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

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CHAPTER 3: MAKSĪMŪS MAŽLŪM'S REFORM OF THE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH: INSTITUTIONALIZATION, HOMOGENIZATION AND CENTRALIZATION

In the previous chapter, we described how the Greek Catholic community struggled to obtain its emancipation from the Greek Orthodox clergy while negotiating a certain level of autonomy from Rome. Once the community was established as a *millet* in the Ottoman Empire, the high clergy and especially the patriarch Maksīmūs Mažlūm embarked on a process of institutionalization. It entailed a centralization of resources and power, and was underlined by a discourse which claimed to increase transparency and efficiency in the administration. This centralization also took the form of the construction a confessional culture, the intensification of religious identity and the homogenization of the flock by marking a visual and ritual distinction with the other Catholic communities such as Maronites or Latin missionaries. Through these processes, the high clergy sought to create a sense of belonging among its flock through rites and religious practices. This attempt to separate communities was underlined by a concern with authority, jurisdiction and ownership of ecclesiastical property fostered by the nature of the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reforms. In many ways, the internal reforms of the Greek Catholic community mirrored the larger transformations of the Ottoman state structure and administration.

These internal reforms were encouraged by the Ottoman State as part of the institutionalization of the Ottoman *milel* and coincided in part to the efforts of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide to structure the local Catholic Churches towards more transparency, hierarchization and increased separation between the laity and the clergy. Yet,

in many occasions the reformist agenda of the Propaganda Fide frustrated the patriarch Maḏlūm's will for autonomy and authority, leading to prolonged conflicts with missionaries and apostolic delegates.

This transformation of the Greek Catholic community into a homogeneous autonomous and centralized institution marked a break with the traditionally diffused and multileveled organization of the community, which had allowed individuals some level of interstitial freedom in their worship and daily lives. This process thus led to multiple resistances which marked lines of conflict within the institutionalizing Greek Catholic *millet*. The reforms were challenged by various bodies, such as fraternities and monastic orders which had been an important basis of solidarity and identification and had played an integral role in the power struggle of the Greek Catholic flock.

In this chapter, we will explore the transformation to the structure of the Greek Catholic Church initiated by the patriarch Maksīmūs Maḏlūm and the various conflicts that arose around these reforms. It will shed light on the way in which the institutionalization of the *millet* during the *Tanzimat* and the creation of confessional cultures were challenged by other forms of belonging and identification dynamics. First, we will focus on Maḏlūm's conflict with the monastic orders and his will to increase the power of the high clergy at their expense. Then, we will look at his attempt to create a homogenized community through marking separation and distinction with other Catholics through the imposition of the Greek rite. Finally, it will focus on the end of Maḏlūm's rule and the conflicts that arose from his policies of centralization which strengthened factionalism within the Church. This factionalism in turn contributed to the politicization of the Greek Catholic community.

1. Centralizing Resources and Challenging the Monastic Orders: Property and Appointments

1.1 Separating the Lay and Clerical Elements

The key aspects of the *Tanzimat* reforms, centralization, standardization, systemization and the rule of law were already at play among the Christian community of *Bilād al-Šām* in the 18th century as a consequence of the Catholic reform, but encountered strong centrifugal forces. Indeed, the organization of the Greek Catholic community was not to the liking of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide in Rome, responsible for Catholic missionary works. The Congregation sought to enforce the decisions of the Council of Trent (1542-1563),¹ which had enacted a process of reform based on pontifical absolutism and centralization. It included an emphasis on transparency, hierarchization and separation between lay and clerical elements. The familial and local administration of the Church was to be transformed into a centralized, top-down type of management of ecclesiastical resources and clergy members.² In this sense, the internal transformations mirror the reforms of the Ottoman State during the *Tanzimat*.

The ecclesiastical reforms focused extensively on monastic orders. They were to be placed under the direct jurisdiction of bishops and cut off from the influence of the laity. The Council also sought to put an end to the laity's involvement in the election of bishops, which, while not justified textually, had been customary in Roman Catholicism. Monks and priests, to be formed in seminaries, were to be clearly distinguished from the common folk. The bishops' power, while strengthened by the Council, was seen as directly rooted in the Pope's mandate, and was not independent. However, the application of these principles encountered a strong opposition in the Roman church itself.³

The Holy See saw the involvement of laymen into the administration of the Church as problematic. In the same manner, the economic relationship between monks and the laity was also seen as a possible source of corruption of the monastic orders as it allowed for the intrusion of lay politics into the daily life of monasteries, causing divisions within the orders.

¹ The main council in the history of Catholicism.

² de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 419.

³ Ibid.

The professional activities and personal resources of the monks were recurring issues in the 19th century. Were monks supposed to have personal funds or did they have to give everything to the orders? Was a monk to be entirely devoted to the service of his order or could he engage in mundane matters? Who was to inherit from monks? Was their properties personal or ecclesiastical? Monastical statutes prohibited monks from engaging in any economic activity as they took the vow of poverty,⁴ However, it seems to have been a common practice in the region. Monasteries were also producing institutions, involved in commerce and agriculture.⁵ Monks were also commonly accused of leaving a luxurious life, thus contributing to the idea of the riches lying around in the monasteries and turning them into targets of plunder.⁶ These questions were related to the power relations within monasteries. To deprive monks of personal funds was a way to ensure hierarchy in the monasteries.⁷

The lack of control over monks, and their illegitimate mobility is also often seen to be the cause of all disorders and rebellions. Patriarch Mazlūm, together with the apostolic delegates attempted to control the mobility of priests and monks, to assign them to a territory and prevent them returning to their families in the cities. It demonstrated an attempt at population control and territorialization, which is also observable in the 19th century objectives of the Ottoman government.⁸ It also corresponded to the objectives of the Tridentine reform of the Roman Catholic Church.⁹

⁴ de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 407.

⁵ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 19 , p. 3, Anastasio Bishop of Baalbek, 1837.

⁶ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 568, Bishop of Beirut Agabios to superior Basilian Chouerite *Baladī* monks, March 12th 1842; Ibid, vol. 19, p. 727, Villardel, December 9th 1839; Ibid, vol. 19, p. 439, Mazlum, September 20th 1838; Ibid, vol. 20, p. 658, Villardel, July 28th 1842; Ibid, vol. 19, p.727, Apostolic delegation Lebanon to Cardinal Franzoni, October 8th 1839.

⁷ See the consequence of these various interpretations of the role of monks in the conflict that arose in 1835, when Gibril Tawīl, a Salvatorian, died and gave all of his inheritance to the Salvatorians; *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 529, Pietro Kahil, December 21st 1835.

⁸ As exemplified by the stricter definition of provincial borders by the vilayet law of 1864. See Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 88-90.

⁹ Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du proche-orient*, 92.

The patriarch and the apostolic delegates encouraged a process of territorialization of the Church, where parishes and bishoprics had to be clearly defined and priests, bishops and patriarchs had to reside in their own.¹⁰ Given the unstable history of the Greek Catholic Church, spread across the region and having to flee patriarchal residences and bishoprics, not to reside in one's own bishopric had become a habit of the high clergy.¹¹ Some bishoprics only had a few families, which could not sustain the expenses of a bishop, who often preferred to live in the cities or in the monasteries of Mount Lebanon. Just as Ottoman administrative regions were more clearly defined and administered, and especially in the form of the *vilayet* law of 1864, ecclesiastical units were to be more efficiently administrated and delimited. Their resources and property were also be put in order and accounts presented, in line with the *Tanzimat* reforms in the administration.¹²

Then, just as the Ottoman State attempted to cut down the power base of governors by changing their post often, Mazlūm recommended that priests only stay in the same parish for three months. In this way, they would not have the time and resources to build they own power base to defy the power of the secular clergy and especially the bishops.¹³

The patriarch also attempted reduce the influence of the laity in the appointment of priests by entrusting it to the bishop.¹⁴ Family relations had always been an important determinant of clerical appointments at all the levels of the Greek Catholic church. Secular priests were married, which also fostered the formation of clerical dynasties.¹⁵ The attempt to

¹⁰ de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 400; This requirement was already highlighted by the council of Qarqafa in 1806; Ibid, 350.

¹¹ Haïssa Boustani, "Réglement général des patriarchats melkites," *Échos d'Orient*, vol. 10, no.67 (1907): 359, 361.

¹² de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*,

¹³ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 19, p. 486, Mazlum, November 26th 1838.

¹⁴ Miḥā'īl Mišāqā, *Tabrīya al-mathūm mimā qaḍafahu bihi al-Baṭrīyark Maksīmūs Mazlūm* (Beirut, 1854), 40.

¹⁵ Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, 92.

reduce the role of the laity in the appointment of priests gave rise to a strong opposition on the part of the notables in Damascus and Aleppo.¹⁶

The patriarch Mazlūm and the representatives of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide thus attempted to encourage the adoption of measures in the Greek Catholic synods which would sever the links between the laity and the monasteries.¹⁷ However, these regulations were only applied partially.¹⁸ Separating the monasteries from the laity was a particularly difficult task in Mount Lebanon, where civil and religious authorities intertwined. This process met with the opposition of ruling families who had come to consider the monasteries as their property.

1.2 The Rise of the Secular Clergy

The Council of Trent demanded the creation of seminaries to form the secular clergy,¹⁹ effectively competing with monasteries who formed the regular clergy. The Council of Saint Savior which took place in 1811 under the patriarchate of Āġābīūs Maṭār was designed to regulate the creation of such a seminary to form the secular clergy in ‘Ayn Taraz.²⁰ It was based upon the model of the Maronite seminary of Ayn Warqā which formed most of the Christian Arab intellectuals in the beginning of the Nahḍa.²¹ This new college was to become the residence of the patriarch, in an effort to shield him from the influence of the monasteries in which he used to reside.²² The rector of the seminary was to be designated by the patriarch himself. Maksīmūs Mazlūm, before he became patriarch, was named as the first rector and

¹⁶ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 222, Gregorio Chayat, August 26 1833; Ibid, vol. 21, p. 906, Letter of Damascenes, March 6th 1848.

¹⁷ See for example de Clercq, *Histoire de conciles*, 378, 405.

¹⁸ Ibid, 396.

¹⁹ Clergy members who do not belong to a religious order.

²⁰ Ibid, 362, 363.

²¹ Butrus al-Bustani, *The Clarion of Syria: A Patriot's Call against the Civil War of 1860*, trans. Jens Hanssen, Hicham Safieddine (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 23.

²² de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 367; Previously the patriarch had resided in the Salvadorian monastery of Dayr al-Muḥallaṣ close to Sidon. As in the case of the Maronite, the missionaries saw the residence of the patriarch in the monasteries as making him more vulnerable to the influence of the notables; Richard Van Leeuwen, “The Control of Space and Communal Leadership : Maronites Monasteries in Mount Lebanon,” in *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, no.79-80, Biens communs, patrimoines collectifs et gestion communautaire dans les sociétés musulmanes, dir. Sylvie Denoix (1996): 190.

came to embody the rise of the secular clergy. This seminary was to be funded by the population as well. In fact, the council decided that the clergy should request public donations, and inheritance should be taxed.²³ Monastic orders, especially the Salvadorian monks, opposed the seminary, as they saw it as competing with their parochial services. However, the seminary of 'Ayn Taraz was soon closed because of the conflict between Druzes and Maronites in Mount Lebanon as well as financial problems, which eventually led to its abandonment.²⁴

The development of the secular clergy was also accompanied by an increased role for bishops. When Greek Catholics obtained some level of freedom in the exercise of their religious rites, bishops were instituted in the bishoprics, and they started ordaining secular priests and taking control of the place of worship. This institutionalization of the secular clergy was resented by the Salvatorians and Chouerites monastic orders who felt that their traditional rights on the seats of Beirut and Sidon were being trampled upon.²⁵²⁶ The bishops wanted to obtain the most resourceful bishoprics, in this period being the coastal cities, where trade developed. Their personal resources depended directly on the resources of the local Greek Catholic community.²⁷ The power balance between the various ecclesiastical institutions shifted away from the monastic orders and towards the high clergy, thus effectively initiating a process of centralization of power and resources.

1.3 Contested Ownership of Churches

Ecclesiastical property was an important stake in the hierarchization of the Greek Catholic Church through the reinforcement of the role of the high clergy. We have seen in the previous chapter that the division between the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Catholics raised

²³ de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 362, 363.

²⁴ Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 64; Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf*, 42.

²⁵ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 304, Agabios Tawil to Rome, January 20th 1802.

²⁶ *Ibid*, vol 11, p. 257, Agabios Tawil, May 1800. The bishop of Beirut was consequently involved into a prolonged conflict with the Chouerite St John monks. The Salvatorians also lobbied against the nomination of a bishop for Sidon.

²⁷ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol 11, p. 322, Gabrielle Debbas, April 16th 1802.

the question of property ownership. When the Greek Catholic community obtained its partial recognition by the Ottoman government in 1837, there were no more obstacles to the construction of churches. The Egyptian ruler Ibrāhīm ‘Alī’s facilitating policies regarding the construction of churches²⁸ together with the influx of foreign charity led to a building spree in *Bilād al-Šām*. However, the issues were now internal as the ownership of these new churches were highly contested. Did they belong to the monastic orders, the patriarchate, the bishopric or the laity? Mazlūm displayed a will to bring all the properties of the Greek Catholic church under the patriarchate or the bishoprics, thus mimicking the process of centralization of property of the Ottoman State. It also corresponded to the project of the reform of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide which emphasized that property was to be put under the strict control of the religious hierarchy.²⁹

The multi-leveled ownership of ecclesiastical lands and goods was challenged and various actors attempted to claim full ownership. For Mazlūm, ecclesiastical property belonged to the high clergy. The lower clergy and the orders could not own property in their own name. This notion of institutional property was quite foreign to the tradition of the Greek Catholic church. It denied the multiple and overlapping system of property that had existed so far in the empire, in which various actors, from farmers to large landowners, had some level of property rights. The process is in line with the Ottoman land reform which sought to identify a single owner for each property. The 19th century saw increasing conflicts, delimitation, trials over the land estates, including ecclesiastical property. While the 18th century had been the period of expansion of monasteries lands, of alliance with emirs and feudal chiefs, in the 19th century these acquisitions had to be made official through a process of centralization and constitution of these estates³⁰, paralleling the registering policies of the Ottoman State.

²⁸ Ibid, vol. 18, p. 407, Zogheb, June 15th 1835.

²⁹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol 11, p. 304 Agabios Tawil to secretary Congregation, January 20th 1802.

³⁰ Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf*, 95.

The patriarch Mazlūm managed to obtain the ownership of various churches and to dispossess the monastic orders, especially from the Salvatorians. Mazlūm argued that himself and the community had paid for all the churches and the seminary³¹ and were thus to be the recipient of charity from Europe directed at reimbursing the expenses. However, since the Salvatorians, unlike the patriarch, had representatives in Rome and Naples, they were charged with collecting funds. Mazlūm accused them of keeping the charity for themselves.³² He thereby asked the Propaganda to send funds to him directly.³³ To do so, he appointed a direct representative in Rome.³⁴

The Propaganda stated that funds should be given directly to the apostolic delegates who were charged with the distribution on the ground.³⁵ Yet, Greek Catholics often managed to obtain a letter from Rome giving them the right to collect funds by themselves. Various representatives were sent to Europe to collect funds on behalf of the patriarch or various institutions such as monastic orders. In addition to going to the funding institutions such as the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of Faith in Lyon, they also went around cities with Greek Catholic communities and collected donations from the population directly.³⁶ These individuals were often bishops, which gave them a certain level of legitimacy to obtain funds.³⁷ However, the archbishops of Marseille and Lyon started to grow suspicious of these individuals.³⁸ In one case, a Greek Catholic bishop even forged a letter from the

³¹ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 579, Mazlum, April 22nd 1836.

³² *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 573, Mazlūm, March 20th 1836.

³³ *Ibid*, vol. 18, p. 573, Mazlum, March 20th 1836; *Ibid*, vol. 19, p. 570, Basilios Fende, March 5th 1839.

³⁴ *Ibid*, vol. 18, p. 577, Giovanni Dopus, April 22nd 1836.

³⁵ *Ibid*, vol 25, p. 108, Pontifical Society for the Propagation of Faith in Lyon, May 21st 1858.

³⁶ *Ibid*, vol. 25, p. 29, Society for the Propagation of Faith in Lyon, January 22nd 1858.

³⁷ Heyberger, “La France et la protection des chrétiens maronites,” 26.

³⁸ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 21, p. 49; The theme of ‘Orientals’ coming to ask funds in Europe was already an issue for monarchies and the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide in the 18th century, see Bernard Heyberger, “La France et la protection des chrétiens maronites. Généalogie d’une représentation” *Relations internationales*, no. 173 (2018/1): 26; Bernard Heyberger, “Chrétiens orientaux dans l’Europe catholique (XVIIe – XVIIIe s.),” in *Hommes de l’entre-deux. Parcours individuels et portraits de groupe sur la frontière méditerranéenne*, dir. Bernard Heyberger, Chantal Verdeil, 61-94 (Paris, Les Indes Savantes).

Congregation of the Propaganda stating that he should be given funds.³⁹ The funds collected by the bishops could also be monopolized and serve as a tool of power back home, or to challenge the authority of the patriarch.⁴⁰ The control over the influx of charity was thus an important part of the centralization reforms.

Rather than encouraging the unity of Greek Catholics, these funds created strong divisions. This discord was due to the polycentric nature of the Greek Catholic institutions. The need to channel and organize foreign funds created the imperative of centralizing the administration of the church and turn it into a top-down power structure. Charity thus contributed to transforming the Greek Catholic Church. The superiors of monastic orders, monastery superiors, bishops and patriarchs disputed the ownership of these funds and of the buildings erected with them.⁴¹

Conflicts over the ownership of the churches took place regarding the church of Jaffa⁴² and Alexandria.⁴³ In Damascus, two years after the building of the Greek Catholic church,⁴⁴ the superior of the Salvatorians, Buṭrus Kaḥīl wrote a letter to the Propaganda explaining that the monks had contributed so much to the building of the church of Damascus that they were now destitute. He thus demanded to obtain funds from Rome through the order's procurator Yūsuf Zuḡṭb. He also asked help from Rome against the intrigues of the patriarch Maẓlūm who, according to him, wanted to destroy his order by making them destitute.⁴⁵

1.4 Centralizing Clerical Appointments

³⁹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 24, p.735, Secretary Society for Propagation of Faith in Lyon, May 29th 1857.

⁴⁰ Frédéric Pichon, *Maaloula (XIX^e-XXI^e siècles). Du vieux avec du neuf: Histoire et identité d'un village chrétien de Syrie* (Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2010), 118.

⁴¹ See for example, *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 588, Pietro Cahil, May 23rd 1836.

⁴² *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 588, Pietro Cahil, May 23rd 1836. Ibid, vol 19, p. 486, Mazlum, November 26th 1838.

⁴³ For the conflicts over the church of Alexandria see *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 19, p. 193, Antoine Bulad, July 27th 1837; Ibid, vol. 19, p. 285, Guisepe Saba and others, November 17th 1837.

⁴⁴ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 205, Annex to letter apostolic delegate Villardel, July 1833.

⁴⁵ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 495, Pietro Kahil, December 21st 1835.

Appointments of clergy members were another point of contention within the Greek Catholic Church. In addition to centralizing resources and ecclesiastic property, Maḏlūm set out to appoint his protégés in important positions of power, especially in regions less favorable to him. Who was to elect the superior of an order or convent? Was it to be bishops, patriarchs, apostolic delegate or monks? All these authorities increasingly claimed the right to choose the superior of a convent, thus completely by-passing the rights of the monks. The 19th century saw the self-determination and autonomy of monasteries threatened by the increased power struggles at the level of the high clergy.

While Maḏlūm displayed a will to homogenize the Greek Catholic community, he also reinforced divisions based on regional identifications by using the existing rivalry between monks of different localities and families to further his control over the Church institutions. He used the reforms encouraged by the Ottoman State and the Congregation of Propaganda Fide vis à vis transparency, hierarchization and the separation between the laity and the monasteries, to increase his own decision-making power.

For example, in 1829, the Chouerite order was further split into an Aleppine and a Chouerite (*Baladī*) branch based on theological divisions but also on geographical distinctions and *‘aṣabīya*. This antagonism took root in divergences of approaches to monastic life in these two orders but also more pragmatically in conflicts of interest between clergy members. Two factions can be determined, one associated with the cities of the hinterland, and especially Aleppo, and another one called the *Baladī* associated with the smaller scale cities of Mount Lebanon and Damascus.⁴⁶ Previously, the *Baladī* had mobilized the main positions within the order, such as the representatives to the Holy See.⁴⁷ Once officially separated, the Aleppines demanded to have one of their own as a representative in Rome and set out to

⁴⁶ The Chouerite branch (*Baladī*) kept the monastery of Dhur al-Šuayr, Zaḥle and Kafar Šimā (close to Beirut). The Aleppine branch got the monastery of Rās Ba‘lbak, Mār Ša‘īyā and Dayr el-Šīḥ.

⁴⁷ *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 17, p. 50, Basilios Chayat, February 13th 1830.

divide resources between the two branches.⁴⁸ This rivalry between inhabitants of Damascus, Mount Lebanon and Aleppo is neither particular to the Christians nor to the Ottoman period. Christians were well embedded into the city-based competitions that ran across religious lines. In the Salvadorian order, there were similar conflicts between the Damascene and Lebanese branches.⁴⁹

Mazlūm, himself an Aleppine, relied on the Aleppine Basilian Chouerites to increase his power base to counter the power of both the *Baladī* among the Chouerites and the Salvatorians.⁵⁰ In order to increase his authority, Mazlūm claimed that he could elect superiors of monasteries, curators and bishops by himself.⁵¹ The example of Zaḥle is quite telling in this aspect. Zahliotes were divided in two factions. The elections of bishops often brought to light these divisions. For example in 1835 the bishop of Zaḥle Iḡnāsīū Aḡḡūrī died. Some Zahliotes wanted a Salvatorian bishop. Others wanted a Chouerite. Both presented themselves as the majority. Those who wanted a Chouerite were supported by the Jesuits fathers Planchet and Ricadonna, who had come to Syria with Mazlūm. Mazlūm also preferred a Chouerite Aleppine bishop, as he was involved in a prolonged conflict with the Salvatorians.⁵² He chose Bāsīl Šāīyāṭ, the superior of the Aleppine branch of the Chouerites (1829-1833), as bishop. Šāīyāṭ had also been named superior of the controversial college ‘Ayn Taraz, who had reopened thanks to the Jesuits.⁵³ He was thus favored by the Jesuit fathers. This election caused the party of the Salvatorians to rise in rebellion. Six hundred of the opponents came out in protest, yet the patriarch answered that it was his privilege to elect whoever he saw fit.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Ibid, vol 17, p. 270, Letter from Damascenes, August 26th 1830.

⁴⁹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 24, p. 737, Basilio Sidaoui, April 19th 1857.

⁵⁰ Ibid, vol. 19, p. 39, Gregorio Chayat, January 5th 1836.

⁵¹ Ibid, vol. 19, p. 39, Gregorio Chayat, January 5th 1836.

⁵² Ibid, vol. 18, p. 321, Collective letter of 36 individuals presented by the Jesuits Planchet and Ricadonna, 1835.

⁵³ Verdeil, “Between Rome and France”, 24-25.

⁵⁴ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 18, p. 369, Translation of letter by Antonio Bulad, 1835.

The role played by Maḥlūm in the elections also bothered the lay elite of Damascus which had benefited from a great level of influence over the monasteries beforehand. They saw their family members replaced at the head of the orders by monks originating from Zaḥle, who were seen as social climbers. Maḥlūm relied on the Zahliots to counter the influence of the Damascenes among the monks, who were part of the bastion of the traditional elite of the community.⁵⁵

In addition to intervening directly in the election of superiors, Maḥlūm often chose patriarchal vicars to represent him from among the secular clergy, thus causing tensions with the monastic orders and their lay patrons.⁵⁶ For example, the patriarchal vicar of Damascus, Mīḥā'il 'Aṭā was not a Damascene, but a Zahliot. Mīḥā'il 'Aṭā was not part of an order but had rather been chosen by Maḥlūm directly from among the laymen. The fact that he was a secular and not a regular clergy member rendered him illegitimate in the eyes of the Damascenes, themselves linked to the Salvatorian order.⁵⁷ The Damascene notables argued that the vicar needed to be a man from the city not a foreigner.⁵⁸

Arguments brought forward by the Damascenes reveal the tensions regarding the recruitment for positions of priesthood in the Greek Catholic Church. The reforms instituted by the patriarch challenged the privilege of a religious and lay elite which had exercised its influence on the institutions. Interestingly, many parallels can be drawn with various Ottoman institutions. One that comes to mind is the officers corps, which used to be recruited from within the military elite, but in the 19th century they were increasingly recruited from among

⁵⁵ See the dispute regarding the election of superiors of the Chouerite and Salvatorian orders in 1843, A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, de Ségur - Lavalette, October 25th 1851.

⁵⁶ Mišāqā, *Tabrīya al-mathūm*, 42.

⁵⁷ *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 21, p. 591, Petition of the head of the Greek Catholic nation in Damascus to Ferrieri the apostolic delegate in Istanbul. February 15th 1846.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, vol. 21, p. 906, Letter of Damascenes, March 6th 1848.

the civilians, to the dismay of older officers who resented the enlargement of the profession and their loss of privilege.⁵⁹

Salvatorians called upon both Rome and the Ottoman government against their patriarch, adapting their arguments to delegitimize him to the audience.⁶⁰ They even attempted to be recognized as a separate community by the Ottoman government.⁶¹ This conflict demonstrates Maḥlūm's effort of centralization of power and resources which were detrimental to the monastic orders. The actors of the Greek Catholic Church did not hesitate to call upon Rome or the Ottoman government to further their positions. They knew what could be obtained from each authority and used the overlapping secular and religious jurisdiction to challenge the increasing authority of their patriarch.

The relation between the Propaganda and Maḥlūm, already fragile because of the context of his election of patriarch, was damaged by these conflicts with the Salvatorians. The internal struggle for access to resources and decision making power opened the way for delegates to intervene more directly in the affairs of the Greek Catholic Church. Yet, delegates in this period, because of their geographical location and personal idiosyncrasies often failed to grasp the role of *'aṣabīya*, locality and family relations in the internal struggles. They tended to interpret all actions and reactions based upon the dichotomy of obedience/rebellion towards the Pope and orthodoxy/heresy, or at least presented it as such to the Propaganda Fide.⁶²

In the question of appointments and dismissals, Maḥlūm's exclusive claims over the decision-making process was not well received by the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide

⁵⁹ For more on this subject see Levy, Avigdor, "The Officer Corps in Sultan Mahmud II's New Ottoman Army, 1826–39", *IJMES* 2 (1971): 21–39.

⁶⁰ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 19, p. 377, Vice-consul Austria in Acre Count Palatino and agent of France in Acre Joseph Conti, July 31st 1838; *Ibid*, p. 378, Consul of France in Acre Henry Guys, March 6th 1838.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, vol. 19, p. 399, Aftimios Mishaqa, August 14th 1838; *Ibid*, vol. 19, p. 439, Maḥlūm, September 20th 1838.

⁶² Bernard Heyberger, "Pro nunc, nihil respondendum". Recherche d'informations et prise de décision à la Propagande: l'exemple du Levant (XVIII^e siècle), in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, tome 109, no.2 (1997): 551.

who reminded him that Rome had the last word.⁶³ While the patriarch's and the Congregation's objective of hierarchization coincided, he often lost the support of the Congregation or the apostolic delegate because of his lack of recognition of the position of Rome at the top of the hierarchy.⁶⁴ His perception of his role was more in line with the prerogatives awarded to him by the Ottoman State as the head of a *millet*. Mazlūm's claims of exclusivity over appointments were strengthened by the recognition of the Greek Catholic patriarch by the Ottoman State, in a period in which Pope Pius IX was engaged in a struggle with the secular authorities to maintain his authority over the clergy. This particular context of threat to Roman authority instructed the strong reaction of the Propaganda against the patriarch.

The Roman and Ottoman conception of the role of patriarch did not coincide. The Ottoman State considered the patriarch as the ultimate authority over the hierarchy and the laity. In the *berat* obtained by Mazlūm in 1848, some of the articles clearly contradict the synods, especially when it came to inheritance or the hierarchy. In this *berat*, the patriarch was made into the ultimate judge of all conflicts within the community and monopolized the power to elect his subalterns. It stated that the patriarch had the authority over all the clergy and the laity and that everyone had to obey him without objections. External interference in appointments and elections was forbidden. No one could tell the patriarch which priests to appoint where.⁶⁵ These articles gave the patriarch an authority that countered the attempts, both on the part of Rome and of the monastic orders, to restrict the intervention of the patriarch in the internal administration of the bishoprics and orders.

⁶³ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol.19, p. 439, Mazlum, September 20th 1838.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, vol.19, p. 439, Mazlum, September 20th 1838.

⁶⁵ For a french translation of this *berat* see Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 305-310; For an arabic translation, see Mazlūm, *Nubḍa tāriḥīya*, 333-336. The same situation led to a schism in the Armenian catholic church, see the upcoming PhD thesis of Salim Dermarkar, "Les Puissances et la protection religieuse : les cas des Arméniens Ottomans au XIX^e siècle (1808-1908)," PhD. diss., (EHESS, 2020).

In conclusion, while the history of the Christian communities during the *Tanzimat* is often narrated from the point of view of the opposition between the laity and the clergy, the examples narrated above rather point to the intertwined nature of the clergy and laity, especially when it comes to the monasteries. The factional lines were not between laymen and clergymen but rather between various clerical institutions, and involved their lay patrons. Monasteries which had been at the forefront of the community and run autonomously were now sidelined and brought under the authority of the high clergy. Locality was also an important basis of political action and loyalty. The centralizing reforms were tainted by *‘aşabîya*, as some factions were favored at the detriment of others, fostering resistance and opposition. It parallels the reactions to the Ottoman State reforms among the population, which had less to do with the dichotomy between reformers and conservatives but was rather related to the changes in the rules of access to resources. These divisions and conflicts regarding monasteries and appointments highlights the transition from a familial and local administration of Church affairs into a more centralized and top down system of management of resources, characteristic of the modern state. These divisions called for the intervention of a variety of outside actors, such as foreign consuls, missionaries, apostolic delegates and Ottoman governors who were instrumentalized in this struggle over institutional power.

2. Crystallization of Religious Identities: Charity, Persecution and Political Representation

In addition to centralizing the institutions of the Church under the secular clergy, Mazlûm also strove to give the Greek Catholic Church a certain level of autonomy and self-determination. He did so by taking control of the influx of charity from Europe, by homogenizing his flock and bringing all Greek Catholics under his jurisdiction. The post-Egyptian period saw the crystallization of religious identities among Maronites and Druzes but also among Christian communities themselves, pointing to the wider nature of

confessionalization.⁶⁶ The influx of foreign charity contributed to the reinforcement of religious identities between Maronites and Greek Catholics and to their competition for representation and access to resources, eventually leading to acts of violence.

The Egyptian departure from *Bilād al-Šām* in 1841 changed the balance of power between Christian communities in Greater Syria. After the plunder committed by the Egyptian army in Mount Lebanon, charity that flowed from France and Austria as reparations became a tool in the strong competition between Christian communities. Conflicts between Greek Catholics and Maronites also came to the surface, as did those between Mazlūm and the missionaries.

The position of Greek Catholics was particularly threatened because of their alliance with the Egyptians, which made them suspect of divided loyalty in the eyes of the Ottoman State. The Emir Bašīr II Šihāb, who was the patron of Greek Catholics and allied with the Egyptians, also fell in disfavor with the Ottoman State.⁶⁷ This turn of events shifted the balance of power between Christian communities and increased the rivalry between the Maronites and Greek Catholics.

Mazlūm, fearing the change of regime, departed for Europe in 1840 to obtain political and financial support for his community.⁶⁸ He demanded from the pope the authorization to put his churches and clergy under the protection of France. He proposed that the laity would continue to remit taxes to the Ottoman government but that the clergy would be put under the direct protection of France and thus be exempt of taxes. His clergy would thereby have the same status than missionaries and Latins.⁶⁹ This proposal however was not accepted by Rome and failed to materialize.

⁶⁶ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 51.

⁶⁷ He wrote to the Propaganda, declaring that when he was in charge he had always conformed to the will of the Holy See and had favored Catholics. He now asked to be granted the right to go to Rome. Yet he did not receive an answer to this request and was sent to Istanbul. *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p 430, Emir Bechir Shihab, September 24th 1841.

⁶⁸ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 290, Mazlum, January 3rd 1841.

⁶⁹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 265, Memorandum of Mazlum to the Pope, November 25th 1840.

Mazlūm however was not set on France as the only possible protector. Given that France was in a difficult situation in the Ottoman Empire because of its support to Muḥammad ‘Alī, Mazlūm saw Austria as another possible patron.⁷⁰ The French and Austrian consuls competed for influence in Damascus. They both gave their protection to Greek Catholics and encouraged them to write petitions in their favor to the Ottoman State to further their influence.⁷¹

Mazlūm was closer to the Greek Catholics under Austrian and British protection than to those under French protection.⁷² His relationship with French consuls had been damaged by his repeated conflicts with missionaries and especially French Lazarists. Then, he had come back to *Bilād al-Šām* with Jesuits, who tended to favor Austria rather than France due to their precarious position in France after the 1830 revolution and during the July Monarchy.⁷³ Greek Catholics under Austrian protection represented the new commercial elite who also had positions within the local administration.⁷⁴ Mazlūm borrowed from these merchants to pay for the debts of his predecessors and the *beratlar* he had to buy to obtain his recognition by the Ottoman government.⁷⁵ During his patriarchate he had delegated some of his civil powers to these merchants employed by the Ottoman administration. At times, these merchants intervened in the religious issues of the community, thus creating a conflict of jurisdiction with the bishops.⁷⁶ They also took over the former responsibilities of the traditional elite. For

⁷⁰ A.E., 67/CPC, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, January 27th 1842. The eventuality of Greek Catholics being protected by Austria rather than France had already been considered by Mazlūm during his stay in Rome. Indeed in 1818, Mazlūm had planed to ask all the bishops to make petitions demanding the protection of Austria rather than France in order to counter the persecutions they suffered at the hands of the Greek Orthodox in Damascus and other cities, Cyrille Charon, “L’Église grecque melchite catholique (Suite.),” in *Échos d'Orient*, tome 6, no.43 (1903): 384.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² A.E., 67/CPC, Baron de Bourquency-Guizot, February 3rd 1842.

⁷³ Verdeil, *La mission jésuite*, 50, 114, 115.

⁷⁴ For example, Yūsuf Āyrūt was an Austrian protégé and later on had close relationships with the British consul Richard Wood. He was an employee of the Ottoman administration, and had been employed as a writer by Ibrāhīm Pasha. He is described by the French consul as the chief of the administration, and was indeed nominated first writer. A.E., 67/CPC, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, January 18th 1841; Ibid. Ratti-Menton-Guizot, January 25th 1841.

⁷⁵ Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 112.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 110.

example, in 1844, the patriarch left Ḥannā Frayḡ, an Austrian protégé, in charge of his affairs in the city. Then, when the government instituted a new tax to be paid by the Greek Catholics to the patriarch, Maḡlūm entrusted the collection of this tax to these new merchants, to the dismay of the traditional elite and the clergy.⁷⁷ He used the financial and political influence of this group to consolidate his authority.⁷⁸ Maḡlūm gave them a central role in the affairs of the community in Damascus to counter the influence of the old elite who had tight links with the monasteries and opposed his centralization efforts.

While Maḡlūm was moving towards the protection of Austria, the Maronite leadership relied heavily on the French consuls. The rivalry between these two countries thus affected negatively the relationship between Greek Catholics and Maronites. This parallel competition contributed to the politicization of both communities. The deterioration of their relationship came to light with the question of the distribution of charity from Europe. One would expect that charity coming from Catholics in Europe would favor the development of a sense of Catholic belonging. However, it actually highlighted the relevance of communal identifications and strengthened the rivalry between Catholic communities who competed for access to resources.

The way in which charity was received also added to the complicated distribution. For example, in 1848, the apostolic delegate Villardel received funds from the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon for the bishop of Sidon and Latakia. However, it did not mention to which community it should be endowed.⁷⁹ It left apostolic delegate a large leeway in distributing funds on the ground.

In 1841, funds for the victims of the war in Mount Lebanon were sent by the Propaganda from France through the apostolic delegate and missionaries. Funds from Austria

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ The French consul accused the patriarch of asking these merchants to put pressure on the Greek Catholics who had commercial links with their houses of commerce to force them to support him, A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, de Ségur-Lavalette, December 24th 1851.

⁷⁹ Ibid, vol. 21, p. 1027, Villardel, November 12th 1848.

were also given to the Maronite patriarch. The Greek Catholic bishops of Beirut and Aleppo, Agabios Rīyāšī and Bāsīl Šāyāṭ, demanded to be paid their part as the money was directed at all victims, not just Maronite ones. However the Maronite patriarch claimed that it was directed only at Maronites. The Greek Catholic bishops explained to Rome that they also had damages to their churches and monasteries and that since the leaving of Emir Bašīr they were at the mercy of the Greek Orthodox and the Russians who obtained a *ferman* against them.⁸⁰ The apostolic delegate Villardel mentioned this issue in 1845, and argued that these funds collected from Europe to repair places of worship in Mount Lebanon had done more harm than good, because the Austrian chancellor Metternich had donated the funds for the Maronites but had also declared that it was to be distributed to all Christians. The Maronite bishop of Beirut, Ṭobīyā ‘Aūn, started to spend all the funds for his community, which angered Greek Catholics, especially the bishop of Beirut, Agabios Rīyāšī. Maronites on the other hand accused the Greek Catholics of planning to use the funds to have their own governors in Mount Lebanon in order to escape the authority of the Maronites.⁸¹ The issue of political dominance of Maronites in Mount Lebanon was intricately linked to the issue of funds distribution among communities.

In the midst of this dispute regarding the distribution of charity, the Greek Catholic bishop of Beirut Agabios Rīyāšī brought up a strong accusation against the Maronites. In a letter to the Propaganda in November 1840, he related the persecution to which he was allegedly subjected to by the Maronites. He was in the monastery of Kasarwān when twenty Maronites came to take him prisoner and plundered the monastery. They then delivered him to the Ottoman troops. They then presented some leaders of Kasarwān who accused him of some crime under false charges. The Ottoman governor thus decided to send him on a Turkish fleet to be judged in Istanbul. Fortunately, he was saved by a military leader of the Austrian

⁸⁰ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 388, Agabios and Chayat, August 7th 1841.

⁸¹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 21, p. 338 Villardel, July 28th 1845.

fleet in Beirut. The Austrian military leader then negotiated with the Vizir and the Emir Bašīr Šihāb III to obtain his liberation and retributions for this attack. In the letter he send to the Propaganda, he accused the Maronites in general of disloyalty towards the Greek Catholics.⁸² Rīyāšī received the support of Mazlūm, who demanded that the Propaganda send orders to the Maronite patriarch for retributions.⁸³ The Maronite patriarch on the other hand accused Rīyāšī of misrepresenting the enmity of the Maronites against him.⁸⁴ This anecdote points to the increasing use of narratives of persecution as a way to gain access to charity from Europe, which in turn affected the rise of sectarian discourses.

The competition between Maronites and Greek Catholics revolved around access to resources and political power in Mount Lebanon. This competition created an hostile relationship between the two communities which explains their lack of mutual help in various events of violence in the Mountain. In 1841, the Greek Catholic clergy of Dayr al-Qamar complained to the Holy See that they were attacked by Druzes and that Maronites and Greek Orthodox refused to help them, leaving them defenseless.⁸⁵ Ibrahim Mišāqa together with a priest called Anṭūn Sussa wrote to the Holy See to complain about the fact that Maronites did not help them. If they had done so, they would have been able to push away the Druzes, and they would have avoided plunder.⁸⁶ This conflict also explains in part the inaction of the Maronite forces when called for help against the attackers of the predominantly Greek Catholic town of Zaḥle in 1860.⁸⁷ The influx of foreign charity, which was often used to build luxurious churches in the city, also contributed to the image of Christian wealth in the mid-19th century and turned them into targets of plunder.

3. Mazlūm's Reverse Missionary Enterprise : the Greek Rite

⁸² Ibid, vol. 20, p. 238, Riachi, November 10th 1840.

⁸³ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 315, Mazlum, February 9th 1841. Ibid, p. 310, Mazlum, February 5th 1841.

⁸⁴ Ibid, vol. 20, p.369, Nicolas Murad, May 18th 1841.

⁸⁵ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 474, Ibrahim Mishaqa and sacerdote Susa, November 3rd 1841.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 65.

3.1 Bringing the Flock back into the Greek Rite

Maksīmūs Mazlūm attempted to centralize resources and impose himself as the sole intermediary with the state and foreign institutions. In the same manner, he endeavored to abolish the overlapping authorities and institutions which had given individuals some level of interstitial freedom. To do so, he tried to bring all the Greek Catholics under his jurisdiction and to sever the links with Latins and Maronites. This reverse missionary enterprise focused on the issue of religious rites.

In the end of the 18th century, the main issue which had divided missionaries on one side and the bishop of Aleppo Ġarmānūs Ādam and the patriarch Agabios II Maṭār on the other was the issue of rite.⁸⁸ The Holy See had maintained an official line since Benoit XIV which demanded that Oriental Catholics continue to officiate according to their own rite, in order to facilitate the entry of Orthodox into the Catholic realm. Greek Catholic were therefore now allowed to abandon the Greek rite and adopt the Latin rite.⁸⁹ However, missionaries constantly wrote to Rome exposing the difficulty of preventing Greek Catholics from adopting the Latin rite, especially before the emancipation of the Greek Catholics.⁹⁰ After numerous years living among missionaries and Latin monks, many Greek Catholics followed the mass officiated by missionaries or Maronites. In the late 18th century and early 19th century, Ġarmānūs Ādam and the patriarch Maṭār, demanded that Greek Catholics follow their own rite and follow mass with their own coreligionists according to the will of the Holy See.⁹¹ Missionaries, and especially the Franciscan Terra Santa fathers⁹² wrote numerous

⁸⁸ Liturgical, theological and spiritual traditions of a particular Church.

⁸⁹ Aurelien Girard, “Nihil esse innovandum?” 346, 347.

⁹⁰ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 239, Terra Santa college of Damascus to Father Cotmi, July 21st 1800.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, vol. 11, p. 337, patriarch Matar and three other members of the community, July 23rd 1802.

⁹² *Ibid*, vol. 11, p. 128, Document entitled “Riflessione sopra l’istruzione di Monsig. Germano Adami intorno al sagramento della gresima”, March 25th 1800.

complaints to Rome denouncing Ġarmānūs Ādam's heretical ideas, which also aimed at delegitimizing his attempt to challenge their jurisdiction over the Greek Catholics.⁹³

Patriarch Maḏlūm built on the efforts of Ġarmānūs Ādam to make all Greek Catholics follow the Greek rite which became the terrain of Maḏlūm's reform program. Maḏlūm used printing to homogenize of ritual literature and to bring the Greek Catholic back into the Greek rite. He printed Greek Messale in Arabic and demanded that every clergy member adopt it in the mass. Publishing homogeneous mass and ritual literature was a way to ensure homogeneity among the clergy and to compete with the influence of the Latin's publications.⁹⁴

Bringing back all Greek Catholics into the Greek rite would have two consequences: the creation of new parishes, the ordination of new priests and bishops, and an influx of resources into the church through donations during the mass. Missionaries were to be sidelined by this process, and to loose their influence and their pool of local resources. Unsurprisingly, various missionaries opposed this 'Greek' missionary effort of Maḏlūm. They started to accusing him of mismanagement, of ordaining too many priests, of wanting power and influence, and of opposing Rome through opposing Franciscan and Lazarist missionaries. They also brought forward successive accusations of mismanagement of funds, corruption or sexual misconduct against his appointed vicars.⁹⁵

After the missionaries, Maḏlūm and some of his bishops attempted to sever the links of Greek Catholics with Maronites. They resented Maronites' influence over their flock through the blurry borders between institutions of both communities. The patriarch forbade Greek Catholic to confess with Maronite priests. The influence of Maronite priests was

⁹³ See various letters in *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 130-230.

⁹⁴ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 191, Mazlum, June 24th 1840; Regarding the Greek messale see Chirbel Nassif, "L'Euchologe Melkite depuis Malatios Karamé (†1635) jusqu'à nos jours, Les enjeux des évolutions d'un livre liturgique," PhD diss., (Institut catholique de Paris. Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, 2017).

⁹⁵ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 17, Mussabini, 1840; Ibid, p. 191, Mussabini, June 25th 1840.

problematic in the eyes of the patriarch because it challenged his objective of centralization by providing an alternative to the Greek Catholic clergy's authority and spiritual influence.⁹⁶ Then, conversion between the two sects became the terrain of tensions between the two high clergies, and they increasingly sought to forbid it.⁹⁷ Overlapping religious belonging became problematic during the *Tanzimat* period, both for the Ottoman government and for the religious leadership. It led to the reinforcement of religious borders, referred to as a process of confessionalization.

Some Greek Catholic notables, faced with the increasing power of an independent secular clergy over which their influence was limited, asked Rome the right to pass to the Latin rite. The adoption of the Latin rite had political consequences as it meant that the individual could obtain French protection.⁹⁸ The adoption of the Latin rite would also allow them to create marriage alliances with influential families abroad. The notables argued that they had always followed the Latin rite because of their marital links to Latins and the absence of a Greek Catholic priest in their region. Because the Greek rite relied on the Julian calendar while the Latin rite used the Gregorian calendar, following the Greek Catholic rite would have prevented the joint celebration of holidays with Latins.⁹⁹ Even in cities with a Greek Catholic clergy, some rich notables also resented the injunction of following the Greek rite and wished to continue to attend the missionary churches. The apostolic delegates supported these arguments. However, to the dismay of the missionaries, the Propaganda did not accept the change of rite of these individuals because of the synod which declared the

⁹⁶ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 203, Agabios Riachi, July 16th 1840; Ibid, vol. 18, p. 246, Letter signed by priests to the bishop of Aleppo Basil Chayat, February 12th 1834.

⁹⁷ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 203, Agabios Riachi, July 16th 1840.

⁹⁸ Ibid, vol. 21, p. 59, Apostolic delegate, June 24th 1844.

⁹⁹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 270, Mussabini, October 13th 1840; For example, a member of the Anhoury family living in Leghorn whose mother was Latin asked to adopt the Latin rite with his family, Ibid, vol. 21, p. 51, Michelle Anhuri to Brunelli, May 28th 1844.

integrity of the rites.¹⁰⁰ Franciscan missionaries constantly wrote to Rome exposing the difficulty of applying this line of conduct.¹⁰¹

In the wake of numerous demands from Greek Catholics to become or remain Latins, Mazlūm blamed the missionaries and accused them of wanting to turn his flock Latin. He suspected them of wanting to have jurisdiction over his flock. The Ottoman State's recognition of Mazlūm in the 1840's had given him a stronger legitimacy to defend his interests against missionaries and the apostolic delegate. The apostolic delegated Villardel responded that those rich families turning Latin only did so to escape the authority of Mazlūm whose behavior they despised.¹⁰² Because of the intertwining of religious practice, jurisdiction and identification dynamics, rites became the locus of the struggle between Mazlūm, missionaries and the Maronites. It also brought into question the basis of membership into the Greek Catholic community. Was it a matter of rituals, identity, family or belief?

Conversion and adoption of the Latin rite was used by various Greek Catholics as a tool to escape the increasing clerical authority of the high clergy, reinforced by the Ottoman reforms. These two prerogatives raised popular opposition in 1852 in the Maydān neighborhood of Damascus. A conflict erupted between partisans of the patriarch on the one side and those who opposed him on the other. The patriarch went to the Maydān, judged the issue and gave orders regarding the punishments. However, this decision was not respected. Those he considered guilty, together with the French consul, accused Mazlūm of usurping the role of the governor.¹⁰³ This accusation points to the increasing role of the patriarch even in civil affairs, reinforced by his *berat*.¹⁰⁴ One of the patriarch's opponents was arrested by the

¹⁰⁰ *S.C.P.F, Index delle Lettere*, vol. 331, p. 509, Propaganda Fide to Michelle Anhuri, July 4th 1844.

¹⁰¹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 239, Terra Santa college of Damascus to Father Cotmo, July 21st 1800.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, vol. 21, p. 18, Villardel, February 4th 1844.

¹⁰³ A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, de Ségur- Ministre Plénipotentiaire, January 28th 1852.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, vol. 19, p. 39, Gregorio Chayat, January 5th 1836.

governor. His allies accused Mazlūm of being the instigator of this imprisonment. In protest, five family heads of the neighborhood went to the Latin convent of Terra Santa and asked to be admitted into the Latin rite. However, they met with a refusal. They then went to the Greek Orthodox patriarch and asked to be accepted into his Church. He agreed and promised them that a church would be built for them with the financing of the Russian consulate.¹⁰⁵ The French consul, alarmed by this event, convinced these five individuals to change their mind. Afterwards, they started to attend the mass at the Terra Santa convent although they could not officially become Latin.¹⁰⁶ In retribution, Mazlūm threatened with excommunication any Greek Catholic who would confess with the missionaries.¹⁰⁷

Given the divisions within the Greek Catholic church and the increasing authority given to the clergy, the demands to become Latin increased exponentially during this period.¹⁰⁸ It came from the notables but also from the less wealthy who resented his fiscal reforms and increased taxation.¹⁰⁹ The aforementioned conflict in the Maydān¹¹⁰ was triggered by the collection of taxes. In 1847, Mazlūm obtained the right to collect taxes directly from the Greek Catholics. The *ferman* also gave him the responsibility to arrest those who refused to pay and to keep them imprisoned until their case was examined.¹¹¹ Mazlūm thus became an intermediary of the state and a fiscal agent. This new role, which had previously been assumed by the notables created discontent among them. It also led to tensions with the less well off Greek Catholics because of his increased taxation and ostentatious spending, which was not to the liking of the old elite but also of the poor among

¹⁰⁵ A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, de Ségur- Ministre Plénipotentiaire, January 28th 1852.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Barbet de Jouy- Lavalette, January 21st 1852.

¹⁰⁸ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 22, p. 621, Members of the Awra and Bahri family, October 1st 1850. Ibid, p. 248, Guiseppe Bahri, November 21st 1850.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, vol. 19, p. 337, Gregorio Chayat, May 30th 1838; Ibid, vol. 19, p. 357, Inhabitants Ġbayl and Batrun, July 5th 1838.

¹¹⁰ See the map of the city of Damascus in Annex 1.

¹¹¹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 21, p. 602, Mazloun, April 15th 1847.

the Greek Catholics.¹¹² A parallel can be drawn with the increased taxation coupled with the increased consumption and lavish lifestyle of Sultan Abdülmecid, which caused resentments and a feeling of fiscal injustice among the Ottoman subjects.¹¹³ The large Greek Catholic community of the Maydān was less wealthy than their counterpart in the city center, where foreign protégés resided.¹¹⁴ Maḏlūm's allies among the elite were under foreign protection and thus could escape taxation while leaving the lower and middle class Greek Catholic to bear the burden of the tax. The adoption of the Latin rite was thus increasingly used both by the elite and the poor to escape taxation and clerical authority.

Together with bringing all the Greek Catholic into the Greek rite, Maḏlūm also attempted to control religious confraternities,¹¹⁵ an important tool of power among all communities in the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, the influence of confraternities was another obstacle to the centralization objectives of Maḏlūm. They created links of solidarity and loyalty that could be manipulated by bishops and the high clergy, or could compete with their authority, especially because missionaries were often involved. Confraternities could be used to build a power base to gain access to high positions. These confraternities provided a link between the clergy and the notables.

Latin confraternities had been created in the 17th century in Damascus and Aleppo and had caused conflicts with the Greek Catholic high clergy.¹¹⁶ During Maḏlūm's rule, the confraternity of the Sacred Heart in Aleppo became the locus of power struggles with

¹¹² Ibid, vol. 19, p. 337, Gregorio Chayat, May 30th 1838; Ibid, vol. 19, p.357, Inhabitants Ġbayl and Batrun, July 5th 1838.

¹¹³ A.E., 18/PO/A, vol. 9, Outrey-Lallemand, July 20th 1859.

¹¹⁴ BOA, ML.VRD.CMH.D.253, 1853;

¹¹⁵ Pious voluntary association of Christian laity, for charitable or spiritual purposes.

¹¹⁶ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 257, Letter patriarch Agabios Mattar, May 1800; Ibid, vol. 11, p. 277, patriarch Agabios Mattar, November 17th 1801; *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 337, patriarch Agabios Mattar, July 23rd 1802. Heyberger, "Individualism," 80-83. See the affair regarding the Maronite confraternity of the Sacred Heart led by Hindiyya al-ʿUjaimi in the 18th century, in Heyberger, *Hindiyya*.

missionaries but also within the Greek Catholic community.¹¹⁷ The high clergy attempted to control the confraternities and to sever their links with Latins.¹¹⁸

3.2 Greek Catholic Patriarch of the Orient

Mazlūm as the first officially recognized Greek Catholic patriarch wished not only to bring back latinizing Greek Catholics into the Greek rite but also to exert his jurisdiction over his flock even in places where there was no Greek catholic clergy. To do so, he nominated numerous bishops and sent them to territories which had been managed by the missionaries.¹¹⁹ This challenge to missionary influence met with a strong opposition. Mazlūm in 1837 decided to name his protégé and patriarchal vicar Macārīyūs Şammān as bishop of Diyarbakir because some Greek Orthodox had become Catholic in the city.¹²⁰

Afterwards, Mazlūm attempted to settle his authority in Istanbul. The Greek Catholics in the city used to celebrate the mass with the Latins. Mazlūm, through his vicar Macārīyūs Şammān, asked the Propaganda to have his own public orator and to be given jurisdiction over his flock in the city, who originated from the regions under his rule.¹²¹ In order to reach his goal, Mazlūm also demanded the help of the Ottoman government to support his authority against missionaries.¹²² However, he failed to obtain an answer from the Holy See.¹²³ According to the Roman conception, there could only be one Catholic bishop in each bishopric. While in other regions, Rome had to allow the presence of various Catholic bishops, it refused the extension of this practice to Smyrna and Istanbul, which had always been under

¹¹⁷ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 17, p. 18, patriarch Ignatius Qattan, February 1st 1830; Similar to the affair of the Maronite Hindiyya al-'Ujaimi and the confraternity of the Sacred Heart in the 18th century described by Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, vol. 19, p. 223, Gregorio Chayat, August 20th 1837.

¹¹⁹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 17, Summary of letters sent to the Holy See regarding Mazlum, January 1840.

¹²⁰ Mazlūm, *Nubda*, 32.

¹²¹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 17, Summary of letters sent to the Holy See regarding Mazlum, January 1840; *Ibid*, vol. 20, p. 238, Mazlum, November 10th 1840.

¹²² *Ibid*, vol. 20, p. 17, Summary of letters sent to the Holy See regarding Mazlum, January 1840.

¹²³ *Ibid*.

the authority of a Latin representative.¹²⁴ The Propaganda confirmed in 1846 that Greek Catholics in Istanbul were under the jurisdiction of the Latins, in the absence of a Greek Catholic bishopric of Istanbul.¹²⁵

Macārīyūs Şammān, after being unable to complete his mission in Istanbul, set out to Smyrna. He wanted to extend his jurisdiction over the Greek Catholics of the city, who in the absence of a bishop, had been going to the church of the Latins.¹²⁶ Antonio Mussabini, the Latin archbishop of Diyarbakir claimed that Macārīyūs Şammān started to celebrate masses in private houses and refused to obey him. Macārīyūs Şammān also officiated celebrations according to the Julian calendar while in Smyrna the Gregorian calendar was followed.¹²⁷ The calendar was an important marker of ritual distinction between Greek Catholics and Latins, and was used a tool to bring back the Greek Catholic into the Greek rite by marking a separation in the celebration of holy days.¹²⁸

The archbishop of Smyrna, Antonio Mussabini, accused Maḏlūm of wishing to extend his jurisdiction over the Greek Catholics in the whole Orient, and that his pretension in using the title: *patriarch of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem* was already exaggerated and illegitimate.¹²⁹ This suspicion towards Maḏlūm was encouraged by his behavior, indeed Maḏlūm was so set up upon bringing all the Greek Catholics under his authority that he looked beyond the borders of the Empire towards Europe but also towards India. He deplored the situation of the Aleppine Greek Catholics merchants in Calcutta, who did not have an Arabic speaking priest and had to do communion with missionaries. He announced to the

¹²⁴ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 614, Villardel, April 5th 1842.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 191, Antonio Mussabini, June 25th 1840; Ibid, vol. 20, p. 270, Antonio Musabini, October 13th 1840.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 270, Antonio Mussabini, October 13th 1840. Maḏlūm then sent Macārīyūs Şammān to impose his will on the bishopric of Aleppo and obtain the election of his favorite, Mīḥā'il Ānṭakī, to the bishop's seat. The current bishop or Aleppo, Bāsil Šaīyāt, strongly resented this attempt to replace him. *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 24, Melchites in Aleppo, January 1840; Ibid, vol. 20, p. 409, Villardel, September 23rd 1842; Ibid, vol. 21, p. 123, Mazlum, September 25th 1844.

¹²⁹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 270, Antonio Mussabini, October 13th 1840.

Propaganda that they demanded from him a priest to whom they could confess in their own language. He asked to the Propaganda the authorization to send a Greek Catholic priest who could officiate in the church of the Latins, together with receiving a subsidy from the Propaganda and would have jurisdiction over all the Arabic speaking Catholics in the city, regardless of their rite.¹³⁰ This demand of jurisdiction over Indian Greek Catholics pointed to the ambitions of Mazlūm and his self-perception as the patriarch of all Greek Catholics in the world.

It also points to the ongoing globalization, with Greek Catholics travelling beyond their places of origin. This phenomenon, already present in the 18th century with the development of a Greek Catholic diaspora in Europe was accentuated in the 19th century. This diaspora was usually quite wealthy and influential which encouraged the patriarch to try to bring them back into his fold.

This self-perception as patriarch of the whole Orient was encouraged by the jurisdiction incrementally given to him by the Ottoman State, which was larger than his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Indeed, after his trip in Europe, Mazlūm had collected enough funds to go to Istanbul and buy a *ferman* from the Ottoman government¹³¹ In 1844, with the emancipation from the Armenian Catholic patriarch, he obtained the recognition of his religious authority. In 1848, he also obtained the civil authority over the Greek Catholics and had thereby the full jurisdiction over all aspects of the Greek Catholic communities in the empire. This understanding of the jurisdiction of the patriarchs in terms of communities, conflicted with the territorial conception of the Holy See based upon patriarchal seats. Mazlūm understood the stakes of the rites and endeavored to create a clear distinction between Latins and Greek Catholics, to delimit his flock through ritual distinction, to assert his authority as defined by the Ottoman State. The fact that the jurisdiction offered by the

¹³⁰ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 185, Mazlum, June 12th 1840.

¹³¹ Ibid, vol. 20, p. 491, Mazlum, December 7th 1841.

Ottoman Empire was more advantageous than the one proposed by the Propaganda in part explain his bold attitude against the apostolic delegates and missionaries. Then, this shift from a conception of jurisdiction based on territory to a jurisdiction based on communities contributed to the development a greater Greek Catholic community across the empire. The recognition by the Ottoman government and the efforts at centralization widened the imagined geography of the community.

Mazlūm's rule was marked by the attempt to carve a place for his community among Catholics in the Ottoman Empire. To foster self-determination and independence from other Catholic institutions, he had to sever links with Maronites and Latins and to emphasize separation and ritual distinction, participating in the confessionalization of these communities. These endeavors encountered the opposition of missionaries and Maronites but also of notables among his own flock. These struggles for influence and access to resources called for outside intervention into the administration of the Greek Catholic Church, complicating the task of institutionalizing the *millet* and contributing to the politicization of the flock.

4. Mazlūm's Reforms Contested: *ʿAṣabīya*, Factionalism and Patronage

Mazlūm reforms fostered resentments from the monastic orders, apostolic delegates, the laity and other actors of the Greek Catholic church who had previously enjoyed a certain level of autonomy from the high clergy. However, from the end of the 1840's, the main opponents to Mazlūm centralization program came from within those who seemed to have benefited the most from the hierarchization of the Church: the high clergy. Indeed, Mazlūm institutionalized the Church by relying on his own protégés and using the existing factionalism based on local identities and family networks. His reliance on his protégés caused the resentment of other bishops who entered into an open conflict with their patriarch. In reaction, Mazlūm further attempted to increase his own authority at the expense of the high clergy. The political strategies of both parties favored foreign and Ottoman intervention into

the internal affairs of the Greek Catholic Church. The *millet* was at the center of a struggle for sovereignty between foreign powers, Rome and the Ottoman State.

The opposition of the bishops materialized in 1849 during the synod of Jerusalem in which Maḏlūm gave a wider authority to the patriarch over the administration of the bishoprics.¹³² The debates which underlined most of the sessions of this synod deepened the divisions among the high clergy and increased the hostility of some bishops towards the patriarch. It also had repercussions among the population leading Maḏlūm to forbid Greek Catholics from discussing the decisions taken regarding ecclesiastical matters.¹³³ The theological and doctrinal debates, which had previously been restricted to the clerical circles were increasingly taken into the open and caused disputes among the population, pointing to the development of popular religious mobilization.

Some bishops were discontented by the policies of their patriarch because he clearly favored his patriarchal vicars at the expense of bishops. Almost all the bishops ordained by Maḏlūm¹³⁴ had not originated from a monastic order and were chosen as vicars and then ordained as bishops. They had thus by-passed the traditional route of clerical appointments and elections within the Church, rendering them illegitimate in the eyes of the other bishops who were angered by the use of Church charity to maintain them. The bishops also criticized Maḏlūm for his use of the bishoprics' revenue to reimburse his spending done for the construction of churches. All these measures reduced the revenue of bishops and challenged their authority in their bishopric.¹³⁵

The major point of contention that arose during the synod of Jerusalem was that Maḏlūm decided to restructure the territorial division of the various bishoprics. He divided the

¹³² Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 123; *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 22, p. 89, unknown author, June 1849.

¹³³ A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol.3, Segur-Aspik, March 13th 1851.

¹³⁴ Including Bāsil Šaiyāt, the bishop of Zaḥle, Macārīyūs Šammān, the bishop of Diyarbakir, Bāsil Kfūrī, his patriarchal vicar in Egypt, Aṭanāsīyūs Tūtunḡī, the bishop of Tripoli and Kīrlis Fasfūs, the bishop of Bosra.

¹³⁵ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 21, p. 1027, Villardel, November 12th 1848. 12 nov 1848.

existing bishoprics in order to create new ones for his patriarchal vicars.¹³⁶ This step arose the opposition of the bishops who resented the territorial reorganization of Maḥlūm. It was composed of the archbishop of Tyre and the bishops of Baalbek and Beirut (Kārūt, ‘Ubayd and Rīyāšī).¹³⁷ They appealed to Rome to limit the authority of the patriarch over the bishops.¹³⁸

Maksīmūs Maḥlūm has come to embody the figure of the reformer, who sought to modernize the administration of his Church and rescue it from a variety of internal and external threats.¹³⁹ Beyond the questionable dichotomy of reformer and conservative which informed much of the scholarship on the Ottoman Empire during the *Tanzimat*,¹⁴⁰ the strife which resulted from these various reforms should also be seen as the result of conflicting claims of access to resources rather than personal attitudes towards modernization. Indeed, the objectives of the reforms functioned as discourses mobilized in the competition over social, political and economical gains.¹⁴¹ The new institutions of the Greek Catholic Church, rather than downplaying the solidarities and identifications based on *‘aṣabīyā*, were rather instrumentalized by Maḥlūm as new tools of power within the same logic of social interactions.¹⁴² As Pierre Bourdieu argues when a discourse of power is created, it leaves room for interpretation of this discourse, especially when the structures of power are not well established.¹⁴³

¹³⁶ Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 156; Pichon, *Maaloula*, 20-30; Haïssa Boustani, “Les évêques de Sidnaïa” in: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 7, no.47 (1904), 215; Cyrille Charon, “Le Concile melkite de Jérusalem en 1849” in *Échos d'Orient*, tome 10, no.62, (1907): 27.

¹³⁷ Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 108.

¹³⁸ De Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 412.

¹³⁹ The narrative presented by Joseph Hajjar in *Un lutteur infatigable* illustrates this dynamic.

¹⁴⁰ See criticism of this dichotomy in Oliver Bouquet, “Is it Time to Stop Speaking about Ottoman Modernisation?” in *Order and Compromise: Government Practices in Turkey from the Late Ottoman Empire to the early 21st century*, ed. Marc Aymes, Benjamin Gourisse and Elise Massicard, (Boston: Brill, 2015), 53.

¹⁴¹ See a similar dynamic in the case of the Maronite Patriarch Yūsuf Istifān, Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya*, p. 192 – 193.

¹⁴² Heyberger, “Confréries,” 240.

¹⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Polity Press, 2000), 236.

Faced with the strong opposition of the bishop of Beirut, Agabios Rīyāšī, and his attempts to delegitimize him by writing to the Propaganda, Maḥlūm wrote to Rome accusing him of various crimes and embezzlement of ecclesiastical property. He asked to demote him from his position of bishop.¹⁴⁴ In 1851, the Propaganda saw the internal divisions of the Greek Catholics and predicted a problem of succession in case Maḥlūm died. The Propaganda thus decided to appoint the metropolitan of Tyre Archbishop Iḡnāṭīyūs Kārūt as an apostolic vicar after the death of Maḥlūm so that no patriarch would be appointed without the participation of Rome. The archbishop of Tyre was one of the opponents of Maḥlūm within the clergy. Rumors circulated that the Holy See wanted to replace Maḥlūm while he was still alive.¹⁴⁵ Nine priests in Damascus already pledged allegiance to the archbishop of Tyre.¹⁴⁶ These rumors created a scandal in the community as it was seen as an unacceptable intervention of Rome into the election process of the Greek Catholic Church. Seeing these reactions, the Propaganda sent a following letter to show that it was a misunderstanding and that the archbishop of Tyre had falsified the translation to make it seem like the letter gave him the right to claim the patriarchate.¹⁴⁷ It was too late however for a complete denial of the charges and this letter of the Propaganda was not taken into consideration.¹⁴⁸

The division of the community between two camps was sealed by this event. Maḥlūm obtained the support of the Ottoman government, while the bishops opposed to him turned to French consuls and the apostolic delegate. The willingness of the French consul to intervene can be understood by the foreign policy of the French empire. Indeed, the French emperor Napoleon III had established the alliance of the army and the Catholic Church and had intervened in favor of the Pope against the Roman Republic in 1848. Then, on a more local

¹⁴⁴ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 22, p. 53, Mazloun, June 17th 1849; *Ibid*, vol. 22, Mazloun, June 20th 1849.

¹⁴⁵ Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 240.

¹⁴⁶ A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Ségur-Ministre Plenipotentaire, June 10th 1851.

¹⁴⁷ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, p. 1053, Franzoni to bishop of Tyre, March 11th 1851.

¹⁴⁸ Fake letters often circulated in Bilad al Sham, creating commotions and upheaval. For example, in 1852 a fake letter by Agabios circulated saying that Maḥlūm had agreed with the Greek Orthodox and had given up the obedience to the Pope, *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, P 62, vol 23, Paolo Hatem, 2 mars 1852

level, the French consuls' main protégés among Greek Catholics were opposed to the patriarch and were close to the Salvatorian order.¹⁴⁹

However, not all French consuls supported the bishops opposed to the patriarch. Each consul had his own perspective in this affair. The French consul of Beirut, Gabriel de Lesparda, sided with Maḏlūm.¹⁵⁰ He reported that the majority of the population under his jurisdiction sided with Maḏlūm and only a minority with the bishop of Beirut, Rīyāšī.¹⁵¹ The two consuls of France did not support the same actors, as their local context differed and encouraged them to protect those who could serve their influence.

Each side attempted to obtain the most signature for their petitions crafted to support their side of the story to Rome.¹⁵² Each side wanted to show that the majority was with them. The petitions sent to Rome had previously been signed by a few individuals, mostly notables or members of the clergy, but in this period one can observe the shift towards a quantitative approach to petitioning which contributed to the politicization of the population.

The patriarch felt that the situation was becoming difficult for him given his conflictual relationship with Rome and the enmity of foreign consuls and missionaries. He thus tried to improve his image in the eyes of Rome by making petitions in his favor.¹⁵³ He also proved his orthodoxy by making sermons praising Rome during the mass.¹⁵⁴ Yet, his attempts did not bear fruit and the apostolic delegate took the side of Bishop Rīyāšī, the most vocal of his opponents. Rīyāšī used the influence of the missionaries, French consuls and the apostolic delegate to defend his autonomy vis à vis Maḏlūm and to check on his authority. Maḏlūm thus turned towards the Ottoman government for help in imposing his authority. He mandated Necip Paşa, the governor of Damascus in the early 1840's who was now in Istanbul,

¹⁴⁹ Antoine Rabbath, *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire du Christianisme en Orient*, Tome 1 (London: Luzac & Co., 1905), 159.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 133.

¹⁵¹ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, Vol. 22, p. 1066, French consul Beirut, August 5th 1851.

¹⁵² A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Ségur-Ministre Plénipotentiaire, June 25th 1851; Ibid, Ségur-Aspik, March 13th 1851.

¹⁵³ A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Ségur- Ministre Plénipotentiaire, June 25th 1851.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

to complain against Rīyāšī to the Ottoman government and to obtain his dismissal from his position. Since his passage in Damascus, Necip Paşa's secretary was the Greek Catholic Yūsuf 'Ayrūt, close to the Austrian consul.¹⁵⁵ 'Ayrūt helped Maḏlūm against the apostolic delegate and Rīyāšī by using Necip Pasha's influence in Istanbul.¹⁵⁶ Maḏlūm knew which angle to present in order to bring the case to the Ottoman courts. Indeed, he accused Rīyāšī of disposing of ecclesiastical property, of various immoral acts, and of lacking loyalty to the Ottoman government.¹⁵⁷ He criticized Rīyāšī for obeying only Rome, and disobeying the laws of the country.¹⁵⁸ Maḏlūm's call upon the Ottoman authorities in this affair was not well received by Rome. Rīyāšī accused his patriarch of betrayal towards Roman authority.¹⁵⁹ He called for the intervention of Giuseppe Valerga who was both the apostolic delegate and the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem. In turn, the opponents of Rīyāšī denounced him to the governor and characterized this call upon the apostolic delegate as a rebellion against the Ottoman authorities.¹⁶⁰ The never-ending accusations of political and spiritual betrayal point to the politicization of the Greek Catholic community. The conflicts between the two sides spread beyond clerical realms as it led to violence among the flock in Beirut.¹⁶¹

These conflicts highlight the increasing politicization of the Greek Catholic community and the overlapping jurisdictions which were increasingly problematic in the 19th century. Foreign and Ottoman interventions into the affairs of the Greek Catholics were encouraged by the nature of the factional struggles and the calls upon external authorities to give more weight to campaigns of delegitimization of opponents. The hierarchy of the

¹⁵⁵ 'Ayrūt was an Austrian protégé and had been instrumental against French influence in Damascus in the 1840's. He was the nephew of Malāṭīyūs Fandī, Maḏlūm's patriarchal vicar.

¹⁵⁶ *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 22, p. 1152, vol 22, Amin Shilbli Chmayl, October 10th 1851. He was the representative of Rīyāšī in Istanbul.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, vol. 23, .p 11, Agabios, January 3rd 1852.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, vol. 23, p. 15, Villardel, March 10th 1852.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, vol. 23, p. 11, Agabios, January 3rd 1852.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, vol. 23, p. 175, Valerga, June 5th 1852.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*.

non-Muslim communities became an additional battleground for international struggle for influence.¹⁶²

In the end, Mazlūm resorted to use the population to get rid of Rīyāšī. In 1851, the population of Mount Lebanon and Beirut sent a petition to the government asking to replace Rīyāšī because he was selling the waqf of the bishopric which they claimed were the goods of the nation.¹⁶³ As a response the Ottoman authorities recalled his *berat* for failing to maintain social peace.¹⁶⁴ In this case the bishop was thus considered as another intermediary such as a governor, a council member, a tax collector, who could be appointed and dismissed depending on their ability to manage their constituents, obtain taxation and ensure social peace. This dynamic reveals that the same logic that was applied to the appointments of civil servants were now also applied to the religious hierarchy. This is one of the consequence of the institution of the *millet* system, in which the clergy was placed under the overview of the state.

The use of popular will to delegitimize a bishop was problematic for Rome. Indeed, in the Roman perspective, popular will was not a legitimate basis of decision-making. Obedience to superiors (bishops, patriarch) amounted to obedience to Jesus. Thus, the population was not to be consulted in ecclesiastical matters.¹⁶⁵ This was not surprising given the context of Roman Catholicism in the 19th century. In the face of political turmoil in Europe and the rise of nationalist movements, the authority of the clergy was threatened in an unprecedented manner. The Roman revolution had posed an unprecedented threat to the authority of the Pope and was put down in a bloodbath in 1849. Similar demands based on the

¹⁶² Similar developments are observed among Catholic Armenians and Chaldeans. For Armenians see Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 186-187; Mariam Kartashyan, "Ultramontane Efforts in the Ottoman Empire during the 1860s and 1870s." *Studies in Church History* 54 (2018): 345–58; See also the upcoming thesis of Salim Dermarkar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS).

¹⁶³ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 23, p. 271, Letter of Greek nation to Lesparde Consul general of France in Beirut, April 1st 1852.

¹⁶⁴ Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 243; A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Ségur-Aspik, Annex 1, October 25th 1851.

¹⁶⁵ *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 25, p. 379, Valerga-Agabios, February 23rd 1859.

notion of popular will among Ottoman Christians were seen with suspicion and worries by the apostolic delegates.¹⁶⁶

The Holy See's main basis of law was revelation and obedience to the Pope. In the first part of the 19th century, the concept of the infallibility of the Pope was reinforced as the main basis of dogma.¹⁶⁷ The authority of the Pope was theorized as monarchic and sovereign in the writings of Roman school in the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century. According to the Roman dogma, obedience to the patriarch was encouraged if the patriarch was obeying the Pope.¹⁶⁸ In this case also the patriarch was seen as an intermediary. Decision power and authority belonged to Rome, and this authority was then awarded to the patriarch, the bishops and the priests. The Holy See could thus deprive a clergy member of his role of intermediary in case he did not respect the canons.

The recall of Rīyāšī's *berat* was seen by many as an unlawful intervention of the state in ecclesiastical affairs. Rīyāšī obtained the Maronite patriarch, together with the vicar of the Armenian patriarch as well as some Syrian Catholic bishops to accuse Mazlūm of having violated the cannons of the Church by applying to the Ottoman government regarding ecclesiastical goods.¹⁶⁹ This conflict brought to light the confusion that existed regarding the border between civil and religious realms. The institutionalization of the *millet* system, together with the creation of councils and the attribution of salaries to clergy members, did reinforce the legitimacy of the patriarch as a state actor. Mazlūm was given both the secular and spiritual authority over his flock. However, the *millet* system also brought the administration of the community under the purview of the state. The high clergy was chosen by the patriarch or elected by a council and then certified by the Holy See. In addition to that

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, vol. 25, p. 393, Valerga-Chargé d'affaire, April 4th 1859.

¹⁶⁷ Jean-François Chiron "« Une barrière éternelle. » L'autorité de l'Église dans la définition du dogme au XIX^e siècle," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 94, no. 1(2006): 10, 11.

¹⁶⁸ Such as Pietro Ballerini, Zaccaria, Muzzarelli, Mamachi, Cappellari, Ibid, 23. The infallibility of the Pope was later consecrated during the Council Vatican I. However, it was opposed by Oriental patriarchs.

¹⁶⁹ A.E, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Barbet de Jouy-Lavalette, January 21st 1852.

spiritual legitimacy, they obtained a civil legitimacy through receiving an official *berat*, which allowed them to collect taxes. In order to defend themselves against the Greek Orthodox clergy, the Greek Catholics were eager to receive a *berat* from the government. However, it also meant that the Ottoman government could have a say in ecclesiastical affairs. An order from Istanbul could demote a clergy member of his *berat*, as Rīyāšī witnessed. However, it did not take away his spiritual legitimacy. The conflict between Rīyāšī and Maḏlūm thus illustrates the overlapping of jurisdictions and the blurry border separating religious from civil matters. In the end, both Maḏlūm and Rīyāšī were called to Rome regarding their dispute in January 1852.¹⁷⁰ Although he received several pressing invitations to come to Rome, he did not cooperate and died not long after.¹⁷¹

In conclusion, Maḏlūm's patriarchate was marked by a will to reform the institutions of the Greek Catholic church towards a centralization of resources and an attempt to increase the jurisdiction of the clergy over the flock. Through this process, he sought to homogenize practices and rites, to emphasize separation from other Catholics. He sought to move away from a patrimonial management of the Church in line with Roman and Ottoman objectives. The attempt to build an exclusive confessional culture through ritual and religious distinction conflicted with existing forms of belonging, either within the community or beyond. It challenged the overlapping institutions and jurisdictions which had allowed Greek Catholic individuals some level of interstitial freedom, thus giving rise to numerous resistances. To operate this centralization of the Church, he relied on his own protégés, thus giving strength to the dynamic of *'aṣabīya*¹⁷² and factionalism. It led to opposition from those who had previously benefited from access to power. The conflicts which took place encouraged outside intervention into the affairs of the Greek Catholic Church and contributed to the politicization of the population. Political loyalty became an important basis of legitimacy. The intervention

¹⁷⁰ Hajjar, *Un lutteur infatigable*, 242.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 256.

¹⁷² Social solidarity based on partisanship.

of these various patrons led to efforts to define the border between religious and civil jurisdictions. These dynamics partook in the confessionalization of Ottoman society, which affected intra-Christian relationships as much as inter-confessional interactions.