

LATIN CATHOLICISM IN  
OTTOMAN ISTANBUL:  
PROPERTIES, PEOPLE & MISSIONS

Edited by  
Vanessa R. de Obaldía and Claudio Monge

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Tel.: 90 (0216) 321 38 51

Fax: 90 (0216) 321 86 66

e-mail: [isis@turk.net](mailto:isis@turk.net)

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Yazmacı Emine sokak 6

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Cover illustration: A procession in an Istanbul suburb at the beginning of the twentieth century (Courtesy of the Dominican Archive of SS. Peter and Paul in Galata).

PATRIARCH MAKSĪMŪS MAZLŪM'S REVERSE  
MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE DURING THE *TANZĪMĀT*  
PERIOD: BRINGING THE GREEK CATHOLICS BACK  
INTO THE GREEK RITE

Anais MASSOT

Ritual distinctions among Ottoman Christians are often perceived to belong to clerical or church history. However, the issue of rite also belongs to political and social history. Ritual distinctions are a way to create community, they can serve as identity markers. As such they can be emphasized to homogenize the flock or to establish the clergy's authority. In consequence, changing rites can also be a way to subvert authority. In the Ottoman empire, ritual distinctions also had political consequences for they corresponded to various overlapping jurisdictions, including foreign powers. Nowhere was this political and social aspect of ritual distinctions more visible than in the Ottoman *Tanzīmāt* period. In this period, the non-Muslim *millets* were institutionalized and the political role of patriarchs or *hahambaşı* was increased and transformed. Although the consequences of these transformations varied between religious communities, we can observe a general trend towards increasing internal strife and divisions.

This chapter will emphasize the political and social relevance of ritual distinctions by focusing on the issue of rite among the Greek Catholic community in the first part of the nineteenth century and its relation with the Roman Latin Church. The Greek Catholic Patriarch Maksīmūs Mazlūm (1833-1855) obtained the official separation of his church from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in the first part of the nineteenth century. Afterwards, he attempted to create a homogenized community through marking separation and distinction with other Catholics through the imposition of the Greek rite over his flock, even in cities beyond his patriarchal seats, such as Istanbul. In this endeavour, he encountered the opposition of missionaries but also of members of his own flock. These reforms encouraged by the Ottoman state as part of the institutionalization of the Ottoman *millets*, coincided in part with 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, on some occasions the reformist agenda of the Propaganda Fide frustrated Patriarch Mazlūm's will for auton-

omy and authority, leading to prolonged conflicts with missionaries and apostolic delegates. The question of rite was embedded with issues of political sovereignty and loyalty as well as clerical authority. This study will shed light on the way in which the institutionalization of the *millet* during the *Tanzīmāt* and the creation of confessional cultures were challenged by other forms of belonging and identification dynamics. First, we will examine Patriarch Maksīmūs Mazlūm's reform policies regarding the rite. Then, we will analyze the reactions among the population. Finally, we will focus on the patriarch's reverse missionary enterprise in cities beyond his patriarchal seats such as Istanbul and Smyrna.

### *Maksīmūs Mazlūm's Reforms Regarding the Rite*

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 transformation of the Greek Catholic Church into a centralized institution was challenged by the resistance of 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.

Maksīmūs Mazlūm 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.<sup>1</sup> He attempted to centralize resources and impose himself as the sole intermediary with the state and foreign institutions. In the same manner, he endeavoured to abolish the overlapping authorities and institutions which had given individuals some level of interstitial freedom. Overlapping religious belonging became problematic during the *Tanzīmāt* 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. Patriarch Maksīmūs Mazlūm tried to bring all the Greek Catholics under his jurisdiction and to challenge their dependence on Latin missionaries.

Because of the precarious political situation of the Greek Catholics in the empire prior to the recognition of the community as a *millet* in the 1830's, the community had relied on missionaries or Maronites for religious purposes. The schism between the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Catholic clergy had taken place with the double election of two patriarchs in 1724, an Orthodox

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Hajjar presented this narrative in *Un lutteur infatigable, le Patriarche Maxime Mazloum* (Harissa: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1957).

one recognized by the Ottoman government and a Catholic one recognized by the Pope.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the Greek Catholics were not recognized by the Ottoman government. In practice, it meant that they did not have access to the same resources and were in a position of weakness in 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. 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. They could not officially have their own churches. When they refused, they could be accused of rebellion. 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.<sup>3</sup>

However, this reliance on missionaries raised some issues regarding the jurisdiction and authority of the Greek Catholic clergy over its flock and the adoption of the Latin rite. At the end of the eighteenth century, the main issue which had divided missionaries on one side and the Greek Catholic bishop of Aleppo Ğarmānūs Ādam and Patriarch Agabios II Maṭār on the other was the issue of rite.<sup>4</sup> The Holy See had maintained an official line since Benedict XIV which demanded that Oriental Catholics continue to officiate according to their own rite, in order to facilitate the entry of the Orthodox into the Catholic realm. Greek Catholics were therefore forbidden from abandoning the Greek rite and adopting the Latin rite.<sup>5</sup> The Greek rite was to be kept intact. In 1729, Pope Benedict XIII had already requested from the new Greek Catholic patriarch Cyril VI, not to change the Greek rite and to abrogate Latin innovations introduced into it earlier by a bishop. The synods of the Greek Catholic Church repeatedly stated that the introduction of new practices into the Greek rite were forbidden.<sup>6</sup> However, missionaries constantly wrote to Rome exposing the difficulty of preventing Greek Catholics from adopting

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient : Au temps de la réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome (Rome: École française de Rome, 2014), 85, 120; Aurélien Girard, "Le christianisme oriental (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles). Essor de l'orientalisme catholique en Europe et construction des identités confessionnelles au Proche-Orient," PhD diss., (Paris, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2011), 617; Cyrille Charon, "L'Église grecque melchite catholique (Suite.)" » *Échos d'Orient* 6, no.39 (1903): 114; 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): 12.

<sup>3</sup> Heyberger, *Chrétiens du Proche Orient*, 358, 400.

<sup>4</sup> Liturgical, theological and spiritual traditions of a particular church.

<sup>5</sup> Aurélien 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), 346, 347.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

the Latin rite, especially before the political recognition of the Greek Catholics.<sup>7</sup>

In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, Bishop Ğarmānūs Ādam and 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.<sup>8</sup> Missionaries, and especially the Franciscan Terra Santa fathers<sup>9</sup> wrote numerous complaints to Rome denouncing Ğarmānūs Ādam's ideas, which were influenced by gallicanism. However, these complaints also aimed at delegitimizing his attempt to challenge their influence over the Greek Catholics.<sup>10</sup>

Patriarch Mazlūm, elected in 1833, built on the efforts of Ğarmānūs Ādam to make all Greek Catholics follow the Greek rite, which became the terrain of Mazlūm's reform program. Mazlūm used printing to homogenize ritual literature and to bring the Greek Catholics back into the Greek rite. He printed the Greek Missal 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.<sup>11</sup>

Bringing back all Greek Catholics into the Greek rite would have various consequences: the creation of new parishes, the ordination of new priests to attend to the flock, and an influx of resources into the church through donations during the mass. Missionaries were to be side-lined by this process, and to lose their influence and their pool of local resources.

Together with bringing all the Greek Catholic into the Greek rite, Mazlūm also attempted to control religious confraternities,<sup>12</sup> 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 Mazlūm. 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

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<sup>7</sup> 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. 11, p. 239, Terra Santa college of Damascus to Father Cotmi, July 21<sup>st</sup> 1800.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 337, Patriarch Matar and three other members of the community, July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1802.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 128, Document entitled "Riflessione sopra l'instruzione di Monsg. Germano Adami intorno al sacramento della gresima", March 25<sup>th</sup> 1800.

<sup>10</sup> See various letters in *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 130-230.

<sup>11</sup> *S.C.P.F, (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 191, Mazlum, June 24<sup>th</sup> 1840; regarding the Greek Missal see Chirbel Nassif, "L'Euchologie 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).

<sup>12</sup> Pious voluntary association of Christian laity, for charitable or spiritual purposes.

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 seventeenth century in Damascus and Aleppo and had caused conflicts with the Greek Catholic high clergy.<sup>13</sup> During Mazlūm's rule, the confraternity of the Sacred Heart in Aleppo became the locus of power struggles with missionaries but also within the Greek Catholic community.<sup>14</sup> The Greek Catholic high clergy attempted to control the confraternities and to lessen the influence of Latin missionaries who headed these institutions.<sup>15</sup>

Unsurprisingly, various missionaries opposed this 'Greek' missionary effort of Mazlūm. They accused 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.<sup>16</sup> This conflictual relationship between the Patriarch and missionaries negatively affected his image in the eyes of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. His attempts to obtain some level of control over his flock in this new political setting fostered opposition among missionaries who wished to keep their influence over Greek Catholics. Yet, at no point did Mazlūm express the wish to leave the Catholic realm or refused to recognize the spiritual authority of the Pope. His demands were mostly in line with the instructions of the Holy See regarding the need to follow the Greek rite.

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<sup>13</sup> *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 17<sup>th</sup> 1801; *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 337, patriarch Agabios Mattar, July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1802; Bernard Heyberger, "Individualism and Political Modernity: Devout Catholic Women in Aleppo and Lebanon. Between the Seventeenth and the Nineteenth Centuries," in *Beyond the Exotic. Women's histories in Islamic Societies*, dir. Amira Sonbol (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 80-83. See the affair regarding the Maronite confraternity of the Sacred Heart led by Hindiyya al-'Ujaimi in the eighteenth century, in Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya. Mystique et criminelle, 1720-1798* (Paris, Aubier, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 17, p. 18, Patriarch Ignatius Qattan, February 1<sup>st</sup> 1830; similar to the affair of the Maronite Hindiyya al-'Ujaimi and the confraternity of the Sacred Heart in the 18<sup>th</sup> century described by Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya*.

<sup>15</sup> *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 19, p. 223, Gregorio Chayat, August 20<sup>th</sup> 1837. This attempt was in line with the Greek Catholic synod of St Sauveur in 1790 that stated that missionaries needed the authorization of the patriarch and bishop to open fraternities for Greek Catholics, de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 331.

<sup>16</sup> *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 17, Mussabini, 1840; *ibid.*, p. 191, Mussabini, June 25<sup>th</sup> 1840.

*Greek Catholic Notables' Reactions Against the Reforms*

Mazlūm's policies also fostered opposition from within the Greek Catholic community. 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.<sup>17</sup> The adoption of the Latin rite would also allow them to create marriage alliances with influential families abroad. Some 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.<sup>18</sup> Even in cities with a Greek Catholic clergy, some notables also resented the injunction of following the Greek rite and wished to continue to attend the missionary churches. The apostolic delegates sent by Rome supported these arguments. However, to the dismay of the missionaries, the Propaganda Fide did not accept their change of rite according to the decrees of the Holy See forbidding the adoption of the Latin rite by Greek Catholics.<sup>19</sup> Franciscan missionaries constantly wrote to Rome exposing the difficulty of applying this line of conduct on the ground.<sup>20</sup>

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 as Greek Catholic patriarch in the 1840's had given him a stronger legitimacy to defend his interests against missionaries and the apostolic delegate. The apostolic delegated Francisco Villardel (1839-1852) responded that those rich families turning Latin only did so to escape the authority of Mazlūm whose behaviour they despised.<sup>21</sup> Because of the intertwining of religious practice, jurisdiction and identification dynamics, rites became the locus of the struggle between Mazlūm, missionaries and the notables. It also brought into question the basis of membership into the Greek Catholic community. Was it a matter of rituals, identity, family or belief?

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 59, Apostolic delegate, June 24<sup>th</sup> 1844.

<sup>18</sup> *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 270, Mussabini, October 13<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 1844.

<sup>19</sup> *S.C.P.F. Index delle Lettere*, vol. 331, p. 509, Propaganda Fide to Michelle Anhuri, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1844; see also William W. Bassett, *The determination of rite, an historical and juridical study*, *Analecta Gregoriana* vol. 21 (Rome: Gregorian Biblical Bookshop, 1967), 145, 146.

<sup>20</sup> *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 11, p. 239, Terra Santa college of Damascus to Father Cotmo, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1800.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 18, Villardel, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1844.



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.<sup>22</sup> It came from the notables but also from the less wealthy who resented his fiscal reforms and increased taxation.<sup>23</sup> Various conflicts were triggered by the collection of taxes. The adoption of the Latin rite was increasingly used both by the elite and the poor to escape taxation and clerical authority.

### *Greek Catholic Patriarch of the Orient: Maḏlūm's Reverse Missionary Enterprise*

Maḏlūm 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.<sup>24</sup> This challenge to missionary influence met with a strong opposition. Maḏlūm in 1837 decided to name his protégé and patriarchal vicar Macārīyūs Ṣammān as bishop of Diyarbakir because some Greek Orthodox had become Catholics in the city.<sup>25</sup>

Afterwards, Maḏlūm attempted to settle his authority in Istanbul. The Greek Catholics in the city used to celebrate the mass with the Latins. 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 the authority of a Latin representative.<sup>26</sup>

However, Maḏlūm's vicar, Macārīyūs Ṣammān, went to Istanbul and ordained priests in the city to attend to the needs of the Greek Catholics. The apostolic vicar of Istanbul, Mgr. Hilleraux denounced his actions to the Propaganda. In reaction, Maḏlūm asked the Propaganda Fide to have his own pub-

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

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 337, Gregorio Chayat, May 30<sup>th</sup> 1838; *ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 357, Inhabitants Ğbayl and Batrun, July 5<sup>th</sup> 1838.

<sup>24</sup> *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 17, Summary of letters sent to the Holy See regarding Mazlum, January 1840.

<sup>25</sup> Maxīmūs Maḏlūm, *Nubḏa tāriḥīya : Fīmā jarā li-tā'ifat al-Rūm al-Kāṭūlik munṭu sanat 1837 fimā ba 'dahā*, ed. Quṣṭantīn al-Bāšā (Damascus: 1907), 32; During the council of Ain Taraz in 1835, the synod agreed upon the decision to revive this bishopric because of the adoption of Catholicism among the Greek Orthodox in the city, de Clercq, *Histoire des conciles*, 381; The nomination of bishops was one of the prerogatives of the oriental patriarchs, *ibid.*, 417, 419, 333. In the Greek Catholic case, the patriarch was to consult the other bishops and to a certain level the lay notables but he had the last word, *ibid.*, 327, 327.

<sup>26</sup> *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 614, Villardel, April 5<sup>th</sup> 1842.

lic orator and to be given jurisdiction over his flock in the city, who originated from the regions under his rule.<sup>27</sup> He referred to Greek Catholics in Istanbul as Aleppines.<sup>28</sup> Mazlūm claimed that Mgr. Hilleraux, the apostolic vicar of Istanbul, had received orders to give him jurisdiction over Greek Catholics in the city but had not applied it.<sup>29</sup> However, he failed to obtain an answer from the Holy See.<sup>30</sup> In order to reach his goal, Mazlūm also demanded the help of the Ottoman government to support his authority against missionaries.<sup>31</sup>

In his history of the Greek Catholic Church written years after these events, Mazlūm presented a different reading of the immediate causes of this conflict. He claimed that he respected the fact that Greek Catholics in Istanbul were under the religious authority of the Latin clergy and argued that he simply wanted them to register as members of his flock for administrative matters, as requested by the Ottoman government. He argued that according to the regulations, if a Greek Catholic wanted to travel, or engage in some work or contract, he needed to have a paper stamped by the Greek Catholic Patriarch. Mazlūm stated that he had turned a blind eye for many years to the Istanbul based Aleppines' disregard for this procedure.

According to the Patriarch, missionaries had encouraged Aleppines not to register as such for fear of seeing them leave the Latin churches. However, he claims that he was forced to enforce this registration procedure in 1839 under pressure from the government. Mazlūm presented it as an issue of political representation rather than a question of religious leadership. This registration did not go smoothly as some Aleppines then demanded to rather be registered as Latins, who were represented by a Muslim notable instead of a Patriarch. They wrote a petition to the Ottoman government, asking to be recognized as Latins and freed from the authority of the Greek Catholic and Armenian Catholic Patriarchs.<sup>32</sup>

In 1844, the apostolic delegate Villardel, was sent to Istanbul to clarify the matter of rite. He went to visit the Greek Catholics and attempted to determine their wishes in terms of rite. He allegedly asked all the Greek Catholics of the city if they wanted to be Greek or Latins, made up a list, and sent it to the Propaganda.<sup>33</sup> According to the list, they overwhelmingly wished to remain Latin. Mazlūm protested against this proceeding and complained that a

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 20, p. 17, Summary of letters sent to the Holy See regarding Mazlum, January 1840.

<sup>28</sup> Mazlūm, *Nubda*, 91

<sup>29</sup> *S.C.P.F. (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 17, Summary of letters sent to the Holy See regarding Mazlum, January 1840.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 20, p. 17, Summary of letters sent to the Holy See regarding Mazlum, January 1840.

<sup>32</sup> Mazlūm, *Nubda*, 91-95.

<sup>33</sup> This was the procedure to be adopted in case Greek Catholics were baptised by Latins, according to Pope Benedict XIV's decree "Demandatam", written in 1743, Bassett, *The determination of rite*, 145.

Greek Catholic priest should have been consulted.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

The archbishop of Smyrna, Antonio Mussabini, accused Mazlūm of wishing to extend his jurisdiction over the Greek Catholics in the whole Orient.<sup>36</sup> This suspicion towards Mazlūm was encouraged by his behavior, indeed Mazlūm was so determined to bring all the Greek Catholics under his authority that he looked beyond the borders of the Empire towards Europe but also towards India.<sup>37</sup> It pointed to Mazlūm's ambitions and his self-perception as the patriarch of all Greek Catholics in the world. It also underlines the ongoing globalization, with Greek Catholics travelling beyond their places of origin. This phenomenon, already present in the eighteenth century with the development of a Greek Catholic diaspora in Europe, was accentuated in the nineteenth 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 *fermān* from the Ottoman government.<sup>38</sup> In 1844, with the emancipation from the Armenian Catholic patriarch, he obtained the recognition of his religious authority. In 1848, he also obtained civil authority over the Greek Catholics and had thereby full jurisdiction over all aspects of the Greek Catholic communities in the Empire.<sup>39</sup> 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. The *millet* system and the political recognition awarded to patriarchs contributed to the formation of autonomous Churches on the imperial scale and challenged the influence and authority of foreign entities, such as the Holy See. Mazlūm understood the stakes of the rites and sought 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 Ottoman Empire was more advantageous than the one proposed by the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide explains, in part, his bold attitude against the apostolic delegates

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<sup>34</sup> *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 21, p. 481, Information of the Holy See on Mazlūm, December 7<sup>th</sup> 1846.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *S.C.P.F., (S.C) Greci Melchiti*, vol. 20, p. 270, Antonio Mussabini, October 13<sup>th</sup> 1840.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 20, p. 185, Mazlum, June 12<sup>th</sup> 1840.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 20, p. 491, Mazlum, December 7<sup>th</sup> 1841.

<sup>39</sup> 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, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 455.

and missionaries. Then, this shift from a conception of jurisdiction based on territory to a jurisdiction based on communities contributed to the development of 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.

In conclusion, 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 attempted to lessen his flock's reliance on Latins and to emphasize separation and ritual distinction, participating in the confessionalization of these communities. These endeavors encountered the opposition of missionaries but also of notables among his own flock. The rites became the locus of a struggle for political jurisdiction and religious authority involving clergy members, missionaries, foreign representatives and the Ottoman government. 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. These struggles reveal that religious communities were imagined on a variety of levels within and beyond the borders of the empire, at times conflicting with the identifications put forward by the creation of imperial *millets* during the *Tanzīmāt* reforms.

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**APPENDIX**

Maximos III Mazloum, Patriarch of the Melkite Church. In Wikimedia Commons.  
Retrieved June 7th, 2021, from [https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/  
File:Maksymos\\_III\\_Mazloum.jpg#mw-jump-to-license](https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maksymos_III_Mazloum.jpg#mw-jump-to-license)