Socio-political changes, confessionalization, and inter-confessional relations in Ottoman Damascus from 1760 to 1860

Massot, A.K.J.M.

CHAPTER 2: THE BIRTH OF THE GREEK CATHOLIC MILLET

While foreign intervention in the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the 19th century had favored the rise of a dichotomous vision of Christian and Muslim Ottomans through the politicization of these religious identities, the development of a Christian common consciousness was greatly hindered by conflicts between Catholic and Orthodox denominations. Indeed, due to missionary efforts in the 16th and 17th century, schisms took place in the various Churches of the Ottoman Empire, which were thereby divided between Catholic and Orthodox branches. This chapter will explore the rise of the Greek Catholic Church which was born in the 17th century following a schism with the Greek Orthodox Church. The Greek Catholic *millet* was institutionalized during the Ottoman reforms of the *Tanzimat* after its official recognition by the Ottoman State. While other Catholic communities followed similar patterns of development, this thesis will focus on the case of the Greek Catholics for various reasons.

First, the Greek Catholics were the most numerous in Damascus and its surrounding areas, matched only by the Greek Orthodox. Sources on the Greek Orthodox community in the city, which would make for an interesting comparison with their Catholic counterpart, are not currently available and are not comparable in terms of volume.[1] The amount of sources available on the Greek Catholics, from missionaries, foreign consuls, Ottoman archives and chronicles, in addition to letters sent by local actors to Catholic missionary headquarter, the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide in Rome, is unmatched for other communities.

[1] These sources have however been accessed by Simon Najm, see "Christian Military Conscription and Badal al'Askariya in Damascus Syria after the *Tanzimat*: The Case of the Orthodox Men Imprisoned and its Consequences (1858-1862)" in *Cercetare Şi Dialog Teologic Astazi,* ed. Viorel Sava, (Iaşi: Doxologia, 2017).

Then, contrary to the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, whose role in the politics of Mount Lebanon has been explored,[2] the history of the Greek Catholic community in the 19th century has yet to be written.[3] This thesis will point to the central role of the Greek Catholics in inter-confessional tensions in Damascus. They were an integral part of Damascene politics yet have not been studied as full-fledged actors of the city's history. The Greek Catholic clergy separated from its Orthodox counterpart in the 17th century. It was then recognized by the Ottoman State in the 19th century. The exploration of the institutionalization of the Greek Catholic community through this period will shed light on the internal transformation of communities before and during the *Tanzimat* reforms. The Greek Catholic clergy had to assemble diffused institutions under one single hierarchical structure and define its distinctiveness vis-à-vis its Orthodox counterpart. At the same time, Greek Catholics had to determine their position in the Catholic world by delineating their communal borders and carving a sphere of independence in relation to the Holy See, missionaries and the Maronite Church. Rival confessional identifications were built simultaneously in juridical, political and theological places, thus leading to a variety of conflicts which entwined these various societal domains.[4] The creation of new *milel*[5] was also a tool for the Ottoman State to build loyalty among its Christian subjects in a context of political secession. This imperative played an important role in the breakaway of the Greek Catholics from the Greek Orthodox in the 19th century.

In this chapter we will explore the early development of the Greek Catholic Church and its institutionalization as an Ottoman *millet* which challenged its relation to its Orthodox

---

[2] See Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism* and *Artillery of Heaven.*

[3] For the 18th century see Aurélien Girard, "Le christianisme oriental", for groundwork on the 19th century see Bruce Masters,"The Establishment of the Melkite Catholic *millet* in 1848 and the Politics of Identity in *Tanzimat* Syria," in *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule, Essays in honour of Abdul-Karim Rafeq*, ed. Peter Sluglett and Stefan Weber (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[4] Olivier Christin, "Introduction," in *Les Affrontements religieux en Europe: du début du XVI^e^ au milieu du XVII^e^ siècle,* ed. Véronique Castagnet, Olivier Christin and Naima Ghermani (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2008), 14.

[5] Plural of *millet.*

counterpart but also to Rome. This chapter will highlight the multifaceted aspect of the creation of the Greek Catholic millet, which had to position itself in regards to various institutions. First, we will explore the birth of the Greek Catholic Church and the development of its institutions before the *Tanzimat* focusing on the central role of monasteries, notables and missionaries. We will highlight the decentralized nature of the Church which allowed individuals a high level of interstitial freedom. Then, we will explore how the Greek Catholic religious leadership advocated for the distinctiveness of their community within the Catholic world and defended the clergy's autonomy in regards to missionaries. This longing for sovereignty over the flock led to a conflictual relationship with Rome. Finally, this chapter will examine the Greek Catholic's separation from the Greek Orthodox patriarch and its attempt to entrench distinctions and separation among the two sects by building a distinctive confessional culture. Foreign intervention on behalf of the two communities further entrenched their division and encouraged the politicization of these religious identities.

1. The Rise of the Greek Catholic Church : a Case of Interstitial Freedom

1.1 Account of the Rise of the Greek Catholic Church: Laity, Monasteries and Latins

The end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century in *Bilād al-Šām* saw widespread changes in the political, societal and economic sphere. Inter-confessional relations were affected by the rise of local power holders as well as changes in the balance of power in international politics at the disadvantage of the Ottoman Empire. Amid these changes, Christian communities in Syria were shaken politically, economically, socially and religiously by the rise of Catholic churches, linked to the Roman seat.

In *Bilād al-Šām*, most of the Christians were Arabic-speakers under the authority of the patriarchal See of Antioch, one of the Eastern patriarchates of the Greek Orthodox (*Rum*)

Church represented in Istanbul by the Ecumenical patriarch.[6] There were also Syrian Orthodox, Maronite and Armenian communities. Until the 19th century, only the *Rum* and Armenian patriarchates were recognized by the Ottoman State.[7]

In the 17th and 18th centuries the election of the patriarch of Antioch was a site of communal struggle. The simultaneous election of two rival patriarchs was quite common, however it had not not led to a schism within the Church.[8] Various candidates were often presented by different factions, with conflicting understandings of the election method. Was the patriarch to be chosen by the high clergy, his flock, the lay notables, the previous patriarch, the Ecumenical patriarch or by the Ottoman government? Which city had a say in his election? The rival candidates to the patriarchate often represented the rivalry and power struggles within the church between the clergy members and among notables of important cities.[9]

This dynamic coincided with the increasing activity of Catholic missionaries in the empire in the 17th century. It also took place against the background of the intensification of theological training of Maronites, *Rum* and Syrian clergy members in Rome in the Maronite College or the Urban College, created to form the indigenous clergy under the institution of the Propaganda Fide.[10] This missionary activity however slowed down in the 18th century because of political turmoil in Europe. This period represented the flourishing of Greek, Arab, Armenian and Coptic lay elites in various places of the empire. They obtained important posts in the Ottoman administration and came to play a larger role in church affairs.[11] Since the clergy was not autonomous in regards to economic and political forces, there was always some part of the community which challenged clerical power using various tools, including

---

6 Carsten Walbiner, "The split of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate of Antioch (1724) and the emergence of a new identity in Bilad al-Sham as reflected by some Melkite historians of the 18th and early 20th centuries," *Chronos* 7 (2003): 11.
7 Masters, "The Establishment," 459.
8 Walbiner, "The split of the Greek Orthodox," 13.
9 Ibid, 14.
10 Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient,* 4.
11 Çolak, *The Orthodox Church,* 111, 139.

the Ottoman power structure, to do so.[12] Governors or local power holders would often take sides in these internal rivalries, to further their own influence or simply to obtain bribes.[13] Ambitious bishops created political alliances with governors or emirs to increase their mutual power. Indeed, bishopric's borders often shifted with provincial lines.[14]

With the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in the 16th century, the *Rum* Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople became more involved in the affairs of the Eastern patriarchates of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and later in the patriarchate of Antioch, naming Greek-speaking bishops to the positions of patriarchs.[15] The threat of Roman Catholic influence encouraged him to seek the help of the Ottoman authorities to increase his control over the *Rum* in the seat of Antioch. Outside intervention in the elections of the clergy, from the Ecumenical patriarch in Constantinople, the Holy See, missionaries, religious orders, and foreign consuls dramatized the existing factionalism, leading to a schism within the *Rum* church with the double election of two patriarchs in 1724, an Orthodox one recognized by the Ottoman government and a Catholic one recognized by the Pope.[16] This double election marked the definitive schism within the *Rum* church, with Silfāstrūs being the Greek Orthodox patriarch chosen by the central state and the Patriarch of Constantinople and Sarufīm being the Greek Catholic patriarch recognized by Rome.

However, both communities did not benefit from the same status within the Ottoman Empire as the Greek Catholics were not recognized by the government. In practice, it means that they did not have access to the same resources and were in a position of weakness in

---

[12] Aurelien Girard, "Nihil esse innovandum ? Maintien des rites orientaux et négociation de l'union des Églises orientales avec Rome (fin XVIe – mi-XVIIIe s)," in *Réduire le schisme ? Ecclésiologies et politiques de l'Union entre Orient et Occident, XIIIe XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Marie-Hélène Blanchet and Frédéric Gabriel (Paris: Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2013), 129.
[13] Ibid, 118.
[14] Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt,* 13.
[15] Girard, "Le christianisme oriental", 639; Çolak, *The Orthodox Church,* 140; Masters, "The Establishment", 458, 469.
[16] Heyberger*, Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, 85, 120; Walbiner, "The Split of the Greek Orthodox," 12, 172; Girard, "Le christianisme oriental," 617; Cyrille Charon, "L'Église grecque melchite catholique (Suite.) » *Échos d'Orient* 6, no.39 (1903) : 114.

regards to the Orthodox patriarch. They thus lived through periods of leniency and persecution, depending on the interests of the governor, various alliances and power relationships in the provinces. Numerous Greek Catholics left the cities to take refuge in Mount Lebanon, Egypt, Istanbul, Leghorn, and Marseille. This departure was also motivated by commercial or economic opportunities abroad. The community was thereby dispersed in the empire and across the Mediterranean. They developed international networks in Europe and across the empire which allowed them to enjoy some level of influence over the community.[17]

Yet, while the Greek Orthodox had the backing of the government, Greek Catholics had their own power base. The presence of various Greek Catholics in the entourage and administration of local power holders and in international commerce, gave them a strong influence in some cities, such as Acre, Damascus, Sidon, and in Mount Lebanon.[18] This local influence allowed them to counter the attacks of the Greek Orthodox patriarchs.[19] However, because of their lack of official status, they had to pray in Orthodox churches and remit their taxes to the Orthodox prelates, at least in the cities where the Orthodox patriarch's authority could easily be enforced. When they refused they could be accused of rebellion. They could not officially have their own churches. This situation encouraged Catholics to pray in the Latin churches or with Maronites, a solution which at that time provided a safe haven to Greek Catholics.[20]

In Mount Lebanon and remote places, thanks to the Greek Catholics' relationship with local power holders, they obtained the ownership of places of worship, especially monasteries. The monasteries were divided between the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Catholics in the

---

[17] Coller, *Arab France,* 38, 90. Heyberger, *Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, 37.
[18] Thomas Philipp, *Acre : the rise and fall of a Palestinian city, 1730-1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 117.
[19] Mishāqah, *Murder, Mayhem,* 117; Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, hereafter BOA, C.ADL.93/55.94, February 2nd 1785; A.E., 166/PO, Serie D/20, vol. 1, Letter of the superiors of the Capucin Rousset and de Rennes-French Ambassador, August 12th 1782.
[20] Heyberger, *Chrétiens du Proche Orient*, 358, 400.

18th century based upon the size of the community but also their relative power and the influence of the *mukataacılar*.[21] However, the emirs also intervened to favour those who promised more taxes, or gave a bigger bribe.[22] The division was not conducted peacefully however, and conflicts between monasteries took place.[23] In Damascus the closest stakes were the monasteries and churches of Ṣaydnāyā and Maʿlūlā, a few hours from the city. These churches often changed hands at the end of the 18th century, depending on the power balance between the Greek Orthodox patriarch and the Greek Catholic priests.[24] The division of taxes between the two communities was also a thorny question and depended on the power balance in the various cities.[25]

In the 18th century the monasteries and religious orders gained in importance. New Greek Catholic religious orders such as the Chouerites and Salvadorians were created in this period and organized along the European monastic model, with the help of Jesuits. They were structured on a top-down level, with superiors named at their head.[26] The Greek Catholic monasteries were situated in Mount Lebanon and the coast. They formed the majority of the clergy and provided an economic and political link with the laity. Bishops were often away from their seat, thus delegating power to those left behind, mainly monastic 'missionaries'.[27] Greek Catholics were often attended to by monks rather than secular priests.[28]

Monasteries were the beneficiaries of most of the endowed *waqf* of the community. They had lay patrons who funded the monasteries, ensuring them a level of influence over these institutions. Notables often sent their sons and daughters to the monasteries to enter religious orders. Monasteries also relied on lay representatives who were in a position to

---

[21] Tax-farmers in Ottoman Empire, in a tributary relationship to the state.
[22] Souad Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf in Lebanon during the Ottoman period* (Beirut: Orient Institut Beirut, 2007), 101
[23] Ibid, 102.
[24] al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ,* 73.
[25] A.E., 166/PO, Serie D/20, vol. 1, Letter of the superiors of the Capucin Rousset and de Rennes-French Ambassador, August 12th 1782.
[26] Heyberger, *Chrétiens du Proche-Orient,* 434.
[27] Ibid, 400.
[28] Not originating from a religious order contrary to regular priests; Ibid, 442-444.

advocate for the community in front of temporal powers and counter efforts at dispossession from the part of the Greek Orthodox clergy.[29] The exercise of jurisdiction over the monasteries was a crucial tool in struggles within the Church, but also in the civil realm.

The laity played an important role in the local affairs thanks to their employment by the governors and local power holders as advisers, money-lenders, and scribes. Greek Catholic elites were concentrated in the main cities of *Bilād al-Šām* and Egypt. Their relation with power holders allowed them to obtain authorizations for the construction of churches, monasteries and bishop's residences. This central role also ensured that they had a say in the elections and choice of bishops, monastery superiors, priests and even patriarchs.[30] The support of a wealthy merchant could help tilt the balance of power in favor of a candidate to these positions of power. They demanded from monasteries to be sent specific monks as priests or sent back the ones they deemed unfit.[31] In the absence of a strong secular clergy in the main cities of *Bilād al-Šām*, the lay elite became accustomed of taking care and maintaining all the community institutions, together with monks and missionaries. The bishops and patriarchs were also chosen from among these important families.[32]

Then, in addition to monks and notables, Latin missionaries installed in their convents were also involved in the life of Greek Catholics in the cities of *Bilād al-Šām*, such as Damascus, in the absence of a bishop or high clergy who tended to reside in Mount Lebanon. Missionaries confessed the flock and attended to their daily needs.[33] In times of threat, local Christians were quick to demand the protection of Latin missionaries over their church and properties to avoid dispossession.[34]

---

[29] Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf*, 74, 92.
[30] See for example the Ṣayfī family in Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, 119-126.
[31] For example, Alepine notables refused to obey their bishop when he imposed priests on them. They thought that they had the right to chose them, Archives of the "Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" (S.C.P.F), Serie "Scritture riferite nelle congregazioni generali" (S.C.) First Serie : Letters which reached the Dicastery of Missionary Lands : Greeks Melkites 1682-1862, vol. 17, p. 18, Qattan, February 1rst 1830.
[32] Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, 119-126.
[33] Ibid, 358.
[34] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* vol. 21, p. 364, Clemente bishop of Akka, October 25th 1843.

This diffused leadership structure put monasteries and missionaries at the center of the daily lives of Greek Catholics, and tended to sideline bishops. Yet, this was not an issue for bishops and patriarch who themselves came from the monastic orders, and exercised their authority through cherishing their links with them.[35] In a word, the different elements forming the Greek Catholic community were each tied in some way or another to the monastic orders. They shared different layers of property and had stakes in maintaining the strength of this institution.

The main power struggle in the period was not between the clergy and the laity, but rather among different monastic orders, who bid each other for influence over the high clergy and patriarchate and over the property of funds. The two main Greek Catholic orders, the Chouerites and Salvatorians monks were engaged in such a competition.[36] The division between the Chouerites and the Salvatorians was geographically marked.[37] Sidon and the South of Lebanon were linked to the Salvatorians through the monastery of Dayr al-Muḫallaṣ funded by the bishop of Sidon Aftīmyūs Ṣayfī.[38] This area was dominated by Druze shaykhs. Most of the Chouerite monasteries surrounded Beirut, and many were established in the districts were under the Maronite *kaymakam* in the 19th century. The two orders lived in different geographical and political contexts.[39]

Monasteries were not isolated in Mount Lebanon but rather fully involved in its power networks. Their situation depended on the political balance of power. When ruling families such as the Šihāb of the Ḫarfūš were entangled in succession wars, monks knew their possessions could be subjected to plunder. When the political situation was stable, their

---

[35] Girard, "Le christianisme oriental," 657.
[36] Heyberger, *Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, 445.
[37] Charles de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, Tome XI, vol. 2 (Paris : Librarie Letouzey et Ané, 1949), 429.
[38] Heyberger, Chrétiens du Proche-Orient, 121.
[39] See Paul Bacel, "La Congrégation des Basiliens Chouérites" in *Échos d'Orient,* tome 6, no.41 (1903): 242-248; Joseph Chammas, *The Melkite Church,* trans. Christina Schmalenbach, ed. Lutfi Laham (Jerusalem, Emrezian 1992), 134-136.

relationship with emirs allowed them to prosper, and they could obtain justice and favors under their protection.[40]

The Greek Catholic monasteries multiplied in the 18th century.[41] As a result of the political context, changes in the taxation system and the increasing trade with Europe,[42] the monasteries increasingly acquired land, changing monastic life as they adapted to the needs of cultivation and production. With the boom of silk trade in the 18th century, monasteries engaged in inter-sancak and international trade and employed numerous farmers and peasants. They became economic centers on which depended the prosperity of the surrounding peasantry.[43] The multiplication of monasteries in the 18th century was accompanied by an increasing reliance on emirs rather than on the lay elite.[44] Monasteries thus became major political and economic centers in the late 18th century.

1.2 Overlapping Institutions and Norms

The overlapping of institutions that formed the Greek Catholic Church and its diffuse structure awarded individuals a certain level of interstitial freedom. The blurry borders between Christian communities allowed for legal pluralism and the coexistence of various norms which offered Greek Catholics a large choice in their religious practice and the expression of their faith.

---

[40] Ibid, 39.
[41] Ibid, 6, 9, 10, 12. Waqf foundations became more numerous in this period, see Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf,* 38, 77; For extended studies on the Christian waqf in the region see Sabine Saliba, *Les fondations pieuses waqfs chez les chrétiens et les juifs. Du moyen Âge à nos jours,* Paris, Geuthner, 2016; Richard van Leeuwen, *Notables and clergy in Mount Lebanon: The Khâzin Sheikhs and the Maronite Church (1736-1840)* (Leiden, New-York, Köln: Brill, 1994); Musa Sroor, *Fondations pieuses en mouvement. De la transformation des statuts de propriété des biens waqfs à Jérusalem 1858-1917 (*Aix-en- Provence : IREMAM and IFPO, 2010).
[42] See the role of monasteries among Maronites in Sabine Saliba, *Les monastères maronites doubles du Liban. Entre Rome et l'Empire ottoman (XVII*e*-XIX*e*siècles)* (Paris, Geuthner et Kaslik / Presses de l'Université Saint-Esprit,2008) and in Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya. Mystique et criminelle, 1720-1798* (Paris, Aubier, 2001).
[43] Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf*, 100; Also see Souad Slim, *Le Métayage et I'impot au Mont-Liban XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Beirut: El-Machreq, 1993).
[44] Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf*, 95.

In the archives of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide lays an unusual love story which takes us across the Mediterranean and embodies this type of interstitial freedom.[45] It narrates the affair between a priest and a married woman in which all the societal actors of Ottoman Christians' daily lives, the bishop, the apostolic delegate, the mufti, the patriarch, the governor, the Holy See, notables and monasteries, were all involved. Characterizing it as a love story might not do justice to the actors of this adventure, it might rather be described as an Ottoman adventure through the system of religious identity, legal pluralism and political ambitions, which underlines the journey of the key protagonists through Syria, Mount Lebanon, Egypt and Rome.[46]

A priest called Elīyās officiated the church Mār Elīyās in Mount Lebanon. However, not content with being limited to his small parish, he left his district and moved to Damascus in the early 1830's. A large and rich city like Damascus could surely offer more hopes of comfort and sources of wealth than his small parish. He managed to reside at the house of an aged woman, to which he read the mass everyday.

Elīyās was not the only priest residing out of his bishopric, but his presence in Damascus was particularly problematic because the woman in question lived with her daughter in law, Rosa, the daughter of Ḥannā Baḥrī, the advisor of the governor of Damascus under the Egyptian rule. As such, she benefited from a respected status, and the fact that Elīyās was celebrating a mass in her house attracted other individuals who came to receive the sacraments, and who gave him their alms, a precious source of revenue for priests. The patriarch Maksīmus Maẓlūm ordered Elīyās to leave this house and return to his parish, under the threat of suspension, but he did not pay much case to this warning and continued to officiate in the house. The patriarch called upon the superior of the Franciscan Terra Santa,

---

[45] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* Vol. 18, p. 235, Villardel, 1834.

[46] Heyberger, *Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, 76; Similar stories can be found in Cesare Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie : communicatio in sacris, coesistenza e conflitti tra le comunità cristiane orientali (Levante e Impero ottomano, XVII-XVIII secolo)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2019).

Francisco Villardel, to force him to leave, but to no avail. While this affair unraveled, Elīyās was spending his time teaching the young Rosa the art of reading. He was also her confessor, to whom she disclosed her sins and asked for absolution. His service seemed a bit too dedicated to some of the notables, especially his father, the well respected Ḥannā Baḥrī. Rosa's Muslim neighbors noticed something unusual about the priest's constant presence in her house and forbade Elīyās to come to their street. The Greek Catholic notables also became suspicious of some unholy behavior and threatened him of dire consequences if he did not leave right away. Where the orders of the patriarch, his vicar and the Franciscan superior of Terra Santa failed in scaring away Elīyās, the antagonism of the notables succeeded.

Elīyās thus left Damascus, but not alone. Rosa had decided to leave her husband, Yūḥannā Sinağī, and ran away with the priest to Zaḥle. Arriving in Zaḥle, which they hoped would be a safe haven, they met with the antagonism of the bishop, warned by the patriarch about their scandalous behavior. With no place to go, Elīyās and Rosa came back to Damascus. How could they escape the authority of the patriarch and the notables? They had to find a much stronger protector, the only option was to turn to the government and conversion to Islam was the only way to obtain immunity. The ceremony of conversion was conducted by the mufti right away.[47] They were then united in marriage. The news of this conversion spread to the city, scandalizing Catholics, but causing jubilation on the part of the Greek Orthodox, who blamed the Catholics' preference for unmarried priests for the whole affair.[48]

However, the couple apparently expected a larger subsidy from the mufti which did not materialize.[49] They were living in a miserable house and to get out of this bad economic situation, they called upon the Franciscan Superior of Terra Santa, Villardel. They confessed to him their sins and expressed the wish to return to Christianity. He thought that if he could

---

[47] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* Vol. 18, p. 235, Villardel, 1834.
[48] Ibid,
[49] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* Vol. 18, p. 235, Villardel, 1834.

facilitate the apostate couple's escape, he could win back their soul. However, Elīyās signified to the superior of Terra Santa that he could not leave the city because of the heavy debts he had contracted. Villardel sacrificed himself to bring them back into the Christian realm by paying himself Elīyās' debts and arranged for the escape of the couple to Cairo under the pretense of a commercial venture, to let them stay there long enough to make themselves forgotten and in return in some months. In this manner, they would not be considered as fugitives. Rosa and Elīyās agreed and set out to Cairo. However, they did not stay in Cairo but instead embarked on a boat to Rome, against the advice of the Franciscan Villardel.[50]

In the meanwhile, Rosa's husband Yūḥannā thought that it was time for him to remarry, given that his wife had had public extra-conjugal relationship, had changed religion, got married again and lived in a different continent. However, Villardel did not judge these reasons strong enough to justify to break the insolvable nature of the link of marriage. Yūḥannā had to remain married to Rosa. Unsurprisingly, he was not satisfied by the idea. Frustrated by his failure to remarry a Catholic wife, he turned to the Greek Orthodox patriarch and demanded to enter the Church and marry a Greek Orthodox. This demand was accepted right away because Greek Orthodox consider apostasy as death. He was thus allowed to remarry just as widowers were. Yet, Giovanni's attachment to the Greek Orthodox Church did not seem very strong, for he soon returned to attend the Greek Catholic service. Seeing him there, Villardel warned him that he was living an unlawful union and could not receive the sacraments in this state. Giovanni was not moved by this threat and continued to attend the church and received the sacraments. While he was committing a sin in the view of the Church cannons, his action was not reprehensible according to local customs, where marriage among

[50] Ibid, Vol. 18, p. 235, Villardel, 1834.

Christian communities were common.[51] It allowed him to maintain his reputation among his peers and continue attending his own church.[52]

Villardel, unhappy about this turn of events, and his inability to put an end to this situation, thought that if he could bring back Rosa, she could return to her husband, who would leave his current Orthodox wife. That this entailed two divorces did not seem to bother Villardel, who only considered the first catholic marriage as legitimate according to canon law.[53] Meanwhile, in Rome, Rosa managed to obtain the protection of the Pope by entering the hospice of the beggars.[54]

A year after her arrival to Rome, Rosa wrote to her husband asking if he would take her back. Surprisingly, he accepted.[55] In the meanwhile, a new patriarch had been elected, which gave her the opportunity to present herself through a new light. Now she had to justify her return to Damascus to the Propaganda. She thus wrote to the secretary of the Propaganda Fide, narrating an interesting version of her life story, which she knew would fit into the existing expectations about the Ottoman Empire. According to her letter, she was living peacefully in Damascus with her husband, when the governor captured her and tried to force her to become Muslim and to marry one of his sons. At that point, entered the character of Elīyās, her confessor, who braved all the dangers and saved her from the claws of the governor to get her into safety in Rome. Now Elīyās was returning to his hometown after a year of dedicated service to ensure her safety, and she asked to be allowed to return with him. She asked to be spared the danger of returning to Damascus, where the governor would resume his persecution, neither to Mount Lebanon where her brother Yūsuf who became a

[51] The Greek Catholic synods repeatedly forbade marriage to non-Catholics, which demonstrate that it was a common occurrence, de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 350.
[52] Ibid, vol. 18, p. 235, Villardel, 1834.
[53] Ibid, vol. 18, p. 235, Villardel, January 15th 1834.
[54] Ibid, vol. 18, p. 265, Rosa Arabe, 1834.
[55] Ibid, vol. 18, p. 262, Giovani Sinadji-Rosa Araba, March 11th1834.

Muslim could help the governor find her. She rather asked to be able to go to Cairo where her husband would join her.[56]

Elīyās however returned to Cairo alone because Rosa set out to Mount Lebanon. Elīyās sought to return to priesthood and was well received by the Franciscans, and even resided in their convents. However, his story had not completely been forgotten by the vicar of the new patriarch, who prevented him from celebrating the masses in the city. Elīyās complained about the vicar directly to the Propaganda.[57] In 1835, Rosa arrived in Mount Lebanon and was soon joined by her former husband having divorced his Greek Orthodox wife.[58]

The story of Elīyās and Rosa, beyond its amusing aspects points to the way local Christians used the multiplicity of possible sources of authorities to navigate between various jurisdictions and thus escape the increasing authority of the patriarchs and bishops. It also points to the instrumentalization of discourses of persecution by the Ottoman government in order to obtain resources in Europe. Then, conversion was used to escape authority, to obtain access, but it did not represent a final choice. This level of interstitial freedom enjoyed by Christians was challenged by the institutionalization of the Greek Catholic church under the patriarch Maximūs Maẓlūm.

2. Separation of the Greek Catholic Church: Finding its Place in the Catholic world

The Greek Catholic Church separated from the Greek Orthodox and started to build its institutions. At the same time, this transformation of the Greek Catholic Church implied a necessity to determine its position in regards to Rome. What level of autonomy in the decision-making process should the patriarchs have in regards to the Pope? What were the

---

[56] Ibid, vol. 18, p. 265, Rosa Araba, 1834.
[57] Ibid, vol. 18, p. 321, Elia Marhawi, December 12th 1834.
[58] *Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV)*, Delegazione apostolica nel Libano, Correspondance with patriarchs, political leaders, priests, vol. 76, letter no.7, Auvergne-Mazlum, July 24th 1835.

limits of the missionaries and apostolic delegates' interventions in the affairs of the Church? Who had the ultimate say in the election of bishops, patriarchs and other members of the clergy?

This reconsideration of the relation to Rome was accompanied by a need to clearly establish the hierarchy of the Greek Catholic Church, especially the relative authority and jurisdiction of the bishops and patriarchs. The councils that took place from 1806 to 1860 were underlined by the question of the relation between the patriarch and the bishops, between the latter and the congregation superiors and between the patriarch and the Pope.[59]

The council of Qarqafa 1806 led by the bishop of Aleppo Ǧarmānūs Ādam and the patriarch Āġābīūs II Maṭar had attempted to regulate the relation between the different levels of the hierarchy. The council followed the model of the synod of Pistoia, which supported Gallican ideas. It rendered Ǧarmānūs Ādam suspect in the eyes of the Propaganda Fide.[60] Gallicanism, as developed in France, supported the autonomy of the organization of the French church, but left the spiritual authority to the Pope. This ideology attempted to limit the intervention of the Pope in the organization of the church thus privileging the councils, the authority of the bishop in his jurisdiction and the authority of the government on his territory. Gallicanism has a long history in the church, but it took a more official form with the writings of Bossuet in the 17th century. Since the 18th century, French episcopal Gallicanism was a reaction against Richerist and Presbyterian movements within the constitutional church. After the French revolution, the Gallican church was constituted with a civil constitution of the clergy. However, in 1801 Napoleon restored the superiority of the Pope through the Concordat. Yet, the regulations of the Concordat in 1802 were underlined by this episcopal Gallicanism, for it gave the bishop a central role as an intermediary between the political power and the inhabitants of the bishopric. The bishop was also given the full jurisdiction

[59] de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 353
[60] Girard,"Le christianisme oriental," 678.

over his bishopric and was alone to appoint and dismiss priests. This authority given to the bishops met with opposition from the low clergy against this episcopal form of authoritarianism.[61]

In the council of Qarqafa which took place a few years the synod of Pistoia, the bishop of Aleppo, Ādam, introduced the ideas of episcopal and parochial authority in the Greek Catholic church.[62] On the one hand, the patriarch was prevented from intervening in the administration of the bishopric.[63] On the other hand, the council also sought to repel the influence of missionaries into the local churches. Ādam promoted a more independent role for the patriarchs vis à vis the Pope in regards to elections and decision-making process.[64] The autonomy of both the bishop and the patriarch were simultaneously strengthened.

Rome saw as a dangerous possibility that Ādam could spread these Gallican ideas in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to these larger contemporary political concerns, missionaries such as the Lazarists and the Franciscans saw in the ideas of Ǧarmānūs Ādam a threat to their jurisdiction over Greek Catholics, they thus strongly opposed him and denounced him to the Holy See. In the end, the writings of Ǧarmānūs Ādam were condemned in 1812 by the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. His works were forbidden in 1816.[65] The acts of the synods of Qarqafa were annulled in 1835.

The relation of the high clergy and Rome proved conflictual through the first part of the 19th century. It was especially highlighted in the case of contested elections. Ādam had sought to regulate the conduct of elections in the council of Qarqafa. This council authorized

---

[61] Séverine Blenner-Michel, "L'autorité épiscopale dans la France du XIXe siècle," *Histoire@Politique. Politique, culture, société*, no. 18 (September-December 2012): 63-65.
[62] Heyberger, *Hindiyya,* 214.
[63] De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 353
[64] Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923 (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 206.
[65] On the accusations of jansenism and gallicanism see Aurelien Girard, "Le jansénisme et le gallicanisme sont-ils des « articles d'exportation » ? Jalons pour une recherche sur le parcours et la doctrine de Ǧirmānūs Ādam, archevêque grec-catholique d'Alep au tournant des XVIIIe et XIXe siècles," in *Église, Mémoire(s), Éducation, Mélanges offerts à Jean-François Boulanger,* eds. Véronique Beaulande-Barraud et Benoît Roux (Reims: Editions et presses universitaires de Reims, 2014).

two ways to elect a bishop. The first would be to regroup the priests and eventually the notables of a bishopric and to let them chose a bishop by at least full majority. If majority could not be reached, the patriarch was to choose the candidate. This method was only applied in Aleppo. The second method would be to let the patriarch choose three candidates, present them to the clergy and the notables, who were then to select one. If they were unable to do so, the patriarch himself would make the final decision.[66] This method, applied in all the other bishoprics gave a increasing power to the patriarch, especially since internal conflicts often prevented the bishops from reaching an agreement. However, it was already an improvement from the synod of Saint Savior in 1790 which stated that the patriarch could propose a single candidate. In 1849 it was instructed that the Patriarch had to consult with the bishops to choose the candidates that he was to present.[67] We can thus observe a transition towards more consultation of the bishops in the election process.

It should be noted that none of the councils mentioned that the Holy See was to have a say in these elections. Yet, according to Rome, this was an unalienable right of the Pope.[68] Through the apostolic delegate, the Propaganda Fide attempted to push for the appointments of certain bishops over others. These conflicting conceptions of the role of the Pope became apparent with the election of Maksīmūs Maẓlūm, Ǧarmānūs Ādam's protégé, to the position of bishop of Aleppo in 1810. At the death of Ǧarmānūs Ādam, the patriarch Agapios II Maṭar called for the election of the bishop of Aleppo, to which only seven bishops answered. Four or five other bishops did not come to the election. Maẓlūm was elected bishop by six voices over seven.[69] However, his election was challenged by the opponents of Ǧarmānūs Ādam, because

[66] De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 351-352.
[67] Ibid, 419.
[68] Verdeil, *La mission jésuite*, 60-62.
[69] De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 363.

he had been under his wing and was his secretary during the council of Qarqafa.[70] The opposition was composed of many priests of the city, some notables such as Ḥannā Aǧǧūrī, the bishop of Beirut Āġnāṭīūs Ṣarrūf and the missionaries, especially the Lazarists.[71] The opponents appealed to Rome to contest this election. However the affair was not dealt with right away because the Pope was imprisoned in Fontainebleau. Finally, in 1811, Maẓlūm was suspended and left for Rome the same year.[72] His election was invalidated by Rome in 1815.[73] However, as a compensation he received the title *in partibus infidelium*[74] of bishop of Myra, without any territorial jurisdiction.[75] He stayed in Europe several years, hoping for the situation to change in his favor.

While he was in Rome, the situation of Greek Catholics in *Bilād al-Šām* changed dramatically. In the beginning of the 19th century, Greek Catholics had benefited from the support of French consuls in cities, which had allowed them to escape the authority of Greek Orthodox patriarchs. However, with the French Bourbon Restoration following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 and the downfall of the French Empire, France lost influence and prestige, and its consuls were consequently less able to defend Greek Catholics from the Greek Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire.[76] The situation of Catholics in the Empire was threatened following these events.[77] Armenian Catholics in Istanbul suffered a setback when the Armenian administrators in charge of the imperial mint were killed by the Grand Vizier.

---

[70] Hanna Kildani, *Modern Christianity in the Holy Land: Development of the Structure of Churches and the Growth of Christian Institutions in Jordan and Palestine; the Jerusalem patriarchate, in the Nineteenth Century, in Light of the Ottoman fermans and the international relations of the Ottoman Sultanate*, trans. George Musleh (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2010), 645.
[71] Joseph Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable, le patriarche Maxime Mazloum* (Harissa: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1957), 28-30.
[72] De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 358.
[73] Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable,* 188.
[74] A bishopric that no longer exists
[75] De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 371.
[76] Ian Coller, *Arab France*, 130.
[77] Heyberger, *Hindiyya*, 285.

The official justification was that they were targeted for having clandestine private chapels in their houses, yet it is most probable that they were killed to avoid the repayment of debts.[78]

In 1818, in Aleppo, which was dependent on the patriarchate of Constantinople, the Orthodox metropolitan Gīrāsīmūs demanded the application of the sultanic order addressed to the governor Ḫūršīd Pasha, at the request of the patriarch of Constantinople.[79] It condemned the rebellion of some Greek Catholic priests in Aleppo, who forbade their flock to attend the *Rum* Churches and encouraged them to enter the "Frank and Catholic" sect. The order demanded the exile of these priests, the surrender of the churches, and to forbid the Catholic and Latin priests from entering *Rum* Orthodox's houses. This document, designating the Greek Catholic priests as rebels or *müfsidler*,[80] endorsed the narrative of the Greek Orthodox, who presented the Greek Catholics as illegitimate rebels against the authority of the patriarch, not as a different sect. The use of the *fesad* (rebellion) category makes an analogy with the act of rebellion against the government.[81] Two months later, Ḫūršīd Pasha sent a report to the government mentioning that the accused priests responded with rebellion, protested in front of the governor's office, and attacked the house of Gīrāsīmūs. Eleven of them were arrested and executed by the governor.[82]

Then, in 1820, Zakariyā, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of ʿAkkār near Tripoli, came to Damascus and with the help of his patriarch demanded the application of the same order. They complained of the rebellion of the Greek Catholics, their lack of obedience towards their patriarch and their joining the Church of the Franks. They denied that they constituted a different church, by arguing that they just joined the Franks' sect, Catholicism. They

[78] Frazee, *Catholics and the Sultan,* 256-257.
[79] Yūsuf Ǧ. Warda, Al-*Šuhub al-Ṣubḥiya fi al-Kanīsa al-Masīḥiya*. Cairo: Al-ṭab'a al-'umūmiya, 1901), 141. I would like to thank my colleague Diane Kahale for finding this work.
[80] Corrupters, rebels.
[81] BOA, C.ADL.70.4180, February 27th 1818.
[82] BOA, HAT 774/36303, April 4th 1818.

demanded that all churches and *waqf*[83] used by the Catholics be returned to their rightful owner, the Greek Orthodox patriarch.[84]

The provincial administration of Damascus had beforehand been in the hands of local power-holders, with strong links to local factions. These local power holders had used the service the Greek Catholic scribes and advisers. However, from 1812 onwards, the governor of Damascus was usually an outsider sent from Istanbul and did not stay long enough to build his own power base.[85] This administrative change favoured the Greek Orthodox. After meeting in the governor's office to judge the behavior of the Greek Catholics, the Greek Orthodox patriarch accused them of throwing stones at him with the intent to kill him.[86] In consequence, some Greek Catholic notables were jailed and tortured, even after they agreed to pay a ransom.[87] Numerous Greek Catholic priests were arrested and exiled to the Arwād Island.[88] The Greek Orthodox Bishop of ʿAkkār, Zakariyā also attempted to obtain the ownership of the church of Sidon, claimed by the Greek Catholics. However, he was unable to do so because of the influence of Greek Catholics on the governor.[89] Some members of the community went to Zaḥle in Mount Lebanon, to the convents of the coast, while others fled to Egypt.

This ill-treatment of the Catholics by the Greek Orthodox patriarch gave Maẓlūm an opportunity to increase his influence and collect funds. It gave him a cause to support, bringing him to various places in Europe (Vienna) and to Istanbul.[90] In these travels he represented a persecuted community in need for the support of foreign powers. His travels were financed by the Holy See.[91] At that point, Maẓlūm was even given a recommendation

---

[83] Inalienable endowments.
[84] Warda, *Al Šuhub,* 145.
[85] Dick Douwes, *The Ottomans in Syria, A History of Justice and Oppression* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 58.
[86] Warda, A*s-Šuhub,* 147.
[87] Ibid, 146.
[88] Mishāqah, *Murder, Maheym*, 117.
[89] al-ʻAwra, *Tārīẖ wilāyā*, 451.
[90] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* vol. 12, p. 621, Mazloum, July 21st 1818.
[91] Ibid*,* vol. 12, p. 625, Carlo di Masse, August 28th 1818.

by the patriarch and was mentioned as the bishop of Aleppo by the patriarch.[92] His endeavors were quite successful as he obtained a letter of recommendation from the Austrian statesman Klemens Wenzel von Metternich.[93] Maẓlūm emerged as the champion of the cause of Oriental Catholics in Europe.

At the same time, Maẓlūm travelled to Marseille, where he managed to obtain enough funds and endeavored to start the construction of a church for the Greek Catholic community in the city, the church of Saint Nicolas of Myra, which added to his popularity.[94]

A year later, in 1821, the Greek Uprising of Morea took place, leading to the Greek independence. This event was the starting point of the Greek Catholics' road to political separation from the Greek Orthodox patriarchate. On account of the participation in the revolution of the Phanariots, the Greek elite in Istanbul, the Ecumenical Greek Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople was hanged in 1821. The position of the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Antioch was in turn weakened, allowing for the return in 1824 of the Greek Catholic priests who had been exiled in 1818-1820.[95] Greek Catholics emphasized that they were *Rum* but unlike the Orthodox they were not *Yūnān,* an identification with geographical Greece that hinted at the rebellion of 1821. The distance they established between them and the Greek Orthodox, defined in terms of loyalty to the Empire, helped to create the image of a loyal Greek Catholic community, acknowledged by the Ottoman State.[96] Yet, they were still to be recognized as an official *millet*.

The first steps towards the emancipation of the Greek Catholics came with the official recognition of the Catholic churches in 1831. They were now to be placed under the authority and supervision of the Armenian Catholic patriarch, speaking for all the Catholics in the

---

92 Ibid*,* vol. 12, p. 635, Procurator of patriarch-Maẓlūm, July 27th 1818.
93 Ibid*,* vol. 12, p. 688, Mazloum, November 24th 1818.
94 Charon Cyrille, "L'Église grecque melchite catholique (Suite.)," in *Échos d'Orient*, tome 7, no.44, (1904): 21-23.
95 Mishāqah, *Murder, Mayhem,* 121.
96 Masters, "The Establishment," 463-464.

Empire. They were thus officially emancipated from the authority of the Greek Orthodox patriarch in political and economic terms, although full independence still eluded them.[97] Orders were sent to the various regional governors not to persecute Catholics and to allow them to have their own churches.[98] The *millet* system was a tool to foster the loyalty of non-Muslim subject but also a tool of foreign policy. It served as a divide and rule strategy in order to neutralize the influence of foreign powers over Ottoman Christians to ensure its survival. France and Russia were competing for the protection of Ottoman Christians and for the ownership of the holy places in Palestine. Favoring Catholics was a way to counter Russian and Greek influence among the Empire's Christians which increased after the treaty of mutual assistance of Hunkiar Iskelesi in 1833 and the election of a pro-Russian Greek Orthodox Ecumenical patriarch.[99] As a result of the recognition of the Greek Catholic millet, Greek Orthodox lost their position of leadership and prestige in the empire.[100]

Maẓlūm's interventions in favor of the Greek Catholics made him quite popular in *Bilād al-Šām*. In addition, while he was away, the bishops of Tyre, Acre, Baalbek and Diyarbakir who had opposed him died or were replaced by individuals more favorable to him.[101] From among the opponents of Maẓlūm only the bishop of Beirut was left.[102] Those favorable to Maẓlūm wrote a letter to the pope to contest his suspension.[103] Maẓlūm also had a good relationship to the new pope, Gregory XVI, elected in 1831.[104] Finally, because the Holy See was worried about the internal divisions of the Greek Catholics and thought that Maẓlūm, as a patriarchal vicar, might be able to remedy them, he was allowed to come back

---

97 Ibid, 465.
98 *Muḫtaṣar tārīḫ*, 86.
99 Dimitri Stamatopoulos,"From Millets to Minorities in the 19th – Century Ottoman Empire: an Ambiguous Modernization," in *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*, ed. S. G. Ellis, G. Hálfadanarson, et al, (Pisa: Edizioni Plus-Pisa University Press, 2006), 256, 257.
100 *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* vol. 23, p. 184, Family heads of Homs, June 1st 1852. Inhabitants of Homs wrote to the Propaganda in 1852 that back in 1830, the Ottoman State diminished the political strength of the Greek Orthodox and gave superiority to Catholics.
101 De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 361.
102 Ibid, 368.
103 Ibid, 368.
104 Verdeil, *La mission jésuite*, 47.

to Mount Lebanon in 1831.[105] He was accompanied by two Jesuits fathers, Benoit Planchet and Paul Riccadonna, who were supposed to take over the direction of the Greek Catholic seminar of ʿAyn Taraz which had been abandoned.[106] Maẓlūm's return coincided with the rapidly increasing Jesuit activities in the region. From 1831 until 1864, they built six residences in the region.[107] However, Maẓlūm soon abandoned his Jesuit escort, and they failed to turn the seminary into a central institution.[108] While they supported the patriarch at first, to the dismay of Franciscans and Lazarists, they ended up turning against him.[109]

Maẓlūm had promised Rome that he was not going to run for the position of bishop of Aleppo.[110] However, he had said nothing about running for the position of patriarch. On February 9th 1833, the patriarch Qaṭān died. At the same time, the apostolic delegate who had been the most opposed to Maẓlūm, Giovanni Pietro Losana, left the region. One month later, the bishops met and elected Maẓlūm as patriarch.[111] Jean Baptiste Azcher, vicar of the apostolic envoy, wrote a letter to Rome describing the election of Maẓlūm. He was very critical of Maẓlūm and of his election, which he deemed irregular. First, he explained that after the death of the patriarch Qaṭān, Emir Bašīr Šihāb's Greek Catholic adviser made a circular to the bishops saying that Maẓlūm had to be chosen. Then, the synod was planned after Easter but it was suddenly moved to Good Friday, during which the minister read a similar letter. The apostolic delegate had written a letter of protestation in the name of the Holy See to prevent Maẓlūm from being elected, but to no avail.

---

105 Ibid, 40.
106 Ibid, 47.
107 Chantal Verdeil,"Between Rome and France, Intransigent and Antiprotestant Jesuits in the Orient :The Beginning of the Jesuit's Mission of Syria (1831-1864),"in *Christian Witness Between Continuity and New Beginnings, Modern Historical Missions in the Middle East, ed.* M. Tamcke, M. Marten (Berlin: LIT-Verlag (Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte), 2006), 24; On the renewal of missions in the 1830's and 1840's see Chantal Verdeil, "Travailler à la renaissance de l'Orient chrétien. Les missions latines en Syrie (1830-1945)," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 51 (2001): Fasc 3-4, 267-316.
108 Ibid, 25; Verdeil, *La mission jésuites*, 65-67.
109 A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol.3, de Ségur- Aupick, March 13th 1851; Verdeil, *La mission jésuite*, 65.
110 S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti, vol. 18, p. 171, Mazloum-Cardinal Pedicini, November 15th 1830.
111 Cyrille Charon, "Les débuts du patriarcat de Maximos III Mazloum (1833-1835)," *Échos d'Orient*, tome 9, no.56 (1906): 15.

Maẓlūm was asked during the election if he had promised the Propaganda that he renounced to be elected patriarch. He answered negatively.[112] The bishops therefore all voted Maẓlūm, to one exception. The apostolic vicar Azcher then reported to the Propaganda that Maẓlūm stated that he didn't need to be confirmed by Rome to be elected patriarch, and that synods can be enacted without the authorization of Rome. This idea reflected Ādam's gallican ideas exposed in the council of Qarqafa. The vicar accused Maẓlūm of printing and distributing the council of Qarqafa.[113]

Maẓlūm, Āġābīūs Maṭār and Ǧarmānūs Ādam had insisted that the Greek Catholic church recognized the spiritual authority of Rome, yet refused its claims to impose its authority on temporal matters such as elections. Rome was to offer counsel, to assign blame and reward but not to impose its will. That this authority on temporal matters was materialized by the direct intervention of apostolic delegates or missionaries, to whose attitudes and modes of intervention many members of the clergy were opposed, did not help. However, in the community there were also those who favored this outside intervention to further their own positions within the Church, and to counter Maẓlūm's increasing power.

3. Emancipation from the Greek Orthodox: Building Confessional Cultures and the Politics of Distinction

While the Greek Catholics were officially separated from the Greek Orthodox in 1831, the various ecclesiastical resources were still monopolized by the Greek Orthodox patriarchate. Fortunately for the Greek Catholics, the election of Maẓlūm took place during the Egyptian rule over *Bilād al-Šām* which turned the situation to their advantage. In 1832, Ibrahīm Pasha, the son of Muḥammad 'Alī the viceroy of Egypt, invaded Syria and defied the Ottoman central government. During his reign over Syria, ending in 1841, he favored Greek Catholics at the expense of Greek Orthodox and Jews who had had a predominant place in the

[112] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* vol. 18, p. 248, Jean-Baptiste Azcher-Cardinal Pedicini, February 19th 1834.
[113] Ibid.

administration. This favorable disposition towards Greek Catholics can be explained by the fact that many Greek Catholic notables who had made their fortune in Egypt as well as clergy members returned to Damascus with Ibrahīm Pasha. His financial administrator was the aforementioned Ḥannā Baḥrī, a Greek Catholic who had been his adviser in Egypt. He was awarded this position which was previously the stronghold of the Jewish Fārḥī family.[114] The Greek Catholic patriarch obtained a direct access to the government through his intermediary.[115]

The Greek Catholic community, freed from the restrictions on their visibility and religious practices, started to acquire a new role in the city. When Maksīmūs Maẓlūm was elected Greek Catholic patriarch, he made a triumphant tour of centers of Greek Catholicism such as Baalbek, Mount Lebanon, Damascus, being welcomed by governors in celebration.[116] The community in Damascus built a large cathedral in 1833 in Damascus. The patriarch Maẓlūm finally settled in Damascus in 1834, for the first time since 1724.[117] He ordained all his bishops and started to institutionalize his Church.[118]

This new position and political power of the Greek Catholics during the Egyptian rule in Damascus was displayed by clothing, public processions and the building of churches.[119] All these displays angered the Greek Orthodox and led to skirmishes and episodes of violence.[120] The new patriarch Maẓlūm was accused by one of his bishops to be the cause of the persecutions of the Greek Orthodox against the Catholics. The bishop of Aleppo also

---

[114] *Muḏakkirāt tārīḫīya,* 59.
[115] *Muḫtaṣar tārīḫ*, 91.
[116] Ibid, 88, 89.
[117] Ibid, 90.
[118] Maxīmūs Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa tārīḫīya : Fīmā jarā li-tāʾifat al-Rūm al-Kāṯūlīk munṯu sanat 1837 fimā baʿdahā*, ed. Qusṭanṭīn al-Bāšā, 35, 36.
[119] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* vol. 19*,* p. 337*,* Chayat, May 30th 1838; *Muḫtaṣar tārīḫ*, 90; *Muḏakkirāt tārīḫīya,* 72, 73.
[120] Johann Büssow and Khaled Safi, *Damascus affairs: Egyptian rule in Syria through the eyes of an anonymous Damascene chronicler, 1831-1841 (*Würzburg: Ergon, 2013), 80. For example, in 1832 in the city, two Greek Catholic priests were walking in the streets with their *kamilavkion* clerical hat, some Greek Orthodox children threw stones at their hats. The Greek Catholics, outraged at this attack asked the arrest of the children. At the same time, some Greek Catholic drunkards attacked Greek Orthodox in the streets, claiming immunity because of their connection to the government through Ḥannā Baḥrī.

accused Maẓlūm of coming to Damascus and parading in the streets under the nose of the Greek Orthodox to provoke them, which was not prudent.[121] Many Muslims also resented this change in status and considered that Christians, and especially Catholics, had overstepped their limits and were behaving arrogantly. This impression was shared by non-Catholic Christian chroniclers as well.[122] In retribution, after the departure of the Egyptians, there were threats against the newly built Greek Catholic churches.[123]

The Greek Orthodox patriarch of Antioch Mīṯūdiyūs used important resources to prevent the official recognition of the Greek Catholic clergy. He met with all his bishops in 1836 warning them of the spread of Catholicism and asking them to collect funds from the population to send to Istanbul for their cause.[124] In 1837 their efforts paid off. After complaining to the Ottoman authorities about the actions of the Greek Catholics, Mīṯūdiyūs obtained a *ferman* to forbid the Greek Catholics from wearing their clerical hat, a sign of prestige and recognition.[125]

Rather than taking off their hat, which would be a sign of defeat, the Greek Catholic clergy rather stayed confined in the patriarchal houses. However, they did not remain inactive. The Greek Catholics decided to engage funds and to use connections in Istanbul to obtain a *ferman* canceling the previous one. Six *ferman-s* followed, each canceling the previous one and giving the upper hand to one or the other community.[126] Each side used its connections in Istanbul, the influence of the French or Russian ambassadors, as well as bribes to imperial and local authorities to win this *ferman* competition. The affair of the hat, rather than being a simple anecdote, represents the transformations of Christian communities during the *Tanzimat* period and the institutionalization of the *millet* system. It points to the progressive

---

121 *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* vol. 19*,* p. 337*,* Chayat, May 30th 1838.
122 Iskandar Abkāriyūs, *Kitāb Nawādir al-zamān fī waqā'i' ğabal Lubnān*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Samak (London: Riyad el-Reyyes Books, 1987), 253.
123 F.O., 195/196, Wood-Abderdeen, January 3rd 1842.
124 Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 3, 5.
125 Masters, "The Establishment", 466.
126 *Muḫtaṣar tārīḫ,* 97.

construction of the confessional border between Christian communities in *Bilād al-Šām*. This emphasis on appearance was part of a larger demand for separation and distinction between religious sects.

At the theological level, narratives of authenticity, orthodoxy, and heresy, emphasizing distinction between the two Churches, were developed. Both clergies presented themselves as the upholders of tradition and their opponents as departing from the past, as leaving 'orthodoxy'.[127] For the Greek Orthodox the Catholics, under influence of the missionaries, became *Afranǧ*[128] some 150 years ago, imitated Armenians and left the *Rum* church.[129] In order to illustrate this departure from tradition, Greek Orthodox argued that Greek Catholics should change their clothes and adopt the clerical clothing of the Latins.[130] According to this argument, the Greek Orthodox church, under the leadership of the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, was the original church that had been granted privileges by Mehmed II at the conquest of Istanbul.[131] The nineteenth century saw the development of the narrative of the *millet*, which used the alleged "privileges" granted at the conquest of Constantinople to the Armenian, Greek patriarchs and Jewish Grand Rabbi to justify claims of autonomy, authority within the *millet* and access to resources from the Ottoman State.[132]

The 19th century Ottoman society was inventing tradition, yet in contradictory ways. Notions of authenticity and tradition could be used to justify existing practices and local particularities in the face of reforming movements. They could also be used to advocate for reform as well as for the homogenization of practices across the region. For example, Catholic missionaries wished to bring local Christians "back" into the fold of Catholicism from which,

---

[127] Masters, "The Establishment," 467.
[128] Franks, Europeans.
[129] Mishāqah, *Murder, Mayhem*, 119.
[130] Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 260.
[131] Cyrille Charon, "L'émancipation civile des Grecs Melkites (1831-1847)(fin)*." Échos d'Orient*, tome 9, no. 61 (1906): 338.
[132] Méropi Anastassiadou, *Les Grecs d'Istanbul au xixe siècle. Histoire socioculturelle de la communauté de Péra* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012), 7, 8.

in their conception, they had formerly strayed. Yet, a times, the patriarchs of these local Christian communities advocated for the maintaining of their particular political, social organization and ritual practices based upon the legitimacy given to them by tradition and custom, defined as authenticity. There were therefore a variety of claims on tradition and authenticity which contradicted each other and were used as tools in the struggle for access to power.

On the Catholic side, Patriarch Maẓlūm emphasized that the patriarch of Antioch had never left the union with Rome and followed an uninterrupted line up to Saint Peter.[133] Greek Catholics argued that the Greek Orthodox, if they insisted on their schism, were to be considered as heretics and thereby would not be saved.[134] In the same manner, the Synod of Constantinople in 1722 had made clear the various distinctions between the Orthodox and Catholic creeds, creating tools to distinguish between the two communities on the ground.[135]

Claims of authenticity also had important consequences for access to various communal resources. With the same clothing and the same rites, the difference between a Greek Catholic and Orthodox priest would not be visibly marked. It was also not clear to the governors.[136] The distinction between the two churches were of a theological, ecclesiastic or political nature, regarding issues such as the jurisdiction of the Pope or the source of the Holy Spirit. Marking it visually was a way to create a physical barrier between the two clergies and entrenching the distinction between the two Churches and their followers.

The Greek Orthodox patriarch Mīṯūdiyūs complained that the Greek Catholic priests could go around and collect funds from the Greek Orthodox by deceiving people about their identity.[137] He thus required an obvious distinction between the two clergies so that people would not demand their services and adopt Catholicism without knowing its consequences.

---

[133] Masters, "The Establishment," 110.
[134] Girard, "Le christianisme oriental," 635-637.
[135] Ibid, 620.
[136] ʻal-ʻAwra, *Tārīḫ wilāyā,* 448.
[137] Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 3.

Maẓlūm answered to the Greek Orthodox concerns, with irony: "How weak is a man's faith, if a simple cloth can change his beliefs?".[138] In a petition to the government, the Greek Catholics argued that the danger of confusing priests based on their clothing was only a pretext, for each community knew very well who their priests were.[139] Yet, they were all quite aware of the stakes in this "affair of the hat".

These arguments brought forward by Maẓlūm and his flock about the irrelevance of costumes points to the transformation of the notion of communal belonging. While belonging used to be manifested by external appearances, the Catholic reforms emphasized that faith is rather to be internalized through discipline and practices.[140] This transformation was in line with the reforms of the *Tanzimat* which tended towards the erasing of social and economic distinctions through costume, represented by the imposition of the universal fez.[141]

The rules agreed upon in the various Greek Catholic synods also show an attempt to create a physical barrier between the Orthodox and Catholic churches by forbidding the simultaneous use of the same church by both clergies, called *communicatio in sacris.*[142] Marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics also were forbidden by the Greek Catholic councils of 1806 and 1835.[143] When Maẓlūm sent circulars forbidding such marriages in Damascus, the Greek Orthodox patriarch Mīṯūdiyūs responded with the same interdiction for his flock.[144] Greek Orthodox patriarchs also attempted to forbid interactions between their flocks and Latins.[145]

Catholic fraternities created links of solidarity between members who vowed to help each other in defending the Catholic faith. In addition to developing certain practices such as

---

[138] Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 118.
[139] Ibid, 248.
[140] Heyberger, *Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*,485, 511- 515.
[141] On the fez see Donald Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 3 (1997): 403-404.
[142] Girard, "Le christianisme oriental," 639.
[143] De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 446.
[144] Cyrille Charon, "Les débuts du patriarcat de Maximos III Mazloum (1833-1835)" *Échos d'Orient*, vol. 9, no.56 (1906): 19.
[145] Masters, "The Establishment," 458.

confession and promoting individual devotion, these fraternities also sought to regulate the public behaviour of their members and their interactions with other religious groups. Members were encouraged to look differently than the rest of the society and restrain from actions that would make them resemble Muslims, such as going out on Ramadan nights. Mixing with Christian "heretics" was also to be avoided. Similarity and closeness to other Christian sects was considered as a threat for religious integrity.[146]

The emphasis on visual distinctions after the abolition of clothing restriction for non-Muslims,[147] which was part of the *Tanzimat* reforms, denotes a need to reaffirm borders that were becoming blurry. Karen Barkey argues that in the Ottoman Empire boundaries were such an important part of everyday practices and discourses that the relation between boundaries and conflicts should be approached carefully. She argues that if boundaries are evident, individuals find ways to circumvent and weaken them. If, on the other hand, boundaries are blurry and ambiguous, individuals attempt to affirm and strengthen them because they are seen as a condition for the group's survival.[148]

Issues of ownership were embedded in claims of authenticity symbolically represented by the donning of the hat. Both the Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox laid claims on the ownership of the churches, *waqf*, convents, and liturgical items of the See of Antioch. During these years, the affair of the hat mirrored the conflict over the ownership of churches and *waqf.* When clergy members were prevented from wearing their hats, they would go into hiding, and lose the possession of churches.

The conflict between Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics marked the public sphere because they were large communities and had particular reciprocal relationships with local

---

[146] Bernard Heyberger, "Confréries, Dévotions et Société chez les Catholiques Orientaux," in *Confréries et Dévotions dans la Catholicité Moderne (mi-XIIe-début XIXe siècle),* ed. Bernard Dompnier and Paola Vismara (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2008), 232, 237- 238.
[147] On the abolition of clothing distinction during the *Tanzimat* see Donald Quataert, "Clothing Laws," 403-404.
[148] Karen Barkey, *Empire of difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 119.

decision makers. However, this conflict over property was also mirrored in smaller Christian communities present in the city, such as Syrian Catholics and Syrian Orthodox.[149]

The legitimization of a community through a reference to continuity, tradition, and authenticity coincided with the Ottoman conception of the *millet* and the rights of religious communities as articulated in the nineteenth century. In this period, the notion of "equality of the *millet*" which was part of the *Tanzimat* reforms came to mean that what is appointed to one group cannot be disposed of or sold to another group. A church belonging to one sect cannot be expropriated or sold to another sect. Either the sect uses it or the state retakes control of it. This ruling was made in the nineteenth century to answer to the practical issues arising from the multiplication of the *millets*.[150] Thus, the question of who was the initial owner, who had the legitimacy of tradition, became a crucial issue for the ownership of all ecclesiastical goods and properties.

This ruling came into conflict, however, with another important notion in jurisprudence that "unbelief is one *millet*". It means that the government is not to make distinctions between different non-Muslim communities, because they are all one community outside the Islamic one. In the various *fatwā* given to Maẓlūm from various *'ulamā'*, this expression is interpreted to mean that one community cannot impose on another. Thus, if one group split because of differences of beliefs, or if someone changed religion, there was nothing the patriarch or Grand Rabbi could do. Maẓlūm obtained *fatwa* from three '*ulamā'* of Egypt, as well as from the Mufti of Beirut.[151] They all agreed that the Greek Orthodox patriarch could not impose anything on the Greek Catholics. One *fatwā* mentioned that there

---

[149] Weber, Stefan. *Damascus : Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation (1808-1918)*. 2 vols, Proceedings of the Danish Institute in Damascus. Århus Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 59, 60; For the conflict between the Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic regarding the places of worship see A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 1, Beaudin-Roussin, June 10th 1836; F.O., 195/196, Canning-Wood, May 19th 1842; BOA, A.DVN.24.22, August 19th 1847.

[150] Ahmad Atif Ahmad, "On the Cusp of Modernity Reading Ibn 'Abidin of Damascus (1784–1836,)" *in Islam, Modernity, Violence, and Everyday Life*, ed. Ahmad Atif Ahmad (Palgrave: Macmillan US, 2009), 62; Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 173, 179; Muḥammad Amīn ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd al-muḥtār ʿalā al-durr al-muḫtār* (Ryad: Dār 'ālīm al-Kutub, 2003), 330.

[151] Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 173, 179.

was no requirement for Christian sects to have a different appearance among themselves; they should only look different than Muslims.[152] The *Tanzimat* reforms also abolished clothing restrictions and allowed conversion, strengthening the argument of Maẓlūm.

When the Ottoman central government retook control of Damascus in 1841, the balance of power between the two communities shifted again. The influence of France was challenged by its support to Ibrahīm Pasha and Great Britain took the upper hand in the empire.[153] Those who had allied with Ibrahīm Pasha were dismissed from positions of power.[154] At the same time, the Greek Orthodox patriarch was able to regain his influence and obtain orders to restrict the Greek Catholics' use of the hat. While Maẓlūm had gained the favour of Sultan Mahmud II, his death in 1839 and the succession of Sultan Abdülmecid was initially more inclined towards Russian influence and the Greek Orthodox.[155] Mīṯūdiyūs managed to get a *ferman* in 1842 through the Russian ambassador's influence to prevent them from wearing the hat and, as a consequence, clergy members in Damascus who were caught wearing the hat were arrested.[156]

When in 1842 the clergy members were forbidden from appearing in public with the clerical hat, the *qalūsa*, the priests of Damascus went into hiding into private houses, waiting for the situation to change. They asked for the help of the French consul. After some hesitation, he decided to encourage them to go out in public wearing the hat. The governor arrested one of the clergy members who wore the hat and asked one of them if he was a subject of France or of the sultan. When one of the clergy members answered that he was the latter's, the governor said that Catholics lost this status because they did not obey the governor and instead listened to the French consul's orders. Wearing the hat was seen by the

---

[152] Ibid, 179.
[153] A.E. CPC/ 67/vol. 1, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, January 8th 1841.
[154] F.O., 78/447, Werry-Palmerstone, August 21st 1841.
[155] Maximos Mazloum, *Mémoire sur l'état actuel de l'église grecque catholique dans le levant (*Marseille : Imprimerie d'Achard, 1841), 12.
[156] Ibid, 12, 13.

governor as a rebellion not against the Greek Orthodox patriarch but against the state itself, for it defied the order published by the sultan.[157] Clothing visually represented conflicting claims of jurisdiction over local Christians.

In 1844, the Greek Catholic patriarch Maẓlum won his independence from the Armenian Catholic patriarch.[158] Letters were sent by Istanbul to the governors of Syria to treat Maẓlūm in the best of manners.[159] His bishops obtained a *berat* recognizing them as official representatives of the community.[160] A few months earlier, the negotiations around the hat had turned in favour of the Greek Catholics, hinting at the upcoming recognition of Maẓlūm as the head of his *millet*. The Ottoman foreign minister proposed to create a hat on which would appear a *nīšān* (the medal of the sultan with his signature) with a crown toppled by a cross. A more Ottoman hat could not be imagined. The crown hinted at the Melkite or *Rum* identity.[161] Finally, in 1847 the patriarch Maẓlūm was recognized as the patriarch of the Greek Catholics of Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria and all the East.[162] The hat that was decided upon by the government for the Greek Catholic clergy would be the same as the Greek Orthodox except that the top part will be six-sided, and both the hat and the veil would be purple. Purple also represented the Byzantine heritage. The Greek Orthodox patriarch complained about this hat, but he no longer had any say in this affair and the matter ended thirty years after it had first started.[163]

The "affair of the hat" was not solely an ecclesiastical affair. It became the materialization of conflicting narratives of legitimacy, authenticity, and tradition. These narratives were important stakes in the competition for access to resources. Symbolizing the abolition of various privileges awarded to the *Rum* leadership, the "affair of the hat" was well

---

157 A.E. CPC/67-1,Sayour-Beaudin , January 3rd 1842.
158 Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 120.
159 BOA, A.MKT.14.58, July 27th 1844.
160 Maẓlūm, *Nubḏa,* 120.
161 Ibid, 112.
162 Masters, " The Establishment," 469.
163 BOA. A.DVN.31.29, September 9th 1847.

embedded in the *Tanzimat* reforms. This period was characterized by a reshuffling of social and political hierarchies. The social contract that had ruled relations between Muslims and non-Muslims was gradually abolished. In the same manner, the structure of Christian communities and their relation to the state were redefined, giving rise to various claims of self-representation and autonomy in regards to the existing leadership structure. These transformations unraveled in a period of foreign threats and internal secession. In this context, loyalty and treason became central notions to delegitimize one's opponent or to obtain state recognition. Clothing, and especially hats, embodied these larger dynamics of the *Tanzimat*.

After his recognition by the Ottoman State, Maẓlūm came back victorious to Aleppo in 1850 and paraded in the city with all the clothing of prestige to display his final triumph against the Greek Orthodox. This event is pointed to some as the causes of the violence against Christians as it pictured the Greek Catholics as extremely wealthy. Indeed, in February 1850, the Greek Catholic Bishop of Baalbek criticized Maẓlūm for behaving as an Ottoman prince, taking decisions unilaterally and going around the country parading on his horse.[164] Another bishop also mentioned that those who attacked the Christians in 1850 wanted to kill the patriarch himself.[165] The parades of the patriarch were often blamed for causing interconfessional tensions.[166] Maẓlūm was aware that such accusations circulated against him. Indeed, he received a letter from Cardinal Franzoni, prefect of the Propaganda Fide, blaming him for the attacks against Christians in Aleppo in 1850, because of his lavish procession and displays of power when he entered the city. Maẓlūm protested and declared that such accusations originated from his opponents who tried to delegitimize him.[167] 'Aṭā, the Greek Catholic bishop of Hama and Homs, also described the situation on October 9th 1850, a week before the violence erupted in Aleppo. He narrated that he spent a lot of money

[164] *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti,* vol. 22, p. 396, Athanasio bishop of Baalbek, February 27th 1850.
[165] Ibid*,* vol. 22, p. 712, Antachi bishop of Aleppo, December 13Th 1850.
[166] Ibid*,* vol. 21, p 1029, Abdallah Messabini, November 13th 1848.
[167] Ibid*,* vol. 22, p. 753, Mazlum, January 10th 1851.

building the new Greek Catholic churches which angered the Greek Orthodox who wrote to the governor and accused him of rebellion against the government. It encouraged the governor to take the Greek Catholic churches and turn them into barracks for soldiers.[168]

The competition for recognition, resource and followers between the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics but also among Catholics in this period encouraged them to build larger and more luxurious churches,[169] to obtain more visibility in the public realm and gain prestige through obtaining the protection of foreign powers. These strategies of recognition contributed to the impression that Christians were the main beneficiaries of the reforms and that they became the elite of the city. The British consul in 1860 made a direct link between the construction of luxurious religious buildings and houses by Christians and the attacks of 1860.[170]

In conclusion, the Greek Catholic Church formed its institutions in the 19th century in line with the Ottoman *Tanzimat* and the transformation of society towards the building of confessional cultures and the intensification of religious identification. It sought to carve a space of autonomy in the Catholic world and in the Ottoman society through distinction and separation with fellow Catholics and with the Greek Orthodox community. These transformations were necessary to enjoy the authority and jurisdiction given by the Ottoman State to the *millet* as modern centralized institutions under the authority of their patriarch. However, the institutionalization of the Church caused conflicts and tensions with Rome and between Christian communities which at times evolved into violence. The example of Greek Catholics points to the politicization of religious identity as a society-wide phenomenon born out of the rise of a modern Ottoman State and society. It also challenges the notion of non-Muslim *millet* as cultural and religious units with full-fledged institutions.

---

168 Ibid, vol. 22, p. 661, Gregorio Ata, October 9th 1850.
169 Weber, *Ottoman Damascus*, vol. 2, 55; F.O., 78/1520, Bulwer-Brant, August 30th 1860.
170 F.O., 195/601, Brant-Bulwer, August 25th 1860.