One of the key cities in the Ottoman Empire, Aleppo enjoyed its economic heyday during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. European consulates were concentrated in *khāns* in *al-madīna*, the urban commercial center; and consuls and Western merchants dealt with local and foreign traders, employing Aleppine Christians and Jews as dragomans and servants. The European residence was prescribed by the Capitulations, which were first granted to Genoa in the middle of the fourteenth century\(^{(1)}\). At the renewal of the Capitulations for France in 1673, Sultan Mehmet IV guaranteed the safety of French Catholic missionaries in “Smyrna, Sayda, and Alexandria, and all the other ports” in the empire\(^{(2)}\). Aleppo was undoubtedly one of those ports.

In fact, for decades before the 1673 Capitulations, Franciscans, Jesuits, Capuchins and Carmelites had already stayed in Aleppo. They regarded the city as a bridgehead for missionary activities in the Levant\(^{(3)}\). The Christian population in Aleppo was mainly composed of four sects; the Melchites (i.e. the Greek Orthodox, the Eastern Orthodox, or *al-rūm* in Arabic) which were the largest, the Armenians, the Syrian Jacobites and the Catholic Maronites. The European missionaries tried to convert the people of the first three sects to the Catholic faith by transferring their loyalty from each Eastern patriarch to the Pope in Rome. This Uniate movement had already begun with the Crusades and had entirely succeeded for the Maronites in the twelfth century, partly for the Cilician Armenians in the thirteenth century, and nominally for the Melchites at the Council of Ferrara-Florence just before the fall of the Byzantine Empire. With the Melchites in Aleppo, the Catholic missionaries had to start anew because the Melchite church had been reactivated and even expanded and reinforced under the protection of the Ottoman Empire, which had covered a far larger domain than that of the Byzantine Empire.

The missionaries also took advantage of the Western diplomatic presence...
in Aleppo. The privileged status of the dragomans and their servants working at consulates made many Orthodox Christians seek the favour of Catholic consuls by pledging their loyalty to the Pope. The certificates issued by consuls to the Uniate Catholic merchants declaring their religious affiliation and the nature of their merchandise were also attractive to the Orthodox because, with these and the flag of Western nations on vessels, they could escape attacks by the Latin corsairs when they sailed on the east Mediterranean Sea\(^{(4)}\).

The Orthodox Melchites and their converted Catholics regarded each other as schismatic. The Melchites of Aleppo had originally belonged to the patriarchate of Antioch, which was moved to Damascus in the thirteenth century where it is still located. During the Ottoman period, the patriarchate of Constantinople strongly dominated the other three patriarchates: Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria; and sent their parishes Greek-speaking Phanariot clergy to high ranks such as metropolitans and bishops. The Phanariots' proliferation as clergymen, merchants, and sailors, among others, and the rise of their economic and political powers in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkan areas helped to develop their national movement from the eighteenth century, and their independence movement in the nineteenth century. In the Arab areas of the empire, their dominance and occasional compulsion to use Greek at ceremonies, provoked antagonism among Arabic-speaking local Melchites. This feeling of antagonism towards the Phanariotes or “Greeks” was probably the strongest element in causing the conversion of indigenous Aleppine Christians to the Catholic faith. On the other hand, the Orthodox Melchites called the Catholic Melchites the “Franks” (i.e. the Europeans) and, by stressing their own identity as the descendants of the Eastern Romans, often appealed for help to the Ottoman government so that the conversion be restrained\(^{(5)}\).

Already in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Melchite, Armenian and Syrian Jacobite metropolitans of Aleppo all swore loyalty to the Pope. It was not until 1724 that both the Orthodox and the Catholic patriarch were established in the Antiochian Melchite patriarchate of Damascus. At that time in Aleppo, although the Catholic Melchites must have outnumbered the Orthodox, they still supported the Orthodox patriarch Sylvester, a Greek clergyman from Cyprus; their rivalry with the Damascene Catholics had surpassed the sense of religious cohesion. But in 1726, when
In the beginning of the year 1813, a Greek clergyman Gerasimos received a berâth (an imperial patent) which authorized him as the Orthodox Melchite metropolitan of Aleppo, and arrived there to succeed his predecessor Neophyte. This conferment was recorded in a ferman (an imperial order), dated January 19, 1813(7). It was issued according to an appeal by the patriarch of Constantinople and a group of metropolitans staying in Istanbul and was supposedly sent to the church in Aleppo via the qaâdi (the judge in the Islamic court) of the city, and of other parts of the province and their na‘ibs (authorized representatives)(8). It declared the authorization of the new metropolitan and confirmed the amount of tributes to the government (twelve thousand aqche for mîrî peshkesh) and the amount of the fixed tax (thirty thousand aqche for mâl-i maqtû’). It also described the various powers granted to the metropolitan. They included the prohibition of people from entering churches or monasteries, even those with administrative decrees (buyûrûldus) to inspect the institutions for repairs; the prohibition of anyone other than the metropolitan and his representatives from intervention in marriages and divorces among the Christians (dhimmis); to forbid anyone from meddling in the church and monasteries’ endowed property (waqfs) which contained orchards, gardens, large estates (chiftliks), fields of arable land, meadows, mills, sacred springs, houses, shops, movable and immovable properties, money, and cattle. From these articles, it can be presumed that the Ottoman government guaranteed the interests of the

the Orthodox patriarch came to Aleppo and oppressed the Melchite Catholics there, they revolted against him and insisted to the Ottoman authority that they themselves were full Ottoman subjects and it was the patriarch Sylvester who was overstepping his duty. Moreover, they required that the Melchite metropolitan’s district of Aleppo be separated from the patriarchate of Antioch and annexed to the patriarchate of Constantinople. This was realized in 1732. From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, the Orthodox and Catholic metropolitans stood side by side in Aleppo with the exception of some years in the 1750s. In the Melchite church double hierarchies were emerging and the laity was being polarized between the two(6).
Orthodox Phanariot metropolitan vis-à-vis the Catholics whose influence was dominant in the various phases of Christian life in Aleppo.

The Catholic Melchite metropolitan of Aleppo at that time was Maksimüs Maşlûm, who was a native Aleppine and had long been in struggle with a counter faction within the Catholics in the city. He won the support of the Catholic Melchite patriarch residing in Lebanon, but the Pope and the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda in Rome did not accept him. He was elected to be metropolitan while he was staying in Lebanon in 1810, but could not go back to Aleppo because of the strong antagonism within his sect. He remained at the Catholic patriarchate in Lebanon and negotiated with Sultan Mahmut II in Istanbul, and Napoléon Bonaparte and his government in Paris, seeking their support. In 1814, he went to Rome to appeal to the Pope but the situation was not improved. In 1816, an Aleppine, Basîlyûs ‘Arqûnûji from Maşlûm’s faction was elected to be the new metropolitan. Nevertheless, ‘Arqûnûji also continued to stay in Lebanon and did not go back to Aleppo(9). Thus the Aleppine Catholic society was torn apart despite its comprising of the overwhelming majority of the Christian population(10).

In order to take advantage of this situation, the aforementioned Orthodox metropolitan Gerasimos visited Istanbul, and after negotiating with the Ottoman government, was granted a fermâni addressed to the vâlî (the Ottoman governor) and the qâdi of Aleppo. It was issued in late January, 1818. He returned to Aleppo with the fermâni and presented it to the vâlî Khûrshid Pasha and it was registered at the Islamic court on April 4, 1818. It severely condemned the Catholic clergy for their activities: converting the Orthodox Melchite Christians (rûm milleti re'âyâsi) to the Frank and Catholic faith (efrenj ve qâtlik madhhabına); prohibiting the Orthodox Melchites from entering the Orthodox church and taking them to the Frank and Catholic church; and performing rituals at the Melchites’ houses. The fermân saw those deeds as causing the disintegration of the bond of believers (inhilal-i shirâze-i nişâm-i râ'îyetê bâ'ith olajağı), and strictly warned the offenders of punishment by exile(11). By the beginning of April it was read aloud by the metropolitan Gerasimos in front of a group of Catholic clergymen. Fourteen of them were exiled to Lebanon on April 5(12).

On April 16, the day before Good Friday(13), the metropolitan Gerasimos ordered the Catholic Melchites to come up to his cell in a church in the
quarter of al-Šalība, the north-west suburb of the city. As many as two or four thousand people surrounded the church. He read aloud the administrative decree issued by the ṭalī and ordered that they should worship at his Orthodox church. It was evident that he bore the coming Easter ceremonies in mind and was trying to integrate the Catholics under the Orthodox rite with the authority and compulsive power of the fermān and administrative decree. Perturbed, the Catholic crowd rejected the order, and most of them turned to the office of the wālī, Takiya al-Shaykh Abū Bakr, which was originally a convent of Islamic Sufis and situated on a small hill about a half kilometer north of the city. Among the crowd there was the wālī’s private doctor, an Italian, who was sent to the church in order to gather information concerning the unsettled situation. On arriving at the Takiya, the doctor consulted with the wālī and announced that he required three persons from the crowd who could speak Turkish. As follows is an English translation of the Arabic text of the conversation, which was translated from the Turkish\(^{14}\). The wālī was in the building and spoke from a window opened above.

The wālī: “I sent an administrative decree to you which ordered you to obey your metropolitan.”

The three: “This is not our metropolitan nor do we belong to his millet.”

The wālī: “Are you and he Melchites (al-রুম)?”

The three: “Yes. But there are two Melchite (al-রুম) sects which are separate from each other. We are the original and they are the schismatics. We adhere to the teachings which have been preserved from the Apostles.”

The wālī: “There are no double organizations of the Melchites (al-রুম) in Istanbul nor anywhere in Anatolia but only in Aleppo. This separation will cause evil among the ‘flocks’ (al-reʿāyā). Who baptizes and buries you?”

The three: “The (Orthodox) metropolitan and his priests do.”

The wālī: “Then why don’t you worship with him?”

The three: “It is not allowed in our religion to join him because he is ignorant of the faith of our religion, especially of the Pope.”

Here came out Aḥmad Bey from the wālī’s side and asked the three in Arabic.

Aḥmad Bey: ”To whom did Jesus give the deputyship (al-khilāfa)?”

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The three: “To Peter (Butrus). The metropolitan does not know this.”
Ahmad Bey: “If the metropolitan recognizes the deputyship, would you obey him?”
The three: “Yes.”
Ahmad Bey talked with the wālī secretly. The wālī turned back.
The wālī: “What is your millet?”
The three: “The Melchites (rum).”
The wālī: “Then you must obey the metropolitan or convert to Judaism or Islam.”
The three: “Your religion does not allow you to compel someone to change his religion.”
The wālī: “There is a fermān in his (i.e. the metropolitan’s) hand and if you call up a substitute (i.e. something instead of the fermān), you will be saved from his hand.”
The three: “Then our matter goes to the Islamic sacred law (shari‘a).”
The wālī: “If you are obedient to the order of the Islamic sacred law, I am its (i.e. the fermān’s) deputy in the Islamic sacred law.”
Ahmad Bey turned back.
Ahmad Bey: “Oh Christians, the metropolitan has a fermān in his hand and it orders you to obey him. Those who obey him are freed and those who disobey him are punished.”
Aḥmad Bey shut the window.

Meanwhile, after the crowd had left for Takiya al-Shaykh Abū Bakr, those who remained at the church became upset and began to destroy the Orthodox religious symbols. They besieged and threatened the metropolitan Gerasimos, seizing his crown to insult him. The metropolitan escaped to the Islamic court (al-maḥkama) in the center of the city and asked the qāḍī for help. The crowd followed him but the doors of the court were shut soon after the metropolitan entered. On hearing of the state of unrest from the metropolitan, the qāḍī sent a messenger to the wālī in Takiya al-Shaykh Abū Bakr, telling him that the crowd had turned rebellious. When the wālī received the message, the crowd who had been in front of the Takiya were already on their way back to the city. He called them back and ordered them to obey the metropolitan by penalty of execution. They rejected him. The wālī’s troops were sent and began to arrest them.
In the midst of the violence, the troops killed eleven Catholics: nine Melchites, one Syrian Catholic and a Maronite who happened to be on the way to an orchard outside the city and got mixed in with the crowd. Those arrested were thrown into prison. Then the troops proceeded to enter the central commercial area (al-madīna) of the city and continued to arrest Christians from the crowd until the prison was full. People closed their shops and the area was shut down\(^\text{15}\).

The next day, Good Friday, a town crier (munāđin) walked around the streets in the central commercial area calling that order was restored, and people began to open their shops\(^\text{16}\). All the Christian prisoners except for the Catholic Melchites, whose number was about five hundred, were released. The representatives of the Catholic Melchites held a meeting and decided to obey the Orthodox metropolitan. On Saturday, April 18, the representatives visited Gerasimos and suggested a compromise. The rest of the prisoners, the Catholic Melchites, were released. On April 19, Palm Sunday, the representatives of the Catholics attended Easter Mass given by the Orthodox metropolitan. Nonetheless some refused to enter the church, and others had already set out for Lebanon or other places\(^\text{17}\).

The eleven Catholics who were killed were buried in the Catholic cemetery outside the city. They were regarded as martyrs and called "the flowers of the Catholic youth of Aleppo." Many Catholics visited the cemetery and a rumor of a supernatural light above the tombs spread among the people\(^\text{18}\).

THE OTTOMAN REACTION AND THE GREEK INDEPENDENCE WAR

About one month after the clash, on May 23, the Catholic Melchites paid a fine which amounted to four hundred kīs to the wālī, apologizing for making disturbances and causing disorder in the city\(^\text{19}\). Already on May 19, the wālī Khūrshid Pasha issued an administrative decree to his deputy-governor (mutasallim), Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Āgha, ordering him to superintend the Orthodox Melchite metropolitan so that he should not compel anything against the Islamic sacred law on his own sect, i.e. the Catholic elements. The wālī also ordered that the deputy-governor should not pay attention to the requirement of the metropolitan if it was against the Islamic sacred law. Two days later, the qāḍī issued the same order to most of the representatives
of the Melchites (rum tâ'ifasinin 'umûman söz şâhîbleri) in Aleppo\(^{(20)}\). The Ottoman government began to change their stance towards the Melchite Christians after the bloodshed.

The Catholic Melchites then appealed to the qâdi that the metropolitan Gerasimos deprived them of their right to enter the church. The qâdi sought the opinion of the muftî (official expounder of the Islamic law). It declared that Muslims did not have to judge in non-Muslim lawsuits. However, the wâli prevented the metropolitan from compelling the Catholic Melchites to worship under himself but, at the same time, prohibited them to worship in the other Catholic churches. On Sunday a week before Christmas, orders were attached onto the doors of the Maronite and Syrian churches, saying that Melchites who dared to worship at the other churches would be strictly punished: execution for the poor and confiscation for the rich, and that a heavy penalty would be imposed on the churches which let them worship. The wâli again ordered the Maronite and the Syrian metropolitans not to let the Melchites enter their churches\(^{(21)}\).

The European Catholic powers began to negotiate with one another in order to support the Catholic Melchites in Aleppo. In August, after receiving news of the clash, the Vatican ambassador in Vienna presented a petition to the Austrian government. He also worked so that Maksîmûs Mažlûm, the former Catholic Melchite metropolitan of Aleppo staying in Rome, could bring a letter from the Vatican ministry of foreign affairs to Metternich, the Austrian minister of foreign affairs, and meet the Austrian emperor. The emperor was moved by Mažlûm’s petition and assured his help for the Catholics in Aleppo\(^{(22)}\).

Those activities seemed to be effective in some respect. In the beginning of the next year, 1819, Na‘ûm Ghaḍbân, a Catholic Melchite and a bitter enemy of the metropolitan Gerasimos, was appointed as one of the three representatives (qoja bashî) of the Melchites\(^{(23)}\). Less than a month after his nomination, he succeeded in receiving an allowance from the wâli so that the Catholic Melchites could worship at the Maronite or Syrian church. This enabled the sect to attend the Masses conducted by the Maronite metropolitan. The wâli himself came to the church and stayed there during the Mass. Now the critical situation was over for the Catholics\(^{(24)}\).

On August 28, however, the wâli Khûrshid Pasha issued an administrative decree to his deputy-governor Muḥammad Şâlih Āghâ and called his attention
to the fact that some clergy who were ignorant of the situation (majhūl al-ahuwal, i.e. the Catholic clergy) were, among other things, taking charge of marriage contracts and contradicting the jurisdiction of Gerasimos. The wālī ordered the deputy-governor not to intervene in the punishment of the clergy. In the Islamic court, the administrative decree was read aloud in front of the Armenian, Syrian and Maronite clergy and representatives and at the presence of Gerasimos’s deputy (wakil). The representatives of the three sects argued that they were neither “ignorant of the situation” nor taking charge of the contract of marriage, but only performing baptism and burial, which were lawful. They also declared that they would not meddle in affairs of the Melchite metropolitan. The process was recorded by the qādi on October 14, 1819, and sent to Istanbul[25]. The Orthodox Melchites were still dominant over the Catholics in the power game. Thus some of the Catholic clergy and laymen were exiled to Lebanon and Istanbul and some of them emigrated to Livorno, Marseille and other Western cities[26].

Just nine days after the registration of the above-mentioned case, on October 23, Aleppines revolted against the wālī and the city was completely besieged by the wālī’s troops and reinforcements. The disturbance continued with fierce battles for almost one hundred days, until February 3, 1820[27].

In the beginning of April, the Sublime Porte sent a fermān to the qādis of Aleppo and the districts and their deputies. It was issued after the submission of the petition by the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople and the group of metropolitans staying there, and its outline was almost the same as the one which Gerasimos brought to Aleppo in 1813. It again assured the metropolitan Gerasimos of the many powers attributed to him. The Orthodox Melchites were described in the document as the “real Melchite flock” (ṣāḥīh rum re‘āyā li‘ifasu), and all the Melchites were prohibited from going to the churches of the Catholics (afrānji), Syrians, Maronites and some other sects[28]. It must have seemed to the Aleppine Catholics that the situation had been regressed to the time before the martyrs’ tragedy. The fermān was registered at the Islamic court in Aleppo about six months later, on October 15, 1820. Within the month, the qādi al-Ḥajj ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ sent a report to Istanbul. It said that a few days after the fermān was read aloud in the Islamic court, the metropolitan Gerasimos insisted that in Aleppo the real Melchite millet was composed of twenty or thirty houses, while the number of the Catholic sect’s houses was reaching seven
or eight hundred. It also stated that the Catholics had been converted from
the real Melchites recently, and should not worship at churches other than
the real Melchite one. By integrating the Catholic Melchites in this way,
he tried to increase the amount of the tribute. The Catholics came to the
court and stated in front of some Muslim notables of the city (mebnâ-i
eldenin a'yan ve vazih-i sa'iressi) that their Catholic doctrines were so deeply
rooted in history that even its origins were impossible to trace and the
metropolitan’s insistence of their recent separation was not right. They
also asserted that the Catholics had already been allowed to worship at the
Syrian church and that their conflict with the Orthodox Melchites should be
settled. Then they stated that the Catholics would be responsible for col-
lecting tributes to the state (miri) and to the treasury of waqfs of Mecca
and Medina (khazine-i harameyn-i muhteremeyn); and that when they worshipped
at the Syrian church, the Catholic Melchite metropolitan Basilius ‘Arqtunji
would declare himself as the metropolitan of the re'âya of Mecca and Medina.
Subsequently the Muslim notables in court testified that the Catholic Mel-
chites, the Maronites and the Syrians had their old rites, doctrines and
traditions and had not separated from the Orthodox (rum). They also
stated that the Christians belonging to the Franks (efrenj) were original
re'âya of the Ottoman Empire bearing taxes (kharaj), and since many of
them were the privileged merchants of the long distance trade (avrupa ve
'ajam ve hindustan berâlî tujjari) working in their town of Aleppo, their
presence was very beneficial to the Muslims. The Muslim neighbors were
taking sides with the Catholics, not of the Orthodox Phanariots. In spite
of the strong obstruction by the legitimate Christians protected by the
government, the non-legitimate majority of the Christian population in a
pivotal city was now establishing a footing in the religio-political system
of the empire.

A landmark event in Ottoman history decisively reinforced this tendency.
In March 1821, Dimitrios Ypsilantis’s troops invaded the two Danubian
principalities and a revolt started in the Peloponnese. It was the beginning
of the military struggle of the Greek independence movement. On Easter
Eve, the Sublime Porte immediately reacted to the urgent situation by
executing Gregory V, the Orthodox Melchite patriarch of Constantinople,
although he was loyal to the Ottoman government and had anathematised
Ypsilantis. On June 16, the wâli of Aleppo al-Ḫajj Muṣṭafâ Pasha, the
successor of Khūrshid Pasha\(^{(31)}\), issued an administrative decree to the metropolitan and clergy of the Catholic Melchites of Aleppo. At first, the wālī seriously criticized the treachery of rebellious activities among the Greeks \((rūm milleti)\) and mentioned the execution of the patriarch two months before. He also declared that serious reconsideration was necessary concerning the Orthodox's attribution of their evil deeds to the Catholics; proceeding that the Orthodox \(millet^{'s}\) treason to the religion and state, and the Catholic sect's \((\text{\textit{\textasciitilde}a\textit{\textasciitilde}fā}})\) loyalty were evident. He now acknowledged the Catholics performing not only baptism and burial but assigning marriage contracts by themselves. And he prohibited the Orthodox from intervening with those rights. Furthermore, with regards to the tributes levied on the Christians and Jews, he ordered that the ratio between the Orthodox and the Catholic Melchites be five to thirty-five, and that they should be collected separately. Eight days later, the qādī of Aleppo decreed the same to the Aleppine Catholics\(^{(32)}\). Nonetheless, it seems that the Catholic Melchites were occasionally harassed by the Orthodox. The next year, 1822, on November 3 and 9, respectively the wālī and the qādī again issued decrees of the same kind\(^{(33)}\).

Before this, a severe earthquake hit Aleppo on the night of August 13, 1822. Many buildings in the city were destroyed and as many as twelve to twenty thousand people, estimated to be one tenth of the city population, were said to be killed\(^{(34)}\).

One year after the earthquake, in early September of 1823, Aleppine Islamic scholars \(('ulema\')\), notables \(('ayān)\), the righteous \(('ulema\')\), Islamic religious leaders \(('e'imme)\), Islamic preachers \(('huteba\')\) and the Muslim dignities \(('sādāt-i du'āğıyān qollari)\) came to the Islamic court and submitted a petition to the qādī. They described at first the beneficial economic activities of the non-Muslim residents \(('re'āyā)\) in Aleppo, especially in the sector of manufacture and trade of textile, and then mentioned the causes and development of the Orthodox-Catholic clash in 1818. There they noticed, just as in the case of October 1820, that the “group of Greek nationals” \((\text{\textit{jinslerinden rum taqmi}})\) consisted of twenty or thirty households; and that the Christians whose rites were similar to the Syrians and the Maronites \(('sūrīyān qollari)\), of 1500. In spite of this discrepancy, it was still the latter who conformed to the “Greeks” \((rūm)\). The Muslims also affirmed that eleven had been killed and fourteen clergymen exiled as the...
result of the clash of 1818. Subsequently they said that the earthquake had destroyed houses, shops and factories, and the disastrous chaos had caused many people to leave the city. The revenue of tributes was seriously decreased as a result, and much of it belonged to the Catholics. In need of recovering the deficit, the Muslim notables asserted that the Ottoman government should recall the Catholics, many of whom were able merchants and beneficial to their city and Muslims, so the government should at first recall the Catholic clergy in exile, and then allow the Catholic Melchites to perform their rites, baptisms, marriage contracts, and burials independently of the Orthodox and to make this separation peacefully. The qādi of Aleppo accepted the request and sent a petition to the Sublime Porte(35).

THE MILLET SYSTEM AND LOCAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The de facto establishment of the millet of the Catholic Melchites in the Ottoman Empire was not achieved until October 31, 1837, when the Sultan Mahmut II issued a fermān to Maksımūs Mağlūm, who was the former metropolitan of Aleppo, and a patient struggler for pursuing the sect's independence as a millet, who was travelling around European and Ottoman cities. By imperial order, he was given authority to organize the Catholic Melchites in all parishes of the Orthodox Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria. The official and final separation and independence of the millet was delayed until January 8, 1848(36).

Benjamin Braude argued against the unconditional recognition of the millet system in the Ottoman Empire and described its concept as a product of a "combination of myths." He insisted that it was impossible to assume a homogenous system covering the diversified religious communities in the vast domain of the empire. The usage of the term "millet" in the institutional context had emerged since the 1820s, the reforming era of the Sultan Mahmut II. Before this period, the term "tā'ifa" (sect) was generally used instead of "millet"(37). Among the historians of the Ottoman Aleppo, Bruce Masters and Abraham Marcus supported Braude's discussion by indicating the very rare usage of the term "millet" in the Ottoman and Arabic documents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries(38).

As far as the aforementioned fermāns, administrative decrees and qādi's reports were concerned, the term "tā'ifa" is more commonly and frequently
used than that of “millet,” and there is no evident sign of the presence of the institutional *millet* system as Braude explained. The few cases in which the term “*millet*” was used for the Christians are as follows:

1. When the Sublime Porte issued a *fermān* to the Orthodox Melchite metropolitan of Aleppo to affirm his powers and rights in January 1813, April 1820, and December 1825, the metropolitan was entitled “the chosen leader of the Christian *millet*” (*qudwat-i mukhtar-i millet al-masiḥiya*)⁴⁹.

2. From the end of 1818 to the beginning of 1819, eleven representatives (*qoja bashlar*) of Christians and Jews were appointed by the wāli. All of them were entitled to be “the honor of his *millet*” (*fakhr millati-hi*)⁴⁰.

3. In 1820, two years after the clash between the Orthodox and Catholic Melchites, the qāḍī reported the recent development of the situation to the Sublime Porte. He quoted the Orthodox metropolitan’s words which contained “rūm milleti” and “qatūlīk tā’ifast”⁴¹.

4. In 1821 and 1822, after the beginning of the Greek war of independence the wāli of Aleppo issued an administrative decree to the Catholic Melchite metropolitan and clergy of Aleppo. The title given to them was “the leader of the Christian *millet*, the Catholic sect residing in Aleppo” (*qudwat-i millet al-masīḥiya ḥaleb-de mutemekkin āṭīlik tā’ifast*). But in this text “*millet*” was used for “rūm” only, while “tā’ifast” was used for the Catholics. The qāḍī of Aleppo followed the usage in the decree⁴².

5. When the Muslim notables presented a petition to the qāḍī to influence him to recall the Catholics to Aleppo in 1823, they insisted that the “*millet*” of the Catholics had been existing since the Ottoman conquest (*feth-i khāqānīnīnberi qatūlīk milleti mevjud olup*), although the term “qatūlīk tā’ifast” was also used in other parts of the document⁴³.

Other than the examples mentioned above, there can be found few cases of usage of the term “*millet*” before the 1820s⁴⁴, and it seems that all were interchangeable with “tā’ifast”. But in the cases No. 4 and 5 above, the difference of the two terms is significant; “tā’ifast” was a sub-category of “*millet*” which had an authorized and independent character. It is also significant that the three Catholic Melchite representatives answered “rūm” when they were asked by the wāli to which *millet* they belonged during the event of the clash in 1818. It was ambivalent for them to answer as such because at that time, on the eve of the Greek independence war, the meaning of the term “rūm” must have been the national “Greeks” as well as the
More in depth research on the Ottoman documents is needed, but it may be said that the Uniate movement, promoted by the Western Catholic missionaries, and the Greek national movement, promoted by the Phanariots and stimulated by nation-state building in the Western Europe, created the political *millet* system in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In other words, the process of the separation and establishment of the *millet* of Catholic Melchites is considered to have been the catalyst for the emergence of the modern *millet* system in the Ottoman Empire. The clash in Aleppo was a symbolic moment in the last phase of the process.

In the confrontation between the two sects, Aleppine Muslims, as seen above, sided with the Catholics in spite of the Orthodox's allegation that the Catholics belonged to the "Franks." Already in 1726, when the Aleppine Catholic Melchites struggled against the Orthodox Patriarch staying in Aleppo and made a petition to the court, the Muslim notables gave evidence favouring the Catholics\(^{45}\). Similarly, in 1835 and 1839, respectively, eight and five Aleppine Muslims including a *shaykh* of the Mevlevî Sufi order came up to the Islamic court and testified in favour of the Aleppine Syrian Catholics which had suffered by the intervention of the Syrian Orthodox patriarchate in Dayr Za'farân near Mardin\(^{46}\). In Islamic law, in case of the non-Muslims' lawsuits, it was necessary for them to bring Muslim witnesses to the court, so Muslim attendance was quite natural at Christian lawsuits. But at the same time, every case suggests the daily interaction between the Aleppine Muslims and Christians, whose majority were Catholics. The court system itself required the cooperation among the different communities. What is significant is that, in October 1820 and September 1823, the Muslim notables appealed to the *qâdî* to recognize the Catholic Melchites' separation from the Orthodox, indicating the importance and beneficability of the Catholics in Aleppo. The Muslims shared the economic interests with the non-Muslims in the city, where diversified religious groups put their backgrounds and commercial networks one over another. Although the term "*jiwâr*" (neighborhood) was not recorded in the documents, it could be assumed that the Muslims acted in terms of the tradition of protecting one's neighbors, and that this took precedence over the conservative guarding of the formal religious regime of the empire. This local consciousness was similar to the feeling of the Maronite priest who wrote a diary.
during the urban disturbance in Aleppo for more than three months from 1819 to 1820 and openly expressed his sympathy with the rebels, “ahl al-balad” (the people of the town)(47). This local tie was without doubt one of the geneses of Arab nationalism and was manifested at the last urban disturbance in 1850.

Notes

(7) Awāmir Sultāniya, Halab (abbreviated as AS in the following), vol. 35, No. 224, Ferman, and other kinds of documents referred hereinafter are from the collection of records of the Ottoman imperial orders and miscellanea preserved in Markaz al-Wathā‘iq al-Ta‘rikhiya bi-Dimashq (The National Archives in Damascus). I would like to express my gratitude to the director Dr. Da’d al-Ḥakim and her colleagues for their kind cooperation for my research. It was enabled by support from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Saito Foundation for the Islamic Studies and the Murata Science Foundation.
(8) There is no mention of qādis nor naʾībs in the document. But in a ferman of the same kind and contents issued in April, 1820, those titles are addressed at the beginning. AS, vol. 36, No. 48.
(9) Idlibi, asaqifa al-rum, pp. 221–237. Mazlūm continued to stay in Europe for fifteen years and as mentioned later in this article, achieved the establishment of the independent Catholic millet in the Ottoman Empire in 1848. He did not go back to Aleppo until 1850 when he was attacked by rebels in the urban disturbance and escaped to Beirut. Ibid., pp. 290–294; Būlus Qar‘alī (ed.), ahamm ḥawādith halab
It is difficult to estimate the correct population ratio between the Orthodox and Catholic Melchites in Aleppo at that time. The Ottoman documents mentioned later in this article suggest symbolically that the number of the Orthodox Melchites’ houses was twenty or thirty, while that of the Catholics’ houses was seven or eight hundred in 1820, and 1500 in 1823. See the parts covered by the notes (29) and (35). A Carmelite missionary report at that time tells that the population of the Orthodox Melchites in Aleppo was less than three hundred and that of the Catholic was more than fourteen thousand, Rabbath, *Documents inédits*, vol. 2, pp. 450–452. In 1856 the Maronite metropolitan of Aleppo reported the Christian population by sect as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sect</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melchite</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>4000–4200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
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<td>Caldean</td>
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(13) There is a one day difference on the date of the beginning of the event between the two sources mentioned in the note (12): April 17 in the record by Bulus Arūtin and April 16 in the description by Idlibi. Although the former is the contemporary one, there is no information on the day of the week. On the other hand, the latter has correct information. Therefore the latter is taken here provisionally, but the former’s information of the event is used as a complement because there is no contradiction on the process between the two.

(14) The description is derived from the report by Bulus Arūtin, in Qar‘ali (ed.), *ahamm hawādith*, pp. 23–24. In spite of the fact that it is impossible to substantiate the reality of their conversation in detail, it is presumably worthy of quotation because the information was sent to the Maronite patriarch, who probably believed and took it for granted. Thus the words in the conversation represent the common atmosphere of the religious society as they were used in the social context at that time.


(16) It was a common feature of urban disturbances in Ottoman Arab cities that
merchants closed their shops in the market area and opened them after safety was recovered and after the people regarded the situation as justifiable and in order. Sometimes they shut down their shops in order to demonstrate their will of protest against the government. André Raymond, *Grandes villes arabes à l'époque ottomane*, Paris, Editions Sindbad, 1985, pp. 142-144.

(18) Rabbath (ed.), *Documents inédits*, vol. 1, p. 58; Qur'ān (ed.), *ahamm ḥawādith*, p. 32.
(21) Iḍilibī, *asāqīfa al-rūm*, pp. 244-245.
(23) *Ibid.* Naʿūm Ghaḍbān was appointed to the *qoja bashi* with the administrative decree issued by the wālī on January 20, 1819, and with the order by the qāḍī on the same date. The title given just before his name is “the honor of his millet Mr. (fakhr millatihi al-hawaja)”, and the term “qoja bashi”, whose original meaning is a chief of a Christian village in the Balkan area, and almost equivalent to “mukhtar” in another area of the Ottoman Empire, is explained in the text as “a head appointed on the Melchite sect (ra‘is mu‘ayyan ‘ala ta‘ifa al-rūm)”. The Melchite qoja bashis were three; the Armenian, the Syrian, the Maronite and the Jewish ones were two each. They were appointed during the period from December 4, 1818, to January 26, 1819. In every case, both the wālī and the qāḍī issued the documents in Arabic. AŠ, vol. 42, No. 79-100.
(28) AŠ, vol. 38, No. 48.
(32) AŠ, vol. 38, No. 221, 222.

(35) *AS*, vol. 38, No. 516, 517.


(39) *AS*, vol. 35, No. 224; vol. 38, No. 48; vol. 43, No. 129.

(40) *AS*, vol. 42, No. 79–100. See note (23).

(41) *AS*, vol. 38, No. 166.

(42) *AS*, vol. 38, No. 221, 222, 438, 439.

(43) *AS*, vol. 38, No. 516, 517.

(44) For example, in May 1806, when the ʿwāli of Aleppo issued an administrative decree in Arabic to the chiefs of the Christians and Jews and the European consuls, and ordered them to examine the qualification of dragomans working at the consulates, it said “ʾilā ‘umdat al-millet al-masīhiya wa nukhbat al-tā‘īfat al-mūsawiya wa jamī‘ qanāṣil al-duwal al-musta‘aminin bi-madinat ḥalab”. *AS*, vol. 30, No. 151. From 1817 to 1818 the Maronites and the Armenians in Aleppo disputed over the annual rent of their place in church, and in April 1818, the qaḍī issued an order to assure the each church’s properties using the term of “millet-i ermeniyân” and “märūnî milleti”. *AS*, vol. 42, No. 11. On the dispute, see Qar‘alī (ed.), *ahamm ḥawādith*, pp. 76–77; Avedis Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 264.


(47) See note (27).