

# **Early Modern Maronite Accounts on The Challenges Of The Ottoman Christendom**

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Even though Christendom primarily denotes a physical space that is ruled by a Christian ruler whose power is legitimized by ecclesiastical authorities of his own suzerainty, the territories of the Eastern Christianity in Anatolia and the Mediterranean preserved their Christian motives even under the rule of a Muslim Sultan. Therefore, the Ottoman example, incorporating the vast territories of the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Mediterranean might be called as “Ottoman Christendom” or a “Christendom of Rum” under the Ottomans.

This paper aims to bring forth some of the challenges of the Ottoman Christendom- mainly characterized by the Rum (Greek Orthodox)- for the Maronites, whose religious allegiance was pledged to the Pope in Rome. Apart from the schism between the Latin and Orthodox Christianities, the case of the Maronites present an interesting case within the broader concept of Ottoman ecclesiastical institutions. The contemporary historical accounts demonstrate that the Maronites were mistreated, and their ecclesiastical institutions were brought into trial by the other Christian authorities of the Empire. Therefore, they differed in terms of understanding of the “Christendom”, allegiance, and loyalty from the other Christian groups of the Ottoman administration. Based on this differentiation, the paper intends to discuss the physical and spiritual realms of the Ottoman Christendom, the conceptualization of loyalty and allegiance to the church and a Muslim Sultan, and the challenges of denominational differentiation within the broader Ottoman ecclesiastical system. For this aim, the paper will refer to some early modern travel accounts and Ottoman archival documents.