

# A Companion to the History of the Roman Curia

*Edited by*

Donald S. Prudlo



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# The Roman Curia and the Eastern Churches, 1500–1800: Diplomacy, Cultural Policy, Mission, and Confessional Control

*Cesare Santus*

## 1 Introduction

In this chapter I will provide a synthetic overview of the long and tortuous relationship between the Roman Curia and the Christian East in early modern times.<sup>1</sup> During this period, the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Churches followed a non-linear development, further complicated by the plurality of the communities involved, which were scattered over different geographical and political contexts (Eastern and Central Europe, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, Ethiopia, India ...) and belonged to distinctive theological, liturgical and disciplinary traditions, expressed in Greek, Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, Slavic, and other languages.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, if one considers the phenomenon from the perspective of the Roman Curia, it is possible to identify three recurrent attitudes or ‘styles’ toward Eastern Christianity: a diplomatic-cultural approach, a missionary effort, and confessional-normative control. These approaches coexisted for a long time, sometimes overlapping, but they also prevailed at different stages in the history of the Catholic Church: in the late sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, respectively. Each

1 I would like to thank Margherita Farina, Aurélien Girard, Sam Kennerley, Laurent Tatarenko and Matteo Salvatore for their help and advice. Abbreviations: AAV=Archivio Apostolico Vaticano; ADDF=Archivio del Dicastero per la Dottrina della Fede; APF= Archivio Storico della Congregazione de Propaganda fide; ASR=Archivio di Stato di Roma; BAV= Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; BVR=Biblioteca Vallicelliana (Rome).

2 For an overview of the history of Eastern Christian communities, especially in late medieval and early modern times, see M. Angold (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*: vol. 5, *Eastern Christianity* (New York: 2006), and B. Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens d'Orient* (Paris: 2017). More specifically, for the history of relations between Catholics and Orthodox in the Near East, see Ch.A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire (1453–1923)* (Cambridge: 1983); B. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVII<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Rome: 1994); C. Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie: Communicatio in sacris, coesistenza e conflitti tra le comunità cristiane orientali (Levante e Impero ottomano, XVII–XVIII secolo)* (Rome: 2019).

one of them mobilized different ecclesiastical actors, such as cardinals, secretaries of Congregations, and consultants.

## 2 Diplomacy and Cultural Policy in the Hands of Cardinals and Popes

The attitude of the Roman Curia toward the Christian East in the sixteenth century was obviously affected by the double legacy left by the Council of Florence with the bulls of Union (1439–1442) and by the Council of Trent (1545–1563). The former offered the model of a gathering in which the ‘Union’ among the Churches had been achieved through diplomatic channels and high-level contacts between the Roman pontiffs and the representatives of the Eastern communities. This effort had resulted in the signing of agreements that lacked real support among the faithful and thus were in practice disregarded by all parties, but which nevertheless remained theoretically in force as a normative frame of reference.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, despite being labeled as an ecumenical council, Trent was never a place for discussion within the Universal Church over conflicting beliefs and practices, and its real legacy consisted in the definition of an orthodoxy and orthopraxy that coincided with obedience to the authority of the Roman pontiff. Except for a few late attempts, there was no place for the Eastern Churches in this perspective. It is noteworthy that, in January 1546, when an anonymous participant proposed inviting Armenian or Ethiopian representatives to the Council, his words seemed so absurd that almost the entire assembly burst into laughter.<sup>4</sup>

3 J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: 1959); V. Peri, “La lettura del concilio di Firenze nella prospettiva unionistica romana”, in V. Peri, *Da Oriente e da Occidente: Le Chiese cristiane dall’Impero romano all’Europa moderna*, ed. M. Ferrari, 2 vols. (Rome-Padua: 2002), 1:375–396; M.-H. Blanchet, “La question de l’Union des Églises (13<sup>e</sup>–15<sup>e</sup> siècle): Historiographie et perspectives”, *Revue des études byzantines* 61 (2003), 5–48.

4 ‘Illud vero ridiculosum fuit, quod quidam dixit, videlicet ut litterae quodque ad regem Nubiae, quam presbyterum Ioannem appellamus, itemque ad Arabos et ad Armenos destinarentur. Quae adeo omnibus risum excitavit, ut tota pene synodus in risum erumperet’ (quoted by V. Peri, “Trento: Un concilio tutto occidentale”, in Peri, *Da Oriente a Occidente*, 1:397–459, quote 410). In fact, Pius IV tried, at least theoretically, to have an Eastern participation in the last stages of the Council by inviting (among others) the Greek, Armenian, and Coptic patriarchs to send some delegates. However, for several reasons, none of them reached Trent. A non-Latin bishop who briefly attended the Council in 1551 was the Greek ‘Archbishop of Thessaloniki’ (in fact Herakleia) Makarios: not knowing Latin, he depended entirely on the translations of a Calabrian bishop. See V. Peri, “Il concilio di Trento e la Chiesa greca”, in G. Alberigo and I. Rogger (eds.), *Il concilio di Trento nella prospettiva del terzo millennio* (Brescia

In this context, the initiative was first taken by Eastern Christians themselves, who began to arrive in Rome in increasing numbers, seeking political, economic or military support for their home communities (and often pursuing their own personal interests as well), almost always resorting to the protection offered by some cardinals.<sup>5</sup> A particularly significant example is that of the Cyprus-born Ethiopian priest Yohannæs, who arrived in Rome in 1542. He successfully wove relationships with many important prelates, skillfully navigating from the ‘spiritual’ party (he had been invited to Rome by Gasparo Contarini and had been previously a host of Pietro Paolo Vergerio in Koper) to the ‘zealous’ one. In Rome, he found his way into the household of the intransigent inquisitor Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa, later Pope Paul IV, eventually becoming his ‘familiar’ or even ‘chaplain’.<sup>6</sup> Further, after the latter’s death, in a surprising turn of events he managed to secure the benevolence of the most bitter enemy of his former benefactor, Cardinal Giovanni Morone, and of Carafa’s successor, Pope Pius IV.<sup>7</sup> Thanks to this network of protection and to his own skills as a polyglot, ‘Giovanni Battista Indiano’ or ‘Abissino’ (as Yohannæs was called in Rome) filled the role of interpreter and mediator in practically all the

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- 1997), 403–441; N.H. Minnich, “The Organizational Structure of the Council of Trent”, in idem (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Council of Trent* (Cambridge 2023), 32–52: 41–44.
- 5 See the essays included in E. Michelson and M. Coneys Wainwright (eds.), *A Companion to Religious Minorities in Early Modern Rome* (Leiden: 2021), in particular R.J. Clines, “Pope as Arbiter: The Place of Early Modern Rome in the Pan-Mediterranean Ecumenical Visions of Eastern Rite Christians” (ibidem, 55–88), S. Kennerley, “Ethiopian Christians in Rome, c.1400–c.1700” (ibidem, 142–168), and C. Santus, “Wandering Lives: Eastern Christian Pilgrims, Alms-Collectors and ‘Refugees’ in Early Modern Rome” (ibidem, 237–271). I will not dwell here on the involvement of Eastern Christians in Catholic plans for a ‘crusade’ against the Ottomans, on which I refer to G. Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade: Mythes et réalités de la lutte contre les Turcs au XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: 2009) and to the essays collected in M.A. Visceglia (ed.), *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna* (Rome: 2013), particularly the chapter of A. Girard, ‘Entre croisade et politique culturelle au Levant: Rome et l’union des chrétiens syriens (première moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)’, 419–437.
- 6 On Yohannæs’s life, see M. Salvatore, “African Cosmopolitanism in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Diasporic Life of Yohannes, the Ethiopian Pilgrim Who Became a Counter-Reformation Bishop”, *The Journal of African History* 58/1 (2017), 61–83. While in Rome, he was re-ordered in the Latin rite: see S. Kelly and D. Nosnitsin, “The Two Yohannæses of Santo Stefano degli Abissini, Rome: Reconstructing Biography and Cross-Cultural Encounter Through Manuscript Evidence”, *Manuscript Studies* 2 (2017), 392–426: 398. For an overview of the Ethiopian presence in sixteenth-century Rome, see now S. Kelly, *Translating Faith: Ethiopian Pilgrims in Renaissance Rome* (Cambridge MA: 2024).
- 7 On the curial context of those years and the opposition between ‘spirituali’ and ‘zelanti’, see M. Firpo, *La presa di potere dell’Inquisizione romana 1550–1553* (Roma-Bari: 2014); E. Bonora, “Morone e Pio IV”, in M. Firpo and O. Niccoli (eds.), *Il cardinale Giovanni Morone e l’ultima fase del concilio di Trento* (Bologna: 2010), 21–52.

major diplomatic missions of those years. He was involved both when Eastern patriarchs visited Rome in person (e.g. the ‘Nestorian’ Yōḥannān Sulaqa, who in 1553 was consecrated patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, followed in 1562 by his successor ‘Abdīshō’ of Gazarta), as well as when contacts were conducted through the exchange of letters or ambassadors, such as the negotiations with the Coptic patriarch Gabriel VII in 1555, or the embassy of Abgar of Tokat on behalf of the Armenian *catholicos* Michael II in 1564.<sup>8</sup> In 1564, after being examined by Cardinal Inquisitor Michele Ghislieri, Yohānnās was elected bishop of the Ethiopian community of Cyprus and charged with a delicate diplomatic mission directed to the prelates of Syria, Armenia and Mesopotamia, which could not be accomplished due to his sudden death along the way.<sup>9</sup>

Yohānnās’s ordination had been promoted by a cardinal, Marco Antonio Da Mula, who at the same time was also supporting another Eastern Christian, the young son of the Armenian ambassador Abgar. This young man stayed in Rome and ended up making a career in the service of the curia, even taking on his patron’s given names: Marco Antonio Abagaro. It is worth dwelling on this figure because of his role in the history of the Oriental press in Rome, since he was involved in the creation of no less than two sets of Armenian typefaces, the first in 1565 together with his father (with the authorization of Pius IV), and the second in 1579, in collaboration of the French type designer Robert Granjon, who had been specially called to Rome by Pope Gregory XIII to publish books in all the main languages of the Christian East.<sup>10</sup>

Printing books in the languages of the Eastern Churches was not a new interest in Roman circles, but until then it had been limited to personal relationships forged between certain cardinals endowed with particular erudition or intellectual sensitivity, Eastern clergymen who had arrived in Rome in a more or less adventurous way, and private printers who were willing to invest in this market. The best-known example is that of Cardinal Marcello Cervini.

8 G. Beltrami, *La Chiesa caldea nel secolo dell’Unione* (Rome: 1933), 62, 64–65, 180, 183, 186–188; H.L. Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures: The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces (1500–1850)* (Leuven: 2015), 44–51; BVR, Ms. K11, fols. 402v–406v.

9 Yohānnās’s canonical examination as bishop-nominee is preserved in AAV, Arm. I–XVIII, 2953; see Salvatore, “African Cosmopolitanism”, 79–81; P. Dib, “Une mission en Orient sous le pontificat de Pie IV”, *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 19/1 (2014) 24–32, 266–77.

10 H.D.L. Vervliet, “Cyrillic & Oriental Typography in Rome at the End of the Sixteenth Century: An Inquiry into the Later Work of Robert Granjon (1578–90)”, in H.D.L. Vervliet, *The Palaeotypography of the French Renaissance* (Leiden: 2008), 2: 427–474 (436–438); C. Santus, “New Documents on the Armenian Presence and Printing Activity in Early Modern Rome: Marco Antonio Abagaro (Sult’anšah), Bartolomeo Abagaro and the ‘Typographia Gabiana’”, *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 41 (2022) 193–221. On the editorial project of Gregory XIII, see BVR, Ms. K 17, fol. 111r–v.

In addition to his role in the publication of numerous patristic texts in Greek, recent studies have revealed how in the late 1540s and early 1550s, by taking advantage of his position as Apostolic Librarian (1548–1555), Cervini promoted the production of printed characters in Ge'ez and Syriac. This happened in collaboration with the Ethiopian Täsfa Şeyon, a resident of the monastery of Santo Stefano dei Mori behind the Vatican Basilica, and with the controversial Syrian priest Moses of Mardin. These types were used to print, respectively, some biblical, liturgical, and grammatical books in Ge'ez in Rome, and a New Testament in Syriac in Vienna.<sup>11</sup> In line with this type of approach we may also evoke the famous Medici Oriental Press (*Typographia Medicea*), created in 1584 by Cardinal Ferdinando de Medici and entrusted to the direction of Gian Battista Raimondi, with the collaboration of a former Patriarch of Antioch, Ni'matalläh. In just a few years this press produced an Arabic translation of the Gospels and a Maronite missal as well as other scientific and educational texts, following a logic that was partly determined by commercial purposes.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to these initiatives, the project of Gregory XIII was at once more institutionalised (although it also relied on private printers such as Francesco Zanetti and especially Domenico Basa), and more resolutely missionary. In this regard, it started a new trend that would continue with his successor Sixtus V's creation of the 'Stamperia Vaticana', and later with the establishment of the polyglot printing house linked to the Congregation *de Propaganda fide* during the pontificate of Urban VIII.<sup>13</sup>

11 P. Sachet, *Publishing for the Popes: The Roman Curia and the Use of Printing (1527–1555)* (Leiden: 2020); G. Cardinali, "Ritratto di Marcello Cervini 'en orientaliste' (con precisazioni alle vicende di Petrus Damascenus, Mosè di Märdin ed 'Heliodorus Niger'). Prima parte", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 80, 1 (2018), 77–98; Idem, *Il cardinale meraviglioso. L'avventura editoriale di Marcello Cervini (1539–1555)* (Geneva: 2022), 191–205; R.J. Wilkinson, *Orientalism, Aramaic, and Kabbalah in the Catholic Reformation: The First Printing of the Syriac New Testament* (Leiden: 2007), 64–75; M. Salvatore and J. De Lorenzi, "An Ethiopian Scholar in Tridentine Rome: Täsfa Şeyon and the Birth of Orientalism", *Itinerario* 45, 1 (2021), 17–46; S. Kennerley, *Rome and the Maronites in the Renaissance and Reformation: The Formation of Religious Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Abingdon: 2021), 57–85.

12 A. Tinto, *La Tipografia Medicea Orientale* (Lucca: 1987); M. Farina and S. Fani, *Le vie delle lettere: La Tipografia Medicea tra Roma e l'Oriente* (Florence: 2012); E. Leuschner and G. Wolf (eds.), *The Medici Oriental Press: Knowledge and Cultural Transfer around 1600* (Rome: 2022).

13 A. Tinto, "Per una storia della tipografia orientale a Roma nell'età della Controriforma: Contributi", *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia* 41 (1973) 280–303 (on the other hand, the author emphasizes how in 1584–85 the Medici and Basa's printing house worked closely together: *La Tipografia Medicea*, p. 20 and ff.); G. Pizzorusso, "I satelliti di Propaganda Fide: Il Collegio Urbano e la Tipografia poliglotta. Note di ricerca su due istituzioni culturali

Gregory XIII certainly demonstrated continuity with the inquisitorial popes, who had replaced the idea of a 'Union' between the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches with the '*riduttione*' of any 'Schismatics', which meant bringing them back to obedience to the pope. Compared to the harshness typical of Ghislieri's papacy, however, Eastern Christians were now regarded not as heretics, consciously resisting Catholic truths, but rather as *bona fide* misguided people. Their errors were thought to come from their own ignorance – which made them potential prey for Protestant propaganda – and of their political subjection to the 'Turk'. Consequently, the pontiff promoted a policy that combined diplomacy with culturally oriented missionary activities. On one hand, secret negotiations were held with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremias II, during the promulgation of the new Gregorian calendar (1582–1584), while the Jesuit Antonio Possevino was entrusted with a delicate mission to the Tsar of Muscovy (1581–1582). On the other hand, the Curia financed the production and distribution of Catholic books in the East and supported the education of young Eastern Christians in Rome, allowing them to remain faithful to their own liturgical traditions as long as these did not contradict the Tridentine disciplinary framework and proved useful for proselytism.<sup>14</sup>

The main architect and implementer of this project was a central figure of the curia during and after the reign of Gregory XIII. This was Giulio Antonio Santori, cardinal of Santa Severina and member of the Holy Office, who had been invested with the office of protector of the Eastern nations (with the exception of the Maronites, who were under the patronage of Antonio Carafa).<sup>15</sup> His imprint can be found in most of Gregory XIII's initiatives towards the East, such as the erection of a College for Greek students on the Via del Babuino (1573), and of the College of the Neophytes (1577). The latter was

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romane nel XVII secolo", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 116, 2 (2004), 471–498. In general, on teaching and printing in Oriental languages in Rome, see now the articles collected in E. Andretta, A. Romano, and M.A. Visceglia (eds.), *Le lingue nella Roma della prima età moderna: Luoghi e risorse*, monographic issue of *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 132, 1 (2020).

- 14 V. Peri, *Due date, un'unica Pasqua. Le origini della moderna disparità liturgica in una trattativa ecumenica tra Roma e Costantinopoli (1582–1584)* (Milan: 1967); S. Mund, "La mission diplomatique du père Antonio Possevino (s.j.) chez Ivan le Terrible en 1581–1582 et les premiers écrits jésuites sur la Russie moscovite à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Cahiers du monde russe* 45, 3–4 (2004), 407–440; Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, 114–119.
- 15 For a biography of Santori, see S. Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore: Giulio Antonio Santori tra autobiografia e storia (1532–1602)* (Rome: 2002), which however devotes little space to his activity towards Eastern Christians. In the years before 1585, another very important figure in the Holy See's cultural policy towards the Eastern Churches (especially the Greek Church) was Cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto.

originally intended for Jews and Muslims who were converting to Catholicism, but under Santori's direction it also welcomed Armenians, 'Jacobites', and even Maronites, until the latter obtained a college of their own in 1584; an Armenian College was also established by decree in the same year, but the project was short-lived.<sup>16</sup> Santori's wide-ranging schemes are hinted at in his autobiography and the diaries of his audiences with successive popes. They included promoting and censoring the publication of texts in different Eastern languages, sending instructions to Jesuit missionaries in Egypt and the Ottoman Levant, overseeing the problems caused by the Greek communities in Ancona and southern Italy, financing the reception of Armenian pilgrims in the Roman hospice of Santa Maria Egiziaca, and much more.<sup>17</sup>

Despite a setback during the pontificate of Sixtus v, who was determined to curb all such expenditures,<sup>18</sup> the cardinal's efforts continued until the papacy of Clement VIII, when they produced two particularly significant and almost contemporaneous outcomes. In 1595, a special curial congregation, chaired by Santori himself and tasked with regulating the spiritual government of the Greeks and Albanians who had settled in southern Italy since the fifteenth century, issued the *Perbrevis instructio super aliquibus ritibus Graecorum* ('Very

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- 16 The bibliography on the Greek and Maronite colleges is extensive. Among others, cf. A. Fyrigos (ed.), *Il Collegio greco di Roma: Ricerche sugli alunni, la direzione, l'attività* (Rome: 1983); A. Girard and G. Pizzorusso, "The Maronite College in Early Modern Rome: Between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Letters", in L. Chambers and Th. O'Connor (eds.), *College Communities in Exile: Education, Migration and Catholicism in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: 2017), 174–197; C. Fiore and S. Kubersky-Piredda, "Gregorio XIII e l'Oriente. Arte e identità nei Collegi greco, maronita e armeno", in V. Balzarotti and B. Hermanin (eds.), *Gregorio XIII. Arte dei moderni ed immagini venerabili della nuova Ecclesia* (Rome: 2021), 137–157. The presence of Eastern Christians in the College of the Neophytes has been completely overlooked, despite the suggestions to investigate this venue provided by G. Levi della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca vaticana* (Rome: 1939), 405–413.
- 17 G. Cugnoni (ed.), *Autobiografia di Monsignor G.A. Santori cardinale di S. Severina* (Rome: 1890); A. Castellucci, "Il risveglio dell'attività missionaria e le prime origini della S.C. de Propaganda Fide", *Le Conferenze al Laterano, marzo-aprile 1923* (Rome: 1923), 117–254; 180–185; J. Krajcar, *Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro and the Christian East: Santoro's Audiences and Consistorial Acts* (Rome: 1966); N. Fattori, "Strong-Headed Barbarians: The Greeks of Ancona and the Papal Policies in the Sixteenth Century", *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 1 (2018), 117–140; Cl. Libois, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis. IV. Égypte (1565–1591)*, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* 150 (Rome: 1996), 79–80 and passim; Santus, "New Documents on the Armenian Presence", 202.
- 18 To give just an example, when Santori presented yet another request for financial support for an Armenian cleric, the pope blurted out that he could not take care of all of Armenia and that the Holy See's coffers were empty (AAV, Arm. LII, vol. 18, f. 338v; Krajcar, *Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro*, 83).

brief instruction on some rites of the Greeks'). This document had an influence far wider than its initial scope. As highlighted by Vittorio Peri, it provided a general theoretical framework for how Eastern Christians could be admitted to Catholic communion. This was made possible by downgrading their religious tradition to a mere 'rite', that is, a set of liturgical or disciplinary practices, which could be lawfully employed only if they conformed to the criteria of orthodoxy established by Roman authorities, and only if the faithful and clergy who observed them had been detached from their former hierarchy. Within this theoretical framework, it became possible to imagine the canonical existence of Eastern Catholic hierarchies dependent directly on the Roman Pontiff and not on the Eastern Patriarchs.<sup>19</sup>

This was exactly what happened for the first time in the year that the *Perbrevis instructio* was issued, when some Ruthenian bishops of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth broke relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate by submitting their obedience to the pope. The text of the 32 articles of union drafted by a synod specially assembled in the city of Brest was examined in Rome by some of the same prelates who sat in the Congregation of the Greeks. In both cases it was a matter of safeguarding the particular 'rites' of each community within a framework consistent with Tridentine principles. The respect of orthodoxy was secured also by a mandatory profession of Catholic faith, first elaborated during the pontificate of Gregory XIII and later published as an appendix to the *Perbrevis instructio*. Although the Union of Brest was more the result of the local ecclesiastical and political initiative of the Ruthenian bishops than of any impulse coming from Rome – which found itself confronting a *fait accompli* – there is no doubt that this union was the first realization of what was to become the model of later Uniate Churches, created by detaching parts of the Eastern episcopate from their original obedience.<sup>20</sup>

19 *Perbrevis Instructio super aliquibus ritibus Graecorum ad RR. PP. DD. Episcopos Latinos, in quorum civitatibus vel dioecesibus Graeco ritu viventes degunt* (Rome: Impresores Camerales, 1596). The genesis of this document and the work of the Congregation, originally established on 10 May 1573 with the official title of 'Congregatio pro reformatione Graecorum in Italia existentium et monachorum et monasteriorum ordinis Sancti Basilii', have been masterfully studied by V. Peri, *Chiesa romana e "rito" greco: G. A. Santoro e la Congregazione dei Greci (1566–1596)* (Brescia: 1975). Here and in the next paragraph I echo what I wrote in *Trasgressioni necessarie*, 118–119.

20 L. Tatarenko, "La naissance de l'Union de Brest : La curie romaine et le tournant de l'année 1595", *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 46, 1–2 (2005), 345–354; Idem, *Une réforme orientale à l'âge baroque: Les Ruthènes de la grande-principauté de Lituanie et Rome au temps de l'Union de Brest (milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup>–milieu du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Rome: 2021). It should also be mentioned that in the same year (1595) a union with the Coptic Church was also achieved, albeit of

### 3 The Government of the Missions between the Congregation of Propaganda and the Holy Office

Cardinal Santori led the Roman Curia into a new phase of its relations with the Eastern world, characterized by an increasingly centralized and vertical management of the missions. At the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the spread of the Catholic faith beyond Europe acquired momentum thanks to the contribution of religious orders of recent foundation, such as the Capuchins (1528), Jesuits (1540) and Discalced Carmelites (1562).<sup>21</sup> Under the pontificates of Clement VIII and Paul V, these missions were coordinated through the personal initiative of specific prelates, albeit with a progressive awareness of the need to institutionalize such efforts, to make them permanent, and to free them from the patronage of the Iberian Crowns.<sup>22</sup> Thus, beginning in 1599, Santori hosted periodic meetings of a Congregation ‘*supra propagatione seu dilatatione fidei*’ that, according to a contemporary source, was meant to facilitate the ‘reunion of the Greek Church with the Latin Church, a task that had been already accomplished before but without lasting effects, due to the fickleness of the Greeks’. In fact, this Congregation dealt not only with the Greeks but with all Eastern Christian communities, spanning a much wider geographical area (from the Balkans to India) and forming a real embryo of what would later become the ‘*Propaganda fidei*’.<sup>23</sup>

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short duration: V. Buri, *L'unione della Chiesa copta con Roma sotto Clemente VIII* (Rome: 1931).

- 21 For an excellent historiographical review of Jesuit missions to Eastern Christian communities, see R.J. Clines, “The Society of Jesus and the Early Modern Christian Orient”, *Jesuit Historiography Online* (Brill Reference Works), first published 2016; on Capuchins, see Ignazio da Seggiano, *L'opera dei cappuccini per l'unione dei cristiani nel Vicino Oriente durante il secolo XVII* (Rome: 1962); on the importance of the missionary activity of the Discalced Carmelites, especially in Persia, see now Ch. Windler, *Missionare in Persien: Kulturelle Diversität und Normenkonkurrenz im globalen Katholizismus (17.–18. Jahrhundert)* (Cologne: 2018).
- 22 Actually, already in 1568 the leadership of the Society of Jesus had convinced Pius V of the need to create a commission of cardinals to coordinate missionary activity, but the pontiff's efforts had no lasting consequences: see Castellucci, “Il risveglio dell'attività missionaria”, 140 ff.; J. Metzler, “Wegbereiter und Vorläufer der Kongregation: Vorschläge und erste Gründungsversuche einer römischen Missionszentrale”, in J. Metzler (ed.), *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, vol. 1/1 (Rome-Freiburg-Vienna: 1971), 38–78; G. Pizzorusso, *Propaganda fide, 1: La Congregazione pontificia e la giurisdizione sulle missioni* (Rome: 2022), 3–60.
- 23 AAV, Arm. LII, vol. 22, fol. 94r; BAV, Urb. Lat. 1067, fols. 503r–504r (*Avviso di Roma*, 14 August 1599: ‘trattandosi di riunir la Chiesa Greca alla Latina, negotio altre volte fatto, ma la volubilità de Greci non permette, che le cose siano stabili et perpetue’); Castellucci,

After Santori's death, however, the congregation dissolved and the superintendence of the missions was temporarily entrusted to the Discalced Carmelite Pedro de la Madre de Dios, while another friar, Tomás de Jesús, reflected on how to systematise missionary activity, freeing it from the political constraints of national monarchies.<sup>24</sup> The pontificate of Paul v still witnessed oscillations between the late medieval model based on embassies and new ideas about the reorganization of missionary work. The former is celebrated in the cycle of frescoes of the Sala Regia in the Quirinal Palace, which shows the portraits of Persian, Armenian, Chaldean and Ethiopian representatives sent to Rome (besides others from Kongo, China, and Japan).<sup>25</sup> The latter is exemplified by the proposals put forward at different times by Martín de Funes and Juan Bautista Vives to train secular clergy to be sent as missionaries to 'Muscovy, Tartary, Turkey, Prete Giovanni [i.e. Ethiopia], Persia and all those regions where *messis magna, operarii nulli*'.<sup>26</sup>

In the meantime, a very significant role was played by the Congregation of the Holy Office. In the 1610s, thanks also to the network of contacts of Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino, inquisitor and Jesuit, the Holy Office took into its hands the examination of several thorny issues related to the Christian East: among them, the interconfessional marriages between Greeks and Latins on the island of Chios, the profession of faith of the Nestorian patriarch Eliya VII, and the Balkan missions studied by Antal Molnár.<sup>27</sup> In doing so, the Roman

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"Il risveglio dell'attività missionaria"; M. Jačov, "Clément VIII et la fondation de la Congrégation pour la Propagation de la Foi en 1599", *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 100 (2005), 5–14.

- 24 Pizzorusso, *Propaganda fide*, 28–39. According to Castellucci, the activity of the congregation was curbed even before Santori's death (1602), due to the political opposition of the Iberian monarchy: "Il risveglio", 197–198.
- 25 C.L. Baskins, "Locating the Chaldean Embassy to Pope Paul v in the Sala Regia of the Palazzo Quirinale in Rome", *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 59–60 (2014–2015), 310–335; Eadem, "Framing Khoja Sefer in the Sala Regia of the Quirinal Palace in Rome (1610–1617)", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 24 (2015), 3–28; M. Fujikawa, "Pope Paul v's Global Design: The Fresco Cycle in the Quirinal Palace", *Renaissance Studies* 30, 2 (2016), 192–217.
- 26 G. Piras, *La Congregazione e il Collegio di Propaganda Fide di J. B. Vives, G. Leonardi e M. de Funes* (Rome: 1976); ADDF, SO, St. St., H 2-f, fasc. 1 ('1609 Roma. Circa erectionem Congregationis per R.P.D. Vives pro conversione Infidelium'), fol. 4r; I. Fosi, "Roma e gli 'ultramontani': Conversioni, viaggi, identità", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 81 (2001), 351–396: 365–366.
- 27 Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, 126; ADDF, SO, St. St., QQ 2-a, fols. 13r–57v; A. Molnár, "The Holy Office and the Balkan Missions before the Foundation of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide (1622)", in A. Molnár, *Confessionalization on the Frontier: The Balkans Catholics between Roman Reform and Ottoman Reality* (Rome: 2019), 31–46.

Inquisition affirmed its will to exercise doctrinal control over the entire Christian world, a claim that would also be reaffirmed at the time of the creation of a Congregation specially delegated to the government of the missions, that of *Propaganda Fide*.

I will not dwell here on the much-discussed circumstances that saw the birth of Propaganda. It has been rightly noted that a decisive impulse was given by the evolution of the European context, where the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War made it possible to overcome the resistance of the Iberian monarchy in view of a unified project of Catholic 'reconquest' of the Protestant countries.<sup>28</sup> However, it is worth noting that just two days after the promulgation of the founding constitution of Propaganda, *Inscrutabili Divinae Providentiae arcano* (June 22, 1622), Pope Gregory xv sent a Brief to the Melkite archbishop of Aleppo Malātyūs Karma in which he established an explicit link between the erection of the new Congregation and aid to the Eastern Churches oppressed by the Ottoman yoke.<sup>29</sup>

It is more important to stress that it was not only the cardinals who determined the functioning of the Congregation. Certainly, they reported on the individual affairs brought to their attention and voted on the proposals for resolving them, under the leadership of the Cardinal Prefect, who was responsible for the general direction of the Holy See's policy towards the Christian East. However, it was the bureaucratic staff of the Congregation who summarized and guided the discussion on the various dossiers. From this point of view, the role of the secretary became central, as was particularly true in the case of the first officer to bear this title, Francesco Ingoli, who held the role until his death in 1649.<sup>30</sup>

Ingoli often directly intervened in the management of the Eastern missions, given that, as he wrote, 'the Sacred Congregation is vigilant over all parts of the world, and especially over those ancient relics of Christianity that lie oppressed

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The importance of inquisitorial documentation for the history of relations between Rome and the Eastern Churches is at the heart of the volume by C. Santus, J.-P. Gay, and L. Tatarenko (eds.), *The Inquisition and the Christian East, 1350–1850* (forthcoming).

28 E. Sastre Santos, "La fundación de Propaganda Fide (1622) en el contexto de la guerra de los Treinta Años (1618–1648)", *Commentarium pro religiosus et missionariis* 83 (2002), 231–261; see also the perspective put forward by Elena Bonora in this volume, which emphasises the centrality of the nuncios and of the European context rather than the activities of missionaries in non-European worlds.

29 BNF, Ms. français 16158, fols. 17r–18v. For an overview of the historiographical debate, see Pizzorusso, *Propaganda fide*, 61–66.

30 J. Metzler, "Francesco Ingoli der erste Sekretär der Kongregation (1578–1649)", in *Memoria Rerum*, vol. 1/1, 197–243; Pizzorusso, *Propaganda fide*, 101–121.

in the midst of the Mohammedan sect, however heretical and schismatic they may be.<sup>31</sup> Despite a growing scepticism among prelates of the curia about the usefulness of colleges for Eastern Christians – as shown by the refusal of the Cardinals to erect additional colleges for the Chaldeans, Copts, and Armenians on the model of what had been done for Greeks and Maronites, given that experience taught that ‘*melius esse per Missiones, quam per Collegia fidem catholicam [...] propagare*’ (it is better to spread the Catholic faith through the missions rather than through the Colleges)<sup>32</sup> – Ingoli was one of the major promoters of the need to educate an indigenous Catholic clergy in Rome. His commitment to this matter was shared by the aforementioned Juan Bautista Vives, thanks to whom the *Collegium Urbanum de Propaganda fide* was established in 1626. In this truly international seminary, the students of Eastern Christian origin were always the majority, and despite some recurring criticisms, there is no doubt that they played an important role in promoting the Catholic faith in the Levant, and knowledge of the Christian East in Rome.<sup>33</sup>

However, Ingoli’s attention was also directed to Eastern Christian subjects of Catholic states, as in the case of the Ionian islands controlled by the Republic of Venice, where mixed marriages between Greeks and Latins, and the joint participation of Catholics and Orthodox in the same sacraments and liturgies (*communicatio in sacris*) were commonplace.<sup>34</sup> This latter problem, which became more and more relevant over time and eventually involved

31 ASR, Archivio Santacroce, vol. 84, fol. 66r: ‘la Sacra Congregazione sopra tutte le parti del Mondo è vigilante, e massimamente sopra le antiche reliquie del Christianesimo, che in mezzo alla Setta Maometana, quantunque scismatiche, et heretiche siano, rimangono oppresse’, published in F. Ingoli, *Relazione delle Quattro Parti del Mondo*, ed. F. Tosi (Vatican City: 1999), 100. On this work, see S. Ditchfield, “Rome calling? Rewriting the Catholic Reformation for the 21st century”, in M. Al Kalak, L. Ferrari and E. Fumagalli (eds.), *La crisi della modernità. Studi in onore di Gianvittorio Signorotto* (Rome: 2023), 305–328, and the chapter of Pizzorusso in this volume.

32 APF, Acta, vol. 4, fol. 77r (30 June 1626); see also *ibidem*, vol. 3, fol. 36; vol. 7, fols. 126v–127r (6 September 1630).

33 M. Jezemik, “Il Collegio Urbano”, in *Memoria Rerum*, 1/1, 465–480; Pizzorusso, “I satelliti”; *Idem*, “Una presenza ecclesiastica cosmopolita a Roma: Gli allievi del Collegio Urbano di Propaganda Fide (1633–1703)”, *Bollettino di Demografia Storica* 22 (1995), 129–138. More in general, for an analysis of Rome as a ‘site of mediation’ at the crossroad of many circuits of missionary knowledge, see A. Romano, “Rome and Its Indies: A Global System of Knowledge at the End of the Sixteenth Century”, in S. Burghart, L. Burkart, and Ch. Göttler (eds.), *Sites of Mediation: Connected Histories of Places, Processes, and Objects in Europe and Beyond, 1450–1650* (Leiden: 2013).

34 APF, SOCG, vol. 206, fol. 320r: ‘Casi ne’ quali li Greci di Corfù communicano con li Latini in divinis et e contra, con alcune note del Segretario Ingoli. Die 28 Augusti 1634’. See Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie*, 257–267.

most of the eastern Mediterranean and beyond, represents one of the cases in which the prerogatives of *Propaganda fide* and of the Holy Office ended up competing. Ingoli and Vives did their best to affirm the right of Propaganda to decide in such matters, even through the recourse to a special theological commission. One of the issues that this hypothetical '*Congregatio de tuenda fide*' would have dealt with was precisely whether it was possible to allow 'those who were already united with the Latin Church to attend some Greek rites'.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the Inquisition eventually managed to maintain exclusive control over the two central points in apostolic action. First was the granting of faculties (*facultates*), that is, the definition of the spiritual powers conceded to the missionary clergy in a regime of derogation from the traditional ecclesiastical regulatory framework. Second was the theoretical clarification of the difficulties (*dubia*) encountered by missionaries in their apostolic action, for example regarding the compatibility of Eastern theological, liturgical, or disciplinary traditions with the Tridentine model.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, a complex information and decision-making process developed. Any thorny questions posed by nuncios, missionaries, and Eastern Catholics themselves about sensitive elements or unresolved dilemmas were forwarded by the secretary of Propaganda to the Assessor of the Holy Office, where they were then examined by a group of specialized consultants (*consultores*). It is for this reason that the history of the construction of Eastern Catholicism must involve joint examination of the documents preserved in the historical archives of the Dicastery for Evangelization (former *Propaganda fide*), and those of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (former Holy Office).<sup>37</sup>

35 APF, CP, vol. 1, fols. 279r–288v, "Discorso di Monsig: Vives sopra l'erettione della Cong. De Tuenda Fide, che dovrebbe erigersi in Roma", 5 February 1625 (fol. 281v: 'se permetteranno alcuni riti Greci a quelli che sono già uniti con la Chiesa latina').

36 G. Pizzorusso, "Le fonti del Sant'Uffizio per la storia delle missioni e dei rapporti con Propaganda Fide", in *A dieci anni dall'apertura dell'Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede: storia e archivi dell'Inquisizione*, (Rome: 2011), 393–423, now published in revised form in Idem, *Propaganda fide*, 157–190.

37 C. Santus, "Les papiers des consultants : Questions missionnaires et procès de décision au Saint-Office, xvii<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* 130, 2 (2018), 431–445. In addition to this 'centralistic' approach, attention must also be paid to the way in which the application of Roman decisions was negotiated on the spot, as Elena Bonora rightly points out in this volume. From this point of view, for example, one must not forget the role played by the representatives of the French crown in the Ottoman Empire as 'protectors' of Eastern Catholics, in a position of simultaneous collaboration, negotiation and rivalry with the Roman Curia (see Girard, 'Entre croisade et politique culturelle').

#### 4 Eastern Christian Curia Officers and the Confessional Control over the Eastern Catholic Churches

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the successful diffusion of Catholicism in the territories of the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe caused two important changes to the picture illustrated so far. On one hand, the promotion of the apostolate even at the price of tolerance of a certain confessional ambiguity ceased to be the main priority of the ecclesiastical authorities, being instead replaced by the need to consolidate already existing Uniate communities, to insert them into a clear regulatory framework, and to defend them from the risk of doctrinal indifferentism. On the other hand, the spread of Catholic ideas and behaviours not only among the ecclesiastical elites but also among the faithful led to an evolution in the type and number of Eastern Christians who came to Rome. After mostly hosting bishops, patriarchs, and ambassadors, starting from 1650 Rome witnessed the arrival of an imposing mass of lay pilgrims and ‘confessional refugees’ fleeing the sectarian conflicts of the Ottoman world. There were also monks and prelates wandering in search of alms and economic support, and especially members of the new religious orders born within the Eastern Catholic Churches, who arrived in Rome to act as representatives of the Uniate patriarchs in the Curia.<sup>38</sup>

To manage this growing influx of individuals, *Propaganda fide* created a network of reception institutes which has yet to attract scholarly attention. Among them was the hospice of Saint Ephrem at the church of S. Maria della Sanità (1697–1748), intended for Syrian Catholics and built with the donations collected by representatives of the Patriarchate of Antioch; the hospice of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, entrusted in 1639 to the Ruthenian Basilian

38 Santus, “Wandering Lives”. The circulation of Eastern Christians in the Mediterranean area (and beyond) has recently received considerable interest: to name but a few, see J.-P. Ghobrial, “Migration from Within and Without: In the Footsteps of Eastern Christians in the Early Modern World”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (2017) 153–173; Idem, “Moving Stories and What They Tell Us: Early Modern Mobility Between Microhistory and Global History”, *Past & Present* 242, Supplement no. 14 (2019) 243–280; S.D. Aslanian, “‘Many have come here and have deceived us’: Some Notes on Asateur Vardapet (1644–1728), An Itinerant Armenian Monk in Europe”, *Handēs amšōreay* 1–12 (2019), 133–194; Idem, *Early Modernity and Mobility: Port Cities and Printers across the Armenian Diaspora, 1512–1800* (Yale: 2023); M. Salvadore, “‘I Was Not Born to Obey, but Rather to Command’: The Self-Fashioning of Šägga Krəstos, an Ethiopian Traveler in Seventeenth-Century Europe”, *Journal of Early Modern History* 25, 2 (2021), 1–33. Bernard Heyberger was a pioneer of this kind of studies: see the articles now collected and translated into English in B. Heyberger, *Middle Eastern and European Christianity: Connected Histories*, ed. A. Girard, C. Santus, V. Kontouma, and K. Sanchez (Edinburgh: 2023).

monks of Poland-Lithuania; the Maronite convent of Saints Marcellinus and Peter, near the Lateran (1707); but also the Armenian convent of Saint Gregory the Illuminator near the Vatican, active during 1760s–1870s, and the church of S. Maria in Domnica, with liturgy celebrated in Arabic by the Melkites from 1734.<sup>39</sup>

These institutes, although managed by the individual Eastern communities, remained under the supervision of the Congregation of *Propaganda fide*. Furthermore, in line with Counter-Reformation policies, the reception of foreign pilgrims and visitors was accompanied by a thorough confessional vetting process that concluded with a formal profession of Catholic faith. The latter was a prerequisite to access hospitality, material aid, or just to file any request with the offices of the Curia. These professions of faith took place at the Palace of the Holy Office, and in the Inquisition archives there are volumes recording thousands and thousands of names, along with biographical information and autographed subscriptions in various oriental languages.<sup>40</sup>

A fundamental role of mediation in this twofold process of reception and control was played by those Eastern Christians who had somehow managed to settle permanently in Rome at the service of the Congregations. Intermediaries between the Curia and the various Eastern communities had always existed in Rome, from the clients of the cardinals mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, up to some famous names of the seventeenth century, such as the Greeks Pietro Arcudio (Petros Arkoudios) and Leone Allacci (Leōn Allatios), the Maronites Abraham Ecchellensis (Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāqilānī) and Faustus Naironus (Mirhij al-Bānī), the Armenians Zaccaria Agam (Zak'aria Aḡam) and Basilius Barsech (Barseḡ Barseḡean), the Syrian Timoteo Agnellini (Timot'ēos Gaṛnuk), and many others.<sup>41</sup> But it was in the eighteenth century

39 L. Tatarenko, "I ruteni a Roma: I monaci basiliani della chiesa dei Santi Sergio e Bacco (secoli XVII–XVIII)", in A. Molnár, G. Pizzorusso, and M Sanfilippo (eds.), *Chiese e Nationes a Roma: Dalla Scandinavia ai Balcani. Secoli XV–XVIII* (Rome: 2017), 175–191; G. Petrowicz, "Origine dei monaci antoniani armeni", *Bazmavep* 143 (1985), 143–148; B. Cattani, "La chiesa di S. Maria in Domnica, detta volgarmente della Navicella", *Bessarione* 21, 4 (1917), 374–396. For the later history of these institutions, see C. Santus, "Rome, avant-poste de la France en Orient: Les chrétiens orientaux dans la Ville Éternelle et la Congrégation de la Propagande pendant l'occupation napoléonienne (1808–1814)", *Annales Historiques de la Révolution française* 401, 3 (2020), 135–157.

40 I am currently completing the transcription of the registers and the construction of a prosopographic database based on them: for some preliminary data, see C. Santus, "Tra la chiesa di Sant'Atanasio e il Sant'Uffizio: note sulla presenza greca a Roma in età moderna", in *Chiese e Nationes a Roma*, 193–223; Idem, "Wandering Lives".

41 K. Hartnup, "On the Beliefs of the Greeks": *Leo Allatios and Popular Orthodoxy* (Leiden: 2004); I. Herklotz, *Die Academia basiliana: Griechische Philologie, Kirchengeschichte und Unionsbemühungen im Rom der Barberini*, (Rome: 2008); A. Girard, "Was an Eastern Scholar Necessarily a Cultural Broker in Early Modern Europe? Faustus Naironus

that this phenomenon reached its peak and became institutionalized, above all due to the need to communicate ever more closely with the new Eastern Catholic Churches united with Rome and to regulate their internal life. The Easterners in the service of the Curia then became a fundamental cog in the machine through which the Holy See controlled the circulation of people and information between Italy and the Middle East. This topic remains decidedly understudied: extant historiography has mostly focused on the role of Eastern Christian scholars within the *République des Lettres*,<sup>42</sup> while neglecting to consider the administrative, informative, and sometimes policing tasks performed by them on behalf of the Roman Congregations, and for other European princely courts.<sup>43</sup>

A telling example is that of the most famous Eastern Curial officer of the time, the Maronite Giuseppe Simone Assemani (Yūsuf Sham'ūn al-Sim'ānī, 1687–1768). His dazzling career, which led him from being a simple student of the Maronite College to becoming a *scriptor* for Syriac and Arabic in the Vatican Apostolic Library, canon of St. Peter, domestic prelate, and eventually First Custodian (Prefect) of the Vatican Library, has been normally explained in relation to his cultural and scholarly work, and above all to the publication of his masterpiece, the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (1719–1728).<sup>44</sup> Less well-known is the fact that throughout his life Assemani collaborated closely

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(1628–1711), the Christian East, and Oriental Studies”, in N. Hardy and D. Levitin (eds.), *Faith and History: Confessionalisation and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: 2019), 240–263; M. Karapetean, “Zak'aria Aḡam (1611–1688)”, *Handēs amšōreay* 1–12 (2020), 181–228; Aslanian, *Early Modernity and Mobility*, 406–407; B. Heyberger, “La carrière manquée d'un ecclésiastique oriental en Italie: Timothée Karnush, archevêque syrien catholique de Mardin”, in B. Heyberger (ed.), *L'Italie vue par les étrangers, Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Mulhouse* 19 (1995) 31–47 (an updated English translation in Heyberger, *Middle Eastern and European Christianity*, 90–104).

42 The latest studies aim to redirect focus towards the involvement of Eastern Christians in facilitating European Orientalists' access to manuscripts and specialized knowledge. This goes beyond portraying them merely as 'native informants' or subordinate collaborators of academic scholars: see J.-P. Ghobrial, “The Archives of Orientalism and its Keepers: Reimagining the Histories of Arabic Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe”, *Past & Present* 230, suppl. n° 11 (2016), 90–111; S. Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, 1600–1760* (Oxford: 2020); E. Natalie Rothman, *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism* (Ithaca: 2021); A. Hamilton, *Arabs and Arabists: Selected Articles* (Leiden: 2022).

43 One exception is the recent article by Th. Glesener, “Gouverner la langue arabe. Miguel Casiri et les arabisants du roi d'Espagne au siècle des Lumières”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 76, 2 (2021), 227–67.

44 G. Levi della Vida, “Assemani, Giuseppe Simonio”, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 4 (Rome: 1962), 437–440; N. Gemayel, *Les échanges culturels entre les Maronites et l'Europe: Du Collège maronite de Rome (1584) au Collège de Ayn Warka (1789)*, 2 vols. (Beirut: 1984), 1:420–434.

with the Congregations of *Propaganda fide* and of the Holy Office, serving as a point of reference for oriental affairs in Rome by translating, studying documents, censoring books, and consulting on liturgical and theological issues.<sup>45</sup> Unsurprisingly, he also influenced some of the decisions taken during the pontificate of Benedict XIV, when the effort of the Roman Church to clearly define the ecclesiastical discipline of Eastern Rite Catholics reached its greatest systematization.<sup>46</sup> This activity, rewarded in 1756 with the official appointment as consultant of the Inquisition, placed Assemani at the center of an important patronage network, of which the members of his extended family took ample advantage, creating a Roman-Lebanese dynasty that was highly influential in the Curia.<sup>47</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

The three phases outlined in this article were not perfectly consecutive in the history of the Roman Curia's attitude toward the Christian East. More often than not, the diplomatic, missionary, and inquisitorial approach existed simultaneously, and intertwined in inextricable ways. For example, throughout the eighteenth century the cardinal protectors of each Eastern nation continued to play an important role with their personal agency and patronage, as had been the case in the sixteenth century. And as late as the 1820s, the pontiff gave credit to a project of Union of the Coptic Church with Rome that was carried out exclusively by mail, which resulted in a sensational setback when it was discovered that the correspondence was the work of a forger.<sup>48</sup>

45 C. Santus, "Giuseppe Simonio Assemani consultore del Sant'Uffizio", in Ž. Paša (ed.), *Actes du congrès "L'Orient chrétien dans l'Occident latin". 300<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Bibliotheca Orientalis d'Assémani (1719–2019)*, monographic issue of *Parole de l'Orient* 47 (2021), 175–190.

46 A. Girard, *Le christianisme oriental (xvii<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles). Essor de l'orientalisme catholique en Europe et construction des identités confessionnelles au Proche-Orient* (PhD dissertation, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2011), 359–365; M.T. Fattori, "Benedict XIV and His Sacramental Polity on the Eastern Churches (1740–1758)", *Nicolaus* 39 (2012), 117–144.

47 B. Heyberger, "Chrétiens orientaux dans l'Europe catholique (xvii<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles)", in B. Heyberger and Ch. Verdeil (eds.), *Hommes de l'entre-deux: Parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (xvi<sup>e</sup>–xx<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Paris: 2009), 61–94; 85 (see the English translation in Heyberger, *Middle Eastern and European Christianity*, 49–89).

48 C. Santus, "The Great Imposture: Eastern Christian Rogues and Counterfeiters in Rome, c. 17th–19th Centuries", in C. Zwierlein (ed.), *The Power of the Dispersed: Early Modern Global Travelers beyond Integration* (Leiden: 2022), 98–130.

Two other themes can be extracted from the rapid overview offered here. First is the process of increasing institutionalization in the relations between the Roman Curia and the Eastern hierarchies, marked by the evolution from the personal initiative of individual prelates to the construction of temporary commissions of cardinals, and then the erection of the permanent Congregation *de Propaganda fide*, leading finally to the current Dicastery for the Eastern Churches which gained full autonomy in 1917. Another fundamental theme is the growing importance assumed within the mechanisms of the Curia by Eastern Christians themselves, who, although normally relegated to subordinate roles, gradually acquired an increasingly important role in the effective assembly of dossiers relating to their communities of origin. The importance of these 'amphibious' figures, oriental by birth but Roman in education and career, for the history of relations between Rome and the Christian East cannot be underestimated, and deserves to be further explored, to understand how their intermediation ended up influencing the eastern policy of the Holy See.