

## The Maronite Church in the Middle Ages and its Union with Rome

by

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The union of the Maronite church with Rome, a factor of inestimable importance in Lebanese history, cannot be strictly thought of as an isolated event. It is, rather, a process that was started in the twelfth century, soon after the advent of the Franks to Syria, and which continues today, bringing about a gradual increase in Maronite acquiescence to Rome and in Maronite conformity to the Roman rite. In this process one event, which took place in c. 1180, brought about the formal union, which has not been broken officially since then. The unanimous acceptance of this union by the Maronites did not come about, however, until the early sixteenth century; and, even then, the education of the Maronites in Roman orthodoxy was not yet fully effective. The period 1100—1515, coinciding with the period of Frankish and Mamluk rule in Lebanon, during which the Maronites were converted to the idea of union, may be considered as the period of groundwork in the process of union. The concern of this article is to examine this stage in the process of union and follow the trends, counter-trends, and events that led to the effective union of the early sixteenth century.

The conversion of the Maronite church from an independent Monothelite communion<sup>1</sup> to an autonomous unit within the Roman Catholic communion, administered by a patriarch confirmed in his office by the Pope, was the fruit of the friendly relations between the Maronites of Lebanon and the Franks which began with the advent of the Crusaders. Starting with the earliest days of their contact with the Franks, the Maronites seem to have shown a willingness to identify their church with the Roman Church. Maronite tradition has it that, as early as 1100, the Maronite patriarch, Joseph<sup>2</sup> al-Jirjisi, sent his envoys with those of Gaudefroy de Bouillon to the Pope, Paschall II, to greet him with the tidings of victory. In return, it is said, the Pope sent back to the patriarch with the envoys the crown and the staff, thus signifying that he had accepted the submission presumably offered

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<sup>1</sup> The accepted theory of the original Monothelitism of the Maronites has been challenged by historians. See Robert W. Crawford, *William of Tyre and the Maronites* = *Speculum* 30 (1955) 222/8. The acceptance or refutation of this theory, however, is not within the interest of this article; although the author holds to it.

<sup>2</sup> I shall give throughout the English form of the Christian names of the patriarchs, except where the English form does not exist.



by the patriarch<sup>3</sup>. Following this incident, the Maronites are said to have begun using brass bells instead of planks of wood to call the faithful to church, in imitation of the Latins<sup>4</sup>; and a general Maronite ecclesiastical revival seems to have set in with the Frankish conquest of Lebanon<sup>5</sup>.

The friendship between the Maronites and the Franks has been mentioned, and often dwelt upon, by historians of the Crusades. From the moment of their arrival in northern Lebanon in 1099, the Crusaders found in the Maronites their most eager supporters in Syria. In return for their support, the Franks gave them favoured treatment. Ecclesiastical conformity between the Maronites and the Franks was a natural result of this mutual friendship.

A fact that has been overlooked by historians, however, is that the Maronites were not unanimous in their friendship to the Franks. Whereas the Maronites of the coastal region and of the immediate hinterland, who came into regular contact with the Franks, were eager to identify themselves ecclesiastically with them, the more conservative Maronites of the mountain fastnesses appear to have resented Frankish rule strongly<sup>6</sup>, and to have been decidedly opposed to the thought of union with Rome. With the expulsion of the Franks from Syria the cause of this anti-union Maronite group died, since protection by Catholic Europe was generally desired by the Maronites during the periods of Mamluk and Ottoman rule; but, throughout the stay of the Franks in Syria, Maronite separatists put up a violent opposition to the union which was championed by the patriarchs; and their opposition was a main factor in the delay of the effectiveness of the union.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'ī († 1516), letter to Patriarch Simeon of Ḥadath, dated November 6, 1494 = Al-Manāra 3 (1932) 103f. Duwayhī, *Tārīkh at-tā'ifa al-mārūniyya* (Beirut, 1890; hence T. T. M.), p. 355; *Tārīkh al-azmina* (Beirut, 1950; hence T. A.), p. 11; and *Silsilat baṭārikat at-tā'ifa al-mārūniyya* = Al-Mashriq 1 (1898) 309; hence S. B. — Duwayhī refers to Ibn al-Qilā'ī.

<sup>4</sup> Duwayhī, T. A. 22 & 27; Ibn al-Qilā'ī, *Letter to patriarch Simeon* 104, Jacques de Vitry, *History of Jerusalem*, translated by Aubrey Stewart (P. P. T. S. XI; London, 1897) 80f.

<sup>5</sup> Duwayhī, T. A. p. 22; E. Rey, *Les colonies franques de Syrie aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris 1883) 79, referring to Maronite church-building in the period.

<sup>6</sup> William of Tyre, *History of Deeds done beyond the sea*, translated by E. A. Babcock 2 (New York, 1943) 82—82 relates an interesting incident which illustrates this point. Count Pons of Tripoli, he says, was defeated in battle near the fortress of Mont-Pelerin then captured and put to death by the Moslems in 1137 «through the treachery of the Syrians [native Christians: a term which includes the Maronites] who lived on the heights of Lebanon». Young Raymond II, the son and successor of Pons, «collected the remnant of the cavalry and with a strong body of foot soldiers in addition went up to Mt. Lebanon with great valor. There he seized and carried away in chains to Tripoli as many of those men of blood, with their wives and children, as he could find. For he considered them guilty of his father's death and responsible for the general massacre of the Christians . . . . Accordingly . . . he visited upon them diverse tortures in the presence of the people, and, in just proportion to the enormity of the crime which they had committed, and caused them to suffer death in its most cruel form».



Ignoring the opposition of the more conservative mountain Maronites, the patriarchs, at the head of the pro-Frankish and pro-Roman Maronites, readily accepted the advances of the Roman Church. It seems that as early as 1139 or 1140 the Maronite church had offered a formal submission to Rome at the hands of Albericus, the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia († 1148). Albericus was, at the time, in Syria on a mission to investigate certain troubles that had arisen in the Latin see of Antioch (1139–1140). After settling affairs in Antioch, he proceeded to Jerusalem, where he presided over a council in the spring of 1140 at which the Armenian Catholicos promised to abjure certain doctrines of the Gregorian church which did not conform with Roman orthodoxy. Albericus appears also to have contacted the Maronites at Tripoli during his stay in Syria, and to have received their submission to Rome<sup>7</sup>.

The major step towards union with Rome, however, was not taken until c. 1180, when the Maronites formally abjured their Monothelite doctrines and accepted Roman orthodoxy and union with Rome. William of Tyre, a contemporary to the event, relates it as follows:

At this time, while the kingdom [of Jerusalem] was enjoying a temporary state of peace . . . , a race of Syrians in the province of Phoenicia, near the Lebanon range, who occupied the territory near the city of Jubail<sup>8</sup>, underwent a wonderful change of heart. For almost [five hundred]<sup>9</sup> years these people had followed the heretical doctrines of a certain Maro, from whom they took the name of Maronites. They separated from the Church and the faithful and had adopted a special liturgy of their own. Now, however, by divine leading, they were restored to their right minds and abandoned their heresy. They repaired to Aimery, the Patriarch of Antioch, the third of the Latin patriarchs to preside over that church<sup>10</sup>, renounced the error by which they had been so long enslaved, and returned to the unity of the Catholic Church. They adopted the orthodox faith and prepared to embrace and observe

<sup>7</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'ī, l. c. 102. Duwayhī, T. T. M. 356, adds that they met the papal legate at Tripoli, and gives the date as 1131. Both sources give the name of the patriarch, Gregory of Ḥālāt, and that of the Pope, Innocent II. Both also give the name of the legate as Cardinal Gulielmo. I have found no legate of this period by this name, and all the available evidence seems to point out that he was none other than Albericus of Ostia. He might have been mistakenly called Gulielmo by the Maronite sources because the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem at the time bore that name (Guillaume I of Malines, 1130–1145). The date 1131 was the first year of the pontificate of Innocent II and of the patriarchate of Gregory of Ḥālāt, which may account for the wrong date given by Duwayhī.

<sup>8</sup> Thus spelt in the English translation. In this article it is transliterated as «Jubayl».

<sup>9</sup> In the English translation, as in the Latin original, it is given as «fifty years». In the old French translation (*Recueil des historiens des Croisades; Historiens occidentaux* 1, 1076) it is given as 500 years. The old French version here appears to be more plausible, since five hundred years back from c. 1180 A. D. gives the date c. 680 A. D., the approximate date of the establishment of the Maronite church in Lebanon and the date of the Sixth Oecumenical Council at which the Monothelite heresy was anathematized.

<sup>10</sup> Aymeri or Haimery, also called Amaury or Amalric, of Limoges, Latin Patriarch of Antioch (1142–c. 1196). L. de Mas Latrie, *Les patriarches latins d'Antioche* = *Revue de l'Orient latin* 2 (1894) 193f.



with all reverence the traditions of the Roman Church . . . . The heresy of Maro and his followers is and was that in our Lord Jesus Christ there exists, and did exist from the beginning, one will and one energy only . . . . To this article . . . they added many other pernicious doctrines after they separated from the number of the faithful. Now, however, as has been stated, they repented of all their heresies and returned to the Catholic Church under the leadership of their patriarch and several of their bishops<sup>11</sup>.

The "wonderful change of heart" which the Maronites underwent did not pass without trouble, and even bloodshed. The action taken by the patriarch provoked a strong reaction from the anti-union Maronite clergy and laity. Led by the dissenting Maronite clergymen<sup>12</sup>, the anti-union Maronites attacked the uniatic churches and monasteries, beating, mutilating, and sometimes killing uniatic priests, monks, bishops and abbots<sup>13</sup>. Gravely concerned about the sedition, Pope Innocent III instructed his legate to the East, Peter of Capua, Cardinal-Priest of the Church of St. Marcellus, to investigate the troubles and to arrange for a renewal of the submission of the Maronite church to Rome. Peter of Capua arrived in the East in 1203 and met representatives of the Maronite clergy and notables at Tripoli<sup>14</sup>. There the Maronite representatives, in the presence of Frankish notables and Latin clergymen, renewed their oath of allegiance to Rome.

The success of the mission of Peter of Capua was not long-lasting. It is not known whether or not he managed to quell the opposition temporarily. It appears that the oath of allegiance to Rome was renewed merely by the uniatic Maronites, who had never broken off with Rome. The legate, however, reinvestigated the doctrines and practices of the Maronite church and introduced several corrections which were restated by Pope Innocent III in his bull to Patriarch Jeremiah of 'Amshīt, dated January 3, 1215 (1216 by modern reckoning)<sup>15</sup>:

That you believe without doubt what the Roman Church holds, which is: that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as it proceeds from the Father . . . ; that you use this manner in baptism, which is: that the invocation of the Trinity is made once in the three immersions; that you shall receive the sacrament of confirmation from bishops only; that only oil and balsam shall go into the preparation of the

<sup>11</sup> William of Tyre, l. c. 2, 458f.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'ī mentions two heretical monks as the chief instigators of the trouble. *Madiha 'alā Jabal Lubnān* (published by Būlus Qara'ī as *Hurūb al-muqaddamīn*, 1075–1450, Bayt Shabāb 1937) 21.

<sup>13</sup> These troubles, hinted to by Ibn al-Qilā'ī (l. c.), are mentioned with less ambiguity in the Bull of Innocent III to the Maronite patriarch Jeremiah of 'Amshīt, dated January 3, 1215, published by T. 'Anaysī (T. Anaissi), *Bullarium Maronitarum* (Rome 1911) 2f.

<sup>14</sup> Peter of Capua (1150–1209), was sent by Innocent III in 1203 with the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) as his legate to the East. T. 'Anaysī, *Silsila tārikhiyya li baṭārikāt Anṭākiya al-Mawārīna* (Rome 1927) 21; F. Suriano, *Il trattato di Terra Santa e dell'Oriente* (Milano 1900), 68f., called him Peter of Malphi and gave the same story.

<sup>15</sup> The medieval New Year started, as a rule, on March 25. The bull was written after the fourth Lateran Council, which met on November 11, 1215, had begun its proceedings.



Chrism; that every one of you shall confess his sins to his own priest at least once every year, and that you shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist with devotion at least three times a year; that you shall believe that in Christ there are two wills, one divine and one human; that the chalices you use in the Mass shall not be of glass, wood, or brass, but of tin, silver, or gold; and you shall have bells to distinguish the hours and to call the people to church<sup>16</sup>.

In 1213, ten years after the mission of Peter of Capua to the Maronites, the Maronite patriarch, Jeremiah of 'Amshīt (1199–1230), was honoured by a summons from Innocent III to attend the fourth Lateran Council which was held in Rome beginning from November 11, 1215<sup>17</sup>. The patriarch answered the summons, attended the opening sessions of the Council, and left Rome early in 1216. The event, in itself, was of great significance in the history of the relationship between the Maronite church and Rome, for, as far as can be determined, it was the first occasion on which a Maronite patriarch visited Rome and attended an oecumenical council. Equally significant was the papal bull, already mentioned, which was received by Patriarch Jeremiah on the eve of his departure from Rome. This bull is the earliest available document on the history of the Maronite church in its relations with Rome.

The contents of the bull of 1216 are of great interest to the historian of the Maronite church. It opens with expressions of joy because the Maronites had returned to union with Rome after having been "like wandering sheep, not properly understanding that the Catholic Church was the one spouse of Christ, . . . . that Christ was the true shepherd, and, after Him and through Him, that Peter was his Apostle and Vicar . . . . whose faith, and that of his successors, the Roman pontiffs, cannot fail . . . ." <sup>18</sup>. The bull then relates the story of the mission of Peter of Capua to the Maronites, and repeats the corrections to Maronite doctrines and practices quoted above. The last part of the bull refers to the troubles that had beset the Maronite church before 1203, absolving the repentant rebels of their sins and threatening any future trouble-makers with excommunication:

Whosoever lays his hand on a Maronite cleric in daring and violence shall fall under the pains of excommunication and, as an excommunicate, shall be evaded by everybody until he pays his due and so receives the benefit of absolution from the authority of the Apostolic See. As for you, O brother Patriarch, who, because of your great devotion, have personally visited your mother, the Holy Catholic Church, and attended the General Council, we wish to grant you and your people,

<sup>16</sup> Anaissi, *Bullarium* 3.

<sup>17</sup> In a list of the patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops present at the Council, the Maronite patriarch (Patriarcha seu Primas Maronitarum) is mentioned. C.-J. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles d'après les documents originaux* 5 (Paris 1912), 1727. A copy of the circular letter, dated April 19, 1213, summoning the church leaders of the East and the West to repair to the Council, is found addressed to Jeremiah (Patriarcam Maronitarum Hieremiam). Anaissi, l. c. 1. The original is in the Vatican Archives (Arch. S. Sedis Innocentii III, t. 8, fol. cxlii, 30).

<sup>18</sup> Anaissi, l. c. 2. The translation of this passage is taken from H. K. Mann, *The lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages* 12 (London 1902) 70.



who have recently renewed their allegiance to the Roman Church, special grace. We grant you the Apostolic authority to absolve those Maronites who had fallen under the above sentence, having raised their hands in daring against the clerics, except [in cases where] there had been mutilation of limbs or effusion of blood, or the laying of hands in violence of a bishop or abbot . . . .<sup>19</sup>

Under Jeremiah's successor, Daniel of Shāmāt (1230—1239), the troubles started afresh. The new patriarch was forced under the circumstances to move his residence from Mayfūq, north-east of Jubayl, to Kfayfān, a town nearer to the coast, to the east of Batrūn (Botrys)<sup>20</sup>. The mountaineers of the Jubayl district appear to have rebelled against the lord of Jubayl and the pro-Frankish Maronite patriarch, and to have set up temporal and spiritual leaders of their own<sup>21</sup>. The dissension continued to grow unchecked, reaching a climax in 1282 when, on the death of Patriarch Daniel of Ḥadshīt at Mayfūq, the uniante and anti-union Maronite factions elected rival patriarchs. Jeremiah of Dimilṣā, the uniante patriarch, took residence near the coast in the village of Ḥālāt, to the south of Jubayl. Luke of Bnahrān, the anti-patriarch, leader of the anti-union and anti-Frankish faction, fortified himself in Ḥadath, a village in the mountain fastnesses of Bsharri, to the east of Tripoli<sup>22</sup>.

The Franks, patrons of the uniante faction, supported the candidature of Jeremiah, and sent him to Rome after his election, probably to receive instructions from the Roman See. They even appear to have taken the initiative in proposing the election of a uniante patriarch, possibly after Luke had already been elected by the opposing faction. Jeremiah himself left an autobiographical note clarifying this point:

In the year 1590 of the Greeks [1279 A.D.], on February 9, I, the worthless Jeremiah, came from the blessed village of Dimilṣā to the monastery of our Lady in Mayfūq . . . to our lord . . . , the patriarch of the Maronites; and he ordained me with his holy hands and made me archbishop of the holy monastery of Kaftūn<sup>23</sup> . . . . Four years later, the lord of Jubayl<sup>24</sup> summoned me along with the bishops, the heads of the churches, and the clergymen, and they cast a lot which fell on me; and they instated me patriarch in the holy monastery of Ḥālāt. Then they

<sup>19</sup> Anaissi, l. c. 4. Translation mine.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'i, *Madiha* . . . 42f.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. The district of Munaytra and the town of Liḥfid are said to have renounced allegiance to the lord of Jubayl and to have set up a muqaddam (chief-tain) and an archbishop of their own.

<sup>22</sup> Jeremiah of Dimilṣā appears in the list of Maronite patriarchs published by 'Anaysī (*Silsila* . . . 24/7). Luke of Bnahrān, mentioned by Ibn al-Qilā'i (*Madiha* . . . 21) as a heretical patriarch, contemporary or predecessor to Jeremiah of Ḥadshīt (confused with Jeremiah of Dimilṣā), was mentioned by Duwayhī as having usurped the patriarchal see after the death of Daniel of Ḥadshīt. Neither of the latter two sources made mention of Jeremiah of Dimilṣā. It is interesting to note that the uniante patriarch came originally from the village of Dimilṣā, near the coast, to the north of Jubayl. The anti-patriarch came from Bnahrān, a mountain village of the Bsharri district.

<sup>23</sup> Kaftūn lies to the east of Batrūn, on the lower reaches of the Jawz river.

<sup>24</sup> In the original the "amīr" of Jubayl, his own translation of the French "seigneur". Maronite sources translate this title as amīr or malik.



sent me to the great city of Rome and I left our brother, the archbishop Theodore, to direct the flock and manage its affairs<sup>25</sup>.

The rival patriarch, Luke, appears to have been none other than the Maronite patriarch mentioned in an Arabic source as having been taken captive (and possibly put to death) by Turkoman irregulars acting on behalf of Qalāwūn, the Mamluk sultan, in 1283. An anonymous biographer of Qalāwūn related the incident, noting that the patriarch was the leader of a group of people who had "fallen in error" (heterodox Maronites), and that he was feared by the Count of Tripoli and the Franks:

The arrest of the patriarch of Al-Ḥadath in the land of Tripoli. There happened to be in the land of Tripoli a patriarch who became strong, swollen with pride, and rebellious. The ruler of Tripoli and all the Franks feared him. He won over the people of those mountains and the people of those valleys who had fallen in error; and his power grew until he was feared by every neighbour. He fortified himself in Al-Ḥadath and held his nose high [with pride] . . . . The governors<sup>26</sup> [of Syria] tried to get him several times but could not find him. Then the Turkomans sought him in his place and managed to capture him; and they brought him back a miserable prisoner . . . . The Moslems were freed from him and were spared his wickedness; and his capture was a great conquest — greater than the conquest of a rampart or a fortress<sup>27</sup>.

It is likely that the widening breach between the mountaineer Maronites and the coastal Franks hastened the end of the County of Tripoli. Whereas the Franks had previously relied on the friendliness and the assistance of the sturdy Maronite mountaineers, a fact to which several Crusader sources attest, they had to deal, in the latter half of the thirteenth century, with a hostile Maronite faction of considerable size. A Maronite historian of the fifteenth century, in fact, went to the extent of attributing the fall of Tripoli to the "heresy" of a chieftain of the Bsharrī district<sup>28</sup>.

While the Franks were in Syria the attempts on the part of the Church to secure an unanimously accepted union of the Maronite church to Rome failed. With the fall of Tripoli in 1289 and the final expulsion of the Franks from Syria in 1291 the situation changed. Under the repressive rule of the Mamluks the Maronites, in general, soon forgot their grudges against the Franks and gradually learnt to look to Western Christendom for help and protection.

With the general Maronite attitude thus changed, the Catholic missionaries, who resumed their activities in Syria in the first half of the fourteenth century, could work towards the establishment of an effective union with

<sup>25</sup> Quoted by 'Anaysī (*Silsila* . . . 24f.). The original is written on a Syriac Gospel in the Medici Library in Florence. The note was written, apparently, when Jeremiah was in Italy. Arabic original: translation mine.

<sup>26</sup> Translation of nā'ib, pl. nuwwāb, the title of the Mamluk governors of the Syrian provinces.

<sup>27</sup> *Tashrif al-'usūr fī akhbār al-Malik al-Manṣūr* (MS. Bibliothèque Nationale 1704) 94f. The two pages have been reproduced in photostat in *Al-Manāra* 5 (1934) 204.

<sup>28</sup> The chieftain in question was Muqaddam Sālim of Bsharrī. See Ibn al-Qilā'i, *Madiha* 47f.



a good chance of success. On the other hand, those missionaries had to compete with Monophysite groups which had flocked into Mount Lebanon, fugitives of the anti-Christian persecutions that had raged in Syria after the final success of the counter-crusade, and which were likewise interested in converting the Maronites to their own rite.

Officially, the Maronite church has not broken with Rome since the rapprochement of 1180, and has remained effectively in union with Rome until the departure of the Franks from Syria, in spite of the ever-present dissensions. After 1291, however, the union tended to be more nominal than real. No longer under the direct supervision of the Latin church of Syria, through which they could come into contact with the Roman See, the Maronites, still faithful to the union in principle, found themselves lapsing from Roman orthodoxy under the influence of their non-uniate neighbours. Brother Felix Fabri, who made a pilgrimage to the Holy land in 1484, stated that the Maronites living in Jerusalem were "heretics", believing in the One Will and Energy of Christ (Monothelite), but that they rang bells to call people to church, like the Latins. He added that, although they had been once in union with Rome, they had long since fallen away from that union and had become "tainted with the worst error, and become daily more so; for they have no doctors and preachers of the Catholic faith"<sup>29</sup>. Francesco Suriano, twice Superior of the Franciscans of Terra Santa in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, also stated that since the time of their union with Rome they had fallen into many errors and sundry heresies<sup>30</sup>. The Franciscan monk Pietro Verniero († 1660) gave the following verdict on the spiritual state of the Maronites since their union:

Although . . . , due to the influences of the Jacobites<sup>31</sup>, they had relapsed from time to time into some errors, they all came back promptly to render obedience to the Apostolic See and, in every case, they were soon relieved from these errors by the help of the learned and holy fathers . . . as in the year 1215, with the help of Aimery, the Patriarch of Antioch (!) . . . and in the year 1450, with the help of Fra Gryphon and Fra Gabriele<sup>32</sup> of the Lesser Brothers and finally in the year 1579 and 1580 by the help of brothers Giovan Battista Eliano and Giovanni Bruno, the Jesuits, legates of Pope Gregory XIII . . . . For that reason they never deserved to be called schismatics and heretics<sup>33</sup>.

It was not until about the middle of the fifteenth century that Rome resumed the initiative in bringing the Maronites back again to the Roman fold, following the revival of Catholic missionary activity in the East. The

<sup>29</sup> Felix Fabri, *The book of wanderings of brother Felix Fabri*, translated by Aubrey Stewart (P. P. T. S. VII—X, London 1897) II, p. 389/92.

<sup>30</sup> F. Suriano, l. c. 69.

<sup>31</sup> The Jacobites are the Syrian Monophysites. At the present their church is known as the Syrian Orthodox church.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'i, the Maronite missionary and historian, was a Franciscan brother. See below.

<sup>33</sup> Pietro Verniero di Montepiloso, *Croniche ovvero Annali di Terra Santa* (P. Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliographica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* 1 [Florence 1913] 26f.).



Franciscans of Terra Santa, who took charge of this missionary activity, had first established themselves in Beirut in the first half of the thirteenth century. They had a monastery, attached to the famous old church of the Saviour (the Serail Mosque of the present day) in which they served as priests. With the fall of the last remnants of the Latin Kingdom in Syria to the Mamluks in 1291, they were forced to leave the city, and many of the monks of the Franciscan monastery were killed. It was not long, however, before they returned. In 1345 they were already reestablished in Beirut, and the Franciscan monastery of that city was one of the largest Franciscan establishments in Syria<sup>34</sup>.

It appears that early in the fifteenth century those Franciscan missionaries, along with Catholic missionaries belonging to other orders<sup>35</sup>, attempted to bring the Maronites back to Roman orthodoxy. Their efforts were crowned with success when, in 1439, at the Council of Florence, the Maronite church was officially recognized as having reaccepted union with Rome and when, in token of this renewal of submission, Patriarch John of Jāj (1404—1445) received the crown and the staff from the Pope<sup>36</sup>. The Pope (Eugene IV, 1431—1447), in fact, had not summoned the Maronite patriarch to attend the Council. It was Patriarch John himself who took the initiative in the renewal of the union by requesting the Superior of the Beirut Franciscans, who was going to Florence to attend the Council, to act as his representative there and to solicit an apostolic confirmation of his patriarchate<sup>37</sup>. It was the Franciscan Superior himself who probably suggested this course of action to the patriarch.

The Council of Florence marked a significant stage in the history of the relations between the Maronite church and Rome. Beginning with 1439 there was no longer any doubt about the orthodoxy of the Maronite church. The "errors" of the Maronites after that date, which many Catholic authors noted, must have been abuses of practice due to ignorance rather than doctrinal errors due to heresy. "The most decided adversaries of the perpetual orthodoxy of the Maronites must agree that since the Council of Florence their beliefs have been absolutely irreproachable"<sup>38</sup>. The remaining years of the fifteenth century and the early years of the sixteenth were

<sup>34</sup> P. Girolamo Golubovich, *Serie cronologica dei Reverendissimi Superiori di Terra Santa* (Jerusalem 1898) 216f.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'ī, *Madiha* 61f. and *Letter to Patriarch Simeon*, p. 102, mentioned a Dominican monk by the name of Aimeric who restored the Maronite dissenters to their right minds in the early fifteenth century.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'ī, *Letter* 101f.; *Madiha* 62. Duwayhī, T. T. M. 288. T. Anaissi, *Bullarium* 17f. This reunion of the Maronites with Rome is mentioned in the Bull dated 1447, sent by Pope Nicholas V to the Maronite Patriarch Jacob of Hadath (1445—1458).

<sup>37</sup> Ibn al-Qilā'ī and Duwayhī, l. c.

<sup>38</sup> Henri Lammens, "*Fra Gryphon et le Liban au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*" = *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 4 (1899) 87.



to be spent in the struggle of the Maronite church, in alliance with the Franciscan missionaries, to reconcile the non-uniate Maronites to the principle of union and to convert them to Roman orthodoxy.

Upon the suggestion of the Popes, the Franciscan monks in Jerusalem and Beirut, during the period following the Council of Florence, paid regular visits to the Maronites and attended to their spiritual needs. Their task was the religious education of the Maronites and the correction of the abuses of practice that had crept into their ecclesiastical discipline and ritual through the years<sup>39</sup>. One of those Franciscan missionaries, Brother Gryphon of Flanders, who came to Lebanon in 1450, prepared a questionnaire for the confession of the ignorant<sup>40</sup>. The Maronite church itself felt the need for religious instruction in order to preserve and promote the orthodoxy of its flock. On more than one occasion the Maronite patriarch requested the Pope to provide his people with some necessary religious instruction. In answer to these requests, Pope Sixtus IV (1471—1484) appointed in 1475 the vicar general of the Franciscan order in Lebanon, Brother Pietro of Napoli, as his commissioner to the Maronites, to be followed in this office by his successors<sup>41</sup>, requesting him to send one or two of his monks to visit the Maronites and give them the necessary instruction<sup>42</sup>.

It was also during this period that Rome began insuring Maronite union with Rome through the education of its clergy: an action that culminated in 1584 with the foundation of the Maronite College in Rome by Pope Gregory XIII. Beginning with the latter half of the fifteenth century, young Maronites appear to have been encouraged to join Western Christian religious orders; and some of them were sent to study in Rome. A record exists of three of those young Maronites, who joined the Franciscan order in Jerusalem at the recommendation of Brother Gryphon: Gabriel Ibn al-Qilā'ī (the historian) and his two comrades, John and Francis. In 1470 the three novices were sent to Italy where they studied for many years. Of the three only the first, Ibn al-Qilā'ī, lived to return home in 1493 as a missionary to his own people<sup>43</sup>. Back in Lebanon, he worked hard in combatting the influence of the Monophysite missionaries in the country; and many of his polemical works in prose and in verse have survived. In 1496 he was appointed head of the Franciscan order in Cyprus; and in 1507 he was ordained Maronite bishop of Cyprus, an office which he occupied until his death in 1516.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> F. Suriano, l. c. 69.

<sup>41</sup> P. Verniero, l. c. 27.

<sup>42</sup> Duwayhī, T. A. 215f.

<sup>43</sup> F. Suriano, l. c. 71; Duwayhī, T. A. 220. John was drowned on his way back from Italy with Ibn al-Qilā'ī (See the latter's elegy on his comrade = *Al-Mashriq* 17 [1920] 252/6). Nothing is known about Francis, who probably died in Italy.



The task of converting the dissident Maronites to Roman orthodoxy and to union was a difficult one. The main center of dissent that was holding out was the secluded mountain district of Bsharrī, which had been throughout a center of opposition. There, the Jacobite missionaries had had great success. They enjoyed the protection, and sometimes the support, of the local chieftains (*muqaddams*), and their influence was strongly felt.

The persecution of the Christians of the Moslem East by the Mamluks after the fall of Frankish power in Syria and the defeat of the Mongols brought about, as has been noted, a considerable immigration of Christians into Lebanon. Jacobites infiltrated in considerable numbers into Maronite country and tried to get the natives of the country, and particularly the chieftains, reconciled to their presence among them. They seem to have attempted to achieve their aims by converting the Maronites to their respective rites. The mountaineer Maronites of Bsharrī, whose links with the Maronite patriarchate had always been feeble and who lived furthest away from the influence of the Catholic missionaries, were the most susceptible to Jacobite propaganda.

The favourite propaganda tool of the Jacobites was education, which had been badly neglected among the Maronites. 'Abd al-Mun'im Ayyūb, *muqaddam* of Bsharrī (1472-1495), professed the Monophysite doctrine and was well-known to be a Jacobite sympathizer. As a youth his education had been entrusted to a Jacobite priest<sup>44</sup>. Another Jacobite cleric, Noah of Baqūfā<sup>45</sup>, taught a group of young Maronites in the village of Al-Farādīs, in the neighbourhood of Ihdin<sup>46</sup>, and later converted them to the Jacobite communion<sup>47</sup>. Even Jacobite laymen appear to have been active propagandists of Monophysitism<sup>48</sup>.

Aside from belonging to a well-organized church, capable of carrying on an effective propaganda, the Jacobites had come to Lebanon from the prosperous towns of the coast and the interior and were far wealthier than the peasant Maronites whose condition at the time, according to the reports of the Franciscan monks, was wretched. It is not unlikely that the Jacobites should have used their wealth to win the sympathy of influential Maronites. *Muqaddam* Abd al-Mun'im of Bsharrī himself is known to have received presents from them. Having won the support and protection of some of the

<sup>44</sup> Duwayhī, T. A. 217.

<sup>45</sup> He later became the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch (1493-1509).

<sup>46</sup> An important town in the Bsharrī district, to the north-west of Bsharrī.

<sup>47</sup> Duwayhī, T. A. 218. Ibn al-Qilā'ī (*Madiha* 64) mentioned the Jacobite monk Samyā, who also taught in Al-Farādīs, converting several Maronites, most of whom were women. He attributes to him the conversion of the *muqaddam* of Bsharrī. Previously (*ibid.* 63) he noted that the Jacobite missionaries taught Maronite boys and girls "to cross themselves with one finger and to anathematize the Fourth Council".

<sup>48</sup> Ibn 'Aṭshā, a Jacobite missionary who exerted a strong influence on the *muqaddam* of Bsharrī, was a merchant. Ibn al-Qilā'ī, *Tabkīt kull man zagh 'an al-'imān* = Al-Manāra 2 (1931) 808.



more powerful chieftains<sup>49</sup>, the Jacobites soon became a powerful group in the district of Bsharri and a serious threat to the success of Catholic missionary activity in the district.

Prompted possibly by the Franciscan missionaries, the Maronites of Ihdin, in 1488, took the lead in expelling the Jacobites from the Bsharri district. Some time previously a group of Monophysite Abyssinian monks had taken residence in the monastery of St. Jacob in Ihdin. In 1488 the bishop and notables of Ihdin requested those monks to renounce the Monophysite faith. When the latter paid no heed to the request, the bishop of Ihdin sent one of his subordinates to take charge of the monastery, ordaining him as its abbot. Resenting such interference in their affairs, and not daring to offer resistance, the Abyssinian monks moved their residence to a monastery in the neighbourhood of Ḥadshīt, not far from Bsharri, and appealed for help to the shaykh of the town, a Jacobite who came originally from Nābulus in Palestine<sup>50</sup>. The shaykh of Ḥadshīt took up their cause, supported by the muqaddam of Bsharri. Together, they called upon the Moslems of the Dinniyya district, north of Bsharri, to raid Ihdin on their behalf; but the men of Ihdin ambushed and routed the assailants. Their victory spelt panic to the Jacobites of Bsharri, who forthwith dispersed and left for other districts, "some escaping by sea to Cyprus"<sup>51</sup>.

The dispersal of the Jacobites from the district of Bsharri was the mortal blow to the non-uniate Maronite cause. The event was followed by the gradual conversion of the Jacobite sympathizers to Roman orthodoxy. A considerable part of the task of conversion was carried out by Gabriel Ibn al-Qilā'i, who arrived in Lebanon five years after the dispersal of the Jacobites.

Having noticed that Jacobite propaganda had been spread among the Maronites largely through education, Ibn al-Qilā'i seems to have decided to use the same medium to reconcile his people to Roman orthodoxy. The ignorance of the Maronites at the time, and particularly their ignorance in matters of religious doctrine, was their main point of weakness; and the Jacobite missionaries had exploited it to the full. To combat this ignorance, Ibn al-Qilā'i used the vernacular poetic form (*zajal*) current in his day to popularize the secular and religious instruction he sought to impart. Throughout the remaining years of his life poems of medicine, natural science, astronomy, history, Church history, and theology poured out of his prolific pen. He also wrote in prose and translated from Latin a number

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<sup>49</sup> It is known when the Jacobite missionary activity in the district began. 'Abd al-Mun'im's uncle and predecessor seems to have been a Jacobite sympathizer (Ibn al-Qilā'i, *Tabkīt* 809). The muqaddams of Ḥardīn during the latter half of the fifteenth century were Monophysite converts (*Madiha* 63).

<sup>50</sup> The *shaykh* (here meaning town-elder) of Ḥadshīt, Jirjis Ibn al-Ḥajj Hasan, left Nābulus and settled in Ḥadshīt in the early latter half of the fifteenth century. Duwayhī, T. A. 214.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 218f.



of works on theology, ecclesiastical discipline, ritual, and dogma with the purpose of bringing a better knowledge of the Catholic faith to the Maronite clergymen, who appear to have been remarkably untaught in these matters; all this aside from the numerous letters he wrote to Maronite clergymen and notables, rebuking those among them who had strayed from Roman orthodoxy, warning those who were about to stray, and expounding orthodox doctrines to the faithful.

The opening years of the sixteenth century found the Maronites in unanimous agreement to the principle of union with Rome. The voices of dissent had been silenced forever; and the Roman orthodox faith, accepted by the Maronite church since the twelfth century, had come to be professed by all its flock. In 1515 Pope Leo X, having received favourable reports about the orthodoxy of the Maronites and their faithful submission to Rome, sent their patriarch Simeon of Ḥadath (1492—1524) his confirmation, with a bull exhorting him to alter certain practices in his church. In this bull the Pope praised the good faith of the Maronites:

We thank Divine providence ... since, among the Eastern churches, placed among infidels as in a field of error, the Almighty had deigned to keep His faithful servants as a rose among the thorns ... and had made you piously and bravely keep to the faith and discipline of the Holy Roman Catholic Church in spite of the persecutions and difficulties you had to stand from the infidels ..., the schismatics, and the heretics ....<sup>52</sup>

With this papal bull, the process of the basic union between the Maronite church and Rome became complete. The Roman See, eager to bring about a closer conformity between the uniate churches and the Catholic Church, has intervened on several occasions, since 1515, in the internal affairs of the Maronite church, exhorting it to alter details of its discipline and ritual. The Catholic missionary orders in Syria continued to supervise the Maronite church and to act as the spiritual guides of the Maronites. Nevertheless there has been no doubt shed, since then, on the orthodoxy of the Maronites or on their faithful allegiance to Rome.

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<sup>52</sup> T. Anaissi, *Bullarium* 32/5. A French translation of the bull, with the Latin original, is found in J. Debs, *Perpétuelle orthodoxie des Maronites* (Arras 1896) 19f. The bull is dated August 1, 1515.