

CATHOLIC ARMENIAN-MARONITE RELATIONS IN MOUNT LEBANON 1720-1840

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to illustrate and trace, through the support of available facts and data, the development of Catholic Armenian-Maronite relations during the eighteenth century, which resulted in the organization and settlement of a Catholic Armenian community in Mount Lebanon.¹

This study is based upon both primary and secondary sources available in the Arabic, French, English and Armenian languages. Emphasis is given to unpublished documents found in the archives of the Catholic Armenian monastery of Bzummar and the Maronite Antonine monastery of Luwayzeh.²

A GLANCE AT ARMENIAN-MARONITE RELATIONS IN ALEPPO

The period extending from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries was a prosperous period for the Armenian community in Aleppo. Located between Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Mediterranean Sea, Aleppo, with its numerous inns (*khans*) and warehouses, was an important center for trade activities between Europe and Asia. French, English, Dutch, Venetian and other traders met in Aleppo and traded with each other. Indeed, the French-Ottoman Treaty of 1535 and subsequent agreements of the Ottoman Empire with other European countries – which later formed the basis for the Capitulations³ – paved the way for the arrival in Aleppo in 1670 of Latin missionaries, who, protected by the French consul, François Piquet, immediately undertook the mission of spreading Catholicism among the native Christians.

The Armenian traders in Aleppo in the sixteenth century were mostly from Julfa (then part of the Persian Empire) and Cilicia. They played the role of intermediaries in trade activities between the European merchants and the local market.⁴ These wealthy Armenians, called *khodjas*, imported European products to the local market and in return sold to European merchants local raw materials, such as silk, the supply of which was

monopolized for some time by Khodja Bedik between 1590 and 1632.⁵ The famous Armenian traveler and author Simeon Lehatsi (Simeon of Lemberg), who visited Aleppo in 1616, described the city as follows:

This city is a magnificent trade center...The traders are from all corners of the world. Here, one can find whatever tissue you wish. The city has 365 khans, numerous shops and kiosks, where one can find whatever he wants...In the French khans one can find good French fabric. The baths are superb, with healthy and abundant water.⁶

The rich cultural life of the prosperous Aleppine Armenian community was centered mainly around its two churches: the Holy Forty Martyrs (built in 1509) and the Holy Virgin, which was very old and had been renovated in 1535. The wealthy and pious Armenian merchants paid special attention to the cultural life of the community in general and to these churches in particular. They supported these churches by providing money for repairs and encouraging artistic work. Furthermore, driven by their Christian feelings of brotherhood, they sometimes also showed the same benevolent attitude towards the Maronite church of St. Elias, which was adjacent to the Armenian church of the Holy Virgin.⁷ Thus, at the end of the fifteenth century, Ra'is Issah, a very rich and famous person in the Armenian community, after having enlarged the church of the Holy Forty Martyrs, also helped repair the Maronite church of St. Elias and decorate it with new cross-bearers.⁸ The priest Movses Vartabed of Julfa stopped in Aleppo while on his way to Jerusalem on pilgrimage and left an inscription in which he says that he visited the church of the Forty Martyrs in the year 1500 and was very pleased to see its newly built altar and the new altar of the adjacent Maronite church, both of which had been constructed by the pious Ra'is Issah.⁹ This benefaction to the Maronite church by Ra'is Issah has also been explained by the fact that, in addition to being a wealthy and famous personality in the community, he was also an experienced trader and a far-sighted man. He realized that other Christian communities, such as the Maronites and Greeks, had also been living in Aleppo since old times. They were useful elements in trade and the professions of the city, with whom the developing Armenian community had to be on good neighborly terms.¹⁰ Indeed, these good relations with the Maronites and the other Christian communities would in turn increase cooperation and the feeling of unity between the Armenian clergymen and the latter. Simeon of Lemberg wrote:

The Maronites show great affection and respect towards our prelate. On Sundays, after leaving the church, they come to kiss his hand and ask for his benediction. If it so happens that the Armenians are not through with their mass yet, they will wait until the end and then come and kiss the cross before going home.¹¹

Simeon also describes the return of Armenian pilgrims from Jerusalem, including the Armenian Catholicos of Cilicia, Hovhannes IV of Aintab (reigned 1602-1621), and the author himself: "at the moment when we arrived in Aleppo, still half a day away from the city, we were welcomed by Armenian men, women, young boys, girls and children as well as the Maronites, the Copts..."¹²

In the seventeenth century, the presence of the Maronite community in Aleppo attained special importance because of the role the Maronites played in facilitating the spreading of Catholicism among the local Armenians. The Maronite church of St. Elias, which was in the vicinity of the said two Armenian churches in the district of Jedaideh, was chosen as a base wherefrom the call for union with Rome was preached. In fact, those European missionaries who said mass and preached attracted the attention of the native Christians, in this case the Armenians, who on the way to their churches would be interested in these sermons, and be thus motivated to have closer links with the missionaries. Furthermore, the missionaries, who enjoyed the support of their consuls, could attract the Armenians by promising to help them further advance their careers.¹³

Already, in the year 1660, Latin missionaries were officiating and preaching in the Maronite church at the invitation of the Maronite religious authorities, while the neighboring Armenians were carefully listening to these sermons.¹⁴ Father Jean Amieu, the head of the Jesuit missionaries in Aleppo, wrote that in 1650, the Maronite patriarch, Yuhanna Safrawi, allowed the Jesuit missionaries to preach in the Maronite church of St. Elias on Sundays and on holidays. Thereafter, the Capucin Father Sylvester, the Superior of the Capucin missionaries, Father Bruno, Father Chezaud and Father Paul Codet, preached in this church from the beginning of the year in order to let the Armenians and Greeks listen to these sermons.¹⁵

At the passing away of Father Sylvester, a grand funeral ceremony was held in different languages: Greek, Syriac, Armenian and Arabic. The members of these communities had assembled on this occasion in the

Maronite church of St. Elias.¹⁶ Such ceremonies could very well be used by the Catholic priests as good occasions for propagating the Roman Catholic faith among the native Christians in general and among the Armenians in particular. Thus, the Maronites encouraged the conversion of Armenians to Catholicism and, at times, even protected the converts when they were persecuted by Orthodox Armenians or government officials.

In the year 1698, the Catholic Armenian bishop, Jacob of Mar'ash, who had converted to Catholicism a good number of Armenians in Aleppo and Mesopotamia, escaped the persecutions instigated by Orthodox Armenians and Ottoman officials and took refuge in Lebanon, where he would remain for several years as the guest of the Maronite patriarch, Estephan Duwayhi (reigned 1670-1704) at Qannubin. Commenting on this incident, Duwayhi wrote in his letter to the Pope on 26 September, 1698, that, before escaping to Kisrawan, bishop Jacob had already been imprisoned in Mar'ash for three months, upon accusations presented by the Orthodox Armenians to the government.¹⁷ After coming out of jail, he had escaped to Kisrawan and taken refuge for a short time in the house of Sheikh Hosn Al-Khazin, the governor of Kisrawan. He was then taken by Duwayhi to Qannubin, where he remained for several years as a guest.¹⁸

ARMENIAN CATHOLICS IN ALEPPO IN THE 17th-EARLY 19th CENTURIES

The Ottoman government recognized the patriarch of the Orthodox Armenians as the chief authority representing all the Armenians in the empire in 1461. In the eyes of the Ottoman government, the patriarch was the religious head of the Armenian *millet* and hence responsible for the good conduct of his people, including the payment of the annual tribute to the government. The failure to acknowledge the authority of the patriarch was considered a rebellion, subject to severe penalties. This arrangement placed the Armenian Catholics, who were not recognized officially, under the jurisdiction of the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch. Generally speaking, the Armenian Catholics did not have their separate churches in the eighteenth century. The number of Armenian Catholic priests was very limited. The Orthodox priests blessed the engagements and marriages of Armenain Catholics. They also blessed their houses during the Christmas and Easter holidays.¹⁹ Moreover, Orthodox and Catholics were mixed in Aleppo, as well as in Constantinople, and their differences on doctrinal

questions were not as clear as they are today. Armenian Catholics used the same liturgy books as the Orthodox Armenians. It was only in January 1831 that the Sultan promulgated, under French pressure, a *firman* by which the Armenian Catholics were recognized as a distinct community-*millet*. Henceforth, they could have their own religious head enjoying the same privileges as the Orthodox patriarch.²⁰

Members of various Christian communities – Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics, Orthodox Armenians and Catholic Armenians, Maronites, Jacobites and Latins – lived in Aleppo, in addition to the city's Moslem population. In the eighteenth century the total number of Christians in Aleppo was estimated at 15,000.²¹ The number of Catholic Armenians was reportedly 4,000 in 1776 and 5,000 in 1794.²² According to a report sent to Rome by a Catholic Armenian cleric in Aleppo, the number of the Catholic Armenians in the city was 3000 in 1827.²³ The decrease in the number of Catholics was probably due to their gradual migration to other countries, especially Lebanon, where they had found in the district of Kisrawan favorable conditions to practice their religion and propagate the missionary movement.

The Armenian Catholics in Aleppo and Constantinople were being persecuted at the end of the eighteenth century by two main forces: the patriarch of the Orthodox Armenians and the Ottoman government.

An important cause of the persecution of the Catholic Armenians in Aleppo and Constantinople was their relationship with the missionaries, whose mission was "to mix with the Orthodox nationalities in order to enlighten them and prepare the union."²⁴ The missionaries sometimes criticized and attacked the liturgy and the practices of the Armenian Orthodox Church with extreme severity. Conversion to Catholicism took place mostly in the private houses of the believers. "In Aleppo, the Jesuit Father Chezard was devoted to the instruction of the Armenians." He was able to convert around one thousand Armenians.²⁵ The missionary Jean-Baptiste de Saint-Aignan wrote the following in one of his letters from Aleppo in 1670:

At first [in 1626], the main occupation of our missionaries was with the Maronites. It was in their church that they started to preach for several years. Later, they started to visit them in their houses, where they catechized and instructed them on anything which was necessary for the salvation of their soul. It was this penetration among the

Maronites that then helped them get into contact with those who were from the other Christian communities, who, being neighbors, got interested in the preaching of the missionaries and thus invited them to their houses to receive instruction about those matters which they should know and believe in for the salvation of their soul.²⁶

A small school in the house of a Maronite was operating in Aleppo in 1636 under the direction of the Jesuit missionaries. The Greek, Arabic, Latin and Italian languages were taught at this school to 40 students, including Armenian children. Father Chezard, the director of this school, gave his lectures in Armenian and Arabic. He lectured on philosophy to the clergymen, with one of his priests explaining Roman catechism in Armenian to the Armenian students.²⁷

In 1732, the French Ambassador, Marquis de Villeneuve, was instructed by his country's foreign minister on the missionary activities. He was told to act cautiously in order not to bring any harm to the authority of the chiefs of the Armenian and Greek Churches and to their rites and try to draw them nearer, smoothing the differences which separated them from the Latin rite in order to guide the things to a desirable union.

In the face of this French policy and the missionary activities, the *pasha* of Aleppo raised his concerns to the Greek bishop about the fact that the Christians were receiving the missionaries in their houses and attending the church services of the Franks. He warned whoever dared trespass the Sultan's prohibition. He sent the same orders to the Maronites, Armenians and Jacobites.

The interference of the Ottoman officials against the missionaries and the Catholic Armenians was mostly based on the accusations of the Orthodox Armenians. Indeed, the Armenians in Aleppo denounced the missionaries to the Ottoman ministers through the use of bribes and presents. They claimed that French missionaries were entering their houses, under the pretext of healing the sick, to convert them to Catholicism, and were suggesting to them not to visit their churches so as to come out of the jurisdiction of the patriarch, who would have no more right to collect their taxes.

In the year 1735-36 the persecutions against the Armenian Catholics were renewed. The orders issued by the Sultan openly referred to all the accusations made by the Orthodox Armenians, who insulted the Catholic

Church and accused its followers of plotting against the Ottoman government.²⁸ Indeed, the policy of discrediting religious opponents and using the power of the state to destroy them was used successfully during this period.

The French reaction to these persecutions was to try to protect the Catholics. France, in the 18th century, appeared, besides the Papacy, as the great Christian power par excellence; it was naturally towards her that the Catholics of the East would turn. This protection was sometimes considered as interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Any deterioration of relations between France and the Ottoman government was used by the Orthodox patriarch as an occasion to justify his persecutions against the Catholics. For example, during the persecutions of 1828, Catholic Armenians were imprisoned or exiled, while the rest found refuge in Lebanon. Richard Madden refers to this event as follows:

By a new edict the whole of the Roman Catholic Armenian population was ordered, at the expiration of fifteen days, to depart from the city [of Constantinople] and take up their quarters in the neighboring villages...The Porte declared that it recognized only one Armenian religion in the Turkish empire and one Armenian Patriarch of the Orthodox Church. All separatists were denounced as schismatics, and threatened with the direst penalties, if they did not return to their true Patriarchal church.²⁹

The destruction of the Ottoman-Egyptian navy by the French, English and Russian forces at Navarino in October 1827 had been an opportunity for the Orthodox patriarch to accuse the Catholics of sympathizing with European powers and present them as conspirators against the Sultan. In 1828, the Sultan gave to Garabed, the Orthodox patriarch, a *firman* permitting the persecution of the Armenian Catholics.³⁰

As we can see, the condition of the Armenian Catholics in Aleppo was unstable and not safe. The protection of the European ambassadors could not continue indefinitely. In fact, the protection of France was not always efficient in light of changes in the political situation and "the danger that would arise, in facing the joint opposition of the schismatics and the Turks."³¹

Armenian Catholics realized that they could not be organized as a distinct community under such circumstances. Therefore, it was natural

that they would turn their attention towards Lebanon, "where monastic life among the Maronites was much more respected and better appreciated than it was in the West by many who called themselves Christian."³²

ARMENIAN MONKS IN MARONITE MONASTERIES

Towards the end of the 17th century and throughout the 18th, Armenians from Aleppo came to the Maronite Antonine monasteries in Mount Lebanon, and were initiated there as Maronite monks. As time passed, most of these monks decided to remain loyal to their calling and congregation until death; "a good number of them persevered, made their vows and followed the Maronite rite."³³

In 1700, Patriarch Duwayhi appointed the illustrious priest from Aleppo, 'Abdallah Qar'ali (1672-1742), as the responsible director of the monastery of Mar Elisha.³⁴ This very old monastery is located north of the village of Besharreh in the Valley of the Qadisha River, which springs from the region of the cedars and flows into the Mediterranean.³⁵ Later, under Qar'ali's guidance, the Maronite Antonine monasteries of Lebanon organized themselves and adopted rules and procedures for the initiation of monks.³⁶ Henceforward, these monasteries, instead of existing as isolated entities, would form a united front under written rules that regulated the daily activities of the monks.

A great number of young individuals from various ethnicities in the East – Greeks, Syrians, Armenians and Jews – wanted to join the priesthood. They took their monastic vows within these monasteries under Qar'ali's guidance. They were all treated as equals and were evaluated according to their abilities.

The Abbot General Qar'ali, a tolerant man of vast knowledge, welcomed equally all those who wished to join the priesthood; he did not differentiate among the Maronite, the Greek, the Armenian, the Syrian, the Copt, the Jacobite, or even the Jew. He was very cautious in establishing brotherly equality among them, in eliminating sectarian tendencies by distributing offices without the least favoritism, only taking into consideration their abilities.³⁷

Many young Armenians from Aleppo, coming to Mount Lebanon, were accepted in these monasteries, where they took their monastic vows and were initiated as Maronite monks by the directors of these monasteries. The records in the monastery of Luwayzeh indicate that the

applications of Armenian candidates to enter monastic life in Lebanon increased with time.

Ya'qub Arutin from Aleppo was accepted in the monastery of Mar Elisha and took his monastic vow in 1696.³⁸ Mikha'il Ibn Aslan took his monastic vow there in 1714 and was ordained by the Abbot-General Qar'ali in the monastery of Mar Antunyus Qozhayya.³⁹ Nathanayel, also from Aleppo, took his monastic vow in the monastery of Luwayzeh in 1726, at the age of twenty-four. Butros Sa'ati, another Armenian from Aleppo, took his vow in the monastery of Mar Elisha in 1736.

The monastery of Mar Butrus of Bikfayya had many Armenian monks, such as Fibyanus and Joachim Ballit, who took their monastic vows in 1733 and 1735 respectively. Thereafter, Barlam from Damascus took his monastic vow in 1736; Yusuf Dawlat and Yuhanna Garabed, in 1737; Bulus Shmavon, in 1740; and Aznawur, in 1746. The Maronite monastery of Mar Elias Shwayya, near the village of Shwayr, also housed Armenian monks, such as Ajemy, Yusuf Sayegh and Francis, who received their ordination from the directors of this monastery.⁴⁰

From among these monks, those who showed intellectual ability and excelled in their studies were sent to Rome to continue their higher education in the "College of Propaganda", where there were also other Maronite students from Lebanon. Ballit, after studying for two years in Lebanon, was sent to Rome in 1738. It was during this year the administration of the Maronite Antonine congregation held a conference where a number of important decisions were taken. Father Yusuf Qar'ali's visit to Rome to survey the conditions of the Maronite monastery was one of the issues agreed upon. Brothers Rufa'el Faddul and Ballit were to accompany him. They were to reside in the monastery of Rome to study theology in the "Urban College".⁴¹ A number of sources testify that Ballit proved to be a successful student, excelling in his studies. A few months after Ballit's departure, other Armenian monks, including Jean Garabed and Hanna Arutin, were also sent to Rome for the same purpose. Arutin was sent in 1739 – upon the request of Monseigneur Yusuf Sim'an Al-Sim'ani – because of his good knowledge of the Armenian and Turkish languages.

The more able among these monks occupied important administrative positions in the Antonine monasteries to which they were attached. Ya'qub Arutin was the first director of the monastery of Luwayzeh, located near

the Dog River in Kisrawan, when the Maronite Antonine monks took charge of this monastery in 1707.

He was fervent, industrious, wise and both proficient in the Syriac language and skilled in the art of Arabic and Syriac penmanship. It was in 1707, when the Antonine congregation acquired the monastery of Luwayzeh and opened a school to educate the brothers, that the direction of this monastery was handed to Ya'qub Arutin.⁴²

As the records of the monastery of Luwayzeh state, it was in his position as the director of the monastery that Ya'qub Arutin initiated Maronite monks such as Sim'an of Ghosta in August 1712.

In the year 1716, Ya'qub Arutin split from the Antonine order and was allowed, with the approval of the Maronite patriarch Ya'qub 'Aouad (1705-1733), to establish himself in the Maronite monastery of St. Peter and Marcellin in Rome, which, by that time, had the Maronite priest Gabriel Hawa as its authoritative figure. Farhat Jermanos describes these events as follows:

In the year 1716, one of the influential [figures] from among the Lebanese monks, namely Ya'qub Arutin of Aleppo, detached himself from the Antonine Congregation and went to Rome to join the priest Gabriel Hawa.⁴³

It was in the year 1720, and upon the recourse of Al-Sim'ani and Hawa to the College of Propaganda, that Ya'qub Arutin, along with another Maronite priest, Talhuni, were given special permission to visit the cities of Italy to collect alms for Patriarch 'Aouad.⁴⁴ They left Rome on April 18, 1720, and toured for six months, returning to Rome on September 18.⁴⁵

Pope Clement XI (reigned 1700-1721) had offered the monastery of St. Peter and Marcellin to the Lebanese Maronite Antonine monks in 1707. The purpose of this donation was to found a hospice and a seminary for the Maronite Antonine monks, so that after studying theology and philosophy, they would return to Syria and be able to accomplish missionary works among the community, besides their duties as educators. However, this donation led to numerous disputes between the Abbot-General Qar'ali (representing the beliefs and ideals of the Maronite Antonine Congregation) and Hawa, who, disregarding the instructions given to him by the Antonine Congregation in Lebanon, tried to follow an

independent policy. He went as far as obliging the monks to recognize his own authority instead of obeying the Congregation.

This tense situation continued to agitate the Antonine Congregation until 1724, when finally, as a result of the decision of the Propaganda, the monastery of St. Peter and Marcellin was returned to the Maronite Antonine Congregation, in response to the continual letters of protest and deputations that were sent to Rome by the Abbot-General and the managers to illustrate to the Pope the unlawful attitude of Hawa.

Ya'qub Arutin, who was during this period a resident of this monastery, was naturally involved in these disputes. He was criticized and sometimes even accused of introducing innovations in the rules of the monastery. This is clearly illustrated in the following extract from the letter written to him by Iskandar Biskantawi, the Abbot-General of the Maronite Antonine monks in Lebanon in 1726:

We can not rely on you where new arrangements and new customs are concerned, because you have never taken a uniform stand. You are sometimes advancing and at other times lagging behind. You are so unpredictable. This problem was a cause of great anguish to us. However, we thank God that you have now returned to your former virtuous conduct.⁴⁶

Ya'qub Arutin had sided with Hawa in the latter's dispute with the Lebanese Maronite Congregation. However, as the above-mentioned letter mentions, when the monastery in Rome was given back to the congregation in 1724, Ya'qub Arutin yielded to Al-Sim'ani's request and was re-admitted to the Antonine Congregation. He served for a time in the monastery. However, in spite of constant interventions by Al-Sim'ani, he was dismissed from this function by Yusuf Shahin, the director of the monastery. On the other hand, Ya'qub Arutin attempted to ameliorate relations between Hawa and the other monks.⁴⁷

It can be inferred that Ya'qub Arutin led an active life in Rome. This is true especially during the crisis that the Maronite clergy underwent in the years 1726-28, which resulted in Shahin's dismissal from the directorship of the monastery. Throughout his stay in Rome, Ya'qub Arutin was favoured by Hawa and especially by Al-Sim'ani, an old acquaintance. Ya'qub Arutin used to visit Al-Sim'ani long before the founding of the monastery of St. Peter and Marcellin. Al-Sim'ani was still studying at the Maronite College in Rome at that time and Ya'qub Arutin used to seek Al-

Sim'ani's help in his translations from Latin to Arabic.⁴⁸ This relationship became so friendly that "Ya'qub considered Al-Sim'ani an indivisible part of himself. He did not miss any occasion to praise him before the other monks."⁴⁹ It was due to this friendship, that Ya'qub Arutin enjoyed a certain amount of authority, which affected events in the monastery. It was through Ya'qub Arutin that the monks were able to present a collective protest to the authorities in Rome against Shahin's conduct in 1726.⁵⁰ Later, in 1728, when the monks demanded Shahin's dismissal, the acceptance of their demand by the congregation in Lebanon was communicated to them by a special letter sent to Ya'qub Arutin.⁵¹

In the ensuing years, Ya'qub Arutin continued to serve the Maronite community in Rome skillfully.

Although Ya'qub Arutin was involved in disputes and conflicts throughout most of his life, he was also able to dedicate part of his time to translations. Due to his good knowledge of Arabic and Latin, he translated into Arabic the theological and religious works of a number of European authors, which were useful for the education of the monks.

Here are some of his translations, which are found in the library of the Maronite monastery of St. Peter and Marcellin in Rome:⁵²

1. *Kitab Al-Majma' Tridentini* (The Book Of The Council Of Trent), translated from Latin in 1723.⁵³

2. *Catechismus Romanus*, a book of catechism of the Roman Church, in two volumes. According to Louis Sheikho, this book was printed by the Propaganda Press in 1786-87 on the orders of Pope Pius VI and was reprinted in 1891.

3. *Al-Lahut Al-Adabi Li-Daniel Uskuf Madinat Betrakora* (Moral Theology Of Daniel, Bishop Of Petrakora), in two volumes. It consists of three main parts. The first part speaks about the rules which organize our life. The second part discusses human acts in light of these rules, while the third part discusses divine virtues.

4. *Kitab 'Ilm Al-Lahut Al-Nazari Li-Yuhanna Claudius Vertrieu* (The Book Of Theoretical Theology Of J. Cl. De Vertrieu), in 16 sections, several volumes, translated in 1728.

5. *Kitab Al-Rad 'Ala Muslimin* (The Book Of Rejection Against Moslems), written in Latin by a Spanish priest Tirsus Constalitz.

Among the other Armenian monks who held important positions in the Maronite monasteries it is worthwhile to mention Butros Sa'ati, who, in

addition to his post of manager in the Antonine Congregation, was also the head of the central library at the monastery of Luwayzeh, which holds valuable documents concerning the history of Lebanon and the Maronite community.⁵⁴

Nathanayel Halaby, another Armenian monk, was the assistant-manager⁵⁵ in the monastery of Luwayzeh. His signatures are seen under official letters and acts, mainly concerning the financial condition of the congregation. He co-signed, as manager, a petition by Maronite monks to King Louis XV of France and Tsarina Cathrine II of Russia in 1743. The monks explained the difficult financial condition of the monasteries in Kisrawan and requested the King's financial help.⁵⁶ He also co-signed, together with the other managers, another act in 1744, by which the Lebanese Maronite Congregation acknowledged that it had borrowed money from a rich Frenchman, on condition that it would repay after the lapse of one year.⁵⁷

Ballit, who was a bright student at the Maronite College in Rome, was elected director of the monastery of Luwayzeh in 1738.⁵⁸ He later became a manager, and, after the termination of his term in that office, dedicated himself completely to intellectual activities. While still studying in Rome, he had made use of that opportunity to visit a number of European countries, in search of old manuscripts about the Maronites, which he later sent to the library of the congregation in Luwayzeh. He was certainly not the only Maronite monk studying in Rome who visited other European countries. Others toured Europe as well, either individually or in groups, for the same purpose.⁵⁹ Blaybil writes:

The students of the Maronite College of Rome, such as Joachim Ballit the Armenian, Gabriel Saker and others, were not satisfied with merely studying. They also visited the countries of Europe and Africa, such as Spain and Egypt, as well as other monasteries of the East, to collect valuable and rare manuscripts for their library.⁶⁰

Ballit authored a few religious books:⁶¹

1. *Al-Rawda Al-Ruhaniyya Fil-Sirat Al-Rahbaniyya* (Spiritual Garden Of Monastic Life), which comprises forty chapters concerning the spiritual life of monks. According to Sheikho, one copy of this book is found in the library of the Maronites in Aleppo.

2. *Kitab Al-Murshid Al-Amin Lil-Ru'asa Wal Mar'usin* (The Book Of Faithful Guidance For Supervisors And The Supervised), printed by the Maronite priest Michel Gabriel in 1902.

3. *Kitab Al-Minhaj Al-Amin Lil-Rahban Al-Mubtadi'in* (Book Of Faithful Methodology For Beginner Monks), used to educate monks. It was printed in two volumes by the priest Tanius Shibli in the printing house of Harissa (Kisrawan) in 1921.

4. *Ta'ammulat Fi 'Ibadat Qalb Yasu'* (Meditations Concerning The Worship Of Jesus Christ), a book of prayers.

Thus, the Armenian monks were active in Maronite Monasteries in Lebanon at a time when Maronite monasticism was becoming organized and a body of common rules was being developed. In the eighteenth century the Maronite Antonine monasteries provided an environment in which a Maronite-Armenian relationship could prosper, at least on religious grounds. As a result, Armenian youth were trained in monastic life under the Antonine regulations and were able both to receive theological education in Rome and come into contact with Western culture. This could have proven quite hard to achieve without the support of Maronite religious authorities.

Some of these Armenian monks, because of their outstanding administrative and intellectual abilities, served the Maronite clergy. Moreover, they were also interested in the daily life and problems of their order, sharing equally with the other Maronite monks both their difficulties and joys. Sometimes they were criticized and, at other times, praised, according to the attitude adopted by them towards the problem of the day.

All this paved the way for the other Armenian Catholics in the Ottoman Empire to choose Mount Lebanon as their permanent settlement for their free religious exercise.

THE CONGREGATION OF THE ARMENIAN ANTONINE MONKS AT KRAYM (KISRAWAN)

A. Request For Settlement

By now, Catholic Armenian-Maronite community relations had reached a level whereby Catholic Armenian monks felt at home in Maronite surroundings. Similarly the Maronite monks and religious authorities were able to find among the Armenians devoted Catholics who, as a community, could develop well within Maronite surroundings and under

their protection in Kisrawan. On the other hand, an organized Catholic Armenian community could be useful for the spread of the Catholic faith among the Armenians themselves. Thus, among the Catholic Armenians, the idea of establishing a monastery in Kisrawan began to develop, for, the Maronite Antonine monasteries had become a good example for those who wished to found a monastery for their own community in Mount Lebanon, profiting from their own experience within these monasteries.

Thus, the two Catholic Armenian brothers of Aleppo, Hagop (Jacques) and Ohannes (Wânis) Hovsepian, after being trained for several years in the Maronite monastery of Qozhayya, together with their brothers Apraham and Minas, became the founders of the Armenian Antonine Congregation in Kisrawan.⁶²

The idea of abandoning all worldly affairs and founding a monastery for these Catholic Armenians in Lebanon began to take shape.⁶³ As merchants, they were already on intimate terms of friendship with those Maronite merchants of Aleppo who gradually became famous religious personalities in the Lebanese Maronite Community. Gabriel Hawa, Yusuf El-Batn and Abdallah Qar'ali⁶⁴ were some of those who took their vows in 1694 from the Maronite Patriarch Duwayhi and became, after a short period, the founders of the Lebanese Maronite Antonine Congregation. In 1701, Qar'ali was appointed Director General of the monastery of Mar Elisha.

This change of the Aleppo Maronites, from the worldly life to the religious, had a tremendous effect on their Armenian colleagues. In fact Apraham, the eldest of the four above-mentioned brothers, coming to Lebanon in 1702 visited Qar'ali, his old friend, to receive information and consult him about the possibility of founding their own monastery.⁶⁵ A few years later, in 1708, the two other brothers, Hagop and Ohannes, left Aleppo and came to Lebanon to the Monastery of Mar Elisha and asked the Director General, Qar'ali, to accept them as monks. After listening to their request, Qar'ali agreed to merge them into his already existing student body.⁶⁶ Describing the arrival of these two brothers at this monastery, Jermanos Farhat writes:

In the year 1708, two young Catholic Armenians came to the monastery of Qozhayya. One of them was called Ya'qub and the other Yuhanna. They desired to be trained in the monastic life and study monastic behavior and discipline in order to be able to found a

monastery for their community. They resided ten years in this monastery, that is until 1718.⁶⁷

After a few years, when the persecution against the Catholics increased in Aleppo, the two remaining brothers, Apraham and Minas, who already had decided to devote themselves to the religious life, considered the time appropriate to come to Lebanon and attempt the realization of their project. Thus, they visited Qar'ali and explained to him their intention. The latter not only found the idea of founding a Catholic Armenian Congregation in Lebanon beneficial, he also encouraged them in their purpose and promised to help them in every way possible for the success of their enterprise and furthermore allowed his students, Hagop and Ohannes, to leave the monastery of Mar Antonius Qozhayya to join their brothers and help them in their effort to found a monastery for the Armenian Community in Kisrawan.⁶⁸ It must be noted that during this period Qar'ali was a famous religious personality among the Maronite monks. He enjoyed a great reputation in Kisrawan and his influence was great, especially on the Khazin sheikhs, who were the feudal lords of the district. He used his good offices to persuade the sheikhs to adopt a favorable attitude towards the request of the four Armenian brothers.

After discussing the matter with Qar'ali, and encouraged by him, the Armenians went to the village of Ghosta (Kisrawan), where they met the sheikh Sakhr Al-Khazin. The sheikh listened to their request and said: "In the past, we once allowed the Jacobites to settle in Lebanon, but after some time they proved to be heretics, so we expelled them by force."⁶⁹ He was concerned that the same could happen with the Armenians.⁷⁰ But he promised to present the matter to his nephews and discuss it with them before taking any decision. The Khazin sheikhs, in their turn, consulted the Maronite Patriarch Ya'qub Aouad and the bishops about the matter.

In 1718, after their first meeting with the Khazin sheikhs, the four Hovsepien brothers sent a collective letter to the Pope Clement XI, expressing their devotion to the Catholic faith and their submission to the Papal See, saying that their intention was to build a monastery for the glory of Jesus Christ in Mount Lebanon, which belonged to the Maronite Khazin sheikhs, who had promised to offer them a place. Their request from the Pope was "to write a letter of recommendation to the Maronite sheikhs and their Patriarch to offer them a place."⁷¹ In the meantime, Hagop and Minas returned to Aleppo to sell their possessions to finance

the building of a monastery in Kisrawan, while Apraham and Ohannes remained in Lebanon awaiting the decision of the Maronite patriarch and the Khazin sheikhs.⁷²

During his stay in Aleppo, Hagop was ordained priest⁷³ by the Catholic Armenian Bishop Apraham Arzivian. Hagop did his best to collect as much money as possible to facilitate his work through the selling of his family possessions. To this same purpose he also asked the Maronite priest, Towlawi of Aleppo, to give him a letter of recommendation. It said:

We hereby certify that the bearer of this letter, Hagop Armenian of Aleppo, is a priest of Catholic faith. He has received his holy ordination from the hands of Bishop Apraham Arzivian. We ask you to offer him every possible help and let him exercise his sacred functions and treat him as a minister of the church. We ask from his debtors to remit to him their obligations, because he is truly a priest who obeys the Papal See and has decided to abandon worldly affairs and devote himself to religious life.⁷⁴

After completing his mission in Aleppo, Hagop, with another young Armenian, Antun,⁷⁵ returned to Lebanon.

At this time, the four Armenians were summoned by the Maronite patriarch, who told them that he had received from the Papal See a recommendation about them and promised his full assistance for the realization of their purpose.⁷⁶ Thereupon, they went to the village of Ghosta, where the Khazin sheikhs offered them a place in the valley of Kraym. The text of this donation ran as follows:

The aim of this document is to allow and grant permission to Father Ya'qub and clerk Apraham, Minas and Yuhanna, who are Catholics from Aleppo and obedient to the Church of Rome, to construct a monastery for their community. We have granted them the grapes, the fig trees and the houses found in the village of Ghosta at Kraym, which has belonged to us since the time of our forefathers with the firm memory that this land should never be sold or purchased except for the construction of a convent. Peace, respect and honor should be given to them everywhere because their laws are our laws and our properties, theirs. The boundaries will be as mentioned in this writing. Written in March 1721, Khattar Khazin, Dargham Khazin, Sakhr Khazin, Nawfal Khazin.⁷⁷

It is clear from this document that the Catholicity of the Armenians

was the main condition for their settlement in Kisrawan. Furthermore, the Khazin sheikhs were not satisfied merely by granting a place, but they also engaged themselves to look after the comfort of the Armenian Catholics "everywhere" in Kisrawan and, if necessary, protect them against any offence to their persons or property. This shows that the sheikhs did not act only as landowners but as powerful feudal rulers who considered themselves responsible for the good conduct of the inhabitants in the district. Moreover, the recommendation of the Maronite Patriarch as the supreme head of the community, protected and sanctified the Armenian settlers against all possible outside influence.

A few months after the donation of Kraym, the Maronite patriarch Ya'qub 'Aouad published, in July 1721, a circular to the Maronite priesthood and people in Kisrawan, requesting them to accept the Armenians as their brothers and to respect and assist them by all means. Thus, he said:

The divine blessing and the Holy Spirit's heavenly grace be maintained on our blessed flock abundantly. Let God bless all our priests, clerics and ecclesiastic fathers, our honorable sheikhs of Ghosta and all our neighboring villagers.

The honorable Father Ya'qub, his brother priests, and the vicars are all sheltered on this mountain to preserve their Catholic faith. Their sole purpose is to resign from worldly deeds and devote themselves to God. Our honorable sons, your Khazin sheikhs, have granted them the place known as Kraym which was the heritage from their forefathers, for the construction of a convent. Let God grant them complete success in all their undertakings.

Our utmost desire is to have you fully cooperate with them and accept them as your brothers in Jesus Christ and the members of the Holy Church. Respect and honor them as you want them to honor and respect you. Give them assistance and favor which has fully been granted to you by God...

It is our great hope that you will be able to develop, together, your body and soul, to avoid disasters and misfortunes. Let your and their names be worthy of being mentioned in the book of life. This is our desire and let God's blessing be on you in abundance.⁷⁸

The Maronite patriarch who "appeared everywhere as the indefatigable protector of his people and the center of its religious and

political rallying,"⁷⁹ by this recommendation, impelled the Maronites to consider the Catholic Armenians as reliable elements for their settlement in Kisrawan and thus accept them as members with whom they were bound through their obedience to the Roman Catholic Church. Furthermore, this attitude of the Maronite patriarch would give the Maronites an awareness of their responsibility to protect and offer assistance to the settlers who were persecuted for a cause for which the Maronites also stood.

The Maronites, who paid great deference to their priests, whom they considered as their legislators and administrators, considered it a duty to respond to the appeal of the head of their community.

It must be noted that, besides Kraym and its neighboring gardens, other donations, including adjacent lands such as the land of Beit Khashbo, located near the village of Ghazir in Kisrawan, were also made to the Antonine Armenian monks at Kraym.⁸⁰ This, according to an act of donation, signed on April 12, 1760 by sheikh Sinto Al-Khazin, and approved by Patriarch Tubiyya Al-Khazin,⁸¹ was legalized by the Shihabi Emirs, Qassim, Ahmad and Harfouch, who were the governors of Lebanon.

By this act, the Khazins gave to the Armenian community the land of Beit Khashbo with its surrounding gardens and vineyards, including the lands in the neighboring village Dar'oun which belonged to Beit Khashbo.

The act acknowledged that the Armenian monks, the "perpetual owners" of these lands which cannot be sold, would build a monastery at Beit Khashbo. It also stated that they would have complete freedom in their use of these lands and that nobody from the cousins or sons of the donors could interfere in their affairs. The Armenian monks would be protected,⁸² if necessary, by the Khazin sheikhs. In the meantime, they would continue to pay the *miri*⁸³ taxes for these lands to the Khazin sheikhs, and remember them and their fathers in the masses offered in the convent. In the ensuing years, the building of the convent was completed, and it was named after Saint Antony. It stood on a site which dominated the bay of Junieh. Near the convent was erected a monumental church, which in the year 1900, was described as "one of the most beautiful and largest churches of Lebanon."⁸⁴

The land possessions of the Armenian community at Kraym increased with time. As years passed by, other lands were bought by the monks, and

mulberry trees were planted for the development of the silk industry, which was then the main economic occupation of the monks.

B. Apraham Arzivian, The First Armenian Patriarch As Refugee In Lebanon

Born in Aintab in 1679, he was ordained bishop in Aleppo in 1710, and dedicated all his life to the propagation of the Catholic faith among the Armenians of Aleppo and the neighboring regions. In 1712, accused of being a "Frank" by the Orthodox Armenians in Aleppo, he was put in chains and jailed in Trabizond by a governmental decree.⁸⁵ He was imprisoned for twenty-eight days. After his release, he passed to Aintab and Sis in Cilicia and continued to preach the Catholic faith among the Armenians. Eventually he was apprehended again in August 4, 1715, and banished to Istanbul.⁸⁶ He was imprisoned for eleven months and was released by the efforts of some influential friends and the payment of 733 francs.⁸⁷

In 1719, protected by the governor of Aleppo, Hakim Oghlou Pasha and some other friends, he was able to continue his missionary activities in that city. Here, in June 1720, he ordained as priest Hagop, one of the four above-mentioned Hovsepien brothers, as the initiator of the Armenian monasticism in Kisrawan. Likewise, Apraham, the second of the four brothers, received ordination.

Due to his intense missionary activity, his religious opponents looked for some excuse for expelling Bishop Arzivian from Aleppo. On September 1, 1720 he was accused of introducing Catholic rite to the Armenian mass and removing Armenians from the authority of the Sultan.⁸⁸ Upon the incitement of Patriarch Krikor Sheghtayagir of Jerusalem, the Orthodox Armenian patriarch of Constantinople, Golod thereupon received from the Ottoman government a decree by which Bishop Arzivian was exiled to the island of Arwad (in Syria, opposite Tartus), on September 2, 1720.⁸⁹

After his exile to the island of Arwad, Bishop Arzivian was left with no place to carry out his missionary activities. He was already well known as a devoted Catholic clergyman, for which he was under constant persecution from his opponents. However, the convent in Kisrawan which was being constructed under the protection of the Maronites, could be considered a very suitable refuge, where he could settle among the

Catholic Armenian monks and organize missionary activities through them, with the support of the Maronites, who had great respect for them.

After remaining close to two years in Arwad, Bishop Arzivian was freed by the efforts of a certain Antun Turbay, a pious Maronite who was the first interpreter of the French Consul in Tripoli. By bribing the Pasha of Tripoli, Turbay secured the release of Arzivian from Arwad and took him to safety in his own house. Later, in 1722, Bishop Arzivian moved to Kraym and established himself there among the Armenian monks. Before entering the convent of Kraym, he was the guest of both the Maronite Patriarch and the governor of Kisrawan, Sheikh Abi Nader Al-Khazin.⁹⁰ His arrival in Kraym was an occasion for rejoicing among the Maronites and the Armenians:

When the Maronite sheikhs, bishops and monks heard about the release of Arzivian from prison and his arrival in Kraym, they rushed in great number from every village to greet him and pay their respects to him... Thereafter, the inhabitants, following the example of their leaders, began to offer wheat, flour, sweets, silk and different kinds of goods to this newly established [Armenian] religious congregation. Sheikh Sakhr Al-Khazin and his brothers were especially intimate with Arzivian, whom they considered a champion of the Catholic faith.⁹¹

The Maronite patriarch Yusuf Al-Khazin (1733-1742) took special care of Bishop Arzivian and his monks at the monastery of Kraym. He authorized them to perform the mass in the Maronite churches in Kisrawan. In this regard, he issued an official letter on November 18, 1733, saying:

Let every son of the Maronite community know that we already prohibited all the priests of the Eastern communities from confessing our subjects, except for our venerable brother Apraham and the monks inhabiting the convent of Kraym, who were freed from this interdiction. We issued this document for them in order to give them the full power to perform the mass, confess and preach in our churches in the same manner as our Maronite priests, because we are bound to them and they are bound to us. They are the subjects of the Roman Catholic Church and are tried and well known for their piety and zeal to preserve the Faith. We want them to be honored and cared for by our people and the priests, wherever they may be.⁹²

These privileges which Bishop Arzivian and the Catholic Armenian monks in Kisrawan received from patriarch Yusuf Al-Khazin did not end with this patriarch's death. They were renewed by the succeeding patriarchs who repeatedly reminded the Maronites of their duties towards the Armenian Catholics. Thus, in May 1745, Elias Burji, the procurator of the Maronite Patriarch Sim'an 'Aouad stated that:

Apraham and his monks possess documents given by the deceased patriarchs Ya'qub [Aouad] and Yusuf [Al-Khazin], of blessed memory, according to which, they can deal with any matter in our community...No difference exists between them and us. They have proved themselves with their good behavior, erudition and usefulness...⁹³

On September 2, 1735, Arzivian and another Armenian monk, Nichola, from the convent of Kraym, received an invitation from the Papal delegate, Monseignor Yusuf Sim'an Al-Sim'ani, to attend the Lebanese Council. This Council, held in the monastery of our Lady of Luwayzeh, gave to the Maronite church a new religious constitution.⁹⁴ Arzivian, like the Maronite prelates, signed the acts of this council.

Before the opening of the Council, Arzivian, in company with Al-Sim'ani, the Maronite bishops and the Khazin sheikhs, paid several visits to different Maronite monasteries in Kisrawan, during which religious ceremonies and popular processions in honor of the Papal delegate took place. One evening the procession visited the convent of Kraym, where all the Armenian monks, dressed in their official robes and ranged along the two sides of the entrance, candles and cymbals in their hands and under the tinkling of the bells, bade the guests welcome. After the sermon, the visitors dined and stayed in the convent for the night.

Al-Sim'ani held the person of Arzivian in high esteem.⁹⁵ An act of donation made by Sheikh Jumblat Al-Khazin on September 14, 1735, by which the convent of Mar Jirjis of Dbaye, with its gardens and lands, was offered to the Armenian monks of Kraym, bears the approval of Al-Sim'ani who, after confirming the donation, wrote:

...We saw and duly approved this act by our missionary authority, because it is understood that the Armenian monks to whom this donation is made will imitate in their conduct, the example of Apraham, Bishop of Aleppo. They will always be under his guidance and obedience even if he is chosen for a higher dignity.⁹⁶

In 1739, when the persecution of the Catholics in Aleppo subsided, Arzivian returned to his diocese. There, he ordained three Catholic Armenian bishops, who in their turn elected him as patriarch.⁹⁷ Before his confirmation by the Papal See on July 29, 1741, he requested the Maronite Patriarch and the authorities of the Lebanese Maronite Antonine Congregation to recommend him to Pope Benedictus XIV and solicit the pallium for him because, as he said, "I always considered myself a protégé of your order."⁹⁸

The Maronite religious hierarchy, including all the Maronite parishes, responded positively to the request of Patriarch Apraham Arzivian, and on September 10, 1741, sent a collective recommendation of him to Pope Benedictus XIV. The recommendation certified:

...that Apraham, the Bishop of the Catholic Armenian community in Aleppo, after being persecuted by government officials, the Orthodox Armenians and their patriarch in Constantinople and after imprisonment, exile and blame, was finally rescued by seeking refuge among us in Mount Lebanon, in the district of Kisrawan...Later, he was elected as patriarch by the Catholic Armenians in Aleppo. Now, regarding his request for the pallium from your Holiness, we certify that he is an ardent Catholic...We beseech you to bestow on him the pallium and confirm him in the patriarchal seat.⁹⁹

A few days later, another recommendation by the Maronite Antonine Congregation was dispatched to Rome. It stressed the honesty and pious virtues of Bishop Arzivian pointing out that "he remained among us about twenty years."¹⁰⁰

After being confirmed by the Papal See, in September 1742, as Patriarch of the Catholic Armenians in the See of Cilicia, Arzivian returned to Mount Lebanon and established himself among the Armenian monks at Kraym. Meanwhile, on April 25, 1743, the Pope sent a circular to the Maronite Patriarch, the priests and the community, regarding the newly elected patriarch. It said:

...we ask you to continue to show Patriarch Arzivian every consideration and the most intimate friendship, because we hold him in high esteem as a man who shows unconditional obedience to the Roman Catholic Church and guides his community in the Catholic faith with purity. Therefore we are certain that you will also do everything you can for him, according to your authority...¹⁰¹

With the settlement of Arzivian in Kisrawan, the convent of Kraym became the patriarchal seat from which the community in different parts of the Ottoman Empire was spiritually governed. In 1749, Arzivian ordained three bishops: Boghos for the diocese of Damascus, Hovsep for Edessa, and Bedros Necessian for Aintab.¹⁰²

The presence of the Patriarch among the Armenian Catholic monks in Kisrawan promoted the status of these monks in the eyes of the Maronites, whose patriarch and sheikhs, as already mentioned, held Arzivian in high regard. Moreover, Arzivian's presence at Kraym was a factor which helped to increase the number of Catholic Armenians in Kisrawan, especially when we consider that the Catholic Armenians seeking refuge in Kisrawan were hospitably received by the Maronites. Thus, after 1722, when it was well known that Arzivian was in Mount Lebanon, great numbers of Armenians started to come from Aleppo and settle in Lebanon.¹⁰³ Some Armenian pilgrims, on their return from Jerusalem, visited the convent and decided to remain in Kisrawan permanently. Three members of the Kaplanian family from Aleppo, on their return from pilgrimage, settled in the village of Bat'ha near Kraym, where the convent had its estates. Another member of the same family, the Orthodox Bishop Sarkis, settled on May 13, 1738, among the monks at Kraym,¹⁰⁴ where Estephan of Aleppo, a monk in the Orthodox Armenian monastery of Saint Jacob in Jerusalem, had already established himself.

According to the archives of the monastery of Kraym, many Armenian clergymen from Aleppo such as Der¹⁰⁵ Mardiros, Der Simeon, Der Manuel, Der Apraham Chirin, Der Yerima, and deacons, like Simeon Karabashian, Bedros Ganatchian, and Kevork Chachatian came to Kraym. Besides, civilians, such as Arutin of Kilis, with his two sons Hagop, Ovsep and two daughters Kohar and Mariam came. Ohannes of Beylan, with his parents and two brothers. Abdel-Mesih of Aleppo, with his mother Zmroukhd, Arakel of Istanbul, Ovsep of Damascus and others established themselves in Kisrawan.¹⁰⁶

Thus, the number of the Armenian community in Kisrawan, increased in time. Touma El-Boudy, the Abbot General of the Maronite Antonine monks in Lebanon, wrote a letter to Monseignor Al-Sim'ani, in October 1739. It said: "during these last years many Armenian families escaping from the persecution in Aleppo have settled in Tripoli and become Maronites..."¹⁰⁷

Arzivian governed the monks at Kraym according to the rules of the Maronite Antonine monks. In 1739, he recommended these rules to his monks, who, after introducing some changes, adopted them for themselves. Hereafter, following these rules, they elected their Abbot General and his assistants as did the Maronite monks, for a period of three years.

Arzivian played a basic role in the shaping of the Catholic Armenian community and its development, mainly in the strengthening of the ties between the Maronites and the Armenians. It was mostly through his person that the Maronites appreciated the Catholic Armenians. All paid their homage to him at his funeral on October 1749. The Maronite bishops and the feudal lords, who had received special invitation from the Armenians, organized for him a remarkable funeral ceremony, the like of which had not been seen in Kisrawan.¹⁰⁸

In the meantime, the monastery of Kraym, which included a church named after the Holy Savior, continued to be enlarged and enriched by new estates. Many new students from Aleppo and other parts of the Ottoman Empire continued to come and add to the number of the community. George Robinson who visited this Monastery on October 16, 1830, wrote:

[The convent of Kraym]...is an extensive building, apparently new, and more like the monasteries of Europe than any I have yet seen in these parts. It belongs to the Armenian Catholics, of whom there are a great number here, monks and students...¹⁰⁹

BZUMMAR AS THE PATRIARCHATE OF THE CATHOLIC ARMENIANS

A. The Donation Of Bzummar By The Sheikhs Mushrif And Qabalan Al-Khazin

The increase in the number of the Armenian monks in the monastery of Kraym started worrying the authorities due to lack of space. Moreover, the monastery was used as the patriarchal seat where, besides ordinary monks and bishops, a good number of priests, escaping persecution by the Orthodox Armenians, had taken refuge. Thus, after the 1740s the need for a new monastery was felt. Faced with this situation and in order to facilitate the monastic observances of the monks, who already had chosen their Abbot General, Arzivian decided to build a separate monastery dedicated to the patriarch and the bishops. For this purpose he published a

letter in 1749 asking for the financial support of his community.¹¹⁰ However, he was not able to see the realization of his project. He died on October 1, 1749.

A few days after the burial ceremonies, and before electing a new patriarch, the bishops tried to realize the wish of the defunct patriarch. They met with the Maronite patriarch Sim'an 'Aouad and, after receiving his permission, started work on their project with great zeal.

The next meeting was held with the Sheikhs Mushrif and Qabalan Al-Khazin, who offered them the farm of Bzummar¹¹¹ in October 1749. The act of donation begins with a brief introduction by the Maronite patriarch, who salutes the Armenian monks and states:

Our beloved and honorable Sheikh Mushrif visited us and informed us of his good intention of offering you the farm of Bzummar, where you intend to build a monastery...We duly approved his request and in honor of him gave you the right to receive the above place to build a monastery. Do not forget us in your prayers and let God's blessing and protection be on you.¹¹²

After this brief introduction by the patriarch, there follows the act of donation by the Khazin sheikhs which states:

We hereby declare that our patriarch Sim'an signed a document authorizing the honorable Armenian bishops Jacob, Peter, Paul and Joseph to build for themselves and for all those of their nationals and patriarchs, bishops or priests who belong to the church of Rome, a monastery dedicated to Holy Virgin in the farm of Bzummar.

We, the undersigned, Mushrif and Antun, have offered of our own free will and consent this farm with its fields of mulberry trees, wheat, houses, grapes and uncultivated lands which we had received from the honorable Emir Mulhim. This monastery, which will be erected in the name of Holy Virgin, is offered for the love of God and the salvation of our father's and our souls. Our only expectation in return, will be to be remembered in their prayers. An agreement was concluded between us and the honorable bishops that for half of the price of the received lands, they will offer holy masses in our memory and for the other half they will do good work in the monastery for the benefit of the people. This document was written of our own will while enjoying good physical and mental health. It has mutually been understood that every year the *miri* tax will be paid to us for the above mentioned

possessions, according to the register book of his excellency. October 1749.¹¹³

B. The Successors Of Patriarch Arzivian On The Seat Of Bzummar

The successors of Patriarch Arzivian carried on the building of the monastery of Bzummar.

In the presence of the Catholic Armenian archbishops of Aleppo, Damascus, Edessa, Kilis and Aintab, Jacob Hovsepian the Archbishop of Aleppo, who was a missionary in Constantinople, Ankara and Aleppo, and "full of zeal and intelligence, well instructed in theology and very recommendable for his ability and merits..."¹¹⁴ was elected new patriarch to the seat of Cilicia at Bzummar. He received Papal confirmation on September, 23, 1750.

After his election, he requested the Maronite patriarch Sim'an Aouad to approve the monastic regulations of the Armenian monks at Kraym.¹¹⁵ According to Patriarch Jacob, this approval was necessary in order to solicit the confirmation of Rome later,¹¹⁶ for which the Maronite patriarch was requested to send a recommendation to the Pope.

Patriarch Jacob witnessed the beginning of the construction of the monastery of Bzummar, around which he bought new lands. Under his authority numerous mulberry trees and vineyards were planted around the monastery. Two mulberry fields were bought in the neighboring village of Ashqut.¹¹⁷ In 1750 he finally left the monastery of Kraym and settled in the new monastery at Bzummar. Before his death, he ordained the priests Basilus Avcadian and Lucas. He died in June 10, 1753 and was buried at Kraym.

The next patriarch, who was elected on June 23, 1753 at Kraym, was Michel Gasparian, Archbishop of Aleppo. Under his guidance, the monastery of Bzummar witnessed the continuation of new construction. In 1771 the building of the church of the Holy Virgin was completed. A mulberry field in the neighboring village of Bat'ha was bought. Furthermore, new mulberry trees were planted around the monastery.¹¹⁸ Gasparian ordained new bishops, such as Jean Azarian for Diarbekir, Paul Cobbe for Damascus, Jean Tasbas for Mardin and Gregory Kupelian for Adana. Gasparian died in November 16, 1780 and was buried at Bzummar.¹¹⁹ His successor, Patriarch Basilus Avcadian, was already living at Kraym as a refugee from Aleppo, where he had been archbishop. He was elected on December 1, 1780. The Pope confirmed his election after

he was solicited by the Maronite Patriarch Yusuf Estephan, who had, in a letter to the Pope, given information concerning the spiritual and intellectual merits of patriarch Basilus. On this occasion Bishop Michel Khazin, the procurator of the Maronite patriarch, sent a letter of congratulation and expressed joy, considering the newly elected patriarch as "the most appropriate candidate for the patriarchal seat and the most experienced among the bishops." Furthermore, the letter suggested to the monks residing at Kraym and Bzummar "not to hesitate to apply to the Maronite patriarchate in case help was needed."¹²⁰ Patriarch Basilus showed great hospitality towards those Catholics who escaped from the persecutions of Zakaria, the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople (1780-1781) to find refuge at Bzummar.¹²¹ Basilus died On February 15, 1788.

In May 1788, the Archbishop of Adana, Gregory Kupelian, was elected patriarch. He was confirmed by the Pope on December 15 of the same year. During this period (1788-1790), Lebanon was undergoing political unrest. The intrigues and clashes between different local groups and the policy of Ahmad Jazzar Basha (1735?-1804) had created an unstable situation in the country. The monasteries were affected by this general instability.¹²²

However, Kupelian's most important work was the foundation of the seminary of Bzummar, which prepared and still prepares priests for missionary and educational work in different missions of the patriarchate.¹²³ This seminary would serve to teach the priests theology, ecclesiastic hymns and Armenian literature. The lectures were given in Armenian. The curriculum included philosophy, rhetoric, Latin grammar, Arabic, Italian and Turkish.¹²⁴ The main source of the financial support for the building of the seminary was some Armenian merchants from Madras (India); it was based on an agreement signed by them and the patriarch on September 29, 1791.¹²⁵

Patriarch Gregory ordained as bishops the priests Manuel for Adana, Bedros Jeranian for Mar'ash and Jacob Holassian for Amassia. Gregory died in June 17, 1812.

In 1812, Bishop Gregory Jeranian was elected to the patriarchal post.

In 1813, upon the request of the Maronite patriarch, Hanna Helou, Patriarch Jeranian received pallium as confirmation for his election from the Pope.¹²⁶ The letter of the Maronite patriarch to the Pope said:

After the death of their patriarch, the Catholic Armenian bishops retired to the monastery of Bzummar and, according to canonical regulations, they chose Bishop Gregory as patriarch. Being their neighbor and in a position for observing happenings, I can certify that this election was held freely and in full consent and charity. Moreover, being informed about our dear brother Gregory, I can testify that he is an ardent protector of religion, full of zeal for the salvation of souls. Therefore, I request that your sacredness deign to confirm him in his dignity and send him the pallium with all the privileges and prerogatives, because this beloved patriarch merits complete acceptance for his intense love for the Catholic faith.¹²⁷

Patriarch Jeranian was erudite in theology and law. Besides Armenian, he had a good knowledge of Arabic, Turkish, Latin and Italian.¹²⁸ His procurator was the bishop Jacob Holassian, who had cordial relations with the Maronite community, especially with the family of Emir Bashir Shihab II.¹²⁹ By the order of the patriarch, Bishop Holassian enlarged the estates of the monastery in the villages of Kisrawan by buying hundreds of new plots of lands, especially in the villages of Zibdin and Bzummar.

Under the guidance of Patriarch Jeranian, new construction was carried out in the building of the monastery. During his patriarchate the Catholic Armenians of Constantinople and Aleppo were severely persecuted by the Orthodox Armenian patriarch of Constantinople. Thus on June 14, 1828, the priest Gregory Sarafian and sixteen other priests, escaped from Anatolia and took refuge in the monastery of Bzummar. In November 15 of the same year, another group of clergymen arrived in Bzummar from the villages and regions of Kullu, Daron and Khodortchur. These clergymen remained in the monastery under the paternal care of the patriarch until the persecutions ended in 1830,¹³⁰ when Sultan Mahmud published a decree recognizing the Catholic Armenians as a separate community independent from the Orthodox Armenian Patriarch.

During the patriarchate of Jeranian five bishops and priests¹³¹ were ordained. George Robinson who visited the monastery in October 15, 1837, described his reception in these terms:

...I waited upon the Armenian patriarch. I found him seated at a large circular window, overlooking the valley of Kesrouan, and listening to the storm. By his side, on the divan, were three or four bishops... My companion, who was a Maronite, approached the patriarch with great

respect, kneeling and kissing his hand, which he afterwards repeated to the bishops. I was received with all the ceremonies that accompany a visit to a Pacha: sherbet, pipes, and coffee being served, and numerous domestics standing attentive at the door. . . .¹³²

Patriarch Jeranian died on September 22, 1840 and was buried at Bzummar. From 1750 to 1830, the archbishops of Aleppo resided in the patriarchal monastery of Bzummar, from where they governed their diocese under the guidance of the patriarch with the help of the curates (the diocese of Aleppo included the cities of Damascus, Kilis and Aintab, Kilis and Aintab being served by the curate of Aleppo).¹³³

Patriarchal jurisdiction extended over the dioceses of Syria, Merdin, and the missions of Mesopotamia (Baghdad, Basra and Edessa). Missions were also sent to the Armenians of Madras. The patriarchate exercised its jurisdiction over the Catholic Armenians in Egypt by sending pastoral letters to the faithful and instructions to the missionaries. It exercised its jurisdiction over Anatolia by means of curates and missions sent by the missionary institute of Bzummar. It encountered great difficulties in exercising its jurisdiction over these Catholic Armenian communities. However, the firman of the Sultan in 1830, which gave freedom to the native Catholics to exercise their religion, greatly facilitated the missionary work of Bzummar.

Thus, after 1750, the monastery of Bzummar became the heart of Catholic Armenian activities in and outside Lebanon. As Janin wrote, "After the year 1750, the monastery of the Holy Virgin of Bzummar became the residence of the Uniate Catholics, who extended his jurisdiction over Syria, Cilicia, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Egypt."¹³⁴

THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCH AT THE SERVICE OF THE MARONITES IN KISRAWAN

The Catholic Armenian patriarchs at Bzummar, who were under the protection of the Maronite patriarchs and feudal lords, gave full support to the Maronites when spiritual or financial help was asked from them.

In 1752, during the patriarchate of Sim'an Aouad, troubles in the Maronite community occurred because of the famous visionary Hindiyyah,¹³⁵ who, after receiving authorization from the patriarch, erected a nunnery at Bkerkeh in the name of the congregation of the "Sacred Heart."

The Maronites considered the decision of the Pope unjust and were very much offended.¹³⁶ Thereupon, the Armenian patriarch, Hovsepian, who was well aware of the critical situation, hastened to write a letter to the Pope in June 23 of the same year, requesting him to be careful in taking decisions in this matter, because, as he wrote:

Your decisions which were sent to the patriarch Sim'an Aouad in respect to the congregation of the "Sacred Heart", where eighteen nuns are residing, is considered unjust, primarily because the public complains that your judgment does not correspond to reality and secondly the nuns say that the rules of their congregation were sent to your sacredness and that they are ready for correction of mistakes any time desired...Also, the majority of the population suppose that the givens on which the judgement of your sacredness was based were false.

Thus, Patriarch Hovsepian tried to present to Rome the point of view of the Maronites. In the same letter Patriarch Hovsepian advised the Pope to be cautious and asked him to be moderate in his attitude and soft-hearted in his approach to the matter because, "...interdictions and orders given in this matter, as it appears, increase trouble and cause hard feelings towards your sacredness and can result even in their separation from your authority." Indeed the information which the Armenian patriarch received was based on facts to which he was eyewitness and which worried him greatly, because he added; "Here, I heard and saw things, which moved me to fear that under your authority such evil could happen since the inhabitants of this country have a difficult temper. They are extremely jealous and proud when their women are concerned..."¹³⁷

Patriarch Hovsepian's approach to the above matter was appreciated by the Maronite patriarch because it reflected an attitude of understanding. This appreciation carried on by the followers of patriarch Aouad on various occasions. In June 1779, Patriarch Yusuf Estephan was accused of supporting and encouraging the visionary Hindiyyah by the prefect of Rome Pietro Craveri de Moretta and by other local opponents.¹³⁸ He was suspended by the Pope and his orders and jurisdictions were taken from him. But the patriarch, who did not despair in his search for justice, met with the governor of Lebanon, Emir Yusuf Shihab, in June 1782 and requested him "to appoint the Catholic Armenian and Melkite patriarchs as

arbitrators, because they were personalities of integrity and beyond suspicion. His request was approved by Emir Yusuf Shihab.¹³⁹

Arbitration and conciliatory acts of the Armenian patriarchs residing at Bzummar were not limited only to the clergymen of the Maronite community. Sometimes there were civilians, such as the Khazin feudal family, concerned too.

In April 1800, a robbery occurred. Sheikh Ya'qub Al-Khazin, a son of the Haykal family stole jewellery from the house of Haykal Al-Khazin, reopening an old family feud. But soon finding himself in danger of being discovered, he offered the precious objects to the monastery of Bzummar.¹⁴⁰ After a short time, the theft was discovered and the patriarch was informed of the fact by Qa'dan Shihab, who had kindly requested the Patriarch to hand the jewellery to its genuine owners, at the same time assuring him that his excellency the Emir, would care for the part of Sheikh Ya'qub Al-Khazin.¹⁴¹ However, justice was done when Patriarch Gregory and Bishop Gabriel returned the stolen jewellery to Haykal Al-Khazin, who, in a letter¹⁴² dated April 2, 1800, thanked the patriarch and thankfully acknowledged the receipt of the following: seven hundred eleven piasters, half-silver money, a pair of golden bracelets and three golden rings in addition to other precious objects. Furthermore, the signatories of this letter announced in the presence of witnesses that they were guaranteeing the defense of the patriarch against any judiciary action which could be taken by their son.

The Catholic Armenian patriarch sometimes offered spiritual assistance to the Maronites through his clergymen, allowing them temporarily to look after the spiritual needs of the inhabitants of a certain locality in Kisrawan. In May 30, 1819, Bishop Holassian was requested by a Maronite bishop, Ighnatyus, to give spiritual guidance and confession to the inhabitants, while the responsible priest was traveling.¹⁴³ The Maronite bishop delegated the Armenian bishop full authority to allow any priest from his community to confess the inhabitants, because as he said "we are pursuing the same goal which is the glory of God and the salvation of souls..."¹⁴⁴

On October 3, 1813, Patriarch Jeranian was requested for a second time by Sheikh Bisharah Al-Khazin to accept in the monastery Sheikh Bisharah Saqr, "who wished to do spiritual exercise for a certain period

under the paternal care of his sacredness."¹⁴⁵ The patriarch was requested to guide Sheikh Bisharah Saqr to accomplish this spiritual exercise.

The Maronites, clergyman or civilian, in the neighborhood of the monastery of Bzummar, did not hesitate to seek help from the Armenian patriarch when they so needed. The archives of Bzummar are full of letters of gratitude written by Maronites who had received either spiritual or financial assistance from the Catholic Armenian patriarchs. In this respect the Catholic Armenian community was greatly honored by its services rendered to the ruling Shihabi family, especially to Emir Bashir II,¹⁴⁶ under whose protection the community experienced further prosperity.

THE CATHOLIC ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND EMIR BASHIR II

Under Shihabi rule "the various Lebanese communities lived peacefully side by side."¹⁴⁷ Emir Bashir II, who ruled Lebanon from 1788 to 1840, had a special regard for the Armenian community in Kisrawan.

His confidence in the Armenian community at Bzummar was expressed by the fact that he appointed the Armenian bishop Holassian as the spiritual guide and confessor for his second wife, Husn Jahan. Indeed, a few years after the death of his first wife, Emir Bashir, wishing to remarry, chose a young Circassian woman from Istanbul. Wishing to Christianize her before marrying, he invited the Catholic Armenian bishop, Holassian, from Bzummar and asked him to instruct the young lady in the principles of the Christian religion. This bishop knew Turkish well, which was the only language understood by the young lady.¹⁴⁸

Thus, Husn Jahan found in the person of Bishop Jacob the kind clergyman to whom she could express herself in her mother language without difficulty.¹⁴⁹

Bishop Jacob, after a short time, fulfilling the wish of Emir Bashir, baptized Husn Jahan, and the wedding ceremonies followed.¹⁵⁰

Hereafter, Bishop Holassian, "as an intimate friend", continued to visit Emir Bashir and was the guest of his family. In this regard, the courteous letters which he received from Emir Amin (son of Emir Bashir) and Husn Jahan testify that he was respected and beloved. In one of his letters addressed to Bishop Holassian, Emir Amin wrote:

...In view of our belief in your trustworthy friendship... we wish that you keep visiting our seat on all occasions and look into our affairs as you deem appropriate. There is no need for us to stress more the

necessity of your frequent visits. We aver that your favor will not remain unrewarded.¹⁵¹

The frequent visits of Bishop Holassian to the Shihab family were not only appreciated on the occasions of "affairs" and for his "trustworthy friendship" but also for the pleasure which he was giving to the princely family. On several occasions, Shihab family members wrote to Patriarch Jeranian, requesting Bishop Holassian's stay in the palace of Beit Ed-Din. Emir Amin, in one of his letters addressed to the patriarch in 1813, wrote "Bishop Jacob has tried several times to take leave from us, but we have not let him go, because we have been greatly enjoying his company. Thus, we request from you not to oblige him to leave us."¹⁵²

In 1833, Emir Bashir expressed a desire to learn Turkish, and for this purpose asked Patriarch Gregory to send him two Turkish books with correct grammatical explanations so that he could acquire a knowledge of the language.¹⁵³ Indeed, Emir Bashir knew well that the monastery of Bzummar was the right place for him to learn the Turkish language, since it was a part of the curriculum of the seminary of the monastery. Accordingly, those Armenian Catholic clergymen who enjoyed the confidence of the Emir, could assist him in interpreting letters or reports written in Turkish.

Bishop Holassian, who originally was from Ankara, had a good knowledge of Turkish. He could in this respect, be useful to Emir Bashir during those troublesome years which Lebanon underwent. In the year 1838, when Patriarch Jeranian ordained the priest Basilus Aivazian as bishop, instead of doing it in the presence of two bishops, he carried out the ordination with the assistance of only one bishop, because "during that period, Bishop Jacob Holassian, due to the Turko-Egyptian war, was staying with Emir Bashir II."¹⁵⁴

The above evidence, illustrates that the Armenian patriarchs and bishops were treated by the ruling Shihab family as spiritual leaders worthy of honor and esteem. Husn Jahan in her letters addressed to the patriarchs, expressed her deep affection and wishes of good health.¹⁵⁵ One of her letters, sent to Bishop Holassian in 1841, indicates that she periodically received rose water and tobacco from the monastery.¹⁵⁶ In 1838 her husband, Emir Bashir, benevolently offered a sum of one thousand piasters to Patriarch Jeranian for distribution to the needy in the community.¹⁵⁷ This act of assisting needy persons was a part of Bashir's general policy

towards the communities in Lebanon. His letter to the Patriarch read: "...an order was given by us to distribute alms to the needy of the country..." This financial assistance came at a time when a good number of Catholic Armenians had fled from the persecutions of the Orthodox patriarch in Istanbul and sought refuge in Bzummar. Their livelihood was cared for by the patriarch. The financial assistance also helped those who were being greatly affected economically by the Turko-Egyptian war.¹⁵⁸

The interest of Emir Bashir in the monastery of Bzummar is further illustrated by the fact that in 1836 he sent Sheikh Khattar Oqaily to Bzummar in order to draw a picture of the lightning rods which were placed on the monastery to protect it against thunderbolts. The Emir in his turn would order similar lightning rods for the palace of Beit Ed-Din.¹⁵⁹

As the monastery of Bzummar was in 1837 "the finest and richest convent in Kesrouan,"¹⁶⁰ it attracted Emir Bashir's attention with reference to the building of the palace of Beit Ed-Din and the canal constructed in 1812-15. These "remain until this day the most impressive of the Emir's public works."¹⁶¹

The friendly and encouraging attitude of Emir Bashir towards the Armenians was expressed also in the economic field, when he ordered the abolition of the *miri* taxes collected from the estates of the monastery. In the year 1832, Bashir ordered the feudal lords of Kisrawan, Qan'an Al-Khazin from the family Qansu Al-Khazin and Bisharah Al-Khazin from the family Abu Nawfal Al-Khazin, to prepare a list indicating the estates of Bzummar in different regions of Kisrawan and the names of the feudal landowners who had offered those pieces from their estates to the Armenian community in Mount Lebanon.

According to the list, the estates of the community were scattered in different regions. In the village of Ghosta, lands were given by the Sheikhs Hanna Tanius Shahwan, Elias Jad'on Muhassib and his brothers. In the Village of Mazra'a by the Sheikhs Hanna Dandash, Fahim Al-Khazin, Shaji' Baz Al-Khazin, 'Alman Baz Al-Khazin, Hanna Badawi Al-Khazin, Khattar Yunis Al-Khazin and others. In Raifoun, by Mikha'il Al-Halabi and Yusuf Faris Ma'sara. In Ashqut, by Bisharah Abu-Samra, Tanius Issa, Yusuf Tabit, Hanna Shidyaq, the sons of Francis Sarkis, the sons of Ziadeh Mas'ad Ma'sara, the sons of Sheikh Mussa Nawfal and others. In Ghadir, by Sheikhs Yusuf Francis Al-Khazin, Bisharah Baz, Francis Al-Khazin and others. On the other hand, a good number of other estates were owned

by the community in the villages of Buq'at Al-Shidyah, Harat Sakhr and Bzummar. A part of these lands was uncultivated at the time when they passed to the community; others were fields of mulberry and olive trees and vineyards.

All these lands were set free from the *miri* and other taxes, which were paid to the state treasury. The deed of Emir Bashir in 1832 stated:

We have on this date, waived, in favor of our dear Armenian patriarch, our claim in the above-mentioned lands, property of the monastery of Bzummar, totalling ninety-four Piasters and one Misriyyah and three-quarters of a Misriyyah. This waive covers *miri* money and all supplementary costs both old and new, distributions wholly or in part, together with silk weighing-scales belonging to these properties in Kisrawan and Zawiya¹⁶²...This is a perpetually extending and unlimited waiver made by us, and it shall bind our survivors in perpetuity, following which neither taxes nor fees will be imposed on the said properties, and the interested parties shall not defray anything, old or new.

Whereupon, we have drawn-up this deed giving notice of waiver of claim, marking same in the agenda of our treasury.¹⁶³

To this deed followed another one in the same year, by which the Emir abolished the tax of thirty-three Piasters which was imposed on the goats, which were the property of the monastery. In this regard, the deed declared:

We have on this date waived in favor of our dear Armenian patriarch our claim on the goats of the convent of Bzummar, the total value of which is thirty-three Piasters. This is an extending and unlimited waive from us, and it shall bind our successors in perpetuity. Henceforth no charges shall be imposed on the goats of the above-mentioned monastery in view of neither the past nor the present. We have submitted this deed to the patriarch as notice for its publication. Responsible governmental officials were notified in this respect and ordered to deduct the cancelled taxes from the agenda of the treasury.¹⁶⁴

Furthermore, in the year 1836, the Emir waived in favor of the community the *miri* taxes of the properties of Bzummar purchased from Yusuf Agha Al-Jawhari and Qassim Al-Arab. These properties were: an

olive grove at Abu-Nkeirah, olive trees at Tahwita and one olive pressing-machine. The deed exempting these properties from taxes stated:

We have on this date waived, in favor of our beloved Armenian patriarch, our title to a claim which constitutes one amount of thirteen Piasters and a quarter and nine silver coins in the above-mentioned properties appearing in the Hameyn tax book. This is a perpetual, extending and unlimited waiver made by us and extending to our survivors in perpetuity. Following this award the referenced properties shall not be subject to taxes or cadastrage, and the parties concerned shall not be liable to anything, old or new...The previous award submitted by us, which awarded the miri taxes and claims concerning the said properties to Ibrahim Agha Al-Jawhari and Qassim Al-Arab, has become null and void and with no effect; it will be the present award that shall prevail. We have ordered that the same be recorded in the agenda of our treasures...¹⁶⁵

Thus, Emir Bashir supported and encouraged the Catholic Armenian community on all levels: moral, political and economic. On one hand this direct protection by the princely family gave the Armenians a feeling of security. Besides, it raised the fame of the community on the whole, and strengthened its ties in Mount Lebanon, resulting in the identification of its interests with the existing political and economic reality of feudal Lebanon. On the other hand, it enabled the cancellation of taxes on the numerous estates of Bzummar, allowing the various sources of income in the community to increase considerably, thus enabling the patriarchate to care for the livelihood of Armenians settling in Kisrawan.

The Armenian community remained grateful to the Shihab family, especially to Emir Bashir, who, when exiled to Istanbul in 1841, had the Armenian community of Istanbul at his and his family's service. "A Catholic Armenian priest from the congregation of the monastery of Bzummar, Simeon Vartabed, a friend of the family, arranged for them a good-looking house in the region of Samatia on the shores of the sea of Marmara."¹⁶⁶ Another famous Armenian, Mihran Bey Rose-Oghlu, the general supervisor of the coinage in Istanbul, was an intimate friend of Bashir. According to Rustum Baz, Emir Bashir offered Mihran Bey the precious gun which he had received as a present from Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte when the latter besieged Acra in 1799.¹⁶⁷ Baz, with whom Emir Bashir had sent his offer to Mihran Bey, writes "...Most probably, Emir

Bashir's offer was a gesture of gratitude for the good things done for him by Mihran Beg...¹⁶⁸

In 1851, when the Emir died in exile, his funeral ceremony was undertaken by the Armenian community in Istanbul. It was so imposingly done that the notables of the Armenian *millet*, after burying the Emir in the Armenian church at Galata, were heard saying: "No Christian has had the privilege of being buried with such veneration since the conquest of Istanbul by the Ottomans."¹⁶⁹

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN ARMENIAN-MARONITE RELATIONS

The settlement of the Armenian Catholic Community in Mount Lebanon coincided with the period when silk trade was the main economic activity in the area. Thus, in discussing the association of the Maronites with Lebanese silk production in the 18th Century, Salibi writes: "...As the foremost Lebanese producers, the Maronites, grew rich on the silk trade, and their economic ascendancy in the country became established."¹⁷⁰ Silk was considered one of the staple products of Lebanon in the mid-19th century. Indeed, those Armenian settlers who had had experience in Aleppo in the silk trade, were considered by the Maronites to be a profitable element from the economic point of view. In this regard the acts of Emir Bashir II exempting the estates of the community from the *miri* tax encouraged the community in the cultivation and trade of silk.

Around their monastery at Kraym, the Armenian Antonine monks possessed several gardens of mulberry trees, on the leaves of which they fed their silk worms. Apraham Arzivian, still a bishop at Kraym, bought in the years 1732, 1733 and 1738 mulberry gardens in Kisrawan, the value of which was estimated at 207 Piasters.¹⁷¹

The Armenian Antonine monks paid special attention to the planting of mulberry trees. On their fourth elective meeting in the monastery of Kraym on August 4, 1749, many decisions were taken, including one that said, "the mulberry trees and vineyards which are planted around the monastery should be cared for and continuously cultivated."

In addition, the meeting unanimously agreed that, "the plantations of mulberry trees should increase and should never be sold."¹⁷²

The records of the convent of Bzummar stated that in the 18th century the Armenian community at Bzummar possessed numerous pieces of land in the villages of Kisrawan. George Robinson, who visited the monastery

on October 15, 1837, wrote: "The income belonging to it is very considerable, and is derived partly from its landed possessions..."¹⁷³

According to the records of the monastery of Bzummar, from 1749 to 1841 the community, under different patriarchs, bought a good number of vineyards and groves of mulberry trees, the value of which amounted to 9,689 Piasters.¹⁷⁴ All these gardens and estates were continuously cultivated and cared for by the community, thus, making the monastery a center which supplied the necessities of the villagers in Kisrawan. In this respect, the archives of Bzummar describe the trade activities which took place between the community and the clients nearby.

In the year 1780 a member of the Khazin family sent a letter to the monastery confirming that he had received one and a half pounds and 300 grams of silk, the price of which was paid by him to the monastery.¹⁷⁵ On March 5 of the year 1803, Shahin 'Eid certified that he had delivered to the monastery the result of his silk for the years 1800 and 1801, weighing 4 pounds and 10 ounces, so as to reel them together with the silk of the monastery; he thanked the authorities for the price which he had received that amounted to 207 and 0.75 Piasters.¹⁷⁶

On August 5, 1803, the community received a request from Yusuf 'Allam, who wished to buy the silk of the monastery of Bzummar at a price one Piaster higher than the price of the silk of the convents of Kraym and Mar Shallita.¹⁷⁷ However, the authorities replied that the silk of the mentioned convents was already sold at 107 Piasters each pound and they had decided to sell that year at a price higher than the usual selling price. They requested the client to inform them if he was still willing to buy at a higher price.¹⁷⁸

This implies that the silk of the monastery of Bzummar was appreciated by the clients for its good quality.

The selling of silk was not the only business of the community; it also owned a small industry of weaving silk and preparing cloth. Thus, in 1792 Yusuf Sim'an Al-Khazin requested the responsible authorities in the monastery to prepare for his family a velvet robe and a silk robe in dark blue, suggesting that the garment of silk-made cloth should be four fingers longer than the ordered size, because it might become shorter after washing.¹⁷⁹ In another letter written in the same year, he acknowledged with thanks the receipt of the cloth and expressed his hope that the monastery would satisfy him in the preparation of the "tantour"¹⁸⁰ also. He

had requested that the agent of the monastery, Bishop Holassian, "explain to the master that the length of the "tantour" should be exactly the ordered length, neither more nor less, and that the upper side should have a silver colour."¹⁸¹

The monastery could also supply flour and wheat to clients, who occasionally expressed their gratitude after the receipt of their request. Thus, Faysal Al-Khazin in his letter to the monastery, said: "...as for the flour, it reached us. We thank you very much and pray God to keep you always a center of help for all."¹⁸² Another request from Dib Al-Hajj to Bishop Holassian acknowledged the need of one and half kilos of wheat for which he said, he was sending his brother Mikhail to collect.¹⁸³

Sometimes, the monastery received goods as a substitute for the money owed. Mussa Shihab, who had borrowed a certain amount of money from the community, in his letter to Patriarch Kupelian in the year 1803 stated that, in order to cover one part of the money which he had borrowed from the community, he was sending to the monastery thirty pounds of olive oil and for the remaining twenty-five Piasters, he would send his silk of the next season.¹⁸⁴ In another letter, a new borrowing of 115 Piasters by Mussa Shihab is acknowledged. This amount was covered by sending to the monastery a certain quantity of olive oil and other necessities.¹⁸⁵ Haykal Al-Khazin, who owed 500 Piasters to the monastery, had submitted a promissory note saying that for the balance of this amount, he would deliver to the convent all his silk produce of the next season.¹⁸⁶

Money-lending was another noteworthy activity of the Catholic Armenian community. In general, money was lent on the basis of a promissory note signed by the receiver, who stated that he would remit the amount after a certain period.

In the year 1737 Apraham Arzivian, still a bishop in the convent of Kraym, assisted the Maronite Patriarch Tubiyya Al-Khazin by lending him an amount of 42 Piasters, which he had borrowed in his turn from another person.¹⁸⁷ But, the Maronite patriarch had difficulties repaying the money in due time. Thereupon, Bishop Arzivian sent a notice to the Maronite patriarch reminding him of his failure to fulfill the promise.¹⁸⁸ The patriarch, offended by the style of Arzivian, replied in a letter and said:

...There is no need for such words...If you have found something bad in us the size of a flea, do not make it as big as a camel... but whether

you want it or not, you are our brother, and we wish you good health. We will never forget your assistance; if men forget it, God will not.¹⁸⁹

On August 11, 1800, the priest Maroun 'Azm borrowed a sum of 1000 Piasters from the monastery of Bzummar for a certain period. In this regard, he had submitted a document which said:

This is to certify that I received from his Holiness, the Armenian Patriarch Gregory, the amount of 1000 Piastres in the name of his Honor Emir Hassan Shihab, the son of the Honorable Qassim Shihab; I did not remit the said amount to the patriarch, because His Honor guaranteed that after his return to the monastery, he would repay it to the patriarch.¹⁹⁰

Another request by Qassim Khalil Al-Khazin to Bishop Holassian said that his partner, Antun, had a debt of 20 Piasters to a certain Ibrahim Mugharbal and 2 Piasters to Hanna Bustani. Therefore, he was requesting the community to close the debt of Antun, promising that he would remit the amount during his visit to the monastery, in a few days.¹⁹¹ In December of the year 1824, Bajan Kazi acknowledged the receipt of 73 Piasters from Bishop Holassian and promised to remit the amount to the monastery after a period of three months.¹⁹²

From the evidence stated above, it can be deduced that the Catholic Armenian monastery at Bzummar was a center of trade activities with inhabitants of the neighboring villages. This indicates that in a short time the community had gathered enough economic potency to be able to supply the requested goods to clients. This further broadened the field of cooperation with the Maronite community, thus introducing economic profit as a new element in their relations, and brought the community into daily touch with the inhabitants of Kisrawan as two distinct Christian Communities.

CONCLUSION

Already at the end of the XV and during the XVI centuries, the Armenians and the Maronites in Aleppo were in good cooperation. Armenians had offered their assistance for the reparation of the Maronite Church, Saint Elias. The Maronites, in their turn, honored the Armenian patriarch as the head of a sister community. But, in the XVII century, this relationship was affected as a result of the developing missionary activities among the native Christians. The Maronites who were assisting the

missionaries in their missionary work facilitated the conversion of Armenians to the Roman Catholic faith to a great extent. Henceforth, the Catholic faith, as a religious bond between the Maronites and the Catholic Armenians, became of paramount importance.

Maronite monasticism, which was reorganized in Mount Lebanon in the XVII century, provided the environment for young Armenians who were coming from Aleppo to find the opportunity to receive religious education and offer their administrative, artistic and intellectual talents for the development of the Maronite Antonine monasteries in their organizational phase. Moreover, in recognition of their capabilities, the Maronite Antonine Congregation assisted these Armenian monks to receive higher religious education in Rome and allowed them to visit European libraries for research purposes, enabling them to receive higher intellectual formation.

Another consequence of this early interaction between the two communities was the encouragement and support offered by the Maronite religious authorities and the Khazin feudal lords. Armenian individuals, including the trainees of the Maronite convent of Qozhayya in Besharreh, were helped. Permission was granted for the Armenians to found their community, the convent of Kraym in Ghosta in 1720 and in 1750 the convent of Bzummar, thus creating a foothold for the Catholic Armenians in Lebanon, which would attract in course of time, other Armenians, who, escaping anti-Catholic persecution perpetrated by the authorities of the Armenian *millet* in Aleppo, would seek refuge within these monasteries under the protection of the Maronites.

It is interesting to note that the acts of donation made by the Khazin feudal lords regarding the above mentioned monasteries and their respective estates do not refer to the Ottoman government as an official authority. The only reference made is to the Maronite patriarch, as the supreme head of the community, and the Khazin lords, who, in their turn, attributed their donations to the Catholic faith of the refugees and their persecution by the Orthodox patriarch and the Ottoman government. This makes us assume that, legislatively and executively speaking, the Maronites in Mount Lebanon in the XVIII century enjoyed a certain freedom which enabled them not only to assist and protect an officially persecuted minority, but moreover, to create favorable economic conditions for its settlement as a community.

The ruling Shihab family and Emir Bashir II especially, by his sympathetic attitude towards the community, encouraged further the Catholic Armenians to settle in great numbers in Lebanon and increased in them the feeling of association with Lebanon. Moreover, the economic assistance of Bashir II towards the community resulted in the increase of the community's landed possessions and material wealth, so that, within a short period, the monastery of Bzummar, with its silk production and supply of wheat flour and money lending, became a center of commerce in the local market, which in its turn promoted the status of the community members not only in the eyes of the Maronites as educated, polite and intelligent, but also as an economically useful element to the prosperity of Mount Lebanon.

No wonder that later, in 1915, thousands of Armenians escaping the genocide in Turkey sought refuge in Lebanon, where they were received with little reservation and found sympathy, due mainly to those early Armenian settlers and particularly the monastery of Bzummar, whose two-century-old activity among the Maronites in Mount Lebanon proved to be a priceless recommendation for the whole Armenian nation.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ This study is an amended version of the author's thesis submitted in June 1971 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History and Archeology at the American University of Beirut.
- ² The author feels a deep sense of gratitude towards those who helped him in writing this article and, earlier, the thesis upon which this article is based, especially Professor Kamal S. Salibi, the thesis adviser, Professors M. Buheiry, D. Gordon, Z. Zeine (members of the Committee), the then Fathers-Superior of the monasteries of Bzummar and Luwayzeh, who so generously allowed the author to make full use of the documents found in their respective archives, as well as the staff of the Jafet Library of the American University of Beirut, whose cooperation also played an important role in the achievement of this study.
- ³ These were commercial concessions granted by the Ottoman Empire to European powers. These concessions evolved in time to include political aspects.
- ⁴ Avedis K. Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities In Syria Under Ottoman Dominion* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 48.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Fr. Nerses Aginian, "Hay Gyanke Halebi Mech" (Armenian Life In Aleppo) *Hantes Amsorya*, III-VI (March-June 1933), pp. 307-8.
- ⁷ In Aleppo the Armenian, Maronite and Greek churches were found in the same court. The Italian traveler Pietro Della Valle, who visited Aleppo in August 1625, also mentions in his notes that the Armenian churches of the Holy Forty Martyrs, which 'was the largest among

- the others and the most beautiful', the Holy Virgin, the Maronite church of St. Elias and the Greek church of St. Nicholas were located in the same court (Antoine Rabbath, *Documents Inédits Pour Servir A l'Histoire Du Christianisme En Orient*, I (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1905), p. 388).
- ⁸ Archb. Ardavazt Surmeyan, *Badmutyun Halebi Hayots III (1355-1908)* (History Of The Armenians Of Aleppo) (Paris: Imprimerie Araxes, 1950), p. 33.
- ⁹ Archb. Ardavazt Surmeyan, *Tsutsag Hayeren Tserakrats Halebi Surp Karasun Mangunk Yegeghetsvo Yev Masnavorats* (List Of Manuscripts Of The Holy Forty Martyrs' Church Of Aleppo And Of Individual Collectors), Vol. I (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1935), p. 151 A.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Aginian, "Hay", p. 307.
- ¹² Ibid. p. 318.
- ¹³ Surmeyan, *Badmutyun*, p. 518.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 532.
- ¹⁵ Rabbath, p. 398.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 90.
- ¹⁷ Bulos Mass'ad and Nassib Al-Khazin, *Al-Usul Al-Tarikhiyya*, III (The Historic Roots) (Beirut: Samya Press, 1958), pp. 50-51.
- ¹⁸ Yusuf K. Dagher, *Batarikat Al-Mawarinah* (The Patriarchs Of The Maronites) (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1957), p. 62.
- ¹⁹ Vartan Tekeyan, *Le Patriarcat Arménien Catholique De Cilicie Au Temps De Gregoire Pierre VI (1812-1840)* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Arménienne Catholique, 1954), p. 140.
- ²⁰ George Young, *Corps De Droit Ottoman*, II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 103.
- ²¹ Tekeyan, p. 15.
- ²² Mesrob Terzian, *Le Patriarcat De Cilicie Et Les Arméniens Catholiques* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie La Photo-Press, 1955), p. 25.
- ²³ Ibid., p. 15.
- ²⁴ Pierre Raphael, *Le Role Des Maronites Dans Le Retour Des Eglises Orientales* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Khalifé, 1935), p. 7.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 13.
- ²⁶ Rabbath, p. 510.
- ²⁷ Surmeyan, *Badmutyun*, p. 525.
- ²⁸ Fr. Butros Ghaleb, *Sadikah Wa Muhamiah* (Friend And Defender) (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1924), p. 314.
- ²⁹ Richard Robert Madden, *The Turkish Empire In Its Relation With Christianity And Civilization*, 2, (London: T. Cautely Newby, 1862), p. 143.
- ³⁰ Tekeyan, pp. 48-49.
- ³¹ Charlie-Roux, *France Et Chrétiens d'Orient* (Paris: Flammarion, 1939), p. 301.
- ³² Laurent de Saint-Aignan, *Syrie, Egypt Et Isthme De Suez* (Paris: C. Dillet, 1868), p. 87.
- ³³ Raphael, p. 34.
- ³⁴ Bulos Qar'ali, *Al-La'ali Fi Hayat Al-Mutran 'Abdallah Qar'ali* (The Pearls In The Life Of The Prelate Abdallah Qar'ali) (Beit-Shabab, Lebanon: Imprimerie 'Ilm, 1932), p. 58.
- ³⁵ 'Qadisha' is a Syriac word which means 'holy'.
- ³⁶ Qar'ali, *Al-La'ali*, pp. 64-66.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 75.

³⁸ Ya'qub Arutin was a member of the Arutin family, which gave three bishops to the Maronite community in Aleppo: Arsen Shukry held the episcopal seat of the Maronite community in Aleppo in 1762-1786; Bulos Arutin held the same seat in 1829-1851; and Bulos Hakim Arutin held the bishopric of Aleppo in 1885-1888. Moreover, Bishop Bulos Arutin was nominated in 1829 as director of the Maronite College of 'Ain Waraqaq, where theology, and philosophy, as well as the Arabic, Latin and Syriac languages were taught. Yuhanna Murad, another descendant of the Arutin family, was named by the Maronite patriarch Yuhanna Al-Hajj (1890-1898) as bishop of the diocese of Baalbeck in 1892 (Qar'ali, *Al La'ali*, La Patrie Press: Cairo, 1950, pp. 214-222).

³⁹ Father Fahed Butros, *Tarikh Al-Rahbaniyya Al-Lubnaniyya* (History Of The Lebanese Congregation) III (Junieh: Krzym, 1965), p. 12. The monastery of Mar Antunyus Qozhayya is located in northern Lebanon, in the Qadisha Valley, a few miles away from the monastery of Mar Elisha. The name 'Qozhayya' has Syriac origins meaning 'the treasure of life'. In Arabic, it is translated as 'kanz al-hayat'. Jones Bliss describes this as follows: "the interest of Qozhayya centers in a cave, not far from the convent, which pierces far into the mountain above. Here, so runs the legend, once slept Saint Anthony himself, when he came from Egypt to visit the Lebanon hermits. Hence to this convent and cave are brought the "possessed" of all creeds, including Moslems and Druzes, that Saint Anthony may drive out the evil spirit" (Frederick Jones Bliss, *The Religions Of Modern Syria And Palestine* (Scribner Press: New York, 1912), p. 121).

⁴⁰ See the records of the monastery of Luwayzeh.

⁴¹ Louis Blaybil, *Tarikh Al-Rahbaniyya Al-Lubnaniyya Al-Maruniyya* (History Of the Lebanese Maronite Congregation) (Egypt: Yusuf Kewa, 1924), p. 287.

⁴² Farhat Jermanos, 'Tarikh 'Al-Rahbaniyya' (History Of The Congregation), manuscript held in the monastery of Luwayzeh, p. 24.

⁴³ Jermanos, p. 40.

⁴⁴ Butros, pp. 30-31.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁶ Toma Boudy, *Collections*, p. 138, N° 192 quoted by Butros, pp. 381-82.

⁴⁷ Butros, p. 82.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 81.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 130.

⁵² Louis Sheikho, *Al-Makhtoutat Al-Arabia Li-Kitabat Al-Nasraniyya* (The Arabic Manuscripts For Christian Writings) (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1924), p. 28.

⁵³ The 19th oecumenical Council, which opened at Trent, Italy, on December 13, 1545, and closed there on December 4, 1563, having held 25 sessions. The Council's objective was the order and clarification of Catholic doctrine, and legislation for a thorough reform of the Church.

⁵⁴ Blaybil, p. 422. In his position as the head of the central library, Sa'ati should have had, in addition to the Arabic, Syriac and Latin languages, a detailed knowledge of the contents of the documents in the monastery, which were useful for writing about Lebanon. For

example, the priest Augustin Zindeh of the Maronite monastery in Rome sent a letter to the Abbot-General in Lebanon in order "to ask Butros Sa'ati to send him documents and inscriptions for the realization of this huge and difficult work" of writing the 'history of Lebanon'; Bulos Mass'ad, *Al-Zikra Fi Hayat Al-Mutran Jermanos Farhat* (In Memory Of The Life Of The Prelate Jermanos Farhat) (Junieh, Lebanon: Al-Mursilin al-Lubnaniyyin, 1934), p. 73.

⁵⁵ Blaybil, p. 422.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 390-392.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 393.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 422.

⁵⁹ According to Blaybil, pp. 405-06, the monastery of Luwayzeh was the seat of the director of the Lebanese Maronite Congregation in 1725-68. Moreover, it was considered, due to its secure geographic position, as the best place to establish a library, where old manuscripts could be kept.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 406.

⁶¹ Sheikho, *Al-Makhtoutat*, pp. 63-64.

⁶² Bishop Yusuf Debs, *Mukhtasar Tarikh Suriyya* (Abridged History Of Syria) (Beirut: Maronite Press, 1907), p. 328.

⁶³ Tannus Mansur Hattuni, *Nabza Tarikhiyya Fil Mukata'at Al-Kisrawaniyya* (A Historic Overview On The Regions Of Kisrawan) (Beirut, 1956), p. 134.

⁶⁴ Maghakia Ormanian, *Azkabadum* (National History), II (Beirut, Sevan Press, 1960), Cols. 2715.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Raphael, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Jermanos, p. 21.

⁶⁸ Butros, p. 35.

⁶⁹ Archives of the Armenian Antonine Monks, Box 26, N° 11, monastery of Bzummar; Khatchik Atanassian, *Araham-Bedros I Ardzivian Gatoghigos* (Catholicos Araham-Bedros I Arzivian) (Beirut: Armenian Catholic Press, 1959), p. 82.

⁷⁰ According to Kamal Salibi, in the years 1473-1495 a clash took place between the Jacobites and the Maronites in Jubbat Besharreh (Kisrawan). The village headman of Besharreh, Muqaddam Abd-Al-Mon'eim Ayyub, who took a hostile attitude toward the increasing authority of the patriarch, began to support the Jacobites by every means. But the Maronites, grouping around their patriarch, stood in opposition against the Muqaddam. The events developed into such a critical situation that the Muqaddam invited Muslim troops to subdue the inhabitants of Ehden. As a result, a battle took place which ended in the defeat of the Muslim troops and the weakening of Muqaddam's position. The Muqaddam was no longer able to protect the Jacobites, who out of fear of the Maronites, began to migrate from Besharreh (Kamal S. Salibi, "Al-Mawarina" (The Maronites) *Al-Nahar* (supplement), N° 40 (January, 1970), pp. 21-22).

⁷¹ Fr. Isahag Srabian, "Himnargutyun Andonian Miapanutyun" (The Founding Of The Armenian Antonine Congregation) *Hantes Amsorya*, IX (September, XVI, 1902), p. 289.

⁷² Hattuni, p. 110.

⁷³ Butros, p. 36.

- ⁷⁴ Raphael, p. 26.
- ⁷⁵ Minas died in Aleppo and Antun replaced him as monk (Hattuni, p. 110).
- ⁷⁶ Archives of the Armenian Antonine monks, Box 26 11° 2; Hattuni, p. 124; Butros, p. 36.
- ⁷⁷ Archives of the Armenian Antonine monks, Box N° 10.
- ⁷⁸ Archives of the Monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 43; Srabian, "Himnargutyun," p. 291.
- ⁷⁹ Ibrahim Aouad, *Le Droit Privé Des Maronites Aux Temps Des Emir Shihab* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, 1933), p. 90.
- ⁸⁰ Archives of the Antonine Armenian Monks, Monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 10; Chahin Al-Khazin, "Awkaf Al-Ailat Al-Khaziniyya A'la Al-Tawaif Al-Laji'at Ila Lubnan" (The Estates Of The Khazin Families At The Refugee Sects In Lebanon) *Al-Machriq*, 4th year, XXI (Nov. 1901), p. 978; Appendix A.
- ⁸¹ Patriarch from 1756-1766.
- ⁸² Emir Mulhim Shihab wrote a letter in 1760 to the Armenian monks of the convent of Beit Khashbo, and expressed his good wishes and assured them of his personal protection against any person who created the slightest difficulty to them (Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1832); Appendix B.
- ⁸³ Pertaining to the taxes paid to the governor/emir.
- ⁸⁴ Louis Sheikho, "Taifat Al-Arman Catholic," *Al-Machriq*, II (January 1900), p. 151.
- ⁸⁵ Atanassian, *Apraham*, pp. 56-7.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- ⁹⁰ Raphael, p. 36.
- ⁹¹ Atanassian, *Apraham*, pp. 95-6.
- ⁹² Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 122, year (1679-1749).
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, Box N° 153-170 year (1739).
- ⁹⁴ Salibi, "Al-Mawarina," p. 35.
- ⁹⁵ In 1742, after his election as the first Catholic Armenian patriarch, when Arzivian went to Rome for the confirmation of his election from the Pope, Monseigneur Yusuf Sim'an Al-Sim'ani recommended him to the religious authorities of Rome, because, "he knew him personally when he was in Mount Lebanon" (Atanassian, *Apraham*, p. 205).
- ⁹⁶ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 219.
- ⁹⁷ Gregoire Hindiyye, "Al-Arman Al-Catholic Fi Lubnan" (The Catholic Armenians In Lebanon) *Al-Majallat Al-Batriakiyya*, 5th year, I, (15 January 1930), pp. 23-24.
- ⁹⁸ Raphael, p. 40.
- ⁹⁹ Terzian, p. 74; Appendix C.
- ¹⁰⁰ Appendix D.
- ¹⁰¹ Archives of the Monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 34 (year 1740-1742).
- ¹⁰² Atanassian, *Apraham*, p. 337.
- ¹⁰³ Butros, p. 38.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁵ *Der*, short for *Derhayr*, title given to the married Armenian priest.

- ¹⁰⁶ Archives of the Armenian Antonine Monks, Monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 26; Srabian, "Himmargutyun," p. 292.
- ¹⁰⁷ Blaybil, p. 337.
- ¹⁰⁸ Raphael, p. 41.
- ¹⁰⁹ George Robinson, *Travels In Palestine And Syria, Vol. II, Syria* (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1837), pp. 55-56.
- ¹¹⁰ Fr. Isahag Srabian, "Herkumen" (Refutation) *Hantes Amsorya*, XI (1906), pp. 349-351.
- ¹¹¹ Bzummar is located in Middle Kisrawan, 950 meters above sea level on the top of a mountain looking to the bay of Junieh. On the West of Bzummar are the villages of Harissa, Dar'oun and Ghosta; on its east the villages of Raifoun and Ashqut, all inhabited by Maronites.
- ¹¹² Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 2; Al-Khazin, "Awkaf," pp. 974-977.
- ¹¹³ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁴ Terzian, p. 93.
- ¹¹⁵ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box N° 26, year (1753)
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁷ Antreas Alexandrian, *Hamarod Badmutyun Yergodasan Gatoghigosats Giligyo* (A Concise History Of Twelve Patriarchs Of Cilicia) (Venice, 1906), p. 22.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 27.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid.
- ¹²⁰ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1753).
- ¹²¹ Alexandrian, p. 32.
- ¹²² Despite the difficult circumstances, Patriarch Basilus succeeded in enlarging the estates of the patriarchate. He bought new lands in the neighboring villages of Mazra'a, Ashqut and Zibdin. Eight mulberry fields were bought in the village of Ghadir and a large piece of land in Junieh in 1809 from Ya'qub Haykal at 1240 Piastres. Patriarch Basilus also built a new kitchen, a reading room and a drawing room in the monastery (Alexandrian, p. 32).
- ¹²³ Raphael, p. 51.
- ¹²⁴ Mesrob Terzian, *The Armenian Monastery of Bzummar* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1949), p. 51.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 49-50.
- ¹²⁶ According to Pierre Dib, the request for confirmation of the Maronite Patriarch Yusuf Hobeish was made in the year 1823 by the Armenian Antonine monk Basilus Dursun from the convent of Kraym. Dursun went to Rome especially for this purpose and fulfilled his mission successfully, notwithstanding the fact that Patriarch Hobeish was less than the canonical age 40 required for such a position (Pierre Dib, *Histoire De l'Église Maronite* (Beyrouth: La Sagesse éditions, 1962) I, p. 223).
- ¹²⁷ Archives of Patriarch Hanna Helou, N° 28, as quoted by Pierre Raphael, pp. 38n.2-39.
- ¹²⁸ Alexandrian, p. 39.
- ¹²⁹ To be discussed later in this work.
- ¹³⁰ Alexandrian, p. 40.
- ¹³¹ Tekeyan, p. 156.
- ¹³² Robinson, II, p. 52.

¹³³ In Aintab in 1780, there were only twenty Catholic Armenian families with one Catholic priest serving the small community in secrecy, because of fear of persecution. Kilis had the same number of Catholics with a missionary priest sent by the curate of Aleppo. Damascus had a resident curate of its own (Terzian, p. 174).

¹³⁴ Raymond Janin, *Les Eglises Orientales Et Les Rites Orientaux* (Paris: Imprimeur J. André, 1922), p. 473-474.

¹³⁵ Born in 1720 in Aleppo, Hindiyyah received her religious education from the Jesuits. Still a child, she revealed a mystic character. Later, on settling in Lebanon, she began to have visions of supernatural images during one of which a revelation of Jesus Christ was reported. Through these visions, she won the attention of the Maronites, who became very curious and enthusiastic about her, believing that she was possessed by a divine power. Gradually, she became famous and popular and was granted permission from the Maronite patriarch Sim'an Aouad to organize a congregation for nuns in the name of "Sacred Heart" at Bkerkeh. However, besides popular esteem, Hindiyyah also enjoyed the support of the governor of Lebanon, Emir Mulhim Shihab (1732-1754). But the Jesuits, who had previously patronized the "Holy Hindiyyah," now accused her of superstition and false vision and blamed the patriarch for supporting her. They dispatched a report to the Pope who, in a letter dated January 4, 1752, accused the patriarch of being a party in an affair so important without the consultation of Rome. Thus, he gave orders to suppress the congregation of "Sacred Heart" and transfer Hindiyyah to another monastery (Dib, p. 197).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 202-207.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 213.

¹⁴⁰ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1800).

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1819).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Emir Bashir's father, Qassim Shihab, embraced Christianity and became Maronite in the year 1767 in the village of Ghazir, before the birth of his son Bashir.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., XXVI; Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History Of Lebanon* (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 3rd ed., 1968), p. 19.

¹⁴⁸ Butros F. Sfeir, *Al-Amir Bashir Al-Shihabi* (Emir Bashir Al-Sihabi) (Beirut: Dar Al-Tab'a Wal Nashr Al-Lubnaniyya, 1950), p. 31.

¹⁴⁹ This fact induced Husn Jahan to consider Bishop Holassian as an intimate clergyman and a sincere friend to her family. Her beautiful letters written to him express deep affection and care for his good health as if he was a member of the family.

¹⁵⁰ Sfeir, p. 31.

¹⁵¹ Appendix E.

¹⁵² Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1812-13).

¹⁵³ Appendix F.

¹⁵⁴ Tekeyan, p. 33

- ¹⁵⁵ Appendix G.
- ¹⁵⁶ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1841).
- ¹⁵⁷ Appendix H.
- ¹⁵⁸ According to the archives of the Maronite patriarchate at Bkerkeh, in 1832 Patriarch Yusuf Hobeish was receiving confidential instructions from the Maronite Bishop of Aleppo, Bulos Arutin, on the condition of the Turkish army and the Druzes who were its allies, and was passing these instructions to Emir Bashir, who in his turn was submitting them to Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt. Thus, according to Bulos Qar'ali, a letter written in 1832 by Antun Charabati (the spiritual guide of Emir Bashir) to Patriarch Yusuf Hobeish, said: "...when Qubrusly arrived, we were in the house of Bishop Maximos, who had invited us. When we returned, his Honor let us know that he had already sent his answer to your Happiness. We request you to send us as early as possible the reply which comes from Aleppo..." (Anton Catafago, *Historical Documents On The Conquest Of Ibrahim Pasha Of Egypt In Palestine, Lebanon And Syria (1831-1841)*, trans. by Bulos Qar'ali, ed. (Harissa, Lebanon: Saint Paul Publishing House, 1937), p. 3); "The Secret Letters Received By Patriarch Yusuf Hobeish" *Al-Majallat Al-Batriakiyya* IX (December, 1928), p. 595.
- ¹⁵⁹ Appendix I.
- ¹⁶⁰ Robinson, p. 53.
- ¹⁶¹ Salibi, *Modern History*, p. 23.
- ¹⁶² Province in Northern Lebanon.
- ¹⁶³ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1832).
- ¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Box year (1832-1836).
- ¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Box year (1836).
- ¹⁶⁶ "Muzakkarat Rustum Baz" (Memoirs of Rustum Baz) *Awraq Lubnaniyya*, VIII (August 1955), p. 372.
- ¹⁶⁷ "Muzakkarat," *Awraq Lubnaniyya*, III (March 1955), pp. 105-8.
- ¹⁶⁸ "Muzakkarat," *Awraq Lubnaniyya*, XII (December 1955), p. 539.
- ¹⁶⁹ "Muzakkarat," *Awraq Lubnaniyya*, I (January 1955), p. 18.
- ¹⁷⁰ Salibi, *Modern History*, p. 12.
- ¹⁷¹ Atanassian, p. 342.
- ¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 340.
- ¹⁷³ Robinson, p. 53.
- ¹⁷⁴ Inscriptions of the monastery of Bzummar.
- ¹⁷⁵ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1780).
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Box year (1802).
- ¹⁷⁷ A Maronite convent, located near the monastery of Bzummar.
- ¹⁷⁸ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1812-1813).
- ¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Box year (1792-1841).
- ¹⁸⁰ "Tantour" was the name of a head-dress used mainly by married women which had conical form and was decorated with precious stones. Its height and material were proportional to the social rank and wealth of the person who wore it. The "tantour" used by a princess could have a height of 70 cm. and be decorated with gold and sometimes with diamonds and pearls. In Lebanon in the 18th century, the "tantour" was used equally by the Maronites, Druzes and Moslems (Maurice Chehab, "Le Costume Au Liban," *Bulletin Du Musee De*

Bevrouth, VI (1942-1943), pp. 71-72). George Robinson, who visited Lebanon in 1837, noticed the Druze females who wore "that singular ornament of the head, called the *Tantour*, which is a conical tube, about eighteen inches long, of silver, or copper silvered slightly over, according to the wealth of the wearer, and ornamented with a variety of patterns" (Robinson, p. 10).

¹⁸¹ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1792-1841).

¹⁸² Ibid., Box year (1792-1841).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Archives of the monastery of Bzummar, Box year (1803).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., Box year (1824).

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., Box N° 299.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., Box year (1800).

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Box year (1792-1841).

¹⁹² Ibid.

**ՀԱՅ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿԷՒՄԱՐՈՆԻՔ ՓՈԽՅԱՐԱԲԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ
ԼԵՆԱԼԻԲԱՆԱՆԻ ՄԷՋ՝ 1720-1840
(Ամփոփում)**

ՓԱՆՈՍ ՃԵՐԱՆԵԱՆ

Հեղինակը հիմնուելով Հայ եւ մարոնիթ կրօնականներուն կողմէ հրատարակուած գրականութեան, Հայ Կաթողիկէ Զմեառու վանքի եւ մարոնիթ Լուսյգէի վանքի արխիւներուն ու Անտոնեաններու Հայ Միաբանութեան արխիւային ծիւթերուն վրայ կը շարադրէ Հայ Կաթողիկէ միաբանութեան մը Լեոնայիրանան հաստատուելու, չըջապատին հետ իր ունեցած յարաբերութեան եւ Լեոնայիրանանի կառավարիչ էմիր Պեշիր Բ. ի հետ անոր ունեցած կապերու 1720-1840ի պատմութիւնը:

Հեղինակը կը նշէ թէ ժէ. դարէն սկսեալ կաթողիկէ միաբանները մուտք կը գործեն Միջին Արեւելք եւ առաջին հերթին կը շփուին մարոնիթ համայնքին հետ: Հալչպի մէջ անոնց տարած դաւանափոխական աշխատանքը դժգոհանքի ալիք կը յառաջացնէ Հայ Առաքելական Եկեղեցիին մօտ, որ Հայածանքի կը ձեռնարկէ դաւանափոխ հայերու դէմ: Մարոնիթ եկեղեցին ասպնջականութիւն կը շնորհէ խումբ մը դաւանափոխ հալչպահայերու, որոնք Լեոնայիրանանի մարոնիթ զանազան դպրեմանքերու մէջ կրօնական ուսման եւ միաբանական կեանքի կը հետեւին:

Այս միաբաններու թիւի մեծացումը կը մղէ զիրենք կաթողիկէ միաբանական ուխտ մը հիմնելու գաղափարին: Մարոնիթ պատրիարքին համաձայնութեամբ անոնք կը հիմնեն Անտոնեան Հայկական Միաբանական Ուխտը՝ Քրէյմի վանք, 1720ին, ուր կ'ապաստանի Հայ կաթողիկէ Արրահամ Արծիւեան Եպիսկոպոսը: Հուսկ, միաբանութիւնը կ'որոշէ հիմնել աւելի ընդարձակ վանք մը, որ կ'իրականանայ Լեոնայիրանանի առատատէր Խազէն ընտանիքին նուիրատուութեամբ, մարոնիթ պատրիարքի արտօնութեամբ եւ Հոռմի Պապի համաձայնութեամբ:

1749ին կը հիմնուի Զմեառու վանքը, որ մեծ դեր կը խաղայ Հայ Կաթողիկէ Հաւաքականութեան կազմակերպչական գործին մէջ:

Title-Deed (Hujja)
Of Beit Khashbo

Tubliyya Butros, Patriarch of Antioch and all the Orient.

The present delivery and disposal have been effected to the benefit of our dear sons, the Catholic Armenian monks of the convent of Kraym, and, in witness of our agreement and consent to the said delivery, we have set our hands and seal hereto as appearing above.

No one shall oppose them in their dispositions, and let them be reassured on all sides, and let them administer the sites mentioned in this document, and the same shall serve as a proof in their hands.

Bishop Yusuf Bishop Jibra'il Mubarak Bishop Bishop
Antun Bishop of Beirut Jermanos Bishop of Ba'albeck Yuhanna Yusuf

The reason for drawing up the present Deed is that we have given and bequeathed to the Catholic Armenian Fathers, the monks of the convent of Kraym, the farm of Beit-Khashbow for the purpose of making a convent out of it, with all the matter and air known there-in and pertaining thereto. Also, we have given them the vineyard of Dar'un with the water and air known therein and pertaining thereto, so that the said farm be in their possession. We have disposed of the said sites with the intention of making them the recipients' property, which they can dispose of at will as an unsaleable waqf. We shall not oppose them as regards the regulation of the said sites throughout the seasons, the institution of partners, and the renewal of moneys. We shall not let anyone oppose them, be it a son or cousin of ours, or any other person. They shall enjoy our safeguard and protection, and we shall collect from them taxes as due only and nothing else. And when the said sites will be cadastrated by the Ruler, the same shall be cadastrated to them. We have written the present Deed for retention of the same by them, and we have guaranteed to them all the law-suits from all points of view.

May we and our fathers be remembered in the Holy Masses and prayers taking place in the said convent. We shall not alter any of the conditions herein.

Made on the Twelfth day of April, 1760.

Milan al-Khazin, Miha'il al-Khazin, Bisharah al-Khazin, Ghazan al-Khazin

APPENDIX C

[LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FROM THE MARONITE HIERARCHY
IN FAVOR OF MONSEIGNOR APRAHAM]

Beatissimo Padre,

Noi sottoscritti Giuseppe Patriarca Antiocheno e Prelati Maroniti umilissimi servi di Vostra Santità prostrati con tutto ossequio e sommissione a' suoi piedi l'esponiamo che Mons. Abraham vescovo della Nazione Armena Cattolica in Aleppo, dopo aver patite gravi persecuzioni dai governanti per istigazione delli armeni eretici e loro Patriarca Constantinopolitano, e dopo aver sofferti esgili, carceri, inguirie, battiture e dispendii, piu volte, liberatosi per grazia di Dio si è rifugiato nel Monte Libano tra di noi nella provincia di Chesroano, ove ha eretto un monastero per i suoi religiosi sotto la regola di S. Antonio; e per 20 anni dimorando con noi non ha cessato di combattere a pro della S. Fide. Chiamato poi ad Aleppo dalli cattolici armeni, un anno fà, fa da essi eletto per loro Patriarca coll' assistenza di tre loro vescovi segnalati nella professione della fede orthodoxa. Condiscese egli alle loro suppliche: perciò coll'imposizione delle mani la consecrarono Patriarca della Sede dei cattolici armeni di Cilicia col nome di Pietro.

Bramando ora di essere decorato da Vostra Santità col Pallio della potestà patriarcale, anche con nostra testimonianza, attestiamo essere esso di fede orthodoxa, supplichiamo Vostra Santità, O Padre Beatissimo, a fregiarlo col Pallio della piena autorità e confermazione, preso dai corpi de' SS. Apostoli Pietro e Paoplo, dalle mani del Vicario di Gesu Christo. Speriamo e chiediamo la grazia della Benedizione Sua Apostolica per noi e per l'eletto Patriarca, e augurando a Vostra Santità lunga vita e prosperità di nuovo prostrati con tutta umiltà baciamo i suoi piedi.

Monte Libano lo Settembre 1741

di Vostra Santità
umilissimi servi

Giuseppe Pietro Gazeno Patriarca d'Antiochia
Simone Evodio Arcivescovo di Damasco
Elia vescovo di Arca
Attalla vescovo di Berito
Stefano vescovo di Batri
Filippo vescovo di Bibli
Giovanni vescovo di Laodicea
Ignatio arcivescovo di Tiro
Michele vescovo di Baneade
Gabriele vescovo di Acri
Tobia arcivescovo di Cipro.

Source: Mesrob Terzian, *Le Patriarcat De Cilicie Et Les Armèniens Catholiques (1740-1812)* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie La Photo-Pres), 1955, p. 74.

[LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION OF THE MARONITE HIERARCHY IN
FAVOUR OF MONSEIGNOR APRAHAM]

Holy Father,

We, the undersigned, Joseph Patriarch of Antioch and the humble servants of your Holy authority, the Maronite prelates, certify herewith, that the most honorable Bishop Apraham of the Catholic Armenian Community in Aleppo, after being persecuted by the government officials, the Orthodox Armenians and their patriarch in Constantinople, and after imprisonment, exile and blame, was finally rescued by seeking refuge among us in the Mount Lebanon, in the district of Kisrawan, where he founded a monastery for his monks after the decrees of Saint Antony. Being among us for twenty years, he did not cease to struggle for the faith. Last year, the Catholic Armenians in Aleppo elected him patriarch of Cilicia.

Now, regarding his request for the pallium from your Holiness, we certify that he is an ardent Catholic and beseech you to bestow on him the Pallium and confirm him in the patriarchal seat.

Soliciting the grace of your benediction for us and for the newly elected patriarch and wishing long life to your Holiness, we once again proscript humbly and offer our deepest thanks.

Mount Lebanon, September 10, 1741.

The Humble servants of your
Holiness

Yusuf Butros Khazin, Patriarch of Antioch
Sim'an Aouad, Archbishop of Damascus
Elias, Bishop of Arca
Atallah, Bishop of Beirut
Istiphan, Bishop of Batrun
Bulos, Bishop of Byblos
Yuhanna, Bishop of Lattakia
Ighnatius, Archbishop of Tyre
Mikhail, Bishop of Banias
Jibrail, Bishop of Acra
Tubiyya, Archbishop of Cyprus

APPENDIX D
[RECOMMENDATION OF THE ALEPPINE MONKS OF
THE MONASTERY OF LUWAYZEH]

Eminentissimi e Reverendissimi Signori,

Esponiamo alle VV. EE. dopo il bacio della sagra porpora che la cattolici armeni hanno spontaneamente eletto per loro Patriarca il Reverendissimo Monsignore Abraham Archivescovo d'Aleppo, insigne nella professione della cattolica fede, per la quale ha combattuto virilmente e sofferto carceri, esigli et angustie gravissime fin al di d'oggi. Supplica ora la benignità delle VV. EE. ad impetrargli dalla Santità del Sommo Pontefice la confermazione nella dignità patriarcale, della quale si è reso ben meritevole: accio munito della Apostolica Benedizione e conferma nel grado, a cui è stato chiamato, possa sempre piu dilatare la vera fede. Tanto noi attestiamo alle VV. EE. circa la probità et i meriti di questo prelado, stanteche per spazio di 20 anni ha dimorato tra di noi in queste parti. Percio speriamo che le VV. EE. esaudiranno i nostri voti in di lui favore, e pregandole a compartire ancora a noi la loro S. Benedizione, bacciamo diratamente la s. porpora.

Dal Monastero nostro di S. Maria di Lovaize
15 Settembre 1741

Delle Vostre Eminenze umilissimi servi
Arsenio Domenico, Vicario Generale
Michele Scander, 1° Definitore
Abdalla Habacuc, 2° Definitore
Benedetto Hobaid, 3° Definitore
Tomaso Rescalla, 4° Definitore

Source: Mesrob Terzian, *Le Patriarcat De Cilicie Et Les Arméniens Catholiques (1740-1812)* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie La Photo-Pres), 1955, pp. 75-6.

Most respectful and honorable Sirs,

We, hereby certify to your most respected authorities that the Catholic Armenians elected as their patriarch, the reverend Monseignor Apraham Archbishop of Aleppo, well recognized for his Catholic faith, for which he ardently struggled and bore with patience imprisonment, exile, and blame. Now, he requests that you solicit from his Holiness the Pope, his confirmation in the patriarchal dignity, which he deserves fully. Thus, armed by apostolic benediction and confirmed in his degree, he will be enabled to propagate further the true faith. We duly testify to the merits of this prelate, who has been with us for twenty years. We hope that you will accept our votes in favour of Patriarch Apraham and beseech once more your benediction.

Monastery of Luwayzeh,
September 15, 1741

Your humble servants
Arsenios Dominica
Abdallah Habacuc
Mikhail Iskandar
Benedetto Hobaid
Tuma Rizkallah

حفظ الى الجليل الدير البطريركي و خريف اربوس المذبح و حافظة اربوس

اولا من زيد الاسواق لروبا كنج على كل خبير و عافية الباشا لثوره
 السؤال في صحيح اخرج كونه في اشارة الاشارة و بعد كنج
 لورم لنا كتابين تركيه و فيه اربع فاصول في اربوس و بعد اربوس
 لنا اباهم و يكون في اربوس في اربوس في اربوس في اربوس
 هذه اللفه و نرفه كنج و نرفه كنج و نرفه كنج
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Source: Monastery Of Bzummar, Box year 1835.

To our beloved and honorable Patriarch Gregory, may God preserve him.

In the first instance we wish to express our heartiest wishes that you are well. The motive for our letter is to enquire about your health; we hope you are very well. Thereafter, we wish to inform you that we are in need of two books in Turkish, to be furnished to us either by sale or on loan. Please arrange to send the same to us, and let them be different in form in order for us to acquire knowledge of this language, and we wish that the explanations they contain be set up according to the rules of the language.

In closing, we hope that you will always let us have news regarding your health and anything you require.

Emir Bashir Shihab

22 Th. 1251

حفظ المجد المحترم
 كبطران خريستوس
 المذبح والحرث
 نب الاثوان كقوله الامام اخباركم السارة على كل خير وعافتم ايها
 لخيرها افتقارنا لكم واستخاش في حال محسنكم انما انتم يكون
 وجودكم بزيد الياضه والهدال من نحونا فاننا وبعدهم
 منكم الملاح المنان حينه زعمد حايرون بفاية ارفاهيه
 والاسرار لا جرم بدمها زخمكوا الايمان ولا يزال
 في احوالكم وافتقارنا لكم لزم بحسنكم وديما لثمنوا
 اخباركم السارة بمولاه الرحمه انجيله وبعدهم
 حسان

Source: Monastery Of Bzummar, Box year 1834.

To our beloved and honorable Patriarch Gregorios, may he remain safe.

Heartiest greetings and fervent hopes to hear comforting news that all is well with you.

The motive for writing this letter is to have your news and enquire about your health, which we hope is excellent. For our part, many thanks and great gratitude to the Lord; we live in the generosity of the Gracious almighty. At this date, we are extremely well and most cheerful, and hope you are so too. Be reassured. Now, it is for the sake of asking for your news and enquiring about your situation that we found it expedient to write to you. Always keep us informed of your good news and we send our prayers.

Date 27 ch. 250 [1834]

Husn Jahan

جناب حضرة المحب الخديوي
 ابراهيم غريغوريوس
 راجوسا

بحسب المحبة والاشواق انه تباركنا صدر امرنا بتوزيع اسرنا الى فقراء
 فحسنا فخرنا بامرنا الفخرى والبلغ المرقوم من يد
 المطر العتيق لنبقى بحسب بصله ليدكر توزعوه على فقراء
 المحاجين بالاسواق تملوك والامنعوا علىكم راجوسا
 ورحمنا ملايا جمع
 محاسن

Source: Monastery Of Bzummar, Box year 1838.

To our beloved and honorable Patriarch Gregorios, may he remain safe.


Greetings and love,

We have today issued our order for distributing alms to the needy in the country. We have, hence, allotted one thousand piasters to the poor of your Community. Said amount shall reach you through our dear Archbishop Ya'qub, and you are earnestly requested to distribute it to the most needy poor of your Community at your discretion, and always keep us posted about your good news.

May you remain safe,

Date: 10 B 254

Bashir

حفظنا مجنا الكفيرة لبلدك وبنو رسد الكرم ودم سلمنا
 بعد مزيد الاثواق لس هتم في كل خير وعافية وكون
 محبتكم نخبه كجتم ان الون مجهيند اخوانك في خطا
 العقبى لدر كرم بزمار ليشهر الفوهد المصون عيني لدر
 لمنع الكسوعق وبعيل صورها وسنخرها لكى يعبها
 نامر بعيل احد في المعمورق بشدنه ولا فاده كجتم
 بزلك للسور في محبتكم اوقضى نخرم وفيما بعد لسنفوه
 اخباركم فاما 2006/10/20


Source: Monastery Of Bzummar, Box year 1836.

To our beloved and honorable Patriarch Gregory, May he remain safe.

Our fervent hopes that you are in good health. We wish to inform you that our brother Khattar Okaily is now on the way to your monastery at Bzummar in order to see and draw for us a picture of the lightning rods placed on the monastery against thunderbolts, so that, according to these drawings, we may order the same for our buildings at Beit Ed-Din.

Enquiring about your health and hoping that you will always keep us informed of your good news.

Date: 22T 252

Bashir Shihab