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## **‘BEIRUT STORIES’ BY AHATANHEL KRYMSKY: For the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of the Prominent Ukrainian Orientalist**

*Abstract.* The article deals with the scholarly contribution of the outstanding orientalist Ahatanhel Krymsky in the development of Ukrainian history, science, and literature in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The author describes the years of A. Krymsky's life in Lebanon and the influence of the Beirut period of his life on his making as a young scientist. The author has examined his literature works created in Lebanon, particularly *Beirut Stories* providing insight into the life, daily routine, and interreligious relations of Beirut citizens of that time. The author analyses the significance of A. Krymsky's works for the development of modern Ukrainian-Lebanese bilateral relations and points out events devoted to the scientist, which have been held by the Ukrainian Embassy in Beirut and Choueir.

*Keywords:* Ahatanhel Krymsky, oriental studies, science, *Beirut Stories*, Arab world.

Lebanon! A happy, dear sound! Sacred is his name!... (Krymsky, 1923)  
Ahatanhel Krymsky (*from Palm Branches*)

The month of January 2021 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the birth of Ahatanhel Krymsky, a celebrated Ukrainian orientalist, poet, and translator, one of the founding fathers and the first member of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Over the span from 1896 to 1898, he carried out his creative and scientific activities in the cities of Beirut and Choueir, Lebanon. He is considered one of the leading ethnographic researchers of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Lebanon and is the author of such books as *Beirutski opovidannia (Beirut Stories)*, *Lysty z Livanu (Letters from Lebanon)*, *Palmove hillia (Palm Branches)*, *Istoriia novoi arabskoi literatury (XIX – pochatok XX stolittia) (History of the New Arabic Literature from 19<sup>th</sup> to Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, etc.

As the famous orientalist Omelian Pritsak put it in the article commemorating the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the birth of the scientist, he was ‘the best gift of Crimea to Ukraine.’ Ahatanhel was born in Volodymyr-Volynskyy on 15 January 1871 into the family of the history and geography teacher Yukhym Krymsky. The latter was of Belarusian-Tatar origin, as his family descended from a Crimean mullah from Bakhchysarai, who had moved to Mstyslav (Mohyliv region, Belarus) at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As A. Krymsky himself put it, his mother was a ‘Polish Lithuanian.’

As early as three and a half years of age, young Ahatanhel learned to read, and at age five he was enrolled at the two-year Zvenyhorod town college. This was followed by studying at the oldest educational centres of Ukraine. Starting from 1881, he attended a progymnasium in Ostroh, later joined by the Second Kyiv Gymnasium and the renowned Pavlo Halahan Collegium in 1884 and 1885, respectively. The scholar graduated from the Collegium at the age of 18 with a good command of eight foreign languages.

While at Pavlo Halahan Collegium, he made the acquaintance of such prominent figures as Pavlo Zhytetskyi, Mykhailo Drahomanov, and Lesia Ukrainka, who had a major impact on young Ahatanhel's worldview. It was Pavlo Zhytetskyi who planted in him the love for the Ukrainian language, which echoed through his entire life.

Subsequently, he studied Arabic philology at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages in Moscow from 1889 to 1892 and Slavic philology and world history at the department of history and philology of Moscow University from 1892 to 1896.

In 1896, he received a scholarship from the Lazarev Institute for a term of two years, one of which he had to spend in Arab countries. However, he prolonged his staying in Beirut for a year by giving up his studies in one of Western European universities. At that time, he was 25 years old and was proficient in 17 languages.

On 2 October 1896 (dates are hereinafter given in the New Style), on board the Odesa ship Ahatanhel Krymsky set sail on the route Constantinople-Beirut to stay in Lebanon from 13 October 1896 to 14 May 1898.

As we now know, Beirut is the capital of Lebanon, but back in the day it was part of Syria together with the Mediterranean coast. As Krymsky put it, the city was an intellectual capital: 'Beirut is the beating heart of Syria's intellectual life, but it is more of an Arab Odesa than Arab Moscow or Kyiv. It is Odesa. Definitely' (19 October 1897, Beirut. A letter to M.F. Krymska).

The primary source of knowledge about his life in Lebanon are his letters. During his stay in the country, he wrote a total of nearly 180 letters, of which 150 were addressed to relatives, and the other – nearly 30 – were sent to his friends and colleagues. In many cases, it was as if the letters were written in diary form going over his stay with a fine-tooth comb.

In the very first letter to his father, Ahatanhel wrote: 'Beirut is an improbably beautiful city. It is all luxuriant with greenery (palms, figs, oranges); its streets are almost European; a lovely view of the sea; sophisticated buildings. The style is predominantly Mauritian. However, most locals are not Muslim but Christian, thus being more receptive to European culture...' (20-22 October 1896, Beirut. A letter to Yu.S. Krymsky).

Vernadskyi Central National Library in Kyiv has preserved his description of Beirut of those days: 'A part of the modern boundless Beirut, which still preserves its name 'old city and bazaars', *al-madine el-qadime wa el-aswaq* (nota bene: he trans-

mits Arabic sounds /qāf/ and /wāw/ with Latin /q/ and /w/ respectively). In 1832, during the lifetime of Alphonse de Lamartine, the western part of the present-day city stretching towards Ras Beirut Point and Msaytbeh quarters (owing its beauty to sophisticated massive premises of the university of American missionaries) was a wasteland with debris of ancient ruins. The eastern part of the Beirut Bay between the old city and the Beirut River (Nahr Beirut), rich in plantlife, was also uninhabited. These days, in the districts of Achrafieh, Rmeili, and Mar Mitr we can see palatial houses of Beirut's richest men, Christian dignitaries (Sursock Street, the estates of Gebran Tueni, Trads, Tebbits, etc.), while back then, in the 1830s, the locality from the old city to the Beirut River was, as Lamartine put it, a luxuriant bosom of nature, however, garden-like, not wild. Now it is all civilized with a proper highway running, on one side, along the seashore northbound, to Tripoli; on the other side, this well-maintained road gradually works its way up the mountains of Lebanon.

Krymsky's letters from Lebanon suggest that he immediately fell captive to the city's beauty: 'Indeed, Beirut is beautiful around the clock. Even breaking out in sweats in mid-day heat, you can't help but admire everything around. This is the nicest oriental city I have ever seen. If it had not been for stone floors instead of wooden ones and the absence of stoves (to make up for humidity), it would be heaven. Constantinople is wonderful as seen from the sea but ugly inside, while Beirut is wonderful both in and around – and clean, which is a rare sight to see' (4 November 1896, Beirut. A letter to Yu. Yu. Krymsky).

His another letter says: 'I suddenly found myself in the countryside standing on a high upland and was stunned in surprise. On the left, there was Beirut right in the palm of my hand, and on the right, the Beirut Bay cut deep in Lebanon; this is where the Beirut River, Nahr Beirut, meets the sea; stretching across the bay there are out-of-town gardens, plantations, and little white cottages hardly seen in the greenery from the tall building I am staying at. Next, beyond the valley, comes a fog-girded mountain chain with fogs huddling together on mountain ledges. The peak of one mountain rises far above the fog. I gazed upon it, motionless, for probably more than an hour and forgot myself' (15 November 1896, Beirut. A letter to brother Yu.Yu. Krymsky).

He was particularly impressed by the August view of Beirut afforded from the city of Aley. It was from there that he wrote extremely emotional lines addressed to Beirut. In this 'declaration of love,' Krymsky called Beirut his second home city: 'I froze. The entire Beirut peninsula lay in the south in front of us in plain sight. I saw the sea washing it from almost every side; I saw what was there beneath Beirut and beyond it but best of all, the city of Beirut itself. How tremendous, wonderful, and magnificent it is! At sunrise, it was seized by powder-pink freshness, with the sea in its foothills lying by in light blue. At that second, I got a lively feeling of profound affection to this gorgeous city. Without a shadow of a doubt, it became my relative, my second home.'

When in Beirut, the young orientalist took up residence with the family of Mykhailo Attai, his professor at the Lazarev Institute, in the Orthodox quarter of Rmeil located near one of the central districts of Beirut, Achrafieh. He wrote about his living conditions in a letter dated 27 December 1897 to B. Hrinchenko: 'I live with a very poor family, which was not able to find a proper European dwelling with an entryway and thick walls. My room directly overlooks the yard, thus making the slightest rain a source of moisture in the building. To this must be added that the chamber is more of an arbour than a house: unglazed window leaves are all over the place (above the windows) with wind slipping through cracks around windows and doors. I tried closing them with gunny, but that's of little help. So long as the sun shines, it is warm and at times even hot with temperatures soaring to 35 °Ré (almost 44 degrees Celsius), but once it starts raining, the temperature drops to 10 °Ré (12.5 degrees Celsius) – a sheer torture for those suffering from fever, rheumatism, and whatnot. Naturally, there are no stoves. I'd rather abandon this family and settle somewhere else, but, I'm telling you, their hardship is frightening and the people are very kind and have come to love me as their own...'

It was his daily observations of the family's mode of life, relations with neighbours, merchants and his participation in Beirut's social life that fed into *Beirut Stories*. The book was written in 1897 and was first published in the *Nova hromada* magazine in 1906 (no. 6, 7, and 8).

Falling into the genre of an 'outsider's diary', *Beirut Stories* might be the first to unlock the Middle East to the Ukrainian reader.

While reading it, one ventures deep into the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century life in Beirut and feels all the vicissitudes of contemporaneous political struggle in the Middle East. The author provides a painstaking insight into the tapestry of interreligious relations and the niceties of local everyday life.

*Beirut Stories* consist of two parts: 'Corruption of Morals' and 'Solomonytsia or Solomon in a Skirt'. In the first part, we become witnesses to cultural diffusion between the East and the West, or Europe, the influence of 'new' European customs on patriarchal moral and ethical fabric. The climax of the first part brings us to a Beirut ball that eventually prompted the literary character to complain about the 'corruption of morals' as he watches crony and brazen-faced 'Beirut Orthodox "grandees"' smiling to each other and women vested with low-cut dresses, a fruit of European fashion fads.

The second part is devoted to the life of the Beirut girls' school Bākūrat al-ishān patronized by Amelia Sursock belonging to a famous Beirut family of philanthropists. The author's focus is on the school's relations with the Russian Orthodox Palestine Society and the competition of French and Russian influences on the educational process.

For me, *Beirut Stories* is also a riveting profile on a Beirut patois of that time, skillfully translated terms and idioms worth being memorized. For instance, now

I understand that the Ukrainian hateful phrase 'let your house burn down!' is irrelevant in Lebanon, as fire cannot cause much harm to stone buildings which prevailed at that time. Instead, when swearing, the Lebanese say 'let your house tumble down!' (*yihrib beytak!*).

While re-reading his emotional letters, one may also come across a dramatic story of 'Beirut love' to Mariia Kamenska, a teacher of Polish-Ukrainian origin.

There is extensive writing on Ahatanhel Krymsky's private life. Of particular interest are his relations with Lesia Ukrainka, who devoted her drama *In Catacombs* to 'dear brother A. Krymsky'. Researchers assume that he had a secret affection for the renowned poetess. Reference is also made to the poem, which Pavlo Tychyna dedicated to Krymsky on his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and which explicitly mentioned the 'eternal longing for Lesia Ukrainka'. One of the most gripping studies of A. Krymsky's heritage in biographical and psychoanalytical aspects has been written by S. Pavlychko.

Against this background, the Beirut love story has somewhat wandered into the shades of the unknown but still was quite dramatic and is worthy of our attention. It all began in the aforementioned school Bākūrat al-ishān, also known as the school of Labiba Gahšan. Hardly a day passed without him visiting the place in the afternoons, when professors were free.

In the letter to his brother Yu. Krymsky dated 25 November 1896, he says that 'one of Russian teachers, Mariia Kamenska, can no longer endure living in Beirut due to heavy rheumatism and thus leaves for Russia on 25 November or at the beginning of December...' (13 November 1896, Beirut. A letter to Yu.Yu. Krymsky).

In the very next letter dated 7 December 1896, he 'discovered the whole mystery' by saying: 'The day after tomorrow, Mariia Kamenska leaves for Russia to reach Moscow as early as the end of December... I would be very grateful if you would kindly accept Ms Mariia and even offered her to stay at your place for the night. She seems intent on spending only one day in Moscow.'

Could you please ask Ms Mariia two things:

1) Has she bought me five-kopeck stamps of the Russian Shipping and Trade Society in Constantinople?

2) This one is confidential. Ask Mariia (but subtly, as if hinting) if she would marry me. Do me a favour, ask on your behalf, not mine' (7 December 1896, Beirut. A letter to Yu.Yu. Krymsky).

However, in a week's time the whole affair ended in a total fiasco, thus making his next letter a 'loser's confession' with a detailed account of the crowning moment of their relationship. The text made it clear that it took him a long time to make up his mind and propose to her. He did it at the very last moment of their parting and then wrote in a letter: 'There is no need in notifying me about Ms Mariia's answer, as I have already received it. Her last words to me there on the steamer were "you are out of your minds!"'

It happened in a matter of seconds before the steamer departed... I was the last one to bid farewell to her and received the aforementioned answer to my question. There was no time for objections. The captain's mate ran over and shouted impatiently: "All ashore who's going ashore, now! The third whistle is coming right up". We rushed to the steps scurrying for our felucca. The steamer gave a roar and headed northbound, while our felucca sailed to the quay. Kamenska stood on the deck near the railing looking at us. I gazed unflappably at water without looking at the steamer. It took a turn – and Kamenska fell out of sight. Our boatmen rowed a fast stroke, and not a word was uttered by girls onboard. It was only their director, old Ye. Schmidt, who said through gritted teeth as if speaking to herself: "Proposing to the sound of the third whistle... and out in public like that, in front of honest folk... That's insane!" Well, I have actually lost my mind, I guess... Returning to Ms Maria, I will tell you this: I think she is not quite normal, not to say "half-mad" (15 December 1896, Beirut. A letter to Yu. Yu. Krymsky).

In a couple of days, perhaps having cooled down a bit, he writes: 'Today I became clearly aware that if she had agreed to marry me, I still wouldn't marry her. My guess is that it will not be more than a month before the very thought of marriage gives me a fearful shiver' (19 December 1896, Beirut. A letter to Yu. Yu. Krymsky).

Nonetheless, he was definitely deceiving himself and his relatives. I. Smilianska, a researcher of works by A. Krymsky, mentions a few poems inspired by his relationship with M. Kamenska. Two of them ('Na dushi yakas tryhova' ('Angst-devoured is my soul') and 'Ya obirvav rozmovu. V ochakh meni tuman...' ('I have cut off the talk. My eyes are hazy...')) were written immediately after the first meeting with M. Kamenska in Beirut on 20 October 1896, whereas the poem 'Z chervonym blyskom misiats zhas...' ('The moon went out in garnet tints...') were composed after M. Kamenska left from Beirut to Russia: 'The same calming Beirut adventure, which seemingly makes a person happy, inspired the poet to write the utterly desperate elegy "Zakotylosia sonechko v mutnii khmary" ("The sun goes down a muddy cloud"). His poem written in Beirut in December 1896 with a Caucasian date (1900) later appeared in the cycle *Peredsmertni melodii* (*Near-Death Melodies*):

Before the dawn,  
I see Leila in my sleep.  
My love, do you give happiness  
Lying so far deep?  
    'No', she says, 'leave me alone,  
    Oblivion is now your wife' –  
    'I never will, let it be known:  
    In you there's my entire life!'

In his travels around Lebanon, A. Krymsky resonates well with Vasyl Hryhorovych-Barskyi. In particular, he also visited the memorial place to St George near Beirut (present-day Jounieh) and presented a crucial detail about a weird case with an ancient stone near which, as legends have it, St George slayed a dragon: ‘The holidays of St George are also revered by Muslims. In the past, everyone went to the coastal stone where George slayed the dragon, but last year, in 1896, the land owner turned the place into a construction site and made the stone part of the basement’ (29 April 1897, Beirut. A letter to Yu. Yu. Krymsky).

A. Krymsky also wrote down a retelling about the saint who had come from the territory of modern Lebanon: ‘St George, commemorated on 23 April, is the favourite saint in Syria and Palestine. The geographical topography attributed to retellings about George has long been classified in the following way. George was borne in a locality to the east of Akka (Acre), whose memory is evoked by the fortress known as “St George” or “St George’s Castle”. The latter is nestled in a valley among the mountains. George slayed the dragon in Beirut above the sea... In Ramah, 12 miles away from Jerusalem, he was burnt. George was buried in Lydda, where his tomb is displayed.

The legend about his battling a dragon is generally known throughout Syria and Palestine. Its content is roughly the same whatever the place, thus allowing us to limit ourselves to the recording made in Beirut. It reads as follows: “Once, at the times of paganism, Beirut was ruled by its own king. One day, at the place where the Beirut River (Nahr Beirut) meets the sea, a giant dragon showed up. He lived in a cave above the sea, and to placate him, the locals brought a young girl to be massacred by the beast on an adjacent hill. And then the turn came for the king’s daughter. She was brought to the coast on the hill and left alone waiting for the inevitable. But a wonderful knight in shining armour and a spear in his hand got there first – that was St George. He told the princess he would protect her from the beast – and fell asleep in the meantime, his head on her knees. While he was sound asleep, the dragon crawled out of the cave to come near his victim. The princess was petrified with horror, and there was no way she could wake George. It was only her hot tears rolling down his cheeks that made him spring on his feet, get up on his horse, and rush off towards the dragon. The beast opened his mouth wide ready to devour the knight; but the latter viciously kicked the dragon with his spear and pinned his open mouth to the ground to triumph. Exhausted, the dragon couldn’t put up a fight. Tremendously thirsty, George pushed the spear against the stony soil. The water spray shot out creating a well that has survived until the present. Afterwards, George asked the princess to give him one long hair from her gorgeous braid and used it as a rope to drag the dragon to the town. The king was all set to marry his daughter off to the knight, and the princess fell in love with her savior too. However, George explained to her that it wasn’t him who defeated the dragon, but the one true God, who empowered him for that purpose.’

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Upon returning from Lebanon, from 1898 to 1918 A. Krymsky undertook teaching assignments as professor and, later, head of the department of Arabic linguistics, while also giving lectures in the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages.

During this period, he authored and published an entire library of academic handbooks on philology and history of the Middle East, Quran, Islam, courses on the history and literature of Arabs, Persians, and Turks.

During the reign of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi in 1918, A. Krymsky moved to Kyiv to take up the post of permanent secretary of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and was practically in charge of its activities.

In parallel, from 1918 to 1921 he worked as a professor of world history at Kyiv University and laid the foundation of the first institutions of Ukrainian oriental studies.

In 1921, he also became director of the Institute of the Ukrainian Academic Language. In October 1921, he took part in the First All-Ukrainian Church Council, which confirmed the autocephalous status of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, although the process was finalised only in January 2019, when Ukraine received a Tomos of Autocephaly.

In 1929, he fell victim to the Soviet repressive apparatus and was persecuted in the framework of the Union for the Freedom of Ukraine trial, including for his scientific beliefs, as he did not recognize the 'fraternal peoples' theory, instead advocating the hypothesis of the separate existence of the Ukrainian language since as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

By then, he had almost lost his eyesight, thus needing the assistance of M. Levchenko, his foster son, in his professional activities. However, he was also destined to fall victim to repressions.

Soon after, A. Krymsky entered into a loveless marriage with M. Levchenko's pregnant wife to save his child. Later on, a boy named Vasyl was born, whom A. Krymsky also adopted.

On 20 July 1941, he was accused of anti-Soviet activities and declared the 'mastermind of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism who lead the nationalist underground movement'.

Together with his many other colleagues, Krymsky was sent in freezing railway cars to Kazakhstan, from where he never came back. A. Krymsky's documented date of death is 25 January 1942. However, there are different versions of his demise. One of them has it that Ahatanhel died in the infirmary of Kostanay Prison no. 7. But it is entirely possible that the scholar died on the way to the Kazakh town of Kostanay, as his burial site is still unknown.

The great scholar, prominent orientalist and author, A. Krymsky, just like the majority of Ukrainian creative and academic elite, will become yet another



victim of the communist terror. In three years, all Crimean Tatars will face the same fate during forcible deportations to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Siberia. More than 50,000 Crimean Tatars died on the journey and in exile.

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A. Krymsky's *Beirut Stories* have awaited Arabic translation for more than a century – to be more exact, 120 years. Finally, the Lebanese are now able to read the engrossing account of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century life in Beirut thanks to Imadeddin Raef's translation published by Riyad El-Rayyes Books. The book was sold out fairly quickly causing the publishing house to prepare the next edition of *Beirut Stories*.

The presentation of the book was held within the framework of the 60<sup>th</sup> International Arabic Book Fair in Beirut. It was this forum that became the place for presenting new Arabic translations of Ukrainian literature made by Imadeddin Raef, including an excellent rendering of Ivan Franko's *Ziviale lystia* (*Withered Leaves*) and Oleksandr Pali's short course of *Istoriia Ukrainy* (*History of Ukraine*). Interestingly, Amaliia Kauvash, a Lebanese singer and composer of Palestinian origin, set to music Ivan Franko's poems for us to experience a most touching sounding of Franko's heritage.

Another important project of utmost importance for us is the establishment of Ahatanhel Krymsky Museum in Dhur esh Shueir in cooperation with the municipal authorities of Dhur esh Shueir and Ain El Sindiane and Habib Mjaes, the head of the municipality. The first step towards this end was the exhibition of the forthcoming museum expo at the municipality premises in June 2019, which became an event of many revelations. It was the first time visitors saw unique archival documents and photographs submitted by Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine and the Central State Archive Museum of Literature and Art of Ukraine.

Photographies taken on Ahatanhel Krymsky's request by the local photographer Symon Abi Nami were particularly interesting for the Lebanese audience. In the letter dated 21 July 1897, he wrote the following about him: 'besides being a shopkeeper, he is also a postmaster and a photographer too... The photography being his side job as a postmaster and a salesman, he must be happy to earn some money when I have it and will be pleased to take photos of the places I like, not him, at an affordable cost...' (21 July 1897, Choueir. A letter to Yu.Yu. Krymsky).

This collection of pictures also includes the Monastery of St John, to which the author refers to as the 'uniate'. It was this monastery that he considered resembling of the Preobrazhenskyi Garden of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves (28 July 1897, Choueir. A letter to M.F. Krymska). Interestingly, there is one more coincidence, as the next photo on spiritual issues was 'The Holiday of Transfiguration in the Zakhlynskyi Monastery'.

Unique pictures of Choueir and the surrounding nature became a fanciful surprise for locals. In this sense, the incredibly beautiful snow clad Mount Sannine is certainly iconic. However, on the back of one photo we came across a shocking inscription, the key to what he had been searching for over the last few years. That was the answer to mystery of where exactly in Choueir Ahatanhel Krymsky lived. The inscription reads as follows: ‘Sannine (the view from Choueir as seen from the roof of Mrad El Khalebi’s house – the place where I lived in Choueir). Aïn es Sindiâné is on the right’. Now, it is piecing together nicely: he came here on 15 July 1897 and spent three days in the house of the Attay’s family. Already on 18 July, he moved to the house of Mrad El Khalebi. The investigation is over!

In the photos, there can also be seen Church Mountain with Kfar Silwan, Kfar Aqab, Baskinta, and Sannine (as seen from Choueir’s Shreen Valley), the village of Aaraiya (offering a view of Darb al-Sham and the sea), and a view of the route to Beirut from Aaraiya.

The photo entitled ‘The School of Revd Hannah Mjaes before the 1897 Summer Break. Teachers Khalil, Ibrahim, Ghusn (the leftmost in the third row – Ibrahim Zgayb)’ was especially emotionally evocative, as this was where local highlanders tried to recognize their likely ‘ancestors’. One of them was... Khabib Mjaes, the city major, as Revd Hannah Mjaes came from his family.

All of these photos are part of the historical Library of the Cabinet of Arabic and Iranian Philology of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

It was also the first time Choueir saw the exposition of the bust of Ahatanhel Krymsky created by the Lebanese sculptor Pierre Karam, an alumnus of the Kyiv Art Institute, now known as the National Academy of Visual Arts and Architecture.

It can now be stated that the opening of the museum is right around the corner and that in the last two years Ahatanhel Krymsky has become much closer to the Arab world, once again staging a comeback on the Lebanese soil.