

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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CESARE SANTUS

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^{rem} 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 adi 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 Ařak'elian, who sent along also a Latin translation (fols 193r–196v, 199r).

³⁴ '...zirē əzmez vasn aysm patčari Ērzumma 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/1, 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.

- Awetik' vardapetin T'oxat'ec'oy manzul Kostant'nupölsoy patriargut'enēn ew surb yErusalēmay yarañnordut'enēn*], AMAE, 134CP/8 (Correspondance Politique, Turquie—Supplément, vol. 8, 1701–1711), fols 4r–17r
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