

Entangled Confessionalizations?



The Modern Muslim World

15

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Entangled Confessionalizations?

Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety
and Community-Building in the Ottoman
Empire, 15th–18th Centuries

Edited by

Tijana Krstić

Derin Terzioğlu

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| Table of Contents | v |
| Acknowledgments | ix |
| Notes on Transliteration..... | xi |
| List of Abbreviations | xiii |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| <i>Tijana Krstić</i> | |
| PART I: ENTANGLED CONFESSIONALIZATIONS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | |
| 2. Can We Speak of ‘Confessionalization’ beyond the Reformation? Ottoman Communities, Politics of Piety, and Empire-Building in an Early Modern Eurasian Perspective | 25 |
| <i>Tijana Krstić</i> | |
| PART II: VISIONS AND REALITIES OF COMMUNAL AUTHORITY | |
| 3. Two Visions of Rabbinic Authority and Their Ottoman Context: The Legal Worldviews of Joseph Caro (d. 1575) and Joseph Sambari (d. c. 1703)..... | 117 |
| <i>Roni Weinstein and Guy Burak</i> | |
| 4. Grigor Daranałc’i: An Armenian Chronicler of Early Modern Mass Mobility | 139 |
| <i>Henry Shapiro</i> | |
| 5. Confession-Building and Authority: The Great Church and the Ottoman State in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century | 159 |
| <i>Eleni Gara and Ovidiu Olar</i> | |
| 6. Whose Realm, His Bishop: Orthodox Patriarch’s Flock beyond the Borders of the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century | 215 |
| <i>Vera Tchentsova</i> | |
| 7. Sheikh  l-islam Feyzullah Efendi and the Armenian Patriarch Awetik’: A Case of Entangled Confessional Disciplining? | 233 |
| <i>Cesare Santus</i> | |

**PART III: VARIETIES OF TEXTUAL COMMUNITIES IN THE OTTOMAN ARENA OF
CONFESSIONAL POLARIZATION**

8. Kabbalistic Fraternities of Ottoman Galilee and Their Central European Members, Funders, and Successors 255
Carsten Wilke
9. The Commandment (*Buyruk*): An Introduction to the Sacred Texts of the Kizilbash-Alevi Community 285
Rıza Yıldırım
10. The Abdals of Rum and the Development of Competing Muslim Confessional Identities in the Early Modern Eastern Balkans 313
Nikolay Antov
11. Orthodox Martyrdom and Confessionalization in the Ottoman Empire, Late Fifteenth–Mid-Seventeenth Centuries 335
Yorgos Tzedopoulos
12. Catholic Confessional Literature in the Christian East? A View from Rome, Diyarbakır, and Mount Lebanon, ca. 1674 383
John-Paul A. Ghobrial

PART IV: POLEMICAL ENCOUNTERS IN AN INTER-IMPERIAL PERSPECTIVE

13. Masjed-e Jame‘-ye ‘Abbasi: A Twelver Shi‘ite Congregational Mosque in the Context of the Debate on the Friday Prayer in the Safavid World 401
Damla Gürkan-Anar
14. On the Margins of Empire: Confessionalization and the East Syrian Schism of 1552 429
Lucy Parker
15. From Doctrinal Persuasion to Economic Threats: Paolo Piromalli’s Missionary Work among the Armenians and His Conversion Strategies 451
Paolo Lucca
16. Intra-Armenian Polemics and Confession-Building in Ottoman Constantinople: The Case of Gēorg Mxlayim Ōħi (1681/85–1758) 489
Anna Ohanjanyan
17. Orthodox Confession-Building and the Greek Church between Protestantism and Catholicism: The Mission of Marquis Nointel to the Levant (1670–1673) 521
Margarita Voulgaropoulou

PART V: CONTEXTUAL LIMITS OF CONFESSIONAL AMBIGUITIES

18. Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-Building: Philo-Alidism, Sufism and Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1400–1700 563
Derin Terzioğlu
19. Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha and the Ottoman Non-Muslims 625
Nenad Filipović

| | |
|--|-----|
| 20. On the Legal Status of Yezidis: Law, Geography and Confession-Building in Early Modern Kurdistan (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)..... | 673 |
| <i>Yavuz Aykan</i> | |
| 21. Brokering Tridentine Marriage Reforms and Legal Pluralism in Seventeenth-Century Northern Ottoman Rumeli..... | 701 |
| <i>Emese Muntán</i> | |
| 22. Shi'ite-Iranian Pilgrims and Safavid Agents in Holy Sites under Ottoman Rule, 1690–1710 | 725 |
| <i>Selim Güngörürler</i> | |
| Afterword: Entangled Confessionalizations—A European Perspective..... | 745 |
| <i>Alexander Schunka</i> | |
| Index..... | 763 |

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¹ The full name of the project was ‘The Fashioning of a Sunni Orthodoxy and the Entangled Histories of Confession-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries’ (project ID: 648498; ERC Consolidator Grant).

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Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu
November 2021

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

Words from Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and Persian that appear in the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary are given in their anglicized form and are not italicized. These include, for instance, the terms Quran, sharia, aga, firman, ulema, berat, mufti, qadi (thus, we also use qadiasker, although it is not in the said dictionary), pasha, Kizilbash (thus, we also use Kadizadeli), fatwa, Shi'i, vizier, waqf, timar. Certain technical terms that exist in English are adjusted to follow more closely the Turkish pronunciation—thus, we use sheikh *ül-islam* (as an alternative for shaykh al-islam; both are given in Merriam-Webster). Otherwise, technical terms from Ottoman Turkish are transliterated according to their modern Turkish form and given in italics, so *pişkeş*, *buyruk*, *hatt-ı şerif*, etc.

When transliterating directly from the sources in manuscript, transcription rules of İslam Ansiklopedisi are applied for Ottoman Turkish, but we use *k* instead of *q*. For transliteration from Arabic and Persian we use the IJMES rules for translation and transliteration, including for the personal names and titles of works (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies/information/author-resources/ijmes-translation-and-transliteration-guide>), which are given without diacritics, but with indication of 'ayn and hamza (except when hamza is in the initial position). For the sake of consistency, we follow the same rule in rendering personal names and titles in Ottoman Turkish (i.e. we indicate only 'ayn and hamza but not the long vowels).

Place names with accepted English spellings are spelled in accordance with English norms, for example, Etchmiadzin, Istanbul, Damascus, Riyadh, Iraq. This rule applies also to the cities of publication in citations.

For transliteration of words and names in Armenian, both Eastern and Western, both Middle and Old (Grabar) Armenian, we used the Hübschmann-Meillet-Benveniste (HMB) system, which is suggested by the *Revue des études arméniennes*. The same system is used to transliterate Armeno-Turkish (i.e. Turkish written in Armenian script).

For romanization from Greek we used the modified Library of Congress system, which entails no diacritics for long vowels, but the use of 'h' for *δασεία* (Ἑλλην—> Hellen, *Ἱερεμίας*—> Hieremias, *Ἰωάννης*—> Ioannes). We use the established classical transliteration for historical or key terms (such as *βασιλεύς*—> basileus). The English rendition of the dioceses, however, is according to Nomikos Michael Vaporis, Codex (B̂) Beta of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople:

Aspects of the History of the Church of Constantinople (Brookline MS: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1975). For the names of authors, we followed the transliteration they use in their international publications (Χασιώτης—> Hassiotis); otherwise, we transliterated them according to the above rules.

Since there is no generally agreed upon transliteration system for Syriac, we sought to match the approach we followed for transliteration of personal names in Arabic and Persian. Thus, the names of East Syrian Christians are transliterated in a simplified way, without indicating long vowels or any diacritics except ˘ for ܘ (thus, ˘Abdisho˘). Well known English versions of Syriac names are used where appropriate (e.g. Ephrem, Eliya). In the case of Greek names used in Syriac, we used the most well-known forms, which are often Latinized (Ignatius, Nestorius). In respect of place names, the modern names for cities in Mesopotamia are used (Cizre not Gazarta, Diyarbakır not Amida), unless in reference to a quotation from Syriac or in a Syriac name (thus ˘Abdisho˘ of Gazarta). When Syriac place names are mentioned, transliterated versions are provided without diacritics except for ˘ (e.g. Tur ˘Abdin).

For Hebrew, we use the simple transliteration system loosely based on the *Encyclopedia Judaica* ‘general’ transliteration rules (for detail see: https://brill.com/file-asset/downloads_static/static_fonts_simplehebrewtransliteration.pdf). For personal names we use established English forms where possible (so, Joseph Caro rather than Yossef Karo).

In order to maximize accessibility of the references in such multitude of languages as featured in this volume and facilitate dialogue across scholarly fields, all the titles of works originally written in non-Latin script are given in the footnotes in English translation, while a full transliteration of the title in original language is provided in the bibliography.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO—*Archivum Ottomanicum*

Braude & Lewis—B. Braude and B. Lewis eds, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols (New York, 1982)

BSOAS—*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*

CaMR—*Cahiers du monde russe*

CMR—*Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vols 1–5 (for the period 600–1500) edited by D. Thomas and A. Mallet; Vols 6–14 (for the period 1500–1800) edited by D. Thomas and J. Chesworth (Leiden, 2009–2020)

CSSH—*Comparative Studies in Society and History*

EI²—*Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs (Leiden, 1954–2003) (online edition: <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>)

EI³—*Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd edn, edited by K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas and E. Rowson (Leiden, 2007–present) (online edition: <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3>)

Historicizing Sunni Islam—T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu eds, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c.1450–c.1750* (Leiden, 2020)

İA—*İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 13 vols (Istanbul, 1940–1987)

IJMES—*International Journal of Middle East Studies*

JAOS—*Journal of the American Oriental Society*

JESHO—*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*

JNES—*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

JSAS—*Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*

OA—*Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies*

Orthodoxa Confessio?—M.-D. Grigore and F. Kühner-Wielach eds, *Orthodoxa Confessio? Konfessionsbildung, Konfessionalisierung und ihre Folgen in der östlichen Christenheit Europas* (Göttingen, 2018)

OTAM—*Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Araştırma Ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*

Ottoman Sunnism—V. Erginbaş ed., *Ottoman Sunnism: New Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 2019)

POF—*Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*

L'Union—M.-H. Blanchet and F. Gabriel eds, *L'Union à l'épreuve du formulaire: Professions de foi entre Églises d'Orient et d'Occident (XIIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2016)

RÉA—*Revue des études arméniennes*

ReMMM—*Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*

SI—*Studia Islamica*

TDVİA—*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 44 vols (+2 supplements)
(Istanbul, 1988–2016) (online edition: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr>)

WZKM—*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*

1. INTRODUCTION

TIJANA KRSTIĆ

An interesting diplomatic incident transpired during the imperial circumcision festival in Istanbul in 1582—the largest and most ambitious public spectacle that the Ottomans ever organized, memorialized in numerous Ottoman as well as European observers’ accounts.¹ Taking place against the background of an ongoing Ottoman-Safavid war (1578–1590), growing monetary problems, and disunity among Ottoman elites, the festival was an opportunity for sultan Murad III (1574–1595) to project the vision of his own domains and the world as he and those in his close circle wanted to see it. According to one of the key Ottoman sources on the event, the *Imperial Festival Book* of İntizami, the seating arrangements of the foreign envoys at the tribunes overlooking the festival grounds in the Hippodrome became contentious when the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (referred to in the text as ‘the evil-doing king of Vienna’) refused to sit next to the Safavid envoy (‘the ambassador of the ill-behaving Kizilbash’). He explained his refusal by the fact that the Ottoman chief jurist had issued a fatwa declaring the killing of one Kizilbash² more meritorious than the killing of seventy infidels (i.e. non-Muslims). The Habsburg ambassador’s demonstrations were reinforced by the fact that the festival program featured an act of conversion—likely staged—of a Safavid nobleman and his entourage to Sunni Islam after delivering a blistering speech accusing the Safavid shah of ‘leading his people astray’ and praising the Ottoman sultan.³ The lavish illustrations in the *Imperial Festival Book* capture the scene of conversion as well as the mockery of the Safavid turbans that buffoons in the Hippodrome balanced on

¹ The episode is discussed by Derin Terzioğlu in her detailed study of the festival. The translations from the text are hers. See Terzioğlu, ‘The Imperial Circumcision Festival’, p. 85.

² ‘Kizilbash’ (lit. readhead, referring to the twelve-gored red headgear symbolizing allegiance to the Twelve Shi‘i Imams and to the Safavid sheikhs) was a derogatory term used in Ottoman sources for the followers of the Safavid shah in particular but also Shi‘ites in general, depending on the context, type of a source, and period. On the nuances see Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, ‘One Word, Many Connotations’. For the fatwas of the Ottoman chief jurists on the merits of killing the Kizilbash see Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik* and Atçıl, ‘The Safavid Threat and Juristic Authority’.

³ Terzioğlu, ‘The Imperial Circumcision Festival’, p. 86.

their behinds, while European envoys, recognizable in the miniature by their ‘Frankish’ berets, were looking on.⁴

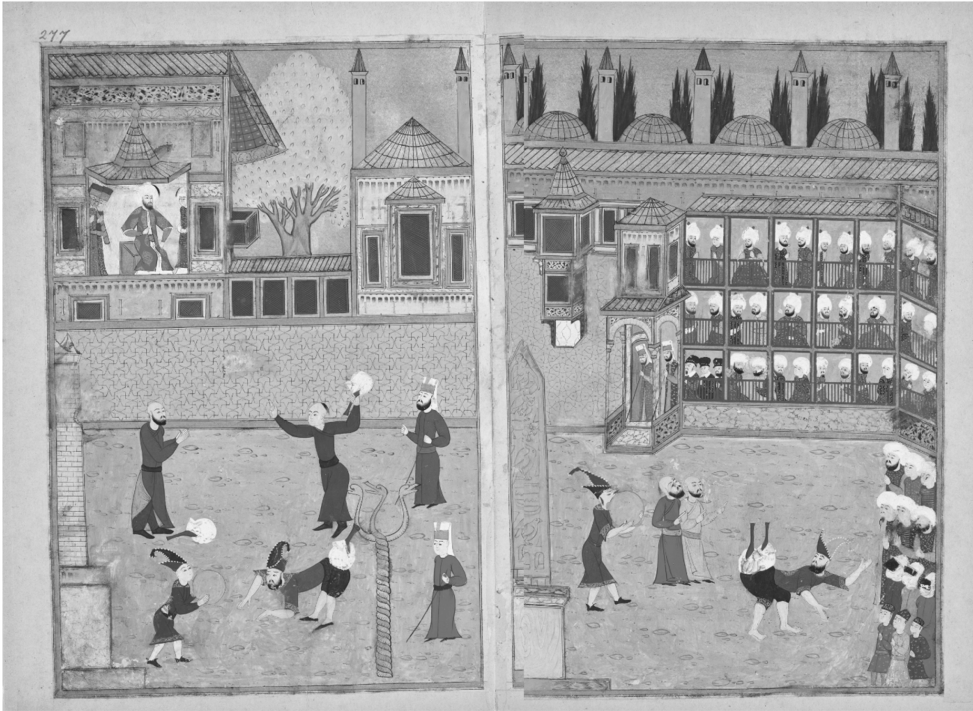


Image 1: İntizami, *The Imperial Festival Book* (*Surname-i Hümayun*), TSK, Hazine 1344, fols 276b–277a

The narrative and the miniatures from the *Imperial Festival Book* about the seating incident and the conversion of the Safavid envoys at the festival capture several important trends that converged in the Ottoman context in the sixteenth century: the growing importance of confessional politics, inter-imperial competition, and mobility of people, objects and ideas. These trends combined to cause intense comparisons and commensurations about which religion and/or confession was the ‘true’ one that would guarantee salvation, and which sovereign had the power to bring about its victory, negotiated by different types of intermediaries—converts, diplomats, travelers, religious refugees, missionaries, etc. For the Habsburg ambassador, the knowledge about the Ottoman fatwa on the Kizilbash—who were considered worse than any Christians—had a direct bearing on the Habsburg Emperor’s honor and prestige of the Catholic faith he represented, since being seated next to the Safavid envoy would have been damaging to Habsburg status in this global competition, at least as it played itself out in the Ottoman festival arena. Agents of empire engaged in constant comparisons, calibrating their own categories and practices in the process based on the knowledge they acquired about the practices and beliefs of others.⁵ As

⁴ İntizami, *The Imperial Festival Book*, fols 276b–277a.

⁵ See, in particular, Rothman, *Brokering Empire* and Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*.

Ann Laura Stoler reminds us, ‘Crossimperial knowledge acquisition and application included a poaching of practices, a searching for new technologies. Such cross-imperial scrutiny shares recognition of the portability of practices and ideas, be it in form or in goal, across imperial systems and within them.’⁶ Speaking of early modern confessions, Thomas Kaufmann emphasized a similar aspect: ‘The confessions divided themselves from each other and profiled themselves in competitive constellations. They interacted and influenced each other, or at least built up standards to which others had to respond.’⁷ The present volume is about these inter-confessional comparisons, competition, dialogue, mimicry, borrowings and adaptations as they manifested themselves in the early modern Ottoman Empire within and between various groups of Muslims, Christians, and Jews and became entangled due to various intra- and inter-imperial dynamics.

Historians of the early modern Ottoman Empire have long been pointing out that in the early sixteenth century the religious outlook of the sultans and the imperially sponsored hierarchy of religious scholars underwent a shift: while heretofore they had been largely unconcerned with defining, observing or enforcing a Sunni ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘orthopraxy’, they now became increasingly invested in precisely such a project.⁸ Some scholars postulated that this was the effect of the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt—often seen as the ‘core’ lands of Sunni Islam—from the Mamluk Empire in 1516–17.⁹ Others suggested that it was the contemporary challenge of the rising Safavid Empire, which in 1501 proclaimed conversion of heretofore Sunni Iran to Twelver Shi‘ism, that prompted the Ottomans to increasingly profile themselves as the defenders of Sunnism and articulate more precise criteria of who does and does not belong to ‘the people of the sunna and the community’ (*ahl al-sunna wa’l-jamā‘a*; namely, Sunnis).¹⁰ More recently, historians came to argue that this development built on the trend that started already in the second half of the fifteenth century and had much to do with the dynamics of building the Ottoman state and sultanic authority.¹¹ Research along all these lines of inquiry continues, with the emerging consensus that these intra- and inter-imperial dynamics had a mutually reinforcing effect on the Ottoman understanding of and concern with Sunni orthodoxy.¹² In the meantime, Derin Terzioğlu has suggested that we could think of this process of redefinition of Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy according to how

⁶ Stoler, ‘Considerations on Imperial Comparisons’, p. 39.

⁷ In Forster et al, ‘Forum: Religious History beyond Confessionalization’, p. 591.

⁸ On Ottomans’ ‘metadoxy’ prior to the sixteenth century see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 76; on the early sixteenth-century shift see, for instance, Beldiceanu-Steinherr, ‘Le règne de Selīm Ier’; Üstün, *Heresy and Legitimacy*; Ocak, ‘Les réactions socio-religieuses’, among others.

⁹ Literature is extensive but see for instance Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 115–130, who dates the end of ‘Ottoman syncretism’ to the conquest of Syria and Egypt.

¹⁰ See, for example, Dressler, ‘Inventing Orthodoxy’; al-Tikriti, ‘Kalam in the Service of State’.

¹¹ Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize’; Kafescioğlu, ‘Lives and Afterlives’.

¹² For the latest discussions of Ottoman Sunnism in a historical perspective and various factors that shaped it see Erginbaş ed., *Ottoman Sunnism*; Krstić and Terzioğlu eds, *Historicizing Sunni Islam*.

Ottoman jurists and administrators understood it as a sort of confessionalization of Sunnism (similarly to how Catholicism was rearticulated as a confession in the aftermath of the Reformation) or ‘Sunnitization’.¹³

Numerous questions, however, remain to be explored in greater detail: how did the understanding of what constituted a Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy evolve across the spectrum of Ottoman society between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries? To what kinds of responses and possible pushbacks did the greater emphasis on correct belief and practice give rise, both among Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire? Was it by chance or perhaps due to similar social and political processes that the growing polarization between Sunnism and Shi‘ism, as well as contemporaneous building of Ottoman and Safavid empires, precisely coincided with the Catholic-Protestant (and later Calvinist) polarization and the rise of confessional states in Europe? Were these contemporaneous projects of defining correct belief and/or practice in some sort of dialogue, and is this dialogue traceable in the sources left by various individuals and communities living in or passing through Ottoman domains between c. 1500 and c. 1750?

In this volume, we explore these questions through empirical studies based on a vast array of early modern Muslim, Christian and Jewish sources, focusing on confessional dynamics within and between communities in various parts of the Ottoman Empire in an ‘entangled’ perspective.¹⁴ The overall argument of the volume is that the reasons for the emergence of the discourses of orthodoxy and orthopraxy from Europe to Iran around 1500 were specific to the particular religio-political traditions and power configurations in different regional contexts. However, they were similarly motivated by the calls for religious and moral renewal and implicated in the redefinition of communal and political authority that fueled the processes of state and community building in a competitive and mimetic fashion across large parts of early modern Eurasia. Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these discourses came to be visibly entangled in the Ottoman context as a result of inter-imperial and inter-communal rivalries, greater mobility of people across large distances and imperial as well as confessional boundaries, and continued comparisons and commensurations that this mobility provoked.¹⁵

Recent research has highlighted the effects of this new early modern mobility and movement of people, ideas, and objects, as well as the role of comparison,

¹³ Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize’, p. 305.

¹⁴ The volume is based on the papers presented at the conference entitled ‘Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on Community- and Confession-Building Initiatives in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries’, which took place at Central European University in Budapest, June 1–3, 2018. It was organized within the framework of the ERC project entitled ‘The Fashioning of a Sunni Orthodoxy and the Entangled Histories of Confession-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–17th Centuries’ (OTTOCONFESSION, 2015–2020, project ID # 648498). For details on the project and related publications see <https://cems.ceu.edu/ottoconfession>

¹⁵ On the methodological approach of ‘entangled histories’ or, more precisely, of *histoire croisée*, which inspires this volume, see Werner and Zimmermann, ‘Beyond Comparisons’.

analogy, and ignorance in the production of new knowledge in post-Reformation Europe about the Quran, Islam, the Ottoman and Safavid Empires and different confessional groups that inhabited them.¹⁶ These studies have duly emphasized the intellectual labor of various Ottoman subjects (typically Maronites, Jews and various converts from Islam) in the production of new knowledge about Islam or various Eastern Christian theologies and rituals, which was often employed in the context of inter-confessional polemics in Europe. However, there has been little recognition of the fact that the phenomenon of confessional polarization, polemics, and production of new knowledge about confessional others transcended the boundaries of early modern Europe, and that the reasons for this development were not limited to the fallout from the Reformation. Similarly, it is often forgotten that greater early modern mobility did not affect only Christians and Jews—Muslims were on the move as well, whether we are talking about Morisco refugees from Spain fleeing to North Africa and Europe, Sunni scholars from Anatolia and the Balkans encountering their counterparts from Damascus and Cairo in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest of Mamluk domains, or Sunni scholars from Iran migrating into Ottoman lands under Safavid pressure, to mention just a few examples of dramatic early modern encounters among different groups of Muslims from rivaling empires.¹⁷ Indeed, the period between c. 1500 and 1750 inaugurated profound but until now scarcely studied and understood changes in the way Ottoman Muslims, Jews, and Christians came to think about their own beliefs, rituals, and communal boundaries, generating important new knowledge about their own traditions as well as new takes on similarities and differences with the religious traditions and political cultures of rivaling communities and polities.

This volume—as well as the related sourcebook¹⁸—explores how the new Muslim, Jewish and Christian early modern discourses on communal belonging, orthodoxy and orthopraxy manifested themselves, intersected, and interacted in the Ottoman Empire and looks into the factors that informed the emerging Ottoman polemical milieu. The notions of ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘orthopraxy’ are here conceived not as fixed sets of beliefs or practices, but rather as discursive processes by which different social actors were seeking to impose as authoritative their own understanding of which beliefs and practices should be viewed as ‘correct’. The volume adopts a wider Eurasian perspective that allows contributors to explore the repercussions of the developments within various Ottoman communities as far afield as the Safavid Empire, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Russia, and Europe, and vice versa. Our argument is that representatives of various confessional groups in the Ottoman Empire

¹⁶ See, for instance, Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters*; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*; Loop, Hamilton and Burnett eds, *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic*; Malcom, *Useful Enemies*, etc.

¹⁷ For instance, García-Arenal and Wieggers eds, *The Expulsion of the Moriscos*; Pfeifer, ‘Encounter After Conquest’; Sohrweide, ‘Dichter und Gelehrte’, etc.

¹⁸ Many of the primary sources discussed by authors in this volume will be published in English translation and made available in the sourcebook edited by Tijana Krstić, Derin Terzioğlu, Polina Ivanova and Hasan Umut (forthcoming, Gorgias Press).

articulated their notion of correct belief and practice through both ‘vertical’ (diachronic) engagement with their particular traditions, and through ‘lateral’ (synchronic) engagement with the normative claims of other confessional communities. The papers focus on specific people who disseminated ideas about ritual and creedal normativity and social clusters through which such ideas spread. At the same time, the papers also explore the limits of such normative discourses and their agents, as well as the role of alternative ideas about confessional and communal belonging informed by various forms of ambiguity.

One of the goals of the collection is also to examine whether and how the evolving Sunni sensibilities of the Ottoman administrators, religious authorities, and various middling agents of ‘Sunnitization’ affected communal affairs and confessional dynamics among the empire’s Muslim and non-Muslim subjects; and vice versa, how different subject populations’ religious outlook forced Ottoman authorities to adapt their approach to religious politics. However, rather than focusing only on the vertical, top-down and bottom-up relations between Ottoman authorities and their subjects, the papers also explore the less commonly examined lateral relations, between different Ottoman religious communities themselves, as well as their encounters with the external agents of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, such as Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist missionaries. In this way, the papers depart from traditional historiographical approaches to inter-faith dynamics in the Ottoman Empire, which are typically limited to examining a single ‘ethno-confessional’ community and its interactions with the Ottoman state. The key terms with which this traditional historiography has operated, such as *dhimma* (‘covenant’; pact of protection for tax-paying non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim polity), *millet* (lit. religion, nation; but typically used in Ottomanist historiography to denote a self-governing non-Muslim religious community), *millet system* (a supposed system for management of non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman state), and ‘tolerance’, also all explicitly or implicitly privilege the vertical approach to inter-communal relations and the role of the Ottoman state as the exclusive arbiter of religious politics.¹⁹ The argument of the volume is that these terms are analytically inadequate to capture the complexity and multi-directionality of inter-confessional dynamics and the profound shifts in the meaning of being a Sunni, Orthodox, Catholic, Jew or affiliate of any other among the host of new religious communities that emerged in the early modern Ottoman context.

The essays focus on the following questions:

- a) to what extent were various Muslim, Christian and Jewish groups and communities living in the empire (as either Ottoman subjects or temporary residents) concerned with articulating what constitutes a norm in terms of belief and/or ritual? If the concern did exist, where did it stem from? Through which strategies and genres was it expressed and how was it

¹⁹ A classical study on non-Muslims in Ottoman society and their relationships with the Ottoman government is Braude and Lewis eds, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*. For a recent re-evaluation of the approaches to interconfessional relations in the Ottoman Empire see Gara, ‘Conceptualizing Interreligious’. For more detail on how the present collection seeks to reframe the discussion see the essay by Krstić in this volume.

- enforced? How was it resisted and what margin of tolerance existed for confessional ambiguity and indifference?
- b) what was the relationship between various Muslim, Christian or Jewish visions of ‘orthodoxy’ and/or ‘orthopraxy’ to respective intra-communal struggles for authority? Were these visions in any way related to the Ottoman imperial project or the state- and/or confession-building projects of the empire’s rivals, particularly the Safavids and the Papal Curia?
 - c) to what extent and in which ways did individual and communal strategies of asserting particular visions of ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘orthopraxy’ intersect and mutually affect each other in the Ottoman context between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries?

In their discussion of how Ottoman Muslims’, Jews’ and Christians’ attempts to define creedal and ritual norms affected their concepts of communal boundaries and political imagination, and how these attempts responded to (and emulated) one another, contributors were asked to engage with the notion of ‘confessionalization’ as a heuristic device. German historians Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling developed this concept in the early 1980s in the context of the historiography of the Holy Roman Empire to explain the societal impact of the parallel formation of confessional churches—Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist—in the post-Reformation period.²⁰ They were particularly interested in how the disciplinary tools developed in the context of defining and policing the boundaries of confessional communities could be employed for state-making purposes and disciplining of the subject population. The ‘confessionalization thesis’ they articulated, which among other points argued that the process of confessionalization led to the formation of the modern German state, has been much criticized over the last forty years. However, historians have come to recognize that by highlighting the new alignment of religious and political authority and their respective disciplinary powers starting in the early sixteenth century, as well as the mimetic and competitive nature of the community- and confession-building projects that arose as a result, the concept of ‘confessionalization’ grasped at something fundamentally relevant to understanding early modern religious politics not only in Europe but possibly beyond as well. They have also cautioned that attempts to build and impose confessional boundaries coexisted with and highlighted equally important resistances, ambiguities and indifferences that also need to be analytically accounted for.²¹

As I stress in my essay that lays out the theoretical and methodological framework of the volume and the project it arises from, the goal of engaging with

²⁰ Reinhard, ‘Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung?’; Reinhard, ‘Reformation, Counter-Reformation’; Reinhard, ‘Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?’; Schilling, ‘Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich’; Schilling, ‘Confessionalization’; Schilling, ‘Confessional Europe’. For a detailed discussion of the ‘confessionalization thesis’ and criticisms against it see Krstić’s essay in this volume.

²¹ For a stimulating discussion of ambiguity and dissimulation in the early modern European context see the collection of essays in Pietsch and Stollberg-Rilinger eds, *Konfessionelle Ambiguität*, especially the introduction.

the ‘confessionalization thesis’ is not to ‘apply’ a concept from European historiography to the Ottoman context. Rather, the aim is to examine the heuristic utility of this concept—and the robust debate it generated about sources and methods of research into early modern religious politics in Europe—for posing new questions and stimulating research into traditionally neglected sources penned by early modern Ottoman authors of different confessional affiliations about religious beliefs and practices. Until recently, early modern forms of belief and ritual of Muslim, Jewish, and Eastern Christian communities have been imagined as simple continuations of medieval traditions or their ‘perversions’ unworthy of closer study. Such a perception has been in part consequence of the nationalist discourses that lamented the loss of independence of various medieval Christian polities to the Ottomans, as well as biases in Islamic studies that privilege the ‘classical’ or ‘formative’ period of Islam (up to 1300) to the postformative one, leading generations of historians to view the sources from the early modern era as derivative and indicative of an intellectual decline. As a result, in stark contrast to the research on the intellectual production of early modern Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist authors, religious and intellectual history of the period between c. 1500 and 1800 in the case of all Ottoman communities is in many respects still in its infancy.

Contributors were also free to completely reject the concept of confessionalization if they did not find it useful, and propose alternative analytical vocabulary based on the features that arise from their specific sources and contexts. While most contributors found the exercise productive in the context of their materials and specific fields, some expressed reservations (see the essays by Carsten Wilke and Nenad Filipović) about the term’s conceptual baggage and potential to tackle the peculiarities of early modern Jewish and Islamic traditions as they manifested themselves in the Ottoman context. Ultimately, the aspiration of the volume is to offer new insights into how forms of belief and devotional practice became embedded into social and political dynamics in the Ottoman Empire in order to facilitate reconsideration of the analytical vocabulary and frameworks which have been used until now to discuss politics of piety in early modern Eurasia. It particularly aims to challenge the view that Latin Christendom was the only one to be affected by the spirit of religious renewal and reformation, which then spread around the globe as the only vector of confessional polarization. As a step towards this reconsideration, my opening essay explores the analytical purchase of the volume’s title phrase (‘entangled confessionalizations’) in an early modern Eurasian perspective, while Alexander Schunka’s ‘Afterword’ engages with the volume’s findings from the perspective of European historiography.

Rather than organizing the essays according to the communities which they primarily focus on, and thus perpetuating the mono-communal approach pervasive in the traditional scholarship, we have loosely grouped them into five thematic sections (although some essays address more than one chosen theme) to highlight the dialogue, common challenges, similarities as well as differences in various Ottoman communities’ experiences during the age of confessional polarization. However, those readers who are interested in the changes in confessional dynamics within a

particular community could also read the collection in a different order. Thus, the dynamics within different Muslim communities (Sunni, Sufi, Kizilbash-Alevi, Yezidi and Twelver Shi'i) are addressed in the essays by Terzioğlu, Filipović, Antov, Yıldırım, Aykan, Gürkan-Anar and Güngörürler; in the Greek Orthodox communities by Tzedopoulos, Gara and Olar, Tchentsova, and Voulgaropolou; in Slavic-speaking Orthodox and Catholic communities by Muntán and Filipović; in Syrian Christian communities by Parker and Ghobrial; in Armenian communities by Shapiro, Lucca, Santus and Ohanjanyan; in Jewish communities by Wilke as well as Weinstein and Burak. In order to highlight how these essays contribute to the ongoing debates in their respective sub-fields as well as to the overall inquiry into early modern Eurasian politics of piety, in the first part of the volume my essay provides the necessary historiographical background and conceptual framework within which the essays speak to each other.

In Part II, named 'Visions and Realities of Authority', the essays explore how Jewish, Orthodox Christian, and Armenian communal leaders sought to fashion themselves, establish their authority, and discipline communities of believers amid a growing confessional polarization in the Ottoman and wider Eurasian context, with or without the support of Ottoman administrators. The paper by Roni Weinstein and Guy Burak examines two visions of rabbinic authority in the Ottoman Empire against the background of both the rise of Kabbalistic spirituality in the sixteenth and the messianic Sabbatean movement of the seventeenth century. By focusing on the writings of Rabbi Joseph Caro (d. 1575) in Safed, and Joseph Sambari (d. 1703), a Jewish scholar from Egypt, they raise the question of whether there was a meaningful dialogue between these intra-Jewish dynamics that profoundly affected understanding of rabbinic authority on the one hand, and the broader Ottoman imperial context on the other. In particular, they are interested in the overlap of the Jewish and Ottoman Muslim legal histories, with a focus on the 'political and redemptive function of law in constructing big communities'. They first juxtapose Joseph Caro's legal imagination and reforms to those of the mid-sixteenth-century Ottoman Sultan Süleyman (1520–1566). Inspired by mystical visions, Caro strove to produce a code of law that would unify different strands of the Jewish Halakhic tradition, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, into a legal standard for the entire Jewish *oikumene*. Moreover, he envisioned the legal court of Safed as the central legal body of this Jewish *oikumene*, over which he would preside as the leading jurist. A strong rabbinate was also central to Joseph Sambari's vision of Jewish history, especially in the aftermath of the messianic Sabbatean challenge. He saw rabbis as political leaders of the community, but he also seems to have yearned for sultanic support that would shore up rabbis' authority and standing against the encroachment of the lay Jewish leaders and various messianic pretenders. Interestingly, Sambari's account, which features episodes of the rabbis' close relationships with Ottoman sultans who appointed them as heads of the Jewish community, is roughly contemporaneous with the increasing tendency of the Ottoman authorities after 1700 to intervene into the affairs of dhimmi communities to shore up the authority of the communal leaders, especially against missionary proselytization, highlighted also in the papers by Santus, Ohanjanyan, and Olar and Gara.

Henry Shapiro's article examines how in the first three decades of the seventeenth century Armenian refugees fleeing Ottoman-Safavid theaters of war in eastern Anatolia as well as Celali revolts (re)constructed their ecclesiastical institutions in the new locations in western Anatolia and Istanbul in terms of both priestly authority and physical buildings of churches and monasteries. Shapiro points to the intense infighting in the process with both local Armenian and Greek communities but also with the newly arrived Catholic missionaries. He shines light on the strategies of a learned Armenian priest (*vardapet*) Grigor Daranac'i (1576–1643) to establish his own authority in the conditions of a 'wild west' where various opportunists could 'falsely' claim religious and moral authority. While Grigor's generation of Armenian Apostolic clergy did not yet engage in a coherent project of confession-building, it nevertheless began to realize the danger posed by 'global Catholicism' and the necessity of articulating the boundaries of 'correct' belief and practice in order to preserve communal cohesion.

Eleni Gara and Ovidiu Olar team up to offer a detailed study of the contentious Greek Orthodox Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris' (d. 1638) administrative activities and authority-building strategies. They focus in particular on the nature of his power as a church leader to bring about a much-needed reform at a time of profound economic crisis for both the Orthodox church and the Ottoman state. Starting with the idea that a renewal of Orthodoxy about which Loukaris dreamed could not be realized without an administrative reform, Gara and Olar look at the surviving documents from the patriarchal and Ottoman archives to examine his strategies for reviving the financial health of the church. They suggest that Loukaris successfully argued to Ottoman authorities that without the support of the Ottoman state in shoring up the patriarch's authority and ability to appoint bishops and metropolitans who had immediate access to cash, both the church and the state would suffer setbacks. They, thus, examine the role of the Ottoman state in creating the preconditions for the patriarchs to enhance their authority and initiate various community- and confession-building projects.

Vera Tchentsova sheds light on how the patronage of the Ottoman state as well as inter-imperial politics helped the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople to establish and extend its jurisdiction beyond the boundaries of the empire. She examines how the dynamics between the Orthodox and Uniate churches in Kyiv, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, resonated with the Orthodox ecclesiastical establishment in both the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Her essay focuses on the strategies devised by the Patriarchate of Constantinople to exert its jurisdictional oversight and influence in the Metropolitanate of Kyiv in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest of Kamyanets-Podolskij in 1672 and demonstrates that it involved a triangulation with Moscow. Tchentsova also underscores the extent to which the boundaries of different Orthodox groups and their confessional cultures were determined by the combination of political factors—what she refers to as 'confessional absolutism' of early modern states. She also emphasizes that while we can speak of connected histories of Eastern Christians, we cannot assume any homogeneity of experience, even within the same confessional group.

Cesare Santus' paper focuses on the fallout from the aggressive late-seventeenth-century Catholic missionary strategies among Ottoman Christians backed by France and a particularly fascinating episode in the process of entrenchment between the Catholic and Apostolic Armenians between 1695 and 1703. He examines the joint efforts of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Awetik^c Ewdokacⁱ, and the Ottoman chief jurist (sheikh ül-islam) Feyzullah Efendi to curb the influence of Catholic missionaries among Ottoman Armenians and stop and reverse conversions to Catholicism. Delving into the motivation of the Ottoman chief jurist to get involved more decisively into the affairs of dhimmi communities and alter confessional dynamics in favor of Ottoman-appointed communal leaders and their traditions, Santus sheds light on the growing—although by no means universal—realization of the Ottoman administration that what was at stake in conversions to Catholicism was also, at least in part, Ottoman sovereignty. Like Ohanjanyan in her reading of polemical works by Istanbul-based Armenian intellectuals, Santus also highlights the shared conceptual vocabulary that the Patriarch and the sheikh ül-islam invoked in their official pronouncements to their communities, pointing to the entangled visions of confessional disciplining between the two communal leaders.

In Part III, entitled 'Varieties of Textual Communities in the Ottoman Arena of Confessional Polarization', papers examine various types of communities that emerged in the Ottoman Empire around texts that in some cases had normative aspirations (like Alevi *Buyruks* or Catholic literature in Arabic and Syriac disseminated among communities of Eastern Christians) while in others they inspired group solidarity of a different kind that nevertheless reflected the broader confessional dynamics of the era and constituted a reaction to them. Thus, Carsten Wilke focuses on one of the major early modern Jewish diaspora-wide developments that emerged from the Ottoman Empire, namely the rise and spread of Kabbalistic spirituality and Kabbalistic fraternities. He underscores the fact that while Safed in Ottoman Galilee certainly became the center from which interpretations of the *Zohar*, the major work of Kabbalistic lore published in 1558, emerged and inspired a diaspora-wide messianic ideology, it was the inter-imperial mobility of the Jews between Ottoman Palestine and the major Jewish centers in Habsburg Central Europe, such as Prague and Buda, that enabled this phenomenon to happen. Wilke looks at the scholarly links, economic considerations, and religious practices of individuals such as the Moravian Kabbalist Shlomel ben Hayyim who travelled to Safed in the first decade of the 1600s and circulated news about the life of mystics in the Holy Land, gradually establishing the template for Kabbalistic hagiography and popularizing among the diaspora the view of Safed as the city of Kabbalists and the place of encounter of the Jews from all the world. Wilke argues that in Safed various strands of Jewish tradition, from Spain, Italy and the Habsburg Empire, merged into a new, more universal entity, which was symbolically captured in Joseph Caro's synthetic legal work discussed by Weinstein and Burak. In reflecting on the question of confessionalization, Wilke points out that Kabbalists displayed no obsession with converting religious others and conceived of their knowledge as something that should be available only to the select few. It was more of an inward turn towards moral discipline and piety, not

necessarily inspired by the trauma of the exile but rather by a variety of Jewish traditions entangled with both Reformation-era Christian sensibilities imbibed by the Conversos and the Sufi Muslim practices, all of which converged in Safed.

Rıza Yıldırım focuses on the central textual source of Kizilbash-Alevi piety known as *Buyruk* ('commandment' in Turkish) and historicizes this genre against the background of the evolving relationship of Kizilbash-Alevi communities with both Ottoman and Safavid authorities and their respective projects to define creedal and ritual norms. He draws analogy between the *Buyruk* and its role in the formation and standardization of a distinct Kizilbash-Alevi piety and communal authority structure, and the Christian catechisms' role in confession- and community-building projects in post-Reformation Europe, while emphasizing differences in their social usage. The earliest *Buyruk* text, according to Yıldırım, emerged from the attempt to write down, systematize, and standardize the teachings of the Safavid order for its Kizilbash followers, both in the Safavid Empire and Ottoman Anatolia, most likely in the reign of Shah Tahmasb I (1524–1576). He argues that the greater variety in *Buyruk* texts, which is evident today, can be traced to a later dynamic, namely the breaking of the Anatolian Kizilbash communities' connection with the shah in Iran after the demise of the Safavid state in the 1730s, and the subsequent rise of the regional and local recensions of the text reflecting the communities' new conditions and localized concerns.

The subject of Nikolay Antov's paper is closely related to that of Yıldırım and Terzioğlu because it focuses on the largely rural Sufi groups known as Abdals of Rum. Antov studies two saintly vitae (*vilayetname*) associated with the milieu of Abdals of Rum in Eastern Rumeli, produced at two critical points in the gradual process of Sunnitization of Ottoman society—mid-to late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. He argues that the two hagiographies reflect the Abdals' community-building efforts amidst the growing sectarian polarization in Ottoman domains as well as their changing relationship with Ottoman authorities and other non-conformist Sufi groups into which they were gradually absorbed, such as Bektashi and Kizilbash-Alevi communities. Antov's research suggests that as an example of 'failed' community-building in the age of confessional polarization the case of Abdals of Rum is instructive for understanding how the process of Sunnitization, which was ultimately more successful in urban centers, also rearranged dynamics in rural areas, leading to blending of smaller non-conformist groups into larger ones that were themselves prompted to articulate their creedal and ritual norms over the course of the sixteenth century.

Yorgos Tzedopoulos asks the question of whether the signs of a distinctly Orthodox confessional identity could be seen in Greek Orthodox neomartyrologies written between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Pointing to the importance of martyrdom in the context of competing Catholic and Lutheran confessional projects and social scripts for enactment of confessional identities, Tzedopoulos examines whether Orthodox martyrdom was used to a similar effect, and whether it could serve as a lens through which to study an 'Orthodox confessionalization'. He argues that unlike Catholic and Lutheran narratives about martyrs, which were written in

vernacular and intended for wide dissemination, in the Ottoman Orthodox context between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries martyrdom suffered from an ‘ecclesiastical diglossia’—the phenomenon whereby in vernacular texts for popular religious instruction martyrdom was discouraged and depicted as irrelevant under the ‘tolerant’ Ottoman rule, while in the texts written in archaizing Greek language for the ecclesiastical audiences, it was very much present as the ‘holiest and best baptism’. Echoing the discursive distinction between the elite and commoner in Sunni Islam, highlighted by Terzioğlu and Filipović in their papers, and the idea that the elites could use certain concepts and expressions whose esoteric meaning they could comprehend unlike the masses who would inevitably take them literally and misunderstand them, Tzedopoulos builds a sophisticated case for the ambiguity of martyrdom in the Orthodox discourse. However, he also traces the process of its disambiguation and progressive confessionalization over the course of the seventeenth century in the hands of middling local actors and monastic circles, as a result of their interaction with Catholic missionaries and Ottoman Sunnizing policies.

John-Paul Ghobrial’s paper focuses on the Church of the East in Ottoman Mesopotamia c. 1674 to ask what it meant for Eastern Syrians to become Catholic at this time. He examines the literature published by the Propaganda Fide in Arabic and Syriac intended for the Catholic education of Eastern Christians and argues that this literature was not simply translated from Latin to Arabic or Syriac, but entailed a more complex process of mediation that included multiple agents in different locations in Europe and the Ottoman Empire. He shows that for Eastern Syrians in Diyarbakır, most of whom spoke Syriac and Kurdish, becoming Catholic and being exposed to confessional literature published by the Propaganda Fide could mean not only a progressive exposure to more Arabic but also to Maronite traditions and liturgical content due to the preponderance of Maronites in the translation efforts of the Propaganda Fide. Ghobrial thus points to an interesting geographic triangulation in Catholicization of Eastern Christians, while suggesting that by promoting Maronite traditions in Arabic, Catholic confessional literature acted as a unifying factor for numerous Uniate churches that emerged within different Eastern Christian traditions.

Part IV delves into different polemical encounters within and between communities in an inter-imperial perspective. Damla Gürkan-Anar’s essay thus illustrates the importance of inter-imperial competition and polemics with the Ottomans in the Safavid molding of the Twelver Shi’ite tradition, now that Imami Twelver Shi’ite scholars, whose doctrines developed in the conditions of historical subjugation to the Sunnis, found themselves for the first time in a position to formulate policies necessary for establishing and ruling a Shi’ite state. Gürkan-Anar focuses specifically on the issue of Friday prayer, which was considered by medieval Imami scholars as temporarily suspended due to the absence of the Imam who was believed to be in occultation, as well as due to practical obstacles to his representatives (faqih or mujtahid) potentially carrying out this ritual under Sunni rule. With the Friday prayer and congregational prayers in general becoming key to the Ottoman sultan’s claim of being the implementer of the divine law in his realm,

and the failure to uphold the Friday prayer and respect mosques becoming the marker of heresy in the Ottoman Sunni discourse, the Safavid shahs were put on the defensive and strove to reconsider the Imami tradition on the subject and reintroduce Friday prayers in order to counter Ottoman accusations. Gürkan-Anar explores this debate through both polemical treatises and architectural history—specifically, the function of mosques built by Safavid shahs in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. She argues that although Imami scholars never reached an agreement on the issue during the Safavid era, several shahs promoted the ritual and even built Friday congregational mosques, mirroring their Ottoman rivals. She reminds us that Shi'i scholars hailing from the Ottoman realms, like Mirza Makhdum, were crucial for formulating new arguments in this respect and postulating that Friday prayer should be obligatory for each Shi'ite believer.

Lucy Parker's paper focuses on the 'Chaldean' branch of the Church of the East in Ottoman Mesopotamia whose patriarchs entered into union with Rome in 1552 and examines the textual evidence for polemics between them and the rest of the community that remained faithful to the 'traditional' teachings of the Church. Parker argues against continuity between the group that turned towards Rome in the sixteenth century and the Chaldean church that emerges in Diyarbakır in the later seventeenth century, discussed by Ghobrial in his paper. Rather, she emphasizes discontinuities and ruptures in what has often been imagined as a linear process of confession-building. She underlines that it is possible to speak of a process of 'soft confessionalization' in the Church of the East, in the sense of emergence of new communal boundaries as a consequence of contact with Rome and rivalries with splinter groups, but without a clear confessional content. At the same time, she emphasizes that there was much fluidity and ambiguity, both between the two branches of the Church of the East she discusses, and with other Syriac Christian communities, until the early eighteenth century when more clearly defined confessional loyalties emerge.

Paolo Lucca discusses the activities of a controversial Dominican missionary Paolo Piromalli (d. 1667) among Armenians of the Archdiocese of Nakhichevan and New Julfa in the Safavid Empire, in Ottoman Istanbul, and Lviv in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, between 1632 and 1664. His paper illustrates the complexity of relations among different Armenian ecclesiastical authorities and merchant communities in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the one hand and Catholic missionaries on the other, bringing the economic interests of various actors into the discussion of confessional polemics and conversion. Lucca emphasizes that Piromalli's strategies for bringing Armenians into union with Rome evolved in terms of practical political steps that he envisioned as necessary for the union but never in terms of theological approach, which remained intransigently Tridentine despite local exigencies. Thus, Piromalli never seized to view Apostolic Armenians as incorrigible schismatics, rather than exploring possible common points between Catholic and Apostolic theologies, like local Catholics (especially Mekhtariists) later did or as Gēorg Mxlayim Ōḷi, discussed by Ohanjanyan in this volume, endeavored to do.

Anna Ohanjanyan highlights how the contact with Catholic missionaries and their confessional polemical vocabulary but also the wider polemical environment of Istanbul, in which Muslims simultaneously vied over the meaning of tradition and correct practices, affected the way Apostolic Armenian theologians began to think and write about their own creedal and ritual tradition. At the heart of her paper is a Jesuit-trained Armenian theologian, Gēorg Mxlayim Ōĥi (d. 1758), who tried to re-think old theological terms in light of growing communal polarization and usher in new terms to capture traditional concepts in a way that would de-emphasize the theological rift between Catholic and Apostolic interpretations. Her paper traces a growing entrenchment between Catholic and Apostolic Armenians between the 1690s and 1730s and Mxlayim's own transformation from an ecumenist into a staunch anti-Catholic. Ohanjanyan's work highlights the richness of manuscript material in Armenian and Armeno-Turkish for the study of confessionalism in the Ottoman Empire and the new dynamics within Ottoman Armenian communities, especially in large urban centers.

Margarita Voulgaropoulou focuses on the process of Greek Orthodox clergymen's negotiation with and differentiation from the Catholics and Protestants between the 1670s and 1690s. She examines the network of Greek Orthodox, Orthodox philo-Catholic, Armenian, and other Eastern Christian clergy of various theological persuasions, as well as various lay individuals, who submitted their confessions of faith to the French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Marquis de Nointel (d. 1685, ambassador 1670–1679). Engaged primarily in the task of renewing the Ottoman-French capitulations and reconfirming the French protectorate over Catholics in Ottoman domains, Nointel also worked on a side-mission of strengthening the cause of the French Jansenists in their debate with Calvinists over the Eucharist by obtaining confessions of faith by Eastern Christian clergy that demonstrated their siding with Catholics on the issue. Voulgaropoulou discusses a variety of agents who aided Nointel and their agendas, including financial and political ones, but she also asks the question of whether and how the Orthodox' participation in western Christian confessional polemics raised their confessional awareness and contributed to the formulation of explicitly Orthodox doctrinal and ritual norms. She demonstrates that, although the submitted confessions focused largely on liturgical issues and followed a particular format that was possibly based on a prepared questionnaire, they still played a role in raising awareness among the Orthodox that they should provide concrete answers to questions that were debated across the Christian denominational spectrum. These questions also contributed to the gradual realization among the Orthodox that they were only one group within that spectrum, while still claiming to be the one, true, universal church.

In Part V, entitled 'Contextual Limits of Confessional Ambiguities', papers turn away from the discussion of how various groups and individuals in Ottoman society sought to define authority and impose ideas of an 'orthodoxy' and/or 'orthopraxy' towards examples of confessional, ritual, and discursive ambiguities that coexisted with these attempts or emerged in reaction to them. Derin Terzioğlu sets the stage for this discussion with her essay that engages with the arguments articulated in

recent studies that the tolerance for ambiguity (as discussed by Thomas Bauer) and plurality of hermeneutical approaches (as discussed by Shahab Ahmed) were inherent in Islam prior to its ‘religionization’ and tendency to reduce it to legal discourse beginning in the early nineteenth century. She postulates that just like the attempts to define an orthodoxy within Sunni Islam, at no point was tolerance for ambiguity a static or timeless feature of Islamic tradition. She shows that while tolerance for confessional ambiguity—focused in particular around loyalty and love for the Prophet’s family descended through his daughter Fatima and son-in-law ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib—persisted among Ottoman Sunnis into the age of confessional polarization, its parameters were significantly circumscribed. This was as a result of the rivalry with the Safavids who derived their legitimacy precisely from the claim of being descendants of the Prophet through the line of the Twelve Imams headed by ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. Terzioğlu shows that the level of tolerance for philo-Alidism and blurred confessional boundaries depended very much on the social context and genre of writing. Namely, away from the public eye and the dangers of being misunderstood by commoners, whose intellectual capacities were considered sufficient for processing only the most basic, exoteric interpretations of the Quran and pithy formulations of belief as presented in catechetical literature, spiritual and intellectual elites steeped in the Sufi tradition could engage in the exploration of the more esoteric meanings of the divine message. More often than not these explorations of the higher truth by Ottoman Sufis and intellectuals led through the veneration of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and even the Twelve Imams as the guardians of the highest spiritual insight and were articulated in a variety of poetic and mystical genres that strike one as an anomaly in the age of supposed confessional polarization. This rhetorical ‘diglossia’ made it possible for discourses of orthodoxy and ambiguity to coexist in the age of confessional polarization, not unlike in contemporary European contexts, but on a much larger scale.

In his essay in this volume Nenad Filipović also reminds us of the multiple hermeneutic approaches to the divine truth in Islam, especially when it comes to the spiritual outlook of the empire’s elites like Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha (d. 1596). He warns that the expectation that there could have been a uniform confessional outlook in the Ottoman empire—one articulated by the imperial scholar-bureaucrats—reflects a statist approach to religion. Instead of looking just for uniformity, as stipulated by the confessionalization thesis as originally conceived by Schilling and Reinhard, he calls for more flexibility in acknowledging forms of resistance and indifference to orthodoxy in Ottoman Islam. He also emphasizes the importance of the local dynamics—rather than some overarching Ottoman imperial policy vis-à-vis non-Muslims—for the way inter-confessional relations played out in particular contexts. Focusing on two cases of the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha’s intervention into places of worship of the empire’s Orthodox subjects—to deprive the Serbian Orthodox monastery of Mileševo of its relics of Saint Sava and to convert a Greek Orthodox church in Thessaloniki into a mosque—Filipović demonstrates that in both cases local circumstances and dynamics informed Sinan Pasha’s decision to target these sites. Indeed, several participants in the original workshop from which this

volume emanates emphasized the importance of monasteries and monks as key brokers of local confessional dynamics and imperial politics in the Ottoman Balkans.²²

Yavuz Aykan focuses on the Kurdish communities in eastern Anatolia and Iraq, exploring how confessional polarization and inter-imperial rivalry between the Ottomans and Safavids affected the religio-political outlook of the Kurdish tribes and their perception by the Ottoman authorities. He highlights the diversity among these tribes in terms of religious and political affiliation and examines the challenges this diversity posed both to the Ottomans and to the Sunni Kurds who sought their patronage. Among these tribes, Yezidis presented a particular conundrum to contemporary Ottoman administrators and their evolving understanding of 'Kurdistan'. Ottoman jurists had to deal with this group for the first time beginning in the first half of the sixteenth century, as Ottoman troops made advances in eastern Anatolia, and especially after Sultan Süleyman's conquest of Baghdad in 1534. As Aykan demonstrates, what appears to be the earliest Ottoman fatwa on Yezidis, ascribed to the legendary Ottoman sheikh ül-islam Ebüssü'ud (d. 1574), asserts that they are 'apostates', 'accursed unbelievers' who adhere to a completely different religion (namely, not Muslims), and habitual 'brigands'—all three qualifications referring to a particular legal status, two of which (apostasy and habitual brigandage) in theory necessitated capital punishment under certain conditions. However, as Aykan shows, legal theory and attempts to construct Yezidis as heretics and legal subjects ineligible for the protection of the Ottoman rulers tells only part of the story that obscures various types of engagements and arrangements that both the Ottoman state and Sunni Kurds had with the Yezidis over the course of the centuries. It also highlights the regional and spatial nature as well as limits of the Ottoman project of Sunnitization.

Emese Muntán takes up the issue of ambiguity in the context of ecclesiastical authority, legal pluralism, and the (in)ability of Catholic missionaries and clergy to implement Tridentine reforms in Ottoman 'northern Rumeli', by which she refers to the regions of Bosnia, Slavonia, Srem, and the Banat, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She focuses on the Catholic sacrament of marriage and how different legal and canonical jurisdictions and their agents—in particular Orthodox priests and Ottoman qadis (judges)—complicated Catholic clergy's attempts to enforce Tridentine norms by offering local Catholics different legal fora where they could contract and dissolve marriages. In this way, they forced missionaries and the Propaganda Fide in Rome to constantly negotiate and rethink the boundaries of what was allowable. Muntán underscores the importance of agents of other confessional cultures, Orthodox and Sunni Muslim, in shaping the local ways of being Catholic in northern Rumeli, while arguing that despite the inability of missionaries to impose Tridentine norms, one can label certain local dynamics as indicative of the growing

²² Unfortunately, neither Molly Greene nor Ana Sekulić, whose papers addressed this topic, could contribute to the volume. Ana Sekulić's research on the Bosnian Franciscans' 'conversion' of the mountainous areas and pasture lands in the environs of the monastery of Fojnica eloquently demonstrates the importance of focusing not only on the local confessional dynamics but also on how they were mapped onto physical landscape. See Sekulić, *Conversion of the Landscape*.

importance of ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘orthopraxy’. She refers to common Catholic believers who on occasion strove to prove to missionaries that they were ‘good Catholics’ despite their idiosyncratic ways of doing things. However, she also points to Bosnian Franciscans’ ongoing attempts to draw jurisdictional as well as spiritual boundaries with their non-Catholic competitors in the Ottoman sphere and demonstrate to the missionaries coming from Rome that their own as well as their flocks’ Catholicism was sound.

Selim Güngörürler’s essay discusses the ambiguities and their limits in the Ottoman administration’s management of Safavid Shi’ite pilgrims en route to Mecca and Medina, which were under Ottoman rule, between the 1690s and 1710s. His work also underscores how particular genres of writing, in this case diplomatic correspondence, could employ different discursive approaches to the issue of confessional boundaries and orthodoxy. He demonstrates that even though the Ottoman state facilitated Safavid subjects’ pilgrimage, and even allowed occasional donations of the shahs to the holy sites in Mecca and Medina, any requests or moves on the part of the Safavids that could be construed as undermining Ottoman sovereignty or aspiring to an alteration of the power balance between the two polities immediately led to a resurgence of animosity and rhetoric of religious deviance in diplomatic correspondence. He concludes that the rapprochement between the two states on the diplomatic level was unstable because it did not have the support of religious scholars nor were the latter involved in inter-state dialogue, despite the overtly Quranic language and principles that were invoked in diplomatic correspondence.

While the essays in this volume examine politics of piety in a wide variety of Ottoman religious groups and communities in both an inter-communal and inter-imperial perspective, like every edited collection this one also covers certain groups, periods, and issues in greater detail than others. For instance, there is no paper devoted exclusively to various Ottoman agents of Sunnitization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although much of the research on the question of Sunnitization heretofore has focused precisely on such figures and groups, the issue is by no means exhaustively explored.²³ Furthermore, while the papers frequently refer to Sabbatai Sevi and the Sabbateans, none of the essays focus exclusively on them. These lacunae partially stem from the fact that some of the original participants in the conference had to withdraw from the volume due to other priorities or publish their essays elsewhere due to tenure and early career requirements. Thus, one should read Nir Shafir’s article entitled ‘Vernacular Legalism in the Ottoman Empire: Confession, Law, and Popular Politics in the Debate over the “Religion of Abraham (*millet-i Ibrāhīm*)”’²⁴ and Hadar Feldman’s ‘Ottoman Songs in Sabbatian Manuscripts:

²³ In this respect, most work has focused on the legal opinions (fatwas) of sixteenth-century Ottoman jurists regarding the Kizilbash and various antinomian Sufis and their rituals; actions of the state against the Kizilbash and Shi’ite populations as reflected in the entries from the sixteenth-century records of important imperial affairs; and polemical works and social activism of various ‘Kadizadeli’ preachers and their sympathizers in the seventeenth century. For an overview and references see the essay by Krstić.

²⁴ *Islamic Law and Society* 28/1 (2020), pp. 1–44.

A Cross-Cultural Perspective on the Inner Writings of the “Ma’aminim”,²⁵ both originally presented at the conference, as contributions to the overall conversation and problematique at the center of this volume.²⁶ We would have also liked to have contributions on other groups of Eastern Christians; however, given that the study of Christianity in the early modern and modern Middle East (especially within the framework of ‘Global Catholicism’) has focused mostly on Syria and Egypt, we chose to focus on Ottoman Slavic-, Greek-, Syriac-, and Armenian-speaking Christians who have been less integrated into ‘global’ frameworks.

Despite these lacunae, certain conclusions present themselves in terms of overall dynamics and chronology. Based on the essays, no Ottoman community seems to have remained immune to the broader discourses of orthodoxy and orthopraxy that emerged in the age of confessional polarization from Europe to Iran, roughly between the early 1500s and mid 1700s. However, significant differences existed in terms of chronology, key competitors in the politics of piety who drove a particular community’s or individuals’ desire to define their creedal and ritual norms, as well as ability and desire of communal leaders to discipline their communities to adhere to these norms. Based on the essays in the volume, the Ottoman panorama of confession-building and polarization features chronologically staggered but nevertheless dialogic emergence of discourses of orthodoxy and orthopraxy that at times ran parallel but became entangled in certain points, only to run parallel again and converge and entangle at a later point. Thus, the Sunni and Shi’i discourses of orthodoxy began to be articulated already in the early sixteenth century, only to evolve and adapt to the changing social dynamics within the Muslim communities in and between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. After the cessation of wars with the Safavids in 1639, Ottoman Sunni Muslims turned inwards to argue amongst themselves over what constituted orthopraxy and orthodoxy, with hostilities and attempts by different groups to impose their vision of normativity on others peaking in the mid to late seventeenth century. While some Ottoman Christians had been exposed to Catholic missionaries since the late fifteenth century, it was really in the early seventeenth century that the missionaries imbued with the spirit of Tridentine reforms and Catholic Reformation began to arrive in greater numbers and make deeper inroads into various Eastern Christian communities. This, in combination with the presence of some Lutheran and Calvinist missionaries as well as evolving discourses of Ottoman Sunnification, triggered various attempts among Eastern Christians to define their own confessional outlook and distinguish themselves from others, both within the Ottoman Empire and beyond. As papers in the volume show on the example of the Greek Orthodox, Armenians, as well as the Church of the East, polarization within the communities that this engagement with the missionaries caused peaked in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century. Incidentally (or perhaps not?), the Ottoman Jewish community experienced polarization and emergence of the new discourses of orthodoxy exactly at the same time as a reaction to Sabbatai Sevi’s messianic quest.

²⁵ *Jewish Quarterly Review* 109/4 (2019), pp. 567–597.

²⁶ On the subject of Ottoman Sabbatean communities the conference also featured contributions by Cengiz Şişman and Pawel Maciejko.

The early eighteenth century, thus, appears to be one point at which various communal discourses of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, after emerging in different points and in response to various stimuli within and beyond the boundaries of the empire, seem to converge, with the result that divisions within each community became recognized by others. This convergence was particularly reflected in the newly-found willingness of some Ottoman dignitaries to get directly involved into the confessional politics of their non-Muslim communities—something that they previously avoided.

In this panorama, certain confessional projects seem to have had more ability to influence the overall dynamic of the age and trigger other normative discourses and community-building initiatives in response. For this reason, it may be helpful to think of certain confessional projects as primary drivers of polarization and others as more secondary and reactive. For instance, the Sunni-Shi'i polarization appears to have stimulated attempts to standardize Alevi teachings and spiritual hierarchy (see the essay by Yıldırım). The process of Sunnitization also 'ordered' the Muslim confessional panorama in terms of what is and is not admissible in public, prompting the emergence of various crypto-groups and strategies of dissimulation (especially among Ottoman Shi'ite communities), and pushing others like Yezidis into the legal space of heresy and apostasy (see Aykan's essay). The process of Sunnitization also informed, although secondarily, the processes of confession-building among Ottoman Christians and possibly attempts at standardization of legal norms within certain Jewish circles (see the essay by Weinstein and Burak). However, with respect to Ottoman Christians, the primary driving force was the Catholic-Protestant split and the spirit of the Catholic Reformation brought to the empire by various Catholic missionaries.

Finally, the papers presented in this volume illustrate not only the existence of various discourses of orthodoxy and orthopraxy that were legible across communal boundaries in the Ottoman Empire but also their limits, fragmentary nature, and continuing ambiguities. Papers highlight various Ottoman communal leaders' inability (and occasionally strategic choice not) to fully enforce a policy of confessional clarity within their communities. In some cases, this lack of enforcement stemmed from the capacity of Islam, Orthodoxy or Catholicism to accommodate ambiguity to varying degrees. In others, however, it underscored the absence of sufficient political and infrastructural power to enforce normativity in belief and worship, both on the part of various patriarchs, metropolitans, *vardapets*, and rabbis, and the Ottoman administrative and religious authorities who strove to govern an empire of vast proportions, with its many rural and inaccessible regions and largely illiterate, ethnically and confessionally diverse populations. Legal pluralism also allowed Christians and Jews to evade to some extent the disciplinary reach of their own communal leaders, while the plurality of hermeneutic approaches to the Divine enabled Muslims to circumvent in certain social, spatial, and discursive contexts the normative claims of the Islamic law that came to regulate public expressions of Sunni piety. As Terzioğlu and Tzedopoulos show, ambiguities persisted in the Ottoman confessional age, but not as some timeless feature of Islam or Orthodox Christianity, but in a close dialogue with and circumscribed by the discourses of orthodoxy and orthopraxy that

were becoming increasingly central to early modern political imagination and community building.

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2. CAN WE SPEAK OF ‘CONFESSIONALIZATION’ BEYOND THE REFORMATION? OTTOMAN COMMUNITIES, POLITICS OF PIETY, AND EMPIRE-BUILDING IN AN EARLY MODERN EURASIAN PERSPECTIVE

TIJANA KRSTIĆ

Thus, Isma‘il Sofi came to Persia, conquered it, so that the faith that first his father had taught, spread in all those lands. It had started in 1499. Short time later Luther emerged too and started sowing the seeds of his pernicious and infamous heresy in the German lands. And it is truly an astonishing thing, that at the time when among the Mohammedans the heresy of Haydar [Safavid shah Isma‘il’s father] arose, at the same time the heresy of Luther arose among the Christians. And not only in our own hemisphere, of both West and East, heresies emerged at the same time, but also in the southern hemisphere, in the New Indies, where many people abandoned their old religion and believed in Christ. Thus, at the same period everywhere occurred some kind of change in faith.

Paolo Giovio, *Historiarum sui temporis* I (1550)

This observation of the Catholic bishop and historian Paolo Giovio (d. 1552), made in the mid-sixteenth century, evidently rang true to the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Nektarios (d. 1676), who repeated it verbatim in his own *Compendium of Sacred World Histories* (1677), written at St. Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai more than a century later.¹ They both seem to have been of the opinion that the early sixteenth

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century ushered in some kind of a ‘global’ moment in the politics of faith, epitomized by the simultaneous outbreak of the Protestant Reformation and its consequences on the one hand, and the rise of the Safavids and their impact on the Islamic world, on the other. Is there something to this idea or were our early modern observers reading too much into the concurrent emergence of Luther’s and Shah Isma‘il’s ‘heresies’?

Recent studies on the concept of ‘early modernity’ have built a loose consensus around a set of post-1450 developments that seem to define the period up to the late 1700s as a distinct historical era on a global scale. Those developments are said to have included a much greater mobility and connectedness thanks to sea passages that for the first time connected Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans; accelerating bureaucratization and administrative centralization of early modern states; monetization and growing market specialization; rising literacy and textuality that went hand in hand with vernacularization; and firearm based warfare, among others.² Anything pertaining to religion is rarely included in the list of criteria, let alone systematically elaborated. However, some notable exceptions have provided inspiration for the new and growing research into the politics of piety in a global early modern perspective, including for the essays in this volume.

A pioneering effort in this respect has been Joseph F. Fletcher’s essay on ‘integrative’ early modern history in which he suggested that the rise of the urban classes across Eurasia between 1500 and 1800 led to the re-examination of religion and religious values, triggering everywhere reform movements that saturated society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and inspiring far-flung missionary movements.³ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, building in part also on Cornell Fleischer’s insights, drew attention to an early modern Eurasian ‘millenarian conjuncture’ and the importance of elite circulation for the emergence of ‘vocabularies that cut across local religious traditions’.⁴ Victor Lieberman, in turn, postulated in his ambitious endeavor to place South Asia into a global early modern context that during this period various ‘disciplinary revolutions’ exemplified by religious reforms in different parts of the world caused political pacification and broader social integration that led to the

research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 648498) and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

¹ I am very grateful to Nikolas Pissis for bringing this passage from Nektarios’s *Compendium of Sacred World Histories* to my attention and translating it from Greek (for the passage see Manousakas, “‘Hē epitomē’”, p. 317). He also pointed out that Nektarios was here borrowing verbatim from Paolo Giovio’s *Historiarum sui temporis*, vol. 1, pp. 527–528. On Nektarios, see Sarris, ‘Nektarios’.

² For the list of developments, as well as discussion of the concept of early modernity in a global perspective, see Subrahmanyam, ‘Connected Histories’; Parker, *Global Interactions*, pp. 1–13; Porter, ‘Introduction’; Bentley, ‘Early Modern’; Pollock, ‘Introduction’, p. 3; Strathern, ‘Global Early Modernity’, pp. 324–325.

³ Fletcher, ‘Integrative History’, esp. p. 25.

⁴ Subrahmanyam, ‘Connected Histories’, p. 748; Fleischer, ‘Lawgiver as Messiah.’ See also Fleischer, ‘A Mediterranean Apocalypse’, which will be discussed in more detail below.

expansion of the political and moral community and the rise of politicized ethnicities.⁵ More recently, in a review article dedicated to the global turn in the scholarship on the Reformation, Charles Parker observed that studies on early modern religious dynamics have been pointing to the similar ways in which forms of belief and devotional practice became embedded into social and political contexts across large parts of early modern Eurasia. This led him to pose the hypothetical question of whether it is 'possible that the Reformation was part of a global religious conjuncture', and whether we should rather think of a 'global age of reformations'.⁶

While Parker reflected mostly on the literature emanating from missionary studies, his question was also informed by the recent trend in Ottoman studies where over the last decade research into early modern Muslims' beliefs and practices as well as politics of piety surged, generating new insights into the nature of Ottoman Islam and its relationship to the processes of social change and imperial state-building.⁷ In fact, this surge is part of a broader recent scholarly effort to shed light on the so-called post-formative or post-classical (post-1200s) Islamic discourses, the neglect of which has led scholars to overlook novel and distinct developments in early modern Islam.⁸ Recent research has also highlighted the fact that in the aftermath of the Mongol destruction of the caliphate in 1258, the Islamic world underwent significant changes in terms of understanding the nature of sovereignty and experimentation with various models of legitimacy, which culminated in the period between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth century when the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires came into existence. The concepts of millennium and renewal of Islam played a pivotal role in the processes that led to the formation of these empires and competition among them.⁹ In the context of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry, the notion of confessional allegiance (Sunni vs. Shi'i) eventually became central to the empires' mutual differentiation as well as disciplining of their respective subjects, in a way reminiscent of confessional polarization that accompanied the formation of territorial states in Europe during the very same period.

In the past, these similarities, if considered at all, were dismissed as purely coincidental on the grounds that early modern 'Christendom' and 'Islamdom' had

⁵ Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, esp. p. 359. See also the insightful extended review of Lieberman's book by Strathern, 'Featured Review Article', esp. pp. 136–139.

⁶ Parker, 'The Reformation in Global Perspective', p. 931. In a recent book, Heinz Schilling argued for the global importance of the year 1517 not only in Europe but worldwide, gesturing towards simultaneous 'epoch-making' developments in Latin America and the Islamic world. However, his book is an attempt to place the Reformation in a global context rather than explore the global nature of the reformations. See Schilling, *1517*.

⁷ For an overview of the literature see the section below on the Ottomanists' discussions of the 'confessionalization thesis'.

⁸ See, for instance, Bauer, *Die Kultur*; Ahmed, *What Is Islam?*; El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*; Burak, *The Second Formation*; Yilmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

⁹ See especially Fleischer, 'Lawgiver as Messiah'; Fleischer, 'A Mediterranean Apocalypse'; Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*; Melvin-Koushki, 'Early Modern Islamic Empire'; Yilmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*. On related dynamics in the Western Mediterranean see García-Arenal, *Messianism*.

profoundly different historical trajectories, and that, therefore, any parallels in the sphere of religious politics could not possibly stem from related causes or be analyzed within the same framework. However, as the above-quoted passage from Paolo Giovio's and Nektarios' histories suggest, at least some of the more perspicacious contemporaries intuited that something more 'global' was going on. This raises the question: what if the Reformation was, in fact, a peculiar articulation of a broader trend in which the notion of religious renewal and disputes over what constituted the only 'correct' belief and ritual that guaranteed salvation fueled the processes of state and community-building in a competitive fashion across large parts of early modern Eurasia? In the first half of the sixteenth century, sovereigns and community leaders across Eurasia began to articulate their claims to authority and legitimacy in terms of their ability to set and protect the boundaries of 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxy' on the one hand and exterminate 'heresy' on the other. While they did so for different reasons arising from the specific political traditions and equations of power in different polities or regions, the result was similar and pointed to the closer alignment of various early modern states and their rulers with particular religio-normative projects. Exclusive claims to the representation of the only true belief and/or only correct ritual were increasingly calibrated in a competitive and comparative perspective, with growing mobility ushered in by the early modern era—of traders, diplomats, missionaries, soldiers, refugees, converts, laborers—triggering and occasioning ongoing and ever-new entanglements, comparisons, and commensurations.¹⁰ At the same time, these normative claims also faced various forms of resistance, ranging from open rejection to ambiguation, dissimulation and even indifference.

Recent studies have pointed out that this trend can be identified not only in Europe but across early modern Eurasia, including in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, and suggested that the concept of 'confessionalization' might be a useful heuristic device to discuss the phenomenon.¹¹ The goal of this essay is to examine the limits and potentials of this concept and the historiographical debate it has generated for the study of religious politics, piety, and state- and/or community-building in a broader early modern Eurasian perspective. As such, this essay aspires to provide a conceptual framework both for the present volume and for the project that it emerged from.¹² The focus of my discussion will be on the relevance of the concept of confessionalization for discussing the histories of various Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities living in the early modern Ottoman Empire. Like this entire

¹⁰ Particularly important for the approach to comparisons and commensurations in this essay have been Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*; Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters*; Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; Stoler, 'Considerations on Imperial Comparisons'; Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*; Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades*; Hennings, 'Rang und Kultur'.

¹¹ For different takes see Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, p. 359; Krstić, 'Illuminated'; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*; Terzioğlu, 'Where Catechism Meets *İlm-i Hâl*'.

¹² This volume is one of the 'deliverables' of the ERC project entitled 'The Fashioning of a Sunni Orthodoxy and the Entangled Histories of Confession-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–17th Centuries' (OTTOCONFESSION, 2015–2020, project ID # 648498). For details on the project and related publications see <https://cems.ceu.edu/ottoconfession>

volume, I approach communal relations in the Ottoman Empire in an 'entangled' and dynamic rather than mono-communal and static perspective, radiating out to the neighboring and connected spaces and polities through various forms of mobility and connectedness.¹³ As a result, the discussion below will also take into consideration relevant dynamics in the Russian, Safavid and Mughal Empires as well as in Europe, to the extent that they shed important light on the processes and communities living in the Ottoman Empire. However, the entangled approach does not apply only to the trans-imperial dimension of the present inquiry; instead of focusing only on the vertical relations between various state and communal authorities and their subjects and flocks, the discussion will emphasize the lateral, inter- and cross-communal entanglements within the empires themselves, which highlight the competitive and mimetic nature of co-existence in multi-confessional contexts.

With these goals in mind, in Part I, I first discuss the current state of debate on the concept of confessionalization in the historiography on Europe and recent attempts to recast it as a term of analysis for global early modern history, arguing that they have failed to appreciate the dynamics in the Ottoman Empire in general and in early modern Islam in particular. In Part II, I turn to those dynamics and argue that various religious groups living in the Ottoman Empire and early modern Eurasia more broadly experienced changing conditions for belief resulting from competing imperial/dynastic projects and new strategies of community-building that they triggered. In Part III, I examine how recent research in Eastern Christian Studies, Jewish Studies, and Ottoman Studies has evaluated and analyzed these changing conditions for belief, with particular attention to whether and how they have engaged with the concept of confessionalization to explain the new developments in early modern Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions. Finally, in the Conclusion I return to the question of terminology and re-evaluate the utility of the concept of confessionalization as a heuristic device for the study of early modern Ottoman and broader Eurasian religious politics while also considering potential alternatives, such as the notion of 'normative centering'.

PART I—THE CONCEPT OF 'CONFESSIONALIZATION'—CAN'T LIVE WITH IT, CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT?

The notion of 'confessionalization' is a historiographical construct that emerged in the early 1980s in the context of the German scholarship on the Holy Roman Empire. Historians Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling put forward the 'confessionalization thesis' to denote a particular post-Reformation alignment between the strategies of confessional churches to build a community around a standardized form of belief and practice on the one hand, and the steps taken by territorial governments to accelerate an integrating and unifying dynamic in society with the goal of building a

¹³ In terms of the methodological approach, both the volume and this essay are inspired by the *histoire croisée* approach as discussed in Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparisons'.

state on the other.¹⁴ The thesis built on the work of E. W. Zeeden, who argued that beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century Catholicism, Lutheranism and Calvinism underwent a simultaneous, parallel process of ‘confession-building’, which entailed the fashioning of clearly defined, textually determined doctrinal ‘orthodoxies’ as the basis for the formation of confessional communities.¹⁵ Seeking to integrate the study of religion into social history, Reinhard and Schilling argued that this process in fact had consequences beyond doctrinal and church history and that it fundamentally affected all areas of social life, from politics to family and gender relations. They termed this phenomenon ‘confessionalization’ and postulated that the building of confessional communities entailed ‘social disciplining’¹⁶ that could be used for political purposes, particularly for the goal of building a territorial state. They also argued that the consequences of this phenomenon were modernization and the formation of the German nation state.

Over forty years since its promulgation, the thesis has been extensively debated, tested and criticized, primarily among German historians,¹⁷ and these exchanges have engendered an enormous volume of research. As Ute Lotz-Heumann has summarized, scholars have attacked the thesis for its:

- a) macro-historical claims: i.e. the claims that confessionalization was a fundamental process in early modern society, without sufficiently taking into consideration non-confessional, de-theologizing (in law, for instance) or explicitly anti-confessional phenomena (secularization, skepticism, unbelief, etc.); claims that confessionalization process was directly related to the process of ‘modernization’ (imagined as a positive and homogenous phenomenon under the influence of modernization theory) and formation of the modern German nation-state
- b) proposed periodization: while Schilling saw the ‘age of confessionalization’ as starting in the 1570s and lasting until the beginning of the Thirty Years’ War (1618), Reinhard implied that it began already in the 1520s and lasted until the early eighteenth century (1730s). These differences prompted other historians to suggest alternative periodizations, undermining the idea that

¹⁴ For an overview of the theory and its theoretical claims see Reinhard, ‘Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung?’; Reinhard, ‘Reformation, Counter-Reformation’; Reinhard, ‘Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?’; Schilling, ‘Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich’; Schilling, ‘Confessionalization’; Schilling, ‘Confessional Europe’.

¹⁵ See Zeeden, ‘Grundlagen und Wege’; Zeeden, *Die Entstehung der Konfessionen*. For a detailed discussion of the meaning of the term ‘confession’ and its evolution through the history of Christianity see Pelikan, *Credo*, especially pp. 1–5.

¹⁶ This concept was articulated by the German sociologist G. Oestreich. See Oestreich, ‘Strukturprobleme des europäischen Absolutismus’.

¹⁷ As the thesis was introduced into various historiographical traditions around Europe, different takes on it emerged. For the discussion of this issue see the ‘Focal Point/Themenschwerpunkt: Confessionalization and Social Discipline in France, Italy and Spain’ in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 94/1 (2003).

- the 'age of confessionalization' can be precisely chronologically defined and calling into question the criteria based on which periodization is to be made
- c) insufficient attention to the role of theological 'truth' and the specific characteristics of different confessions: by likening and levelling the processes of building the three confessions (Protestant, Catholic, Reformed), the concept of confessionalization is said to have neglected their *propria* or particular theological and organizational principles that differed considerably from one another
 - d) 'top-to-bottom approach' leading to 'étatistic narrowing': the thesis was criticized for putting too much emphasis on the relationship between confession- and state-building, being overly top-down and overlooking the ways in which social disciplining and confessional formation can arise from 'below', for example in various rural contexts where the pressures of the state were secondary to communal self-disciplining; furthermore, research has indicated that attempts of the state to confessionally discipline was more often than not a failure and entailed much resistance.¹⁸

These criticisms have led many scholars in Germany to argue that the confessionalization thesis has exhausted its heuristic potential and should be laid to rest. However, in international scholarship on the Reformation and its aftermath a consensus seems to have emerged that although confessionalization may not be *the* defining trend of early modern European history and hold a paradigmatic value, as the fathers of the concept argued, it still constitutes a useful analytical tool for discussing certain dynamics that were an important part of the early modern European experience. The argument this scholarship advances is that what is necessary is not so much a full rejection of the notion of confessionalization but a restoration of the balance in research on early modern piety that would examine the interplay of various new normative discourses with lived experience, especially in the situations of inter-confessional coexistence, transconfessionality, and plurality within confessions, as well as a greater appreciation of non-confessional trends.¹⁹ As one move towards a more diversified analytical toolbox, scholars have dubbed Reinhard's and Schilling's idea about the mutually reinforcing role of state- and confession-building as the 'strong' theory of confessionalization, suggesting that it may have been operative in some contexts in Europe but certainly not all. They have juxtaposed it to the 'weak' theory of confessionalization, which Philip Benedict defined as 'a process of rivalry and emulation by which the religions that emerged from the upheavals of the Reformation defined and enforced their particular versions of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, demonized their rivals, and built group cohesion and identity', which is seen as more

¹⁸ Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of "Confessionalization"'; Lotz-Heumann, 'Confessionalization'.

¹⁹ Dixon, 'Introduction'; Kaufmann, 'Einleitung: Transkonfessionalität'; Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Einleitung'; Forster, Gordon, Harrington, Kaufmann, Lotz-Heumann, 'Forum'.

broadly relevant.²⁰ Recent studies have suggested that our toolbox should also include concepts such as ‘confession-building’ to denote a more limited legal/theological process articulated by scholars, jurists, and clergymen that may not have affected society at large, as well as various terms that challenge the idea of clear-cut boundaries and identities, such as ‘confessional ambiguity’, ‘confessional indifferentism’, and ‘situational confessionalism’.²¹

Reformulating the concept of confessionalization also raised the possibility of its greater relevance beyond Latin Europe. In 2004, Heinz Schilling himself expressed regret that until now the research on confessionalization has been largely intra-cultural (remaining within the framework of Latin Christendom). Arguing for his thesis’ comparative potential, he specifically underlined the need for comparisons with Eastern Christianity and Islam, but until recently his call largely remained unanswered.²² Taking up Schilling’s plea as well as responding to the global turn in the research on the Reformation, in a recent article Cornel A. Zwierlein attempted to tackle the question of how the concept of confessionalization could be useful for the study of global history. He argued that at its core confessionalization was an epistemic phenomenon and that it had to do with ignorance (or as he puts it, non-knowledge), which led Catholic and Protestant theologians to draw on their own experience of confession-building or polemical needs in the European context to pose questions to their eastern Christian counterparts, pushing them to answer queries that the latter had never had to ponder before. These questions, in turn, induced the latter to articulate more clearly their own beliefs and practices, thus sparking a processes of confession-building, which may or may not have been accompanied by concerted attempts to discipline society, as envisioned by the fathers of the concept of confessionalization. Zwierlein sees confessionalization as an essentially empirical project of constantly asking and verifying how the actual ritual practice and held beliefs compared to theologically normative expectations.²³

While Zwierlein’s reconceptualization of confessionalization as an epistemological and empirical project is highly insightful and useful, he explicitly denies that

²⁰ See Lotz-Heumann, ‘Confessionalization’, p. 41; Benedict, ‘Confessionalization in France?’ p. 48.

²¹ For an insightful discussion of the how place, time, context, perspective, and intention should be reflected in the analytical terminology of confessional dynamics see Stollberg-Rilinger, ‘Einleitung’ as well as the essays in that volume.

²² He wrote: ‘Such a comparative perspective will, on the other hand, sharpen the understanding of the special role of early modern confessionalization in European cultural typology, while on the other hand it will prompt an understanding for the historical precondition for a fruitful collaboration between different cultures in a world that is steadily growing together’. Schilling, ‘Confessionalization’, p. 27.

²³ Zwierlein, “Konfessionalisierung” europäisch, global’. It should be noted that Zwierlein was not the first one to highlight the importance of the encounter with Catholic and Protestant clergy or their questions for the Orthodox church’s reconsideration of its positions and theological lexicon in the early modern period; his contribution is, rather, in using this dynamic of ‘questioning’ to rethink the concept of confessionalization as a global and epistemic phenomenon. See also his *Imperial Unknowns*.

Islam can be part of the discussion. For him, in order to be understood under the rubric of 'confessionalization', a phenomenon must be a result of or related to the European Reformation (namely, without Reformation, no confessionalization), which is why he sees the merit of talking about it in the Greek Orthodox and Armenian, and even Jewish contexts in the Ottoman Empire, but not in the Muslim one. While he makes an attempt to engage with the recent studies by Ottomanists, Zwierlein ultimately argues that, in addition to the fact that Muslims were largely impervious to missionary overtures, there is no evidence of any truly confessional dynamics in the Ottoman-Safavid or wider early modern Islamic world, and he declares that it cannot, therefore, be included into analysis.²⁴

However, as it was already suggested above and will be further elucidated below, there is neither need nor basis for crediting the Reformation for confessional dynamics among early modern Muslims. While the Reformation and its fallout certainly affected Ottoman Christians, it was only one of several discursive vectors informed by notions of the 'true' faith and 'correct' ritual that became entangled in the Ottoman Empire and made the reality of differentiation along confessional or sectarian lines legible across communal boundaries, but not *the* factor that directly affected or caused these dynamics among Ottoman Muslims. In a nutshell, the argument presented here is that one can dissociate processes of confessional polarization from the Reformation and study them as a broader early modern phenomenon of which the Reformation is but one prominent manifestation. Thus, in order to understand the contemporaneous emergence of discourses on 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxy' in large parts of early modern Eurasia (as well as their absence in others) and examine the effects of their intermingling in the Ottoman context in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries one needs a different, broader analytical framework. The goal of this framework would be to elucidate not only parallel but also dialogic and entangled processes of thinking about ritual and creedal normativity and its relationship to communal and political imagination across early modern Eurasia, without erasing or denying differences and specificities of particular contexts, traditions, and temporalities. With this purpose in mind, the following section will briefly outline the historical processes that led to the rearticulation of older Sunni-Shi'i differences in the early modern Turco-Iranian context. Then it will point to how subsequent attempts to define Sunni and Shi'i orthodoxy and orthopraxy came to coexist, interact, and compete in the Ottoman context with other normative confessional projects as well as various strategies of resistance to them, making the empire a meaningful 'laboratory' for examining the utility of the concept of confessionalization beyond post-Reformation Europe.

Before moving on, it is necessary to address the question of whether the term 'confessionalization' with its unmistakably Christian and European roots can be helpful in constructing this broader framework. Some scholars of the Ottoman Empire and Russia have argued that as such the term carries too much risk of normativizing (western) Christian and Eurocentric terminology and thus distorting or levelling the

²⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

peculiar embeddedness of ritual and belief in the lives of Muslims, Jews, and various groups of Eastern Christians.²⁵ Indeed, it stands to reason that a more global analytical framework to discuss the changes in the historical conditions that informed beliefs and ritual practices of Muslims, Jews, and Christians living in the Ottoman Empire and beyond between c. 1450 and 1750 would require a different vocabulary—preferably less laden with Christian- and Eurocentric connotations. With this caveat in mind, in the ensuing discussion, just as in this volume as a whole, the notion of ‘confessionalization’ is used reflexively and its utility as a heuristic device is continuously questioned. The goal is decidedly not to ‘apply’ it to the Ottoman or early modern Eurasian context but rather to examine how it can help us pose new questions to traditionally neglected sources and genres, while in the process generating new insights about the early modern period as a whole and potentially a new vocabulary to discuss it.²⁶ Similar to the term ‘early modern’, the concept of ‘confessionalization’ thus serves here as a tool to interrogate and/or facilitate the commensurability of different past experiences but does not automatically imply their homogeneity or equality.²⁷ In line with this, the question of terminology will be revisited at the end of this essay, having considered recent scholarship on the subject.

PART II—OTTOMAN EMPIRE-BUILDING, INTER-IMPERIAL RIVALRY, AND THE CHANGING CONDITIONS FOR BELIEF IN EARLY MODERN EURASIA

At first glance, the notion of confessionalization appears incompatible with the Ottoman Empire’s multiconfessional make-up and reputation for institutionalized ‘tolerance’ towards ‘religious minorities’, the like of which was unknown in contemporary early modern Europe.²⁸ As a Muslim-ruled state, the Ottoman Empire had a legal

²⁵ For skeptical reactions among Ottomanists, see Baer, ‘Contested Conversions’; Şahin, *Empire and Power*, pp. 208–209; Erginbaş, ‘Introduction’, p. 3; among scholars working on Russia and Poland see references below in the section on Eastern Christianity. For a recent consideration of the idea in the Safavid context see Tiburcio, *Muslim-Christian Polemics*. It should be mentioned that in all of these cases the authors understand the concept as originally formulated by Reinhard and Schilling.

²⁶ As Alan Strathern points out in his review of Lieberman’s *Strange Parallels*, an unreflexive adoption of the confessionalization model (in Lieberman’s case, of a model formulated by the historical sociologist Philip Gorski in his *The Disciplinary Revolution*) and its projection on a global context would result in a ‘confessionalization writ large’ rather than a deeper engagement with and understanding of religio-political dynamics in different parts of early modern Eurasia. See Strathern, ‘Featured Review’, p. 139.

²⁷ On ‘early modernity’ as a term that facilitates commensurability without rendering pasts equal see Conrad, *What is Global History?*, p. 202.

²⁸ This approach and vocabulary is widespread in both popular and scholarly publications about the Ottoman Empire. However, as Aaron Rodrigue has argued, the notion of religious ‘minority’, associated with liberal political systems and the possibility of achieving equal rights and eradicating difference, is inadequate for the analysis of the Ottoman social context where

framework to accommodate the 'people of the Book', Jews and Christians, who were considered protected subjects (Ar. *dhimmi*; Tr. *zimmi*), and their freedom of belief and worship was guaranteed as long as they paid the poll-tax. However, the nature of inter-confessional relations in the Ottoman Empire throughout the six centuries of its existence can hardly be comprehensively explained only by referring to the general framework of the *dhimma* pact.²⁹ This framework is also of very limited utility if one is interested in how the meaning of being a 'Muslim', a 'Christian' or a 'Jew' changed over time in relation to the vicissitudes of the Ottoman imperial project and inter-imperial configurations of power in the early modern period.³⁰ Furthermore, if we go beyond the habit of measuring Ottoman 'tolerance' by how they treated Christians and Jews, we discover that, starting in the sixteenth century, Ottomans ceased to be as accommodating as before to groups of Muslims who did not subscribe to what was understood as a Sunni orthodoxy in this particular historical moment. After all, while the *dhimma* pact conceived of difference among Ottoman non-Muslim subjects, it did not stipulate anything about alterity within the Muslim community itself or envision rights and autonomies for non-Sunni groups.

Although there has long been a consensus among the Ottomanists that by the early sixteenth century Ottoman religious politics changed from what Cemal Kafadar aptly described as a state of 'metadoxy' (or lack of concern with any specific belief) to a greater concern with defining and enforcing a Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy, it was only in the late 1990s and early 2000s that scholars began to explore the meaning and implications of this shift.³¹ Two developments have been cited as possible reasons for change in the Ottoman outlook in the early 1500s: the conquest in 1516–1517 of Syria and Egypt, depicted by scholars as the 'core lands' of Sunni Islam, on the one hand, and the onset of the rivalry with the Safavids, who in 1501 proclaimed conversion of Iran to Shi'ism, on the other. However, until very recently, the 'Sunni orthodoxy' that the Ottomans came to embrace has been understood as something inherited from previous Islamic polities in a more or less unchanged form and transmitted to the Ottomans by Sunni religious scholars coming from Mamluk domains after 1516–1517 or scholars fleeing the persecution in the Safavid Empire after 1514. A more concerted effort to understand the nature of Ottoman Sunniness in a historical context and the new concern with setting and enforcing the boundaries

'difference' rather than 'sameness' was the norm. As he suggests, in the Ottoman Empire, 'tolerance was predicated on the notion of acceptance of difference, but it did not imply a lack of discrimination'. See Rodrigue, 'Difference and Tolerance'.

²⁹ Friedmann, 'Dhimma'.

³⁰ Studies on medieval and early modern Iberia, in contrast, have long adopted a more dialogic, interactive, and polyphonic perspective on relations among Iberian Muslims, Jews, and Christians, and moved beyond conceptualizing them as stable and homogenous groups. See especially García-Arenal and Wiegers eds, *Polemical Encounters*.

³¹ See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 76; for pioneering studies on early sixteenth century shift see Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Le règne de Selim Ier' and Ocak, 'Les réactions socio-religieuses', among others. For a detailed discussion of historiography since the 1990s see Krstić, 'Historicizing the Study'.

of an ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘orthopraxy’ against the background of complex dynamics of the post-Mongol Islamic world accelerated in the 2010s.³² The onset of this discussion coincided with another trend that greatly amplified the volume and quality of research, namely the larger shift in the field of Islamic Studies towards a greater recognition of and curiosity about postclassical or postformative Islamic discourses and intellectual history broadly conceived, which had long been dismissed as derivative and therefore inferior to its classical counterpart.³³

As this new research has highlighted, in the aftermath of the Mongol destruction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, Sufi mystical discourse became the key hermeneutical resource powering alternative conceptualizations of universal authority in polities across the Islamic world by offering what Azfar Moin has described as ‘inhabitable cosmologies and performative narratives of sovereignty’.³⁴ Sufis imagined a cosmic government where the ultimate authority rested in the most perfect human being (a mystical *axis mundi*; Ar. *qutb*) who possesses the spiritual authority (*walāya*) but is at the same time the caliph on earth. But Sufi sheikhs were not the only ones claiming *walāya*. The same type of spiritual authority was associated with Shi‘i imams who claimed both spiritual and temporal rulership, tracing this prerogative through the lineage of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, and her husband ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), whom they believed to be the only rightful heir of Muhammad as the leader of all Muslims and the recipient of esoteric wisdom that explained the true meaning of God’s commands. ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib was also perceived by many Sufis as the holder of the key to the esoteric meaning of the Quran. This made Alid genealogy—i.e., descent from ‘Ali and Fatima—a coveted trait among political contenders and the veneration of the House of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) a widespread feature of piety across the late medieval Turco-Iranian world. As such, it in some cases blurred while in others accentuated the boundaries between Sunni and Shi‘i Islam (both of which were different at this point in time from the modern phenomena we understand by these terms today).³⁵

Another prestigious source of legitimacy in the Islamic world after 1258 was Chinghisid lineage. Through his rapid, extensive, and cruel conquests Chinghis Khan (d. 1227) cut a larger-than-life persona of a conqueror that attained mythical

³² Of particular importance for understanding how religious dynamics in the Ottoman period relate to previous developments has been the ERC-sponsored project on the Islamisation of Anatolia between c. 1100 and 1500 (IslamAnatolia, 2012–2016) led by Andrew Peacock at the University of St Andrews, with important contributions of Sara Nur Yıldız and Bruno De Nicola. See especially the essays in Peacock, De Nicola, Yıldız eds, *Islam and Christianity*; Peacock ed., *Islamisation*; and Peacock, *Islam, Literature and Society*.

³³ See especially Ahmed, *What Is Islam?*; El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*. For a more detailed historiographical discussion see Krstić, ‘Historicizing the Study’.

³⁴ Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, p. 8.

³⁵ For the medieval Central Asian context see McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia*, pp. 268–269; Woods, *The Akkoyunlu*, pp. 1–23; Pfeiffer, ‘Confessional Ambiguity’; Moin, ‘Sovereign Violence’; for the medieval Anatolian context see Yıldırım, ‘Sunni Orthodox vs. Shi‘ite Heterodox?’ and Peacock, *Islam, Literature and Society*.

proportions across Eurasia, including among Muslims. His charisma of a world conqueror was most convincingly embodied later by Timur (d. 1405), in whose reign and its aftermath the Chinghisid legacy began to merge with the Alid and Sufi modes of legitimation. The result was a powerful model of universal authority and sacred kingship that envisioned a ruler with both spiritual and temporal prerogatives whose divine blessing and chosen status was evident in his martial prowess and the scale of his territorial conquests.³⁶ It is against this confessionally ambiguous background, in which the elements of Sufi, Sunni, and Shi'i Islam were blended into a religious sensibility that favored notions of sovereignty embodied in a persona of a perfect human being with supreme martial qualities and preferably from the blood line of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, that the empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals began to rise.

Cornell Fleischer has convincingly argued that from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-to-late sixteenth century one can observe a Mediterranean-wide apocalyptic conjuncture reflected in numerous previously neglected texts relating to Muslim, Christian, and Jewish millenarian beliefs. He posited that these apocalyptic texts reacted to revolutionary events and developments all around the Mediterranean and beyond. In the European context these included divisions within the church, natural disasters, rivalry between the French Valois and Spanish Habsburgs for the imperial title, calls for spiritual and political renovation, the outbreak of the Reformation, the discovery of the 'New World', and the rise of the Ottomans. They informed the proliferation of apocalyptic literature, which was also validated by astrological prognostication, anticipating the end of days and the final 'conflict between universal religions and universalizing empires'.³⁷ On the eve of the tenth century of the Muslim era (1494–1592), Muslims were also contemplating the coming of the Last Days and the renovation of Islam and its political institutions in a continued attempt to re-conceptualize universal authority under the new historical conditions in the aftermath of the collapse of the Caliphate.³⁸

It was, arguably, the Safavid shahs who, as leaders of a Sufi order and claimants of Alid descent, could best 'convert' their millennial, messianic charisma into an empire-building project by 1500, forcing the Ottomans and the Mughals who were competing in the same post-Timurid landscape to experiment with other discourses of sovereignty, depending on their subject populations and moral communities to which they sought to legitimize themselves. Although the Mughal rulers were themselves nominally Sunni and Hanafi, they ruled not only over various Muslim communities but also over a vast population of Hindus, which required different strategies of state-building and sovereign self-fashioning. Thus, for instance, Akbar (1556–1605) used the expectations of the millennium to articulate a syncretic 'divine religion' (*din-i ilāhī*) that allowed him to style himself as a millennial being and a

³⁶ On this phenomenon see Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*.

³⁷ Fleischer, 'A Mediterranean Apocalypse', p. 19.

³⁸ Ibid. On the continued importance of the figure of caliph in the post-1258 Islamic world from Morocco to India see García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, pp. 217–295; Moin, 'Sovereign Violence'; Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*; Güngörürler, 'Islamic Discourse'.

universal sovereign whose authority, like rays of the sun, transcended any religious or sectarian barriers.³⁹

For the Ottomans, the decisive event that distinguished them from other post-Timurid dynasties was the conquest of Constantinople in 1453: by delivering a conquest coveted by the Muslims since the time of the Prophet, the Ottoman sultans could now style themselves not only as the greatest vanquishers of the infidels but also the heirs of Roman emperors, integrating themselves into a different historical scheme and vision of sovereignty. As Matthew Melvin-Koushki has pointed out, ‘Mughal and Safavid millenarianisms were cyclical and reincarnationist in orientation, while their Ottoman cognate was linear and teleological...Danielic prophecies current in the Mediterranean were crucial for this orientation that allowed the Ottomans to style themselves as the New Rome—so it was an empire in equal measure European and Asian’.⁴⁰ By claiming the title of the Roman Emperor, the Ottoman Sultans soon came into direct competition with Habsburg emperors who aspired to the same dignity, in part based on their role of protecting Christendom from the Ottomans. This act of balancing different discourses of sovereignty and legitimacy for multiple audiences culminated in (and is best documented for) the reign of Sultan Süleyman (1520–1566) who faced Habsburg Charles V (emperor 1530–1558) on one side and Safavid Shah Tahmasb I (1524–1576) on the other, both contesting Ottoman claims to universal sovereignty.⁴¹ In this respect, the Ottoman Empire represented the lynchpin of a vast Eurasian space that became connected in a new way through competing and mutually-defining dynastic projects and imperial ideologies.

Unable to comprehensively and convincingly wrest the claims to spiritual authority (*walāya*) from the Safavid shahs who had a vast following among the Anatolian Turkmen population, in the 1530s Süleyman and his ideologues pivoted to re-fashion the sultan as the renewer of Islam based not on messianic charisma but on ushering in an era of perfect justice, implementation of divine law, and protection of the true faith.⁴² In Alan Strathern’s insightful analysis of sacred kingship, this meant that the Ottoman ruler transitioned from an ‘immanentist’ to a ‘transcendentalist’ form of sovereignty, whereby he ceased to be styled as ‘sacred’ *per se* but came to play a role in the soteriological scenario regulated by law and ‘clerisy’, in which he became the ‘righteous’ executor of God’s commands on earth.⁴³ Part of this pivoting

³⁹ On the importance of the subject moral communities for the ruler’s religious outlook and the nature of the early modern state in Southeast Asia see Strathern, ‘Transcendentalist Intransigence’, esp. p. 370; Moin, ‘Sovereign Violence’; on Akbar’s *din-i ilahi* see Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, pp. 130–169.

⁴⁰ Melvin-Koushki, ‘Early Modern Islamic Empire’, pp. 368–369; Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, pp. 246–248.

⁴¹ See Fleischer, ‘A Mediterranean Apocalypse’; Şahin, *Empire and Power*; Kolodziejczyk, ‘Khan, caliph, tsar’.

⁴² On this process see Fleischer, ‘Lawgiver as Messiah’.

⁴³ For his theory on ‘immanentist’ and ‘transcendentalist’ forms of religion and their relationship to the nature of kingship and state centralization see Strathern, *Unearthly Powers*, pp. 27–218.

act was a progressive articulation of difference between Sunnism—defined by the Ottoman legal scholars as the ‘true’ faith—and the faith of the Safavid shahs and their followers, who were labelled by different terms, such as Kizilbash (Tr. *Kızılbaş*, meaning ‘redhead’, referring to the red headgear of the Safavid followers), *Rafizi* (Ar. *al-Rāfiḍa*, literally ‘rejectionists’, referring to their rejection of the first three caliphs accepted by Sunnis), and (less frequently) *Şi‘i* (Shi‘ite), and thus decisively otherized.⁴⁴ Over the sixteenth century, the Safavid shahs also underwent a progressive ‘transcendentalization’ of their rule, as they moved away from the messianic beliefs of their Kizilbash followers towards the scriptural Twelver Shi‘ism, interpreted by a newly established scholarly hierarchy, as the basis of their rule.⁴⁵ In the Ottoman-Safavid context, thus, the process of empire-building and competition over spiritual authority led to the exacerbation of pre-existing sectarian differences and their progressive articulation in new terms reflecting the respective priorities of the two rivaling empires as well as the profile of their subject populations.⁴⁶ This re-thinking and re-formulation of what it meant to be a Sunni or Shi‘i, and teaching it to vast Muslim populations in both empires, was a long-term process that unfolded in many different phases and received a variety of responses between the early sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Mughals, whose subject population overwhelmingly did not belong to what the Quran referred to as the ‘people of the book’ depended on legitimating themselves in the ways that went beyond the authority of Muslim scriptures and religious scholars (at least until the reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707)),

⁴⁴ In the state documents such as the ‘records of important imperial affairs’ (*mühimme defterleri*), as well as in juridical opinions (fatwas), the term *Kızılbaş* was most frequently used to denote the Safavid followers. Although some Ottoman jurists, most notably Ebüssü‘ud Efendi (d. 1574), maintained that the Kizilbash were not Shi‘ites but a new heresy that combined all previous heresies, most Ottoman literati used the term *Rafizi* when referring to the Safavid followers, which by the early sixteenth century was already a well-established reference to the Shi‘ites. Nevertheless, by not explicitly referring to the Shi‘ites as such, Ottoman scholars and jurists left some space for the semantic slippage and differentiation between the sharia-abiding Shi‘ites and the Kizilbash, whose primary characteristic was said to be the rejection of the sharia. On the evolution of the terminology and its conceptual complexity see Kohlberg, ‘al-Rāfiḍa’; Üstün, *Heresy and Legitimacy*; Baltacıoğlu, ‘One Word, Many Implications’; Atçıl, ‘The Safavid Threat’; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevis*, pp. 262–272.

⁴⁵ On the process of conversion of heretofore Sunni Iran to Shi‘ism, recruitment of the Twelver Shi‘i ulema from Mt. Lebanon and other medieval Shi‘i scholarly centers, and progressive establishment of the Twelver Shi‘i law as the basis for Safavid rule see Abisaab, *Converting Persia*; on the development of the Twelver Shi‘ite legal system under the Safavid rule see Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy*; on the distancing of the Safavid shahs from their Kizilbash followers see Babayan, ‘The Safavid Synthesis’; Babayan *Mystics, Monarchs, Messiahs*, esp. pp. 245–295; 349–437.

⁴⁶ Despite their ‘transcendentalist’ turn, both Ottoman and Safavid rulers continued to foster aspects of immanentist kingship. As Alan Strathern points out in his analysis of sacred kingship, this was a very common phenomenon. See Strathern, *Unearthly Powers*, pp. 81–218, especially 204–218.

and thus did not make a similar transcendentalist transition that constituted the basis for a sectarian, normative turn evident in the Ottoman and Safavid contexts.⁴⁷

One should not underestimate the extent to which this normative turn together with geopolitical pressures, both from the east and from the west, played a role in Ottoman state-building—similar to that of their Habsburg and Safavid foes.⁴⁸ Rapid military expansion and preparation for war required a more efficient extraction of resources from the subject population, which in turn highlighted the importance of the coordinating role of the state in managing territorial unity, especially in an empire cobbled together from many formerly independent entities with different customary laws. The need to extract resources for war and regulate duties and rights, including distribution of land and resources resulting from conquests, together with the growing monetization of economy, generated the need among various segments of society for explicit laws and led to the enhancement of the ruler's 'infrastructural power' (as Michael Mann terms it) as well as to the growing importance of the religious scholars with the requisite legal know-how.⁴⁹ The promotion of Sunni legal norms (selected and adapted to suit the needs of the Ottoman enterprise), which regulated legal transactions, public order, as well as ritual practice, directly aided the consolidation of the Ottoman domains with its linguistically and otherwise heterogeneous Muslim (let alone non-Muslim) population. This process started already in the mid-fifteenth century with Mehmed II's (1451–1481) empire-building efforts but attained a new dimension and meaning in the early sixteenth century as a result

⁴⁷ Azfar Moin made this point in his presentation entitled 'Mughal Religious Policy of *Sulh-i Kull* (Total Peace) and the Biblical Problem of Oaths' delivered at the conference on *Imperial Mysticisms: Piety and Power in Early Modern Empires from a Global Perspective* (Budapest, Central European University, November 28, 2019). The quote from the memoirs of the Mughal emperor Jahangir is indicative in this respect. Talking about his father Akbar's reign, he says: 'Followers of various religions had a place in the broad scope of his peerless empire—unlike other countries of the world, like Iran, where there is room only for Shiites, and Rum, Turan and Hindustan, where there is room for only Sunnis. Just as all groups and the practitioners of all religions have a place within the spacious circle of God's mercy, in accordance with the dictum that shadow must follow its sources, in my father's realm...there was room for practitioners of various sects and beliefs, both true and imperfect, and strife and altercation were not allowed.' Thackston ed., *The Jahangirnama*, p. 40.

⁴⁸ Most to the point see MacHardy, *War, Religion, and Court* on Habsburg state-building in the age of confessional polarization, while on the Safavid case see Abisaab, *Converting Persia*; Matthee, 'Was Safavid Iran an Empire?' and Matthee, *Persia in Crisis*.

⁴⁹ Mann defines two different ways in which state elites might be powerful. One he labels as 'despotic' or 'autocratic', by which he understands the ability of the ruler/state elites to take a range of actions without routine, institutionalized negotiation with other 'stakeholders'/power players in the society. The other one he labels as 'infrastructural power', which denotes the ability of the ruler/state elites to penetrate the structures of the society and 'implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm' in cooperation with other stakeholders. A state that has the former type of power does not necessarily have the latter, and vice versa. See Mann, 'The autonomous power of the state', pp. 188–189. On monetization of Ottoman economy and the rise of the 'Lords of Law' see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*.

of the clash with the Safavids, endowing the sultan with a moral aura of a protector of the Sunni community and the implementor of the divine plan on earth.⁵⁰ By the 1550s the initiative to promote and implement what the sultan and imperially sponsored jurists defined as a Sunni orthodoxy generated a tentative consensus among the Ottoman Rumi (that is, from Anatolia and the Balkans) administrative and military elites, religious scholars, middling literati and preachers, as well as urban artisans and tradesmen who all benefited from the state's expanded coordinating role and new patronage patterns, while it alienated certain groups that stood to lose from the process.

Indeed, the processes of Sunnitization and Shi'itization, and attempts to impose clarity where ambiguity prevailed for a long time, put into spotlight various Muslim communities not observing the newly-promoted creedal and ritual norms, many of them steeped in Sufi beliefs and practices and inhabiting the lands contested between the two empires, and singled them out for persecution and/or disciplining and/or close monitoring.⁵¹ As Ayfer Karakaya-Stump points out, the emergence of the Ottoman Sunni and Safavid Shi'i confession-building projects was not the only outcome of the inter-imperial conflict—given the centrality of the notion of spiritual authority (*walāya*) to it, Sufism (and Alid loyalty, as Derin Terzioğlu shows in this volume) was the primary arena in which the conflict played out. The articulation of the Sunni and Shi'i confessional projects was, thus, inextricably interwoven with the rethinking of the Sufi tradition to define 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' forms of following the mystical path, with the question of whether or not one showed respect for the divine law (*sharia*) being the primary criterion.⁵² As a result of being pushed beyond the margins of 'acceptable' and being externally defined as 'deviant' and non-*sharia* abiding, various heretofore loosely organized groups began to evolve into more formal 'confessional' communities—the Kizilbash-Alevi case being the most prominent one—with their own spiritual genealogies and rituals.⁵³ Reflecting the logic of this increasingly polarized landscape, the Kurdish tribes in the Ottoman-Safavid borderlands were also increasingly 'read' as 'Sunni', 'Kizilbash', or 'Yezidi' based on their political allegiances and practices, as Yavuz Aykan shows in his paper in this volume.⁵⁴

By the mid-sixteenth century, major lines of polarization between rivaling normative projects, Catholic and Lutheran, Sunni and Shi'i, backed by various imperial and princely powers, became indelible. It also became clear that the final victory of one 'true faith', while remaining the coveted goal, could not be achieved (only) by

⁵⁰ On the fifteenth-century attempts by Ottoman jurists and Mehmed II to set ritual norms see Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize'.

⁵¹ On Sufis in the Safavid Empire and their relationship with the Safavid political as well as Shii clerical establishment see Babayan, 'The Safavid Synthesis'; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*; Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*. On Sufis in the Ottoman context see below.

⁵² Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi*, pp. 257–258.

⁵³ Yıldırım, 'Literary Foundations'; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi*, pp. 295–302. See also the papers by Rıza Yıldırım and Nikolay Antov in this volume.

⁵⁴ See also Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, pp. 193–230.

military means but potentially through theological disputation and persuasion, while striving to clarify the boundaries in the meantime. This situation was acknowledged by Charles V's agreement with the Lutheran princes at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, epitomized by the motto of *cuius regio, eius religio*. In the Ottoman-Safavid context, in the same year the Treaty of Amasya was signed that ratified the sultan's and the shah's mutual recognition of the other's sovereign rule within his own territories, at least until the next salvo of warfare between the two empires in the late 1570s.⁵⁵ In both Christian and Muslim polities in question, however, from the mid-sixteenth century onwards (with tempo and intensity varying from context to context) we see more concerted efforts of the authorities to build communities around more precisely defined sets of beliefs and ritual and enforce these communal boundaries in public by various means of disciplining.

This growing sensibility across Ottoman society and institutions towards the issues of Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy gave rise by the early seventeenth century to the first wave of the so-called Kadizadeli movement. It started from the pulpits of Istanbul's mosques by preachers who decried what they perceived as deviations from the custom of the Prophet (sunna) and the divine law (sharia), and turned the moral tenet of 'commanding right and forbidding wrong', found in a number of Quranic verses, into social activism. The onset of this puritan discourse is associated with Kadizade Mehmed (d. 1635), who in turn drew inspiration from a mid-sixteenth century Ottoman scholar Mehmed Birgivi (d. 1573), the author of some of the most popular Ottoman catechetical texts.⁵⁶ In the cross-hairs of Kadizade's and his followers' critique were various forms of what they perceived as 'harmful innovations', in particular popular customs and beliefs (like the performance of supererogatory prayers in congregation or veneration of saints), and Sufi practices like the use of singing and dancing in the *dhikr* ritual. Coinciding with the cessation of the conflict with the Safavids in the 1630s, the Kadizadeli movement marks an inward turn of the Rumi Muslim society—by now more thoroughly informed about Sunni norms and sensitized to the issues of orthodoxy and orthopraxy—to become less concerned with heresy without and more focused on deviations in belief and ritual within.⁵⁷ Intermittently endorsed by Ottoman sultans, Kadizadeli preaching generated polemics and social polarization among Sunni Muslims across the empire (in some cases even physical violence) that can be traced in contemporary sources, forcing even those contemporaries who did not agree with their views on orthodoxy and orthopraxy—like Sufi sheikhs and their disciples from various orders—to be on defense and demonstrate compliance with Sunna and sharia, at least in public or in their writings for common readership.⁵⁸ Although the influence of the Kadizadeli-type preachers on the imperial policies subsided after the failure of the Ottoman campaign to Vienna

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the treaties of Augsburg and Amasya in a comparative perspective see Şahin, *Empire and Power* pp. 131–136.

⁵⁶ On Kadizadelis see Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*; Zilfi, 'The Kadizadelis'; on Birgivi see Ivanyi, *Virtue, Piety and the Law*; on Kadizade Mehmed see Tezcan, 'The Portrait'.

⁵⁷ On this dynamic see Shafir, 'How to Read Heresy'.

⁵⁸ Le Gall, 'Kadizadelis, Nakşbendis'; Terzioğlu, 'Sunna-Minded Sufi'.

in 1683, which they promoted, their views reverberated across the empire for decades to come. While their overall impact on everyday worship and beliefs of common people—especially those in rural areas—remains to be examined, in the cities they managed to create a polarizing atmosphere throughout the seventeenth century in which both Muslim and non-Muslim groups grew much more concerned with clearly demarcating and policing communal boundaries.⁵⁹

Hundreds of thousands of Jews and eastern Christians of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds inhabiting Ottoman territories were also affected by the dynamics between and within Ottoman and Safavid empires, making the notion of empire and the emperor's religion central to their own political imagination and salvation narratives. However, non-Muslims also reacted to and were affected by the dynamics in other non-Muslim communities in the empire as well as by various religious and political factors beyond Ottoman borders. Thus, rather than focusing only on vertical, top-down relations between the Ottoman authorities and their subjects, it is imperative to also look at less commonly examined lateral relations between the Ottoman subject communities themselves, as well as between various Ottoman groups and external agents of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, such as Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist missionaries. So far, however, Ottomanist historiography has largely focused on the vertical, top-down model of relations among the empire's religious communities (often referred to as *millets*), juxtaposing Muslim rulers to their non-Muslim subjects.

The term *millet* had three basic meanings in the Ottoman context prior to the nineteenth century: 1) that of 'religion, confession, or rite', based on the Quranic usage of the term where it most frequently appears in the phrase *millat Ibrahim* (religion or community of Abraham) that is meant to denote the only true monotheistic religion;⁶⁰ 2) 'religious community, community of the same confession or rite', whether Muslim or non-Muslim; and 3) 'nation, part of a people'.⁶¹ Additional complication to the term was added by historians who, following the publication of Gibb and Bowen's landmark volume *Islamic Society and the West* (1950), began to speak of a '*millet* system', which was imagined as a 'rigorous hierarchy in which the Sultan assigned the management of non-Muslim communities to their ecclesiastical leaders, the Greek and Armenian Patriarchs and the Jewish Chief rabbi, who were granted legal jurisdiction and to whom the collection of communal taxes was delegated'.⁶² This institutional arrangement supposedly began upon the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror is said to have appointed Gennadios Scholarios as the Orthodox patriarch, rabbi Moses Kapsali as the chief rabbi, and Yovakim of Bursa as the Armenian patriarch of Constantinople, thus creating three official *millets* with empire-wide jurisdictions.⁶³ As a consequence of this

⁵⁹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*; Shafir, *The Road*.

⁶⁰ On the changing connotations of the phrase *millat Ibrahim* see Shafir, 'Vernacular Legalism'.

⁶¹ Ursinus, 'Millet'.

⁶² Boogert, 'Millets', p. 28.

⁶³ This historiographical narrative and the existence of a 'system' was first challenged by Braude, in his 'Foundation Myths'.

historiographical narrative, the leaders of the three *millets* came to be imagined as ethnarchs, heads of state within a state, whereas *millet* acquired a meaning of a self-governing, autonomous religious community with its own courts (unless the case involved a Muslim). At the same time, the notion of a ‘*millet* system’ became the corner stone of the narrative about the institutionalized nature of Ottoman tolerance towards non-Muslims.⁶⁴

Recent scholarship, however, has demonstrated that there was no Ottoman ‘system’ in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the indirect rule of various religious communities, the number of which began to proliferate at this time under the impact of missionary activity and confessional polarization. Patriarchs and rabbis often acted as tax-collectors and transmitted collectively-assessed tax duties to Ottoman authorities, but they were not administrative heads of their communities, nor was their spiritual leadership uncontested by their own community members.⁶⁵ Similarly, while communal courts existed in certain places, they were not universally available to all non-Muslims.⁶⁶ By looking at a variety of administrative genres from different regions of the empire, scholars have shown that *millet* was indeed one among various terms in Ottoman Turkish used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to refer to religious groups and communities, others being *taiife* (Ar. *tāʾifa*), *cemaat* (Ar. *jamāʿa*) and *mezheb* (Ar. *madhhab*), without evidence of a standardization of terminology either in the documents produced by the central administration in Istanbul or by scribes and administrators in various locales.⁶⁷ Indeed, this diversified vocabulary went hand in hand with new splinter confessional communities seeking to achieve recognition as separate entities from old established ones, assert control over the places of worship in competition with other communities, levy taxes on their own members, and appoint their own communal leaders.⁶⁸ It was only in the course of the eighteenth century that institutional arrangements were put in place which can be described as a ‘*millet* system’, although the term was not systematically used until the next century.⁶⁹ Michael Ursinus has suggested that the progressive evolution of the idea of a *millet* as a formally recognized religious community led

⁶⁴ In 1991 Halil İnalçık was still suggesting that the ‘system’ was in place from the very beginning of the Ottoman polity: see İnalçık, ‘The Status’. For a more nuanced approach to Ottoman ‘tolerance’ that nevertheless retains the notion of the ‘*millet* system’ see Barkey, *Empire of Difference*.

⁶⁵ Braude, ‘Foundation Myths’; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, pp. 61–67; Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*, esp. pp. 19–62; Ayalon, ‘Rethinking Rabbinical Leadership’; Hadjikyriacou, ‘Beyond the *Millet* Debate’.

⁶⁶ Kermeli, ‘The Right to Choice’.

⁶⁷ Goffman, ‘Ottoman Millets’; Konortas, ‘From *Tāʾife* to *Millet*’; Kursar, ‘Non-Muslim Communal Divisions’.

⁶⁸ Examples abound but see, for instance, Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians*, pp. 263–293 on the competition among various communities of Eastern Christians in the Holy Land; Henry Shapiro’s essay in this volume for the competition among Greek Orthodox and Armenians in early seventeenth-century Tekirdağ; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, p. 149; Ginio, ‘Coping with Decline’, for the competition among Jews and Greeks.

⁶⁹ Gara, ‘Conceptualizing Interreligious’; Hadjikyriacou, ‘Beyond the *Millet* Debate’.

and represented by the patriarch or rabbi whose authorities were more precisely defined and supported by the Ottoman government may have been a reaction to the havoc wreaked by missionary activity among Ottoman Christians, which undermined not only the authority of Christian prelates but also Christian subjects' loyalty to the empire.⁷⁰ This makes a closer look at the nature of lateral relations among Ottoman communities, and their interaction with both Ottoman authorities and external agents of confessional initiatives, imperative for understanding Ottoman social history.

Sources suggest that some Orthodox clerics became aware of the Reformation and its fallout already in the first half of the sixteenth century, while the patriarchs in the Ottoman capital became exposed to both Catholic and Lutheran overtures for union already in the 1570s.⁷¹ Catholic communities and a small number of Catholic missionaries existed in several parts of the empire since the late medieval period, most notably in Bosnia, in the Cyclades, and in the neighborhood of Galata in Constantinople. However, it was only in the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century, especially after the establishment of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622, that post-Tridentine missionary efforts in the Ottoman Empire intensified, both in terms of attempts to provide better pastoral care for the existing Catholic communities and efforts to expand them by proselytizing to various Eastern Christians.⁷² After this point, Catholic missionaries—above all Jesuits but also Franciscans, Capuchins, and Dominicans in specific locations—could be found in varying numbers (mostly in clusters of two, sometimes more), in different locations across the Ottoman domains, with larger groups in bigger port or transit cities like Istanbul, Aleppo, and Izmir. Except for Bosnian Franciscans, who became Ottoman subjects after the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia in 1456, most missionaries, regardless of denomination, arrived under the pretext of providing pastoral care for the communities of foreign residents, tradesmen and diplomats of the nations that successfully petitioned the Ottoman government for commercial privileges ('capitulations'). These nations received a document affirming peace and friendship (Tr. *ahidname*) with the Ottoman empire, which bestowed the right of trade and residence in the empire, legal autonomy, and freedom of worship on their representatives. As early recipients of *ahidnames*, Dubrovnik, Venice, and later France (1569) were protectors of the

⁷⁰ Ursinus, 'Millet'. For an elaboration of this argument based on further sources see Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, pp. 53–65, esp. p. 64.

⁷¹ Pachomios Roussanos (d. 1553) was one of the first Orthodox clerics to mention Luther, thanks primarily to his education in Venice. See Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, p. 100. On Protestant and Catholic overtures to the Orthodox see Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople*; Wendebourg, *Reformation und Orthodoxie*; Ben-Tov, *Lutheran Humanists*; Frazee, *Catholic and Sultans*.

⁷² Belin, *Histoire de la latinite*; Džaja, *Konfessionalität*; Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*; Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*.

Catholic missionaries in different parts of the Empire, while England (1580) and the Dutch Republic (1612) promoted the Anglican and Calvinist efforts, respectively.⁷³

In addition to diplomats and missionaries, religious sensibilities and ideas about orthodoxy as well as resistance to it were also disseminated in the Ottoman Empire by converts to Islam from different backgrounds and the religious refugees fleeing persecutions in various European—especially Catholic—polities, from Iberian Jews and Muslims, to Protestants and anti-Trinitarians, many of whom sought protection and settled in Ottoman territories. In some cases these religious refugees entered the service of Ottoman elites—with or without converting to Islam—and imparted important information about political, economic, confessional, artistic and other dynamics in Europe to the administrators of the empire and its leading scholars. Although Ottoman sources rarely talk about it, spy reports as well as diplomatic and travel accounts suggest that Ottoman authorities were well aware of Luther, the Reformation, and the polarization that it caused among European polities, as well as that they were ready to take advantage of it for their own purposes, just as Europeans hoped to take advantage of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict.⁷⁴ This growing mobility and contact through trade, diplomacy, conversion or otherwise triggered constant comparisons and commensurations, not least in the domain of religious sensibilities.⁷⁵ For instance, the Habsburg envoy Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq famously reported that during a conversation with the Ottoman Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha in 1560 the latter asked him whether the kings of Spain and France were still fighting, only to wonder what right they had to do so given that they belonged to the same religion. When Busbecq remarked that they did so by the same right that the Ottomans waged war with the Persians, Rüstem Pasha retorted that the two cases cannot be compared and that the Ottomans hated Persians much more than they hated Christians and considered them more impious than any non-Muslim.⁷⁶

This anecdote also sheds light on the question why the Ottomans showed lenience towards Christian missionaries. Apart from the fact that their presence in the empire was seen as part and parcel of capitulatory agreements, the Ottoman establishment's guiding principle in this respect was the saying sometimes ascribed to Prophet Muhammad that 'unbelief (*kufir*) is one nation (*milla*)', meaning that all non-

⁷³ On Venetian capitulations and residents see Theunissen, *Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats*; Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*; Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; on Dubrovnik see Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*; on France see Veinstein, 'Les capitulations' and Eldem, *French Trade*; on England see Skilliter ed., *William Harborne*; on the Dutch Republic de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic*.

⁷⁴ See Isom-Verhaaren, 'An Ottoman Report'; Feridun Bey, *Correspondence of Sultans*, vol. 2, pp. 450–452; for European attempts to take advantage of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict see García Hernán, Cutillas Ferrer, Matthee eds, *The Spanish Monarchy and Safavid Persia*.

⁷⁵ On the production of new knowledge about Islam and Muslims among European literati of the confessional era, and the role of comparison and analogy in it, see Bevilaqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters*.

⁷⁶ Forster and Daniel eds., *The Life and Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 235–236. See also Ben-Tov, "'Turks and Persians'", on European humanists' perception of the Sunni-Shi'i split.

Muslims belonged to a single category and thus it mattered not whether a Christian was a Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant or something else, as long as he or she was an infidel. However, over time, the views of the Ottoman administrators on this issue evolved, and by the end of the seventeenth century, as papers by Olar and Gara, Santus, and Ohanjanyan in this volume demonstrate, a realization began to set in that conversions between different Christian denominations were not simply infidels' internal business but could affect political loyalty of the Ottoman subjects, shifting it away from the sultan to one of the rivaling European sovereigns.⁷⁷ At this point, the Ottoman state began to intervene more decisively into the affairs of its own *zimmi* (especially Christian) communities in order to shore up the authority of communal leaders against Catholic missionaries and better define the patriarchs' rights and powers in order to enable them to discipline their communities and raise taxes more effectively. Patriarchal letters of appointment (*berat*) suggest that by the late seventeenth century it became clearer to the Ottoman administrators that the interests of the state and sultan authority were not defended only through regulating the piety of its Muslim but also its non-Muslim subjects as well, insofar as it enabled the latter's communal leaders—appointed by the sultan—to maintain the boundaries of their own confessional communities, ensure their loyalty to the sultan, and curb foreign influence. This goal of limiting missionary influence, and with it, various Western polities' impact on the political imagination of Ottoman Christians and Jews, was one of the principal concerns of the Ottoman state in the coming centuries, but against the background of the changed equations of power with its European rivals. Whereas prior to the eighteenth century, Ottoman sultans graciously 'allowed' the presence and 'bestowed' privileges on foreign residents, diplomats, and missionaries, after 1700 they were increasingly unable to refuse foreign diplomats' requests.⁷⁸

These were the broader political and confessional developments against the background of which the beliefs and rituals of various Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Ottoman communities came to be rethought and redefined in the period between c. 1450 and c. 1750. It is somewhat paradoxical that it is precisely the attempts to explore the global relevance of the confessionalization thesis that have recently given boost to the much needed research into the specific theological and confessional developments in early modern Greek Orthodoxy, Armenian Apostolic Christianity, and other Eastern Christian churches, Judaism, as well as Sunni and Shi'i Islam, recognizing that they adapted to the changing historical conditions. After all, the thesis has been criticized by some scholars for leveling the theological *propria* of various confessions and for emptying the notion of 'confession' of its theological and spiritual content, which is why some considered it pointless to 'extend' the concept of confessionalization to Islam and Judaism.⁷⁹ And yet, rather than extending it, the effect of engaging with it as a tool to think with and ask new questions has been most fruitful and began to shed important new light on the evolution and meaning of particular terms, concepts, and legal and theological discourses that emerged during the early

⁷⁷ On this point see also Ursinus, 'Millet' and Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*.

⁷⁸ See, for instance, van den Boogert, *Capitulations*; Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western Trade'.

⁷⁹ Schindling, 'Konfessionalisierung und Grenzen', p. 12.

modern era in Eastern Christianity, Islam and Judaism, and the extent to which they constituted a continuation and/or departure from the medieval tradition. In the next section, I review some of the most important outcomes of this research, including reflections on the relevance of the concept of ‘confession’ in different traditions. In contrast to Part II, the discussion here descends into particularities of different traditions, groups, regions, and locales, highlighting the dialectic between the global, regional, and local perspectives on confessional belonging.

PART III—ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE CONCEPT OF CONFSSIONALIZATION BEYOND LATIN EUROPE: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Eastern Christianity

Scholars focusing on various Eastern Christian communities in the early modern era were among the first to start engaging—albeit cautiously—with the concept of confessionalization and its relevance beyond the ‘great confessions’ (Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism) of Latin Christendom. Initially, these were isolated and unconnected attempts by historians studying mutually distant parts of the Eastern Christian world, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (more specifically, parts that are today Ukraine and Belarus) and Russia, on the one hand, and the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, on the other. However, with the recent consolidation and growth of the field of Eastern Christian studies, the question of relevance of the confessionalization thesis to various early modern Orthodox (namely, in communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople), ‘Oriental Orthodox’ (not in communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople; e.g., Coptic, Armenian, and the Church of the East) and ‘Uniate’ or Eastern Catholic (in communion with Rome; e.g., Maronite, Ukrainian Greek Catholic, and so forth) churches and their flocks has moved to the center of the research agenda.

Some of the earliest studies exploring the heuristic relevance of the confessionalization thesis in the context of the *Slavia Orthodoxa* argued that the developments leading to the division of the Kyivan metropolitanate into Orthodox and Uniate branches, made official by the Union of Brest in 1596, and the subsequent confessionally articulated clashes in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including the Cossacks’ interventions into them in the first half of the seventeenth century, must be understood as a part of the upheaval caused by the European Reformation and can be analyzed under the rubric of ‘confessionalization’.⁸⁰ However, subsequent

⁸⁰ Dimitriev, *Pravoslavie i reformacija*; Plokhly, *The Cossacks and Religion*. In addition to focusing on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russia, early attempts to examine the relevance of the concept of confessionalization beyond Latin Europe also focused on Bohemia and Transylvania. However, latter studies will be taken into consideration in this discussion only inasmuch as they bear relevance to the dynamics in the Ottoman Empire and communities living in it. For an overview of this scholarship see Plaggenborg, ‘Konfessionalisierung in Osteuropa’; Deventer, “‘Confessionalization’”. See also Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*; Craciun, Ghitta, Murdoch eds, *Confessional Identity*.

discussions and comparisons with the thesis as originally formulated by Schilling and Reinhard raised various questions, most notably whether Orthodox Christianity can be considered a 'confession' in a more technical sense of the word—that is, as a community formed around a precisely formulated written creed—given Orthodoxy's preference for ritual over theology, and apophatic (or negative) theology at that.⁸¹ Scholars have also pointed out that the role of the state in the building of the Orthodox confessional consciousness in Ukraine is not analogous to the model envisioned by the confessionalization thesis, given that the Orthodox church mostly existed in tension with Polish Catholic authorities, rather than working in cooperation with them. Another question that emerged was whether one can actually speak of a confessionalization of society, as envisioned by the original thesis, in the apparent absence of any concerted efforts or inability to discipline the flocks—Cossacks' aggressive interventions on the side of the Orthodox notwithstanding—beyond the very top level of the clergy, both Uniate and Orthodox.⁸² In general, 'lived Orthodoxy' remains a poorly researched subject for the early modern period that poses a considerable methodological conundrum.⁸³

More explicit references to the concept of confessionalization—although with a caveat that Orthodoxy is a 'religion of the sign, not of the word'—and exploration of analogies and differences with developments in post-Reformation Europe are found in the literature on the reform movement of the so-called Zealots of Piety, Patriarch Nikon's (1652–1666) liturgical reforms, and the subsequent schism within the Russian Orthodox Church in the mid-seventeenth century.⁸⁴ Supported by Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich (1645–1676), an informal group of priests and preachers—whose aspirations Robert O. Crummey has likened to that of reformers in Western and Central Europe—set out to establish order in liturgy, root out the remnants of pre-Christian beliefs in popular piety, reform the sinful behavior of the parishioners both during and outside church services, and 'correct' practices such as making the sign of cross.⁸⁵

⁸¹ For an overview of the early literature on confessionalization in this context see Brüning, 'Confessionalization in the *Slavia Orthodoxa*'. For a more recent discussion see Brüning, 'Die Orthodoxie im konfessionellen Zeitalter' and Makrides, 'Konfessionalisierungsprozesse in der orthodox-christlichen Welt'. Both Brüning and Makrides emphasize variety within Orthodoxy and suggest that rather than talking about it as a 'confession', it would be more productive to conceive of it as a 'confessional culture' along the lines outlined by Thomas Kaufmann for Lutheranism (see Kaufmann, 'What is Lutheran'). For a very helpful discussion of Orthodoxy as a confession see also Pissis, *Russland in den politischen Vorstellungen*.

⁸² Brüning, 'Confessionalization in the *Slavia Orthodoxa*'; Brüning, 'Social Discipline'.

⁸³ On day-to-day lives of monks see Spock, 'The Cornucopia'. For a discussion of the historiography on 'lived Orthodoxy' see the special issue of *Cahiers du monde russe* 58/3 (2017), especially the introduction by P. Bushkovitch, N. A. Chrissidis and R. G. Păun. On the advancements made in the study of religion in early modern Russia and overview of historiography see also Bushkovitch, 'Introduction: Rethinking Religion'.

⁸⁴ See especially Crummey, 'Ecclesiastical Elites'. Crummey asserts that for the historians of Russia the concept of confessionalization has long been 'axiomatic', but that appears to be an overstatement.

⁸⁵ Crummey, 'Ecclesiastical Elites', p. 56.

The Zealots were influenced in this endeavor by Orthodox clergy from Ukraine, who were much more sensitized to the issues of ‘orthodoxy’ through their interactions with Catholics and Protestants, and whose ideas began to gain more ground in Russia after the Cossack Revolt in 1648.⁸⁶ They focused on liturgical books, and they sought to establish authoritative standardized texts free of mistakes introduced by copyists over centuries. As the basis of their reforms and model for normative liturgical texts they took Greek Orthodox liturgical books, supplied to Nikon by Greek and Arab Orthodox clergy from the Ottoman Empire, in a move that signaled both Nikon’s and emperor’s intension to make Moscow the center of Orthodoxy and a new openness to the idea of an Orthodox ecumene.⁸⁷ At the same time, Nikon’s aggressive attack on Russian customary practices caused a rift within the Orthodox church, giving rise to the formation of the communities of Old Believers, which were consistently anathemized as heretics by the Russian Orthodox church until the 1970s. Despite apparent similarities between Nikon’s reforms and contemporary reforms in Catholic and Reformed polities in Europe, especially the fact that the state strongly supported them, historians have cautioned that while in the long run changes to the liturgy persisted, attempts to eradicate alternative popular practices, improve the education of the clergy, and reform the moral life of the parishioners were largely unsuccessful until the nineteenth century.⁸⁸

While on the whole historians of early modern Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth have been cautious when engaging with the concept of confession-ization,⁸⁹ over time comparative questions and a less narrow understanding of the thesis inspired a new wave of research. It focused, for instance, on previously unstudied Orthodox and Uniate confraternities and monastic orders, striving to better understand the peculiarities of the local variants of Christianity resulting from their encounter with Catholicism and Protestantism (as well as with Polish Tatars’ Islam), and their power to mobilize and discipline society around newly formulated categories of belonging.⁹⁰ Special attention has been devoted to the reforms of Peter Mohila, the Orthodox metropolitan of Kyiv (1633–1646) who drew extensively on Catholic tools of the post-Tridentine reforms—especially Jesuit educational methods—to produce a program of educational, liturgical and doctrinal innovation ‘aimed at the legal and political emancipation of the Orthodox Church in the Polish-Lithuanian

⁸⁶ Bushkovitch, *Religion & Society in Russia*, p. 58. See also Sysyn, ‘Orthodoxy and Revolt’; Plokhly, *The Cossacks and Religion*.

⁸⁷ Bushkovitch, *Religion & Society in Russia*, pp. 51–73, and Sysyn, ‘Orthodoxy and Revolt’ for the background; for details see Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual and Reform*.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of confessionalization in nineteenth-century Russia see Crews, ‘Empire and the Confessional State’.

⁸⁹ See for instance Steindorf ed., *Religion und Integration*, esp. p. 14. One should say, though, that the engagement here is mostly with the original paradigm rather than the possibility of rethinking it through the Russian case.

⁹⁰ Tatarenko, ‘Confesser l’Union’; Tatarenko, *Une réforme orientale*; Pavlish, *Confessionalization from Below*; Brüning, ‘Social Discipline’; Suter, *Alfurkan Tatarski*, pp. 94–108.

Commonwealth'.⁹¹ This program included founding a *Collegium* (1632) and producing the first Orthodox confession of faith (1638 or 1640) on the model of Latin confessions, which was endorsed in a slightly modified form by the patriarchs of the Orthodox church at the Council of Jassy in 1642 and declared canonical in 1643.⁹² The mere existence of Mohila's confession and its endorsement by the council convened by the Patriarch of Constantinople seems to suggest that, similarly to the case of post-Tridentine Catholicism, Orthodoxy could also be 'confessionalized', as a consequence of the interactions with the Catholic and Protestant theologies during the era under discussion. Adoption of Mohila's confession by other leaders of the Orthodox church also demonstrates that they recognized the merit of having a universally-agreed-upon articulation of the Orthodox creed. At the same time, however, Alfons Brüning warned that there are grounds for not equating Mohila's confession to, for instance, *Confessio Augustana*, in terms of its community-constituting intentions and capacities. He argued that by rooting itself in the text of the Nicæan creed and not including an explicit mention of who has the authority to set the teachings of the Orthodox faith or specifically anathemizing other groups, Mohila's confession did not present explicit lines along which a community could profile and distinguish itself from others.⁹³ Furthermore, Brüning argued that it is not clear how far this new confessional consciousness extended beyond the highest clergy and possibly urban elites in Ukraine or elsewhere, given the preponderant evidence of the lack of education among the lower Orthodox clergy and rural populations in general, at least until the Orthodox church reforms in the 1660s.⁹⁴

Raising the question of whether we can speak of either parallel or connected histories of confessionalization, Brüning warns that what may at first glance appear as a Western influence in *Slavia Orthodoxa* does not in fact have to be so, since the tools of reform in the Christian East and West essentially go to the same roots. For instance, just as the Council of Trent was taking place (1545–1563), in 1551 the so-called Stoglav Synod was convened by the newly crowned Tsar Ivan IV (1547–1584) in Moscow in response to the need for a reform, especially in light of deviations in liturgy. The Synod used similar tools of church reform inherited from the late antique era that were also at the disposal of their colleagues in Trent: the strengthening of central authority, greater clarity and unity in matters of ritual and doctrine, buttressing of the administrative structures, and disciplinary measures towards both clergy and the flock. But, as Brüning emphasizes, similar tools of reform do not necessarily lead to the same outcomes; thus, in the East we do not see the confessionalization of the society along the lines one arguably finds in Latin Europe. However, these kinds of cognate mechanisms of reform and shared heritage make it difficult to distinguish between historical parallelisms and connected histories in the case of confessional

⁹¹ Charipova, 'Orthodox Reform in Seventeenth-Century Kiev', p. 277.

⁹² Sharipova, 'Orthodox Reform in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth'. Pelikan and Hotchkiss date Mohila's confession to 1638 (*Creeds & Confessions*, p. 559) while Sharipova and Brüning date it to 1640.

⁹³ See Brüning, 'Confessio Orthodoxa und europäischer Konfessionalismus'.

⁹⁴ Brüning, 'Social Discipline'.

developments in Eastern and Western Christianity. Similarly, Mohila's reforms in the 1630s may have simply reflected, as contemporary sources suggest, consternation with the chaos in the church and the real and present danger from 'heretics' rather than an 'influence' of post-Tridentine Catholicism. Brüning thus puts forward the idea of 'multiple confessionalisms' on the model of Eisenstadt's 'multiple modernities', which recognizes the fact that in the early modern period in both Western and Eastern Christianity religion attained a new collective-building function but with different outcomes depending on the particular combination of factors. In the case of Poland and Russia the outcomes were informed by a combination of regional religious-political conditions, occidental influences, and Byzantine heritage.⁹⁵

In contrast to the *Slavia Orthodoxa*, where scholars have been more circumspect in approaching confessional developments within the analytical framework of the Reformation and its consequences, in the case of the churches on the other side of the Eastern Christian world, in the Middle East, precisely this framework has become prominent in recent years, although without necessarily engaging with the confessionalization thesis. The most systematic study on the subject, focusing on Ottoman Syria, Lebanon and Palestine primarily through the Catholic missionary sources and narratives produced by Arab Christians, has been undertaken by Bernard Heyberger.⁹⁶ Without explicitly discussing German historiography on the concept of confessionalization, and speaking more from the vantage point of French historiography, Heyberger suggested that confessional developments among Middle Eastern Christians should be approached through an 'histoire croisée de la confessionnalisation' that would re-connect their histories with those of European Catholics after the separation in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography.⁹⁷ This historiography was affected both by early modern Catholic views of the Maronites, Armenians, and Assyrians, among others, as 'less civilized' schismatics, and colonial-era images of them as theocratic and fanatical communities overly attached to their patriarchs and 'unchanging' beliefs and practices. In contrast, Heyberger has called for the recognition of great diversity and segmentation within these communities, between urban and rural populations, sedentary and tribal, as well as among various factions within the communal and church elites, which were exacerbated by the arrival of the Catholic missionaries in the early seventeenth century.⁹⁸ In recent years, these nuances have been recognized and historicized in the context of Ottoman Syria and Egypt by scholars like Bruce Masters, Alastair Hamilton, Helen Murre-Van den Berg, Herman G. B. Teule, Febe Armanios, Aurélien Girard, Cesare Santus, Felicita Tramontana, Magdi Guirgis, John-Paul Ghobrial, Lucy Parker and others who have

⁹⁵ Brüning, 'Die Orthodoxie'.

⁹⁶ Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*.

⁹⁷ It should be noted that in the preface to the second edition of his *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient* (2014) and in the recent overview of the literature on Eastern Christianity since the 1960s (Heyberger, 'Le christianisme oriental') Heyberger reflects in greater detail on the concept of confessionalization and the scholarship it engendered.

⁹⁸ Heyberger, 'Pour une "histoire croisée"'; Heyberger, 'Eastern Christians, Islam, and the West'.

examined the impact of the Catholic missions on local Christian communities, the complex and multi-faceted processes that led to the creation of several new splinter churches that entered into union with Rome, and the new mobility of Eastern Christians that these contacts with Rome facilitated.⁹⁹

Unlike Reinhard and Schilling, Heyberger and other scholars focusing on Eastern Christians in the Middle East have used the notion of 'confessionalization' in a more general sense of creation of a new confessional consciousness among local groups as an outcome of their engagement with Catholic missionaries, often with unintended consequences. At the same time, they have also emphasized that the engagement with various groups of Eastern Christians contributed not only to the constant rethinking of Catholic missionary goals and tools but also to the expansion of knowledge about the history of Christian theology and ritual, as well as the study of the Bible—knowledge that was used in real time for polemical discussions with Lutherans and Calvinists in Europe. An essential component of this exchange of knowledge with Eastern Christians was also the latter's role in the teaching of Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, Chaldean, and Armenian languages to European missionaries and scholars—a topic that has recently received considerable attention and generated excellent research.¹⁰⁰ The role of printing presses and various agents (including Eastern Christians who traveled to Europe) who translated Catholic confessional literature to be printed in Rome, Florence, Venice, Paris and other Catholic centers of learning into Arabic, Greek, Armenian, Illyrian, Syriac and other languages of the Eastern Christians, is still insufficiently explored. The printing activities of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and its network of translators and mediators deserve particular attention in further research on the utility and limits of the concept of confessionalization in the context of Eastern Christian studies.¹⁰¹

Over the last two decades, the field of Eastern Christian Studies has grown to become increasingly transregional, trans-communal, and trans-imperial, and various studies have highlighted the new mobility of Eastern Christian groups and individuals in the early modern period, from a member of the Church of the East who traveled all the way to the New World or Armenian merchants who spanned the

⁹⁹ See Masters, *Christians and Jews*; Murre-Van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, pp. 21–78; Teule, *Les Assyro-chaldéens*; Girard, 'Le christianisme oriental'; Girard, 'Nihil esse innovandum?'; Tramontana, *Passages of Faith*; Parker, 'The Ambiguities of Belief'; Guirgis, 'The Coptic Community'; Hamilton, *The Copts*; Armanios, *Coptic Christianity*, especially pp. 117–146; Santus, 'Conflicting Views'; Ghobrial's ERC project entitled *Stories of Survival: Recovering the Connected Histories of Eastern Christianity in the Early Modern World* also sheds light on important aspects of this dynamic (see <https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/stories-of-survival>)

¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, Heyberger ed., *Orientalisme, science et controverse*; Ghobrial, 'The Life'; Girard, 'Teaching and Learning', etc.

¹⁰¹ Henkel, 'The Polyglot Printing-office'; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*; Pizzorusso, 'I satelliti di Propaganda Fide'; Girard, 'Une traduction arabe'; Kilpatrick, 'From Venice to Aleppo'; Ayalon, 'Richelieu in Arabic'; Ambrosiani, 'Slavic Alphabets and Languages', Radonić, *Štamparije i škole rimske kurije* to mention just a few relevant background studies.

Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.¹⁰² Within this increasingly global outlook, it has also become clearer how the Orthodox Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria interacted not only with the Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow, all of which were previously treated as discrete units, but also how they were entangled with European Christians of various denominations as well.¹⁰³ However, while the outer edges of the Eastern Christian, and especially Orthodox world—from Russia to the Middle East—have become increasingly better connected in recent scholarship on early modern confessional dynamics, this has not been the case (yet) for the geographical ‘middle’, inhabited by the diverse groups of Slavic-, Greek-, and Albanian-speaking Ottoman Orthodox Christian subjects in Rumeli and Anatolia, with their atomized historiographical traditions ‘neatly’ separated along the confessional, ethnic, and geographical lines.¹⁰⁴

It is indicative of this atomized state of research that we know very little even about the relationship among the three major Orthodox ecclesiastical seats with jurisdictional powers in Ottoman Rumeli—the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the renewed Serbian Patriarchate of Peć (1557–1766), and the Archbishopric of Ohrid (which was created in the Byzantine era but vied for the jurisdiction with the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Peć, especially in Epirus and Western Macedonia, until its abolition in 1766).¹⁰⁵ Each of these Orthodox ecclesiastical seats had a complicated relationship both with the Ottoman authorities and the Catholic states and institutions, which still awaits a systematic study and is generally overlooked in the mainstream scholarship.¹⁰⁶ Most studies focus on the institutional history of each individual patriarchate, typically woven into a Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian or Macedonian national framework, respectively. The institutional lens has also been prominent in the scholarship on Catholicism in the Slavic-speaking parts of Ottoman

¹⁰² See, for instance, Aslanian, *From the Indian*; Ghobrial, ‘The Secret Life’; Ghobrial, ‘Migration from Within’; Santus, ‘Wandering Lives’. Ghobrial’s ERC project entitled ‘Stories of Survival’ and the publications arising from it have shed further light on the global nature of early modern Eastern Christians’ experience.

¹⁰³ Most important studies in this respect are Tchentsova, ‘Le premier voyage’; Tchentsova, ‘Moscou face a la tentation’ and many of her other studies; Çolak, *The Orthodox Church*; and Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians*.

¹⁰⁴ Least studied has been the history of the early modern Albanian tribes, most of which were Christian—Orthodox or Catholic—until the end of the seventeenth century when conversion to Islam as well as their sedentarization picks up pace. Important studies on the subject include Malcolm, *A Short History of Kosovo*, Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, Murzaku, *Returning Home to Rome*; Molnár, ‘A Forgotten Bridgehead’; Zhelyazkova, ‘Islamization’; Malcolm, *Rebels, Believers, Survivors*.

¹⁰⁵ On the Patriarchate of Peć see Hadrovics, *Le peuple serbe*; Djurdjev, *Uloga crkve*, Mirković, *Pravni položaj*; Zirojević, *Crkve i manastiri*; Tričković, ‘Srpska crkva’; most of the literature on the Archbishopric of Ohrid is in Greek, Macedonian, and Bulgarian but see also Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida*; Tspiranlis, ‘La posizione della comunità’; Greene, *The Edinburgh History of Greeks*, pp. 144–146; 182–183.

¹⁰⁶ On the relationship of the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć with the Catholics in the eighteenth century, around the time of its abolition, see Pletuhina-Tonev, *The Patriarchate of Peć*.

Rumeli, which has focused on the history of the Catholic church in the region and the role of particular missionary orders, like Jesuits and Bosnian Franciscans, while largely ignoring both the Orthodox church and the Ottoman legal landscape.¹⁰⁷

The polar opposite of this historiography based on institutional sources, which conjure up the image of confessional communities in Ottoman Rumeli as living apart, are studies that emphasize confessional fluidity, disregard for theological detail, and futility of looking for any clear-cut boundaries among Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam, especially in the contexts of Ottoman Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania.¹⁰⁸ Drawing on anecdotal evidence from missionary letters and travel accounts, as well as folk traditions and anthropological studies about shared places of worship, the operative terms in these kinds of historiographical accounts, which often seek to counter polarizing ethno-confessionalist frameworks, are 'popular religion', 'syncretism', 'fluidity', 'crypto-Christianity' and 'dissimulation'. Unfortunately, while alerting us to the importance of crypto-religion and dissimulation (to which I will return below) in studying confessional dynamics in this region, studies in this vein have largely failed to critically assess the politics of the sources on which they have drawn and historically contextualize the phenomena they labeled in this way.¹⁰⁹

However, when it comes to Slavic-speaking groups in Ottoman Rumeli, in recent years important strides have been made in the direction of a more integrated research that transgresses confessional boundaries without either denying their importance or essentializing them. Building on the rich tradition in Ottoman studies from former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, and complementing it with extensive research in the archives in Istanbul and elsewhere, since the 1990s Ottomanists hailing from the region, like Rossitsa Gradeva, Svetlana Ivanova, Aleksandar Fotić, Nenad Moačanin, and Vjerran Kursar, have been shining light on the productive dialogue of the Ottoman administrative and local sources in Slavic languages for the study of inter-confessional dynamics in the empire. Thus, considerable progress has been made on understanding Ottoman authorities' administrative policies vis-à-vis various Orthodox monasteries and churches, clerical appointments, and jurisdictions, as well as modes of Orthodox Christians' engagement with the Ottoman courts. Ottoman sources have also highlighted the jurisdictional competition between the Serbian Patriarchate and Bosnian Franciscans who, as Ottoman subjects themselves, were the

¹⁰⁷ Key studies include Batinić, *Djelovanje Franjevacu*; Jelenić, *Kultura i bosanski franjevci*; Radonić, *Rimska kurija i južnoslovenske zemlje*; Miletich, *Iz istorijata*; Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*; Vassileva, 'Les missions des franciscains'. Important collections of primary sources relevant to the history of the Catholic missions in Ottoman Rumeli are Fermeđžin, *Acta Bulgariae*, Fermeđžin, *Acta Bosnae*; Jačov, *Spisi Kongregacije*; idem, *I Balcani*; idem, *Le missioni cattoliche*; Tóth, *Litterae missionariorum I*; idem., *Litterae missionariorum II*.

¹⁰⁸ Stadtmüller, 'Die Islamisierung'; Skendi, 'Crypto Christianity', Bartl, 'Kryptochristentum'; Balivet, 'Aux origines', Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*.

¹⁰⁹ The exception is Malcolm, 'Crypto-Christianity,' which suggests a concrete chronology and historical reasons for the phenomenon. For a lucid analysis of the phenomenon of crypto-religion in the Ottoman context, on which more below, see also Reinkowski, 'Hidden Believers'; Reinkowski, 'Keine Kryptoreligion'.

most active representatives of Catholic interests in the Slavic-speaking parts of Rumeli.¹¹⁰

Furthermore, the concepts of confessionalization and confession-building, as used in German historiography, have also recently entered the vocabulary of scholars working in and on the region. This is an interesting lag given the importance of confessional identity to the historiography of Ottoman Rumeli.¹¹¹ In the context of literary studies, Croatian scholar Zrinka Blažević has explored the relationship between confessionalization and literary production by focusing on 'Illyrian' (Slavic-speaking) Jesuits and Franciscans active in the Catholic missionary effort in Ottoman Rumeli between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (although she is less interested in the Ottoman context itself). Blažević has examined their theological and literary works to see how they related to the larger discursive frameworks of the Catholic Reformation, and how these 'Illyrian' intellectuals viewed their place at the intersection of the papal, Venetian, Habsburg and Ottoman imperial and confessional agendas. However, she has also highlighted these Catholic authors' inter-confessional discursive strategies meant to appeal to the Orthodox 'Illyrians' and bring them into union with the Papacy.¹¹² By contextualizing the theological works of the early modern Catholic intellectuals writing in Illyrian in the larger story of Catholic Reformation, Blažević and her colleagues have also provided an important impetus for the growth of cultural history of early modern Slavdom, which has been sorely missing. Part of that cultural turn has also been a renewed attention to the importance of Rome-sponsored printing of religious texts in 'Illyrian' for the language politics in the region; the usage of different scripts and types of literacy among different social and ethnic groups; as well as the processes of vernacularization, translation and cultural mediation.¹¹³

The greatest connoisseur of the Roman archives when it comes to Catholic missions in Ottoman Rumeli, Antal Molnár, has also recently ventured into the discussion of the concept of confessionalization. Focusing on Bosnia and Ottoman parts of Hungary, he has argued for what he dubs a 'Franciscan confessionalization', namely a special Ottoman-structured confessionalization model that was not parallel to that of the post-Tridentine Catholic or Protestant churches but to that of the Orthodox

¹¹⁰ See, for instance, Gradeva's numerous articles collected in *Rumeli under Ottomans and Frontiers of Ottoman Space*, Ivanova's many studies on women and marriage as well as Christian women in Ottoman courts (for instance, 'Judicial Treatment'); Fotić's numerous articles and his *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*; Moačanin's articles collected in *Town and Country*; Kursar 'Non-Muslim communal divisions'.

¹¹¹ Although the acclaimed 1984 study by Srećko Džaja (*Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens und der Herzegowina*) used the concept of confession and juxtaposed the three Bosnian confessions in the Ottoman period, it was not affected by the discussions by Schilling and Reinhard that were just starting at this time. The book was translated into Bosnian only in 1992.

¹¹² Blažević, *Ilirizam prije Ilirizma*; Blažević, 'Konfesionalni identitet'; Blažević, 'Reformation Studies'.

¹¹³ See, for instance, Nakaš, *Jezik i grafija*.

church. He has outlined parallels and strategic mimicry between the Orthodox church and Bosnian Franciscans in a specific Ottoman religious-political environment, arguing that both churches played a crucial role in creating and preserving confessional and national 'consciousness'.¹¹⁴ For Molnár, thus, 'confessionalization' refers primarily to the particular structures of ecclesiastical authority rather than to a process of building a community around a particular, well-defined expression of creed. This appears to be a distinctly Ottoman manifestation of the 'weak' confessionalization in the sense that it entailed 'a process of rivalry and emulation' as well as 'demonization' of rivals and 'building of group cohesion and identity', but without ability to enforce a particular version of orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the context of legal pluralism in which neither Catholicism nor Orthodoxy had the upper hand. Emese Muntán recently pursued this problem further by bringing not only Catholic and Orthodox clergy but Ottoman judges into the picture.¹¹⁵

Confessional dynamics are also at the center of recent research on the cultural and intellectual history of Greek Orthodox communities in the early modern Ottoman Empire. Until recently, the rich collections of manuscripts and printed books in Greek from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries have been largely ignored by historians who believed this period to be one of intellectual barrenness and decline compared to the glorious days of Byzantium or the modern Greek nation state.¹¹⁶ However, new research delving precisely into these kinds of sources has begun to expand our understanding of early modern developments in lay learning, theology, and canon law. In this context, the question of Greek Orthodox confessionalization and how it should or could be conceptualized has also come up, with a number of recent articles, conferences, and edited volumes being dedicated to the subject.¹¹⁷ Unsurprisingly, these growing debates in the field of religious and cultural history and engagements with the confessionalization thesis have put the questions of book culture and printing in the Greek language, as well as the nature of the Greek language used in these publications, into the focus of research, highlighting the networks of transmission of knowledge and cultural mediation.¹¹⁸ Although various

¹¹⁴ See Molnár, 'Bosnian Franciscans'.

¹¹⁵ Muntán, 'Uneasy Agents of Tridentine Reforms'.

¹¹⁶ Key classical studies are Runciman, *The Great Church*; Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*; Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*; Argyriou, *Les exégèses grecques*; Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*. Over the last two decades, important work has been done on cataloguing major manuscript collections. See, for instance, Kouroupou and Géhin eds, *Catalogue des manuscrits* and Binggeli et al. eds, *Catalogue des manuscrits*.

¹¹⁷ See, in particular, Brüning, 'Die Orthodoxie im konfessionellen Zeitalter' and Makrides, 'Konfessionalisierungsprozesse in der orthodox-christlichen Welt'; as well as the edited volume by Sarris, Pissis and Pechlivanos, eds, *Confessionalization and/as Knowledge Transfer in Eastern Christianity*.

¹¹⁸ More recently scholars have begun to explore the 'semiotic labor' of various brokers of the Orthodox dialogue with the Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists, such as the Greek dragomans

presses in Catholic, Protestant and Calvinist centers of learning, from Rome and Venice to Tübingen and Geneva, printed books in Greek script in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Greek Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, including the top echelons of the clergy, were largely steeped in an oral and manuscript culture, with occasional access to books in Greek and other languages printed beyond the borders of the Empire.¹¹⁹ Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris' (d. 1638) attempt to set up a Greek press in Istanbul and print religious texts in a vernacular eventually failed, with the most important Greek Orthodox printing enterprise being established in the Romanian principalities only in the late seventeenth century by Patriarch Dositheos II of Jerusalem (d. 1707).¹²⁰

The texts that have drawn most attention in the context of the discussion on Greek Orthodox confessionalization are various 'confessions' written and eventually published by the Greek Orthodox patriarchs and clergymen entangled in the debate with the Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and other theologians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹²¹ All of the major texts of Orthodox confessions of faith have been published and translated into English and other languages, greatly facilitating the discussion.¹²² In addition to Peter Mohila's confession (c. 1640, approved with emendations by the Synod of Jassy in 1642), which was mentioned above in the context of the Orthodox-Uniate struggle in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it is the confessions of Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris (1629 in Latin, 1633 in Greek) and Patriarch Dositheos II (in 1672 and 1690) that have received most scholarly attention. While Ovidiu Olar and Vasileios Tsakiris have explored in depth the intellectual itinerary and production of the 'Calvinist' Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris who has been tentatively credited with initiating the process of confessionalization of Orthodox theology and whose confession was repeatedly condemned by the ecumenical synods from the late 1630s to the 1670s, Vassa Kontouma has shed important new light on Dositheos' theological views and how they evolved over time, in part as a reaction

of the Ottoman Porte, Panagiotes Nikousios and Nikolaos Maurokordatos, various book printers, and clergymen traversing confessional boundaries. See, for instance, Hartnup, *On the Beliefs of the Greeks*; Paun, "Well-born of the Polis"; Koutzakiotis, *Attendre la fin du monde*; Chrissidis, *An Academy*; as well as the forthcoming studies by Pechlivanos, ed., *Intellectual Entanglements*; Pissis and Sarris eds, *The Libraries of Nikolaos Mavrokordatos*.

¹¹⁹ For the reconstruction of a collection of books that the Calvinist minister and chaplain of the Dutch Embassy to Istanbul, Antoine Léger, a friend and interlocutor of Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris, ordered to be sent to the Ottoman capital in the late 1620s–early 1630s in order to create a Protestant 'public library' see Olar, "Io se puotesse".

¹²⁰ On Loukaris's printing project see Pektas, *The First Greek Printing Press*; Khokhar, "The 'Calvinist Patriarch'"; on Dositheos' see Olar, "A Time to Speak", Russell, 'From the "Shield of Orthodoxy"', Chrissidis, *An Academy*, pp. 62–68.

¹²¹ Tsakiris, *Die gedruckten griechischen Beichtbücher*.

¹²² For English translation see Pelikan and Hotchkiss eds, *Creeds & Confessions*, pp. 385–638. An important collection of essays on the historical development of the profession of faith in the Eastern Christian tradition in the late medieval and early modern eras is Blanchet and Gabriel eds, *L'union à l'épreuve du formulaire*.

to Loukaris' confession.¹²³ One of the most important points raised by this recent research on confessional dynamics within the Greek Orthodox community is that these texts cannot be treated simply as constitutive elements in a linear process that eventually culminated in a promulgation of the Orthodox confession, but that each text has to be examined in the context in which it was produced, and that any notion of continuity between them—let alone their confession-building intent and potential—should be questioned.¹²⁴ Even less can we generalize about confessional dynamics in all contexts where Greek Orthodox Christians lived. When it comes to the Greek Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire, sources suggest that as a result of the dialogue with the Catholic and various Reformed interlocutors during the seventeenth century, explored in this volume by Margarita Voulgaropoulou, the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical establishment had to articulate its position on issues such as purgatory, indulgences, the doctrine of transubstantiation, cult of saints and the veneration of relics, as well as numerous other theological questions that became point of contention among Latin confessions.¹²⁵ This process of differentiation culminated in the tenure of Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem and the publication of his two confessions of faith, in 1672 and 1690, with the latter becoming canonized as the official creed of the Orthodox church.¹²⁶ However, elsewhere, from Venice to Moscow, Greek Orthodox clergy's engagements with Catholicism, Lutheranism or Calvinism could also result in various forms of confessional ambiguity, 'inter-confessionality' (in the sense of exchanges with reciprocal impact) and 'transconfessionality' (in the sense of openness to other confessions).¹²⁷

Recent studies have also highlighted the fact that the broader Ottoman social context, including the relationship between the Orthodox Patriarchate and the Ottoman government, and even the developments in contemporary Muslim communities, may shed further light on confessional developments among the Greek Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire. Studies by Ottomanists like Elizabeth Zachariadou, Eleni Gara, Marinos Sariyannis, Phokion Kotzageorgis, Elias Kolovos, Evgenia Kermeli, Tom Papademetriou and Molly Greene have particularly enriched our understanding of the dynamics between various Orthodox monasteries, the Patriarchate, and local Greek communities and individuals on the one hand, and the Ottoman provincial and central authorities on the other in the period between the fifteenth and early eighteenth

¹²³ Tsakiris, 'The "Ecclesiarum Belgicarum Confessio"'; Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*; Olar, 'Les confessions'; Kontouma, 'La Confession de foi'; Kontouma, 'Christianisme orthodoxe'. On Dositheos' theological views see also Russell, 'From "The Shield of Orthodoxy"'.
¹²⁴ For such skepticism about Mohila's confession see Brüning, 'Confessio Orthodoxa'; for discussion of Loukaris' confession and its confession-building intent, or lack thereof, see Gara and Olar in this volume.

¹²⁵ Chrissidis, 'The World of Eastern Orthodoxy', p. 639.
¹²⁶ See Kontouma, 'La Confession de foi'.
¹²⁷ See various articles in Sarris, Pissis and Pechlivanos eds, *Confessionalization and/as Knowledge Transfer*.

centuries.¹²⁸ Specifically regarding the question of confessionalization, Evgenia Kermeli raised the question of the extent to which the reforms of Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris should be viewed as an outcome of a dialogue not only with the confessional developments among Catholics and various Reformed confessions, but also with Ottoman Sunni normative discourses and debate over ritual and creedal innovations raging in the Ottoman capital in the 1630s.¹²⁹ The phenomenon of Orthodox neomartyrdom has also been highlighted as an arena in which Orthodox, Catholic, and Sunni orthodoxizing discourses became entangled—a topic explored in this volume in greater detail by Yorgos Tzedopoulos.¹³⁰ Finally, historians have pointed to the Ottoman confiscation of Orthodox and Catholic monastic properties between 1567 and 1571 as an example of how the process of normativization and pursuit of orthopraxy in the Ottoman Sunni community directly (and in this case negatively) affected the lives of Orthodox institutions and subjects.¹³¹ The problem that scholars are experiencing in this effort to identify specific contexts in which various Muslims' and non-Muslims' understanding of religious politics intersected and became entangled are poignant silences in the sources when it comes to religious others and 'inconvenient truths' related to them, which requires one to consult a wide variety of sources in different languages.¹³²

Recent historiography has also highlighted the importance of the period between the 1720s and 1750s for understanding the entanglements among the Orthodox and Catholic confessional projects as well as the role of the Ottoman state in the determination of the boundaries between them within the empire. In 1729, in the midst of the growing disputes and discussions, the Propaganda Fide issued the first general prohibition of *communicatio in sacris*, i.e. the practice whereby some newly converted Catholics attended the liturgy and participated in the sacraments administered by the priests of other denominations, such as Greek Orthodox or Apostolic Armenian.¹³³ This effectively forced the Catholics in the Ottoman Empire to openly declare their confessional belonging, separating them from their former coreligionists and attempting to eliminate the blurring of confessional boundaries, signaling a more aggressive phase of Catholic proselytization in the Ottoman domains that

¹²⁸ All of these scholars have authored numerous relevant studies, but see, for instance, Zachariadou, 'Ottoman Documents'; Gara, 'Neomartyr'; Sariyannis, 'Aspects of "Neomartyrdom"'; Kotzageorgis, 'To Hagion Oros'; Kolovos, 'Christian Vakifs'; Kermeli, 'The Confiscation'; Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*; Greene, *The Edinburgh History*.

¹²⁹ Kermeli, 'Kyrillos Loukaris' Legacy'.

¹³⁰ See Sariyannis, 'Aspects of "Neomartyrdom"'; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, Chapter 5.

¹³¹ On the monastic confiscation affair or 'crisis of the monasteries' see Kermeli, 'The Confiscation'; Fotić, 'The Official Explanations'; Greene, *The Edinburgh History*, pp. 66–69; Sekulić, *Conversion of Landscape*.

¹³² On such 'inconvenient truths' suppressed in Ottoman sources see, for instance, Gara, 'Prophecy, Rebellion, Suppression'; in contrast, on sources placing various religious groups sharing the same space and language into a common framework, see Ivanova, 'Armenians in Urban Order'.

¹³³ On *communicatio in sacris* see Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*; Windler, *Missionare in Persien*; Windler, 'Ambiguous Belongings'; Santus, 'Conflicting Views'.

subsided in the 1770s (when Jesuits were suppressed by the papal bull), at least until the nineteenth century.¹³⁴ The affirmation of boundaries was in turn echoed from the Orthodox side when in 1755 Patriarch Kyrillos V (1748–1751; 1752–1757) promulgated a decree signed also by Patriarchs Matthew of Alexandria and Parthenios of Jerusalem that the 'heretics' converting to Orthodoxy must be rebaptized, making the Catholic baptism invalid. The decree abrogated the order of 1484 that had allowed for the Latins to be received by chrism (rather than rebaptism) after abjuring their innovations, signaling a sharp change of course and causing much controversy in Istanbul.¹³⁵ Half a century later, Nikodemos Hagiorites (d. 1809) explained this change in canonical reasoning by stating that in the earlier period the Orthodox church had used *oikonomia* (flexibility in dispensation of canonical matters) in accepting baptism of Latins so that the popes would not authorize Western rulers to wage wars on Eastern Christians but that such compromise was not necessary anymore given that the 'divine providence has granted the Eastern Christians the protection of the Ottoman Empire'.¹³⁶ Indeed, scholars have argued that by the mid-eighteenth century the Orthodox Patriarchate consolidated its authority by absorbing the Patriarchate of Peć and the Archbishopric of Ohrid, and becoming much more integrated in and supported by the Ottoman state, as well as confident and effective in disciplining the believers through traditional methods of penitence, anathema, interdiction and excommunication.¹³⁷ As Gara and Olar show in this volume by drawing both on new sources and the work of Paraskevas Konortas, Elif Bayraktar Tellan and Hasan Çolak,¹³⁸ over the course of the second half of the seventeenth century the Ottoman administration began to include a growing number of clauses into the patriarchs' letters of appointment. The new clauses specified the patriarchs' rights, jurisdictions, and nature of authority, thus enabling them to more effectively initiate reforms, including a program of explicit differentiation with the Catholics (and various Reformed denominations).

A similar chronology of confessional dynamics, which peak in the Greek Orthodox community in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, although against the background of a very different history of communal presence in Ottoman

¹³⁴ For an overview of the tensions and clashes see Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, 153–222; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, pp. 98–118; see also Bayraktar Tellan, *The Patriarch and the Sultan*, p. 123.

¹³⁵ On the decree, its canonical basis, and role of various polemicists see Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*; Heith-Stade, 'Receiving Converts'. The decree of 1755 has been published, examined, and contextualized in Kontouma, 'The so-called Synod of Constantinople'. On the Catholic reaction to the decree, see Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, pp. 228, 231.

¹³⁶ Heith-Stade, 'Receiving Converts', pp. 106–107.

¹³⁷ Petmézas, 'L'organisation ecclésiastique', pp. 499–504. See Bayraktar Tellan, *The Patriarch and the Sultan*, for a systematic study of the transformation of the Orthodox Patriarchate in the eighteenth century. Pletuhina-Tonev has also demonstrated that the abolition of the Serbian Patriarchate in 1766 had much to do with the accusations that the last patriarch Vasilije Brkić allegedly converted to Catholicism and received material support from the Habsburg lands.

¹³⁸ Konortas, *Ottoman Considerations*; Çolak and Bayraktar Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*.

domains, is visible in the Armenian case. The religious and intellectual history of early modern Armenians has been virtually a *terra incognita*, despite the availability of important groundwork studies cataloguing Armenian book production during this period, the existence of numerous manuscripts produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in both Armenian and Armeno-Turkish, and the richness of information provided by both book and manuscript colophons.¹³⁹ Privileging the study of medieval and modern eras, when Armenians lived or strove to live in independent polities, Armenian historians have largely ignored the early modern period, which ushered in not only division and subjugation of Greater Armenia to the Ottoman and Safavid Empires but also a growing confessional polarization within the Armenian community. As a consequence, until very recently, few monograph-length studies existed that were devoted specifically to the history of Armenian communities between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁴⁰ Fewer studies yet have sought to integrate the cultural and intellectual history of Armenians into early modern Ottoman or Mediterranean history.

However, in recent years, important strides have been made towards introducing some of the early modern material on Armenian communities to the wider scholarly public, together with opening up the debate on religious and confessional dynamics within these communities. Peter Cowe has published a series of short articles on Armenian neo-martyrs and other polemical texts by authors living in the Ottoman and Safavid empires, while Cesare Santus examined the martyrdom of a later Catholic Armenian neomartyr, Komitas K'ēōmiwrčean, executed in Istanbul in 1707.¹⁴¹ Santus and Christian Windler have explored the archives of the Propaganda Fide and the Holy Office in Rome to examine Catholic missionary strategies for proselytizing to Armenians in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, respectively, raising the question of confessional polarization as well as confessional ambiguity between the Armenian Catholics and Apostolics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁴² In a series of recent articles, Sebouh Aslanian has focused on the entanglement between the activity of early modern Armenian printers and merchants in port cities from the Italian peninsula all the way to India, examining how merchant networks influenced the choice of books to be printed in various locations.¹⁴³ Building on this, in his forthcoming book, he engages with the relevance of the concept of confessionalization for the study of early modern Armenian history in general and book production in particular.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, in a work that embodies the desideratum of moving

¹³⁹ Kévorkian, *Catalogue des «incunables»* and Kévorkian, *Les imprimés arméniens*.

¹⁴⁰ Literature is more abundant in Armenian, but in English see Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities in Syria*; Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 46–58; 178–189; 256–274. An overview of the period is also provided in Cowe, 'Church and Diaspora'.

¹⁴¹ See Cowe's entries in *CMR*, Vol. 7; Santus, 'Un beato martire'.

¹⁴² Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*; Santus, 'Conflicting Views'; Windler, 'Ambiguous Belongings'; Windler, *Missionare in Persien*.

¹⁴³ Aslanian, 'Port Cities and Printers'; Aslanian, 'The Early Arrival of Print'.

¹⁴⁴ See his forthcoming *Mobility and Early Modernity: Port Cities and Printers across the Armenian Diaspora, 1512–1800*. I thank the author for sharing a draft of his opening chapter.

from 'autonomous' to 'interactive' Armenian history,¹⁴⁵ Henry Shapiro has drawn on both Armenian and Ottoman sources to document the migration of Armenians from the Greater Armenian plateau contested by the Ottomans and Safavids as well as from across Anatolia ravaged by the Celali revolts in the late 1590s and early 1600s towards the cities of western Anatolia, Thrace, and Istanbul. He has traced the rise of the 'Western Armenian' society to this development and begun to analyze its cultural achievements and repercussions on Ottoman culture, and vice versa, the impact of assimilation on Armenian communities in both cultural and linguistic sense (such as the rise of Armeno-Turkish).¹⁴⁶ In a recent article, Polina Ivanova has shed important light on the extent of Armenians' integration into the urban fiber of Istanbul in the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁷

Relatively little is still known about the ecclesiastical organization and hierarchy among early modern Armenian prelates and institutions they represented. The period between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, with warfare and population shifts that it brought, significantly altered dynamics among medieval centers of Armenian spirituality and gave rise to new ones. While Sis, formerly the capital of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1198–1375), and Etchmiadzin in Greater Armenia, which laid claims to being the new center of the Armenian Apostolic church after 1441, vied for the status of the catholicosate (i.e. for being considered the Mother Church) between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, two further ecclesiastical entities played an important role during this period—the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, also of medieval origin, and Patriarchate of Constantinople, established most likely sometime in the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁸ By the end of the seventeenth century, Etchmiadzin, which was located in Safavid territory, was able to assert itself as the seat of the catholicos, but the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the virtue of residing in the Ottoman capital, played a crucial role in Armenian ecclesiastical affairs throughout the seventeenth and especially eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In her recent articles, Anna Ohanjanyan captures this ongoing rivalry among the prelates of Constantinople, Jerusalem and Etchmiadzin.¹⁴⁹ She demonstrates that this rivalry was further complicated by Catholic missionary activity among Ottoman Armenians. Contact between Rome and the Armenian Apostolic church started already in the middle ages, both in the context of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia

¹⁴⁵ On this issue see Aslanian, 'From "Autonomous"'.
¹⁴⁶ Shapiro, *The Great Armenian Flight*; Shapiro, 'The Great Armenian Flight: Migration and Cultural Change'.

¹⁴⁷ Ivanova, 'Armenians in Urban Order'.

¹⁴⁸ Kouymjian, 'Armenia from the Fall'. He points out that while there was certainly an Armenian prelate in the Ottoman capital since the fifteenth century, the elevation of his seat to a Patriarchate was likely a later development, possibly dating to the reign of Sultan Süleyman (1520–1566), while the clout of this office increased significantly only in the seventeenth century, after the growth of the Armenian community in Istanbul in the aftermath of the Celali revolts and the Ottoman-Safavid wars between the 1580s and 1639. See also Bardakjian, 'The rise of the Armenian Patriarchate'.

¹⁴⁹ See Ohanjanyan, 'Creedal Controversies'.

during the Crusader period, and further west, on the Great Armenian Plateau, where in the 1340s an Armenian Catholic monastic order, known as *Fratres Unitores*, was founded in Nakhichevan as a suborder of the Dominicans, only to be absorbed into the Dominican order and lose its autonomy in 1582.¹⁵⁰ After the foundation of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622, the missionary activity of Rome in this area intensified again, personified in the figure of the Dominican friar Paolo Piromalli (d. 1667), whose activities are discussed in this volume by Paolo Lucca. As Ohanjanyan shows, by the 1690s, encounters with the missionaries across the Ottoman domains and a growing number of converts to Catholicism gave rise to polemics over what constituted the correct creed and ritual of the Armenian church, especially among Istanbul-based literati like Eremia K'ēōmiwrčean and Gēorg Mxlayim Ōhli.¹⁵¹ Growing tensions between Armenian Apostolics and Catholics were also evident in late seventeenth-century Isfahan in the Safavid Empire, driving the production of new polemical literature that sought to prove their respective cases not only to each other but to Twelver Shi'ites as well.¹⁵²

Despite some efforts within the Armenian community to bring about the reconciliation of the opposing confessional groups, from the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards both the Ottoman and Catholic authorities in Rome contributed to their growing distancing and disambiguation. As Santus and Windler have demonstrated by focusing on the problem of *communicatio in sacris*, up to 1729 there was considerable ambiguity in the implementation of Tridentine reforms and administration of sacraments within Ottoman and Safavid Armenian communities, with newly converted Catholics participating in sacraments administered by Armenian Apostolic priests.¹⁵³ The practice challenged the notion of clear denominational boundaries and was thus generally opposed by the Holy Office and Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith throughout the seventeenth century while at the same time being tacitly or explicitly tolerated. However, in 1729 it was finally prohibited, forcing Armenian Catholics to start worshipping separately and to some extent clandestinely, until they were recognized by the Ottoman administration as a separate *millet* in 1830. As Cesare Santus' paper in this volume suggests, from the late seventeenth century onwards, these efforts at confessional disambiguation and disciplining of Armenian Apostolic and Catholic communities were occasionally supported by the Ottoman authorities eager to limit the influence of Catholic missionaries and the European polities that patronized them.

As this extensive overview of confessional dynamics among Eastern Christian communities both within and beyond the Ottoman Empire suggests, the experiences of individual communities and groups within larger traditions (whether Greek

¹⁵⁰ Atamian, *The Archdiocese of Naxjewan*.

¹⁵¹ On K'ēōmiwrčean see Ohanjanyan, 'Creedal Controversies'. On Mxlayim, see her article in this volume.

¹⁵² On this polemical literature see Halft, 'Hovhannes Mrk'uz Jułayec'i'; Ohanjanyan, 'Narratives of Armenian Polemics'; on the wider polemical context in Safavid Iran see Tiburcio, *Muslim-Christian Polemics*.

¹⁵³ Windler, 'Ambiguous Belongings'; Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*.

Orthodoxy, Apostolic Armenian Christianity, Syriac Christianity) varied greatly depending on the political framework and local social and inter-confessional dynamics. However, when focusing on the Eastern Christian groups under Ottoman rule, a pattern does emerge. Although all of these groups were exposed to the missionary—in particular Catholic—proselytization at the latest from the late sixteenth century onwards, and various developments indicative of an awareness of new confessional differences if not of a new confessional awareness itself can be identified between the 1550s and 1650s, for most communities it was the period between the 1670s and 1740s that ushered in a more decisive differentiation and disambiguation between convert and traditional communities. It also brought a greater concern with orthodoxy and a turn towards formulation of normative, confession-building texts, along with measures of social disciplining designed to guard communal boundaries and generate a sense of centeredness.¹⁵⁴ While this shift must have been in a close dialogue with the social and political transformation at the very core of Ottoman power and administration, papers in this volume suggest that they also stemmed from an accumulation of experience on the part of both church leadership and Ottoman administration with Catholic and Protestant missions and their effects.

Judaism

Historians have long begun to integrate histories of various Jewish communities into their geographical and religious settings, recognize the competitive and mimetic nature of co-existence in the contexts where Jews lived, including those of early modern European and Middle Eastern polities, and engage with the historiographical debates in relevant fields.¹⁵⁵ However, the question of whether the notion of confessionalization is relevant to the Jewish tradition and history cropped up only recently. One of the principal reasons for the absence of the debate on the issue is that many Jewish scholars—both Orthodox and secular—maintain that it is primarily what you *do* rather than what you *believe* that matters—and is more strictly regulated—in Judaism. That does not mean that Judaism does not have a number of essential beliefs that need to be affirmed;¹⁵⁶ rather, these affirmations were never ordered in a system which attained the authority of its parts, unlike early modern confessions. Instead of a set of dogmatic precepts, it was the *Halakhah* or law, which regulated liturgical expressions of dogma, that has historically served as a source of normativity in Judaism. Similarly to the Muslim case, attempts to articulate a system of beliefs were considered instances of individual insight and did not attain a universal communal

¹⁵⁴ For similar dynamics in Coptic communities in Ottoman Egypt see Armanios, *Coptic Christianity*, esp. chapter 5.

¹⁵⁵ For an overview of historiography on and developments in early modern Jewish communities across diaspora see Bell, 'Early Modern Religious', Bell, 'Early Modern Comparative'; Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*.

¹⁵⁶ For instance, in many publications one comes across the claim that *Shema Yisrael*, a prayer that is supposed to be recited twice a day and that consists of three passages (Deut. 6: 4–9; Deut. 11:13–21; Numb. 15: 37–41) emphasizing God's oneness, love for God, and Jewish unity, respectively—constitutes the ancient Jewish creed.

authority.¹⁵⁷ For example, while Moses Maimonides (d. 1205) identified thirteen articles of Jewish dogma that became the basis of a popular liturgical hymn called *Yigdal Elohim* recited on the eve of the Sabbath beginning in the fifteenth century, it was not universally accepted by all Jews as the epitome of Jewish beliefs.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, although there were some attempts to compile a Jewish catechism, such as Abraham Jagel's *Lekah Tob*, which was published in Venice in 1587, they were exceptional until the eighteenth century when Jewish catechetical literature boomed as a result of greater Jewish-Christian philosophical engagement in the Mendelssohnian era.¹⁵⁹ However, as will become clearer below, this does not mean that the early modern era did not witness new manifestations of Jewish self-awareness or Jews' awareness of confessional differences in the world around them, which became expressed in new ways through legal and theological discourse.

Another feature of the original confessionalization theory that acted as a particular stumbling block to inquiries into the Jewish context was the putative relationship between confession- and state-building: since the early modern Jewry was in no position to create a state, the theory was presumed irrelevant. However, with the advancement of the debate about the dynamics that informed processes of early modern confessional polarization, and numerous case studies suggesting that confession-building did not necessarily transpire only with the support of state authorities but also despite and against them, the question of whether the theory can shed light on some aspects of early modern Jewish history was taken up by several scholars in recent years.¹⁶⁰

In his pioneering effort in this direction, Gerhard Lauer argued that the field of early modern Jewish history can greatly benefit from engaging with the concept of confessionalization to go beyond internal debates in Jewish studies. However, Lauer emphasized, for the confessionalization framework to be of any heuristic utility, it cannot simply be relevant to the context in which Jewish communities lived but rather to the developments within the Jewish tradition itself as it evolved from the medieval into the early modern era. He set out, therefore, to identify those features and developments that would suggest that early modern Judaism should not be

¹⁵⁷ For an insightful discussion on the relationship between law and theology in Judaism see Novak, 'The Role'.

¹⁵⁸ For an important overview of the issue and historical examples of formulating the dogmas of the Jewish faith see Schechter, 'The Dogmas of Judaism' and Kellner, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought*. The work that played an important role in creating dissent from Maimonides' philosophical approach to Judaism was Isaac Abravanel's *Rosh Amana* (Constantinople, 1506) which maintained that every word of the Torah must be believed, and that thus formulation of dogmatic principles is unnecessary. On Abravanel's work see Kellner, 'Isaac Abravanel' and Wilke, 'Rosch Amanah'.

¹⁵⁹ Kohler and Schreiber, 'Catechisms'.

¹⁶⁰ Studies on confessional dynamics in the Dutch Republic, in particular, have pointed out that confessionalization processes did not have to be initiated by the state or lead to state formation. See, for instance, Mörke, 'Die politische Bedeutung'; Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*.

considered only a religion but a confession on par with other contemporary Christian confessions. In calling for the inquiry into the *propria* of the early modern Jewish tradition, Lauer also rejected the objections of those historians who see the extension of the confessionalization debate to Judaism and Islam as meaningless on the grounds that the concept of 'confession' is foreign to them.¹⁶¹

In recent years, Lauer's call has been followed up by several other scholars, like Dean Phillip Bell and Yoseph Kaplan, who have also found confessionalization theory a meaningful heuristic framework for approaching early modern Jewish history, although mostly of the Jewish communities in the Christian West.¹⁶² What, according to Lauer and other scholars, are the developments in early modern Judaism that could be broadly qualified as 'confessional' and 'confessionalizing'? And within what chronological framework are these developments observable? Lauer identified as the inaugural event of the confessional era within the Jewish tradition the printing and the subsequent diaspora-wide impact of Rabbi Joseph Caro's (1488–1575) legal compendium *Shulḥan 'Arukh* (published in Venice in 1565). Caro was a Sephardic rabbi who migrated to the Ottoman city of Safed, where he authored this compendium that for the first time conceived of a universal lawcode for the Jewish community. It synthesized Sephardi and Ashkenazi legal traditions, and ushered in the systematization and sacralization of everyday life.¹⁶³ Lauer argued that Caro's lawcode, which was embraced by many Jewish communities across Europe within a generation—albeit with the commentary of Moses Isserles (c. 1525–1572), the Rabbi of Krakow, who retained the distinctions between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi legal interpretations—represented a redefinition of tradition as orthodoxy in the sense that it denoted a move to fix, systematize and define something that had previously been more fluid and fragmented.¹⁶⁴ Several other scholars, like Roni Weinstein, Dean Phillip Bell and Michael Driedger, have agreed with Lauer that the discourse of renewal and radical reform of religious inheritance that informed Caro's legislative thought, and that was also central to the post-Reformation religious life, may be interpreted as a confessional turn in Judaism.¹⁶⁵ In this volume, Carsten Wilke takes a more

¹⁶¹ Lauer, 'Die Konfessionalisierung des Judentums'.

¹⁶² Bell, 'Confessionalization'; Kaplan, 'Between Christianity and Judaism'; Kaplan, 'Confessionalization, Discipline and Religious Authority'. For an argument for Jewish confessionalization from the perspective of Prague see Ramon, 'Konfesyonalizatsyah'.

¹⁶³ Caro based his major legal work entitled *Beit Yosef* (House of Joseph) on Jacob ben Asher's authoritative (among both Sephardim and Ashkenazim) *Arba'ah Turim* (Four Pillars) (1340), the code that had for the first time incorporated multiple opinions of Talmudic scholars, grounded them in relevant textual passages, and reached decisive conclusions. Caro sought to expand *Turim* to include subsequent scholarly views and chose the method of consensus of major scholars to reach normative conclusions. He then presented his decisions from *Beit Yosef* in a terse form of a code, without sources or analysis, in his popular reference work *Shulḥan 'Arukh* (Set Table). See Berger, 'The Centrality of Talmud', pp. 327–329.

¹⁶⁴ On the reception of Caro's lawcode by the communities beyond Safed see Davis, 'The Reception of the *Shulḥan 'Arukh*'.

¹⁶⁵ See especially Weinstein, 'Jewish Modern Law'; Bell, 'Confessionalization'; and Driedger, 'The Intensification', esp. pp. 277–278.

circumspect approach. On the one hand, he maintains that engaging with the notion of confessionalization has a great potential for sketching-out and historicizing—without essentializing—the pan-Judaic developments that have been obfuscated by historians’ seemingly universal acceptance of the idea that ‘there was always an irreducible plurality of the Jewish diaspora’. On the other, he emphasizes that Kabbalistic spirituality, as one such pan-Judaic phenomenon among others, did not generate an ‘outwardly enforceable confessional model’.

Lauer interpreted the mystical turn that informed Caro’s law-based reform and the growing popularity of the Kabbalah from the mid-sixteenth century onwards as the outcome of a need to renew and rethink the tradition in the aftermath of the expulsions of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and the turmoil of the preceding fifty years. However, these attempts at the renewal of piety and religious commitment were not limited to elites but affected a broader swath of the population, spreading from Safed in the Ottoman Empire across the Jewish diaspora and leading to the formation of numerous Jewish confraternities and other forms of sacralization of everyday life facilitated not only by the spread of Kabbalistic learning but also by the rise of new, printed forms of Jewish literature in vernaculars. As David B. Ruderman has pointed out, print made Jews more aware of other Jews, led to the intermingling of Sephardi and Ashkenazi traditions, and helped generate a shared, more unified cultural experience of early modern Jewry.¹⁶⁶

Lauer and other scholars of early modern Jewry have also pointed to the ongoing struggle of the rabbinate since the late fifteenth century to assert its own authority in the midst of the growing influence of the secular Jewish authorities across the diaspora; the appearance of printed book that undermined their authority; the rise of voluntary, often mystically-inspired fraternities; and in the aftermath of the Sabbatai Sevi (d. 1676) phenomenon, self-styled messiahs who claimed authority of a different order.¹⁶⁷ One among the strategies of re-sacralization of rabbinical authority and organizational retrenchment attempted by Joseph Caro’s teacher Jacob Berab (d. 1546) and like-minded rabbis informed by the messianic fervor in the 1530s Safed, was the reintroduction of rabbinical ordination—an ancient Jewish practice that was abandoned in late antiquity—which was nevertheless met with a mixed response by rabbis in both the Ottoman Empire and Europe.¹⁶⁸ Although this idea ultimately failed, the early modern rabbinate did become more professionalized and organized, much like the clergy in post-Reformation Europe or the ulema in Ottoman lands. Some scholars have surmised that rabbis in the Ottoman Empire commanded comparatively more authority over their communities than their counterparts in Europe.¹⁶⁹ However, recent studies suggest that the idea of a strong rabbinical authority and leadership that sets agenda for the community was largely an aspiration by the rabbis in the Ottoman Empire prior to the emergence of the formal hierarchical

¹⁶⁶ Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, pp. 99–110.

¹⁶⁷ Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, pp. 58–59. On the models of rabbinical authority see also Sagi, ‘Models of Authority’.

¹⁶⁸ See Cover, ‘Bringing the Messiah’.

¹⁶⁹ Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, pp. 58–59.

structures in the first half of the nineteenth century. In reality, similarly to the Orthodox patriarchs, Jewish rabbis depended both on the cooperation of their communities (which were themselves often disunited) and the support of the Ottoman authorities, neither of which could be taken for granted, in enforcing their preferred legal framework or rulings.¹⁷⁰

Be it as it may, Sabbatean controversies, which were a trans-regional Jewish phenomenon, appear to have triggered a more concerted rabbinical opposition and attempts to define Jewish norms and beliefs as well as mechanisms of defending them, thus giving rise in the early eighteenth century to what, as Ruderman suggests, we might label first 'orthodox' rabbis.¹⁷¹ Although in the context of the Jewish tradition the notion of orthodoxy is typically associated with nineteenth-century reactions to the Enlightenment, more recent scholarship views the emergence of 'orthodoxy' not in terms of specific content but as a post-Sabbatean dynamic that is evident already by the early eighteenth century.¹⁷² Sabbatai Sevi's appearance and the subsequent spread of Sabbatean networks galvanized the rabbinic establishment in a new way, leading to organized and unified ways across the diaspora to determine and defend Jewish norms and beliefs. These 'orthodoxizing' initiatives were epitomized in the attempts of rabbinate to extirpate 'deviance', combat 'heresy', and enforce conformity by using tools such as *herem* (excommunication), *haskamah* (approbation of books), and acerbic polemics.¹⁷³ A byproduct of these mechanisms of exclusion and polarization were also various modes of community- (and possibly confession-) building, including among various Sabbatean groups (which could be outwardly Jewish, Christian, or Muslim),¹⁷⁴ that were also coupled with vigorous social disciplining within the communities themselves.

Marc Baer and Cengiz Şişman have done much to elucidate the importance of the Ottoman context and the role of Ottoman authorities in the messianic career of Sabbatai Sevi, the dissemination of his teachings across Eurasia, and the emergence of different Sabbatean (or Dönme, as they are known in Turkish) communities with the center in Ottoman Salonica in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹⁷⁵ Setting off in the early 1660s, Sabbatai Sevi's meteoric rise to prominence as the expected Jewish messiah coincided with the ongoing and occasionally violent debates about orthodoxy and orthopraxy among Ottoman Muslims stirred by

¹⁷⁰ Ayalon, 'Rethinking Rabbinical Leadership'.

¹⁷¹ Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, p. 146–147.

¹⁷² On this point, see especially Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy* and Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, pp. 146–155.

¹⁷³ See Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*. She also discusses the attempts of Rabbis Jacob and Moses Hagiz to establish Jerusalem as the center of rabbinic authority in the second half of the seventeenth century and combat the Sabbatean influence.

¹⁷⁴ On Sabbateans in Poland and the Habsburg Empire, led by Jacob Frank (d. 1791) who challenged normative Judaism, Islam, and various denominations of Christianity, see Maciejko, *Mixed Multitude*.

¹⁷⁵ See Baer, *Honored by the Glory*, pp. 121–138, and Sisman, *The Burden of Silence*; on the Sabbateans in the late Ottoman and Turkish contexts see Baer, *The Dönme*.

Kadizadeli preachers in Istanbul and other major cities. His career then took an unexpected turn with his conversion to Islam under duress in 1666, which figures as an example *par excellence* of imposition of Sunni normativity on a messianic discourse potentially threatening public order. Indeed, Sevi's and his followers' visibility in the Ottoman society already sensitized to various messianic discourses and apocalyptic expectations anticipating the end of the Ottoman dynasty or otherwise delegitimizing it was what informed Ottoman authorities' actions against him.¹⁷⁶ Şişman has emphasized that the seventeenth century was the century of a marked proliferation of crypto-communities in the Ottoman Empire that were tolerated by imperial authorities as long as they did not flaunt their beliefs and practices in public. He has shown that the Sabbateans publicly performed Sunni Muslim rituals, but privately adhered to a secret messianic subculture at the core of which were Eighteen Commandments that aimed to organize their daily life as believers.¹⁷⁷ Their beliefs revolved around the credo which had much in common with the Jewish articles of faith formulated by Maimonides and later celebrated by *Yigdal Elohim*, while their liturgy was in Ladino and Hebrew and drew heavily on Turkish music and poetic vocabulary.¹⁷⁸ Communal boundaries and secrecy were strictly enforced through measures of social disciplining. Endogamy was one of the pillars of the community's integrity and secrecy, and punishments for transgressors ranged from various material and spiritual measures (such as excommunication) to private execution.¹⁷⁹ As ostensible Muslims, Sabbateans were supposed to go to the sharia courts, but one of the Eighteen Commandments specifically instructed them never to do so; instead, community rabbis set up their own court system that decided on necessary measures of communal discipline.¹⁸⁰

While this dialogic hardening of the boundaries among the Jewish and Sabbatean communities in the early eighteenth century was above all an outcome of the developments within the Jewish tradition itself, it also became entangled with Muslims and Christian messianic and confessional sensibilities both within the Ottoman Empire and beyond it. Indeed, both Ottoman Christians and Muslims were well aware of the appearance of the self-proclaimed Jewish Messiah: prominent contemporaries such as Panagiotes Nikousios (d. 1673), the Grand Dragoman of the Ottoman Porte who was himself highly active in Greek Orthodox confessional debates with the Catholics, and Eremia K'ēōmiwrčean, the most prolific Armenian scholar of the time and author of several anti-Catholic polemical works, both left works on Sabbatai Sevi's messianic mission, while the famous Sufi Halveti sheikh and mystic Niyazi-i Misri (d. 1694) (whose direct comments on the Jewish messiah are yet to surface), was

¹⁷⁶ On reaction to Sevi's messianic claims beyond the Jewish community see below.

¹⁷⁷ Sisman, *The Burden of Silence*, pp. 172–175.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 177–178. On Sabbatean hymns see also Feldman, 'Ottoman Songs in Sabbatian Manuscripts'.

¹⁷⁹ Sisman, *The Burden of Silence*, pp. 192–194.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203. Each Dönme community had its own houses of prayer in which they prayed together (having also performed their prayers in the local mosque), since they believed not in individual but in communal salvation. *Ibid.*, pp. 200–201.

rumored to be his intimate acquaintance.¹⁸¹ Together with other sources, these testimonies to the cross-communal reverberations of the Jewish messianic fervor point to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as a period of convergence of various community-building projects as well as growing legibility and sharing of community-building strategies, registers of piety, and even vocabularies for expressing polemical issues (as illustrated by the importance and negative connotations of the concept of 'innovation' in belief and practice in the polemical discourse of all Ottoman communities at the time).¹⁸²

Islam

The concept of confessionalization appeared in the context of Ottoman historiography only recently, although it inevitably built on the growing discussion, especially since the early 1990s, about the nature of Islam in medieval Anatolia and early modern 'lands of Rum' (Ottoman Anatolia and the Balkans).¹⁸³ Based on apparent parallels in the timing and social processes that inter-imperial and inter-confessional polarization triggered in both the Ottoman-Safavid context and post-Reformation Europe, in an essay from 2009 I raised the question of whether it would be possible to speak of connected histories of confessionalization that spanned Europe and parts of the Middle East.¹⁸⁴ Making preliminary remarks on the characteristics of an Ottoman 'confessionalization' based on the sources relevant to the process of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Empire as well as the dynamics of empire-building, I suggested that the greater concern with articulating and enforcing a Sunni orthodoxy started in the early sixteenth century, as a consequence of the Safavid challenge, and was initiated largely by the scholars affiliated by the Ottoman state. I postulated that the process of Sunni confessionalization lasted until the late seventeenth century and went through different phases involving a variety of social actors beyond the state. By looking simultaneously at the Christian sources such as neomartyrologies, I argued that this process of Sunni confessionalization affected both Muslim and Christian communities in the empire and intersected in various ways with the confessionalizing initiatives from post-Reformation Europe, introduced to Ottoman Christians by Catholic and Protestant missionaries.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ On Nikousios see Koutzakiotis, *Attendre la fin*; on Eremia K'ēōmiwrčean see Lucca, 'Šab-betay Šewi and the Messianic Temptations of Ottoman Jews'; on Niyazi-i Mırsi see Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*; Graetz, 'Ueberbleibsel', p. 60.

¹⁸² On the importance of the notion of 'innovation' and the negative connotations it had in polemical discourse of specific communities see Terzioğlu, '*Bid'at*, Custom and the Mutability of Legal Judgments'; Kermeli, 'Kyrillos Loukaris' Legacy'; and Ohanjanyan, 'Creedal Controversies'.

¹⁸³ For the relevant literature see Part I of this essay as well as the overview of historiography in Peacock, De Nicola and Yıldız, 'Introduction'; Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize'; Krstić, 'Historicizing the Study'.

¹⁸⁴ Krstić, 'Illuminated by the Light'.

¹⁸⁵ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*.

In a series of articles Derin Terzioğlu addressed the question through other genres of sources, including Ottoman manuals for religious instruction (Ott. Tr. *‘ilm-i hāl*, Tr. *ilmihal*) and Sufi writings from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, suggesting that the concept of confessionalization may be useful with some qualifications. She argued that it is possible to speak of a confessionalization of Ottoman Sunnism—the process she termed ‘Sunnitization’¹⁸⁶—which she characterized as ‘the adoption by the Ottoman religious and political authorities of a series of policies to modify the behavior (and to a lesser extent the beliefs) of all their Muslim subjects in line with the precepts of Sunni Islam, as they were understood at the time’.¹⁸⁷ She pointed out, however, that these measures worked best on already nominally Sunni Muslims in urban environments and that the limits of the Ottoman power to police and discipline its vast imperial domains have to be kept in mind when thinking about the impact of these measures, especially in rural settings, or engaging in comparison with European states.¹⁸⁸ She called for looking beyond the state’s agency in the process and examining the role of multiple other social actors, including Sufis, in the process of articulating and popularizing what constituted Sunni tradition.¹⁸⁹ Terzioğlu also proposed a different chronology, arguing that the onset of Sunniting initiatives cannot be tied exclusively to the Ottoman rivalry with the Safavids, but that it started earlier, with the formation of an increasingly self-confident imperial learned hierarchy in the second half of the fifteenth century. Likewise, she pointed out that the debates over the boundaries between Sunnism and Shi’ism continued in the eighteenth century, as did controversies over Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy, which made her raise the question of whether, perhaps, the entire Ottoman era, until the later nineteenth century, could be conceptualized in terms of ebbs and flows of confessionalizing initiatives.¹⁹⁰

Since these initial forays into the question, important studies, some of which directly engaged with the concept and some that did not, were published that shed light on various issues related to the debate. A number of important recent monographs, most notably by Snježana Buzov, Guy Burak, and Abdurrahman Atçıl, examined the formation, beginning in the mid-fifteenth century, of an Ottoman imperial learned hierarchy (*ilmiye*) topped by a state-appointed chief jurist, which went hand in hand with the promotion of the Hanafi school of law (Ar. *madhhab*; Tr. *mezheb*) into the state school of law.¹⁹¹ These studies have shown that the level of integration of the ulema into the structures of the state was unprecedented in Islamic history

¹⁸⁶ Nathalie Clayer previously used the term ‘sunnitization’ to speak about the dynamic of denunciation of the heretics, imposition of shariatic norms, and propagation of central Ottoman power in Rumeli by the Halveti dervishes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See her *Mystiques, état et société*, p. 97.

¹⁸⁷ Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize’, p. 313.

¹⁸⁸ See *ibid.*, as well as her ‘Where Catechism Meets *‘ilm-i Hāl*’, pp. 107–114.

¹⁸⁹ Terzioğlu, ‘Sufis in the Age of State-Building’.

¹⁹⁰ Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize’, pp. 320–324.

¹⁹¹ Buzov, *The Lawgiver and His Lawmakers*; Burak, *The Second Formation*; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*.

and began to explore the implications of this phenomenon on the relationship between political and religious authority in the empire. The fact that the sultan had the prerogative to appoint the chief jurist of the empire particularly stood out as an innovation compared to the medieval Islamic period, although it was in line with the new practice by 'post-Mongol' Muslim rulers, who, starting in the first half of the fifteenth century, not only began to appoint chief jurists of the realm but also picked a particular school of Islamic law and promoted it as a state school of law.¹⁹² Although more detailed research into the consequences of these developments awaits, studies so far have shown that in the sixteenth-century Ottoman context the result of this integration of scholarly and administrative structures was both the greater influence of the sultan on the interpretation of the shariatic norms—to the extent that he could even influence the selection of particular opinions within the Hanafi tradition that were more beneficial to the needs of the state—and a greater ability, in principle, of the ulema to influence imperial governance and decision making. While in this arrangement the ulema could certainly assert their independent opinion, they also had every incentive to shore up the sultan's and Ottoman dynasty's legitimacy.¹⁹³ Thus, although in Islam there is no equivalent of the church, clergy or councils deciding on matters of doctrine, in the Ottoman Empire the integration of the traditionally independent Muslim ulema into the structures of the state created conditions that were conducive for a group of social actors backed by political power to impose their opinion of what constitutes correct belief and practice of Islam—i.e., the conditions for the definition of 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxy'.

The process of defining a Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the Ottoman context thus began already in the mid-fifteenth century with the formation of an imperial scholarly class but took on a different tone and set of priorities beginning in the early 1500s, with the participation not only of empire's intellectual and administrative elites but also various middling literati and preachers not affiliated with the state as well as urban Muslims engaged in trade and crafts.¹⁹⁴ In terms of the intellectual labor that went into the production of this new Sunni normativity, the efforts of Rumi (i.e. from the Ottoman Balkans and Anatolia) scholars were significantly augmented from two directions that show the extent to which the trajectories of the early modern Islamic empires and production of orthodoxies were entangled. One source was first-hand information on the beliefs of the Safavid followers they

¹⁹² Burak uses the term 'post Mongol' to draw attention 'to the ongoing dialogues—despite their different manifestations over time and space—that sultans, emperors, and dynasties held with their real and imagined Mongol past and Chinggisid heritage'. See Burak, 'The Second Formation', p. 594.

¹⁹³ On the studies that emphasize the continued independence of the ulema see especially Buzov, *The Lawgiver and His Lawmakers*; Atçıl, 'The Safavid Threat'; Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, pp. 46–152.

¹⁹⁴ Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, p. 48; Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize'; Krstić, 'State and Sunnitization'.

received from the Sunni scholars fleeing the Safavid territories in the early 1500s.¹⁹⁵ This process was mirrored by the actions of the Safavid shahs who drew on the expertise of Shi'ite scholars from Mt. Lebanon in Ottoman territories who were intimately familiar with Sunni law and theology.¹⁹⁶ Their intellectual labor was necessary for the articulation of Twelver Shi'ite beliefs and practices that were used in a progressive Shi'itization of Sunni Iran that started in 1501 with Shah Tahmasp's conquest of Tabriz and continued throughout the entire sixteenth century and beyond.¹⁹⁷

The second source for Ottoman scholars' articulation of Sunni normativity were exchanges—either in person or through the reception of written works—with the scholars from the Mamluk territories in Syria and Egypt that Ottomans conquered in 1516–1517, where anti-Shi'i sentiment was much more pronounced since the thirteenth century and expressed in various military campaigns against the Shi'i population and heresy trials against individuals with Shi'ite leanings who were seen as a threat to public order.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, in the Mamluk context this anti-Shi'i sentiment never reached the level of a concerted anti-Shi'i policy, and while the Mamluk sultans and ulema from the four different schools of law certainly shared the goal of protecting public order, there was a variety of opinions on how 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxy' should be defined and sanctioned. In the Ottoman context, this traditional plurality of Islamic law, and even the plurality of opinions within a single school of law—in this case, the Hanafi school—was beginning to be considerably circumscribed according to a particularly Rumi, imperial vision, starting in the mid-fifteenth century. As recent research suggests, Rumi scholars' understanding of Sunni orthodoxy and orthopraxy—in which an exclusively Hanafi imperial scholarly hierarchy and the sultan himself had the ultimate authority to set the boundaries of correct belief and practice—began to diverge from that of their Arab colleagues in the former Mamluk provinces, even when the latter belonged to the Hanafi school of law.¹⁹⁹

How, concretely, did Ottoman Rumi authors' understanding of Sunni and Hanafi Islam differ from that of previous generations of Hanafis (as well as, in some respects, from contemporary Hanafi scholars living in the Arab-speaking provinces of the empire)? Recently scholars have begun to examine different genres of Ottoman writing, from legal treatises and hadith works, to prayer manuals, theological and heresiographical treatises, in order to understand the discursive shifts that both articulated

¹⁹⁵ Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik*; Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, p. 257; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi*, pp. 267, 272.

¹⁹⁶ On this phenomenon see Stewart, 'Notes on the Migration'; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, pp. 10–30.

¹⁹⁷ On 'imperialization' and consolidation of Shi'ism in the Safavid Empire as reflected through madrasa curriculum and learning see Moazzen, *Formation of a Religious Landscape*.

¹⁹⁸ Al-Tikriti, 'Ibn-i Kemal's confessionism'; Kaplan, *An Anti-Ibn 'Arabi*; on heresy trials see Levanoni, 'Takfir in Egypt and Syria'.

¹⁹⁹ Meshal, 'Antagonistic Sharias'; Burak, 'Faith, Law and Empire'; Burak, *The Second Formation*; on attempted Hanafization of Egypt and resistance to it see Ibrahim, 'Al-Sharāni's Response'; Atçıl, 'Memlûkler'den Osmanlılar'a'.

and sought to shape a particular Rumi Sunni and Hanafi *madhhab* consciousness.²⁰⁰ For instance, Evren Sünnetçioğlu has examined Ottoman jurists' treatises and opinions discussing the issue of whether regular attendance at the five daily congregational prayers was a 'confirmed *sunna*' (and thus by definition not obligatory but 'strongly recommended') or a duty (Ar. *wujūb*)—a legal distinction that was directly related to the question of necessity of penal sanctions for non-attendance as well as authority to discipline male believers. The Hanafi jurisprudential tradition considered the regular attendance at the five daily congregational prayers as 'confirmed *sunna*' (Ar. *sunna mu'akkada*); however, majority of jurists maintained that prayer in congregation was one of the 'distinguishing marks of religion' whose abandonment leads astray and thus must be sanctioned, leading the jurists to progressively equate it with a duty. Sünnetçioğlu traces the crystallization of the consensus on this issue among the Ottoman Hanafi jurists over the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The Ottoman jurists' consensus that five daily congregational prayers constituted a duty and thus necessitated sanctions for non-compliance opened the door for the Ottoman sultan to intervene into the regulation of piety at the communal level to ensure that this defining marker of Sunniness was upheld throughout the empire. This was epitomized not only by a boom in building Friday mosques in the cities across Ottoman domains, as Gülru Necipoğlu has shown,²⁰¹ but also by the decree promulgated by Sultan Süleyman in 1537–1538 (and reconfirmed as a law throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), which stipulated that each village in the empire must have a designated prayer space (*masjid*) or face sanctions. Sünnetçioğlu also demonstrated that a corollary development of the period was the raised standard of moral probity and piety for both prayer leaders and communities.²⁰² This, of course, is what the prescriptive sources tell us—how this stipulation was realized in practice, especially in the villages, is a matter of further research that requires us to resolve the methodological conundrum of how to gauge the effect and reception of Sunnizing policies.

Derin Terzioğlu has provided further insight into a distinctively Rumi approach to prayer and piety in her article on the seventeenth-century debate regarding the congregational performance of supererogatory (Tr. *nafile*) prayers, i.e. additional prayers that could be performed either before or after obligatory ones. She demonstrated that while in principle medieval Hanafi jurists recommended that such prayers be performed at home in order not to be confused with obligatory worship, since the fifteenth century it became a custom in Rum that the nocturnal prayers on the five holy nights (Tr. *kandil*) during the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (Tr. *Mevlid*) be performed with the congregation. While the practice itself was old and heavily criticized already by the Mamluk-era scholars, most Rumi jurists and Sufi authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth century were inclined to see it as a beneficial innovation that raised the level of public piety and devotion to the Prophet in

²⁰⁰ For a collection of studies addressing in particular this *problematique* through the traditional genres of Islamic learning see Krstić and Terzioğlu eds, *Historicizing Sunni Islam*.

²⁰¹ Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, pp. 47–70.

²⁰² Sünnetçioğlu, 'Imams and Their Communities'.

‘the age of corruption’. Furthermore, in the late sixteenth century Ottoman dynasty began to sponsor the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday and popular participation in it was encouraged, including in the communal performance of the associated supererogatory prayers. The fact that the Ottoman sultans supported it was cited as a proof of its soundness, underlying the deep connection between communal piety and sultanic legitimacy. However, that does not mean that the practice went uncontested: taking inspiration from the critiques by Mamluk-era scholars, Kadizadeli preachers made the congregational performance of supererogatory prayers a target of their crusade against innovations (Tr. *bidat*).²⁰³ Furthermore, as Nir Shafir has demonstrated, by the early eighteenth century, it was precisely the connection between piety and legitimacy of the state apparatus that some believers sought to sever by withdrawing from public life and the performance of communal prayers.²⁰⁴ Overall, as recent research shows, Sunni Muslims across Ottoman domains, even those belonging to the Hanafi school of law, did not necessarily agree on which practices were most correct or constituted the best basis for reinforcing the sense of a Sunni community.

Building a Sunni community through prayer was accompanied by communicating a clearer definition of who belongs to that community and who does not, in a language understandable to the common folk. I examined various Ottoman manuals of faith (Tr. *ilmihal*), which can be likened to catechisms, written by Rumi authors in simple Turkish between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries and compared them to the medieval Sunni creeds to demonstrate both the novel features of the genre itself and its theological content. My research suggested that when it comes to the definitions of who belongs to the ‘People of the Sunna and the Community’ (Tr. *ehl-i sünnet ve’l-cemaat*; namely Sunnis), Ottoman *ilmihals* used the articles existing already in medieval Sunni creeds but singled out and prioritized those, among many, that directly distinguished Sunnis from Shi‘ites.²⁰⁵ These *ilmihals* also insisted that the faithful acknowledge the *mezheb* (Ar. *madhhab*; literally, path but also often glossed as doctrine, sect, school, or denomination) of the Sunnis as the only true path in terms of belief, and the *mezheb* of Abu Hanifa (i.e. the Hanafi school of law) as the most correct one in terms of ritual practice, thus articulating a particularly Rumi Sunni and Hanafi consciousness. In that sense, if we look for the terminology used by the early modern Ottoman Muslim authors to indicate belonging to different communities of belief and practice, it may be more fitting to label the dynamic under discussion here as *madhhabization* rather than Sunnitization or confessionalization.

Moreover, in contrast to medieval Sunni creeds, none of which included legal stipulations of any sort, Ottoman *ilmihals* typically combined discussion of the articles of faith, the divine attributes, and the defining features of the Sunnis, with an extensive list of blasphemous utterances and actions that required one’s renewal of faith and marriage—a legal stipulation that had its roots in the post-classical Eastern Hanafi legal discourse but was elaborated and promoted in a new way by Ottoman

²⁰³ Terzioğlu, ‘*Bid’at*, Custom and the Mutability’.

²⁰⁴ Shafir, ‘Moral Revolutions’.

²⁰⁵ Krstić, ‘State and Religion’.

Rumi jurists.²⁰⁶ By combining articles of faith and communal belonging with a list of utterances and actions that placed an individual legally outside the boundaries of faith, Ottoman catechists presented a much narrower understanding of Sunni Islam, effectively articulating their vision of orthodoxy and orthopraxy that was to be enforced by legal sanctions.²⁰⁷

This building of a Rumi Sunni-Hanafi consciousness did not entail attention only to the outward markers of communal belonging; it also focused on the internal forum (namely, personal beliefs). As my research has shown, there was also an important difference in the Ottoman catechists' views on the individual believer's understanding of faith and responsibility for salvation compared to medieval Hanafi and Maturidi tradition. The latter generally maintained that it was sufficient for a believer to profess faith in general terms, epitomized by the *shahāda* ('There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger'), in order to be considered a true believer (Tr. *mūmin*) and attain a place in Heaven; a detailed knowledge, understood as ability to enumerate the six articles of faith, was not considered necessary. However, from the mid sixteenth century onwards and especially in the seventeenth century, most Ottoman catechists began to insist that while general faith may technically make one a Muslim and save him/her from paying the poll-tax obligatory for non-Muslims (Tr. *cizye*), it does not guarantee a place in Heaven. As they explain, this is because if one asks you what faith is and you respond with 'I don't know', you have committed blasphemy (Tr. *kūfr*) and are to be considered an unbeliever (Tr. *kāfir*), which automatically triggers further legal consequences. In this case, Ottoman catechists stipulate, you have to be taught the articles of faith and then renew your faith (and your marriage vow, if married) by professing the *shahāda* again, which effectively restores one to the community of the believers.²⁰⁸ This shift in the emphasis may be partly explained by the fact that the process of conversions to Islam in the Ottoman Empire peaked by the mid sixteenth century, and that the catechisms from the sixteenth and seventeenth century reflect the concerns of a more established Muslim society in which a bare minimum of familiarity with the ritual and creedal norms was not sufficient anymore.²⁰⁹ However, greater emphasis on the detailed knowledge of one's faith and practice, and the need to raise the ability of the common folk to distinguish between the correct and false teachings of Islam is also consistent with the goals of agents of confession-building in other contemporary contexts, making it a key feature of this age of confessional polarization.

Of course, a Europeanist familiar with the confessionalization debate would inevitably wonder how this Sunni-Hanafi orthodoxy could be enforced given the absence of print in the Ottoman Muslim context? Without doubt, the absence of print, as well as limited resources of an empire the size of Ottoman, with its vast rural regions and low literacy rates, precluded the standardization of confessional texts or concerted enforcement of their teachings comparable to what went on in the urban

²⁰⁶ Burak, 'Faith, Law and Empire'; Krstić, 'You Must Know Your Faith in Detail'.

²⁰⁷ Krstić, 'You Must Know Your Faith in Detail'.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ On this issue see Krstić, 'From *Shahāda* to 'Aqīda'.

centers of Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist Reformation. However, we should not exaggerate the separation between print and oral culture before the eighteenth century, and underestimate the importance of the manuscripts and the performative nature of reading for transmission of knowledge and religious instruction.²¹⁰ It would amount to an act of methodological abdication if we did not explore how confession-building process could work in a manuscript culture, rather than simply assume that it could not. After all, hundreds upon hundreds of manuscripts of key Ottoman catechisms, especially by Birgivi Mehmed (d. 1573), Ahmed Rumi Akhisari (d. c. 1632), Kadizade Mehmed (d. 1635) as well as a host of anonymous texts survive from the Ottoman period in collections from Hungary to Cairo, copied by people who ranged from functionally literate to educated court and mosque personnel. These texts were both read individually and aloud in family or community, thus reaching a much wider audience and playing a role in the formation of textual and aural communities around confessional literature. In recent years, manuscript studies have become central to reimagining histories of the book and reading in the context of Muslim Eurasia. For instance, Nir Shafir has shed light on the fierce long-distance polemics over issues related to creed, ritual, and other community-defining issues that spanned Ottoman domains from Egypt to the Balkans in the absence of print, thus pointing to the fact that modern historians' obsession with print technology as the only means of building imagined communities is limiting, to say the least.²¹¹ While print overrides the process of 'natural' selection, manuscripts of Ottoman catechisms allow us to trace the process by which certain texts became popular, gradually became connected to others, and came to constitute the canon (of sorts) of the Ottoman Rumi Sunni confessional ecosystem.²¹² It would be possible, thus, to speak of a Rumi Sunni confessional culture—with a variety of catechetical texts that sustained it—along the lines proposed by Thomas Kaufmann for the Lutheran case.²¹³

Recent research by Ottomanists suggests that this Sunni confessional culture had different registers and that the building of a Sunni Hanafi *madhhab* consciousness did not go hand in hand with the persecution and extermination of difference at all cost. As Vefa Erginbaş has shown, various forms of ambiguity—in particular various degrees of Alid loyalty and devotion to the House of the Prophet (known as 'ahl al-baytism')—that also characterized late medieval Muslim landscape in Eurasia, persisted in this age of confessional polarization.²¹⁴ However, as Terzioğlu demonstrates in her contribution to this volume, the new conditions for belief—namely, the confessional turn informed by intra- and inter-imperial dynamics—made these forms of ambiguity a contested ground and prevent us from conceiving of them as indicators

²¹⁰ See Chartier, 'Texts, Printing, Readings'.

²¹¹ Shafir, 'The Road from Damascus.' For a manuscript-centered approach see also Quinn, *Books and Their Readers*. On the importance of manuscript culture for the reinforcement of confessional belonging among Eastern Christians see Girard ed, *Livres et confessions*.

²¹² I hope to elaborate on this phenomenon in my forthcoming book. On Ottoman catechetical canon see Tezcan, 'The Canon of Disenchantment'; Krstić, 'State and Religion'.

²¹³ Kaufmann, 'What is Lutheran Confessional Culture?'

²¹⁴ Erginbaş, 'Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism'; Erginbaş, 'Reading Ottoman Sunnism'.

of an undisturbed continuity with the pre-1500s.²¹⁵ Thus, both 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Twelve Imams could be appropriated and accommodated in early modern Ottoman Sunnism, typically as long as they were disconnected from the idea of the last imam's return from occultation to assume the rule on earth, the belief that constituted the basis of the Safavid Shi'i political claim.²¹⁶ Terzioğlu reminds us that Ottoman Sunnism cannot be equated to what we imagine under the label of Sunnism today but rather has to be thought of as an outcome of engagements with the tradition and sources in a particular historical and political context. Furthermore, like Shahab Ahmed and Nenad Filipović,²¹⁷ Terzioğlu emphasizes that the policies of Sunnization played out in a particular spatial and rhetorical context: it was the public manifestations of belief and ritual practice that were visible to and entailed the participation of common believers that were increasingly circumscribed by law and monitored for deviations; private and especially elite pursuits of the Truth were left unchecked.²¹⁸ This was not only true for Sufis threading a fine line in their devotion to *ahl al-bayt* but also for Ottoman literati interested in what Harun Küçük calls 'practical naturalism' (rather than 'science'), who by and large were left to their own devices as long as they did not flaunt what could be perceived as blasphemous views in public.²¹⁹

As these papers and other recent studies suggest, public, outward compliance with the sharia, whose implementation and enforcement were the basis of Ottoman political legitimacy, along with the acceptance of the sultan's rule and imperial ulema's authority, constituted the ultimate boundary of orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. This dichotomy between the monitored, Sunnitized public and unsupervised 'private' space left considerable room for groups and individuals to maintain different forms of beliefs and practices away from the public eye, thus encouraging the formation of double or crypto-confessional identities. Communities that did not adhere to normative Sunni Hanafi interpretations of law underwent various forms of assimilation or engaged in varying degrees of dissimulation. For instance, by the mid sixteenth century various non-sharia abiding Sufi groups, like Abdals of Rum, discussed in this volume by Nikolay Antov, were progressively assimilated into formally sharia-abiding Sufi orders, like

²¹⁵ Terzioğlu engages, in particular, with Thomas Bauer's argument that ambiguity was an essential feature of Islam until the nineteenth century when Islam was 'theologized' and 'disambiguated'. See Bauer, *Die Kultur*.

²¹⁶ In some cases, like that of the famous Ottoman bureaucrat and intellectual Mustafa 'Ali, even that requirement was ignored, but in this respect 'Ali's views seem to represent a minority within the Ottoman Sunni spectrum, elite or commoner, Sufi or non. On 'Ali see Erginbaş, 'Reading Ottoman Sunnism'.

²¹⁷ Ahmed, *What is Islam?*; see also the conclusion to Filipović's essay in this volume.

²¹⁸ For a related point see also Krstić, 'State and Religion'.

²¹⁹ See Küçük, *Science without Leisure*. Accusations of blasphemy could be well founded or slanderous, as in the case of Patburnuzade, a sharp-tongued clerk in the imperial financial bureaucracy, who ruffled too many of his colleagues' feathers and offended religious scholars only to be executed for blasphemy in 1681. See Menekşe, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklık*.

the Bektashi order, which had already undergone a Sunnizing intervention by Ottoman authorities in the early sixteenth century, or they blended into emerging Kizilbash-Alevi communities. Other non-conformist groups embraced various dissimulative practices, such as maintaining a Sunni Hanafi identity in public while privately adhering to a completely different, secret credo and legal system, like the Sabbateans; adopting a low public profile, showing respect for the sultanic rule by paying relevant taxes, and concealing their beliefs and rituals from non-members of the community, like the Kizilbash-Alevi; or simulating being Sunnis by claiming to follow the Shafi'i school of law, like some Shi'ites of Mt. Lebanon.

As Maurus Reinkowski reminds us, there was much that was situational in the circumstances that informed day-to-day strategies of such groups, some of which indeed developed a lasting and stable system of beliefs and practices that qualify as a 'crypto-religion'—like the Sabbateans—while in the case of others it is more methodologically justifiable to speak of 'crypto-religious strategies', either conscious or not, that could arise from various circumstances in a particular context and be of a limited duration.²²⁰ As recent studies by Michael E. Meeker, Yorgos Tzedopoulos, Zeynep Türkyılmaz, Selim Deringil, and others have shown, the phenomenon of crypto-Christianity became a particular headache for the Ottoman authorities in the nineteenth century, following the Tanzimat reform edicts of 1839 and 1856. By these edicts Ottoman sultans, under the pressure of rival imperial powers, granted freedom of religion to their subjects, prompting a wave of requests by various crypto-Christian communities that had up to this point publicly observed Islam, to return to their 'true' beliefs.²²¹ In most cases, however, it is unclear how far back these communities' Christian affiliation and awareness of 'true' vs. 'false' practices dated, and to what extent this wave of declarations of Christian allegiances had to do with ethno-confessional continuity from the late medieval/early modern period, prior to conversions to Islam in the Ottoman Empire, as opposed to peculiar local contexts and dynamics of the nineteenth century.²²² As a rule, Ottoman authors did not report on such phenomena, while they regularly featured in the accounts of missionaries and travelers who had their own reasons to 'spot' crypto-Christians in the Ottoman landscape, making this phenomenon a particularly challenging methodological problem, particularly for the early modern period when the sources are more scarce.

However, it appears that already during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Ottoman authorities, while being fully aware of various communities' non-conformity to Sunni creedal and ritual norms, nevertheless willingly treated them as Sunni Muslims at times of peace. This allowed the authorities to maintain the dynastic state's legitimacy without disrupting public life and unnecessarily exerting violence or expanding precious resources. For instance, while Ottoman punitive actions against the Kizilbash populations were part and parcel of the Ottoman-Safavid wars

²²⁰ Reinkowski, 'Keine Kryptoreligion.'

²²¹ Meeker, *A Nation of Empire*; Tzedopoulos, 'Public Secrets'; Türkyılmaz, *Anxieties of Conversion* (especially ch. 2); Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy* (especially ch. 3); Malcolm, 'Crypto-Christianity', pp. 65–66.

²²² On this point see especially Türkyılmaz, *Anxieties of Conversion*.

that punctuated the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries up to 1639, research by Stefan Winter and Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer has demonstrated that in times of peace or in places far away from the theaters of war the decision of the Ottoman authorities whether to persecute known Kizilbash and/or Shi'i population or individuals depended on the latter's readiness to acknowledge the sultan's sovereignty, typically by paying requisite taxes, and not disturb public order or flaunt their religious views.²²³ These kinds of strategies were not uncommon in confessional-era Europe, where in daily life local and imperial authorities had incentives to privilege coexistence in the interest of stability of rule.²²⁴ However, it is clear that the tolerance for ambiguity, dissimulation, and 'don't ask, don't tell' approach was much higher in the Ottoman context.

That being said, despite the fact that Ottoman authorities did not pursue a policy of constant persecution of non-conformist Sufis, Kizilbash-Alevis and Shi'ites in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and that after the end of the wars with the Safavids in 1639 Rumi Muslims began to be more focused on perceived deviations from tradition within the Sunni community itself, pressure on non-conformist groups did not disappear but rather became conventionalized. While during times of peace Ottoman authorities may have approached these groups as (Sunni) Muslims, the moment the latter undermined this pretense in any way or reasons for scapegoating appeared in local contexts, the language of heresy and deviance resurfaced in the sources as the basis for punitive action. As Ayfer Karakaya-Stump and Cengiz Şişman have shown in their respective books, and Rıza Yıldırım in this volume, over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this external pressure backed by Ottoman legal discourse, which articulated what these communities were not (that is, Sunnis), was coupled with an internal pressure within the same communities to articulate what they were. Despite these communities' predominantly oral culture, they appear to have undergone processes of communal, ritual, and creedal articulation akin to those envisioned by the phenomenon of confessionalization.

The importance of the context, documentary genre, and rhetorical register in mapping the full spectrum of confessional attitudes in the Ottoman context is also highlighted by Selim Güngörürler's research, which explores diplomatic correspondence between the Ottomans and Safavids in the period following the cessation of wars between the two empires, from the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639 up to the 1720s. He shows that while the Ottoman ulema of this period continued to pronounce fatwas against the *Rafizis* and treat the Safavids as heretics, Ottoman bureaucrats who authored letters to the Safavid leadership completely suspended references to heresy and adopted the language enriched with Quranic quotations and metaphors that allowed them to stress solidarity and unity in religion between the two polities, as long as the Safavid shah recognized Ottoman claims to the 'greater caliphate' and contented himself with being a 'lesser caliph'. However, as soon as this more-or-less

²²³ Winter, *The Shiites*; Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, 'The Formation of Kızılbaş Communities' and Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, 'Neither Victim nor Accomplice'.

²²⁴ See, for instance, essays in Dixon, Freist, and Greengrass eds, *Living with Religious Diversity*; Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*.

explicit consensus about Ottoman superiority was in any way undermined, the pretense of brotherhood between the two Muslim dynasties would quickly evaporate and references to heresy would resurface in diplomatic correspondence.²²⁵

The unstable nature of diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and their Iranian neighbors, both up to the fall of the Safavid dynasty in 1736 and upon Nader Shah's (d. 1747) establishment of the Afsharid dynasty (1736–1796), continued until the mid-eighteenth century, with initiatives to 'deconfessionalize' the relations playing an important role in the attempt to achieve a lasting peace. Nader Shah himself attempted to provide a solution to this problem by reconceptualizing Twelver Shi'ism as the 'Ja'fari madhhab' and proposing that the Ottomans recognize it as the fifth Sunni school of law and allow for the Ja'fari representation in Mecca. He in effect planned to prohibit all explicitly anti-Sunni aspects of ritual worship (such as the rejection of the first three caliphs' legitimacy and their public cursing) and emphasize pilgrimage to the tombs of the Imams, which was in tune with Sunni Alid sensibilities.²²⁶ As M. Sait Özervarlı shows, the request generated considerable polemics and resistance among the ulema in Istanbul, which accounts for the eventual rejection of Nader Shah's request.²²⁷ However, a fascinating record survives by a Sunni Iraqi scholar named al-Suwaydi (d. 1760) who participated as the Ottoman representative in the debate between Sunni and Shi'i scholars at Najaf, organized by Nader Shah in 1743. As Özervarlı argues, al-Suwaydi's account demonstrates openness of the Ottomans towards a dialogue with their Iranian neighbors at the time but also the depth and intensity of mistrust towards them, which points to the success of Sunnitization. At one point in his narrative, al-Suwaydi, who was extremely wary about the possibility of openly discussing theological differences with his Shi'i interlocutors, suggests that a Christian or a Jew should arbitrate in the debate in order to ensure impartiality.²²⁸ It is indicative of al-Suwaydi's perception of his own role in this dialogue and the importance of the task before him that he viewed it as the third most difficult challenge that the Muslim community faced in its entire history, after the civil wars following the death of Muhammad and the so-called Inquisition (*mihna*) period of the ninth century.²²⁹ In the final countdown, for al-Suwaydi, as for most of his scholarly colleagues in Istanbul, nothing short of full conversion to Sunnism would have led to the acceptance of Nader Shah's request for the Iranian ruler's representation at Mecca and appointment of an Iranian hajj guide. While the Ottomans did not eventually concede to the request, the dialogue appears to have played a role in the peace treaty they signed with Nader Shah in 1746, which lasted for nearly half a century.²³⁰

²²⁵ Güngörürler, 'Islamic Discourse' and his essay in this volume.

²²⁶ On Nader Shah's initiative see Tucker, 'Nadir Shah'; Tucker, *Nadir Shah's Quest*; Özervarlı, 'Between Tension and Rapprochement', pp. 533–542.

²²⁷ Özervarlı, 'Between Tension and Rapprochement', p. 534.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 538.

²³⁰ Shaw, 'Iranian Relations'.

The mid-eighteenth century thus seems to represent the end of an 'early modern' phase in Sunni-Shi'i relations that can be treated on its own and whose features and dynamics stand in contrast to the Tanzimat era (1839–1876) and later sectarian dynamics between the Sunni Ottoman authorities and various non-Sunni groups, including Shi'ites, Alevi, and Yezidi. The nineteenth century, especially the reign of 'Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), ushered in what could be qualified as confessionalization in the strong sense, epitomized by the concerted attempts of the Sunni Ottoman state to 'correct the beliefs' of non-conformist groups and enforce religious uniformity within the Muslim community, ultimately unsuccessfully.²³¹ For this reason, Derin Terzioğlu has suggested that we might view confessionalization in the Ottoman case as a process that lasts until the very end of the empire, with ebbs and flows in intensity, rather than seeking to arbitrarily pinpoint its end.²³² This is certainly a productive way to approach the issue, especially if one is interested in understanding the genealogy of modern Turkish Islam. It is also true that during the nineteenth century Ottoman literati who were interested in the polemics against non-Sunni Muslims found the early modern Ottoman polemical treatises to be useful templates for discussing religious alterity, and that the printing of these texts as well as early modern catechisms starting in the 1830s finalized the process of canonization of the textual corpus promoted by the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century agents of Sunnification.²³³ At the same time, however, these polemical discussions and initiatives were transpiring in a very different legal and political environment informed by the changed equations of power, with the Ottomans gradually losing ground to their imperial rivals. The new post-Tanzimat legal framework did away with the legal inequality between Muslims and non-Muslims, which meant that conversion of a Muslim to Christianity was not considered a crime of apostasy anymore, and that the term 'apostate' (Tr. *mürted*) as well as 'unbeliever' (Tr. *kafir*) ceased to be used in the official Ottoman parlance from the mid nineteenth century onwards.²³⁴ However, this brought diversity within the Muslim community into a sharper focus of the Ottoman authorities, and groups like Yezidi, Alevi, and Shi'ite, rather than being tacitly treated as Sunni Muslims as before, were now reconceptualized as 'heretics' (Tr. *frak-ı dalle*) whose beliefs should be corrected through instruction and 'civilizing mission', inspired by the discourse and strategies of the much-hated Christian missionaries.²³⁵

²³¹ On these policies and the role of the state see Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, pp. 68–84; Gölbaşı, "Turning the 'Heretics'"; Alkan, "The Ottoman Policy of 'Correction of Belief(s)'".

²³² Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize', p. 324.

²³³ On the printing of the polemical literature see Rank, *Disputing Religion, Empire, and Modernity*; on catechisms and other genres see Tek Başaran, *The Ottoman Printing Enterprise*.

²³⁴ Gölbaşı, "Turning the 'Heretics'", p. 4.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*; Alkan, "The Ottoman Policy of 'Correction of Belief(s)'".

IN SEARCH OF ALTERNATIVE VOCABULARY

It has been suggested in the opening pages of this essay that the notion of ‘confessionalization’ and related concepts such as ‘confession-building’, ‘confessionalism’ and ‘confessional polarization’ are intended here as heuristic devices to interrogate the relationship between religious and political authorities in different communal contexts across the early modern Ottoman Empire, and possibly facilitate the discussion of commensurability of different past experiences. After engaging in this heuristic exercise and examining other scholars’ conclusions on its utility, it is time to re-evaluate both terminology and the broader processes that have been highlighted through this exercise.

Many scholars whose contributions were discussed in this overview have remarked that there is something fundamentally relevant in the concept of confessionalization for a variety of communal contexts across early modern Eurasia—specifically, that religion begins to play a new community-building function, which could overlap with state-building—but that the term ‘confession’ (and consequently ‘confession-building’ and ‘confessionalization’) fails to universally capture the focus and basis of this community- and/or state-building process. Scholars working on Judaism, various forms of Eastern Christianity, and Islam have pointed out that in these traditions it is ritual rather than belief that has historically constituted the primary focus of regulation and community-building, and that this continues to be the case in the early modern era. That is not to say that the questions of belief were irrelevant for these communities. On the contrary, a number of recent articles considered above and contributions in this volume suggest that as a consequence of the rise of the early modern empires, mobility, increased global interactions and comparisons that they entailed, communities across Eurasia were prompted to define more precisely, often in genres and formats that were previously unfamiliar to them, what they did or did not believe in. In this respect, the concept of confessionalization in its ‘weaker’ sense—as emergence of a new sensitivity to the notion of correct belief, which in turn could serve as the basis for differentiation within or between communities—is certainly relevant. It has also been demonstrated that this phenomenon did not arise solely as a consequence of the Reformation; rather, the Reformation was one local manifestation of a more global dynamic of confessional polarization that parts of Eurasia witnessed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as an outcome of the new dialectic between spiritual and political authority.

Nevertheless, an exclusive focus on belief—epitomized by the notion of confession in the sense of a pithy formulation of key tenets of faith—leaves out important new early modern developments in the domain of ritual practice and legal discourse that regulated it, especially in the cases of Judaism and Islam. The question thus arises of what alternative concepts could serve as a better basis for the discussion of these community-building dynamics and their relationship to the political imagination that is peculiar to the early modern period, even though it certainly drew on late medieval developments. As stated in the beginning, ideally such a terminology should be less tradition-specific. While speaking about ‘Sunnitization’ or ‘maddhabization’ may capture the particular phenotype of the phenomenon in the early modern

Islamic context and is certainly not Euro- and (Latin) Christiano-centric, it does not help us with the analysis of the global nature of the dynamics.

One term that captures the underlying process in a tradition-neutral way is 'normative centering'. It was suggested by the German scholar of theology Berndt Hamm for the analysis of religious dynamics in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as an alternative to various epoch-defining labels such as 'Renaissance' and 'Reformation' as well as 'Confessionalization'.²³⁶ Hamm has argued that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries one sees the 'alignment of both religion and society towards a standardizing, authoritative, regulating and legitimizing focal point'.²³⁷ This process was both multidimensional and relational, in the sense that initiatives towards normative centering fed off of each other across the social spectrum. Hamm postulated that this impulse, which can also be expressed in terms of standardization, consolidation, and reduction of complexity, stemmed from striving for 'a new certainty and legitimacy, a fresh clarity and order with respect to one's life in this world and the next. It thereby provided an answer to what many contemporaries saw as unsettling patterns of differentiation, multiplicity, individualization, and concern for (and attention to) the things of this world'.²³⁸ He argued that those beliefs and practices that were considered central, necessary and helpful, 'were held up as the core and key for the shaping, measuring, and determining of individual life and of social, political and economic relations'.²³⁹ In the sphere of theology, he identified the emergence of what he called a 'theology of piety'—a simplified set of key concepts easily understandable for laity, formulated in pithy texts, such as catechisms, religious hymns, and saints' lives. In the sphere of rule, emphasis on new demarcations and the proper ordering of public life through new legislation on public propriety, market regulation, sumptuary laws, marriage, and burial, contained an in-built religious component directed towards both the wellbeing of the earthly state and the salvation of the community in the hereafter through the observation of divine laws.

While Hamm's own framework and analysis were informed by the Latin Christian context, the notion of 'normative centering' as well as his description of what it entailed in various discursive registers and social contexts appears highly useful for the discussion at hand. Indeed, as we have seen repeatedly in the discussion above, early modern Muslim, Jewish, and Eastern Christian religious authorities in the Ottoman Empire (as well as in the Safavid and Russian Empires) conceived of several ambitious and unprecedented projects of normative centering, whether we are talking about Joseph Caro's attempt to formulate a universal code of law that would serve as a norm for all the Jews, the Ottomans' singling out of the Hanafi school of law as the state school of law, the attempts of Ottoman catechists to define the characteristics of the Sunni community and belief in a pithy and simplified manner, or the Russian Patriarch Nikon's attempt to reform liturgy in accordance with 'true'

²³⁶ See Hamm, 'Reformation als normative Zentrierung'; Hamm, 'Normative Zentrierung'. The latter essay was translated into English. See Hamm, 'Normative Centering'.

²³⁷ Hamm, 'Normative Centering', p. 3.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Greek Orthodox tradition. That does not mean that these initiatives did not have rivalling normative projects or that they did not face resistance. Like the notion of confessionalization, ‘normative centering’ does not have a paradigmatic value and can be only one tool in our conceptual toolbox for working on the early modern period, but perhaps one that has a wider relevance than the concept put forward by Schilling and Reinhard. This wider relevance arises from the fact that it can capture different initiatives of re-ordering and definition of norms, whether legal, ritual, or creedal, rather than only the latter.

‘Normative centering’ was essentially an epistemic process but one arising not solely from ignorance, as Zwierlein has suggested. While competition between rivaling normative projects certainly involved obtaining specific knowledge about the other—often indeed out of lack of information—‘normative centering’ primarily entailed creating a consensus around the necessary knowledge (of practice or belief) that defines one’s own community.²⁴⁰ When it comes to large-scale initiatives for community-building, especially on the level of top religious and state authorities, this notion of normative centering seems to effectively capture the key epistemic process informing early modern religio-political imagination. Even beyond the Sunni, Shi’i, Jewish, and various Christian denominations negotiating their own normative projects, we see the drift towards normative centering in the context of crypto communities such as the Sabbateans or non-sharia minded communities such as the Kizilbash, who at this time strove to define ritual and creedal norms along with spiritual hierarchy as the basis of building community and resisting other rival communities’ normative projects. As was highlighted in the historiographical overview above, in the Ottoman Empire these discourses of normative centering ebbed and flowed at different pace in different communities. Sometimes they were in direct dialogue with each other while at other times they ran parallel only to interweave again later on, creating staggered communal chronologies that seemingly converge in the early eighteenth century, at least for a while.

These entangled projects of normative centering were firmly embedded in the mechanics of building and maintaining the Ottoman Empire as well as enabled by it. For instance, they often had a spatial expression, and the geographical and infrastructural framework of the Ottoman Empire facilitated this phenomenon for all its major communities. For the Sunni Muslims and the Ottoman dynasty, one can detect the process of normative centering not only in the sphere of law and theology but also in the growing inter-relatedness of piety focused on Prophet Muhammad (and his family), the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultans. Over the sixteenth century we see a progressive ‘imperialization’ of the celebration of the Prophet’s birth (*Mevlid*) in the Ottoman Empire, and by the early

²⁴⁰ For a similar attempt to come up with an analytical vocabulary that obviates cultural and religious differences in historical analysis see the special issue of the *Zeitschrift für historische Forschungen* on ‘Normenkonkurrenz in historischer Perspektive’, edited by A. Karsten and H. von Thiesen. However, the essays in this volume still focus mostly on intra-European and intra-Christian competition in standards or norms. I thank Jan Hennings for bringing it to my attention.

seventeenth century a new emphasis on the legitimization of the dynasty through the patronage of the hajj and the holy sites in Mecca and Medina, with resources from all around the empire, as far as Hungary and Transylvania, tied to their upkeep.²⁴¹ In spatial terms, as Nir Shafir recently demonstrated, the need to symbolically tie Istanbul (and its European provinces) with the Hijaz also meant the building of the infrastructure such as roads and transit stations that facilitated this initiative, with Damascus (in addition to Cairo) becoming a crucial pilgrimage hub. This, in turn, facilitated the simultaneous process of Eastern Christian normative centering on Jerusalem, since for the Christians from Egypt and Syria Damascus was also a crucial pilgrimage hub on route to Jerusalem.²⁴² As Felicita Tramontana has shown, starting in the seventeenth century, an increasing number of Catholic Christians from Palestine and elsewhere went to Jerusalem not only on pilgrimage but also to be married or to baptize their children rather than taking these sacraments in their local congregations, thus underscoring both Jerusalem's gravitational pull and mobility towards it facilitated by the imperial network.²⁴³ In the Jewish case, Jacob Berab (d. 1546) and his students like Joseph Caro, and later in the seventeenth century other rabbis, also sought to establish Jerusalem as the center of Jewish rabbinical authority, which was another initiative towards normative centering enabled by the Ottoman imperial system. In the meantime, engaged in its own project of normative centering, Russian Empire was styling Moscow as a New Jerusalem.²⁴⁴ Deprived of access to Mecca and Medina until later in the seventeenth century, the Safavids had to create an alternative holy geography centering on the tombs of Imams.²⁴⁵ They became physical centers of Safavid Shi'ism, which was itself undergoing a process of normativization.

One could, then, argue that in large parts of early modern Eurasia, including the Ottoman Empire, we can identify entangled and dialogic processes of creedal and/or ritual normativization that became bases for community- (and in some cases state-) building. However, as the discussion in this essay has demonstrated, while the initiatives to define creedal and ritual norms—along with the impulse to define and persecute non-conformity—certainly informed the policies of Ottoman authorities as well as of various non-Muslim religious elites, these authorities had limited 'infrastructural power' or indeed incentives to enforce such policies in all corners of the empire at all times. It is true that in the Ottoman Empire, as in other early modern states, technologies of rule were becoming more formalized, with the growth in record keeping and archival consciousness as well as in initiatives to classify subjects,

²⁴¹ On the Ottoman 'imperialization' of the *Mevlid* see Terzioğlu, 'Bid'at, Custom and the Mutability of Legal Judgments'; on the growing importance of the hajj in imperial legitimation see Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites*, pp. 229–230; 245–246; Hathaway, *The Chief Eunuch*; on the imperial resources devoted to the hajj see Kynn, *Encounters of Islam and Empire*.

²⁴² Shafir, 'In an Ottoman Holy Land'.

²⁴³ Tramontana, 'Geographical Mobility and Community-Building'.

²⁴⁴ See Kain, "'New Jerusalem' in Seventeenth-Century Russia"; Kain, 'Conceptualizing New Jerusalem'.

²⁴⁵ See Farhat, 'Shi'i Piety and Dynastic Legitimacy'.

survey lands, account for revenues, and define the functions and prerogatives of various office holders.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the sheer vastness of the Ottoman domains, their overwhelmingly rural character, absence of landed nobility *stricto sensu*, and legal pluralism that governed its various communities meant that a desire for imposition of order and norms would always remain unfulfilled. This was more so the case here than in contemporary European states with their numerous urban centers that were either politically autonomous or controlled by major landed nobility who had the incentives and resources to enforce confessional discipline within their own sphere of interest, either in their own or the king's/emperor's name.²⁴⁷ Although a broad consensus emerged in the Ottoman lands of Rum by the mid sixteenth century among the sultans, religious scholars, various middling religious functionaries, preachers, Sufis as well as urban non-elite Muslim population that Sunni Islam was the only publicly admissible form of Islam, attempts to formalize this policy and classify people accordingly, which are reflected in the prescriptive sources, also underscored the persistent informality of practices and arrangements.²⁴⁸ As discussed above, in many places and social contexts various forms of ambiguity in confessional matters and inter-communal relations prevailed unless grounds for conflict emerged.

This reminds us that, similarly to any form of authority, including imperial, the discourses of normative centering constituted claims that constantly had to be recreated, reconfirmed, and re-enacted in particular contexts.²⁴⁹ They were typically articulated in dense intellectual and social clusters and disseminated through networks that were not continuous or empire-wide.²⁵⁰ Whether we speak of the Ottoman Rumi ulema whose views were contested by the ulema in the Ottoman Arab provinces, Catholic missionaries who had presence only in particular locations scattered across Ottoman territories, high-level Orthodox clergy who were split into multiple cliques

²⁴⁶ See, for instance, Ferguson, *The Proper Order of Things*, and Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*.

²⁴⁷ Although Ottoman sultans awarded land grants (timar) to the cavalymen serving in the Ottoman army, which could be passed on from father to son provided that the latter serves in the same military capacity, the land ultimately belonged to the sultan and there was, generally speaking, no hereditary landed aristocracy in the Ottoman context that could be compared to the European nobility. That being said, in certain times and places Ottoman administrative elites could and did mobilize their own resources as well as networks of patronage and influence to implement confessional policies that supported the imperial goal of Sunni community-building and cohesion. See, for instance, Boykov, 'Abdāl-affiliated Convents'.

²⁴⁸ For an interesting discussion of early modern formalization and its dialectic with informality see Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Die Frühe Neuzeit'.

²⁴⁹ Ann Laura Stoler has suggested that empires were also a form of authority that had to be constantly re-enacted in a given context and thus should be thought of less as fixed macropolitical entities and more as 'states of becoming' that produced various gradations of sovereignty. See Stoler, 'Considerations on Imperial Comparisons', pp. 35, 40. Tyler Kynn also underscores this point when he suggests in his discussion of the Ottoman hajj patronage that from the perspective of Mecca and Medina the Ottoman imperial power was 'seasonal'. See Kynn, 'Encounters of Islam and Empire'.

²⁵⁰ On sociology of networks see King, 'The Odd Couple', p. 258.

across the empire, or a circle of rabbis from Safed who sought to make Jerusalem the center of rabbinical authority and ordination but were resisted by other rabbis both in Jerusalem and beyond the Ottoman Empire, we are talking about social clusters and networks. The importance of clusters, networks, and specific contexts highlights an important methodological issue. It suggests that it is less productive to think of the discourses of normative centering and power relations that informed them exclusively in a 'vertical perspective', which envisions a conflict between a pre-determined 'structure' (typically the 'state' or 'state authorities') on the one hand, and the 'agency' of individuals and communities trying to resist it on the other.²⁵¹ Certainly, it was of crucial importance who in a particular context claimed the power of definition of confessional affiliation—either one's own or others'—and who was able to enforce the relevant distinctions, how, and why. Nevertheless, sources suggest that we should also approach the issue of power that informed the processes of normative centering from a 'horizontal perspective', whereby 'multiple participants negotiated as they interacted with, co-operated or struggled with each other'.²⁵² This is reflected in the essays in this volume, which take into consideration both vertical and horizontal power dynamics and examine how they interfaced to produce specific local outcomes, highlighting the fact that denominational affiliation and communal politics were always dependent on a particular context and situation.²⁵³

In light of these terminological and methodological caveats, can we and should we refer to the early modern Eurasian dynamics under study here as 'entangled confessionalizations' for the sake of expediency and in order to facilitate further comparative endeavors? This may be possible if we take a step further in the process of releasing the term 'confessionalization' from its original formulation in light of the forty years of research on related dynamics both within and beyond Europe. Building on—but going beyond—Philip Benedict's reformulation of the term that still privileges the Reformation (see Part I), we should understand 'entangled confessionalizations' as spatially uneven (more visible in cities), socially clustered, and chronologically staggered yet rivalling projects of creedal and/or ritual normativization that increasingly served as basis for community- (and in some cases state-) building across large parts of Eurasia but coexisted with ambiguity, resistance, and indifference towards them in a dynamic and dialogic relationship that ebbed and flowed. Such entangled normative discourses came to the fore in polities where Christians, Jews and Muslims constituted key populations to which the rulers had to legitimate themselves, and where beginning in the early sixteenth century we see a growing 'conflict between universal religions and universalizing empires'²⁵⁴ exacerbated by an expectation of the end of the world and the final victory of the 'true' religion. While they

²⁵¹ This is also in line with recent studies that approach power of early modern states in terms of their capacity to negotiate with and coordinate different networks of power rather than as Weberian all-powerful static entities juxtaposed to the rest of the society. See, for instance, MacHardy, *War, Religion and Court Patronage*; Mathee, *Persia in Crisis*.

²⁵² King, 'The Odd Couple', p. 259.

²⁵³ On this point see also Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Einleitung', pp. 24–26.

²⁵⁴ Fleischer, 'A Mediterranean Apocalypse', p. 19.

were competitive and mimetic, the specific circumstances of the emergence of these normative discourses, their particular manifestation, greater or lesser focus on ritual and/or creed, and disciplinary effect differed depending on the nature of the particular state, community, tradition, and the overall equations of power in a given context.

Whether an integration of the discourses of correct belief and practice—what Lieberman refers to as ‘disciplinary revolutions’—and state formation can be identified also in parts of East and Southeast Asia as he suggests, and whether they are entangled with the ones discussed here or need a different analytical framework that would require us to further tweak our vocabulary, remains to be seen.²⁵⁵ It is possible that the ‘entangled confessionalizations’ analyzed in this essay constitute a subtype of an even broader early modern trend in which rulers in cooperation with the elites sought to consolidate their rule by bringing the population ‘to participate more fully in religious practices and beliefs common to the whole territory’ through expansion of ‘literacy, schooling and doctrinal understanding’.²⁵⁶ Further research on other parts of Eurasia and other religious traditions, with a focus on the changing conditions of belief, practice, and configurations of political power between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries will show which lines of inquiry are productive and which not, and whether we should at that point abandon the concept of ‘confessionalization’ as a term of analysis. Whatever turns out to be the case, as this discussion has hopefully demonstrated, the heuristic potential of the concept as a vehicle for rethinking the nature of global early modernity has not yet been entirely exhausted. If used reflexively as a tool to interrogate the ways in which forms of belief and devotional practice became embedded into social and political contexts across large parts of early modern Eurasia it may yet prove to have enough mileage to deliver us closer to the desired destination before we cast it aside.

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²⁵⁵ I am in direct dialogue here with Alan Strathern who raises this question in his essay on ‘global early modernity’. See Strathern, ‘Global Early Modernity’, p. 342.

²⁵⁶ Strathern, ‘Featured Review’, p. 136.

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3. TWO VISIONS OF RABBINIC AUTHORITY AND THEIR OTTOMAN CONTEXT: THE LEGAL WORLDVIEWS OF JOSEPH CARO (D. 1575) AND JOSEPH SAMBARI (D. C. 1703)

RONI WEINSTEIN AND GUY BURAK

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed the emergence of large imperial entities across Eurasia. Despite denominational differences, the rulers of these entities participated in a conversation in multiple registers about the nature of rule and sovereignty. Across the Mediterranean and Western Asia, rulers portrayed themselves as universal sovereigns, whose reign was intended to serve a divinely ordained order. Moreover, throughout Europe and West Asia, emperors, kings, and sultans became increasingly interested in the beliefs and ritual practices of their subjects and in the latter's adherence to the correct confessions, which, in turn, would turn them into loyal subjects. The political authorities founded or collaborated with religious/learned hierarchies and authorities to this end. In some cases, rulers and states also promoted messianic and salvific imperial ideologies that supported the legitimacy of their rule.¹

To what extent were Jewish communities throughout the Ottoman lands and elsewhere affected by these claims and notions of sovereignty? This question is especially pertinent as the Jewish communities, for the most part, lacked any weighty influence on these large processes, as they were deprived of any steady political representatives in power circles or in military activities.² What is more, they lacked institutions at the imperial level to enforce law and communal order and social discipline. In general, the political and social ethos of Jewish communities during the Middle Ages and the early modern period revolved around voluntary acceptance of communal authority, which was embodied and represented by either 'lay' leaders or rabbis.

¹ Fleischer, 'A Mediterranean Apocalypse'; Yilmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*; Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*.

² Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*.

In the following pages, we would like to examine how contemporary ideas about community-building, sovereignty and confession building were reflected in the writings of two figures who were affiliated with the rabbinic elites in different parts and time periods of the Ottoman empire. The first one is R. Joseph Caro (d. 1575), member of the Sephardi rabbinic elite; the second is Joseph Sambari (d. 1703), an 'Arabized' (*musta'rib*) scholar (pertaining to Jews living for centuries in the Arabic-speaking parts of the Middle East), not officially a rabbi yet certainly a member of this very small intellectual elite and deeply imbued with rabbinical heritage. In addition, their biographical trajectories were considerably different. Caro prospered in Edirne in Rumeli and later migrated to the province of Sham, more specifically to the small town of Safed in the northern part of the Holy Land, whereas Sambari lived in Egypt his entire life. In all likelihood, Caro knew some Turkish and Arabic, whereas Sambari seems to have been suffused in Arabic rather than in Ottoman Turkish.

The entangled histories of Jewish and Islamic law have been the subject of several studies over the past few decades. The studies of the relationships between the Jewish and Islamic legal traditions in the Muslim-ruled lands have tended to focus on two major issues: (a) similarities between the traditions, especially in terms of rules and specific concepts employed³ and (b) the use that Jews made of Muslim courts.⁴ The first issue has been primarily the focus of students of the first Islamic centuries, while studies about the latter are spread more evenly across time periods. A different approach was proposed by Benjamin Jokisch. In his extensive 2007 monograph, Jokisch pointed to parallels between what he considered the 'Islamic codification project' and similar non-Muslim projects, most notably R. Sa'adiya Ga'on's (d. 942).⁵ In so doing, Jokisch invited scholars of both Islamic and Jewish legal traditions to examine a different register of lawmaking, and the similarity in legal discourses and their cultural background (for example, Sacred Law as derived either from sacred texts, or reliable chain of transmission).

In the Ottoman context, the study of entangled Islamic and Jewish legal histories has focused primarily on the use Jews made of the qadi courts, which had the backing of the Ottoman state and functioned as imperial courts. Inspired by Jokisch's approach, this essay seeks to shift the focus to another register and examine the responses of two Jewish authors/thinkers to the legal claims made by the Ottoman dynasty in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Our goal is to illustrate how these thinkers engaged with the political and legal ideas and practices that evolved in the Ottoman Islamic context and were integral to the Ottoman Sunni and Hanafi confession-building project—namely the efforts made by the sultan (and, by extension, the dynasty) to regulate the legal spheres in his domain and to intervene in determining the doctrines of a specific branch within the Sunni Hanafi school of law⁶—and

³ See, for example, Libson, *Jewish and Islamic Law*; Ackerman-Lieberman, *The Business of Identity*; Cohen, *Maimonides and the Merchants*.

⁴ Simonsohn, *A Common Justice*; Marglin, *Across Legal Lines*.

⁵ Jokisch, *Islamic Imperial Law*.

⁶ Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*; Yilmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

translated them into Jewish legal thought with varying degrees of success. Concretely, this essay focuses on the responses of Caro and Sambari to the Ottoman dynasty's claims of sovereignty as expressed through the ruler's legislative prerogative that was inevitably intertwined with particular theological claims. By examining the writings of these thinkers, we hope to draw attention to the manners in which the Ottoman confession-building project shaped the sensibilities of members of other confessional communities in the Ottoman domains.

R. JOSEPH CARO: THE VISIONARY LAWGIVER

The life of R. Caro reflects the history of the first generations of Sephardic Jews following the expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in the late fifteenth century, as they were following the route from Spain to the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin, into Ottoman domains. The relocation of a person of Caro's stature to Safed in Galilee contributed to the town's emergence as a major center in the Jewish world, arguably the most important hub of Jewish religious innovations in mysticism, new ritual patterns, pietistic confraternities, and the study of Torah.⁷ In recent years his work has attracted considerable scholarly attention; however, in this essay we will confine our discussion to his response to the legal-political ethos of the contemporary Ottoman regime, especially the way in which it may have informed the composition of his two codes of law.⁸

A brilliant legal expert, erudite scholar, and the founder of large schools for Talmudic studies (*yeshiva* in Hebrew), Caro sought to establish a supreme court of law for the entire Jewish Diaspora. In the past, towering figures had attempted at times to expand their authority beyond their localities, yet none of them had ever expected distant communities to send their legal cases to them, as did Caro. Moreover, Caro sought to canonize a universal version of the Jewish Halakhic tradition in two legal compendia (a long and later an abridged version). These attempts turned Caro into a key figure in that tradition for centuries to come. At the same time, he was an active mystic with incessant ecstatic revelations, documented in a mystical diary. The diary is several hundred pages long but seems to contain a very small part of the original copy. Apparently, Caro had divine revelations and ecstatic states almost on a daily basis, and, as he presents it, all his activities and personal choices were accompanied and guided by divine inspiration.

Caro's lifetime overlapped with what Hüseyin Yılmaz has called the long Süleymanic age. Sultan Süleyman's reign (1520–1566) was presented by many thinkers throughout the empire as a new age of impartial justice, and they envisioned the sultan as the saintly pillar (Ar. *qutb*) of the world who combined both political and spiritual authority.⁹ Ottoman thinkers, bureaucrats, and jurists also promoted, from

⁷ On the life course of R. Joseph Caro, see Altshuler, *The Life of Rabbi Yoseph Caro*.

⁸ Roni Weinstein intends to dedicate his forthcoming book to R. Caro, and especially to the Ottoman context of his work and life. In the meantime, see Weinstein, 'Jewish Modern Law and Legalism in a Global Age'; Weinstein, 'The Codification Project'.

⁹ Fleischer, 'A Mediterranean Apocalypse'; Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

the second half of the fifteenth century (if not earlier), the vision of the sultan as legislator, conducting his rule with justice for the well-being of the Empire and his subjects. In that capacity, Ottoman sultans developed an imperial learned hierarchy whose structure was shaped by sultanic decrees and legal codes (Tr. *kanunnames*). Particularly famous in this respect is the close relationship between Süleyman and his chief jurist, the sheikh ül-islam Ebüssu‘ud Efendi (d. 1574).¹⁰

From the second third of the fifteenth century (if not earlier), the Ottoman dynasty adopted and developed a particular branch within the Hanafi school of law (Ar. *madhhab*). To this end, the dynasty gradually established a learned hierarchy of scholars and jurists who were affiliated with it. The hierarchy was presided over by the sheikh ül-islam as the chief imperial mufti. With various degrees of success, the sultans and their highly professional legal staff attempted to implement a unified legal policy throughout their domains. Importantly, the establishment of a learned hierarchy in the Ottoman realms and in contemporary polities throughout the Islamic East diverged from the practice in many earlier Muslim ruled polities.

R. Caro—highly attuned to the international Sephardic networks mentioned previously—was undoubtedly familiar with these political visions and was acquainted with the legal and political mechanisms of the Empire, both in its historical core and in the newly conquered parts. For instance, according to his own account, during a prayer he had a premonition of the coming military victory of the Ottoman troops over European armies: ‘During the late-afternoon prayer when the cantor read the Torah-scroll [the angelic voice] told me: “You Should know, my beloved and dear Joseph, that shortly [in a specific battle to be waged] the Ottoman forces [*Togar* in the rabbinic parlance] would defeat Christianity/ Christian armies [*Edom*]”’.¹¹ Ottoman politics and power dynamics were common knowledge among contemporary Sephardic rabbis, especially in big cities such as Istanbul or Salonica, and Caro stood in frequent contact with them.¹² In this sense, R. Caro was not unique. In the late sixteenth century, the rabbi of the Sephardic community in Salonica and Caro’s contemporary, R. Moses Almosnino (1516–1580), published his book *Cronica de los reyes otomanos* (*Chronicle of the Ottoman Kings*). The *Cronica* records the major political and military events during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–1566), his eventual death and the burial procession, and the mission Almosnino led to the sultanic court, during which he met with the chief mufti, Ebüssu‘ud Efendi.¹³ *Cronica* reflects the deep interest and familiarity of Jewish communities in Anatolia and Rumelia with

¹⁰ Imber, *Ebu’s-Su‘ud*; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*; Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*.

¹¹ Caro, *The Preacher of Righteousness*, p. 45. Since this entry in the diary lacks the date, one can only guess to which specific battle Caro was referring.

¹² See, for instance, Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul*.

¹³ Benaya, *Moses Almosnino, Salonika Man*; Borovaya, *The Beginning of Ladino Literature*. On Almosnino’s writings as reflecting the increasing interest in historical writing and historiography among the Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire, see Fleming, ‘Two Rabbinic Views of Ottoman Mediterranean Ascendancy’. The rise of Jewish historical writing fits well with the Ottoman historical early modern writing and is another indication of the close sensitivity to social and cultural dynamics in the Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman imperial politics and its power mechanisms. The third part of the printed book contains a rich and detailed presentation of the wonders and virtues of the city of Istanbul and its people, following the well-known literary genre of ‘city thriller’ (*şhrengiz*).¹⁴ In spite of its admiration for and fascination with Ottoman culture and politics, the book was not composed either in Ottoman Turkish, or in Hebrew—as was customary with Rabbinic elite, and as was the case in Almosnino’s other books—but in the Judeo-Spanish dialect (better known now as *Judezmo* or Ladino),¹⁵ clearly pointing to the intended readership: the Sephardic diaspora in the Ottoman Empire (and possibly beyond). The section dealing with his two journeys to the sultan’s court on behalf of his home community of Salonica, one of the most prominent Sephardic communities in the empire, indicates the political connections and resilience of this community and the Sephardic diaspora in general. The language, a dialect of Castilian Spanish, was not chosen without deep consideration. The use of *Judezmo* reflected what David Wacks calls the double diaspora among Sephardic Jews before and after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492,¹⁶ as it maintained the Sephardic communities’ ties to the Spanish kingdoms they had been forced to leave. Importantly, *Judezmo* also enabled Sephardic communities throughout the empire and beyond to maintain their extensive trans-imperial and international contacts for centuries after the expulsion.¹⁷ Both R. Caro and R. Almosnino were members of the Sephardic diaspora in the Ottoman lands and were part of the same cultural and rabbinical networks. They both seem to have been interested in the imperial institutions and practices and ideologies, a stand that left a deep imprint on their writings and activities.

Arguably, Caro’s greatest achievement is the compilation of the aforementioned two major legal compendia. The first and longer version is *The House of Joseph* (*Beit Joseph*, in Hebrew) encompassing four different sections. This compendium is an exegesis of a previous Jewish code of law—*The Four Turim*, composed in fourteenth-century Spain—and it provides the most current and updated legal discussions in Caro’s time. It is probably the first Jewish book that aimed to benefit from the advantages of the print revolution, as Caro intended to print and distribute *The House of Joseph* to the entire Jewish world. He took great pains to have his manuscripts sent to Italy, the center of Jewish printing presses, and the international Jewish book market, rather than print it in one of the Jewish printing presses in Istanbul. Access to printed books allowed Caro to examine both Ashkenazi and Sephardic legal

¹⁴ On the Ottoman *şhrengiz* genre, see Andrews and Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds*, esp. p. 40. On local patriotism among Jews living in the center of the Ottoman Empire, see Hacker, ‘An Invitation for an Intellectual Confrontation’.

¹⁵ On the linguistic aspects of the book, see Ferré ed., *Crónica de los reyes otomanos*, pp. 37–46. Roni Weinstein discusses in a forthcoming article the linguistic choices of Sephardic Jews within the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁶ Wacks, *Double Diaspora in Sephardic Literature*.

¹⁷ Parenthetically, the writing in *Judezmo* also facilitated the spread of these works throughout the Spanish-speaking world far beyond the Ottoman pale. Almosnino’s *Crónica* and description of Istanbul were printed in Spanish in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

compilations and produce a new legal synthesis of the entire Jewish Halakhah. Such an extensive synthesis was another innovative aspect of his double codes of law. Later in life he composed an abridged compendium, *The Well-Set Table* (*Shulḥan 'Arukh*), in which he skipped the long and complex legal arguments and left only the juridical consequences of his previous discussions in the *House of Joseph*. This compendium gained him instant fame and became increasingly popular from the late sixteenth century onward. As he explains in the introduction to *The Breastplate of Judgement* (*Hoshen Mishpat*, the section dealing with legal procedures of his *House of Joseph*), he decided to write the work out of a sense that a code of law is urgently needed as part of a broader project of establishing a unified legal system for the entire Jewish *Oikoumene*.

In order to understand how ambitious Caro's project was, one needs to bear in mind that since late antiquity, the Jewish diaspora had evolved into fairly decentralized collectives. One can discern in medieval Jewish history both centrifugal and centripetal trends. Shared sanctified language (Hebrew), the Talmudic heritage, sacred texts, ritual tradition, the sanctity of the Holy Land and Jerusalem in the collective memory, and shared messianic visions for the future—all led to the establishment of a cohesive collective. Concurrently, the political fragmentation in both the Muslim and Christian-European contexts was mirrored by fragmentation of the Jewish collective into different diasporas. The center of Jewish life was maintained mainly in communities, guarding tenaciously their independence from the gentile authorities. For centuries, the decentralized nature of the Jewish collective was accepted by many. Caro, on the other hand, was discontented with this state of affairs. Indeed, he considered it a social and legal calamity. In this sense the introductions to Caro's work attest to his aspiration to establish a uniform law as a constitutive element of Jewish identity, beyond all local and particular variations:

Since the troublesome days prolonged and we wandered from one exile to another, and many tribulations followed, such that the biblical verse – 'The sagacity of their sages was lost' – was validated in regard to the *Torah*/tradition and its scholars, such that the *Torah* turned into, not two, but infinite [versions] of *Torahs*, due to the excessive number of exegetical books on its norms and rules.¹⁸

As biographical, and especially auto-biographical, writing is a rarity in rabbinic literature, book introductions offered a textual space where authors could relate to their readers the reasons for the compilation of a work or the circumstances in which they did so. Interestingly, Caro's introduction, which he persisted in printing again and again, thus emphasizing its special message, had its parallel in the Ottoman context. The expansion of the Ottoman legal system and legal mechanisms mentioned previously was intimately related to the compilation of sultanic laws (*kanunname* in Turkish) that applied to particular regions of the empire—such as the *kanunname* promulgated following the conquest of Egypt—or relating to certain activities—such as mining. These *kanunnames* were preceded by introductions, stating the aim of

¹⁸ Caro, Introduction to *The House of Joseph*, Section *Hoshen Mishpat*, no pagination.

their promulgation.¹⁹ However, it is impossible to say with any certainty whether Caro was aware of this Ottoman practice.

In Talmudic and post-Talmudic heritage diversity in law and customs is accepted as a blessing (mainly in the Ashkenazi tradition), or as a fact of life to reckon with (mainly in the medieval Sephardic tradition). No Talmudic school (*yeshivah*) could do without diversity and argumentation. Indeed, by following in the footsteps of Maimonides (d. 1204) in that matter, Caro equated this diversification with corruption of some original elevated state. Caro's view of Jewish legal history, in the words of Houari Touati, was 'a catastrophic theory of knowledge'.²⁰ Diversity is a kind of 'falling from grace', the latter being a single unified law.²¹ In his mystical diary, R. Caro further explains the necessity of a unified code: 'The multiplicity of judges leads to discord, and thus renders the Torah into a thousand Torahs, therefore it was written/advised [in the Bible] [for a person] to turn it [his legal issue or query] to a central authority [in Jerusalem]'.²² Legal plurality was prevalent in the Jewish context, a fact R. Caro had to reckon with, as he did not have any institutional means in place to change this state of affairs. Yet in his vision of the future Caro aspired to transform this multivocality into legal homogeneity.

Both introductions to the codes of law, but mainly the one to the longer compilation (*Beit Yoseph*), served R. Caro as his personal manifesto, as he insisted on printing it in various editions. The exact same law, according to this vision, should serve every Jewish believer, regardless of his geographical setting or local tradition. No less important is the reiteration of this same position in his mystical diary, as it suggests that this vision was not merely a judicial issue but part of a broader vision of his Halakhic project. Both codes of law, in their turn, were part of a divinely ordained mission. In other words, both in his juridical and mystical writings Caro presented the codes as intending to define a Jewish collective on the basis of a unified law (or legal code), not only as an epistemological ideal but as a concrete practice, the law to be followed and enforced. Indeed, R. Caro clearly believed that a breach of this suggested unified law was a threat to the unity of the Jewish people. Moreover, to achieve a unified law, Caro claimed to encompass multiple jurisprudential traditions beyond the Sephardic one.²³ However, as was noticed by rabbis and modern scholars, his double codes of law were fundamentally biased towards his Sephardic legal traditions. Nevertheless, they were the first important and extensive corpus which

¹⁹ The importance of such introductions was stated by Buzov, *The Lawgiver and His Lawmakers*; Abou-El-Haj, 'Aspects of the Legitimation'.

²⁰ Touati, *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, pp. 25–28.

²¹ The suspicion of legal diversity characterizes the Sephardi Halakhic tradition, motivated by the search for original truth, as conferred by God. In contradistinction, the Ashkenazi attitude considers variety and indeterminism as immanent character of Halakhic discourse and rather as a blessing.

²² Caro, *The Preacher of Righteousness*, p. 85.

²³ He did so selectively, as R. Moses Isserles (d. 1572), the famous Ashkenazi commentator on the *Well-Set Table*, argued. See Isserles, *The Tablecloth of the Table*. On Caro's work with texts from multiple traditions see Kelman, "'Written with Iron and Lead Letter in Print'".

absorbed massive quantities of Ashkenazi legal materials and verdicts (*pesikot* in rabbinic terminology).

R. Caro did not confine his activity to producing a comprehensive and trans-local code but attempted to advance it a step further by arguing for implementation and enforcement mechanisms. His magnum opus was to serve as a basis for adjudication in a central legal court based in Safed, whose authority would prevail over the entire Jewish diaspora throughout the world.²⁴ The court was to be presided over by him, as the leading jurist of the entire Jewish people, and by his disciples who graduated from the schools (*Yeshivot*) he established and remained highly loyal to their venerated master. R. Caro also envisioned a formal ordination system of rabbis, which seems to echo the formalization of legal establishments and learned hierarchies in the Ottoman lands in this era of increased bureaucratization, and to a lesser extent, across Europe.

The attempt to establish formal ordination (*semichah* in Hebrew) aroused a sharp polemic among the rabbis of the Holy Land in the late sixteenth century, but actually had very minor impact on rabbinic authority. The attempt, however, reflects Caro's awareness of the importance of having a formal law in Jewish life, if not in practice at this stage, as a leading ideal of common life. For Caro, law requires enforcement, and enforcement requires—as least as a vision for future generations—the formation of professional and institutional legal establishment, or legal guild very much like in the Ottoman Empire. Ordination was meant to provide exactly this dividing line between officially authorized and non-authorized 'experts' of the law, carrying a formal authorization provided by some central institution. The politico-historical ethos behind this attempt was the renovation of an old tradition, going back to the Second Temple period, when every legal issue depended on the decision of a centralized body of the *Sanhedrin*, placed in the temple itself, and benefitting from divine assistance and inspiration. Caro may have been inspired by ordination practices in contemporary learned hierarchies, but this may have also been an obvious way to tackle the issue of a decentralized Jewish legal landscape. At the same time, as Mor Altshuler has recently argued, Caro's ordination vision was also part of a broader, failed attempt by several rabbis in the northern Palestinian town to reestablish the assembly of the sages of Palestine (*Sanhedrin*), much like the assembly that had existed before the destruction of the Temple, in Safed. Caro apparently wanted to be the first ordained authority by the assembly, an authority that would be both juridical and political, as he claimed to be the minister and patron (*sar venagid*) of all the Jews in the Arab lands (*Arabistan*).²⁵ This self-appointment was, in part, a response to the abolition of the position of the 'patron/head of the Jews' (*nagid*) in Egypt in the wake of the Ottoman conquest in the early sixteenth century.²⁶

Importantly, Caro's Halakhic project, as he relates, was divinely ordained and inspired. His mystical diary reveals that his legal judgments (*pesikot*, sing. *pesika*)

²⁴ Roni Weinstein will expand on this issue in his forthcoming book on Caro, as well as on rabbinic ordination.

²⁵ Altshuler, *The Life of Rabbi Yoseph Caro*, ch. 15.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

were affirmed by divine revelation. When in doubt about one of his legal decisions, he was assured by a divine voice that he had chosen the right legal path:

And so all scholars of the heavenly school agree that your legal verdict is correct, [correct] as the law/*Halakhah* given to Moses on Mount Sinai,²⁷ according to your legal path. Should you send it to Constantinople [Istanbul]²⁸ or to your Rabbi/Master or to the sages in the Holy Land, they would all concur with you ... Why have you so worried about this verdict, God has provided you with a knowledgeable heart, yet you are constantly anxious about your reasoning, which is a good virtue, yet truth always prevails.²⁹

Further, in his self-fashioning R. Caro is intimately backed by all major figures of past Jewish post-Talmudic learning. The major importance of the chain of transmission (*Shalshet Messira* in Hebrew, very much like the Islamic *silsila*) of legal knowledge and practice as an assurance of the validity and veracity of its content is common to both Jewish and Muslim traditions. In his ecstatic visions he joins the heavenly Talmudic school where he discusses concrete ongoing legal issues face-to-face with these figures:

You should know that God and all members of the heavenly school send you their regards, the veritable prophets, Tana'im, Amora'im, Rabanan, Savora'im, Ge'onim, Verdict Providers/arbiters,³⁰ they all bless you when you are occupied with their words and discern them properly ... asserting [among themselves] that he [Caro] is the major school-master, rabbi of the Holy Land, a leading arbiter in the Holy Land, Joseph known as Caro, The Almighty God honors him ...³¹

The encounter with past generations, according to this revelation as well as many others, is not conducted on an impersonal intellectual or academic level, but points to a very personal, even intimate contact. Not only is Caro in dialogue with past scholars of Jewish law, at times they even save his life.³² Eventually he himself turns into a personification or incarnation of all past erudition, and his magnum opus—in both long and short versions—into the Summa of all past discussions and their ultimate conclusions:

There is no religious school in the Jewish diaspora where such refined legal argumentations are debated, as in your school. Oh, if every time you walk in the market

²⁷ Rabbinic tradition attributes to Moses the transmission of both written tradition [the Bible] and oral tradition [the Talmudic and post-Talmudic discussions] during the revelation on Mount Sinai.

²⁸ Note that in this vision he is advised to send his legal/Talmudic doubts to Istanbul rather than to Salonica, even though the leading Yeshivot and scholars were active in the latter city. The imperial capital has precedence over the city in Rumelia.

²⁹ Caro, *The Preacher of Righteousness*, pp. 97–98.

³⁰ All these titles characterize various phases in Jewish Halakhic studies from the third century to the Early Middle Ages.

³¹ Caro, *The Preacher of Righteousness*, p. 82.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 59.

people could observe all the heavenly cortège around you from all sides, as a king in his regiment. And [these heavenly figures] declare: 'Make place [for this man], honor the sacred royal image' [of Caro]. So many worlds are shaken by this herald, and it has been asked: 'Who is he [the person thus honored]?' They are answered: 'He is the man honored by God, the Tanah of the Holy Land, the school-master of the Holy Land, head of all Jewish diasporas, our provider of legal verdicts, our legal expert, our composer of books [the double codes of law]'.³³

It is a rich and multi-layered citation, but we would underline the regal character of his entry to paradise, accompanied by a royal procession, preceded by a formal heavenly herald. This royal presentation of a rabbi, we would like to suggest, is significant for understanding Caro's project. The classical-Talmudic lore contains references to rabbis as kings (*Man malchei rabanan* in Aramaic) among the Jewish people. Yet this recurrent saying never had political implications. Caro takes the image or metaphor very literally and turns it into a claim of regal/political rights for himself. Qua jurist he has a claim to political rights.

To be sure, R. Caro had no institutional means at his disposal to enforce his vision. His legal works and mystical visions, however, reveal his belief in the political and perhaps redemptive function of law in constructing big communities. As we have already suggested, this view drew on ideas that were internal to the Jewish Halakhic tradition as well as on broader developments across Eurasia that Caro must have been aware of. A community, R. Caro argued, in its current global dispersion, needs a single law as its source of identity. It is quite likely that as a member of the Sephardic diaspora R. Caro responded to both the European (and especially Iberian) and Ottoman legal worldviews. The very same period witnessed a European contender for the universal rule, tinged by messianic claims, the Habsburg ruler Charles V. One of the power bases of Charles was the Spanish kingdom. His political ethos was elaborated by his trusted political councilor Mercurino de Gattinara, and it suggested the triple nexus of one ruler, over the entire imperial territory, under one law (*unum ovile et unus pastor*). Such a rule of an ideal master would lead to the reign of justice and peace in a new golden age. His Christian role will also be fulfilled by the wars to be waged against the religious and military Ottoman foe.³⁴ If this was indeed the case, Caro exemplifies the intersection of multiple legal traditions. Having lived his entire adult life under Ottoman rule, first in the core lands of the empire and later in the Holy Land, he was likely familiar with the legislative initiatives and at least some of the legal claims of his contemporary Sultan Süleyman.³⁵ And through his contacts with Europe and the Sephardic diaspora, he likely learned about the comparable claims to universal rule of Süleyman's Habsburg rival (and the ruler of Iberia), Charles V. His biography reflects the fate of his generation of Sephardic Jews, moving on the axis between Christian (mostly Catholic but also Protestant) Europe

³³ Ibid., p. 41. See also pp. 6, 10, 19.

³⁴ Headley, 'The Habsburg World Empire'. See also Curtis, *The Habsburgs*, pp. 47–53.

³⁵ Fleischer, 'The Lawgiver as Messiah'. See also Yilmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

and Ottoman-Sunni spaces, forming a unique Sephardi *mélange* based on both contexts.

The dominance of the Sephardic diaspora around the Mediterranean basin during the sixteenth century made it possible to imprint this *mélange* on the entire Jewish *Oikoumene*. Seen in this context, Caro's vision of legal unification and his political aspirations as disclosed in his diary place him in a wide Eurasian context stretching from Habsburg Austria-Spain to the Ottoman Empire under the rule of Süleyman.³⁶ Even though the political, financial, and legal resources at his disposal were minimal, Caro shared a comparable vision of legal unification as a precondition for the reform of his group of belonging. In the case of the Jewish minority the reform was to be implemented particularly in the classical domain of legal scholarship and law. Again, Caro was not alone in this vision. The generation following him in Safed considered the task of reforming religion as the major and urgent mission of their time. It would be established by charging the religious rituals and law with new content.³⁷

Caro's self-image as the head of the Jews clearly informed his self-perception as the leader of the reform movement:

I [the divine figure addressing R. Caro] shall exalt you to be Head and Leader [*Sarve Nagid* in Hebrew] over all the Jewish diaspora in the Arab lands (*Arabistan*)... and since you dedicated so much effort to reinstating the Rabbinic Ordination you shall be ordained by all Sages of the Holy Land, and Sages beyond this area³⁸ ...I shall install you as Leader [*Nagid*] over my people Israel, those located in the cities of Arabia. Be sure not to cease to concentrate/link with God even for a moment.³⁹

The image of a Jewish minister/state official presiding over the Jewish communities in Ottoman-ruled 'Arabia' reflects Caro's perception of himself within the Ottoman framework. More concretely, the title *Nagid* for his leadership was not chosen haphazardly. It had been used by the leaders of the Egyptian diaspora, from the time of the descendants of Maimonides in the twelfth century onwards and throughout Mamluk rule. This post was weakened and eventually cancelled prior to the Ottoman occupation of Egypt (1517), which left a political vacuum in the Jewish communities of Egypt and the Holy Land (historically under the *Nagid's* rule). Caro, in his mystic-

³⁶ Fleischer, 'A Mediterranean Apocalypse'. As for the Safavid and Mughal contexts, see Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*.

³⁷ The people involved in this task (such as R. Jacob Berab, Moses Cordovero, Isaac Luria, Hayyim Vital) were not marginal figures but belonged to the core of the rabbinic establishment in Safed. The initiative of this generation would later serve the great messianic movement of Sabbatai Sevi: before his conversion to Islam, and all the more so later, Sabbatai Sevi used Kabbalistic metaphors to claim that none of his contemporaries had a true acquaintance with 'The Real God'. Based on his intimate acquaintance with God, he argued that changes were required in major aspects of Jewish traditions, most notably with regard to rituals, the role of divine inspiration, and the place of women in ritual and communal practices.

³⁸ This is a strange saying, because legally—from the Halakhic perspective—only the rabbis living in the Holy Land are entitled to participate in rabbinic ordination. Again, Caro expresses his intention and claim to international trans-local authority.

³⁹ Caro, *The Preacher of Righteousness*, pp. 57–58.

political vision seems to take up this political position, and by extension, competes with the Halakhic authority of Maimonides over the eastern Mediterranean basin. His double codes of law were deeply linked—both in their legal content and as a model—to the famous code composed by Maimonides several centuries earlier. Using the benefits of the print revolution, his work implicitly supersedes the work of this great former figure, by including Maimonides decisions in his work alongside other authoritative scholars. Not by coincidence his authority—Halakhic, next to political and mystical—is directed to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and especially *Bilād al-Shām*, while he shows little interest in the Sephardic communities in northern Europe, and certainly no interest in the Ashkenazi communities in eastern and central Europe. His vision is centered almost entirely on the eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, his name—Joseph—and the title of his large compendium *The House of Joseph*, chosen under divine inspiration, must have reminded his readers of the biblical Joseph, who was second to the Egyptian Pharaoh in managing his kingdom, due to his divine inspiration. His attempt to establish a Jewish international court of law—headed naturally by him and assisted by his direct and loyal disciples—reveals that his intentions went even further. His figure seems to mirror the position of an Ottoman chief mufti.

Due to the double printing of the mystical ‘Book of Splendor’ [*Sefer HaZohar* in Hebrew] in the sixteenth century, and the dissemination of the Zoharic-mystical lore, another dimension was added to the name Joseph, well known to Caro: it pointed to a certain aspect of divinity, related to the divine Righteousness (*Zaddik* in Hebrew), especially in relation to the figure of biblical Joseph. Titling his book after this biblical figure can be seen as an act of self-aggrandizement and self-representation as a leader of his people. The reception of Caro’s work in various Jewish diasporas is still waiting to be written, regarding the different phases and different cultural/geographical settings. Yet Benaya’s comprehensive book dedicated entirely to Caro contains enough testimonies to start such a work. It shows that in spite of criticism on several aspects of the double codes of law, the work—especially the *Shulhan ‘Arukh*—had an immediate and impressive success.⁴⁰ His erudition was highly appreciated as a milestone in Jewish Halakhic learning, and his work became an instant classic of post-Talmudic scholarship. Moreover, Caro was hailed as a leader of his generation, and in various communities across the Mediterranean his work was considered as central in resolving legal debates. Of even greater importance is the fact that Caro’s work transcended the Sephardic milieu and also elicited a powerful, albeit more negative, response in the Ashkenazi communities in Central and Eastern Europe, where a new Jewish diaspora was expanding and about to become the cultural and demographic focus of Jewish life. There, the content and verdicts of *Shulhan ‘Arukh* were mostly rejected, as representing Sephardic rather than Ashkenazi heritage. Yet the project, its importance and motivations were fully accepted, since the leading rabbinical figure in Poland, R. Moses Isserles added his commentaries on the book, and this Sephardo-Ashkenazi mixture was to become henceforward the canonical printed

⁴⁰ Benaya, *Joseph My Chosen One*.

version. Even though some of the concrete content of *Shulḥan ‘Aruch* was rejected by the Ashkenazi rabbis, the idea of unification of the law—as suggested by Caro—eventually won the day. It contributed to the slow remodeling of Ashkenazi religious and community identity, by shifting the gravity-center from locality to larger geographical zones. The ‘Ashkenazi tradition’ was until the late Middle Ages to a large extent an abstract concept, as each community maintained its loyalty to its particular traditions and the local rabbinical tradition-bearers. The sixteenth century witnessed the construction of the entire zone of Yiddish speaking communities as a distinct cultural-Halakhic part of Jewish people.⁴¹ In this regard, the success of Caro and the impact of his project and his vision could only be measured on a global level, even though his source of inspiration was to a considerable extent Ottoman.

JOSEPH SAMBARI ON THE RABBI IN MEHMED II’S IMPERIAL COUNCIL

(*DIVAN-I HÜMAYUN*)

Joseph Sambari (or Samkari, ca. 1630–1703) was most likely a member of the Arabized Jewish community in Cairo. Remarkably little is known about Sambari, other than his father’s name (Isaac) and his toponymic name (Qataya), which may suggest that his family hailed from the town of Qata (in the environs of Cairo). He studied at the yeshiva of Rabbi Abraham Scandari. In the 1670s, Sambari served as a clerk of Raphael Joseph (d. 1669), the chief financier/money lender of Karakaş ‘Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Egypt (from October 1668 to April 1669), the director of the Cairo mint and the tax farmer (*multazim*) of the custom revenues in the port city of Alexandria, until his dramatic fall from grace and execution.⁴² Raphael Joseph was also Sambari’s patron. Importantly, as Martin Jacobs has pointed out, Raphael Joseph was one of the most eminent followers of Sabbatai Sevi (1626–76) in Egypt.⁴³ One of the most vocal seventeenth-century opponents of the Sabbatean movement, Jacob Sasportas (1610–93) claimed that Raphael Joseph had converted to Islam to avoid being prosecuted for the crimes he had committed. Jacobs, on the other hand, has suggested that Joseph was following in the footsteps of Sabbatai Sevi or, perhaps, was pressured to convert.⁴⁴ Sambari, then, was intimately familiar with the innermost circles of the Sabbatean movement in Egypt or, as Jacobs has proposed, was himself a follower of the movement.⁴⁵

Sambari completed his chronicle, *Joseph’s Chronicle* (*Sefer Divre Yosef*), in 1674, approximately four years after his patron’s downfall.⁴⁶ Sambari’s chronicle covers eleven centuries and deals with the political history of the Islamic world and the

⁴¹ Davis, ‘The Reception of the “Shulchan ‘Aruch”’.

⁴² Jacobs, ‘An Ex-Sabbatean’s Remorse?’, pp. 350–352.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 351–352.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 352–353. On the aftermath of Raphael Joseph’s downfall see Hathaway, ‘The Sabbatai Sevi Controversy’.

⁴⁵ Jacobs, ‘An Ex-Sabbatean’s Remorse?’, p. 353.

⁴⁶ Shtober, ‘Yosef Sambari’. See also Shtober’s introduction in Sambari, *Joseph’s Chronicle*, pp. 13–17.

history of the Jews, with special focus on the history of the Jews of Egypt and, to a lesser extent, the Ottoman lands. Sambari made use of both Jewish and Muslim chronicles and sources in both Hebrew and Arabic, including major chronicles such as Taqi al-Din Abu al-ʿAbbas Ahmad al-Maqrizi's (d. 1442) topographic description of Cairo (*al-Mawaʿiz wa-l-Iʿtibar fi Dhikr al-Khitat wa-Athar*) and the sixteenth-century Egyptian Ahmad Ibn ʿAli Ibn Zunbul's account of the Ottoman defeat of the last Mamluk sultan (*Waqiʿat al-Sultan al-Ghuri maʿa al-Sultan Salim*). In all likelihood, he did not consult Turkish chronicles.⁴⁷ Moreover, it is clear from his chronicle that Sambari was well read in the Jewish jurisprudential and intellectual traditions of the eastern Mediterranean and was familiar with Caro's work, including the latter's mystical diary.⁴⁸ This last fact is no small matter, taking into consideration that Caro's mystical thought remained scarcely known even after the printing of his diary. This diary, as shown in the first part of the article is a key source to understanding Caro. Throughout, Sambari's chronicle was intended to promote a Rabbanite view of Jewish history. Furthermore, as Jacobs has convincingly shown, the chronicle 'reflects the contemporary rabbinic indictment of a messianic movement that not long before had been so popular among Egyptian Jewry' and responds to the danger posed to the Jewish community by Jewish converts to Islam, from the earliest days of Islam to his own day.⁴⁹

As part of the Rabbanite narrative Sambari was advancing, he was primarily interested in the history of the rabbis as the political leaders of the Jewish community. In so doing, Sambari sought to stress the independent and perhaps even superior authority of the rabbis over the Jewish lay authorities, to whom the rabbis, especially in the Sephardic diaspora throughout the Mediterranean, were subjugated.⁵⁰ Indeed, Sambari presents the rabbinic milieu as the axis of Jewish life and the Jewish heritage. In this sense, his chronicle can be read as an apologetic representation of rabbinic status and role within Jewish life. Thus, for instance, in his introduction to the chronicle, he defends his decision to chronicle the history of the Muslim rulers and kings by explaining that

[my narrative] can be compared to a gem that falls to the sand, the man sifts through the sand until he finds the gem, and once he finds it, he throws away the piles [of sand] and takes the gem. Similarly, we will count some of the Ishmaelite kings and relate [their history] briefly, but when we get to the issue of Maimonides and his likes, we will discuss [their affairs] at length. So will I do, with God's assistance, when I tell briefly the [history] of the Ottoman kings and their deeds [...] and when I get to the years I have interest in, in which God is interested, the time

⁴⁷ Sambari, *Joseph's Chronicle*, pp. 19–35. On Sambari's historiographical method see also Bonan, 'Sambari and the Nile'.

⁴⁸ Sambari, *Joseph's Chronicle*, p. 318.

⁴⁹ Jacobs, 'An Ex-Sabbatean Remorse?', pp. 353–354.

⁵⁰ Rabbinic authority was constantly challenged and rejected by both simple people and lay leaders of the Sephardi diaspora along the Mediterranean basin. See Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, esp. chs. 2 and 4.

of the [real] kings, “who are the kings, the rabbis,” we will mention, with God’s assistance, at great length and breadth the rabbis of Egypt and her learned, kings and lords, the rabbis of Jerusalem, the holy city, Safed, Hebron, Salonica and Constantinople [...].”⁵¹

It is worth dwelling on this tension between the chronicle’s narrative framework according to the ruling Muslim dynasties and the account of the rabbis’ history that is foundational in Sambari’s historiographical and theological view. Slightly earlier, in the opening lines of the chronicle, Sambari emphasizes the theological role non-Jewish (including Muslim) rule over the Jews plays:

Should the Hebrew slave ask, Why should we care to know the chronology (*heshbon*) of the kings of Ishmael [of Islam], whether they ruled or not? Answer him what our sages of blessed memory said about the chronology of *the kings of Media and Persia* (Est. 10:2). The [sages] said: Since they (the Jews) did not want to count the years according to their own [chronology] [therefore as a punishment] they shall count [them] according to [the chronology of others; as [Scripture] says in *the second year of Darius* (Hag, 1:1), *in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar* (Dan 2:1), etc. [That is to say:] Since you did not want to be subjected (*le-hishta’abed*) to heaven, you shall be subjected to the Arab peoples. Indeed, the kings of the Abbasid reign (*malkhut*) and the caliphs who ruled in Baghdad which is Babylon, are the descendants of their prophet [Muhammad] who was an Arab (*mi-bnei ha-‘araviyim*).⁵²

In other words, using Muslim reigns as the organizing principle of the chronicle reflects a divine punishment that befell the disobedient Jews who ‘did not want to be subjected to heaven’.

In any case, in several instances in his chronicle, the two narrative axes—that of the Muslim reigns and that of the history of the rabbis—intersect. It is precisely for these reasons that two episodes in Sambari’s chronicle concerning the relationship between Mehmed II and Rabbi Moses Kapsali merit attention.

The first episode concerns the appointment of Rabbi Moses Kapsali to the Imperial Council (*Divan-i Hümayun*) of Mehmed II:

The story of the first rabbis during the reign of Mehmed [II] in the King’s *Divan*, and the story of Rabbi [Moses] Kapsali, whom the King elevated. In the first year of his reign, [Mehmed II] announced throughout his kingdom and [sent] a letter saying: ‘God has given me all the kingdoms of the land. Now, all the Jews who reside in my realm, listen! Any of His people among you may go up, and may the Lord their God be with them, to Constantinople, the capital of my kingdom. You shall remain in the land, you will reside with us in the best [parts] of the land, multiply on the earth and increase upon it.’ Many Israelites gathered from the environs [of the city] [and they were as numerous] as sand on the seashore. The King gave them land in Constantinople, and they held to it and multiplied and became

⁵¹ Sambari, *Joseph’s Chronicle*, p. 78.

⁵² Sambari, p. 77. Cited and discussed in Jacobs, ‘An Ex-Sabbatean’s Remorse?’, pp. 358–359.

very numerous. He [Mehmed II] granted them a permission to build synagogues and schools [and] had three seats fixed in his *divan*: one for the mufti, one for the patriarch of the uncircumcised [gentiles], and one for the rabbi of the Jews, because there stand the thrones of judgement. Each nation shall adjudicate its people in justice.

From the Jews, he appointed as their head the elderly rabbi, our extremely honored Rabbi Moses Kapsali, may his memory live in the world to come, and he fixed his seat in the King's *Divan* next to the mufti['s]. And the King loved [Moses Kapsali] as he [loved] himself.⁵³

This excerpt is intriguing for it casts light on Sambari's perception of Mehmed II's reign and his—and, perhaps, the Ottoman dynasty's—judicial claims.⁵⁴ Three biblical references draw parallels between Mehmed II and the Ottoman dynasty and key biblical figures and events. The content of Mehmed II's letter/edict is modeled after the biblical version of Cyrus' proclamation in Chronicles II, 36:23: 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of His people among you may go up, and may the Lord their God be with them'. Sambari's readers must have noticed the parallels he drew between Jerusalem and Constantinople and between Cyrus and Mehmed II. Moreover, Sambari's description of Mehmed II's hospitality echoes several passages from Genesis, and it is possible that Sambari believed that Mehmed II played a role in the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Finally, when reading the first part of the Psalms 122:5 ('there stand the thrones of judgement'), Sambari's readers must have understood the comparison of Mehmed II and the Ottoman dynasty more generally with the House of David (The full verse reads: 'For their thrones were set for judgment, the thrones of the house of David'). In other words, Sambari wove the Ottoman dynasty, the settlement of the Jews in Istanbul and the appointment of a Rabbi to the *Divan* into a narrative of divinely ordained political redemption. This passage also reflects the centrality of the imperial capital in the administration of justice throughout the Ottoman domains. Furthermore, the appointment of a rabbi to the imperial *Divan*, according to Sambari, was part of a broader attempt to organize the Ottoman legal realms, so that 'each nation shall adjudicate its people in justice'. It is worth pointing out that the mufti is not elevated above the rabbi and the patriarch but presented as equal.

Joseph Hacker has devoted a fairly long article to debunking the historical accuracy of Sambari's account. He has convincingly demonstrated that fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources do not mention an official Ottoman permission to build new synagogues and schools. More importantly for our purpose in this essay, Hacker has clearly shown that 'the description of the *divan* as an institution in which the leaders of the three monotheistic religions in the empire sit is unsubstantiated and

⁵³ Sambari, pp. 248–249.

⁵⁴ Interestingly, he refrains in this context from alluding to the use of violence and coercion by the Ottoman sultans, such as the forced migration of Jewish communities to the newly conquered Ottoman capital.

baseless'. Moreover, he has pointed to the fact that the chief mufti did not attend regularly the sessions of the Imperial Council.⁵⁵ Hacker's reading of the passage from Sambari, however, treats it as a factual report and evaluates it according to its historical accuracy (or lack thereof).

The importance of the question of the historical accuracy of Sambari's account notwithstanding, the passage may be read as the response of a Jewish chronicler and scholar to the legal claims made by Mehmed II and, perhaps, the Ottoman dynasty more generally. It appears that Sambari's attitude towards the Ottoman legal claims was complex and somewhat inconsistent. As we have seen, Sambari invests considerable efforts to present the Ottoman sultan and the dynasty as a new Cyrus and as similar to the House of David. Moreover, one may find in the excerpt from Sambari's chronicle echoes of the legal claims made by the Ottoman dynasty and specifically the dynasty's attempt to regulate the legal landscape of the empire as well as to the practice of admitting petitions in the Imperial Council.

Sambari, like many of his coreligionists who interacted with Islamic legal institutions and doctrines over the centuries, had a fairly solid knowledge of jurisprudential developments in the Islamic tradition. For instance, in his chronicle, he discusses the differences between the Islamic Sunni schools of law (the Hanafi, Maliki and Shafi'i schools) concerning the taxation of non-Muslims.⁵⁶ Moreover, he clearly saw similarities between Jewish and Muslim judicial practices. For instance, Sambari relates that he consulted an old manuscript copy of Maimonides' (d. 1204) *responso* (*she'elot u-teshuvot*) in which Maimonides (and others) used the Arabic term *fatwā* to denote his answers.⁵⁷ Although it appears that the Ottoman dynasty did not intervene in shaping the rulings of Jewish rabbis, Sambari's juxtaposition of the rabbi and the patriarch with the chief mufti and the institutional parallels he identified seem to suggest that he was aware of the Ottoman dynasty's interest in regulating the legal spheres and, to a lesser extent perhaps, the legal discourses and doctrines across the Ottoman domains.

Elsewhere in the chronicle – and this is the second episode of interest to us – in the biography of Rabbi Moses Kapsali, which is part of the section Sambari devotes to the biographies of the rabbis of Constantinople, he relates the story of the fierce and quite famous debate between Kapsali and the eminent Rabbi Joseph Colon ben Solomon Trabotto (known as the Maharik, ca. 1420–1480), who mostly operated among the Jewish communities of northern Italy, over the question of divorce. R. Colon was misinformed by an emissary from Jerusalem who conspired against Kapsali about the latter's decision to abrogate a marriage. Although the Talmud mentions a hypothetical authority of Rabbis to annul any marital status they wish by retroactively expropriating the dower given to the bride (as dowers had to be in full possession of the groom), rabbinical authorities never made use of this prerogative, since it seemed to break the rules of Talmudic internal discourse embraced by the rabbinic elite. Yet Kapsali, allegedly, did just that. Doubtless, Colon (and possibly other

⁵⁵ Hacker, "The "Chief Rabbinate"", p. 235.

⁵⁶ Sambari, *Joseph's Chronicle*, pp. 95–98.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

rabbinical authorities) perceived Kapsali's intervention as a bold violation of the norm. In addition to this violation of the norm, Kapsali allegedly treated his fellow Istanbulite rabbis in a condescending manner.⁵⁸ In response, R. Colon ordered the Jewish community in Istanbul to excommunicate his Istanbulite rival.

The details of the jurisprudential controversy are beyond the scope of this essay. More pertinent is Sambari's description of Kapsali's action upon learning about Colon's call for his excommunication:

When [Colon's] letters arrived to the head of the yeshiva Kapsali and he read them thoroughly, he was enraged and threw away his letters because Colon did not examine and study well Kapsali's rulings and condemned him in absentia. [Kapsali] entered the [sultan's] palace and the Turkish king wrote an epistle to the German king saying: 'send the sage of the Jews known as the Rabbi Joseph Colon to me quickly, don't stop (Samuel 20:38), bring him to me enchained in iron chains. If you do not do so, I will send an army to you, [an army] that resembles beasts'.⁵⁹

Shtober, who edited Sambari's text, interpreted his mention of the sultan's intervention as 'a legend intended to glorify Kapsali's name and position.'⁶⁰ Clearly, Sambari wanted to emphasize Kapsali's access to Mehmed II. But this anecdote seems to capture Sambari's understanding of the claims Ottoman sultans had once made. The sultan's intervention on behalf of the rabbi in a debate between Jewish authorities, Sambari seems to suggest, allowed Kapsali to assert his authority among members of his community in Istanbul.

The sultan's intervention on behalf of Kapsali and his instrumental role in establishing the Istanbulite rabbi's authority resemble the role the Ottoman sultan (and the dynasty, more generally) played in establishing the authority of the chief mufti (the sheikh ül-islam). The sheikh ül-islam, the head of the imperial learned hierarchy, was appointed by the sultan, and this appointment made the chief mufti's rulings enforceable within the imperial judicial system. Moreover, the chief mufti occasionally asked the sultan to issue an edict ordering the implementation of a minority opinion within the Hanafi school of law.⁶¹ Given the parallels that Sambari drew between the rabbi, the patriarch, and the chief mufti in Mehmed II's *Divan*, it is possible that he entertained an idea of rabbinic authority that depended on appointment and support by the Ottoman dynasty/sultan.

At the same time, Sambari describes the relationship between Kapsali and the sultan as quite exceptional. In general, he undermined his, and possibly others', association of the Ottoman dynasty with the House of David, by emphasizing the Davidic lineage of several eminent rabbis and authorities. In so doing, Sambari challenges the attempt to subjugate a rabbi to the sultan. He, too, sought to stress the autonomy of the rabbis from the ruling dynasty. But, one may argue, the recurring

⁵⁸ On Joseph Colon see Woolf, 'The Life and Responsa'. On the controversy with Kapsali see pp. 59–64.

⁵⁹ Sambari, pp. 385–387.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Burak, *The Second Formation*, ch. 1.

attempts to dissociate the rabbis from the Ottoman dynasty need to be understood in the context of the dynasty's legal claims by which their sultans and their administrative and judicial elite sought to organize and regulate the empire's legal landscape.

Sambari may have had additional reasons to relate this account. As Sambari recorded in his chronicle, in 1671–2, an edict was issued prohibiting Jews from production and possession of wine.⁶² This aggravation was temporary, but it may have spurred Sambari to evoke a different relationship between the Jewish community and the Ottoman authorities. Moreover, if Sambari was indeed an ex-Sabbatean, as Jacobs has suggested,⁶³ it is possible that this account was an attempt to strengthen the rabbinic authority in the wake of the crisis and the challenges it posed to the rabbi's authority.⁶⁴ If this is indeed the case, Sambari's emphasis on the support of the Ottoman sultan in the constitution of the rabbi's authority merits attention, in part because Sabbatai Sevi was forced/asked to apostatize by one of Mehmed II's descendants.

CONCLUSION

The responses of the rabbis to the legal claims of the Ottoman dynasty present an opportunity to examine the manners in which legal histories and histories of confession-building were entangled in the Ottoman lands and well beyond. Several scholars, including Carsten Wilke in this volume, have questioned the applicability of the concept of 'confessionalization' or 'confession-building' to the Jewish experience in the early modern period. Indeed, as Wilke points out, 'it would be exaggerated [...] to speak of a Jewish confessionalization process. Of the basic characteristics defined by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling for the concept—state control, social discipline, and combative orthodoxy—none can be associated with the Safed mystics'. While this statement is to a considerable extent valid, we believe that it does not apply to the Jewish experience in its entirety. Moreover, as we have tried to suggest in this essay, even if these elements cannot be easily found in Jewish communities, they still informed the visions and to some extent the practices of certain Jewish circles in the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

In studying Caro's and Sambari's responses, we have taken a 'minimalist' and positive approach to the question of confession-building and its social consequences in the Ottoman domains (and elsewhere). Accordingly, we have focused on specific practices, institutions, and claims which recent studies have identified as central to the Ottoman project of building a Sunni confessional community, primarily the Ottoman dynasty's attempt to regulate its adopted branch within the Hanafi school of law. Clearly, both Caro and Sambari were aware of and interested in those claims and developments. Moreover, evidently, they implicitly or explicitly engaged with

⁶² Sambari, p. 370.

⁶³ Jacobs, 'An Ex-Sabbatean's Remorse?'

⁶⁴ On the Rabbinic authority crisis in the eighteenth century see Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, ch. 4.

them in their own conceptualization of the role of law and rabbinic authority in building and regulating a community and its practices. Therefore, our essay supplements Wilke's by showing a fairly wide range of Jewish responses, both positive and negative, to the Ottoman confession-building project.

The examination of the responses of the rabbis to the Ottoman legal claims requires a comparative study with the responses of members of other Muslim and non-Muslim elites from different parts of the Ottoman realms. As Sambari's account illustrates, individual members of the Jewish communal elites were aware of or at least interested in the effects of the Ottoman confession-building on other communities and denominations throughout the empire. Furthermore, as the case studies we have examined here suggest, both Sambari and Caro were aware—albeit in different ways—of other confession-building projects across the Mediterranean and of confession building attempts in Jewish communities beyond the Ottoman lands. These examples point to the potentially fruitful future exploration of the dynamics within early modern Ottoman Jewish communities in dialogue with confessional dynamics in both early modern Christianity and Islam.

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4. GRIGOR DARANAԿԻ: AN ARMENIAN CHRONICLER OF EARLY MODERN MASS MOBILITY¹

HENRY SHAPIRO

INTRODUCTION

Grigor DaranaԿi (1576–1643) was a learned Armenian preacher (*vardapet*) from Kemah, Erzincan in Central-Eastern Anatolia who is known to scholarship thanks to one major literary work, a chronicle composed in two parts. The text survives in a sole copy currently housed in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem (St. James Manuscript Library, MS 1069), and it was published by Mesrop Nšanian in 1915.² Therein Grigor recounts the story of his youth in Anatolia, famine and chaos unleashed by the Celali revolts at the turn of the seventeenth century, and a mass flight of Armenians from Eastern Anatolia to Western Anatolia, Istanbul, and Thrace which I call ‘The Great Armenian Flight’.³ The arrival of these refugees in the coastal cities of the Ottoman Empire prompted a widespread refugee crisis, and it is possible to study the crisis using both Armenian and Ottoman Turkish sources.⁴

Grigor’s chronicle is well known to Armenologists, and scholars like Hrand Andreasyan,⁵ Yakob Siruni,⁶ and Manvel Zulalyan⁷—among others—have all used its first part as a repository of data about early seventeenth-century Armenian history

¹ I would like to thank Tijana Krstić and an anonymous reviewer for reading this article and offering helpful suggestions. I am also grateful to Marc Nichanian for generous advice regarding some translations from Armenian into English. The final version of the paper also greatly benefited from the lively discussion with my fellow panelists and other conference participants.

² DaranaԿi, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*.

³ I adapt this term from the classic Turkish secondary literature on the Celali revolts, in particular, Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası*.

⁴ For the history of an Armenian refugee crisis in Thrace investigated through Ottoman Turkish archival sources, see Shapiro, ‘The Great Armenian Flight’.

⁵ Andreasyan, ‘Bir Ermeni Kaynağına Göre’.

⁶ Siruni, *The City and Its Role I*.

⁷ Zulalyan, *The Celali Movement*.

in the Ottoman Empire. Scholars, however, have tended not to consider the chronicle holistically as an artifact of seventeenth-century Ottoman-Armenian cultural and intellectual life, and they have consistently ignored its second part. While the first part of the chronicle addresses the Celali revolts and the mass migrations, the second part focuses on church history and consists largely of the biographies and tales of Armenian clergy and holy men.

Although largely ignored as a historical source, the second part of Grigor's chronicle offers a critical window into a disjuncture in the cultural and religious history of Ottoman Armenians.⁸ When the Armenian refugees arrived in Istanbul, Western Anatolia, and Thrace, they lacked sufficient religious infrastructure to support traditional educational, cultural, and ecclesiastical life, and in Grigor's eyes this led to rampant disorder. Grigor spent many years as an itinerant preacher around the Marmara Sea—particularly in Rodosto (Tekirdağ), Istanbul, Izmit, and Iznik—working to bring ecclesiastical order to the refugee communities. Much of the second part of his chronicle consists of stories about people who Grigor deemed to be religious frauds, heretics, sinners, and Catholics, and the work can be interpreted as a moralistic sermon warning against the dangers of unregulated religious life. Of course, Grigor was writing in roughly the same time and place as diverse Muslim authors engaged in debates about public morals.⁹

In the midst of the refugee crisis, Armenian churchmen like Grigor recognized these dangers and began to build new communal infrastructure. Grigor depicts himself as a key leader in this process, who ministered to newly arrived Armenian migrants in villages around Iznik, Izmit, Istanbul, and Thrace. Grigor helped plan and fundraise for the construction of new Armenian churches and a monastery, and he participated in negotiations for the confiscation of Greek churches to be given for use to Armenian communities. Throughout his chronicle he recounts self-glorifying stories about his efforts to bring order to Armenian religious life in Istanbul and its environs.

Ottoman-Armenian intellectuals of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century—most notably Eremia K'ēōmiwrčean (1637–1695)—translated devotional literature into Armeno-Turkish (Turkish written in the Armenian alphabet) and wrote diverse polemical works in Armenian, building up intellectual infrastructure aimed at preserving Apostolic Armenian church life and culture in the face of multiple perceived threats to the Armenian community, from conversion to Islam to the growing popularity of Roman Catholicism. Armenian clergy of Grigor's generation did not participate in a comparably systematic process of 'confession-building' in the

⁸ In his seminal article on the development of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople Kevork Bardakjian drew on Grigor's chronicle to demonstrate how spiritual and ecclesiastical authority was negotiated among the older and incoming Armenian communities in Western Anatolia and Constantinople. See Bardakjian, 'The Rise of the Armenian Patriarchate'.

⁹ Instability in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire also prompted extensive debates among Ottoman Muslims. Their literary responses to crisis are far better known to the field of Ottoman history, and of a rather different nature. See Terzioğlu, 'Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers'; Tezcan, 'From Veysi (d. 1628) to Üveysi (fl. ca. 1630)'.

intellectual sphere. They did, however, play an important and previously ignored role in Ottoman-Armenian religious history by creating much of the physical infrastructure for later Armenian ecclesiastical and cultural life in western parts of the Ottoman Empire.

This article will rely on the second part of Grigor's chronicle as a window into the early seventeenth-century disjuncture in Ottoman Armenian ecclesiastical life, as seen through the eyes of a pugnacious refugee-priest. By recounting some of Grigor's stories from this period of ecclesiastical disjunction, we will see how the increased mobility of the seventeenth century¹⁰—including the movement of refugees, economic globalization, and the spread of Catholic missionaries in Ottoman lands—catalyzed changes in Armenian communal life which Grigor interpreted in a highly negative light. Focus will then shift to a description of Grigor's role in infrastructure building, showing, in particular, how Greek churches became the object of intercommunal conflict in the midst of the refugee crisis.

REFUGEES, MERCHANTS, AND MISSIONARIES IN GRIGOR DARANAŁC'İ'S CHRONICLE

Much of the second part of Grigor's chronicle consists of lengthy diatribes attacking fake priests (*sut k'ahanay*), heretics, sinners, and contemporary clerics of note, including the patriarchs of Constantinople who reigned during Grigor's lifetime. In a chapter from the second part of his chronicle entitled, 'concerning laymen practicing false-eldership and false-priesthood',¹¹ Grigor depicts a crisis of Armenian religious leadership which was caused by the mass migrations of peasants from Eastern Anatolia to Western Anatolia because of the Celali revolts.¹² He writes:

...no one could discern the cenobite priest [from the] lay elder, the lay reader and the deacon without rank [from the] priest. Many of the lay readers and ranking deacons and fornicator priests were doing the work of priests for a long time.¹³

In short, Grigor argues that the anonymity of refugees who had fled from Eastern Anatolia led to a breakdown in mechanisms of communal regulation of religious authority.

An example of one of the 'fake priests' described by Grigor is a certain Abraham. Grigor relates:

¹⁰ My emphasis on the effects of 'mobility'—broadly conceived—on Armenian cultural life in the early modern period is inspired in part by conversation with Sebouh Aslanian about his forthcoming book, *Early Modernity and Mobility*. I am grateful to him for an ongoing rich dialogue about Armenian and world history.

¹¹ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 473.

¹² For insight into the depths of economic and structural problems which took place in Eastern Anatolia during the first half of the seventeenth century, see Özel, *The Collapse of Rural Order*.

¹³ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 477.

A certain layman named Abraham, knowing well all the learning of childhood, the Psalms and hymns, for thirty years was doing the work of a priest around Nikomedia—which they call Լոճայել (*Kocaeli*)—in the villages of the Armenians, even though he was a layman and did not have a single degree [of rank].¹⁴

Grigor learned about Abraham's prior background from an Armenian who had fled from Eastern Anatolia along with him. The fellow-villager described Abraham's transformation to a life of fraud as originating from a ploy to beg for food on the flight from Divriği, near Sivas, to the region around modern-day Kocaeli:

a woman died on the road, and because he knew the readings, they called him deacon. When we came near to Tokat, he went to beg for bread from the Armenians. When he came back from begging, I called him by the name deacon and chorister, according to [our] frequent custom, but he did not want to be called by his usual name. He said to me, 'Don't call me deacon and chorister, but call me priest and reverend, because while begging I said that I am a priest, and they gave abundant gifts and accepted [me] with honor.' On account of our needs and necessities I called him priest and reverend on the road until this place [near Izmit]. And when we came to this side, he split and went to unknown places. From that time, he was serving as a priest. From then until now is nearly thirty years.¹⁵

Finally—after thirty years—the story became known to Abraham's new community, and Grigor recounts how 'they drove him out of the village like useless excrement'.¹⁶

Another 'fake priest' that Grigor describes in the second part of his chronicle was Sahak of Erzincan:

A certain deacon named Sahak from Erzincan is now a priest in Istanbul in Topkapı over our Armenians and the son-in-law of our priest Barduḡimēos. In this year, which is 1635, in the month of May expulsion (*sürgün*) was ordered by the king [i.e., the Ottoman sultan].¹⁷ Sahak went to Erzincan, and Barduḡimēos, to Jerusalem. This priest Sahak, in the time of his elder deaconship, which was in the year 1618, went to Ankara. Putting faith in the gracefulness of his learning and lovely voice and on the rank of elder deaconship, he said by the testimony of his mouth and the perfection of his education that he [is a] priest. On many days he offered the mass and performed the Lenten services. When he came to Istanbul, they ordained him as a priest without examination until the coming of K'ot' Karapet *vardapet* of Erzincan, [who] knew [that] such [were] actions of illegality and condemned him. [Sahak] assumed responsibility for his act of illegality and he confessed. [Karapet] placed on him the heaviest penitence.¹⁸

As a result of such frequent acts of fraud, Grigor lamented:

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 477–478.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 478.

¹⁷ On two occasions, in 1609 and 1635, the Ottoman state attempted to send refugees from Istanbul and its environs back to Eastern Anatolia. See Andreasyan, 'Celâlilerden Kaçan'.

¹⁸ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 480.

now men readily listen to and believe lies and swindlers and false words and lying men and false histories and easy-preaching and seducers more than the just and the true and the preachers of truth on the slender and narrow path, as the Lord said: 'Few are those who go on it'.¹⁹

In addition to his tales of fake priests, Grigor also offers several narratives about men who he deemed to be heretics. While the 'fake priests' described above usurped religious authority without challenging orthodoxy, Grigor's heretics openly preached unorthodox teachings. Grigor encountered one such man near Iznik, where he spent seven months endeavoring to establish an Armenian monastery.²⁰ There he met Yovhannēs, an Armenian from a village near Malatia who had moved westward at the time of the 'Great Armenian Flight'. Grigor explained:

[Yovhannēs] was a drunk, slothful, and lazy man. He [was] the son of a rich man, and he was idle and drunken and moved by lasciviousness. His father drove him from the house. Now he's committing fraud.²¹

Yovhannēs had convinced both Muslim and Armenian villagers that he had powerful mystical experiences.²² He was claiming to the Armenians:

I have seen St. John the Baptist and the Mother of God near to God. I saw the father [Grigor the] Illuminator in hell, and I requested from God, and I freed [him] and took him from hell.²³

Likewise, to the Muslims he was claiming: 'I have seen your prophet [peygamber].'²⁴ According to Grigor, villagers near Nicaea were enthralled by his stories, and in particular 'many women were gathering around him'.²⁵ Grigor narrates that his response to Yovhannēs was swift, harsh, and severe: '...I took a cudgel, and I struck [Yovhannēs] many times. They were barely able to take him from my hands, and [so] I drove him off from the village.'²⁶ This is but one story among several in which Grigor depicts himself as reimposing ecclesiastical order through physical violence.

Grigor describes another tale of heresy, which was far more outlandish. Unlike the lascivious con-man Yovhannēs, this heretic is depicted as having been a well-intentioned man who lacked the discipline and proper guidance to live the ascetic life. Grigor explains:

In 1630 there was a devil-possessed man in the city of Silisray. He had studied all the learning of a child and a little bit of scribeship, and by trade he was also a

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 490.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 442.

²¹ Ibid., p. 444.

²² For interesting comparisons, see Kotzageorgis, "Messiahs" and Neomartyrs in Ottoman Thessaly'.

²³ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 444.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 444.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 443.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 443–444.

silver-worker and a sculptor, such that they said ‘there is no one like him in this land’. At first he lived for a time in the country of Moldova. When his wife there died, he took a second wife, and he regretted it. He made penitence with fasts, and he departed for a solitary place in the forest, living as an ascetic, [even though] he was uneducated and untrained on the path of asceticism.²⁷

Grigor suggests that the man’s lack of training left him unprepared for the ascetic life and thus defenseless against dark influences. In particular, he began to be visited by two satanic apparitions which assumed the form of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, called ‘Fake Jesus’ (*Sut Yisus*) and ‘Fake Mother of God’ (*Sut Tiramayr*) in Grigor’s chronicle. Upon their first visit to the hapless man, they announced:

We have come to advise you and to be of assistance to you and to give you grace and wisdom and to make you enchanting on earth. Now, take parchment and write that which we say and show to you, signs and the greatest arts and words of observance. That which we say to you, write it down and recite it often in church.²⁸

Under this false inspiration, the beguiled ascetic began to write and to compose. He went to town and told his mother and wife about the revelation, and they believed him with great enthusiasm. So too did his fellow townsmen, with the exception of the priests.

Over time the ascetic’s relationship with ‘fake Jesus’ and the ‘fake Mother of God’ became more sadistic. While initially the demons incited the ascetic to preach their new gospel, in time their commands took a sexual nature. Jesus commanded the ascetic to

take your mother and your wife and bring them into the church, and before me and before your mother, be with your wife.²⁹

In response to the poor man’s protests, ‘Evil Jesus’ retorted by asking,

How is lawful (*halal*) marriage a shame and sin? ...human copulation is pleasing to me, more than that of the other animals.³⁰

This extended dialogue was partially censored from the 1915 publication of Grigor’s chronicle, but remains intact in the original manuscript in Jerusalem and was recently published separately.³¹

While the crazed ascetic was initially tolerated and, in fact, encouraged by his community, his heresy eventually reached a point that required the intervention of the local Armenian clergy. According to Grigor,

²⁷ Ibid., p. 436.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 438.

²⁹ Shapiro, ‘Concerning Some Problems’, p. 66. «Արի՛ առ զմայր քո եւ զկին քո եւ բեր ի մէջ եկեղեցոյն, եւ առ[ա]ջի իմ առաջի մօրք լեր ընդ կնոջդ...»

³⁰ Shapiro, ‘Concerning Some Problems’, p. 67. «Եւ աւէ չար Յիսուսն. Հալալ ամուսնութիւնն զի՛արդ ամօթ է եւ մեղք, զի արու էգ վասն այնորիկ իրաց եւ գործոցն արարի զմարդիկ եւ զամենայն շունչ կենդանի, այլ մարդոյ խառնակութիւնն ինձ հաճոյ է, քան զայլ կենդանեացն.»

³¹ Shapiro, ‘Concerning Some Problems’.

[The ascetic] tried to throw out the Gospel and the missal and to put in place of the Gospel this false book of fable and to read it for the hearing of all as a new Gospel. But the priests raised a cry at the people of evil faith, [saying]: 'Until when will we be silent and not speak? You believe this devil-deceived [man] who was deceived by demons, and he has also deceived you, so that you [too] are devil-deceived. Know that we will die over our Gospel and we will not allow that demonic book to enter the church and [for us all] to become devil-worshippers.'³²

At this point the priests gained outside assistance. By coincidence, Grigor's brother Markos arrived on the scene making collections for the Armenians of Jerusalem. He reprimanded the ascetic and his followers, and worked to pull the man back to orthodoxy through patient teaching. The ascetic repented in shame, and his mother procured all his writings—which he had written over the course of seven years in nine notebooks—and gave them to Markos.³³ It was from Markos that Grigor later learned the details of this incident. Unlike the story of Yovhannēs, Grigor concludes the account in a sympathetic tone for the hapless ascetic: whereas Yovhannēs had been cunning and opportunistic, this ascetic had been well-intentioned but utterly mad, and he arrived in the end at full repentance.

The stories recounted up until now all took place in the aftermath of mass migrations from Eastern Anatolia to Western Anatolia, and Grigor suggests that they were possible because of a breakdown of communal regulation of religious norms in the midst of refugee crisis. As Sebouh Aslanian describes, however, the mobility of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was not only increased by migrations in the seventeenth century. The early seventeenth century was also the time when the famed New Julfan merchants established their global networks of trade in the aftermath of Shah Abbas' forced population transfer from Julfa to Isfahan.³⁴ Likewise, Jesuits and Capuchins began arriving in Istanbul at the end of the sixteenth century,³⁵ and their influence on Ottoman Armenian religious life increased drastically over the course of the seventeenth century. Timothy Brook has described the seventeenth century as the 'dawn of the global world', a time in which people, goods, and ideas gained a level of mobility unseen in world history beforehand.³⁶ Grigor found the changes catalyzed by this heightened mobility—caused by mass migration, transcontinental trade networks, and 'global Catholicism'—to be a threat to religious life as he knew it.

In addition to his diatribes on the disorderly religious life among the refugees, Grigor offers extended discourses on the sin and avarice of the Julfa merchants, whose trade empire spanned Eurasia, including nodes in Aleppo and Izmir.³⁷ Grigor had a clear disdain for these merchants. He had grown up in an agricultural society,

³² Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 440.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

³⁴ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*.

³⁵ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 73–74.

³⁶ Brook, *Vermeer's Hat*.

³⁷ Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, pp. 66–70.

and for most of his adult life in Thrace and around Istanbul he ministered to farmers and peasants. The values and culture of this hyper-mobile merchant class repulsed him, and Grigor offers both general condemnation of the Julfan merchants and anecdotes about specific unpleasant interactions with them in his chronicle. For example, on a general note, Grigor decries how

they have abandoned the worship of God and become servants of Mammon, blinded by the disease of avarice. They all are trying to become rich, and they are [rich] more than measure, just as the Lord laments in the holy Gospel: ‘Woe upon you wealthy [ones], for you have received your consolation’ (Luke 6:24), and ‘You cannot serve God and Mammon’ (Luke 16:13), and with many other examples he reproaches the wealthy. With blind eyes they do not consider the holy Gospel. They abandon their wives, sons, and daughters forlorn and destitute and in straits. [Meanwhile they are] dispersed and scattered, spreading over all the face of the world like locusts or snow, until inner India, Ethiopia, Egypt, all of the land of the Franks, Constantinople, all of the land of the Thracians and Goths, [and that] which is of the Poles, the Russians, the Muscovites, and the Verkanans, and in all the land of the Turks, Kurds, Chaldeans, and of all the Persians and in the east, until China, (Č’in ew Matč’in), T’ōn, Tonquin, England, and in all the land of the Tatars and Abhazians until the extremity of the unknown lands. Like dust they are strewn and scattered on account of the disease of avarice and the accumulation of surpluses of treasure.³⁸

Elsewhere Grigor adds that

they are all vagabonds [and] uniformly arrogant, haughty, conceited, uncompassionate, unpitying, implacable, [and] dishonorable. They never honor anyone except Jerusalemites and Ējmiacinites, on account of their vanity.³⁹

Grigor also describes an incident in which he personally confronted Julfans. According to Grigor’s account, the confrontation took place in a village near Iznik, part of Grigor’s regular tour of ministry to new Armenian settlements established by Celali refugees. In this passage, Grigor punishes some Julfans for allegedly acting like boors in his church. According to Grigor,

Even if [the Julfans] sleep in a house of prayer, they do not stand up when it’s time to pray in order to pray with the people, as we [beheld] in a village of Nicaea, which they call Soloz. We descended to a house of prayer. Three of them came, evil and vacuous [?]. They lodged with us and slept, and when it was the time of prayer, I did not wake them up immediately, [saying] they have been working. We said the daily Psalms and the appropriate daily hymns and prayers until I reached [the hymn] ‘Glory to the Most High’. We were standing above their heads. [They were] not deep in sleep, but having awoken in secret they gazed at [us]: on account of

³⁸ Daranałc’i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, pp. 457–458. See also Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, p. 121.

³⁹ Daranałc’i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 465.

much weakness of faith, they did not want to remember God. When I began 'Glory to the Most High' [and] they did not come out, my heart became very troubled in my chest. I became indignant, and I beat them with my staff [for] their iniquity. I tortured them in accordance with their affront. They arose, and with belt unfastened, head uncovered, barefooted, and naked they fled outside.⁴⁰

Here we see yet another violent anecdote in which Grigor proudly describes the weaponization of his clerical staff for the reimposition of orthopraxy. Grigor's hostility to the Julfa merchants stands in contrast to the Kadizadelis—Muslim preachers delivering moralizing sermons in seventeenth-century Istanbul, in particular—who tended to be in alliance with Istanbul's merchants.⁴¹

The second part of Grigor's chronicle also includes multiple condemnations of ranking Armenian churchmen, particularly the Armenian patriarchs of Constantinople who served during his lifetime. In general, Grigor depicts Patriarch Grigor of Kayseri as his most hated enemy. Yet again, understanding of Grigor's conflict with the patriarch requires us to recall the refugee crisis caused by the Celali revolts. In 1936 A. Alpoyaĉean wrote a biography of Patriarch Grigor of Kayseri, in which he described the context for the intra-Armenian struggle. He suggested that the refugees arriving in Constantinople, Rumeli, Yalova and Izmit caused a dispute between the newcomers and locals, especially among the clergy.⁴² Grigor Daranałc'ı was the leader of the refugee faction, engaging in intermittent strife with the Patriarch Grigor of Kayseri from 1607 until 1616.

The struggle between the refugee Armenians and the patriarch had a financial component. In his biography of Patriarch Grigor of Kayseri, Alpoyaĉean writes that

Grigor the *vardapet* from Kayseri later began to harass the 'emigrant and pilgrim', 'new-comer', 'troubled, impoverished, and poor' priests because the new refugees of Constantinople were gradually growing in numbers and their countrymen priests, who had migrated together with them, were serving them as clergy. The newcomers were not viewed by the locals with favorable eyes. The [newly-]arrived priests, especially, became the object of the enmity and hatred of the local priests and lay deputies, who were demanding to take a share of the money taken from the emigrant population to help with the state tax placed on clergymen. The poor population, however, was barely able to sustain its priests, for whom it was impossible to pay the demanded tax. For this reason, the deputies were not allowing them to participate in the performance of the liturgy. They were driving them out of the churches and cemeteries, and there was no lack of scenes of public scandal, to the point that some of the priests, insulted by the violence and oppression they suffered, were obliged to leave their [religious] order and to become watercarriers and porters in order to procure a livelihood.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 465.

⁴¹ For a rich exploration of this theme, see Sariyannis, 'The Kadizadeli Movement'.

⁴² Alpoyaĉean, *Patriarch Grigor of Kayseri*, p. 62.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 83–84.

In his chronicle, Grigor Daranałc'i described the sad situation as follows:

After so many infringements and oppressions [the problems in the East], [the patriarch] began to write a number for the priests, to demand tax-collection from them. From some, ten red [coins]; from others, a ten-*kuruş* piece; and from the very poor, a five-*kuruş* piece. Thus, [he was] requesting tax-collection in three ways. And a cry of woe and lamentation fell among the newly arrived emigrant priests, who had just come [to Istanbul], poor, naked, and very indigent, having been afflicted and pillaged. Both the priests and the [common] folks were just barely able to procure [their] daily [piece of] bread, some [only] with great effort.⁴⁴

On several occasions in this internal struggle the Armenians resorted to Ottoman qadi courts for arbitration. While Grigor invariably described the patriarch Grigor of Kayseri as a villain, he often depicted the judges in a heroic light, and sometimes he even prayed for them. On one occasion Grigor Daranałc'i wrote that

Because of God, [the Ottoman judge] made the right judgement and he delivered us from injustice. May the Lord God pay the just judge his wages of compensation, as He knows how to measure and to recompense.⁴⁵

In addition to his arch-nemesis Grigor of Kayseri, another Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople to whom Grigor devotes a biography in his chronicle's second part is Yovhannēs Xul. While his contempt of Grigor of Kayseri arose out of the latter's policies towards the Anatolian refugees in Istanbul, his disdain for Xul stemmed from the latter's sympathies to Rome. Grigor offers the following comments on Xul:

Xul Yovhannēs *vardapet*...was deceived by some [with Catholic sympathies]... With enticements they took him away from Istanbul, where he had enjoyed lordship with the name patriarch for twenty-two years, though he was wicked, defective, weak-skinned, forlorn, and brutish. He was on the same level as animals, and he did not know his dignity, [in the words of] the prophet. Another prophet said, 'Whoever the Lord wishes to destroy, first He bewitches him, so that He might destroy him by a foolish work.' ...in this way it was for [Yovhannēs]...for twenty years with afflictions he was in narrow prisons on account of debtors. It was still two years more [before] he was relieved from all the debts. Many venerable sources were taken—stores of gold and silver—on account on his destruction. Some evil [men] duped him, especially our apostate (*aktarma*),⁴⁶ Pahtasar, who was the translator (*terciman*) of the Franks... Duping him, he sent him off praising the Pope. [He said], 'If you go [to Rome], he will honor you much, and he will bestow countless

⁴⁴ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 127.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141. For further elaboration on the relationship between seventeenth-century Armenian refugees and Ottoman qadi courts, see Shapiro, 'The Great Armenian Flight'.

⁴⁶ Armenians who embraced Catholicism were usually called *aktarma* in the seventeenth-century Armenian texts, a Turkish term deriving from a verb meaning 'transfer', or 'turn over'.

treasures [on you]. He will send you here [to Istanbul] with the greatest gifts if you agree with all their religion and go according to their desire...'⁴⁷

Later Grigor narrates:

Xul went to Rome—to the Pope—via Poland. Wherever he went, by deceit they took venerable gifts from [his] hands and little remained. When he reached the Pope, he was received. [The Pope] granted [him] the monastery of the Armenians, and he ordered the daily preparation of food and the granting of a stipend for expenditure [for Xul].⁴⁸

When Xul died soon later, Grigor lamented that 'We did not know by which faith and by what laws he had confessed, or [which] rites he had taken.'⁴⁹

In the above passages, Grigor contemptuously suggests that Xul's pro-Catholic sympathies—or potential conversion—arose out of pecuniary interest. Grigor likewise criticized another patriarch, Zak'aria, as having been debt-ridden, leading to his inability to hold the patriarchal throne.⁵⁰ It seems certain that Grigor's contempt for the institution of the patriarchate had structural causes which transcended his personal relationships with these three men, given that taxation and debts ultimately lay at the heart of his complaints against all three patriarchs, Grigor of Kayseri, Xul, and Zak'aria. It is not coincidental that similar passages against avarice exist in Greek ecclesiastical histories of the early modern period. For example, the sixteenth-century Greek *Patriarchal History of Constantinople* contains lengthy complaints about the way in which competing factions for the patriarchal throne bribed their way to power, creating a necessity for constant taxation and fundraising. The author describes how this problem plagued patriarchal politics for about a century, and he narrates outlandish stories about competition to gain the patriarchal throne and concomitant bribery in great detail.⁵¹ The research of Tom Papademetriou provides rich contextualization for this early modern patriarchal history, as he describes how the Orthodox patriarchs played a critical role in the Ottoman taxation of non-Muslims.⁵² Grigor's chronicle shows how the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople had a similar relationship with the Ottoman state, and that Armenian patriarchs were also forced to engage in constant taxation and fundraising to pay off the state and to stay on the throne.

Mobility was a force that could exacerbate this constant tension, as mass migration and rapid urbanization led to particularly fierce struggles between our chronicler and Grigor of Kayseri, while 'global Catholicism' and the spread of Catholic sympathies among Ottoman Armenians added bitterness to his relationship with Patriarch Yovhannēs Xul, who supposedly travelled to Rome and accepted gifts from the

⁴⁷ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 384.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 365–366.

⁵¹ *Historia Politica et Patriarchica Constantinopoleos*.

⁵² Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*.

Pope. Xul was not the only Catholic sympathizer that Grigor condemns. In fact, he chose to end his chronicle with a lengthy condemnation of the Catholic missionary Paolo Piromalli, implying subtly that his fears for the future of his community lay with the Catholics.

Paolo Piromalli was an Italian Dominican friar who learned Armenian and travelled to the Caucasus to serve as a Catholic missionary.⁵³ In his chronicle, Grigor provides a fascinating glimpse into the controversy Piromalli's missionary work caused among Istanbul Armenians upon his arrival in the Ottoman capital from Etchmiadzin:

When he departed, two followers went with him, and a letter came to Istanbul, to Galata in the year 1636. We were present at that time in the Church of the Mother of God. That evil [man] was convincing all of the priests of Galata and the credulous people, especially our sons Xoĵay Tawit' and Kirakos of Julfa, saying that 'For three years I lived in Ējmiacin and I became an Armenian. I am a student of P'lippos and I have taken the authority of a *vardapet* to preach.' They put him at the head of a class, and he began to preach in the Armenian language on the history of the Illuminator so that firstly he might convince [them] of his sincerity by it. Word got out in the city; some stormed after [him], going after [his] renown. While listening to his words, they surprised us, and the priests of two churches, St. Sargis and St. Nikolayos, were moved to agitation. They went to Zak'aria, who was patriarch in name, and said to him, 'Did you grant the authority to be a *vardapet* over the Armenian people to that fraud?' Zak'aria denied it, [saying], 'I don't know him, but the Julfans accepted him, Xoĵay Tawit' and his student Kirakos.'⁵⁴

Grigor describes how they sent a delegation to investigate the theological views of Piromalli and his coterie:

First [they were] to ask of our faith and our laws and of the true confessions of religion and of [their] loving acceptance and pledging [themselves] to all of our religion and [their] rejection of all of the Chalcedonian heresies, and especially the new-fangled heresies of the Frankish fraud. We ordered that they ask so many firm precepts from him. And taking [a letter] they went, [and] they gave the letter to the priests. The priests did not have the courage to take the letter to him at once for fear of some chief [members] of the populace, on account of much warm love [which they had] for him. Lord Łazar took courage [and] went without the letter to greet the former [Paul] with his lips and not with his heart. He began to inquire as we had commanded. [Paul] deceptively tried to conceal, saying that 'They are signs of dispute: lay off!' [Łazar] said that 'I have been sent from the *vardapets* and the multitude of priests for the sake of this examination. How can I lay off? First say the "We believe" of Nicaea [the Nicæan Creed], which is always said in

⁵³ For more about Paolo Piromalli, see Haft, 'Paolo Piromalli'. I am very grateful to Dr. Paolo Lucca of the University of Venice for suggesting this reference and sharing his own research on Piromalli with me. On Piromalli, see also Lucca's essay in this volume.

⁵⁴ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, pp. 585–586.

church.' [Paul] spoke until 'But those who say', but from there he did not want to say more.⁵⁵

Piromalli was unwilling to articulate the anathema of the original Nicæan Creed of 325 CE, which continues to be recited by followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church during their liturgy but has been edited out of the version of the creed recited by both Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians. Thus, he exposed himself as a Catholic. This prompted strife between Piromalli's sympathizers and his detractors. Grigor was among the latter, and he concludes his chronicle with condemnation of those who could be led astray by such a man and with lament about the state of Armenian ecclesiastical life in Poland, where Armenian church life was under Catholic influence and where Piromalli proceeded to travel after leaving Istanbul.⁵⁶

As this passage shows, the clash between Armenian clerics and Catholic missionaries had reached the streets of Istanbul by the 1630s. Of course, there had been Armenian Catholics long before this time, in the medieval Kingdom of Cilician Armenia, and among the so-called 'Unitor Brothers' of Nakhichevan.⁵⁷ But by early modern Ottoman times, the Kingdom of Cilicia had become old history, and Catholic life in the late sixteenth-century Istanbul was primarily limited to European merchants, slaves, and prisoners.⁵⁸ Grigor's chronicle shows that Catholic missionaries were beginning to make inroads among the Armenians by the early seventeenth century, in the aftermath of the 'Great Armenian Flight'. Some Armenians were influenced by their personal travels to Rome, where the Pope had an Armenian translator and examiner named Łazar of Tokat who would test the faith of visiting Armenian merchants and pilgrims, threatening harassment for those who refused to accept Roman Catholicism.⁵⁹ Others, like Xul, developed Catholic sympathies under the influence of Catholics in Istanbul. In the later seventeenth century the growing prosperity of the Armenians in Istanbul, the rise of the *amira* merchant class with trade ties to Europe,⁶⁰ and educational links between Armenians and Jesuit and Capuchin teachers led to a higher rate of conversion, such that by 1700 there were reportedly eight thousand Armenian Catholics in Istanbul, many more than the foreign French and Italian Catholics.⁶¹ These Armenian Catholics operated without official sanction until 1830, when Sultan Mahmud II recognized a separate Armenian Catholic Community.⁶²

As shown, the second half of Grigor's chronicle is a valuable window into a period of disjuncture in Armenian history, when Armenians moved *en masse* from their ancient homeland in 'Historical Armenia' to the coastal cities of the Ottoman Empire, to Western Anatolia, Istanbul, and Thrace. Grigor felt threatened by the

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 586–587.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 588.

⁵⁷ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 46–47.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 72.

⁵⁹ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, pp. 381–382.

⁶⁰ Barsoumian, *The Armenian Amiras*.

⁶¹ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, p. 178.

⁶² Beydilli, *II. Mahmud Devri'nde Katolik Ermeni Cemâati*.

breakdown of communal regulation mechanisms amidst migration, by the ways of life of transcontinental merchants, and by the ideas and sectarian discord brought by European Catholic missionaries. The first half of Grigor's chronicle provides a narrative which brings Armenians from their 'old world' in Eastern Anatolia to their 'new world' in Western Anatolia, Istanbul, and Thrace, serving as an intellectual bridge across a moment of historical disjuncture comparable to ones crafted by Greeks like Kritovoulos, Chalkokondyles, and the author of the *Patriarchal History of Constantinople* after 1453. The second half of Grigor's chronicle, on the other hand, was his intellectual response to threats that existed in that 'new world', threats created by the increased movement of peoples, goods, and ideas at the 'dawn of the global world'⁶³ in the seventeenth century.

GRIGOR'S ROLE IN ARMENIAN INFRASTRUCTURE BUILDING

Grigor's responses to these threats were not limited to storytelling. On the contrary, Grigor was primarily a man of action. Unlike the renowned seventeenth-century Armenian polymath Eremia K'ēōmiwrčean—who was Ottoman Istanbul's first great Armenian author and thinker—Grigor should be remembered less as an intellectual, and more as a politician, fundraiser, preacher, and infrastructure-builder.

Grigor's descriptions of his infrastructure building projects are scattered throughout his chronicle, and they do not form discrete sections like his discussions of the churchmen described above. Yet if we follow Grigor's comments about his movements, we see that he was engaged in ministry and construction projects for refugee communities in various localities in Istanbul and its environs.

On two occasions Grigor sought to participate in the construction of monasteries. Unlike Eastern Anatolia—which to this day is still littered with the ruins of ancient Armenian monasteries—Western Anatolia at the beginning of the seventeenth century lacked structures for organized Armenian ascetic life. On one occasion Grigor describes how he tried and failed to build a monastery in a village near Iznik, where he met the above-mentioned Yovhannēs:

At that time we wanted to dwell there in order to build a monastery, and we stayed there for seven months and built a cell in the above-mentioned village. I wanted to build a monastery for cenobites in a suitable place. For two reasons this was impeded: Firstly, a long-lasting and heavy sickness fell upon me; secondly, I didn't have any friend or a seeker of solitude.⁶⁴

On this attempt, Grigor's monastery building efforts were impeded, but he played a role in another much more successful project. Later, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Armenian community of Izmit was best known in the Armenian world because of the Armenian Monastery of Armaš. Grigor refers to this monastery as his own 'handicraft' in one passage about a visit there.⁶⁵ But whereas Grigor

⁶³ Brook, *Vermeer's Hat*.

⁶⁴ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 442.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 361. «ձեռնակերտս»

seems to have been the undisputed author of the above-mentioned failure, there is competition for the claim to fame as the founder of the very successful Armař Monastery. The monastery was founded in 1611, and both colophons⁶⁶ and a local Armenian history concur in stating that its founder was a certain bishop T'adēos.⁶⁷ It seems that Grigor's role in the construction of the monastery was limited to fundraising efforts,⁶⁸ and he may have downplayed T'adēos's critical role in his chronicle out of personal feelings. About T'adēos he writes,

An unbeliever named T'adēos became bishop by a fornicator who had abandoned the priesthood. He was in the newly-built Armař Monastery, but he did not have concern for the laws. He did not have fear or dread of God, nor shame of man. He did not know of fasting, nor of refrain from wine-drinking. He was never repentant of his sins, but hopelessly he was committing every evil. He was hating good and loving evil, and he died in this way, unrepentant.⁶⁹

Whatever Grigor's role had been in establishing the monastery, it seems that after T'adēos' passing, the Armař Monastery became one of Grigor's regular haunts in the early 1620s.⁷⁰

Grigor's efforts in the construction and restoration of churches was far more successful than his failed or disputed role as the founder of monasteries. During his tenure as bishop in Rodosto, modern-day Tekirdađ, at least two churches were built. Rodosto's first Armenian church, the Archangel Church, had been constructed in 1607 under the initiative of Rodosto's first Armenian bishop, Yakob.⁷¹ But this church was destroyed in 1629 in the midst of sectarian conflict which erupted after a Muslim sergeant kidnapped a Greek boy, and Grigor describes how joint Greek-Armenian protest over the incident prompted a riot aimed at the Armenian church:

they [the Muslims] turned upon our church, complaining that so long [ago the Armenians] built the church without basis (*temelsiz*) by bribes. [They were] saying this and other things, until they took an order to destroy it. There you would have seen, that like a swarm of locusts they ran altogether, a multitude of atheists, over the poor church to destroy it.⁷²

This destruction prompted initiatives to make up for the loss of the Archangel.

According to Grigor, it was the idea of some Turks who felt badly for the Armenians that they take a church from the Greeks—who supposedly had twelve churches in Rodosto—and give one to the Armenians. The Armenians were ultimately able to procure the Orthodox St. Yovhannēs Church for themselves from the Greeks in the same year that they lost the Archangel after organizing a fundraising campaign for

⁶⁶ Ibid., ԽԷ/xlvi.

⁶⁷ Gasapean, *Armenians in the Nikomedia Province*, p. 106.

⁶⁸ Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 423.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 478.

⁷⁰ Ibid., ԽԷ/xlvi.

⁷¹ For a short note on chronology, see Daranałc'i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, p. 320.

⁷² Ibid., p. 193.

bribing the Ottoman officials, a process in which Grigor claimed a leading role.⁷³ It seems that Grigor may have exaggerated the number of Orthodox churches in Rodosto in order to mitigate rhetorically the offence against his fellow-Christians, or perhaps he included churches and monasteries in the general region. In either case, his numbers are difficult to reconcile with the testimony of Evliya Çelebi, who wrote that ‘in total there are seven infidel churches [in Tekirdağ]...The Rum churches are few but they are seemly’.⁷⁴

Although the Armenians had procured a new church from the Greeks almost immediately after losing their own, the Rodosto historian Sargis G. P‘ač‘ačean describes how the Armenians were not satisfied with this church because it was in a Greek neighborhood—a fact which caused some awkwardness about the means by which it had been procured—and thus they gradually began to build the Holy King (Redeemer) Church on the location of the destroyed Archangel Church.⁷⁵ In the twentieth century the Tekirdağ governor’s residence (*vali konağı*) was built atop the Redeemer Church’s foundation,⁷⁶ and the site is currently home to the Tekirdağ Archaeology and Ethnography Museum.

The story of the Archangel Church is not the only one in which Grigor recounts how the seizure of Armenian property by Muslims led to a counterstrike against the Greeks. In 1626 the St. Nicholas Church at Edirnekapı⁷⁷ in Istanbul was converted into a mosque, and this prompted the local Armenians there to begin searching for another place of worship. They ultimately settled upon a Greek Orthodox church, the Holy Archangel, in the nearby neighborhood of Balat. Grigor narrates that

The unfortunate afflicted priests and people were abandoned and churchless. For a whole year like vagrants they wandered, like lost sheep, and there was no one who visited them and gathered the dispersed into one. Among themselves together they found an idle church, named the Archangel, inside the Gate of Balat by a half-mile distance in a dark place among the Jews. They endeavored to take it from the Romans.⁷⁸

Of course, the Greeks found this solution to be unacceptable, and they resisted. As usual in episodes of Greek-Armenian conflict, the Ottoman state eventually had to arbitrate. Grigor triumphantly describes how the Armenians gained victory in the dispute via bribery:

Exhorting one another, [the Armenians] gathered much money and silver. They bribed the vizier and all the grandees of the palace, and all the Romans were moved to wage war and to fight with the Armenians, [so that] the Armenians not be allowed to take the church. With prayers to the holy Illuminator and with the

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 194–201.

⁷⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Evlîyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 2, p. 349.

⁷⁵ P‘ač‘ačean, *Scrapbook*, pp. 37–38.

⁷⁶ Çevik, *Tekirdağ Tarihi Araştırmaları*, p. 80.

⁷⁷ Tuğlacı, *İstanbul Ermeni Kiliseleri*, pp. 89–91.

⁷⁸ Daranač‘i, *Chronicle of Grigor Vardapet*, pp. 186–187.

omnipotent power of God the Armenians defeated them and all their supporters. Recep Pasha gave an order to the Armenians, and then three sergeants (*çavuş*) came and opened the church and gave passage into the hands of our Armenians. Among them there was much rejoicing.⁷⁹

Very soon after the Armenians' triumph by bribery over their Greek opponents, a fire broke out and the church burnt down. Grigor played a critical role in keeping the church in Armenian hands by rapidly rebuilding it and negotiating with Ottoman authorities to maintain it as an Armenian site of worship, despite opposition from local Greeks and Muslims in Balat.

The examples described in this section are but a few examples of a much broader process of Armenian infrastructure building that took place in the aftermath of the 'Great Armenian Flight'.⁸⁰

CONCLUSIONS

The seventeenth century was to be a period of cultural and intellectual renewal and rebirth for Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire, following a long period of relative cultural decline in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This renewal reached its apex with the life and work of Eremia K'ēōmiwrčean (1637–1695), a second-generation emigrant whose grandfather fled from Kemah—Grigor's hometown—at the time of the 'Great Armenian Flight'. While Eremia himself did not become a priest, perusal of his diary⁸¹ shows the integral role that Armenian holy places played in his life and intellectual formation. This paper argues that the renaissance of Armenian culture which took place in the second half of the seventeenth century was preceded by a period of disjuncture followed by conscious attempts by Armenian churchmen like Grigor to reimpose ecclesiastical order and to build structures which would serve as bases for the maintenance of Apostolic Armenian cultural and religious life. The second half of Grigor's chronicle documents his anxieties about early modern mobility as well as evidence of his tangible efforts to respond to perceived threats through preaching, teaching, and infrastructure building. Through such work, Grigor helped lay the foundation for the rise of Istanbul as the most important demographic and cultural center in the Armenian world.

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⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 187.

⁸⁰ For a study of Armenian infrastructure building in Balıkesir, see Öntuğ, 'Balıkesir'deki Ermeni Kilisesi'.

⁸¹ K'ēōmiwrčean, *Diary of Eremia*.

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5. CONFESSION-BUILDING AND AUTHORITY: THE GREAT CHURCH AND THE OTTOMAN STATE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

ELENI GARA AND OVIDIU OLAR

Since its emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in the works of Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling,¹ the concept of confessionalization has undergone significant changes. Closely associated with the notion of social disciplining, *Konfessionalisierung* was initially viewed as a fundamental aspect of the larger process of modern state-building in the lands of the Holy Roman Empire. It was theorized that the measures taken by the church and by the political authorities in order to achieve confessional homogenization and impose social control had contributed to the crystallization of cultural and political identities, and thus to the formation of the modern state.² When subjected to critical examination, however, the confessionalization thesis turned out to be flawed in several respects. Some scholars questioned the adequacy of a top-to-bottom model of change, where church and state represent the top and the flock and communities the bottom. Others cast doubt on the centrality of confessionalization as a historical process and contested its contribution to the process of modernization.³

While some scholars who evaluated the original confessionalization thesis ended up rejecting it altogether as fundamentally flawed even for Habsburg history, others saw potential in its reconceptualization. Consequently, the concept of confessionalization has become more flexible and extendable to other early modern

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¹ Reinhard, 'Konfession und Konfessionalisierung'; Reinhard, 'Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung?'; Schilling, *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen*; Schilling, 'Confessionalization'.

² See, for example, Schilling, 'Die Konfessionalisierung'.

³ For an overview of the critique and further bibliography, see Brady, 'Confessionalization'; Deventer, 'Confessionalization'; Lotz-Heumann 'The Concept of Confessionalization'; Lotz-Heumann and Pohl, 'Confessionalization and Literature'.

contexts.⁴ Some studies now approach confessionalization as a pan-European phenomenon, visible from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean and from the British Isles to East-Central Europe and the Ottoman Empire, although its traits are not necessarily the same everywhere. They vary from what has been described as double confessionalization (Ireland), to multiple confessionalizations (the Netherlands), to non-statistic or bottom-up initiatives (Bohemia), and accommodate various forms of resistance.⁵

In terms of the Orthodox world, it is only recently that attempts at the examination of the potential and limits of the concept of confessionalization have been made.⁶ One reason for the long-standing reluctance to extend the concept's coverage to non-Western Christianity is that the relationship between church and state in the Orthodox world differs from Western models.⁷ Another reason is the complex ecclesiastical situation. A researcher wanting to examine the extent to which the issues inherent in the original confessionalization theory are relevant to the early modern Orthodox world has to take into consideration the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the rise of the Ottoman Empire, the creation of the Muscovite Patriarchate (1589/1593), the Union of Brest (1596) and the continuous efforts of Rome to promote the union of the churches in the Ottoman lands. Anyone interested in the 'Ottoman Orthodox' confessionalization⁸ has to take into consideration both the Byzantine antecedents⁹ and the post-Byzantine 'adjustments' to Ottoman realities.¹⁰ As to understanding the relationship between church and state, it requires a thorough examination of the Patriarchate's interaction with the Ottoman administration, study of the networks of influence centered around the Great Church—which included not only members of the ecclesiastical elites, but also lay Orthodox archons, Ottoman officials, and agents of European states—and taking into consideration the particularities of the religious and political structures in the Danubian Principalities.

In recent years significant progress has been made toward a better understanding of the relationship between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Ottoman

⁴ For confessionalization in a global context, see Zwierlein, 'Konfessionalisierung'.

⁵ Lotz-Heumann, 'Confessionalization'; Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of Confessionalization'.

⁶ Brüning, 'Die Orthodoxie'; Makrides, 'Konfessionalisierungsprozesse'. For the Christian Middle East, see Heyberger, 'Pour une histoire croisée'. For the Orthodox communities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Belorussia, Ukraine, and Russia, see Brüning, 'Confessionalization'; Dmitriev, *Between Rome and Constantinople*; Dmitriev, 'The Church Confraternity'; Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion*.

⁷ See, for instance, Schilling, 'Confessionalization', p. 28.

⁸ For the notion of 'Ottoman Orthodoxy', its potential and limitations, see Zelepos, *Orthodoxe Eiferer*, pp. 13–15.

⁹ Gastgeber, 'Annäherung'.

¹⁰ Apostolopoulos, 'Continuity and Change'; Apostolopoulos, 'Les frontières'; Apostolopoulos, 'The Flexible Policy'; Apostolopoulos and Païzi-Apostolopoulou, *After the Conquest*; Païzi-Apostolopoulou, 'Continuity and Change'.

administration.¹¹ Research on the position of the church in the institutional and legal order of the Ottoman state has discredited the *millet* system theory¹² and has shown that the integration of the Orthodox subjects and the relationship of their ecclesiastical institutions with the state underwent considerable transformation over time.¹³ The lay protectors of the Great Church have also attracted increased attention, and the Wallachian, Moldavian, and Muscovite networks, to which the patriarchs and other members of the higher clergy belonged, have been placed under scrutiny.¹⁴

Since many prerequisites seem to be in place, we feel that it is time to take up the question of confessionalization among the Orthodox of the Ottoman Empire from the perspective of church–state interaction. A disclaimer is due here: we do not regard the involvement of temporal authorities as a *sine qua non* of confessionalization; the well-justified critique of the state-centered paradigm of Reinhard and Schilling has demonstrated the flaws of such an approach.¹⁵ There is no denying, however, that the strengthening of religious authorities, for which the alliance between church and state proved crucial, was a cornerstone of confessionalization in Protestant and Catholic Europe. The state features prominently also in the case of Ottoman (Muslim) confessionalization, particularly during its first phase, as argued by Tijana Krstić.¹⁶ It is therefore worthwhile to look into this aspect in the case of the Orthodox as well, all the more so as the Patriarchate of Constantinople had become the Christian church of the Ottoman Empire *par excellence* in the time period under scrutiny here, in spite of initial hardships and local specificities or resistances.¹⁷

The questions at the heart of our inquiry are to what extent the Great Church was able to implement canon law and ecclesiastical order, whether she could rely on state support for achieving it, and under which conditions and in which ways the state authorities were willing to support her. In this article we will focus on the first half of the seventeenth century and address the issue both in an overarching way, by discussing the nature of ecclesiastical authority at the time, and through a case study

¹¹ See, especially, Bayraktar Tellan, *The Patriarch and the Sultan*; Konortas, *Les rapports*; Konortas, *Ottoman Views*; Kotzageorgis, ‘About the Fiscal Status’; Kotzageorgis, ‘The Newly Found’; Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*; Zachariadou, *Ten Turkish Documents*. For the Patriarchate of Antioch, see Çolak, *The Orthodox Church*. See also the thoughtful overview of Petmézas, ‘L’organisation ecclésiastique’.

¹² For an overview and further bibliography, see Gara, ‘Conceptualizing Interreligious Relations’, pp. 66–72.

¹³ For a periodization, see Gara and Tzedopoulos, *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 52–89.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Apostolopoulos, ‘Continuity and Change’, pp. 107–108; Apostolopoulos, ‘Les mécanismes’; Păun, ‘Well-born of the Polis’; Tchentsova, *The Icon*; Zachariadou, ‘Les notables laïques’.

¹⁵ See, especially, Schmidt, ‘Sozialdisziplinierung’.

¹⁶ Krstić, ‘Illuminated by the Light’, pp. 40–41. See also Krstić, ‘State and Religion’; Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize’.

¹⁷ The restoration/imposition of the Great Church’s authority in regions outside the Ottoman core lands was a prolonged process, for which the Empire’s advance was instrumental. For example, in Moldavia and Wallachia, its authority was fully restored only in the first half of the sixteenth century. Pilat, *Studii*; Teoteoi, *Byzantina et Daco-Romana*, pp. 283–294, 295–319.

of Kyrillos Loukaris, patriarch of Alexandria in the period 1601–1620 and five times patriarch of Constantinople between 1620 and 1638.¹⁸ Better known for his ‘Calvinist’ *Confession of Faith* and his energetic anti-Catholic activity, Loukaris was undoubtedly the most confession-minded patriarch of his time.¹⁹ While his catalytic role in the shaping of Orthodoxy is generally acknowledged, his ecclesiastical policies have been largely ignored. As we will try to show, the combined examination of archival material generated by the state authorities and the church permits us to draw conclusions regarding the nature and extent of the authority of the patriarch and the higher clergy, and demonstrates the potential and limitations of state support. In addition, the analysis of documents issued by Loukaris or at his instigation and relating to matters of ecclesiastical administration (in a broad sense) and nomocanonic implementation, permits us to follow a crucial development in the Great Church: the enhancement of the patriarch’s authority over the higher clergy as well as that of metropolitans and bishops over subordinates and the flock.

THE GREAT CHURCH IN THE OTTOMAN LEGAL ORDER

Restored under the auspices of Mehmed II, the Patriarchate of Constantinople resumed its functions in January 1454, with a synod that ordained Gennadios Scholarios and made his prior appointment by the sultan canonically licit.²⁰ In the course of the next decades the Patriarchate completed its ‘reflective adjustments’ to life under Ottoman rule by assigning the subjection to the Ottomans to divine providence and by acknowledging the sultan’s authority—who by 1580 would come to be addressed as *basileus* (king or emperor), a term that had specific connotations in canon law and referred to the legal sovereign.²¹ At the same time, it took pains to re-establish a legal

¹⁸ For his tenures as patriarch of Constantinople, see below, Appendix.

¹⁹ Loukaris has attracted much scholarly attention. See, especially, Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*; Nosilia and Prandoni, *Trame controlloce*; Todt, ‘Kyrillos Lukaris’. For a recent account of Loukaris’ life and work and further bibliography, see Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*. Many documents relating to Loukaris have been published by Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellenique*, pp. 161–521.

²⁰ Apostolopoulos and Païzi-Apostolopoulou, *The Acts*, pp. 51–52; Zachariadou, *Ten Turkish Documents*, p. 46. See also Apostolopoulos, ‘Du sultan au basileus?’; Apostolopoulos, ‘Les dilemmes’; Apostolopoulos, ‘Les mécanismes’; Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios*; Blanchet, ‘L’ambiguïté’.

²¹ Apostolopoulos, ‘Du sultan au basileus?’; Konortas, ‘From the Historical Compromise’; Konortas, *Les rapports*; Moustakas, ‘Ottoman Greek Views’. The portrait of Murad IV by Synadinos of Serres clearly shows the extent to which the Ottoman sultans were considered legitimate heirs to the Byzantine emperors. Strauss, ‘Papasyndinos de Serres’; Todorova, ‘The Ottoman State’.

space based on the Eastern Roman nomocanonic tradition, which would allow the Great Church to function legitimately also from an ecclesiastical point of view.²²

Given that the Islamic law does not recognize either legal persons or corporate bodies, the Patriarchate's integration into the Ottoman institutional and legal order was fraught with challenges from the start. The situation became even more complicated since the late fifteenth century because of the Ottoman polity's gradual transformation into a full-fledged Islamic empire, which also entailed the modification of pre-existing institutional arrangements in conformity with the tenets of Islamic law and Hanafi jurisprudence.²³ The Ottoman solution for the accommodation of the church was to (re)conceptualize the ecclesiastical dioceses as districts subject to administration and taxation by the state. In 1474 the Great Church started paying a yearly tax to the state treasury.²⁴ The patriarch was considered personally liable for the payment, but he was expected to collect the necessary amount from the metropolitans and the bishops.²⁵ From then on, the patriarch and the prelates were construed by the Ottoman authorities as office holders whose duties were of a hybrid nature: to offer religious services to the Christian population and at the same time operate as tax farmers for the state.²⁶

This conceptualization of the higher clergy clashed directly with the ecclesiastical order. According to canon law, patriarchs, metropolitans, and bishops had to be elected by a synod and appointed for life. They could be deposed if found guilty of violating the canon law or were unable to perform their duties, but again only by a synod.²⁷ From the point of view of the Ottoman administration, however, the imperatives of canon law were irrelevant. It did not matter whether a candidate for the patriarchal throne or another ecclesiastical see had been elected or not. A hierarch

²² Apostolopoulos, 'Continuity and Change'; Apostolopoulos, *Reliefs*; Apostolopoulos, *The Great Nomimon*; Apostolopoulos, *The 'Sacred Codex'*; Apostolopoulos and Païzi-Apostolopoulou, *After the Conquest*; Apostolopoulos and Païzi-Apostolopoulou, *The Acts*; Païzi-Apostolopoulou, 'Continuity and Change'; Pitsakis, 'Renvois à des canons'.

²³ See, especially, Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud*; Kermeli, 'Ebū's Su'ūd's Definitions'.

²⁴ Apostolopoulos, 'Continuity and Change', pp. 109–110; Apostolopoulos, 'Les mécanismes', pp. 203–204; Konortas, 'Considerations ottomanes', p. 219. For the controversy surrounding this momentous arrangement and the role of Grand Ekklesiarches Manuel Chistonymos (the future Maximos III) in the events, see Apostolopoulos, *The 'Sacred Codex'*, especially pp. 79–84.

²⁵ See the synodical act corroborating the decision to accept the payment of the tax. Apostolopoulos, *The 'Sacred Codex'*, 89–97; Apostolopoulos and Païzi-Apostolopoulou, *The Acts*, pp. 152–154.

²⁶ Konortas, 'Considerations ottomanes'; Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, especially pp. 345–350, 360. See also Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi*, pp. 185–202; Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*, pp. 107–175. For the financial obligations of the Church and ecclesiastical taxation, see also İnalçık, 'Ottoman Archival Materials'; Kabrda, *Le système fiscal*; Konortas, 'Relations financières'; Kotzageorgis, 'Socio-Economic Aspects'.

²⁷ For the role of the Synod after 1453, see Papadopoulos, *Studies and Documents*, pp. 39–60. For the importance of the canon law, see Mureşan, 'De la place du Syntagma'; Pitsakis, 'Ius graeco-romanum'.

could lawfully assume office as long as he paid the entrance fee (*pişkeş*) and was in possession of a firman, a sultanic decree of appointment, and of a berat, an official investiture document.²⁸ Like any other officeholder, a hierarch could lose his position if there were complaints against his performance or if he failed to renew his berat upon the enthronement of a new sultan. In addition, given that hierarchs were technically construed as tax farmers, they could be deposed if they did not pay on time or if a contender gave a more lucrative offer to the Treasury—or a larger bribe—and had an order of appointment issued in his name.²⁹

This state of affairs permitted contenders for the Patriarchate or for other ecclesiastical sees, who could not find support for their candidacy among the Holy Synod, to ascend to the throne without prior election. Until about the mid-eighteenth century it was not unusual for patriarchs to be removed from office in favor of contenders who offered a higher entrance fee or profited from the patronage of powerful lay archons or highly placed state officials.³⁰ Even though the church made every effort to keep a semblance of legality, there is no denying that many a hierarch was illicitly (from the viewpoint of canon law) imposed or deposed. This, however, should not blind us to the fact that no patriarch, metropolitan or bishop was able to hold his office for long with only 'external' support or against the concerted reaction of the Holy Synod. Appointment by the sultan was a prerequisite for ascending to office but it was not on its own sufficient for a successful term.³¹ To command respect and not be regarded as a usurper (*epivates*), a hierarch needed both the lawfulness created by the sultanic documents and the legitimacy provided by canonical election.

Decrees of appointment and investiture documents not only rendered the operation of the church lawful but also formed the legal foundation for requesting the support of the state's judicial and executive authorities.³² In Ottoman administrative practice, rescripts in favor of office holders—and the higher clergy were considered as such—who encountered difficulties in the execution of their duties and petitioned

²⁸ See, especially, Chidiroglou, 'Sultanic *berats*'; Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*; İnalçık, 'The Status'; Konortas, 'The Development'; Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, pp. 53–119; Kotzageorgis, 'The Newly Found', p. 5; Zachariadou, *Ten Turkish Documents*, pp. 147–154; Gara, 'Grievance Redressal'. According to Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, pp. 124, 168–169, a prelate received first an appointment firman upon the payment of the *pişkeş*, and then a berat bestowing on him the usufruct of the office.

²⁹ For examples from the sixteenth century, see Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*, pp. 121–122, 150–153, 155–156, 166, 202–211. On tax farming (*iltizam*) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Darling, *Revenue-Raising*, pp. 119–160.

³⁰ Konortas, 'The Ottoman Crisis'; Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*, especially pp. 121–122, 150–153, 155–156; Stathi, 'Replacing Patriarchs'.

³¹ For example, Raphael I (1475–1476) met with fierce opposition by the *archons* and the higher clergy and was deposed after failing to fulfill his financial obligations to the Treasury. Theoleptos I (1513–1522), on the contrary, managed to rally support and to remain on the throne. Both patriarchs had ascended without prior election by a synod. Malaxos, 'Patriarchica Constantinopoleos Historia', pp. 113–115 (Raphael), 151 (Theoleptos). Raphael's berat, the oldest to date (7–16.2.1476) was recently discovered by Kotzageorgis, 'The Newly Found'.

³² Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, pp. 329–334.

the sultan, were issued on the basis of pre-existing entitlements recorded upon appointment to office. The higher clergy could—and did—petition the sultan as needed, either for a redress of grievances or to ask for support against hostile local governors, timariots and office holders, or against insubordinate members of the clergy and the flock.³³

The sultans had acknowledged the right of the hierarchs to implement their own confession's 'religious practices' (*ayinler*), a general term under which the canon law was also subsumed. Ecclesiastical regulations and traditions, however, were regarded as an internal affair of the Church.³⁴ The evoking of a nomocanonic ruling was not sufficient ground to induce the qadi court or the Imperial Council to decide in favor of the higher clergy when their authority was contested. Consequently, patriarchs, metropolitans and bishops could rely on the support of the state authorities in matters covered by their investiture documents, but not in anything else. Nomocanonic provisions included in the berats and specified in the appointment firmans acquired the status of sultanic rulings and were legally enforceable. The rest could be implemented only with consent or inasmuch as penalties such as the denial of sacraments and excommunication retained any coercive force over the flock.³⁵

AUTHORITY AND JURISDICTION

The few extant documents from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries show that the ecclesiastical berats were originally rather brief charters of rights and obligations whose main concern were matters of a financial nature, namely church revenues and payments to the Treasury.³⁶ These early investiture documents included only two provisions of a nomocanonic nature: that the hierarch for whom the document was issued had authority over the lower clergy and the flock 'in matters concerning his office', and that he had jurisdiction over marriage and divorce. Over the course of the eighteenth century, however, berats turned into extensive documents with numerous clauses, some of which concerned internal matters that were already treated in ecclesiastical canons, while others aimed at enhancing the higher clergy's authority and ensuring their power to collect taxes from the members of their flock, ability to implement the 'religious practices of old' and discipline transgressors.³⁷

³³ See, for example, Mutafova, 'Ottoman Documents'; Ursinus, 'Petitions'.

³⁴ See, especially, Kermeli, 'The Right to Choice'.

³⁵ For the extensive use of the ecclesiastical penalty of excommunication during Ottoman times, see Michailaris, *Excommunication*; Michailaris, *The Treatise*.

³⁶ For the Patriarchate of Constantinople: Babinger, *Sultanische Urkunden*, pp. 229–232; Chrysochoidis, 'The Financial Situation', pp. 288–292; Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 67–73 (translit.), 195–200 (trans.); İnalçık, 'The Status', pp. 418–419; Kotzageorgis, 'The Newly Found'; Salakides, *Sultansurkunden*; Zachariadou, *Ten Turkish Documents*, nos. 1, 7, 8, 9, 10.

³⁷ For an overview of the development of berats, see Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, pp. 94–104. For eighteenth-century berats, see *ibid.*, pp. 127–148, 174–184, 217–227, 236–267, 321–324, 347–354; Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 47–50.

The detailed analysis by Paraskevas Konortas has shown that the inclusion of additional clauses in the investiture documents accelerated during the eighteenth century and reached a zenith in the first decades of the nineteenth: the berat of Patriarch Gregorios VI from 1835 includes no less than sixty-five clauses, some with several sub-clauses.³⁸ It remains, however, to be seen when exactly this development started and how it progressed. There are only few Ottoman documents (berats, appointment firmans, rescripts) on behalf of the higher clergy from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁹ Most importantly, there are no extant original investiture documents for the patriarchs of Constantinople for the period between 1525 and 1714. The berat of Dionysios III, ostensibly issued in 1662 and published in 1910 by Manouel Gedeon,⁴⁰ exists only in Greek translation and is of dubious authenticity. Elif Bayraktar Tellan has already remarked upon the suspicious similarity of its stipulations to those of the berats of the early eighteenth century,⁴¹ whereas the honorifics used to address the patriarch are not plausible for an investiture document from the mid-seventeenth century.⁴² On the contrary, the berat of Dionysios IV, published in French translation in 1708 and dating from 1671, is certainly authentic.⁴³

In order to find out when the investiture documents and the decrees of appointment started including additional nomocanonic provisions, we have to turn to the few extant documents issued on behalf of metropolitans and bishops. Research on the basis of published and unpublished berats, appointment firmans and sultanic rescripts has led us to the conclusion that the insertion of additional clauses of a nomocanonic nature in the Ottoman documents for the Patriarchate of

³⁸ Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, pp. 75–85.

³⁹ Recently, a type of sultanic rescript in favor of metropolitans and bishops has been identified as an appointment firman. Gara, 'Grievance Redressal'.

⁴⁰ Gedeon, *Official Turkish Letters*, pp. 9–14.

⁴¹ Bayraktar Tellan, *The Patriarch and the Sultan*, pp. 31–33, 135–138. Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, on the other hand, treats the berat as genuine.

⁴² The patriarch is addressed as 'model of the Messiah's community and leader of the illustrious nation' (*hypogrammos tou Messiakou ethnous kai archegos tou perephanous Genous*). The documents published by Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, however, show clearly that until the early eighteenth century the berats did not include any honorifics for the patriarch: the first extant berat with an honorific is the one issued for Kosmas III of Constantinople in 1714 (pp. 79 [translit.], 206 [trans.]), which addresses the patriarch as 'model of the leaders of the Messiah's community' (*kıdvetü'l-muhtâri l'milleti'l-Mesîhiyye*) (Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan render the honorific as 'the chosen leader of the community of the Christians').

⁴³ Aymon, *Monumens*, p. 486; Gedeon, *Official Turkish Letters*, pp. 98–99 (Greek translation from the French). About the dating of the berat, see below.

Constantinople⁴⁴ was a slow and non-linear process.⁴⁵ A first step, taken between 1609 and 1618, was to include a clause referring to a hierarch's right to 'dismiss and appoint' ('*azl ve nasb*) priests and monks in his diocese.⁴⁶ Sometime between 1618 and 1640 the metropolitans were granted the right to dismiss and appoint bishops as well; the clause, however, was abolished between 1645 and 1649.⁴⁷ Between 1649 and 1654 a further clause was added, authorizing metropolitans—presumably also bishops—to unfrock (literally: to shave the hair of) priests and monks who refused to deliver the taxes due to them, and to give the parishes (literally: the churches) of unfrocked priests to other persons.⁴⁸

In a sense, both clauses are specifications of the right of metropolitans and bishops to exercise authority over the lower clergy and the monastic communities in their dioceses, which was acknowledged from at least the early sixteenth century.⁴⁹ The original wording of this right, however, was rather vague: the sultan's order was that 'abbots, priests, monks and all other infidels' should recognize the hierarch in question as their bishop/metropolitan, should refer to him all matters relating to his office and refrain from disobeying him.⁵⁰ Evidently, by 1618 this formulation was no longer adequate to ensure obedience to the higher clergy's decisions in regard to

⁴⁴ It must be noted that the documents issued for the 'Slavic' churches, namely the patriarchates (according to the Ottoman authorities) or archbishoprics (according to the Patriarchate of Constantinople) of Ohrid (Tr. Ohri) and Peć (Tr. İpek), do not follow the same pattern and display important differences from those issued for Constantinople, sometimes including provisions in blatant breach of the canon law. The berat of Ioasaph of Bitola and Prilep from 1639, for example, includes fees for fourth and fifth marriages. *Documents Turcs*, pp. 183–184 (Macedonian trans.). The berat and appointment firmans for Ohrid and Peć must become the subject of separate research.

⁴⁵ Eleni Gara is preparing a publication on the subject, which will discuss the matter in detail.

⁴⁶ Documented for the first time in 1618, in the berat (renewal) of Ignatios, 'metropolitan and bishop of Trabzon' (metropolitan of Trapezous and bishop of Chaldia). Ari, *The First Dutch Ambassador*, p. 403, no. 144 (in the publication the hierarch's name is misread as Agamemnon). The clause is absent from a rescript (or rather appointment firman) issued on behalf of the metropolitan of Kaisaria (Tr. Kayseri) in 1609, but is referred to in 1622: the metropolitan complains that the secular authorities interfere with his appointing and dismissing priests and monks. Jennings, '*Zimmis*', pp. 266–267 and 267–268 respectively (English sum.).

⁴⁷ Documented for the first time in 1645, in the berat of Ioasaph of Verroia. HKV 17, p. 179 (90r). The clause was operative since at least 1640, when Kallinikos of Thessaloniki petitioned for the dismissal of bishops who refused to pay their dues. Vasdravelles, *Historical Archives of Macedonia*, no. 26, pp. 22–23. It is absent, however, from the berat of Ioakeim of Verroia. HKV 19, p. 335 (21r).

⁴⁸ Documented for the first time in the appointment firman for Metropolitan Auxentios of Andros from 26.3.1654. Kolovos, *The Insular Society*, pp. 277–279 (Greek trans.), <http://androdocs.ims.forth.gr/documentsview.php?l=1&id=149> (facsimile and transliteration).

⁴⁹ Compare the berat of Metropolitan Vessarion of Larissa from 1527. Chryssochoidis, 'The Financial Situation', pp. 290, 311–312; Sophianos, 'Saint Bessarion', pp. 199–200.

⁵⁰ See, for example, the berat issued for Bishop Ioannikios? of Karpathos (30.6.1551), Pachomios of Kassandria (Tr. Kesendere) (26.3.1564), and Kallistos of Leros (24.3.1567). Zachariadou, *Ten Turkish Documents*, nos. 8, 9, and 10 (with Greek trans.).

appointments and dismissals. By 1654, the only means to coerce the lower clergy and the monastic communities into fulfilling their financial obligations was to threaten parish priests and abbots with unfrocking. The inclusion of these clauses in the Ottoman documents confirmed that the metropolitan or bishop who disciplined disobedient priests and monks was acting in conformity to the sultan's order, without overstepping or abusing his authority. It also ensured that he would find the support of the judicial authorities in case of litigation. Two cases from the late sixteenth–early seventeenth century permit us to better understand the practical necessity to render the higher clergy's authority legally enforceable in no uncertain terms.

According to a report signed by the priests of Arta (Tr. Narda) and submitted to Patriarch Hieremias II, the monks from the monasteries of the diocese were in the habit of visiting the town and would 'insolently and without respect eat and drink with women and children'. They were often found 'in shameful mingling' with women, whereas lay women and nuns frequently entered male monasteries and stayed there overnight. The metropolitan of Naupaktos, claimed the report, had repeatedly tried to put an end to that behavior, but 'many from among those *hieromonks* [priest monks] and monks and other persons had denounced both him and the most holy Master Nephon, his *exarch* [plenipotentiary], and had caused them great damage'. The matter was most probably discussed in 1593, in a synod that included not only the patriarch and many hierarchs of Constantinople, but also the patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem.⁵¹ The participants decided to evoke a ruling of the Sixth Synod that forbade the entrance of women into male monasteries and vice versa, and regulated the monks' absence from their monasteries. The decision provided that priest monks re-entering the lay world were to be suspended and the lay persons who received them in their houses excommunicated. Excommunication was also to be imposed on monks leaving their monasteries (until their return), and on lay women and nuns spending the night at a male monastery. In addition, the metropolitan of Naupaktos was given permission to bring transgressors to justice for punishment.⁵²

It is very probable that the matter was more complex and not just a blatant breach of ecclesiastical discipline and propriety on the part of unruly and lustful monks—and of misguided lay persons—as presented in the report. After all, a close relationship of the townsmen with the monasteries of the area entailed a direct competition between monks and parish priests for the limited resources of the Christian population. Be it as it may, the metropolitan's effort to intervene gave rise to litigation. The 'denouncement' mentioned in the report refers undoubtedly to a lawsuit filed by the monks and their lay supporters at the qadi court against the metropolitan and his *exarch*. The charges are unknown; the metropolitan was probably accused of overstepping his jurisdiction, which could be easily substantiated given that he would be unable to present evidence of his entitlement to monitor the movements of monks belonging to his diocese. Bringing the matter to the notice of the patriarch

⁵¹ The synod's main concern was the confirmation of the promotion of the see of Moscow to patriarchate. Evangelou, 'A New Reason', pp. 96–97.

⁵² Gedeon, *Canonical Decisions*, vol. 2, pp. 72–73.

was under the circumstances the only way for the metropolitan to ascertain his authority. It must be noted, however, that even patriarchal decisions depended on consent and on the efficacy of the penalty of excommunication in order to be obeyed. Rulings on the basis of canon law could not be used as an argument at the qadi court.

A lawsuit filed at the qadi court of Trikala (Tr. Tırhala) against the monks of Varlaam Monastery in 1606 reveals the difficult relationship between the higher clergy and the monastic communities of their diocese, and helps to better understand the need to specify in the ecclesiastical berats the exact entitlements of metropolitans and bishops. In their lawsuit, four priests who held ecclesiastical office at the metropolitan see of Larissa complained that the monks of Varlaam used to visit the villages of the diocese for the purpose of collecting money and victuals, which was damaging to their own income. The monks refuted the accusation by arguing that they were not putting pressure on the villagers and that whatever they collected was spent on behalf of the travelers to whom they offered hospitality. They also claimed that, while they themselves did not encumber the villagers, the plaintiffs were causing damage to the monastery's pious foundation (waqf), and requested the court to hear the testimony of the region's Muslim notables and timar (military fief) holders on the matter. The latter not only confirmed the monks' allegations but also added that the metropolitan had no right to interfere. Consequently, the qadi ordered the plaintiffs not to harass the monks of Varlaam 'in matters relating to the monastery's pious foundation'.⁵³ The metropolitan had to respect the decision. A second lawsuit in 1610 was equally unsuccessful.⁵⁴

THE GREAT CHURCH AT CROSSROADS

The higher clergy's need for the support of the state in asserting their authority and collecting taxes was in direct relation to their difficulty to cope with their own financial obligations towards their creditors, the Treasury and the Patriarchate. The outbreak of the monetary crisis that started with the debasement of the *akçe*, the Ottoman silver coin, in 1585/86⁵⁵, had found the higher clergy and the church in a vulnerable position. Competition between contenders for metropolitan sees and the patriarchal throne had resulted in chronic indebtedness, since ascent to office entailed the payment of a considerable sum of money to the Treasury in the form of *pişkeş*.⁵⁶ Internal division, evidenced in the frequent change of patriarchs between 1579 and

⁵³ Laiou, *The Ottoman Documents*, pp. 164–165. The reference to the monastery's waqf has to do with the fact that, after the 'confiscation affair' of 1568–1569, monasteries—more accurately monastic properties—were awarded waqf status on the grounds that they provided services to travelers and the poor. See, especially, Kermeli, 'Ebū's Su'ūd's Definitions', p. 152.

⁵⁴ Laiou, *The Ottoman Documents*, pp. 169–170.

⁵⁵ Pamuk, 'Money'; Tezcan, 'The Ottoman Monetary Crisis'.

⁵⁶ On the amount of *pişkeş* in the period 1641–1651, see İnalçık, 'Ottoman Archival Materials', pp. 441–444.

1587, and again between 1595 and 1598,⁵⁷ exacerbated the crisis. In the following decades, the factional struggle for the control of the Patriarchate and the loss of income, in addition to rising tax demands on the part of the state and the repeated expenses for the renewal of the ecclesiastical berats at the enthronement of each new sultan (no less than eight enthronements between 1595 and 1648), plunged the higher clergy further into debt.⁵⁸ Simony, which was synodically condemned in 1477, 1482, 1484 and 1497,⁵⁹ became endemic inasmuch as it became a generalized practice to demand an entrance fee (*emvatikion*) for parishes, ecclesiastical offices and, in general, every kind of activity of an ecclesiastical nature that conferred economic benefits,⁶⁰ whereas hierarchs facing difficulties in the collection of revenues accumulated enormous debts. Every ‘correction of coinage’ (a euphemism for the repeated debasements of the *akçe* in 1600, 1618, 1624 and 1640),⁶¹ was followed by a surge of resignations and depositions of metropolitans and bishops who could not cope with their financial obligations.⁶²

In addition, the clash between pro- and anti-Latin hierarchs that was simmering since the first patriarchate of the pro-Latin Metrophanes III (1565–1572; 1579–1580) was rapidly reaching a climax. The ascent of pro-Latin hierarchs to metropolitan sees and the patriarchal throne in the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century was equally a symptom of confessional and political reorientation among a part of the Orthodox elites. Patriarch Gennadios had followed a conciliatory policy toward those in favor of the union of the churches and, in spite of the official condemnation of the decision of Ferrara–Florence by a so-called ‘pan-Orthodox synod’ in 1483/84,⁶³ there continued to exist hierarchs harboring philocatholic feelings.⁶⁴ The new outreach of the Roman Church in the post-Tridentine era started making

⁵⁷ The first period of instability was due to the clash between supporters and opponents of Hieremias II; the second one resulted from the struggle for his succession. For a chronological list of the patriarchs between 1565 and 1702, see below, Appendix.

⁵⁸ Konortas, ‘The Ottoman Crisis’.

⁵⁹ Apostolopoulos, *The ‘Sacred’ Codex*, pp. 135–139; Chrysochoidis, ‘The Financial Situation’, p. 286.

⁶⁰ Chrysochoidis, ‘The Financial Situation’, pp. 305–306.

⁶¹ Pamuk, ‘Money’, p. 962.

⁶² For example, Neophytos of Zetounion and Pteleon (1619) and Timotheos of Chalkedon (1620) resign invoking old age and debts, Sophronios of Vidyna (1620) resigns invoking his inability to administer the diocese, and Ignatios of Sophia (1640) resigns because of the huge debts. Vapouris, *Codex (B) Beta*, pp. 47–48 (no. 12), 52 (no. 17), 54 (no. 19), 114–116 (no. 62). For a sharp analysis of the reasons behind the depositions listed in the *Juridical Collection*, see Evangelou, ‘A New Reason’.

⁶³ Apostolopoulos, *The ‘Sacred’ Codex*, pp. 124–133.

⁶⁴ Several pro-Latin members of the clergy were removed under Isidoros II (1456–1462). Apostolopoulos, ‘The Orthodox Church’, p. 161. Some of them, such as Deacon Leon, were restored shortly thereafter, after submitting an Orthodox confession of faith. Apostolopoulos and Païzi-Apostolopoulou, *The Acts*, pp. 87–88, 93–94; Blanchet, ‘L’Union de Florence’.

the union appealing to a larger audience.⁶⁵ Part of Rome's attraction was due to the pressures exerted on Christian elites by the ongoing process of Sunnization and by the consolidation of Muslim urban communities claiming social and economic hegemony in the—hitherto Christian—European provinces of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁶ The withdrawal of waqf status from most of the monastic and ecclesiastical real property in 1568–1569 and its subsequent confiscation by the state had demonstrated that the arrangements of earlier centuries were not to be upheld in contravention of the Islamic law. It had also dealt a heavy blow to the finances of the monasteries and the dioceses that were forced to redeem their properties, and to that of their patrons.⁶⁷ After the Battle of Lepanto (1571), the Habsburg monarchs (the Holy Roman emperor and the Spanish king) started looking to many among the Balkan Christians as preferable alternatives to the Ottoman sultan.⁶⁸ The confiscation of Pammakaristos Monastery in 1587 or 1588 and its conversion into a mosque shortly thereafter,⁶⁹ which forced the Patriarchate to relocate to the district of Phanari/Fener, was probably the last straw.

An anti-Ottoman political orientation went hand in hand with a pro-Latin stance in confessional matters, whether genuine or affected. Dionysios of Larissa, one of the leaders of an anti-Ottoman conspiracy in the Greek mainland (Epirus and Thessaly), was forced to accept the Roman confession of faith in 1602 in view of his travelling to Spain to present the plan of rebellion to the king.⁷⁰ Patriarchs Neophytos II and Timotheos II, Loukaris' immediate predecessors, also endorsed the insurrectionary plan, which foresaw the union of the churches.⁷¹ Neophytos recognized the primacy of the pope and accepted the Roman confession in August 1608, in preparation of an appeal to the Spanish king urging him to a military expedition against the Ottomans.⁷² Timotheos co-signed another appeal to the same monarch in 1605, in his capacity as metropolitan of Old Patras.⁷³ In 1619, during his tenure as patriarch, he

⁶⁵ Girard, *Le christianisme oriental*; Heyberger, *Les chrétiens*. For pro-Latin theologians and prelates, see Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*.

⁶⁶ For the case of Ioannina, see Gara, 'Prophecy, Rebellion, Suppression'; Kotzageorgis, *Early Ottoman Town*, pp. 279–307.

⁶⁷ Alexander, 'The Lord Giveth'; Fotić, 'The Official Explanation'; Kermeli, 'Ebū's-su'ūd's Definitions'; Kermeli, 'The Confiscation and Repossession'. According to the ruling of the Ottoman grand mufti (sheikh ūl-islam) Ebūssu'ūd, a Christian waqf was valid and legal only if made for the sustenance of monks and the indigent, or the upkeep of bridges and fountains, and registered by the qadi.

⁶⁸ See, especially, Bartl, *Der Westbalkan*; Gara, 'Seditious Activity'; Hassiotis, *Tendiendo puentes*; Păun, 'En quête du cheval de Troie'; Păun, 'Enemies Within'; Pippidi, 'Conspiracy'.

⁶⁹ Asutay-Effenberger, 'Zum Datum der Umwandlung', argues persuasively that the conversion took place in 1593/94.

⁷⁰ Gara, 'Prophecy, Rebellion, Suppression', pp. 339–340.

⁷¹ Gara, 'Seditious Activity'.

⁷² Hofmann, *Griechische Patriarchen II/5*, nos. 3–5, pp. 263–266; The appeal dates from April 1609. Floristán Imízcoz, *Fuentes*, no. 11, pp. 220–225.

⁷³ Floristán Imízcoz, *Fuentes*, no. 9, pp. 159–165.

was reportedly involved in anti-Ottoman negotiations, this time with the French Duke of Nevers who claimed descent from the Palaeologoi.⁷⁴

It is against this background that Kyrillos Loukaris, patriarch of Alexandria since 1601, an active participant in the confessional debates of the period and a committed anti-Unionist, ascended to the throne of Constantinople on 4 November 1620. According to the memorandum of his election, he was invited to become ecumenical patriarch after the death of Timotheos II because there had been fear 'that the patriarchal throne would be seized without the approval of the Holy Synod'.⁷⁵ The sentence implies that, if the supporters of Kyrillos had not acted quickly, his opponents might have bypassed the canonical procedure of election and procured the appointment of another person. The danger was real. The first attempt to elect Kyrillos at the throne of Constantinople (1612) had been thwarted by Timotheos and his supporters, two of whom (Paisios of Thessaloniki and Timotheos of Larissa) had also endorsed the insurrectionary plan and had signed appeals to the king of Spain.⁷⁶

It is highly probable that the anti-Ottoman stance of at least some from among the pro-Latin higher clergy helped rally together those who dreaded the consequences of conspiring with the Catholic powers and promoting rebellion. The two revolts of Dionysios, in Trikala in 1600 and in Ioannina in 1611, had been followed by the execution of lay persons and clergy, and by conversions to Islam.⁷⁷ Shortly thereafter, an attack by 'sea bandits and enemies of our mighty kingship' (possibly the Maltese Knights) in the coastal district of Kitros (Tr. Çitroz) at the Gulf of Thessaloniki (Tr. Selanik) was attributed to a conspiracy with Bishop Hieremias and the local population. The bishop had managed to escape death, but many others were not so fortunate.⁷⁸ Anti-Catholic hierarchs had long looked to the patriarchs of Alexandria for leadership: Meletios Pegas (1590–1601) had served as supervisor (*topotetes*) of the throne of Constantinople in 1597–1598,⁷⁹ and Kyrillos Loukaris had done the same for roughly a month in 1612. It was to Loukaris that they turned again upon the death of Timotheos in 1620, at a time when the sultan and his grand vizier were also trying to counteract the Roman influence and the crusade projects of the Catholic powers, and were contemplating war against Poland.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Lauxtermann, 'Unhistoric Acts', pp. 128–129, 132–134. For negotiations with the Duke of Nevers, see especially Papadopoulos, *The Movement*.

⁷⁵ Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellenique*, pp. 340–342 (no. 113); Delikanes, *Ta en tois Kodixi*, pp. 3–4; Vaporis, *Codex (B) Beta*, p. 55–59 (no. 21).

⁷⁶ Floristán Imízcoz, *Fuentes*, no. 9, pp. 159–165.

⁷⁷ Gara, 'Prophecy, Rebellion, Suppression'.

⁷⁸ We learn about the events on the occasion of the annulment, in 1617, of Hieremias' transfer from Polyane to Kitros. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Miscellanies*, pp. 90–92; Vaporis, *Codex (B) Beta*, pp. 40–42.

⁷⁹ On Pegas' supervising mission, see Cristea and Olar, 'War, Diplomacy, and Trade'.

⁸⁰ Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, pp. 61–62; Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 125–130.

RESTORING THE CHURCH, REFORMING THE FAITH

Kyrrillos Loukaris owes much of his enduring fame to a ‘Calvinist’ *Confession of Faith*. Published in Geneva, first in Latin in 1629, then in Latin and Greek, with additions, in 1633, this *Confession* was immediately translated from Latin into French, English, German, and Italian; it was also translated from Greek into Latin. It circulated in both manuscript and printed versions, and there even exists a pirate Latin edition, dated 1632.⁸¹ Although laconic, the text triggered passionate debates across Europe and forced Eastern Christianity to address theological issues it had never tackled before.

Loukaris and his *Confession* were condemned by a Constantinopolitan synod in 1638, convened by his pro-Latin archenemy and successor Kyrrillos Kontares. Two other synods, held in 1642 in Constantinople and in 1672 in Jerusalem, contented themselves with an anathema issued against the *Confession* attributed to him.⁸² The fact that Loukaris was regarded as a saint in Crete immediately after his death and that many of his theological opponents were reluctant to openly and synodically proclaim him a heretic⁸³ tells a lot about the respect he commanded and about the efforts made to minimize the damages produced by accusations formulated against his orthodoxy.⁸⁴ Yet, should we regard the 1629/1633 *Confession* as a step towards confessionalization? Was this small text intended to circumscribe the ‘true faith’? Did its author try to disseminate it to his flock?

Before we answer, a caveat is in order. Loukaris may be ‘une des plus grandes figures de l’histoire universelle’,⁸⁵ but many primary sources of particular importance for his life and thought, especially his sermons and epistles, remain unknown. Still, there is enough information to follow the patriarch’s political, intellectual, and spiritual journey and place his *Confession* in its rightful context. Born in Crete in 1570 as a Venetian subject and educated in Venice and Padua, Loukaris was a remarkable character: intelligent, polyglot, trained to become the pride of his community. Disciple of Maximos Margounios, he had contacts with German (Protestant) humanist circles, yet proved rather sympathetic to Rome. Loukaris really knew his Augustine, and when sent by the patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pegas as his representative to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the time of the Union of Brest, he adopted a moderate attitude towards the Latins (although he treated those accepting the Union as ‘traitors’ and ‘wolves’).⁸⁶ In 1608, seven years after his election as patriarch of Alexandria, Loukaris even recognized the papal primacy.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Davey, ‘Cyril Loukaris’; Tsakiris, ‘The Ecclesiarum Belgicarum Confessio’. For a recent account and further bibliography, see Olar, ‘Les confessions de foi’.

⁸² Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, p. 238–240; Olar, ‘Un temps pour parler’. For the 1672 synod, see Kontouma, ‘La *Confession de Foi*’; Kontouma and Garnier, ‘Concilium’.

⁸³ About Loukaris’ being a ‘secret heretic’, see Dositheos, *History*, p. 1171.

⁸⁴ Loukaris is counted among the saints by the Patriarchate of Alexandria since 2009. Morini, ‘La canonizzazione’.

⁸⁵ Iorga, *Histoire*, p. 180.

⁸⁶ Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 72–79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 81–82. For a different point of view, see Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, p. 34.

The letter addressed to Pope Paul V is genuine;⁸⁸ therefore we should rather inquire about the rationale behind the decision, not about its authenticity.

In any case, a shift occurs around 1612: it was then that Loukaris entered a harsh debate with a Latin missionary in Constantinople, quarreled with the pro-Latin Neophytos II and contributed to his expulsion. Loukaris became supervisor of the patriarchal throne for roughly a month but failed to obtain a berat, as Timotheos of Old Patras outbid him and became patriarch, forcing Loukaris to flee to Mount Athos and then to Wallachia in order to save his life and regroup.⁸⁹ It is not known what brought about this reversal of attitude. It certainly contributed to his rapprochement with the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga, who would become a lifelong friend and political ally. From 1612 dates also Loukaris' first letter to Johannes Wtenbogaert, the leader of the Dutch Remonstrant party.⁹⁰ One year later he rebuked Patriarch Timotheos for attacking and calumniating him. In 1615, still in Wallachia, Loukaris excommunicated the 'Latins'.⁹¹ In May of the same year, in preparation for his return journey to Alexandria, he turned to Haga for help. With Haga's intervention, Loukaris obtained a sultanic decree that permitted him to stay in Istanbul and 'arrange his affairs' there before sailing back to Alexandria, and prohibited 'the patriarch of Constantinople and any other persons' from hindering him in any way.⁹²

The correspondence of Loukaris with the followers of Arminius, with Marc'Antonio de Dominis (a Latin archbishop who defected to England) and, after the defeat of the Remonstrant faction at the Synod of Dort (1618), with the 'orthodox' Calvinists, went hand in hand with an increased anti-Latin attitude and with negotiations with the political leaders of the Reformed powers. Loukaris was one of the main promoters of an alliance between the Ottoman Empire, Muscovy and the 'Protestant' states (England, the Netherlands, Sweden, Transylvania) against the Catholic 'axis' (mainly Poland and the Habsburgs), which did not materialize.⁹³ For a while, however, he appeared to change his stance towards Rome. In 1625 he engaged in negotiations with papal envoys regarding church unity, but they were interrupted in the autumn of 1627 when Rome found out that Loukaris had established a Greek printing press in Istanbul. Accused of spreading the 'venom of heresy' into the Levant, the patriarch was branded a Calvinist; the Pope declared war on him, the Catholic princes asked their representatives in Constantinople to take the same stance, and in

⁸⁸ Hofmann, *Griechische Patriarchen II/1*, pp. 44–46, ill. 3a–d.

⁸⁹ Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 94, 99–100.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 107–108. Loukaris targets a group of Greeks who had studied in Rome and embraced 'Latin heresies'. The excommunication, however, does not concern only these *latinophrones*, but all Catholics.

⁹² A copy of the rescript in response to Cornelis Haga's petition on behalf of Loukaris, issued in 10–19 May 1615, is found among the Ottoman documents from Haga's register book kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Supplément Turc 118) and has been published in facsimile in Ari, *The First Dutch Ambassador*, p. 397. In the English summary provided by Ari, the beneficiary of the sultanic decree is misread as 'Patriarch of Alexandrietta Gabrilo'.

⁹³ Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, pp. 49–80; Tsakiris, 'Cyril Loukaris' Grand anti-Polish Plan'.

a couple of months the printing adventure ended in the sea.⁹⁴ Yet, the books published were not Protestant; they were directed against union with Rome and against the Latins,⁹⁵ which explains both the pope's discontent and Loukaris' mindset.

The 1629 *Confession of Faith* is a consequence of the 'total war' Rome declared on Loukaris, of the increasingly anti-Latin stance of the patriarch, and of the fact that the Dutch ambassador Haga tried to take advantage of the situation and asked Geneva to send a Calvinist minister, Antoine Léger, who was to push Loukaris even more toward Calvinism. Composed in Latin, the *Confession* was destined for a Western public and was not meant to be published, being 'for friends only'. The text is genuine, unlike a 1627 'Orthodox' confession also attributed to him. Once the text was leaked, Loukaris admitted that he was the author and provided a Greek enlarged version in 1631 (it was published in 1633). Yet, for him the main purpose was to underline the differences with the Church of Rome, while stressing the common points between his church and 'orthodox' Calvinism. Loukaris' 'Calvinism' was first of all directed against Rome.⁹⁶

The patriarch wanted a reformation of his church and believed Calvinism could provide a model, but he understood this reformation as a 'renovation' and 'restitution', not as a conversion.⁹⁷ In September 1618, enthusiastic about Marc'Antonio de Dominis' *De Republica ecclesiastica*, Loukaris wrote to the author. In the letter he spoke about the 'reformation of our faith' (*reformationem fidei nostræ*). It is not the only time the patriarch uses the word *reformation*. In an epistle written about the same time to his Dutch Calvinist friend David le Leu de Wilhem, he expresses his desire to 'reform' his church, which he considers impossible.⁹⁸ Yet, the letter to de Dominis allows us to grasp the meaning attached by Loukaris to the word. Disappointed by the superstitious ignorance of his church and horrified by the relentless Roman innovations, the patriarch had decided to take a stand. Christianity was no longer apostolic, but papal. 'Antichrist's satellites' had occupied almost the entire East and were trying to impose the papal primacy. Combined with the Ottoman captivity, this enslavement was leading the Great Church to perdition. A 'serious reformation' (*seria reformatione*) was out of the question because the correction of errors and the reformation of the faith were systematically refused. Advised by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the Stuart king James I, Loukaris had sent a student to Oxford:⁹⁹ he needed people able to 'vindicate' a calumniated Christianity; to teach the true faith to the faithful; to reform the souls of men (*animos hominum reformare*)

⁹⁴ Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, pp. 121–143.

⁹⁵ Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 168–182.

⁹⁶ Olar, 'Les confessions de foi'. Antoine Léger's letters are a major source of information on the topic.

⁹⁷ Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, pp. 233–237; Kermeli, 'Kyrillos Loukaris' Legacy', pp. 744–748.

⁹⁸ 'Io se puotesse reformare la mia chiesa, lo farei molto volentieri; ma iddio sa che tractatur de impossibili'. Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellenique*, p. 326.

⁹⁹ The student was Metrophanes Kritopoulos, the future Metrophanes I of Alexandria. Davey, *Pioneer for Unity*; Ică, 'Mărturisirea de credință'; Karmires, *Metrophanes Kritopoulos*.

and to feed their consciences with evangelical food. Things had to return to their pure apostolic state (*ad pristinum apostolicum statum restituere*), continued Loukaris. Christ the Liberator and the Savior—the only hope of afflicted Christianity—had to be glorified in his universal, apostolic, and evangelical church. The Antichrist and his kin had to be chased away.¹⁰⁰ *Reform* was therefore closely related—if not synonymous—with *restoration*, which explains the ‘Protestant’ affinities of Loukaris and his efforts to define Orthodoxy, to strengthen the ties between the faithful and the church, and to improve the political status of his community.

Was this a project of confessionalization or not? According to Wolfgang Reinhard, the confessional unity of early modern Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism was achieved by means of seven ‘methods’ (*Verfahren*): clarification of theoretical perspectives through written confessions of faith; dissemination and enforcement of the new norms; propaganda and prevention of counter-propaganda, that is, printing press and censorship; internalization of the new order through education, which included catechizing, preaching, and promotion of pilgrimages; disciplining of the followers, also by persecuting all confessional minorities; control of the participation in rites; and exertion of influence on the language.¹⁰¹ Can we recognize any of these ‘methods’ in Loukaris’ initiatives?

The 1629/1633 *Confession of Faith* can hardly be seen as a confessionalization prerequisite in the above sense. However, several of his initiatives could fit in the schema of confessionalization coined by Reinhard, albeit with some adjustments: intense preaching in accessible language, support accorded to education on all levels, foundation of a Greek printing press in Constantinople (the first of its kind in the Ottoman Empire), translation of the Scriptures in a ‘simple’, that is comprehensible language, and intense polemical activity directed against the Latins (with a focus on the Jesuits) and the Jews.¹⁰² For Loukaris had been forced to address a difficult yet fundamental question: who are we, the Eastern Christians? Given the theological and cultural context, the patriarch was unable to provide a positive answer. He did however provide a negative one: we are not Jews and, especially, we are not Latins.

The project of a printing press—number three on Reinhard’s list—is suggestive in this respect. Brought to Istanbul from England by Nikodemos Metaxas, the enterprise lasted half a year.¹⁰³ Yet, in 1633 the Russian ambassadors Afanasij Osipovič Prončišev and Tikhon Vasil’evič Bormosov brought to the Muscovite patriarch Philaret Nikitič Romanov the Greek-Latin dictionary of Guarino Favorino, printed in Rome in 1523, and two of the books printed under the patronage of Loukaris. Informed by one of his closest collaborators, archimandrite Amphilochos, of the intention of the Tsar and of Philaret to establish a Greek school in Moscow, Loukaris

¹⁰⁰ Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellenique*, pp. 329–340; Neale, *A History*, pp. 390–397 (note 1).

¹⁰¹ Reinhard, ‘Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung’, pp. 263–268; Lotz-Heumann, ‘The Concept of Confessionalization’, p. 98–99.

¹⁰² For a brief presentation of Loukaris’ reforms, see Kermeli, ‘Kyrillos Loukaris’ Legacy’, pp. 738–740.

¹⁰³ Augliera, *Libri, politica, religione*; Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 145–155, 161–182; Palabiyik, ‘A Public Debate’; Pektas, *The First Greek Printing Press*.

had seized the opportunity and sent the dictionary and the books. The two books were to be translated into Russian by hieromonk Ioseph, Loukaris' main agent to Moscow at the time; but the death of Ioseph in February 1634, following the death of Philaret, put an end to this editorial plan.¹⁰⁴ The peace treaty between Poland and Muscovy, signed a couple of months later, put an end to the anti-Catholic 'Grand Plan' as well.¹⁰⁵ Still, Loukaris' initiative is highly interesting. The books were the first treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit by Gennadios Scholarios and three letters on the papal primacy by Meletios Pegas. They were anti-Latin and anti-Unionist, which brings us back to the question 'Who are we?' and to the answer Loukaris gave. It is clear that the patriarch had a project and was determined to disseminate it.

IN SEARCH OF STATE SUPPORT

In order to achieve his plans, Loukaris needed, if not the support, at least the toleration of the Ottoman state. We know that, despite initial success, he ultimately failed. Does this mean that the Ottoman government disapproved of his plans? Is there any meaning in considering the question of state support at all given that Loukaris was eventually executed on the sultan's orders and the grand vizier's suggestion?¹⁰⁶

It is impossible to form an opinion on how the Ottoman sultan, his grand vizier or other state officials viewed Loukaris' plans to promote religious education and confessional indoctrination among the Orthodox subjects. The implications for foreign policy of his stance in confessional matters and the fact that his initiative to build a printing press triggered a diplomatic war between the Protestant powers that supported him and the Catholic ones that opposed him complicated his relationship with Ottoman officials and power brokers.¹⁰⁷ To support or oppose Loukaris, to accept or deny his requests, to go along or counteract his decisions was not only to be weighed against domestic concerns but also in relation to priorities and aims in foreign policy;¹⁰⁸ all the more so as the political situation in Istanbul was particularly volatile in the first half of the seventeenth century. The political scene was dominated by competing factions, and domestic policies were shaped by the difficult relationship between different poles of power (the Palace, the Janissaries, the Household Troops, the 'Lords of the Law') and influenced by the recurrent rebellions in Anatolia and fiscal crisis.¹⁰⁹ The question of state support in our discussion has not

¹⁰⁴ Fonkič, 'From the History'; Tchentsova, 'Moscou'.

¹⁰⁵ Tchentsova, 'Moscou'; Tsakiris, 'Cyril Loukaris' Grand anti-Polish Plan'.

¹⁰⁶ Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, p. 367.

¹⁰⁷ Harai, 'Une chaire aux enchères'; Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, pp. 295–374.

¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that in 1638 the sultan had Loukaris executed for high treason: the Patriarch was accused of encouraging the Cossacks to attack and conquer the fortress of Azov one year earlier. Although Loukaris' Greek enemies and (to a smaller degree) the Jesuits played an important role in the events, the Patriarch was not executed because of his religious preferences, but for his political ones. Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 260–261.

¹⁰⁹ See, especially, Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites*; Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, pp. 196–252; Özel, 'The Reign of Violence'; Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*; White, *The Climate of Rebellion*.

so much to do with Loukaris' grand projects, but with his 'everyday ecclesiastical policies' in his effort to restore the church at the peak of a severe financial and ideological crisis.

In September 1613, in a letter to the Arminian minister Johannes Wtenbogaert, Loukaris had reflected on the power and limitations of the four Eastern patriarchs and concluded that the patriarch of Constantinople was at the same time the most powerful and the most fragile of them all: powerful, because he was close to the center of power; fragile, as he very much depended on the will of the Ottoman high officials.¹¹⁰ Elected to the throne of Constantinople in November 1620, Loukaris did his best to use the advantages provided by the fact that he was a servant of the sultan in order to enhance his authority over the Christian communities of the Empire. Like all his predecessors and successors, he belonged to patronage networks that intersected with networks of political alliance, cut through religious lines, extended also to the foreign embassies, and connected to transnational networks along the Mediterranean and much of continental Europe. As long as his patrons and allies were in power—or at least were able to influence governmental decisions—Loukaris could count on success. Sometimes he failed. For example, he never managed to impose a viable candidate on the see of Antioch, as the Druze emir Fahreddin Ma'noğlu, far more influential in the region than the Ottoman sultan, supported his own contender.¹¹¹ Yet Loukaris' grip on Wallachia and Moldavia lasted until 1632 and 1634, respectively.¹¹²

Gunnar Hering's detailed study of Loukaris' political activity gives a glimpse of the complex nature of his political networks, his supporters and opponents in the Ottoman ruling class, and the contribution of specific persons to his failures and successes.¹¹³ It is, however, very difficult to identify the patronage networks to which he belonged. Documentation is scarce and inconclusive, all the more so as such networks were extremely dynamic: their members had their own interests and, quite often, multiple allegiances. A precious letter from Loukaris to the prince of Transylvania Gábor Bethlen written in 1620 provides the names of several power brokers: the noble Ioannes Katartzes (Catargi), *ban* of Craiova, nephew of Skarlatos, a very rich, 'pious', and influential 'Constantinopolitan noble' of Greek origin, and his son-in-law, Konstantinos Asanis Kantakuzenos.¹¹⁴ In contrast, we do not know much about the 'friend' called Ahmed Aga mentioned by Loukaris in his letters to the

¹¹⁰ 'Potentior est Constantinopolitanus propter latus imperatoris, sed omnium infelicior'. Legrand *Bibliographie Hellenique*, pp. 292–313.

¹¹¹ Haddad, 'Constantinople over Antioch'.

¹¹² Olar, 'Pour des raisons bénies'.

¹¹³ Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*. See also Kermeli, 'Kyrillos Loukaris' Legacy', pp. 748–751.

¹¹⁴ Breslau-*Universitätsbibliothek*, Akc. 1948/790; Budapest-*Magyar Tudományok Akadémia*, Ms. 4942a. Olar, 'Pour des raisons bénies'. According to Lustrier, the Imperial resident in Constantinople, the Skarlatoi were one of the three most powerful Greek families of the time, alongside the Doukes and the Kavakoi. Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, p. 158.

British ambassador Sir Thomas Roe,¹¹⁵ and we can only guess the identity of the arch-enemy that the patriarch calls ‘wolf’ in his correspondence with the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga: was he perhaps Kurt Çelebi, the rich *greco gentilhomme* related to Konstantinos Asanis Kantakuzenos, a powerful ‘king-maker’ in Moldavia and Wallachia, who used to be a friend of Loukaris before turning into his adversary?¹¹⁶

Unfortunately, the Ottoman information on Kyrillos Loukaris, which would open a window into the view of the state authorities, is extremely scant. His investiture documents have not survived. The chronicles of Topçular Katibi ‘Abdülkadir Efendi (d. 1644), Solakzade (d. 1657 or 1658), and Na‘ima (d. 1716) do not mention Loukaris at all.¹¹⁷ The Documents of the Bureau of Bishopricks (*piskoposluk kalemi belgeleri*) held in the Ottoman Archive of the Prime Minister’s Office in Istanbul (*Başbakanlık Arşivi–Osmanlı Arşivi*) contain petitions addressed to the Ottoman authorities by high Christian ecclesiastics. With the exception of a 1607 document, they cover the period 1636–1792; therefore, only a very small portion of Loukaris’ tenure is covered. The Registers of the Bishops’ Subdivision of State Revenues (*piskopos mukata‘ası defterleri*) kept in the same archives contain the official responses to the said petitions; they date from 1641 to 1837.¹¹⁸

Fortunately, the Registers of Important Affairs (*mühimme defterleri*) contain copies of a few decrees issued by the Chancery with respect to issues raised by Loukaris. Two documents from 14 November 1630, a time when the patriarch was at the peak of his power, are particularly pertinent to our discussion. They respond to petitions forwarded ‘through the hand of Ahmed Aga, formerly representative (*kethüda*) of the voivode of Moldavia’¹¹⁹ (presumably the same person as the Ahmed Aga mentioned in the letters sent by Loukaris to Roe) and carry orders to the qadi of the island of Naxos. Both documents show ‘monk Kirilos, patriarch of the infidels of Istanbul’, petitioning the sultan on behalf of two monasteries, the Monastery of Aya (Mone Hagias) and that of Panaya (probably Mone Panagias Protothrones).¹²⁰ In both cases the patriarch reports that the monastery’s lands are being habitually trespassed. But there are also differences. In the first case, the problem is caused by ‘some notables of the district (*a‘yan-ı vilayet*) and other persons’ who contest the monastery’s ownership of endowed property. In the second case, the problem is not just the

¹¹⁵ Manousakas, ‘The Unpublished Secret Correspondence’. He is most probably the same person as ‘Acmed Agà’, representative (*capuchehaia*) of Prince Alexandru Coconul in Istanbul. Luca, ‘Le rappresentanze diplomatiche’, p. 103.

¹¹⁶ Kurt Çelebi acted as the representative in the Ottoman capital of several Moldavian and Wallachian princes. Iorga, ‘Coconul’; Luca, ‘Le rappresentanze diplomatiche’, pp. 101, 103; Olar, ‘Pour des raisons bénies’; Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină*, p. 171. For his possible identification with Loukaris’ ‘wolf’, see Hering, *Ecumenical Patriarchate*, p. 337.

¹¹⁷ Bayraktar Tellan, *The Patriarch and the Sultan*, p. 72.

¹¹⁸ Çolak, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 27–29.

¹¹⁹ See also Luca, ‘Le rappresentanze diplomatiche’, p. 103.

¹²⁰ *85 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, pp. 330 and 331: *Tıpkıbasım*, p. 139; *Özet–Transkripsiyon–İndeks*, pp. 201–202 and p. 202. The Monastery of Panaya was located near the village of ‘Çöklârpa’, an obvious misspelling for Tsoukalaria (also known as Tsikalario).

contestation of ownership but that of the monastery's stavropegial status: the patriarch does not mention any names, but complains of persons 'having the intention to take from his hands and seize without any right the churches and monasteries that have been attached to the patriarch's jurisdiction since olden times', which has been causing him loss of income.¹²¹ The qadi is ordered to see to the matter and, once the patriarch's claims are established, to prevent the infringement of the two monasteries' property rights.

There are two interesting twists in these at first sight unremarkable documents. The first is that the section comprising the sultan's orders, though not that of the petition, includes both times an explicit mention of Latins (*Efrenc*) who, alongside other persons, must be hindered from injuring the monasteries. In fact, in the second document the offending foreigners are designated as 'Latins of enemy status' (*harbi Efrenc*). The second twist is that the qadi is not ordered to hear the case, as usual in rescripts, but to examine the documents of prior court hearings (*hiicet-i şer'iyye*) about the matter, which the patriarch had presented. In other words, the decrees close the door to local power politics that could influence a hearing at the qadi court of Naxos, and at the same time alert the qadi to the possibility that Latin enemies are also involved in the infringement of the rights of the two monasteries. Even though they adhere to the conventions of the genre and do not exclude the possibility that the patriarch has misrepresented the case in his petitions, the two rescripts clearly take sides.

It is all but certain that behind the petitions on behalf of the two monasteries lies Loukaris' effort to restrict the pro-Latin Hieremias of Paronaxia and counteract the influence of the Jesuit missionaries who had arrived in Naxos in 1627—they are most probably the 'Latins of enemy status' mentioned in the documents. Hieremias (Gieremia Barbarigo in the Italian sources), an alumnus of the Greek College in Rome, was close to the Jesuits and opposed Loukaris' policies of reform; in fact, he was the one who had informed Rome about the founding of the printing press in Istanbul.¹²² Ensuring the support of the state on behalf of the two monasteries was therefore not a minor matter. It can hardly be a coincidence that by April 1632 Hieremias of Paronaxia was deposed and Veniamin Asanis elected in his place,¹²³ the brother of Kurt Çelebi, who was still a close friend of the patriarch at the time.

STRUGGLING FOR CONTROL

The bulk of material concerning the 'everyday' ecclesiastical policies in the first half of the seventeenth century comes from the documents registered in the so-called

¹²¹ Stavropegial monasteries were under the patriarch's and not the local metropolitan's jurisdiction. Evangelou, 'Les relations'.

¹²² Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 149–155.

¹²³ Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 959, p. 406.

Codex Beta of the Patriarchate¹²⁴ and in the *Nomike Synagoge* (Juridical Collection), a collection of nomocanonical decisions and other juridical material compiled for Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem in 1680.¹²⁵ Combined, the two sources provide a fascinating perspective on the Great Church and Loukaris' activity: out of the 981 documents of the *Nomike Synagoge* no less than 168 (that is, 17%) were issued by Loukaris. *Codex Beta* contains 68 documents, issued between 1616 and 1646 by five patriarchs of Constantinople, 29 of which (that is, 41%) by Loukaris. Interestingly, there is hardly any overlap between the documents recorded in the two collections.

A large part of the synodical decisions from the first half of the seventeenth century reflect the increased financial burden on the Great Church. Loukaris was faced with the pressing problem of the Patriarchate's enormous debt that had risen to 40 loads (Gk. *phortia*, Tr. *yük*) or 4,000,000 *akçe*. After his enthronement, he paid a part of the debt (five loads or 12.5% of the total) from his own funds and negotiated the apportionment of the rest among the hierarchs of the Patriarchate. In December 1620, less than a month after his election, the Holy Synod agreed to the apportionment, decided that the hierarchs would have until the feast day of St. George (23 April) to pay their share, and gave permission to the patriarch to depose as disobedient and uncooperative the metropolitans and bishops who would not pay, and to give their dioceses to other persons.¹²⁶

Loukaris was not the first patriarch to press for the deposition of hierarchs who were not able or refused to pay their share of the Patriarchate's debt. The imposition of such a penalty, or at least its threat, is in evidence since the 1580s. In 1593 the refusal to pay the financial contributions due to the Patriarchate was formally introduced as a new reason for the deposition of metropolitans and bishops by a Constantinopolitan synod under Patriarch Hieremias II.¹²⁷ In May 1595 a synod was planned to be convened in Thessalonike in order to press the bishops of 'Western Greece' and of the Peloponnese to fulfill their financial obligations.¹²⁸ Subsequent patriarchs implemented or renewed this ruling on various occasions.¹²⁹ Loukaris resorted to it not only in 1620 but also in 1624, after the brief interlude of the patriarchate of the pro-Latin Gregorios of Amasia. Faced with a debt of over 100 loads as a result of Loukaris' deposition and reinstatement on the throne of Constantinople, the Holy Synod

¹²⁴ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitan Library*, pp. 7–21; Vapori, *Codex (B') Beta*. Unfortunately, the manuscript has not been published in full nor been subjected to a thorough analysis. As a consequence, we know little about its genesis (the order of the documents is not chronological) and of its purpose.

¹²⁵ Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*. For an overview of the post-Byzantine patriarchal archives, see Paizi-Apostolopoulou, 'Archives détruites'.

¹²⁶ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Miscellanies*, pp. 93–95; Vapori, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 62–63.

¹²⁷ Evangelou, 'A New Reason'.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117. It is not certain whether it took place.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–112.

approved a *zeteia*, a special contribution,¹³⁰ and gave permission to the patriarch and his envoys (*exarchs*) to punish and depose the hierarchs who refused to pay their share.¹³¹ In 1636 a synod convened by Kyrillos II Kontares decided to impose another contribution as a consequence of the heavy indebtedness of the Great Church. The patriarch was again authorized to depose and replace those unwilling or unable to comply with the financial requirements.¹³²

Several of the depositions that took place in the aftermath of these decisions have strong political overtones. There are indications that, after recovering the throne from Gregorios, Loukaris started using the deposition of insolvent hierarchs not only to cope with the indebtedness of the church, but also for taking control of appointments and in the process neutralizing his political and ideological opponents. In July 1624, in the same month (and possibly the same day) in which the Holy Synod decided to impose the *zeteia* mentioned above, Metropolitan Neophytos of Korinth was deposed and unfrocked as he refused to pay his due and justify his actions in front of the Synod.¹³³ He was replaced by Daniel, the future metropolitan of Serres and a close friend and collaborator of Loukaris.¹³⁴ In May 1625 Metropolitan Ioasaph of Chalkedon was deposed and unfrocked.¹³⁵ Ioasaph, who had joined Gregorios of Amasia in his overturning of Loukaris in 1623, was replaced by another member of the Loukaris faction, the anti-Latin Grand Protosynkelos Gregorios.

A letter from March 1637, addressed to the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga, provides us with a very rare opportunity to see up-close the mechanism and the rationale of deposing and appointing a bishop or metropolitan.¹³⁶ As soon as he recovered the throne, Loukaris deposed the metropolitans of Lakedaimonia and of Paronaxia. Veniamin Asanis of Paronaxia, the brother of Loukaris' former friend Kurt Çelebi, had joined the pro-Latin Kontares faction by that time. Kurt's execution by the Ottomans in 1636, probably induced either by Loukaris or his friends, had exposed Veniamin to harassment by the state authorities.¹³⁷ No one stepped in for him and he was soon replaced by Makarios. Ioasaph of Lakedaimonia, the first of the deposed metropolitans, was probably a follower of Kontares, at least if we judge by

¹³⁰ Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, 'The Phenomenon of *zeteia*'; Konortas, 'Les contributions ecclésiastiques'; Konortas, 'Relations financières'; Kotzageorgis, 'About the Fiscal Status'; Kotzageorgis, 'Socio-Economic Aspects'.

¹³¹ Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellenique*, pp. 345–347; Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Miscellanies*, pp. 95–97; Vapouris, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 77–79.

¹³² Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitan Library*, p. 19; Vapouris, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 103–104.

¹³³ Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellenique*, pp. 347–348; Vapouris, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 80–81.

¹³⁴ Odorico, *Conseils et mémoires*; Odorico, *Mémoire*, pp. 65–67.

¹³⁵ Vapouris, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 84–85.

¹³⁶ Munich–BSB–Cam. 9 = Clm. 10359, no. 224.

¹³⁷ Laurent, 'Chronologie', pp. 147–148.

the support he had received from the latter in his feud with another hierarch.¹³⁸ After his deposition, Loukaris received several offers for the see but rejected them all. Parthenios of Adrianople (the future Parthenios I of Constantinople) expressed his interest, while Gregorios of Larissa and Parthenios of Ioannina (the future Parthenios II of Constantinople) pleaded for the reinstatement of Ioasaph in exchange for a nice present. At the time of his letter to Haga, Loukaris had not yet decided whom to appoint.¹³⁹ As for the highly lucrative see of Thessalonike, we learn that Loukaris had been approached by the secretary of the Venetian *bailo* who was doing his best in order to have Athanasios Patelaros elected metropolitan. As Patelaros had betrayed and deposed him in 1634, Loukaris was not well disposed toward such a move.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, as he could not afford to antagonize the *bailo*, he decided to appoint Patelaros as long as he agreed to pay the patriarchal dues.

Of course, not all elections were contentious; nor is it possible to ascertain the rationale behind every appointment or the ‘political affiliation’ of the appointees. The patriarch had to cope simultaneously with the indebtedness of the church and the pressure of Rome and her allies who supported his enemies. Both concerns weighed on his decisions; but he could not implement his plans to restore the church without the cooperation of the higher clergy. The synodical decisions that gave the patriarch free hand to depose insolvent hierarchs enhanced Loukaris’ authority and allowed him to appoint his own men at the first opportunity.

The fact that Loukaris had to contend with fierce opposition should not make us underestimate this aspect of his ecclesiastical policy. Loukaris enjoyed strong support among the higher clergy, and his men within the Holy Synod played a crucial role in restricting the movements of Kyrillos II Kontares during his short terms in office in 1633 and in 1635–1636, and also in effecting his deposition and exile after his third tenure (20 June 1638–late June 1639). For example, in May 1635, as Kontares won another costly war with Loukaris and replaced him, the Holy Synod, which was directly affected by the conflict, resorted to a desperate measure and appointed a financial committee. Composed of four to five hierarchs and three church officials, the committee had to oversee all revenues (alms, taxes, inheritances, fees paid by the stavropegial monasteries and the exarchates) and expenses of the Patriarchate, enforce all decisions pertaining to the punishment, deposition and election of the higher prelates, appoint tax collectors, and audit the Great Church. Appointed on a

¹³⁸ Kontares had deposed Archbishop Ioasaph of Domenikon and Elasson who was accused of having menaced the metropolitan of Lakedaimonia and of having performed an illegal marriage in the latter’s diocese. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitan Library*, p. 20; Vapori, *Codex (B’) Beta*, pp. 97–100.

¹³⁹ It seems that Loukaris took the present and reinstated Ioasaph, given that the latter is recorded again as metropolitan of Lakedaimonia until 1641. Vapori, *Codex (B’) Beta*, pp. 39–40.

¹⁴⁰ For ‘il furbo Patelaro’, see Tomadakes, ‘Athanasios Patelaros’.

yearly basis, the members of the financial committee were to be compensated for their service but had to deliver a report at the end of their tenure.¹⁴¹

Kontares did not manage to bring the higher clergy under his control after his enthronement in June 1638. Compromised by the execution of Loukaris and forced by the Imperial Resident Rudolf Schmidt and the Latin Patriarchal Vicar Angelo Petricca da Sonnino to convene a synod against Loukaris and his *Confession of Faith*, in exchange for their support and for 4000 tallers,¹⁴² his position was precarious. Kontares blackmailed several friends of Loukaris to sign the condemnation (the patriarch of Alexandria Metrophanes Kritopoulos, for example, who was poisoned one year later in Wallachia), while others changed sides out of opportunism.¹⁴³ Yet, in spite of his efforts, the faction of Loukaris could not be uprooted. Only a couple of months later Kontares was deposed and exiled, and replaced by Parthenios of Adrianople (Parthenios I).¹⁴⁴

The memorandum of Kontares' deposition is a fascinating text.¹⁴⁵ It presents all three attempts of the former patriarch to seize the throne (1633, 1635, and 1638) and insists on the nefarious consequences of his actions: indebtedness of the Great Church, institutional havoc, and tyrannical treatment of clergy and laymen alike. According to the author(s), Kontares had embezzled money and exiled several of his opponents, including Daniel of Serres, Parthenios of Ioannina and Ioannikios of Verroia, all of them members of the financial committee that had discovered the patriarch's wrongdoings. The 'sheep-like wolf from Verroia' had even initiated a sharia court hearing against them, accusing them of disobedience to the sultan's orders,¹⁴⁶ and had been contemplating their execution. In reaction, the Holy Synod decided to submit a petition to 'our emperor king' (*tou autokratoros hemon vasileos*). As Murad IV was returning a victor from his Persian campaign, the hierarchs hastened to meet him on the road and present their grievances regarding Kontares' outrageous and illegal behavior. The accused was imprisoned and put to trial. His guilt was proven beyond doubt; and the sultan, enraged, ordered his deposition and exile—and shortly thereafter his execution.¹⁴⁷ As in 1636, when they managed to appoint Neophytos III

¹⁴¹ Delikanes, *Patriarchal Letters*, pp. 321–325; Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitan Library*, pp. 471–477; Vaporis, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 95–97.

¹⁴² Cervellini, 'Relazione', pp. 22–23 (see also note 3, p. 22–23 and note 3, p. 23–24); de Sanctis, *Un tentativo di unione*, p. 47.

¹⁴³ Papaïliaki, 'Concilium', pp. 231–243. An incomplete version of Loukaris' condemnation was included in *Codex Beta*. Vaporis, *Codex (B') Beta*, p. 105. For the full text, see Karmires, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Documents*, vol. 2, pp. 572[652]–575[655]; Papaïliaki, 'Concilium', pp. 247–251.

¹⁴⁴ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Miscellanies*, pp. 103–104; Vaporis, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 107–112.

¹⁴⁵ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Miscellanies*, pp. 97–102; Vaporis, *Codex (B') Beta*, pp. 105–107. Unfortunately, all the signatures are missing.

¹⁴⁶ 'chontzietion pepoiekos kat' auton, apeitheis kai enantious deixas autous dethen tou vasilikou diatagmatos'. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Miscellanies*, p. 99.

¹⁴⁷ Kontares' execution is attributed to the influence of Loukaris' friends. Dositheos, *History*, p. 1170; Meletios, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 449.

as an interim patriarch,¹⁴⁸ the informal leaders of the Synod, such as Gregorios of Larissa, showed great skill in using the Ottoman judicial institutions—and the protocol of communication with the sultan—in order to get rid of a pro-Latin patriarch and safeguard Loukaris' legacy.

In the aftermath of the deaths of Loukaris and Kontares, the patriarchs became more circumspect in displaying their theological, ideological, or political affiliation.¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, there are enough indications that the Lukarist faction continued to fight for the control of the Patriarchate and the implementation of Loukaris' 'confessionalization project' long after the patriarch's death. The conciliatory policy of Parthenios I, who in March 1643 corroborated the revised version of Peter Mohila's *Orthodox Confession* that had been prepared by the anti-Protestant theologian Meletios Syrigos under the auspices of Prince Vasile Lupu of Moldavia,¹⁵⁰ was a disappointment to Loukaris' followers. But they had enough power to replace him in early September 1644 with Parthenios II, the preferred successor of Loukaris himself¹⁵¹ and a proponent of the plan to distribute copies of the Bible's translation in the vernacular.¹⁵² Even though he met with resistance by the anti-Loukarists and was deposed in November 1646—to be replaced by Ioannikios II, presumably as part of a deal with Lupu who offered to settle the Patriarchate's debt for a second time in six years¹⁵³—Parthenios II was restored to the throne for a second patriarchate in

¹⁴⁸ Neophytos, originally an archimandrite of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, had followed Loukaris to the Ottoman capital and became metropolitan of Heraklia in 1622. Arampatzoglou, *The Library of Photios*, p. 210. Elected patriarch after the expulsion of Kontares, he abdicated in favor of Loukaris upon the latter's return to Istanbul (March 1637). Tomadakes, 'Loukarian I'.

¹⁴⁹ For example, Parthenios I, Parthenios II, and Ioannikios II had ties with the Catholic world, while Parthenios II was also in contact with Calvinist circles in Leiden. Iorga, 'Nichifor dascalul', pp. 193–195; Fonkič, 'Diplomatica', pp. 280–284; Manousakas, 'Letter of Patriarch Parthenios I'; Meienberger, *Johann Rudolf Schmid*, pp. 217–220. See also Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 320–321.

¹⁵⁰ Dositheos, *History*, p. 1171. For the metropolitan of Kyiv Peter Mohila (also known as Pëtr Mogila, Petru Movilă), his *Orthodoxa Confessio* and the latter's translation and revision by Meletios Syrigos, see Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellenique*, pp. 104–156; Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, pp. 296–304. See also Tchentsova, 'Les documents grecs', pp. 315–317.

¹⁵¹ This was the claim of the synod who elected Parthenios II. Arampatzoglou, *The Library of Photios*, pp. 101–102.

¹⁵² Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, p. 275, note 142. For the initiative to translate the Bible, see Olar, 'Un trésor enfoui' (with further bibliography).

¹⁵³ Ioannikios was elected on 16 November 1646 and the settlement with Lupu took place in December. Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 589, p. 291 (5.12.1646; letter by Lupu stating his conditions), no. 591, p. 292 (23.12.1646; Synod's acceptance); Delikanes, *Patriarchal Letters*, pp. 326–331; Hurmuzaki, *Documente XIV/1*, pp. 134–138, 185–190. The first settlement had been reached in 1641 under Parthenios I. Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 1042, pp. 431–432 (May 1641; Synod's consent

October 1648. His execution on charges of high treason in May 1651, brought about—or so it was rumored—by Vasile Lupu of Moldavia and Matei Basarab of Wallachia,¹⁵⁴ was a grave blow. There is no reason to assume, however, that Loukaris' followers disappeared in the following years, during which the internal crisis reached a peak: no less than ten replacements and seven different patriarchs between June 1651 and May 1657. The repeated depositions of Lupu's favorite, Ioannikios II, during those years (see Appendix) must have been at least to a degree effected by the followers of Loukaris—and of his disciple, the executed Parthenios II. It is plausible to assume that the Loukarists were instrumental in the enthronement of Paisios I, elected in early July 1652 by a 'very large (*pammeges*) synod assembled by hierarchs, clerics and archons',¹⁵⁵ and of Parthenios III, elected in late July 1656 after the deposition of Ioannikios II who was unfrocked (*kathairesei teleia kathypovlethentos*) 'because of his exceedingly numerous crimes'.¹⁵⁶

The execution of Parthenios III for high treason in March 1657¹⁵⁷ signaled the end of an era and the beginning of a new one for the Great Church's relationship to the state and for the confessional controversy among the Orthodox. Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, who had dealt with the suspicions of a collusion with the Russians by hanging Parthenios III and by putting in jail Paisios of Jerusalem,¹⁵⁸ abolished the symbolically momentous patriarch's privilege to pay his respects to the

to abolish the *zeteia*), no. 1043, p. 432 (May 1641; Synod's decision to grant Lupu the relics of Saint Paraskeve), no. 191, p. 169 (15.8.1641; Lupu's conditions), and no. 192, p. 169 (September 1641; Synod's acceptance); Delikanes, *Patriarchal Letters*, pp. 288–293, 293–295, 296–302, 303–309; Hurmuzaki, *Documente XIV/1*, pp. 138–146, 146–162, 164–170. For Lupu's ecclesiastical policies, see Iorga, 'Basile Lupu'; Pall, 'Les relations', pp. 69–70; Suttner, 'Vasile Lupu'. For Ioannikios, see Tomadakes, 'Ecumenical Patriarch Ioannikios II'.

¹⁵⁴ Dositheos, *History*, pp. 1175, 1192. Parthenios II was executed on 16 May 1651, not 1650 as Dositheos (*ibid.*, p. 1176) and Athanasios Komnenos Hypselantes (*Post-conquest Events*, p. 152) claim: Ioannikios II (the rival of Parthenios II) was 'restored' to the throne in June 1651. Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 630, p. 303. Meletios (*Ecclesiastical History*, p. 449) and Komnenos Hypselantes are mistaken in attributing his execution to 'Paulakios and others'. Paulakios/Paulakes used to be Vasile Lupu's representative in Istanbul (Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 591, p. 292, no. 602, p. 295–296), but had been executed in November 1650 on charges of treason upon his master's request. Luca, 'Le rappresentanze diplomatiche', p. 103; İpşirli, *Târih-i Na'îmâ*, p. 1283.

¹⁵⁵ Germanos, 'Contribution', p. 127. Paisios met with opposition and, facing insolvency during his second tenure, abdicated in favor of his rival Ioannikios. For the memoranda of his first election and his abdication, see *ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁷ Dositheos, *History*, p. 1176; Meletios, *Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 465–466. İpşirli, *Târih-i Na'îmâ*, p. 1730. See also Bayraktar Tellan, *The Patriarch and the Sultan*, pp. 73–77; Tchen-tsova, *The Eastern Church*, for further accounts.

¹⁵⁸ See the comments of the Swedish ambassador Claes Rålamb, *İstanbul'a bir Yolculuk*, pp. 77, 91, cited in Bayraktar Tellan, *The Patriarch and the Sultan*, p. 74. In his lengthy account of Paisios' imprisonment, however, Dositheos does not bring the two events in connection. Dositheos, *History*, pp. 1191–1197.

sultan upon his appointment.¹⁵⁹ During the tenures of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha (1656–1661) and his son and successor Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha (1661–1676), the archons and prelates associated with the powerful Köprülü network and their favorite client Panagiotes Nikousios¹⁶⁰ would play a key role in suppressing the ‘heretical’ teachings of Loukaris and the Loukarist circle (Theophilos Korydalleus and especially Ioannes Karyophylles). It was Nikousios who orchestrated the advancement of Mohila’s *Orthodox Confession*—as translated and revised by Syrigos and furnished with an introduction by Nektarios of Jerusalem—as the authoritative text of the Orthodox faith in the 1660s.¹⁶¹ And it is not by coincidence that the former princes of Moldavia and Wallachia, Gheorghe Ghica and Vasile Lupu, the *deus ex machina* for the church’s salvation from debt in the 1640s, and by far the most influential lay patron of the Patriarchate in the 1650s, were both present at the synod that elected Nektarios to the throne of Jerusalem in January 1661.¹⁶²

FROM SYNODICAL RULINGS TO SULTANIC ORDERS

We have already seen that the first steps towards strengthening the authority of the higher clergy *vis-à-vis* the lower clergy and the monastic communities were taken between 1609 and 1618 by introducing in their berats and appointment firmans a clause referring explicitly to their right to ‘dismiss and appoint’ priests and monks. Another clause, introduced between 1649 and 1654, authorized them to unfrock priests and monks who refused to pay taxes and dues. It is by now clear that these developments were in direct relation to the effort of the Great Church to cope with indebtedness, which had led on several occasions the Holy Synod to authorize the patriarch to depose insolvent hierarchs. The Patriarchate needed metropolitans and bishops to be solvent; it had therefore to ensure that they were getting taxes from their subordinates. For that purpose, the berats had to be modified through the introduction of specific clauses that made a hierarch’s decision to suspend priests or abbots, and appoint others in their place, incontestable at court.

There is no doubt that the patriarchal berats were also modified to ensure that metropolitans and bishops would fulfill their financial obligations to the

¹⁵⁹ Meletios, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 465.

¹⁶⁰ Hering, ‘Panagiotis Nikousios’; Janos, ‘Panaiotis Nicousios’; Păun, ‘Well-born of the Polis’. See also Koutzakiotis, *Attendre la fin du monde*; Tzedopoulos, ‘Christian, Muslim, Greek, Turk’.

¹⁶¹ Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, pp. 300–301; Olar, ‘Un temps pour parler’, pp. 222–233. The Greek translation was published in Amsterdam in 1666 thanks to Nikousios. In 1673, the French ambassador to Constantinople, the marquis de Nointel, sent to his king a bilingual Latin-Greek manuscript containing Mohylas’ *Confession* offered to him for that purpose by Nikousios. Malvy and Viller, *La Confession Orthodoxe*, pp. lxxvii–lxxviii, lxxxi–lxxxiii; Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 292–293, 310.

¹⁶² Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 550, pp. 280–281; Delikanes, *Official Ecclesiastical Documents*, pp. 362–363. For the relationship between Nikousios, Lupu and Ghica, see Luca, ‘Le rappresentanze diplomatiche’, p. 104; Păun, ‘Enemies Within’, pp. 225–226; Păun, ‘Well-born of the Polis’. For the role of Nikousios and Lupu in the election of Nektarios, see also Dositheos, *History*, p. 1208; Kontouma, ‘Recherches’, pp. 210–211.

Patriarchate. In the absence of conclusive evidence, however, it is not a simple matter to estimate when particular clauses were introduced or abolished. The berats of Raphael I (1476) and Maximos III (1477) refer explicitly, and that of Symeon (1483) implicitly to the patriarch's right to appoint and dismiss ('*azl ve nasb*) metropolitans,¹⁶³ whereas that of Hieremias I (1525) does not: the patriarch's jurisdiction according to his investiture document was to 'oversee the matters of the metropolitans'.¹⁶⁴ Tom Papademetriou's discussion of Ottoman documents from 1544–1545 that relate to Hieremias' patriarchate clearly shows the limitations of the patriarch's authority at the time.¹⁶⁵ If the patriarchs lost control over appointments between 1483 and 1525,¹⁶⁶ how and when did they regain full jurisdiction over the higher clergy? The berat of Makarios III of Antioch from 1649, the only seventeenth-century patriarchal berat surviving in its original form, refers only to the patriarch's right to appoint and dismiss priests and monks.¹⁶⁷ The relevant clause in subsequent documents, issued for Gerasimos II of Alexandria in 1703¹⁶⁸ and for Chrysanthos of Jerusalem in 1707,¹⁶⁹ adds also bishops—but not metropolitans—to the list.

By that time, however, the patriarchs of Constantinople had managed to (re)gain control over appointments. A berat issued for Dionysios IV and published in French translation in 1708 refers concretely to the patriarch's jurisdiction over the appointment and dismissal of metropolitans—alongside bishops, priests and monks.¹⁷⁰ Even though the original is lost and the translation does not include the date of issuing, we can be certain that it dates from Dionysios' first tenure: the contents of the published document match the description by John Covel, the chaplain of the English embassy (1670–1677) who had attended Dionysios' enthronement in 1671 and was shown a copy of the berat.¹⁷¹ From the 1710s onwards, the situation

¹⁶³ Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 67–68, 195 (Maximos), pp. 69–70, 196–197 (Symeon); Kotzageorgis, 'The Newly Found', p. 19 (Raphael).

¹⁶⁴ 'mitrepolidlerinim umûrun bundan evvel patrik olanlar ne vechile göregeldiler ise bu dahî ol vechile göre'. Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 71–72, 198–199. The document was first published by Zachariadou, *Ten Turkish Documents*, pp. 174–178 (original and Greek translation).

¹⁶⁵ Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*, pp. 126–137.

¹⁶⁶ The change occurred most probably after 1488. A firman from that year orders the Ottoman authorities of the European provinces to deliver to the patriarch's envoy those who refuse to pay ecclesiastical taxes, including metropolitans and bishops; this indicates a degree of authority not found in sixteenth-century documents. Salakides, *Sultansurkunden*, pp. 39–42. We wish to thank Phokion Kotzageorgis for bringing the document to our notice.

¹⁶⁷ Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 74, 201.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 75–76, 202–203.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78, 204–205.

¹⁷⁰ Aymon, *Monuments*, p. 486; Gedeon, *Official Turkish Letters*, pp. 98–99 (Greek translation from the French).

¹⁷¹ Covel, *Some Account*, pp. lii, 136–137. A further indication for the dating of the berat is the amount of the *pişkeş* mentioned in the document: 900,000 *akçe* (not 9000 as erroneously stated in the Greek translation). By 1686 the *pişkeş* amounted to 1,000,000 *akçe*. Kotzageorgis, 'Socio-economic Aspects', p. 209.

is clear. According to the berat of Kosmas III of Constantinople from 1714, the patriarch had jurisdiction over the dismissals and appointments of metropolitans, bishops, priests, monks and—for the first time—abbots. Metropolitans and bishops were to be appointed only upon the patriarch's 'sealed petition or letter'. He also had the right to discipline bishops (metropolitans are not mentioned), priests and monks.¹⁷²

Given the repeated synodical rulings from the first half of the seventeenth century authorizing the patriarch to depose the hierarchs who did not fulfill their financial obligations, which continued at least until 1650,¹⁷³ it is improbable that the patriarch's investiture document at the time included a clause putting him in control of appointments and dismissals at the metropolitan sees. This development must date from after the mid-seventeenth century, possibly only from 1671—Covel's comments imply as much.¹⁷⁴ Not that it was easily established: as late as 1678 there were still hierarchs such as Daniel of Sophia (formerly of Vidyna/Vidin in Bulgaria) who were able to obtain a metropolitan see without prior canonical election.¹⁷⁵

It should not surprise us that it took so long for the head of the church to be given full control over the appointments and dismissals of the higher clergy. Neither the Holy Synod nor the Ottoman authorities would have allowed such a step, which overturned the status quo and gave potentially unlimited power to the patriarch, were it not absolutely necessary: the church needed to ensure the replacement of insolvent—or disobedient—hierarchs, while the state needed to secure the regular flow of taxes—and in the long run preferred stability over factional struggle.¹⁷⁶ Synodical rulings could not solve the problem. It was far from certain that the hierarchs affected by the measure—or deposed on other grounds—would comply and not contest the decision to replace them. To give an example: in June 1622, the bishop of Zetounion (Lamia) had not only refused to accept his deposition but he had also resorted to 'the outside power' (that is, the Ottoman authorities) in order to keep his

¹⁷² Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 79–82, 206–209.

¹⁷³ Ordinance regarding the payment of the *zeteia* (January 1650). Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 315, p. 207.

¹⁷⁴ 'The Berat or Patent that was procured from the grand Seigneur for Dionysius by his Friend the Caimacham, shews what an absolute Power *that Patriarch* had over all the Metropolitans, Bishops, and Priests, which were under his Jurisdiction, to Censure or Displace them, (right or wrong) as he himself should think fit.' Covel, *Some Account*, pp. lii. The emphasis is ours.

¹⁷⁵ His illicit obtainment of the metropolitan see was only one of the grounds for his deposition in January 1678. Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 163, pp. 159–160.

¹⁷⁶ The grand vizier, fed up with the continuous infighting, is reported to have harshly reprimanded the Synod on the occasion of Dionysios IV's appointment: 'But when the Metropolitane of Heraclea and the others presented Dionysius to him, that wise and upright Minister of State, who well knew their ways, call'd them all, a Company of Dogs, and vile Wretches, without either Faith or Honesty, and upbraided them for their shamefull Quarrels, Covetousness, Ambition, and Uncharitable ways of Supplanting one another; and calling them all, accursed Dogs, he threatned Dionysius, and the rest, that he would cut of their Heads if he heard any farther Complaints of them or from them.' Covel, *Some Account*, pp. li–lii.

throne. The Holy Synod was forced to reinstate him and wait for more opportune times to ‘confirm and corroborate once again’ his deposition.¹⁷⁷

There is another aspect to the issue. Until the modification of the patriarchal berats, the only way to ensure that the Holy Synod—or the patriarch, provided that he was in control—would not be bypassed in the interval between the deposition of a hierarch and the official appointment of his successor, was to petition the sultan accordingly. The case of the deposition of Bishop Neophytos of Methone in 1631 gives us a rare glimpse into the procedure and helps us better understand the limitations of the early patriarchal berats. Neophytos had disputed with Ignatios of Christianoupolis on account of an alleged debt of 4000 *akçe* and had promised in writing that he accepted to ‘be considered as self-deposed’ if the qadi court document he had presented (Gk. *chotzeti*, from Tr. *hiiccet*) proved a forgery.¹⁷⁸ Neophytos evidently lost the litigation and was deposed. Patriarch Kyrillos Loukaris, however, wanted to take his time to find a suitable candidate. An imperial rescript, dating from 15 March 1631, accepted the patriarch’s petition to administer the see ‘in his capacity as a proxy’ and ordered that ‘until a bishop is appointed [to the see of Methone], with a noble berat issued by the Finance Department’, no one else should be permitted to interfere in the matter.¹⁷⁹

Even though the modification of the patriarchal berats, which gave the patriarch control over the appointment and dismissal of metropolitans and bishops, took place long after Loukaris’ death, we believe that his tenure was pivotal. His effort, on one hand, to restore the finances of the Great Church and, on the other, to promote his program of reform made him and his allies in the church and among the state authorities realize the necessity of giving more powers to the patriarch. This realization became even more pronounced in the years following his death, as the struggle between Loukaris’ supporters and opponents continued unabashed. An unintended but momentous consequence of the enormous indebtedness of the church, to which Loukaris’ struggle with the Catholic powers and their allies had substantially contributed,¹⁸⁰ was that the Holy Synod was forced to give a free hand to Patriarch Ioannikios II in December 1646. Upon the request of Prince Vasile Lupu, who had agreed for the second time in six years to settle the Patriarchate’s debt, the Holy Synod was suspended for six months and the administration of the Great Church

¹⁷⁷ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitan Library*, p. 12. We do not know the reasons for the bishop’s deposition.

¹⁷⁸ Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 1060 (1629/30, promise of Ignatios of Christianoupolis to pay the amount if ‘trustworthy witnesses’ corroborated that such a debt had been indeed registered) and no. 1061 (1629/30, promise of Neophytos of Methone), pp. 438–439.

¹⁷⁹ 85 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri, no. 683: *Tıpkıbasım*, p. 279; *Özet–Transkripsiyon–İndeks*, p. 420. The bishop’s name is misspelled as ‘Navâfikôs’.

¹⁸⁰ See, especially, Harai, ‘Une chaire aux enchères’.

passed to himself and the patriarch.¹⁸¹ There followed further ordinances aiming at enhancing the patriarch's authority in the next decade, a time of deep division: that prelates should not stay in Istanbul without the patriarch's written permission (December 1647, renewed in October? 1648),¹⁸² that no clergyman should associate with deposed patriarchs (September 1652),¹⁸³ that hierarchs coming from the provinces to the capital should present themselves every morning to the Patriarchate (July 1657?).¹⁸⁴

It would take a long time for the church to internalize the need for a powerful patriarch and for the Ottoman authorities to accept it. Once this was achieved, however, the road was open for the modification of the investiture documents, which would put the patriarch in control of appointments and dismissals, and eventually put an end to the established practice of independent biddings for metropolitanates and bishoprics. In the course of the eighteenth century, the patriarchal *berats* would again be modified, this time in order to curb the power of the patriarch in favor of the senior members of the Holy Synod, in greater—though not absolute—conformity to the canon law and the synodical rulings.¹⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

The relationship between church and state in the early modern era, a complex matter to begin with, was further complicated in the Orthodox case by the non-Christian character of the state under whose protection the church operated. The Ottoman sultans guaranteed the function of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and of other Christian churches; but they also dictated the terms under which they could operate. In the eyes of the state authorities, metropolitanates and bishoprics were revenue-bearing districts administered as tax farms. The implementation of the *iltizam* system, which did not guarantee life-time tenure, not only undermined the adherence to canonical procedures regarding appointments and depositions, but also led the Church to chronic indebtedness.

Ecclesiastical and administrative sources, as well as other materials from Kyrillos Loukaris' era, reveal the difficulty in implementing synodical rulings about the hierarchs' financial obligations to the Patriarchate. They also show the efforts made by the church and the state to support the authority of the higher clergy and the patriarch, and to ensure the collection and payment of ecclesiastical taxes. In our opinion, it is in light of this that the modification of investiture documents for

¹⁸¹ Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 589 (5.12.1646, letter by Vasile Lupu stating his conditions) and no. 591 (23.12.1646, synodical letter accepting Lupu's conditions), pp. 291, 292; Delikanes, *Patriarchal Letters*, pp. 326–331; Hurmuzaki, *Documente XIV/1*, pp. 134–138, 185–190.

¹⁸² Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 261, p. 190, no. 288, p. 199.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, no. 679, p. 318. The ordinance regards specifically Ioannikios II, Athanasios II and Kyrillos III.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 733, pp. 334–335.

¹⁸⁵ For the establishment of the so-called 'system of elders' (*gerontismos*), see Konortas, *Ottoman Views*, pp. 127–134; Bayraktar Tellan, 'The Patriarchate'.

metropolitans and bishops during this period must be understood. In what concerns the patriarchal *berats*, on the other hand, political considerations played an equally important role as fiscal ones. In the first half of the seventeenth century, during the political and confessional confrontation between pro- and anti-Catholic—as well as pro- and anti-Protestant—hierarchs, theologians and archons, the control of appointments (and hence of the Holy Synod) became the main aim of the competing factions; and the church's enormous debt turned out to be the means by which this was achieved. Eventually, the need for stability after the prolonged crisis triggered by the vehement reaction to Loukaris' 'confessionalization project' and especially to his *Confession of Faith* (the 'Calvinist danger' continued to stir passions even at the turn of the century),¹⁸⁶ led to the enhancement of the patriarch's power, first through synodical rulings and then through the modification of the *berat*, the investiture document.

Did the supporting of the authority of the patriarch and the higher clergy by the Ottoman administration, evidenced in the ecclesiastical *berats* and in the sultan's decrees on their behalf, contribute to a process of Orthodox confessionalization in the Ottoman lands? We believe that it did indeed play a role, by helping stabilize the Great Church which had been torn apart by decades of political and confessional struggle. Steps had already been taken; but, given the legal and administrative framework within which the church operated, synodical rulings were not on their own sufficient to regulate contested matters, especially if they affected ecclesiastical jurisdiction or changed the balance of power between the metropolitans and the patriarch. Obedience to controversial rulings could be ensured only if those affected by the changes were stopped from upturning the patriarch's or the Synod's decisions by resorting to the qadi court or the executive authorities; hence the need for a modification of the investiture documents. The clause giving the patriarch power over appointments and dismissals, probably introduced in 1671, was crucial in this respect because it could help suppress dissent and create the ground for confessional initiatives.

If confessionalization, as opposed to confession-building, is a process not limited to church circles and theology but extending into the society and refashioning the community, then the effort of Loukaris and his followers was more or less a dead end. The prolonged struggle to (re)define Orthodoxy, however, did not remain confined to theological debates. A new and eventually more successful

¹⁸⁶ Dositheos of Jerusalem convened a synod in 1691 to condemn the teachings of Ioannes Karyophylles, one of Loukaris' most prominent followers, and wrote a polemical work against him. Dositheos, *Enchiridion*. Given that Karyophylles had publicly repented his errors already in 1645 and later had held various positions at the Patriarchate, he must not have posed any real threat to Orthodoxy. But he had a private feud with Grand Dragoman Alexandros Maurokordatos, Dositheos' close ally, and condemning his Calvinist teachings was an effective way to discredit him and achieve his dismissal from office. On the feud, see Apostolopoulos, 'Around the Will'. On Karyophylles' teachings and their condemnation, see Miladinova, *The Panoplia dogmatike*; Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, pp. 324–328; Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, pp. 308, 368; Tudorie, 'The Eucharistic Controversy'.

‘confessionalization project’ began in the 1660s and 1670s, with the active involvement of two patriarchs of Jerusalem, Nektarios (d. 1676) and Dositheos (d. 1707), and two grand dragomans who enjoyed the protection of the Köprülü grand viziers, Panagiotos Nikousios (d. 1673) and his successor Alexandros Maurokordatos (d. 1709)¹⁸⁷—and under the auspices of the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia.¹⁸⁸ A first step was the publication and distribution of Mohila’s/Syrgos’ *Orthodox Confession*.¹⁸⁹ A second step was the clarification of the creed in the course of two synods convened in 1672: one in January, under Dionysios IV of Constantinople, to deal with questions that had been posed by French and English theologians;¹⁹⁰ and another one in March, under Dositheos of Jerusalem, to condemn once again Loukaris’ ‘Calvinist’ confession and endorse an exposition of the Orthodox faith composed by Dositheos himself—a text that, according to Gerhard Podskalsky, would be considered unsurpassed for almost two centuries.¹⁹¹

In shaping Orthodoxy, the new agents of confessionalization turned against Loukaris’ ‘heretical’ Calvinist teachings—although they never openly admitted that the *Confession of Faith* was written by him.¹⁹² But they also fought consistently against the dissemination of Catholic teachings and they used largely the same tools to educate, indoctrinate and catechize as Loukaris and his followers had envisioned: schools, printing press, and religious polemics.¹⁹³ Dositheos of Jerusalem even published anti-Latin texts written by Loukaris, such as the 1615 excommunications issued in Wallachia against Catholics and the ‘Latin-minded’ (*latinophrones*).¹⁹⁴ At the end of the seventeenth century the Church was more assertive than ever before, and ready to start an effort to impose conformity in ecclesiastical matters and correct the errors of the flock. It is not by coincidence that Kallinikos II (1688, 1689–1693, 1694–1702) was the first patriarch to address a broad spectrum of issues regarding

¹⁸⁷ For a discussion of their role in the shaping of Ottoman Orthodoxy, see Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, pp. 314–318 (Nektarios), 357–372 (Dositheos), 372–374 (Maurokordatos). For Nikousios, see above.

¹⁸⁸ Although significant progress has been made in the last years, we still lack an in-depth treatment of the role of princes like Constantin Brâncoveanu and Nicolae Mavrocordat (Nikolaos Maurokordatos) in shaping early modern Orthodoxy.

¹⁸⁹ Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, pp. 300–301.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 360–361; Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Juridical Collection*, no. 137, pp. 150–151.

¹⁹¹ Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, p. 362. On the synod of Jerusalem and Dositheos’ *Confession of Faith*, see *ibid.*, pp. 360–367; Kontouma, ‘La *Confession de Foi*’; Kontouma and Garnier, ‘Concilium’; Olar, ‘Un temps pour parler’.

¹⁹² Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, pp. 362–363. On Loukaris’ being ‘a secret heretic’, see Dositheos, *History*, p. 1171.

¹⁹³ Kontouma, ‘Recherches’; Kyriakantonakis, ‘Between Dispute and Erudition’. See also, Biliarsky and Păun, ‘La version roumaine’.

¹⁹⁴ Dositheos, *Volume of Love*, pp. 552–554.

liturgical and devotional practice, ecclesiastical order, and public behavior.¹⁹⁵ Others were soon to follow. But this is an eighteenth-century story.

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¹⁹⁵ See the published letters, synodical rulings and nomocanonical decisions of his patriarchate in Delikanes, *Patriarchal Letters*; Gedeon, *Canonical Decisions*; Vaporis, ‘A Study of Ziskind Manuscript’; Vaporis, *Codex (G’) Gamma*. It must be noted, however, that the ruling about dowry attributed to Kallinikos II by Gedeon dates from the patriarchate of his successor, Gabriel III, as shown by Michailaris, ‘Ioannina or Mytilene?’.

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APPENDIX

Patriarchs of Constantinople, 1565–1702¹⁹⁶

| YEAR OF APPOINTMENT | INCUMBENT | DATES OF TENURE |
|---------------------|---|--|
| 1565 | Metrophanes III | January 1565–4 May 1572 |
| 1572 | Hieremias II ho Tranos | 5 May 1572–mid-November [23 November] 1579 |
| 1579 | Metrophanes III (2nd time) | mid-November [23 November] 1579–9 August 1580 |
| 1580 | Hieremias II (2nd time) | August 1580–late February [22 February] 1584 |
| 1584 | Pachomios II | late February [22 February] 1584–mid-February 1585 |
| 1585 | Theoleptos II | 16 February 1585–May 1586 [mid-April 1587] |
| 1586 | as supervisor: Deacon Nikephoros Parasches (and Deacon Dionysios for 10 days) | May 1586–April 1587 |
| 1587 | Hieremias II (3rd time) | April 1587–late 1595 [September 1595] |
| 1596 | Matthaios II | January–February 1596 (for circa 20 days) |
| 1596 | Gabriel I | March–early July [late August] 1596 |
| 1596 | as supervisor: Theophanes Karykes of Athens | July–December 1596 |
| 1596 | as supervisor: Meletios Pegas of Alexandria | December 1596–February [late February] 1597 |

¹⁹⁶ Patrinely, 'Chronological Catalogue'. The alternative dates in square brackets are according to Podskalsky, *Greek Theology*, pp. 496–498.

| | | |
|--------|---|---|
| 1597 | Theophanes Karykes | late February–26 March 1597 |
| 1597 | as supervisor: Meletios Pegas of Alexandria | late March [26 March] 1597–April 1598 |
| 1598 | Matthaios II (2nd time) | April 1598–December 1601 |
| 1601 | Neophytos II | December 1601 [early February 1602]–early January 1603 |
| [1603] | [Matthaios II (3rd time)] | [January–February 1603 (for a few days)] |
| 1603 | Raphael II | February 1603–early October 1607 |
| 1607 | Neophytos II (2nd time) | 15 October 1607–October 1612 |
| 1612 | as supervisor: Kyrillos Loukaris of Alexandria | October–November 1612 (for 21 days) |
| 1612 | Timotheos II | November 1612–3 September 1620 |
| 1620 | Kyrillos I Loukaris | 4 November 1620–12 April 1623 |
| 1623 | Gregorios IV (Gregorios of Amasia) | 12 [7] April–18 [16] June 1623 |
| 1623 | Anthimos II | 18 [16] June–22 September 1623 |
| 1623 | Kyrillos I Loukaris (2nd time) | 22 September 1623–4 October 1633 |
| 1633 | Kyrillos II Kontares | 4–11 [12] October 1633 |
| 1633 | Kyrillos I Loukaris (3rd time) | 11 [12] October 1633–25 February [6 March] 1634 |
| 1634 | Athanasios II [III] Patelaros | 25 February [6 March]–early April [2 April] 1634 |
| 1634 | Kyrillos I Loukaris (4th time) | early April [2 April] 1634–early March [15 March] 1635 |
| 1635 | Kyrillos II Kontares (2nd time) | early March [15 March] 1635–mid-June [16 June] 1636 |
| 1636 | Neophytos III | mid-June [16 June] 1636–5 [10] March 1637 |
| 1637 | Kyrillos I Loukaris (5th time) | 5 [10] March 1637–20 [19] June 1638 (executed) |
| 1638 | Kyrillos II Kontares (3rd time) | 20 [19] June 1638–late June [7 July] 1639 (executed while in exile) |
| 1639 | Parthenios I ho Geron | 1 [7] July 1639–early September [8 September] 1644 |
| 1644 | Parthenios II ho Neos (also known as Oxys or Kes kines) | 8 September 1644–16 November 1646 |

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| 1646 | Ioannikios II | 16 November 1646–29 [27] October 1648 |
| 1648 | Parthenios II (2nd time) | 29 October 1648–16 May 1651 (executed) |
| 1651 | Ioannikios II (2nd time) | early June 1651–mid-June [9 June] 1652 |
| 1652 | Kyrillos III ho Spanos | mid-June 1652 (for 8 days) |
| 1652 | Athanasios II [III] Patelaros (2nd time) | late June–early July 1652 (for 15 days) |
| 1652 | Paisios I | early July 1652–early April 1653 |
| 1653 | Ioannikios II (3rd time) | early April 1653–early March 1654 |
| 1654 | Kyrillos III (2nd time) | early March 1654 (for 14 days) |
| 1654 | Paisios I (2nd time) | late March [mid-March] 1654–March [late March] 1655 |
| 1655 | Ioannikios II (4th time) | March 1655–31 July 1656 |
| 1656 | Parthenios III (Parthenakes) | 31 [26] July 1656–24 March 1657 (executed) |
| 1657 | Gabriel II | 23–30 April 1657 |
| 1657 | Parthenios IV ho Mogilalos (also known as Choum-choumes) | 1 May 1657–late June 1662 |
| 1662 | Dionysios III ho Vardales | 29 June [12 July] 1662–21 October 1665 |
| 1665 | Parthenios IV (2nd time) | 21 October 1665–9 September 1667 |
| 1667 | Klemes | 9 September 1667 |
| 1668 | Methodios III Morones | 5 January 1668–early March 1671 |
| 1671 | Parthenios IV (3rd time) | early March–7 September 1671 |
| 1671 | Dionysios IV ho Mouselimes (also known as Seroglanes) | 8 November [8 October] 1671–14 August 1673 |
| 1673 | Gerasimos II | 14 August 1673–December 1674 |
| 1675 | Parthenios IV (4th time) | 1 January 1675–19 [29] July 1676 |
| 1676 | Dionysios IV (2nd time) | 29 July 1676–2 August 1679 |
| 1679 | Athanasios III [IV] | 30 July–10 August 1679 |
| 1679 | Iakovos | 10 August 1679–30 July 1682 |
| 1682 | Dionysios IV (3rd time) | 30 July 1682–10 March 1684 |
| 1684 | Parthenios IV (5th time) | 10 March 1684–20 March 1685 |

| | | |
|------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1685 | Iakovos (2nd time) | 20 March 1685–late March 1686 |
| 1686 | Dionysios IV (4th time) | late March 1686–12 October 1687 |
| 1687 | Iakovos (3rd time) | 12 October 1687–3 March 1688 |
| 1688 | Kallinikos II ho Akarnan | 3 March–27 November 1688 |
| 1688 | Neophytos IV ho Philaretos | 27 November 1688–7 March 1689 |
| 1689 | Kallinikos II (2nd time) | 7 March 1689–August 1693 |
| 1693 | Dionysios IV (5th time) | August 1693–April 1694 |
| 1694 | Kallinikos II (3rd time) | April 1694–8 [20] August 1702 |

6. WHOSE REALM, HIS BISHOP: ORTHODOX PATRIARCH'S FLOCK BEYOND THE BORDERS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

VERA TCHENTSOVA

THE METROPOLITAN SEE OF KYIV AS AN EXTRATERRITORIAL DOMAIN OF ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHS

The jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople over the Orthodox faithful extended beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire, often resulting in serious problems, especially in dioceses situated in countries at conflict with the Sublime Porte, such as the Venetian Republic or the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In such contexts, the control of Constantinopolitan patriarchs over the daily affairs of the local Orthodox churches could give rise to suspicions against the latter, since they were often seen as instruments of the sultan's court. The demand for security at a time of assertion of the early modern states triggered various policies: the local Orthodox communities were either forced to enter into union with the Catholics, thus breaking their tie with their 'Ottoman' Mother Church, as demonstrated by various episodes in the Polish-Lithuanian state, or to obtain complete independence as a self-governing autocephalous church, an achievement exemplified by the creation of the Patriarchate of Moscow, which was confirmed by the Orthodox patriarchs at the Councils of Constantinople in 1590 and 1593. Therefore, the usual canonical discipline, or even the doctrinal positions subscribed to by various Orthodox communities, from Venice to Russia, were highly influenced by the political context in which they found themselves and the local interplay between the 'confession-' and 'state-building' processes. Faced with new challenges, the Great Church devised various solutions to insure a properly orthodox religious life to the faithful who belonged to the ecumenical patriarch's flock but lived beyond the Ottoman borders.

The situation in the metropolitan see of Kyiv was one of the most complex to manage, because the territory of the diocese was divided into several parts controlled by rival states, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with its Catholic political elite, the Orthodox Tsardom of Moscow, and the Cossack Hetmanate, who were all

involved in endemic warfare. Political rivalries in the region caused strain in the Church as every contender jockeyed for the spiritual and ideological support of the local clergy and its leaders. Even the title of the metropolitan of Kyiv was disputed between several pretenders and deputies fulfilling the functions of *locum tenentes*, who sought confirmation from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, from Moscow and/or from the Polish Crown.

In 1675 a serious crisis loomed as the metropolitan of Kyiv Joseph Nielubowicz-Tukalski died on July 26. Joseph's title had been confirmed in 1668 at the request of the Cossack hetman Petro Doroshenko by both Patriarch of Constantinople Methodius and the Ottoman sultan.¹ Doroshenko's rapprochement with the Ottoman Porte and then, in 1669–1670, his submission to the sultan, as well as aspirations to unite both sides of the Dnieper River under his own authority, could inspire hopes that the see would return under the lasting spiritual guidance of Constantinople thanks to the *Pax Ottomana*. However, Joseph's death and the surrender of Doroshenko to the pro-Muscovite Cossack hetman Ivan Samoylovych in 1676 opened the way to the new rivalries for the chair of Kyiv.

A protracted state of war between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian state (1672–1699) led the Polish authorities to prohibit in 1676 the Orthodox clergy from their polity from being ordained in Constantinople, and because of this legal obstacle their ties with the Patriarchate became considerably curtailed. This policy compelled the Patriarchate to search for solutions to the problem of governing these outlying dioceses. The ban intended to prevent the potentially detrimental influence of the ecumenical patriarchs, subjects of the sultans, on the flock of the metropolitan see of Kyiv, as in the times of Joseph Nielubowicz-Tukalski. This forced vacancy of the see and later, in 1677, the secret accession of its *locum tenens* Joseph Szumlański, bishop of Lviv, Halych and Kamyanets-Podolskij, to the Union with the Roman Church,² forced the Patriarchate of Constantinople to devise new ways to re-establish its spiritual control over the eparchy. As such, in the second half of the seventeenth century the metropolitan see of Kyiv experienced the enforcement of a variety of canonical solutions conceived to restore the control of Constantinople over the local Orthodox communities.

CANONICAL SOLUTION FOR THE SEE OF KAMYANETS

Ottoman victories in the Cretan war, culminating in the fall of Candia in 1669, allowed the Sublime Porte to intervene more actively on its Northern front. Thus, in the very same year, the Cossack hetman Petro Doroshenko became a vassal of the sultan.³ This new expansion of Ottoman power into the territories previously belonging to the Polish-Lithuanian state led to the outbreak of war against the *Rzeczpospolita*. The Ottoman offensive carried out in early summer of 1672 was

¹ Florja, 'Metropolitan Joseph (Toukalsky)', pp. 130–131.

² Pidgajko, Skoczylas, 'Joseph Shumlyansky', pp. 682–694.

³ Ostapchuk, 'Cossack Ukraine', pp. 123–152; Grygor'ëva, 'Hetman Petro Doroshenko', pp. 449–475.

aimed at conquering Kamyanets-Podolskij, controlled by the Polish Crown. This most important fortress of Podolia fell after a short siege and the whole province was turned into an Ottoman *eyalet*.

A contemporary witness of the event, Theodor, archimandrite of the Athonite Hagiou Pavlou Monastery, complained in Moscow of the plight of the Orthodox in the territories subject to the Porte, denouncing 'the nasty gluttony' of the 'Turks,' their 'unjust violation of the treaty' with the Polish king and their desire 'to spread the pagan's possessions,' all of which seemed to him reasons for the Ottoman conquest of the Crown lands. According to the archimandrite's story, the sultan who began the war 'with the Poles' also 'started persecutions against the Christians,' turning churches into mosques.⁴ These words were pronounced by the Greek cleric when he came to Moscow to negotiate the allegiance of the Moldavian and Wallachian princes to the tsar, thus trying to transfer their oaths of allegiance from the Sublime Porte to Moscow. The supporters of these anti-Ottoman plans denounced the sufferings of Christians under the Muslim power ('under the pagans') and emphasized the need of common action against the sultan. A certain Greek merchant described to the Muscovite Ambassadorial chancellery the plight of Christians in the newly conquered Kamyanets: 'And all the churches, Catholic and Orthodox, they have turned into mosques, and the dead bodies and the bones of the Christians that were buried near Catholic and Orthodox churches, they swept out of the town, and left only one church, and took away the bells and the crosses, and from these the sultan ordered to give two bells to Doroshenko as a gift'.⁵ He complained that if the Christian rulers had concluded an alliance before the fall of Kamyanets to the 'Turks', the peoples inside the borders of *Pax Ottomana*, 'Moldavians, Greeks and all Orthodox' would have also stood up against the sultan.

However, this position was not unanimously held, and different ideas seem even to have prevailed in the Great Church of Constantinople as it was preoccupied by the influence of the pro-Union clergy in the see of Kyiv. This pro-Union drive was backed by the Polish-Lithuanian government, which was eager to impede contacts between its Orthodox population and the patriarch of Constantinople who was considered to be a potential conduit of the sultan's influence. The Ottoman conquest of Kamyanets reactivated the links between the Orthodox population of Podolia and the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In 1681 the ecumenical patriarch Jacob and the synod found a solution for the flock of Ottoman Podolia. A synodal act dated August 1681 stated that the Orthodox of the 'diocese of Podolia with the city of Kamyanets recently subdued by the autocratic and invincible royalty' (that is, the sultan) was in urgent need of pastoral care and 'Orthodox teaching and instruction'.⁶ To solve this problem, the patriarch and the synod established the metropolitan see of Kamyanets and Podolia and entrusted it to the former bishop of Lidoriki, Pankratios, the first

⁴ RGADA, f. 52-1, 1674, no. 1, fols 3r-4r, 21r-22r.

⁵ Šamin, 'Information of Greek agents', pp. 202-208.

⁶ IR NBU, f. 18, no. 121; Chernukhin, *Collection of Manuscripts*, no. 172, p. 44; Petrušević, ed., *Acts*, pp. 52-53. Cf.: Skoczylas, 'Territorial distribution', pp. 441-442.

incumbent of the new chair and exarch of the ecumenical patriarch.⁷ The nomination act was written by a well-known Greek theologian, the Grand Logothete Ioannes Karyophylles, and signed by the members of the synod.

Two letters revealing that Pankratios had to borrow money after his nomination to Kamyanets have been identified in the codex Beinecke 303 (Ziskind 22) of Yale University library.⁸ Among these documents a promissory note provides evidence for a loan from the son of the Grand Logothete Ioannes Karyophylles, dated 1683. An imprint of the seal of the new Church officer of Kamyanets displays a crowned lion, the coat of arms of the Ruthenian voivodeship (*Palatinatus Russiae, Województwo Ruskie*) where his diocese lay. The legend of the seal illustrates how the patriarch circumvented the canons prohibiting changes in the eparchies' borders: '† Pankratios, by the Grace of God Orthodox metropolitan of Halych, *hypertimos*, patriarchal exarch of all Little Russia' († ПАНКРАХИЯ М(и)Л(ос)ТІЮ Б(о)ЖІЮ ПР(а)В(о)СЛ(ав)НІ М(и)Т(ро)П(о)литъ?) Г(а)Л(и)Ц(кий?), ИП(ерти)М П(атриар)Ш В(сея) М(алья) Р(уси?) ЄЭ(а)РХА (ø 45 mm). Thus, even if the patriarchal act gave to the newly nominated hierarch the title of metropolitan of Kamyanets and Podolia, in conformity with the canon law the see was identified with an ancient diocese of Halych, which had disappeared at the beginning of the fifteenth century. This 'restoration' enabled the patriarch to split the diocese of Kyiv into two parts without creating a 'new' chair and disrupting existing ecclesiastical boundaries.

Hence, one part of the diocese of Kyiv returned under the direct control of the patriarch of Constantinople, escaping in this way the influence of Joseph Szumlański and pro-Union clergy of the Polish-Lithuanian part of the diocese. The idea to restore the see of Halych, however, was not lost on the bishop of Lviv himself as he tried to use the very same strategy: in May 1689, Joseph Szumlański addressed a letter to the Patriarch Joachim of Moscow in which he expressed his desire to restore the metropolitanate of Halych. But unlike the see of Kamyanets, this diocese would belong to the Patriarchate of Moscow. In his own name and in the name of other bishops of the eparchy he asked Joachim to protect Orthodoxy in the Polish-Lithuanian state and to restore the diocese of Halych, previously a 'foundation of the Russian great princes' that existed independently from the diocese of Kyiv. He proposed to organize, with the Polish king's permission, the 'free election' of a metropolitan to the see; and the incumbent would afterwards get consecration and receive liturgical vestments (*sakkos*) from the patriarch of Moscow.⁹ The latter rejected the proposal in his response to Joseph Szumlański, drawing attention to the canonical impediments to such a sundering of the traditional title and diocese of Kyivan metropolitan who officially was metropolitan of Kyiv and Halych.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the patriarch of Moscow was not adverse to the idea of establishing a see under his own jurisdiction, but in Lviv or 'somewhere else.'

⁷ Kołodziejczyk, 'Orthodox Exarchate', pp. 247–255.

⁸ Vaporis, *Some Aspects of the History*, no. 31, pp. 61, 128 (pl. 5), 138.

⁹ ArxJuZR, pt. 1, t. 5, no. 77 (24.05.1689), pp. 271–276.

¹⁰ ArxJuZR, pt. 1, t. 5, no. 82 (22.10.1689), pp. 290–293.

IN SEARCH OF A CANONICAL SOLUTION FOR THE SEE OF KYIV

The synodal act of 1681 paved the way to a solution for the part of the see of Kyiv placed under the sultan's power after 1672. This solution was to hold till 1699 when the region returned to the Polish Crown. However, the fact that the Polish authorities prohibited the canonically legal ordination of a metropolitan to the see of Kyiv by the patriarch of Constantinople put the Orthodox of the diocese and the Patriarchate in a complicated situation: the canonically ordained hierarch could not be recognised in the part of the diocese under Polish authority because it would be breaking the law of Rzeczpospolita. The eparchy of Kyiv, both 'Polish' and 'Cossack' parts of it, seemed to ignore the existence of Pankratios of Kamyanets even if he was called 'Patriarchal Exarch'.

Soon after the creation of the see of Kamyanets the Cossack hetman Ivan Samoylovych made his decision to proceed to the election of a metropolitan for the emptied chair of Kyiv. He was relying on a permission given by the synodal act of Ecumenical Patriarch Parthenios IV Mogilalos to ordain a metropolitan in Moscow. The news about the existence of such a permission reached Moscow through the chief administrator of Sevsk, Leontij Nepljuev. Notifying the Muscovite authorities of the funerals of Semen, son of hetman Samoylovych (d. May 19, 1685), Nepljuev mentioned the hetman's decision (maybe somehow influenced by these tragic circumstances) to order a meeting of the Orthodox clergy and the election of a new metropolitan who will be 'in the obedience' to the patriarch of Moscow.¹¹ However, the hetman, who was already negotiating the matter, was anxious about possible resistance from the local Kyivan clergy. Some high-ranking hierarchs considered it impossible to violate the canons and to receive the blessing of the newly elected metropolitan from the patriarch of Moscow instead of that of Constantinople, who was the canonical head of their eparchy.¹² For this reason, Samoylovych entrusted his representative to the Church assembly, Ivan Mazepa, with the original of the act, which spelled out the official patriarchal permission to obtain the blessing and consecration of the metropolitan in Moscow. Nepljuev received a translation of this important act and sent it to the Ambassadorial chancellery.¹³

This official decision of the patriarch of Constantinople, signed by twelve metropolitans and dated February 7, 1685, expressed Patriarch Parthenios's elation in hearing that the metropolitan could be legally elected to the see of Kyiv, insuring that 'heresies would not take hold' and that the 'ravening wolves would not arrive to that diocese' (Math. 7. 15): 'The blessed archbishop of Moscow, *kyr* [lacuna], in the Holy Spirit our brother and co-servant, by our humble power and in conformity with the Church canons, should gather three hierarchs of this land and by his ordination in conciliar manner consecrate the reverend hieromonk and confessor, *kyr* Innocence Gizel, archimandrite of the monastery of the Caves, metropolitan of Kyiv and of all Russia by God's grace and power, as we order to do without contention or

¹¹ Kočegarov, *Russian Government*, p. 190.

¹² RGADA, f. 89–1, book 25, fols 45r–46r.

¹³ RGADA, f. 124–3, no. 460, fols 1r–1v (Indicated by K. Kočegarov).

any disputation.¹⁴ It is, however, paramount to stress that this consecration was to be enforced ‘by our humble power’, that is by the power of the patriarch of Constantinople, exercised through the patriarch of Moscow.

Even if the date of the document, 1685, was written in the translation, the content of the text does not match it at all. In 1685 Gizel had already died (d. November 8/18, 1683) and it is improbable that the patriarch, who was enthroned for the fourth time on March 10, 1684, already after Gizel’s death, could receive a delegation of Ruthenian clergy asking him to consent to archimandrite’s future nomination. It seems more probable that the act was signed by the patriarch during his previous term that began on January 1, 1675 and went on till July 19, 1676. It was during this term that the metropolitan of Kyiv Joseph Nielubowicz-Tukalski died and immediately after, in spring 1676, the Diet in Krakow voted for the interdiction of all relations with the hierarchs in the Ottoman territories. The names of two of the twelve signatories of the act permit to specify the date more exactly. Callistus of Corinthos is known as metropolitan from 1668, and in 1684 his chair was already occupied by his successor Zachariah. Timotheos of Vidin was elected to his chair on May 20, 1676, permitting to establish a *terminus post quem*: the act must have been signed after this date and before the deposition of Parthenios IV on July 19, 1676.¹⁵

By 1685 the act must have been in the hetman’s hands for nearly 10 years, but it seems that he was not eager to benefit from it and settle the see of Kyiv’s situation. Probably, this reluctance stemmed from Samoylovych’s tense relations with the local Kyivan clergy.¹⁶ In 1685 the text’s importance still lay in the fact that it offered an official precedent, a patriarchal ‘blessing of release’ for the see. The solution proposed to settle the specific case of Gizel could be applied in the future to any other successive candidate, thus offering a general legal framework for solving the difficult situation of the emptied see. And by 1684 the hetman already had his preferred candidate for the diocese coming from the Polish-Lithuanian territories and thus less linked to the local clergy. It was Gideon Svyatopolk-Chetvertynsky, bishop of Lutsk and Ostroh, who had moved under the hetman’s protection fleeing confessional oppression. On July 8, 1685, the electoral assembly chose him to be metropolitan and to go to Moscow for ordination. However, the question of canonical permission for such a consecration had not been solved and it made the confirmation of the elected metropolitan precarious.

Thus, at the end of 1685, a Muscovite envoy, the *podyachiy* (clerk of the Ambassadorial chancellery) Nikita Alexeev, was sent to the Ottoman Empire with the difficult and important task of obtaining from the patriarch of Constantinople ‘the blessing of release’ for the metropolitan see of Kyiv, that is a permission to consecrate metropolitans in Moscow. Such permission was conceived by the Russian authorities as a change of canonical jurisdiction of the diocese, which was partly under the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Apostolopoulos and Michailaris, *The Legal Collection*, no. 185, p. 646; Mystakidēs, ‘Lists of Bishops’, p. 184. I intend to examine the dating of this document based on the signatures of church hierarchs in greater detail elsewhere.

¹⁶ Kohut, ‘Servant of the Tsar’, pp. 450–451.

political power of the Tsardom. Nikita Alexeev had with him letters addressed by the Russian Tsars Ivan, Petr and their sister Sophia to both Ecumenical Patriarchs, Jacob (elected to the throne for the second time in March 1685) and Parthenios IV (his predecessor). Two letters were given to the legate to obviate a possible new permutation on the patriarchal throne. The Muscovite government probably hoped for the return of Parthenios as he was credited for his act in favor of Gizel. Unsurprisingly, the tsars' letters mentioned this important precedent,¹⁷ quoting directly from the act: 'This blessing of release of the metropolitan see of Kyiv, your archpriesthood could give in response to the request of our tsars' majesty without any difficulty, as in the recent past Parthenios, the holiest Patriarch of Constantinople, wrote and gave his blessing, confirming it by the signature of his patriarchal hand and [by the signatures] of the hands of twelve reverend metropolitan bishops, at the request of the clergy of this metropolitan see of Kyiv. In order to prevent damage to Christ's *flock through the arrival of ravenous wolves and heresies*, according to his patriarchal permission and the Church canons, the holiest Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia had to consecrate by his ordination a metropolitan elected in conciliar manner to that see, Father Innocence Gizel, Archimandrite of the Monastery of the Caves'.¹⁸

MUSCOVITE ATTEMPTS TO TRANSFER ALLEGIANCE OF THE SEE OF KYIV IN THE 1680S

Previously unaware of Parthenios' act, the Russian authorities made their own moves to bolster the spiritual control of Moscow over the diocese of Kyiv and to strengthen the loyalty of the high clergy through which the local population would more willingly accept the tsar's rule. It is no accident that Jacob of Constantinople's restoration of the 'see of Halych' in the Ottoman city of Kamyanets coincided roughly with the embassy of Prokofij Voznitsyn, sent to Constantinople to confirm the peace treaty of Bakhchisarai. This treaty between the Tsardom of Moscow and the Tatar khan of Crimea had been signed in January 1681 and the ambassador had to obtain from the sultan both its confirmation and the recognition of the tsar's sovereignty over the Left-Bank Zaporozhian Cossacks.

The decision of the patriarch of Constantinople on Kamyanets, issued in August, must have been already known in Moscow at the end of November when the new instructions for Voznitsyn were formulated and sent. They contained one significant secret clause concerning the see of Kyiv, as it seems, introduced because the split of the diocese into two parts was considered alarming and tantamount to taking a large part of the Ruthenian Orthodox flock out of the control of a Muscovite *locum tenens*, archbishop of Chernihiv Lazar Baranovych. The ambassador, 'in proper time' and pretending to speak only for himself and of his own initiative, had to ask the patriarch of Constantinople, 'why the metropolitan see of Kyiv does not have a shepherd for many years' and to ascertain if the patriarch would be ready to 'transfer this see

¹⁷ RGADA, f. 89–1, book 25, fols 208r–221v; ArxJuZR, t. 5, pp. 104–111, 122; Lourié, *Russian Orthodoxy*, pp. 189–193.

¹⁸ RGADA, f. 89–1, book 26, fols 10v–11.

with all the clergy under the blessing of the most holy Patriarchs of Moscow and of all Rus'. Voznitsyn had to pretend that his interest was only prompted by his own personal concern for the 'spreading of the pious Christian faith'.¹⁹ These instructions specified that the ambassador had to obtain answers 'in the most accurate way', so that neither the patriarch, nor anybody 'in Little Russia', namely, in the diocese of Kyiv, could have learned anything about the purpose of his questions. The results of this specific mission are not known, perhaps because the ambassador did not have the opportunity to address the problem or because he decided not to register the answers in his official report to the Ambassadorial chancellery.

A new attempt was made at the end of 1684, when a Greek merchant named Zapheirios was secretly sent to the patriarch of Constantinople to obtain his authorization for the transfer of the jurisdiction of the see of Kyiv to the Patriarchate of Moscow.²⁰ However, when he arrived in Constantinople in June 1685, Patriarch Jacob had already succeeded Parthenios IV, who, taking into account the decision of 1676, could be favourably disposed towards the idea to ordain metropolitans of Kyiv in Moscow. The mission was aborted, and the news was not very comforting: Patriarch Jacob was reluctant to maintain contacts with Moscow because of 'the troubled time' and the Great Dragoman of the Porte Alexandros Maurokordatos told Zapheirios that the transfer of the see of Kyiv to Moscow was not a matter to address currently because of 'hostilities' in the Ottoman Empire.²¹ It was necessary to wait for more 'propitious times'. And as a matter of fact, such time was fast approaching.

THE MISSION OF NIKITA ALEXEEV TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE SYNODAL DECISION OF 1686

When the tsar's envoy Nikita Alexeev arrived in Edirne, on April 10, 1686, along with the representative of the Cossack hetman, Ivan Lisitsa, he was granted audience by Patriarch Dionysios IV Mouselimis just a few days after the latter's restoration to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople.²² Dionysios IV's eagerness to solve the vexing problem of the see of Kyiv stemmed again from the activities of Joseph Szumlański and his rising influence over the clergy. Nikita Alexeev made clever use during the negotiations of the hated name of this 'apostate of the holy Oriental church' who 'recently have stuck to the Roman church' and 'dares to call himself guardian of this metropolitan see of Kyiv'.²³ The confessional betrayal of Szumlański was, as the patriarch freely admitted, 'very painful for him'.²⁴

¹⁹ RGADA, f. 89–1, 1683, no. 1, fols 1r–2r.

²⁰ RGADA, f. 89–1, book 25, fols 33v–41v; Kočegarov, *Rzeczpospolita and Russia*, pp. 287–288.

²¹ RGADA, f. 89–1, book 25, fols 348v–350r. 'Hostilities' here probably meant the uprising of *sipahis* against the grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha in August 1685, provoked by the defeats of the Ottoman army near Buda.

²² *Ibid.*, f. 89–1, book 26, fols 90r–94v.

²³ *Ibid.*, fols 54–54v.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 135v.

The other reason for concern was the increasing aspirations of the local Ruthenian hierarchs to obtain independence from the patriarch of Constantinople. The issue was hardly a new one: already in 1671, a political exile and well-known Moldavian intellectual Nicolas Spathar had warned the Muscovite court on behalf of Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem and the Grand Dragoman of the Porte Panagiotes Nikousios against the ambitions of the Metropolitan of Kyiv Joseph Nielubowicz-Tukalski. The latter desired to be completely independent from Constantinople: 'Tukalski seeks from the sultan the order to the most holy ecumenical patriarchs to make him patriarch of the Little, Red and Black Russias; and if he starts to ask for it assiduously, the sultan, certainly, will give the order to make him patriarch.'²⁵

For its own part, Rome also considered at the time the possible creation of an independent Church of Kyiv. In 1671 the Papal *nuncio* Ranutius wrote to the Cardinal Alterio that the first thing to obtain from the Polish Diet was to forbid 'schismatics' from sending representatives to the patriarch of Constantinople, because they served as spies and through this channel hetman Doroshenko and other Cossack leaders could correspond with the sultan's court. To his mind, the second pressing matter was to ensure the election by the 'schismatics' of a patriarch for the Ruthenian nation, following the model set by Muscovy. Measures should be taken to ensure that the title of patriarch would go to an individual well-disposed towards the Union and able to attract others to the obedience of Rome.²⁶ Consequently, the danger was real that the see could become completely independent, either as an Orthodox or Uniate autocephalous patriarchate, and the patriarch had to tackle the problem without delay.

Thus, Dionysios expressed his willingness to meet the tsars' request and to enact a 'blessing of release' for the see of Kyiv, approved also by Dositheos II, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who confirmed that canonical grounds existed for such a decision. Having received the documents signed by the members of the synod and by the patriarch, the Muscovite legate concluded that his mission had met full success and that 'all the articles' of the synodal decision corresponded to the Muscovite proposal he had submitted to the patriarch's attention. However, neither the request nor the solution was understood in the exact same way in Moscow and in Constantinople.

The official documents, dated June 1, were handed over to Nikita Alexeev during the audience on June 5.²⁷ He obtained two acts, the original of the synodal act itself authenticated by 20 signatures (that is the 'blessing of release for the see of Kyiv') and the synodal resolution laying down the procedure for the election and enthronement of metropolitans of Kyiv,²⁸ along with various accompanying letters.²⁹ The content of the decisions is known both from the copies found in a register, probably compiled in the middle of the eighteenth century, and from their Russian translations done by the Ambassadorial chancellery when the documents were delivered

²⁵ Ibid., f. 52–1, book 7, fol. 135r; Arsen'ev, *New Information*, pp. 31–35.

²⁶ *Monumenta Ucrainae historica*, t. IV, no. 21, p. 40–43 (25.11.1671).

²⁷ RGADA, f. 89–1, book 26, fols 132r–132v.

²⁸ Tchentsova, 'The Synodal Decision', pp. 100–107.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 90–91.

to Moscow.³⁰ From the great number of letters only a few originals have survived, and among them the original letter of the Patriarch Dionysios to the Tsars Ivan, Petr and Sophia. The patriarchal letter, an excellent example of calligraphy, was written by the Grand Logothete of the Great Church Ioannes Karyophylles, also the scribe of the synodal decision concerning the metropolitan see of Kamyanets. It was decorated with an image of the Virgin and Child in a frame of grape leaves.³¹ The style and iconography fit with the decorations of an earlier synodal act written in 1651 by the same scribe. This so-called ‘synodal chrysobull’ 15 A, conserved in the archives of the Hellenic Institute in Venice, confirmed privileges conceded to Athanasius Vellerianos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia—a connection that is important, as we will see below.³²

According to the acts of June 1686, the metropolitans of Kyiv would in the future be ordained by the patriarchs of Moscow.³³ The documents specify that this right was given *kat’oikonomian*, a formula referring to the particular canonical concept covering the necessity to compromise in the face of adversity for the sake of the greater good. The right to consecrate metropolitans to the see of Kyiv was transferred to the patriarchs of Moscow in view of the special circumstances, namely ‘the great distance’ separating this see from Constantinople and the wars waged in territories situated ‘between the two great empires’, the Russian Tsardom and the Ottoman Empire.³⁴ The period of validity of the synodal decision was not specified, the text contenting itself with rather imprecise expressions like ‘when there will be a need’ or ‘when the see of Kyiv will be deprived of metropolitan’.³⁵

Besides, the text of the document included one important provision: the synodal decision stated that during the liturgy the name of the ecumenical patriarch should be commemorated by the metropolitan of Kyiv before the name of the patriarch of Moscow (*mnēmoneysē en prōtois toy sebasmiōy onomatōs toy oikoymenikoy patriarchoy*).³⁶ This hierarchy of commemorations proved the ultimate ‘overlordship’ of Constantinople over the see. The Greek text of the synodal decision explicitly confirms that the metropolitan, while celebrating the Eucharist in ‘this diocese’ (*en tē paroikia taytē*), must commemorate the name of the ecumenical patriarch ‘among the first’ because ‘all parishes and dioceses [in the see of Kyiv] are subject to him’ (*yperkeimenoy pantōn tōn pantachoy paroikiōn te kai eparchiōn*), while in the Russian translation the meaning of this phrase turned rather elusive ‘as he [the ecumenical

³⁰ MIET/ IPA, 22, fol. 202r–204r. Ed.: Tchentsova, ‘The Synodal Decision’, pp. 89–110. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Agamemnon Tselikas for providing me with the copies of the documents.

³¹ RGADA, f. 52–2, no. 669, fol. 1r.

³² Tselikas, ‘Catalogue’, pp. 223–226, n. 26; Manousakas, ‘The False Synodal Chrysobull’, pp. 331–343, pl. 164, 168–169. On the authenticity of this document see Fonkič, *Studies in Greek Paleography*, pp. 665–676.

³³ Tchentsova, ‘The Synodal Decision’, pp. 93, 100–103, 105–106.

³⁴ Lourié, *Russian Orthodoxy*, pp. 173–235; Vetochnikov, ‘La “concession”’, pp. 38–41.

³⁵ Tchentsova, ‘The Synodal Decision’, pp. 101, 105.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101. Cf.: Lourié, *Russian Orthodoxy*, pp. 185, 201–204.

patriarch] prevails over everybody everywhere in village and diocese' (*predvosxodjašču vsex iže povsjudu pri selenii i eparxii*).³⁷

MODEL FOR THE SYNODAL DECISION OF 1686: THE ACT ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN OF PHILADELPHIA

When Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem, who initially protested against the insistence of the tsars' envoy to obtain the transfer of jurisdiction on Kyiv, received Nikita Alexeev for the second time, his position had changed radically. Speaking to the Muscovite legate Dositheos said that he had 'found in the rules that every bishop is at liberty to release from his diocese and give a blessing to another hierarch, and he would instigate Dionysios to do [it] according to the will of the tsars' majesty'.³⁸ What were the rules he alluded to, that permitted a hierarch to transfer a diocese 'under the blessing' of somebody else?

A functioning model can be found in the privileges conceded in 1651 to the metropolitan of Philadelphia, who obtained jurisdictional rights over the dioceses of Kerkyra (Corfu) and Cephalonia-Zakynthos. Indeed, a close analysis of this text reveals similarities extending well beyond the decoration mentioned above. It suggests that this previous decision had inspired the author of the 1686 provisions to settle the situation in the eparchy of Kyiv. The new rights of the Metropolitan Athanasios Vellerianos and his successors on the throne of Philadelphia (titular see in Asia Minor) were recorded in two synodal acts, now conserved in the Hellenic Institute in Venice: the first one was issued in June 1651 and is known as the 'synodal chrysobull' 16 B;³⁹ the second one is the already mentioned 'synodal chrysobull' 15 A written by Ioannes Karyophylles later in that year.⁴⁰ Both the intervention of the same scribe and the already mentioned common ornamental design link the 'synodal chrysobull' 15 A from Venice with the letter of Patriarch Dionysios IV to the tsars and thus with the synodal decisions of 1686 concerning the see of Kyiv. This similarity finds confirmation in the texts themselves as both the 'synodal chrysobull' 15 A and the synodal act for the metropolitans of Kyiv begin with the same *prooimion* alluding to the *Divine Names* of Dionysios the Areopagite, an author especially treasured by Dionysios IV.⁴¹

According to the text of the act of June 1651 (16 B), the Metropolitan of Philadelphia Athanasios Vellerianos was appointed patriarchal exarch. As such, he was entitled to wear mitre and *sakkos*, to ordain deacons and priests on Corfu and to

³⁷ RGADA, f. 52–1, 1687, no. 3, fol. 31r; Tchentsova, 'The Synodal Decision', p. 103.

³⁸ RGADA, f. 89–1, 1686, book 26, fol. 88v.

³⁹ Manousakas, *Unpublished Patriarchal Letters*, pp. 63–69, pl. 12.

⁴⁰ Tselikas, 'Catalogue', pp. 223–226, no. 26; Manousakas, 'The False Synodal Chrysobull', pp. 331–343, pl. 164, 168–169.

⁴¹ Tchentsova, 'The Synodal Decision', p. 105.

consecrate locally elected⁴² archbishops for Cephalonia and Zakynthos.⁴³ According to the later document concerning Venetian territories (15 A), which inspired even more clearly the 1686 act for the see of Kyiv, the metropolitan of Philadelphia was also entitled to transfer to the archbishop of Cephalonia and Zakynthos his right to ordain the bishop of Kythira, in order to remove the latter from the traditional authority of the metropolitans of Monemvasia residing in the Ottoman territory.⁴⁴ Thus, the metropolitan of Philadelphia not only obtained the right to ordain clerics outside of his own eparchy, but could even confer this same power to another hierarch in case he could not consecrate the bishop of Kythira personally.

Such an extension of the jurisdictional rights of the Metropolitan of Philadelphia Athanasios Vellerianos was a direct consequence of the War of Candia (1645–1669) between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. The Venetian government tried to prohibit all contacts with the high clergy living in the Ottoman Empire, unwilling to see its Orthodox subjects' loyalty swayed by its enemies.⁴⁵ The situation was similar in the diocese of Kyiv in the 1680s, as the state of war between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire impeded the pastoral care of the Patriarchate of Constantinople over this see.

In 1648 Athanasios Vellerianos returned from Crete to Venice via the Ionian Islands and ordained along the way, without any patriarchal authorization, the new Archbishop of Cephalonia and Zakynthos Makarios Panas, who had been elected in September 1647.⁴⁶ This ordination was approved by the Venetian authorities but was not confirmed by the Patriarch of Constantinople Ioannikios II, deposed in the autumn of 1648. The patriarchal see passed to Parthenios II, whose close relation with the sultan's court would have deterred him from blessing such a pro-Venetian outlook. However, immediately after the assassination of Parthenios II in 1651, Ioannikios was restored to the patriarchal throne, and he issued the first 'chrysobull' (16 B), which confirmed the right of the metropolitans of Philadelphia to consecrate the archbishops of Cephalonia and Zakynthos.⁴⁷ This solemn act paved the way for a considerable autonomy of the Orthodox population in the territories under Venetian rule, at least as far as episcopal ordinations were concerned. Once more the parallelism is obvious with the situation in the north. The elected Metropolitan of Kyiv Gideon (Swiatopołk-Czetwertyński) was consecrated in Moscow in November 1685 to end the long vacancy of the see of Kyiv, and the approval of the patriarch of

⁴² This provision has its direct parallel in the diocese of Kyiv with local elections of metropolitans.

⁴³ Veloudis, *Chrysobulls and Acts*, p. 50; Manousakas, *Unpublished Patriarchal Letters*, p. 66.

⁴⁴ Veloudis, *Chrysobulls and Acts*, p. 50; Manousakas, 'The False Synodal Chrysobull', pp. 333–334.

⁴⁵ In this time the government of the Republic of Saint Marc tried to expand the spiritual jurisdiction of metropolitans of Philadelphia with residence in Venice, to all the orthodox eparchies under Venetian political supremacy: Chiôtès, *Historical Memoirs*, pp. 144–146.

⁴⁶ Manousakas, 'The False Synodal Chrysobull', p. 339.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 339–340; Fonkič, *Studies in Greek Paleography*, p. 671.

Constantinople was received only after the return of the tsars' envoy, who brought the synodal acts and letters of 1686 giving *a posteriori* legitimacy to this ordination.

Thus, neither the situation in the territories outside the Ottoman borders, nor canonical solutions for them were original. The Patriarchate's solutions for the situation in its dioceses under the political domination of the Republic of Venice led to the promulgation of several similar regulating documents for the see of Kyiv. Wars of the Ottoman Empire with Venice or with the *Rzeczpospolita* created difficulties which gave rise to the conception of parallel solutions to bolster patriarchal control over the eparchies affected by these wars, and it is methodologically sound to analyse them jointly. It seems that the metropolitan of Philadelphia's new rights and the new regulations for the see of Kyiv were grounded in ancient canon regulating the activity of the so-called *chorepiskopoi* (*tōn chōrōn episkopoi*). These, like the later vicars or exarchs, exercised auxiliary functions alongside the bishops of a given eparchy to ordain clerics by proxy and permission of the actual ecclesiastical head of the eparchy (Synod of Ancyra 13; Synod of Antioch 10; VII Ecumenical Council 14). When Dositheos of Jerusalem mentioned to Nikita Alexeev the 'rules' he had found to solve the problem of the see of Kyiv, he probably referred to these canons which allowed the transfer of the patriarchal authority to another *archiereus* 'to give blessing' (that is to ordain) to suitable clerics.⁴⁸

Faced with the complex political situation of festering religious confrontations beyond and within the shifting Ottoman borders, the patriarchs had to address the Europe-wide confessionalization processes that aimed at achieving confessional unity and ecclesiastical discipline in order to enhance political homogeneity.⁴⁹ In the cases considered here, whether to re-establish direct control over canonical territories as in Kamyanets, or to handle the *de facto* interruption of this control as in Kyiv, along with all possibilities of legal pastoral care, the ecumenical patriarchs strove to find solutions in ancient precedents in order to answer the situation in a canonical way. The concession to the patriarchs of Moscow of the right to act as a substitute for their Constantinopolitan counterparts in ordaining metropolitans of Kyiv when the situation required, stemmed not only from the desire of the hetman Samoylovych and of the Muscovite government to have a free hand in settling church matters in the territories under their authority. It was also yet another application of the general strategy conceived by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to deal with complex political situations which endangered pastoral care in the lands outside the Ottoman borders, be it Venetian territories⁵⁰ or the see of Kyiv. By invoking ancient canons, the patriarch developed an instrument enabling him to delegate his right to consecrate bishop placed under his jurisdiction through proxies while safeguarding his ultimate symbolic authority and showing a high degree of compromise and canonical flexibility to accommodate political circumstances. Such measures, even though they were taken 'as a lesser evil' (*kat'oikonomian*), could contribute to improving ecclesiastical

⁴⁸ RGADA, f. 52–2, no. 668, 2v; f. 89–1, book 26, 1686, fols 87–88v; f. 52–1, 1687, no. 3, fol. 57 (ArxJuZR, pt. 1, t. 5, pp. 156–157).

⁴⁹ Brüning, 'Confessionalization', p. 67.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bayraktar-Tellan, 'Orthodox Church of Crete', pp. 198–214.

life and religious practices in the dioceses and retaining spiritual control over Orthodox communities. However, the concerns of the church authorities in Constantinople with continuing their 'control' over their flock were in opposition to the formation of social and confessional 'discipline' in each 'territorial' state where the Orthodox resided, and thus to the attempts at reorganization of the church or of the 'churches' in conformity with the local political interests of states. No wonder, then, that the metropolitan see of Kamyansky ceased to exist after the return of the territory of Podolia under the control of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as did the complicated system of liturgical commemorations, invented to protect the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople over the see of Kyiv. The Russian authorities were not ready to have in the lands under their rule a 'shared church jurisdiction' and preferred to fully integrate the eparchy into the Patriarchate of Moscow. *Slavia Orthodoxa*, which split into several confessional entities located in separate polities, thus experienced the challenges of the confessional era differently, depending on the local state-building processes. On the other hand, the experiences of the Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire were shaped by the local Ottoman realities, reminding us of the diversity of Orthodox communities' experiences in the era of confession- and state-building.

ABBREVIATIONS

ArhJuZR—*Archive of South-Western Russia. Vol. 1. Part 5 Acts, concerning the affair of the subordination of the Metropolitan See of Kyiv to the Patriarchate of Moscow (1620–1694)* [Arhiv Jugo-Zapadnoj Rossii. Č. 1. T. 5: Akty, odnosjaščiesja k delu o podčinenii Kievskoj mitropolii Moskovskomu patriarhatu (1620–1694)] (Kyiv, 1872)

IR NBU, f. 18—Institute of Manuscripts of the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine. Fund 18: Consistory of Greco-catholic metropolis. Collection of Metropolitan Andrej Szeptycki [Institut rukopisi Nacional'noj biblioteki Ukrainy im. V. I. Vernadskogo. F. 18: L'vovskaja greko-katoličeskaja mitropoličeskaja konsistorija. Kollekcija Šeptickogo]

MIET/IPA—National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation. The Historical and Palaeographical Archive [Morfōtiko Idryma Ethnikēs Trapezēs. Istoriko kai Palaografiko Archeio]

RGADA—Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts [Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj arhiv drevnih aktov]

SGGD—*Collection of State Acts and Treaties conserved in the State Collegium of Foreign Affairs*, eds A. F. Malinovskij, N. P. Rومjantsev, vol. 4 (in Russian) [*Sobranie gosudarstvennyh gramot i dogovorov, hranjaščihja v Gosudarstvennoj kollegii inostrannyh del, izd. A. F. Malinovskij, N. P. Rumjanceva. č. 4*] (Moscow, 1826)

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7. SHEIKH ÜL-ISLAM FEYZULLAH EFENDI AND THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCH AWETIK^c: A CASE OF ENTANGLED CONFESSIONAL DISCIPLINING?¹

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INTRODUCTION

When it was originally conceptualized by Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, ‘confessionalization’ was depicted as both a top-down and bottom-up process, involving at the same time the crystallization of doctrinal and ritual differences at the level of daily life practice, and the alliance between clerical and political authorities in ‘socially disciplining’ their subjects.² While exploring whether this historiographical concept is relevant to the Eastern Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire, several studies have shown the gradual but inexorable emergence of a ‘difference’ in the behaviour, devotional practices and self-perception of the faithful targeted by the Catholic apostolate, as well as the building of a renewed Orthodox identity in reaction to it.³ What has so far remained in the background is the question of whether the political and religious authorities collaborated in shaping a homogenous and exclusive confessional belonging of their subjects. Although the role of the central Ottoman authorities is often evoked in the reconstruction of the power struggles going on between rival Christian prelates, they appear more as context factors than as proper actors with a recognizable agency or a coherent policy. Through a detailed case study, in this paper I will address the role of the Ottoman authorities in the confessional conflicts within a particular Eastern Christian community—that of the

¹ I would like to thank M. Bais, E. Bayraktar Tellan, H. Çolak, E. Güçlü, E. Köse, P. Lucca, A. Ohanjanyan, R. Paun, N. Shafir, H. Shapiro and M. Ueno for their advice and help with translations, especially of Ottoman documents.

² A good historiographical discussion is provided by Lotz-Heumann, ‘The Concept of “Confessionalization”’.

³ Among many, see the seminal work of Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*; Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou eds, *Orthodox Constructions of the West*.

Armenians—while also shedding light on how the internal dynamics of different religious groups in the Empire were entangled and interconnected.

Among the sheikh ül-islams, the chief jurists of the Ottoman Empire who were also heads of the imperial ulema (religious scholars-cum-bureaucrats) hierarchy, Feyzullah is one of the best known and most studied. This is certainly due to the incredible amount of power and wealth he was able to accumulate during his tenure, as well as to his sudden and tragic end during the rebellion that deposed Sultan Mustafa II in 1703. The fact that he also authored two autobiographical memoirs has certainly helped to increase the scholarly interest in him. Scholars have considered Feyzullah an extraordinary yet paradigmatic example of how members of the Ottoman elite household could reach the highest peaks of power, as well as a late example of the ‘Kadizadeli’ influence on the government of the empire.⁴

What is less known and completely neglected by his biographers, is that Feyzullah also played a central role in the religious and social turmoil which affected the Eastern Christian communities of the Empire at the turn of the eighteenth century, interfering directly in the ecclesiastical organization of the Syriac and especially Armenian Church. In order to investigate this side of his political activity, it is necessary to take into consideration not only Ottoman sources, but also and above all Western and Armenian ones. In fact, the chronicles of Catholic missionaries, the correspondence of the French Ambassadors to the Sublime Porte and, especially, the documents relating to the Armenian bishop and later patriarch Awetik‘ Ewdokac‘i all highlight Feyzullah’s particular concern with the advances of the Catholic apostolate in the Ottoman Empire. These accounts reveal how the sheikh ül-islam became progressively aware of the need for a coherent confessional policy toward the Eastern Christian subjects, directed less at promoting conversions to Islam than at preventing their conversions to Catholicism: in fact, this latter risk was seriously considered a political danger for the unity and security of the Empire.

ERZURUM, 1690–1694

The first occasion when this issue became manifest to Feyzullah was in the city of Erzurum, in the 1690s. At that time, his career was at a dead end. Born into a family originally from the Karabakh region, which had moved to Erzurum in the 1630s, Feyzullah profited from being the disciple and son-in-law of Vani Mehmed Efendi (d. 1685), the famous preacher and counselor to sultan Mehmed IV (1648–1687), as well as one of the last prominent exponents of the conservative movement known as ‘Kadizadeli’. Thanks to this relationship and to his proximity to the Köprülü dynasty (particularly to Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, governor of Erzurum in 1659–1660 and, later

⁴ On Feyzullah’s biography, see Meservey, ‘Feyzullah Efendi’; Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*. For his autobiographical memoirs, see Derin, ‘Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi’nin’ and Türek, Derin, ‘Feyzullah Efendi’nin Kendi Kaleminden’; they are discussed by Nizri, ‘The Memoirs of Şeyhülislam’. On his role in promoting provincial fatwa compilations, see Burak, ‘Şeyhülislâm Feyzullah Efendi’. For the political context of Feyzullah’s actions and the causes of his death, see Abou El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion*.

on, grand vizier), Feyzullah had a quick career rise, being appointed in 1669 as tutor of the son of the sultan, Prince Mustafa.⁵ This position also granted him a place in the scholarly establishment of Istanbul. However, when his ascent to the top of the religious hierarchy of the Empire seemed already accomplished with the appointment as sheikh ül-islam in 1688, he suddenly lost the trust of the court and was dismissed, being sent back to Erzurum as a simple local qadi (judge).⁶

Erzurum, known as Karin in Armenian, was an obligatory passage point toward the Armenian and Persian highlands, and further away, to Central Asia and China. The caravan city was at the time the main urban center of the Eastern provinces of the Empire and one of its most flourishing commercial hubs, thanks to customs rights levied on goods coming from Persia, especially raw silk. The Armenians played a fundamental role in the economic life of the city, and they made up one third of the urban population (8,000 individuals among about 25,000 inhabitants). Because of its gateway role, an increasing number of Jesuit missionaries began to pass through the city, especially after the foundation of a French consulate in 1690. Under the skilled guidance of Father Jacques Villotte, the missionaries started to target the local Armenians, preaching the Catholic faith and opening a school for children that used rather innovative tools of proselytism, with great success.⁷ The same year, the French Ambassador in Constantinople Castagnère de Chateauneuf was able to obtain from Sultan Süleyman II the confirmation and extension of a firman explicitly granting the Jesuits the possibility to perform catechetical activities among Ottoman Christian subjects, though only as a result of the voluntary request of the latter and in case of absence or incapacity of the Eastern clergy to perform that task. It is necessary to point out that this was not at all a trivial concession, because in theory the strict interpretation of the Capitulations of 1673 (to which the command referred) justified the presence of the *religieux francs* on the Ottoman territory only for purposes related to the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the management of the Latin churches, and the religious assistance to European residents, especially to the 'diplomatic' personnel.⁸

The newly obtained privilege provoked the reaction of some of the Eastern prelates, who not only risked being replaced in the doctrinal education of the faithful, but also feared losing the pastoral and therefore economic control over their flock. In Erzurum, during Lent of 1692, a part of the Armenian clergy denounced the activity of the European missionaries and the complacency of the local bishop Aharon towards them, asking for his deposition and replacement. Under the leadership of a bishop residing in nearby Erzincan, Awetik^c Ewdokacⁱ, this faction decided to appeal

⁵ On the relationship between Vani, Fazıl Ahmed and Feyzullah, and more in general on the Kadizadeli movement, see Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp. 146–158 and 215–220.

⁶ Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*, chap. 1; Abou El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion*.

⁷ See Villotte, *Voyages d'un missionnaire*, pp. 204–206; ARSI, *Gallia*, vol. 104, fol. 245rv. The life of an Armenian from Erzurum converted by the Jesuits has been discussed in Shapiro, 'Falling Out of Love with the Franks'.

⁸ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 76, fols 232r–234r; Fleuriau d'Armenonville, *Estat présent de l'Arménie*, pp. 98–111. For the text of the Capitulations, see Bianchi, *Nouveau guide*, p. 269, art. 32 (added in 1673).

to the local Ottoman authorities, namely the governor of the Erzurum province (*vilayet*), Halil Pasha, and the qadi of the city, i.e. Feyzullah. It was easy to persuade the pasha to support the anti-Catholic reaction by stimulating his greed; as for Feyzullah, when he asked to examine the imperial firman held by the Jesuits, he sensed that the document had been obtained in a rather suspect way, and—in any case—against the general rules of the Capitulations. Meanwhile, the local Armenian community had progressively grown apart, rocked by the continuous doctrinal quarrels. Eventually, on May 2, an angry mob assaulted the Jesuit residence, crying: ‘We are faithful subjects of the Grand Signor, we do not wish to be Franks; if we must change our religion, we prefer to turn Muslims than to embrace the religion of the Franks’. The pasha and the qadi took advantage of this occasion to force the European missionaries to leave the city and take shelter in Yerevan.⁹

However, this temporary success of the Armenian Apostolic party did not last long. At that time, the problem of confessional clashes between Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Apostolic Armenians was still regarded by Ottoman authorities as an internal issue of the Christian communities of the Empire, at least insofar as it allowed the extortion of money in cases of disputes and rivalries. Between 1692 and 1694, French diplomacy took advantage of the Ottoman government’s weakness and instability during the last phases of the War of the Holy League to obtain from the Sultan the return of the missionaries to Erzurum and the punishment of those who had hindered them. Halil Pasha was beheaded on the ground of some injustices against the local population, whilst the French representative to the Ottoman army, Charles de Ferriol, made sure that bishop Awetik^c was arrested by the Ottoman soldiers in the summer of 1694 on the specious charge of having offended the king of France, ally of the Sultan. Shortly after, thanks also to some bribes paid by the French community of Pera to the local Ottoman officers, the prelate was taken to the fortress of Chania, on the island of Crete.¹⁰ Feyzullah had to impotently watch the return of the missionaries, while also being outraged by Villotte, who dared threaten him with

⁹ ARSI, *Gallia*, vol. 113, fols 20r–24r (letter of Villotte, 16 July 1693); Villotte, *Voyages d’un missionnaire*, pp. 213–229; Lucas, *Voyage*, pp. 353–357. Concerning the role of Feyzullah, see, in particular, the later report by the French Ambassador Chateauneuf: AN, AE, B/I, vol. 382, fol. 117rv, 20 February 1696. Indeed, Feyzullah was right concerning the irregularities of the imperial order (firman), since in the same letter the Ambassador wrote that it had been prepared by subordinate officers without the personal involvement of the Sultan and without informing the leaders of the Greek and Armenian Churches.

¹⁰ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 381, fol. 452v (letter of Ambassador Chateauneuf, 21 September 1694); vol. 382, fol. 112 (expenses of the French community of Pera for the arrest and exile of Awetik^c, 22 July and 27 August 1694); vol. 384, fol. 5r (Ferriol to Pontchartrain, 13 February 1702). For the order addressed to the Pasha of Candia and the *dizdar* of Chania, see BOA, MD, n° 103, p. 68 (beginning of Muharrem 1106/end of August 1694), quoted, with an incorrect reading of the year, in Köse, ‘Bir Hayalin Peşinde Yüz Yıl’, p. 56.

death.¹¹ He would not forget this humiliation and the sense of impunity acquired by Catholic missionaries thanks to the European protection.

Paradoxically, it was another Ottoman military defeat that offered him the opportunity for revenge and comeback. In September 1694, the Venetian forces landed on the island of Chios, a few miles from the Ottoman mainland.¹² The military occupation lasted only few months, but its consequences were long-lasting: the return of Chios to Ottoman hands coincided with the advent to the throne of the former pupil of Feyzullah, Mustafa II (1695–1703), who was determined to turn the tide of the war. Among his first acts, the new sultan recalled his old master to the court, now established in Edirne, appointing him once again to the post of the chief jurist of the Empire (April–May 1695).

TRoubles in Aleppo, 1695–1701

Feyzullah is known to have profited from his authority and from his personal influence over the Sultan to accumulate wealth and appointments for himself and his family. Considering only his offspring, his second-born Mustafa became chief judge (*qadiasker*) of Anatolia and later of Rumeli when he was still very young; another son named Ahmed became qadi in Bursa; and his fourth son was appointed preceptor of one of the sultan's sons. But what was deemed most scandalous by the contemporaries was the fate reserved for his firstborn, Fethullah, named *nakibüleşraf* (representative of the descendants of the Prophet) at the age of 26, and then designated in 1702 to succeed his father in the post of sheikh ül-islam. Moreover, far from remaining within the traditional limits of his office, Feyzullah took advantage of the complete reliance of the sovereign on his advice to greatly extend his own authority, to the point of being able to choose or dismiss pashas and viziers.¹³

Most pertinently to this story, however, he immediately resumed his battle against Catholic and European influence on the Eastern Christian communities of the Empire, this time from a position of strength. First of all, he took advantage of the Chios events—where the local Catholic community was considered the main culprit for having attracted the Venetians to the island and then having collaborated with them in the occupation regime—to underline the political danger represented by Catholic presence in the Ottoman Empire. Shortly after his ascent to the throne, Sultan Mustafa II signed a *hatt-ı şerif*, which obliged Eastern converts to Catholicism to return to their previous Church under threat of severe punishment, whilst the vast privileges obtained over time by the missionaries were reduced to those specifically

¹¹ APCP, fonds Constantinople, Saint-Louis de Pera, série E, doc. 16: 'Feyzoulla Effendi allora moufti d'Arzorum y pensa périr dans un tumulte que ces Pères excitèrent contre lui, et le Père Villotte Jésuite se faisant fort de l'autorité du Roy le menaça de le faire piller dans un mortier (suplice dont on punit les gens de loy qui y prévariquent en choses de conséquence)' (undated memorial, probably from 1710).

¹² Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios*.

¹³ Kellner-Heinkele, 'Family Politics', pp. 192–196 and Faroqhi, 'An Ulema Grandee'; see also Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, pp. 330–333 and Salzman, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 102–104.

mentioned in the Capitulations.¹⁴ Even if this command was issued before Feyzullah's official reappointment as sheikh ül-islam, the French Ambassador was pretty sure of his involvement.¹⁵ Indeed, when he was able to talk with Feyzullah in person, the latter explained very clearly the causes of his hostility towards Catholic propaganda: according to him, the missionaries were foreigners meddling in the internal affairs of the Empire 'against any law and rule of politics', trying to subvert the Eastern Christian subjects of the Sultan who already had their own religious and communal chiefs.¹⁶

Erzurum and Chios were not isolated cases: in those same years, another Christian community was being troubled by the Catholic apostolate. The Syriac church of Aleppo was split between the supporters of patriarch Butrus Shahbaddin, who had been educated by the Jesuits, and the partisans of his fiercely anti-Catholic rival to the throne, Jirjis. Since the 1680s, the two parties had fought each other in a bitter struggle, made of reciprocal accusations and appeals to the Ottoman authorities. Jirjis's faction, in particular, accused Shahbaddin of being a puppet of the missionaries, guilty of having altered the original Syriac liturgy by omitting the mention of saints Dioscorus and Barsauma (considered heretics by Rome) and, even worse, of replacing in their prayers the 'Servant of the two cities of Mecca and Medina' (the Ottoman Sultan) with the Pope. For this reason, on several occasions the Jacobites had taken to the streets against the patriarch, screaming that the missionaries wanted to divert the Christian subjects from obedience to the Grand Signor to put them under that of the Roman Pontiff, a sworn enemy of the Ottomans.¹⁷ These accusations were certainly tendentious, but nonetheless effective as they were based on some real elements, such as the Catholic faithful being religiously dependent on Rome (an external and rival authority) and economically supported by the French consuls, representatives of another kingdom. Indeed, every attempt of the Jacobite party to disgrace Shahbaddin was rebuffed by the missionaries thanks to the good offices of the French representatives and the bribes offered to local officers. With the appointment of Feyzullah, however, this system

¹⁴ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 382, fol. 240r (15 Rebi'ül-evvel 1107, 'c'est à dire à la fin du mois de Mai 1695'); an English translation in La Motraye, *Travels*, p. 393.

¹⁵ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 382, fol. 116r: 'Encore qu'il ne fust pas en dignité lorsque ce décret fut rendu, il est de notoriété qu'il ne laissoit pas d'entretenir souvent Sultan Moustafa, de qui il avoit esté le précepteur, et qu'il avoit eu mesme un secret commerce de lettres avec ce prince avant qu'il fust sur le trône' (20 February 1696). In a later report, Ambassador Chateaufeuf underlined the role played in this juncture also by another Ottoman officer, the Grand Dragoman Alexandros Maurokordatos, who was originally from Chios and knew well the Catholic world: Schefer, *Mémoire historique*, pp. 110–112. On the close relationship between Maurokordatos and Feyzullah, see Paun, "Well-born of the Polis", p. 66.

¹⁶ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 382, fol. 217v (letter of Ambassador Chateaufeuf to the King of France, 4 April 1696).

¹⁷ APCP, fonds Constantinople, Saint-Louis de Pera, série U, doc. 39 (20 Ramazan 1106 = April 1695); série R, doc. 29 (12 Recep 1107 = February 1696); D'Arvieux, *Mémoires*, p. 57. For an overview of the sectarian clashes in Aleppo, see Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, and Masters, 'The Millet Wars'.

ceased to work. When he was informed of the unrest taking place in Syria, he exploded with rage ('What—he cried—the Franks of Aleppo want to undertake the same thing as those of Erzurum?!'),¹⁸ and on the basis of the aforementioned *hatt-ı şerif* obtained the deposition of Shahbaddin, who left for Rome (March 1696). The subsequent efforts of European diplomacy to reappoint the Patriarch faced Feyzullah's stern opposition. When the Habsburg Emperor Leopold eventually managed to insert the reestablishment of Shahbaddin among the clauses of the Habsburg-Ottoman peace treaty, the sheikh ül-islam could not immediately oppose it, but shortly thereafter, in 1701, he fought back by sending to the qadi of Aleppo an order of the grand vizier commanding 'to search those among the Christians who were Franks, as if this name of Frank meant rebel to the *Gran Signore*'. Shahbaddin and other Syriac Catholic prelates were then arrested and sent in chains to the castle of Adana, where the former patriarch died a year later, probably poisoned.¹⁹

THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF CONSTANTINOPLE, 1701–1702

As we have seen, Feyzullah played a significant role in shifting the confessional balance of the Syriac Patriarchate; however, the Ottoman Christian community which suffered the most from his interference in internal sectarian struggles was undoubtedly the Armenian one. Indeed, his tenure as sheikh ül-islam coincided with an unprecedented outburst of confessional conflicts among the Armenian inhabitants of Constantinople.²⁰

At the turn of the eighteenth century, Catholic apostolate was achieving considerable success in the Ottoman capital (some European sources mention as many as 8,000 Armenian Catholics, but this number should be taken with caution), thanks in particular to the French diplomatic protection and the work of missionaries of Armenian origin educated in Rome.²¹ At the beginning, the latter cultivated good relations with the Apostolic hierarchy while tolerating a certain degree of ambiguity and interconfessional mixing (*communicatio in sacris*) on the part of the converts. One of the pupils of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, the preacher (*vardapet*) Xaç'atur Arak'elian, succeeded, for instance, in gaining the trust of the Patriarch of Constantinople Mxit'ar K'yurtistanc'i (1699–1700), to the extent that he was appointed as the latter's vicar, regularly preaching in the cathedral and organizing Armenian liturgies during which the name of the Roman pontiff was mentioned. During the same period, another Armenian Catholic monk destined to become famous, Mxit'ar of Sebastia, achieved great success with his sermons in the church of St. Gregory the

¹⁸ The episode is related in AN, AE, B/I, vol. 382, fol. 218r.

¹⁹ See the chronicle of the Carmelite mission of Aleppo, 1701–1702: Rabbath ed., *Documents inédits*, vol. 2, pp. 34–40. See also Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations*, p. 46.

²⁰ For a more detailed account of what follows, see Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, chap. 6, esp. pp. 320–359. See also Aral, *Les Arméniens catholiques*, pp. 72–83.

²¹ The estimate is contained in the report of the Apostolic Visitor David di San Carlo (3 August 1700), published in Hofmann, *Il vicariato apostolico di Costantinopoli*, pp. 78–83. Overall, the Armenian population of Constantinople amounted to around 40,000.

Illuminator in Galata.²² However, once the number of Catholic converts became considerable, Rome decided to progressively replace the previous supple strategy with a more intransigent attitude that aimed at the construction of clear-cut boundaries, preventing Catholic converts from entering the Armenian churches, and fueling confessional clashes through the publication of polemical works in Armenian. This fed into the political and economic polarization that already stirred the local community, with two parties struggling to take control of the Patriarchal seat by offering the highest sum to the Ottoman officers.²³

Events reached a climax during the summer of 1701, when the bishop of Edirne, Ep^{re}m Lap^{anc}i—who had already been patriarch twice (1684–86, 1694–98), each time deposed by rivals on good terms with the missionaries—denounced three Armenian priests as ‘Franks’ and rebels against his authority in front of the qadiasker of Rumeli. When the latter discovered that doctrinal issues relating to the Christian faith were at stake, he refused to condemn them, but, at that point, the anti-Catholic party resorted to Feyzullah. The sheikh *ül-islam* immediately took advantage of the opportunity and had the three priests incarcerated in the *Bagno* of Constantinople (the prison for galley slaves), persuading moreover the sultan to promulgate further repressive orders against conversions to Catholicism.²⁴ Since even the new Armenian patriarch of Constantinople Melk^{isedek} Suphi was compromised with the missionaries, Feyzullah came up with the idea of replacing him with his old Armenian ally in the fight against Catholicism, Awetik^c Ewdokacⁱ. The two had established a friendly relationship during their stay in Erzurum, and even before the troubles of 1692 the qadi had helped the bishop to get out of difficult situations *vis à vis* the Ottoman administration.²⁵ In 1696, soon after reaching the summit of the Ottoman

²² APF, SC, *Armeni*, vol. 5, fols 664, 674; *Acta* 1700, fol. 236 (17 August 1700); Hofmann, *Il vicariato*, p. 80; Nurikhan, *Il servo di Dio abate Mechitar*, p. 99; Č^{am}č^{ean}, *History of Armenia*, vol. 2, p. 437; Zekiyān, ‘La formazione e gli sviluppi’, pp. 643–664.

²³ Kévorkian, ‘L’imprimerie Surb Ējmiacin’, and Santus, ‘La comunità armena di Costantinopoli’, pp. 51–59. On social unrest among the Armenians of Constantinople, see Ivanova, ‘Armenians in Urban Order and Disorder’.

²⁴ APF, SC, *Armeni*, vol. 4, fols 724r–725v (*Relazione delle cose successe tra la Nazione Armena adì 25 agosto 1701*: this is the Italian translation of a report made by some Armenian Catholic prelates).

²⁵ According to Awetik^c’s own autobiography, when he was in Erzincan, he worked on the renovation of the Surb Mariam Astuacacin church, destroyed by an earthquake and then pillaged during the Janissary revolt: on that occasion, Halil Pasha (the aforementioned pasha of Erzurum) tried to falsely accuse him of having built an entirely new church. Awetik^c was able to produce the official permission he had obtained from the sultan and from qadi Feyzullah himself, who finally issued a fatwa in his favour. See Awetik^c, *History of Awetik^c vardapet from Tokat*, fol. 7r (original Armenian); BNF, NAF 7490, fols 253v–254r (French translation by his interpreter Pétis de la Croix); Brosset, ‘Autobiographie du vartabied Avétik^c’, pp. 9–10 (Brosset placed this episode in 1701 but he was wrong, since, as mentioned, Halil Pasha was beheaded in 1692). Feyzullah’s master and father-in-law Vani Mehmed issued some fatwas on the issue of Church restoration precisely while he was a mufti in Erzurum: Köse, ‘The fatwa collection’, pp. 70–73.

scholarly hierarchy, Feyzullah had even sought to use his powerful influence to end Awetik^c's exile.²⁶

Thinking that the bishop's hostility toward Catholic propaganda made him the perfect candidate for the role of patriarch, in September 1701 Feyzullah summoned him to the court to officially receive the appointment. This is confirmed by two particularly relevant Armenian documents. The first one is the patriarch's own autobiography, composed around 1710 during his imprisonment in France, where the events are related in this way: 'While I was preaching in Erzurum, there came from Constantinople a Tatar messenger of the Grand Turk, with a scripture from the sheikh ül-islam, carrying this message: "You, who are the monk Awetik^c, come to Istanbul, whose patriarchate and dependencies are granted to you". Osman, the pasha of Erzurum, called me and gave me the writing of the sheikh ül-islam. He read me the order of the Grand Turk: "You must go to Istanbul without delay, because there is an order of our master, and the people ask you to be patriarch of the Armenians".'²⁷ Even if Awetik^c's account is often biased, this version is confirmed by a contemporary chronicle of the confessional clashes that occurred within the Constantinopolitan community, written by one of the leading exponents of the Armenian Catholic party, the priest Komitas K^cēōmiwrčean.²⁸ According to him, during the trip from Erzurum to Constantinople, Awetik^c justified the extortion of supplies by local Armenians by saying: 'the Muslim sheikh ül-islam Feyzullah Efendi called me and I am going to him without delay'.²⁹

In fact, it took some months for Awetik^c to arrive: during his absence, Ep^crem profited from his closeness to the imperial court in Edirne to obtain the patriarchal throne for himself. Fearing that he would lose the recently obtained position for the umpteenth time, Ep^crem switched sides and tried to start negotiations with the Catholic missionaries and with the French ambassador, Charles de Ferriol, since they both had an enemy in common, Awetik^c (indeed, Ferriol was the one who had asked for the bishop's exile back in 1694). During the fall of 1701, the Capuchin

²⁶ By putting pressure on the French Ambassador to consent to his return: AN, AE, B/I, vol. 382, fol. 77v (Chateaufort to Pontchartrain, 3 June 1695). At the end Feyzullah managed to obtain Awetik^c's release even without the consent of the French monarchy.

²⁷ Awetik^c, *History of Awetik^c vardapet from Tokat*, fols 8v–9r. The text was published in installments in 1874 in the Armenian journals *Masis* and *Ararat*, but here I refer to the original manuscript. The name of the pasha is written as 'Iuman', but this is probably a scribal error and Pétis de la Croix rendered it as 'Osman'.

²⁸ Brother of the famous Eremia K^cēōmiwrčean (Eremia Çelebi, 1637–1695), who was then the leading intellectual of the Istanbul Armenian community, Komitas was a married priest in Surb Gēorg Church in Samatya (Sulumanastır). He had been converted to Catholicism in the 1690s by the work of the Jesuit missionaries, soon becoming a point of reference for the local Armenian Catholic community. For his later fate and some bibliographical references, see *infra*, fn. 59–60.

²⁹ K^cēōmiwrčean, *On the Conflict Arisen in These Last Times among our Nation*, f. 25r. A different manuscript of this chronicle has been published in episodes in the weekly magazine of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate of Constantinople between 1913 and 1914: for the excerpt quoted, see *Catholic Echo* [*Kat'olikē arjang*], 106 (1913), p. 485.

missionaries succeeded in gathering the two factions of the Armenian community around a negotiating table in order to elaborate a text of compromise, which would have assured peaceful relationships between Catholic and Apostolic faithful. Ep'rem never explicitly agreed to this 'treaty of concord', asking in return for promises of political protection that could not be granted. However, the rumor of his dealings with the missionaries came to the ears of Feyzullah and shortly after, in March 1702, Ep'rem was deposed and Awetik^c eventually ascended to the patriarchal throne.³⁰

PATRIARCH AWETIK^c, 1702–1703

According to the European missionaries based in Constantinople, Awetik^c's appointment outraged a good part of the Armenian elites who controlled the community, because 'he had made himself Patriarch against the ordinary ways, and had intruded thanks to the authority of the Turks'. Even though it was customary that the Ottoman authorities granted appointments and depositions in exchange for bribes and gifts, they normally maintained an appearance of formality and justice, requiring the competitors to present signed petitions accusing the incumbent patriarch of misdeeds or evoking the popular will as a reason for change. 'But Awetik^c, who had tried to reach the Patriarchate in the same way as his predecessors, having not found enough credit in the Nation to be the candidate of the majority, chose a different path...and founded his hopes entirely on the authority of the Mufti. The latter, in order to have someone dependent on him that could persecute the Catholics, had Ep'rem deposed and Awetik^c established in his place, to the acclamation of his seditious troops'.³¹

This version is not completely true to reality, since Awetik^c, once he arrived in the imperial capital, did struggle to get himself known and earn popular support, while presenting an official petition (*arzuhal*) requesting the patriarchate for himself. In any case, this petition (which was accepted by an imperial order of investiture dated 7 Şevval 1113/7 March 1702), confirms that the reason for his election was precisely his opposition to the Catholic apostolate and his ability to bring the faithful back to their original faith, as he had done previously in Erzurum: 'This servant brought the servants of the patriarch in Erzurum and a few from the Armenian community who had entered the Frank religion back to the path by advice (*nasihat*). And there are two communities (*tâ'ife*) of Armenians in Istanbul: one is the Armenian community; and the other community is composed of those who follow the Frank religion. And now the Armenian community wants us and asks us to advise them according to the rules of our rite. Because of that, it is requested from the exalted mercy of your highness that this servant partakes in the Patriarchate of Istanbul, and the

³⁰ Constant de Craon, 'Le projet d'union de 1701'. The correspondence of the Capuchin superior is a very rich (but often biased) source for the events taking place within the Armenian community: see APCP, Manuscript 1261. Several excerpts from the letters have been published by Kévorkian, 'Documents d'archives français'.

³¹ The quotations come from APCP, Ms. 1261, pp. 33–34 (letter of Hyacinthe-François de Paris, 6 June 1702).

command belongs to my excellent, prosperous and merciful Sultan. Avedik the monk'.³²

Only a few weeks later, in an encyclical letter addressed to the Armenian faithful of Constantinople, Awetik' railed against those who destroyed 'the laws and canons of our Holy Fathers', identifying them, on the one hand, with the violators of the ecclesiastical rules about marriage (bigamists, incestuous, conjoined with Muslims), and on the other with 'those leaning toward the customs of the Dyophysites' (*Erk-abnakac'*), namely Catholic converts. In this respect, the patriarch claimed that a growing number of people (especially women and youngsters) had taken the habit of attending the European churches and following their rite. Being separated from the communion of Christ and from the true Armenian Church, they were excommunicated and anathematized: 'Therefore, our dear priests and laymen who obey the laws of the Holy Illuminator [St. Gregory, founder and patron of the Armenian Church], always be careful and watch anyone who comes and goes to Frankish churches in order to arrest that man and deliver him to us, so that we can punish him accordingly.'³³ What is even more interesting is that Awetik' warned his flock that the duty to denounce the Catholics had been established by order of the Ottoman authorities, and that he had been made patriarch precisely for this purpose: 'I inform you, blessed obedient priests, that by high royal decree I have sent you the copy of the berat [stating] that every parish priest should inquire and examine his parishioners, and if you find such a man [a Catholic convert], you should send the register (*defter*) to us; and if you don't want to send it and inform us, once discovered we will punish you with the punishment due to him, *because for this reason they made us come from Erzurum, to make from this schism one flock and one shepherd under the faith of the Illuminator*.'³⁴ Those Catholics who wanted to repent and be once again accepted into the community should take a 'profession of orthodox faith' having an explicitly monophysite and anti-Roman stance. The text, written in a question-and-answer format that resembled a catechism, asked the penitent to confess the single nature of Christ, to anathematize the Council of Chalcedon and Pope Leo, and to promise to no longer associate with the European and Armenian Catholic missionaries. In fact, the text is

³² BOA, Bâb-ı Deferi Piskoposluk Kalemı, 2/48: see Köse, 'Bir Hayalin Peşinde Yüz Yıl', p. 57. Some words are misspelled, and the text of the petition presents serious grammatical issues that prevent a literal translation: according to Köse, who was kind enough to share with me a photo of the document, they could derive from Awetik's scarce mastery of Turkish, but they may also stem from scribal mistakes in copying the petition. I warmly thank G. Börekçi, E. Gara, E. Güçlü and Nir Shafir for translating this text for me. The imperial order appointing Awetik' can be found in AMAE, 134CP/8 (Correspondance Politique, *Turquie – Supplément*, vol. 8, 1701–1711), fol. 41r (notification to the qadis of Istanbul and Edirne). In his autobiography, Awetik' recalls the sheikh ül-islam's support to his petition, but he points out that he had previously obtained the confirmation and blessing of his appointment by the *kat'otikos* of Etchmiadzin Nahapet: Brosset, 'Autobiographie', pp. 13–15.

³³ APF, SC, *Romania*, vol. 4, fols 197r–198r; 197v. The text of the letter was copied on 28 April 1702 by Xaç'atur Aṙak'elian, who sent along also a Latin translation (fols 193r–196v, 199r).

³⁴ '...zirē əzmez vasn aysm patčari Ērzurumma het berel etun t'ē zays erkčhut'iwns mi hōt ew mi hoviw Lusaworč'adawan linik'...' (*ibid.*, fol. 198v).

much more detailed than that, providing us with what was considered the complete set of beliefs one was supposed to hold to be considered a true, orthodox Apostolic Armenian.³⁵

If Awetik^c had the mission to bring the whole Armenian Ottoman community back under 'the confession of St. Gregory the Illuminator' (*Lusaworč'adawan*),³⁶ his means were not as straightforward as one may think. On the one hand, he started to pursue a patronage policy similar to that of his protector Feyzullah, by replacing a good number of high Armenian prelates with his own trusted men, almost invariably arguing that the former had compromised themselves with the Frankish missionaries. This is the case with the replacement of the *marhasa* of Amasya and Merzifon Galust Kaycak with Awetik^c's own *vekil* (vicar) Yovhannēs, or with the deposition of the bishop of Hasankale-Erzurum.³⁷ The first and most striking example is the one concerning the patriarchate of Jerusalem, which Awetik^c managed to attain in July 1702 by taking advantage of the financial difficulties of the local Armenian monastery of St. James, but also by accusing the incumbent patriarch Minas Hamdec'i of Catholic practices, like 'celebrating Mass on days other than Saturday and Sunday, mixing water in the consecrated wine and consenting to the letter of Pope Leo to the Council of Chalcedon'.³⁸ Indeed, as we can learn from the Imperial berat and firmans he obtained on that occasion, Awetik^c received the appointment on two conditions: that he should pay 11,900 *akçes* and that he should discipline those who converted to the 'Frank religion'.³⁹ In a later collective petition of the Armenian community of Jerusalem against the union of the two patriarchates, it is specified that this happened at the time of Feyzullah Efendi, and the importance of the sheikh ül-islam's intercession seems confirmed by the choice of the patriarch to reside close to the Imperial court in Edirne, ruling both Constantinople and Jerusalem through delegates (*vekil*).⁴⁰ The

³⁵ The text is preserved only in a contemporary Latin translation dated August 1702: ARSI, *Gallia*, vol. 104, f. 285r–286v: 'Formula fidei pro iis qui de errore ad veritatem redeunt instituta a Pseudo-Patriarcha Armenorum Constantinopoli sub ... Augusti 1702'.

³⁶ On the value of this expression, see A. Ohanjanyan's contribution in this volume.

³⁷ Köse, 'İstanbul Ermeni Patrikliği'nin', p. 13. Among the documents found on Awetik^c in 1706, when he was kidnapped and sent to France by order of the French Ambassador Charles de Ferriol, one may find many other examples of the same kind: see the description provided by Pétis de la Croix (BNF, NAF 7490, fols 309v–310r, 312r) and Brosset ('Autobiographie', col. 70–71, 77, 87–88). Some of the originals are now in AMAE, 134CP/8, fols 53r–57r.

³⁸ Brosset, 'Autobiographie', col. 14–15, fn. 50 and col. 17–18, fn. 59; Örmanean, *National History*, vol. 2, col. 2710; Č'amč'ean, *History of Armenia*, vol. 2, pp. 442–443.

³⁹ AMAE, 134CP/8, fol. 43r and ff. The Ottoman documents catalogued by Brosset ('Autobiographie', col. 69–75) and Pétis de la Croix (BNF, NAF 7490, fol. 309r and ff.) included among others the berat and firman sent to the qadi of Kudüs (Jerusalem) in Safar and Rebi'ül-evvel 1114 H. (July–August 1702), and the imperial orders addressed to Ottoman governors and officers in order to help Awetik^c against Catholic proselytism (18 Rebi'ül-evvel 1114 [H.], 12–13 August 1702: the qadis of Constantinople and Edirne should find, prosecute and punish the Armenian priests who had converted to the Roman religion).

⁴⁰ BOA, Bâb-ı Defteri Piskoposluk Kalemi, 4/49 (13 July 1710), quoted by Köse, 'Bir Hayalin Peşinde Yüz Yıl', p. 73.

activism of Awetik^c in demanding the dismissal or punishment of other prelates is also evident if we consider that among the patriarchs of Constantinople who occupied the office in the first fifteen years of the eighteenth century, he was the one who presented most petitions to the Porte, in a quite disproportionate way.⁴¹

On the other hand, during the first months of his tenure, the patriarch acted in a rather ambiguous way, showing, for instance, a more conciliatory attitude and resuming the negotiations with the Capuchin missionaries of Constantinople for the elaboration of an agreement between the two factions of the Armenian community. In September 1702, the Patriarch agreed to sign the ‘treaty of concord’, which proclaimed the end of confessional hostilities and the cessation of further inquiries into the personal faith of community members. In return, Awetik^c was supposed to obtain the reappearance of Catholics in the Armenian churches under his jurisdiction and an important sum of money.⁴²

Whether this move was just a ploy to get money with which to pay his debts, or he was afraid of losing the support of Feyzullah and being discharged like Ep^crem, Awetik^c did not respect the agreements, and, as soon as he had the possibility, he imprisoned some Catholic Armenian prelates in his residence. This turnaround aroused the violent reaction of his opponents: a menacing crowd went to Edirne and assaulted the house of the Patriarch, freeing the priests and beating and mistreating Awetik^c himself. He thus deemed it necessary to denounce the incident to the grand vizier, but in so doing he worsened the situation: Daltaban Mustafa Pasha, recently appointed to the post of Grand Vizier, had the chiefs responsible for the riot arrested, but he put Awetik^c in jail too, outraged that the patriarch had dared to act as a jailer of the subjects of the sultan. At that time, Feyzullah was far from Edirne and only upon his return, about a week later, could he free the patriarch and restore him to power.⁴³

This anecdote allows us to underline another important aspect, namely that the internal affairs of the Armenian patriarchate ended up becoming a stage for the larger power struggle opposing the sheikh ül-islam and other higher Ottoman officers. We have other similar evidence: for example, in a letter dated 8 May 1703, the Armenian missionary Xaç^catur Arak^cean openly stated that apart from the sultan, ‘deceived by Feyzullah’, the other members of the Imperial court and

⁴¹ Even if Awetik^c reigned for roughly 20% of the whole period considered, his petitions represent more than 40% of the total (30 out of 72): see Köse, ‘İstanbul Ermeni Patrikliği’nin’, p. 7.

⁴² The text of the ‘Pacta pro pace Armenorum’ with a Latin translation of Awetik^c’s letter of acceptance (dated 10 September 1151 according to the Armenian calendar) is in APCP, Ms. 1261, pp. 36–38 (letter of Hyacinthe, 6 October 1702).

⁴³ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 384, fols 108r-108v (Blondel to Pontchartrain, 31 October 1702) and fols 112r-112v (Ferriol to Pontchartrain, 3 November 1702); APF, *Acta*, CG 30 April 1703, fols 111v–112r; Čamč^cean, *History of Armenia*, vol. 2, pp. 444–446.

bureaucracy did not share the sheikh ül-islam's crusade against Catholicism, and even tried to smooth out the tensions.⁴⁴

The protection afforded to Awetik^c by Feyzullah was not destined to last forever, and the bond between the two, in the long run, proved counterproductive for the patriarch. In July 1703, the mutiny of a Janissary unit (*cebeci*) demanding payment ignited a large uprising in Constantinople, fueled by the dissatisfaction of the inhabitants with the sultan's absence from the capital, and by the general hostility toward the excessive authority acquired by the sheikh ül-islam.⁴⁵ At the end of August, the army of the rebels marched to Edirne and deposed Mustafa II, appointing his brother Ahmed as the new sultan. Feyzullah tried to escape but was captured, tortured to confess where he had hidden his wealth, publicly humiliated, and finally killed in an atrocious manner. According to both Ottoman and Armenian contemporary accounts, the Christian populace took part in the last hours of the 'Kizilbash müfti' (as the rebels called him),⁴⁶ while some Western sources even relate that Feyzullah had to parade in a mock Christian funeral procession accompanied by some Greek or Armenian priests.⁴⁷ Deprived of his protector, Awetik^c came close to sharing the same fate. Arrested in Üsküdar, the former patriarch was incarcerated at the Seven Towers, from where he was later moved into the much safer prison island of Arvad, in front of the city of Tartus, in Syria.⁴⁸ Only one year later he succeeded in regaining the patriarchal throne by promising an enormous amount of money to the Ottoman treasury, but this is another story.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

The collaborative relationship between Feyzullah and Awetik^c in the repression of the Catholic apostolate within the Armenian community is a striking and almost

⁴⁴ APF, SC, Armeni, vol. 5, f. 38r: 'Videtur, excepto magno Muphdi et magno Domino ab eo decepto, non placuisse aliis Magnatibus huius regionis ista irrationabilis persecutio...' On the complicated relationship between Daltaban and Feyzullah, which led to a failed attempt to poison the sheikh ül-islam and eventually to the dismissal and death of the grand vizier, see Cantemir, *The History*, pp. 417–422, 430–432; and Meservey, 'Feyzullah Efendi', pp. 103–106.

⁴⁵ For an analysis of the causes, see Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion*. A contemporary account of the rebellion is provided by K'ēōmiwrčean, *History of the Ottomans who revolted against their sovereign*; see Kévorkian, 'Un témoignage arménien anonyme'.

⁴⁶ This was the term used to refer to the Shi'ite supporters of the Safavids, enemies of the Sunni Ottomans: in a more general sense it had acquired the derogatory meaning of 'heretic', or traitor. The Iranian origin of Feyzullah's family and his reputation as a 'sorcerer' must have played a role in the choice of the term. See the text of the 'Janissary Ballad' published in appendix to Zarinebaf, *Crime and Punishment*, p. 184, and the similar words attributed to the rebels by Komitas: 'This Łəzəlpəš [Kizilbash] wants to change our faith and religion and to reign himself!' (K'ēōmiwrčean, *History of the Ottomans*, fol. 3r).

⁴⁷ La Motraye, *Travels*, p. 245; Kévorkian, 'Un témoignage arménien', pp. 244–245.

⁴⁸ It seems that the French Ambassador played a role in soliciting his exile: AN, AE, B/I, vol. 384, fol. 202v (11 November 1703) and fol. 265rv (12 June 1704).

⁴⁹ Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, p. 345 ff.

exceptional example of direct Ottoman interference into confessional matters of a subject Christian community. The Patriarch's supporters were so grateful for the powerful protection granted to Apostolic Orthodoxy by the sheikh ül-islam that, according to Komitas K'ēōmiwrčean, they had no scruples in comparing Feyzullah—a Muslim!—to Saint Gregory, the Illuminator of the Armenian nation.⁵⁰ Indeed, the extent of Feyzullah's support to the Armenian and Syriac Churches in their struggle against Catholic propaganda was considered so unusual and remarkable at the time, that at a certain point a rumor began to circulate, that before converting to Islam he had been a monophysite Christian.⁵¹ Already in 1696, the French Ambassador was amazed at Feyzullah's knowledge about theological quarrels among the Christian Churches, underlining that this was not at all a common feature among Ottoman officers.⁵² Five years later, in a formal complaint addressed to the Sublime Porte against him, the French diplomacy remarked that 'it is surprising that the Mufti Efendi publicly condemns the Law of the Emperor of France, of Germany, of the Kings of Spain and Poland, and of several other powerful sovereigns of Europe, and that *he meddles into the discussion of our particular sects as a theologian expert in our religion*, to condemn the rite of all these great princes and to approve that of some Armenians from the dregs of the people; this means to unleash a war of religion and to make the Catholic faith and the name of Franks odious and despicable in this Empire.'⁵³

As for Awetik', one might speculate about the degree of his 'confessional awareness', since on some occasions he proved interested, more than anything else, in gaining power and money: we have several examples of how the confessional disputes within the Armenian community were instrumentalized for personal enrichment or for obtaining the patriarchal throne. As even Western observers admitted,

⁵⁰ 'Again, he [i.e. Yovhannēs Izmirç'i, the *vekil* of Awetik'] was saying in the sermon that the banner and honor of our Saint Illuminator were thrown to the ground and trampled by Catholics, but our Mufti, *being a second Illuminator for us* [*krkin Lusaworič' eteal mez*], exalted again the fallen glory [lit. horn] of our Illuminator and his honor' (K'ēōmiwrčean, *On the Conflict Arisen in These Last Times among our Nation*, f. 37r; *Catholic Echo* 117 (1913), p. 663). This claim may be a polemical exaggeration of Komitas, but the references to Grigor Lusaworič' were indeed part of the confessional rhetoric of the time (see Ohanjanyan, 'Creedal Controversies', and her essay in this volume): moreover, Komitas reports that Awetik's supporters referred to him as the 'Second Illuminator' (*erkrord Lusaworič'*, in K'ēōmiwrčean, *On the conflict*, fol. 18r; and *krkin Lusaworič'*, as the author himself defines Awetik' in *History of the Ottomans*, fol. 16r, either in a sarcastic way or making allusion to the patriarch's own claims).

⁵¹ 'Si dice che costui fu di nascita christiano, della setta di Giacobiti, e che facendosi Turco, fu maestro del figliuolo di Mahumetto III, addomandato Mustafa. Subito che Mustafa fu fatto Sultano, chiamò da se ed innalzò il suo maestro, e lo fece gran Mufti...era amico delli eretici Soriani, detti Giacobiti, e come questi li davano gran denari, li favoriva in ogni occasione' (from the journal of the Carmelite mission of Aleppo, 1703, Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. 2, pp. 42–43).

⁵² AN, AE, B/I, vol. 382, fol. 215v (21 October 1696).

⁵³ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 383, fols 278v–279r: 'il est surprenant que le Moufty Effendi...entre dans la discussion de nos sectes particulières comme un Docteur très éclairé dans notre Religion' (French translation of Ferriol's letter to the grand vizier, 28 July 1701).

when the Patriarch needed to find money to repay the debts incurred to obtain the berat, he did not hesitate to target both Catholic and anti-Catholic magnates within the community, and his sometimes ambiguous behavior suggests that he might have been more accommodating to the missionaries had he not feared Feyzullah's reaction.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, without diminishing the importance of the economic factor, it is possible to imagine that the close contact between the Patriarch and the sheikh ül-islam had in fact produced a common vision of confessional relations, a shared moral and rhetorical vocabulary. As was mentioned above, when in 1702 Awetik^ç presented a petition to obtain the patriarchal throne, his main claim was his skill in persuading Catholic converts to come back to Apostolic orthodoxy 'by means of advice/admonition' (*nasihat*). Since we know that Awetik^ç's request was then fostered and backed by Feyzullah, I find it interesting to note that the same Islamic concept of *nasihat* (from the hadith *al-dīn al-naṣīḥa*, 'Religion is advice', related by Muslim and Nawawi) is evoked at the beginning of a set of commands issued almost at the same moment by Feyzullah. There, the sheikh ül-islam ordered the governors, qadis and muftis of different provinces across the Ottoman Empire to examine the orthodoxy of Imperial officers and subjects, as well as the functioning of the main educational institutions in view of a generalized education of the masses, in what has been seen as an ambitious but belated attempt of 'Sunnitization'.⁵⁵ Whether this is just a coincidence or a symptom of something more complex, it is a matter that deserves further examination. However, it must be stressed that this is neither the first nor the only case in which Armenian writers of the time resorted to Islamic concepts, or even lexicon. For example, Awetik^ç himself employed several Turkish loanwords in the above-mentioned encyclical letter of 1702, such as when he labeled the 'faith/religious community' of the true Armenian believers as *mēsēp*, from Turkish *mezhep* (Ar. *madh-hab*).⁵⁶

⁵⁴ On 31 October 1702 the secretary of the French ambassador wrote that Awetik^ç picked on all his countrymen, 'tant catholiques qu'hérétiques', trying to get from them the money promised to the Ottoman authorities in exchange for the patriarchate of Jerusalem. The same concept was reiterated two months later: 'on peut dire la persécution est maintenant contre les Arméniens riches, car sans distinction de catholique et d'hérétique, on arouse des avanies à tous ceux qui ont de l'argent...' (AN, AE, B/I, vol. 384, fols 106, 120). In his autobiography, written while imprisoned in France, Awetik^ç tried to present himself as a pacifying spirit and even well-disposed toward Catholicism, against the evidence presented so far: for a thorough examination of this claim, see Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, pp. 349–359.

⁵⁵ The commands, dated beginning of Zilhicce 1113 (April-May 1702), are preserved in BOA, MD, n°112, 724–757 (pp. 208–210): a condensed translation may be found in Abou El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State*, pp. 51–52, 91–97. A detailed discussion and transcription of the orders can be found in Göcen, *An Attempt at Confessionalization*. On the moral-political value of the concept of *nasihat* and on Feyzullah's order, see now Shafir, 'Moral Revolutions' (who prefers to speak of a 'pietistic movement'); more in general, see Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization'.

⁵⁶ APF, SC, *Romania*, vol. 4, fol. 197v ('our *mēsēp* is the *mēsēp* of the Holy Illuminator'). In the Latin translation the word is rendered as *fides* (fol. 195v). At the time, Ottoman Turkish exerted a heavy influence on the Armenian spoken in Istanbul.

What seems more certain is that the reasons behind Feyzullah's behavior were ultimately political, as he regarded the conversions of Ottoman subjects to Catholicism as a sign of disobedience to the patriarchs appointed by the sultan, and the activity of European missionaries as a danger for the social (and fiscal) order of the Empire. From this point of view, if he had lived long enough, he would surely have found a confirmation of his fears in the behavior of the French ambassador Ferriol, who in agreement with some Jesuit missionaries went so far as to abduct and forcefully take Awetik^c to France at the end of his second term as patriarch (1706). This unprecedented event further exacerbated sectarian tensions.⁵⁷ In an attempt to force the French ambassador to reveal where the patriarch had been taken, the grand vizier Çorlulu Damat Ali Pasha (1706–1710) arrested the main Catholic prelates still at large, while the following year the Armenian clergy began to refuse administering the sacraments to those faithful who did not publicly condemn Pope Leo the Great as a dyophysite heretic.⁵⁸ The situation worsened even further when in 1707 the Ottoman authorities promoted the appointment of Yovhannēs of Izmir as patriarch of Constantinople. The former vicar of Awetik^c was able to push the vizier to an escalation of violence against the Catholic Armenians: several of them, already imprisoned in the *Bagno*, were condemned to death. In the end, everyone escaped the executioner by converting to Islam, except for one who did not want to deny his faith: the already mentioned Komitas K^cēōmiwrčean.⁵⁹ Beheaded on 5 November (25 October according to the Julian calendar), Komitas was immediately recognized as a martyr by the local Armenian Catholics, enjoying a long-lasting fame of holiness, officially recognized by the Roman Church only in 1929. However, since the beginning, the veneration of his memory fostered a popular devotion, which canceled all the ambiguous nuances of his life by presenting him as a victim of the hatred of the 'Heretics' against the followers of the Roman Pontiff. In this sense, Komitas's martyrdom was an important building block in the construction of the Armenian Catholic confessional identity.⁶⁰

In the end, we have to acknowledge that while Feyzullah's project of mass education and moral scrutiny of the Muslim subjects of the Empire was cut short by his death, his view of the need for clear-cut confessional borders between the religious communities of the Empire proved to be long-lasting. This new awareness also met

⁵⁷ Brosset, 'Autobiographie', col. 32 ff.; Ravaisson ed., *Archives de la Bastille*, vol. XI, pp. 477–548. The kidnapping of Awetik^c and its consequences are described in detail in Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, pp. 339–365.

⁵⁸ APCP, Ms. 1261, letter of 22 July 1707, pp. 76–77.

⁵⁹ AN, AE, B/I, vol. 385, fol. 215: Ferriol to Pontchartrain, 8 November 1707. See also the description of Komitas's death attached to another letter from Ferriol published by Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. 1, pp. 129–130, as well as the report by Hyacinthe: APCP, Ms. 1261, 7 November 1707 (pp. 87–95). The life of Komitas is narrated, in an openly hagiographic way but with plenty of information, by Riondel, *Une page tragique*. On his legacy, see Shapiro, 'Afterlives of Komitas K^cēōmurchean'.

⁶⁰ In fact, even his complicated process of beatification became intertwined with the main events in the history of the Armenian Catholic Church: see Santus, 'Un beato martire'.

with the parallel stiffening of confessional identities carried on by Church leaders through the progressive banning of the previously allowed phenomena of cross-confessional interactions: contrary to the long-established tradition of *communicatio in sacris*, now it was no longer possible to disguise one's own confessional affiliation; rather, it was necessary to publicly take side, even if this involved retaliation or exclusion from the community.⁶¹ In the perspective of a multi-confessional state like the Ottoman Empire, confessional disciplining did not necessarily mean adherence to a single creed, but rather enforcement of community borders and obedience to the official, state-sponsored ecclesiastical hierarchy.

ABBREVIATIONS

AN, AE = Archives Nationales, Affaires Étrangères (Paris)

AMAE = Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (La Courneuve)

APCP = Archives Provinciales des Capucins (Paris)

APF, SC = Archivio storico di Propaganda Fide, Scritture riferite nei Congressi (Rome)

ARSI = Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Rome)

BOA, MD = Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Mühimme Defterleri (Istanbul)

BNF, NAF = Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises (Paris)

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⁶¹ In 1729, Rome clearly stated that for no reason Eastern Catholics could keep attending the churches and liturgies of the 'Schismatics'; in 1755–56, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople Kyrillos Karakallos condemned *communicatio in sacris* between Orthodox and Catholic faithful, while also sanctioning the non-validity of the Roman Catholic Baptism. For a more extensive discussion of this argument, see Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, pp. 177–196, 229–232.

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8. KABBALISTIC FRATERNITIES OF OTTOMAN GALILEE AND THEIR CENTRAL EUROPEAN MEMBERS, FUNDERS, AND SUCCESSORS

CARSTEN WILKE

The breakthrough of the mystical movement in early modern Judaism appears to have been a rather strange anomaly. While medieval Kabbalah consisted of esoteric lore that was jealously guarded by small circles of initiates, its place in Jewish culture started to change after the printing of its major work, the *Zohar*, in 1558.¹ The Zoharic interpretations that emerged from a small circle in Safed in Ottoman Palestine inspired a diaspora-wide messianic ideology in the seventeenth century and became part of a mass creed in the eighteenth. Kabbalistic texts and ideas traveled not only in a geographical sense from medieval Catalonia to Italy, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Eastern Europe, but they also penetrated all layers of diaspora society and transformed the education, religious rituals, social hierarchies, and even the physical lives and deaths of early modern Jewish men and women. In the Jewish religious consciousness, this cultural transformation brought about a shift from a medieval world structured by philosophical dogma and Talmudic dialectics to a cosmic drama governed by competing divine impersonations, angels, and demons.

In this article, I want to underscore the importance of spatial mobility, and especially how such mobility was tied to Ottoman-Habsburg relations, during the first phase of this cultural transformation. Rather than assuming a star-like spread of a message or idea from the center to the periphery, I will put an emphasis here on the effects of cross-imperial interaction between Ottoman Sephardim and Central European Ashkenazim.² More specifically, I will describe and examine three major aspects of this line of communication, namely, scholarly contacts, economic support, and ritual practice, which will make me focus on the members, the funders, and the successors of the Galilean Kabbalistic circles. In my discussion of the emergence of trans-imperial Kabbalistic fraternities I will also reflect on how this phenomenon was in

¹ Huss, *The Zohar*.

² Regarding Jewish mobility and internal pluralism, see the seminal essays by Idel, 'On Mobility'; and Lehmann, 'Rethinking Sephardi Identity'.

dialogue with—and yet distinct from—contemporary confessional dynamics in early modern Habsburg and Ottoman Empires.

THE KABBALISTIC REVOLUTION IN LIGHT OF THE CONFSSIONALIZATION PARADIGM

Taking note of the Kabbalistic revolution that emerged from Safed, Heinrich Graetz reflected in 1866 about an awkward fact: centuries earlier, at a time when Christian Europe was being transformed by the rationalist spirit associated with the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment, Jewish intellectual history was headed in the opposite direction. After the intense Jewish participation in medieval scientific and literary culture, sixteenth-century mysticism would turn the following two centuries into an obscurantist period. Graetz stated that it was only at this time that ‘Jewry entered its peculiar medieval phase of stupid credulity, while in the European world, only some belated traces of that nightly horror lingered on’.³ Graetz observed that the mystical fervor in Safed coincided quite exactly with the apex of Jewish power inside the Ottoman Empire, which can be attributed to the influence that the Sephardi businessman and diplomat Dom Joseph Nasi held at the court of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574). Graetz found himself asking the following question: ‘Did perhaps the self-conceited feeling of security, with which the Jews of Turkey were imbued under their powerful protectors, boost this monstrosity?’⁴

In a revolt against the nineteenth-century rationalist bias, Gershom Scholem attributed to Jewish mysticism an eminently creative and in some sense therapeutic force. He saw its motivation not in the hubris of imperial expansion but in the effects of a catastrophe that had occurred in another time and place: the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. This trauma was digested, after a long incubation period, in the framework of the Safedian mystical theology of evil and exile, which discovered a meaning in the ‘basic instability’ of Jewish existence.⁵ In another long process, the mystical and messianic trends were to challenge rabbinic authority structures and open the way for modern secular movements.

Scholem’s narrative of early modern Jewish history maintains the opposition between philosophy and myth as well as the optimistic assumption that antirationalist forces only prevail when an incisive experience of collective suffering has unsettled the reasonable order of ideas.⁶ This conception of irrationalism as an emotional balm in times of crisis and misery has been questioned by recent research. David B. Ruderman, for example, has demonstrated that Jewish mystical speculations were very much part of the Renaissance environment, especially in Italy, and that they were perfectly compatible with scientific interests and

³ Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, p. 436.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 454–455.

⁵ Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi*, p. 67.

⁶ Ruderman, *Revisiting the Notion of Crisis*.

interreligious communication.⁷ The same is true for sixteenth-century messianic movements.⁸ There is even a close structural parallel between physical scientific principles and the Kabbalistic speculations on the heavenly world,⁹ which has brought some scholars to see esotericism as an alternative path to scientific modernity.¹⁰ But Kabbalah was modern also insofar as its teachings and rituals have shaped and unified Judaism as a religious community. Attentive to the confession-building forces of mystical sectarianism, Roni Weinstein has recently focused his attention on the seventeenth-century emergence of a ‘Jewish ecumene’: a diaspora-wide communication network that produced a common legal system, theology, historical narrative, literary heritage, and folklore.¹¹

Can this integration of Jewish diaspora cultures be seen as a part of the confessionalization process by which historians of Christianity had reinterpreted the so-called Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation? When it was formulated in West Germany during the 1980s, the confessionalization thesis endeavored to overcome the Lutheran and Calvinist stereotypes of Catholic atavism by detecting a set of common features in the three competing churches of the Holy Roman Empire. All three, it was claimed, developed religious systems of institutional cohesion, doctrinal individuality, and symbolic identity within a political framework built on state control and social discipline.¹²

Recommended by its ecumenical promise, the confessionalization thesis has more recently been applied to the Islamic empires¹³ and even to minority groups such as the Eastern Christian churches¹⁴ and the German Jews of the Reformation age.¹⁵ Unsurprisingly, the extension of the concept has progressively turned it into a ‘commonplace universal’. According to anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, ‘in the social sciences, paradigms are not outmoded because they explain less and less, but rather because they explain more and more—until, all too soon, they are explaining just about everything’.¹⁶ In this case, the confessionalization thesis is now being used to explain any ‘intensification of religious commitment’ that took place during the early modern period.¹⁷ When speaking about the Ottoman Jewish world, we should

⁷ Ruderman, *Kabbalah, Magic, and Science*; Ruderman, ‘Philosophy, Kabbalah and Science’; Ruderman, *Jewish Thought*; Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, pp. 103–132; Ruderman, *A Best-Selling Hebrew Book*.

⁸ Voß, *Umstrittene Erlöser*; Benmelech, ‘History, Politics, and Messianism’; Benmelech, *Shlomo Molcho*.

⁹ Werblowsky, *R. Joseph Karo*, p. 48; Dan, ‘Lurianic kabbalah’.

¹⁰ I am paraphrasing Kahana, ‘An Esoteric Path to Modernity’.

¹¹ Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity*.

¹² Schilling, ‘Konfessionales Zeitalter’.

¹³ Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*.

¹⁴ Heyberger, ‘Pour une histoire croisée’; Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*.

¹⁵ Lauer, ‘Die Konfessionalisierung des Judentums’; Bell, ‘Confessionalization and Social Discipline’; Bell, *Jewish Identity*, pp. 104–105; Zwierlein, ‘“Konfessionalisierung”’, pp. 32–33. On the Ottoman Jews, see Weinstein, ‘Jewish Modern Law’, pp. 8–9.

¹⁶ Sahlins, *Waiting for Foucault*, p. 73.

¹⁷ Driedger, ‘The Intensification of Religious Commitment’.

therefore not treat confessionalization as a clearly defined analytical category, but use it as a commonplace reference that might allow us to draw certain cautious analogies.

The confessionalization paradigm has been applied most fruitfully to such Jewish communities that immediately took part in the post-Reformation controversies; and one of the analogies that I would like to make has to do with the representation of religious identity in terms of knowledge. The cognitive, polemical, and symbolical aspects of self-definition are foregrounded in a number of texts from the Western Sephardi diaspora.¹⁸ In some extreme cases, authors of the time reconceptualized Judaism as a rational or mystical system that promised salvation to the initiated and believing convert, contrasting clearly with the traditional rabbinic formulation, in which Jewish identity is a birthright and not a matter of confession, conviction, or conversion.¹⁹

Another possible analogy that has to do with confessional dynamics concerns the geographical unification of religious cultures, which is inseparable from large-scale processes of knowledge transfer. Christian confession-building needed the spread of the Heidelberg Catechism in Transylvania and the celebration of the Roman Mass among indigenous Mexicans. The most useful work that the confessionalization thesis can perform for the understanding of Jewish history is the study of the emergence of pan-Judaic norms. Recent scholarly interest in early modern Jewish confessionalization trends seems to be questioning the postmodernist postulate that there was always an irreducible plurality of Jewish diaspora cultures, each one of them 'embedded' in its local non-Jewish environment.²⁰ The research agenda has thus returned to the notion of Jewish cultural staples, but, far from essentializing them, the confessionalization paradigm historicizes and contextualizes their appearance.²¹

THE 'MYTH OF SAFED' IN THE MAKING

It is remarkable that most of the early modern diaspora-wide movements had their origins in the Ottoman Empire, with legal codification and the Safed Kabbalah emerging in the sixteenth century, the Holy Land charities and Sabbateanism coming in the seventeenth, and moralistic literature starting in the eighteenth. This centrality of the Eastern Mediterranean is even more striking if we consider that later Ashkenazi movements, such as Hasidism, met with no success in the Ottoman Jewish communities. Weinstein has found this observation 'sufficient to demonstrate the shifting center of gravity from Europe to the Ottoman Empire',²² but we should not forget that in the seventeenth century only 13 percent of the Jewish world population lived

¹⁸ Kaplan, 'Between Christianity and Judaism'.

¹⁹ Wilke, *The Marrakesh Dialogues*, pp. 131–133; Wilke, 'Torah Alone'.

²⁰ Biale, *Cultures of the Jews*.

²¹ Examples of this approach are Lehmann, *Emissaries from the Holy Land*; Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity*; and Teller, *Rescue the Surviving Souls*.

²² Weinstein, 'Jewish Modern Law', p. 5.

in the Ottoman lands.²³ A communication hub is not, as a matter of course, a center of hegemonic power; and the huge acclamation earned by the legal code *Shulḥan 'Arukh* of the Safed Sephardi rabbi Joseph Caro (1488–1575) does not necessarily illustrate a victory of Ottoman Jewry over its European counterpart. With its large-scale textual borrowing from the medieval Ashkenazi *Turim*, the *Shulḥan 'Arukh* owes its success rather to a multilayered coordination of both traditions around a jointly elaborated and negotiated intellectual norm. When in turn Moses Isserles (c. 1525–1572), the Rabbi of Krakow, reissued the same code with a commentary insisting on peculiar Ashkenazi customs, he formulated a common Jewish norm and, at the same time, the Ashkenazi deviation from it.²⁴ As this example shows, the spread of diaspora-wide cultural references did not contradict their internal diversification; on the contrary, both processes often went hand in hand. The joint pursuit of unity and diversity can be observed in the emergence of composite communities such as those in Istanbul, Salonica, or Venice, where a profusion of separate subethnic congregations nonetheless maintained a common identity and representation.²⁵

Similar considerations apply to the spread of the Safed Kabbalah around 1600 and its rise as a global Jewish doctrine. The peculiar contribution of Safed was to merge various trends in Jewish religious history, which originated not only in Spain but also in the Holy Roman Empire and in Italy. Moshe Idel called Jewish Safed ‘a heterogeneous center’,²⁶ a ‘melting pot’, and ‘a city of spiritual encounters for Jews from all over the world’.²⁷ Safed was a center of gravity mainly through its communicative function and its symbolic value. In Jewish memory, legends of the personalities who lived in this city during a relatively short period of the sixteenth century have nourished a ‘myth’ of Safed, which evokes an exceptionally creative moment in time and space. As Solomon Schechter stated in his seminal essay of 1908, ‘there can be little doubt that no place in Jewish history since the destruction of the Holy Temple could point to so brilliant a gathering of men, so great in their respective branches, so diversified in the objects of their study, and so united by the dominant thought of religion, as were attracted to Safed during the greater part of the sixteenth century’.²⁸

A Crusader fortress turned into an Ottoman sanjak capital and an industrial hub, Safed was an unlikely candidate for a holy city. Recent Jewish immigrants from Spain and Italy,²⁹ with smaller groups of Arabic-speaking and Ashkenazi Jews, built

²³ Friesel, *Atlas of Modern Jewish History*, p. 10. DellaPergola, in ‘Some Fundamentals’, estimated the Jewish population at the beginning of the 17th century at 1.1 million, around 140,000 of which lived in the Ottoman empire according to Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*, p. 80.

²⁴ Zimmels, *Ashkenazim and Sephardim*, pp. 49–58.

²⁵ Rozen, *A History of the Jewish Community*, pp. 81–86; Rozen, ‘Individual and Community’, pp. 216–224.

²⁶ Idel, ‘Italy in Safed’, pp. 241, 243.

²⁷ Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, pp. 156, 164.

²⁸ Schechter, ‘Safed in the Sixteenth’, p. 255.

²⁹ David, ‘The Spanish Exiles’; David, *To Come to the Land*.

up a textile industry by using the sheep wool and waterpower that were in abundant supply. In the mid-sixteenth century, Jews made up almost 40 percent of the city's households (the others being Muslim).³⁰ Though the political and fiscal pressure was generally less than in Jerusalem, Jewish life in the Galilee was at the mercy of Ottoman taxation and raids by Arab tribes, so that the city had started to lose many of its Jewish inhabitants at the turn of the century. It had lost almost all of them after the Druze rebellions and riots of 1628 and 1660.³¹

This persistent remembrance of the 'city of the Kabbalists'³² and the 'time of the Kabbalists', in Gérard Nahon's words,³³ as an extraordinary spatiotemporal *kairos* is first and foremost owed to the labor of rabbinic hagiography. 'The history of the world, some maintain, is but the record of its great men. This is especially true of the history of Safed', wrote Schechter.³⁴ Indeed the short period of Safed's glory is associated in Jewish memory with the joint presence of three major mystic scholars: the already mentioned Joseph Caro, author of the *Shulḥan 'Arukh*, and the authors of the two major systems of early modern Kabbalah, Moses Cordovero (1522–1570) and Isaac Luria (1534–1572). During the first half of 1570, from Luria's arrival until Cordovero's death, all three studied together in the city.

Legends on these three giants, all of them Sephardim, were first collected in the years 1606–1609, when an obscure Moravian immigrant named Shlomel ben Hayyim, called Meinstrel ('minstrel'), wrote four Hebrew letters describing his new mystic milieu to family members, rabbis, and donors in Moravia, Hungary, and Poland.³⁵ Shlomel's letters had an almost immediate impact thanks to their publication in an anthology compiled in 1629 by a colorful personality, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591–1655),³⁶ a physician from Candia, Crete, interested in mathematics, astronomy, and the natural sciences.³⁷ Delmedigo was one of the most eloquent Jewish witnesses of the interoperability between Kabbalistic and scientific thought in the Renaissance period. Material from Delmedigo's edition became the earliest stratum in the flow of pious hagiography on the Safed Kabbalists.³⁸ A fourth letter was

³⁰ Lewis, 'Studies in the Ottoman Archives'.

³¹ Werblowsky, 'The Safed Revival'.

³² Yassif, *The Legend of Safed*; see also Yassif, 'In Fields and Wastelands'; and Yassif, 'The Conflict Over the Myth'.

³³ Nahon, *La Terre Sainte*.

³⁴ Schechter, 'Safed', p. 237.

³⁵ On this author, see Benayahu, 'History of Rabbi Solomon', pp. 57–58; and Yassif, 'The Conflict Over the Myth', pp. 43–44, with references to further literature.

³⁶ Delmedigo has published three of Shlomel's letters in inverse chronological order. His *Hidden Resources of Wisdom* (Basel [recte Hanau] 1629) reproduces on 37a–39b the third letter, dated 23 Nisan 369 (April 27, 1609); then on 40a–41b follows the second letter, dated 24 Tamuz 367 (July 19, 1607); and finally on 41b–49b is the first letter, dated 25 Heshvan 367 (November 25, 1606).

³⁷ On the author, see Barzilay, *Yoseph Shlomoh Delmedigo*. On the edition, see Prijs, *Die Basler hebräischen Drucke*, pp. 475–479.

³⁸ Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah*, pp. 130–136.

unearthed from an Oxford manuscript by a historian of the last century.³⁹ In the 1940s, the Jerusalem librarian Avraham Yaari (1899–1963) gave extracts from these letters a new life when he inserted them into his popular Zionist anthology, calling them the most enthusiastic praises of the Land of Israel that were ever penned by a Jewish traveler.⁴⁰ In spite of their variegated reception among Renaissance scientists, Hasidic mystics, and secular nationalists, Shlomel's Hebrew texts have never been translated into any language⁴¹ or studied for their own sake.

In these four letters, Shlomel refuses to reveal Luria's secret doctrine, but he tells his readers much about the saint's life on the basis of commemorative texts and oral traditions that were in circulation in the Safed milieu. Moreover, he mixes his tales on the Safed masters with elements from his own life story, which, as we will see, provides remarkable testimony to the cultural encounter that took place within Ottoman Jewry. It fully confirms Ruderman's claim that 'mobility was a crucial factor in early modern Jewish life, especially for many of its most prominent intellectual figures. The precise impact it played on cultural formation has not yet been studied sufficiently and systematically'.⁴²

SHLOMEL OF DREZNITZ, A MORAVIAN JEW IN THE LEVANT

Shlomel gives contradictory evidence on the place of his birth. At one point, he signs his name 'Solomon from the holy community of Dreznitz in the province of Moravia',⁴³ and at another point he claims to be 'from among the inhabitants of Moravia in the city of Lutenburg'.⁴⁴ In a third passage, the typographer dropped the place name, which must have been incomprehensible to him.⁴⁵ We can thus link Shlomel's origins either to Straßnitz (Strážnice in Czech, Dreznitz in Yiddish) or to Lundenburg (Břeclav in Czech), both being South Moravian localities close to the Hungarian border. Both places belonged to the lords of Zierotin, a noble family affiliated with the Hussite Brethren and known for its protection of Jewish communities.⁴⁶ It is possible to guess in which order Shlomel must have lived in these two places during his early life. In his presumable birth year of 1572, Lundenburg was still a thriving Jewish community, where Moravian Jewry had its gathering under its chief rabbi, Rabbi Liwa ben Betsalel, the Maharal (1512–1609); two years later, the community was

³⁹ Assaf, 'Letters from Safed, 1'. A manuscript on burial rites has been attributed to Shlomel, perhaps mistakenly, by Tamar, 'A Newly Discovered Writing'; see the objection of Benayahu, 'History of Rabbi Solomon', p. 55.

⁴⁰ 'Shelosh "Three Letters from Rabbi"', p. 196. The first edition of the book appeared in 1943.

⁴¹ A brief extract made it into the anthology of Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, pp. 289–292, under the title 'A Short Biography of the "Lion", about 1607'.

⁴² Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, p. 54.

⁴³ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 41b.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 39a.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 47a.

⁴⁶ Bondy and Dworsky, *Juden in Böhmen*, pp. 1048–1049.

decimated by a murderous pogrom.⁴⁷ The Maharal had by then settled in Prague, where he started publishing Kabbalistic works; and in 1591, the printing of Moses Cordovero's *Pardes Rimoni* (*Orchard of Pomegranates*) in Krakow added to the offer of mystical readings. About three years later, when Shlomel was 22 years old and already married, he experienced a religious crisis and vowed to dedicate himself exclusively to the study of the Kabbalah,⁴⁸ while apparently his wife financed him from her work. He studied the Zohar by himself with Cordovero's commentaries. A few years later, in 1600, when he was 28 years old, the book *Pelah ha-Rimon* (*Slice of the Pomegranate*) by the Italian Kabbalist Menahem Azaria da Fano (1548–1620) came out in Venice: this book contained the first rumors about the system of Isaac Luria, claiming that the true esoteric meaning of the Torah had only recently been revealed by this master and was secretly being taught by his disciples in the Holy Land. With great amazement, Shlomel learned that Da Fano had once paid Moses Cordovero's widow more than a thousand guilders to allow him to copy her deceased husband's Zohar commentary; but now, after meeting a mysterious Egyptian Kabbalist from Luria's circle, Israel Sarug, he became convinced that Cordovero had understood nothing at all, and he praised Providence for the bits of truth that he had received from Sarug. Shlomel was thunderstruck by the idea that the truth about the Torah had been hidden throughout the ages and had suddenly come to light during his lifetime. 'Immediately', as he writes, he decided to set off for Safed and strive for initiation.⁴⁹

Hatched by long hours of solitary reading, Shlomel's decision to become a Kabbalist in the Holy Land may remind us of the story of his fictional contemporary, Don Quixote, the passionate reader of chivalry novels who decides one day to embody the knight-errant. Not unlike his literary double in the Spanish novel of 1605, Shlomel had to engage in a relentless struggle with his social world. The first obstacle he encountered was his wife, who acted as the provider of the family. She refused to follow Shlomel in his migration plans, even though he would by no means give them up. They finally agreed to divorce. He left her everything he had, even his books and clothes, so that she might supply a decent dowry to their daughter, who was then 8 years old and who had reached 13 by the time he was writing.⁵⁰

The timing of his journey to the Levant was rather unlucky, since he had to circumvent the frontlines of the Ottoman-Habsburg War (1596–1606), in which all of Hungary was aflame. In order to finance his fare and provisions, Shlomel went on a fundraising tour to various Jewish communities in 'Poland, Ruthenia, Bohemia and Germany'. The migrant mystic then 'took the sea route on big ships' and reached Safed in early October 1602, all alone and destitute.⁵¹ Upon his arrival, he had only

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 1039–1040; Schwenger, 'Geschichte der Juden', p. 321; Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, p. 27.

⁴⁸ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 40a.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 42a. On the early reception of Lurianism in Italy, see Avivi, 'The writings of Rabbi Isaac Luria'; Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah*, p. 138.

⁵⁰ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 42a, 40a.

⁵¹ Ibid, 40a, 42b.

three-and-a-half thalers left, one-and-a-half of which he spent for the basic equipment he needed as a would-be master of the Kabbalah: a printed copy of the Zohar. To make things worse, the hoped-for encounter with the local sages was a deception: no one found him worthy of being initiated into Luria's secrets. At best, Safedians disclosed to him a few anecdotes on their long-deceased master, because a ban pronounced by all the sages of Safed had vowed to keep his teachings secret. Luria's original manuscripts were locked away by his main disciple, Hayyim Vital (1542–1620), who organized all his written and oral doctrine into a systematic corpus entitled *'Etz Hayim (Tree of Life)*, which he would not share with anyone.⁵² For a year, Shlomel lived in the utmost misery, imploring God to somehow give him access to the hidden knowledge.

Help arrived in the form of a new marriage. As a newcomer, all he could aspire to was an orphan without dowry.⁵³ But the orphan he married was 'a good and God-fearing woman',⁵⁴ the daughter of a learned and reputable man from the Sephardi Sarug family. Her late father Israel Sarug (not to be confused with Luria's homonymous disciple) had spent more than two hundred thalers to put together the most complete collection of Kabbalistic works that existed in the Holy Land. At some moment in 1587, when Hayyim Vital was seriously ill, Israel had even bribed his brother to give him three days' access to the jealously guarded treasure of mystical texts, from which he then feverishly copied a large sample of secrets.⁵⁵ The manuscripts, about six hundred large folio leaves, ended up in the hands of his orphan daughter to make up for her lack of dowry. Shlomel understood that he was being given the opportunity of a lifetime:

The woman that I, your humble servant, have married brought me neither gold nor silver, but a divine temple and its holy tools, that is, Kabbalistic books of our teacher and master Isaac, of blessed memory, besides some clothes for herself, nothing else. I decided to marry the daughter of that learned and pious man only for heaven's sake and with the intention that I might be blessed with these holy texts. Without her, I would never have had the merit to know these texts, because they are in the exclusive possession of a few members of the highest elite from among the strictly pious, who hide and dissimulate these things with the utmost jealousy... Thanks to the pity of the Creator, the help of the Almighty, the grace of the Holy One did I become beloved in the eyes of all the sages of Safed, so that they do not hide from me any secret from among the mysteries of the Torah.⁵⁶

It thus happened that the marriage of an Ashkenazi migrant with a Sephardi orphan broke the knowledge monopoly of the Safed elite. One may wonder how this mixed couple communicated in everyday life. Shlomel's wife, as a scholar's daughter, may have picked up some Hebrew; perhaps they used the Arabic vernacular of the region,

⁵² Ibid, 42b, 46b.

⁵³ Ibid, 41b.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 41a.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 41b, 46a.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 41b; Lamdan, *A Separate People*, p. 36.

or maybe he taught her his native Judeo-German; but most probably he became acquainted with Judeo-Spanish, the main tool of communication among Ottoman Jews.⁵⁷ Shlomel now spent several years studying his wife's manuscripts with the guidance of one of the two official yeshiva leaders, the blind Kabbalist Mas'ud Azulai, called 'Moghrabi', who was an immigrant from Fez in Morocco.⁵⁸ By the time Shlomel sent his first letter, he had ploughed through 'almost all' the texts in his wife's collection;⁵⁹ he had read each and every work by Luria several times and arrived at a fuller knowledge of the latter's thought than anyone else in the Holy Land.⁶⁰ He suddenly found grace among the Kabbalists, who were eager to learn from him; and he also had access to funds sent from the diaspora.

Cultivating his Central European networks through letter-writing was, however, not only a means of fundraising, but it was also part of a manifest proselytizing effort. The first letter that has come down to us, dated November 25, 1606, was written to an important scholar back in Central Europe, Rabbi Issashkhar-Ber ben Petahia-Moses of Kremnitz in Upper Hungary (Körmöcbánya in Hungarian, Kremnica in Slovak),⁶¹ author of a printed introduction to the Kabbalistic system of Moses Cordovero.⁶² Shlomel treats this rabbi as the major Zohar expert 'of all Jews in the lands of Ashkenaz' and asks him to send one copy of his letter to Poznań, so that it might be read by two of his Moravian friends who married there, Isaac Katz and Hayyim Raudnitz. Another copy should go to a certain place in Moravia (the name was omitted by the typographer) that was home to a third friend, Hayyim Rashpitz.⁶³ The recipients of the second and third letters are not indicated in the above-mentioned Delmedigo edition. Shlomel sent the fourth letter around 1607 to his brother-in-law, who as a youth had studied in Kraków. The addressee was supposed to show the letter to his community leader, Israel ben Samuel, and to Chief Rabbi Feiwesh; these dignitaries should allow anyone to copy the text.⁶⁴ Shlomel thus searched for an audience in at least four Central European environments: Upper Hungary, Moravia, Greater Poland, and Lesser Poland. He also sent letters to Germany, as Joseph-Yuspa Hahn of Frankfurt attests in his ethical treatise, but these have since been lost.

⁵⁷ Shlomel remarks that the schoolchildren in Safed always speak Spanish among themselves; Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 48a.

⁵⁸ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 41a–b. On Azulai, see also 38b, 41b–42b, and 46b; and Assaf, 'Letters from Safed, 1', pp. 125–126.

⁵⁹ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 42b.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 41b.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 41b (information given in a note of the editor). Shlomel's allusions are the most important source on the life of this obscure author, whose contribution to the spread of Cordoverian Kabbalah in Central Europe has been explored by Gondos, 'Kabbala, Halakhah', pp. 116–117; and Gondos, 'New Kabbalistic Genres', p. 78.

⁶² Issashkhar-Ber ben Petahia-Moses, *Openings of the Lord*.

⁶³ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 48a.

⁶⁴ Assaf, 'Letters from Safed, 1', pp. 121–122.

ASHKENAZI ASCETICISM AND THE SAFED MYSTICS

Shlomel, so it seems, was engaged in a sort of Paulinian epistle-writing program, extolling Lurianism without actually teaching it. His interest was to justify the use of the financial aid he had received, to document the weekly thanksgiving services in honor of the donors, to encourage further donations and travels to the Holy Land, to give advice to pilgrims regarding the gathering, investment, and expenditure of travel funds from Central Europe, and to promote some of the ritual innovations implemented by the Kabbalists in Safed. As mentioned above, Shlomel's epistles to the Hungarians, Moravians, Poles, and Germans strictly refrain from going into any doctrinal matters, but they whet his correspondents' appetites, so to speak, by enumerating the secret teachings that he has become an expert in.⁶⁵ He gives a lengthy quote from Hayyim Vital to argue that Kabbalistic secrets should be reserved to oral communication among the elect.⁶⁶

His emphasis is thus on the scholarly environment and the lifestyle of the Safed saints. Shlomel was at the origin of an entire Safedian hagiography, especially when it came to collecting stories that narrate supernatural forces and interventions.⁶⁷ In this respect, he was inspired by medieval Ashkenazi models that had become common Jewish lore in the 'melting pot' of sixteenth-century northern Italy.⁶⁸ Material from the three letters, which was reprinted under the title *Shivḥei ha-'ARI* (*Tales in Praise of the Divine Rabbi Isaac*), was edited repeatedly in Hebrew,⁶⁹ Ladino,⁷⁰ and Yiddish,⁷¹ and it provided a model for hagiographic collections on all future Jewish saints. In his most ambitious dream, the author wished to come full circle from the Safed legend to his Central European background. His first letter culminates in an invitation to his master, Rabbi Issashkhar-Beer ben Petahia-Moses of Kremnitz, to move from Upper Hungary to Safed and become Isaac Luria's successor as the community's mystic leader. Shlomel insinuates that the Hungarian Kabbalist may well be Luria's long-awaited reincarnation, to whom Hayyim Vital had promised to disclose all secrets.⁷²

Jointly with the legends, Shlomel publicized liturgical innovations from Safed's mystic fraternities, most of them combining Ashkenazi and Sephardi sources in an eclectic way.⁷³ The letters document peculiar Lurianic rituals such as the new moon blessing, a tradition of medieval German origin,⁷⁴ and the clearly Mediterranean

⁶⁵ Assaf, 'Letters from Safed, 1', p. 128.

⁶⁶ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 48a.

⁶⁷ Garb, 'The Cult of the Saints'.

⁶⁸ Raspe, *Jüdische Hagiographie*, p. 324.

⁶⁹ Bacharach, *The King's Valley*, 10r–15r, section title 'Miraculous event', separately reprinted thirteen times in Eastern Europe between 1795 and 1895.

⁷⁰ Benayahu, 'The "Book of the ARI stories"' (this is on a version printed in 1720 and translated into Ladino in 1766).

⁷¹ Baumgarten, 'Textes mystiques'.

⁷² Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 46a, 47b.

⁷³ Zimmels, *Ashkenazim and Sephardim*, pp. 117–118.

⁷⁴ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 40b.

convening of the entire Jewish community after the Friday afternoon prayer in the synagogue courtyard. Worshippers would then sing the mystical marriage hymn 'Come, My Beloved' (*L^ekha Dodi*) that Solomon Alkabetz had composed in a tune based on the Italian rondo.⁷⁵ This chant subsequently came to be recited on Sabbath evenings as one of the most recent ingredients accepted in both liturgies, Ashkenazi and Sephardi.⁷⁶

Among other religious practices, Shlomel explains the processions carried out around a recently deceased person's body (*haqafot*) and other customs relating to death, burial, and graves.⁷⁷ Again, the connection to Central European traditions is patent. The custom of forming burial fraternities had arrived from Spain to Safed and to the Central European communities, the first one having been founded in Prague as early as 1564.⁷⁸ Shlomel also attests to new rituals of pilgrimage to tombs,⁷⁹ which have their precedents both in the traditional scenario of Jewish travel to the Holy Land,⁸⁰ in the Muslim customs of shrine worship,⁸¹ and in medieval Ashkenazi Judaism. Pilgrimages to the tombs of the Rhenish communities started in the late Middle Ages:⁸² in the latter region, a particular liturgy can be traced back to the early seventeenth century.⁸³ The Maharal's tomb would become the most venerated Jewish site of the Czech Lands, but it remains controversial until this day when this grave cult actually started (ethnographers point to the early eighteenth century).⁸⁴ Shlomel certainly did not speak of a cult that had existed already in his home region, but he actively participated in its creation. With his letters, he has contributed to the popularization of such pilgrimage sites as Mount Meron in Galilee⁸⁵ and the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Most notably, he is the first to have transmitted in writing the famous folktale about one of Luria's Moroccan followers, Rabbi Abraham Berukhim, who during a penitential midnight vigil at the Wall had a vision of the Divine Presence (*sh^ekhinah*) in the form of a mourning woman.⁸⁶

For Shlomel, the spirit of Safed was most clearly manifested in the circles of pious men who met to perform tomb visits, fasts, exorcisms, and other ascetic rituals, often tormenting and symbolically executing their own bodies. Gershom Scholem

⁷⁵ Assaf, 'Letters from Safed, 1', p. 127.

⁷⁶ Cohen, 'The Liturgy of Sabbath Eve'; Salomon, "'Leha dodi'"; Arendt, 'The Change of Tune'.

⁷⁷ Assaf, 'Letters from Safed, 1', pp. 125–126.

⁷⁸ Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, p. 30. On the further spread of Lurianic burial rituals, see Goldberg, *Crossing the Jabbok*.

⁷⁹ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 40b, 43b–44a.

⁸⁰ David, *In Zion and Jerusalem*, pp. 64–72.

⁸¹ Fenton, 'Influences soufies'.

⁸² Shoham-Steiner, "'For a Prayer'"; Roemer, *German City*, p. 54; Raspe, 'Sacred Space'; Raspe, 'Heilige Gräber'.

⁸³ Lieberman, *A Proper Answer*.

⁸⁴ Kieval, *Languages of Community*, p. 103; Burg, 'Chukat: Rite of the Dead'.

⁸⁵ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 43b, 46b; on the cult of this site see Reiner, 'From Joshua'.

⁸⁶ Assaf, 'Letters from Safed, 1', pp. 122–123; Ben-Dov, Naor, and Aner, *The Western Wall*, pp. 89, 116–117; Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, pp. 48–49; Wineman, *Ethical Tales*, pp. 140–145; Schwartz, *Tree of Souls*, pp. 63–66.

observed the centrality of these practices in Lurianic Kabbalah, which was spread in the diaspora communities by ‘fraternities of devout and pious men desirous of adopting the devotions and ascetic exercises propagated from Safed’,⁸⁷ and much of it was due to the mindset and Catholic background of returning Conversos.⁸⁸ Vital had protested against these excesses of self-flagellation; but Shlomele’s fourth letter shows a certain fondness in reporting the somber rituals of the fraternities of which he was a member.⁸⁹ He had heard that Berukhim once decided to lie on the street wrapped in a sack and invite the members of the community to throw heavy stones at him. He then prepared a bed of nettles, stripped off his clothes, and rolled in the stinging plants until he was all covered with bulbs. His disciples imitated him in these exercises. Some of them, who wanted to suffer the penitence anonymously, slipped into the sack in the middle of the night and lied bound up in it during the entire day in front of the synagogue, expecting to be trodden and kicked by passers-by. In the middle of the following night, they would emerge from their sacks unseen.⁹⁰

In his description of the Safed fraternities, Shlomele devotes a particular section to the institutions relating to the common study of sacred texts. He claims that there were eighteen Talmudic academies in the town with an enrollment of three hundred advanced scholars and four hundred young students. After each morning service at the synagogue, Safedians would come together in five to seven groups to study the classical Jewish texts: there were separate groups for Bible, Mishnah, Gemara, Halakhah, Aggadah, Maimonides, and the Zohar.⁹¹ The common study of the Mishnah is particularly conspicuous; this was a tradition of Byzantine and Italian origin that had been adapted to mystical purposes in Safed. It was thought to be endowed with redemptive effects, the word *mishnah* being read as an anagram of *ne’shamah* (‘soul’).⁹² In the system of the Ten Sefirot, Scripture was identified with the sixth, *tiferet* (‘adornment’), and thought of as male, while the Oral Torah or the Mishnah was considered as the expression of the tenth, *malkhut* (‘kingdom’), and identified with the *shekhinah*, God’s female presence, whom the worshipper could imagine as a lover. The ritual of Mishnah recitation shows, once again, an intricate dialogue between Safed and Prague, since it was also backed by an educational reform of the Maharal that had its parallels in the contemporary pedagogical innovations of Czech humanists and confessional authors.⁹³ The popular custom of learning the Mishnah before any systematic study of the Gemara came to be known as a Prague tradition. Once again, the origin of cultural innovation cannot be located in one place only.

⁸⁷ Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi*, p. 67.

⁸⁸ David, ‘Safed, foyer de retour’; Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity*, pp. 142–165.

⁸⁹ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, pp. 59–77.

⁹⁰ Assaf, ‘Letters from Safed, 1’, pp. 123–124. This passage was left out by Yaari, but partly translated in Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, pp. 49–50; and in Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, pp. 68–69.

⁹¹ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 40a.

⁹² Fine, ‘Recitation of Mishnah’; Arendt, ‘Mishnah Study’, see pp. 21–22 on the Prague school, and pp. 22–23 on Safed.

⁹³ Kulka, ‘Comenius and Maharal’; Ingall, ‘Reform and Redemption’; Ramon, ‘Confessionalization and World Peace’; Ead, *Maharal in New Light*.

THE COURTYARD AS A KABBALISTIC LIVING SPACE

The community ideal of the Safed scholars described by Shlomo went so far as to turn the *bet midrash*, the Jewish house of study, into a *h'avurah*, a fraternity for the practice of a common ascetic life.⁹⁴ In different places of the Holy Land, circles of pious men started to settle together in a closed compound devoted to the realization of an ideal unity of life and learning. This institution type was known by the name of *hesger* ('enclosure'). Shlomo reports that Isaac Luria had set up such a fraternity during the last five months of his life (he died on July 25, 1572) for himself, his wife, his two daughters, and ten handpicked disciples with their respective families. He 'created a *hesger* for these ten companions and assigned rooms to the women and children in a separate part of the same courtyard inside the *hesger* house'. This social experiment of a Kabbalistic convent failed dramatically. On one Friday evening, a bitter quarrel broke out inside the women's quarters, and the husbands became involved in their dispute. Realizing that Samael, the devil, had found entrance into his saintly community, Luria fell into despair and died that same night.⁹⁵

The institution he had created would nonetheless prevail; and its early chronology shows an intriguing case of entanglement between Eastern Mediterranean and Central European innovations. A version of the *hesger* that did manage to interfere less with family life would become one of the most emblematic expressions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ashkenazi culture. Known as *kloyz* or *Klaus* in the Judeo-German dialects, this type of *bet midrash* meant a shared house of study, prayer, and living for up to twenty scholars and their families that was financed by the private endowment of a 'court Jew' or other wealthy donor.⁹⁶ The first such institution was established in 1573 in Prague, where David Ganz mentions the imperial agent Mordechai Meisel as the founder of the 'Great *bet-midrash* called *kloyz*'.⁹⁷ At Meisel's invitation, the Maharal stepped down from his dignities as Moravian chief rabbi and became for eleven years the first director of the 'Klausen-Synagoge'.⁹⁸ The building, which was destroyed in the ghetto fire of 1689, seems to have consisted of three small houses, one of which housed the rabbi and his elitist fraternity of

⁹⁴ Necker, *Einführung in die Lurianische Kabbala*, pp. 26–27, 38, 41; Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity*, pp. 92–93.

⁹⁵ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 46a. Samael has been substituted by the Angel of Death in the English translation (see Meinstrel, *Tales in Praise of the ARI*, p. 60). The possibility that relations among women could have influenced the mystics is discarded, a bit too apodictically, by Necker, *Einführung*, p. 38.

⁹⁶ Reiner, 'Capital, Social Status', see pp. 290–297 on the origins of the *kloyz*. On the importance of Lurianic model for the later history of this institution in Germany, see also Wilke, 'Den Talmud und den Kant:', p. 59; and Preuß, *Gelehrte Juden*, pp. 11–12, 27–31.

⁹⁷ Ganz, *Sprout of David*, pp. 145–146; Stein, *Die Geschichte*, pp. 167–168; Bondy and Dworsky, *Juden in Böhmen*, pp. 750, 1032–1033, 1047.

⁹⁸ Wachstein, 'Zur Biographie', pp. 172–173; Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, pp. 28, 30; Veltri, *Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 117–118.

unmarried students.⁹⁹ A similar institution functioned in Vienna in the seventeenth century, having been set up by Zacharias Levi and his wife Fögele for twenty-four men, who were lodged, dined, and taught on the site with the idea that there should be continuous reading in the house of study except for the Sabbath prayer service.¹⁰⁰

The Hebrew *hesger* and the Yiddish *kloyz* do not only have the same meaning; the institutions named thus also appear roughly at the same time in Safed and in Prague. However, the names do not in all cases hint at the same social reality. While Shlomoel clearly describes a convent-like fraternity, Ganz evokes a yeshiva or a private study facility for advanced scholars (*beit va'ad l'hakhamim*); in other cases, the term refers to a communal house of study or to a school attended by young students. Elhanan Reiner has argued that the ideal of a common living space among scholars has been an imagined, if not practiced, part of the Ashkenazi study ethos since the Middle Ages and that Shlomoel, as a Central European, may have misrepresented Luria's *hesger* when he wrote about it thirty-three years later: he simply attributed to it the fraternity features that he knew from home.

Though the existence of Luria's short-lived *hesger* foundation is attested in 1572 in the commemoration sermon given by Samuel Ojeda shortly after the teacher's death, this source supplies only scarce information. A second *hesger* existed, according to Hayyim Vital, around 1577 in Ein al-Zeitun, a village two kilometers from Safed that was half populated by Arabic-speaking Jews; one may identify this institution with a fraternity of Kabbalists there who formulated their by-laws in 1598. For the *hesger* as a convent-type institution, evoked in Shlomoel's projection of 1606, we find clear proof in Safed only in 1616: a donor from Buda, Noah ben Solomon, founded in that year a fraternity of four scholars that would be called *Gvir Oyv*n ('Grand Seigneur of Buda'). Reiner concluded that the *hesger* was brought from Central Europe to Ottoman Palestine rather than the other way around.¹⁰¹

The foundation history of the *Gvir Oyv*n study house can, however, complicate Reiner's hypercriticism of Shlomoel's testimony. It gives an illustrative example of how the idea of a Kabbalistic fraternity could emerge not from Safed or Prague alone, but from the communication system that connected Galilee to the Danube via the community of Buda, the capital of Ottoman Hungary. As the headquarters of alms collectors from the Holy Land, Buda had a peculiar place on the pilgrimage route because its Jewish communities used to transmit to travelers the financial contributions from the Western diaspora to be taken to Jerusalem and, in turn, received Kabbalistic scholars and texts in real time on their travels. For example, the Buda rabbi Jacob Kohen, who died in 1597, possessed already the text of the hymn that the Lurianic circle in Safed used to recite yearly at the tomb of Shimon bar Yochai, the alleged author of the Zohar. Noah ben Solomon's above-mentioned donation of a *hesger* was the result of his well-established family relations. His sister Zisle lived in Safed and was married to the son of one of Luria's disciples; and after the demise of

⁹⁹ Podiebrad, *Alterthümer der Prager Josefstadt*, pp. 116–118; Sadek and Šedinová, *The Old Jewish Cemetery*, p. 29; Pařík, 'The Prague Ghetto', pp. 254–255.

¹⁰⁰ Kaufmann, *Die letzte Vertreibung*, p. 67.

¹⁰¹ Reiner, 'Capital, Social Status', pp. 290–297.

Zisle's husband, the Buda donor funded the *hesger* with the provision that it would host her son-in-law, Jacob ben Hayyim Filip, who kept the book of accounts for the institution until the latter was moved to Jerusalem in 1628. This document has been preserved (JTS cod. Adler 74) and shows that the four *hesger* pensionaries and their families formed an interethnic community, since according to Noah's wish, two of the rabbis were Ashkenazim (Jacob being one of them) and two were Sephardim.¹⁰² Not unlike Shlomel, Jacob entertained a vast correspondence network with family members in the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul, Vidin, Buda), in the Holy Roman Empire (Prague, Frankfurt, Wimpfen, Worms), and in Poland (Poznań).¹⁰³ The subsistence of the fraternity was paid for by the rent from several houses, which were apparently located in Buda or in its environs. When Noah, the benefactor, died in January 1621, one of his sons-in-law brought his body from Hungary via Istanbul and Sidon to Safed, where he was laid to rest.¹⁰⁴

Founded on the basis of the steady exchange between Safed and Buda, the case of *Gvir Oyv*n shows the cooperation between actors from both cities. It is likely that the institution of the Kabbalistic fraternity was not invented in one place and transferred to the other, but that Sephardi and Ashkenazi mystics from the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy created it jointly as a deliberately hybridized space of encounter. While the patterns of collective textual study have their models in the Ashkenazi world, Luria's strange idea of assigning to men and women different residential sections of the same courtyard has no Central European precedent whatsoever.¹⁰⁵ To understand the historical context of this Jewish convent, one should search for parallels in the Near Eastern environment. The Sufi lodges in the Ottoman Empire progressively developed their modest places of gathering into spacious residential compounds, which came to be described by terms derived from the Persian *khāneqāh* and the Turkish *tekke*.¹⁰⁶ The major Middle Eastern example is the Tekkiye Süleymaniye complex in Damascus, whose construction from 1554 to 1567 was attributed to the famed architect Sinan.¹⁰⁷ Like Christian convents and institutions of mystic lay piety, Sufi lodges were as a rule set up for all-male (or, occasionally, all-female) congregations. Christian mystics generally observed celibacy, and many Sufis did so at least temporarily, while the married members of a *tekke* usually kept their families outside it.¹⁰⁸ As an exception, the closest female relatives of the sheikh had the right to live inside the compound, but they did not intervene in the life of the male community members, since the sheikh's family quarters, as any private dwelling of the Ottoman upper class, were 'physically "zoned" into the customary

¹⁰² Kinstlikher, 'Hungarian Chapters'.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 75.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 76–78.

¹⁰⁵ Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity*, pp. 93–99, thinks of possible models in Counter-Reformist Catholicism of Italy and Spain.

¹⁰⁶ On the meaning of these terms, see Spahić, 'From Mosques to Khanqahs'.

¹⁰⁷ Goodwin, 'The Tekke of Süleyman I'; Hakky, 'The Tekkiye Süleymaniye'.

¹⁰⁸ Mala, 'The Sufi Convent'; Watt, *A Short History of Islam*, p. 129.

harem, for women and young children, and selamlık, for older males'.¹⁰⁹ This division of the compound into gendered spaces was closely mirrored in Luria's fraternity, which had integrated Jewish religious duties related to family life into the ascetic lifestyle itself. The gender segregation during weekdays was counterbalanced, or rather further accentuated, by the elaborate Kabbalistic ritual for Friday night, when the married couples of the fraternity were expected to stay together.¹¹⁰

At this point, I must add yet another local twist to the history of the *hesger* institution. The term could have such a bewildering range of meanings because it was not defined in the first place by its institutional purpose. Rather, it was defined by an architectural reality fulfilling the specific need for gated and fortified compounds among Ottoman Jewry in an age of insecurity. Living together among various low-income families around a courtyard with a single entrance is a Spanish-Jewish tradition from Andalusia, which was implanted among the Ottoman Jews in the sixteenth century. Not unlike the quarters and alleys of Eastern Mediterranean cities,¹¹¹ the *hesger* was at the intersection of private family life and the public sphere; yet its units differed in size, compactness, and social composition from the Muslim living-spaces housing extended families. While some medieval *patios* are preserved in Spain, most notably in Cordoba, the early modern Jewish courtyards of both Safed and Jerusalem's Old City have all been destroyed.¹¹² Some rare *cortijos* remain in İzmir and have recently become the object of studies by architects and ethnographers. A rabbi from the latter city described the Jewish *cortijo* in which he lived during the 1940s:

Eighteen Jewish families were living in Arazaki Aile Evi, which was owned by a rich Jewish family living in Karsiyaka. Residents of this *cortijo* shared two toilets, a communal kitchen, a laundry room, and a common hall. It was a two-storey building organised around a courtyard with a big gate connecting to the street. There was also a secondary entrance from a side street that led directly to the upper floors... the gates were locked at night and this transformed the courtyard into a private space.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Lifchez, 'The Lodges of Istanbul', pp. 99–100. In her description of the Jewish residential building (*yahudihane* in Turkish), Minna Rozen observes that Istanbul Jews adopted the Ottoman custom of gendered spaces by the mid-sixteenth century. See 'Public Space and Private Space', pp. 341–345.

¹¹⁰ The gendering of space and time in the *hesger* thus appears related to Luria's elaborate prescriptions on conjugal intimacy; see Magid, 'Conjugal Union' p. XXXVIII; Tamari, *The Body Discourses*, pp. 192–226, A kabbalist should abstain from sexual activity on weekdays and have intercourse with his wife only on Friday after midnight, the holiest moment of the week; *ibid*, p. 204.

¹¹¹ Karagedikli, 'Overlapping Boundaries', p. 662.

¹¹² El'azar, *Courtyards in the Old City*.

¹¹³ Yucel, 'Minority Heterotopias', p. 248.

This architectonic tradition was revived in the new residential areas of late Ottoman Jerusalem, which also developed peculiar ways of self-government.¹¹⁴ When Moses Montefiore founded in 1883 the first Sephardi neighborhood outside the Jerusalem walls, *Ohel Mosheh*, he copied the Andalusian courtyard pattern. The complex has conserved to this day its original shape as a gated community, and under the stone inscription honoring the founder new instructions announce the strict rules of silence and modest clothing that are judged appropriate to the courtyard, which is designed as a 'holy place'.

Economic constraints, security needs, and ideals of communal piety thus stood behind the predilection for courtyard compounds among the Jews of Ottoman Palestine and Jewish immigrants thereto. With funding from donors in Istanbul, a large, fortified caravanserai was built in Safed in 1586 for Jewish merchants and travelers.¹¹⁵ How well aware European Jews were of this construction type and its peculiar rationale is manifested by a rabbinic authority of Prague, Isaiah Horowitz (c. 1555–1630), one of the early propagators of Lurianism in Central Europe. Distressed by the death of his wife in 1620, Horowitz decided to renounce his rabbinate and end his life in the Land of Israel. He remarried and accompanied by his second wife, left Prague at the end of 1621. He traveled by sea from Venice to Tripoli and stayed for a while among the Jews of Aleppo and Damascus, to whom he taught and preached in Hebrew. When emissaries of the Ashkenazim in Safed and Jerusalem approached him with offers of rabbinic positions, Horowitz decided in favor of Jerusalem because, he explains, 'the community of the Ashkenazim settles in a closed building complex (*yoshevim m'suggarim*), which is not the case in Safed', where the Ashkenazim, without a courtyard, were constantly the victims of robbers and aggressors. Like Shlomel, Horowitz endeavored to fund his community by asking for support from Jewish leaders of Poland, Bohemia, and Germany.¹¹⁶

This example shows the close connection between physical security and religious identity that was associated with the Jewish courtyard compound. The urban space of the courtyard had acquired a Jewish connotation in Ottoman cities (and later in Eastern Europe),¹¹⁷ which recommended it to be appropriated by Kabbalists. In such an architectural framework, Isaac Luria had tried to realize the peculiar lifestyle of his scholarly *havurah*, the fraternity that was implicitly meant to embody an inward-looking norm.

FROM MIGRANT MYSTICISM TO JEWISH CONFESSION-BUILDING?

Expressed through ritual and residential patterns, the spread of Kabbalah as a distinctive lifestyle and confessional doctrine emerged from the Ottoman Empire and

¹¹⁴ Bahat, *Carta's Historical*, pp. 69, 75, with maps; Kark, *Jerusalem Neighborhoods*.

¹¹⁵ Nahon, *La Terre Sainte*, p. 27; Immanuel Demati, 'The Khan el-Basha'.

¹¹⁶ Yaari, *Letters from the Land*, p. 216. On the Ashkenazi courtyard in the Old City of Jerusalem, see Reiner, 'The Jerusalem Courtyard'.

¹¹⁷ Teitelbaum, *Courtyards of Warsaw* (see also German translation Teitelbaum, *Warschauer Innenhöfe*).

grew into a groundbreaking reformation of Jewish identity that shares certain similarities with confession-building in Western Christianity. It would be exaggerated, though, to speak of a Jewish confessionalization process. Of the basic characteristics defined by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling for the concept—state control, social discipline, and combative orthodoxy¹¹⁸—none can be associated with the Safed mystics.¹¹⁹ To start with, the state did not play a role in Shlommel's self-identity. He signs his letters from 'Safed, may it be built up, in the Upper Galilee, in the upper territory of Naftali',¹²⁰ substituting a fictional regionalism of Biblical inspiration for the contemporary reality that located his city within the Damascus administrative province (*eyalet*) of the Ottoman Empire. Shlommel may well merit the label of a 'trans-imperial subject',¹²¹ since he was a migrant and shows a good geographical knowledge; he even details the Holy Land's maritime exports 'on ships that come from the end of the world, from Venice, Spain, France, Portugal, and Constantinople'.¹²² Yet for him, Jewish piety and diaspora confessionalism were turned inward toward an imagined courtyard, not outward toward a political horizon. Never does he think about imposing general standards of social discipline on eventual deviants. Like his medieval predecessors, he fills his pages with tales of ascetics who teach morality by individually setting extreme examples of abnegation and self-mortification. The scholarship, moral discipline, and self-government of the Kabbalistic fraternity belonged to an experiment in monastic life and did not generate an outwardly enforceable confessional standard. As Schechter wrote, Caro was an authority, but Luria was a model.¹²³

On the intellectual level, Kabbalists in Shlommel's time did certainly not 'impose normative theological demands through asymmetrical communication and empirical control', as Cornel Zwielerlein has summarized the confessional pattern.¹²⁴ On the contrary, the Safed mystics still kept their doctrinal truths hidden from other Jews. Kabbalah was not force-fed to masses of catechumens, but it was an object of artificial scarcity, sold dearly to sectarian devotees for hard thalers and guilders. If Moshe Idel is right, Lurianic Kabbalah did not become exoteric knowledge before the second half of the seventeenth century.¹²⁵ At a remarkably early stage, Rabbi Issashkhar-Beer ben Petahia-Moses of Kremnitz expressed on the title page of his Kabbalistic treatise the messianic hope that 'light will reach the children of Israel in all their settlements'; and Shlommel's writings also show his eagerness to raise awareness of

¹¹⁸ Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of "Confessionalization"', p. 97.

¹¹⁹ See the discussion in Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity*, pp. 124–126.

¹²⁰ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 49b.

¹²¹ Rothman, *Brokering Empire*.

¹²² Delmedigo, *Hidden resources*, 40b.

¹²³ Schechter, 'Safed', p. 292.

¹²⁴ Zwielerlein, "'Konfessionalisierung'", pp. 9, 34. One may think of confessionalization without its coercive aspect, based on the 'use of persuasion rather than force' (Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity*, p. 168), but such a reinterpretation would strip the concept of much of its relevance for political history.

¹²⁵ Idel, "'One from a Town'".

the recent breakthrough to the divine secrets; but he concentrated on legendary and ritual information and avoided revealing the doctrinal content to his fellow Jews, let alone imposing it on anyone.

Finally, Shlomel does not manifest any interest in polemics against opponents of either Kabbalah or Judaism. His worldview is strangely free from competition among creeds. Certainly, in hindsight, his veneration of the Western Wall seems to have lent ideological support to a successful act of confessional separation: a firman (decree) by Sultan Suleiman I had around 1560 disentangled the worshippers around the Temple Mount by assigning to Jewish prayer the space outside the Wall, where services have been documented since 1625.¹²⁶ In his experience in Galilee, however, Shlomel still encounters the age-old Middle Eastern tradition of sharing the sacred.¹²⁷ He is not the only traveler to observe that the borders of religious practice were fluid between Jews and Muslims, since all groups tried to imitate each other's public rituals to some extent.¹²⁸ Expecting Central European hate rituals against religious otherness, Shlomel is surprised by the veneration that the 'non-Jews' (*goyim*) of the country—in Levantine Jewish parlance, this term tended to mean Muslims, since Christians were called 'arelim, 'uncircumcised'—show toward the Jewish holy places:

The non-Jews who settle on Israel's soil are all smitten with devotion to the sanctity of Israel. Even when we stand an entire day in the field, wearing prayer shawls and phylacteries, and pray in a loud voice to the Lord our God next to the tombs of the saints, it will never occur to a single non-Jew to step in front of the prayer assembly of the Jews or, God forbid, open his mouth to mock our prayer. No, they all go their way, and no one brags or whistles when we pray to God. On the contrary, they often show deep veneration to the places where the ancient saintly sages are buried and to the synagogues. They light candles on the tombs of the sages and donate oil to the synagogues. [In] Kafr Biriyya, Ein Zeitun, and Meron, the synagogues are ruined, no one inhabits [these villages] for our sins, and there are countless Torah scrolls in the holy arks. The non-Jews show them great honor; they keep the keys, treat them with respect, and light candles in front of the holy arks; and no one dares to touch the Torah scrolls.¹²⁹

Wishing to attract pilgrims and donations, Shlomel may have idealized the peace that reigned in the Holy Land, but his representation shows that his Kabbalistic piety was not the result of a trauma of persecution and that his view of interreligious dynamics was not organized by confessional polarization. The same can be said about the intra-Jewish divisions, which he overcame in his private life by taking a

¹²⁶ Reiner, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage*, pp. 165–166; Loewenberg, 'Where Jerusalem Jews Worship', pp. 223–224; Mulzer, 'Vom Klageplatz'. The main destination of medieval Jewish pilgrimage was still the Mount of Olives; see Reiner, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage*, pp. 171–198.

¹²⁷ Albera and Couroucli eds, *Sharing Sacred Spaces*.

¹²⁸ Ben-Naeh, "'Thousands [of] Great Saints'".

¹²⁹ Delmedigo, *Hidden Resources*, 40b. The original spellings, distorted by typos, of the place names are וכפר צירי עין דיתום ומירון. For the identification of the places, see David, *To Come to the Land*, p. 28.

Sephardi wife and learning from a Moroccan master. In sum, in his Jewish spirituality he pursued communal cohesion but in a different way than others did under the confessional schism in post-Reformation Europe.

Yet some form of a confessional dynamic was at work in the way in which Shlomel's new message would cross diaspora spaces and would become for two centuries Judaism's common heritage in all its literary, liturgical, ritual, and institutional ramifications. Drawing a conclusion from this study, I would propose that we conceptualize this emergence of early modern Kabbalistic spirituality not so much through a genealogical and centrifugal model that follows the shift of power centers and the linear transfer of ideas and institutions. Rather, it might do more justice to mediators such as Shlomel of Dreznitz and Noah of Buda if we imagine the Kabbalists' activity as an entangled history of cultural traditions. By their very nature, these encounters cannot be reduced to isolated sources of inspiration, so that all scholarly interpretations of the rise and spread of Lurianic Kabbalah may in the end claim some degree of truth: we can simultaneously point to influences from the Spanish exiles, medieval German Jewish asceticism, the Italian Renaissance, local Sufi piety, and the Central European sense of community and communication. By sending letters home to Moravia on the Mediterranean-Danubian route, the penniless traveler Shlomel of Dreznitz became the apostle of Lurianism, one of the first Kabbalists to promote the idea of letting everyone participate in the mindset that underpinned the quest for mystical knowledge, even though he and his peers kept the content of this mystical knowledge as a secret among themselves.

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9. THE COMMANDMENT (*BUYRUK*): AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRED TEXTS OF THE KIZILBASH-ALEVI COMMUNITY

RIZA YILDIRIM

INTRODUCTION

Kizilbash-Alevi today constitute the largest religious minority of Turkey with roughly 15% of the population, as well as a sizeable immigrant community in Europe.¹ They are distinguished from the Sunnis with their Alid- and Sufi-oriented beliefs, latitudinarian attitude towards Islamic law, and peculiar ways of worship. Similarly to various strands of Shi'ism, including Twelver Shi'ism and Isma'ilism, the doctrinal disputes that separate Kizilbash-Alevi from the Sunni majority are related to the question of succession to Prophet Muhammad. However, the social and cultural roots of the Kizilbash-Alevi identity can be traced to the heterogeneous socio-cultural and religious landscape of medieval Anatolia and neighboring regions such as northern Syria, Iran, Azerbaijan, and the Balkans. It was this politically decentralized, culturally plural, socially diverse, and intellectually vibrant milieu that bred the sharia-inattentive character of Kizilbash-Alevi piety.² Ideological, doctrinal, institutional, organizational, and ritual aspects of Kizilbash-Alevi religiosity began to crystallize in the course of the Safavid-Kizilbash movement that led to the foundation

¹ Historically speaking, the proper name of this religious group is 'Kizilbash' as they had been called as such in historical sources since the sixteenth century. It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century and especially during the Republican era that the appellation 'Alevi' became widely used, both by members of the group and by outsiders, and replaced 'Kizilbash' as the name of the group. As a midway solution to keep both historical and contemporary appellations, lest their nuances are lost, I employ the combination 'Kizilbash-Alevi'.

² For discussions on medieval roots of the Alevi tradition, see Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*; Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia*; Mélikoff, 'Le Probleme Kizilbaş'; Ocak, 'Un aperçu general sur l'heterodoxie'; Karamustafa, 'Kaygusuz Abdal'; Karakaya-Stump, *Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah*; Yıldırım, *Hacı Bektaş Veli'den Balım Sultan'a*.

of the Safavid state in Iran in 1501, and it continued to evolve in subsequent centuries.³

Scholars usually assume that the Kizilbash-Alevi faith is principally based on oral traditions, lacking a robust literary heritage through which religious knowledge was transmitted. It is true that Kizilbash-Alevi communities were not able to develop structured learned classes and sophisticated educational infrastructures to produce a literary heritage that would match that of the sharia-abiding traditions such as Sunnism or Twelver Shi'ism. Consequently, they lacked the means and opportunities to produce a strong written tradition. Yet, recent studies on Alevi-related manuscripts and documents have shown that the dominant approach in scholarship underestimates the role of writing in the production and preservation of Alevi religious knowledge. The prominent role of oral traditions notwithstanding, there are certain books, treatises, and formal documents that Alevis have considered as authoritative textual sources of their faith and reproduced them repeatedly.⁴

Studies show that the most important and authoritative written source enjoying a universal recognition by Kizilbash-Alevi communities is a genre called in Turkish *Buyruk* (literally, 'Commandment'), which is a sort of catechism explicating the fundamental beliefs, rituals, and religious institutions of the Kizilbash-Alevi tradition in a didactic manner. As the most esteemed sacred book of the Kizilbash-Alevi community, one may consider the *Buyruk* as a 'quasi-canon', to the extent that the concept can be applied in the Kizilbash-Alevi tradition which developed in a predominantly oral milieu.⁵ Numerous manuscript copies of religious texts that are lumped under the umbrella term 'Buyruk' have been produced by Kizilbash-Alevis from the sixteenth century onward. Likewise, since Kizilbash-Alevis started to publish their religious books in the Latin script in the 1950s, the *Buyruk* has been one of the first and most frequently published Alevi texts.

³ On the beliefs and rituals of the Kizilbash-Alevis, see Yıldırım, *Geleneksel Alevilik*; Yıldırım, 'Ritual as a Microcosm of Society'; Yıldırım, 'Red Sulphur, the Great Remedy and the Supreme Name'. For the relations between the Kizilbash-Alevi communities and the Safavids, see Yıldırım, *Turkomans between Two Empires*; Yıldırım, 'In the Name of Husayn's Blood'; Yıldırım, 'The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene'; Karakaya-Stump, *Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah*, pp. 171–206.

⁴ For the major works on Alevi written sources, see Yıldız, 'Anadolu Aleviliğinin Yazılı Kaynaklarına Bir Bakış'; Kutlu, *Alevilik-Bektaşilik Yazıları*; Şeyh Safiyeddin Erdebîli, *Makâlât: Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*; Kaplan, *Yazılı Kaynaklarına Göre Alevilik*; Karakaya-Stump, 'Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts'; Ocak, *Ortaçağ Anadolu'sunda*; Aytaş, *Belgeler Işığında Şah İbrahim Veli Ocağı*; Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık*; Yıldırım, 'Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition'; Kaplan, 'Defining Alevism via Written Texts'.

⁵ I use the concept of canon in the sense of a standardized, frozen, and sanctified text. As opposed to other texts, a canon is closed to further change and universally accepted as the primary reference of the tradition it refers to. As such, religious canons are usually accepted as sacred texts by their believers. For a discussion of Kizilbash-Alevi written sources, with particular reference to the *Buyruk*, and the question of whether we can apply the concept of canon in Kizilbash-Alevi literary heritage, see Yıldırım, 'Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition'.

Despite its central place as a source for Kizilbash-Alevi religiosity and history, modern scholarship on *Buyruk* texts is still at a rudimentary stage. From among more than a hundred extant copies, only a few *Buyruk* manuscripts have been studied. Likewise, primary questions such as the textual and thematic boundaries of the *Buyruk* genre and its historical formation have not been discussed thoroughly.

Given the undeveloped state of *Buyruk* studies, this paper aims to introduce the oeuvre to broader scholarship. After a discussion of the primary place of the *Buyruk* in Kizilbash-Alevi literary heritage and a summary assessment of secondary literature, it examines the thematic content and textual limits of the genre. Based on the published and unpublished *Buyruk* copies, the paper also makes preliminary observations on how the text presents itself as the conveyor of a primordial, sacred message. Following a brief discussion of the historical origins of the oeuvre, the final part of the paper addresses the question of the role that the *Buyruk* played in the confession-building processes among the Kizilbash-Alevi communities during the early modern era.

WRITTEN SOURCES OF THE KIZILBASH-ALEVI TRADITION AND THE *BUYRUK*

Written sources of the Kizilbash-Alevi tradition have not been systematically studied yet. For example, the following questions have not been adequately addressed: Which books are the primary authoritative texts of the Kizilbash-Alevi faith? Are there any canonical texts? Is there any hierarchy between those religious texts in terms of representation of Kizilbash-Alevi beliefs? Furthermore, a methodological approach to examine and classify Kizilbash-Alevi written sources is yet to be developed. Elsewhere, I have offered an approach, which highlights two features to test whether a religious text is an authoritative and definitive source of the tradition. According to this approach, any authoritative religious text must have a certain ‘horizontal width’ across the community and a certain ‘vertical depth’ in history. This is to say, any canonical or quasi-canonical text must be renowned and recognized by a vast majority of the community, on one hand, and historically or mythologically traced back to the foundational era of the tradition, on the other.⁶

When we apply these criteria to the Kizilbash-Alevi written heritage, certain books come to the fore as the central reference texts of the Kizilbash-Alevi faith and rituals. Since the earliest field research among Kizilbash-Alevi communities during the early decades of the Turkish Republic (1920s–1940s), scholars have been aware that Kizilbash-Alevi revere certain books as their sacred texts. For example, Yusuf Ziya Yörükân (d. 1954), who did his field research in the 1920s and 1930s, determined that among Tahtacı Alevi communities of southwestern and western Anatolia, the most respected books were *Kumru* (a late example of the *Maktel-i Hüseyin* corpus),⁷

⁶ Yıldırım, ‘Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition’, p. 63.

⁷ *Maktel-i Hüseyin* (sometimes called *Maktel*, from Ar. *maqatal*, meaning ‘place of murder’) is the generic title of texts that narrate the martyrdom of Husayn ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib usually

Faziletname,⁸ *Hüsniye*,⁹ *Noktatiil-Beyan*, *Hutbeti'l-Beyan*,¹⁰ *Sakiname*, *Vilayetname-i Hacı Bektaş Veli*,¹¹ *Mir'atü'l-Mekasid*,¹² *Cavidan*,¹³ *Salname-i Sadreddin*,¹⁴ and most importantly the *Buyruk*, also known as *Menakıb* (literally, 'exploits', a word which is also commonly used for Sufi hagiographies).¹⁵ Abdurrahman Yılmaz's studies among Tahtacı Alevi some two decades later identified more or less the same works as the primary religious books of these particular Kizilbash-Alevi groups.¹⁶

My own fieldwork in more than six hundred Kizilbash-Alevi villages in the provinces of Tokat, Amasya, Çorum, Yozgat, Sivas, and Erzincan in central Anatolia from

in verse. In Anatolia, the earliest known *maktel* was written by a certain Şadi in 1362. In the following centuries, numerous *maktel* texts were composed in Sufi and Alevi circles. The most important and widespread among them was the *Hadikatü's-Sü'eda*' (Garden of the Felicitous) of Fuzuli (d. 1556), which was a liberal translation of Husayn Va'ez-e Kashefi's (d. 1504) Persian *Ravdat al-Shuhada*' (Garden of the Martyrs). During the twentieth century, another example of the *maktel* genre written by Mirza Muhammad Taqi Darbandi in the nineteenth century, *Kenzü'l-Mesa'ib*, also known as *Kumru*, became the most widely read *maktel* among Alevi. For a thematic analysis of the earliest *maktel* in Turkish, see Yıldırım, 'Beylikler Dünyasında Kerbela Kültürü ve Ehl-i Beyt Sevgisi'. For a brief description of *Kumru*, see Yıldız, 'Anadolu Aleviliğinin Yazılı Kaynaklarına Bir Bakış', p. 341.

⁸ *Faziletname* was written by Yemini in 1519 most probably in the Ottoman Balkans. The entire book is dedicated to explicating the legendary and miraculous deeds of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. For a critical edition of the text, see Yemîni, *Fazilet-Nâme*. For an analysis of *Faziletname*'s authorship and content, see Yıldırım, 'Abdallar, Akıncılar, Bektaşilik ve Ehl-i Beyt Sevgisi'.

⁹ This is a small treatise written in a polemical style to defend the fundamental tenets of Shi'ism against Sunnism. The original work, which is lost, was allegedly written in Arabic and translated into Persian in Iran during Shah Tahmasb's reign. It was translated into Turkish only in 1274 AH (1857–8) and achieved widespread recognition among Alevi and Bektashi. Several editions have been published in Turkey. See, for example, Usluer and Demirsöz, 'Risâle-i Hüsniye'. For a study of the text, its formation and later uses, see Ünal, *More than Mere Polemic*.

¹⁰ A short treatise composed of declarative statements attributed to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. See Seyyid Hüseyin ibn Gaybî, *Şerhu Hutbeti'l-Beyân*.

¹¹ The famous hagiography of Hacı Bektaş Veli. Numerous copies of this hagiography are available in public and private libraries. It has been published by several scholars. See, for example, Gölpınarlı ed., *Vilâyet-Nâme*; Duran ed., *Velâyetnâme*; Duran and Gümüšoğlu eds, *Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş Veli Velâyetnamesi*.

¹² The famous work of Ahmet Rifat Efendi (d. 1876), which was written to defend Bektaşî beliefs and practices against the polemical attacks of Nakshbandî sheikhs and sharia-minded religious scholars. See Ahmet Rifat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik*.

¹³ The name comes from the *Javidanname* of Fazlallah Astarabadi (d. 1394), the founder of Hurufism. However, among Alevi this title, along with its derivatives such as *Cavidanname* and *'İlm-i Cavidan*, has been mostly used for the collection of treatises that have similar themes to *Buyruk* texts.

¹⁴ Another version of the *Buyruk*. See below.

¹⁵ Ziya, 'Tahtacılar' (1929); Ziya, 'Tahtacılar' (1931); Yörükân, *Anadolu'da Aleviler ve Tahtacılar*, p. 289.

¹⁶ Yılmaz, *Tahtacılar Gelenekleri*, p. 56.

2013 to 2015 led me to a similar conclusion. Among the 288 manuscripts in private libraries of Alevi *dedes* and elders that I had a chance to consult, the most frequently copied books are the following: Quran, *Buyruk*, *Faziletname*, *Maktel-i Hüseyin*, *Kumru* [*Kenzü'l-Mesa'ib*], Hz. 'Ali Cenklere,¹⁷ *Vilayetname-i Hacı Bektaş Veli*, *Makalat-ı Hacı Bektaş Veli*,¹⁸ *Hüsniye*, *Ebu Muslimname*,¹⁹ *Battalname*,²⁰ *Müseyyebname*,²¹ *Kitab-ı Cabbarkulu*,²² *İlm-i Cavidan*, and poetry collections (*divan*) of prominent Kizilbash-Alevi poets such as Şah Hatayi, Pir Sultan Abdal, Kul Himmət and Virani.²³

Likewise, Alevi spiritual leaders (*dede*) refer to the same texts as the principal written sources of the Alevi tradition. For example, Mehmet Yaman (d. 2014), who was distinguished among the last generation of Alevi *dedes* with his expertise in Ottoman Turkish and Alevi manuscript traditions, listed *Buyruk*, *Hüsniye*, *Faziletname*, *Battal Gazi Destanı*, *Hutbetü'l-Beyan*, and *Kitab-ı Cabbarkulu* among the most revered Alevi books.²⁴

Among these 'Alevi books', the *Buyruk* has a special place. Kizilbash-Alevi have almost universally accepted it as the most authoritative religious text after the Quran. Yörükan underscores, for example, that the *Buyruk*, also known as *Menakıb* or *Menakıb-ı İmam Ca'fer-i Sadık*, is the highest esteemed religious book of Tahtacı Alevi. He records that he heard from the *dedes* of Hacı Emirli Ocak that there were two books at their disposal, which included everything about the history, beliefs, and rituals of the Tahtacı Alevi; they inherited these books from their ancestors and

¹⁷ This is the generic title of the legendary accounts narrating the fictive exploits and holy wars of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. Various stories with this content have been continually told and reproduced among various religious circles; hereby, these stories became an integral part of popular Islamic religiosity in Anatolia. Needless to say, they have been popular mostly among Kizilbash-Alevi communities. Various scholars have published several versions of these stories. See, for example, Demir and Erdem eds, *Hz. Ali Cenklere*, vol. 1.

¹⁸ Coşan ed., *Makâlât*.

¹⁹ This epic narrates the legend of Abu Muslim al-Khorasani's (d. 755) rise against the 'Umayyad rule and his subsequent victory. Noticeably differing from the historical account of the events, the governing theme of the entire narrative is avenging the murder of Husayn at Karbala. See Mélikoff, *Abu Muslim*.

²⁰ The epic of an Islamic war hero named Battal Gazi who allegedly spearheaded the Islamic conquest of eastern Anatolia. See Dedes, *Battalname*.

²¹ Another epic in the series of the revenge of Karbala. The protagonist named Musayyab Gazi was allegedly the son of Mukhtar Gazi (most probably the famous Mukhtar al-Saqafi (d. 687) who led a religiopolitical movement and killed perpetrators of the Karbala massacre). According to the epic, he rose against Umayyad rule and avenged Husayn's murder. See Demir, *Müseyyeb Gazi Destanı*.

²² This book is composed of stories and conversations of a fictive character named Cabbarkulu. The anonymous author declares his aim in writing this book as helping Muslims to live a better life. It explains several aspects of the Alevi faith from a conspicuously Sufi perspective. See Yüksel and Savaş eds., *Üveysilikten Bektaşiliğe Kitab-ı Cebbar Kulu*.

²³ For a preliminary discussion of the written sources discovered during this project, see Yıldırım, *Geleneksel Alevilik*, pp. 295–302.

²⁴ Yaman, 'Alevilerin İnanç ve İbadetlerinin Temel Kitabı', p. 15.

never showed them to nonmembers of the community, including Yörükân himself. He was told that these books were titled *Menakıb* and *Salname-i Sadreddin*. Apparently, *Menakıb* was a copy of the *Buyruk*. Yörükân was told that *Salname-i Sadreddin* consisted of conversations between Sheikh Safi and his son Sheikh Sadreddin.²⁵ As the description strongly suggests, this book must have been another version of the *Buyruk*, which is known as *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu* (*The Commandment of Sheikh Safi*). When Yörükân asked about the veritable written sources of the Alevi tradition, one Tahtacı *dede* told him:

[*Menakıb*:] This is the most esteemed book for us. It belongs exclusively to *dedes*. We do not show it to our disciples. At the disposal of İbrahim-i Sani Ocak, which bears the name ‘Hacı Emir family’ and constitutes the center of Şehepli tribe, there is a quite old *Menakıb* that is left from their ancestors and includes everything. This book is the *İmam Ca’fer Buyruğu*. It is a thousand years old, and you can find all kinds of information about the spiritual path, beliefs, and traditions of the Tahtacıs in it.²⁶

According to Mehmet Yaman, *Buyruk* is ‘the book that explains the beliefs, worship forms and rituals, ethics, and traditions of the Alevi Path...In short, *Buyruk* is the program, codified guidelines, and constitution of Alevism’.²⁷ Yaman also states that the doctrinal and ritual principles of Alevism, as well as its fundamental institutions such as *dedelik*, were regulated and standardized by Shah İsmâ‘il (d. 1524). According to him, these regulations were recorded in the *Buyruk* and copies of this book were disseminated by deputies (*halife*) of Shah İsmâ‘il in every corner of Anatolia.²⁸

My studies among the Kizilbash-Alevi *dedes* and elders also show that *Buyruk* is universally accepted among traditional Alevis as the topmost authoritative religious text with regard to the beliefs, practices, and institutions of the Kizilbash-Alevi tradition. From among some 400 Kizilbash-Alevi *dedes* and elders whom I interviewed in the years 2013, 2014, and 2015, not a single person contradicted this proposition. On the contrary, whenever I asked about the written sources of Alevism, they mentioned *Buyruk* at the top of the list. This consensus among traditional Kizilbash-Alevis is also verified by the fact that among the manuscripts that I discovered in the private libraries of Kizilbash-Alevi *dedes* and elders *Buyruk* is one of the most frequently copied texts.²⁹

The social usage of *Buyruk* texts is also an important question to address. First of all, it should be remembered that during the Ottoman period, literacy among Kizilbash-Alevi communities was very low. Even after the implementation of mass-education policies during the Republican period, *Buyruk* and other Alevi religious texts remained legible to only a few since they were written in the Arabic script. My

²⁵ Yörükân, *Anadolu’da Aleviler ve Tahtacılar*, pp. 169–171, 175, 353, 366, 455, 468.

²⁶ Yörükân, *Anadolu’da Aleviler ve Tahtacılar*, pp. 289–291. [All translations from Turkish are mine.]

²⁷ Yaman, ‘Alevilerin İnanç ve İbadetlerinin Temel Kitabı’, pp. 15–16.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁹ Yıldırım, *Geleneksel Alevilik*, pp. 295–302.

ethnographic research discovered that as late as the 1960s and 1970s, there were only a couple of people in Alevi villages who could read Ottoman Turkish, namely Turkish written in the Arabic script. Furthermore, as long as the *Buyruk* is concerned, these books were kept in the possession of prominent *dedes* and mostly read during the *cem* rituals. Otherwise, ordinary members of the community did not have access to *Buyruk*.³⁰ In that sense, the social usage of *Buyruk* was different from the catechisms in Reformation Europe and *ilmihals* (Ott. Tr. '*ilm-i hâl*') in the Ottoman Empire, which were supposed to be read (or read to) by believers at large.³¹ Despite such differences in social usage, however, they can still be considered as catechisms since large parts of the text were in the question-and-answer format on the basics of the creed, rituals, and religious institutions, and as such lent themselves to oral dissemination.

MODERN STUDIES ON THE *BUYRUK*

Among modern scholars, Fuat Köprülü (d. 1966) was the first to use a *Buyruk* manuscript as a source for the religious history of Anatolia. In his magnum opus, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature* (1918), he refers to a book titled *Manaqib al-Asrar Bahjat al-Ahrar* and argues that it was written by—or attributed to—Shah Isma'îl (d. 1524) to disseminate the rules, precepts, and rituals of his Sufi order.³² However, he never realized that this book was a copy of the Kizilbash-Alevi *Buyruk*. It was Yörükân who noticed for the first time that the *Buyruk* was the most esteemed sacred book among Alevi communities. Based on his ethnographic research, Yörükân concluded that the *Menakib* was written during the time of Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524–1576).³³

Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, who examined at least four manuscripts that can be identified as versions of the *Buyruk*, arrived at a similar conclusion. According to him, this book was written during the time of Shah Tahmasb and considered sacred by Alevi. Gölpınarlı's lasting contribution to *Buyruk* research and the perception of the *Buyruk* in the eyes of the wider public regards his naming and categorization of the oeuvre. Like Köprülü, though without referring to him, Gölpınarlı argued that the original title of the book is *Manaqib al-Asrar Bahjat al-Ahrar*. Furthermore, he claimed that the book was penned by a certain Bisati, who was a poet and man of letters in Shah Tahmasb's court.³⁴ His second influential argument regards the types of *Buyruk*.

³⁰ On the religious and social functions of the *Buyruk* in an Alevi village see also Shankland, 'The *Buyruk* in Alevi Village Life'; Karolewski, 'Discovering Alevi Rituals by Analysing Manuscripts'.

³¹ On this issue see Terzioğlu, 'Where '*İlm-i Hâl*' Meets Catechism'.

³² Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, p. 282; Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, p. 298.

³³ Yörükân, *Anadolu'da Aleviler ve Tahtacılar*, p. 468.

³⁴ The only evidence that Gölpınarlı provides for this argument is a poem included in earlier versions of the *Buyruk* texts. See Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Müzesi*, vol. III, p. 430. In fact, Bisati figures once in the entire text as a penname in a panegyric written for Shah Tahmasb. Surely,

According to him, *Manaqib al-Asrar Bahjat al-Ahrar* was known among Alevis as the *Büyük Buyruk* (*The Great Commandment*), while a letter included in the manuscripts he examined was known as *Küçük Buyruk* (*The Short Commandment*).³⁵ As I have discussed elsewhere, neither of these arguments is substantiated by manuscript sources or oral traditions.³⁶ Nonetheless, his naming and dual categorization have been widely accepted both by scholars and modern Alevi intellectuals.

First to publish a *Buyruk* with the Turkish original text and a translation into Arabic was Ahmad Hamid al-Sarraf in 1954.³⁷ In his introduction, al-Sarraf says that the book belonged to the private library of a leader of the Shabak religious community in the province of Mosul in northern Iraq. Although its original title is *Haza Kitab-ı Menakib-i Şerif-i Kutbül-Arifin Hazreti Şeyh Safi*, al-Sarraf states that the book was known among the Shabak as *Kitab-ı Menakib* or *Buyruk*. A content analysis shows that this text is an incomplete copy of the *Menakib* that Gölpınarlı identified as *Manaqib al-Asrar Bahjat al-Ahrar*.

Four years after al-Sarraf's publication, another *Buyruk* text was published by Sefer Aytekin in Ankara.³⁸ In his short introduction, Aytekin states that the main body of his work is a transliteration of the book known as *Tahtacı Buyruk*. He also added excerpts from other *Buyruk* manuscripts that he found in Maraş, Alaca (in Çorum), Gümüşhacıköy (in Amasya), Malatya, and Hacı Bektaş (in Kırşehir) at the end of his edition. Aytekin does not give any information about his sources but says that his text is a genuine transliteration of the original manuscripts without any additions or subtractions. Defining the *Buyruk* as the code, guidebook, program, and constitution of the Alevi Path, he also notes that this book is known among Alevis under a variety of titles such as *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu*, *Menakib-ı Evliya*, *Menakıbname*, and *Fütüvvetname*.³⁹ Anke Otter-Beaujean has confirmed with Rıza Yetişen, a leading Tahtacı *dede*, that the latter had the original manuscript that was published by Sefer Aytekin. She also notes that the manuscript was copied in AH 1309 (1891–2) and is currently in the possession of Fuat Bozkurt, from whom she obtained a photocopy.⁴⁰

Even though several other *Buyruks* have been published following Aytekin's work, his edition set the perception of the *Buyruk* by both modern Alevis and

only one poem, which says nothing about the *Buyruk* except being included in the text, does not suffice to conclude that the entire text was written by Bisati. In addition, the fact that there are many other poems of well-known Kizilbash poets such as Shah Hatayi, Pir Sultan Abdal, and Kul Himmet in the same text further weakens Gölpınarlı's argument.

³⁵ Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Müzesi*, p. 240; Gölpınarlı, *Alevî-Bektâşî Nefesleri*, p. 86. For a discussion of this letter, see Yıldırım, 'The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene', pp. 464–467.

³⁶ Yıldırım, *Menâkıb-ı Evliyâ (Buyruk)*.

³⁷ Al-Şarrâf, *The Shabak*.

³⁸ Aytekin, *Buyruk*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ Otter-Beaujean, 'Tahtacıların Kutsal Kitabı Buyruk Hakkında Birkaç Not', p. 5.

scholars.⁴¹ This is partly because of the re-publication of the same text by Alevi scholar Fuat Bozkurt in 1982. In its first edition, Bozkurt does not give any information about the manuscript used in his text. However, it is clear from the content that his text is a simplified and reorganized version of Aytekin's publication. Another methodological problem with this edition is that Bozkurt does not hesitate to tamper with the content of the original text as published by Aytekin.⁴² In the later editions, Bozkurt partially corrected his mistakes by giving Aytekin's text without distortion in the main body and moving his own comments to the footnotes. Unlike the first edition, he has also added general references to some manuscripts that he says remain in his possession.⁴³

Despite these methodological problems, Bozkurt's edition has dominated the field for decades, and it has been widely cited. It was only in the 2000s that more scholarly publications based on identified and described manuscripts began to come out. In 2003, Ahmet Taşğın published the oldest available *Buyruk* manuscript, which dates from 1612. After a brief introduction, Taşğın provides the transliteration of the text along with a facsimile copy of the manuscript. Yet, following Gölpınarlı, he misnames the oeuvre and its author.⁴⁴ Another important manuscript dated to the seventeenth century was published by Doğan Kaplan, again with an incorrect title.⁴⁵ Kaplan also published another *Buyruk* text based on four manuscript copies, which is probably the most important work so far in this field.⁴⁶ Both of Kaplan's publications include transcriptions and facsimile copies of the manuscripts.

Apart from these editions, some shorter *Buyruk* copies have been published as journal articles. A short and incomplete copy allegedly dating from 1658 was published by Ahmet Taşğın.⁴⁷ Yunus Koçak published a manuscript copy found in the

⁴¹ These publications have significant problems from a scholarly perspective. Apart from serious methodological issues, such as not describing source manuscripts and mistakes in reading Ottoman Turkish, in some cases editors did not hesitate to tamper with the content of the original texts. For some examples, see Komisyon, ed., *Buyruk: İmam-ı Cafer Buyruğu*; Ayyıldız, *İmam-ı Cafer Buyruğu*; Erbay, *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*; Sakallıoğlu ed., *Buyruk—Ehl-i Beyt Erkânı*; Saygı, ed., *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*; Atalay, *İmam Cafer-i Sadık Buyruğu*; Şener ed., *İmam Cafer Buyruğu*. Although they do not follow scholarly methods, Mehmet Yaman's publications are relatively more loyal to the original texts in manuscript forms. See Yaman, *Erdebilli Şeyh Safi ve Buyruğu*; Yaman ed., *Buyruk: Alevi İnanç-İbadet ve Ahlak İlkeleri*. Yet he too indulges himself with twisting some critical phrases and concepts while translating the original texts into modern Turkish (*sadeleştirme*). See Karolewski, 'Discovering Alevi Rituals by Analysing Manuscripts', pp. 85–86.

⁴² Bozkurt ed., *Buyruk*. As I stated earlier, Otter-Beaujean has confirmed that the original manuscript that was used by Aytekin has been later entrusted to Fuat Bozkurt by its owner Rıza Yetişen. See Otter-Beaujean, 'Tahtacıların Kutsal Kitabı Buyruk Hakkında Birkaç Not', p. 5.

⁴³ Bozkurt, *Buyruk İmam Cafer-i Sadık Buyruğu* (2005); Bozkurt ed., *Buyruk: İmam Cafer-i Sadık Buyruğu* (5th edn, 2018).

⁴⁴ Bisâti, *Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu*.

⁴⁵ Kaplan, *Erkânâme 1*.

⁴⁶ Kaplan, *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*.

⁴⁷ Taşğın, 'Şeyh Safi Menâkıbı ve Buyruklar'.

village of Mezirme in the province of Malatya, an important center of the Şah İbrahim Veli Ocak. Although this manuscript was produced in 1908, a content analysis shows that it is an inaccurate and incomplete copy of older *Buyruk* texts.⁴⁸ Filiz Kılıç and Tuncay Bülbül published another short treatise that includes excerpts from the *Buyruk* and belongs to the private library of Mehmet Akgül of Hamza Şeyh Ocak located in the provinces of Kütahya, Afyon and Eskişehir.⁴⁹

THEMES AND BOUNDARIES OF THE *BUYRUK* GENRE

As already suggested, *Buyruk* is not a well-defined single book but a genre of religious writing, the textual boundaries of which are difficult to determine. Published *Buyruk* texts vary to a great extent in terms of both scope and substance. The same can be said for the available unpublished manuscripts, which are by no means verbatim copies of each other but rather vary to a significant extent. *Buyruk* texts are usually included together with other treatises in bound manuscripts. Even within a single manuscript, it is hard to determine the beginning and end of the *Buyruk* if it is not separated by a conspicuous title. This being the case, scholarship has not yet developed the criteria for determining whether a given book should be deemed a *Buyruk* or not.

Otter-Beaujean acknowledges that the known *Buyruk* manuscripts do not represent a standardized text but vary in terms of style and scope. Nonetheless, she points out, these works share certain themes that distinguish them from other literary products.⁵⁰ She explains the plurality within the *Buyruk* genre by the dynamic interaction between the written and oral traditions. According to her, the compilation of the *Buyruk* occurred in two stages. In the first stage, *Buyruk* writings emerged as treatises that were sent by the Safavids to Anatolian Kizilbash to propagate their religious teachings. In the second stage, additions and changes were made to these texts in subsequent centuries. Especially after the collapse of the Safavid dynasty in the mid-eighteenth century, Anatolian Kizilbash were left without supreme leadership. Thence the former Safavid missionaries in Anatolia found themselves as the religious leaders of the Kizilbash communities. In the course of later centuries, these leaders—called *dede*—continually revised the *Buyruk* texts in their possession according to the

⁴⁸ Koçak, 'Şah İbrahim Ocağı'ndan Gelen Bir Şeyh Safi Buyruğu'. For *Şah Tahmasb Menakibi*, see below.

⁴⁹ Kılıç and Bülbül, 'Erdebil Dergâhı'nın Anadolu Alevîliğindeki Yeri'. In addition to these publications of *Buyruk* texts, scholars have examined several aspects of the genre. Among them, Anke Otter-Beaujean, Doğan Kaplan, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, and Janina Karolewski have made considerable contributions to the field. See, for example, Otter-Beaujean, 'Tahtacıların Kutsal Kitabı Buyruk Hakkında Birkaç Not'; Otter-Beaujean, 'Schriftliche Überlieferung versus Mündliche Tradition'; Kaplan, *Yazılı Kaynaklarına Göre Alevilik*; Karakaya-Stump, 'Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts'; Karakaya-Stump, 'Alevi Dede Ailelerine Ait Buyruk Mecmuaları'; Karolewski, 'Discovering Alevi Rituals by Analysing Manuscripts'. I will highlight their relevant contributions in the following sections.

⁵⁰ Otter-Beaujean, 'Schriftliche Überlieferung versus Mündliche Tradition', p. 219.

changing conditions and needs. It was these continuous revisions by *dedes* that account for such a wide variety of *Buyruk* texts.⁵¹

Ayfer Karakaya-Stump follows the same line of argumentation and maintains that the *Buyruk* is not a single text but a miscellany (Tr. *mecmua*, Ar. *majmū'a*) that includes several treatises. Observing that the textual boundaries of the 'proper *Buyruk*' are not always easily distinguishable even in a single collection of treatises that are bound as a manuscript, she states: 'At one level, then, *Buyruk* may be understood as a generic name for evolving collections of some core Alevi religious texts, while at a stricter level, only the *Menakıbs* may be considered as proper *Buyruks*.'⁵² These significant variations notwithstanding, Karakaya-Stump also notes the overlapping themes between different *Buyruk* copies, such as the principles that should govern relations between a spiritual guide and his disciples, regulations between *musahıbs* ('path brothers'), aspects of the *cem* ritual, Alevi beliefs and cosmology, morals, and appropriate behavior.⁵³

It is chiefly due to the Aytekin edition and the subsequent publications that a twofold categorization of the *Buyruk* genre into *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu* and *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu* became widely accepted by both Alevis and scholars. This classification has presented the so-called *Tahtacı Buyruk* (the Aytekin edition) as the *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu* par excellence, while *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu* remains only vaguely identified. Following this established tradition, Otter-Beaujean maintains that the latter traces back to *Menaqıb al-Asrar Bahjat al-Ahrar*, which is accepted as the oldest of the Safavid treatises, while the former corresponds to variants of *Menakıb-ı İmam Ca'fer el-Sadık*.⁵⁴ Doğan Kaplan, who has studied a variety of *Buyruk* manuscripts, follows the same categorization and highlights Safavid influence as the distinguishing feature between the two categories. According to him, those books known as *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu* were written by the Safavids in the sixteenth century, while the second group known as *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu* do not bear Safavid influence.⁵⁵ Karakaya-Stump too espouses the same approach. According to her, one of the main differences between the two categories of *Buyruk* is the extent to which the Safavids and Hacı Bektaş figure in each. Arguing that 'Hacı Bektaş makes little or no appearance' in the former while he figures as a patron saint in the copies of *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu*, she concludes, 'The declining presence of the Safavids and the growing prominence of Hacı Bektaş seems to be one of the most significant lines of disparity between the two *Buyruk* types... this disparity may be a reflection of the eroding Safavid memory

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 224–226.

⁵² Karakaya-Stump, 'Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts', p. 279.

⁵³ Ibid. On the question of plurality in the *Buyruk* genre, see also Karolewski, 'Discovering Alevi Rituals by Analysing Manuscripts', pp. 80–88.

⁵⁴ Otter-Beaujean, 'Tahtacıların Kutsal Kitabı Buyruk Hakkında Birkaç Not', pp. 7–8.

⁵⁵ Kaplan, *Yazılı Kaynaklarına Göre Alevilik*, pp. 57, 107–114.

and the increasing Bektaşî influence among Alevi communities in the post-Safavid era.⁵⁶

My studies on a variety of *Buyruk* manuscripts in private and public libraries concur with the above-mentioned scholarship regarding its two main observations that (1) the term 'Buyruk' refers to a genre of religious writing but not to a specific text, although, as I will argue below, I maintain that this became the case only after the seventeenth century, and (2) in terms of literary form, historical context, and religious content, the available *Buyruk* copies tend to agglomerate into two identifiable clusters. However, as I will discuss shortly, I take issue with the established nomenclature that identifies these two clusters as *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu* and *Şeyh Safî Buyruğu*. I argue that such a nomenclature has only been popularized in the mid-twentieth century and does not correspond to the textual and contextual history of the *Buyruk* since it creates an artificial line of separation within the genre.

Although the *Buyruk* is not a single work and it is difficult to discern its boundaries with other religious texts, a content analysis can still identify with some certainty whether a given text is a *Buyruk* or not. A *Buyruk* is a guidebook that was composed to guide spiritual leaders (*dede*) of the Kizilbash-Alevi community in matters of beliefs, religious institutions, socio-religious organization, rituals, and sacred history. Therefore, there is a set of themes one may expect to find in a *Buyruk* text.

A typical *Buyruk* usually starts with a narrative that explicates the legendary origin of the text itself. According to this account, the *Buyruk* consists of the secret teachings that the Prophet Muhammad entrusted to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib in the form of a written testament, which was meant to be taught only to sincere believers about the esoteric aspects of Islam, that is, the 'people of *tarikât*' or the Kizilbash-Alevi.

A significant portion of *Buyruk* texts deals with fundamental Kizilbash-Alevi beliefs about such matters as deity, prophethood, sainthood (Ar. *wilāya*, Tr. *vilayet*), humanity, cosmic history, and ways of salvation. In many aspects, Kizilbash-Alevi religiosity looks like a unique variant of Sufi Islam. Therefore, the religious terminology of the *Buyruk* shares much with the broader Sufi tradition. Nonetheless, the Kizilbash-Alevi tradition uniquely reinterprets some key concepts such as sainthood, worship, intercession, primordial essences of the Imams and their descendants, the special status of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and *ahl al-bayt*. The *Buyruk* remains the principal Alevi oeuvre that explains the Kizilbash-Alevi understanding of these concepts.

Another recurrent topic regards the qualifications, responsibilities, and socioreligious tasks of spiritual masters (referred to under a variety of names such as *halife*, *mürşid*, *mürebbi*, and *pir*) and disciples or followers called *talib*, as well as the regulations regarding the relationship between them. We know that the socio-religious fabric of the Kizilbash-Alevi community is based principally on the relationship between

⁵⁶ Karakaya-Stump, 'Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts', p. 280. Karakaya-Stump's argument that Hacı Bektaş figures as a patron saint in *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu* seems a hasty conclusion as it is not corroborated by the manuscript copies that I examined. Although some late *Buyruk* copies produced among Bektashi-affiliated Kizilbash-Alevi circles occasionally mention Hacı Bektaş with great reverence, he never assumes the position of Sheikh Safî, who is actually replaced by Imam Ja'far in these later *Buyruk* versions.

spiritual master (*dede*) and disciple (*talib*). Therefore, the principles and rules that regulate this relationship and mythical stories that explain its sacred origins dominate the narrative of any *Buyruk* text. Meanwhile, there are other religious principles and rules that equally apply to spiritual masters and followers. These rules and the punishments to be administered to those individuals who break them are also a recurrent subject matter of *Buyruk* texts.

A consistent theme of the *Buyruk* concerns the fundamental institutions of the Kizilbash-Alevi religious system. Arguably the most central among these institutions are those of the hereditary spiritual guide (*halife, dede, mürşid, pir*) and the Path Brother or *musahib*. According to the Kizilbash-Alevi Path, every member of the community must attain a *musahib* when they reach the age of maturity, usually soon after marriage. A person may become a full member of the Kizilbash-Alevi faith community only through having a *musahib*. The special relationship of *musahib* can only be enacted between two brothers in the Path and their two wives through a special ritual of initiation presided over by their spiritual guide. Once bound together with the covenant of *musahib*, two path brothers and their wives are supposed to share everything in the Path, including worldly possessions, spiritual positions, responsibilities, and sins. Accordingly, a typical *Buyruk* devotes a significant portion to explaining the status, socioreligious qualifications, responsibilities, and mythic origins of the institution of *musahib*. Ritual enactment of the bond of *musahib*, relationship between *musahibs* and their responsibilities towards each other, circumstances in which the bond of *musahib* becomes null, and stories that explain how Muhammad and Ali established this institution by becoming *musahib* to each other are the distinctive themes of the *Buyruk* that are expected to be found in each version of the genre.

Alongside the spiritual guidance and the institution of *musahib*, the *cem* ritual occupies a central place in the Kizilbash-Alevi religious system.⁵⁷ For this reason, passages that explain several aspects of the *cem* ritual, especially the rites of initiation, and its performers constitute another recurrent theme of the *Buyruk* genre. The *Buyruk* traces the mythic origin of the *cem* ritual to the legendary gathering of the Forty Companions of the Prophet, a spiritually elite group that included men and women such as ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, Fatima bint Muhammad, and Salman al-Farisi. A typical *Buyruk* account includes the myth of the Assembly of the Forties (*Kırklar Meclisi*), according to which forty select companions of Muhammad gathered immediately after his heavenly journey (*Mi‘rac*) and received him only after he introduced himself as a humble servitor of dervishes instead of the prophet of his people. The *Buyruk* explains the cosmic meaning, religious functions, and doctrinal importance of the *cem* ritual within the context of this myth. Likewise, it explicates the primary services during the ritual, which counts twelve sub-rituals called *hizmet*, literally translated as ‘service’, with reference to the personae who attended the Assembly of the Forties.

⁵⁷ For an analysis of the *cem* ritual and its functions in the Kizilbash-Alevi socio-religious constitution, see Yildirim, ‘Ritual as a Microcosm of Society’.

NOMENCLATURE AND MYTHOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE *BUYRUK*

The origin and history of the generic title ‘Buyruk’ is still a mystery. One should note that this word is not included in the original titles of early *Buyruk* texts as we find them in manuscripts. The original titles of those treatises that we consider to be *Buyruk* are usually recorded as *Menakıb-i Şeyh Safi* or *Menakıb-ı İmam Ca’fer-i Sadık*. In some manuscripts, the word *Menakıb* is replaced by *Risale*, *Tezkire*, *Fütüvvetname*, or *Makalat*. In a few cases, the texts bear the titles *Dürr-i Meknun* or *Cavidan*.

Otter-Beaujean has argued that the word ‘Buyruk’ as the generic name of these texts has become widespread only via the publications during the last few decades. According to her, the term is derived from the Turkish word ‘buyurmak’ (literally ‘to command’), which is frequently used in *Buyruk* texts as a synonym of ‘söylemek’ (literally ‘to say’ or ‘to utter’).⁵⁸ However, my examination of various manuscripts shows that these books have been known as *Buyruk* from the late eighteenth century onward. A treatise, which is an excerpt from the *Buyruk* and recorded in two manuscripts dated from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, refers to those texts that explain the Alevi faith and rituals as *Buyruk*.⁵⁹ This short treatise explicates the fundamental doctrinal principles and institutions of the Kizilbash-Alevi Path called the *Three Customs and Seven Obligations* (*Üç sünnet yedi farz*).⁶⁰ The text starts with the question of Sheikh Sadreddin to Sheikh Safi about the ‘three customs and seven obligations’. The former’s question ends with the following sentence: ‘My esteemed *pîr*! You are my lord and the explorer of the treasures of the *Ṭarîkat*. Say out of your grace so that the aspirants of the Saints (*evliyâ tâlîbi*) may follow this commandment (*buyruk*) henceforth.’⁶¹ It is clear from the context that the term ‘Buyruk’ refers to the whole body of Sheikh Safi’s words as an answer to this question, which constitutes the treatise itself. A statement in the same treatise also suggests that the term was established by the early nineteenth century as the generic name of this particular genre.⁶² After a brief explanation of the third obligation, the anonymous author says,

⁵⁸ Otter-Beaujean, ‘Schriftliche Überlieferung versus Mündliche Tradition’, p. 218. Karakaya-Stump repeats the same argument. See Karakaya-Stump, ‘Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts’, p. 279.

⁵⁹ The first manuscript is housed in Mevlânâ Müzesi Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı Kütüphanesi (MS 181). Gölpınarlı estimates the date of copying of this manuscript to be 1017 AH (1608–9). However, some treatises included in the manuscript show that it must be dated to later centuries. The second manuscript is also a collection of numerous religious treatises and preserved in İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı (MS 27). It was copied in 1841.

⁶⁰ Versions of this treatise are included in numerous *Buyruk* texts.

⁶¹ *Menakıb*, Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı Kütüphanesi, MS 181, fol. 51b. This text is published in Kaplan, *Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*. See also *Menakıb*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS 27, fol. 631b.

⁶² Sources from outside the Kizilbash-Alevi communities also confirm the proposition that the *Buyruk* became widely known as the umbrella term for Alevi sacred texts in the nineteenth century. We come across sporadic notes in the reports of Christian missionaries who were

‘This matter too is referred to those spiritual guides who have the Commandment in their possession.’⁶³ As it is clear from the context, the anonymous author of the treatise states that what he wrote is just a brief summary of the issue. Those who want to learn more should resort to the spiritual guides who possess the *Buyruk*.

We also know of at least three *Buyruk* copies from the nineteenth century that bear the word ‘Buyruk’ in their titles. The title of the first copy, which is included in a miscellany of twelve treatises all related to the Alevi and Bektashi tradition, reads: *Hāzā Buyruġ-ı İmām Ca‘fer-i Sādık*.⁶⁴ The second *Buyruk* manuscript, which is preserved in the private library of Fikret Yılmaz, starts with the title *Şeyh Şafî (rahmetullahi ‘aleyh) buyruġudur (It is the commandment of Sheikh Safî, God’s mercy be upon him)*.⁶⁵ Lastly, the title of a short section in a *Buyruk (Menākib-ı Şeyh Şafî)* copied in 1893 reads as follows: *Menākib-ı Buyruk-ı Evliyā-yı Tārīkat*. Yet this section is not in the main *Buyruk* text in this manuscript; it is rather recorded as a separate short treatise.⁶⁶

In fact, such naming goes well with the content of these books. A significant portion of the *Buyruk* is penned in the form of a catechism, where Sheikh Safi (d. 1334), the eponymous founder of the Safavid Sufi order, answers the questions of Sheikh Sadreddin (d. 1391), his son and successor. In some cases, answers to the questions are given by Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq, and in yet fewer cases by Imam ‘Ali. The catechetical form is the established literary technique, especially in sections regarding the rules and regulations of the Kizilbash-Alevi Path. A close content analysis reveals that the entire text is conceived as the commandments (*buyruk*) of an anonymous group of spiritual elects called *Evliyā* (the Saints) to the aspirants of the Kizilbash-Alevi Path. The group of Saints includes, but is not limited to, Imam ‘Ali, Imam Ja‘far and other Imams, Sheikh Safi, *Ustād* (Shah Isma‘il, referred to with the penname of Hatayi), and the reigning Safavid shah.

Therefore, as far as its content is concerned, the oeuvre is the Commandment of the Saints to their disciples. A close reading of the earliest texts also suggests that all members of this elect group of Saints are manifestations in the human form of the primordial essence called the Light of Muhammad-‘Ali. According to the *Buyruk*’s presentation, the religious rules and regulations that are written in the text were established when Adam was created. In an untitled treatise dealing with the sacred origins of the Kizilbash-Alevi Path, the primordial origin of the *Buyruk* is traced back to the covenant between God and the spirits of human beings:

active in Anatolia in the mid-nineteenth century. For example, the American Protestant missionary Dunmore writes in his letter dated 1857 that the Kizilbash-Alevi have a sacred book called ‘Bouyouruk’ and the content of this book shows similarities to the Old Testament. Cited in Otter-Beaujean, ‘Tahtacıların Kutsal Kitabı’, pp. 2–3.

⁶³ *Menakib*, Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı Kütüphanesi, MS 181, fol. 53a; *Menakib*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS 27, fol. 634a.

⁶⁴ *Buyruġ-ı İmām Ca‘fer-i Sādık*, İstanbul Araştırmaları Kütüphanesi Suna ve İnan Kırac Vakfı El Yazması Koleksiyonu, MS SR_000257_12, fol. 184b.

⁶⁵ *Şeyh Safî Buyruġu*, Fikret Yılmaz private collection, fol. 1a.

⁶⁶ *Menakib-ı Şeyh Safî*, manuscript kept in the Ocak village library, fol. 57b.

The divinely inspired word (*nefes*) of the Great Master (*Ustād*) is like a signed title-deed. In the Arabic language, the word *‘ahd* means various things. First of all, it means ‘statement’ and ‘decision’; secondly, it means ‘oath’ or ‘vow’; thirdly, it means ‘testament’ and ‘enforcement’; fourthly, it means ‘to issue a command’; fifthly, it means ‘to save’ or ‘to preserve’; sixthly, it means ‘time’. Now, know that when this world was created, in accordance with the covenant with the Light in the Candle [the Light of Muhammad-‘Ali], God said, for the first time, [to the spirits of human beings]: ‘*Did I not enjoin upon you, oh children of Adam, that you not worship Satan?*’⁶⁷ Know that Satan is the enemy of men.’ Since this time, this *‘ahd* of statement and decision and that of oath and testament have been kept in order to save and preserve the *Buyruk* and to follow the Path. This is how the Grand Master penned and my spiritual guide stated. This statement cannot be explained in one thousand books.⁶⁸

According to the same treatise, the true believers have been following these precepts since the time of Adam. Eventually, at the dawn of history’s final epoch, Muhammad-‘Ali came in human form and revised those rules so that they would guide the true believers or the people of the *Ṭarīkat* until the end of time.

In the final epoch of history, Muhammad and ‘Ali came and became the last of the prophets and the last of the legatees (*aşfiyā’*). They honored the earth with the felicity of the Prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and the Sainthood (*vilāya*) and issued the Path, the Rituals, the Four Gates, the Forty Ranks, the Seventy-Two Stages, and the Forty Thousand Commandments (*Buyruk*). [After completing their mission] They retreated into mystery [died in the material world]. Being not permanent in this world, all prophets, Muhammad, ‘Ali, and the Twelve Imams visited this world like guests. They entrusted to *dedes* and spiritual guides (*mürşid*) the Forty Thousand Commandments that were issued in the Four Gates. [True believers] have attached themselves to the Path of Muhammad-‘Ali as per these commandments. And *mürebbis* (spiritual guides) and *muşāhibs* (path brothers) subjected themselves to the *Dargāh* according to these regulations.⁶⁹

In harmony with the above-quoted passage, the oldest *Buyruk* text, which, I argue, is the *Urtext* of the later *Buyruk* versions, starts with a story that explains the origin, nature, and the sacred content of the *Buyruk* (*Menakīb*). According to this account, while he was on his deathbed, Prophet Muhammad called ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib to his presence to entrust to him a body of secret knowledge that he had never spoken of to anyone else. As the story goes, ‘Ali carefully listened to the Prophet and wrote down this secret knowledge in the form of a testament (*vaşiyetnāme*). Prophet Muhammad also told ‘Ali that this knowledge was about the spiritual path (*Ṭarīkat*);

⁶⁷ Quran 36: 60.

⁶⁸ *Menakīb*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS 27, fol. 641b. This treatise is recorded in at least five other manuscripts. For a broader discussion of these manuscripts, see Yıldırım, *Menâkīb-i Evliyâ*, pp. 247–280.

⁶⁹ *Menakīb*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS 27, fol. 640b.

unlike the knowledge of sharia, which was to be taught to everyone, this special knowledge could be taught only to the spiritual elect, namely the people of the *Ṭarīqat* who were distinguished by their love for the House of the Prophet and the Saints. It was incumbent upon the people of the *Ṭarīqat*, in turn, that they carefully follow the rules and regulations recorded in this Testament. After Imam ‘Ali’s death, the Testament was inherited by Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and his nine successors as the Imams of Twelver Shi‘ism. When the Twelfth Imam went into occultation, the Testament was entrusted to the leaders of the Saints until it reached Sheikh Safi, who spiritually enlightened his disciples according to its precepts. The text that follows, says the story, is nothing but this Testament that has been safeguarded by the Safavid sheikhs down to the time of Shah Tahmasb.⁷⁰

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE *BUYRUK*

Since Fuat Köprülü, scholars have generally agreed that *Buyruk* texts first appeared as the propaganda pamphlets of the Safavids to disseminate their beliefs among Kizilbash-Alevis living in the Ottoman empire. As I have already stated, Gölpınarlı’s argument that the first *Buyruk* was written by a certain Bisati, a poet and literatus at Shah Tahmasb’s court, appears incorrect. More importantly, Gölpınarlı never discusses the significant variations between the contents of the *Buyruk* copies, all of which he names *Manaqıb al-Asrar Bahjat al-Ahrar*. Furthermore, Gölpınarlı never addresses the question of whether the *Buyruk* was first written as a single book or as miscellaneous treatises. Likewise, later scholarship largely ignored this question. An assumption has prevailed that the *Buyruk* was a genre of religious writing, rather than a specific book, from the very beginning. All in all, the available scholarship agrees upon two fundamental views: (1) the early *Buyruk* texts were penned as propaganda booklets to spread Safavid beliefs among Ottoman subjects; (2) they appeared as miscellaneous tracts but not as a unitary text.

Partly challenging these assumptions, my examination of some fifty *Buyruk* manuscripts housed in private and public libraries suggests that the *Buyruk* was first composed as an authoritative text dealing with the teachings of the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order or Kizilbash Sufism.⁷¹ This is to say that the first *Buyruk* text, which was originally titled *Kitab-i Menakıb-ı Şerif-i Kutbü’l-‘Arifin Hazreti Şeyh Seyyid Safiyüddin*, was penned as the central guidebook for all Kizilbash Sufis, that is, both the military aristocracy of the Safavid empire and the dissident subjects of the Ottoman empire, not only for the latter. There are at least fifteen extant manuscript copies of this probably earliest *Buyruk* text. It is important to underscore that, as opposed to the above-mentioned widespread assumption that each *Buyruk* manuscript varies from others in content, these fifteen manuscripts contain verbatim copies of the same text.

⁷⁰ *Menakıb*, Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı Kütüphanesi, MS 181, fols 13a–15b; *Menakıb*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS. 27, fols 650b–652a. For a critical edition of the text based on eleven manuscript copies, see Yıldırım, *Menâkıb-ı Evliyâ*, pp. 323–477.

⁷¹ For the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order and how it differed from the Safavid Sufi order before Sheikh Junayd (d. 1460), see Yıldırım, ‘The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene, c. 1500–c. 1700’.

Even though the extant manuscripts were produced in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, I argue that all of these copies descend from an ‘Urtext’ that was composed under the auspice of Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524–1576). In my view, this ‘Urtext’, which I term *Şah Tahmasb Menakıbı*, reflects an attempt to combine and standardize several epistles and short treatises, as well as oral traditions, that had already been in circulation among the Kizilbash communities both in Iran and Anatolia.⁷²

Shah Tahmasb’s name shows up on several occasions in the text. First and foremost, the text entitles the Safavid-Kizilbash rites of initiation (*ikrār āyini*) the ‘Ritual (*erkân*) of Shah Tahmasb’. When explaining the ritual, it says that the neophyte must pledge his allegiance to his spiritual master in the name of the ‘Shah who gives refuge to the world’ (*Şâh-ı ‘Âlem-penâh*), an expression obviously indicating Shah Tahmasb. As an important part of the initiation rites, the master of the ceremony must utter a certain prayer called ‘the Khutbah of the Twelve Imams’ (*Huṭbe-yi Duvâzdeh Imâm*), at the end of which comes the invocation of the present ‘perfect guide’ (*mürşid-i kâmil*). In the *Şah Tahmasb Menakıbı*, this part includes the name of Shah Tahmasb with laudatory titles.⁷³ One should note that, according to Kizilbash beliefs, it was compulsory to pledge one’s allegiance to the present *mürşid-i kâmil* (the Safavid shah) and invoke his name in the prayer that concluded the initiation rituals. This is equally true of the manuscripts written by Kizilbash-Alevis in later periods. If a religious text was an original composition, the composer had to place the name of the present *mürşid-i kâmil* in the passage where he described the rites of initiation. For example, a *Buyruk* text composed in 1612 replaced the name of Shah Tahmasb with Shah ‘Abbas, who was the *mürşid-i kâmil* at the time.⁷⁴ In the meantime, if the text was not an original composition but merely a copy of an earlier text, the name in the original copy remained.⁷⁵

Secondly, the Sufi lineage and genealogy of the Safavid shahs, which are combined in one and the same chain in the Safavid case, starts from Shah Tahmasb and

⁷² For a detailed discussion of these manuscripts as well as a critical edition of the entire text, see Yıldırım, *Menâkıb-ı Evliyâ*.

⁷³ *Menakıb*, Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı Kütüphanesi, MS 198, fols 58a-61a; *Menakıb*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS. 27, fols 675b–676b. It is primarily this passage in several extant copies of the *Şah Tahmasb Menakıbı*, which also includes the biological/spiritual genealogy of Shah Tahmasb, as I will discuss shortly, that led scholars such as Yörükkan, Gölpınarlı, Otter-Beaujean, Kaplan, and Karakaya-Stump to the rightful conclusion that the earliest *Buyruk* texts were composed during the time of Shah Tahmasb. In addition to sporadic mentions in other already cited works, see, especially, Karakaya-Stump, ‘Documents and *Buyruk* Manuscripts’, p. 282.

⁷⁴ *Risale-i Şeyh Safî*, Konya Mevlana Müzesi Yazmaları, Ferit Uğur Kitaplığı, MS 1172, fol. 15b. Ahmet Taşğın published the entire Turkish text of this manuscript. See Bisâtî, *Şeyh Sâfî Buyruğu*.

⁷⁵ For a detailed discussion of how this belief is reflected in various *Buyruk* manuscripts, see Yıldırım, *Menâkıb-ı Evliyâ*, pp. 170–181.

traces back to the Prophet Muhammad.⁷⁶ Reciting the lineage (*silsila*) of Safavid sheikhs was a part of many Kizilbash rituals, including the rites of initiation. It was required by the Kizilbash faith that all names in this sheikh lineage be invoked down to the present sheikh. Furthermore, in the text the *silsila* is followed by a poem of a certain Bisati that is written as a panegyric for Shah Tahmasb. One should note that this is the only poem included in the text that praises a Safavid sheikh/shah.

Thirdly, Shah Tahmasb is the only Safavid sheikh to whom the text refers in historical terms. The passage in question seems to narrate a historical event that happened at Shah Tahmasb's court.⁷⁷ According to this passage, when leading Kizilbash were performing the *cem* ritual in the presence of Shah Tahmasb, there appeared a question concerning Kizilbash Sufi practices. A certain 'Ali Halife, Ibrahim Halife, and Bulgar Halife raised a question to be answered by Shah Tahmasb. His answer to their question became the authoritative rule in the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order and was included in the extant canonical text, the *Şah Tahmasb Menakıbı*.⁷⁸

CONFESSIONALIZATION OF THE KIZILBASH-ALEVI COMMUNITY AND THE *BUYRUK*

The composition of the *Buyruk* was part of the broader stabilization process of Kizilbash religiosity.⁷⁹ During the so-called revolutionary period of Safavid history, roughly between 1447 and 1501, the Safavid Sufi order served as the ideological guideline and organizational infrastructure of the Safavid-Kizilbash movement. After the foundation of the Safavid state, this new form of Safavid Sufism turned into the religion of the ruling military class. The tenure of Shah Isma'il (d. 1524) marked both the culmination of the millenarian Kizilbash Sufism and the inauguration of its transition from chiliastic military mysticism to a more streamlined and regulated religious system. Even though the dynamics of the process remain to be explored, it appears that efforts in this direction were intensified during the long reign of Shah Tahmasb (1524–1576).

I should note that my *Buyruk*-based approach here challenges the common wisdom in Safavid historiography, which maintains that Kizilbash Sufism waned in the aftermath of the foundation of the Safavid state, as the Safavid shahs began to enforce Twelver Shi'ism as the official religion. Safavid historians usually assume that Kizilbash Sufism was primarily a phenomenon of the transitional, chiliastic period of the Safavid Sufi order. Once the millenarian Sufi movement gave birth to the state,

⁷⁶ *Menakıb*, Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı Kütüphanesi, MS 198, fol. 57a; *Menakıb*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS 27, fol. 675a.

⁷⁷ Cf. Karakaya-Stump, 'Documents and *Buyruk* Manuscripts', p. 282.

⁷⁸ See, for example, *Menakıb*, Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı Kütüphanesi, MS 198, fols 71b–72a; *Menakıb*, İ.B.B. Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS 27, fols 688b–689a. As I discussed elsewhere, two other Safavid sheikhs, Sheikh Safi and Sheikh Sadreddin, were included in the text for literary effect as well as for purposes of legitimation. See Yıldırım, *Menâkıb-ı Evliyâ*, pp. 170–181.

⁷⁹ Yıldırım, 'Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition', pp. 68–87.

it turned into a burden on the shoulders of the shahs who threw in their lot with Twelver Shi'ism and, in cooperation with the Twelver Shi'ite ulema, sought ways to eliminate undisciplined Kizilbash religiosity. Nonetheless, my reading of contemporary sources from the perspective that the *Buyruk* provides suggests otherwise. I propose, instead, that Kizilbash Sufism took the form of a secretive mystical religion that served as the organizational infrastructure or the quasi-law of the Safavid ruling military class. Separated from the society at large with their exclusive membership in the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order, the Kizilbash military aristocracy and their coreligionists in the Ottoman territories created a confessional block separated from Sunnis and Twelver Shi'ites.⁸⁰

A significant component of this process was the regulation and stabilization of the rituals, institutions, and fundamental beliefs in a more unified and harmonious way. It was for this purpose that earlier beliefs and practices were written down in the form of a catechetical guidebook, which soon became the 'canon' of Kizilbash Sufism and functioned as the textual basis of creedal and ritual streamlining.⁸¹ It seems that after the fall of the Safavid dynasty, Kizilbash *Buyruks* disappeared in Iran, as we do not know of any extant copy as of yet.⁸² In the Ottoman territories, meanwhile, Kizilbash-Alevi managed to reproduce and preserve some of the manuscripts that exclusively belonged to Kizilbash Sufism, the *Buyruk* being the most important among them. As I said earlier, we have reasons to assume that the extant 'Urtext' that has been preserved in more than fifteen known manuscripts represents probably a large part of this first canonical text.

Meanwhile, the conditions in the lands under Ottoman rule forced the Anatolian Kizilbash-Alevi to develop peculiar survival strategies. Scholars have long acknowledged that the Ottoman empire went through a substantial political and religious transformation between the mid-fifteenth and the late sixteenth century. This period is usually referred to as the 'classical era' in which the former frontier principality transformed into a centralized military monarchy sustained on an agricultural economy. Concomitantly, the religious orientation of the empire was increasingly readjusted according to Sunni Hanafi law, a development which some scholars have

⁸⁰ For the most influential essay articulating the 'waning' approach, see Babayan, 'The Safavid Synthesis'. For my preliminary discussion of the 'transformation and standardization' approach, see Yıldırım, 'The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene'.

⁸¹ For a discussion of the dynamics that governed the canonization-cum-standardization process of the scriptural bases of the Kizilbash-Alevi confession and how this process worked in a predominantly oral setting, see Yıldırım, 'Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition'.

⁸² Sporadic references to some exclusively Kizilbash manuscripts kept in the royal library of the Safavid palace are recorded in the writings of contemporary Safavid literati and notes of Western travelers and diplomatic envoys. For a discussion of these accounts, see Yıldırım, *Menâkıb-ı Evliyâ*, pp. 60–73.

suggested to conceptualize as confessionalization.⁸³ Parallel to the rise of ‘Ottoman Sunnism’, there appeared a number of ‘heresies’ in the Ottoman core lands in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the ‘heresy par excellence’ being Kizilbash Sufism, which became the thorn in the eye of the Ottoman administration.⁸⁴

In a sense, the establishment of the Ottoman imperial regime roughly between 1453 and 1566 was an ambitious project of creating an empire-wide confessional community, that is, Sunni Muslims, through enforcing particular beliefs and rituals upon the society at large via ideological and administrative means such as a hierarchically structured and bureaucratized learned class, a centrally organized judicial system, as well as mosque preachers sympathetic to the Sunnitization project.⁸⁵ The important point to underline here is that in this confessional reorientation of the Ottoman religio-political landscape, it was not only the officially sanctioned socioreligious body that ‘confessionalized’ but also those groups who were pushed out of the boundaries of orthodoxy. By the same token, as they were excommunicated from the Ottoman Sunni ‘confession’, the Kizilbash-Alevi community assumed more and more distinctive confessional traits that separated them from the surrounding Sunni society and resulted in intragroup coherence, a process which might be called ‘counter-confessionalization’ or ‘parallel confessionalization’.⁸⁶

Hence, as far as the Kizilbash-Alevi in the Ottoman territories are concerned, there was a confluence of two separate but interrelated confessionalization processes, one in the Safavid empire and the other in the Ottoman empire. Available evidence suggests that in the sixteenth century, Anatolian Kizilbash-Alevi maintained their relentless adherence to the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order. Hence, just like the Kizilbash in Safavid territories, they were subjected to the religious rules and regulations of the *Şah Tahmasb Menakibi*. Their liaison with the Safavid center continued during the seventeenth century, albeit losing its former vitality and rigor. By the time of the demise of the Safavid dynasty in the third decade of the eighteenth century, the Kizilbash-Alevi in the Ottoman empire completely lost their connection with Iran

⁸³ There is a growing literature on confessional approaches to the early modern Ottoman history. For pioneering works in this vein, see Krstić, ‘Illuminated by the Light of Islam’; Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*; Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization’; Terzioğlu, ‘Where *‘İlm-i Hâl* Meets Catechism’; Burak, ‘Faith, Law, and Empire in the Ottoman Age of Confessionalization’; Erginbaş, ‘Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism’. For a review article, see Yıldırım, ‘The Rise of the “Religion and State” Order’.

⁸⁴ Imber, ‘The Persecution of the Ottoman Shi’ites’; Zarinebaf-Shahr, ‘Qizilbash “Heresy” and Rebellion’; Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik*; Yıldırım, *Turkomans between Two Empires*; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi in Ottoman Anatolia*.

⁸⁵ Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, pp. 27–70; Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*; Krstić, ‘Illuminated by the Light of Islam’; Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization’; Terzioğlu, ‘Where *‘İlm-i Hâl* Meets Catechism’; Burak, ‘Faith, Law, and Empire’; Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*; Yıldırım, ‘The Rise of the “Religion and State” Order’.

⁸⁶ For a different approach to Kizilbash-Alevi confessionalization, see Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi in Ottoman Anatolia*, pp. 256–319. Since Karakaya-Stump’s book was published after this paper was submitted, I could not engage with the author’s arguments.

and reoriented themselves to survive under new conditions. Probably the most crucial part of this reorientation was the rapprochement between Kizilbash-Alevi communities and the Bektashi Sufi order.⁸⁷

Therefore, the confessionalization of the Kizilbash-Alevi community in the Ottoman territories took place in two successive but partly overlapping stages. In the first stage, as members of the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order, they were subjected to what appears to be an attempt to streamline and regulate the Kizilbash beliefs and rituals, in both Iran and Anatolia. This was a project of confession- and community-building, which was curated on behalf of the shah by the headquarters of the Safavid order under the leadership of the head deputy (*ḥalifetü'l-ḥulefā*) and high-ranking deputies (*ḥalifes*).⁸⁸ The *Buyruk* itself or the 'Urtext', that is, the *Şah Tahmasb Menakıbı*, was likely composed as the scriptural component of this process, about which we still do not know enough. Its appearance suggests a *scripturalization* of the already established religious practices and oral knowledge, thereby providing a textual basis for the confessionalization of the hitherto disarrayed, heterogenous Kizilbash-Alevi religiosity. Arguably, *Şah Tahmasb Menakıbı* resulted from the compilation, systematization, and standardization of earlier epistles and short treatises. A significant portion of the text was penned in a form of catechism, where Sheikh Safi answers the questions of Sheikh Sadreddin with regard to the Kizilbash-Alevi creeds and rituals. And, as the canonical guidebook of the Kizilbash-Alevi faith, it was soon closed to further textual changes.

We know that the adherence of the Kizilbash-Alevi in the Ottoman territories to the Safavid shah was in decline already in the seventeenth century for various reasons. In the meantime, the Kizilbash-Alevi were gradually establishing an alliance and spiritual connections with the Bektashi Sufi order, a process which secured the tacit support of the Ottoman administration. It was, however, the fall of the Safavid dynasty in the first half of the eighteenth century that marked the definitive break of the Anatolian Kizilbash-Alevi with Iran. By the same token, this momentous development in Alevi history fueled the second stage of Kizilbash-Alevi confessionalization.

It is my argument in this paper that *Şah Tahmasb Menakıbı* maintained its central status as the topmost authoritative religious text of the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order up until the demise of the Safavid dynasty. After the fall of the dynasty and the subsequent collapse of the Safavid-Kizilbash Sufi order, however, Kizilbash-Alevi in Ottoman territories found themselves in a process of decentralization, which in turn

⁸⁷ Arguments regarding the rapprochement between Kizilbash-Alevi communities and the Bektashi Sufi order since the seventeenth century have been raised by several scholars, most notably Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi and Suraiya Faroqhi. For a discussion of the literature on this particular subject and my own approach, see Yıldırım, *Turkomans between Two Empires*, pp. 605–621; Yıldırım, *Hacı Bektaş Veli'den Balım Sultan'a Bektaşiliğin Doğuşu*, pp. 320–336.

⁸⁸ One should note that this argument rests primarily on the information provided by the *Buyruk*. Although a close reading of sporadic records in Safavid sources and Western travelogues about the Kizilbash corroborates *Buyruk's* vision, details of this process are yet to be explored.

triggered diversification in their religious beliefs and practices. It was during this period that the *Buyruk* was de-canonized, as several *Buyruk* texts were composed according to the changing needs of local communities. In the meantime, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq replaced Sheikh Safi as the principal religious authority in these new texts. It must be because of this conspicuous change of the authority figure that this cluster of parochial *Buyruk* texts later came to be called *İmam Ca'fer Buyruğu*. However, Kizilbash-Alevi communities continued to reproduce verbatim copies of the *Şah Tah-masb Menakıbı* during the post-Safavid era as well. For this reason, new parochial variants of the *Buyruk* emerged out of the interaction between the 'Urtext', oral traditions and local practices. It was this dynamic and creative processes that generated a variety of *Buyruk* texts in different regions and periods. Thenceforth, the term 'Buyruk' has signified a genre of sacred texts rather than a single canonized book.

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10. THE ABDALS OF RUM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETING MUSLIM CONFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN THE EARLY MODERN EASTERN BALKANS

NIKOLAY ANTOV

INTRODUCTION

This essay focuses on the development of confessional and sectarian identities among Muslims in the eastern Ottoman Balkans from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, with a focus on one particular, non-sharia-minded Muslim collectivity—the Abdals of Rum (of Otman Baba’s branch), which attracted numerous followers, especially among rural Turcoman populations. The period in question, especially from the mid-fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries, has been associated with the Ottoman polity’s transformation from a frontier enterprise, in which Turcoman (semi-) nomads and non-sharia-minded dervishes played leading political and military roles, into an increasingly mature, centralized and sedentary, bureaucratic regime under which those groups were politically marginalized and lost their prominent position.¹ A major aspect of this transformation was the articulation of a state-endorsed ‘Sunni Orthodoxy’, not only in competition with the Shi’itizing Safavid Empire of Iran (founded in 1501), but also because of the organic relationship between the building of a centralized imperial order and the formulation and endorsement of ‘right belief’.²

The evolution and articulation of an Ottoman ‘Sunni Orthodoxy’ from the mid-to-late fifteenth century onwards has become a part of an evolving debate in Ottoman studies, whereby an increasing number of Ottomanists have worked to explore the history of religious identities and communities in the early modern Ottoman Empire within the framework of ‘confessionalization’—an interpretative category and

¹ The most effective conceptual and comparative treatment of the transition from frontier polity to a centralized imperial regime in pre-modern Islamic history continues to Lapidus, ‘Tribes and State Formation’. On the transformation of the Ottoman polity along these lines, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds* and Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans*.

² Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”*, p. 277.

historiographical paradigm in early modern European history introduced in the 1970s by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling in the context of the history of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Reinhard and Schilling posited a strong connection between confession-building and state formation and have argued that (roughly) from the Peace of Augsburg (1555) to the beginning of the Thirty Years War (1618), and following the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, early modern European states, in union with state-endorsed confessional churches, pursued policies of confessional homogenization aiming at increased social control and social disciplining through various means (such as the establishment of ‘pure doctrine’, propaganda and censure that included the use of the printing press, education, the removal of dissidents, and so on), and thus contributed significantly to the development of stronger and more effective state regimes.³ The paradigm has been further articulated, challenged, rejected, or endorsed in early modern Europeanist historiography ever since.⁴

Tijana Krstić first drew attention to the potential utility of the concept of confessionalization in Ottoman and early modern Islamic world history, positing that, in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict of the sixteenth century and the related ‘Sunni-Shi’a polarization’, which roughly coincided with the Catholic-Protestant split in Western Christendom, ‘the Ottomans experienced analogous developments and even implemented policies leading to integration of politico-religious spheres similar to those taking place throughout the Habsburg and other contemporary European domains’. She also argued that ‘the process of formation of distinct confessional territorial blocks and forging of religious “orthodoxies” unfolded simultaneously in both Muslim and Christian empires in the sixteenth century as a consequence of imperial competition between the Ottomans and Habsburgs on the one hand and the Ottoman and Safavids on the other’.⁵ Thereafter, other Ottomanists have taken up the task to evaluate the relevance of the concept in the early modern Ottoman and the wider Islamic world context, largely with a focus on the ‘confessionalization’ of Muslim communities, drawing attention to the dynamic development of ‘Ottoman Sunnism’, including the related textual production, and the role of non-state actors in the process⁶ as well as pointing to potential limitations of the concept’s utility in early modern Ottoman and Islamic history.⁷ As mentioned above,

³ For the major arguments of Reinhard and Schilling and their most important writings, see Lotz-Heumann, ‘The Concept of “Confessionalization”’ as well as Krstić’s essay in this volume.

⁴ See Lotz-Heumann, ‘The Concept of “Confessionalization”’; and Brady, ‘Confessionalization: The Career of a Concept’.

⁵ Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, pp. 13–14.

⁶ Terzioğlu, ‘Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization’; Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization’; Terzioğlu, ‘Where *‘İlm-i Hâl* Meets Catechism’; Burak, ‘Faith, Law and Empire’.

⁷ Most notably Kaya Şahin who has pointed to the Ottoman state’s sheer lack of resources and possibly also lack of vision and drive needed to pursue confessional homogenization (among Ottoman Muslims) at a level comparable to Western Europe; see Şahin, *Empire and Power*, pp. 208–210.

a common aspect of all of these approaches is a focus on the development of an Ottoman ‘Sunni orthodoxy’, in relation to the shaping of the Ottoman imperial project and the Ottoman-Safavid ‘Sunni-Shi’a polarization’ of the sixteenth century. This development is said to have followed a period of ‘confessional ambiguity’ in the central Islamic lands, from the removal of Baghdad as the center of the Caliphate by the Mongols in 1258 till the late fifteenth century,⁸ or, as one scholar put it in the more specific context of Anatolian and Balkan Muslims living in frontier areas—a period characterized at least in part by ‘metadoxy’.⁹ Ottoman non-Sunni (Muslim) communities have figured in this picture either as objects of Ottoman state-endorsed ‘Sunnitization’ and/or as groups associated with the Safavid order in the late fifteenth century or the Safavid Empire from 1501 onwards.¹⁰ In this regard, it is important to note recent work on the evolution of Kizilbash(-Alevi) communities in Anatolia and the production of written works which would form the textual basis of the Kizilbash(-Alevi) confessional-sectarian tradition.¹¹

By focusing on a non-Sunni religious collectivity in the Ottoman Balkans, the Abdals of Rum, this essay strives to further move away from the one-dimensional discussion of Ottoman (Muslim) ‘confessionalization’ (which I understand in the broader, and less strict sense of formation and articulation of competing confessional-communal identities)¹² as well as to broaden this discussion’s geographical scope. Thus, the formation and evolution of the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba’s branch in the eastern Balkans could be seen as one aspect of the articulation of multiple Muslim confessional-sectarian identities in the early modern Ottoman Empire, whereby, in addition to the evolving Sunni ‘etatistic mainstream’, non-Sunni groups also experienced processes of crystallization of confessional and communal identity. Such processes were conditioned by, and may also be seen as a reaction to, the

⁸ On the use of the notion of ‘confessional ambiguity’ in this context, see Woods, *The Aqqayunlu*, pp. 1–23. For a critique of Wood’s argument, see Pfeiffer, ‘Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization’. See also Terzioğlu’s essay in this volume.

⁹ Kafadar defines ‘metadoxy’ as ‘a state of being beyond doxies... as well as the absence of a state that was interested in rigorously defining and strictly enforcing an orthodoxy’. *Between Two Worlds*, p. 76.

¹⁰ See Yıldırım, ‘The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene’.

¹¹ A major recent work on the formation and historical development of Kizilbash(-Alevi) communities and the articulation of Kizilbash(-Alevi) identity in early modern Anatolia is Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi in Ottoman Anatolia*. Notable recent works on the textual legacy of the Kizilbash(-Alevi) communities in early modern Anatolia have focused on the *buyruk* didactic guidebooks and mystical poetry (attributed to Shah Isma‘il as well as by other authors) as two major genres of the Kizilbash textual tradition. See especially Karakaya-Stump, ‘Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts’; Kaplan, *Yazılı Kaynaklarına Göre Alevilik*; Oktay, ‘Layers of Mystical Meaning’; Yıldırım, ‘Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition’; and Yıldırım, ‘The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene’.

¹² The broader use of ‘confessional’ here is in conformity with earlier uses of the term in the historiography of the Islamic world, as in ‘confessional ambiguity’ and ‘confessional polarization’, see footnote 8 above. In this sense, ‘confessional’ is broadly comparable to ‘sectarian’ as used in Islamic world historiography.

Ottoman transformation into a centralized, sedentary regime with the concomitant evolution of state-endorsed, scriptural, and sharia-minded Sunnism (with its implications for the Ottoman societal order). However, the evolution of Rum Abdal confessional-sectarian and communal identity, and ultimately the historical fate of the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba's branch, were shaped also in interaction, dialogue, and competition with other non-Sunni groups with which the Abdals of Rum shared, to varying degrees, historical and doctrinal roots as well as socio-religious sensibilities, such as the Bektashis and the Kizilbash-Alevis. Indeed, as will be shown below, the Bektashis came to be seen as the Rum Abdals' greatest rivals and even a threat to the existence of the Rum Abdal community. In the end, as demonstrated in the last section, the Abdals of Rum faded away and were largely assimilated into other non-Sunni collectivities, above all the already mentioned Bektashis and Kizilbash-Alevis.

The following discussion of the evolution of Rum Abdal identity is based largely on the two voluminous *velayetnames* (saintly *vitae*) of the first and third 'poles' (that is, heads) of the Rum Abdal community in the eastern Balkans—Otman Baba, the *de facto* founder of the collectivity in the eastern Balkans, who died in 1478, and his 'spiritual grandson' Demir Baba whose life roughly spanned the sixteenth century, both of them regarded as saints by their followers. The first *vita* was written in 1483, shortly after Otman Baba's death, by one of his closest disciples, Küçük Abdal.¹³ Demir Baba's *vita* was put to paper by an anonymous author most probably in the early eighteenth century on the basis of preserved oral traditions about Demir's life and miracles.¹⁴ The very existence of these two lengthy *vitae* testify to the determination and ability that rural (and non-Sunni) communities such as the Abdals of Rum had in the way of building a textual basis of their evolving confessional-sectarian and communal identity, despite the fact that their members had a low degree of literacy and commanded much more limited resources compared to (urban) Sunni groups. The two *vitae* also provide important clues on how the respective hagiographical communities organized around the saintly cults of Otman Baba and Demir Baba perceived their relationship with the evolving Ottoman imperial order and how the attitudes of the Abdals of Rum towards the Ottoman state and dynasty evolved over time. Could such (non-Sunni) communities eventually be integrated reasonably

¹³ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*. On Otman Baba's *vita* see İnalçık, 'Dervish and Sultan'; Gramatikova, 'Otman Baba'; and Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, pp. 71–92.

¹⁴ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*. Different extant recensions of the *vita* point to two possible datings—the early seventeenth and the early eighteenth century, respectively. While neither of the two datings may be discarded, I give preference to the later one, mostly on the basis of certain stylistic features such as the repeated use of the phrase '*râviyân-i aḥbâr ve nâkilân-ı âşâr rivâyet iderler ki...*' ('the storytellers and conveyors of traditions recount that...') and the inclusion of different oral traditions describing the same event as well as some chronological discrepancies, which suggest that the author-compiler of the *vita* was most likely removed by several generations from the saint's death. For a detailed analysis of the *vita*, see Gramatikova, *Neortodoksniiat Isliam v Bâlgarskite Zemi*, pp. 231–399; and Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, pp. 206–250.

well within the Ottoman imperial order without imposing (upon them) the kind of ‘confessional homogeneity’ that Reinhard and Schilling stipulated as an important link between confession-building and state formation in early modern Europe? Apart from the two saintly *vitae*, references will be made to sources that emanated from the Ottoman state, such as sixteenth-century Ottoman tax registers and imperial orders.

THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE EARLY MODERN ABDALS OF RUM

Before discussing the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba’s branch, a few words are due on the origins of this and other similar non-sharia-minded, originally ‘antinomian’ dervish collectivities that came to play a prominent role in early Ottoman history, including in the conquest, colonization, and ‘Islamization’ of the Ottoman Balkans. Non-sharia-minded dervishes migrated into Anatolia via two main channels. First, many Turcoman *babas*¹⁵ who preached a ritually less demanding Islam, and were seen by their Turcoman followers as wonder-working saintly figures, started pouring from Central Asia via Iran and into Anatolia as a part of the larger process of Oghuz Turcoman migrations from the second half of the eleventh century onwards.¹⁶ The second source of migration of non-sharia-minded mystics to Anatolia was the so-called New Renunciation current in Islamic mysticism which developed from the early thirteenth century onwards in parts of the central lands of the Islamic world, including Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt.¹⁷ Attracting recruits from various social strata, the New Renunciation developed as a form of social protest against the already established, mainstream, world-embracing, and largely urban Islamic mysticism, which was institutionalized in Sufi tariqas (Tr. *tariqat*; ‘path’) and had become well-integrated into the sharia-regulated (especially urban) social order. The New Renunciants demonstrated their rejection of society via a combination of asceticism, expressed through voluntary poverty, mendicancy, itinerancy, celibacy, and antinomianism, manifested through demonstrative disregard for the widely accepted social and sharia-prescribed religious norms and the embracement of socially liminal practices such as the cultivation of bizarre appearance (including wandering semi-naked, the practicing of the ‘four blows’, self-laceration and self-cauterization) and the consumption of hallucinogens and intoxicants.¹⁸ Organized in loose groups, these dervishes saw themselves as divinely pulled ecstatic mystics (Ar. *majdhūb*; Tr. *meczub*) who consciously placed themselves beyond the pale of social respectability and engaged in a radical re-interpretation of a number of major concepts in Islam and

¹⁵ *Baba* stands for ‘father’ but could also denote a ‘holy man’ among medieval Turcomans.

¹⁶ See Köprülü’s classic *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*; and Karamustafa’s revisionist ‘Origins of Anatolian Sufism’.

¹⁷ The major works on the ‘New Renunciation’ movement are Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, wherefrom I borrow the concept of ‘new renunciation’, and Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Marjinal Sufilik*.

¹⁸ Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”*, pp. 51–52; Ocak, *Kalenderîler*, pp. 161–182. The so-called *chahār ɗarb*, or ‘the four blows’—the shaving off of the hair, moustache, beard, and eyebrows, or at least some of these.

Islamic mysticism, such as the passing away of the self (*fanāʿ*) and sainthood (Ar. *walāya*, Tr. *velayet*), and embraced openly heretical ideas such as incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and transmigration of souls (or metempsychosis, Ar. *tanāsukh*, Tr. *tenasih*).¹⁹

While the two mystical currents—the originally Central Asian Oghuz Turcoman mysticism and the New Renunciation—had already been in contact outside of Anatolia, they came to interact more comprehensively and eventually fuse in Asia Minor as the Mongol advance pushed numerous dervishes of both molds into the peninsula (together with numerous Turcoman nomads as well as some sedentary populations) in the first half of the thirteenth century. A major catalyst of this fusion was the Babai Revolt of 1239–1240. Led by two antinomian sheikhs in the context of the deep socio-economic crisis of the Seljuk Sultanate of Anatolia following Sultan ‘Ala al-Din Kayqubad I’s death in 1337, this messianic upheaval largely pitted the incoming masses of Turcoman nomads against the centralizing Seljuk regime and spread quickly in central and southeastern Anatolia.²⁰ While eventually suppressed, the revolt helped the (relative) consolidation of various non-sharia-minded groups in Anatolia into a loosely defined ‘Babai’ religio-political movement, whose representatives would missionize in the emerging Turcoman frontier principalities in Anatolia from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards.²¹ By the later fourteenth and fifteenth century, these later-generation non-conformist, non-sharia-minded dervishes came to be best known under the catch-all term ‘*abdals* of Rum’ (*abdalan-ı Rum*, *Rum abdalları*, I use lower-case ‘a’ in ‘abdals’ for the catch-all term), whom the famous late-fifteenth century Ottoman chronicler Aşıkpaşazade would list as one of four major popular groups in late medieval Anatolia.²²

These non-sharia-minded dervishes came to play an important political role in Anatolia (and later in the Balkans) from the late thirteenth through the mid-fifteenth century, that is, during the period of the frontier principalities (*beyliks*) in Anatolia and the early expansion of the Ottoman frontier state in Anatolia and the Balkans. They largely joined forces with semi-nomadic Turcomans and frontier lords in the process of conquest and colonization and supported and participated in ‘holy war’ against the infidels (*gaza*). Their activities as holy warriors and colonizers are well evidenced in Ottoman narrative and documentary material.²³ In exchange they often received tracts of land in the newly conquered territories (often with *waqf*, or pious

¹⁹ Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, pp. 17–23; Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”*, pp. 51–53.

²⁰ See Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı*.

²¹ Ocak, ‘Babailer İsyanından Kızılbaşlığa’; Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”*, pp. 54–55.

²² Aşıkpaşazade, *Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi*, p. 307. The other three groups were the Gazis of Rum (frontier warriors for the faith), the Ahis of Rum (chivalric groups of young urban men), and the Bacıs of Rum (an association of (pious) women). ‘Rum’ generally denotes the former territories of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, which later came to be ruled by the Ottomans, but in this context Aşıkpaşazade refers specifically to late medieval Anatolia. In classical Sufi theory, *abdāl* (pl. of *badāl*) has the original meaning of ‘substitute’, ‘lieutenant’, or ‘deputy’ of God. See also Köprülü, ‘Abdal’, and Goldziher, ‘Abdal’.

²³ On the *gaza* ethos in contemporary (late medieval) frontier narratives, including the role of itinerant dervishes, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 60–117.

endowment status), as well as tax-exemptions and other privileges from frontier lords (including the early Ottoman sultans).²⁴ While many of them had been hitherto itinerant, such dervishes would often settle on the newly conquered lands and start practicing agriculture as an assertion of their claim to having successfully participated in *gaza*.²⁵

A turning point in the history of these non-sharia-minded dervish groups, which had made formative contributions to the expansion of the early Ottoman state, was the Ottoman polity's transformation from a frontier principality to an urban-based, sharia-regulated centralized imperial regime, which started in earnest in the late years of Murad II's reign (1421–1444, 1446–1451) and especially during Mehmed II's mature reign (1451–1481). Groups that had played a formative role in the rise of the early Ottoman polity, such as non-sharia-minded dervishes and semi-nomadic Turcoman warriors started being increasingly marginalized (often through sedentarization that would turn them into politically insignificant peasants) by an evolving centralizing regime that was quickly expanding its armed forces of non-nomadic origin, building a bureaucratic apparatus at the center (from 1453 onwards, Constantinople itself), and increasingly endorsing a scriptural, sharia-minded Islam by nurturing an indigenous Ottoman ulema that would staff a nascent judicial and educational systems.²⁶

In this context of rapid political change, many non-sharia-minded dervish groups (and their Turcoman followers) underwent a process of articulation and crystallization of religious and communal identity, a process taking place in dialogue and in reaction to the articulation of the Ottoman centralist vision, which included the rise of an Ottoman scriptural 'orthodoxy', even before the emergence of the Safavid state in 1501. Thus, while the second half of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century witnessed an Ottoman 'historiographic explosion' with the composition of a large number of dynasty-centered Ottoman chronicles,²⁷ this is precisely the period in which a significant number of *vitae* of non-sharia-minded 'saints', very much celebrating the ethos of the frontier zone and the formative roles played by 'heterodox' saints and their followers, were composed as well, spurring the development of the related 'hagiographic communities' and saintly cults, which would

²⁴ For numerous examples in related Ottoman administrative documentation from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (mostly in contemporary tax registers), see Barkan, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir İskân'.

²⁵ Barkan, 'Vakıflar ve Temlikler'; Yıldırım, 'Dervishes, Waqfs, and Conquest', pp. 23–40.

²⁶ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 138–150. Kafadar argues that these processes of 'centralization' started (in less intensive form) earlier, from the 1370s onwards, and that traces of the Ottoman dynasty's centralizing vision could be identified even in the first half of the fourteenth century.

²⁷ See İnalçık, 'The Rise of Ottoman Historiography'; and Mengüç, *A Study of 15th-Century Ottoman Historiography*.

contribute significantly to the shaping of the identities of distinct dervish collectivities (such as the Abdals of Rum and the Bektashis).²⁸

**THE EMERGENCE OF THE ABDALS OF RUM IN THE EASTERN BALKANS
IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 15TH CENTURY (IN THE LIGHT OF THE
VITA OF OTMAN BABA)**

The emergence of the Abdals of Rum (of Otman Baba's branch) as a distinct Sufi dervish collectivity—and here I write 'Abdals' with an upper-case 'A' to distinguish Otman Baba's collectivity from the catch-all usage—may be seen as an instructive example of this process of articulation of 'heterodox' Muslim identities in Ottoman society in the second half of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century. Otman Baba's *vita*, composed in 1483, only five years after his death, casts the saint as a typical itinerant antinomian dervish of the New Renunciation mold, practicing the 'four blows' and living (together with his disciples) on charity. Born in the late fourteenth century, according to the *vita*, he came 'from the East' to Anatolia at the time of Timur's invasion,²⁹ and later, most probably in the 1440s into the Balkans, whereby he gathered a large following of dervishes (up to 300), referred to as his 'army of Abdals' (*leşker-i Abdālān*). In the Balkans, Otman Baba would missionize above all among semi-nomadic Turcoman *yürüks*, and would also find good reception (according to the *vita*) in small towns and villages.³⁰ The main areas in the Ottoman Balkans where Otman Baba was active were Thrace and the eastern Rhodopes, eastern Macedonia, and the northeastern Balkans, whereby he would cross the Balkan range a number of times into the regions of Gerlovo, Deliorman, and Dobrudja. Importantly, Otman Baba's *vita* articulates a number of doctrinal points, including a theory of sainthood, according to which the cycle of prophecy (*nübüvvet*), which was manifest and visible (*izhār idi*), was sealed by the Prophet Muhammad, whereby the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law 'Ali b. Abi Talib (first imam of the Shi'is and fourth caliph according to Sunni Muslims) initiated the cycle of sainthood (*velāyet*) and was seen as the epitome of the ideal saint (as well as the hero of *gaza*, or 'holy war' in the formative age of Islam).³¹ Sainthood was hidden (*bāṭn*), being

²⁸ A good brief overview of the most important such 'heterodox' saintly *vitae*, composed in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, including those of Hacı Bektaş, Otman Baba, Seyyid 'Ali Sultan, Abdal Musa, Kaygusuz Abdal, Şüca'üddin Veli, and others may be found in Ocak, *Alevi ve Bektaşî İnançlarının*, pp. 31–46.

²⁹ Based on some orthographic and linguistic features of Otman Baba's speech as reproduced in the *vita*, İnalçık argues that Otman Baba was of Azeri origin. See İnalçık, 'Dervish and Sultan', p. 20.

³⁰ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 65, 94, 124, 131, 138; İnalçık, 'Dervish and Sultan', pp. 25–26. On the *yürüks*, semi-nomadic Turcomans who came to be organized as an auxiliary military group in the Ottoman Balkans and western Anatolia, see İnalçık, 'The Yürüks', pp. 97–136; and Yeni, 'The Utilization of Mobile Groups'.

³¹ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 6–9.

the ‘shepherd’ (*çobān*) and ‘custodian’ (*nigāh-dāṣṭi*) of prophecy.³² Denial of sainthood would entail denial of prophecy and would thus amount to a declaration of unbelief.³³ In the cycle of sainthood, the ‘mystery of Muhammad’ is preserved by a hierarchy of ‘hidden saints’ (known only to God and endowed by him with miraculous powers), who are in control of everything; at the pinnacle of this hierarchy stands the ‘pole’ (*kuṭb*) or ‘pole of poles’ (*kuṭbü’l-aḳṭāb*).³⁴ The ‘pole’ has two ‘witnesses’ (*tānūḳ*), one of whom would succeed him on the throne of poleship, these Three (the ‘pole’ and the two ‘witnesses’) are followed in importance by the Seven, the Forty, the 300, and the 1000, each group being a part of the subsequent larger group.³⁵ Every age in the cycle of sainthood has its ‘pole’ and the *vīta* identifies Hacı Bektaş Veli (d. 1271) and Sultan Şüca‘ (d. first half of the fifteenth century) as the poles in their respective ages.³⁶ Being the *kuṭb* of his age, Otman Baba is the deputy of God (*ḥalīfe-i Ḥūdā*), and the re-incarnation of nearly a dozen of major figures of the ages of prophesy and sainthood—the prophets Adam, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, and also ‘Ali (b. Abi Talib), Husayn (son of ‘Ali), Mansur al-Hallaj, Sarı Saltık, and Hacı Bektaş in the age of sainthood.³⁷ Otman claims to be the one who descends on earth every one thousand years to show compassion to all God’s creatures, provide guidance to believers, and help the oppressed.³⁸ Otman Baba and his disciples in the eastern Balkans recognize a brotherly fraternity of Abdals—the Abdals of Rum of Anatolia—who were organized around the cult of Sultan Şüca‘ (Şüca‘üddin Veli) and with whom Otman Baba’s Abdals meet and visit Şüca‘üddin Veli’s tomb in western Anatolia as well as the central Rum Abdal shrine of Seyyid Gazi nearby.³⁹

While not directly engaged in conquest and colonization, Otman Baba is cast as a champion of ‘holy war’ (*gazā*) and maintains close relations with a prominent member of one of the most illustrious frontier lord families in the Balkans, the

³² *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, p. 3; Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, p. 47.

³³ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 10, 32, 87, 118.

³⁴ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 10–13.

³⁵ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 10–13. On the theory of the hidden saints and the related hierarchy of hidden saints, see Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, pp. 74–116; Uludağ, ‘Ricālū’l-Gayb’, and İnalçık, ‘Dervish and Sultan’, pp. 21–22.

³⁶ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 10–11. Whereby Hacı Bektaş Veli (d. 1271) would come to be seen as the founder and patron-saint of the Bektashi order of dervishes, the heterodox dervish group that would eventually assimilate most non-Sharia minded collectivities in Ottoman society by the end of the early modern period, including the Abdals of Rum, see Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*. Sultan Şüca‘, or Şüca‘üddin Veli, lived in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century and came to be considered the patron-saint of the Abdals of Rum in Anatolia, the Anatolian counterpart of the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba’s branch, see Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, p. 63.

³⁷ Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”*, p. 75.

³⁸ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 70, 212.

³⁹ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 244–251. On Seyyid Gazi, Şüca‘üddin Veli, and their respective shrines, see Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, pp. 51–56, 79–101 (on Seyyid Gazi), and pp. 41–4, 126–128 (on Şüca‘üddin Veli).

Mihaloğulları, in the person of Mihaloğlu ‘Ali Bey (d. 1507) who served as a major raider commander and Ottoman provincial governor in various provinces along the Ottoman Danubian frontier under Mehmed II and Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512).⁴⁰ Otman Baba would bless Mihaloğlu ‘Ali Bey’s campaigns (especially in Hungary) and the latter would accept Otman Baba as his spiritual guide.⁴¹ Apart from this, the *vita* also casts Otman Baba as responsible for various military successes and failures of the Ottoman state at large: Otman Baba meets Mehmed II in Istanbul and warns the sultan not to undertake planned siege of Belgrade (which eventually fails in 1456); the saint also helps the Ottomans win the Battle of Başkent (1473) against the Aqqoyunlu sovereign of Iran and eastern Anatolia Uzun Hasan (r. 1453–1478); and his blessing or the lack thereof determines the outcome of Ottoman campaigns in the Balkans and the Crimea in 1475.⁴²

There are several groups that Otman Baba is vehemently opposed to: the populace of the big cities (esp. Edirne and Istanbul) whom he addresses as ‘ugly townsmen’,⁴³ the conformist, settled Sufi sheikhs whom he sees as supportive of Mehmed II’s emerging centralizing imperial order, the ulema (especially the high-ranking ulema of Edirne and Istanbul), and the Ottoman dynasty itself, in that Otman essentially does not accept the legitimacy of Mehmed II.

While Otman Baba is generally intensely critical of ‘people of the hospices’ (also referred to as ‘people of the brotherhoods’), accusing them of ‘having embraced this world’, indulging in luxurious lifestyle, and selling their ‘rotten knowledge’ to the gullible common folk, whereby these are generally meant to be representatives of the urban, sharia-minded, ‘conformist’ Sufi brotherhoods,⁴⁴ his most severe criticism is directed against one particular group—the followers of the growing saintly cult of Hacı Bektaş (which was in the process of shaping as a distinct dervish collectivity). The *vita* recounts several occasions on which Otman Baba comes into conflict with these ‘proto-Bektashis’—most notably when he criticizes a certain Bayezid Baba who obeys the instructions of the judge and other members of the ulema in Salonica to correct some of his (Bayezid Baba’s) ways deemed by the ulema to be contrary to the sharia (a ‘conformist’ stance that Otman Baba would have never taken),⁴⁵ and the conflict between the saint and a certain Mahmud Çelebi, a leader of ‘the dervishes of Hacı Bektaş’ in Istanbul, whom Otman Baba scolds for wearing fine attire (and thus embracing the pleasures of this world) and chases away.⁴⁶ In several encounters between the dervishes of Otman Baba and the followers of the cult of Hacı Bektaş, Otman Baba’s dervishes assert that the spiritual path of their leader (Otman Baba) is superior to that of the (proto-)Bektashis.⁴⁷ This is not to say that Otman Baba does

⁴⁰ On Mihaloğlu ‘Ali Bey and the Mihaloğlu family, see Kiprovska, ‘The Mihaloğlu Family’.

⁴¹ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 74–74, 168–169.

⁴² *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 152–154, 225–228.

⁴³ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, p. 160.

⁴⁴ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 11, 43–45.

⁴⁵ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 62–63.

⁴⁶ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, p. 242.

⁴⁷ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 85–88.

not respect Hacı Bektaş; indeed, he claims to be the latter's incarnation. Rather, Otman is critical of those who claim to be the dervishes of Hacı Bektaş for misappropriating and corrupting Hacı Bektaş's legacy, becoming de facto part of the world of the 'conformist' urban brotherhoods. By voicing such criticism toward the contemporary followers of the cult of Hacı Bektaş, Otman Baba's *vita* appears to foresee crucial developments in the history of the fledgling Bektashi community in the near future. Within the following fifty to hundred years, the Bektashi community, especially under the leadership of a certain Balım Sultan (d. 1516), would develop into a highly institutionalized, hierarchical brotherhood, much akin in terms of its organizational texture to the 'conformist', urban (and Sunni-leaning) Sufi brotherhoods that supported the Ottoman imperial order.⁴⁸ While in terms of its theology, the Bektashi order preserved its 'non-Sunni' orientation (including obvious Shi'i elements), it would develop a close relationship with the Ottoman state (especially on account of its closeness to the Janissary corps),⁴⁹ whose support it would enjoy, eventually serving as a 'melting-pot' that would assimilate other non-Sunni groups during the early modern period.

The confrontations between Otman Baba and the ulema of Edirne and Istanbul follow a predictable scheme—the ulema accuse Otman Baba (and, by association, his disciples) of various forms of heresy, such as making the *ene'l-Ḥaḳ* (Ar. *anā'l-Ḥaqq*) claim,⁵⁰ claiming to be 'God's mystery' (*surr-ı Yezdān*) as well as the incarnation of the prophets Adam, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, or simply of disregarding ritual prayer, for which Otman and his disciples are repeatedly expelled from Edirne.⁵¹ During the saint and his dervishes' last visit to Edirne, the local ulema and sharia-minded urban Sufi sheikhs accuse Otman Baba's Abdals of not belonging to any recognized religious community (*millet*) or 'rite' (*mezheb*), to which they respond: 'He [Otman Baba] is the mine of Sainthood and the Axis Mundi in the whole of world, the lord of the horizons and the guide of the Court... We are the army of the lord of sainthood and the Pole of Poles of the whole of existence, and we are his Forty, Seven, and Three. We are the Abdals of Rum and thus we became free from Satan's whispers and from all trickery and deceit, artifice and hypocrisy'.⁵²

Because of these accusations of heresy leveled against them, Otman Baba and his disciples are ultimately summoned to Istanbul, where Otman Baba is de facto

⁴⁸ On the historical development of the Bektashi order, see Birge, *The Bektashi order of Dervishes*; and Faroqhi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolien*.

⁴⁹ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, pp. 46–48.

⁵⁰ '*Anā'l-Haqq*', or 'I am the Truth', is considered the most famous of Sufi ecstatic utterances, thought to have been originally pronounced by the famous mystic Mansur al-Hallaj (executed in 922 in Baghdad on accusations of heresy), and often associated with Sufi theories of the Unity of Being, but also traditionally treated by urban ulema as a blasphemous claim to divinity; see Schimmel, '*Anā'l-Haqq*'.

⁵¹ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 155–163.

⁵² *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, p. 164–165, also cited in Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, p. 84. The 'Forty, Seven, and Three' here clearly represent a reference to the theory of the 'hidden saints'.

held in custody for around two years (1474–1476).⁵³ More importantly, during those two years, he meets (according to the *vita*) several times with Mehmed II, whereby Otman makes a number of substantive claims to political authority vis-à-vis the Ottoman sultan, dynasty, and state. Most notably, when Otman asks the Ottoman sultan who the *pādiṣāh* (emperor) is, Mehmed II is presented as kneeling before the saint and admitting: ‘You are [the *pādiṣāh*], my father!’, whereafter Otman confirms that Mehmed II is only his (Otman’s) obedient son.⁵⁴ Similarly, Otman declares to Mehmed: ‘You are a city dweller, I am the *pādiṣāh*’ and scolds the sultan for building and settling in a palace, thus presumably breaking away from the itinerant lifestyle of his forefathers.⁵⁵

Unexpectedly, however, after Otman leaves Istanbul and retreats in upper Thrace, he instructs his Abdals to build a convent and engage in sedentary, agriculturalist life, which, needless to say, goes against what he preached all his life.⁵⁶ This could be explained either through a possible realization on the part of Otman Baba that political conformism is the only way to ensure the survival of his dervish collectivity, or more likely, may have been inserted by the author of the *vita* to justify the fact that his followers (or at least some of them) did, in fact, settle in a convent around the grave of the saint soon after he died in 1478.⁵⁷

To summarize, in the light of Otman Baba’s *vita*, the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba’s branch emerged in the second half of the fifteenth century as a loose, but distinct, itinerant Sufi dervish collectivity, whose members followed the spiritual path of their leader, whom they also saw as the pole (*kuṭb*) in a hierarchy of ‘hidden saints’ who were God’s true deputies on earth. While the Rum Abdals of Otman Baba saw themselves as spiritually superior to the representatives of competing comparable (itinerant and relatively loose) dervish collectivities (such as the proto-Bektashis), urban Sufis, as well as the urban ulema and urban Muslims in general, they were generally seen as ‘heretics’ by the urban religious establishment (especially the ulema of the large cities, like Edirne and Istanbul, but also smaller urban centers like Varna). This negative attitude toward the Abdals of Rum, but also toward some other similar dervish collectivities with whom the Abdals of Rum competed (but also shared historical roots and some doctrinal commonalities) finds confirmation in the well-known work of the urban Sufi Vahidi whose 1522 treatise on dervish groups in Ottoman society points to the *taife* (collectivity, or ‘sect’) of the Abdals of Rum (both those in the Balkans and their brethren in Anatolia) as heretical and in a

⁵³ As the *velayetname* hints, Otman had been brought to Istanbul on account of accusations of heresy and sedition levied against him.

⁵⁴ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 250–251.

⁵⁵ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, p. 253.

⁵⁶ *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 261–262.

⁵⁷ The first tax registration of Otman Baba’s convent dates from 1515–1516, BOA TD 50, pp. 130–131. The wording of the expository text of the registration suggests that the convent was built sometime after Otman Baba’s death but before Mehmed II’s death (namely, between 1478 and 1481).

permanent state of ritual impurity.⁵⁸ In contrast, the Abdals themselves would not use any specific term to refer to themselves, such as *taife* (Ar. *tā'ifa*) or *fırka* (Ar. *fırqa*), but would call themselves plainly the 'Abdals of Rum' (*Abdālān-ı Rum* or *Rum Abdālları*). Importantly, Vahidi also considers the Abdals of Rum to be fervent Twelver Shi'is, while neither the *vita* of Otman Baba, nor that of Demir Baba betrayed clearly identifiable Shi'i overtones, even though both texts contain numerous references to 'Alid piety.⁵⁹

**THE ABDALS OF RUM IN THE EASTERN BALKANS IN THE 16TH CENTURY
(IN THE LIGHT OF THE *VITA* OF DEMİR BABA)**

Demir Baba's *vita* is devoted mostly to the life and miracles of the saint presented as Otman Baba's 'spiritual grandson' (i.e. the third *kuṭb*, or 'pole', of the Abdals of Rum in the eastern Balkans), but also sheds considerable light on the history of the collectivity following the death of Otman Baba (1478), and more specifically from the first years of the sixteenth century to Demir's assumption of the poleship (most likely in the late 1520s). In terms of its basic structure, it first dwells upon the several years preceding the birth of Demir Baba (around the turn of the sixteenth century), then follows in considerable detail the events leading to the wedding of the saint's parents and the wedding itself, whereby both the bride and the groom, members of the Rum Abdal community, were personally picked by the second 'pole' of the Abdals of Rum (of Otman Baba's branch)—Akyazılı Baba, to 'produce' Akyazılı's designated successor.⁶⁰ After recounting the birth of the saint (most likely in the first decade of the sixteenth century), the *vita* then passes over the childhood and adolescence of Demir Baba, noting only that he spent the first seventeen years of his life in his birth place—the village of Kovancılar (mod. Pchelina) in Deliorman (mod. Ludogorie in the northeastern Balkans). Once a fine young lad, Demir undergoes a period of initiation and training under the guidance of Akyazılı: first they visit Akyazılı's closest associate Kademli Baba in Thrace on the latter's death bed, whereafter they spend three years at Kademli's convent and build the latter's mausoleum; the following two years are spent in travel in the course of which the current and future

⁵⁸ Karamustafa ed., *Vāhidī's Menākib-i Hvoca-i Cihān*, fols 41a–53b (for Vahidi's original description), pp. 7–8 (for Karamustafa's summary and commentary). It is worth noting that Vahidi's use of the term *taife* for the Abdals of Rum is neutral. He uses it for all the dervish groups that he discusses in his treatise – the ones he strongly disapproves of, such as the Abdals of Rum, the Bektashis, or the Kalenders, as well as for those that he approves of, like the Mevlevis or the Edhemis.

⁵⁹ *Vahidi's Menākib-i Hvoca-i Cihān*, fols 41a–47b. But note that the famous early sixteenth-century Rum Abdal poet Yemini, who identified himself as a disciple of Otman Baba and whose poetry would later be especially popular within the Kizilbash-Alevi communities in Anatolia and the Balkans, did openly praise the Twelve Imams in his celebrated *Faziletname*. See Yıldırım, 'Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition', pp. 88–89; and Yıldırım, 'Abdallar, Akıncılar, Bektaşılık', pp. 63–64.

⁶⁰ *Demir Baba Velāyetnāmesi*, pp. 41–58.

pole of the Abdals of Rum visit a number of Rum Abdal convents and communities in the eastern Balkans.⁶¹ Thereafter the two go to Akyazılı's convent in Dobrudja, where Akyazılı transfers the poleship to Demir and dies.⁶² The middle part of Demir Baba's life is devoted to peregrinations (approximating the life of an itinerant renunciant dervish similar to Otman Baba) that included fighting for the faith in military campaigns on the side of the Ottomans at Budim (Buda) in Hungary.⁶³ The saint spends the last couple of decades of his life in his native Deliorman (in the northeastern Balkans), having settled in a convent with a growing number of disciples.

In terms of general doctrinal orientation, the hagiographical account of Demir Baba unsurprisingly follows that of Otman Baba. Like his 'spiritual grandfather', Demir Baba is the 'pole of poles' (*kuṭbū'l-aḳṭāb*) of the Abdals of Rum in the eastern Balkans. Demir Baba is described as having 'pledged allegiance' to Otman Baba,⁶⁴ meaning that he accepted the beliefs propagated by Otman, and that, by association, the Abdals of Rum in Demir's time would accept those same beliefs. Demir's prayers also invoke the Three, Seven, and Forty, thus echoing the theory of the 'hidden saints' presented in Otman Baba's hagiographical account.⁶⁵ Alid piety too occupies a major place in the hagiographical account.⁶⁶

However, in its treatment of the period it covers (roughly, the sixteenth century), the *vita* presents a picture of the collectivity that differs markedly from Otman Baba's hagiographical account, specifically in three major aspects: the structure and texture of the Rum Abdal community, its relations with the Ottoman dynasty and state, and the image and the nature of authority of Demir Baba as 'pole' compared to Otman Baba (and to a lesser extent, to Akyazılı Baba).

With respect to the first issue, Demir Baba's *vita* presents the Rum Abdal community as largely settled in convents and village communities. The wedding of Demir Baba's parents and the burial of Kademli Baba become occasions of grand communal reunions attended by numerous representatives of Rum Abdal convents and village communities in the eastern Balkans. The essential sedentarization of the collectivity and the emergence of a network of Rum Abdal convents is confirmed by

⁶¹ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 61–66.

⁶² *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 67–68.

⁶³ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 99–107. As the narrative makes it clear that these events took place after the Ottoman incorporation of Buda (1541), then if Demir Baba actually participated in any Ottoman military campaigns in Hungary, this must have been a part of Ottoman-Habsburg military encounters sometime in the 1540s or early 1550s.

⁶⁴ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, p. 118.

⁶⁵ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, p. 156.

⁶⁶ Various elements and aspects of Alid piety are ubiquitous in Demir Baba's hagiographical account. To give just a few examples, Demir is referred to as 'the Slave of 'Ali' (*Ali kulu*), *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, p. 74; Demir is also inspired by 'Ali as a warrior for the faith, p. 100; 'Ali is here referred to as the 'lord of sainthood' (*şah-ı velayet*).

contemporary Ottoman tax registers for the eastern Balkans (and especially in the case of the northeastern Balkans).⁶⁷

Similarly, the account of the visitations of Akyazılı and Demir in the last couple of years of the former's life are meant to map the network of Rum Abdal convents as well as to strengthen the sense of communal unity among the Abdals of Rum of the eastern Balkans who were part of the 'hagiographic community' associated with Demir Baba's *vita*. The *vita* also suggests the development of a nascent hierarchical structure of the collectivity, whereby both Akyazılı and Demir have *halifes* (lieutenants/deputies) in various parts of the eastern Balkans. The convent of Otman Baba in Thrace is considered the most important one in the Rum Abdal network of convents; Demir Baba visits it multiple times and the resident dervishes there, selected by the previous pole of pole of the Abdals, Akyazılı Baba, accept Demir as the head of their community.⁶⁸

Secondly, in contrast to the confrontational relationship between Otman Baba and the Ottoman state (and specifically Mehmed II), Demir Baba's hagiographical account suggests a rather amicable relationship between the Abdals of Rum and the Ottoman dynasty. Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566) is presented as an illustrious emperor of the House of Osman⁶⁹ who attends the wedding of Demir Baba's parents in disguise, largely in honor of Akyazılı who is presented as the sultan's spiritual guide.⁷⁰ Sultan Süleyman makes wedding gifts that are gladly accepted, Kademli heals a member of the royal family, and Demir himself is cast as healing from infertility the daughter of an Ottoman sheikh ül-islam (the head of the Ottoman learned hierarchy, the ulema) and fighting on the Ottoman side at Budim (Buda) after having found himself there by chance.⁷¹

The *vita* of Demir Baba thus presents the Rum Abdal community in the eastern Balkans as (increasingly) well-integrated in the rural countryside, without major signs of tensions or systematic persecutions.⁷² Ottoman administrative documents from the mid-sixteenth century point to some relatively isolated cases of government inspections in highly visible centers of the Rum Abdal community where also anti-nomian practices more typical of Otman Baba's age (such as the consumption of alcohol and intoxicants and the demonstrative neglect of sharia-regulated ritual practices) could provoke the government's intervention. Thus, in 1560, the convent of Akyazılı Baba near Varna was inspected on allegations of consumptions of alcohol,⁷³

⁶⁷ See, for example, BOA TD 439 (dated c. 1535), BOA TD 382 (c. 1550), esp. pp. 7–614, and TKG KK TTd 151 (1579).

⁶⁸ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 165–166.

⁶⁹ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, p. 40.

⁷⁰ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 48–52.

⁷¹ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 47–52; 99–107; 135–138.

⁷² One isolated exception being the judge of Hezargrad's oppression of Rum Abdals, but he would change his attitude after Demir Baba's intervention. *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 131–138.

⁷³ *3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri 966–968/1558–1560*, order No. 1644, dated Rebi'ü'l-evvel 968 AH/November 20–December 19, 1560 AD.

and that inspection took place shortly after the investigations in the central Rum Abdal shrine of Seyyid Gazi in western Anatolia in the late 1550s.⁷⁴ Despite these relatively isolated occurrences, however, the example of the Abdals of Rum in the eastern Balkans, as reflected by both the collectivity's saintly *vitae* and Ottoman administrative documentation, does not confirm a clear link between the Ottoman state's pursuit of confessional homogeneity and the progressive centralization of state authority in the early modern period. Non-Sunni groups could be integrated into the evolving Ottoman imperial order while largely preserving their confessional-sectarian identity, as long as they recognized state's authority and did not publicly flaunt those beliefs and rituals that went against the Sunni norms endorsed by the state.⁷⁵

Thirdly, while Demir Baba is presented as a 'pole of poles' with miraculous powers, his claims to both spiritual and especially political authority are much diminished in comparison to Otman Baba's as cast in the latter's *vita*, but also in comparison to Akyazılı Baba, the second pole of the Abdals as presented in Demir Baba's *vita*. Demir emerges largely as a wonder-working rural holy man, whose image appears provincialized and even 'folklorized' compared to that of Otman Baba and even Akyazılı Baba. Demir has neither the intention nor the capacity to challenge the Ottoman imperial order, whose legitimacy is amply recognized throughout the *vita*.

All these transformations of the Rum Abdal community of the eastern Balkans, while happening in the specific Ottoman historical context, also fit the general developmental model of *ṭarīqas* (Sufi brotherhoods), whereby the transition from a 'new' to 'established' *ṭarīqa* is usually characterized by an increasing degree of institutionalization, a decreasing degree of tension with the surrounding environment, and a decline of charismatic authority.⁷⁶

While the legitimacy of the Ottoman state and dynasty is categorically recognized, the one great enemy of the Rum Abdal community, in the light of Demir Baba's hagiographical account, are the Bektashis. Presented as an already well-developed collectivity with its network of convents, the Bektashis are portrayed as a threat to both Demir Baba and the integrity of the Rum Abdal community. It is the Bektashis who conspire to murder Demir Baba at one of their major convents in Thrace, merely because Demir was not a Bektashi, but had 'pledged allegiance' to Otman Baba.⁷⁷ Demir also has to settle accounts with a local Bektashi leader in Deliorman who harrasses Demir's followers and threatens their property. In the end, Demir causes the death of the Bektaşî leader and buries him with his own hands.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, pp. 43–44.

⁷⁵ This could be compared to the Ottoman state's toleration of Shi'ites in Ottoman Lebanon as well as the Shi'i-leaning Bektashi order, and the relative toleration of Kizilbash(-Alevi) communities in Anatolia from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards.

⁷⁶ Sedgwick, 'Sects in the Islamic World', pp. 214–215.

⁷⁷ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 117–119.

⁷⁸ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 151–156.

THE FADING AWAY AND LEGACY OF THE ABDALS OF RUM

The anxieties expressed in Demir Baba's *vita* in relation to the perceived ascendancy of the Bektashis that threatened the gradual assimilation of other 'heterodox' collectivities in the Balkans and Anatolia, such as the Abdals of Rum, have been validated by historical developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reflected in other (non-hagiographical) sources. While much has been written about Ottoman state-endorsed Sunnitization, including periodic calls by Ottoman ulema and urban ('conformist', Sunni-leaning) Sufis to bring rural 'heretics' into the fold of Sunnism, and the state's promulgation of certain measures aimed at strengthening religious discipline in the countryside, Sunnitization appears (not surprisingly) to have been more prominent and impactful largely in the urban centers. Ottoman tax register data of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries reflect steady demographic growth and favorable socio-economic development in the eastern Balkans' rural countryside, including in areas that could be identified as populated by 'heterodox' (Muslim) populations.⁷⁹ Eventually, the Abdals of Rum in the eastern Balkans faded away as a distinct 'heterodox' collectivity as they gradually dissolved into other groups, most notably the Bektashis and the Kizilbash (-Alevi) community. As early as in the second half of the seventeenth century, the famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi shows a tendency to associate many, if not most 'heterodox' convents in Anatolia and the Balkans (as well as their patron-saints) with the Bektashi order (including the originally Rum Abdal mausoleum-convent complexes of Otman Baba, Akyazılı Baba, Kademli Baba, and Demir Baba in the eastern Balkans).⁸⁰ Inventories of the Bektashi order dated 1826 (the year of the dissolution of the order, largely due to its perceived opposition to Ottoman modernizing reforms in alliance with the Janissaries) essentially corroborate Evliya Çelebi's claims made more than a century earlier.⁸¹ As for the Kizilbash-Alevi connection, while it is possible but difficult to prove that Safavid propagandists were in contact with Rum Abdals (and other similar antinomian groups) in the Balkans before the proclamation of the Safavid regime in 1501,⁸² we possess evidence of significant migrations (forcible or voluntary) of Anatolian sympathizers of the Safavid regime to the eastern Balkans as early as the first two decades of the sixteenth century, in the opening

⁷⁹ Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, pp. 278–280.

⁸⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. 3, pp. 197, 213; vol. 5, p. 313; vol. 8, pp. 341–344. However, note Faroqhi's criticism of Evliya Çelebi's tendency to present certain 'heterodox' convents as 'Bektashi' when contemporary (or later) sources do not provide sufficient corroborating evidence; Faroqhi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden*, pp. 17–21.

⁸¹ Faroqhi, 'Agricultural Activities in a Bektaş Center', pp. 92–96.

⁸² Ocak was the first to develop the argument that antinomian, non-Sharia-minded groups in Anatolia and the Balkans constituted the primary recruiting ground for Safavid propagandists. Ocak makes this argument specifically with regard to Shah Isma'il's reign (1501–1524), and possibly the very last years of the fifteenth century, when Isma'il was the leader of the Safavid revolutionary movement, soon to found a new state; see Ocak, 'Babafler İsyânından Kızılbaşlığa', pp. 150–151.

phases of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict.⁸³ We also know that by the time Şah Kulu's (perceivedly pro-Safavid) rebellion erupted in 1511, Şah Kulu had lieutenants in the eastern and southern Balkans who helped in the mobilization of participants in the rebellion.⁸⁴ By the time Demir Baba's *vita* was put to paper, the interaction and/or fusion of Kizilbash-Alevi and (at least some) Rum Abdal groups and the related sectarian traditions must have advanced enough so that Demir Baba's *vita* contains a lengthy poem (*nefes*) attributed to Hata'i (the *nom de plume* of Shah Isma'îl I Safavi).⁸⁵

In modern times, non-Sunni Muslims in the eastern Balkans are usually referred to as Alevis (esp. in Bulgaria), whereby one may identify two major subgroups—the Babai Alevis, who venerate Otman Baba and Demir Baba as their primary saints and recognize the authority of the heads of their convents (in Thrace and Deliorman, respectively), and the Bektashi Alevis, also divided into two major branches—the Babagan (celibate) branch, which represents the 'institutionalized' Bektashi order which took shape in the sixteenth century, and the Çelebis, followers of perceived biological descendants of Hacı Bektaş Veli, whereby Bektashi subgroups also venerate the old Rum Abdal saints as part of their 'pantheon of saints' (although they revere primarily Hacı Bektaş Veli).⁸⁶ All subgroups too consider the *vitae* of Otman Baba and Demir Baba as part of their literary traditions, while the Babais see the two hagiographical accounts as both prescriptive and self-identification texts. Thus, the Abdals of Rum of Otman Baba's branch may be seen as an instructive example of a non-Sunni collectivity that formed in the fifteenth and flourished in the sixteenth century, but could not maintain its autonomy, eventually being assimilated and

⁸³ The earliest known significant deportation of Anatolian sympathizers of the Safavids took place in 1501, the year of the proclamation of the Safavid regime, when Bayezid II deported some Anatolian Kizilbash to the newly conquered Morea (Peloponnese). See Hoca Sadeddin, *The Crown of Histories*, vol. 2, p. 127, as well as *II. Bayezid Dönemine Ait 906/1501 Tarihi Ahkâm Defteri*, pp. xxiv–xxv, and orders Nos. 27, 71, 111, 281, 330, 453, and 454. Another major deportation took place shortly before 1518, most likely immediately following the revolt of Shah Kulu of 1511–1512 and the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514. An Ottoman tax register for the Ottoman province (*sancak*) of Silistre, dated 924 AH/1518 AD contains the registration of 1784 households of deportees from Anatolia to Dobrudja in the northeastern Balkans; BOA TD 65, p. 30. The same entry was copied into BOA TD 370 of 937 AH/1530 AD, p. 436. The law code (*kānūn-nāme*) appended to BOA TD 65 (and also copied into BOA TD 370) contains stipulations that suggest that the exiled deportees (*sürgün t̄ā'ifesi*) were often accompanied or followed by relatives (*aḳrabā*), who were not supposed to be deported, but nevertheless followed their exiled kin and were also given the status of deportees and the related tax exemptions; BOA TD 65, pp. 3–4. This law code has also been published in transliteration in Akgündüz ed., *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, vol. 3, pp. 465–470, esp. 467.

⁸⁴ Emecen, 'Şahkulu Baba Tekeli'.

⁸⁵ *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, pp. 43–44. For the same poem, with minor variations, see Ergun, *Hatayî Divanı*, pp. 112–113.

⁸⁶ See De Jong, 'Problems Concerning the Origins of the Kızılbaş in Bulgaria', as well as Yıldırım, 'Bektaşî Kime Derler?'

contributing to the literary and socio-religious traditions of other confessional-sectarian groups.

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11. ORTHODOX MARTYRDOM AND CONFESSIONALIZATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, LATE FIFTEENTH–MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

YORGOS TZEDOPOULOS

Toward the middle of the sixteenth century, a prelate of the Orthodox diocese of Thessaloniki—probably the metropolitan himself—sat down and composed the *vita* of Michael of Agrapha (d. 1544), who had been executed for defamation of Islam. According to the text, Michael was an immigrant from the small mountain town of Granitsa in Central Greece who had settled down in Thessaloniki as a baker. During a heated discussion with a Muslim acquaintance on matters of religion, he was apprehended by a Muslim learned man who was passing by, and he was brought to the judge, the qadi, for having uttered ‘blasphemous words against Muhammad and God’. Before the qadi, Michael—despite the fact that he was illiterate—expounded the Trinitarian doctrine and the divine nature of Jesus, discussed knowingly (and rejected) the Muslim views on these issues, and finally exposed Muhammad as a ‘son of Satan, precursor of the Antichrist, destroyer of human souls, deceiver, impious, and godless’. After having repeatedly refused to renounce his words and embrace Islam in order to save his life, Michael was burned at the stake.¹

I have chosen the *vita* of Michael as an introduction to this paper for two reasons. The first is that the text is a masterful combination of factual plausibility and narrative ingenuity that, on the face of it, would make a suitable vehicle for the formation of confessional identity, as was the case with Protestant and (to a lesser extent) Catholic martyrologies in Christian Europe at that time.² The author of Michael’s *vita* has his facts right: he portrays in an exact way the judicial procedure at the Ottoman sharia court and furnishes a Greek translation of the qadi’s decision as it would appear in the court register. Moreover, he adds a convincing depiction of Ottoman urban socioeconomic realities by mentioning that Michael was temporarily

¹ Sophianos, ‘The Original Akolouthia’, pp. 265–274.

² Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*; Dillon, *Construction of Martyrdom*; Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit*; Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*.

released from jail in order to settle his financial affairs with his creditors and debtors before the execution. However, a closer look reveals a complicating factor, which is the second reason to start with this text: the *vita* is written in an archaic language that only few were able to understand. In addition, Michael's argumentation before the qadi is taken almost verbatim from Gregory Palamas' *Dialexis* (disputation), the famous fourteenth-century example of Orthodox polemics against Islam.³ The fact that the words of a master theologian were put into the mouth of an illiterate baker would seem to undermine the account's claim to verisimilitude, while the narrative's language, rather than serving as a medium for building a communal identity, functioned as a mechanism of exclusion. Furthermore, the *vita* did not appear in print. In fact, the story of Michael was popularized only in the eighteenth century: the original *vita* was translated into vernacular Greek around the middle of the century, replicated in numerous manuscripts, and finally incorporated in the famous compilation of neomartyrs' *vitae* by Nikodemos the Hagiorite that was published in Venice in 1799.⁴

How should we interpret the choice of the *vita*'s author to write it in the archaizing form of the Greek language that was inaccessible to common believers? Does it mean that martyrdom and the stories about it did not constitute a ground for the formation of confessional identity among the Greek Orthodox of the Ottoman Empire? What kind of light does the phenomenon of martyrdom and the narratives about it shed on the Ottoman arena of confession-building and confessionalization in general, and Orthodox Christian confessionalization under Ottoman rule in particular? In this chapter, I will try to answer these questions by examining martyrdom both as a social and a discursive process in the context of the Ottoman Orthodox Christians' entanglements with the Sunni Muslim and Catholic confessional projects. I will treat the concept of confessionalization not as much as a process of defining and enforcing a precise set of beliefs and practices that constitute an orthodoxy and orthopraxy, but as an attempt by groups and individuals within the Greek Orthodox community to draw clearer boundaries with confessional others in the Ottoman arena by constantly calibrating martyrdom as the quintessential embodiment of Orthodoxy.

This is not a simple task. Hagiographical texts are particularly challenging sources for the historian. Stephanos Efthymiadis has rightly pointed out that nowadays research is not so much concerned with issues of factual accuracy: 'what matters today is rather the [hagiographical] text itself and its context: its hero or heroes, author, language, writing style and models and, finally, the audience it addressed and its underlying message'.⁵ For a thorough discussion of martyrdom, however, we

³ The text was allegedly written by the physician Taronites, who attended the debate at the summer court of Orhan near Bursa. For the editions and interpretations of the *Dialexis*, see Vucetic, 'Taronites'. For Palamas' captivity at the hands of the Ottomans and the texts referring to it see Pahlitzsch, 'Gregory Palamas'.

⁴ Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, pp. 52–57. For the translation and dissemination of Michael's *vita* (and of other martyrs as well) see Paschalides, *The Autograph*, pp. 55–66, 179–189.

⁵ Efthymiadis, 'New Developments', pp. 164–165.

also need to locate the executions in their precise social context. Here comparison with other sources is crucial. Recent historical research has revealed considerable factual overlap between neomartyrologies, Ottoman sources such as qadi court records, and travelers' or diplomats' accounts.⁶ In general, the descriptions of everyday life, social relations, and court procedures found in neomartyrs' *vitae* not only do not come in conflict with the evidence offered by other sources, but also let us glimpse rarely documented instances of intra-communal interactions and local negotiations of justice and coexistence.⁷ At the same time, there is no denying that the actors' intentionality, argumentation, decisions, and, most of all, their feelings and sentiments, are instrumentalized in the *vitae* in accordance with a narrative strategy that aims at transforming the dead from common persons into saints. In what follows, I will try, with all due caution, to situate the phenomenon of Orthodox martyrdom in the middle ground between discursive agency and social experience.

MARTYRDOM AND ECCLESIASTICAL DIGLOSSIA

Martyrdom is not a self-evident category, but, in the words of Michael Kirwan, 'a social construction in which many kinds of social actors participate, an act that comes to be legitimized and celebrated in a narrative'.⁸ The communicative and formative potential of martyrdom depends on an authoritative mediation that transforms it into a martyrology, a narrative (or a *corpus* of narratives) that can support and help impose perceptions of belonging and difference. Most striking in this respect are the extensive Protestant martyrologies of the mid-sixteenth century. Written in vernacular languages (English, French, German, Dutch), they were widely read, had many reprints and revised editions, and, by providing a collective trope for remembering and performing resistance and suffering, they played a pivotal role in the formation of socio-political identities and alterities.⁹ In this sense, martyrdom was instrumental in reinforcing ongoing processes of confessionnalization and played a pivotal role in the emergence of 'a transnational awareness of belonging' through the circulation and translation of the texts in a confessionally divided Europe.¹⁰

The Orthodox case is different. There are twenty-five to thirty narratives of martyrdom written between the late fifteenth and the mid-seventeenth century. They are stories about persons acknowledged as martyrs by some, though not necessarily all, of their contemporaries, for whom a *vita* and/or an *akolouthia*—that is, an arrangement of services devoted to a saint to be performed on a particular saint's day—was

⁶ Faroqhi, 'Orthodox Woman Saint'; Gradeva, 'Apostasy in Rumeli'; Gradeva, 'The Church in the Life'; Kotzageorgis, "'Messiahs" and Neomartyrs'; Gara, 'Neomartyr Without a Message'; Tzedopoulos, 'Coexistence and Conflict'.

⁷ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, p. 145.

⁸ Kirwan, 'Girard, Religion', pp. 912–913. See also Weiner and Weiner, *The Martyr's Conviction*, p. 12.

⁹ Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit*, pp. 5–6.

¹⁰ Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, pp. 339–341; Freist, 'Lost in Time and Space?', p. 211.

composed.¹¹ Of these, only one *vita* and *akolouthia* appeared in print.¹² In addition, the texts were not composed in the vernacular, but in a language very close to ancient Greek, and, as a rule, they exist in only a few manuscripts. Lastly, only very few martyrs were portrayed in ecclesiastical art during that period. In fact, the stories of the persons martyred in the first centuries of Ottoman rule began to circulate more widely after the translation of their *vitae* in the Greek vernacular in the course of the eighteenth century.¹³

Most of the early *vitae*, written from the late fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, were composed as *synaxaria*, namely as narrative units within the martyrs' *akolouthiai*. It would seem that the commemoration of neomartyrs was conceived in the ritualized context of liturgical service and not as an incentive for social mnemonic practices. Assuming that the martyrs were actually venerated in liturgy (which is not self-evident), their *vitae* appear to have been composed in order to be absorbed in the cultural trope of Christian martyrdom rather than to foster communicative exchange.¹⁴

This gap between 'functional' and 'storage' memory, to use the concepts introduced by Aleida Assmann,¹⁵ is complemented by the fact that the martyrologies of that period were not organized as a *corpus*. As a rule, the martyrs' *vitae* do not have any intertextual connections: although there are groups of *vitae* by the same author, there are no references to other contemporary martyrs within the texts. Individual martyrdoms are depicted as single events, as islands of defiance in a sea of Ottoman captivity. What was actually lacking in that period was a network of 'memory activists'¹⁶ who would undertake the transmission of the stories of the martyrs and would construct an integrative and meaningful discourse on the specific conditions of martyrdom under Ottoman rule. Such an integrative documentation and dissemination of martyrdom took place only in the late eighteenth century and was finally crystallized into a theory of martyrdom by Nikodemos the Hagiorite.¹⁷

Strangely enough, an overall assessment of martyrdom in the period under consideration was provided from a reverse perspective, namely from the viewpoint of martyrdom's irrelevancy. Some twenty years after the composition of Michael's *vita*, Damaskenos Stoudites (d. 1577), a monk who was later to become metropolitan of Naupaktos, wrote in vernacular Greek a work of popular theology and orthopraxy that was published in Venice in the 1550s under the title *Treasure (Thesaurus)* and

¹¹ Baumstark, *Historical Development*, p. 154.

¹² *Anthologie*, pp. σς^τ-σθ^ν (the *akolouthia* and *vita* of Ioannes of Ioannina, d. 1526).

¹³ Tzedopoulos, *Orthodox Neo-Martyrs*, pp. 159–219.

¹⁴ On the differentiation between 'cultural' and 'communicative' memory as distinct modalities of remembering see Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, pp. 48–66.

¹⁵ *Funktionsgedächtnis* and *Speichergedächtnis* respectively. See Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume*, pp. 130–142.

¹⁶ Freist, 'Lost in Time and Space?', p. 211.

¹⁷ Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, pp. 9–25. On Nikodemos' elaboration of martyrdom see Tzedopoulos, 'Martyrdom under Ottoman Rule', pp. 367–369; Gara and Tzedopoulos, *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 222–223.

became one of the most widely read books among the Orthodox until the eighteenth century.¹⁸ Damaskenos structured his work in the form of sermons and homilies devoted to important religious feasts and to the major Christian saints. No martyr contemporary to him is mentioned in the book. Indeed, Damaskenos made clear that martyrdom was not pertinent to the condition of the sultan's Christian subjects:

Because at that time [in antiquity] the kings were Greeks [heathens] and polytheists and they couldn't bear to hear of Christians, therefore the martyrs went and suffered martyrdom in Christ's name. Nowadays, since no one compels us to deny our faith, there is no reason for martyrdom. All God wants from us is to walk along the Christian way and to live according to Christ's will.¹⁹

The juxtaposition between Roman persecution and Ottoman religious toleration was warranted at a time of fierce confessional struggle all over Christian Europe. Damaskenos' relationship to martyrdom, however, was much more complex than that. The prelate wrote two *vitae* of martyrs contemporary to him and most probably commissioned the composition of a third one.²⁰ Contrary to *Treasure*, his martyrological texts were written in archaic Greek and remained unpublished.

The association of two opposing discourses on martyrdom with the same author is a striking example of what we could call 'ecclesiastical diglossia' under Ottoman rule.²¹ By this term we should understand not only the use of different linguistic forms, but mainly 'a hierarchy of discourses each of which represented a different set of values, behavior and attitudes'²² and was addressed to different publics, thus accentuating social, political, and cultural cleavages inside Ottoman Orthodoxy. The martyrs' *vitae* were addressed mainly to the Great Church and its elite, prelates, and *literati*. They were conceived as offerings, as testimonies of Christianity's everlasting truth and Orthodoxy's resilience. The message of everyday orthopraxy, on the other hand, was addressed to the lower clergy and common Christians.

With its many editions and its smooth, accessible language, the *Treasure* of Damaskenos was perhaps the most important text for Orthodox identity-building in that period. The author conceived his work in terms of promoting socio-religious conformity and urged the faithful to abstain from magical practices, games, singing, dancing, and drinking, oath-taking, and excessive mourning, as well as to follow the prescriptions of the Church in relation to confession, fasting, attending mass, and

¹⁸ The translation of the book in Church Slavonic and eventually in vernacular Bulgarian became the basis for the composition of the so-called *damaskini* (after the author's name), a compilation of popular theological texts in Bulgarian. The *damaskini* constitute 'literary works, written in different languages, but belonging to a single Romaic [Ottoman Orthodox] literary "system"'. Detrez, 'Pre-National Identities', pp. 50–51. On *Treasure* and its editions see Manou, *Damaskenos Stoudites*, pp. 57–64.

¹⁹ Damaskenos, *Treasure*, p. 248.

²⁰ Manou, *Damaskenos Stoudites*, pp. 76–78, 79–80, 100–103.

²¹ Tzedopoulos, *Orthodox Neo-Martyrs*, pp. 153–154, 181–184.

²² Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, p. 66.

helping the poor.²³ In what concerns confessional identities, Damaskenos juxtaposes the Orthodox to the Muslims and, more often, to the Jews. The Muslims are not mentioned by name; they are rather the ‘impious ones’ (*aseveis*), those who ‘have us in contempt and call us infidels and dogs’.²⁴ The Jews, on the other hand, are dealt with in a direct manner: they are the eternal enemies of Christianity, the ones who have always plotted against Christ and the Church.²⁵ Yet such juxtapositions are scarce. Damaskenos presents the Orthodox Ottoman subjects as a world of their own, a self-sufficient and introvert community ideally focused on social conformity and hope for salvation, rather than a population embedded in a hierarchical inter-communal system. This went well with his statement on the irrelevance of martyrdom in an age of religious tolerance.

And yet, martyrdom permeates Damaskenos’ discourse. The stories of ancient saints, which the prelate narrates with genuine empathy, are full of it. This is not important *per se* (after all, most major Christian saints were martyrs), but it is noteworthy because the saints’ *vitae* provide a narrative backbone for the recurring trope of martyrdom in the book. Damaskenos exalts martyrdom as the ‘holiest and best baptism’,²⁶ as the most perfect form of sanctity that defines by imitation and comparison every notion of Christian life and salvation. The author reveals a tension between the kind of life he propagates to the faithful, that is, a life of constant care against sin, and the energetic course of martyrdom that leads straight to sanctity: ‘the martyrs’ sufferings do not last long; the enjoyment of their benefits lasts forever’.²⁷ The Christians’ duty to be ‘wise as serpents’²⁸ is interpreted as a call for the safeguarding of the faith at all costs: in analogy to the snake, which, when beaten, ‘gives its body to the death and hides its head’, the Christians are prompted to offer ‘their body to the death, if necessary, for the love of Christ’.²⁹ In Damaskenos’ *Treasure*, martyrdom is the litmus test of Christian life.³⁰

The divergent discourses on martyrdom were, therefore, more ambivalent than the diglossic divide would suggest. In his *Treasure*, Damaskenos seems to use an opaque language on martyrdom that allows for leakages of meaning along a spectrum of statements, silences, and hints. A somewhat similar tension can be traced in the iconographic program of the Philanthropenon Monastery at Ioannina (Tr. Yanya) from the mid-sixteenth century, which stands out for its particularly gruesome frescoes of the bodily torments of ancient saints in the upper zone of the narthex.³¹ Only

²³ In this sense, *Treasure* presents a Christian equivalent of the ‘increased concern with the issues of [Muslim] religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’. Krstić, ‘From *Shahāda* to *Aqīda*’, p. 297.

²⁴ Damaskenos, *Treasure*, p. 486.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 106–107, 109, 115, 398–400, 405–410, 458–459.

²⁶ Damaskenos, *Treasure*, p. 50.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 541.

²⁸ Mt. 10:16.

²⁹ Damaskenos, *Treasure*, pp. 48–49.

³⁰ See also Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 137–138.

³¹ Acheimastou-Potamianou, *The Frescoes of Philanthropenon Monastery*, pp. 133–141.

one new martyr, Ioannes of Ioannina, was portrayed in the church (presented in full body together with other saints under the zone featuring the graphic torture),³² yet the connection was not to be missed.

One could raise the objection that this iconographic program decorated a monastic church outside the city (it is located on the island of Ioannina's lake), and that therefore its impact on the local Christians' everyday life must have been marginal. One could also point to the fact that this iconographic program was rather exceptional in the ecclesiastical art of the period and that it betrays strong Catholic influences in relation to style (mannerist painting)³³ and theme: the Catholic 'cult of martyrdom' peaked in the horrifying mannerist depictions of early Christian and modern Catholic martyrdoms in the chapels of the German-Hungarian and English Colleges of Rome in the 1580s.³⁴ Yet this is exactly the point: the formation of confessional identity among the Greek Orthodox subjects of the sultan was not a clear-cut, linear process, but one marked by ambiguity and contradiction, oscillating between clarity and obfuscation, exchange and polarization.³⁵ It was defined by the encounters with—mostly Catholic—Reformation and, above all, with Ottoman Sunnitization, which was closely connected to the position of the Orthodox within the sultan's realm. To this now we must turn, using martyrdom as our interpretative focus.

THE MARTYRDOM AND *OIKONOMIA*

A little more than a century before Damaskenos, martyrdom had already been vested with a pivotal function in the context of the Ottoman conquest. Gennadios Scholarios (d. c. 1473), the first Patriarch of Constantinople (1454–56; with further tenures in 1463 and 1464–65) to be appointed by an Ottoman sultan (Mehmed II, 1444–46; 1451–81), resorted to the ancient theological notion of *oikonomia* (accommodation, lenience) in order to interpret the trauma of Constantinople's fall to the Ottomans and to legitimize the Church's compromise with an Islamic empire.³⁶ In his writings, Gennadios associated *oikonomia* with the era of the first Christians, when the canonical framework of the Church had not yet been developed, and with his own times, when the Christians 'have neither a reign of their own (*basileia*), nor a free Church,

³² Vasilikou, 'The Depiction of St Ioannes'.

³³ Garidis, 'Close Iconographic and Stylistic Contacts', pp. 65–67.

³⁴ Dillon, *Construction of Martyrdom*, pp. 171–240; Richardson, 'The English College Church'.

³⁵ It is indicative that one of the executioners in the frescoes of Philantropenon Monastery is portrayed as a Spanish knight (Garidis, 'Close Iconographic', p. 70), as well as that the frescoes actually coincided with the emergence of the Catholic Reformation.

³⁶ On *oikonomia* see Dagon, 'La règle et l'exception', and Richter, *Gebrauch des Wortes Oikonomia*. On its use by Gennadios see Maropoulou, 'L'économie'; Blanchet, *George-Gennadios Scholarios*, pp. 149–154. On the compromise of the Church with the new imperial power and its incorporation in Ottoman institutions see Apostolopoulos, 'Les mécanismes d'une conquête'; Apostolopoulos, 'The Flexible Policy'. On the concept of *oikonomia* as an ecclesiastical norm under the Ottomans see also Petmézas, 'Organisation ecclésiastique', pp. 532–549.

nor boldness of expression (*parrhesia*).³⁷ The patriarch extended his argumentation on the legitimacy of deviation from rule in order to address the situation of his fellow Christians who, according to him, suffered daily afflictions but stayed true to their faith despite temptations, and were ready to die for it if necessary. ‘Who would dare say they are not martyrs by volition?’ he rhetorically asked. ‘Who would dare judge them with inopportune correctness and meticulousness?’³⁸

‘Martyrdom by volition’, a concept coined already by the ancient fathers of the Church after the prevalence of Christianity,³⁹ became thus a tool for the interpretation of the Ottoman Christians’ position in a new context: that of religious tolerance coupled with socio-political inequality. Even though the excerpts on martyrdom from Gennadios’ writings have been considered to refer to actual executions,⁴⁰ close reading shows that they were not supposed to glorify any heroic deaths, but to render meaning to a Christian life and accommodation under Islamic rule. In his *Epistle on the Fall of the City* (1454), Gennadios compared the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman sultan to the first Christians and concluded that the faithful of his time could boast of martyrs greater and more valiant than the ancient ones. The latter, he explained, were inspired by the hope of overthrowing ignorance and by the zeal of proclaiming and establishing truth, whereas the Ottoman Christians had to suffer innumerable afflictions without hope for any temporal relief.⁴¹

In 1480, Patriarch Maximos III (1476–82) sent to the Venetian doge Giovanni Mocenigo an epistle concerning the position of the Orthodox in the Venetian possessions. The patriarch presented the Ottoman Christians as suffering a daily martyrdom for the survival of the faith and compared them to the apostles, who had kept their faith ‘without having any Christian king’. Reacting to the Latin accusations of simony in view of the sums paid by the Church to the Ottomans either on an annual basis or at the investiture of a new patriarch, Maximos maintained that this was in fact a ‘martyrdom by volition’. The ancient martyrs, he argued, had offered their blood and their life to safeguard the faith; to the same end, the Ottoman Orthodox were giving their money instead of blood. ‘Without this *oikonomia* and condescendence, the Church would not survive, and the faith of Christ would perish in these parts’.⁴² Maximos employed the notion of *oikonomia* as a discursive alchemy that turned simony into martyrdom, Christian *reaya* into heroes of the faith, and the Great Church, which had been restored by the Ottomans, into a fighting Church, an *Ecclesia militans*.

Maximos went on urging the Venetians to imitate Mehmed II’s wisdom and deal fairly with their Orthodox subjects. Christian intolerance, he implied, looks even more intolerant when compared to the attitude of the Muslim ‘great and most exalted lord’ (*megas kai hypselotatos authentes*) who ‘leaves all men free in matters of belief

³⁷ Petit, Sideridès, and Jugie, *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 203. See also the analysis by Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios*, pp. 118–122.

³⁸ Petit, Sideridès, and Jugie, *Oeuvres complètes*, pp. 203–204.

³⁹ Basil of Caesarea, *Opera Omnia*, cols 507–508.

⁴⁰ Vryonis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, p. 360.

⁴¹ Petit, Sideridès, and Jugie, *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 219.

⁴² Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et diplomata*, pp. 282–284.

and faith'.⁴³ Gennadios also had praised 'the ruler's (*tou kratountos*) wisdom and benevolence' towards his Christian subjects.⁴⁴ There is an apparent tension between 'not having a king' and having a just and benevolent ruler. Yet coming from patriarchs at an ancient seat of imperial *cum* religious power, those conflicting but complementary statements were meant to construe the Church's co-existence with Muslim temporal authority as a state of *oikonomia*. In this context, martyrdom was employed as a systemic metonymy that allowed a new 'manifestation' of the Church in its symbiotic and unequal relationship with the sultans as a 'menaced virgin' and legitimized this relationship in front of Orthodox and Catholic audiences.⁴⁵

FASHIONING OTTOMAN ORTHODOXY

Both the metonymic and the diglossic functions of martyrdom permit us to glimpse the uneven process of Orthodox confession-building under Ottoman rule. The re-establishment and incorporation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the state machinery transformed the Great Church into an Ottoman institution. As a consequence, the Church was called on to reformulate discourses and disseminate performances of Orthodox identity that could be effective both in the Ottoman plural religious system and in a landscape of rising religio-political antagonism all over Europe. This was inscribed within a mutual relationship of support between church and state: by resorting to the notion of *oikonomia*, the Patriarchate, which had been re-established by a Muslim ruler in an uncanonical procedure, was contributing to the legitimacy of the Ottoman empire-building project. The Church explained the conquest as divine punishment for the sins of the Christians and as part of God's providence both for salvation by repentance and for the survival of Orthodoxy,⁴⁶ facilitating thus the institutional incorporation of the empire's Orthodox population as protected non-Muslim subjects (*dhimmi*) and as taxpaying producers (*reaya*).

The Ottoman-Orthodox symbiotic dynamics mobilized complex mechanisms of power distribution that are quite close to a 'coalescing of religious reform and state formation', as confessionalization has been described, and to the traits of a

⁴³ Ibid, p. 284.

⁴⁴ Petit, Sideridès, and Jugie, *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 265. On Maximos' epistle see also Konortas, 'From the "Historical Compromise"', pp. 89–90.

⁴⁵ For a comparable analysis see Kelly, *Performing Virginity*, p. 44, who, in turn, draws on White, *Metahistory*, pp. 34–35. Kelly argues that 'the menaced virgin in the near-rape narrative is more useful as a metonym, as an inviolate body that stands in for the Church, than as an actual, historical person. ... The virgin indeed figures as a "manifestation" of the Church, but does so most effectively when she is lifted out of her historical moment and textualized in the discourse of hagiography'.

⁴⁶ Petit, Sideridès, and Jugie, *Oeuvres complètes*, pp. 221–223. For the explanations provided by Gennadios, who understood the Ottoman conquest also in eschatological terms, see the analysis by Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios*, pp. 124–135. For the providential legitimation of Ottoman rule see also Apostolopoulos, 'Glorifying the Situation'; Konortas, 'From the "Historical Compromise"', pp. 76–77. For the longevity of the providential explanation and for an overall approach see Theotokas, 'Tradition and Modernity', pp. 353–361.

‘confessionalization in the service of political growth’,⁴⁷ in this case, of the Ottoman Empire. It is true that in the fifteenth century the most crucial element of confessional politics, the enforcement of social discipline according to theoretical abstractions of theological and sociopolitical order,⁴⁸ was lacking—and would continue to be lacking for a long time. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the fact that the elaboration of a theory and the dissemination of a message concerning Orthodox identity under Muslim rule took place. This circumscription of Orthodoxy *vis-à-vis* Islam and Catholicism was expressed from the start in terms of confession and manifestation. Shortly after his ascension to the patriarchal throne, Gennadios Scholarios presented to the sultan (at the latter’s request) a detailed Orthodox confession translated into Ottoman Turkish by the qadi of Karaferye (Veroia), possibly a Greek convert to Islam. The event, which is mentioned in numerous Orthodox chronicles,⁴⁹ can be inscribed in the long tradition of religious disputations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims;⁵⁰ an illustrious example of which is the *Dialexis* of Gregorios Palamas to which we referred in connection to the *vita* of Michael of Agrapha. The long interaction of the Orthodox world with Islam through experiences of conquest, exchange, antagonism, and syncretism had already produced a record of negotiations of difference and coexistence and had played a crucial role in preparing the late Byzantine anti-unionist faction, to which Gennadios belonged, for a Christian life under the Ottomans—a situation considered preferable to submission to Rome.⁵¹

Gennadios’ confession is the first from among several instances that were formative for the self-fashioning of Ottoman Orthodoxy during the reign of Mehmed II.⁵² A second one is associated with Maximos III: the sultan is reported to have requested the patriarch to revoke the penalty of excommunication that had been imposed on a woman, long dead by that time, in order to put to test the Christians’ claim that the bodies of excommunicated persons remained intact after death. According to the chronicles, the gruesome demonstration of the fact (as soon as the excommunication was revoked, the body began to decompose) made the sultan marvel at Orthodoxy’s power.⁵³ The story about this miracle fulfilled several functions: it helped explain Ottoman tolerance as a result of the truth of Orthodoxy; it demonstrated the power of the Church over the common Christians’ life and death; and it displayed Orthodoxy’s superiority over Catholicism: in his epistle to the Venetian doge mentioned

⁴⁷ Reinhardt, ‘Zwang zum Konfessionalisierung’, p. 268.

⁴⁸ Reinhardt, ‘Zwang zum Konfessionalisierung’, p. 263.

⁴⁹ Bekker, *Historia Politica*, pp. 29–31, 83–93; Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca*, p. 573.

⁵⁰ Khoury, *Polémique byzantine*; Argyriou, ‘Greek Polemical and Apologetic Literature’; *Christian-Muslim Relations*.

⁵¹ Zachariadou, *Ten Turkish Documents*, pp. 29–40; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans*, pp. 208–220; Kiousopoulou, *Basileus or Oikonomos*, pp. 58–77; Apostolopoulos, ‘Du sultan au basileus?’, pp. 243–244.

⁵² See also the remarks by Petmézas, ‘Organization ecclésiastique’, pp. 539–542, 547–548.

⁵³ Bekker, *Historia Politica*, pp. 48–50, 118–124; Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca*, p. 587–588; *Historical Account*, pp. φξ–φξα.

above, Maximos did not fail to make an oblique—albeit clearly recognizable—reference to the recent event that ‘glorified our Orthodox faith’.⁵⁴

These instances contain in a nutshell the specific and idiosyncratic traits that would define the unfolding of Ottoman Orthodox confessionalization in the future: the symbiotic and at the same time antagonistic relation to the Ottoman state, and the constant interaction with European religio-political developments, which included instances of open theological and political confrontation, mainly against Catholicism, and in the seventeenth century also against Protestantism.⁵⁵ The Church’s concern would be to secure its hold over the flock and counteract conversion, to disseminate—and even try to enforce—specific practices or performances of Orthodoxy, and to safeguard and maximize its religio-political autonomy by taking advantage of its institutional position in the empire.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople was one distinct variant within European religious diversity, being neither a ‘state’ nor a ‘communal’ Church, but having the status of a systemically integrated religious institution operating under the sultan’s protection in the form of a fiscal entity.⁵⁶ Orthodox confessionalization, as it emerged through interaction with Ottoman Sunnitization and Christian Reformation, was not simply one of the ‘different confessionalizations within the same political space’,⁵⁷ as was the case in the Netherlands and in Ireland,⁵⁸ but a result of Ottoman imperial plurality that encompassed not only subjection and toleration, but also institutional continuity, public visibility, and mutuality. Let us see how martyrdom can help us unravel this complex, and what it has to offer for a discussion of the ‘blind spots’ of the confessionalization concept, especially when it comes to the relationship between the the top-down and bottom-up confessionalizing initiatives.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et diplomata*, p. 282.

⁵⁵ For an overview of anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant writings, see Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*.

⁵⁶ Of course, this is not to say that the Orthodox Church between the fifteenth and seventeenth century constituted a fully organized hierarchical power structure capable of imposing central policies on the clergy and common Christians in a state of relative autonomy, but to emphasize that its status cannot be understood merely as the outcome of an ‘ad hoc toleration’ (compare with Te Brake, ‘Emblems of Coexistence’, pp. 75–76). In order to assess the position and development of the Church under the Ottomans, we have to combine Ottoman and Church understandings of it. See, for instance, Konortas, ‘Orthodox Hierarchs’. On this issue see the chapter by Eleni Gara and Ovidiu Olar in this volume.

⁵⁷ Mörke, ‘Die politische’, p. 145.

⁵⁸ Lotz-Heumann, *Die doppelte Konfessionalisierung*.

⁵⁹ Lotz-Heumann, ‘The Concept of “Confessionalization”’, pp. 109–114.

MARTYRDOM AND THE GRADUAL ECLIPSE OF A CHRISTIAN ELITE

The Ottoman shift in the sixteenth century from ‘the absence of a state that was interested in rigorously defining and strictly enforcing an orthodoxy’⁶⁰ towards a Sunnization project undertaken by the religious and political authorities of the empire,⁶¹ which launched the ‘Ottoman age of confessionalization,’ had its repercussions for Christians, too. New definitions of apostasy, which served in the persecution of Shi‘ite and Kizilbash groups suspect of collaboration with Safavid Iran,⁶² together with the expansion of the ‘list of actions and formulations that constituted signs of unbelief’,⁶³ were symptoms of a stricter interpretation of the sharia and of a raised awareness of religious transgression. Such preoccupations contributed to accusations against Christians for having defamed Islam or for having embraced and subsequently apostatized from it. As Tijana Krstić has argued, this phenomenon is particularly relevant for the socio-local dimension of Ottoman confessionalization.⁶⁴ In the present discussion we will take into account aspects that did not owe their existence to confessionalization as such, but rather were in a constant interplay with it. To do this we must start from a somewhat earlier point.

The stories of martyrs from the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century throw light onto the process of assimilation of the old Byzantine aristocracy into the new Muslim urban elite. Michael Mauroeides of Adrianople (Tr. Edirne)⁶⁵ and Ioannes of Serres (Tr. Siroz),⁶⁶ who were executed during the reign of Bayezid II (1481–1512), were persons of economic and social prominence, particularly Michael, who in 1493 was the tax-farmer of Edirne’s customs duties.⁶⁷ Both were accused of living as Christians after having converted to Islam—Michael through the pronouncement of the *shahāda*, the Islamic creed, and Ioannes through his promise to become a Muslim. Both cases are reported to have been brought before the sultan himself, who ordered that the offenders choose between Islam and execution. In my opinion, these two stories reveal a pressure for the Islamization of elite persons, associated with the transfer of economic and social capital to the emerging Muslim urban ruling class. This was particularly important in Balkan cities, in which the remnants of Christian aristocracy were still bearers of local identity, economic

⁶⁰ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 76. In my opinion, Kafadar’s notion of ‘metadoxy’ should be complemented by Lowry’s understanding of ‘Ottoman syncretism’, particularly in what concerns the non-Muslim subjects. Lowry, *Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 115–130.

⁶¹ Terzioğlu, ‘Ottoman Sunnization’, p. 322.

⁶² Al-Tikriti, ‘*Kalam* in the Service’.

⁶³ Burak, ‘Faith, Law and Empire’, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 143–164.

⁶⁵ Sophianos, ‘The Neo-Martyr’, pp. 247–250, 451–452, 739–755.

⁶⁶ Karanastases, ‘A Neo-Martyr in Serres’, pp. 254–255.

⁶⁷ Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville ottomane*, pp. 176–177. Mauroeides’ prominence was reflected in his martyrological dossier: two *akolouthiai cum vitae* and one *encomium*, written by Manouel Korinthios and Ioannes Moschos. Sophianos, ‘The Neo-Martyr’, pp. 783–802.

power, and social prestige;⁶⁸ especially in urban centers such as Serres, where the population consisted largely of recent immigrants and the old elite's visibility was even more pronounced.⁶⁹ At the same time, the demand for a strict interpretation of things religious, evident in both cases, was probably fueled by the presence of heterodox Islam: followers of the rebellious sheikh Bedreddin of Simavna (d. 1416) were still active in Serres and Adrianople;⁷⁰ and the region of Adrianople became the theater of persecution of the Kalenderi dervishes after the mysterious assassination attempt against the sultan by a dervish in 1492.⁷¹

To Michael of Adrianople and Ioannes of Serres we can add another Ioannes, this time from Prousa (Tr. Bursa), whose death must be dated to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.⁷² According to his *vita*, he was accused of having defamed Islam during a debate with some Muslims who were bent on making him a convert. The *vita* implies that the reason for their proselytizing zeal was Michael's charitable activity, and particularly his efforts to support those who, being poor, were more tempted to renounce Christianity in favor of Islam. In Bursa, with its booming silk manufacture and a constant labor demand, Islamization was instrumental in forming and reproducing networks of dependency and mutuality between former masters and freed slaves, as well as between craftsmen and apprentices.⁷³ It is conceivable that, in Muslim eyes, Ioannes' Orthodox network of charity appeared antagonistic in terms of socio-economic dominance. Actually, this factor may have played a role in the manipulation of the accusation against Michael Mauroeides of Adrianople as well: the wealthy Christian was renowned for fostering networks of charity among his coreligionists.⁷⁴ Lastly, there are two more points that tie Ioannes of Bursa to the martyrs of Serres and Adrianople: persecution of heterodoxy, which is documented in late fifteenth-century Bursa as well,⁷⁵ and the personal involvement of Bayezid II. The *vita* recounts that the sultan, after having failed to persuade Ioannes to embrace Islam, ordered that he be put to death.

Of course, we cannot take for granted the factual accuracy of our sources. But I think that, irrespective of the exact circumstances of the deaths, we can attribute

⁶⁸ In the region of Serres, for instance, Byzantine princes had been granted lands by Ottoman sultans. Zachariadou, 'Via Egnatia', pp. 81–82.

⁶⁹ Lowry, *The Shaping*, pp. 175–186.

⁷⁰ There were two dervish lodges (*zaviye*) founded by Bedreddin in Edirne and Siroz. In the latter city, where Bedreddin was executed, there was his funerary monument, too. Balivet, *Islam mystique*, pp. 96–97; Balta, *Les vakıfs*, pp. 119–120.

⁷¹ Ocak, 'Kalenderi Dervishes', pp. 249–250. According to an Ottoman chronicle, the sultan ordered the qadi of Edirne to put to death 'those who expressed impious utterances'. Kissling, *Bâjezâd's Beziehungen*, pp. 12–13, 40. For a recent analysis see Antov, *The Ottoman 'Wild West'*, pp. 87–89, who reads the events in the light of the emergence of a distinct heterodox dervish collectivity under the leadership of Otman Baba.

⁷² Patrinoles, 'Sources About the Greek Community', pp. 41–46.

⁷³ Sahillioğlu, 'Slaves in the Social and Economic Life'.

⁷⁴ Sophianos, 'The Neo-Martyr', pp. 451, 741–743.

⁷⁵ Molla Lutfi, a teacher at the Muradiye religious school (madrasa) of Bursa, was executed for heresy in 1494. Ocak, *Zındıklar ve mühlidler*, pp. 205–227.

these cases to three factors: the pressure for the equation of socio-economic power with Muslim identity; the shift towards the instrumentalization of speech-acts of conversion that tilted power relations at the expense of the non-Muslims;⁷⁶ and the supporting role of a sultan who is known to have ‘turned away from the more accommodating postures espoused by his father Mehmed II’⁷⁷ and paved the way for the Sunnitization measures that intensified in the reign of Selim I (1512–1521) and especially Süleyman I (1521–1566). These early martyrdoms also manifest the consequences of the rising emphasis on the practice of ‘renewal of faith’, which, as Guy Burak has shown, began to be prominent at exactly the same time. The demand that Muslims ‘renew their faith’ by publicly declaring their adherence to Islam was due to the authorities’ rising concern with ‘belief, heresy, unbelief and apostasy’, first in dealing with the fluid boundaries between Islamic orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and then in the context of the antagonism with the Safavids.⁷⁸ The dilemma between death and conversion to Islam appearing in the martyrs’ stories might be regarded as equivalent to requiring from a Muslim person suspect of apostasy or heresy to ‘renew his faith’.

Most of the texts concerning the martyrs of that period were written by Manouel Korinthios, Grand Rhetor of the Patriarchate and director of the Patriarchal School in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.⁷⁹ Manouel, who was also involved in the composition of a ‘mirror for princes’ commissioned by Prince Neagoe Basarab of Wallachia for his son Teodosie,⁸⁰ had probably collected the material for his martyrologies during his participation in the inspection tours that were undertaken by subsequent patriarchs from 1491 onwards.⁸¹ Manouel’s writings were in concert with the Patriarchate’s effort to impose control on the dioceses and expand its influence in the Danubian Principalities, a process that was ignited by the Patriarchate’s re-establishment and evolvment in a relationship of cautious mutuality with the Ottoman imperial project.⁸²

Manouel’s martyrologies were written in a very conservative variant of archaic Greek and seem to have been composed for the use of an ecclesiastical elite. Therefore, it is not surprising that those early deaths did not leave a documented trace either in mnemonic practices or in pictorial representation. The martyrologists of the eighteenth century, who collected, translated in the vernacular, and published earlier *vitae*, did not include in their *corpus* the relevant texts, probably because they were

⁷⁶ On the *shahāda* as speech-act see Feener, ‘Islam: Historical Introduction’, p. 5. On speech-acts see Austin, *How to Do Things*, and Davies and Harré, ‘The Discursive Production’.

⁷⁷ Lowry, *Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, p. 113.

⁷⁸ Burak, ‘Faith, Law and Empire’.

⁷⁹ On Manouel see Patrinoles, ‘The Grand Rhetors’, pp. 17–25; Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, pp. 87–88; Paschalides, ‘The Ecumenical Patriarchate’, pp. 701–702.

⁸⁰ Vranoussis, ‘Les “Conseils” attribués’; Panou, ‘Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns’, pp. 83–84.

⁸¹ Karanastases, ‘A Neo-Martyr in Serres’, pp. 211–212.

⁸² Păun, ‘Mount Athos’, p. 136; Konortas, ‘From the “Historical Compromise”’.

not able to locate them.⁸³ Obviously the martyrs' stories did circulate among a wider population, at least for some time after their executions. The martyrdom of Mauroeides, for instance, is mentioned in the *vita* of Georgi of Sofia, who was put to death some twenty years later. With the profound changes in the socio-religious physiognomy of the urban centers through Islamization and migration, however, the continuity of the Christian communities' composition and leadership broke down and the martyrdoms fell into oblivion.

MARTYRDOM AND COMMUNITIZATION

The martyrdom of Georgi in Sofia (Georgi Novi, d. 1515) is also a result of the pressure for Islamization in an urban context. Georgi, a young goldsmith from Kratovo, was accused of having defamed Islam during two discussions, first with a learned Muslim and then with the local qadi, which, according to the *vita*, had been orchestrated in order to make the young goldsmith convert to Islam.⁸⁴ Yet Georgi's story represents a shift from the patterns we have encountered until now.

The text starts with an introduction on Christian sanctity that seems to corroborate in advance the superiority of Christianity over Islam, a theme that is presented in full in the heated discussions on religion between the martyr and his interlocutors and reaches its peak in the miracles following Georgi's execution. In addition, it contains a reference to Michael Mauroeides, which accentuates even more the function of martyrdom as a vehicle for inter-communal antagonism. Upon Georgi's execution, the Muslims taunt the Christians: 'Do not expect to acquire any part of his body! We will burn him and scatter his ashes into the wind, as with Mauroeides in Adrianople.'⁸⁵

The text is composed in Old Church Slavonic, a language that was probably more accessible to the literate Bulgarian-speaking Christians in comparison to the vast diglossic divide of the Greek martyrologies. In addition, the communicative potential of the *vita* is particularly strong: the narrative is structured as a story full of dramatic twists and turns that does not fail to attract the reader's (or listener's) interest. To this contributes that the story is narrated in the first person by the priest Pejo,⁸⁶ who not only functioned as Georgi's mentor, but also deployed his network of Muslim acquaintances (he claims that he was familiar with the qadi) in order to collect exact information on the development of the case and, in the end, to procure

⁸³ Paschalides, 'The Manuscript Neo-Martyrological Collections', pp. 161–162.

⁸⁴ Ivanova, *Old Bulgarian Literature*, pp. 291–308. The hagiographical texts on Georgi of Sofia comprise two *vitae*, one extensive and one shorter, one *akolouthia*, and one *encomium* for three sixteenth-century martyrs of Sofia (Georgi Novi, Georgi Nai-Novii, and Nikolai). I refer here to the extensive *vita*, which was probably written shortly after his martyrdom. Gergova, 'St Georgi the New', pp. 53–55.

⁸⁵ Ivanova, *Old Bulgarian Literature*, p. 306.

⁸⁶ Pejo was the author of the extensive *vita* and of the *akolouthia*, which was also written shortly after Georgi's martyrdom. Gergova, 'St Georgi the New Martyr', pp. 45–46, 54.

Georgi's body and raise the foundations for his cult as a martyr.⁸⁷ In my view, Pejo's cunning machinations⁸⁸ serve as a call for the Christians' 'communitization'⁸⁹ around their ecclesiastical leaders, to whom the burden and the privilege of dealing with the Ottomans must be assigned, since any interaction with them involves the danger of conversion to Islam.⁹⁰

Georgi is one of the very few martyrs of this period who were represented in ecclesiastical art soon after their death: there are numerous representations of him in monasteries around Sofia, but mainly in Serbian monasteries after 1557, when the Patriarchate of Peć was restored,⁹¹ while his relics—which were actually saved from the fire—found their way to several monastic centers from Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos to Moscow.⁹² In his veneration we must recognize two overlapping and subsequent processes. First, the effort to constitute Georgi's cult as an identity marker for the Christian community of Sofia, a city that, on one hand, was 'highly charged with potential for inter-communal conflict', as evidenced in three martyrdoms in the sixteenth century,⁹³ and, on the other, had an active group of Christian *litterati* with a sense of civic pride.⁹⁴ Secondly, the inclusion of Georgi in the manifestation of a south Slavic (or rather Serbian) Orthodox identity.⁹⁵ It seems that this effort,

⁸⁷ At the end of the *vita*, Pejo adds a physical description of Georgi. Ivanova, *Old Bulgarian Literature*, p. 308. Obviously, this was meant to help the eventual painter draw the martyr's image.

⁸⁸ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, p. 126.

⁸⁹ The social conflict instigated by martyrdom could thus enhance a 'subjectively felt ... mutual sense of belonging' upon which, according to Max Weber, rests communitization (*Vergemeinschaftung*). Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 21. On the analytical value of communitization in interpreting communities not as static but processual entities, see Hepp, *Transcultural Communication*, p. 205–210.

⁹⁰ Zachariadou, 'The Neomartyr's Message'.

⁹¹ Kiel, *Art and Society*, pp. 320–322; Gergova, 'St Georgi the New', pp. 57–58; Gergova, 'St Georgi the New Martyr', pp. 55–62.

⁹² Gergova, 'St Georgi the New Martyr', pp. 48–54.

⁹³ Gradeva, 'The Church in the Life', p. 124. The tension was probably reinforced by intense urban Islamization amidst an almost completely Christian countryside (Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, p. 49), as well as by the presence of the Halveti dervish Bali Efendi, a champion for the imposition of Islamic orthodoxy in the Balkans (Gradeva, 'Apostasy in Rumeli', pp. 52–53, 69–70; Clayer, *Mystiques, état et société*, pp. 70–81). The war on heterodoxy often backfired in issues of 'contested conversions' (to borrow the apt phrasing by Krstić) and defamation of Islam by non-Muslims.

⁹⁴ Gradeva, 'The Church in the Life', pp. 123–124, 126.

⁹⁵ This is evident already in the *vita*: almost all the saints mentioned therein (Ivanova, *Old Bulgarian Literature*, pp. 293–294) are important figures of Slavic (more specifically Serbian) Orthodoxy. See also Gergova, 'St Georgi the New Martyr', p. 62. Georgi is mentioned in the *akolouthia* as being of 'Serbian root'. This could very well be true, since Kratovo was an old Serbian silver-mining center; a possible connection of Georgi's family with mining would account also for his becoming a goldsmith.

undertaken by the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć, ensured the dissemination and continuation of the martyr's cult.

A pattern comparable to Georgi's can be found in the martyrdom of the tailor Ioannes of Ioannina (d. 1526), a poor immigrant in Constantinople. The accusation against him, described in the *vitae* as orchestrated by some Muslims in order to have him convert to Islam, was that he had already turned Muslim when he was in the town of Trikala (Tr. Tırhala) but that he went on living as a Christian. After refusing to confirm his faith in Islam, Ioannes was put to death.⁹⁶

The martyrdom of Ioannes is particularly important because it contributed to Orthodox identity-making in the context of a triple juxtaposition between Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Ottoman Islam. Not long after his death, two *vitae* and *akolouthiai* were composed in his honor by the scholars Nikolaos Malaxos (d. 1587) and Ioustinos Dekadion who were active in Venice and its domains. The *akolouthia* of Malaxos, who was probably a student of Manouel Korinthios (d.c. 1550),⁹⁷ remained unpublished, but that of Dekadion was later included in the *Anthologie*, a collection of Orthodox liturgical services that was printed in Venice from 1564 onwards.⁹⁸ The early iconography of Ioannes (which includes his depiction at Philanthropenon Monastery on the island of Ioannina, dated to 1542) makes him the most-portrayed neomartyr of that period alongside Georgi of Sofia.⁹⁹ Ioannes' skull was acquired by the Varlaam Monastery in Meteora, which was established by the brothers Apsaras, members of the Christian elite of Ioannina.¹⁰⁰ Other relics were transferred to Italy, where they were reported to have brought about numerous miracles, the most impressive of which was the healing of the Spanish envoy in Venice from gout.¹⁰¹ The episode constituted a clear confessional message of Orthodoxy's superiority over the very embodiment of Catholic arrogance. According to the *vita* in Nikodemos' *New Martyrology*, the proud envoy humbled himself before the miraculous relics of the poor tailor by uttering the words of the Gospel: 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.'¹⁰² The wordplay served well in the description of a Catholic Christian from the viewpoint of Orthodoxy.

The veneration of Ioannes bears different but comparable traits to that of Georgi. Ioannes' cult did not develop in Istanbul, where he had been martyred, but along the networks of his native city of Ioannina. It is not a coincidence that Hieremias I (1522–24; 1525–46), who was patriarch when Ioannes was martyred and who is reported to have vainly intervened on behalf of the young tailor, was a native of

⁹⁶ Lambros, 'Contributions to the History', pp. 138–143; Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, pp. 44–50.

⁹⁷ Strategopoulos, *Nikolaos Malaxos*, pp. 99–100.

⁹⁸ *Anthologie*, pp. γ', σζ'–σθ'.

⁹⁹ Vasilikou, 'The Depiction of St Ioannes'.

¹⁰⁰ Tourta, 'The Prodromos Monastery', pp. 348–351.

¹⁰¹ Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, p. 49.

¹⁰² Mk. 9:24.

Zitsa, a region close to Ioannina.¹⁰³ The importance of Ioannes' martyrdom for the formation of local identities is clear in that the *akolouthia* written by Dekadion was composed at the request of 'some Christ-loving and martyr-loving compatriots' of Ioannes.¹⁰⁴ The first part of the *vita* sketches a portrait of glorious historical continuity for Ioannina that culminates in the city's monasteries: 'it would not be wrong to call it a city of monks (*Monachopolin*)'.¹⁰⁵ The fact that, in contrast to other Balkan regions, landholding, taxation and administration in the province of Ioannina was to a large extent in the hands of Christian archons until the late sixteenth century¹⁰⁶ was surely vital to the rise and continuation of Ioannes' cult. The latter, however, did not surpass the limits of diglossia: Dekadion's *akolouthia* was written in a learned Greek language accessible to only few. As to the extent of the cult, it was restrained by the imperative not to endanger the delicate accommodation with the Ottomans imposed by *oikonomia*. The title of the *vita* in the contents of the *Anthologie* was followed by a notice: 'to be performed if the prior (*proestos*) so chooses'.¹⁰⁷

Georgi of Sofia and Ioannes of Ioannina are unique among the martyrs of that period in that they transcended spatial boundaries and achieved symbolic status. Even though their cult did not extend to the 'imagined community' of the Orthodox as a whole but was situated in specific niches and networks of the Christian lay and monastic elites, the resonance of their martyrdom reveals the importance of 'mid-dling' social groups in the formation of confessional attitudes.

MARTYRDOM AND CONFESSIONAL ENTANGLEMENTS

The exploitation of martyrdom in the competition against Catholicism became more pronounced with the unfolding of Catholic confessionalization after the Council of Trent. In the 1570s Rome turned its attention to the Eastern Christians with a view to bringing them in union with the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁸ To the same end, it applied pressure on the Orthodox communities in Italy.¹⁰⁹ The territory of the Republic of Venice, which maintained a relatively tolerant attitude in order not to estrange its non-Catholic subjects and jeopardize its economic and political position in the eastern Mediterranean,¹¹⁰ was a major arena of confessional coexistence and antagonism. According to his *vita*, Theophanes, a convert to Islam who was executed in Istanbul as an apostate in 1588, was prompted to the public confession of Christianity—and thence to martyrdom—by none other than Gabriel Severos (d. 1616), the Orthodox

¹⁰³ On Hieremias see Stroumpakes, *Hieremias I*. Hieremias also confirmed the rights of Varlaam Monastery, where Ioannes' relic skull was held, in 1545. *Ibid*, pp. 99–100, 350–352.

¹⁰⁴ Lambros, 'Contributions to the History', p. 135.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 138.

¹⁰⁶ Gara, 'Prophecy, Rebellion, Suppression', p. 341.

¹⁰⁷ *Anthologie*, p. γ'. The word *proestos* could also mean a prelate.

¹⁰⁸ Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens*, pp. 225–239; Greene, *Catholic Pirates*, pp. 100–107.

¹⁰⁹ Arbel, 'Venice's Maritime Empire', pp. 171–172.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 170–179.

metropolitan of Philadelphia whose seat was in Venice.¹¹¹ It is probable that Severos, one of the staunchest defenders of Orthodoxy,¹¹² encouraged Theophanes to die a martyr's death instead of seeing him convert to Catholicism in Venice (the Venetian Inquisition was particularly open to accepting converts to Islam—and Muslims as well—to the bosoms of Catholic Christianity).¹¹³ It is no coincidence that, after Theophanes' execution, 'tre pezzi de osso' of his relics found their way to Venice,¹¹⁴ where their symbolic capital would contribute to strengthening the Orthodox community.

The competition with Catholicism, particularly after the arrival of Jesuit and Capuchin missions in the Ottoman lands at the end of the sixteenth century,¹¹⁵ led to a re-elaboration of martyrdom as a systemic metonymy for Orthodox life under the Ottomans. According to Meletios Pegas (d. 1601), Patriarch of Alexandria, 'we [the Orthodox] are filling up the afflictions of Christ in our bodies', but the Catholics have us in scorn, and ridicule 'our hardships, the cuffs we bear and the scourges we suffer, the persecutions and the deaths we die every single day'.¹¹⁶ In texts that were addressed to a wider audience, the theologian Nathanael Chychas (also known as Chikas, d. after 1621) stated that the Orthodox become 'suffer martyrdom ten times a day' but stay faithful to Christianity, in contrast to the Catholics, who convert to Islam as soon as they arrive in Ottoman territory.¹¹⁷ Kyrillos Loukaris (Patriarch of Constantinople between 1621 and 1638, with interruptions), perhaps the most important figure of early Orthodox confession-building, wrote in 1616 that the Orthodox subjects of the sultan 'bear [their] cross' and 'spill [their] blood for Christ's faith and love'; the Catholics, had they been in their place, would have long apostatized.¹¹⁸

And yet, not a single martyr was mentioned in these texts. The *oikonomia* of the Church continued to spread its diglossic blanket over actual martyrdom. Pegas' defense of Ottoman Orthodoxy is lucid in its ambiguity: the Catholics, he wrote, accuse

¹¹¹ Paschos, 'Hosiomartyrs' Embellishment', pp. 855–856. In 1577, the ecclesiastical leader of the Greek-Orthodox community of Venice was bestowed with the title of the metropolitan of the diocese of Philadelphia (present-day Alaşehir), a diocese in Asia Minor that had become defunct. Severos was the first metropolitan of Philadelphia residing in Venice. On this interesting episode of political and confessional intrigue see Greene, *Catholic Pirates*, pp. 70–74; Manousakas, 'The Greek Community', pp. 194–210.

¹¹² On Severos see Apostolopoulos, *Gavriil Sevros*; Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, pp. 118–122.

¹¹³ Plakotos, 'Christian and Muslim Converts', pp. 138–140.

¹¹⁴ Maltezos, 'Nazione Greca', p. 23.

¹¹⁵ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 73–87.

¹¹⁶ Pegas, *On the Primacy*, pp. 19, 21.

¹¹⁷ Ninolakes, *The Correspondence*, pp. 130–131. The author of the *Manual against the Primacy of the Pope*, which must be dated between 1594 and 1611, was not Pegas but Chychas. Manousakas, 'Nathanael Chikas', pp. 11–21.

¹¹⁸ Papadopoulos, 'Kyrillos Loukaris', pp. 121–122. For the importance of Loukaris' activity in the Ottoman context see Kermeli, 'Kyrillos Loukaris' Legacy'. For the European context see Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*. For a thorough discussion of Loukaris and his legacy see the chapter by Gara and Olar in this volume.

the Church of having given allegiance to the sultan; but the truth is that God in his wisdom and mercy has subdued the impious rulers and caused them to let the Orthodox Church be free to ‘conduct its affairs without any hindrance’ (*prattein akolytos ta heautes*).¹¹⁹ The argument, of course, invited criticism: if the Ottomans were tolerant towards religion, how could the Orthodox Church boast of resilience? Pachomios Rousanos (d. 1553), a scholarly monk from Zakynthos, had written in his polemical treatise *On the Faith of the Orthodox and of the Saracens* (ca. 1550) that it was actually the Devil who was making the Ottomans moderate their tyrannical rule so that Christianity could not produce martyrs.¹²⁰

Although Pachomios did not mention in his work (which remained unpublished in his time) any martyr contemporary to him, he had a singular interest in the phenomenon. First, he composed an *akolouthia* and *synaxarion* for the ‘martyrs of Strophadai’, the monks who had perished in 1537 during an Ottoman raid on those small Venetian-held islands in the Ionian Sea.¹²¹ Here Pachomios did not refrain from resorting to an interpretation that did not conform to the Orthodox ‘canon’ (the monks had not ‘chosen’ death against conversion) but was in accordance with Catholic understandings of martyrdom as death at the hands of the unbelievers.¹²²

Secondly, Pachomios modified an *encomium* by the late Byzantine author Theodoros Mouzalon in praise of Niketas the Younger (allegedly martyred in late thirteenth-century Cappadocia for defamation of Islam) into an abbreviated *vita*.¹²³ Pachomios did not adapt the story in a contemporary context;¹²⁴ yet the conflict between the Christian martyr and the Muslim ‘ruler’ (*hegemon*) of the city, and particularly Niketas’ exclamation—‘a curse (*anathema*) upon Muhammad, his whole religion and all his laws!’—would not fail to appear relevant to Pachomios’ contemporaries.

Pachomios’ treatment of martyrdom is strikingly roundabout: he finds his martyrs at the spatial and temporal borders of Ottoman rule. He describes Islam as the personification of absolute otherness, but he implicitly acknowledges it as the powerful partner in a necessary coexistence. He was more interested in providing theological arguments for Orthodoxy’s superiority over its rulers’ faith and in safeguarding dogmatic purity than in glorifying actual acts of resistance to conversion. Pachomios not only had a genuine antipathy for the common folk, its language, and its

¹¹⁹ Pegas, *On the Primacy*, p. 25.

¹²⁰ Karmires, *Pachomios Rousanos*, p. 256.

¹²¹ Sarmanes, ‘Akolouthia for the Holy Fathers’.

¹²² Probably Pachomios modelled his work on the pattern of the ‘martyrs of Otranto’, the victims of the Ottoman sack of the town in 1480, who became the subject of numerous apocalyptic texts in the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italy. Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, pp. 157–161.

¹²³ Delehayé, ‘Nicétas le jeune’. For the position of Pachomios’ work in the polemical literature against Islam see Argyriou, ‘Greek Polemical and Apologetic Literature’, pp. 134–136.

¹²⁴ The narration takes place at the time of the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II and of the Seljuk sultan Masud II, while the Muslims are being called ‘Persians’ according to Byzantine usage.

culture,¹²⁵ but he also devoted much of his energy to polemizing against Ioannikios Kartanos, the author of an extensive encyclopedic work of Christian doctrine in the Greek vernacular that included vast translations from the Old and the New Testament and was a great publishing success.¹²⁶ In this, Pachomios echoed Catholic stances against vernacular Bible reading that were expressed in the Council of Trent.¹²⁷ Indeed, the confessional zeal of Pachomios, with his obsession with heresy and the moral reformation of clergy and laity,¹²⁸ bore striking resemblances to Tridentine Catholic Reformation. Yet its efficacy was relativized by Pachomios' archaic Greek language and by his reluctance to print his works (he had an aversion against typography, since it could not be easily held in check).¹²⁹

In spite of his snobbish way, Pachomios points clearly to the complexities of confessional dynamics in the Ottoman context. In one of his homilies, he recounts how he remarked during a discussion on religion with an aga of the Janissaries somewhere in Thrace that 'many wise Ishmaelites come from time to time to our religion'.¹³⁰ In his treatise *On the Faith of the Orthodox and of the Saracens*, Pachomios writes about one of these wise Ishmaelites, 'Perisykalyphos', a learned Muslim who had acknowledged the supremacy of Jesus over Muhammad and had been executed as an apostate.¹³¹ I believe that in this figure we must recognize the religious teacher Molla Kabız, who had preached Jesus' superiority and was executed in 1527.¹³² With the reference to Perisykalyphos, Pachomios contextualized confessional death squarely—albeit indirectly—in the imperial 'project of Sunnitization and social disciplining' of Süleyman I's reign.

¹²⁵ Serges, *Ecclesiastical Discourse*, pp. 73–122, 139–169.

¹²⁶ Negoîță, 'Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy', pp. 35–39; Vlantes, 'Pachomios Rousanos'. It is indicative that, in his refutations of Kartanos' numerous deviations from dogma, Pachomios refrained from referring directly to the author's evident Catholic influences, as well as that, in his toxic polemics, Pachomios, copying again Catholic obsessions, invented almost *ex nihilo* a 'Kartanite' heresy. Ibid, pp. 539–540 and 531–534, 544–546 respectively. For an annotated edition of Kartanos' text, together with an introduction on the work and its author, see Kartanos, *Old and New Testament*.

¹²⁷ The issue was hotly debated in 1546 and, although decisions concerning the reading of the Bible in the vernacular was left to local instances, the Latin Vulgate was declared to be 'the only version to be used in public lessons, disputes, preaching, and exposition'. François, 'The Catholic Church', p. 20.

¹²⁸ Serges, *Ecclesiastical Discourse*, pp. 60–66, 73–137.

¹²⁹ Ibid, pp. 171–186.

¹³⁰ Lambros, 'Some Homilies', p. 57.

¹³¹ Karmires, *Pachomios Rousanos*, pp. 255–256.

¹³² Demiri and Kuzey, 'Molla Kâbız'; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 92–93; Sariyannis, 'Aspects of "Neomartyrdom"', pp. 258–259; Imber, 'Note on "Christian" Preachers', pp. 157–158. Perisykalyphos is a *hapax legomenon* that obviously means 'Persian *khalifa*'. Molla Kabız is portrayed in Ottoman chronicles as originating from Iran. Probably the title *khalifa* (Tr. *halife*) is used here in the sense of a spiritual successor or minor sheikh in a Sufi context. Sedgwick, *Sufism*, pp. 37–38. The title could also signify that he held a position in the scribal bureaucracy. Rousanos reproduces Muslim usages and attributions of the term.

Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the encounters of Orthodox dhimmis and literati with adjacent confessional projects produced understandings of martyrdom that highlighted common concerns with gender roles, apocalyptic anxieties, and resistance. One of them is associated with the abbess Philothee of Athens, who was almost put to death by the Ottoman authorities because of her having given refuge to captured women bound to be converted to Islam, as well as to Muslim converts who reverted to Christianity and became nuns in her monastery. In a letter requesting help from the Republic of Venice in 1583, she recounted how she ‘was put to the test of martyrdom to become a Turk or be burned’.¹³³ The bearer of her letter to the Senate wrote in his requisition that Philothee was following the Capuchin order,¹³⁴ which is not surprising given that Athens was in close contact with Italy, particularly Venice. In fact, the very existence of a female monastery in Athens at that time must be seen in the light of the development of female monasticism after the Council of Trent.¹³⁵

Philothee fell a victim of transgression in an urban society characterized by overlapping religious, gender and class inequality. Christophoros Angelos, who had a similar experience in the same city in the early seventeenth century, owed his misfortune to his social liminality at a time of local and international political friction: being a stranger in the city, he was held to be a spy for the Spaniards and an accomplice of Athenian merchants established in Venice who supposedly had in mind to overthrow Ottoman rule. Angelos, who—just like Philothee—escaped death thanks to bribery, sought refuge in England, where, in addition to an encomium to England and an exegesis of the book of Revelation, he published a short text on his afflictions¹³⁶ and a treatise on the contemporary situation of the Greeks.¹³⁷ In an extravagant and idiosyncratic prose that was quite close to the vernacular, Angelos expanded on a martyrological discourse that went beyond the limits of the Church’s *oikonomia*. On the one hand, he claimed that the taxes given by the Christians to the Ottomans were in fact a sacrifice for keeping the faith;¹³⁸ on the other hand, he maintained that the English, exactly as the Greeks, ‘die for their religion, but never turne

¹³³ Mertzios, ‘St Philothee’, p. 124.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 125. On Philothee see Faroqhi, ‘Orthodox Woman Saint’, where Ottoman sources corroborate Philothee’s account, and Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 142–145. Philothee’s *vita* was published in 1775.

¹³⁵ MacCulloch, *The Reformation*, pp. 620–624.

¹³⁶ The work was first published in Greek under the title *Ponesis* (Oxford, 1617). It was translated and published in numerous English editions from 1617 onwards under the title *Christopher Angell, a Grecian, who tasted many stripes and torments inflicted by the Turkes for the faith he had in Christ Jesus*. Garitses, *Christophoros Angelos*, pp. 103–111. For Angelos’ life and work see also Mitsi, *Greece in Early English Travel Writing*, pp. 17–41. Here I refer to the 2008 edition by Garitses.

¹³⁷ The *editio princeps* of the work (Cambridge, 1619) was in Greek, and was followed by many bilingual (Greek and Latin), Latin, English, and German editions. Garitses, *Christophoros Angelos*, pp. 299–328. Here I refer to the Greek and Latin edition of 1678 (*Enchiridion*).

¹³⁸ Angelos, *Enchiridion*, p. 16.

from their true worship of God to any other',¹³⁹ a statement that resonated very well with Protestant understandings of suffering at the hands of the Catholics.¹⁴⁰

Angelos' reference to martyrdom was at the same time a metonymy and an actual narrative of resistance. He repeatedly claimed that he had been a martyr in the sense that he had indeed died for his faith: 'I was perfectly dead, and so remained for the space of an hour. And again after an hour, by the Grace of God, I revived.'¹⁴¹ The description of his afflictions was followed by a rather crude but clear sketch of 'two Turkes, beating Christopher Angelo with two Cudgels on each side of him'.¹⁴² The visual representation of his martyrdom was probably another result of Angelos' cultural encounters, this time between the Orthodox iconography of saints¹⁴³ and the print images of martyrs as those depicted in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.¹⁴⁴

Zacharias Gerganos (d.c. 1631), a theologian from Arta in western Greece, had also heavy Protestant leanings (his *Christian catechism*, published in Wittenberg in 1622, was an amalgamation of Orthodox and Protestant beliefs and practices that caused the ire of Catholic authors),¹⁴⁵ but lived in a region with strong Catholic influences. In his unpublished *Exegesis* of the book of Revelation, written in the vernacular between 1622 and 1626, he refers to those who 'appear as enemies of the Orthodox Christians by mouth [though not by heart]', but who, before the end of days, are going to 'confess the Orthodox faith by their mouth and heart, as well as by their blood'.¹⁴⁶ This indirect but clear reference to converts to Islam who secretly adhered to their Christian faith, expected to atone through public confession and martyrdom, echoes the contemporary hardening of the Catholic stance against 'crypto-Christianity' and double identities in the adjacent region of Albania.¹⁴⁷ The emphasis on the dialectics between professing and hiding one's 'true beliefs' and the imperative of sincerity,¹⁴⁸ which postulated identity as an unambiguous, transparent

¹³⁹ Garitses, *Christophoros Angelos*, p. 194.

¹⁴⁰ Angelos' statement was almost simultaneous to a rapprochement between the Orthodox and the Anglican Church, as evidenced in the initiatives of Kyrillos Loukaris, then Patriarch of Alexandria. See also Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 121–122, 139–140.

¹⁴¹ Garitses, *Christophoros Angelos*, p. 126.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 152. Mitsi, *Greece in Early English Travel Writing*, p. 26.

¹⁴³ The sketch in Angelos' book is reminiscent of the small scenes from the saints' lives that often surround their portraits in Byzantine iconography. Maguire, *The Icons*, p. 173.

¹⁴⁴ See the papers in the section 'Visual Culture' in Highley and King, *John Foxe and His World*, pp. 133–182.

¹⁴⁵ See the introduction in Argyriou, *Zacharias Gerganos' Exegesis*, pp. 20–31; Podskalsky, *Die griechische Theologie*, pp. 161–162.

¹⁴⁶ Argyriou, *Zacharias Gerganos' Exegesis*, p. 202. See also p. 96: 'Whoever confesses God by heart and denies him by mouth, his name is wiped off from the book of life and Christ denies him in front of his Father', a reference to Mt. 10:33: 'But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven'. On the *Exegesis* of Gerganos see Argyriou, *Les exégèses grecques*, pp. 158–218.

¹⁴⁷ Dursteler, 'Fearing the "Turk"', p. 494; Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity', pp. 235–239.

¹⁴⁸ Martin, *Myths of Renaissance*, pp. 103–122.

category, resonated with all sides of the confessional divides in Europe as well as in the Ottoman Empire, and brought to the fore issues of conscience politicization and supervision.¹⁴⁹

Admittedly, Philothee, Christophoros Angelos, and Zacharias Gerganos were somewhat divergent cases in comparison to the policy of *oikonomia* as expressed by the Church. This, however, does not make their understandings of martyrdom any less valuable, since their work and activity reflects socio-cultural encounters that connected European confessional dynamics with the negotiation of personal and collective identities within Ottoman Orthodoxy.¹⁵⁰

MARTYRDOM AS A SOCIO-LOCAL AND CONFESSIONAL CONTESTATION

Our martyrs' *vitae* from the sixteenth century form specific narrative clusters that, I believe, retain their validity for a socio-cultural history of the period by pointing to concrete attitudes, experiences and responses of the Orthodox within an Ottoman arena of confessionalization that included both Muslim and Christian confession-building initiatives.

The first cluster concerns a few martyrdoms, mostly from the early sixteenth century, featuring zealot preaching activity by Orthodox monks that either directly challenged Muslim supremacy or provoked social unrest and inter-communal friction. The martyrdoms of Makarios and Ioasaph, disciples of ex-patriarch Nephon II (d. 1508) in the monastic community of Mount Athos, fall into this category. The two monks are reported to have pursued martyrdom through the public defamation of Islam in the first decades of the sixteenth century.¹⁵¹ Another variant of the same cluster of martyrdoms concerns charismatic Orthodox preacher monks who attracted large crowds from among the Orthodox of Rumeli and, in the eyes of the authorities, fostered seditious attitudes. Iakovos the Shepherd with his followers, the monk Dionysios and the deacon Iakovos (all martyred in 1520), as well as the monk Damianos (d. 1568), whose controversial preaching and miraculous healings provoked the reaction of both Muslim and Christian groups and persons of authority, belong to this group.¹⁵²

The second—and dominant—narrative cluster concerns the micro-social environments of family, friendship, work, and sexual relations.¹⁵³ Kyrillos (d. 1566,

¹⁴⁹ Luria, 'The Power of Conscience?'

¹⁵⁰ In this sense, it is important to note Angelos' and Gerganos' contribution to Orthodox apocalyptic literature through the appropriation of Protestant explanatory schemata in their interpretations of the book of Revelation. Pissis, 'Apokalyptik und Zeitwahrnehmung', pp. 478–479.

¹⁵¹ Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, p. 673. Both martyrdoms are included in Nephon's *vita*, composed by Gabriel, superior of Mount Athos. Păun, 'Gabriel, Superior of Mount Athos'.

¹⁵² For the *vita* of Iakovos and his followers see Paschalides, *The Autograph*, pp. 43–44, 175–178; Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, pp. 38–44. For the *vita* of Damianos see Manou, *Damaskenos Stoudites*, pp. 187–194. See also Kotzageorgis, "'Messiahs" and Neomartyrs', p. 222.

¹⁵³ Tzedopoulos, *Orthodox Neo-Martyrs*, pp. 167–168, 216–219.

Thessaloniki/Selanik) was accused of apostasy by his uncle, a convert to Islam;¹⁵⁴ Nikolaos (d. 1554, Constantinople/Istanbul) was charged with apostasy from—or defamation of—Islam by Muslim colleagues;¹⁵⁵ Nikola (d. 1555, Sofia) was circumcised by Muslim friends while he was in a drunken stupor and later challenged the validity of his conversion;¹⁵⁶ Doukas (d. 1564, Constantinople) was vilified by a Muslim woman whose love he had not requited;¹⁵⁷ Ioannes (d. 1575, Constantinople) was accused of defamation of Islam by his former Muslim protégé;¹⁵⁸ the same charges were thrown at the priest Lazaros (d. before 1618, Tripole/Tripoliça) by a Christian acquaintance who had converted to Islam;¹⁵⁹ Nikolaos (d. 1617, Trikala/Tırhala), who had converted to Islam but lived as a Christian, was accused of apostasy by a Muslim acquaintance who had blackmailed him for some time in exchange for his silence.¹⁶⁰ The martyrdoms of Ioannes of Ioannina and Michael of Agrapha, whom we met before, also belong to this category. The martyrs' stories help us understand how, under circumstances of friction over material or symbolic gain, everyday interaction could turn into a minefield of confessional antagonism.

Contrary to the socially eminent martyrs of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, most of the martyrs after the 1520s were poor immigrants to urban centers.¹⁶¹ Their martyrdoms highlight the relative vulnerability of such persons when faced with confessional competition, due to their liminal situation on the fringe of Christian communal and social networks.¹⁶² Most of all, however, the martyrdoms point to the ambiguity and the complexities of confession-building and boundary-making on the local level: the tendency toward a strict identification of apostasy from Islam, coupled with the issuing of legal opinions concerning the 'renewal of faith', contributed to the instrumentalization of accusations of apostasy or blasphemy against Orthodox neighbors, family members, friends, associates, and lovers. Of course, such occasions were rather marginal in a society focused more on practical co-existence than on forced assimilation or direct confrontation. Yet co-existence was always a fluid and dynamic condition. Martyrdom was actually the peak of an iceberg: an event that, exactly due to its liminality, expressed much too clearly the

¹⁵⁴ Papoutsakes, 'The Neo-Martyr Kyrillos', pp. 204–205.

¹⁵⁵ Iezekiel of Thessaliois, *Akolouthia of the New Martyr*, p. 39; Dernschwam, *Tagebuch einer Reise*, pp. 111–112. According to Dernschwam, Nikolaos converted to Islam after having been caught with a Muslim woman and was later accused of adhering to his former faith.

¹⁵⁶ Ivanova, *Old Bulgarian Literature*, pp. 336–376.

¹⁵⁷ Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, pp. 59–60.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62; Gerlach, *Tagebuch*, p. 80.

¹⁵⁹ Balatsoukas, 'Martyrdom and Akolouthia', p. 244–245.

¹⁶⁰ Kyrkos, *Akolouthia of the Neo-Martyr*, pp. 16–17.

¹⁶¹ A blatant exception is Serapheim, archbishop of Phanari in Thessaly, who was executed in the first decade of the seventeenth century after being charged (falsely, according to all sources) with being an accomplice to the abortive revolt against the Ottomans by Dionysios, metropolitan of Larisa, which had erupted in Trikala in 1600. For his *vita* see Dionysios, *Akolouthia of the Saint Hieromartyr*. For the context of Serapheim's execution see Gara, 'Prophecy, Rebellion, Suppression'.

¹⁶² Tzedopoulos, *Orthodox Neo-Martyrs*, pp. 171–172.

transformations, disappointments, and contestations that, as a rule, were dealt with without too much fuss in everyday life.

The most crucial factor in this process was the dialectics of inter-confessional interaction and social mobility. The completion of an early phase of Islamization through the conversion of old Christian elites or through the *devşirme* system¹⁶³ and the subsequent crystallization of a Muslim urban upper class contributed to the identification of Islamization with social advancement. This was particularly relevant to Christian artisans and petty merchants who were often migrants to the urban centers and who provided a pool of converts to Islam.¹⁶⁴ At the same time, living and working together created the need for a sharper demarcation along communal lines,¹⁶⁵ a concern that was shared by Muslim and non-Muslim elites alike, since the former had to deal with the acculturation of new converts and the latter with the symbolic and material loss associated with conversion to Islam. In its turn, communitization was constantly negotiated in an everyday environment in which common cultural *habiti*, mixed families, and inter-confessional networks were present and active. In this respect, martyrdom was actually a culmination of a failed or undermined negotiation of difference.

This is evident in the third narrative cluster, which concerns two martyrs who appear to seek death after having converted to Islam. As already mentioned, voluntary martyrdom as a means of atonement for conversion is characteristic mainly of the eighteenth century, when Orthodox martyrdom was instrumentalized within a traditionalist—arguably fundamentalist—movement against secularization and Enlightenment.¹⁶⁶ In quite a different way, the few voluntary martyrs of our period display an ambivalence that helps us access confessionalization from an oblique point of view.

Both martyrs, Theophanes from Zapante on the Peloponnese (d. 1588) and Makarios from Kios/Gemlik (d. 1590), are reported to have sought a kind of legal certificate that would confirm the validity of their return to Christianity after Islamization: Theophanes asked the qadi of Athens for a ‘written permission’ that he could go on living as a Christian, since he was mistaken in converting to Islam;¹⁶⁷ Makarios, who claimed that he had been forcibly converted by his father, presented to the qadi of Bursa a legal opinion (fatwa) he had procured from the sheikh *ül-islam* in Istanbul, according to which forced Islamization was not valid and anyone who had undergone it could return to his faith without being charged with apostasy.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Krstić, ‘From *Shahāda* to ‘*Aqida*’, p. 297.

¹⁶⁴ Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, pp. 108–109.

¹⁶⁵ Krstić, ‘From *Shahāda* to ‘*Aqida*’, pp. 299–307.

¹⁶⁶ Tzedopoulos, ‘Martyrdom under Ottoman Rule’, pp. 367–369; Zelepos, *Orthodoxe Eiferer*, pp. 293–310, 340, 343, 378; Petmezas, ‘The Formation’. For a problematization of the term ‘fundamentalism’ and an analysis of ‘Orthodox rigorism’, see Makrides, ‘Orthodox Christian Rigorism’, with a bibliography of the author’s earlier studies on the phenomenon.

¹⁶⁷ Paschos, ‘Hosiomartyrs’ Embellishment’, pp. 856–857.

¹⁶⁸ *New Spiritual Meadow*, pp. 264–265.

The tension between the tradition of Hanafi jurisprudence that regarded Islamization under compulsion as revocable¹⁶⁹ and the Ottoman legal framework for apostasy that drew inspiration from a variety of legal sources created a grey zone of uncertainty and ambivalence as to how to handle liminal cases. This tension was accentuated, on the one hand, by the delicate distinction and interconnection of legal opinion and legal practice, and, on the other, by the unfolding of confessional politics on the local level. In the *vita* of Makarios, the qadi is presented as being ‘persuaded by the fatwa’ and letting Makarios go free. It is the local Muslims who, having recognized Makarios as a convert to Islam who had gone back to his former faith, reproach the judge for not being a ‘true Muslim’ and threaten to report him to the sultan as an ‘enemy of the faith’. In the *vita* of Theophanes we read that the martyr, after recounting the story of his mistaken conversion to the qadi of Larisa (Tr. Yenışehir), was set free without any punishment. Yet the Muslims who had been present at the court demanded that he be brought back and properly tried. So the qadi had Theophanes brought back to court and ordered that he be severely beaten.

The reaction of local Muslims against a qadi who appears favorably inclined toward Christians accused as apostates or blasphemers constitutes a leitmotif common in several *vitae*.¹⁷⁰ The selective use of it, as well as its precise contextualization in the Ottoman socio-cultural environment, shows that this was not merely a narrative pattern based on the trial of Jesus, but an embedding of social realities into discursive strategies. The *vitae* let us glimpse Sunni Muslim and Orthodox confessional community-building politics in the Ottoman arena as dynamic processes of negotiation, friction, and contest, which unfold between the local and institutional levels through constant and mutual feedback.

Lastly, it is important to recognize in the stories of Theophanes and Makarios an effort to dissolve a situation of precarious ambiguity into an officially acknowledged regularity and a socio-religious conformity. The *vitae* under discussion, rather than glorifying martyrdom as an attack against the religious and political order, seem to have internalized both the institutional and the social dimensions of Ottoman Sunni confessionalization, and to try to cope with its repercussions.

THE GENESIS OF A ‘CULTURE OF MARTYRDOM’ IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

In 1603, a Christian of Serres by the name of Manoles Bostantzogles was accused of having murdered a Muslim. Manoles was judged and, after refusing to convert to Islam, he was executed. The priest Synadinos, who narrated the event in his memoirs some forty years later, added the following comment:

And he rested in God’s peace, and his soul went with the martyrs, because ... he became a new martyr. May his memory be eternal ... And some pious Christians saw a great light shining in the place where he was executed; and a plane tree that

¹⁶⁹ Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, pp. 104, 144–145.

¹⁷⁰ See also Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 152–153.

was there, from which they had hanged him, immediately withered. Likewise, the Turks who had borne false witness against him either went blind or died as a result of the king's wrath.¹⁷¹

Synadinos also recalls the story of Amarianos, who in 1617 was accused of having implied that a Muslim cuttlefish vendor was in fact a Christian (according to the priest, Amarianos had only said that cuttlefish is 'Christian food'). After the qadi had him beaten, some Muslims, who obviously did not think that the punishment was enough, took Amarianos by force and began to torment him until he converted to Islam to save his life. Synadinos adds: 'O man, why did you not say, "I will not become a Turk?" You could have achieved perfection in a moment ... And all Christians were saddened that he did not stand firmly for his faith ... in order to become like... Manoles'.¹⁷²

On another occasion, Synadinos did not hesitate to associate martyrdom with delinquency and crime. After describing the execution of Alexandres in 1630, a thug who was accused of having attacked a Muslim and who refused to embrace Islam to save his life, the priest commented: 'Although some prudent and learned and wise men...denied their faith without any affliction, reason or excuse, [Alexandres], despite being silly and mad...proved himself brave and courageous and suffered two martyrdoms and acquired two wreaths.'¹⁷³ The story of Alexandres was reminiscent of the Gospel's penitent thief on the cross, who won salvation at the very last minute. Elsewhere, however, Synadinos compares the courage of the martyrs with the cheek of 'the thieves and rippers and brigands' who suffer 'many tortures and torments and martyrdoms and beatings and twistings of limbs for nothing', until death delivers them from bodily punishment,¹⁷⁴ without any hint at repentance. By recounting the story of Alexandres and by drawing an analogy between martyrs and brigands, the priest Synadinos claims for himself the authority to interpret the symbolic meanings of violence by first bringing together and then distinguishing holiness from delinquency, salvation from sin.¹⁷⁵

Synadinos' remarks show the communicative use of martyrdom for interpreting power relations and instances of conflict on the social level. His text, written in the Greek vernacular, was intended to be read and understood by moderately literate persons (primarily by his brother, to whom it was directly addressed), contrary to

¹⁷¹ Odorico, *Conseils et mémoires*, pp. 70–72. According to Synadinos, Manoles was not the culprit of the murder.

¹⁷² Odorico, *Conseils et mémoires*, pp. 76–78.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 106–108. The 'two martyrdoms' refer to the fact that Alexandres was first stabbed and then hanged.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 282–284.

¹⁷⁵ See also Petmézas, 'Organisation ecclésiastique', pp. 541–542.

the books written in learned Greek, which ‘those who know the common letters can read but cannot grasp either what they are about or their meanings’.¹⁷⁶

Synadinos’ implicit attack against diglossia is characteristic for the confessional shift that took place among the Greek Orthodox of the Ottoman Empire in the early seventeenth century and produced such dramatic peaks as the patriarchate of Kyrillos Loukaris, his rapprochement with Protestantism, the founding of a Greek printing press in Istanbul,¹⁷⁷ the popularization of theology and the ‘initiation of discourse on [Orthodox] Christian renewal and the definition of innovation’.¹⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, Synadinos was an admirer of Loukaris and mourned his death.

As to the social uses of martyrdom, we see the repercussions of diglossia in Synadinos’ remarks. He does not mention the martyrdom of Ioannes of Serres, whose death was narrated in the learned prose of Manouel Korinthios some 150 years earlier, most likely because his death had been forgotten. On the other hand, his remarks on the death of Manoles Bostantzogles echo two crucial elements from martyrs’ *vitae*: miraculous phenomena and divine punishment. This, together with his effective use of martyrdom in his censure of Amarianos’ conversion to Islam, suggests an informal process of social interaction through which the pattern of martyrdom permeated experiences and understandings of identity beyond the limits set by the *vitae*’s actual circulation.

We should, however, be cautious with generalizations. Elsewhere in his memoir, Synadinos recalls how his zeal provoked intra-communal friction. When the priest had the church of St Paraskeue frescoed with a painting representing the sinners’ afflictions at the Last Judgement, which also portrayed figures of power among the sinners, namely prelates and kings, ‘some Christians rose and made a great tumult [and] said: “He [Synadinos] depicted the king who rules us in Hell” ... And my heart trembled with fear ... and I made the painter wipe out everything and thus the flame was extinguished’.¹⁷⁹ It is therefore doubtful that the Christians of Serres shared—or would succumb to—Synadinos’ certainty of Manoles’ sanctity—or Alexandres’, for that matter. After all, neither Synadinos nor anyone else tried to introduce them in martyrdom’s canon by composing an *akolouthia* and/or *vita* in their honor.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Odorico, *Conseils et mémoires*, pp. 302–304. See also the remarks by Petmézas, ‘Organization ecclésiastique’, p. 535. In this statement Synadinos echoed the words of Kartanos, who wrote he had composed his work ‘not for the teachers but for the uneducated, ... for sailors and craftsmen and women and children and every humble person who just can read’. Kartanos, *Old and New Testament*, p. 103.

¹⁷⁷ Pektaş, ‘The Beginnings of Printing’, pp. 17–29.

¹⁷⁸ Kermeli, ‘Kyrillos Loukaris’ *Legacy*, p. 753.

¹⁷⁹ Odorico, *Conseils et mémoires*, pp. 296–298.

¹⁸⁰ As Gara rightly argues, ‘as long as there was no agenda for which such cases could be of use, there was no need to record every single case of execution and proclaim the victims neomartyrs’. Gara, ‘Neomartyr without a Message’, p. 171. The systematic elaboration of martyrdom into an identity-building *topos* took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

Synadinos' position on martyrdom cannot be taken as reflecting either a 'bottom-up' or a 'top-down' attitude. It should rather be located 'in-between'. Synadinos was not a prelate, but he belonged to the Christian elite of Serres, both as a literate priest and as the son of a priest *cum* communal leader. On the other hand, his moral teachings were not a matter of routine; on the contrary, some of them seem to have been quite novel. In his urgency to deliver a message, Synadinos is reminiscent of the priest Pejo of Sofia, the author of Georgi's *vita* (d. 1515), whom we discussed earlier in this study. The difference is that Pejo painted for himself the image of a cunning and successful *impresario* of martyrdom (to borrow again Krstić's phraseology),¹⁸¹ while Synadinos' account reveals the actual workings, hopes and frustrations of confessional teaching in its social context.

Synadinos' case highlights the contradictions of Orthodox confessionalization in respect to the limits of ecclesiastical power and its necessary accommodation with the Ottomans. In the context of *oikonomia*, martyrdom could not explicitly thrive. Yet it was omnipresent: commemorated by and for the Church, used as a systemic metonymy for Christian life under the sultan's rule, employed against—and in dialogue with—Islam and Catholicism, hinted at in ambiguous ways, discussed and contested, martyrdom permeated the imaginings and interpretations of power and identity.

This is why martyrdom was so effortlessly incorporated in the intense inter-confessional competition from the first half of the seventeenth century onwards, a process that was further facilitated by the encounters of the Greek Orthodox with the Jesuits, for whom martyrdom bore a confessional message forged in the fires of the Reformation. The theologian Georgios Koressios (d.c. 1660), a leading figure in the war of words against Rome, composed an *akolouthia* and an oration for Theophilos,¹⁸² who was martyred in 1635 on the island of Chios, a place of interaction and collision between the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, and Catholic monastic orders.¹⁸³ Theophilos was accused of having worn a Muslim headgear,¹⁸⁴ an act that sixteenth-century Ottoman jurisprudence had identified as contrary to sumptuary order and dangerously close to a conversion statement;¹⁸⁵ after refusing to convert to Islam he was put to death. Some years later, the well-known Catholic scholar

century and included the construction of networks for the apprehension and documentation of the executions in the southern Balkans and, mainly, around the Aegean, as well for the exchange and dissemination of the accounts. Tzedopoulos, *Orthodox Neo-Martyrs*, pp. 346–351, 377, 384–385.

¹⁸¹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 121–142.

¹⁸² Koressios, *Akolouthia of the Martyr*. On Koressios see Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, pp. 183–190; Stoupakes, *Georgios Koressios*.

¹⁸³ Hartnup, 'On the Beliefs', pp. 53–58; Argenti, *The Religious Minorities*, pp. 270–294.

¹⁸⁴ Koressios did not expand on the accusation against Theophilos. The charge is mentioned explicitly in the *vitae* of Theophilos that were published in the martyrologies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, pp. 69–70; *New Spiritual Meadow*, pp. 69–72.

¹⁸⁵ Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades*, pp. 109–110; Elliot, 'Dress Codes', pp. 106–107.

Leo Allatios (d. 1669), who, like Koressios, was a native of Chios, composed the *vita* of Alessandro Baldrati da Lugo, a Dominican friar who was charged with apostasy from Islam and was executed on the same island in 1645.¹⁸⁶ Similar accounts would follow in the course of the century commemorating antagonistically Orthodox and Catholic martyrdoms at the hands of the Ottomans.¹⁸⁷ In these narratives, Islam is transformed into a 'common Other' that hosts the object of a shared desire (to glorify dying for the faith as a proof of Christian zeal) and becomes the vehicle of an underlying confessional antagonism in terms of a 'conflictual mimesis', in the words of René Girard.¹⁸⁸ After all, Allatios knew Koressios' text and, although he found it lacking in elegance,¹⁸⁹ he must have understood only too well the potential of a martyrdom narrative for the shaping of identity.

The rise of the zealous Muslim preachers, known as Kadizadelis, in the middle decades of the seventeenth century¹⁹⁰ created the conditions for a paradigm shift in regard to martyrdom. The number of those (Muslims and Christians alike) executed for apostasy and defamation of Islam arguably rose in the context of an unprecedented push to control religious behavior and an emphasis on conquest and conversion of Muslims and non-Muslims to orthodox Islam.¹⁹¹ At the same time, a wave of popular devotion and adoration of the martyrs' relics spread among Orthodox artisans in cities like Constantinople and Smyrna (Izmir). The confessional zeal of the Kadizadelis, of the Catholic monks and of the Jewish followers of Sabbatai Sevi found its Orthodox counterpart in the emergence of voluntary martyrdom among zealot Athonite monks and, most importantly, among penitent converts to Islam, who publicly denied their adopted faith and proclaimed their return to Christianity.¹⁹² This kind of turning back was not only a 'physical evidence of the centrifugal force of the community ... and of the compelling power of the faith'.¹⁹³ Most of all, it was a liminal performance of identity through a terminal act of re-appropriation that, far from merely articulating, embodied conflict in terms of a symbolic re-establishment of the community upon and through the martyr's body. Not surprisingly, voluntary martyrdom was a cause of anxiety both to the Ottoman authorities, which saw it as a challenge against the political order, and to the Church, since it problematized its accommodation with the Muslim rulers.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁶ Allacci, *Vita e morte*. The first account of Alessandro's martyrdom, on which Allatios' text based, was published in the same year of his death: de S. Marie, *Relation du martyre*.

¹⁸⁷ Tzedopoulos, 'Coexistence and Conflict'.

¹⁸⁸ Girard, *La violence et le sacré*, pp. 204–205.

¹⁸⁹ Stoupakes, *Georgios Koressios*, p. 597. In fact, Allatios despised Koressios vehemently. See Argenti, *The Religious Minorities*, p. 262.

¹⁹⁰ See especially Zilfi, *Politics of Piety*, pp. 129–180.

¹⁹¹ Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*, pp. 6–24. For the use of a conversion narrative in confessional polarization by a Jewish convert to Islam in the 1650s see Pfeiffer, 'Confessional polarization'.

¹⁹² Tzedopoulos, *Orthodox Neo-Martyrs*, pp. 249–254.

¹⁹³ Brummett, 'The Early Modern Convert', p. 116.

¹⁹⁴ Graf, 'Of Half-Lives', p. 133; Gara and Tzedopoulos, *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 249–254.

Thus, the gradual emergence of a ‘culture of martyrdom’ corresponded (and was in dialogue) with a second wave of Ottoman confessionalization that was articulated ‘from below’.¹⁹⁵ In addition, the transformations of martyrdom coincided with—and offered feedback to—an overall unfolding of Orthodox confessional politics on the theological and political level. A juncture in this process is represented in the activity of the monk and theologian Meletios Syrigos (d. 1663), a man who had closely experienced the adventures of Orthodox confessionalization. Having fought against Catholicism in his native Crete, he was recruited by Kyrillos Loukaris but opposed the latter’s Calvinist tendencies and worked on the Greek translation *cum* revision of the *Orthodox Confession* composed by the metropolitan of Kyiv Peter Mohila, which was later published and distributed as the authoritative text of the Orthodox faith.¹⁹⁶ In a sense, Syrigos was the embodiment of the uneven but decisive shift of Ottoman Orthodoxy towards the crystallization of confessional politics, which took place in the second half of the seventeenth century.¹⁹⁷

Syrigos was the first Ottoman Orthodox *literatus* after Manouel Korinthios to keep a record of martyrdom: he composed *akolouthiai* and *vitae* for at least six neomartyrs. Although he adhered to the standards of diglossic *oikonomia* (the martyrologies were mostly modeled on liturgical texts, written in archaizing Greek, and not published), Syrigos’ activity betrays the beginnings of a growing interest in the confessional potential of martyrdom. His martyrologies, together with those written by his contemporary Ioannes Karyophylles (d. after 1693),¹⁹⁸ provided the basis for the collection of *vitae* undertaken by the committed martyrologists of the eighteenth century, an effort that culminated in the publication of Nikodemos’ *New Martyrology*.¹⁹⁹

The quantitative and qualitative scope of martyrdom expanded around the middle of the seventeenth century both on the discursive and on the social level. Precisely at this juncture, the Cretan monk Agapios Landos (d.c. 1671) composed in the Greek vernacular and published in Venice an impressive *oeuvre* consisting of adaptations and translations of saints’ *vitae*, homilies and religious instructions, which reached large audiences and popularized a baroque emphasis on passion, transgression and transcendence of sin. Agapios’ work was actually a plea and an effort for the re-formation of Orthodox orthopraxy along the lines of post-Tridentine Catholic

¹⁹⁵ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, p. 14; Terzioğlu, ‘Ottoman Sunnitization’, pp. 305, 321.

¹⁹⁶ Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, pp. 207–210. On the publication of Syrigos’ revision (1666), which was effectuated by the efforts of Panagiotes Nikousios, grand dragoman of the Ottoman Porte, see Olar, ‘Un temps pour parler’, pp. 222–233.

¹⁹⁷ See the chapters by Eleni Gara and Ovidiu Olar, and Margarita Voulgaropoulou in this volume.

¹⁹⁸ The martyrologies by Ioannes Karyophylles, an official of the Patriarchate who stayed faithful to Loukaris, are particularly revealing for the growing interest in martyrdom. The *vitae* are autonomous narratives that are not included into *akolouthiai*, a fact that, together with the use of a more approachable language (though still at a distance from the vernacular), signals a turn to a more communicative tone in martyrological discourse.

¹⁹⁹ Paschalides, ‘The manuscript Neo-Martyrological Collections’.

piety. It is very probable that what saved his books from a patriarchal ban was their popularity.²⁰⁰

Agapios was probably the first to present in print a theory of Orthodox martyrdom under Ottoman rule outside the ambiguous discourse of diglossia:

[I]f it happens that the Hagarenes afflict you and tell you either to convert or to be killed, say unto Christ our Lord: “make me worthy to receive death for your sake.” And then, if they kill you, you are verily a martyr, to enjoy the company of the other saints in Paradise.²⁰¹

Agapios did not confine himself to these general remarks. He referred directly to the example of Markos Kyriakopoulos,²⁰² a young man who, after having converted to Islam, declared publicly his return to Christianity and was executed in Smyrna in 1643. His death was narrated in several texts by Orthodox and Catholic authors,²⁰³ among others also by Meletios Syrigos, who had personally known and given counsel to Markos. In his *vita*, Syrigos emphasized the martyr’s public rejection of Islam and his return to his former faith as an ultimate act of Christian confession that proved the resiliency and fighting spirit of Orthodoxy, whereas the double conversion of the martyr served to dismantle from the inside the proselytizing zeal preached by the Kadizadelis. Syrigos did not fail to mention that Markos’ martyrdom triggered a spontaneous cult that dragged in its orbit also the Catholics of Smyrna: “There was a great quarrel concerning his relic, about who would acquire which part. And those who took part in the noble competition were French and Italians and members of our own Church. But the relic stayed with the Orthodox, who offered more money.”²⁰⁴

In the middle decades of the seventeenth century, the names and stories of martyrs thus began to circulate in letters, reports, and via the printed word. This process reached a peak in the next century, when voluntary martyrdom became the cornerstone for the formation of a zealot Orthodox imagined community under the guidance of a radical monastic faction involved in a bitter struggle against secularization and Enlightenment.²⁰⁵ By that time, however, Orthodox confessionalization had already gotten entangled in the rise of new imagined communities informed by the idea of a nation.

CONCLUSIONS

Until recently, Michael of Agrapha (d. 1544), with whom we began our navigation in the tricky waters of martyrdom, was conflated with Michael Mauroeides, who, as we saw earlier in this study, was martyred in Adrianople in the last decades of the

²⁰⁰ Tomadakes, ‘Un Lando veneto-cretese’, pp. 382–384.

²⁰¹ Landos, *Sunday Sermonary*, p. τβ’ (σπδ’).

²⁰² Landos, *Christians’ Guidance*, pp. 35–36.

²⁰³ For a discussion of Markos’ martyrdom and the often conflicting evidence of the various accounts see Tzedopoulos, ‘Coexistence and Conflict’, pp. 192–194.

²⁰⁴ Tomadakes, *History of the Church*, p. 220.

²⁰⁵ Tzedopoulos, *Orthodox Neo-Martyrs*, pp. 310–313, 376–391; Gara and Tzedopoulos, *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 226–227.

fifteenth century. The conflation, which is due to the attribution of the family name Mauroudes (a vernacular form of Mauroeides) to the martyr by none other than Nikodemos the Hagiorite, is quite revealing for the shifts in the uses and understandings of martyrdom between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. When preparing the *New Martyrology*, Nikodemos and his collaborators did not have a *vita* of Michael Mauroeides at their disposal but knew that his was the name of a martyr: Mauroeides had been included in a list of martyrs compiled several years earlier by the Greek scholar Eugenios Voulgaris.²⁰⁶ In addition, as we have seen, the name appeared in the *vita* of Georgi of Sofia (d. 1515), which was available to Nikodemos. Wishing to bring together loose ends, the martyrologists attributed the family name Mauroeides to Michael of Agrapha, who had been martyred in Thessaloniki half a century later and for whom a *vita* was available, too. Thus, the latter's *vita* appeared in the *New Martyrology* under the name of Michael Mauroudes.²⁰⁷ After that, of course, Nikodemos could not have Mauroeides mentioned in the *vita* of George of Sofia. In the translation in the Greek vernacular of the *vita* of George of Sofia included in *New Martyrology*, the passage in which the Muslims of Sofia boast that they will burn George's body to ashes as it had been done with Michael Mauroeides of Adrianople was omitted.²⁰⁸ Otherwise, it would have appeared that the Muslims of Sofia were referring to a martyrdom that had not yet taken place.

Such creative re-formulations of the past into a meaningful tradition for the sake of the present, which mark the peak of Orthodox confessionalization under Ottoman rule, stand on a par with early modern martyrologies like the one by John Foxe in the mid-sixteenth century. In their 'belatedness' they seem to confirm stereotypes about the 'backwardness' (and implicit otherness) of Ottoman societies in lining up with historical processes originating in the 'core lands' of modernity, namely Western and Central Europe. Yet it is not so. The apparent lack of an integrative discourse on Orthodox martyrdom under Ottoman rule between the late fifteenth and the mid-seventeenth century is informed by two factors: first, the metonymical use of martyrdom in the context of ecclesiastical *oikonomia*, which sought to provide a meaningful explanation of the religious and political subordination of the Orthodox in the Ottoman context; and second, the diffuse uses and understandings of martyrdom that were part of the Orthodox cultural makeup and made their presence felt at critical moments of identity contestation and/or affirmation.

The ebbs and flows of failed negotiations of difference associated with occurrences of inter-religious strife that culminated in executions constituted the *par excellence* ground for martyrdom to become a recognizable category and a vehicle for identity formation. Regardless of the Church's ambivalent stance towards martyrdom, an accused person's public declaration of his Orthodox faith when faced with death in defiance of Islam—and often also in competition with Catholicism—was *de facto* a confessional message that forced everybody involved in witnessing or reporting the event to take sides and confirm—or conversely doubt—their own faith.

²⁰⁶ Voulgaris, *Epistle of Eugenios Voulgaris*, p. 28.

²⁰⁷ Nikodemos, *New Martyrology*, pp. 52–57.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–38.

(Neo)Martyrdom's acquisition of a distinct pattern, its crystallization as a chain of events embedded in precise social milieus and institutional contexts, is itself a consequence of the Ottoman plural socio-religious condition.

Institutionalized Ottoman plurality was the decisive factor for the shaping not only of martyrdom, but of Orthodox confessionalization as a whole. Since the Church was—and continued to be—incorporated in the Ottoman state machinery, any negotiation of confessional difference (bar open rebellion) had to take for granted the requirements of co-existence. At the same time, any notion of co-existence had to accommodate the formation of specific sociopolitical niches for the religious communities of the empire. Both facets of this duality were underpinned by class difference and power relations that either accentuated or relativized the spaces and claims of confessional autonomy. Although marginal in comparison to the Catholic or Protestant ones at the time of confessional intolerance, the Orthodox martyrdom expressed lucidly social change and the understandings of such change across the religious divides. Even though it did not serve as an effective normative vehicle for imposing religious behavior from above, it did function as a marker of difference in relation to confessional Others, whether Muslims or Catholics, and as a point of negotiating and asserting Orthodox identity across networks that linked the Ottoman lands with Christian Europe.

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12. CATHOLIC CONFESSIONAL LITERATURE IN THE CHRISTIAN EAST? A VIEW FROM ROME, DIYARBAKIR, AND MOUNT LEBANON, CA. 1674*

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Nearly a millennium separates two of the most important moments in the long history of Christianity in the Middle East. The first took place in the age of late antiquity when the emergence of Islam gradually transformed the ‘simple believers’ of early Christianity into a community of dhimmis living under Islamic rule.¹ The second took place centuries later in the aftermath of the Protestant and Catholic reformations in Europe. This second transformation witnessed the emergence of ‘uniate’ factions from within these same dhimmi communities, that is, groups of Christians who came to see themselves as being in union with the Catholic Church. These expressions of uniate identity were first and foremost of a formal and ecclesiastical nature, but they were also imagined in a more general way as a form of belonging rooted in spiritual, cultural, and even intellectual affinities with Roman Catholicism.

The first stirrings of this ‘uniate project’ took place in the late sixteenth century in a series of small-scale exchanges between Eastern Christians and Catholic

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¹ Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East*.

authorities much like those described for the Chaldeans in Lucy Parker's contribution to this volume. Yet it was only in the seventeenth century, particularly with the arrival of Catholic missionaries to the Ottoman Empire in the 1620s, that these initial exchanges began to develop momentum in a more formal and, crucially, a more public way. There is evidence as early as the 1660s, for example, of clergy from three different communities in Aleppo declaring their support for Catholicism within their communities. They did so in a variety of ways from engaging in correspondence with Rome to supporting local Catholic missionaries in everyday life to preparing confessions of faith for dispatch and examination by authorities at the Propaganda Fide.² These local developments taking place within specific communities would eventually have a profound impact on the ecclesiastical organization of Christianity in the Middle East. To give an example, it was from within the Church of the East that a Chaldean Catholic community was established in Diyarbakır in 1681, despite the opposition of the Patriarch of the Church of the East who was based, with his supporters, near Mosul.³ Likewise, a Melkite, or 'Greek Catholic', community in Syria established a union with Rome in 1724, rejecting any further allegiance to the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople. This was a process that replicated itself across several communities in the Ottoman Empire in this period. It was in this way that by the end of the eighteenth century, an archipelago of uniate communities stretched across the Ottoman Empire—'islands of Catholicism in a sea of Eastern Christianity'.

This volume invites contributors to consider whether we might see in such phenomena a specimen of a more general process of confessionalization that took place across Christianity and Islam in the early modern period. Viewed with hindsight, there certainly seems at least a basic case for seeing the establishment of individual uniate communities as part of a larger, connected phenomenon, especially when we consider the incidence of such developments across Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq in roughly the same period. Of course, this is also how Catholic missionaries wanted the process to be understood by their contemporaries. In their incessant missives to Europe, missionaries conceptualized their achievements as a triumphant, connected set of Catholic conversions reflected best in the establishment of missionary households, one after another, in Beirut, Aleppo, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Mosul, Diyarbakır and Isfahan. Despite the 'connected history' that emerges in the self-fashioning of these missionaries, twentieth-century research into specific localities where missionaries worked has taught us to be critical, skeptical even, about the connections between these processes. If we consider the research carried out on Syria alone, it is clear that diverse and multiple motivations for conversion to Catholicism may have existed even within a single place. Robert Haddad, for example, has highlighted the material incentives for conversion in the context of the arrival of European merchants to the Ottoman Empire. In contrast, Bernard Heyberger has emphasised how the spiritual tools of early modern Catholicism attracted local leaders who saw in Catholicism a powerful means of educating and edifying their communities. Bruce Masters, for his part, has argued instead for the importance of Ottoman contexts, in

² Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*.

³ Lampart, *Ein Märtyrer der Union*.

particular the state's need to relate in more effective ways with local power holders. None of these arguments, it bears noting, are necessarily incompatible: in many ways, they reflect the challenges of writing a general history of conversion to Catholicism in the Ottoman Empire when this was a process that involved different actors, each with their own preoccupations, often working towards different goals.⁴

Perhaps the greatest challenge to understanding the emergence of uniate churches in the Middle East remains the problem of knowing what exactly 'Catholicism' meant to the wide variety of Christian communities living in the Ottoman Empire. This question becomes even more complicated if we consider the diversity of Ottoman Christians across specific contexts of geography, language, demography, theology, manuscript cultures and liturgical traditions. What exactly do we mean when we say that two communities as different from each other as the Melkites of Syria and the Copts of Egypt 'became Catholic' in this period? Moreover, did Catholicism mean the same thing, say, to an East Syrian woman living in Mosul as it did to an Orthodox priest living in Aleppo? Put simply, how did the process of 'becoming Catholic' interact with local traditions, practices and histories, each of which necessarily varied from one community of Eastern Christians to another?

Connected history has a mixed legacy when it comes to answering such questions. On the one hand, as the work of Bernard Heyberger has demonstrated masterfully, we cannot understand conversion to Catholicism without acknowledging the connections that existed between different Eastern Christian communities.⁵ As Françoise Michaeu has argued in a different context, amid the diversity of these communities, there is good reason to see the existence of a core set of 'Eastern Christianities'.⁶ Yet at the same time, the frameworks we use to study Christians in the Ottoman Empire can sometimes be misleading: even the basic idea of 'Eastern Christianity', when taken to its extreme, risks distorting and erasing the specificity and contexts of everyday life among diverse Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire. Some of these 'Eastern Christians', it must be said, came into contact with one another only infrequently; oftentimes, they had little in common beyond their shared legal status as Christian subjects of the Ottoman sultan.

Rather than explore the motivations and mechanics for conversion to Catholicism, this paper sets its sights squarely on the much more basic issue of what Catholicism meant to Ottoman Christian communities in the early modern period. It does so by focusing on the Church of the East, or the East Syrians, a community of Christians established since the fourth century in the borderlands between the Roman and Persian, and later, the Ottoman and Safavid empires. What might we learn about conversion to Catholicism if we look at this community through the lenses offered to us by scholars working on confessionalization in the context of early modern Europe?

⁴ Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society; Masters, Christians and Jews*; Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*.

⁵ Long before the idea of 'connected history' was coined, this was an approach already present in Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*; more recently, see also the comments in Heyberger, 'Eastern Christians, Islam, and the West'.

⁶ Michaeu, 'Eastern Christianities', pp. 371–403.

Here, I am particularly interested in the idea of ‘confessional literature’ and the role ascribed to it in the process of confessionalization. In particular, historians of the Reformation such as Ute Lotz-Heumann and Matthias Pohligh have called for more purposeful study of the ways in which printed materials were used as ‘an instrument of confessionalization’, that is to say, into the ways in which written material contributed to the rise of confessional identities.⁷ Was there such a thing as Catholic confessional literature in the Christian East? If so, which writers, texts, and actors played a part in comprising this confessional literature? Such questions form the background to this study, and they may offer productive ways of exploring what Catholicism meant to Eastern Christians in the early modern world.

That the Catholic Church ascribed importance to the role of literature in converting Eastern Christians is abundantly clear if we consider the great intellectual and financial resources given over to the work of writing, publishing, and circulating Catholic publications in Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, and other oriental languages in the hundred years following the Council of Trent. Some of these early works have been the subject of important studies by historians of Arabic printing and early modern orientalism. Scholars have, for example, detailed the early Arabic publications of the Medici Press in Rome.⁸ Other works have taught us about the later wave of Arabic texts published in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century, for example the Counter-Reformation works published at the Orthodox monastery at Shuwayr.⁹ Moreover, historians of oriental studies have offered a rich account of the place of Eastern Christians in the European Republic of Letters, for example in the study of Maronite scholars in this period as well as other important contributions to the formation of early modern orientalism.¹⁰ But amid all of this important work, there remains a striking and rather surprising lacuna: there is, as yet, no single exhaustive study of arguably the most important Catholic publisher of oriental texts in this period, namely the Propaganda Fide. It was in the 1630s that the Propaganda Fide began to publish its first works in Arabic, Syriac, and Armenian, along with a host of Old World and New World languages. Some of these early publications have been the subject of study in a piecemeal fashion.¹¹ Yet no one has offered a systematic study of the full range of publications produced by the Propaganda Fide as an actual

⁷ Lotz-Heumann and Pohligh, ‘Confessionalization and Literature’, pp. 35–61 and 41 and 44 for the citations.

⁸ Jones, ‘The Medici Oriental Press’; Fani and Farina eds, *Le vie delle lettere*.

⁹ See, for example, the bibliography included in Ghobrial, ‘The Lost World of ‘Abdullah Zakher’.

¹⁰ Heyberger ed., *Orientalisme, science et controverse*; Girard ed., ‘Connaître l’Orient en Europe’; Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger*.

¹¹ See, for example, Henkel, ‘The Polyglot Printing-office of the Congregation’; Henkel, ‘The Polyglot Printing-office of the Congregation’; Metzler, ‘Orientation, programme et premières décisions (1622–1649)’; Heyberger, ‘Livres et pratique de la lecture’; Pizzorusso, ‘I satelliti di Propaganda Fide’; Girard, ‘Une traduction arabe pour la Propagande (1663)’. This list is not exhaustive.

corpus of Catholic confessional literature intended for an audience of Eastern Christians.

For this reason, we still know very little about some rather basic questions related to Catholic confessional literature in the Christian East. What works were selected for publication by the Propaganda Fide? How were such works sourced, composed, translated, or assembled, and who was involved in these processes? How did Catholic authorities envision such works would be used by Eastern Christians? Indeed, what were the actual lives and afterlives of these publications among Eastern Christians? Put simply, was there such a thing as Catholic confessional literature aimed at Eastern Christians? Answering such questions would require a detailed and exhaustive study of the production and output of the press; a closer reading of the specific texts that were published and their textual and linguistic genealogies; a social history of the individuals who were connected to the press; and a better understanding of the reception history of these works. There is also a separate question of whether the works produced by the press ever had any real impact on the doctrines or practices of Eastern Christians.

These are all important desiderata for further research, but they are clearly far beyond the limited scope of this paper. Instead, this essay seeks only to explore some preliminary ideas about what the study of Catholic confessional literature might reveal about the larger question of what Catholicism meant to Eastern Christians. I will do so by focusing on a single moment—indeed, a single letter—in the long history of exchanges between Rome and the Church of the East. For it was in 1681 that a uniate branch of the Church of the East was established in Diyarbakır under the leadership of Joseph of Amid, the ‘Patriarch of the Chaldeans’ as he styled himself in Rome. Because Joseph was educated from a young age by Catholic missionaries, and because he spent time in Rome, there survives today an extensive set of sources documenting his conversion to Catholicism.¹² Through these sources, it becomes possible to obtain a glimpse of the variety of works of Catholic confessional literature available to someone like Joseph in his time.

In what follows, I carry out a close study of a sort of ‘reading list’ that survives in a letter that Joseph sent to the Propaganda Fide in 1674. When we look closer at this ‘uniatic curriculum’, it becomes clear that Catholic confessional literature aimed at Eastern Christianity did not simply involve the translation of European traditions and works into the Arabic and Syriac languages used by Eastern Christians. Rather, the list of books discussed in this essay presents an entirely different picture of the complicated European and Middle Eastern genealogy of Catholic confessional literature in the Christian East. It does so in two ways. First, it prompts us to reject any basic assumptions about the specific roles played by Rome and Eastern Christians as producers and consumers, respectively, of specific bodies of Catholic confessional knowledge. Instead, the article argues that Catholic confessional literature had the effect of creating new connections between Eastern Christian communities who were otherwise separated by language and geography. Secondly, the article argues that

¹² The fullest study of these sources remains Lampart, *Ein Märtyrer der Union mit Rom*.

within this process, the Propaganda Fide prioritised the traditions and works of certain communities over others—as we shall see, Catholic confessional literature published at the Propaganda Fide drew heavily on Maronite traditions, texts, and devotional practices. Viewed in this way, Catholic confessional literature aimed at the Christian East reveals itself to have been multi-sited in its genealogy and dependent on the collaboration of countless Western and Middle Eastern intermediaries. For this reason, the publications of the Propaganda Fide had unpredictable and possibly unintended consequences that remain central to our understanding of the emergence of uniate churches in Eastern Christianity.

BACKGROUND: THE CHURCH OF THE EAST IN THE LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Elsewhere in this volume, Lucy Parker has described the earliest exchanges between the Vatican and the Church of the East in the sixteenth century.¹³ These exchanges witnessed the establishment of a ‘Chaldean’ branch of the Church of the East in union with Rome under Patriarch Yohannan Sulaqa in 1553. In the decades that followed, this episode became little more than a distant memory as Sulaqa’s successors gradually moved away from their public union with Rome. Over the course of the latter half of the sixteenth century, the patriarchate moved several times, first from Diyarbakır to Siirt then further east to Urmia. During this same time, Shimun IX (patriarch from 1580–1600) was the last patriarch of Sulaqa’s line to be formally recognised by Rome. His successors broke off relations with Rome, while also moving the patriarchate deep into the mountains of Salmas in Iran. Throughout this period, the patriarchate from which Sulaqa had broken off in the 1550s continued to exist under a succession of patriarchs (all of whom took the name ‘Eliya’) whose seat was based in the town of Alqosh in northern Iraq. It is unclear to what extent these two patriarchal lines—the ‘Shimun’ line of Catholic sympathisers descending from Sulaqa and the ‘Eliya’ line of ‘traditionalists’ who rejected Rome—interacted with each other. Indeed, when a missionary visited the region in the 1670s, he doubted that these two communities even knew of one another.¹⁴

By the late seventeenth century, the Church of the East encompassed several geographic, linguistic, and tribal communities brought together loosely into a single ecclesiastical structure.¹⁵ Geographically, there were communities of East Syrians scattered in a triangle stretching from the urban and town communities centred around Mosul northwards to the Urmia plains and eastwards to the Hakkari mountains. This was also a region marked by great religious and linguistic diversity. In addition to other Christian communities—for example, the West Syrians or the

¹³ See, also, Parker, ‘The Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging’.

¹⁴ Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, p. 369.

¹⁵ For the finest work on the Church of the East’s history in this period, see the body of research by Heleen Murre-van den Berg, especially her most recent *Scribes and Scriptures*. More generally, see Baum and Winkler, *The Church of the East*; Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church*; Carlson, *Christianity in Fifteenth-Century Iraq*.

Armenians—the Church of the East rubbed shoulders with Muslim, both Shi'i and Sunni, Yezidi, and Jewish communities. Linguistically, East Syrians were also divided into two major groups: although both groups used Syriac for liturgical purposes, the East Syrians of the Hakkari mountains in Iran tended to use neo-Aramaic whereas those based around Mosul, Diyarbakır and Mardin spoke Arabic primarily but also inhabited a world where multilingualism was relevant in everyday life (Turkish, Kurdish, and Armenian). There is good reason to imagine close and persistent interactions between the Christian communities who shared this same space, that is, within East Syrian communities but also between East Syrians and the local West Syrians and Armenians. We know much less, however, about interactions between East Syrian and other Christian groups further afield—for example, the Copts or the Maronites—although these groups certainly would have encountered each other at shared sites of pilgrimage, most notably in Jerusalem.

From the early seventeenth century, increased contacts began to take place between Catholic missionaries and East Syrian clergy and laity. In the 1610s, for example, representatives travelled in both directions between Rome and Mosul, culminating in a synod in Diyarbakır in 1617 carried out in hopes of facilitating a union of the Eliya line of patriarchs with Rome.¹⁶ In the decades that followed, the arrival of Catholic missionaries to the region—first in Aleppo then in Diyarbakır and Mosul—gradually increased the opportunities for the exposure of local clergy and laity to Catholicism. These exchanges began to bear fruit in the 1650s and 1660s with some individuals having direct contact with missionaries, a phenomenon witnessed by sources on both the European and East Syrian side. Among the early fruits of these exchanges was the pro-Catholic stance taken by a priest in Diyarbakır, Joseph of Amid, who shortly after his consecration as bishop of Amid in 1669 declared in 1672 that he had become a Catholic. As a result, Joseph became the target of opposition by some of the local East Syrian community and, in particular, he was subject to attacks from Eliya X Marogin, the patriarch of the Church of the East based in Alqosh. In the wake of these attacks, Joseph fled to Rome in 1674 with the assistance of Capuchin missionaries based in Baghdad and Aleppo.¹⁷

ROME, 1674: A LIST OF BOOKS

It was while in Rome in November 1674 that Joseph sent a letter to the Propaganda Fide, which is preserved today in the archives of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. The letter begins with Joseph's request for the Propaganda Fide to support his efforts to return to the Ottoman Empire. He asks whether it makes more sense to return to Diyarbakır or to travel instead to another part of the Ottoman Empire. In this same letter, Joseph also includes a list of books that he wishes for the Propaganda to provide so that he may take them back with him to the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁶ Strozzi, *Synodalia Chaldaeorum*.

¹⁷ For a detailed account of these events, see Lampart, *Ein Märtyrer der Union mit Rom*, chapter 3.

The list includes seventeen works that are described in only the most general terms as follows:

1. Annales Baronij Arabice. Tom. 3.
2. Epitom Annalium Sacramentorum Arab.
3. Thesaurus, Arabico – Syro – Lat.
4. Antithesis Fidei Arab.
5. Dottrina Arabica – Italiana.
6. Septem Psalmi penitent. Arab.
7. Thomas a Kempis Arab.
8. Brevis Orthodoxae fidei profession Arab.
9. Evangelia Arabica Latina.
10. Dichiaratione della Dottrina, più copiosa.
11. Introductorium Arab. in scientias Logicas.
12. Calendarium Caldeum.
13. Dottrina Christiana Caldea.
14. Grammatica Syriaca.
15. Officium simplex Maronitarum.
16. Breviarium Maronitarum. Tom. 2.
17. Vocabularium Italiano–Turchesco.¹⁸

It bears noting here that although Joseph's signature is at the bottom of the document, the letter is written in Italian in what may be a different hand, presumably a European one. For this reason, it remains unclear whether Joseph wrote the letter himself or, more likely, whether it was written on his behalf by one of his hosts in Rome. This raises natural questions about the extent to which the letter was dictated by Joseph or whether in fact its contents were prepared by the person helping him prepare the letter. Whatever the case, full details of the list of books, in as much as each title could be identified, is available in the appendix at the end of this article.

At first glance, the list appears to offer a rather unsurprising view of Catholic Reformation works translated into Arabic and Syriac. Yet if we look closer at the works in some detail, we begin to find a rather more complicated picture of the genealogy and traditions lurking beneath the surface of this Catholic confessional literature. On the most basic level, the great majority of the works on this list—at least eleven out of seventeen—were published by the Arabic press of the Propaganda Fide. In the first instance, there are some rather standard works here, for example, a copy of the Medici Press' Arabic-Latin translation of the Gospels (no. 9) or the copy of the Psalms in Arabic (no. 6) published in Rome in 1638. The list also includes

¹⁸ Archives of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide, Rome, SRCG 450, fol. 242, dated 27 November 1674, Rome. An edition of the letter can be consulted in Lampart in *Ein Märtyrer der Union mit Rom*, pp. 270–271.

publications that seem like obvious works of ‘confessional literature’. There are at least three confessions of faith or catechetical works: the *Antithesis fidei Arabica* by Dominico Germanus of Silesia (no. 4) published in Rome in 1638; the *Doctrina Arabica Italiana* (no. 5) also published by Germanus in Rome in 1642; and the *Brevis Orthodoxae fidei professio* in Arabic (no. 8). There is also a copy of Robert Bellarmine’s *Dichiaratione della Dottrina Christiana* (no. 10), which had been translated into Arabic by the Maronite John Hesronita and published in Rome in 1627. Similarly, the ‘Dottrina Christiana Caldea’ (no. 13) is probably a reference to a Syriac version of Bellarmine’s work that had been published in 1633 by one Giacomo Begnamini. In addition, the list mentions an Arabic translation of Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ* (no. 8), a work that had been translated by the Dutch Carmelite Célestin de Sainte-Ludwina.¹⁹

Secondly, there are several linguistic works published in Rome in the seventeenth century that also appear on this list, for example the *Thesaurus Arabico-Syro-Latinus* (no. 3) by the Franciscan missionary Thomas Obicini of Novara. Obicini had studied Syriac, Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic and Coptic in Aleppo, before being present for the 1617 synod in Diyarbakır that explored the prospects for Chaldean conversion to Catholicism. The grammar itself was aimed at helping support the work of European missionaries attempting to convert Syrians. Moreover, a Syriac grammar was included on the list (no. 14), although it is unclear whether this book is the grammar of Abraham Ecchellensis published in Rome in 1628 or a later version published in 1647 by Victorius Scialach Accurensis. Whatever the case, both works were prepared by Maronites with strong links to the Maronite College in Rome. Less clear is what use Joseph would have made of the Italian-Turkish vocabulary (no. 17) prepared by the Capuchin Bernard of Paris and published in Rome in 1665. It is a work usually found among the libraries of merchants trading in the Ottoman Empire.²⁰

Of particular interest are several titles that reflected the recent accomplishments of Catholic missionaries based in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to the aforementioned works by Dominicus Germanus, Célestin de Sainte-Ludwina, and Bernard of Paris, there are two works composed by François de Brice de Rennes, a Capuchin missionary who had spent three decades of his life working in Aleppo and Damascus.²¹ The first is his Arabic translation of *Annales Ecclesiastici* (no. 1), the triumphant history of the church written in the sixteenth century by Cardinal Cesare Baronio. The *Annales* is a history of the church from the establishment of Christianity at the start of the first millennium until the contemporary day. For his part, François de Brice had started working on the translation while living in Damascus in 1644. On his return to Rome in 1650, he published the first two volumes of his translation and continued his work on a third volume when he returned to Syria in 1655. The third volume was finally published in 1671, and Joseph’s specific request for this third volume may have had something to do with the fact that the third volume dealt with

¹⁹ On him, see Samir, *Le P. Célestin de Sainte-Ludwina*.

²⁰ Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*, p. 49.

²¹ So far as I can tell, Francis Britius has not been the subject of any extensive study, but see Trentini, ‘Baronio arabo’.

the most recent history of the church stretching from 1198 to 1646. Indeed, the third volume even included several interesting references to Eastern Christianity. As for Brice de Rennes' second work, the *Annalium sacrorum a creatione mundi ad Christi* (no. 2) presented an Arabic translation of excerpts from several European histories of the world.

Finally, there is a last category of books that we might think of as devotional works in the broadest sense. All of them, interestingly, are connected in some way either to Maronite authors or to the Maronite College of Rome. We find, for example, an account of the Gregorian calendar (no. 12) prepared by the Maronite Michael Hesronita and published in Rome in 1637, along with two Maronite liturgical books: the *Officium simplex Maronitarum* (no. 15) published in 1637 and the *Breviarum Maronitarum* (no. 16) published in 1656. Looking across the list more generally, it is striking the extent to which the genealogy of many of these works stretch back to Maronite authors, traditions, and devotional practices. Also important is that these works represented the core output of the Propaganda Fide press in Arabic and Syriac, most of which dated to the seventeenth century. If we compare this list, for example, to a catalogue of the Propaganda Fide's Arabic and Syriac publications prepared in 1773, we find that only five new works in Arabic and one in Syriac were published by the Press after 1700.²² Well into the eighteenth century, therefore, the list of books requested by Joseph comprised an important example of the core works of Propaganda Fide publications available to Eastern Christians.

EAST SYRIANS BETWEEN ROME AND MOUNT LEBANON?

First of all, it should be emphasized that we do not have any indication that Joseph either ever received the actual books on the list or read them, let alone how he experienced what he read. For this reason, what follows focuses more on the formal aspects of the texts included in the reading list, and only secondarily on what their contents could have signified to an East Syrian who harboured Catholic sympathies. In this regard, the list obliges us to question the notion of any straightforward 'translation' of the Counter-Reformation from Latin into Arabic, or the idea of a 'circulation' of texts from Rome to Diyarbakır. Even works that appear to be so-called 'classics' of the Counter-Reformation were in many cases produced in specific contexts that involved the collaboration of Catholic missionaries or officials with Eastern Christian clergy, translators and scribes. Often this sort of collaboration took place not in Rome but rather in the Ottoman Empire, as was the case for example with the translation of Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* (no. 7) and the translation of Baronio's history of the church (no. 1), which Brice de Rennes carried out with the help of a scribe in Damascus who he names as one 'Yusuf Shammās'.²³

²² This and the other estimates below are based on the titles contained in an inventory of the Propaganda Fide's works published in the late eighteenth century. See Amaduzzi, *Catalogus librorum*.

²³ The reference to Yusuf can be found in the preface to vol. 1 of *Analiu. Ecclesiasticor. Caesaris Baronii S.R.E. Card. Arabica Epitome* (Rome, SPCF, 1653).

Secondly, it is also interesting to note the prominent role played by Arabic in these Catholic publications. I have already described the mixed linguistic situation of East Syrians in this period, whose use of Arabic or Syriac reflected particular geographies. Of the seventeen books listed here, twelve are written primarily in Arabic or involve Arabic (in the case of the Arabic-Latin Bible) while only four deal with Syriac. This reflects a wider trend in the literature produced by the Propaganda Fide, which published four times more Arabic texts than Syriac ones in the first hundred fifty years of its output. In some ways, this may reflect wider contemporary ideas about the Arabic language among Catholic erudite circles in Rome, particularly as they developed around the case of the lead books of Sacromonte.²⁴ At any rate, what little we know of the linguistic situation on the ground in this period suggests that the Arabic emphasis in the Propaganda's books would have resonated well with the usage of Arabic that prevailed among East Syrians in Diyarbakır.²⁵ This also reinforces an idea proposed by Heleen Murre-van den Berg that from very early on Catholicism appeared to embrace Arabic over Syriac in its attempts to proselytize to East Syrian communities.²⁶

Other evidence also suggests that an association with the Arabic language became an important element in the self-fashioning of East Syrian uniates in this period. This becomes clear if we consider a contemporary account of the persecutions endured by Joseph at the time of his public conversion to Catholicism, an account of which was written in Joseph's life by one of his disciples, a priest called 'Abd al-Ahad.²⁷ The account describes the tribulations Joseph experienced when faced with opposition from the Patriarch of the Church of the East, Eliya X, and others from among the 'traditionalists' in the East Syrian community. As the account describes it, the laity persuaded Patriarch Eliya to leave the monastery of Rabban Hormizd in order to challenge Joseph, by that point bishop of Diyarbakır, over his conversion to Catholicism. In the account, the Patriarch is described as having called on the help of an Ottoman governor and the account goes on to describe a face-to-face disputation between Joseph and Eliya held in the presence of the Ottoman official. What is striking here is the crucial role played by language in this disputation between Joseph and the 'traditionalists' in the community. Joseph, for example, lambasts Eliya for only knowing how to speak Syriac and Kurdish, while emphasizing his own

²⁴ García-Arenal, 'The Religious Identity of the Arabic Language', pp. 495–528.

²⁵ For an alternative example—of an East Syrian community with closer links to neo-Aramaic—see the fascinating case of a Chaldean priest and his difficulties with communicating in Arabic to his flock in Siirt in Lentin, 'Du malheur de ne parler', pp. 229–252.

²⁶ Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, chapter 2.

²⁷ The textual tradition of this account is obscure. An edition of the work was published by Louis Cheikho (Abd-al-Ahad [L. Cheikho, ed.], 'La vie du Patrarche Chaldéen Joseph I), which he claims to have been based on an 'original' version that was copied for him although he does not indicate whether the original was in Arabic or Karshuni; a French translation of the work was also published by Jean-Baptiste Chabot ('Vie de Mar Youssef 1^{er}', pp. 66–90). Here, I refer to both versions, without having yet managed to identify an original manuscript in either Arabic or Karshuni.

linguistic talents in Arabic and Turkish. Perhaps what is most interesting in ‘Abd al-Ahad’s account is the appeal to particular forms of learning. Eliya is described as having no learning at all: he is unable to give sermons, pray publicly, or even read the Gospels because he never attended a school. Joseph, however, is not only literate, but he excels in the command of Arabic and the genres of *ādāb* linked to the Arabic language. Of course, this example—as written by a uniate sympathiser in a hagiographical work commemorating Joseph—tells us more about how the Chaldeans maligned the ‘traditionalists’ in this period than about actual confessional identity on the ground. Even so, what matters here is the ways in which the Chaldeans chose to define their own uniate identity by invoking the Arabic language. As with Catholic confessional literature published by the Propaganda Fide, Catholic confessional identity was, first and foremost, rooted in the Arabic language.

Third and most importantly, the list of books is striking for what it reveals about the important role played by Maronite authors, texts and traditions in early Arabic and Syriac printing by the Propaganda Fide. It is unclear, however, what such Maronite works would have actually meant to someone like Joseph whose origins lay in the East Syrian tradition. On the one hand, the Maronites would certainly have been known to West and East Syrians, not least because of their shared use of Syriac as a liturgical language. Writing in the thirteenth century, Barhebraeus, for example, explicitly refers to the Christology of the Maronites in his *summa theologica*.²⁸ Less clear, however, is what was the nature of relations between Maronites and East Syrians in the fifteenth century, that is, before both communities began to engage in a substantial way with the Catholic Church in Rome. None of this should be surprising if we consider the impact of geography: Maronites were based mainly around Mount Lebanon and Aleppo, less commonly in the area around Diyarbakır. It may be that when these two communities actually came into contact with each other, it was often through their shared contacts with Rome rather than any sort of direct encounters taking place in the Ottoman Empire.²⁹

What explains, therefore, the interest of an East Syrian in a corpus of works rooted in the Maronite tradition? Admittedly, there is only so much that we can say here about Joseph’s agency in this process. As I have noted above, we cannot even be sure whether this list of books was requested outright by Joseph or whether it was requested on his behalf by one of his Catholic patrons. Nonetheless, it is doubtful that any Eastern Christian could engage with Catholic confessional literature in this period without contending with the real ways in which Maronites permeated the intellectual, scholarly, and religious contexts of seventeenth-century Rome. In many ways, the dominance of Maronites in the list of books reflects the esteemed position that Maronites had secured for themselves in Rome by this period. Although

²⁸ See, for example, Nau, *Les heresies christologiques*, pp. 264–265. I am grateful for this reference to Salam Rassi, and indeed to both Salam Rassi and Thomas Carlson for what little I know about this earlier period of contacts between Maronites and East Syrians; cf., Carlson, *Christianity in Fifteenth-Century Iraq*, p. 27.

²⁹ For an interesting account of Sulaqa’s relationship with Maronites in Rome, see Parker, ‘The Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging’, p. 1431.

European contacts with the Maronites dated back to age of the medieval crusades, it was only in the seventeenth century that Maronite scholars and propagandists—like Stephen Douaihi, Abraham Ecchellensis, and Faustus Nairone—combined with the establishment of the Maronite College in Rome meant that Europeans increasingly accepted Maronite claims to having maintained a sort of ‘perpetual orthodoxy’ with Roman Catholicism throughout their long history.³⁰ When the Propaganda Fide sought to publish works aimed at converting Eastern Christians, it was only natural that Maronites would come to play an important role in selecting, curating, and preparing these works for print. In this way, Catholic confessional literature in Arabic and Syriac was deeply imbued with Maronite traditions, texts and practices.

When we survey the body of works produced by the Propaganda Fide in this period, it is striking that although some of them may have been completely intelligible from a linguistic perspective—that is, as Arabic or Syriac books aimed at an audience that could read these languages—the works themselves emerged from specific liturgical, devotional and intellectual traditions that were not shared in common by all Christian communities in the East. Indeed, one could go so far as to suggest that the Maronite traditions of Mount Lebanon were just as foreign to the East Syrians of Diyarbakır as would have been the classic works of the European Catholic Reformation. If a process of confessionalization was taking place—in the sense of promoting an awareness of belonging to a confessional community defined by specific beliefs and practices—this was a process that did not simply translate European works into oriental languages. Rather, it became, whether intentionally or not, a process that sought to bring East Syrians from Diyarbakır into conformity with Maronite practices from Mount Lebanon. Whether it makes sense anymore to gather all these works together as a form of ‘Catholic’ confessional literature is a question that requires further study.

CONCLUSION

Stepping back from all of this, what vision of Catholic confessional literature emerges in this list of books as it appears in the letter of Joseph of Amid in November 1674? Further research will need to consider a range of questions about the composition, production, circulation, and reception of Catholic confessional literature among Eastern Christians. Even so, we can point here to at least three important points that seem relevant to the wider set of questions raised in this volume.

First, if such a thing as Catholic confessional literature existed in the Christian East, it involved much more than the unproblematic translation of European works into oriental languages. Rather, the key texts published by the Propaganda Fide in this period were often assembled, reworked, and produced through collaborations between European Catholics and Eastern Christians, some in Rome but some also very far from Rome in different parts of the Ottoman Empire. Without a better

³⁰ For some examples of this important literature, see Girard and Pizzorusso, ‘The Maronite College in Early Modern Rome’; Girard, ‘Quand les maronites écrivaient en latin’; Hamilton, ‘Eastern Churches and Western Scholarship’.

understanding of these European and Ottoman contexts of production, we cannot begin to understand the mechanics and nature, let alone the reception, of Catholic confessional literature in the Christian East.

Secondly, this essay has tried to show that within the body of printed Catholic works that were published by the Propaganda Fide in Arabic and Syriac, Maronites played a rather important role—certainly more important than any other single group of Eastern Christians. That this should have been the case was not a foregone conclusion. In the early sixteenth century, for example, Maronites had been a little-known and rather suspect group among Catholic circles in Rome.³¹ Be that as it may, by the time of the establishment of the press of the Propaganda Fide in the 1630s, the Maronites came to occupy a significant role at the heart of the production of printed Catholic confessional literature in Arabic. Even if they shared little in common with Maronites, East Syrians had no choice by the end of the seventeenth century: becoming Catholic meant engaging with the Maronites, with their texts, and with their practices. In this way, Maronite traditions and practices would become the standard against which claims of catholicity made by other Eastern Christians would be assessed in the eighteenth century.

Finally, it is clear from the above that the printing of Catholic confessional literature by the Propaganda Fide could have had the effect of creating new connections between Eastern Christian communities, which in some cases had no history of direct exchanges before Rome brought them together. In this way, Catholic confessional literature functioned as a sort of lingua franca embracing the diversity of a range of communities—East Syrian, West Syrian, Melkite, Armenian, Maronite, and otherwise—under a single form of uniate belonging.

In sum, making sense of Catholic confessional literature among East Syrians requires us to locate ourselves not only in Rome and Diyarbakır in this period but also in Mount Lebanon. In doing so, we obtain a vision of Catholic confessional literature as the product of a connected history of the multiple communities of Eastern Christianity: their connections with Rome, to be sure, but also their history of connections with each other.

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³¹ See, for example, the forthcoming work of Sam Kennerley on this subject, *Rome and the Maronites in the Renaissance and the Reformation: From the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1445) to the Protectorate of Marcello Cervini (1540–1555)*.

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APPENDIX

1. An Arabic version of the *Annales Ecclesiastici* of Cardinal Caesar Baronius, translated by Franciscus Britius: *Analiu. ecclesiasticor. Caesaris Baronii S. R.E. Card. Arabica Epitome*. (Rome: SCPF, 1653)
2. *Annalium sacrorum a creatione mundi ad Christi D. N. incarnationem epitome latinoarabica*, etc, translated by Franciscus Britius (Rome: Apud I. Lunam Maronitam, 1655)

3. Tommaso Obicini, *Thesaurus Arabico-Syro-Latinus* (Rome: SPCF, 1636)
4. Domenico Germano de Silesia, *Antithesis fidei Arabica* (Rome, 1638)
5. Domenico Germano de Silesia, *Doctrina Arabica Italiana* (Rome, 1642)
6. Domenico Germano de Silesia, *Sette Salmi Penitentiali Arabici* (Rome, 1642)
7. *Thomae à Kempis de Imitatione Christi Arabice*, by P. Coelestino à S. Liduina Carmelita discalceato Batavo (Rome, 1663)
8. *Brevis Orthodoxae fidei profession* (Rome, 1648)
9. *Evangelia Arabico-Latina* (Rome: Medici Press, 1591)
10. *Dichiaratione della Dottrina Christiana più copiosa del Bellarmino*, translated into Arabic by Giovanni Hesronita (Rome: Medici Press, 1627)
11. *Isagoge, sive Introductorium Arabicum in scientiam Logices, cum versione Latina ac Theses S. fidei, apud Stephanum Paulinum* (Rome, 1625)
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14. *Grammatica Syriaca Abrahami Ecchellensis* (Rome, 1628); or, possibly, *Grammatica Syriaca Accurrensis* (Rome, 1647)
15. *Officium simplex Maronitarum* (Rome, 1637)
16. *Breviarium Maronitarum, sive Syrum Pars Hyemalis* (Rome, 1656)
17. *Vocabolario Italiano-Turchesco, compilato dal P.F. Bernardo da Parigi Capuccino* (Rome, 1665)

13. MASJED-E JAME‘-YE ‘ABBASI: A TWELVER SHI‘ITE CONGREGATIONAL MOSQUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEBATE ON THE FRIDAY PRAYER IN THE SAFAVID WORLD

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Patronage of religious architecture and promotion of religious rituals occupied a significant place in the Safavid and Ottoman rulers' religious and political agendas in the age of confession-building, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Safavid and Ottoman political and religious authorities instrumentalized religious ritual and architecture as sites of confession-building and establishment of orthopraxy, through which they attempted to create distinctly Shi'i and Sunni religious landscapes and communities. Consequently, religious architecture and ritual figure as two important arenas in which confessional differences between the Ottoman and Safavid contexts can be observed. The Friday prayer and the ritual use of congregational mosques was one of the most debated subjects in the context of the religio-political conflict between the Safavids and the Ottomans, with the latter accusing the former of neglecting the Friday prayer and disrespecting mosques by using them as venues for Shi'ite rites like the ritual cursing of the first three caliphs.¹ Partly in order to eliminate the Ottomans' accusations, and partly to ensure that the Twelver Shi'ite tenets and practices grow a firm root within their realms, the Safavid authorities endeavored to establish the Friday ritual, build congregational mosques, and

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¹ These accusations were generally uttered in the polemical treatises and fatwas of the Sunni scholars, and diplomatic correspondence between the Ottoman and Safavid rulers. For examples of these treaties, fatwas, and letters, see: Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik*, pp. 97–99, 104–110; Falsafi, *Essays on History and Literature*, pp. 50–56; Nava'i, *The Safavid Shah Tahmasb*, pp. 203–237; Feridun Bey, *The Compilation of Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 249–254, 257–261.

transform the existing Friday mosques into Shi'ite sanctuaries through alterations of the inscriptions and other Sunni insignia on these edifices.

This article investigates the reasons for the construction, architectural features, and ceremonial uses of the Masjed-e Shah (or Masjed-e Jame'-ye 'Abbasi) complex, a royal Safavid congregational mosque complex that was constructed by Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629). It does so with reference to the debate among the Twelver Shi'i clerics and community regarding the Friday ritual, the Ottoman accusations, and the Safavid shahs' patronage of mosques. The article challenges the common assumption in the literature that the Safavid shahs had not constructed any Friday mosques before 'Abbas I's erection of the Masjed-e Shah complex because of the controversy over the status of the Friday prayer. According to this argument, which was put forward by S. Babaie and followed by other scholars, Shah 'Abbas was able to construct the complex because the problem of legality of the Friday prayer was resolved during his reign by the Imami clerics he patronized, especially Sheikh Lutfullah al-Maysi (d. 1622), who argued that the observance of the Friday prayer was obligatory for the Shi'is in all times and under all conditions.² However, several scholars such as R. Ja'fariyan and A. Sachedina have shown that the debate concerning the Friday ritual continued and was never resolved during the Safavid era.³ In light of these studies, I argue that the construction of Shah 'Abbas' Friday mosque was not the result of a definite resolution of the debate regarding the Friday prayer and that this issue needs to be reconsidered in light of both written and architectural sources from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Furthermore, I question the assumption that Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan was the first Friday mosque that was constructed by a Safavid monarch. While several scholars have referred to the Sahib al-Amr Mosque (Masjed-e Saheb al-Amr) in Tabriz and Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin as buildings erected by Shah Tahmasb, they have not discussed the functional traits of these mosques, namely whether they were built and used as congregational mosques or neighborhood masjids.⁴ There is considerable evidence suggesting that it was not 'Abbas I, but Tahmasb (r. 1514–1526), who was responsible for the building of the first royal Friday mosque(s) in the Safavid realms. I contend that both Safavid monarchs constructed Friday mosques as a part of their endeavors to popularize the Friday ritual, and to display their attachment to and support of the Twelver Shi'ite doctrine and practices within their realms. Further, I suggest that the Ottomans' accusations played a considerable role in the Safavid shahs' patronage of Friday mosques and promotion of the Friday ritual within their

² Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, pp. 55–57, 86; Babaie, 'Sacred Spaces of Kingship', pp. 188, 199; Rizvi, 'Architecture and the Representations', p. 388; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, pp. 34–35.

³ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture in the Age of the Safavids*, vol. 1, pp. 591–744; Sachedina, *The Just Ruler*, pp. 173–204; Holmes, *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice*, p. 138; Turner, *Islam Without Allah?*, p. 114.

⁴ Kareng, *The Historical Monuments and Buildings of Tabriz*, pp. 8–11; Minorsky, *The History of Tabriz*, p. 88; Brignoli, *Les Palais royaux safavides*, p. 175; Gulriz, *Minudar or the Gate of Heaven*, pp. 581–586; Eshraqi, 'The Historical City of Qazvin', pp. 11–12.

realms. Finally, I aim to contribute to the literature on the Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan by focusing on its ritual uses within the framework of the question of the Friday prayer, and the formation of a distinctly Twelver Shi'ite congregational mosque. Although there are many studies on this monument's architectural and stylistic features, research into its social and ritual uses is lacking.⁵

THE QUESTION OF FRIDAY PRAYER IN THE SAFAVID CONTEXT

As one of the prescribed rituals of worship (*ṣalāt*), Friday prayer constitutes one of the most significant communal prayers, which takes place on Muslims' weekly day of assembly. Instead of the midday prayer that requires four prostration cycles (*rak'a*), Friday prayer involves two cycles, preceded by two short sermons (*khutbah*) separated by a short pause.⁶ The Friday prayer ceremony has two specific stipulations, which relate it directly to the issues of political authority and legitimacy.⁷ The first is that Friday prayer, like the two Muslim festival prayers, must be performed in congregation. It necessitates a prayer leader (*imam*) and can only be performed in a public mosque or outdoor prayer ground (*muṣallā*).⁸ The second, and more important one, is that Friday prayer must be preceded by two sermons, delivered by the prayer leader who was usually appointed by the ruler. Established in the Abbasid period during the second Islamic century, the practice of mentioning the name of the caliph in the sermon has been the most significant constituent of this ceremony, which turns the Friday ceremony into one of the primary insignia of Islamic rulership.⁹

Friday prayer has been a contested issue within the Shi'i community because of its political connotations. Classical Imami thought defines leadership of the Friday prayer as one of the prerogatives of the Immaculate Imams, along with jihad, the administration of justice (*al-ḥukūma*), and the execution of legal punishments (*ḥudūd*).¹⁰ In the pre-Safavid era, the majority of Imami clerics argued that the Friday prayer was not individually binding in the absence of the Immaculate Imam or his designated representative, while according to others, it was not even legally valid (*mashrū'*).¹¹ Prior to the Safavid period, when Shi'ites for the most part lived under Sunni rule, Imami clerics held that the Friday prayer was in abeyance, since obtaining the consent of the Twelfth, or Hidden Immaculate Imam was impossible because he was believed to be in occultation, and even had it been possible, Sunni rulers would not have allowed Shi'i communities to perform the Friday prayer behind their own prayer leaders.¹² A number of clerics claimed that jurists (*faqih* or *mujtahid*)

⁵ Keyani, *The History of the Art of Architecture in Iran in the Age of Islam*, pp. 110–111; Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. 3, pp. 1185–1191; Hillenbrand, 'Safavid Architecture', pp. 785–789.

⁶ Holmes, *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice*, p. 130.

⁷ Agajari, *An Introduction to the Relations of Religion and State in the Safavid Period*, p. 48.

⁸ Katz, *Prayer in Islamic Thought*, p. 131.

⁹ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture in the Age of the Safavids*, vol. 1, p. 597.

¹⁰ Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 61–62; Sachedina, *The Just Ruler*, p. 192.

¹¹ Stewart, 'Polemics and Patronage in Safavid Iran', p. 427; Sachedina, *The Just Ruler*, p. 184.

¹² Stewart, 'Polemics and Patronage', p. 427.

could lead the Friday prayer as general deputies of the Hidden Imam,¹³ but this was practically impossible because for the most part Imami jurists were living under Sunni dominion and did not have such an opportunity.

With the emergence of the Safavid state, the question of the Friday prayer became one of the main issues of Twelver Shi'ite jurisprudence at both the doctrinal and practical levels. The establishment of Safavid Shi'ite rule brought complex changes into the political and legal doctrine of Imami Shi'ism, as well as into the social and religious life of the Twelver Shi'ite community. As an issue that is directly related to the political, religious, and social spheres, the Friday prayer was among the main subjects that came to the fore in this context. Concordant with the tendencies of other contemporary Muslim dynasties, including the Ottomans, Mughals and Uzbeks, who all adhered to the Hanafi school of law, the Safavids embraced Twelver Shi'ism and integrated its doctrines and religio-legal practices into their legislative and religio-political agenda.¹⁴ With the help of a group of Shi'i clerics, Safavid shahs endeavored to revive the Friday ritual both as a means of establishing a sharia-oriented society, and as a shield against the accusations of their Sunni rivals that Shi'i communities failed to perform a major religious obligation.

In the age of confession-building, a growing concern for the regular performance of daily congregational and Friday prayers was observable also in the Ottoman realms. Concomitantly with the rise of the debate on the Friday prayer in the Safavid realms, the Ottomans took measures for the enforcement of the observance of congregational prayers, including the Friday ritual, which had already been defined as an obligatory (rather than recommended) religious duty by the Ottoman Hanafi jurists.¹⁵ Especially after the conquest of Constantinople, the enforcement of Sunni orthopraxy and orthodoxy became an official policy of the Ottoman authorities.¹⁶ The appointment of the official prayer enforcers (*namāzci*), the construction of a myriad of congregational mosques in various Ottoman cities and towns, and the definition of masjids as the nuclei of neighborhoods of the cities were among the measures that reflected the Ottoman authorities' growing concern with the observance of daily and weekly congregational prayers. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the enforcement of attendance at daily congregational and Friday prayers gained momentum with the intensification of punitive measures for those who neglected them,¹⁷ and an imperial order was issued by Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–1566)

¹³ Sachedina, *The Just Ruler*, pp. 184–188.

¹⁴ Burak, 'The Second Formation of Islamic Law', p. 583.

¹⁵ On this process see Sünnetçioğlu, 'Imams and Their Communities'; Kafescioğlu, 'Lives and Afterlives'.

¹⁶ Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, p. 48

¹⁷ The penal codes of both Selim I (r. 1512–1520) and Sultan Süleyman involve commands inviting the officers to examine those who abandon their prayers intentionally in every neighborhood and village, and to vanquish them severely with reprimand and capital punishment. Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, vol. 3, p. 93; Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman*, p. 122.

to the effect that every single village within the Ottoman realms must have a designated place of prayer, i.e. masjid.¹⁸

The Safavid initiatives regarding the Friday prayer were carried into effect by the political and religious elites, which began in the earliest decades of Safavid rule in Iran. After his declaration of rulership in Tabriz, one of the earliest deeds of Ismaʿil I (r. 1501–1524) was to have the sermon delivered in the name of the Twelve Imams from the pulpits of mosques.¹⁹ The anonymous chronicler narrating Ismaʿil's conquests relates that the shah attended the Friday ceremony in the Masjed-e Jame^ʿ, the old congregational mosque of Tabriz, in which he forced people, with his Kizilbash soldiers, to curse the first three Sunni caliphs, after one Shi'i cleric delivered the sermon in the name of the Immaculate Imams.²⁰ As this and various other examples discussed below suggest, the Safavid mosques served as one of the primary public spaces of ritual cursing.²¹ Chronicles from this period relate that Shah Ismaʿil had the sermon delivered in the name of the Twelve Imams in various other cities he conquered, including Baghdad, Herat and Balkh.²² Various Safavid narratives from the sixteenth century, including those of ʿAbd al-Latif Qazvini (d. 1554), ʿAbdi Beg Shirazi (d. 1580) and Qadi Ahmad Qummi (d. after 1590), eulogize Shah Ismaʿil as the first ruler who had sermons delivered in the name of the Twelve Imams, and enumerate a series of rulers from the Buyid and Ilkhanid eras who had attempted but failed to do so.²³ These accounts suggest that the Friday prayer began to be performed during Shah Ismaʿil's reign, even if only occasionally.

It was during the reign of Tahmasb that the Friday prayer began to be held regularly in most Iranian cities. This development owed much to the endeavors of the Imami cleric, al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki (d. 1534).²⁴ With the support of Ismaʿil I and Tahmasb, Karaki undertook to popularize the Friday ritual within the Safavid realms by appointing a prayer leader (*pishnamāz*) in every village,²⁵ and compiling a treatise on the subject. In 1533, Tahmasb delegated all religious affairs to al-Karaki, bestowed upon him the title of 'the seal of mujtahids',²⁶ and ensured Friday prayers were led by a mujtahid, or a prayer leader directly appointed by the chief mujtahid. Al-Karaki outlined the legal basis for the Friday service in a treatise called *al-Jaʿfariya*

¹⁸ Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, pp. 47–49; Sünnetçioğlu, 'Imams and Their Communities'.

¹⁹ Amini Haravi, *The Royal Conquests*, p. 173; Khandamir, *The History of Shah Ismaʿil*, pp. 65–66; Qazvini, *The Essence of Histories*, p. 394; Qummi, *The Epitome of Histories*, vol. 1, p. 73.

²⁰ Anonymous, *The World-Adorning History of Shah Ismaʿil*, pp. 60–61.

²¹ For the ritual of cursing in the Safavid lands, see Stanfield-Johnson, 'The Tabarra'iyān', pp. 47–71; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 18.

²² Qummi, *The Epitome of Histories*, vol. 1, p. 63; Qazvini, *The World-Adorning History*, p. 271; Khandamir, *The History of Shah Ismaʿil*, p. 72; Anonymous, *The World-Adorning History of Shah Ismaʿil*, p. 386.

²³ Qazvini, *The World-Adorning History*, p. 267; Shirazi, *The Accomplishment of Episodes*, pp. 40, 41; Qummi, *The Epitome of Histories*, vol. 1, p. 65.

²⁴ Jaʿfariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 602.

²⁵ Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 38.

²⁶ Turner, *Islam Without Allah?*, pp. 78–79; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 37.

fi al-Salat (The Ja'fari Treatise on Prayer), which constitutes the earliest Safavid treatise on the issue.²⁷ In this treatise, al-Karaki claimed that Friday prayer was not obligatory, but legally valid on the condition that a general deputy of the Immaculate Imam (faqih or mujtahid) was present, or designated someone to lead it.²⁸ However, this proved to be too restrictive for the ritual to take root, since after al-Karaki, who was a mujtahid, died in 1534, Friday prayers fell into abeyance in Iranian cities for more than two decades.²⁹

Al-Karaki's treatise and initiatives triggered a vehement discussion among Safavid clerics, which continued until the end of the empire. Even before al-Karaki's death, his arguments were opposed by a number of Imami jurists like al-Ardabili (d. 1585) and al-Qatifi (d. 1539), who supported the view that Friday prayers were prohibited (haram), and asserted that the performance of this ritual was legally invalid during the Major Occultation.³⁰ This juristic debate accelerated during the second part of Tahmasb's reign, which was marked by the Treaty of Amasya signed with the Ottomans in 1555. It started a new period in Ottoman-Safavid relations because each state officially recognized the sovereignty of the other for the first time in their history.³¹ The mutual recognition between the Ottomans and Safavids accelerated the confessional policies on both sides, and they concentrated on the formation of clearly defined confessional communities within their realms.³² Safavid religious and political elites attempted to protect the Ottoman-Safavid border against Ottoman incursions and safeguard the Safavid subjects from Sunni tendencies.³³ In this context, the question of the legitimacy of the Friday noon prayer came to the fore again, after more than two decades, as Tahmasb moved to revive this ritual. Both the Ottoman and Safavid sources suggest that the ongoing criticism of the Sunni Ottomans against the Shi'i Safavids was among the most significant reasons informing the shah and his clerics' initiative to revive the Friday prayers.

The neglect of the Friday prayer, disrespect for mosques, and the ritual cursing of the Sunni caliphs in the mosques and other public spaces were among the most frequent accusations which were directed by the Ottoman religious and political authorities against the Safavids and expressed in different genres and contexts. Ottoman ulema and literati criticized the Safavids for abandoning the Friday prayer as a major religious duty, which they interpreted as an indication of the Safavids' heresy. Al-Shirvani (d. 1540) and Mirza Makhdum (d.1587), émigré scholars who had come to the Ottoman lands from Iran, were among the most eminent polemicists who articulated such accusations.³⁴ Accusations regarding the Safavids' disrespect of

²⁷ Stewart, 'Polemics and Patronage', p. 429; Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 629.

²⁸ Sachedina, *The Just Ruler*, p. 186; Stewart, 'Polemics and Patronage', p. 429.

²⁹ Stewart, 'Polemics and Patronage', p. 429.

³⁰ Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 17; Agajari, *An Introduction to the Relations of Religion and State*, p. 86.

³¹ Krstić, *Contested Conversion to Islam*, pp. 96–97; Fleischer, 'The Lawgiver as Messiah', p. 171.

³² Krstić, *Contested Conversion to Islam*, p. 97.

³³ Stewart, 'The First Shaykh al-Islam', p. 103.

³⁴ Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik*, p. 98.

mosques and pulpits, and their insistence on ritual cursing, also appear in Ottoman sultans' letters sent to Safavid shahs. For instance, in his letter to Isma'îl I, Selim I accused the Safavids of disrespecting the mosque pulpits from which sermons were delivered, and of destroying and abandoning the mosques within their realms.³⁵ Although this accusation did not explicitly refer to the Safavids' rejection of the Friday prayer, this was clearly implied. Sultan Süleyman repeated the same accusation in his letter to Shah Tahmasb, which was written before one of his military campaigns against the Safavids.³⁶ Similarly, Ottoman chronicles portrayed the Safavids as mischief-makers and infidels who did not perform the obligatory prayers and who vandalized the mosques and the pulpits.³⁷ In the seventeenth century, for example, an anonymous Ottoman chronicler who visited Tabriz during Murad IV's campaign of Yerevan (1635), defined the Shi'ite mosques in Tabriz as '*Sebbâbhânele*', places of ritual cursing, and claimed that the Safavids filled the Sunni mosques in the city with various animals.³⁸

That these criticisms appear mostly in the context of military campaigns against the Safavids reveals that the latter's neglect of congregational prayers and disrespect of mosques was used to justify the Ottoman wars against the Safavids within the framework of holy war against 'the infidels'. Nevertheless, the Ottoman accusations regarding the Friday prayer were taken seriously by the Safavid religious and political elites. In their diplomatic correspondence with the Ottoman rulers, the Safavid shahs assumed a defensive attitude. In one of Tahmasb's letters to Süleyman, for example, he challenges the Ottomans' occupation of Caucasus, and asserts that the Safavids were delivering Friday sermons in the name of the Immaculate Imams in the cities of Georgia.³⁹ Similarly, Tahmasb's congratulatory letter to Süleyman for the completion of the Süleymaniye Mosque can be read partly as a defensive gesture displaying his respect for mosques and religious duties. In this letter, Tahmasb eulogizes the act of building and repairing mosques, and congratulates Süleyman on his construction of the mosque, which he calls the second al-Aqsa.⁴⁰

The Safavid initiatives for popularizing the Friday ritual gained momentum in the second half of the sixteenth century, when peace was established in 1555 with the Ottomans after a long period of war. In this regard, the most significant development was the articulation of a new argument for legalizing the Friday prayer during the period of the Hidden Imam, and his special or general deputies. For the first time in the history of Twelver Shi'ism, an Imami scholar defined the Friday prayer as individually obligatory, namely *wujûb 'aynî*. This argument was pioneered by Zayn al-Din 'Amili (d. 1558), known as al-Shahid al-Thani (The Second Martyr), who lived in Ottoman Syria, and was persecuted by the Ottoman authorities because of his

³⁵ Falsafi, *Essays on History and Literature*, p. 51.

³⁶ Atik, *Lütfî Paşa ve Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, p. 274.

³⁷ Celâl-zâde Mustafa, *Selim-nâme*, p. 49; Atik, *Lütfî Paşa ve Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, p. 271.

³⁸ Anonymous, *IV. Sultan Murâd'ın Revân ve Tebriz Seferi*, p. 36.

³⁹ Nava'i, *The Safavid Shah Tahmasb*, p. 215.

⁴⁰ Nava'i, *The Safavid Shah Tahmasb*, pp. 330–335.

confessional identity.⁴¹ Al-Shahid al-Thani defined the performance of the Friday prayer as one of the most significant religious obligations, and this would provide the basis for the recognition of the Twelver Shi'ism by Sunni authorities among other Islamic legal schools.⁴² His experiences concerning the Ottoman repression of various Shi'i communities within their realms, and his familiarity with the accusations of the Sunni legal authorities against Shi'is must have had an impact on the evolution of his arguments regarding the Friday prayer. His concern with the Sunni critiques directed at his own religious school is reflected in his assertion that the Shi'is' neglect of the Friday prayer causes other Muslims to despise Twelver Shi'ism.⁴³

Al-Shahid al-Thani's view was brought to Iran by his student Husayn bin 'Abd al-Samad (d. 1576), who supported his teacher's argument for the obligatory status of the Friday prayer, and claimed that all Shi'is must perform it independently of the presence of a jurist, in order to disprove the accusations of the Sunnis.⁴⁴ In addition to his treatise on the Friday prayer, 'Abd al-Samad's endeavors as the sheikh al-Islam of the Safavid capital, Qazvin, played a significant role in the consolidation of the Friday ceremony within the Safavid lands. Occupied for the first time by 'Abd al-Samad, the position of the sheikh al-Islam of the Safavid capital was established by Shah Tahmasb as a special office for instituting major changes in public religious policy, including the revival of the regular Friday noon prayer.⁴⁵ The sheikh al-Islam of the capital city could appoint prayer leaders, and take other measures for regulating the Friday prayer as the foremost religious authority.⁴⁶

In the second half of Tahmasb's reign, namely after the mid-sixteenth century, all institutional and intellectual bases for legalizing Friday prayer in the Safavid lands were firmly established. The establishment of the status of sheikh al-Islam of the capital city, who appointed local prayer leaders, was among the main measures taken by the Safavid elites to this end. The appointment of local prayer leaders suggests that in this period the Friday prayers were performed, at least to a certain extent, on a regular basis. Equally significant was the formulation and proliferation of the *wujūb 'aynī* argument, which regards the Friday prayer as a personal religious obligation. Indeed, in the second half of the sixteenth century this argument came to prevail among the Shi'i clerics.⁴⁷ Despite all efforts made by the Safavid political and religious elites, however, the regularity and continuity of Friday prayer could not be ensured in the Safavid cities, and there continued to be strong opponents to the ritual until the end of the Safavid rule.⁴⁸

The ongoing opposition to the Friday prayer is most apparent in the juristic and scholarly discussions. Over two centuries, almost a hundred juristic treaties were

⁴¹ Stewart, 'The Ottoman Execution of Zayn al-Dīn al-Āmili'.

⁴² Sachedina, *The Just Ruler*, p. 188.

⁴³ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 604.

⁴⁴ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 603.

⁴⁵ Stewart, 'The First Shaykh al-Islam', pp. 390, 405.

⁴⁶ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 358.

⁴⁷ Ja'fariyan, *Twelve Jurisprudential Treatises*, p. 65.

⁴⁸ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, pp. 606, 609.

written by Imami clerics, arguing variously that the Friday ritual should be optional, obligatory, or prohibited during the Occultation of Imam Mahdi.⁴⁹ In addition, there were scholars who were ambivalent towards the practice, and who could not reach a definite conclusion in their treatises.⁵⁰ Even though the opponents of the Friday ritual were generally less numerous, they included some of the most eminent clerics, which is why their views had a significant impact both on the public and on other scholars. The Safavid state did not suppress the opponents of the Friday prayers, and such clerics could climb to the highest positions in the Safavid religious bureaucracy, including the office of the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan, or professorships in the royal madrasas of the capital city. For example, ^cAli Naqi Gomrahi wrote a treatise defending the view that the Friday noon prayer should be prohibited when he occupied the position of the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan in the seventeenth century.⁵¹ Hasan ^cAli Shushtari penned a similar treatise in 1086 AH (1675/6), when he was a distinguished professor in the madrasa of Molla ^cAbdullah in Isfahan, which had been built by ^cAbbas I in the name of Hasan ^cAli Shushtari's father.⁵²

Historical sources are mostly silent about the extent of the ritual's implementation in the Safavid lands, but there are clues indicating that different Safavid shahs struggled to ensure the continuity and regularity of Friday prayers. Writing during the reign of Isma^cil II (r. 1576–1577), for example, Hasan Rumlu eulogized the shah for encouraging his subjects to perform the Friday prayers regularly.⁵³ Similarly, different sources from the seventeenth century praised particular scholars for their attempts to revive the Friday prayers, suggesting that there was a continuous effort to regularize the ritual, and that its recurrent neglect was perceived as a major problem. One of the most eminent historians of Shah ^cAbbas I, Eskandar Monshi (d. 1634) eulogized Sheikh Baha^ci (d. 1621) as follows: 'One of his achievements was the revival of the Friday prayer, which had been in abeyance for a considerable time because of differences of opinion among theologians regarding the conditions pertaining to it'.⁵⁴ Empowered as the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan, Sheikh Baha^ci took measures for popularizing the Friday prayers within the Safavid capital and other cities, and wrote a treatise defending the legality of the Friday prayer during the Major Occultation, but defined its performance as optional for the Twelver Shi'i community.⁵⁵ In his manual on worship and belief penned for the lay public in Persian, he addresses the controversy regarding the Friday ritual among the Twelver clerics, and gives the community the option to perform the ordinary daily noon prayer instead of the Friday prayer. On the other hand, he adds that the Friday prayer's spiritual reward is greater than that of the ordinary noon prayer: 'You should know that among the scholars there is conflict regarding the observance of the Friday prayer during the

⁴⁹ Ja^cfariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 632; Ja^cfariyan, *Twelve Jurisprudential Treatises*.

⁵⁰ Ja^cfariyan, *Twelve Jurisprudential Treatises*, pp. 92–95.

⁵¹ Ja^cfariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 607.

⁵² Ja^cfariyan, *Twelve Jurisprudential Treatises*, p. 614.

⁵³ Rumlu, *Safevi Şahı II. İsmail*, p. 67.

⁵⁴ Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 1, p. 247.

⁵⁵ Stewart, 'Fayd al-Kashani', p. 37.

Occultation of Imam Mahdi, and it is optional to perform the Friday prayer or the noon prayer. However, since the spiritual reward (*ṣawāb*) of performing the Friday prayer is greater than that of the noon prayer; it is better to perform the Friday ritual instead of the other.⁵⁶

The evidence suggests that Sheikh Baha'i's endeavors were not sufficient for ensuring the regularity and popularity of the Friday prayers in Isfahan. In the mid-seventeenth century, Fayz al-Kashani (d. 1680) was entrusted with the task of leading the Friday service in Isfahan, and for propagating the Friday and congregational prayers.⁵⁷ In a letter to his friend in Mashhad, who requested help from al-Kashani to be appointed as a prayer leader, the latter complains that he could not find a sufficient number of Muslims to perform the Friday prayer in his city of Kashan. He adds that the situation in Isfahan is not better, for some people there refuse to perform the ritual in mosques, and different groups with their own prayer leaders convene for this ritual outside the city.⁵⁸ Visiting Iran in the same years, the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi's observations confirm the accounts of al-Kashani and his colleague. Evliya asserts that Iranian mosques lacked congregations because people generally did not perform congregational prayers but prayed individually within mosques. He adds that the reason for their neglect was their belief that congregational prayers should be led by the Immaculate Imams.⁵⁹ There are other historical accounts suggesting that the neglect of the Friday prayer among some groups continued in the last decades of Safavid rule too. A cleric resident in Yazd named Molla Muhammad complained about Yazd's denizens' refusal to attend the Friday prayers, and the hostile treatment they showed him for performing the ritual together with his sons and children in one of Yazd's mosques.⁶⁰ In the eighteenth century there was still a serious conflict regarding the Friday ritual, and on one occasion a prayer leader was killed in a quarrel that erupted over the issue.⁶¹

As the abovementioned examples show, the controversy about the Friday noon prayer persisted throughout the Safavid period. The evidence suggests that the Friday prayers were observed more regularly when Muhaqqiq al-Karaki served as Tahmasb's deputy, and in the second half of Tahmasb's reign, as mentioned before. Considering that there were also Sunnis, and probably crypto-Sunnis at least in some Safavid cities, it is reasonable to think that the ritual was performed on a regular basis by small groups and in particular cities.⁶² As I will argue in the second part, the existence of multiple Friday mosques within various Iranian cities from the inception

⁵⁶ Sheikh Baha'i, *The Collection of 'Abbas*, p. 86.

⁵⁷ Sheikh Baha'i, *The Collection of 'Abbas*, pp. 40, 42.

⁵⁸ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 619.

⁵⁹ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, vol. 2, p. 216, and vol. 4, pp. 184, 218.

⁶⁰ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 606.

⁶¹ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, vol. 1, p. 615.

⁶² Evliya Çelebi asserts that some Iranian cities such as Urumiye, Salmas and Save included Sunnis among their residents. Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, vol. 4, pp. 184, 194, 231. For a study on Sunnis of Safavid Iran in the sixteenth century, see, Stanfield-Johnson, 'Sunni Survival in Safavid Iran'.

of Safavid rule also suggests that Friday prayers were being performed, even if on an irregular basis and with spotty participation. Although the Safavid shahs endeavored to establish the ritual by various means, including the patronage of mosques and clerics defending the ritual's legality, they did not force their subjects to perform the ritual, nor did they define its neglect as a religious and legal offense. The ritual's neglect never became a sign of unbelief or heresy as was the case in the Ottoman realm.

Both the debate regarding the Friday prayer's legality and the Safavid authorities' endeavors for establishing this ritual continued during the era of Shah 'Abbas, too: Six treatises were composed by different clerics, one of whom argued against the Friday prayer.⁶³ Even if the issue could not be resolved during his reign, it is true that he pushed further than his predecessors to legalize and promote the ritual. Unlike Tahmasb, however, Shah 'Abbas could not gain the consent of his top clerics for 'the unconditional or universal endorsement of the Friday prayer as an emblem of Safavid Imamite theocracy'.⁶⁴ Except Lutfullah al-Maysi, the majority of the leading court jurists under Shah 'Abbas, along with their students, argued that the performance of Friday prayer was legitimate but optional for the Shi'ite community.⁶⁵ As the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan, Sheikh Baha'i gave both society and jurists the option to perform the Friday prayer or avoid it, and he was followed by the most influential clerics of the period, including Mir Damad (d. 1631).⁶⁶ This suggests that the question of Friday prayer remained unresolved during the period of 'Abbas I, and on this basis it is appropriate to argue that he attempted to construct a royal congregational mosque not as a result of the resolution of this problem, but as a part of his endeavors to resolve it and popularize the ritual in his capital city, Isfahan.

THE SAFAVID SHAHS' PATRONAGE OF MOSQUES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *MASJED-E SHAH* COMPLEX

The construction of mosques has been one of the most prestigious architectural enterprises of Muslim rulers throughout history. The patronage of mosques ensured the visibility of piety, wealth, and power of Muslim rulers both spatially and ritually. Along with being an emblem of piety, mosques were associated with political authority in multiple ways. Especially in the earlier centuries of Islam, the rulers' loggias (*maqṣūrah*) were attached to the main congregational mosque of the capital cities.⁶⁷ For the most part, the titles and names of the patron-rulers were inscribed on the doors and walls of these sanctuaries, and they were mentioned in sermons during the Friday noon service and during the two Muslim religious holidays. Further, it was a custom of Muslim rulers to glorify their success in holy war by constructing

⁶³ Ja'fariyan, *Twelve Jurisprudential Treatises*, pp. 77, 79, 80, 82, 86, 90.

⁶⁴ Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 72.

⁶⁵ Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 56.

⁶⁶ Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 72; Mir Damad, *A Treatise on the Necessity of the Friday Prayer*.

⁶⁷ Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, pp. 48–50.

congregational mosques for the commemoration of their conquests,⁶⁸ and some of them, like the Ottoman sultans, established royal mosques with the booty obtained in military expeditions. They regarded the booty gained in *gaza* activities as a prerequisite for the construction of royal mosques.⁶⁹

Along with a number of Shi'i and Sufi shrine complexes, mosques occupied a significant place in the architectural programs of Safavid shahs. From the beginning of their rule in Iran, Safavid shahs patronized mosques in different cities within their realms, either by renovating existing mosques,⁷⁰ or by constructing new ones. Safavid chronicles and contemporary travelogues do not mention the construction of any royal mosque in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Seemingly, Isma'īl I did not construct any mosques, and confined himself only to renovations and repairs of existing edifices. Sources suggest that Shah Tahmasb was the first Safavid shah who constructed new mosques in different cities. Narratives and architectural evidence enable us to identify at least two royal mosques that were commissioned by Tahmasb. Known as Sahib al-Amr Mosque, the first one was erected in Tabriz, on the eastern side of the royal square of the city, the Sahibabad Square.⁷¹ The account of Michele Membré, who visited Tabriz in 1539, reveals that this edifice was being constructed at the time.⁷² Membré states that this mosque was one of the most beautiful royal edifices surrounding the Sahibabad Square, but he does not provide a detailed description.⁷³ More detailed information is provided by an Ottoman visitor, Ta'likizade Mehmed Subhi, who participated in the Ottoman military campaign against the Safavids as the secretary of Osman Pasha, the military leader of the campaign against Tabriz in 1585. In his treatise *Tebriziye*, Ta'likizade describes the conquest of the city by the Ottomans and narrates the events that occurred after its takeover. His account seems to be the only document that was written by an eyewitness, and which mentions the Sahib al-Amr Mosque in Tabriz before its destruction by the Ottomans in the 1630s.⁷⁴ According to Ta'likizade, Tahmasb's mosque was located on the eastern side of the Sahibabad Square. It had two green domes and was

⁶⁸ Babaie, 'Building on the Past', p. 45.

⁶⁹ Necipoğlu, 'The Süleymaniye Complex', p. 113.

⁷⁰ Hillenbrand, 'Safavid Architecture', pp. 766–769; Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. 3, pp. 1166–1170; Honarfar, *The Treasury of Isfahan's Monuments*, pp. 91–93; Babaie, 'Building on the Past', p. 32.

⁷¹ For the history of the Sahib al-Amr Mosque, see Kareng, *The Historical Monuments and Buildings of Tabriz*, pp. 8–11; Minorsky, *The History of Tabriz*, p. 88; Mukhlisi, *A List of the Historical Buildings*, pp. 124–125.

⁷² Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539–1542)*, p. 29.

⁷³ Membré, *Mission to the Sophy Lord of Persia (1539–1542)*, p. 29.

⁷⁴ Kareng, *The Historical Monuments and Buildings of Tabriz* p. 8; Minorsky, *The History of Tabriz*, p. 88. Contemporary sources are silent about the destruction of this mosque. However, the anonymous chronicler narrating Murad IV's siege of Tabriz asserts that the Ottoman soldiers took orders for the destruction of the city, and Tahmasb's mosques could have been devastated upon this order, probably as a sign of the Ottomans' anger against the ritual cursing in this mosque, and as a vehicle to proclaim the takeover of the city by an Ottoman sultan. See Anonymous, *IV. Sultan Murâd'ın Revân ve Tebriz Seferi*, p. 36.

commissioned as a Friday mosque, just like the mosque of Uzun Hasan that stood next to it.⁷⁵

Tahmasb's second mosque was in Qazvin, which served as the Safavids' second capital after Tabriz. Known as the Masjed-e Shah, this mosque was located to the west of the palatial precinct of the Safavid shahs, the Sa'adatabad.⁷⁶ It features the design of a classical Iranian congregational mosque with a four-iwan courtyard and a domed-chamber, which contains a minbar and serves as the prayer hall.⁷⁷ Since the Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin was restored by the Qajar shahs in the early nineteenth century,⁷⁸ it is sometimes incorrectly attributed to the Qajars. Both the observations of some scholars and sources from the Safavid era, however, indicate that this edifice was a Safavid monument. Eshraqi has pointed to the mosque's architectural features and design to date it to the Safavid period.⁷⁹ On the other hand, Gulriz, Zari'i and Zari'i Mo'ini have remarked on the mosque's spatial and architectural connections with a series of Safavid monuments including a bazaar, a caravanserai, and a public bath, which all date to Tahmasb's period. They argued that these structures must have been conceived as part of a single architectural project.⁸⁰ 'Abdi Beg Shirazi's *Jannat al-Asmar (The Garden of Fruits)*, which constitutes probably the only contemporary Safavid source mentioning this mosque, supports this dating. 'Abdi Beg lists this mosque and the *arasta* bazaar among the new edifices that were constructed by Tahmasb in Sa'adatabad. He writes: 'Next to this desirable shop (of a fruit seller) is a mosque resembling the firmament that is among the monuments of the shah, whose excellence reaches to the ninth heaven (*'arsh-janāb*). His (the shah's) Khosrow-like titles are inscribed on the mosque.'⁸¹ Since 'Abdi Beg's treatise was written between 1557–1560,⁸² it is reasonable to date the mosque's construction to sometime before this interval. The best-known primary source on the monument, Jean Chardin's account of the Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin, is also in agreement with 'Abdi Beg's description. Chardin, who visited Qazvin in the late seventeenth century, mentions Masjed-e Shah among the largest and most beautiful mosques of the whole Safavid realm,

⁷⁵ Özkuzugüdenli, *Talikhizade Mehmed Subhi-Tebriziyye*, p. 56.

⁷⁶ Brignoli, *Les Palais royaux safavides*, p. 175; Szuppe, 'Palais et Jardins', p. 154.

⁷⁷ Gulriz, *Minudar or the Gate of Heaven*, pp. 581–586; Eshraqi, 'The Historical City of Qazvin', pp. 11–12. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines iwan as 'a large hall or audience chamber often open on one side and found in Parthian architecture.'

⁷⁸ For the Qajar intervention into this mosque, see Ritter, *Moscheen und Madrasabauten*, pp. 101–102, 731–746; Zari'i Mo'ini and Zari'i, 'The History of Mosque', pp. 117–132.

⁷⁹ Eshraqi, 'The Historical City of Qazvin', p. 11.

⁸⁰ Gulriz, *Minudar or the Gate of Heaven*, p. 578–579; Zari'i Mo'ini and Zari'i, 'The History of Mosque', p. 120.

⁸¹ '*Muttasil-e ān dukkān-e jān-payvand/ ba-yakī masjed-e falak-mānand/ ham za āṣār-e Shāh-e 'arsh-janāb/ ham mukattab ba-Khurrūvī al-qāb*'. Shirazi, *The Garden of Fruits*, p. 52.

⁸² Losensky, 'The Palace of Praise and the Melons of Time', p. 2.

and asserts that this mosque is located at the end of a tree-lined street that begins at one of the gates of the royal palace.⁸³

At this point, the question arises whether Tahmasb's places of prayer in Tabriz and Qazvin were constructed as Friday mosques or as neighborhood masjids. I suggest that the terminological uncertainty caused scholars to fail to notice the sixteenth-century royal Safavid mosques' function as Friday mosques because they were not referred to as *masjed-e jāme'* (congregational mosque) in the sources. It does not mean, however, that they did not function as congregational mosques. In the Safavid sources it is possible to encounter the use of *masjid* as a term for several mosques that were designed or used as Friday congregational mosques. For example, Masjed-e Diyar in Qazvin was called *masjid* despite the fact that it had a pulpit and was used as a Friday mosque. In his *Tarikh-e Soltani (The Sultanic History)*, Astarabadi mentions this mosque, whose preacher was taken down from the pulpit upon the order of Isma'il II since he abandoned the custom of cursing the first three Sunni caliphs in the Friday ceremony.⁸⁴ Interestingly, the Süleymaniye Mosque was also referred to as a *masjid* in the letter of Tahmasb that was sent to Sultan Süleyman to congratulate him on the opening of this mosque.⁸⁵ Similarly, the Hakim Mosque in Isfahan, which was built in the mid-seventeenth century,⁸⁶ was referred to as a *masjid* in its foundation inscription,⁸⁷ despite the fact that it was created and used as a congregational mosque.⁸⁸ Even Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan, which was clearly defined as a congregational mosque (*masjed-e jāme'*) in its inscriptions,⁸⁹ was referred to as a *masjid* in some of the contemporary sources.⁹⁰ Clearly, it is not possible to identify Safavid mosques as congregational mosques or masjids merely by looking at the terms used for them. Rather, one must consider how the mosque was used.

Thus, the fact that both Sahib al-Amr Mosque in Tabriz and Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin were named as *masjid* in contemporary sources does not indicate that they were not designed or used as Friday mosques. In the case of Sahib al-Amr Mosque, there is concrete evidence indicating that it was a Friday mosque. As mentioned before, Ta'likizade describes it as such. The fact that he resided in Tabriz for more than a year, and established close relationships with denizens of this city from

⁸³ Chardin, *Voyages de Monsieur le chevalier Chardin en Perse*, vol. 3, pp. 25–26. Eshraqi suggests that the tree-lined street mentioned by Chardin was most probably the forecourt of the royal caravanserai, which was flanked by trees and contained a pool in the Safavid times. Gulriz suggests that the palace's entrance mentioned by Chardin can be one of several doors of the Safavid palace complex, which no longer stands today. Eshraqi, 'The Historical City of Qazvin', p. 12. For a description of this royal caravanserai's forecourt and its direct connection with the Masjed-e Shah, see also Gulriz, *Minudar or the Gate of Heaven*, pp. 578–579.

⁸⁴ Astarabadi, *The Sultanic History: From Sheikh Safi to Shah Safi*, p. 99.

⁸⁵ Nava'i, *The Safavid Shah Tahmasb*, p. 335.

⁸⁶ Blake, *Half the World*, p. 152.

⁸⁷ Honarfar, *The Treasury of Isfahan's Monuments*, p. 213.

⁸⁸ Ja'fariyan, *Politics and Culture*, p. 614.

⁸⁹ Honarfar, *The Treasury of Isfahan's Monuments*, p. 429.

⁹⁰ Astarabadi, *The Sultanic History: From Sheikh Safi to Shah Safi*, p. 202.

different classes increases the reliability of his account in this regard.⁹¹ The Safavid historian Qadi Ahmad Qummi who wrote in the late sixteenth century mentions Sahib al-Amr Mosque as *masjed-e shāhī* (the royal mosque) on the Sahibabad Square, and recounts that the governor of Tabriz, Shahzada Sultan Husayn Mirza, performed the Eid prayer in it.⁹² Qummi's account indicates the existence of a pulpit from which sermons were delivered. Together with the observations of Talikizade, Qummi's testimony of the performance of the Eid prayers in this mosque reveals its status as a congregational mosque.

Unfortunately, there is no such clear evidence for the usage of Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin. Its gigantic dimensions and central location within the city, however, suggests that this building also served as a congregational mosque. That Safavid cities had multiple congregational mosques lends greater credence to this presumption. There is evidence indicating that at least from the fourteenth century onwards Iranian cities had multiple congregational mosques, and Friday prayers were being performed not only in the main congregational mosque of the cities. In his *Nuzhat al-Qulub (The Serenity of Hearts)*, Hamdullah Mustavfi recounts that the city of Yazd had three congregational mosques.⁹³ The number of Friday mosques seem to have multiplied in the fifteenth century, when a Timurid patron constructed the Amir Chaqmāq mosque, which served as a Friday mosque along with other congregational mosques of this city.⁹⁴ Similarly, the Uzun Hasan Mosque, which was constructed by the Aqqoyunlu ruler in Tabriz in the fifteenth century, had a minbar and functioned as a congregational mosque together with the main congregational mosque of Tabriz.⁹⁵ Seemingly, this custom continued in different cities of Iran under the Safavids, at least from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. As mentioned before, the Friday prayer was performed in one of the neighborhood masjids in Qazvin, Masjed-e Diyar, along with the main congregational mosque of the city, the Masjed-e Jum'a. In a city where a neighborhood mosque functioned as a Friday mosque, it seems unlikely that Tahmasb's monumental mosque did not serve as a congregational mosque. It must have been added to the multiple Friday mosques of this Safavid capital.

The paucity of contemporary sources makes an investigation of the Safavid shahs' patronage of mosques a difficult task because the majority of the Safavid architectural monuments in Tabriz and Qazvin were destroyed due to successive earthquakes.⁹⁶ Besides, several architectural monuments in Tabriz were damaged or ruined during military occupations of the city by the Ottomans. Further, the Safavid chronicles are generally silent about the architectural projects of the Safavid shahs during the sixteenth century. The majority of early Safavid narrative sources were

⁹¹ Özkuzugüdenli, *Talikizade Mehmed Subhi-Tebriziyye*, p. 45.

⁹² Qummi, *The Epitome of Histories*, vol. 2, p. 700.

⁹³ Limbert, *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez*, p. 58.

⁹⁴ Piraniyan, *The Architecture of Iran*, p. 294.

⁹⁵ Ottoman historians reported that Selim I performed the Friday prayer and had sermons delivered in his name in the mosque of Uzun Hasan in Tabriz. Atik, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, p. 219; Özkuzugüdenli, *Talikizade Mehmed*, p. 43

⁹⁶ Melville, 'Historical Monuments and Earthquakes in Tabriz', pp. 103–131.

written as universal histories and consisted of relatively brief annual accounts of major military and political events. Especially those that were composed before the mid-sixteenth century rarely included thematic accounts of cultural life in the Safavid lands. As far as I have observed, such accounts began to appear only afterwards, with ‘Abdi Beg Shirazi’s treatise on Qazvin, *The Garden of Fruits (Jannat al-Asmar)*, which he composed between 1557 and 1560,⁹⁷ and his chronicle *The Accomplishment of Episodes (Takmilat al-Akhbar)*, that was completed in the 1570s.⁹⁸ Yet, the lack of physical/architectural evidence and the silence of the written sources do not mean that the Safavid shahs did not build any Friday mosques up to this point. The accounts of the foreign visitors, and a careful reading of the sixteenth-century Safavid narrative sources provide significant clues suggesting that royal congregational mosques were being erected.

Tahmasb’s patronage of the Shi‘ite congregational mosques has to be evaluated in the context of his confessional policies. Their construction was concurrent with Tahmasb’s religio-legal initiatives for legalizing and regularizing the Friday prayers in Iran, which I discussed above. Besides, these Shi‘ite sanctuaries played a significant role in transforming the architectural and religious landscape of the Safavid capital cities of Tabriz and Qazvin, which had inherited the architectural legacy of a series of successive Sunni dynasties. In Tabriz, the Safavid shahs settled on the royal center of the Aqqoyunlu rulers, the Sahibabad Square, and appropriated this place as their own center. In this sense, the construction of the Sahib al-Amr Mosque adjacent to this royal center was instrumental in transforming this Sunni urban center into a Safavid Shi‘i one. In Qazvin, on the contrary, Tahmasb intended to create a new royal urban center assembling administrative, religious and commercial structures, which he named Ja‘farabad, a title with Shi‘ite connotations.⁹⁹ With its two ceremonial squares (*maydān*) and boulevard (*khiyābān*), the new royal quarter of the Safavid dynasty constituted a new urban center that was physically and symbolically distinct from the old Sunni center of the city.¹⁰⁰ Tahmasb’s mosque was located in this new Safavid center.

The Safavids’ religio-political rivalry with the Ottomans seems also to have played a role in Tahmasb’s patronage of mosques. The Safavid shahs’ insistence on repairing and renovating various mosques in their cities can be assessed as a defensive act against the Ottoman accusations discussed above, as they prompted replacement of Sunni insignia like inscriptions and pulpits with Shi‘ite ones.¹⁰¹ Tahmasb’s construction of Friday mosques can also be viewed as a display of his concern for the

⁹⁷ Losensky, ‘The Palace of Praise and the Melons of Time’, p. 2.

⁹⁸ Çetin and Dilek, *Safevi Tarihi*, p. 40.

⁹⁹ Shirazi, *The Garden of Fruits*, pp. 8–11, 43; Brignoli, *Les Palais royaux safavides*, pp. 168–170; Eshraqi, ‘Le Dâr al-Saltana de Qazvin’, p. 111.

¹⁰⁰ Brignoli, *Les Palais royaux safavides*, pp. 173–177; Eshraqi, ‘Le Dâr al-Saltana de Qazvin’, pp. 105–115.

¹⁰¹ For Isma‘il I’s and Tahmasb’s alterations in various Sunni mosques see Hillenbrand, ‘Safavid Architecture’, pp. 767–768; Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol.3, pp. 1166–1170; Honarfar, *The Treasury of Isfahan’s Monuments*, pp. 91–93; Babaie, ‘Building on the Past’, p. 32.

Friday ritual and respect for congregational mosques, contrary to the Ottoman accusations. In this context, the simultaneous construction of his Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin with the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul is noteworthy. The evidence suggests that Masjed-e Shah's erection began when Sultan Süleyman's Friday mosque was being constructed in Istanbul, between 1548–1559.¹⁰² Tahmasb's congratulatory letter and precious gifts sent to Sultan Süleyman indicates that he was informed about the Ottoman sultan's patronage of mosques.¹⁰³

Tahmasb's architectural and religio-political legacy was inherited and appropriated by ^cAbbas I, who carried his grandfather's confessional and architectural policies further. Following his predecessor, ^cAbbas I attempted to establish the tenets and practices of Twelver Shi'ism within his realms, with the support of a group of Imami clerics, and took new measures to this end. Among these measures were the establishment of new colleges for religious instruction,¹⁰⁴ and entrusting clerics with propagating Twelver Shi'ism in public spaces like bazaars and coffeehouses.¹⁰⁵ Besides, he charged the sheikh al-Islam of Isfahan, Sheikh Baha'i, with compiling a catechizing manual for the lay public in Persian.¹⁰⁶ The formation of a new capital city accompanied his endeavours to create a religious environment that was in accordance with the Twelver Shi'ite tenets. Before ^cAbbas I, the public square that is known as the old *maydān* constituted the administrative, religious, and commercial center of Isfahan, which had grown with the architectural interventions of successive dynasties including the Seljuks, Ilkhanids, and Timurids. The main congregational mosque of the city was adjacent to this public square and embodied the Sunni legacy of this urban center.¹⁰⁷ With the construction of a new public square, ^cAbbas I embarked on creating a new religious, commercial, and administrative center, which would replace the old center of the city. Known as the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, this royal center functioned as an arena for various courtly ceremonies and was the equivalent of the Sahibabad Square in Tabriz, and the two royal squares in Qazvin, Sa'adatabad Square and Maydan-e Asb.¹⁰⁸ Four royal buildings mark the sides of this rectangular space, including the ^cAli Qapu Palace precinct, the Qaysariya bazaar complex, the chapel mosque of Sheikh Lutfullah, and the Masjed-e Shah complex.¹⁰⁹ Along with the Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque, the Masjed-e Shah complex constituted one of the two

¹⁰² Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, pp. 207–222.

¹⁰³ Nava'i, *The Safavid Shah Tahmasb*, pp. 330–337.

¹⁰⁴ Blake, *Half the World*, p. 158.

¹⁰⁵ Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, p. 442.

¹⁰⁶ Khuzani Isfahani, *A Chronicle of the Reign of Shah 'Abbas*, vol. 2, p. 804.

¹⁰⁷ Golombek, 'Urban Patterns in Pre-Safavid Isfahan', pp. 23, 29.

¹⁰⁸ Brignoli, *Les Palais royaux safavides*, pp. 173–177; Eshraqi, 'Les alentours du palais', pp. 88–90; Amirshahi, *La Ville de Qazwin*, pp. 65–76, 145, 154.

¹⁰⁹ For the history of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square and its surrounding monuments, see McChesney, 'Four Sources'; Galdieri, 'Two Building Phases'; Bakhtiar, 'Reminiscences of the Maidan-e Shah', pp. 151–161; Ritter, 'Das königliche Portal', and Ritter, 'Zum "Siegesmonument" in Islamischer Kunst'; Honarfar, *The Treasury of Isfahan's Monuments*, pp. 401–470; Keyani, *The History of the Art of Architecture*, pp. 108–111.

Shi'ite sanctuaries that adorned this new urban center, and marked the distinct religious identity of its new owners (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The view of the Masjed-e Shah from the Naqsh-e Jahan Square (photo credit: the author)

The Masjed-e Shah complex, which is also known as Masjed-e Jame'-e 'Abbasi, is located on the southern side of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, and consists of a large congregational mosque and two flanking madrasas. Its construction began by the order of Shah 'Abbas I and continued under his successors Shah Safi (r. 1629–1642) and 'Abbas II (r. 1642–1666). This mosque features a plan type known as a four-iwan, or courtyard mosque, which constituted a major type of congregational mosque in Iran since the Seljuk period. It consists of a wide rectangular courtyard with iwans on each of the four sides, the one on the qibla side leading to the domed chamber over the mihrab sanctuary.¹¹⁰ There are two-storied cloisters behind the eastern and western iwans; while the southern iwan leads one to the main sanctuary, which is surmounted by a monumental double-shell dome, and contains an oratory on either side of the mihrab.¹¹¹ Flanking the domed chamber and its adjacent vaulted prayer halls, two small rectangular courtyards with adjoining halls served as madrasas of the complex.¹¹² The integration of these smaller courtyards within the walls of the mosque constitutes the most original architectural feature of the Masjed-e

¹¹⁰ Bloom and Blair, *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art*, vol. 2, p. 551.

¹¹¹ Keyani, *The History of the Art of Architecture*, pp. 110–111; Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. 3, p. 1187.

¹¹² Babaie with Haug, 'Isfahan xi. Monuments'.

Shah complex.¹¹³ Although the addition of madrasas to mosque structures was not an innovation, the incorporation of madrasas into the original plan of a congregational mosque has very few precedents in the Islamic architectural tradition (Figure 2).¹¹⁴

The decorative and inscriptional program of the edifice reflects this sanctuary's distinctive Shi'ite character. Almost all plain surfaces of the building were covered with polychrome tiles with an overwhelming palette of turquoise blue.¹¹⁵ Along with various floral and arabesque decorative motifs, monumental inscriptions dominate the decorative scheme of the mosque complex. Nearly all visible parts of the edifice are adorned with inscriptions, and the most visible sections like the portal, minarets, mihrab and dome embrace the most monumental ones. The Shi'ite character of the sanctuary is mostly visible in its epigraphic program, which contains some Quranic passages, traditions (*akhbār*) of the Shi'ite Imams, and popular Shi'ite prayers like *Nadi 'Aliyyan*.¹¹⁶ Besides, the Shi'ite texture of the edifice was augmented with a number of relics and insignia. Chardin relates that over the marble mihrab was a gold-encrusted cupboard in which the blood-soaked robe of Imam Husayn and a Quran that was copied by Imam Reza were kept.¹¹⁷

The *ābsangs*, huge water basins made of marble or stone, constitute the most interesting Shi'ite insignia of this sanctuary. These basins always contained drinking water and were meant to evoke the thirst of Imam Husayn in Karbala. The *ābsang* is a Safavid invention that served as a Shi'ite symbol in different edifices including mosques, madrasas, and even churches of Isfahan. Masjed-e Shah is among the monuments that contain multiple *ābsangs*, which were located in different parts of the architectural complex.¹¹⁸ Along with the inscriptions and the Shi'ite relics, these huge water basins were instrumental in bringing a distinctively Shi'ite character to the architectural complex of Shah 'Abbas (Figures 3 and 4).

¹¹³ Golombek, 'The Anatomy of a Mosque', p. 8.

¹¹⁴The most prominent examples of madrasas that were integrated into the main plan of congregational mosques belong to the Ottoman architectural tradition. The Friday mosque of Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481), which was constructed in the 1460s, had two rows of axially located eight madrasas within its outer courtyard. Another example is the congregational mosque complex of Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566), built in the 1550s, which is surrounded by a wide platform flanked by two rows of madrasas. See Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/ Istanbul*, pp. 81–82; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, p. 210.

¹¹⁵ Babaie with Haug, 'Isfahan xi. Monuments'.

¹¹⁶Honarfar, *The Treasury of Isfahan's Monuments*, pp. 428–464.

¹¹⁷ Chardin, *Voyages de Monsieur le chevalier Chardin*, vol. 8, p. 55.

¹¹⁸ Tusi and Mani, 'The Waterbasins of Isfahan', p. 51.



Figure 2: The madrasa courtyard (photo credit: the author)

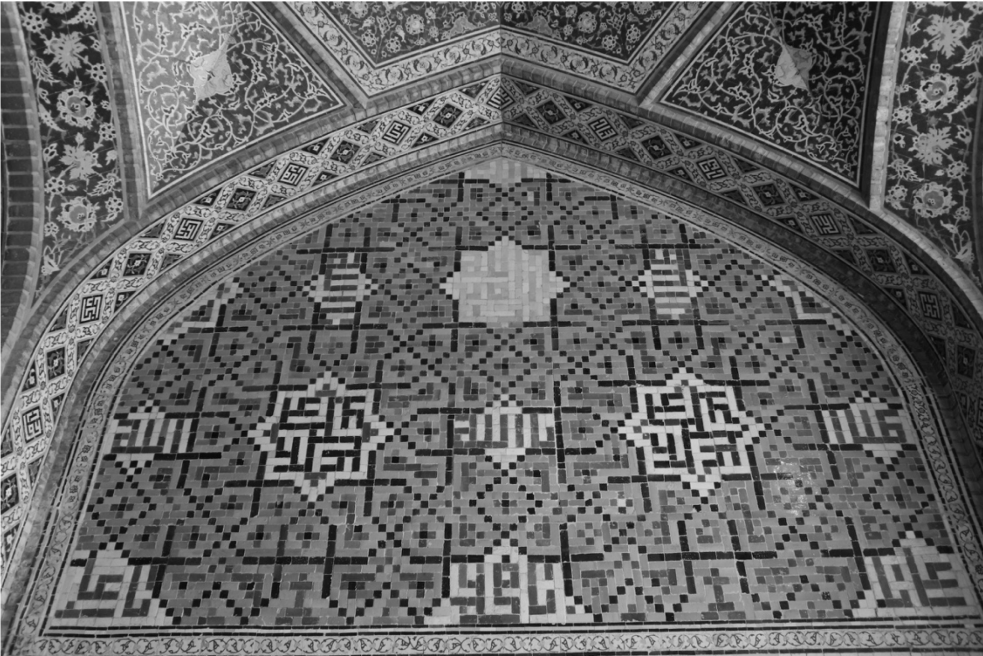


Figure 3: Inscriptions 'Allah, Muhammad, 'Ali' (photo credit: the author)



Figure 4: An *ābsang* (water basin) in the mosque (photo credit: the author)

Masjed-e Shah was designed as a Shiʿite sanctuary to serve as a platform for various Shiʿite ceremonials, along with prescribed prayers. Its spacious courtyard, multiple vaulted halls, and cloisters were created to embrace a populous community in different times of the day and in different seasonal conditions. People convened in this architectural complex for the performance of daily prayers and the Friday ritual, and for attending the ceremonies that were held on significant days of the Shiʿite calendar. The endowment deed of the mosque complex provides significant information concerning the religious activities that were held in the sanctuary. Every day, reciters of the Quran (*ḥuffāz*) were to read the Holy Book for the souls of the Twelve Imams, and as a part of the Muharram rituals, a *rawḍakhān* was to recite an epic titled *Rawdat al-Shuhada* (*The Garden of Martyrs*), about the sufferings of the House of ʿAli and martyrdom of the third Shiʿi Imam, Husayn, in Karbala.¹¹⁹ To serve the community of the mosque, ʿAbbas I commissioned numerous incumbents, who were charged with different tasks such as lighting the lamps, sweeping the prayer rugs, carrying and serving water, or putting the visitors’ shoes in order. The existence of a prayer leader, *pīshnamāz*, and a preacher, *khaṭīb*, among these employees indicates a concern for providing the performance of daily and weekly congregational prayers in the mosque on a regular and continual basis. Special foods and beverages were served to visitors on special days and nights, including the month of Ramadan, or

¹¹⁹ A *rawḍakhān* is someone who recites the epic of the martyr Imam titled *Rawdat al-Shuhada* penned by Kashifi (d. 1504). Being the first Persian work on the topic, this text was canonized by the Safavid authorities and publicly read out during the Muharram rituals. Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, p. 25; Rahimi, *Theater State*, p. 215; Turner, *Islam Without Allah?*, pp. 110–111.

the tenth day the month of Muharram, *‘āshūrā*. In this sense, it functioned as a place where the Safavid shahs displayed their generosity and piety through feasting and philanthropy. It is known that especially in the month of Muharram, various public spaces of Isfahan functioned as stages for elaborate theatrical ceremonies, and Masjed-e Shah, along with other mosques, was among the edifices that witnessed the mourning rituals.¹²⁰ Alongside its ceremonial and ritualistic functions, this architectural complex functioned as a center of higher religious education. Its madrasas served as colleges for 12 professors, and hosted 37 students, who were lodged in the mosque.¹²¹

Chronicles from the seventeenth century reveal that occasionally the Safavid shahs visited the sanctuary for attending the ceremonies held in the Masjed-e Shah. For example, on the first Friday after his enthronement in the beginning of 1629, Shah Safi ordered the clerics, high-ranking bureaucrats, and city-dwellers of Isfahan to convene in the Masjed-e Shah for listening to the first sermon that was delivered in his name by Mir Damad.¹²² Approximately after one month, on the fortieth day of Shah ‘Abbas I’s passing away, people gathered in the same place to pray for the deceased shah’s soul and listen to the Quran recitation. On the same day, two thousand cups of food were offered to the community that filled the Masjed-e Shah.¹²³ The sources suggest that along with such significant occasional events, the Safavid shahs attended the Friday rituals in the mosque. The seventeenth-century chronicler Qazvini Isfahani relates that in 1661 Shah ‘Abbas II (r. 1642–1666) performed the Friday prayer in the Masjed-e Shah.¹²⁴ Another interesting occasion was the attendance of an Ottoman envoy. Qazvini Isfahani recounts that in 1640, upon the order of Shah Safi, the envoy of the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV was taken to the Masjed-e Shah by a group of bureaucrats and clerics to attend the Friday prayer.¹²⁵ This account suggests that Shah Safi wanted to show the Ottoman envoy that the Safavid capital city had a glorious royal Friday mosque, and that in the Safavid lands the Friday prayers were being performed. Unfortunately, contemporary sources do not provide any clue regarding the regularity of the performance of the Friday ritual in the Masjed-e Shah, and the frequency of the shahs’ and Isfahan’s denizens’ attendance at these rituals. However, the evidence suggests that the mosque continued to be used as the venue of the Friday prayers throughout the seventeenth century.

CONCLUSION

The discussion above suggests a number of conclusions. First, Masjed-e Shah in Isfahan was not constructed as a result of the resolution of the debate regarding the

¹²⁰ Rahimi, *Theater State*, pp. 134–135; Moazzen, *The Sacred Geography of Shi’i Higher Learning*, pp. 40–76.

¹²¹ Sipanta, *A Short History of Isfahan’s Waqfs*, pp. 58–61.

¹²² Qazvini Isfahani, *Iran During the Age of Shah Safi and Shah ‘Abbas II*, pp. 4–5.

¹²³ Qazvini Isfahani, *Iran During the Age of Shah Safi and Shah ‘Abbas II*, p. 6.

¹²⁴ Qazvini Isfahani, *Iran During the Age of Shah Safi and Shah ‘Abbas II*, p. 659.

¹²⁵ Qazvini Isfahani, *Iran During the Age of Shah Safi and Shah ‘Abbas II*, p. 301.

legality of Friday prayer during the Major Occultation. The legitimacy of holding the Friday noon service remained a contested issue throughout the Safavid era. Debates concerning its legality accelerated during the Safavid period because of the establishment of Shi'ite rule for the first time in the history of Twelver Shi'ism, and the growing critiques and accusations of Sunni Ottomans. Safavid authorities' attempts to establish the Friday ritual intensified during the reigns of Tahmasb and 'Abbas I. Both rulers promoted the regular performance of Friday prayers as a part of their policies of confession-building and orthopraxy. The Ottoman authorities' criticisms concerning the Safavids' neglect of the Friday ritual and disrespect of mosques, which were largely uttered within the context of war and used as a pretext for the recurrent Ottoman campaigns against the Safavids, played a significant role in the Safavids' concern for establishing the Friday prayers within their realms. The most significant measures in this respect were taken by Shah Tahmasb, who created the position of the sheikh al-Islam of the capital city in order to regulate the performance of the ritual. Besides, Tahmasb patronized different groups of clerics, who formulated arguments for the legality of Friday ritual during the Major Occultation. 'Abbas I inherited and continued Tahmasb's policies but could not ensure the continuity and regularity of the Friday prayer in the long run. The Friday prayers thus remained irregularly observed and with spotty attendance by Shi'i Muslims.

Second, patronage of congregational mosques played a significant role in the Safavid shahs' promotion of the Friday ritual. Although various Safavid shahs sponsored mosque repairs and renovations, only two Safavid shahs constructed congregational mosques. Contemporary sources strongly suggest that Shah Tahmasb was the first Safavid ruler who built at least two congregational mosques in the first capital cities of the Safavid Iran: the Sahib al-Amr Mosque in Tabriz, and Masjed-e Shah in Qazvin, built in the 1530s and 1550s, respectively. Both seem to have been designed as monumental congregational mosques, which were located at the urban centers of Tabriz and Qazvin. Physically and conceptually, they were integrated into the royal precincts that combined the main administrative, commercial, and religious edifices in an urban center. This urban scheme was inherited and adopted by 'Abbas I in his new capital city, Isfahan, where he created a new royal square assembling different palatial, commercial, and religious structures. Located on the southern edge of this urban center, the Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Masjed-e Shah was intended to serve as the main religious sanctuary of the Safavid Isfahan. With its spacious layout, monumental dimensions, and distinctive ornamental vocabulary, this architectural complex was intended to serve as a stage for various Shi'ite ceremonies, along with the Friday ritual and daily prayers. But more than anything, it was an embodiment of the Safavid regime. Ironically enough, this edifice was in the mold of the major Sunni sanctuary, namely the Friday mosque, whose construction was defined as a sign of religious orthodoxy, military triumph, and royal magnificence by the Safavids' main rivals, the Ottomans.

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14. ON THE MARGINS OF EMPIRE: CONFESSIONALIZATION AND THE EAST SYRIAN SCHISM OF 1552¹

LUCY PARKER

The poet Sliba of Mansuriya composed a poem, probably in the mid-1510s, lamenting the sufferings endured by the city of Gazarta d-Bet Zabdai (Turkish Cizre) after unrest caused by Shah Ismail I's efforts to impose Safavid control on the region. He recounts repeated disasters inflicted on the city and its surroundings, first by the Safavid governor Muhammad Beg (Muhammad Khan Ustajlu), then by Kurdish chieftains and tribes and, finally and most devastatingly, by Safavid troops led by the brother of Muhammad Beg; these last, we are told, violated the women even of their allies the Kizilbash. Victims of the devastation included Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Sliba, who wrote his poetry in Syriac, was himself a Christian, and lamented in particular the martyrdom of the city's bishop, Yohannan, 'an elderly man, a wonder-worker, pure and full of the Holy Spirit'.² His poem reflects the diversity of this region of eastern Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia, home to urban and rural communities of varied religious, linguistic, tribal, and cultural backgrounds. It also reflects its instability: the region was a battleground for much of the first half of the sixteenth century, initially conquered by the Safavids but soon contested and

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² Scher, 'Episodes de l'histoire de Kurdistan', p. 124. Unfortunately, the only manuscript of this poem appears to have been lost, so we have to rely on Scher's French translation from the Syriac (I have based my English translation on this version).

ultimately won by the Ottomans. It remained, however, a frontier area, where Ottoman suzerainty was often mediated through local rulers, many of them Kurdish.³

Sliba himself was a member of the Church of the East. The Church of the East had its origins in the late antique Persian empire, and thus had always maintained a separate hierarchy from the other Christian churches. It professed a distinctive Christological position deemed 'Nestorian' (in reference to the widely-condemned fifth-century patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius) and heretical by the other churches, that Christ had two 'qnōmē', a Syriac word often, but not necessarily accurately, treated as equivalent to the Greek 'hypostasis' ('individual existence').⁴ By the sixteenth century, most of the members of Church of the East lived in southeastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia: the patriarchate for most of the sixteenth century was based at the Rabban Hormizd Monastery, some fifty miles to the north of Mosul; important communities lived in the Hakkari mountains, and in and around the westerly cities of Cizre, Diyarbakır and Mardin; some also lived further east, around Urmia and Salmas, beyond the Ottoman frontiers for most of this period.⁵ Eastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia were also home to the Syrian Orthodox Church, which, although it professed a very different, Miaphysite Christology from that of the Church of the East, shared much cultural heritage with it, including the use of Syriac as a literary and liturgical language.⁶ The Syrian Orthodox patriarchs, despite bearing the title patriarch of Antioch, were based in Diyarbakır and the nearby Tur 'Abdin area, although there were also important Syrian Orthodox communities in Syria, including in Aleppo.⁷ The Syriac Christian churches of Mesopotamia have rarely received much attention in scholarly discussions of Ottoman religious culture and society. When these communities have been studied, it has often been in terms of the history of the individual, separate churches, but this approach can engender risks. First, as highlighted by Bernard Heyberger in an important discussion, such studies tend to present the churches and their members in terms of fixed and ontological identities, whereas in fact these identities were historically constructed and subject to change.⁸

³ For an introduction to the different groups living in this region, see H. Murre-Van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, pp. 25–39. For an important study of one city and its hinterlands, see Khoury, *State and Provincial Society*.

⁴ On the general history of the Church of the East, see Baum and Winkler, *The Church of the East*. On its early modern history, see Murre-Van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*. On its theology see Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church', pp. 23–35; Brock, *Fire from Heaven*, articles I–III. The Greek term 'hypostasis' is itself ambiguous and has been used in several ways: on this see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, pp. 1454–1461.

⁵ For a full study of the ecclesiastical structure and of the geographical centres of the Church of the East, see Wilmschurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East*.

⁶ We lack a study of the early modern Syrian Orthodox Church comparable to those of Murre-Van den Berg and Wilmschurst for the Church of the East, but on its contacts with the Catholic Church see Hayek, *Le relazioni della Chiesa Siro-giacobita*, sections 2 and 3.

⁷ On the geographical spread of the church, one important sixteenth-century witness is the missionary bishop Leonard Abel, on whom see below. His report on the Syrian Orthodox church is found in A[rchivio] S[egreto] V[aticano], AA.Arm.I–XVIII, 3095, fols 2v–10v.

⁸ Heyberger 'Pour une "histoire croisée"', pp. 37–38.

In addition, these studies tend to look at the churches largely in isolation, as if their history were only tangentially related to those of the other communities around them. In reality, as Sliba's poem suggests, the Syriac churches were closely entangled both with each other and with the rest of Ottoman society.

They also had contacts with the wider world: in the sixteenth century both the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church sent emissaries to Rome and entered into discussions about church union.⁹ This marked the beginning of the process whereby, over the next two centuries, the historically independent Syriac churches split into traditional and Catholic factions. The Church of the East experienced schism in 1552, when part of the church seceded from the current patriarch, Shem'on VII bar Mama, and elected a new patriarch, Yohannan Sulaqa.¹⁰ They sent Sulaqa to Rome to seek ordination from the pope, whom they seem to have told, falsely, that the previous patriarch had died. After the pope had confirmed Sulaqa in his role, he returned to Mesopotamia, but he soon was arrested by the local (Ottoman/Kurdish—the sources disagree) authorities, reportedly due to the machinations of Shem'on bar Mama. He was killed at the orders of these authorities in 1555. His new church line, usually referred to as the Chaldean Church, did, however, continue for some generations in union with the papacy; his successor, 'Abdisho' of Gazarta (patriarch until his death in 1570),¹¹ also received confirmation of his position in Rome. Most of what little scholarship exists on these events focuses on the difficult question of why Sulaqa and his supporters decided to secede from their mother church (a question which is still unclear, although one motivation seems to have been opposition to the hereditary takeover of the patriarchal line by Bar Mama's family). But other questions, too, deserve to be explored, including: how did the identities of the 'Chaldeans' evolve during and after the events of 1552–5? How did those East Syrians who remained loyal to Bar Mama respond in ideological as well as practical terms to the challenge posed by the Chaldeans? And how did these changes relate to wider religious developments in the Ottoman Empire and beyond?

Recent scholarship has begun to explore the possibilities of the term 'confessionalization', long applied to Habsburg Central Europe in the aftermath of the Reformation, as a way of approaching Ottoman religious culture in this period, as the Ottoman state began to enforce a more clearly defined Sunni orthodoxy, as a

⁹ On the Syrian Orthodox church, see Hayek, *Relazioni*, sections 2 and 3; Borbone, 'From Tur 'Abdin to Rome', pp. 277–287. On the Church of the East see the following note.

¹⁰ Important studies on these events include Vosté, 'Catholiques ou nestoriens?', pp. 515–523; Vosté, 'Mar Iohannan Soulaqa', pp. 187–234; Habbi, 'Signification de l'union chaldéenne de Mar Sulaqa', pp. 99–132, 199–230; Murre-Van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, pp. 44–54; Parker, 'The Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging', pp. 1420–1445. Many important sources related to these events are edited in Giamil, *Genuine relationes*, and Beltrami, *La chiesa caldea nel secolo dell'unione*.

¹¹ The date of his death is recorded in a colophon to a manuscript from Mosul: see Scher, 'Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques', p. 243, MS 63.

reaction, in part at least, to their rivalry with the Shi'ite Safavid Empire.¹² 'Confessionalization' in its most developed sense, with strong socio-political and state-building implications, was not possible for the Syriac Christian churches, which had restricted political agency (although in some remote Kurdish tribal areas it is likely that the Syriac communities were largely self-ruling).¹³ But, as scholarship on Europe has shown, limited forms of confessionalization were possible even among communities with little or no political power; that is to say that they too could form stronger and more cohesive religious identities, on the basis of more clearly defined doctrines, tenets and practices, in dialogue and in rivalry with other communities. On both sides of the East Syrian schism of 1552, processes of identity reformation, boundary-making and confessional definition did occur which do bear some resemblance to this 'soft confessionalization'.¹⁴ This paper will explore these processes, setting the internal developments of these two closely interconnected churches in the context of their relations with other Syriac churches, with Latin Catholicism, and with Ottoman society. Throughout, it will take into account the limitations of the surviving sources, which are not as detailed for the Syriac churches as for many communities in this period; evidence therefore needs to be pieced together from varied kinds of texts from poetry to manuscript colophons. Some of the most extensive surviving sources are written by European Catholic missionaries and envoys to the east, but these bring their own problems; in particular, it is likely that the Catholics have imposed their own confessional interpretative schema upon the eastern Christians whom they encountered. Whereas Catholic missionaries wrote that the Chaldeans had converted from their heresy and rejected Nestorius, surviving texts in Syriac written by the Chaldeans themselves convey no such clear sense of a change in religious belief. Indeed, the paper will consider the limitations of the concept of 'confessionalization' when addressing Syriac Christians' own understandings of the relationship between different religious communities; in some contexts, at least, they did not view different religious groups as strictly demarcated from, and necessarily hostile to, each other.

First, however, there is a problem of terminology to consider, which brings with it a danger of false teleology. It is typical to refer to Sulaqa, his followers and his successors as the Chaldeans, but, although sixteenth-century Catholic missionaries did label this community Chaldeans, there is very little direct evidence of the Syriac

¹² See Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*; Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization'.

¹³ Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, p. 29, draws a contrast between the largely independent area of the Hakkari mountains and the more regulated regions around Mosul and the western cities of Cizre and Diyarbakır; Dina Khoury's research on the Mosul region has shown, albeit for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that members of the Church of the East appealed to Istanbul for relief from tax burdens and other exactions, suggesting integration into the broader political system. See Khoury, *State and Provincial Society*, pp. 195–200.

¹⁴ For the concept of 'soft confessionalization', which he defines, drawing on Hanlon, as the formation of boundaries around religious groups, see Kaplan, 'Between Christianity and Judaism', p. 332.

Christians calling themselves by this term.¹⁵ The Chaldean Catholic Church exists today as a Catholic, uniate church of the East Syrian tradition, and it is common for Sulaqa's schism to be referred to as the origin of this church.¹⁶ Yet this later Chaldean Church had no direct link to Sulaqa. In the seventeenth century Sulaqa's patriarchal line fell out of communion with Rome and his successors moved eastwards to the Hakkari mountains and Persia.¹⁷ Despite intermittent contacts with Catholics over the centuries, his ecclesiastical hierarchy has remained independent and now forms the non-uniatic Assyrian Church of the East. The modern Chaldean Catholic church in fact arose in very different circumstances within the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Bar Mama line, Sulaqa's rivals.¹⁸ By referring to the sixteenth-century followers of Sulaqa as 'Chaldeans', in the knowledge that eventually a Chaldean church with clearly Catholic beliefs would emerge, we risk projecting back this later history onto an entirely different series of events and historical actors, and thereby missing the ambiguities and complexities of the sixteenth century case, which should rather be seen in its own terms.¹⁹

There is a terminological problem, too, on the other side of the schism, for that part of the Church of the East which did not secede with the Chaldeans but remained loyal to Shem'on bar Mama and his successors. 'East Syrian' (the adjectival phrase used for members of the Church of the East) is too vague and could apply to the Chaldeans as well; 'Nestorian' (although it was sometimes used by members of this church at the time) has historical baggage and polemical overtones, as well as being arguably inaccurate;²⁰ 'traditionalist' is perhaps the best option, since it is less loaded with specific doctrinal implications. Nonetheless, 'traditionalist' is also problematic,

¹⁵ For an example of a Catholic missionary claiming that the Syriac Christians referred to themselves as 'Chaldeans', see the comments of Antoninus Zahara below. The only example I have found of a contemporary Syriac Christian using the term is in an Italian report by the bishop Eliya Asmar Habib, edited in Beltrami, *Chiesa caldea*, p.203. Other scholars have noted that using 'Chaldean' to refer to Sulaqa's followers is anachronistic: Wilmshurst, for example, prefers to use the term 'Catholic' (Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, p. 4), but this too runs the risk of engendering false assumptions about the Syriac Christians' beliefs and practices, given that it is far from clear that they had embraced Catholic doctrines, as will be discussed below.

¹⁶ The modern Chaldean Church refers to Sulaqa as its first patriarch, as discussed by Brock and Coakley, 'Chaldean Catholic Church', p. 92.

¹⁷ For the places of residence of the patriarchs in this line, see Murre-van den Berg, 'The Patriarchs of the Church of the East', pp. 250–257. Sulaqa's brief patriarchate seems to have been centred on Amida (Diyarbakır); his sixteenth-century successors were based at the monastery of Mar Ya'qob the Recluse near Siirt, but from the seventeenth century onwards they lived at various times around the Salmas region in Persia or at Qudshanis (modern day Konak) in Hakkari.

¹⁸ For a narrative of these events see Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, pp. 60–72.

¹⁹ Parker, 'Yawsep I of Amida'.

²⁰ Brock, 'Lamentable misnomer', pp. 23–35, argues against the use of term, but for counter-arguments, see Treiger, 'The Christology of the *Letter from the People of Cyprus*', Appendix A at pp. 44–46; Seleznyov, 'Nestorius of Constantinople', pp. 165–190.

since it seems that in this same period the traditionalist part of the church was also in flux, evolving aspects of its traditions and defining and crystallising others more clearly, something which has rarely been recognised.²¹ This article will refer to the Chaldeans and the traditionalists, in the absence of better alternatives, but it will seek to avoid any undue assumptions about the nature of and relationship between the two groups.

It is very difficult, in fact, to establish the boundaries between these ‘churches’. In the absence of clear evidence for their membership, attempts have been made to trace allegiance to the different patriarchs on the basis of colophons: scribes often refer to the patriarch of the day, and this has been taken to show loyalty to the successors of either Sulaqa or Bar Mama, depending on which patriarch is named.²² Even if the naming of a patriarch does usually suggest a tie of loyalty, it does not enable us to infer anything about that individual scribe’s *beliefs*, particularly their doctrinal beliefs; many factors, including location, tribal or family allegiances, or local politics could conceivably influence a scribe’s attachment to a particular patriarch. What is more, it is clear that some scribes had ties to figures on both sides of the schism, suggesting that loyalties could be mixed.²³ These methodological challenges may in fact help us to think more carefully about the different possible levels of ‘confessionalization’, from polemics, explicit or implicit, by rival religious leaders, to the development of more elaborate professions of faith, to the asserting of strict boundaries between different religious groups, and to the sincere uptake of a confessional mindset by lay believers. The Chaldean schism therefore becomes a useful test case for exploring the utility of ‘confessionalization’ as an analytical concept in cases of religious groups with little political power and for whom only limited evidence survives.

THE CHALDEANS

The fledgling Chaldean church was in a precarious position immediately after the schism of 1552. Its initiators had broken with centuries of tradition in sending their patriarch to seek ordination from the pope, who was a controversial as well as geographically distant legitimizing authority. Their rival patriarch, Bar Mama, had, in contrast, all the trappings of traditional legitimacy behind him, as well as, seemingly, the ear of the local authorities. The Chaldeans urgently needed, therefore, to cement their church and to confirm the loyalty of its followers by establishing a powerful justificatory ideology and narrative which could challenge their opponents’ claims to unquestioned legitimacy. Their need to distinguish themselves from the church from which they had seceded might seem to provide an ideal context for confession-ization to occur, as boundaries were established between the communities. Scraps

²¹ See below section 2 on the ‘traditionalists’.

²² This is the methodological approach of Wilmshurst’s important study, *Ecclesiastical Organisation* (see p. 9 which refers to colophons as often providing the ‘only evidence for...the allegiances of individual villages’).

²³ See below.

of evidence suggest that the Chaldeans did endeavour to demonstrate the superiority of the authority of their church line, and to foster a communal identity. It is less clear from the sources, however, whether this process of distinction from their rivals and of identity formation took a fully confessional form, that is to say whether it related to the differentiation of beliefs and doctrines as well as to arguments over proper religious authority. The most lengthy and detailed Chaldean source from this period is a trio of poems written about Yohannan Sulaqa by his successor, ‘Abdisho’ of Gazarta.²⁴ I have argued elsewhere that the first of these poems contains an elaborate apologetic for the decision to send Sulaqa to Rome, in terms which reveal the instability of the Chaldean position.²⁵ The other most extensive surviving body of Chaldean evidence consists of letters, petitions, and reports in Rome, but these are written for a Roman audience in western languages and therefore are of limited utility in assessing domestic debates in Mesopotamia. Similarly, sources written by Europeans about the Chaldeans can provide some insights, but they are affected by European confessional concerns. Apart from this, scraps of evidence from manuscripts, in the form of scribal notes and colophons, can add to the picture of evolving Chaldean rhetoric and ideology, which seems to have rested, in its initial phases, on a few key points.

First, and most importantly, the Chaldean case for legitimacy was predicated on papal primacy (something which long been debated within the Church of the East); on the traditional status of the see of Rome within the Church and on the pope’s position as the heir of St Peter.²⁶ These claims are repeatedly backed up by references both to the Bible and to canon law. ‘Abdisho’ of Gazarta emphasises this in the most explicitly apologetic part of his first poem on Sulaqa, noting that God made Peter the head of the disciples, and that his see is therefore the first see, and that the Council of Nicaea enshrined the authority of the papacy.²⁷ Elsewhere in this poem he also refers to the pope sitting on Peter’s golden throne, and to the Roman ordination ceremony being directly transmitted from Peter.²⁸ ‘Abdisho’ was not the only Chaldean to press this theme. The scribe of Borgiano Siriaco 21, one of the manuscripts of ‘Abdisho’’s poems, copied in his manuscript an excerpted series of canonical texts

²⁴ I am currently preparing an edition and English translation of these poems. They are discussed and translated into French in Vosté, ‘Mar Ioḥannan Soulaqa’. When I cite them subsequently in this article, I quote my edition, but with folio references to the oldest extant manuscript of the poems, today in the B[ibliotheca] A[postolica] V[aticana], Vat. sir. 45. All translations of texts quoted are my own unless specified otherwise.

²⁵ Parker, ‘Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging’, part IV.

²⁶ On earlier debates in the Church of the East about the position of the papacy, see Murrevan den Berg, ‘The Church of the East’, pp. 306–309; Teule, ‘Autonomie patriarcale’, pp. 65–82.

²⁷ Poem 1 verses 218–223, BAV Vat. sir. 45, fols 151v–152r.

²⁸ Poem 1 verses 210–213, BAV Vat. sir. 45, fol. 151r. I discuss this passage in more detail in ‘Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging’, pp. 17–18. Several shorter poems attributed to ‘Abdisho’ in praise of popes survive, and have recently been edited by Pritula, ‘Abdišo’ of Gazarta’, pp. 374–391.

through the connection to Saint Peter). Some of these figures are identifiable with known fathers of the East Syrian church; in no case, however, is there known to be any historical connection between them and the Roman see.³² The scribe of Borgiano Siriaco 21 copies a variant of this list after his collection of texts on papal primacy, with the caption ‘anyone who doubts about the greatness of the honour and the ordination of the patriarch of Rome, let him know these things which are written’; he names the same figures as ‘Abdisho’, but adds Yohannan Sulaqa himself at the end.³³ Whereas ‘Abdisho’ states that most of these patriarchs were ordained in Antioch, the scribe of Borgiano Siriaco 21 states that they were ordained ‘by the see of the Romans’,³⁴ glossing over the precise geographical location but certainly suggesting that they were a direct precedent for Sulaqa and his successors. They seem, perhaps deliberately, to have muddled the Antiochene and Roman sees to prove their apologetic and polemical point, that their actions had a long tradition within their church heritage.

Early Chaldean ideology was not only focused on the primacy of Peter. After Yohannan Sulaqa’s apparently violent death, his supporters lauded him as a martyr. His martyrdom is the main theme of ‘Abdisho’ of Gazarta’s second and third poems on Sulaqa. ‘Abdisho’ compares Sulaqa to many persecuted Christian heroes of the past, and even to Christ himself. He emphasises Sulaqa’s sufferings, worthy of martyrdom: ‘the sufferings and torments and afflictions and punishments, frightening and terrible, which this chief of rulers endured, are inexpressible in speech.’³⁵ He tells us that Sulaqa has been crowned with the double crown of martyrdom and of priesthood; that he has been purified by the furnace of trial; that he has offered his body and blood as a libation to the Lord; that his soul was resolute in the battle with Satan; that he will rest in heaven with those killed by the sword and will fly on high with the martyrs.³⁶ Blame for his death is placed squarely on Shem’on bar Mama, his rival as patriarch, rather than on the local governor who actually ordered the execution; Bar Mama is compared to various historic oppressors of persecuted Christians.³⁷ As in some other contemporary martyr texts, therefore, Sulaqa appears not simply as a Christian martyr to an Ottoman oppressor, but as a victim of an internecine Christian dispute.³⁸ The Chaldean bishop Eliya Asmar Habib and the Dominican papal envoy Ambrosius Buttigieg both also described Sulaqa as a martyr in separate accounts to the papacy.³⁹ It is very difficult to assess, however, whether any cult of Sulaqa ever emerged domestically in Mesopotamia; no sign of this survives in the

³² On this passage, and for another explanation for the seeming confusion, see Habbi, ‘Signification de l’union chaldéenne’, pp. 201–203.

³³ BAV Borg. sir. 21, p. 221.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Poem 2 Verse 69, Vat. sir. 45, fol. 165v.

³⁶ Poem 2, verses 80, 87, 90, 92, 97, 98, Vat. sir. 45, fols 166r–167v.

³⁷ Poem 2, verses 55–68, Vat. sir. 45, fols 164v–165v.

³⁸ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, p. 148.

³⁹ They are edited in Beltrami, *Chiesa caldea*, pp. 149–150, 200.

sources. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Chaldean leadership, within years of the schism, had developed stories, traditions and rhetoric which had the potential to form a strong sense of identity and group loyalty.

It is much harder to assess the success and reach of these arguments: did their impact extend beyond the textual arena of polemic and apologetic to encourage a cohesive group identity? This is particularly difficult to establish given the limited scope of the extant sources, which mostly originate with 'Abdisho' of Gazarta or his immediate circle. Reports written for the papacy by both Chaldeans and western envoys contain much relevant material here, but this must be treated with caution, as it was in the interest of their authors to present their efforts to promote loyalty to the papacy as much as possible. Yohannan Sulaqa himself wrote to Julius III after his return to the East in 1553. He claims that, upon stopping in Amida (Diyarbakır), he showed to the citizens the pope's letters, which they 'kissed and received graciously and rejoiced at as being like letters of the Apostles; and so they have preached your name in all the churches, and similarly announced it to all the bishops and to many other people'.⁴⁰ Later reports by western envoys went further, in suggesting that a true Chaldean identity, sharply differentiated from the 'Nestorian' heresy of Bar Mama's followers, had come into existence. Antoninus Zahara, the other Dominican envoy sent by the pope to Mesopotamia with Sulaqa in 1553, reported, after his return to Rome in 1563, that

'in Mesopotamia, Assyria and Chaldaea, to which [the two Dominicans] had been sent in particular, they introduced obedience to the Holy Roman Church and to its Highest Pontifex, whose Most Holy Name is now held in the greatest veneration there; and staying there for three years...and teaching those people who professed the error of Nestorius, who were named from Nestorius, and educating them with sincerity in the Catholic faith, they purged them from the aforesaid error, so that they loathe the name of Nestorius, and want to be called Chaldeans.'⁴¹

A later Roman envoy, Leonard Abel, who was sent to Mesopotamia in 1583, reported to Pope Sixtus V upon his return in 1587 that Sulaqa's followers called themselves 'eastern Chaldeans of Assyria', and that before Sulaqa's untimely death he had 'confirmed all his people in the same obedience to the holy Roman church. He removed the invocation of Nestorius which the Deacon made in the Church. He published the profession of the holy Catholic faith brought from Rome, and he began already to draw other Nestorians to his devotion and obedience to the Apostolic See.'⁴²

Zahara and Abel's reports are particularly interesting, in that they suggest not only that these eastern Christians had a distinctive 'Chaldean' identity and a strong

⁴⁰ Beltrami, *Chiesa caldea*, p. 147 (translation mine).

⁴¹ Vosté, 'Missio duorum fratrum melitensium O.P. in orientem saeculo XVI'; p. 271.

⁴² 'Confermò tutti i suoi nella istessa obediencia della s[an]ta Rom[ana] chiesa. Fece levare la invocazione che faceva il Diacono in chiesa di Nestorio. Pubblicò la professione della s[an]ta fede cat[holi]ca portata da Roma, et incomenzava già tirare delli altri Nestoriani alla sua devotione et obediencia della Sede Ap[osto]lica': Abel's report is preserved in the A[rchivio] S[egreto] V[aticano], AA. Arm. I-XVIII, 3095, quote at fol. 11r.

sense of loyalty to the pope, but that this involved a sharply defined theological and liturgical position, predicated on a Catholic profession of faith, clearly differentiated from that of the Nestorian Church. If accurate, this would suggest that a true Chaldean ‘confession’ had come into existence. There are, however, reasons for caution. Admittedly, few eastern sources survive to give insights into this question, particularly at the level of the lower clergy and of the laity. But the Chaldeans’ own writings from this period do not suggest a straightforward adoption of ‘Catholic’ theology or liturgy even at the top of the church hierarchy. In Rome, orthodox Catholic professions of faith survive attributed to both Sulaqa and ‘Abdisho’ of Gazarta.⁴³ But these were intended for a western audience, and domestic Mesopotamian sources offer a rather different picture: ‘Abdisho’^c’s Syriac writings and manuscripts still refer to ‘Nestorian’ saints and contain ‘Nestorian’ liturgical elements.⁴⁴ There seems to have been a degree of ambiguity and complexity in the Chaldeans’ response to Catholic doctrine; they may have been more willing to embrace some aspects of Catholicism than others.⁴⁵ Buttigieg and Abel, writing from a western Catholic perspective, may well have imposed more clear-cut confessional paradigms on the eastern Christians whom they encountered than those eastern Christians themselves would have recognised. ‘Abdisho’ and his circle undoubtedly promoted a form of community belonging for their supporters based on Sulaqa’s martyrdom and the historical primacy of the papacy as a source of Christian authority, but it is far from certain that this was a ‘confessional’ identity based on a clearly defined set of doctrines.⁴⁶ Processes of differentiation and identity formation do not necessarily take a confessional form. I will return to eastern Christian perceptions of confessional differences at the end of the paper, but, first, will turn to analysing that part of the East Syrian Church which did *not* in this period accept papal supremacy.

THE ‘TRADITIONALISTS’

Unfortunately, even less evidence survives from the traditionalist side of the conflict than from the Chaldean side, and nothing which deals with the schism directly. Nonetheless, telling fragments of evidence do point to significant developments in this period, as elements of the church’s traditions were transformed, and others were defined more sharply. Professions of faith seem to have become a matter of concern, which might reflect an increasingly ‘confessional’ mindset. This probably happened, in part, in response to the challenge posed by the Chaldeans, but as aspects of it may have started before the schism, it may also relate to other underlying factors and to wider societal trends. The traditionalist church thus stands as an important reminder

⁴³ On the surviving professions of faith attributed to Sulaqa and ‘Abdisho’, see Teule, ‘Les professions de foi de Jean Sullāqā’, pp. 259–269; see also Parker, ‘Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging’, pp. 1429–1430.

⁴⁴ See Vosté, ‘Catholiques ou nestoriens?’, pp. 515–523.

⁴⁵ Parker, ‘Ambiguities of Belief and Belonging’, part V.

⁴⁶ For an important discussion of the nature and limits of Sulaqa’s followers’ sense of identity in this period, see Girling, *The Chaldean Catholic Church*, 101.8 to 110.8 and passim.

that eastern Christian identities, even among the antique churches, were historically determined and subject to change. The Chaldeans did not break away from a static, timeless church which preserved its eternal traditions unchanged; rather, both lines evolved and fluctuated, at least in part in response to each other.

One development, which is very clearly linked to the Chaldean schism, relates to the names of the patriarchs. Historically the patriarchs of the Church of the East had used a variety of names, but in the centuries preceding the Chaldean schism, two had become dominant: either 'Eliya' or 'Shem'on.' After the schism, however, the use of these names divided: Yohannan Sulaqa and his Chaldean successors adopted the patriarchal name Shem'on,⁴⁷ whereas the traditionalist successors of Shem'on bar Mama switched to using, exclusively, the patriarchal name Eliya.⁴⁸ This must relate to some conscious or unconscious process of differentiation between the two parties, which became a new tradition. This distinction persisted even after the successors of Sulaqa fell out of communion with Rome, so that it becomes possible to speak of the Shem'on line and the Eliya line. The 'traditionalist' party also seems in this period to have professed more assertively, in some contexts, its Christological profession of faith. At the important monastery of Rabban Hormizd, near Alqosh in northern Iraq, which became the patriarchal seat of the traditionalist line around the middle of the sixteenth century, there survives a series of finely carved funerary inscriptions for the patriarchs from the late fifteenth through to the early nineteenth century.⁴⁹ All these inscriptions contain a profession of faith attributed to the deceased patriarch, written in the first person, although they are largely formulaic; most of the text is the same across the surviving inscriptions. They contain a distinctively 'Nestorian' profession of faith, that is to say, they use the Christological formulation which was only accepted by the Church of the East, stating that Christ had two *qnōmē*.⁵⁰ The first inscription is dated to 1497; there is then a gap for the next two patriarchs, before the sequence resumes with the death of Shem'on VI in 1538, to continue uninterrupted until 1804. Why did these professions, seemingly, start in 1497? A note of caution must be sounded, since it is not impossible that similar tombstones existed for earlier patriarchs who were buried elsewhere, but there is no evidence that this was the case. The tombstones seem to suggest a conscious effort to project East Syrian theology and to associate the patriarchs with a specific doctrinal position.

What is certain is that the funerary inscriptions on the patriarchal tombs changed, and became more elaborate, in the later sixteenth century, after the Chaldean schism. The first three extant inscriptions for Shem'on IV (d.1497), Shem'on VI (d.1538) and Shem'on VII bar Mama (d.1558) all bear the same Christological

⁴⁷ Except, seemingly, for 'Abdisho' of Gazarta, who continued to use his pre-patriarchal name.

⁴⁸ On the various patriarchal lines in the early modern period, see Murre-van den Berg, 'Patriarchs of the Church of the East', pp. 235–264.

⁴⁹ These were edited in Vosté, 'Les inscriptions de Rabban Hormizd', pp. 263–316 and have been re-edited in Harrak, *Syriac and Garshuni Inscriptions of Iraq*, vol. I, pp. 482–502. See also Harrak, 'Patriarchal Funerary Inscriptions', pp. 293–309.

⁵⁰ On Church of the East theology see above note 4.

formula. But from the inscription of Shemʿon VII's long-reigning successor, Eliya VI (d.1591), the profession is extended and altered, as a comparison of the two texts shows:⁵¹

| Early formula (1497–1538) | Extended formula (1591 onwards) |
|---|---|
| <p>As soon as I existed—I Mar Shemʿon the Catholicos [patriarch of the East]—God the First Light I came to know. I confessed and believed in His Son Jesus Christ: complete God and complete Man, two natures, two <i>qnōmē</i>, and one <i>parsōpā</i>. I loved His Spirit. I paid homage to His cross. I shared His Body and Blood. And I died in the hope that He may raise me up.</p> | <p>Since I—Mar Eliya Patriarch of the East by Grace—existed, I confessed the three persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—One true God and eternal Nature. I believed in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, conjointly complete God and complete Man, two natures, two <i>qnōmē</i>, in one <i>parsōpā</i> of one Sonship and one Will—he suffered, was crucified and was buried, but he rose up on the third day as is written, and he ascended to Heaven to his Father. I paid homage to his living and life-giving Cross and partook his body and blood in the hope of the forgiveness of my sins.</p> |

The classical 'Nestorian' formulation of Christ's two *qnōmē* is retained (although someone has at an unknown date tried to erase it from Eliya VI's inscription),⁵² but more details and elaboration are added. In general these might seem to tend towards emphasising Christ's unity ('conjointly' is added, as is the reference to the 'One Sonship' and the 'One Will'), but these are traditional Church of the East formulations fully in line with their two *qnōmē* theology.⁵³ It is tempting to associate this more elaborate formula with a heightened awareness about professions and doctrinal formulae in the aftermath of the schism, and in the context of direct contacts with Catholicism: during the patriarchate of Eliya VI (1558/9–1591) the traditionalist line had also entered into communication with the papacy and offered a profession of faith to Rome (which was, however, rejected as heterodox).⁵⁴ It could therefore be a strong assertion of Nestorian orthodoxy in the face of the Chaldean threat, or a demonstration to Eliya's followers that, despite conversations with Rome, he still professed their traditional faith, or, it could reflect more generally an interest in confessional details at this time.

⁵¹ The translations are from Harrak, *Syriac and Garshuni Inscriptions*, vol. I, pp. 483–489. I have made some slight changes (on the basis of the text edited by Harrak in the same pages).

⁵² Harrak, *Syriac and Garshuni Inscriptions*, vol. I, p. 489.

⁵³ Although theologians from the Church of East refer as here to Christ's 'one will', this was interpreted as meaning two wills acting as one—they condemned the doctrine of monothelism, the belief that Christ had only one will. For discussion see Rassi, 'Justifying Christianity in the Islamic Middle Ages', p. 168 and footnote 130.

⁵⁴ Eliya VI's letter and profession is edited in Giamil, *Genuinae Relationes*, pp. 492–510.

Also interesting in this context is a striking text published by Addai Scher on the basis of a now-lost manuscript from Siirt.⁵⁵ The text purports to be a profession of faith which Nestorian bishops had to recite before their ordination. No other version of this text, to my knowledge, survives. The oath, which is in a generalized format to be adapted by the particular person taking the oath ('I, the weak so and so, priest and monk in name, since I was chosen by the inhabitants of such-and-such the blessed diocese...'), combines a strong focus on a sincere faith in traditional East Syrian orthodoxy, and the anathematization of all those who did not profess this, with an emphasis on obedience and loyalty to the patriarch:

I confess, the weak so-and-so, and I believe, in my heart and in my mind secretly, and in my mouth and my tongue openly, in one divine nature ... [Christ] has one will, one power, and he is proclaimed in two natures, and two *qnōmē*, one *parsōpā* of the sonship, as the holy Apostles taught, and as the spiritual fathers transmitted, [the fathers] Mar Diodorus, Mar Theodorus, and Mar Nestorius, who attained the truth, and according to the charge and permission of our blessed fathers: Mar Ephrem, Mar Narsai, Mar Abraham, with the rest of the orthodox Fathers, who excelled in this eastern region... I anathematise and I reject all the beliefs of other confessions/sects which are alien to this orthodox confession which I hold; and I do not accept any of the heresies, which are not in accord with the true doctrine of the orthodox easterners.

I also say, with a free will, duly and fittingly, that I am the lowly disciple and true servant of our Father and our Lord, the holy and blessed Mar such and such, Catholicos Patriarch of the East...I am subject to his command; I perform his will; and I follow everything that he commands.

The end of the text, as published by Scher, runs: 'I wrote it in the month of Tamūz in the year 1859 of the Greeks (July 1548); or in the month so and so of the year such and such of the Greeks. Glory to God. It is finished, the confession of the bishops'. This date of 1548 may well reflect the date of composition of the text, although this is not certain, in view of the loss of the manuscript and lack of other copies of the oath. But it is very interesting that such a markedly confessional text, with an apparently proud pro-eastern rhetoric and a strong sense of division from other, 'heretical', confessions, survives attributed to a date shortly preceding the schism, at a time, judging from the Rabban Hormizd inscriptions, of a more extroverted assertion of confessions in Syriac.

One other feature of the longer Rabban Hormizd inscription deserves attention. The opening reference to the patriarch changes from 'the catholicos' or, in some versions, the 'catholicos patriarch' to 'the patriarch *by Grace* [emphasis mine].' This could be due simply to the more elaborate style of the longer inscription, but it is also possible that it fits into a wider contemporary proliferation of a legitimizing rhetoric based on claims about divine involvement in the selection of the patriarchs. The traditionalist patriarchs had not been forced, before the schism, to develop an

⁵⁵ Scher, 'Traité d'Isaï le docteur et de Hnana d'Adiabène', pp. 82–91.

elaborate ideology of legitimacy (even after they had turned towards hereditary succession, seemingly in the fifteenth century).⁵⁶ After the schism, however, and in the face of the Chaldeans' polemics in favour of papal authority and against hereditary succession, they and their supporters may have needed to justify their position more carefully. Certainly, although space will not permit a detailed exploration here, in some of the colophons written by traditionalist scribes in the later sixteenth century we find language which seems preoccupied with legitimacy. This includes repeated references to God being the one who had chosen the traditionalist patriarch and bishops (including one striking reference to a patriarch being chosen 'from the womb');⁵⁷ invocations of orthodox Nestorianism and the exalted status of the eastern see; and vivid horticultural language relating to descent and generation (sprouting, springing, from the roots).⁵⁸ Again, there is a risk in putting too much weight in fairly limited evidence, given the lack of any extended polemics or apologetics against the Chaldeans written by traditionalists, but it does seem possible that the traditionalists were forced to respond to the Chaldean challenge by developing a more comprehensive and assertive ideology of divinely-favoured patriarchal rule. Between these different scraps of evidence, it certainly seems that the 'traditionalist' party was also evolving in this period, largely in dialogue and rivalry with the Chaldeans, and that this involved processes of confessional elaboration, and the stronger assertion of intercommunal boundaries.

CONTEXT AND LIMITATIONS OF CONFESSIONALIZATION

The interconnected evolution of the Chaldean and traditionalist churches must be viewed in a regional and transregional context. It is clear that contact with Catholicism was crucial. Not only did the Catholic Church provide a source of support for the Chaldean leadership, but it may also have spurred the development of elaborate professions of faith and encouraged the assertion of 'traditional' beliefs against the Catholic threat. The traditionalist Eliya VI's initiative in the late sixteenth century to send a profession of faith to the Romans suggests that the possibility of papal support could encourage inter-confessional rivalry. The Ottoman setting is also important. At a simple level, the incorporation of Mesopotamia into the Ottoman empire may have enabled the Chaldeans to turn to Rome for support, since it facilitated long distance travel.⁵⁹ In addition, it is possible that, as has been discussed in other contexts, eastern Christians were motivated to turn towards western Catholics in the hope that they would provide a source of protection against possible Ottoman oppression.

⁵⁶ On the beginnings of hereditary succession, see Carlson, *Christianity in Fifteenth-Century Iraq*, Chapter 8.

⁵⁷ Cambridge Add. 1988 (from 1558), fol. 168; see Carlson, *Christianity in Fifteenth-Century Iraq*, p. 218.

⁵⁸ MS Kirkuk Chaldean Archdiocese 56 (from 1568), available online at HMML.org, ACK 00056, colophon on fols 104v–107r.

⁵⁹ Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, p. 30, discusses the rise in pilgrimages to Jerusalem after the Ottoman conquests; Sulaqa travelled to Rome via Jerusalem.

Sulaqa reported in his letter to Julius III that the Venetian consul at Aleppo had come with him to meet the Sultan, and had helped to persuade him to issue an order to all the potentates 'who are in our land' that no one should do any harm to the Chaldeans, but should help and honour them.⁶⁰ The rival Christian confessions could also appeal to the Ottoman and Kurdish authorities against each other, as Shem'on bar Mama allegedly did against Sulaqa. For minority communities in a potentially insecure societal position, competition for political support could undoubtedly heighten tensions further.

Less clear is how far the developments in these Syriac churches related to any kind of broader process of confessionalization across Ottoman society and beyond, in which all communities became increasingly exclusive and assertive in defining their beliefs and their differences from other religious groups. This is difficult to assess because of the paucity of extant sources and the necessity to rely on fragments which can give only glimpses into aspects of the development of the churches. Yet the sources that do survive suggest that, in fact, the Syriac Christians had not formed a fully confessional mind-set; they did not all view religion in terms of strict, clearly defined, and mutually exclusive religious communities. We must remember, again, that, despite the claims of western Catholic observers, the Chaldeans do not seem to have formed a coherent doctrinal position at this point that differentiated them from the traditionalists. No Chaldean writings contain any sense that they had 'converted' from their previous beliefs. This is very different from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the emergence of a Chaldean church in Diyarbakır under patriarch Yawsep I, when its members speak clearly of converting from the Nestorian heresy to the true Catholic faith: the Chaldean bishop 'Abd al-Ahad, in a biography of Yawsep written in 1719, refers to Yawsep being moved by the holy spirit to overthrow the heresy of Nestorianism, of heretics being enlightened and converting to orthodoxy, and of Yawsep as a beacon of light who burst through the dark clouds of heresy; the text also contains sustained polemic against 'Nestorian' beliefs.⁶¹

None of this language has any parallel in the literature produced by the sixteenth-century Chaldeans in the context of Sulaqa's schism. Indeed, Sulaqa's

⁶⁰ Beltrami, *Chiesa caldea*, pp. 147–148.

⁶¹ On the formation of the Chaldean Church under patriarch Yawsep I of Amida (d.1696) see Lampart, *Ein Märtyrer der Union mit Rom*, and Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, pp. 60–68. The principal Chaldean (as opposed to western Catholic) source for these events is the biography of Yawsep I by 'Abd al-Ahad, completed in 1719, and therefore an early, if not contemporary, Chaldean interpretation of events. Importantly, although 'Abd al-Ahad may draw upon an earlier account of Yawsep's career written by a Capuchin monk (edited in Lampart, *Ein Märtyrer*, document XV, pp. 252–261), he appears to have added in these references to conversion and illumination himself, and they can thus be taken as a Chaldean perspective on the events. 'Abd al-Ahad's biography is published in French translation by J-B. Chabot, 'Les Origines du patriarcat chaldéen', pp. 66–90; the autograph manuscript of the text is available on HMML, number CCM 00012 (see fols 274r, 287r, 289v–291v, for examples of language relating to conversion/illumination/heresy). For discussion of the text see Lampart, *Ein Märtyrer*, pp. 105–106. See also on the later Chaldeans Ghobrial's paper in this volume.

Chaldeans never make any explicit acknowledgement of a difference between their beliefs and those of their rivals; the main point emphasised is the greater legitimacy of their patriarch. Texts, manuscripts, and people seem to have crossed boundaries between the Chaldeans and the traditionalists, and sometimes also between other Syriac Christian communities. Contemporary manuscripts survive that contain both Chaldean and traditionalist texts, suggesting that their copyists and owners had interests that crossed these boundaries. The most prolific scribe of the period, Ataya bar Faraj, repeatedly refers to the traditionalist patriarch as the reigning patriarch in his colophons, and consequently has been taken to belong to the traditionalist hierarchy.⁶² Yet he also had links to Chaldeans; he was commissioned to copy a Gospel manuscript for the ‘Nestorian Church’ in Jerusalem by the Chaldean bishop Eliya Asmar Habib;⁶³ he copied a manuscript on the basis of an autograph copy by ‘Abdisho’ of Gazarta;⁶⁴ and in one colophon he appears to describe himself as a ‘disciple’ of ‘Abdisho’ of Gazarta.⁶⁵ Personal links thus seem to have transcended church boundaries.⁶⁶ At least in some settings ‘Abdisho’ of Gazarta himself seems to have had a fairly open-minded, even ecumenical, approach to members of other Christian confessions, including the Syrian Orthodox, who professed a very different Christology from the Church of the East and were traditionally viewed by them as heretics.⁶⁷ ‘Abdisho’ owned two polemical books against the Syrian Orthodox—yet he seems himself to have composed poems in honour of some Syrian Orthodox figures.⁶⁸ He copied a grammatical treatise in a Syrian Orthodox monastery, seemingly with the

⁶² Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, p. 114. Wilmshurst also suggests that Ataya worked for the traditionalist patriarch Eliya VI, on the basis that he was witness to his profession of faith sent to the pope in 1585, but this document only names ‘the priest Ataya’ so cannot securely be identified with Ataya bar Faraj (Giamil, *Genuinae Relationes*, p. 510).

⁶³ Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana Borg. sir. 169.

⁶⁴ The manuscript is preserved in Mardin and available online via HMML, number CCM 00024.

⁶⁵ The manuscript is preserved in Thrissur, India, MS Syr 57, fol. 118v; I thank István Perczel and Radu Mustață for bringing it to my attention.

⁶⁶ Anton Pritula has discussed links between Ataya and Chaldeans and argued more broadly that there were links in literary circles between Chaldeans and traditionalists: Pritula, ‘East Syriac Literary Life in the mid-16th century’, pp. 89–107; Pritula, ‘Abdišō’ of Gazartā’, pp. 297–320, esp. 311–316.

⁶⁷ In the Middle Ages some members of the Church of the East and Syrian Orthodox Church had also, at least in some contexts, expressed fairly ecumenical attitudes towards the other Syriac Christian churches: see for the Syrian Orthodox, Teule, ‘It is Not Right to Call Ourselves Orthodox’, pp. 13–27; Hage, ‘Ecumenical Aspects of Barhebraeus’ Christology’, pp. 103–109, and for the East Syrians, Rassi, ‘Between *‘Asabiyya* and Ecumenism’, pp. 169–186. I thank Salam Rassi for bringing these articles to my attention.

⁶⁸ ‘Abdisho’ wrote a list of his books in a manuscript of St Mark’s Monastery in Jerusalem, MS 116, fol. 140v. MS. Diyarbakır 95 (now available digitally via HMML, number CCM 00398) contains several poems attributed to him with Syrian Orthodox subjects; on fol. 248v, for example, there is an acrostic poem on the accession of a new Syrian Orthodox patriarch.

assistance of some Syrian Orthodox monks.⁶⁹ He also, in his first poem on Sulaqa, described Sulaqa receiving blessings from the churches of many different Christian confessions in Jerusalem, including the Syrian Orthodox. In 1701 the Chaldean patriarch Yawsep I copied ‘Abdisho’s poems but omitted this verse as well as the poems’ Nestorian references, suggesting that it was offensive to a more confessionally-rigorous Chaldean.⁷⁰ ‘Abdisho’s relatively open-minded attitude may help to explain how the Chaldeans could accept union with the Catholics without, necessarily, adopting all their views on liturgy, the sanctoral, and doctrine.

What is more, fear of the Ottomans and contact with Catholicism could encourage cross-confessional Syriac Christian cooperation, as well as rivalry. ‘Abdisho of Gazarta, fearful lest he would meet the same fate as Sulaqa, successfully sought the protection of the Syrian Orthodox patriarch, Ignatius Ni‘matallah, from the Ottomans; Ni‘matallah claimed to be well-connected in Ottoman society (an important reminder that Christian-Ottoman relations were not always hostile).⁷¹ In 1576 Ni‘matallah was forced to abdicate and flee to Rome, where he acted as a nodal point between east and west; he continued to communicate not only with members of his own Church but with both Chaldeans and ‘traditionalists’.⁷² He seems on occasion to have invoked some form of cross-confessional eastern Christianity identity; he wrote to the Chaldean bishop Eliya Asmar Habib, who was visiting Rome, to tell him to interact with the Roman Christians as little as possible and only to confide and trust in Ni‘matallah himself ‘as you are not familiar with the habits of the people of this land and with their nature’.⁷³ Despite doctrinal and liturgical differences, and historical rivalry, the Syriac Christians could in some contexts feel—or at least plausibly claim to feel, if they felt it to be useful—closer to each other than to more ‘distant’ others, be they European Catholics or local Muslims.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ As attested in the colophon to a manuscript from the Chaldean Diocese of Alqosh, available online via the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, project number DCA 00067, fols 112v–114r. See Pritula ‘‘Abdišō of Gāzartā’’, pp. 297–320.

⁷⁰ Poem 1, Verse 75; BAV Vat. sir. 45, fol. 140r. BAV Vat. sir. 63 contains a version of the poems and was copied in 1701 by Yawsep I. For Yawsep’s variations, see the notes to Vosté, ‘Mar Iohānnan Soulaqa’.

⁷¹ In a document edited in Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, XI: 1577–1580, pp. 866–867.

⁷² On Ni‘matallah’s career see esp. Levi della Vida, *Documenti*, pp. 1–113 and Hayek, *Le relazioni*: Part 2. Ni‘matallah was patriarch from 1557 until his abdication in 1576, whereupon he fled to Rome, and lived in Italy until his death in c. 1587. On his ongoing connections with members of various eastern churches, including also the Armenian church, see Krajcar, *Cardinal Giulio Santoro*, pp. 38, 49–50, 91; Borbone and Farina, ‘New Documents’, pp. 179–189.

⁷³ Borbone and Farina, ‘New Documents’, p. 182 (with slight adjustment to the translation by me).

⁷⁴ For further discussion of interactions between the Syriac churches, see Parker, ‘Interconnected Histories’.

CONCLUSION

The bishop ‘Abd al-Ahad provided near the beginning of his biography of the Chaldean patriarch Yawsep I a garbled account of the schism of 1552, implicitly presenting it as the foundational stage of his own Chaldean church.⁷⁵ Sulaqa has in this way often been imagined as the first Chaldean patriarch.⁷⁶ But it is far from clear that the events of 1552 witnessed the birth of a new confession. The schism (which probably had its roots in still obscure internal disputes within the Church of the East) did cause a permanent fracturing of political control and legitimacy with the East Syrian tradition, and this did of necessity prompt some processes of differentiation and polemicalising between the two parties. This may have encouraged a more active interest in professions of faith and the strong defense of ‘Nestorian’ beliefs, at least on the ‘traditionalist’ side. Ultimately, however, this process does not seem to have been accompanied by a clear crystallization of doctrines and confessional mindsets. Beliefs and boundaries remained fluid and changes reversible and subject to historical contingency. We must not forget that union between the successors of Sulaqa and ‘Abdisho’ and Rome lapsed at the start of the seventeenth century, in a further indication that they had not fully embraced a Catholic confession. A Carmelite missionary, Dionysius of Thorns, who visited a later patriarch of Sulaqa’s line, Shem’on XI, in 1652, reported that this community, although respectful of the pope and open to the missionaries’ overtures, had no memory of the terms of their union with the papacy and still venerated Nestorius.⁷⁷ This serves as a useful reminder that not only were the eastern Christian ‘confessions’ not historically fixed and unchanging entities, but fluid and subject to evolution and transformation, but also that boundaries and relations between communities could shift, harden and soften over time.⁷⁸ The processes of reversal, of the softening and blurring of boundaries, of the lapsing of confessional changes, deserve as much attention as does the hardening of confessional lines.

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⁷⁵ Chabot, ‘Origines du patriarcat’, p. 69.

⁷⁶ The process of the fashioning of a Chaldean lineage, by both western Catholics and Chaldeans themselves, deserves further study. As noted above (see note 70) Yawsep I himself copied ‘Abdisho’'s poems in a manuscript now surviving in Rome, suggesting an interest in Sulaqa. See now Parker, ‘Yawsep I of Amida’.

⁷⁷ Chick, *A Chronicle of Carmelites in Persia*, pp. 383–385.

⁷⁸ See Heyberger, as cited above note 8.

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15. FROM DOCTRINAL PERSUASION TO ECONOMIC THREATS: PAOLO PIROMALLI'S MISSIONARY WORK AMONG THE ARMENIANS AND HIS CONVERSION STRATEGIES¹

PAOLO LUCCA

INTRODUCTION

Preaching in Armenia is like trying to break off small branches, which would join again later. Toiling here [in Yerevan, next to the Armenian Catholicos] is like removing the soil to eradicate the tree.²

These words, written in 1634 by the Dominican missionary Fr. Paolo Piromalli, encapsulate his attitude towards Armenians (both Catholic and Apostolic) and his deep belief that his God-given mission was to work for the final union of the Armenian Church with the Roman. Indeed, for more than thirty years, between 1632 and 1664, Piromalli preached and toiled in various capacities among the Apostolic and Catholic Armenians in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, trying to turn the former from their 'heresy' and to eradicate from among the latter those liturgical practices and doctrinal beliefs which to him and to Rome appeared to be unorthodox. Still, he would see most of his efforts fail, notwithstanding the apologetic and triumphant tone of most of his letters and reports to the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, in which he often declared to be on the verge of negotiating the union with the Armenian Catholicos or other Armenian Apostolic high clergy. While his failure can be, in retrospect, partially credited to his 'rather difficult nature'³ and overzealousness, it is easy to recognize that it was wishful thinking to expect that the orthodoxy ratified at the

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² 'Predicar per l'Armenia è tentar alla rottura di ramuscoli, quali anco ritornarebbono ad unirsi; faticar cqui è cavar la terra per svellere l'albero dalle radici' (Piromalli, Letter to the Pope, APF, SOCG 59, fol. 211r).

³ Van den Oudenrijn, 'Bishops and Archbishops', p. 177.

Council of Trent (1545–1563) and intended primarily for solving the problems of European Christians⁴ could smoothly and without resistance be implemented in lands beyond Europe. In the early seventeenth century, however, the Church of Rome started an aggressive missionary policy towards Eastern Churches, with the aim of centralizing the administration and jurisdiction of missions. In 1622, Pope Gregory xv founded the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which was to supervise all missionary activities and regarded the Catholics of the Oriental Rite and their ‘dissident brethren’ more or less as one and the same:⁵ the ‘schismatics’ were obviously heretical, but, through the lens of the Latin-tailored orthodoxy, Eastern Catholics were also to be monitored and corrected due to their constant proximity to heresy.

Drawing on Piromalli’s letters and accounts, this paper will present the conversion strategies he adopted in his missionary work and what could be seen as a paradigm shift in his policy. In his *Account of his Own Successes*, written in 1637, Piromalli clearly embraced what at the time was a ‘classic’ approach: to discuss first the matter of the union with the local ecclesiastical hierarchies; then, when—as it often happened—this failed, to gather some disciples among the schismatics who would preach correct creed among local people on a more practical and day-to-day basis.⁶ However, in another account that Piromalli wrote in 1654, just a few months before being officially appointed the Archbishop of the Diocese of Nakhichevan, he claimed that although the Armenian ‘clergy was already educated and enlightened in the Catholic truths’, only the conversion of the wealthy Armenian merchant families of New Julfa could persuade other Armenians to embrace Catholicism. Since, as he wrote, ‘all missionary efforts are wasted’ in converting New Julfan Armenians, he maintained that it was necessary for the Pope to ask ‘the Princes of Venice and Tuscany’ to threaten the New Julfan merchants that they would be denied access to their ports, unless they chose to convert.⁷

This paper will consider this shift by discussing Piromalli’s attempts to bring the whole Armenian Church into union with Rome, including his role in the union of the Polish Armenian Church. It will also analyze his embracing of a more *Realpolitik* approach in light of the emerging Armenian merchant colony of New Julfa.

PROSELYTIZATION BY THEOLOGICAL DEMONSTRATION: PIROMALLI’S FIRST MISSION TO ARMENIA (1632–1637)

Piromalli was born in 1591 in Siderno, Calabria, and took his vows as a Dominican friar around 1610 at the Convent of Our Lady of the Annunciation in San Giorgio Morgeto. He studied in Naples and Soriano, and after 1628 left for Rome, where he became master of the novices at the Convent of S. Maria sopra Minerva. On October 10, 1630, he got his bachelor’s degree. He was said to be proficient in theology,

⁴ Flüchter, ‘Translating Catechisms’, pp. 5–6.

⁵ Dziob, *The Sacred Congregation*, p. 50.

⁶ Piromalli, *Relation de’ successi*, APF, SOCG 293, fols 24r–31r.

⁷ Piromalli, *Relazione trasmessa*, APF, SC Armeni, vol. 1, fols 13r–32r.

philosophy, logic, Latin, Greek, and a number of ‘oriental’ languages, among which was Armenian.⁸ On May 31, 1631, he was sent by *Propaganda Fide* as Apostolic Prefect to the Catholic missions of Eastern Armenia, where he arrived in April 1632.⁹ At that time, the region was under Safavid rule, since after 1603 Shah Abbas I reconquered Tabriz and Nakhichevan from the Ottomans. To discourage the Ottomans from invading and trying to win back the Safavid territories in the Caucasus, in

⁸ On the life and works of Paolo Piromalli, see Van den Oudenrijn, ‘Bishops and Archbishops’, pp. 176–180; Riggio, ‘Fra Paolo Piromalli’; Van den Oudenrijn, ‘De operibus Pauli Piromalli’; Van den Oudenrijn, *Linguae Haicanae Scriptores*, pp. 68–69; Eszer, ‘Sebastianus Knab’, pp. 221–234; Eszer, ‘Ôgostinos Baġeñç’, pp. 196–210, 231–233; Amatuni, ‘Oskan wrd. Erewanc’i’; Čemčemean, ‘The Activity of Brother Paolo Piromalli’; Čemčemean, ‘Paolo Piromalli Archbishop’; Longo, *Silvestro Bendici*; Longo, ‘Giovanni da Siderno’, pp. 292–294; Longo, ‘La “Relation de” successi”’; Busolini, ‘Piromalli, Paolo’; Halft, ‘Paolo Piromalli’; Windler, *Missionare in Persien*, pp. 312–317; Lucca, ‘Cleansing the Christian Vineyard’, pp. 48–54.

⁹ The establishment of a Catholic diocese in the territory of historical Armenia dates back to 1318, when the See of Maragha, in Persia, was entrusted to the Italian Dominican friar Bartolomeo de Podio. Tradition goes that a group of Armenian Apostolic monks from the K’rñay monastery—nowadays in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic—reached out to him and he successfully convinced them to unite with Rome, establishing an Armenian Catholic diocese in Nakhichevan. Between 1337 and 1344, the monks who had reached out to Bartholomew founded a new order, which was approved by Pope Innocent VI in 1356 and was given the name of *Ordo Fratrum unitorum S. Gregorii Illuminatoris*. These ‘unifying friars’ (*Fratres unitores* / *Ełbark’ miabanołk’*), accepted to give up the Armenian liturgic tradition for the Latin one, though continuing to use the Armenian language in the liturgy. They were subjected to the authority of the Dominican Master; still, they would remain an almost independent emanation of the *Societas Fratrum peregrinantium*—the Dominican missionary branch—for more than two centuries. Even if their diocese was ‘missionary’, at least nominally, they really engaged themselves in active missionary activities only in their first two generations. That was also the time when their number reached its peak: later sources speak of about 700 hundred unifying friars and some 50 convents in the mid-fourteenth century. Then, once the initial momentum and missionary fervor had run out, the *Fratres unitores* started occupying themselves mostly with administering their monasteries and parishioners, writing polemical works, and translating theological, philosophical, devotional, and liturgical works from Latin into Armenian. By the last quarter of the fourteenth century, their number was already reduced to less than a hundred friars: both the opposition of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the 1370s and the 1380s and the campaigns of Tamerlane at the end of the same century had a lot to do with this abrupt decline in their number. In 1583, as one of the results of the centralising tendencies of Counter-Reformation, the Dominican General Council decreed the suppression of the *Fratres unitores* as an independent Order and its absorption into the Dominican Order, and the Archdiocese of Nakhichevan became a Dominican province for all practical purposes. By that time, only 12 Catholic convents were left in the newly established *Provincia Nesciovaniensis Armenorum*. On the history of the *Fratres Unitores*, see Tournebize, ‘Les Frères-Unitours’; Van den Oudenrijn, ‘Unitours et Dominicains’; Van den Oudenrijn, *Linguae Haicanae Scriptores*; Delacroix-Besnier, ‘Les missions dominicaines’; Longo, ‘Relazioni d’Armenia’; Longo, ‘I domenicani nell’impero persiano’, especially pp. 35–44; Lucca, ‘La traduzione armena’, pp. 135–143; Lucca, ‘Cleansing the Christian Vineyard’.

1606–1607 Shah Abbas implemented a scorched-earth policy in the region between Tabriz and Erzurum, leaving it depopulated.¹⁰ Safavid and Ottoman campaigns through Armenia continued, though to a lesser extent, in the 1620s and 1630s, impoverishing and dispersing the population still further.¹¹ This was Piromalli's first impression right upon his arrival in the Armenian Catholic Diocese of Nakhichevan:

Talk to Our Holiness and tell him that Armenia is ruined: there are very few friars, and they are ignorant, villainous, and disgraceful.¹²

What Piromalli found there, and hastened to report to Rome 'for conscience sake', was, in his words, an Armenian Archbishop—*Ōgostinos Baĭenc'*—who lacked 'apostolic authority', and a community of friars whose liturgical books included the 'fancies of their predecessors [the *Fratres Unitores*] and schismatic rites, to which they [the Armeno-Dominican friars] conform in their chants and services',¹³ and whose convents were 'full of women and of sons of friars, with no seclusion nor obedience; and [there are] a thousand words against Jesus Christ and his most Holy Incarnation, and [they say] that the Pope is not the Pope *et alia innumerabilia*'.¹⁴ Piromalli, like *Propaganda Fide*, also conflated Eastern Catholic Churches and schismatics.¹⁵ Still, as it is apparent from his life and work, he must have thought that—for the greater

¹⁰ Farrokh, 'The Military Campaigns', especially pp. 84–93.

¹¹ Herzig-Zekiyan, 'Christianity to Modernity', p. 47. Finally, after the short-lived occupation of Yerevan and plundering of Tabriz by Sultan Murad IV in 1635, the 1639 peace accord of Qasr-e Shirin confirmed the frontier already agreed between the Safavids and the Ottomans at the 1555 Treaty of Amasya, with Eastern Armenia, Nakhichevan, and Azerbaijan remaining Persian (Matthee, 'Safavid Dynasty').

¹² 'Raggionate con N(ostra) S(antità) e diteli, che l'Armenia è rovinata, li fr(at)i pochiss(imi) ignoranti, scelerati, pieni di scandali' (Piromalli, Letter to Campanella, APF; SOCG 104, fol. 322r).

¹³ 'Devo per scrupolo di coscienza ... avvisar le Sig(norie) loro Ill(ustrissi)me, et Emine(ntissi)me, come ... fa necessario rivedere li loro breviarij et missali, perche si giudica haver molte aggiuntioni secondo le fantasie d'Antecessori, e riti de' scismatici, alli q(uali) sono uniformi nel canto e nelle cerimonie. ... Di tutto questo d(ovrebbe)e haverne autorità apostolica, mà io non la trovo ...' (Piromalli, Letter to the Cardinals, APF, SOCG 104, fol. 313r).

¹⁴ 'Li con(ven)ti pieni di donne, e di figli di fr(at)i, non si conosce clausura, ne ubidienza, mille parole contro Gesù Cristo, e della sua SS. Incarnazione, e ch'il papa non è papa et alia innumerabilia' (Piromalli, Letter to the Pope, APF, SOCG 104, fol. 315r).

¹⁵ This was a common sentiment among missionaries, even those who were of Armenian birth. For instance, the Armenian Dominican Brother Grigor Corcorec'i, apostolic missionary in Armenia, wrote in 1658 to the Secretary of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* that he felt that he had never failed to fulfil his duty—to preach to the Armenian people, both the Catholic and the Apostolic, and instruct them in the Catholic faith, meaning that, in terms of needing to be catechized, they were basically the same to him: '[I have] always preached and taught the Catholic faith to these peoples, not only here [in the Armenian Catholic diocese of Nakhichevan], but also I have gone many times to the Schismatics, and when I was with them I have always preached and done many good things, and for this reason they are fond of me ... *et sic semper laboro in vinea Domini*' (Grigor Corcorec'i, Letter to Alberici, APF, SOCG 222, fol. 32r).

glory of God, the Church, and possibly himself—schismatics were worthy of more consideration. After all, notwithstanding their liturgical abuses and their dubious traditions, Armenian Catholics were already under the jurisdiction of Rome. Armenian Apostolics, on the other hand, must have been to him like the evangelic ‘one sinner’ over whom, if he would repent, there will be more joy in heaven than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:7). That Piromalli could have seen his own mission among the Armenians through the lens of this passage from the Gospel could be inferred from one letter he wrote more than ten years later to the Secretary of *Propaganda Fide*, where he likened the Armenian Apostolics to the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32):

Because the Pope is like a father, and these are prodigal sons. When the prodigal son was returning to his father, his father did not wait for him to come to his house but went to meet him when he was still afar.¹⁶

Thus, at the end of June 1632, when barely three months had passed since his arrival in Nakhichevan, after exposing in his letters to Rome the ‘errors’ of Archbishop Ōgostinos Baĵenc^ć, and fearing retaliatory actions by him, Piromalli resolved to go to Yerevan and visit the prospective prodigal sons, ‘to study that language [Armenian] next to the Patriarch [the Catholicos Movsēs III Tat^ćewac^ći], ... given the good disposition he saw in the said Patriarch and his Vicar the *vardapet* P^ćilippos, although they were schismatic’.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Ōgostinos Baĵenc^ć managed to have Piromalli back to his diocese in Nakhichevan by August of the same year, and kept him in prison in the convent of Aparaner for 22 months, until June 1634, on account of his excesses.¹⁸

¹⁶ ‘Perché il papa è padre, e questi sono figlioli prodigi. Il figliol prodigo stando ancora da lontano et inviato al padre, quel padre non l’aspettò sin dentro la casa, ma andò all’incontro’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 259r).

¹⁷ ‘Per ... imparare quella lingua appresso il Patriarcha, ... per la buona inclinazione, che conobbe in esso Patriarcha, e nel suo Vicario Filippo Vartabiet benche scismatici’ (Piromalli, *Relazione trasmessa*, APF, SC Armeni, vol. 1, fols 21v–22r).

¹⁸ According to Ōgostinos Baĵenc^ć, upon his arrival, Piromalli ‘took over the convent [of Čahuk], dismissing its Prior and [the] Vicar General ...’ by appealing to the Pope’s authority, and ‘forbade the friars from officiating according to the Armenian [Catholic] rite even outside the doors of the church’. Baĵenc^ć added that, while Piromalli stated that he had been sent there as Vicar General, having no document in his possession to prove such a claim, he had forged the necessary patent letter with the aid of another friar. The novices the Armenian Archbishop ‘entrusted him ..., after a few days started saying that they had nothing to learn from that teacher but arrogance, lies, falsehood, and bad example in many things, especially because he kept money in great quantity that he spent on eating’. Moreover, when Baĵenc^ć dismissed Piromalli from the convent of Čahuk ‘because he had made himself loathed by everybody,’ the Dominican lied to him, saying that he would return to Rome, while instead he went ‘to Yerevan, which is four days’ walk from here, at the home of the schismatic Patriarch’ (Baĵenc^ć, Letter to the Cardinals, APF, SOCG 103, fol. 271r; for other accusations against Piromalli, see also Baĵenc^ć, Letter to the Pope, APF, SOCG 103, fols 263–264). In still another letter in the

However, after his liberation, instead of going back to Italy as he was expected to, Piromalli went again to Yerevan, to discuss the union of the Armenian Apostolic Church with Rome with the Catholicos P^cilippos Ի Ա՛բաեց^cի, the former vicar of Movsēs III and now his successor. There he would remain for 16 months, trying to convince P^cilippos and other *vardapets* of the original orthodoxy of the Armenian Church, which, in his words, over the centuries had ‘erred in grammar, in philosophy, in historiography, in theology, and in the Holy Scripture’.¹⁹ His opinion was that the Armenian Apostolics had lost the ‘faith of St. Gregory’ and that Gregory’s profession of faith, as it was recorded in St. John Chrysostom’s *Sermo ... de Sancto inluminatore magno Gregorio*, was fully orthodox.²⁰

The ‘original orthodoxy’ of the Armenian Church was a common argument among Armenian Catholics and Catholic missionaries as well, and Piromalli was adamant in showing the Catholicos that

all of their disgraces were born out of ignorance, [... and since] all Christians are one body, we should also have one spirit, one faith, one Baptism, one mind, one understanding, and one language, nor is it possible in any way to say: “I am Armenian, you are Frank”; and I show this unity with the Roman Church in their first Patriarch St. Gregory the Illuminator ... on account of the covenant sealed between the same St. Gregory and Pope St. Sylvester ... and between Tiridates [III] king of Armenia and the emperor Constantine.²¹

To prove to Armenian Apostolics that they were mistaken in their faith, Piromalli wrote between the end of 1634 and the beginning of 1635:

summer of 1632, Baĵenc^c stated that, Piromalli, adding to ‘all of his excesses, [also] demolished a church in a field, where the people used to gather four times in the year to attend the Holy Mass, and made for himself an Italian oven with its bricks, to the great scandal of all the Catholics’ (Letter to the Pope, APF, SOCG 104, fol. 329r).

¹⁹ ‘La Chiesa Armena erra in Gramaticha, in Filosofia, in Historiegrafia, in Theologia, et nella S(an)ta Scrittura’ (Piromalli, *Relazione degl’errori*, APF, SOCG 293, fol. 4r).

²⁰ ‘Et [verbum] mortuum est quidem quantum ad humanam naturam, sed immortale stetit et mansit quantum ad divinitatem quae in illo erat, quia autem ex duplici natura unus efficitur Christus’ (*Patrologia Graeca* LXIII, vol. 12, p. 945).

²¹ ‘Tutte le loro rovine nacquero dall’ignoranza, ... come tutti i Christiani siano un corpo, et consequentem(en)te dovemo haver un spirito, una Fede, un batesimo, una mente, una Intelligenza, et una lingua, né si puol dir in modo alcuno, Io son Armeno, tu sei Francho & mostro questa unità nel primo loro Patriarcha S. Gregorio Illuminato con la Chiesa Romana, per la profession della Sa(n)ta fede la confermo, per il patto fatto dal medesimo S. Gregorio, da S. Silvestro Papa ... et da Tortada Re degl’Arm(e)ni et da Costantino Imperatore’ (Piromalli, *Relazione degl’errori*, APF, SOCG 293, fols 7r–v). Piromalli’s preaching to Movsēs and P^cilippos and his arguments relying on the original orthodoxy of the Armenian faith and the ‘union’ between St. Gregory and Pope Silvester are reported also in Grigor Daranalc^cի’s *Chronicle*, where, according to the author, the initial and all in all positive attitude shown by the two Catholicos towards Piromalli and his preaching was the result of their lack of understanding the deceitfulness of the Dominican (see Nšanean, *The Chronicle of Vardapet Grigor*, pp. 582–585).

a booklet *De duabus naturis in Christo* with forty-five doctrinal proofs, many textual authorities from the Holy Scripture, of which more than 200 are from St. Cyril of Alexandria and other doctors of the Council of Ephesus, many authorities from the Armenian *vardapets* (preachers) and common doctors found in their books, and I replied to seventy points drawn from their books against the duality of the natures of Christ.²²

Given that Piromalli was a trained theologian and philosopher, this would remain his fundamental conversion strategy over the years to come: trying to convince the hierarchies of their errors and of the Catholic truths by theological demonstration, believing that the most direct way to win the schismatics was to uproot the entire tree of heresy, since ‘cutting off the branches would be useless, and it is only with greatest difficulty that they can be cut off’.²³ Still, he would soon have to know that theological debate with ecclesiastical leaders, even when they seemed to acknowledge they were wrong,²⁴ was not enough if one could not persuade the clergy *and* the people (or at least their notables), who had different day-to-day priorities from the religious elite. All this he would learn by experience. The *vardapet* Łazar—the prior of the convent of Etchmiadzin as well as one of Piromalli’s fiercest opponents—managed to convince Catholicos P’ilippos that, if the *vardapets* of the Lesser Armenia united with the Church of Rome, they would have him removed from his office.²⁵ In the end, P’ilippos followed Łazar’s advice and, although in February 1635 he had seemingly asked Piromalli to emend some Armenian doctrinal books according to the Catholic principles, between March and April of the same year he sent the Dominican away.²⁶ Followed by several disciples, Piromalli started preaching with some success among the people, teaching them devotional practices such as the rosary and ‘saving the disputes for the intelligent’. Among Piromalli’s disciples there were Kirakos (ca. 1605–1642) and Oskan Erewanc’i (1614–1675), both of whom left an important mark on confessional dynamics of the period,²⁷ as well as letters and

²² ‘[Ho] composto un libretto *De duabus naturis in Christo* con quaranta cinque prove dottrinali, molte autorità testuali della sacra scrittura, sopra ducento estratte da san Cyrillo Alessandrino et altri dottori del consilio ephesino, molte autorità de’ vartabetti armeni et dottori communi trovate nelli loro libri et risposto a settanta argomenti cavati da’ loro libri contro la dualità de le nature di Christo’ (Piromalli, *Relation de’ successi*, APF, SOCG 293, fol. 24v; see also Piromalli, *Relazione degl’errori*, *ibid.*, fol. 7r).

²³ ‘SS. Padre, cqui stà la radice cqui fà necessario scavare, che tagliar li rami è nulla, et con grandiss(ima) difficoltà tagliar si possono’ (Piromalli, Letter to the Pope, APF, SOCG 59, fol. 207r).

²⁴ In his *Relation de’ successi*, Piromalli states that the Catholicos ordered him to draw up a confession of faith for him to read and possibly sign (APF, SOCG 293, fol. 25r).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 24r.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 26v.

²⁷ Oskan had a pivotal role in the history of the Armenian printing and in 1666–1668 published in Amsterdam the first complete printed Bible in Armenian (getting for that a grant of 60 *scudi*

documents in which they speak highly of their teacher and his scholarship.²⁸ However, P'lippos wrote 'thundering letters against [Piromalli], calling [him] the forerunner of the Antichrist, slave of Satan, and deceiver of souls', turning the local clergy and the people against him.²⁹ Eventually, after thinking of fleeing to Persia (he would renounce the idea, fearing that the Catholicos would denounce him to the Shah, telling him that he wanted to give Armenia to the Franks, and that the Shah would put him to death), in January 1637, Piromalli arrived in Constantinople.³⁰ There, he engaged in preaching among the Armenians of the city. According to some apologetic reports by his brother Giovanni, he 'was invited by the Armenian schismatics to preach in their church' (the Armenian Apostolic church of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Galata), where he gave '30 sermons to them, and there were five thousand attendees at his homilies'.³¹ However, according to Grigor Daranałc'i's, it seems that Piromalli managed to preach in the church of the Apostolic Armenians by claiming that he was a 'disciple' of Catholicos P'lippos, 'had become an Armenian [...] and had taken the authority of *vardapet*'.³² His exposure as a Catholic impostor by

from *Propaganda Fide*, provided that no intentional errors were found in the book: see De Veer, 'Rome et la Bible arménienne d'Uscan'. On Oskan's life and work, see Amatuni, 'Oskan *vrđ. Erewanc'i i-ıııı*'. In 1641 Kirakos—after excommunication by Catholicos P'lippos in 1637 and by the Patriarch of Constantinople Dawit' Arewelc'i in 1640—was elected as patriarch of Constantinople in the place of the same Dawit'. Following his election, prompted by the Theatine missionary Fr. Clemente Galano, he signed a confession of Catholic faith which he sent to Rome (Kirakos Erewanc'i, Letter to the Pope, APF, Lett. div. ling. 180, fols 375, 384), but he died from the plague a few months after, in 1642 (according to Galano, before he could obtain the independence from the See of Etchmiadzin: Galanus, *Conciliatio*, fols 180r–181v. On Kirakos, see Örmanean, *National History*, pp. 2464–2466).

²⁸ In a letter to the Pope that Kirakos wrote in 1637, he says that Piromalli 'taught him the truth' (Kirakos Erewanc'i, Letter to the Pope, APF, Lett. div. ling. 180, fol. 287). In his biography, Oskan Erewanc'i remembers Piromalli as 'much learned in all the teachings of wisdom' (*Life History*, p. 633; see also his letter to Paolo Piromalli, APF, Lett. div. ling. 180, fol. 299, which is addressed to 'my sublime and excellent master the *vardapet* Połos').

²⁹ Piromalli, *Relation de' successi*, APF, SOCG 293, fol. 28v.

³⁰ 'Ma il Patriarca ci faria bruggiar dal Re, suggerendole, che vogliamo dar l'Armenia in mano de' Franchi. Sendo io confuso, mi risolsi aspettar cqui in Constantinopoli ordine di quel, che devo fare, tanto più, tanto più, che spero che li discepoli maggiori pian piano seguitarano' (Piromalli, Letter to the Pope, APF, SOCG 293, fol. 10r; see also his *Relation de' successi*, *ibid*, fol. 30v).

³¹ 'Simul cum eis venit ad civitatem Constantinopolitanam, ubi, quando Armeni schismatici intellexerunt eius adventum, rogaverunt eum uti in eorum ecclesia praedicaret Verbum Dei. Res inaudita est ut schismatici invitarent praedicatorum catholicorum ut eis praedicaret. Ipse enim zelo salutis animarum triginta sermones habuit ad eos et qui concionem audiebant erant numerus quinquies milia' (I. [Piromallus] a Syderno, *Directorium*, pp. xxix–xxx). See also G. Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 27, fol. 170v: 'Al passaggio c'ha fatto per Costantinopoli fu invitato dall'armeni scismatici a predicar nella loro chiesa. Predicò una settimana intera con gran frutto di quelle anime.'

³² 'Hay em ełeal ew ašakert em P'lipposin ew vardapetakan išxanut'ıwn em areal k'arozeloy' (Nšanean, *The Chronicle of Vardapet Grigor*, p. 585).

the same *vardapet* Lazar that opposed him in Etchmiadzin stirred up controversies among the Armenian community,³³ until 1638 when Piromalli was sent by the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* to Lviv, in the Ruthenian Voivodeship of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with the mission of smoothing out the differences between the Armenian former-Apostolic Archbishop Torosowicz and the local elders (*seniores*) of the Armenian (Apostolic) community. On October 24, 1630, Torosowicz had made his confession of Catholic faith against the will of most of his nation. While opposing the said union, in 1631 the Armenian elders stated that they would accept it if Torosowicz were to be removed from his office, a condition to which Rome did not agree.³⁴

BUILDING UP A CRITICAL MASS: PIROMALLI AND THE QUESTION OF THE CHURCH UNION OF POLISH ARMENIANS (1638–1645)

Part of the differences between the Archbishop and the *seniores* was about the Armenian churches of Lviv, whether they were to pass under Catholic jurisdiction—as Torosowicz claimed—or continue to be run by Apostolic clergy—as the Armenian elders of the city demanded.³⁵ This was the occasion for Piromalli to experience firsthand that Church union could not happen in a vacuum, and appreciate the importance of having the people on your side, even when hierarchies had already been persuaded. Or, as it was the case at hand with Torosowicz, when one chose union in order to be elected bishop of the Polish Armenians by Melk'isēt' Gaṛnec'i, former and pro-Catholic co-adjutor of Catholicos of All the Armenians Dawit' IV, in exchange for helping him repay his debts.³⁶ In short, Piromalli was to understand that the conversion of the ecclesiastical leadership alone could not guarantee that the people would follow.

³³ Nšanēan, *The Chronicle of Vardapet Grigor*, pp. 586–587 (see also Shapiro's paper in this volume).

³⁴ On the union of the Polish Armenians with the Roman-Catholic Church, see Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁶ According to Aṛak'el Davrižec'i, Melk'isēt' was said to be 'a vain man' and very generous in giving gifts and bribes to all, in order to 'win everybody's heart and make friends with everybody' ('Melk'iset' ... ēr ayr p'aramol ... Yoroy patčarē bašxēr aratur'eamb inč's amenec'un, ew zameneč'un zsiṛtsn hanguc'anēr ar ink'n, ew zamenesean arnēr ink'ean barekam': *Book of Histories*, p. 7). Melk'isēt' was offered 'a great deal of gold' to ordain Torosowicz bishop, which he did, 'hoping for an even greater deal of gold in the future' ('Ew mijnordac'n matuc'eal ar kat'uḥikosn əncayec'in oski bazum, ew xndrec'in arnel zNikōlayos abelayn episkopos. Ew kat'uḥikosn tesanelov zolovut'iwn ar jeṛn patrast oskwoyn, naew aknkalut'iwn ews yolovic' oskwoy arypayn, hačec'aw ōrhnel zNikōlayosn episkopos Ilovay': *ibid.*, p. 356). The seventeenth-century Armenian traveler Simēon Lehac'i—who was born in Zamość—also passes a very harsh judgment on Melk'isēt', whom he describes as 'old and gray-haired, light-witted and feeble, a heavy drunkard and too fond of money' ('cer 'w alewor, xelac' t'ap'eal ew yužə ankeal, yoyž ginēmol ew arcac'asēr': Akinean, *The Travel Diary*, p. 384).

After an initial idyll with Torosowicz,³⁷ when Piromalli started discussing the matter of the union with the local Armenians, he soon changed sides, blaming the Archbishop for slowing and hampering the achievement of the union.³⁸ It is debatable whether Piromalli was used by the Armenian elders as an ‘opportunity’ not only to represent ‘their claims [against Torosowicz] at the royal court in Warsaw ... and at the Apostolic see’ and resolve the religious conflict but also to ‘reinvent the story’ of the foundation of their colony.³⁹ However, the opportunity *he* saw in the Polish affair is crystal-clear. While he was in Armenia, he had dealt first and foremost with ecclesiastical hierarchies, and the people he had preached to were mostly peasants. The Armenian *seniores* of Lviv, on the other hand, were rich and wealthy merchants, urban notables who had access to the King and felt themselves entitled to speak out both to the Catholicos and the Pope against their own religious leaders. Most importantly, their requests were heard by the authorities and, even if not always answered, at least taken into consideration. In a nutshell, their say had a weight. Piromalli must have thought that by persuading the Polish Armenian elite of Lviv to recognize the original orthodoxy of the Armenian Church he could use that wealthy and powerful community as a critical mass and leverage for the Catholicos of All the Armenians to sign the union on behalf of the entire Apostolic Church. In the beginning of 1641, trying to persuade the Congregation to let the Armenians have at least one of their churches back, he addressed to Rome the following lines:

One can catch a big mouse with not much bread, and a way bigger fish with a little one; what is certain is that if this church would not be granted ... you cannot even imagine what you will lose. And I regret I will lose both what I have already gained and the hope of gaining.⁴⁰

³⁷ Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*, pp. 100–101.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

³⁹ Osipian, ‘Forgeries and Their Social Circulation’, pp. 119, 123. While it seems that the first Armenian merchants settled in Lviv between the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century, the elders of the Armenian community told Piromalli that Armenians were admitted to the city of Lviv in 1062 by the Ruthenian Prince Theodore (Fedor). On the reasons why the Armenians felt the need for antedating their arrival in the region, see Osipian, ‘Forgeries and Their Social Circulation’. What is certain is that Piromalli believed their version of the story, and on August 5, 1641, reported it to Rome (*ibid.*, pp. 122–123).

⁴⁰ ‘Con un tantino di pane si prende un grosso sorco e con un piscicolo uno molto più grosso; certo è che se questa chiesa non si concederà ... voi perderete quanto non vi potete immaginare: et a me dispiace che perderò l’acquistato e la speranza d’acquistare’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 293, fol. 258v; see also Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*, p. 105). Grigor Daranac’i tells in his *Chronicle* that Piromalli actually persuaded the King and the Pope not to give the churches back: ‘This evil monk, whose name is not worthy to be mentioned, has appeared and prevented them from giving [the churches back]’ (‘na ayn č’ar abełayin, or anuamb č’ē yišman aržani, i veray ku asani ew č’i t’oħur or tan’: Nšanēan, *The Chronicle of the vardapet Grigor*, p. 588). While this information is true, it concerns an earlier stage of

Piromalli reported that he had persuaded the *seniores* into acknowledging the errors of Eutyches and Dioscoros, professing two natures in Jesus Christ, and getting rid of the errors in their liturgy.⁴¹ The elders also agreed to send a mission with four delegates from Lviv to Catholicos P'lippos, who allegedly was in favor of the union.⁴² However, *Propaganda Fide* feared—not without reason—that the Polish Armenians were showing readiness to accept the union *only* because they wanted to have their churches back.⁴³ Accordingly, Roman Cardinals ordered Piromalli exactly the opposite to be done: to 'freeze' for the moment the question of the union of the Polish Armenians and to discuss first the 'universal union' with P'lippos.⁴⁴ In February 1643, Piromalli went back to Armenia together with the Polish Armenian delegates. According to his reports, Catholicos P'lippos was open to discussing the union and had acknowledged that he did not 'have the faith of St. Gregory' (the original, uncorrupt, and orthodox faith of the Armenian Church), to the great scandal of the

Piromalli's mission to Poland, when he still sided with Torosowicz: in 1639, the Dominican was granted an audience with the King and persuaded him that the Armenians had to obey Torosowicz and that the churches belonged to the Archbishop and not to the people (see Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*, p. 101). Arak'el Davrižec'i, who loathed Torosowicz and mentions only the siding of Piromalli with the Armenian people of Lviv *against* their Archbishop, actually gives a favorable portrayal of the Dominican, whom he describes as 'a *vardapet* ...from the order of Dominic, a wise and eminent man from the nation of the Franks ('i kargēn Dōminikosi ... vardapet omn, ayr imastun ew ereweli, yazgēn Frankac': Arak'el Davrižec'i, *Book of Histories*, p. 375).

⁴¹ Eutyches professed that Jesus Christ had only a single nature, which was divine, despite his incarnation (monophysitism). His Christological position was rejected in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, where dyophysitism (the coexistence of two natures, divine *and* human, in Jesus Christ) was affirmed, and Eutyche's disciple Dioscoros was condemned as heretic. The Armenian Church took no part in the Council of Chalcedon, which it officially rejected some hundred years later. Hence, the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches regarded all the Oriental non-Chalcedonian Churches—including the Armenian Apostolic Church—as 'schismatic' and 'monophysite'. In fact, the Christology of the Armenian Apostolic Church—and, for that matter, of other Oriental non-Chalcedonian Churches—should be more correctly labeled as 'miaphysite', since it affirms, according to the formulation of Cyril of Alexandria, the 'one incarnate nature of the Word of God', meaning that both divinity and humanity coexist in the person of Christ within a single nature. On the basic dyophysitism of the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria, see Van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology*.

⁴² Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*, pp. 102, 105; see also APF, SOCG 119, fol. 157r, where already in 1640 Piromalli claims to have gained the trust of 'nine out of the twelve [Armenian] leaders'.

⁴³ Schütz, 'An Armeno-Kipchak Document', p. 298.

⁴⁴ Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*, p. 107. That, at this stage, *Propaganda Fide* subordinated the union of the Polish Armenians to the union of all the Armenian Church, probably believing that the former could not be achieved without the latter, is apparent from a letter the Secretary of *Propaganda Fide* Mgr. F. Ingoli addressed to the Apostolic Nuncio to Poland Mgr. M. Filonardi in 1642, where Ingoli warned Torosowicz to stay in Lviv and keep guard over the churches, in case the Catholicos should not sign the union (APF, Lett. volg. 21, fols 64v, 94; see Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*, p. 108; see also APF, Acta 15, fol. 380).

Polish Armenians, who ‘heard him with their own ears’.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, fearing his opponents, P’ilippos gave Piromalli ‘some hope for the union, not of all the [Armenian] nation ... but only of those in Poland’.⁴⁶ Whether the Catholicos was only buying time because he, too, was interested only in the Polish Armenians having their churches back, or he really worried about those who were hostile to the union, his reply showed that, the worries of *Propaganda Fide* notwithstanding, the notion of building up a critical mass of wealthy pro-union Armenians *before* having the union signed by ecclesiastical hierarchies was not that far-fetched. Piromalli complied with the Congregation’s orders in his own way. For the following two and a half years he would be engaged in a strange minuet with a hesitating P’ilippos, who at one moment seemed to be ready and willing to unite, and at the next—at the instigation of the *vardapet* Simēon of Julfa and Gaspar, another priest sent by the Armenian community of Kamieniec, which opposed the union—issued ‘thundering precepts and decrees of excommunication’ against the Dominican.⁴⁷ Piromalli tried to come up on his enemy’s flank⁴⁸ by discussing the union with the Catholicos of Ganjasar Petros II Xanjec’i⁴⁹ and drawing into the discussion also the Catholicos of Cilicia Simēon II Sebastac’i.⁵⁰ (Note that, only four months before, Piromalli was asked by *Propaganda Fide* not to engage anymore in public disputations with the Armenian *vardapets*—which the Congregation deemed more harmful than useful—and to work only on the establishment of an Armenian college for the Armenian Catholic seminarians in

⁴⁵ ‘L’istesso Patriarca di propria bocca disse non haver la fede di esso Santo. Li legati di Polonia l’hanno inteso con li propri orecchi e ritornano molto sdegnati’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 233r).

⁴⁶ Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 229r; see also APF, SOCG 123, fol. 23; APF, SOCG 292, fol. 341.

⁴⁷ Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 229r. On this wavering attitude of Catholicos P’ilippos, see also a series of letters Fr. Jozeph do Rozario wrote in April 1644 from Isfahan (probably upon the instigation of Piromalli himself, who at the time was staying as a guest at the Augustinian convent of the city), complaining about the suffering and tribulations the missionaries had to endure on account of the opposition of the Catholicos and local Armenians (see Alonso, ‘El P. José del Rosario’).

⁴⁸ Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 229r.

⁴⁹ Ganjasar, in Caucasian Albania, served as the See of the Catholicosate of Ałunk’ of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The once independent Albanian Church had fallen under the religious jurisdiction of the Armenian Apostolic Church at the beginning of the eighth century. At the time of Piromalli, Ganjasar, under Persian rule, functioned as a separate bishopric of the Armenian Church. Its bishop, while still bearing the title of Catholicos, was ordained by the Catholicos of All the Armenians in Etchmiadzin and recognized its primacy in terms both of honor and authority.

⁵⁰ The Holy See of the Armenian Apostolic Church had been moved to Cilicia in 1116. In 1441, when the titular Catholicos in Sis refused the moving of the See back to Armenia, a new Catholicos of All the Armenians was elected in Etchmiadzin. From that moment on, the two Catholicosates coexisted in the Armenian Apostolic Church, with the ‘primacy of honor’ (but not of jurisdictional authority) of the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin recognized by that of Cilicia.

Nakhichevan.)⁵¹ A few months later, in one moment of idyll with P^cilippos, the Dominican even wrote to the Secretary of *Propaganda Fide*, believing that all the three Catholicos were ready to go to Rome, and that the union would soon be signed, as in that period many Armenians were siding with Catholics.⁵²

Meanwhile, in 1644, the Armenian delegates from Lviv had left from Isfahan, where Piromalli had followed them, to Poland with letters of P^cilippos to the Polish King and the Pope, to which the Catholicos enclosed a confession of orthodox faith.⁵³ Nevertheless, another letter addressed by P^cilippos to King Vladislaus IV Vasa a few months later is quite telling of what the real intentions of the Catholicos were: while enclosing in the missive a profession of orthodox faith, P^cilippos did not deal with the matter of the union. On the contrary, he asked the King to give back the churches to the Apostolic Armenians and let them live according to their faith:

We address unceasing prayers to Your all-powerful Lordship, so that they [the Armenians] may live their life peacefully and tranquilly, according to the faith and statutes transmitted by [their] forefathers. ... Therefore we ask with affectionate supplications Your all-powerful Majesty that, as your ancestors kept our small herd in its faith and tradition until [the time of] Your Autocracy, also Your Autocracy ... may keep that miserable herd as it has been so far [and], looking after their privations, return their churches to them. ... And the confession of the Armenian Church according to the orthodox holy fathers, which the doctor of theology Paul [Piromalli] has asked, Your autocratic Lordship may get to know it on a separate letter.⁵⁴

⁵¹ General Congregation of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, January 19, 1644 (APF, Acta 16, fols 1v–12r).

⁵² ‘Si faranno in Roma tutti questi, nissuno mi impedirà l’unione, avverta che in questo tempo havemo molti con noi’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 246v). In the same letter, Piromalli once again suggested that it would have been wise to ‘comfort the Patriarch [the Catholicos], by giving at least one of the churches back to them [the Polish Armenians]’.

⁵³ Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 229v. However, the letter addressed to Pope Urban VIII was left unopened, owing to a breach of etiquette in its address (Petrowicz, *L’unione degli Armeni*, p. 114; Amatuni, ‘Oskan vrd. Erewanc’i III’, p. 273). A letter of Catholicos P^cilippos to Pope Innocent X is published in the *Archives of Armenian History* whose content is very similar to that of a confession of faith sent by the same Catholicos to Pope Urban VIII on 20 January 1642. In both letters, P^cilippos professed the coexistence of divinity and humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ, according to the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria (see Ałanean, *Archives of Armenian History*, pp. 89–99; see also Amatuni, ‘Oskan vrd. Erewanc’i III’, pp. 260–261; 271–274). Tone and content of the unopened letter could well have been the same.

⁵⁴ ‘...hanapaz ałōt’s matuc’anemk’c vasn mecazōr tērut’ean jerum, zi xałālut’eamb ew handartut’eamb varesc’en dok’a zkeans iwreanc’c handerj hayrenawand krōniwk’c ew shmanōk’c iwreanc’c. ... Vasn oroy siralir małt’anōk’c xndremk’c i mecazōr t’agaworut’enē jermē, zi orpēs naxnik’n jer minč’ew zjer ink’nakalut’iwnd zp’ok’rik hōtd mer paheal en iwreanc’c krōniwk’n

That P^çilippos was more than anything else interested in giving the Polish Armenians their churches back was clear also to Piromalli, who complained to the Cardinal Prefect about how the Catholicos allowed ‘the confession of Eutyches to be professed in his churches [in Isfahan], and cursed publicly the holiness of our Lord [the Pope] because he had asked him to enter the union in his [letter] and [to confess] the faith of St. Gregory’.⁵⁵ In October 1645, a frustrated Piromalli addressed a letter to the Secretary of *Propaganda Fide*, complaining again about the deviousness and lack of character of P^çilippos:⁵⁶ both unions—the ‘local’ one of the Polish Armenians and the

ew awandut^çeambn, noypēs ew jer ink^çnakalut^çiund ...ztaṛapeal hōtd aynpēs pahesc^çē, orpēs min^çew zayžm, ayc^ç arnelov zrkanac^ç doc^çin zekelec^çisn iwreanc^ç yink^çeans darjusc^çē. ... Isk zdawanut^çiwn hayastaneac^ç ekelec^çwoy æst uḥap^çar srboç^ç harc^çn, zor xndreac^ç Pōlos astuacaban vardapetn, i miws t^çt^çin canic^çē ink^çnakal tērut^çiwnd jer’ (P^çilippos ἰ Αἰβακε^çἰ, *Letter to King Vladislaus*; transcription in Kołodziejczyk, *The Relations*, pp. 344–347). In his letter, P^çilippos likens Torosowicz to a ‘shepherd turned into a wolf that has merciless devoured his herd’ (‘anxnayabar gišateac^ç zhōt iwr gayl eteal hovuin’). For the text of the attached confession of faith, see P^çilippos ἰ Αἰβακε^çἰ, *Confession of the Orthodox Faith*.

⁵⁵ ‘Li spedi con lettere al Re di Polonia et a S. Santità, pregandoli li restituiscano le chiese e li manda il simbolo di Nicea per la dovuta fede; e nelle sue chiese si recita la professione di Eutiche; e biastema pubblicamente la S(antit)tà di nostro Signore per haverli dimandato nella sua l’unione e la fede di S. Gregorio’ (Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fols 229v, 243r). See also Arak^çel Davrižec^çἰ, who states clearly that ‘Catholicos P^çilippos entertained a great love and friendship for that Paul [Piromalli]’ only ‘to help our people and save the church of Lviv’ (‘P^çilippos kat^çoḥikosn bazum sēr ew barekamut^çiwn arar ænd Pōlosin ayn, vasn oḡti žoḻovrdeann mero yew p^çrkut^çean ekelec^çwoyn Lovay’: *Book of Histories*, p. 375).

⁵⁶ ‘Questo patriarca è huomo da niente, ognuno lo rivolta, non ha stabilità veruna, né prudenza’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 65, fol. 329r). On the other hand, in a letter written presumably on May 25, 1644, when Piromalli was in Isfahan, P^çilippos complained to the Armenian head royal painter (*naqqash-bashi*) Yakobjean about the Dominican’s harmful involvement in the Polish crisis, and asked Yakobjean assistance for bringing him back to Etchmiadzin. According to the Catholicos, Piromalli was a bad influence on the Polish King and, even if both the Pope and the King had agreed upon the restitution of the churches to the Armenians, he had interfered by saying ‘one thing to the King, another thing to the Pope, and another to our people’. P^çilippos was also worried about the negotiations which Piromalli was carrying out with the Shah to bypass his authority, and asked Yakobjean to press and threaten local missionaries to produce a document which would grant the restoration of the churches to the Armenian Apostolics in Lviv (see Tēr-Grigorean, *Archives of the All Saviour’s Monastery*, pp. 44–46; see also Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, pp. 138–139; Kołodziejczyk, *The Relations*, pp. 357, 359, 363). Since P^çilippos says in his letter that he has already written to Yakobjean on the same matter, the *naqqash-bashi* could well be that ‘Armenian and great enemy of the Christian faith’ who, as Fr. Jozeph do Rozario reported to the Cardinal Prefect of *Propaganda Fide* on 3 April 1644, ‘forbade all Christians to come to our churches ... and the ban was lifted on condition that we write to Your Eminence about the churches of the Polish Armenians’ (‘hum Armenio, grandissimo inimigo da santa fé catholica, fes huma prohibição que nenhum christão viesse a nossas igrejas. ... se alevantou o entredito com condição ques nos

universal one of the entire Armenian Church—were never so close but so far.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, in those very years, following his first stay in Isfahan, Piromalli came to consider yet another strategy for finally converting the Armenians to Catholicism. In Poland he had realized the importance of having the (right and wealthy) people on his own side; still, in that case, he had resorted to the old way of trying to persuade the prospective converts by means of theological demonstration. The encounter with the wealthy and powerful class of the Julfan merchants was to make him devise a new approach.

A REALPOLITIK OF CONVERSION: PIROMALLI AND THE JULFAN ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

Starting from the seventeenth century, the Armenian neighborhood of New Julfa in Isfahan became the hub of Safavids' foreign trade in raw silk. Up until the mid-eighteenth century, the many-branched network of the Julfan merchants spanned north-western and eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.⁵⁸ Apparently, the consequences of the affair of the Church-union of Polish Armenians 'proved to be untoward and calamitous', changing what up to that time was a relatively favorable attitude of the Julfan Armenians towards Catholic missionaries into a hostile and often violent stance.⁵⁹ Julfan Armenians were said to be against missionaries 'more than Moors were' and 'to do all possible evils

escrevesemos a V. Imminencia sobre as igrejas dos Armenios de Polonia': Jozeph do Rozario, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 217r; transcription in Alonso, 'El P. José del Rosario', p. 297). In the same letter, Catholicos P^olippos is said to be 'more hostile than one could ever be to the Holy Catholic Church' ('E he este Patriarcha tam grande adverso á santa Igreja Catholica que não pode ser mais': *ibid*; see also Jozeph do Rozario, Letter to Ingoli, *ibid*, 219r; transcription in Alonso, 'El P. José del Rosario', p. 296). Fr. Jozeph do Rozario mentions also the negotiations carried out by Piromalli with the Shah concerning the Polish Armenians, thus substantiating the Catholicos' fears. According to him, Piromalli was 'waiting for the Shah to give him a letter to the King of Poland' ('Está esperando carta do Xa pera o rei de Polonia': Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 222r; transcription in Alonso, 'El P. José del Rosario', p. 298).

⁵⁷ Actually, the union of the Polish Armenians with the Church of Rome was concluded only decades later, long after the death of Piromalli, thanks largely to the efforts of the Theatine clerics, and especially of Fr. Clemente Galano (1611–1666) and Fr. Louis-Marie Pidou (1637–1717; see Petrowicz, *L'unione degli Armeni*, especially chpts. VIII–X). Piromalli's mediation was at best 'ineffectual' (*ibid*, pp. 99–115).

⁵⁸ On the history, organization, and geographic and economic scope of the Julfan Armenian trade network, see Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*; Baghdiantz McCabe, *The Shah's Silk*.

⁵⁹ Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, pp. 135–136; Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 321.

against [them], ... persecuting [them] more and more every day';⁶⁰ they were spreading 'slanders, errors, excommunications, and curses [against] the Roman Holy See, St. Leo, the Council of Chalcedon, and the Catholic people'.⁶¹ Indeed, if one compares these reports with others sent from Persia just a few decades before, the contrast is striking: around 1608, Persian Armenian clergy were said to be 'friendly towards the Latins and confess that they have received their faith from Rome ... the patriarch and ecclesiastics paid us great respect...';⁶² in 1619, New Julfans were described as 'staunch in recognizing and confessing the Primacy of the Roman Church and the obedience due to the Sovereign Pontiff';⁶³ as late as the late 1620s and the early 1630s, they were still 'asking for spiritual assistance' from Rome, and made promises of living according to the Catholic faith, if admitted to the Papal States for trading.⁶⁴ According to Ghougassian, such a change of attitude towards western missionaries could have been at least in part fostered by the Armenian Apostolic Archbishop of New Julfa Xaç'atur Kesarac'i. In 1630 Xaç'atur had been sent to Lviv by Catholicos Movsēs III in the attempt to mediate between Torosowicz and the Armenian community. As suggested by Ghougassian, his 'bitter experience in Poland, in which the Catholic Church had played a negative role', could have prompted him 'to fight off Catholic influence throughout his diocese' upon his return to New Julfa.⁶⁵ However, to my knowledge, no contemporary source describes Xaç'atur as blatantly anti-Catholic. In fact, Oskan Erewanc'i, who has been mentioned above together with Kirakos as one of the first followers and disciples of Piromalli, had been also a pupil of Xaç'atur, whom in 1631 he accompanied back to New Julfa when Xaç'atur got back from his mission to Lviv, and whom he described as 'a good-natured and pious man' in his autobiography.⁶⁶ Had Xaç'atur been anti-Catholic, Oskan's judgment would presumably have been less benevolent.

⁶⁰ 'Os Armenios ... nos são mas adversos que os mesmos Moiros'; 'Este Patriarca dos Armenios e o seus seguases nos são muito contrarios e nos fazem todo o mal que podem' (Jozeph do Rozario, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, 219r; transcription in Alonso, 'El P. José del Rosario', p. 296).

⁶¹ Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 248r.

⁶² 'Sono amici dei Latini, et confessano che hanno ricevuto la loro fede da Roma' (Paolo Simone di Gesù Maria, *Descrizione di Persia*; partial English translation in Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, pp. 155–163). Fr. Paolo Simone di Gesù Maria wrote that the Carmelites were welcome by the Armenian Apostolics, who said that 'St. Gregory, whom they venerate as their Patriarch, professed obedience to the Pontiff' (ibid, p. 157). On 12–13 May 1607, Catholicos David IV had professed obedience to the Pope in the church of the Augustinian convent in Isfahan; in that case, however, the Julfan Armenian clergy complained to the Augustinians and the Catholicos about not having been consulted, and the bishop of New Julfa, together with another bishop and some notables, refused to sign the same version of the letter of obedience sealed by the Catholicos (see Flannery, *The Mission*, pp. 131–137).

⁶³ Juan Thadeo de San Eliseo, Letter to Domingo de Jesús María, AGOCD 237, m, 13; partial English translation in Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol., 1 p. 232–235).

⁶⁴ See Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, pp. 294, 295.

⁶⁵ Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, pp. 135–136, 138.

⁶⁶ 'Ayr hezahogi ew srbasun' (Oskan Erewanc'i, *Life History*, p. 629).

Nevertheless, as his reforms and cultural initiatives aimed at strengthening the Armenian Church, they could well have promoted anti-Catholic sentiments as a collateral. As a matter of fact, by the late 1630s, the graduates of the school for higher education that Xačatur established at the All Saviour's Monastery in New Julfa 'became the main defenders of the Armenian faith against Catholic encroachment'.⁶⁷

While the Polish affair certainly had a role in it, this change of attitude could have been also due to the Julfan merchants fearing the fines and penalties imposed by the Shah's officials on those who wanted 'to become Franks', so that the 'the richer men [were] the most timorous'.⁶⁸ This could explain also why the Armenians who traded in Europe—and particularly those who traded in Italy—where they often became Catholics, were the same who, once back in Isfahan, most opposed the union, as Piromalli himself noted in 1644 when he first came to Isfahan and stayed as a guest at the Convent of the Augustinian Fathers.⁶⁹ However, this also could have been, at least in part, a reaction to the preaching of Piromalli to the Julfans. Indeed, when in Isfahan, the Dominican did not renounce one of his favorite activities, namely theological disputation with the local clergy and population. In his effort to

⁶⁷ Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, p. 138.

⁶⁸ Denis de la Couronne d'Épines, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 213r (see also, by the same friar and on the same tone, Letter to Mgr. Ingoli, *ibid.*, fol. 204r). Carmelite Provincial Fr. Domenico di Santa Maria wrote in 1646 that this change of disposition seemed to have been caused 'more by other dissensions in their private interests, than any real disillusionment on points of their creed' (Letter to Eugenio di San Benedetto, AGOCD 237, fol. 19; partial English translation in Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 376).

⁶⁹ 'L'Armeni contrarij sono quelli che ritornano dalla Cristianità, benché ivi si confessino e comunichino, anzi questi più degl'altri' (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 233v). 'L'Armeni di Spahan et in particolare quelli che ritornano da Franchia sono li più contrarij all'unione, e più mordaci a divertir li populi dalla divotione che tiene a Roma' (Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 243r). See also a letter written by Fr. Jozeph do Rozario on the same days and at the same convent where Piromalli was staying: 'Pareseume era obrigado dar conta á Sagrada Congregação como esta nação está oie mais obstinada que nunca e todos os que fazem a profição da fé em Roma ou na India quando aquí tornão ficão hereges como dantes' (Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 222r; transcription in Alonso, 'El P. José del Rosario', p. 298). As late as 1711, Vicar Apostolic for the dominion of the Mughal in India Maurice of St. Teresa, passing through Tabriz, wrote to the Pope the following lines in the same tone: 'All Armenians coming to Italy, and particularly to Rome, deceive your Holiness and the Cardinals: *there* they give themselves out to be Catholics, and *here* they are the greatest persecutor of the missionaries and of true Catholics' (see Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 2, p. 1081). On this practice of conversion for 'strategic and practical reasons' among the Armenians who conducted trade in Manila and who often returned to the Armenian Apostolic faith upon coming back to New Julfa, see Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, p. 63. Of course, a certain degree of flexibility was essential to succeeding in adapting to different political and economic contexts, and the New Julfan Armenians had 'multiple and fluctuating identities', 'changed their names and sometimes religion when residing in places beyond New Julfa', changing and adapting identities in their own trading lives (Baghdiantz McCabe, 'Opportunity and Legislation', pp. 64–65).

win some Julfan Armenians to his flock, with all his distinctive fervor, Piromalli reached the point of worrying the local missionaries. In 1646, the Carmelite Provincial Fr. Domenico di Santa Maria deemed his preaching style ‘unsuitable’ and ‘uncalled for’;⁷⁰ in 1647, the Capuchin Fr. Valentin d’Angers asked rhetorically how one could discuss with a man who used to debate cholericly, landing punches and insulting those who he was discussing with;⁷¹ in 1649 and 1650, Fr. Domenico di Santa Maria took up the issue again, expressing concern about Piromalli’s ‘violence’ and complained to Rome about the Armenians being ill-disposed towards ‘Franks’ on account of the Dominican ‘jousting’ with them ‘on controversial matters’.⁷²

Moreover, this opposition could have been also due to the fact that, in 1647, Piromalli had convinced Catholicos P‘ilippos, twenty-five of his bishops, and eight *vardapets* into signing a confession of faith, which they entrusted to him to hand over to Rome.⁷³ As it had happened forty years before with the profession of obedience to the Pope made by Catholicos Dawit‘ IV,⁷⁴ the initiative, carried out without the support of the Armenian Apostolic clergy in New Julfa, might have contributed to the growth and manifestation of anti-Catholic feelings. Moreover, after the death of Xač‘atur Kesarac‘i in 1646, a power struggle followed for the appointment of the new Archbishop, which saw the pro-Catholic faction defeated and its candidate Yakob Ĵulayec‘i leaving Isfahan for Armenia. In 1652, his main contender and strong opponent of Catholicism Dawit‘ Ĵulayec‘i was elected the new Armenian Archbishop.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, already in 1644, on the occasion of his first sojourn in Isfahan, Piromalli had taken notice of two important facts: the Armenian notables of New Julfa exerted a strong influence with the Armenian Apostolic hierarchies, and at the same time they feared that their opposition to western missionaries could hamper

⁷⁰ Domenico di Santa Maria, Letter to Eugenio di San Benedetto, AGOCD, 237, fol. 19; partial English translation in Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 377. As a matter of fact, in Isfahan Piromalli would dispute not only with local Armenians and/or Christian ‘schismatics’, but also with Muslims (see Halft, ‘Paolo Piromalli’).

⁷¹ ‘Di quale maniera si può trattare con uno huomo che disputa sempre in colera, che da de li pugni, che dice de le iniurie a quelli con cui tratta’ (Valentin d’Angers, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 65, fol. 332r).

⁷² Domenico di Santa Maria, Letter to Bruno de Saint-Yves, AGOCD 237, fol. 24; partial English translation in Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 377.

⁷³ Č‘amc‘ean, *History of the Armenians*, p. 621; Tašean, *Haupt-Catalog*, p. 112. This confession of faith had no practical consequences; actually, in the same year Piromalli was expelled from Armenia on account of his anti-Apostolic missionary preaching.

⁷⁴ Between 1607 and 1613 Catholicos Dawit‘ IV and his co-adjutor Melk‘isēt‘ Gařnec‘i addressed a series of professions of Catholic faith to Pope Paul V and King Philip III of Spain (see Ōrmanean, *National History*, pp. 2315–2317; Floristán–Gil, ‘Carta del patriarca armenio’; Gulbenkian, ‘Deux lettres surprenantes’; Floristán, ‘Las relaciones hispano-armenias’, pp. 58–59; Alonso, ‘Cuatro cartas’; Aral, *Les Arméniens catholiques*, pp. 245–246).

⁷⁵ Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, pp. 105–106; Baghdiantz McCabe, ‘The Socio-Economics Conditions’, p. 375; Matthee, ‘Poverty and Perseverance’, p. 471.

their trade in Europe in general and in Italy and France in particular.⁷⁶ Italy and France could be ‘problematic’ as to the settlement of Armenian merchants, because they were Catholic. Already in 1630, when the *kalantar* Khwaja Nazar asked the Vatican’s permission for the Armenians to establish workshops in Italy, the stipulated condition from Rome was that they were Catholics or willing to convert to Catholicism.⁷⁷ The Dominican soon put two and two together. His plan to build up a critical mass, which had failed to bring about theological change in the case of the Polish Armenians, had found a new community which could be swayed by threatening its economic interests: why not put this fear of the Julfans to good effect and use it as means for getting to the Catholicos and ultimately achieving the union? Piromalli first formulated the idea in a letter he wrote on April 5, 1644, from the Augustinian Convent in Isfahan:

I think it advisable to banish them from the Christian lands [Europe] as heretics, ordering the [Catholic] faithful not to trade with them under the pain of excommunication.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ ‘Due sono li principallissimi come principi in mezzo della natione, cioè Safrasi Bec e Poghos Calantar ... poiché se questi secolari comandano, tutti faranno, imperocché anche il patriarca teme di essi ... Condesceranno costoro anco per interesse proprio, atteso tutte le loro mercanzie sono in Europa e loro stessi dissero a quelli che volevano farmi male che hanno paura di esserli proibito il commercio di Italia dal Papa’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 248v). ‘Perché quelli primati et altri grandemente temono d’esser privati del commercio con Franchi, atteso tutte le loro ricchezza vengono dalla Cristianità d’Europa onde dicono che l’India degl’Armeni è Franchia’ (Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, *ibid*, fol. 249v). ‘Bisognano anco lettere alli capi dell’armeni e di tutta la natione in Persia, cioè a Paolo Callantare a Saurasis Bec et altri, come per altre mie avvisano, quando questi comandano anco il patriarca ubbidisce’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, *ibid*, fol. 259r). Three years later, Piromalli asked again from the Pope ‘una amorosa et esortativa [lettera]’ to the two notables (Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 65, fol. 331r). The Safrasi/Saurasi mentioned by Piromalli is in all likelihood Khwaja Safraz, who was the *kalantar* of New Julfa in 1636–1656 (on the office of *kalantar*, see Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 185–188). That Safraz was well-disposed towards Western missionaries is attested also by some letters written by the Carmelite Fr. Balthazar of St. Mary in 1653; in these letters, however, the favor of Safraz is not said to be motivated by personal interest (see Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, pp. 378–379). Khwaja Boghos appears as ‘the richest and most powerful man in the Armenian nation’ in the already mentioned letter written by the Carmelite Fr. Denis de la Couronne d’Épines on 9 October 1643 (Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 213r).

⁷⁷ Baghdiantz McCabe, ‘Opportunity and Legislation’, p. 66.

⁷⁸ ‘Credo saria a proposito di scacciarli da cristianità come heretici, con una scomunica alli fedeli, che non negotijno con loro’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 233v). The Augustinian Father Joseph do Rozario had written some lines on a similar but milder tone just two days before: ‘Se na christiandade os principes christãos fizesem algumas demonstraçoens com os Armenios que ás suas terras vão, por ventura que esta missão se acrescentara, que muitas vezes fazem os homens por medo aquillo que por amor não querem fazer’ (Letter to Barberini, *ibid*, 222r; transcription in Alonso, ‘El P. José del Rosario’, p. 299; partial English translation in Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 375).

In another letter written a few months after, while reporting that he managed to convert one of the Armenian notables of the city who had agents in Italy,⁷⁹ he added that, according to the new convert,

it should be ordered from Rome to all [Catholics] that in every place Armenians should be asked to accept the Roman faith, and those who do not accept it, should be banished; thus, we'll soon get to have twenty or thirty [of them] and the wall will be breached.⁸⁰

This figure of twenty or thirty converts as the critical mass which was needed to sway the entire Armenian nation occurs also in another letter; indeed, it seems that the Armenians who were in favor of the union persuaded Piromalli that, under the threat of banishing Armenian Apostolics from Italy and its trading network, they 'would start coming [would start converting], and after twenty or thirty of them, all Julfa would follow, and then all Armenia'.⁸¹ This could well explain his fervor in preaching, which during those years other missionaries viewed with concern, provided he really thought that a couple of dozens of converts would have been enough to win over all other Armenians.

Thus, after identifying the Apostolic See of Etchmiadzin as the 'root' to be extirpated for the union to be achieved, and after identifying the Polish Armenian community as the group to be won for the Catholicos to be swayed (the 'little fish' which had to be caught in order to catch the much bigger one), Piromalli began looking upon the 'notables of the Armenian nation of Isfahan' as the people 'on whom all depended',⁸² and asked the Pope to address a letter to them, reminding them of the benevolent disposition the Church had always shown by giving them freedom to trade in Italy, as opposed to the curses they articulated against the Roman Holy See.

The idea of asking for the intervention of western powers, in particular the Republic of Venice and the Grand-duchy of Tuscany, had been circulating among missionaries in Persia since the beginning of the 1640s, before Piromalli's arrival in

⁷⁹ Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 248v. Chick reports that two Augustinian Fathers testified in 1646 to the confession of faith of Khwaja Sarhat Shahrmanian (*A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 376). Piromalli himself mentions the confession of faith of 'Choggià Sahrat' together with 'Choggià Manug' (Letter to Capponi, APF, SOCG 65, fol. 330r). We do not know for sure who was the notable converted by Piromalli in 1644.

⁸⁰ 'Da Roma si ordinasse per tutti, che si proponesse in ogni luogho all'armeni la fede romana, e chi non l'abbraccia fusse discacciato; e che così arriveremo in breve havervi 20 o 30 e il muro saria rotto' (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 248v).

⁸¹ 'L'Armeni di Spahan desiderosi dell'unione vorrebbero che si facesse qualche demonstratione, cioè che chi non accetta la fede romana, subito si discacciasse dall'Italia, lo che appena cominciato, cominciariano a venire, e quando fossero venuti 20 o 30, tutta Giulfa e poi tutta l'Armenia seguirebbe' (Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 249v).

⁸² 'Li Primi della Natione Armena in Spahan, dalli quali depende il tutto' (ibid, fol. 249r).

Isfahan.⁸³ However, it seems that it became more radical in 1644 with the suggestion that some ‘demonstrations’ needed to be made to Armenians by western powers. And it is probably not by chance that, besides Piromalli’s reports from that period, the first letters where one can find this argument expressed already *in nuce* come from the same Augustinian convent in Isfahan where the Dominican stayed as a guest for some months in that same year.⁸⁴

However, Julfan Armenians proved to be a difficult fish to catch.⁸⁵ Letters and reports from the 1650s describe them as ‘more opposed to conversion than ... ever in the past’.⁸⁶ Piromalli claimed that during his first three years in Isfahan he had ‘brought back the most part of them to the Catholic faith’, but the same *vardapet* Simēon, who in 1643–1645 had averted the union with the Polish Armenians, had led the people back again to the Armenian Apostolic faith, making them ‘deadly enemies of the Romans’.⁸⁷ It is probably for this reason, and maybe counting on the confession of faith made by Catholicos P̄ilippos in 1647 as a given, that he started to think that preaching and theological disputation were ‘wasted’ on Julfan Armenians, and that *only* threats to their economic interests could persuade them into the union with Rome.

⁸³ See for example the above-mentioned 1643 letter of the Carmelite Fr. Denis de la Couronne d’Épines, where he suggested *Propaganda Fide* to argue the ‘Duke of Florence and the Signory at Venice’ into appointing ‘someone as their resident agent’ in Isfahan and writing to Khwaja Boghos in favor of the missionaries (Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 213r). Fr. Denis stressed the same point once again several months later, in June 1644, in a letter where he explained that Khwaja Boghos was ‘very fond of the Catholic faith, but he cannot reveal it for many respects’ (Letter to Ingoli, *ibid.*, fol. 204r).

⁸⁴ The already mentioned series of letters were written in April 1644 by Fr. Jozeph do Rozario. In one of them one can read: ‘Es paresialhe aos religiozos missionarios desta Perçia que se na Europa e terras dos princepes catholicos se apertasem os Armenios ou se fizese alguma prohibiçãõ que não fossem a nossas terras, a fin que libremente nos deixasem pregar e ensinar a santa fê catholica’ (Jozeph do Rozario, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 62, fols 219r–v; transcription in Alonso, ‘El P. José del Rosario’, p. 296; see also, by the same Jozeph do Rozario, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 62, fol. 222r, and, by Piromalli, Letter to Barberini, APF, SOCG 65, fol. 285r). Interestingly enough, the same idea was accepted and implemented by the Armenian Apostolic Church too, obviously in the reverse direction: in a letter written on 18 October 1645, while asking the Pope to order not to trade with the Armenian schismatics, Piromalli mentions a *vardapet* in Constantinople who ‘excommunicated all those who want to buy the wares of Khwaja Peter, who became Frank’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 65, fol. 329v).

⁸⁵ In March 1648 Piromalli gives the figure of only ‘two converts in the current year’ (Letter to Capponi, APF, SOCG 292, fol. 352v). That actual conversion was a difficult victory to obtain is clear also from the case of Khwaja Boghos, who in 1647 is said to have become ‘fond of the truth insomuch that he acts as a missionary to the other leaders’ (Piromalli, Letter to Ingoli, APF, SOCG 65, fol. 331r), but still had to make his ‘promised confession’ one year later (Piromalli, Letter to Capponi, APF, SOCG 292, fol. 352v).

⁸⁶ Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, pp. 378–380.

⁸⁷ Piromalli, *Relazione trasmessa*, APF, SC Armeni, vol. 1, fols 28r–v.

It is in his 1654 report to the Pope that this idea can be found expressed fully. Piromalli illustrated the social context of the Armenian merchant community of New Julfa by elaborating on the financial influence it had on the Armenian Apostolic clergy and people:

Those Julfans divert the people from the Catholic faith, because they are the most powerful among the Armenian Nation in wealth, eloquence, and boldness; they can elect and remove the Catholicos whenever they want; and all the Preacher Bishops and clergy depend on them, since none of those has income coming, and they beg for their food and livelihood from them, and because of that they are obliged to obey their orders. On account of the control those Julfans exert all over the [Armenian] nation, there is no doubt that the union with the Roman Church could be achieved only if they want it, and if they do not want it, there is no way it could be achieved.⁸⁸

Then he went on to expound his new strategy to the Pope, reassuring him about the fact that the Armenian Church had already acknowledged its errors and the clergy yearned after embracing the Catholic truth, and emphasizing the ‘easiness’ of the solution he was proposing: since there were no more convenient ports to them than those of Venice and Livorno, and since Julfan Armenians feared falling out of favor with the rulers of the said cities, just one nod from the Grand Duke of Tuscany or the Doge would be enough to ‘subdue their power’.⁸⁹ Finally, after acknowledging the failure of all missionary work among Julfan Armenians (even if he sugar-coated this statement by preceding it with the bold claim that the Armenian Church was *already* theologically won), and reassessing that the matter of the union depended

⁸⁸ ‘Essi Giulfalini divertono i Popoli dalla fede Cattolica, perche sono i più potenti della Nazione Armena in ricchezze eloquenza et ardire: possono promuovere, e rimuovere il Patriarca quando vogliono; & tutti li Vescovi Predicatori, e Clero dipendono da loro, atteso che niuno di questi tiene entrata, e da quelli mendicando, ricevono il vitto, e sostentamento, per il che restano obbligati ad obbedire alli loro commandi. Per il dominio dunque, che questi Giulfalini tengono sopra tutta la nazione, senza niun dubbio volendo l’unione con la Chiesa Romana, si concluderà, e non volendo, in niun modo si effettuarà’ (ibid, fols 30r–v). Indeed, the Armenians of New Julfa, together with those of Constantinople, had the right to approve or disprove the appointment of a new Catholicos (see Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, p. 105).

⁸⁹ ‘Questi Giulfalini sono quelli Mercadanti, li quali negoziano le loro merci per tutta la Christianità, e fanno scala principale in Venezia, et in Livorno, da dove riportano tutte le loro ricchezze; & perche non hanno, ne possono avere altro Porto così comodo, temono grandemente d’incorrere la disgrazia di questi Prencipi. ... Per conchiudere dunque ... la Chiesa Armena oggi conosce, e confessa gli errori: & benche i Capi bramino di abbracciare la verità Cattolica, nondimeno è ritardato l’effetto da suddetti Giulfalini, la cui potenza può per le sud(dett)e ragioni esser piegata da ogni minimo cenno, ò della Ser(enissi)ma Repubblica di Venezia, ò del Ser(enissi)mo Gran Duca di Toscana. ... V(ostra) S(antit)à si degni far riflessione alla facilità, che porgono le sud(dett)e disposizioni, e mezzi per la unione, et obbedienza alla Santa Sede Apostolica di tutta la Nazione Armena’ (Piromalli, *Relazione trasmessa*, APF, SC Armeni, vol. 1, fols 30v–31v).

on their will, he stressed that the union could be achieved *only* if the Princes of Venice and Livorno intervene in a matter of such importance.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the idea was destined to remain an exercise in style with no practical consequences, and Rome did not follow Piromalli's suggestion. It is true that in the previous centuries there had been papal bans against the trade with 'infidels' or 'heretics'. However, those bans were issued not because 'the Church could not tolerate the existence of trade with those groups per se' but because Rome could not allow 'the attempts of lay powers and lawyers to make their own sense of canon law and papal orders',⁹¹ and they certainly were not seen as a means of conversion. Rome failed or refused to use the Armenian merchant class of New Julfa as a bridgehead; in fact, when the Church started granting commercial privileges to the Julfan Armenian Catholic Shahrmanian family, it did so not as much in order to use them to get to other Armenians, but to reward them for the favors they had done to Catholic missionaries.⁹² Moreover, when in 1655 Piromalli was appointed Archbishop of the Armenian Catholic Diocese of Nakhichevan, he was forbidden to wield episcopal authority outside the Diocese, thus *de facto* debarring him from preaching to Armenian Apostolics.⁹³ Meanwhile, the opposition of the Armenian Apostolics in Isfahan intensified. Following the arrival in New Julfa of a large number of Catholic missionaries in the late 1640s, in 1654 the Armenians presented a petition to the Shah, who stopped the already authorized establishment of a Catholic church in the neighborhood and forced the missionaries to leave the Armenian quarter and move back to Isfahan.⁹⁴

CONCLUSION

In 1634–1635, when engaging in theological debate with the Catholicos in Etchmiadzin, Piromalli first met with a rather 'open' attitude, if it is true that—after the Dominican allegedly showed him all the errors of the Armenian Church—P'lippos

⁹⁰ 'Dalla parte degli'Ecclesiastici per esser già istruiti, et illuminati nelle verità Cattoliche, ... con certezza che tutte le fatighe de' Missionarij sono perse; la opera solamente de sud(dett)i Prencipi di Venezia, e di Toscana resta potente per tale effetto, i quali volendo mostrarsi di volere, quelli tutti si butteranno à lor piedi, e così l'unione si effettuarà. Il negozio è di grande importanza, e li mezzi sono efficacissimi' (ibid, fols 31v–32r).

⁹¹ Stantchev, *Spiritual Rationality*, p. 144.

⁹² Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 150–151; Korsch, 'The Sceriman', p. 368. As a matter of fact, as noted also by Baghdiantz McCabe, 'in the case of the Shahrmanians their Catholicism did help them settle in Venice but it is legislation and tax exemption that is key to New Julfan commerce in these ports, rather than religion' (Baghdiantz McCabe, 'Opportunity and Legislation', p. 66).

⁹³ Piromalli arrived in the Diocese in 1657, but after only three years, following clashes and disagreements with the local Armeno-Dominican clergy, he moved again first to Isfahan, in 1660, and then back to Italy, in 1662.

⁹⁴ Chick, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, vol. 1, p. 381. In 1658, after almost fifteen years since Piromalli's first arrival to the city, there were only six Armenian Catholic families left in New Julfa (ibid, p. 382).

had given order to collect and *check* manuscripts, in particular those containing the works of Grigor Tat'ewac'i. In this way P'ilippos questioned, at least in principle, one of their most important theologians, who in the fourteenth century had written polemic works against the Catholics.⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, this triggered a violent reaction on the part of some Armenian *vardapets*, who accused Piromalli of 'being a Frank and against their law and doctors', and—irrespective of the seeming openness of P'ilippos (and of his successor Yakob iv Ĵulayec'i)—the occasion prompted part of the clergy to line up in defense of their own tradition.⁹⁶

When in 1639 the question of the union of the Polish Armenians flared up, it marked a turning point in the relations the Ottoman and Safavid Armenian Apostolics had with Catholicism. Their attitude increasingly started to change, and more and more frequently tensions arose between them and the missionaries. In the case of the Julfan Armenians, Safavid imperial politics too had a role in that change of attitude: after the Treaty of Zuhab was concluded with the Ottomans in 1639, the Safavids lost interest in the Europeans as potential allies and their stance towards missionaries changed.⁹⁷ While during the reign of Shah Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) the relations between the state and both local Christians and Catholic missionaries had been 'tolerably good',⁹⁸ they 'cooled off' under Shah Safi (r. 1629–1642) and were 'markedly cooler' under Shah Abbas II (r. 1642–1666).⁹⁹ Moreover, apart from the official stance the Shahs took *vis-à-vis* the domestic Christian communities during the first half of the seventeenth century, one should not forget that, unlike foreign missionaries, the indigenous Christian minorities were subjects of the Shah. The idea that foreign powers could have jurisdiction over indigenous Christian subjects could have dire consequences for their loyalty to the Shah,¹⁰⁰ and debating whether or not to acknowledge the Pope's authority was viewed as a conflict of loyalty.¹⁰¹ Also, starting from the mid-1630s, and in particular under Shah Abbas II, as a consequence

⁹⁵ Piromalli, *Relation de' successi*, fol. 26r.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 26v and *passim*.

⁹⁷ Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, p. 136; Baghdiantz McCabe, 'The Socio-Economics Conditions', pp. 375–376; Matthee, 'Christians in Safavid Iran', p. 24.

⁹⁸ Savory, 'Relations', p. 446. It should be noted that, as Matthee puts it, 'Shah 'Abbas' approach to Christians and Christianity was informed less by natural sympathies than by strategic considerations' ('Christians in Safavid Iran', p. 22): hoping for an alliance with European monarchs against the Ottomans, it was in his interest that Western missionaries and travelers reported favorably about his kingdom in Europe (Moreen, 'The Status of Religious Minorities', p. 125). On the other hand, Shah Abbas also used Western missionaries to keep the ulema at bay; at the same time, to maintain good relations with his own clergy, he allowed the ulema to harass and revile non-Shi'i minorities, if need be. He also managed to take advantage of the strained relations between pro- and anti-Catholic Armenians to keep them divided (Matthee, 'The Politics of Protection', p. 267).

⁹⁹ Matthee, 'Christians in Safavid Iran', p. 24.

¹⁰⁰ Savory, 'Relations', pp. 444–445. More often than not, when tensions arose between the missionaries and the Safavid state, local Christian communities—and the Armenians in particular—were the ones who took the brunt (Matthee, 'The Politics of Protection', p. 265).

¹⁰¹ Moreen, 'The Status of Religious Minorities', p. 129.

of the growing power of the ulema, the Shah's officials were given more latitude in their initiatives against non-Muslims, and a succession of Grand Viziers began to enact measures against the *dhimmi* population.¹⁰² Accordingly, the opposition displayed by the Julfan Armenian merchants to Catholic missionaries did not originate only from ethno-confessional reasons: while understanding that Catholicism could be an enticing and convenient solution for those who wanted to trade in Europe, they feared that their position with the Shah could be damaged if they converted or showed too much interest in the Catholic faith.¹⁰³ As a consequence, starting from the late 1640s, the Julfan Armenian community began to style itself as *the* stronghold of Armenian Apostolic orthodoxy, not only against Catholicism and Catholic missionaries, but also in direct conflict with the Catholicoi in Etchmiadzin and their more open attitude with Catholics.¹⁰⁴

Thus, as far as the Armenians are concerned, one can see a twofold stance in their reaction to Catholic missionary activity: apart from political considerations and the opposition of some members of the clergy, Etchmiadzin was more open to dialogue and willing to re-discover or at least take into consideration what missionaries argued to be the original orthodoxy of the Armenian Church.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Julfan Armenian merchants proved to be more 'conservative', starting a process of reformation of their ecclesiastical institutions to consolidate and reappraise the Apostolic tradition. In this sense, one does not have to wait for the 1680s or the 1690s to start discerning at least some signs of confessionalization among Armenians: Piromalli's activity since the 1630s seems to have prompted Armenians in various circles to start ask questions about their own practices and beliefs, discussing and disputing how they should approach Catholicism.

¹⁰² Matthee, 'Christians in Safavid Iran', pp. 26–28. According to Baghdiantz McCabe, the ulema were hostile not to the Armenians *tout-court* but to 'a new heretical movement among Armenians ... much akin to the Dervish cult', which 'spread among Armenian artisans ... beginning in the late 1630s' (Baghdiantz McCabe, 'Princely Suburb', p. 433). The measures taken by the Armenian clergy to repress the sect could have contributed to strengthening the Apostolic identity.

¹⁰³ Safavid officials see the Armenians who were closer to the Church of Rome and offered economic support to the missionaries 'as a fifth column' of dangerous sympathizers of the European powers, which explains some of the persecutions that the indigenous Christian minorities underwent in late Safavid Iran (Matthee, 'Christians in Safavid Iran', pp. 30–31).

¹⁰⁴ Ghougassian, *The Emergence*, pp. 101, 105–122. The election of Yakob Ĵulayec'i—the pro-Catholic defeated contender of the anti-Catholic Dawit' Ĵulayec'i in the election to the archiepiscopal See of New Julfa—as the new Catholicos of All the Armenians in 1655 played a major role in exacerbating the rift between the New Julfa clergy and the Holy See of Etchmiadzin.

¹⁰⁵ As a matter of fact, even if an actual union with Rome would never be negotiated, most of the Catholicoi of the seventeenth century—Dawit' IV Vaĵaršapatc'i, Melk'isēt' Garnecc'i, Movsēs III T'atewac'i, P'ġilippos I Aĵbakecc'i, Yakob IV Ĵulayec'i, Nahapet I Edesac'i—seemingly displayed pro-Catholic sympathies and engaged in epistolary communication with the Pope, to whom they wrote letters expressing deference and submitted their confession of orthodox faith.

As for Piromalli and Rome, the three phases I have highlighted in the Dominican's career are not to be necessarily seen as parts of a linear and progressive course, or as the result of a deep and well-considered reflection on his part (which the scattered nature of his letters make difficult to discern) or that of *Propaganda Fide*. They are rather consequence of Piromalli moving from place to place, getting in touch with different social and economic contexts, and learning from his missionary work. Moreover, assessing the ratio between self-deception and self-propaganda in Piromalli's letters and reports is not an easy task. The enthusiastic and apologetic tones of his writings notwithstanding, one cannot believe that every time, in every place he went (the Ottoman Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Safavid Empire), he really believed that he had (almost) managed to persuade Armenian clergy into acknowledging the Catholic truth, and that he had failed only because of the improvident involvement of some Armenian *vardapet*, who, inevitably, came to ruin his work.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, his representation of his interlocutors lacks any social or political consideration: they are 'good' or 'bad' depending on whether they accepted his preaching or not, regardless of the reasons they might have had for doing one thing or the other. Accordingly, Catholicos P'lippos is represented as an 'inconstant man' because of his seemingly wavering attitude, without considering how union with Rome could have affected his position with the Armenian clergy and the Shah, not to mention the idea that this 'wavering' could have been a strategic stance, coming from the religious leader of a people who historically looked to the Christian powers of the West to come and rescue them from Muslim rule.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, Piromalli complained about the duplicity of the Julfan Armenians—who, according to his reports, professed to be Catholic in the West and in New Julfa were fierce opponents of the Catholic missionaries—and the fact that they 'diverted the people from the Catholic faith', without acknowledging the social, political, and economic implications of their conversion to Catholicism in terms of their relations with the Shah. Interestingly enough, even when acknowledging that 'all missionary efforts are wasted' on Armenians, and admitting the inadequacy of *Propaganda Fide's* conversion strategies based on theological demonstration and the implementation of a specifically Tridentine confessional agenda (like he does in his 1654 report), Piromalli

¹⁰⁶ Ambitious and eager to advertise his supposed victories as he was, Piromalli could also count on his brother Giovanni to promote his virtues and commitment to his mission. Giovanni, a Capuchin friar, 'became the most enthusiastic and devoted spreader of the thought and adventures [of Paolo Piromalli] in the Western circles' (Longo, *Giovanni da Siderno*, p. 289). Exaggerations and overstatements were in any case common in letters sent to Europe by missionaries, who were in constant need for economic support from the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*. However, while mentioning the dire conditions he faced in his travels and missionary activities, it seems to me that the often-triumphant tone of Piromalli's letters was informed less by his actual need for money than by his personal ambition and eagerness to take 'official' credit for his work. In that sense, the fact that he started to sign his letters as Archbishop of Nakhichevan *before* formally obtaining that title is quite telling (see Busolini, 'Piromalli, Paolo').

¹⁰⁷ Matthee, 'The Politics of Protection', p. 258.

could not think of a different approach in his preaching. While questioning the practical effectiveness of this conversion strategy (by blaming the schismatics for its failure), what he suggested was a complete change of approach, where the union achieved with means other than theological persuasion (economic threatening) preceded *de facto* the doctrinal conviction of the people. Even if he realized that the strategy of *Propaganda Fide* did not work with Armenian Apostolics, he failed to adapt the theological content of his preaching to the situation at hand, and the only solution he could devise was a completely different one, one that did not question the intrinsic value of the other, because it played on a different level.

If we judge Piromalli's success by his own avowed goal of bringing the whole Armenian Church into the union with Rome, we would have to acknowledge that, some occasional and collateral success apart,¹⁰⁸ his entire career was essentially a failure; or, at best, it was like the proverbial mountain that labors to bring forth a mouse. Still, his fervent reports must have worked if in 1655 he was appointed by Rome as the Archbishop of Nakhichevan, despite his dubious success in Armenia, his failure in Poland, and his brisk, uncalled for, and ultimately ineffective methods known from the letters of other missionaries in Isfahan. Furthermore, Piromalli was appointed in spite of the opposition of the local Armeno-Dominican friars, with the result that three months after his arrival the entire Dominican clergy of the Archdiocese was in rebellion.¹⁰⁹ For that matter, the news of Piromalli's appointment was received with anxiety also by the Catholic missionaries in Isfahan, who—as the Carmelite Fr. Denis de la Couronne d'Épines wrote—were concerned about his 'violent and impetuous spirit, which had already given rise to great anger and dislike among the Armenians' against missionaries.¹¹⁰ Despite all of this, both Piromalli and *Propaganda Fide* seemingly did not regard the controversies and opposition prompted by his preaching as the signs of a failing strategy. Indeed, they lacked a critical reflection, if not on the content of their preaching, then on the method that would be acceptable to the Armenians. Instead, they shifted the problem on to Armenians themselves: it was not the missionaries' strategies that were to be blamed, but the Armenians who were ignorant and stubborn in persisting in their supposed 'errors'. In that sense, while the zeal, excess, and ambition of Piromalli made him stand apart from other missionaries, his stance is indicative of what was and would remain the position of the Roman Church, *Propaganda Fide*, and Catholic missionaries towards the Armenian Apostolics: they were regarded as obstinate and deceitful schismatics who were in error and needed to be converted.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, the above-mentioned cases of Kirakos and Oskan Erevanc'i.

¹⁰⁹ See Eszer, 'Sebastianus Knab', p. 230.

¹¹⁰ 'C'est un esprit bien trop violent et véhément, qui a causé très grandes altérations et aversions des Arméniens vers nous' (Denis de la Couronne d'Épines, Letter to Isidore de Saint-Joseph, AGOCD, 237, c. 25; quoted in Windler, *Missionare in Persien*, p. 316).

¹¹¹ This idea was so deep-rooted that Piromalli could write in absolute good faith that the Armenian Church 'erred [also] in grammar', and that, *unlike Latin*, the Armenian language was

To be sure, in the early seventeenth century, initial missionary efforts in Armenia were intended especially for Armenian Catholics.¹¹² Piromalli himself was sent as Apostolic Prefect to the Catholic missions of Eastern Armenia to establish a school where the Armeno-Dominican novices could be properly trained. Only after the Dominican went to Etchmiadzin on his own initiative to discuss the matter of the union with the Catholicos of All the Armenians, the Secretary of the Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide*, Mgr. Ingoli, believing in what Piromalli reported in his letters, asked him to persist in that line of action, regarding the prospective union as ‘more important than the school’.¹¹³ However, over the course of the seventeenth century, Armenian Apostolics acquired a reputation for being almost ‘unconvertible’ in their stubbornness and heresy, which became a *topos* in missionary letters and travel literature.¹¹⁴

In retrospective, a better and more fruitful approach would have probably been that undertaken over the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries by the Mekhitarist fathers, an Armenian Catholic Order founded at the beginning of the eighteenth century by the monk Mxit‘ar Sebastac‘i (1676–1749). The Mekhitarists believed that the Armenian Church ‘formally acknowledges ... all the truths of the Roman Church’, and that it ‘possesses and professes since the very beginning the orthodox faith, and division entered it only because someone understood differently the articles of

unsuited to express theological teachings because it lacked functions such as, among others, gender differentiation in nouns and adjectives (*Relazione degl'errori*, APF, SOCG 293, fol. 4r). The underlying idea was that, since the language of post-Tridentine theology was Latin, Latin was *the* language best suited to spread its doctrine. Accordingly, since its grammar was different from that of Latin, Armenian was inherently unfit for rightly and clearly conveying that very doctrine. It goes without saying that, if one questions even the ‘orthodoxy’ of the language used by the persons he is talking to, there is not much room for actual dialogue.

¹¹² See, for instance, the mission of Paolo Maria Cittadini to Nakhichevan in 1614: he and his companions were expressly requested by their Master General not to actively engage in theological debate with the Armenian Apostolics (see *Istruzione per li frati di S. Domenico*, APF, Misc. div. 22, fol. 198r; see also Lucca, ‘Cleansing the Christian Vineyard’, especially pp. 42–43).

¹¹³ ‘E già che si trova presso cotesto Pat(riarc)a Filippo veda anche d'apprendere la lingua Armena per discorrere con esso dell'unione, ch'il suo precursore dissegnava di fare con questa S(an)ta Sede, rappresentandogli ciò ch'altre volte hà fatto la sua nat(io)ne ... E s'ella havesse qualche speranza di ridurlo alla med(esim)a unione, non si partirà da lui, perché ciò importa più, ch'il d(etto)o Colleg(i)o’ (Ingoli, Letter to Piromalli, APF, Lett. volg. 15, fol. 69v). That Piromalli's visit to the Catholicos had not been previously planned by Rome is apparent from the tone and content of Ingoli's letter (see Lucca, ‘Cleansing the Christian Vineyard’, p. 50).

¹¹⁴ See, for instance, Chardin, who, in the 1660s, reported that ‘les Missionnaires font quelques progrès parmi le chrétiens orientaux, excepté pourtant parmi les Arméniens’ (*Voyages*, p. 158); and Sanson, who, in 1695, mentioned the obstinacy of the Armenian Apostolics and their ‘attache à leurs erreurs & leurs superstitions’ (*Voyage*, p. 165).

faith'.¹¹⁵ This conviction—and the fact that they had a deep knowledge of the Armenian language and religious traditions—enabled them to engage in a more productive dialogue with the Armenian Apostolics.¹¹⁶

Instead, an attitude based on suspicion and on a fundamental ignorance of the Armenian Apostolic tradition—which was wrongly regarded as heretic and an obstacle to the union with the Catholic Church—ended up yielding the opposite result from the one Piromalli and Rome were seeking, as it ultimately contributed towards the strengthening or re-defining of an Armenian Apostolic identity which was built *also* in opposition to Catholicism. Indeed, most of the western and the Armenian missionaries trained in Rome at the Collegio Urbano would embrace this very approach up until the mid-nineteenth century, engaging in an escalation of controversy and dispute with the Armenian Apostolics which, in 1831, resulted in the creation of the Armenian Catholic *millet* in the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent establishment of an Armenian Catholic hierarchy that halted once and for all any hope of the longed-for union.

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AGAD = Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (Warsaw)

AKW = Archiwum Koronne Warszawskie

AGOCD = Archivum Generale Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum (Rome)

¹¹⁵ 'La Chiesa Armena dal principio in qua ha e professa la vera fede Cattolica, ma siccome l'uso de' termini in materia di fede altri altrimenti intendevano, ed intendono, da ciò è entrata tra noi la divisione'; 'la Chiesa Armena formalm(ent)e come Chiesa ammette tutte le verità della Chiesa Cattolica Romana' (APF, SC Armeni, Misc. 32, docs no. 17 and 19).

¹¹⁶ However, they were opposed by the Armenian alumni of *Propaganda Fide*, who more often than not were accusing them of liturgical abuses and doctrinal deviations. Starting from 1714 and up to the mid-nineteenth century a series of investigations were carried out by *Propaganda Fide* and the *Santo Uffizio* which concerned the Catholic orthodoxy of the Mekhitarists, mostly on the basis of allegations coming from Western missionaries and the Armenian alumni of *Propaganda Fide*. They were accused of religious indifferentism, since they thought and taught that 'the difference between the Armenian Catholics and Apostolics was a mere nothing.' See, for instance, APF, SC Armeni, Misc. 35, fols 388–389: 'Dunque egli è un chiaro segno, che Mechitar, per riunire insieme i Cattolici, e gli eretici Armeni, teneva una strada di mezzo, cioè quella di indifferentismo, facendo intendere, essere cosa di niente la differenza, che passava fra li Cattolici, e gli Eretici Armeni [...]. Dunque sono altresì indifferenti tutti i Mechitaristi, i quali lodano una tal condotta del loro fondatore, e chiamano pacifiche quelle persone indifferenti.' By failing to capitalize on the activity of the Mekhitarist monks to proselytize among the Apostolics, *Propaganda Fide* proved once again its inability or unwillingness—at least when it came to Armenians—to rely upon someone who had a profound understanding of their national religious and cultural traditions, but who had not been directly trained at its school and did not speak its same post-Tridentine language. On the clashes between the Mekhitarist fathers and the alumni of *Propaganda Fide*, see Lucca, *Neither Fowl nor Fish?* [forthcoming].

APF = Archivum S.C. de Propaganda Fide (Rome)

Acta = Acta Sacrae Congregationis

Let. div. ling. = Lettere diverse lingue

Let. volg. = Lettere volgari

Misc. = Miscellanea

SOCG = Scritture originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali

SC = Scritture riferite nei Congressi

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16. INTRA-ARMENIAN POLEMICS AND CONFESSION-BUILDING IN OTTOMAN CONSTANTINOPLE: THE CASE OF GĒORG MxLAYIM ŌLLI (1681/85–1758)¹

ANNA OHANJANYAN

INTRODUCTION

In his book composed in 1713 ‘in the jail of Frankistan’, Constantinople-based Armenian Apostolic preacher (*vardapet*)², theologian and polemicist Gēorg Mxlayim Ōlli (1681/85–1758)³ describes the experience that induced him to switch from being a peacemaker between Armenian Apostolics and Catholics to becoming a zealous anti-Catholic polemicist, through a comparison with prophet Amos’ divine call to prophecy:

‘I was not a prophet, and neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was a shepherd and was gathering sycamore fruit and suddenly the Lord took me from the flock and I prophecy now’ (Amos 7:14–15). This was said by prophet Amos, and the same I reiterate. Neither a theologian, nor a pupil of a theologian,⁴ but rather a worthless shepherd of the rational flock of Christ, I had hardly reposed upon the ample fields of the writings of the Fathers to collect spiritual fruits and to feed the Church with

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² In the Armenian church, *vardapet* was an educated preacher corresponding to the rank of archimandrite in the Greek church.

³ In his book from 1750 Gēorg Mxlayim states that he was sixty-five years old. See Mxlayim, *Catholicity of the Followers*, M 6458, fol. 54r; W 1243, fol. 253.

⁴ Although Gēorg Mxlayim was a highly educated *vardapet* when he was writing these lines in 1713, he belittles himself in the eyes of readership to point out his young age and lack of stature and authority to pronounce on divine truths.

them, when suddenly, I was captured by the diabolic schismatics, and I began to theologize on the Sacraments of the Church of Christ.⁵

As this paper will argue, Mxlayim's experience as a captive in France turned him into one of the key authors engaged in the refashioning and reshaping of orthodoxy and orthopraxy within the Armenian Apostolic Church in the age of intensified confessional tensions. Although he was in good standing with the patriarchs and catholicos of his time and found himself in the center of a widespread network of Catholic and Greek Orthodox theologians in the Ottoman Empire, who left extensive notes about him, Mxlayim Ōḷi and his work were ignored by contemporary Armenian authors and remain overlooked by the modern scholarship. The only bio-bibliographical article about him was published in 1984 by Armen Ter-Stepanyan,⁶ followed by a short communication in a newspaper a decade later,⁷ which has since been reiterated by other scholars.⁸ Otherwise, a brief note on the content of Mxlayim's published pieces might be found in the bibliographical volume edited by Kevork Bardakjian.⁹

Scholarly neglect of Mxlayim is probably related to the purely theological character of his works. However, in the scholarship on early modern Europe, the theory of 'confessionalization' inspired historians to take a closer look at theological texts, primarily polemical writings and catechisms, as major sources for the religious and cultural history of the period.¹⁰ This paper is an attempt to explore the comparative potentials of the 'confessionalization theory' and the debate it generated by considering its relevance to the early modern Armenian confessional dynamics. Rather than discussing the applicability of the theory to the Armenian context per se, the paper focuses on how various Armenian groups and individuals engaged with their own theological tradition and rethought classical theological genres and vocabulary in light of the new questions and concerns arising from post-Reformation confessional debates in Europe, brought to the Ottoman context by the missionaries. The paper approaches these issues through Gēorg Mxlayim's work, seeking to contextualize it in this time of growing confessional polarization, and understand his contributions to the refashioning of the Armenian Apostolic orthodoxy. In order to better grasp the climate in which Mxlayim Ōḷi's early career evolved, it is necessary to first consider the major developments of the period.

⁵ Mxlayim, *Theology Concerning the Sacraments*, M 134, fol. 2v; W 733, fol. 2r. Here and elsewhere, I do not provide the Armenian text due to space constraints.

⁶ Ter-Stepanyan, 'Gēorg Mxlayim', pp. 36–44. In his attempt to classify Mxlayim's writings Ter-Stepanyan refrains from reflections on the content of his writings accentuating only their polemical character.

⁷ Ter-Stepanyan, 'The Patriarch of Constantinople', p. 5.

⁸ In the introduction to the reprints of Mxlayim's rare printed books the already known facts are reiterated. See Tarverdyan ed., *Armenian Theological Thought*, pp. 63–69.

⁹ Bardakjian ed., *A Reference Guide*, pp. 96–97. In his introduction Bardakjian discusses Mxlayim's printed books but leaves out his writings in manuscript.

¹⁰ Lotz-Heumann, Pohlig, 'Confessionalization and Literature', pp. 35–61; Rummel, *The Confessionalization of Humanism*; Ferry, 'Confessionalization and Popular Preaching', pp. 1143–1166.

**CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC ARMENIANS IN LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
CONSTANTINOPLE**

Gēorg Mxlayim's early life unfolded within the complex *mise en scène* with a number of political and ecclesiastical players in the Ottoman Empire at the dawn of the eighteenth century. The shift in foreign policy of the Sublime Porte after the Venetian occupation of Chios in 1694–1695¹¹ gave rise to the Sultan's *hatt-ı şerif* or edict against the activities of the 'Frankish' (Catholic) priests among Ottoman Christian subjects. According to the edict, Catholics were perceived as 'not only Agents of the Roman Pope, but Spies in the [Ottoman] Empire'.¹² Thus, the engagement of Armenians and Greeks with any 'Frank' was punishable by the law. The edict became decisive for the internal life of the Armenian communities in Constantinople, leading to harsh clashes between the Armenian Apostolics and Catholics.

More than a century after the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Jesuits finally gained access to the communities of 'schismatic' Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Though their presence among Armenians might be traced back to the early seventeenth century, the real breakthrough in terms of conversions occurred only in the 1690s due to the switch in proselytizing strategy. Similar to the case of the Greek Orthodox, the strategy of secret conversions used by Jesuits proved to be effective and resulted in the establishment of pro-Catholic groups among Armenians. The success was achieved thanks chiefly to the infiltration of crypto-Catholic clergymen, educated in the schools of Propaganda Fide, into the Armenian churches in Constantinople. Saint Grigor Lusaworič^c Church in Galata was particularly accommodating thanks to the large concentration of Catholic monasteries in Galata under the protectorate of foreign embassies. For this reason, the discontent of the Apostolics initially focused more on converted Armenian clergymen, who kept preaching in Armenian churches clandestinely, thereby leading astray the Apostolic faithful 'from within',¹³ than upon the Catholics themselves. This situation laid the foundation for the orthodoxy debates among Armenians in Constantinople, 'dividing the same

¹¹ For details see Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios*. On the long-term effect of the occupation on the confessional balance in the island see Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, pp. 16–42.

¹² De la Motraye, *Travels through Europe*, pp. 159, 393–394.

¹³ In one of his writings on *communicatio in sacris* Mxit'ar Sebastac'i explains to his fellow crypto-Catholics why it is necessary to retain membership in the Apostolic Church and follow Apostolic Divine Office except for the recitation of the Nicene anathema during the Liturgy. As one of the main reasons he mentions access to the faithful and ability to educate them in 'true doctrine' and 'true praxis', thus gaining more and more followers. See Sebastac'i, *Reasons Brought*, W 263, fols 88r–91v.

nation into two sides and two faces',¹⁴ into *axt'arma* (Tr. *aktarma*)¹⁵ or a Catholic Armenian one, and *lusaworč'adawan*¹⁶ or an Apostolic Armenian one.

Judging by the polemical writings of Eremia Č'ēlēpi K'ēōmiwrčēan (1637–1695), a Constantinople-based Armenian historiographer, the debates on 'true doctrine' and 'true praxis' escalated in the early 1690s. In his letter from 1690 addressed to Catholicos Ełiazar Aynt'ap'ec'i (1681–1691), Eremia complains about the intra-communal controversies caused by Sargis T'oxatec'i (*vardapet* Sargis Sahit'či Gasparēan),¹⁷ who openly divided Armenians into 'Catholics and schismatics, Frank and Armenian'.¹⁸ Such a situation provoked Eremia to compose his polemical works toward the end of his life criticizing even the *vardapets* he was intimately acquainted with, because of their 'Frankish practices' and 'bad innovations'. His critique may have echoed contemporary Ottoman Muslims' usage of the concept of 'bad innovation' or *bidat* in Turkish (Ar. *bid'a*).¹⁹ This concept from Sunni theology became particularly important in the seventeenth century as Ottoman Muslims grew increasingly concerned with the question of which practices departed from the Prophetic custom and tradition (*sunna*) and constituted harmful innovations—debates that at times even resulted in intra-communal violence.²⁰ By resorting to the concept of 'bad

¹⁴ K. K'ēōmiwrčēan, *Concerning the Confrontation*, p. 437; BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 19r.

¹⁵ Turkish word *aktarma*, from the verb *aktarmak* (to transfer, change), was used in the Armenian Apostolic circles to refer to those Armenians who converted to Catholicism.

¹⁶ Literally, the one who professes the teachings of Grigor Lusaworič' (Gregory the Illuminator), the founder of the Armenian Church as an institution.

¹⁷ Sargis was the bishop of Bethlehem, 1684–1690. Ordained a *vardapet* by Minas Hamt'ec'i, he traveled to Jerusalem and was consecrated a bishop by Ełiazar Aynt'ap'ec'i in 1676. For more detail see Galemk'erean, *Biographies*, pp. 64–99.

¹⁸ E. K'ēōmiwrčēan, *History of Istanbul*, p. 176; Galemk'erean, *Biographies*, pp. 74–77.

¹⁹ See Eremia Č'ēlēpi's unpublished *Response with God's help*, BNF, MS Arm. 334, fols 142–148v; W 779, fols 1r–4r. His *Apology of the Armenian Church*, which also remains unpublished to this day, is one of the most elaborate polemical works of the period (J 533, fols 101r–280v; J 1205). In *Apology* Eremia engages with the works of Latin Fathers to prove the 'true orthodoxy' of the Armenian Church, while refuting the accusations coming from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish contexts. *Apology*, composed after 1692, is in contrast with the fact that Eremia compiled an Armenian-Catholic catechism in 1681, commissioned by T'adēos Hamazaspean Isfahanc'i (Erewanc'i), where he included the Armenian liturgical version of the Nicene Creed and appended to it Fillioque as well as other Catholic doctrinal and ritual elements, thus adjusting Catholicism to Armenian ecclesiastical milieu. It is possible that he modeled it on the first Tridentine Catholic-Armenian catechism (*Book of Questions*, NOJ 498; M 72, fols 123r–179v). His *Apology*, however, testifies to the shift of his attitude and increasing antagonism toward Catholic Armenians, apparently because of their intense proselytizing in Armenian churches after 1690.

²⁰ For a first-hand account on the issues that divided contemporary Muslims, and clashes between the followers of mosque preachers known as Kadizadelis (who condemned innovations that they identified in everyday pious practices of their coreligionists) and common people and Sufis opposing their views, see Kātib Chelebi, *The Balance of Truth*. For more about *bidat*, see Terzioğlu, 'Bid'at'.

innovation', Eremia possibly gestured to a shared sensibility towards the issues of correct practice and belief.

Further escalation of the controversy was apparently caused by the activities of *vardapet* Xač'atur Ērzurmc'i Aṙak'elian (1666–1740), an alumnus of the Urbanian College of Propaganda Fide in Rome.²¹ Between 1698 and 1699, during the first tenure of Patriarch Melk'isedek Suphi (Suphi shahir, 1698–1699) who favored Catholic preachers, Xač'atur Ērzurmc'i commenced preaching in Saint Gēorg Armenian Church (or Sulumanastır) of Samatya and Saint Astuacacin in Kumkapı in Constantinople.²² In 1701, with the special permission of Patriarch Melk'isedek and with the aid of two other priests, Petros T'iflisc'i and Mxit'ar Sebastac'i, Xač'atur Ērzurmc'i rendered from Latin to Armenian the Commentary on the Gospel of John and *Key of Devotion*, and had them printed in Surb Ējmiacin and Surb Sargis Zoravar underground printing press.²³ Already in 1700 Mxit'ar Sebastac'i commissioned the translation of *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis, *Reasonable Prayer* and *Commentary on Song of Songs* by Xač'atur Ērzurmc'i. The dissemination of Catholic books among Armenian priests increased the possibility of enforcing the Catholic understanding of 'true doctrine and practice', as well as definition of 'schismatics', hence serving as a catalyst for persecutions by the Armenian Church authorities bolstered by the sultan's edict. Thereby, when in 1701 Ep'rem Ľap'anc'i (1701–1702) took the patriarchal seat, he embarked on a fierce campaign against the Catholics, accompanied by the interrogations.

Komitas K'ēōmiwrčean, a converted Catholic (and brother of Eremia Č'ēlēpi K'ēōmiwrčean) who was martyred for his beliefs, provides interesting details on the religious atmosphere in the city, describing the course of inquisition normally taking place in the Armenian church Saint Astuacacin in Kumkapı. To prove themselves believers of the miaphysite Armenian Apostolic Church, the suspects had to sing the Armenian spiritual hymn 'O, marvelous',²⁴ containing at the end anathemas against Arius, the Council of Chalcedon, and Pope Leo I (d. 461).

... and they boast as the avengers of the initial and Armenian traditions, by saying that this church through long time has not sung the entire 'O, marvelous' because

²¹ Xač'atur entered the Urbanian college on the instructions of its former student Vardan Yunanean (1644–1715), the second archbishop of the Catholic Armenians in Lviv, with whom he kept corresponding during the years of disquiet.

²² In some scholarly circles it is deemed that Xač'atur obtained official permission from Armenian Catholicos Nahapet Edesac'i (1691–1705) during his visit to Etchmiadzin as papal internuncio, to preach in all Armenian churches in Constantinople. Č'amč'ean, *Armenian History*, p. 726.

²³ On the Catholic printing houses see, Kévorkian, 'L'imprimerie Surb Ējmiacin', pp. 401–416.

²⁴ One of the hymns in the Canon of Holy Patriarchs in Armenian Hymnal called Šaraknoc', 'O, marvelous Patriarchs' refers to 318 Church Fathers partaking in Nicene Council of 325 anathematizing Arius of Alexandria.

of the Catholics, hence, now we will sing. It seems that by articulating ‘O, marvelous’ they were establishing the order in the eyes of illiterate peasants.²⁵

In fact, the anathemas against the Chalcedon Decree and Pope Leo I were recent amendments, as they are not found in earlier editions of the Hymnal, be it in manuscript or printed version.

Another method of inquisition was the public affirmation of the ‘Dioscorian’ faith in accordance with the Apostolic tradition. One of the peculiarities of the seventeenth century in terms of defining the faith of the Armenian Church was to label the Armenian faith ‘Dioscorian’, after Dioscoros of Alexandria who presided over the meetings of the Second Council of Ephesus in 449. As we will see later, Gēorg Mxlayim elaborated on the Acts of this Council to reshape Armenian orthodoxy within the relevant theological and confessional framework of the period. This format of inquisition proved to be unreasonable given the illiteracy of questioned suspects who were unable to understand theological nuances and answer the complicated questions on Christ’s nature and hypostasis.²⁶ According to Komitas, all the suspected *axt’armas* would be sent to the Saint Astuacacin in Kumkapı to be interrogated, forced to repent, and renounce the formula ‘two natures in Christ’; otherwise, they would be persecuted, chastened and jailed.²⁷

This was the climate in the community of Constantinople when in 1699 Louis XIV recalled his ambassador Castagnères de Châteauneuf and appointed instead Marquise Charles de Ferriol (1699–1711), who used his authority to reconcile the warring Armenian factions. In his efforts to reach a consensus to avoid the direct involvement of the Sublime Porte into the conflict on the one hand, and the exclusion of the Armenian Catholics from the confessional life of the Armenian Church on the other, Marquise de Ferriol summoned a council on October 22 (26), 1701, to induce the representatives of the rival factions to sign the prepared treaty. The treaty, which addressed contested confessional issues suggesting *accommodatio* and *communicatio in sacris*, was rendered by Xaç’atur Ērzurmc’i from Armenian to Latin.²⁸ To the disappointment of both sides, it was never implemented because of the opposition of the Jesuit father R. P. Braconnier, who expressed his discontent concerning the prevalence of statements in favor of ‘schismatic’ Armenians.²⁹ After the attempt to sign the treaty with the Franks, Patriarch Ep’rem Łap’anc’i lost his prestige both in the eyes of the Apostolics and of the Sublime Porte; thereby, the need to appoint a stricter fighter against the Franks became vital.

²⁵ K. K’ēōmiwrčēan, *Concerning the Confrontation*, p. 454; BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 22r.

²⁶ K. K’ēōmiwrčēan, *Concerning the Confrontation*, p. 455; BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 23v.

²⁷ K. K’ēōmiwrčēan, *Concerning the Confrontation*, p. 484; BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 25r.

²⁸ Brosset, ed. ‘Le prétendu masque’, p. 48; Anasian, *Armenian Bibliography*, p. 994. There is also a French translation of the treaty. In Brosset’s opinion this translation is not credible, hence he leaves it aside presenting only Latin text.

²⁹ Kevorkian, ‘L’imprimerie Surb Ējmiacin’, p. 406.

In 1701 Sheikh ül-islam Feyzullah Efendi³⁰ (1695–1703) invited his compatriot Awetik^c Ewdokacⁱ (1702–1703, 1704–1706), a zealous anti-Catholic Armenian bishop of Erzurum, to urgently arrive in Constantinople and work hand in hand with him to establish a joint forefront against the Franks. According to Awetik^c's autobiography, the sheikh ül-islam invited him to assume the Patriarch's office upon the demand of the Constantinople community,³¹ whereas Komitas K^cēōmiwrčean, whose Chronicle is one of the main sources on Awetik^c,³² makes no mention of community demand, but rather places the accent on the personal invitation by Feyzullah.³³ His appointment was approved by the then Catholicos Nahapet Edesacⁱ (1691–1705), with a decree and two encyclical letters (*kondak*) sent to Edirne and Constantinople.³⁴

Upon his arrival in Constantinople on March 7 (February 24) 1702, Awetik^c deposed the old patriarch Ep^crem Ɣap^cancⁱ, sending him to Etchmiadzin to the feet of Catholicos Nahapet. On July 13 (2), 1702, thanks to the involvement of the sheikh ül-islam and Grand Vizier Hüseyin Pasha, Awetik^c obtained the Sultan's firman to usurp the seat of Jerusalem. Enjoying the protectorship of the sheikh ül-islam and relying on the *hatt-ı şerif*, Awetik^c obtained absolute power to rule the Apostolic faction in the Ottoman territories and uproot the Catholics from the community.³⁵ Awetik^c's followers treated him as the Second Lusaworič^c, making allusions to the founder of the Armenian Church, Grigor Lusaworič^c (Illuminator),³⁶ hence emphasizing Awetik^c's functions as the protector of the *lusaworč^cadawanut^ciwn*, that is to say, the profession of the Apostolic faith.³⁷ In contrast to this, the Armenian Catholic faction, led by Komitas, referred to him as a tyrant sowing separation within the nation through his discrimination between the 'orthodox' and 'schismatic':

[He] became a wicked *vardapet* and taught to confront and to combat each other, saying that our faith is different and the faith of other nations is different; different

³⁰ Feyzullah Efendi was appointed a sheikh ül-islam by his student Sultan Mustafa II (1695–1703), assumed central office in legal-academic establishment and in the course of time set up enormous political power within the Ottoman administration. For Feyzullah's biography see Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*.

³¹ Dulaurier, ed., 'Biography of the Armenian Patriarch', p. 115. Also in Brosset, ed., 'Le prétendu masque', p. 13. Latin and French translations of Awetik^c's Autobiography, written in Bastille and translated by Pétis de la Croix in 1710, are to be found in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris. Brosset has done a new translation having at hand de la Croix's version.

³² Komitas' chronicle is Č'amč^cean's main source for the event, even though he never makes a mention of it.

³³ K. K^cēōmiwrčean, *Concerning the Confrontation*, p. 485; BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 25r.

³⁴ Dulaurier, ed., 'Biography of the Armenian Patriarch', p. 115.

³⁵ See also Cesare Santus' paper in this volume.

³⁶ The notion of Second Lusaworič^c was common in Armenian context of the period. Geōrg Mxlayim uses it while speaking of miaphysite *vardapets* who would secure the Armenian Church from duophysite 'schism' and establish the purity of doctrine and practice. The notion was deeply rooted in the apocalyptic aspirations of the Armenians.

³⁷ K. K^cēōmiwrčean, *Concerning the Confrontation*, BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 30v.

is their Church and ours is different; and what will be our unity with them, for they are schismatics and separated from us?³⁸

Despite his fame as ‘the greatest persecutor the Catholics ever had in the East’, Awetik^c failed to establish favorable relationship with the new Grand Vizier Daltaban Mustafa Pasha (Sept. 1702–Jan. 1703), brought to the power by Feyzullah in 1702.³⁹ Bound by the *hatt-ı şerif*, the patriarch was forced to act in line with it, otherwise his position would be jeopardized. Likewise, despite the cautious diplomacy carried out by Awetik^c with the French ambassador Marquise de Ferriol and his agent, the Capuchin friar Hyacinth—the two major protectors of Catholics in the Empire—he gradually earned their disapproval, which grew into hatred leading to his collapse in 1706.

Following Feyzullah’s public execution in 1703 (September 3), during the Janissary revolt known as the Edirne Event (*Edirne Vakası*),⁴⁰ Awetik^c was exiled to the island of Aratos in 1703 (September 8) through the intervention of Marquise de Ferriol. He was back on the patriarchal throne in Constantinople a year later, in 1704, thanks to Kalaylıkoz Hacı Ahmed Pasha (1704–1706) and the Valide Sultan, the sultan’s mother.⁴¹ For the second time he fell victim to the intrigues of missionaries in 1705 and by the decision of the Sublime Porte was exiled to the island of Tenedos on November 2 (13) that year. Pardoned in 1706, Awetik^c was on his way back through Chios when he was kidnapped by the agents of de Ferriol and taken to Messina (then under the control of Spain),⁴² and later moved from jail to jail throughout France. His last years of suffering earned him the fame of ‘a living martyr’ among the contemporary Apostolic Armenians.⁴³ It was at this point, after 1706, that Awetik^c’s career would become intertwined with polemicist Gēorg Mxlayim’s.

³⁸ K. K’ēōmiwrčean, *Concerning the Confrontation*, BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 18r.

³⁹ Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics*, p. 40–46.

⁴⁰ Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion*.

⁴¹ Rabbath, ‘Lettre du P. Besnier au Ministre’, p. 555.

⁴² ‘J ay l’honneur d’informer par ordre du roy V. Em. de la destinée d’un Arménien nommé Avedick, patriarche des gens de cette nation à Constantinople. Vous avez sans doute pris une partie de ses malheurs par les relations des missionnaires du Levant; mais l’auteur vous en a esté apparemment inconnu jusqu’à présent, et vous aurez peine à croire que M. de Ferriol, sans ordre ni permission, mais excité seulement par le zèle indiscret de quelques religieux, a eu l’imprudence de le faire enlever dans l’isle de Scio et conduire à Marseille par la voie de Messine.’ See Depping, ‘Le Comte de Pontchartrain’ (Lettre 122, Le 18 février 1711), p. 259.

⁴³ An acrostic poem by an anonymous author, copied in 1714, after Awetik^c’s death, but was written during his imprisonment in Bastille, in 1710–1711. I am quoting fourth and fifth stanzas: ‘Տէր վարդապետ դու ես բարի / Կոստանտինու պատրիարքի / Հերցվայցողաց զո չարչարվիս / Նահատակ ես սուրբ կենդանի / Ի նման սուրբ ըստեփանոսի / Նախայ վկայ տեսոն արարչի / Դու չարչարիս ֆռանկաց բանդի / Նահատակ ես սուրբ կենդանի:’ Poem about *vardapet* Awetik, M 8248, fol. 56.

**FROM A PEACEMAKER TO A POLEMICIST:
GĒORG MxLAYIM ŌĻI KOSTANDNUPŌLSEC'Ī**

This was the confessional atmosphere that frames Gēorg Mxlayim's early life, writings and the shift in his rhetoric. Mxlayim ŌĻi was born in 1681, in Constantinople. Little is known about his early life. He remembers the names of his father, *xoĵa* (*hoca*) Karapet, and his grandfather Papanun, a new martyr from Sebastia (present-day Sivas), killed during the Celali revolts.⁴⁴ Based on linguistic analysis, Armen Ter-Stepanyan interprets the name '*mxcayim*' as 'goldsmith' (Tr. *mihlayıcı*), hence he may have been 'the son of goldsmith'.⁴⁵ In 1700 (January or December), at the age of nineteen, Gēorg Mxlayim, holding the rank of acolyte, entered 'the Royal College of Paris', that is the *École des Jeunes de Langues* (*Lycée Louis-Le-Grand*)⁴⁶ where he studied for six years⁴⁷ to become either a dragoman⁴⁸ or a missionary to the Levant.⁴⁹ He never became either; instead, he put his skills at the service of the Apostolic Church.⁵⁰ His versified epitaph attributes to him fluency in Turkish, Greek, Latin and French, all of which are featured in his polemical writings.⁵¹ He seemed particularly prone to writing in Armeno-Greek and Armeno-Turkish when it came to the popularization and propagation of theological concepts. However, most of his books are composed in pure Grabar (Classical Armenian).

⁴⁴ Mxlayim, *Acts of the Second Council of Ephesus*, J2961, 1–16 (in margin).

⁴⁵ Ter-Stepanyan, 'Gevorg Mxlayim', p. 36.

⁴⁶ The College was founded in 1669 by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the minister of Luis XIV, in the Pera section of Constantinople and curated by Capuchins. From 1700 till 1720 its branch within Le Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris came under the control of Jesuits. The Parisian branch of the College pursued a goal of recruiting 'Armenian' students to train them in European languages to become either missionaries or dragomans. Interestingly, into the category 'Armenian' fell also Syrian, Greek, and Arab students. See Dupont-Ferrier, 'Mémoire justificatif', pp. 347–448; Dupont-Ferrier, 'Jeunes de langues', pp. 189–232; Dupont-Ferrier, 'Armenian College in Paris', pp. 29–37; Alpoyačean, 'Who are Gevorg Mecklaim', pp. 84–87.

⁴⁷ Mxlayim, *Book of Polemics*, p. 61.

⁴⁸ On the function of the dragomans' institute see Rothman, 'Interpreting Dragomans', pp. 771–800; Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, pp. 165–186.

⁴⁹ It seems that most of the students would prefer missionary work as they proceeded with their education in the Jesuit branch of the school. 'De 1705 à 1710, le roi pouvait pressentir que deux sur trois de Arméniens tournaient le dos au drogmanat et ne se sentaient appelés qu'à l'évangélisation du Levant, et par exemple Lomaca, Justiniani, Javigy, Righo, Jarrali, Abdalla, Mecklaim.' Dupont-Ferrier, 'Jeunes de langues', p. 202.

⁵⁰ On this matter Dupont-Ferrier writes: 'La seule chose certaine, à voir les résultats, c'est que les Arméniens dupèrent et le roi et les Jésuites eux-mêmes; car, à trop peu d'exceptions près ou quatre à tout le moins, l'éducation donnée, fort onéreusement, à trente-trois Arméniens ne servit ni la religion, ni la France. Elle profita aux bénéficiaires, elle ne profita pas à leur deux bienfaitrices'. Dupont-Ferrier, 'Jeunes de langues', p. 202.

⁵¹ Epitaph of Gēorg Mxlayim ŌĻi, M 6273, fol. 509v. I express my sincere thankfulness to Armen Ter-Stepanian for kindly providing me with a copy of the epitaph.

Despite the scarcity of research on Mxlayim Ōhli's life, his hostile polemical stance against the Franks is widely acknowledged. What is less known are his previous ardent attempts to act as a peacemaker for the good of the confessionally disunited Armenian community. Two events obliquely and directly influenced Mxlayim's ideological switch, changing the nature of his theology: one was Awetik' Ewdokac'i's abduction and the other his personal connection to Catholicos Alek'sandr Ĵuļayec'i (1706–1714).

After Awetik's exile and confinement in Messina,⁵² and later in Marseille (Arsenal), Louis XIV, in the letter from November 10, 1706, enjoined the prior of Mont-Saint-Michel to receive and keep him in total isolation.⁵³ Awetik' was delivered to the monastery on December 18, 1706.⁵⁴ While in Messina, he managed to send a message to his Apostolic fellows through a Greek merchant from Chios, describing the situation he found himself in. Upon receiving the message, Awetik's followers appealed to Sultan Ahmed III (1703–1730), who assigned Çorlulu Damat Ali Pasha (1706–1710) to carry out an investigation and find Awetik'.⁵⁵ On December 20, 1706, newly elected Catholicos Alek'sandr Ĵuļayec'i⁵⁶ received a *mehser* (petition) from patriarchal vekil Mik'aēl Xarberdc'i (appointed on May 9, 1706)⁵⁷ signed by 448 Apostolic clergymen and representatives of the Armenian elite in Constantinople.⁵⁸ The document elucidated the intra-communal debates resulting in Awetik's confinement, blaming Armenian Catholics and requiring Catholicos' support in sorting out the issue.⁵⁹ A list of 175 crypto-Catholics from Kumkapı, Samatya, Balat, who 'alter the principles established by Lusaworič'⁶⁰ was submitted at the end of the document. The senders requested the return of Yovhannēs Izmirc'i, Awetik's former deputy and furious persecutor of Armenian Catholics, who took refuge in Etchmiadzin after Awetik's first exile.⁶¹ With the arrival of Yovhannēs Izmirc'i the situation grew even more critical, leading to executions and bloodshed.

⁵² Dulaurier, ed., 'Biography of the Armenian Patriarch', p. 72.

⁵³ Depping, ed., 'Lettres du Roi' (Lettre 121, Novembre 10), p. 255.

⁵⁴ Ibid. The document reads December 18, 1709, which should be corrected to 1706 based on the calculations in Awetik's Autobiography, where the author states, that he stayed in the monastery for three years, till January 8 (19), 1710. Dulaurier, ed., 'Biography of the Armenian Patriarch', p. 194.

⁵⁵ 'Source of the History of National Deeds', p. 672.

⁵⁶ According to Małakia Ōrmanean, even though Catholicos consecration happened in December, his selection and approval as a relevant candidate should have taken place in September. Ōrmanean, *National History*, p. 3183.

⁵⁷ According to the petition, the appointment of a vicar from Awetik's faction (սւնտիքցի) was the demand of the new grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Pasha. 'Source of the History of National Deeds', p. 672.

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 663–685.

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 666–667. The document contains ten accusations against Catholic Armenians with ten clauses of the observance of Latin rites and Chalcedon decree.

⁶⁰ քակտիչ լուսաորչադիր օրինացս, *ibid*, p. 679.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 678.

This was the situation that prompted the still acolyte Gēorg Mxlayim to get involved in order to reconcile the two factions, and in 1707, in Paris, he commenced his treatise *A Peace-Making Interpretation of the Universal Church*⁶² initially bearing the title *A Brief Interpretation of the Universal Church*, where ‘brief’ was later changed to ‘peace-making’ by the hand of the author, obviously for a reason. In his foreword to the treatise Mxlayim reveals that reason: ‘impossible calamity and unbearable misery, that discord, that devoured Armenian Church of Christ for a long time...’ incited him to compose a peace-making treatise:

For who is that impious and unlawful person that will not commiserate and condole with such a misery when he watches God’s church threatened by decay in the entire East, the peace of Christ disturbed, the order of brotherhood desolated, the name of God blasphemed among gentiles,⁶³ [when he watches] Christians detesting each other and calling their brothers schismatics.⁶⁴

After that Mxlayim introduces the objectives of the treatise:

Now, because multitude and diverse are the rocks of offence ... I have chosen the greatest, that is ... the rock of the ignorance of the true meaning of the catholic [Universal] Church, as many ignorant in our nation do not understand the [meaning of] catholic Church and become the reason and cause of the aforementioned disorder and turmoil as known to everyone.⁶⁵

Mxlayim uses the Armenian loanword *kat’olikē* for universal, drawing directly on the Greek word *katholou* (καθόλου) meaning ‘on the whole’ to argue that it defines not solely the Latin Church, but Christians overall as the ‘body of Christ’ or the Universal Church. In his choice of the method of conciliation he differs from his contemporary Komitas K’ēōmiwrčean. Finding himself in the center of the ‘great turmoil’, Komitas had chosen the *Lament on Disunited Brotherhood* as the call to conciliation in 1707, before he was executed by the Ottoman authorities.⁶⁶ However, Mxlayim Ōlli opts

⁶² Mxlayim, *A Peace-Making Interpretation*, M 1464, fols 2–161v (autograph, 1707); for other copies see M 1463 (autograph, 1707), NOJ 509; W 734; W 1596. The treatise is also known under the name *On the Unity of Church*, M 7913; M 7933; M 6567; M 6674 (autograph, 1707). Mxlayim played with the title of his own treatise while copying and disseminating it, which suggests the existence of different audiences and purposes.

⁶³ By ‘gentiles’ Mxlayim refers to Muslims.

⁶⁴ Mxlayim, *A Peace-Making Interpretation*, M 1464, fols 4r–v.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, fols 4v–5r.

⁶⁶ K. K’ēōmiwrčean, *Lament*, W 111, fols 35v–37r. The *Lament* contains historical details about the disorders in Armenian community and persecutions of the representatives from both Catholic and Apostolic factions. Komitas K’ēōmiwrčean (1656–1707), the brother of Eremia Č’ēlēpi, was a priest in Saint Gēorg church (Sulumanastır) in Samatya. It is deemed that Komitas converted to Catholicism in 1695–1697, but neither Eremia K’ēōmiwrčean, nor Minas Hamt’ec’i, who he accompanied to Jerusalem in 1701, make a mention of it. Komitas has written a historico-polemical work against patriarch Awetik’ illustrating his relations with

for the call to constructive coexistence by explaining the discord as arising from linguistic differences and dissimilar mentalities. He sought to prove that all Christian denominations profess the same faith while expressing it in different terms due to differing mentalities.

Maybe you will ask, how come that Eastern and Western Churches can be equally orthodox and catholic and only together represent the Universal Church, when there are so many differences between them, and they are not unanimous...

Now ... Eastern and Western Churches differ from each other only by the way they speak, for this difference in language is not a difference in faith, because the articulation of one nature or two natures is not a difference in faith, but solely in philosophical and logical language and discussions.⁶⁷

In the hope of getting an approval, Mxlayim Ōlli sent a copy of his irenic treatise to Catholicos Alek'sandr Ĵuļayec'i and another one to the Patriarch of Constantinople.⁶⁸ We know that he received a couple of questions from the *vardapets* of Constantinople,⁶⁹ whereas the colophon to a copy of the same treatise made by Kirakos T'alnc'i in 1707 in Etchmiadzin testifies that Catholicos did approve it; moreover, he ordered a copy to be printed in the printing press of Holy Etchmiadzin.

... reading and approving it His Holiness ordered me to copy it by saying, that with God's help, I will publish it in the printing mill of Holy Etchmiadzin [in] as many [copies] as it is convenient for the press; let them print it and let it be multiplied and let everyone know and consider what is catholic and how many [classes] it is divided into, and about the ignorance of those who call catholic one particular Church.⁷⁰

Interestingly, no copy of the book has survived, possibly because it was in fact never published. Nevertheless, in its manuscript form the 'ecumenical' treatise on the unity of Church remained the most copied among Mxlayim's works, testifying to its popularity and necessity.

Feyzullah Efendi and describing the discord in Armenian communities in Edirne and Constantinople (see his *Concerning the Confrontation*, BNF, MS Arm. 196). In this writing, composed in 1703, we see him already converted. Komitas' name was the first on the list of Constantinopolitan crypto-Catholics attached at the end of the *mehser* (petition) sent by Awetik's faction to Catholicos Alek'sandr Ĵuļayec'i in 1706. After this, in 1707, upon the accusation of having stirred up the disorder among Armenian community, Komitas was executed by the Ottoman authorities. In 1929 he was beatified by Pope Pius XI. On Komitas K'ēōmiwrčean's biography and martyrdom see Riondel, *Une page tragique*. On the beatification process see Santus, 'Un beato martire', pp. 221–233.

⁶⁷ Mxlayim, *A Peace-Making Interpretation*, M 1464, fols 26v–27r, 34v–35r.

⁶⁸ As Mxlayim does not mention the exact month of finishing his treatise, it might either be Sahak Apuč'exc'i (1707), or Yovhannēs Izmirč'i (1707–1708).

⁶⁹ Mxlayim, *A Peace-Making Interpretation*, M 1464, vol. 86r.

⁷⁰ Mxlayim, *A Brief Interpretation*, NOJ 509, fol. 209r.

Over years, however, Gēorg Mxlayim's writings seem to have changed their pacifist character, acquiring a tone of acerbic criticism against duophysites. This suggests a dramatic shift in the author's disposition, which can be linked to the incidents related to Patriarch Awetik^c. From the correspondence of Count Pontchartrain, the Secretary of the State of France, one learns that while confined in Mont-Saint-Michel in 1707, Awetik^c requested access to a confessor. The State Secretary reacted positively, promising to send someone 'who can listen to him and enjoin him to keep the secret of the things he can explain to him outside the confession'.⁷¹ A year later, Pontchartrain was rejoicing upon the news the confessor passed to him about Awetik^c's will to convert to Catholicism, to which he replied that Awetik^c should confess, receive absolution, and be set free. However, there was an obstacle, as 'he [Awetik^c] has been portrayed to the King as a great villain and an outraged persecutor of Catholics, and His Majesty expects, in order to dismiss him, some conjuncture in which he can no longer do any harm'.⁷² In 1709, by the order of Louis XIV, Awetik^c was transferred to Bastille⁷³ where Eusèbe Renaudot⁷⁴ (1646–1720) became his confessor. With the help of Petis de la Croix (1653–1713), the Secretary-Interpreter of the King for Eastern languages, Awetik^c and Renaudot had a series of conversations about the Catholic faith. After having read the Armenian books 'suitable to instruct him' and 'copied most of them', Awetik^c decided to convert to Catholicism.⁷⁵ Most of those books had been printed in the underground printing mills of Constantinople that Awetik^c's deputy had banned years before.⁷⁶ Those were the New Testament, Missal, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitatio Christi*, Clemente Galano's *Conciliatio*, *Spiritual Garden*, and Bellarmin's *Dottrina Christiana*, which testifies to the complete 'education' in the doctrine and ritual of the Catholic Church imposed on Awetik^c.⁷⁷ On September 22 (25), 1710, Awetik^c received abjuration from M.

⁷¹ Depping, ed., 'Le Comte de Pontchartrain' (Lettre 125, le 13 juillet, 1707), p. 265.

⁷² Depping, ed., 'Le Comte de Pontchartrain' (Lettre 125, le 22 août, 1708), p. 266.

⁷³ Depping, ed., 'Lettre du Roi à Bernaville' (Lettre 135, le 18 décembre 1709), p. 285.

⁷⁴ Eusèbe Renaudot was a French theologian and an orientalist serving at the court of Louis XIV. His interest in Eastern Christianity was conditioned by his involvement in the Eucharistic controversy (about whether the substance of bread and wine really transformed into the body and blood of Christ during the Holy Mass), that turned into a long-term debate between the Calvinist Huguenots and the Catholic Jansenists of Port-Royal. On the religio-political context of the controversy see Voulgaropoulou, 'Orthodox Confession Building' in current volume. Hamilton, 'From East to West', pp. 83–100.

⁷⁵ '... que je mis entre les mains dudit Sieur Avediek des livres Armenian propres à l'instruire: qu'après les avoir eus avec attention et en avoir copié la plus grande partie, il me déclara qu'il esprit plus résolu que jamais à solliçiter sa réunion'. 'Procez verbal de Monsieur D'Argenson', BNF, MS Fr. Miscellanée 3499, fol. 21v; Basmadjian, 'L'homme au Masque', pp. 3–17.

⁷⁶ New Testament, BNF, MS Arm. 28; *Missal*, BNF, MS Arm. 89; Bellarmin, *Dottrina Christiana*, BNF, MS Arm. 155; *Spiritual Garden*, BNF, MS Arm. 156; Galano, *Conciliatio ecclesiae Armenae*, BNF, MS Arm. 197. The copies were made through the years 1709–1710.

⁷⁷ Awetik^c copied Robert Bellarmine's *Dottrina Cristiana* twice, which stresses the high significance of this catechism.

Cardinal de Noailles⁷⁸ by signing the profession of faith of the Roman Church. Upon conversion, the patriarch was released and placed under the watchful eye of Petis de la Croix or Xač'atur⁷⁹ in his house. Awetik^c was allowed to perform the Holy Mass on Sundays and Feast days in the Chapel of the Carmelite Covenant in Paris.⁸⁰ In 1711, the patriarch requested Pontchartrain 'vizier's' mediation with the King in order to receive permission for heading, via Rome and Smyrna, to his country.⁸¹ Pontchartrain showed interest in organizing a trip to Rome, his main goal being Awetik^c's public and solemn confession of the Catholic faith in front of Pope Clement XI.⁸² However, his plan never materialized, as on July 21, 1711 Awetik^c died under strange circumstances in the house of Petis de la Croix at the age of 54.⁸³

As a student in Lycée Louis-Le-Grand, Gēorg Mxlayim was acquainted with Pontchartrain, as the school was under the latter's constant surveillance. Louis XIV was particularly enthused by the launch of this new school. After the solemn reception by the monarch, the contingent of the Lycée was periodically invited to Versailles for an audience with the King,⁸⁴ where Mxlayim was noted as one of the most brilliant students of the school.⁸⁵ Hence, Mxlayim's arrest by the French around 1708 is puzzling. There are no clear testimonies about the date of his imprisonment. According to his epitaph, he was imprisoned in France for four years,⁸⁶ that is between 1707–8 and 1711. Even though his name is not found on the list of the prisoners, most probably he was confined in Bastille. What was the reason of his confinement?

Taking into account Mxlayim's connection to Catholicos Alek'sandr Ĵulayec'i, who was concerned with Awetik^c's destiny, it seems realistic to think that Mxlayim had instructions to get in touch with the patriarch, and, if possible, to release him from Bastille. Certainly, such activities of a Louis-Le-Grand student would have been labeled as a plot against the State and as espionage, because he was sentenced to execution and expecting it any minute, as he writes in his prayer-colophons to his above-mentioned books composed in jail:

I pray and ask You for my imprisonment and my torments, for my trouble and tortures, for my future death and my execution that I am ready to undergo if You

⁷⁸ Depping, 'Le Comte de Pontchartrain' (Lettre 122, Le 18 février 1711), p. 260.

⁷⁹ Awetik^c was attached to Petis de la Croix and devoted to him couple of poems.

⁸⁰ 'Procez verbal de Monsieur D'Argenson', BNF, MS Fr. 3499, fol. 19v; Basmadjian, 'L'homme au Masque', p. 7.

⁸¹ 'Two Letters by Awetik^c Ewdokac'i to Ponchartrain', BNF, MS Arm. 318, fols 1r, 3r.

⁸² Depping, ed., 'Le comte de Pontchartrain' (Lettre 122, le 18 février 1711), pp. 260–261.

⁸³ Awetik^c's death could affect the French-Ottoman relationship, hence the king was extremely concerned to make it public that Awetik^c had converted, was released, well-treated, and died from natural causes. See Depping, ed., 'Le Comte de Pontchartrain' (Lettre 141, le 30 juillet 1711), pp. 293–294. On the details of Awetik^c's death see the records of Police Chief D'Argenson, 'Procez verbal', BNF, MS Fr. 3499, fols 19v–31v; Basmadjian, 'L'homme au Masque', pp. 6–17.

⁸⁴ Dupont-Ferrier, 'Jeunes de langues', p. 201.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 202.

⁸⁶ Epitaph of Gēorg Mxlayim Ōhli, M 6273, fol. 509v.

are willing, for the sake of apology of Your divinity, to take all the passion of Your wrath and Your indignation off of them [Catholics].⁸⁷

Interestingly, Mxlayim never makes any mention of Awetik's case. Instead, he constantly accuses his 'Catholic Armenian (*aktarma*) brothers' of treason on confessional grounds resulting in his detention.⁸⁸

After Awetik's death in 1711 Gēorg Mxlayim was issued a pardon. Once released, he travelled to Safavid Armenia to 'the service of Catholicos Alek'sandr', where he visited among others the villages of Dominican Catholics in Jahuk⁸⁹ as well as observed the worship of Apostolic faithful. Apparently, he arrived in Armenia on the invitation of the Catholicos and stayed there for three years, as he mentions in his lengthy colophon to the translation of Saint Augustine's piece on fasting,⁹⁰ rendered from Latin 'in the dark jail of Frankistan'.⁹¹ This translation, along with his *Book of Polemics against Duophysites*, was published years later, in 1734 in Constantinople, by Imperial Chief Architect Sargis Kalfa and his son Haji Gēorg.⁹²

In 1713 Mxlayim, already a *vardapet*, headed back to the Ottoman lands, as we see him polemicizing with a Greek Metropolitan in Kayseri in the same year.⁹³ In 1714 he moved to Tokat. We know that he visited Constantinople sometime after 1715, as he translated *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* and left his translation in hands of Patriarch Yovhannēs Bahšec'i (1715–1741).⁹⁴ According to his epitaph, he 'was exiled for thirty years'.⁹⁵ He described it as a 'thirty-year-long detention' during which 'Armenians had never supported him in earning his living'.⁹⁶ It is uncertain where exactly Mxlayim had settled during the exile, but on January 28, 1735 we find him in Ferrara, Italy.⁹⁷ The period of Mxlayim's exile is obscure. Judging from

⁸⁷ Mxlayim, *Book of Polemics*, pp. 175, 250.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁸⁹ 'And in the year of 1160 of Armenian Era (= 1711) I myself arrived to the service to Catholicos Alek'sandr.' Mxlayim, *Theology of Sacraments*, W 733, fol. 175v; Mxlayim, *Book of Polemics*, p. 238.

⁹⁰ 'and during three years of wanderings across Armenia (hujuuunniū (sic)) I witnessed many wonders, be it healing or disasters', Mxlayim, *Book of Polemics*, p. 241.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁹² Mahtesi Sargis Kalfa (d. 1737) was the Imperial Chief Architect of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Mahmut I (1730–1754) and an ardent follower of the Armenian Apostolic Church. With his son Haji Gēorg Sargis initiated the printing of Mxlayim's book, which most probably was published in the printing press of Astuacatur Konstandnupōlsec'i.

⁹³ 'In the year of 1162 of Armenian Era (= 1713), I, Gēorg of Constantinople, arrived in Caesarea in Cappadocia for preaching the word of God, and a controversy occurred between me and the Greek Metropolitan on the sufferings of God.' See Mxlayim, *Polemics with the Greek Metropolitan*, J 328, fol. 258r; M 2080, fol. 112r.

⁹⁴ Mxlayim, *Letter ... to Sergis Kalfa s son*, VAT, MS Borg. Arm. 18, fols 29r-v.

⁹⁵ Apologist was he in everything/For four years he was in jail/For thirty years in the exile/For our holy confession s sake/ (Էր շատազով յամենայնի/ Չորիւք ամօք ի մէջ բանդի / Երեսուն ամ ի յաքսորի/ Վասն մերոյս սուրբ կրօնի), Epitaph of Gēorg Mxlayim Ōhli, M 6273, fol. 509v.

⁹⁶ Mxlayim, *Catholicity of the Followers*, W 1243, fol. 254.

⁹⁷ Mxlayim, *Letter ... to Sergis Kalfa s son*, VAT, MS Borg. Arm. 18, fol. 30r.

Dominican Bernardus Bergomi's imprimatur dated to April 19, 1735 and placed at the end of Mxlayim's ambiguous Christological treatise composed in Ferrara, he was under the surveillance of Dominican friars.⁹⁸ It is from Ferrara that he wrote to Sargis Kalfa reproaching (!) him for printing his anti-Catholic book without obtaining his permission.⁹⁹

The exact date of Mxlayim's ultimate return to Constantinople is unclear. In 1750 he mentioned his exile post-factum. The same year he was in Samatya witnessing performance of exorcism on a possessed Armenian infant.¹⁰⁰ Later we find him in service to Patriarch Yakob Nalean (1741–48; 1752–64), fully engaged in the confessional life of the Armenian community. When Mxlayim eventually went back to the city, he purposely settled in Galata to serve in the restored Saint Grigor Lusaworič' church, an ideal place to polemicize with Papists because of the high number of Catholic Armenian priests and numerous Catholic churches in the neighborhood.

Gēorg Mxlayim's personal drama and disappointment transformed him from an ardent advocate of peaceful coexistence to an extreme adversary of the Roman Church, motivating him to polemicize with its representatives on almost all debatable topics related to the 'true doctrine' and 'true practice' of the Church. His most significant polemical book composed in jail is the *True Meaning of Catholicity*,¹⁰¹ against the Theatine missionary Clemente Galano.¹⁰² In its pages Mxlayim argues that catholicity has two meanings. First, catholicity denotes the Universal Church of firstborns (Heb. 12:23) in terms of the mystical body of Christ including all Christians regardless of their confession. Second, catholicity belongs not to duophysites, but rather to pre-Chalcedonian miaphysites because of their loyalty to the traditions of the old Universal Church.¹⁰³

Years later, in 1750,¹⁰⁴ he wrote another complex treatise on the subject entitled *Catholicity of the Followers of Lusaworič's Faith*, partially in Armeno-Turkish, which shows his growing interest in sacramental theology. In 1749 he discovered the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, 'written in Hellenic

⁹⁸ Ibid, 54v–55r. This book had been sent to Vatican where it remained hitherto.

⁹⁹ Mxlayim complained to the publishers Sargis Kalfa, his son Haji Gēorg and the head of printing press priest Grigor because they published his book *Interpretation of the Church*, see in *Letter ... to Sergis Kalfa s son*, VAT, MS Borg. Arm. 18, fol. 1r. In fact, Mxlayim was misinformed as the published book was not the *Interpretation of the Church*, but rather the *Book of Polemics*.

¹⁰⁰ Mxlayim, *Catholicity of the Followers*, M 6458, fols 54r–v.

¹⁰¹ The book was also known by the title *Book of Polemics*.

¹⁰² Clemente Galano (d. 1666) was a missionary from the Theatine order, sent to Circassia and Armenia (1636), then to Constantinople in 1640, where he opened a college for Armenians. In 1663 he was sent to Poland to help achieve the union of the Polish Armenians with Rome. Galano's monumental bilingual (Latin and Armenian) two-volume book *Consiliationis Ecclesiae Armeniae cum Romana* became a standard manual for Catholic Armenians. Initially Mxlayim's book was not intended against Galano, but its second brief edition targeted Galano's theological conjectures.

¹⁰³ Mxlayim, *True Meaning of Catholicity*, pp. 10–44, 45–50.

¹⁰⁴ Mxlayim, *Catholicity of the Followers*, M 6458; W 1243.

language',¹⁰⁵ and he admired its 'orthodox' content, which is strange, because Armenian church tradition (and Eastern church tradition in general) was deeply anchored in Pseudo-Dionysian theology.¹⁰⁶ His ignorance was the result of his Western education, but his sincere admiration for Pseudo-Dionysius' sacramental theology made him embark on writing the *Catholicity of the Followers of Lusaworič's Faith*. In this piece he would depict 'true catholicity' as something peculiar only to miaphysite Churches, which inherited the practice of sacraments from the ancient Universal Church. In this regard, catholicity, as uninterrupted tradition of the Universal Church inherited by the non-Chalcedonian Churches, becomes the leitmotif of his polemical works.

Toward his last years Mxlayim became involved in baptismal and eucharistic debates that erupted in Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theological circles in Constantinople. His correspondence with the Greek theologian Eustratios Argenti (1691–1757) on immersion baptism in the Armenian Church¹⁰⁷ and his contribution to the translation of Argenti's books with the help of translator Melk'isedek Banasēr (d. 1774)¹⁰⁸ testify to his active engagement in the intellectual debates of the period, across communal boundaries. Mxlayim died on January 6th, 1758 in Constantinople. His epitaph, containing biographical details, survives in a manuscript collection in Matenadaran, Armenia.

REFASHIONING ARMENIAN ORTHODOXY

Gēorg Mxlayim has indeed earned the right to be called an author dedicated to the refashioning of Armenian orthodoxy; however, many of his works were marginalized after the confessional age. The reason might be seen in the sources he employed to prove or reject a certain theological concept. While he tried to mend confessional polarization within the Armenian community by emphasizing common worship and common ethnic identity, at times he chose Latin sources alien to the Armenian tradition to prove the credibility of his arguments relating to 'true orthodoxy'. In contrast, in the ecclesiastical center responsible for shaping Armenian orthodoxy, which was Etchmiadzin in Eastern Armenia, the theologians seemed to abstain from searching for new approaches and sources for reshaping orthodoxy in order to face new challenges. They were focusing instead on filtering out Latinised elements by making references mostly to the eastern Church Fathers while neglecting those associated more with the Roman Church, such as Saint Augustine or Ambrose, let alone the works of missionaries. It is easy to imagine that Mxlayim's theological writings, which were based on Western sources while seeking to prove the orthodoxy of

¹⁰⁵ Mxlayim, *Catholicity of the Followers*, W 1243, fol. 3r.

¹⁰⁶ La Porta, *The Theology*; La Porta, 'Two Anonymous Sets'.

¹⁰⁷ More on the topic is said in my upcoming article about Mxlayim's correspondence with Eustratios Argenti. It is important to note that despite his anti-Latin zeal, Mxlayim had never openly shared Eustratios' views on re-baptism of Catholic converts.

¹⁰⁸ Ter-Stepanyan, 'Translating Activity of Melk'isedek', pp. 166–172.

miaphysitism, would have been frowned upon and to some extent seen as pointless within the theological circles in Eastern Armenia.

Later marginalization of Mxlayim's works might also be due to different realities within the Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire. The confessional climate in Constantinople was rather different from that of Etchmiadzin and New Julfa; its elitist trends and sophisticated theology were alien to the simpler realities of Eastern Armenia. Mxlayim's visit to Etchmiadzin in 1711 contributed to his understanding of the relationship between theology and faith. Traveling throughout Armenia, he witnessed villagers possessing simple truths that he came up with after six years of education in Paris—he realized that wisdom and theology did not determine true faith. In this regard, he set the simple but firm faith of Eastern Christians against the sophisticated theology of Western Christians.

I do not want to see any other wonder than the wonder of firmness and solidity of faith in Christ of Eastern Christians;¹⁰⁹ despite their lack of education and literacy, they are firmer in the truth of the Gospel than any sages and theologians, and ready to shed their blood every day for the sake of Christ, as has happened many times.¹¹⁰

This is why, having been educated in Europe, he attempted to combine Western scholastic techniques and theological tradition of the Eastern Church to keep the balance and make his own texts acceptable to the theological authorities in Eastern Armenia, too. However, because of his many references to Latin sources as well as his engagement in more global theological debates, his notion of orthodoxy was largely relevant to the Armenian and other elites in Constantinople, but not in Eastern Armenia.

Gēorg Mxlayim had a complex approach to the orthodoxy (and orthopraxy) debates, attempting to cover all possible debatable topics to draw the border line beyond which 'schism' started, as well as to frame the orthodox confession. As said above, the central terms on which Mxlayim elaborated were 'catholic' and 'catholicity', which for him were terms applicable to all Christian churches, not just the Roman Catholic Church. He highlighted the unifying aspects of catholicity, but he also examined distinctions within it.

For instance, one term that he focused on, which is peculiar to the early modern period and had never been used in the same context before or after the confessional age, is the term *lusaworč'adawan* (լուսաւորչադաւան) applied to the Armenian Church, literally meaning 'professing the faith of Grigor Lusaworič'. It seems that this neologism first appeared in the first decade of the eighteenth century¹¹¹ in the writings of Constantinople-based polemicists. Interestingly, in 1711 the term *lusaworč'adawan* had been also used in reference to Apostolic Armenians by Jesuit

¹⁰⁹ By Eastern Christians here he means Armenian Christians in Eastern or Safavid Armenia.

¹¹⁰ Mxlayim, *A Peace-Making Interpretation*, M 1464, fols 22r–22v.

¹¹¹ Norayr Poghosyan argues that the term was a neologism from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries without providing any solid example of its usage before the eighteenth century. Poghosyan, 'Newly-Found Religious', pp. 105–121.

missionary Jaques Villotte.¹¹² Although it is detected in official correspondence of Etchmiadzin chancery in the late eighteenth century, the search for its earlier usage in the polemical literature produced by the Easterners remains fruitless.¹¹³ By using the term *lusaworč'adawan* Mxlayim strove to prove the legitimacy of the Armenian Church against Catholic Armenians.¹¹⁴ Derived from the Armenian Church and attached to its traditions, Armenian Catholics were striving to prove their own legitimacy by pointing to Grigor Lusaworič' as their forefather and to the old legend about the 'Letter of Love and Concord', a treaty allegedly signed by Lusaworič' and Pope Silvester.¹¹⁵ In order to rebuff this attempt of the Armenian Catholics, which had started already in the Middle Ages and acutely intensified in the early modern era, miaphysite Apostolic Armenians began to use the term *lusaworč'adawan* to assert that they are the ones who inherited the faith of Grigor Lusaworič' and were its true adherents.¹¹⁶ Mxlayim takes it to the next level by juxtaposing the Catholic Armenians to the catholicity of *lusaworč'adawans*,¹¹⁷ thereby emphasizing the affiliation of the miaphysite Armenians with the Universal Church. Under the Universal Church he understands the ancient Christian Church before the Council of Chalcedon (451).

In contrast to Papists¹¹⁸ whose worship, in Mxlayim's opinion, was based on 'bad innovations' (*bidat*), Armenian Church remained loyal¹¹⁹ to the doctrine and worship of the ancient Universal Church. In this regard, according to Mxlayim, historically speaking it was not possible to impose any innovation upon the Armenian Church. As mentioned above, *bidat* was a loan word from Arabic (via Turkish) that had specific theological implications in Islam, but it seems that it was also instrumental in the Armenian polemics against the Catholics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, the idea of 'innovations' in relation to the practice of the Armenian Church was not completely alien to medieval Armenian polemics. The word *nora-jewut'iwn* (նորաձևութիւն), meaning 'innovation' crops up in the letter of the twelfth-

¹¹² Villotte, *Explanatio Professionis*, p. 79.

¹¹³ Eastern Armenian theologians were keener on the term *lusaworč'acin* (լուսաւորչաձիւն) meaning 'born from Grigor Lusaworič'', apparently coined by Julfaians, as seen in the *Book of Prayers* by Catholicos Alek'sandr Ĵulayec'i. See Alek'sandr Ĵulayec'i, *Book of Prayers*, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ At times he uses the term *lusaworč'akan* (լուսաւորչական) which was introduced into the ecclesiastical vocabulary both in the western and eastern parts of early modern Armenia.

¹¹⁵ Pogossian, ed., *The Letter of Love*.

¹¹⁶ Towards the end of the eighteenth century Mekhitarist fathers started to apply the term to the 'Armenian nation' as a whole, regardless of confessional affiliations.

¹¹⁷ Mxlayim, *Catholicity of the Followers*, M 6458; W 1243. It is the remark that common people would rather relate to a Catholic Armenian as to Frank or *axt'arma*, that reveals Mxlayim's audience to be well-educated theologians.

¹¹⁸ Mxlayim saw only Papists, namely, Catholics, as his opponents, whereas Greek Orthodox have his sympathies especially when it comes to sacramentological issues and practice, namely Baptism, that is almost identical with that performed in the Armenian Church.

¹¹⁹ սոցին բանքն ամանեքեան յետ քաղկեդոնի ժողովոյն շինեալ են և մեր բանքն հին առաքելական ընդհանուր եկեղեցւոյ աւանդութիւնքն են: Mxlayim, *Catholicity of the Followers*, W 1243, fol. 4v.

century Cilician bishop Nersēs Lambronac‘i¹²⁰ (1153–1198) to the ‘northeastern’ *vardapets*, accusing the latter of deviant rigorist penitential practice customary in the monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin.¹²¹ Lambronac‘i’s usage of *norajewut‘iwn* denotes ‘neopraxy’ heavily impacted by the multi-confessional context of the Kingdom of Cilicia. This said, although the idea of innovation was known to the Armenians, the word is barely used in medieval Armenian ecclesiastical literature.¹²² It became extremely popular in the early modern period, particularly thanks to Eremia Č‘elēpi K‘ēōmiwrčean’s polemical works. As suggested earlier in the paper, Eremia likely drew on the concept of *bidat*—vociferously discussed by his Muslim contemporaries in Constantinople—when he articulated his critique of Catholics in terms of ‘bad innovation’ or *norajewut‘iwn* (նորաձևութիւն).¹²³ However, it is Mxlayim who uses the word *bidat* in his writings in Armeno-Turkish, whereas in the polemics composed in Armenian he opts for *norahnarut‘iwn* (նորահնարութիւն, lit. recently invented, novelty), *nor dawanut‘iwn* (նոր դաւանութիւն; novel confession), *nor vardapetakan hawat* (նոր վարդապետական հաւատ; novel doctrinal faith) and other similar iterations of the concept. Interestingly, Mxlayim turns to the concept of *bidat* when it comes to the classification of the ‘schismatics’. There are many passages in his writings where the innovations are considered as deviations from the tradition of the ancient Universal Church.

But those who create a schism are first of all the duophysite *vardapets*, who make novel confession and novel doctrines and alter many orders of the first catholic [Universal] Church ... Second, the ones who create a schism are also nowadays popes and friars of the Franks, who are day by day trying to intrude with their numerous newly-built schisms not only into their but also into other nations. And third, the ones who create a schism are the *axt‘armas* of our nation, both clergymen and laymen...¹²⁴

Another important expression rethought by Mxlayim within the new context is ‘Dioscorian heresy’, as suggested above based on Komitas K‘ēōmiwrčean’s words. Previously branded more as ‘Eutychian monophysites’, in the confessional age Armenians started to be referred to as ‘Dioscorian heresy’. Dioscoros of Alexandria had presided over the sessions of the Second Council of Ephesus in 449, where he had defended the formula ‘one nature in Christ’ suggested by Eutyches of Constantinople

¹²⁰ Lambronac‘i, ‘Mystagogy on the Rites’, pp. 21–41.

¹²¹ For the discourse see Findikyan, ‘A Penitential Peculiarity’, pp. 161–181.

¹²² The authors of *Haykazean Dictionary* mention the usage of *norajewut‘iwn* by Xosrovik T‘argmanič‘ in the eighth and Nersēs Lambronac‘i in the twelfth centuries. See Avetikian et al, *Haykazean Dictionary*, p. 444.

¹²³ E. K‘ēōmiwrčean, *Response with God’s Help*, BNF, MS Arm. 334, fols 142r–148v.

¹²⁴ The highlights are mine. Mxlayim, *True Meaning*, pp. 140–142.

against Flavianus' formula 'two natures in Christ'.¹²⁵ Later Armenians anathematized Eutyches and his monophysitism, proving themselves to be miaphysites attached to the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria. Contrary to Eutyches, Dioscoros was sanctified in the Armenian and Syriac Churches as a holy martyr. Being rarely mentioned in medieval polemical literature, in the early modern era Dioscoros was rediscovered by the Armenian miaphysite faction and promoted to a central figure in the orthodox debates. In contrast, Armenian Catholics, such as Komitas K'ēōmiwrčean, had perpetually doubted Dioscoros' orthodoxy by pointing to the lack of writings either attributed to or written about him.

I have heard from great wise *vardapets*, who possess knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, [are trained in] theology and are knowledgeable, and who said that they have nowhere seen Dioscoros' witnessing. For we call [someone] a witness [in case] they have teachings and books, or [if they] witnessed for Christ and were martyred. But from Dioscoros, whom they call a great witness, we saw neither doctrinal books, nor are we aware of his martyrdom.¹²⁶

To prove Dioscoros' orthodoxy Mxlayim started to translate the *Acts of the Second Council of Ephesus*¹²⁷ in an attempt to remedy the lack of information about the 'great martyr'. Indeed, there was a lack of sufficient information. In the most important Armenian florilegium, *The Seal of Faith*, Dioscoros is quoted only twice—the passages about Christ's sufferings from his epistles to Gangra in Syria, to the hermits of Henton and to Sekendon written from his exile in Gangra, where he had been martyred.¹²⁸ Yet in 1706, Mxlayim finished the translation of the *Acts*, later incorporated into almost all his polemical writings. In his peace-making treatise Mxlayim quotes an extensive passage from the *Acts of Second Ephesus*, highlighting that people of Alexandria treated Dioscoros as a saint.¹²⁹ By drawing on the *Acts*, as well as on the writings of the Latin Fathers, Mxlayim argues against the Papists for the sanctity, orthodoxy and martyrdom of Dioscoros of Alexandria.¹³⁰ In so doing, he attempted to remove the label of 'Dioscorian heresy' from the reputation of the Armenian Church. He also translated the *Acts of the Councils of Serdica* (343),¹³¹ Constantinople¹³² (381), and Chalcedon (451)¹³³ to contribute to their distribution among Armenians. It is worth noting that in his efforts to justify the theological tradition of the

¹²⁵ In his poem on martyrdom of blessed Komitas K'ēōmiwrčean, Step'anos Ewdokac'i calls Armenian Apostolics 'from wicked schism of Eutyches / Dioscoros' proponent'. ժսնկ հերձուածոյն Եւտիզէի / Դիոսկորոսի հասախոհի: Ewdokac'i, *Poem to the same holy martyr*, W 160, fol. 166r.

¹²⁶ K. K'ēōmiwrčean, *Concerning the Confrontation*, BNF, MS Arm. 196, fol. 22v.

¹²⁷ Mxlayim, [*Acts of*] *the Second Council of Ephesus*, M 4036; M 9805; J 2961.

¹²⁸ Ter-Mkrtchian ed., *The Seal of Faith*, pp. 112, 357.

¹²⁹ Mxlayim, *Peace-Making Interpretation*, M 1464, fols 132r–v.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, fol. 137r.

¹³¹ Mxlayim, *History of the Three Ecumenical Councils*, M 2620, fols 34r–52v.

¹³² *Ibid*, fols 53r–70r.

¹³³ Mxlayim, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, M 1777; W 721.

Armenian Church he particularly elaborated on the decrees of the first three Ecumenical Councils, accepted by the Armenian Church.

The variety of theological topics Mxlayim polemicizes on and the sophisticated manner of his writings reveal his audience to be the intellectual elites, be they Armenian, Greek Orthodox or Catholic. Mxlayim was in constant dialogue with different representatives of various intellectual circles, which is reflected in his writings. He knew his proponents and adversaries personally or through their writings, like father ‘Philip from the order of Carmelites’, or ‘the great theologian Father Simeon, the priest of the Roman Church proficient in languages and in writings of Eastern Christians, whose wisdom is known in the entire West’.¹³⁴ He is aware of the books of the Armenian authors writing beyond Ottoman territories, such as Yovhannēs Mrk‘uz Ĵuļayec‘i’s (1643–1715) catechism entitled *A Brief Book on the Real and True Faith*,¹³⁵ where Yovhannēs elaborates on the terms ‘orthodoxy’, ‘catholicity’ and ‘universality’, central to Mxlayim’s theological vocabulary. It is worth noting that Mxlayim relies more on the sources in Latin not because of the lack of in-depth familiarity with the tradition—he had spent enough time in Armenia to imbibe the tradition, at least in the way it was seen by the Easterners. In spite of what Cornel Zwierlein¹³⁶ has dubbed ‘non-knowledge’ between Christian East and West during the period in question, which might to some extent be at play in Mxlayim’s case because of his Jesuit education, his frequent references to the Latin Fathers and the writings of missionaries were rather prompted by the desire to prove that the Eastern tradition of the Armenian Church did not necessarily contradict the Western one, as the pre-Chalcedonian Church recognized no serious inconsistencies between them. On the other hand, Mxlayim’s polemical texts had practical use in the quotidian intellectual debates with Papists, hence he was geared towards enriching his polemical toolbox with diverse arguments based on Latin sources.

Realizing the complexity of his texts even for the learned people of his time, Mxlayim made brief glossaries of theological vocabulary including Greek and Turkish equivalents, the latter written in the Armenian script.¹³⁷

Φύσις, *physis*, in Armenian means *nature*, in Turkish *tapiyet*; *tabiyet*, but in the times of the [Nicene] Fathers¹³⁸ it meant *substance*, and now it means *nature*.

Μορφή, *morphē*, in Armenian *appearance*, in Turkish *kisvet*.

¹³⁴ Mxlayim, *History of the Three Ecumenical Councils*, M 2620, fol. 51r.

¹³⁵ Ĵuļayec‘i, *A Brief Book*.

¹³⁶ Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, pp. 118–136.

¹³⁷ Բառք աստուածաբանականք թղթոյս այսորիկ թարգմանեալս տաճկերէն վասն հասկացուցանելոյ զնոսս, Mxlayim, *Letter ... to Sergis Kalfa s son*, VAT, MS Borg. Arm. 18, fols 30v–31r.

¹³⁸ I translate the Armenian word *hayrapetac‘*, lit. ‘patriarchs’ as Nicene Fathers, as judging from the context Mxlayim uses the word in relation to them.

Օύσια, *usia*, in Armenian *essence*, in Turkish *hayat*, but in the times of Nicene Council it meant *substance*, in Turkish *vücut* or *cevher*...¹³⁹

Over the years Mxlayim seems to have realized that refashioning orthodoxy and especially orthopraxy from above failed to prevent the conversions among the common faithful, while sophisticated polemical texts failed to reach the less educated members of the society. Therefore, to reach the wider populace, he introduced Armeno-Turkish and vernacular Armenian into his writings. In this regard, *Homily on the Nativity and Sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ*, written and published in Armeno-Turkish, proved to be Mxlayim's most popular work, as it went through eight editions.¹⁴⁰ The *Homily* was divided into two parts. The first part contained polemical passages on the celebration of Nativity on the 6th of January and Christ's sufferings on the cross intertwined with popular apocryphal themes and short poems in Armenian. Mxlayim's arguments based on the writings of Latin Fathers to prove the credibility of January 6th as the date of celebration of Nativity rooted in the tradition of the ancient Universal Church caused discontent of a Jesuit theologian, who set out to refute Mxlayim's *Homily*. In the published version of the *Homily* we find Mxlayim's response to the Jesuit, whose name he keeps secret.¹⁴¹

The second part of the homily, sometimes published as a separate unit, belongs to the genre of passion or Treaty (or Covenant)—a relatively new genre in Armenian ecclesiastical literature. Treaty became specific to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as popular variants of Grigor Tat'ewac'i's fourteenth-century version,¹⁴² which was apparently influenced by Jacopone da Todi's (d. 1306) *Stabat Mater*.¹⁴³ Passions as public laments had been recited by the priests during the evening service of Good Friday,¹⁴⁴ which is why Mxlayim incorporates short Marian poems in modern

¹³⁹ Φύσις, ֆիսիս, հայերէն բնութիւն, տանկերէն թապիյեթ, բայց ի ժամանակս Հայրապետաց գոյացութիւն նշանակեր, իսկ այժմ զինչ էութիւն նշանակէ: Մօրօհ, մօռֆի, հայերէն կերպարան, տանկերէն քիսվէթ.

Օծսւ, ուսիս, հայերէն էութիւն, տանկերէն հայաթ, բայց ի ժամանակս Նիկիայու ժողովոյն գոյացութիւն նշանակէր, տանկերէն վիճիւտ կամ նուհեր... Mxlayim, *Letter ... to Sergis Kalfa s son*, VAT, MS Borg. Arm. 18, fol. 30v.

¹⁴⁰ On the many editions of the homilies see Ter-Stepanian, 'Gevorg Mxlayim', pp. 41–43. Other editions bear the title *Homily of Most Innocent Nativity of Lord and Treaty of the Passion of the Lord*.

¹⁴¹ Mxlayim, *Homily on the Nativity*, pp. 25–28.

¹⁴² Grigor Tat'ewac'i (d. 1409) is the one, who established the canon of the Treaty (Heb. 9:15). *Book of Sermons*, pp. 580–582. Passionistic genre in vernacular Armenian was further popularized by the Patriarch of Constantinople Yakob Nalean (1741–49, 1752–64) and Catholicos in Etchmiadzin Simëon Erewanc'i (1763–1780).

¹⁴³ For the evolvement of *Stabat Mater* and the reversal of its Mariological aspects to Christological in the confessional age see Bertoglio, 'The Mother', https://www.academia.edu/38226958/The_Mother_the_Sinners_and_the_Cross_Pergolesi_s_Stabat_Mater_and_Bach_s_Tilge_Höchster [accessed on 10.05.2019, 11am].

¹⁴⁴ Eremia K'ëömiwrčean testifies that the Treaty of Passion or Crucifixion was accompanied by public lament: որպէս թէ ի յուր յարտաբերութիւն կտակի խաչելութեան մերոյ կենսատուին, յի լինէր յարանս ողորք դառնագին, see K'ëömiwrčean, *Diary*, p. 480.

dialect (աշխարհաբար) into his homily.¹⁴⁵ Both homilies were composed for preaching purposes, so that through sermons they could convey doctrinal concepts to the faithful. Judging by the title of homily's first publication, the author was the first to recite it in Saint Grigor Lusavorič^c church of Galata.¹⁴⁶

Having had no patrons or permanent commissioners, Mxlayim was selective when it came to book publishing. Usually copying his writings by himself, he commissioned only those ones that in his opinion contributed most to confession-building, such as the *Book of Polemics Against Duophysites /The True Meaning of Catholicity*,¹⁴⁷ the translation of Saint Augustine's book on fasting, and two homilies on the Nativity and Sufferings of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the Armenian Church in the Ottoman and Safavid lands, confessional consciousness reached its apogee in the late seventeenth and particularly early eighteenth century. The presence of Tridentine Catholicism among Armenians under the Safavid rule might be traced to the early 1600s, when Discalced Carmelites followed by the Augustinians from Goa, Capuchins, Jesuits and missionaries of other orders arrived in Safavid lands to find themselves in the company of the old-rite Dominican friars who had settled in Armenian territories in the fourteenth century. Early seventeenth century, however, stands as a pre-confessional period, when *communicatio in sacris* was acceptable to both Catholics and Apostolics as long as the strategy of 'good correspondence' prevailed.¹⁴⁸ The momentum for the confessional upheaval of the Armenian Church began in 1630, when Armenian archbishop of Lviv Nikol T'orosovič^c, a fervent apologist of the union with Rome, converted to Catholicism, which entailed a relatively forceful conversion of the entire Apostolic community of Lviv in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹⁴⁹ This event stimulated the Armenian Church to seriously rethink and take steps towards redefining its confessional boundaries. In this respect, the early seventeenth century might be considered as a formative period of confession-building in the Armenian Church, leading to gradual sharpening of confessionalist strategies. The lengthy list of Bibles, New Testaments, hymnals, breviaries, sermon books, missals and polemical books composed, copied and published in Amsterdam, Venice, Constantinople, New Julfa, Etchmiadzin and elsewhere from the 1660s to the 1690s testify to the growing confessional consciousness, the need for indoctrination as well as redefinition of Armenian orthodoxy.¹⁵⁰ The final switch to confessionalist strategies was fueled by the sultanic edict

¹⁴⁵ Mxlayim, *Homily on the Nativity*, pp. 41–42.

¹⁴⁶ Ghazikyan, *Armenian New Bibliography*, p. 433; Mxlayim, *Homily on the Nativity*.

¹⁴⁷ Mxlayim, *True Meaning*, pp. 269–270.

¹⁴⁸ Windler, 'Ambiguous Belonging', pp. 205–234.

¹⁴⁹ See Paolo Lucca's article in this volume.

¹⁵⁰ For a more elaborate discussion on confessionalization for the early modern Armenian communities, see Aslanian, *Early Modernity and Mobility*, chap. 3; Ohanjanyan, 'Creedal Controversies', pp. 14–16.

in May 1695 leading to intra-communal clashes between Armenian Apostolic and Catholic factions.

Gēorg Mxlayim Ōhli, a witness to the intra-communal turmoil of the late seventeenth-century Constantinople, set his focus not only on intra-communal, but also on inter-confessional orthodoxy debates. Initially oriented toward peaceful confessional coexistence, Mxlayim eventually turned into the advocate of exclusivity of the Armenian orthodoxy, deeply rooted in ancient tradition of the pre-Chalcedonian Universal Church. He took it upon himself to redefine the confessional boundaries of the Armenian Church by applying Latin Christian conceptual vocabulary to the Eastern theological tradition. However, even if in this attempt Mxlayim aimed at a global effect, the lack of references to his writings in the corpus of the Eastern Armenian theologians proves that his oeuvre served largely local, Constantinopolitan needs.

ABBREVIATIONS

- BNF – National Library of France
 J – Library of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem
 M – ‘Matenadaran’ in Yerevan
 NOJ – Library of the All Savior’s Monastery in New Julfa
 VAT – Apostolic Library in Vatican
 W – Library of the Mekhitarist Congregation in Vienna

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17. ORTHODOX CONFESSION-BUILDING AND THE GREEK CHURCH BETWEEN PROTESTANTISM AND CATHOLICISM: THE MISSION OF MARQUIS NOINTEL TO THE LEVANT (1670–1673)¹

MARGARITA VOULGAROPOULOU

In November 1670 a new French embassy to the Porte arrived in Istanbul, led by Charles-Marie-François Olier, Marquis de Nointel (1635–1685), and dispatched with orders to rekindle the fragile Franco-Ottoman relations, which by the end of the War of Crete had almost reached a breaking point.² Apart from his official tasks of negotiating the renewal of the capitulation treaties between France and the Ottoman Empire,³ and securing a French religious protectorate in the Levant,⁴ ambassador Nointel was assigned another side mission, aiming to resolve one of the most heated theological debates that troubled France at that time. With the conflicts between Catholic Jansenists and Calvinist Huguenots centered on their different teachings on the Eucharist, Nointel was tasked with procuring confessions of faith from a multitude of Orthodox prelates and foreign agents, attesting to the agreement of the

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² Bérenger, 'La politique ottomane', p. 115; Saint-Priest, *Mémoires*, pp. 88, 229; Farganel, 'Les échelles', pp. 61–83.

³ The capitulations (Ott.Tr. *imtiyazat*) were commercial privileges granted by the Ottomans to *müstemin*, foreigners residing in the Ottoman lands, and benefitting from the Sultan's protection. Poumarède, 'Négocier près la Sublime Porte', pp. 78–80; Farganel, 'Les échelles', pp. 62–83; 'L'Empire ottoman', pp. 179–180; Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western trade', pp. 283–335.

⁴ Saint-Priest, *Mémoires*, pp. 446–474; Farganel, 'Les échelles', pp. 61–83; Slot, *Archipelagus turbatus*, p. 204; Dew, *Orientalism*, pp. 33–34; Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, p. 102.

Oriental Churches with the Catholics regarding the Eucharistic doctrine of transubstantiation and other articles of faith.⁵

Nointel's expedition and the confessions of faith that were obtained through his Levantine campaign have been the subject of several studies in recent years. Alastair Hamilton, Frédéric Gabriel and to a lesser extent Émile Turdeanu have discussed the topic within the broader context of the Eucharistic controversy, assessing the contribution of Nointel's mission and the attestations he collected to the larger confessional debates between French Jansenists and Calvinists.⁶ In a similar vein, Jean Lesaulnier, Bernard Chédozeau and Masanori Sakano briefly touched upon Nointel's case while exploring the relations between the Eastern Churches and the abbey of Port-Royal, as well as the latter's conversion strategies.⁷ From a different perspective, Cornel Zwierlein addressed the issue within the framework of a new historiographical approach, which researches the history of ignorance across political, socio-economic, and religious lines, discussing specifically how the Greek Church learned to deal with the theological matters arising from the confessional debates following the Protestant Reformation.⁸

Contrary to previous studies, which engaged with the Greek role in the Eucharist controversy only to the extent that it shed light on the clash between the Jansenists and Calvinists, this article will approach the topic from the perspective of the Greek Orthodox Church and assess the importance of Nointel's expedition within the broader process of Orthodox confession-building. Departing from a strictly theological analysis of the sources in question, this study will interpret the confessional positions adopted by the Greek Church in light of its internal crisis and struggle to establish stability as well as rally its prelates around a set of defined beliefs and practices in a manner of Catholic, Protestant, and Reformed confessions. Moreover, along with evaluating the confessions of faith produced at Nointel's incitement, this study will also consider the individuals that signed or authored them, aiming to reconstruct the vast network of agents involved in the ambassador's campaign, and trace their political and religious incentives. By doing so, this article intends to demonstrate how a primarily theological debate was entangled in a web of economic and political interests, set against the backdrop of intense diplomatic maneuvering between European powers and the Ottoman Empire.

⁵ The manuscripts of the confessions collected by Nointel are now at the National Library of France (BNF, MS Arménien 145), while another copy is preserved in the Library of Rouen (Bibliothèque Patrimoniaile Villon, cote 82–83). The tables of contents of the confessions were published in: Omont, 'Confessions de foi (1884)', pp. 235–236; Omont, 'Confessions de foi (1894)', pp. 567–570.

⁶ Hamilton, 'From East to West', pp. 83–100; Gabriel, 'Les témoins', pp. 373–389; Turdeanu, 'Les controverses des Jansénistes', pp. 284–294.

⁷ Lesaulnier, 'Arnauld de Pomponne', pp. 456–460; Chédozeau, 'Pourquoi Port-Royal', p. 216; Sakano, 'Port-Royalists', pp. 129.

⁸ Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, p. 117.

**NOINTEL'S LEVANTINE EXPEDITION AND THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY
IN FRANCE**

Throughout the seventeenth century a theological controversy was raging between Calvinist Huguenots and Catholic Jansenists⁹ regarding the issue of transubstantiation, namely the transformation of the substance of bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ during the consecration in Mass.¹⁰ While the Catholics preached the real presence of Christ in the species of the host, the Calvinists believed that the Eucharist was but a symbolic commemoration. In 1659 the Jansenist leaders, Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole published a liturgy volume for the nuns of the abbey of Port-Royal in Paris, the stronghold of Jansenism, including a long preface where they quoted the church Fathers, and claimed that the notion of transubstantiation 'was so universally established, not only in the entire Church of Rome, but also in all the communities which were separated from it, such as those of the Greeks and the Armenians'.¹¹ An immediate reaction came from Jean Claude, the Huguenot minister of Charenton, who challenged the idea of a supposed agreement of the Eastern Christians with this doctrine,¹² thus opening up a debate that would trouble the French Church in the years to follow. In 1664 Arnauld and Nicole issued the first edition of their oeuvre titled *La perpétuité de la foy de l'église catholique touchant l'eucharistie*, where they stated that 'if we ask every Greek on the face of the earth if they disagree with the Church of Rome on the matter of Eucharist, they will respond that no they do not', without, however, providing any solid proof.¹³ In his 1665-*Réponse* Jean Claude contested the universality of Arnauld's statement, controverting that 'if we ask every Greek on the face of the earth if there is a general law among them that establishes transubstantiation, if it has been determined in any of their councils or if it is stated in any of their confessions of faith, they will say no'.¹⁴ As a consequence, Arnauld and Nicole made it their mission to approach and interrogate 'every Greek on the face of the earth', requesting attestations of their faith, in order to use these as ammunition against their Calvinist nemesis.

At first Arnauld and Nicole made use of their own connections to approach motley agents and collect theological material that would prove to be of assistance to their cause. One of the first to be recruited was the Moldavian Nicolae Spătarul Milescu (1636–1708), who wrote a Manual on transubstantiation in 1667 at the

⁹ Jansenism was a religious movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that arose out of the theological problem of reconciling divine grace and human freedom. It appeared chiefly in France, Low Countries and Italy. See Doyle, *Jansenism*.

¹⁰ Bourlon, *Entre cousins germains*.

¹¹ Turdeanu, 'Les controverses des Jansénistes', p. 277; Hamilton, 'From East to West', p. 83; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, p. 125.

¹² Turdeanu, 'Les controverses des Jansénistes', p. 277; Hamilton, 'From East to West', p. 83; Gabriel, 'Les témoins', pp. 375–376.

¹³ Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1664), pp. 464–475; Hamilton, 'From East to West', p. 84–85.

¹⁴ Claude, *Réponse*, p. 694.

request of the French ambassador in Stockholm, Simon Arnauld, Marquis de Pomponne, none other than Arnauld's own nephew.¹⁵ In turn, Simone Arnauld approached the Lutheran Jean de Lilienthal, who was in contact with the then Metropolitan of Gaza, Paisios Ligarides.¹⁶ As a result of this correspondence, Ligarides addressed a lengthy letter in Latin to Lilienthal, reporting on the 'Greek and Muscovite faith'. At about the same time, the first attestations of faith started to appear from the Churches of Moscow and Armenia. Soon, however, it became evident that in order to achieve comprehensive results, they would need to reach out to a larger pool of agents with direct access to the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The French embassy that was about to embark for Istanbul seemed like an ideal solution. After all, Marquis de Nointel, Arnauld's relative and a Jansenist himself, was handpicked by Minister Hugues de Lionne, another fervent Jansenist, who requested the new ambassador to collect signed declarations of faith from Eastern Christians about transubstantiation. To this end Nointel was assigned the assistance of a young Orientalist, Antoine Galland, who thanks to his knowledge of Greek, Latin and Arabic would take on the task of translating the material in French.¹⁷ The French embassy left the port of Toulon on August 21, 1670, and arrived in Istanbul on November 10.¹⁸ In the following three years, while negotiating the renewal of the capitulations with the Porte, Nointel and Galland would ardently work on building a wide network of agents and obtaining attestations of faith from the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE AGE OF CONFSSIONALIZATION

After the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the vacuum created by the collapse of Christian political power in the East, the Greek Orthodox Church was regarded by the Western European nations as a most valuable political interlocutor and a strategic ally in the Ottoman Empire. During the religious and geopolitical conflicts of the seventeenth century and especially the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), the Greek Orthodox Church became a theater of contest between Catholics and Protestants (including various Reformed churches), who were trying to bring it under their influence and extend their power in the Levant.¹⁹ During the period of the Counter-

¹⁵ The treatise, titled *Enchiridion, sive, Stella orientalis occidentali splendens id est Sensus Ecclesiae Orientalis, scilicet Graecae, de Transsubstantione Corporis Domini, aliisque Controversiis*, was published in Latin in 1669. Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1669), pp. 50–54, 301; Turdeanu, 'Les controverses des Jansénistes', pp. 280–282; Lesaulnier, 'Arnauld de Pomponne', pp. 456–460; Kármán, *A Seventeenth-Century Odyssey*, pp. 139–142; Sakano, 'Port-Royalists', pp. 126–128.

¹⁶ Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1669), pp. 59–72; Suttner, 'Panteleimon (Paisios) Ligarides', pp. 92–94; Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, p. 256; Lesaulnier, 'Arnauld de Pomponne', pp. 456–458; Sakano, 'Port-Royalists', p. 127.

¹⁷ Hamilton, 'From East to West', pp. 85–86; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, p. 126.

¹⁸ Saint-Priest, *Mémoires*, pp. 227–228; Omont, *Missions archéologiques*, pp. 175–221; Hamilton, 'From East to West', p. 86.

¹⁹ Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, p. 71; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, p. 118.

Reformation the Catholic Church was fervently attempting to convert Orthodox populations of the Ottoman territories through the constant dispatch of missionaries, such as Franciscans, Capuchins and especially Jesuits, ultimately aiming to bring the Eastern Churches in union with Rome.²⁰ Meanwhile, Protestant circles were approaching Greek higher prelates and theologians wishing to recruit them to their cause and ally with them against their mutual Catholic enemy.

Caught in the middle of this struggle for control, the Greek Church, which was previously but an interested bystander, now found it hard to maintain its neutrality. In fact, the division of Western Christianity after the Reformation and the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants presented the Orthodox with diplomatic opportunities from which they could possibly profit. Orthodox prelates would switch their allegiances towards either side, depending on the historical circumstances, the power shifts, and the possibilities of gaining political and personal advantages. Moreover, as the patriarchal office was occasionally auctioned off by the Sultan to the highest bidder, Greek prelates would often pledge their allegiance to foreign powers in return for political and financial support for their election.²¹

Seeing the Protestants as a potential ally in counteracting Catholic influence and promoting their autonomy, the Greeks entered into an interconfessional dialogue with Lutheran and Calvinist circles that would eventually shake the very foundations of the Orthodox Church.²² The earliest formal contact with the Protestants dates from 1572, when Lutheran theologians from the university of Tübingen approached Ecumenical Patriarch Hieremias II, attempting to earn his support and his endorsement of the Augsburg Confession (1530), without, however, any significant results.²³ The

²⁰ Capuchin missions were active in the Greek world since the sixteenth century but were intensified in the seventeenth, spreading to the Greek islands. The Jesuits first arrived in Istanbul in 1583 and started their missionary work under French protection in 1609. Jesuit missions were also established in Chios (1592), Smyrna (1623), and the Islands of the Aegean (1627). Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 72–73, 81–83, 88–92, 114–126, 171–177; Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*, pp. 153–154, 169–173; Vakalopoulos, *History of New Hellenism*, pp. 392–393, 395, 404, 413; Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, p. 79; Roussos-Milidonis, *Jesuites*, pp. 21–35, 79–88, 123–131, 151–153; Roussos-Milidonis, *Franciscan Capuchins*; Papailiaki, 'Aspects'; Tzedopoulos, 'Orthodox Neomartyrs', p. 155. See also Heyberger, *Les chrétiens*, pp. 48–49; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, p. 135; Greene, *The Edinburgh History*, pp. 164–170.

²¹ The role of France was instrumental in numerous cases of patriarchal depositions and reinstatements. Nointel himself had intervened in 1671 in the appointment of Patriarch Parthenios IV. De La Croix, *État présent*, pp. 108–109; Mertzios, *Patriarchika*, p. 36; Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*, pp. 10–11; Stathi 'Allaxopatriarcheies', pp. 37–66; Gara and Tzedopoulos, *Christians and Muslims*, p. 105.

²² Hamilton, 'From East to West', p. 47.

²³ Philip Melancthon had attempted to gain the Orthodox interest by sending a copy of the Augustan Confession translated to Greek to Ecumenical Patriarch Ioasaph II. Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, p. 72. For the exchanges between Hieremias and the Tübingen theologians see: Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople*; Hannick and Todt, 'Jérémie II Tranos', pp. 551–615; Tsakiris, 'Ecclesiarum Belgicarum Confessio', pp. 476–478; Ben-Tov, 'Turco-Graecia', pp. 181–195; Olar, 'Les confessions', pp. 274–275.

exchanges between the two Churches were renewed in the first decades of the seventeenth century, when a young theologian, Metrophanes Kritopoulos (1589–1639), later Patriarch of Alexandria, was sent to Europe by the then Patriarch of Alexandria, Kyrillos Loukaris, to study and prepare the ground for a possible rapprochement of the Orthodox and Protestant Churches.²⁴ In 1625, while in Helmsted, Kritopoulos composed a *Confession of the Eastern Catholic and Apostolic Church* at the request of Protestant professors, which however remained unpublished, as it refrained from openly endorsing Protestant beliefs in favor of ambiguity.

The theological exchanges with Protestant Europe culminated in 1629 with the publication of a ‘Calvinistic’ Confession of Faith in Latin under the name of Kyrillos Loukaris, who in the meantime had risen to the Ecumenical throne. The Confession was greeted with ovations by Protestant circles and was immediately translated to French and English; a Greek edition appeared only in 1633, indicating that the text was mainly intended for a European audience. Loukaris’ confession²⁵ served the goals of Calvinist propaganda by providing support to Protestant doctrines and legitimizing them through the connection with the Early Christian Patristic tradition. For the post-Tridentine Catholic Church, on the other hand, Loukaris’ confession was just another pretext to press on with the conversion of Orthodox populations to Catholicism, which was promoted as the only true faith.²⁶

With Kyrillos Loukaris the interconfessional and political conflicts that were raging in Western Europe were officially transferred to the heart of the Ottoman Empire.²⁷ The decades that followed found the Greek Orthodox Church in a state of disorder. The Ecumenical throne was changing hands in rapid succession and rivalries between candidates were raging; throughout the course of the century fifty-five changes of patriarchs were registered among the same twenty-eight recurring names.²⁸ Meanwhile, the Greek Church was striving to control the fallout from the

²⁴ Dyovouniotis, *Metrophanes Kritopoulos*; Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*, pp. 177–181; Davey, *Pioneer for Unity*; Tsirpanlis, ‘Metrophanes Kritopoulos’, pp. 383–414; Tsakiris, *Die gedruckten griechischen Beichtbücher*, p. 71; Tsakiris, ‘Ecclesiarum Belgicarum Confessio’, pp. 478n15. Loukaris was apparently not particularly invested in the doctrinal and theological differences between the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

²⁵ On the controversy of whether Loukaris was the real author of the *Confession* see Karmiris, *Orthodoxy and Protestantism*, pp. 215–216. See also Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*; Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, pp. 80–81; Todt, ‘Kyrillos Lukaris’, pp. 617–658; Tsakiris, ‘Ecclesiarum Belgicarum Confessio’, pp. 475–487; Olar, ‘Les confessions’, pp. 271–310.

²⁶ Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, p. 81.

²⁷ Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*.

²⁸ Edouard De La Croix, Nointel’s secretary, mentions that during his stay in Istanbul he witnessed the change of five patriarchs. De La Croix also provides an illustrative description of a dogfight taking place between the rivals Parthenios IV, Dionysios III and Dionysios IV for the patriarchal throne, quoting the words of Grand Vizier Köprülü to the winner, Parthenios: ‘Beware not to spend a dime without good reason; and you, cursed dogs, “he said to the Metropolitans”, I will make you all die, if I hear speaking of you in the next six months’. De La Croix,

Calvinistic Confession, and at the same time define the true doctrines of the Orthodox faith and communicate them to the West. Right after Loukaris' death two Synods were convened, in Constantinople (1638) and in Jassy (1642), to condemn his Calvinistic confession and disassociate the Orthodox Church from Protestantism. At the same time, new confessions of faith were composed to counter the one by Loukaris, first in 1631 by Ioannes Karyophylles (ca. 1566–1633), and later in 1638 by the Metropolitan of Kyiv, Peter Mohila (1596–1647).²⁹ The text of the latter was reworked by Meletios Syrigos and was confirmed by the Synod of Jassy in 1642, while a year later it was recognized by the four Patriarchates of the East as the fundamental text defining the right faith of the Orthodox world under the title *Confession of the Orthodox faith of the Catholic and Apostolic church of Christ*.

Faced with an unprecedented internal crisis, but also under the pressure of external powers, in the second quarter of the seventeenth century the Greek Orthodox Church took up the challenge of redefining its doctrines and reforming its ecclesiastical tradition, therefore entering its own process of confession-building.³⁰ Under the influence and instigation of European nations that were developing their own confessionalization programs, the Greek Church adopted the Western model of defining the official principles of their faith with increased precision and through carefully composed confessions of faith, which were either intended to safeguard the internal integrity of the Orthodox Church or directed at a Western European audience—often both.

While in the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed contexts the process of confessionalization is often associated with social disciplining as well as the goal of creating religiously uniform states according to the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, in the

État présent, p. 109. Likewise, John Covell provides a colorful narration of the consecration of Patriarch Dionysios IV, and the anathematization of his predecessor Parthenios in 1674: '... coming to speak of Parthenios ... comparing him to Lucifer and the bad angels; he mistook, and said Paisios ... The French ambassador, and we Franks and many Greeks could not but smile. My Dragoman (a Greek) told me that if this one be turned out, and Parthenios restored, the other faction will anathematize him as much, and they served Methodius just so'. Bent, *Early Voyages*, pp. 145–149. Similar incidents are described by Pinelopi Stathi in: Stathi, 'Al-laxopatriarcheies', pp. 37–66. See also Gara and Tzedopoulos, *Christians and Muslims*, p. 105.²⁹ Sathas, *Neohellenic Philology*, pp. 264–265; Rozemond, 'De confessio Orthodoxa', pp. 193–207; Karmiris, 'Peter Mohila', pp. 1239–1242; Karmiris, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments*, pp. 582–686; Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, pp. 81–83; Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeeds and Confessions*, pp. 561–612; Kontouma, 'Christianisme Orthodoxe', pp. 208–217.

³⁰ For the concept of confessionalization see Reinhard, 'Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung?', pp. 257–277; Schilling, 'Die Konfessionalisierung', pp. 1–45; Lotz-Heumann, 'The Concept of Confessionalization', pp. 93–114; Van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag*, pp. 108–137; Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline*; Schilling, 'Confessional Europe', pp. 641–670; Schilling, 'Confessionalization', pp. 21–36; Zwierlein, '(Ent)konfessionalisierung', pp. 199–230; Brüning, 'Confessionalization in the Slavia Orthodoxa', pp. 66–98; Krstić, 'Illuminated by the Light of Islam', pp. 35–63; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*; Lotz-Heumann, 'Confessionalization', pp. 33–53; Kriegseisen, *Between State and Church*; Burke, *Popular Culture*; Rodrigues, 'Confessionalization processes'; Zwierlein, 'Konfessionalisierung', pp. 1–51; Brüning, 'Die Orthodoxie', pp. 45–75.

Greek world, which lacked an official centralized political power, it had a much different manifestation closer to the phenomenon of what Ernst Zeeden described as confession-building, without social disciplining. Serhii Plokyh argues regarding the case of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, that ‘if in the West confessionalization involved the division of previously unitary Christendom (*Christianitas latina*) into a number of confessionalized churches, in the East it fostered the revival and growth in particular Orthodox churches of a sense of belonging to one Orthodox ecumene (*Christianitas orthodoxa*)’.³¹ Failing to designate these ‘particular Orthodox churches’, Plokyh’s thesis remains vaguely axiomatic; nevertheless, it points towards a tendency observable within certain parts of the Orthodox world to seek to define norms and strive towards greater homogeneity in the face of external challenges and internal diversity. For instance, this was the case when Patriarch Nikon of Moscow reached out to the Greek theologians from Constantinople, Jerusalem and Antioch to bring into harmony the local beliefs with those of the Orthodox ‘tradition’.³² Although more research needs to be done on the subject, it would appear that in certain contexts, such as in Poland-Lithuania, Constantinople, and Moscow the transfer of confessional debates to the Eastern front catalyzed a gradual shift in the self-perception of the Greek Orthodox Church: from seeing itself as the one and only Christian church, it proceeded to define itself as one Christian confession amongst others.³³ However, this was neither a linear process nor did it take the same form in all the above-mentioned Orthodox contexts, underlying diversity within the larger ‘Orthodox confessional culture’.³⁴

In Constantinople, apart from gradually producing a list of Orthodox beliefs, Orthodox confession-building developed in tandem with the growing importance of Greek diplomacy in both Ottoman and European contexts, which regulated the relations of the Eastern Churches with the West. When the French embassy of Nointel reached Istanbul seeking the cooperation of the Orthodox Church, it seemed to the latter that such an agreement would prove to be mutually beneficial, allowing the Greeks to once and for all distance themselves from the Calvinists, while securing the support of France, which after the Cretan (1645–1669) and the Anglo-Dutch wars (1665–1667) seemed to be the most stable ally in the West.

THE ‘ORIENTALIZATION’ OF THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY³⁵

It was in this framework that the Eucharistic controversy was transplanted to the Eastern front, leading the way to a substantial number of confessions and attestations

³¹ Plokyh, *The Cossacks and Religion*, pp. 11–12. For the concept of confessionalization in the Russian and Ukrainian lands see also Brüning, ‘Confessionalization in the Slavia Orthodoxa’, pp. 66–98; Dmitriev, ‘Western Christianity’, pp. 321–342; Charipova, ‘Orthodox Reform’, pp. 295–299.

³² See Paul of Aleppo, *The Travels of Macarius*; Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians*.

³³ See also Makrides, ‘Konfessionalisierungsprozesse’, pp. 77–110.

³⁴ On the notion of an ‘Orthodox confessional culture’ and its diversity see *ibid.*

³⁵ The title is paraphrasing Cornel Zwierlein. Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, pp. 118–124.

of faith, most of which were produced under the direct incitement or indirect support of the French ambassador. Although the issue of transubstantiation was hardly contested in the Orthodox tradition, with the circulation of Loukaris' confession it became a thorn in the side of the Greek Church. Especially after the publication of a manual refuting the concept of transubstantiation (μετουσίωσις) by Ioannes Karyophylles,³⁶ the need to address the problem became even more pressing. In Peter Mohila's confession two paragraphs were already dedicated to the subject, confirming the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the change of the substance of the bread and wine into his body and blood.³⁷ The approved text of the confession was included in the 1669–edition of the *Perpétuité de la Foy* by Arnauld and Nicole, who explicitly stressed that 'the Latins have not interfered in any way' in its production.³⁸

Interestingly, the earliest traceable involvement of the Greek Church in the French Eucharistic debates arrived from a rather unexpected place, namely Ottoman-ruled Cyprus. Almost two years before Nointel's expedition, on April 8, 1668, a Synod was called in the city of Nicosia, following the example of the Synods held in Constantinople and Jassy.³⁹ But while the Cypriot Synod touched upon several similar points as the previous ones, it was clearly distinguished from them in both content and pronouncements. In particular, while the aim of the previous Synods was to explicitly refute the chapters of Loukaris' confession one by one, the Synod of Nicosia focused on seven central points, which constituted the main areas of disagreement between the Orthodox and Protestant Churches: the Holy Sacraments, the Episcopacy, the Chrism, fasts, monasticism, the adoration and intercession of the saints, and finally commemorations of the dead. Among these points, the first one dealt with the subject of the Eucharist, confirming the belief of the Orthodox Church in transubstantiation, and making use of this exact term.

As we shall see further down, the doctrinal matters discussed in Nicosia would later form the core around which Nointel's attestations of faith would be structured. But is it possible to pinpoint a direct link between the Cypriot Synod and the French Church? Previous scholars have spotted subtle Latinisms hidden in several chapters of the Synod of Nicosia, such as the part where it is mentioned that transubstantiation

³⁶ Sathas, *Neohellenic Philology*, pp. 374–375. For Karyophylles see also Halastanis, *Ioannes Karyophylles*.

³⁷ Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions*, pp. 604–606.

³⁸ Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité (1669)*, p. 668.

³⁹ Probably, the Synod took place at the church of Archangel Michael Trypiotes in Nicosia. The Synod was presided by Archbishop Nikephoros, hegumen of Kykkos, and attended by the metropolitans of Paphos, Cyrenia, Limassol, as well as other prelates, hegumens, and even lower clergy. The proceedings, composed by the Great Theologian of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Hilarion Kigalas, were published in Greek by Philippos Georgiou and in English by John Hackett. See Hackett, *Church of Cyprus*, pp. 212–213, 660–664; Georgiou, *Historical Notes*, pp. 94–98. See also Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, p. 1055; Kyprianos, *Chronological History*, p. 362n; Iviritou, 'The Confession of Faith', pp. 581–589; Hill, *History of Cyprus*, pp. 334–336; Philip-pou, 'The 1668–Cypriot Synod', pp. 13–19, 31–35; Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, pp. 104–108; Mitsidis, 'The Anti-Calvinistic Synod', pp. 111–118; Tsirpanlis, *Cypriot Hellenism*, p. 179.

occurs when the priest utters the words ‘Come eat this is my body’, compared to the Orthodox belief that it takes place after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, or the part where it is indicated that commemorations of the dead may reduce the time of ‘delay’ (αναβολή), which was interpreted as a concealed reference to purgatory.⁴⁰ It was suggested that this formulation stemmed from the spirit of constructive ambiguity, so that they could be subject to different interpretations by either the Orthodox or the Catholic side.⁴¹

Regardless of how we interpret these statements on a theological level, it is evident that the Synod of Nicosia was not only convened to address the internal affairs of the Greek Church and keep up with the current trend of renouncing Calvinism, but was also (or even primarily) intended to communicate the Orthodox doctrines to a Western audience, under the incitement or influence of the Propaganda Fide and Port-Royal.⁴² Indeed, the Synod was presided over by Archbishop Nikephoros, a man of Frankish origin, known for his pro-Latin tendencies.⁴³ Referred to as a ‘Catholic’ and ‘the right hand of the Missionaries’,⁴⁴ Nikephoros was in direct contact with the Vatican and with the Catholic circles of Cyprus.⁴⁵ However, the mastermind and leading figure of the Cypriot Synod of 1668 was the man who was going to succeed Nikephoros on the Episcopal throne of Cyprus, the pro-Catholic and Latin-educated Hilarion Kigalas (1624–1682), one of the most controversial personalities of his time.⁴⁶ Hilarion, son of the priest Matthaïos Kigalas, had received a Latin-oriented education at the Greek College of Saint Athanasios in Rome, and was afterwards sent by the Propaganda Fide to preach in the East, thus ‘facilitating the reunion of the schismatic churches’.⁴⁷ Upon his return to Italy in 1657 Kigalas was appointed professor and first rector of the Cottunian College in Padua.⁴⁸ A couple of years later, in 1660 Kigalas was ordained bishop of Cyprus, and in 1666 he was

⁴⁰ Duckworth, *The Church of Cyprus*, p. 58; Georgiou, *Historical Notes*, p. 94. See also Philippou, ‘The 1668–Cypriot Synod’, pp. 32–33; Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, pp. 106–107; Mitsidis, ‘The Anti-Calvinistic Synod’, pp. 117–118.

⁴¹ Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, p. 107.

⁴² Hackett, *Church of Cyprus*, p. 298; Georgiou, *Historical Notes*, p. 93; Philippou, ‘The 1668–Cypriot Synod’, pp. 14–15; Hadjianastasis, ‘Consolidation of the Cypro-Ottoman Elite’, p. 82.

⁴³ In his 1650–letter to the secretary of Propaganda Fide in Nicosia, the missionary Buonaventura di Lauro mentions that Nikephoros had accepted Catholicism. In addition, in a letter dating from 1655, Nikephoros accepts the Council of Ferrara–Florence. Tsirpanlis, *Unpublished Documents*, pp. 127–129, 132–134; Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, pp. 108–110.

⁴⁴ Tillyridis, ‘An unpublished text’, pp. 162–177; Alexandrou, ‘The Church of Cyprus’, pp. 108–109; Tsirpanlis, ‘Forms of Communication’, pp. 121–145.

⁴⁵ Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, pp. 105–106.

⁴⁶ For Hilarion Kigalas see: Kyprianos, *Chronological History*, p. 362; Sathas, *Neohellenic Philology*, pp. 300–301; Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, pp. 318–338; Hadjipsaltis, ‘Documents’, pp. 51–61: 55–57; Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, pp. 137–144; Tsirpanlis, *Cypriot Hellenism*, pp. 128–136, 170–184; Hill, *History of Cyprus*, pp. 336–342; Hadjianastasis, ‘Between the Porte and the Lion’, pp. 160–161.

⁴⁷ Hadjianastasis, ‘Between the Porte and the Lion’, p. 160.

⁴⁸ Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, p. 140.

named Great Theologian and Exarch of the Ecumenical Throne by Patriarch Parthenios IV, an office which was reconfirmed by his successor, Methodios III. Finally in 1674 Kigalas was ordained Archbishop of Cyprus, after Nikephoros' resignation.⁴⁹

In his capacity as Great Theologian and thanks to his profound erudition, Hilarion Kigalas became the central figure of the Synod of Nicosia, as he was the one who moderated the discussions, drew up the decrees, and drafted the proceedings of the Assembly. Shortly after, in June 24, 1668 Kigalas translated a summary of the proceedings of the Synod in Latin and sent it to France via Fra François de Brissac, a Capuchin from Larnaca, to be included in the second edition of the *Perpétuité de la Foy*.⁵⁰ The same text in its original Greek version, signed by Archbishop Nikephoros, was also sent to Arnauld and Nicole in November 9, 1668.⁵¹ Therefore, although there is no sufficient evidence to support that the Synod was called at the direct instigation of the Catholic Church, the almost immediate dispatch of the proceedings to France suggests the involvement of Jansenists in the preparation of the Synod and the design of its central points. According to Kyprianos and Hill, Kigalas had discussed the questions debated at the Synod with the Franciscan Friars,⁵² while it is known that he was also closely tied to the French Capuchin order of Cyprus.⁵³ What might help to even better clarify the link between the Cypriot theologian and the Jansenists is a letter by Demetrios Kigalas (1630–1681), Hilarion's brother, to the Jansenist abbot Sébastien-Joseph du Cambout de Coislin, known as 'Pontchâteau', dated January 8, 1667, just a year before the Synod. In the letter Demetrios replies to the abbot's inquiries about 'whether the Greek Church believes, confesses and defends these articles that your Majesty has mentioned', and writes that his brother Hilarion will procure 'a patriarchal and Synodical act confirming all the points that your Majesty has written to me, in a way that agrees with the beliefs of the Roman Church, and anathematizing whomever says and teaches the contrary'.⁵⁴ Pontchâteau, after all, was one of Arnauld's associates,⁵⁵ providing him with a letter by the German Adam Oléarius about the agreement of the Armenian and Moscovite Churches on the matter of transubstantiation.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ According to Nointel, Nikephoros was deposed and Hilarion was appointed archbishop after obtaining a *berat* through his brother Demetrios, who was personal physician to the Grand Vizier. Vandal, *L'Odyssee*, p. 348; Tsirpanlis, 'Forms of Communication', p. 133. See also Hackett, *Church of Cyprus*, p. 280; Alexandrou, *The Church of Cyprus*, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1669), pp. 85–86; Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, p. 1056; Bail, *Summa Conciliorum*, pp. 740–741; Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, p. 337.

⁵¹ BNF, MS Arménien 145, 21r–22r.

⁵² Kyprianos, *Chronological History*, p. 362n; Hill, *History of Cyprus*, p. 335n3.

⁵³ Hill, *History of Cyprus*, pp. 337–339; Hadjianastasis, 'Consolidation of the Cypro-Ottoman Elite', p. 80.

⁵⁴ BNF, MS NAF 7460, fols 1r–1v. Published in Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, pp. 340–342. See also Tsirpanlis, *Cypriot Hellenism*, p. 185.

⁵⁵ Sakano, 'Port-Royalists', p. 127.

⁵⁶ BNF, MS NAF 7460, fols 3r–4v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1669), pp. 56–57.

Thanks to the information provided by this letter, it is possible to safely pinpoint Kigalas' French connection to the abbot Pontchâteau through his brother, Demetrios.⁵⁷ It is also likely that Kigalas himself got in touch with the Port-Royalists during his stay at the Cottunian College in Padua, which according to the Venetian diplomat in Paris, Francesco Marchesini, was founded with the financial help of the French. Ioannes Kottounios, the founder of the College, had dedicated several works to King Louis XIV, hoping that he would undertake a crusade to liberate Greece,⁵⁸ and was also associated with Greek diplomats in the French court, such as the Athenian Leonardos Philaras or Villeret (1595–1673), ambassador and advisor to Cardinal Richelieu. Apart from the French court, Hilarion Kigalas was also connected to the Ottoman Porte through his brother, the aforementioned Demetrios, who was personal physician to Grand Vizier Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed, to whom he allegedly also preached the Old and New Testament.⁵⁹

Being highly connected and proving his usefulness to the Jansenist cause, Hilarion Kigalas became one of the first agents to be recruited by Nointel and a key figure in building up the vast network of people employed by the French ambassador in the following years. In his journal entry from May 28, 1673 Antoine Galland mentions that Nointel had just received a letter from Kigalas from Cyprus, dated from November of the previous year, where the bishop was promising to 'provide him [the ambassador] with weapons against the minister Claude', by refuting all accusations made by the Calvinists, and obtaining attestations of faith from the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria.⁶⁰ Indeed, as early as May 13, 1670, after being reconfirmed in his office as Great Theologian, Hilarion was asked by the newly ordained Patriarch Methodios to provide a confession of faith, renewing the one he had submitted at his first appointment under Patriarch Parthenios IV in 1666. But instead of repeating the same 'indisputable truths', Methodios asked Hilarion to only elaborate on the doctrinal differences between the Eastern and Western Churches, probably wishing to refute in that way the circulating accusations of Hilarion's pro-Latinism.⁶¹ Kigalas complied with Methodios' demand and provided him a profession of faith focusing on the main points of contestation with the Latins. However, he still

⁵⁷ So far it is not possible to establish a connection between Hilarion and the impostor Jean-Michel Cigala, alias Mehmet Bey, who appeared in the court of Louis XIV at around the same time in 1668. Mehmet Bey was supposedly the son of a certain Scipione Cigala and Canou Salie Sultana, daughter of Sultan Ahmet. For Jean-Michel Cigala see Cazacu, 'Un faux prince', pp. 328–356.

⁵⁸ Such expectations were expressed by many of Kottounios' fellow countrymen, including his former classmate and diplomat in France, Leonardos Philaras from Athens. Karathanasis, *Treatises on Macedonia*.

⁵⁹ Antoine Galland provides this information in a journal entry from June 12, 1673. Galland, *Journal*, pp. 81, 100–101. For Demetrios Kigalas see Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, pp. 338–342; Tsirpanlis, *Cypriot Hellenism*, pp. 184–187. With some reservation Cazacu associates Demetrios Kigalas with the impostor Jean-Michel Cigala. Cazacu, 'Un faux prince', p. 350.

⁶⁰ Galland, *Journal*, pp. 78–79. Nointel and Galland finally met Kigalas in person in 1673. Vandal, *L'Odyssée*, pp. 160–161.

⁶¹ Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique*, pp. 331–332; Rodotà, *Rito greco*, pp. 209–210.

managed to make his text useful to the French cause, by skillfully including a passage on the Orthodox beliefs regarding transubstantiation and the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.⁶² By citing excerpts from Kigalas' confession, translated to French by Galland, Arnauld could now respond to Claude that it was not just the 'Latinized Greeks' who were in agreement with the Catholic Church on the Eucharistic debate, but the official Church of Constantinople in its entirety, despite being in clear disagreement with Rome in other doctrinal matters. The fact that Kigalas' confession was signed by both Parthenios IV and Methodios III provided additional value to Arnauld's arguments, proving that 'this profession of faith represented the faith of two Patriarchs of Constantinople'.⁶³

A couple of years later, on January 20, 1672, Kigalas delivered the second part of his promise. He composed a lengthy and detailed profession of faith, synodically approved and signed by Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysios IV as well as his predecessors Paisios I, Dionysios III and Methodios III, the Patriarch of Alexandria Paisios, and thirty-nine Metropolitans and Archbishops of the Orthodox Church.⁶⁴ According to Antoine Galland, the Synodic act was presented to Nointel by the Metropolitans of Adrianople and Athens, who received the ambassador's promise that he would forward it to the hands of the French king.⁶⁵ The text touched upon several issues contested by the Calvinists, namely those of the Sacraments, the Eucharist, baptism, episcopacy, marriage, the infallibility of the Church, the veneration and adoration of the saints, fasting, and the inclusion of books rejected by the Protestants in the Holy Scripture.

Moreover, along with providing a treatise on doctrinal matters, the Profession of Dionysios also featured elaborate decorations and illuminations, which were even praised by Antoine Galland himself.⁶⁶ Of particular interest is the fact that the opening of the text is marked by a historiated initial 'O', enclosing the scene of the

⁶² BNF, MS Arménien 145, 13r–16v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *Réponse générale*, pp. 200–206.

⁶³ Arnauld and Nicole, *Réponse générale*, p. 201.

⁶⁴ BNF, MS Grec 431. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1669), pp. 623–631.

⁶⁵ Galland, *Journal*, pp. 54–56.

⁶⁶ The scenes represented are the ones of the 'Deesis' and the 'Melismos'. In his journal Antoine Galland provides a detailed description of the painted decorations: 'Elle estoit écrit sur un grand papier de soye collé sur de taffetas orné de peintures et principalement d'une lettre initiale qui représentoit d'un costé St Chrysostôme et St Basile de l'autre, en acte d'adoration envers un petit Jésus couché sur une patène couvert d'un voile à demy corps et un calice avec trois Chérubins qui estoient représentés au dessus. Signée du Patriarche lui même, de trois autres ses prédécesseurs et de celuy d'Alexandrie et d'un grand nombre de Métropolitans et bullée d'un grand sceau d'argent doré ayant d'un costé ces paroles: Διονύσιος ἐλέω Θεοῦ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ Ῥώμης, καὶ οἰκουμενικὸς πατριάρχης avec la date de son élection (qui se fit au mois de novembre 1672) avec deux clefs croisées au dessous d'un costé d'un aigle imperial et une église représentée sur une pierre quarrée: de l'autre costé, on voyoit une Vierge tenant le petit Jésus avec ces mots au dessus MP ΘΥ. Ce bulle pesoit quarante cinq dragmes.' Galland, *Journal*, pp. 54–55. Another description is provided by Galland in BNF, MS Français 6139, fols 6r–8r.

‘Melismos’ (Ο Μελισμός): Christ is depicted as a Sacrificial Lamb laying upon a paten on the altar in front of the Eucharistic Chalice, surrounded by the co-officiating Saints John Chrysostom and Basil.⁶⁷ With the inclusion of this iconographic scene, the profession of Dionysios not only offered a verbal confirmation of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but also provided a symbolic visual representation of the Liturgical Sacrifice of the Eucharist and the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. As Dositheos II of Jerusalem would point out in his own confession, which he composed in the very same year, ‘I am inclined to wonder whether the heretics have not seen the Lord’s body hanging in churches outside the Altar, maybe because the walls of the Altar had collapsed with time, and they have thus jumped to such absurd conclusions. For they did not see Christ on the apse of the Holy Bema portrayed as a baby in the paten, in order to realize that just as the Easterners do not represent a symbol, or grace, or anything else in the paten, but Christ himself, thus they believe that the bread of the Eucharist becomes nothing else, but substantially the body of the Lord itself. Had they done that, they would have uncovered the truth.’⁶⁸

It is worth noting that, while the theme of the ‘Melismos’ is unique among the documents produced for the Jansenists, illustrations of Eucharistic iconography also feature in several of the confessions of the Armenian Church. The most explicit is the illustration accompanying a letter of archbishop David of Ispahan and other notable Armenians to King Louis XIV, dated from December 1, 1671.⁶⁹ Repeating visually the content of the letter, that is the agreement of the Armenian Apostolic Church with the Catholics on the topic of the Eucharist, the miniature offers an allegory of the Holy Liturgy, capturing the specific moment of the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the consecration of bread and wine. The symbolic agreement of the two Churches is conveyed through the presence of the Apostles Peter and Paul, the respective heads of Western and Eastern Christianity, who are flanking the central scene, but also through the Latin-influenced liturgical vestments and tonsured heads of the clergy.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ The word ‘Melismos’, literally ‘dismemberment’, stands for the ritual breaking of the consecrated bread in Holy Communion, during which the priest chants the relevant hymn from the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom: ‘Μελίζεται και διαμερίζεται ὁ Ἄμνος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ μελιζόμενος και μὴ διαιρούμενος, ὁ πάντοτε ἐσθιόμενος και μηδέποτε δαπανώμενος, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μετέχοντας ἀγιάζων.’ For the iconography of the ‘Melismos’ in Orthodox art, see Konstantinidi, *The Melismos*.

⁶⁸ “Ἐπεισι δέ μοι θαυμάζειν, πῶς τὸ δεσποτικόν σῶμα παρά τινι ἐκκλησίᾳ ἴδον κρεμάμενον οἱ αἵρετικοὶ ἔξω τοῦ βήματος, διὰ τὸ ἴσως σεσαθρῶσθαι τοὺς τοίχους τοῦ βήματος ὑπὸ τῆς παλαιότητος, κάκ τούτου συμπεραίνουνσι τὰ ἀσύστατα· τὸν δὲ Χριστὸν οὐκ εἶδον ὑπὸ τὸ ἡμικύκλιον τοῦ ἁγίου βήματος ἱστορούμενον ὡς βρέφος ἔνδον τοῦ δίσκου, ἵνα ἴδωσιν, ὅτι, ὡς ἱστοροῦσιν οἱ ανατολικοὶ ἔνδον τοῦ δίσκου οὐ τύπον, οὐ χάριν, οὐκ ἄλλο τι, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν τὸν Χριστὸν, οὕτω και πιστεύουσι, τὸν ἄρτον τῆς εὐχαριστίας οὐκ ἄλλο τι, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ γίνεσθαι οὐσιωδῶς τὸ σῶμα τοῦ κυρίου και οὕτω συμπαρανοῦσι τὸ ἀληθές’. BNF, MS Grec 424, fol. 92. See also Karmiris, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments*, pp. 730–731.

⁶⁹ BNF, MS Arménien 141. See also Vernay-Nouri, *Livres d’Arménie*, no. 4.

⁷⁰ For the tradition of tonsure in the Armenian Apostolic Church see Meinardus, ‘The Use of the Tonsura’, pp. 365–369.

RECONSTRUCTING NOINTEL'S LEVANTINE NETWORK

In the above pages it has been shown how the contribution of a single agent, Hilarion Kigalas, was instrumental in Nointel's expedition, by securing a significant number of attestations of faith and enlisting the heads of the Orthodox Church to the cause. During the three years of their tenure Nointel and Galland would construct a much larger network of agents, exploiting the trade infrastructure⁷¹ and employing the connections of French consuls or missionaries posted in Istanbul and throughout the Levant, tasked with procuring attestations of faith from a wide array of people, Orthodox and Catholics, clerics, and laics. As we learn from Nointel's correspondence,⁷² but also from Galland's journal, certain attestations were sent to the ambassador via his envoys, while others were directly collected by him during his travels through the Eastern Mediterranean.

As expected, the main goal of Nointel was to retrieve attestations from the Orthodox Patriarchates, since they would provide an official bearing to the Jansenist cause. Apart from the Synodic act procured by Kigalas, in July 1671 Nointel received a fourteen-point profession of faith by Ecumenical Patriarch Methodios III,⁷³ and in the same month another attestation signed by seven archbishops of the Orthodox Church.⁷⁴ The ambassador also collected anti-Calvinistic professions by the Patriarchs of Antioch Makarios and Neophytos, procured by the Jesuit theologian Michel,⁷⁵ and a letter discussing transubstantiation sent by the anti-Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Nektarios⁷⁶ to the pro-Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria, Paisios. Finally, on April 25, 1673 Nointel would receive the tome *Shield of Orthodoxy*, containing Dositheos' confession of faith, and the Acts of the Synod of Jerusalem (1672),⁷⁷ which was apparently held at the ambassadors' request and advice,⁷⁸ possibly through the mediation of the Great Dragoman, Panagiotes Nikousios.⁷⁹ Apart from the Greek Patriarchates, Nointel also collected attestations from prelates of the other Eastern Churches, such as the Armenian Patriarchate, the Syriac Church, the Maronites, the Copts and the Nestorians through the assistance of the French consuls

⁷¹ Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, p. 126.

⁷² See for example: BNF, MS Français 6139; BNF, MS NAF 7460.

⁷³ BNF, MS Arménien 145, 20r; Arnould and Nicole, *Réponse générale*, pp. 150–155.

⁷⁴ The Profession was dated July 18, 1671, and was signed by metropolitans Vartholomaïos of Heraklia, Hieremias of Chalkedon, Methodios of Pissidia, Metrophanes of Lysium, Antonios of Athens, Ioakeim of Rhodes and Neophytos of Nikomedia. BNF, MS Grec 431; Arnould and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1669), pp. 569–571.

⁷⁵ Arnould and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), p. 743.

⁷⁶ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 67r–67v.

⁷⁷ BNF, MS Grec 424; Karmiris, 'The Confession', pp. 99–119, 245–279, 457–494, 657–703; Karmiris, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments*, pp. 734–773; Galland, *Journal*, pp. 64–66; Kontouma and Garnier, 'Concilium Hierosolymitanum', pp. 267–327.

⁷⁸ BNF, MS Grec 424, fol. 103; Karmiris, *The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments*, pp. 734–736; Covell, *Some account*, pp. xx, xxi.

⁷⁹ Olar, 'Un temps', p. 233; Kontouma and Garnier, 'Concilium Hierosolymitanum', p. 270.

Ambroise de Tiger in Egypt, François Picquet and François Baron in Aleppo, and Bonnetcorée in Sidon, as well as missionaries, such as the Capuchin monk Justinian.⁸⁰

Another important hub of the ambassador's confession-collecting network included the Greek islands of the Aegean and Ionian Seas. Especially the islands of the Greek Archipelago received increased attention during the reign of Louis XIV, being part of the so-called *Échelles du Levant*, a chain of port-cities in the Eastern Mediterranean, where the French were authorized to trade and maintain consulates.⁸¹ In a letter from July 1670 recommending the newly appointed ambassador to the Ottoman sultan, Louis XIV underlined the importance of protecting the *Échelles* through the renewal of the capitulations;⁸² in the same month a trading company under the name *La Compagnie du Levant* was established at the initiative of Minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, intended to regulate the transit of raw materials and manufactured products between France and the *Échelles*.⁸³ In the Greek-speaking world the *Échelles* comprised of Smyrna and the islands of Cyprus, Chios, Tinos, Paros and Naxos. These trading centers were all provided with French consulates, tasked with the protection of the local French communities of merchants and missionaries.⁸⁴ The French consuls were usually selected among the most prominent Greek or Catholic families of the islands, and were often responsible for maintaining the peace between the Orthodox and Catholic communities of the islands, as noted by Chevalier d'Arvieux.⁸⁵

By employing the help of the French diplomatic network in the islands, between July and October 1671 Nointel collected a large number of attestations of faith from

⁸⁰ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 3r–11r, 26r–27r, 30r, 60r–62r, 71r–76r, 90r–92r, 95v–96r; BNF, MS Arménien 141; BNF, MS Arabe, 225–226. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), p. 737. See also Goyau, *François Picquet*, pp. 21–26; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, p. 126; Sakano, 'Port-Royalists', p. 128.

⁸¹ Masson, *Histoire du commerce français*, pp. 425–444; Farganel, 'Les échelles,' pp. 62–83; Fontenay, 'Le Commerce des Occidentaux', pp. 337–370.

⁸² Saint-Priest, *Mémoires*, p. 445.

⁸³ Masson, *Histoire du commerce français*, pp. 178–200.

⁸⁴ Faivre d'Arcier, *Les oubliés de la liberté*, pp. 15–30.

⁸⁵ Arvieux, *Mémoires*, p. 324.

the clergy of Naxos,⁸⁶ Sifnos,⁸⁷ Andros,⁸⁸ Mykonos,⁸⁹ Melos,⁹⁰ and Chios,⁹¹ while in August 1672 he was provided with a confession of the church of Cephalonia, Zakynthos and Ithaca,⁹² as well as an attestation of faith of the community of Smyrna, a port which was also part of the French *Échelles*.⁹³ These attestations were procured by French consuls and other officials and were signed by higher prelates of the Orthodox Church, but also from numerous members of the lower clergy. In the case of Smyrna, the confession of faith was not only countersigned by the French consul there, Antoine Fouquier, but also by a long list of French clerics and merchants residing in the city. It should also be mentioned that Hilarion Kigalas also had connections throughout the islands, for instance with the Cretan scholar Parthenios Chairetes and the prior of the monastery of Vrysi, Nektarios, whom he later ordained bishop of Paphos.

⁸⁶ The attestation was signed by members of the lower clergy of Naxos, but not by the metropolitan Theophanes Maurokordatos. The reason behind this absence might be traced in the latter's attempts to seize the Patriarchal throne during the same years, and his eventual exile in Italy. Maurokordatos' successor, Meletios Pagkalos, was ordained in his office in 1673. BNF, MS Arménien 145, fol. 38r–38v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 574–578.

⁸⁷ The attestation was signed by Archbishop Athanasios and members of the local clergy, among which Parthenios Chairetes, a Cretan scholar associated with Hilarion Kigalas. BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 45r–46r. Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 572–574. Furthermore, the clergy of Sifnos was asked to confirm the existence of the monk Agapios Landos, which was contested by Jean Claude. Landos had written a treatise titled *Salvation of the Sinners*, condemning Luther-Calvinism especially on the matter of the transubstantiation. See Claude, *Réponse au livre de M. Arnauld*, vol. 4, c. 3; Simon, *Gabrielis Métropolitae Philadelphiensis opuscula*, pp. 131–132; Covel, *Some Account*, p. 126; Petit, 'Le moine Agapios Landos', pp. 278–285; Tselikas, 'Parthenios Chairetes', pp. 21–48.

⁸⁸ The attestation was signed by Iakovos, archbishop of Andros, and Dionysios, former archbishop of Melos. BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 34r–34v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), p. 574. Archbishop Iakovos is mentioned in Mystakidis, 'Episcopal lists', p. 160.

⁸⁹ BNF, MS Arménien 145, 82r–82v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 419–420.

⁹⁰ The attestation was signed by Archbishop Gerasimos and the clergy of Melos. BNF, MS Arménien 145, 55r. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 583–584.

⁹¹ The attestation was signed by Archbishop Ignatios and members of the local clergy. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 584–585. The Archbishop Ignatios is registered in Mystakidis, 'Episcopal lists', p. 233.

⁹² The attestation of the Ionian Islands was signed by Archbishop Paisios, as well as a multitude of priests and monks, among which the painter Gerasimos Kouloumbes. BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 78r–79r. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), vol. 3, book 8, pp. 578–580. For Archbishop Paisios see Razis, *Paisios Choidas*; Kriaras, 'Unpublished List of Prelates', p. 15.

⁹³ The attestation was signed by the metropolitan of Smyrna, Makarios, as well as numerous monks and priests. BNF, MS Grec 431, fols 2r–4r.

As one would expect, several of the individuals involved in this process were either Catholics or expressed pro-Latin sympathies and were siding with the French in return for personal profits. In Melos, for example, Nointel was assisted by the consul Nicolo Zucco, a man of Italian origin and Catholic faith,⁹⁴ while in Naxos he employed the help of the vice-consul Germano Coronello, also a Catholic,⁹⁵ who was connected with the Jesuit order of the island.⁹⁶ Moreover, in Sifnos, where the French also had a vice-consulate,⁹⁷ Nointel recruited the consul Philippos Grammatica, hailing from an Andriote family that was traditionally closely related to the French, and had even erected a church to honor King Louis XIV.⁹⁸ In Andros the ambassador was assisted by Gasparo Contostaulos, an international merchant acting as the principal intermediary of the Propaganda Fide in the Aegean, and closely associated with the Latin Church and missionary circles of Santorini and Kea.⁹⁹ Lastly, the Heptanesian confessions were procured by the French consul, Jean Taulignan.¹⁰⁰ According to Albert Vandal, the populations of the islands, being ‘of Italian origin, language and customs, had become French or considered themselves French in heart, since they saw in the King the only protector of the Christians, given our position in the Levant’.¹⁰¹

But while the favorable attitude of the French consuls and the Catholic populations of the islands towards Nointel was self-evident, the intentions of the local Orthodox Churches were less clear. After the end of the Cretan War and the restoration of Ottoman power in the region, the position of the Greek Church improved considerably compared to the previous period of Venetian rule. The islands did not have much to expect from the Catholic Church, and abandoned the more pronounced pro-Catholic tendencies of earlier years for a more moderate diplomacy.¹⁰² Adopting the official strategy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Churches of the islands maintained a vaguely Catholic-friendly policy, in order to ensure the good will of the foreign powers, and mainly their protection against Christian pirates.¹⁰³ Especially in

⁹⁴ Arvieux, *Mémoires*, pp. 321–325. For the Zucco family see also Lambrinos, ‘Tra Creta e Costantinopoli’, pp. 261–272.

⁹⁵ Zerlenti, *Historical Notes*, pp. 9–10, 144–145n46; Slot, *Archipelagus turbatus*, p. 258.

⁹⁶ Germano’s son, Crusino Coronello, was a student at the Jesuit school of Naxos, and in 1723 he took part in a theatric play, titled *The Tragedy of Saint Demetrios*. See Panagiotakis and Puchner, *The Tragedy*, pp. 91–105.

⁹⁷ Mézin, *Les consuls de France*, p. 10.

⁹⁸ In 1700 the apostolic visitor Antonio Giustiniani mentions that the Della Grammatica family had erected a church dedicated to Saints Nicholas and Louis, to honor the French king Louis XIV. According to the French traveler Tournefort, the church of the Della Grammatica was regularly frequented by French consuls.

⁹⁹ The Propaganda took advantage of the commercial network of Condostaulos extending from the Aegean islands to Crete and Venice, to dispatch correspondence and make payments throughout the Aegean. Slot, *Archipelagus turbatus*, pp. 188, 211, 215, 218.

¹⁰⁰ Arvieux, *Mémoires*, p. 377.

¹⁰¹ Vandal, *L’Odyssée*, p. 118.

¹⁰² Slot, *Archipelagus turbatus*, p. 219.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 218.

less wealthy islands, where piracy was rampant, the Orthodox communities were eager to profess their fealty to the pope, and follow a sympathetic approach towards the local Catholic institutions, hoping that the Latin priests would intervene in favor of the Greek people.¹⁰⁴ In 1650, for instance, Archbishop Athanasios,¹⁰⁵ who would later sign the profession of faith of the Church of Sifnos, issued a decree allowing the Jesuits of Santorini to confess Orthodox Christians and teach in Greek churches throughout the Cyclades.¹⁰⁶ Latin tendencies were also expressed by the metropolitan of Paronaxia, Theophanes Maurokordatos, who submitted a profession of faith to the pope during his exile in Italy, as well as by his successor, Meletios Pagkalos, who attempted to employ Nointel's assistance in order to rise to the Patriarchal throne.¹⁰⁷ A similar picture can be drawn in the case of Smyrna, with Archbishop Makarios being described as 'a true Catholic'.¹⁰⁸

Within this political and confessional context, it is possible to interpret the agreement of the Churches of the Greek Islands to provide attestations of faith to Marquis de Nointel, aiming for the French protection and support. Indeed, after the successful renewal of the capitulations in 1673 Louis XIV delivered his promise; on the one hand, he addressed letters to the Catholic clergy of the islands, charging them with the protection of the local populations against piracy, while on the other, he officially forbade the activity of Catholic pirates in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the same year, Nointel set off on a journey to the Échelles du Levant to personally enforce the newly signed capitulations,¹⁰⁹ and then in 1676 he revisited the islands, at which time he seized the opportunity to rekindle his relations with his diplomatic network and collect additional confessions of faith.¹¹⁰

Apart from representatives of the Greek Church Nointel also demanded declarations from foreign officials who were familiar with the Orthodox Church, such as diplomats of European countries, Catholic clerics, and even foreign merchants. Among the people recruited by Nointel were: Francis Casimir de Wysocki, resident

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 219.

¹⁰⁵ Established under Patriarch Parthenios in 1646, the Archbishopric included the islands of Sifnos, Amorgos, Folegandros, Astypalaia, Seriphos, Mykonos, Anafi, Ios, Sikinos, and Iraklitsa. Zerlenti, *Historical Notes*, pp. 324–325; Mystakidis, 'Episcopal Lists', p. 216.

¹⁰⁶ Richard, *Relation*, pp. 59–60; Zerlenti, *Historical Notes*, pp. 325.

¹⁰⁷ Tomadakis, 'The archbishop of Sevasteia', pp. 9–10; Slot, *Archipelagus turbatus*, p. 219; Baán, *Theofánisz Mavrogárdosz*.

¹⁰⁸ Tillyridis, 'An Unpublished Text', p. 177; Tsirpanlis, 'Forms of Communication', p. 144.

¹⁰⁹ In his journey Nointel was accompanied by Cornelio Magni and Antoine de Barres, both of whom wrote their impressions of the voyage in the form of memoirs. Galland only included some events from the first weeks of the trip, while the rest of the events we learn from the correspondence of Nointel with Louis XIV as well as with Marquis de Pomponne. For Nointel's visit in the Cyclades see Barres, *L'estat*, pp. 135–157; Magni, *Quanto di più curioso*; Omont, 'Relation', pp. 32–33; Vanderpool, 'Nointel in Naxos', pp. 257–259; Vandal, *L'Odyssée*, pp. 113–130.

¹¹⁰ During his second journey through the Cyclades Nointel received an additional attestation of faith from the clergy of Melos. BNF, MS Grec 432, fols 5r–6v.

of Poland at the Ottoman Porte;¹¹¹ Sinibaldo Fieschi, resident of the Republic of Genoa;¹¹² the Venetian Cristoforo Tarsia on behalf of his son Leonardo Tarsia, dragoman of the Republic of Venice;¹¹³ Giacomo Quirino, bailo of the Republic of Venice in Constantinople;¹¹⁴ Marino Bernardo di Caboga and Giorgio Bucchia, ambassadors of the Republic of Ragusa¹¹⁵ and Andrea Ridolfi, conventual bishop of Calamine, suffraganeous and patriarchal vicar in Constantinople.¹¹⁶ A collective attestation of the Greek faith was also provided by the Catholic community of Pera.¹¹⁷ Although all the above-mentioned agents were of Catholic faith, in the journals of Antoine Galland and the correspondence of Nointel we learn that the ambassador had also asked for the opinion of Protestants, from German and English diplomats¹¹⁸ to random people, such as a German Calvinist merchant named Pestalozzi, who assured him that the Greeks truly believed in transubstantiation and that minister Claude should not doubt their faith.¹¹⁹

In a letter to King Louis XIV, Nointel reveals the reasons why the attestations he collected from these foreign agents were valid and valuable.¹²⁰ By recruiting these

¹¹¹ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 24r–24v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 640–641.

¹¹² BNF, MS Arménien 145, fol. 43r. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 642–643.

¹¹³ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 52r–52v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 649–650.

¹¹⁴ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 57v–58v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 641–642.

¹¹⁵ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fol. 47r. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 644–645.

¹¹⁶ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fol. 41r. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 638–639. See also Belin, *Histoire de la Latinité*, pp. 352, 354.

¹¹⁷ BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols. 50r–50v. Published in Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 645–647.

¹¹⁸ Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 647–648.

¹¹⁹ Galland, *Journal*, pp. 34, 44.

¹²⁰ ‘Thus, as the dispute revolves around a fact, and as it is customary to clear up these kinds of disputes with information provided by witnesses that are all the more credible, and that their integrity and quality elevates them substantially and puts them above all suspicion, I thought that the depositions of the representatives that are here or at the Porte deserve to be entirely believed. You will see what the *Internuncio* of Poland has to say. The Resident of Genoa of the house of Fieschi is the second witness. He is considerable himself and from his birth, as his family counts several Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops. The ambassadors of Ragusa, a Republic dependent on his Highness, could alone cut off all difficulties thanks to their important commerce in this empire. You will read with pleasure the manner in which they speak, while waiting for me to send you a certificate of the new ambassador of Venice, as the previous one passed away before being able to provide me with one. ... There is also the Latin Patriarchal Vicar, named Ridolfi, who has been there for a few years. He is an enlightened man, who has thoroughly studied the Orthodox doctrines in order to write against them, and who has clearly

foreign officials Nointel wished to provide supplementary support to the Jansenist cause, demonstrating that their arguments are not only based on the views of the Orthodox people themselves, but also on the opinions of external sources, whose credibility draws on their social status, their reputation, and their lengthy engagement with Greek populations in the Ottoman lands. In several cases the credibility of the testimonies was based on personal experience, as in the case of the Venetian Cristoforo Tarsia, who gave an attestation on behalf of his son Leonardo, victim of the plague while at the service of Chancellor Giovanni Battista Ballarino in Edirne. While it does not follow the pattern of the other foreign attestations, Cristoforo's account carries considerable weight on the issue of agreement between Greeks and Latins, specifically on the matter of the Extreme Unction—the administration of the Holy Sacrament to the sick. According to Tarsia, his dying son Leonardo was confessed by a Greek priest, who also gave him the last rites, while after his death he was buried in the Orthodox church of Saint Demetrios in Edirne.

The collection of this group of confessions of faith by the ambassador can be better understood within the broader political and religious context of that time and the diplomatic relations of France with the other European powers. As mentioned above, a crucial part of Nointel's negotiations with the Porte concerned the institution of a French protectorate over the Christians of the Ottoman Empire, including the Latin community of Constantinople, the so-called *Magnifica Comunita* of Pera. The community, initially a colony of Genoese and Venetian settlers, was in constant decline after the Fall of Constantinople; however, it still retained a degree of political and financial autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.¹²¹ During the course of the sixteenth century the Magnifica Comunita was under the protection and patronage of the Republic of Venice; however, in 1608 an imperial firman placed the community and its churches under the protection of France, with the Perots now recognizing the French ambassador at the Sublime Porte as their *protecteur generale*.¹²² The French protectorate over the churches of Pera was reconfirmed with the 1673–capitulations, and by the early eighteenth century the community had become a French parish under the authority of the French ambassador.

In this regard, the dependency of the Perots on the French explains their favorable position towards Nointel's cause. Likewise, the attestation of the Patriarchal vicar, Andrea Ridolfi,¹²³ can be read within the context of improving the relations of France with the bishop, who strongly opposed French authority,¹²⁴ and was the cause

declared what he knows regarding the points that I gave him. I have attached to all this evidence an attestation of nineteen witnesses who are subjects of the great Lord. They are descendants of old families, named the Perots, residing mainly in Galata and Pera. Their ancestors obtained a particular capitulation from the Sultan who captured Constantinople.' Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 647–648.

¹²¹ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 72–73; Rothman, 'Interpreting Dragomans', pp. 776–779.

¹²² Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, pp. 145–146; Eldem, 'The French Nation', p. 133; Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 80–81.

¹²³ For the bishop see: Belin, *Histoire de la Latinité*, pp. 352, 354.

¹²⁴ Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, p. 101.

of constant conflicts within the Latin community of Constantinople.¹²⁵ In the same vein, we can interpret the recruitment of the Genoese resident, Sinibaldo Fieschi. The relations of France and Genoa were tense during the previous years. Thanks to the support of the grand vizier and the Great Dragoman Panagiotes Nikousios, who was married to a Genoese,¹²⁶ ambassador Giovan Agostino Durazzo¹²⁷ managed to reinstate Genoa's trading rights in the Levant, strongly contesting French monopoly.¹²⁸ However, after the appointment of Sinibaldo Fieschi as first resident of Genoa at the Porte, the balance once again shifted. Amidst numerous scandals and accusations concerning the distribution of counterfeit coins in the Ottoman markets,¹²⁹ Sinibaldo Fieschi solicited the support of Nointel, and adopted a more positive attitude towards France, eventually leading to Genoa losing their trading privileges and Sinibaldo leaving the Ottoman capital to spend the rest of his days in the court of Louis XIV.¹³⁰

From the above it becomes obvious that a large number of the confessions collected by Nointel were by agents who were dependent on the French support or were expecting favors in return. It is no coincidence that people belonging to the traditional enemies of the French were less cooperative, such as the Austrian diplomatic representative,¹³¹ or the English chaplain John Covel, who refused to provide an attestation. The hidden agenda of Nointel's network was already noticed by Jean Aymon, who discredited such witnesses, calling them 'nobodies,' 'cheats,' 'shameless liars,' and 'impostors,' and claiming that they were promoting the objectives of foreign Princes or Ambassadors, 'corrupted by these powers and devoted to their service'.¹³²

THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF NOINTEL'S ATTESTATIONS OF FAITH

Among the numerous confessions of faith that are included in the volumes of the *Perpétuité de la Foy*, the ones collected during the three-year long expedition of Marquis de Nointel seem to form a coherent group, as they follow a more or less similar format. In fact, the same pattern was also followed by the attestations of other churches that were gathered by Nointel, as was for example that of the Armenian Patriarch of Sis in Cilicia.¹³³ In most cases, the attestations begin with a preface where the confessants complain about the Calvinist slanders against the Orthodox Church, followed by the main body of the attestation which provides their views on specific

¹²⁵ Galland, *Journal*, pp. 52–53, 65–66, 136, 145, 173.

¹²⁶ Panagiotes Nikousios' first wife belonged to the Calvocoressi family of Chios. Koutzakiotis and Sariyannis, 'Panagiotes Nikousios', p. 422.

¹²⁷ For the Durazzo family and the Genoese ambassador see: Puncuh, 'L'archivio dei Durazzo', pp. 9–22.

¹²⁸ Casoni, *Annali*, pp. 105–120; Pàstine, 'Genova e l'Impero Ottomano', pp. 47–53.

¹²⁹ Pàstine, 'Genova e l'Impero Ottomano', pp. 33–34, 85, 91–97, 102–106.

¹³⁰ Gelder and de Moor, *Eastward Bound*, p. 99n51.

¹³¹ Galland, *Journal*, p. 2.

¹³² Aymon, *Monuments authentiques*, pp. 499, 516.

¹³³ Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 770–774.

articles contested by the Protestants, divided into the following categories: The Eucharist (The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Transubstantiation, the Eucharist being a true sacrifice for the living and the dead, the body of Christ consumed in the Eucharist, the adoration of the Bread); fasting (The Church can order fasts and define which food categories are to be prohibited); veneration (the veneration of the Virgin and the Saints, the veneration of holy relics, the veneration of images); the Church (the hierarchy of bishops, the necessity of episcopacy, the visibility and infallibility of the Church); the Sacraments (number of Sacraments, Baptism and the Chrism); prayers; monasticism; the sermons for the dead; the inclusion of seven apocryphal books in the Scripture.

All of the above-listed points discuss doctrinal matters and religious practices of the Eastern Churches that were challenged by the Protestants, and were also contested in the Calvinist Confession accredited to Kyrillos Loukaris.¹³⁴ As a result, some of these articles were extensively addressed by seventeenth-century Orthodox synods, treatises and confessions, such as those by Peter Mohila¹³⁵ or Dositheos II of Jerusalem (1672).¹³⁶ Several of these articles were already dealt with at the Synod of Nicosia, yet by the time Nointel took up office they were better specified and carefully drawn up into what seems to have been a questionnaire that was provided to the recruited agents. When discussing the case of Andrea Ridolfi, Nointel implied the preexistence of a questionnaire, noting that the bishop had ‘declared what he knows regarding the points that I gave him’,¹³⁷ while a list of questions had also been given to the Moldavian Spătarul by Marquis de Pomponne.¹³⁸ This becomes even clearer in the *Condemnations of the Calvinists* composed by the patriarchs of Antioch Makarios and Neophytos, which followed a question and answer format, addressing thirteen and twenty points, respectively.¹³⁹ In fact Neophytos explicitly mentions in his preface that his testimony ‘is a short explanation on the questions that were provided to us’.

Interestingly, the use of questionnaires in obtaining confessional statements was not exclusive to the Catholic Church; in fact, it was extensively known in Byzantine literature, and was later adopted by the Protestants.¹⁴⁰ What is more striking is that seventeenth-century Catholic and Protestant questionnaires followed more or less

¹³⁴ Chapters 15–17, Questions 3–4, Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeeds and Confessions*, pp. 551–558.

¹³⁵ Points 99–119. Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeeds and Confessions*, pp. 561–612.

¹³⁶ Decrees 15–17, Questions 3–4. Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeeds and Confessions*, pp. 615–635.

¹³⁷ Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 647–648.

¹³⁸ ‘He [Spătarul] studied hard the questions that lay between our religion and the Greek, and also between the Lutherans and the Calvinists.’ Mathis, *Le solitaire*, pp. 150–151, letter 45; Sakano, ‘Port-Royalists’, pp. 128 n31.

¹³⁹ The refutation of Makarios was written in Arabic in 1671. See BNF, MS Arabe 224. Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 723–757.

¹⁴⁰ For the history of the literary genre of questions and answers see: Volgers and Zamagni, *Erotapokriseis*.

the same pattern, and addressed the very same points.¹⁴¹ Almost a century before Nointel, Cardinal Charles de Guise de Lorraine (1524–1574) addressed a twelve-point questionnaire to the Cretan Zacharias Skordylis Marafaras (1562–1572), priest of the Greek community of Venice, querying him on the subject of transubstantiation, but also on other topics such as the veneration of images.¹⁴² In addition, in the Zentralbibliothek of Zürich there is a letter of the Reformed Swiss theologian, Johann Caspar Schweizer (1619–1688), addressed to the Greek archbishop of Leukas, Nathanael, who was at that time residing in the city in search of financial aid. The letter, composed by Schweizer in Greek, contains a questionnaire addressed to the Greek bishop regarding seven points, five of which touch on the same topics as Nointel's confessions and especially on the subject of transubstantiation.¹⁴³ Likewise, in a series of letters dating from 1635 the English theologian Ephraim Pagitt sent out similar questionnaires to the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Moscow, requesting their opinion on several contested topics.¹⁴⁴ But even Jean Claude himself decided to respond to the Jansenists by drafting his own fifteen-point questionnaire in 1674, and distributing it among the Protestant chaplains of the Ottoman Empire to determine the views of the Eastern Christians on the Eucharist.¹⁴⁵

Despite some minor variations that can be explained by the different languages in which the professions are written (Greek, Latin, Italian, Arabic), and the personal approach of the witnesses, all professions of faith gathered by Nointel seem to

¹⁴¹ According to Cornel Zwierlein the use of these questionnaires emerged out of the ignorance of the Westerners regarding the beliefs of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, pp. 117–142; Zwierlein, *The Dark Side*, pp. 225–265; Zwierlein, 'Konfessionalisierung', pp. 21–34.

¹⁴² The cardinal's name is erroneously registered in the document as Claude instead of Charles. The Greek version of the text has survived in several manuscripts, among which in BNF, MS Grec 949, fols 118v–126v; ÖNB, MS Theol. gr. 331. The questions and answers were translated to Latin by the German Orientalist Johannes Leunclavius, and were published in Herberstein, *Claudii Cardinalis Guisani*, pp. 195–204 and Lamius, *Deliciae eruditorum*, pp. 72–109. Cited in: Petit, *Documents*, pp. 15–16; Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, p. 393; Tsakiris, *Die gedruckten griechischen Beichtbücher*, p. 128n20; Kontouma and Garnier, *La communauté grecque*.

¹⁴³ The relevant questions are as follows: 'Which books of the Holy Scripture are considered apocryphal for you', 'What is the duration of fasting and which foods are you supposed to abstain from?', 'How are infants baptized? Do they only receive water or something else too?', 'What are the names of the Church officials and which are the orders they receive?', and finally 'How do you interpret the words included in the Sunday supper, "Is this my body"? Do you believe that the bread is transformed into our Lord's body, and the chalice in our Lord's blood? Or that through spiritual faith these symbols are received as seals of God's grace bestowed upon us through Christ?' The information was kindly provided by Sundar Henny. See Henny, 'Nathanael of Leukas'.

¹⁴⁴ BL, MS Harley 825; Hackel, 'Not Damned Hereticks', pp. 337–346.

¹⁴⁵ The questionnaire was subsequently sent to John Covel and is included in the latter's preface for his 1722-treatise. BL, MS Add. 22910; Covel, *Some account*, pp. v–vi; Hamilton, 'From East to West', p. 94; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, pp. 127–128.

address the above-mentioned fixed points. What is more, in several cases the attestations not only follow a similar format but are almost identical in matters of content and even articulation. This is particularly evident in the case of the attestations of non-Orthodox agents, raising the question of whether the texts were drafted by some third party and then submitted to different agents to sign. Masanori Sakano argues that another Jansenist agent, the French consul in Aleppo, François Baron, also used pre-existing templates while collecting confessions of faith. Incited by his predecessor, François Piquet, and with the assistance of the Capuchin missionaries of Aleppo, Baron composed a theological report on transubstantiation, which was to be signed by the prelates of the Syriac, Armenian and Melchite churches.¹⁴⁶ But even Dositheos II had declared to Nointel after handing him his book that he had ‘fully satisfied what the ambassador desired from him, following the advice that he had received in his letters’, a statement that is open to interpretation.¹⁴⁷

CONCLUSION AND AFTERMATH OF NOINTEL’S EXPEDITION

The homogeneity of the confessions collected by Nointel, as well as the suspicion of pre-existing instructions to their authors was one of the main reproaches against the ambassador and was already criticized by his contemporaries John Covel and Jean Aymon. In 1708 Aymon rejected the attestations published in the *Perpétuité* as ‘nulles’, by claiming that they all responded to the same questions and were based on specific instructions given to the witnesses.¹⁴⁸ As for the latter, Aymon had already discredited their depositions by rebuking their political agenda. The same critique was voiced by the English chaplain, John Covel, who wrote in 1722: ‘let us consider whether these Articles were not first drawn up by the Latins themselves before they were offer’d to the Subscribers ... It is manifest in all the Subscriptions which I have yet seen, that the Articles were first Modell’d and set down or contrived by the Latins themselves, and then offer’d and urg’d upon the Subscribers’.¹⁴⁹ Covel also noticed the strong similarities between the attestations, and even went so far as to suggest that ‘the articles were all ready drawn and stated by your Emissaries’ and given to the agents, who signed them driven by ‘that potent idol Interest’.¹⁵⁰ To support his polemic, Covel also argued that most of the Orthodox prelates that were interrogated had a very limited education and would never have been able to know about the

¹⁴⁶ Gabriel, ‘Les témoins’, p. 378; Sakano, ‘Port-Royalists’, pp. 128.

¹⁴⁷ BNF, MS Grec 424, fol. 103. Cited in Fouqué, *Synodus Jerosolymitana*, pp. 360–361; Aymon, *Monumens authentiques*, p. 368; Covel, *Some Account*, p. 146.

¹⁴⁸ Aymon, *Monumens authentiques*, p. 516.

¹⁴⁹ Covel, *Some Account*, pp. xv–xvi.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Reverence and Fear; private Interest; compliance and easiness of Tempers; plain Ignorance of the whole matter, Stupidity, or Inadvertency, or want of Judgment; strong and earnest Importunity pressing upon all these Advantages; I say, where all these “Motives”’. Covel, *Some Account*, pp. xvi, xix–xxi.

articles they were confessing without the assistance of Catholic theologians and agents.¹⁵¹

John Covel had confessed his concerns about the credibility of the attestations to Nointel, however, the ambassador did not seem willing to address the matter, so long as his goal was achieved. Indeed, by 1673 the French embassy had fulfilled its manifold purpose, having successfully provided ammunition to the Jansenists against the Calvinist propaganda, while at the same time securing the renewal of the capitulations, reviving French commerce in the Levant, and enforcing the French ecclesiastical protectorate in the Ottoman lands. According to chevalier d'Arvieux, when news of Nointel's success reached Paris, town criers were shouting the 'renewal of the new alliance of the Grand Seigneur with the King, and the re-establishment of the Catholic faith in the Ottoman Empire by Marquis de Nointel'.¹⁵²

But what about the Greek Church? While Aymon and Covel were right to spot the opportunistic motives behind these attestations, still it would be excessive to refute them in their entirety as tokens of fealty to the French. Likewise, these professions should not be seen as a step towards a union of the Greek and Latin Churches,¹⁵³ since several of them clearly take their distance from Catholicism.¹⁵⁴ What we can conclude is that for the Greeks Nointel's project created a rare triple opportunity: to refute any association with the Protestants (especially Calvinists), to better define and solidify the doctrines of the Orthodox faith, and to secure the good graces of France and the Catholic Church at a minimal cost. Due to the absence of a top-down confessionalization program and given the chaotic state of the Ecumenical Patriarchate during the constant succession wars, the incitement of foreign powers acted as a catalyst for the Churches of the East to crystallize and articulate their confessional identities. This was already pointed out as early as 1713 by Eusèbe Renaudot, who commented that before Nointel's time the Greek Church never had the opportunity to issue new declarations of its faith regarding points of controversy between

¹⁵¹ Covel, *Some Account*, pp. xiii–xxii. It is interesting to note that similar accusations were made by Catholics against Oriental attestations of faith collected by Protestant theologians. Regarding the Lutheran Hiob Ludolf's interviews of Levantine Christians, for example, Cornel Zwielerlein mentions how the Catholic Louis Pique noticed that 'some specific Latin words were highly unlikely to have been said spontaneously by those interrogated' and argued that such 'ignorant' witnesses could have hardly used such 'sophisticated language'. Zwielerlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, pp. 138–140.

¹⁵² Arvieux, *Mémoires*, p. 54; Saint-Priest, *Mémoires*, pp. 230, 301.

¹⁵³ Frédéric Gabriel argues the presence of unionist expectations in the confessions gathered by Nointel. Gabriel, 'Les témoins', pp. 373–389.

¹⁵⁴ Alastair Hamilton mentions that in his confession Parthenios IV accepted transubstantiation, while clearly distancing himself from the Catholic Church. While Hamilton is right in his observation, he confuses Parthenios IV with Hilarion Kigalas, obviously reproducing an error made by Henri Omont in his catalogue entry for the manuscript. Hamilton, 'From East to West', p. 99.

Catholics and Protestants.¹⁵⁵ In Cornel Zwierlein's terms, with Nointel the Greek Church had to 'answer the questions that no one ever posed to them before'.¹⁵⁶

Still, the question remains of whether these confessions could be interpreted within the context of an Orthodox confessionalization process. The concise format of the attestations and their limited focus on transubstantiation, a subject mainly problematic for the Westerners, but also the increased intervention of the French in their preparation cannot allow us to consider them as documents of decisive theological importance in the process of Orthodox confession-building. Still, while most of these attestations were brief testimonies directed to an external audience, they managed to trigger larger confessional debates and set off profound theological fermentations, leading to synodically accepted doctrinal definitions of the Orthodox faith that would form the fundamentals of future Orthodox theology. It is illustrative that when the non-juror Anglican bishops sought to approach the Eastern Patriarchates in 1716, the latter were better prepared and replied by citing verbatim passages from Dionysios' IV confession for Nointel, a document which had already been sent to John Covel in 1672, addressed 'to the lovers of the Greek Church in Britain'.¹⁵⁷ A few years later, in 1723, during the second round of their discussions with the Anglicans, the Orthodox attached to their reply another document that was composed at the French ambassador's request, Dositheos II's 1672–confession, which for them epitomized 'the pious and Orthodox faith of the Eastern Church'.¹⁵⁸

Through the personality of Dositheos II the confession-building process of the Greek Church entered its period of maturity and got eventually detached from external influences. In the decades that followed the council of Jerusalem in 1672, Dositheos II turned his back on his Western interlocutors and adopted a fervent anti-Latin policy, now supporting the stability of the Ottoman Empire that was threatened by the European powers.¹⁵⁹ It is no coincidence that in 1695 the Porte finally issued an edict prohibiting all Catholic missions, and obliging their 'Rayas who have abandon'd their Religion and their antient Rites ... and do follow those of the Roman Pope, to re-assume their antient Professions'.¹⁶⁰ In this context, and through the exploitation of quintessential confessional tools, Dositheos opened up a printing house in Moldavia to promote his program to 'Orthodoxize' the Greek Church,¹⁶¹ and in 1690 he published a revised version of his 1672–confession of faith, devoid of earlier

¹⁵⁵ Renaudot, *La perpétuité* (1713), p. 47. See also Gabriel, 'Les témoins', pp. 379–380.

¹⁵⁶ Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*; Zwierlein, *The Dark Side*, pp. 1–47, 225–265; Zwierlein, 'Konfessionalisierung', p. 9.

¹⁵⁷ Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, pp. 453–463; Runciman, *The Great Church*, pp. 310–319; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, p. 142n84.

¹⁵⁸ Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, pp. 541–574; Runciman, *The Great Church*, pp. 310–319; Zwierlein, *Imperial Unknowns*, pp. 141–142n84.

¹⁵⁹ Murgescu, 'Confessional Polemics', pp. 174–183; Russell, 'From the Shield of Orthodoxy', p. 79.

¹⁶⁰ Motraye, *Travels*, pp. 159, 393–394. See also Ohanjanyan and Santus in this volume.

¹⁶¹ Turdeanu, 'Les controverses des Jansénistes', pp. 275–296; Olar, 'A Time to Speak', pp. 35–45; Russell, 'From the Shield of Orthodoxy', p. 75.

Latinisms, for which he apologized acknowledging his mistake (*ἡμαρτημένως εἰπῶν*).¹⁶² As Vassa Kountouma noted, ‘in 1690, Dositheos was no longer addressing exterior readers on Orthodoxy’.¹⁶³

Having practically replaced the role of the Ecumenical patriarch,¹⁶⁴ Dositheos in his position of the Patriarch of Jerusalem managed to rally up the fragmented Orthodox Church, defending it ‘against enemies from outside and from within, be those Lutheran, Calvinist, Catholic, or tainted with Protestant or “Papist ideas”’, to quote Ovidiu Olar.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, although Orthodox confession-building was triggered by the incitement of foreign powers, with Dositheos the Greek Church was steered towards a more autonomous path, ‘neither worshiping the Pope through verbal monsters nor thinking like the Calvinists and Lutherans by worshiping the shadows’.¹⁶⁶ As for the Westerners, the Greeks’ approach can be encapsulated in the words of Nektarios of Jerusalem: ‘if the Latins and Lutherans are fighting each other, let them fight’.¹⁶⁷

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¹⁶² Dositheos made extensive changes in his eighteenth chapter, dealing with the purgatory: ‘*χρὴ εἶδέναι ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἐγχειριδίῳ τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ τῆς ἐν Βηθλεὲμ συνόδου, ἡμαρτημένως εἰπῶν ὁ συγγραφεὺς περὶ τοῦ κεφαλαίου τούτου, τοῦ: ἡ, ἤδη ἐπιδιορθούμενος ἑαυτὸν εἰς πλάτος ἐξήνεγκεν αὐτὸ εἰπῶν πάντα τὰ ἀναγκαῖα περὶ αὐτοῦ*’. [It should be known that in the manual that was written at the Synod of Bethlehem, the author was mistaken regarding this eighteenth chapter. Already correcting himself, he has extended it in length, and said everything that needed to be said.] Dositheos, *Manual*, p. 81. See also Renaudot, *La perpétuité* (1711), pp. 495–506; Todt, ‘Dositheos II’, pp. 713–720; Olar, ‘A Time to Speak’, pp. 44–45; Russell, ‘From the Shield of Orthodoxy’, pp. 74–77; Miladinova, *The Panoplia Dogmatike*, p. 176; Kontouma, ‘La Confession’, pp. 362, 368.

¹⁶³ Kontouma, ‘La Confession’, p. 357.

¹⁶⁴ During the forty years of Dositheos’ tenure the Ecumenical throne changed hands twenty times.

¹⁶⁵ Olar, ‘A Time to Speak’, pp. 38–39.

¹⁶⁶ ‘... μήτε διὰ τερατολογίαὺν παπολατρεῖν μήτε διὰ σκιολατρείααν καλβινολουτεροφρονεῖν’. This passage was included in the statute of the new Patriarchal Academy founded in Istanbul in 1663 by Nektarios of Jerusalem. Cited in Fonkitch, ‘The patriarchal document’, p. 313; Kontouma, ‘La Confession’, p. 363.

¹⁶⁷ ‘εἰ τοίνυν πολεμοῦσιν ἀλλήλοις λατῖνοι καὶ λούτεροι, πολεμήτωσαν’. BNF, MS Arménien 145, fols 67r–68r. Published in: Arnauld and Nicole, *La perpétuité* (1674), pp. 653–659.

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IMAGES



Figure 1: Attestation of Faith on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, signed by Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysios IV and prelates of the Greek Orthodox Church, BNF, MS Grec 431.



Figure 2: Detail of figure 1: The Deesis, with the Signature of Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysios IV.



Figure 3: Detail of figure 1: The 'Melismos'.



Figure 4: Letter of Archbishop David of Ispahan and other notable Armenians to King Louis XIV, BNF, MS Arménien 141.

18. CONFSSIONAL AMBIGUITY IN THE AGE OF CONFESSON-BUILDING: PHILO-ALIDISM, SUFISM AND SUNNI ISLAM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1400–1700¹

DERİN TERZIOĞLU

When the process of becoming a Sufi is completed, then begins hypocrisy. The true Sufi sees things eyes cannot see; he hears things ears cannot hear, he witnesses and understands things that do not ordinarily enter hearts. Yet he does not share with the people what is in his heart; he tells them words that are appropriate for their state and which they can understand. For if he told them what is in his heart, then they would surely kill him. So, how can he not be a hypocrite? ... A Sufi is that person, the light of whose comprehension does not extinguish the light of his caution. He does not divulge the knowledge that is in his heart and that goes against the letter of the Book; he does not allow the wonders that have been revealed to him to tear open the veil of God's prohibitions. But it is still possible for someone who has arrived at Reality to also believe all that he tells the people. In that case, he does not become a hypocrite. Even though it may seem strange for him to believe

¹ Some of the material discussed in this essay was first presented at the Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies on 16 January 2014. I delivered subsequent versions of that initial lecture at the conference 'Confessional Ambiguity, 'Alid loyalty, and *tashayyu'* *hasan* in the 13th to 16th Century Nile to Oxus region' convened by Judith Pfeiffer at Oxford University on 19–20 September 2014, then again at the University of Tübingen in the same year, at the *École française de Rome* and at the University of Toronto in 2017 as well as at the 'Entangled Confessionalizations' conference that provided the starting point of the present volume. Finally, I reworked the essay into its present form while a fellow at the *Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin* during the academic year 2019–2020. I would like to extend a collective thanks to all the people who provided helpful feedback on these occasions, but acknowledge in particular Tijana Krstić, Kathryn Babayan, Judith Pfeiffer, Mehmetcan Akpınar, and Zeynep Altok for their contributions. The research that went into the final version has been funded by the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2015–2020)/ERC Grant Agreement 648498, 'The Fashioning of a Sunni Orthodoxy and the Entangled Histories of Confession-Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–17th centuries'.

in two contradictory truths, it is not actually, because both are true in their proper place. (Sheikh Bedreddin, *Inspirations*)²

Even if not all put the matter as bluntly as does Sheikh Bedreddin (d. 1420) in his *Inspirations* (*Waridat*), both the concealment of one's beliefs for reasons of self-protection, and the possibility of entertaining contradictory beliefs—typically premised on there being multiple truths, one for the enlightened 'elites' (*khawāṣṣ*) and another for 'commoners' (*awāmm*)—were well-established ideas within the Sufi tradition.³ These ideas and the discursive practices that they underpinned also reverberated across a broad cross-section of Muslim literati from occultists to poets and made possible what Thomas Bauer has called a high degree of 'tolerance for ambiguity' among premodern Muslims. Yet, as the centuries-long controversies surrounding the name of Bedreddin should remind us, tolerance for ambiguity did not necessarily translate into tolerance for dissent, much less tolerance for words and deeds that were considered a threat to public order. Besides, ambiguity itself is a slippery concept. What may seem ambiguous to us today was perhaps not that ambiguous to the people who lived at the time, as there were certain unwritten norms that determined who could say what, in what ways, and where, and which set the limits for displays of what we may today perceive as contradiction and ambiguity.

Like all concepts, ambiguity also has a history. In their respective attempts to reconceptualize the history of Islam, both Thomas Bauer and Shahab Ahmed have argued that Muslims' unusually high degree of tolerance for ambiguity and paradox withered only in the last two centuries. Bauer has put this down to the 'religionization' and 'theologization' of Islam, while Ahmed has underscored the narrowing down of Islam from a pluralistic tradition that engages with the 'Pre-Text, Text and Con-Text of Revelation' to a more homogenous one that looks to 'Text alone' and which prioritizes the discourse of the sharia over other ways of engaging with Revelation.⁴ Yet, like all grand narratives, this particular narrative about the disambiguation of Islam in the modern age might also need to be qualified. Recent ethnographies on 'everyday Islam' have underscored the ambiguities and contradictions that characterize the lives of most contemporary Muslims.⁵ At the same time, historians

² Gölpınarlı, *Simavna Kadısıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin*, p. 65; for the Arabic original, see Şeyh Bedreddin, *Inspirations*, fols 16a–16b. I thank Samet Budak for bringing this passage to my attention. All translations into English are mine unless otherwise indicated.

³ Some Sufis also made a tripartite distinction between 'commoners', 'elites' and the 'most elites' (*khāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*), as discussed by Brown, 'The Last Days of Al-Ghazzālī', pp. 97–106.

⁴ Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität*; Ahmed, *What is Islam?* For a review essay that discusses both works, see Griffel, 'Contradictions and Lots of Ambiguity', pp. 1–21.

⁵ See, for instance, Schielke and Debevec eds, *Ordinary Lives*; Schielke, *Egypt in the Future Tense*; Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*; Deeb and Harb, *Leisurely Islam*; Marsden, *Living Islam*. At the same time, this new ethnographic current has itself come under criticism for reproducing in a different form the old dichotomies between theory and practice, and for privileging ways of being Muslim that appeal to 'secular-humanist' sensibilities. For the critique and some responses to

working on Islamic piety before the modern era have found credible evidence for the existence of powerful currents of disambiguation among Muslims at several moments between the eleventh and eighteenth centuries and have conceptualized these currents variously as ‘canonization’, ‘Sunni revival’, or ‘Sunni recentering’, the construction of ‘legal orthodoxy’, and, in the context of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman and Safavid realms, ‘confessionalization’.⁶

There is a broad consensus in the scholarship that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a significant transformation in the understanding of Islam in the central lands of the Ottoman Empire, comprising Anatolia and the Balkans, collectively known as the lands of Rum. According to this consensus, Islam in the lands of Rum before the sixteenth century was considerably more fluid, ‘syncretistic’, ‘confessionally ambiguous’ and even to some degree, ‘metadox’,⁷ whereas Sunni Hanafi Islam became hegemonic as both ‘state ideology’ and the faith of the vast majority of Rumi Muslims thereafter. Elsewhere I have conceptualized this change as ‘Sunnitization’ but have also been open to Tijana Krstić’s proposition to discuss it under the broader rubric of ‘confessionalization’.⁸ The latter term has the advantage over ‘Sunnitization’ in that it enables us to discuss in tandem the changes in the boundaries and definitions of multiple religious communities in and beyond the Ottoman realms. Yet, it remains an open question to what extent Sunni Hanafi Islam in the early modern Ottoman Empire can be described as a form of ‘confession’ analogous to the Lutheran, Calvinist/Reformed or post-Tridentine Catholic churches in early modern Europe.

As Krstić has stressed in her recent publications, the nearest Islamic equivalent of a ‘confession’ is madhhab (Tr. *mezheb*). In the early modern era, this concept had a range of different meanings, of which the most relevant were: a) legal school, guiding one’s practice, and b) denomination, defined (primarily but not exclusively) by the articles of faith.⁹ Since both the principal legal schools and the principal denominational groups among Muslims had been formed centuries earlier, the case for Ottoman confessionalization has rested instead on 1) the Ottoman creation of a Hanafi

that critique, see Fadil and Fernando, ‘Rediscovering the ‘Everyday’ Muslim’, pp. 59–88; for the responses, see Schielke, ‘Living with Unresolved Differences’, pp. 89–92; and Deeb, ‘Thinking Piety and the Everyday Together’, pp. 93–96. I thank Yael Navaro for alerting me to this ethnographic discussion.

⁶ For some of the notable studies on these and related formulations, see El-Shamsy, *Canonization of Islamic Law*; Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī*; Makdisi, ‘The Sunni Revival’; Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge*; Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, ch. 20; Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy*; Fierro ed., *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Islam*; on confessionalization, see fn. 8.

⁷ For the concept of metadoxy, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 75–76.

⁸ Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize’; and ‘Where ‘*İlm-i Hāl* Meets Catechism’. For the first studies that introduced the concept of ‘confessionalization’ to Ottoman studies, see Krstić, ‘Illuminated’; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*. For recent perspectives on the history of Sunnism in the Ottoman lands, see Erginbaş ed., *Ottoman Sunnism*, and Krstić and Terzioğlu eds, *Historicizing Sunni Islam*.

⁹ Krstić, ‘State and Religion’, esp. pp. 80–81, 86; Krstić, ‘From *Shahāda* to ‘*Aqīda*’; Krstić, ‘You Must Know Your Faith’.

‘state madhhab’¹⁰ and 2) the Sunni-Shi‘i polarization that followed the outbreak of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry and which fueled simultaneously Ottoman Sunnization, Safavid Shi‘itization and the eventual formation of Kizilbash-Alevism as a distinctive faith group in course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹

While some Ottomanists have found ‘confessionalization’ to be helpful in analyzing the abovementioned processes, others have expressed reservations about what they consider to be the concept’s inherent Eurocentrism and/or state-centrism.¹² Some of the recent contributions to Ottoman legal history have also questioned the very notion of Hanafism as the Ottoman ‘state madhhab’ and highlighted the legal pluralism that prevailed in Ottoman Egypt and Syria as well as the plurality of opinions that persisted among the Hanafi jurists throughout the Ottoman realms.¹³ Others have pointed out that Islamic law was not the sole source of religious norms and ideas for Ottoman Muslims and that Sufism or Islamic mysticism remained another important force in both an intellectual and spiritual, and a social and political sense for a vast number of Muslims throughout the period of Ottoman rule.¹⁴ The persistence of a strong streak of ‘ahl al-baytism’ or ‘philo-Alidism’ among the Ottoman Muslim men of letters throughout the same period has also been duly noted.¹⁵

It is in dialogue with these recent interventions but also with the aim of providing a more nuanced and balanced understanding of Ottoman religious politics that this essay attends to both the dynamics of boundary-setting and boundary-blurring, of disambiguation and ambiguity in the Ottoman realms from the late fifteenth to the late seventeenth century. While there were multiple sources of ambiguity that impacted the Ottoman Rumi inflections of Islam, my essay focuses specifically on the roles played by philo-Alid Sufism in Ottoman confessional politics. It shows that while philo-Alid Sufi piety remained an important feature of Rumi Islam throughout the period surveyed (and indeed until the very end of Ottoman rule), the parameters for acceptable forms of devotion to the Alids were constantly negotiated and subtly

¹⁰ For the most elaborate argument about Hanafism as the Ottoman ‘state madhhab’, see Burak, *The Second Formation*; for a discussion that links it with the debate on confessionalization, see Burak, ‘Faith, Law, and Empire’.

¹¹ For an exploration of the history of Anatolian Alevis through the concept of confessionalization, see Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevis*; for a non-Ottomanist’s engagement with the concept in the wider early modern Islamic context, see Green, ‘Islam in the early modern world’, pp. 376–381.

¹² Baer, ‘Review of *Contested Conversions to Islam*’; Şahin, *Empire and Power*, pp. 208–209; Erginbaş ed., *Ottoman Sunnism*.

¹³ For notable recent contributions on madhhab pluralism, see Ibrahim, *Pragmatism in Islamic Law*, pp. 43–49, 93–163; Atçıl, ‘Memlükler’den Osmanlılar’a Geçişte’; for notable recent studies that have emphasized juridical agency vis-à-vis the state, see Buzov, *The Lawgiver and His Lawmakers*; Atçıl, ‘The Safavid Threat’; for a nuanced discussion that takes into consideration both juridical agency and imperial authority, see Ayoub, *Law, Empire, and the State*.

¹⁴ For a recent study that makes a strong case for the centrality of Sufism to early modern Ottoman religious and political culture, see Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

¹⁵ Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*, pp. 7–30; Erginbaş, ‘Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism’; Erginbaş, ‘Reappraising Ottoman Religiosity’; Erginbaş, ‘Reading Ottoman Sunnism’.

altered, as the Ottoman authorities promoted Sunnism as the only *publicly admissible* Islamic denomination in their realms during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Further, not just the philo-Alid Sufis but also the Ottoman imperial establishment selectively resorted to ambiguation and obfuscation alongside disambiguation to further their respective agendas. Ambiguity, in other words, was not so much a timeless feature of a holistic 'culture' of Islam, as Bauer has suggested, but rather an ever shifting, and intensely contested element of a distinctively early modern Ottoman 'politics of piety'.

Since historians studying people who lived centuries ago cannot observe them in their daily lives the way anthropologists can, they have a much harder time capturing the complexity of these people's religious beliefs and practices and their self-understanding as religious and moral subjects. In this essay, I try to overcome this hurdle by reading across genres, and by taking into consideration the different expectations and guidelines that prevailed in different social, political, literary, and religious contexts. At the same time, I trace how these expectations and guidelines changed over time. Because of the complexity of the factors that prevailed upon who could say what in the late medieval and early modern Ottoman world, the margins allowed for expressions of philo-Alid Sufi piety did not narrow in a unilinear manner. If at several points in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Sufis were subjected to unprecedented pressures to conform, these 'orthodoxizing' impulses also prompted crosscurrents, leading to moments of relaxation of doctrinal strictures, as happened at the end of the seventeenth century. At the same time, even times of high religious fluidity were not entirely free of voices calling for greater conformity, as we shall see in the next section.

PHILO-ALIDISM, SUFISM AND SUNNI ISLAM BEFORE 1500

Even though the Sunni-Shi'i split is popularly discussed as if it has been a fixture of Islamic history since the death of the Prophet Muhammad, it actually took a good three centuries for the principal Sunni, Shi'i and Khariji denominations to take shape, with their distinctive creeds and rituals and distinctive interpretations of Islamic law.¹⁶ Moreover, even after the formulation of these distinctive beliefs and practices, Sunni and Shi'i modes of piety continued to evolve in competitive dialogue with one another, and converged in new ways after the twelfth century. One of the pioneering scholars to draw attention to this convergence was Marshall G.S. Hodgson. According to Hodgson, one of the factors that softened Sunni-Shi'i differences in the 'late middle period' of Islamic history (1200–1500) was 'Alid loyalism', a term he coined to denote the non-sectarian veneration of 'Ali b. Abi Talib and his descendants, known collectively as the Alids. 'Ali was for the Sunnis the last of the four 'rightly guided'

¹⁶ On this long process, see Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*; Madelung, *Religious Trends*; Hodgson, 'How Did the Early Shi'a Become Sectarian?'; Daftary, *The Isma'ilis*; Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*; Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy*; Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi'ism*; Zaman, *Religion and Politics*; Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*; El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law*; Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqil*.

caliphs and for the Shi'is the first Imam; he was also the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, the husband of Muhammad's daughter Fatima, and the father of Muhammad's grandchildren, Hasan and Husayn; a key figure, in other words, in the Muslims' 'noblest' family, referred to collectively as the *ahl al-bayt* (literally, People of the Household). Even though Sunnis did not accept the Shi'i claim that leadership of the Muslim community belonged *exclusively* to the Alids, from the twelfth century onwards it also became increasingly common for Sunnis to venerate people with Alid genealogies as a kind of nobility, to distinguish them from ordinary Muslims with the use of such honorifics as *sayyid* and *sharif*, and to grant them legal and fiscal privileges.¹⁷

Subsequent scholarship has shown that the non-sectarian veneration of the Alids has an even longer history, extending from the ninth century until the modern era.¹⁸ It was mainly to capture the diffuse character of this broader phenomenon that R.D. McChesney coined the term 'ahl al-baytism' in 1991, and more recently, historians have also used such terms as 'Alidism' or 'philo-Alidism' in a similarly broad sense.¹⁹ Philo-Alidism in this general sense was not necessarily incompatible with Sunni confessionalism. Depending on how Sunnism was understood in a given context, certain forms of philo-Alidism could be an integral part of Sunni piety, and were in some cases even weaponized against the Shi'is.²⁰

The concept of 'confessional ambiguity', on the other hand, was introduced to Islamic historiography by John E. Woods, and has been used primarily with reference to the particularly intensive forms of philo-Alidism found in certain parts of Islamdom between the years 1200 and 1500.²¹ Different theories have been put forth to account for the accentuation of philo-Alidism in the late medieval period. Scholars focusing on the trends among the Arabic-speaking Muslims in Egypt, Syria and Iraq have emphasized the Sunni wish to win over moderate Shi'is after the downfall of Shi'i Ismaili dynasties like the Fatimids,²² while those focusing on the Turkish- and Persian-speaking Muslims of Iran, Central Asia, Anatolia and North India have emphasized instead the impact that the Mongol invasions and the accompanying mass migration of Turkic tribes had on the religious and political culture of the Muslims of these regions.²³ In both of these contexts, the general trend towards political

¹⁷ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, pp. 445–455.

¹⁸ Hartmann, *An-Nasir li-Din Allah*; Bernheimer, *The 'Alids*; Morimoto ed., *Sayyids and Sharifs*; McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*; García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*; Mulder, *The Shrines of the Alids*.

¹⁹ McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia*, pp. 33–34, 268–269.

²⁰ Algar, 'Naqshbandis and Safavids', p. 32; Algar, 'Sunni Claims'; Rizvi, 'Before the Safavid-Ottoman Conflict'.

²¹ Woods, *The Aqqyunlu*, pp. 2, 4.

²² Mulder, *The Shrines of the Alids*.

²³ On Ilkhanid religious and political ideas, see Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity'; Brack, *Mediating Sacred Kingship*; on the use of Chinggisid traditions in later Turco-Mongol polities, see Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion*; Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*; Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, ch. 2; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*; Melvin-Koushki, 'Early Modern Islamicate Empire'.

fragmentation and localization, and the spread of Islam among new peoples, many of whom came from tribal backgrounds, are thought to have increased the importance of personal charisma and genealogy as bases of religious as well as political authority.²⁴

Of course, it was not just philo-Alidism but also Sufism that benefited from the abovementioned trends, and the two currents of piety converged increasingly after the twelfth century. Late medieval Muslims could engage with mystical ideas and practices in several different institutional contexts from the quasi-mystical young men's associations, known as the *futuwwa* (Tr. *fütüvvet*) or in the Anatolian context, *ahi* (Ar. *akhi*) brotherhoods, to the supra-regional Sufi networks, which were slowly evolving into more formalized tariqas (literally, 'paths') with distinctive initiatic chains (*silsila*) and distinctive teachings and practices. Philo-Alidism was important to both these traditions. While the *fityān/ahis* commemorated 'Ali as the chivalric young man par excellence, for most Sufis 'Ali was the paradigmatic mystic to whom God had first revealed the esoteric meanings of the Quran. The infusion of strands of Sufism with elements of Neoplatonic philosophy, Shi'i gnosticism and occultism further strengthened the trend towards confessional ambiguity during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁵

Much the same trends also made themselves felt among the Turcophone Muslims who inhabited the lands of Rum. Because Islam and Muslims were recent implants in the region and because there were neither powerful state structures nor the kinds of religious experts who had the inclination and/or the power to impose a particular understanding of Islam on a diverse Muslim population comprised of many recent converts of diverse origins, the Islamic culture of Anatolia and even more so the Balkans is said to have been particularly fluid until well into the fifteenth century.²⁶ Unlike the adjacent lands of Iraq or Syria, however, Anatolia and the Balkans were not home to any identifiably Shi'i communities before the sixteenth century, and most Rumi Muslims had only hazy ideas about Shi'ism. In his travel account, Ibn Battuta, who traveled across Anatolia circa 1331–1332, represents the Turcomans of Anatolia as belonging uniformly to the *ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamā'a*, and even describes how Muslims of Sinop gave him the cold shoulder, when they mistook him for a Shi'i.²⁷ Yet the Moroccan traveler also attests to the ubiquity of the *ahi* networks

²⁴ In addition to the works cited in footnotes 20 through 23, see Deweese, *Islamization and Native Religion*; Deweese, 'The Descendants of Sayyid Ata'; and the essays in Mir-Kasimov ed., *Unity in Diversity*, pt 2.

²⁵ On the infusion of 'Shi'i' and 'Alid' elements into late medieval Sufism, see Molé, 'Les Kubrawi'; Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safawids*; Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*; McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism*; Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*. On the growing importance of 'Ali as the paradigmatic valiant young man in the *futuwwa* tradition, see Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism*, pp. 61–91 and Yıldırım, 'Shi'itisation of the *Futuwwa*'.

²⁶ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 76; on the question of Shi'ism in late medieval Anatolia, see Cahen, 'Le problème du shi'isme'; Yıldırım, 'Sunni Orthodox'; Ünlüsoy, *Anadolu'da Hz. Ali Tasavvurları*.

²⁷ Ibn Battuta, *The Travels*, pp. 416–417, 468.

throughout Anatolia and describes attending, in a dervish lodge in Bursa, a highly emotive ceremony commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn on the day of the ‘Ashura’ (10th of Muharram).²⁸

The significance of the Muharram rituals for Rumi Muslims is also confirmed by the fact that in 1362 a *meddah* (Ar. *maddāh*; storyteller) named Yusuf, composed the earliest known Anatolian Turkish *maktel* (Ar. *maqta*; literally meaning murder, murderous battle or the place of killing, but in this context denoting the genre of martyrology), detailing the martyrdom of Husayn by the forces of the Umayyad caliph Yazid, and devoted it to the Çandarid bey of Kastamonu.²⁹ Considering that Anatolian Turkish had only recently been ‘admitted into literacy’, it is meaningful that one of the first genres to be chosen for vernacularization was an Alid martyrology.³⁰ The text and its variant versions illustrate well what Stefan Winter has called the ‘formally Sunni but affectively Alid’ tenor of Rumi Islam in this period.³¹ As Rıza Yıldırım observes, in this narrative, as in most other Alid ‘religious-heroic epics’ that issued from late medieval Anatolia and Iran, early Islamic history is narrated in a highly ‘dualistic’ fashion.³² On one side are the Alids (in this case, Husayn and his supporters) who represent the best of Islam and on the other side are their enemies, the Umayyads (who are also called ‘Yazid’ and ‘Yazidis’ with reference to the Umayyad caliph held responsible for Husayn’s death) who represent the worst. While we, as modern readers, might be tempted to read this storyline as being about the conflict between the proto-Shi’is and proto-Sunnis, the denominational markers are rather differently assigned in this text (as indeed they generally are in late medieval Alid narratives). The Alids are eulogized as ‘Sunnis’, and the Umayyad caliphs who persecuted them are condemned and cursed as ‘Kharijīs’. One of the few reminders of the conventional labels for Islamic denominations comes towards the end of the text, when the ‘Shi’is’ (*Rafāzī*) are briefly mentioned as one of the 72 errant sects.³³

It is important to point out that this non-conventional use of confessional markers did not necessarily stem from a lack of knowledge about Sunni norms. In fact, as

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 418–422, 426–430, 434–438, 444, 449–451, 459–460.

²⁹ Because of a misinterpretation of the text, this *maktel* used to be attributed to a *meddah* presumed to be named Şadi or Şazi, but Kenan Özçelik has convincingly shown the author to be Yusuf-ı Meddah, or Yusuf the storyteller, who was a well-known writer and poet of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries who had also penned a Turkish version of the Persian romance *Varqa and Gulshah*. See Özçelik, *Yûsuf-ı Meddâh*, pp. 8–98; Özçelik, ‘Türk Edebiyatında Yazılmış İlk Maktel’.

³⁰ For theoretical perspectives on vernacularization, see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods*, pp. 19–30; on the making of a Turkish vernacular tradition in Anatolia, see Peacock and Yıldız, ‘Introduction’.

³¹ Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*, p. 9.

³² Yıldırım, ‘Beylikler Dünyasında Kerbela Kültürü’; Yıldırım, ‘In the Name of Hosayn’s Blood’, pp. 133–141.

³³ For a Latinized transcription of the text, see Özçelik, *Yûsuf-ı Meddâh*, pp. 117–328, for the specific passage, see p. 324; for a study based on the earliest known copy of the text see Mélikoff, ‘Le drame de Karbala’; for an analysis of similar texts from Iran, see Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, pp. 121–196.

we shall see presently, this non-confessional and yet highly polarized religious discourse was even more forcefully deployed in the fifteenth century, even though knowledge of normative Islam was by then becoming more widely available. The fifteenth century is a challenging time to make sense of since the period in question saw many twists and turns in both the political and religious arenas. A major development was of course the extension of Ottoman rule over Anatolia, which was achieved despite some serious setbacks and much resistance along the way. This process also slowly transformed the religious and cultural landscape, as more mosques and madrasas were built and as the weight of ulema increased as arbiters of religio-legal 'orthodoxy'. At the same time, however, many new Sufi groups flocked into Anatolia and these groups themselves spanned a wide spectrum in terms of religious, social and political sensibility from the sober and scholarly Khwajagan-Nakshbandis to the unabashedly 'esotericist' Hurufis, who espoused a radical form of mystical humanism and letter mysticism and who were persecuted wherever they went.³⁴ Add to this mix the heightened expectations of the end times that the social and political dislocations of the fifteenth century triggered and what you get is a religious environment that was both tense and ripe for change.³⁵

It is well known that the late fifteenth century witnessed both the tentative beginnings of Ottoman Sunnitization and the 'Shi'itization' (or more accurately perhaps, Alidization) of the itinerant nonconformist dervishes known collectively as *abdal* or *ışık*.³⁶ What is not as appreciated is that when it came to confessional matters, some of the mainstream Sufis also moved on rather slippery ground. Perhaps the case that illustrates this the best is that of Eşrefoğlu Rumi (d. 1469/70?). An urban and learned Sufi, Eşrefoğlu had spent his formative years studying at the madrasas of Iznik and Bursa before becoming the disciple, first, of Hacı Bayram in Ankara and then of a Kadiri master, Sheikh Husayn, in Hama.³⁷ It is evident that his learning continued to serve Eşrefoğlu well also as a Sufi. One of his best-known works, *Purifier of Souls (Müzekki'n-Nüfus)*, is a didactic Turkish text that he wrote in 1448 for a general audience and it illustrates well the roles learned Sufis played as imparters of both basic religious knowledge and Sufi ethics. In this text, Eşrefoğlu comes across

³⁴ On the early Khwajagan-Nakshbandis in Anatolia, see Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, esp. 35–75; on the Hurufi teachings, see Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*; Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi*; Usluer, *Hurufilik*; on their presence in Anatolia see Gölpinarlı, *Hurûfîlik Metinleri Kataloğu*, pp. 24–25, 27–31; on the persecution of the Hurufis in the fifteenth century, see Babinger, 'Von Amurath zu Amurath', pp. 245–249, based on Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqa'iq al-nu'maniyya*, pp. 59–61.

³⁵ Yerasimos, *Légende d'Empire*; Emecen, *Fetih ve Kıyamet*; Şahin, 'Constantinople and the End Time'.

³⁶ On the beginnings of Ottoman Sunnitization in the fifteenth century, see Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize', pp. 309–310, 313–314; on the accentuation of Alid loyalist tendencies among the *abdal/ışık* during the same period, see Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Marjinal Sûfîlik*, pp. 155–161.

³⁷ On his biography, see Hickman, 'Two Fifteenth-Century ... Part 1'.

as a seemingly unexceptional sharia-abiding Sufi with a moderate veneration of ‘Ali and his descendants.³⁸

Yet there was also another side to this Sufi sheikh, which we glimpse from a shorter Turkish tract he wrote under the title *Book of the Sufi Path (Tarikatname)*. From this work we learn that not unlike Sheikh Bedreddin cited at the beginning of this essay, Eşrefoğlu found it necessary to convey different truths to different people. He explains that when conversing with the ‘common folk’ (*‘avām*), a Sufi master should speak of nothing but the sharia; if he is conversing with his dervishes, who constitute the ‘elite’ (*hāṣ*), then he can speak of the Sufi path (*ṭarīkat*), but if the subject veers to human transactions (*mu‘āmelāt*), the conversation should revert back to the sharia; it is only when talking with his advanced pupils (*ṭālibler*), who are the ‘most elite’ (*hāṣṣü’l-hāṣ*), that the master is free to speak of spiritual states and divine reality in accordance with the spiritual state (*hāl*) of his addressee(s).³⁹ Because Eşrefoğlu wrote *Book of the Sufi Path* for the second of these groups, in this text he ventures into some topics that he doesn’t take up in *Purifier of Souls*, but he is still reticent to go too far, and frequently cuts a topic short by writing, ‘There is more to say, but disclosure is difficult; it is better to conceal.’⁴⁰ Bill Hickman suggests that Eşrefoğlu might have expanded on these parts in his conversations with his more advanced disciples.⁴¹

A bifurcated approach also characterizes Eşrefoğlu’s discussion of confessional matters in *Book of the Sufi Path*. Even though in one passage the Sufi sheikh claims preference for the ‘Sunnis’ madhhab’ (*Sünniler mezhebi*) over that of the ‘Kharijites’ and ‘Alevi’,⁴² in many others he makes it clear that he considered Sunni norms to be sufficient for ‘commoners’ but not for dervishes. He writes that ‘commoners’ should honor the four ‘rightly-guided’ caliphs equally, and it is also not a problem if they like one of the first four caliphs more than the others. Dervishes, on the other hand, should know that ‘Ali is superior to all the other caliphs.⁴³ Whereas the first three caliphs used to engage in idolatry and drink wine before converting to Islam, the Sufi writer explains, ‘Ali never committed any sin, big or small, in his entire life, and even miraculously prevented his mother from committing sins while in her womb.⁴⁴ Eşrefoğlu further contrasts the Sufis and the ‘common folk’ in terms of their practices, stating that ‘every deed of a Sufi must be contrary to the deeds of the common folk’. According to his definition, commoners are ‘those people whose every

³⁸ For the writer’s ‘reasons for writing’ and target audience, see Eşrefoğlu, *Müzekki’n-Nüfûs*, pp. 58–59; for observations on the circulation of this text, see Heinzelmann, *Populäre religiöse Literatur*, pp. 132–137.

³⁹ Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, p. 6.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, pp. 8, 16, 19.

⁴¹ Hickman, ‘Two Fifteenth-Century ... Part 1’, pp. 17–18.

⁴² While he sometimes uses this term in the sense of descendants of ‘Ali (see, for instance, Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, p. 15), here he seems to mean Shi‘is. However, on p. 12 of the same text, he also uses the term ‘Rāfīzī’ for Shi‘i.

⁴³ Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, pp. 12–13.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.

deed is a deed of submission (*fi'īl-i inkīyādī*) and is not based on verification (*taḥkīk*), and who are unaware of the perfect master, and who engage in blameworthy innovations (*ehl-i bid'at*) and do not practice *tevellā* and *teberrā*.⁴⁵ *Tevellā* was the ritual praising of the Alids, while *teberrā* was the ritual cursing of their enemies. Both practices were popular among the Twelver Shi'is as well as some Alid loyalist dervish groups, while ritual cursing of the first three caliphs and Companions (*aṣḥāb*) of the Prophet was condemned by the majority of the Sunni authorities. Though a self-professed Sunni, Eṣrefoğlu also curses Yazid and his supporters whenever he mentions them in this text.⁴⁶

Even though Eṣrefoğlu never questions the legitimacy of the first three caliphs and in this sense does not cross the ultimate red line from the Sunni perspective, it is striking to see him put down Sunnism as the faith of the 'common' folk. In some passages he goes even further and states that one cannot be considered a genuine believer unless one finds a 'perfect master' who is of Alid descent.⁴⁷ He even deems 'it legitimate according to the *tariqa* to kill those who disobey a perfect master who descends from the line of 'Ali, just as it is legitimate according to the *sharia* to kill those who renege out of Islam, for such people have ceased to be true believers and have become Kharijites'.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Eṣrefoğlu is also fiercely critical of the Shi'itizing antinomian dervishes, who profess to love Muhammad and 'Ali but who 'commit adultery, take drugs and drink wine' and he declares it 'more meritorious to kill them than to kill infidels'.⁴⁹ Like so many other Sufis and scholars of the period, he also condemns the Hurufis in the strongest terms in both *Book of the Sufi Path* and *Purifier of Souls*.⁵⁰ Eṣrefoğlu's violent discourse towards the antinomian dervishes anticipates the ways in which Sunni scholars would anathematize the Safavids and the Anatolian Kizilbash half a century later. Yet, simultaneously, his condonement of violence against the dervishes who abandon a perfect master of Alid descent is reminiscent of the militancy displayed by the Safavid sheikh Junayd (d. 1460), who was active in Anatolia in this period and with whom Eṣrefoğlu had a common *silsila* via his master Hacı Bayram.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 52.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, *ibid.*, pp. 13, 14, 15, 27, 52, 53, 56.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 21; Eṣrefoğlu, *Müzekki'n-Nüfûs*, p. 31. It has been argued that with such statements Eṣrefoğlu intended to 'construct his own version of an Ottoman Sunni-Sufi orthodoxy' (Baştürk, 'Orthodoxy, Sectarianism and the Ideals of Sufism', pp. 137–138).

⁵¹ Even though later generations would remember Eṣrefoğlu mainly as a Kadiri, he actually pays tribute to both the Safavi and Kadiri *silsilas* in his works. For references to Sheikh Safi and the 'Sufis of Ardabil', see Eṣrefoğlu, *Müzekki'n-Nüfûs*, pp. 146, 163, 279, 336, 352, 372, 392, 406, 441, 475, 479; Eṣrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, pp. 3, 42, 52; for references to Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and his own Kadiri master Sheikh Husayn of Hama, see Eṣrefoğlu, *Müzekki'n-Nüfûs*, pp. 59, 211–212, 317, 383, 386, 389–397, 408, 459, 477, 480; Eṣrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, p. 51.

While it might be tempting to attribute Eşrefoğlu's particularly strong brand of Alid loyalism to his Safavid connections, Eşrefoğlu himself points to a different source of inspiration. This source is the Andalusian Sufi master Muhyi l-Din Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240), whose highly elusive writings on sainthood inspired many Sufis and who was known to his admirers as 'Sheikh Akbar' (the Greatest Master). Eşrefoğlu cites Ibn 'Arabi only once in *Purifier of Souls* but multiple times in *Book of the Sufi Path*.⁵² In one such instance, he draws on Ibn 'Arabi's conceptualization of the primordial 'Muhammadan Reality' (*ḥaqīqa Muḥammadiyya*) to define both Muhammad and 'Ali as the 'eternal spirit' (*kaḍīm rūḥ*). Eşrefoğlu also evokes the name of Ibn 'Arabi when he lists Alid descent among the hallmarks of a 'perfect master'.⁵³ These instances confirm once again that philo-Alidism was infused into the world of Rumi Muslims via many different channels, including learned works on Sufi philosophy. In the penultimate section of this essay, we shall see that this Akbarian take on Muhammadan sainthood would continue to inspire novel expressions of Alid loyalism also in later centuries.

A MOMENT OF CRISIS IN OTTOMAN-SUFI RELATIONS: THE EARLY 1500S

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries represent markedly different moments in the current scholarship on Ottoman religious history: the first is seen as the last phase of an age of confessional ambiguity and latitudinarianism while the second is seen as the dawn of a new era of confessional polarization and confession-building. However, just as the fifteenth century anticipated and prepared the way for the confessional polarization of the sixteenth century in the sheer contentiousness of the religious discourses that it produced, so did the sixteenth century, especially its early decades, carry echoes of the confessional fluidity and flux of the fifteenth. However, our teleological projections of the Ottoman Sunni-Sufi consensus that emerged in the middle decades of the sixteenth century make it difficult for us to appreciate the true scale of both the tensions and the fluidity that marked Sufi-state relations in the early decades of the sixteenth century.

We can trace some of the tensions and uncertainties of the era through the documents produced by Ottoman state officials. Several entries in the *Ahkam* register of 1501, for instance, indicate that the Ottomans went on high alarm as soon as they received news of the ascent of Sheikh/Shah Isma'īl to power and sent order upon order to their governors in Anatolia to prevent the passage of 'Sufis' to the other side and to kill all those who were caught doing so.⁵⁴ By 'Sufis' in this context, the Ottoman authorities meant primarily the followers of 'the Sufis of Ardabil', but since by this time the Safavid network had expanded to include several different dervish groups,⁵⁵ there was also an undeniable vagueness to the term. This might be one

⁵² Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, pp. 3–4, 7, 9, 18, 25, 28, 31, 36, 43, 55; cf. Eşrefoğlu, *Müzekki'n-niifûs*, p. 305.

⁵³ Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, pp. 3, 7–9, 25.

⁵⁴ Şahin and Emecen eds, *Osmanlılarda Divân*, vol. 1, pp. 8, 21, 32, 78–79, 92, 125.

⁵⁵ Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi*, pp. 227–228.

reason why a decade later, the Ottomans began to refer to the Safavids and their Anatolian supporters as ‘Kizilbash’ instead. ‘Kizilbash’ was the name given to the Turcoman and Kurdish tribal soldiers in the Safavid army on account of their twelve-gored red headdress, but it became a derogatory and incriminating term of identification for the Safavids and their followers (and sometimes other individuals and groups that were deemed ‘deviant’) in the Ottoman context.⁵⁶

Even if the switch from ‘Sufi’ to ‘Kizilbash’ to designate the Safavid supporters among their subjects stemmed from a desire to dissociate the pro-Safavid Sufis from the wider Sufi circles in the Ottoman realms, it cannot have been easy, in this early period, to distinguish between those Ottoman subjects who were actual Safavid devotees, and those Ottoman subjects who being Sufis, exhibited many of the same religious proclivities as the former but who did not support the Safavids. Add to this the large numbers of people who, under duress, shifted their allegiance from the Safavids to the Ottomans as well as vice versa, and what you get is a religious landscape that must have been far more fluid than what most Ottoman sources of the period suggest.

A rare glimpse into the religious fluidity and tensions that prevailed in the lands of Rum in the early decades of the sixteenth century is provided by a recently discovered biographical dictionary (*tezkiye*) of Rumi poets written for Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524–1576) by a Rumi émigré to the Safavid lands. The author, who identifies himself by the penname of ‘Garibi’ was, according to his own testimony, born in Bozüyük in the principality of Menteşe (present-day Muğla) as the son of Hacı Muslihuddin Emir Khan, ‘of the sons of Menteşe’ (*Menteşe evlâdından*). Likely a descendant of the family that had once ruled the Menteşe emirate, Hacı Muslihuddin was also a learned man and a devotee of the Safavid house. After Muslihuddin was arrested and executed by the Ottoman authorities for being a ‘Shi’ite’ and a ‘Kizilbash’, his sons were taken into the Ottoman imperial cavalry. Sometime in or after the 1530s, however, Garibi managed to escape to the Safavid side, converted to Twelver Shi’ism and entered the court of Tahmasb. It was also there that he wrote his *tezkiye* sometime between 1558 and 1576.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ On the uses of the word ‘Kizilbash’ in Persian sources from Iran, Central Asia and North India during the sixteenth century, see Bashir, ‘The Origins and Rhetorical Evolution’; on the significations of the word in Ottoman sources, see Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, ‘One Word, Many Implications’; on the occasional uses of the word for other Shi’i groups in the Ottoman Empire, see Winter, ‘The Kızılbaş of Syria and Ottoman Shiism’.

⁵⁷ Our knowledge about Garibi comes exclusively from his own writings, which are collected in a manuscript compilation titled *Garibi’s Divan* (*Divan-ı Garibi*) and preserved in the Parliament (Majles) Library in Tehran (MS 7012). The manuscript was copied in 998/1590 by a certain Mukhtar b. Mirza Zaki Maragi, but its folios were subsequently misbound and renumbered. For Garibi’s account of his father’s trial, which also contains some information about Garibi’s childhood, see Garibi, ‘The Story of Hacı Muslihuddin’ (*Hikayet-i Hacı Muslihuddin*) in *Garibi’s Divan*, pp. 104–135 (Zeynep Altok is currently preparing an English translation of this

Reading Garibi's recollections of the Rumi literary scene, one gets the sense that he hated the House of 'Osman but was much more favourably disposed towards the Rumi men of letters who lived under Ottoman rule. In his prefatory remarks, Garibi explains that he has included in his *tezkiye* only those Rumi poets who were 'people of faith' (*ehl-i imân*) and 'lovers of the House [of Muhammad and 'Ali] (*muhibbân-ı hânedân*).⁵⁸ Garibi's choice of terminology when discussing the religious affiliations of Rumi Muslims is worth highlighting. He frequently refers to the Ottoman authorities and their supporters as 'Sunnis', but characterizes the 'Ali-loving people of Rum more loosely as 'people of faith', 'lovers of the House', 'lovers of the House and (their) supporters' (*muhibb-i hânedân u mevâlî*), 'friends of 'Ali' (*'Alî-dost*), and 'Sufi', and very rarely, as 'Shi'a' (*Şi'a*). Many of these terms were markers of devotion to the Alids and were used as such also in texts written by Rumis for the Rumi context.⁵⁹ *Muhibb-i hânedân*, for instance, is an expression that surfaces in a wide variety of texts from the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of poets to Ottoman Sufi (including Kizilbash-Alevi) literature from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries.⁶⁰ Contrary to a suggestion in the modern Turkish edition of the text,⁶¹ the term *mevâlî*

auto/biographical section for the sourcebook that will be a companion volume to the present one). Further information about Garibi's early years in the Ottoman lands as well as about his father and brother can be found in his *tezkiye* titled *Biographical Dictionary of the Poets of Rum (Tezkire-yi Mecalis-i Şu'ara-yı Rum)* in the same compilation (Garibi, *Garibi's Divan*, pp. 322–324). Cf. the biography of Garibi, as reconstructed in Csirkés, 'Popular Religiosity', pp. 216–218.

⁵⁸ For the preface, see Garibi, *Garibi's Divan*, pp. 276–277; for the complete text, see *Ibid.*, pp. 271–325. There are two modern publications of the *tezkiye*, one published in Iran, with an Introduction in Persian (Sadiq ed., *Garibi's Divan*) and another published in Turkey, in modern Turkish (Babacan ed., *Tezkire-i Mecâlis-i Şu'arâ-yı Rûm*). My own analysis of this text is greatly indebted to that of Zeynep Altok, whose ongoing Ph.D. thesis about the sixteenth-century biographers of Ottoman poets will present a much more in-depth analysis of this *tezkiye* than can be provided here. I would also like to thank Ms. Altok for kindly sharing her digital copy of the manuscript with me.

⁵⁹ Even the seemingly neutral term 'people of faith' could be used in a distinctively philo-Alid and Shi'i-leaning sense. For instance, the Halveti sheikh Seyyid Seyfullah Nizamoğlu, whose confessional orientation will be discussed below, writes: 'The people of faith follow the madhhab of Ja'far al-Sâdik/Their *millet* is that of Abraham and their disposition (*meşreb*) that of Muhammad/What the people demand is Haydar/There is no valiant youth but 'Ali and no sword but his Zülfikâr.' (*Cafer-i Sâdik'dan oldu ehl-i imân mezhebi/Milleti oldu Halîlullâh Muhammed meşrebi/Haydar-ı Kerrâr'dır hem halk-ı cihanın matlabı/La fetâ illâ Alî la seyye illâ Zülfikâr.*) *Seyyid Seyfullah Külliyyâtı*, vol. 1, p. 26.

⁶⁰ For examples, see Eşrefoğlu, *Tarikatnâme*, p. 55; Latîfî, *Tezkireti's-Şu'arâ*, p. 389; Gölpınarlı ed., *Alevî-Bektâşî Nefesleri*, pp. 53, 57; Seyyid Seyfullah, *Seyyid Seyfullah Külliyyâtı*, vol. 1, pp. 114–117, 119.

⁶¹ İsrâfil Babacan argues that the term *mevâlî* as used in this text signifies 'Mevlevî' (see his Introduction to *Tezkire-i Mecâlis-i Şu'arâ-yı Rûm*, pp. 33, 39); however, this reading is unconvincing, since Garibi uses the term 'Mevlevî' for Mevlevis, and uses expressions like *mevâlî-dost*, *mevâlî-meşreb* and *muhibb-i hânedân u mevâlî* also with reference to figures with no Mevlevi connections, and basically to connote Alid sympathies.

is also used in the sense of supporters of ‘Ali in much the same literature. In some of the Turkish poems of Shah Isma‘il, alias Hatayi, which also circulated among the Anatolian Kizilbash, the double plural form, *mevāliler*, is mentioned in juxtaposition with the *Mervāniler* (Marwanids), suggesting that the term harkened back to the memory of the non-Arab converts to Islam who had a special ‘client’ (Ar. *mawlā*, pl. *mawālī*) status during the period of Umayyad rule and among whom support for the Alids had been particularly strong.⁶² As for the term ‘Sufi’, often Garibi uses it to designate not just any member of a mystical brotherhood, but more specifically, a person who was, or was suspected of being, a Safavid devotee. We learn, for instance, of a certain Mevlana Hasan Halife of Kayseri, who was ‘repeatedly imprisoned by the Sunnis on account of his being known as a Sufi’, and who was in fact ‘a pure Shi‘i’ (*Şi‘a-i pāk*).⁶³ The use of the word ‘Sufi’ in the sense of Safavid devotee is also well-attested in sources originating in the Rumi context: the word appears as a term of self-designation in some Kizilbash-Alevi poems of the sixteenth century, and was also used to refer to Safavid devotees in the orders sent to provincial governors by the Ottoman central state in the immediate aftermath of Shah Isma‘il’s ascent to power, as mentioned above.⁶⁴

Many of the Rumi men of letters whom Garibi considered to be ‘Ali-loving ‘people of faith’ were also Sufis in the more conventional sense. Significantly, they comprised not just itinerant nonconformist dervishes, often referred to as *abdāl* or *ışık*, but also members of the more institutionalized *tariqas* with a preponderance of Mevlevis and *Gülşenis* (a sub-branch of the Halvetis) among them. That various prominent *Gülşenis* got into trouble with the Ottoman authorities during the sixteenth century is well known,⁶⁵ but with the notable exception of Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, modern scholars have not adequately acknowledged the nonconformist as well as Alid loyalist streak of the Mevlevis.⁶⁶ It seems that the poetic corpus of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273) was an important part of the literary and religious patrimony of ‘upper-class’ Anatolian Kizilbash in this period. Garibi not only cites many poems of Rumi in his writings, but also relates how when he was only four or five years old, his father initiated him to the Sufi path by reciting him a poem in praise of ‘Ali from Rumi’s *Great Divan (Divan-ı Kebir)*.⁶⁷ Garibi was also personally connected with a contemporary Mevlevi dede, İbrahim Şahidi (d. 1550), under whose guidance he studied Arabic lexicon and grammar and read the *Mesnevi* of

⁶² For the use of the term *mevālī* in Kizilbash circles, see *Hatayi Divanı*, pp. 141, 143, 155, 160, 166, 175–176, 207 (I thank Vefa Erginbaş and Rıza Yıldırım for this reference); for a similar use in a poem of Pir Sultan Abdal, see Gölpınarlı ed., *Alevî-Bektâşî Nefesleri*, p. 190. For uses of the term *mevālī* or *mevālī-mezheb* to describe philo-Alid Sufis, see Hayretî, *Dîvan*, p. 97 and Latîfî, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘arâ*, p. 389.

⁶³ Garibi, *Garibi’s Divan*, pp. 321–322.

⁶⁴ For use in Kizilbash-Alevi poems, see Gölpınarlı ed., *Alevî-Bektâşî Nefesleri*, pp. 89–90; for use in Ottoman state documents, see fn. 54.

⁶⁵ For the most in-depth analysis of this topic, see Emre, *İbrahim-i Gulshani*, pp. 209–348.

⁶⁶ Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, pp. 204–243.

⁶⁷ Garibi, *Garibi’s Divan*, pp. 106–107.

Rumi while still a young boy in Muğla. Garibi claims that Şahidi was constantly pestered by ‘the Ottoman crowd’ (*‘Osmanlu t̄ayifesi*), who suspected him of being a ‘Sufi’, that is, a Safavid devotee, and that he therefore chose to live his life in the shadows.⁶⁸

Garibi also includes some members of the learned establishment, many soldiers, some military and civilian administrators, and even one member of the Ottoman dynasty, Cem Sultan (d. 1495), among the philo-Alid ‘people of faith’.⁶⁹ What redeemed such high-ranking officials as Karamani Mehmed Pasha (d. 1481), Koca/Cezeri Kasım Pasha (d. between 1502 and 1532); and Dukaginzi Ahmed Bey in Garibi’s eyes was 1) the fact that they had befriended and patronized ‘Sufis’, and 2) the fact that they had authored poems in praise of ‘Ali and the Twelve Imams.’⁷⁰ Garibi also relates stories about how some Ottoman officials themselves came under accusations of being Safavid devotees and/or Shi’is. A particularly interesting name he mentions in this connection is İshak Çelebi of Skopje (d. 1537). İshak Çelebi was a multi-faceted scholar and man of letters who was equally famous for his love poems for beautiful boys as for his *Selimname* (*Book of Selim*), which memorializes the life of Selim I up to and including his controversial ascent to the Ottoman throne and repeats the usual condemnations of the Kizilbash. Even if Garibi knew of İshak’s eulogistic history of Selim, however, he does not mention it; instead, he depicts İshak as a formidable scholar and teacher and a skilled poet, who provoked much enmity for his accomplishments. Garibi also relates how when İshak was a *müderri*s at the prestigious imperial college of Sahn-ı Semaniyye, ‘the Sunni mollahs’ talked behind his back, saying that he was a ‘Shi’i’.⁷¹

It would of course be rash to take Garibi’s claims about the poets of Rum at face value. In addition to his expressed commitment to the Safavid and Shi’i cause, the fact that he was writing hundreds of miles away from the lands of Rum must have made it easier for him to take certain liberties when representing the literati of his homeland. In his zeal to symbolically claim the hearts and minds of as many Rumi

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 322–323. While the entries on Şahidi in the Ottoman *tezkires* do not mention any incident of surveillance, they mention that Şahidi needed ‘men of censure’ (*ehl-i ta’ın*) in his writings and spent the latter part of his life in recluse in his hometown. Esrar Dede further characterizes Şahidi as someone who was “girded by Ali” (*kemer-bestegân-ı Hayderi*) and a wearer of the cloak of blame (*hurka-püş-ı melâmet*). Âşık Çelebi, *Meşâ’irü’ş-Şu’arâ*, pp. 1410–1411; Esrar Dede, *Tezkire-i Şu’arâ-yı Mevleviyye*, pp. 253–254.

⁶⁹ Cem Sultan is described specifically as *mevâlî-dost* (Garibi, *Garibi’s Divan*, p. 299). On Cem’s ties with gazi-derwish circles, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 147–148. For rumors about the pro-Safavid sympathies of the Ottoman princes Şehinşah (d. 1511) and Ahmed (d. 1513), who were sons of Bayezid II, and Murad (d. 1521), who was Ahmed’s son, around the time of the Şahkulu Rebellion, see Çıpa, *The Making of Selim*, pp. 45–48.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 302, 305, 314–316. On these military administrators, see Küçükdağ, ‘Karamânî Mehmed Paşa’; Erünsal, ‘Kasım Paşa, Cezerî’; Sefercioğlu, ‘Dukakinzi Ahmed Bey’.

⁷¹ ‘Şi’a mezhebdir diyü Sünni mollalar gâybâne gıybet kıılurlar’. See Garibi, *Garibi’s Divan*, pp. 309–310; for biographical information on this figure, see Savaş, ‘İshak Çelebi, Kılıççızade’; on his *Selimname* and its place in the larger *Selimname* corpus, see Çıpa, *The Making of Selim*, esp. pp. 155–156; on his love poems, see Kuru, ‘Naming the Beloved’.

men of letters as possible, the Rumi émigré may have represented anyone and everyone who had a brush with the Ottoman authorities as Alid loyalists and even supporters of the Safavids. On the other hand, it is also likely that Garibi's distance from the Ottoman context enabled him to write about some incidents of confessional tension surrounding Rumi men of letters that were real enough, but which were passed over in silence in the Ottoman biographical sources.⁷²

But it is not just the amnesia of the later Ottoman sources that makes Garibi's memories of Rumi Muslims seem so incongruous to us today. It is also the fact that the Ottoman authorities significantly changed the rules of the game with their attempts to establish and enforce clearer guidelines regarding the boundaries of Sunni belief and practice in the lands of Rum in the sixteenth century. In the next section, I will focus on those of their attempts that affected the philo-Alid Sufis.

SETTING BOUNDARIES FOR PHILO-ALIDISM IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The first attempts to establish some ground rules that Turcophone Muslims in the lands of Rum had to abide by to be counted as 'proper' Muslims can be traced as far back as the early fifteenth century. However, Sunni-Shi'i antagonism had little or no role to play in these early religious handbooks.⁷³ This changed markedly after the rise of the Safavids and especially after the outbreak of the Şahkulu Rebellion (1511). In the aftermath of this rebellion, when Selim I acceded to the throne as the candidate of those who favored a forceful response to the Safavid threat, high-ranking Ottoman ulema dignitaries began to pen polemical treatises and fatwas in which they ruled the 'Kizilbash' to be 'heretics' and 'unbelievers' who were worse

⁷² For an illuminating discussion of how sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ottoman writers, and modern Turkish scholars, tried to purge the life stories of two prominent fifteenth-century Anatolian Sufis of potentially incriminating elements, see Hickman, 'Two Fifteenth-Century ... Part 1'; Hickman, 'Two Fifteenth-Century ... Part 2'.

⁷³ See, for instance, Akkuş ed., *Kitab-ı Ğunya*, which is a manual that is focused more on practice than on creed, and which bases itself squarely on the Hanafi madhhab with occasional references to differences with the Shafi'is. There are absolutely no references to either the Sunni or the Shi'i madhhab in this text, but if Semih Tezcan is right that this text was a translation of a thirteenth-century Khwarazmian Turkish manual, perhaps the absence of confessional references was simply a carry-over of that earlier era. For philological observations on the text, see Tezcan, 'Kitābu'l-Ğunya'. See also Kutbe'd-dîn İznikî, *Mukaddime (Introduction)*, which may be the earliest known *ilmihal* written in Anatolia. Differently from the *Kitab-ı Ğunya (The Indispensable Book)*, this text contains brief references to all three principal Islamic denominations as well as to the principal legal and theological schools. However, confessional differences still play a minor role in this text as well. While İznikî takes 'the Sunni madhhab' (*ehl-i Sünnet mezhebi*) as the norm, he defines it mainly in terms of the six articles of faith and the five ritual obligations without contrasting them with the beliefs of other Islamic denominations. Likewise, in his religious guide for married couples, Kutbeddin İznikî's son İznikizade Muhyiddin Mehmed (d. 1480) contrasts the 'Sunni creed' (*ehl-i Sünnet i'tikâdi*) with 'the creed of the people of innovation' (*ehl-i bid'at i'tikâdi*) rather than with that of the Shi'is. İznikizade Muhyiddin Mehmed, *Guide for the Married*, fol. 80a.

than the Christian ‘infidels’ and they affirmed the right and even obligation of the Ottomans to wage war against them in defense of Sunni Islam.⁷⁴

Interestingly, nevertheless, with a few exceptions, the Ottoman ulema dignitaries did not use the term ‘Shi‘i’ (or its derogatory form, ‘Rafizi’) all that much in the texts they authored against the Kizilbash during the sixteenth century. In a fatwa he issued in 1548–1549, the sheikh ūl-islam Ebüssu‘ud even argued explicitly that the Kizilbash were a new and worse form of heresy than all of the previous ‘72 errant sects’, including Shi‘ism.⁷⁵ Moreover, ‘excessive’ veneration of ‘Ali and his descendants was only one of the fault lines that divided Sunnis from the Kizilbash, antinomianism and failure to observe the canonical forms of worship being another important one. Besides, because veneration of the Alids was deeply rooted in Rumi society, including among self-identified Sunni Muslims, the Ottoman authorities could not be categorical about this matter, and had to discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable forms of Alid loyalism: How far could one go in praising ‘Ali and his descendants (*tevellā*) without lapsing into ‘heresy’? Perhaps even more critically, how far could one go in condemning the enemies of the Alids (*teberrā*) without falling into *ta‘aşşub* or ‘fanaticism’, a quality that was, in this time, frequently associated with Shi‘is?

Imputing divinity to the Alids (or for that matter, to any other human) was seen as contradicting the belief in the oneness of God and was deemed unacceptable,⁷⁶ but this was a no-brainer compared to some of the trickier questions that began to be raised in this period. One such question pertained to the relative merits of the first four caliphs. We have already seen that for Eşrefoğlu writing in the mid fifteenth century, the choice was between revering all four caliphs equally and revering ‘Ali more than the other caliphs. The latter position had been a well-established tendency among the Sufis, while the former was something of an aberration in the *longue durée* of Islamic thought. In the first two centuries of Islam, the third and fourth caliphs ‘Uthman and ‘Ali had been both divisive figures so much so that in the earliest known version of the *The Supreme Understanding (al-Fiqh al-Akbar)*, dating from the mid eighth century, the author, possibly Abu Hanifa (d. 767) or someone from his circles, had deferred judgment on ‘the question of ‘Uthman and ‘Ali to Allah,

⁷⁴ Eberhard, *Osmanische Polemik*; Üstün, *Heresy and Legitimacy*; Al-Tikriti, ‘Kalam’; Atçıl, ‘The Safavid Threat and Juristic Authority’.

⁷⁵ Düzdağ ed., *Şeyhülislām Ebüssu‘ūd Efendi Fetvaları*, pp. 110–111, fatwa no. 481. This fatwa will be revisited below, when discussing Ottoman policies against their own Kizilbash population.

⁷⁶ In fact, imputing divinity to ‘Ali and his descendants had been denounced as ‘extremism’ (*ghuluww*) even by many moderate Shi‘is such as Ja‘far al-Sadiq (d. 765) centuries earlier, even though certain notions central to ‘orthodox’ Twelver Shi‘ism such as the ‘return’ (*raj‘a*) still remained open to accusations of *ghuluww*; on this, see Turner, ‘The Tradition of “Mufaḍḍal”’. Condemnations of incarnationism (*hulūliyya*) and Hurufism had also already been expressed in various texts written in Anatolia during the fifteenth century. See the discussion of Eşrefoğlu above.

who knoweth the secret and hidden things'.⁷⁷ However, by the mid ninth century, majority opinion had come around to the compromise solution of accepting all four caliphs as legitimate while maintaining that the historical order in which they had ruled reflected their moral ranking. According to this ranking, 'Ali would have been the least rather than the most virtuous of the first four caliphs, though still legitimate. This was the position taken in the *Testament (Wasiyyat)*, a creed that was also widely attributed to Abu Hanifa, and the same position was repeated in all the major Sunni creeds written thereafter as well.⁷⁸ Given the unanimity of the later Sunni creeds on this point, it is unlikely that Rumi scholars had been ignorant of it, but probably because of the great esteem in which they held 'Ali they did not emphasize the precise ranking in their own texts until the early sixteenth century.

One of the earliest texts from the Rumi context that stipulates this exact order and provides an extended commentary about it was written by a Sufi scholar, Kasım b. 'İsa, who identifies himself as a 'Hanafi by madhhab and a Vefai by tariqa' as well as a descendant of Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166). Kasım was originally from Antioch, a city that was culturally connected to Syria, a region with well-established Sunni and Shi'i communities and with a far longer Islamic past than Anatolia. Kasım wrote his book of religious advice after his move to Bursa, and some years after 1497 and before 1512, most likely in the early 1500s.⁷⁹ These were the years in which the Safavid threat weighed particularly heavily on Ottoman minds, so it is tempting to think that Kasım also wrote his work to bring his Rumi readers up to par on Sunni norms and sensibilities. In fact, Kasım's text not only specifies the correct ranking of the Rashidun caliphs in terms of virtues but also identifies Islam's four 'virtuous women' as 'Maryam, Khadija, 'A'isha and Fatima', listed in this order.

As Tijana Krstić has shown, the issue of the moral ranking of the first four caliphs as well as of the Prophet's female kin also entered the Ottoman *ilmihal* literature, written to provide ordinary Muslims with basic religious knowledge. Most of these writers, too, insisted that the order of succession of the first four caliphs reflected their moral ranks, while a minority allowed the philo-Alid Sufis some room for manouever by deeming it permissible to rank 'Ali above the other caliphs in terms of excellence in the 'esoteric' or 'spiritual' caliphate, though not in the 'exoteric' (*şūrī*) or worldly one.⁸⁰ This was perhaps a relatively small concession to make to the philo-Alid Sufis, since many of them returned the favor by actively preaching to their constituencies the importance of honoring both the kin and all the Companions of the Prophet.

One such philo-Alid and yet adamantly Sunni Sufi was the Halveti master Şemseddin Sivasi, known popularly as Kara Şems (d. 1596). Born in Zile, a

⁷⁷ Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, pp. 104, art. 5; pp. 109–110.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 127–128, art. 10; pp. 151–152; p. 192, art. 10; p. 268, art. 29; Watt, ed., *Islamic Creeds*, p. 55, art. 40; p. 58, art. 10; p. 65, art. 10; p. 72, art. 29; pp. 78–79, art. 25; p. 84, art. 27; p. 88, art. 24.

⁷⁹ Kasım ibn İsa, *Cevāhirü'l-Aḥbār*, fols 117a, 118b–119a. On this Sufi and scholar, see Taş, 'Antakyalı Kâsım Şeybânî'.

⁸⁰ Krstić, 'State and Religion'; Krstić, 'From *Shahāda* to 'Aqida', pp. 296–314.

dependency of Tokat in north-central Anatolia, Şems had studied in the madrasas of, first, Tokat and then, Istanbul, and attempted a career as madrasa teacher (*müderriş*) in the capital before reportedly becoming disillusioned with this career track and returning to his hometown to devote himself to the Sufi path. Even then, however, Şems continued to teach the 'exoteric sciences' alongside his sheikhly activities, and it was his command of both the 'exoteric' and 'esoteric' sciences that led Hasan Pasha, the governor of Sivas, to choose him as preacher at the Friday mosque he had built in that town.⁸¹ Both Tokat and Sivas were part of the province of Rum, which had been an early recruiting ground of the Safavids as well as a major site of the Ottoman persecutions directed against the Kizilbash. According to his hagiographer Mehmed Nazmi (d. 1701), Şems himself lent a hand to the Sunnitization efforts by converting four 'Rafizi' villages to Sunni Islam by the sheer force of his charisma.⁸² As a Sufi sheikh who was believed to possess such spiritual prowess that he could even converse with 'Ali bin Abi Talib 'in bodily form',⁸³ Şems must have been especially well suited to win over intransigent communities to Sunni Islam, but in addition to his charisma, the Halveti master also relied on his learning and rhetorical skills to enlighten the wider Muslim public about Sunni norms. A prolific writer, Şems wrote over twenty texts in verse and prose, the vast majority of them in Turkish, and many of these texts circulated widely, to judge by the large number of manuscript copies and printed editions that have come down to our time. One of the most popular of these texts as well as one written with a clear intent to impress on its readers the importance of revering all four of the 'rightly guided' caliphs was *Vitae of the Four Esteemed Beloveds (Menakıb-ı Çehar-yâr-ı Güzîn)*, written in 1581.⁸⁴ Another text of his with a clear confessionalizing intent was *Vita of the Greatest Imam (Menakıb-ı İmam-ı A'zam)*, written in *mesnevi* form in 1593. Though this versified text focuses ostensibly on the life of the founder of the Hanafi madhhab, the first one-third of it is devoted to an explication of the Sunni creed, with a strong emphasis on honoring all four of the 'rightly guided' caliphs, and it is interspersed with polemic against the Shi'is (Rafizi) and Shi'itizing dervishes (*ışıklar*) who followed Hacı Bektaş.⁸⁵

Another issue that ranked high on the agenda of Sunni polemicists in the sixteenth century was the malediction of the enemies of the Alids. What propelled this issue to one of the top items in both the anti-Kizilbash polemics and in intra-Sunni debates at this time was the fact that the Safavids were actively sponsoring the public cursing of the first three caliphs, the prophet's wife 'A'isha and the Umayyad caliphs as enemies of the Alids. The Ottomans found the Safavid practice of public cursing to be so offensive that they made its abolition one of the

⁸¹ Mehmed Nazmî Efendi, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvufî Hayat*, pp. 340–341.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 362–363.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁸⁴ Şemseddin Sivasî, *Menâkıb-ı Çehâr-Yâr-ı Güzîn*. The text's popularity is attested by both the high number of its extant manuscript copies as well as the fact that it was published multiple times in the nineteenth century.

⁸⁵ For the polemical parts, see Şemseddin Sivasî, *Menâkıb-ı İmâm-ı A'zam*, pp. 85–99, 105, 121–124, 138–141.

preconditions for peace between them and the Safavids and even put it into the text of the Amasya peace agreement in 1555.⁸⁶ From the viewpoint of the Ottoman religious authorities, the public cursing directed at the first three caliphs as well as 'A'isha, was especially repugnant, and was therefore condemned and prohibited unambiguously.⁸⁷ Members of the Ottoman learned establishment also subscribed to the well-known Sunni doctrine that even if the Umayyad caliph Mu'awiya, who had wrested the caliphate from 'Ali, had erred in his treatment of 'Ali, because Mu'awiya was a Companion of the Prophet and by extension, a mujtahid (jurist entitled to *de novo* judgment), it was unacceptable to speak ill of him, let alone curse him.⁸⁸ Clearly, however, it was a more delicate matter to condemn the widespread practice of cursing Mu'awiya's son and successor Yazid, who had ordered the murder of 'Ali's son Husayn. Opponents of the practice cited the opinion of no less an authority than Abu Hanifa on the topic, but the commemoration of the murder of Husayn via the public recitation of *maktels*, which culminated in the malediction of Yazid, was so deeply rooted among Rumi Muslims that attempts to prohibit the practice by the likes of Molla 'Arab (d. 1531) met resistance not only from the Shi'itizing dervishes, who were known to be fiercely given to ritual cursing, but also from some learned Sufis with otherwise impeccable Sunni credentials.

One of these Sufis, the Nakshbandi man of letters Lami'i Çelebi (d. 1532), responded to this challenge by penning a new, bowdlerized version of the *maktel* and submitting it for approval before a gathering of ulema dignitaries, including Molla 'Arab, in Bursa's great mosque, Ulu Cami. Impressed, the ulema had to express their approval. This at any rate is the story reported first in 'Aşık Çelebi's *Way-Stations of Poets (Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'ara)* in 1568 and then in greater detail in İsmâ'il Belîğ's *A Bouquet of Gardens of Gnosis (Güldeste-i Riyaz-ı 'İrfan)* of 1722.⁸⁹ Curiously, Lami'i himself makes no mention of this story in the introduction to his work; instead, he simply credits a certain Sinan Bey, who is identified as a treasurer (*defterdar*) of Süleyman I, for encouraging him to write this work.⁹⁰ Otherwise, however, Lami'i's text very much reads like the kind of work that would have been written to appease the prohibitive ulema, while retaining the kernel of philo-Alid sentiments that characterize *maktel* literature. In the opening programmatic section, the author affirms devotion to the Alids to be a corollary of devotion to Muhammad, but comes out against the

⁸⁶ On ritual cursing in Safavid Iran, see Stanfield-Johnson, 'The Tabarra'iyân and the Early Safavids' and Abisaaab, *Converting Persia*, pp. 18, 24, 26–27, 34–35, 42–50; on the Ottoman demand for the Safavid abandonment of ritual cursing in the Peace of Amasya in 1555, see Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyâsi Münâsebetleri*, p. 4; Atçıl, 'Warfare as a Tool of Diplomacy', pp. 11–12, 21.

⁸⁷ Düzdağ ed., *Şeyhülislâm Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 112, no. 487.

⁸⁸ This is explained in detail in Katib Çelebi, *Balance of Truth*, 84–88 but for a brief statement of the same points, see also Düzdağ ed., *Şeyhülislâm Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 112, no. 488–489.

⁸⁹ 'Aşık Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*, vol. 2, p. 749; Donuk ed., *Türk Edebiyatında Vefeyatname*, p. 392.

⁹⁰ Lâmiî Çelebi, *Maktel-i Âl-i Resûl*, pp. 59–61.

practice of cursing, and labels those who would curse Yazid as ‘people of extreme partisanship’ (*taassub kavmi*).⁹¹ But then in the narrative parts of the text, the murder of Husayn is still related as a tragic event and Yazid is still blamed for it. Moreover, Shimr, who killed Husayn and cut off his head, is referred to multiple times as ‘accursed’ (*laîn, melîn*), despite the author’s earlier categorical statements against cursing.⁹² The unstated but more critical issue here was to avoid cursing someone who headed the Muslim polity as caliph, in this case Yazid. This, and the insertion of polemics against the Shi’is, probably lay behind the approval given to Lami’i’s *maktel* by his learned audience.

It remains an open question whether Lami’i wrote his *maktel* primarily to convince the ulema to rethink the prohibition against the recitation of *maktels* or to show other philo-Alid dervishes a more acceptable way to commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn. Either way, the efforts of law-abiding, moderate Sunni Sufis like Lami’i must have been more effective in the long run than the efforts of prohibitive ulema like Molla ‘Arab in bringing the majority of Rumi Muslims around to more moderate forms of philo-Alidism, but of course the choices made by countless other interlocutors of diverse religious and political affiliations must have mattered as well. Regarding the thorny issue of whether or not to curse Yazid, it might be worth observing that Lami’i’s text, *Martyrdom of the House of the Prophet (Maktel-i Âl-i Resul)* remained a rare exception among the Turkish *maktels* in ostensibly *not* cursing Yazid.⁹³ It also never achieved quite the renown and wide circulation as did, for instance, *Garden of the Felicitous (Hadikatî’s-Sü’eda’)* of the famous Iraqi Turcoman poet Fuzuli among Rumi readers.⁹⁴ The latter was a Turkish translation-cum-adaptation of Husayn Va‘ez-e Kashefi’s *Garden of Martyrs (Ravdat al-Shuhada’)* which had become immensely popular in Safavid Iran, and which also circulated widely in the Ottoman lands. Fuzuli’s *Garden of the Felicitous* tells the story of Husayn’s martyrdom without any of the Sunni apologetics that Lami’i deployed, but also without making too strong a display of Fuzuli’s probable Twelver Shi’i sentiments.⁹⁵

It was evident by the mid sixteenth century that the popular practice of cursing Yazid could not be outlawed in the Ottoman lands unlike the cursing of the

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 63–69.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 66, 104–105, 107, 109, 112.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 42–43.

⁹⁴ In the introduction to her 1987 publication, Şeyma Güngör lists 231 manuscript copies of Fuzuli’s *Garden of the Felicitous* and eight different printed editions that were published in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. (Fuzulî, *Hadikatî’s-Sü’eda*, pp. LX–LXXI.) It is almost certain that with the advances in library cataloguing and digitalization of manuscripts in Turkish libraries in recent years these figures would go up. In the introduction to his 2012 publication, Ertuğrul Ertekin lists 14 manuscript copies of Lami’i Çelebi’s *Book of the House of the Prophet*, while also noting that more detailed research might yield more copies. (Lâmîî Çelebi, *Maktel-i Âl-i Resûl*, pp. 29–31).

⁹⁵ Whether Fuzulî was a Sunni, Shi’i or without an identifiable madhhab has been a topic of scholarly controversy. For a recent overview of the Turkish-language scholarship, see Karaca, ‘Fuzûlî’de Teşeyyu’.

Companions of the Prophet, and it fell to the sheikh ül-islam Ebüssu‘ud to articulate the new guidelines. When asked about the practice in a fatwa, the famous sheikh ül-islam stopped short of condemning the malediction of Yazid outright, but rather ruled it ‘illegitimate to curse those who do not curse Yazid, for not cursing him does not mean accepting his acts’.⁹⁶ With this judicious response, Ebüssu‘ud sought on the one hand to accommodate those Muslims who were philo-Alid but who self-identified as Sunni, and on the other hand, he still drew a line of exclusion around those Muslims who evoked their hatred for Yazid to set themselves apart from the Sunni majority; who were in short Shi‘i or Kizilbash sectarians.

It must be stressed that setting parameters for acceptable forms of Alid loyalism was not only an academic matter. These parameters also informed the imperial authorities, when they set out to inspect, arrest, and otherwise discipline suspected Kizilbash at various points during the sixteenth century. An order issued by the central government to the qadis in Amasya and a number of other towns in the province of Rum in 1581 instructed the officials in question to draw up a list of suspected Kizilbash and to identify them by the following five external signs of ‘heresy’: 1) cursing the ‘four (!) rightly guided caliphs’, 2) referring to Sunni Muslims as ‘Yazid’, 3) holding mixed-gender assemblies, 4) not observing the obligatory five daily prayers and the Ramadan fast, and 5) never giving their sons the names of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman.⁹⁷ Sometimes, too, in an effort to increase their control in a region where pro-Safavid and Shi‘i sympathies ran deep, the imperial authorities introduced prohibitions that went further than the religio-legal pronouncements of the leading ulema, such as when Istanbul imposed a public ban on all ‘Ashura’ celebrations in the province of Mosul in 1574.⁹⁸

Despite these punitive measures and the periodic attempts at surveillance, however, the Ottoman state was not ultimately an inquisitorial state in the sense that the imperial or local authorities did not routinely go around questioning people about their inner convictions; they were content rather to enforce outward compliance. Again, it was Ebüssu‘ud who acknowledged this obliquely in one of several fatwas he issued about the Kizilbash in 1548–1549. After explaining in detail why he considered the Kizilbash (in the sense of both the Safavids and their supporters) to be unbelievers and heretics, the sheikh ül-islam distinguished between those Kizilbash who fight actively on the side of the Safavids as their soldiers (*asker*) and followers (*etba*) and those others ‘[who live] in cities and villages in peace, who disavow these people’s attributes and practices and whose external appearance testifies to their truthfulness’. He stated that the latter should not be subjected to punishments ‘as long as the falsity of their claims does not become apparent’ (*kizbleri*

⁹⁶ Düzdağ ed., *Şeyhülislâm Ebüssu‘ud Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 112, no. 487.

⁹⁷ Imber, ‘The Persecution of the Ottoman Shi‘ites’, pp. 261–262.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

zahir olmayınca).⁹⁹ Namely, the Kizilbash communities who lived under Ottoman rule were to be left alone, as long as they did not rebel and disturb the public order and as long as they *appeared to be conforming* to the norms of Sunni Islam. Dissimulation, in other words, was considered a minimal form of acquiescence to the ‘state madhhab’ and perhaps the first step on a long journey towards becoming a proper Sunni Muslim.

This was of course a highly precarious arrangement from the viewpoint of the Shi‘i and Kizilbash communities that lived under Ottoman rule, but it still allowed them to survive in a Sunnizing polity. Remarkably, despite losing some (possibly, many) of their followers to Sunnizing pressures, the diverse and initially rather amorphous Kizilbash communities in Anatolia and the eastern Balkans not only survived the periodic purges of the sixteenth century, but also underwent what might be called a ‘confession-building’ process of their own. Namely, they differentiated themselves from the nominally Sunni majority in terms of their religious beliefs and rituals, and gradually also in other aspects of life, from patterns of residence to naming practices to marriage and burial rites. Because the Kizilbash lacked the financial resources and institutional means enjoyed by their Sunni counterparts, and because they could practice their rites only in close-knit communities and in secrecy, oral instruction and local customs were of special importance for their community- and confession-building efforts. This having been said, recent scholarship has shown that written texts disseminated by Safavid *halifes* as well as by local religious leaders known as *dedes* also played a crucial role in the formation of a trans-local, supra-communal Kizilbash faith in this period.¹⁰⁰ In fact, this literature itself was transformed over the years, as the Kizilbash-Alevi scribes who copied and recopied them stripped them of confessionally ambiguous elements.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ There are minor variations in the wording of the fatwa, as it appears in Millet Library, MS Ali Emiri Şeriyye 80–81, fols 256a–256b, and in Süleymaniye Library, MS Özel, fols 2a–2b. The former is given in modern Turkish transcription in Düzdağ ed., *Şeyhülislâm Ebussuûid Efendi Fetvaları*, pp. 175–176, while the latter is transcribed and translated into English in Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, ‘One Word, Many Implications’, pp. 56–57. But the variations do not alter the basic meaning. My translation follows the Millet Library version, published by Düzdağ. Baltacıoğlu-Brammer interprets this part of the fatwa as making a distinction between ‘Ottoman and non-Ottoman Kızılbaş’ as well as alluding to the Shi‘i practice of taqiya.

¹⁰⁰ For groundbreaking research on this topic, see Kaplan, *Yazılı Kaynaklarına Göre Alevilik*; Karakaya-Stump, ‘Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts’; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi*, pp. 229–255, 295–301; Yıldırım, ‘Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition’ and the contribution of Rıza Yıldırım to this volume.

¹⁰¹ For observations about how names that were not in conformity with ‘Shi‘i-Alevi sensibilities’ were later altered in the genealogies of Kizilbash-Alevi *dedes*, see Karakaya Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevi*, pp. 84, fn. 95; 108, 125–126, 131; for a version of the 1362 *maktel* that was rewritten for Kizilbash-Alevi audiences in the mid seventeenth century, and in which the earlier references to the ‘Sunnis’ were replaced with references to ‘believers’, see Şadi Meddah, *Maktel-i Hüseyin* and Yıldırım, ‘Beylikler Dünyasında Kербela Kültürü’, pp. 346, 365.

MAKING EXCEPTIONS, ALLOWING MARGINS FOR AMBIGUITY

Even as diverse religious currents and social and political forces came together in the sixteenth century to divide the Muslims of Rum along confessional lines, however, members of the Sufi brotherhoods still managed to preserve a certain degree of immunity from the pressures to conform. These Sufis were able to enjoy this immunity, partly because most of the Ottoman ruling elites were still willing to make exceptions, within certain limits, for those dervishes whom they considered to be genuine 'friends of God'. Partly, too, the imperial authorities made concessions to those Sufis who they thought were well placed to exert a moderating influence over the various intransigent communities living in the lands of Rum.

This, at least, is why the Ottoman sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512) is thought to have turned to the Bektashis of Rumeli and appointed Hızır Balı bin Resul Balı known as Balım Sultan from the shrine of Kızıl Deli in northern Greece to oversee the shrine of Hacı Bektaş in Central Anatolia. The Hacı Bektaş Shrine was in a region that was then a borderland between the Ottomans and Dulkadirids and which was also within the sphere of influence of the newly arisen Safavids. The Kızıl Deli Shrine, on the other hand, was in a region where the Ottomans were the only Muslim sovereign for miles at hand and where most of the population was Greek Orthodox. The Bektashis of Rumeli, like the itinerant dervish groups that the Ottoman gazi-dervish historian Aşıkpaşazade calls the 'abdals of Rum' (*abdâlân-ı Rum*),¹⁰² had close ties with the raider commander families of the Balkans such as the Mihaloğulları and Evrenosoğulları. By the late 1470s, Bektashis had also established a foothold in the Janissary corps, the Ottomans' elite infantry corps, whose ranks were staffed with Christian-born converts to Islam. Bektashis even claimed that the putative founder of their *tariqa*, Hacı Bektaş, was also the spiritual founder of the Janissary corps.¹⁰³ Interestingly, some members of the more mainstream brotherhoods also helped them in their claims. For instance, Sheikh Mehmed Çelebi (also known as Sheikh Muhyiddin) of Eğirdir in Central Anatolia, whose *Book of Khidr* (*Hızırname*) (written in 1475–1476) was one of the earliest sources to hail Hacı Bektaş as a patron saint of the Ottomans, was an adherent of the Zeyniyye, a Sufi brotherhood known for its sober approach to Islamic mysticism.¹⁰⁴ Another non-Bektashi who contributed to the

¹⁰² Aşık Paşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nun Tarihi*, p. 571. On the *abdals* of Rum, and specifically the branch associated with Otman Baba, see the contribution of Nikolay Antov to this volume.

¹⁰³ On the relations between the Ottoman state and Bektashis in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Les Bektaşî'; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, pp. 25–50, 113–133; Yıldırım, *Hacı Bektaş Veli'den Balım Sultan'a*, chs 3–8; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevis*, ch. 3; on *abdal* and Bektashi relations with the raider commander/gazi families, see also Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Seyyid 'Ali Sultan'; İnalçık, 'Dervish and Sultan'; Kiprovska, 'The Mihaloğlu Family'; İnalçık, 'Dervish and Sultan'; Kiprovska, 'The Mihaloğlu Family'; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*; on the Bektaşî-Janissary connection, see Küçükyağcı, *Turna'nın Kalbi*; cf. Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', pp. 125–129.

¹⁰⁴ For a Latinized edition of the text, see Bardakçı, *Eğirdir Zeynî Zâviyesi*; for an evaluation of the author and the text, see, in addition to the Introduction of the aforementioned edition, Ocak, 'Hızırname'; on the Zeyniyye, see Öngören, *Tarihte bir Aydın Tarikatı*.

textualization of Bektashi hagiographical lore by penning the verse and prose-and-verse versions of the *Vita of Hacı Bektaş* (*Vilayetname-i Hacı Bektaş*) was Şerefeddin Musa (d. after 1517), who went by the penname of Firdevsi-i Rumi or Firdevsi-i Taviil. Firdevsi, by his own account, came from a long line of gazis, who had fought alongside the Ottomans from the latter's first bid for power in Bithynia through their expansion into the Balkans, so he was well-placed, socially and culturally speaking, to make the acquaintance of the nascent Bektashis. However, Firdevsi himself was an adherent of the Nakshbandi sheikh 'Abdullah-ı İlahi (d. 1491), known commonly as Molla İlahi. As Dina Le Gall has pointed out, Nakshbandis in this period were significantly more accommodating than the later Nakshbandis, who would be among the staunchest critics of the Bektashis in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. İlahi had a *melâmi* streak and a long-abiding interest in the philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being), associated with the school of Ibn 'Arabi; he even wrote a commentary on Sheikh Bedreddin's *Inspirations* and openly came to the defense of this controversial Sufi. İlahi's associates would have likely included the Bektashi dervish Bayezid Baba, who, like him, lived in Yenice-i Vardar (present-day Giannitsa in northern Greece).¹⁰⁵

It is reasonable to think that all these connections helped make the Bektashis, in general, and the Bektashis of Rumeli, in particular, a strategic ally for the Ottomans in their rivalry with the Safavids. Still, there were also times in the sixteenth century when the Ottoman-Bektashi alliance temporarily gave way under social and political tensions. One such moment of crisis occurred in 1526, when Kalender Çelebi, head of the Hacı Bektaş lodge, and grandson of Balım Sultan, led a rebellion against the Ottomans, and the Ottomans responded by killing Kalender Çelebi and closing down the Hacı Bektaş lodge for about two decades. Ultimately, however, the Bektashis not only survived this crisis, but emerged out of it institutionally strengthened. Between the mid sixteenth and mid seventeenth century, Bektashis took over many of the lodges associated with the *abdals* of Rum, and further absorbed into their ranks members of many other philo-Alid, nonconformist dervish groups like the Haydaris, Jamis, Kalenderis, and Hurufis.¹⁰⁶ The Ottoman authorities encouraged this process by targeting the latter dervish groups for their nonconformity with the newly agreed norms of Sunni propriety, while by and large sparing the Bektashis from similar surveillance. Evidently, the authorities preferred to have their nonconformist dervishes under the umbrella of one 'designated' *tariqa* to better control them. It was

¹⁰⁵ For evidence strongly suggesting the hand of Firdevsi in the authorship of the *Vita of Hacı Bektaş*, see Gölpinarlı ed., *Vilâyet-nâme*, pp. xxiii–xix and Köksal's introduction in Uzun Firdevsî, *Manzum Vilâyet-nâme*, pp. 1–4; on Firdevsi's life and literary oeuvre, see Büyükkarçı, 'Firdevsî'. On the early Nakshbandis and Molla İlahi, see Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, esp. pp. 35–38 and Kara, 'Molla İlahî'; on the *zaviye* of Bayezid Baba in Giannitsa, see Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans*, p. 105; for a depiction of Bayezid Baba from the *abdal* perspective, see [Köçek Abdal], *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi*, pp. 58–67, 76–79, 221.

¹⁰⁶ Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, pp. 83–84; Karamustafa, 'Kalenders, Abdâls, Hayderîs'; Faroqhi, 'Conflict, Accommodation'; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography*, pp. 35–37; Karakaya-Stump, *The Kızılbaş-Alevis*, pp. 168–170.

likely also to enhance its control over these dervishes that in 1610 the Ottoman administration delegated to the Çelebis in charge of the Hacı Bektaş Shrine sole authority over all Bektashi-affiliated lodges.¹⁰⁷ This made the Bektashis one of the two most centralized tariqas in the Ottoman lands, the other being the Mevlevi, who, as we have seen, also had a philo-Alid orientation as well as a strong Persianate ethos.

Domestication within the framework of institutionalized Sufism, however, did not bring the Bektashis around to the Ottoman 'state madhhab'. To the contrary, from the time they emerged as an identifiable group in the fifteenth century down to the imperial ban on their lodges in 1826, Bektashi dervishes continued to espouse a slightly moderated version of *abdal* piety that was centered on 'a divinization of the human (which might be called 'theistic humanism') through the veneration of 'Ali', and they de-emphasized the canonical Sunni religious rituals as mere ritualism.¹⁰⁸ Throughout this period, Bektashi poets evoked Muhammad and 'Ali as an inseparable pair and paid tribute to the Twelve Imams in countless poems; sometimes they even identified themselves as belonging to the 'Ja'fari madhhab' (*Caferi-me-zheb*).¹⁰⁹ It seems that Ja'far al-Sadiq's (d. 765) role as the teacher of Abu Hanifa helped make 'Ja'farism' a more acceptable signifier of Shi'i faith among Rumi Muslims. At the same time, however, some of the Bektashi poets who identified themselves as 'Ja'fari' also took the precaution of interspersing in their poems occasional praise of the 'four esteemed beloveds' (*çehar yar-ı güzin*), meaning the first four caliphs.¹¹⁰ While I know of no Bektashi (or *abdal* or for that matter, Kizilbash) poet of the lands of Rum cursing the first three caliphs or any of the Companions of the Prophet on paper, Bektashis like other philo-Alid poets commonly gave vent to their hatred for Yazid and his ilk in their writings. Sadık Abdal (d. after 1470), for instance, wrote poems cursing Yazid and calling those who do not curse Yazid 'worse than animals', while Hayretî (d. 1534) wrote poems cursing Yazid, Shimr and Marwan for their role in the murder of Husayn, and affirming that the *abdals* would engage in *teberrâ* (ritual cursing) until the Day of Judgment.¹¹¹ Again, however, Bektashis

¹⁰⁷ Faroqhi, 'Conflict, Accommodation', p. 179.

¹⁰⁸ Karamustafa, 'Kaygusuz Abdal', pp. 338–339; for an alternative conceptualization of Bektashi discursive practices as 'esopraxy', see Soileau, 'Conforming Haji Bektash'.

¹⁰⁹ In most modern compilations, poems by Bektashis are intermixed with poems by Kizilbash-Alevis, and it is not always possible or meaningful to distinguish between the two groups. Nevertheless, for some examples of Bektashi poetry with Alid loyalist themes, see Sadık Abdal, *Sâdik Abdal Divanı*, pp. 84, 116–118, 126, 140–142, 180, 206–208; Gölpinarlı ed., *Alevî-Bektâşi Nefesleri*, pp. 31–32, 37–39, 53–57, 108–109, 117–119, 120–121, 154–155, 168–169, 176–178; Özmen ed., *Alevî-Bektaşî Şiirleri Antolojisi*, vols 2, and 3; Öztelli ed., *Bektaşî Gülleri*; pp. 49–96. For a pioneering study of the evolution of religious beliefs in *abdal* poetry from the fourteenth through the seventeenth century, see Oktay, *L'Homme Parfait*, ch. 4.

¹¹⁰ Hayretî, *Dîvan*, pp. 5–6 (tribute to the first four caliphs), 7–9, 9–12, 12–14, 14–15 (eulogies to the Twelve Imams); for a discussion of the mixed confessional messages found in Hayretî's poetry, see Tatçı, *Hayretî'nin Dinî-Tasavvufî Dünyası*.

¹¹¹ Sadık Abdal, *Sâdik Abdal Divanı*, pp. 84 (*Behâyimden dahi ebter Yezid'e kılmayan la'nât*), 126 (*Cehl-i neces içre mülmî' ol Yezidîler kamu*); Hayretî, *Dîvan*, pp. 9–12.

steered clear of using the word ‘Sunni’ in a pejorative sense, identifying the enemies of the Alids as ‘Yazidis’, ‘Marwanis’ or ‘Kharijites’ instead.¹¹²

How did the mixed messages given by the Bektashis about their confessional affiliations resonate among those Ottoman Muslims who self-identified as Sunni? As Helga Anetshofer has shown, several of the well-known Ottoman biographers of poets in the sixteenth century were not blind to the divergent beliefs of the Bektashi, Abdal, Haydari and Kalenderi poets they included in their biographical compendia, but marked this with relatively neutral descriptors such as *kalender-meşrebî* (with the sensibility of an antimonian dervish), ‘Alevi’, *muhıbb-i hanedân* and *mevâlî-mezheb* along with stigmatizing terms such as ‘Rafizi’ (Shi‘i) and *mülhid* (heretic). Anetshofer attributes this relatively latitudinarian attitude among the sixteenth-century Ottoman literati to their belief that the sensibility of antinomian dervishes went well with the ‘bohemian’ ethos of poethood.¹¹³

When we look beyond the biographical dictionaries of poets and into some other genres such as histories and religious and didactic texts, we encounter greater scepticism about the Bektashis’ conformity with Sunni Islam. Interestingly, nevertheless, most of the critique directed at the Bektashis in these texts was on account of their nonchalant attitudes towards the sharia, their non-performance of the canonical ritual prayers, their shaving off of their beard and their consumption of intoxicating substances such as bane and hump rather than their strong love for the Alids.¹¹⁴ Even Vahidi, a Sunni Sufi (possibly a Zeyni or a Halveti) who consigned the Bektashis, along with the *Abdals* of Rum, Haydaris, Camis, Hurufis and Şems-i Tebrizis, to the category of unorthodox dervishes, objected to the Bektashis’ practice of wearing bands bearing the names of ‘Ali, Hasan and Husayn on their heads, not so much because he found the practice objectionable, but because he considered the Bektashis to be too disreputable to be associated with the Alid Imams.¹¹⁵

By contrast, imputations of excessive Shi‘ism loom large in a long polemical poem written by the Halveti dervish ‘Abdülvahhab, or Vahib-i Ümmi (d. 1596), of Elmalı in southwest Anatolia against an unnamed Sufi or Sufi group who ‘professed’ to be *ışık* and to follow Hacı Bektaş and the Twelve Imams. ‘Abdülvahhab denounces the Shi‘itizing dervishes for such misdeeds as calling ‘Ali God (*Taîrı*), disrespecting and cursing the first three caliphs, advocating antinomianism (*mubâhatlık*), refusing to perform the canonical acts of worship and engaging in various forms of disreputable behavior contrary to the teachings of Hacı Bektaş.¹¹⁶ Since the mountains surrounding Elmalı were home to a major Bektashi and *abdal* cult, that of Abdal Musa,

¹¹² It should be noted, however, that one can make the last two observations also about the Abdalan.

¹¹³ Anetshofer, ‘*Meşairu’ş-Şuara’da Toplum-Tanımaç Sapkın Dervişler*’, pp. 95–96.

¹¹⁴ Aşık Paşazade, *Osmanoğulları’nın Tarihi*, pp. 571–572; on ‘Aşıkpaşazade’s life and social and political connections, see İnalcık, ‘How to Read Aşıkpaşazade’; Taşköprülüzâde, *Eş-Şakâ’iku’n-Nu’mâniyye*, pp. 52–53; Mustafa ‘Âli, *Essence of Histories*, vol. 5, p. 58; Şemseddin Sivasî, *Menâkıb-ı İmâm-ı A’zam*, pp. 121–124.

¹¹⁵ Vahidî, *Hâce-i Cihân*, pp. 217–228.

¹¹⁶ Elmalılı Vâhib Ümmî Halvetî, *Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, pp. 439–445.

as well as to the heterodox *tahtacı* (woodcutters) Turcoman community, it is hard to say whom exactly ‘Abdülvahhab targeted with these lines.¹¹⁷ Moreover, even though ‘Abdülvahhab himself professed to be (and probably was) a law-abiding Sufi who prays five times a day, in many other poems he also paid tribute to the Twelve Imams, and self-identified as an *abdal* and *ışık* as well as a Noktavi. Could ‘Abdülvahhab have meant by ‘Noktavi’ that he was a follower of the Hurufi leader Mahmud-ı Pasikhani (d. 1415)? The latter’s followers, the historical Nuqtavis, in Iran had been subjected to a brutal purge first by Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524–1576) in the 1570s and then by Shah ‘Abbas (r. 1588–1629), around 1590–2, the beginning of the second Islamic millennium. By the 1570s many Noktavis had fled to India, where they are thought to have provided one of the inspirations behind the novel ‘universal peace’ (*şulh-i kull*) policies of the Mughal emperor, Akbar (r. 1556–1605), and it is not impossible that some had also sought refuge in this remote corner of Anatolia, away from the watchful eyes of the Ottomans.¹¹⁸ It is of course possible that ‘Abdülvahhab used the word ‘Noktavi’ in some other sense, but even if so, it is clear that this particular branch of the Halveti brotherhood had absorbed influences from the Hurufi movement. Poems by Halvetis of Elmalı feature references to such Hurufi greats as Fazlallah Astarabadi (d. 1394) and Nesimi (d. 1417) as well as exhibiting certain elements of Hurufi cosmology.

The larger point to take from this discussion is that the Bektashis were not the only *tariqa* to absorb into their ranks members of marginalized, persecuted groups. Despite and perhaps because of their role as active agents of Sunnitization, Halvetis also performed a similar function vis-à-vis such persecuted groups as Hurufis, Bedreddinis and later, Hamzevis, as Bayrami-Melamis were called. However, unlike the later Bektashis, Halvetis were and would remain a remarkably decentralized brotherhood, with multiple branches, and sub-branches, and representatives of these branches showed considerable variety in terms of their religious, social, and political orientations. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the ‘Sunnitizing’ Halvetis, with close relations to Ottoman officialdom, were affiliated mainly with the Cemali and Sivasi branches, whereas the Gülşenis had a more troubled relationship with the Ottoman authorities until at least the late sixteenth century.¹¹⁹ Other confessionally ambivalent Halvetis belonged to the less well known Ahmedi or Yiğitbaşı branch of the Halveti *tariqa*. Ahmed Şemseddin-i Saruhani, known as Yiğitbaşı (d. after 1548), who was also ‘Abdülvahhab’s master, had lived and made his career in the Gediz basin. The region had been an early base of the Hurufis in Anatolia as well as one of the three epicenters of the rebellion started in the name of Sheikh

¹¹⁷ On the Bektashi and *abdal*-affiliated dervish lodges in the region, see Faroqhi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden*, pp. 57–69; Köprülü, ‘Abdal Musa’; Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, vol. 9, pp. 131–132, 134.

¹¹⁸ On the Noktavis, see Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, ch.4; Amanat, ‘Persian Nuqtavis’.

¹¹⁹ On the complex relations between the Halvetis and the Ottoman religious and political authorities, see Clayer, *Mystiques, état et société*; Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought*; Karataş, ‘The Ottomanization of the Halveti Sufi Order’; Emre, *Ibrahim-i Gulshani*.

Bedreddin, so it is not surprising to learn that sheikhs belonging to the line of Yiğitbaşı ‘adhered to the religious beliefs of the author of *Inspirations*.¹²⁰ Yet, in his *Compiler of Secrets (Cami’ü’l-Esrar)* (1534), Yiğitbaşı not only pays tribute to both Sultan Süleyman and Prince Mustafa, who was then governor of Manisa, but also professes strong support for the Ottoman policies of building mosques everywhere and installing imams as ‘military commanders’ (*serasker*). He also denounces both the Hurufis and ‘the *viücudis*’, even though he himself was immersed in the philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.¹²¹

Since Yiğitbaşı had made his career in the peak years of the ‘Kizilbash scare’, he must have taken special care to distance himself from the dervish circles suspected of ‘heresy’. However, as the century progressed and as Yiğitbaşı’s followers spread elsewhere, to Istanbul and beyond, they began to discourse with somewhat less restraint. One of these later Halveti-Yiğitbaşı sheikhs was Seyyid Seyfullah Nizamoğlu (d. 1601). While veneration of the Alids had been a well-entrenched tradition among Halvetis of the Yiğitbaşı branch, it clearly had an altogether greater import for Seyfullah. The son of a sayyid Sufi who had arrived in Istanbul from Baghdad, Seyyid Seyfullah was in all likelihood more than a philo-Alid nominal Sunni and may even have been a Twelver Shi‘i. Seyfullah’s *Divan* is a powerful testimony to his Shi‘i leanings, opening with no less than 33 poems written in praise of the Twelve Imams and containing many verses in which the poet unambiguously proclaims the *mezheb-i Ca’fer* to be the true path and in which he professes to be a ‘Ja’fari’ and a ‘*bende-i Ca’fer*’ (literally, slave of Ja’far, meaning the sixth imam Ja’far al-Sadiq). For all his love of the Alids, nevertheless, Seyfullah, like the Bektashi poets mentioned above, was also mindful of the fact that he lived in a Sunni-dominant polity; hence he refrained from excessive displays of ‘Shi‘i *ta’aşşub*’, cursing only the ‘Marvanids’ and the ‘Kharijites’ and never the first three caliphs or the Prophet’s wife, ‘A’isha. He even pays tribute to all four of the ‘rightly guided’ caliphs in two out of some 270 poems.¹²²

But it is especially in his prose works that Seyfullah’s concessions to Sunni sensibilities become noticeable. One of these works is *Nobility of Sayyidhood (Şeref-i Siyadet)*, an apologia for sayyids that he wrote in 1564 and in the preface of which he eulogizes the sultan and the grand vizier, indicating that he intended his text to be read also by people at the top of the imperial hierarchy. In this text, Seyfullah still curses Yazid, the ‘Marvanids’ and ‘Kharijites’ multiple times, and even asserts (in a versified section) that it is permissible to kill those who ‘do not like the children of ‘Ali’, but he also pays tribute (twice) to Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman alongside ‘Ali, ‘Commander of the Faithful’. Further, he defines the ‘people of Sunna and

¹²⁰ Mehmed Nazmi Efendi, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvufî Hayat*, p. 487.

¹²¹ For the relevant passages in modern Turkish transcription, see Ögke, *Ahmed Şemseddîn*, pp. 364–365, 370–374, 425–426. On Yiğitbaşı’s biography, see, in addition to Ögke’s work, Okumuş, ‘Yeni Kaynakların Işığında’; and Okumuş, ‘Ahmed Şemseddîn Marmaravî’.

¹²² For a Latinized Turkish edition of the *Divan*, see Seyyid Seyfullah, *Seyyid Seyfullah Külliyyatı*, vol. 1, pp. 1–228; for the references to the ‘four rightly guided caliphs’, see specifically pp. 33–34, 120.

Community' (*ehl-i sinnet ve'l-cemâ'at*) and 'the good people' (*ebrâr*) as people who perform the five obligatory deeds of Islam (namely, who utter the profession of faith, perform the ritual prayers, fast, pay the obligatory alms and go on hajj), but he sets them below 'those who have been drawn near' (*mukarrebîn*) and the 'people of God' (*ehlullâh*), who are defined as people who, in addition to performing the five obligatory deeds perfect their soul under the direction of a perfect master. Seyfullah further indicates that a perfect master should be someone of pure lineage and that no lineage is purer than that of Muhammad and 'Ali.¹²³ Similar concessions to Sunni norms can also be found in Seyfullah's *Compiler of Gnosés* (*Cami'ü'l-Ma'arif*), a hagiographical text in which he recorded his father's vita together with the vitae of several of the most influential and Sunnizing Halveti sheikhs of his time.¹²⁴

It has been argued that in giving such mixed messages about his confessional identity, Seyfullah, like the Bektashi poets mentioned above, was basically following the time-honoured Shi'i practice of taqiya or dissimulation.¹²⁵ However, the concept of 'dissimulation' alone cannot explain why Seyfullah represented himself in one way in one set of writings and in another way in others. Poetry, after all, was the prime medium for cultural expression in this period and Seyfullah's poems, in which he gives full vent to his devotion to the Twelve Imams, must have circulated much more widely than his putatively 'Sunni' prose works.¹²⁶ In this regard, his Ja'fari affiliation can only have been a 'public secret', and likely explains his exclusion from the biographical compendia of the seventeenth century, which were considerably more exclusionary than the biographical dictionaries of the sixteenth century.¹²⁷ Yet, despite being ignored in the written record until much later, Seyfullah lived a seemingly unperturbed life in the imperial capital.

Ultimately, cases like Seyfullah's go to show that it was not just religio-legal guidelines but also a set of socio-cultural norms that set the parameters of acceptable expressions of philo-Alid Sufi piety within a Sunnizing Ottoman Empire. Different guidelines applied to what could be said in poetry as opposed to prose, in literary texts as opposed to doctrinal ones; and in texts written for a general audience versus texts written for a specific audience. Different guidelines applied also in different kinds of spaces. In a brilliant unpublished study, the late Shahab Ahmad and Nenad Filipović have observed that in the early modern Ottoman context 'the boundaries of what could be said related to where it could be said'. Accordingly, while it was considered permissible for learned 'elites' to engage with even the most controversial

¹²³ For a Latinized Turkish edition of this treatise, see *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 103–143.

¹²⁴ For a Latinized Turkish edition of this text, see *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 159–220.

¹²⁵ Gölpınarlı, 'Seyyid Seyfullah (Nizamoğlu)', pp. 405–413. For more recent perspectives on the relevance of the practice of taqiya for Twelver Shi'is living under Ottoman rule, see Stewart, 'Taqiyya as Performance'.

¹²⁶ For a preliminary listing of the manuscript copies of his *Divan*, and prose works, see Seyyid Seyfullah, *Seyyid Seyfullah Külliyyatı*, vol. 1, iv–v and vol. 2, i–ii.

¹²⁷ For observations about the growing exclusivism of the later biographical dictionaries of poets, see Altok, 'Âşık Çelebi ve Edebî Kanon'; Kim, *The Last of An Age*; cf. Kuru, 'The Literature of Rum'.

strands of peripatetic philosophy and intellectual Sufism in intimate gatherings or *meclises*, it was another matter to do so in the presence of ‘commoners’ in more ‘public’ spaces, where law was ‘the ultimate arbiter of legitimacy’.¹²⁸

Distinctions between ‘public’ (*‘amma*) and ‘private’ (*hāṣṣa*) spaces and between ‘elites’ (*ḥavāṣ*) and ‘commoners’ (*‘avām*) were semantically and conceptually related in people’s minds. They were also fundamental to the way Sufis and even some non-Sufis conceptualized the relationship of Sufism to Sunni Islam. Sufis regularly distinguished between ordinary Muslims whom they regarded as *‘avām*, and the genuine ‘friends of God’ (*evliyāullah*) who were, regardless of their social status, regarded to be ‘elite’ in a spiritual sense. Because Sufis conceived of all existence as emanations of the divine, they also allowed for people of different social status and spiritual rank to perceive truth on different levels and in different forms. As we have seen with Eşrefoğlu and then again with Seyyid Seyfullah, some Sufis also seized on this idea of truth as being relative to one’s spiritual station to carve a space for themselves as confessionally ambiguous Muslims. Yet, because the sixteenth-century boundaries for Sunni conformity were drawn not only in doctrinal but also social, cultural, and spatial terms, the very complexity of the rules rendered them vulnerable to contestation from multiple directions. This was already apparent in the scholarly debates about Sufi beliefs and practices in the sixteenth century but became even more so when these debates were popularized and gained new social and political significations in the seventeenth century.

ATTEMPTS AT DISAMBIGUATION AND A SUFI PUSHBACK IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The seventeenth century introduced several new dynamics into Ottoman religious politics. Firstly, dynastic competition with the Safavids ceased to be a major driver of Sunnizing policies in the Ottoman lands. Instead, the crisis of the Ottoman state in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and intensified social and political conflicts gave a new impetus to the demands for a stricter adherence to the sharia and the Sunna. A second distinguishing feature of the seventeenth-century politics of religion was the broadening of the social base of the agents of Sunnization, and concomitantly with this, the intensification of debates about the definition of Sunni orthodoxy/praxy.

From the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639 until the downfall of the Safavid dynasty in 1722, the Ottomans enjoyed an unprecedentedly long period of peace with Iran. This prolonged peace corresponded in time with (and likely facilitated) the end to the sporadic Ottoman persecutions of the Kizilbash as well as a lull in the production of

¹²⁸ I read this piece, when it was in the form of an article titled ‘Two Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Heretics’. Subsequently, the project grew and took the form of a book project, which Shahab Ahmed having passed away, Nenad Filipović is currently bringing to conclusion. I am grateful to both authors for having shared the early article version with me, and I thank Nenad Filipović for allowing me to cite it here.

anti-Kizilbash, anti-Shi'i polemics.¹²⁹ Yet, the de-escalation of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict did not mean the end of confessional tensions in either empire. To begin with, the memory of the Ottoman-Safavid wars of the past remained etched in the consciousness of the parties concerned. When the Ottoman gentleman, courtier, and jack-of-all-trades Evliya Çelebi wrote about the trips he undertook to western Iran in 1647 and 1654, for instance, he frequently referenced the times when these lands had been in Ottoman hands. From Evliya's travelogue we learn that the two issues that had most angered the Ottomans about the Safavids in the sixteenth century continued to be a source of confessional antagonism also in the seventeenth century. Though hardly a Sunni zealot himself, Evliya professed to be just as incensed as his sixteenth-century predecessors had been by the Safavid practice of *teberrā*.¹³⁰ He also noted in an unmistakable tone of disapproval that mosques in Iran were largely empty, since 'unlike in the lands of Rum and of the Arabs' Iranians do not perform their ritual prayers in congregation, or if they come to the mosque for the five daily prayers, they complete the service in haste and then leave the mosque immediately.¹³¹

However, there are also signs of the normalization of Sunni-Shi'i relations in Evliya's *Book of Travels (Seyahatname)*. Even though Evliya followed the usual Ottoman practice in referring to the Kizilbash with such epithets as *evbâş* (rabble) and *bed-mâ'aş* (evil-living), he distanced himself from the more fanciful Sunni libels about how the Safavids and their Rumi followers secretly practiced orgiastic rituals called *mum söndürme* (extinguishing the candle). After raising the possibility that the practice had its origin in a wondrous occurrence in the time of the founder of the Safavid Sufi lineage Sheikh Safi, the Ottoman writer rejected the claim that the Kizilbash of his time practiced such orgies, and he labelled it as the fabrication of vicious and slanderous people. He noted that he himself saw no evidence of such practices during the two times he travelled through Iran and the fifty plus times that he passed through Keskin and Bozok in the province of Sivas, Deliorman and Karasu in Silistra and Dobrudja in Rumeli (all places with Kizilbash populations); he conceded, however, that there were people in these places who 'neglected their ritual prayers and who ran after singing girls'.¹³² Writing for an exclusively Ottoman readership, Evliya

¹²⁹ On Ottoman-Safavid relations and the role of religious discourse in diplomacy in the seventeenth century, see Selim Güngörürler's contribution to this volume as well as Güngörürler, 'Fundamentals' and Güngörürler, 'Islamic Discourse'; on the Kizilbash communities in the Ottoman Empire and their relations with the Ottomans and the Safavids in this period, see Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevis*, pp. 229–235, 240–245, 292–301.

¹³⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 2, pp. 123–124; vol. 4, p. 180, 184; for the English translation, see Evliya Çelebi, *Travels in Iran*, 20, 22, 145, 153. Note that the English translations given in this essay are mine rather than from the published translation, which misses some of the nuances of the Ottoman Turkish text.

¹³¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 2, p. 126, 137, 145; vol. 4, pp. 176, 183–184; Evliya Çelebi, *Travels in Iran*, pp. 27, 54, 72, 140, 151–153.

¹³² Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 4, p. 188; Evliya Çelebi, *Travels in Iran*, pp. 159–160.

was careful not to present any group living in the core Ottoman lands explicitly as Kizilbash, for this would still have been an incriminating claim. However, he felt at greater liberty when describing the confessional affiliations of the people who lived in Safavid Iran. He notes, for instance, that the people of Marand are all Shi'is (*mezheb-i Şî'iyyân*); while most people in Maragheh are crypto-Hanafis; likewise, the people in Shirvan are said to be 'Sunni and Hanafi' and 'secretly perform the ritual prayers in congregation'.¹³³

At the same time, however, Evliya surveyed the religious landscape of Iran not only as a member of the Ottoman Sunni ruling elite, but also as a philo-Alid dervish, specifically, a Gülşeni who was inclined to view most other Sufis favorably. Evliya's sympathies towards Sufis of all colors are apparent in the way he often makes an exception for the Sufi groups he encountered in Iran. While he deemed the great majority of the notables of Tabriz to be 'Shi'is' and 'heretics', for instance, of the city's 'righteous sheikhs' he merely noted that 'their madhhab is not known'.¹³⁴ Even though Evliya was famously defensive of the Bektashis of the Ottoman lands and insisted that they were all Sunni, he could not claim the same for the dervishes at a 'Bektashi lodge' (*tekke-i Bektaşiyân*) attached to a place of visitation associated with Imam Rıza in western Iran. He conceded that these dervishes were 'not *ehl-i Sînnet*', but he still described them as 'believers and affirmers of the oneness of God' (*mü'min ü muvahhid cânlar*) and he added that there are 'no cursers (*teberrâî*) among them'.¹³⁵ From these passages one gets the sense that for this seventeenth-century Ottoman man of letters, philo-Alid Sufi piety represented an intermediate realm and perhaps even something of a bridge between Sunni and Shi'i Islam. This is also confirmed by the fact that Evliya resorted to the idiom of trans-sectarian philo-Alidism himself, whenever he wanted to make himself agreeable to his Safavid hosts. He reports that when the Turcoman governor of Tabriz called him 'fanatical' (*muta'assib*) for refusing an offer of wine, he responded: 'O my khan, I am not fanatical! I am an adherent of the Hanafi madhhab, pure in creed, a traveler of the world, a boon-companion of mankind and a lover of the House [of the Prophet and 'Ali] (*muhîbb-i hanedân*)'.¹³⁶

It was in fact no small matter for Evliya to be charged with *ta'assub*, or fanaticism. It will be remembered that in the sixteenth century 'fanaticism' had been a charge that Ottoman Sunni writers had typically directed to Shi'is. In the seventeenth century, this usage was still current, but philo-Alid Sufi writers like

¹³³ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 2, pp. 123, 135, 149–150; Evliya Çelebi, *Travels in Iran*, pp. 20, 52, 80.

¹³⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 2, p. 127; Evliya Çelebi, *Travels in Iran*, 30. On Evliya's Sufi connections, see Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, pp. 117–122.

¹³⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 4, p. 193; Evliya Çelebi, *Travels in Iran*, pp. 168–170; for a discussion of this passage, see Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevis*, pp. 175–176.

¹³⁶ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 2, pp. 130–131; for a similar instance, see Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, vol. 4, p. 192; see also, Evliya Çelebi, *Travels in Iran*, pp. 41–42, 167. Note that the expression *muhîbb-i hanedan* is mistranslated as 'lover of the king' in the English translation.

Evliya used the word just as commonly to describe those of their coreligionists who adhered to a particularly narrow definition of Sunni Islam and who anathematized all who disagreed with them. By the mid seventeenth century, ‘fanaticism’ had become a charge laid most often at the door of the Kadizadelis, the followers of a Sunni revivalist movement named after Kadızade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1635). The Kadizadeli movement was in part an outgrowth of the Ottoman Sunnitization efforts of the sixteenth century, and in part a response to the crisis that had struck the Ottoman state at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Inspired by the writings of Birgivi (Birgili) Mehmed Efendi (d. 1573), Kadızade Mehmed and his followers wanted to define Sunni Islam more exclusively as well as more consistently, without the ambiguities and contradictions that had been a part of mainline Ottoman religious culture until that time. This meant, among other things, a significantly narrower margin for Sufis and Sufism. The Kadizadelis rejected a wide variety of Sufi beliefs and practices from the Sufi ritual music and dance to seeking intercession at the tombs of holy men and women, to the monistic philosophy of *wahdat al-wujūd* (unity of being) as *bid’ats* or blameworthy innovations that had no place in the normative example of the Prophet. They also challenged the authority of Sufi sheikhs to weigh in on religiolegal disputes, or to claim a special dispensation for themselves as spiritual ‘elites’.¹³⁷ In more vulgar renditions, the Kadizadeli attacks even took the form of jibes at the representatives of most of the mainline Sufi brotherhoods. ‘Mevlevis are the chief of heretics/Bektashis are their brothers/Kadiris are the confidants of the Devil’ went one such verbal attack, which equated these dervishes, along with the Halvetis and Celvetis, with the ‘Kizilbash’ and ‘heretics’.¹³⁸

It was the extension of the attacks to the ‘learned’, ‘sharia-abiding’ and socially and politically powerful Sufi masters and their patrons that exposed the Kadizadelis to charges of ‘fanaticism’. In the eyes of their critics, the Kadizadelis were opportunists who turned little issues into big ones and who seized on religious polemics to build a wide following among the masses. Some of the more dispassionate observers like the polymath Katib Çelebi (d. 1657) found fault with both the Kadizadelis and the Sufis in this regard. Citing the popular saying ‘Masses are asses’ (*el-‘avam ke’l-hevam*), Katib Çelebi argued that matters that require careful reasoning and deliberation should not be discussed in front of the common folk, as the latter are incapable of subtlety and incline towards fanaticism.¹³⁹ Learned Sufis who polemicized against

¹³⁷ For a sampling of the studies on the Sufi-Kadizadeli conflict, see Çavuşoğlu, *The Kadizadeli Movement*; Zilfi, ‘The Kadizadelis’; Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*; Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*, ch. 3; Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*; Tezcan, ‘The Portrait of the Preacher’; Terzioğlu, ‘*Bid’at, Custom*’.

¹³⁸ ‘*Mevlevilerdür mülhidiin başı/Bektaşilerdür anuñ qardaşı/Ķādirilerdür şeytān sırdāşı.*’ The full diatribe, written by a certain Gamî, can be found appended to a copy of the *Pendnâme* of Eskici Hasan Dede in Süleymaniye Library, Ahmed Paşa MS 345, fols 163b–164a.

¹³⁹ Katib Chelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, pp. 28–30; for similar remarks, see also pp. 48, 97–98, 108–109, 133–134, 137, 148–149. For the original passage, which can be more literally translated as ‘Commoners are insects’, see Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizânü’l-Hakk*, p. 152.

the Kadizadelis also deployed a similar line of criticism and sought especially hard to bring out the differences between the pressures brought on the Sufis in the sixteenth century and in their own time. Ability to discriminate was key to the defense of the Sufi ritual dance (*devrân*) by the Halveti-Sivasi sheikh ‘Abdülahad Nuri (d. 1651). In the sixteenth century, when Ibn Kemal and Ebüssü‘ud had issued fatwas deploring the use of music and rhythmic motions in Sufi ceremonies, they had done so as part of a campaign against the ‘heretical Shi‘is’ (*Revâfîz*); they had never intended to interfere with those Sufis who belonged to the people of Sunna and Community’, ‘Abdülahad argued.¹⁴⁰

Sufis also went on the counterattack by accusing the Kadizadelis of denying sainthood (*vilayet*) and of disrespecting the House of the Prophet. In his collective hagiography of three generations of Halveti-Sivasi sheikhs, Mehmed Nazmi reports that ‘Abdülahad’s uncle and spiritual master ‘Abdülmeccid Sivasi (d. 1639) clashed with Kadızade Mehmed about many matters, but their greatest clash was over Kadızade Mehmed’s claims that the parents of the Prophet had died without faith and that Hasan and Husayn had been killed by their grandfather’s sword, meaning that they had been justly killed. Confident that these claims would strike his readers as outrageous, Nazmi asks the rhetorical question, ‘Now how was Sivasi Efendi supposed to tolerate this as a descendant of the Prophet himself?’¹⁴¹

Unfortunately, so far, no text of Kadızade Mehmed has come to light that makes either of the claims imputed to him by Nazmi. Regarding the claim that the parents of the Prophet had died without faith, however, there is a very interesting discussion in Katib Çelebi’s *Balance of Truth (Mizanü’l-Hakk)*. Katib Çelebi, of course, was no Kadizadeli, but he had attended Kadızade’s lectures, and on this particular issue, he took a position that was antithetical to the position that had been taken earlier by Ibn Kemal as well as by the aforementioned ‘Abdülahad Nuri. According to Katib Çelebi, the view that the parents of the Prophet had died as believers is based on weak traditions and shows the influence of ‘Rafîzi’ thought on the latter-day Sunnis. Because the latter-day Sunnis venerate the House of the Prophet like Shi‘is, they are reluctant to admit that the parents of the Prophet who had died before the latter had received revelations from God must have died in a state of ‘presumptive infidelity’ (*hükmi küfr*). Presumptive infidelity, Katib Çelebi explains, is not the same as actual infidelity. Since only God can know what is in people’s hearts, jurists must decide by the apparent signs of faith, and it was on that basis and in that sense that Abu Hanifa himself had ruled in *The Supreme Understanding (al-Fiqh al-Akbar)* that the Prophet’s parents had died as unbelievers. Without naming ‘Abdülahad Nuri, Katib Çelebi also dismisses the arguments of those like Nuri who claimed that *The Supreme Understanding* was not Abu Hanifa’s work. Still, Katib Çelebi would not offend public

¹⁴⁰ ‘Abdülahad Nuri, [*Treatise about the Sufi dance*], fols 6a–7a.

¹⁴¹ Mehmed Nazmi Efendi, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvufî Hayat*, pp. 458–459.

sensibilities, and concludes by saying that the best course for ordinary Muslims is to say, 'It is to be hoped that the Prophet's Parents were believers', and to avoid controversy.¹⁴²

As for the statement that 'Hasan and Husayn died by the sword of their grandfather', it surfaces in Ibn Khaldun's (d. 1406) *Prolegomena (Muqaddima)*, where it is attributed to the Maliki jurist and hadith scholar Abu Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1148). Basically, the reasoning behind the statement was that the grandsons of the Prophet were justly killed because by rising against the Umayyads they had jeopardized the unity and well-being of the Muslim polity. If indeed the Kadizadelis maintained this view, this would mean that they took a decidedly pro-Umayyad stance on the struggle between the Alids and the Umayyads, thus departing significantly from the mainstream opinion among the Ottoman Rumi ulema. The problem is, however, that none of the known Kadizadeli texts takes this position, while a few give a different impression. Most notably, Kadizade's versified creed, written in 1627/1628, devotes some five couplets to the eulogy of Hasan and Husayn where they are referred to as 'the two munificent martyred imams' (*imāmeyn-i hümāmeyn-i şehideyn*).¹⁴³ This makes it unlikely that Kadizade Mehmed considered the murder of Hasan and Husayn to have been just, unless he later changed his opinion, or unless he, like some Sufis, expressed different views in different contexts. Another possibility is that Nazmi attributed to Kadizade Mehmed views that some other Kadizadelis entertained. Indeed, further down in the text, Nazmi identifies Köse Mehmed Efendi, who was a preacher at the Bayezid Mosque, as one of the 'fanatical preachers' who asserted that 'the parents of the Prophet died as unbelievers, Hasan and Husayn were killed by the sword of their grandfather, Mu'awiya and Yazid are caliphs by right (*bi-hakkin*) and all Sufis are infidels'.¹⁴⁴ Of course, in the absence of other textual evidence, we have no way of knowing whether Köse Mehmed did indeed entertain such views. Regardless, the fact that such explicitly anti-Alid statements surface only in the Sufi critiques of the Kadizadelis rather than in texts by the Kadizadelis indicates that it continued to be exceedingly difficult to challenge the place of moderate philo-Alidism within Ottoman Sunnism also during the seventeenth century.

It was, by contrast, easier to marginalize the Sufis on account of their controversial sayings and rituals, and the pressures on them reached a new high during the grand vizierates of Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed (gv. 1661–1676) and Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pashas (gv. 1676–1683). No wonder, then, that when the Kadizadelis and their powerful patrons lost face in the aftermath of the Ottoman defeat at Vienna in 1683, long-repressed Sufis got back at their persecutors by seizing on the cause of philo-Alidism. The main actor in this regard was Niyazi-i Mısri (d. 1694), a learned Sufi who like 'Abdülvahhab and Seyyid Seyfullah discussed above came from the

¹⁴² Katib Chelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, pp. 65–74; for the original phrasing, see Kâtib Çelebi, *Mîzânü'l-Hakk*, pp. 177–182. For the wider corpus of Ottoman texts that addressed this thorny issue of the faith of the Prophet's parents, see Ayğın, 'Osmanlı Dönemi Nübüvvet Literatürü', pp. 161–167.

¹⁴³ Karaca, *Kadızâde Mehmed Efendi*, pp. 222–223.

¹⁴⁴ Mehmed Nazmi Efendi, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvufî Hayat*, pp. 614–615.

Yiğitbaşı branch of the Halveti tariqa. There is no doubt that like most Halvetis, Mısri also revered the Alids: He named one of his two sons ‘Ali and gave the name Fatima to four of his daughters, who all died in infancy.¹⁴⁵ Until the last years of his life, however, Mısri’s philo-Alidism did not reach the intensity of, say, such philo-Alid Sufis as Seyyid Seyfullah. In fact, in that part of his life that he called the ‘time of caution’ (*zamān al-ittikā*) before his fallout with the Ottoman authorities, Mısri took care to prove the compatibility of Sufism with Sunni Islam. This is quite evident in his treatise that is popularly known as *Treatise of Questions and Answers* (*Risale-i Es’ile ve Ecvibe*) or *Treatise on Sufism* (*Risale-i Tasavvuf*). One of the questions Mısri tackles in this treatise is ‘What is the *madhhab* of the Sufis?’ The Sufi sheikh answers this question by stating matter-of-factly that ‘most Sufis are people of Sunna and Community’ (*ehl-i sünnet ve’l-cemā’at*) and follow one of two theological schools—Maturidi and Ash‘ari—in their beliefs and one of the four Sunni legal schools—Hanafi, Shafi‘i, Maliki and Hanbali—in their practice. Despite this categorical statement, however, Mısri later introduces a degree of ambiguity to the discussion, when he takes up another question about the meaning of Bayezid al-Bistami’s (d. 848 or 875) statement that he belongs to the ‘madhhab of God’ (*Allāh mezhebi*). In his explication, Mısri points out that with these words Bayezid did not mean to reject the established madhhabs; he was rather discoursing on the level of divine reality, and on that level all madhhabs are metaphors (*mecāz*) and are no different from one another.¹⁴⁶

That Mısri himself adhered to a similar position is confirmed by another treatise of his, *Treatise on the Return* (*Risale-i İ‘ade*). In the first part of this treatise, Mısri explains his (rather unorthodox) belief in an eternal cycle of existence, in which the human soul returns to the material world time and again until he no longer takes pleasure in the return. Then, in the latter part of the treatise, he evaluates the confessional differences among the Muslims from the viewpoint of this belief. Because all beings are ultimately nothing but manifestations of divine existence, it is meaningless for people to engage in disputes about who is superior to whom among the believers, argues Mısri. From this perspective, both the *Revāfız* who see the manifestation of God only in ‘Ali, and the ‘Kharijites’ who see it only in the first three caliphs are classified as ‘people of separation’ (*ehl-i tefrik*) who are stuck at the lowly rank of the animal soul in the cosmic hierarchy. As for those Muslims who see the manifestation of God in all four Rashidun caliphs but who find it in its most perfect form in ‘Ali (the most common position among philo-Alid Sufis) and those others who consider the Real to be manifest in all four Rashidun caliphs but in decreasing order (the standard Sunni position advocated by jurists), they are called ‘people of preference’ (*ehl-i tercih*). According to Mısri, the ‘people of preference’ are superior to the ‘people of separation’ in that they can perceive the divine attributes; however, the ‘people of separation’ can still not perceive the divine essence, and thus continue to have

¹⁴⁵ For Mısri’s handwritten notes about the births and deaths of his children, see Niyazi-i Mısri, *Compilation of Sheikh Mısri*, fols 5a–5b; for further insights on his marriages and children, see Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*, pp. 73–76, 154–157.

¹⁴⁶ Niyazi-i Mısri, *Treatise of Questions and Answers*, fols 10a–11a. This is the earliest known copy of the treatise, handwritten by Mısri’s disciple Dervish Mustafa ‘preacher of Kavala’.

meaningless disputes about the ranking of the first four caliphs and accuse each other of 'heresy'. Ultimately, it is only the 'people of union' (*ehl-i cem'*) 'and people of love' (*ehl-i 'išk*), who see the manifestation of God equally in all four Rashidun caliphs, and who know that only God knows the true station of believers that meet the unqualified approval of Mısri.¹⁴⁷

While this second treatise reveals Mısri to be essentially a non-sectarian, non-madhhab-minded Muslim, a more radical rejection of the mainstream Sunni Hanafi position can be found in a third treatise attributed to him, *Gift for the Lovers and Prize for the Desirous* (*Tuhfetü'l-Uşşak ve Turfetü'l-Müştak*), also known as *Treatise on the Unity of Being* (*Risale-i Vahdet-i Vücut*). Though attributed to Mısri, this text was likely the work of one of his followers, who shared the Sufi master's radical monism and even took it to a new level. The author of the *Gift for the Lovers*, whom I shall call pseudo-Mısri, was clearly an ardent 'Ali loyalist. He even criticizes Abu Hanifa, the 'Greatest Imam' of the Hanafis, for having condemned the cursing of Mu'awiya and Yazid, and he practices what he preaches by cursing Mu'awiya, his family and his followers right then and there. Despite this strong show of non-compliance with Sunni orthopraxy, pseudo-Mısri stops short of endorsing the Shi'i position, and embraces instead a radically esotericist and non-confessional stance. Here, too, the true madhhab is identified as 'the madhhab of God', and Muslims are urged to avoid confessional squabbles and strive to reach the spiritual station of Muhammad (*maḳām-ı Muḫammed*) instead. Pseudo-Mısri reminds his readers that if and when one reaches that station, one becomes the Mahdi (the divinely guided one) and is no longer obligated to be Hanafi.¹⁴⁸

There is no evidence that the historic Mısri ever rejected the Hanafi madhhab as did pseudo-Mısri, but he, too, viewed confessional differences among the Muslims through the prism of a radical version of Ibn 'Arabi's monistic philosophy rather than as a run-of-the-mill Sunni Hanafi or as a crypto-Shi'i. It was also this monistic philosophy that eventually prompted him to challenge the established boundaries of philo-Alidism in mainline Sunni piety. This, however, did not happen until the last three years of Mısri's life. In between, Mısri had fallen out with the Ottoman authorities (1674), spent more than fifteen years of his life in exile on the islands of Rhodes and Lemnos and finally seen his nemeses fall from favor and the Ottoman authorities make overtures to make peace with him once again. It was in this atmosphere of lingering resentment and hesitant anticipation of rapprochement that Mısri divulged a 'revelation' that he claimed he had recently received from the archangel Gabriel: Hasan and Husayn, grandsons of the Prophet, are also prophets (*rusul*). Significantly, this was not just a piece of esoteric wisdom that Mısri shared with his trusted disciples. To the contrary, he made his revelation public by sending letters to prominent

¹⁴⁷ Niyazi-i Mısri, *Treatise on the Return*, fols 100a–102a.

¹⁴⁸ Niyazi-i Mısri, *Treatise on the Unity of Being*, fols 1a–28b. The fact that the text includes numerous quotes from Persian masters such as Nasir Khusraw (d. 1088) and Jalal al-din Rumi suggests that the author cannot have been Mısri, who had only rudimentary knowledge of Persian and cited no Persian texts in his works, as discussed in Terzioğlu, 'Mecmû'a-i Şeyh Mısri', pp. 306–308.

Sufis as well as to the Ottoman sultan, the grand vizier and other grandees, presenting proofs for his claim and urging them to accept his prophecy.¹⁴⁹ A year later he was even arguing that it was incumbent on all Muslims to renew their faith by reciting a revised version of the profession of faith (*shahāda*): ‘I testify that there is no God but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God and his grandchildren Hasan and Husayn are also prophets through the prophet of God.’ Those who refuse to renew their faith thus should no longer be considered as Muslims but as ‘Yazidis’ after the accursed Yazid, Mısrî declaimed.¹⁵⁰

On the surface, Mısrî’s claim that Hasan and Husayn are prophets might seem a provocation, an unprecedented claim that flies in the face of the Sunni doctrine about the finality of Muhammad’s prophethood and which possibly even smacks of Shi’ism. Closer examination reveals, however, that this prophecy was indebted more to Ibn ‘Arabi than to any Shi’i influence. It is true that neither Ibn ‘Arabi nor any of his later followers had ever attributed prophethood to Hasan and Husayn; however, Ibn ‘Arabi had significantly blurred the boundaries between prophethood and sainthood by arguing that there are two kinds of prophethood: the prophethood of legislation (*nubuwwa al-tashrī*), which is also known as *risāla*, and ‘general prophethood’, which is also known as *walāya*, sainthood. Accordingly, all prophets were at the same time *awliyā* or saints, while saints were heirs to the prophets. Depending on one’s place in the spiritual hierarchy, one could be a *walī* in the mold of any one of the major prophets, but the highest station in Ibn ‘Arabi’s prophetological scheme belonged to the ‘seal of the saints’ (*khatm al-awliyā*), which was in several key writings identified with the seal of Muhammadan sainthood. Ibn ‘Arabi left it unclear whether the seal of Muhammadan sainthood came once in human history or whether the office was always filled by whichever believer happened to occupy the highest spiritual station at the time.¹⁵¹

Mısrî himself had written both more academic, and more inspired and personal pieces on Ibn ‘Arabi’s prophetology. In the diary entries that he kept circa 1681–1682, in particular, he had toyed with the idea that he himself was a latter-day Christ, the persecuted prophet par excellence, as well as the *axis mundi* and the seal of the saints; he had also sought support for his claims from numerological interpretations of Ibn ‘Arabi’s *The Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* (*Kitab ‘Anqa Mughrib*) as well as from the ‘revelations’ he received from the archangel Gabriel himself.¹⁵² His claim

¹⁴⁹ Niyazi-i Mısrî, [Hasan-Hüseyin tract dated 15–17 Rebi‘ü’lahir 1102 AH (16–18 January 1691 CE)], fols 47b–49a; for further details on Mısrî’s banishments and his prophecy about Hasan and Husayn, see Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*, pp. 141–189, 434–443.

¹⁵⁰ Niyazi-i Mısrî, [Hasan Hüseyin tract dated Zi’l-ka‘de 1103 AH (July/August 1692 CE)], fols 55a–55b.

¹⁵¹ Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*; Elmore, *Islamic Sainthood*; Morris, ‘Ibn ‘Arabi and His Interpreters’; Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi*, pp. 193–195.

¹⁵² For the autograph diary, see Niyazi-i Mısrî, *Compilation of the Sacred Words*; for a modern edition with Latinized transliteration and facsimile, see Niyazî-i Mısrî, *Niyazî-i Mısrî’nin Hatıraları*; for a discussion of the diary, see Terzioğlu, ‘Man in the Image of God’; for further discussion of Mısrî’s prophetology, see Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*, ch. 5.

about the prophethood of Hasan and Husayn was a direct continuation of these prophecies except that now, for the first time in years, he sought to make his prophecy known to a broader public.

This was also why Mısrı tried to support his prophecy with arguments derived from the Quran and hadiths and the wider religious and legal literature. The Sufi sheikh was especially keen to show that accepting Hasan and Husayn as prophets did not go against the Sunni doctrine that Muhammad is the last prophet. He explained that because Hasan and Husayn were prophets *through* Muhammad, their prophethood did not weaken but rather strengthened Muhammad's unique stature as the last prophet. Besides, when Muhammad had said, 'there will be no prophet (*nebı*) after me', he had meant that there would be no prophet after him who would bring a new sharia. Since Hasan and Husayn were non-legislative prophets who had complied with the sharia of their grandfather, this did not present a problem in their case.¹⁵³

In the context of this argumentation, Mısrı also went back to the debate on the malediction of Yazid. He wrote that those who refused to believe his prophecy about Hasan and Husayn, did so, because the 'Greatest Imam', Abu Hanifa, had disapproved of cursing Yazid. Unlike pseudo-Mısrı, Mısrı was not ready to forego the authority of Abu Hanifa, so he argued instead that the latter had issued the statement about the impermissibility of cursing Yazid only because he had wanted to protect the true believers from persecution by the Yazidis (i.e., the Umayyads), who were oppressing them. In reality, Abu Hanifa had hated the government of Yazid and the 'Yazidis' so much that he had preferred to die in prison than be a qadi for them.¹⁵⁴ In sum, the Sufi sheikh concluded, one cannot be considered a true believer, unless one loves the House of the Prophet and hates and curses its enemies, including Yazid, his 'supporters, helpers, friends and all those who do not curse him because they like him'.¹⁵⁵ This position prompted Mısrı to further label the Kadizadelis, or as he called them, the 'deniers' (*münkir*, pl. *münkirin*), and especially his chief nemesis, the recently deceased imperial preacher Vani Mehmed (d. 1685), as 'unbelievers', 'Yazidis' and 'Yazidi Vanis' (*Vaniyye-i Yezidiyye*).¹⁵⁶

'Yazid' and 'Yazidi' were, as discussed above, common slurs used by Shi'is and philo-Alid Sufis for all perceived enemies of the Alids, and this must also have been the primary sense in which Mısrı used the term. But the skilled user of double-entendres that Mısrı was, it is possible that he also wanted to evoke in the minds of his

¹⁵³ Niyazi-i Mısrı, [Hasan Hüseyin tract dated Zi'l-ka'de 1103 AH (July/August 1692)], fol. 54b; *Treatise on Hasan and Husayn*, fol. 61b; [Hasan Hüseyin tract dated 28 Muharrem 1103 AH (21 October 1691)], fol. 71b.

¹⁵⁴ Niyazi-i Mısrı, [Hasan Hüseyin tract dated Zi'l-ka'de 1103 AH (July/August 1692)], fols 55a–55b; [Hasan-Hüseyin tract dated 15–17 Rebi'ül-ahir 1102 AH (16–18 January 1691)], fols 48b–49a.

¹⁵⁵ Niyazi-i Mısrı, *Feasts of Gnosis*, fols 99a–100b; for the modern Turkish edition, see Niyazi-i Muhammed Mısrı, *Mawâidul-İrfan*, pp. 149–152.

¹⁵⁶ Niyazi-i Mısrı, [Hasan Hüseyin tract dated 15–21 Cemaziyü'l-ahir 1103 AH (4–10 March 1692)], fols 34b–35b.

readers an association between Vani Mehmed, who came from Van, and the marginalized Yazidi communities that inhabited the mountainous terrain between the Van Lake in the north and the Sinjar Mountains in the south.¹⁵⁷ As arbitrary as such name-calling may seem, it was not uncommon in this period for the discontented to appropriate the anathematizing discourse of the Ottoman authorities and deploy it against them. About a decade after Mısri's Hasan and Husayn prophecy, Vani's son-in-law Sheikh ül-islam Feyzullah Efendi would be similarly anathematized as 'Kizilbash' by the motley coalition of Janissaries, dervishes and shopkeepers of Istanbul who would lynch him in the notorious Edirne Incident of 1703. In Feyzullah's case, his family's Iranian origins would seem to have provided the sole pretext for the choice of the label 'Kizilbash'; otherwise, the sheikh ül-islam was just as ardent and stringent a Sunni as his father-in-law, and it was partly built-up resentment at decades of Sunni revivalist pressures that had motivated the crowds.¹⁵⁸

In fact, Mısri's advocacy of the prophethood of Hasan and Husayn and the public lynching of Feyzullah were both part of a wider societal pushback to decades of Sunni revivalist ascendancy in the Ottoman imperial center. Because Vani and the Kadizadelis had been staunch advocates of military expansionism during the grand vizierates of Köprülüzade Fazıl and Kara Mustafa Pashas and because the grandest of those military ventures, the Second Siege of Vienna, had badly misfired, the Palace no longer listened as intently to the Kadizadelis and tried hard to mend bridges with the Sufi sheikhs. Even Feyzullah found it necessary to bring up his family's Halveti pedigree alongside his connection with Vani in the autobiography he penned shortly before his demise, and he enlisted the support of Sufi and Kadizadeli preachers alike for his ambitious religious indoctrination campaign in the Empire's European provinces.¹⁵⁹ Discontent, however, was still in the air, and through the 1680s and 90s, ongoing military and political crisis made it easier for the discontented to make their voices heard. It was also in this context that prominent Sufi leaders polemicized against their critics in a way that they had been unable to do for decades.

Of course, Mısri's proclamation about the prophethood of Hasan and Husayn and his anathematization of all who did not accept this was excessive even by the standards of that turbulent time. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the prominent Sufi leaders of the time took it upon themselves to condemn this

¹⁵⁷ In the seventeenth century, the Yazidis were even more vulnerable than the Kizilbash to otherization. Even the otherwise latitudinarian Evliya Çelebi related the violence that the troops of Melek Ahmed Pasha visited upon the Yazidi community of Sinjar with glee. On this, see Dankoff ed., *The Intimate Life*, pp. 167–191; on the Yazidis, see also the contribution of Yavuz Aykan to this volume.

¹⁵⁸ The Kizilbash imputation appears in a 'Janissary ballad' that commemorates the revolt of 1703; for the original text, see Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgo Turco, Box 39: fols 96b-98a; for an English translation, which has some misreadings, see Zarinebaf, *Crime and Punishment*, pp. 183–186. I thank Yaşar Tolga Cora for sharing with me his facsimile of the poem.

¹⁵⁹ On the autobiography, see Türek and Derin, 'Feyzullah Efendi'nin' and Nizri, 'The Memoirs'; on Feyzullah's campaign of religious indoctrination, see Göcen, 'An Attempt at Confessionalization'.

proclamation publicly. One of Mısri's harshest critics in this affair was his younger contemporary and fellow Bursan, the Celveti master İsmâ'il Hakkı Bursevi (d. 1725). Even though Bursevi and his master 'Osman Fazlı-i Atpazari (d. 1691) had also been the target of state persecution in the 1670s and 80s, this experience did not make Bursevi sympathetic to Mısri. Rather, he denounced Mısri as a 'heretic' (*mülhid*) and an 'evildoer' (*müfsid*), who had deserved to be killed, and he blamed the 'upheaval of religion among the people of the age' for the licence that had been given to Mısri to lead people astray.¹⁶⁰ Mısri's one-time friend and fellow Halveti, Mehmed Nazmi, on the other hand, took a different tack by dismissing the Hasan and Husayn prophecy as the product of a delusional mind. Nazmi argued that Mısri's extreme love of leadership (*sevda-yı riyâset*) and ill treatment by the authorities had driven him into 'melancholy' (*mâl-i hülyâ*) and 'madness' (*cünûn*) and had caused him to make delusional statements such as those about the prophethood of Hasan and Husayn.¹⁶¹

Interestingly, however, not all viewed Mısri's claims about Hasan and Husayn so negatively. In his biographical dictionary of Ottoman ulema, completed circa 1703, 'Uşşakizade complained that nearly one-third of the population in Bursa, home to the central Mısri lodge as well as a great many of Mısri's followers, still adhered to this 'false belief'.¹⁶² Even if 'Uşşakizade was exaggerating, it is clear that at least some of Mısri's followers were actively copying and disseminating his treatises proclaiming Hasan and Husayn to be prophets. Moreover, Mısri's claim that Hasan and Husayn are prophets was also being discussed and defended by some Sufis who were *not* Mısri disciples. As early as 1692, the noted Damascene scholar and Sufi, with a dual Kadiri and Nakshbandi affiliation, 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (d. 1731) wrote a treatise in defense of Mısri's prophecy. In this treatise, Nabulusi also draws on Ibn 'Arabi's concept of 'general' as opposed to 'legislative' prophethood to explain Mısri's claims about the prophecy of Hasan and Husayn. He acknowledges that even if it is permissible, it 'contravenes courtesy (*âdâb*) towards the Prophet' to call Hasan and Husayn 'prophets'; but still Mısri cannot be blamed, if he made these statements 'in a state of rapture', or if he made them in a state of 'lucidity' but did not mean to deny the finality of Muhammad's prophethood. Ultimately, Nabulusi not only rules against deeming Mısri an 'unbeliever' because of his utterances about Hasan and Husayn, but also 'asserts that those who deny that Hasan and Husayn are perfect heirs to the Prophet and the locus of manifestation of the perfections of his prophecy deserve to be accused of unbelief' themselves.¹⁶³ In effect, Nabulusi endorses, if not the terminology, then the essence of Mısri's claim about the 'prophethood' of Hasan and Husayn, and even supports him in castigating the deniers of this unique stature as unbelievers.

¹⁶⁰ İsmail Hakkı Bursevî, *Seyr ü Sülûk*, pp. 80, 216, 224; see also the passage cited in Gölpinarlı, 'Niyâzî-i Mısri', pp. 218–219.

¹⁶¹ Mehmed Nazmî Efendi, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvufî Hayat*, pp. 488–489.

¹⁶² Uşşakîzade, *Zeyl-i Şakâ'ik*, pp. 998–999.

¹⁶³ Pagani, 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi's Treatise'.

CONCLUSION

Misri's proclamation about the prophethood of Hasan and Husayn might seem an odd point at which to end an essay on the topic of confessional ambiguity in the age of confession-building in the Ottoman Empire. After all, this episode sits oddly with the basic narrative about how Rumi/Ottoman Islam became progressively more 'shariatized', 'madhhabized,' 'confessionalized', 'disenchanted' and 'disambiguated' during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Are we then back to Bauer's and Ahmad's theses about how Islam remained a hermeneutically pluralistic tradition or a 'culture of ambiguity' until the advent of modernity? Not necessarily. What I have tried to present in this essay and what I will try to recapitulate below is a more layered understanding of early modern Ottoman religious history, one that highlights the multiple and sometimes contradictory social, political, and cultural trends that impinged on the ways in which Rumi Muslims understood and lived their faith.

It would be exceedingly hard to deny that the social, political, cultural, and religious environment in the core Ottoman lands changed in important ways between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Simply put, there were more institutions and mechanisms in place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than previously to uphold and disseminate Sunni orthodoxy/praxy and to correct 'deficiencies' in the 'lived Islam' of ordinary Muslims in at least the urban centers. Yet, despite this, non-canonical forms of philo-Alid Sufi piety did not follow a clear downward slope during the period surveyed. This was partly because 'orthodoxizing' pressures engendered counter currents, or to paraphrase Hüseyin Yılmaz, 'Sunnitization' bred 'non-Sunnitization'.¹⁶⁴ Partly, too, the spread of institutionalized Sufi brotherhoods and Sufi lodges in the same period provided designated safe spaces for those religious practices (such as ritual cursing) that might have elicited controversy when practiced in more public venues such as mosques, marketplaces, and public roads. The social and cultural codes of urban elites also allowed a greater margin for the expression of extreme love for the Alids and hatred for their enemies in such genres and discursive modes as poetry and mystical discourse than in others. It is reasonable to think that ongoing processes of urbanization and embourgeoisement made these codes accessible to more people during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

At the same time, it is important to remember that the kind of Sunnism that was instituted and endorsed by the Ottoman authorities in the sixteenth century was itself accommodating towards moderate forms of philo-Alidism and Sufism. There were historical reasons for this, not least the fact that learned Sufis had long been an important conduit through which Islamic norms reached the lands of Rum. Admittedly, the state-appointed ulema dignitaries eclipsed the Sufi masters as figures of religious authority from the late fifteenth century onwards. Furthermore, for several decades at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the meteoric rise to power of Shah Isma'il and the turmoil that it caused in Anatolia badly strained Ottoman-Sufi relations and created an atmosphere in which philo-Alid Sufis lived under constant surveillance and threat of punishment, as described so vividly by Garibi. Still, the Ottoman

¹⁶⁴ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, pp. 49–50.

imperial authorities needed the Sufis' help to reach out to the wider Muslim populace and the Sufis used their leverage to negotiate the terms of Ottoman Sunnism. By the second half of the sixteenth century, an understanding had been reached between the two sides, and many urban Sufis were back in the game as allies of a Sunnifying Ottoman state.

It was both this negotiated Sunnism and the privileged place that Sufis occupied in it that came under attack with the rise of the Sunni revivalist movement of the Kadizadelis in the seventeenth century. In place of the Sunni-Sufi synthesis of the sixteenth century, the Kadizadelis advocated a more stringent definition of Sunni Islam, one that was grounded on strict adherence to the sharia and the Sunna, and which did not make exceptions for local customs or grant special dispensations to 'perfected masters' (*mürşid-i kâmil*). In a time in which there was strong societal demand for law and order, the Kadizadelis' call for rigorism in the application of the law found a receptive audience both within the palace and among the city folk. However, even at the height of Kadizadeli influence, institutionalized Sufism continued to strike even deeper roots in Ottoman society. Alongside the already well entrenched Halvetis, Celvetis, Nakşbendis and Mevlevis, even once marginal groups such as the Bayrami-Melamis and Bektashis widened their networks and became more visible. Hence it would be wrong to see the seventeenth century as the time Sunni revivalism triumphed and Sufism was in retreat. If anything, religious and intellectual life in the principal Ottoman cities became *more rather than less diverse* in this period.

Of course, diversity also meant more clashes, both verbal and physical. While the Kadizadelis charged the 'Sufi pretenders of the time' with perpetrating 'blame-worthy innovations', their Sufi critics charged the Kadizadelis with 'fanaticism' and 'denying sainthood'. Perhaps because the debates unravelled in a time of declining tensions between the Ottomans and Safavids, neither side hurled at the other accusations of Shi'i leanings. Questions about due reverence to the House of the Prophet came up more in the arguments of the Sufis, who accused the Kadizadelis of questioning the faith of the parents of Muhammad, and of approving of the murder of Hasan and Husayn. Finally, the debates about philo-Alidism were brought to a whole new level, when, in a time of declining Kadizadeli influence, one of their most embittered victims, the exiled Sufi leader Niyazi-i Mısri proclaimed Hasan and Husayn to be prophets.

In a larger sense, Mısri's proclamation about Hasan and Husayn was a powerful Sufi pushback to decades of Sunni revivalist attempts to push Islamic law as the sole arbiter of Islamic legitimacy. It is less certain what relation, if any, the proclamation had to do with Ottoman sectarian politics in the late seventeenth century. In the 1690s, around the time Mısri declared Hasan and Husayn to be prophets, the Ottoman authorities were waging a war against the Twelver Shi'i tribal leaders in Mt. Lebanon. According to Stefan Winter, the Ottoman grievances against the Hamadas were more political than religious, but still the Ottomans found it useful to couch

their campaign in confessional terms.¹⁶⁵ We do not know whether news of the Ottoman campaigns against the Hamadas in Mt. Lebanon ever reached Misri as he transitioned between Lemnos and Bursa, but Nablusi, who ran to Misri's defense in the Hasan and Husayn affair was quite close to the scene of action and toed the official line by speaking of the Hamadas as 'pernicious heretics'.¹⁶⁶ For this Damascene Sufi at least, philo-Alidism and Shi'ism were ostensibly separate phenomena.

What was the role of the 'state' in all this? That imperial politics and bureaucratization of the ulema were fundamental to Ottoman Sunnitization in the sixteenth century goes without saying. The state was of course still important in the seventeenth century except that the dispersion of power between the palace and the grandee households and such collective bodies as the *kul* soldiers makes it harder to discern clear patterns. There were times that the imperial administration lent its support to the Kadizadelis, but even then, high-ranking officials could also privately sponsor some Sufis. In times of crisis, factionalism in state ranks further intensified the religious divisions. What was perhaps the most constant through all this was what we might loosely call 'state ideology', namely the notion that the Ottoman state was a Sunni power that would not tolerate 'heretics' under its rule. Of course, this does not mean that the Ottomans persecuted all who fell outside the bounds of Sunni Islam. They did not and could not, because at the end of the day political loyalty trumped religious conformity, and the state authorities were willing to turn a blind eye to religious differences, if doing so served their best interests. Given these limitations, what 'state ideology' produced, rather, was selective silences in the sources. For instance, Nablusi noted the 'heretical' beliefs of the Hamadas when they clashed with the state, but kept silent about their Twelver Shi'i affiliations on other occasions. Likewise, Evliya insisted on the Sunniness of all the Bektashi dervishes he met in the Ottoman lands but not of those he met in the Safavid realms.

Finally, it is worth remembering that the Ottomans were not alone in the early modern world in accommodating a surprising degree of simulation, dissimulation, confessional ambiguity, and ambivalence, even while actively promoting a particular version of religion. Recent scholarship has shown that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw not only the congealing of confessional churches and the division of societies along confessional lines, but also experimentations with practices of 'toleration', and 'multiconfessionalism' in various parts of Europe.¹⁶⁷ Likewise, the intensification of confessional loyalties did not necessarily spell the end of, and perhaps even spurred new articulations of confessional indifference and ambiguity as well as outright dissimulation among early modern Europeans.¹⁶⁸ Of course, it remains an open question to what extent early modern Europeans and Ottomans had similar attitudes towards simulation and dissimulation, and ambivalence and indifference

¹⁶⁵ Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule*, pp. 88–116, 146–156.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁶⁷ See, for instance, Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*; Safley ed., *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism*; Hanlon, *Confession and Community*; Luria, 'Religious Coexistence'.

¹⁶⁸ Pietsch and B. Stollberg-Rilinger eds, *Konfessionelle Ambiguität*; Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*; Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy*.

(not to mention religious pluralism and multiconfessionality), but the more crucial point to take from this discussion is that confessional ambiguity and ambivalence were not necessarily attributes of a pre-confessional age, but also an integral and perhaps even an inevitable part of the processes of confession-building and confessional differentiation.

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19. GRAND VIZIER KOCA SINAN PASHA AND THE OTTOMAN NON-MUSLIMS

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On 27 April 1594 the Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha, who was then residing in Belgrade, a logistic centre during the Hungarian campaign,¹ ordered the relics of the Serbian national saint, Saint Sava (d. 1236),² to be burned publicly in the area of Old Vračar, in the very downtown of today's Belgrade, after he had them brought from the Herzegovinian monastery of Mileševo where they had been placed since the saint's demise.³ Many contemporary and near-contemporary Serbian and Western sources, from the Old Serbian colophons to the English author Knolles, mention this event, although mostly in a lapidary way.⁴ But it was believed on the basis of decades of fruitless search that no Ottoman source discussed it. In 1983, however, British Ottomanist Christine Woodhead published her doctoral dissertation dedicated to the chronicle of the Ottoman campaign in Hungary in 1593–1594 penned by the Ottoman chronicler Ta'likizade (c.1550–1599).⁵ As it turned out, the third chapter (out of eighteen in total) of Ta'likizade's chronicle describes the burning of the relics of Saint Sava, making it one of the few early sources for this event.⁶ Furthermore, it is

¹ On this campaign, see Jorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen*, vol. 3, pp. 291–319, (hereafter: Jorga, *GOR*); Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, III/1, pp. 71–76. For the list of the contemporary and near-contemporary French narrative sources, see Samardžić, ed., *Beograd i Srbija*, pp. 633–643.

² On him, see Ćirković ed., *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. 1, esp. pp. 297–314.

³ On the monastery, see Radojčić, *Mileševa*. On the region of Herzegovina which was a part of the kingdom of Bosnia and a province in the *eyalet* of Bosnia, see Dinić, 'Zemlje Hercega Svetoga Save', pp. 151–258.

⁴ A detailed analysis of all preserved sources about the event is offered in: Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā* (a monograph in print based on the author's 1991 M.A. thesis submitted to the Belgrade University).

⁵ Woodhead, *Ta'likī-zāde's Şehnāme-i Hümāyūn* (hereafter: Woodhead).

⁶ Woodhead, pp. 185–196.

the most detailed account of the event discovered until now. Although it was written in the macaronic and complicated high Ottoman style (*faṣīḥ*)⁷ the work in its entirety, and this chapter in particular has first-rate evidentiary value. Additionally, unlike the majority of the later Ottoman chroniclers, Ta'likizade was not biased towards Sinan Pasha.⁸ We shall proceed with an analysis of this narrative, especially with respect to how Sinan Pasha's role is reflected in it.

This paper is also a case study which attempts to provide an indirect proposal on how to address questions of interplay between religion(s), politics, state(s), society, and personalities in the sixteenth-century Ottoman world, with a look also at the wider Mediterranean basin and Central Europe that lay beyond the Ottoman borders. The main character in this case study is a long-lived Ottoman high dignitary who was quite a remarkable person. Consequently, any generalization based on the deeds of a man so idiosyncratic, even according to the standards of his own age, should be taken *cum grano salis*. This exceptionalism, on the other hand, might be very telling not only for the study of such a person but equally for the study of a plethora of persons who behaved totally differently. In this paper we shall focus on how the Ottoman Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha treated Ottoman non-Muslims on two separate occasions. At this stage it is time to give a short overview of Sinan Pasha's *vita et gesta*.

KOCA SINAN PASHA (1520?–1596)⁹

This Ottoman statesman who served repeatedly as grand vizier towards the end of his life was born in historical northern Albania. His father was either a Catholic or a Muslim Albanian peasant. According to the old custom, Muslim Bosniaks and Muslim Albanians were taken into the janissary corps. On the other hand, there is strong evidence suggesting he had Catholic origins.¹⁰ One can safely assume that Sinan was

⁷ On this category, see Ateş, 'Seci', esp. coll. 310b–311a. Ta'likizade praised in the very same work the language of the Ottoman core lands (*lisân-i Rûm*) as the most comely, the most embellished, gem-studded and adorned, for it is an imperial language in the first place (*lisân-ı Rûm daḥı kelâmü'l-mülûk mülûkü'l-kelâm kavlınce cemî'-i elsinenüñ ebhâ vü ezyeni muraşsa' u müzeyyeni olmağın*), Woodhead, p. 134. On this point see also Develi, *Osmanlı'nun Dili*, p. 68; Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own', pp. 7–25.

⁸ On this in detail, see Filipović, *Qoca Sinân Pâşâ*.

⁹ Two best biographies are Kaleshi, 'Veliki Vezir Kodža Sinan-paşa', pp. 104–144 and Turan, 'Sinan Paşa'. Among the most important sources are Öz, 'Topkapı Sarayı Müzesinde Yemen Fatihi', pp. 171–193, (hereafter: Öz = Arşivi); Sahillioğlu, *Koca Sina Paşa'nun*, (hereafter: Sahillioğlu = Telhisler). Also, see *Tarih-i Selânikî*, (hereafter: Selânikî = İpşirli); Câfer İyânî, *Tevârih-i Cedîd* (hereafter: İyânî = Kirişcioğlu); *Topçular Kâtibi* (hereafter: Topçular = Yılmaz).

¹⁰ Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 263–265, 272 et passim. A Ragusan document of 1571, listing all the renegades in the Imperial Council, defined Sinan as *Albanese cattolico*. See Malcolm, *Agents*, pp. 265, 493 (n. 5). Besides, Malcolm's book is one of the rare publications where the

taken into the janissary corps according to that custom. His brother Ayas Pasha¹¹ was already a janissary brought up in the Seraglio. Thanks to that, Sinan's career advanced faster than was usual in the sixteenth century. In 1567 he was appointed governor of Egypt. This province was of enormous importance for the Ottoman Empire. Obtaining its governorship was a sure sign that such a person might eventually enter the Imperial Council. In the years 1568–1570 Sinan Pasha was a major player in the pacification of the rebellion in Yemen. Thereafter, the Ottoman chroniclers described him as 'the conqueror of Yemen' (*fātiḥ-i Yemen*).¹² In the beginning of May 1573, Sinan Pasha was appointed the seventh vizier of the Dome. In the year 1574 he successfully fought the Spaniards and assured by the end of August 1574 the Ottoman success in Tunisia. After a long conflict in the Imperial Council where he allied himself with Lala Mustafa Pasha¹³ against the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha,¹⁴ Sinan Pasha emerged as a victor, together with Lala Mustafa Pasha, in the initiative for an expedition against Persia. Soon after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1579, Sinan Pasha removed Lala Mustafa Pasha as a competitor and became the chief commander of the Ottoman Persian expedition. At the end of August of 1580 Sinan Pasha became grand vizier for the first time. According to his hand-written report to the sultan, Sinan Pasha returned from Persia in July 1581 with war booty estimated at 150 000 ducats. Nonetheless, in 1582 he was deposed from office and exiled to Malkara on the European shore of the Sea of Marmara where he possessed a huge estate.

In 1588, during the famous *sipahi* rebellion, caused by their resistance to payment in debased coinage, Sinan Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier for the second time, on 14 April. In this second term, which lasted more than three years, Sinan Pasha accepted a Persian peace offer. The twelve-year conflict between the two Muslim gunpowder empires was brought to an end. He was also successful in stabilizing the Ottoman currency. Sinan Pasha lost his position on 2 August 1591. Moreover, his various endowments in Syria, Palestine, Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, historical Anatolia, and eastern Turkey, which he had established after he was appointed grand

person and historical impact of Sinan Pasha is treated in an unbiased way. The contemporary Western sources sometimes provide a more balanced picture of Sinan Pasha. Therefore, Von Hammer, based on the Ottoman sources gives a predominantly negative portrait of Sinan Pasha, while Jorga furnishes us with a more objective view. See, Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 170–171 et passim. A balanced view on this grand vizier is also provided in Graf, *Renegades*, based mostly on the Austrian Habsburg evidence.

¹¹ On him, see Baysun, 'Ayas Paşa'; Parry, 'Ayās Pasha'; Küttükoğlu, 'Ayas Paşa'. The question of whether Ayas Pasha was indeed a brother of our Sinan Pasha needs a reexamination. For the purposes of our paper we, tentatively, accepted the received wisdom.

¹² Turan, 'Sinan Paşa', col. 671a. For comparison see Nahrawāli, *Lightning over Yemen*.

¹³ On him, see the classic paper by Turan, 'Lala Mustafa Paşa', pp. 551–593.

¹⁴ On him, see Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 35–63, 131–179; Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa'; Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolović*; Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolovitch*, to be read together with an important review by Veinstein in *Turcica* 27 (1995), pp. 304–310; Afyoncu, 'Sokullu Mehmed Paşa'.

vizier, were confiscated for the state treasury and he was once again banished to his Malkara estate.

In 1593, after a series of crises and riots that brought a state of chaos to the capital, the imperial seal was awarded to him for the third time. On this occasion, Sinan Pasha turned towards Habsburg Austria and took charge of the war that entered history under the title of The Long War (1593–1606). Belgrade was the main logistic centre of this long war.¹⁵ Although he succeeded in conquering certain important fortresses, this campaign turned to be very protracted. This, naturally, caused a lot of financial pressure and many interest groups came into conflict. In February 1595 the old commander-in-chief was removed from office for a short time. After only five months, Sinan Pasha became grand vizier again, for the fourth time. He was backed by a very strong party composed of the four most important viziers in the Imperial Council as well as by both the chief jurist (sheikh ül-islam) Bostanzade (d. 1598)¹⁶ and the chief military judge (*qadiasker*) Baki Efendi (d. 1600),¹⁷ one of the greatest Ottoman poets ever. Thanks to Pasha's not very successful resolution of the conflict with the Wallachian Prince Michael (r. 1593–1601),¹⁸ as well as to the poor conduct of his favourite son Mehmed Pasha¹⁹ on the Habsburg front, at the end of 1595 Sinan Pasha was yet again removed. His successor from the clan of Sokollu died only nine days after his appointment and thus Sinan Pasha was brought, by the hand of destiny, to the grand vizierate for the fifth time. This was to be his last tenure in that position. The Ottoman chroniclers, who were generally hostile to him, describe these last years of his as the tenure of a senile and irresponsible angry old man. On the other hand, one of his greatest political allies in the last years was nobody less than Hoca Sa'deddin (d. 1599),²⁰ the powerful royal tutor, a great intellectual, and the head of one of the most influential Ottoman ulema clans. Sinan Pasha passed away on 3 April 1596. He left an estate consisting of 600 000 ducats, 20 boxes of emeralds, 61 measures of pearl, 600 mink coats, 29 loads of the gem-studded objects and various movables whose value was estimated in millions of silver coins.²¹ His too were manifold endowments all around the empire.

It is quite noteworthy that this person achieved so much on the military field and in the political arena and left behind an enormous wealth as well as numerous endowments all around the empire, but none of this saved him from having a bad reputation in both contemporary narrative sources and later historiography. Ottoman, Persian, European, Ottoman Christian, and Ottoman Jewish sources, predominantly the narrative ones, all agree that he was a corrupt, bad-tempered, severe person. Only very few contemporary narrative sources disagree. The reason for this

¹⁵ On this, see Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 365–382; Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare*.

¹⁶ On him, see İpşirli, 'Bostanzâde'.

¹⁷ On him, see İz, 'Bâkî'; Çavuşoğlu, 'Bâkî'.

¹⁸ On this Prince of Wallachia, see Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 289–290, 303–333.

¹⁹ On this person, see, e. g., Selânikî = İpşirli, Index s. v. Mehmed Paşa, Koca Sinan-zâde.

²⁰ On him, see Turan, 'Sa'd-ed-din'; Schwarz und Winkelhane, *Hoğa Sa'deddin*. On his origins, clan and his client network, see Sohrweide, 'Hoğa Sa'deddin und die Perser', pp. 170–179.

²¹ Selânikî = İpşirli, II, pp. 584–585.

remains an enigma and a detailed study of his character and deeds as well as the nature of his era is a desideratum required to answer the question of how much such an image was grounded in reality.

SINAN PASHA, THE BURNING OF THE RELICS, AND TA'LIKIZADE'S NARRATIVE

Ta'likizade's narrative is a very well-crafted text with a thesis. It differs from the conventional Ottoman popular annalistic texts. In such texts where there is no plan of discussion, main theses, arguments, or proofs, the main unit of understanding the events is purely calendrical. The events are noted down as they occur, with no attempt to construct a hermeneutical argument about why something happened or what the consequences of an event were. Ta'likizade, on the other hand, not only narrates the events; he comments on them, and he offers broad explanations. His work is historiography connected to religious polemics and a biographical panegyric with a clear purpose. It is made up of the following sub-chapters:

- a) Description of the monastery and its geographical setting.
- b) Description of the relics and relic chest/coffin, i. e. reliquary.
- c) The wealth of the monastery.
- d) The cult of Saint Sava among local Muslims.
- e) The letter concerning the relics and the rebellion.
- f) Seizure and burning of the relics.

We shall proceed with an analysis of his narrative, point by point.

a) Ta'likizade uses the terms *deyr* and *kilise* for the monastery. This overlaps with the usage in various official Ottoman sources concerning Mileševo in the period 1468–1614.²² Using *Volksetymologie* and its play with names of different origins as one of the favourite rhetorical stratagems of Ottoman historiography and literature,²³ Ta'likizade connects the name of the monastery (Mileševo) with the hero of the Serbian Kosovo myth, Miloš Obilić, who was believed to have been the assassin of Murad I. Ta'likizade calls him *Milūš Kōbila*,²⁴ as he was known in the Ottoman narrative sources.²⁵ It is interesting that the chronicler combines the Kosovo version of the Ottoman narrative sources with the local tradition, testified to in the works of European travellers, which connected the monastery and the nearby fortress with the

²² Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*, pp. 97–109. Also, see Bojanić, 'Dva Priloga', pp. 97–103; Spaho, 'Mileševo', pp. 363–374; Zirojević, *Crkve i Manastiri*, p. 133.

²³ This trait of Ottoman historical writing was recognized by both Paul Wittek and Victor Louis Ménége. See Ménége, *A Survey*. We are grateful to the late Prof. Ménége as well as to the late Prof. Inalcik who both helped us, back in 1987, in obtaining a copy of this still unpublished masterpiece; Filipović, 'Bosansko Krajište', pp. 167–206, esp. pp. 191–192.

²⁴ Woodhead, p. 185 and n. 6.

²⁵ Olesnicki, 'Turski Izvori', pp. 59–92, esp. 89–92. For more on Obilić, see Ćirković, 'Dopune', p. 456.

Kosovo events.²⁶ This is a clear proof of the extent to which the Ottoman literati were aware of the local non-Ottoman tradition and how they were able to rewrite such a tradition and re-edit it in accordance with their literary and other agendas.

According to Taʿlikizade, the monastery was well built, domed, lavishly decorated. He is sincerely fascinated by it, for he compares the monastery with the Seraglio in Istanbul and Indian pagan shrines. The chronicler gives us an account of the frescoes on the walls of the monastery church which included scenes from both the Old and New Testaments. This is also surprisingly accurate. Studies of Byzantine and Serbian medieval art include Mileševo in every single history of Byzantine painting before 1453. They show special interest in the earliest layer of the frescoes dating from the first half of the thirteenth century.²⁷ Taʿlikizade knows that the frescoes are full of graffiti and that some of them had been mutilated with stones. This is an equally accurate observation of one aspect of Balkan folk culture which involved using the powder scraped from frescoes as a supposedly miraculous remedy, especially for blindness.²⁸ For a long time it has been supposed that the popular culture of the lower strata of the Balkan non-Muslims was terra incognita for Ottoman Muslim intellectuals.²⁹ In parentheses one might say that the entire text is characterised by familiarity with both the high and the popular culture of the local Christians. Taʿlikizade expresses his fascination with the monastery's beauty tempered by his despair that this emanation of God's beauty is defiled and polluted by infidels. The following verses illustrate his point:

Its interior is full of impure and dishonourable infidels,
It is paradise which is polluted by the gentiles.³⁰

Taʿlikizade applies the Ottoman variety of Sufi neo-platonic aesthetics according to which the beauty of a person, animal, plant, edifice, object etc. is only a trope (*mecāz*)

²⁶ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*, pp. 99–101. Also, see Samardžić ed., *Beograd i Srbija*, pp. 129, 372 (Philippe du Fresne-Canaye—1573); pp. 138–139, 381–382 (Jean Palerne Foresien—1582). On their visits to Mileševo see also Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, pp. 297–299, esp. p. 297 (the visit of du Fresne-Canaye on 26 January 1573); pp. 339–341, esp. p. 341 (the visit of Palerne Foresien on 18 August 1582).

²⁷ Radojčić, *Mileševa*.

²⁸ On this habit, see Slijepčević, 'Stare Zadužbine', p. 37. This essay, which rightly became famous in the ex-Yugoslav countries, was published for the first time in 1929 and was one of the first examples of scholarly revindication of the artistic qualities and cultural importance of post-Byzantine arts and crafts in the Christian Orthodox Commonwealth, in the period 1453–1690 especially.

²⁹ The anonymous reviewer of this essay observed how those who postulated this 'lack of knowledge' apparently never read Evliya Çelebi's travelogue. The present author is grateful to the reviewer for this remark which strengthens the main thesis of the paper.

³⁰ Woodhead, p. 187. 'İçi pür gebr-i pelid ü murdār/ Cennetiin levveşet-he 'l-küffār.'

for the Truth of God's Beauty (*ḥaḳīkat*).³¹ The poet is puzzled why such beauty was given to Christians. For this is a beautiful house of God inhabited by impure and dishonourable untrustworthy monks. He quite accurately reports the presence of a number of monks living in the cells (*mābeyn*).³² According to the Ottoman sources and European travellers from ca. 1468–1626, between 40 to 80 monks inhabited Mileševo.³³ This was indeed a high number.

b) Ta'likizade describes the relics of Saint Sava as impure dried skeletons (*ḳadīd-i pelīd*), geomancer's skeletons (*ḳadīd-i kehene*), and old impure corpses (*mürde-yi pelīd-i köhene*), which are obviously worthless and undeserving of worship given that they belong to 'the Nazarenes,'³⁴ who are devoid of confession and perfidious lawless sodomites who follow the ways of the unbelieving Christians robbed of their senses (*üslüb-ı meslüb-ı Tersā üzre Naşārā-yı bī-dīn ve ḥusārā-yı bed-āyīn*)³⁵. Sometimes he addresses the relics as a living person: merely as Saint Sava. For him the relics are clearly objects of pagan worship (*şirk*), without any basis in the true faith. No one should pay respect to them. Nonetheless, the writer has no doubts about the supernatural powers of the relics. According to him, the relics speak, prognosticate, and enter the politics of the day. They are agents of the powers of darkness, and protégés of the devil. As for the monks, he says that they are tricksters inspired by the devil. This dimension of solid conviction about the supernatural powers of the relics in the service of the devil is of the highest importance. We believe that not only Ta'likizade, but Sinan Pasha himself was strongly convinced of these supernatural abilities. The political benefit of the pacification of the monastery together with the rich booty taken from it would not exclude the dimension of the Pasha's strong conviction that he was fighting a justified war as a partisan of Light against the army of devilish Darkness.

³¹ On this, see Ahmed, *Islam*, pp. 38–46 and other places. The point is further elaborated and put in the context of Ottoman cultural history in Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*, especially the analysis of the well-known adage *al-majāz qanṭaratu l-ḥaḳīqa*. Also, see Heinrichs, 'On the Genesis', pp. 112–140; Mustafa Ali, *Ḥilyetü'r-ricāl*, pp. 272–274 (the editor's discussion of the term *ḥaḳīkat* in the Ottoman context).

³² Woodhead, p. 193.

³³ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāşā*, pp. 107–108, 158–159. Also, see Spaho, 'Mileševo', pp. 367–369.

³⁴ One of the standard Ottoman terms for Christians, *Naşārā*, is here translated in a more literal way as 'the Nazarenes' to preserve the author's synonymical language game in juxtaposing this term with another word frequently used as a term for the Christians, *Tersā*. See 'tersā', *Redhouse*, col. 532b; and 'naşārā', *Redhouse*, col. 2084b. Redhouse renders the latter term as 'Nazarenes, Christians'. The term *naşārā* was used in Ottoman diplomatics to describe Christians (e. g. *mülük-i naşārā*). It is mentioned frequently in the Quran and as such it must have been familiar to all strata of Ottoman Muslims. For the terms *naşārā* and *naşrānī* in the Quran, see Q II: 62, 111, 113, 120, 135, 140; III: 67; V: 14, 18, 51, 69, 82; IX: 30; XXII: 17.

³⁵ Woodhead, pp. 185, 187–188, 191–192. The last quoted syntagm *üslüb-ı meslüb-ı Tersā üzre Naşārā-yı bī-dīn u ḥusārā-yı bed-āyīn* is indeed a masterpiece of rhetorical invective. For the term *ḥusārā* with the meaning of homosexual and used as a form of abuse in the Punjabi language, see www.urbandictionary.com/Khusara, accessed on 1 September 2018. The term clearly originated in premodern Turco-Persianate courtly and/or urban setting(s).

Further, Ta'likizade describes the relic chest, namely the relic coffin (*tābūt*),³⁶ and he says that it was made of 18 *vuḳīyye* of silver, namely more than 23 kg³⁷ of silver (*on sekiz vuḳīyye sim-i hām̄la endūde*). The relics were perfumed with expensive perfumes (*revā'ihle ālūde*).³⁸ The other sources confirm the existence of such a coffin which was a masterpiece of the thirteenth-century Byzantine style silver-smithing. The gilt pure silver plates were enamelled (Slav. *hineu[s]i* < Gr. *χόμευσις*, *χέμευσις*) as well as gem-studded and put as an outside cover of the wooden coffin.³⁹ The chronicler knows that an episcopal staff made of rock crystal was placed in the coffin next to the saint's head (*başı uçında kabzası billūr bir 'aṣā*).⁴⁰ The English traveller, Fox, who visited Mileševo in 1589, noted the miraculous abilities of the staff, writing that his travelling companions, three Ragusan Catholic merchants, rubbed their eyes with the apple head of the staff for they believed it was very good for their eyes.⁴¹ Once again we encounter the widely accepted belief in the miraculous abilities of the relics and other objects from the coffin, this time viewed positively. Also, the chronicler observed that a hand with gem-studded and embellished bracelets and with a lot of rings with gems on its fingers was stored separately, outside of the coffin and/or the chest (*parmaklarında cevheri nice engiṣteri ve muraṣṣa' sīvārlarla bir elin tabutdan birūn kılmiṣlar*).⁴²

c) Ta'likizade claims that Mileševo Monastery was very rich at the time these events took place. The source of this wealth were the enormous contributions in

³⁶ It is interesting that the Venetian bailo to Constantinople, Paolo Contarini, in 1580 used the term *arca*, which corresponds to the Ottoman *tābūt* to describe the relic coffin and/or chest of the Mileševo Monastery (*l'arca di santo Saba, ch'è tutta guernita di fuori d'argento a figure dorate*). See *Diario del Viaggio di Contarini*, p. 19. He visited Mileševo on 21 May 1580. See Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, p. 335.

³⁷ 1 standardized *vuḳīyye~oḳka* = 400 *dirhem*, i. e. 1.2828 kg. See Škaljić, *Turcizmi*, s. v. 'oka'; Hinz, *İslâm'da Ölçü*, p. 30. See also İnalçık, 'Introduction', pp. 318–320 who warns that the earlier Ottoman *vuḳīyye~oḳka* weighed 1228. 835 g or 389 *dirhem* of different standardization. H. Sahillioğlu has shown that the official *dirhem* in Ottoman use by the end of the seventeenth century was actually the *dirhem-i Tebrizi* of 3.072 g, while after the seventeenth century the official *dirhem* became the *dirhem-i Rūmī* which weighed 3.207 g. This would render the following ratio: 1 standardized pre-seventeenth century *vuḳīyye~oḳka* = 400 *dirhem*, i. e. 1.2288 kg. Also, see Herzig, 'A Note'; Agoston, *Guns*, pp. 243, 245.

³⁸ Woodhead, p. 187.

³⁹ Miljković, *Žitija*, p. 197 and n. 695. Also, see Popović, 'Mošti Svetog Save', p. 82.

⁴⁰ Woodhead, p. 187. On this staff, see Radojković, *Srpsko Zlatarstvo*, pp. 76–77; Petković, *Manastir Svete Trojice*, p. 45 and pict. 60; Miljković, *Žitija*, pp. 83–84 and n. 215; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 114–115.

⁴¹ Kostić, *Kulturne veze*, p. 332; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, p. 115. Fox who was in the entourage of a certain Henry Cavendish, a private traveler to Constantinople, visited the Mileševo Monastery on 26 May 1589. See Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, p. 398. For Fox's travelogue, see Fox, 'Mr. Harrie Cavendish', XVII; Ault, 'Review', pp. 82–83.

⁴² Woodhead, p. 187; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāṣā*, pp. 113–114. This testimony resolves a long-standing problem from the history of the relics of St. Sava. For comparison see Popović, 'Mošti Svetog Save', pp. 93–95. Also, see Popović, 'The Siena Relic'.

money and precious votive offerings given to both the monastery and the relics by the local population, as well as worshippers from distant areas. Ta'likizade places these distant donors in the Orthodox Commonwealth and in Christian, mostly Catholic Europe together with Transylvania. The other distant donors were, according to him, from China, India and pagan Central Asia.⁴³ This rhetorical exaggeration served to illustrate the enormous wealth of the monastery, according to the standards of the era. The chronicler noted that the monks handled this money as their private property all their lives, which corresponds with what we know about the late Byzantine and post-Byzantine monasticism characterized by the predominance of the phenomenon termed *idiorrhymia*. He also described how the monks used to divide the gifts given to the monastery among themselves.⁴⁴

Despite all exaggeration, this narrative testifies that the Ottomans were quite familiar with the daily life inside the Balkan Orthodox monasteries. The numerous preserved Ottoman documents testify to a never-ending line of court cases between the state treasury and the monasteries involving the inheritance of the monks. The state treasury claimed that the possessions and objects owned by the monks were private property and that they belonged to the state since the monks died without issue. On the other hand, the monasteries argued, and this was clearly a more accurate and justified version of events, that these possessions and objects belonged to the monastery and that they had been given to the monks for their use only.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the better study of how the monks under the *idiorrhymic* vows understood their property rights as well as how the Orthodox Church(es') authorities perceived this issue is a pressing research desideratum. Any generalization might be proven to have been too hasty.

The chronicler is aware of the customary tax known by the Slavonic term *poklon* (gift).⁴⁶ This was an investiture gift which the monastery was obliged to give to every

⁴³ Woodhead, p. 188. For the donors from the Orthodox Commonwealth (Wallachia, Moldavia, Muscovy), see Radojčić, *Mileševa*, pp. 45, 49–54. On Moldavia and the impoverished scions of the lords of Herzegovina Hranići-Kosače-Hercegovići, see Jireček, *Spomenici Srpski*, p. 90. Mileševo was located in the Kosača patrimony. Also, see Atanasovski, *Pad Hercegovine*, pp. 163–165, on the pitiable living conditions of this branch of the magnate family Kosača in Moldavia and Transylvania ca 1550–ca 1605.

⁴⁴ Woodhead, pp. 188, 193. On *idiorrhymia* in the Ottoman-era Serbian monasticism, see Fotić, *Sveta Gora*, pp. 88–89, 106–107.

⁴⁵ Boškov, 'Jedan Ferman'; Fotić, *Sveta Gora*.

⁴⁶ Tričković, 'Poklon'. Also, see Bojanić, *Turski Zakoni*, pp. 30 (№ 19 § VI), 161 s. v. *poklon*. For the gifting practices among the Ottomans before 1800, see Reindl-Kiel, 'Der Duft der Macht', and many of her other papers pertaining to the subject. The Ottoman provincial diplomatic gift-giving as well as the internal Ottoman gift-giving among the non-palatial Ottomans are barely studied subjects, on the other hand. The ex-Yugoslav historiographies since 1860s, nonetheless, observed the phenomenon of Ottoman provincial diplomatic gift-giving, mostly on the basis of evidence from the archives of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and Zadar (Zara); their findings are barely known to the majority of the scholars in the fields of Ottoman, early

single newly appointed Ottoman governor of Herzegovina. Certainly, the gift was not limited to the Mileševo Monastery only. The amount of that gift, according to Ta'likizade, was 70–80 000 akçes (*her gelen beg kiliseden yetmiş seksen biñ akçe tenāvül eyleyüb*).⁴⁷ This is an exaggerated amount, though the custom existed as such. The real value of the monastery gift to the governor was ca. 700 akçes. A cash gift was the customary symbolic tribute of the subject to the governor as a representative of the ruler. In return, the monastery was given sultanic orders (firman) endorsing the protection of the monastery as well as tax privileges followed by various documents issued by provincial governors, judges, and local authorities. Ta'likizade writes that these privileges were granted to the monastery, to the relics, and to the monks. This report is corroborated by contemporary European travellers (1533, 1550, 1559, 1573, 1582, 1626).⁴⁸ A local oral tradition, still extant at the beginning of the twentieth century, claimed that the monks had a wooden aqueduct made which brought milk to the monastery from a village in the vicinity.⁴⁹

Ragusan archival sources describe the wealth of the monastery and the presence of the monks at the international market in Ragusa. From 1573 to 1586 the monks used to sell 4700 heads of sheep and smaller quantities of other cattle which brought them an income of 2000 ducats. Between the years 1580 and 1583 around 5000 heads of sheep were sold. In 1588, on one single occasion 150 heads of sheep were brought to Ragusa. Certainly, these were not all heads of sheep or cattle sold in Ragusa by the Mileševans. The records in the series *Dona Turcarum* are incomplete but highly illustrative.⁵⁰ We should bear in mind that, as a result of their privileges, the Mileševans used to pay to the state treasury a lump sum tax of 500 akçes (*hükmi hümayün mücebince yılda beşyüz akçe maqtū' harāc virürler imiş*) or something more than four ducats, according to the exchange rate in the 1580s.⁵¹ The huge net income of the monastery is more than obvious.

modern Mediterranean and Central-European studies. For instance, see Božić, 'Ajaz', pp. 75–76, where it is shown that this Ottoman governor of Herzegovina and more prominent people from his entourage during the late 1470s and early 1480s used to receive from the Ragusan government gifts such as cash in gold and silver pieces, silver goblets and cups, fine silk and woollen cloths, sugar, candied fruits, dessert vine like *malvasia*, etc. The Ottomans always reciprocated, mostly in livestock (oxen, bulls, cows, rams, sheep, goats, horses), but also with silver goblets and cups. Especially valuable were the gifts Ayas Bey used to send to the Ragusan government. Also, see Miović, 'Beylerbey of Bosnia'.

⁴⁷ Woodhead, p. 192.

⁴⁸ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*; Yerasimos, *Voyageurs*, pp. 180–181, 207, 211, 221, 243, 297, 341.

⁴⁹ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*, pp. 115–125.

⁵⁰ Dubrovnik, DAD, *Dona Turcarum*, vol. I-II (entries discussing *il caloieri di Santo Saba*). Also, see Grujić, 'Manastir Mileševo i Dubrovnik'.

⁵¹ Spaho, 'Mileševo', p. 370; Zirojević, *Crkve i Manastiri*, p. 133, s. v. MILEŠEVA; *Popis za Hercegovinu iz 1585*, II, pp. 537–538 with an inaccurate and periphrastic translation which is far inferior to that offered by Spaho; Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*, pp. 119–120. Compare to Ankara, *Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, Kuyûd-ı Kadîme* (=TKGM, KuK), TTD, № 483, *Defter-i mufaşsal-i livā'-i Hersek*, fol. 250b.

d) Ta'likizade claimed that the Muslims of Herzegovina, where the Mileševo Monastery is located, worshipped and/or respected the relics of Saint Sava. He strongly reprimands them for that habit. In a dystich he gravely accuses the local Muslims of having converted to Islam to avoid the poll-tax, and of actually being frauds and infidels.

He writes:

By uttering 'I am a Muslim' they should not pay a poll-tax
Whereas amongst them there is a plethora of white-headed infidel marauders.⁵²

He further maintains that the local Muslims have never abandoned Christian customs and beliefs, while they neglect Muslim religious duties, especially fasting. Their human nature has become corrupt.

These are standard phrases from the Ottoman heresiographical and legal literature with a touch of poetic license. Nonetheless, we propose that his claims were not mere empty formulas and topoi. Elsewhere in the text Ta'likizade writes that monks, thanks to their wealth, give a lot of money to the local Muslims. He says:

In accordance with their useless and donkey-like natures [the local Muslims] are

brought into non-existence thanks to the alms and charities from the monastery... and because these monks who are the foes of the eloquent⁵³ faith are in the habit of giving to the local Muslims the alms, charities, and votives which reached them [i.e., the monks] from distant realms. ...this causes the ripening of the fondness for hypocrisy at their [i.e., the local Muslims'] palates devoid of any sense of taste... by damaging the edifice of their own [i.e. the local Muslims'] creed they enlisted themselves amongst the welcoming helpers of the Nazarenes and the auxiliaries of the sodomite infidels.⁵⁴

This was how the monks tied the local Muslims to the Christian faith. Ta'likizade was here not only talking about this particular monastery's wealth, but probably also about the money-lending activities of monasteries in general. In the sixteenth century the main creditors in the Ottoman Empire were Muslim endowments.⁵⁵ However, in the area where Mileševo was located there were no great or wealthy Muslim

⁵² Woodhead, p. 188. '*Müsülmân-em diyü virmez harâcı /Nice aķ başlü kâfir var qaracı*'.

⁵³ For the precedent for such a translation of the term *mübîn*, see Wittek, '*Fath Mubîn*—“An Eloquent Victory”'. Wittek's more than felicitous rendering of this term does justice to the Ottoman intellectual, cultural, and religious tradition(s). It also underlines the place of the Quran as an intertextual focus which influenced so many facets of life of Muslim Ottomans, and not merely their written production.

⁵⁴ Woodhead, pp. 188–189. '*şadâkât-ı kiliseden intifâ' eyleyen bi-menfa'at-u-har-ṭabî'atlara göre...ol rehâbin ki, a'âdi-yı dîn-i mübindür meşâfât-i dürdan gelen şadâkât-u-nüzürü orada olan Müsülmânlara virmekle anlarıñ dañi kâm-ı bi-mezâklarına lezzet-i nifâķ irişüb...bünyân-ı imânlarına hâlet virüb enşâr-ı Naşârâ ve a'vân-ı kefere-i husârâdan olmuş olurlar.*'

⁵⁵ Sućeska, 'Vakufski Krediti'. The evidentiary basis of this seminal study was the kadı court records of Sarajevo from 1540–41, 1556–58, 1564–66. Equally seminal is Mandaville, 'Usurious Piety'.

endowments. The first substantial Muslim endowment in the area came into being only in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.⁵⁶ Therefore, it is safe to propose that the monastery was the main moneylender in the area.

Ta'likizade's claim about the spread of the cult of Saint Sava among the Muslims of Mileševo and Herzegovina is corroborated by many external sources.⁵⁷ Ramberti in 1534 was puzzled by the fact that 'Turks and Jews' were better alms-givers to the monastery than Christians. Jean Chesneau in 1547 observed how 'Turks respect the corpse of Saint Sava and give it votive offerings and alms'.⁵⁸ In 1547–1548 Jacques Gassot made virtually the same observation.⁵⁹ In the summer of 1550, the Venetian bailo in Constantinople, Ser Catharin Zen, stopped at Mileševo. His remarks can be condensed as follows: the lion's share of votive offerings and alms, as well as gifts to the monastery, were made by Turks; the Turks tremendously respect Saint Sava; and, last but not least, they are afraid of him.⁶⁰ In 1574, Parisian globetrotter Pierre

⁵⁶On this see the endowment deed of the latter ill-fated grand vizier Süleyman Pasha, a Muslim native of Mileševo, who, in 1677 as a high dignitary of the Sublime Porte (*mîr-âhûr-ı evvel*), bequeathed huge endowments both in immovables and in ready cash for the utterly run-down network of Islamic institutions in Mileševo, Prijepolje and Mileševac (Hisarcık), a petty fortress near the above-mentioned monastery (*Milôşöva qal'esi sükkânundan iken İstanbûlda tevattun idüb*). The endowment deed was composed on 24 Şa'bân 1088 AH/ Friday, 22 October 1677 CE. See, Ankara, Vakıflar Arşivi, Kuyûd-u Kadîme, *Defter*, № 744, p. 155 (sıra 39). On this person, see Samardžić, 'Sulejman-paša'; Özcan, 'Süleyman Paşa'; Tričković, *Beogradski Pašaluk*, pp. 19–27, 47–50, 54–55, 162, 472.

⁵⁷ On the visits of Ramberti, Chesneau, Gassot, Zen, and Lescalopier, see Filipović, *Qoca Sinân Pâşâ*, pp. 118, 127–128. The chronologies of their visits to the Mileševo monastery can be reconstructed as follows: 18 February 1534 (Ramberti), after 13 March 1547 and before 15 May 1547 (Chesneau), after 17 December 1547 and before 23 January 1548 (Gassot), after 31 May 1550 and before 1 August 1550 (Zen), 21–23 March 1573 (Lescalopier). See Yerassimos, *Voyageurs*, pp. 181, 207, 211, 221–222, 308.

⁵⁸ His note reads as follows: 'Passames près d'un monastere appellé Santa Sava où il y a plusieurs moines que vivent à la grecque, et s'appellent caloyeri **et monstrent le corps de Santa Sava aux passants. Les Turcs l'ont en reverence et y font des aumosnes**' [emphasis N. F.]. See Schefer ed., *Le voyage de Monsieur d'Aramon*, pp. 10–11.

⁵⁹ He wrote: '& passames vn Monastere de santa Saua, ou y a plusieurs Religieux qui viuent a la Grecque, **& monstrent le corps de santa Saua aux passants, qui este encore entier & beau, & les Turqs mesmes l'ont en grand reuerence, & y font plusieurs aulmosnes**' [emphasis N. F.]. See *Le Discours du Voyage de Venise de Constantinople*, fols 6b–7a.

⁶⁰ The entire passage reads as following: 'Di dove partiti cavalcando arrivamo ad un casal detto Prepuli [sc. Prijepolje. N. F.], et de li cavalcamo per una valle, **arrivamo ad un monasterio de colloieri serviani, nel qua vi è una chiesa di S. Sava, che dicono esser il corpo, tamen non vidi salvo le mani.** La chiesa fornita a la greca, et molti paramenti d'oro et d'argento, et li dentro sono 50 colloieri col suo generale, il qual dice haver 20 monasteri in quella provincia sotto il suo governo. **Vivono de elemosine la maggior parte de Turchi; è molto riverito il santo e temuto, come se ne dira.** Le sue habitationi sono di tavole a la turchesca; la chiesa, come si è detto, e di muro in cubba; paganno al gran signor de carazo duc. 1000 l'anno. Ditti calloieri fatti li suoi ufficii vano ala campagna a lavorar, raccogliendo pan et vin per loro bisogno' [emphasis N. F.]. Matković, 'Dva Talijanska Putopisa', p. 207.

Lescalopier left three important notes upon observation of the monastery and its life. First, he saw that some ‘Jews and Turks’ were kissing the hand-bone of Saint Sava with the same devotion as Christians. Second, ‘Jews and Turks’ gave more gifts to the relics than Christians. This observation is a leitmotif in travelogues during the sixteenth century. Third, an Ottoman junior officer (*çauş*) from his escort told Lescalopier how a certain Turk came to collect monastery taxes for the state, behaved oppressively toward the monks, and immediately fell dead at the monastery gates.⁶¹ This officer from his escort must have been a local janissary because this was the practice at that time: namely, state-sponsored travellers were escorted by the local state officials from one official site on the caravan route to another, where they were replaced by a local of that area.⁶² As is well known, Mileševo was situated near the famous Ragusan caravan route from Ragusa to Constantinople.⁶³ As late as 1630, a Dalmatian Counter-Reformation scholar Ivan Tomko Mrnavić noted that the Turks observed the saint’s day and the glorious memory of Saint Sava.⁶⁴ In 1642 the Serbian patriarch Pajsije I, in his life of the Serbian Emperor Uroš (d.1371) added an excursus explaining the event of the burning of the relics. A certain provincial governor, inspired by the devil, maligned the Serbs to Sinan Pasha, stating that ‘Turks’ believe in Saint Sava and get baptized, and these claims caused Sinan Pasha to order the burning of the relics.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Lescalopier’s note reads as follows: ‘De là nous vismes le monastère de St Sava, convent de moyens serviens calaires, vestus de noir, parlant esclavon et vivants selon l’Eglise grecque: ilz nous feirent baiser ung grand os du bras de St Sava duquel ilz disoient avoir le corps, nous veismes de Juifz et Turcs baiser cet os avec autant de révérence que les chrestiens et leur font plus d’aumosnes: ces moyens payent certain tribut au Grand Seigneur. Notre chaous dict qu’un Turc, allant ung jour demander ce tribut, pour avoir usé de quelque violence aux moyens tumba mort à la porte du monastère’. See Cléray, ‘Le voyage de Pierre Lescalopier’, pp. 29–30. Also, see Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija*, p. 378.

⁶² Compare a telling piece of evidence in the writings of the Croat Jesuit Bartol Kašić from his missionary travel in the Ottoman Herzegovina which took place in the fall of 1612. Kašić wrote: ‘cum D. Simone Matkovich et quatuordecim Ragusinis mercatoribus, qui pro tutela in itinere secum elegerant **armatum Janisarum** inter Turcas insignem ac nobilem...circa meridie sumpto levissimo cibo ac poturus Gazko dictum **ad domum Janicari** prope solis occasum praeparatam hospitibus vacuumque indigenis Turcis devenerunt, in qua unusquisque suis rebus compositis sub tecto bene cenati quieverunt. Cena autem (ex proxima domo, in qua erat ipsius domini tota familia cum domina cadunna uxore) honorifice, opipare optimeque cibus coctis conditisque **ab ipsa cadunna**, delata est a servis ad hospitum domicilium cum amplis patinis. **Praeibat Turcico habitu filius domini indutus, ingenuus adolescens nomine Mehmetus**, servos, ipse oblaturus hospitibus nomine patris matrisque lautum ciborium apparatus absque ulla vini amphora; noverat enim hospites habere apud se vini Ragusio delati copiam non parvam pro omnibus in diurno itinere’ [emphasis N. F.]. See Horvat, ed., *Autobiografija Isusovca Bartola Kašića*, pp. 164–65. For more on Kašić and Matković, see Radonić, *Kurija*, pp. 14–18, 29, 32, 66, 86–90, 95–97, 141, 282.

⁶³ Dinić, ‘Karavanska Trgovina’, pp.119–146, esp. at pp.121–122, 125–126, 137 .

⁶⁴ Čajkanović, ‘Život Svetoga Save’, p. 137.

⁶⁵ [Ruvarc, ed.], ‘Žitie Cara Uroša’, pp. 231–232; Pajsije I, ‘Život Cara Uroša’, p. 404.

It seems necessary here to enquire about the character of local religion, especially religion as practised by the common people in the early modern era in localities like Herzegovina. For a long time, this kind of religiosity was understood in line with Hasluck's great work, which insisted on categories like popular religion and syncretism. This paradigm was criticised, and rightly so, by Tijana Krstić who pleaded for a more historicised analysis of popular religion.⁶⁶ Hasluck himself as a classical scholar inherited the category of syncretism from the great historians of Antiquity like Mommsen, Meyer, and Geffcken. Their powerful work influenced the history of religion in almost every sub-field of historiography.⁶⁷ The intellectual basis of their analyses was the Humean critique of popular religion and this philosopher's thesis that polytheism is the natural option for Man. As is well known, this paradigm was criticised by Peter Brown in his work on the rise of the cult of saints in Latin Christendom.⁶⁸ Brown's paradigm heavily influenced a short, though inspiring book by Karamustafa on antinomian Sufism between 1250 and 1500.⁶⁹ As such, Brown, read and adapted by Karamustafa, became representative of a new orthodoxy in Islamic and Ottoman studies. We firmly believe that Brown and Karamustafa have thrown the baby out with the bathwater in their critique of the syncretic paradigm. The overwhelming evidence, from the early modern period especially, as well as anthropological evidence in the twentieth century, suggest that one should seek a middle ground between historicists like Karamustafa and pro-syncretistic essentialists like Kissling.⁷⁰ Suffice to mention Ginzburg's work on witchcraft which discussed common Indo-European origins and the long history of the cult of witchcraft among the various peoples and societies of Europe from Estonia to Sicily and from the fifth to the nineteenth centuries at least;⁷¹ or Katičić's reconstruction of a common pre-Slavonic paganism that survived in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Croatian pious folk poetry, even if this was nominally Catholic, as well as the latter's studies which demonstrated the philological soundness of the *interpretatio christiana* understanding of the pre-Christian layers of the common Slavonic mythology as preserved in

⁶⁶ Krstić, 'The Ambiguous Politics'.

⁶⁷ The best introduction into this great school of thought in the historiography is provided in Geffcken, *The Last Days*. This English translation is preferable to the German original because of its masterful bibliographic rewriting and updating by as great scholar as the late MacCormack.

⁶⁸ Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, esp. pp. 12–22.

⁶⁹ Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*.

⁷⁰ Kissling, *Dissertationes*, I–III. For very telling studies of the religious ambiguities among the Bosnian commoners, mostly in the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, which build on Hasluck and Kissling paradigms, see Hadžijahić, 'O Jednom Vrelu'; Hadžijahić, 'Sinkretistički Elementi'. Also, see Popovska-Korobar and Gorgiev, 'Icons with Ottoman Inscriptions'. The paper deals with the cultic graffiti incised during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onto the Byzantine icons in Macedonia by the local Turkish-speaking Bektaşī-leaning Muslims. For new methodological vistas how to study the meeting of Islam with the local gnostic and other religious tradition and/or practices, see Crone, *The Nativist Prophets*.

⁷¹ Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*. Ginzburg owes a lot to the seminal work of the Swiss classical scholar and folklorist Karl Meuli. See Meuli, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I–II.

Christian saint cults among the Slavs.⁷² In that context we could argue that the cult of Saint Sava among the Muslims of Herzegovina during the sixteenth century was not only a result of the recentness of their Islamization, but also an example of the 'longue durée' of syncretism⁷³ among the Dinarian transhumant pastoralists. The evidence of other survivals from Antiquity onwards among such pastoralists is abundant.⁷⁴

e) Since the 1850s, based on Austrian Habsburg, papal, Venetian, Ragusan, Savoird, and Mantuan records, as well as those from Spanish Habsburg lands, and both Spain proper and Spanish-held areas of today's Italy, it is known that from the late 1580s onward the secret agents of the two Habsburg branches, the Pope, the Duke of Savoy, and the Marquess of Mantua, were visiting every single corner of the west Balkans and to a lesser degree some Greek areas, propagating anti-Ottoman rebellions.⁷⁵ These rebellions would be included in support for the 'liberation of Constantinople'. All these designs were characterised by a mixture of Realpolitik, dynastic claims,⁷⁶ religious zeal on a new Counter-Reformation pattern, sheer adventurism, etc. The envoys contacted many of the high dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church including patriarch Jovan Kantul (1592–1614) and some important bishops.⁷⁷ In a letter dated 24 April 1596 and composed in Trebinje, in Herzegovina, one of such agents, Franciscan Dominik Andrijašević informs his employer, Emperor Rudolf in Prague, of an assured pledge of allegiance to Rudolf from Vissarion, Serbian Orthodox bishop of Herzegovina, as well as from the tribal chiefs from Trebinje, Mostači, Banjani, Nikšići and Ljubomir in Herzegovina, on the condition that Rudolf liberate them from the Ottomans. Such pledges may have already been made since 1591.⁷⁸

Ta'likizade clearly was aware of such habits of correspondence on the part of the dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church for he mentioned that the letter written jointly by the Serbian patriarch and the saint's relics contained an offer to the rulers of the Franks for rebellion as an act of treason toward the Ottoman ruler. In his account of the letter and in his version of the letter he addresses the Serbian patriarch as 'patriarch on the wrong path' (*batrik-i bed-tarik*). The letter is described as 'a letter full of tricks and deceit' (*mektüb-i pür-mekr-ü-âl*), 'unsuccessful text'

⁷² Katičić, 'Nachlese zum urslawischen Mythos'; Katičić, *Die Hauswirtin am Tor*; Katičić, 'Natko Nodilo', methodologically a pathbreaking contribution; Katičić, 'Zeleni Lug'. See also Marković, 'Kult Svetog Vida (Vita)', esp. pp. 40 and n. 33, 47–49.

⁷³ On this, see Zirojević, *Islamizacija*.

⁷⁴ Kulišić, *Stara Slovenska Religija*.

⁷⁵ Fiedler, 'Versuche der Türkisch-Südslavischen'; Fermendžin, 'Prilozi k poznavanju'; Vinaver, 'Toma Peleš'; Vinaver, 'Dominik Andrijašević'; Bartl, *Der Westbalkan*; Malcolm, *Agents*.

⁷⁶ Both the house of Savoy and the house of Mantua claimed inheritance rights to the Byzantine throne for they were related to the Palaiologan dynasty. See Popović, *Istočno Pitanje*, pp. 62–67.

⁷⁷ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāšā*, pp. 139–141. On Jovan Kantul, see Ruvarac, *O Pečkim Patrijarsima*, pp. 17–59; Tomić, *Pečki Patrijarh Jovan*; Ćorović, 'Jovan'.

⁷⁸ Ruvarac, *O Pečkim Patrijarsima*, pp. 50–51.

(*maẓmūn-i nā-meymūn*), and, a ‘cursed book’ (*la‘net-nāme*). The addressee of the letter is named ‘non-prosperous king’ (*ḳrāl-i bī-iḳbāl*), one from the lineage of the inimical rulers, master of Franks and Latins.⁷⁹ We think that this description relates to the Roman-German emperor Rudolf II. The Ottomans used the denigrating phrase ‘the king of Vienna’, when addressing the Roman-German emperor, from their earliest contacts with the Habsburgs until 1606 and the Treaty of Zsitvatorok. Lesser rulers were merely beys and *tekfurs* for the Ottomans, and they would never ascribe the title of king to a European duke.⁸⁰

The letter as rendered by Ta‘likizade is a stunning example of Ottoman ironic parody. It is a satire in that the author pretends that it is a real letter but its content is exaggerated to the point of dadaistic absurdity. This dadaistic absurdity is an indirect tool to triumph over a foe who is ridiculed while his intentions and deeds are taken seriously. The letter is written according to the olden rules governing Ottomans addressing Western rulers, though the meanings and terms used are very expressive and grave invectives. One such passage reads as follows:

The Majesty who departs and returns in ritual uncleanness, being disgustingly brute and utterly vexatious a person, the one who is the abode of tarnished appearance, the one who is diseased and calamitous in a properly deserved degree, the one being related to and/or descended from excrements as well as bound to the *membra virile* in the sodomite manner, the rage-acquiring one, the king who is a pander to his own wife, the one who is especially selected for the devilish errors, the one who shall burn in the Hellfire together with the Franks and Latins—let Allah shorten his [the King’s] days and let Him nourish the hounds with the parts of his [the King’s] body.⁸¹

Instead of the formulas for long and prosperous life or, in the case of addressing Christians, expressing a wish that the addressee will one day accept the right path (namely, Islam), in the letter as rendered by Ta‘likizade the patriarch supposedly prays that his correspondent burn in hell together with all Franks and Latins; that Allah shortens the petty king’s days and that He feeds dogs with the correspondent’s

⁷⁹ Woodhead, p. 189.

⁸⁰ For this see a brilliant short study by Köhbach, ‘*Çasar oder Imperator?*’. For the Ottoman text of the Treaty of Zsitva-Torok and its German translation, see *Türkische Schriften*, pp. 3–7, № 1 (Ott. orig.), pp. 207–213, № 1 (Germ. transl.). Pay attention to this stipulation: *ikinci mādde budur-ki bizüm se‘ādetlii pādişāhumuz ḥazretlerinüñ cānib-i şeriflerinden yazılan nāme-’i hümāyūnda Rōmā-yi çāsār diyü yazılıb ḳrāl nāmı ile yazılmiya*. Op. cit., p. 4. On this peace treaty also, see Bayerle, ‘The Compromise’.

⁸¹ Woodhead, pp. 189–190. *cenāb-ı cenābet-iyāb, niḳbet-me’āb, naşab-nuşāb, faẓalāt-intisāb, ḥuşm-iktisāb, Ḳral-ı ḳamal, el-muḥtaşş bi-ğavāyeti ’ş-şeyātin, el-ḥarīḳ bi-’n-nāri ’l-cehim ma’a ’l-Firenc ve-l-Laṭın-kaşşare-llāhü eyyāme-hü ve-rezāka bi ’l-kilābi ecsāme-hü*. For the formulary, compare Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin*, pp. 106–108. Also, see Schaendlinger and Römer, eds., *Die Schreiben Süleymāns*, I-II. Every single syntagm in this longer quote represents a masterful use of the *double entendre*. Sometimes the layers of meaning are triple, even quadruple. In translation we tried to do justice to that without being periphrastic. Frequently, Ta‘likizade forsakes grammar for the sake of rhyme, i.e. style.

corpse. It is not to be believed that the Ottoman reader would assume such formulas were actually used. They are clearly satirical spoof and scoop texts. Such a use of satire is evidenced in Islamic letters from the early Sunni-Shi'a conflicts where both sides were in the habit of parodying each other.⁸² Another example of dadaistic travesty is a statement in which the Serbian patriarch describes the realms of his spiritual authority as a 'well and source for swine' (*menba'u l-ḥanāzīr*).⁸³ The paragon of creatures that are impure and polluted in the Islamic *Weltanschauung* is used here as a trope to mock the Christian rebellious leaders. Generally, Ta'likizade's satire heavily relies on tropes addressing both supposed literal and ritual uncleanness of non-Muslims, on the tropes of the supposed sexual perversities of the same population judged according to the standards of his age, and similes comparing that population with animals.

At the end of the letter as rendered by Ta'likizade, a rhetorical turn occurs. The discourse goes from dadaistic to clear cut reporting: 'and this was intended by the letter: that is to say, from the mouth of Saint Sava it was said to the king: "now the opportunity is yours. The Turk became weak. As soon as you come here you shall take over the whole of Rumelia".'⁸⁴ This straightforward passage indicates that the Ottomans were either in possession of the conspiratorial letter or they were informed about its existence and content. A small detail deserves special attention, though. In this passage, the actor is not the patriarch, but the saint himself (*İsveti Sāva ağzından*). Ta'likizade did not use one of his derogatory terms for the relics on this occasion. Now, the saint himself appears in the letter in an active role. This reflects Ta'likizade's belief in the supernatural power of relics. The saint's name, St. Sava, is here a metonymy for the holy relics. At the end of the letter, the chronicler reports that the carrier of the secret letter made a mistake, and the letter was taken from him. In other words, one of Sinan Pasha's spies stole the letter from the secret agent. These statements are highly trustworthy.

f) This report about the removal and incineration of the relics of the Serbian national saint, St. Sava, in Ta'likizade's chronicle is a unique source. It offers so much new data that it cannot be compared with any other previously known source about the event. As soon as the letter was taken from the patriarch's agent, the Ottoman spy hastened to the grand vizier to deliver it to him. We know from many sources that Sinan Pasha was then in the winter camp in Belgrade.⁸⁵ Upon reading the letter, Ahmed Pasha, who was at that time the governor of Herzegovina⁸⁶ got a special order

⁸² Crone, 'Mawālī', pp. 167–168.

⁸³ Woodhead, p. 190.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 191. *Fe-hüve 'l-murād: ya'nī İsveti Sāva ağzından Kırala 'Fırşat seniñdür. Türk zebün olmışdur. Geldiğin gibi 'umüm Rümilini alursun' dimişler.*

⁸⁵ Filipović, *Qoca Sinān Pāşā*, pp. 145–146, 191–192. Compare to Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 366–367, 371–373, 474–475. His evidence is Dubrovnik, DAD, *Lettere e Commissioni di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols. 168–169, 221–225, 228; Dubrovnik, DAD, *Prepiska*, XVI, fol. 45.

⁸⁶ This person officiated as a governor of Herzegovina in the period around August 1593–April 1594. On him, see Skarić, 'Podaci za Historiju', p. 196 (published for the first time in 1931); Popović, 'Spisak Hercegovackih', p. 98.

from Sinan Pasha. The shrewd Ragusans described Ahmed Pasha merely as a cat's paw of Sinan Pasha,⁸⁷ while Ahmed Pasha's Ottoman nickname preserved in its Slavonic rendition (Oćuz < Öküüz) suggests that he was perceived as a dull, heavy, stupid person.⁸⁸ Sinan Pasha had Ahmed Pasha immediately go to the monastery and bring the coffin and the relics to the winter camp in Belgrade. Further, the chronicler claims that the Belgrade infidels became aware of this order and informed the monks and local Christians about it. This is not so unacceptable a claim as one can think *prima facie*.⁸⁹

Again, the narrative about the relics as endowed with speech and supernatural powers enters the account. The relics prophesy that the Grand Turk shall order the Ottomans to abduct them. The relics prognosticate that they can be neither abducted nor transported to Belgrade (*İşte İsveti Sava buyurdu ki 'Büyük Türk beni almağa hüküm göndermişdür. Beni alub gıdüür, şanurlar, alub gidemezler. Emmā ben eyle görinürüm'*).⁹⁰ This supernatural power of the relics is once again ascribed to the devil. In further passages Ta'likizade actually mentions the various rebellions taking place in the Balkans between 1594 and 1596, for many of which we can show that the seizure of the relics played a large part in the ideological motivation of the rebels.⁹¹ He doubtless exaggerated the number of rebels but his account indicates the extent of the spread of rebellion. On the other hand, his claim that Ahmed Pasha left Belgrade for Mileševo with 400 warriors is totally acceptable. During the sixteenth century, the entourage of the provincial governor varied in most cases from 400 to 800 mounted warriors.⁹² This illustrates how such sources interweave factual information with rhetorical explanation, in such a way that they cannot be judged as fictitious merely on account of their use of rhetorical devices. Many decades ago, Peter Gay proposed

⁸⁷ Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 366, 474 ('the cat's paw'). His evidence is DAD, *Lettere e Commissioni di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols 140, 157–161, 168–169; DAD, *Prepiska*, XVI, fol. 45.

⁸⁸ In 1651, in the Slavonic chronicle known as *The Vrhobreznica Annals*, the author, a Serbian monk (*inok*) Gavril, wrote that the abductor of the relics of St. Sava from Mileševo was a certain *Ahmet-beg Oćuz*. See, Stojanović, *Stari Rodoslovi*, p. 269. In *New Redhouse* (col. 907b) 'öküz' is defined as '1. ox. 2. dull, heavy, stupid (person)'.

⁸⁹ Woodhead, pp. 191–195.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 191. The usage *Büyük Türk* is as clever as stylistically successful. Namely it is an Ottoman contemporary calque of the Italian term *il Gran Turco* (together with its many renderings in other languages of the European Christendom) which was the main European technical term for the Ottoman ruler from fifteenth to the end of the sixteenth centuries. This usage was clearly intended to bring touch of authenticity to the letter as rendered by Ta'likizade. The awareness of the term shows how an Ottoman intellectual who was neither a professional translator from Western languages nor a renegade might have been aware of the Christian 'Frankish' ways, usages, manners, and customs. On the term *il Gran Turco* evidenced in zillions of written sources, see www.treccani.it/vocabolario/turco1/, accessed on 10 February 2019.

⁹¹ *Iyânî* = Kirişcioğlu, pp. 72–79. Also, see Tomić, *O Ustanku Srba*; Grafenauer et al. eds, *Historija Naroda*, II, pp. 502–504, 506–509; Ćirković, 'Ustanak Banatskih'.

⁹² Skarić, 'Popis Bosanskih Spahija'; Aličić, 'Popis Bosanske Vojske'; Korić, 'Pratnja Bosanskog Sandžak-bega'; Filipović, 'Draç'in Fethi', p. 402; Moaçanin, 'O Brojnom Stanju'.

that the kind of rhetoric like the one used by Ta'likizade is part and parcel of the historian's argument and not a superimposed addition.⁹³ That Ottoman historians believed in holy men, supernatural phenomena and evil spirits does not mean that they did not seek to establish what they understood as truth in their works.⁹⁴

The account of the seizure of the relics continues as follows. Ahmed Pasha of Herzegovina sent 20 soldiers (*nefer*), dressed in Christian costume, posing as pilgrims to the relics. They were to prepare the Pasha's entrance to the monastery. When Ahmed Pasha entered the monastery with his 400 men, the monks were in their cells busy with 'division of money gifts and votive offerings'. The Pasha sent 40 soldiers into the church to take the relics. When the monks heard that the Pasha had arrived at the monastery, they appeared before him to pay their respects to him as governor. The Pasha ceremonially responded. At this point cynicism and irony re-enter the account. The Pasha threw towards the monks a handful of high value ducats and silver pieces. While the monks were supposedly fighting each other to grab the coins, the Ottomans took the relics from the church.⁹⁵ In this part we can see that visits by Ottoman dignitaries to the monasteries were frequent events and that there was a certain decorum connected with such visits.

The motif of the monks' greed for coins and other valuables is a constant of the entire narrative. Though this account should not be taken as literally true, the motif indicates the extent to which the Ottomans were aware of the wealth of certain monasteries and how much they were distressed by the economic activities of the monks, especially in such situations of conflict as described in this chronicle. Nonetheless, they could not remedy what angered them, for to suppress or forbid monks to engage in economic activities would run counter to the Ottoman self-proclaimed political philosophy. In their 'self-fashioning', the Ottomans, namely, the ruler and his servants in the military-administrative branch (*ülû l-emr*),⁹⁶ insisted that their God-given role was to protect the subject masses impaired in their minds as they seemed to be (*el-'avâmm ke-l-hevâmm*),⁹⁷ and that such weak creatures of God needed constantly

⁹³ Gay, *Style*.

⁹⁴ Filipović, 'Drač'ın Fethi', pp. 412–414. Cf. Baynes, 'The Supernatural Defenders of Constantinople'.

⁹⁵ Woodhead, pp. 192–193.

⁹⁶ For the Quranic roots of the notion, see Quran IV: 59 (*an-Nisā'*, the Medinese). Also, see Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa', col. 605a, on the duty of the grand vizier as a figure of *ülû l-emr*, based on Feridun Bey's writing; Cook, *Commanding Right*, *passim*.

⁹⁷ This famous adage is omnipresent in all kinds of written sources in the Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman languages. It means: 'the masses are like bugs'. Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804), one of the Founding Fathers of the USA, is believed to have said: *The masses are asses*. The classical Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal Complex (Sh. Ahmed) in the period 1258–1850 were not as generous as Hamilton. The masses according to them were mere creeping creatures, not even asses. On the idea and its long journey from the medieval Islamic Middle East to Enlightenment Europe, see Crone, 'Post-Colonialism', pp. 25–26, 31–32; Crone, 'The Case of the Three Impostors'.

to be observed, protected and dealt with justly (*'adālet*),⁹⁸ applying the Islamic variation on the Aristotelian 'rule of the golden mean' (*mizānu l-ḥakḳ*).⁹⁹ By achieving such social order the ruler and his servants bring society into a state of tranquillity of soul (*ḥużūr; āsūde ḥāl*).¹⁰⁰ One could argue that such statements were merely part and parcel of keeping up appearances in a real world of self-interest and Realpolitik. But keeping up appearances was a constituent element of enacting power in the pre-modern world; we would fare better if we reminded ourselves that the supposed dichotomy between insincere 'self-fashioning' and sincere self-interest and the demon of Realpolitik turns out to be a false dichotomy and false argument too.

When the monks became aware that the relics had been taken from the church, says the chronicle, more than 800 infidels took up arms to reclaim them.¹⁰¹ This number is exaggerated since the monks, monastery servants, and the peasants from the vicinity could have made a group of no more than 100 armed men. Ahmed Pasha and his entourage went to *Taşluca* (Pljevlja), seat of the governor of Herzegovina.¹⁰² The local tribal leaders, monks with a sultan's firman, and the local population in large numbers had an audience with Ahmed Pasha to negotiate the ransom of the relics. The local Muslims tricked the Christians and distracted them while Ahmed Pasha was leaving at great speed for Belgrade. This part of the story is quite significant. There is no reason to doubt its veracity. As such, it testifies to how the local bonds between the Christians and the Muslims of the same Slavonic origins could have been suspended in a case of open conflict between the Muslim authorities and the Christian population. The bonds forged from common origins and common local culture broke when the empire's interest was at stake. Although the relics were the object of their veneration as well, the local Muslims neither dared nor wanted to counter the authority of the grand vizier who as the chief army commander (*ser-asker*) was an absolute vicegerent (*vekil-i muṭlak*) of the ruler.¹⁰³ Ahmed Pasha rode a whole day and night and came near Belgrade. A Christian came to Ahmed Pasha and bargaining about the coffin and relics began. The Christians offered 1000, 2000, 3000, 10 000, and in the end, 20 000 best coins. The amount is realistic and the whole situation bears the stamp of authenticity. He then delivered the coffin and relics to Sinan Pasha who ordered them to be publicly burned.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ See İnalçık, 'State and Ideology', pp. 70–85; Darling, *A History of Social Justice*; Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*, passim.

⁹⁹ Katib Chelebi, *The Balance*; Crone, *Medieval Islamic*, chap. III, subch. 'The Greek Tradition and "Political Science"', chap. IV, subchs. 'Visions of Freedom' and 'Social Order'.

¹⁰⁰ A masterful study is Glassen, *Hużūr*. A further detailed discussion with a plethora of new evidence and with an analysis from the viewpoint of the history of ideas is provided in Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*.

¹⁰¹ Woodhead, p. 192.

¹⁰² Cf. Popović, 'Sedište Hercegovačkog Sandžaka'.

¹⁰³ For some invocation of the notion in the sources contemporary to the event we discuss, see Selânikî = İpşirli, II, p. 618. Also, see Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*.

¹⁰⁴ Woodhead, pp. 193–195.

However, the account of the bargaining, although quite realistic, misses two important points: the separated hand of the saint, described as so lavishly decorated, as well as the saint's archbishop's staff clearly seen by Ta'likizade, were not burnt. The hand survived until the end of the eighteenth century, while the archbishop's staff was for many centuries kept in the treasury of the monastery of Sveta Trojica near Pljevlja,¹⁰⁵ to be removed to the museum in the Mileševo monastery only a decade and half ago. The survival of a part of the relics testifies to the Realpolitik informed by the Islamo-Aristotelian rule of the golden mean. We would like to hypothesize that Sinan Pasha took the coffin and had it melted down to its more than 23 kg of pure silver and confiscated the precious and semi-precious stones adorning the coffin, but he did not deprive the Christians of the relics in totality. The preserved hand and the archbishop's staff were enough to enable the monastery's status as a site of relics of the highest value to continue.

After this close source analysis in which the veracity of the account has been repeatedly demonstrated, the view that Ta'likizade was merely an interested courtier and a propagandist misses the point.¹⁰⁶ Well-paid courtier Ta'likizade might have been, but he wrote what he had seen and what he had believed to have seen, and he wrote what he meant. He did it in a brilliant language using his sharp mind. This is not such a frequent case in the Ottoman written legacy.

EXPLICANDUM BY WAY OF COMPARISON

Various questions arise from our detailed analysis of the report in Ta'likizade's chronicle. For instance, was Sinan Pasha's act an exception which proves the rule, or was it an example of new trends in the interplay between religion and power in the Ottoman Empire approaching the end of the sixteenth century? Was this act part and parcel of Sinan Pasha's decades-long conflict with the clan of Sokollu? Could the burning of the relics be put in the context of the chiliastic expectations around 1000 AH (1591–1592)? Did Sinan Pasha's concern for the troublesome and exacting financing and logistics of the Hungarian campaign affect his decision to seize and incinerate the relics? Did the Serbian Orthodox Church and its Patriarch, thanks to their scheming with the Habsburgs and the Italian lesser rulers, forfeit their general protection contract (*zimma*)¹⁰⁷ with the Ottoman Empire? If the Ottomans indeed understood those actions as a forfeiting of *zimma*, were they of the opinion that such forfeiture applied to the entire Serbian Orthodox community in the Balkans? How much did the personal traits of as colourful a historical player as Sinan Pasha influence the sequence of events and their consequences? Further questions proliferate.

In order to understand what really happened in Mileševo in 1594, we should visit Salonica (Tr. Selanik) in 1589–1590. The Ottoman cosmographer Mehmed-i

¹⁰⁵ See *supra* nn. 39–42.

¹⁰⁶ Fetvacı, *Viziers to Eunuchs*, pp. 144–162. Also, see Fetvacı, *Picturing History*. Cf. Karaman's well-argued review in: *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, XXXII, 2014, pp. 199–203, esp. p. 203.

¹⁰⁷ On *zimma*, on losing and on (re)entering it, see Cahen, 'Dhimma'; Moaçanin, 'Some Remarks'; Fotić, 'Institucija Amana'.

‘Aşık (Trapezunt, ca 1556–1557–?, probably after March 1605) wrote a highly valuable work on cosmography entitled *Menâzirü'l-Avalim (Views of the World)*¹⁰⁸ in which he left very telling notes about his frequent visits to the greatest Ottoman Balkan port city of Salonica in years 1585–1589, 1592–1595.¹⁰⁹ In one of his descriptions of these visits, Mehmed-i ‘Aşık reported about the then recent conversion of the famous Rotunda of Salonica,¹¹⁰ known by the Ottomans as ‘the pregnant church’ (*gebe kilise*), in the following words:

As a church owned by Christians it was known under the name ‘the pregnant church’. When it was still a Christian church this author as well as many of his friends among the people of Selanik, while we were walking beside it, used always to express the desire that it should become a mosque. Glory to Allah, soon our hope was brought to fulfilment by Allah. This mosque, upon the insistence and pleading of Sheikh Hortacı, who is a paragon among dervishes, was taken from the Christians by Sinan Pasha (Allah’s mercy be upon him), who passed away as grand vizier in Şa‘ban of the year 1004 [3 April 1596]. After the establishment of the *ambon*, *mih-rab*, and *mahfil*, inside the edifice and a well-built minaret on the east wall of the mosque, it became a house of worship for the Islamic people, the true believers; it also became a source of service in the belief of the most elevated among the prophets.¹¹¹

Mehmed-i ‘Aşık in a further text explains that he was in Salonica again in the middle of 1595 and that Sheikh Hortacı asked him to compose a chronogram for the building and its transformation into a mosque. The chronogram reads as follows:

In order to remove the traces of wrong belief from this high place // Sinan Pasha moved into action; and what he intended finally took place // In the conquest of this mosque Sheikh Hortacı busied himself a lot, his contribution was great // In the path of the True One this place, thanks to the input of the Only One, became a new believer // It was taken from the people of Jesus as soon as the Sultanic order came // The community of Muhammad turned into followers of the sheikh in the

¹⁰⁸ For the exemplary edition of this work prefaced by a long authoritative study of Mahmut Ak on the author and his opus as well as on the work in question itself, see Âşık Mehmed, *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim*, I–III (hereafter: *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak).

¹⁰⁹ For this traveller’s meticulously reconstructed itinerary, see ‘Ek 1: Âşık Mehmed’in Seyahatleri’, *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, I, unpag.

¹¹⁰ ‘The Rotunda of Salonica’ was built by tetrarch Galerius in 306 C.E., probably as his prospective mausoleum. It is located 125 m northeast from the Arch of Galerius. Its diameter is 24.15 m, and its dome is 30 m high at the peak, while its walls are more than 6.3 m thick and for this reason it withstood earthquakes which were so frequent in this area. In 326 Emperor Constantine turned it into a Christian church. The high-quality mosaics in it date from the early Byzantine era. In the years 1589–1590 it was turned into a mosque, while after 1912 it was rededicated to St. George. See, Salah Nasrallah, ‘Empire and Apocalypse’, pp. 472–484. Also, see Kreutel, ‘Ein Kirchenraub in Selânîk’, p. 73, (hereafter: Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*); Ćurčić, ‘Christianization of Thessalonikē’.

¹¹¹ *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 986; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, p. 82.

conquest of this house of worship // When the Muslim prayer was performed in it 'Aşık made a chronogram of it // This ancient and rundown monastery, there is no doubt of it, became a house of worship for the people of Islam. In the year 998 [1589–1590].¹¹²

In his description of the church Mehmed-i 'Aşık added that Sheikh Hortacı knew that in a Christian wooden house situated in a place distant from the church-turned-mosque was hidden a huge piece of white marble. The sheikh wanted this piece of marble for the water-fountain in his mosque. Transporting such a huge piece of stone was a real problem. The distance was around one mile. The sheikh called to duty the craft apprentices in the city and the young people of the port and had them transport the huge marble piece on special wooden devices through the meandering streets of the city. In writer's own words:

In a corner of the house of a person who dwelled in one of the infidel buildings [there was a stone] fit to be turned into a fountain basin...it was ordered to the youngsters and journeymen belonging to the craftsmen of Salonica as well as to the boatmen and privateers from the ships in the port of Salonica to load [the stone] on a wooden device called qızaq in the vulgar Turkish¹¹³ parlance and to transport it from one among such narrow places to the mosque of Sinan Pasha...And the present compiler of the letters [i.e., Mehmed-i 'Aşık], that is to say my poor self, arrived to celebrate its [the stone's] removal¹¹⁴ and to behold it as a witness while the young fellows were busying themselves with the pulling out of this piece of marble from the depth of the earth.¹¹⁵

Further, Mehmed-i 'Aşık informs us that the highly learned Mevlana 'Abdurrahim Efendi el-Hamidi, while he was judge of Salonica for a second time, sent his official report (*i'lām*) to the Sublime Porte endorsing the petition (*'arz-ı hāl*) submitted by a subject concerning the matter of the turning of the church into a mosque. His report about this reads as follows:

When Mevlana 'Abdurrahim Efendi el-Hamidi became for the second time a qadi of the Allah-protected Salonica on the date which is the year nine hundred and

¹¹² *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 987; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 82–83. *Dalâl âsârını mahv itmeğe bu cây-ı 'âliden // Sinân Paşa 'azîmet itdi gâyet-i maksadı oldu // Bunun fethine sa'y ü himmet itdi Şeyh Hortâcî // Tarîk-i hakda 'avn-i Hâdî ile mühtedî oldu // Alındı emr-i sultânî irince kavm-i 'İsâ'dan // Muhammed ümmeti fethinde Şeyh'e muktedî oldu // Kılındı çün nemâz içinde 'Aşık didi târîhin // Bu deyr-i köhne lâ-şek ehl-i İslâm ma'bedi oldu* [emphasis N. F.] *şene 998*.

¹¹³ For this rendering, cf. '...2. A country bumpkin, a boor...', *Redhouse*, col. 536a, s. v. *türk*. Also, see Göyünç, 'Die Begriffe "Türke"'

¹¹⁴ Again an instance of double *entendre*. Cf. *Redhouse*, col. 570a, s. v. *teferruj*.

¹¹⁵ *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, pp. 987–988; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 83–84.

'Ebniye-i kâfiriyeden bir şahsun hânesiniün bir mevzı'nda havz-ı şâdurvân olmağa münasib...Selânik'ün erbâb-ı hırefinden şebbân ve ahdâsa ve Selânik limânında olan ashâb-ı süfün ve merâkib levendlerine...Türki dilde kızak didikleri ahşâb üzre tahmîl idüp ol emkine-i dayyıkadan Câmi'-i Sinân Paşaya nakl idüp...Râkmû'l-hurûf halk bu mermeri batn-i arzdan ihrâc iderken teferruc ve müşâhedesine vardum.'

ninety eight [1589–1590] upon the report-cum-petition of the aforementioned one the conquest of the earlier discussed monastery [i.e., the church] was divinely facilitated to have taken place and it was ordained by Allah, and on top of that Sheikh Hortacı had proceeded with the aid of Allah—whose lauds we recite—to repair and restore it [the church] from the bottom of his heart, mind, and soul.¹¹⁶

In his exemplary source-critical (*Quellenkritik*) study Kreutel proves beyond any doubt that this report is almost totally authentic.¹¹⁷ What is interesting in this account is how the writer shows that such huge undertakings as the transformation of important Christian churches of an Ottoman city was never solely the result of an order coming from above, namely from the ruler or his absolute vicegerent, the grand vizier. Sheikh Hortacı filed the common petition of a subject, such a petition was endorsed by the chief judge of the city, and the grand vizier approved it and assured a favourable sultanic order. The church which became a mosque belonged to the endowment of Sinan Pasha and Sheikh Hortacı became both overseer of the endowment and the prayer-leader in the mosque. So, we observe the interaction between local needs and the needs of a highly positioned endower.¹¹⁸ These interests and needs might not have been an expression only of mundane interest and a drive to oppress and control. The language of the report hints at the tropes of holy war in regard to this takeover of the church.¹¹⁹

The turning of the church into mosque in Salonica happened on the very brink of the year 1000 AH/1591–1592, and this transformation of the church must be understood in the context of the millenarian and chiliastic expectations in the Ottoman and Islamic world. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Christian community of Salonica was in a continuous process of deterioration, both in numbers and in wealth. The Christian properties in the city were frequently bought, re-sold, and re-bought by Jews and Muslims.¹²⁰ The growing Muslim community voiced the need for more mosques. These needs went hand in hand with millenarian hysteria, which was in evidence throughout the empire among Muslims, from the lowest commoners to the ruler,¹²¹ as well as with the need of the grand vizier to secure his

¹¹⁶ *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 988; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 84–85. ‘*Mevlânâ ‘Abdü’r-rahûm Efendi el-Hamîdî mahrûse-i Selânike def’a-i sâniide sene semân ve tis’in ve tis’a-mi’e târihinde kâdî oldukda mûmâ-ileyhün arzı ile deyr-i mezbûrun fethi müyesser ve mukadder olup bi-i’âneti’llâhi sübhânehû Şeyh Hortâcî dahi ‘an-samîmi’l-bâl ta’mîr ve meremmâta mübâşeret eylemiş idi*’ (emphasis N. F.).

¹¹⁷ Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, p. 85.

¹¹⁸ Still the best study on the Ottoman turning of churches into mosques is Andrejević, ‘Pretvaranje Crkava’.

¹¹⁹ *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, pp. 986–988; Kreutel, *Kirchenraub*, pp. 81–84.

¹²⁰ Jorga, *GOR*, III, pp. 202–205; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, pp. 328–332 et passim.

¹²¹ Selânikî = İpşirli, I, p. 222; II, pp. 703–04; Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. 104 (№ 72), 126–127 (№ 87); 184–185 (№ 144), 207 (№ 161); [Sultan Murad III], *Kitabu l-menamat*. Cf. Felek, ‘(Re-)creating Image and Identity’, who endorses two conflicting dates of the compilation of

unprecedented wealth through a network of endowments.¹²² The establishment of new endowments meant new appointments for local Muslims and stratified patron-client ties between the grand vizier and many people throughout the Empire. It is important to observe that the weakest community in Salonica, namely the Christians, were the losers in such events. Salonica was full of synagogues, but there is no evidence that any were ever turned into mosques. Moreover, the present author is unaware of any such event in Ottoman history. As a curiosity, we can add that Mehmed-i 'Aşık noted how the so-called Maltese Hospice was one of dwelling places of the Jews of Salonica and that it belonged to the endowment of the mosque of Sinan Pasha (*Hân-ı Malta mesâkin-i Yehûd olan hânlardandır ve Câmî'-i Sinân Paşa ev-kâfundandır*).¹²³

The events in the Mileševo Monastery must be equally understood as ones in which millenarian hysteria played a certain role. But, to note such hysteria is not the same as explaining both the very same hysteria as well as the very same event which was to a certain degree caused by that hysteria. The other factor was the involvement of the highest echelons of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the monastery flock in secret designs with the great powers of Latin Christendom, a point that was elaborated above. Here one recalls the famous sentence Sigmund Freud is believed to have uttered once in his lectures: 'Even the paranoiacs have real enemies!'¹²⁴ Sinan Pasha's handwritten reports to the Sultan (*telhîs*) demonstrate his excellent knowledge of European politics, for instance the Franco-Spanish conflict in the 1580s and 1590s. He wrote:

the manuscript, at pp. 250 (1003 AH), 251–252 (1001 AH). Further on millenarism and chiliastic hysteria in the Ottoman Empire around 1000 AH, see Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, I/1, p. 179 who were the first to notice the phenomenon and marshalled the first-rate contemporary evidence; Faroqhi, 'Der Aufstand'; B. Kütükoğlu, 'Murad III', *İA*; Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, pp. 72–73, 126–127; Filipović, *Qoca Sinân Pâşâ and the Burning*, pp. 173–174; Felek, '(Re-)creating Image and Identity', pp. 263–266; Felek, *Kitâbü'l-Menâmât*, pp. 27–31; Kafadar, 'Prelude to Ottoman', pp. 266–267, 274–276. For the earlier historical precedences for the phenomenon, see Ned. Filipović, *Princ Musa*; Flemming, 'Şâhib-kırân und Mahdi'; Fleischer, 'Lawgiver as Messiah'; Fleischer, 'Mahdi and Millennium'; Fleischer, 'Seer to the Sultan'; Fleischer, 'Shadows of Shadows'; Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom'; Ocak, 'Kutb ve İsyân'.

¹²² On his endowments, see Öz = Arşivi; Kalessi, 'Veliki Vezir Kodža Sinan-paşa'; Schwarz und Kurio, *Die Stiftungen*; Haase, 'Eine kleinere Waqf-Urkunde'; Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, pp. 174–175, 281, 506, 508–509; 'Dossier: "Koca Sinan Pacha (ca 1520–1596)"', and esp., Meier, 'The Charities of a Grand Vizier'.

¹²³ *Menâzirü'l-Avâlim* = Ak, III, p. 990.

¹²⁴ We owe the knowledge of the ascription of this famous sentence to Freud to our esteemed teacher, the late Norman Itzkowitz of Princeton University, himself a connoisseur of Freud's life and work. The sentence is frequently misattributed to Henry Kissinger.

To the land of France came complete disorder and riot while there is a probability that the cursed one whom people named Spain shall overcome and invade [France]. This humble servant of Yours is constantly getting informed about it.¹²⁵

It is safe to propose that Sinan Pasha was informed about the secret designs of the Serbian Orthodox Church and that his action was meant to punish and discipline the unruly first echelon of this church. The confiscation of a coffin/chest which weighed more than 23 kg in pure silver accompanied by many precious and semi-precious stones could be a welcome addition to the campaign treasury. Sinan Pasha was extremely well-versed in matters economic and there is plenty of evidence that he laboured to remove the Ottoman budget deficit and at the same time finance campaigns.¹²⁶ Logistically, it was very difficult to finance campaigns without having local sources of cash, bullion and supplies in kind.¹²⁷ Therefore, he insisted, for instance, around 15 November 1593, upon his return from the Hungarian campaign to the main winter camp in Belgrade, that the Ragusan envoys should render there unto him their Republic's yearly tribute in the amount of 12 500 ducats, and not carry it all the way to Istanbul.¹²⁸

Nonetheless, he either preserved a portion of the relics and most probably sold them back to the Christians so that they could preserve their cult-site which was also a source of income for the state treasury. Or he might not have taken the relics from Mileševo, save for the coffin/chest and the skeleton in it; though it is a less feasible scenario. Sinan Pasha had been in a decade-long conflict with the Sokollu clan too.¹²⁹ We must consider the possibility that his enmity towards this clan might have affected his behaviour. So much is safe to propose for lack of more explicit sources. For it is a well-known fact that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, before he was taken to the *değişirme* corps, was a novice monk under the name Bajo or Bajica in the Mileševo monastery.¹³⁰

This discussion would be incomplete without considering what kind of Muslim Sinan Pasha was. In the secondary literature a view predominates that the Ottoman military and administrative dignitaries were people unaware of complicated questions of Islamic religious thought and Ottoman culture. In this kind of thinking, such

¹²⁵ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, p. 4 (No. 3): 'Fransa diyârına tamam ihtilâl gelmişdir ve İspanya didükleri mel'ûn müstevlî olmak ihtimâli vardır bu kulları haber almakdan hâlî değim.' Comp. Fodor, 'Between Two'.

¹²⁶ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, passim. Also, see Faroqhi, 'Ein Günstling'; Fodor, 'An Anti-Semite'.

¹²⁷ See *supra* n. 15; Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare*.

¹²⁸ Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik*, pp. 371, 476. His evidence is: DAD, *Lettere di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols. 184'–187'. On the false pretence that the Ragusan merchants in Belgrade were unable to provide him the cloths he wanted to purchase, Sinan Pasha asked the Ragusan government to send him, together with the tribute, certain quantity of the luxury cloths. This certainly was nothing else than extortion of the protection money. See DAD, *Lettere di Levante*, XXXVIII, fols 198–198'.

¹²⁹ The two best overviews of this rivalry are provided in Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa', coll. 600a, 602a, 604a; Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolović*.

¹³⁰ On this, see Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed Paşa', col. 595b.

dignitaries knew the main tenets of the faith, but they were merely practical Muslims. Such a distorted picture is based to a high degree on the anti-dignitary bias in the works of great intellectuals like Mustafa ‘Ali and Katib Çelebi.¹³¹ For great intellectuals anybody who is not a great intellectual is ignorant *ipso facto*. So Plato, so Aristotle, so Cicero, so Ibn Haldun, so Max Weber, so Foucault... Sinan Pasha was neither an intellectual nor a writer. But his handwritten informal reports to the Sultan are full of quotations from the Quran and hadiths accompanied by paraphrases of such texts;¹³² and quotes from Persian Sufis from Bayezid-i Bistami (d. 848 or 875)¹³³ (‘After these two had been chosen, he shall make everything to be believed and even he shall possibly pass himself for Bayezid-i Bistami’)¹³⁴ to Rumi (1207–1273).¹³⁵ The reference to Rumi is given via his celebrated work *Mathnavi-yi ma‘navi*:

My prosperous ruler, there is a strangely marvellous story in the *Meşnevi*: a cursed one, in order to make mankind fall into grave errors, having changed his own faith in outward form, had endured an immense suffering and mortification of the flesh. At the end of the matter, after he made people fall into grave errors, having destroyed his own unclean body and/or being,¹³⁶ he became one in error who leads others astray. There is no doubt that this cursed one [i.e., the person reported about to the Sultan] is exactly of such a moral quality.¹³⁷

In his reports one encounters also Sufi-style adages in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish as well as popular Turkish proverbs.¹³⁸ In one instance, Sinan Pasha told the then resident Venetian bailo in Constantinople how ‘the Empires are not to be governed by the advice of women’ (Gli imperii non si governano con il consiglio delle donne).¹³⁹ One should not ascribe such views to the boorish manners and disposition of an Ottoman statesman who originated from the overly patriarchal Albanian

¹³¹ For teaching the Persian literary canon to the pages of the Palace, the future military-administrative dignitaries, see *Târih-i Na‘ûmâ*, I, pp. 55, 84.

¹³² Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. 12–15 (№ 8) et passim. Also, see Filipović, ‘Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’, p. 161 (n. 39) with the analyses of Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. 16 (№ 9), 27–28 (№ 18), 51–53 (№ 37), 97–99 (№ 67), 100–101 (№ 69), 103 (№ 71), 127–128 (№ 88), 133–134 (№ 92), 137–138 (№ 95), 138–139 (№ 96), 197–199 (№ 153).

¹³³ On this early Muslim mystic of Iran who highly influenced the Ottoman Islam *in toto*, see Böwering, ‘Bestâmî, Bâyezîd’, with all relevant secondary literature.

¹³⁴ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, p. 52–53 (№ 37). ‘*Bu ikisin ihtiyâr eyledükden sonra her nesne inandrub Bayezid-i Bestâmî geçinmek mümkin ancak.*’

¹³⁵ The literature on Rumi is a shoreless ocean, with a lot of titles of questionable value. Still the best introduction is Ritter, ‘Celâleddin Rûmî’. On his impact on Ottoman Islam, see Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra*.

¹³⁶ Also a *double entendre*. Cf. Redhouse, coll. 2129a–b, s. v. *vujûd*.

¹³⁷ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, p. 16 (№ 9). ‘*Devletlü pâdişâhım, Mesnevi’de bir ‘aceb hikâye vardır; birmel’ûn halâyıkı dalâlete düşürmek için sûratâ tağyir-i din idüb nice eziyyet ve riyâzet çeküb li-âhiri’l-emr halkı dalâlete düşürdükdən sonra kendü vücûd-ı habîsini dahi telef idüb dâl ve mudil olmuş, hiç şübhe yokdur ki bumel’ûn tâ ol hasletdedir.*’

¹³⁸ See, the editor’s introduction to Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, pp. III–XXXIX, at pp. XII–XV.

¹³⁹ Jorga, *GOR*, III, p. 180 and n. 6.

peasantry-cum-pastoralists. For the Turco-Persianate written legacy in the advice books is full of such views from Nizam al-mulk and *Qabus-name* to the late Ottoman memoranda.¹⁴⁰

To go back to Sinan Pasha's reports, they were written in a colloquial style but informed by high and sublime Islamic thought. These reports reveal a complex and authentic person who was a convinced Muslim of the Ottoman school. His observation on the dialectic between the drive for wealth acquisition, on the one side, and the drive for the fight on God's path, on the other, presages the apt remark Patricia Crone made in the late 1980s–early 1990s about how 'since God told the Arabs to go and enrich themselves, the old question whether they fought for God or for booty is meaningless':¹⁴¹

Wealth is an essential substance for the holy war. And especially the holy war against infidels is a blessed thing.¹⁴² If one is given to savour its taste, it cannot resemble anything else. It both brings expenditures and accrues advantages in this world. What a felicity in establishing of the eloquent faith in the Abode of Infidels. That is to say: they call wealth when Muhammadan laws get to be practised in such a way.¹⁴³

A lexicon entry-like short lecture on the lawfulness of Islamic poetry from the viewpoint of Maturidi theology and Hanafi law which was composed for the pasha by the Ottoman polymath Nev'î Efendi, has been preserved.¹⁴⁴ What is especially important in the case of that lecture it is that it provides a summary of a frequently debated

¹⁴⁰ See n. 135 on teaching the palace pages Persian language and Persianate courtly lore via Persian advice literature.

¹⁴¹ Crone, 'The Tribe', p. 471 (n. 113).

¹⁴² Here Sinan Pasha invokes the famous dichotomy 'the holy war against one's own erring soul' (*cihâdu n-nefs*) vs. 'the holy war against infidels' (*cihâd 'ale'l-küffâr*) frequently endorsed by the Ottoman Sufis who predominantly used to follow Ibn 'Arabi's views on the matter. It is clear that the idea was known to the grand vizier and that he presumed Murad III's familiarity with the idea. For an earlier attestation of the vernacularization of the idea, see Halil bin İsmâil, *Smavna Kadıoğlu*, edid. Gölpınarlı and Sungurbey, p. 147, vers. 2204–2205. For more on the idea, see Şibay, 'Cihâd', *İA*; Tyan, 'Djihâd', *Et*².

¹⁴³ Sahillioğlu = Telhisler, p. 5 (№ 3). '...mâl asıl cihâd içündür husûsan cihâd 'ale'l-küffâr bir mübârek nesnedür ki lezzeti zevkolunsa hiç nesneye benzemez hem harcı çıkar ve hem dünyânın menâfi'i hâsıl olur dâr-i keferede ikamet-i dîn-i mübîn ne sa'âdetdir. İşte mâl ana dirler ki böyle şerâyi'-i Muhammedî icrâ oluna'.

¹⁴⁴ Kortantamer, 'Nev'î Efendi'nin', pp. 224–228. This text deserves a special scholarly analysis. A prolegomenon of that is provided in Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*, passim.

issue¹⁴⁵ in a vernacular rendition¹⁴⁶ from the viewpoint of the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the Ottomans. This is a classic example of the vernacularization of the high discourses of the scholarly arguments uttered, written, repeated, rewritten for centuries in the Arabic language and to a lesser extent in Persian as well. Sinan's Sufi tutor was the prominent Halveti sheikh Ma'ruf Efendi.¹⁴⁷ Sinan Pasha's Islam was typical sixteenth-century Ottoman elite Islam which was characterised by Hanafi jurisprudence, Maturidi theology, Islamic philosophy (*hikmet*) and high intellectual Sufism, which emerged as a mixture of Ibn Arabi's Sufism (*taṣavvuf u tefelsüf*) wedded to the Neoplatonic philosophies of Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi al-Maqtul.¹⁴⁸ This was an elite Islam. Its cosmology was always suspect to certain strata in the Islamic world, and the Kadizadeli movement in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century rose among people who were troubled by such a cosmology, and especially with the social implications of such a cosmology. It is easy to trace the ideas of the leading intellectuals of this philosophising Sufism, but it is very difficult to trace how such Sufism affected the mentalities and actions of the elites and the middle class who were not intellectuals and writers as such. Nonetheless, this influence can be traced through careful reading of manifold sources. We believe that the living out of such ideas was as important as putting them down in written form. The polemics about them between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries testify to their living importance.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, both Sinan Pasha's burning of the relics of St. Sava and his manifold turning of the churches into mosques during 1590s having started with the Rotunda of Salonica were also Islamic acts consciously undertaken as such.¹⁵⁰ That this action does not fit our preconceptions of what is Islamic and what is non-Islamic is not Sinan Pasha's problem.

¹⁴⁵ See, e. g., Jacobi, 'Dichtung und Lüge'; Bürgel, "Die beste Dichtung"; Yosefi, 'Muhammad's Attitude', with an exhaustive bibliography. In our view, Yosefi's paper shortchanges the Maturidi-Hanafi tradition on the subject. On the other hand, Ahmed and Filipovic's *Hellfire* stresses the pathbreaking character of Bürgel's book-like piece where it was not only the Neo-Persian Islamic poetry which was read with a prospective to the medieval Islamic Arab poetry, but *vice versa*; a perspective missing in the earlier scholarship, save for Hellmut Ritter's *œuvre*.

¹⁴⁶ On the vernacularization tides in the Balkans-to-Bengal complex in the period ca 1258–1850 influenced by and leaning to the high Islamic discourse(s) in Arabic and Persian languages, see Ahmed, *Islam*, pp. 334–343, 386–397.

¹⁴⁷ Kefeli Hüseyn, *Rāznāme*, pp. 136–137, 233–234.

¹⁴⁸ On this, see Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*. Also, see Meier, 'Ein wichtiger Handschriftenfund', p. 104; Rosenthal, 'Ibn 'Arabi between'.

¹⁴⁹ Terzioğlu, 'Sunna-minded Sufi', esp. pp. 255–259, 271–278; Filan, 'Religious Puritans'. Also, see Zilfi, 'The Kadizadelis'; Cook, *Commanding Right*, pp. 323–330.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Ahmed, *Islam*, pp. 46–71, on iconic arts and wine-drinking as conscious Islamic acts according to the self-understanding of Islam in the Balkans-to-Bengal Turco-Persianate zone ca 1258–1850.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present author intended this paper to be devoid of any musings about methodological issues, including the question of confessionalization. We opted for the principle *res ipsa loquitur*—the things are told by themselves.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, the respected editors of this volume kindly asked for some written *apologia pro causa sua* on our part. Thus, in the following we reflect on the concept of confessionalization. We shall not repeat the narrative of the rise of the concept of confessionalization in the interpretation of early modern European history. Tijana Krstić did that in her introductory remarks to the conference with the update on the current state of the debate (ca to 2018)¹⁵² and with her take on the question how useful the concept might be for Ottoman studies. Derin Terzioğlu repeatedly discussed the applicability of the notion for the study of Ottoman religious history (ca 1400–1826). She opted for a careful use of the concept leaning towards notions of ‘Sunnitization’ and ‘process of confessionalization’ rather than that of ‘confessionalization with a capital C’ in the sense the scholars of early modern Europe use it.¹⁵³ Recently, Eleni Gara wholeheartedly embraced both the term and the notion behind it.¹⁵⁴ Graf’s carefully written monograph on elite converts in the Ottoman Empire ca 1580s–1620s—based on evidence from the somewhat underutilized archives of Vienna, Graz, and Innsbruck—fruitfully used the concept, in our opinion, but this should be connected with the fact that his monograph as much as it is a work on Ottoman history, is also a work on the history of the Holy Roman Empire, the Christian Central Europe and the politically Christian portion of the Mediterranean, namely, Italy and Spain with its Mediterranean domains.¹⁵⁵ As for our views, we should like to respectfully disagree with the above described proposals, sometimes totally, sometimes to a certain degree.

Let us first say something about what we find commendable in the concept both in general and as applied in the Ottoman history. The concept of confessionalization takes religion seriously. While this might not be such a revolutionary turn in the study of early modern Europe, it is indeed something new in Ottoman studies. For a long time in Ottoman studies Islam used to be understood merely as a tool of state politics if official, and as an expression of the political and social alterity if heterodox. For various reason the other religions present in the Ottoman Empire fared better with regards to their historical role. That is to say, Ottoman Islam tended for decades to be viewed in some vulgarized sociologicistic way which is best described as a both conscious and unconscious comingling of vulgar Marxism with equally vulgar Durkheimism. Strangely, Weber did not make an impact on Ottoman studies save for the

¹⁵¹ Cf. Wansbrough, *Res Ipsa*.

¹⁵² Beside Krstić’s paper in this volume, see Forster, *Catholic Revival*; Forster et al., ‘Religious History’.

¹⁵³ Terzioğlu, ‘Ottoman Sunnitization’, esp. at pp. 304–305, 311–318, 320–324; Terzioğlu, ‘Where *’İlm-i Hâl*’, esp. at pp. 80–82, 102–104, 107–114.

¹⁵⁴ Gara, ‘Conceptualizing Interreligious’, pp. 84–88.

¹⁵⁵ Graf, *Renegades*, esp. at pp. 96–97, 210–215 et passim.

input of two highly valuable scholars, but their Weberism was far from vulgar as opposed to the plethora of Marxists and Durkheimists in Ottoman studies.¹⁵⁶

The evidence which enables one to study Ottoman Islam from the perspective of religious and intellectual history wedded with social, cultural, and political history is abundant in an exceptional amount, lacking in such a degree for any other pre-industrial Islamic society and/or polity. But there are few studies which try to connect all those traits of the Ottoman existence(s). In our view the best study of that type we actually do possess is alas Terzioğlu's unpublished doctoral thesis on Niyazi-i Misri.¹⁵⁷ Recently, the late Shahab Ahmed and the present author tried to wed the political, social, intellectual, religious and cultural history in a book in print which treats the questions of heresy, orthodoxy, freedom of speech, freethinking, varieties of space, varieties of the sayable, and the ways how ideas were actually lived out in the Ottoman Empire (ca 1400–1800).¹⁵⁸ Although it was relatively easy to amass abundant and indeed unprecedented evidence provided one knows where to look for the evidence, to interpret the accumulated pieces of evidence was highly difficult, on the other hand. For us, there was no help in the studies of early modern Europe or some other non-Islamic area. We had to come up with our own models having started with the questioning of the very notions of religion, orthodoxy, orthopraxy, cathecumenization before offering our interpretation of the Ottoman case. This led the late Shahab Ahmed to his now highly discussed reinterpretation of Islam in general and to his notion of the 'Balkans-to-Bengal' complex of the Turco-Persianate ways of expression of Islam in the period ca 1250–1800, or even 1850.¹⁵⁹ It is necessary to say, that our joint book, however, at certain important points is actually in disagreement with some of the claims Ahmed proposed in his own book. That is to say that his own book in no way should be taken as theoretical prolegomena to our joint book. But the most general morale of our joint manuscript is that the scholarship should take religion(s) in the Ottoman Empire seriously, which is in absolute agreement with the tenor of this volume. Also a part of that morale is our demonstration that the Ottoman subjects of various confessions used to think about their religion, and not merely 'to do' religion; religion(s) and the most abstruse creedal as well as metaphysical questions of it meant something even to a shepherd somewhere in the mountains, cobbler, or manumitted slave she-cook with a small shop in the bazaar of a bigger Balkan Ottoman town, to mention only three examples of people who were presumed to be disinterested in religious issues as such and the evidence we produced belied such supposedly apodictical claims.

As for confessionalization *sensu stricto*, this author agrees with the warning of Roni Weinstein expressed during the conference that led to this volume that in the European case the scholars of early modern era might have too hastily concluded that confessionalization was something which appeared only in the early modern times. He stressed the late antique and medieval precedents for many phenomena for which

¹⁵⁶ Ülgener, *İktisadî İnhitat*; Inalcık, 'The Poet and the Patron'.

¹⁵⁷ Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident*.

¹⁵⁸ Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*.

¹⁵⁹ Ahmed, *What is Islam?*

the scholars claimed that they did not pop up on the historical scene before the early modern era (heresy trials, catechumenization texts, professions of faith etc.). In that vein, to strengthen Weinstein's argument, we can mention a case which has been known in the studies of medieval Bosnia since the 1860s–1870s. The head of the Bosnian Franciscan province during the 1370s, a certain Bartol of La Verna (Alverna) sent in 1372 to Pope Gregory XI (1370–1378) and to his office in Avignon a set of questions entitled *Dubia ecclesiastica* dealing with all sorts of issues of doctrine, practical life, and moral theology.¹⁶⁰ In the existing literature it is claimed that the form of *dubia*-texts was a post-Tridentine tool of confessionalization par excellence, which appeared thanks to what one might term the Jesuit moral theology revolution. Clearly this was not the case. One might ask: did the scholars of early modern European confessionalization close their eyes in front of medieval precedents in general? Another possible, and from our point of view, the biggest, danger embedded in the notion of confessionalization is that it, willy-nilly, might end up in statism proper, as it was observed by one historian of early modern Europe as early as 1997.¹⁶¹

Although the statism in Ottoman studies was powerfully and with justification criticized by Abou-El-Haj in the early 1990s,¹⁶² it reappeared as a set of varieties of neo-statism since the end of 2000s. We think in the first place of Barkey's attempt at the reinterpretation of the Ottoman polity from the point of view of comparative historical sociology.¹⁶³ Further, Tezcan's project of digging up the supposed seventeenth-century Ottoman commoner in the historically English insular political sense of the term as a coeval counterpart to the English commoner in the time span from the days of Charles I to the Glorious Revolution in 1688¹⁶⁴ in our view also ended up in a variety of neo-statism. One could give the benefit of doubt to Tezcan considering that he did not intend to end up in neo-statism, but this cannot change the outcome upon any judicious reading of his book. As far as religious history taken in a broad sense is concerned, in our opinion neo-statism seems to be triumphant there. In the first place we think of Guy Burak's notions of the supposed second formation of Islamic law and the equally supposed construction of Ottoman dynastic law, namely Ottoman Hanafism.¹⁶⁵ We concur with Snježana Buzov that Ottoman Hanafism is better seen as a law of a non-territorial guild, a constructed community of knowledge with a supposedly unbroken chain going back to early Islamic Transoxania and finally to Abu Hanifa. This Ottoman guild of law doctors used the state and the facilities the state offered and/or might have offered rather than the Ottoman state and dynasty supposedly using the Ottoman doctors of law.¹⁶⁶ The argument of Buzov was presaged by the Bosnian-born Ottoman scholar Hasan Kafi al-Akhisari (d. 1614–

¹⁶⁰ See, Zagreb, Arhiv HAZU, Ms. Lat. I.a 57, fols 76a–78b, Bartol of Alverna (La Verna), *Dubia ecclesiastica*. Also, see Šanjek, 'Crkvene i društvene', esp. pp. 78–93.

¹⁶¹ Schmidt, 'Sozialdisziplinierung?'

¹⁶² Abou-El-Haj, *Formation*.

¹⁶³ Barkey, *Empire of Difference*.

¹⁶⁴ On this, see Murphey, 'Tezcan, *The Second*', pp. 482–483.

¹⁶⁵ Burak, *The Second Formation*. See especially the review by Aykan, 'Guy Burak'.

¹⁶⁶ Buzov, *The Lawgiver and his Lawmakers*, esp. at pp. 135–171, 190–195, 245–258.

1615) in his biographical treatise in the Arabic language entitled ‘The String of Scholars to the Seal of Prophets’ (*Nizamu l-‘ulama ila khatami l-anbiya*).¹⁶⁷

Statism is also observable in some attempts at interpreting the era of Mehmed IV (r. 1648–1687) in the terms of the era of a Sultan-cum-Kadizadeli. For one scholar would have us believe that Mehmed IV was not merely a sympathizer of the Kadizadelis, in itself a questionable claim, but the most important actor of the movement.¹⁶⁸ The scholars insistent on the confessionalization paradigm(s) shall be bound to come up with ways of avoiding falling into the statist trap.

Taking religion seriously means also considering that there were always innumerable varieties of the religious experience in the widest possible sense of the term (doing religion; remembering religion; thinking religion; teaching religion; sensing religion etc.). Also, even in the predominantly and genuinely religious environments and eras there were always dissenters, people opposed to organized religion, but also indifferent ones,¹⁶⁹ impostors,¹⁷⁰ and atheists proper. In a joint book the late Shahab Ahmed and the present author are discussing in detail two cases: one is of a philosophically grounded dissenter who was executed in 1601 and who was a deist who accepted the existence of God but was opposed to organized religion as such following the celebrated tradition of Islamic philosophy proper; the second case was of an atheist *sensu stricto* who denied the very existence of God and paid in 1665–1666 with his head for his conviction but only after he entered into a public conflict of a secular character and was reported for his strange ideas by people who were socially, not religiously inimical to him. That is to say, one was able to be privately a religious and ideological ‘weirdo’ in the Ottoman Empire as long as he did not divulge his ideas in the public space.¹⁷¹

In conclusion, we should like to reiterate that we find the notion of Sunnitization in the period 1453–1826 more productive in the study of the Ottoman Empire. Also it is possible to trace something very similar to confessionalization proper in the Ottoman Empire in the period 1826–1924, but this issue is heavily understudied. If one really wants to stick with the word confessionalization then the syntagm ‘process of confessionalization(s)’ might be a better choice. In general terms, scholars of the Ottoman Empire should never forget that the Ottoman sources are like the Bible or Shakespeare. It is easy to find a dozen of Ottoman sources which can supposedly prove any claim, similar to the way any view can be backed by at least one quote

¹⁶⁷ al-Aqhisari, *Nizamu l-‘ulama*. On the author, see Šabanović, ‘Hasan Kafi’.

¹⁶⁸ Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*; Baer, ‘Death in the Hippodrome’.

¹⁶⁹ On Ottoman religious indifferentism see the pioneering remarks in Graf, *Renegades*, pp. 103–106. For the developments in early modern Europe and how to study the phenomenon, see Mulsow, ‘Indifferentismusforschung’.

¹⁷⁰ The highly important theme of cynical impostorship, especially in the religious-cum-political movements in the pre-industrial environments is in the Ottoman case totally neglected although the notion of impostorship (*düzme*) is well documented in Ottoman sources of various types. On how to conceptualize impostorship in preindustrial societies, see Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*; Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*; Crone, *Pre-industrial Societies*.

¹⁷¹ Ahmed and Filipovic, *Hellfire*.

from the Bible or Shakespeare. Therefore, a strictly source-directed study is, in our view, the only research option if one does not want to be derogated quite soon by the publication of new sources or new data.

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20. ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF YEZIDIS: LAW, GEOGRAPHY AND CONFESSION-BUILDING IN EARLY MODERN KURDISTAN (SIXTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES)¹

YAVUZ AYKAN

INTRODUCTION

While during the early modern period many different religious groups existed among the Kurdish communities (such as Kizilbash, Ahl-e Haqq, Sunnis adhering to the Shafi'i school of law, Şemsi, etc.), historians have focused mostly on the history of the Kizilbash and the Ottoman attitudes towards them. In this context, despite its polysemic meaning, Kurdistan, the historical region contested by the Safavids and Ottomans throughout the early modern period, has been mainly discussed as an administrative entity.² In this article, in contrast, I explore the layers of meaning attached to the term Kurdistan (one of which carried a heavy confessional tenor) in the early modern period by focusing on the Yezidis, a group that followed a syncretic religion of Islamic origin that emerged in the twelfth century, and the challenges that it presented to the Ottoman Sunni authorities.³

My discussion will have two interrelated foci. First, I will examine the role of Yezidism in the portrayal of Kurdistan by both Kurdish intellectuals and Ottoman administrators in various administrative and literary texts, addressing the intimately interwoven histories of confession-building and geography in the early modern period. Second, my discussion will explore the role of law and construction of the Yezidis' legal status in the opinions of jurists from both Istanbul and Kurdistan in the sixteenth century. I will then examine the extent to which this legal construction of

¹ Thanks are due to Tijana Krstić, Evren Sünnetçiöğlü and Derin Terzioğlü for their intellectual engagement with the text. Ideas running through this article were mostly developed during my stay as a visiting fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna. For the abbreviation of the archival catalogues consulted see the bibliography.

² See Göyünç, 'Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği'nin'; van Bruinessen, 'The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir'; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*.

³ For the history of the Yezidis see Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism* and Spät, *Late Antique Motifs*.

Yezidis was reflected in the administrative and alliance-making practices on the ground in the following centuries.

The prevailing tendency in the historiography on Yezidism has been to focus on the nineteenth-century context, when Yezidis were perceived as a heretical sect (Ar. *fırqa dālla*) that had to be transformed into proper Hanafi Muslims via conversion.⁴ This reflects the *modus operandi* of the nineteenth-century Ottoman state, whereby the creation of reliable citizens became central to the constitution of the modern state power.⁵ Yet, between the sixteenth and eighteenth century we encounter a radically different picture where, through casuistry—that is, the technical capacity of *fiqh* to construct categories of persons, acts and things in order to respond to newly emerging legal questions—the Yezidis were classified somewhere in between infidels (*kāfir*) and apostates (*murtad*).⁶ This process was closely linked to what scholars have termed Sunni confession-building or ‘Sunnitization’ of the early modern Ottoman society, which began sometime in the mid-fifteenth century but attained new dynamism in the mid-sixteenth century. In this context, the concept of Sunnitization is understood as measures adopted by the Ottoman authorities, scholars, and preachers to correct the ritual practice and beliefs of the (nominally) Sunni population, as well as define, expose, and sanction the practices and beliefs of non-Sunni groups within the Ottoman domains with the goal of limiting their ability to ‘corrupt’ the rest of the society, sometimes (but by no means always) through physical persecution.⁷ By drawing on the chronicles, fatwas, *mühimme* registers and geographical works, the article seeks to contribute to the scholarly debates on the question of Ottoman confession-building and Sunnitization, as well as to complicate the discussion on the notion of early modern ‘Kurdistan’ through an analysis of how early modern Sunni authorities framed the question of Yezidism.

BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY

Let me begin with a story that may serve as an introduction to the contextual and historical issues that I explore in this article: on January 26, 1568, Abdal Khan, the holder of the districts of Tor and Heytam, within the Kurdish hereditary fiefdom of Cizre, stabbed the chief sergeant Muhammed Aga with a dagger. According to Feridun Bey, the secretary of the grand vizier, the homicide took place in the courtyard of Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne.⁸ The event generated a serious political scandal, which left its traces in the chronicles of the period including the *Sharafnama* of

⁴ See Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, particularly pp. 69–92.

⁵ For some exemplary studies on the question of Ottoman citizenship in the nineteenth century see Salzmänn, ‘Citizens in Search of a State’; Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, particularly pp. 156–197; Phillips Cohen, ‘Between Civic and Islamic Ottomanism’.

⁶ For the casuistry applied to the Yezidi case in general see Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, pp. 194–226; for casuistry in the Roman legal tradition see Thomas, ‘La valeur des choses’.

⁷ For the question of Ottoman ‘Sunnitization’ see Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization?’; Krstić, ‘State and Religion’.

⁸ Feridun Bey, *Nüzhet-i Esrâr*, pp. 310–315.

the Kurdish prince Şerafeddin Khan Bitlisi.⁹ In their diplomatic correspondence, the Habsburg and Venetian ambassadors devoted considerable attention to the event, which resonated beyond the territories of the empire.¹⁰

Why did a homicide committed by a Kurdish prince of insignificant rank create such an impact? First of all, the murder had a symbolic meaning since it took place between two Sunni Muslims in the courtyard of a mosque. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the homicide took place at a moment of visible tension between the imperial center and the Kurdish chieftains. At the heart of this tension was the question of the administrative status of the newly annexed Kurdistan, a sprawling frontier region between the Ottoman and Safavid territories.

Feridun's account describes a charismatic Kurdish notable named Bedir Bey, the holder and the chieftain of the hereditary fiefdom (*hükümet*) of Cizre.¹¹ Through his sustained loyalty and services, Bedir had accrued charisma in the eyes of the Ottoman center that lasted more than sixty years. Under Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566), he had demonstrated a great deal of success during the campaigns of Baghdad (1534) and Tabriz (1548).¹² The tension between Bedir and Abdal began when the latter claimed more power and influence over the *hükümet* of Cizre. Upon the enthronement of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574), Abdal Khan made his way to the city of Edirne, to the meeting of the Imperial Council. His aim was to obtain an imperial certificate (*berat*) that would give him more power and influence over the *hükümet* of Cizre.¹³

The Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha held an audience with Abdal Khan and clarified the impossibility of his request, underlining the fact that he could become the chieftain of Cizre only after Bedir's death. After this encounter, events become complicated: Abdal Khan left the scene without following Sokollu's advice and refused to join the Imperial Army. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha sent his man Muhammed Aga after Abdal Khan to summon him to the Council that gathered in the afternoon. According to Feridun, Muhammed encountered Abdal and his retinue in the vicinity

⁹ Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, vol. 1/2, pp. 154–165.

¹⁰ See Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, vol. 5, p. 237 and State Archives of Venice, Senato, Dispacci di Costantinopoli, Filza 2, 517a. I would like to thank Güneş Işksel who called my attention to these sources.

¹¹ The term *hükümet* referred to the fragmented territories ruled by a Kurdish chieftain; their sole responsibility vis-à-vis the imperial center was to participate in military campaigns, providing soldiers for the imperial army. These units were exempt from the imperial census (*tahrir*) according to the imperial pledge (*ahdname*) they held. Their holders enjoyed political and fiscal independence. See, Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânin-i Âl-i Osmân*, p. 30: '*Ammâ hükümetler tahrir olunmamıştır, içinde zeâmet ve tumar yoktur*'. Compare with the *kanunname* of Sofyalı Ali Çavuş, which was drafted 44 years later: '*Ebvâb-ı mahsûlâtı dâhil-i Defter-i Hâkanî olmamıştır. İçlerinde ümerâ-yi Osmâniye'den ve kul tâifesinden hiç bir kimse yoktur*'. See Sertoğlu ed., *Sofyalı Ali Çavuş Kanunnâmesi*, p. 19.

¹² Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, volume 1/2, p. 154.

¹³ The event took place during the period when the Sultan Selim II moved to Edirne to spend the winter. For the political importance of the city of Edirne during the time of Selim II see, Emecen, 'Selim II'.

of Üç Şerefeli Mosque and invited him into the mosque's courtyard to negotiate. In a moment of passion, Abdal ordered his men to kill Muhammed in the courtyard of the mosque. As the archival documents suggest, Abdal Khan and his twenty men were subsequently executed on the sultan's order.¹⁴

While recounting the event Feridun eulogizes Bedir due to his loyalty to the Ottoman center, and subsequently paints a very negative picture of Abdal Khan. By recounting the homicide on Abdal Khan's orders, Feridun Bey opens a rare window onto the Sunni perception of the Kurds and Kurdistan. Feridun achieves this through a mythical narrative, offering readers a striking genesis story, drawing on the history of al-Maqrizi (d. 1442).¹⁵ He recounts: One day, the cruel king Zahhak charged one of his viziers with the daily feeding of his snakes, who were fed with the brains of two men among his subjects.¹⁶ The pitiful vizier accepts the duty yet adopts a strategy: While feeding the snakes with the brain of one man, he secretly saves the second one by dispatching him to the mountains of Istahar, which are inhabited by djinns and demons (*dīv* in Persian). At this juncture in the story, the Persian motifs in the narrative tangle with Semitic elements, as Solomon enters the picture as a main protagonist.¹⁷ When God revokes the seal of kingship and prophecy from Solomon, he makes his way to the Istahar Mountains in order to take refuge. While in seclusion, Solomon prays for forgiveness and God grants him his remittance. When he returns to his country, he realizes that some of his wives and concubines have deviated from the path of righteousness and orders them to be exiled to the Istahar Mountains.¹⁸ When these women arrive at the mountains, they encounter the men saved by Zahhak's vizier who had become wild. According to Feridun, the Kurds were born out of the coupling of these exiled men and women.¹⁹ As such, according to Feridun, while Bedir was the embodiment of a real Sunni Muslim, Kurds like Abdal Khan descended from the offspring of the Istahar community. He further adds that the Yezidis were also the descendants of these people.

Feridun Bey's narrative juxtaposes two Kurds, placing one (Bedir Bey) in the Sunni realm, known and governable, and the second (Abdal Khan) in a space of 'ignorance' (*méconnaissance*),²⁰ to use René Girard's term—a sort of *terra incognita*. It

¹⁴ For the order see, BOA (MD), VII, no: 2348.

¹⁵ Generally abbreviated as *al-Khitat*, the text is entitled *al-Mawa'iz wa-l-I'tibar fi Dhikr al-Khitat wa-l-Athar*. For the importance of al-Maqrizi and his history see, Rabbat, 'Was al-Maqrizi's'.

¹⁶ Stretching back to the Zoroastrian mythology, Zahhak is the evil figure that takes an important place in Persianate mythology, particularly in the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi. See Melville, 'The *Shahnameh*', pp. 16–22.

¹⁷ Feridun makes a critical move in his narrative as he replaces the figure of Kaveh the Blacksmith with Solomon. The former is a legendary heroic figure in the *Shahnama* who starts a revolt against Zahhak. He is also an important mythical figure in the Kurdish nationalist discourse today. See Omidsalar, 'Kāva'.

¹⁸ Feridun Bey, *Nüzhet-i Esrâr*, p. 313. Text: '*utrūd-hum ilā'l-jibāl*', meaning '*expel them to the mountains!*'

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 313. Text: '*bu iki tâifenin çiftleşmesinden tenâsül eden nev'-i insana Kürd denir*'.

²⁰ René Girard uses the French word *méconnaissance* to describe such situations. See Girard, *Des choses cachées*.

is this very ignorance that creates the uncanny primal scene, and, thus, the mythology.²¹ This space of ignorance, indeed, corresponded to the newly annexed Kurdistan, confessionally diverse territory that the Sunni imperial center tried to make sense of.

THE MANY MEANINGS AND VISIONS OF KURDISTAN

Historians studying the development of the term Kurdistan in the Ottoman period have long treated the question in the context of the administrative structure of the Empire. Their account is straightforward: after the overthrow of the Akkoyunlus (1508), Shah Isma‘il (d. 1524) replaced Kurdish chieftains with a Kizilbash aristocracy.²² The presence of a large population of Kizilbash influenced by the mystical Shi‘ism of Shah Isma‘il (d. 1524) was perceived as a threat in Anatolia. This was one of the reasons that prompted Selim I (r. 1512–1520) to organize a massive military campaign against the Safavids on the eastern frontiers of the Empire. Following Selim I’s campaign and a subsequent alliance with local Kurdish chieftains, the Ottomans succeeded in establishing sovereignty in formerly Akkoyunlu and Safavid cities, such as Amid and Van. As such, the Sunni political alliance between the Ottomans and Kurdish chieftains also made the gradual creation of the province of Kurdistan possible under Ottoman rule.²³

The word ‘Kurdistan’ did not appear as a geographical entity in the vocabulary of the imperial center during the initial stages of the Ottoman encounter with the Kurds, but rather as a series of fragmented political and administrative units. Although the first Ottoman register dates back to 1518, it is in the 1520 register that we see the Ottomans make a clear distinction between the administrative units ruled by the Ottomans and those ruled by Kurdish notables.²⁴ In this register, the territories governed by the Kurdish notables were registered as ‘Kurdish communities’ (*cemâ‘at-i Kürdân*).²⁵ It is approximately ten years after the region’s annexation that we find the word ‘Kurdistan’ used by the Ottomans to designate the territories held by

²¹ In another work Girard further explains the role of *méconnaissance* in creating mythology. See Girard, *Les origines de la culture*, pp. 85–94.

²² See Khacharian, ‘The Kurdish Principality of Hakkariya’.

²³ The literature on the topic is vast. For some examples see Göyünç, ‘Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği’nin’; van Bruinessen, ‘The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir’; Tezcan, ‘The Development of the use of “Kurdistan”’; Öz, ‘Ottoman Provincial Administration’; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*; Posch, ‘What Is a Frontier?’.

²⁴ The 1518 register is considered the first census of the region undertaken by the Ottoman Empire. See Göyünç, ‘Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği’nin’, pp. 23–34; van Bruinessen, ‘The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir’, p. 17. The law code (*kanunname*) of this period is analyzed and published by İlhan, *Amid (Diyarbakır)*, pp. 122–125.

²⁵ This register seems to be the oldest register to give a clear idea of the administrative divisions of the region. The register is published in Barkan, ‘H. 933–934 (M. 1527–1528) Malî Yılına Ait Bir Bütçe Örneği’, esp. p. 306. However, except for Ebru Sönmez, this register seems to have been ignored by historians who have recently worked on the subject. See Sönmez, *İdris-i Bidlisi*, pp. 114–125.

Kurdish notables. This register dating to 1527 gives as its first entry a list of the subdivisions of Diyarbakır province ruled by the Ottomans. It includes nine districts (*livâ*), as well as the important urban centers of the region such as Amid, Harput, Ruha (Urfa), Ergani, Mosul and the regions in which the itinerant tribe named Ulus dominated. The second entry entitled ‘the province of Kurdistan’ (*vilâyet-i Kürdistan*), contained seventeen ‘territories’ (*eyâlet*)²⁶; these included Bitlis, Hısnkeyf (Hasankeyf), Siverek, Hizan, Sason, Palu, Cizre and other territories registered under the names of the Kurdish notables who ruled them, such as Mir Zahid.²⁷ Thus, if we look at the archives of the imperial center, in the Ottoman ‘administrative vocabulary’ the word ‘Kurdistan’ seems to have been used as an administrative category denoting the totality of fragmented local Kurdish authorities recognized by the Ottoman center through a series of negotiations rather than as a unified territorial entity.

Negotiating with different regional powers in return for titles and influence was not something new for the Kurdish notables. In the Kurdish context, this tradition of political negotiation and alliance making stretches back to the Mongol, Great Seljuk, and Byzantine periods.²⁸ Yet, it is in the Ottoman context that the criterion of being Sunni gave Kurdish rule its legitimacy in the region. Thus, in the early modern context, Kurdistan came to represent a geographical space that was inflected by confessional and political dynamics.²⁹ As I am going to discuss below, the production of Kurdistan as a confessional space had been long in the making; in this process, while having their own political agenda, Kurdish intellectuals and bureaucrats such as Şerafeddin Khan Bitlisi took on a role almost akin to that of ‘native informants’ in order to ‘translate’ the ‘local’ into the imperial. By doing so, they also included their own Sunni Kurdistan in the larger context of the Ottoman political and geographical vocabulary.

Let me illustrate this with a description of Kurdistan offered by Şerafeddin Khan in his *Sharafnama*:

Kurdistan begins at [the strait of] Hormuz, which is on the coast of the Indian Ocean and extends from here, in a straight line, to the province of Malatya and Maraş where it ends. In the north of this line are Fars, Persian Iraq [Western Iran],

²⁶ In his book, Metin Kunt uses the word ‘territory’ to draw a clear line between the administrative subdivisions of the Kurdistan province and those of Diyarbakır (Diyarbakir, in Kunt’s book). According to Kunt, unlike the Diyarbakır province, the use of the word *eyâlet* to designate each subdivision of the province of Kurdistan refers to certain autonomy of each notable within that province. See Kunt, *Sultan’s Servants*, p. 108.

²⁷ This register (Topkapı Palace Archives, D. 5246) is published in Annex 1 in Kunt, *Sultan’s Servants* (for the facsimiles, see Figures 6–7 of Annex 1). See also Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânin-i Âli Osmân*, pp. 29–30.

²⁸ An example is the case of one İbn ad-Dahhak (d. 928), a Kurdish chieftain who adopted Christianity and was given a fiefdom near Tarsus by the Byzantine ruler Romanos I Lakapenos (d. 948). See ‘İbn ad-Dahhâk’.

²⁹ Even in the later periods Ottoman bureaucrats and statesmen were to stress the Sunnism of the Kurdish notables as the main criterion of alliance making. See Murphey ed. and trans., *Kanun-nâme*, pp. 12–18.

Azerbaijan and Armenia; in the middle, Diyarbakır, Mosul and Arabian Iraq [Mesopotamia]; however, many branches of this community have spread from the most remote frontiers of the East to the extreme limit of the West (the Maghreb).³⁰

Şerafeddin Khan's gargantuan geographical description does not correspond to the earlier portrayals of Kurdistan. In his *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, Qazwini (d. 1283) describes the province of Kurdistan as covering the region of Hamadan in Iran. He includes cities such as Bihar, Dinawar, Kirmanshah and Shahrazur. The regions around Lake Van fall into the province of Armenia, and cities such as Amid, Hınkeyf, Mardin, Jazira and Imadiyya are included in the provinces of Diyar Bakr or Diyar Rabi'a.³¹ This description is that of the province of Kurdistan created by Sanjar (d. 1157) under the Great Seljuk Empire.³² Although we do not yet know which sources served Şerafeddin Khan for his geographical description of Kurdistan, it is certain that Qazwini's *Nuzhat al-Qulub* was one of them.³³ In his description, Şerafeddin Khan takes as the basis the spread of the Kurdish tribal communities in the region. By doing so, he jumps over the administrative divisions of his time. The cultural and linguistic ties between different Kurdish tribes and dynasties sprawling throughout the region seem to be the basis for his description of Kurdistan.

Such a shifting perception of the term Kurdistan as an administrative unit and geographical category is not peculiar to the context under study. Recent scholarship has addressed and accounted for multiple meanings attached to a particular cultural and geographical landscape beyond administrative and cartographic categories.³⁴ In Şerafeddin Khan's description, it was a sense attached to a certain territory populated by different Kurdish communities that gave meaning to the word Kurdistan. This perception had much to do with what can be described as 'segmentary lineage system'³⁵ through which the Kurdish tribal confederations were organized; these tribal organizations could fragment or form larger confederations at any given time, depending on the larger political situation at hand. Put simply, while being in charge of a certain territory assigned by the Ottoman center, the Kurdish tribal confederations also formed and produced another layer of authority, which consisted of a network of political entities.³⁶ It was in this sense that Kurdistan could be said to have constituted a connected and culturally unified landscape. However, despite Şerafeddin Khan's efforts to present it as a culturally unified territorial entity,

³⁰ Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, I/II, p. 27.

³¹ See al-Qazwini, *The Geographical Part*, pp. 105–107.

³² For the story of the creation of the province of Kurdistan by the Great Seljuks see Le Strange, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 55–56; also see Tezcan, 'The Development of the Use of "Kurdistan"'.
³³ For the sources of *Sharafnama* see Alsancaklı, 'What's Old is New Again'.

³⁴ See Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own'; Dauphant, *Géographies*.

³⁵ See Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own'; Dauphant, *Géographies*.

³⁶ Yalçın-Heckmann, 'Kurdish Tribal Organisation'. For an important formulation of 'segmentary lineage system' see Sahlins, 'The Segmentary Lineage'.

³⁶ Compare with the early modern Mexican case: Villalobos et al., 'Mapping Political Space'.

commensurable and intelligible to an Ottoman interlocutor,³⁷ in reality the political landscape was riven by inter-tribal conflicts and confessional diversity that corresponded to a much more fragmented and heterogeneous picture. In certain territories, place names and tribe names coincided,³⁸ while certain confederacies were of short duration.³⁹

Şerafeddin Khan also strove to sunnitize his Kurdistan, with Yezidis as a major exception:

All the Kurdish communities follow the Shafi'i *madhhab*. They show themselves to be most eager, and [they] display a truly ineffable zeal when it comes to observing the canonical laws of Islam and putting into practice the oral prescriptions of His Holiness, the best of mortals, may he approve of our sacrifices and our homage, to follow the traditions of his companions, of his illustrious and glorious successors [or vicars, Caliphs], and of his acquittal of prayer, alms, holy pilgrimage and fasting, with the exception of a few groups belonging to the nomadic tribes in Mosul and Syria such as Tasni, Khalidi and Bijani and a part of Bohti, Mahmudi and Dumbeli tribes who belong to the Yezidi sect, who are ranked among the disciples of Sheikh 'Adi, son of Musafir, one of the partisans of the Marwanid Caliphs, to whom they trace their origin. They erroneously believe that Sheikh 'Adi has taken upon them their fasts and their prayers, and that on the day of the resurrection they will be transported to paradise without being exposed to any question or reproach. These Kurds harbor the most implacable hatred and enmity against the virtuous ulema.⁴⁰

In this passage, Şerafeddin Khan emphatically distances himself and most of Kurdistan from non-Sunni groups, while aligning the Sunni Kurds with the Ottoman center. The Sunni construction of Kurdistan is here a discursive strategy that is directly

³⁷ It is striking to see that Şerafeddin Khan's description of Kurdistan was subsequently reproduced in the writings of Katib Çelebi (d. 1657) and gained a cartographic expression in the map of an eighteenth-century anonymous Ottoman cartographer. For Katib Çelebi's description see, *Kitab-ı Cihannüma*, p. 469. Ariel Salzmann studied the map of the anonymous cartographer. See Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 31–71.

³⁸ Historical sources make a clear distinction between tribes and Kurdish emirates. The tribes, in general, were associated with the name of the family of the tribal chief such as the Millizades, Kikizades, Zirkis, etc. Other tribes derived their name from the region in which they circulated, such as the Bahdinan tribe. See Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, pp. 17–18; Conermann, 'Volk, Ethnie oder Stamm'; Bacqué-Grammont, Adle, 'Quatre lettres de Sheref Beg de Bitlîs'. See also Quinn, 'The Timurid Historiographical Legacy', p. 23.

³⁹ The eighteenth century witnessed the disappearance of the term Kurdistan from the administrative vocabulary of the Ottoman Empire. The Register of Nominations (*Sancak Tevcih Defteri*) of the years 1717–1730 shows that the territories, which initially had been united under the heading of the Province of Kurdistan, were now registered under the heading of Diyarbakır Province. This register attests the emergence of new Kurdish *hükümet* territories in the eighteenth century, such as Kulb, Atak, Kızucan, Pertek, Kürdkıran, Ovacık etc. See Başar, *Osmanlı Eyâlet Tevcihâtı*, pp. 105–145.

⁴⁰ Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, 1/2, p. 28. [my translation from French]

related to his own and Kurdish notables' legitimacy in the eyes of the Ottomans. However, as we have seen in Feridun's account as well, the Yezidis posed a major problem to the efforts to cogently construct a Sunni Kurdish identity.

THE YEZIDI CHALLENGE: TWO SIXTEENTH-CENTURY JURISTS' RESPONSES

Who were the Yezidis? Yezidism emerged as a Sufi brotherhood in the twelfth century in Lalish, near Mosul, in the mountains populated by the Kurdish communities (*jabal akrād*). The group had gathered around a dervish named Sheikh ʿAdi, the son of Musafir (1073–1160), who was originally from the Bekaa valley in Lebanon and descendant of the Umayyad dynasty; he would later migrate to Hakkari.⁴¹ The origins of the Yezidis as a religious community can be traced to this Sufi brotherhood, al-ʿAdawiyya.⁴²

When Sheikh ʿAdi founded al-ʿAdawiyya, the communities populating these mountains were only partly Muslim. As the contemporary sources suggest, there were Aramaic-speaking Christian and Jewish communities inhabiting the area. A Kurdish-speaking community professed a pre-Islamic religion of Iranian origin, described in the sources as 'Magian'.⁴³ Finally, there were other Kurdish-speaking communities, who were followers of Yazid son of Muʿawiya, the caliph held responsible for the tragedy of Karbala (in 61/680) where the Prophet's grandson Husayn b. ʿAli was killed. As I am going to discuss below, this geographical proximity between the members of al-ʿAdawiyya and the followers of Yazid son of Muʿawiya was to critically inform Ottoman perception of the Yezidis in subsequent centuries.

The earliest sources suggest that Yezidism was seen as a serious political threat to Sunni Islam, particularly in relation to Yezidi collaboration with the Mongol conquerors. According to al-Maqrizi, in the year 1415, there was hostility between Sunni Muslims and the adherents of the ʿAdawiyya brotherhood, then called al-Sohbetiyya, that is the 'companions'.⁴⁴ It was also in this year that Sunni Muslims organized a campaign against the disciples of Sheikh ʿAdi. During this campaign, al-Maqrizi reports that the tomb of Sheikh ʿAdi and the sanctuary were destroyed by the Sunni armies while a large number of Yezidis were massacred.⁴⁵ However, as Philip Kreyenbroek has noted, even al-Maqrizi, a fairly pious Sunni Muslim, did not consider the Yezidis infidels or apostates. This is evident also in the writings of the jurists of earlier periods such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) who did not consider the Yezidis as infidels. They were perceived as a Muslim sect who had deviated from the true

⁴¹ The origins of Yezidism have been studied by Philip Kreyenbroek in a historical perspective; see his *Yezidism*; Eszter Spät, in turn, has worked on the influence of the late antique religions on Yezidism; see her *Late Antique Motifs*).

⁴² Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, p. 27.

⁴³ Kreyenbroek, 'Yezidi', p. 313.

⁴⁴ Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, p. 35. See also Spät, pp. 77–83.

⁴⁵ Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, p. 35.

path of Islam because of their extreme adoration of Sheikh ‘Adi and because of their affinity with the ideas of Yazid son of Mu‘awiya.⁴⁶

For the Ottoman period, the history of the Yezidis suffers from a lack of sources as well as from the absence of historical studies. According to the scarce information provided by *Sharafnama*, certain Yezidi Kurdish tribes had political power in Kurdistan before and after the arrival of the Ottomans, despite the hostility of the Kurdish ulema towards Yezidism. Thus, the ancestors of the Dumbeli tribe came to an eminent position under the domination of the Akkoyunlu Turkmens and conquered part of Hakkari.⁴⁷ After the conquest of Baghdad by Sultan Süleyman I in 1534, the imperial center entrusted the sanjak of Erbil to a certain Husayn, son of a Yezidi emir, the chief of the tribe of Tasni (members of the Tasni tribe gradually immigrated to Hakkari after Husayn’s execution by the imperial center for reasons not explained in the *Sharafnama*). It was another Husayn who abolished Yezidism within the tribe of Tasni.⁴⁸ As for the Mahmudi tribe, its members migrated north to the area around Lake Van, where most of them converted to Sunni Islam.⁴⁹ However, in spite of their conversion to Islam, the *mühimme* registers suggest that the tension with the Yezidis was not resolved. For example, a sultanic order dated October 13, 1560 suggests that the Kurdish chieftain Sultan Hüseyin Bey was charged with the execution of one Budak, belonging to the Yezidi Tasni tribe and described in the register as a bandit who practiced robbery (*harāmilik*) between Erbil and Mosul.⁵⁰

The overall lack of sources and research on Yezidis in the pre-nineteenth century Ottoman context makes the two heretofore-unexplored legal sources from the sixteenth century particularly important for this discussion. During the same period when Feridun Bey and Şerafeddin Khan wrote, two jurists penned two lengthy legal opinions (fatwa) on the legal status of the Yezidis. This suggests that Yezidism became a serious issue for the Sunni powers in the region towards the late sixteenth century. Ebüssü‘ud (d. 1574), the chief jurist under Sultan Süleyman, purportedly formulated the first fatwa.⁵¹ The second fatwa was written by one Mullah Salih al-

⁴⁶ See Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Wasiyya al-Kubra*, pp. 134–142.

⁴⁷ Cheref-ou’ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, II/I, p. 169.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, II/I, p. 129. The Register of Nominations to Sanjaks (*Sancak Tevcih Defterleri*; hereafter, RNS) for the years between 1717–1730 mentions a district in the Province of Diyarbakır under the name of ‘Dāsini’. The district in question presumably took its name from the tribe mentioned in the *Sharafnama*. See RNS, p. 112. The register can be found in the Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives in Istanbul (BOA) in the Kamil Kepeci catalog: *mükerrer* 523. The register has been transliterated, and published, together with original page numbers by Başar, *Osmanlı Eyâlet Tevcihâtı*.

⁴⁹ Başar, *Osmanlı Eyâlet Tevcihâtı*, II/I, p. 129. For a lengthy discussion see Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, pp. 197–202.

⁵⁰ MD 3/1605 (25 Muharrem 968)

⁵¹ See, Ebüssü‘ud, *Fatwa on the Accursed Yezidis (Yezidan-ı mel‘unan hakkında fetva)*. I found the fatwa attributed to Ebüssü‘ud in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, attached to an

Kurdi (d. ?), who seems to have held a key position in the Kurdish *hükümet* of the Hakkari region.⁵² The exact date of Ebüssu‘ud’s fatwa is not known, but the date of

undated Arabic manuscript on subjects related to Islamic jurisprudence. The fatwa is written on two folios and involves two questions on the legitimacy of the execution of the Yezidis. For now, it appears to be the oldest known legal source on the Yezidis penned by the Ottoman legal authorities. It should be underlined here that this fatwa does not appear in the fatwa compilations of Ebüssu‘ud (see for example the most comprehensive and up to date corpus published by Akgündüz, *Şeyhü’l-İslâm Ebüssu‘ûd Efendi*), which might suggest that the attribution is apocryphal. However, one should also keep in mind that most of the fatwas formulated by muftis were not included in the fatwa compilations (for the Ottoman fatwa tradition in general see Özen, ‘Osmanlı Döneminde Fetva Literatürü’). The classification of the Yezidis in the subsequent centuries as occupying the legal space in between ‘apostasy’ and ‘infidelity’ shows the parallels and continuities with this fatwa attributed to Ebüssu‘ud. Sadiq al-Damluji, who reprinted the fatwa in 1946, underlines that he found the hitherto lost fatwa in the library of a certain Hacı Emin Bey Celili in Istanbul. See al-Damluji, *The Book of Yezidis (Kitab al-Yazidiya)*, pp. 428–429. At the end of the fatwa he provides his reader with an interesting anecdote that was left as a marginal note in the fatwa text: Tayyar Pasha, the governor of Mosul, apparently referred to this fatwa during the 1846 campaign against Sinjar, the Yezidi stronghold in Mosul. Before starting the campaign he copied the fatwa directly from the notebook (*mecmû‘a*) of the qadi of Baghdad named ‘Abdülmü‘min Efendi. (For the campaign organized by Tayyar Pasha see Guest, *Survival among the Kurds*, pp. 102–103). This anecdote shows that the fatwa attributed to Ebüssu‘ud was known and copied by a judge of Mosul, a district that was very close to the Yezidi stronghold Sinjar. According to al-Damluji, fatwa was originally written in Arabic and translated into Turkish and sent to Istanbul. The marginal note in Ottoman Turkish reads as follows: ‘Bâğdat kâdısı ‘Abdülmü‘min Efendi’nin mecmû‘asından huzûrlarında naql olunup Musul muhâfazasında me‘mûr olan sa‘âdetlü vezîr-i mükerrrem Tayyâr Mehmed Pâşâ mecmû‘asına naql olundu.’ See al-Damluji, *The Book of Yezidis*, p. 433.

⁵² The fatwa of Mullah Salih is entitled *The Refutation of the Yezidis (al-Radd ‘ala al-Yazidiya)* and it is conserved in the library of the city of Qom in Iran. For a translation of the fatwa of Mullah Salih, see Dahqan, ‘The Fatwâ of Malâ Şâliḥ al-Kurdî al-Hakkârî’. The life and the death dates of Mullah Salih are not known. The available Shafi‘i *tabaqât* literature provides no information on his life and his activities as jurist. In Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, there is another fatwa preserved, bearing the name of a certain Sheikh ‘Abdullah Efendi al-Rabteki, dated 1746 (1159) and entitled *Epistle on the Yezidi Community and the Judgment on Their Property (Risala fi Bayan Madhhab al-Ta‘îfa al-Yazidiya wa-Hukm Amwalihim)*, Süleymaniye Library, İzmirli Hakkı, MS 1092. The fatwa of al-Rabteki is identical to the one attributed to Mullah Salih al-Kurdi (Indeed the name of the village is in Kurdish and should read as Rebetkê, which is today in the city of Duhok, in the territories of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq. According to al-Damluji, it is a village near the Mount Mezuriyya (*Jabal Mezuriyya*), near Mosul, populated by the members of the Kurdish Mizûrî tribe. See al-Damluji, *The Book of Yezidis*, p. 433). Although the relationship between these two texts is entirely unclear, a marginal note in the fatwa that bears the name of al-Rabteki suggests that a certain notable named Bedir, from the Kurdish Baban dynasty (*Babanzâde*), donated the text to the library. See, al-Rabteki, *Epistle on the Yezidi Community*, fol. 1b. Be that as it may, this suggests that the fatwa of Mullah Salih was a foundational text among the Sunni Kurds with regard to the legal status

Mullah Salih's is precise: sometime during the month of Muharrem of the year 980 (May 14–June 12, 1572). While the first fatwa offers insights into the Ottoman approach to the Yezidis, Mullah Salih's fatwa reveals the Kurdish jurists' perception on the subject. Thus, from both the local and imperial perspectives, the two fatwas open up a rare window onto the convergence of Shafi'i and Hanafi doctrine on Yezidism.⁵³

At this stage, it is important to remind the reader of the political landscape that motivated the jurists to formulate such legal opinions on the Yezidis. This development coincided with the period when the Ottoman and Safavid rivalry for imperial expansion reached its peak. While both powers laid claim over Iraqi lands, considering them as part of their rightful heritage, the Ottomans gradually established their rule in the region between 1515 and 1546. The establishment of the Ottoman authority in Iraq was solidified during the period of Sultan Süleyman.⁵⁴ As was the case with the annexation of the region of Kurdistan, the Sunni Kurds played a considerable role in the deployment of the Ottoman authority in the region. The territorial expansion also meant that new groups of people that the Ottomans encountered and sought to govern had to be classified in the imperial legal vocabulary.⁵⁵ Moreover, through the clash with the Shi'ite Safavids, the support for and protection of the Sunni Muslim community became one of the pillars of the Ottoman dynasty's legitimacy and claim to authority in the region, as well as the lens through which to 'read' and classify their subjects.⁵⁶

If there was one fundamental question with which the two jurists grappled, it was precisely how to define the place of the Yezidis within or vis-à-vis the Sunni political community. Hence, at stake was the legal question of subjecthood or belonging to the Muslim polity. Could the Yezidis be considered tribute-paying subjects (Ar. *dhimmi*; Tr. *zimmi*) under the umbrella of the Islamic polity, which would, then, preserve both their lives and their religion? Or were they infidels who had to be

of the Yezidis that remained influential over centuries. It remains important to conduct an in-depth comparative study between Rumi and Kurdi jurists to fully grasp their intellectual conversations and respective roles in the confessionalization processes. On the influence of Kurdish scholars on the intellectual landscape of the seventeenth century see El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, pp. 13–37.

⁵³ I discuss both fatwas in my analysis of a court case on the execution of a Yezidi man in the city of Amid, included in my monograph. See Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*. Non-converted Yezidis were enslaved, and this is evident in the probate inventories safeguarded in the court records of the province of Diyarbakır. See Niemoeller, *Das Kadiamtsprotokollbuch von Mârdîn 247*, pp. 690–691.

⁵⁴ See al-Tikriti, 'Ottoman Iraq'.

⁵⁵ One should perhaps mention the case of the Şemsîs, a small pacifist religious sect known as the 'sun-worshippers'. Interestingly, in the city of Amid, in the extraordinary wartime tax (*avarız*) registers, the Ottoman administration classified this group together with the *zimmi* subjects. See Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, p. 31.

⁵⁶ On the increasingly close relationship between Ottoman dynastic legitimacy and support for Sunni Islam in the mid-sixteenth century see Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*; for the developments in the legal discourse see Üstün, *Heresy and Legitimacy*; al-Tikriti, 'Kalam in the Service'; Atçıl, 'The Safavid Threat'.

excluded from the Ottoman political community? It was not an easy task to find a juridical response to these questions since the Yezidis inhabited the realm of Islam (*dār al-Islām*) and not the realm of war (*dār al-ḥarb*). What is more, at their origin, the Yezidis were perceived to be Muslims, which rendered their legal position even more complex. As I am going to discuss in what follows, these two fatwas are central for understanding the legal classification of the Yezidis in Islamic jurisprudence and the ways in which the Yezidis became the subject of law in early modern Sunni legal discourse. My contention here is that these epistle-length fatwas were foundational legal opinions that inspired the short fatwas subsequently written against the Yezidis.

The question addressed to Mullah Salih al-Kurdi runs as follows:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! O God, grant us a true inspiration and a clear judgment. Remove from us misapprehension, helplessness, and doubt; grant us mercy from Your Presence, for You are the Bountiful! Now, these words aim to explain the religion of the Yezidi community, their religious judgments, and the rules governing their possessions and things, which are in their hands. Know that they are in agreement upon futile beliefs and words, all of which are prompted by blasphemy, rebelliousness, and profoundly misleading.⁵⁷

After this introduction, Mullah Salih underlines that the Yezidis deny the Quran and the sharia by considering them as lies; they believe in the absurd ideas of their sheikhs like Fakhr al-Din.⁵⁸ These ideas attributed to Fakhr al-Din are not specified in the fatwa, but the author, like Şerafeddin Khan, nevertheless argues that this is the reason why the Yezidis are hostile to the Muslim ulema; that they destroy Islamic books when they are in their hands; that they favor their spiritual leader Sheikh ‘Adi over the Prophet; that they believe that they do not need to pray because they will be transported to paradise by Sheikh ‘Adi; that they make pilgrimage to Lalish⁵⁹ instead of going to Mecca; that they attribute to God qualities such as eating, drinking, standing or sitting and other manners that are related to the body; that they allow their sheikhs to have access to their wives and consider adultery licit as it is written in the book of Jelwa,⁶⁰ which they attribute to Sheikh ‘Adi. Nowhere in his fatwa does Mullah Salih mention that the Yezidis worship Satan in the form of the peacock angel. (As I will discuss in what follows, this point takes an important place in the question that forms the fatwa attributed to Ebüssu‘ud).

According to Mullah Salih, the Yezidis can be divided into three branches: one unites the extremists (*ghulāt*), who consider Sheikh ‘Adi as God. The second group believes that Sheikh ‘Adi shares the divine dimension with God, that the heaven is in the hands of God, while the earth is in the hands of Sheikh ‘Adi. A third branch sees in the latter neither God nor his partner but his great minister. Mullah Salih underlines that the basis of this religion is reincarnation and that is precisely why,

⁵⁷ Dahqan, ‘The Fatwā of Malā Şāliḥ’, p. 144.

⁵⁸ Presumably a renowned Yezidi sheikh of the time.

⁵⁹ A mountain valley in Mosul where the Yezidi sanctuary is located.

⁶⁰ The book is considered the sacred book of the Yezidis. See Guest, *Survival among the Kurds*, pp. 146–163.

according to him, Yezidism is a religion close to Christianity.⁶¹ Therefore, its adherents must be considered as infidels (*kāfir*).

At that moment, Mullah Salih makes an intellectual maneuver by citing an unidentified Maliki work entitled *Muttafiq wa-l-Mukhtalif*, where it is stated that ‘when the judgment of infidelity (*kufr*) is pronounced on a place, it becomes the domain of war (*dār al-ḥarb*)’⁶²; this is a crucial aspect of the fatwa as it legitimizes the war and booty on the Yezidis, making them into *ḥarbi* infidels (that is infidels from the domain of war, who are ineligible for protection in return for paying tribute). This opinion is applied to apostates (*murtaddūn*) and infidels (*kuffār*), says Mullah Salih, based on the book by Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 805) entitled *al-Jami‘ al-Saghir*. Hence, this leads him to conclude that it is legitimate to kill the Yezidis and plunder their properties in wars, because they are the equivalent of the infidels and the apostates.⁶³ As is patently obvious, in order to legitimize his opinion, Mullah Salih uses theological arguments as the basis for his legal casuistry. As I am going to discuss in what follows, Ebüssu‘ud took another path, mainly a political one, to arrive to the same conclusion.

In his fatwa, Ebüssu‘ud undertakes an exposition of the general characteristics of Yezidism and proposes an analogy between the opinions of the previous Hanafi jurists on heresy, rebellion, and unbelief. Ebüssu‘ud had to first establish conformity between his legal reasoning and the earlier Hanafi tradition since this was a new legal subject for jurists of the imperial center. Indeed, central to Ebüssu‘ud’s legal reasoning was an anachronism. The first question addressed to Ebüssu‘ud reads as follows:

Query: With regard to the explanation of the subject, the response of the Hanafi and the Shafi‘i jurists is that, according to law, it is legitimate to kill [the members] of the accursed Yezidi community. Would those among the soldiers of Islam who kill them become great warriors for faith (*gāzī*) and those who are killed by them martyrs (*shēhid*)? Let it be clarified.⁶⁴

Response: [Yes] they will become [martyrs]. It is the holy war and glorious martyrdom.⁶⁵

After this answer, another more detailed question is addressed to Ebüssu‘ud, which is asking for an explanation and justification of his answer:

⁶¹ Since Mullah Salih is not explicit on this point, probably it is the reincarnation of the divine but not of the spirit. See Spät, *Late Antique Motifs*, p. 78.

⁶² Here Mustafa Dahqan mistakenly translates the word *kufr* as ‘blasphemy’ whereas, in legal context, it should be translated as ‘infidelity’ (or ‘unbelief’). See Dahqan, ‘The Fatwā of Malā Şālih’, p. 149.

⁶³ Dahqan, ‘The Fatwā of Malā Şālih’, pp. 155–156.

⁶⁴ Ebüssu‘ud, *Fatwa on the Accursed Yezidis*, fol. 16a: ‘*Bu mes’ele beyānında e’imme-i Ḥanefiyye ve Şāfi’iyye’den cevāb bu vech üledir ki Yezidān-ı mel’ünān ṭā’ifesinin şer’en katilleri ḥelāl olub, ‘asker-i İslām’dan anlārı katliden gāzī ve ellerinde maqtūl olanlar şēhid olurlar mı? Beyān buyurula’.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* ‘*El-cevāb: Olurlar; gāzā-i ekber ve şēhādet-i ‘uẓmādır’.*

Is it because of their rebellion and their hostility towards the Sultan and the fact that they wielded the sword against the soldiers of Islam; or because of the hatred they bestow on the Imams Hasan and Husayn and the Muslim ulema; or is it because they regard the Prophet Muhammad as a dhimmi and Sheikh ‘Adi as being the equivalent of Allah, and because of their affection for, instead of cursing of, the Satan in the form of the peacock angel; or is it because of the highway robbery and carnage that they practice or because of the invalidity of their marriage contracts or because they deliver [their] wives to their adulterous sheikhs; or finally, is it for another reason? Can we consider the one who follows them, admits them, and protects them, as being one of them? Let it be clarified.⁶⁶

In his response, before discussing the opinions of the previous jurists, Ebüssu‘ud first likens the Yezidis to apostates, brigands, and infidels. He states:

These [the Yezidis] are rebels and brigands, and apostates (*mürted*), worse than infidels (*kāfir*). According to the four [Sunni] legal schools (*mezhep*), their murder is legitimate; from the point of view of the divine as well as the mundane, it is considered a pious act. Those who undertake to divide and annihilate their community, to kill their representatives and their great [characters], and those who authorize and give their consent to their assassination [such as] the judges of the cases, will be considered to have led the greatest battle and will serve Allah and the Prophet; and those who help and support this accursed faithless community will be considered hostile to Allah and to the Prophet. Killing them, enslaving their children, and selling them on the Muslim markets, like other infidel slaves, is legitimate according to the fatwa, just as it is the case with possessing their wives. In any case, they are accursed and infidels.

After this response, Ebüssu‘ud legitimizes these lines through a genealogical chain that stretches back to Abu Hanifa (d. 767), the founder of the Hanafi legal school. Although Ebüssu‘ud is not precise about what the exact opinion of Abu Hanifa regarding the Yezidis allegedly was, he mentions that Abu Hanifa considered them an accursed community. Moreover, according to Ebüssu‘ud, Abu Hanifa’s disciple Abu Yusuf (735–795) did not consider the Yezidis as one of the seventy-two ‘heretical sects’ (Tr. *fırka-i dālle*), which implies that he did not consider them to be Muslim.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid., fol. 16a.

⁶⁷ Ibid., fol. 16b: *‘İmām Ebū Yūsuf hāzretlerinden su‘āl olunub cevāb buyurmuşdur ki tātife-i mezkūre yetmiş iki fırka-i dāleden hāricdir, birinden değildir’*. This is a critical difference in the imperial center’s perception of the Yezidis before the nineteenth century. As I underlined in the introduction of this article, during the nineteenth century, the Yezidis were considered a ‘heretical sect’. The category of ‘heretical sects’ in Islam is based on the following hadith: ‘My disciples will be divided into seventy-three sects; except for one group among them, all will burn in fire’. This legal concept is very important since, throughout history, it served Muslim jurists as an ‘empty signifier’ to classify new groups and sects in this category. Groups like Kharijīya and Mu‘tazila fall into this category because they are considered to have deviated

There is one fundamental question that should be asked: since, historically, there is a gap of four centuries between the time of Abu Hanifa and the emergence of Yezidism, how can we make sense of Ebüssu'ud's anachronism? In his explanation, Ebüssu'ud relies on the opinions of jurists with regard to the tragedy of Karbala, for which Yazid son of Mu'awiya is held responsible. We should remember that during the emergence of Yezidism in the twelfth century, the Yezidis were associated with the adherents of Yazid son of Mu'awiya due to their geographical proximity to these communities. Although inaccurate from the historian's point of view, this demonstrates how Ebüssu'ud articulated his legal casuistry by using historical elements.

The chief jurist further argues that the jurists of Egypt, Yemen, the Golden Horde (Tatar), Samarkand, and Bukhara were in agreement on the legality of the killing of the Yezidis. He gives the example of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d.1209) and his book *Tafsir al-Kabir*. In this book, while interpreting some verses of the Quran, notably the sura of al-Baqara, the jurist recommends the killing of the Yezidis and considers those who do so as great fighters for faith.⁶⁸ Ebüssu'ud also mentions the names of the Hanafi scholars according to whom enslaving and possessing the children of the Yezidis and their wives is regarded as legitimate. He cites jurists such as Abu l-Layth al-Samarqandi (d. 983), 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani (d.1166) and Sa'ad al-Din Taftazani (d. 1390), al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Jurjani (d. 1413), and 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (d.1492). Ebüssu'ud specifically references Taftazani's *Sharh al-'Aqa'id* and points out that he even saw 'Abd al-Rahman Jami's epistle on the subject, written in his own hand and bearing his seal.⁶⁹ It is this anachronism that makes it possible for Ebüssu'ud to mobilize a wide-ranging late medieval jurisprudence in order to establish the Yezidis as a subject of legal discourse and judgment.

Ebüssu'ud concludes his fatwa in the following words:

They are accursed infidels. One must never hesitate or refrain from killing them. Betraying them is honoring and expressing affection and fidelity to the spirits of the prophets and saints. Respecting and protecting them is to be hostile against all prophets and saints. In order to repulse and expel from the earth the abominable reputation of this mountainous community and in order to remove their sins, evils, names, and signs, I have written this fatwa in conformity with the tradition, supported by the strongest evidence in accordance with the law and I have passed this fatwa on to the hands of the zealous Muslims and those who are attentive to the book of the manifest faith (*kitāb-i dīn-i mübīn*).

Rebelling against the sultan's soldiers, worshipping Yazid, son of Mu'awiya, considering Sheikh 'Adi as the equivalent of Allah, worshipping Devil in the form of the peacock angel, robbery, carnage, and, finally, immoral sex are all practices associated with Yezidism from the point of view of the Ottoman jurists. Thus, according to

from the right path of Islam, but their followers are still Muslims; namely, they do not fall into the category of *ahl al-kufr* who refuse Islam and forget God. See Ibn Kemal, *Epistle on the Exposition of the Deviant Sects (Risala fi Bayan al-Firaq al-Dalla)*.

⁶⁸ Ebüssu'ud, *Fatwa on the Accursed Yezidis*, fol. 16b.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 16b.

Ebüsü'ud, the Yezidis are neither an erring sect of Islam nor adherents of a Sufi brotherhood; they are not Muslims. In this fatwa, which aims to include the subject of Yezidism in the Ottoman legal vocabulary, they are apostates and infidels, both of which denote a specific legal status and require specific legal sanctions. Islamic law cannot protect them; as such they should be excluded from the Ottoman political community.

There are striking differences between the fatwa of Ebü'sü'ud and that of Mullah Salih al-Kurdi. Although both were presumably written around the same time, Mullah Salih al-Kurdi gives a realistic picture of the Yezidi religion, without referring to the tragedy of Karbala, probably because of Hakkari's proximity to Lalish, the Yezidi stronghold. Neither does Mullah Salih use in his fatwa against the Yezidis the very well-known argument about their devil worshipping. What is more, he also does not use one of Ebü'sü'ud's major arguments, namely the Yezidis' proclivity to habitual robbery and insubordination to the sultan's authority. However, in both Ebü'sü'ud's and Mullah Salih al-Kurdi's legal opinions Yezidis are considered both apostates and infidels, and Yezidism as a religion is held to be radically different from Islam.

This casuistry motivated by political concerns of the period seems to have strongly influenced the perception of Yezidism in Sunni Mashriq: The fact that the Yezidis were considered infidels legitimized the war and plundering against them. In this context, it is the doctrine of jihad that legitimizes such practice, since it is this doctrine that determines the legal status of persons, lands, and taxation in Islamic legal vocabulary. However, considering the Yezidis only as infidels would, theoretically, require their protection by the ruler, in return for their payment of the *cizye* that would allow them to have a place in the Ottoman political community. It is at this point that the attribution of apostasy takes on its full meaning because it renders their protection legally invalid.⁷⁰ This legal construction, therefore, suggests that death remains the only possible legal outcome for a Yezidi. But what was the reality on the ground? This legal construction invites us to peer into the history of Sunnification of Kurdistan at the ground level and the legal and political reasons that led to the construction of the Yezidis through these two legal categories.

BEYOND THE NORMATIVE DISCOURSE

The Ottoman perception of Yezidism beyond the normative juridical discourse becomes more visible in the seventeenth-century sources. By this period, unlike in the sixteenth century, Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats seem to have become well informed about the question of Yezidism. First of all, Kurdistan and Arab provinces were not anymore *terra incognita* for the Ottoman authorities. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the crystallization of Sunni discourse in the imperial center in the middle of the seventeenth century may well have increased Ottoman sensitivity

⁷⁰ For the question of apostasy in Islamic law see Peters and De Vries, 'Apostasy in Islam'.

towards non-sharia conforming practices.⁷¹ For example, Katib Çelebi (1609–1657) draws a clear distinction between the Sunni and Yezidi Kurds in the part of his geographical work entitled *The Mirror of the World (Cihannüma)* where he also defines the terms ‘Kurdistan’ and ‘Kurds’ (*ekrād*). After summarizing the meanings of the word ‘Kurd’ using the same mythical elements also found in *Sharafnama*, where the source is the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, the author provides us with the following account about the Yezidis:

The Kurdish communities are Sunnis and they belong to the Shafi’i *madhhab*. Nevertheless, tribes such as Sinni, Tasni and Haluy, which are in Mosul and Syria (Şam), belong to the Yezidi *madhhab*. They consider themselves followers of Sheikh ‘Adi, who was a disciple of the Mervaniyye. Yezidis deviated from the Sufi path and entered the path of error; they became heretics (*zendeka*) and disbelievers (*ilhādi*). Most of them are ignorant. Those who are considered sheikhs among them gird their heads with black turbans and are for this reason known as Karabaş (Black Head). They [the ordinary believers] never seclude their women from them [the sheikhs], and they buy land in Paradise from them. They refrain from cursing the devil, Yazid, or anything at all, and they regard Satan as an angel who is an intimate of God (*melek-i muḳarreb*). They erroneously say: ‘Sheikh ‘Adi has taken it upon himself to pray and fast in our place and he will ensure that on the Day of Judgment we are accepted into Paradise without reckoning.’ They express the greatest enmity towards the exotericist ulema.⁷²

The Mirror of the World is the only Ottoman work, among the available sources, which mentions the Sufi origins of Yezidism. This suggests that the Ottoman perception of the Yezidis did not exclude their Muslim origins, which is crucial to understand the representation of the Yezidis as apostates (*mürted*) and the role that apostasy played in legitimizing their execution in the fatwas of Ebüssu‘ud and Mullah Salih. Katib Çelebi also views Yezidism as a religious belief only within certain Kurdish communities.

Evliya Çelebi’s (1611–1682) travel account (*Seyahatname*) provides further invaluable details. According to Evliya, the provinces of Van and Diyarbakır suffered fairly frequent highway robberies by Yezidis in the seventeenth century.⁷³ According to Evliya’s anecdote from his trip made to the governor of Diyarbakır, Melek Ahmed Pasha (d. 1662) and his entourage, the villagers of Mardin pleaded at the council of the capital city Amid against the Kurds of Mount Sinjar, a portion of which was populated by 45 000 Yezidis.⁷⁴ According to the villagers, the Yezidis had invaded and looted the villages of Mardin on their way down from the mountain, attacked merchants and travelers, and committed acts of banditry. In his narration of the events, Evliya designates the Yezidis as ‘Yezidi Kurds’, ‘dog worshipers’, ‘worse than

⁷¹ For the seventeenth-century context see Zilfi, ‘The Kadizadelis’ and Terzioğlu, ‘Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers’.

⁷² Katib Çelebi, *The Mirror of the World*, p. 339 [my translation].

⁷³ Dankoff ed. and trans., *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman*, pp. 168–200.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 167.

infidels', 'brigands' and 'hairy heretics'.⁷⁵ Between the years 1611–1614, the Yezidis of Mount Sinjar had indeed defeated Nasuh Pasha, who had served as the vizier under Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–1617). In the battle 7 000 soldiers under the command of Nasuh Pasha had died.⁷⁶ Keeping in mind this event, the soldiers of Melek Ahmed, with the collaboration of the 'soldiers of Kurdistan'⁷⁷, attacked Mount Sinjar and raided 300 Yezidi villages.⁷⁸ This battle lasted ten days and ten nights; 9 000 Yezidis died, 13 600 individuals, women and men, girls and boys, were enslaved and seven of their sheikhs (*bapir*) were captured. Evliya notes that the Yezidis were extremely wealthy. Troops from the provinces of Van and Diyarbakır, who had come to help Melek Ahmed Pasha, including the 'soldiers of Kurdistan', took part in the division of booty. Melek Ahmed Pasha obtained, as royal tithe, 1 060 pouches of silver, 11 pouches of gold, 13 000 rifles, 300 bales of silk, several hundred cartridges of bullets, 300 mules, 1 800 captives, young and old, and countless precious fabric items. Evliya notes that only God knows the amount that had been distributed to the emirs and other notables as well as the officers and other warriors. However, he also adds that, certainly, everyone had obtained some handsome boys and girls and other captives.⁷⁹

Another interesting anecdote told by Evliya shows that, despite the hostility of the Sunni Kurds to the Yezidi Kurds, there were also times when the two groups made political alliances. The Sunni Kurds never hesitated to seek alliance with the Yezidis in order to gain more local power than the imperial center would grant them. Thus, in a letter from Melek Ahmed Pasha written in Evliya's hand and addressed to Abdal Khan of Bitlis, Melek Ahmed Pasha accuses the latter of accepting the Yezidis in his territories, of attacking Ottoman subjects and soldiers and the territories of other Kurdish emirs, and of practicing highway robbery by collaborating with the Yezidi tribes.⁸⁰ Since the emirate of Bitlis was under the jurisdiction of the province of Van, it was up to the governor Melek Ahmed Pasha to take action against Abdal Khan's activities. Melek Ahmed's letter shows that, despite protests from the Kurdish ulema who were in the territories of his emirate, Abdal Khan had not stopped this collaboration.⁸¹

Similar to Evliya's account, we find evidence of this kind of political collaboration between Sunni and Yezidi Kurds against the imperial center in a *mühimme* register dating to December 18, 1694. The order is addressed to Mehmed Pasha, responsible for the sedentarization of the nomadic tribes of the region of Elbistan, and reveals that against this policy of sedentarization Kurdish tribes such as Afşar, Çepni and Lek collaborated with the Yezidis of Kara Hizan and led the revolt against the

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 167.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 170.

⁷⁷ Evliya obviously means the Sunni Kurdish power in the region.

⁷⁸ Dankoff ed. and trans., *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman*, p. 172.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 173.

⁸⁰ See Dankoff ed. and trans., *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis*, pp. 167–174.

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 174.

sultan's authority.⁸² As such, although the Kurdish notables endorsed the religious and legal discourses of the Ottoman center against the Yezidis, the political situation at the local level reveals another reality.

Eighteenth-century sources such as a local chronicle entitled *The History of Van* (*Van Tarihi*) penned by a certain İbn-i Nuh (d. ?) as well as archival documents attest to the sanguinary conflicts between the Ottoman soldiers and the Yezidis.⁸³ Most of these conflicts were armed confrontations between the governors of the provinces like Van and Diyarbakır and the Yezidis. For example, in October 1715, following an order sent from the imperial center, Van governor Murtaza Pasha aimed to replace the chieftain of the *ocaklık* of Hoşab named Zeynel Bey and the *hakim* of Bitlis, Mehmed Said Khan. To this end, he waged a war against the Yezidis in the region, with the aim of avoiding any collaboration between the latter with the soldiers of local leaders who İbn-i Nuh designates as the 'soldiers of Kurdistan'.⁸⁴ İbn-i Nuh mentions a Yezidi community belonging to the fairly powerful Mahmudi tribe, populating the outskirts of the citadel of Hoşab.⁸⁵ He describes these Yezidis as soldiers guided by the Devil (*asâkir-i şeytân-rehber*), who had heard the news of the offensive organized by the governor and his 450 soldiers, and who responded with 4 000 armed Yezidis. It should also be noted that it was the Bey of Hoşab Zeynel who had collaborated with the Yezidis and warned them of the offensive.⁸⁶ During this event, which took place in the village of Canik, the Yezidis killed a considerable number of soldiers and wounded the governor.⁸⁷

A second anecdote told by İbn-i Nuh concerns the December 2, 1716 attack of Ballı Mehmed Pasha, the successor of Murtaza Pasha, against the Yezidis of the region.⁸⁸ The author emphasizes the following detail: Mehmed Pasha did not ask for the help of the Sunni Kurdish chieftains, nor did he declare the war, which shows that the governor was trying to avoid any communication between the Kurdish chieftains in the region and the Yezidis. With an army of 7 000 soldiers, the Pasha attacked the Yezidis to avenge the battle of Canik.⁸⁹ In recounting the event, İbn-i Nuh gives readers insights into the Yezidis' legal status: 'As the place in question was not under the status of capitation (*cizye*) and given that it belonged to the domain of war

⁸² BOA (MD) 105/ H. 309 (*Fi evâ'il-i Ca. sene* 1106).

⁸³ İbn-i Nuh, *The History of Van*. İbn-i Nuh was originally from a scholarly family in the city of Van. He was the imam and preacher of the great mosque in the city, and he frequently attended the meetings of the Council (*Divan*) of the Van province. For the historical quality of the work, see Tekin, 'İbn-i Nuh'.

⁸⁴ İbn-i Nuh, *The History of Van*, fol. 123.

⁸⁵ According to *Sharafnama*, the Mahmudi tribe migrated to this region from the south. The changing statuses of the Mahmudi tribe is interesting because a part of this tribe converted to Islam, settled, and, according to a document of appointment dating to March 8, 1702, owned the citadel of Hoşab and its surroundings as an *ocaklık*. BOA (İE.DH) 12/1129 [8 L 1113].

⁸⁶ İbn-i Nuh, *The History of Van*, fol. 124.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 127.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 145.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

(*dāri'l-ḥarb*), many women and children were enslaved.⁹⁰ As these anecdotes suggest, in Ottoman sources, Yezidism generally comes to the fore in reports about local political conflicts and activities of brigandage and banditry, with Yezidis' religion and socially transgressive behavior being mentioned in the same breath.

Sources also demonstrate that Yezidis can be considered as a group that created a serious challenge against the installation of Sunni power in Kurdistan. They reveal that four areas of the Kurdish region were the target of frequent activity by the Yezidis: the first was the mountainous region located between the towns of Amid and Van, as described by Evliya Çelebi and İbn-i Nuh. The second area was further in the south, in the mountainous regions from İmadiye to Hakkari, which was held as *hükümet* by Kurdish Sunni notables with the title of Khan.⁹¹ This *hükümet* showed a great deal of loyalty towards the imperial center. The conflicts between the Sunni tribes and the Yezidis of this *hükümet* reflected cooperation between the imperial center and the local Kurdish chieftains and, according to a report (*layiha*) written by the governor of Mosul, Yusuf Pasha, the conflicts between the Sunni Kurds and the Yezidis were linked to blood feuds and struggles over land in the region. The governor's report also reveals that the local wars between these two parties gave rise to booty.⁹²

The third zone was the region located between the districts of Kilis and Ruha (Urfa), populated by the Yezidis of Reş. The Yezidis frequently attacked villages in the region and looted them. The fact that the Yezidis of Reş were nomadic made it easy for them to move between the districts of Urfa and Kilis. In addition to the local military campaigns organized against them, through the governor of Mosul, the imperial center sought to settle them down as well.⁹³

The fourth and final area was the mountainous region between Mosul and Sinjar, that is, the region from which the Yezidis originated and was thus a Yezidi stronghold. This area seems to have particularly preoccupied the imperial center. An imperial order dating back to June 14, 1740 reveals that the region's Yezidis had attacked and occupied the Citadel of Telafer in Mosul. Upon the orders of the imperial center, the inhabitants of Telafer were punished by the payment of a fine (*te'dib bedeli*), because of their passivity during this event.⁹⁴ Another document dating back to November 30, 1786 shows that the Yezidis of the region assassinated the governor of Mosul, 'Abdülbaki Pasha.⁹⁵ It was only nine years later, according to another document, dating April 20, 1795, that the governor of Baghdad Süleyman Pasha waged a military campaign on Mount Sinjar, during which 500 Yezidis were killed.

⁹⁰ Ibid., fol. 147.

⁹¹ BOA (RNS), p. 136.

⁹² BOA (İE.DH) 1569/17 [29 Zi'l-ka'de 1117]

⁹³ BOA (C.Z.B) 14/674 [20 Cemaziyü'l-aher 1121]

⁹⁴ BOA (C.ML.) 185/7732 [19 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1153]

⁹⁵ BOA (HAT) 27/1294 [10 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1201]

CONCLUSION

This article offers a multilayered reading of what Sunnitization meant in the context of Kurdistan in the early modern period and what its limits were. I have shown how Ottoman administrators and Sunni jurists from both Istanbul and Kurdistan deployed Sunni theological and legal tradition to include and exclude aspects of Kurdistan into the Ottoman imperial religious, legal, political, and geographical discourse. Nevertheless, the Sunni identity of the Kurds was always a moot question for the Ottoman authorities. The position of the Yezidis as strong political actors in Kurdistan as well as the collaborations between the Sunni and Yezidi Kurds transformed the region into the arena of ongoing Sunnitization battle. The question of whether any concerted measures were taken, by either Hanafi or Shafi'i scholars and preachers, to 'correct' the ritual practices and beliefs of the Kurds (whether Sunni or Yezidi) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remains to be explored in further detail. However, as the evidence gathered in this chapter suggests, far from being a top-down political process imposed by the imperial center, the Sunni confession-building in Kurdistan had an equivocal character that involved multiple actors and politics of checks and balances throughout the early modern period.

Throughout the early modern period, rather than being considered heretics (namely, erring Muslims who could conceivably be brought back to the right path), Yezidis were deemed infidels and apostates, a move that legitimized their exclusion from the Ottoman Sunni political community. This, in turn, reveals a close affinity between confessionalization processes and the creation of political communities in the early modern Ottoman context. Unlike the nineteenth century when belonging to a political community was determined by the practices such as military conscription or conceptions of imperial citizenship, it was belonging to the Sunni community and/or professing allegiance to the sultan by paying taxes that determined one's subject status in the early modern Ottoman political landscape. This political community was partly established by defining the Yezidis (and other non-Sunni confessional groups, depending on the context) as a separate (and excluded) legal category. As such, the nineteenth century signaled a new form of relationship between the state and its subject, and in this context the case of the Yezidis figures as an example of progressive integration into the imperial citizenship.⁹⁶

Finally, the process of creation of Kurdistan lasted throughout Ottoman history and did not go smoothly partly because of the confessional diversity in the region and the resulting political contestations. As was shown here, it was this very diversity that gave an equivocal tone to Ottoman relations with the region, turning it into a space that was hard to 'read' and 'govern'. For this reason, any study of Kurdistan as a historical space needs to take the issue of confessionalization into consideration. In turn, focusing on how confessional policies played out in Kurdistan may help us

⁹⁶ For the nineteenth-century context see Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, particularly pp. 69–92. In her recent research Zeynep Türkyılmaz develops a different approach arguing that the nineteenth century represented an assimilating state logic rather than integration of these subjects into imperial citizenship. See Türkyılmaz, 'Refugees Once Again?'

understand how the very concept and utility of confession-building and confession-alization for political community-building purposes were continuously reimaged within the *longue durée* of Ottoman history.⁹⁷

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⁹⁷ Compare with Terzioğlu's argument that the politics of confessionalization might have survived until the end of the empire. See Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize', particularly the Conclusion.

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553

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21. BROKERING TRIDENTINE MARRIAGE REFORMS AND LEGAL PLURALISM IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NORTHERN OTTOMAN RUMELI¹

EMESE MUNTÁN

INTRODUCTION

In 1630 the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide)² inquired with the bishop of Bosnia, Tommaso Ivković (d. 1633) about the way the Tridentine rules on marriage, contained in the decree of *Tametsi*,³ were publicized and explained in Bosnia and Ottoman Hungary. The cardinals of the Propaganda particularly wanted to know whether the decrees of the Council together with

¹ Research for this essay was supported by the funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 648498).

² The founding of the Propaganda Fide by Gregory XV in 1622 represented one of the most significant events of the second phase of Catholic revival, and a crucial turning point in the development of missionary propaganda in the Ottoman Empire. For an overall framework on the activity of the Propaganda, see Metzler ed., *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*.

³ The marriage reforms of Trent, regulating clandestine marriage practices, were promulgated in the decree of *Tametsi* (from the Latin, 'although', the first word of Chapter 1, Session 24, *De reformatione matrimonii*) in 1563. According to *Tametsi*, for the sacrament of marriage to be administered the consent of both parties and the presence of the parish priest and two witnesses was obligatory, and the event had to be preceded by the announcement of three banns of marriage. *Tametsi* also imposed new, stricter regulation over the marriages of persons without a permanent address, forbade forced marriages, regulated the permitted times of wedding celebrations, standardized the law concerning affinity and consanguinity, and restated the prohibition on concubinage among the laity. According to the Tridentine instructions, the *Tametsi* had to be promulgated and explained at every parish and after thirty days it became valid and binding. In many parts of Europe and in overseas missionary territories alike the *Tametsi* was neither published nor explained to the faithful, sometimes for several decades after its acceptance at Trent. On the decree and its promulgation, see Mattia, 'Il decreto *Tametsi*', pp. 476–500.

Tametsi were announced in these territories, and if so, in which parishes. They also queried Ivković on how marriages were celebrated and registered, and whether they were celebrated according to the Roman ritual or not. If the latter, they wanted to know the reasons why the Tridentine marriage stipulations were not properly observed.⁴ According to Ivković's report,⁵ the Tridentine decrees together with *Tametsi* and the Gregorian calendar were promulgated in all the parishes under his jurisdiction, and each priest had a copy of the Roman Ritual and administered marriages according to it; however, there were still people at the southern border of Ottoman Hungary who left their first spouse and contracted a second marriage. The Propaganda ordered the bishop to compel these people to return to their first spouse.⁶

The above detailed correspondence between the Propaganda and the Bosnian bishop testifies to the efforts of the post-Tridentine papacy in promulgating and locally implementing the decrees of the Council—a project that spanned centuries, connecting different continents, societies, and cultures. The papacy's main goal was to penetrate essential segments of everyday life and reinforce confessional boundaries through missionary agency. From the end of the sixteenth century, the papacy commissioned Jesuits, Franciscans, Capuchins, Benedictines as well as select lay priests to promote a rearticulated and reinvigorated Catholic religiosity in different territories. Although missionaries received detailed instructions and various apostolic faculties (papal authorizations)⁷ from Rome regarding the ways they should proceed in their missionary and pastoral work, they continuously appealed to the papacy with various problems and doubts (*dubia*) they faced on the ground.⁸

The territories of northern Ottoman Rumeli in the period between the late sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries encompassed the historical regions of Bosnia, Slavonia, Srem, and the Banat, and in Ottoman administrative terms approximately corresponded to the *eyalets* of Bosnia, the southern parts of Kanije and Budin, and Tımsıvar. With their amalgam of Orthodox, Catholics, Reformed, Antitrinitarians,

⁴ 'P. An publicatum sit Concilium praedictum in Bosna, et in partibus Ungariae sub Turcis et praesentis in materia Matrimonii. 2. An sit publicatum in singulis Parochiis iuxta prescriptum eiusdem Concilii in eadem materia. 3. In quibus parochiis sit publicatum, et in quibus non. 4. Quibus modis nunc in illis locis celebrentur matrimonia, et quibus praesentibus vel assistentibus. 5. An matrimonia notantur in libro peculiari a Parochiis iuxta Rituali Romanum. 6. An Matrimonia celebrentur iuxta dictum Rituale. 7. quenam sint causae, quare Sacrum Concilium in eadem materia matrimoniorum non possit in illis partibus observari.' APF Acta, vol. 7, fol. 143 r.

⁵ Ivković's report was published in Tóth ed., *Litterae missionariorum de Hungaria et Transylvania (1572–1717)* [hereafter *Litterae*], vol. 1, pp. 368–370.

⁶ The order was published in Jelenić, 'Spomenici', p. 102.

⁷ On the granting of missionary faculties, see Pizzorusso, 'Le fonti del Sant'Uffizio', pp. 393–423.

⁸ The period of the sixteenth-seventeenth century was very aptly referred to as the 'time of doubts' ('le temps des doutes') by Paolo Broggio, Charlotte de Castelnau-L'Estoile, and Giovanni Pizzorusso in their seminal study from 2009, where they approached the 'genre' of *dubium* as an integral part of Catholic orthodoxy within the sphere of negotiation. See Broggio, Castelnau-L'Estoile, and Pizzorusso, 'Le temps des doutes'.

and Muslims of various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, these areas came into the focus of Rome-directed Catholic missionary endeavors already in the 1570s, only to command even more attention after the foundation of the Propaganda Fide in 1622.⁹ The primary focus of the pastoral work of the various missionaries active in different areas centered around the acceptance and correct administration of the seven sacraments. At the same time, the various missionary pursuits were informed by complex political, confessional, ethnic, and familial affiliations. But how were the sacramental reforms of Trent received, contested, and brokered in the religiously, ethnically, and legally pluralistic context of northern Rumeli?

Prior to the establishment of the Propaganda Fide, a number of Jesuits had already been active in Ottoman Hungary where they entered into a permanent competition over certain missionary territories in the southern parts of the region with the Bosnian Franciscans, who were legally Ottoman subjects, and with a smaller number of lay priests. These Catholic missionaries were not only in conflict with one another, but they also had to reckon with the presence and influence of Orthodox priests, who often claimed jurisdiction over the local Catholic population, and of Ottoman judges, who in several instances proved to be more attractive legal ‘alternatives’ for many Catholics than Catholic ecclesiastical authorities themselves. During the formative decades of the Propaganda, missionaries from the Italian peninsula and Ragusa (today Dubrovnik, Croatia) were sent to the Balkan peninsula and southern parts of Ottoman Hungary. It soon turned out, however, that without the local know-how and knowledge of languages, the activity of many of these missionaries was bound to face serious challenges, and it also became clear that power relations in the region were mostly determined by the decrees of the Ottoman authorities, and only tangentially by Rome. For these reasons the Propaganda was compelled to side with the Bosnian Franciscans, who besides being up to date with the local circumstances and languages, occupied a privileged political and social status among the communities of the empire, and by 1647 had managed to supersede their missionary adversaries and gain local control.¹⁰ Still, they could not counteract the hegemony of Orthodox priests and Ottoman judges in various Catholic communities.

Drawing primarily on Jesuit and Franciscan missionary reports sent to the Roman Curia, this paper will examine the role of non-Catholic agents, i.e., Orthodox

⁹ The most in-depth study on the topic is Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège, Raguse et les missions Catholiques*.

¹⁰ Ottoman subjecthood entailed several privileges and limitations for the Franciscans in Bosnia. Besides earning the right to travel freely in the empire, carry arms, be protected from the harassments of the Orthodox bishops, etc., Ottoman domination also brought about the conservation and further molding of the medieval Franciscan church structure, which subsequently enhanced the distance between Rome and Bosnian Catholicism. Besides administrative and political connections with the local Ottoman magistracy, the Bosnian Franciscans also had family connections in the communities where they were preaching, and in many cases, these extended family networks also included Muslim members. On Bosnian Franciscans, see Džaja, *Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens*; Tóth, ‘Between Islam and Catholicism’; Molnár, ‘Bosnian Franciscans’.

priests and Ottoman judges (qadis), in the administration of marriages¹¹ in the studied regions during the seventeenth century. On the micro level, it will analyze those cases when the Orthodox priest or the qadi acted as a 'surrogate Catholic priest', the strategies they employed, and the way Catholic missionaries responded to such cases. In this way, the paper aims to rethink the function of these priests and judges in sacramental acts, approaching them not merely as 'enemies' epitomizing rival confessions that the missionaries always had to compete with, but as agents active in shaping local articulations of what it meant to be a Catholic.

The countless number of missionary letters and Ottoman documents from the analyzed regions testify to the convoluted networks and activities of these religio-political communal representatives. A local Ottoman authority who, for instance, endorsed the renovation or rebuilding of a particular Christian church for a particular sum of money or authorized the activity of a missionary¹² in a certain territory implicitly became a 'participant' in maintaining or even strengthening the continuous presence of a particular denomination in a particular area, whilst still retaining an active role in the process of a state-endorsed Sunni confession-building.¹³ Even though on numerous occasions Orthodox priests did resort to the help of the local Ottoman authorities to collect taxes from the Catholics, in other cases they saw competitors in the local qadis. Although Catholic missionaries generally condemned the idea of Catholics turning to the local Orthodox or Muslim authorities, they themselves sought the 'service' of the Ottomans to obtain permissions to renovate or build a church, minister to a particular group in a particular territory, or get orders to be protected from the tax-collection of the Orthodox. What is more, in numerous instances the missionaries asked for Ottoman intervention in the settlement of inter-missionary conflicts. The analyzed cases will show the way(s) particular agents, such as Catholic missionaries, Orthodox priests, and qadis, belonging to different confessional, ethnic, and social backgrounds, and representing imperial, papal, local, and/or individual interests, became brokers of Tridentine marriage reforms and legal pluralism in northern Rumeli in the seventeenth century, and the 'tactics' through which the subject population (Christian and Muslim groups and/or individuals) became active participants in these legal-confessional negotiations.

¹¹ Besides marriage, baptism was the other sacrament that entailed the greatest number of 'deviations' from Tridentine stipulations; the discussion of this issue, however, will constitute the topic of a separate study.

¹² Among others, I would like to single out a letter from the mission in Bácska sent in 1622 by the Ragusan secular priest Paolo Torelli to inform the Propaganda that he got permission to rebuild two churches (Tóth, *Litterae I*, p. 131); the Bosnian secular priest, Don Simone Matković continuously emphasized in his letters to Propaganda Fide that with the help of his connections with the Ottoman magistracy he could regain churches from the Calvinists along the Drava (Tóth, *Litterae I*, p. 136); also according to a report of Simone Matković from around 1628, the Bosnian Franciscans in Nagybecskerek (Zrenjanin, today Serbia) claimed that they had an order from the pasha of Buda according to which they [i.e. the Franciscans] had exclusive rights to minister to the Catholics of the region (Tóth, *Litterae I*, p. 260).

¹³ Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization'.

Thus, on the macro level, the paper will seek to understand the intra- and inter-communal dynamics of this cross-institutional and cross-confessional dialogue, and the way it informed the implementation of Tridentine reforms. In this way, it will also address the more analytical question, namely, whether different socio-political and religious developments among various communities in northern Rumeli might be defined as ‘confessional’ in the first place and, consequently, whether the term ‘confessionalization’¹⁴ itself is flexible enough to capture and describe the complex changes different religious communities underwent in this region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

IMPLEMENTING TRIDENTINE MARRIAGE REFORMS IN NORTHERN RUMELI: AGENTS, STRATEGIES, AND CHALLENGES

The role of Catholic missionaries in the process of Tridentine confessionalization has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention and analysis, with a predominant focus on the activity of the Jesuits and the Franciscans.¹⁵ This ongoing research has shed light on the heterogeneity of the Catholic missionaries and demonstrated that these agents cannot be simply described as ‘bearers’ of a renewed Catholic religiosity, but that their missionary endeavors should be approached as ‘products’ of the multilayered social, political, economic, and legal framework they were part of.¹⁶ Several scholars have already shown how both in the case of European and non-European Catholic groups the strict decrees and canons on the sacraments were often received with skepticism, disbelief, and resistance, and on several occasions they were also contested and negotiated by the agents who were supposed to enforce them.¹⁷ In these respects northern Rumeli was no exception, but its territories can open up the possibility of studying heretofore less explored interactions between the missionaries

¹⁴ For the vast amount of literature on confessionalization in European and non-European contexts, see the bibliography of the introductory article of this volume. Representative works include, but are not limited to: Schilling, ‘Confessional Europe’; Schilling ‘Confessionalization’; Lotz–Heuman, ‘The Concept of “Confessionalization”’.

¹⁵ The literature is immense. Major contributions from the last decade include: Cohen, *The Missionary Strategies of the Jesuits in Ethiopia*; Coello de la Rosa, *Jesuits at the Margins*; Roest, *Franciscan Learning*; Forrestal and Smith eds, *The Frontiers of Mission*.

¹⁶ On the jurisdictional reforms of the Propaganda and the conflicts these engendered, see Pizzorusso, ‘L’Europe et/ou le monde’. On the relationship of Bosnian Franciscans with the papacy, see Molnár, ‘Bosnian Franciscans’.

¹⁷ On the doubts of the missionaries in various territories see the articles of the already referenced special issue of *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome-Italie et Méditerranée* from 2009, ‘Administrer les sacrements en Europe et au Nouveau Monde’. Other representative works, addressing the issue of adaptation of Catholic sacraments and the problem of transgressions include: Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*; Cristellon, ‘Die Römische Inquisition’.

and other local communal representatives, such as Orthodox clergymen or Ottoman judges, who were part of the complex religious economy of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸

Because the sources about the activities of Orthodox priests and qadis in northern Ottoman Rumeli in the seventeenth century come predominantly from Catholic missionaries, and only to a very limited extent from Ottoman Muslim or Orthodox Christian sources,¹⁹ the image of the intercommunal relations is scanty and often distorted. For instance, characterizing and evaluating the role of Orthodox *pops* (priests) and *vladikas* (bishops) in their respective communities poses a conundrum.

Following the footsteps of László Hadrovics, scholarship gives a general description of the lifestyle of the Orthodox priests as differing from the Catholic ones in the sense that the former were more integrated into their communities, often as married men, and since the Orthodox bishops resided in their bishoprics, they could ensure the continuity of priestly presence within various communities.²⁰ While the sources that come from the Catholic side and describe the daily activities of Orthodox priests do report a 'closer' relationship with certain local groups, they do not provide much information about the way the gradual arrival of Catholic missionaries affected the confessional awareness of the Orthodox clergy and their flocks, and what kind of inner transformations—if any—the Orthodox Church was experiencing, irrespective of any Catholic influence. Missionaries also tended to describe the local Orthodox priests as 'less educated' and more lenient towards the breaching of particular stipulations of the canon law, but this did not necessarily mean that the higher clergy was not concerned with issues of public morality and administration of the sacraments.²¹

Since most sixteenth-seventeenth-century court records concerning the regions in question were destroyed,²² the information these missionary sources provide about the activities of the local qadis, exceptionally valuable as they are, should be treated carefully and analyzed within the larger imperial context. The function of the qadi in Ottoman provincial society is generally described in terms of brokering communal peace and stability, embodying and enforcing imperial legal and administrative

¹⁸ Regarding confessional coexistence in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire with a particular focus on the issue of marriage, see Ivanova, 'Christian Women in Rumeli'; Laiou, 'Christian Women in an Ottoman World'; Gara, 'Marrying in Seventeenth-Century Mostar'; Kermeli, 'Marriage and Divorce of Christians'. Considering northern Rumeli, see Magina and Magina, '*Mores et ceremonias ecclesiasticas ignorabant*'; from the great oeuvre of the late István György Tóth, see his *Misszionáriusok a kora újkori Magyarországon*.

¹⁹ Published Ottoman primary sources on the topic include Boškov, 'Turski dokumenti', pp. 7–95; Matašović, *Fojnička Regesta*; Fabianich, *Firmanî inediti dei sultani di Costantinopoli*. Parts (covering the years 1660–1666) of the episcopal register (in Romanian, *catasîf*) for the metropolitanate of the Banat, which was within the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Peć, were published in Suciú and Constantinescu, *Documente privitoare la istoria mitropoliei Banatului*, pp. 108–149.

²⁰ Hadrovics, *Vallás, egyház, nemzettudat*, p. 20.

²¹ Kermeli, 'The Right to Choice', especially pp. 171–173; Levin, *Sex and Society*.

²² The available court registers are the *sicil* of Sarajevo from 1551–1552, 1556–1558, and 1565–1566; a partial register from Tuzla from the first half of the seventeenth century; Mostar from 1632–1634; and Timișoara from 1652–53.

authority on the local level, and serving as the main link between the imperial center and the provinces.²³ What were the strategies of these judges in maintaining this stability? How did they interact with their Christian subjects and their clerical representatives, and how did the latter, in turn, deal with the local qadis?

Within the bureaucratic and legal system of the Ottoman Empire, non-Muslim subjects had the right to resort to their own ecclesiastical or communal courts when these were available for solving different cases pertaining to intra-communal matters, such as marriage, divorce, or inheritance.²⁴ They were obliged to use the sharia (Islamic law) court only in those cases that involved disputes or transactions with Muslims. In addition, non-Muslim subjects could also resort to the sharia court whenever they found it more advantageous. This cross-institutional and cross-confessional interaction has been interpreted within the larger context of legal pluralism that applied to the non-Muslims living in the Ottoman Empire, which allowed for considerable amount of ‘forum shopping’.²⁵ Furthermore, the sixteenth-century formalization of the Ottoman learned hierarchy (*ilmiye*) and the concomitant proliferation of the Ottoman Hanafi legal culture, gave rise to more legally ‘educated’ subjects (Muslims and non-Muslims alike) throughout the empire.²⁶ Research on non-Muslims’ usage of Islamic courts in other parts of the empire suggests that non-Muslim interpreters could have been present during hearings, and that in some cases there could even be non-Muslims serving as witnesses, bailiffs, or inspectors, which could make the qadi court look much less ‘foreign’.²⁷ For Catholics, however, the sharia court was not the only ‘alternative’ they could choose from.

As the analyzed cases will illustrate, besides frequently turning to the local qadi, they also appealed to the Orthodox priest for officiating a marriage either because the missionaries would not have blessed a particular union due to the violation of canon law, or for practical reasons, such as being already familiar with a particular

²³ Jennings, *Kadi, Court, and Legal Procedure*; Gradeva, ‘On Kadis of Sofia’, pp. 67–106; Akarlı, ‘The Ruler and Law Making’, pp. 91–93.

²⁴ Even though in the analyzed regions the presence of ecclesiastical courts per se is not attested, at least concerning the Catholic community, the missionaries sent by Rome also functioned as quasi ‘judges’ when it came to adjudication of complicated marriage cases. As several missionary letters illustrate, Orthodox priests also exercised judicial control in their respective communities, even if the sources do not enable us to reconstruct the exact functioning of episcopal courts as in the case of the Greek or Bulgarian lands. One cannot completely rule out the existence of communal courts in the region, but even if they existed, they were probably convened on an ad hoc basis and I find it improbable that they systematically recorded their cases, like the Greek-speaking communities in the Aegean islands. See, also, Anastasopoulos, ‘Non-Muslims and Ottoman Justice(s)’.

²⁵ On this practice, whereby the litigants take their suits to the court that is most likely to provide favorable judgment to them, see Kermeli, ‘The Right to Choice’; Laiou, ‘Christian Women in an Ottoman World’; Barkey, ‘Aspects of Legal Pluralism’; Anastasopoulos, ‘Non-Muslims and Ottoman Justice(s)’.

²⁶ Zečević, *On the Margin of Text*, pp. 92–110; Kermeli, ‘The Right to Choice’, p. 207; Peirce, *Morality Tales*; Fitzgerald, ‘Reaching the Flocks’.

²⁷ Anastasopoulos, ‘Non-Muslims and Ottoman Justice(s)’, 286.

judge or Orthodox priest, or because the closest Catholic priest was too far.²⁸ So, how did this interaction among various communal agents and the superimposition of different legal systems affect the receiving of Tridentine marriage reforms and the efforts to reinforce Catholicism in the region?

In accordance with the general stipulations of the Council, marriage canons and decrees first and foremost demanded from a 'good Catholic' to accept marriage as one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.²⁹ The Church also outlawed the practice of polygamy and stipulated that heresy, irksome cohabitation, the absence of one of the spouses, and adultery were not valid causes to end a marriage.³⁰ Since the Tridentine decrees on matrimony forbade the dissolution of marriages for any reasons except the death of one of the spouses, and divorce only entailed separation from bed and board (*a mensa et thoro*), without granting the right of remarriage, non-Catholic communal representatives were not only crucial figures in officiating marriages, but they became even more indispensable in dissolving them.

Whereas in the Catholic tradition (especially after the Council of Trent) the notion of divorce was considered incompatible with the idea of marriage, in the Islamic context the legal discourse on divorce and the conditions that justified appealing for a separation were integral to the legal stipulations on marriage.³¹ Although 'the majority of jurists held that a divorce without a compelling reason was reprehensible (Ar. *makrūh*), to be exercised sparingly and avoided if possible',³² divorce became an accepted practice. There were four ways of separating in Islam: the first was the *ṭalāq* (repudiation; the husband's exclusive right to dissolve a marriage), the second was the *tafriq* (judicial divorce; might be sought by either of the spouses if they have sufficient grounds to appeal to the court), the third was the *khul'* (mutual divorce; the exclusive right of the woman, who initiates a divorce, offering financial compensation to the husband), and the fourth was the *faskh* (annulment; initiated for breaching the matrimonial contract, for instance marriage without the right witnesses or marrying within the prohibited degree of kinship).³³

In the Orthodox tradition the termination of marriage was also a common, but frowned-upon practice; therefore, the church tried to prevent it by setting strict requirements for seeking a divorce, which included physical violence against the wife, attempted murder of a spouse by the other, adultery of the wife (but not the husband), mental illness, absence or impotence (not infertility) of the husband for three years or more, and alcoholism.³⁴ Orthodox canon law stipulations allowed three consecutive marriages and the levied fee imposed usually increased with each marriage—a prevalent custom in Ottoman Rumeli and a major point of contention

²⁸ Due to the scarcity of Catholic priests, Orthodox prelates were also essential in performing baptisms in different Catholic communities.

²⁹ *The Council of Trent. Doctrine on the Sacrament of Matrimony. Canon I* (electronic resource).

³⁰ *The Council of Trent. Doctrine on the Sacrament of Matrimony. Canon II, V, and VII.*

³¹ See Siddiqui, *The Good Muslim*, p. 12.

³² Awad and Mawla, 'Divorce. Legal Foundations', pp. 219–223.

³³ Awad and Mawla, 'Divorce. Legal Foundations', p. 220.

³⁴ Ivanova, 'Christian Women in Rumeli', p. 155.

among Catholic missionaries (especially Bosnian Franciscans), Orthodox priests, and Ottoman authorities.³⁵ Despite the fact that in the spirit of *oikonomia* the Orthodox Church permitted remarriage in order to avoid debauchery, the Church also imposed preventive measures on the parties willing to enter into a new union, including penance (which could last from a couple of months to years, depending on the church father whose rule was followed), property sanctions, and limitations on remarriage.³⁶ The legal pluralism that emerged due to the coexistence of all these traditions in the regions in question enabled the development of a *modus vivendi* where the ecclesiastical and secular legitimation of divorces and second marriages became an integral part of the religious economy informing daily interactions.

Thus, in 1606, the Ragusan Benedictine Antonio Velislavi reported about the regions of Požega (today in Croatia), Srem, and Timișoara (today in Romania) that many Catholic men renounced their first wife for their ugliness or other reasons and married another woman. He also encountered women who left their husbands in order to marry another man, ‘in their own way’, resorting along the way even to the help of Ottoman authorities to obtain the permission from the Church to enter such a union or the dispensation after they had contracted it. The missionary also underlined that in order to contract a marriage, many went to the local Ottoman qadi for officiation, even though such a union was considered illegitimate in the eyes of the Catholic Church.³⁷

The problem of the validity of marriages concluded in front of non-Catholic authorities became a point of contention among missionaries, sometimes leading to heated clashes, especially between the Jesuits and the Bosnian Franciscans who, as Ottoman subjects, in certain instances had a different perspective. As I have highlighted above, until the middle of the seventeenth century the Jesuits were in a continuous battle with the Bosnian Franciscans over the question of which order should have the upper hand in missionizing to the regions of Slavonia, Srem, and Banat, and in many cases this conflict took the shape of debates concerning the ‘right way’ of administering the sacraments. What is particularly interesting in these inter-missionary debates are the emerging (and in many cases clashing) discourses on the issue of marriages contracted through the mediation of other communal representatives such as Orthodox priests or Ottoman judges.

³⁵ See the referring documents in Boškov, ‘Turski dokumenti’.

³⁶ Levin, *Sex and Society*, p. 108; Ivanova, ‘Christian Women in Rumeli’, p. 155. Regarding the context of Bulgaria, Ivanova also mentions that the Orthodox Church had to make concessions concerning marriage restrictions, sometimes explicitly motivated by the fact of wanting to divert people from appealing to the local qadi.

³⁷ ‘Item si trovano infiniti huomini che repudiata la prima moglie, o per bruttezza, o per altro disgusto, pigliano altra moglie, et all’incontro donne, che lasciato il primo marito se ne pigliano un altro a modo loro, et quel che è peggio, vogliono per forza la licenza di poterlo fare, o vero l’assolutione dopo che l’hanno fatto, ricorrendo a quest’effetto all’autorità di superiori Turchi. Item molti vanno a contraer li detti illegitimi matrimoni avanti il Caddi turco.’ Molnár, ‘Raguzai bencés misszionáriusok’, p. 61.

In his report from 1613, detailing his visit to the Catholic communities from Belgrade to Buda, the Jesuit Bartol Kašić complained that many men got divorced and remarried following the example of the ‘Serbs’ (i.e., the Orthodox), while others separated, having been convinced by some (the Bosnian Franciscans) that marriages conducted in front of the qadi or the Orthodox priest were not valid.³⁸ Kašić further explained that the claim of the Franciscans that those who had married their first wife in front of the Orthodox *vladika* or the Ottoman qadi were allowed to take another wife demonstrated that these Franciscans did not recognize the decrees of the Tridentine Council,³⁹ which stipulated that marriages contracted before the decree of *Tametsi* was promulgated were valid regardless of who had officiated them.⁴⁰ However, as it is mentioned in other letters written by various Bosnian Franciscans, the *Tametsi* had been proclaimed in the region of Bosnia (which according to the Franciscan understanding also comprised the parishes of Slavonia and Srem), long before these marriages were contracted, in which case they were indeed not valid.⁴¹ Nevertheless, one also needs to take into account the fact that since divorce was an accepted legal category within both Orthodox canon and Islamic law, it is possible that some Bosnian Franciscans were simply more lenient in accepting the legal pluralism as practiced in the Ottoman Empire and accordingly, viewed a marriage conducted in front of the qadi or the Orthodox priest as a legally valid, yet breakable bond. It must also be emphasized, however, that like other religious orders the Bosnian Franciscan order was not a monolith either—other motivations could have also figured in the friars’ decision making, such as getting a fee when a couple contracted a new marriage.

Bartol Kašić SJ was not only firm in his conviction that marriages administered by the Ottoman judge were valid marriages, in one special case he even ‘advocated’

³⁸ ‘Vi sono molti imbroglio dei matrimonii, perché alcuni alla imitatione serbgli cacciar le mogli e pigliar altri. Altre havendo contratto il matrimonio coram Kaddi o ministry heretici et schismatici, sono da alcuni persuasi che tali matrimonii irriti et cusì facil pigliare altre moglie.’ Mihály et al., eds, *Erdélyi és hódoltság jezsuita missziók* [hereafter *EHJM*], I/1, p. 75.

³⁹ ‘Due cose affermo, che siano ignorantissimi et inimicissimi. Questi puote provar facilmente da casi seguiti: Nelli sacramenti del matrimonio ministrati et nelle risposte che han date i più dotti stimati tra loro; come che possano pigliar altra moglie quelli i quali han preso la prima coram sacerdotibus scismaticis vel Kadi, non essendo in queste bande ricevuto il Tridentino.’ *EHJM* I/1, p. 76.

⁴⁰ Before the promulgation of the Tridentine reforms, the presence of the priest was not mandatory at the wedding and the officiant was often a family member, who did not necessarily have to be a Catholic. Cristellon, ‘Does the Priest Have to be There?’, p. 14.

⁴¹ For instance, according to the above quoted letter by Tommaso Ivković the decrees of the Council were announced more than forty years ago in Bosnia, APF SOCG, vol. 73, fol. 52 r. In Ottoman Hungary, however, according to the extant documents, in most dioceses they were not publicized. When in 1626 Alberto Rengjić presented two complicated marriage cases to the Propaganda and asked for advice, it was still not clear whether the decrees of the Council were announced in and around Belgrade, APF SOCG, vol. 56, fol. 243 v. See, also, Vanyó, *Püspöki jelentések*, pp. 53–54. Therefore, it would be difficult to determine whether in the region in question the announcement occurred prior to the arrival of the Jesuits or not.

for a divorce to be administered in the qadi court. The Jesuit father described one particular instance when a Catholic priest married a woman at the qadi court, causing a great scandal among the local Catholics.⁴² The priest asked Kašić to absolve him, but the father said that he could not simply hide this scandal with a secret confession but he needed to go to the local judge, who according to local custom would give him a letter of divorce (*hüccet*, legal certificate); afterwards, he would need to publicly swear in the church, in front of the Catholics, that he would leave his wife, and give the letter of divorce to the father, who then would absolve him.⁴³ Allegedly, the priest got the asked *hüccet* from the qadi, who according to the report was aware of the fact that ‘Latin priests’ were not supposed to get married.⁴⁴

Nearly forty years later, in 1651 the Jesuit Rodolpho Calleli reported that among the Catholics of Timișoara divorces were still abundant, men left their wives even if the latter were still alive and took another in front of the Orthodox priest.⁴⁵ Already in 1617, the Jesuit Marino De Bonis formulated similar complaints, claiming that local Catholics regarded marriage as terminable and if a woman paid a certain sum to the Orthodox priest, he dissolved the marriage.⁴⁶

As mentioned above, repudiating a wife or leaving a husband was formally permitted in Orthodox canon as well as Islamic law. According to the sharia, a Muslim man had the right to dissolve a marriage by simply declaring to his wife, in front of a qadi, that he was repudiating her (*talāq*). A report by the apostolic visitor of Bosnia

⁴² Vanino, ‘Autobiografija Bartola Kašića’, p. 76.

⁴³ ‘Publice ibis ad cadiam, ut tibi suo more det scriptum libellum repudii; deinde coram catholicis promittes illam a te relinquendam esse adhibito iuramento, teque sacramentali confessione tantum sacrilegii scelus deleturum, postremo publice coram populo ante altare in templo s. Andreae poenitentiam postulaturum offerendo Patri libellum repudii.’ Vanino, ‘Autobiografija Bartola Kašića’, p. 76.

⁴⁴ Vanino, ‘Autobiografija Bartola Kašića’, p. 76. It is safe to assume that the respective local judge was aware of such a stipulation concerning the marital status of the Catholic clergy. A document from around 1636 that listed the ‘abuses’ and ‘misconducts’ of the Bosnian Franciscans also mentioned that some friars married publicly in front of the qadi, which caused great scandal among the local Catholics as well as Muslims. Tóth, *Litterae I*, p. 680. Despite the document’s emotionally charged nature, it is highly possible that this accusation was grounded, especially considering that the issue of certain Catholic priests and the religious getting married was a general problem in early modern Southeast Europe and beyond. Another interesting story from 1647 concerns a Bosnian Franciscan lay friar who was a healer. He abandoned the order, got married at the Ottoman court, then got divorced after five years, and remarried again before the qadi, and eventually, converted to Islam. Tóth, *Litterae II*, pp. 1546–1547. In 1639 the Bosnian Franciscan Girolamo Lučić, then bishop of Drivasto (today Drišt, Albania) reported a similar case about a Ragusan Franciscan who became a doctor for the Ottoman officials in Sarajevo, abducted a Christian girl with the help of the Ottomans, and married her at the qadi court. SOCG vol. 299, fol. 41 r.

⁴⁵ ‘Hinc, dimissa, vel dilapsa, legitima uxore, aliam eam vivente, idque unam sacerdote schismatico ducere non adeo abherrent.’ Published in Magina and Magina, ‘*Mores et ceremonias ecclesiasticas ignorabant*’, p. 341.

⁴⁶ *EHJM I/2*, p. 290.

from 1676 also referred to this practice of the Muslim population and the way it affected the everyday customs of the local Catholic community.⁴⁷ Not only were these marriages and divorces performed by non-Catholic authorities, but the fact that they were completed through financial transactions (paying a certain sum to either of these authorities) turned marriage (and separation) itself into a commodity to negotiate among the local religious brokers and the communities themselves.

In 1621, Marino de Bonis SJ accused the secular priest, Paolo Torelli, active in the region of Bač (in present-day Serbia) that he married divorced couples for money.⁴⁸ Svetlana Ivanova has shown that in the town of Vidin (in present-day Bulgaria) certain qadis abused their position in order to collect taxes from the Orthodox Christians: in 1700 a firman was sent to the local authorities of Vidin, issued as a result of the complaint of the Patriarch of Constantinople, who claimed that certain qadis and *naibs* (assistants of the judge) said that without a letter from them marriages cannot be contracted. Another firman sent to the qadi of Vidin also gave evidence about the existence of such abuses concerning the activities of the former qadi.⁴⁹ The cross-institutional dynamic and competition is remarkable here: the firman was issued based on the complaint of the Orthodox bishop because the qadi had actually mimicked the Orthodox practice of collecting marriage fees, and in this way tried to extend his sphere of jurisdiction. In general, qadis, who served a particular administrative unit (*kaza*) only for a limited time period (for one, two, or in some cases, three years), did not have a fixed salary, with their income depending on the pay rank of the judgeship (*mevleviyet*) as well as the number of transactions their court processed and the corresponding fees (for example, divisions of inheritance, notarial services, or registration of marriages).⁵⁰ Thus, qadis, especially those in smaller provincial courts with lower-ranking judgeship posts, had every incentive to contract marriages between the local Orthodox subjects and be 'creative' about the fees they would charge for the service.⁵¹

A number of Ottoman documents provide additional insight into the complex legal and religious economy that surrounded the contracting of marriages in the region of northern Ottoman Rumeli, including the role of the qadis. For instance, a 1562 firman ordered the judges of the *eyalets* of Budin (Buda) and Tımsıvar (Timișoara) to examine the process of marriage fee collection of the Bosnian Franciscans;⁵² and a *hiicet* (legal certificate) of the qadi of Kreševo (today Bosnia) from

⁴⁷ ACDF, Res Doctrinales, Dubia Varia 1669–1707, fol. 143 r.

⁴⁸ Molnár, *Katolikus missziók*, p. 206.

⁴⁹ Ivanova, 'Christian Women in Rumeli', p. 164.

⁵⁰ Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society*, p. 23; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, pp. 162–166.

⁵¹ The issue of court revenues in general and qadis' salaries in particular is a complicated one. For various takes see Moaçanin, *Town and Country*, p. 100; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, p. 162. For the most comprehensive discussion see Abacı and Ergene, 'The Price of Justice'.

⁵² Matašović, *Fojnička Regesta*, doc. 48. Matašović only gives the summary of this document, which is incorrect, since the regesta says that qadis should not marry local Catholics. The

1598 issued to the Bosnian Franciscan guardian confirmed that the friar named Luka did not marry the wife of Gabriel to another man.⁵³ These examples testify to the occasional involvement of qadis in the various marriage business of the local Catholics, such as the issue of marriage taxes .

The problem of whom marriage fees ('ženidbene pristojbe') and other church taxes ought to be paid to, was a permanent source of conflict between the Bosnian Franciscans and Orthodox *vladikas*, the latter continuously attempting to collect these taxes from the Catholics too. From the middle of the sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth centuries several firmans and *hüccets* from the *sanjaks* of the *eyalets* of Bosnia, Budin, Kanije, and Timișvar inform about the various alleged tax collecting abuses of the Orthodox metropolitans and *vladikas* towards the local Catholics and the Franciscans.⁵⁴ For instance, in 1601 a firman of Sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603) was sent to the sanjakbey and the qadis of the sanjak of Zvornik that—on the basis of a petition filed by the Bosnian Franciscans—forbade Orthodox metropolitans to collect the wedding tax from the Catholics, i.e., 12 akçe for the first marriage, 24 akçe for the second marriage, and 48 akçe for the third marriage, as well as the tax from Catholic priests in the amount of 12 akçe.⁵⁵ A complaint from the Catholic side, meant to prevent the Orthodox priests from collecting fees from the Catholics, is cited in a 1615 firman of Sultan Ahmed I: 'We are of the Latin faith and our belief (*šljedba*) is utterly different from the faith of the Serbs, the Greeks, and the unfaithful Vlachs, and we are not connected to them in any way. Until now we gave marriage fees and other church taxes to the priests of our faith, the Franciscans.'⁵⁶

Even though in the missionary reports concerning the cases from seventeenth-century northern Ottoman Rumeli financial motivations do not explicitly figure when it comes to resorting to the qadi, it is fairly certain that these judges also asked for a certain sum, and in some cases, they could have even offered a better 'financial deal' than the Orthodox or the Catholic priests would. It should be also mentioned that concerning eighteenth-century Bosnia, several documents attest that divorces and the annulment of marriages between Muslim men and Catholic women, as well as the various cases when the Franciscan friars and/or other local Catholics tried to prevent at the court the marriages of Catholic women to Muslim men constituted a

original document, however, is an interesting firman of Süleyman the Magnificent that was issued based on the accusations of the Peć patriarch, Makarije, against the tax collection practices of the Bosnian Franciscans. I thank my colleagues Ana Sekulić, for sharing the original document with me, and Günhan Börekçi, for helping me translate it.

⁵³ 'Hudžet Kreševskoga kadije fra Matiji gvardijanu, da nije fra Luka iz njegove familie vjenčao Gabrielovu ženu za drugog', Matašović, *Fojnička Regesta*, doc. 145.

⁵⁴ Matašović, *Fojnička Regesta*, doc. 66, 82, 96, 97, 114, 123, 238, 530, 812; Boškov, 'Turski dokumenti', doc. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19.

⁵⁵ Boškov, 'Turski dokumenti', doc. 11.

⁵⁶ 'Mi smo latinske vjere, i naša je šljedba od vjere Srba, Grka i Vlaha nevjernika sasvijem različita, i s njima mi nemamo nikakvih veza. Ženitbene pristojbe i druge crkvene daće dosada smo davali svećenicima naše vjere, franjevcima.' Matašović, *Fojnička Regesta*, doc. 238.

great source of income for the local judges.⁵⁷ Be that as it may, the qadi court usually could offer a way to avoid canonical restrictions, since at the court there were no investigations into the motives of divorcing, no conciliation terms, and no bans on subsequent marriages. Moreover, marrying in front of the Ottoman judge would not even mean that a couple was obliged to conform to any kind of non-Christian marriage ritual.

According to the above quoted letter of Antonio Velislavi, when contracting a marriage in front of the Ottoman qadi, the marrying couple would put their hands on the gospel and make the sign of the cross.⁵⁸ Even though Velislavi's description of such a Christian marriage ritual in the presence of the qadi so far seems to be unique for the territories under analysis, one might still assume that in other cases the process was similar. It is possible that other missionaries stayed silent on the subject either due to lack of information or because they were unwilling to report to Rome that Ottoman judges remained more 'attractive' alternatives than Catholic priests and missionaries, in spite of the fact that usually one or two Catholic religious or lay priests were also active where a qadi was present, and despite occasional papal marriage dispensations that recognized 'irregularly' contracted marriages.

Already in 1560, Guillaume Postel (d. 1581), the French linguist and diplomat, published in his *De la République des Turcs* an interesting account of the so-called *kebin* (temporary marriage), a practice especially popular among the foreigners (merchants, ambassadors, etc.) residing in the empire.⁵⁹ According to Postel's account:

All immoral foreigners make use of this kind of marriage and use sophistry in dealing with the Turks, because kadis and subashis are permitted to authorize the said kebin, mainly between Christians, *only in the form and with the oath or sacrament of marriage*. They make them swear as follows: 'You, so-and-so, promise on the Faith of God and *your Law* to take so-and-so as wife and spouse, just as *your God, your Law and custom* (italics mine) commands you, and pay her so-and-so much dower.'⁶⁰

In 1599, the Ragusan chaplain Vincenzo di Augustino in his report concerning Ottoman Buda spoke in similar terms about the marriages of those Catholic Ragusan merchants who were married by the qadi.⁶¹ In his visitation report that was composed between 1623 and 1624, the bishop of Bar (in today's Montenegro), Pietro Massarechi also encountered this practice of *temporary marriage* in Sofia (in today's Bulgaria) and described that there were men who ransomed Christian female slaves for the sake of prostitution, while others married women by 'Chiebin' at the sharia court.⁶²

⁵⁷ Chelaru, 'Between Coexistence and Assimilation', pp. 309–310.

⁵⁸ 'Item molti vanno a contraer li detti illegitimi matrimonii avanti il Caddi turco, in mano del quale giurano sopra il libro d'Evangelii et sopra la croce per verba con presenti vis, volo.' Molnár, 'Raguzai bencés misszionáriusok jelentése', p. 61.

⁵⁹ Imber, 'Guillaume Postel on temporary marriage', pp. 179–183.

⁶⁰ The passage is published and translated in Imber, 'Guillaume Postel', p. 181.

⁶¹ Molnár, 'A Chaplain from Dubrovnik in Ottoman Buda', pp. 95–121.

⁶² Draganović, 'Izvjješće apostolskog vizitatora Petra Masarechija', p. 21.

A plausible explanation for the qadis' 'lenient' approach and 'legal flexibility' to the marriage ceremonies of Catholics (and non-Muslims in general) can be manifold.⁶³ First of all, the sharia marriage (Ar. *nikāḥ*) was not a uniform legal category. One of the most contentious legal concepts that related to it was the notion of *mut'a* (enjoyment, marriage of pleasure) that was employed in Islamic law in the sense of *temporary marriage*.⁶⁴ In principle, all the Sunni schools of law forbade *mut'a* (with certain concessions, nonetheless), and it only came to be officially recognized by the Shi'ites, especially the Imami school.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the practice did not disappear from the everyday life of Sunni Muslim communities either.⁶⁶ Concerning the Ottoman Empire, sixteenth-seventeenth-century Christian sources often referred to the problem of *temporary marriage* under the name of *kiambin*, *kebin*, *chiebin*, or *kepinion*. According to these sources, Muslim men could contract such type of *temporary marriages* with a Jewish or Christian woman in front of the qadi and minimum two witnesses, and it was also common in certain parts of the empire that two Christians contracted such a marriage in front of the qadi—as the above analyzed examples also illustrated; the time to be lived together was usually determined in advance after which the wife could lawfully leave her husband.⁶⁷ Second, besides the sharia and the *kanun* (sultanic, administrative law), local qadis were also aware of local traditions and many times took these customs into consideration in their decision making.⁶⁸ As Boğaç A. Ergene also highlights, 'provincial courts were a part of the socio-political environment in which they operated; they not only influenced the local dynamics but were also influenced by them'.⁶⁹ And third, evidence from other parts of the empire illustrates that establishing strong connections with certain local groups and individuals was one of the prerequisites for having a prosperous judicial career in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷⁰

As it transpires from the analyzed letters (and many others not enumerated here involving different parts of Rumeli), from the Catholic viewpoint, Orthodox priests and *vladikas* as well as Ottoman qadis had a more 'lenient' attitude when it came to the granting of divorces and allowing (as well as administering) subsequent marriages. In this way, the Orthodox clergy could exert pressure on the Catholic clergy to make and ask for certain concessions on the Tridentine rules to avoid conversions.

⁶³ Compared to the Ottoman judges, Orthodox priests and metropolitans rarely showed such flexibility when it came to administering marriages that involved Catholics. In the case of mixed marriages, the Orthodox often demanded the Catholic party to abjure their faith prior to the wedding and get rebaptized in the Orthodox rite. Molnár, 'Raguzai bencés misszionári-usok jelentése', p. 61; APF SOCG vol. 299 fol. 55 r; APF ACTA vol. 7 fol. 113 v; APF ACTA vol. 37 fol. 256 v.

⁶⁴ Heffening, 'Mut'a'.

⁶⁵ Haeri, 'Mot'a'; Heffening, 'Mut'a'.

⁶⁶ Heffening, 'Mut'a'. See, also Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, p. 163.

⁶⁷ Pantazopolous, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula*, p. 93.

⁶⁸ Kafadar, 'The Ottomans and Europe', p. 606.

⁶⁹ Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society*, p. 25.

Whilst the continuous appeals to the qadi court could have affected conversions to Islam in the long term, in the case of marriages, Catholic missionaries seemed more alarmed about conversion to Orthodoxy in those instances when Catholics approached the priest or the *vladika*.⁷¹ An Orthodox priest or bishop could and would often take every opportunity to convert a local Catholic, and marriages were ideal case scenarios for such an undertaking. A registering of a Catholic marriage by a qadi, however, was probably considered more of a bureaucratic/notarial act, reflective of the multifunctional role the judge occupied within the institutional framework of the sharia court.

Undeniably, most Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire had multiple legal choices at their disposal. Still, it should also be borne in mind that it was not just the imperial subjects who had to cope with this plurality but also the agents who were supposed to impose certain legal and religious rules, which could lead to confusion and ambiguity, as well as strategic exploitation and adaptation of interlegality. As Jeroen Duindam, Jill Harries, Caroline Humfress, and Nimrod Humfritz aptly formulated: ‘law, even if devised as an instrument for top-down domination tends to develop a dynamic of its own that makes room for initiatives by agents as well as subjects’.⁷²

CONCLUSION

Since the formulation of the original theory of confessionalization by W. Reinhard and H. Schilling and its subsequent criticisms, the study of early modern Catholicism has gone through several stages in terms of theoretical and methodological approaches. This process has led to a growing interest in examining local forms of Catholicism and their relation to the universalistic claims of the Roman Catholic Church.⁷³

Already in 1997, Heinrich Richard Schmidt in his programmatic article and critique⁷⁴ concerning the ‘etatic narrowing’ of Reinhard and Schilling’s approach emphasized that ‘confessionalization was a communal process: certain gender and social groups within the rural communities took up guidelines and instructions “from above” (from clergymen and state authorities) and put them into practice because they fitted in with their particular interests’.⁷⁵ Whereas Schmidt’s main reference point were Protestant communities, Marc R. Forster, who focused on the Catholic

⁷¹ I would not want to perpetuate Krunoslav Draganović’s far too apologetic rendering of the ‘mass conversion’ of Catholics to Orthodoxy, but he still presents some thought-provoking ideas, which should not be dismissed. See Draganović, *Massenübertritte von Katholiken zur “Orthodoxie”*. On Orthodox conversions to Islam in the context of marriage see Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*; Greene, ‘Living with Others’, pp. 139–162; Gradeva, *Rumeli under the Ottomans*.

⁷² Duindam, Harries, Humfress, and Humfritz, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.

⁷³ Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln*, p. 14.

⁷⁴ Schmidt, ‘Sozialdisziplinierung?’, pp. 639–682.

⁷⁵ H. R. Schmidt as paraphrased by Lotz-Heumann in ‘The Concept of “Confessionalization”’, p. 110.

communities, employed the concept of ‘local Catholicism’ in order to shed light on the negotiated character of Catholicity,⁷⁶ whilst Peter Hersche criticized the presupposed disciplining effects of Tridentine norms and underlined the importance of concentrating on the ‘simple believer’ in order to capture the essence of the formation of ‘Catholic confessional culture’.⁷⁷

In terms of analytical vocabulary and methodological approach, in the present study I also engaged with the notion of ‘local Catholicism’ to capture the locally contingent and multifarious nature of Catholic meaning-making. I deliberately refrained from employing the term ‘popular religion’, since the term itself is rather vague to adequately encompass the complexity of local variants of Catholicism, and it inevitably invites a preemptory judgment on the daily habits of these communities, instead of focusing on the multilayered contexts that engendered such practices in the first place. The studies that focus on this locally contingent nature of confessional meaning-making and engage with the notion of ‘confessionalization’ do not generally view it as a top-to-bottom, but as an open-ended process and as an interaction among different actors.⁷⁸ This approach has led to the problematization of the very notion of the ‘agent of confessionalization’ itself, and indeed, as the above analyzed examples also demonstrated, when it comes to the case of Catholic missionaries, one cannot exclusively see in them the embodiment of the ‘agent of Catholic confessionalization’, nor can qadis or Orthodox priests by default be viewed as the ‘agents’ of Sunni and Orthodox confessionalization, respectively—if in these cases this label is at all applicable.

As the present study has illustrated, the interaction of Catholic missionaries with Orthodox priests and Ottoman qadis, and the active role Catholic communities themselves assumed in shaping this ‘relationship’, complicated and decisively informed confessional developments in the analyzed region, including the implementation of Tridentine reforms. The various ‘deviations’ resulting from confessional coexistence were on the daily agenda of the missionaries, and as their reports attest, it was truly puzzling to find the most appropriate strategy to persuade the local population of the ‘erroneousness’ of their practices. In a number of letters, missionaries emphasized that despite the occasional digressions from particular normative Catholic practices, these people still considered themselves Catholics; hence, they did not perceive the ‘borrowing’ of certain customs, rituals, laws, or even representatives from the other’s religion as incompatible with adhering to the Catholic faith.

The analyzed case studies have shown that different Catholic communities’ perception of the local jurisdictional and confessional divides often did not coincide. Being married by the qadi or the Orthodox priest (in those cases when there was no explicit requirement to convert) did not make anyone ‘less’ Catholic. The practical implementation or rejection of different legal and religious decrees and orderings

⁷⁶ Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque*. For methodological insights, see also Windler, *Missionare in Persien*.

⁷⁷ Hersche, *Muße und Verschwendung*. For a similar approach, see also von Greyerz, *Religion und Kultur*.

⁷⁸ Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln*, p. 17.

was in most cases the result of the continuous negotiations on the ground. Not observing the standard forms of Catholic rituals strictly and appealing to the local Orthodox priest or qadi did not automatically mean that these people were not aware of the distinct character of their own religion, but that they had a locally contingent understanding of law,⁷⁹ and consequently, articulated a local version of Catholicism, which had several irreconcilable elements with the stipulations of Tridentine Catholicism.

Even if at first sight the ‘social disciplining’ endeavors of various missionaries seem to have borne no fruit in the long term, several reports attest that there existed particular ‘communal disciplining’ and ‘boundary drawing’ efforts within Catholic and non-Catholic groups themselves. For instance, in a report from 1646 the Jesuit Jacov Micaglia, describing the situation in Timișoara and its vicinity, reported that in the cities, where the decree of *Tametsi* had allegedly been promulgated, people considered marriages administered by the qadi or the Orthodox priest not to be ‘real marriages’, and the couples who got married in such a way were cursed and ostracized from the community.⁸⁰ The lay priest Simone Matković, writing in the name of the ‘innumerable Christian people of the Greek rite’ in Srem explained how every time he went to Rome these groups implored him to send them good priests ‘of their own rite’.⁸¹ The Ragusan Benedictine Antonio Velislavi underlined that many people gave their daughters ‘voluntarily’ to be the wives of Muslims, after which they and their relatives celebrated together with the Muslims at the wedding, only to ask for absolution after the celebration.⁸² The acceptance or refusal of the Gregorian calendar was also a common means for various Catholic groups to ‘draw’ the boundaries of their community—a decision informed by economic (accepting the Gregorian calendar would have led to confusion concerning the time fairs should be held), ethnic (for instance, some Hungarian-speaking Catholics rejecting, while Slavic-speaking ones accepting it), and/or confessional motivations (many people believing that accepting the ‘new calendar’ promoted by the missionaries would mean embracing a ‘new faith’, sometimes resulting in celebration of all holidays twice).⁸³

Could, thus, all the above detailed social, religious, and legal developments and dynamics be labelled as ‘confessional’? If the term ‘confessional’ is understood to denote an altered and stimulated awareness about someone’s denominational belonging and detached to a certain extent from the written tradition of confessions, the notion could be an adequate means to describe those cases where a particular group—in this case Catholics—had to juggle the legal and religious choices at their disposal represented by various agents, whilst trying to maintain and in several instances prove their own ‘Catholicism’. Other case studies from the Ottoman context will demonstrate how the politicization of the confessional landscape could in certain instances lead to the blurring and rewriting of confessional lines, thus further

⁷⁹ Benton and Ross, ‘Empires and Legal Pluralism’.

⁸⁰ Vanino, ‘Leksikograf Jakov Mikalja’, p. 33.

⁸¹ Tóth, *Litterae I*, pp. 354–355.

⁸² Molnár, ‘Raguzai bencés misszionáriusok jelentése’, p. 61.

⁸³ *EHJM I/1*, pp. 74–75; 91; *EHJM I/2*, pp. 401–402; Tóth, *Litterae I*, p. 200.

complicating the aspects of ‘agency’ and multi-directional ‘communal disciplining’ that are currently high on the agenda of scholars critically thinking with the concept of ‘confessionalization’ and probing its flexibility.

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22. SHI'ITE-IRANIAN PILGRIMS AND SAFAVID AGENTS IN HOLY SITES UNDER OTTOMAN RULE, 1690–1710

SELIM GÜNGÖRÜRLER

After maintaining a peace for half a century following the Treaty of Zuhab signed in 1639, the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran grew politically closer towards the 1700s. The two monarchies officially championing rival Islamic denominations took their doctrinal differences off the agenda for the first time to engage in cordial diplomatic relations. As an outcome of this, the Ottoman Empire, which claimed to represent the universal leadership of Sunni Islam through the 'Greater Caliphate', and the Safavid state, which laid claims to the leadership of Shi'ite Islam as the proxy of the Hidden Imam, came to work together on several occasions. This transconfessional political rapprochement manifested itself above all in the language of solidarity, discourse of brotherhood, mutual recognition of canonical validity and dynastic claims, such as the House of Osman's assertion of caliphal supremacy and the House of Safi's professing to stem from the House of the Prophet Muhammad (*ahl al-bayt*). The extent of this rapprochement is particularly striking when one recalls that these parties had previously been involved in a conflict for almost a century and a half, characterized by accusations of heresy and warfare justified by references to religious principles. It is also striking that the subsequent rapprochement was achieved without any legal or doctrinal re-interpretation or reconciliation of the Shi'ite and Sunni ulema.¹

One of the major platforms on which these Shi'ite and Sunni monarchies worked together from the 1690s through the 1710s was pilgrimage. Both as (greater) caliphs² and as territorial sovereigns of the Islamic pilgrimage sites, Ottoman monarchs were responsible for the upkeep of Mecca and Medina and the pilgrimage routes, and for making them accessible to all Muslims, regardless of denomination or political subjecthood. While in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries warfare between the two states had made it sometimes impossible for Safavid pilgrims to travel to the

¹ In this regard, see Güngörürler, 'Islamic Discourse in Ottoman-Safavid Peacetime Diplomacy'.

² On the question of 'greater' and 'lesser' caliphate see *ibid*.

Islamic holy sites,³ this situation changed in the late seventeenth century. In this paper, I look at how the Shi'ite Iranian pilgrims' (*hājīs* and *zā'irs*) journey through Ottoman territory to the holy sites in Hijaz (for hajj, one of the 'pillars of Islam') and in Iraq (for *ziyārat*, or visitation of the Alid Imams' mausolea) came to be regulated in an era of peace between these two polities. On the basis of diplomatic sources that I discovered in the Ottoman archives, my paper deals with the management of these Safavid subjects' entry into Ottoman territory, journey across the eastern provinces of the empire, contacts with the locals, relationship with the sovereign authority, patronage, and legal status.

Within the scope of the above-mentioned rapprochement, the Safavids began to put forward a series of requests for favors and permissions to perform certain activities in Islamic holy sites ruled by the Ottomans. The nature of these requests requires us to treat religion and inter-sectarian contacts—jurisprudence aside—against the backdrop of contemporary politics, diplomacy, and dynastic matters. Accordingly, the operative terms that characterized diplomatic discourse in the first decade under study (1690–1700) were *brotherhood*, *perpetual peace*, and eventually *alliance* between the two states. However, during the second decade (1700–1710), relations rapidly deteriorated, although the mentioned concepts continued to be referred to, albeit rarely. In this respect, one should note that these unifying concepts appear exclusively in the diplomatic correspondence produced by Ottoman and Safavid bureaucrats, and not in Ottoman advice literature, chronicles, religious treatises, or *fatwas*.

I argue that as long as the shah's requests remained limited to asking for one-time, exceptional favors and essentially had a symbolic nature, without the capacity to undermine Ottoman legitimacy and sovereignty at these sites, the padishah granted them in accordance with the political *Zeitgeist* of those decades that favored a diplomatic rapprochement. However, requests for lasting privileges in this domain, the granting of which would possibly instigate a new wave of sectarian strife in the region, were categorically denied, hinting that the recent fraternization between the two polities, though unprecedented in Islamic history, was rather shallow, as the ulema, who were the principal legal and religious authorities, did not contribute to this agenda. And, whenever these requests pertained to larger projects involving the shah's providing a public service to the shrines and inhabitants of targeted towns, that is to Ottoman sovereign territory and subjects, these were not only rejected but also deemed offensive by the Sublime Porte, eventually leading to antagonism between the two states in the 1710s.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

In the last decade of the seventeenth century, the supervisor of the Iranian pilgrim convoy in Ottoman territory was a Safavid subject, who, chosen by his fellow travelers, was sometimes called *superintendent* (*emīn*), but more frequently, deputy (*vekīl*)

³ See, for example, Faroqi, *Herrscher über Mekka*; and Ja'farian, *Safavids in the Realm of Religion*.

of the Iranian pilgrims (*İran/Acem hüccāci*). Aside from recognition by the convoy and the Safavid government, the deputy was also acknowledged by the Sublime Porte and could directly petition the imperial government, especially when he thought that an Ottoman official or subject had wronged the pilgrims. Consequently, the Sublime Porte could decree to the governor(-general) and the qadi of the relevant province that the grievance be redressed.⁴ Sometimes, these corrective decrees, rather than addressing only specific wrongdoings, were issued as imperial writs (*ḥaṭṭ-ı hümmāyūn*) for emphasis, and included a long set of harsh reminders to all governors, qadis, and other local authorities, who would be in contact with the Iranian convoy in Iraq, Kurdistan, Eastern Anatolia, and the Levant, on the status and rights of the Iranian pilgrims, and on what constituted a transgression. In such exceptional cases, the imperial government would micromanage the items and amounts of all customs tolls, guidance fees, camel rents, boat charges, administrative dues, water service, etc. to be exacted from the convoy members.⁵

The involvement of the Sublime Porte in the appointment of an 'Iranian pilgrims' deputy' seems to have been no more than acknowledging and registering the nominated person.⁶ Normally, the pilgrims would send a collective petition to the imperial court to notify it of their chosen nominee. The deputy could also engage Ottoman officials at a provincial level, such as at courthouses, while requesting supportive decrees from Istanbul.⁷

Formally, the nomination would be made by the pilgrims, while the ultimate appointment was worded as made by the padishah's command. This construct provided the legal basis for the issuance of the imperial decrees that were addressed directly to the deputy himself. If a Safavid ambassador was present at the padishah's court, he could also intercede on behalf of the pilgrims and their deputy,⁸ or he could ask for an empire-wide circulation of decrees for the reconfirmation of all conventional rights of Iranian groups in Ottoman territory. In extraordinary instances of the

⁴ OSA, *Mühimme d.* 102, entry 852: decree dated early May 1692 to the governor-general of Diyarbakır and the judge of Amid (Diyarbakır) in response to the petition by the deputy of the Iranian pilgrims.

⁵ OSA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entries 1754, 1756, 1762–1764, 1767, 1770: decrees and imperial-writs dated early May 1698 to the sharif of Mecca, the imperial pilgrimage commander, the governor of Jidda, the superintendent of the Kaaba, the qadis of Mecca and Medina, the superintendent of Prophet Muhammad's shrine in Medina, the military personnel in Hijaz, the superintendent of the imperial pilgrimage convoy, the governors-general and the qadis of Baghdad, Basra, Erzurum, Aleppo, Diyarbakır, Van, Raqqa, Damascus, Tripoli, Kars, Maraş, and of all provinces in Asia Minor.

⁶ OSA, *Mühimme d.* 104, entries 53–55: decrees dated mid-May 1692 to the governor-general and the qadi of Baghdad in response to the petition and the subsequent death of 'Ali, the pilgrims' deputy.

⁷ OSA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entries 886–890: decrees dated early December 1697 to the governor-general and the qadi of Damascus in response to the petitions by the pilgrims and their deputy, Tebrizi Mustafa.

⁸ OSA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entry 916: decree dated early December 1697 to Tebrizi Mustafa, the deputy.

pilgrims' discontent with their incumbent deputy due to his negligence in fulfilling his responsibilities, the Safavid ambassador could appeal *ex officio* to the Sublime Porte for the deposition of the incumbent deputy and the submission of the new nominee, who would eventually be appointed again with the padishah's decree. This appointment could be accompanied with the conferral of the hierarchical grade—but not the actual post—of master-gatekeeper (*kapıcıbaşı*) of the Imperial Court to the Iranian office holder. Remarkably, this Iranian subject, who enjoyed an honorary Ottoman court rank, was entitled by the Sublime Porte to protect the interests of the pilgrims from potential transgression by the Ottoman authorities and subjects, about whom he even enjoyed the right to file complaints to the imperial government. Apparently, the appointment to the Iranian pilgrims' deputyship was made not on a yearly basis but for an undetermined period of time.⁹ In extraordinary instances, the Ottoman provincial authorities that would deal with the new deputy were also informed of the change of the office holder.¹⁰

As of the mid-1690s, a new office was introduced: the chief (aga) of the Iranian pilgrims, who, if an Ottoman subject, would be appointed from among the actual master-gatekeepers of the Imperial Court, and, if a Safavid subject, would receive the hierarchical grade of a master-gatekeeper. It seems that this new position was superior to that of deputy. If the deputy represented the pilgrims to Ottoman state authorities, then the chief represented the Ottoman State to the pilgrims and to those coming into contact with the convoy. Thus, given the fact that the pilgrimage routes and sites were in Ottoman territory, the chief was the supreme officer of the convoy, who had the political and decision-making responsibility.¹¹ Along with the chief, a deputy continued to serve in the apparently lesser role of procuring the daily material needs of the pilgrims. It seems that so long as there was a chief, the Ottoman government rather dealt with him, while the deputy still petitioned the imperial court occasionally and received mention in the documents addressed to the

⁹ OsA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entry 1769: imperial-writ dated early May 1698 to the new deputy, Hüseyin. *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 258: decree dated early August 1699 to the same deputy Hüseyin.

¹⁰ OsA, *Mühimme d.* 110, entry 1793: decree dated mid-May 1698 to the great-judge of Damascus. Also see entry 1826.

¹¹ OsA, *Cevdet—Dahiliye*, 8165: the draft of the decree dated late June 1694 to 'Ali [Aga], a master-gatekeeper of the Imperial Court who was appointed as the chief of the Iranian pilgrims. *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 451: decree dated early January 1700 to Hüseyin.

authorities.¹² Otherwise, during the times that the imperial government did not create a chief, the deputy continued to serve in his conventional function.¹³

Within a few years, this division of labor and jurisdiction between the chief and the deputy came to an end, because the Ottoman government created yet another new office, the conductor (*kā'id*, office: *kıyādet*) of the Iranian pilgrims, which apparently replaced the two former offices by merging their separate functions. The first available charter of investiture sets down the main responsibilities of the conductor to be gathering the pilgrims, keeping them as a group so long as they were within Ottoman borders, preventing disputes, reconciling the parties in the case of a dispute, determining the most convenient route as well as way-stations, leading the convoy during the entire journey through roads as well as hazardous passes, protecting the pilgrims while on the road, guarding and entirely surrounding the camp during stops, making sure the convoy arrives safe and sound in the Hijaz, treating the pilgrims with lenience, and not travelling too fast for the incapable and the weak to keep pace. If the conductor could not settle a dispute amicably, he was to refer the case to provincial authorities. The first known appointee to conductorship was a senior (*emekdār*) palace halberdier (*hāşşa baltaçı*), and the investiture was made for an unlimited period of time.¹⁴ In this decade, as in the previous one, the problem of interference attempts by former superintendents of the Iranian pilgrimage convoy continued.¹⁵

This formally perpetual appointment lasted only several years. Upon an appeal by a Safavid ambassador in Istanbul, the first conductor was eventually deposed on the grounds of overcharging the pilgrims and showing carelessness in their protection. In his stead, an actual master-gatekeeper of the Imperial Court was invested with the conductorship of the Iranian convoy. Remarkably, the new mission

¹² OsA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 452: decree dated mid-October 1699 to the governors-general and the qadis of Damascus and Aleppo, in which Hüseyin the chief and Said the deputy are mentioned. *Ibid.*, d. 111, entry 853, decree dated mid-February 1700 to the governors-general and the qadis in the provinces of Erzurum, Diyarbakır, Aleppo, Damascus, Kars, Çıldır, and Sivas, which pertains to the collaborative offense committed by a false chief and a former deputy of the Iranian pilgrims.

¹³ OsA, *Mühimme d.* 111, ent. 1132–1133: decrees dated mid-June 1700 to the governors of Damascus, Raqqa, Erzurum, Van, Kars, and Maraş, and to the judges of Damascus, Aleppo, Maraş, Erzurum, Sivas, Malatya, Ruha (present-day Urfa), Kars, and Van, regarding the deposition of Hüseyin the chief carrying the degree of the master-gatekeeper of the Imperial Court and the plain appointment of Sadık [b. Reşid] the deputy.

¹⁴ OsA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b.* 289/36: copy of the investiture charter of Mahmud, the senior sultan halberdier, as the conductor of the Iranian pilgrims, dated early March 1702. Two years later on the occasion of the enthronement of Ahmed III, Mahmud successfully petitioned the grand vizierate for the renewal of his charter, *Ibid.*

¹⁵ OsA, *İbnülemin—Evkaf*, 4635: Mahmud the halberdier's petition to the grand vizierate in complaint about Sadık b. Reşid, the former superintendent who, using his old documents of authorization, was attempting to take over the supervision of that year's convoy of Iranian pilgrims. The petition was processed on 16 September 1704. The document also includes a copy of Mahmud's charter of investiture and the imperial-writ inserted above it.

instructions specified that the conductor's responsibility was geographically limited to the journey from Yerevan (Erivan) to Damascus, from where the imperial pilgrimage commander (*mür-i hacc*) was to take over. Upon the completion of his mission, the conductor of the Iranian convoy was to obtain a voucher from the Safavid governor of Yerevan addressed to the Ottoman governor of Erzurum stating that he had duly fulfilled the service expected of him.¹⁶ In one extant letter, the governor of Yerevan states that he had previously written to his Ottoman counterpart to ask for his help in having a certain nominee appointed as the leader of the Iranian pilgrims; that even though this person had charged the pilgrims excess amounts for various tolls in the previous year, they were nevertheless satisfied with his efforts in attending to and safeguarding the convoy; and that he vouched for this official's satisfactory conduct during his service.¹⁷

INFERENCES ON THE PILGRIM'S LEGAL STATUS AND THE PILGRIMAGE ROUTE¹⁸

As of the later seventeenth century, the Iranian pilgrims in the Ottoman Empire were acknowledged as Muslims without any further qualification. In many of the decrees and charters, the convoy members were identified as the 'joyous pilgrims who depart from Persia to fulfill the obligation of pilgrimage and visit the honorable martyrdom sites and blessed tombs, as the circumambulation of the sacred House of God is one of the five conditions of Islam'.¹⁹ Thus, their undertaking was given full Islamic status by the Ottoman government, which did not designate the Iranian convoy with any differentiating or discriminatory label as compared with the rest of the domestic and foreign pilgrims. In the same vein, the imperial capital prescribed the officials in Mecca and Medina to 'support and safeguard the Iranian pilgrims as [they were to support and safeguard any] other Muslim pilgrims... and have them join the ranks of other Muslim pilgrims'. As seen, the Ottoman state did not condone the segregation of Shi'ite Iranians in Hijaz; there, they were to act and be treated as full members of the larger Muslim community, especially within the framework of this grand organization under the aegis of the House of Osman, which attracted Muslims from all over the world.

¹⁶ OsA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemî b. 307/77*: the approved and decreed draft of Halil Aga's charter of investiture dated mid-April 1706.

¹⁷ OsA, *Sadaret Mektubi Kalemî b. 1/56*. The archivist's dating of the letter (to AH 1058) is not supported with any evidence. Again, the archivist's claim that the letter was addressed to the Ottoman grand vizier is inaccurate, for the *inscriptio* used in the opener is clearly that of an Ottoman vizier (i.e. governor-general), and not of the grand vizier. With reference to the above-mentioned charter of investiture, it is highly likely that this voucher was sent to an Ottoman governor-general of Erzurum from a Safavid governor-general of Yerevan (Erivan).

¹⁸ The inferences made in this section are based on the collective treatment of the documents referred to in the previous section.

¹⁹ Among others, see OsA, *Cevdet-Dahiliye*, 8165; OsA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemî b. 289/36, 307/77*; OsA, *Mühimme d. 102*, entry 852; d. 104, entries 53–55; d. 110, entries 886–690, 916, 1754, 1756, 1762–1764, 1767, 1769–1770, 1793; d. 111, entries 258, 452, 853, 1132–1133.

It is remarkable that in formal contacts between the Ottoman authorities and the Iranian pilgrims the issue of sectarian difference was not mentioned. When registering the Iranian pilgrims' Muslimness, Ottoman authorities never qualified this status as Shi'ite, non-Sunni, or otherwise. Besides, they kept the Shi'ite Iranians as part of the larger group of co-religionist travelers and pilgrims. Their financial oppression with undue exactions or harassment in any form, particularly in Hijaz and Iraq, was deemed a 'diversion from the path of God, contrary to divine consent, in negation of the Islamic disposition which precludes oppression and animosity, and against the satisfaction of the illustrious, immaculate Imams'.²⁰ Here, the Ottoman monarchy's justification of its patronage of Iranian pilgrims with reference to not only the general tenets of Islam but also the Imams of the Prophet's House is of particular importance for us to understand the unifying motive behind the Empire's policy regarding the target group. Even in intra-governmentally circulating documents, which were to be seen only by the involved Ottoman officials and certainly not by any Iranians, there seems to have been no mention of the sectarian difference, let alone discord. This, of course, does not mean that the Ottoman Sunni establishment stopped perceiving Shi'ism as an unorthodox form of Islam. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the pilgrimage, which was supposed to be an activity unifying the community, was not exploited as a platform on which to express sectarianism.

Equally striking is that the Ottoman monarchy, when pledging itself to patronize the Shi'ite Iranian pilgrims, did not refer to its claim to the ('greater') caliphate as a source of justification: 'the pilgrims' traffic, passage, and arrival in the Protected Domains [i.e. imperial territory] in complete security, well-being, utmost safety, and prosperity are the requisites of the liability of world-keeping and within the scope of the majestic efforts'. Apart from this justification based on political sovereignty, the Sublime Porte did not mention the traditional, sharia-based responsibility of the caliph to ensure the safe performance of the pilgrimage for all Muslims.

Likewise, the Ottoman monarchy forbade the oppression of the Shi'ite Iranian pilgrims on the grounds that it was contrary to its treaty, contractual relationship, peace conditions, and friendship with the Safavid State. It was not even discussed whether the case of an Iranian convoy's suffering an injustice in Ottoman territory would constitute a shortcoming in the House of Osman's fulfillment of its caliphal responsibilities. This is in stark contrast to the contemporary diplomacy between the Ottomans and the Safavids, in which caliphal concepts were used as one of the principal discourses for defining the relationship between the two states. This outward contradiction, however, can be explained by the fact that the Ottoman State exploited its 'greater caliphate' status almost exclusively on an interstate platform. Internally, caliphate did not underlie the relationship between the state and its subjects. If we keep in mind that the Iranian pilgrims in the Ottoman Empire were qualified as Iranian only due to their land of residence, and not due to their Safavid subjecthood, and that regarding their dealings with the state they enjoyed the same status as Ottoman subjects, we can conclude that because the Ottoman monarchy

²⁰ OsA, *İbnülemin—Evkaf*, 4635; OsA, *Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi*, b. 1/56.

then did not grant international status to the Muslim subjects of other sovereign states, it legally treated them as if they were its own Muslim subjects as long as they were in imperial territory. Likewise, because the caliphate did not regulate the relationship between the Ottoman state and its subjects in practice, the imperial government did not employ a caliphal discourse in justifying its patronage of the Iranian pilgrims.

Unfortunately, our information on the Ottoman government's preferences and policy regarding the route of the Iranian pilgrim convoy is limited owing to the very scattered nature of the sources and the apparent lack of a document series directly dealing with this issue. Nevertheless, dispersed references and mentions made in passing are still helpful in partly reconstructing the picture. First of all, the Sublime Porte seems to have upheld its position that the Iranian convoy should join at Damascus the imperial pilgrimage train that traveled from Istanbul for the Hijaz. As a rule, the Iranian convoy would enter the Ottoman territory from Yerevan, and via the route leading through the provinces of Kars, Erzurum, Van, Diyarbakır, Raqqa, and Aleppo, reach Damascus, from where it would travel on together with the imperial train through Syria and Palestine to the Arabian Peninsula. There are not only documents that make this preference clear, but also plenty of decrees to the authorities in Syrian provinces regarding their conduct towards the Iranian pilgrims who were present there. Decrees regulating the affairs of both the incoming and the returning Iranian pilgrims suggest that it was the norm for the convoy to use the Damascene route in its outbound as well as inbound journeys.

Next to this primary highway, there was also the Mesopotamian route. As can be seen from the intermittently preserved Ottoman documentation, Iranian pilgrims had a constant presence in the Imams' mausolea located in Iraq, which were sometimes additional and sometimes alternative sites of pilgrimage.²¹ The sources show that the pilgrims (*zā'irs*) visiting the Holy Shrines (*'Atabāt-i 'Aliyāt*) consisted mostly of principal pilgrims (*hācis*) going to or returning from the Hijaz, and that the imperial government emphatically prescribed its appointees in Iraq that they facilitate the Iranians' pilgrimage to the Imams' shrines in every way possible. Thus, in addition to the above-mentioned Syrian highway, the pilgrimage route from Iran to the Arabian Peninsula through Iraq and the Persian Gulf, and the stand-alone pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines in Iraq, were also under the patronage of the Sublime Porte, which did not prohibit the Mesopotamian route.

SHAH'S APPEALS TO THE SUBLIME PORTE FOR PERMISSION TO MAKE DONATIONS TO THE PROPHETIC SHRINES, CASE ONE:

In 1696, Shah Husayn asked for Mustafa II's permission to 'renovate' Imam 'Ali Hadi's and Hasan 'Askari's 'sarcophagi' situated within their 'sepulchers' at

²¹ Shi'ite Iranians could visit these shrines either as part of a greater pilgrimage that also included Mecca and Medina, or in a standalone trip only to Iraq. Also see, for example, Rizvi, 'The Incarnate Shrine'.

Samarra.²² The matter was submitted to the Sublime Porte by Abu'l-Masum Shamlu during his embassy (late December 1696–early January 1697) at Edirne.²³

In Ottoman-Safavid relations, the 1690s constituted a heyday that was unprecedented and that would not be repeated. A half-century-long peaceful coexistence had stabilized relations between the two former enemies. On top of this, the Safavids had rejected joining the anti-Ottoman *Sacra Ligua* (of the Habsburg Empire, Poland-Lithuania, Venice, Russia, and the Papacy, 1684–1699). Moreover, the shah's government was not letting the harm that Iran had been suffering from the rebellions arising in Ottoman territory impact the bilateral relations, even though these rebellions had found favorable ground to spread to Iran only due to the power vacuum in the Empire's eastern provinces, because the empire-wide mobilization against the *Sacra Ligua* was channeled to the western and northern fronts. In return for this show of goodwill, the Ottomans let their relations with the Safavids be no longer defined merely as peace, but as *brotherhood* (*uĥuvvet*), *perpetual peace*, and *alliance* (*ittifak*).²⁴

If it were not for these unusual circumstances, the above-mentioned request could not only have been rejected without hesitation but could also have caused antagonism. What made possible the Safavids' submission and the Ottomans' eventual granting of this request was the combination of a series of factors that had been slowly gaining momentum since the 1640s, and which testified to the Safavids' unconditional acknowledgment of Ottoman superiority. Thanks to the steadiness of this political relationship, the Sublime Porte did not perceive this request as a Safavid scheme to open a breach in Ottoman legitimacy and sovereign rights. Without this extremely positive background, the same request could have triggered a confrontation.

In the end, during either the embassy of Rustam Zangane at Edirne or Kavuk Mehmed Pasha at Isfahan (mid-1698 to early 1699), the Sublime Porte granted the request 'in accordance with the premises and brotherhood between [the two states]'.²⁵ The padishah issued to the shah a decree²⁶ registering the permission and entitling him to carry out the renovation. However, the almost three-year lag in answering the request hints at the Sublime Porte's concerns about Ottoman legitimacy at the Holy Shrines, for the shah was meaning to make this symbolic renovation in a sacred territory whose sovereignty lay exclusively with the padishah. The matter must have been thoroughly discussed among the Ottoman dignitaries. In the end, the shah's unreserved return of the entire province of Basra, which had been in rebel hands since 1695 and recently captured by Safavid vassals, to the padishah must have convinced the Ottomans that the Safavid initiative was not an attempt to undermine Ottoman legitimacy in Iraq. In light of this major display of goodwill by Shah Husayn, Mustafa II must have seen no harm in issuing this one-time permission. Another imperial decree, to the governor of Baghdad, forbade anyone to forestall the

²² OsA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 1694.

²³ Güngörürler, *Diplomacy and Political Relations*, pp. 292–293.

²⁴ Güngörürler, *Diplomacy and Political Relations*, pp. 237–370.

²⁵ OsA, *Mühimme d.* 111, ent. 1694; Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 331–332.

²⁶ Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', p. 334.

Iranian agent from carrying out his commission, and even ordered the pasha of Baghdad to provide the shah's functionary with lumber and whatever other materials that were required for the renovation.²⁷

Presumably in early December 1700, on the eve of the launch of an imperial campaign in Mesopotamia, an agent from the governor of Kermanshah brought a letter to Daltaban Mustafa Pasha, governor-general of Baghdad and marshal (*serdār*) of the Imperial Army. The Iranian governor informed his addressee that the 'illustrious sarcophagi' at the mausoleum of 'the radiator of oracle, fruition of the genealogy of *siyādat* and *valāyat*, the revered imams, the preeminent 'Ali Hadi and Hasan 'Askari of the Prophetic House' [the choice of vocabulary belonging to the Ottoman rephrasing] had been renovated with the padishah's 'august permission'. The shah's armor-bearer (*jaba-dār-i šāhī*), Khaje Mahmud Aqa, had been commissioned with transporting them to their destination, the mausolea in Samarra. In reply, the vizier-marshal wrote that his troops were already mobilized and that he was about to set out for campaign, stipulating that the shah's functionary was to wait in Kermanshah until the marshal's return from Basra.²⁸

Here, we can observe a tendency: in protecting the Empire's interests in Iraq from potential harm, the padishah's appointees and military corps serving in Baghdad could be harsher than the Ottoman court itself. In this case, we see that the central government preemptively instructed its provincial representatives to cooperate with the shah's functionaries throughout the transportation and placement of the renewed sarcophagi. Given the ideological weight of Baghdad as the seat of the Abbasid caliphs, the resting place of major Alid Imams, and the focus of the last Ottoman-Safavid war, it can be inferred that the governorate apparatus, the Imperial Household Corps (*kapıkulları*), and the Local Servicemen (*yerli kulu*) in the province preferred to be one step ahead of the central government in keeping Iraq clear of anything Safavid, not only in a political and military sense but also in terms of administrative and courtly representation, except for diplomatic missions. This sternness they would relax only in the case of specific orders from the imperial court, or else they could not protect themselves from a later accusation that their negligence had facilitated Safavid infiltration into the Imams' shrine towns which, for the padishah, were ideologically a *sanctum sanctorum*²⁹ second only to the Kaaba in Mecca and the Prophet's Sanctuary in Medina, and arguably Jerusalem, and were thus crucial sources of religio-political legitimacy.³⁰

²⁷ OsA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 1694.

²⁸ Nazmizâde, *Gülşen-i Hulefâ*, pp. 337–338; Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 331–332.

²⁹ Although Sunnis, unlike Shi'is, do not deem the Alid Imams to be revelation-receiving and infallible, they still venerate them as members of Muhammad's family, saints, and scholars of Islam, and they consider them to be Sunni Muslims. This veneration of the Imams was even more emphasized in the Ottoman context. Therefore, as long as the Ottoman monarchy, as the leader of Sunni Islam, held sway in Iraq, it invested in the Imams' shrines there. See Arabkhani, *Sultan II. Abdülhamit Dönemi* and Mulder, 'Abdülhamid and the 'Alids.'

³⁰ One should not forget that the self-interest of the incumbents of the governorship, judgeship, and military officerships could also be a factor contributing to this rigor.

Approximately in early January 1701, the Safavid court doubled its efforts to realize its project: the governor of Kermanshah sent another letter to Daltaban Mustafa Pasha via his agent. Accompanying him, the shah's armor-bearer came to the marshal's encampment assembling in Baghdad, and brought the shah's rescript as well as the padishah's decree of permission. The Iranian governor stressed that Khaje Mahmud Aqa was the shah's courtier, and that halting him [that long] was impossible. Upon observing the padishah's decree produced by the Iranian mission, in which it was stated that he permitted the shah to renovate the sarcophagi 'as blessing', that the governors of Baghdad should assist in the execution, and that no one should hinder the conveyance, Daltaban Mustafa Pasha gave them passage and 'appointed a pious (*mütedeyyin*) aga of his' to accompany them and to secure the way. The sarcophagi, along with a 'fine door' that accompanied them, were set up at their destined site.³¹

It seems that upon seeing Daltaban Mustafa Pasha's earlier response that the shah's armor-bearer should wait, the Safavid court this time got in touch directly with the Sublime Porte to make sure that the imperial permission be acted upon. This we understand from the decree to the governor-general of Baghdad dated late January 1701, which summarizes the shah's 'beseeching' for this sake. The governor-general, who was supposed to receive the decree after returning from the imperial campaign, was charged with assisting the conveyance of the sarcophagi to their locations and, if necessary, with providing the shah's functionary with carpenters, workmen, and lumber available locally.³² This decree must have reached Daltaban Mustafa Pasha after he had already given passage to the shah's armor-bearer and provided him with escort.

Immediately following January 29, 1701, on which day the Imperial Army departed from Baghdad for Basra, the shah's armor-bearer, having fulfilled his commission in Samarra, returned to Baghdad. Marshal Daltaban Mustafa Pasha invited him and the Iranian notables accompanying him to a feast at his encampment by the Diyala River. The royal armor-bearer, according to the master-secretary of the Baghdad council, feigned illness and did not go, while the notables came along with his chief-of-staff (*kethüdā*) and joined the feast. The marshal wrote his reply to the shah's rescript and delivered it to the royal armor-bearer's chief-of-staff. He also 'commissioned' Çetrefiloğlu Yusuf Pasha (governor of Mosul) and Hüseyin Aga (governor's proxy at Baghdad) with ensuring the safety of and assisting the Iranian delegation on its return journey.³³

CASE TWO

In a letter to the grand vizier that was delivered in August 1702, the Iranian chief vizier Muhammad Mu'min Beygdili-Shamlu requested from the Ottoman grand vizier Köprülü Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha that the padishah issue a general 'permission of

³¹ Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 334–335.

³² OsA, *Mühimme d.* 111, entry 1694.

³³ Çabuk, 'Nusret-nâme'nin', pp. 337–338.

initiative' for the shah's functionaries so that henceforward they be entitled to renovate the edifices of the Holy Shrines and to dispatch necessities, presents, and alms without the need to produce their permission before the Ottoman provincial authorities and without the requirement to obtain a new license from the Sublime Porte each time. Additionally, the chief vizier requested active cooperation from the Ottoman state authorities in installing the new sepulchers of the Imams Musa al-Kazim and Muhammad Taqi in Kazimiyya, as he stated that the Safavids had already crafted these sepulchers 'as blessing' and dispatched them 'as auspiciousness'.³⁴

In his reply, Köprülü Hüseyin Pasha informed the shah's chief vizier that the padishah indeed 'favored' the granting of (a one-time) permission for the installation of the restored sepulchers and sarcophagi to the mausoleum of Musa al-Kazim and Muhammad Taqi at Kazimiyya, for which imperial decrees were also issued. However, the Safavids' request for an open-ended permission enabling them to undertake renovations at and donate to the Holy Shrines was categorically denied: Being the 'yearning' of monarchs, such 'imposingly prestigious' projects of 'pride' were the exclusive prerogative of the Ottoman ruler. The grand vizier declared that the shah's desire was 'evidently intolerable and unattainable', and that the padishah Mustafa II himself would obviously attend to the Holy Shrines.³⁵

A decree to the governor and to the qadi of Baghdad in late August/early September—issued around the same time as the Safavid envoy Muhammad Selim Beyg, who effected the aforesaid letter exchange, was leaving Edirne—summarized the Kazimiyya affair as such: 'it has been appealed by the shah, the sovereign of Iran, that sarcophagi be placed to the purified mausolea of the preminent *Kāzīmāyın* Imams from among the Imams of the immaculate-lineage and evident-orthodoxy, who bestow honor to the soil of Baghdad. [This appeal] has incurred the [padishah's] august favor'. The addressees were charged with ensuring that no one hinder the [Safavid] functionaries and with procuring for them the necessary material as well as workmen. In the case of any tolerance the governor and the judge would show towards Baghdad's janissaries or other actors that could attempt to hamper the execution, these two dignitaries would be held directly responsible.³⁶

The Safavids' donating to the Imams' shrines under Ottoman sovereignty had previously been the subject of negotiations, yet it had not entered interstate correspondence. Now, for the first time, matters concerning the Holy Shrines became referred to in inter-governmental letters, in an itemized and explicit manner.

CASE THREE

In 1705, in yet another letter to the grand vizier, Muhammad Mu'min Beygdili-Shamlu spoke of an earlier uncompleted initiative to dig a canal from the eastern

³⁴ OsA, *Name-i Hümayun d. 5*, entry 218; Navai, ed., *Documents and Correspondence 1693–1723*, pp. 82–86.

³⁵ OsA, *Name-i Hümayun d. 5*, entry 220; Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 23a–24a (some words are missing in this copy).

³⁶ OsA, *Mühimme d. 112*, entry 1218.

Euphrates (Murad Water, specifically) to the shrine-town of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib at Najaf. Through his chief vizier, Shah Husayn asked for the Ottoman ruler's permission to complete the project. The Sublime Porte referred the matter to be inquired by the governor-general and the qadi of Baghdad, and ordered them to deliberate with a committee of experts.³⁷

An exchange of diplomatic notes between the incoming Safavid ambassador, Murtaza-qulu Ustajlu, and the grand vizier, Baltacı Mehmed Pasha, whose reply is dated 1 February 1706, makes clear the empire's position: these matters had to be submitted to the padishah himself, and only after his ruling would Murtaza-qulu Ustajlu be duly informed.³⁸ This tells us that although it was the diplomatic channel through which the requests were being handled, these particular matters were beyond even grand vizierial authority. Pertaining to the sites that carried sanctity not only for the Shi'ite shah but also for the Sunni padishah, these requests needed to be weighed with an eye to their likely effect on Ottoman legitimacy in Iraq before taking any decision.

On 11 February 1706, Baghdad's committee of experts, which was composed of the ulema and the military officers, and which was presided over by the governor-general Eyüplü Hasan Pasha, penned its final report to the Imperial Court. It delivered the opinion to reject the shah's request, and in this regard, highlighted the likely harm that the Ottoman monarchy would see from the Najaf canal project's actualization by the Safavid State:

With this pretext, it is apparent that those of contrary-denomination (*hılâf-mezheb*) will shuttle across, interfere in, and assault the frontier of Islam (*serhadd-i islâm*) and the domain of the padishah, and that under that [request] are a great many drawbacks and tacit evils (*mefâsid*).³⁹

The composition of the committee can tell us more about the concerns of the Imperial Court and the Baghdad governorate: even though the report was also co-sealed by military officers of the Imperial Household Corps deployed in Baghdad⁴⁰ as well as

³⁷ See the draft of the imperial decree and the grand vizierial edict for its issuance in OsA, *Ali Emiri—Ahmed III*, 20076. Also see OsA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemî b.* 305/49; OsA, *Ali Emiri—Ahmed III*, 20277; *Ali Emiri—Ahmed III*, 20281; *İbnülemin—Hariciye*, p. 704. These are all for AH 1116–17 (1704/5–1705/6).

³⁸ Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 24b–25a.

³⁹ OsA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemî b.* 305/23.

⁴⁰ co-sealers: Salih Haseki—commanding Janissary officer of the garrison, Abbas—[garrison] secretary of Baghdad, Ahmed—*serçavuş*, Mustafa [captain of the Janissary company] 78, Hasan—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]k 58, Ömer—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]k 31, Hasan [captain of the Janissary *bölü*]k 40, Mehmed—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]k 26, Hüseyin—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]k 60, Bektaş—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]k 6?, Ömer—[captain of the Janissary *bölü*]k 35.

Baghdad's Local Service officers,⁴¹ the foremost commissioners who sealed the document were members of the ulema, such as professors (*müderriis*),⁴² jurists (muftis as well as *naķibü'l-eşrāf*),⁴³ prayer-leaders,⁴⁴ preachers (*vā'iz*), and orators (*ḥaṭīb*).⁴⁵

In his cover letter to the grand vizier, dated 14 February 1706, the governor-general of Baghdad justified the negative opinion of the committee he presided over and the unfeasibility of the project with reference to his own observations, field reconnaissance, consultation with administrative authorities, and security concerns about a potential clash of the Safavid armed personnel with locals. In the case of the dispatch of a Safavid workforce, and particularly Safavid troops to meet the sentry demand that would arise from the necessity to guard the Najaf canal's route, Eyüplü Hasan Pasha stressed: 'among Baghdad's vizier-governors and this many Rumi *kuls*, the existence of a community of incompatible-sect and denomination (*meşrebi ve mezhebi uymaz bir tā'ife*) in the same place will be the cause of dispute and hostility'. In short, the governor-general declared the request to be unfriendly and unbefitting.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the Safavid government simultaneously attempted a *fait accompli*. Around the end of 1705 / beginning of 1706, an 'emür' named 'Abdülhakk arrived in Baghdad with his retinue. In the letter he brought from the shah's chief vizier, it was stated that 'just as' the revenues of Süleyman the Magnificent's endowment were already being disbursed at Karbala, and 'in accordance with the friendship [between the two states]', the said functionary was to serve as trustee and also to 'overtly, and publicly' donate revenues from the Safavids' royal endowments to be spent for the shrine's expenditures at Karbala, 'so that there be no discomfort of separation [between the Ottoman and Safavid states]'. The Ottomans were asked to perform the necessary arrangements, so that 'blessings [could] accrue'. Eyüplü Hasan Pasha did refer this initiative to the imperial government, but also sent a letter of rejection to the Iranian chief vizier on his own authority: 'whereas there is [already] a stand-alone trustee of the Sublime [Ottoman] State at the Two Illustrious Martyria

⁴¹ co-sealers: Mustafa—chief of the [Local] artillerymen, Ebubekir—chief of the [Local] *azebes*, Bayram—lieutenant of the left flank Volunteers, Ömer—chief of the left flank Volunteers, Ahmed—... lieutenant of the right flank [Volunteers?], Ahmed—chief of the right flank Volunteers, Mehmed—lieutenant of the Local Janissaries, Ahmed—chief of the Local Janissaries, Sefer—lieutenant of the *azebes*, Ahmed—chief of the [Local] munitioners, 'Ali—lieutenant of the [Local] munitioners.

⁴² Abdülkadir—*müderriis*.

⁴³ Seyyid Fereccullah—vice *naķibü'l-eşrāf* of Baghdad, Mehmed—former mufti of Baghdad, 'Ali—mufti of Baghdad.

⁴⁴ Şemseddin—prayer-leader of the Abdülqadir Geylani Mosque, Abdullah—prayer-leader of the İmam-ı Azam Mosque.

⁴⁵ Receb—Friday preacher (*ḥaṭīb*) of the Sheikh Shahabeddin Mosque; Seyyid Taha—*ḥaṭīb* of the Abu Hanifa Mosque; Halil—*ḥaṭīb* of the Abdülqadir Geylani Mosque; Salih?—preacher (*nāşih*) of the İmam-ı Azam Mosque; Ahmed b. Sheikh Tacü'l-Ârifin—preacher (*vā'iz*), Abdurrahman b. Ömer—*ḥaṭīb* of the Muradiye Mosque, Celaeddin, *ḥaṭīb* of the Citadel Mosque, Mustafa—*ḥaṭīb* at [the mausoleum of] Musa al-Kazim.

⁴⁶ OsA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b.* 305/49.

[*Meşhedeyn-i Şerifeyn*, the shrines of 'Ali in Najaf and that of Husayn in Karbala], this [Safavid appointee] will be sort of a second trustee. The emergence of an unprecedented matter will occasion dispute. Their [two separate trustees'] complaints about each other and contrary communications to their [own governments'] sides will inevitably occasion annoyance between the great ministers [of the two states]'.⁴⁷

Concurrently, the Safavid chief vizier submitted a further request. In the previous year, Shah Husayn—on his own initiative and without prior arrangement with the Ottoman State—had sent via his armor-bearer Khaje Mahmud Aqa a bejeweled pastille (*muraşsa' şemmāme*) to be placed at the sepulcher of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. On the grounds that imperial permission was lacking, the personnel in charge of the shrine had prevented the royal armor-bearer from carrying out the plan. Probably following the instructions previously given to him, Mahmud Aqa, instead of taking the bejeweled pastille back to Iran, had rather left it in Medina. Now, via the diplomacy between Istanbul and Isfahan in 1705–1706, Muhammad Mu'min Beygdili-Shamlu also asked that the shah's donation be set upon its destined location.⁴⁸

In his consequent reply⁴⁹ (1706) to Muhammad Mu'min Beygdili-Shamlu, Baltacı Mehmed Pasha reminded the chief vizier that 'because the Ottoman state was designated by the grace of God to the service of the *Two Illustrious Sanctuaries*, it was impossible in Medina [or in Mecca] for anything to be placed or removed without the explicit permission from the padishah. Nevertheless, because the bejeweled pastille had already ended up there, and in accordance with the lasting harmony between the two states, its rejection was not deemed appropriate'. An imperial decree would be issued for its placement within the tomb. However, this was to be done by the padishah's Hijaz-donation superintendent (*şurre emīni*) during the next pilgrimage season. Secondly, undertaking the Imam 'Ali canal project was portrayed to be the padishah's exclusive honor. If this enterprise was to be embarked upon by the Safavid side, it would cause 'bother', but if by the Ottoman side, then 'ease'. Baltacı Mehmed Pasha comforted the Safavid government by referring to Ahmed III's statement that the shah would also receive divine merit (*şevāb*) by virtue of having occasioned the padishah's enterprise. Even more sarcastically, the grand vizier expressed his hope that the Safavid court would 'do the favor of constantly busying itself with making the rivers of amity flow'.

With regards to the two Safavid requests that provoked reaction, the Sublime Porte did not content itself just with rejecting them. The bejeweled pastille donated by the shah would not be sent back; however, it would be held until the arrival of

⁴⁷ OsA, *Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemi b.* 305/49. The Safavids' belated dispatch of a conventional embassy with unreasonable requests and their concurrent attempt, in a provocative manner, to score two separate faits accomplis—one in Iraq and one in Hijaz—cannot have been a coincidence. These actions make up the second episode of the series in which Muhammad Mu'min Beygdili-Shamlu put his anti-Ottoman policy into action. After all, the initiative would only serve to antagonize the other party, which must have been the chief vizier's real agenda.

⁴⁸ Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 25a–25b, ent. 37.

⁴⁹ Rami Mehmed, *Compositions*, fols 25a–26a, ent. 37 (misdated in this copy).

the imperial Hijaz-donation superintendent (*şurre emîni*) and be placed by him within the tomb. This was meant to remind the donor who the sovereign of the donation site was. In the same vein, in communicating that the shah would receive divine merit by the padishah's undertaking of the canal project to Najaf, declared to be an exclusive Ottoman prerogative, the grand vizier added an insult to the injury of the shah's rejection.

CONCLUSION

The opportunistic yet unprecedented rapprochement in the realm of diplomacy between the Ottoman and Safavid states started a novel dialogue on joint pilgrimage organizations and mutually venerated religious sites. It is noteworthy that this dialogue did not tackle the issues of sectarianism or orthodoxy. The Ottomans returned the Safavids' gestures of goodwill by conceding a limited right of representation in the supervision of the Iranian pilgrimage caravan and accommodating isolated, exceptional, and symbolic requests regarding the holy sites—with the following conditions: firstly, that the Ottoman State remain as the absolute decision maker in terms of granting, withholding, or rejecting such requests; secondly, that the imperial officials oversee the timing and each step of the actual execution even when the shah's functionaries were involved, so that no shadow is cast on Ottoman sovereignty; and thirdly, that the manner of the granting of requests remind everyone that it was a one-time and exceptional Ottoman magnanimity, not a vested right of the Safavids.

Safavid requests for the perpetuation of otherwise extraordinary permissions were the extension of the anti-Ottoman policy of the Iranian chief vizier, Muhammad Mu'min Beygdili-Shamlu. The two instances in which the padishah answered the shah's petitions in the affirmative were isolated cases, granted as one-time favors and only in return for greater sacrifices from the Safavid government, first the symbolic offering and then the actual handover of the province of Basra in its entirety. But in the latter cases discussed above, the chief vizier was asking that certain privileges be granted in perpetuity—in practice a concession from the Ottomans' sovereign rights. He must have known that in the absence of an exceptionally favorable conjuncture such requests would bring about nothing other than antagonism, and that, given the actual circumstances, their rejection was certain.

Therefore, Safavid attempts to build on the precedents of their previous requests granted as one-time favors and turn them into vested privileges were destined not only to be rejected but also to considerably deteriorate bilateral relations. The discourse of Islamic unity employed since the late seventeenth century in the diplomatic correspondence between the foremost Shi'ite and Sunni polities of the age was maybe not hypocritical or completely dissimulative, but rather formal, and certainly superficial. Downplaying sectarian differences and highlighting Islamic commonalities—to the point that the parties came to define bilateral relations through brotherhood-in-religion and to project their policies as jointly undertaken deeds in the way of God—could be sustained only as long as the senior partner's, the Sunni Ottomans', dynastic priorities and political objectives necessitated close cooperation with the junior partner, the Shi'ite Safavids ruling Iran. Take the political circumstances out

of the equation, and the sides do not seem to have had the intention of backing up an autonomous inter-sectarian reconciliation independent from realpolitik.

Beyond the Ottoman-controlled cooperation on the organization of pilgrim caravans, one-time granting of requests, and rejection of the applications for permanent privileges, there were also the more extraordinary proposals that the Safavids bring public service to a shrine town by undertaking a canal project and that the Safavid State become a full partner in providing funds for the expenditures of sacred shrines by endowing continuous donations of cash. The proposals belonging to this latter set would, if granted, constitute a limited Safavid partnership in Ottoman sovereignty and an injury to Ottoman legitimacy, for the towns and subjects in question were under direct Ottoman rule. Even the very submission of these proposals was considered by the Sublime Porte to be an insult to the point that it embittered the parties against one another.

In response, the parties—primarily the Ottoman side—toned down the trans-sectarian discourse of the 1688–1702 rapprochement. While the Ottoman authorities did not raise any objections to the coming of Shi'ite pilgrims from Iran to the Holy Shrines in Iraq, they eventually began to openly utter concerns that permanent cooperation at the official level would result in an organized, regular, and quasi-extra-territorial Shi'ite Safavid presence in Sunni Ottoman territory, which would lead to conflict.

The 1688–1702 Ottoman-Safavid rapprochement, which brought about an unprecedented cooperation in the bedecking of the Holy Shrines, was the byproduct of political processes independent from the realm of theological discourse. Likewise, this heyday of Shi'ite-Sunni cooperation was short-lived due to the fact that the above-discussed requests, which were initially exceptions, eventually created political tensions as they increased in ambition and scope. When the trajectory of the Safavids' requests, which were pro-Shi'ite as a matter of course, clearly began to aim at turning the Ottomans' exceptional favors into permanent privileges, both the political authorities and the ulema of the Ottoman Empire emphatically blocked the initiative with reference to sovereign rights and legitimacy concerns, and thus these goodwill gestures between the political establishments representing Shi'ism and Sunnism came to an end.

This short-lived, trans-sectarian, Islamic solidarity could not be sustained because it was championed by bureaucrats and military administrators who sought to justify their course of action with references to Islamic principles, while those who were indeed competent to interpret such principles, i.e. the ulema, conspicuously stayed out of the dialogue, and voiced their concerns when it appeared to go beyond performing symbolic acts of goodwill. However, one should note that, firstly, political dignitaries appear to have taken the potential opening of a breach in Ottoman sovereignty in Iraq vis-à-vis Safavid Iran no less seriously than did the Sunni ulema, and, secondly, it is understood that they did notice the disappearance of the pressing circumstances that had prompted this practical rapprochement. Concerns for legitimacy were shared by the administrative and military elites and the Islamic scholars of the empire, and although they were not articulated in an identical manner, with

the former two groups referring more to state sovereignty and the latter to theological differences, in the final analysis they implicitly agreed that these two dimensions formed, in this specific case, an indivisible whole. The confessional divide between the Sunni and the Shi'ite establishments was too wide to be bridged merely by a practical effort by bureaucrats without the endorsement of the ulema.

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AFTERWORD: ENTANGLED CONFSSIONALIZATIONS— A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

ALEXANDER SCHUNKA

INTRODUCTION

In his travelogue, first published in 1608, the German Lutheran pastor Salomon Schweigger (1551–1622) expressed a great fascination for the religious groups of the Ottoman Levant. During his stay in Constantinople around 1580 he recorded what he found out about the beliefs and practices of Sunni Ottomans as well as of Shi'ite Persians. In his opinion, the political and military antagonism between the two Islamic powers was beneficial for the survival of European Christendom *vis-à-vis* a potential Muslim threat.¹ Schweigger also described begging dervishes and local Muslim customs of the Ottoman Empire, but he seemed even more interested in the Christians of the East. The pastor wrote about the Armenians and Georgians he met in Constantinople, and he depicted in detail the religious doctrines and practices of the Greeks—something he had been asked to do by his German patron, the Tübingen scholar Martin Crusius, whose long time correspondent Theodosios Zygomas became Schweigger's friend. While his inquiries about the Greek Church were ultimately (albeit fruitlessly) aimed at the creation of a European Protestant-Orthodox front against the Papacy,² the pastor also got in touch with members of Catholic orders, Western diplomats, and European captives in the Ottoman capital. Whereas Catholic captives and slaves could visit the religious services of their faith and thus rely upon a certain confessional infrastructure in Constantinople, Protestants lacked any spiritual support. Therefore, Schweigger translated Martin Luther's *Short Catechism* into Italian and had it printed as a devotional tool for his co-religionists in

¹ Schweigger, *Reyßbeschreibung*, pp. 72–73. On Schweigger see Schunka, 'Salomon Schweigger'. My thanks go to Max Hochschild (Berlin) for discussions and assistance in finalizing this chapter.

² Ben-Tov, *Lutheran Humanists and Greek Antiquity*, pp. 116–123; Wendebourg, *Reformation und Orthodoxie*.

captivity.³ During his onward journey to the Holy Land, the pastor learned about the Coptic, Abyssinian, and other Eastern churches, and he was a guest of the Franciscan Order in Jerusalem.⁴ With the notable exception of Jews,⁵ Schweigger's account of the religious groups in the Ottoman realm was, thus, quite comprehensive.

Compared to other Western travelogues on the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most of Schweigger's descriptions are not particularly exceptional—and neither is the general anti-Islamic attitude of his book.⁶ What makes Schweigger's account a good starting point for this commentary on 'Entangled Confessionalizations' are the several levels of confessional identity formation he witnessed or even actively participated in, such as his translation of a catechism for Protestants in the Levant and his inquiries about the Greeks (which, according to recent research, may be interpreted as a contribution to internal confessionalization processes within eastern Orthodoxy⁷). The book was written from a Lutheran point of view and aimed at a German Protestant readership. Judging from its several printed editions during the seventeenth century, it turned out to be a huge success. Schweigger was at pains to show his audience that the only way to defeat the Ottoman menace was to fight the 'Turk within', urging his readers to return to the pious life of good (Lutheran) Christians.⁸ While he hoped that the Turkish enemy might unite the Christians so that they would jointly overcome the Muslims (something that seemed rather implausible given the confessional fault lines within European politics⁹), he made sure that his readers considered the Papacy as an equally great danger to the Protestant Reformation.¹⁰ In his travelogue as well as in other publications Schweigger engaged in preserving and strengthening the faith of the Lutheran Reformation against a great number of potential enemies, some even from within

³ [Luther], *Il catechesimo*. See Schweigger, *Reyßbeschreibung*, p. 97.

⁴ Schweigger, *Reyßbeschreibung*, pp. 287–294. Even more impressive here is the account of Hans Jacob Breuning von Buchenbach, *Orientalische Reyß*, pp. 234–237.

⁵ Schweigger's conspicuous omission of Jewish culture in the Ottoman Empire may have something to do with his interest in the Holy Land and in the Jews of Biblical times, leaving little space for contemporary Jewry. It nevertheless stands in striking contrast to other travelogues of Protestants such as that of Stephan Gerlach, Schweigger's predecessor as chaplain of the Habsburg embassy to Constantinople. See the numerous entries on 'Juden' in the index of Gerlach, *Tage-Buch*, pp. Bbb ii r–v. On the relationship between Schweigger and Gerlach see Schunka, 'Konfessionalisierung der Osmanen'.

⁶ On the context of this publication see Kaufmann, 'Türckenbüchlein'.

⁷ See Zwierlein, "'Konfessionalisierung'", pp. 23–31; Heyberger, 'Catholicisme et construction des frontières confessionnelles', pp. 123–142; Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*.

⁸ Schweigger, *Reyßbeschreibung*, pp. 155–158. See Kaufmann, 'Aspekte der Wahrnehmung', p. 20.

⁹ Schweigger, *Reyßbeschreibung*, p. 141, referring to the Roman writer Livy. On the political context and the factionalized approaches to Islam among Christian polemicists see the recent overview by Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, pp. 76–103.

¹⁰ On the anti-Catholicism of Schweigger and his contemporary travelers see Schunka, 'Konfessionalisierung der Osmanen', pp. 29–30, 38–39, 44. On the context see Kaufmann, 'Türckenbüchlein', p. 44–45.

Christianity: when he published the Quran for the first time in the German language in 1616 (based on the 1547 Italian translation) he did so as a warning to all those who doubted the doctrine of the Trinity. The Nuremberg pastor did not have the Antitrinitarians of Transylvania in mind but aimed at the Socinian circles at the University of Altdorf, only a few miles away from his hometown.¹¹ Schweigger's views on Islam were, to a great extent, shaped by his Lutheran confessionality, namely his anti-Catholicism and opposition to Antitrinitarianism. In this respect he did not differ from many of his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, Salomon Schweigger's life, works, and travels provide some good examples for early modern confessional entanglements in the Western and Eastern parts of Europe and the Mediterranean, as well as among Christians and non-Christians. As will be evident shortly, this commentary is not written from an Ottomanist perspective but from the viewpoint of (Central and Western) European history in the early modern era. It aims to summarize the key findings from the present collection and connect them to the methodology and recent research on confessional phenomena in Europe. Therefore, in the ensuing paragraphs I address the concept of confessionalization and some of its recent reconsiderations, followed by remarks and research perspectives regarding religious group cohesion in an entangled and comparative perspective.

Looking at Ottoman confessional entanglements from the 'outside', it seems that the wish to create a coherence in faith and religious practices was ubiquitous among members of different religious denominations between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Sometimes the processes to achieve cohesion originated from within a particular community of believers, in other cases they were stimulated from beyond. This commentary aims at highlighting how several features of religious group formation connected the multi-religious, Islam-dominated Mediterranean with Central and Western Europe.

CONCEPTS

For forty years now, researchers have been discussing the evolution of confessional groups following the Reformation through the lens of the 'confessionalization paradigm'. As originally formulated by German historians Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard in the early 1980s, the concept of confessionalization denoted an intra-Christian, top-down process of standardization of religious belief that ran parallel among Lutherans, Calvinists, and Roman Catholics. Inspired by the earlier concept of *Konfessionsbildung* (confession-building, coined by Ernst Walter Zeeden), Schilling and Reinhard considered these institutionalized Christian churches instrumental in the formation of territorial states and societies, and they postulated that their theory had a paradigmatic value.¹² Building upon sociological modernization theory, the

¹¹ [Schweigger], *Alcoranus Mahometicus*; on the anti-Socinian context see Schunka, 'Zwischen Altdorf und Jerusalem', pp. 230–232.

¹² See the literature cited in Tijana Krstić's essay in this volume.

new paradigm made the history of early modern religion a matter of political and social processes.

In recent years, the term *Konfessionalisierung* itself has been historicized: implicit semantic links with the idea of an *Entkonfessionalisierung* of society, propagated among German National Socialist politicians of the 1930s, have been discovered.¹³ Still, the roots of the word are even older: in the years around 1900, ‘confessionalisieren,’ used in a derogatory sense, denoted the rendering of secular institutions (especially schools) into ‘confessional’/denominational, *viz.* anti-modern facilities.¹⁴

The ‘confessionalization paradigm’ has attracted many scholars and stimulated a great volume of research on Central Europe, but it has also been extensively criticized. Its connection with the early modern state and with hierarchical disciplining efforts of the population (*Sozialdisziplinierung*) was perhaps its most controversial point. Recent historical research on social discipline in early modern Europe has taken a more cautious stance here, departing from the idea of a hierarchical, top-to-bottom imposition of order from the ruling elites to their subjects, highlighting more varied forms of norm adaptation (*Aneignung*).¹⁵ While confessionalization has not been discarded as an explanatory concept for the relationship between religion, governmental politics and society, it has been modified in light of the new documentary evidence and methodology of cultural studies. From the 1990s onwards, historians started to address the ‘limits of confessionalization’ in early modern societies.¹⁶ An increasing number of historians has analyzed possible gaps between confessional norms on the one hand, and the beliefs and religious practices of early modern people on the other.¹⁷ Forms of ambiguity within denominational systems have attracted the attention of researchers, while aspects of confessional plurality and multiconfessionalism have come to the fore.¹⁸ Whereas early modern practices of belief are now often seen as part of the social sphere, the theological issues that were initially neglected in the socio-historical confessionalization research have been integrated as well. These new developments have certainly contributed to making the concept of confessionalization more easily adaptable to different religious and geographical

¹³ Zwierlein, “(Ent)konfessionalisierung”.

¹⁴ See for instance, Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack*, pp. 382–383, 400, and appendix, letter from Mommsen to Harnack, 6 December 1901: ‘Ich bin aufgetreten gegen die Weiterführung der Konfessionalisierung der deutschen Universitäten’ (p. 917). See Zwierlein, “Konfessionalisierung”, pp. 7–8; Zwierlein, “(Ent)konfessionalisierung”, p. 218 (where Heinz Schilling is quoted). The *Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung* of 1902 stated that ‘man durch die Lectüre ultramontaner Blätter dazu kommen kann, selbst die Bereitung von Leberknödeln und Kalbshaxen zu *konfessionalisieren*.’ *Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung* 137 (1902), p. 405.

¹⁵ See Schunka, ‘Social and Moral Discipline’. On the authoritarian origins of Gerhard Oestreich’s concept of *Sozialdisziplinierung* see Miller, ‘Nazis and Neo-Stoics’.

¹⁶ Starting from Schindling, ‘Konfessionalisierung und Grenzen der Konfessionalisierbarkeit’.

¹⁷ Engels, von Thiessen, ‘Glauben: Begriffliche Annäherungen’; Siebenhüner, ‘Glaubenswechsel in der Frühen Neuzeit’.

¹⁸ See Pietsch, Stollberg-Rilinger eds, *Konfessionelle Ambiguität*; Dixon, Freist, Greengrass eds, *Living with Religious Diversity*; Safley ed., *Companion to Multiconfessionalism*.

contexts, departing from its original focus on the specific ecclesio-political situation of the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁹

Thus, research on confessional phenomena of early modern Christian Europe has turned away from analyzing hierarchical processes of creating homogeneous state-confessional systems and increasingly addresses the religious situation on the ground. Scholars have uncovered ample evidence of a fascinating heterogeneity of beliefs and practices, both within seemingly clear-cut theological systems such as Tridentine Catholicism²⁰ and Post-Reformation Lutheranism,²¹ and within allegedly well-confessionalized early modern territorial states.²² Furthermore, researchers have come to approach the matters of confessional affiliation as ‘situational,’ as a cultural practice of individuals and groups rather than an essentialist, immutable fact.²³

Taking into account these recent views on the plurality and flexibility of beliefs among early modern contemporaries, it would perhaps be easy to discard the ‘confessionalization paradigm’ altogether. However, three points shall be mentioned here to suggest why this may not be a good solution. First, most of the current research on confessional dynamics in early modern Europe still builds upon—and owes a great deal to—the ‘confessionalization paradigm,’ even though historians have departed from its original trajectories and modified the concept to some degree. Second, research on religious plurality has illustrated in several European regions (Ireland, France, the Palatinate a.s.o.) that multi-confessional settings were free neither from disciplining efforts nor from the creation of confessional in- and out-groups; in fact, even promoting confessional plurality could serve territorial rulers as a means to ‘confessionalize’ their lands, especially in composite states or in the context of dynastic changes. The Hohenzollern monarchs of Brandenburg-Prussia, for example, supported a confessional co-existence between Lutherans and Calvinists because they considered this the best strategy to establish the Reformed faith among the dominant Lutheran population and to finally win over the country to Calvinism.²⁴

A third reason why a modified understanding of confessionalization may still be useful for historical studies lies in the recent and more systematic advancements

¹⁹ See also Tijana Krstić’s essay in the present volume.

²⁰ Regarding the situation among Catholics after the Council of Trent see Windler, *Missionare in Persien*, pp. 11–12.

²¹ See Greyerz et al. eds, *Interkonfessionalität—Transkonfessionalität—binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität*. On the situation among German Protestants, c. 1700, see Schunka, ‘Deutsche Protestantismen um 1700’.

²² See, among others, Luebke, *Hometown Religion*, especially his typological remarks on pp. 201–219.

²³ For instance, Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger suggests: ‘Konfessionalität nicht essentialistisch als eine feste Größe zu behandeln, die sich einmal herausgebildet und dauerhaft verfestigt hat, sondern sie als eine stets schwankende und instabile kulturelle Praxis im jeweiligen performativen Vollzug zu beschreiben.’ (Stollberg-Rilinger, ‘Einleitung’, p. 14). And: ‘Statt in essentialistischer Weise von konfessioneller Identität auszugehen, sollte man lieber von “situativer Konfessionalität” sprechen.’ (ibid., p. 26).

²⁴ Schunka, *Ein neuer Blick nach Westen*, pp. 31–49.

of the concept, some of which should briefly be addressed here. These recent studies take into account features of confessional plurality as well as the global turn in the historiography of the early modern era, including an awareness of communication and cultural entanglements. Hence, they attempt to extend the concept beyond Central Europe. Philip Benedict, for instance, an expert of French Protestantism, proposed to consider confessionalization simply as a ‘process of rivalry and emulation by which the religions that emerged from the upheavals of the Reformation defined and enforced their particular versions of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, demonized their rivals, and built group cohesion and identity’.²⁵ On a critical note it could be said that liberating the concept from its focus on politics (including territorial states and ecclesio-governmental institutions) may lead to a point where confessionalization becomes hardly distinguishable anymore from Ernst Walter Zeeden’s earlier idea of ‘confession-building’, just as from many other approaches that deal with the evolution of collective identities and the construction of in-groups and out-groups.

Another attempt to adapt confessionalization to the requirements of current historical research is Cornel Zwierlein’s approach from the angle of a history of knowledge and communication. Confessionalization, understood as an ‘epistemological process’, relies on inquiries from above/outside that lead a group to define their beliefs and practices in a way they might have never needed to do before.²⁶ In this respect, confessionalization is only possible when institutionalized groups of believers compete with each other for followers. However, it could be argued that the much-criticized teleological étatism of the original paradigm is replaced here by another hierarchical approach, namely the focus on institution-based knowledge production and on asymmetrical communication.

All these criticisms aside, the above-mentioned modifications to the ‘confessionalization paradigm’ open up new possibilities on how the concept could be transferred to—or translated into—regions beyond Central Europe. The present volume is the first attempt on a broader basis to redefine and extend this concept with a focus on the Ottoman realm. As its contributions illustrate, this can create a challenging but rewarding dialogue between Europeanists and specialists on religious group-building processes in other parts of the world. In the context of the Ottoman Mediterranean, confessionalization can hardly be applied as a socio-historical process in the original sense of the Schilling-Reinhard paradigm, not least because the relationship between the (evolving) state and the religious setting simply differs from Central and Western Europe. Therefore, the contributors use ‘confessionalization’ as an explanatory tool to analyze the establishment of coherent denominational groups through theology and (devotional/social) practice, including the creation of out-groups, meaning the exclusion of others.

It should nevertheless be kept in mind that opening up the ‘confessionalization paradigm’ for research on different religions and world regions may come at the price of losing some of its specifics. Therefore, a couple of more systematic

²⁵ Benedict, ‘Confessionalization in France’, p. 48.

²⁶ Zwierlein, “Konfessionalisierung”, pp. 9–10, 20. One of his central examples are the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire.

suggestions may be in place here. The first is to take up Tijana Krstić's proposition, namely to distinguish between confessionalization as a *vertical* phenomenon of confessional streamlining *within* a given religious constellation on the one hand, and on the other hand the *horizontal* forms of confessionalizing a group from the *outside*.²⁷ This would also enable investigations about where and how both vertical and horizontal features of confessionalization possibly intermingle.

While *vertical* here should not automatically denote a *top-down* process but rather a multi-directional engagement with one's own religious tradition (as opposed to those of others), both forms of attempting or creating confessional coherence point to whether the verb *confessionalize* is being used in an *intransitive* or a *transitive* sense (*id est*: protagonists of a certain denomination confessionalize *their own* group or *another* group). This, secondly, has implications on whether to speak of *unintended* or *intentional* confessionalization processes. In the case of the Catholic missions in the Balkans, it would be easy to consider their practices as intentional.²⁸ In other cases, it may be more difficult to distinguish between intentional and unintended confessionalizations, but it can still be helpful to separate both for analytical purposes. The Greek Church in the early modern Ottoman Empire may serve as an example here, as analyzed in several contributions to this volume: European Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics all inquired about the doctrines and devotional practices of the Greeks. They then integrated their newly-acquired information into their specific confessional mindsets. In this context, the Greek patriarch, Kyrillos Loukaris (1572–1638), was accused of turning the Greeks into Calvinists, while he, in fact, attempted to pursue internal reforms of his community.²⁹ These reform processes, again, might have been induced by Europeans earlier who had involuntarily started an internal confessionalization process among the Greeks with their inquiries. Thus, several parties pursued goals that might have differed but could also overlap. In the Greek case, the outcome was a mix of vertical and horizontal confessionalization phenomena; some unintended, others intentional.

A third suggestion would be distinguishing more sharply than usual between confessionalization as a *normative goal* (that was not always put into practice) and as a *practical process* (from 'above', 'below', or both). The rhetoric of religious group cohesion could involve several actors on very different levels. However, they were not always followed by practical efforts of reform and indoctrination. Dissecting the concept at this point would still leave room for some of its specifics while releasing it from its previous focus on ecclesio-political hierarchies of early modern central Europe and from the modern state as its *telos*.

²⁷ I refer to Tijana Krstić's introduction where she states as a hypothesis of the volume 'that representatives of various confessional groups in the Ottoman Empire articulated their notion of correct belief and practice through both "vertical" (diachronic) engagement with their particular tradition, and through "lateral" (synchronic) engagement with the normative claims of other confessional communities'.

²⁸ See Emese Muntán's contribution to this volume including the relevant literature.

²⁹ See the contribution by Eleni Gara and Ovidiu Olar in the present volume. On Loukaris see also Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat*.

These suggestions are meant as an attempt to make the confessionalization concept more easily (and perhaps more systematically) adaptable to other world regions such as (but not exclusively) the early modern Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Mediterranean.³⁰ The evolution of distinctive confessional groups, then, may or may not be the result of clear-cut confessionalization processes, while any confessionalization approach should not (and does not need to) cover all the confessional dynamics and developments in permanently changing confessional/religious circumstances.

ENTANGLEMENTS

From an empirical point of view, the chapters of the present volume illustrate that the religious group-building processes and confessionalizations in the Ottoman Mediterranean can—and must—be told from very different angles, taking into account various historical actors and communities. These include the local inhabitants of Muslim, Christian, Jewish faiths, but also the wider Islamic (Persian), Christian (Eastern as well as Latin European) and Jewish (Sephardi as well as Ashkenazi) connections. The different viewpoints (for example Ottoman views on Catholicism, Catholic views on Ottoman Muslims), the varied alliances and lines of conflict (such as Armenians with Ottomans against Catholic ‘Franks’³¹) account for a truly kaleidoscopic picture which can be understood best as an entangled history.

The early modern Ottoman Mediterranean provided the scene for a multitude of processes that bear relevance to ‘confessionalization’. As far as their *horizontal* dimensions are concerned, the Ottoman Empire was the stage for genuinely Western-style confessionalization phenomena: since the sixteenth century, the evolution and negotiation of confessional norms among European Christians extended to Ottoman soil, and the creation of confessional boundaries between Catholics and Protestants moved to the Mediterranean. This Eurasian extension of European confessionalization appeared, for instance, in missionary enterprises (Catholics and Protestants reaching out to local Christians and Jews), diplomatic negotiations, diasporic networks and expatriate communities where people of Catholic and Protestant (Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican) persuasion interacted and sometimes clashed.³² Sometimes (but not always) a cross-confessional Christian universalism would prevail abroad, with Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans as well as local Christian denominations forming a common front against a Muslim ‘other’, as Christian Windler has shown in the case of Isfahan.³³ In many other cases, the sharp divisions between the confessional churches of Europe were transplanted into an Islamic context,

³⁰ On the possibilities of integrating the Mughal Empire or the Americas into a global religious history of early modernity see Strathern, ‘Global Early Modernity’, pp. 341–343.

³¹ See Anna Ohanjanyan’s contribution to this volume.

³² See Tramontana, ‘An Unusual Setting’. A good example for a ceremonial conflict among Catholics over church attendance may be taken from the sixteenth-century travelogue of the Protestant apothecary Reinhold Lubenau, who reports an almost physical confrontation between the French and Habsburg delegations over the seating order in a Catholic mass in Pera. See Teply, *Kaiserliche Gesandtschaften*, pp. 350–355.

³³ Windler, *Missionare in Persien*, p. 462 and passim.

reverberating back to the lands of the Reformation by information networks and prints. Travelogues such as Salomon Schweigger's may be a case in point here, as well as the numerous polemical sermons addressing the Ottoman threat (so-called *Türkenpredigten* in the German lands), which were directed to the respective confessional in-groups at home and should be interpreted more as intra-Christian polemics than invectives against a more distant Ottoman enemy.³⁴

The creation and intensification of specific denominational or 'confessional' identities under diasporic circumstances can be seen not only among Christian Europeans in the early modern Mediterranean. Research on migrations has illustrated that diaspora communities in foreign lands often turn to particular, conservative, even invented religious traditions and disciplinary measures in order to create group coherence, while not secluding their communities from the host societies in other contexts.³⁵ This seems to be similarly applicable to the religious groups in the Ottoman realm, such as the Armenian migrant communities in Western Anatolia³⁶ and Jewish circles in Safed with their attempts to connect Sephardim and Ashkenazim by articulating pan-Jewish legal norms.³⁷ Even the 'islands of [unitarian] Catholicism in a sea of Eastern Christianity' developed some sort of diasporic identity across large distances, influenced by the Roman *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* and based on prints in the Arabic language.³⁸

At the same time, confessionalizations among Eastern Christians could be initiated from outside, as in the case of the Western outreach to Greeks and Armenians. But the wish to create confessional cohesion also played an important role within the several internal factions of the Greek, Armenian and Syriac churches.³⁹ Where solid internal institutions were weak or absent, 'confessional' identity formation took place only on a limited basis, such as in the case of the Syriac churches.⁴⁰ Here, weaker identification categories such as naming provided markers of distinction. Among Greeks, the recourse to particular martyr stories served to delineate the difference from the 'other'—Muslims and Catholics alike.⁴¹ Sometimes, the wish to create group cohesion went along with attempts to ally with Europeans, but such initiatives took place only within the spaces and limits granted by the Ottoman government.

In most cases where European Christians were involved in confessionalization schemes in the Ottoman Empire, these activities remained on the level of norm propagation and very rarely went further into concrete action. Practical limits and political/religious constraints on the ground prevented Europeans from extending their

³⁴ See Grimmsmann, *Krieg mit dem Wort*.

³⁵ See Schunka, 'Normsetzung und Normverletzung', esp. pp. 50–52, with the relevant literature on practices of religious identity formation within early modern immigrant communities.

³⁶ See Henry Shapiro's contribution to this volume.

³⁷ See Carsten Wilke's contribution to this volume.

³⁸ See John-Paul Ghobrial's chapter in this volume.

³⁹ See, among others, Paolo Lucca's contribution to this volume.

⁴⁰ See Lucy Parker's contribution to this volume.

⁴¹ See the contribution by Yorgos Tzedopoulos in this volume.

powers directly, such as by proselytizing Muslims (which proved nearly impossible).⁴² European contacts with Christian groups in the Ottoman Empire were sometimes meant to pursue larger schemes of religio-political alliances or to search for common theological ground that may be used within the confessional struggles of Europe.⁴³ At the same time, Sunni and Shi'i 'confessionalizations' found echoes in the Latin West where close observers like the German pastor Salomon Schweigger expected the conflict between Ottomans and Persians to be beneficial for the Christians.

While the creation of in-groups and out-groups often went along denominational lines, sometimes these lines were deliberately crossed: for example, when Patriarch Loukaris reached out to Reformed Protestants in Europe, when Armenians and Ottomans allied against 'Franks',⁴⁴ when the Ottoman Sheikh ül-islam Fezzullah decided to pursue a policy directed against the Catholics with the help of Ottoman Christians⁴⁵ or when Sephardic rabbinic scholars, devoid of any governmental institutions and state structures, acted in 'response [...] to the Ottoman confession-building project.'⁴⁶ As has been mentioned, Christian authors could hope for Protestant alliances with the Sultan to overcome the Roman-Catholic threat, but anti-Catholic fears seem to have, at times, even reached the upper echelons of the Ottoman government.⁴⁷ However, trans-confessional support as well as trans-religious alliances were always a matter of politics as much as they were a religious issue.⁴⁸ Just as attempts at supra-confessional dialogue and co-operation were discussed in the West, even a Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement seemed at times possible, for instance regarding practical questions such as pilgrimage and the maintenance of the holy sites of Islam.⁴⁹ Looking at such alliances in the Ottoman context enables us to evaluate the significance of religious affiliation vis-à-vis other community-building factors (such as geographical origin, language, politics, social positions etc.) in a broader, comparative perspective.

COMPARISONS

In the Islamic world, just as in Christian Europe, the construction of 'confessional' spaces could express itself in architecture and religiously-motivated building programs.⁵⁰ On an epistemic level, depictions of confessionalized space entered geographical works, travelogues, and maps. In Ottoman border regions, negotiations of confessional space went along with the creation of out-groups, and with long and exhausting attempts to demarcate spheres of religio-political influence, as in the case

⁴² See Windler, *Missionare in Persien*, passim.

⁴³ See, among others, the examples in Bevilacqua, *Republic of Arabic Letters*.

⁴⁴ See Anna Ohanjanyan's contribution to this volume.

⁴⁵ See the contribution by Cesare Santus in this volume.

⁴⁶ See the contribution by Roni Weinstein and Guy Burak in this volume.

⁴⁷ On Ottoman fears of Catholicism see the contribution of Cesare Santus in this volume.

⁴⁸ See the contribution by Nenad Filipović in this volume.

⁴⁹ See the contribution by Selim Güngörürler in this volume.

⁵⁰ The literature for Christian Europe as well as for the Ottoman empire seems equally vast here. From the present volume see the contribution by Damla Gürkan-Anar.

of the Orthodox church at the northern frontier of the Ottoman Empire.⁵¹ Here, as elsewhere, norms and expectations often differed from practices.⁵²

Turning from the peripheries to the center, one major question informing this volume was whether or how an Ottoman ‘Sunnitization’ could be compared to a western Confessionalization.⁵³ If in the Sunni context the reform of religious morals increasingly became a matter of politics since the sixteenth century,⁵⁴ this implies that a Sunni Muslim setting would provide ideal conditions for state-centered processes of Ottoman confessionalization, including the imposition of social and moral discipline on the people. However, it appears that the ostentatious turn to Sunni orthodoxy (including the respective forms of piety) seems to be primarily an urban phenomenon: in the countryside, nonconformist groups such as the Abdals of Rum strove for coherence among their own followers, for instance by referring to the life-stories of saints as their own shared heritage.⁵⁵ A similar search for cohesion might be true for Kizilbash communities who attempted to stabilize their group with the help of catechisms.⁵⁶ Sunni Ottomans were surrounded by and interspersed with non-Sunni Muslims who cared for the cohesion of their own groups with measures of confessionalization. Willingly or not, these ‘out-groups’ also contributed to shaping Sunni identities: the formation of orthodoxies and heterodoxies mutually depended on each other, not just in the Ottoman case. Such an interplay seems to be one of several features that would make the ‘confessionalizations’ of the Ottoman Mediterranean comparable to the evolution of confessional, or sub-confessional, groups in the West.⁵⁷

Another similarity between the religious situations of the European West and the Ottoman realm seems to be that despite a ‘confessional’ awareness among the population, pragmatic interaction and co-operation among different religious groups in plural settings (such as the Ottoman Balkans) seem to have been very common.⁵⁸ Some years ago, Thomas Bauer had pointed to Islam’s potential to tolerate ambiguity, and several contributions to this volume seem to underline this.⁵⁹ However, neither ‘ambiguity’ nor ‘confessional plurality’ should be seen as direct opposites to ‘confessionalization’, because they are closely connected to it: first, confessionalization is only possible in respect to its ‘other’; second, a deliberately arranged confessional openness could facilitate integration and cohesion, leaving room for (temporary) variations (such as in the case of the Sunni appropriation of ‘Ali⁶⁰). Thus,

⁵¹ See the contribution by Vera Tchentsova in this volume.

⁵² See Yavuz Aykan’s contribution to this volume.

⁵³ See Krstić, ‘Can We Speak’ in this volume; Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize’.

⁵⁴ Shafir, ‘Moral Revolutions’.

⁵⁵ See the contribution of Nikolay Antov in this volume.

⁵⁶ See Rıza Yıldırım’s contribution to this volume.

⁵⁷ On mechanisms of creating in-groups and out-groups within Central European Protestantism see Schunka, ‘Protestantismen’, especially pp. 508–514.

⁵⁸ See Emese Muntán’s contribution to this volume.

⁵⁹ See, among others, the essay by Derin Terzioğlu.

⁶⁰ See *ibid.*

confessional belonging should be understood as a constant process of interaction, including the negotiation of confessional spaces, that can perhaps best be observed when the bird's eye view of confessionalization meets the micro-historical world of the village and the everyday practices of the ordinary people.

Confessional spaces are of course social phenomena, and as such are never static but change over time. This leads to another important parallel among nearly all religious communities mentioned here: namely, their concepts of time in relation to group-building processes. Certain historic, imagined, or deliberately invented traditions usually serve religious groups to create cohesion by recurring to a particular past. The Lutheran pastor Salomon Schweigger was one among several western travelers who visited the architectural remains of the sites in the Ottoman Empire where early Christian councils were held; early modern Christian visitors to the Holy Land sometimes measured biblical places and compared this information to Holy Scripture, while some of them even tried to re-enact biblical scenes such as the crossing of the Red Sea on foot.⁶¹ Moreover, confessional competition among European Christians after the Reformation was largely based on the question of which doctrines followed most closely a presumed original meaning of the Bible, including its uses during the seemingly uncorrupted period of early Christianity. In a similar respect, the idea of a Jewish diaspora is based upon forms of religious memory, myth, and imagination. It could, at times, easily be politicized, just as, for instance, the uses of the Caliphate by the Ottoman rulers, the sites of Shi'i pilgrimage, or the memory of local Muslim saints. Newly evolving traditions during the early modern era (such as Wittenberg or Geneva as historicized centers of Protestants, or a Jewish 'myth of Safed') also point to the fact that references to the ancient past are broad, trans-religious phenomena that would perhaps deserve more attention within a comparative research of confessionalizations.

But what about periodization? Several of the attempts at creating confessional coherence treated in the present volume do not fit exactly into a classic 'Confessional Age' (c. 1550 to 1650) that had once been the core of Schilling's confessionalization thesis, while they are more in line with Reinhard's view that the phenomenon extended into the eighteenth century. Confessionalization—in the sense of the present volume—appears not as a singular historical process but rather as a structural phenomenon whose expressions can be seen in different historical periods and geographical contexts. This structural approach can make confessionalization more than just a European category, opening up the possibility for cross-cultural as well as cross-temporal comparisons of specific phenomena related to religious group-building processes.⁶² It has recently been suggested that we should view as one of the features of global early modernity the fact that 'emboldened ruling elites sought to use and

⁶¹ Fürer von Haimendorf, *Reis = Beschreibung*, pp. 106 and 129, who got wet during his attempt to cross the Red Sea on foot. On visits to the sites of early Christian councils see Schunka, 'Konfessionalisierung der Osmanen', pp. 20, 28, 44. On the intellectual and physical approaches to the Holy Land by early modern (Protestant) Christians see Shalev, *Sacred Words and Worlds*, pp. 73–140.

⁶² On such comparisons in a global perspective see Strathern, 'Global Early Modernity', p. 332.

control the religious sphere' by 'closing down [religious] options'.⁶³ Whether this is the case, and how this corresponds to the ambiguities on the ground, needs to be examined in more detail in the future. Globalized in such a way, confessionalization may lose some of its original focus and specificity, but what is left would still be more than just a 'commonplace reference'.⁶⁴

OUTCOMES

One paradoxical aspect of confessionalization is that it describes phenomena of group-building with implications that necessarily transgress the boundaries of a group or territory. Confessional rhetorics, everyday practices and larger confessional entanglements are closely related to each other. And the confessionalization(s) in the early modern Ottoman Mediterranean were firmly connected to wider contexts of Europe, Asia and the world.

Among the repercussions of 'confessional' group-building from the Ottoman on an extra-Ottoman sphere, just a few aspects can be mentioned here with special regard to Central and Western Europe. Certainly, the increase in information on the Ottoman Mediterranean triggered expectations among Christians of the West. European theologians and politicians were often led by particular motivations when they reached out to religious groups in the East: especially the Greeks appeared attractive for both Catholics and Protestants.⁶⁵ From a Protestant perspective, the fate of the Christian churches under Ottoman rule was interpreted as a warning to European observers about what might happen to their own communities in the wake of a Catholic takeover.⁶⁶ The evolving interest in the Greek church since the late sixteenth century as well as, for instance, the outreach to Coptic and Ethiopian Christianity in the seventeenth were inspired by the search for a common ground in theological matters as well as by the wish for greater political (anti-Catholic and anti-Ottoman) alliances.⁶⁷ In the early eighteenth century, the study of Oriental languages in Germany and England and the printing of devotional works directed to the Christians in the Levant had a political as well as a spiritual meaning: German Pietists hoped to build connections among all truly believing Christians in East and West, regardless of their denominations.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Greek Orthodox fundraisers and Syrian Christians traveling across Europe served theological scholars as information brokers on

⁶³ Strathern, 'Global Early Modernity', p. 342.

⁶⁴ See Carsten Wilke's contribution to this volume.

⁶⁵ See, among others, the contribution of Margarita Voulgaropoulou in the present volume.

⁶⁶ Wansleben, *A brief account of the rebellions*; Rycaut, *The present state of the Greek and Armenian churches*. A similar perspective can be found in the Huguenot Jean Chardin's depiction of Persia, see Windler, *Missionare in Persien*, p. 402.

⁶⁷ On the Copts see Hamilton, *The Copts and the West*. Some examples regarding the Protestant appropriation of a wider Christian 'Orient' for irenic purposes can be found in Schunka, 'Orientinteressen und protestantische Einheit'.

⁶⁸ C. Bochinger, 'Orientalische Sprachen, Mission und Erbauung'; Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*; Malena, "'Promoting the Common Interest of Christ'".

the religions, languages, and cultures of the East.⁶⁹ Former Christian captives wrote down their experiences in the Islamic Mediterranean with a confessionalized European audience in mind, providing their readers with ethnographic and linguistic detail as well as with confessional indoctrination.⁷⁰ At the same time, Protestant as well as Catholic clergymen proudly took the chance of converting and baptizing captive Muslims and sometimes also presented their knowledge on Islam and the European 'East' in their (printed) baptism sermons.⁷¹

On an epistemic level, all these examples illustrate in one way or another how information about the Ottoman Mediterranean made its way to Europe, how it was sometimes even generated in Europe (in places such as Gotha, Halle, London, and Rome, among many others), and how it contributed to European confessionalization processes that were entangled with the Mediterranean. In light of the contributions to the present volume, confessionalization appears as a multifold phenomenon of religious group cohesion attempts and practices, based on internal and/or external influences. The shaping of religious in-groups, and the creation of out-groups appears as a constant and fluid phenomenon that includes the occasional blurring of religious boundaries.

The aim of this commentary was to sum up some of the findings from the present volume and to interrelate them with the research on confessionalization in the early modern central and western parts of Europe. This volume has illustrated the links and comparative possibilities regarding religious group formation in the Ottoman Mediterranean. It has demonstrated that the confessionalization concept is still alive and productive after forty years, albeit with important modifications. Bridging the gap between 'eastern' and 'western' confessionalizations by looking at their local manifestations and trans-regional entanglements is something that will, in the wake of this volume, hopefully inspire future research on different world regions. The pastor Salomon Schweigger and many of his contemporaries (missionaries, writers, diplomats, merchants, beggars, captives) witnessed and recorded some of these entanglements and were sometimes even instrumental in creating them. Looking at confessionalizations in a broader perspective may therefore be more than just imposing current historiographical approaches on religious phenomena of the past but may lead us directly into the worlds of the contemporaries.

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⁶⁹ See Saracino, 'Griechisch-Orthodoxe Almosenfahrer'; Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, pp. 108–115 and 224–234.

⁷⁰ The material is vast here. I refer to the two recent anthologies: Klarer ed., *Verschleppt—Verkauft—Versklavt*; Matar, Vitkus eds, *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption*.

⁷¹ See Friedrich, "'Türken" im Alten Reich'; Schunka, 'Türken taufen in Thüringen'.

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INDEX

GENERAL TERMS

A

- Abbasid Caliphate 36, 131, 403
Abbey of Port-Royal 522–523
abbot 167–168, 187–189, 531–532
abdāl 12, 318, 320–321, 323–324,
325n, 327–330, 571, 577, 587n,
588n, 589, 590n, 591
Abdals of Rum (Rum Abdals) 12, 79,
313, 315–318, 320–321, 323–330,
587–588, 590, 755
ābsang 419, 421
Abu Hanifa Mosque 738n
adab 394, 605
administration 11, 18, 44, 61, 64, 65,
132, 160–163, 190, 192, 240, 305–
306, 352, 403, 452, 495, 541, 608,
684n, 703–704
administrative 10, 20, 26, 41, 44, 51,
55, 73, 88n, 164, 191–192, 273, 305,
319n, 327, 416–417, 423, 643, 650,
651n, 673–675, 677–679, 702, 706,
712, 715, 726, 727, 738, 741
adultery 573, 685, 708
agency 72, 89, 233, 337, 394, 432,
566n, 702, 719
ahi 569
ahidname 45
Ahkam register 574
ahl al-bayt (see also philo-Alid) 36, 78–
79, 296, 566, 568, 726
*ahl al-Sunna wa'l-jamā'a (ehl-i sūnnet ve'l-
cemā'at)* 3, 76, 569, 593, 600
Afsharid dynasty 82
Akbarian 571
akolouthia 337–338, 346, 349n, 350n,
351–352, 354, 363, 364, 366
Alevism 290, 566
Alevi 9, 11, 12, 20, 41, 80–81, 83, 285–
299, 301–307, 315–316, 325n, 328–
330, 566n, 572, 576–577, 586, 589n
Alid (see also philo-Alidism) 36–37, 41,
78, 82, 285, 325–326, 563n, 566–
585, 589n, 590, 592, 599–600, 603,
606, 726, 734
All Saviour's Monastery 467
alterity 35, 83, 654
ambiguity, ambiguous 6–7, 13–18, 20,
28, 32, 37, 41, 59, 62, 64–65, 79, 81,
88–89, 239, 245, 248–249, 315, 341,
353, 359, 361, 364, 367, 430n, 433,
439, 504, 526, 530, 563–569, 574,
586–87, 594, 597, 600, 606, 608–609,
638n, 716, 748, 755, 757
ambassador 1–2, 15, 174–176, 179,
182, 186n, 187, 221–223, 234–235,
236n, 238, 241, 244n, 246n, 247,
248n, 249, 494, 496, 521–522, 524,
527n, 529, 532–533, 535–36, 538,
540–542, 545–546, 675, 714, 727–
729, 737
amira(s) 151
anathema 61, 151, 173, 243, 354, 442,
491n, 493–494, 509, 527n, 531, 573,
597, 604
Anglican 46, 357n, 547, 752
Antichrist 175–176, 335, 458
antinomian 18, 317–318, 320, 329,
329n, 573, 590, 638
Antitrinitarian 46, 702, 747

- apostasy 17, 20, 83, 346, 348, 359, 360, 365, 683n, 689, 689n, 690
- apostate (see also *mürted*) 83, 148, 222, 352, 355, 361, 674, 681, 686–687, 689–690, 694
- Aqqoyunlu 322, 415–416
- Arabic (language) 11, 13, 53, 118, 130, 259, 263, 269, 288n, 290–292, 300, 386–387, 389–396, 507, 524, 543–544, 564, 568, 643n, 651, 653, 653n, 657, 683n, 753
- Archangel Church 153–154
- archbishop 174, 183n, 219, 226, 221, 359, 454–455, 455n, 459–460, 461n, 468, 473, 493n, 512, 529n, 530–531, 534, 537n, 539, 544, 562
- archbishopric 167n, 539n; ~of Ohrid 54, 61
- Archdiocese
of Nakhichevan 14, 452, 476n, 477
of New Julfa 14, 466,
- architecture 401, 754
- Armenian 9–11, 14, 15, 19, 44n, 53, 60, 62–64, 70, 139–155, 233–236, 239–242, 244–249, 389, 396, 451–453, 454n, 455–479, 489–496, 497n, 498–499, 500n, 501n, 503–510, 512–513, 523, 531, 534, 562, 745, 752–754
~Catholic(s) 64, 151, 239, 240n, 241, 243, 249, 453n, 454, 462, 473, 478, 479, 492n, 495
~language 19, 53, 62n, 139–140, 148n, 150, 235, 240, 241n, 386, 389, 453n, 455, 457n, 477n, 478n, 490n, 493–494, 497, 501, 508–511
- Armenian Apostolic(s) (see also *lusa-worč'adawan*) 10, 11, 14–15, 47, 60, 63–65, 140, 151, 155, 236, 244, 451, 453n, 454n, 455–456, 458–460, 461n, 462n, 463–464, 466, 467n, 468, 470–475, 477–479, 489–493, 496, 503n, 506–507, 509, 513, 534;
~Church 63, 151, 453n, 456, 458, 461n, 462n, 490, 493, 503n, 509n, 534; ~Christianity 65, 47; ~Orthodoxy 247, 490, 475, 490
- Armeno-Greek 497
- Armeno-Turkish 15, 62–63, 140, 497, 504, 508, 511
- ascetic, asceticism 143–145, 152, 265–268, 271, 273, 275, 317
- Ash'ari 600
- Ashkenazi 67–68, 121, 123–124, 128–129, 259, 263, 265–266, 268–270, 272n, 752
- Ashura 422, 570, 585
- asker* 585, 644, 686n
- Assembly of the Forties (Kırklar Meclisi) 297
- Assyrian Church 433
- attestation of faith 537, 539n, 560
- authority 3–4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 17, 28, 36–39, 41, 45, 47, 51, 57, 61, 65–66, 68, 69n, 73–75, 79, 84, 88–89, 117, 119, 123–124, 127n, 128, 130, 133–136, 140n, 141, 143, 150, 159, 161–162, 165, 167–169, 178, 183, 187–188, 191–192, 216, 219, 227, 237–238, 240, 242, 246, 256, 272–273, 307, 324, 326, 328, 330, 343, 358, 362, 403, 408, 434–436, 439, 443, 453n, 454, 455n, 458, 462n, 464n, 474, 489n, 494, 541, 566n, 569, 583, 597, 603, 606, 641, 644, 679, 684, 689, 692, 704, 707, 726, 737–738
- axis mundi* 36, 323, 602
- axt'arma* (or *aktarma*) 148n, 492, 492n, 494, 503, 507n, 508
- B
- Babagan 330
- Baptism 61, 250n, 340, 456, 55, 505n, 507n, 533, 543, 704n, 758
- Battle of Lepanto 171
- Bayrami 591, 607
- Bayrami-Melami 591, 607
- Bektashi 12, 80, 288n, 296n, 299, 306, 306n, 316, 320, 321n, 322–324, 325n, 328–330, 587–593, 596–597, 607–608
- belief 2, 4–8, 10, 16, 20, 27–30, 32, 34–35, 37, 39, 40n, 41–43, 46–47, 49, 52, 65–66, 68–74, 76–80, 83–86, 90, 117, 126, 244, 286–287, 288n, 289–290, 295–296, 301–302, 304–307,

- 326, 328, 336, 342, 346, 348, 357,
409–410, 432–435, 441n, 442–445,
447, 451, 475, 493, 522, 526, 528–
531, 533, 544n, 564, 567, 579–580,
586, 589n, 590, 592, 594, 597, 600,
605, 608, 632, 635, 641, 646, 674,
685, 690, 694, 713, 745, 747–750,
751n
- believer 14, 77, 123, 573, 602–603,
646, 717
- Benedictine(s) 702
- bet midrash* 268
- berat 47, 164, 166, 167n, 174, 188,
189–190, 192, 243–244, 248, 531n,
675
- Bible 53, 123, 125n, 185, 267, 355,
393, 435, 457n, 458n, 512, 657–658,
756
- bidat* (Ar. *bid'a*) (see also innovation)
76, 492, 507–508, 579, 597
- bishop 25, 153, 164, 167, 168, 172,
175, 182, 189, 190, 215–218, 220,
225–227, 234–236, 240, 244, 389,
393, 430n, 433n, 434, 436, 444–447,
459, 459n, 461n, 462n, 466n, 492n,
495, 508, 530, 532, 537, 540–541,
543–544, 639, 701–702, 711n, 712,
714, 716
- bishopric 54, 179, 191, 462n, 706
- Bosnian Franciscans 17n, 18, 45, 55,
57, 703, 704n, 705, 709–710, 713
- boundaries
confessional ~ 4, 7, 55, 58n, 60, 513,
752
communal ~ 5, 7, 14, 20, 33, 43, 65,
70, 443, 505
blurring of ~ 60, 447, 566, 718, 758
- Buyruk* 11–12, 285–304, 306–307,
306n, 315n
- Byzantine 52, 54, 162n, 267, 318n, 344,
346, 347n, 354, 354n, 357n, 543,
630, 632–633, 638n, 639n, 646n, 678
- Byzantium 57
- C
- caliph, caliphal 36, 37n, 38n, 81, 320,
403, 570, 583–584, 681, 725, 731,
732
- caliphate 27, 36, 37, 81, 315, 581, 583,
725, 731–732, 756
- Calvinism 30, 48, 59, 175, 530, 537n,
749
- Calvinist 4, 6–8, 15, 19, 43, 46, 53, 57n,
58, 78, 173–175, 185n, 192–193,
257, 366, 501n, 521–523, 525–526,
528, 532–533, 535, 540, 542–543,
546, 548, 565, 704n, 747, 749, 751
- canon 78, 165, 218–219, 221, 227, 286,
304, 354, 363, 436, 493n, 511n,
651n, 705, 708, 711
- canon law 57, 161–165, 167, 169, 191,
218, 435, 473, 680, 706–708, 710
- canonization 83, 304n, 565
- capitulations 15, 235–236, 238, 521n,
536, 539, 541, 46n
- Capuchin(s) 45, 145, 151, 241, 242n,
245, 353, 356, 389, 391, 444n, 468,
476n, 497n, 512, 525, 525n, 531,
536, 545, 702
- Carmelite(s) 239n, 247n, 391, 447,
466n, 467n, 468, 469n, 471n, 502,
510, 512
- casuistry 674, 686, 688–689
- catechism (see also *ilmihal*) 12, 66, 76–
78, 83, 85, 243, 258, 286, 291, 299,
306, 357, 490, 492n, 501n, 510, 746,
755
- Catholic
~ church 55, 249n, 352, 364, 383,
386, 394, 430n, 433, 443, 454, 459n,
465n, 466, 473, 479, 499, 501, 504,
506, 525, 526, 531, 533, 538, 543,
546, 565, 708, 709, 716
~ missionaries 10, 11, 13–15, 17, 19–
20, 45–47, 52–53, 64, 88, 141, 151–
152, 234, 237, 241, 243, 384, 387,
389, 391, 392, 432, 456, 465, 473–
477, 703–706, 709, 716–717
- Catholicism 4, 10–11, 18–20, 30, 48, 50–
52, 54–55, 57, 59, 61n, 64, 140, 145,
148n, 149, 151, 176, 234, 237, 240,
241n, 246, 248n, 270n, 344, 351–
353, 364, 368, 383–387, 389, 391,
393, 395, 432, 439, 446, 452, 465,
468, 474–476, 479, 492n, 492n,

- 499n, 501, 512, 521, 530n, 546,
703n, 708, 716–718, 752–753, 754n
- Catholicity 396, 504–507, 510, 717
- Catholicosate 63, 462n, 462n
- Catholicos 63, 436n, 441–442, 451,
455–466, 468–473, 475n, 476, 478,
492, 493n, 495, 498, 500, 502–503,
507n, 511n
- Celali revolts 10, 63, 139–141, 147, 497
- celibacy 270, 317
- Celveti 597, 605, 607
- cem* ritual 291, 295, 297, 303
- Cemali 591
- Chaldean(s) 14, 53, 146, 384, 387–388,
391, 393n, 394, 431–447
- Chaldean church 14, 431, 433–434,
444, 447
- chief rabbi 43, 261, 264, 268
- chief jurist (see also sheikh ül-islam) 1,
11, 72, 73, 120, 237, 628, 682, 688
- chieftain 675, 677, 678n, 682, 692
- chiliastic 303, 645, 648
- Chinghisid lineage 36
- Chrism 61, 529, 543
- Christ 25, 144, 176, 243, 340, 342, 352–
353, 357n, 367, 391–392, 430, 437,
440–442, 441n, 454, 457, 461, 461n,
463n, 489, 490, 494, 499, 501n, 504,
506, 508–509, 511, 523, 527, 529,
533–534, 543, 544n, 560, 602
- Christology 394, 430, 461n, 463n, 509
- Church of the East 13–14, 19, 48, 53,
384–385, 387–389, 393, 430–431,
432n, 433, 435, 436n, 440–441, 445,
447
- circumcision 1
- citizen 438, 674
- citizenship 674n, 694
- cizye* (Ar. *jizya*; see also poll-tax) 77,
689, 692
- clergy, clergymen 10, 15, 17, 32, 49–
51, 57–59, 68, 88, 73, 140, 144, 147,
161–170, 172, 183–184, 187–189,
217–218, 191–192, 216–222, 226,
235, 249, 339, 345, 355, 384, 389,
392, 439, 451–452, 457–459, 466–
468, 472, 473n, 474–477, 491, 498,
506, 508, 530n, 534, 537, 539, 706,
711n, 715, 716, 758
- clerisy 38
- coexistence 31, 337, 344, 345n, 352,
354, 461n, 463n, 500, 504, 513,
706n, 709, 717, 733
- Collegium 51
- College 180, 341, 493, 493n, 578,
Cottunian ~ 530, 532; Greek ~ 180,
530; Maronite ~ 391, 392, 395; Royal
~ 497, 497n; Urbanian ~ 493; Arme-
nian ~ 462, 504n
- colonization 317–318, 321
- communicatio in sacris* 60, 64, 239, 250,
491n, 494
- commoners 564, 572, 594, 597n, 638n
- communitization 349–350, 360
- community-building 4, 12, 20, 28–29,
71, 84, 86, 88n, 118, 306, 361, 695,
754
- communal
~ authority 4, 12, 29, 65, 117; ~be-
longing 5, 6, 77; ~boundaries 5, 7,
14, 20, 33, 42–43, 65, 70, 505; ~
identity 315–316, 319, 336, 435; ~
leaders/leadership 9, 11, 19, 20, 44,
47, 364; ~regulation 141, 145, 152
- Companions (*ashab*) of the Prophet 297,
573, 581, 585, 589, 680–681
- Confessio Augustana* 51
- confession-building 4n, 7, 10, 20, 28n,
30–32, 41, 56, 59, 65, 77, 78, 84,
118–119, 135–136, 140, 192, 257,
258, 272, 273, 287, 314, 317, 336,
343, 353, 358–359, 401, 404, 423,
512, 522, 527–528, 547–548, 574,
586, 606, 609, 673–674, 694–695,
704, 747, 750
- confession of faith 51, 162, 170n, 171,
173, 175, 176, 184, 193, 457n, 463n,
464n, 468, 470n, 471, 526, 532, 535,
537, 547
- confessional
~ ambiguity 7, 16, 32, 59, 62, 315,
563n, 568, 569, 574, 606, 609; ~ con-
sciousness 49, 51, 53, 512; ~commu-
nity/ies 6, 7, 30, 41, 44, 47, 55, 119,
406, 751n; ~identity/ies 12, 56, 249,

- 335, 336, 341, 394, 408, 439, 593,
746, 753; ~polarization 5, 8–12, 16,
17, 19, 27, 33, 40n, 44, 62, 66, 77–
78, 84, 274, 365n, 490, 505, 574;
~politics 2, 20, 344, 361, 366, 566
- confessionalism 15, 32, 84, 273
- confessionalization
~thesis 7n, 8, 16, 27n, 47–49, 57,
159, 257, 756; ~paradigm 50n, 256,
258, 314, 657, 748–750; process of ~
7, 58, 386, 395, 444,
- congregation 75, 87, 270, 403, 460,
462, 463n, 595–596
- Congregation for the Propagation of the
Faith (*Propaganda Fide*) 13, 45, 64,
239, 384, 386–390, 392–396, 451–
455, 458n, 459, 461–464, 471n, 476–
479, 491, 493, 530, 538, 701, 703,
753
- congregational (prayer) 13, 42, 75–76,
404, 407, 410, 421
- connected history 384–385, 396
- convent (of Aparaner) 455; (of S. Maria
sopra Minerva) 452
- conversion 1–3, 11, 14, 17n, 35, 39n,
46–47, 54n, 70–71, 77, 82–83, 127n,
140, 149, 151, 171–172, 175, 234,
240, 249, 258, 345, 348, 350, 354,
359–364, 365n, 367, 384–385, 387,
391, 393, 444, 451–452, 457, 459,
465, 467n, 471, 473, 476–477, 491,
502, 511–512, 522, 526, 646, 674,
682, 715–716; ~ to Catholicism 384,
385, 387, 391, 393, 452, 486, 526; ~
to Islam 54n, 70–71, 127n, 140, 348,
350, 360, 363; ~ to Orthodoxy 716;
~ to Sunnism 1–2, 82; ~ to Shi'ism 3,
35, 39n
- convert(s) 2, 5, 16, 28, 37, 46, 61, 64–
65, 129–130, 237, 239–240, 243,
248, 258, 344, 347, 349, 351–353,
356–357, 359–361, 365, 367, 391,
452, 465, 469–470, 471, 501, 505n,
525, 569, 577, 587, 654, 716–717
- Conversos 12, 267
- Copts 385, 389, 535, 757n
- Coptic
~ Christianity 757; ~ Church 48,
476
- cortijo* 271
- Cossacks 48–49, 177n, 221
- Council
~of Chalcedon 243–244, 461n, 466,
493, 503, 507; ~of Ephesus 457, 494,
508–509; ~of Jassy 51; ~of Nicaea
435, 493n; ~of Trent 51, 352, 355–
356, 386, 452, 491, 708; ~of Con-
stantinople 215
- Counter-Reformation 7n, 257, 314,
453n, 637, 639
- court 9, 70, 78, 119–121, 124, 128, 165,
168–169, 180, 184, 187, 190, 192,
215, 223, 226, 235, 237, 241, 244–
245, 256, 268, 291, 301, 303, 323,
335, 336n, 337, 361, 411, 460, 475,
501n, 532, 542, 575, 633, 635n,
684n, 706–708, 706n, 707n, 711–
714, 716, 727–729, 734–735, 737,
739
- courtier 595, 645, 735
- Cretan War 216, 538
- creed 49, 51, 57, 59, 64, 65n, 76, 78,
90, 150–151, 193, 250, 255, 274, 291,
306, 346, 452, 467n, 492n, 567,
579n, 581–582, 596, 599, 635
- creedal 6–7, 12, 15, 19, 33, 41, 60, 77,
80–81, 86–87, 89, 304, 655
- Crusader 64, 259
- crypto 596, 601, 55n, 79, 80, 410
~Catholic 491, 491n, 498, 500n;
~Christianity 55, 80, 357; ~ commu-
nities (groups) 20, 70, 86
- cuius regio, eius religio* 42, 314, 527
- cult 59, 266, 321–323, 341, 350–352,
367, 437, 475n, 590, 629, 636, 638–
639, 650; ~ of saints 316, 319, 322,
629, 636, 639
- D
- Danielic prophecy 38
- dārū'l-ḥarb* 693
- deconfessionalization 82
- dede* 289–290, 292, 294, 296–297, 577,
597n

- defterdar* 583
demonization 57
denomination 76, 565, 567, 704, 725, 737–738, 751
dervish 317, 319–320, 321n, 322, 324, 325n, 326, 347, 347n, 350n, 475n, 573–574, 578, 587–588, 590, 592, 596, 600n, 681
dervish lodge 347n, 570, 591n
descendants of the Prophet 131, 237
Devil 145, 268, 354, 597, 631, 637, 642, 688–690, 692
devran 598
devşirme 360, 650
dhikr 42, 130
dhimma, dhimmi 6, 9, 11, 35, 343, 356, 383, 475, 684, 687
diaspora 11, 65n, 67–69, 119, 121–122, 124–128, 130, 130n, 255, 257–258, 264, 267, 269, 273, 275, 753, 756
din-i ilahi 37, 38n
diglossia 13, 16, 337, 339, 352, 363, 367
diocese 167–169, 170n, 183n, 215, 217–222, 224–226, 335, 442, 446n, 452, 453n, 453n, 454–455, 466, 473, 473n
Dioscorian faith 494; ~ heresy 508–509
diplomacy 46, 236, 239, 247, 496, 528, 538, 595n, 726, 731, 739–740
diplomat 2, 45–47, 256, 337, 532, 532n, 539, 714, 745
disambiguation 64–65, 565–567, 594
Discalced Carmelites 512
disciple 173, 186, 234, 263, 297, 325n, 442, 445, 458, 461n, 571, 600n, 687, 690
discipline 9, 11, 19, 30n, 17, 31, 47, 49, 50, 70, 72, 75, 88, 143, 165, 168, 189, 215, 227–228, 244, 257, 273, 329, 344, 585, 650, 748, 755
disciplining 7, 27, 31, 41–42, 61, 64, 176, 250, 717, 748–749; ~communal 11, 718, 719; ~social 30–31, 65, 70, 159, 233, 527–528, 718
dissimulation (see also *taqiya*) 7n, 20, 28, 55, 79, 81, 586, 593, 608
Divan (see also Imperial Council) 129, 131–134, 165, 626n, 627–628, 675, 692n
divorce 133, 165, 262, 707–713, 715, 719
doctrine 13, 51, 59, 73, 76, 118, 133, 259, 261, 263, 272, 314, 335, 355, 387, 402, 404, 432–433, 435, 439, 441n, 442, 446–447, 478n, 491n, 493, 495n, 501, 504, 507–508, 522–523, 526–527, 530, 540n, 546, 583, 602–603, 656, 684, 689, 745, 747, 751, 756
dogma, dogmatic 61, 66, 255, 354, 355n
Dominican(s) 14, 45, 64, 150, 365, 437–438, 451–452, 453n, 454, 455n, 456n, 457, 461n, 462, 464n, 467–469, 471, 473, 477–478, 503–504, 512
dönme 69, 70n
dragoman 57n, 70, 192n, 193, 222–223, 366n, 497, 527n, 535, 542
Druze 178, 260
Dulkadiroğulları 587
dyophysite, dyophysitism 243, 249
- E
early modern(ity) 3–11, 19, 21, 25–35, 36n, 47n, 49n, 50, 52–54, 56–57, 58n, 62–63, 65–68, 73, 76, 79–80, 83–87, 88n, 89–90, 117, 120n, 135–136, 139, 141n, 149, 151, 155, 159–160, 176, 191, 193n, 215, 255–258, 260–261, 271, 275, 287, 305n, 313–315, 317, 321n, 323, 328, 368, 384–386, 430n, 440n, 490, 506–509, 512n, 565, 566n, 567, 593, 606, 608, 638, 654–656, 657n, 673–674, 678, 679n, 685, 694, 711n, 716, 747–752, 750n, 753, 756, 753n, 756n, 758
Eastern Christianity 34n, 48, 52, 52n, 84, 173, 384, 387–388, 392, 396, 446, 501n, 534, 753
Eastern Christians 10–11, 13, 19, 34, 43, 44n, 45, 53, 61, 61n, 176, 352, 383, 385–387, 392, 395–396, 432,

- 438–439, 506, 510, 523–524, 544, 753
- ecclesiastical 10, 13–14, 16–17, 43, 54, 57, 63, 140–141, 140n, 143, 149, 151, 155, 160–163, 163n, 165, 165n, 168–171, 178, 180, 183, 186n, 191–194, 218, 227, 234, 243, 250, 337–339, 341, 348, 350, 352, 353n, 363–364, 367–368, 383–384, 388, 430n, 433, 452, 457, 459, 460, 462, 475, 491, 492n, 505, 507n, 508, 511, 703, 707
- École des Jeunes de Langues (Lycée Louis-Le-Grand) 497, 502
- ecumene 50, 257, 528
- ecumenist 15
- Ecumenical Patriarchate (see also patriarchate) 227, 538
- Edirne Event 496; ~ Incident 604
- education 13, 45n, 50, 142, 176–177, 235, 248, 255, 290, 314, 422, 467, 497n, 501, 506, 510, 530, 545
- ehl-i bid'at* 573, 579n
- ehl-i iman* 576
- Eighteen Commandments 70
- elite(s) 13, 26, 79, 118, 121, 133–135, 215, 234, 263, 297, 339, 346, 348, 351, 364, 457, 460, 498, 572, 587, 594, 596, 653–654
- endogamy 70
- endowment (see also waqf) 169, 171, 268, 318–319, 421, 636, 648–649, 738
- entangled confessionalizations 8, 11, 89–90, 135, 233, 745–746; ~history 4n, 118, 275, 752; ~perspective 4, 29, 747
- Entkonfessionalisierung* 748
- envoy 1–2, 46, 174, 182, 188n, 220, 222, 225, 227, 304n, 351, 422, 432, 437–438, 535, 639, 650, 736
- episcopacy 533, 543
- esoteric, esotericism 13, 16, 36, 255, 257, 262, 296, 569, 581–582, 601
- esotericist 571, 601
- Ethiopian Christianity 757
- ethno-confessional 6, 55, 475
- Eucharist 15, 224, 501n, 505, 521–523, 528–529, 533–534, 543–544, 560
- Eurocentric 33–34
- everyday Islam 564
- Evil Jesus 144
- evliya* 292, 298–299, 594
- Evrenosoğulları 587
- excommunication 69–70, 134, 165, 165n, 168–169, 174n, 193, 344, 458n, 462, 466
- exile 12, 122, 183–184, 212, 223, 236n, 241, 246n, 256, 275, 330n, 496, 498, 503–504, 509, 537n, 539, 601, 607, 627, 676
- extreme unction 541
- F
- factionalism 608
- fake priest 141–143
- family 16, 30, 78, 86, 129, 234, 237, 246n, 260–263, 268–271, 290, 322n, 327, 350n, 358–359, 368, 431, 434, 473, 538, 540, 542n, 568, 575, 601, 604, 633n, 680n, 692n, 703n, 710n, 734n
- faqih 13, 403, 406
- faskh* 708
- fast 144, 266, 529, 543, 585, 593, 680, 690; fasting 153, 339, 503, 512, 533, 543, 544n, 635
- fatwa 1–2, 17, 18n, 39n, 133, 234n, 240n, 360–361, 401n, 579, 580, 585, 586n, 598, 674, 682–690, 726
- fırak-ı dalle* 83
- firman 164–166, 166n, 167n, 187, 188n, 235–236, 244, 274, 495, 541, 634, 644, 712–713
- flexible 159, 705; flexibility 16, 61, 227, 467n, 715, 719, 749
- fluid 67, 274, 378, 359, 447, 565, 569, 575, 758; fluidity 14, 55, 567, 574–575
- forum shopping 707
- Franciscan(s) 17n, 18, 45, 55–57, 391, 525, 531, 639, 656, 702–703, 704n, 705, 709–710, 711n, 713, 746
- Fratres Unitores (see Unitor Brothers) 64, 151, 453n, 454

- French embassy 521, 524, 528, 546
 Friday prayer 13–14, 401–416, 415n, 422–423
 Friday service 405, 410
 frontier 304, 313, 315, 318–319, 321–322, 430, 454n, 675, 677, 679, 737, 755
futuwwa (Tr. *fütivvet*) 569
- G**
gaza 318–321, 412, 686n
 gender 30, 271, 356, 478n, 585, 716
ghulāt, ghuluww 580n, 685
 global 2, 19, 26–28, 32, 34, 47–48, 54, 84, 85, 90, 126, 129, 152, 259, 506, 513, 750, 752n, 756; ~Catholicism 10, 19, 145, 149; ~networks: 145
 gnosticism 569, 638n
 governor 129, 234, 322, 393, 415, 429, 437, 582, 592, 596, 627, 634, 637, 641, 642, 643, 644, 683n, 690–693, 727, 730, 733–738
 Grabar (classical Armenian) 497
 Grand Logothete 218, 224
 grand vizier 16, 46, 172, 177, 186, 189n, 193, 222n, 235, 239, 245, 246n, 247n, 475, 495, 496, 498n, 526n, 531n, 532, 542, 592, 599, 602, 604, 625–628, 636n, 641, 643n, 644, 646, 648–649, 652n, 674, 675, 729n, 730n, 735–740
 ‘Great Armenian Flight’ 139, 143, 151, 155
 ‘Greater Caliphate’ 81, 725, 731
 Greek (language) 13, 19, 26n, 53, 54, 57, 58, 149, 166, 173, 175, 176, 180, 187n, 224, 335–336, 338–339, 348, 352, 355, 356n, 362–363, 366, 368, 430n, 497, 499, 510, 524, 526, 531, 536, 544, 707n
 Greeks 9, 10, 12, 19, 25, 43, 54, 57, 153–155, 171, 174, 176, 177n, 178, 180, 217–218, 222, 246, 344, 349, 368, 430, 453, 498, 503, 505, 523–525, 528, 530, 532, 536, 539–541, 544, 639, 707n, 718, 751
 Greek Catholic (see also Melkite) 48, 384
 Greek Church(es) 16, 140–141, 154, 489n, 522, 524–531, 538–539, 546–548, 745, 751, 753, 757
 Greek Orthodox(y) 9–10, 12, 15, 33, 47, 50, 57–61, 64, 70, 86, 236, 250n, 336, 341, 353n, 363–364, 490–491, 507n, 510, 524, 540, 587, 757
 Gülşeni(s) 577, 591, 596
- H**
 Habsburg(s) 1–2, 11, 37, 38, 40, 46, 56, 61n, 69n, 126–127, 159, 171, 174, 239, 255–256, 262, 314, 431, 627n, 628, 639–640, 645, 675, 733, 746n, 752n
 hagiography, hagiographical (see also *vita*) 11, 249n, 260, 265, 288n, 319, 326–330, 336, 343n, 349n, 588, 593, 598
 Hagiou Pavlou Monastery 217
 hajj 82, 87, 88n, 593, 726,
 Halakhah, Halakhic 9, 65, 119, 122–126, 127n, 128–129
halife 290, 296, 297, 303, 306, 321, 355n, 577
 Halveti(s) 70, 72n, 350n, 576n, 577, 581, 582, 590–593, 597–598, 600, 604, 605, 607, 653
 Hamadas 607–608
 Hanafi, Hanafism 37, 72–80, 85, 118, 120, 133–135, 163, 304, 361, 404, 565–566, 579n, 581, 582, 596, 600–601, 652–653, 656, 674, 684, 686–688, 694, 707
 Hanbali 600
haskamah 69
ḥaṭṭ-ı hümayün 727
hatt-ı şerif 237, 239, 491, 495–496
 Haydari(s) 588, 590
 Hebrew (language) 70, 119, 121–122, 124–125, 127–128, 130, 260–261, 263, 265, 269, 272, 391
herem 69
 heresiography(ical) 635
 heresy 14, 20, 25, 28, 39n, 42, 69, 74, 81–82, 143–144, 174, 305, 323, 324n, 347n, 348, 355, 406, 411, 432, 438, 444, 451, 452, 457, 478, 508–

509, 580, 585, 592, 601, 655–656, 686, 708, 725
 heretic(s), heretical 17, 50, 52, 61, 69, 72n, 81, 83, 140–141, 143, 173, 187, 193, 238, 246n, 249, 318, 324, 329, 430, 444–445, 452, 461n, 469, 473, 475n, 479, 534, 579, 585, 590, 596–597, 598, 605, 608, 674, 687, 690–691, 694, 710n
hesger 268–271
 Hidden Imam (see also occultation) 404, 407, 725
 Hindu(s) 37, 40n
 Holy King (Redeemer) Church 154
 Holy Land 11, 44n, 118, 122, 124–127, 235, 258, 262–266, 268, 269, 274, 746, 756
 Holy Office 62, 64
 Holy Roman Empire 1, 29, 159, 171, 257, 259, 270, 654, 749
 Holy Shrines (‘*Atabāt-i ‘Alīyāt*) 732–733, 736, 741
 Holy Synod 164, 172, 181–184, 187, 189–192
 holy war (see also *jihad*, *gaza*) 289n, 318, 320–321, 407, 411, 648, 652, 686
 homogeneity 10, 123, 227, 317, 328, 528, 545, 749
 House of Osman 576, 725, 730,
 House of Safi 725
 House of the Prophet Muhammad (see also *ahl al-bayt*) 36, 78, 301, 584, 598, 603, 607, 725
 household 234, 260, 330n, 608, 734, 737
 Huguenots 501n, 521, 523, 757n
hüccet 180, 190, 711–713
hükümet 675, 680n, 683, 693
hulūl 318, 580n
 humanism 564n; mystical ~ 571; ‘theistic ~’ 589
 humanist 46n, 173
 Hurufi(s) 571, 573, 588, 590–591
 hymn(als) 66, 70n, 85, 142, 146, 266, 269, 493–494, 512, 534n
 hypocrisy, hypocrite, hypocritical 323, 563, 635, 740

I

ideology, ideologies, ideological 11, 38, 117, 121, 182, 185, 216, 255, 274, 285, 303, 305, 431, 434–435, 437, 443, 498, 565, 608, 642, 657, 734
 ignorance 5, 32, 86, 175, 342, 456, 479, 499, 500, 505, 522, 544n, 545n, 676–677
 Illyrian (language) 53, 56
ilmihal (see also catechism) 72, 76, 82, 291, 579n, 581
iltizam 164n, 191
 imam(s) 1n, 13, 16, 36, 79, 87, 89, 290, 292, 293n, 295–296, 298, 299, 301–302, 307, 320, 325n, 403–407, 409–410, 419, 421, 568, 578, 582, 589–593, 596, 599, 601, 603, 687, 692n, 726, 731–732, 734–735, 737, 739
 Imami (scholars, clerics) 13–14, 402–407, 409, 411, 417, 715
 Imperial Council 129, 131–134, 165, 626n, 627–628, 675
 incarnation 125, 321, 323, 454, 461n
 indifference 7, 16, 28, 32, 89, 479n, 608, 657
 indoctrination 177, 512, 604, 751, 758
 indulgences 59
 infidelity (see also *kufr*) 598, 683n, 686
 infrastructure 87, 140–141, 152, 155, 286, 303, 304, 535, 745
 innovation(s) (see also *bida*) 42, 50, 60–61, 71, 73, 75–76, 119, 175, 265, 267, 363, 419, 492–493, 507–508, 579n, 597, 607
 inquisition 82, 353, 493–494
 intermediaries 2, 388, 538
 investiture 164–166, 179, 188–189, 191–192, 242, 342, 633, 729, 730n
ışık 571, 577, 582, 590–591
 Islam 1, 3, 5, 8, 13, 16, 20, 27, 29, 32–33, 36, 38, 47–48, 50, 55, 67, 84, 131, 136, 296, 317, 320, 335–336, 344, 346, 351, 354, 358, 364–365, 368, 383–384, 411, 507, 564–567, 569–571, 581–582, 586, 590, 593–594, 596–597, 600, 606–608, 638n, 640, 647, 651n, 653–654, 680–682, 685–687, 689, 708, 725–726, 730–

- 731, 734n, 737, 747, 755, 758 ; conversions to ~ 5, 46, 54n, 70–71, 77, 80, 127n, 129–130, 140, 172, 234, 247, 249, 335, 344, 346–353, 356–357, 359–365, 367, 569, 572, 577, 587, 635, 692, 716; conversion from ~ 573; Ottoman/Rumi ~ 16, 27, 71, 73–74, 77, 80, 83, 88, 118, 351, 566, 570, 606, 651n, 654–655
- Islamdom 27
- Islamic law (see also sharia and Hanafi) 20, 73–74, 118, 163, 171, 285, 408, 566, 567, 607, 689, 707, 710–711, 715
- Islamization 317, 346–347, 349, 350n, 360–361, 639
- itinerancy, itinerant 140, 317, 318n, 320, 324, 326, 571, 577, 587, 678
- J
- Jacobite(s) 238
- Ja'fari 82, 589, 592–593
- janissary(ies) 177, 240n, 246, 323, 329, 355, 587, 604, 626, 627, 637, 736, 737n, 738n
- Jansenist 15, 501n, 521–523, 531, 534, 544, 546
- Jesuit(s) 15, 45, 55–56, 61, 145, 176, 177n, 180, 235–236, 238, 364, 491, 497n, 512, 525, 535, 538–539, 637n, 656, 702–703, 705, 709–711, 718
- Jews 3, 5, 7, 11, 20, 34–35, 43, 46–47, 65–71, 85, 89, 118–121, 124, 126–127, 130–132, 134–135, 154, 176, 256–257, 259–260, 264, 269, 271–275, 340, 429, 636–637, 648–649, 746, 752
- jihād (see also holy war) 403, 689
- Judaism 47–48, 65–67, 69n, 84, 255, 257–258, 266, 274
- Judeo-German 264, 268
- Judeo-Spanish 121, 264
- Judezmo 121
- judge (see also qadi) 148, 235, 237, 322, 327n, 335, 342, 361, 628, 647–648, 683n, 708, 710–712, 714, 716, 727n, 728n, 736
- jurisdiction(al) 10, 17–18, 43, 54–55, 61, 165, 168, 180, 188–189, 215, 218, 220, 222, 225, 226n, 227–228, 245, 452, 455, 459, 462n, 474, 691, 703, 705n, 706n, 712, 717, 729
- jurist(s) 1, 9, 11, 72–73, 120, 124, 126, 237, 408, 583, 599, 628, 682, 683n, 688
- K
- Kabbalah, Kabbalist, kabbalistic 9, 11, 68, 255–260, 262–265, 267–275
- Kadiri 571, 573n, 605
- Kadizadeli(s) 18n, 42, 70, 76, 147, 234, 235n, 365, 367, 492n, 597–599, 603–604, 607–608, 653, 657
- kāfir* (Tr. *kafir*) 77, 83, 635n, 647n, 674, 686–687
- Kalender(is) 347, 588, 590
- kandil* 75
- kanun* 715
- kanunname* 330n
- Karshuni (Garshuni) 393n
- kebin* 714–715
- Kharijites 567, 570, 572–573, 590, 592, 600, 687n
- khutbah 302, 403, 405, 422
- king(s) 46, 88, 117, 120–121, 126, 128, 130–132, 134, 142, 151, 162, 171, 175, 179, 184, 187n, 217–218, 236, 238, 247, 339, 342–343, 362–363, 456, 460, 461n, 463, 464n, 465, 468n, 501–502, 532–534, 538, 540, 546, 596n, 640–641
- kingdom 63, 126, 131, 151, 238, 267, 474n, 508, 625n
- kingship 37–38, 39n, 172, 676
- Kizilbash 1–2, 9, 12, 18n, 39, 41, 80–81, 86, 246, 285–291, 292n, 294, 296–299, 301–307, 315–316, 325n, 328n, 329–330, 346, 405, 429, 566, 573, 575–580, 582, 585–586, 589, 592, 594–597, 604, 673, 677, 755
- Kızıl Deli Shrine 587
- knowledge 2–3, 5, 11, 32, 46n, 53, 57, 77–78, 86, 120, 123, 125, 133, 247, 258, 263–264, 273, 275, 286, 300–301, 306, 322, 387, 433, 479, 509–

- 510, 524, 563, 570–571, 581, 601n, 630n, 656, 703, 750, 758
- kufir* (Tr. *kufr*, see also unbelief and infidelity) 46, 77, 598, 686
- Kurds 17, 146, 676–677, 680, 683n, 684, 690–691, 693–694
- Kurdish 17, 430–431, 444, 673–675, 676n, 683, 690, 693; ~ language 13, 389, 393, 681; ~ tribes 17, 41, 429, 432, 575, 679, 680n, 691; ~ chieftains/notables 429, 675, 677, 678, 681–682, 691–693; ~jurists/ulema 682–684, 691
- L
- Ladino 70, 265
- Latin (language) 13, 58, 173, 175–176, 187n, 243n, 245n, 286, 355n, 356n, 390, 392–393, 453, 477n, 478n, 493–494, 495n, 497, 503, 504n, 505–506, 510, 513, 524, 526, 531, 544
- Latin(s) 61, 173–176, 180, 545, 548, 640; ~ priests 174, 184, 342, 492n, 509, 510–511, 539, 711; faith/confession: 51, 59, 505, 713; ~ Europe/West 8, 32, 48, 51, 85, 505n, 752, 754; ~ Christendom 8, 32, 48, 85, 432, 499, 638, 649; anti-~ 170, 174, 175, 177, 182, 193, 535, 547; pro-~ 170–174, 180–181, 184–185, 193, 530, 538; ~ community (of Constantinople) 541–542; ~ church 499, 538, 546
- law (see also Islamic law; sharia; canon law; Halakhah) 9, 13, 30, 38, 39n, 41–42, 65, 66n, 68, 74–75, 79, 85–86, 117–119, 121–129, 136, 161–165, 169, 177, 191, 218, 219, 238, 247, 304, 330n, 435, 473–474, 491, 523, 584, 591, 594, 607, 656, 673, 677n, 685–686, 701n, 706–708, 714–716, 718; school of ~ 72–74, 76, 80, 82, 85, 118, 120, 133–135, 404, 652, 673, 715
- lay, laity 9, 15, 57, 85, 117, 130, 141, 147, 160–161, 164, 168, 172, 187, 270, 352, 355, 389, 393, 409, 417, 434, 439, 473, 701n, 702, 703, 711n, 714, 718
- legal pluralism 17, 20, 57, 88, 566, 704, 707, 709–710
- legitimacy, legitimization 16, 27–28, 36, 38, 73, 76, 79–80, 82, 85–87, 164, 227, 322, 328, 342, 403, 406, 423, 434–436, 443, 445, 447, 507, 573, 594, 607, 678, 681, 683n, 684n, 690, 726, 733–734, 737, 741
- literate, literacy 26, 56, 77–78, 90, 290, 316, 349, 362, 364, 394, 506, 570
- liturgy, liturgical 15, 49–51, 60, 65, 66, 70, 85, 147, 151, 194, 218, 224, 228, 238, 265, 266, 275, 338, 351, 366, 385, 389, 392, 394, 395, 430, 439, 446, 451, 453n, 454, 455, 461, 479n, 491n, 492n, 523, 534
- loyalty 16, 41, 45, 47, 78, 129, 221, 226, 434, 438–439, 442, 474, 504, 608, 675–676, 693
- lusaworč'adawan* 243n, 244, 492, 495, 506–507
- Lusaworič' (St. Gregory the Illuminator) church of ~ 491, 504, 512; faith of ~506–507
- Lutheran, Lutheranism 6–8, 12, 30, 41–43, 45, 49n, 57n, 58–59, 78, 176, 257, 524–525, 526n, 527, 543n, 546n, 548, 745–747, 749, 751, 756
- M
- madhhab* (see also *mezheb* and law, school of) 44, 72, 75–76, 78, 82, 120, 565–566, 572, 576, 579n, 581, 582, 584n, 586, 589, 596, 600–601, 680, 690
- madhhabization 76
- madrassa(s) 74n, 347n, 409, 418–420, 422, 571, 582
- Magnifica Comunita of Pera 541
- Major Occultation 406, 423
- maktel* 287, 288n, 289, 570, 583, 584, 586n
- Maliki 133, 599–600, 686
- Mamluk(s) 3, 5, 35, 74–76, 130
- marriage 17, 56, 76–77, 85, 133, 144, 165, 243, 263, 266, 297, 533, 586,

- 687, 701–702, 704–705, 706n, 707–716
- Maronite(s) 5, 13, 48, 52, 386, 388–389, 391–392, 394–396
- Maturidi 652–653
- martyr (see also neomartyr) 249, 339, 341, 349–350, 352–354, 357, 361, 365, 367–368, 407, 421n, 437, 496, 497, 509, 753
- martyrdom 12–13, 62, 249, 287n, 336–343, 345–346, 349, 350n, 351–369, 421, 429, 437, 439, 500n, 509, 570, 584, 730
- martyrology (see also neomartyrology) 335, 337–339, 348–349, 351, 356, 366, 368, 570
- Masjed-e Shah complex (Masjed-e Jame^c-ye ‘Abbasi) 402–403, 411, 413–415, 417–419, 421–423
- mausoleum 325, 329, 646n, 734, 736
- mausoleum-convent complex 329
- mecmua* 295, 683n
- Medici Press 386, 390, 399
- Melami(s) 588, 591, 607
- Melismos* 533n, 534, 561
- Melkite (see also Greek Catholic) 384–385, 396
- mendicancy 317
- merchant(s) 14, 53, 62, 141, 145–147, 151–152, 272, 356, 360, 391, 452, 460, 465, 467, 469, 472–473, 475, 498, 536, 537–540, 632, 650n, 690, 714, 758
- Messiah 69–70
- messianic, messianism 9, 11, 19, 37–39, 68–71, 117, 122, 126, 127n, 130, 255–257, 273, 318
- metadox(y) 3n, 35, 315, 346n, 565n
- metropolitan 164, 167–171, 182–184, 185n, 189, 215–228, 335, 338, 353, 366, 503, 537n, 539
- Metropolitanate (of Kyiv) 10, 48, 50, 185n, 218, 366, 527
- mawālī (Tr. *mevālī*) 576–577, 578n, 590
- Mevlid* 75, 86, 87n
- mezheb* (see also *madhhab*) 44, 72, 76, 323, 565, 572, 576n, 577n, 578n, 579n, 590, 592, 600, 687, 737–738
- miaphysite 430, 461n, 493, 495n, 505, 507, 509
- Mihna* 82
- Mileševo Monastery 16, 625, 629–632, 633n43, 634–637, 642, 645, 649–650
- millenarian 26, 37, 303, 648–649
- millennium 27, 37, 383, 391, 591
- millet* 6, 43–44, 64, 323, 479, ~of Abraham 18, 576n; ~system 6, 43, 44, 161
- mimesis, mimetic 4, 7, 29, 65, 90, 365
- Mi‘rac* 297
- missionary(ies) 2, 6, 9–11, 13–15, 17–20, 26–28, 33, 43–47, 52–53, 55–56, 63–65, 71, 80, 88, 141, 150–152, 174, 180, 234–245, 248–249, 294, 298n, 384, 387–389, 391–392, 430n, 432, 433n, 447, 451–452, 453n, 454n, 456, 458n, 462, 464–479, 490, 496, 497, 504–505, 507, 510, 512, 525, 530, 535–536, 538, 637n, 701–707, 709, 713–714, 716–718, 752, 758
- Mekhtarist(s) 14, 478, 479n, 507n
- mobility 4, 5, 11, 26, 28–29, 46, 53, 84, 87, 141, 145, 149, 155, 255, 261, 360
- modernization 30, 159, 747
- Mohammedans 25
- monastery 16, 25, 140, 143, 149, 152–153, 168–169, 171, 179, 217, 219, 221, 244, 340, 341n, 350–351, 352n, 356, 386, 393, 430, 436n, 440, 445, 453n, 467, 498, 537, 625, 629–637, 642–645, 647–650
- monastic 13, 50, 60, 64, 167–169, 171, 187, 273, 350, 352, 358, 367
- monasticism 356, 529, 543, 633
- monk(s) 179, 239, 241, 243, 338, 354, 358, 366, 442, 444n, 460n, 478, 536, 537n, 642n, 650
- Mongol 27, 36, 73, 318, 568, 678, 681
- monophysitism, monophysite 247, 461n, 508–509
- Morisco 5
- Mother of God 143–144, 150
- mufti (see also sheikh ūl-islam) 120, 128, 132–134, 171n, 240n, 242, 246–247, 738n

- Mughal(s) 27, 29, 37–39, 40n, 127n, 404, 465, 467n, 591, 752n
- Mühimme* register 39n, 179, 674, 682, 691
- muḥibb-i ḥānedān* (see also philo-Alid) 576, 590, 596
- mujtahid 13, 403, 405–406, 583
- multiconfessional(ism) 34, 608–609
- müderris* 578, 582, 738
- mümin* 77
- münkir* 603
- mürşid* 296, 297, 300, ~-i *kamil* 302, 607
- mürted* (see also apostate) 83, 687, 690
- musahib* 297
- myth 256, 258–259, 297, 629, 674, 756
- mythology 638, 676n, 677n
- mysticism, mystics (see also Sufism and Kabbalah) 9, 11, 16, 36, 41, 68, 70, 119, 123, 124, 126–128, 130, 135, 143, 255–258, 260–263, 265–267, 268n, 270, 272–273, 275, 303–304, 315n, 317–318, 323n, 504, 566, 569, 571, 577, 587, 606, 651n, 677
- N
- nafile* 75
- nakibüleşraf* 237
- namazcı* 404
- Nakshbandi(s) 571, 583, 588, 605,
- naşārā* 631, 635n
- nation 6, 30, 43, 46, 57, 132, 166n, 242, 247, 367, 459, 461n, 462, 469n, 470, 472, 492, 495, 496n, 499, 507n, 508
- neomartyr(s) (see also martyr(s)) 62, 336–338, 351
- neomartyrology(ies) (see also martyrologies) 12, 71
- neopraxy 508
- Nestorian(s) 430, 433, 438–442, 444–447, 535
- network 15, 53, 69, 87–89, 120, 121, 145, 160–161, 178, 187, 257, 264, 270, 326–328, 338, 347, 349, 351, 352, 360, 364n, 369, 465, 470, 490, 522, 524, 532, 535–536, 538n, 539, 542, 569, 574, 607, 628n, 636n, 649, 703n, 704, 753
- New Renunciation 317, 318, 320
- New Rome 38
- New Testament 501, 532
- New World 37, 53, 152, 386
- Noktavi 591
- nomad(ic) 313, 318–320, 680, 691, 693
- non-Muslim(s) 1, 4, 6, 16, 20, 35, 40, 43–44, 46–47, 60, 77, 83, 87, 118, 133, 136, 149, 343, 348, 360, 365, 475, 626, 630, 707, 715
- norm(s) 6, 17, 19, 35n, 40, 73, 85–86, 88, 122, 134, 176, 259, 272, 341n, 528, 564, 579n, 588, 593, 606, 732, 755, confessional ~ 748, 752; creedal~ 19, 41, 77, 80, 87; Jewish ~ 69, 258, 753; legal ~ 20, 40, 72n, 73, 753, ritual~ 7, 12, 15, 19, 41, 77, 80, 87; religious~ 145, 317, 566; Sunni~ 40, 42, 328, 570, 572, 581, 582, 586, 588, 593; Tridentine ~ 17, 717
- normative centering 29, 85–89
- normative, normativity, normativization 6, 11, 19, 20, 28, 32–33, 40, 50, 60, 65, 67n, 69n, 70, 73–74, 79, 85–90, 273, 369, 571, 597, 689, 717, 751
- notable(s) 169, 179, 457, 460, 466n, 468, 469n, 470, 534, 596, 675, 677, 678, 681, 683n, 691–693, 735
- nun(s) 168, 356, 523
- O
- ocak* 290, 294,
- ocaklık* 692
- occultation 13, 79, 301, 403, 406, 409, 410, 423
- oikonomia* 61, 224, 227, 341–343, 352, 353, 356, 358, 364, 366, 368, 709
- oikumene* 9
- Old Church Slavonic 349
- Old Testament 299n
- oriental 48, ~languages 386, 395, 453, 757, ~ churches 222, 461n, 522, ~rite 452, 546
- orientalism 386

Orthodoxy

- Greek ~ 10, 20, 47, 49–51, 55, 57, 61, 65, 162, 176, 192, 193, 218, 339, 343, 344, 351, 353, 358, 366, 367, 548, 716; Slavic ~ 350n
- orthodoxy 3–7, 15, 16, 18–20, 28, 31, 33, 36, 43, 46, 50, 57, 67, 69, 74, 77, 79, 135, 143, 173, 248, 305, 319, 336, 340n, 346, 395, 423, 441–442, 444, 451–452, 478n, 479, 490–491, 505–506, 509–511, 513, 565, 571, 594, 750; Armenian Apostolic ~ 47, 65, 247–248, 456, 460, 475, 490, 494, 505–506, 638, 702n, 736, 740, 750; Sunni ~ 3–4, 16, 33, 35, 41–42, 71–73, 77, 313, 315, 404, 431, 606, 655, 755; Islamic ~ 348, 350n
- orthopraxy 3–7, 15, 18–20, 28, 31, 33, 35, 36, 42, 43, 57, 60, 69, 72–74, 77, 79, 147, 336, 338–339, 366, 401, 404, 423, 490, 506, 511, 601, 655, 750
- Ottoman-Safavid 33, 39, 42, 71, 315; ~ relations 406, 595n, 733; ~ border 41, 406; ~ rivalry 27, 566; ~ conflict 46, 314, 330, 595, ~ rapprochement 741, ~ war(s) 1, 10, 63n, 80

P

- padishah 726–728, 733–737, 739–740
- Palaeologoi 172
- Pammakaristos Monastery 171
- pan-Judaic 68, 258
- papacy 56, 431, 435, 437–439, 441, 447, 702, 704, 705n, 714, 733, 745–746
- papal 56, 174–175, 223, 443, 466, 473, 493n, 639; ~ bull 61; ~ Curia 7, 703; ~ primacy/supremacy 173, 175, 177, 435–437, 439
- parish 167, 168, 170, 224, 243, 541, 701n, 702, 710
- parishioners 49, 50, 243, 453n
- parsōpā* 441, 442
- path (see also *tariqa*) 76, 548, 686; spiritual/Sufi ~ 41, 144, 257, 317, 322, 324, 572–574, 577, 582, 690; Al-*evi* ~ 290, 292, 295, 297–300, 690;

- right/true ~ 76, 125, 143, 242, 592, 640, 646, 676, 682, 688n, 694; God's ~ 652, 731; wrong ~ 639
- patriarch 45, 49, 58, 60, 61, 132–134, 149–150, 162–164, 166, 168, 170–171, 179, 181, 224, 249, 342, 344, 351, 358, 388, 442, 455–456, 462, 463, 466, 532, 548; Chaldean ~ 431, 433n, 434, 437, 443, 444n, 445, 447; ~ of the Church of the East 384, 387–389, 393, 431, 433n, 434, 436–437, 440–445, 447; Greek Orthodox ~ of Constantinople 10, 43, 51, 162, 172, 174–187, 189–193, 216–226, 250n, 341, 353, 430, 525, 531–533, 535, 712, 751; Greek Orthodox ~ of Jerusalem 25, 58–59, 181, 187, 223, 225, 535, 548; Greek Orthodox ~ of Alexandria 162, 172–173, 353, 357n, 526, 533; Armenian ~ of Constantinople 11, 43, 63, 147–148, 239–246, 248–249, 458n, 493–496, 500–504, 511n; Armenian ~ of Jerusalem 244; Armenian ~ of Sis 542; Serbian ~ 61n, 637, 639–641, 645, 706n, 713n; Syrian Orthodox ~ 238–239; 430, 445n, 446; Russian ~/of Moscow 49, 85, 176, 218–224, 528
- Patriarchal School 348
- patriarchate 149, 223, 241, 363; Chaldean 388; 430, 433n; 441; Greek Orthodox ~ of Constantinople: 10, 48, 54, 59, 61, 63, 161–162, 164, 166–167, 169–171, 181, 183, 185, 187–188, 191, 192n, 215–216, 219, 226, 228, 343, 345, 348, 366n, 538; Greek Orthodox ~ of Alexandria 173n, 185n; Serbian ~ of Peć 54n, 350–351; ~ of Moscow 160, 168n, 215, 218, 222, 228; Armenian ~ of Constantinople 63n, 242, 245, 535; Armenian Catholic ~ of Constantinople 241n; Armenian ~ of Jerusalem 63, 139, 140n, 244, 248n; Syriac ~ 239
- patronage 10, 41, 87–88, 164, 176, 178, 244, 401–402, 411, 415–417, 423, 541, 726, 731, 732
- Pax Ottomana* 216–217

- Peace of Augsburg 42, 314
 persecution 35, 41, 78, 81, 248n, 274,
 339, 346–347, 571n, 603, 674
 Persian (language) 270, 288n, 409,
 417, 422n, 568, 570n, 575, 576n,
 601n, 628, 643n, 651, 652n, 653, 676
pesikot 124
 Philanthroponon Monastery 340
 philo-Alid, philo-Alidism (see also Alid;
ahl al-bayt) 16, 566–569, 574,
 576n, 577n, 578–579, 581, 583–585,
 588–589, 592–593, 596, 599–601,
 603, 606–608
 Pietists 757
 piety 8–9, 11–12, 18–20, 26–28, 31, 36,
 47, 49, 68, 71, 75–76, 85–86, 270,
 272–275, 285, 325, 326, 367, 411,
 422, 565–569, 589, 593, 596, 601,
 606, 755
 pilgrim(s) 18, 147, 151, 265, 274, 643,
 726–732, 741
 pilgrimage (see also hajj and *ziyārat*)
 18, 82, 87, 176, 235, 266, 269, 389,
 443n, 680, 685, 725, 727n, 728–732,
 740, 754, 756
pīshnamāz 405, 421
pişkeş 164, 169, 188n
 plurality, pluralism (see also legal plural-
 ism) 16–17, 20, 31, 57, 68, 74, 88,
 123, 255n, 258, 285, 294, 295n, 343,
 345, 369, 564, 566, 606, 623, 703–
 704, 707, 709–710, 716, 748–750,
 755
 poet, poetry 16, 70, 289, 291, 292n,
 301, 315n, 325n, 429, 432, 564,
 570n, 575–578, 583–584, 589–590,
 592–593, 606, 628, 631, 635, 638,
 652, 653n
 polarization 341, 566, confessional ~ 4,
 5, 8–9, 11–12, 15–17, 19–20, 27, 33,
 40n, 41–42, 44, 46, 62, 66, 69, 77,
 78, 84, 274, 365n, 490, 505, 574;
 economic 240; Sunni-Shi'a~ 314–315
 poll-tax (see also *cizye*) 35, 77, 635
 polemics, polemical 5, 11, 13–15, 32,
 42, 53, 62, 64, 69–71, 78, 82–83,
 140, 176, 192n, 193, 228n, 240,
 247n, 258, 274, 336, 354, 355n,
 401n, 433–434, 436–437, 443–445,
 453n, 489–490, 492, 497–498, 503–
 505, 507–512, 579, 582, 584, 590,
 595, 597, 629, 653, 753
 polemicist 61n, 406, 489, 496–497,
 506, 582, 746n
 politics 2, 6–10, 17–20, 26–30, 35, 55,
 56, 60, 120, 121, 149, 180, 344, 361,
 366, 434, 474, 566, 594, 607, 608,
 626, 631, 649, 654, 694, 726, 748,
 750, 754–755; ~ of piety 8–9, 18–19,
 26–27, 567
 pope (see also papal) 148–151, 171,
 174, 238, 243–244, 249, 431, 434–
 436, 438–439, 445n, 447, 452, 453n,
 454–456, 458n, 460, 463–464, 466n–
 472, 475n
 popular religion 55, 638, 717
 practice 4, 6, 8, 10, 27, 29, 32, 40, 60,
 64, 68, 71, 73–77, 79, 84, 86, 90,
 120, 123, 125, 164, 170, 191, 194,
 233, 255, 268, 274, 348, 361, 403,
 409, 436n, 467n, 493, 495n, 504,
 505, 507–508, 564n, 565, 573, 579,
 582–585, 586n, 590, 593, 595, 600,
 674, 680, 689, 708, 712, 714–715,
 740, 749–751
 prayer 65n, 70n, 74–76, 120, 146, 266,
 268–269, 274, 302, 323, 493, 502,
 647–648, 680, 738; Friday ~ 13–14,
 401–411, 413–415, 418, 421–423
 priest(s), priesthood 10, 17, 49, 60, 64,
 141–145, 147–148, 150, 153–155,
 167–169, 187–189, 225, 240–241,
 243, 245–246, 349, 359, 361–364,
 385, 389, 393, 437, 442, 445n, 462,
 491, 493, 499n, 504, 510–511, 530,
 534n, 537n, 539, 541, 544, 701n,
 702–718
 printing, printed 53, 83, 173, 314, 367,
 386, 396, 757; Arabic ~ 386, 394,
 396; Syriac ~ 394, 396; Jewish ~ 67,
 121, 122, 128, 130, 255, 262–265;
 Greek ~ 57–58, 174–177, 180, 193,
 351, 363, 547; Illyrian ~ 56; Arme-
 nian ~ 457n, 493, 500–501, 503n,
 504, 757

printing press 174, 176–177, 180, 193,
314, 363, 493, 500, 503n, 504n
profession of faith 58n, 60, 62, 439,
440–443, 445n, 456, 502, 532, 533,
535, 539, 593, 602
Propaganda Fide (see Congregation of
Propaganda Fide)
prophet, prophetic 148, 489, 603, 605,
732; ~ Muhammad 16, 36, 38, 42,
46, 75, 78, 86, 131, 143, 237, 285,
296–297, 300, 301, 303, 320, 492,
567, 573, 581, 583–585, 589, 596–
599, 601–603, 607, 685, 687, 725,
727, 734, 739
prophecy 320, 321, 489, 602–605, 676
prophethood 296, 300, 602–606
prophetology 602
proselytization 60, 65, 452,
Protestant(ism) 4, 15, 20, 26, 31–32,
45n, 46–47, 50–51, 56, 58, 65, 71,
126, 161, 173–177, 185, 192, 299n,
314, 335, 337, 345, 357, 358n, 363,
369, 383, 521–522, 524–527, 529,
533, 540, 543–544, 546–548, 716,
745–746, 749–758
punishment 17, 131, 168, 183, 236–
237, 243, 245, 343, 361–363, 404n,
606
purgatory 59, 530, 548n

Q

qadi (see also judge) 17, 93, 169, 171n,
179–180, 235–237, 239–240, 243n,
244n, 248, 335–336, 344, 347, 349,
360–362, 405, 415, 585, 603, 647,
683n, 704, 706–707, 709–718, 727,
729n, 736–737
qadi court 118, 148, 165, 168–169,
180, 190, 192, 337, 707, 711, 714,
716
qadiasker 237, 240, 628
Qajars 413
qnōmē 430, 440–442
Quran 5, 16, 18, 36, 39, 42–43, 81,
289, 419, 421–422, 569, 603, 631n,
635n, 643n, 651, 685, 688, 747
quṭb 36, 119

R

Rabban Hormizd Monastery 393, 430,
440, 442
rabbi 9, 43, 45, 67, 69n, 117–120, 123–
126, 127n, 129, 131–136, 259–261,
264–266, 268–271, 273
rabbinical 68–69, 87, 89, 118, 121,
128–129, 133–134
Rafizi 39, 580, 582, 598
Ramadan 421, 585
Realpolitik 452, 465, 639, 644–645,
741
rebaptism 61
rebellion 171–172, 177, 234, 246n,
260, 330, 369, 477, 579, 588, 591,
627, 629, 639, 642, 686–687, 733
reform 10, 26, 49, 50–51, 67–68, 80,
85, 127, 175–176, 180, 190, 267,
343, 751, 755
reformation 8, 27, 175, 273, 355, 432,
475
Reformation 4–5, 7, 12, 25, 27, 28–29,
31–33, 37, 45–46, 48–49, 52, 67–68,
71, 84–85, 89, 257–258, 275, 291,
314, 345, 364, 386, 490, 525, 747,
749–750, 753, 756; Lutheran ~ 746,
Calvinist ~ 78; Protestant ~ 26, 46,
78, 522, 746; Catholic ~ 20, 56, 341,
341n, 355, 390; Counter-~ 257, 324,
392, 453n, 524–525, 637, 639
refugee 2, 5, 10, 28, 46, 139, 139n,
140–141, 142n, 145–148, 152
relics 16, 59, 186n, 350–351, 353, 365,
419, 543, 625, 629, 631–635, 637,
639, 641–645, 650, 653
reincarnation 265, 685, 686n
religion 2, 6, 16–18, 25, 26, 30–31, 37,
38n, 40n, 43, 46, 49, 52, 55, 67, 75,
80–81, 84–85, 89, 127, 132, 149–150,
236, 242, 244, 246n, 247–248, 259,
303–304, 335, 349, 354–356, 444,
467n, 673n, 497n, 543n, 547, 594,
605, 608, 626, 638, 645, 654–655,
657, 673, 681, 684–686, 689, 693,
717–718, 726, 740, 748, 750, 758
Religion of Abraham (*millet-i Ibrāhim*)
18
religionization 16

- Renaissance 85, 155, 256, 260–261, 275
- renewal 4, 8, 10, 27–28, 67–68, 76, 155, 167n, 170, 348, 359, 363, 521, 524, 536, 539, 546, 729n
- resistance 7, 16, 28, 31, 33, 46, 74n, 82, 86, 89, 161, 185, 337, 354, 356–357, 452, 571, 583, 627, 705
- restoration of churches 153, 161, 176, 240n, 464n
- Revelation (Book of) 356–357, 358n, 564
- rite 43, 242–243, 247, 323, 452, 455n, 512, 715n, 718
- ritual 5–8, 12–15, 19, 28, 32–34, 36, 40–42, 47, 49, 51, 53, 60, 64, 70, 76–82, 84, 86–87, 89–90, 117, 119, 122, 127, 233, 255, 257, 265–267, 271–272, 274–275, 285–287, 289–291, 296–298, 300, 302–306, 317, 323, 325, 327–328, 338, 401–411, 417, 421–423, 436, 492n, 501, 534n, 567, 570, 573, 583, 586, 589, 593, 595, 596–599, 606, 640–641, 674, 694, 702, 714, 717–718
- ritual cursing (*teberrā*) 401, 406, 407, 412n, 573, 580, 583, 589, 595–596, 606
- rival(ry) 4, 7, 14, 16–17, 27, 31, 34–35, 37, 47, 52, 57, 63, 72, 80, 83, 86, 126, 134, 186n, 215–216, 233, 236, 238, 240, 316, 384, 404, 416, 423, 432, 434–437, 443–446, 494, 526, 566, 588, 650n, 684, 704, 725, 750
- Roman Curia 7, 703
- Roman Emperor 1, 38, 171, 640
- rural 12, 20, 31, 43, 51, 52, 72, 77, 88, 313, 316, 327–329, 429, 716
- Russian Empire 87; Russian Orthodox Church 50
- Ruthenian 218, 220–221, 223, 459, 460n
- S
- Sabbatean 9, 19n, 69, 70n, 129, 135
- sacrament 17, 541, 701n, 704n, 714
- Safavid(s) 1, 2–5, 7, 10, 12–14, 16–19, 25–29, 33, 34n, 35, 37–43, 46, 62–64, 71–74, 79–82, 85, 87, 127n, 246n, 285–286, 294–296, 299, 301–303, 304, 305–307, 313–315, 319, 329–330, 346, 385, 401–405, 406–416, 419, 421n, 422–423, 429, 432, 451, 453–454, 465, 474, 475n, 503, 506n, 512, 565–566, 573–575, 577–579, 581–588, 594–596, 607–608, 673, 675, 677, 684, 725–731, 733–739, 740–741
- Sahib al-Amr Mosque 402, 412, 414, 416, 423
- Şahkulu Rebellion 330, 578n, 579
- Sahn-ı Semaniyye 578
- saint 173, 247n, 295, 296n, 320, 321n, 322–326, 337, 587, 625, 639, 641, 645
- Saint Astuacacin Monastery 493–494
- Saint Grigor Lusawori^c Church 491, 504, 512
- sainthood (*vilāya*) 296, 300, 318, 320–321, 323, 326n, 574, 598, 602, 607
- salvation 2, 28, 70n, 77, 85, 187, 258, 296, 340, 343, 362; salvific 117
- Satan 300, 323, 335, 437, 458, 685, 687, 690
- schism 49, 243, 275, 429, 431–434, 438–444, 447, 449n, 506, 508, 509n
- schismatics 14, 52, 223, 250n, 452, 454–455, 457, 471n, 477, 490, 492–493, 496, 499, 508
- scholar 9, 16, 42, 56, 70, 82, 85, 118–119, 133, 264, 293, 315, 364, 368, 407, 537, 578, 581, 599, 605, 637–638, 656–657, 745
- Second Siege of Vienna 42, 599, 604
- secret conversion 491
- sect 76, 324, 475n, 674, 680, 681, 684n, 687n, 689, 738
- sectarian 12, 38–40, 83, 152–153, 238n, 239, 249, 273, 313, 315–316, 330–331, 567–568, 596, 601, 607, 726, 731, 740–741
- secular 65, 68, 167n, 256, 261, 564n, 657, 704n, 709, 712, 748
- sedentarization 54n, 319, 326, 691
- self-fashioning 37, 125, 344, 384, 393, 643–644

- Şems-i Tebrizi(s) 590
- Sephardi(c) 9, 67, 68, 118–121, 123, 126–128, 130, 130n, 256, 258–260, 263, 265–266, 270, 272, 275, 752, 754
- Sephardim 67n, 255, 260, 270, 753
- serasker* 592, 644
- Serbian 16, 54, 54n, 55, 350–351, 625, 630, 633n, 637, 639, 641, 642n, 645, 649–650
- Shafi'i 80, 133, 579n, 600, 673, 680, 683n, 684, 686, 690, 694
- shahāda* 77, 346, 348n, 602
- shah 1, 12, 25–26, 38, 74, 81–82, 145, 288n, 290–291, 292n, 299, 301–303, 306, 315n, 329n, 330, 402–409, 411–415, 417–419, 421–423, 429, 453–454, 458, 464n, 465n, 473–476, 574–575, 577, 591, 606, 677, 732–737, 739–740
- sharia (see also Islamic law) 39n, 41–42, 70, 79, 86, 184, 285–286, 288, 301, 313, 316–319, 321n, 322–323, 327, 329n, 335, 346, 404, 564, 572–573, 590, 594, 598, 603, 607, 685, 690, 707, 711, 714–716, 731
- sheikh ūl-islam (Ottoman; see also chief jurist) 11, 17, 120, 134, 171n, 234, 238, 240, 244, 246, 248, 327, 360, 495, 580, 585, 604, 628, 754
- sheikh al-Islam (Safavid) 408–409, 411, 417, 423
- Shi'i 1n, 9, 14, 19–20, 27, 33, 36–37, 41, 46n, 47, 74, 79, 81–83, 86, 323, 325, 328n, 389, 401–406, 408–409, 412, 416, 421, 423, 474n, 566–569, 572n, 575n, 577–581, 584–586, 589–590, 592–593, 595–596, 601–602, 607–608, 754, 756
- Shi'ism 3–4, 35, 39, 72, 74n, 82, 87, 285–286, 288n, 301, 303–304, 404, 407–408, 417, 423, 569, 575, 580, 590, 602, 608, 677, 731, 741
- Shi'ite 13–14, 18, 20, 39, 74, 246n, 304, 346, 401–404, 407, 411, 416–419, 421, 423, 432, 575, 684, 725–726, 730, 732n, 740, 742, 745
- Shi'itization 41, 74, 566, 571
- shrine 266, 321, 328, 412, 587, 589, 630, 726, 727n, 732–734, 736–739, 741
- silsila* 125, 303, 569, 573, 573n
- sin 144–145, 340, 366, 572
- sinner 140–141, 363, 455
- Slavic (language) 9, 19, 54–56; ~ churches 167n; ~Orthodox identity 350, 718
- Slavs 639
- Slavia Orthodoxa* 48, 51–52, 228
- social disciplining 19–20, 26–27, 30–31, 42, 49–51, 65, 70, 72, 90, 159, 228, 233, 257, 273, 344, 527–528, 718, 748, 755
- sovereign 2, 28, 37–38, 42, 47, 117, 237, 247, 322, 466, 587, 726, 732–733, 736, 740–741
- sovereignty 11, 18, 27, 36–38, 81, 88n, 117–119, 221, 406, 677, 726, 731, 733, 736, 740–742
- Spanish 37, 121, 126, 171, 262, 264, 271, 275, 341n, 351, 356, 627, 639, 649
- state 3–4, 6–7, 10, 12–13, 17–18, 26–31, 34–35, 37, 38n, 39n, 40–41, 44, 47, 49–50, 54, 57, 60–61, 66, 71–73, 76, 80, 83, 85–90, 117–119, 127, 135, 142n, 147, 149, 154, 159–165, 169–171, 174, 176–177, 179–180, 182, 186, 189–191, 215–216, 218, 226, 228, 250, 257, 273, 286, 303, 313–315, 316–319, 322–324, 326–328, 329, 343, 345–346, 369, 385, 404, 406, 409, 431, 466, 474, 501–502, 527, 563, 565–566, 569, 574, 577, 585–586, 587n, 589, 594, 597, 605–608, 626, 628, 633–634, 637, 650, 654, 656, 674, 694, 704, 716, 725–726, 728, 730–733, 736–742, 747–751, 754–755
- state formation, state-building 7, 27, 30–31, 37, 40, 66, 84, 90, 159, 215, 228, 314, 317, 343, 432, 747
- statism (étatisme) 656–657, 750
- standardization 12, 20, 44, 77, 85, 304n, 306, 632n, 747
- St. Catherine's Monastery 25

- St. Nicholas Church 154
- Sublime Porte 215–217, 234, 247, 291, 494, 496, 541, 636n, 647, 726–728, 731–733, 735–739, 741
- Sufi 9, 12, 16, 36–37, 41–42, 70, 72, 75, 79, 270, 275, 285, 288, 289n, 291, 296, 299, 301–306, 317, 318n, 320, 322–324, 328, 355n, 412, 563–564, 566–567, 569, 571–578, 581–582, 587–588, 590–601, 603–608, 630, 651, 653, 681, 689–690
- Sufism 41, 303–305, 563, 566–567, 569, 589, 594, 597, 600, 606–607, 638, 653
- Süleymaniye complex (in Damascus) 270
- Süleymaniye Mosque (in Istanbul) 407, 414, 417
- şûh-i kull* 40, 591
- sultan 1, 3, 9, 13, 17, 38, 41–43, 47, 63n, 73–76, 79–81, 86, 88, 117–120, 126, 130, 132n, 133–135, 142, 151, 162, 164–165, 167–168, 170–172, 177–180, 184–185, 187, 190–191, 215–217, 219, 221, 223, 226, 234–238, 240, 243, 245–246, 247n, 249, 256, 274, 289, 292n, 318–319, 320n, 321–324, 327, 339, 341–348, 353–354, 361, 364, 385, 404, 407, 412, 414–415, 417, 422, 444, 454n, 491, 495, 496, 498, 521n, 525, 532n, 536, 541n, 577–578, 587–588, 592, 602, 627, 649, 651, 657, 675–676, 682, 684, 687–689, 691–692, 694, 713, 754
- Sunna 3, 42, 75–76, 492, 569, 592, 594, 598, 600, 607
- Sunni 1, 3–6, 9, 13–14, 16–17, 19–20, 27, 33, 35–37, 39, 40–42, 46n, 47, 60, 70–83, 85–86, 88, 118, 127, 133, 135, 246n, 285, 304–305, 313–316, 320, 323, 328–330, 336, 361, 389, 401, 402–408, 414, 416–417, 423, 431, 492, 563, 565–568, 570, 572–574, 578–586, 588–590, 592–597, 600–604, 606–608, 641, 673–678, 680–682, 683n 684–685, 687, 689–694, 704, 715, 717, 725, 731, 734n, 737, 740–742, 745, 754–755
- Sunni revival 565
- Sunnism 3–4, 39, 72, 79, 82, 286, 288n, 305, 314, 316, 329, 565n, 567–568, 573, 599, 606–607, 678n, 741
- Sunnitization 4, 6, 12, 17–18, 20, 41, 72, 76, 79, 82, 84, 171, 248, 305, 315, 329, 341, 345–346, 348, 355, 565, 571, 582, 591, 594, 597, 606, 608, 654, 674, 694, 755
- surveillance 502, 504, 578n, 585, 588, 606
- syncretism, syncretic 3n, 37, 55, 344, 346n, 638, 673
- Synod 162–163, 164, 168, 170, 172–173, 181–187, 189, 190–192, 193n, 217–218, 223, 227, 389, 391, 529n, 535, 548n; ~ of Constantinople 61n, 173; ~ of Dort 174; ~ of Jassy 51, 58, 527, 529; ~ of Nicosia 529–531, 543; ~ of Stoglav 51; ~ of Jerusalem 173
- Syriac 11, 13–14, 19, 53, 65, 234, 238–239, 386–387, 389–396, 429–432, 433n, 436n, 439, 442, 444–445, 446
- Syriac Church 238, 247, 431–432, 444, 509, 535, 545, 753
- Syrian Orthodox 430–431, 442, 445–446
- T
- ta'assub* 580, 584, 592
- Tahtacı (Alevi) 287–290, 292, 295, 591
- taife* 44, 324–325, 325n, 675n, 676n
- talib* 296–298, 572
- Talmud, Talmudic 67n, 119, 122, 123, 125–126, 128, 133, 255, 267
- Talmudic school (see *yeshivah*)
- tanāsukh* (Tr. *tenasüh*) 318
- Tanzimat 80, 83
- taqiya (see also dissimulation) 586n, 593
- tariqa (Tr. *tarikāt*) 296, 298–301, 317, 328, 569, 573, 577, 581, 587–589, 591, 600
- Tatar 50, 146, 221, 241, 688
- tax(es) 6, 35, 43–44, 47, 77, 80–81, 129, 133, 147–149, 163–165, 167,

- 169–170, 183, 187, 188n, 189, 191, 260, 317, 319, 324n, 327, 329, 330n, 343, 346, 352, 356, 432n, 473n, 633–635, 637, 684n, 689, 694, 704, 712–713
- teberrā* (see ritual cursing) 573, 580, 589, 595–596
- tekke* 270, 596
- tevellā* 573, 580
- tezkire* 298, 575–576, 578n
- Timurid 37–38, 415, 417
- theocracy 411
- theocratic 32
- theology 49, 53, 57–58, 66n, 74, 85–86, 192, 256–257, 323, 338, 363, 385, 439–441, 452, 456, 463, 478n, 492, 498, 504–506, 509, 547, 652–653, 656, 750; theological 14–15, 31–32, 42, 47, 55–56, 58–59, 66, 74, 76, 82, 119, 131, 150, 173, 176, 185, 192, 247, 273, 339n, 341, 344–345, 366, 439, 452, 453, 457, 465, 467, 469, 471–473, 476–477, 478n, 490, 494, 497, 504n, 505–507, 509–510, 513, 521–523, 526, 526n, 530, 545, 547, 579n, 600, 686, 694, 741, 748–749, 754, 757
- theologian 15, 32, 58, 171n, 185, 192–193, 218, 247, 336, 353, 357, 364, 366, 409, 441n, 457, 474, 489–490, 501n, 505–506, 507n, 510–511, 513, 525–526, 528, 529n, 531–532, 535, 544, 546, 757
- theologization 564
- Thirty Years War 30, 314, 524
- timar 88n, 169
- tolerance 6–7, 16, 35, 44, 81, 340, 342, 344, 564, 736; toleration 328n, 339, 345
- Topkapı Palace 134, 142, 154
- tradition 13–16, 41, 48, 55, 67, 73, 75, 77, 81, 84–86, 90, 119, 125n, 129, 133, 163, 250, 265, 267, 271–272, 274, 295, 296, 299, 315, 344, 361, 368, 393n, 394, 419, 433–434, 436–437, 440, 543n, 463, 475, 479, 490, 494, 505–506, 508–511, 513, 527–529, 534n, 564, 569n, 570, 592, 606, 629–630, 634, 635n, 638n, 653n, 657, 674n, 678, 683n, 686, 688, 694, 708, 718, 751; Alevi ~ 285n, 286–290, 296; Jewish ~ 9, 11, 65–68, 70, 122–126, 123n, 271; Orthodox ~ 86, 529, 708; patristic ~ 526; prophetic ~ 492
- traditionalist 360, 388, 393–394, 433–434, 439, 440–446
- transcendentalist 38, 39n, 40
- transcendentalization 39
- transconfessionality 31, 59
- translation 13, 56, 166, 176, 185, 187n, 188, 219–220, 224, 240n, 243n, 244n, 245n, 247n, 248n, 268n, 272n, 288n, 292, 335, 336n, 337–338, 339n, 355, 366, 368, 387, 390–392, 393n, 395, 436n, 494n, 495n, 503, 505, 509, 512, 584, 746–747
- transubstantiation 59, 523–524, 529, 531, 533–535, 537n, 540, 543–545, 547
- Treaty of Amasya 42, 406, 454n
- Treaty of Zuhab 81, 474, 594, 725
- tribe 17, 41, 54n, 260, 290, 429, 568, 678–680, 682, 683n, 690–693; tribal 52, 388, 429, 432, 434, 569, 575, 607, 639, 644, 679–680
- Tridentine 14, 17, 19, 64, 476, 492n, 512, 701–702, 704–705, 708, 710, 715, 717–718, 749; post-~ 45, 50–52, 56, 170, 366, 478n, 479n, 526, 565, 656, 702
- Trinitarian doctrine 335, 747
- Trinity 747
- Turco-Iranian 33, 36
- Turcoman 313, 317–320, 569, 575, 584, 591, 596
- Turco-Persianate 631n, 652, 653n, 655
- Turcophone 569, 579
- Turkish (language, text) 12, 15, 44, 62–63, 76, 118, 121–122, 139, 140, 148n, 243n, 248, 270, 271n, 286, 287, 288n, 289, 291–292, 293n, 298, 344, 389, 391, 394, 492, 497, 504, 507–508, 510–511, 568, 570–572, 576–577, 579n, 582, 584, 586n,

- 592n, 592n, 593n, 595n, 603n, 638n,
651, 683n, 746
Turkmen 38, 682
Twelve Imams 1n, 16, 79, 82, 299–302,
405, 421, 578, 589–593
Twelver Shi'ism 3, 39, 82, 285–286,
301, 303–304, 404, 407–408, 417,
423, 575
Twelver Shi'ite 13, 39n, 64, 74, 304,
401–404, 417
- U
Üç Şerefeli Mosque 674, 676
ulema 39n, 68, 72–74, 79, 81–82, 88,
234, 304, 319, 322–324, 327, 329,
406, 474n, 475, 571, 579–580, 583–
585, 599, 605–606, 608, 628, 680,
682, 685, 687, 690–691, 725–726,
737–738, 741–742
Ulu Cami 583
Umayyads 570, 599, 603
unbelief (see also *kuf̄r*) 30, 46, 321,
346, 348, 351, 411, 605, 686n
Uniate(s) 48–50, 58, 223, 393–384,
387, 393–394, 396
Uniate Church 10, 13, 385, 387–388,
433
Union of Brest 48, 160, 173
Unitor Brothers (Fratres Unitores) 64,
151, 453n, 454
Universal Church 499–500, 504–505,
507–508, 511
university 218, 525
unorthodox 143, 451, 590, 600, 731
urban 12, 15, 26, 41, 51–52, 63, 72–73,
77, 88, 171, 235, 272, 316–317,
318n, 319, 322–324, 329, 335, 346–
347, 349, 350n, 356, 359–360, 388,
416–418, 423, 429, 460, 571, 606–
607, 631n, 678, 755
urbanization 149, 606
Uzun Hasan Mosque 413, 415
- V
Valois 37
vardapet 10, 20, 139, 147–148, 150,
239, 455–459, 461n, 462, 464n, 468,
471, 474, 476, 489, 492–493, 495,
496n, 500, 503, 508–509
Varlaam Monastery 169, 351, 352n
Vefai 581
veneration 16, 36, 42, 59, 249, 274,
350–351, 438, 533, 543–544, 567–
568, 572, 580, 589, 592, 644, 734n
Venetian(s) 46n, 56, 173, 183, 215,
226–227, 237, 342, 344, 353–354,
444, 491, 532, 538, 540–541, 632n,
636, 639, 651, 675
vernacular 13, 18, 58, 263, 336–338,
339n, 348, 355–356, 362, 366, 368,
511, 570n, 653
vernacularization 26, 56, 570, 570n,
652n, 653
vilayetname 12, 288–289, 588
village 75, 140, 142–143, 146, 152,
169, 179n, 225, 269, 274, 288, 291,
294, 299n, 320, 325–326, 404n, 405,
434n, 503, 506, 582, 585, 634, 683n,
690–693, 756
vita (see also hagiography) 316–330,
335, 336–340, 344, 347, 349, 350n,
351–352, 356n, 358, 359n, 361, 363–
365, 367–368, 582, 588, 593, 626
Vlach(s) 713
vladika 706, 710, 713, 715–716
- W
waḥdat al-wujūd 588, 592, 597
walāya 36, 38, 41, 318, 602
Wallachian 161, 179n, 217, 628
walī 602
waqf (see also endowment) 169, 171,
318
War of Crete 521
Western Christianity 52, 160, 273, 525
worship 16, 20, 35, 43–45, 55, 75, 82,
146, 154–155, 285, 290, 296, 300,
357, 403, 409, 503, 505, 507, 580,
590, 631, 646–647, 684n, 685
wujūb 75, 407–408
- Y
yeshivah 123, 125
Yazidis (after Yazid b. Mu'awiya) 570,
590, 602–604

Yezidi(s) 9, 17, 20, 41, 83, 389, 603,
673, 674, 676, 680–682, 683n, 684–
694
Yigdal Elohim 66, 70

Z
zealot 358, 365, 367, 595; Zealots (of
Piety) 49–50
Zeyniyye 587, 587n
ziyārat 726

PERSONAL NAMES

A

‘Abbas I 145, 302, 402, 409, 411, 417–
419, 421–423, 453–454, 474, 591
‘Abbas II 418, 422, 474
‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi 605, 608
‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani 573n, 581, 688
Abdal Khan 674–676, 691
Abdal Musa 320n, 590
‘Abd al-Ahad 393–394, 444, 447
‘Abd al-Rahman Jami 688
‘Abd al-Samad 408
‘Abdishō‘ of Gāzartā 431, 435–439,
440n, 445–446, 447n
‘Abdūlahad Nuri 598
‘Abdūlbaki Pasha 693
‘Abdūlhamid II 83
‘Abdullah-ı İlahi 588
‘Abdūlmecid Sivasi 598
Abraham Berukhim 266–267
Abraham Ecchellensis 391, 395, 399
Abraham Jagel 66
Abraham Scandari 129
Abu l-Layth al-Samarqandi 688
Abu Bakr 585, 592
Abu Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabi 599
Abu Hanifa 76, 580–581, 583, 589,
598, 601, 603, 656, 687–688
‘Adi (Sheikh) 680–682, 685, 687–688,
690
Afanasij Osipovič Prončišev 176
Agapios Landos 366–367, 537n
Ahmad Qummi 405, 415
Ahmed I 691, 713
Ahmed III 246, 498, 729n, 739
Ahmed Rumi Akhisari 78
Ahmed Şemseddin-i Saruhani (Yiğitbaşı)
591–592
‘A’isha 581–583, 592
Akbar 37, 38n, 40n, 591
Akyazılı Baba 325–328; convent of ~
326–327, 329

‘Ala al-Din Kayqubad I 318
Aleksandr Jułayec’i 498, 500, 500n,
502–503, 507n
Alessandro Baldrati da Lugo 365
Alexandros Maurokordatos 193, 222,
238n
Alexei Mikhailovich 49
‘Ali Hadi 732, 734
‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (Imam ‘Ali) 16, 36–
37, 79, 288n, 289n, 296–297, 299–
301, 320–321, 326n, 420–421, 567,
569, 572–574, 576–578, 580–583,
589–590, 592–593, 596, 600, 737,
739, 755
‘Ali Naqi Gomrahi 409
Ambroise de Tiger 536
Ambrose 505
Ambrosius Buttigeg 437, 439
Andrea Ridolfi 540–541, 543
Anthimos II 212
Antoine Arnauld 523–524, 529, 531,
533
Antoine Fouquier 537
Antoine Galland 524, 532–533, 535,
539n, 540
Antoninus Zahara 433n, 438
Antonio Velislavi 709, 714, 718
Antonios of Athens 535n
Arius 493
Arminius 174
‘Aşık Çelebi 583
Athanasios II [III] Patellaros 183, 212–
213
Athanasios III [IV] 213
Athanasios (Archbishop of Sifnos) 537n
Athanasios Komnenos Hypselantes 186n
Athanasios Vellerianos 225–226
Aurangzeb 39
Awetik‘ Ewdokac’i 11, 233–236, 240–
243, 244–249, 495–496, 498, 499n,
501–503

B

Balim Sultan 323, 587–588
 Ballı Mehmed Pasha 692
 Baltacı Mehmed Pasha 737, 739
 Barhebraeus 394
 Bartol Kašić 637n, 710–711
 Bayezid II 322, 330n, 346–347, 587
 Bayezid al-Bistami 600, 651
 Bayezid Baba 322, 588
 Bedir Bey 675–676
 Bedreddin of Simavna (Sheikh) 347,
 564, 572, 588, 592
 Bernardus Bergomi 504
 Bonnecorée 536
 Buonaventura di Lauro 530n
 Butrus Shahbaddin 238–239

C

Callistus of Corinthos 220
 Castagnères de Châteauneuf 235, 236n,
 238n, 241n, 494
 Célestin de Sainte-Ludwina 391
 Cem Sultan 578
 Cesare Baronio 391–392
 Chalkokondyles 152
 Charles I (of England) 656
 Charles V 38, 42, 126
 Charles de Ferriol 236, 241, 244n,
 245n, 247n, 249, 494, 496
 Charles de Guise de Lorraine 544
 Charles-Marie-François Olier, Marquis de
 Nointel 15, 187n, 521–524, 525n,
 526n, 528–529, 531n, 532–533, 535–
 536, 538–547
 Chevalier d'Arvieux 238n, 536, 546
 Chinghis Khan 36
 Christophoros Angelos 356, 358
 Chrysanthos (Patriarch of Jerusalem)
 188
 Claes Rålamb 186n
 Clement XI 502
 Clemente Galano 458n, 465n, 501, 504
 Constantin Brâncoveanu 193n
 Çorlulu Damat Ali Pasha 249, 498,
 498n
 Cornelis Haga 174–175, 179, 182–183
 Count Pontchartrain (see Louis Phélyp-
 eaux, Count of Pontchartrain)

Cristoforo Tarsia 540–541
 Crusino Coronello 538n
 Cyril of Alexandria 457, 461n, 463n,
 509

D

Daltaban Mustafa Pasha 245, 246n,
 496, 734–735
 Damaskenos Stoudites 338–341
 Damianos 358
 Dawit^c IV 459, 468, 475n
 Dawit^c Arewel^ci 458n
 Dawit^c Jułayec^ci 468, 475n
 Demetrios Kigalas 531–532
 Demir Baba 316, 325–330
 Denis de la Couronne d'Épines 467,
 469n, 471n, 477
 Dionysios III 166, 213, 526n, 533
 Dionysios IV (Mouselimis) 166, 188,
 189n, 193, 213–214, 222–225, 526n,
 527n, 533–534, 560–561
 Dionysios (Deacon) 211
 Dionysios the Areopagite 225
 Dionysios (archbishop of Melos) 537n
 Dionysios of Larissa 171–172, 359n
 Dioscoros of Alexandria 494, 508–509
 Domenico di Santa Maria 467n, 468
 Dominico Germanus of Silesia 391, 399
 Dominik Andrijašević 639
 Dositheos II of Jerusalem 58–59, 181,
 192n, 193, 223, 225, 534–535, 543,
 545, 547–548
 Dukaginzade Ahmed Bey 578

E

Ebüssu^cud 17, 39n, 120, 171n, 580,
 585, 598, 682–683, 685–690
 Edouard de la Croix 526n
 Eliazar Aynt^cap^cec^ci 492
 Eliya Asmar Habib 433, 437, 445–446
 Eliya VI 441, 443, 445n
 Eliya X Marogin 389, 393–394
 Ephraim Pagitt 544
 Ep^crem Łap^canc^ci 240–242, 245, 493–
 495
 Eremia Č^celēpi K^cēōmiwrčean 64, 70,
 71n, 140, 152, 155, 241n, 492–493,
 499n, 508, 511n

- Eskandar Monshi 409
 Eskici Hasan Dede 597n
 Eşrefoğlu Rumi 571–574, 580, 594
 Eugenios Voulgaris 368
 Eusèbe Renaudot 501, 546
 Evliya Çelebi 154, 329, 410, 595–597,
 604n, 608, 630n, 690–691, 693
 Eyüplü Hasan Pasha 737–738
- F
- Fahreddin Ma‘noğlu 178
 Fakhr al-Din al-Razi 688
 Fatima 16, 36, 297, 568, 581, 600
 Fayz al-Kashani 410
 Fazlallah Astarabadi 288n, 571n, 591
 Feridun Bey 46n, 401n, 643n, 674–676,
 681–682
 Feyzullah Efendi 11, 233–242, 244–
 249, 495–496, 500n, 604, 754
 Francesco Marchesini 532
 Francis Casimir de Wysocki 539
 François Baron 536, 545
 François de Brice de Rennes 391–392
 François Picquet 536
 Fuzuli 288n, 584
- G
- Gábor Bethlen 178
 Gabriel I 211
 Gabriel II 213
 Gabriel III 194n
 Gabriel Severos 352–353
 Gamî 597n
 Garibi 575–579, 606
 Gasparo Contostaulos 538
 Gennadios Scholarios 43, 162, 170,
 177, 341–343
 Gēorg Mxlayim Ōlli 14–15, 64, 489–
 491, 494, 495n, 496–513
 Gheorghe Ghica 187
 Georgi Novi 349
 Georgios Koressios 364–365
 Gerasimos (archbishop of Melos) 537n
 Gerasimos II (Patriarch of Alexandria)
 188
 Gerasimos II (Patriarch of Constantino-
 ple) 213
 Gerasimos Kouloumbes 537n
- Germano Coronello 538
 Giacomo Begnamini 391, 399
 Giacomo Quirino 540
 Gideon Svyatopolk-Chetvertynsky 220
 Giorgio Bucchia 540
 Giovanni Battista Ballarino 541
 Giovanni Mocenigo 342
 Girolamo Lučić 711n
 Gregorios IV (see also Gregorios of
 Amasia) 212
 Gregorios VI 166
 Gregorios of Amasia (see also Gregorios
 IV) 181–182, 212
 Gregorios of Larissa 183, 185
 Gregorios (Gregory) Palamas 336, 344
 Gregory XI 656
 Gregory XV 452, 701n
 Grigor Corcorec’i 454n
 Grigor Daranałc’i v 139–155, 456n,
 458, 460n
 Grigor Lusaworič’ (St. Gregory the Illumi-
 nator) 247n, 492n, 495, 507, 507n;
 church of ~ 491, 504, 512; faith of ~
 506–507
 Grigor Tat’ewac’i 474, 511, 511n
 Guarino Favorino 176
 Guillaume Postel 714
- H
- Hacı Bayram 571, 573
 Hacı Bektaş 285n, 295, 296n, 306n,
 321–323, 330, 587, 589n; cult of ~
 322–323; convent/lodge/shrine of ~
 292, 587–589; descendants of ~ 330;
 followers/dervishes of ~ 323, 582,
 590; hagiography/*vilayetname/vita* of
 ~ 288, 288n, 289, 320n, 321, 588,
 588n; teachings of ~ 590
 Hacı Emin Bey Celili 683n
 Hacı Muslihuddin Emir Khan 575
 Haji Gēorg 503, 504n
 Hasan ‘Ali Shushtari 409
 Hasan (ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib) 301, 568,
 590, 603n, 608, 687; martyrdom of ~
 599; murder of ~ 598–599, 607;
 prophecy about ~ 601–602, 602n,
 603–605, 607; prophethood of ~
 601–607

- Hasan 'Askari, sarcophagus of ~ 732, 734
 Hasan Kafi-i Akhisari 656
 Hasan Pasha 582
 Hasan Rumlu 409
 Hatayi (see also Isma'îl I) 289, 292n, 299, 577
 Haydar (Sheikh) 25
 Hayyim Vital 127n, 263, 265, 267, 269
 Hayyim Rashpitz 264
 Hayyim Raudnitz 264
 Hayreti 577n, 589
 Hieremias I 188, 351, 352n
 Hieremias II 168, 170n, 181, 211, 525
 Hieremias (bishop) 172
 Hieremias of Chalkedon 535n
 Hieremias of Paronaxia (Gieremia Barbarigo) 180
 Hilarion Kigalas 529n, 530–533, 535, 537, 546n
 Hugues de Lionne 524
 Husayn b. 'Abd al-Samad 408
 Husayn (ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib) 301, 321, 419, 568, 570, 590, 608, 687; martyrdom of ~ 287n, 421, 570, 584, 599; murder of ~ 289n; 570, 583–584, 589, 598–599, 607, 681; prophecy about ~ 601–602, 602n, 603–605, 607; prophethood of ~ 601–607; shrine of ~ 739
 Husayn (Shah) 732–733, 737, 739
 Husayn (Sheikh) 571, 573n
 Husayn Va'ez-e Kashafi 288, 584
 Hüseyin Pasha (see Köprülü Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha)
- I
- Iakovos (martyr) 358
 Iakovos the Shepherd (martyr) 358
 Iakovos (archbishop of Andros) 537n
 Iakovos (Patriarch of Constantinople) 213–214
 Ibn Khaldun 599
 Ibn Kemal 598
 İbn-i Nuh 692–693
 Ibn Sina (Avicenna) 653
 Ibn Taymiyya 681
 İbrahim Şahidi 577–578, 579n
 Ignatios (archbishop of Chios) 537n
 Ignatios (metropolitan of Trapezous and bishop of Chaldia) 167n
 Ignatios of Christianoupolis 190
 Ignatios of Sophia 170n
 Ignatius Ni'matallâh 446
 Innocence Gizel 219–221
 İntizami 1–2
 Ioakeim of Rhodes 535n
 Ioakeim of Verroia 167n
 Ioannes Karyophylles 187, 192n, 218, 224–225, 366, 527, 529n
 Ioannes Katartzes (Catargi) 178
 Ioannes Kottounios 532
 Ioannes Moschos 346n
 Ioannes of Ioannina 338n, 341, 351–352, 352n, 359
 Ioannes of Bursa 347
 Ioannes of Serres 346–347, 363
 Ioannikios II 185–186, 191n, 213, 226
 Ioannikios Kartanos 355
 Ioannikios? of Karpathos 167n
 Ioannikios of Verroia 184
 Ioasaph (martyr) 358
 Ioasaph II (Ecumenical Patriarch) 525n
 Ioasaph of Bitola and Prilep 167n
 Ioasaph of Chalkedon (metropolitan) 182
 Ioasaph of Domenikon and Elasson 183n
 Ioasaph of Lakedaimonia (metropolitan) 182, 183n
 Ioasaph of Verroia 167n
 Isaac Abravanel 66n
 Isaac Katz 264
 Isaac Luria 127n, 260, 262, 265, 268, 272
 Isidoros II 170n
 Isma'îl I (Shah) (see also Hatayi) 25–26, 290–291, 299, 303, 315n, 329n, 330, 405, 407, 412, 574, 577, 606, 677
 Isma'îl II (Shah) 409, 414
 İsmâ'îl Hakkı Bursevi 605
 İsmâ'îl Belig 583
 İshak Çelebi 578
 Issashkhar-Beer ben Petahia-Moses 264–265, 273
 Ivan IV 51

- Ivan V 221, 224
 Ivan Lisitsa 222
 Ivan Mazepa 219
 Ivan Samoylovych 216, 219–220, 227
 Ivan Tomko Mrnavić 637
- J
- Jacob (Ecumenical Patriarch) 217, 221–222
 Jacob ben Asher 67n
 Jacob ben Hayyim Filip 270
 Jacob Berab 68, 87, 127n
 Jacob Frank 69n
 Jacob Kohen 269
 Jacob Sasportas 129
 Jacopone da Todi 511
 Ja‘far al-Sadiq (Imam Ja‘far) 298n, 299, 307, 580n, 589, 592
 Jalal al-Din Rumi 577, 601n, 651
 James I 175
 Jaques Villotte 235–236, 237n, 507
 Jean Aymon 545–546
 Jean-Baptiste Colbert 497n, 536
 Jean Claude 523, 532–533, 537n, 540
 Jean de Lilienthal 524
 Jean Taulignan 538
 Jesus Christ 144, 321, 323, 335, 355, 361, 441, 454, 461, 461n, 463n, 511, 523, 533, 646
 Jirjis 238
 Johann Caspar Schweizer 544
 Johannes Leunclavius 543n
 Johannes Wtenbogaert 174, 178
 John Covel 188–189, 527n, 542, 544n, 545–547
 John Hesronita (Giovanni Hesronita) 391, 399
 Joseph Carov 9, 11, 67–68, 85, 87, 117–130, 135–136, 259–260, 273
 Joseph Colon ben Solomon Trabotto (the Maharik) 133–134
 Joseph do Rozario 462n, 464n, 465n, 466n, 467n, 469n, 471n
 Joseph Nasi 256
 Joseph Nielubowicz-Tukalski 216, 220, 223
 Joseph of Amid 387, 389–395
 Joseph Sambari (Samkari) 9, 117–119, 129–136
 Joseph Solomon Delmedigo 260, 264
 Joseph Szumlański 216, 218, 222
 Joseph-Yuspa Hahn 264
 Jovan Kantul 639
 Junayd (Sheikh) 301n, 573
- K
- Kadızzade Mehmed 42, 78, 597–599
 Khwaja Nazar 469
 Kalaylıkoz Hacı Ahmed Pasha 496
 Kalender Çelebi 588
 Kallinikos II 193, 194n, 214
 Kallistos of Leros 167n
 Kallinikos of Thessaloniki 167n
 Karakaş ‘Ali Pasha 129
 Konstantinos Asanis Kantakuzenos 178–179
 al-Karaki (al-Muhaqqiq) 405–406, 410
 Kasım b. ‘İsa 581
 Katib Çelebi 583n, 597–598, 599n, 651, 680n, 690
 Kavuk Mehmed Pasha 733
 Khadija 581
 Khaje Mahmud Aga 734–735, 739
 King Vladislaus IV Vasa 463
 Kirakos Erewanc‘i 150, 457, 458n, 466, 477n
 Kirakos T‘alnc‘i 500
 Klemes 213
 Koca Sinan Pasha 625–629, 631, 637, 641–642, 644–653
 Komitas K‘ēōmiwrčean 241, 247, 249, 493, 495, 499, 500n, 508–509
 Konstantinos Asanis Kantakuzenos 178–179
 Köprülü Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha 495, 735–736
 Köprülü Mehmed Pasha 186–187
 Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Pasha 187, 234, 235n, 599, 604
 Köse Mehmed Efendi 599
 Kosmas III 166n, 189
 Kritovoulos 152
 Kul Himmet 289, 292n
 Küçük Abdal 316
 Kurt Çelebi 179–180, 182

- Kyrillos 358–359
 Kyrillos Karakallos 250n
 Kyrillos II Kontares 173, 182–185, 212
 Kyrillos III 191n, 213
 Kyrillos Loukaris 10, 58–60, 162, 171–187, 190–193, 212, 353, 357n, 363, 366, 526–527, 529, 543, 751, 754
 Kyrillos V 61
- L**
 Lami‘i Çelebi 583–584
 Lazar Baranovych 221
 Łazar of Tokat 151
 Łazar (*vartapet*) 150, 457, 459
 Leo I 493–494
 Leo Allatios 365
 Leonard Abel 430n, 438
 Leonardo Tarsia 540–541
 Leontij Nepljuev 219
 Louis XIV 494, 498, 501–502, 532, 534, 536, 538–540, 542
 Louis Phélypeaux (Count of Pontchartrain) 236n, 241n, 245n, 249n, 501–502
 Lutfullah al-Maysi 402, 411
- M**
 Mahmud II 151
 Mahmud Çelebi 322
 Mahmud-ı Pasikhani 591
 Makarios III (Patriarch of Antioch) 188, 535, 543, 543n
 Makarios (martyr) 360–361
 Makarios of Smyrna 537n, 539
 Makarios Panas 226
 Manoles Bostantzogles 361, 363
 Manouel Korinthios 346n, 348, 363, 366
 Mansur al-Hallaj 321, 323n
 al-Maqrizi, Taqi al-Din Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad 130, 676, 681
 Marino Bernardo di Caboga 540
 Marino de Bonis 711–712
 Markos Kyriakopoulos 367
 Martin Luther 25–26, 45n, 46, 745
 Ma‘ruf Efendi 653
 Marwan 589
 Maryam 581
 Mas‘ud Azulai (Moghrabi) 264
 Matthaios II 211–212
 Matthaios Kigalas 530
 Matthew (Patriarch of Alexandria) 61
 Maximos III 163n, 188, 342, 344
 Maximos Margounios 173
 Mehmed II 41n, 131–134, 162, 322, 324, 327, 341, 344, 348, 419n
 Mehmed III 713
 Mehmed IV 234, 657
 Mehmed-i ‘Aşık 646–647, 649
 Mehmed Birgivi 42, 78, 597
 Mehmed Çelebi (Şeyh Muhyiddin of Eğirdir) 587
 Mehmed Nazmi 582, 598–599, 605
 Mehmed Said Khan 692
 Meletios Pagkalos 537n, 539
 Meletios Pegas 172–173, 177, 211–212, 353
 Meletios Syrigos 185n, 366–367, 527
 Melk‘isedek Banasēr 505
 Melk‘isedek Suphi 240, 493
 Melk‘isēt‘ Garneç‘i 459, 468n, 475n
 Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha 599, 604
 Methodios III 213, 531, 533, 535
 Methodios of Pissidia 535n
 Metrophanes III 170, 211
 Metrophanes Kritopoulos (later, Metrophanes I of Alexandria) 175n, 184, 526
 Metrophanes of Lysium 535n
 Mevlana ‘Abdurrahim Efendi el-Hamidi 647, 648n
 Mevlana Hasan Halife 577
 Michael Hesronita (Micheale Hesronita) 392, 399
 Michael Mauroeides 347, 349, 367–368
 Michael of Agrapha 335, 344, 359, 367–368
 Mihaloğlu Ali Bey 322
 Mik‘aēl Xarberdc‘i 498
 Mir Damad 411, 422
 Mirza Makhdum 14, 406
 Mirza Muhammad Taqi Darbandi 288n
 Molla ‘Arab 583–584
 Molla Kabız 355
 Molla Lutfi 347n

- Moses Almosnino 120–121
 Moses Hagiz 69n
 Moses Isserles 67, 123n, 128, 259
 Moses Kapsali 43, 131–133
 Moses Cordovero 127n, 260
 Moses Maimonides 66, 70, 123, 127–128, 130, 133, 267
 Movsēs III Tat'ewac'i 455
 Mu'awiya 583, 599, 601, 681–682, 688
 Muhammad (Prophet) 36, 46, 77, 82, 86, 131, 285, 296–297, 299–300, 303, 320–321, 323, 335, 354–355, 567–568, 573–574, 576, 583, 589, 593, 601–603, 605, 607, 646, 687, 725, 727n, 734n, 739
 Muhammad Beg (Muhammed Khan Ustajlu) 429
 Muhammad Mu'min Beygdili-Shamlu 735–736, 739–740
 Muhammad Taqi 736
 Mukhtar b. Mirza Zaki Maragi 575
 Muhyi l-Din Ibn 'Arabi 574, 588, 601–602, 605, 652n
 Mullah Salih 682–686, 689–690
 Murad III 1, 652n
 Murad IV 162n, 184, 407, 412n, 422, 454n
 Murtaza Pasha 692
 Murtaza-qulu Ustajlu 737
 Musa al-Kazim 736, 738n
 Mustafa II 234, 237, 246, 495n, 732–733, 736
 Mustafa 'Ali 79n, 651
 Mxit'ar Sebastac'i 478, 491n, 493
- N**
 Nader Shah 82
 Nahapet Edesac'i 493n, 495
 Nasir Khusraw 601n
 Nathanael Chychas (Chikas) 353
 Nawawi 248
 Nektarios (bishop of Paphos) 537
 Nektarios of Jerusalem 25, 26n, 28, 187, 193, 535, 537, 548
 Neagoe Basarab 348
 Neophytos (Patriarch of Antioch) 535, 543
 Neophytos II 171, 174, 184, 185n, 212
 Neophytos III (see also Neophytos of Heraklia) 184, 212
 Neophytos IV 214
 Neophytos of Heraklia 185n
 Neophytos of Korinth 182
 Neophytos of Methone 190
 Neophytos of Nikomedia 535n
 Neophytos of Zetounion and Pteleon 170n
 Nephon II 358
 Nephon (Master) 168
 Nersēs Lambronac'i 508
 Nesimi 591
 Nestorius 430, 432, 438, 442, 447
 Nev'i Efendi 652
 Nicolae Spătarul Milescu 523, 543
 Nicolas Spathar 223
 Nicolo Zucco 538
 Nikephoros 529n, 530–531
 Nikephoros Parasches 211
 Nikolaos Maurokordatos (Nicolae Mavrocordat) 58n, 193n
 Nikita Alexeev 220–223, 225, 227
 Nikodemos Metaxas 176
 Nikodemos the Hagiorite 61, 336, 338, 366, 368
 Nikol T'orosovič' (see also Torosowicz) 512
 Nikolaos Malaxos 351
 Nikon (Russian Patriarch) 49–50, 85, 528
 Niyazi-i Mısri 70, 71n, 599–607, 655
 Nointel, Marquis de (see Charles-Marie-Françoise Olier)
- O**
 Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq 46
 Ōgostinos Baĵenc' 454–455, 456n
 Oskan Erewanc'i 457, 458n, 466
 'Osman Fazli-i Atpazari 605
 Otman Baba 313, 315–317, 320–330, 347n, 587n
- P**
 Pachomios II (Patriarch of Constantinople) 211
 Pachomios of Kassandria 167n

- Pachomios Rousanos 45n, 354–355, 355n
 Paisios I 186, 213, 533
 Paisios (archbishop) 537n
 Paisios Ligarides 524
 Paisios of Thessaloniki 172
 Pajsije I 637
 Panagiotes Nikousios 58n, 70, 71n, 187, 187n, 193, 366n, 535, 542
 Paolo Giovio 25
 Paolo Piromalli 14, 64, 150–151, 451–452, 453n, 454–479
 Paolo Simone di Gesù Maria 466n
 Paolo Torelli 704n, 712
 Parthenios I (Parthenios of Adrianople) 183–185, 212
 Parthenios II (see also Parthenios of Ioannina) 183–186, 213, 226
 Parthenios III 186, 213
 Parthenios IV (Mogilalos) 213, 219–222, 525n, 526n, 531–533, 539n, 546n
 Parthenios Chairetes 537
 Parthenios of Adrianople (see Parthenios I)
 Parthenios of Ioannina (see Parthenios II)
 Parthenios of Jerusalem 61
 Peter Mohila 50–52, 58, 185, 366, 527, 543
 Petis de la Croix 240n, 241n, 244n, 495n, 501–502
 Petro Doroshenko 216–217, 223
 Petros II Xanjgeç'i 462
 Petros T'iflisc'i 493
 Philaret Nikitič Romanov 176–177
 Philippos Grammatica 538
 Pierre Nicole 523, 529, 531
 Pietro Massarechi 714
 P'lippos i Aġbakeç'i 456
 Pir Sultan Abdal 289, 292n, 577n
 Pontchâteau (see Sébastien-Joseph du Cambout de Coislin)
 Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite 504–505
- R
 al-Rabteki, Sheikh 'Abdullah Efendi 683n
- Raphael I 164n, 188
 Raphael II 212
 Raphael Joseph 129, 129n
 Robert Bellarmine (Bellarmino) 391, 501n
 Rodolpho Calleli 711
 Rudolf II 1, 639–640
 Rustam Zangane 733
 Rüstem Pasha 46
- S
 Sa'ad al-Din Taftazani 688
 Sabbatai Sevi 18–19, 69–70, 127n, 129, 135, 365
 Sadik Abdal 589
 Safi (Shah) 418, 422, 474
 Safi (Sheikh) 290, 296n, 298–299, 301, 303n, 306–307, 573n, 595
 Saint Augustine 173, 503, 505, 512
 Saint Peter 435–437, 534
 Sargis G. P'ač'ačean 154
 Sargis Kalfa 503–504
 Saint Sava 16, 625, 629, 631, 635–637, 639, 641
 Salman al-Farisi 297
 Salomon Schweigger 745–747, 753–754, 756, 758
 Sargis Toxateç'i (or Sargis Sahit'çi Gasparean) 492
 al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Jurjani 688
 Sébastien-Joseph du Cambout de Coislin (Pontchâteau) 531–532
 Selim I 348, 404n, 407, 415n, 578–579, 677
 Selim II 256, 675
 Şemseddin Sivasi (Kara Şems) 581–582
 Şerafeddin Khan Bitlisi 675, 678–680, 682, 685
 Şerefeddin Musa 588
 Seyyid Seyfullah Nizamoğlu 576n, 592–594, 599–600
 al-Shahid al-Thani (see Zayn al-Din 'Amili)
 Shahzada Sultan Husayn Mirza 415
 Sheikh Baha'i 409–411, 417
 Shem'on VII bar Mama 431, 440–441
 Shimr 584, 589
 Shimun IX 388

- al-Shirvani 406
 Shlommel ben Hayyim ('Meinstrel') 11,
 260–270, 272–275
 Silvester 456n, 507
 Simēon II Sebastac'i 462
 Simēon of Julfa 462, 471
 Simon Arnauld (Marquis de Pomponne)
 524
 Simone Matković 637n, 704n, 718
 Sinan Bey 583
 Sinibaldo Fieschi 540, 542
 Sliba of Mansuriya 429–431
 Solomon (Prophet) 676
 Sokollu Mehmed Pasha 627–628, 645,
 650, 675
 Sophronios of Vidyna 170n
 Stephan Gerlach 746n
 St. Gregory (the Illuminator) (see also
 Grigor Lusaworič') 239–240, 243–
 244, 247, 456, 458, 461, 464, 466n,
 492n
 Suhrawardi al-Maqtul 653
 Süleyman I 327, 348, 404n, 419n, 583,
 592, 675, 682
 Süleyman II 235
 Sultan Şüca' (Şüca'üddin Veli) 320n,
 321
 al-Suwaydi 82
 Synadinos 361–364
- T
- T'adēos Hamazaspean Isfahanc'i (Ere-
 vanc'i) 492n
 Tahmasb I 12, 38, 288n, 291, 301–303,
 305–306, 402, 405–408, 411–414,
 416, 423, 575, 591
 Ta'likizade Mehmed 412, 414–415,
 625–626, 629–636, 639–643, 645
 Tikhon Vasil'evič Bormosov 176
 Timotheos II 171–172, 174, 212
 Timotheos of Chalkedon 170n
 Timotheos of Larissa 172
 Timotheos of Vidin 220
 Timur 37, 320
 Theoleptos I 164n
 Theoleptos I 211
 Theophanes 352–353, 360–361
 Theophanes Karykes 211–212
 Theophanes Maurokordatos 537n, 539
 Thomas à Kempis 390–392, 493, 501
 Thomas Obicini of Novara 391
 Tommaso Ivković 701–702, 710n
 Torosowicz (Archbishop of Lviv) 459–
 460, 461n, 464n, 466
- U
- Umar 585, 592
 Uthman b. 'Affan 580, 585, 592
 Uşşakizade 605
 Uzun Hasan 322; mosque of ~ 413, 415
- V
- Vahib-i Ümmi ('Abdülvahhab) 590
 Vahidi 324–325, 590
 Valentin d'Angers 468
 Vani Mehmed Efendi 234, 235n, 240n,
 603–604
 Vartholomaïos of Heraklia 535n
 Vasile Lupu 185–187, 190, 191n
 Veniamin Asanis of Paronaxia 80, 182
 Victorius Scialach Accurensis 391
 Vincenzo di Augustino 714
 Virani 289
- X
- Xaç'atur Erzrumc'i Arak'elean 239,
 243n, 245, 493–494, 502
 Xiaç'atur Kesarac'i 466–468
 Xoşay Tawit' 150
- Y
- Yakob Ĵulayec'i 468, 474, 475n
 Yakob Nalean 504, 511n
 YakobJean 464n
 Yawsep I 433n, 444, 446–447
 Yazid 570, 573, 583–585, 589, 592,
 599, 601–603, 681–682, 688, 690
 Yemini 288n, 325n
 Yohannan Sulaqa 388, 431, 435, 437–
 438, 440
 Yovakim of Bursa 43
 Yovhannēs Bahšec'i 503
 Yovhannēs Izmiric'i 247n, 249, 498,
 500n
 Yovhannēs Mrkuz Ĵulayec'i 510
 Yovhannēs Xul 148–151

Z

Zacharias Gerganos 357–358
 Zacharias Levi 269
 Zacharias Skordylios Marafaras 544

Zahhak 676

Zayn al-Din al-‘Amili (Al-Shahid Al-Thani) 407, 408n
 Zeynel Bey 692

GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS

A

Adrianople (see also Edirne) 118, 183–184, 222, 237, 240–241, 243n, 244–246, 322–323, 346–347, 349, 367–368, 495, 496, 500n, 533, 541, 604, 674–675, 733, 736
 Afyon 294
 Albania 55, 357, 626, 627, 711n
 Aleppo 45, 53n, 145, 237, 238–239, 247n, 272, 384, 385, 389, 391, 394, 430, 444, 536, 545, 727n, 729n, 732
 Alexandria 54, 61, 129, 162, 168, 174, 509
 Alqosh 388–389, 440, 446n
 Amasya 224, 288, 292, 585
 Amid (see also Diyarbakır) 13, 14, 383, 384, 387–389, 391–396, 430, 432n, 433n, 438, 444, 677–679, 680n, 682n, 684n, 690, 693, 727n, 729n, 732
 Amsterdam 187n, 457n, 512
 Anatolia 5, 10, 12, 17, 36, 38, 41, 54, 63, 71, 73, 120, 139–142, 145, 148, 151, 152, 177, 237, 285, 287–288, 289n, 290–291, 299n, 302, 304, 315, 317, 318, 320–322, 324, 325n, 328–329, 330n, 429–430, 565, 568–571, 573–575, 577, 579n, 580n, 581–582, 586–587, 591, 606, 627, 677, 727, 753
 Antioch 54, 161n, 178, 188, 227, 430, 436–437, 528, 532, 535, 543–544, 581
 Arabian Peninsula 732
 Aratos 496
 Asia 38, 757
 Asia Minor 225, 318, 353n, 727n
 Athens 356, 360, 532n, 533, 535n
 Atlantic Ocean 26
 Austria 127, 542, 627n, 628, 639
 Azerbaijan 285, 454n, 679

B

Baghdad 17, 131, 315, 323n, 384, 389, 405, 592, 675, 682, 683n, 693, 727n, 733–737, 738n
 Balat 154, 155
 Balkan Peninsula 703
 Balkans 5, 17, 41, 71, 73, 78, 285, 288n, 313, 315–318, 320–330, 331n, 350n, 364n, 565, 569, 586–588, 639, 642, 645, 751, 755
 Balkans-to-Bengal complex 643n, 653, 655
 Banat 17, 702, 706n, 709
 Basra 727n, 733–735, 740
 Bastille 495n, 496n, 501, 502
 Beirut 384
 Belarus 48
 Belgrade 322, 625, 628, 641, 642, 644, 650
 Bitlis 678, 691–692
 Bohemia 48n, 160, 262, 272
 Bosnia 17, 17n, 18, 45, 55–57, 625n, 626, 638n, 656, 701–703, 704n, 705n, 709–713
 Bozok 595
 Buda (Budín) 11, 222n, 269, 270, 275, 326, 326n, 327, 702, 704n, 710, 712–714
 Bulgaria 54–55, 189, 330, 707n, 709n, 712, 714
 Bursa 43, 237, 336n, 347, 360, 570–571, 581, 583, 605, 608

C

Cairo 5, 78, 87, 129, 130, 384
 Candia 216, 226, 236n, 260
 Caucasus 150, 407, 453
 Caucasian Albania 462n
 Central Asia 36n, 235, 317, 318, 568, 575n, 633

- Central Europe 49, 128, 160, 255, 261, 264–266, 268–270, 274–275, 368, 431, 626, 654, 748, 750–751, 755n
- Cephalonia-Zakynthos 225–226, 537
- China 146, 235, 633
- Chios 237–238, 364–365, 491, 496, 498, 525n, 536–537, 542n
- Cilicia 462, 508, 542; Kingdom of ~ 63, 151, 508
- Cizre 429–431, 432n, 435–439, 440n, 445, 446, 674–675, 678
- Constantinople (see also Istanbul) 10–11, 38, 43, 45, 48, 51, 54, 63, 125, 131–133, 140n, 141, 146–147, 149, 152, 160–162, 165n, 166–168, 172–174, 176, 178, 181, 183, 187–189, 191, 193, 215–222, 224–228, 235, 239–246, 249, 319, 341, 343, 345, 351, 353, 359, 365, 384, 404, 430, 458, 471n, 472, 489, 491–498, 500–501, 503–506, 508–509, 511n, 512–513, 524, 527–529, 533, 540–542, 632, 636–637, 639, 651, 712, 745, 756n
- Çorum 288, 292
- Cossack Hetmanate 215
- Crete 173, 226, 236, 260, 366, 521, 538n
- Crimea 221, 322
- Croatia 56, 638, 703, 709
- Cyprus 509, 531–532, 536
- D
- Damascus 5, 87, 270, 272–273, 384, 391–392, 727n, 728n, 729n, 730, 732
- Danubian Principalities 160, 348
- Deliorman 320, 325–326, 328, 330, 595
- Divriği 142
- Diyarbakır (see also Amid) 14, 384, 387, 389, 391–396, 430, 432n, 433n, 438, 444, 678–679, 680n, 682, 684, 690–692, 727n, 729n, 732
- Dobrudja 320, 326, 330n, 595
- Dubrovnik (see also Ragusa) 46n, 633n, 641n, 703
- E
- Edirne (see also Adrianople) 118, 222, 237, 240–241, 243n, 244–246, 322–324, 346, 347n, 495, 500n, 541, 674, 675n, 733, 736
- Edirnekapı 154
- Egypt 3, 9, 19, 35, 52, 65n, 74, 78, 87, 118, 122, 124, 127–131, 146, 262, 317, 384–385, 536, 566, 568, 627, 688
- Eğirdir 587
- Elbistan 691
- Elmalı 590–591
- England 46, 146, 174, 176, 356, 757
- Epirus 54, 174
- Erzincan 139, 142, 236, 240n, 288
- Erzurum 234–236, 238–244, 240n, 454, 495, 727, 729n, 730, 732
- Eskişehir 294
- Etchmiadzin 63, 150, 243n, 457, 458n, 459, 462n, 464n, 470, 473, 475, 478, 493n, 495, 498, 500, 505–507, 511n, 512
- Eurasia 4–5, 8–9, 25–29, 33–34, 34n, 37–38, 69, 78, 84, 87, 89–90, 117, 126–127, 145, 752
- Europe 1–2, 4–5, 7–8, 12–13, 16, 19, 27–29, 30n, 31–34, 37–38, 46–54, 46n, 64–65, 67–68, 71–72, 81, 86n, 87–89, 117, 120, 122, 124, 126, 128, 151–152, 160–161, 171, 173, 178, 188n, 227, 235–237, 239, 242–243, 247, 249, 255–256, 258–259, 272, 275, 285, 291, 314, 317, 335, 337, 339, 343, 345, 353n, 358, 369, 383–387, 389–392, 395–396, 432, 435, 446, 452, 464, 467, 469, 474–475, 476n, 490, 497n, 506, 522, 526–528, 539, 541, 547, 565, 604, 608, 627, 629, 631, 633–634, 640, 642n, 643n, 649, 654–656, 657n, 701n, 705, 706n, 711n, 745–758
- F
- Ferrara 170, 503–504, 530n
- Florence 53, 170, 471n, 530n
- France 11, 45–46, 236, 241, 244n, 247, 248n, 249, 273, 469, 490, 496, 501–

- 502, 521, 523, 525n, 528, 531, 532n,
536, 541–542, 546, 650, 749
Frankistan 489, 503
- G
- Galata 45, 150, 240, 458, 491, 504,
512, 541n
Gangra 509
Galilee 11, 119, 255, 260, 266, 269,
273–274
Ganjasar 462
Gazarta d-Bet Zabdaï (see Cizre)
Geneva 58, 173, 175, 756
Genoa 540, 540n, 542
Georgia 407, 745
Germany 25, 31, 134, 247, 257, 262,
264, 268n, 272, 757
Goa 512
Greece 181, 335, 357, 532, 587–588
Greek Archipelago 536
- H
- Hakkari 388–389, 430, 432n, 433n,
681–683, 689, 693
Hama 571, 573n
Hamadan 679
Harput 678
Hijaz 726, 727n, 729–732, 739, 740
Helmsted 526
Herzegovina 625n, 633n, 634–636,
634n, 637n, 638–639, 641, 641n,
643–644
Henaton 509
Heytam 674
Hungary 56, 78, 87, 260, 263, 264–265,
269–270, 322, 326, 326n, 625, 701–
703, 710n
- I
- Iberia 35n, 46, 126
Iberian Peninsula 68, 119, 121
India 37n, 62, 146, 467n, 568, 575n,
591, 630, 633, 678
Indian Ocean 26, 678
Ioannina 171n, 172, 183–184, 340–341,
351–352, 359
- Iraq 82, 292, 317, 384, 388, 440, 568,
569, 584, 679, 683n, 684, 726–727,
731–734, 737
Iran (see also Persia) 3–5, 12, 19, 35,
39n, 40n, 64n, 74, 285–286, 288n,
302, 304–306, 313, 317, 322, 346,
355n, 388–389, 405–406, 408, 410,
412, 415, 416, 418, 423, 568, 570,
575–576, 583n, 584, 591, 594–596,
651n, 678, 679, 683n, 725, 727, 732–
733, 736, 739–741
Ireland 160, 345, 749
Isfahan 64, 145, 384, 402–403, 409–
411, 414, 417, 419, 422–423, 462–
471, 473, 477, 733, 739, 752
Istahar Mountains 676
Istanbul (see also Constantinople) 1,
10–11, 14–15, 42, 44–45, 54–55, 58n,
61–64, 70, 82, 87, 120, 121, 125,
132, 134, 139–140, 142, 145–152,
154–155, 174, 176–177, 179–180,
185n, 186n, 191, 235, 241–245n,
248n, 259, 270, 272, 322–324, 351–
352, 359–360, 363, 417, 432n, 521,
524, 526n, 528, 535, 548n, 582, 585,
592, 604, 630, 650, 673, 683n, 694,
727, 729, 732, 739
Italy 11, 30n, 121, 133, 255–256, 259,
262n, 265, 270n, 351–352, 354n,
356, 446n, 456, 467, 469–470, 503,
523n, 530, 537n, 539, 639, 654
Izmit 140, 142, 147, 152
Iznik (see also Nicaea) 140, 143, 146,
152, 571
- J
- Jahuk 503
Jerusalem 25, 54, 58–59, 61, 63, 69n,
87, 89, 122–123, 131–133, 139, 144–
145, 168, 173, 181, 186–187, 192n,
193, 223, 225, 227, 244, 248n, 260–
261, 266, 269–272, 274, 389, 443n,
445, 446, 492n, 495, 499n, 528, 532,
534–535, 543, 547–548, 734, 746
- K
- Kaaba 727n, 734

- Kamyanets-Podolskij 10, 216–219, 221,
 224, 227–228
 Kanije 702, 713
 Karaferye (Veroina) 344
 Karasu 595
 Karbala 289n, 419, 421, 681, 688, 689,
 738, 739
 Kars 727n, 729n, 732
 Kastamonu 570
 Kayseri 147–149, 167n, 503, 577
 Kea 538
 Kemah 139, 155
 Kerkyra (Corfu) 225
 Kermanshah 734, 735
 Keskin 595
 Kilis 693
 Kocaeli 142
 Kosovo 55, 627, 629–630
 Krakow 67, 220, 259, 262, 264
 Kreševo 712
 Kurdistan 17, 673–680, 683–684, 689–
 694, 727
 Kütahya 294
 Kyiv 10, 50, 215–228
- L
 Larissa 167n, 169, 171–172, 183, 185,
 Latin America 27n
 Lebanon 39n, 52, 74, 80, 328n, 392,
 394–396, 607–608, 681
 Lemnos 601, 608
 Lesser Armenia 457
 Levant 174, 261, 262, 496n, 497, 521,
 524–536, 539, 542, 546, 727, 745–
 746, 757
 Livorno 472–473
 Lviv 14, 216, 218, 459–461, 463, 464n,
 466, 493n, 512
- M
 Macedonia 54, 320, 627, 638n
 Malatya 292, 294, 678, 729n
 Manisa 592
 Marand 596
 Maraş 292, 678, 727, 729
 Mardin 389, 430, 445n, 679, 690
 Marmara Sea 140
 Marseille 496n, 498
- Matenadaran 505
 Mecca 18, 82, 86–87, 88n, 238, 685,
 725, 727n, 730, 732n, 734, 739
 Medina 18, 86–87, 88n, 238, 725, 727n,
 730, 732n, 734, 739
 Mediterranean 37–38, 54, 62, 117, 119,
 127–128, 130, 136, 160, 255, 258,
 265, 268, 271, 275, 352, 465, 535,
 539, 626, 634n, 654, 747, 752–753,
 757–758
 Menteşe 575
 Mesopotamia 14, 429–431, 435, 437–
 439, 443, 732, 734
 Messina 498
 Middle East 19, 52–54, 71, 118, 383,
 385, 643n
 Mileševo 16, 625, 629–632, 633n, 634–
 637, 642, 645, 649, 650
 Moldavia 144, 161n, 178–179, 185–
 187, 193, 633n
 Moravia 11, 260–261, 264–265, 268
 Moscow 10, 50–51, 54, 59, 87, 168n,
 176–177, 215–217, 219–224, 227–
 228, 350, 524, 528, 544
 Mosul 292, 384–385, 388–389, 430,
 431n, 432n, 585, 678–682, 683n,
 685n, 690, 693, 735
 Mount Athos 174, 217, 350, 358, 365
 Mt. Lebanon (see Lebanon)
 Mount Sinjar (see Sinjar)
 Muğla 575, 578
- N
 Nagybecskerek (Zrenjanin) 704n
 Najaf 82, 737; ~ canal 738, 739–740
 Nakhichevan 14, 64, 151, 452–455,
 463, 473, 478n
 Naples 452
 Naqsh-e Jahan Square 417–418, 423
 Naupaktos 168, 338
 Naxos 179–180, 536–539
 Netherlands 160, 174, 345
 New Indies 25
 New Julfa 14, 145, 452, 465–468,
 469n, 472–473, 475n, 476, 506, 512
 Nicaea (see also İznik) 143, 146, 150
 Nikomedia (see also İzmit) 535n
 North India 568, 575n

- Northern Mesopotamia 429
 Northern Rumeli 17, 703–705, 706n
- O
- Ohrid 54, 61, 167n
 Old Patras 171, 174
- P
- Pacific Ocean 26
 Padua 173, 530, 532
 Palestine 11, 52, 87, 124, 255, 269, 272, 384, 627, 732
 Paris 53, 174n, 391, 497, 499, 502, 506, 523, 532, 546
 Peć 54, 61, 167n, 350–351, 706n, 713n
 Pera 236, 237n, 238n, 497n, 540–541, 752n
 Persia (see also Iran) 25, 131, 235, 433, 453n, 458, 466, 469n, 470, 627, 730, 757
 Persian Gulf 732
 Phanari (Fener) 171, 359n
 Poland 34n, 52, 69n, 128, 149, 151, 172, 174, 177, 247, 260, 262, 264, 270, 272, 461n, 462–463, 465–466, 477, 504n, 540
 Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Poland-Lithuania 5, 10, 14, 48, 50, 58, 173, 215–218, 220, 226, 228, 459, 476, 512, 528, 733
 Port-Royal 501n, 522–523, 530
 Požega 709
 Prague 11, 67n, 262, 267–270, 272, 639
- Q
- Qazvin 402, 408, 413–417, 423
- R
- Ragusa (see also Dubrovnik) 45, 46n, 540, 633n, 634, 637, 703
 Raqqa 727n, 729n, 732
 Rhodes 535n, 601
 Rodosto (Tekirdağ) 140, 153–154
 Rome 14, 17–18, 38, 48, 53, 56, 58, 62–64, 148–149, 151, 160, 171, 173–176, 180, 183, 223, 238–240, 250n, 341, 344, 352, 364, 383–384, 386–396, 431, 433, 435–441, 443, 446–447, 451–452, 453n, 454–457, 458n, 459–460, 464, 465n, 466, 467n, 468–471, 473, 475n, 476–477, 478n, 479, 493, 502, 504n, 512, 523, 525, 530, 533, 702–703, 707n, 714, 718, 758
 Ruha (see also Urfa) 678, 693, 729n
 Rum (lands of) 12, 71, 75, 79, 88, 154, 313, 315–318, 320–321, 323–330, 565, 569, 575, 576, 578–579, 587–590, 595, 606, 755
 Rum (province of) 582, 585
 Rumeli 12, 17, 54–56, 72n, 118, 147, 237, 240, 358, 587–588, 595, 702–706, 708, 712–713, 715
 Russia 5, 33, 34n, 48, 49n, 50, 52, 54, 87n, 160n, 215, 218–219, 221–222, 733
- S
- Safed 9, 11–12, 67–68, 89, 118–119, 124, 127, 131, 135, 255–256, 258–263, 264n, 265–273, 753, 756
 Sahibabad Square 412, 415–417
 Salonica (see also Thessaloniki) 120–121, 125n, 131, 259, 322, 645–649, 653
 Salmas 388, 410n, 430, 433n
 Samatya (Sulumanastır) 241n, 493, 499n
 San Giorgio Morgeto 452
 Sanahin 508
 Santorini 538–539
 Sarajevo 635n, 706n, 711n
 Sebastia 497
 Serbia 704n, 712
 Serres (Siroz) 162n, 182, 346–347, 361, 363–364
 Shirvan 596
 Shuwayr 386
 Siirt 388, 393n
 Siliistra 595
 Sinai 25, 125
 Sinjar 604, 683n, 690–691, 693
 Sinop 569
 Sivas 142, 288, 582, 595, 729n
 Slavonia 17, 702, 709–710

Smyrna (Izmir) 45, 145, 249, 271, 365,
367, 502, 525n, 536–537, 539
Sofia 349–352, 359, 364, 368, 714
Soriano 452
South Asia 26
Spain 5, 11, 30n, 46, 119, 121, 127,
171–172, 247, 256, 259, 266, 270n,
271, 273, 468n, 496, 639, 650, 654
Srem 17, 702, 709–710, 718
Syria 3, 3n, 19, 35, 52, 74, 87, 239,
246, 285, 317, 384–385, 391, 407,
430, 509, 566, 568–569, 581, 627,
680, 690, 732

T

Tabriz 74, 402, 405, 407, 412, 412n,
413–417, 415n, 423, 453–454, 454n,
467n, 596, 675
Telafer (citadel of) 693
Tenedos 496
Thessaloniki (see also Salonica) 16,
120–121, 125n, 131, 172, 259, 322,
335, 359, 368, 645–649, 653
Thessaly 171, 359n
Thrace 63, 139–140, 146, 151–152,
320, 324–325, 327–328, 330, 355
Tımsıvar (Temesvár) 702
Tokat 142, 151, 288, 503, 582
Tor 674
Transylvania 87, 174, 258, 633, 747
Trikala 169, 172, 351, 359
Tur ‘Abdin 430
Tuscany 470, 472
Tübingen 58, 525, 745

U

Ukraine 48–51, 160n
Urfa (see also Ruha) 678, 693, 729n
Urmia 388

V

Van (Lake, province) 604, 607, 679,
682, 690–693, 727n, 729n, 732
Vatican 388, 469, 504n, 530
Venice (Republic of) 45, 53, 59, 66–67,
173, 215, 224–227, 226n, 259, 262,
272–273, 336, 338, 351–353, 356,
366, 452, 470, 471n, 472–473, 512,
538n, 540–541, 544, 675n, 733
Vienna 1, 42, 269, 599, 604, 640, 654,
673n
Vidin (Vidyna) 170n, 189, 220, 270,
712

W

Western Asia 117
Western Europe 314n, 524, 526–527,
747, 750, 757

Y

Yalova 147
Yazd 410, 415
Yemen 627, 688
Yerevan 236, 407, 451, 454n, 455–456,
730, 730n, 732
Yozgat 288
Yugoslavia 55

Z

Zile 581