Fishers of men: the Jesuits in Bilad al-Sham, 1625-1660

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Fishers of Men,
the Jesuits in Bilad al-Sham
1625 – 1660

by

Mazin Tadros

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Fishers of Men,
the Jesuits in Bilad al-Sham,
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Mazin Tadros

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For my father,

ظيفافه عاده تادرس

Deifallah Ayed Tadros
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements iv
List of Tables vii
List of Charts viii
Abstract ix

Ch. 0. Introduction 1
Ch. 1. France and the Fishers of Men 23
Ch. 2. Mission Established: 1625 – 1627 53
Ch. 3. An Inauspicious Beginning: 1627 – 1643 96
Ch. 4. Casting Their Nets: 1643 – 1660 132
Ch. 5. The Relations and Jesuit Mentalities 184
Ch. 6. Propaganda: *La Syrie Sainte* of Joseph Besson 231
Ch. 7. Conclusion 279

Bibliography:

Archives and Sources 284
Published Primary and Secondary Sources 285
List of Tables

Table 1. Length of Stay of Jesuits in the Syria Mission 178
   1a Average Length of Service in Greater Syria – Group 153

2. Place and Average Age at Death of the Jesuit Missionaries 179
   2a. Average Age at Death – Group 154

3. Age of the Missionaries at Entry into the Jesuit Novitiate 180
   3a. Average age of Entry into the Novitiate – Group 155

4. Age at Arrival and Arrival Place of the Jesuits into Greater Syria 181
   4a. Average Age at Arrival in Greater Syria – Group 155
Abstract

For several decades historians have struggled with the dynamics of cross-cultural contact and the creation of perceptions of the “other”. Detailed studies of the European image of the Islamicate world during the pre-modern period rarely analyze why and how these representations were formed. Through the analysis of Jesuit missionary correspondences made during the first half of the seventeenth century, this study aims to articulate the variables that impacted the development of Jesuit attitudes toward the people and environment of Greater Syria. Jesuit written sources conveyed the challenges to the mission that arose from a multiplicity of sources, including from fellow Europeans, lay and religious alike. Their greatest challenge however was to understand, and insert themselves in, the cultural and doctrinal traditions of the indigenous population, Christian and Muslim. The tensions and opportunities experienced by the Jesuits, combined with their individual personalities and group mentalities, formed the basis of their views and impressions of Bilad al-Sham. Yet, equally as important in the understanding of the development of Jesuit perceptions, is the recognition that the medium of correspondence (letters, reports, or published works) had recognizable impact on the articulation of Jesuit experiences. As this study demonstrates, the level of objectivity in the expressions of the Jesuits depended on the form of communication they used. In their letters to their fellow priests in Europe, they showed ideological and cultural detachment, whereas in their published works they tended to include embellished stories and tropes familiar to their reading audience in Europe. Moreover, this study is an entrée into Jesuit mentalities and how they acted in and reacted to the prevailing political, social, and, cultural circumstances in Greater Syria between 1625 and 1660.
Chapter 0: Introduction

In 1625, two ill-prepared and inadequately provisioned Jesuit priests left France to establish a mission in Greater Syria. After an unpromising beginning, the Society of Jesus was firmly planted in the region until the universal suppression of the Order in 1774. During this period, the Jesuits worked their enterprise in a predominantly Muslim world, and expressed their experience in various forms of correspondence and publications. This study is concerned with the first thirty-five years of the mission’s history as it confronted a multiplicity of challenges and tensions from 1625 to 1660. It will reveal how the form and function of Jesuit communications to various European audiences influenced their portrayal of the indigenous population of Bilad al-Sham¹ and the choice of circumstances or events they decided to report. Analyzing the experience of the Jesuits by the type of correspondence is a novel approach to understanding the relative objectivity in their perceptions of the inhabitants of the region, where they had to adapt to the cultural norms of a society influenced by a religion that was anathema to their own. As priests and as promoters and defenders of the Catholic faith, the Jesuits responded to their surroundings in an array of acts and emotions that demonstrated their humanity, their fears, their beliefs, and their desires. They were of their own time and exhibited responses and comments befitting the mentalities of the period and the canon of European writing that at times portrayed the Muslim – the Saracen, the Turk, or the barbarian - in various shades of perversity and sophistication.

¹ Greater Syria and Bilad al-Sham define the same geographic location.
There are several choices of established methods and perspectives that can be utilized to contextualize the experience of the Jesuit missionaries in Greater Syria. One approach is to place the narratives of the Jesuits in the context of a hostile and at times violent encounter with Muslims in a Mediterranean milieu. Works such as Sea of Faith by Stephen O'Shea, Infidels from Andrew Wheatcroft, and of course Samuel Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations, have defined the relationship between the inhabitants of Dar al Islam and Dar al Harb in terms of a political and economic competition that was infused with intolerance of the other’s religious beliefs and cultural norms. Some historians have approached the problem with a more nuanced interpretation of the interaction between Muslims and European Christians. Molly Greene and Daniel Goffman, among others, have provided various cases of amicable relations in commerce and in diplomacy at various times since the rise of Islam. Their scholarship has paved the way for a more detailed understanding of the complexity of Fernand Braudel’s Mediterranean World. These authors have made evident the more common or typical exchanges between Muslims and European Christians that far outnumber instances of violence and mistrust. The third option is to analyze the Jesuit experience from the perspective of travel accounts. Chew, Rouillard, and Matar, for example, have revealed the complex aspects of cross-cultural contact in its various modes. To demonstrate the

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2 Dar al-Islam is the territory governed and controlled by Muslims, and as such, it is the abode of peace. Conversely, Dar al-Harb is the abode of war, the world of infidels that lies outside Dar al-Islam.


types of encounters and the perceptions formed by travelers, they examined the published and unpublished travel accounts of Muslims and Europeans in order to identify how one group saw the other. The narrative of the Jesuit experience in Greater Syria contributes partially to all these interpretations and approaches as the extant sources reveal opportunities for sharing and trust, and conversely, the barriers to toleration and cultural accretion.

Previous studies on cross-cultural contact and European images of the other – specifically the Muslim other – have utilized two types of primary sources. Published religious, historical, and intellectual treatises and diatribes explaining the rise of Islam and its meaning in the world constitute the first of the pre-modern primary sources. These works were usually the product of persons who did not travel to the Islamicate world nor had very little contact with it. The second source is the published travelogues and pamphlets of pilgrims, merchants, slaves, diplomats, and missionaries. This form of literature became more popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth century as the quantity and quality of contact increased between Muslims and Christians (and others) in the Mediterranean region. The research into these sources has demonstrated in recent years that although one can point to a European discourse that frequently was not objective or honest; it was nonetheless evolving and contingent. Inter-European interpretations and perceptions of Muslims were subject to the relative power relationship between the

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5 The term Islamicate was first used by Marshal Hodgson in 1958 in order to distinguish the religious component of culture. Hodgson notes that the use of “Islamic” emphasizes the “religious sense” of the society, where “Islamicate” refers to the “cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when formed among non-Muslims.” The term “Islamicate” includes the multiplicity of faiths and ethnicities that existed and participated in society whose population was predominantly Muslim, sharing in the same food, language, and various other components of culture (Marshal Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, the Classical Age of Islam, v.1* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1974), 57-60).
Ottomans and the Europeans, and were conditioned by the quality of the information at the disposal of Europeans about the Islamicate world. These two factors when combined with the slowly changing mental constructs of Europeans and Ottomans produced images of the other through the prism of religious indoctrination, and from political, ethnic, or nationalistic affiliation.

Historical analysis over the past sixty years has tended to focus on the first category of primary sources, on academic and religious formulations of European understanding and perceptions of Islamicate society. For example, Richard Southern rendered the European discourse on Islam and the Islamicate world during the medieval period, as an evolutionary process moving through three phases of formation. In the “Age of Ignorance”, Europeans, specifically those with limited or no interaction with the Islamicate world, tended to base their impressions on the biblical interpretations of their theologians who had limited information on Muslims or their religion. Lacking any direct contact with the Islamicate world, European scholars during this period relied on biblical exegesis to explain the rise and expansion of Islam.6 Theologians such as Venerable Bede, Eulogius and Paul Alvarus were not “equipped” to discuss Islam on a pragmatic or objective level, and could only offer an eschatological explanation for Islam’s raison d’être.7 By the end of the eleventh century however, biblical exegesis failed to explain coherently this threatening religion. With the conquest of Toledo in central Spain in 1085 by Alphonse VI, European scholars (mostly theologians) came to see Islam in a different light, that of another Christian heresy.

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7 Ibid., 22-24.
In Southern’s second phase, “the Century of Reason and Hope” Western European scholars advanced their understanding of Islam with greater access to Arabic texts and direct contact with Muslims due to Alphonse’s Reconquista. Writers such as William of Malmesbury, Otto of Freising, and Peter the Venerable, although they maintained the same hostile attitudes toward Islam, acknowledged the monotheism in the Muslim faith and that Mohammed was not a God. Most scholars of this period realized that Islam was not a pagan religion. With its attachment to the Old Testament and reverence for Jesus-Christ, as merely a prophet without a divine nature, most theologians concluded that Islam was yet another heresy and that Mohammed was merely a false prophet. During the twelfth century, many philosophical and scientific works written in Arabic were translated into Latin that significantly changed European perceptions of the Arab world as a barbarous race. Also during this period, European theologians, believing Islam was a Christian heresy, were confronted with two choices: continued military confrontation or conversion of Islamic heretics; the debate over how to handle these alternatives lasted well into the sixteenth century, and was reflected in works such as Martin Luther’s translation of Ricoldo da Monte Croce’s *Confutatio Alchoran*.

Martin Luther’s work was not unique and followed a line of polemics against Islam that began in Southern’s third phase, “the Moment of Vision.” Scholars from the latter thirteenth century to Luther’s time consistently attacked the theological and doctrinal tenets of Islam; while on the other hand, they compared Islam to the ills of the Catholic Church. To John Wycliffe, writing between 1378 and 1384, the vices in the Church led to the rise of Islam, and the moment the Church reformed its immoral state, Islam would
simply vanish. Furthermore, theologians of the fifteenth century such as John of Segovia and Nicolas of Cusa wanted to pursue a course of dialogue in hopes of finding unity with Muslims, or their conversion. Conversely, Jean Germain and Aeneas Silvius feared such attempts would lead to contamination of their Christian faith. This moment of vision was perhaps fleeting. As the Ottoman Empire encroached into European lands, Europeans continued to view the Islamicate world as a threat: religiously, culturally, and specifically militarily.

While Southern’s work relied much on the publications and treatises of theologians to describe European perceptions of the Islamicate world, Nancy Bisaha’s recent monograph presents the perspective of Renaissance writers, specifically those learned in the Latin and Greek classics. Bisaha promotes these writers as transitional figures in a slight shift from the medieval discourse as outlined by Southern. As Bisaha has demonstrated in her exposition of various humanist works on the “Turk,” fifteenth century European writers continued to express hostility toward the inhabitants of the eastern Mediterranean. Their formulations of the history of Muslims however, were based on classical secular models that mixed with notions of a constant and ubiquitous Muslim aggression toward Christians. Additionally, many of their themes maintained the medieval elements of eschatological interpretations for the rise of Islam and crusading rhetoric in defense of Europe as the Ottomans expanded westward and Constantinople became Istanbul.

Bisaha’s arguments are further supported by Margaret Meserve, who in similar fashion, exposes changes in the European construction of Muslims as barbarians based on

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8 Ibid., 80.
the use of secular classical sources. In various examples, including that of Aeneas Silvius, Renaissance writers came to reconstruct the history or origins of the Turks in order to refashion their enemies as “barbarous enemies of civilization”. They no longer depended on biblical interpretations for the rise and expansion of Islam, but relied on early classical writers to support their assertions. As this study will reveal, Jesuit interpretations and attitudes toward their Muslim and non-Muslim hosts included Medieval and Renaissance elements. And, the Jesuit missionaries, specifically in published works, used biblical stories as well as classical literature to describe and portray the inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham and the space they occupied. But unique to this study, the Jesuit sources provide an opportunity to examine the span of Jesuit expressions of objectivity that were governed by the medium in which they were delivered. No historical analysis into the works of humanists and theologians, nor the travelogues and pamphlets, has been conducted into this type of comparison between the written form and its level of cultural or religious neutrality.

Samuel Chew and Clarence Rouillard were the first to explore the writings of travelers and “armchair” travelers of the late Renaissance period to the middle of the seventeenth century. Both writers analyzed the development of a malevolent portrait of Arabs and Islam in England and France respectively through the accounts of travelers: merchants, adventurers, diplomats, and pilgrims who traversed Muslim lands. These travelers, either because of an inability to divorce themselves from their subjective perspectives or due to their need for self-aggrandizing and embellishment, reported their experiences to a highly receptive audience with certain literary expectations. Authors and playwrights alike used

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the accounts of travelers in order to develop the characteristic negative and often opprobrious depictions of “Saracens” and “Turks.” Their effect was cumulative: the combination of travel accounts, histories, polemics, and plays, perpetuated the myths about Southwest Asia.¹¹ For Chew and Rouillard, the travelers were the essential force behind the promulgation of nefarious character types of Muslims as found in various forms of literature and entertainment.

Although this study lacks the means to make evident a connection between the various publications as outlined above, the Jesuit missionaries to Greater Syria, as part of the intelligentsia of Europe, must have encountered some information on the Islamicate world while they attended to their education in France. Whether through the treatises of theologians and humanists about the Islamicate world, or through the accounts of travelers, religious or otherwise, Jesuit notions of Southwest Asia were influenced, directly or indirectly, by these publications. Further investigation into the libraries of the colleges where future Jesuit missionaries were educated and trained could reveal a closer proximity to such works on this region and its people, and thus point to a direct correlation to preconceived Jesuit impressions of the Ottoman Empire, its inhabitants and its religions. Into this world, the Jesuits came with some element of the ideas and projections of Islamicate society that were prevalent in Europe. The degree to which the Jesuit missionaries a priori understood the diverse culture of the Ottoman Empire is not clear. They never directly challenged the established European canon of thought on the Muslim faithful and the geographic and cultural spaces they occupied. Jesuit ethnographic statements rarely explicitly indicated what they experienced was in opposition to the negative portrayals of the Empire by their fellow Europeans. They

¹¹ Chew, 544.
never rebuked the Medieval and Renaissance conceptions of the Saracen and the Turk. In situations when the Jesuits wanted to portray Muslims in a manner that supported their agenda, they often used the same language and metaphors to describe the Muslim inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham, as their European predecessors from the ninth through the sixteenth century.\(^\text{12}\)

Research into the historical roots of cultural interaction and the formation of images of the other has led some writers to attempt to explain the dynamics of such exchanges and perceptions. According to Norman Daniel, the relationships between the two major religious groups in the Mediterranean were governed by the quality and length of interaction. From the ninth to the thirteenth century, there was a lack of interest on the part of Arabs and Europeans to engage each other culturally.\(^\text{13}\) When both “civilizations” were not at war or engaging in commerce, they avoided each other and sought comfort in the familiar, in family and in custom – each group rejecting the culture of the other. Daniel asserts that each group, because of religious differences, “set up a barrier of intolerance, which effectively prevented the conscious passage of most ideas.”\(^\text{14}\) But this does not necessarily imply a complete segregation of people based on doctrine, even Catholic priests acting as apostles, had intellectual and social interchange with their counterparts of the Muslim faith. This study will establish when and why religious intolerance was expressed by the Jesuits, and that religion was not always a central component of cultural antipathy.

\(^{12}\) As will be discussed below, the employment of negative imagery of the Muslim inhabitants had as much to do with a particular Jesuit’s agenda as any other conceivable influence on his perceptions, a priori or experienced.


\(^{14}\) Ibid., 190.
Daniel defines the concept of culture as the totality of a given society, its “arts, education, science and research, religious practice, economics, finance, commerce, politics, [and] amusements”. During the pre-modern period, when individuals were confronted with the other across the Mediterranean, they typically used religion, rather than ethnicity or nationality to differentiate themselves. However, as Daniel suggests, barriers to cultural exchange are not religion-dependent only, they are “innate” due to the need to maintain one’s habits and customs. Over time however, these barriers diminish if an individual resides in a foreign culture, and with the passage of time, will begin to focus on the similarities and not differences between his and the “foreign culture.” The extant sources of the Jesuits are inconclusive regarding any shift in their attitudes or perceptions of the inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham. Following the writing of an individual Jesuit over the length of his mission has not revealed a perceptible shift or change in how they described their experience in Greater Syria. Nonetheless, there was a discernable difference in how they expressed themselves relative to the form of communication that they utilized: letters, reports, or published works.

The historical analysis of cross-cultural contact and the perceptions formed and communicated has also been approached from an anthropological perspective. This method has led to a debate between those who submit that the writings of the observer, the foreigner, are self-reflective. In other words, Europeans specific to this study, who wrote about their encounters with the other, were merely rationalizing their experiences based on their innate social, political, and economic constructs. Moreover, some anthropologists have suggested that the observer’s written account should be interpreted

16 Ibid., 7-9.
as commentary or metaphor on their homeland, or what Marcus and Fischer refer to as *defamiliarization by cross-cultural juxtaposition*. In this sense, the Jesuit discourse can speak much about European, specifically French, cultural issues, as seventeenth century Catholic priests would see them. Conversely, the other side of the debate maintains the belief that a level of detachment from one’s own cultural categories is achievable. With exceptions, the written observations of travelers reveal much of the observed and speak to the reality of the situation. To measure this objectivity however, the remarks of the “foreigner” must be compared to other primary and secondary sources as has been suggested by Asli Çirakman. This is not always possible. In this study, the Jesuit case affords the opportunity to compare the missionaries’ explications of events and attitudes that were contingent on the form of communication. Correspondingly, the letters, reports, and published work revealed different “mentalities” of the same author.

Although this method is important in understanding and deciphering individual Jesuit views, in fact, this is the essential motivation of this work; this approach also guides the analysis of cultural relativism.

19 Asli, Çirakman, *From the "Terror of the World" to the "Sick Man of Europe": European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century* (New York: P. Lang, 2002), 41.
20 Urs Bitterli’s *Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492-1800*, tr. Ritchie Robertson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), confronts both sides of the debate
From the field of Interpretive Anthropology, cultural relativism is a methodological tool that guides the anthropologist to understand that “each historical period has its own assumptions and prejudices, and the process of communication is the engaging of notions of one’s own period (or culture) with those of another.”21 Differences in period or culture implicitly affect the perceptions or interpretations of the anthropologist’s consideration of “symbols, meanings, and mentalities.”22 In the context of this study, notwithstanding the background of Jesuits as priests and not as anthropologists, the expressions of the missionaries in their letters, reports, and publications were influenced by impulses governed by French, and more broadly, European, cultural norms. Thus the differences in culture led to comparisons and corresponding analogies that were manifest in their writing on the society of Bilad al-Sham. Moreover, there was the potential for the Jesuits to engage in defamiliarization by cross-cultural juxtaposition, where the anthropologist uses perceptions of a foreign culture as a means to provoke critiques or to promote the attributes of his or her society.23 Again, this is not to say the Jesuits wrote about their encounters from an academic sense, as anthropologists or sociologists, with the explicit intent to comment on their own society through the veil of an ethnographic narrative of the other.

Identifying this “cross-cultural juxtaposition,” or in other words, the “self-reflective,” presents a complex set of problems. Specific to the Jesuits, and because there is limited extant biographical information on these missionaries, there is no indication that any of them had a political or philosophical agenda that was unrelated to religion, whether in

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21 Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Critique*, 31-33.
22 Ibid., 31-33.
23 Ibid., 138.
France or in Greater Syria.\textsuperscript{24} Additionally, the Jesuits in France during this period were given stern warnings about philosophical tracts that could damage the relationship between the Society and the French crown. As will be discussed below, the Order’s hierarchy recognized the value of monarchical patronage and commanded its members to abide by the strictures on royal and social commentaries. And when one considers the different audiences to whom they wrote, in letters, reports, and published works, the majority of their communications were with their Superior Generals, in which they addressed their issues directly without the sort of embellishment found in the annual reports of the mission superiors or in the publication of Joseph Besson. What is left however is an attempt at understanding the culture from which they came in order to identify potential social parallels in what they imagined their homeland to be and their perceptions of the foreign milieu in which they operated. This method in itself is not without pitfalls, and as Clifford Geertz suggests, the components of culture as defined above, merely serve as “control mechanisms” for the regulations of individual or group conduct.\textsuperscript{25} And as Daniel suggests, some components of culture, language or religion for example, acted as barriers to cultural understanding and toleration.\textsuperscript{26}

As part of an attempt to validate and contextualize pre-modern European perceptions of the Islamicate world and cross-cultural contact, some historians have turned to Ottoman sources as a counter to the European narratives that pervasively cast a critical image of Muslims and how they treated Christians in their midst. Within the last thirty years, Masters, Cohen, Heyberger, Marcus, Bakhit, and others have demonstrated the

\textsuperscript{24} With the exception of Joseph Besson, who published \textit{La Syrie Sainte} in 1660, it is not directly apparent that any of the Jesuits had any hidden agendas. As noted below, Besson’s work is the focus of Chapter VI.


\textsuperscript{26} Norman Daniel, \textit{The Cultural Barrier}, 60-77.
complex relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims in various cities and regions of the Ottoman Empire. They collectively revealed that European travelers’ reports of a constant oppression and subjugation of Christians are dubious. The analysis of these authors, and others, reveals a dynamic, and religiously complicated heterogeneous society that constituted the Ottoman Empire, and like any other place of the period, it was at times prone to calamities caused by man and nature, by war and by plague. They demonstrate the consistently liberal attitude of the Ottoman sultans and their administrators toward non-Muslims. Inasmuch as they were considered second-class citizens, non-Muslims, particularly Christians and Jews, had rights under Ottoman law and Muslim tradition that allowed them freedom to pursue their own religions and to participate in any commercial activity. From the current historiography, it is evident that non-Muslims had the opportunity to prosper materially in Greater Syria although they lacked the legal consideration to participate in the administration of the Empire. Moreover, the non-Muslim status at times left Christians, Jews, and others to confront the prejudice and oppression that was intermittently practiced against them. Muslims

27 Antoine Rabbath published a two volume compilation of letters and reports regarding the missionary enterprise and state of Christianity in Southwest Asia. In his preface to volume 1, Rabbath perpetuates this notion: “the Easterner [referring to the indigenous Christians] had preferred the misery, the appalling dungeons, the beatings and the death rather than apostasy!” Rabbath, preface, v.1, p.V. Antoine Rabbath, ed., Documents inédits pour servir à l’histoire du christianisme en Orient. 2 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1905).

however were not always the oppressors, nor was subjugation a constant; injurious acts varied by period, place, and group. This study of the Jesuit missions in Greater Syria contributes to our understanding of the Muslim – non-Muslim dynamic and how it was portrayed to a range of European audiences in the three different forms of correspondence.

Jesuit notions of the superiority of their religion and doctrine affected their relations and perceptions of the Muslim and non-Muslim population of Bilad al-Sham. The expression of this ideal was a consistent theme in the three forms of correspondence: letters, reports, and published works. All of these forms identified this religious or doctrinal perspective as the central point of anxiety between the missionaries and the inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham. The exposition of these tensions however, was conveyed differently depending on the type of correspondence and its respective audience. Each form of correspondence determined the level of objectivity, self-reflection, and rhetoric of the Jesuits. The first form, letters to the Superior General, consisted of short updates and requests expressed in usually less than 2,000 words. Annual reports, or relations, written by the mission superiors, were accounts of the activities and accomplishments of the mission addressed to the provincial leaders of the Province of Lyon and later, the Province of France (Paris). These reports, as was customary, were circulated among teachers and students at the various Jesuit colleges. Thus, the relations had a greater tendency toward embellishment and personal expression in order to maintain the interest of the reader as he perused the lengthy documents that consisted, on average, of 15,000 words. Finally, the published two-volume work, *La Syrie Sainte*, of Joseph Besson,
written for the elite in European society, tended toward the marvelous in order to meet this audience’s expectations.

Each of these forms of correspondence constitute the basis for the chapters to follow; the letters, annual reports, and published work provide a different insight into the mentalities and experiences of the Jesuits as they projected themselves in each specific medium of communication. Chapters II through IV present the narrative of the foundation and expansion of the Jesuit mission from Aleppo. This exposition is based predominantly on the letters of the missionaries, and as a result, a more objective and less inflated account of their experience and perceptions is revealed. On the other hand, Chapter V analyzes the mentalities of the superiors of the mission through a reading of their annual reports, the relations. Since the superiors were writing to a broader audience, they used this opportunity to provide a more personal expression of their experience, uncovering their predispositions and mentalities. While the final chapter considers the published form of Jesuit communication and how this medium demonstrates its author’s proclivity to adhere to the literary tropes current in European writing on the Islamicate world. It provides an excellent opportunity to establish the degree of misrepresentation of Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire.

Accordingly, each of these chapters represents the important phases of the Jesuit missionary enterprise. Chapter II analyzes the political preparation and establishment of the mission to Greater Syria in Aleppo. A focus on the experience of the first Jesuit missionaries, Jean Stella and Jean Amieu, reveals the poor planning of the Society of Jesus and its lack of coordination with the French crown and its ambassadorial representative at the Ottoman Porte. And if problems were not caused from within, they
were instigated by Jesuit rivals, the Venetians and the Franciscans. These two entities were unrelenting in their character attacks on the two missionaries who were forced to vacate temporarily Greater Syria. As Goffman has demonstrated, intra-European rivalries were carried to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean where the animosities played out between missionaries, diplomats, and merchants. The enmity between fellow Europeans, at times, resulted in the profit of Ottoman officials. Yet the problems the Jesuits encountered as a result of the machinations of Venetians and Franciscans serve to highlight the Ottoman authorities’ sense of fairness and adherence to legal norms of the Empire. Stella’s and Maniglier’s letters and report counter other travelers’ reports that portrayed Ottomans as a barbaric and avaricious race. Additionally, this chapter reveals that without the intercession and support of the French crown, the mission to Greater Syria was not possible.

Chapter III provides more insight into the role of the French crown and the political cover it provided for the missionaries as they interacted with the merchants and diplomats in Aleppo. While they received the bare minimum to survive, with little support coming from the Province of Lyon and Rome, the Jesuits had to rely on the graces of their fellow Frenchmen as well as the assistance of the indigenous Christians. In addition, unnecessary tensions were created as a result of a lack of planning and material support that fueled intra-Jesuit animosities and rivalries. This chapter exposes the interaction of different Jesuit personalities as they approached the difficulties of managing a mission, revealing their aspirations, goals, fears, and tribulations. Moreover, it provides examples of cross-cultural and cross-religious contact between the Jesuits and the inhabitants of

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29 The Order of Friars Minor consisted of two major groups: the Franciscans, or Observant, and the Capuchins.
Greater Syria, where language was the main factor in bridging cultural and social divides.

As discussed in Chapter II, the Jesuits rarely depicted the Muslims in a deleterious fashion, and when they did, it was out of misunderstanding rather than preconceived prejudices toward this group. This lack of odium is an essential thread in the letters written during this period, and in this chapter, the first example of embellishment based on the form of correspondence is analyzed. The letters during this fifteen-year period, 1627 – 1642, again show the sense of fairness and flexibility of Ottoman officials, but also bears witness to elements in Ottoman Society that took advantage of Jesuit mistakes, regardless of their perpetrator’s religion.

In the final chapter of the chronological narrative of the Jesuit experience in Greater Syria, Chapter IV completes the story of the expansion of the mission to Damascus, Saida, Tripoli, and Antoura. During the period between 1643 and 1660 the mission, specifically in 1644 and 1645, the Society quadrupled the number of missionaries in Bilad al-Sham. From a statistical perspective, analysis of the missionaries’ ages, mortality, time in mission, and other statistics demonstrate that most of the Jesuits were men of experience when they entered Greater Syria. These statistics also reveal the continuity between new arrivals and the already established missionaries, where experiences were passed from one generation to the next of Jesuits. And, the new missionaries brought with them news from France. The first signs of a nascent nationalism were expressed during the 1650s that was not articulated in the previous years. When lay men entered into disagreements over preference to particular religious
orders to meet their spiritual needs, such conflict was now settled based on national affiliation rather than allegiance to a particular order.30

Furthermore, Chapter IV provides information on the activities of the missionary enterprise in greater detail with a discussion on the formation of congregations and the founding of schools and how they were used to attract and indoctrinate students to Christianity, and in certain cases, to Catholicism. Some of the schools, the Jesuits missionaries argued, were a bridge to appease the reluctance of their fellow Catholics, the Maronites, of sending their boys at an early age to the Jesuit supported Maronite College of Rome. Enrollment in the college appeared to be dwindling in this period. Moreover, the chapter makes evident that during this early missionary period, antagonisms between Christian rites, at least in Greater Syria, were minimal: the so-called “schismatics” were the first to open opportunities to the Jesuits, in education and in preaching within prescribed limits as discussed in the second chapter of the chronological narrative.

Shifting from a chronological narrative to a more thematic approach, Chapter V relies much on the relations of the Jesuit mission superiors rather than their letters. Its main purpose is to expose the mentalities of the missionaries and the factors that contributed to their peculiar perceptions, as they wrote to a wider audience. As expressed above, the form of correspondence influenced the latitude for embellishment. The superiors of the Syria Mission elaborated on themes of heroism and oppression, and expressed more vividly their eschatology and their polar world view of good and evil. Their sincere beliefs in omens and progenies governed their behavior toward and perceptions of the inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham, imposing an a prior negative image of the Islamicate

30 Future research and analysis will reveal that by the 1670s national association rather than religious affiliation became the more familiar category to describe the other European.
world. When articulating these themes, the Jesuits reveal that they were not too far removed from their medieval relatives, and as such, relied on biblical interpretations to rationalize the existence of a powerful infidel and its impending demise. But in sheer contrast to these expressions of contempt, the Jesuits expressed themselves in the manner of their seventeenth century European counterparts.

As Chew, Rouillard, and Çirakman have indicated, sixteenth and seventeenth century travelers expressed diverse and opposing views, that no generalizations could be drawn to indicate that all Europeans used the same rhetoric to describe aspects of the Ottoman Empire. Within the same individual(s), medieval impulses were opposed by a general Jesuit proclivity toward tolerance (accommodation) as demonstrated by the social interaction with their Muslim hosts. Although not explicitly stated in their relations, certain allusions to such encounters reveal cordial and friendly relations between the two group. Yet, webs of relationships were complex and varied, and show that both sides of the exchange were willing to dispense with religious differences when certain aspects of an individual or their culture were appealing. Unfortunately, it is impossible to point to some of the barriers that were breached, but Jesuit skills in medicine, mathematics, astrology were valued among the Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham, part of the attraction or appeal of Jesuits to the indigenous population. Jesuit portrayals in the reports offered a sense of detachment and a reluctance to use ad hominem attacks. Similar to some to other travelers of the period, Jesuit ethnographic explications were intended to educate and possibly point to things amiss in their own lands.

The final chapter of the study analyzes the published work of Joseph Besson, La Syrie Sainte. Besson was one of the last members to arrive in Greater Syria during this period
of study and was the first to publish a “history” of the Jesuit mission. Chapter VI reveals the distance between the relative objectivity in the letters to the hyper-inflated history of the mission in Besson’s publication. Besson played the role of Chew’s “armchair” traveler, taking the letters and relations of his peers and manipulating them in order to generate sympathy for the Jesuit enterprise. His work is based on the annual reports submitted to the provincials in Paris and Lyon. It is one of the few “armchair” travelogues that have a verifiable source – the author’s exaggerations and embellishments are identifiable. And similar to his counterparts, Besson used tropes that were common imagery familiar to his readership. With a few well known and placed words, his audience could understand the thousands of faces in Bilad al-Sham who participated in European notions of barbarism and cruelty. Although Besson’s La Syrie Sainte can be interpreted as the work of a bigoted or intolerant individual, the few extant letters of this period do not support such a characterization. His motivation was quite evident in his zeal for the mission and the need for continued material assistance, and as such, used the medium of the published word to propagandize his agenda. As Meserve and Bisaha noted, the humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth century turned to the classics for explanations of the origins of the Ottomans. Besson was not different, when reached into the classics, and the Bible, to support his rhetorical propaganda in an attempt to inspire his audience of literate nobles, clergy, and possibly a few wealthy commoners, to recognize the importance of the Jesuit mission in the fight against heretics, schismatics, and infidels.

The Jesuit missionaries confronted challenges and tensions that were unique to their profession that other travelers to Southwest Asia experienced, which imposed certain
impressions of and attitudes toward the inhabitants of Greater Syria. As this study will demonstrate, they adapted to and met some of the challenges that came from their fellow Europeans and their Muslim and non-Muslim hosts as they tried to fulfill their apostolic venture. How these challenges and tensions influenced their perceptions of the world they worked in, and how they were expressed in different mediums of communication contributes to the historical analysis of several themes in European – Islamicate relations, cross-cultural contact and imagining the other, as well as studies on religious minorities existing among a Muslim majority. These themes, within the framework of the encounter within a Mediterranean context, reveal they are codependent and intertwined as this study of the Jesuit missionary enterprise in Bilad al-Sham will make evident. As important however, is to recognize the humanity of the individuals included in this study and their fallibility relative to their time and place, that as Edward Said instructed, should be treated as subjects and not merely objects of analysis.31 They deserve a certain empathy for their courage and their remarkable commitment to their work and their ability to adapt to a foreign environment: it does not however, turn ghosts into heroes.

Chapter I: France and the Fishers of Men

Inasmuch as the Jesuits of this present work were oriented to a religious and apostolic life, they were a product of their time and place, and thus their reports and observations reflected their understanding of the world as priests, intellectuals, Frenchmen, and Catholics. This chapter aims to describe certain elements of the society from which they came, and the education and training they received that potentially shaped their world views. Their observations and narrations of Ottoman culture and religion were wholly dependent on what was culturally relative to them. That is to say, Jesuit understanding, of the things they decided to report on, reflected what was normative to them specifically, and to French culture in general. In their narrations on Ottoman society in Syria, the Jesuits relied on French realities to explain this foreign yet familiar land. What they perceived as injustices in a “tyrannical” society of infidels for example, was qualified, in part, by their familiarity with such inequity in their homeland.

Although it is difficult to ascertain all the variables that govern a person’s actions or the formation of self-awareness and identity in an individual based on his or her environment, education, or parenting, (and even their genes), it is possible and reasonable to consider the Syria missionaries as a subset or fractal of the general Jesuit experience in France. To try to quantify the impact of the group experience on the mentality of an individual member is a highly problematic task, but in the process of assessing the group experience, one can qualify this relationship as being relevant and formative. However, conclusions should not be drawn such that the personalities or mentalities of individual

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32 This is not to imply however that their observations were self-reflective in the sense they were veiled criticisms of French society as in the time of Voltaire.
Jesuits were merely a reflection of shared organizational practices and education. Biographical information on the Syria missionaries is very sparse and does not provide much insight into the lives of these Jesuits prior to their departure. What is known of their experiences in Europe is only supported by the basic facts of their birth, education, and the places they inhabited at certain times. From these simple pieces of data, the individual Jesuit can be placed in proximity to the people or events that directly or indirectly affected the missionary’s world view.

The majority of the Jesuits who went to proselytize in Greater Syria between 1625 and 1660 were of French descent. Missionaries to Syria were born in cities and towns such as Marseille, Dijon, Amiens, Chaumont, and Tours and the majority of them began their novitiates at the colleges in Lyon, Paris, and Champagne. They typically entered the Society at a young age. Of the thirty-three known missionaries to Syria during this period of study, twenty-seven have known entry dates into the novitiate, for which, the average age at entry was nearly twenty-one; the youngest, François Bourgoin was fifteen and the oldest, and first mission superior, Jean Stella was twenty-eight when he entered the Society. While at Lyon, Paris or Champagne, the future missionaries prepared for ordination into the priesthood and were later employed as teachers prior to engaging in the apostolic life. Members, such as Jerome Queyrot and Aimé Chezaud taught grammar at Lyon; Jean Amieu taught philosophy at Avignon and Dijon, and Nicolas Poirresson lectured on philosophy, rhetoric, and grammar at Champagne. Thus, their formative years were spent in these cities before embarking on their missionary careers where their

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33 Each of these cities had its own character and history. To analyze them individually would be a substantial task that is not necessarily warranted for this study. Emphasis however has been placed on Lyon because the majority of the main actors in this project either entered the novitiate, taught, or did both in this city. Reference the tables at the end of Chapter IV for the statistics on Jesuit missionaries who arrived in Greater Syria by 1660.
mentalities were shaped by local and national forces, their education, and their inculcation into the Society through the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* and *Spiritual Exercises*.

As members of the Society of Jesus, the missionaries were required to adhere to the articles of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions* that governed Jesuit behavior and practice. Part of an individual’s progress toward becoming a member of the Society was the participation in a month-long retreat that usually took place in the first two years of their novitiate.34 During this hermitage, the participant was guided by an ordained priest on meditations on the life of Jesus and the apostolic path. They were introduced to contemplations on the nature of the world and man’s relation to it, and the bond between man and his god. From an Ignatian perspective, the world was governed by forces of good and evil, where God and Satan were directly involved in the affairs of humans. The Jesuit novitiate was taught to “discern” between these forces and thus learn to make moral judgments.35 In its basic form, the retreat was a period for spiritual self-examination and evaluation. On the other hand, the articles found in the *Constitutions* established guidelines for the Order’s organization and how its members were to function as missionaries and teachers. It was a set of laws that governed the actions of the group and the individual. From how the Society was to attract students and fund schools, to how individuals should regulate their personal lives within the Order, these prescripts were intended to harmonize Jesuit behavior toward the goal “ad majorem dei glorium.” Moreover, the *Constitutions* were intended to unify the members in Catholic doctrine, which was accomplished through the Jesuit educational system.

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35 Ibid., 42.
By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Company of Jesus had established over one hundred schools throughout Europe based on the *Ratio studiorum* as promulgated in 1599. Similar to the *Constitutions*, the *Ratio* was intended to bring uniformity in doctrine and practice at various Jesuit learning institutions. These schools were more than academic in nature, combining humanistic ideals of self-improvement for the betterment of society with scholastic philosophy and theology of Aristotle and Aquinas respectively. To the Jesuits, and humanists in general, education was more than the acquisition of knowledge; through the study of history and literature, the dignity of man and his material soul could be uplifted for the fundamental good of society.

Although the combination of scholastic and humanist curricula were not unique to Jesuit schools, these new institutions distinguished themselves by offering an education free of charge and by accepting students from a variety of economic and social backgrounds: the son of a peasant or craftsman sat next to the son of a noble lord, that of a Catholic, next to a Protestant or Hussite. Professors at the Jesuit schools were instructed to “look down on no one,” and to focus on “the education of poor students just as that of the rich, taking special care for the progress of each one of his students.” This apparent openness was the hallmark of Jesuit education, and as a by-product of this innovation, Jesuit priests were theoretically prepared to teach and engage a mixture of students from varying socio-

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36 According to Picot the Jesuit college at Lyon enrolled 800 students in 1595 and in 1609 the college had over a thousand students. Joseph Picot, *Les Jésuites à Lyon de 1604 à 1762: le collège de la très saincte Trinité* (Lyon: Editions aux Arts, 1995), 129-130.
economic and religious backgrounds. For the missionaries, this was the basis for a tacit acceptance of the cultural norms they encountered in foreign lands.

By utilizing the scholastic and humanist methods and curriculums, the Society’s ultimate aim was to teach “our neighbors all the disciplines… in such a way that they are thereby aroused to a knowledge and love of our Master and Redeemer;”\textsuperscript{40} and that “the Society eagerly undertakes secondary and higher education so that Jesuits can be properly instructed both in doctrine and in other matters that contribute to helping souls, and so that they can share with their neighbors what they themselves have learned.”\textsuperscript{41} In order to achieve these goals, Jesuits studied and taught the commentaries of the Church Fathers, doctrine accepted by tradition and validated in councils (specifically the Council of Trent, 1545-1563), and with a primary focus on the \textit{Summa Theologiae} of Thomas Aquinas in the theology faculty. In several areas of the \textit{Ratio studiorum} teachers were implored not to deviate from the arguments of Aquinas.

And, in order to avoid confusion or the possibility of conflict of opinion between Jesuit teachers and non-Jesuit students, the teachers were instructed to simply leave out or ignore the sensitive issues that divided Christianity in Europe between perceived orthodoxy, heresy, and schism. They were to abide by the strict scriptural formulas of the Catholic faith as established in the canons and traditions of the church. They were implored not to innovate or promote untested opinions “even in matters that present no risk to faith and religious devotion, no one should introduce new articles for discussion in matters of any significance, nor opinion that does not belong to any suitable authority.”\textsuperscript{42} Jesuit teachers and students were guided by a corporate curriculum that was based on

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{42} Pavur, 49.
conformity to rigidly held doctrinal and theological beliefs: there was no room for free-thinkers. This inflexible allegiance to the Catholic canon presented problems for the missionaries in their encounter with non-Catholic Christians in Greater Syria: although they instructed Orthodox Greek and Armenian students, it was at times difficult for them not to introduce Catholic doctrine.

As in the theology faculty, the Jesuit teachers and students confronted similarly strict parameters in the faculty of philosophy. Comparable to other “scholastic” institutions, the vast majority of the universities in Europe, Jesuit philosophical education was founded on all the works of Aristotle. During the compulsory three-year program in philosophy, students, Jesuit and non-Jesuit, were immersed in the ten books of Aristotle’s *Ethics*, the eight books of *Physics, On Generation and Corruption, On the Soul, Metaphysics*, and so on.\(^{43}\) Again there was a prescription prohibiting any deviation from Aristotle and the canon of commentaries on his works dating back to the thirteenth century. It was acceptable however, to stray from Aristotle when his philosophy “clash[ed] with the teaching that educational institutions everywhere approve, and if he contradict[ed] orthodox belief;”\(^{44}\) for example Aristotle’s unknowing Prime Mover in contradistinction to the Catholic belief of an omniscient, controlling universal being. Although the Jesuit fathers recognized Aristotle as a pagan, his cosmology and “scientific” methodology were the foundation for the philosophical explanation of the order of the universe and man’s place in it. This esteem however, was not held for Aristotle’s most prolific and widely read commentator, Averroes.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 101-104.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 99.
While Averroes’s works remained a staple for philosophers of the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth century, the *Ratio studiorum* rejected him and dismissed his usefulness to the goals of Jesuit schools. The reasons for this are unclear. Averroes was placed in the category of authors “Who Do Not Serve the Christian Faith Well,” stating that “only very selectively should he [the professor] either read or present in class interpreters of Aristotle who do not serve Christianity well. And he should be careful students do not become well disposed towards them.” Averroes was the only such commentator to be singled out by name. If the need arose however, that this Muslim philosopher should be referenced, his argument or comment “should be cited without praise; and if it is possible, he [the professor] should indicate that he has taken it from somewhere else.”

It is tempting to assume the rejection of Averroes was based on his ethnic or religious background, and it is possible that this was the case, and potentially contributed to negative a priori impressions of Muslims.

Still, one must consider the context of this rebuff. As the Jesuits gained an academic reputation and increased support from Rome by the early 1590s, they began to produce their own commentaries on Aristotle which gave them greater control over the promulgation of philosophical (scientific) and theological ideas. There was no longer a dependence on commentaries that were translated from Arabic or Hebrew; the humanists of the sixteenth century had come a long way in refining their classical Latin, and produced many translations of Greek philosophy and literature including those of

45 Julia, 128: “l’averroïsme est sévèrement condamné et toute utilisation d’un commentaire d’Averroès doit se faire sans aucun éloge.”
46 Pavur, 100.
47 Ibid.
Aristotle. Furthermore, Averroes held the controversial view that religion should not be allowed to impose limits on the exercise of rational thought, specifically regarding the debate over the immortality of the soul. Scholastic philosophers such as Pietro Pomponazzi argued that whether or not the soul is immortal, is indeed an article of faith, and should be proved by what is proper to faith, through revelation and canonical scripture.

Similar to the cautions issued on the use of Aquinas, removing Averroes from the Jesuit curriculum was a means of control and not necessarily an expression of Islamic loathing, although such abhorrence of Muslims was plentiful in the theological circles of Europe, it was merely a means toward intellectual and spiritual hegemony and conformity. With respect to the religious tumult that was pervasive in Europe, the Lutheran break with the papacy and the ensuing religio-political onslaught in France in reaction to Calvinist encroachment, where the Jesuits by 1575 had established fifteen colleges, it was important for the order to maintain control and consistency in the education of its members and others. As one of the leading entities in the fight against heresy, the Society formalized an educational system that inculcated in its members a dogmatic and rigid interpretation of theology and philosophy based on Thomistic and Aristotelian interpretations and methods. Above all, the colleges they attended were religious institutions, in which the academic day was punctuated by intervals of prayers.

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and processions. 52 The symbols and rituals of the religion were a constant reminder of their association with the Roman Catholic Church that, in their minds, was the one and only true representative of Jesus Christ on earth.

Within this deliberate and calculated approach to Jesuit education, the members of the Society were guided to believe that Catholicism was the only true faith, and that all other beliefs were anathema. In addition, these convictions formed the basis for Jesuit assessments of individual or group differences, real or imagined. 53 They saw themselves as morally distinct from infidels, heretics, pagans, and schismatics. As noted in the following chapters, this sense of religious righteousness proved to be the most significant barrier that obscured Jesuit perceptions of the inhabitants of Greater Syria. Members of the Society were trained to defend the faith philosophically, in the scientific sense, theologically, and rhetorically when they encountered the other. This is not to say however, that the Order was filled with a multitude of programmed automatons – drones to execute the wishes of the Superior General or the Pope – but they were certainly influenced by their belief in the primacy of Catholicism and a disregard for all other faiths. Jesuits were certain that God was on their side; they were confident in their holy and moral enterprise as they experienced a rising demand for their schools and fellowship, and equally significant, greater ties with the French monarchy. As reflected in the correspondences and published works of the Jesuit missionaries of Greater Syria, these convictions and accomplishments contributed to a sense of elitism, and a profound belief in the correctness of their faith and the errors of others. Although this is to be

52 Picot, 133-135.
53 Geertz defines religion as “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic,” The Interpretation of Cultures, p.90.
expected from priests confronted with the opposing theologies and doctrines of Islam, Judaism, along with heretical and schismatic forms of Christianity, the zeal for their faith, bolstered by their academic interpretation of the world, guided Jesuit actions in France and in their encounter with the indigenous population of Bilad al-Sham.

Beyond their indoctrination in the Catholic faith, their education, and the prescriptions for their behavior as outlined in the Constitutions and the Ratio studiorum, little is known of other variables that potentially affected the Jesuit missionaries’ inter-cultural experience and the manner in which they reported on their encounters in Greater Syria. The extant sources scarcely reveal any of the environmental or emotional factors, in adolescence or adulthood, which would have influenced their judgment and perception of the other. In general terms however, an outline of the social and political circumstances of seventeenth-century France may reveal the rationale or motivation for the approach the Jesuits took in their evangelization, attempts at conversion, their interaction with the indigenous population of Bilad al-Sham, and the manner in which they articulated their experiences in letters, reports, and published works. Jesuit missionaries, by the time they completed their studies and teaching responsibilities, spent a majority of their adolescent and early adult years in the company of like-minded and similarly driven men within the Order at the various colleges in France.  

During the seventeenth century, France was comparable to other “nations” ringing the Mediterranean in its socio-economic structures. A relatively small percentage of the population owned or controlled the majority of the land and wealth, while the much greater part of the inhabitants were impoverished or eked-out a meager existence. Those

in the trades or commerce carried the heaviest burden in risk and in taxes, whereas the
nobility and clergy were legally protected from such liabilities. After joining the Church,
Jesuit priests became part of the First Estate, protected under the ancient traditions for
“those who prayed.” The Society of Jesus, as an officially recognized body by the pope
received the same tax exemptions and status as the Catholic Church in France. In Lyon
for example, the Jesuit Collège de la trés sainte Trinité, where some of the Syria
missionaries were students or teachers, came to own large tracts of land that produced
sizeable revenues from the labors of peasants and artisans without the burden of paying
taxes.55 Jesuits during the seventeenth century had become accustomed to a certain
standard of living as was manifested in the architecture and size of their colleges and
churches.56 This security in their social and economic standing contributed to their sense
of being and purpose, and they were esteemed in most circles for their social status and
intellect.57 In Syria however, their European social rank was relatively meaningless; the
Jesuits of Bilad al-Sham were “second-class” entities, leaving them more susceptible to
the machinations of corrupt officials and common criminals. This inversion of status,
where they no longer held such high social or economic rank, must be taken into
consideration when analyzing the correspondences of the Jesuits and their perceptions of
the indigenous population of Greater Syria.

55 Picot, 81-87.
56 The scale and scope of the Jesuit enterprise has been articulated in several works referenced throughout
this project. No one doubts the significance or impact of the Order on French society, their contributions
were many. In this present discourse however, the stark difference between their positions in France and
those in Greater Syria is remarkable. Reference Picot, pp.91-122, for descriptions of the material aspects of
the Jesuit college and mission in Lyon. See also, John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).
57 Not all of France was receptive to the Jesuit enterprise. For example, the town of Châlon-sur-Saône was
not very eager to have a Jesuit presence and did not allow the establishment of a Jesuit mission until 1632
when the Prince of Condé forced the hand of the town administrators to accept the Jesuits after he read a
decree from Louis XIII to admit the Jesuits in the city (Babeau, p.42). See also below discussion of the
Jesuit conflicts with Gallican factions in Paris.
On the other hand, and as a balance to this position in European society, the nature of the Jesuit mission in Europe, in teaching and in “saving souls,” placed members of the Society at the intersections between the wealthy and the poor, the educated and the uninformed. From this vantage they noticed the virtuousness and the cruelty of their own society. Throughout their history in France, the Jesuits carried their apostolic responsibilities to the poor in the cities and peasants of the countryside. Pastoral missions represented the fervor of a missionary and above all, his love for God.\textsuperscript{58} Yet, their primary goal was to secure this numerous segment of French society, roughly ninety-percent of the population, from the infiltration of Calvin’s heresy.\textsuperscript{59} In groups of two, Jesuits travelled the French countryside teaching and preaching, where they found a population of Christians who lacked knowledge of Catholic doctrine and practice.\textsuperscript{60} Peasants in rural areas and the urban poor were often noted by the Jesuits as being ignorant of doctrine, ignorant of the prayers, and ignorant of what constituted sin. They were seen to be living under the jurisdiction of evil spirits, and thus, the Jesuits were sent there to combat the devil.\textsuperscript{61} As will be noted in the subsequent chapters, these same views were held for the poor Christians of Greater Syria. It was not only a lack of knowledge, but also the preponderance in superstitious beliefs that troubled the missionaries.\textsuperscript{62}


\textsuperscript{59} George Huppert, Public Schools in Renaissance France (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 104-105.

\textsuperscript{60} Bangert, 124.


\textsuperscript{62} See Chapter V, discussion of the superstitious beliefs of the inhabitants of Syria. One will note the contradictions and hypocrisy of the Jesuits who themselves held significant beliefs in omens.
As Christianity developed into an organized movement and religion, various elements of pagan belief proved too difficult to repulse during the first few centuries of the movement due to the slow pace of conversion to the new religion. Early converts to Christianity maintained certain pagan convictions as in divination (prophecy), possession (demonic), omens, and the efficacy of amulets, which over the course of centuries, became ingrained in the mentalities of pre-modern Christians. This is not to insinuate that these beliefs have been expulsed in the twenty-first century. In order not to lose a sense of cultural connection and stability, these converts emphasized Christianity’s links to its pagan past. Consequently, Christian and pagan beliefs blended together in ways that developed widespread superstitions, permeating all levels of society in Europe. This was more pronounced in rural villages where the absence of educated bishops and priests allowed for pagan superstitions and magic rites to flourish. On the other hand, uneducated or under-doctrinized prelates themselves contributed to beliefs that ranged from astrological divination to wicked women with powers of sorcery. For example, acts of exorcism, in which the sacrament of the Eucharist was used to drive out evil spirits, were demonstrations of church affirmation in the belief of demonic possession and in the efficacy of the consecrated bread. For Catholic priests, in this case the Jesuits, distinctions between superstitions and Christian doctrine were blurred and not

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65 Monter, 87-88.
easily distinguishable when some of the early Christian authors that they studied, Origen and Cyprian for example, upheld pagan opinions on prophecy and demonic possession.66

Yet, as much as the Jesuits frowned on these practices, they themselves held beliefs in the power of relics and the bones of dead “saints” to heal the sick and vanquish evil spirits.67 Such belief in relics was reinforced by Loyola’s precepts in the *Spiritual Exercises* and in the Tridentine principles where the Church hierarchy:

instruct[ed] the faithful diligently in matters relating to intercession and invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, and the legitimate use of images, teaching them that the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their prayers to God for men, that it is good and beneficial suppliantly to invoke them and to have recourse to their prayers, assistance and support in order to obtain favors from God through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who alone is our redeemer and savior.68

Body parts of saints and fellow Jesuits were used to heal various ailments, shun demons, and influence the forces of nature. The Jesuits and their fellow Frenchmen were relatively unremarkable in such beliefs and superstitions, that similar notions were held in Europe and Southwest Asia alike; convictions in miracles and in the efficacy of the bones of saints were ubiquitous in France and in Syria. For the Jesuits and other Catholic priests, the bones of Bellarmine had the power to heal broken bones;69 those of François Xavier reduced fevers and restored the sick to health.70 For Jesuit adversaries however, specifically the Protestants (Calvinists), such convictions were antithetical to Christian

66 Fox, 406-408.
68 Council of Trent, Session XXV, 1563. Also, Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*. Edited by John F Thornton and Susan B Varenne. Translated by Louis J Puhl. New York: Random House, 2000, p.125: Under the heading “Rules for thinking with the Church”: “We should show our esteem for the relics of the saints by venerating them and praying to the saints. We should praise visits to the Station Churches, pilgrimages, indulgences, jubilees, crusade indults, and the lighting of candles in churches.”
69 Wright, 40.
70 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.164-183r (Poirresson, Relation for 1652), also in Rabbath, v.1, 30-81.
notions and they accused Catholics of idolatry and connected their beliefs to paganism.\textsuperscript{71} This did not prevent the Jesuits from condemning magic, divination, and superstitions.

Jesuits, imbued with Thomistic ideals, saw any ritual or notion that did not glorify God or was not approved by the Catholic canon as an aberration.\textsuperscript{72} Adjectives such as “ignorant” and “barbarian” were commonly employed in the descriptions of the rural Christian populations in France as well as in Bilad al-Sham. In various correspondences the Jesuits made explicit this parallel between the two societies.

To help combat this perceived “ignorance,” and instill piety in the lay population, the Jesuits established congregations or societies. These were confraternities dedicated to the Virgin Mary such as “Les Jeunes Messieurs,” “Grands Artisans,” and, “Les Saintes Anges.”\textsuperscript{73} Members of these autonomous congregations came from a range of social and economic backgrounds who voluntarily joined in order to achieve a deeper, spiritually contemplative life through repeated confessions and participation in communion.\textsuperscript{74} The various congregations participated in the collection of alms and other charitable acts: the repair of chapels, the provisioning of churches with oil and candles, and providing the wine for communion.\textsuperscript{75} Associates of these congregations, lawyers, artisans, doctors, merchants, and farmers, not only contributed money and human energy into supporting the missions of the Jesuits, but also became examples of “piety” in their local areas.\textsuperscript{76} Their value to the Society was immeasurable and can be assessed by the actions of missionaries like Maniglier and Amieu who diligently sought to establish these

\textsuperscript{71} Whelan, 44 and 124.
\textsuperscript{72} Jean Verdon, \textit{Les superstitions au Moyen Age} (Saint-Amand-Montrand: Perrin, 2008), 111-119.
\textsuperscript{73} Picot, 173-182.
\textsuperscript{74} O’Malley, \textit{The First Jesuits}, 196-199; Bangert, 57.
\textsuperscript{75} Picot, 178.
\textsuperscript{76} Bangert, 57 and 106.
congregations in Greater Syria. While they were initially established for their fellow Frenchmen, the Jesuits, in the second decade of their mission in Syria, promoted such confraternities to the indigenous Christian population. As the following chapters reveal, the support of the members of these congregations proved invaluable to the sustainability of the mission itself.77 Equally important however, the foundation of these organizations in Bilad al-Sham demonstrates the need to create material parallels between the two societies, particularly when ministering to the poor.

Either through direct participation or by means of second-hand accounts, the Jesuit missionaries were cognizant of the precarious position of the materially-lacking individuals in French society. The poor and peasants were at the mercy of the forces of nature and the greed of man. During periods of plague the urban poor were the most susceptible to the vagaries of the contagion. They lacked the means to remove themselves from the crowded neighborhoods where the virus was more easily transmitted from rats to humans. In 1628 Lyon was afflicted with a devastating incidence of plague in which within a few months nearly half of the population had dispersed or perished. Meanwhile, three future missionaries Aimé Chezaud, François Rigordi, and Joseph Besson were studying in Lyon and had recently entered into the novitiate there. According to Lucenet, the various religious orders in Lyon augmented their numbers to service the poor, especially the Jesuits.78 They were there to witness this exceptional outbreak of plague “whose ravages were enormous… and that this epidemic provoked a moral, social, economic, and demographic crisis.”79 By July 1629, the city had interred

77 See specifically Chapter IV.
79 Ibid., 34.
over 30,000 bodies, nearly half of the population of the city.\textsuperscript{80} Their experience in Lyon not only prepared the Jesuits for the task of ministering to plague victims, but also formed in them a degree of empathy for the urban poor and peasants they encountered in Greater Syria. Likewise, their work in Lyon governed their behavior and shaped their perceptions of the Christian and Muslim inhabitants.

Beyond the human suffering caused by nature, this vulnerable segment of the population in France was also at the mercy of municipal magistrates, who at times capriciously taxed the non-noble, non-clergy of the cities and towns they administered. By the time of Colbert’s accession to the position of Contrôleur Général (Minister of Finance), the financial situation in most towns was chaotic and the new minister pushed for reform. For decades municipal revenues lagged behind expenditures, funds were either misappropriated or pilfered, and the burden of deficits fell on those least likely able to pay. Arbitrary taxation and extortion were the norm and often led to popular rebellions.\textsuperscript{81} In Lyon during the 1620s, for example, there were several protests and riots by merchants and artisans alike, that were fueled by rapacious tax collectors. By 1632 however, merchants were successful in pushing the tax burden on consumers rather than producers and traders in order to meet the city’s financial obligations. The primary target was to tax wine. In December, inn-keepers in solidarity with the silk weavers and other guilds of Lyon, rampaged through the city streets destroying anything that belonged to the officials of the city who were perceived as supporters of the tax collectors. Louis XIII responded by sending troops to quell the upheaval; for the first three months of

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 167.
1633, his soldiers were conspicuous in their efforts to control the discontented populace. For their “crimes” city officials were forced to pay for the upkeep of the soldiers, while more than a dozen of the rioters (including two women and a boy) were executed as proof of the king’s power.82

This uprising in Lyon was one of many that afflicted France during the Ancien Régime. Perceived or real economic and social inequity often resulted in violent reactions from the populace (this is not to say that revolts were initiated by the lower classes, the nobility in French society did not hesitate to use force against the monarchy or its representatives) and cruel, oppressive counter-responses from the authorities.

While the scholarship on violence in French society is considerable, its relevance to this study is not of a comparative nature, juxtaposing two societies to identify their common or distinct features. Riots and rebellions were significant variables in the formation of Jesuit mentalities. Their experience and proximity to violence within France prepared the analogical framework from which they constructed their representations of the societies of Greater Syria. Whether the use of analogical comparison was meant to be a critique of French society, or was merely used to familiarize their audience with the foreign, the Jesuit missionaries could never divorce themselves from the world from which they came. They were not blind to the discord in French society, nor were they immune from the philosophical and ideological attacks on their Society.

In France, the Jesuits played a not-so-minor role in transforming French society during this period of study. Members of the Order were associated with all levels of society in their service as missionaries and as attendants to the sick and poor, as educators, as

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promoters of science and art, and as confessors to kings. Their intellectual, scientific and social triumphs were evident in the popularity of Jesuit missions and schools. Likewise, their advancements contributed to a corporate sense of pride and accomplishment. Yet, there were times in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that the Jesuits were loathed by various groups depending on the political and religious climate. Jesuits became entangled in philosophical, political, and religious debates that resulted in their expulsion from the majority of the provinces in France, significantly from the principal population areas of Paris, Champagne, and Lyon. Some members of this body wrote treatises and preached sermons that challenged staunch Gallican beliefs in French control over ecclesiastical institutions within their borders. In these expositions, they concurrently questioned the authority of the monarch through their defense of tyrannicide theory and the explication of papal powers in temporal matters. Even so, there came a time, as seemed to be the nature of the Jesuits, where they had to be pragmatic as exhibited in their experience in France and in Greater Syria.

The relationship between the Jesuits and the French monarchy during the latter sixteenth and early seventeenth century reveals Jesuit abilities to adapt to prevailing political currents. It also exposes the Society’s dependence on elite and monarchal patronage to sustain their enterprise, that without noble and royal support their mission in France, as well as in Syria, would not have been possible. To demonstrate they deserved such favor, they had to distance themselves from the controversial debates over royal authority in the context of secular control of varying aspects of the Church. And they would have to declare their loyalty to the king or “nation.” All professed members of the
Society took a vow of allegiance to the pope,\textsuperscript{83} such that the Jesuits were at philosophical odds with a revitalized Gallicanism after three decades of politico-religious wars.\textsuperscript{84} Gallican “proto-nationalist” sentiments, asserting the authority of the monarch and parliamentarian judicial rights over ecclesiastical courts, called into question Jesuit loyalties in response to perceived fears that the Society of Jesus served only the interests of the papacy.\textsuperscript{85} Non-French Jesuits who spoke out against this trend, fashioned their arguments in support of papal temporal rights and denounced royal oppression and despotism. Some went as far as to espouse tyrannicide theory, a justification for the murder of a monarch who cruelly or unjustly dominated over his subjects.\textsuperscript{86}

Debate over tyrannicide long preceded the establishment of the Society of Jesus. From Cicero to Aquinas, the philosophical and theological justification for the murder of a prince rested on the definition of power and where that authority came from. Furthermore, determining when absolute power was applied cruelly or unjustly was as problematic as interpreting the divine right of kings. Jesuit inquiries and commentaries on this topic were part of a standard intellectual discourse taught at a variety of colleges and universities in Europe, not only Jesuit colleges. Höphl has argued that the majority

\textsuperscript{83} O’Malley, \textit{The First Jesuits}, 298-301. Referred to as the “Fourth Vow”, the Jesuits pledged allegiance (obedience) to the pope, it was in addition to their vows of chastity, obedience (to their superiors), and poverty.


\textsuperscript{85} Gallicans wanted to curtail papal authority so that the church hierarchy within France was under the control of the “state.” They did not seek to dictate doctrine or theology, but pushed the notion that the pope had no temporal authority, specifically in France. Nelson takes this further in defining \textit{Royalist Gallicanism} which emphasized “the right of French church corporations and clergy to appeal papal and ecclesiastical court decisions in the sovereign royal courts”. Eric Nelson, \textit{The Jesuits and the Monarchy: Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590-1615)} (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005), 14-15.

\textsuperscript{86} Nelson, 5-6; Bangert, 120-131. Such notions of tyranny and oppression were ubiquitous in the reports of Nicolas Poirresson and the published work of Joseph Besson, Chapters V and VI.
of Jesuits operated in a paradigm that “was always in favor of obedience to the ruler,” and consistently supported the Council of Constance’s denunciation of the ambiguous assumption that the killing of a prince was legal and sanctioned by the Church. This however did not prevent some Jesuits from expounding the virtues of tyrannicide while simultaneously advocating the role of the pope in temporal affairs.

The conjunction between Jesuit anti-monarchal publications and two assassination attempts on the Henri IV’s life resulted in the publication of the Parlement of Paris’s expulsion arrêt in late December, 1594. In August of 1593 Pierre Barrière was arrested and executed for plotting to murder the king. During his brief trial, accusations flew against the Jesuit, Père Varade, that he had influenced the thinking of Barrière toward such a conspiracy. The second attempt was made on 27 December 1594 when Henri IV was wounded in the lip and mouth by the blow of a knife intended to slice the throat of the sovereign. Jean Chastel, who was a student at the Jesuit college in Paris, not only failed in his attempt to slay Henri, but also brought the wrath of the Parlement of Paris on the Jesuits. From the College of Clermont, Jesuit priests were brought before members of the Parlement to answer questions regarding their association with Chastel. For their protection, they were escorted by ineffective guards that separated them from unruly crowds who were able to reach the priests with blows from fists and halberd butts. An arrêt was published two days later by the Parlement that put Chastel to death and also banished the Jesuits from its jurisdiction, accusing the members of the Society as

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88 Höpfl, 316.
90 Ibid., 220.
“corrupters of the young, disturbers of the peace, and enemies of the king.”91 In early January of 1595, the Jesuits were forced to leave Paris, followed by their banishment from Lyon and Champagne. Notwithstanding the physical attempts at removing the king and the loose associations made by judges from Parlement to connect the Society of Jesus to such attempts, Jesuit publications and sermons fueled Gallican anxieties.92

After nearly nine years of exile, the Jesuits were allowed to return to their prior places of residence and mission. As part of lengthy negotiations between the king, pope, and high-ranking Jesuit priests, the Society was formally re-established in France with the promulgation of the Edict of Rouen on 01 September 1603. This was not easy for Henri IV or the Jesuits. Henri recognized the political value of the Jesuits in his relations with Rome, specifically when he was interested in divorcing his wife Marguerite de Valois at the end of the sixteenth century. Furthermore, the Edict of Nantes of 1598, which conceded to the Huguenots certain rights of conscience and worship, and created a state within a state, caused the rest of the European Catholic world to question Henri’s wisdom and loyalty to the Church.93 To counteract tensions and suspicions for this decree, the French King invited a delegation of Jesuits, led by Horatio del Monte and Lorenzo Maggio in order to find a resolution to the conflict between the Parlement of Paris and the Jesuits. These meetings continued over the next four years as “confidence building” measures in order to dispel lingering fears about Jesuit loyalty. After consultation with

92 Nelson, 48-53; in the Concordat of Bologna of 1516, Pope Leo X ceded certain rights to François I and his successors to nominate archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priors, of the monarch’s choosing, for church offices with benefices. See also Robert Bireley, The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 74.
93 The parallels between the rights and privileges of the Huguenots and those of the non-Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire are intriguing and deserve additional study.
the Jesuit Pères, Coton and Armand in May 1603, Henri was convinced that an understanding could be reached between the priests and parlementarians.\textsuperscript{94}

In September Henri declared his intentions toward the Jesuits and stipulated the conditions for a Jesuit return to France. The Edict of Rouen allowed the Jesuits to perform their missionary activities throughout the kingdom, and reopened their colleges in Lyon and Dijon. In addition, Henri IV gave his permission for the founding of new colleges, the opening of a school at La Flèche, which was the first under monarchical patronage in France. In return, the Society of Jesus in France placed itself under royal legal jurisdiction and within the power structure of the French church. Moreover, the edict stipulated that all Jesuits entering a French mission (including institutions of learning) had to be “citizens” of the kingdom and had to take an oath of loyalty to the monarchy.\textsuperscript{95} This allegiance to a temporal power not only contradicted the vow of loyalty to the pope, but also demonstrated the pragmatic nature of the Order. Within five months of the decree, thirty-two towns requested Jesuit colleges, and in 1605 new novitiates were opened in Rouen and Lyon.\textsuperscript{96} It is from this latter city that the first four mission superiors entered into the Society, two in the inaugural year and two in 1607.\textsuperscript{97}

It was evident that any Jesuit presence in France was dependent on the good-will and patronage of the king, and thus the Jesuit hierarchy, including the Superior General Claudio Aquiviva, acquiesced to Henri’s decree. Without the monarchy no Jesuit expansion in France or to Greater Syria was possible. Yet despite this compromise, the

\textsuperscript{94} Nelson, 62-70.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 77-94. This is the primary reason that the majority of the Jesuits serving in Greater Syria were of French origin and attended a French novitiate. Between 1625 and 1773, 84.52% of Jesuits fit this category, while in the period 1625 – 1660, 96.8% were French.
\textsuperscript{96} Bangert, 123.
\textsuperscript{97} These were the first missionaries to establish the mission in Aleppo. Jean Stella and Jerome Queyrot entered the novitiate at Lyon in 1605; Gaspar Maniglier and Jean Amieu entered in 1607.
Jesuits were still mistrusted by their greatest adversaries, the Gallican factions of the Parlement of Paris. Their distrust of the Society was fueled by external factors such as the attack on monarchical temporal sovereignty by the Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. In response to William Barclay’s assertions on the divine right of kings and the Oath of Allegiance promulgated by James I of England, Bellarmine penned his *Tractatus de potestate summi pontificis in rebus* in which he denounced secular control of the church and promoted Aquinas’s position on the implied authority of the pope in temporal affairs. In the same year, 1610, Henri IV was assassinated byFrançois Ravaillac. The conjunction of Bellarmine’s publication and Henri’s death forced Aquiviva to send a written promise to the Parlement of Paris that Jesuits would be forbidden from publishing works on the debate over papal and monarchical authority or on interpretations of the legal basis for tyrannicide. In 1612, he gave further reassurances that the Jesuits would support Gallican interpretations on these disputations in the press, the classroom, or the pulpit.

In later years however, there were various treatises written that “paid tribute” to the increasing powers and authority of the king. More crucial to the Order’s stability and success were Jesuits who had the opportunity to provide “spiritual guidance” to the monarch, potentially influencing his behavior. As confessors to the king, Jesuits had the opportunity to shape the monarch’s opinion of the Order, leading to continued support of the French Jesuit enterprise that, by 1623, was firmly established in France. In return for this patronage, they demonstrated their loyalty to Louis XIII by supporting his enterprise against the heretics of France and the Germanic states. Louis’ projects to eliminate

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99 Höphl, 350-352.
100 Nelson, 213, Bireley, *Thirty Years War*, 13, Höphl, 337-338.
101 Bangert, 201.
heresy were supported by the Superior General, Muteo Vitellesco, and by the bitter rhetoric heaved upon the Huguenots from several Jesuit pulpits in France.102

And for the broader Catholic community, they marched with various princes during the Thirty Years War where they were witness to the “horror, brutality, and religious fanaticism”103 in the struggle between orthodoxy and heresy. In the battles for the doctrinal soul of European Christianity, they learned about the cruelty of war and indiscriminate violence, such proclivity toward these brutal means, innate to all humans, transcend religious affiliation or ethnicity, regardless of time or place. In as much as the Syria missionaries may not have been directly involved in the political and religious tumult in France and Europe in general, they were influenced by the reports that came from the numerous fronts in the seventeenth-century continental wars, where mercenary armies pillaged towns and villages, stripping their inhabitants of their livelihoods. Additionally, the Thirty Years War significantly handicapped the material support for the missions of Greater Syria. Human and monetary resources were diverted to support Catholic activities against the Protestants. The lack of regular financial support was the foremost complaint made by the mission superiors that hampered their proselytizing efforts and attempts at conversion.

Regions on the eastern borders of the French kingdom such as Champagne experienced the devastating impact of war and rebellion for a prolonged period of time.104 During the Thirty Years War this region was invaded by Spanish forces, who to support themselves, denuded the villages and countryside. The turbulence of the 1630s

102 Bireley, *Thirty Years War*, 45.
103 Ibid., 42.
and 1640s extended into the next decade when undisciplined French soldiers “fleeced and pillaged the villages,” during the Fronde in which the high judiciary and nobility challenged the authority of the crown. In this manner, France was not much different from England or the Ottoman Empire from 1600 to 1660. In various periods, royal or sultanic authority was challenged by violent means. Such challenges came from recalcitrant parliamentarians in England who questioned their monarch’s prerogatives, and whose stubbornness (parliamentarian and royal) led to the unintended consequences of civil war and the murder of King Charles I. Nearly five months previously, the young Sultan Ibrahim was deposed and later strangled in August 1648 by members of the elite Janissary corps and the ulema class who believed that his officials had gone too far in their requests for more sizeable gifts and bribes. This act was only the beginning in the numerous challenges that the Ottoman Porte would face throughout this period, specifically concerning this study were the rebellions in the 1650s of Seydi Ahmad Pasha and Abaza Hasan in Greater Syria. French monarchs confronted similar challenges. As discussed above, Henri IV was killed on the third assassination attempt and his grandson, Louis XIV, at an early age nearly lost his patrimony during the civil war known as the Fronde (1648-1653).

During the “Fronde of the Princes,” Nicolas Poirresson, the fifth Mission Superior in Syria, was in the province of Champagne teaching grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy. He was in proximity to the disorders caused by the princes Condé and Conti in their attempts to wrest control of the provincial governments in Burgundy, Berry, and

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105 Babeau, 300.
106 Stanford J. Shaw. History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 202-203. Ibrahim was on the throne for eight years and during this period displayed many signs of insanity and irrational behavior.
107 See Chapter IV and V for discussion of these rebellions.
Champagne. Poirresson, a learned man and part of an organization that had connections to the various power-players involved in this civil war, was aware of the circumstances that governed the at-times savage milieu in which he worked. Poirresson formulated his perspectives on inequity and cruelty based on the conditions that afflicted the northeast of France. And as will be discussed in the following chapters, when Poirresson described the “tyranny” of Ottoman provincial governors during the last half of the 1650s, he had a predefined image of brutality and destruction engraved in his mind from his domestic experience. Now whether the reports, which are the focus of the fifth chapter of this work, that Poirresson submitted to his superiors were intended as veiled messages to his fellow members of the Society is unclear. What is certain is that his experience in France guided his impressions of similar upheavals in Greater Syria, in which Poirresson’s writing reflected a sense of the ubiquitous violent nature in all humans, Christians and Muslims, Frenchmen and Ottoman alike.

All of these aspects of French life, combined with Society’s educational system, contributed much to the formation of Jesuit mentalities and their perceptions of the indigenous population of Bilad al-Sham. Most of the missionaries that were sent across the Mediterranean had several years experience, from their entry into the novitiate to their departure for Greater Syria, serving their countrymen’s spiritual and material needs. The majority of the missionaries, gained their experience of “saving souls” by ministering to the impoverished and infirm, and in their attempts to convert Protestants in France. This was the only practical training they received prior to embarking to foreign

109 In Chapter V, Poirresson’s narrations on Ottoman society and government are discussed in greater detail.
110 See Tables 3a and 4a, Chapter IV: the average time between their entry into the novitiate and their arrival in Syria was 17.4 years. Only four missionaries had an interval of less than ten years.
lands. Although the Jesuits received a high-quality education in literature, medicine, natural science, philosophy, and astronomy, they did not receive any formal training for their foreign missionary endeavors. In addition, only three of the Jesuit missionaries had any formal training in Arabic or other “oriental” languages prior to their travel to Greater Syria. This lack of training coupled with the inadequate organizational processes within the Propaganda Fide\textsuperscript{111} led to near failure of the establishment of the mission to Aleppo in 1625 and contributed to its slow growth until 1643 when the Society doubled the number of missionaries in Bilad al-Sham. Jesuits awaiting or seeking a post learned about the missionary process through direct domestic missionary experience and by means of commentaries and reports from those who worked in the missions of Asia, Europe, and the Americas.\textsuperscript{112}

Letters and reports from the missions were frequently read to the students at the Jesuit colleges that typically portrayed the apostolic experience in heroic fashion: the good, courageous Jesuit doing God’s work – converting the “infidel” while offering his body for martyrdom. Rarely did these narrations provide practical advice for the establishment of missions or more precisely, the conversion of souls to Catholicism, “in bringing in [the] true knowledge” to the people to whom they would proselytize.\textsuperscript{113} Through their educational experience the Jesuits believed in the immutable truth of Catholic doctrine, yet these reports did more to fill the minds and spirits of potential missionaries with religious zeal and idealism, than to articulate methods of “ways of proceeding.” While

\textsuperscript{111} The Propaganda Fide was the organizing body in Rome responsible for the Catholic missionary enterprise, regardless of the religious order. Capuchins, Carmelites, Franciscans, Jesuits, etc. all fell under its umbrella. However, as will be noted throughout this work, it was the French monarch and his representatives in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the generosity of the indigenous Christians, that secured the stability of the mission.

\textsuperscript{112} Brockey, 211.

\textsuperscript{113} ARSI, 95, I, f.509-510r (Chezaud, 24 Sept. 1641)
Jesuit education and religious zeal influenced the missionaries’ impressions of Greater Syria, their deficiencies in Arabic initially contributed to the slow process of conversion and more importantly created barriers to the understanding of a foreign and diverse culture.

The majority of the Jesuits were of French origin who studied and taught at the Jesuit colleges in France, and completed their novitiate in the provinces of Lyon, Champagne, Paris, Toulouse, and Aquitaine. Their common “nationality” significantly contributed to the way they perceived and interpreted the foreign world(s) in which they operated. These missionaries shared similar paths to entry into the Society, participating in the same educational curriculum. They passed through the same retreats as outlined in the *Spiritual Exercises*, and pledged to allegiance and conformity to the *Constitutions* as promulgated by the founding members of the Order. Jesuit mentalities were shaped by the combined effect of these factors. By direct involvement or through observation, individual Jesuit attitudes and dispositions were, in a multiplicity of ways, impacted by this corporate experience. Their actions and reactions to certain aspects of Ottoman cultural norms, and their written constructions of their experience and observations were due in part to a world view formed on the streets of Lyon and Paris, in the countryside of their “patrie”, and in the Jesuit colleges throughout France. In those same places, they were witness to the violent and debilitating impulses of man and nature.

In addition, their sense of toleration, relative to the seventeenth century, and their pragmatic nature proved indispensable in managing their affairs and the tensions that arose from a multiplicity of sources. The Society’s commonsense approach to its relationship with Henri IV and Louis XIII proved not only beneficial to its endeavors in
France, but also was instrumental in the establishment and protection of the missions to the Ottoman Empire. During their time in Syria, the Jesuits were impugned by their fellow Europeans and harassed by the indigenous population. It was the intercession of the French monarchs, through their ambassadors and consuls, that conserved these apostolic men. Furthermore, the toleration that was indirectly inculcated in them through their own education and experience, and as a consequence of the various religious (doctrinal) and social backgrounds of the students they taught at the Jesuit colleges in France, afforded them skills to meet the challenges of a mission to the heterogeneous population of Bilad al-Sham. Likewise, the inversion of their position in society, as elite members of the First Estate in France and as second-class persons in the Ottoman Empire, combined with their religious ideology, formed and informed their perceptions and attitudes as articulated in their letters, reports, and published works. All of this prepared the Jesuits to adapt to, and meet the challenges of, the changing political, social, and economic currents of Greater Syria: a territory rich in its diversity of people and land.
Chapter II: Establishment of the Mission in Aleppo

This is the first of three chapters that analyze the establishment and expansion of the Jesuit mission in Greater Syria. With a few exceptions, the analysis and narrative of the interactions of the missionaries in these chapters proceed from the letters written to the Superior General, Muteo Vitellesco, in Rome. Of the three extant primary sources, the letters, present the events and relationships that influenced Jesuit mentalities in a more objective framework. They are more reliable in substantiating factually the issues that confronted the Jesuit missionaries than their annual reports and published works, which had a tendency for embellishment and exaggeration. For this reason, the letters more accurately reveal the tensions at play between the Jesuits, their indigenous hosts, and their fellow Europeans residing in Bilad al-Sham. This chapter is devoted to rendering the initial experience of Pères Jean Stella and Gaspar Maniglier, the founders of the mission in Aleppo. Their letters expose their difficulties in navigating the Ottoman bureaucratic system, language barriers, and cultural differences of Greater Syria. Moreover, their correspondences demonstrate the pragmatic approach of Ottoman officials and the legal system in which the Jesuits operated to dispute the subversive work of their rivals, the Franciscans and Venetians.

The region the Jesuits encountered and loosely referred to as “la Syrie Sainte” extended from Aleppo south to Gaza and east to Damascus. Included in this geographic triangle are the primary Christian holy sites of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. Specific to this study, the area under consideration is limited to the present-day Lebanese Republic and the western extent of the Syrian Arab Republic. This region was similar in
topography to southwestern France, from where nearly twenty-five percent of the Jesuits came. The Lebanon sub-region is overwhelmingly mountainous, whose range runs north to south, and precipitously declines to the west, into the narrow littoral of the Mediterranean Sea, and to the east, into the Bqaa Valley, a highly fertile area that stretches the length of the Lebanon Mountain range and is constrained by the Anti-Lebanon Mountains approximately ten miles to the east. Beyond the Anti-Lebanon mountains, the plains of Damascus provided a fecund area that sustained the inhabitants of this capital city before disappearing into the inhospitable Syrian Desert. North of these mountain ranges, semi-arid plains stretch to Aleppo and further into the foothills of the Taurus Mountains.

Relative to other areas of the Arabic speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire, this region includes a significant number of rivers that spring from the mountains; chief among them are the Abana (Barada), Euphrates, Litani, Nahr al-Kabir, Nahr al-Kalb, Orontes, Quwayq, and Yarmouk rivers. These rivers were the veins that watered and nourished the gardens of Damascus and Aleppo and made possible the cultivation of a variety of fruits and vegetables that sustained the entirety of Bilad al-Sham. They supported the inhabitants with fresh potable water; they fed the mulberry orchards that supported the Syrian silk trade; they were vital to the manufacture of the highly-prized soap of the region; and they served as routes for communication and transport, facilitating the governance and control of the region from Damascus and from Aleppo. This was an agriculturally vibrant area, verdant and prosperous.\textsuperscript{114}

For the majority of the seventeenth century, Damascus was the political center of Greater Syria, and Aleppo was its commercial hub. Imported goods from Europe, Iran,

\textsuperscript{114}Eldem, et al., 19-21.
India, North Africa, and China, were received in this city and then distributed via land and water to the rest of the region. Although the spices from eastern Asia constituted a substantial amount of Aleppo’s imports (and exports) during the seventeenth century, the imported raw materials such as Iranian silk and other primary products were more important to Aleppo’s active manufacturing and distribution of finished goods which were competitive in quality and price to their European and Ottoman commercial rivals. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, Aleppo, and Greater Syria as a whole were slowly being relegated to primary producing status on the international trading scene. Yet throughout the seventeenth century, Aleppo continued to attract a variety of traders from the region, from Europe, and from as far afield as India to exchange such goods as: cloth, spices, chemicals, soaps, silks, species, and slaves. The vitality of this commerce however, was susceptible to the vicissitudes of man and nature, and affected the physical and mental states of the Jesuit missionaries.

Rebellions, wars, Bedouin raids, pirate attacks, storms at sea, and plagues intermittently interrupted the flow of goods and people in and out of Greater Syria. In several letters and reports, the Jesuit missionaries reflected on the impact of such events on French merchants, which negatively affected the patronage and alms that they received. There were times for example, when merchants loaned money to the Jesuits during economically fruitful times, and then demanded the repayment of their money when one of their ships failed to make port at Alexandretta, sunk at sea by nature or man.

115 Eldem, et al., 33-36; Bruce Masters, _The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600-1750_ (New York: New York University Press, 1988); Marcus, 145-154; Daniel Panzac, "International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th Century." _International Journal of Middle East Studies_ 24, no. 2 (May 1992): 191-204. Whereas Masters believes Aleppo was an “economic battleground” between European and Ottoman merchants, Marcus interprets the role of foreign merchants has been exaggerated, constituting a small percentage of the total trade in Aleppo during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Marcus puts more emphasis on the importance of intra-regional trade and manufacturing.
While the relationship between merchants and missionaries started badly, there were many more times that these two groups came to depend on each other. Specifically in the first two decades of the mission, the Jesuits relied heavily on the benevolence of the merchants, for without them, it is quite evident the mission would have been abandoned. And where French merchants established echelles, the Jesuits followed suit. Nonetheless, trade persisted. The opportunity for profit for these merchants was remarkable, for they had limited competition among Europeans within their own national boundaries. In Paris, Marseille, London, Amsterdam, Vienna, or Venice, the demand for things “oriental” by the elite was significant enough to support the trade in spices, silks and other luxury items. Fluctuations in domestic demand for these items was at times constrained by religious and political upheavals such as the Thirty Years War. Conversely, supply was interrupted by various political factors and uprisings in the Ottoman Empire.

Within this rich land, a multiplicity of ethnicities and religious affiliations whose members’ loyalties and ambitions at times transcended religion. In general however, the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, “Ottomans” and “Europeans” were governed by tradition dating back to the Pact of Umar and the codification of the millet system by Mehmet Fatih. The millet system divided the Ottoman population into four major categories, Muslims, Jews, and Christians (the Christians were divided into two

116 For example the Maronite support for the Druze emir, Fakhr al-Din, see below.
117 The “Pact of Umar,” purportedly an agreement between the Christians of Syria and the Rightly Guided Caliph, Umar in al-Khattab (r.624-644), signaled the surrender of the Christians to the Muslims after the conquest of Jerusalem. In this “contract” the Christians promised certain conditions under which they would live in return for protection.
118 Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths of the Millet System.” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, v.1, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 69-83. Shaw, 58-61, and 151-153. The millet system predates the Ottoman Empire and was used in the Roman and Persian empires who allowed the different subject communities to maintain their individual religious and traditional laws.
groups the Greek Orthodox and the Armenian; the Armenian millet consisted of Christians who did not practice the Greek Orthodox rite, this included Maronites, and Melkites). This system provided a certain degree of autonomy for each of the main groups. Under the authority of their spiritual leaders, the Head Rabbi and the Greek and Armenian Patriarchs in Istanbul, the non-Muslim millets regulated themselves according to their religious rite. They established their own schools and hospitals, and collectively paid the jizya or poll tax.\textsuperscript{119} Within the confines of the millet system, the various groups organized themselves socially, politically, and religiously with relative autonomy and little interference from the Ottoman government. Each millet funded and cared for its own religious, educational, and judicial institutions; and had representation through their patriarchs and rabbis at the Ottoman Porte. These groups however, had become linguistically assimilated into the broader Muslim population. In Greater Syria, Arabic was their primary language – Syriac, Greek, Armenian, and Hebrew were reserved for liturgical exercises and expositions.\textsuperscript{120} As Cohen notes, due to this acculturation, “Christians and Jews were not excluded from effective incorporation into Ottoman society.”\textsuperscript{121}

Beyond the religious spaces and boundaries, Jews, Christians, and Muslim worked in certain occupations and crafts side by side, frequented the same markets, and were susceptible to the caprices of man and nature. The \textit{Ahl al-Kitab} (People of the Book), Jews and Christians, played a significant role in the economic and social life of the

\textsuperscript{119} The fact that each religious group had their own schools independent of the Ottoman central government created opportunities for the Jesuit missionaries without having to deal with Ottoman bureaucracy.


villages and towns they inhabited, holding high positions in commerce, finance, and administration. Rafeq for example, demonstrated that during the Ottoman period artisans were organized according to their specialization into tawa’if and not on their religious affiliation. In various crafts, some were dominated by Jews, others by Christians or Muslims, representatives to delegations sent to the Porte were chosen because of their skills and expertise rather than their religion. In addition, there were no exclusionary practices in who could participate in any of the crafts such as weavers, bakers, saddlers, druggists, smelters of silver and gold, soap makers and doctors: the leadership of each ta’ifa varied by time and place.

In spite of this autonomy and commercial opportunities, there were limitations and burdens placed on the non-Muslim millets. As part of the Pact of Umar, Christians and Jews fell under the rubric of Ahl al-Dhimma, or a group receiving “protection,” or in other words, the group was “inviolable” because of its members’ monotheism and their lineage to Abraham. In return for this protection (aman) they were required to pay a special tax, the jizya; they were not allowed to carry arms, give evidence against Muslims, or marry Muslim women; they had to wear distinguishing clothing from Muslims; and they were banned from riding horses. In addition, they were not allowed to build new churches or synagogues but were permitted, with the approval of the Ottoman Porte, to repair those places of worship already in existence.

These restrictions or disadvantages, were seen by the Jesuits (and some historians) as inducements to convert to Islam, an assertion that is contradictory to the “Pact” as well as

122 Cohen, 15.
123 tawa’if is the plural of ta’ifa, or guild.
being impractical. The correspondences of the Jesuit missionaries, specifically in the annual reports, *Relations*, of the 1650s, are replete with such suggestions and operated to persuade the Jesuit hierarchy in Rome and Paris to provide more funds for the missions in order to off-set the “financial burdens” of the indigenous Christians. But the letters, from which the narrative of this and following two chapters are drawn, offer a different representation with plenty of flexibility in the system for both indigenous and foreign Christians. Nonetheless, from a Muslim perspective, it would have been foolish for them to force conversion on Jews and Christians whereby they would lose such a revenue base while understating the relevance of their own religion: “Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error,” was one of the dominant factors guiding the political and religious relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The nature of the associations between these groups depended on the participants and the attitudes of the local leadership: tolerance and religious prejudice varied with time and place. During this period of study, as the Jesuits indicated in their letters and reports, maltreatment or persecution of religious minorities was the result of the shifting political and economic desires of local elites and intra-European instigations that brought the intervention of the Ottoman Porte and its local agents: agitations toward non-Muslims were never state-sponsored, nor were they wholesale. Examples of this variability are numerous from a Jesuit perspective, whether in the enforcement of the “dhimmi statutes” in Pact of Umar or the intolerance or “persecution” of non-Muslims. The Jesuit missionaries in contradistinction to the privileged position that they held in France, became part of a religious minority that was in Greater Syria, governed by a variety of

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125 The appeals in the annual reports are discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.
126 Qur’an 2:256.
restrictions. On the other hand, as this and the next chapters reveal, the challenges they faced that formed their impressions of the region, arose from a mixture of intra-European, intra-Jesuit, and European-Ottoman discord.

The process and events that led to the establishment of the first Jesuit mission in Greater Syria reveal the complexity and nature of the relationship between various groups competing for commercial, political, and spiritual control of and within the region. Venetians attempted to fend off their French, English, and Dutch rivals; the Franciscans wanted to maintain their control on the Holy Places; and the French vied with all their European competitors for diplomatic and political favor at the Ottoman Porte. At various times, they allowed European domestic conditions to dictate their actions in the Ottoman Empire. These rivalries were manifested in the objections to the establishment of the Jesuit mission to Aleppo: the Venetians feared the Society of Jesus would be used by the pope, the Spaniards, and the French monarch against its commercial interests; the Franciscans detested the idea of sharing their patrimony and role as custodians of the Holy Land with the Jesuits; and the French diplomats and merchants loathed the introduction of a new variable that could jeopardize their position in Istanbul due to the troubles a creation of a Jesuit mission would bring: the controversies between the Jesuits, Franciscans and Venetians weighed heavily on French consuls and ambassadors throughout the seventeenth century.

The founding of the mission in Aleppo demonstrates that the majority of the antagonism, frustration, and derision the Jesuits experienced came from their fellow Europeans or Catholics, including the indigenous Uniate Maronites, and did not come from the Muslim Ottoman subjects or government. Resistance to their establishment was
purely European and must be understood in this context. But this opposition does not imply that some Muslims did not take the opportunity to insult the Jesuits and profit from their pain throughout their time in Southwest Asia. Additionally, as will be discussed in the ensuing chapters, the differences between Orthodox and Catholic rites created tensions along doctrinal rather religious lines.127 Although the events that led to the founding of the mission illustrate the complex relationships and tensions between the various actors, European and Ottoman, the Jesuit experience was plastic and depended on the will of the local population and the local cultural and political dynamics at play. It would take several years before they understood these social forces, for their previous but brief engagements and ventures at founding a mission in this region netted no innovative information to help them navigate the various actors in Ottoman Syria.

During the sixteenth century the Jesuit Order made several attempts to establish, at minimum, contact with the Christian population of Greater Syria in hopes of bringing more souls into the Catholic fold and to support and encourage those groups already professing the supremacy of Rome. In 1582 a delegation led by Jean-Baptist Eliano was sent to the Holy Land and Egypt to assess the spiritual and material state of the Levantine Christians, specifically those of the Uniate church of the Maronites.128 In 1584, as a consequence of Eliano’s efforts, the papacy opened the newly formed Maronite College

127 As noted in Chapters III and IV, initial Jesuit assistance came from the Greeks and Armenians (Orthodox) rather from the Catholics. In the latter part of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century (specifically in the 1720-1740s, the relationships between Jesuit priests and Greek Orthodox prelates turned into hostile encounters. For examples of these tensions see Heyberger, Masters (Christians and Jew).
128 Eliano, a Jewish convert born (1530) in Alexandria, went to the Holy Land on pilgrimage in 1578/9 and returned in 1582 in hopes of establishing a mission. Eliano entered into the Society in 1551. There were approximately 114 Jesuits who originated from the Levant (the majority coming from the islands of Chios, Crete, Cyprus, and Naxos). Of the 114, 20 were from Greater Syria. See Gabriel Lebon, Catalogue des Missionnaires Jésuites du Levant dans l’Ancienne Compagnie, (unpublished). Specific to this study, Lebon cites Kobee and Triva as “Syrians” who became Jesuits and returned to their homeland as missionaries, but they are not named or referred to in any of the correspondences. These men were not included in the tables or statistics of Chapter IV.
in Rome in order to educate Maronites in secular and religious learning and to indoctrinate them in the Catholic rite.129 After graduation, they served in several roles as interpreters, doctors, administrators, teachers, and priests; some returned to their homelands while others remained in Europe to serve as interpreters and as liaisons to various regional powers within the Ottoman Empire.130 At the end of the century, Jerome Dandini was sent to Mount Lebanon to confirm the installation of Patriarch Yuhanna Mekhlouf on behalf of Pope Clement VIII,131 but nothing more. For both visits, the Jesuits lacked monarchal or pontifical support to intercede on their behalf with the Ottoman authorities to establish a mission; Rome had very limited diplomatic relations with the Porte and Henry IV was busy with the reconstruction of a kingdom socially and politically stressed by forty years of religious war and civic unrest. In 1621 they tried again with a mission to Nazareth led by Jerome Queyrot but were swiftly rebuffed by the recently “restored” Franciscans. And again they did not have the support of king or pope to achieve their goal.

Although the Jesuits, as well as the papacy, received several requests from Eastern Christians, specifically the Maronites, to send assistance to them in order to help educate their young and preach, the Jesuit Order could not provide directly such aid themselves. In 1596 Patriarch Girgis from Ihdin (northern Lebanon) wrote to the Superior General of


130 Michel Chebli, *Fakhreddine II Maan, prince du Liban (1572-1633)* (Beirut: Impr. catholique, 1946). Chebli notes that Father Jean Hasrouni, a graduate from the Maronite College in Rome, served as the interpreter to King Louis XIII, and was also responsible for carrying messages between Urban VIII and Fakhr al-Din. Raphael’s work is more complete and lists a number of Maronite graduates from the college in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

131 Louis Cheikh, المقابلة المارونية والرهبانية السيدية بين القرنين السادس عشر والسابع عشر. [The Maronite Nation and the Company of Jesus between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries]. 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 2003), 120.
the Jesuits, Claude Aquiviva, requesting four or five priests to help them preach and to teach their young. Aquiviva could not simply dispatch Jesuit priests to Mount Lebanon without the authorization of the pope and the monarch from the kingdom from which the priests hailed. In the context of the papacy, the pope had the final word on allowing and supporting missions, while the support of a monarch whose “nation” had a stable and amicable relationship with the sultan was absolutely necessary. Instead he sent four graduates from the Maronite College in Rome who were trained to teach religious and secular courses. None of the college graduates were Jesuits.

Aquiviva had no other options. He could not turn to Spain. The Habsburgs had long been the nemesis of the Ottoman dynasty at sea and on land. Too much blood had been spilt between the two houses fighting in the Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe. He could not turn to the Venetians, who, after several decades of resisting the reforming agenda of the papacy and its political ambitions (in Europe and in the Ottoman Empire), were unlikely to support papal aspirations. From the Council of Trent through the early decades of the seventeenth century, the Venetians controlled the assignment of clerical offices in the Republic, taxed Church property, and tried priests and bishops in secular courts. Furthermore, the Republic refused to participate in any crusading ambitions aspired to by the Catholic Church after the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. These were issues with the papacy and its encroachment into Venetian affairs and governance and did

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132 Ibid., 123.
133 Ibid.
not necessarily involve the Jesuits; later however, the tension between the Senate and the Curia extended to include the Capuchins, Theatines, and the Jesuits.\footnote{135}

In 1606 Pope Paul V issued an interdict in response to Venice’s expansion into the mainland, a territorial grab that limited the amount of real estate held by the Church. Angered by such actions, Paul V forbade the observance of any religious rituals, including mass and the offering of sacraments, in Venice, and excommunicated the newly elected doge, Leonardo Donà. To counter the interdict, the Venetian government threatened to execute any clergy who obeyed the pope and not the republic; and those who did not conform to the Senate’s will, were swiftly expelled from Venice. Such was the fate of the Jesuits, who were seen as instruments of the pope and therefore could not be trusted. This mistrust however stemmed not only from the fact that Jesuits had sworn loyalty to the pope, but also from the Venetian perception that the papacy itself was merely an agent for Spanish ambitions on the continent and in the Mediterranean. After a year of tense debate through lawyers and pamphleteers, the Republic had defied the will of the papacy; Paul V had no choice but to lift the interdict as the pressure mounted against the Curia from other European entities. The Jesuits, who so passionately supported the pope’s cause in Venice and elsewhere during this quarrel, were not allowed to return to the Republic.\footnote{136} After these events, the Jesuits were held in contempt by the Venetians. They were regarded as “Spanish spies” and as instruments of papal oppression by virtue of the papacy’s relationship with Spain. These tensions resurfaced some twenty years later in Aleppo, the ancient city that attracted Greeks, Romans,

\footnote{135}{Carl Jacob Burckhardt, \textit{Richelieu; His Rise to Power}, tr. Edwin Muir and Willa Muir (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 221.}
\footnote{136}{Lane, 396-398.}
Byzantines, Persians, and Arabs to trade, and during the pre-modern period it attracted the attention of Renaissance Europeans.

By the end of the sixteenth century, various European entities were given diplomatic and commercial rights in the Ottoman Empire. From Istanbul to Cairo, the eastern Mediterranean was ringed with European trading outposts: “funduqs”, “echelles,” and “nations” trading to fill a growing demand at home for things “oriental.”137 As a result, there was during the century, an increase in the number of merchants and in the number of diplomats and other officials there to support them. Consequently, the foundation of diplomatic relations helped to fuel this growth in trade. To facilitate their commercial and diplomatic activities, Europeans relied on the indigenous population to fill roles as translators and middle men, the majority of them were non-Muslim.138 The Christians of Greater Syria and Europe saw this as a potentially co-beneficial relationship that would advance their interests at the Ottoman Porte and provide an opportunity to improve their economic and political standing at the expense of their coreligionists of different rites.

Some Europeans however, interpreted an association with the Arab Christians as an alliance for a possible military campaign against the Ottomans to return the Holy Land to its “rightful” owners. In fact the Duke of Tuscany, the young Ferdinando II de Medici, envisioned himself as the new regal prince of Jerusalem.139 In the early part of the seventeenth century however, no European power would attempt such a deed. Europe was about to immerse itself in thirty years of war under the religious pretense of stamping

138 Masters, Christians and Jews, 71-80.
139 Chebli, 120.
out heresy or idolatry depending on a Catholic or Lutheran point of view; pragmatic princes understood there was nothing to gain by military agitation of the Ottoman sultan. In addition, the papacy, who at one time fueled the fires of crusade, was in no position to compel noblemen to “pious” acts and rewards of eternal life. The papacy, specifically through its global missionary enterprise, was slowly coming to understand that allegiance to Catholicism could not be had at the point of a sword or in the glowing embers of a heretic’s fire.

Nonetheless, the sources demonstrate a genuine interest, specifically by the French crown, to cultivate a symbiotic relationship with their Syrian coreligionists through the missionary efforts of the Capuchins and the Jesuits. The main path to the indigenous Christians was through the merchants who in the mind of their sovereign, Louis XIII, and his ministers, lacked spiritual support and guidance. Thus it was only appropriate to send French priests to Frenchmen, who could more easily understand and relate to the merchants’ and sailors’ needs. Although never explicitly stated in the sources, the merchants and consuls were the conduit for the missionaries’ interaction with the indigenous population. And as the relations that would organically form between the Jesuits and the Christians of Bilad al-Sham, the nationalistic tendencies of the missionaries would impose themselves on their indigenous coreligionists. In this context, the Jesuits had the potential to draw people to Catholicism, and to associate their faith with loyalty to the French crown.

140 It should be noted that this impact of the missionary enterprise was minimally felt in the first half of the seventeenth century, and it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the work of the missionaries became more pronounced with increased European military and economic strength relative to the Ottoman Empire.
As the rumblings in Paris and Rome grew for the establishment of a Jesuit mission to
the Holy Land, to Jerusalem or Aleppo, the French Ambassador to the Porte, de Brèves,
in a letter to Père Coton, priest and confessor to Louis XIII, dated 06 November 1615
warned of the calamity that would befall the enterprising Jesuits. Aleppo was “a city
inhabited by Moors, Turks, and Jews,”¹⁴¹ and was filled with merchants from England
and Flanders, the enemies of the Catholic religion and “in particular, of our Society and
Company.”¹⁴² According to de Brèves, these adversaries would not “hesitate to create
pitfalls” and would [sic] accuse them of being spies.¹⁴³ He further warned that the well-
established Franciscans would not hesitate to join forces with these Protestant men in
order to chase them from Aleppo. The Franciscans interpreted a Jesuit mission as an
intrusion into their spiritual and temporal birthright; their consecrated position as
“Custodes Terrae Sanctae,”¹⁴⁴ held for nearly four hundred years, could not be
jeopardized. Jesuit competition for souls and alms would only lead to discord among the
relatively small number of Catholics inhabiting the region. De Brèves understood the
ramifications of such an act: the capitulations of 1597 and 1604 that he negotiated on
behalf of Henry IV did not include the term “missionaries,” and therefore it could be
deduced that this group did not deserve the rights and privileges accorded by the Ottoman
Porte to subjects of the Most Christian King.¹⁴⁵

Regardless of de Brèves’s cautionary remarks, the French monarchy pressed the issue
of establishing the Jesuits in Jerusalem, for Louis XIII “breathed [sic] nothing else than in

¹⁴¹ Rabbath, v.2, 463, f.n. 1. Also referenced in Levenq, 5. The original of this document was not located
in the archives visited.
¹⁴² Ibid.
¹⁴³ Ibid.
¹⁴⁴ Martiniano Pellegrino Roncaglia and Leonhard Lemmens, St. Francis of Assisi and the Middle East, 3rd
ed. (Cairo: Franciscan Center of Oriental Studies, 1957), 34-36.
¹⁴⁵ AE, CP, t.36, f.231r-234r (This document titled: “Mémoire sur l’ancienne protection que les Rois T.C.
[Très Chrétien] ont crû des Eglises des Francs en Levant”. The author is unknown, but it is dated, c.1701).
only to contribute to the restoration of the Holy Places”, 146 and as the presumed protector of Catholicism, this venture would certainly contribute to his “gloire.” A plan was devised that hinged on the creation of a new consular position in Jerusalem. This new consul would provide assistance and protection to the “pilgrims who frequent the Holy Places” that were confronted with “the terror of the Turks.” 147 And, as the newly nominated Jean Lempereur to the position of Consul of Jerusalem, who petitioned the support of the Jesuit, Père Christofle Balthazar, expressed that only an able consul would be able to “establish a college of learned men in order to restore, in its [the Holy Places] primitive splendor, and to reduce all the schismatic Christians, entirely led astray from the good path.” 148 In return for the support from Balthazar, who promised to speak with the pope on his behalf in order to approve the substantial pension that was to be associated with the position, Lempereur was prepared to support the Jesuit cause. This conversation with Balthazar was to be kept in utmost secrecy for fear that the Franciscans would uncover the real intentions for the establishment of a French consul in Jerusalem. Such an innovation would certainly raise brows since there was little in commercial or diplomatic interest in Jerusalem. 149 Even Père Jean la Bretesche, Assistant for the Province of France, believed that the establishment of a French consul in Jerusalem would facilitate the aims of the Society and create a Jesuit mission in the Holy Land, finally fulfilling the aspirations of Ignatius Loyola, thus confirming Lempereur’s main and only aim, that of laying the groundwork for future missions.

146 ARSI, 95, t.1, 267rv (Lempereur, 20 Sept. 1621)
147 ARSI, 95, t.1, 267rv (Lempereur, 20 Sept. 1621).
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid.
Nearly one hundred years earlier, in 1523, Loyola began his intrepid pilgrimage to the Holy Land via Rome and Venice. After obtaining the appropriate documentation from the Curia and then while in Venice begging for alms for his passage across the Mediterranean, he arrived in Jaffa “as a warrior knight of the faith.”\textsuperscript{150} Loyola did not carry the sword of a crusader, but the word of his newly found faith and inspiration to peacefully convince the “infidel” Muslims of their errors and bring them into the Catholic Church. To remain in Jerusalem for an extended period of time, Loyola had to gain the approval from the Franciscan Guardian.\textsuperscript{151} Once realizing his intentions, the Guardian declined his request fearing that any attempts, regardless of method, to convert Muslims would result in expulsion, imprisonment, or even death. Loyola’s proselytizing would disrupt the balance and accord between the Ottomans and the Custodians of the Holy Land. His request was denied and he was immediately removed from the city. The Franciscans had the experience and understood the mood of their hosts. They adamantly refused to allow anything to disrupt, or interfere with, their mission.\textsuperscript{152} Despite the fact that the Company of Jesus was not formed by this time, this initial contact between Loyola and the Franciscans set the stage for the spiritual and material polemics to come.

While Ignatius Loyola was influenced by the mendicant orders, specifically the Franciscans, who maintained a profound belief in the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, his Jesuits also had to take the distinctive vow of a commitment to missionary work, to “helping souls.”\textsuperscript{153} From their foundation in September 1540,\textsuperscript{154} the order,

\textsuperscript{151} The title of “Guardian” was similar to that of “Mission Superior” for the Jesuits and entailed like responsibilities.
\textsuperscript{152} Fülöp-Miller, 57. There are various accounts of Loyola’s pilgrimage based on his \textit{Autobiography}.
\textsuperscript{153} O’Malley, \textit{The First Jesuits}, 347. As well as the vow of loyalty to the pope as noted in the previous chapter.
which chose for itself the audacious name “Company of Jesus,” beguiled the senses in their zeal and ambition. As Freer explains, “Loyola’s conception was that of a mobile force, a spiritual light horse, at the disposal of their General and the Pope; in contrast with the older Orders [Franciscans and Dominicans] which resembled infantry guarding a definite position and bound by vows and stability.”\textsuperscript{155} As the following pages demonstrate, the “infantry” staved off the “cavalry’s” (the Jesuits) charge into the modern era in Greater Syria. Beyond this metaphor, the Jesuits went well beyond the normative standards of the Franciscans concerning a member’s place in the world. The Jesuits threw themselves into the world, discarding the “supremacy of the inward” meditation. A member of the Society did not have regular prayer hours, daily fasts, or a specific habit to wear.\textsuperscript{156} The most important distinction between Franciscans and Jesuits however, was the educational system (see above Chapter I) for Jesuit members and the schools they established to win over the youth of Europe as part of the Counter-Reformation. Their success in the educational sphere, as well as their accomplishments as missionaries (in Goa, China and the New World) was a result of a distinctively Jesuit world view and a willingness to accept variations in cultures in order to gain converts; the Franciscans in contrast, held rigidly to their conservative and traditional ways, which led to enmity between the two Orders.\textsuperscript{157} Whether in Europe or in China, the ill-feelings between Jesuits and Franciscans created an embarrassing friction in Greater Syria, the central node of commerce and communication between Europe and the “Far East.” And in part, this

\textsuperscript{154} 27 September 1540, when Pope Paul III issued the bull \textit{Regimini militantis ecclesiae}, established the Jesuits as a sanctioned religious order of the Catholic church. This bull however, limited the order’s number of members to sixty. On 14 March, 1543, the limitation was eliminated by the bull \textit{Injunctum nobis}. See O’Malley, \textit{The First Jesuits}.

\textsuperscript{155} Freer, 82.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 83-85.

\textsuperscript{157} On the differences between the Franciscans and Jesuits in China, see Fülöp-Miller, 264-270; Brockey, 102-107 and 132-133.
centrality (and of course the historical biblical connection to the Holy Places) drove the desires of the Jesuits. With the support of the French monarch, plans for the creation of the position of Consul of Jerusalem were formulated to facilitate the founding of a mission in Bilad al-Sham.

Père La Bretesche’s confidence in the abilities of Lempereur, who promised to aid in the creation of a Jesuit college in Jerusalem, was unfounded. Lempereur proved unable to adapt to the foreign religious and political circumstances in Jerusalem of 1624. He also arrived with little money to pacify the Franciscans: to demonstrate to them the good will of the French king and his positive intentions to secure and protect the passage of pilgrims and the Holy Places.\(^{158}\) Alms from France to support the Franciscans were often minimal and always slow in coming. Lempereur’s problems began soon after his arrival in Jerusalem, fighting Venetian-inspired accusations of treachery and espionage.

According to Lempereur, the *beg* of Jerusalem, Mehmet Paşa constantly harassed and bad-mouthed him, although Lempereur had “written in his favor to Constantinople [Istanbul], for to work to maintain his charge”, and that Lempereur had given Mehmet Paşa “substantial gifts”.\(^{159}\) Yet these favors were not enough to appease the animus of the *beg*; in the mind of the consul, Mehmet Paşa believed that Lempereur would become a “barrier” to the excessive plunder “on the purse of our religious, as he had done in the past”.\(^{160}\) In retribution, Mehmet Paşa wrote to the “Paşa of Damascus”, explaining that there was no precedence for the establishment of a French consul in Jerusalem, and more

\(^{158}\) BnF, Mss.Fr., 16160, f.27r (de Césy, 10 Dec. 1623).
\(^{159}\) AE, CP, t.3, f.112r (Lempereur, 12 Nov. 1624).
\(^{160}\) Ibid.
importantly, that Lempereur was conspiring with Emir Fakhr al-Din II Ma’an, the rebellious Druze *sancakbeg* of Sidon-Beirut.\(^{161}\)

By the time of Lempereur’s letter of November 1624, Fakhr al-Din II was in his sixth year of consolidating power after returning from exile in Italy. At the expense of rival families, or factions such as the Sunni Sayfas and the Shi’a Harfushes, Fakhr al-Din expanded northward to the hinterlands of Tripoli and controlled territory as far south as the *sancaks* of Nablus and ‘Ajlun, within a day’s travel to Jerusalem.\(^{162}\) Through various means of coercion, the Druze emir became the strongman of the *Mountain*\(^{163}\) and won the admiration of various European princes, prelates, and popes who hoped to use him to advance their own interests and aspirations; some viewed his realm as a gateway for a military crusade against the Ottomans in Damascus and Jerusalem.\(^{164}\) For the missionaries however, Fakhr al-Din’s territory was devoid of the chief holy places and pilgrimage sites, and his authority beyond the *sancak* of Nablus to the south and that of Jibbat to the north was problematic at best. Outside his geographic power base, Fakhr al-Din was dependent on the graces of the provincial governor in Damascus and other officials.\(^{165}\) Although he was hailed as a champion of the Christian cause in the Levant, Pope Urban VIII referred to his realm as “a refuge for Christians in the East”, Fakhr al-Din did nothing that was not in his self-interest and for the preservation of his family. As has been made evident by Abu Husayn and Salibi, the impulse to assist Christians of the “East” or those of Europe, depended on the conditions in the *Mountain* and the pressure

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161 Ibid.
163 Ibid., the non-coastal area of Lebanon was referred to simply as the “Mountain.” In general terms, reference to the Mountain implies the geographic area of present day Lebanon west of the Bqaa Valley, stretching north to Tripoli and south near Saida.
164 Chebli, 115-125.
165 Abu Husayn, 124-126.
the Ottoman central government was placing on him. Fakhr al-Din had local power and at times, that power was extended to reach Istanbul through his donations and favors to ranking officials, but when governors and viziers were not friendly with him, his influence was limited to the geographic confines officially recognized by the Porte. He could not help Lempereur or the missionaries to come, and any perceived association with the Emir could be perceived as collaboration with “a man well known for having rebelled against the Sublime Sultanate”.

In Jerusalem the qadi saw Lempereur as rebellious as Fakhr al-Din and accused him of acting against the interests of the sultan. Likewise, the judge wrote to Damascus complaining of the French consul’s sedition. As a result of these grievances, Lempereur was called to Damascus where he stood trial. Lempereur reported that the paşa offered to free him and drop the charges in return for forty thousand sequins, which he promptly refused and was placed under house arrest for five days. Only through the intercession of the Venetian merchant Donaty and Cassoum Aga, agent of the head mufti in Istanbul, did Lempereur manage to gain his liberty. During questioning however, Lempereur’s interrogators learned that he did not have the necessary documentation from the grand vizier that would allow him to establish residence in the Ottoman Empire. He was

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166 Abu Husayn, *Provincial Leaderships*, and Kamal Salibi argue that Fakhr al-Din’s reputation and his “genuine” tolerance of Christians has been based on a very modest number of sources, specifically the historical account of Istifan al-Duwayhi (b.1639) the Maronite Bishop whose historical works include *Tariq al-Azmina* and *Tarikh al ta’ifa al maruniyya*. Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Heyberger contends that the Maronites made-up one third of the 60,000 strong force under Fakhr al-Din’s control (Heyberger, 189). Of course Fakhr al-Din would favor Maronites; he needed their assistances to fight his rivals while demonstrating that systems of patronage crossed religious boundaries.

167 Abu Husayn, 127.

allowed two more months in Jerusalem until he received a *berat*, a written order from the grand vizier granting him such privileges.169

Lempereur had failed to request *aman*, protection given to members of the *Dar al-harb* (all territories not under Muslim rule) visiting Muslim controlled lands, the *Dar al-Islam*. Without the *berat* expressing *aman*, the consul, regardless of French passports and letters of introduction from the king, was open game and his adversaries took full advantage. According to Lempereur the Venetians with help from the Franciscans, informed the local officials of this deficiency in documentation and thus began his ordeal with the Ottoman bureaucracy in its various manifestations of the legal, traditional, or corrupt established practices. All these European actors however, were playing their roles as opportunistic adversaries in a highly competitive political and economic milieu, while some Ottoman officials saw the prospect of profit. Blame for Lempereur’s ordeal and misfortune lays squarely on the French ambassador to the Porte, de Césy – who was responsible for arranging all the necessary paperwork and the acquisition of the sultan’s or grand vizier’s authorization, which he alone had access to. And as the below account of the arrival of the first two Jesuit missionaries in the following year will demonstrate, this was not de Césy’s only mistake.

At the social level, Lempereur was not accustomed to such disrespectful treatment from mere bureaucrats. Coming from the lower nobility of France, he could not comprehend his new diminutive or second-class position in the social and political hierarchy of Greater Syria. From this perspective, Lempereur saw that, all the “Turcs” were corrupt, “this is to say this is the style of this region,” and that corruption was

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169 Ibid. See also BnF, Mss. Fr., 16160, f.188rv (de Césy, 1624) – Lempereur was reinstated as Consul of Jerusalem in January 1625.
rampant. Although the exorbitant sum of forty thousand sequins was dropped, the consul was forced to pay two thousand piastres to the paşa and one thousand to his officers, for which he received financial assistance from Tarquez, the consul of Saida, and the French merchants de Lisle and de Guiban. Ottoman officials had become accustomed to charging higher fees for their services as administrators when the opportunity presented itself. To complement their inadequate salaries from the central government, administrators personally set fees, bahşiş, from those who they provided a service. In the seventeenth century, the system was subject to many abuses, specifically the extortions from the peasants and cultivators who were forced to pay higher fees to ensure the profitability of senior officials, thus forcing the cultivators to abandon their farms and move to cities where they caused disturbances that plagued various provinces of the Ottoman Empire. This system was extended to include the hapless foreigner and was not understood by the likes of a Lempereur or future missionaries. “The insatiable cupidity and the disobediences have now occupied the place”, was the standard refrain evoked often in the correspondences of diplomats, merchants, and priests during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Lempereur was ripe for the picking. His deficiency in Arabic and his lack of comprehension of the bureaucratic ways of the Empire contributed to his demise. Of course, he was not helped by the machinations of the Franciscans and the Venetians who turned him in.

Lempereur’s lack of money and his diplomatic incompetence compounded an already tense situation that reached the Louvre. By June of 1624, several months after Lempereur’s arrival, the Venetian Ambassador resident in Paris paid a visit to Louis XIII.

171 Shaw, 291.
The ambassador informed the king that the schismatic Christians under the Patriarch of Jerusalem and other “religious” of the Holy Places want to place themselves under Venetian protection if the Jesuits are allowed to go to Jerusalem.”  

Secrets, regardless of time and place, are difficult to keep. To allay the Venetian’s fears that there were ulterior motives for establishing a consul in Jerusalem, Louis XIII responded that he had no intention of allowing the Jesuits to found a mission in Jerusalem. He sent Lempereur solely for the protection of the Holy Places and for the safety of the pilgrims “his subjects”, and that indeed he “wanted to innovate nothing to their [the Franciscans] prejudice”.Infuriated, Louis XIII accused the Venetians of favoring a “Schismatic Patriarch” over a Catholic, and that by right, as stipulated in the capitulations, the French were identified by Sultan Ahmed I as the protectors of the Holy Places in 1604. Nonetheless the Venetian ambassador threatened Consul Lempereur and the Jesuits with an avanie.

Undeterred, Louis XIII continued to pursue his options for the establishment of a mission that would reinforce his claim as the temporal authority of all things relating to the Christian faith within the Ottoman Empire, specifically in Greater Syria. He styled

173 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16156, f.430rv (Louis XIII, 9 June 1624).
174 Ibid., see also Levenq, p.8.
175 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16156, f.430rv (Louis XIII, 9 June 1624).
177 Avanie (or in Italian “Avania”) as defined in John Florio’s 1611 Italian – English dictionary, was “an undeserved wrong, a secret grudge, an insulting injury.” In the Ottoman context, an avanie usually entailed a substantial fine for some infraction to be paid to the local authorities. An avanie was specified by the Muslim authorities, and at times, at the behest of various European entities to strike at their fellow Europeans for political and economic gain. Rouillard assumes “the word ‘avanie’ now used for any humiliating insult, is of Levantine origin, and first came into general usage in France through the persecution suffered from the Turks by traders in the sixteenth century”. The etymology of this word deserves further investigation. Rouillard, p.158, fn. 4. John Florio, Queen Anna's New World of Words, or Dictionarie of the Italian and English Tongues (London: Melch and Bradwood, 1611).
himself as the “first Emperor among the Christians and more ancient friend of theirs”.  

He saw the Franciscans as failing to draw Christians to the Catholic fold, particularly in response to the religious turmoil in France and Europe in general. Yet, if the Jesuits presented too great an obstacle there were other eager Orders. Louis, guided by his minister Richelieu and his new priest and confessor, the Capuchin François Le Clerc du Tremblay, most notably known as Father Joseph, resolved himself to foster and support a Capuchin mission “to help the Christians of the East”, and to establish them everywhere “where there are French consuls”. With the death of Pierre Coton and the rise of Father Joseph at the king’s court, the Capuchins became a more palatable alternative to the Jesuits. Notwithstanding Father Joseph’s extreme religious views on the “infidels” and persistent notions of crusade, the opportunity for further French entrenchment and control in Greater Syria at the expense of their Protestant adversaries, the English and Dutch, was enough of a motivating force. Richelieu and his king however, had to take care not to create a divisive conflict within the Catholic Church by overtly antagonizing the Franciscans and their supporters in Rome. Their directives and commandments therefore were often ambiguous and lacked logic. The Capuchins gained the approval of Louis XIII to establish missions in the Levant and only “aux lieux où ne sont pas les religieux de l’Observance”. So it was forbidden for the Capuchins to establish themselves in any place that the Franciscans were founded or had a resident priest. With four hundred years of history in the Holy Land behind them, the Franciscans had by this time fashioned a network of associations in villages and cities throughout the region with both the indigenous and foreign populations, and in the ensuing conflicts, the Order of

178 AE, CP, t.3, f.112rv (Lempereur, 12 Nov. 1624).
179 BnF, Mss. Fr, 16156, f.463r (Louis XIII, 10 Oct. 1624).
180 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16158, f.342r (Pacifique, 6 Dec. 1626).
Friars Minor - Observant laid claim to all the major villages, towns, and cities in Greater Syria.

In his communications with his ambassador de Césy (at Istanbul), Louis continued his attempts to assuage Franciscan fears, “that they should be assured that they [the Franciscans] will maintain their chapels in Aleppo, Alexandria, Saida, Izmir, and in all other places they established”. If this was to be the guiding rule, what would be the role of the Capuchins, or any other mission for that matter? To whom were they to proselytize and what spiritual and liturgical functions were they to fulfill? From all indications, the Franciscans controlled the mass at the various chapels and Catholic-controlled churches throughout Greater Syria; they ministered to the physical and spiritual needs of the merchants during times of plague and other sicknesses; and finally, the Franciscans controlled the religious spaces of the Holy Land - collecting alms, leading pilgrims, and maintaining and repairing the physical edifices of the religion.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the roles that each European religious group played in conserving the holy landmarks and attending to the spiritual and corporal needs of foreign and indigenous Christians remained in flux. It was rare that any steadfast rules were applied to delineate responsibilities and to create boundaries. Louis XIII and Louis XIV both failed to outline a regimen that facilitated the interaction between Orders; nor was the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide, still in its infancy, capable of settling the disputes between the various missionary groups, specifically between the Jesuits and the Franciscans. As will be discussed below, feuds between

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181 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16156, f.423rv (Louis XIII, 20 Nov. 1624).
182 AE, MT, t.70, 19r (Viguier and merchants, 25 Feb. 1625).
183 As noted previously, the Congregation de Propaganda Fide was established in 1622 to manage the activities of the various Catholic missionary groups and to “propagate” the Catholic faith.
individual priests and their respective orders were allowed to fester for decades throughout this period. These polemics attracted, engrossed, and beguiled kings, popes, ambassadors, consuls, merchants, paşas, qadıs, and viziers, as substantiated by the numerous correspondences and memoires associated with the missionary enterprise of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

Such considerations of regulation and method rarely entered into the calculations of monarchs or popes. In February of 1625 in a letter to his ambassador, Louis XIII instructed de Césy that he must do everything in his power to clear the way for the Jesuit fathers, Jean Stella and Gaspar Maniglier, to “transport themselves to Aleppo” and that no one should prevent them from “all their ecclesiastical and spiritual functions”. These men were on a mission for the “glory of God and the edification of the Catholics”, nothing should stand in their way.\(^{184}\) But to perform their religious functions, the Jesuits would ultimately encroach on Franciscan geographic and spiritual territory. Nonetheless, because of the pious motivation of Louis XIII, as expressed in his letters, and the need to ensure the continued participation of French merchants and diplomats in the Catholic rite, it was necessary to send trained priests to minister to their needs. The importance of the establishment of the mission to Louis XIII is further demonstrated by his direct instructions to the consul of Aleppo, Viguier, at the same time that he was writing to de Césy with the aforementioned instructions. In this brief letter, Louis advises Viguier that Stella and Maniglier were on their way from Istanbul to Aleppo “for the advancement of the Christian and Catholic religion”.\(^{185}\) Emphatically, the king warns his consul that no “harm” or “disturbance” should prevent them from their ecclesiastical and spiritual

\(^{184}\) BnF, Mss. Fr., 16156, f.483rv (Louis XIII, 14 Feb. 1625).
\(^{185}\) ARSI, 95, t.2, 289r (Louis XIII, 14 Feb. 1625).
functions, repeating again “it is a matter of the honor and the glory of God, and the
edification of the Catholics”; that these missionaries were being sent, and by extension
of his patronage, the placement of loyal subjects in a foreign land. In Louis’s mind, the
Franciscans were not faring well in venerating God and improving the moral conduct of
the Catholics, nor were they apt to inculcate themselves in an embryonic sense of French
nationalism.

Yet Viguier and the majority of the French merchants were not going to accept this
interference by the king in their local affairs. Within two weeks of receiving the
correspondence from Louis XIII, the consul and the merchants petitioned him to rethink
his motivation for establishing the Jesuits. In their “attestation”, Viguier and the
merchants, under oath, avowed that the “R.P. Observantins have served [them] with great
zeal and charity”. According to the signatories of the attestation, the Franciscans never
hesitated to provide assistance to members of the echelle sick due to airborne infections
common in the port of Alexandretta. They never failed to come from Aleppo “to freely
expose their lives that many of theirs were there lost”. Furthermore, they anticipated
that the mere presence of the Jesuits would result in “disorder and scandal” and their only
desire was that the Franciscans “may continue the divine service”.

As the Jesuit priests were preparing for their journey to Aleppo, ambassador de Césy
launched a propaganda and diplomatic campaign, pledging on the “Gospel and the
Cross”, to assuage the fears of the Franciscans who argued that they would be deprived of

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186 ARSI, 95, t.2, 289r (Louis XIII, 14 Feb. 1625).
187 AE, MT, t.70, 19r (Viguier and merchants, 25 Feb. 1625). Also in Rabbath, v.1, 358-59. Note:
Rabbath did not publish this item completely and omits the sense of loyalty and appreciation of the
merchants.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
their historical custody of the Holy Places. De Césy however, intentionally or otherwise, omitted any discussion regarding the roles and responsibilities that each order was to play, nor had the Propaganda Fide delineated any such ruling, setting the stage for the turmoil to come. By the beginning of August 1625, Jean Stella and Gaspar Maniglier finally arrived in Aleppo to an inhospitable reception of ridicule from the various foreign consuls, and all the churches shut their doors to them except the Maronite church of St. Elias. According to Maniglier, this hospitality did not last; the Maronites apparently intimidated by the Franciscans, did not allow them to return to their church. Within a few days they “had some differences” with the Franciscan priest, Père François.

Questions of roles and responsibilities filled the sometimes hostile discourse between Jesuits and Franciscans: what was to be the role of the Jesuits as missionaries and as priests; to whom could they proselytize; what souls could they take care of; and, where would they get their alms? Père François anxiously posed these questions to the Jesuit priests. And due to his frustration and anger that created a very tense situation, Père François was replaced by Adrian Bonerus, a Franciscan of the “Flemish nation”.

Instead of easing the hostilities between the newly-arrived Jesuits and the resident Franciscans, Bonerus made matters worse. Bonerus was infuriated that Maniglier and Stella were allowed to say the mass in the consular chapel. Believing that this was a major breach of the commitments made by Louis XIII that the Jesuits would not be allowed to infringe on Franciscan responsibilities, Bonerus placed the newly installed

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190 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16150, f.400rv (de Césy, 16 May 1625).
191 Cheikho, 156.
192 In Maniglier’s report on these events, the missionary notes: “they [the Maronites] have been prohibited their church from us, they do not open it, and they have done that. For the Maronites have denied the keys from us upon arriving, they reported that their prohibition was made by the aforementioned fathers [the Franciscans].” ARSI, 95, t.3, f.320v (Maniglier and Stella, end of 1626).
193 AE, MT, t.3, f.177-187rv (d’Olivier, 6 Dec. 1625).
consul Olivier\textsuperscript{194} in the middle of this confrontation by issuing to Olivier a writ of excommunication for allowing the Jesuits to say the mass in the consular chapel.\textsuperscript{195} Olivier denied the allegation, saying that it occurred “unbeknownst” to him.\textsuperscript{196} Bonerus was not merely challenging the Jesuit priests and the authority of the consul, he was contesting the authority of the French king in the Holy Land, and after all, it was the Franciscans who, for the previous four hundred years, controlled the spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs of the Catholic faith in Greater Syria. They understood the local political and religious landscape due to their prolonged existence in the region, for the Franciscans themselves were victim to the capricious nature of the competition between the Ottoman Empire and various European entities, specifically when after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1571 they were expelled from the Empire with their church in Beirut confiscated and retrofitted into a mosque. By 1620 however, they were completely reinstated in Greater Syria including the missions to Nazareth and St. Jean d’Acre with the support of Fakhr al-Din.\textsuperscript{197} And they had the ties with European diplomats, merchants, and pilgrims who viewed the Order of Friars Minor as the rightful custodians of the Holy Places. They had resisted Jesuit incursions since the days of Ignatius Loyola, and they refused to succumb to the aspirations of a temporal monarch who threatened their livelihood and raison d’être in Bilad al-Sham.

After the extreme actions of Father Adrian Bonerus, Olivier vigorously petitioned the Père Guardian of Jerusalem to intercede and help calm the situation in Aleppo,

\textsuperscript{194} BnF, Mss. Fr., 16158, f.344rv (Pacifique, 15 Décembre 1626). Pierre d’Olivier served as Consul of Aleppo until 1631. He was presented with “all the rights and privileges of the position of Consul” on 14 January 1625.
\textsuperscript{195} AE, MT, t.3, f.177-187rv (d’Olivier, 6 Dec. 1625).
\textsuperscript{196} BnF, Mss. Fr., 16160, f.122-123r (d’Olivier, 8 Nov. 1625).
\textsuperscript{197} Chebli, 129-130.
threatening to involve the king and his ambassador in this affair if the conflict could not be resolved between them, and more importantly, the removal of the writ of excommunication.\textsuperscript{198} Since there was not a neutral representative of the pope in Aleppo, or Greater Syria for that matter, Olivier continued to plead with the religious rivals to practice patience, to wait for a ruling from the highest church authority, to no avail. The “noise” that was caused by the dispute caught the attention of the local Ottoman authorities, the subaşi, Baki Ağâ, and the mussalem, Mustafa Ağâ. These officials sent a petition to Olivier in order to bring to the court the two Jesuit priests who were “bad men”.\textsuperscript{199} Olivier refused to turn Stella and Maniglier over to the authorities and sent his “trucheman” (or turjaman – translator) to the mussalem in order to better understand the charges brought against the priests and to invite Mustafa Ağâ to a meeting. In person, Olivier attempted to bribe the mussalem with 150 piastres, but failed. In front of the qadi, Olivier protested vehemently and wanted to know the source of the accusation that the Jesuits were spies. Olivier in his attempt to build a defense quoted the capitulations but was rebuffed by the qadi, who correctly replied that the capitulations offered protections to the consuls and merchants and “not priests from this order”. The qadi’s uncanny familiarity with differences in religious orders implies that French and Jesuit adversaries had influenced the officials’ actions, specifically the judge. Without a proper defense, the Jesuits were ordered to Alexandretta while the judge deliberated on the case, leaving Olivier to threaten to “pull the nation out of Aleppo”, and to “take his complaint to the Ağâ of the Janissaries, the ambassador, and [even] the Grand Seigneur”,\textsuperscript{200} Not impressed with such threats, the qadi pronounced sentence on 25 November 1625,

\textsuperscript{198} BnF, Mss. Fr., 16160, f.122-123r (d’Olivier, 8 Nov. 1625).
\textsuperscript{199} AE, MT, t.3, f.177-187rv (d’Olivier, 6 Dec. 1625).
\textsuperscript{200} AE, MT, t.3, f.177-187rv (d’Olivier, 6 Dec. 1625).
condemning the Jesuits to vacate the region within three days or he would put them in chains.201

With little hope of a quick response from Istanbul, Olivier attempted to negotiate the manner in which the Jesuits were to be transferred to Alexandretta. When that failed, he resorted to bribery in order to at least have Maniglier and Stella escorted by “fellow Frenchmen”; the bribe of twenty-five piastres and a new vest was not enough to convince the mussalem who coldly sent word with the translator that he would “cut their necks” if they were found in Aleppo after the deadline passed. On their arrival in Alexandretta, the Ağa of the city began to “mistreat and abuse the Jesuits, treating them as if they were mere prisoners”. In Olivier’s mind there was no justice “because of the wars with Persia each soldier is a king in this country and the justice so corrupt”.202 Granted the situation seemed unfair to the consul; the Ottoman authorities were legally correct in their argument that the capitulations did not include the priests under the protection of the French consul, that is to say, provided with extraterritorial immunity. Furthermore, the fact that the Jesuits did not have a berat from the grand vizier made any defense for allowing them to stay in Aleppo a moot point. The French consul was at the mercy of the standing “treaties” between his nation and the Ottoman Porte and the resolution of this problem laid in the skills, connections, and tactfulness of higher authorities, a mere consul did not have enough political or material capital to affect the decisions of the local authorities, that persuasion had to come from the central government. Additionally, the accusations of “turquesque” avarice appear to be unfounded since none of the officials accepted any of the bribes, unless Olivier was outbid by his Venetian and Franciscan

201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
adversaries, or that Olivier had not cultivated robust relationships with the local power brokers to convince them to take an alternative, and more amenable approach to the situation.

When news of the incident reached the court of Louis XIII, the king urgently responded to his ambassador de Césy. De Césy was to gain from “the Grand Seigneur a general permission [berat] for the Pères Jésuites of preaching liberally and publicly, to say the mass, to confess, to administer the Holy Sacraments and to do the other offices proper to his company by all the lands…where there are consuls established for the French Nation…”203 Ironically, it fell on the Ottoman central government to settle the internal Catholic European dispute between Franciscans and Jesuits. Since the creation of the millet system, Ottoman officials refrained from interfering with the doctrinal, theological, and material structures of the various indigenous religious groups that were formed under the this system.204 The central authorities and local officials were simply enforcing their rules, and it appears to have been unprecedented that they would be asked to mitigate intra-religious rivalries, unless they disturbed the “peace”, or made any attempts at converting Muslims.205 During this period, the Jesuits were never accused of proselytizing Muslims, something that would have caused their immediate expulsion from the Ottoman realm, if not their swift execution: there are examples however that the Jesuits indeed engaged their Muslim hosts in doctrinal discourse.206 Nonetheless, there were instances in which provincial authorities took advantage of European procedural and administrative naïveté, in this situation, the local administrators adjudicated the Jesuit

204 As noted above.
205 Masters demonstrates the use of Muslim courts by Christians and Jews, (Masters, Christians and Jews, 34-37).
206 Reference discussion in Chapter V.
case by Ottoman legal standards and found the priests to be outside the bounds of the 
millet system and not protected by the capitulations. No matter the accusations that 
Olivier heaved on the Ottoman authorities, or his threats to seek the intervention of the 
French king or Ottoman sultan, Olivier and the “French Nation” were at the mercy of the 
local and central governments of the Empire. Only the skills of ambassador de Césy and 
the right political climate could ameliorate the Jesuit situation.

While Louis XIII and his first secretary, Richelieu, were busy with the Huguenot 
rebellions in La Rochelle and French involvement in the Thirty Years War, de Césy was 
at his political limits in Istanbul. The ambassador, wanted to place blame on Ottoman 
administrators because of his inability to gain a berat for the Jesuits and the renewal of 
the capitulations. De Césy suggested that Ottoman officials “have no other purpose only 
of enriching themselves, and would sell their prophet for money, if he came back to the 
world”. Although he had to admit that the Jesuits and by association, himself, were at 
fault for this distressing and highly embarrassing circumstance. Before departing 
Istanbul, Stella and Maniglier failed to “fit themselves up with the necessary 
commandments for their residence…that these good Pères did not have to go to Aleppo 
to expose themselves to the hate of the Venetians, English and Flemings”.207 For de 
Césy, the Ottoman Empire was filled with wolves in waiting to strike at weak prey. 
Some of these wolves were allegedly motivated by money; the “turcs” were consistently 
portrayed as opportunists in the game of profit, and in this circumstance, unjustly so. 
French incomprehension of Ottoman laws and norms turned into an attack on the moral 
character of Ottoman administrators. French diplomats, who usually came from the 
lower nobility, and priests were unaccustomed to being treated as a relatively

207 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16156, f.466rv (de Césy, 12 Jan. 1626).
insignificant minority group that had to adapt to the foreign conditions of living in the
Ottoman realm. These men were typically respected and held high social positions at
home; and for the clergy of France, the thought of paying any type of tax or monetary
solicitation, much less to be tried in “secular” courts was an abomination. For these two
groups, when they lacked a clear understanding of their circumstances relative to
Ottoman law and custom, they became party to the bahşiş game; it was easier to offer
money or goods when they lacked an understanding of Ottoman bureaucratic norms, or
did not have the political and social connections to intercede on their behalf. There were
exceptions however throughout our period of study.

After several years serving as ambassador at the Ottoman court, de Césy learned the
political currents and power affiliations of the central administration. He understood who
his allies were and which officials were to be avoided. Furthermore, the current internal
power-politics within the Ottoman court, struggles that were fueled by the assassination
of Sultan Osman II in May, 1622, the short and violent reign of his successor (the dull-
witted Mustafa I), and the fall of Baghdad (January 1623/4) to the Safavids, complicated
de Césy’s ability to form court alliances that would benefit the French cause.
Compounding de Césy’s problems was the instability in the position of grand vizier.
From 1622 to 1631 ten grand viziers served the sultan, a fact echoed in the ambassador’s
complaint that “there is nothing in the world more changing than the things of this
Ottoman Porte”.208 In 1626, de Césy’s main obstacle was manifest in the person of Hafiz
Ahmed Paşa, Murad IV’s grand vizier who failed to reclaim Baghdad from the Safavids,
was dismissed in December of 1626. According to de Césy, Hafiz Paşa had a knack for
making trouble for foreigners. In contrast, his replacement Khalil Paşa Kaysariyyeli was

208 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.328r (de Césy, 18 Oct. 1626).
“more capable of reason” and thus more conducive to the ambassador’s requests.

Moreover, Khalil Paşa historically had an anti-Spanish agenda dating back to his days as kapudan (admiral) of the Ottoman fleet when he tried to convince Osman II to focus his attention on the western Mediterranean and not eastern Europe, to no avail. By late autumn of 1626, de Césy wrote to the Père Général, Muteo Vitellesco, that he was successful in obtaining the necessary documentation, specifically the berat from the grand vizier, before his departure for Erzurum to put down the province’s rebellious governor Abaza Mehmet Paşa and then to proceed to end the war against the “Persians” through a negotiated treaty.

Obtaining the berat was not merely a function of a change in the grand viziership, but also in warding-off the exploits of the Venetian and English consuls in Aleppo. In a report to Louis XIII, de Césy emphasized the sincerity and good word of Khalil Paşa in contradistinction to the acts of the French rivals: “This good man [the grand vizier] had made in Aleppo for the Capuchins and the Jesuits all that he promised…for their establishment, despite that the Consuls of England and Venice having offered to him a good sum of money to prevent the Jesuits from entering Aleppo, saying that they were spies of Spain. To which the Vizier responded that, if they were Spaniards, the Ambassador of France would not have recommended them…”

Where other ambassadors relied on bribes and gifts, according to the Capuchin priest, Pacifique, de Césy’s “good virtue and his generosity were acquired on the minds [spirits] from the

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209 In his letter to the Père Général dated 18 October, 1626, de Césy states unequivocally that “Our Seigneur [Jesus Christ] had permitted that a new Vizier was now in charge…” However, most historians establish Khalil Paşa’s appointment as Grand Vizier on 02 December, 1626 (EI², v.IV, p.971).


211 AE, CP, t.3, f.464rv (de Césy, 12 July 1627).
grands [powerful] of the Porte,” for “only the mentioning of his name by one of his servants could, something the other Ambassadors and Consuls would be well prevented of obtaining, only through the use of money and vests”.  

In the interim, Jean Stella and Gaspar Maniglier were exiled to Malta, where they arrived in March of 1626 after being forced from Alexandretta. For Stella, the time spent on Malta was “a persecution of six entire months, without intermission”. Maniglier was suffering from a debilitating fever that rendered him incapable of assisting Stella in resolving their dilemma. Stella’s inability to fulfill his ambition of establishing a mission in the Holy Land, his distress over their removal from Aleppo, his sense of helplessness on Malta, and the added burden of having to care for his fellow missionary, magnified what was apparently a dire situation. His aspirations to be the founding Jesuit of a mission in the Holy Land were checked by the potential death of his companion and the bureaucracy of the Ottoman Porte. Stella was advised that a “dead body with a living one are not good”; if he had hope for a return to Aleppo, he would have to abandon Maniglier. In Istanbul, their fate was in the hands of ambassador de Césy and the changing of the guard to a more acquiescent grand vizier, on Malta however, they believed their destiny lay in the intercession of divine providence; the two Jesuits received word that their documentation was being processed and that concurrently Maniglier was freed from his fever.

By November 1626, the two missionaries were in Istanbul awaiting the keenly sought-after berat from the grand vizier who was preparing for his eastern campaign. During

212 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16158, f.365r (de Césy, 1627).
213 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.332rv (Stella, 22 August 1626).
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
their 42 days at sea from Malta to Istanbul, a voyage that normally took two weeks to complete, the Jesuit Pères negotiated the perils of Mediterranean travel. They were confronted with the “furieux assaut” from the unexpected violence of the “Greek winds”, from a sea in its recurrent winter ferocity. They also had to maintain constant vigilance in order to avoid the Algerian pirates that were prowling the waters between Malta and Istanbul.216 Pale from their tribulations at sea, they were met in the Ottoman capital by Ambassador de Césy “very courteously”, and with the news that a new kaimakan was installed in Aleppo, who “[did not] appear to be so animated against the Christians as the preceding one who had been killed…”217 At this point Maniglier did not draw generalizations from the actions of a single official, noting that their initial experience was an exception, that “for such banishment is against the custom of the country [the Ottoman Empire]”.218 After waiting in Istanbul for a safe passage to Aleppo in order to avoid the tempestuous Mediterranean and the disorder in eastern Anatolia, the Jesuits finally arrived in Aleppo in April, 1627.219

Once in Aleppo their troubles did not subside. Shortly after their arrival, the Franciscan procurer from Jerusalem, a Spaniard according to Maniglier, went to the grand vizier – who was in Aleppo in preparation for his negotiations with Abaza at Erzurum – 220 to persuade him that the Jesuits were Spanish spies and were the “sworn enemies” of the Ottoman Empire.221 Fresh in their minds was their initial visit to Aleppo in 1625 when they were greeted with abuse and derision and the resulting outburst of the

216 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.334r (Maniglier, 10 January 1627).
217 Ibid.
218 Ibid.
219 Levenq, 13.
220 EI2, v.IV, p.971.
221 AE, CP, t.3, f.440-441rv (Maniglier and Stella, 4 June 1627).
Franciscan Père, Adrian, “our open and truly dangerous persecutor”, that led to their expulsion from the Empire and the excommunication of the consul d’Olivier. To compound further their difficulties, the Venetian ambassador resident in Istanbul had also written to his consul in Aleppo that he must do everything in his power to prevent the establishment of the Jesuits. It appears that the Venetian consul did not waste time in manipulating the weary minds of Maniglier and Stella.

Having to endure the physical and emotional ordeal of the previous two years, their fatigue from travel and the relative uncertainty of their situation in Aleppo, opened the Jesuits to Venetian innuendo. They came to believe the French consul, Olivier, was working against their interests. 223 Addressing his complaints and suspicions to de Césy, Maniglier accused Olivier of being under the influence of the Franciscans, that “he had touched the money of the Reverend Pères.” 224 In addition, he claimed that Jacob, translator of the consul, had robbed them, and in response declared that the “Turks had been more men of God than the interpreter”. 225 Olivier however denied the accusations two months later. He asserted the Jesuits were told by the other consuls that they were not in danger of being removed from the region in response to a rumor that they were once again at risk of expulsion from Aleppo. The consul claimed that they were being influenced to think that he was duplicitous, and that in reality he was working against their interests. He further protested that the Venetian senate wrote a lengthy letter to Khalil Paşa advising that the Jesuits were from Spain and could not be trusted. To help persuade the grand vizier, they included nearly 400 piastres worth of fabric, which the

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222 Ibid.
223 AE, CP, t.3, f.440-441rv (Maniglier and Stella, 4 June 1627).
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid. Heyberger, apparently basing his judgment on a letter of Jerome Queyrot (1629), condemns Olivier as a participant in the machinations of the Franciscans and Venetians (Heyberger, 276).
righteous Khalil Paşa declined, and according to Olivier, would not accept them as a gift and was willing to pay for the fabric himself.\textsuperscript{226} In due course, Olivier was able to guarantee the legitimacy of the Jesuit mission when the \textit{berat} was registered in the court of Aleppo, July of 1627, thus establishing the first Jesuit mission in Bilad al-Sham.\textsuperscript{227}

Yet, contrary to the general belief of a well-organized corporate, and supposedly militaristic, Jesuit structure, there was a significant lack of coordination and planning for this mission. Soon after their arrival in Aleppo, Stella was forced to return to Marseille in October, 1627 via Istanbul and the island of Naxos to procure provisions, alms, and books to support the newly founded mission, the fundamental resources for the accomplishment of their tasks as apostles of the catholic faith. Maniglier was left to manage the mission, despairing in his loneliness and his lack of language skills in Arabic or Greek. According to Levenq, Maniglier was of “irresolute character and of little know-how” who lacked the initiative to cultivate relations with the indigenous and foreign populations of Aleppo.\textsuperscript{228} Stella however, never returned. When he reached Avignon, the city was overwhelmed by an outbreak of plague. Compelled by his duty as a priest, and more importantly as a Jesuit walking in the path of Jesus Christ, he remained there for nearly two years comforting the sick and administering the last rites. While

\textsuperscript{226} AE, CP, t.3, f.470-475r (d’Olivier, 23 July 1627).
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid. Albeit August, 1625 has been recognized by Levenq and Heyberger, among others, as the foundation of the mission, April, 1627 seems to be the more likely date since the Jesuits spent very little time in Aleppo prior to this date. Besson, \textit{La Syrie Sainte}, after describing Maniglier’s and Stella’s ordeal states: “the mission therefore was established,” p.23.
\textsuperscript{228} Levenq, 16. This characterization disregards Maniglier’s role as “Superior” of the mission and his ability not to abandon his responsibilities. Maniglier demonstrated fortitude and on occasions, acted independent of the Jesuit hierarchy in Rome. More on Maniglier’s actions that controvert this assertion will be discussed in the next chapter.
many fled to the outskirts of the town, Stella lodged among the plague victims until his own demise on 18 December 1629.229

Meanwhile, the foundation of the Jesuit mission in Aleppo remained in jeopardy. Granted they held an official berat from the grand vizier, local conditions and actors determined its legitimacy. Until the order was registered at court, the berat carried little weight in Aleppo, giving the advantage to the qadi or beg who wanted to abuse this privilege by delaying its registration for political or economic gain. As was the case with the Franciscans openly disregarding the authority of Louis XIII, Syrian Ottoman officials, when it served their interests, challenged and manipulated the edicts of the sultan. This tendency, that power diminishes as great distances increase between ruler and ruled, was not unique to any geographic or “national” entity during this period of study. But as has been demonstrated, various Ottoman officials declined “gifts” offered to them as part of a quid pro quo. Some relationships between Europeans and Ottomans of this narrative were formed based on a “sense” of respect or toleration – that relationships were shaped not necessarily on the paradigm of reciprocity but on mutual attraction, on friendship.

The inauspicious beginnings of the mission reveal the complexities of the relationships between Europeans and between their hosts, topics that will be discussed in greater detail in the remaining chapters. As revealed in the context of the establishment of a mission by the Jesuits, the impulse to reject the Society of Jesus was strongest from their fellow Catholic Europeans whose political animosities crossed the shores of the

229 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16158, f.425rv (Queyrot, 29 June 1629). Jerome Queyrot blamed the death of Stella on the lack of preparation for the mission: “…with the death of the late Père Jean Stella in France, where he returned in order to provide the necessities of the mission, which had been very disorganized in its commencement…”
Medderranean to play out on Ottoman soil.\textsuperscript{230} For the Venetians, this was an opportunity for retaliation for Jesuit support of the papacy during the interdict of 1606. Viewing the Jesuits with great suspicion, Venetian diplomats and merchants weaved tales of espionage and intrigue into the fabric of the Jesuit robes, rebuking them as spies to the Ottoman authorities. In addition, the Franciscans who were outraged by the numerous misleading signals as to the intentions of the French, lashed out against their coreligionists. Their protestations and severe reactions to the Jesuits and the French consul Olivier were fueled by an acrimony based on different outlooks of the missionary enterprise and a fear that competition from the Jesuits would lead to a decrease in the collection of alms and the loss of their authority as custodians of the Holy Places. Pères Adrian and François, who greeted Stella and Maniglier with derision, were an exceptional example of the variability of interpersonal relationships that influenced the mentalities of the Jesuit missionaries.\textsuperscript{231}

Beyond the intra-Catholic and intra-European conflicts and agitations that consistently appeared in the reports and letters of the Jesuits, the missionaries had to manage the labyrinth of political, judicial, and social norms of Greater Syria. They were no longer part of the elite in European society, with all the benefits that this rank entailed as discussed in the previous chapter. In spite of the fact that they were manifestly under the

\textsuperscript{230} Daniel Goffman in \textit{Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642-1660}, demonstrates how the “British” brought the conflicts of the English Civil War and the restoration of the monarchy to Izmir, on the Anatolian side of the Aegean Sea. He analyzes how their actions brought to bear the authority of the Ottoman government and reveals that during this period there is no validity to the notion of British imperialism, that relative to the strength of the Ottoman Empire, the British had to conform to Ottoman laws and traditions. This was also the case for the French.

\textsuperscript{231} As will be discussed in Chapter IV, the Franciscans facilitated the establishment of the Jesuit mission to Saida in 1645. However, tensions between these two Orders were not resolved until the beginning of the eighteenth century when the disputes over religious and spiritual authority in Greater Syria reached to the point of physical violence and excommunication, the events of which will be detailed in a future published work.
protection of the French monarch through the capitulations, they were, most of the time, at the mercy of local bureaucrats and local power-politics. They had to navigate through the multifaceted social, ethnic, religious, economic, and political relationships inherent in the heterogeneous population of Bilad al-Sham fixed within a Muslim super-structure. It is to this theme that the following two chapters, which will continue the narration of the progress of the Aleppo enterprise that eventually led to the mission’s expansion into Damascus, Saida, Tripoli, and Antoura. Yet, the foundation of the Aleppo mission and that of the latter cities was not without its difficulties. A lack of material funding, intra-Jesuit rivalries, or clashes in personalities, and European-Ottoman conflicts contributed to the anxieties of the missionaries and thus affected the relationships with the indigenous population of Greater Syria and the formation of Jesuit mentalities as will be analyzed in the ensuing chapters.
Chapter III: An Inauspicious Beginning: 1627 – 1643

The previous chapter presented insight into the initial experiences of the founders of the mission, that intra-European rivalries contributed more to Jesuit anxiety than any other factor. Once the mission was established however, the Jesuits were confronted with the difficult task of building and sustaining the missionary enterprise by cultivating relationships with the indigenous population of Bilad al-Sham and the French merchants and diplomats residing there. These early missionaries, Maniglier, Queyrot, Amieu, and Chezaud, were challenged by the disorganization of the Society’s missionary process and the lack of consistent or timely funding. They were faced with having to learn the mores and traditions of the various Christian rites, as well as, comprehend the laws and customs of the broader Muslim society that held Christians and Jews in subordinate political positions. Moreover, complications arose and opportunities were lost due to inabilities in the various liturgical languages that were used by the Maronite, Armenian, Jacobite, and Greek Orthodox populations of Greater Syria. This chapter aims to analyze the milieu in which the Jesuits operated in order to establish the forces behind their mental constructs of this region during the first fifteen years of the Aleppo mission. Their conceptions of the Province of Syria, as expressed in their letters, were dependent on the geographic and politico-religious space they encountered, as much as their interpersonal relationships.

For nearly a year since the departure of Jean Stella in October of 1627, Gaspar Maniglier was left to his wit and will to make the best of a desperate situation. Alone and with little guidance, Maniglier confronted the reality of a failed mission. He lacked the necessary monetary support and he was deficient in the languages of the region,
specifically Arabic and Greek. Equally trying was not having a fellow priest or brother as companion, which was the custom in the missions. Maniglier was often frustrated and fearful in his solitude. Consistently harassed by the Venetians and Franciscans for the rare opportunities he had to perform the mass in the consular chapel, he sent several letters to the Superior General, Vitellesco, expressing his anxiety: “I have heard nothing of a member for four months [referring to the anticipated arrival of Jerome Queyrot]… I add that three years in this Orient have been completed, and that we do not yet have a house or a sanctuary where we can carry out our functions… we have not yet received a penny from the entire foreign world… and we keep living here with greatly inconvenient debt to our friends.”

The anticipated financial support from the Province of Lyon, which was officially responsible for maintaining “la mission de Syrie,” never materialized in the first fifteen years of the mission. This forced Maniglier to seek loans from the French merchants to pay the rent on the small, ill-equipped room that he occupied, and for his daily sustenance. Competition for alms was great, and at times was hard to come by. Merchants such as Robert Contour and Alleman supported Maniglier with oil for lanterns, wine at Pentecost, and in severe times, food. Yet Maniglier persisted, and on 13 November, 1628, Jerome Queyrot finally arrived in Aleppo to offer relief and support.

Queyrot, who led the initial attempt at establishing a mission in Nazareth in 1621, was part of the mission to Malta, Istanbul, and then Izmir after being rejected by the Franciscans. During these six and a half years, he came to understand the nuances of living among a non-Catholic majority in the Ottoman Empire. He was conscious of his

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232 ARSI, 95, t.1, 369r (Maniglier, 26 July 1628).
233 ARSI, 95, t.1, 380-381rv (Maniglier, 28 January 1633).
234 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.370rv (Queyrot, 20 November 1628).
status as an outsider in this realm and the importance of tempering his zeal in order to conserve the delicate nature of the mission. Queyrot was in Izmir when there was an outbreak of hostilities against the Jesuit mission in Istanbul, where overzealous missionaries were involved in provoking the controversial Greek Orthodox patriarch, Cyril Lucar (Kyrillos Lucaris). Lucar was alarmed by the eagerness of the Jesuits to convert or “catholicize” the Orthodox of Istanbul. Lucar also blamed the Jesuits for the dismantling of his printing press by the Ottoman authorities. He, with the assistance of the English and Dutch ambassadors reported the activities of the Jesuits to the Ottoman officials who removed the Jesuits from Istanbul and sent them to Chios where they were “kept in custody in a prison… military camp.”

Queyrot apparently learned his lesson: “I am devoted to this matter [the mission] so that I may not commit anything, a blemish to the good name of comradeship, should anything close to a small mishap happen.”

His mission was “to promote culture itself, and to manage the health of the souls of the male part.” What he meant by culture is unclear. In other letters, the word “culture” is dropped for either “faith” or “Catholic.” And as will be discussed in the next two chapters, the intent of the missionaries in the early years of the enterprise was to cast their nets toward the Christian male population, rather than the females. But by the last decades of the seventeenth century, the women of Syria received more attention from the

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235 ARSI, 95, t.1, 369r (Maniglier, 26 July 1628). On Lucar see Kenneth Cragg, The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1991), 129-131. Rouillard adds that the reason for their eviction from Istanbul was a result of a “hostile Caymacam” who incarcerated the Jesuits “on the pretext that a book which insulted Mohamet had been found among them.” (Rouillard, 152). Parry and Cook stipulate the Jesuits were banished from the Empire in contradistinction to the fact that Chios had been under Ottoman control since 1566 (Vernon J. Parry and M A Cook (eds.), A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 151).

236 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.370rv (Queyrot, 20 November 1628).

237 Ibid.
Jesuit priests, coinciding with a general shift in Europe towards greater female inclusion into the Catholic faith.  

Although Maniglier formally held the title of “Superior” of the mission, it was Queyrot who exerted the necessary effort to create a foothold in Aleppo. In June 1629, at the invitation of the Greek Metropolitan of Aleppo, Mellitus Karma, Queyrot established a school in the prelate’s house in the northern suburb of Jdayda where he also resided. The establishment of schools was essential to the propagation of the Catholic faith for the Jesuits; to indoctrinate the youth and capture their minds at an early age was in essence easier than converting adults. Again, these schools were an important element in the fight against heresy in Europe, and therefore were applied in Greater Syria to combat schism. According to Queyrot, there were nearly thirty students, “Greek children,” who were taught in Greek, Arabic, and Italian. Queyrot was given access to the children on one condition that he refrain from infusing Catholic doctrine into the school. His focus was to be strictly on grammar and mathematics. Within fifteen months however, the school was closed and Queyrot was discharged from his teaching responsibilities: “as I had wanted to begin in making the doctrine to the children, one dismissed me; of the manner that our occupations are of making some sermons”.

Queyrot was a priest and devout Catholic, the temptation was too great even for him not to indulge into a doctrinal foray that put the Greek Metropolitan at risk with his own flock and master. This was a precarious period for the indigenous Orthodox Christian population who saw several “conversions” of their patriarchs and prelates to either

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238 The evolving mentalities of the Jesuits toward women of the Islamicate world will be the subject of an article or part of the published form of the present work.  
239 BnF, Mss. Fr., 16158, f.425r (Queyrot, 29 June 1629).  
240 Ibid.
Catholicism or Protestantism, the most famous was that of Cyril Lucar. Lucar, for fear that the influx of Catholic missionaries would undermine his authority and shepherd his flock into the Roman Church, responded by cultivating relations with the “heretic” nations of Europe. He allegedly published a Calvinist treatise entitled *Confessio Fidei Reverdissimi Domini Cyrilli, Patriarchae Constantinopolitani* in which he espoused Calvin’s position on the Eucharist: that doctrine of the real presence and transubstantiation were symbolic in nature. For Calvin, “there [was] no reason for anyone to object that this is a figurative expression by which the name of the thing signified is given to the sign”. In some quarters, it was theorized that Lucar’s motivation for this publication was political or “nationalistic,” a concerned father of the Orthodox Church who used Protestantism as a countervailing force against Catholic encroachment into the Ottoman Empire. From a Jesuit perspective however, priests who Lucar had despised for their role in the destruction of his printing press, the “Patriarch of Constantinople [Istanbul]” was an “heretic,” and not only presented an obstacle to their proselytizing, but could potentially bring the irrational forces behind the Thirty Years War onto Ottoman soil. In his *Relation*, written in 1636 for the years 1630 to 1635, Queyrot blamed Lucar for his removal from Karma’s house. He believed when the news reached Istanbul that a Jesuit, “a name too loathsome to the Patriarch Cyril”, was teaching in the house of the Metropolitan, Lucar issued a commandment to shut down the Jesuit’s educational enterprise. For Queyrot, his sacking was not a result of the

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242 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, v.2, Book IV, Section 10 (McNeil, pp.1370-1371). This belief was antithetical to Catholic and Orthodox doctrine.

243 Michaelides, p.129.
breach of his promise not to inculcate the students with Catholic doctrine, but rather was the product of Orthodox animus. This appraisal, more than five years after his dismissal, significantly diverged from his previous statements. In various letters prior to the composition of the Relation in 1636, he made no reference to Cyril Lucar as the reason for the closure of the school.

Nonetheless, this event provided the impetus for Maniglier to take the risky step, without the authorization of the Superior General, to purchase a house large enough for the priests to erect a sanctuary, to have ample rooms for living, and most of all, a large enough space for a school. Contrary to Levenq’s portrayal of Maniglier as a “gentlemen of irresolute character and of little know-how,” Maniglier disobeyed Vitellesco’s previous prohibitions regarding the purchase of a house. But this was not a rash decision. When the house became available, he sought the advice of some merchants and the French consul on the suitability of the place and its relative market value, and requested their assistance with the purchase negotiations. Furthermore, Maniglier considered the future value of the house, since during this period property prices were depressed due to a slowdown in European trade (some merchants of various “nations” were choosing to abandon their domiciles and return to Europe), and that when business recovered, the house would “fetch well over 2,000 gold coins.” Through the benevolence of Robert Contour, a merchant from Marseille, Maniglier secured the necessary funds, a loan of 600 gold coins to procure the house and pay the associated bureaucratic fees.

244 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636).
245 ARSI, 95, t.1, 380-381rv (Maniglier, 28 January 1633). Maniglier states: “for which reason our French merchant friend, who holds authority among many merchants also selling houses, thinks that this occasion presented by God must be snatched up.”
246 Ibid., It is difficult to deduce if these “gold coins” were Venetian ducats or the Spanish eight-reals, both were widely circulated in Egypt and Syria during the seventeenth century. See Şevket Pamuk, A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 95-100.
Their new habitation was situated in the “middle of the city,” in the large central market that extended approximately 700 meters from the ancient citadel to the city walls due west. This was a busy section of the city that brought together men from various ethnicities and religions to conduct trade. And because of the high level of activity in the central market in which people would be too busy to pay any attention to them, their new location would allow the missionaries to perform their proselytizing “tasks freely and privately.” Moreover, this house according to Maniglier, “was prepared for us by God,” justifying his disobedience, had more than ample space for the Jesuits to conduct their mission. There was plenty of room for a chapel, a vestry, several bedrooms, a large wine cellar, an oven, and various other rooms that served for storage of food and religious objects: holy water, oil, icons, relics, and books when they happened to arrive. Yet, unlike their previous situation, the new residence was completely roofed, with a solid door “for observation,” and a courtyard. No longer would Queyrot’s bedroom serve as “the church treasury, school, and library,” now there was plenty of room to expand and live in comfort.247 The notion of living without property and in poverty seems to have been discarded in order to impress the indigenous Christian population in their competition with the other missionary orders such as the Capuchins and Carmelites.

The once depressed Maniglier was slowly being reassured of the sustainability of the mission with the arrival of Queyrot, and that of the Frère, Fleury Bechesne who entered Aleppo in January, 1633; combined with the friendships formed with some of the merchants and the purchase of their new accommodations to which they moved 12

247 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.376rv (Maniglier, 6 September 1632); ARSI, 95, t.1, f.380-381rv (Maniglier, 28 January 1633).
February 1633.²⁴⁸ Although the residence facilitated their missionary endeavors, and provided them with sufficient space to preach and teach, the “elegance of both the house and the sanctuary supplied grounds for hatred and envy in others.”²⁴⁹ His refreshed attitude however evaporated, “as the extremes of joy and grief happen, thus God mixes sad things with happy ones,” when in August 1633 Queyrot and Bechesne were taken into custody.²⁵⁰ The roots of this incident date back to the period immediately after Easter (1633) when there was a city-wide campaign against the Latin missionaries.

These events coincided with the capture of Fakhr al-Din Ma’an. As previously noted, the Druze Emir took a tolerant approach to the Christians of Lebanon in order to augment his power base. His overt support of Christians, in allowing them to carry rifles, ride horses, and build new churches had very negative repercussions.²⁵¹ After Ma’an’s removal by the Ottomans in 1633 by Küçük Ahmad Paşa, the Druze were “punished” for their rebelliousness.²⁵² Furthermore, the Sayfa family gained control of the region and began subjecting the Christians to violence: plundering their villages, and humiliating and arresting their clergy in order to gain the advantage over their rivals, the Ma’ans and Khazins. In the Lebanese mountains, in Beirut and Saida, the Christians were treated harshly and some of their prelates were “captured, beaten, led into servitude…, and taken by sea to Constantinople [Istanbul].”²⁵³ The Franciscans again lost their church in Nazareth, and had their monastery sacked, with those living there captured by the “Emir

²⁴⁸ ARSI, 95, t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636).
²⁴⁹ ARSI, 95, t.2, 384rv (Maniglier 6 November 1633).
²⁵⁰ Ibid.
²⁵² Abu Husayn, 673.
²⁵³ ARSI, 95, t.2, f.386-388r (Maniglier, 4 February 1634).
of Tharbey [Tarabay]” who later ransomed them for 1,500 gold coins.254 Even as these depredations were occurring, the Franciscans and Greek Orthodox priests found time to quarrel over the key to the sanctuary in Bethlehem, for which Maniglier noted, “the Greeks squandered a huge sum of money in Constantinople [Istanbul] so that they could obtain the key.”255

This mayhem evidently spilled into northern Syria and affected the conditions of Christians in Aleppo. It was revealed to the Ottoman authorities that the missionaries had opened churches in their domiciles without express authorization from the grand vizier or the sultan, contravening the traditional accord between Muslims and non-Muslims. According to Maniglier and Queyrot, a group of “Turcs” led by the judge and “a loud-mouthed Moor” ransacked the domiciles of the Capuchins, Franciscans, and Jesuits, “emptying the sanctuary of the Capuchin fathers and a church of the Venetians” of anything of value. Queyrot however saw this as opportunism; the judge and his associates took advantage of the unrest caused by the fall of Fakhr al-Din and the ascendancy of the anti-Christian Sayfa family. He believed the main reason for such attacks was to try to force the Jesuits from their house, which was being coveted by a “new mutevelli,” that these machinations were based more on personal greed than on religious differences or the establishment of sanctuaries.256

With the intervention of the

255 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.386-388r (Maniglier, 4 February 1634).
256 ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-411r ((Queyrot, 23 February 1636). A “mutevelli” was “the chief trustee of a waqf” who “exercised virtually absolute control over the foundation and its revenues.” See Gustav
French consul and Robert Contour, who sought the assistance of Küçük Ahmad Paşa, they reached an accord that the missionaries of the various rites would not re-establish their chapels and settled on payment of a fine. On 14 August however, news arrived that the Jesuits had reopened their chapel causing the judge to send his “ministers” in order to arrest the priests. Upon their arrival, the officers of the judge rudely “seized the Father and the Brother by the garment under the neck” and brought them to court where they were interrogated and were then put in the public prison for several weeks.  

During the interrogation, Queyrot was given the opportunity to secure his freedom by turning “Turc,” that is to say, to convert to Islam – an assertion made only in his Relation composed in February of 1636. For the intervening period, from September 1633 to February 1636, none of the extant letters by the Jesuits ever implied that Queyrot was given this option of conversion for freedom. This discrepancy is highly instructive. Letters written to the Superior General, Vitellesco, never mentioned the possibility of forced conversion. But for a more public audience, the priests may have embellished their experiences. The Relations, as this genre of communication was referred to, were circulated and read at the various Jesuit schools of Europe. This audience, Jesuit students and teachers alike, was accustomed to hearing of the heroic exploits of missionaries in foreign lands; and in this audience, was nurtured the prospects of adventure and martyrdom. They were very familiar with attacks on their compatriots in Asia, Africa, and the New World; their brothers brutally murdered by indigenous populations who had

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257 ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636). Maniglier was saying mass at the house of the French consul when Queyrot and Bechesne were apprehended.

258 There are 14 letters written by Maniglier, Queyrot, and Amieu for the period for which this incident occurred.
no appreciation for Jesuit interference into their local belief systems and traditions. A forced conversion resisted may be perceived as equally admirable. Missionaries from these distant fields wrote of their exploits as a discourse of battles between good and evil. Queyrot was no different: the good Jesuits, undermined and assaulted by the evil Cyril Lucar and the menacing judge who would spare them time in prison in return for a conversion to Islam. Queyrot the hero of the Relation, offered to “die rather than making himself Turk,” albeit the call hope for martyrdom was answered with only incarceration and not death.

News of the imprisonment of the Jesuits reached Louis XIII. In a letter to his new consul in Aleppo, de l’Estrade, Louis gave permission to “prohibit trade in the Echelles of Aleppo and Alexandretta if the officers of the Empire of the Turks continue to treat badly my subjects, Religious or Merchants, who reside in Aleppo.” This embargo however was never enforced; the merchants confronted with an already difficult market, could not afford any further losses and threatened to “remove the robe of the consul.” More than six years earlier, the merchants expressed their reservations for the establishment of a Jesuit mission, and it appeared their initial fears were being fulfilled. With the exception of a few merchants, the majority refused to forego their opportunity for profit. Merchant recalcitrance placed the French consul in a position where he could not dictate the terms of the settlement, in fact, it only served to weaken it. Competition from the Venetians, English, and Dutch precluded such an embargo; even with the authority and support of the king, de l’Estrade had no alternative but to negotiate with the Ottomans, on their terms.

259 ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636).
260 AE, CP, t.1, f.217r (Louis XIII, 7 January 1634).
261 AE, MT, t.4, f.131rv (de Marcheville, 23 September 1633).
After nearly four weeks of incarceration, Queyrot was released from jail on 8 September, “the day of the Blessed Virgin.” Lengthy negotiations between the paşa, the French consul, Robert Contour, and the judge resulted in the payment of seven hundred piastres: four hundred to allow the Jesuits to return to their domicile in the central market and three hundred for the release of Queyrot. Frère Bechesne was not part of the deal; after serving a few days, he was freed from prison because of a severe fever. Contour gave assurances to the judge that Bechesne would not be allowed to leave the merchant’s house during his convalescence, and if he recovered before the matter was resolved, Contour would return him to prison. This revealed a sense of fairness and flexibility on the part of the Ottoman officials that was rarely explicitly stated by the missionaries. Additionally, the negotiations resulted in the Jesuits procuring a license for the repair of their sanctuary and permission to say the mass in their chapel. Despite the efforts of secular men, Queyrot perceived the resolution of their circumstances as an intercession of divine providence. Not only were they delivered from their “persecution” but God had meted retribution on the judge:

a great fire ignited in the city of Constantinople, which in the space of 24 hours, for as much as it was written by worthy persons of faith, consumed up to seventy thousand houses, among which was that of the judge of Aleppo, which was estimated to be worth many thousands of crowns. When it was known here, it made such an impression in the minds of many, not only Christian, but also Turks, who believed that it had been a punishment from Heaven, levied upon the judge for having imprisoned the Fathers without cause.

s’accese un grand’ incendio nella città di Costinatinopoli, il quale nello spazio di 24 ore, per quantum fù scritto da persone degne di fede, consumò sino a settantamila case, trà le quali vi fù quella del giudice d’Aleppo, che era stimata valere molte migliaia di scudi, il che quando si seppe qui fece tale impressione negli animi di molti, non solo cristiani, ma
ancora Turchi, che credettero che quello fosse stato un gastigo del Cielo, mandato al giudice per avere incarcerato i Padri senza causa.  

Queyrot’s world was strictly controlled by external forces beyond the powers of men, and governed by the caprice of an all-powerful god. This was a ubiquitous belief commonly shared among the monotheists, even though in several correspondences, Jesuit missionaries accused the Muslims of fatalism and superstition. To them, these attributes were inherent in what they believed to be a flawed and apocryphal religion.  

This particular experience of the Jesuits is important in comprehending the weak, yet protected position of foreigners within the Ottoman Empire. When an opportunity presented itself for exploitation, the Jesuits were at the mercy of personal or group political and economic ambitions. According to the sources, there were extreme and cruel cases of Ottoman corruption, when dishonest men manipulated the mistakes or misadventures of the unwitting foreigner, such as in this case of Queyrot and Bechesne. The mistake was obvious: the Jesuits did not have permission from high Ottoman officials to construct a chapel, a church. Once this breach became known to the authorities, the servants of the sultan had to enforce the laws and customs of the Muslim majority, which prohibited the repair, or new construction of churches without the express permission of the ruling elite. The covetous nature of the “new mutevelli” who conspired to “steal” their house was base human nature, but redress to legal proceedings

262 ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636), Also in Rabbath, v.2, 512-532. The fire was one of over a hundred fires that plagued Istanbul between 1630 and 1840. This fire began on 2 September 1633 (although Queyrot puts it on 26 August) and engulfed one fifth of Istanbul, burning down the densely built wooden structures of the city. Queyrot’s estimate of 70,000 houses burned appears to be an exaggeration, most historians place it at twenty to thirty thousand. Also, in the pamphlet Mercure, this fire in Istanbul was a sign that the end of the Ottoman Empire was near (Rouillard, 90).

263 This was also seen as retribution from God for the “immoral” activities of Muslims and “infidels” by Sultan Murad IV. The disaster triggered a campaign against the use of coffee and tobacco in the Empire whereby the Sultan ordered all coffeehouses closed. We will visit this apparent hypocrisy and its causes in Chapter V.
was law. Ottoman legal norms, in conjunction with the capitulations, afforded foreigners legal protections to limit potential arbitrary acts of corruption. Additionally, to ensure accuracy and fairness in presenting their case, foreign litigants had the right to have an interpreter (dragoman, turjiman, turcimanno) present before any judgment could be made.264

Queyrot and Bechesne were represented by the French consul de l’Estrade, the merchant Contour, and an Armenian translator. Unhappy with the position of the judge, de l’Estrade and Contour petitioned Küçük Ahmad Paşa for assistance in this matter. For his part, the paşa called several witnesses to his seraglio in order to ascertain the validity of the accusations against the Jesuits, if indeed they had erected a chapel in their house. As part of an officially recognized millet, the Jesuits like other foreigners, could take their complaints to a higher authority when local conditions were not in their favor. On 27 August however, the paşa left Aleppo to complete his primary aim of ridding the sancak of Saida-Beirut of Emir Fakhr al-Din, before affecting the decision of the judge. While these negotiations were proceeding, Queyrot’s imprisonment was uneventful, and it does not appear that he was badly treated; there was no torture and no opportunity for martyrdom. Beyond the alleged conversion for freedom quid pro quo, Queyrot was made to sleep on the ground directly outside of the main door to the prison building, which was in retribution for declining the offer of the prison guard to sleep on the roof of the building, “al fresco,” as a gesture of good will. Unlike their counterparts in other missionary fields, the Jesuits of Bilad al-Sham never made it into Mathias Tanner’s

Once this matter was resolved, the Jesuit priests returned to their business of teaching
the children, “although they were seeming to refrain for some time from preaching.”
Within a few months however, they were again providing “spiritual services” to the
French merchants. Relieved from the anti-Latin tumult in Aleppo, they had to confront
one of the practical aspects of the mission, money to support their endeavor. For the next
two decades, their letters detailed complaints of the burdens of their debt and the
competition for alms. The prison affair was costly and had to be repaid, the taxes on their
house, 76 piastres for the annual tax and 46 piastres for the door tax, exceeded their
collection of alms, and that the competition for such alms between Jesuits, Capuchins and
Carmelites, “begging for a small offering and other means of living from the French and
Venetians,” further compounded their difficult financial circumstances. They were
receiving bread, wine, meat, oil, and coal, but scarcely any money was given. On
several occasions in these early years, Maniglier and Queyrot vehemently complained
about the lack of funds and that their letters of credit were not being honored. In October
1634, Maniglier explained: “our affairs have sunken so low, that it seems necessary
either to call us back, or effectively provide necessary items,” and “letters of exchange

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265 Mathias Tanner, *Societas Jesu usque ad Sanguinis et Vitae Profusionem Militans, in Europa, Africa, Asia, et America, contra Gentiles, Mahometanos, Judeos, Hærecticos, Impios, pro Deo, Fide, Ecclesia, Pietate. Sive Vita, et Mors Eorum, qui Ex Societate Jesu in causa Fidei, & Virtutis Propugnate, Violentá Morta toto Orbe Sublati Sunt* (Prague, 1675). This work, which was widely circulated at the Jesuit colleges in Europe, graphically depicted Jesuits being tortured and murdered by various means (Jesuits were depicted hanged, burned alive, speared, and decapitated). The reasons for this unique lack of martyrs in Greater Syria and Egypt deserve further investigation. This can be attributed to the level of tolerance within the Ottoman Empire for the multiplicity of belief systems, and the legal protections accorded to religious minorities and foreigners.

266 ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636).

267 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.396rv (Maniglier, 24 September 1634).

268 Ibid.
are being declined by our people [in Marseille], then who will pour forth their money, particularly in this time when there are huge losses, miniscule or no gains, and money is extremely scarce? The Jesuits were losing credibility with those who loaned them money. Lenders to the Jesuits were under tremendous pressure to survive during a down market. Their commercial plight was compounded by the loss of goods and money at sea due to pirate attacks and acts of nature. While the redirection of papal and state resources for the Thirty Years War affected both missionaries and merchants.

This was another indication of the disorganization of the mission and the impact of the war between Catholics and Protestants in central and eastern Europe, a war that was diverting funds from the Province of Lyon in order to support the Catholic cause, and left little in disposable income for discretionary spending on luxury items such as silks and spices, negatively impacting Mediterranean trade. “In European nations everything turns for the worse day by day. We all sail on the same ship, unaware of our future fate,” Maniglier wrote on 16 March, 1634. Maniglier began to insist that an annual stipend be remitted on a regular basis or they would have to sell the house. If financial relief was not sent, according to Maniglier, “we [would be] forced to assume debt from Jews or Moors, we will not be in a position to pay them back, because of the exuberant interest rates” of “24 or 30” percent. They were even forced to borrow 200 gold coins from Isaac, Maronite bishop of Tripoli who hoped for future reciprocal assistance from the

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269 Ibid.
270 In a letter dated 25 June 1636, Queyrot states: “For the war-like turbulence between the Christian princes who ruin trade negotiations, as it has been no more than just one ship in seven months time.” Prior to the beginning of 1635, they were accustomed to the “coming and going of ships.” Abougit_1_063r. See Masson.
271 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.389r (Maniglier, 16 March 1634).
272 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.404-405r (Maniglier, 20 January 1635).
273 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.386-388r (Maniglier, 4 February 1634); and, ARSI, 95, t.2, f.393r (Maniglier, 7 May 1634).
Jesuits as he vied for a bishopric. The loan was granted under the condition that he would be repaid when he arrived in Rome as part of a Maronite delegation to the Pope.\textsuperscript{274}

Lacking significant financial support, Maniglier and Queyrot despaired over the prospects of condemning the mission to failure.

Not only were the financial burdens overwhelming the missionaries, a sense of malaise at times pressed their spirits. On 8 August 1634 Frère Bechesne died in the service of plague victims in Aleppo. While “the merchants locked themselves up within their fondaco, according to their custom,” the Jesuits provided assistance to “Christians and infidels” during this ordeal.\textsuperscript{275} With the loss of Bechesne, the burdens of the missionary life weighed heavily on Maniglier and Queyrot. Maniglier found himself incapable of assisting Queyrot with the school: “for neither intellectual lack nor age (for I am 54) are permitting me to penetrate the most difficult and vast Arabic language which requires many years and a memory blessed with zeal for it.”\textsuperscript{276} Although he resided in Aleppo for nearly eight years at the time of this correspondence, Maniglier had yet to master the Arabic language, much less be conversational in it. He was frustrated with himself and the fact that he was of no assistance to an already encumbered Queyrot who was “full with his scholastic business and [was] rarely ever free from his academic and religious exercises.”\textsuperscript{277} By 1635, Maniglier was exhausted and viewed himself as “useless.” He was ready to return home.

Queyrot on the other hand, envisioned himself as having too much talent for the burdensome task of teaching young boys, noting in his annual report that “after many

\textsuperscript{274} ARSI, 95, t.2, f.400r (Maniglier, 14 October 1634). See also Heyberger, 251.

\textsuperscript{275} ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636). According to Edward Pocock however, the English merchants “fled and dwelt in Tents on the Mountains.” Pocock, 4.

\textsuperscript{276} ARSI, 95, t.2, f.404-405r (Maniglier, 20 January 1635).

\textsuperscript{277} Ibid.
years of teaching Philosophy and the Sacred Scripture in France, with much satisfaction and praise, [I have] come here reduced to teach the abici [ABCs].” Reflecting on his thirteen years experience in Istanbul, Izmir and Aleppo, he expressed his disillusionment with the enterprise: “a span of time which I put entirely towards teaching elementary school boys, where now for six years I have been converting with varying and at times unpleasant work with insignificant results.” Complicating the already difficult task of teaching, Queyrot lacked the necessary books for instruction in grammar, forcing him to spend a greater part of his time preparing the lessons for the growing number of students. Interestingly, with a significant quantity of Arabic books printed in Rome and elsewhere, and no apparent ban on books of this nature, (related to grammar or liturgies) in the Ottoman Empire, the Jesuits had a terrible time accessing these educational instruments. In 1622 the Congregation de Propaganda Fide established a press, then followed by the papacy in 1626. Both institutions printed various liturgies and homilies in Arabic, but for unknown reasons they were not promptly issued to the missionaries. Nonetheless, Queyrot was seeking relief, he was the only Jesuit that was fluent in Arabic and Greek; his teaching load restricted his ability to go out into the world to preach and to “help souls.” He also wanted Vitellesco to send a replacement for Bechesne, not a mere “brother,” but a “priest,” so that he “may be strong enough to

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278 ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636).
279 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.402rv (Queyrot, 9 January 1635).
280 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.409-410r (Maniglier 8 January 1636). One of the works that Queyrot cited most often was a Latin-Arabic lexicon printed in “Mediolanum” (Milan). Although the dictionary is not named, it appears to be Giggei’s *Thesaurus linguae Arabicae*, originally published in 1632. See G.J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome and Learning: the study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 25. According to Toomer, this four volume work was not “of much merit,” compared to the works Erpenius or Golius. This dictionary is also mentioned in the Encyclopedia of Islam, (p.796) “of the Collegio of Ambrosiano of Milan where, in 1632, there was printed the Latin translation of the well-known *Kamus* of al-Firusabadi, made by Antonio Giggei under the title…in four large volumes. Queyrot identifies it as “the big Arabic Lexicon consisting of four volumes which was printed for a few years in Mediolanum…”
organize Arab meetings,” that is to say, to establish congregations in order to further penetrate into the ranks of the non-Catholic Christian rites in Syria. His requests were finally answered in late November of 1635 when Père Jean Amieu and Frère Raymond Bourgeois arrived on the 28th of the month.

With these new arrivals came a rekindled spirit and renewed missionary aspirations. Queyrot finally had a partner in Jean Amieu who was capable of reducing his teaching responsibilities at the school. Amieu was charged with instructing the schoolchildren Latin, while Queyrot taught Greek, Italian, and Arabic in the afternoons after their morning lessons in Syriac from a Maronite priest. During language education, the students memorized Christian doctrine in Greek and Italian. Amieu’s presence allowed Maniglier to relinquish his responsibilities and plan his return trip to France. Prior to his departure, Maniglier placed Queyrot in charge: “I decided to leave the care of the mission to him [Queyrot], at the approval of your Reverend Father, until something else is decided on.” This further demonstrates the previous characterizations of Maniglier were relatively unfounded. When necessary, Maniglier acted independently and decisively. He also tried to secure the continued assistance of the Maronite priest at the school. In a letter to Vitellesco dated 08 January 1636, Maniglier requested a small stipend for the Maronite priest while chastising Rome for “spending frivolously” on a new promenade for the college in Avignon, when that money should be sent to the

281 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.402rv (Queyrot, 9 January 1635). The Jesuits established the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin in July 1635 for the French of Aleppo ARSI, 95 t.1, f.411-418r (Queyrot, 23 February 1636). The significance of the congregations is discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV.

282 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.409-410r (Maniglier 8 January 1636). Amieu was 48 years old at the time, Bourgeois was 38.

283 It is unclear what was meant by “Christian doctrine” since the school was a mix of “Maronites, Greeks, Armenians, and French.” Was this Catholic or Orthodox? Or were the points of contention between Catholicism and Orthodoxy glossed over at this time (with Queyrot well aware of the repercussions if he endeavored to teach Catholic doctrine to the Greek Orthodox students – it already cost him the position at the Greek Metropolitan’s house).
missions. “The Province [Lyon] and the Society are deceiving its brothers,” exclaimed Maniglier, referring to circumstances in which “Pères and Frères” were sent out ill-prepared and insufficiently supplied. 284 On the ninth of March 1636 and nearly eleven years since his initial ordeal in Aleppo, Maniglier hopeful that his words would be heeded, departed from Aleppo on his long journey back to France, leaving behind Queyrot and Amieu to continue the mission without an established protocol for financing their operation. 285

It should not be understated that the lack of money was most oppressive, and that it contributed to Jesuit anxieties. Rants against heretics, schismatics, and infidels, paled in light of the cries for financial assistance from Lyon or Rome. In October 1636 Queyrot asserted that “now for three years straight we have gone in true peace and calm,” but the debt for the purchase of their house and the fines they paid for building a chapel still weighed heavily on the missionaries. He proclaimed:

I am forced again to be a solicitous and annoying supplicant at the feet of Your Father, and beseech you tortured like Lord Jesus… that this mission has been involved in so many difficulties so that it may be preferable to disband the mission… I seek of him [Vitellesco] the ability to return to Constantinople so that what remains of my life, I may put towards assisting Christians who live among the faithless…

cogor iterum supplex ad Pat. V. pedes importunus flagitator accidere, eamque pro Christi cruciatus…missionem hanc tot esse difficultatibus implicitam ut potius videretur dissolvenda…facultatem redeundi Constantinopli ut quod mi hi vitae superest ponam in adiuvandis Christianum qui inter infideles versantur…286

284 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.409-410r (Maniglier 8 January 1636).
285 Abougit_1_199r. Before departing from Greater Syria, Maniglier took a pilgrimage to the Holy Places in Nazareth, but never made it to Jerusalem. He finally departed for France from Alexandretta on 29 March, 1636, on the same Belgian ship that brought Amieu and Bourgeois more than a year earlier (see, ARSI, 95, t.2, f.430r (Queyrot, 19 April 1636); and ARSI, 95, t.2, f.421r (Maniglier, 8 March 1636)).
286 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.435-436r (Queyrot, 2 October 1636).
Queyrot, like his predecessor Maniglier, saw that the fate of the mission rested in funding and not in “infidel” or “schismatic” oppression. Since the purchase of the house, the Jesuits acquired a bad reputation, and word spread not to lend them money anymore. This dire situation had adversely affected Jean Amieu. According to Queyrot, he was “tormented with lethargy because he saw the debt grow every day… and that some ill-repute tarnished the good name of the society.”\footnote{ARSI, 95, t.2, 424-425r (Queyrot, 17 December 1636).} In the summer of 1637 however, their financial worries were resolved. Vitellesco was finally successful in securing funds and sent them with Aimé Chezaud, making the number of Jesuit priests in Bilad al-Sham three.

Queyrot believed that with the addition of Chezaud, they could actually establish a college, “in some way we will bring back the Collegium,”\footnote{Although Chezaud lessened the teaching load of Amieu and Queyrot, a college was not established until the nineteenth century in Beirut. After their dissolution in 1773, the Jesuits removed themselves from Greater Syria. They returned in 1834 with a renewed focus on Beirut. In 1839 they established a school which was elevated to “university” status in 1875, today’s Saint Joseph University.} and split the students into four classes. The highest class, consisting of ten to twelve students, would be in advanced Latin grammar taught by Amieu; the second class, in which Queyrot would teach Greek and Arabic, was to be open to all the students; as was the third class, a course in rudimentary Latin and a course in Arithmetic with instruction by Chezaud; and the lowest class, Syriac language instruction, would be taught by a Maronite priest. Furthermore, Queyrot hoped that Rome would also fund a teacher to instruct the students in Armenian.\footnote{ARSI, 95, t.2, 424-425r (Queyrot, 17 December 1636).} In the meantime, the boys who progressed through the school, which by the end of 1636 had forty students, presented their talents to various audiences. On All Saints Day, they delivered an explanation of the Apostles’ Creed in Greek, Latin, Arabic,
and Italian. During the Feast of the Nativity, they rendered several lines of the first book of Cato that had been translated into Arabic, Italian, and French verse, and Arabic prose. Amieu’s expectations were realized, and his mental “torment” dissipated. He appreciated the potential in these young students, that “with God assisting; thus they accomplish outdoing many Europeans.” Amieu realized however, that these students would not advance to “superior studies,” due to a lack of intelligence, but because their parents transferred them into “specialized fields.”

Amieu boasted that during the previous three years, he had accomplished much. He asserted that his language skills were improving to the point that he was able to write an entire Psalter in Arabic, and that he was “looking forward to delivering a speech [sermon] in Arabic.” He attempted to learn the language through his translation efforts, specifically his rendition of Cato into Arabic. In December 1636, he exclaimed to Vitellesco: “I impress these words upon myself every day, and I see that I can express some in one consistent tone.” Amieu and Chezaud in their letters over the next several years frequently remarked on the emphasis they were putting on learning Arabic, demonstrating the Jesuit willingness to adapt to the cultural milieu in which they carried out their missionary work. A very important part of this adaption was of course

290 It is interesting that Amieu chose Book I of Cato’s Origines which focused on the history of the Italian peninsula and the attributes of its various kings. Amieu’s rationale for the use of Cato is unknown, several reasons come to mind however: (1) Cato was one of the few books available to Amieu; (2) for its historical content and value; (3) to render moral judgment on the actions of princes and kings; (4) for its eloquence. See Marcus Porcius Cato, Les origines, ed. Martine Chassignet (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986), 1-20.
291 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.443r (Amieu, 18 December 1636).
292 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.461rv (Queyrot, 24 August 1637). This letter demonstrates a concern for the futility in their efforts in advancing these students to potentially become priests so that they could maintain or lead their flocks in or to Catholicism. Queyrot felt that Amieu should have “warn[ed] the President of the Society about this issue.” The combination of the loss of students to trades and the elitist attitude the priest maintained toward teaching young children, led to a laxity in teaching: “the fathers are not serious,” about their educational responsibilities. This was part of his attempt to influence Vitellesco to send more frères to assist in the teaching load.
293 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.443r (Amieu, 18 December 1636).
294 Ibid.
developing a proficiency in language. Chezaud had a competence of Arabic prior to coming to Greater Syria that he quickly put to use when he delivered his first sermon in Arabic merely a month after his arrival on 7 July 1637.\textsuperscript{295} Amieu’s proficiency in Arabic on the other hand would later come into question, revealing that his self-appraisal was exaggerated and misleading in order to court favor with Vitellesco as will be demonstrated below.\textsuperscript{296}

While having skill in the languages of the indigenous population set the foundation for the process of bringing “souls” into the Catholic rite, money was also used as an inducement, although inconsistently. As the Jesuits continued to request funds to relieve them from their debts, they also called for the material support of segments of the Christian population, for example, “200 piastres… to nourish six Maronites,” and that if they received these funds, Amieu believed they would be executing the intention of the “founders [of the Jesuit order, specifically Loyola] before 100 years who devoted themselves to here.”\textsuperscript{297} Amieu’s plea to provide financial assistance as a means of inducing affiliation with the Catholic rite, in order to demonstrate that fealty to Rome had its rewards, was not supported until the reign of Louis XIV. Queyrot and Amieu in several letters pointed to the “poor state” of the Maronites, that money was needed to sustain them materially and to ensure they would not become “infidels.” At this stage, it was the missionaries who were forced to borrow money from a Maronite priest. Nonetheless, over the next twenty years, Queyrot, Amieu and Chezaud gained more

\textsuperscript{295} It is not known where Chezaud acquired his language skills.
\textsuperscript{296} In a letter to Vitellesco dated 4 June 1642, Chezaud complained that “the Reverend Superior Father [Amieu] is less fluent at the language because he lacks at the Arabic sermon and hence the natives are hardly enticed to hear him holding a sermon in Arabic”. ARSI, 95, t.1, f.517r (Chezaud, 4 June 1642).
\textsuperscript{297} ARSI, 95, t.1, f.467-468r (Queyrot, 22 January 1638). As will be discussed in Chapters V and VI, the invocation of Loyola (or Jesus and his apostles) was intended to make a historical and biblical connection between the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries and these figures, and therefore imbue in the reader a certain empathy for missionaries.
confidence in their ability to sway the opinion of Rome and the Jesuit hierarchy to provide the necessary financial support for the mission.

In other ways as well, they were challenged to justify their practices. They sought to facilitate their interaction with the other Christian rites by adapting to the traditions and values of the indigenous population in order to gain greater access to flocks of other shepherds. Attending the churches of non-Catholics was often looked on with suspicion, as was taking on their dress. Jesuit missionaries could be perceived as being lax in their own beliefs, for the seventeenth century religious mentalities viewed this behavior as risky and potentially leading to unwanted conversion to another rite or religion. After all, for nearly a century, various European entities were engaged in national and international defenses of their “faith:” England, France, the Low Countries and Germanic states were embroiled in the turmoil between heresy and orthodoxy. In one example, during the celebrations of the “Birth of Christ” Amieu was invited to the Armenian church outside of Aleppo where by custom he had to dress in their “sacred garments.” To protect Amieu from anyone assailing his devotion to the Catholic faith, Queyrot petitioned Vitellesco to accept this as a necessary fact of the missionary process and that it should be condoned:

Therefore I seek from Your Paternity what we should do in the future when we must enter the churches, either of Armenians or of others, whether heretical or schismatic, which is sometimes necessary, whether for the sake of learning their ceremonies and rites, or to bring out their kindness for us, at which point we could help them after; for it seems for that same reason which we are permitted to go to their church, to attend their public supplication and sacrifice, we are allowed to wear their sacred garments; truly in another way it seems they [the Catholic hierarchy] do not allow it because it is proving their errors, and moreover some danger of scandal can be at the bottom of this, for others are accustomed to being offended, certainly the Maronites and the Greeks, because the Armenians follow the Eutychian heretical philosophy.
Queret was concerned; the instructions in the *Constitutions* were ambiguous on Jesuit dress. The Society’s regulations, in fact, did not mandate a specific attire but allowed each individual Jesuit choose his own clothing. It had to be appropriate to local usage, proper, and that the type of outfit conformed to the vow of poverty and was not ostentatious.  

Mateo Ricci, who some forty years earlier, pushed the limits of this prescription by Loyola, clothed and conducted himself in the ways of the Mandarin elite in Chinese society. He wore robes of dark plum silks that were certainly inconsistent with his vow of poverty. This contradiction however was overlooked by the Jesuit hierarchy and defended by Duarte de Sande: “In truth, among these nations that are so distant from ours, and have laws and customs so different, it is necessary to enter with theirs to come out with ours…”  

If Ricci was permitted to stretch the definition of poverty, would Vitellesco allow Amieu and his fellow priests to wear the ceremonial dress of another rite? Queret’s argument was no different than that of de Sande’s

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298 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.467-468r (Queret, 22 January 1638). Heyberger notes that the Jesuits, of all the missionary groups in Syria, “were the only Latins to have adopted the costume of the ecclesiastical Easterners, the other having conserved their traditional habit, were accused in little of accommodating the traditions of the “Greeks”, p. 314.


300 Duarte de Sande was the Superior General of the China mission, 1585-1599. The quote is from Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 44; see also Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, 159-16.
opinion, for the sake of “souls” and the promotion of the Catholic faith, the boundaries of interpretation were malleable.

The issue of dress reappeared in June 1642 when Amieu petitioned the Superior General to allow the Jesuit missionaries to preach without their unique head covering:

Christians of these places with a different mind see us preaching with a four-sided beret. They would see us more pleasingly, with the round beret of novices or with only a veil which is usually worn under the four-sided beret. They have never seen four-sided berets, and so they are opposed to them, because it is unusual. We ask that we could preach without that beret in front of the natives of this town, and in the villages, for it is certain that we would be heard much more willingly.

Christiani horum locorum averso animo vident nos concionantes cum pileo quadrato. Libentius viderent, cum pileo rotundo novitiorum aut cum sola calantica quae sub pileo quadrato ferri solet, quam viderent pileos quadratos et ideo ab eis, ob desuetudinem, avertuntur; Petmus possimus ne sine illo pileo concionari apud indigenas civitatis hujus, et in pagis, certum enim est multo libertius nos auditum iri. 301

Appearance was as important as deeds, and conformity to traditional and cultural preferences was certainly a distinctive characteristic of the Jesuit Order. As in China, Japan, and the Americas, the Jesuit missionaries, with the approval of their superiors, made every effort to accommodate the sensibilities of their hosts.

These were some of the issues that the Jesuits had to manage during the early years of their mission in Greater Syria. According to their letters; they lacked the necessary manpower to affect a significant number of conversions, in fact there were none noted; they toiled with young students, teaching catechism and grammar, a task they felt was beneath them; they had difficulty communicating with the general population of Aleppo due to their deficient skills in Arabic or Greek, which resulted in poor negotiations in

301 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.519r (Amieu, 10 June 1642).
legal and commercial settings; they had to learn new social and religious protocols as they negotiated the various ethnic groups or rites; they had to adjust to the legal norms of the Ottoman Empire, and their position as a minority; and they carried a heavy financial burden throughout the first fifteen years of the mission, of which they constantly complained about. During this period, these hurdles and pressures heightened the tension between Jesuit pères. Internal conflict, born out of differences in personality or “humor”, and their situation in Greater Syria, created a sense of melancholy and discontent between the Jesuits, specifically that of Jerome Queyrot and Jean Amieu.

There was an evident unease between Queyrot and Amieu since the latter’s arrival in Aleppo in November 1635 that was driven by two equally ambitious men. Amieu seems to have believed that he was sent to take control of the mission, as Superior of the Syria Mission; while Queyrot, as stated previously, was left in charge by the outgoing Superior, Maniglier. It was not long before Amieu came to criticize Queyrot. In a 15 January 1636 letter to Vitellesco, Amieu made his feelings known:

... so that I admit, Father Jerome certainly made a beginning both praiseworthy and beneficial to Christian affairs, but it is also definitely about being able to promote it effectively with prudence and spirit, which I do not see him bringing through to perfection, he ponders constantly and he undertakes many things, he varies from going willing to unwilling, he impedes himself and others, he is moved by vigor more so than reason at times, and he finishes nothing.

... ut udemus fatear bonus P. Hieronymus posuit quidem initium laudabile et rei Christainae proficuum, sed non est vin illa prudentia aut animo ut possit illud potenter promovere, non video illum quid quam ad perfectum perducere, multa meditatus multa incipit, variat vult non vult, sese alio que impedit, impetu magis quam ratione in res fertur, nihil que finit. 302

Although the reply letters from Vitellesco relating to this matter are not extant, the corresponding topical responses by Queyrot and Amieu illuminate Vitellesco’s thinking. He was caught between the two antagonists, and had to take care not to side with one priest over the other. It was apparent by Queyrot’s rejoinder in April 1636, that he was going to try to modify his behavior and that he may be forgiven for his “ill-nature.”

Over the course of the following years however, Amieu progressively increased his doubt in Queyrot’s abilities to lead the mission. In a point-counterpoint argument between them, a pattern in the timing of their letters to the Superior General is readily identifiable; a complaint by Amieu was usually followed by a defense by Queyrot, and conversely. Sometimes these letters were written the same day. Still, even with diminishing external pressures, the tensions continued.

By the beginning of January, 1639, the Jesuits sold their costly home to two Venetians for the price of 400 piastres, and therefore completely eliminated their debt. With this burden removed, they were free to find a new place to live that was less expensive and situated in a less active area. Amieu, Chezaud, and Queyrot agreed that the initial purchase of the house by Maniglier was an error, it was too financially exacting and was located in a very busy part of Aleppo, the central market. In fact, Amieu would later state that if it had not been for the house, its location and heavy debt, the Jesuits would not have received the avanies of 1633 and Queyrot would not have been imprisoned. Yet the process of selling the house was not quick enough for Amieu. In several letters prior to the sale of the house, Amieu grumbled to Vitellesco that Queyrot missed two opportunities to sell the house for 200 piastres. He was impatient and wanted to rid

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303 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.428rv (Queyrot, 8 April 1636).
304 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.471r (Amieu, 8 August 1638).
themselves of their staggering debt. For someone of his age (52 at the time) and
experience, he was panicked and acted irrationally. Queyrot on the other hand was more
composed and accused Amieu of fits of rage, “who with his continuous fights and boasts
that he will return to France, and for the sake of deserting the house he seems to want to
lead me to desert the house.”305 The tension between Amieu and Queyrot was palpable,
to the point that Amieu was seeking any path to put some distance or space between him
and his Superior.

In March of 1639, Amieu wrote to Vitellesco requesting that he recommend to
Queyrot that he allow Amieu to visit “foreign villages” with the Jacobite Archbishop
Atla’alla who was returning to the patriarchal seat in “Merdinum,” or Mardin.306 This
was an opportunity for Amieu to set out on his own and make his missionary mark.
While the prospect to proselytize to “twelve villages… around the city, where no one was
Muslim; and if they hear the word of God from someone, they would consider him an
Angel;” the opportunity to break away from Queyrot was irresistible, regardless that
Amieu was not competent or even familiar with Aramaic, the liturgical language of the
Jacobites. Moreover, his proficiency in Arabic, which he apparently exaggerated to
Vitellesco in previous letters, was not sufficient enough to satisfy Queyrot that Amieu
was the best choice for this endeavor. Instead, Queyrot wanted Vitellesco to instruct
Amieu to focus on his responsibilities in Aleppo, educating the young students and to the
care of the spiritual well-being of the French merchants and diplomats. 307

305 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.483rv (Queyrot, 9 May 1639). Queyrot was able to put-off the landlord of the house
without having to pay him the annual fee of 150 piastres. This gave Queyrot time to pursue better offers.
306 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.480r (Amieu, 30 March 1639). Mardin is situated some 350km northeast of Aleppo
near the border between The Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Turkey. The Patriarchal seat
moved to the monastery Mar Hanonyo just outside of the city of Mardin.
307 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.497rv (Queyrot, 4 August 1640). By this time the Jesuits had established the
Congregation of the Blessed Virgin for European merchants (mostly French), and a Congregation of Young
The situation between Amieu and Queyrot negatively influenced Aimé Chezaud who beseeched Vitellesco to transfer him to the India or the Japan missions. Chezaud had kept himself busy since his arrival in Syria, translating Latin works into Arabic, specifically the *Book of Prayers of the Blessed Virgin*, and *On Contrition and Confession*. By December 1639, he had nearly completed a Turkish-Latin dictionary and a book on Arabic grammar. Chezaud was willing to relinquish his work in exchange for a less confrontational house. And if India and Japan were out of the question, he wanted to be considered for a mission to Persia, where “freedom to assist Christians seems greater”. Chezaud had made progress with the Armenian community in Aleppo where “he employed such diligence to do things well, so that a greater man could not be employed, he gained a good reputation for himself and us, even with the Turks and Jews.” Vitellesco understood Chezaud’s value to the mission and refused his requests.

A third opportunity for the Jesuits to venture beyond Aleppo materialized in the late summer of 1640 when the Greek Patriarch of Antioch, Euthymius, arrived in Aleppo en-route to Damascus. Euthymius, similar to his predecessor Mellitus Karma, was friendly toward the Jesuits and Catholics in general. He was familiar with Queyrot’s reputation as an educator who was versed in Greek and Arabic, and offered Queyrot the occasion to expand the mission to Damascus, or at least the prospect of opening a school to “teach

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308 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.489r (Chezaud, 29 December 1639).
309 Ibid.
310 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.494r (Amieu, 5 August 1640).
311 Masters (*Christians and Jews...*, 81) believes that it was Mellitus Karma who made the invitation to Queyrot in 1634. Masters makes this assumption based on Frazee, (*Catholics and Sultans*, 133), who relied on Carayon’s edition of Besson’s *La Syrie Sainte*. Besson’s work, as will be expounded on Chapter VI, has many factual incongruences relative to the letters and reports of the missionaries that came before him.
a few young people to be employed for ecclesiastical duties."312 This opportunity was
fully supported by Amieu, who emphatically promoted the idea to Vitellesco in the
autumn of the same year, outlining the benefits for such a mission, that Queyrot would
have a “comfortable living… in the Patriarch’s house and he could perform the sacrament
with Roman rites.”313 Amieu also had a ready plan for replacing Queyrot, the possible
transfer of Artand Riondet from Istanbul, or Jean Albert from Izmir, both had
“unencumbered colloquial Greek.”314 If these two experienced missionaries were
unavailable, then Gaspar Emmanuel, who was in his fourth year of theology, would be a
suitable replacement. Queyrot however did not depart with the Greek Patriarch for
Damascus until 12 May 1641. He set out on his eleven day trip with a clear conscious,
leaving the “house free of all debt,” and Amieu relieved.315 It is at this time that Amieu
took the position of superior of the Syria Mission, noting that the “Father left me care of
this mission of Aleppo, and I am accepting it, until Your Father [Vitellesco] provides
someone else.”316

While Queyrot was in Damascus, Chezaud assumed the major responsibilities of
teaching and preaching since “hardly anyone else… could write the documents of the
sacraments of the month in an Arabic sermon.” Chezaud was making it apparent to
Vitellesco that Amieu’s skills in the language were not good enough for writing the
weekly sermons, and that “the Superior Father [was] too advanced in years and not fluent
enough in the language for him ever to be able to excel in Arabic.” Furthermore,

312 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.499r (Amieu, 24 October 1640).
313 Ibid.
314 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.499r (Amieu, 24 October 1640).
315 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.505r (Queyrot, 17 April 1641).
316 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.504r (Amieu, 16 April, 1641). Amieu holds this position for the next twelve years until
the arrival of Nicolas Poirresson in 1652.
Chezaud was approached by the Armenian Archbishop to teach at a newly founded school under his patronage. Chezaud taught logic to the Armenian students in Arabic and began to improve his Armenian language skills in order to teach the older students philosophy and theology in their language. In addition to these responsibilities, Chezaud was sent by the Armenian Archbishop to tend to the sick of his flock and to make regular visits to his church in Aleppo. These added duties re-ignited the calls for additional help from Rome while Queyrot was away, yet did not dissipate upon his return.317

In four months time, Queyrot was forced to go back to Aleppo due to the upheaval that gripped Damascus. His initial experience in Damascus was not favorable. Euthymius did not live up to his end of the bargain that Queyrot would have a room to perform the sacrament. According to Queyrot, the Greek Patriarch’s consent to this provision would have exposed him “to a populace not so favorably disposed to those speaking Latin.” Whether Euthymius knew in Aleppo that he could not keep his commitment to Queyrot is unknown; what is important is that the Patriarch was willing to tolerate a Catholic in his home in exchange for the value of an Aristotelian education of future prelates in the Greek Orthodox Church. Since he was not allowed a “chamber” to perform the sacraments, Queyrot was forced to venture to the Maronite Church, which was some distance from the Patriarch’s house. To make life easier for the Jesuit, by reducing his commute, Euthymius rented a house for Queyrot near the Maronite Church. With the installation of a new governor in Damascus, Serci Ahmad Paşa, who levied “a serious fine with which Greeks… were punished… not without some fault of their own,

317 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.509-510r (Chezaud, 24 September 1641). Heyberger also notes Amieu’s lack of Arabic(p.307).
which approached 6,000 Talers\textsuperscript{318} as they call them... they sentenced the Patriarch of the Greeks to withdraw from the city for a few months," Queyrot had no other choice but to return to Aleppo in September 1641, with no patron to support him in Damascus.\textsuperscript{319}

Queyrot’s short entrée in Damascus reveals the complexity of possible relationships in seventeenth century Bilad al-Sham. Of the Christian population, the Greek Orthodox constituted the greatest proportion of the non-Muslim population of Damascus, which Queyrot estimated at 12,000. There were also 100 Maronite families (500 – 700 individuals), who were “poor or in feeble condition,” and “fewer Armenians and Jacobites,” who were wealthier than the Maronites.\textsuperscript{320} Each group had its doctrinal difference, yet each group occupied various economic/political levels in their second-class status. And each group had, in fluctuating degrees, standing with the Muslim elites of Damascus, and elsewhere. Unlike their compatriots in other missions, the people to whom the Jesuits proselytized were not part of the governing elite. For example, Mateo Ricci’s “success” in China rested on his ability to appeal to the Mandarin who were part of the governing elite: the Jesuits of Bilad al-Sham and other places where societies were governed by Islamic-inspired laws and traditions, did not have immediate access to the politically and economically powerful Muslims. With the exception of very few direct interactions between paşas, qadis, muftis, and imams, the Jesuits at this time, did not

\textsuperscript{318} A “Taler” was the Dutch lion thaler, or the esedi gurush, which according to Pamuk had an equivalent value of 1.15 Spanish eight-real, 2.4 Venetian ducats, and 70 Ottoman akçes (Pamuk, 144). During this period, a loaf of bread was 462 grams (compared to the 675 gram loaf of today) and cost one akçe (Suraiya Faroqhi, \textit{Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire} (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 208). If we assume two loaves of bread were consumed per person, per day, one thaler purchased the bread requirements for a family of five for a week. The fine was the equivalent to roughly 6,000 families going without this staple in their diet for a week.

\textsuperscript{319} ARSI, 95, t.1, f.514-515r (Queyrot, 21 October 1641). Heyberger, 282-283.

\textsuperscript{320} ARSI, 95, t.1, f.508-509r (Queyrot, 4 August 1641).
appear to cultivate any significant relationships with this group of Muslims. If so, it was not articulated in their letters. Thus, the fate of the Jesuits was closely connected to that of the non-Muslim sub-groups to who they attached themselves. This is an important distinction between the missions of the Jesuits to Muslim and non-Muslim societies: there was an immediate, and to a great extent, impenetrable boundary placed by the Muslim superstructure that prohibited conversion to Christianity. A breech of this boundary could result in the execution of the convert and the proselytizer. No such prohibitions prevented Confucianists or Buddhists from converting, or the indigenous populations of the Americas for that matter. Such circumstances limited the scope and breadth of proselytizing to the Christian population who were in significant numbers in the cities and towns of Greater Syria. Conversions, when they occurred, came from the non-Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire. In this sense however, it was easier to convert people, the chasm between Catholicism and Orthodoxy was not as great as the gulf between Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, or Shamanism and Christianity.

Queyrot returned to the cloistered living in Aleppo, to the strained relationship with his companions Amieu and Chezaud, and to the monotony of the daily grind of educating young boys without many conversions in return. They continued to feel the impact of continually declining alms due to the financial plight of French merchants, who in late 1641 were rescued financially by Louis XIII. At one point during this period, Amieu was forced to sell one of the two gospels that were written in Arabic in order to “sustain” themselves. It was not long after his return that melancholy took over Queyrot who

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321 There are additional allusions to such encounters in Chapter V.
322 Joseph Besson, however, argued just the opposite in *La Syrie Sainte*, see Chapter VI.
323 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.511-512r (Amieu, 24 September 1641).
refused to carry out his responsibilities to say the mass every fourth Sunday as was his responsibility. 324 His depression continued well into the following year leading Amieu to complain: “He has held one exhortation since he returned from Damascus, and it was wrenched out of him with so much difficulty, that we did not dare to ask for another.” Such were the internal and external tensions that affected the material and mental well being of the Jesuits; anxieties that contributed to their outlook and interpretation of the Ottoman world. They lived at the relative mercy of the people and circumstances around them in Aleppo and beyond in Europe, and they believed that they lived in a world of good and evil, governed by divine providence. They were frequently disheartened by the lack of material support for their mission from Rome and the Province of Lyon in which there was an apparent confusion where funds were to come from which forced the Jesuit priests to become more dependent on local conditions and fortunes.

Assessing the totality of their experience over this period of time, that fifteen years for the living are much longer than fifteen years in the mind of the historian, reveals a relative indifference toward the Muslim majority by the Jesuits. The letters that were generated from 1627 to 1642 rarely depicted Muslims in a deleterious manner; the few times it happened, they were responses to perceived Muslim aggressions, specifically the case of Queyrot’s imprisonment in 1633. 325 With time, Queyrot, Amieu, and Chezaud became attuned to the laws and ways of Greater Syria, and avoided situations that could lead to problems for them. Unremarkably, the letter of these first two decades highlight the limitations of European power and ironically make little mention of the Muslim majority in Aleppo, bringing into question their ability or willingness (or the

324 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.516r (Amieu, 1 January 1642).
325 During this period there were over one hundred letters written by the Jesuits, the majority addressed to Muteo Vitellesco.
opportunities) to engage Muslims in a non-legal or non-administrative venue.\textsuperscript{326} The following years however, with different tensions and new actors on the missionary scene, presented their own set of problems through which the Jesuits had to navigate.

\textsuperscript{326} In a letter to Vitellesco dated 24 October 1640, Amieu actually felt the need to gain permission from the Superior General to interact with the “Turcs” after he began to cultivate a relationship with a Muslim, stating: “… and not before the Turkish priest [mufti] met with me and went on so kindly with me that I was amazed, and he seemed to be carrying on in a humane way, so I visited him again, but does your Father not approve of this?” (ARSI, 95, t.1, f.499r).
Chapter IV: Casting Their Nets

“The harvest is great… but the workers are few”. ³²⁷

In the years between 1643 and 1660, the mission added new members and expanded into more cities in the region. ³²⁸ As the analysis will reveal, this was a by-product of changes within the Order’s general missionary organization, the winding down of the Thirty Years War, and the interpersonal relations they formed in Greater Syria with Europeans and Ottomans alike that created opportunities for expansion. ³²⁹ It demonstrates, as in the previous two chapters that sources of tension and assistance came from a multiplicity of sources, from Europeans and Ottomans, and from Muslims and Christians – Catholic or Orthodox. Out of difficult situations, caused by man and nature, the Jesuits persevered and were greeted with opportunities for establishing their mission in Saida, Tripoli, and Antoura. In addition, it was during this period that the founding of several congregations, the associations of pious lay men (and separately, boys), provided the means for the Jesuit missionaries to reach a greater proportion of the population in their apostolic endeavors. These congregations and the schools that were established in all five missionary outposts became the locus of Jesuit activity, through which the missionaries formed deeper ties with the indigenous Christian population and French diplomats and merchants. Yet, in this period, the Jesuit letters do not provide enough

³²⁷ ARSI, 95, t.1, f.542rv (Rigordi, 7 December 1644). In 1642 Chezaud used a similar metaphor: “the crop is great, but the workers are few” (ARSI, 95, t.1, f.517r (Chezaud, 4 June 1642)).
³²⁸ It must be noted here that the quantity of extant letters decreased considerably after 1653. Although there are references to the annual reports, the majority of this chapter, with respect to presenting a more factual or objective account of the Jesuit experience, makes use of the available letters. Thus the account is limited by the information revealed in the letters and leaves more questions than provides answers.
³²⁹ I use the term Ottoman to include Muslims and non-Muslims who were subjects of the sultan.
quantifiable evidence that suggests any success as measured in the number of conversions to Catholicism, even after the Order answered the appeals for more workers.

By the middle of 1642, Aimé Chezaud was extremely frustrated; his responsibilities had become too great. Writing to Vitellesco, Chezaud pleaded for the Superior General “to help us quickly”, Queyrot was preoccupied with writing, “as he says”, a dictionary, and Amieu was incapable of preaching in Arabic. In addition to his duties of preaching at the consular chapel and to the Congregation of the Immaculate Virgin, Chezaud took on the added burden of giving sermons to the Maronites “in their church”.330 This missionary, master of the Armenian and Arabic languages, taught the Armenian deacons and priests philosophy and theology in both tongues, while maintaining his regular obligations of hearing confessions, visiting the sick, and collecting alms for the materially poor Christians. Chezaud closed his letter with a final plea: “I ask Your Father again and again if he knows whether I could be helped by Rome for the health of the Armenian people”.331 The same request for assistance was expressed by the superior of the mission, Jean Amieu, the following week, in which he identified persons by name: Père Gaspar Emmanuel who was versed in Arabic, and Père François Albert, “who lives in Smyrna [Izmir]”, was proficient in the Armenian language. In fact, Amieu was not only seeking to augment the number of priests, but also to replace the despondent Queyrot, in effect, trading the unhappy missionary for Albert.332

For the following year Amieu persisted in his petitions for relief, in which he consistently insisted that the material resources, the alms they were collecting, were

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330 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.517r (Chezaud, 4 June 1642). The Superior of the Capuchin missionaries who “caught a sickness”, was unable to carry on with his duties to the Maronites.
331 Ibid.
332 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.519r (Amieu, 10 June 1642).
sufficient to support an additional two missionaries. In addition, Amieu argued there was demand for their services, that the opportunities for conversion were great, specifically among the Armenians. Their circumstances began to change at the end of February 1643 when Amieu received the news that the Syria Mission was no longer under the responsibility of the Province of Lyon, but was being placed under the guidance and control of the Province of France, a much larger, wealthier, and more prestigious operation. The latter province, headquartered in Paris, was chosen by the Jesuit hierarchy to support the missions to the Levant, including those to Istanbul and “Persia”, as well as the satellite missions to Naxos and Izmir.

The change in provincial authority over the Syria Mission marked a turning point in the fortunes of the missionaries. Amieu remained persistent in his calls for additional support. All the letters written in 1643 continued the refrain of needing such assistance: “without companions we are powerless and bound at the feet… we cannot satisfy anyone”, the superior of the mission insisted. Amieu had plans; he wanted to send Queyrot to Damascus and Chezaud to Isfahan; these men were requested by the Greek Melkite patriarch and the “Bishop of Babylon” respectively. Amieu also declared that

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333 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.525r (Amieu, 21 January 1643).
334 See Steven J. Harris, “Mapping Jesuit Science” in The Jesuits, ed. J. O’Malley, et al. 218-220; O’Malley, The First Jesuits, pp.52-55; Daly and Dimler (eds.), The Jesuit Series, v.1, p. xi. The Jesuit corporate structure was divided into provinces, led by a Provincial who reported directly to the Superior General in Rome. According to Daly and Dimler, provinces were created along “geographical and linguistic lines” with their seat of governance typically located in the largest city within their geographic borders. The Province of France was established in 1608 with the approval of Henri IV. Dompnier in his assessment of the decline in Jesuit missions within France under the responsibility of Lyon, believes that one of the main reasons the Province had difficulty supporting such enterprises was due to the catastrophic plague that impacted Lyon and the surrounding area in 1628 and 1629 (Bernard Dompnier, “L’activité missionnaire des jésuites de la province de Lyon dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle.” Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-âge, Temps modernes, v.97 (1985) : 954).
335 Levenq, p.30.
336 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.527r (Amieu, 01 April 1643).
337 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.511-512r (Amieu 24 September 1641). At this time, the Greek Melkite Church was not in communion with Rome (only the Maronite Church at this time recognized the primacy of the pope in
the “Patriarch of Alexandria of the Greek rite was present in this town [Aleppo], who asked us voluntarily out of his own will, whether we would like to live in Cairo, and offered his help”, thus the opportunities were plentiful.\textsuperscript{338} By autumn of the same year, the Province of France relented and sent five new members, more than doubling the current work force of the mission.\textsuperscript{339} The new arrivals included the much anticipated Père Gaspar Emmanuel who arrived 12 November 1643; Père Charles Malval, Père François Rigordi, and Frère Jean Richard, who together landed in Alexandretta on 23 December 1643; and on the last day of the year, Frère Valrad Bangen entered Aleppo.\textsuperscript{340} In addition, the Province of France freed the much-needed money that Amieu and the others grumbled about for so many years. Now Amieu could look forward to a coat, noting, “the Province of Lyons had not sent us a penny for five years, and this is the third winter since I have been without a warm coat, and up to now it has not been easy to provide myself with one.”\textsuperscript{341}

Writing at the end of April 1644, Amieu made contradictory statements regarding the money that was sent with the new missionaries. He claimed that the Syria Mission received “no more than 67 coins”, although a rumor spread that they received eight hundred, turning the merchants “colder toward [them]”. According to Amieu the members of the French echelles were reluctant to provide the Jesuits with the alms they

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{338} Ibid.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{339} At this time, the mission consisted of Queyrot, Amieu, Chezaud, and Frère Raymond Bourgeois.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{340} Lebon, \textit{Catalogue}. Lebon states Guillaume Valrad Bangen was a priest. In all the correspondences referring to this individual he is noted as Frère Valrad.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{341} ARSI, 95, t.1, f.530r (Amieu, 2 November 1643). The contradiction in Amieu’s letters should be noted. Initially he claimed they had enough alms to support additional missionaries, yet in this instance, he did not have the means to purchase a coat for the winter.}
occasionally received from the merchants. Moreover, Amieu points to a downturn in trade that affected the French agents who “are getting out of here, among whom three of our benefactors have left.” Amieu’s initial elation of being joined to the Province of France had evaporated, but he was not willing to give up expanding the mission to Tripoli in the north, and a return to Damascus and further east, establishing the long-hoped-for extension into the Safavid Empire. The latter goal was dependent on the motivation of the Armenian bishop of Baghdad, who at this time was reluctant to keep open his invitation to Chezaud. As reported by Amieu, hopes “were abandoned from going to Persia, granted the bishop of Babylonia writes to us fairly coldly”. For reasons that remain unclear, the Armenian bishop’s anxiety over introducing Catholics to his flock countered any perceived benefit from the Jesuit missionaries as educators.

This was all part of the sinuous aspects of the mission, the ups and downs, naturally occurring in any life, time, or place, that were reflected from one letter to another. Sometime in June or early July 1644, Amieu was once again in positive spirits, explaining that “affairs in Aleppo were going along so nicely.” In January of the same year, Amieu had sent Queyrot back to Damascus where his companion, the recently arrived Frère Jean Richard, died on 25 May while assisting victims of the plague that ravaged the city for the previous three months. These two Jesuits were joined a month later by Père François Rigordi. Rigordi had left Damascus with a French merchant who was afflicted with the pestilence and intent on returning to Saida. Meanwhile, Queyrot made the acquaintance of Michel Condoleo, a Venetian who gained his wealth in the

342 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.534r (Amieu, 25 April 1644).
343 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.531r (Amieu, 21 March 1644).
344 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.547rv (Queyrot, 25 November 1644).
service of the Sultan, serving as Master of Artillery in the Ottoman military. After the
death of Richard, Condoleo brought Queyrot to his property at Ras Baalbek in the
northern extent of the Bqaa Valley. According to the missionary, Condoleo’s estate
included a house with over forty rooms of which “four sacred rooms were allotted [to the
missionary] to perform the mass”. During his three month stay at Ras Baalbek,
Queyrot took the opportunity to preach to the Christians of the town, where he “restored a
few Maronites with the holy Eucharist whom [he] found in that town destitute of the
resources of a priest…, initiated an infant Maronite boy with a baptism, [and had] two
Priests of the Greeks expiate their conscience before [him] with a holy confession.” At
the end of August, once the epidemic abated, Queyrot returned to Damascus where
Condoleo paid the rents on a house in which the mission of Damascus was finally
established. In addition, he entrusted his son to the Jesuit “for to instruct him… The
child had made good profit; but God had called him to himself in the summer passed
[1646].” Condoleo’s son was only one of a number of boys (“Greek and Maronite”) that Queyrot taught “from morning to evening hours, for whom [he] dedicated a
painstaking effort to educate.”

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346 Heyberger is not specific about Condoleo’s position in the Empire, noting only that he was a “high
Ottoman functionary, [a] Greek from Candia” (p.283); Amieu however, in his Relation written in 1647
refers to Condoleo as “Candiote, grand cannonier of the grand vizier and man of authority” (ARSI, 95, t.3,
f.563-572r (Relation for 1644/46); A footnote in Rabbath claims that Condoleo was a Venetian who gained
land worth 4,000 to 5,000 écus in rents: “Il aurait pu parvenir à une meilleure fortune selon le monde, s’il
eût voulu prêter l’oreille aux propositions qu’on lui a faites de quitter sa religion.” According to Rabbath’s
source, Condoleo could have vastly increased his wealth if he had abjured his Christian faith (v.2, 272,
f.n.1).
347 Levenq placed Condoleo’s property at Ras Baalbek (p.21, f.n.2); Amieu in his annual report for 1644/46
simply referred to it as “Ras”; Queyrot in his letter (25 November 1644) states the property was “two days
journey from Damascus” but did not give the direction or geographic location.
348 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.547rv (Queyrot, 25 November 1644).
349 Ibid.
350 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.563-572r (Relation for 1644/46).
351 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.547rv (Queyrot, 25 November 1644).
In the meantime, Rigordi was making a name for himself in Saida. Although Rigordi had not informed Amieu of his plans to leave Damascus, the superior was willing to consider the potential of a missionary outpost in this town. Lacking the manpower at this time, Amieu however, was unsure of allowing Rigordi to remain there, for it would require sending a companion to him. Amieu had two other objectives, the establishment of a mission to Tripoli and to bolster the mission in Damascus, to which he eventually sent Père Charles Malval and Frère Valdrad. Equally important, Rigordi’s initial reception in Saida was not a welcome one and contributed to Amieu’s vacillation as expressed to Vitellesco: “I do not know what God wishes on this matter, whether for him to return to Damascus or stay there.” Yet for several reasons the opportunity at Saida was too much to resist. The diseased merchant, Sir Gaidon, who Rigordi accompanied back to this town from Damascus died 18 May 1644, bequeathing his habitation to the missionary. Inasmuch as it was only a single room in the khan where the merchants of the French echelles lived, it was free. Additionally, and surprisingly, Rigordi had the support of Anthony Crozet, provincial commissar who was touring the Holy Land and residing at the Franciscan monastery in Saida prior to his return to Marseille.

This situation however did not go unchallenged. The father of Gaidon refused to acknowledge the last will and testament of his son and challenged the bequest made to Rigordi. According to Amieu’s report of 1646, Rigordi returned the key for the room back to the father. In addition, the Capuchins, who in Aleppo had amicable

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352 Amieu came to the decision of sending these two men in August 1644, although they did not commence their travels until late October of the same year (ARSI, 95, t.1, f.540r (Amieu, 14 August, 1644)).
353 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.531r (Amieu, 21 March 1644).
354 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.541rv (Rigordi, 16 August 1644).
355 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.563-572r (Relation for 1644/46). It is unclear when this actually took place, possibly sometime in July 1644 when Amieu notes the trouble Rigordi was having, but does not explicitly discuss the donation.
relationships with the Jesuits, refused to acknowledge Rigordi’s mission. As in the initial experience of Jean Stella and Gaspar Maniglier, this was turf warfare. Saida was a much smaller town than Aleppo and therefore the competition for alms was greater with this new opportunity. There was little room for missionaries from other orders, much less the indigenous priests. Rigordi refused to capitulate however and sought the assistance of the French community of Saida, the Franciscans, and the Jesuit Superior General in Rome, Muteo Vitellesco. He argued that the “non-religious [lay] people admitted to the patience of the Jesuits”, that Saida “was worthy for a Society Mission because of the abundant harvest which it promises, among Christians and Druses”, and that the “notable love and affection [of the Franciscans] towards our society in this place is not slight.”

It must be noted that Rigordi did not have any of the local languages so his focus was directed toward the “120 Frenchmen [who] seem to be missing from our work”. In addition, Rigordi identified the possibility of a mission in Saida with historical factors, asserting that the Jesuits were following in the “footsteps of Christ” and were fulfilling Loyola’s aspirations “which while he was living was not able to accomplish himself around the sacred region.”

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356 The competition between the Capuchins and Jesuits was noted in a few letters of the missionaries. In 1652 Amieu expressed fear that the Capuchins were “plan[ning] something against” a potential mission to Persia. Although Amieu state that there was love for the Capuchins, “one still must be aware of them” (ARSI, 96, t.3, f.23-24r (Amieu, 12 January 1652)).

357 In the annual report for 1644/46, Amieu reflected on how the competition for alms “corrupted the ecclesiastics of the region… I have seen a curé from Beirut prohibiting the French priests from confessing [the indigenous Christians]”. This “curé” appealed to Amieu to “send me those who confess to you; we live from this; do not cut this away…” ARSI, 95, t.3, f.563-572r (Relation, for 1644/46).

358 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.535r (Rigordi, 16 July 1644).

359 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.540r (Amieu, 14 August 1644).

360 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.541rv (Rigordi, 16 August 1644).
To add credence to Rigordi’s appeal, Crozet wrote a letter to Vitellesco endorsing and confirming the benefits of a mission in Saida. In his correspondence, the Franciscan Commissar General praised the Jesuit’s virtues:

I am very glad about the fortuitous arrival of the very dear Father Francis Rigordi from your most loving society to this city of Saida, and so that Your most illustrious order may hold a firm position there I really want, if I dare say it, with all my might. I will advise that this friend of the society, I have known him for a long time now, I know him as a Father most lovingly, has been of such help for the spiritual lack in the vast neighboring mountains… [he is] very dear to the inhabitants, merchants, and us, and even to the Reverend Guardian in Jerusalem, who adamantly recommended him again and again to me, with a unique friendship with Father Françis known to all the Jesuits, and our entire order, at which time he wanted very much to come to our church in Saida during Advent and rouse the Frenchmen to piety during Lent, which he has already started to do with success, I thought that these things needed to be indicated to Your Reverend Father through letters for the entire society with sincere love, whose position here I adamantly wish to be everlasting and I demand it in the name of me and the Reverend Guardian of Jerusalem… I am saying, for the greater glory of God, and more adamantly for the joy of Saints Françis and Ignatius, for abundant health of spirits, and finally to the ancient friendship of Your order with ours.

Gaudeo plurimum de felici in hunc urbem Sidoniam adventu P. Francisco Rigordi carissimi ex Vestra Societate amantissima, atque ut firmas ibi sedes habeat vester ordo clarissimum valde opto, et si ausim dicere, totis viribus suadeo ut sincerus societas amicus, scio jampridem scio Pater amantissime, quanta sit auxilii spiritualis penuria in vicinis vastisque montibus… incolis, mercatoribus, nobis que carissimo, adeoque ipsi admodum P. R. Gardiano Hierusalem, qui cognita in P. Francisco Jesuitarum omnium erga se ac totum ordinum nostrum amicitia singulari, vehementer etiam atque etiam illum nihi commendavit optarit qu summopere ut in nostro Sidonis templo tempore Adventos et quadragesimus Gallos suis concionibus ad pietatum accenderet, quod illi jam feliciter inchoarit. Hec ego Paternitati Vestrae ad modum Reverendae per literas significanda esse putari pro mea erga totum societatum amore sincero, cuius sedes perpetuos vehementer hic opto flagitoque, meo ac R.P. Gardiani. Hierusalem nomine… opto inquam ad
Franciscan loathing of the Jesuits had, for the time being, dissipated into the salty air of the Mediterranean. It appears that a combination of personal relationships and a decreased anxiety over the Society’s encroachment into the Holy Land were the basis for such reconciliation between the two missionary groups, specifically the abandonment of a Jesuit mission to Jerusalem. These however were the sentiments emanating from the upper strata of the Order of Friars Minor - Observant, while some of the rank and file priests continued to express reservations “that the Pères Jésuites, protected by the very Christian King, wanted to take over the Holy Places”. According to Amieu, this apprehension was fueled by the machinations of the Capuchins who warned their Observantin cousins that “they had admitted the wolves who would eat them,” but to no avail. The mission to Saida, dedicated to Ignatius Loyola, was firmly established on 4 March 1645 when Rigordi, who was joined by the newly arrived Frère Benoit Rivoire, purchased a house from a French merchant named Cornier. While procuring the modest house was significant, more important was the support of the French Consul and the Franciscans who were firmly behind this Jesuit enterprise. This indeed was a high time for Amieu and his fellow missionaries In addition to establishing themselves in Saida, the mission was further augmented with the arrival of Pères Godet and Le Merchand, and the Frère Pierre Becherel, raising the number of missionaries to eleven.

361 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.549r (Crozet, 27 November 1644).
362 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.536-539v (unknown author, dated “end of 1644”).
363 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.563-572r (Relation, for 1644/46).
364 Ibid.
365 Lebon believes Becherel arrived some time in 1644, while Levenq states that Becherel’s “passport to the East is of 1640” (p.24, f.n.2). According to a letter dated 10 November 1644 on behalf of Louis XIV, it
Beyond a rapprochement based on mutual admiration, there was a practical reason for such support for the Jesuit mission. As noted in Chapter II, one of the main reasons given for the establishment of the Society in Greater Syria was to service the French merchants and diplomats. Despite the fact that the merchants initially objected to the mission of the Jesuits, in a sense turning their backs on Stella and Maniglier; over time they came to appreciate their value. The Jesuits came to be viewed as part of the same “nation”, sharing the same language as their compatriots, unlike the Franciscans who typically hailed from the Italian peninsula. In 1644, there was an uproar over the preaching in Aleppo of a Franciscan, Père Damien from Rivoli (western Italy, near Torino), whose “sermons, have disgusted and alike, scandalized all the Catholics of Aleppo [and who] shouts at them apocryphal histories”. His actions, according to the French Consul, “obliged the Maronite clergy, to come in body… in making [their] complaints to me.” The more intolerable act however, was his “insolence and of the discourses against the great action of His Majesty.” This was an issue of French pride in which the consul couched his complaint in nationalistic rhetoric: “for all these Italians who govern the Holy Land, became insufferable to the French, the Religious more than the Seculars, of the air in which they pierce the honor of France.” Furthermore, Damien and his brethren preached in Italian, “of which the French do not understand the language [which is] against the intention of His Holiness, who wants that the Flock hears

was highly unlikely these Jesuit missionaries traveled to Greater Syria before this date: “Beloved and good friends, the PP. Guillaume Godet and Augustin le Merchand religious of the Company of Jesus going to Aleppo and in some other places of the Levant with the FF. Pierre Becherel and Benoit Rivoire for the affairs of the missions that they there have. We write to you the present by the opinion of the Queen Regent our very [?] Madam and Mother for to say to you that you have in protecting, favoring and assisting them in all this that will hinge upon you, in sort that it may not be made to them any bad treatment by which that this may be, if there is fault, for such is our pleasure” (AE, CP, t.5, f.222r (Louis XIV, 10 November 1644)). It was highly unlikely the missionaries left prior to obtaining such an important document, the mistake of de Césy, Stella and Maniglier of 1625 was not repeated in the following years.

366 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.544rv (Bonin, 1644).
[understands] the voice of their Pastor."367 This was the first evidence in the sources of nationalistic expressions in the letters and reports that over the next few decades strengthened the position of the Jesuits in Greater Syria.368 Nonetheless, the opportunistic expansion of the Syria Mission continued in that same year with the foundation of the Tripoli mission.

The establishment of the mission to Tripoli was a dream of Amieu’s that placed the missionaries near the greater number of Maronites in Greater Syria.369 Besides, placing Jesuits in Tripoli served to calm Consul Bonin’s complaints regarding language, culture, and, nationalism, and more importantly placed the missionaries among another significant Christian population consisting of Greek Melkites and Maronites, the former constituting the greater percentage of the non-Muslim inhabitants of the region. For some time, Amieu considered the possibility of placing a Jesuit or two in this city to help “in working the Lebanon Mountain” where the Maronites were plenty. In Tripoli, the superior hoped to establish a school and seminary in order to boost attendance at the Maronite College in Rome. His desire to expand to Tripoli weighed heavy in his decision

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367 Ibid., Damien was obviously disheartened by Richelieu’s and Louis XIII’s military expeditions into the Piedmont during the preceding decades.

368 The Crown however was not ready to concede their association with the Franciscans. The Queen Regent issued a letter patent, dated 21 April 1645, that explicitly stated the Franciscans were to remain in “their Curial functions in the Consular Chapels of Cairo, Alexandria and Aleppo” (AE, MT, t.70, f.29-30r (Louis XIV, 21 April 1645)). The reasons for this are unclear and deserve more research, the initial inclination however is to point the finger at Mazarin. Although the analysis of the Jesuit experience concludes in 1660, preliminary investigation into the correspondences of the Jesuits in the latter part of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century suggests that one’s linguistic and “ethnic” identification took precedence over religious affiliation. A nascent nationalism permeated these correspondences whereby the Jesuits consistently used their national affiliation as part of their appeals to the courts of Louis XIV and Louis XV. This theme will be explored in greater detail in a future article or as part of an expansion of the present work for publication.

369 Tripoli was the closest port city to Qanubin home of the Maronite patriarchal seat. According to Poirresson it was only one day’s travel from Tripoli to Qanubin (BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.164-183r (Relation, for 1652)).
to allow Rigordi to remain in Saida,\textsuperscript{370} and when the opportunity arrived, Amieu did not hesitate to take advantage. Tripoli was also home to Bishop Isaac who some ten years earlier loaned Maniglier 200 coins, and it was his money that kept the mission viable at that time.\textsuperscript{371} This time, in Tripoli, it was French merchants and the Venetian consul, Maro Solderini, who helped support the mission,\textsuperscript{372} and according to Amieu, the mission was under the protections of the “the vice-Prefect of the region, [who stated that ] if any hindrance is inflicted upon us, he promised he would intervene”.\textsuperscript{373}

In his annual report, the superior continued to demonstrate his optimism for the mission to Tripoli, stating that it “being at the foot of Mont Liban and near Quesrouan [Kisrawan], where all are Catholics, is to be the more profitable of all”.\textsuperscript{374} This outpost however was consistently understaffed, forcing Amieu to share his time between Tripoli and Saida in his role as priest, while also carrying on his responsibilities as superior of the mission. He was depending on Rigordi to care for this mission in Tripoli while replacing him in Saida with Père Le Merchand. Rigordi’s time in Tripoli was short lived, and was sent to Isfahan in October 1645,\textsuperscript{375} while Amieu was left with a whining Le Merchand who requested a return to Europe.\textsuperscript{376} This left the Frère Pierre Becherel to fill the void and maintain a presence in this strategic city, who was later joined by another frère, Raymond Bourgeois. It was left in this condition, without a priest, until 1657,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{370} ARSI, 95, t.1, f.531r (Amieu, 21 March 1644).
\item \textsuperscript{371} ARSI, 95, t.2, f.400r (Maniglier, 14 October 1634). See also Chapter III.
\item \textsuperscript{372} Heyberger, 277.
\item \textsuperscript{373} ARSI, 95, t.1, f.559-560r (Amieu, 18 November 1645). Amieu referred to him as Negm Eddin or more likely Najm al-Din (“star of the faith”), “vicario perfecti civilatis” or deputy governor (Ka’im-makam) of the Province of Tripoli.
\item \textsuperscript{374} ARSI, 95, t.3, f.618-627r (Relation for 1650).
\item \textsuperscript{375} ARSI, 95, t.1, f.559-560r (Amieu, 18 November 1645).
\item \textsuperscript{376} Le Merchand was not familiar with any of the local languages. This deficiency in language heightened his anxiety of being responsible for a mission house.
\end{itemize}
when François Lambert came to the city. Under Amieu’s guidance and the material support that was forthcoming from the Province of Paris, the Society had established itself in the principle cities of Bilad al-Sham. By 1651, the number of missionaries was consistently above ten, meeting the requirements of the Jesuit Order that no priest should be without a companion.

Between 1652 and 1653 however, there were significant changes in the composition and leadership of the mission. On New Years Eve of 1652, René Poirresson, the presumptive superior of the mission, arrived in Aleppo after an arduous trip from Marseille that began in early November of the previous year. In his narration of crossing the Mediterranean, Poirresson’s ship became lost several times due to the captain’s poor navigation skills. The vessel was tossed about in several storms, one that broke the ship’s mainsail. While the ship was docked in Malta for repairs and provisioning, Poirresson met the survivors of a pirate attack in which the majority of the crew and passengers had their throats cut. In addition to this perilous crossing, Poirresson lost his traveling companion, who would have been the newest addition to the missionary force. The new superior, along with Père Lazare Brovart spent the last two weeks of December 1651 in the port of Alexandretta tending to sick merchants, during which time, Brovart himself contracted, what Poirresson referred to as “the complicated tertian fever”, and died on 6 January after making the trip to Aleppo. The day after, from the home of the French

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377 See below on François Lambert
378 This is not to imply a direct correlation exists between the change in superiors and the number of correspondences. It is possible that letters were written but are lost to twenty-first-century eyes.
379 The only source for the details of Poirresson’s journey comes from his annual report for 1652. Of interest, the narration of the sea journey used the typical heroic imagery as expressed by Maniglier and Amieu, of storms, wrecks, and pirates. These tropes are part of the analysis of Chapter VI.
380 ARSI, 96, t.2, f.19r (Poirresson, 7 January 1652).
consul, Poirresson wrote a brief letter of eulogy describing Brovart as “quite gifted with a suitable ability to teach”.  

According to Poirresson, there was not much time for mourning. He found the mission in the following state: “Saida in trouble, Tripoli without establishment, Damascus in Plague, and Aleppo worse than all that”.  

Late in the previous year Amieu sent Gilbert Rigaud, who arrived in Saida in 1650 to fill the vacancy left by Godet’s death, to Persia leaving the position open in Saida once again.  

In Aleppo, there was provocation with the Capuchins over rumors and false accusations to the Ottoman authorities that resulted in a fine of 400 or 500 coins. As reported by Amieu, for reasons that are unclear, the Capuchins charged that the Jesuits built an unsanctioned church (altar) which drew the judge of Aleppo into the fray.  

Nonetheless, the new superior came to appreciate the experience level of the missionaries that had formed over the past decade was enough to carry the mission through such troubled times. At the end of January, he left the consul’s home and journeyed south to Tripoli where he was finally reacquainted with his long-time friend of thirty years, Père Jean Amieu, who was coming from Saida to greet him.  

The pleasantries of the encounter are not revealed, but one can imagine the joy of Amieu to see a new face from home coming to relieve him from his difficult responsibilities.

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381 Ibid., and BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.164-183r (Relation, for 1652).
382 Ibid.
383 Rigaud arrived with Père Adrien Parvilliers in November 1650 (ARSI, 96, t.3, f.8rv (Amieu, 16 January 1651)). Rigaud spent five years in Persia before leaving for Europe (ARSI, 96, t.3, f.15-16r (Amieu, 15 November 1651)). On his return journey in 1655, he died in Tripoli at the end of September of unknown causes (Lebon, Catalogue).
384 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.15-16r (Amieu, 15 November 1651). Also, in his letter dated “end of 1651”, Amieu in a postscript noted that avanie (fine) was 500 coins. The following year, in a letter to the Superior General, Goswin Nickel, he stated the avanie was 400 coins (ARSI, 96, t.3, f.17-18r (Amieu)).
385 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.26rv (Amieu, 8 February 1652); and, BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.164-183r (Relation, for 1652).
In 1653, two of the major personalities of the mission died within two months of each other, Jerome Queyrot in September followed by Jean Amieu in November. Both men died of some form of infection after reaching the ages of 66 and 67 respectively, and after a combined 43 years in mission. This was the only time since the expansion of the mission, wherein the core cities there was no priest with more than ten years experience in Greater Syria. Moreover, with Chezaud in Persia, sent by Poirresson in the middle of 1652, no priests were left with fluency in any of the local languages, with the exception of Gaspar Emmanuel and Adrien Parvilliers. The new superior was dependent on these men, and the frère, Raymond Bourgeois who often travelled with Poirresson, acting as his interpreter. These losses were felt, and expressed in eulogies that were circulated within the Society in Europe and elsewhere. The third eulogy written by Poirresson in less than two years, announced the death of Queyrot:

he was taken from us, at 65 years old. The slow and continuous force of a fever, increasingly ominous with high temperatures, and lethal with purple blemishes, killed the body after eight or nine days, so that the fever clothed his spirit in the purple of immortality, since it was not only cleansed with all the sacraments of the Church at his departure [death], but he was also prepared long before by the daily contemplation of eternity. Mindful of his departure, as his friend in the society report that he foresaw his death, I dare say, when he would pass away three months before the annual withdrawal into Pentecost, and he concluded the sacraments of confession for his entire life, he was energetic with as much strength as before, he [Queyrot] wrote to one of us who was planning a trip to Jerusalem, that he should hasten to Damascus (where Queyrot was going to die), if he would like to find him [Queyrot] alive. He [the fellow Jesuit] hurried, but he was too late, only in time to perform the burial rites at his grave.

A priest who was attending to the one dying, asked him whether he was facing the death happily and willingly: I ask you, Queyrot posed to the

386 In a July 1657 letter to Goswin Nickel, Poirresson laments that the “years in which I was suitable for getting a grasp of Oriental languages rolled away, in which I am not capable of excelling along with responsibility for the management” of the mission (ARSI, 96, t.2, f.150r (Poirresson, 9 July 1657).
priest, to pray that I not be spared from death. Nonetheless the priest pursued. And this, my father, [responded Queyrot], if I am needed by my people, I do not refuse the task; to which he responded simply with modest silence. Meanwhile having focused passionately on the image of the Crucifix, it had to be taken down from view, lest it shorten his life; in other respects he was always aware up to the very end, to the degree that although he could not respond to those making pious comments with words, but with his eyes he would speak the affection of his heart in divine and blessed eternity, to which place he transcended as sweetly as he did sacredly.

It was a happy death, really the reward for a religious life; one of its rewards is the product of every reason for it, which he professed for the greater part of his life in the Society in teaching the primary elements of writing and reading to the Christian youth or others in boyhood, even as an old man, even having died. What was the purpose of that labor? Those who experienced it know. With what kind of gains? In Syria, Damascus was amazed, Berea [Aleppo] remembers him; in Asia, Smyrna [Izmir]; in Greece, Constantinople [Istanbul], and the islands of the Aegean, which are crowded with Christians, saw even when he was our superior, did not stop the practice of teaching children.

He was so constantly intent on the mortification of his body that he would not let a day go by when he would not be less insistent on whipping himself, [with a whip] either made of iron or fortified with bits of metal, while reciting the Psalms, *Miserere* [Psalms 51]; with a modest spirit he was known for not only being moved by teaching the alphabet, but even devoted (so he noted with his own hand) to the care of those in need, so (if it is right to say) scrupulous about his chastity that he forbade himself from touching or hitting little boys, even in punishment. With charity he did not indulge himself, not even for one day. On school holidays, he was intent on developing his students’ fathers with pious conversations, and toward reading and writing (which are the apex of the instruction here).

[Queyrot] was dedicated to the study of the Trinity, the enemies of which are the Jewish, Turkish, and Greek inhabitants that we live among. Also while alive he did not pause from celebrating the sacrament every week, as often as the official ways of correct celebration allow; and while he was dying, he requested the image of the same sacrosanct Triad be carried to him so he can see it with his eyes. With the sacrament of the Eucharist repeated the day before his death not according to the viaticum, he was restored the day after because of a repeated viaticum, because it
was not in public exposition, while he was living, he was accustomed to spending hours in adoration.

I will speak without violating the truth about the zeal he passionately felt to commemorate that which touches upon divine glory, was internal. A testament to that zeal, which I spoke about, is his untiring care to shape the values of boys for so many years rather than just the basics of reading and writing; testament is his skill in instructing men in groups equally as well, while they are healthy; testament is his vigilance in strengthening them until death while they lie ill, even with the plague; testament is his penury of all things, and the serious persecutions in Aleppo that he tolerated in order to establish the basis of the mission, both at the hands of the secular and even men in holy positions, expel him from the city; testament is the sermons and exhortations in the Greek language, Italian, French, Arabic, on the island of Mellitus [Malta], as previously proclaimed by the Knights of Malta. In Asia, he was our superior, at Smyrna; in Greece, he was a worker at Constantinople; in Syria, likewise he was a superior in Berea and Damascus, in churches and confraternities. Finally, testament was him laboring entire nights to work by lamplight, (thus) for improving his learning in so many types of disciplines (beyond Hebrew and Latin) not to be compared perhaps with anyone else’s.

This is the unique merit of his life and death, which earned him extraordinary funerary honors with a public gathering, of Maronites and Greeks. They really wanted to make a funerary offering in a public way. While he was alive, the schismatics conferred on him the authority to have the Gospel sung by his students in a Latin sermon in the solemn celebrations of Easter. In the Patriarchal Church, they were giving kisses of veneration to him [lying dead] on the feet, hands, and eyes. With tears one by one, the men approached, then the women who kissed just his feet; nonetheless there was a group of people, against native custom, that walked with the bier wailing, as if communicating to him, the Father common of all…

He really was dear while he was alive to bishops and patriarchs, even to the point of envy, because he acted as a secretary writing letters in Greek; no one of the Greek rite who paid a visit to the city missed the opportunity to visit a man who was an exemplar of antique Greek learning…

What more? Nor did the Turks lack veneration for him, with his grayish white hair and a gentle seriousness of his face, much more because of the free education of boys…
For peroration let what Michael Condoleo said serve as a succinct eulogy: that he saw and knew very many religious men of all types, in the Sicilian and Neapolitan realms, in Florence, Mediolanus, Sabaudus, and all of Spain, in the Empire of the Turks, but no one more modest or pious than our Queyrot. For this reason I may use this quotation, this moment of so much grief for all of us, when we long for such an excellent man: *The crown has fallen from head, since he has gained immortal life as a reward for his well earned service.*

nobis ereptus est, sexagenario major annis sex. Febris lenta vis, at continua, et incrementis male ominosa, purpureis maculis lethifera, octoduum inter et novenariam, corpus extinxit, ut purpura immortaliatis animum convestiret, quippe non sacramentis modo Ecclesiae omnibus elutum in exitu, sed quotidiana aeternitatis meditacione longe ante accinctum. Hujus enim non immemor, ut convictus sodales referunt, illius instantis, ausim dicere, praescius, quod cum tres ante menses secessum annuum in Pentecoste obisset, totiusque vitae sacra exomologesi conclusisset, vegetus viribus quantum sudum fuerat, ad unum e Nostris Hierosolymitana profectione cogitatem scripserit, festinaret Damasco, (ubi diem extremum clausit), transire, si vellet in vivis comperire. Festinavit ille, sed ut sepultura donando parentaret.

Quaesivit ab eo, qui morienti aderat sacerdos, num lubens et volens mortem aspiceret: « Queso te », quaerenti subjecit, « ut ores quo mihi non parcat. » Instat nihilo tamen minus alter: “Mi pater adde: si populo tuo sum necessarius, no recuso laborem;” ad quod modesto duntaxat silentio respondit. Tantis interea in Crucifixi imaginem ardoribus actus, ut subducenda fuerit aspectibus ne vitam praecipitaret; caeteroquin sic sibi praeans animo semper ad extremum usque, ut cum suggerentibus pios sensus ipse responsando subequi lingua non posset, oculis locuerat cordis affectum in divinam beatamque aeternitatem ad quam tam suaviter quam sancte transiit.

Felix mors, sed vitae vere religiosae praemium; cujus vel unum hoc, arguementi omnis instar, quod professus Societatis maximam vitae partem in primis scribendi et legendi elementis christianae juventuti tradendis aut puerili potius aetati, senex… in Syria, miratur Damascus, meminit Beraea; in Asia, Smyrna; in Graecia, Constantinoplis et insualae Aegaei maris, christianis frequentes, videre, eoque munere etiam superior Nostrorum fungi non destitit.

Mortificationi corporis ita assidue intentus ut diem nullum praeterire sineret quo flagellis non urgeret, aut ferreis aut ferro armatis, per
recitationem psalmi Miserere; in animi demissione ita insignis ut abecedario docendo non miro afficeretur modo, sed et (uti propria notavit manu) singulari egentiorum cura, Castitate tam (si fas ita loqui) superstitiesus ut interdicet sibi a puerulis tangendis, etiam in correptione. Ea charitate in proximum qua sibi non indulgeret, ne unum quidem diem. Feriatis intentus scholae liberorum quorum Patres festis diebus tum ad colloquia sancta, tum ad legendum et scribendum (quae hic pro doctrinae apice sunt), excolebat.

In divinarum Personarum Trinitatem cujus inter hostes judaeos, turcas, graecos versamur, praeceipuo ferebatur studio, atque adeo vivens rem sacram singulis septimanis de Trinitate non intermittebat facere, quantum leges rite celebrandi patiebantur; moriensque tabellam de eadem socro sancta Triade sibi asportari, et oculis subjici postulavit. Sacramento Eucharistiae pridie mortis non pro viatico, postridie pro viatico reiectus iterato, quod non vulgari in id veneratione fuisset, solitus, dum viveret, horarum pensum coram eo affuses exsolve.

Zelum quid attinet divinae gloriae commemorare quem ei pro anima fuisse non praeter veritatem dixero. Testis est ea quam dixi cura indefessa puere tot annos in moribus formandis potius quam in apicibus aut legendis aut exarandis; testis solertia in instruendis viris pariter, dum valerent, convenientibus; testis, dum decumberent, etiam in peste, vigilantia in ipsis aut eorum liberis ad mortem communi; testis penuria rerum ominet et persecutiones Beraeae graves in ponendis missionis fundamentis toleratam ab primatibus tum saecimalium, tum hominum etiam in sacris, ad expulsionem usque e civitate; testes conciones et exhortationes graeca lingua, itala, franca, arabica, in Melitensi insula, olim a confessionibus equitum gallorum; in Asia, superior Nostrorum, Smyrne; in Graecia, operarius Constantinopoli; in Syria, superior itidem Beraeae et Damasci, in templis et congregationibus; testes ad extremum sunt elucubrationes excudendae, et (sic) et eruditionis in tot generibus idiomatum (supra hebraeum et latinum) forte cum nullo conferendae.

Hoc est vitae et mortis meritum singulare, quod honores conciliavit funebres extraordinarios populi conventu, maronitarum et graecorum. Hic vero etiam publico officio parentare voluerunt, quique ejusdem authoritati inter schismaticos, dum esset in vivis, detulerant, ut Evangelium latino sermone in solemni Paschae ritu, in Patriarchali Ecclesia, a discipulis decantaretur, eidem mortuo hoc venerationis impendebant ut ad pedum, manuum, oculorum osculum, lachrymis et ordine, viri accederent, mulieres pedum duntaxat; hominum tamen caetum, contra morem
After the deaths of Queyrot and Amieu, Poirresson, for the next few years, focused his energies on stabilizing the mission and no further expansion within Syria occurred due to the limited number of Jesuits allocated within the region. Nor were there any hopes or aspirations for further penetration expressed in the extant letters. For the time being, a presence in Aleppo, Damascus, Saida, and Tripoli kept the missionaries at Amieu’s disposal busy. The number of missionaries, pères and frères, steadily increased to fourteen for this period of study. Their number of years in the Syria Mission averaged 13.7 years (as noted in Table 4a), by any standard, a significant amount of experience in any form of occupation. This average closely approximates the average of 14.1 years for the entire span of the pre-modern mission (1625 – 1774). Significantly however, of those missionaries who arrived in Bilad al-Sham prior to 1660, ten, 32.3%, returned to Europe.

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387 Rabbath, v.2, 318-321 (Poirresson, “Letter of Eulogy”, 8 September 1653). The first of the ending of the eulogy is from Lamentations 5:16, “The crown has fallen from our head; woe to us, for we have sinned.”

388 Preliminary statistical analysis of the period between 1660 and 1774, reveals no more than 28 pères and frères present at one time in Greater Syria which occurred in 1680. For the decades following 1685 until the general suppression of the Society of Jesus, the average number of Jesuits present at one time was 23.
after an average stay of 9.9 years. As a byproduct of an average of nearly fourteen years apostolic experience in the region, this longevity resulted in a degree of continuity in the membership of the mission. Young missionaries received guidance from those who were resident in Greater Syria for a substantial number of years who understood the dynamics of Ottoman social constructs. After 1645 the mission typically had at least three missionaries who had ten years or more of residence in Greater Syria (reference Chart A at the end of this chapter). New missionaries came under the guidance of men like Queyrot, Amieu, Chezaud, and Emmanuel, who served the mission for eighteen years or more. Emmanuel, as noted in the chart worked in the mission for approximately thirty-nine years.

Table 1a: Average Length of Service in Greater Syria - Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1625 – 1660</th>
<th>1625 – 1774</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Entries</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of service in Syria (years)</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortest stay</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longest stay (years)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Length of Stay (years)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode (years)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of missionaries Returned to Europe</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Returned to Europe</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not all the Jesuit missionaries were able to cope with the environment or work in Bilad al-Sham. In January 1652, Amieu expressed his concern over the heartiness of the

389 The average length of those who returned to Europe does not include Jean Stella, who returned to Europe to procure the necessary items for the mission in contrast to the others who left for reasons relating to their displeasure with the mission. Compared to the total (1625-1774), the return of missionaries to Europe was significantly higher for this period of study than the 22% for the entirety of the mission.
390 This does not necessarily imply that the length of experience determined the quality or effectiveness of the missionaries, but that they had the opportunity to learn how to operate in the milieu of a heterogeneous population with certain laws and traditions.
391 The data for this and the other tables are located at the end of this chapter.
392 These statistics do not include Frère Benoit Rivoire – the date of his return to Europe is not known.
new missionaries. The shift from the Province of Lyon to that of France was resulting in men who were not able to sustain the rigors of the enterprise. Amieu notes that according to Frère Rivoire, who lived in Paris for four years, the “priests were treated more sumptuously, and so they got sick more often, and accomplished little… they were more needy and less effective.”393 The first four Jesuits from the Province of France did not fare well. Augustin le Merchand returned to Europe after less than a year of service in 1646, Godet and Malval died of unidentified illnesses, and Frère Becherel according to Amieu, insisted that he “could not bear the air in Tripoli, and reluctantly bears the air of Saida.”394 This of course was nothing new, as previously discussed the short-lived careers of frères Fleury Bechesne and Jean Richard who died within a short span of time after their arrival in Greater Syria.395

Table 2a: Average Age at Death - Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1625 – 1660396</th>
<th>1625 – 1774</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Entries</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age (years)</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

393 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.23-24r (Amieu, 12 January 1652). Rivoire was from the Province of Lyon.
394 Ibid.
395 Bechesne died of the plague in Aleppo in August, 1634; and as noted above, Richard died in the same manner less than six months after his arrival.
396 These statistics do not include Frères Fleury Bechesne and Jean Richard, and Pères Gilbert Rigaud and François Lambert – their birth days are not known.
Table 3a: Average Age of Entry into the Novitiate - Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1625 – 1660</th>
<th>1625 – 1774</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Entries</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age (years)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4a: Average Age at Arrival in Greater Syria - Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1625 – 1660</th>
<th>1625 – 1774</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Entries</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age (years)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experience in the Ottoman field was matched by their activity in Europe. Most of the thirty missionaries were, on average, 38 years old by the time they arrived in Greater Syria (reference Table 4a). Joseph Besson ranked as the oldest, he was 58 when he left Europe for the Syria Mission. The future Jesuit missionaries, who typically entered the novitiate at the age of 21, averaged seventeen years between entering the novitiate and embarking on their apostolic role in Greater Syria (reference Table 3a). In these seventeen years, the Jesuits gained academic and practical experience they could apply in a foreign missionary field. These men served in various capacities as missionaries.

397 These statistics do not include Frères Fleury Bechesne and Jean Richard, and Pères Gilbert Rigaud and François Lambert – their entry year dates are not known. However Lambert was certainly older than the average of 21. As noted below he was a merchant in Syria who left his trade to pursue a religious life with the Jesuits.

398 Again, the average age does not include those of Bechesne, Richard, Rigaud, and Lambert, their birth years are not available. Heyberger notes that the average (as is confirmed by sources that date to 1774) age drops to 30 – 35 years of age after 1660 (Heyberger, 301). Based on my calculations for the entire period, the average age is 34.9 years, with a median and mode of 34 years of age when they arrived in the mission. It is also important to note that four members were 48 years old when they came to Syria.
educators, and as rectors in Europe. When they arrived in the missionary field, they brought maturity and experience that was translated into the establishment of schools and congregations. As the new superior of the Syria Mission, Nicolas Poirresson iterated, “I would have said all in a word, that they are the same [schools and congregations; and preaching and catechism methods] as those in France”. These were the institutions and functions that the Jesuits used to attract members of the Christian community to the Catholic fold. Through these associations, the Jesuit missionaries conducted their apostolic endeavors, becoming more familiar with the parents of students, and the young and old men who formed the congregations.

The first Congregation of the Blessed Virgin was established on 23 July 1632 by Père Gaspar Maniglier of “seven select and well-spirited Frenchmen. A month later, Queyrot formed a congregation for the Greeks of Aleppo. They had first assembled “to hear spiritual reasoning, and to recite the usual prayers.” The number of members in the congregations remains elusive, none of the sources reveals reliable information as to population sizes. At least one congregation during this period was large enough that it had to be divided into two, one for married men, and one for young men. In 1635, Queyrot made official rules that required all members to participate in confession and communion at least once a month, and that each initiate had to confess his sins prior to acceptance into the congregation. This was the basic rule for all the congregations to follow, whether for those of the French or the indigenous Christians; as in France,

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399 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.164-183r (Relation, for 1652). Also quoted in Levenq, p.46
400 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.376rv (Maniglier, 6 September 1632). Heyberger uses the later testimony found in the annual reports of Jean Amieu and Nicolas Poirresson, for 1646, and 1653 – 1655 respectively (Heyberger, 280, f.n.3). Maniglier appears to be the more trustworthy source, demonstrating the at times faulty recollection of the superiors of the missions who narrated the history of events from decades past in their annual reports.
401 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.511-512r (Amieu, 24 September 1641).
402 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.411-418r (Relation, for 1630-1635).
members were expected to assist in the spiritual guidance of the community and provide material support when possible. Associates of the congregations were guided by the Jesuit priests to prevent “the many occasions that there are in the countries of the infidel for some lose one and the other [those Christians who considered abjuring their faith]”. 403 Members of the congregations were called to raise alms in support of impoverished Christians, to help procure manumission of Christian slaves, specifically those aboard vessels, and to intervene on behalf of the Jesuits in times of need. And as Amieu believed, the congregations of the indigenous Christians, of which there was an association for the Greeks, Armenians, and Maronites in each of the mission outposts by 1657, provided the opportunity “that brings little by little the reunion of the churches.”404

The composition of the indigenous Christian congregations is not clear. With the exception of a few vague references in the sources, the identity of these members remains hidden. More is known about the French associations, in which some of the members held positions of significance in lay circles. Most notable are Consuls Bonin and Piquet, and the merchants, Stupan, Audifroy, and François Lambert.405 Lambert eventually became a Jesuit, and Consul Piquet entered the priesthood and later became bishop of the Catholic church in Césarapole. In his role as Consul, Piquet exhibited as much ardor for the faith as the Jesuits, as Poirresson noted: “He [Piquet] keeps thinking of a way to return the Syrien [Jacobite] Sect in Aleppo to the Catholic faith, and this task is doable; and should it succeed, a great field of work would be open to us, not only in Aleppo, but also in Damascus where most of the nobility of the Syriens are friends with our people,

403 Ibid.
404 Letter of Amieu (16 August 1641) in Carayon, 154.
405 With the exception of Bonin and Piquet, the others are rarely mentioned in the letters, however, their generosity and assistance was noted in the annual reports.
and they would gladly support those in Aleppo”.\footnote{ARSI, 96, t.3, f.58v (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin version). See also Heyberger, 279-280.} Moreover, it was Piquet’s relationship with Abu Naufal al-Khazin that facilitated the latter’s decision to provide a residence and a missionary opportunity to the Jesuits as noted below. These men in their diplomatic and commercial capacities provided material and political support, as well as relations with the indigenous Christian power brokers in Greater Syria\footnote{For more on Piquet see: Georges Goyau, “Le rôle religieux du consul François Piquet dans Alep, 1652-62” Revue d’histoire des missions, XII (1935) : 161-198. Goyau discussed the relationship between Piquet and Abu Naufal, in which the French consul nominated the Maronite sheikh to the position of vice-consul, but was challenged by the merchants who protested to the king. Louis XIV weighed in on the side of his consul and ennobled Abu Naufal (p.168). Heyberger asserts the following: “François Piquet, devoted to the cause of Catholicism (he became later bishop of Babylon) found in this affair the occasion of favoring the Maronites. This as well as Abu Naufal, who had equally solicited the recommendation of the pope to endorse his request, obtained from Louis XIV a nomination as vice-consul of Beirut. Revoked by the Parlement of Aix at the request of the merchants of Saida, it was reconfirmed” (Heyberger, 253-254). Raphael adds that it was Isaac Chedraoui, a graduate of the Maronite College in Rome, who delivered Piquet’s letters of recommendation for the title of vice-consul from Louis XIV. On his way to Paris, he went to Rome to retrieve the pope’s recommendation as well (Raphael, 102-103). Nonetheless, Piquet’s generosity and influence were noted in the annual reports of the superiors but not in any of the letters. See also Maurice Mercier, Chronique de l’Échelle de Syrie (Paris, 1923), 50-59, however, Mercier does not discuss Abu Naufal.} that facilitated the work of the Jesuit missionaries.

On the other hand, the congregations manifested tensions for the Society of Jesus, specifically when overly zealous members infringed on the peace of their fellow Europeans or where their meetings were viewed with suspicion by the Greek Orthodox and Muslims. According to Poirresson, these non-Catholics were “offended by this uncustomary new way… and [were] suspicious of the public church at home.”\footnote{ARSI, 96, t.3, f.57-68v (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin).} This approach of the congregations to meet at the home of lay individuals seemed to displace the sanctity of the physical edifice of the church. In 1650, Amieu lamented the reaction of Frenchmen in Aleppo who viewed the activities of the French congregation as an incredulous imposition on their way of living, of their drinking and debauched behavior. They ridiculed the austere rules of the congregation, “making songs of derision against it”
and attempted “to prevent those who frequent it, and in effect, had prevented some, and accused it of being the plague and ruin of the Khan”. Some of the Frenchmen went further and accused Amieu of being “the great devil of the Khan, the blaster in the 4 corners of Khan”. On the balance however, the founding of these associations rendered to the Jesuits opportunities with, and greater access to, the indigenous population of Bilad al-Sham. They used the influence of their members to secure space and protection that facilitated their apostolic work.

The congregations offered an entrée into other areas of possible interaction between the Jesuits and the indigenous population, in providing assistance during various religious holidays, but more importantly complemented the formation of schools. The establishment of an Armenian congregation in Aleppo, in time, resulted in the creation of a school headed by Chezaud as noted in Chapter III. Meetings between the Jesuits and Armenians, lay and religious, “gathered the benevolence of everyone towards us” and although the “beginning of the College had its difficulties, but, by the grace of God, it stands”. In other respects, the congregations could operate as a receptacle for graduates of the Jesuit schools, an opportunity for the Catholic priests to maintain a level of contact with their former students. As Poirresson noted: “we want to establish a congregation in Damascus: “We expect in the first day of erecting a congregation for those who have already left the school”. As such, these two apostolic approaches complimented each other: the members of the congregations in times of need provided assistance to the missionaries and their schools, while the graduates of the Jesuit schools

409 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.618r-627r (Relation, for 1650).
410 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.511-512r (Amieu, 24 September 1641).
411 BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.41-48r (Relation, for 1654/5).
supplied the congregations with new members. In both cases, the Jesuits reached a wider audience for their services.

As noted previously, the schools and colleges of the Society of Jesus were very important to the “refashioning of Catholicism”. They were equally essential in the propagation of the Syria Mission, proving the usefulness of Jesuit learning to the indigenous inhabitants of Greater Syria. Children, regardless of religious rite were educated by Amieu, Chezaud, Queyrot, Parvilliers, Emmanuel, Godet, and others; each of the Jesuit teachers excelling in languages, mathematics, and philosophy, all apparently proficient in Catholic doctrine. The age range of the students is not clear, but it appears from various letters that children began their education relatively young and continued under Jesuit guidance into their early teens.412 Location of the schools was dependent on local political conditions, the number of students, and the doctrinal restraints placed on the Jesuit teachers.413 In each of the missionary outposts, schools were held in the churches of the various rites, or in their courtyards; or, at the home of patriarchs or in the rooms of the Jesuits; or, in a less busy area of a khan or “sometimes [during] an excursion through nearby districts [where] instruction [was conducted] in the streets”.414

Information is also lacking regarding the funding of these schools, it appears that most financial support for the schools came from alms locally collected and the contributions from the members of the congregations. There were occasions however when the

412 The research did not reveal any documentary evidence in the letters regarding ages of the students who attended Jesuit schools. However, in Poirresson’s annual report of 1656, the superior states that there were students as young as four years of age, and rarely exceed twelve years of age (BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.41-48r (Relation, for 1654/5)).

413 As noted in the previous chapter, Queyrot’s first school was forced to close because he began to teach Catholic doctrine to the Greek Orthodox students. This issue was raised again in 1654 by Poirresson that they were not allowed to teach Catholic doctrine: “it is not permitted to us to do it in the church of the Greeks, and we make the catechism in this of the Catholic Maronites” (BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.41-48r (Relation, for 1654/5)).

414 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.57-68v (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin).
superiors beseeched the Superior General to influence the Province of France to send money for the schools. In those situations, the Jesuits framed their appeals as a way to support the Maronite College in Rome.

There were occasions when they tried to make the case for the establishment of a seminary in Tripoli, where there was nothing to fear, the Society’s reputation had apparently gained recognition, where “the Turks praise us Jesuits with thanks for teaching the youth Christianity, in Constantinople [Istanbul], Aleppo, Damascus, and other places”. This seminary, along with the other Jesuit schools in Greater Syria, were, as Amieu hoped, intended to fill an important preparatory role for students who were intellectually competent enough to move to Europe to attend the Maronite College. Amieu, in a letter dated 18 November 1645 and addressed to Pope Innocent X, noted the declining enrollment to the Maronite College in Rome. As part of his responsibilities as superior of the mission, Amieu participated in recommending students to the college as well as helped coordinate their travel to Rome, so he was aware of the movement of students to and from the college. From Amieu’s letter:

I read that fifty coins a month has been cut back for the Maronite College of Rome, because of the quota of students has not been filled: that sum

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415 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.559-560r (Amieu, 18 November 1645). This is an interesting statement, and can be interpreted to imply that the Christian youth in Tripoli were an unruly bunch, and teaching them the principles of Christian morality might improve their behavior. Or it could point to the indifference or lack of Muslim pressure for Christians and others to abjure their faiths for Islam. Amieu also notes that no avanies were ever given for teaching the Christian youths.

416 The seminary never materialized. In the spring of 1651, Amieu stated: “and even because of the College of Maronites, from which hardly any gains [students willing to go to Europe] have been appearing for a while now, without it being our fault, but not without anything to note” (ARSI, 96, t.3, f.10rv (Amieu, 15 May 1651)). See also Levenq, 23.

417 At least the portion of it in Greater Syria.

418 See for example Amieu’s recommendation of a Maronite boy to the Maronite College in Rome and possible entry into the Society of Jesus (ARSI, 95, t.1, f.520r (Amieu, 10 July 1642)), and his promotion of Philip, a Maronite alumnus, who Amieu wanted to enter into the Society and did not “think that the Reverend Patriarch of the Maronites will intervene” ( ARSI, 96, t.3, f.26rv (Amieu, 8 February 1652)).
suffices to support 20 boys in Tripoli, and there they can be taught grammar and humane letters in Syriac and Latin; those who are less capable at studying literature, they can easily be returned to their parents without any expense; those who have proven more capable can be sent to Rome and Ravenna, for philosophy and theology.

Lego resertos esse quinquaginta numos in singulos menses collegio Romano maronitarum, propter quaedam nondum discipulorum non sit completur: illa summa vinginti pubis Tripoli alendis sufficeret ibique possent edorcer grammaticam et humaniores literis syriae et latine, qui minus apti essent studio letterarum, facile possent sine dispendio ullo rem parentibus; qui aptiores probati essent possent, mitti Roman et Ravenaum philosophia et theologia causa.419

Maronite families had become reluctant to send their children to a distant land to gain a Catholic education; for love and practical reasons, they preferred to keep their children at home. Both Amieu and Poirresson recognized the genuine emotional anxiety of the parents, and the important role some of the children played in the economies of their families. Amieu noted the occasion of the mulberry worm harvest and other aspects of the silk industry at times interrupted the attendance of the children to the schools.420 The establishment of a seminary or even a college, as Poirresson wished for Aleppo in 1652, was to the missionaries a co-beneficial component to their apostolic endeavors. Maronite families would not have to send their young boys to foreign lands, and the Jesuit mission would be seen as most necessary in the propagation of the faith in Greater Syria. Quantitatively, it is difficult to assess the number of students who were educated by the Jesuit missionaries, but this appears to be their greatest area of achievement.

The sources reveal sparse evidence of the number of students under the guidance of the Jesuits between 1643 and 1660. In 1647, Amieu noted that the Jesuit school in Saida

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419 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.559-560r (Amieu, 11 November 1645).
420 Ibid.
had twenty students,\(^{421}\) while in 1650 attendance at the same school dropped to fifteen. In the same year, the students numbered seventy in Damascus under the leadership of Jerome Queyrot.\(^{422}\) By 1654, Poirresson reckoned fifty students in attendance at Damascus, this reduction in students is most likely connected to the death of the Père.\(^{423}\) According to Poirresson and Amieu, the Jesuit school in Damascus consistently had the largest number of students in Greater Syria. Since its establishment in 1644 by Père Jerome Queyrot, the school had graduated over one thousand students.\(^{424}\) Queyrot labored with “Greek and Maronite boys from morning to evening hours, for whom [he] dedicated a painstaking effort to educating.”\(^{425}\) Unfortunately, the attendance figures, as meager as they are, do not provide for demographic categorization to determine the socio-economic status and the religious rites of the students. Armenians, Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Melkites, and Nestorians, as well as the children of French merchants and diplomats, were educated by the Jesuits; some were from wealthy families.

In their education of a diverse population of students, whose parents were concerned with doctrinal affiliation, the missionary teachers operated under the same standards of other schools in the Jesuit system in Europe, where Jesuit educators were instructed to avoid doctrinal contestation in classrooms in which Protestant students attended. With the exception of Queyrot’s miscalculation earlier in the mission, it appears the Jesuits adhered to their own teaching principles, as well as respected the authority and autonomy of the non-Catholic Christians. Apparently, Queyrot was the only one caught. Poirresson

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\(^{421}\) ARSI, 95, t.3, f.563-572r (Relation, for 1644/46).

\(^{422}\) ARSI, 95, t.3, f.618r-627r (Relation, for 1650).

\(^{423}\) In promoting his decision to have Père Adrien Parvilliers succeed Jerome Queyrot, in 1653 Poirresson noted that “he [Parvilliers] had eased the regrets of the death of his predecessor, and rather accrued than diminished the number of the young that one instructed in this city here with great success” (BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.49-61v (Relation for 1653).

\(^{424}\) BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.41-48r (Relation, for 1654/5).

\(^{425}\) ARSI, 95, t.1, 547rv (Queyrot, 25 November 1644).
mused in 1656, “we use fraudulence and proceed with it [doctrine], with little questions in mathematics posed during the holidays, or something about the Gospel asked before and explained idiomatically”.

In contradistinction to such doctrinal restriction and game-play that each group employed, Poirresson indicates that no less than the Greek Archbishop in Damascus, who sought the advice of his clergy, promoted the amity “for the foreign religious, who teach gratuitously [our] young, Greek and Arabic [languages]”, and therefore permitted the teaching of the “Doctrine of Cardinal Bellarmine”.

For the most part, it appears that all sides worked to adhere to the doctrinal sensibilities of the other, developing a certain trust between the various rites and the Jesuits. It was under these conditions the Jesuits employed their skills to enhance the intellectual abilities of the students.

The Jesuit missionaries taught a variety of classes, in religion, languages, and the sciences. They instructed students in the rudiments of grammar, in French, Latin, Arabic, Greek, Armenian, and the liturgical Syriac, depending on local needs and influences: As Poirresson described, “our schools are there to teach [students] to read in Arabic, in Syriac, in Greek, and in characters of Europe, Latin, French, and Italian.”

Queyrot who at one time regarded the educating of young children as beneath his intellectual capabilities, over time, adjusted to the daily task of teaching the primary elements in any of the above languages.

In Saida, the schoolchildren were taught the “Psalms and catechisms in their own language”; it was hoped they would “go home and teach [them

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426 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.57-68v (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin).
427 BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.49-61v (Relation, for 1653). It is not clear exactly what constituted the doctrine of Robert Bellarmine. Poirresson did not reference which of the many catechetical or spiritual treatises published by Bellarmine.
428 BnF, Collection Moreau, 841, f.164-183r (Relation, for 1652).
429 Except Armenian.
to] their families”.430 And in Tripoli, Amieu “attended to the schools for the Greeks…, educating boys in the rudiments of piety…, by introducing them to the fundamentals of literature”.431 Concurrently, as they were taught the principles of their faith, the students were being imbued with the essence of mid-seventeenth century learning, in which for the past two hundred years, humanist interpretations and methods based on classical literature helped to define and reshape the religious landscape of Europe.

To support their teaching, books were imported from Europe that were translated into the “language[s] of this country that one produces writings by hand because the printing presses [are passed off as “franc” innovations], and therefore are suspect”.432 So the Jesuits made every effort to obtain books from Europe already in Arabic or Greek translation. Until the Syria Mission was taken from Lyon and placed under the Province of France’s control in 1644, the Jesuits consistently complained they could not fulfill their responsibilities due to the lack of books at their disposal, so they had to perform translation work themselves. Chezaud, in a letter written in December 1639 to the Superior General, indicated that he translated Latin works into Arabic in order “to teach piety, or increase it, like the Book of Prayers of the Blessed Virgin, and On Contrition and Confession. To make a number of copies, Chezaud wanted to send the translations to Europe, indicating in the same letter that he intended to contact Athanasius Kircher in order to have the eminent scholar use his influence to have them published and returned to the mission.”433 In 1643 Amieu stated he was working on a translation of Paul de

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430 BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.49-61v (Relation, for 1653).
432 BnF, Collection Moreau, 841, f.164-183r (Relation, for 1652).
433 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.489r (Chezaud, 29 December 1639). Kircher, one of the most prominent Jesuits of the seventeenth century, lectured on Syriac and Hebrew at Lyon in 1631 while the young Chezaud was in attendance.
Barri’s *Pious Remarks upon the Life of St. Joseph* as part of the instruction on Christian piety and on Arabic grammar. These shorter works did not present much difficulty to translate, however, the Bible was more problematic. In various letters, the Jesuits requested Arabic versions of the Bible.

By the end of 1645, the Jesuits were receiving books from Europe on a regular basis; in fact, the Jesuits assisted merchants locate and procure books requested by European patrons. Books of prayer, catechism, and other pieces of literature, even works that could potentially help the Jesuits form their arguments against the Islamic religion. In this same shipment, they received from the Père Etienne Charlet, the Provincial Assistant of the Province of France, “some Arabic, Surien [Syriac], and Armenian books; between which was the Apology of the R.P. Philippe Guadagnoli from, the Order of Friars Minor, written to respond to Hamet, a Turk person who had written his *Politor Speculi*, against the *Speculum* made by one of ours in Mogor [Mogul India], for to attract the Turks to Christianity. This Apology treated of Muhammad and of his Alcoran from page 321 to page 700.” Amieu was referring to part of the Muslim-Christian polemic that erupted in print at the end of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century. Most notable of these works was François Xavier’s *Aina Haqq Numa*, published in 1608, that claimed the divinity of Christ and the integrity of the Scriptures. In 1621 Ahmad ibn Zain, a Muslim “theologian” responded to this treatise with his own, “The Divine Rays in Refutation of Christian Error,” or as Philip Guadagnoli referred to it, *Politor Speculi*. Guadagnoli was summoned to write a response, the *Apologia pro Christiana religione*

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434 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.527r (Amieu, 2 April 1643).

435 Amieu notes that Queyrot was helping merchants locate books in Damascus (ARSI, 95, t.3, f.563-572r (Relation, for 1644/46).

436 Ibid.
which was published in Rome in 1631 and in 1637 translated into Arabic. Thus the Jesuits had in their libraries a variety of publications they used to teach and to refute.

Unfortunately, the Jesuits did not leave a detailed record or catalogue of the collections of books they used for their own personal edification and for the teaching of students. The use of books however, was only one medium in the education of the youth of Greater Syria. As was typical in the Jesuit missions and schools in Europe and elsewhere, the missionaries used theatrical performances to inculcate Christian beliefs through the rendering of biblical stories on the stage. Students were taught the story of Jesus-Christ raising Lazarus from the dead and re-enacted this scene in “silken, shining clothing” during Easter in which the Roman and Greek calendars coincided.

There were theatrical performances, tragedies in the classical sense, in which the moral and virtuous nature of their religion was depicted. For example, “the small students represented on the theatre the cruel action of this Jewish parent who, under Justinian, threw his son into a hot furnace, for having communed with his small Christian companions”. The performance was so moving that “tears poured from the eyes of the audience”. Additionally, Amieu, with genuine excitement, informed the superior general in Rome that there was “a multitude of boys [in the Aleppo school who had] a passion for learning, who have delivered public speeches three times, and the story of Joseph was prepared for the play; they were laughing at everything with sweet delight and great hope was nourishing the farmers!” These were the children from the

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438 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.108-139v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin)
439 BnF, Collection Moreau, 842, f.41-48r (Relation, for 1654/5).
440 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.450-451r (Amieu, 18 March 1637).
agrarian population being educated by some of the more learned and cosmopolitan men of France.

And beyond teaching grammar, mathematics, and religion through catechism or plays, these men were engaged in teaching the young students to respect their parents: “in this country, where the fathers and mothers leave themselves to rebuke by their children, or fear that only may make themselves Turks, when they grow, or fault of the heart in the parents in correcting them being small. They hit their father and mother, they say of the injuries during which they treated them of: ‘Mister, sidi, what would you do? what would you say?’ and nothing more.”  The methods they employed to change students’ habits were not articulated. In Poirresson’s eulogy of Jerome Queyrot however, he stated that the deceased Père was so “superstitious about his morality that he forbade himself from touching or hitting little boys, even in punishment. With this morality he did not indulge himself, not even for one day. On school holidays, he was intent on developing his students’ Fathers with holy conversations, and reading and writing (which are the apex of the instruction here).” At least in the case of Queyrot, persuading the children to act in a moral or virtuous manner was a function of philosophy and not corporal punishment.

Opportunities to educate students were not always in a formal nor a group setting. When situations for academic, intellectual, and religious exchange presented themselves, the Jesuits took advantage. Godet for example, saw himself profiting from his encounter with Victor d’Abdin as he sailed across the Mediterranean to Alexandretta in 1645:

441 BnF, Collection Moreau, 841, f.164-183r (Relation, for 1652).
443 For similar examples, see Chapter V.
A sailing companion has been added, an honest adolescent, seventeen years old and a Maronite by birth by the name of Victor d’Abdin, from the town of Jerapolis in Syria, in the vulgar, Aleppo, where I am heading. I know he descends from honest Christian parents, who I hear are upright. He returned willingly with me to his native land, and in just over twenty months he learned the French language in Paris well, so as to convert his fellow citizens, and he will be available to me with the help of the vernacular language, which is Arabic, and in turn he may learn humane letters from me, and in this way could be co-opted into the Society in the end.

Adiunctus est navigationis socius, honestus adolescens, annos natus septemdecim natione Maronita nomine Victor d’Abdin, e civitate Syrie Hierapoli, in quam tendo, vulgo Alep, Christianis parentibus iis que pariter, ut audio, honestis oriundus scio. Eo animo mecum redit in patriam, posteaquam per menses tantum viginti Linguam Gallicam Parisis apprime didicirit, ut in popularium suorum animabus lucrificiendis, ope lingae vernaculae quae Arabica est mihi adsit, et vicissim ex me literas discat humaniores, itaque tandem in Societatem cooptari possit.444

This passage is emblematic of the symbiotic relationships that Jesuit missionaries tried to create in order to enhance their apostolic endeavors. Godet was welcoming of the opportunity to engage the Maronite youth for his benefit to learn the Arabic language, while the Jesuit missionary matched the value of his language with humanist learning and the classics that he was to give to Victor d’Abdin. Godet, Amieu, Poirresson and others believed that in the end both parties would profit from the close association between the Maronite and the Society of Jesus, completing the transformation of a Europeanized Arabic speaking Christian inhabitant of Bilad al-Sham and placing him firmly within the

444 ARSI, 95, t.2, f.545-546r (Godet, 6 November 1644). Interestingly, Godet seems to have the names of these Syrian cities confused. This is the first occurrence in which a Jesuit referred to Aleppo as Hierapolis in contradistinction to Berea, which was used quite frequently by other Jesuits
Catholic fold. Furthermore, out of these circumstances, came greater prospects for reaching more people with the Catholic message. Indigenous Christians who had the opportunity to study in Europe or in the Jesuit schools of Bilad al-Sham were expected to return to their native lands to preach and spread their new learning and way of thinking in their homeland. Yet, to measure such beliefs as a function of reciprocal benefit devalues the personal and emotional bonds that were formed between teacher and student.

When students graduated or were pulled away from the schools during times of harvest for example, the Jesuits tried to maintain contact with them in order to sustain their faith by a “means that serves to take back the small lambs into our sheepfold, when the age has pulled them to go to the professions”. Invitations to participate in feast days, readings of the Bible, and even lectures in mathematics, were used to maintain certain continuity between the youth and the Jesuit missionaries. As the students grew older, the Jesuits enticed some of them to maintain their Christian faith through participation in the congregations, extending the apostolic enterprise beyond the Jesuit missionaries, calling on lay European and indigenous Christians to promote a virtuous and penitent existence. For the Jesuits, the combination of these institutions formed the bulwark against Christian apostasy, and extended the reach of the Jesuit apostolic enterprise through the members of these institutions.

Amieu saw the missionaries as “pedagogical fathers” and that young boys should “be taught in the customs of our Society” (ARSI, 95, t.1, f.559-560r (Amieu, 18 November 1645). This is an area that requires further investigation into the roles of the graduates from the Maronite College in Rome. The numbers of graduates who returned to work in their homelands is yet to be established, although Raphael provides a glimpse of such information on select graduates from the college (Raphael, 73-119).

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In addition, the congregations
and schools provided the Jesuits with the potential to form long-term relationships that unfortunately, the sources are lacking for an in depth analysis of the rapport between the Jesuits and the inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham.

There are examples to be sure that demonstrate that relationships transcended religion and ethnicity: Queyrot’s relationship with Condoleo or the Greek patriarch who helped him establish his first school in Aleppo; or Sheikh Abu Naufal and his generous donation to the Jesuits, leading to the founding of their outpost in Antoura; or that of Amieu and his dependence on Najim al-Din, the deputy governor of Tripoli, who reassured the Jesuit that no harm would come to them if they started the missionary enterprise in his city. 449 Although the details behind such examples are insufficient to measure qualitatively the breadth and depth of these relationships, they are an adequate sample to establish that connections or bonds were formed with a multiplicity of people: Italians, Greeks, Maronites, and Muslims. This however was contingent on the Jesuits abilities to learn the languages of the region, and only then were conditions amenable to penetrate cultural barriers and the passage of ideas. Conversely, as discussed in the following chapter, members of these same groups contributed to the tensions that at times framed the Jesuit experience in the Islamicate world in a negative manner.

The greatest source of daily tension and jubilance came in conversions from and to Catholicism. The missionary enterprise in Greater Syria focused on the struggle against heresy and schism, and to indoctrinate Christians in the Catholic way. Amieu, after ten years in mission, understood these goals of the Order. 450 In 1645, he declared: “I don’t

449 For more examples, see Chapter V.
450 Heyberger, 353. Instructions from Rome recommended to the missionaries to address themselves to the clergy and the influential persons when they entered a city. In addition to trying to capture the youth, the idea that the conversion of the head of a church would bring with him his flock.
think there is a more effective solution for containing the people than taking the schism on, gathering them into the sacred seat of kindness,… in a union, and many other good things”.

The Jesuits rarely dared to approach Muslims with the direct intent to convert them. Their primary concerns were to ensure Maronite doctrinal and ritual uniformity with Rome and to attract the population of indigenous Christians, regardless of rite, to Catholicism. They worked with the archbishops and patriarchs of Greeks and Armenians, who as heads of their respective millets at the provincial level, were responsible for the fair assessment of the jizya, to maintain a unity within the various Christian communities to keep members from converting to Islam. It is difficult to quantitatively assess the number of conversions to Catholicism, from either the other Christian rites or from Islam. Expressions of success or failure at converting, or preventing apostasy to Islam, varied with the type of correspondence, and anecdotally appear to produce a zero sum gain. In other words, the number of incidence of conversions to Catholicism was roughly equal to those that involved apostasy to Islam or changing Christian rite. The other forms of correspondence, the annual reports and published work of Joseph Besson, are not credible sources in gauging Jesuit effectiveness to attract people to Catholicism, these sources had a tendency to overstate the number of conversions for purposes of self-aggrandizement or as justification for continued financing of the Syria Mission. In the letters of this period however, the Jesuits rarely

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451 ARSI, 95, t.1, f.559-560r (Amieu, 18 November 1645).
452 Heyberger, 6 and 320-321.
453 Heyberger, 48-49. In several of the relations, Poirresson and Amieu recount a few stories when alms were necessary to prevent Christian apostasy to Islam. These narratives do not appear in the letters to the superior general, so this topic is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.
454 Heyberger explains: “In reality, an influx [of conversion] as massive as the Catholic propagandists would have without doubt roused a sharper hostility of the Ottoman authorities, of the Muslim notables, and of the Christian hierarchies, and definitely would have compromised the presence of the Roman Church in the Empire” (Heyberger, 285)
made mention of conversions to Catholicism, only their hopes for them. However, there are some exceptions to this rule.\textsuperscript{455}

In the letters of eulogy that were circulated in Europe advising the members of the Society of Jesus on the death, attributes, exploits, and accomplishments of the missionaries, the tendency to exaggerate the accomplishments of the deceased was quite common, as noted above. Chezaud, in his letter informing the members of the Order of the loss of Paul Godet, who died 22 December 1650, celebrated his fellow missionary’s accomplishments as an apostle, stating: “He had converted a quantity of Greeks, Armenians, and Nestorians, between others the Muthran [now] deceased of the Jacobites who confessed himself to him generally before he died, made profession of the Catholic faith, and died a few days after, very content”.\textsuperscript{456} And, Amieu was hailed by Poirresson as “an example for posterity…, converted an entire family from the Greek mistake to the Roman faith; and he turned another family away from Islam, which otherwise was about to follow the head of the household led astray with hope of taking possession of an inheritance; and he even returned many who [abandoned their faith], and led [them back] to the church for repentance, to their homeland, sent off by ship; and this work of one man brought a common man to regain many heretics, especially in Aleppo”.\textsuperscript{457}

The dearth in evidence during these thirty-five years, suggests the Jesuits did not fare well at convincing Armenians, Greeks, or Jacobites to switch allegiance to Rome and thus recognize the primacy of the pope. In the surviving Jesuit letters, there was no

\textsuperscript{455} In Chapter V, the issues of conversion/apostasy are analyzed with respect to Jesuit mentalities and how the potential for Christian apostasy forced a deleterious image of Muslims on them.

\textsuperscript{456} Rabbath, v.1, 418 (Chezaud letter, 22 December 1650). Chezaud was identifying the mutran, or metropolitan of Jacobite rite. However, research has not revealed any other primary or secondary source to confirm this. Amieu in his 1650 annual report attributed the apostasy of a European Catholic priest to Islam as a contributing factor to the death of Godet as stated below.

indication that solemn ceremonies took place that confirmed the conversion of a non-
Catholic before witnesses or any statements that a general confession of a convert took
place.\textsuperscript{458} From 1625 to 1660 the Jesuits rarely reported any changes to Catholic affiliation
of significance.\textsuperscript{459} Haddad and Heyberger have proffered that by the end of the
seventeenth century there was a greater tendency for Armenians and Melkites to associate
with the Catholic faith. According to Haddad, one of the more important reasons for
changes in affiliation was a belief by indigenous Christians that closer association with
European merchants and diplomats would result in greater protections and a potential for
increased material rewards. He notes that at some time near the middle of the century, a
shift in Mediterranean economic and military power was slowly taking place favoring
western Europe, giving countries such as France more favorable terms in the
capitulations they signed with the Porte. Although some of the indigenous Christian
population may have been attracted to the Europeans, at a personal and pragmatic level,
the vast majority of non-Catholics, did not abjure their faith for such perceived
benefits.\textsuperscript{460} There is no evidence in the Jesuit letters, and to an extent, the annual reports,
to suggest that non-Catholics saw a relationship with Europeans as materially
advantageous to cause them to abjure their religions. This is supported by the experience
of the Jesuits, as indicated by the mostly empty nets they retrieved. From 1625 to 1660,
it was the indigenous Christian population, at least the individuals with wealth that
provided material assistance to the missionaries, by opening their churches to them and

\textsuperscript{458} Heyberger, 338.
\textsuperscript{459} The most significant exception is that of Chezaud who stated in February 1652: “we restored two
Jacobites to the Roman Church last week, in addition to other Greeks in a religious famine” (ARSI, 96, t.2,
f.29r (Chezaud, 16 February 1652).
\textsuperscript{460} Studies on “East-West” relations during the sixteenth and eighteenth century demonstrate that there was
no pattern of attraction between the various Christian rites on either side of the Mediterranean. French
Catholic merchants and consuls did not associate only with Maronites, they employed and partnered with
Greek and Armenian Orthodox men as well.
by lending them money. In 1657, the most benevolent grant to the Jesuits came from the Maronite sheikh, Abu Naufal, who donated property to the Jesuits to expand their mission in Antoura.

The establishment in Antoura occurred during a tumultuous period in Greater Syria that afflicted the major cities discussed in this study. Between 1654 and 1659 Greater Syria in general, but Aleppo more precisely, felt the impact of provincial governors’ rebellions against the Ottoman Porte, that in part, were connected to the decade-old Ottoman-Venetian war over Crete and the blockade of the Dardanelles. Moreover, there were challenges to the Porte. In Istanbul and surrounding areas disgruntled soldiers created havoc in the capital city over payment in debased money, forcing Sultan Mehmet IV to place Köprülü Mehmet Paşa as Grand Vizier in 1656. Köprülü Mehmet’s primary goals were to stabilize the situation in the capital, in Anatolia in general, break the Venetian blockade, and break the backs of any would-be rebels in the provinces, including Greater Syria. During this five-year period, Seydi Ahmad Paşa and Abaza Hasan Paşa created an atmosphere of chaos and distrust as they asserted their power in the region, specifically a fifty-day siege of the city of Aleppo in 1656 by Seydi Ahmed. Ottoman court records have revealed the testimony of victims of this siege and the uprising in general, in which there was an array of severe damage to property and violence against women, some of which is described by Poirresson in an annual report in the next chapter. Yet, none of the extant Jesuit letters contained any discussion of this subject and thus an opportunity is lost to complement the two main Ottoman narratives of Evliya Çelebi and Naima who reported these events through their own prisms. With the

461 Many studies have been printed that discuss the relations between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, the most detailed comes from Kenneth M. Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991).
exception of the annual report of Poirresson, there were no descriptions of the violence, the atmosphere of fear, or the impact on the indigenous Christian population of the region.462

This turmoil had extended to Saida where the governor of that city, in a region wide atmosphere of impunity, took violent action against the foreigners of the city, specifically the French merchants. Again, according to Poirresson, the governor Hassan Aga murdered two of the merchants while extorting money from the others. These actions forced the merchants to remove themselves to the port of Acre. Within this same period, Abu Naufal offered the Jesuits property to establish themselves in Antoura. Having the manpower available, Poirresson did not hesitate at the opportunity and quickly moved François Lambert to this town. The Maronite sheikh, according to Heyberger, was attracted by the potential benefit of Jesuit knowledge as teachers and as medical doctors. But as discussed above, Abu Naufal was anticipating the vice-consulship of Beirut, and the opportunity to place himself in the good graces of the friends of the French consul, Piquet, therefore helping the Jesuits was part of the quid pro quo. For the Jesuits, locating in the mountains of the Kisrawan offered a potential refuge against the violent actions of men, and the viral infections of nature.463

In Antoura, similar to the other missionary outposts, the Jesuits established congregations and a school under the auspices of François Lambert, who was credited for the foundation of this outpost. These institutions were fundamental to the apostolic approach of the Jesuit missionaries in Europe and in Greater Syria. In the case of this

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463 Heyberger, 196 and 283; Levenq, 25-26.
study, they serve to demonstrate that ethnicity and religion, for practical and personal reasons, were often overlooked when there was a perceived benefit for both sides of the relationship. The participation of non-Catholics in these lay assemblies and schools in Aleppo, Damascus, Saida, Tripoli, and Antoura, reveals the indigenous population’s comfort level in trusting the Jesuits to avoid infusing differences in doctrine and ritual into their teaching. And as important, it exposes the degree of toleration exhibited by the Ottoman population of Greater Syria toward foreigners and non-Muslims. Although some Jesuits just could not resist such opportunities; this was the raison d’être of the missionaries; their image of self and a clearly defined purpose in life, were wholly contingent on the battle for souls. Unfortunately, the decreased number of extant letters for this specific period prohibits a more detailed analysis of the intra-Christian relationships between 1625 and 1660. In the next chapter however, some of these same issues are analyzed as the study delves deeper into the mentalities of the Jesuit missionaries of Bilad al-Sham.
Table 1: Length of Stay of Jesuits in the Syria Mission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>P/F</th>
<th>Arrival Year</th>
<th>Return Year</th>
<th>Death Year</th>
<th>Length of Stay (in years)</th>
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* Rigordi and Chezaud were transferred to Isfahan in 1645 and 1652 respectively. The calculations in Table 1a reflect this. # Brovart, as noted, died within a few days after his arrival in Greater Syria.
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<td>Aleppo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besson</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1601</td>
<td>1659</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Saida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bechesne</td>
<td>Fleury</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1633</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Aleppo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1643</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Aleppo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigaud</td>
<td>Gilbert</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Saida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambert</td>
<td>François</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1657</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 1
Jesuit Timeline
1625 - 1660
Duration of Mission in Greater Syria

Jesuit Missionary

Stella
Maniglier
Queyrot
Bechesne
Amieu
Bourgeois
Chezaud
Richard
Malval
Bangen
Rigordi
Emmanuel
Becherel
Godet
Marchant
Rigaud
Parvillers
Brouart
Poirresson
Sales
Canard
Berthe
Riehelius
Lambert
Resteau
Bonamy
Bourgoin
Besson
Goberon
Clisson

Year
1625 1635 1645 1655 1665 1675 1685 1695

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Chapter V: The Relations\textsuperscript{464} and Jesuit Mentalities

The chronological narrative of the preceding chapters demonstrated the various issues through which the Jesuits navigated during their establishment and expansion of the Mission of Syria. While these sections served to analyze specifically the general experience of the first three generations of missionaries, this chapter aims to articulate the development of a Jesuit attitude or perception toward the people and environment in which they performed their apostolic tasks. Inasmuch as the Jesuits may have had pre-conceived notions of Bilad al-Sham or “la Syrie Sainte,” their construction of the image of the other was influenced as much by local factors as their pre-existing, ideologically-driven paradigms. These factors, mixed with violence and failed conversions, were articulated and arranged categorically in the Relations written in the fifth decade of the seventeenth century. Where the letters sent to the Superior General in Rome typically disclosed the chronology of events, the Relations, conveyed in flowing narrative the hopes and anxieties that led to their construction of the image of the other. Moreover, these Relations should be seen as an entrée into the Jesuit mind.

The Relations were reports submitted on an annual basis by the Superior of the Syria Mission, of which only eleven are extant.\textsuperscript{465} These reports were written between 1627 and 1658; the first two reports were addressed to the Superior General of the Jesuit Order, Muteo Vitellesco, the remainder were written to the Provincial or Assistant of the Provence of Paris. The initial reports were structured in the form of a lengthy letter, lacking any subject headings as those of Amieu and Poirresson written between 1646 and

\textsuperscript{464} There are certain events articulated in the relations that did not appear in the letters of the Jesuits, and therefore were omitted from the preceding chronological narrative.

\textsuperscript{465} Each relation averaged 15,000 words. There are annual reports that span more than one year.
1658. Maniglier and Stella’s report for 1625-1626 was filled with an account of their initial travels to Greater Syria and the problems that they encountered, most of which was covered in the second chapter and will not be included here. While Queyrot’s report, written in Italian, spanning the years 1630 to 1635, focused on the progress of the mission and the “persecution” of being imprisoned,466 Amieu’s and Poirresson’s reports, to the contrary, were more expansive and followed a structured format. Both Poirresson and Amieu divided their reports into sections or chapters. Amieu’s segments were geographically listed, that is to say, each section treated on the individual missions (or outposts) in Syria: Aleppo, Damascus, Saida, and Tripoli. On the other hand, Poirresson’s chapters were thematic in nature, such as: “the State of the Country;” “of the Mores of Syria,” or, “Rarities and Customs of the Region;” “the Employ of the Mission;” “Examples of Notable Virtues;” “the Redoubtable Effects of the Providence of God,” and “Concerning Hope of Greater Benefit.”

In total, these reports present an opportunity to develop a more nuanced understanding of Jesuit mentalities and the formation of an attitude or image of the inhabitants of Greater Syria. When considered over time, the reports provide a context in which certain common or unique attributes of individual Jesuits come to light. Their responses to similar situations reveal something of a group mentality, a shared vision or perspective on events or people attributed to all the members. In addition, the reports, specifically those from 1652-1657, were written by one person, Nicolas Poirresson, the Superior of the Syria Mission. Poirresson’s reports provide the opportunity to study the mentality of an

466 Reference Chapter III.
individual Jesuit during a significant period of time in Ottoman (Syrian) history. Over the thirty-five year period of this study, the common themes shared by the five authors of these reports were expressed in a manner that was meant not only to edify, but to inspire. At times requests for continued support for the Jesuit missions in Bilad al-Sham immediately followed narrations of a heroic act or explications of the poverty of Christians. With this in mind, caution must be taken due to the potential for embellishment or exaggeration of their experiences in order to maintain the attention and gain the support of the Provence of France and Rome. The authors understood these reports would circulate in various Jesuit circles in France and wrote them accordingly. But to get stuck on factualness or objectivity in these reports betrays the essence of this chapter, an understanding of the development of individual and group mentalities and how their general experience shaped their opinions of the other. Jesuit opinions and attitudes were governed by the intersecting relationships within segments of a society differentiated by religion and wealth. Their interactions with affluent and poor Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Druses, assessed to some part in the chronological narrative of the preceding chapters, expose the exceptional in the Jesuit experience, and emphasize each author’s notions of what is most important or most interesting about their missionary life-experience. For the Jesuits, discussions of subjects such as relations with the Christian populations; interactions with the Muslim population; ethnography, that is, their role as anthropologists or sociologists and the statements they produced on Ottoman society; apostasies and conversions; and, “persecutions,” reveal their complex attitudes toward the

467 During the middle part of the seventeenth century the rebellions of various paşas, specifically those of Seydi Ahmed Paşa and Abaza Hasan Paşa, created a period of extreme chaos in Aleppo and the surrounding areas as discussed in Chapter IV.

468 Heyberger, 309. See also Steven J. Harris, “Mapping Jesuit Science”, 217-218.
host population that were formed during periods of distress or in times of fortune.\textsuperscript{469}

Within these categories, Jesuit views were governed by the prevailing Western conception of the world and man’s place in it as outlined in the first chapter of this study. In their letters and reports the Jesuits demonstrated their preoccupation with divine intercession and their notions of godly retribution. Yet, it is the totality of their experience as missionaries and as priests in a foreign land combined with their European education and background that formed and informed the Jesuit mind: the images of Syrian society were created by men very much of their time and training.

Their discussions within these categories were conveyed a sense of Jesuit suffering and heroism, impressions of need and hope, and, a sense of purpose in life, all tied together by an overwhelming awareness of the frailty of humans in a world controlled by a divine being and its opposing evil forces. Like many of their contemporaries, the Jesuits interpreted the events around them from an eschatological lens, and, if not the end of the world, at least the end of the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{470} The prophecies of the Jesuits were more than an example “of a certain prophetic vision of history,” or a means to generate support for the missions. These predictions by their very nature required the establishment of categories where the Christian was “good” and the Muslim inherently “evil.”\textsuperscript{471} Since the Jesuits rarely made mention of Satan in their insights as a cause for earthquakes, fires, and floods, it is inferred that these were produced by God in order to

\textsuperscript{469} These are categories I devised based on the frequency of discussion on various themes in the Relations.


\textsuperscript{471} Heyberger (\textit{Les Chrétiens}, pp.200-201) also discusses omens as a hope for the demise of Islam through divine means in lieu of an actual military crusade against the Muslims, not that it had an impact on the perceptions formed of Muslims.
punish the evil, the “turc.” This proclivity toward omens imposed on the Jesuit mind an a priori negative image of the Islamicate world, an unfortunate starting point for mentalities prone to fear and ignorance. Unexplained events heightened an already existing tension toward Muslims. When omens were described in the reports of Poirresson, they not only demonstrated a consistent belief that the demise of Ottoman rule was near, but they also projected Muslims in the pejorative images that had already become a part of the European discourse on Islam and the “Orient.”

There were many signs or omens that supported such a concept, evident in the natural and man-made chaos that surrounded them during the middle half of the seventeenth century. For Poirresson during this period, there were many acts of nature or unexplained phenomena that signaled the day of final judgment of the Ottomans. Just before the Easter celebrations of 1652, “the figure of the moon was positioned in the higher summit [crown], so large that a man could not have pushed it.” Later in the same year Poirresson heard from several sources that violent storms, gale winds, and high seas had crippled “all sides of the Empire, from Barbary, Egypt, Syria, and the Archipelago” in which a vast number of ships and homes along the coasts were destroyed. “The cries of men, the howl of the sea, the barking of the dogs, in the obscurity of the night that passed in this tempest,” was “an image of the signs of the last judgment,” according to his aged informant, Père Jean Amieu. Another “trustworthy” person reported to him that on Christmas Eve, Istanbul was covered with heavy snow as a result of the astrological

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473 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.179r (Relation, for 1652). This astronomical phenomenon may be the remnants of a solar eclipse that affected the western hemisphere in late March/April of 1652. In 1652, Easter occurred on 31 March (http://www.phys.uu.nl/~vgent/easter/easter_text2b.htm).
474 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.179v (Relation, for 1652). Poirresson here is conveying Jean Amieu’s sentiments, one of his informants regarding these storms.
configuration of stars. And at the end of January 1653 “there was an earthquake at Constantinople [Istanbul], that, between other effects, had extinguished all the lamps of the Jews in their synagogue, and around the same time, in Bethlehem, appeared in the sky two columns, one red, and the other green, on which an arc rested, climbing up to the sky in plain day; rose nearly up to the middle of the sun, [then] disappeared.” These were scientifically inexplicable phenomena that the pre-modern mind, specifically that of a Catholic priest, could only speculate as “some grand portent” to the end of the Ottoman Empire.

These apocalyptic interpretations continued in the following years’ reports for 1653 through 1657 and were typically written under the headings of “Hope” or “Help from Heaven.” In 1653, Damascus was inundated by flooding from a mid-winter thaw in the Lebanon Mountains. Later that season, a great fire consumed “a large quarter of the same city, near the Grand Mosque, formerly a cathedral.” As a result of this fire, an ancient door of the seventh-century church that was appropriated by the Umayyad Caliph, al-Walid I, was revealed and on it an inscription in Greek: ή βασιλεία συ, Χρισέ, βασιλεία πάντων; which is verse 13 from Psalms 144, a prayer for deliverance and prosperity. In Poirresson’s mind, the combination of these two events meant that the “water and the fire are harbingers of the anger of God, will end in rendering to Our

475 Ibid.
477 As Poirresson notes (BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.60r (Relation, for 1653), this is Psalms 144, referencing the Vulgate or Douay Rheims version of the Bible: I give the complete Latin rendering here that Poirresson partially provided: “Regnum tuum regnum omnium saeculorum et dominatio tua in omni generatione et progenie fidelis Dominus in omnibus verbis suis et sanctus in omnibus operibus suis.” The corresponding English, from Psalms 145:13, King James version: “Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.”
Master what has been taken from his domain by an unjust usurpation.

Over the course of these years, there were more portents of the coming rescue of Christianity from the infidel faith. In 1654 an eclipse of the sun on 12 August; while a plague raged in Damascus that according to the Superior, killed over 20,000 people; and later in the year, an earthquake that shook Aleppo. These were omens pointing to the downfall of infidel and heretic ways. In his 1656/7 relation, signs or evidence of the imminent end of Muslim oppression and despotism were stated in lengthier prose and were more detailed: an earthquake in Saida that shook St. Eli’s Church while Poirresson was preaching; a bolt of lightning in Tripoli that hit a mosque, killing the mufti who was “reciting sacrilegious ceremonial prayers”; and, an eclipse of the moon in Damascus (September of 1656).

Although his prognostications of 1652 and 1653 had yet to come true, Poirresson continued to see these events in apocalyptic terms and that the inevitable wrath of a divine power on infidels who seized the lands and churches of Christians was near, fuelling the imagination of his audience in light of the apocalyptic prophecies found in various books of the Old and New Testaments.

In these years, the substantiation of such phenomena leading to the demise of the Ottoman Empire was found in scripture, a ready guide for the “figural interpretation” of the rise and domination of the Islamicate world in its various political manifestations or empires. Contemporary actions or events were reconciled with scripture. In his 1654/5 relation, Poirresson articulated his interpretation of the “tyrannical” conduct of the judges and the governors of Syria as the basis for a resurgent Christianity and the downfall of Islam. He states:

\[478\] Ibid.

Who would believe that we are gaining courage from the ferocity of enemies, and from their extreme ill-will, to foresee an end of these evils? Those officials who preside among the Muslims in the cities today, whom they call qaddi [qadi], and armed men whom they refer to as Bacha [paşa]. For this reason, almost all of them [the officials] are not interested in governing them, but oppressing them. This is really a sign of the coming downfall of tyrannical power, as witnessed in the Scripture, which states the following: Regnum a gente in gentem transfertur propter injustitias.

Quis credat nos fiduciam de ferocitate inimicorum sumere et ab extrema horum maliticis, finem malorum augurari? Qui urribus praesunt hodie inter mahometanos, et togati quos qaddi vocanti, et armati quos Bacha nuncupant non iis administratundis sed opprimendis quaqua ratione plerique omnes intenti sunt. Hoc vero signum proxima raine tyrannici imperii, scriptura fester quae sic habet: Regnum a gente in gentem transfertur propter injustitias.480

Yet this retribution narrative was not a novelty or innovation of the Jesuits during the seventeenth century. To reinforce European beliefs and alleviate fears based on superstition and ignorance (of the Islamicate world), the Bible was used to explain the ascendance or decadence of the “infidel” empires of the Mediterranean world for centuries.481 Moreover, such Biblical explanations were used to validate the hopes of European Christians that divine intervention would soon put an end to the tyranny that they perceived was ubiquitous throughout North Africa and Southwest Asia. These events had specific meanings: a fire was a sign of divine vengeance, a flood was an “omen of a future or even near, fall of power,”482 earthquakes and eclipses were portents

480 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.63r (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin version). The complete phrase is found in Ecclesiastics 10:8; “Regnum a gente in gentem transfertur propter injustitias et injurias et contumelias et diversos dolos,” in English, “Because of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is transferred from one people to another:” Also referenced in Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, tr. William R Trask and Peter Godman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 28-29.
482 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.62r (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin version).
of the displeasure of God.\(^{483}\) Poirresson and the other Jesuit authors of these reports were
not far-removed from their medieval predecessors.\(^{484}\) This is not to say however that the
Jesuits were bound to their medieval past, rather some strands of their predecessors’
thinking imposed a negative image of the Muslim inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham.
Nonetheless, in several ways they differentiated themselves with the ability, in certain
cases, to accept that the Muslim was not totally evil, nor were all Muslims “bad” or
“avaricious,” even in times when they reported of “persecution” perpetrated against them
and the indigenous Christians.

Real or imagined persecutions or oppressions of Europeans and indigenous Christians
further influenced attitudes toward the Muslim population of Syria. Albeit the Jesuits at
times portrayed Muslims in a positive light (as will be discussed), the emphasis was on
the tribulations of the Christian population including the missionaries, effectively
impressing on the reader a negative image of Ottoman Muslim society. Persecutions
impacted the general population in three basic categories: as a byproduct of infighting
among the local elite, or rebellion by the local elite against the central government; as a
direct result of local elite attempts to extort money through vague legal interpretations or
sheer acts of terror; and, thirdly, as random acts of violence by rogue elements such as
common criminals, disgruntled soldiers, and overzealous converts to Islam. These
persecutions or oppressions manifested themselves in fines, exorbitant fees, humiliation,
imprisonment, and sometimes murder. As reported by the Jesuits, these depredations
were not only perpetrated against Europeans and indigenous Christians, but also against

\(^{484}\) Curtius, 28-29. Although many Christians, Muslims, Jews, Pagans, etc., held beliefs in omens,
prodigies, and portents, in Europe these notions came under attack in the latter part of the seventeenth
century when Pierre Bayle assailed their rationality.
various segments of the Muslim population. \footnote{Based on the account of Alexander Russell, Masters notes that “they [Christians in general] were in fact no more the target of venial behavior on the part of the city’s officials than were the Muslims” (Masters, \textit{Christians and Jews}, 37-38).} The Jesuits however, did not refrain from noting that some of the persecutions and oppressions were committed by their fellow Christians, although the tone of the narrations involving Christian criminal acts was less judgmental, more restrained, and somewhat apologetic. Poirresson specifically seems to have forgotten the daily violence and injustices that plagued Christian France and the capacity for Christian cupidity and tyranny. Or, as part of the First Estate, he was simply distanced from it in France. The “persecutions” committed against the Jesuits in Syria were part of the age-old struggle between the powerful and the weak; Jesuits by their status as foreigners were seen as part of the “second-class” population of the Ottoman Empire, and accordingly were susceptible to “injustices” that arose against this group.

The most common type of “persecutions” cited by Amieu and Poirresson were perpetrated by thugs, common criminals, and fervent converts to Islam. In 1652 the Père Gilbert Rigaud “had run the risk of an \textit{avanie} by a Christian turned Turk,” for his mere presence as a Christian and as a foreigner; the recent convert viewed this as an opportunity to prove his enthusiasm for his new-found faith. In Aleppo in the same year, Rigaud “had the honor of receiving the blows, of seeing the dagger drawn on him by the soldiers of the Paşa, as he went to visit the Christians; and one time, [he was] pursued by a cavalry man,” \footnote{BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.173v (Relation, for 1652).} who brandished a “scimitar naked in his hand.”\footnote{BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.54v (Relation, for 1653).} According to Poirresson, it was only by divine intervention that Rigaud was saved. Rigaud did not fare much better in the following year. Poirresson recounts various incidents in which Rigaud was further accosted: a beating from “a Turk guard;” a punch in the face from a “turc;”
stones were thrown at him, and his face spat on. Frère Bernard Sales received similar treatment, even when he was trying to be helpful. In 1653 Sales “received from the hands of the Turks a blow of the fist on the face, of which he carried the mark many days, because he had picked up two or three loaves of bread that this Turk had left to fall, without doing another thing other than of rendering them [the bread] to their master.”

And, in 1654, before his departure for Persia, the Père Alexander de Rhodes while in Saida was beaten by the men of the governor for reasons that Poirresson did not explain. His reference to this incident as well as others, was intended to demonstrate the strength of the Jesuits in their perseverance in such hostile conditions, even if some of them “came up to the point of tears, but never in the least demonstration of bitterness.”

Beyond the physical abuse that confronted the Jesuits and others, the Jesuits described other means of humiliation, such as financial extortions and fines, to demonstrate what they perceived as part of the disadvantaged position of Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the narration of these vexations operated to present the Ottoman as a person motivated by greed, and as a counter to such avarice, the Jesuits emphasized the importance of their mission, beseeching Rome and Paris for more support. There are a few examples of Jesuit intercession on behalf of the indigenous Christian population or slaves taken from European lands to protect them against this perceived avarice. Amieu recounts the story of a certain Abu ‘Abdallah, a “very good Christian” and sheikh of the village of Majdelyoun, some 10km east of Saida. In 1644 an unnamed “turc” accosted the sheikh, beat him, and demanded “4,000 écus” from him. After being “crippled from blows of the baton” it was easy for the “turc” to take Abu ‘Abdallah’s money without

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488 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.39v (Relation, for 1653, Latin version).
489 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.54v (Relation, for 1653).
490 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.46v (Relation, for 1654/5).
further resistance. According to Amieu, this thug was so emboldened that he “wanted to take from him [Abu ‘Abdallah] his children,” but the intercession of some “French,” prompted by Amieu, contributed 200 piastres to prevent the children from being sold.\textsuperscript{491}

On another occasion, Poirresson tells the story of Jesuit and Franciscan intervention in the case of a captured German soldier who was employed under the Venetian flag. After several years of servitude in Istanbul his master brought him to Aleppo sick and despairing. Seeing his “miserable” condition Poirresson and the Franciscan, who was the chaplain for the consul of Flanders, helped to revive his health, “restored him with the sacred Eucharist,” and collected alms to pay his abusive master for his release. Thereafter, they put him on a ship headed for Europe.\textsuperscript{492}

In the category of “persecutions” committed as a byproduct of the political turmoil between local elites or the hostilities between the central government and local power brokers, the Jesuits found themselves in an environment where the legal norms of the culture were breached by such conflicts.\textsuperscript{493} In his 1656-7 relation, Poirresson established that this turmoil was not localized to a certain city-center, but was rampant throughout Greater Syria, that since his arrival in 1652, he had not seen anything so “savage:”

From the time I arrived on these shores six years ago, with the grace of God I have come to an unfamiliarity of the faithless known for a long time, and I have not seen such savagery as what is being flaunted now all around carried out with impunity, even in the broad daylight in notable cities, even from the northern outskirts of Aleppo, to the Holy Lands of Jerusalem (both of which form the northern and southern borders of the Province) or even from the town of Tripoli, all the way to Damascus…

\textsuperscript{491} ARSI, 95, t.3, f.572r (Relation, for 1644/46).
\textsuperscript{492} ARSI, 96, t.3, f.133r (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
\textsuperscript{493} Neither Heyberger, Masters, Frazee, nor Haddad include any discussion of the rebellions of the 1650s which had an impact on the relationships between indigenous Christians and Muslims or indigenous Christians and European missionaries. The turmoil of this period is significant in assessing European impressions of the “other” as well as understanding the impact the disorders had on drawing the Christian indigenous population toward the Europeans (for protection).
No one was spared during this period according to Poirresson. In Damascus, “tyrannical rule was raging:” The Greeks were forced to pay a heavy fine: mules laden with silver and gold were sent to the governor to pay off the avanie; a Catholic bishop was beaten; and a Franciscan was imprisoned for performing the mass in a Maronite church. In Tripoli, “the French consul, in chains, was thrown into prison… with cane-spikes thrust into his fingers, he was forced either to abandon the faith, or pour out his wallet. He chose to pour it out, without needing to be forced to do it with any might.” Still greater calamity fell on the French merchants in Saida. They were forced to abandon this city for “Ptolemaides” (Acre), leaving behind their established habitations and trade connections. Two of the merchants however did not make the trip to the less developed port that was prone to pirate attacks and was situated in a less favorable geographic relationship to Damascus, the difference in distance nearly doubled. After refusing to oblige the governor of Saida, Hassan Aga, with the payment he demanded, they were “condemned to the stake.” Finally, as maintained by Poirresson, after this “inhumane

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494 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.108v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
495 Ibid. The implication is that the consul quickly gave up his money for his faith; this was certainly a message to his fellow Christians in France to forego the material for the spiritual.
496 Acre was a small port relative to Alexandretta and Saida and was recently being developed earlier in the century by Fakhr al-Din. Prior to this Acre was merely a ruin of its former importance in the region during the Christian Crusade period; and, according to Masson, was “perpetually exposed” by Christian and Muslim pirates (Masson, 389-390).
497 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.109r (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin). There are discrepancies between what Masson writes and what Poirresson and d’Arvieux wrote about this situation. d’Arvieux travelled to Acre via Izmir and Alexandria on 15 April 1658. He reported that Hassan Aga coveted the mare of a Frenchman who refused
spectacle” the governor “shook 40 or 50 thousand coins out of them,” forcing the hands of the French merchants and their consul to remove themselves to Acre.498

Poirresson however did not ignore the violence perpetrated against the broader society beyond French merchants, diplomats, and missionaries. He reported on the disorder in Aleppo during the reign of Seydi Ahmed Pasha (1655-1656) that afflicted all of the population:

Another game is played in Aleppo; an offering is made in blood: with citizens fixed to the walls in the streets by a nail through their ears for thirty days. To please himself… while walking through the town he finds those who are in violation of regulations, or in a silk turban in the eastern fashion, or in sandals in a color other than black, for this he beats them smiling, and citing them for a violation of some fanatical order; who has such a hard heart that upon hearing this is not moved? What about seeing it? What about experiencing it? But my purpose is not to report everything, but from every sect of Christians, just one example, one of the Patriarchs, Bishops, Priests, religious people, native women and men, Europeans, that is to say everyone was terrorized by tyrannical oppression.

Alepi ludus alius luditur; sanguine litatur, confixis cum pariete per vicos civibus auriculas tenus cum clavo, ad triginta per dies; oblectandi enim sese… is civitatem obambulans, si quos invenit contra praescriptum, (aut serico pileo toroso in morem orientalium), aut solea coloris alterius a nigro, sic plectit subridens et exprobrans fanatici praecepti violationem. Quis ad haec audita tam duro est corde ut non moveatur? Quid ad visa? Quid ad Passa? Neque tamen omnia referre scopus est, sed e singulis christianorum generibus unum, e patriarchis, episcopis, sacerdotibus, religiosis, feminis, hominibus indigenis, Europaeis, hoc est cunctis in consternatione positis oppressione tyrannica….499

to depart with it. This resulted in an avanie of 2,700 piastres and in protest, moved to Acre. The French party returned to Saida with Consul Bricard in July 1658 after Hasan Aga was recalled by the Porte. Masson dates this event to 1653 and that the French did not return to Saida until three years later when Hassan Aga was replaced in 1657 (Masson, 19-20).

498 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.109v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
499 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.110v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
There is no doubt that the political conditions in Aleppo were unstable throughout this decade. But for Poirresson the mayhem of these last two years was very difficult to accept for its utter indiscriminate violence; the Superior of the mission uncommonly had difficulty in narrating the graphic details of the upheaval in Aleppo. In the previous reports Poirresson had hope of better days or the Day of Judgment, retreating into a belief in divine intervention through the omens and prodigies discussed above. As Poirresson put it: “Daniel was safe and sound in the den of the lions, thus did He save his own men in the midst of the Turks,” leaving the impression of a world dominated by “barbarism,” and “avarice.”

It was not only these persecutions that created an impulse toward the formation of the negative and hostile image of Muslims, Christian apostasy was a constant worry for the Jesuits that produced a high level of anxiety in the missionaries. During this period there were more reports of conversions to Islam than non-Christian apostasy; the most significant of these conversions was that of the Capuchin, Archange de Thouars. After a few years of interaction with Sufi mystics, the Père Archange de Thouars, on 7 September, 1650, changed his religious affiliation to Islam. The actions of the thirty-three year old Frenchman devastated the general Christian population of Syria and struck the missionary enterprise at its core. In his 1650 relation, Amieu described the event as follows:

This laudable and profitable employ made Satan choke with spite, and, for Satin to stop it, he had entered in the heart of another Judas, the Père Archange, religious, who by his apostasy there he made in cold blood the 7th of September, making himself Turk publicly. He astonished the

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500 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.42r (Relation, for 1653, Latin version). In the French relation (f.55r), Poirresson states: “If He, who conserved a prophet in the cavern of a lion, again served his servants in the barbarism of the Turks, persevered more as the prey of a beast the more ferocious.”

501 Heyberger, 322-323.
40,000 Christians who ordinarily inhabit Aleppo, and made them lose the grand opinion that they had of the French. This horrible fall put an end to these so useful preachings. The rumor spread through the city that Père Aimé Chezaud had made this cowardly turn; upon which our friends rushed towards our house, to assure themselves of the truth, and finding him in his ordinary functions, with joy, they said: “Elhamd lella, abouna Habib masser meslem;” that is to say: Praise may be to God, Père Aimé did not become Turk.

Cet emploi louable et profitable faisait crever Satan de dépit, et, pour l’interrompre, il fit entrer dans le cœur d’un autre Judas, le P. Archange, religieux, qui, par son apostasie qu’il fit de sang froid le 7me de Septembre, se faisant turc publiquement, étonna 40 mille chrétiens qui habitent d’ordinaire dans Alep, et leur fit perdre la grande opinion qu’ils avaient des Francs. Cette horrible chute mit fin à ces tant utiles prédications. La bruit courut par la ville que le P. Aimé Chezaud avait fait ce lâche tour ; sur quoi nos amis accoururent vers notre maison, pour s’assurer de la vérité, et le trouvant en ses fonctions ordinaires, s’écrièrent de joie, disant : « Elhamd lella, abouna Habib ma sar meslem ; » c’est-à-dire : Louange soit à Dieu ! Le P. Aimé ne s’est pas fait turc.  

Because of the disorder that resulted from de Thouars’s apostasy to Islam, he was brought in front of the qadi and questioned about the truthfulness and sincerity of his conversion. According to Amieu, de Thouars responded in this manner: “I have found my salvation in the Qur’an,” and then proceeded to attack the Christians for their belief in the divinity of Christ and the theory of transubstantiation, stating that “this is a shame in believing that a man eats his God.” The repercussions of this conversion were such that they “made to humiliate the best senses and had so astonished some people that they fell sick. Among others, the poor Père Paul Godet, who, overcome with distress,” died three months later, a few days short of Christmas.  

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502 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.618v (Relation, for 1650).
503 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.619rv (Relation, for 1650).
In as much as conversions by priests (indigenous and foreign) were extremely rare, the Jesuits were constantly in fear of Christian apostasy and expressed this anxiety in their reports. Amieu and Poirresson believed the greatest threat to Christianity in Bilad al-Sham was the poverty of the indigenous population, which at times, led to a betrayal of the religion. Before providing these examples, it is important to keep in mind the possible exaggeration or embellishment of these stories in quality and quantity. First, the Jesuits used these accounts to convey to the reader the value of the Syria Mission as a bulwark against further Muslim subjugation of the Holy Land. This was the same tactic used in their discourse on “persecutions,” in order to highlight their significance to merit further material support. Second and as important, the prevention of Christian conversions to Islam was their casus belli: “we have one war with the Turks; with them approaching, bearing hatred to us against the Christian community,” turning Christians into Muslims. Their approach to combating such circumstances was not to “utilize any artillery aid besides apathy and public speaking, and even hope for better times.” Unlike their medieval predecessors and some of their contemporaries, the Jesuits believed the age of military crusade to contest the domination of the Holy Land and to halt Christian abandonment of faith was over. To the Jesuits of the present study, the path to eliminating Christian apostasy was to alleviate their poverty and bring them into the protective sphere of the Catholic faith that was “defended” by the “Most Christian Kings” of France. Third, there could be no admission of any other reason than oppression, spiritual and material, that people converted, or threatened to convert to Islam. To recognize and tolerate a sincere change in one’s religious practices and beliefs was anathema; for the Jesuits conversion due to one’s volition was an act of the insane or

504 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.61r (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin version).
demon-possessed, driven by material expedience. In the minds of the Jesuits, Catholicism was far too superior for a sane or virtuous person to choose anything else.

Jesuit narratives regarding conversions or near-conversions were typically associated with poverty; specifically the image of weak women in material need who were forced to consider apostasy as a means to relieve their destitution. Poirresson tells the story of a widowed Nestorian women, who was “in danger of making herself Turk for her poverty.” After consultations with Père Chezaud, who heard her confession and administered communion to her, convinced this woman to change her mind. But this was not enough, alms had to be raised to support her and her small family; and to pay the debt she owed in order to release her daughter who was held as collateral, “that a Turk had taken” into servitude. In 1653, Poirresson recounts a similar story of a young woman who was not married, lacked any material support, and had children to feed. According to Poirresson, these were her direct words: “I am afflicted from all sides; my parents have abandoned me; the bread alike lacks me for my children; those who may have to assist me are those who persecute me; one promises me that I will have a change of fortune, so I come to change faith.” Through the efforts of the Jesuits and specifically that of Consul Piquet, they were able to raise funds to help support this young woman and other families in the same situation. Factual or otherwise, these two examples, were intended to provoke sympathy in the reader so he would reach into his purse and send a few coins to the missionaries. In order to prevent apostasy or the “sale” of children to become slaves in

505 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.173r (Relation, for 1652).
506 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.55v (Relation, for 1653).
507 In the following chapter, we will discuss the work of Joseph Besson’s propaganda campaign, through the publication of his La Syrie Sainte, used to motivate and induce Europeans to send money to finance the missions and support indigenous poor Christian families.
Muslim households, Poirresson warned that “the mighty power of poverty and famine has exposed whole families to the Turks, as this problem needs to be reversed.”

Conversions to Islam resulted from other reasons than poverty. Indigenous as well as European Christians, at times, changed religious allegiance for a multiplicity of reasons. An inducement for conversion cited in the narrations was the elevation of one’s personal status.\(^{508}\) Some of these conversions led to extortions and threats. In 1651, Amieu conveyed the story of a certain “Korkmaz,” a Maronite convert to Islam who happened to be the brother-in-law of the Maronite Patriarch, Joseph ibn Halib.\(^{509}\) According to Amieu, Korkmaz had recently changed religious affiliation to better position himself financially in trade. But this “disavowed apostate” convinced the Ottoman authorities that the Maronites built a church in a house, and thus brought punishment and imprisonment of the priests and leading men of the Maronite community. Their release was contingent on the payment of a 300 piastres fine.\(^{510}\) While in the 1653 relation of Poirresson, an Armenian from Julfa “made himself Turk,” in order to become an ağa (a high-ranking officer) of the paşa. To no avail, the Jesuits, specifically Amieu, made several attempts to convince this man to convert to Catholicism during a period in which the Armenian had lost all his wealth. As stated by Poirresson, the Armenian apostate threatened Amieu with an avanie for his persistence, but before this deed, the Armenian “had been strangled in his chamber” by the “Providence of God.”\(^{511}\) While conversions

\(^{508}\) Haddad, Levtzion, Masters, Shaw, Heyberger, etc. point to such facts. Throughout the history of the expansion of Islam, these authors have demonstrated the proclivity to convert for political reasons as well as material gain. This literature is vast and very few writers indicate that non-Muslims were forced to convert.
\(^{509}\) See Rabbath, v.1, 404,f.n.4. Korkmaz was also the name of the father of Fakhr al-Din Ma’an who had cultivated good relationships with the Maronites (Abu Husayn, “Problems in the Ottoman Administration…”, 670).
\(^{510}\) ARSL, 95, t.3, f.623r (Relation, for 1650). Amieu does not give an explanation of how this was paid.
\(^{511}\) BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.182v (Relation, for 1652).
for the improvement of one’s economic or social standing created plenty of tension for the Jesuits, they were confronted with other holes in the dam holding back a greater outflow of Christians to Islam.

More common breaches, at least associated with the salvation of European souls, tormented the Jesuit missionaries. As in the previous categories, the narrations of such conversions strove to demonstrate the importance of the missions and the need for constant vigilance. Additionally, these examples demonstrate the pettiness of the reasons for converting to Islam. Some French merchants “turned Turk” so that they could avoid being imprisoned by the French consul for not paying their debts. Since they would no longer be subject to the French consul, their cases would have to be litigated in the local Muslim courts. The 1653 relation dedicated ample space discussing the near-conversion of three European sailors, who, to avoid punishment for bad behavior, threatened to make themselves Muslims. By Poirresson’s account, these men would have been lost if it were not for their intervention: “I was beseeched by our consul to restore him [one of the sailors] from this madness and to give to [inculcate in] him the best thoughts… I confessed him; he received communion in the consular chapel, and then returned to his vessel, and from there to Christendom.” And finally, there was the story of a drunken merchant, who not only verbally attacked the Jesuits for their insistence on virtuous conduct of the French, but threatened to convert to Islam if he was not left in peace.

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512 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.46r (Relation, for 1653, Latin version). See also Masters, Christians and Jews, 32-35, for the use of Muslim courts by Christians and Jews.
513 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.57r (Relation, for 1653).
514 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.43v (Relation, for 1654/5).
It is difficult to ascertain the frequency of conversions to Islam from the *Relations of the Jesuits*. Nor is it easy to determine the extent and duration of the persecutions as described above. How much to attribute to embellishment is equally challenging, but the choice of topics to report on reveals tensions that led to Jesuit opinions and attitudes toward their Muslim hosts. So far it was shown that one of the principal motivations for the extensive narrations on persecutions and apostasy in these reports was to influence the behavior of their benefactors for continued material support of their mission. Nonetheless, accounts of persecutions, oppressions, or apostasies seem to fill the pages of the Jesuits’ reports, yet when quantified, there were typically two or three instances of some egregious act against a European or Christian over a period of two years; or a few potential or actual conversions to Islam on an annual basis. From a quantitative perspective, these circumstances hardly made for a life of uninterrupted tyrannical rule. For the audience of these reports however, who read the reports as individual pieces of evidence, the accounts operated to reinforce the negative impressions or stereotypes of Muslims and Christians of Bilad al-Sham. For the Jesuits, who lived among the diverse population of Syria, these incidents, combined with their predisposition for medieval concepts of omens and prodigies, were the framework by which they viewed their experience in its totality and that formed the essential basis of their outlook on the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the Jesuits cannot and should not be viewed as a myopic group that held or conveyed very rigid and negative views of the broader Muslim society.

Although the Jesuits loathed some Muslims for their actions, they did recognize the humanity in others, even if the rendition of Muslim “virtues” was rarely unequivocally
articulated. There were times when the Muslim inhabitants of Syria provided well-needed and timely assistance to the Jesuits. In addition, the Jesuits were also aware that Muslims shared in the despair of poverty and in the despotism of local elites. In 1653, Poirresson wanted to make it known that not all the “turcs” were troublesome. After recounting the insults and injuries committed against Sales and Rigaud, Poirresson asserted: “make no mistake to believe that all sorts of Turks have us thus in this horror. The inhabitants, and particularly the merchants, are more good-humored; they ordinarily leave from their boutiques to give us the means of evading these encounters with the Turk soldiers or the disavowed [Christian apostates].”\(^5^{15}\)

During the following year, Poirresson identified a situation in which Rigaud was being harassed by a “turc” in the course of his visitations to Christian homes. Rigaud however was defended by a “nobler Turk,” who convinced the assailant of the Jesuit’s credibility; that “these men are notable in their uprightness among us, none of them are in any way criminals; in this way they are without money or advantage for you.”\(^5^{16}\)

In a similar example, the \(na\’ib\), an assistant in judicial matters, of the qadi of Tripoli was sent to investigate the rumor that the French had established a church in their domicile without authorization. Finding a construction worker at the sight, the \(na\’ib\) asked if the “francs” were expanding their house in order to build a church. To protect the Jesuits, the worker responded: “these religious are not so patient like our people who can all live in the same room; they [the Jesuits] each need their own, this is what I am doing [building individual rooms].”\(^5^{17}\)

\(^{515}\) BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.54v (Relation, for 1653).

\(^{516}\) BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.41v (Relation, for 1654/5).

\(^{517}\) BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.178v (Relation, for 1652). A \(na\’ib\) was a deputy of a qadi who was “appointed to administer certain legal cases.” (Bayerle, 117).
they were all corrupt, but that there were Muslims who befriended and accommodated the Jesuits on various occasions and in appropriate circumstances.

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As the above narrative presented the influences on Jesuit perceptions and reporting of Greater Syria, this section seeks to analyze the ethnographic and cultural explications of the Jesuit experience in the region. As noted above and throughout the previous chapters, the Jesuits had various opportunities to interact with elements of the heterogeneous population: they lived next to, travelled with, and exchanged money and ideas with a multiplicity of people throughout their careers as missionaries. In contrast to the adventurers and pilgrims that passed through the region, the Jesuits became part of the fabric of Ottoman society: some learned the languages, wore the habits of indigenous priests, ate the same food, and mixed with various segments of the population regardless of religious affiliation. Through their lengthy stays in Greater Syria, they developed a certain understanding of the milieu in which they operated. Although they maintained an evident hostility toward Muslims and Jews, this was only natural for men imbued with the notion of the singular truth of their religion and doctrine, they in fact demonstrated a sense of tolerance and empathy toward the non-Christian (or non-Catholic) inhabitants. With this in mind, and the recognition of the totality of their experience, their descriptions of the people and places they encountered had evolved well beyond the medieval mentality of derision and fear as outlined in the first chapter.

The reports of Amieu and Poirresson provided many examples of cross-cultural or inter-religious associations. These examples demonstrate the “barriers” to toleration or
accommodation were constructed on more of a religious context than an ethnic or cultural one. Yet, there were many cases where religious barriers were breached because of a consistency in cultural tastes or out of political necessity between, for example, Christians and Muslims. While some “turcs” mocked Christians and spat at them, others, such as the governor of Damascus, married a woman who happened to be the sister of a Greek monk. And as noted previously, the relationship between the al-Khazin and Ma’an families, Maronites and Druses, was formed in friendship and from a need for mutual protection and aggrandizement. As the following representations will demonstrate, the web of relationships, attitudes, and emotions were complex and varied.

From a religious perspective, the Jesuit narrations were ideologically grounded, blinding them to any possibility of viewing Islam in any other stance than one of disdain. Their accounts of Christian revulsion and resistance were meant to inspire in the reader a continued diligence against infidel ways. According to Amieu and Poirresson, the indigenous Christian population shared the same contempt for their Muslim neighbors. Poirresson extols the Christians for this position: “in praise of the Christians, I will say that the majority have an incredible hate of Islam, [which is] a very special favor from God.” More likely, this scorn was instilled in the Christians as a reflection of the “persecutions” noted above and the poor conditions in which they lived that were described by the Jesuits, particularly the “bad treatments” they received in the “thousand blows of the batons, on the feet, on the shoulders, and on the stomach,” for their

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518 I will continue to emphasize that religion was the greatest barrier to any sense of toleration. As Rouillard has demonstrated that European “blind prejudice against the Turks… was confined to their religious beliefs.” (Rouillard, 291).
519 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.622v-623v (Relation, for 1650). This same monk wanted Père Queyrot to establish a mission in Jerusalem. Queyrot remembering his experience of 1621 declined.
521 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.47v (Relation, for 1654/5).
perceived violations of Muslim traditions and law.\textsuperscript{522} This hate was emphasized often by Poirresson in several of the reports, specifically highlighting the “courage” of youthful boys. In the 1652 relation, the Superior described a situation in which an Armenian boy was confronted with the reality of his father’s conversion to Islam. As reported by Poirresson, the boy feared that his father would force him to change his religious affiliation as well: “the poor small lamb had the apprehension that one would throw him to the lion’s den… He came to find the Père Aimé Chezaud, protesting to him his faithfulness and appealing to him, the tears in the eyes… in this that one might not force him to follow these bad examples.” Another example is the lengthy story of a “courageous” boy who was abducted by “turcs” and was circumcised against his will. After several days of captivity, the boy, naked, escaped in the middle of the night to the arms of his grieved father and uncle.\textsuperscript{523} Whether or not these accounts are factual is a minor consideration; more important was the intended impact on the reader. These narratives, and others similar to them, were in part, aimed at reinforcing Christian convictions and the fight against infidelity and heresy.

For the previous thousand years in Greater Syria, the Christians saw their religious majority dwindle along with the material edifices of the religion. Quite often they remarked on the decay and ruin of ancient churches with disgust. Poirresson referred to the conversion of a church into a khan as a “metamorphosis of a cathedral into a cowshed,”\textsuperscript{524} and spoke in reverence of what he perceived to be the ruins of the column of Saint Simeon Stylites, the fifth century Christian ascetic who lived the majority of his adult life atop a column in order to escape the world. Indeed for the Jesuits the

\textsuperscript{522} BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.46r (Relation, for 1654/5).
\textsuperscript{523} ARSI, 95, t.3, f.625r (Relation, for 1650).
\textsuperscript{524} BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.168v (Relation, for 1652).
appropriation of previously existing Christian structures by the Muslims was dreadful and contributed to negative or ill-feelings toward their Muslim interlocutors living in “a barbaric land of this race of men, and the greed of monetary things of these unrestrained people.” The usurpation of Christian lands and rights caused some of their contemporaries to take on a belligerent and militaristic attitude toward the Muslims in the form of crusades. This was not the case for the Jesuits during the period of this study. Even in the context of “persecutions” or “oppressions” the Jesuits refrained from such expectations of a military overthrow of the Ottoman Empire, or at least the establishment of Christian, Catholic and European, control of the Holy Land. An example that not only discredits the notion of crusade, but also illuminates the ambiguous enforcement of the Pact of Umar, is found in the experience of Père Gilbert Rigaud. Contradictions in the behavior or what were the expected norms of behavior between Christians and Muslims were evident in the reports of the Jesuits. All of the Jesuits made explicit statements of riding horses, and not mules, whenever they travelled, certainly a violation of the Pact of Umar that was apparently not enforced in Aleppo, Saida, and Damascus. Yet, to some Muslims the deference that had to be accorded to them by Christians was important, and in certain circumstances Muslims imposed these traditions or strictures. Poirresson reported in his 1654 relation that “one of our Pères, passing one day in Jdayda, (that is a large suburb where they lodge), was attacked by a Turk soldier who wanted him to raise his hat, and he, in making some resistance, received a good number of blows of

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525 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.57r (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin version).
526 The Pact of Umar, which was claimed in the late seventh century as an agreement between the Rashidun caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab, and the Christian population of Jerusalem after the cities conquest in 637, defined the prohibitions that non-Muslims had to abide by.
the baton without complaining.” A Christian witness to this incident supposedly turned to the victim of this humiliation in dismay, stating: “Oh, mon Père, when will come the time in which the French, being masters of this region, will treat the Turks as badly as they now treat the Christians? To which the Père replied: never!” By this time, the Jesuits and other Europeans were convinced that military action was not an option; some for practical reasons, while others were influenced by beliefs in omens and divine providence.

But on the cultural or ethnic level, things are a bit more unclear. Jesuit relationships with non-Christians as articulated in their extensive reports vacillated between respect, appreciation, and disgust. In their annual Relations they were consistent in their suggestions, in quality and quantity, of a certain level of “toleration” and a number of amicable associations, from year to year and from one superior to another. In the above section on “persecutions” it was demonstrated that the Jesuits did not believe that all Muslims were corrupt, such as the example of the Muslim Ottoman who came to the aid of Rigaud in response to the harassment of a “turc.” Equally important and unstated, was that Rigaud and the Muslim were walking side by side, in companionship, and in conversation. Anecdotes such as this, vaguely alluded to in the narration, provide the counter-balance to the discursive accounts of abuse or elements of impending danger. They further demonstrate the capacity for both sides of the exchange to dispense with religious and ideological differences. Referring to Père Jean Amieu’s rapport with Muslims, Poirresson stated: “He made himself agreeable to the Turks as well as to the

527 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.54r (Relation, for 1653). Also in Rabbath (v.2, 204, f.n.1) notes that this was Père Gilbert Rigaud.
528 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.54r (Relation, for 1653).
529 Heyberger, 193-198.
Christians by his kindness, of the sort that those there alike received him in route, guided
him, caressed him with a bouquet of flowers; he always says to them some good word for
laughter." In addition, Poirresson relates the story of the Vice Consul of Acre, Pierre
Stupan, who died from a fever in 1655 at the ages of “26 or 27 years of age, but well
mature.” As reported by Poirresson, Stupan “died with the regrets of everyone, the
infidels alike, Turks, Jews and schismatics, with which he had dealings, loved universally
by each of them.” Finally, Poirresson notes that their “Turk neighbors came among
[them] on the feast days and on Sundays” to participate in the day’s celebrations.

Relationships did not only form because of mutual appreciation of personalities; there
were practical reasons as well. There were many opportunities for the Jesuits to interact
with their Muslim hosts, whom they lived among and traveled with, on a rather friendly
basis. Taking guidance from their counterparts in China and elsewhere in eastern Asia,
the Jesuits in Bilad al-Sham demonstrated their value in medicine, mathematics, and
astrology to the learned in Ottoman society. Père Adrien Parvilliers, who had mastered
Arabic quickly, “combined his astrology to his mathematics which had put him in high
credit among the Greeks and the Turks, alike on the eclipses that he predicted and the
phenomena that appeared,” and so inspired one of the “sheikhs of the mosques” who
spoke with admiration about Parvilliers. Still, Parvilliers was not the only Jesuit to
impress; the German, Père Georges Richelius, the only non-French Jesuit of this period in
Greater Syria, was “very knowledgeable in all the disciplines desirable in this region,
thology, philosophy, rhetoric.” And because of his expertise in mathematics, “for which

530 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.178v (Relation, for 1652).
531 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.42v (Relation, for 1654/5).
532 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.44r (Relation, for 1654/5)
533 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.174v (Relation, for 1652).
he was commended among the Turks to such a degree, that he was visited by nobles and invited to their houses.”

Additionally, the Frère Bernard Sales gained the attention and esteem of Muslims because of his medical expertise. Poirresson noted that Sales was at times mistreated or disrespected by “turcs” during his travels. “When they realized he [Sales] was hékim, that is to say doctor; for then they changed their bad treatments for caresses.”

These simple examples reveal that although there were difficult times, and “persecutions,” there were various opportunities for the Jesuits to mix with non-Christians; that relationships could be formed that defied religious or ethnic boundaries. As was demonstrated in previous chapters, there were associations based on trade, interpersonal affinity and respect, and curiosity for the “scientific.” In fact, in the 1654/5 “relation” Poirresson emphasized that the Jesuits “live[d] in good intelligence with all sorts of secular and religious persons” whose only enemies were corrupt officials and scoundrels [regardless of their faith] that oppressed the “poor Christians.”

Other opportunities for interpersonal exchange occurred during overland and sea journeys. For safety from bandits, pirates, and other unsavory fellows, and to reduce travel expenses, excursions from place to place were taken in groups. These groups typically included an array of people from varying walks of life, giving the Jesuits occasions to associate with “Turks, Jews, and Christians, proceeding together.” During such travels, the Jesuits found an opening to “mix in the sermons sometimes, as we do in

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534 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.132v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
535 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.50v (Relation, for 1653).
536 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.44v (Relation, for 1654/5).
transit as is our custom,” not only to Christians, but also to anyone else that seemed approachable. As was maintained by Poirresson:

A word about our voyages, during which we teach our mysteries to the Christians, our companions of the caravans, and to the Turks, the common prayers when we have a favorable opportunity, and also the commandments of God that they value, or also some good saying that they retain, and in subsequent encounters, we have them repeat to prove that they had not forgotten them: testimony of a Turk, having learned from a Père this axiom in Arabic: En tamelou el-khair ma el-tab, el-tab ierouh, ou el-khair iedoum, that is to say: if you make the good with pain [labor], the pain will go away, and the good will remain; en tamelou el-scharr ma el-ferah, el-ferah ierouh, ou el-scharr iedoum; if you did the bad with pleasure, the pleasure goes away and the bad remains; [he] repeated this saying to the same Père, when he saw him working en route.

Journeys from one mission outpost to another were long and arduous; for example Saida to Damascus, took two and a half days to complete, afforded travelers the occasion to engage in dialogue that was mutually interrogative, asking questions that in other circumstances or company would not otherwise have been broached. It is not clear however that Poirresson or any of the other Jesuits viewed these encounters as prospects for proselytizing or attempts at conversion, if so, they knowingly would have put

538 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.126r (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
539 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.43r (Relation, for 1654/5).
themselves in serious jeopardy, any attempts to convert Muslims were strictly forbidden. In the above narration, the axiom that was exchanged was religiously and culturally neutral: do good works and shun evil, commandments found in most religions. This was not a debate over doctrine, the divinity of Jesus, or the legitimacy of the Prophet; such “disputations” nevertheless occurred during a later period of their mission in Greater Syria.540

On other occasions, the Jesuits used simple means to attract non-Christian young boys to their house to hear the “mysteries” of the Catholic faith. Parvilliers for example, attracted boys “by means of a drink and the gentleness of mathematics with the intent of taming them” in order to have them listen to Catholic doctrine. Apparently, this was not appreciated by their parents who were, according to Parvilliers, “jealous of seeing them so familiar with me, prohibited them from our house.” Some of the older boys were very cognizant of the retribution for Muslim apostasy and lashed back at Parvilliers for attempting to induce them to “recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah.” “What! You want that I make myself Christian? This is to say that you want me to run the risk… knowing of an indubitable humiliation” responded a boy to Parvilliers efforts.541 Both parties recognized the dangers of these blatant attempts at conversion, so that these attempts were relatively infrequent with no Muslim apostates recorded in any of the reports during this period.

Efforts at converting Jews and Druses were also equally rare during this period. Poirresson spoke of an attempt to convince a Jewish “cacam,” to abandon his faith.542

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540 This will be a topic discussed in greater detail in the published version of the present work.  
541 BNF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.175v (Relation, for 1652).  
542 I am assuming here that Poirresson is referring to a chacham, a Torah scholar. ARSI, 96, t.3, f.126v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
The Jesuits approached this “very old” man at his synagogue in Saida and “compelled the man with honesty; we dispersed by talking about controversy of faith; we asked what he feels about the Messiah, who understands this prophecy of Jacob: *the scepter shall not be taken away from Judah, etc.*” They continued to challenge this man, pointing to the various sections of the Bible that prophesied the coming of Jesus-Christ to no avail.

Poirresson and Rigaud met the same failed result in their attempts with the Druses of the Chouf, who the Jesuits believed were “not Muslims, but live in the natural; nonetheless they pretend to be [Muslims] for to support the peace with the Grand Seigneur, I do not believe that he [the sultan] would permit that one would make them Christians publicly.” In 1652 they planned to proselytize “in hiding, in visiting the Christians that lived among them, to induce them to change from the country and go to declare themselves where they would not be known.” In spite of such attempts or schemes, the Jesuits, as revealed by the lack of reporting on the number of non-Christian conversions to Catholicism throughout the span of this study, failed to recruit these members of Ottoman society into the Christian or Catholic fold.

There exists the possibility however that an element of the anxiety toward non-Christians was rooted in this reality. Their unsuccessful attempts to convince Jews, Druses, and Muslims to abandon their faiths for Catholicism highly agitated the Jesuit missionaries and was reflected in their contemptuous assertions on a purely religious basis. Even though their priority was not to proselytize to these groups, their failure must have been disheartening. For in the struggle between perceived “good” and “evil,” the idea that an infidel clung dearly to his beliefs and was unwilling to recognize the validity

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543 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.128v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin). This is a verse from Genesis 49:10: Christians believe this is a reference to the Messiah.

544 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.179r (Relation, for 1652).
of the “true faith,” created a dilemma for the Jesuits. And in response, their only option, again on the basis of religion or ideology, was to portray the infidel as “demonic.” In modern parlance, one would use the terms “fundamentalist,” “fanatic,” or “extremist.” This point of reference added to the factors identified above created a significant amount of apprehension over their circumstances in Greater Syria. Nonetheless, there were the more “positive” encounters and relationships that were formed between the Jesuits and non-Christians. Within this framework, Jesuit ethnographic, geographic, and demographic assertions are more clearly understood. Jesuit pronouncements and representations were contingent on this unity of experience. Through their descriptions of people, landscape, and cities, the Jesuits strove, in part, to edify and to form the contextual basis for their experience. Although the quantitative value of their assessments of population sizes and distributions may be problematic, the quality of their cultural considerations, which they termed “mores,” provide valuable insight into Ottoman society. Likewise, their discourse on the habits and appearances of people, speaks to what the Jesuits found of interest, amusement, or value as a result of their participation in this heterogeneous world. And at times, they used analogy, referencing recognizable places in France, to help the reader imagine the complex land in which they worked to serve their Lord, and that it was worth the tribulations and money to continue their missions.

Père Nicolas Poirresson described Aleppo as “the Lyon of Syria, in its grandeur, beauty, commerce, [and] multitude of people,” yet it was not as well fortified as the hometown of most of his Jesuit compatriots. And unlike Lyon, through which the rivers Rhône and Saône flow, Aleppo had a “rivulet,” the river Quwayq, which passed

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545 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.167v (Relation, for 1652).
tangentially outside the city walls. On the other hand, Tripoli was “as one of the mediocre towns of France,” like Châlon in his home province of Champagne in size and inhabitants, but like Aleppo, not for its fortifications. This issue of a defensible city was consistent for Damascus as well, where this city's defenses were formidable enough to stop a cavalry assault but not that of heavy artillery. The attention given to the vulnerability of these cities is perplexing. As stated above, the Jesuits did not believe in a crusade against the Ottoman Empire in contradistinction to other travelers who had previously suggested these cities were easy for the taking. Nor was Poirresson at this time (1653) preoccupying himself with the revolts of Seydi Ahmad Pasha and Abaza Hasan Pasha. This fascination with the protection of the cities could be attributed to the prevailing disorder that gripped all parts of Europe and the Ottoman Empire, specifically the turmoil of the Fronde that was evident in his Provence of Champagne.

Nonetheless, these descriptions have a resonance of objectivity in the manner portraying the various physical edifices in these cities. Adrien Parvilliers spoke of Damascus as a “small terrestrial paradise,” with a “multitude of gardens” and an “abundance of streams and fountains.” On the contrary, the exteriors of the buildings “in general [were] not beautiful in contrast to the “agreeable and comfortable” interiors, with walled-in “courtyards paved with large square tiles of stone and marble, with a large basin and fountains full of water” and included at times “a small garden of orange trees, lemon trees and limes.” Parvilliers did not explicitly state who owned these private spaces, or who had invited him in to them; but it is evident that these were homes of the...
well-to-do. There was a room for receiving “persons of honor, vaulted and domed,” and there was an “apartment for the women, separated from those for the men.”\textsuperscript{550} This last statement appears to indicate the house belonged to a Muslim, further evidence that the Jesuits had no reluctance interacting with non-Christians on a social level. Parvilliers’s representations were not unique. Amieu, Poirresson, and Rigaud delivered similar renditions of Aleppo, Tripoli, and Saida respectively.

More telling of a level of religious or ethnic detachment, are the descriptions of mosques. Poirresson counted two hundred mosques in Aleppo, which “did not lack in good appearance.” Parvilliers however was more generous than his Superior in his description of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus: “The great Mosque, formerly the church of St. Jean, is beautiful, high and spacious, and the profile of its dome can be viewed from all Damascus. One says that its structure does not concede anything to that of St. Sophia of Constantinople [Istanbul]. The squares, from where one enters [the mosques], are beautiful and magnificent.” Another mosque that caught Parvilliers’ attention was what he referred to as the “green Mosque, so named because of its tower or varnished turret.” It was “one of the handsomest built in the modern Turk, almost all of marble.”\textsuperscript{551} He was apparently describing the mosque built by the governor of Damascus, Sinan Paşa, in 1590. This was one of the first mosques to be constructed in the Ottoman style.\textsuperscript{552} Despite their religious myopia, the Jesuits lauded the architecture and grandness of these “infidel” places of worship, putting aside their animus for the religion of their non-Christian hosts. These comments reveal the complexity of their perspective and ambivalence toward the Muslims, and call into question any rigidly

\textsuperscript{550} BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.177r (Relation, for 1652).
\textsuperscript{551} BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.177r (Relation, for 1652).
\textsuperscript{552} Jean Sauvaget, \textit{Les monuments historiques de Damas} (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1932), 84-86.
conceived categories of cultural interaction and exchange, specifically on those that profess exchange only in terms of conflict with, or opprobrium of the other.

The Jesuits acknowledged, at least in the material world, that the Ottoman lands were not significantly much different than their homeland, in fact, they may have implied that conditions were better in Greater Syria than in France. Parvilliers noted the abundance of goods in Damascus. In the covered markets, “in the form of galleries, and frequented by [many] people that there is always a crowd. [There was] nothing lacking in the boutiques, filled with all the merchandise that one may have need.” He remarks further on the fertility of the soil and the variety of foods grown.553 Poirresson made similar observations of the fecund land surrounding Aleppo, where they grew orange and olive trees, and cultivated the morbus alba on which the “silk worms nourish themselves on the leaves, that may be the greatest riches of the country.”554 Aleppo was a bountiful place where “vines on the mountains” produced “white wine that is fairly well priced and good vintage.” Moreover, one could find rice from Egypt, watermelons, oranges, pomegranates, lemons, and the “figs of Adam, thus named because one believes them to have been the forbidden fruit.” There were bananas, cucumbers, grapes, capers, olives, dates, pistachios, and an assortment of spices from Persia, India, and China.555 In typical fashion however, he concluded that the great quantity of goods and the success in agriculture were the doing of the Providence of God, ironically, in contrast to the wrathful God who would one day destroy the Ottoman Empire.556 Poirresson was caught in the multifarious nature of early modern “transnational” connections, in finding a

553 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.177v (Relation, for 1652).
554 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.169r (Relation, for 1652). Poirresson believed that the silks of Beirut were “first in beauty,” followed by Tripoli then Saida.
555 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.169v (Relation, for 1652).
556 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.169v (Relation, for 1652).
balance between the ideological confines of his religion and the reality of the material world that surrounded him. How could he attribute success to a society that was governed by a religion that he abhorred?

These paradoxes were also common in the portrayal of the inhabitants of Greater Syria. At certain times, the Jesuits are relatively complimentary toward indigenous Christians and Muslims, yet never about Jews. Still, by no means did they ever make specific distinctions between preconceived notions and the reality of the day. There were no direct assertions made about friendships or the debunking of the foundation myths that prevailed in the imaginations of Europeans, as did their contemporary, the Chevalier d’Arvieux, who believed that “a man abroad sought his friends amongst those who shared his tastes, whether Arabs, Turks, or Europeans.” Or that of a later visitor to the Ottoman Empire, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who affirmed: “that the Turks are not so ignorant, as we fancy ‘em, in matters of politics, or philosophy, or even gallantry;” and that, “the manners of mankind do not differ so widely as our voyage writers would make us believe.” The Jesuit missionaries were not prone to these declarations of opinion, and never expressed any fondness or deep respect for the Muslim population, and in a broader sense, not even for the Christians inhabiting Bilad al-Sham. Conversely, with the exception of their consistent platitudes in the Relations of “tyrannical” or “avaricious” Ottomans that were also bandied about in many European publications, the Jesuits, rarely used “vituperative” language to characterize Muslims. Jesuit portrayals in the reports

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557 Jews were rarely discussed in much detail in any of the annual reports.
558 Lewis, 35.
560 Ibid., 329.
561 Rouillard, 188. See also Chew for the insulting depictions of Muslims.
offered a sense of detachment and reluctance for ad hominem attacks. In discussions of the “mores” of the region, the missionaries sought to educate, and possibly point to things amiss in their own lands.

Poirresson was the first Jesuit to demarcate sections of his reports on “ethnographic” interpretations whereby he presented statements concerning the “habits” or “culture” of the diverse groups based on his direct experience as well as information passed to him. He listed these groups as:

Turks, Jews, heretics, schismatics, naturalists, idolaters; or rather these are the categories [of people] who have groups that exist in great number, since in Aleppo alone we count sixteen sorts of religions of which four were of the different Turk sects; of the idolaters, there remains only the kind that adore the sun; of the naturalists, some combine the natural essence of God with some superstition about cows and they come from the borders of Mogor [Mogul, India] on this side [the East], and there are others without this superstition who are named Druses…

Turcs, juifs, hérétiques, schismatiques, naturalistes, idolâtres ; ou plutôt ce sont genres qui ont leur espèces en grand nombre, puisqu’en Alep seul nous comptâmes seize sortes de religions dont quatre étaient de turcs différents entre eux ; d’idolâtres, il n’en reste que d’une sorte qui adorent le soleil ; de naturalistes, les uns qui tiennent l’essence naturelle de Dieu avec quelque superstition pour les vaches et viennent des confins du Mogor en deçà, et les autres sans cette superstition qui son nommé druses…  

Poirresson did not differentiate the population by ethnicity or national identity, nor did he provide a sense of the daily lives or occupations of the inhabitants of the region. His main focus however was on the Muslims. In all of his descriptions, and consistent with the mentality of a seventeenth century Catholic priest, the only opprobrious adjectives

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562 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.169v (Relation, for 1652).
penned in his reports were strictly related to the religious component of “culture.” It is worth noting here the entirety of his evaluation of Muslim prayer rituals:

Regarding that of the Turk [religion], as far as I have seen, it is a masque of religion that has only pompous appearances proclaiming from the tops of the balustered towers of the mosques, at regular hours, two times in the night and three times in the day, of the epithets and of the praise to God; and of these three, the one is for calling to the prayer on approximately three hours after noon. It is on Friday that one goes there, at noon, or little before. This is as their Sunday, although they do not keep any feast days free of work. As this call, which they take themselves to the mosques, at different hours in accordance with the different days. I was curious to see what was happening there, from my point of view opposite of the open windows, I there heard only the confused cries of the demonic, and saw only the postures of all sorts and so violent, there one does not see the elderly, nor children, nor women, for there to supply the force of bodies. Thus the devil [demonic] leads away from God those who have more faults, who are more prone to do this only after dinner, for to have more of the vigor to these violent prostrations, and less of the sentiment for God to the burdened heart of the flesh. The devil however amuses them by these exterior humiliations, truthfully with a modesty of the eyes that astonish, and more by the washing of the arms, of the face and of the hands, in the basins prepared at the entrance, or at the water stream; by means of which they believe they are very well disposed… The more conspicuous of the men carry in hand through the town prayer beads of grains all equal in size, and muttering “ia Allah, ia Allah, oh God, oh God,” or, “Allah subhano, Allah subhano, God has praise, God has praise [praise the Lord],” and things like that. To see the criers of the merchandise and of the things to eat go by the streets crying: “Allah karim, God is generous.” Truthfully if God himself is paid with words and expressions, it is here well served, but non omnis qui dicit mihi: Domine etc.

Quant à celle des turcs, à ce que j’en ai vu, c’est un masque de religion qui n’en a que les apparences pompeuses à crier du haut des torus balustrés des mosquées, à heure réglée, deux fois la nuit et trois fois le jour, des épithètes et des louanges à Dieu ; et de ces trois, l’une est pour appeler à la prière sur les trois heures avant, qui est comme leur dimanche, quoi qu’ils ne gardent aucune fête pour le travail. A ces cris donc ils se portent aux mosquées, selon les jours différents, à heure différente. J’ai eu la curiosité d’y voir ce qui s’y passait, et m’étant placé en vue à l’opposé des fenêtres
ouvertes, je n’y entendis que des cris confus de démoniales et n’y vis que
des postures de toutes sortes et si violentes qu’il ne s’y trouve ni vieillards,
ni enfants, ni femmes pour y fournir de force de corps. Ainsi le diable
éloigne de Dieu ceux qui en ont plus fort qu’après le dîner, pour avoir
plus de vigueur à ces prostrations violentes, et moins de sentiment de Dieu
au cœur chargé de viandes. Le diable pourtant les amuse par ces
humiliations extérieures, de vrai avec une modestie des yeux qui étonne, et
de plus par le lavement des bras, du visage et des mains, dans des bassins
prêparés à l’entrée ou au courant de l’eau ; de par là ils se croient très bien
disposés… Les plus apparents des hommes portent en main par la ville des
chapelets de grains tous égaux et marmonnant « ia allah, ia allah, ô Dieu, ô
Dieu » ou bien « allah subhano, allah subhano, Dieu a louange, Dieu a
louange » et choses semblables. Voire les crieurs de marchandises et de
choses à manger vont par les rues criant « allah karim, Dieu libéral » De
vrai si Dieu se paie de paroles et mines, il est ici bien servi, mais non
omnis qui dicit mihi : Domine etc. 563

Poirresson’s representation of prayer in the mosques was intended to provide a contrast
between Catholic and Muslim practices. He had no other choice but to declare the
“demonic” in Islam, a regular European practice of scholars and theologians dating back
to the earliest European accounts of Islam. As the ninth century priest and martyr,
Eulogius, put it: this religion was established by a prophet “seduced by demonic
illusions, devoted to sacrilegious sorcery, he corrupted with his deadly poison the hearts
of many idiots and condemned them to eternal perdition.” 564 Like Eulogius, who feared
the apparent cultural appeal of an Islamicate society in Cordova, Spain, and the
progression of Christians toward Islam, Poirresson resolved to imprint the same image of
the “infidel” religion on his willing audience of Jesuit priests and students throughout
Europe. And as Eulogius used the Book of Mathew to indicate the coming of false

563 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.169v-170r (Relation, for 1652). This is a reference to Mathew,
Chapter 7, verse 2 (from the Latin Vulgate): Non omnis qui dicit mihi Domine Domine intrabit in regnum
caelorum sed qui facit voluntatem Patris mei qui in caelis est ipse intabit in regnum caelorum. The King
James Version: Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but
he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
564 Quoted in Tolan, 87.
prophets, so Poirresson used the same Gospel to state his notions of the speciousness of bodily or verbal expressions of devotion relative to those of the heart and works of piety.

Yet this polemic was not an attack on the people, but rather on their faith. It can also be construed as a “self-reflective” method to reinforce Catholic beliefs, that actions (as prescribed in the Gospels) speak louder than words, part of the mantra used in Jesuit battles against *Sola Scriptura* and *Sola Fide*. This was a narrative that attacked Muslim prayer ritual as well as Protestant doctrinal interpretations. Whether Poirresson explicitly aimed at blurring the distinctions between Christian heresy and Islam is not certain, however the observation was implicitly rooted in the mentality and experience of this missionary. If this depiction was a subliminal message directed at his compatriots in Europe in order to strengthen their resolve against heretics, it would have been stated more emphatically and would not have been couched in anything other than a direct attack on flaccid adherence to Catholic doctrine and traditions. Poirresson, as the other missionaries, spoke often of the failings of the indigenous and European Christians (see Chapter IV). Their disparagement of these two groups, observed in the total context of the reports and the general experience of the Jesuits, reveals a level of objectivity, credibility, and flexibility in thought toward the non-religious components of culture; although not directly apparent in each of the reports.

Nonetheless, the missionaries were not immune to making generalizations about the population, revealing the complex nature of their experience and mentalities. Poirresson

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566 *Sola Scriptura* and *Sola Fide* were the basis for Luther’s arguments against the authority of the papacy in his attack against the efficacy of works for salvation drawn from his initial arguments against the use of indulgences as part of the remission of sins.
projected the whole of this heterogeneous world in this light: “the Turks, or rather the
Moors of this country are as the Christians, of a lax temperament and are a little stupid,
except the Greeks, for the spirit, but shiftless; and the people here [the Greeks] are more
malicious and crafty, although rather civil; and money and impurity is their part.” This
generalized portrayal is contrary to some of the salutatory statements as noted previously.
Furthermore, the Superior pointed to the lack of intellectual sophistication of this
population. According to Poirresson, “universally, Moors, Christians, Jews, are ignorant
of all science, except of each knowing his respective craft. Also they do not have any
colleges, as one has in Europe, with a professor for each genre [faculty]; but those who
know how to read and write must pass for doctors [intellectuals, professors, learned
men].” Poirresson made these statements in his relation for the year 1652 based on his
own ignorance of Ottoman society due to his lack of time in the region. Whether or not
Poirresson depended on a priori knowledge based on the accounts of previous travelers
to the Ottoman Empire, or that at this stage had very limited contact with the literati in
this society, is unclear. This last statement about general “ignorance” is not repeated
however in any of the ensuing reports of Poirresson, nor were they articulated by the
previous superiors of the mission, Maniglier, Queyrot, and Amieu, who had a better
understanding of the intellectual capabilities of the “learned” in Ottoman Society, the
ulema. While such generalizations may have had a permanent impact on the perceptions

567 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.171v (Relation, for 1652). Poirresson used the terms “Moor” and
“turc” interchangeably in his first relation (1652), and does not use “Moor” in the relations for the years
1653-1657, an indication that he had learned to make the distinction, or as most other Europeans of the
period (and before) used the term “turc” as a mark of religion rather than an ethnic demarcation. See also
Rouillard.
568 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.171v (Relation, for 1652).
of their Jesuit audience in Europe, to see all members of Ottoman society as unintelligent, no attempts were made in subsequent reports to reverse this notion in a direct manner.  

There were efforts however, premeditated or otherwise, that demonstrated a degree of objectivity and empathy toward the Muslim population. As Poirresson saw the inequity in Ottoman society as oppression against Christians, he was sensitive to the plight of Muslims as well, stating that “the Moors do not have it any better.” This assertion was made in the context of his discussion on materially poor Christians, such that the tribulations that befell them were due in part to their low economic condition, as was the case for impoverished Muslims and others. As in most societies, pre-modern or modern, the people who suffer the most in times of flux or turmoil are typically those who could support themselves the least. In the pre-modern milieu, this very large segment of society lacked the material wealth or political connections to protect themselves against “tyrannical” or “greedy” Ottoman qadis and paşas or corrupt French ministers and lords. By the same token, this missionary viewed “the vices and depravity” of his fellow countryman as a “disgrace from Europe to the Asiatic, and how terribly they do harm in such a sick way.” Poirresson was speaking about the wrath of a French merchant against the Jesuits that led to their expulsion from Aleppo for a short time. From this perspective, Poirresson was again making analogical comparisons to his homeland where the poor, under Christian kings and princes, did not fare much better than their counterparts in Bilad al-Sham. Moreover, for an ardent Catholic priest and member of

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569 Rouillard noted that Frenchmen such as Postel and du Loir were generous in their remarks on the intelligence and schooling of the Ottomans in logic, arithmetic, geometry, and astrology (Rouillard, 317). Poirresson may have been more critical of practice and structure rather than intelligence, that is, the educational system employed by Europeans of grammar schools, colleges, and universities was

570 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.171r (Relation, for 1652).

571 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.61r (Relation, for 1654/5, Latin version). And as discussed in Chapter II.

572 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.40r (Relation, for 1653, Latin version). Amieu and Poirresson were often critical of the behavior of merchants and sailors with respect to their “debauched” behavior.
the Society of Jesus, whose mission was to provide both material and spiritual care for
the weak and downtrodden in society, the abuse of this class was intolerable. Although
there were ample accounts of perceived Muslim wantonness, Poirresson nonetheless
made room in his reports to discuss the mundane and “exotic” in Ottoman society.

More than all the other Jesuits combined, Nicolas Poirresson described in detail
various cultural components of Ottoman society. From the way people dressed, married,
and buried their friends and family, to their eating habits and the games they played, the
Superior provided a culturally neutral account of these elements and imparted insight into
the daily lives of the heterogeneous population of Greater Syria. Regarding clothing,
Poirresson had difficulty differentiating between the dress of each peculiar religious
affiliation, stating that “clothing in all these countries are so different and indifferent as
the religion, it [the custom of dress] has no order other than for the green turbans which
are for the family of the prophet… and for those who are born on the way to Mecca.”
Yet, he noted there were differences in clothing based on occupations: judges,
administrators, governors, and soldiers, apparently had distinctive dress. What was
exemplary to Poirresson was the brilliance in the color of the clothing. He was impressed
to see a mere baker, who was their neighbor in Aleppo, clad in a “cassock of crimson
satin,” and many other garments “cheerful of all colors.”573 Women however, were
“wrapped of a large shroud of white and fine cloth, under which they wear coats or robes
of silk,” with poorer women covering their faces with “a black shroud… with only a
small opening at the eyes to conduct themselves.”574 These women, rich or poor, were

573 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.170v (Relation, for 1652).
574 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.171r (Relation, for 1652). This of course is a reference to the burqa
and hijab. Interestingly, Poirresson does not state how he came to know the under-dress of the women.
clad with bracelets, earrings, rings on their feet, and “silver coins around their heads.”\footnote{BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.171r (Relation, for 1652). Pamuk indicates that silver coins (either the debased coins from Europe, or specifically the five-sols piece issued by Louis XIII in 1641) were used as “ornamentation by peasant women who could not afford the more expensive silver and gold pieces.” (Pamuk, 152).} Poirresson, in contrast to other French writers, made no moral or cultural judgments on the status of women: he made no references to the public baths, as other Europeans were fixated on this place where women would spend all day in order “to escape from their strict husbands;” or for their “passionate natures and infidelity.”\footnote{Rouillard, 324. These were the estimations of the travelers Nicolay and du Loir.}

The same assessment can be made of the depictions of other aspects of Ottoman society whereby Poirresson did not indulge in critiques with the exception of two minor examples. As in his analysis of the geographic identity of Greater Syria, Poirresson used analogy to enlighten his fellow Jesuits in Europe. Although one may interpret the use of comparative characterizations as self-reflective,\footnote{See Rouillard, 289.} that analogical references were intended as positive or negative appraisals of French society relative to that of the Ottoman milieu, there is no definitive manner to extract the self-reflective from mere observations. For example, in describing the eating habits of Ottomans, Poirresson notes that “their eating of the ordinary is very filthy and improper. They are delighted in seeing the cleanliness of our French.”\footnote{BnF, Collection Moreau, n.841, f.171r (Relation, for 1652).} Poirresson was however very unique in this assertion, as most European travelers commented on the cleanliness and moderation of Ottoman eating habits.\footnote{Rouillard, 298-299.} In addition, the disorder in Ottoman processions piqued his interest. Whether they were funeral marches or the parade of people on the annual hajj, Poirresson was troubled by their disorganization. Speaking of the pilgrimage to Mecca, of which he was much impressed by the quantity and variety of people “where ordinarily there are
100,000 men, that come from Persia, Mogor [Mogul India], India, Constantinople [Istanbul], Natolie [Anatolia] and Syria,” Poirresson remarked: “And of truth, if the order was kept, it will be also beautiful… but being a pomp of the devil, this will be marvelous [miraculous] if it was with order.”

Poirresson’s ethnographic endeavors spanned an array of descriptive assertions that were generally culturally neutral. His depictions of Ottoman society were rarely formulated with the intent to disparage or to moralize. Only in the religious sense were his explications rooted in contempt, or meant as possible critiques of his own society.

Poirresson’s disgust at the use of clairvoyants, sages, fortune tellers, or the employment of amulets and charms was not only aimed at the indigenous Christian population of Greater Syria, but also to those who would read his reports. In his words: “There are Christians who consult divines and sorcerers, in which they are so strongly attached that this is not an easy thing of persuading them of quitting this sort of diabolical practice… they say that they would much rather lose their children than their amulets, and that, by a just judgment of God, have lost their children and their amulets and their health.”

The Superior of the mission found that such superstitions were ubiquitous: they were there in the Holy Land, and in his homeland where witches were still being tried. And, not to sit in judgment of his seventeenth century mentality, in which he and his fellow Jesuits believed in the efficacy of the bones of saints, or the caskets they were buried in, to cure physical ailments and to pacify the torments of evil spirits.

As complex as the attitudes and world views of the Jesuits, so were the circumstances that governed their representations of Ottoman society in Greater Syria.

580 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.52v (Relation, for 1653).
581 BnF, Collection Moreau, n.842, f.55v (Relation, for 1653).
582 Have to include here the use of bits of the casket of François Xavier to heal people.
Their narrations were influenced by their belief in the supernatural and eschatological portents. They were grieved by the tumult that afflicted the region from time to time; the rebellions of governors and the harassment from unruly soldiers combined to create a sense of anxiety in the Jesuits, specifically Poirresson, which led to the formation of a “tyrannical” image of Ottoman government. Moreover, the perceived plight of Christians and their potential to convert to Islam greatly troubled the Jesuits. Their failure to stem conversions during this period further contributed to the tensions they felt for Muslims. And, their inability to convince a greater number of Christians to abandon their traditions and doctrines for those of Catholicism guided Jesuit animosity not only toward the indigenous Christians but also the Muslims, holding the latter in contempt for their own failings. Even under these conditions, the Jesuits maintained a level of consistency in their approach, reporting on this multifaceted heterogeneous population with a degree of detachment and neutral cultural observations. Yet, their codified religious beliefs precluded any opportunity for ideological toleration and thus rendered the Muslim as diabolical, a message that was destined to the readers of their reports of their steadfast beliefs in their faith and the appalling spiritual condition of the non-Catholic inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham.
Chapter VI: Jesuit Propaganda and *La Syrie Sainte* of Joseph Besson

They never show you things as they are, but bend and disguise them according to the way they have seen them; and to give credence to their judgment and attract you to it, they are prone to add something to their matter, to stretch it out and amplify it.

Michel de Montaigne

This chapter is an analysis of how one Jesuit portrayed the Society’s missionary enterprise in Greater Syria. In the context of the formation of pre-modern perceptions of the Ottoman world, the publication of Joseph Besson, *La Syrie Sainte ou La Mission de Jesus et des Pères de la Compagnie de Jesus en Syrie, divisée en deux parties* (1660), reveals how the relatively objective narrations of his peers were intentionally manipulated to beseech his fellow Europeans to provide material assistance for the Syria Mission. As a by-product, the publication influenced and fed European apprehensions of Islam and its adherents, serving to heighten a dominant European image of an empire that was cruel and tyrannical, bent on the eradication of Christianity. His primary goal was not to disparage the Muslim and Jewish natives of the region, but to evoke empathy for his fellow missionaries. Besson’s motivation for writing this book is quite clear insomuch as his extant correspondence reflects a more nuanced insight on the mission and the inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham. This was not the work of an intolerant individual, but

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584 There are twelve extant letters and an annual report from Besson (written between 1661 and 1682). For example, the annual report of 1662, which one would expect to be embellished (as the reports analyzed in Chapter V), Besson dispassionately discussed the involvement of local Ottoman officials in settling the dispute over the archbishopric of the Melkites in Aleppo (who sided with the Jesuits’ adversary). Similar to his peers, he included episodes when Jesuits or their associates were fined or harassed. As noted in the previous chapters, these situations were depicted as oppressive and as examples of tyranny.
one that was calculating, whose singular purpose was to promote the validity of the mission and to secure the funding for the Jesuits’ apostolic endeavors. In his pursuit of this goal, Besson rendered the Jesuit experience as a heroic venture that was historically and metaphorically connected to the narrative of the Bible which was quite different from the writings of Queyrot, Amieu, and Poirresson.

To this point of the present work, the analysis of the Jesuit missionary experience and their perceptions of the indigenous population of Bilad al-Sham has relied on two forms of correspondence. First, the letters, which were addressed to the Superior General in Rome, were confined to short updates on their progress and requests for assistance. While the Relations, directed to the Jesuit provincial administrative and academic entities in Paris, were elaborations on the missionaries experience over a one to two year period of time. In form and function, the type of correspondence and the intended target audience influenced the level of objectivity and embellishment in their narratives. As such, Besson had more room and freedom to set the scene of the missionary milieu, in which he relied on the predominant European images of the Ottoman Empire, of barbarism and tyranny, of infidel rulers bent on destroying Christian civilization.585

Joseph Besson arrived at Saida on 5 April 1659 and within the year began work on La Syrie Sainte.586 The draft of the work was submitted from Aleppo to the Provincial some time after 02 March 1660, as noted by the attestation of Jean Peysonnel, the French doctor responsible for the welfare of the merchants and consuls in Greater Syria.587

585 Çirakman, 75-82.
586 In his letter to the Superior General, Goswin Nickel, Besson articulated his intent to make public the history of the missionaries to Greater Syria: “I would like to bring to light under the great name precious to me of Your Father”. Besson was already planning the publication of this work prior to leaving Marseille in early March, 1659 (ARSI, 96, t.1, f.261r (Besson, 4 March, 1659).
to this short time span, from his arrival to submission of the manuscript, and his inability to comprehend any of the indigenous languages, Besson was similar to the “armchair” travelers as described by Samuel Chew. He did not rely on his direct experience or observation, but merely misrepresented the letters and reports of his peers. Besson spent little time discussing the non-Christian inhabitants of Greater Syria, but rather relied on his readers’ a priori perceptions of the Ottoman world to advance his agenda. His descriptions and analysis of the missionary enterprise in Greater Syria were shaped by his anticipation of what a general literate European audience, which was not privy to the letters and reports of the other missionaries, expected to hear in order to maintain its interests and to provide continued material support for the missions.

Besson’s work was a form of rhetorical propaganda. Its present value is in revealing pre-modern mentalities and impressions rather than an eyewitness account of historical events or persons. Indeed, Besson’s use of his predecessors’ reports presents a rare opportunity to demonstrate his calculated manipulation of events to sway or influence the opinions of the target audience. He evoked various themes that he knew his readership could identify with, in which he consistently relied on imagery that associated the Jesuit experience within the context of Christian history in the Holy Land, of oppression and suffering, and of virtuousness and triumphalism. His rhetoric was divisive, grouping his subjects in well-defined polar categories that could be easily understood by his intended audience. His choice of imagery, as demonstrated below, operated to distinguish the

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588 Chew, 22-30. Chew’s “armchair” travelers were those writers on the Ottoman Empire who never left England. They used the works of their contemporaries to fill the demand for works on the east. Their pamphlets, travel guides, and histories rarely reflected the reality of the Islamicate world. And as Rouillard argued, these compilations (productions of the “armchair” travelers) contributed to the negative image of the other, specifically, the “Oriental”. Note: Çirakman uses this same term but does not give credit to Chew for it.
righteous from the wicked in order to classify or set apart the inhabitants of Bilad al-Sham along religious lines. Besson’s rhetorical propaganda, consisting of biblical and heroic descriptions, was merely an expression of a scholastic’s attempt at persuasion, and reveals his Aristotelian training in his ability to unite the speaker, himself, the subject, and the audience. 589 Furthermore, Besson’s descriptions, specifically of Muslims, are not dependable sources for the analysis of cross-cultural contact. His treatment of the people and events had one purpose only, to maneuver his fellow Europeans toward an empathetic perception of the Jesuit missionaries.

_La Syrie Sainte_ was published on 30 July 1660 after receiving the authorization for printing from the Provincial of the Society in the Province of France at La Flèche, Claude Boucher, almost a week earlier. Interestingly, in the authorization, Boucher states that the work was “seen and approved by three Theologians of our Company: in faith of which I have signed the present Permission.” 590 This raises an important question: did the target audience actually believed the contents of the work, and if so, how far an author could stretch the truth before the sensationalism in his narration was no longer believable? Besson’s work, as will be demonstrated below, pushed the limits of what was plausible in the reality of the seventeenth century, and yet apparently remained credible to those Jesuits, including Besson, who believed in the intercession of saints, the efficacy of relics, and in the prognostications that told of the imminent demise of evil infidels. His multiple references to the _memoires_ of the Company as the basis for the facts of his

589 See for example, Kenneth Burke, _A Rhetoric of Motives_ (New York: Prentice Hall, 1950), 19-37; Evonne Levy, _Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque_ (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 42-56. Levy draws a distinction between rhetoric and propaganda based on their temporal use – rhetoric being “a classical form of persuasion”, while propaganda is a more modern device. However, Levy believes the baroque period was the “intersection” of these forms, hence my use of “rhetorical propaganda.”

590 Besson, _La Syrie Sainte_, end of Volume II (no page number(s)).
narrative, aimed to provide the reader with a sense that this work was a reliable source for the history of the Society of Jesus in Syria. By its very nature, *La Syrie Sainte* is not a trustworthy guide to understanding the complexities of cross-cultural contact.

Without doubt, Besson’s work was written as a propaganda piece for the Jesuit missions. Although Boucher’s authorization and Poirresson’s letter of introduction to the work tried to sell the book as an authentic and truthful account of the history of the Syria Mission, its challenges, and the justification for continued aid, the work tended toward the melodramatic and the marvelous with many embellishments of the “facts” that were established in missionary letters and reports. This was not the product of one specific Jesuit’s personality or mentality expressing “interesting facts” as noted by Carayon, but the anticipation of meeting the needs of a target audience which consisted of the European elite: wealthy bourgeois, the nobility, the Catholic Church in general, and Louis XIV specifically. In Besson’s view, it was up to the French monarch to retake his “patrie”, the Holy Land.

Poirresson notes that the Besson’s work was much anticipated, for many people in Rome

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591 As early as 1673 the Melkite patriarch, André, dismissed the work as being “filled with falsities” (Heyberger, 314, f.n. 9). Carayon in 1862, referred to *La Syrie Sainte* as: “not a work of literature, but a simple narration of interesting facts. If the style, which is full of charm and naïveté, appeared a little dated to some delicate ears, we should remember that the Père Besson left France when it spoke the language of Louis XIII, this language was said in very few words” (p. X); Levenq believed the work provided only a few sources to the historian and that for his time, Besson was “much more concerned with edifying rather than accuracy” (p.76-77); Yet none of these authors has assessed the value of this work in understanding Jesuit mentalities in general, but more specifically, the use of this work for propaganda to solicit support for the mission.

592 Roger Chartier demonstrates that the majority of the reading public in France were the wealthy in society, for they could afford a variety of books. While those at the lower end of the economic ladder who owned books, typically kept books relating to religion. Their libraries consisted of Bibles, Books of Hours, breviaries, and missals, with very few exceptions of “how to” trade books and works of history. Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, tr. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987), 146-152.

593 *La Syrie Sainte*, 226.
were “surprised that a full account of the Syria Missions had not been published”. They were, after all, “working in the place where Christianity took birth”.

According to both missionaries, for the previous thirty-two years, they were unable to make public their experience – having to cloak their work, “wrapping it in a shroud of obscurity”\textsuperscript{594} – giving the illusion that their every move was watched with suspicion. Such a statement served as one of the embellishments of Besson’s narrative that was to set the scene in which there was a foreboding shadow that lurked behind each missionary, a specter of gloom and misery, waiting to unleash itself on the courageous Jesuits. Furthermore, as suggested by Poirresson and Besson, this constant suspicion that they were under justified why they had not previously published an account of their encounters and experiences as their compatriots had done in the missions to Asia and the Americas.\textsuperscript{595} Yet, the unpublished primary sources, mainly the letters directed to the Superior General and the \textit{Relations} did not reflect this portrayal of a milieu in which the movements of the Jesuits were scrutinized to this degree. This more problematic setting, where the missionaries operated in fear of speaking much about their apostolic work to the “Turks, Jews, Heretics, and the Schismatics,” precluded them from publishing any accounts of their travels and missionary experience prior to this of \textit{La Syrie Sainte}, was a fabrication.\textsuperscript{596} Poirresson, in the context of the letter of introduction to the work,

\textsuperscript{594} ibid, Preface, “The Design of the Work”, by N. Poirresson.
\textsuperscript{595} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{596} Ibid. Rabbath seems to accept these two missionaries’ descriptions of being under continuous suspicion and oppression, and the caution they employed: “Here a pious old man, of good faith…, not expecting this last grace to sing his \textit{nunc dimittis}. There, this is a priest, a bishop or even a patriarch, that opens the eyes to the light and himself secretly submits to the Vicar of Jesus Christ [conversions to Catholicism and recognizing the authority of the pope]. Elsewhere small catholic communities form to come to an end soon after, under the combined action of the Governments and of the dissidents, these last often more hateful and more unforgiving than the Pashas themselves. One named these persecutions by a word once frightening, \textit{avanie}, which harkened back to each passage (page) under the quill of the missionaries and Consuls. This that was established with much suffering was thrown over, and it was necessary to resume the work by the
stipulated that “prudence” had obliged them not to embark on such a work in order to “protect [the Jesuits] from surprises and violence.” These fears were not explicitly stated in their extant letters and reports.

The Muslim authorities were obviously aware of the presence of the missionaries. There is ample evidence in the other correspondences that a certain détente was worked out between the seventeenth-century apostles and their Muslim hosts: the mission was to target Christians only. And as long as they adhered to the prohibition against proselytizing to Muslims, they were mostly free to perform their duties unabated as shown in the previous chapters. This embellishment was a rhetorical device to establish one of the more emotive forces of the publication in order to instill in the reader a sense of doom that hung over the Jesuits. It was part of setting the stage for their plight in the shadowy world of the infidels; it was backcloth.

In the process of appealing to Europeans who could influence the material support of the Jesuit missionaries in Greater Syria, Besson had to create a framework that Catholic elites in European society could find empathy with. He had to establish with this audience an emotional and historical bond to the Jesuits in particular and indigenous Christians in general. Fundamental to his approach was to make a historical, yet physical connection with the land in which they proselytized. This land of course, was filled with persecution and misery. As such, his historical reconstruction of the Holy Land,

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basics” Rabbath maintains the same reasons why the Jesuit missionaries did not make public their experience as Poirresson: “For this part of the History of Christianity in the East is nowhere near to be known. For a long time the missionaries themselves refrained from publishing the results of their works, by prudence, or lapse of time, or above all by fear of offending the sensitivities of the Easterner, proud of his past...” (Rabbath, preface to v.1, IV-V). The previous chapters demonstrated this was not the case.  

La Syrie Sainte, Preface.  

As noted in chapters II – IV as long as the Jesuits abided by the laws and traditions of the Muslim majority, they were usually left unmolested, but there were those occasions of harassment as discussed in Chapter V.
combined with the elements of cruelty, were primarily rhetorical devices that challenged the emotions of the target audience in hopes for their sympathetic involvement. They were also intended to develop in the reader a sense of compassion for the heroes of the narrative, the Jesuits and the Maronites; and to imbue feelings of disdain for the other. Thus, the combination of these elements was employed as a representation of an eternal persecution of Christians dating from the time of Jesus directly to Maniglier, Queyrot, Amieu, Chezaud, Poirresson, and Besson in the middle of the seventeenth century. For Besson, the Jesuit tribulations (including those of the indigenous Christians) were tied to those of Jesus and his apostles.

Besson’s rhetoric produced an image of a place in which the mission was conducted in fear and anxiety in an unstable and insecure world. In Jesuits and indigenous Christians lived in a world of bondage, “where one finds little more than chains and crosses”. In the opinion of Besson, the whole of Christianity in Greater Syria lived in despair and “cruel servitude” under the yoke of oppressive infidels who gave them no quarter; that all the “enemies of the Savior [were] assembled there, the Turk, the Arab, the Moor, the Jew, the Schismatic, [and] the Heretic”. In short, the scene he depicted was of a land filled with hate for Catholics, Syrian and European, and for this reason, they had to keep themselves locked in their homes in order not to expose themselves to verbal and physical assaults as they walked the streets and visited the public places. Accordingly, no one could afford to walk alone; to leave the safety of their home or the merchant

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599 In a few instances, Besson seemed to have empathy for non-Catholic Christians, but in others, he loathed “schismatics” and “heretics” for being equally responsible as the Muslims for the “oppression” experienced by the Jesuits.
600 Besson, 67.
601 Ibid., 9.
602 Ibid., 10.
“camp” was to invite taunts and blows. The examples of persecutions and oppressions are many and are interspersed throughout the work, serving as constant reminders of the need for continued support for their mission. Consequently, in order to impose on the reader the impression of a universal Ottoman tyranny and maintain a strict dichotomy between Christian virtuousness and Muslim wickedness, Besson ignored the suffering of Muslims and conversely, neglected the misbehavior of Christians toward their coreligionists. This was in contrast to the depictions of his peers, where in their letters and annual reports they demonstrated that Christians were as likely to act violently and abusively as any other inhabitant of Greater Syria.603

There was no counter to this narrative of oppression as in the reports discussed in the previous chapter. Poirresson, Amieu, and Queyrot did not shy away from describing amicable relations with the Ottoman Muslims. Even Maniglier and Stella, who had the more difficult experience of all the Jesuits, pronounced that the “Turks [were] more humane towards [them] than [their Christian and European] adversaries” and that they “could confirm about the Turks, that [they] suffered nothing too harsh from them.”604 To provide balance was not important for Besson. Similar to most works of propaganda during the mid-seventeenth century, Besson’s La Syrie Sainte intentionally neglected the relative accord and good relations between various Jesuit missionaries and their Muslim hosts as was unapologetically stated and implied in the letters and reports of his predecessors and peers. Where Poirresson and the other missionaries acknowledged the benevolence of some Ottoman subjects, and their intercession on behalf of certain

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603 As discussed in Chapter V.
604 ARSI, 95, t.3, f.321v, 324r (Relation, for 1626).
missionaries, Besson was silent.\textsuperscript{605} In propaganda there can be no balance, no equal time for diverse opinions; the discourse is one-sided and intolerant, specifically in a seventeenth century context. Likewise, the publication of this propaganda corresponded to the ideological discourse that routinely placed Catholicism in opposition to other religious belief systems.\textsuperscript{606} Besson depicted Greater Syria as a place filled with hate against the Christians where “all the enemies of the savior are assembled” living in misery and a “cruel servitude” in a time when “Mohammed [was] triumphant in the domain of Jesus-Christ”.\textsuperscript{607} To a European audience, conditioned to the vagaries of religious war, and recently coming to terms with the possibility of doctrinal toleration, it was plausible that oppression would be more severe across religions than from within them and thus Besson’s propaganda could be perceived as credible.

To be sure, the absence of a narrative conditioned on the amicable relationships that were formed between Jesuits and Muslims as outlined in their letters and reports (the “memoires of the mission” as Besson often referred to them), was not a mere oversight, but was premeditated. In order to remove any possibility of doubt in his readers’ minds, it was essential for Besson to portray Greater Syria as two mutually exclusive and opposed zones. This was no different from the ideologically-driven polemics fought out in the pamphlets and books published during the religious wars in Europe. This discourse was framed by the firm belief in the absolute absurdity of the other side’s perspective. It was also not permissible for them to occupy the same space, as highlighted in the Catholic and Protestant rants of late sixteenth-century France. In the

\textsuperscript{605} As noted above, Chapter V.
\textsuperscript{607} Besson, 9-12.
context of the Holy Land, Besson created a space that was inhabited by Christians, who were in essence good, or had the potential to be good, Catholics; its extreme opposite was inhabited by infidels who constantly imposed their will on the Maronites, Greeks, Armenians, Nestorians, and Melkites alike. These two zones therefore could not coexist, specifically in light of the subordinate Christian position in the Islamicate world. According to Besson, it was important to keep the inhabitants of the Christian zone from associations with Muslims and Druses, for “it [was] necessary in combating all the doubts and errors that the conversation with the Turks and Druses leave them.”\textsuperscript{608} In his mind, the Jesuits were to be a protective barrier between the two zones: they were sent by the “holy Pontiffs… to prevent them [Ottomans] from perverting the Christians.”\textsuperscript{609}

As with other aspects of \textit{La Syrie Sainte}, the narrative of the tormented lives of the missionaries and their Christian allies at the hands of tyrannical and corrupt infidels was intended to strike fear in the reader and motivate them to action. Creating the “Turc” as bogeyman, Besson reaches into the same bag of generalized and ideologically-driven representations that were a feature in the European discourse of the Ottoman Empire. This was a tried and true method in the various manuscripts and published works that were generated in response to an expanding Islamicate world dating to the early eighth century.\textsuperscript{610} The term “Turc” or “Turquesque” automatically drew on the reader’s preconceived notions of its metaphorical meaning, typically conjuring images of barbarism and cruelty. In Europe, Catholics and Protestants used “turc” to label their religious adversaries by analogically connecting them to the tyranny and oppression that

\textsuperscript{608} Ibid., 121
\textsuperscript{609} Ibid., 196. Besson also notes that they had orders from the popes “not to violate the Political Law of the Ottomans who prohibit it [attempts at converting Muslims].”
\textsuperscript{610} This was demonstrated in the works of Setton, Talon, Daniel, Rouillard, among others.
they believed were the embodiments of the malevolent infidel eating away at the periphery of Christendom.\textsuperscript{611} In the context of the European polemic against the Ottoman Empire in general and Muslims specifically, descriptions of Ottoman or Muslim oppression and corruption formed the basis for distinguishing between good and evil, between “us” and “them.” During the intra-Christian tensions of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the term “turc” was applied frequently in the vituperative exchanges that at times incited Catholics and Protestants to brutal violence.\textsuperscript{612} Therefore, it was not difficult for Besson to establish a sense of the tyranny and oppression by merely using the term “Turquesque justice” to describe a perceived injustice without going into detail or explanation of the maltreatment – it was implicit in the term. Nor was it difficult to make the connections between the past and present; the archeological remnants from the rise of Christianity through the crusading period were ubiquitous.\textsuperscript{613}

It was important for Besson to portray the Holy Land as the eternal battleground between good and evil, where virtuous Christians were under constant pressure to abjure their faith. Through his references to the Bible, Besson found the examples of brutality that reflected his interpretation of the present state and experience of the Christians. He expressed a zealous history of Christianity, fueled by the sight of the monuments and ruins that littered the region. He saw the work of the Jesuits as a reenactment of the days of Jesus. For Besson, the names of Queyrot, Amieu, Rigaud, and Lambert, have their counterparts in the Bible, in Peter, Paul, Mathew and Thomas and the persecutions they confronted as told in the Gospels. Jesus and his first followers walked these lands and

\textsuperscript{611} Rouillard, 412-415.
\textsuperscript{612} See for example, Luc, Racaut, \textit{Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion} (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).
\textsuperscript{613} Heyberger, 183. As noted, the second volume of \textit{La Syrie Sainte} was intended as a pilgrim’s guide to the holy sites of Syria filled with descriptions of places and their biblical meaning.
faced similar persecutions: “During the travelling [apostolic] life of Jesus Christ, the darkness was spread on Greater Sidon; and the light appeared with brilliances at the gates alike of the City, and on the main route of Tyr, which was the path of the Sun, and of this admirable Missionary, of the Eternal Father the man-God.” 614 This was the same path the present missionaries were travelling and encountering the same “darkness” that covered the land, which had become a “large cemetery of Christians… that Jesus-Christ had sprinkled with his Blood”. 615

Besson presented the work of his fellow Jesuits in a manner that breeched the temporal divide of some sixteen-hundred years. His Jesuit peers were no different from the apostles that followed Jesus, and their suffering for the cause of saving souls was traced to the blood spilled at Golgotha. And as Jesus bore the burden of his cross to his crucifixion, the Jesuits were prepared to do the same. For Besson and his peers, there was “nothing more agreeable in an Apostolic man, than the cross, of which Syria is very fertile; since namely that the Cross of Jesus-Christ there had been planted.” 616 This theme of bearing the cross and the historical significance of Syria to Christendom permeated the entire work, and operated to insert the Jesuits in the historical narrative of Christianity. In literal and figurative terms, Besson had connected the Jesuits directly to the experience of Jesus and his immediate apostles. Although this theme of a shared persecution-filled experience with the progenitors of Christianity was vaguely alluded to

614 Besson, 182 (note, in the copy of the first edition of this work at the Jesuit Archives in Vanves, France, which appears to have been used by Auguste Carayon, who published an edited version in 1862 La Syrie et la Terre Sainte, Carayon took the liberty to mark and annotate Besson’s work, in this case replacing “la vie voyagère” with “la vie apostolique”.
615 Ibid., 217.
616 Ibid., 32. Besson proceeds to quote Hebrews 11:36-37; “Ludibria & verbera eperti, insuper & vincula, & carceres; egentes, angustiati, afflicti…” ((36) And other had ritual of cruel mocking and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: (37) They were stoned, they were sewn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented”).

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in the *Relations*, it was amplified in *La Syrie Sainte*. This discourse was intended to establish the missionary enterprise as part of the process “of recovering the ancient conquests”.617

In contradistinction with his peers, Besson’s discussion of conquest did not rule out a return to Christian arms against the Muslims as was done during the nearly two-hundred-year European crusading period. In fact, he recalls the papal bulls of Urban II and Innocent III calling men to conquer again the “patrie of Jesus”.618 However, he distinguished between the intent of a military crusade and that of a spiritual mission.

Besson preferred a more peaceful approach, arguing:

> For the clarification of these Words, it is necessary to know that the greater motive that the Popes propose to those whom they solicit in recovering the Holy Land, this is the glory that they receive in re-establishing Jesus-Christ in his Realm from where he had been chased, and this can be done by way of Arms and by way of the Missions. By way of Arms, renders to him the land, [and] this of the Mission, gives to him the souls. Jesus-Christ cannot entirely recover the lands of his Domain, and of his Birth, if they are inhabited by his enemies the Infidels. Thus, the Mission is the accomplice of the Conquest, and has to be to us much more precious in that the words of God, which are weapons of illumination, are preferable to the Arms of the Conquerors, who are only of the steel and of the iron… The States of Jesus crucified, are the Holy places, and his Province, this is Syria.

Pour l’éclaircissement de ces Paroles, il faut savoir que le plus grand motif que les Papes proposent à ceux qu’ils sollicitent au recouvrement de la Terre-Sainte, c’est la gloire qu’ils recevront de rétablir Jésus-Christ dans son Royaume, d’où il a été chassé, ce que se peut faire par la voie des Armes, & par celle des Missions. Celle des Armes, lui rend la terre, celle de la Mission, lui donne les esprits. Jésus-Christ ne peut pas entièrement recouvrer les terres de son Domaine, & de sa Naissance, si elles sont habitées par des Infidèles ses ennemis. Ainsi la Mission est l’accomplissement de la Conquête, & nous doit être d’autant plus précieuse, que les paroles de Dieu qui sont des armes

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617 Ibid., 12.
618 Ibid., 212. In the analysis of the previous chapter, it was established that the other missionaries were not inclined nor did they support any military adventure to capture expanses of Greater Syria.
lumineuses, sont préférables aux Armes des Conquérants, qui ne sont que de l’acier & du fer… Les Etats de Jésus crucifié, son les lieux Saints, & sa Province, c’est la Syrie.\textsuperscript{619}

For Besson the military capture of territory lacked permanence while the conquest of souls was eternal. Without the conversion of infidels, schismatics, heretics, and the occasional idolaters, Greater Syria could never be secured for Catholicism: thus the purpose of the missions. Furthermore he believed the “Mission was a perpetual Crusade”, and as such argued that the plenary indulgences extended to the crusaders and their Franciscan cohorts should also apply to the Jesuits. In his mind, they were the equal of military warriors who “work for the defense of the Christians against the temptations and the attacks of the Impious: and if [they] continued [their] work until death; employing their Arms, which are the prayers and the tears”, the Jesuits were deserving of such recompense.\textsuperscript{620} Although Besson shared in his fellow Jesuits’ beliefs in the intercession of divine providence, and gave credence to omens and prodigies, he deemed that the doctrinal and spiritual wars had to be carried out by men.

But a crusade against who? As noted throughout this work, including the conflicting testimony of Besson himself, there was no hope of converting Muslims. This was an overstatement of Jesuit preaching power, and Besson understood this. After nearly two years in Greater Syria, Besson was certainly aware of the prohibitions against proselytizing to Muslims and the difficulties in getting the various Christian sects to convert to Catholicism;\textsuperscript{621} this evocation of a campaign against the infidel, whether by

\textsuperscript{619} Ibid., 222.
\textsuperscript{620} Ibid., 225-226.
\textsuperscript{621} Besson contradicts himself with such assertions of the possibility of converting Muslims. He stated, “The greater good that one can have with the Turks, is not of discussing religion with them; for we have order from the holy Pontiffs, and that one not violate the Political Law of the Ottomans who prohibit it” (Besson, 196).
arms or mission, was to reassure his European audience that its investment, in the form of alms to the missionaries, would not be wasted. Besson was writing to a European (French) audience that was familiar with the rhetoric of crusade and expulsion of the infidel from the lands bequeathed to Christians by God. He was aware however, like his missionary brethren, that there was no consensus among European princes for a military attack on the Holy Land. In several areas of the narrative, Besson makes inferences to the French role in the conquests of the Crusades and that it was being called on again to claim its historical rights to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth.

Inasmuch as Besson attached great importance to Godfrey de Bouillon’s capture of Jerusalem in terms of a “French” conquest as a motivation for the warrior nobility of France, he also emphasized to his audience the ancient links between France and a nascent Christianity. Besson reminded his readers that Gaul was the first European territory to receive the apostles of Jesus. According to eleventh-century legend, Lazarus, and his sisters Mary Magdalene and Martha, escaped the persecutions in Greater Syria in the aftermath of the execution of Jesus and arrived in Marseille shortly thereafter. In Arles, that one could still find the house of St. Paul. Besson, as many of his day, believed the myth that these initial missionaries brought Christianity to France and therefore, the French were indebted to the East, for the “clarities of the faith”

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622 Louis Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule: Provinces de Sud-est.* 2. Vol. 1. 3 vols (Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1907), 321-340. Duchesne notes several permutations of this legend in which there is no documentary evidence prior to the eleventh century. Pre-modern Europeans blamed the Saracens (Muslims) “ravages” for the destruction of manuscripts by Christian theologians of the fifth and sixth century that would have validated the eleventh century authors of this legend. Moreover, Mary Magdalene holds a special place in Jesuit thought. In the *Spiritual Exercises* of Loyola, Magdalene is referenced nine times, in which she is made an example of patience, repentance, and charity. Her repentance was “a motive for more fervent love [of God] (*Spiritual Exercises*, p.56). Loyola also identified Magdalene as the second person after the Theotokos to have contact with Jesus after his resurrection, before any of the male apostles. Although it is not clear if Besson intended to tie the escape of Magdalene to Gaul, the destruction of material evidence by the Saracens, and the

623 Besson, 201.
that came from it.\textsuperscript{624} But now that the decadent “Orient has eclipsed its light [and] the Occident, because of a gentle guidance from Providence”, was now more superior, it was the responsibility of the Catholics to correct the errors of the Eastern Churches and reunite them with their superior coreligionists of Europe.\textsuperscript{625}

Having established the historical ties between France and the Holy Land, Besson emphasized France’s contemporary role and status. At the Ottoman Porte, France held the highest prestige among the European “nations.” Recalling the Capitulation of 1569, in which specific European nations had to trade under the protection of France in the Ottoman Empire; Besson implied that the capitulation included responsibility and protection of the Christian holy sites. This was not the case at the time Besson was writing; it was not until 1673 that France was formally given this role under a new agreement signed by Mehmet IV. Regardless of this inaccuracy, Besson was directing his audience, pulling at the strings of an embryonic sense of French nationalism that was slowly emerging from the ashes of the Fronde.\textsuperscript{626} For this Jesuit the evocation of the Society’s founder was equally important.

Historical justifications and geographic connections were made to the Society as well in the person of Ignatius Loyola. For Besson the Mission of Syria was unfinished business. His rather selective memory of Loyola’s enterprise to the Holy Land as a triumphant conquest in which the founder of the Jesuit Order “went with joy from Syria to Rome and represented himself with pleasure on how he provoked the Lions to

\textsuperscript{624} Ibid., 200.
\textsuperscript{625} Ibid., 199. Besson’s evocation of a shift in the balance between Europe and the Ottoman Empire demonstrates the sense of European, at least, French confidence and power, that they no longer felt “threatened” by the Ottomans.
\textsuperscript{626} See for example, Todd Olson, \textit{Poussin and France: Painting, Humanism, and the Politics of Style} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 72-78.
combat.” Besson recounts the promise made between “Saint Ignace, and our first Fathers, [who] made vows in the Church of Mont-Martre, of coming to sacrifice their lives in the Holy Land… that the Mission of Syria, may not be the last of our thoughts; since it had been the first of S. Ignace and his nascent Company.” And as noted in Chapter IV, the Saida mission was named after Loyola. In Besson’s mind, not supporting the mission was a dishonor to their founder as well as all the “martyrs” that came before him. As he perused the memoires of the mission, Besson recognized the financial constraints that were imposed on his fellow Jesuits; from the days of Stella and Maniglier, the missionaries were consistently under-funded and minimally staffed. Harking back to a romanticized interpretation of Loyola’s (failed) adventure was a signal to his fellow Jesuits and princes in Europe that the task was not complete.

Clearly, Besson’s historical references and claims, while locating the Jesuits in the “patrie” of Jesus-Christ and that of the kings of France, were aimed to instill a sense of custodial responsibility in his compatriots in Europe. Besson, in effect, imagined a temporal, spiritual, spatial, and historical bond between the western and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Such connections implied ownership and guardianship of the holy places, including the cities of Aleppo and Damascus, hence the title of the work Syria the Holy. Rarely were these two cities included as part of the Holy Land by Besson’s predecessors and contemporaries. In fact, Besson himself did not take account of them in the second volume in which he outlined the historical importance of Acre, Tyr, Saida, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and Nazareth to Christianity. These were the “must see”

627 Besson, 212. Also, reference Chapter I, pp.9-10. Most historians of Ignatius Loyola agree that his attempt at proselytizing to Muslims was a failed mission. As noted previously, the Franciscans refused to assist him and expelled him from Syria.
628 Ibid., 219.
places for pilgrims, where Jesus-Christ conducted his mission. Although Besson’s motivation for including Aleppo and Damascus in his definition of the Holy Land cannot be easily determined, when interpreting La Syrie Sainte as a work of propaganda, the inclusion of these two cities is twofold. First, the material wealth and beauty of these cities. Besson referred to Damascus as “a Paradise rather than a city; domus voluptatis, urbs laetitiae”, made them attractive targets for an eventual conquest. Second, Besson argued these cities should be “honored with this august title of Holy, because of the extraordinary suffering and persecutions” of the missionaries. Moreover, Damascus should not be overlooked as being “holy”, for it was “the first subject” of the mission of Paul, whose conversion from Judaism en route to this city, was a defining moment in Christian history. Besson was calling to his fellow Europeans to come and claim what was rightfully theirs, “where the milk and honey mix from all the places of this land” and the “time of the harvest had come” – the signs were self-evident.

In Besson’s mind, the physical and geographic space that constituted Greater Syria belonged to the Christians, more specifically the Catholics. For the author, this notion was immutable. It was not difficult for this missionary to link the ancient monuments and artifacts to the stories and people in the Bible, since “all the Mysteries of our Religion, are as natives of the Province… and this Province of Syria is the Patrie of the Christians”. Besson’s geographic and temporal connections to Jesus and the first Apostles aimed to depict the Jesuit missions of Syria as part of the continuum of apostolic persecution found in the various accounts in the Bible. Likewise, these

629 Ibid., 69.
630 Ibid., 68-69.
631 Ibid., 203.
632 Ibid., 227.
historical associations were fundamental to increasing his audience’s awareness of the missionary enterprise in Syria relative to those of Asia and the Americas.633

There are frequent references to the missions in China and Japan in which Besson, without equivocation, presented the case for Syria as equally hostile but with greater potential for conversions; even the storms were more trying in Syria than in China.634 According to Besson “one did not have to see the vast extension of seas and empires to meet perils, without going to search for the Tyrants of Japan,” for in the Holy Land, the subjugation of Christians was a historical fact written in the pages of the Gospels and the contemporary travel literature that claimed the deplorable fate of Christians under Muslim tyranny.635 In Syria, one could not find “missions more aggrieved and more active, who have suffered greater distresses for the temporal, and to whom God had opened a more beautiful field for the conversion of souls.”636 From a doctrinal perspective, the “missions are not less glorious in front of God, than these that are established to combat Idolatry. The Missionaries of Japan combat for the unity and the existence of God: We dispute for the Trinity of Persons; they work for a perfection of the Divinity, we work for the fullness of God and the accomplishment of his essence”. It was not merely a matter of cruel circumstances, or “persecutions” that made the missionary enterprise challenging, but also the different starting points of the conversion process.

633 In one of the few works on Jesuit libraries of the pre-modern period, Hendrik Dijkgraaff (The Library of a Jesuit Community at Holbeck, Nottinghamshire (1679) (Cambridge: LP Publications, 2003)) analyzed the inventory of books held by the Jesuit community in Nottinghamshire up to 1674. In this survey of 990 published titles, five were related to the Jesuit missionary enterprise: two specific to Japan, one on Japan/China, one on China, and one regarding the mission to Brazil. In a library that was dominated by religious works (doctrinal polemic, lives of saints, commentaries, bibles, etc.), these five titles are significant because they demonstrate a sufficient interest in missions to foreign lands. This is the arena in which Besson was competing.
634 Besson, 209.
635 Ibid., 14-15.
636 Ibid., 35.
For Besson, it was much easier to convert a Buddhist “idolater” than to convince a Greek Orthodox in the filioque doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son and the Father. 637 Although the doctrinal differences between Christians in Greater Syria presented a significant challenge to the Jesuit missionary enterprise to bring the Greeks, Nestorians, and Armenians into the Catholic fold, Besson was comfortable in boasting, “a harvest more abundant in Syria, than in the Provinces of China”. 638

Yet representing the people of Bilad al-Sham was more problematic, and instinctively, Besson relied on simple and over-used generalizations. Although he surveyed and wrote about a multiplicity of “nations”, it is not necessary to examine all of them: Besson’s commentary on Maronites, Jews, and Muslims, demonstrates that each group served an important and specific function in his propaganda. Of all the Christian sects, the Maronites were presented as the darlings of Greater Syria, serving as a metaphor for the hope and aspiration of the Jesuits. At the extreme opposite, Besson’s portrayal of the Jews of Bilad al-Sham symbolized despair and materialism, in a sense, all that was wrong in pre-modern society. While the third group, the Muslims, was depicted as the ever-present, yet shadowy oppressors determined to extinguish the Christian faith from “la Syrie Sainte.” For the latter group, which constituted the majority of the population of Greater Syria, Besson dedicated little or no space regarding their way of life, they were important only in reflecting the obverse of Catholic virtues and grandness; they were essentially Besson’s bêtes noirs, enemies of the “true faith.”

637 Ibid., 216. The doctrinal debates with the Greeks became very tense during the early to middle eighteenth century when Père Pierre Fromage made extensive use of the printing press at the monastery of St. John in Choueir Lebanon – this subject will be addressed in a later project.
638 Ibid., 12.
Before proceeding with this discussion, it is important to note that Besson did not categorize or differentiate the inhabitants of Syria in socio-economic terms. Besson’s assessments of the various inhabitants of Syria, as with Poirresson’s in the previous chapter, typically grouped their subjects by “race” or “nation” or religion. Besson rarely made distinctions within each group or specific individuals that were based on their material wealth, place of habitation, or how they made their livelihood. With a few exceptions, Besson seldom associated the degree of a person’s tribulations to their socio-economic status, but simply made sweeping statements in accordance with their religious affiliation, creating a sense that all Christians were downtrodden. In his description of Damascus however, a hint of a variegated structure within each religious sect can be extracted. His reference to the “two grand and magnificent Hospitals, of which one founded by Solyman [Suleiman Kanuni] was destined to the lodging of the Grands [elites]; the other is for poor Christians or Turks”. This statement represents one of the few passages that provide any sense of stratification in Ottoman society based on material wealth. Although his description of the two hospitals seems to be incongruous with his rhetoric on the oppression and isolation of Christians, he made no explicit statements that unambiguously reflected an alternative life of material comfort for Christians in the lands of Muslims. In addition, this relatively innocuous comment demonstrates the possibilities for inter-religious mingling based on social status, as was identified in the previous chapter. Local physical and social segregation of the population was as much contingent on one’s personal status as much as on one’s religion. Furthermore such a statement not only offers a counter to Besson’s assertions of a general Christian subjugation, but also demands a more careful and nuanced analysis due to the relative
non-existence of explicit remarks regarding the material status of his coreligionists and their complex interactions within this heterogeneous society.

While Besson did not spend much time differentiating the circumstances of Christians by their socio-economic situations, he nonetheless distinguished the various Christian sects by their potential for conversion to Catholicism. Besson’s considerations on the “Christians of the Region in general” rarely included any discussion of the daily lives of his coreligionists. We learn very little about the lives of his Christian subjects – for the scene was already set – they lived in “misery and cruel servitude”. Rather, his narrative rested on the relationships between the missionaries and the indigenous Christian population in the context of the battle against infidelity and heresy. When he presented the Christians in separate groups: “Maronites, Armenians, Suriens [Jacobites], Nestorians, and Greeks”, it was in the context of their potential for conversion to the Roman rite or in reinforcing their Catholicism. Moreover, his depictions of these groups were meant to highlight the potential of apostolic success in either direction, that is to say, the prevention of apostasy to Islam or to mend the doctrinal schism between Christians. One example of this method will suffice: Besson believed the Maronites were the seeds for the spread of Catholicism in Greater Syria; all they needed was nurturing and guidance from Rome. They also needed support in “opposing [themselves] to the Schism, to the Heresy, to the Muslim Religion, and of stopping the overflow of the Torrent prevalent in so many of the Provinces”.639 These Catholics were on the frontlines of the battle against Christian apostasy and were at times presented as heroes in *La Syrie Sainte*, and if it were not for the missionaries, “the losses would be infinite”.

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639 Ibid., 46.
Of all the Christian groups, it was the Maronites that Besson discussed most often.\footnote{Besson dedicated twenty-two pages to the Maronites.} When he wrote about this group however, he projected them as objects of the work of the missionaries. From his vantage, the Jesuits were the shepherds, and the Maronites the sheep, the latter lacking agency and the ability to control their destiny. His portrayal however, was at times contradictory. On the one hand the Maronites, similar to all the other Christians of Greater Syria, were lambs for the slaughter. While on the other, in specific regions such as “Quesrouan”,\footnote{As noted in Chapter IV, Quesrouan refers to the district of Jabal Kisrawan.} they were the safe-haven for missionaries, who “serve them [the Jesuits] as fortification and of defense.”\footnote{Besson, 110.} According to Besson, this area was a “terrestrial paradise” that only recently had been revitalized by the Christians after having been “so desolated” since the Muslim expansion of the seventh century. This region, in Besson’s opinion, was “the more peaceful in Syria” inhabited by “the best people of the Christians… who make the silks, the very-excellent wines, the pasturage, and the livestock.”\footnote{Ibid., 112.} In Kisrawan, the “Sect of Mohammed is quasi-banished” where the Christians enjoy “a profound peace”, that “one there scarcely sees little of the horrible faces of the Moors and the Arabs; one does not speak of thieves and scoundrels”.\footnote{Ibid., 109.} In addition, the Christian inhabitants of this region demonstrated a benign disposition: “their humor is very gentle, and their manner of behaving peacefully; they never rebuke anyone.”

Besson portrayed the Maronites as tender innocents whose imperfection and weakness lay in their fickleness and lack of education. Although Besson believed the “nature of
this people [was] good and easy”, he found them to be “insensible”, rarely keeping their word:

This is the custom among them, that to each proposition which the Preacher makes, the majority of the listeners respond aloud that he is correct, that it is necessary to do thus; that what he said is true; but when outside of the Church, they scarcely gather themselves around, and do not do what they had promised. Press them a second time, they would always respond that this one is true; they would add that God is beneficent, that all things will succeed well: and after these beautiful discourses, they do nothing.

C’est la coutume parmi eux, qu’à chaque proposition que fait le Prédicateur, la plupart des Auditeurs répond tout haut qu’il a raison, qu’il faut faire ainsi; que ce qu’il dit est véritable; mais étant hors de l’Eglise, ils ne s’empressent guère, & ne font point ce qu’ils ont promis. Pressez-les une secondé fois, ils répondront toujours que cela est vrai; ils ajouteront que Dieu est bienfaisant, que toutes choses réussiront bien: & après tous ces beaux discours, ils n’en font rien.

Their other flaw was in their educational deficiencies. They did not have the institutions to teach them theology and philosophy “as in Europe”, wherein Greater Syria, “a poorly educated man passes here as if he was an oracle”. But these were not their faults alone; they were imposed on them by the Muslims and the Druses of the region. Although Besson asserted that Muslims were “quasi-banished” from this region, they somehow negatively influenced the behavior and intelligence of the Maronites. It was impossible for this Jesuit to maintain the mutually exclusive spaces for Christians and Muslims. Sins such as greed, which manifested themselves in usurious practices, were learned from the infidels, “a contagion transmitted to the Christians” where wealthy families were established “on this criminal business… and from the blood of the poor, that is to say the money, that builds their rich houses” Furthermore, Besson asserts the

645 Ibid., 116-117.
646 Ibid., 102.
647 Ibid., 118.
Maronites were not only learning cupidity from the Muslims, but also the use of violence and false testimony to enrich themselves. To this missionary, the Maronites had become prone to “the spirit of vengeance” and deceitful accusations as a result of continued interaction between the two religions. It was the duty of the Jesuits to protect the “Nation of the Maronites, being all Christian, all Catholic” from “degenerating” into such “dominant passions”. And it was the responsibility of his European audience to send the alms that would prevent this from happening.

Financial support was not all that Besson sought; he had in mind the grand project of opening a seminary in Antoura as a first step toward establishing a college in the region, fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of Queyrot, Amieu, and Chezaud. As noted previously, the Maronites had a long-standing relationship with their coreligionists in Europe, and particularly since 1584 with the establishment of Maronite College in Rome. In his opinion, the seminary would lead the young from the “savage” and “would shortly be civilized”. Yet this was not enough; the establishment of a college would alleviate the pressure on parents who had “difficulty in sending their children from there [Syria], being very attached to their presence”. Besson indicated that for this reason, the number of Maronite students sent to Rome would always be minimal, defeating the designs of Gregory XIII who promoted the establishment of the Maronite College. Besson challenged his would-be patrons, that “if someone in France wanted to be the author of this grand work, it would scarcely cost [anything, and] it would extend the design of Gregory XIII who had so much love for the Christians of Syria.”

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649 Besson, 123-124.
In contradistinction to these sanguine expectations, where the Maronites and other Christians were deserving of European benefaction, Besson’s representation of the Jews of Greater Syria was one of resignation and contempt. Most evident in Besson’s polemical writing was his anti-Jewish rhetoric. As previously discussed, the Jesuits frequently used analogy to represent the foreign to their European audiences in order to create a sense of familiarity with their observations of Greater Syria, specifically regarding descriptions of cities, topography, and climate. This method was also employed in their commentary on groups and individuals: there was no better way to define or describe someone or something than using recognizable tropes. To get his European audience to understand the status of Christians and their treatment in Muslim society, Besson analogically demonstrated that “the Christian here is not treated better than the Jews among the Christians in Europe.”

Throughout La Syrie Sainte, Besson repeatedly depicted Christians, whether Maronites, Greeks, Nestorians, or Armenians, as living in an environment of continual oppression in a life filled with misery, and the only way to get his fellow Europeans to understand this was to compare his perceived interpretation of Christian existence in Greater Syria with that of the Jews in Europe. In describing the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, Besson used the well-worn rhetoric of Jewish bashing current in the lexicon of most Europeans.

Depending on time and place, Jews in Europe were confronted with challenges that threatened their livelihoods and where often the caprice of a prince determined their fate. Scholarship into pre-modern European Jewry has demonstrated and detailed the

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650 Ibid., 11.
development of anti-Jewish rhetoric that dates back to Roman times. Thus, Besson had a multiplicity of sources to draw from to express effortlessly his opinion of Jews in Greater Syria by simply quoting classical texts that were in circulation in humanist circles of his time. There was no need for Besson to detail his analysis of this religious group. In a single paragraph, Besson with quotes from Ammianus Marcellinus and the Bible could paint an all-too-familiar portrayal of their Abrahamic cousins:

This is a people, of which it is not necessary to speak, Populus non populus, this is not the people of God, non plebs mea vos, this is a people more vile, than the sand of the sea dispersed by the winds. The Grace nonetheless which does not rebuke anyone, [and] had not abandoned these unfortunate [people], that it may convert some of them; and alike the conversion will be completely admirable, when the fullness of the Nations (as says Saint Paul) composed of so many of the Realms and Empires, will be entered into the body of the Church: for at the time these souls nourished by hate against Jesus-Christ, [that] it will make them so passionate in their purposes, that they will spill their own blood, for the defense of their cause. This Church in the last gasp of the world will survive with brilliance, it will be primitive and final, and will joyfully manage whatever happens through the ages. But for the present, it is necessary to deplore the blindness and obstinacy of such men. It had not been any easier for the Père to convince than to convert them: The temporal goods, that this Nation loves, killed the thoughts of salvation. Ô Marcommani, ô Quadi, ô Sarmatae, tandem vobis alios deteriores inueni [Oh Marcommani, oh Quadi, oh Sarmatians, at last I have found a people more degenerate than you], said Marc Aurele [Marcus Aurelius], of the Jews of Palestine, that he estimated worse than the Barbarians, because of their disordered and seditious spirit.

C’est un peuple, dont il ne faudrait point parler, Populus non populus, ce n’est pas le peuple de Dieu, non plebs mea vos, c’est un peuple plus vil, que le sable de la mer dispersé par les vents. La Grace néanmoins qui ne rebute personne, n’a pas tellement abandonné ces malheureux, qu’il ne s’en convertisse quelques-uns ; & même la conversion en sera tout à fait
admirable, lors que la plénitude des Nations, (comme parle saint Paul) composée de tant de Royaumes & d’Empires, sera entrée dans le corps de l’Eglise : pour lors ces esprits nourris de haine contre Jésus-Christ, seront si passionnés pour ses intérêts, qu’ils répandront même leur sang, pour la défense de sa cause. Cette Eglise dans les derniers soupirs du monde, se soutiendra avec éclat, elle sera primitive & finissante, & ménagera heureusement les moments de la durée des siècles : mais pour le présent, il faut déplorer l’aveuglement & l’obstination de telles gens. Il a été plus aisé au Père de les convaincre, que de les convertir : Les biens temporels, que cette Nation aime si passionnément, font mourir les pensées du salut. O Marcomanni, ô Quadi, ô Sarmatae, tandem vobis alios deteriores inueni, disoit Marc Aurele, des Juifs de la Palestine, qu’il estimoit pires que les Barbares, à cause de leur esprit brouillon, & séditieux.652

Besson was not presenting anything new to his audience; such rhetoric was widespread among lay and clerical individuals in Europe. Quoting Romans 9:26: “et erit in loco ubi dictum est eis non plebs meas vos… [And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people…], Besson wanted to demonstrate that the Jews were not the chosen people of God; in his assessment they were too vile a people for this to be true. And if the Bible was not sufficient to make the case, then Marcus Aurelius, a pagan Roman emperor and philosopher, provided the historical evidence for Besson’s assertions.653

Besson’s expressions on this religious group, should not come as a surprise, in fact, it was to be expected from the mentalities of an order that for the previous hundred years,

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652 Besson, 55-56.
653 Besson’s reference to Marcus Aurelius came from the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, a Roman (Antiochan) historian of the fourth century. Marcellinus’s work, a history of the Roman Empire from the beginning of the first century to the end of the fourth century of the Common Era, became the subject of widespread annotation and emendation at the end of the fifteenth century based not on the original work but on various transcriptions written in the thirteenth and fourteenth century. According to Clark there are fifteen extant manuscripts in various lengths from this period from which various humanists annotated and amended (Charles Upson Clark, The Text Tradition of Ammianus Marcellinus (New Haven: C.U. Clark, 1904). Gager believes that this statement by Marcus Aurelius was manipulated over time by demonstrating that various Roman emperors of the period were tolerant of their Jewish population and accorded them protections and in certain cases, positions of authority over pagans and Christians (John G. Gager, The Origins of anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). This was not much different than the opportunities and rights given to Jews in the Ottoman Empire.
was at the forefront of the fight against heresy and infidelity. He was not very different from his fellow Jesuits who shared the same medieval intolerance and prejudice toward Jews. However, since La Syrie Sainte was written as a rhetorical propaganda piece, Besson was not willing to concede any sense of accommodation for this segment of the non-Christian population in Greater Syria. Where Poirresson, with respect to the audience he was addressing in his report, expressed similar anti-Jewish sentiments, he was also willing to recognize the potential for intellectual and cultural exchange between Catholics and others. Besson on the other hand, due in part to the constraints imposed on him by the form of his writing and the much greater audience he was trying to reach, could not bring himself to acknowledge such possibilities.

Furthermore, Besson maintained the pre-modern, Christian refrain that the Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, and that their hate for the “Son of God”, continued into his day. Similarly, he maintained the stereotype of Jewish avarice and materialism. This concept was not new, and its origins as Chazan has articulated, were rooted in eleventh-century European mentalities of Jewish moneylenders and Christian biblical interpretations of usury. The second part of Besson’s statement that Jews were beyond saving and thus it was useless to proselytize to them, was consistent with sixteenth century European appraisals of “Jewishness as a permanent characteristic, now incapable of being removed by baptism.” Although this may demonstrate one individual’s proclivity toward a more ideological interpretation, which was shared by his

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654 As an example, Jews attended the funeral of Pierre Stupan. Chapter V, p.191.
655 In his discussion regarding the truth behind certain assertions that the cross on which Jesus was executed was transferred to Beirut before Jerusalem fell to Vespasian, Besson refers to the execution as the “greatest sacrilege of the Jews” (Besson, 134).
656 Chazan, 36-38, 106-109. In detailing the conditions in which the Jesuits carried out their tasks, Besson saw Jews as “piqued with a more violent hate against the Son of God than the Arab” (Besson, 215).
657 Nicholls, 225.
peers in the Order, the degree of his aspervise descriptions was heightened for his audience’s consumption. For Besson, the Jews of Greater Syria were cohorts of the Muslims, and part of the sinister domain that so persecuted his fellow Christians.658

In this same manner, Besson did not offer any insight into material or social circumstances of the Muslims of Bilad al-Sham; in fact, their appearance was staged and limited. For Besson, the “turc” was a caricature of pre-conceived European notions. In La Syrie Sainte, Besson turned Muslims into personifications of the negative aspects of humanity, dragged out to reveal the anxiety and apprehension of the Jesuits and indigenous Christians. Terms such as covetous, criminal, injustice, domination, stranglehold, dangerous, often preceded or followed the word “turc.” Muslims, to Besson, had caused the “greatest disorder of the world”, displacing Christians from their birthright. And what replaced the virtuous Christian law was “Muslim law [that was only] good for the body, while that of Catholics was “good for the spirit”.659 With the exception of such stereotypes, and their use as a reminder to his audience of the “continual dangers” that Muslims presented to the missionaries, the “turc” was virtually non-existent from the pages of his narrative. There was no attempt at describing the social conditions of Muslims, and very rarely did Besson provide a hint of the interaction between the Jesuits and their Muslim hosts. Besson, in accordance with the rules of propaganda, directing his audience down a singular path of selective and well-known tropes, turned the Muslim into props on his stage of oppression and fear. But, Besson did

659 Besson, 53.
not leave his readers to despair; there was promise in the omens and portents supposedly observed by him.\footnote{Besson did not attribute the “marvels” to Poirresson’s reports as he gave his peer credit elsewhere.}

Jesuit interpretations of natural phenomena, as previously analyzed, were guided by a belief in omens and prodigies. To the Jesuits, the floods, fires, earthquakes, lightning, and unexplained celestial apparitions that occurred in Greater Syria during the middle of the seventeenth century were sure signs of the imminent demise of the Muslim infidels. In \textit{La Syrie Sainte}, Besson, as part of his justification for continued support of the missions, repeated the same prophecies outlined in Poirresson’s annual reports. Broadly speaking, Besson, with limited alterations, remained faithful to Poirresson’s renditions of omens and prognostications.\footnote{In several places, Besson placed the events in the wrong city or town, otherwise it is quite obvious that he used the “memoires” of the mission as the basis for his discussion on omens.} On a few occasions however, Besson had a tendency to introduce moralistic elaborations into these portents. For example, when Poirresson described the violent storms of 1652 off the coast of Tripoli, he merely saw it as an augury of things to come. Besson however, used the opportunity to elaborate on the greed of the Qadi and Pasha of Tripoli. According to Besson the Qadi was charged with collecting ten écus from the community for each dead person to cover the expenses of cleanup and burial. He suggests that opportunistic bureaucrats and the governor took advantage of the situation to enrich themselves at the expense of others: “thus the men in the region sadden those who God afflicts; and come to overwhelm those that God touches, in pulling a tribute from the dead alike.”\footnote{Besson, 204-205. See Chapter V. Note, Poirresson did not include any of this narrative regarding the qadi and paşa in his \textit{Relations}.} For Besson, the avarice of the Muslims knew no bounds, even in the most difficult times, and because of this, it was just a matter of time that this decadence would catch up to them. Besson was encouraging his
audience to be patient and persistent, and for it to continue to fund the mission; it was not going to be long now.

Nonetheless, Besson’s discussion of omens provides a baseline for his propensity to embellish the letters and reports of his peers. Besson did not introduce any new portents in *La Syrie Sainte*; they all came from his peers, the last of which occurred in latter part of 1657, near the time of his arrival. It is interesting to note that no new omens appeared in the two and a half years from this point to the time of publication. But this was not the case regarding the historical narrative of the Jesuits in Bilad al-Sham as outlined in chapters two through four of the present work. Besson introduced elements into the accounts regarding the establishment and expansion of the Jesuit mission, which did not appear in the letters, or reports sent to Rome and Paris during the previous thirty years. This was not an accident. In his attempt to raise the awareness of the Syria Mission by presenting it as an equally dangerous and worthwhile venture as those in China, Japan, and the Americas, Besson was forced to overstate the events narrated in the *memoires* or simply add new ones. The Syria Mission would have its own Xavier or Ricci, embodied in the persons of François Lambert or Jean Amieu.

The first of these stories is that of François Lambert. Lambert was a merchant in Aleppo who in the early summer of 1648, so moved by the plan “to extend the Mission of Syria and the Conquests of Jesus-Christ”, volunteered to follow in the path of a missionary previously sent by Père Amieu to Isfahan in Persia. Lambert was a member of the Congregation of the Virgin in Saida, which was established by Père Rigordi in

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663 François Lambert was not mentioned in the letters of the missionaries. He is briefly referred to in Poirresson’s 1656/1657 report. All of the information about Lambert comes from Besson. The story of Lambert appears in pages 153 to 172 of *La Syrie Sainte*.  

263
1644, so he was well acquainted with the Jesuits. As analyzed in Chapter IV, the congregation was an opportunity for devout laymen to be in religious communion with each other as well as to participate in the raising of funds to support charitable works. His participation in the congregation predisposed him to make such a commitment. Yet Besson took this opportunity to send a message to his countrymen who held the belief that there was “little interaction between the bank of a Merchant, and the Pulpit of an Apostle: between the precious stone of the Gospel that one buys in losing all, and the riches of this world that one multiplies in gaining always.” In Besson’s mind, this was a perfect example of the strength of the Christian (Catholic) faith whose appeal could draw men away from material profit to seek spiritual rewards. Moreover, he analogically situated Lambert in the biblical story of Mathew, who “was extremely rich, [and] made himself happily poor” in order to become an apostle of Jesus.666 Again, the repeated associations between historical and contemporary Syria were essential to the contextual placement of the Jesuits in an uninterrupted chain from Jesus-Christ to Ignatius Loyola to François Lambert. The following summary of Besson’s narrative of Lambert’s alleged expedition and his tribulations uncover the manner in which the author connected the Jesuits to the apostles of the Bible. In addition, it reveals Besson’s definition of heroic exploits for the advancement of the Catholic faith, while at the same time conveying a moral lesson to his audience.667

664 Heyberger, 279. See also, Ch. IV.
665 Besson, 153. Also quoted in Heyberger, (p.277).
666 Besson, 153.
667 Heyberger notes that narrations of sea voyages, often depicted as dangerous and dreadful, were expressions of the missionaries’ “zeal”, (p.276).
Lambert’s journey appears to have started with little excitement, for Besson takes Lambert quickly from Saida\footnote{Besson neglected to note when Lambert departed from Saida.} to the mouth of the “Sein Persique” as he passed through the Arabian Desert to Baghdad and south on the Euphrates to Basra.\footnote{According to Cotgrave’s 1611 French-English Dictionary, “sein” also meant “a gulfe, creeke, nooke, angle or arm of the sea…”} From there he “climbed” to his goal of Isfahan, but not finding the missionary, he continued to Hormuz and then to the Indes of Mogor (Mogul India) where he landed at Surat, traversed the continent to its eastern extent where he visited Massulipatan (Machilipatnam) and Meliapot (Mylapore), the latter city, presumed by Jerome and Gregory of Tours as the place of martyrdom of St. Thomas. Here, “he visited the place where the Apostle saint Thomas was wounded, where he died, and spread his blood on a rock… He [Lambert] saw the iron of the lance, with which the saint was struck”.\footnote{Besson, 155.} After paying homage to St. Thomas, Lambert returned to Machilipatnam where he purchased the freedom of two young Christian slaves who were immediately baptized and given to a Christian woman, and prepared for his journey further east to “Bengala”.\footnote{Ibid. According to Besson, it appears the slaves were purchased from Portuguese or Dutch traders; it was “a Christianity of Slaves that the Portuguese and Dutch had”.} According to Besson, Lambert was so filled with “the divine love, which is indefatigable and ingenious” that he searched “a thousand dangers in order to communicate the treasure of the Gospel.”\footnote{Ibid., 155.}

In August 1648, Lambert set out on his voyage to the Bay of Bengal.\footnote{This is the first date that Besson provides. We do not know how long Lambert remained in India prior to his departure for “Bengala”.} After only a few days sail, the Tomas de Lima, a Portuguese merchant ship, was caught in a “furious torment,” striking fear into the passengers “who believed they were seeing the abyss in the waves from moment to moment”. As their screams clashed with the violent “sounds
of the irritated waves” the ship was tossed onto a sandbar not too far from the shore. With the ship beyond repair, Lambert took the initiative to collect driftwood and planks from the ruined vessel in order to build a raft in an attempt to evacuate the passengers to the mainland. In the middle of all of this, he found time to have three children baptized, who were slaves “that the Moors had purchased from Gentiles”. On the raft, which was overloaded with the “weight of the gold and of the money, and of many precious furnishings”, the passengers fared no better. Within a short period of time, the raft was overcome by waves, and the ensuing destruction of their heavily burdened craft was inevitable. People frantically held onto anything that floated, the fortunate ones found themselves hanging onto the planks; “a Persian” and forty other passengers, including the three small children he baptized, were drowned. Lambert, however survived in heroic fashion. When the raft was overturned, he was dragged to the bottom of the sea by “a Chinese named Anthoine Rodriguez” who was struggling to swim to safety, grabbed Lambert’s foot and pulled him down. Enough time had passed that the captain and pilot of the ship “had already prayed to God for him, believing him drowned”. Lambert however recovered his senses and made an initial attempt to reach the shoreline. He was thrown back by the waves toward the sandbar that caused their demise, where he found in the debris of the wreckage “a piece of the lance of St. Thomas the Apostle… that one of his friends had consigned to him.” With this remnant in hand, he invoked the name of the Holy Virgin and waited for divine intercession, and that according to Besson, it was “by a movement of hope” induced by God and the Holy Virgin”, that Lambert gained the courage to make another attempt at swimming for the shore. Exhausted and in

674 It just happened the shipwreck occurred on the eve of the Assumption of the Virgin. Anthoine Rodrigues seems a rather dubious name for a Chinese fellow, he may have been a Portuguese missionary to China.
“incredible pain”, Lambert continued his battle against the storm and the turbulent stir of the waves that forced him under water several times, “pushed himself with more vigor” until he reached the shore of Bengala.

Alone and in the dark on the shore, Lambert, reticent and fearful, reflected on the loss of his fellow passengers, and lamented the death of the three children who “were the puppets of the waves”. With regard to the “Infidels, who made the greater number, [they are] the food of the eternal fires. And as for Lambert, his fate was sealed by the “Work of a miraculous Providence” and his escape from death rivaled that of Jonah: “and that if he had not been in the stomach of a Whale (as Jonas…). He was found two times in the abyss, where this Prophet was plunged only one time.” But the comparisons did not stop there. In order to underscore Lambert’s heroism, Besson evoked the story of François Xavier, who “for three days and three nights, supported on a plank”, and that of the Apostle Paul, who “remained a day and a night in the bottom of the sea”. Lambert was still stranded, yet Besson had already raised him to such heights of glorification and placed him among the ranks of the super saints. The narrative of La Syrie Sainte needed a hero, Besson offered Lambert, dedicating more ink to the future missionary’s adventure than any other topic found in the work, twenty pages.

Lambert’s travels and tribulations lasted some three years and four months according to Besson, who learned of these trials directly from Lambert two months before his death on 12 October 1659. Interestingly, half of the narration was dedicated to Lambert’s initial journey and the consequent shipwreck as noted above. The remaining three years, three months, and two weeks were hurriedly explained in the same amount of space.675

675 After Lambert made it to the mainland, Besson accounts for thirty-five days that passed from this moment to 20 September 1648 (when Lambert and the other survivors encountered a group of native
During this period, Lambert and the other survivors, spent more than a month lost in the jungle, where they nearly starved and on several occasions, barely escaped the attack of tigers and crocodiles. They were rescued by fishermen on the Ganges who brought them to their village where the “honest barbarian[s] treated them splendidly” and were fed a “delicate rice” that had no equal in Europe. For Besson, it was not just the rice that was unique, the charity of the indigenous people “would make blush many Christians, who have so little sentiment for the miseries of other people, and ignore the first virtue of Christianity, charity.” The message was clear: if these infidels were capable of such compassion and generosity, Christians, who were supposed to be more virtuous, were certainly capable of at least this level of benevolence. One wonders that if Besson (or Lambert) at that moment still believed the infidel was “food for the eternal fire”. To continue the travel account, once they gained their strength, Lambert and the other survivors made their way overland across India to the city of Goa. While en route, Lambert purchased two “small Indians” who he immediately baptized on their arrival to the city of Xavier at the end of November.

By the end of December 1651, Lambert made his way from Goa to Lisbon, Portugal aboard the galleon of the Viceroy of the Indes, Dom Philippe Mascaregnas. The return to Europe was not any easier; the ship was devastated by a sickness that according to Besson, claimed the lives of some seventy people. After spending some time in Lisbon he made his way to Marseille “where he was not able to endure a long time the sweetness of his patrie, and the repose of his house.” Even after such tribulations, of the shipwreck, his time lost in the jungles of India, and the terrible sickness that claimed the lives of fisherman who assisted them with food, etc.). According to this date, Lambert made this trip to Bengal in remarkable time; in just two weeks he travelled from Saida to Isfahan to Bengal: it was a month’s travel from the Mediterranean to Isfahan alone.
many on the viceroy’s vessel, Lambert was still filled with the “inspiration from God [that] pressed strongly on him of quitting all the attractions of this world”, set sail for Rome where he entered the priesthood and later joined the Society of Jesus in 1654. In the early spring of 1657, Lambert began his return journey to Greater Syria, arriving sometime in April of the same year. As with the other phases of his travels, the Mediterranean crossing was encumbered with “storms no less dangerous, and which had more Corsairs than the Ocean.”

Nearing the approach to the port of Saida, a tempest with a “torment so strong” pushed Lambert’s ship north toward Beirut, where to the spot, a storm had “rendered Jonas to the land, there remitted this one [Lambert]… makes a part of the history of Jonas. One shows between Baruth [Beirut] and Saida, the beach where this Prophet landed”. This was the closing scene of Besson’s narrative, bringing Lambert, as well as his readers, full circle; the metamorphosis complete – a merchant turned missionary. And like the apostles and prophets before him, Matthew and Jonah as examples, Besson placed Lambert in the historical context of the Holy Land, in the light of men turning from money and reborn in the sea. Such was Lambert, and as such he was used by Besson to draw his audience into the action of the story, and into their pocketbooks.

Besson’s lengthy account of the remarkable travels of François Lambert is not corroborated by the letters and reports of his peers. Other missionaries, such as Maniglier, Queyrot, and Poirresson, elaborated on their frightful experiences on the ships to Syria (it seems they all had a story of fighting off storms and, or pirates), yet nothing was written about Lambert’s tribulation prior to the publication of La Syrie Sainte. In the

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676 We do not have a precise date for his entry into the Society, 1654 comes from Lebon.
extant record, Lambert appears only in the *Relation* for the years 1656/1657. In this report, Poirresson, made a slight reference to Lambert regarding his arrival:

Father Francis Lambert is from the province of Campania, the other [Père Resteau] from Lyons. We may send the latter away now, to go back to his previous place, but the former was a merchant who came back from India on a much laden ship, when, after a shipwreck, he swam away almost naked; he gathered goods which he had destined to be used in the Mission of Syria. When he set sail, he was a leading merchant from Sidon. His goods were not saved, in order that he could be saved. Many other were saved not by his riches, but by his work.

P. Franciscus Lambertus, ille e Campaniae Provincia, hic e Lugdunensi. Prior em dimittamus nunc, suo loco retrectandum; sed posterior mercator, ex India quidem veniebat nave bene onusta, cum naufragio facto, prope nudus enatavit; opes quas referebat, fundandas in Syria Missioni destinabat, ex qua solverat, Sidone prius negotiator; salva non sunt bona, ut salvus fieret, aliisque multis sua opera, non suis opibus, salus pararetur.677

Little significance was attributed to Lambert’s travel to India in the letters and reports. Moreover, there appears to be a discrepancy between the purpose behind Lambert’s trip to India, where Besson imagined Lambert in pursuit of Christian truths in the footsteps of the first apostles, Poirresson placed him in the context of a personal business trip in which he was also bringing “resources” to the Syria Mission.678 Besson’s account had a specific purpose: to make evident heroic deeds and establish the power of the Catholic faith in order to attract attention and support for the Syria missions. Likewise, was his treatment of Jean Amieu’s imprisonment, an episode considered in Chapter IV that deserves discussion here. Besson’s telling of Amieu’s incarceration is another example

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677 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.123v (Relation, for 1656/7, Latin).
678 Levenq also notes Besson’s propensity for embellishment, that one should have “control [of] the original documents, when this is possible, it is not only useful, but necessary” (Levenq, 77). However Levenq sees this as merely a “product of his [Besson’s] time, he is much more concerned about edifying than accuracy”. But this was not about enlightening or educating, it was about manipulation. By constructing the narrative as he did, Besson indeed played the role of propagandist and not educator, it was all for the promotion of the missionary enterprise.
of the introduction of previously unreported events or circumstances in order to heighten their appeal to a general audience in Europe. 679

Although Besson dedicates a mere three pages to the imprisonment of Père Jean Amieu, who at the time was the superior of the Syria Mission, the method and tropes included in the narrative of his incarceration were intended to be equally emotive as in the story of François Lambert. The account begins with Amieu returning from Jerusalem, “where the view of Calvary and of the holy Sepulcher, of the prison of Anne and of Caiphe, inspired him with great desires of suffering some extraordinary thing for Jesus-Christ”. 680 Amieu, in Besson’s opinion was ready for martyrdom and prepared for “having part in his chains.” With such statements, Besson relegated the relationship to the past and the imagery of eternal persecution, conjuring in the minds of his readers the Sanhedrin trial of a bound Jesus before being remitted to the custody of Pilate and later put to death. As in other examples that Besson presented, Amieu’s ordeal was likened to the many accounts of suffering found in the Bible. Moreover, to add a dimension of drama, Besson placed Amieu in Tripoli where he was conducting business for the mission, the purchase of a house in the city. On his return trip to Saida by sea, Amieu encountered “a storm so violent” that it “tore the trees, flung a large rock into the air, and overturned all things.” Once he made it to the port of Saida, Amieu was taken prisoner “where at first he was dragged, charged with a ring of iron [about his neck] and on a long chain that linked twenty-seven, in a dungeon extremely stinking and humid, where he

680 Besson, 97. Besson was referring to Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest who presided over the trial of Jesus, and Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who held that title previously. According to the Gospel of John, Caiaphas continued to pursue and punish the apostles of Jesus after the latter’s execution.
remained twenty-two days suffering... for the prisons of the Turks are strange, and their
treatment is well outrageous to the Christians”.

Similar to the narrative of Lambert’s tribulations, Besson’s version or interpretation of
the imprisonment of Amieu is not substantiated by any other extant source. However, the
“fact” of Amieu’s incarceration is found in only two correspondences. First, in a letter to
the Superior General, Francesco Piccolomini, Amieu made the following statement: “I
was forced to go to Sidon since there was no money to pay the rent, however, I did not
lose the hope of returning, in fact I bought a house, which in the end we lived in, after
continuous aggravation and imprisonment, for four years endured.” In this letter,
Amieu was more concerned with the purchase of the house and the highly problematic
state of their finances than in discussing his ordeal in an Ottoman dungeon. The
second source that refers to this situation is Poirresson’s circular letter that announced
Amieu’s death (6 November 1653). In his eulogy, Poirresson reflected on the life of
Amieu as a missionary in Syria, in which the author of the letter spent more time on the
rather mundane accomplishments and events associated with the deceased missionary’s
life. In his only reference to this ordeal, Poirresson plainly stated that Amieu “due to this
same lofty sense of zeal he took on the prison for quite a few days, and danger for his
life.” There was no elaboration or embellishment, no lofty praise as was sprinkled
throughout the letter, just matter-of-factly that he was in prison for a “few days”.

In addition to the lack of extant sources that might reveal the circumstances that
confronted Amieu when he was taken into custody and later released, it is understood that

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681 Ibid., 97-98.
682 ARSI, 96, t.3, f.10r (Amieu, 15 May 1651).
683 Reference Ch. III for discussion on the devaluation of the house. If the reader recalls, the house was too
big for their needs, and they were forced to rent the unused space at very low rates.
Besson never knew or met this superior of the mission. Nor was there any reference to Amieu’s plight in any of the *Relations*, a forum that would have certainly used such a story to heighten the missionaries’ conditions, as the authors appealed directly to the Jesuit hierarchy. Therefore the information regarding this event came to Besson through oral means, and the episode overtime may have been exaggerated over the decade until Besson’s arrival in Syria. However, since Amieu or Poirresson did not take advantage of telling such a moving account over the years, the narrative of this incident in *La Syrie Sainte* was mostly the work of Besson. As revealed in the preceding chronological narrative (Chapters II-IV), the Jesuits encountered a multiplicity of problems and provocations, but not to the degree as Besson would have his audience believe. In the case of Lambert and Amieu, Besson appears to have created events that were not mentioned in his peers’ letters and reports, or that he frankly exaggerated, in order to render certain Jesuits as heroes.

Not all the heroes had to be Jesuits, much less living, or even French, but they had to be Catholic. Besson ends the first volume by introducing the story of a twenty-year-old Polish slave’s ordeal and eventual death that took place in the context of the Abaza Hassan Pasha rebellion. According to Besson, and based on the testimony of Jean Peysonnel,\(^685\) Mehmet IV, “Emperor of the Turks” sent Ismael Paşa to quell the insurrection who arrived in Aleppo, “the 25th of January last,\(^686\) and the day following he began to cut the heads off and continued for fifteen days, having killed forty-three men during this time”, discarding the headless corpses outside the city walls where “their

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\(^{685}\) Peysonnel was the French doctor for the echelles, as noted above.

\(^{686}\) İnalçık has this event occurring in January 1658, while Finkel places the event in 24 February 1659 (based on Naima). Besson refers to Ismael Paşa as “Testich”, “Inquisitor and Examiner to correct the abuses”.
bodies [were] left there to the mercy of the dogs” which wasted no time in devouring them. During this upheaval, the Polish slave, who Besson does not name, “killed his Patron, who wanted by force to bring him [the slave] to a sin of abominable shamelessness”, and was brought to be tried in front of Ismael Pasha. The Grand Vizier’s envoy heard the case and was ready to dismiss the charges against the slave, but was pressured by “some grands of the region” that this decision would set a terrible precedent, and “other Slaves would want to get rid of their Masters, would take the same pretext”. Ismael Pasha was thus forced to sentence the young slave to death. In response to the warrant, as maintained by Besson, the slave “transported himself heartily to the place of the punishment… [and] in low voice, said to some people he knew, that he was a Catholic Christian, and that in this quality he believed of going to Heaven by the grace of God,” that his fellow Christians should not be so upset. As indicated in the narrative, the Polish slave demonstrated great courage and even “adjusted the collar of his robe for best to receive the blow” from the executioners blade.

After the decapitation, the body of the slave was tossed among those of the rebels outside the city walls. According to Besson, “his body remained exposed to the dogs, as the others, from 30 January, until 9 February” miraculously “without the dogs having ever touched him”. Besson goes as far to suggest that if a dog approached the body to mutilate it, the other dogs would chase it away. And after all the other bodies were devoured during this ten-day period, the dogs chose to gnaw on the bones of the rebels rather than disturb the flesh of the righteous Catholic slave. For Besson, this was indicative of God’s “favor of Christianity” the rest of the bodies were those of infidels and did not deserve such partiality. On 9 February, “some Turks, who saw this spectacle,
only with confusion, went to beg Ismael Pasha to remove it [the body] from there”, and so moved by this miracle, the “Turcs” placed the body in a casket and, according to Peysonnel’s testimony, was buried in a Muslim cemetery. As maintained by the doctor, before the actual burial, the Christians were allowed:

to wash the body and to cover it with a Shroud: and during [the time] that one waited for the water and the cloth, I had the pleasure of considering it: I remarked that he [the slave] had not changed color, although it had been exposed to the rain, to the dew, and to the Sun; that the place where he had been decapitated, as much of the trunk than of the head, was not black and liquid, as it should have have become since so much time [had passed], but also red and vermeil as the first day. That the stomach was not bloated, nor any other part, as is normal that all bodies begin to decay… this body had an odor very sweet, similar to this of musk.

For Catholics such as Besson and Peysonnel, this was a singular sign of God’s favor, who “abhors the sin against nature, which is very frequent among the Turks.” It was not just a matter of religious infidelity that troubled these men, but also their Catholic-nurtured disdain of homosexuality.

Yet the parallels drawn between the Polish slave, Jesus-Christ, and François Xavier cannot be ignored. After the execution of Jesus, his body was washed and wrapped in a shroud before being entombed. More telling however is the Jesuit legendary description of the body of Xavier. After a nearly two-year journey from China to Goa, the body still

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687 Besson, 231-232.
dripped blood, was soft to the touch, and did not have the slightest odor emanating from it. For Besson, such analogical methods were crucial to his agenda; if his audience would not initially believe his narrative or Peysonnel’s attestation, then at least the connections made between the contemporary persons in *La Syrie Sainte* and Jesus, prophets, apostles, and saints would resonate in their minds and souls and move them to action. Although it is difficult to ascertain whether Besson believed in these stories, the evidence suggests that his intention was to promote the missions in order to derive material support for Jesuit endeavors. By placing the narrative of the young and innocent slave at the conclusion of the first volume, Besson aspired to leave a lasting impression on his European readers: the virtuous and enduring attributes of the Catholic faith.

Besson’s articulation of the righteousness of Catholicism and the courageous acts of Jesuits and indigenous Christians served to reinforce the moral and physical legitimacy of the mission to Bilad al-Sham. Within the pages of *La Syrie Sainte*, Besson manipulated and massaged the letters and reports of his peers, turning relatively objective letters into rhetorical propaganda designed to arouse in his audience a sense of duty to the Jesuit project. He used themes that were familiar to his European readers, of malevolent “turcs” imposing their will on the innocent Christians who lived in a constant state of fear and misery. The information at his disposal, specifically the reports of Queyrot, Amieu, and Poirresson was molded to appeal to a readership from which he was seeking material support. Besson relied on making connections to the beginnings of Christianity, where the present missionaries were part of the total history of the apostolic movement initiated by the first followers of Jesus. Besson, in various forms retold the stories of the gospel through the vantage and tribulations of the Jesuit missionaries, of Lambert and Amieu.

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688 Wright, *God’s Soldiers*, 5-6.
These missionaries and others worked in the shadowy world of the “turc”, toiling for the benefit of all mankind, not just Europeans. Furthermore, Besson argued that the physical space they occupied belonged to France, tracing the historical connections to Mary Magdalene, the Apostle Paul, and the Crusades.

With this in mind, Besson’s work reveals the possibilities for pre-modern artifice, where his subjects’ experiences, or the topics that Besson chose to discuss, were in conflict with the relative objectivity found in the correspondences of his fellow Jesuits. The challenge remains in assessing La Syrie Sainte as merely a reflection of a narrow-minded, seventeenth-century bigot; whether or not Besson believed in his rhetoric is difficult to ascertain. There are seven extant letters and an annual report written by Besson written between 1662 and 1687 which are very similar to those of his peers. These letters discussed the challenges and progress of the mission, and in some cases, included accounts of avanies and extortions by Ottoman officials, but they do not reveal the contempt for Jews and Muslims as in his propaganda piece. By combining the heroic, and at times, exotic themes typical in travelogues of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Besson placed the Jesuit experience in a literary context that his French audience was well-accustomed to reading in publications relating to the Ottoman Empire.689 In addition, Besson’s emphasis on mistreatment and oppression, tragedy and tribulations, and heroic deeds and accomplishments of the missionaries were part of the rhetoric of martyrdom that was implicit in his correlations to biblical stories of Jesus and the apostles. All of this was shaped by what he perceived was the literary disposition of his target audience, the reading elite of Europe who had an appetite for travel and

adventure novels. This work should not be held as an eyewitness account of historical events or persons, but should lead to further investigation and analysis of pre-modern propaganda that indirectly augmented an already deleterious representation of the Ottoman Empire.
Chapter VII: Conclusion

This study revealed the complex events and human relationships that influenced the mentalities of the Jesuit missionaries in Greater Syria. From Stella and Maniglier to Poirresson and Besson, these men confronted the seventeenth-century challenges of travelling to and living in a foreign land. Relative to other European travelers, the Jesuits faced an exceptional level of stress and many challenges due to their vocation as priests and as missionaries. The tensions that shaped their perceptions of the people of Bilad al-Sham came from a multiplicity of sources, from their fellow Europeans, and from various segments of the indigenous population regardless of religion. Likewise, how they expressed and defined their experience and impressions in their letters, reports, and publications depended on the intended audiences. Their communications to various entities in the Jesuit hierarchy and to European society in general, spanned a spectrum of tolerant to narrow-minded representations.

The many Jesuit expressions of toleration toward their hosts, in a seventeenth-century context, reflect their pragmatic nature as well as their experience navigating through the political and religious turmoil in Europe. They came from an organization, which for nearly eighty years prior to their arrival in the Ottoman Empire, that proved its ability to adjust to the realities of a difficult and complex world that was not always in agreement with its message or methods. By trial and error, members of the Society of Jesus learned the limits of the organization’s power, and adjusted the approach to their apostolic mission in order to abide by the dictates of secular powers. At times, they demonstrated their willingness to ignore ideological, religious, and doctrinal constructs in order to
coexist with a multiplicity of people in France and Greater Syria. In addition to this practical experience, the Jesuits were among the most learned men in European society, excelling in the sciences, mathematics, philosophy, and literature. Their sense of pragmatism, education, and practical experience in the missionary fields of Europe and elsewhere, proved to be the most useful tools in their approach as missionaries in a foreign land. They brought with them the templates for congregations and schools that were at the heart of their apostolic enterprise.

Yet the adjustments to living in the Islamicate world, with its complex heterogeneous population, values, traditions, and laws, were not easy, and tested their level of toleration. As members of the elite in French society, with certain social and financial protections, the Jesuit missionaries were confronted with a radical adjustment to “second-class” status. This status was an inversion of their elevated social positions as priests in France. Compounding this problem was the lack of language training prior to their arrival in Aleppo or any of the other missionary outposts in the region. These two factors contributed to the initial tribulations they experienced. Beyond the tensions that were cited in their reports and letters, the Jesuits consistently reflected on the lack of material support for the mission. From 1625 to 1643, half of the period of this study, the missionaries were neglected and underfinanced, deficient in the books and religious articles that were essential to their apostolic enterprise. Their material poverty, as well as the need for “workers”, resulted in intra-Jesuit rivalries. Furthermore, European-Ottoman conflicts, specifically those between the Empire and the Republic of Venice, added to the despair of the missionaries, affecting the Jesuits’ views of Bilad al-Sham. As the statistics of Chapter IV demonstrate however, most of the Jesuits persevered, spending a
substantial amount of their life in the lands of the Muslims. For many of the missionaries, these lands were their final resting places; their lives were terminated by disease and old age, none achieved the hoped-for martyrdom for their faith.

In assessing Jesuit statements about their experience in Greater Syria, this study endeavored to connect their a priori understanding of the Islamicate world with the totality of their time in it. The correspondences of the Jesuits to their superiors reflected the tensions outlined above. Over the course of the thirty-five years of this period, the Jesuits communicated their impressions of a predominantly Muslim society in several ways as inspired by the form of correspondence. Their letters exposed a degree of detachment toward Muslims, and rarely characterized this majority of the population in a prejudicial fashion. Moreover, in their letters, and to an extent, in their annual reports, they disclosed explicitly and implicitly the level of fairness and objectivity accorded to them by various Muslim entities, of muftis, qadis, and paşas.

The letters of the Jesuits further demonstrate their pragmatism and levels of toleration in their relationships with the indigenous Christian population during this period. This study reinforced the findings of Masters, Cohen, Bakhit, and others that ethnicity and religion, for a multiplicity of reasons, were repeatedly ignored depending on mutual respect, affinity, and material gain. The non-Catholic Christian prelates were the first to provide material assistance to the Jesuit missionaries, opening their churches, and more importantly, their flocks to these foreign men. They allowed them to educate their children, trusting in the Jesuits that Catholic doctrine would not be imposed on their followers. In addition, the Greeks and Armenians for example, joined in the

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690 This is Nabil Matar’s term as stated to the present author at a recent MESA conference – a play on his In the Lands of the Christians.
congregations where the Jesuit missionaries led the members of these lay assemblies toward Christian spirituality rather than Catholic precepts. This study focused on degrees of Jesuit or European toleration, but the missionaries’ correspondences also expose the level of acceptance displayed by the Ottoman Christian population of Greater Syria. On the other hand, religion, as Norman Daniel proffered, was the most rigid cultural barrier in the exchange between Europeans and Ottomans (including the Maronites).

The previous chapters uncovered the complexity of relationships with and attitudes toward Ottoman society in their seventeenth-century context. Their narrations of the events and people however were essentially guided by the form of correspondence. From the relative objectivity of the letters to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, to the hyperbole of the published work of Joseph Besson, Jesuit writing ranged the span of the European canon on the Ottoman Empire in general. In the annual reports and in Besson’s La Syrie Sainte, the Jesuits had greater latitude to exaggerate or overstate their tribulations. In these forms, there was no hesitation on their part to project the Muslims as tyrannical or diabolical, or the Greeks and Armenians as malicious and crafty. These were intended to reinforce the authority of the Catholic faith to their European readership, and the primacy of their culture. By amplifying and distorting the nature of their experience, they hoped to meet the expectations of their audiences that demanded excitement and heroic actions, drawing on well-established tropes and interpretations of their medieval predecessors. Yet questions persist on how to decode such writing: whether to attribute such reflections as evidence of European bigotry, “self-reflection”, or merely as propaganda.
The Jesuit experience in Greater Syria reflects the possibilities for cultural exchange between religious antagonists in the Mediterranean region: on the shores of a sea that for millennia brought the ebb and flow of violence and cooperation. The Jesuits were just a small part of it.
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Note: This material accounts for only one-fifth of the material gathered during the research conducted between 2005 and 2008 that speaks to the entire missionary enterprise (1625-1774). It does not reflect the amount of time energy invested in this project.

Items in bold print indicate the reference nomenclature in the footnotes.
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