers', 91.

⁶⁴ Incidentally, Valera also asked the men to confirm whether or not the two friars, La Seca and Guarino, might actually be Greeks as well, see AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, 1^o. Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara dismissed this question outright, not least since the only people who could confirm it were the other passengers on the *San Sebastián*. More generally, they accepted that La Seca was from Seville and Guarino from Naples, as they claimed, see AHN, Inquisición, 1647, fo. 3.

In Lisbon, La Seca noted that the priest had been living with three Greeks and an Englishman, Miguel Joseph de Endon, who had been on board the *San Sebastián*. As La Seca's testimony continued, however, the story became more complicated. La Seca described a more recent occasion in the town of Santos in Brazil when he had been present while Georgirenes celebrated Mass in the chapel of a local priest. Afterwards, La Seca testified that he had witnessed the Greek archbishop ordaining nine priests aboard his ship in exchange for which he was given a fine wooden chest and 250 pesos of silver in recompense for the certificates of ordination (*en remuneración de los títulos*).⁶⁵ This was the first of a handful of scraps of evidence that suggested to Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara that the archbishop had engaged in simony — as much a crime on sea as it was on land.

In addition to eyewitness testimony, Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara sought proofs of Georgirenes' Catholicity in the paperwork that he carried with him. They began by interviewing Pedro Fernández Castro, Miguel Castellanos and Clemente Rodríguez Carrillo, the three officials who had been responsible for inspecting the documents on board the *San Sebastián*. (It is unclear whether the two priests knew at the time that, two decades earlier, Castellanos had himself been found guilty of negligence in the inspection of ships, an indication that he had potentially been involved in smuggling in the past.)⁶⁶ Several of the documents in Georgirenes' possession supported his version of events. Castellanos testified that after the shipwreck, he and Fernández had immediately looked through the documents but could not find any sign of a licence. As for the two Ottoman documents, they claimed that they had in fact been able to read them because they were accompanied by a muddled Spanish translation.⁶⁷ More importantly, Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara were told of, or shown, several documents that confirmed that Georgirenes had in fact become a Catholic before travelling to the New World. First, there was the decree issued by the king in November 1682,

⁶⁵ La Seca's full testimony can be found in AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fos. 4^r–7^r; the reference to this particular episode is on fos. 5^v–6^r.

⁶⁶ Zacarías Moutoukias, 'Power, Corruption and Commerce: The Making of the Local Administrative Structure in Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, lxxviii, 4 (1988), 793.

⁶⁷ The *berāt* would have confirmed Georgirenes' investiture, but it would not indicate when his status had come to an end. The documents are described as 'dos bulas escritas en pergamino con muchas letras de oro todo en arábigo y escrito en forma de media luna, y con ellas un pliego de papel, su traducción en castellano, aunque con razones diferentes porque parece que el que la tradujo no era español, pero se conoció ser despachos del Gran Turco', AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fo. 8^r. If he did not produce this translation himself, Georgirenes must have obtained it during his travels in Spain.

which contained proof at least that the Royal Council accepted that Georgirenes was a Catholic.⁶⁸ More importantly, Castellanos described 'an authentic testimony' in which the suspect claimed to have abjured the schism.⁶⁹ For his part, Fernández described also having seen a Latin bull 'in which Georgirenes was granted the right to say Mass' as well as a copy of a letter from Cardinal Savio Millini, papal nuncio in Madrid, referring to Georgirenes' having been given permission to collect alms by Clement X himself.⁷⁰

Interestingly, the documents also revealed that Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara were not in fact the first people to investigate Georgirenes in this way. This emerged in a long letter dated 6 July 1688, a copy of which was given to the priests by Rodríguez, the notary. The letter had been written by Marcello Durazzo, papal nuncio in Spain. It detailed how in March 1688, an order from the Holy Council had forbidden Greeks from celebrating Mass in Europe until they proved their identity as Catholics to local authorities. In his letter, Durazzo confirms that Georgirenes had presented the necessary documents to him to confirm his abjuration of Orthodoxy. The letter even referred to a profession of faith made by Georgirenes in 1664, marking his passing from the Greek rite to the Latin one (*del rito griego se pasó al latino*).⁷¹ Durazzo's letter was registered in Madrid on 12 July 1691, and it was reconfirmed a few months later in Lisbon. These documents certified Georgirenes' Catholic identity, on paper at least, as recently as a few years before his appearance in Buenos Aires in 1694.⁷²

At the same time, other documents in Georgirenes' possession painted a more dubious picture of his religious identity, particularly when it came to his experiences in the Spanish town of Benamejí. In his testimony, the notary Rodríguez shared a letter addressed to Georgirenes in 1687 that referred to several complaints by various bishops that he had been ordaining as priests people who were unsuitable for the office (*muchos iliteratos y totalmente incapaces para los misterios eclesiásticos*). Rodríguez also produced the copy

⁶⁸ For the full letter, see AHN, Inquisición, exp. 8, fo. 16^v–17^v.

⁶⁹ Castellanos described the document as 'un testimonio auténtico en que constaba había sido cismático y se había reconciliado con la Santa Iglesia Romana y abjurado de la misma', AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fo. 12^v.

⁷⁰ The letter from Millini was dated 4 February 1683: see AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fos. 17^v–19^f.

⁷¹ If accurate, this confession of faith would have been made while Georgirenes was living in Constantinople or, potentially, it suggests that he had in fact first travelled to Rome in 1664, long before his travels to Europe in the 1670s.

⁷² For the full letter by Durazzo, see AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fos. 17^v–19^f.

of a signed testimony of a notary in Benamejí, which contained a record of Georgirenes' eventual exile from the town in November 1690.⁷³ Throughout his testimony, Rodríguez confirmed the authenticity of these documents with reference to specific diplomatic features of the documents: he describes, for example, the 'original signed letter' (*una carta original firmada*, fo. 20^v), or the 'wafer seal' at the foot of the document (*un sello en oblea*, fo. 19^r), or 'the five rubrics' of the Royal Council (*cinco rúbricas que al parecer son de los señores del Real Consejo*, fo. 17^v). These clues suggest Rodríguez was working from a much larger collection of documents, not all of which made it into the final Inquisition report.⁷⁴ Moreover, there were presumably other documents still hidden away in the two lockboxes for which Georgirenes had not provided keys. In this way, Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara would have known that they were only seeing a small part of the puzzle.

In determining whether or not the archbishop was a Catholic, Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara looked to one final piece of evidence, namely Georgirenes' own devotional practices, comportment and habits. Did he act in a way that was befitting a Catholic archbishop? Here, the most peculiar piece of evidence came from the testimony of a priest named Lorenzo Guerrero.⁷⁵ On 3 November, Guerrero testified that he had once confessed to Georgirenes before celebrating Mass with him in the castle of the city of Río de la Plata.⁷⁶ The occasion had been the feast of the Samaritan woman. As recounted in John 4:4–42, Jesus Christ encounters a woman at a well while he is passing through Samaria and asks her for a drink. She refuses to share water with him — 'Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans' (John 4:9) — at which point Jesus discourses with the woman. She is astounded by his ability to discern that she is in fact an adulteress. Later in the gospel, the woman goes on to spread the news of her meeting with Jesus (John 4:28–30, 39–42). It was after celebrating this Mass that Georgirenes reportedly turned to Guerrero and said, 'Why did you give me this Mass or this

⁷³ The letter was written by one 'cardinal de Vallo, Señor vicario de Benamejí': see AHN, Inquisición, fos. 20^v–21^r. The testimonial of the notary, Don Blas de los Cobos y Osuna, is on fos. 21^r–21^v (14 November 1690).

⁷⁴ Rodríguez refers, for example, to specific page numbers of documents ('a hojas 45 de dichos autos' on fo. 20^v, 'a hojas 53' on fo. 21^r) as if he was working from a gathered set of papers.

⁷⁵ Guerrero was described as a 'maestro graduado, clérigo presbítero domiciliario de este obispado' — he may have had a link to the Archbishop of Buenos Aires: see AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fo. 14^v.

⁷⁶ This appears to have taken place eighteen months earlier, that is, during Georgirenes' detainment in Buenos Aires.

gospel of this whore? Had I known it, I wouldn't have said it' (i.e. celebrated the mass) (*para que me puso usted esta misa o este evangelio de esa puta, que si lo supiera no la hubiera dicho*).⁷⁷ Guerrero was taken aback by the archbishop's speaking in such a way, so he reported it to the Inquisition in Lima.

Yet in his testimony, Guerrero also entertained the possibility that Georgirenes' behaviour could simply have been the result of defects in his Spanish. To this end, he referred to a separate encounter he had had with the archbishop wherein, upon describing some fabric that had been taken from him after the shipwreck, Georgirenes was reported to have said that he had given the material to a '*puta*' to complete the work but that she had not completed it.⁷⁸ The implication of Guerrero's testimony was that when Georgirenes referred to the account of the Samaritan woman, he had been using the Spanish term '*puta*' (or was it actually the Italian word '*putta*'?) to refer to women in general and not that he had insulted the gospel in the way Guerrero first suggested. In theory, both seem possible.⁷⁹ Whatever the case, one is left with the distinct impression that Guerrero may have been trying to find a way to let Georgirenes off the hook.

Guerrero's testimony gives a clear sense of how contemporaries did their best to try to accommodate Georgirenes' identity claims into their own views of the proper behaviour expected of a Catholic archbishop. What is especially striking here is Guerrero's willingness to carry out impressive feats of imagination in order to make sense of the identity he was confronted with in Georgirenes. On the one hand, the foreigner's behaviour and the paperwork he carried with him seemed obviously to conflict with his claims of being a Catholic archbishop. Nevertheless, Guerrero sought to construct an intelligible version of Georgirenes' identity in which his behaviour was explained not as an act of dissimulation but rather by something as basic as a poor command of Spanish. Of course a Catholic archbishop could not go around calling women *putas*, but might it just be possible for an abjured schismatic and non-Spanish speaking archbishop to do so while still being the genuine

⁷⁷ Guerrero's testimony can be found in AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fos. 14^r–15^v.

⁷⁸ For the relevant passage, 'dijo que aquellas estaban de aquella calidad porque las había dado a coser a una puta y no lo había hecho, de donde infirió este declarante que sería como un estilo de dicho señor arzobispo de nombrar así a las mujeres', see AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fo. 14^v.

⁷⁹ John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* (London, 1598) suggests that the word in Italian could refer either to 'a wench, a girle, a modder, a lasse, a yoong maide' or a 'whore, a harlot, a strumpet'. On the other hand, Covarrubias Orozco's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* (Madrid, 1611) suggests that in Spanish the word only retained a negative meaning. I am grateful to Simon Ditchfield for pointing this out to me.

person he claimed to be? Guerrero's willingness to imagine Georgirenes as a coherent individual — not a trickster, but someone whose behaviour was in line with his identity — recalls the sympathetic way in which English clerics also had approached Georgirenes in London.⁸⁰ In both cases, if the cleric was out of place, it was not with respect to *where* he was but rather to *how* he was. Moreover, the where and the how were intimately linked because it was only in the specific contexts of London and Buenos Aires that Georgirenes had to demonstrate his religious identity — be it Catholic or Anglican — in order to avoid expulsion.

Stepping back from the white noise of the case, what have we learned by placing mobility and identification under the microscope in this way? On the one hand, there is something rather anticlimactic about the way in which contemporaries poured so much energy into the work of identifying Georgirenes. The Inquisition trial is a good case in point. Upon reading the report Crespo and Ladrón de Guevara compiled, Francisco Valera decided that a summary of the trial should simply be sent to the Council of the Holy Inquisition in Madrid. He made no explicit requests or recommendations for any further action to be taken against Georgirenes.⁸¹

Above all, putting mobility under the microscope means acknowledging the range of possibilities *not* taken by historical actors alongside the study of what actually did happen in the case of Georgirenes. In this article, I have chosen to probe a single case where contemporaries put considerable amounts of energy into the task of identifying Georgirenes. I am mindful, however, that things could have gone very differently for the Archbishop of Samos. In 1678, less than twenty years before Georgirenes' arrival in Buenos Aires, there had been a similar attempt to call into question the identity of several men described in the sources as 'Greek merchants'. In that particular case, the local council decided not to pursue the matter; instead, the licences carried by these 'Greek merchants' were accepted as proof that they were

⁸⁰ In the case of Reformation London, of course, this meant a greater focus on Georgirenes' theological positions, that is, whether in fact he could bring Orthodoxy into communion with the Church of England. For example, Georgirenes provided the Bishop of London with a 'declaration of conformity to the doctrines of the Church of England' in which he renounced several tenets of the Orthodox church including transubstantiation, the veneration of icons, and the practice of 'any service which would be contrary to that of the Anglican Church', see Barron, *From Samos to Soho*, 180.

⁸¹ See AHN, Inquisición, 1647, exp. 8, fo. 22^r. I am grateful to Robin Vose for his insights on the possible outcomes of such Inquisition cases.

in fact really ‘Spaniards’.⁸² We cannot know what local alliances lurked behind this decision, or why Georgirenes was treated differently. Whatever the case, it is an important reminder of the variety of local outcomes that could be produced by the same general processes of identification. This unpredictability too was an important feature of mobility in the early modern world, and no one would have understood this better than Georgirenes himself.

V

TAKEN BY SURPRISE

Seeing mobility like a microhistorian means following clues that lead to unexpected places. This is a particular challenge for historians working on individuals whose mobility carries them — and us — across multiple archival traditions, each with its own different languages as well as distinct genres and systems of record-keeping. If microhistory is about ‘taking readers into the kitchen’, making visible the choices and processes behind our interpretation of evidence, then what happens when the method of ‘following’ carries us far from the names we are studying, sometimes even into the realm of fiction?

We fall down one such rabbit hole when we consider a third and final perspective from which to view Georgirenes’ life, one that emerges, curiously enough, in a newspaper article published in 2017 in the Uruguayan newspaper *El País*.⁸³ In it, Alberto Moroy, a frequent contributor to the travel section, reports the news of an archaeological discovery of an eighteenth-century ship in one of the neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires: the ‘*galeón de Puerto Madero*’. Moroy immediately relates the discovery to the ‘incredible story’ (*esta historia increíble*) of the Archbishop of Samos, the implication being that the ship might in fact be the *San Sebastián* itself. In an attempt to identify the ship, he also presents the evidence pertaining to two other shipwrecks near Buenos Aires in the period between 1694 and 1799. In doing so, Moroy invites his readers to join him in uncovering the mystery of the ship’s identity, a story that he says ‘has all the ingredients of a historical novel’ by the

⁸² The case is described in ‘Auto del gobernador sobre mercaderes extranjeros y recogida de ganados’, in José Juan Biedma (ed.), *Acuerdos del extinguido Cabildo de Buenos Aires, 1677–1681* (AGN, Buenos Aires, 1917), xv, 216–17; see also Herzog, ‘Naming, Identifying and Authorizing Movement’, 197n. I am grateful to Julie Coimbra for her help in securing a copy of this source.

⁸³ The article, with links to video footage, is Alberto Moroy, ‘Viaje al fondo de Puerto Madero’, *El País*, <<http://viajes.elpais.com/uy/2017/04/20/viaje-al-fondo-de-puerto-madero/>> (accessed on 19 July 2019). I found it while carrying out a cursory online search for printed sources about the Archbishop of Samos.

Argentinian writer Manuel Mujica Láinez. Moroy even includes a link to Mujica Láinez's story so that readers could read it for themselves.

A somewhat forgotten figure among scholars of Latin American literature, Mujica Láinez was a novelist, essayist and critic whose aristocratic family stretched back to the founding of Buenos Aires in the sixteenth century.⁸⁴ Among his writings are some sixteen novels, four collections of short stories, many of them about Buenos Aires, three books of poetry (including an opera), and dozens of essays, articles and interviews. Only two of these works were ever translated into English, which is perhaps why he never quite achieved the international fame experienced by some of his contemporaries, not least his friend Jorge Luis Borges. In 1951, Mujica Láinez published what remains his best-known work, *Misteriosa Buenos Aires*, a collection of short stories telling the history of Buenos Aires from its foundation in 1536 until 1904. Of forty-two tales, the fifteenth is entitled simply, *The Archbishop of Samos, 1694*.⁸⁵

Reading the story reveals clues that Mujica Láinez must have had access to real historical documents including, almost certainly, some of the sources used in this article.⁸⁶ Even so, the tale is dominated by a type of magical realism that gives Georgirenes' story a surreal otherworldliness. *The Archbishop of Samos* opens with a description of the suspect cleric pacing back and forth in a prison cell in Buenos Aires as he rubs the finger where he once wore a 'thick gold ring whose emerald shows the small owl favoured by

⁸⁴ Only a small secondary literature exists in Spanish on Mujica Láinez's writings. For a useful introduction, see George O. Schanzer, *The Persistence of Human Passions: Manuel Mujica Láinez's Satirical Neo-Modernism* (London, 1986), especially for biographical details. Mujica Láinez's papers are held today at the Firestone Library at Princeton University, <<https://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/C0819>> (accessed 24 July 2019).

⁸⁵ I am using the 6th edition of *Misteriosa Buenos Aires: Edición completa* (Buenos Aires, 1975), 98–103.

⁸⁶ See, for example, his itinerary of Georgirenes' travels (Samos, Rome, Florence, Paris, Marseilles, London, Lisbon and then Buenos Aires); the use of names of the Spanish officials whom Georgirenes encountered in Buenos Aires; and even the detail of his lockboxes lying in the mud ('pocos cajones tumbados en el barro'). It would seem that Mujica Láinez's participation in intellectual circles — particularly as a member of the Argentinian Academy of Letters and Fine Arts, as well as his work for decades as an art critic for *La Nación* — somehow gave him access to the story, possibly from Guillermo Furlong, S.J., a local historian in Argentina with over three hundred publications on the colonial history of Buenos Aires. In 1947, Furlong published a brief article containing some (but not all) of the details included in Mujica Láinez's story, 'El arzobispo de Samos y su extraña comitiva en la Buenos Aires de fines del siglo 17', *Criterio* (1947), 505–8.

Minerva'. Georgirenes had planned to use the ring to 'buy his escape from his jailers', but it had been stolen by his servant, a 'cursed Englishman' called Walter. Mujica Láinez's depiction of the archbishop is remarkable: Georgirenes looks 'like a little owl, an enormous absurd little owl, with his round and cruel eyes, his curved nose, his yellow face and his tattered, dull and dirty clothes, whose floating sleeves flutter like wings in his cell'. As the story unfolds, the narrator describes a ritual that Georgirenes carried out one day in his cell. As he reflects on Walter's treachery, his anger suddenly boils over and 'with a dangerous sparkle in his owl eyes', he begins his witchcraft. He unties a long cord from his waist, placing it on the floor in the shape of a triangle, before removing his shoes and raising his hands in the air.

The magic formulas of the grimoires — those of the Book of Saint Cyprian, those of the Key of Solomon — resonate through the cell in Buenos Aires. The archbishop of Samos is first and foremost a sorcerer. Now he does not look like an owl anymore but a goat, shaking his beard, furrowing his bushy eyebrows, his hair transforming into antlers, while quietly reciting the spells that enact the Devil's alliance: Belfegor, Tanin, Belial, Alastor, Baal.

The story then shifts suddenly to Córdoba, some six thousand miles away in Spain where Walter is sleeping. In the dead of night, he wakes abruptly when he feels the distinct prick of something, 'perhaps an insect', on his ring-finger. The silence of the night is interrupted by 'the bleating of an animal' that sounds like a 'wild goat'. Almost immediately, Walter's fingers, then his hands, begin to swell and ache and before long a purple gangrene spreads across his entire body. Helpless and in despair, he tears off the ring he had stolen. But it is too late: he howls in pain and races through the brush like a madman. In these last despairing moments of his life, Walter is chased by 'the laughter of an invisible little owl' that flutters in the darkness and strikes 'his face with hard wings'.

It is in this way that the Archbishop of Samos experienced a peculiar afterlife in the pages of a twentieth-century Argentinian work of fiction. This is not to say that Georgirenes provides an opportunity for sophisticated experimentation with history and fiction of the sort practised by such scholars as Natalie Zemon Davis, Jonathan Spence or John Demos.⁸⁷ Instead, we have something much more ordinary in the case of Mujica Láinez: his is a simple

⁸⁷ For some classic examples, see Davis, *Return of Martin Guerre*; Jonathan Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-Hsi* (London, 1974); Jonathan Spence, *The Question of Hu* (London, 1988); John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York, 1994); more generally, see Jill Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too

historical fiction crafted out of details drawn from seventeenth-century sources. In other words, it is a story with no obvious relevance to my own historical research on Georgirenes. Indeed, the only reason I stumbled upon it was because I had followed Georgirenes' name, first across the archives, then across cyberspace, and finally into a library in Oxford.

But once I had encountered Mujica's enchanting story, it proved difficult to forget. It seemed a perfect specimen of the deeper interest among micro-historians about ways in which wonder — or surprises encountered in the course of research — can generate knowledge. In a now classic reflection on the subject, Carlo Ginzburg has written about the effects of random and unforeseen facts that crop up in the process of doing research, even when they are not explicitly related to the subject of research.

What we get may initially seem puzzling. Yet, this bewilderment will only last for a minute. Generally, premises (in particular, ideological premises) immediately regain control of the situation. However we still have to deal with the unforeseen question raised by random choice. As in chess, openings in research are important, at times decisive; in any event, they have a lasting influence.⁸⁸

For this reason, Ginzburg emphasizes the importance of 'concrete starting points' that cast a shadow over the frameworks through which we view any subject of research. If we take Ginzburg's invitation seriously, then a micro-historical approach to global mobility should also show a similar sort of reflexivity. I want to end this article, therefore, with an experiment of sorts: what use, if any, should Mujica Láinez's fiction serve in our attempt to understand Georgirenes and his mobility?⁸⁹

On the most basic level, Mujica Láinez's story recalls the emphasis of microhistory on the lived experience of mobility.⁹⁰ If we read his story in the way Ginzburg suggests — as a starting point, 'intuitively acquired and then thoroughly investigated' — we are obliged to approach mobility from the very start of our research as a phenomenon that is as much about

Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography', *The Journal of American History*, lxxxviii (June 2001), especially 137.

⁸⁸ Carlo Ginzburg, 'Conversations with Orion', trans. Giovanni Zanolta in *Perspectives on History* (May 2005).

⁸⁹ On microhistory as a culinary dish, see Filippo de Vivo, 'Prospect or Refuge?: Microhistory, History on the Large Scale', *Cultural and Social History*, vii, 3 (2010).

⁹⁰ Indeed, some of his works betray a certain resemblance to microhistory, for example his *Here They Lived (Aquí vivieron)* (1949), in which Mujica Láinez tells the story of a single village through a series of connected tales that stretch over a period of eighty years.

foreignness as it is about movement. Consider, for example, Mujica Láinez's emphasis on the breakdown of communication and the effect of strangeness that Georgirenes had on those he encountered in Buenos Aires.

The archbishop muttered in Greek, in Latin, in Turkish, jumbling up the words. His servant spoke only English. It was impossible to understand them and they themselves deliberately contributed to the confusion with so much empty noise. But the inquisitorial commissar looked for his way out of the labyrinth. He was determined, bursting, and he repeated the questions over and over.

Here, the novelist can capture the feel of mobility in a way that I, constrained by my sources, can only gesture at in an incomplete and provisional way. Indeed Mujica Láinez's writing evokes very effectively the experience of many of the processes I have described in this article. There is the impression of Georgirenes' helplessness at the hands of local officials (*Todo se había perdido*); the texture of his being out of place in a new society, that idea of him as a 'huge absurd little owl' (*un enorme mochuelo absurdo*); the way the Spanish officials 'puckered their nostrils and inhaled the suspicious smell of heresy' that surrounded him (*fruncía las narices y aspiraba el sospechoso olor de la herejía*); the pain of treachery occasioned by the escape of his servants (*ese condenado inglés, hijo de mala madre, que sin duda se estará riendo ahora*); and, above all, the aura surrounding Georgirenes as a 'man of great ingenuity' (*hombre de mucho ingenio*) who had survived other confrontations in 'the course of his wandering life' (*el curso de su vida azarosa*). In other words, Mujica Láinez's story captures a sense of the emotional experience of mobility. In foregrounding such aspects of our analysis, his story encourages us even to see the sources with new eyes. In a royal decree sent from Spain, for example, we notice the small detail of the 'confusion' unleashed by Georgirenes' arrival in Buenos Aires (*la confusión que ha causado*).⁹¹ Similarly, we suddenly notice the importance of Robles's characterization of Georgirenes' case as an 'irregular' affair in its time.⁹² Even La Seca's testimony to the Inquisition — when he charged Georgirenes with simony — stands out as the act of desertion that it must have represented to Georgirenes.

Two incongruous points emerge from this brief experiment. First, the historical Georgirenes clearly lives on in the fictional Georgirenes conjured up by Mujica Láinez. For Alberto Moroy, it was only natural to invoke Mujica Láinez's story alongside the historical documents he presented in his report on the discovery of the shipwreck in 2017. Indeed, for most residents of

⁹¹ AHN, Buenos Aires, 4, l. 12, fo. 72^r–73^r.

⁹² See AGI, Seville, Charcas 133, fos. 178^v–180^r (26 June 1694).

Buenos Aires — many of whom would have first encountered the *Misteriosa Buenos Aires* as an inexpensive schoolbook from the 1970s — Mujica Láinez's Archbishop of Samos is the only one who has ever existed.⁹³ The second point is perhaps more paradoxical. On the one hand, Mujica Láinez's fiction resonates with the historical narrative that I have presented above. Even if the methods are different — a historical analysis on the one hand, a fictional retelling on the other — both approaches result in a vision of mobility as it was experienced by those who lived it. At this point, some readers may be asking themselves, bravely: Who is to say which offers the truer version of the past? Indeed, some may even be reaching for their dusty copy of Hayden White, confident of the verisimilitude between the narratives offered by Mujica Láinez and myself. Be that as it may, it is crucial to emphasize the obvious but fundamental difference between Mujica Láinez's moving story and the one I have presented here: mine really happened, his did not. Ultimately Mujica presents the Archbishop of Samos as some sort of 'master magician' and not what he really was: an individual freighted with the repercussions of a complex life. For this reason, the surprise occasioned by the discovery of Mujica Láinez's fiction is one that we can acknowledge, even if just momentarily, but then we must return to the work of proper historical research.

Lurking beneath this momentary foray into twentieth-century Argentina, therefore, there is a larger point I wish to make here about the fundamental quality shared by the works of Manuel Mujica Láinez, John Barron and myself: the role of imagination. Microhistory has sometimes been characterized — incorrectly — as an approach that is comfortable with blurring the boundaries between history and fiction.⁹⁴ Acknowledging the place of imagination in historical writing, however, is not to say that history is just another form of storytelling. In this regard, what Wendy Warren has written in a different context holds true for moving stories:

Without imagination, how can we tell such stories? We are not scientists; we cannot test our hypotheses; we cannot recall our subjects to life and ask them to verify our claims or to provide more information on the topics they fail to discuss. We make our way among flawed sources, over-reliant on written texts, hopelessly

⁹³ Schanzer, *Persistence of Human Passions*, 47.

⁹⁴ The reality is more subtle. For an important treatment of this issue, see Carlo Ginzburg, 'Following the Tracks of Israël Bertuccio', in Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True False Fictive*, trans. Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (California, 2012); in a similar vein, see Richard D. Brown, 'Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge', *Journal of the Early Republic*, xxiii, 1 (Spring 2003).

entangled in our own biases and beliefs, doing the best we can with blurry evidence, sometimes forced to speculate despite our specialized knowledge.⁹⁵

Moreover, historians also have to grapple with the personal contexts in which they write. In other words, the historical study of mobility takes place in a here-and-now world in which the politics and friction of mobility are very much under the microscope today. If we accept that historians can ‘think with things’, then should we not also acknowledge that we — and, more importantly, our readers — think about the past with a wide array of other things: novels, films, photography, even the daily news of politics. Rather than ignore how such contemporary contexts influence our idea of the past, microhistory obliges us to recognize their role as sources of inspiration (or contamination?) in historical research. Put simply, ‘moving stories’ — stories of tricksters, migrants and refugees, real or imagined — can make us think differently about our sources. Yet we must not let moving stories, in the sense of emotive storytelling, distract us from writing a history of mobility that is anchored in evidence, critical analysis and philology. It is worth remembering this because when we write about moving stories, our readers will use these stories to think as much about the present as the past — for better or worse.

VI

CONCLUSION

Which, if any, of the men I have described is the ‘real’ Archbishop of Samos? Is it the spiritual entrepreneur in post-Reformation London who seemed to embody a rare and endearing form of ecumenism? Is it the vulnerable man in Buenos Aires whose Catholic identity was determined through a filter of local gossip, communal norms and regimes of paperwork? Is it the opportunistic alms-collector who told moving stories of a brother taken captive in Barbary while ordaining priests on his boat in exchange for cash along the way? Whatever the case, we are only able to recover the unknown, inaccessible aspects of Georgirenes’ identity through the very local processes of identification that existed in the variety of places through which he travelled. In each of these locales — whether it was Samos, London or Buenos Aires — Georgirenes’ identity, insofar as we can grasp it through documents, was never just the product of his own agency or his success at dissimulation and self-fashioning. Rather, microhistory reveals the Archbishop of Samos as a person whose identity crystallized, time and again, through distinct

⁹⁵ Wendy Warren, ‘“The Cause of Her Grief”: The Rape of a Slave in Early New England’, *The Journal of American History*, xciii, 4 (Mar. 2007), 1049.

processes of identification that operated at the local level of everyday life. It takes a microscope to see these processes at work in the lives of individuals; otherwise, their moving stories of survival remain imperceptible.

This is not to say that the documents that survive as witnesses to these processes are not without their own problems. As I have tried to suggest, the records of the investigation are full of small clues that should make us wonder about the local contexts that surrounded Georgirenes' investigation. As in Buenos Aires, identification in the early modern world involved a range of local, interpersonal dynamics — inequalities of power, political rivalries, kinship networks and who knows what else? — all of which certainly contributed to Georgirenes' fate. How else can we explain certain peculiarities in this case? Think, for example, about the witnesses who suddenly turned up with fortuitous memories of having known Georgirenes decades ago in Spain, or the year's delay in the start of the Inquisition trial, or the curious reality wherein the same people involved in determining Georgirenes' identity also stood to gain from his not being who he claimed to be, that is, through obtaining at auction his textiles, his slaves and his possessions. Apart from Georgirenes, there is another person who remains a cipher in this moving story: none other than the governor of Buenos Aires himself, Don Agustín de Robles. On the one hand, he is ever present in the documentation, advancing every step of the investigation. But if Robles really believed that Georgirenes was not who he claimed to be, why did it ultimately prove so difficult for him to send the archbishop back to Spain? Indeed, what should we make of the complicated situation in which Georgirenes found himself living in the house of the very man who was presiding over his investigation? Was Robles the archbishop's prosecutor or his protector?

Whatever the case, so much uncertainty lurks within these documents that one must proceed very cautiously before making any final verdicts about Georgirenes. I have written in the Introduction to this volume about the importance of place-based research in global history. But, as this article shows, global microhistory invariably carries us to fields far from our expertise in the course of which we risk making what Lara Putnam has called 'rookie mistakes'.⁹⁶ As long as readers are aware of the limits of my analysis, this is a risk I have been happy to take here. Even so, this article has tried to demonstrate that without a deep sense of place, we will struggle to recognize friction alongside circulation, dissimulation alongside sincerity, and incommensurability alongside mutual understanding. A historian of Iberian empires will likely find meanings in all of the above that I may have

⁹⁶ Lara Putnam, 'The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast', *American Historical Review*, cxxi, 2 (April 2016), 377.

missed, given my own training as a historian of the Middle East. Indeed, a local historian of Buenos Aires might completely unravel my reading of the documentation. In this way, Georgirenes' history will, I hope, continue to be written and rewritten by others.

Between microhistory and global history, therefore, moving stories can reveal new geographies that we do not see otherwise, for example, a global trail of alms-collectors connecting Constantinople, London and Buenos Aires. But they also can help us write a history of mobility that is not merely about movement, but also about the processes through which belonging, foreignness and displacement were produced (and challenged) in the past. This article has also argued that we should view Georgirenes differently as a result of how mobility has changed him along the way. The man who sought to build a church in London in 1674 was not the same person who turned up on the shores of Buenos Aires in 1694. Indeed, neither may have had anything in common any more with the young boy who left Milos in the 1640s to become a monk on Mount Athos. For Georgirenes, like so many others in the early modern world, space was not only an obstacle to be overcome through mobility. Rather, space transformed people while they moved, sometimes in unrecognizable and permanent ways.

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**This article is dedicated to the memory of my father, Kamal Fahmi Ghobrial (1951–2018): although he had little to do with the research for this article, he knew better than most what it was like to be a stranger in many worlds.