In the Process of Being Levantines. The 'Levantinization' of the Catholic Community of Izmir (1683–1724)

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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to offer a contribution to the process of Levantinization of the Catholic community of Izmir, between the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century. The first part of the paper is about the detection of how the term Levantine has been used, both historically and by historiography, while the second is focused on the Catholic missionaries of Izmir, depicted in their daily dealings with individuals and groups of different religions. Their responses to inter-religious coexistence as a process of adaptation, promote the idea of 'functional tolerance' not necessarily supported by a theoretical discourse about its value. The interaction of the missionaries and their Catholic parishioners sees the emergence of a new hybridized mentality, the actual agent that forms the basis of the Levantine identity. The original archival sources for this paper are the missionaries' letters from the Archivio Storico De Propaganda Fide.

Keywords

The present essay traces the emergence of the Levantine group as a new social and cultural actor in the city of Izmir during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As a specific element of port cities in the Ottoman

empire, the Levantine group begins to appear in scholarly descriptions of the urban environment from the eighteenth century. The purpose of our inquiry here is based on the documentation produced for the management of the Catholic mission of the city. It attempts to trace the genesis of this group through the perception of the Catholic missionaries who were working in the parish churches established for Europeans trading in Izmir. We focus our analysis on two key elements: (1) the use of the term 'Levantine' and the functionality implied with its adoption, and (2) the process of 'Levantinization' of the Catholics of Izmir through an analysis of Levantine writing subjects, namely the catholic missionaries operating in the city. The latter is important since the clergy was deeply involved in the transition towards a hybridization of the mindset of the Catholic group.

Let us first explore the use of the term 'Levantine' as it was applied by the missionaries, i.e. the Catholic parishioners of Izmir during the late seventeenth century. In fact, the term is never used by the missionaries themselves in our documentation. In the late seventeenth century, 'proper' Levantines were not yet to be found as the process of group formation was still beginning. The Europeans living in the Izmir were not Levantines, but still 'Franks' (*Franchi*), a term originally used to identify the crusaders who in the Middle Ages arrived in Byzantium and the Aegean, as well as in the Holy Land. This is also the term used by Antoine Galland, the French orientalist and first translator of *One Thousand and One Nights*, in his description of Izmir and the population of the city in 1678.[1] In giving an account of the Europeans settled in the city, he said: "Les Francs – c'est le nom que l'on donne aux chrétiens qui viennent d'Europe dans les terres du Grand Seigneur – ne sont pas compris dans le dénombrement que j'ai fait des habitants de Smyrne (Turcs, Grecs, Arméniens et Juifs). Ils sont ou Français, ou Anglais, ou Hollandais, ou Vénitiens, ou Génois desquels je parlerai les uns après les autres".[2] So, there is no one group of Europeans in the Izmir of Galland. In following this definition, Galland detected the presence of different groups from different 'nations'[3] that are collectively called 'Franks'.

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1 Galland was in Izmir on a mission in 1678 for collecting ancient coins and medals for Colbert and Louis XIV. He wrote an account of the city, which is probably the most detailed and complete ever written by a European during the seventeenth century.

2 Galland, Antonie, *Le voyage à Smyrne. Un manuscrit d'Antoine Galland, 1678, contenant Smyrne ancienne et moderne et des extraits du voyage fait en Levant* (Paris: Chandeigne, 2000), p. 113.

3 Here national identity is used with the meaning of identifying themselves according to the place of origin and of being born subjects of the same sovereign. The Europeans in the Ottoman empire were "organized in highly structured communities, that is in nations governed by consuls appointed by the relevant rulers" as all the free foreigners (i.e. not the groups of foreign slaves) living in the Porte "were expected to form organized social groups",

The difference between Franks and Levantines is quite substantial. While the Franks still shared a European 'identity',[4] as they are also defined by their different European origins, the Levantines were something totally new. They were the result of the mixture of the Franks with Ottoman groups, a new cultural by-product, which being new still retained the features of both. Here we want to emphasize the modern Greek word that refers to Levantine: *Φραγκολεβαντίνοι* (*Fragkolevantinoi*). The *Φραγκολεβαντίνοι* are, as the word itself shows, the Franks of the Levant, an indication at the same time of western origins allocated to an eastern context.[5] We consider the reference to the Greek term particularly meaningful because it is with Greeks that the Franks had the highest interaction in Izmir and, as we shall see, the highest number of mixed marriages.[6]

The linguistic choice we are about to follow is based instead on the methodological options offered by using the category 'Levantine' in approaching the study of the Catholic mission of Izmir of the period, namely the 'functionality'[7] allowed by Levantine status. In accepting the "définition minimaliste"[8] of Levantine, we want to draw attention to the perception of practical utility of being part of a hybrid group in the Ottoman port cities that is shared both by the Catholic clergy and lay people. The element that makes both of them Levantine, or rather proto-Levantine, is the clear perception of the elaboration of new strategies and a new state of mind by those Europeans confronting a

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Faroqhi, Suraiya, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), p. 212.

4   Not wanting to enter into a theoretical discussion about identity, we prefer to highlight the use of the term in the meaning of identification or/and auto-identification of individuals as members of a group of whatever nature (linguistic, religious, social, cultural). On the subject, see Brubaker, Rogers and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'identity'", *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000), 1–47, and Hall, Stuart, "Who needs 'identity'?", in *Identity. A Reader*, ed. Paul Du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage, 2000), pp. 15–30.

5   According to the Λεξικό της κοινής νεοελληνικής [Dictionary of Standard Modern Greek] (Thessaloniki: Aristoteleio Panepistimio Thessalonikis, Institouto Neoellinikon Spoudon, 1998), the definition of *φραγκολεβαντίνος* (fragkolevantinos) is "of a person of west European origin, who was born and is living in a country of the near East".

6   This predominance is quite obvious if we consider that the largest non-Muslim group of the city was the Greek one. According to the estimate made by Galland, the demographic composition of the population in 1678 was of 800 families of Greeks, 130 of Armenians and 150 of Jews. The Turks were the most substantial group, amounting to between 15,000–16,000 families.

7   By functionality we mean the quality of succeeding or being effective in real circumstances.

8   Heyberger, Bernard and Chantal Verdeuil, "Introduction", in *Hommes de l'entre-deux. Parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVIe-XXe siècle)*, ed. Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeuil (Paris: Indes Savantes, 2009), p. 11.

multiple (multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic) environment. The transformation within the Catholic community is also the transformation of the Catholic orthodoxy in the Ottoman space. The adjustment of the missionaries as individuals is actually their effort to find strategies to embody the semantic elements linked to their office in an alternative and original way. Elaboration of a different evangelical style by the missionaries implied a different way to perceive inter-religious mingling by the missionaries themselves; therefore, we can speak also about a 'Levantinization' of the clergy.

The relevance of questions related to the adoption of the category 'Levantine' is linked to its problematic use already pointed out in previous scholarly studies. In other words, the question of 'who were the Levantines' is a rather insidious and complex one. It brings us to a very slippery path where we should take into consideration not only the rich bibliography on the subject, caught in several 'Levantine environments',[9] but also works that have been developed on the 'Levantine' as a social, cultural and 'identitarian' category. Far from pretending to give an exhaustive answer, we present our discourse as a contribution to the field that, despite its implications, is of great importance. The Levantine actors are a powerful symbol and a concrete example of the possibility of individuals and hybrid groups, showing how elements of difference are integrated and produce a successful cultural product that is 'functional' to the environment, i. e. convenient to practice under the given, specific, circumstances. In other words, pragmatic; that is "of dealing with things sensibly and realistically, basing behaviours on practical rather than theoretical considerations".[10]

The fact that this process of pluralisation also includes the clergy increases its importance in our perspective. It implies a sliding orientation from the orthodoxy towards a more open and tolerant orthopraxy.[11] We strongly support the idea that we can better understand the degree of development and integration of a plural society by observing how institutions, by their very nature, convey absolute values, such as the members of a structured monotheistic Church.

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9   Levantine environments *par excellance* are Pera in Istanbul, Izmir and Alexandria.

10   On the functional management of pluralism in the Ottoman empire, see Barkey, Karen, *Empire of Difference. The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). The author here is following the tendency of the late the Ottomanist historiography, trying to deconstruct 'tolerance' (generated in the empire by pluralism) as a category in favour of something more akin to pragmatism.

11   In the Oxford Dictionary, orthopraxy is defined as "Right action, in addition to (or sometimes in contrast to) orthodoxy, 'right belief'". Orthopraxy is the part of religious life that is not centred on the normative aspects of a religious affiliation (orthodoxy) but on the moral aspects of daily living and faith, including in this category both ritual practices as well as interpersonal and social acts.

We agree with Faroqhi on the relevance of the action of the European missionaries in the early modern Ottoman empire as a moment of encounter and permeability of cultural boundaries.[12]

In the scholarly works, the broadest use of the term Levantine designates members of the non-Muslim residents of the Ottoman empire, while the Levantine 'golden age' is associated with the nineteenth century.[13] We use 'residents' and not 'subjects' because we include also the subjects of European powers that were permanently settled in the cities of the Porte. But, as Rothman astutely points out, the roots of the term were actually quite different. In Venice, 'Levantini' had been used since the sixteenth century in mercantile discourses to distinguish the Sephardic Jewish merchants settled in the Levant from the 'Ponentini' who were mainly established in Amsterdam.[14] The process of dispossession of the 'national' traits of the word in the period, reaching the cosmopolitan status registered in the following centuries, was made possible by its manipulation as a 'container' of identities that could work as a facilitator in the merchants' world and in the building of social inter-relationships.

Literature pertaining to the 'Levantines' has been emerging since the end of the nineteenth century, especially in the form of memories of Levantines themselves. The transcription of family histories was the initial stage of knowledge about the group and it appeared just before the end of the world in which it was developed, namely before the collapse of the Ottoman empire. In these texts they are often called 'Latins of the Levant' or 'Franks of the Levant', stressing how 'western' religious elements represent a distinctive mark of the community and its members.[15]

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12   Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*, pp. 171–4.

13   Schmitt, Oliver Jens, *Levantiner. Lebenswelten und Identitäten einer Ethnokonfessionellen Gruppe im Osmanischen Reich im 'langen' 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), with its French version Schmitt, Oliver Jens, *Les Levantins. Cadres de vie et identités d'un groupe ethno-confessionnel de l'empire ottoman au 'long' 19e siècle* (Istanbul: Isis, 2007), Mansel, Philip, *Levant. Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (London: John, Murray, 2010).

14   Rothman, Ella Natalie, *Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), ch. 7, "Levantine: genalogies of a category", pp. 211–47.

15   On this topic, recent works on Levantines have emphasized the link between Catholicism and the group, often using 'Catholics of the Levant' as an interchangeable definition for the group. This attitude, which could create the impression of disregarding the Levantine families of Greek and Armenian origins, together with the 'Protestant Levantines', should be read on a different level. It is crucial at this point to notice how different a 'Catholic of

In this definition we observe how the very concept of the Levantine group prolonged the idea of an 'alien' element in the urban and social fabric of the Ottoman empire. These texts also show how the Levantines never used the term 'Levantine' as a term of self-definition when they talked about themselves. In our opinion, in the second half of the seventeenth century that was due to the fact the Levantines were still regarding themselves as Europeans in an eastern environment, thus having no need to look for another term of self-definition. Authors of our sources still did not have the perception of a new socio-political actor, generated in the real and symbolic space between Europe and the Ottoman empire, and documents show a new way of dealing with this in-between status that is not codified. In more recent times, especially after the breakup of the Ottoman empire, the eastern element in the identity of the group was regarded as not desirable by Levantines themselves. Hence, they were choosing a self-representation as bearers of European (and non-hybrid) values.[16]

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the Levant' was from a European Catholic. Catholics of the Levant were more likely to include in their personal family history multiple religious affiliations that could not be typically found in the family history of a European Catholic. This difference generated often the sense of something alien and, at the same time, hybrid when European Christians came into contact with Christians of the Levant. "Travelers and missionaries in the Orient, in effect, never failed to be surprised by the cultural distance that separated them from the indigenous Christians, and, correspondingly, by the homology between their practices and those of the Muslims", Valensi, Lucette, "Inter-communal relations and changes in religious affiliation in the Middle East (seventeenth to nineteenth Centuries)", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 39/2 (1997), p. 256.

16   Belin, François-Alphonse, *Histoire de la Latinité de Constantinople* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1894). Belin was consul of the French embassy in Istanbul and already the author of an history of the Latin Church of Pera (*Histoire de l'Église latine à Constantinople*, 1872). Written with the intention of being an account of European tradition in the Ottoman empire is also Miller, William, *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece, 1204–1566* (New York: Dutton, 1908). The well established habit of keeping family records of Levantine families is currently still being practiced. See the works of the De Lusignan family: De Lusignan, Guy, *Mes familles. Nos mémoires de l'empire ottoman à nos jours* (Paris: Les editions universelles, 2004), De Lusignan, Livio Missir, *Vie latine de l'empire ottoman* (Istanbul: Isis, 2004), De Lusignan, Livio Missir, *Familles latines de l'empire ottoman* (Istanbul: Isis, 2004) and the works of Rinaldo Marmara: Marmara, Rinaldo, *Pancaldi, quartier levantin du XIXe siècle* (Istanbul: Isis, 2004) and Marmara, Rinaldo, *La communauté levantine de Constantinople: de L'empire byzantin à la république turquie* (Istanbul: Isis, 2012). In interviews I conducted in Greece with descendants of Levantine families of Thessaloniki and Alexandria, it was interesting that they reported a common memory of a negative connotation of the term Levantine in the definition of the self in the period immediately after the breakup of the Ottoman empire.

The last 15 years have been crucial for academic inquiries related to the 'Levantines', both as a term and phenomenon. The role of descendants in endorsing studies on the topic has proved decisive in promoting a growing interest in cross-cultural studies.[17] This circumstance has sparked an increase in erudite and scholarly works on these themes and the birth of a dedicated academic journal,[18] while on the other hand it has also resulted in the widespread adoption of the term 'Levantine', sometimes as a simple synonym for 'Europeans of the East'.[19] This use of the term in a strong semantic sense can produce the false perception that the Levantines are a precise phenomenon from the eighteenth century onward, happening at that particular time and in a particular, specific way. This was a time when the group was already a stable element of the Ottoman empire's urban fabric with distinctive features. Adopting an analysis along this line runs the risk of making the Levantine category lose its nuanced nature that have so much importance in its own definition.[20]

It seems clear that while scholarly discourses increasingly view the Levantines as a specific group within a unique urban and socio-economic environment, little attention has been devoted to the process of Levantization *per se*.[21] We therefore stress the importance of adopting an analytical

17   The action of promotion by descendants resulted in the organization of the first Izmir Levantine Symposium in 2010, the proceedings of which have been published in *Levantines from the Past to the Present* (Izmir: Culture, Art and History Publications no: 12, 2010). An important platform of discussion of this group is represented by the website Levantine Heritage (http://levantineheritage.com/).

18   The *Journal of Levantine Studies* (JLS) has been published biannually in English in print and online by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute since 2011. The core of the journal is "to reclaim the Levant as a historical and political concept and as a category of identity and classification".

19   "Levantines or Franks were foreign nationals of European origin, regardless of their nationality, which might be Dutch, English, Italian, German, Austrian or French", Kolluoğlu Kırlı, Biray, "Forgetting the Smyrna Fire", *History Workshop Journal*, 60 (2005), p. 42, note 5.

20   By using the adjective 'nuanced', we do not want to invoke an aura of subtle incomprehensibility of the Levantine category, but simply to acknowledge, like Rothman, that we lose much by not recognizing the elusiveness of the term Levantine and its intrinsic contradiction. By not paying attention to the different hues of being Levantine we cut short the analysis on the internal contradictions that are the very core and essence of the group.

21   We would like here to stress how the flourishing of studies on Levantines has developed a tendency to use the Levantine category in the above-mentioned strong semantic sense. That is due to the fact that scholarship is generally inquiring into the period when the Levantine group was already established more than the group making process. See

observation concerning the mechanism of how Levantinization was accomplished and how and when the group developed its hybridization. The present essay contributes to the field by refocusing our attention on how the (Catholic) Franks became Levantine in Izmir at the end of seventeenth century.

Late seventeenth century Izmir already consisted of an urban fabric particularly favourable to the dynamics of multi-culturalism. By the second half of the seventeenth century, Izmir emerged as one of the main trading centres of the eastern Mediterranean, only to decline in 1922 with the catastrophic Great Fire which marks the end of the city's prosperity. While literature about the economic role of Izmir is rich and well-established, especially the significance of the city in international trade,[22] the study of the social and cultural fabric of the city in the Ottoman period has been relatively neglected. Daniel Goffman explored the early seventeenth century[23] dynamics of the city and Marie Carmen Smyrnelis devoted her research to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[24] However, the period of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century remains largely unexplored.[25]

Schmitt, Oliver Jens, "Les Levantins, les Européens et le jeu d'identités", in *Smyrne, la ville oubliée? 1830–1930 mémoires d'un grand port ottoman*, ed. Marie Carmen Smyrnelis (Paris: Editions Autrement, 2006), pp. 106–19. An effective and interesting moment of reflection is the contribution given by Yumul, Arus and Fahri Dikkaya (eds.), *Avrupalı Mı, Levanten Mi?* (Istanbul: Bağlam, 2006), in which there is an attempt to detect the originality of the group as something between cultures.

22 Frangakis-Syrett, Elena, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth century (1700–1820)* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), Fleet, Kate, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State. The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also İnalcık, Halil and Donald Quataert (eds.), *An Economic* and *Social History* of the *Ottoman Empire*, *Vol.II 1600–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

23 Goffman, Daniel, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550–1650* (Seattle and London: The University of Washington Press, 1990), Goffman, Daniel, "Izmir: from a village to colonial port city", in *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, ed. Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

24 Smyrnelis, Marie Carmen, *Une société hors de soi. Identités et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), Smyrnelis, Marie Carmen, *Une ville ottomane plurielle. Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Istanbul: Isis, 2006), Smyrnelis, *Smyrne, la ville oubliée?*

25 An exception to this trend is represented by the recent Kontente, Léon, *Présence Française à Smyrne du XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (Montigny-le-Bretonneux: Yvelinédition, 2012). This work does not focus on the period in which we are interested. It provides a wider fresco of the history of the French community through three centuries. From the same author we find an even more general work on the history of Izmir: Kontente, Léon, *Smyrne et l'Occident: L'histoire Intégrale d'une ville levantine* (Montigny-le-Bretonneux: Yvelinedition, 2005).

All Europeans travelling in the late seveenth century agree in describing Izmir as a place where one can act (and be) like a European.[26] The Ottoman definition of Izmir was *gavur*,[27] the infidel city par excellence, due to the high number of non-Muslims among its inhabitants. The variety of peoples and cultures is the most characteristic element of the urban environment. Travellers describing the city stress how people of the most diverse provenance could be found together with merchandise of any sort, while its streets resonated with the languages of the whole Mediterranean basin and beyond.[28] Churches and synagogues were built next to mosques, and bell towers rose side by side with minarets. If Izmir in the second half of the seventeenth century cannot yet be called a cosmopolitan city in today's terms,[29] it was certainly a "ville plurielle"[30] creating the precondition for a friendly environment of hybridization. The mixed character of the Levantine group allowed individuals categorized within this group to be flexible, and flexibility was functional in a heterogeneous social and commercial environment.[31]

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26   "Il semble, quand on est dans cette ruë, que l'on soit en pleine chrétieneté; on n'y parle qu'Italién, François, Anglois, Hollandois. Tout le mond se découvre en se saluant. On y voit des Capucìns, des Jesuites, des Recoletes. [...] On chante publiquement dans les Eglises, on psalmodie, on prêche, on y fait le service Divin sance aucun trouble; mas d'un autre côté on n'y garde pas affez des mesures avec les Mahometans, car les Cabarets y sont ouvert à toutes les heures du jour & de la nuit". Tournefort, Joseph Pitton de, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant fait par ordre du Roy* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1717), vol. II, pp. 498–9. Diplomats and their relationships remain among the most interesting sources together with travellers. The best known English diplomat in Izmir of the second half of seventeenth century, the consul Sir Paul Rycaut, was among the first Europeans to write about the state of the Ottoman empire (1665) and the Greek and Armenian Churches (1679). See Anderson, Sonia P., *An English Consul in Turkey. Paul Rycaut at Smyrna 1667–1678* (New York : Oxford University Press; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1989).

27   Smyrnelis, *Une ville ottomane plurielle*, pp. 40, 158–60.

28   The city was defined *Tour de babel*, as Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Armenian, Modern Greek, Russian, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, French, English and Dutch, plus the *lingua franca* were spoken there. See Galland, *Le Voyage a Smyrne*, pp. 150–1.

29   On the cosmopolitanism in the Mediterranean and its problematization, see Haller, Dieter, "The cosmopolitan Mediterranean: myth and reality", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 129/1 (2004), 29–47. For an overview of the topic, see Sluga, Glenda and Julia Horne, "Cosmopolitanism: its pasts and practices", *Journal of World History*, 21/3, (2010), 369–73.

30   Smyrnelis, *Une ville ottomane plurielle*.

31   A key point of our analysis stresses the concept of functionality in the cultural hybridization, far from proposing a 'cultural Darwinism' *tout court*. See Berk, Gerald and Dennis Galvan, "How people experience and change institutions. A field guide to creative syncretism", *Theory and Society*, 38/6 (2009), 543–80, Chan Kwok-Bun, Chan and Peter J.Peverelli, "Cultural hybridization. A third way between divergence and convergence", *World Futures*,

It is not sufficient to explain the emergence of the Levantines in Izmir only by stating that they shared the same daily environment. Key factors in the process were a favourable environment and the daily interactions with someone 'other', but, most of all, the fact that the Europeans were not acting as an endogamous group. The cultural mixture in the family unit is a crucial point for understanding the transformation that occurred in the city in the period under scrutiny. In the words of Bernard Heyberger, we can also state that in Izmir "la double appartenance, catholique et orthodoxe, était chose banale au début du XVIIIe siècle".[32]

As already stated, we use the term 'Levantine' to identify a new group of Catholics in Izmir, putting stress on the function of the identification and self-recognition (identity) of the subjects (European Catholics of Izmir) in a new category (Levantines). The process of Levantinization of the European Catholics in Izmir can be viewed on two levels. The first involves the writing subjects of the documents, i.e. the missionaries, while the second concerns the objects of the documents, i.e. the parishioners who were living in the Anatolian city. In both cases, we can observe a reshaping along different needs of social and cultural attitudes of European Catholics who were engaging themselves with a new environment, a process that was particularly clear in respect of parish institutions, originally designed for mono-religious settings. The management of the parish institutions gives us special insights into the transformation of the group through the letters of the missionaries. Those letters were addressed to the Congregation De Propaganda Fide in Rome and discussed the progress of parish life in Izmir. The documentation to which we refer is the epistolary corpus preserved in the Fondo Smirne in the Archivio Storico de Propaganda Fide of Rome. The letters examined (81 in total) here for the first time in an academic study, come from the period 1683 to 1724. The Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide (today Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) was founded in 1622. The Congregation was established after numerous attempts to create an organization that could coordinate missionary activity. It was often boycotted by several Catholic nations who were careful to maintain control over the missions managed by their political subjects and sponsored and financed by themselves.[33]

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66 (2010), 219–42. For new approaches to questions of 'cultural evolution', see Andersson, Claes, Anton Törnberg and Petter Törnberg, "An evolutionary developmental approach to cultural evolution", *Current Anthropology*, 55/2 (2014), 154–74.

32   Heyberger, Bernard, "Les nouveaux horizons méditerranéens des Chrétiens du Bilād Al-šām (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle)", *Arabica*, 51/4 (2004), p. 448.

33   On the history of the Congregation, its aims and a general overview on its archive, see Sanfilippo, Matteo, "La Congregazione de Propaganda Fide e la Dominazione Turca sul

The policy of Propaganda Fide varied greatly according to the missionary theatres to which it was addressed, in the attempt to fit to the foreign place with the aim of maximising the results arising from the evangelization efforts. In the Ottoman empire, where the Congregation was facing a complex, structured and well established political power, Propaganda Fide followed various general guidelines, mainly designed to safeguard the presence of Catholic institutions on the territory of the empire. Other questions detected by historiography, such as the attempt to evangelize schismatics (such as Greeks, Armenians and Maronites) or the control over the orthodoxy of the Catholic communities of the Near and Middle East definitely appear to us as of secondary importance. The relationship Propaganda Fide meant to be built with the Ottoman power has to be mainly evaluated at the institutional level, since the Congregation and the Porte recognised each other as legitimate actors on the territorial stage in which Levantine missions were inserted. The presence of the Catholic missions in Ottoman territory was of a contractual nature and missionaries were seen not as evangelizers but as institutional representatives of the Catholic Church.[34]

The attention of the missionaries is always clear in the documented sources, as is the stipulation that the Congregation not enter into conflict with the Ottoman administration. The priority of the Congregation was also to avoid clashes with the 'Turks' and guarantee the presence of missions, i.e. Catholic institutions, in Ottoman lands.[35]

Mediterraneo Centro-orientale nel XVII secolo", in *I Turchi il Mediterraneo l'Europa*, ed. Giovanna Motta (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1998), pp. 197–211. The Fondo Smirne is one of the most complete of the Archive, which demonstrates not only the importance of the mission but also its continuity over time and its liveliness. We have also used some documents preserved in the Acta, in which the official decisions of the Congregation were registered. We ended our analysis in 1724 which is the year of the death of Pope Innocent XIII (born Michelangelo dei Conti), as we consider his pontificate a turning point in the issue of Chinese rites and, in general, in the way the missionaries were allowed by the central authorities (Sant'Uffizio and Propaganda Fide) to export the Catholic doctrine. Even if in 1724 it established virtual control of Propaganda over the Jesuits' action in China with a restriction of the autonomy of missionaries, it seems clear to us that in the Ottoman empire the Congregation was far from exercising control over the missionaries' conduct. It is interesting to note that Innocent XIII was quite anti-Ottoman, as he was economically supporting both Venice and, particularly, Malta, in their naval clashes with the sultan's military forces.

34   The managerial nature of our letters to the Propaganda supports the idea of a missionary action which lacks an evangelizing impetus.

35   Pizzorusso, Giovanni, "La Congregazione De Propaganda Fide e gli ordini religiosi. Conflittualità nel mondo delle missioni del XVII secolo", in *Religione, Conflittualità e*

The formality of the relationship between the empire and the Catholic Church was reflected in the nature of the missions in Ottoman territory themselves, especially in a relatively new city like Izmir, where groups of European foreigners were already economically meaningful and interacted socially mainly through the creation of institutionalized groups. The Catholic mission of Izmir consisted of two parishes, three religious orders and an apostolic vicar, plus several secular priests. The Franciscans of the Reformation, commonly called in the letters Reformeds,[36] managed the parish of St. Mary, the church of 'Italians and Greeks' and, for a period, with jurisdiction over the Catholics on the island of Tinos.[37] The Capuchins held the French parish of St. Polycarp, which also included the members of the third religious order of Izmir, the Jesuits. They also had jurisdiction over the Armenian Catholics.[38] We do not wish to comment on the balance between the Catholic institutions, but just to point out that all these jurisdictions vied over a limited territory and over a small number of believers, creating the conditions for constant and open hostility.[39] The consequent competition among the institutions was not only fuelled by a matter of mere formal prestige, but was directly linked to the economic situation of each institution.[40]

Cultura. Il Clero Regolare nell'Europa di Antico Regime, ed. Massimo Carlo Giannini, in *Cheiron,* 43–44 (2005).

36   The Ordo Fratrum Minorum Reformatorum (O.F.M. Ref.) was one of the major Franciscan families, a branch that aspired to a closer observance of the Franciscan Rule established in 1519 and officially supported by two Papal bulls (*In suprema militantis Ecclesiae,* 1532; *Cum illius vicem*, 1579).

37   The first Catholic parish of Izmir, as also mentioned by Antonio Gustiniani, apostolic vicar in the 1680s, in Archivio Storico De Propaganda Fide [hereafter ASPF], Scritture Originali Riferite nei Congressi [hereafter SORC], Smirne vol. 1, f. 221 r. For historical references, see Galland, Antonie, *Le Voyage a Smyrne*, p. 126.

38   The parish of the French nation was founded on the initiative of the consul Jean Dupuis at his private chapel in 1628, involving bringing the Capuchins come from Istanbul. It was consecrated as a parish Church on December 23rd, 1630. See ASPF, SORC, Smirne vol. 1, f. 292. The Jesuits were invited to the city in 1623 by another French consul, Samson Napollon, as his private confessors.

39   Pizzorusso, "La Congregazione De Propaganda Fide e gli ordini religiosi " pp. 197–240. In theory, the coexistence of different institutions was based on the presupposition that this stimulated a system of reciprocal surveillance over the orthodoxy in places far from Rome, as one institution supervised the other.

40   The parishes were supported by the alms of the parishioners. Since parishioners were often scarce, Catholic institutions frequently lived on tight budgets. In Izmir the French parish was richer because of the private donations of the King of France and of the privilege paid by all the French ships that docked in the port of the city. On several occasions

For the missionaries the process of modification in approaching religious otherness was often contradictory, as they were in a liminal position not only towards the Ottoman state but also towards their religious community. The relationship with the Ottoman state was somehow ambiguous because of the fact missionaries could not exert their evangelizing function in the Ottoman land. The relationship with Catholic parishioners was even more complex and contradictory, as missionaries were called to invigilate over their tendencies to lose a strong religious characterization in the multi-religious environment of the city while, at the same time, this tendency involved themselves too.[41] Ottoman missions were replacing a kind of laissez faire tendency to the aggressiveness in fighting heresy proper of other Catholic missions established in a country where the sovereign was of a different religion (and where Catholic missions were illegal, as was the case for the mission of England) and/or the emphatic approach to evangelization of the triumphant Catholicism of the 'internal-missions'.[42] However, this policy represented only a practical solution, not a positive will to mediate, in contexts where confessional clashes had to be avoided. The maintenance of the *status quo* of the Catholic mission in Izmir was based on a paradox. The impasse generated by the tolerance of the empire towards the mission in exchange for an evangelizing inertia was driving missionaries to a general sense of frustration. While the mission was legal and inserted in the frame of the religious freedom of the Ottoman empire, the evangelical operators were restricted to a mere managerial level of their parishioners, fulfilling tasks on a more social scale than simply preaching and evangelizing.[43] Preaching linked to evangelical action was prohibited, mutilating

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we have found in the *corpus* the suggestion to unite the Catholics in only one parish church «with two secular priests», a French for the French nation and a Greek or Italian for all other Catholics, in ASPF, SORC, Smirne vol. 1, f. 221 r, following also the example of the other 'churches' of Izmir. This was seen as the solution to the conflicts. The only way to keep the peace in the Catholic community was "to raise the admiration of the Infidels and Heretics [of the city]", namely of the Muslims and of the Protestant (Englishmen and Dutchmen) and Oriental Christians (Greeks and Armenians), ASPF, SORC, Smirne vol. 1, f. 213.

41   The division of the roles in the mission of Izmir is very sharp in the documentation while the process of Levantinization was clearly involving both of them.

42   The internal missions were located in the southern regions of Catholic Italy, France and Spain. Here missionaries, especially Jesuits, carried on a catechizing strategy with strong theatrical connotations. See Po-Chia Hsia, Ronnie, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 59; Colombo, Emanuele, *Convertire i musulmani. L'esperienza di un gesuita spagnolo del seicento* (Milan: Mondadori, 2007).

43   Frazee, Charles A., *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1923* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

the functions of the apostolic operators and forcing them to work in a context they had to accept *a priori*, even, and this is crucial in our analysis, before understanding it.[44] With social function, we mean all the complex religious practices that marked the daily and social life of the Catholic community in the Early Modern era. This includes officiating Mass and administering sacraments such as the Eucharist and penance and moments of passage in the life of individuals belonging to the community like baptisms, weddings and funerals.

The Levantinization of the clergy happened on two levels and did not imply a real change in the mind-set of the subjects. Sometimes the adherence of a flexible policy in religion was only a formal matter. What we want to stress here is that the tolerant attitude developed by the missionaries was not necessarily linked to a better understanding of a multi-religious environment. Efforts to manage an institution born in the context of the European confessional state and based on the principle of the *cuius regio, eius religio* only implied the retailoring of the institution in order to be more flexible and adaptable in a multi-religious, non-Christian empire. The acceptance of the Ottoman environment with its genuine appreciation was not necessary in this process; that could be seen as more formal than substantial.

This attitude is quite clear in the already-mentioned managemental nature of the letters, that can be read on two different, apparently antithetical levels, namely the lack of understanding and the acceptance. There is no reference in the letters in Izmir as a place of interaction with the diversity, many missionaries did not understand the pluralism within which they were immersed, just accepting it as a fact. Sometime it seems they really don't care about the non Catholic groups of Izmir, focusing all their energies on internal contrasts of the Catholic community.

Sources suggest an almost total lack of the rhetoric of evangelization;[45] writing missionaries depicted a world in which there was no space for the religious

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44 The prohibition on the evangelization did not concern only the Muslims, but also non-Catholic Christian subjects of the sultan, although attempts in this sense were carried out by some missionaries.

45 Between 1699 and 1702, Daniele Duranti, Archbishop of Skopje and Administrator of the churches of Chios and Izmir, took charge of sending annual reports on the progress of the mission of Izmir. Here we can find a kind of evangelizing project, as there are recorded conversions of schismatics and infidels, as well as repatriation actions of renegades led back to the Catholic faith. This type of document, found only for the four years reported, should be linked to the figure and will of Daniele Duranti and his idea of mission, closer to the Catholicism of Counter-Reformation and its catechizing intent. It also makes clear how these 'progresses' were in numerical terms rather scarce in a city that was famous for

conquest of the other, an 'other' that was a real presence in the missionaries' daily lives. The absence of interest in conquering the religious other clearly testifies to the underlying acceptance of the religious otherness itself.

The non-communicability between Ottoman Izmir and agents of the Catholic institutions, instead of generating an entrenchment of extreme positions of the missionaries and a radicalization of religious approaches, drove missionaries to the acquisition of an Levantinizing attitude, where acceptance, and consequently tolerant attitudes, were the result of the reciprocal impermeably of Catholic missions and Ottoman state.

The tolerant attitude towards religious differences did not signify tolerance *per se*. At this point, while it is obvious that individual personality played a key role in determining a more open or narrow approach to non-Catholics, a tolerant attitude was an objective element that we can find in almost all missionaries, as long as they wished to work in Izmir and be accepted as a religious minority.

The perception itself of the role of the religious minority of the Catholics in Izmir is symptomatic of the Levantinizing attitude of the missionaries. The Archbishop of Chios, Apostolic Visitor in Izmir in 1693, wrote to the Congregation: "the Catholic name [is] mixed among the barbaric nations of infidels, heretics and schismatics, who by far and without any comparison exceed the number of the few Catholics who live here."[46]

We have evidence that not only did the missionaries strongly perceive themselves as a minority but they also accepted their position in the urban community. Furthermore, even if they defined as 'barbaric' the other groups, there was a clear acknowledgment of the dignity of the other groups. In fact, we find the desire to gain the respect of the other groups. In 1691, Filippo da Locarno, speaking about the internal conflicts of the Catholic mission, suggested different solutions that would "raise the admiration of the Infidels and Heretics [of the city]",[47] i.e. Muslims, Protestant and Oriental Christians. This represents an implicit recognition of the moral value of the non-Catholic communities that must be linked to the question of good repute of Catholics in a

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its concentration of slaves and foreigners. In fact, the report with the major number of 'successes' (the one of 1699), recorded only 27 cases, amongst which we find renegades' abjurations, conversions of Muslim slaves, of Greek Orthodox and even a "Lutheran", as well as redemptions of veterans of the wars of Candia and Vienna, but also the delivery of the sacrament of confession after many years for Catholics who were living in places far from the city, ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, ff. 281–282.

46   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 258 v.

47   ASPF, SORC, Smirne vol. 1, f. 213. See also footnote number 46 in the text.

multi-confessional context. The impression of harmony should be preserved especially "for overcoming scandals, there being there schismatics, heretics, Dutch and English".[48] "The murmuring and scandal caused by such a schism in this city inhabited by many nations",[49] invoked by Gregorio da Napoli in 1699, should be considered as one of the greatest dangers incurred by the community both in terms of the national and confessional reputation on the multinational and multi-religious public stage of the city.[50]

On the other hand, it is interesting to notice how the adaptability of the missionaries drove them to use the opportunities offered by the Ottoman environment to override their own coreligionists. In 1693, the Archbishop of Chios and Apostolic visitor of Izmir, on the request of Monsieur de Brian, the new French consul of the city who supported the Capuchins Fathers, referring to Propaganda Fide, reported that

> the Dutch consul, though not Catholic, [...] heard Father Giacomo [of the Franciscans of Reformation] say in his presence the following unworthy words: that he wanted to appeal to the Ottoman court [and] obtain justice from the *cadì* against his inspector, his coreligionists and against those who wanted to make them obedient to their superiors.[51]

This passage shows how the religious question in Izmir was taking shape in unexpected forms and expressions thanks to the lack of a confessional state with which to conform, and a more fluid context. This constant intermingling, with all the cases linked to it, and the adaptation to a fluid environment were what really made missionaries 'Levantines', regardless of the level of personal involvement with a new and different way of perceiving the otherness. Living outside a context where the practice of the faith was highly institutionalized forced them to find a different way of dealing with religious and secular institutions, with the community of the faithful and with the faith itself. It required from them a good deal of improvisation and adaptability, promoted also by the legal status of the mission that had to be in a stable relationship with the Ottoman authorities.[52]

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48   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 213 r.

49   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 278.

50   On the concept of *réputation* in the early modern period see Bazzoli, Maurizio, *Il Piccolo Stato nell'Età Moderna. Studi su un Concetto della Politica Internazionale tra XVI e XVIII secolo*, (Milano: Jaca Book, 1990) p. 188, where we find that «reputation is of incomparable value and worth more than power».

51   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 254.

52   See Pizzorusso, "La Congregazione De Propaganda Fide e gli ordini religiosi".

The responsiveness of the missionaries to the management of a pluralistic environment was directly related to two factors: (1) the origin of the individual, and (2) his personal adaptability and flexibility. The policy of Propaganda Fide was meant to train individuals originating in the area in which they were going to work. This would guarantee a better integration of the missionary in the territory (and the parishioners would perceive him immediately as a member of the community) and a superior understanding of the context, while already possessing the necessary linguistic skills to work in a plural environment.[53] The linguistic skills were an important element also in fostering the careers of the religious.[54] This is, of course, something that was valid almost only in theory. The Congregation had to face the problem of the lack of religious personnel; therefore, it was not that rare to find inappropriate elements working in the Ottoman missions.[55] So, even if more or less all the missionaries were 'Levantinized', namely able to deal with a plural environment, only some of them were true Levantines capable of an awareness of the encounter with the religious other.

Our argument is supported by the expression of frustration of some of the missionaries, most notably Antonio di Val di Sole in the eighteenth century. Born in the Alps around Trento, he wrote to the Propaganda Fide in 1724 referencing the state of the mission since he had been appointed vicar only a few months earlier.

> I was elected apostolic vicar in this city of Smyrna where the freedom of
> the people, the diversity of religions that are present here and the lack of

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53   Pizzorusso, Giovanni, "La preparazione linguistica e controversistica dei missionari per l'Oriente islamico: scuole, testi, insegnanti a Roma e in Italia", in *L'Islam visto da Occidente. Cultura e religione del seicento Europeo di fronte all'Islam, Atti del convegno Internazionale (17–18 ottobre 2007), ed.* Bernard Heyberger, Mercedes Garcia-Arenal and Paola Vismara (Genoa: Marietti, 2009). One of the main linguistic tools of the Congregation was the creation of the Tipografia Poliglotta, an institution that offered the opportunity to have books of catechesis printed in different languages (and with different alphabets) and, at the same time, grammars for language learning. See Pizzorusso, Giovanni, "I satelliti di Propaganda Fide: il Collegio Urbano e la Tipografia Poliglotta. Note di ricerca su due Istituzioni romane nel XVII secolo", *Melanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 116 (2004), 471–98. On language skills as crucial in the Ottoman area and language mediators see Lewis, Bernard, *From Babel to Dragomans : Interpreting the Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004).

54   For example, fluency in Turkish was the strongest point in the auto-promotion of Franco de Marchis as candidate to the Vicariate of the Church of Izmir, ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 265.

55   See Pizzorusso, "La Congregazione De Propaganda Fide e gli ordini religiosi".

secular coercive authorities, to which one can apply in order to have the power [of being obeyed], are all circumstances that as far as we are concerned about the meaning, the superstitions and the acts that are immediately contrary to the purity of our holy Faith, bring together with them a great libertinism.[56]

With extreme precision Val di Sole identifies three elements that make Izmir a city out of the frame of counter-reformation: personal freedom, multi-religious environment and the lack of the alliance with a confessional political authority. Basically everything that is perceived as positive by a modern sensibility is here disqualified as a cause of contamination of the doctrine and bearer of deplored libertinism. As it so happens, Val di Sole blamed the *status quo* of Izmir in the introduction to his report, but at the same time he failed to suggest any direct solution for implementing change.

Language proficiency was crucial not only for preaching but especially for confession; however, the teaching of languages proved to be particularly ineffective. The language was learned upon arrival and for this reason bilingual subjects or experienced missionaries were preferred and favoured. In this framework, knowledge of Arabic was considered as fundamental as "one finds Arabic used amongst Turks, as Latin is used amongst us: since the Quran is written in Arabic this makes the language necessary for them, as Latin is the language in which we have the Holy Scripture".[57] When one of the missionaries, Fra Daniele Duranti, decided to resign as Archbishop of Skopje, he used the linguistic argument for supporting his request.[58] He could not serve well in Macedonia because "I do not master the language of that country and in lacking it I would be more admired than of utility or edification for those poor Christians".[59] The crucial point in the request of Duranti was, as he was almost then in his seventies, to let him live in Izmir "close to my relatives",[60] where he could also accomplish a great service for the Congregation as "a prelate that speaks Arabic is not idle here for the needs of Christianity and of the Catholic Christians of Egypt, Syria and other places [that speak Arabic], as many of

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56   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, f. 352.

57   Donà, Giovanni Battista, *Della Letteratura de' Turchi* (Venice: Andrea Poletti, 1688), p. 8.

58   Fra Daniele Duranti is the author of 13 letters to the Propaganda and the most prolific writer of the corpus investigated here. He was Administrator of the Church of Izmir in the years 1699–1701. His policy of territorial management was an expression of full compliance with the directives of the Congregation, of which Duranti was an ardent supporter.

59   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, f. 288.

60   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, f. 288. We know then from this detail that Duranti could have been a native of the area or that his family was part of the 'Italian' group of Izmir.

them come here from those parts because of their trades and I am well versed in this language, having learned it in the ten years I was a missionary in Egypt and here no other clergyman masters this language, so those who come here from those parts can only be confessed by me".[61]

The focus on the sacrament of confession is compelling, since it symbolized a new doctrinal and orthodox course inaugurated by the Counter-Reformation tied to the same control of conscience.[62] It is precisely the issues related to the exercise of confession that introduce in our analysis the issue of the *communicatio in sacris*,[63] a crucial institution for building cultural bridges. As it was a connection through religious affiliations, it represents a real tool which shaped the creation of a shared identity, or a hybridization through the blending of them. The practice of allowing, if not encouraging, the *comunicatio in sacris* in confession was quite common in Izmir. For many believers living inland it was difficult to even find a Catholic priest for confession.[64] Therefore several missionaries were asked by the Congregation to allow Catholics "*anco extra mortis articulum*, to make a valid confession to some Schismatic priests".[65] This request is particularly meaningful. It openly sustained the continuous interaction of Catholics with Greek Orthodox or Armenian priests in the administration of a sacrament. The missionary in question was the Discalced Carmelite[66] Father Giuseppe di Gesù, asking that confession to a schismatic priest should be considered valid for a life-threatening predicament, favouring even its acceptance in ordinary religious practice. The issue was quite controversial, as testified to by the contradictory actions previously pursued by the Roman

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61   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, f. 288.

62   Prosperi, Adriano, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996).

63   The *communicatio in sacris* encompasses different cases: the reception by non-Catholics of Catholic Sacraments and/or their participation in Catholic worship, as the reception by Catholics of Sacraments administered by non-Catholic ministers and/or their participation in non-Catholic worship.

64   In a report of Daniele Duranti to the Propaganda, in 1701, we found that "poenitetes habui diversos, quorum aliqui per 20 (viginti) anos confiteri non potuerunt", ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 303 v. In 1703 we find a similar case: "poenitentes diversos habui, qui multis annis confit non fuerunt, maximè aliquos ex damnatis ad triremes", in ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 330 v. There is also testimony here of the practice of the missionaries of Izmir of attending to the Catholic galley slaves.

65   ASPF, *Acta*, 1718, vol. 88, f. 315 v.

66   The Catholic mendicant order of the Discalced Carmelites (or Barefoot Carmelites) was established in 1593 after the reform of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel by the Spanish mystics Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross, both later canonized by the Catholic Church.

Tribunal referred to by the writer. In 1709 the Sant'Uffizio declared it unacceptable for a Catholic to receive the sacraments from schismatics, whereas in 1682 the Cardinal inquisitors had not responded to a similar request posed by a missionary. Giuseppe di Gesù, writing in 1718, "implored" the Congregation to validate the practice.[67] The Carmelite showed not only the will to improve the quality of religious life amongst the Catholics in the Levant, but above all, mental flexibility and a distinct sensibility in managing what was a real daily issue and not simply a theoretical doctrinal exercise.

In practice we may note that the friar openly encouraged Catholics to hybrid practices in following a non-Roman rite, while showing his appeal to the Santo Uffizio's court testifies to a different view of religious affiliation in which orthodoxy is established at an inferior grade of importance compared to the daily practice of faith. This different view is of an inclusive nature, not emphasizing religious distance but looking for an internal coherence of Christian confessions.

The constant will to meet the needs of Eastern Christians plays its functional role in all the organization of the religious life of Izmir Catholic churches. The crucial role of linguistic skills is proved also in offering the preaching of Mass in the languages spoken in the empire. One of Duranti's letters testifies to the strong effort conducted in Izmir in order to obtain an efficient communication: "Reformed fathers, Capuchins and Jesuits, keeping vigil over their parishes [...] with holy preaching in Italian, Greek, French, and [...] the reverend fathers of the Society of Jesus also in the Turkish and Armenian languages".[68]

It is not our intention to diminish the quality of the missionaries in Izmir. Noting the small sample in the essay, we find a very wide variety among the 'Levantinized' clergymen. And for almost everyone, regardless of personal convictions, it was not possible to work in Izmir without being sufficiently flexible and willing to compromise. In fact, in the words of the Jesuit Simone Lomaca writing to the Propaganda on the conduct of the apostolic vicar Antonio Giustiniani of Chios[69] "it is certain that our vicar, though full of zeal and piety, has not all the required experience, to manage himself among so many and so different Nations, with whom he is obliged to practice continuously".[70] On April 20th 1692, Antonio Giustiniani led a clash between the Capuchins and

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67   The case can be found in ASPF, *Acta*, 1718, vol. 88, f. 315 v.

68   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 302 r.

69   Matteucci, Gualberto, "La Grecia, le sue isole e Cipro", in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum. 350 Anni a servizio delle Missioni, 1622–1772*, ed. Joseph Metzler (Rome, Freiburg and Vienna: Herder, 1973), vol. I/2, pp. 350–6.

70   ASDPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 216 r.

Reformeds that required the eventual involvement of the Ottoman administration. The *casus belli* was the burial of some Reformed parishioners in the church of the Capuchins. The issue was finally resolved by requesting the cooperation of the French consul, but when Giustiniani hardened his position again in 1699 the Congregation intervened and promoted him to Bishop of Syros. The island was far from Izmir and one of the 'easiest' Aegean environments with an almost totally Catholic population.[71]

Although the practice concerning any doubts about orthodoxy required the missionaries of the Levant to address the Sant'Uffizio,[72] practical administration faced daily problems which required immediate responsiveness. We often find that the problem submitted to the judgment of the cardinal inquisitors had already been solved in some way by the missionary, who, only at that point, asked if he had acted in accordance with orthodoxy or not. The missionaries usually abided by customary practice, using the documents preserved in their own archives. But if the archive was not accessible or the issue was new, they were required to give proof of autonomy of interpretation and of an attitude of self-adjustment that seems to us the main feature that makes these men, if not or not all of them 'Levantines', at least 'Levantinized'. An example of the practice of decisional power in matters of orthodoxy we find in the corpus was justified by the reorganization of the archive and the chancellery of the city. As the Apostolic visitor "could not find [in the archive] any record or example to satisfy the request made by Monsignor Fra Stefano Sciran, Archbishop of Naxiuan [Naxos], in order to make the Mass conform with the divine offices to the Roman Rites and the use of the Dominican Fathers",[73] we should presume that the Archbishop of Naxos himself decided how to proceed practically in the celebration of Mass, even taking the risk of incurring in formal errors.

The deficiency in defining accurately orthodox practices, certainly favoured by the distance from Rome, also involved the catechization of the Catholic community of Izmir. In 1724 Antonio di Val di Sole denounced the Capuchin Fathers to the Propaganda Fide

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71   About the Catholics on Syros, Giustiniani wrote in 1700 "the islanders of nearby islands are used to saying that if the Pope loses his way in Rome, he will find himself in Syros [meaning, maybe, if the Pope loses control of Rome, he can rule from Syros]; so tenacious are these people in the Roman faith", microfilmed copy of the original in the archive of Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης [the National Bank Cultural Foundation] in Athens, Αρχείο της Καθολικής Επισκοπής Σύρο [the Archive of the Catholic Diocese of Syrus], Κώδικες διάφοροι, n. 4.

72   This praxis is registered in the *Acta* of the archive of Propaganda Fide.

73   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 334.

the Capuchin Fathers […], in charge of the care of souls, are not preach-
ing the Christian doctrine to the sons of the French school more than
four or five times per year, to all appearances, and it has in no way been
possible to lead them to explain the Gospel at least on Sunday. Because of
this the souls [are] little, to say not at all, educated in the mysteries of our
Holy Faith.[74]

The ignorance which scandalized Val di Sole was actually functioned as an
integration tool across religious divides. We support the idea that, from a cer-
tain point onwards (and for sure in 1724), the missionaries themselves (or bet-
ter, some of them) favoured a nuanced relationship (that allowed differences
in beliefs) between their parishioners and Orthodoxy, i.e. that conformed to
the approved form of Catholic doctrine.

   The way the missionaries were transmitting the doctrine allows us to move
to the second level of our analysis and here we can assume that the process of
Levantinization for lay people was substantial and that behind the behavioural
change there was a substantial change of mindset. The mixed element present
in many families, starting from the late seventeenth century onwards, consti-
tuted the basis for the creation of new subjects that were considered as non-
contradictory *per se* through family education and the constant practice of
comunicatio in sacris.[75] The Catholics of Izmir are good examples of the exten-
sive case of the 'subjects in between'. This category was extremely varied. In it
we could include all the subjects who were characterized by an elusive and
multiple cultural background and who were engaging themselves in continu-
ous transition between divergent identities. It seems clear that these charac-
ters were perfectly at ease in the ongoing game of changing their own
identification with different groups. In our opinion, this can only be explained
by the assumption that the whole process was not perceived by those subjects
as 'of exclusion'; therefore, the adoption of one identity did not exclude their
participation in other/others. Renegades (or converters), for example, were a
familiar presence in the Anatolian port city, and one of them, Michele Guareco,
was at the centre of a controversial scandal registered in two of the letters to
the Congregation. Michele, probably a Venetian Greek with influential proté-
gées in Rome, became Muslim before coming back to Catholicism after a few
weeks.[76]

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74   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 352 r.
75   Heyberger, *Les nouveaux horizons*.
76   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, ff. 296–297. The event took place in early spring of 1700. Having
      just arrived in the city, Michele apostatized and 'became Turk' in a public ceremony,

In the urban environment the most significant 'subjects in between' were contingent upon the exogamy of the Frankish group. The practice of mixed marriages was quite common in all aspects of Ottoman life, as testified to by letters and by the observations of travellers.[77] Antoine Galland observed that in the church of San Policarpo sermons were delivered in vulgar Greek, because many French and 'other Franks' were married to Greek women "of the country".[78] This statement is very interesting because we can reasonably assume that a Greek sermon was preached for the benefit of the Greek wives of the Franks, testifying to their attendance at the Catholic rite. It may also imply the possible presence of Orthodox believers in a Catholic church, as the Greek women "of the country" could hardly have been part of a community of Greek Catholics, as neither Galland nor other travellers reported the presence of such a group in Izmir.

The mixing of Franks with Greeks represented an important feature of Izmir which increased throughout the eighteenth century. Marie Carmen Smyrnelis sees in this process the origins of the Kenourio Mahalle (literally 'new district'), the first district of Izmir based not on religious identity but on belonging to a social class (the middle class, in our case). The Kenourio Mahalle was new in meaning and concept, and it grew as a powerful symbol of the new Levantine group in Greek and European circles.[79] The role of women in the process was of the utmost importance, and not only for known cases of Greek wives and mothers of the new families. European women also played a primary role in the way they performed their religious piety. This is effectively demonstrated

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before returning to the Catholic faith less than a month later. This act generated great confusion among Catholics, while the Muslims gave great publicity to the public conversion, as he was a free man who had apparently arrived in the Ottoman city only to embrace the new faith. After the second apostasy, Michele was then sent back to 'Christianity' through the port of Marseille. The figure of Michele is interesting for two main reasons: the first is the lack of coherence in his action (i.e. very quick 'conversion' for both the two apostasies and superficiality in justifying them) and the second is his connection with very significant personalities in Rome. This detail allows us to consider the possibility that Michele was a spy or, at least, he was an adventurer searching for a quick career.

77   In our corpus, this is found only in the case of an interreligious marriage of a Catholic girl with a Muslim Turk, ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 334 r. In the Balkans, intermarriage between Catholics and Muslims was present in the same period in much higher percentages, see Caffiero, Marina, "L'Inquisizione romana e i Musulmani: le questoni dei matrimoni misti", *Cromohs*, 14 (2009), 1–10, (http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/14_2009/caffiero _inquisizmus.html).

78   Galland, *Le Voyage a Smyrne*, p. 115.

79   Smyrnelis, *Une ville ottomane plurielle*, p. 132.

in the case of Anna Boggè (probably an Italianization of Anne Bogè), recounted by Antonio di Val di Sole, who was a highly visible figure in Izmir and a target of the harsh criticism of the new apostolic vicar. The case of Anna put in the spotlight not only attitudes of *communicatio in sacris* shared by many immigrant and native Catholics, but also the 'Levantine' reshaping of the mindset of European subjects.

Anna Boggè was the wife of a French merchant and a woman who "moved in high social circles of the city". In 1723 her only daughter fell ill and Val di Sole wrote to Propaganda:

> Against my admonitions she called a group of Greek Fathers (*papàs*) every night to bless the girl, to ward off what they call air spirits, as well as other fire superstitions, and she also took communion according to the Greek rite, about what all the others were murmuring. They [the Greek Fathers] encouraged her to go and say prayers in the Greek churches, to take the vow to bring her daughter to visit the Greeks' sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of Mettelino [Mitilini], as well as visit the relic of a certain Kiurà, venerated as a saint by the Greeks, on the island of Chios.[80]

Val di Sole underlines how the case was not unique, but it was more noticeable given Anna's social position. The same vicar, in fact, reported the situation as being normal, especially amongst women, to call on "Greek priests to bless sick Catholics" and take a vow, in the case of healing, to "make a pilgrimage to visit their [Greek] churches and ancient relics of saints either non-canonised or not recognised as such by the Holy Mother Church".[81]

Showing an intelligent understanding to the analysis of social behaviours, Val di Sole considered the damaging consequence of this practice as an evident domino effect, as "looking at such practices, one lady followed another, and all the Catholic women […] are following the example of the leading ones in calling Greek priests to bless the infirm".[82] The tradition eventually led to a much deeper practice of practical indifference that opened the mind to mingling with non-Catholic elements, not only in terms of social life but also of their own family units. In fact, "seeing these calls so frequently, they [the Catholic women] think that the Greek faith must also be valid and so many Catholic ladies and girls marry Greeks".[83]

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80   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 353 v and 356 r.
81   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 353 v and 356 r.
82   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 353 v.
83   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 353 v.

We consider this to be an extraordinary document, clearly showing the process of the Levantinization of the Catholic group of Izmir. Despite his rigidity and absolute incapacity to appreciate otherness, Val di Sole shows acumen and an uncommon ability to read the situation. Moreover, he understood the significance of the pilgrimage that Anna wanted publicly to undertake, accomplishing her vow once her daughter recovered. She asked for permission from the Catholic religious authority of Izmir, an act that can be evaluated on two levels. Firstly that the control over parishioners' mobility was exercised also by the Catholic authorities of the mission.[84] On a second level, it reveals how in Anna's perception the worship at a non-Catholic shrine did not constitute an unacceptable act nor one in conflict with religion she belonged to. For Anna there is no exclusion between Orthodox and Catholic beliefs. They integrated one with another, even if not being interchangeable or of equal worth, giving shape to a practical attitude of religious indifferentism, though here the term cannot be strictly applied.[85] It seems that the Jesuits and Franciscans judged it as completely inopportune, as "an action that will cause, to the delight of the Greeks, admiration and scandal, given the social status of the lady, the publicity of the vow taken and the length of the journey".[86] In other words, they considered it an action that would generate admiration, which would encourage contamination, and scandal, which would offend the honour of the Catholic community. But Anna was determined to go and she finally received a passport from the Capuchins,[87] leaving the city amid the clamour of the "Calvinists, Lutherans, Catholics and Greeks […], [as] everyone was speaking of it".[88] With "tears in the eyes"[89] for the shame, Val di Sole reported how the entire male Frankish community completely disapproved of the woman's act, both Catholic and Protestant. From the Catholics' point of view, the vicar underlines how "a French merchant went as far as saying that if she had been his wife, rather than letting her go with so much scandal, he would have killed her",[90] while on the Protestant side a "Dutch Calvinist merchant asked a

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84   The limit to freedom of movement and the attempt to manage and control it by political and religious authorities are constant in the Mediterranean world throughout the Early Modern era.

85   'Indifferentism' defines all those theories that deny the duty of man to worship God by believing and practicing only one, true, religion.

86   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 356 r.

87   According to the report, they [the Capuchins] also suggested that she bring a golden crown as an offer to the Virgin of Mitilini.

88   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 356 r.

89   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 356 r.

90   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 356 r.

Catholic friar: 'What faith is yours? Why do you not simply unite with us, since you join the Greeks, who like us also deny the supremacy of your Pope?'"[91] The reaction of both Catholics and Protestants shows how the confessional climate could not be established by European communities in Ottoman Izmir in an environment that favoured hybridization and mixing; in other words, in an environment that was creating the Levantines. The lack of wars of religion in the Ottoman state, supported, if not by a real tolerance, by a strong pragmatism regarding religious administration of its multi-religious subjects, created the preconditions for an inert environment from the evangelizing perspective of the missionaries from Europe, as it discouraged radical approaches to religious affiliation and, above all, an environment where the confessional differences were not exacerbated because they were not functional. Functionalism and pragmatism resulting in a concrete way of practicing tolerance were the real generators of a new, Levantine, mindset where hybridization of groups was regarded as valuable and where individuals were not obsessed by any *limpieza de sangre*.

In this article we sought to contribute to the discussion on the significance and the social function implied in the hybridization of a cultural and religious group. Focusing our analysis on the Levantines, we have attempted to show how individuals and groups that participate in different 'identities', or, in other words, that identify themselves as members of different groups, possess a real demiurgical potential, both in cultural and social terms. We called the Levantines a successful cultural product for their capacity to 'creatively' react with the environment offered by the city of Izmir and by the several groups that were living in it. This reflection leads us to focus on two aspects which appear to us as the most important. The first is that the hybridization, or in our case Levantinization, should not necessarily be substantial in order to produce a moment of encounter and permeability of cultural boundaries. Even formal adherence and acceptance of a plural environment generate practical tolerance of the religious otherness, promoting civil integration in a common society. As we have previously stated, it has a relevant meaning in the case of the missionaries because it opens the way to the orthopraxy regarding the management of the Catholic communities in the Ottoman empire. The second is that in those cases in which the process is substantial, we obtain a complete

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91   ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, f. 356 r. In Izmir, throughout the seventeenth century, there was still a relationship between the parish of Santa Maria and the Dutch consulate, that offered its protection to the church, as witnessed by the offering by the latter "although heretics" of a place for worshipping after the burning of the church, in 1701, ASPF, SORC, Smirne, vol. 1, ff. 312–313.

reversal of what is perceived as a contradiction in the way individuals recognize themselves as part of a group. Being plural, then, becomes not a theoretical option in which several elements are forced to match together, regardless of the fact of being consistent one with the other. It is the concept of coherence itself that is reversed through contamination and this is not a mere relativization of differences but a real way to be 'more-than-one-thing' at the same time.

Finally, the importance of this analysis is strengthened by observing that, in both cases, cultural and social adaption appears as the natural outcome of the daily life experience, confirming the view that a hybrid society that it is structuring naturally *per se*, generates a product capable of responding to different needs and able to solve the problems of coexistence and intermingling of different groups in the same environment. Developing the analysis of the different strategies of coexistence practiced by the writing subjects of the documents allows us to assert the concept of 'functionality of tolerance', even when it was only formally practiced. The strong divergence between the various subjects in conceiving tolerance is reiterated by the notion of obviousness in the acceptance of coexistence. This is why we consider the Levantines as a good example of building an integrated and plural society.