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SOME ASPECTS OF RUSSIAN ECCLESIAL
AND STATE POLICY IN PALESTINE
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE
TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

The study offers some glimpses into the complex problem of the Russian presence and interest in Palestine. By reference to policy statements from various contexts and individuals we attempt to highlight some important features of this Russian presence and interest in Palestine during the 19th century. We want to demonstrate that this area offers fascinating material for further study and we also attempt to argue for the necessity of rejecting often black and white perceptions of the issues involved which would lead to more objective understanding of the Russian involvement in Palestine and its features.

Greeks and Russians

The relationship between Russians and Greeks in terms of the Orthodox ecclesial context can be termed as a loving one, however, at the same time, extremely mistrustful relationship. The Russians always admired the Byzantine tradition and Greek culture and undoubtedly always realised they were the “younger brother”, in terms of the Church and culture in general. Historically, the Russians struggled to ascertain their place in cultural and religious history in relation to the Greeks. The relationship can be characterised as a younger brother-older brother one. This psychology remained even after the Florentine Union regardless of the emerging ecclesial independence of the Russian Church.

Historically, the Byzantines, for their part, did not make things easy for the Russians and often adopted a typical Byzantine cultural superiority stance. Even during the reign of the enlightened and missionary orientated Patriarch Photios (9th century), who realised the need for a policy of enculturation and wholeheartedly supported it, it was a given fact, that the Byzantine Church and culture will always be a superior force and guiding principle for all other Christian Churches.

Generally, the Russians did not and could not realise the difficulties and complexities of the Middle Eastern situation and this was due to many reasons. This misunderstanding on the part of the Russians often led to a simplification of the issues and the Greeks were often portrayed as unreliable, not sincere and ready to compromise, especially with the Western Church. A suspicion which seemed to have been confirmed by the Council of Florence in 1439 and by the role of the then Greek Metropolitan of Russia, Isidore, at this Council. The Fall of Byzantium appeared to confirm the loss of true direction by the Greeks and was seen by the Russians as a form of Divine intervention if not outright punishment of the Greeks. This was, by the way, also the case for many Western Roman-Catholic thinkers who also saw a Divine sanction of the Roman Catholic supremacy in the Christian world in this event (a notion which would appear in the 17th century during Unionist controversies).¹

However, the “ideology of a divinely sanctioned” Roman Empire (as solely represented by Byzantium and as already promulgated early on by such Christian authors, such as Eusebius of Cesarea) was not replaced by an ideology of the Russian Empire being a “heir” to this Roman Empire or by some other country being the heir, but by an ideology that, in fact, the Russian Empire “is” the new Roman Empire. Thus, the Roman Empire simply embodies itself in a new formation because the Roman idea cannot die. A Russian monk Philotheos, in a well-known account, formulates an idea of Russia assuming the “Roman responsibility”. Evidence of Philotheos ideas linking Russia’s pretensions to being the Third Rome are found, for example, in the letter to Grand Prince Basil III, (although its authorship is doubted). The Tsar is depicted by Philotheos as the “sole ruler of Christians and legitimate heir of the Roman Emperors”.² In 1523–1524, he wrote a letter to the

¹ See the activities, thought and historical context of such Roman Catholic figures as Peter Skarga. Bain, N. R., *Slavonic Europe, A Political History of Poland and Russia from 1447 to 1796*, Cambridge 1908.

² Zernov, N., *Moscow the Third Rome*, London 1937, 36. See also: Schaefer, H., *Moskau das Dritte Rom*, 2nd ed., Darmstadt 1957; Каптерев, Н. Ф., *Характер отношений России к православному Востоку в XVI и XVII столетиях*, 2-е изд., Сергиев Посад 1914.

scribe of the Grand *Prince*: In most manuscripts, the text reads: “You should know, Christ Lover and God Lover, that all Christian kingdoms had come to an end and resulted in one kingdom of our Lord the Ruler, in harmony with the books of the prophets, and this is the Roman Kingdom or Empire: Since two Romes fell and the third is standing and there will be no fourth.”³

The Greek cultural and intellectual representatives being obviously desperate and despondent on their part after the fall of Byzantium, also suggested that various rulers or states, both in the West and East, could assume the role of Rome. Some even (as George of Trebizond) suggested that the Ottoman Empire itself with the Sultan could become a new Rome. Thus, George of Trebizond wrote a letter to the Sultan Mehmed II in 1453 to this effect.⁴ The Greeks did not cease to believe in liberation after the fall of Byzantium, often expecting help from all possible sides, as for example from Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden (died 1632).

Regardless of the captivity of the Greek Church under the Ottomans, lively ecclesial contacts continued between Russians and Greeks and the Russians respected the ecclesial position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The respect for the Byzantine tradition is demonstrated by the fact that notable Greeks were invited to Russia, such as the well-known Maxim the Greek, to share in Russia’s theological and liturgical development.⁵ This respect stemmed from the knowledge that the Byzantine tradition is the basis for the Russian one.

After the Fall of Byzantium, Greeks offered their services as interpreters and generally assumed the role of middle men in Russian dealings with the Ottoman world. G. T. Stavrou writes: “This role of a Patriarch was important because at the time, Russian diplomatic agents in the Ottoman Empire did not carry the prestige they did in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Greek interpreter Anastasios, rendered great services in the relations of Russia and Turkey, and the Turkish representative to Russia, Ali Agas, was a personal friend of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Loukaris.”⁶ Further, the Russians regarded the opinions of the Eastern Patriarchs with high esteem which

³ Синицына, И. В., *Третий Рим: Истоки и эволюция русской средневековой концепции (XV–XVI вв.)*, Москва 1998.

⁴ See: Zoras, G., *George of Trebizond and His Efforts for Greco-Turkish Cooperation*, Athens 1954.

⁵ Geanakoplos, D. J., The Post Byzantine Athonite Monk Maximos the Greek: Reformer of Orthodoxy in 16th Century Muscovy, in: *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 1988, vol. 33, 445–468.

⁶ Stavrou, G. T., *Russian Interests in Palestine, 1882–1914*, Thessaloniki 1963, 11; See also a view on Loukaris, in: Kyriakos A. D., *Geschichte der Orientalischen Kirchen von 1453–1898*, Leipzig 1902, 97–103.

is testified by the life of the brilliant Patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople (c. 1530–1595) who visited the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russia and displayed influence in ecclesiastical affairs of the Russian Church. Russians made all possible effort to observe the Liturgical traditions of the Eastern Patriarchates.⁷

The role of Eastern Patriarchs in Russian affairs is also exemplified by the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophanes who already visited Moscow as a priest in 1603 and who received an invitation to come after the Time of Troubles (1604–1613). He visited Moscow again after becoming a Patriarch and after an adventurous journey. His authority was highly regarded by the Russians and he attended the Council of 1619 acting as its president and ordained the father of Tsar Michael as the Patriarch Philaret of Moscow. The oath exemplifying respect for Eastern Patriarchs taken by Philaret was possibly written by Theophanes and included the words: “Whatever they (the Patriarchs) accept, I also accept and maintain, whatever they reject I do reject too.”⁸ Theophanes was also involved in the ecclesiastical problems of the Kiev context.⁹ The intense relationship was also dominated during the patriarchates of Joachim (1674–1690) and Dositheos (1690–1707).

The Eastern Patriarchs were more and more aware of the pressure emerging not only from the dominating Ottomans, but also from the increasingly aggressive Protestant and Roman Catholic interests in the Holy Places; not to speak of the economic hardships of the Patriarchates. Thus, Dositheos (1690–1707), for example, needed Russian help to win back the Holy Places which from the Sultan in 1689 were given to the Catholics by a *ferman*.¹⁰ Dositheos also sought Russian support for printing of Greek works (such as the *Panoplia Dogmatike* by Euthimios Zygabenos).¹¹ According to Kapterev, Dositheos was serving the interest of Russia for decades.¹²

⁷ See: Medlin, W. K. – Patrinelis, C. G., *Renaissance Influences, and Religious Reforms in Russia, Western and Post-Byzantine Impacts on Culture and Education (16th–17th Centuries)*, Geneve 1971.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 38.

⁹ See: Παπαδόπουλος, Ch., *Οἱ Πατριάρχαι Ἱεροσολύμων ὡς πνευματικοὶ χειραγωγοὶ τῆς Ρωσσίας κατὰ τὸν 17ον αἰῶνα (The Patriarchs of Jerusalem as Spiritual Leaders of Russia during the 17th century)*, Jerusalem 1907, 47; Каптерев, Н. Ф., Сношения Иерусалимских патриархов с Русским правительством с половины XVI до конца XVIII столетия, in: *Православный Палестинский Сборник*, т. XLIII, Санкт-Петербург 1895, 32.

¹⁰ Stavrou, G. T., *Russian Interests in Palestine, 1882–1914*, Thessaloniki 1963, 13.

¹¹ See: Miladinova, N., *The Panoplia Dogmatike by Euthymios Zygadenos. A Study on the First Edition Published in Greek in 1710*, Leiden 2014.

¹² Каптерев, Н. Ф., *Характер отношений России к православному Востоку в XVI и XVII столетиях*, 2-е изд., Сергиев Посад 1914, 300.

The relationship between Russians and Greeks took a new dimension later on (it is difficult to specify the exact dates – more research needs to be done in this area), undoubtedly due to the increasingly larger numbers of Russians arriving in Palestine and the corresponding rise of economic strength of Russians. The number of Russians willing to travel to Palestine had dramatically risen in the 19th century just as conditions of travel improved. This new intensive contact seems to have brought into the fore a latent cultural antagonism between Russians and Greeks (which was there even before in this regard, but not to such extent). In terms of mentality, there was a rift between the Russians and Greeks, since the Greeks viewed the Russian Church with respect due to its strict observance of fasts and other rules, emphasis on long prayer etc., however, criticised the lack of education and depth in the piety and substance in the rituals. The Russians, on the other hand, viewed the Greeks as superficial and undisciplined.¹³ The mutual criticisms were surely indicative of a superficial mutual understanding than of a more substantial character, but they did increase antagonism. The Greeks (understandably given their dire economic situation) saw wealthy patrons and customers in the Russians. This had projected itself into the business of relic selling and unsurprisingly relic fabrication and falsification by some merchants and others all along the pilgrim route.

The 19th century was a turning period for the developments in Palestine. Aggressive Roman Catholic and Protestant activities in the Holy Land provided a new challenge to the Orthodox. The Orthodox could no longer afford to pursue things as they did previously. The Russians soon realised the dangers facing the Orthodox presence in the Holy Land. There was also a traditional tension in the relationship between Greeks and Christian Arabs in the Middle East which could have resulted in loss of Christian Arabs from the Orthodox Church. The Uniate missionaries utilised these traditional problems to gain ground, however, in some instances, they lost ground themselves, like for example, thanks to the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar into the Uniate Church in 1858, which was met with a widespread rejection among the Uniate believers. Even the Uniate Patriarch Clement exiled himself into a monastery and received petitions from congregations that if the Gregorian Calendar is introduced into the Churches Old Style, priests will be brought into the Churches by force.¹⁴ There were conversions from the Uniates to the

¹³ Ibidem, 431.

¹⁴ Архив Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме (further АРДМ), дело № 1015, Переписка по делу воссоединения униатов. Cited by Архимандрит Никодим (Ротов), История Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме, in: *Богословские Труды. Сборник Двадцатый*.

Orthodox Church and the Russians played a key role in the successful conclusions of these conversions since the Arabs did not trust the Greeks.

Overall, in the 19th century, the relationship between the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Russians in Palestine was amicable. There were tensions in some moments. A serious problem related to the Bulgarian schism emerged. The Greeks viewed the growing emancipation of the Balkan nations with scepticism because it could entail ecclesial independence from the influence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Russians supported these emancipatory movements which provided ground for a conflict. In the Bulgarian schism, the Patriarch of Jerusalem Kirill did not sign the document accusing the Bulgarians (therefore supporting the Russian position) and was deposed by his fellow hierarchs in Jerusalem.

The Russian State and the Holy Land

It is not easy to assess of the degree of interest on the part of the Russian state / Tsar in the Middle East, or the Holy Land as such. Apart from the obvious ecclesial aspect and reverence towards the Holy Land, it is difficult to reconstruct the political and economic aspirations of the Russian State in the Holy Land. Some scholars stress that Russian policy on the state level changed towards Palestine during the centuries. Some authors, such as Smolitsch, emphasize that in the 18th century, there was a deterioration in the relations between the Christian East and Russia. That there was no longer such a great interest on the state level in Russia towards Palestine as it was previously. The donations and gifts to the Eastern Christians originated from receipts of the estates of dioceses, defrayed from property of the Russian Church, in contrast to the practice in the 17th century, when aid came from government sources and as personal gifts from Tsars.¹⁵

However, one should not see the situation that simple. The reason why it may appear for authors such as Smolitsch and others, that there was a decreasing interest on the state level in Palestine could lay in the simple fact that they are conflating

Сборник посвящен Митрополиту Ленинградскому и Новгородскому Никодиму, Москва 1979, 15–83 (here 32).

¹⁵ Smolitsch, I., *Zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen der Russischen Kirche und dem Orthodoxen Osten, Ostkirchliche Studien*, 1958, vol. 7, 6; Жигарев, С. А., *Русская политика в восточном вопросе (ее история в XVI–XIX веках, критическая оценка и будущие задачи), Историко-юридические очерки в 2 томах.*, т. I, Москва 1896, 91.

two different historical aspects of state policy. The reason why it appears that the Russian state and Tsars had a greater interest in Palestine before the 18th century could simply lie in the different nature of Russian politics and policy of that period. Earlier, the Russian state / Tsar and Orthodox Church sought to legitimise themselves in Russia and the contacts with the Middle East on the state level could help in this. After the 17th century, Russia was increasingly becoming consolidated and therefore, there was no need to maintain the same type of relationship as before.

On the other hand, there is a new phase, which sees Russia taking an interest outside itself, that is, in playing a role in the Middle East itself. Further, the Tsars seemed to have distinguished state policy from their own personal interest in the Middle East and their support of the Church. Thus, the various Tsars could appear uninterested in the Middle East on the state level, but at the same time, were always personally endowing various individuals and monasteries etc. in the area of the Middle East with lavish gifts; a tradition that continued well until the beginning of the October Revolution.

In any case, it is necessary to emphasise, that in comparison to France and the British Empire, the Russians were much slower in assuming the role “of protectors of Christians in the Middle East”. This is contrary to the mainstream opinion among many scholars, who see Russia as always ready to “protect Orthodox Christians”. The Russians were more interested in military and political influence than in protecting the Church. This goes against the notoriously mistaken view common in scholarship that the Russian state was historically always in a loving relationship with the Orthodox Church and always wanted to protect it and support it. It is more likely that the state decided to play the “Christian card” only when it was politically advantageous for the state and its interests and when it offered an opportunity to give an excuse for Russian involvement in the politics of the Middle East. Peter the Great is an obvious example of a person who did not love the Church unconditionally.¹⁶

The Christian issues were mentioned in legal discussions between the Russians and other powers and were incorporated in a number of treaties. The Treaty of Carlowitz (1699) is an interesting example of the Russians mentioning the Christian issues. The Russian representative in Vienna P. V. Voznitsyn insisted on religious issues being part of the agenda and on returning the Holy Sepulchre to the Greeks. At this time, the Serbs needed protection from the Jesuits, as well.¹⁷ Carlowitz enabled

¹⁶ For an overview see: Nykl, H., *Náboženství v ruské kultuře*, Červený Kostelec 2013; Boček, P., *Stát a církev v Rusku na přelomu XV. a XVI. století*, Brno 1995.

¹⁷ Капгерев, Н. Ф., *Характер отношений России к православному востоку в XVI и XVII столетиях*, 2-е изд., Сергиев Посад 1914, 369.

a treaty between Russia and Turkey in 1700, which confirmed the treaty of 1681 by which Russian clergy and laity received free passage without taxation, to Jerusalem and the Holy Places.¹⁸

The treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji under Catherine the Great (21st July 1774) was another important event, of course.¹⁹ The treaty is important and marks a new phase because it enabled Russia (after previous political and military gains) to use the Christian card much more effectively to meddle into Ottoman politics. In article 7, the Ottomans pledged to protect the Christian faith and churches and Russian ministers are granted the right to protect the interests of the Church “in Constantinople”. Importantly, article 8 offers unhindered travel to the Holy Lands for Russians without taxes etc. Article 14 also offers the Russians (as to other powers) the right to build a “public Greek Orthodox Church” in the Galat district of Constantinople. Russia would now be represented in Constantinople by a minister.²⁰ Another plan, revealed to Joseph II of Austria in 1782, saw the creation of a Byzantine Empire in the Balkans, under the rule of Catherine’s grandson born in 1779, Constantine.²¹ Later, the treaties of Adrianople (14th September 1829) and Unkiar Skelessi (8th July 1833) further elevated the state status in the region and that of Nikolay I (1825–1855). The treaty of Adrianople assured Russian merchants their rights, all of which continued to increase the travel and commerce in the area.²²

In the first half of the 19th century, the European powers were increasingly using the Christian card for political influence in the area of Palestine (this is an irony in some ways, given the secularisation movement in countries such as France). The London conventions of 1840 and 1841 had largely decreased Russia’s role as the protector of Christians in Turkey, awarding this role to the five powers instead. This was coupled by the opening of the doors in the East towards non-Orthodox propaganda.²³

¹⁸ The 1681 agreement of the Treaty of Bakhchisarai, was the first occasion when Holy Places were mentioned in a Russian and Ottoman setting.

¹⁹ Hurewitz, C. J., *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record, 1535–1914*, I., New York 1956, 54–61; *Полное собрание законов Российской Империи*, сост. М. М. Сперанский, т. XIX, № 14.164, Санкт-Петербург 1830, 957–967.

²⁰ Hurewitz, J. C., *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record, 1535–1914*, I., New York 1956, 56–57; *Imperial Russia A Source book, 1700–1917*, ed. B. Dmytryshyn, New York 1996, 107–113.

²¹ Vernadsky, G., *Political and Diplomatic History of Russia*, Boston 1936.

²² *Imperial Russia A Source book, 1700–1917*, ed. B. Dmytryshyn, New York 1996, 239–245.

²³ Архимандрит Киприан, *Archimandrite Kirprian, Отец Антонин Капустин – начальник Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме (1817–1894 гг.)*, Белград 1934, 114–115.

Again, contrary to common opinion, the Russian state and Tsars in the 19th century were rather clumsy and slow to react to the political and economic possibilities offered to the Russians by playing effectively the Christian card in the Middle East. There was no systematic approach and there was no idealistic rush to protect “Orthodox Christianity” by the state either.

The state progressed step by step and even extraordinarily so, in order not to “antagonise” the French or other European powers. Such a rather strangely cautious and humble approach to asserting political might could be also seen in the issue of Greek independence. Thus, while Russian public opinion was sympathetic to the Greek cause, the Tsarist policy was slow to react and people like the foreign minister Count Karl Robert Nesselrode even called for caution in supporting Greek independence since this would undermine “moral” values.²⁴ Nikolay I seems to have been a pacifist disliking rebellion and war.²⁵

An important initiative in terms of Palestine, was the journey of A. N. Muraviev who travelled to the East in 1838 to find out about the possibilities for Russia there. The tone of Muraviev was humble, advocating a limited role of Russia in the area of the Holy Land. Among other things, he stated, in his report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the following: “Just as the French Kings had designated themselves as the protectors of all Franks, who abide in the East [...] and all Catholic communities, [...] it would only be fair and beneficial and propitious for Eastern matters, if the Russian Tsar, would see fit to take under his own special patronage and protection the Holy sites, even if only the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Cave of the Mother of God in Gethsemane and the Bethlehem Church. We are speaking here only [...] about the Holy buildings, which is much more humble than the French ambition to protect all Catholics, regardless of their nationality [...]. It is necessary to obtain from the Sultan either as a gift or acquisition a small mosque (the Sion) of the Last Supper and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, which was previously a Christian monastery [...]. As soon as this mosque will be in our hands, it can become the centre for the establishment of the Russian Mission, consisting of an archimandrite, some monks and re-appointed every three years just as the Catholics do [...]. Just as after the visit of Russia by the Archbishop Favorskiy in all our Churches groups were established in which offerings are placed for the Holy Sepulchre, and the

²⁴ Nesselrode circular dispatch, Laibach, Mar. 18, 1831, *VPR* xii (1990): 70–1, quoted in: Frary, L. J., *Russia and the Making of Modern Greek Identity, 1821–1844*, Oxford 2015, 35.

²⁵ For Nikolay I see: Татищев, С. С., *Внешняя политика императора Николая I*, Санкт-Петербург 1887, 137–138; Татищев, С. С., *Император Николай и иностранные дворы*, Санкт-Петербург 1889.

collection reaches every year 40 thousand roubles in remittances, a part of these collections could be used to support the Jerusalem Mission [...]. The Archimandrite would decide how the money would be spent.”²⁶

An interesting report given in June 1842 by the vice-chancellor Count Karl Robert Nesselrode to the Tsar offers some suggestions about the possibilities of action in Palestine. The concern of the report is to protect the Orthodox Christians from non-Orthodox Christians and Muslims and it also shows how the state politicians viewed the Church as an essential instrument for government policy. It remains a question to what extent there is a sympathy to the Orthodox Christians in this report (especially given the fact that Nesselrode was a Protestant himself) and to what extent the Christians are only a cover for other political interests. Nesselrode advocates a covert “ecclesial operation” when he writes about sending a cleric there. He observes: “But it is also important to realise, that if a cleric is sent to Jerusalem and this is manifested publicly, this could represent certain inconveniences, which could partly proceed from various political causes and partially from the suspicious nature and personal opinions of the higher Greek clergy. And therefore, in the first instance, it might be good to limit oneself to a so-to speak educational role. Having this in mind, it would be good to choose a humble, judicious, hopeful priest monk or archimandrite, but not above this rank, and send him to Jerusalem in the capacity of a pilgrim. After he arrived there, he could, after fulfilling all the requirements of a pious person, try to gain the trust of the local priesthood, gradually infiltrating the situation of the Orthodox Church, and to discern on ground, what would be the useful measures to adopt in order to support Orthodoxy, and to convey this to the Russian Government and through the mediation of our consul in Beirut and according to the latter’s advice as required, give some beneficial suggestions to the Greek clergy from his own ‘private’ personal position and in brotherly love, while at the same time, confirming to the clergy the pious solidarity of the most high court with those sharing our faith.”²⁷

The report and other efforts led to action of the Holy Synod and the gradual process of establishing an ecclesial presence in Palestine which culminated in the establishment of the Russian Spiritual Mission there in 1847 (Русская Духовная Миссия в Иерусалиме). However, this did not mean a straightforward development

²⁶ Безобразов, П. В., О сношениях России с Палестиной в XIX веке, in: *Сообщения Императорского Православного Палестинского Общества*, т. XXII, вып. II, Санкт-Петербург 1911, 185–187.

²⁷ Каптерев, Н., Сношения Иерусалимских патриархов в текущем столетии (1815–1844 гг.), in: *Православный Палестинский Сборник*, т. XV, вып. I, Санкт-Петербург 1898, 679–681.

as this Spiritual Mission had to compete with various other institutions and interests supported by the government later.²⁸

Societies, pilgrims and scholars

The Holy Synod of the Russian Church on 26th June 1842 designated Archimandrite Porphyriy Konstantin Alexandrovich Uspenskiy to fulfil the role as envisioned by the report of Nesselrode cited above. On 4th November 1842, there was a meeting of the Holy Synod which dealt with him and his goals: “The present plan of sending the Archimandrite Porfyriy to Jerusalem in the capacity of a pilgrim and with the goal of revealing the current needs of Orthodoxy in Palestine and to establish a liaison between the Greek clergy and the Church leadership in Russia and with the task to oversee that the gifts offered serve the benefits of the Orthodox Church in those areas, is hereby established temporarily, and if it is to become permanent, will depend on the insights and fruits, which will bear from it.”²⁹ The importance of Archimandrite Porphyriy is paramount. His achievements both as an ecclesial figure and a scholar are amazing. His travels around the Middle East resulted in numerous publications, each valuable in itself, not only from a purely scholarly point of view, but due to multiform information contained in them spanning social, political, as well as personal, geographical and other information about the situation and life of the Orthodox Christians in his period.³⁰

²⁸ For further developments in the 20th century see: Anderson, K., Pilgrims, Property and Politics: the Russian Orthodox Church, in: *Eastern Christianity: Studies in Modern History, Religion and Politics*, ed. A. O’Mahony, London 2004, 388–340; Budnitskii, O., “Battling Balfour, White Diplomacy”: The Russian Orthodox Church and the Establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, *East European Jewish Affairs*, 2004, vol. 34, no. 1, 72–90; Gorodetsky, G., The Soviet Union’s Role in the Creation of the State of Israel, *The Journal of Israeli History*, 2003, vol. 22, no. 1, 4–20.

²⁹ Каптерев, Н., Сношения Иерусалимских патриархов в текущем столетии (1815–1844 гг.), in: *Православный Палестинский Сборник*, т. XV, вып. I, Санкт-Петербург 1898, 679–681 (here 681).

³⁰ See: Дмитриевский, А., Епископ Порфирий Успенский как инициатор и организатор первой русской духовной миссии в Иерусалиме и его заслуги в пользу православия и в деле изучения христианского востока, in: *Сообщения Императорского Православного Палестинского Общества*, т. VII, Санкт-Петербург 1905, 339–342. He published much material. His diaries and autobiographical notes were published as a series *Книга бытия моего* (published in a number of volumes, now reprinted numerously in Russia and spanning the period 1841–1885) containing extraordinary information providing a glimpse into the psyche of the period and also of the personal character and struggles of a Russian-cleric scholar. Material published regarding his

He left Sankt Petersburg on 22nd May 1843. The situation in the Middle East with the Orthodox Christians shocked Porphyriy and he formulated some ideas regarding the possibility of establishing a Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem and its activities which would include: “a) To promote visible unity of the Jerusalem, Antiocheane and Russian Churches and with this a mutual exchange of information; b) To control the money and its whereabouts which is sent from Russia; c) To take care of the Russian pilgrims; d) To furnish all the village churches in Syria and Palestine with icons. The Mission should have iconographers and a school of iconography; e) For the acceptance and the sending of gifts from Russia to the places for which they were meant, since this does not take place now; f) To find out where and in which villages there are formerly Christian Arabs who were turned into Muslims and where they commemorate their past Christianity, where they have respect to our saints and holy people, so that it is possible, after the next Orthodox celebration, to start with missionary activity and the conversion into the Christian faith in those villages; g) To give beneficial advice regarding the construction of national schools and seminaries, and Academies in the (Greek) Patriarchate itself.”³¹

In 1844, he writes two treatises on the situation of Orthodoxy in Syria and Palestine. These were: *On the Situation of the Palestinian Church and about the Measures to Uphold it* (О состоянии Палестинской Церкви и о мерах поддержания ее) and *Concerning the Arguments between Greeks, Latins and Armenians in the Holy Places and about the Possibilities of Bringing about Peace* (О спорах греков, латин и армян на святых местах и о способах водворения тут мира).

After travelling extensively and visiting various areas in the Middle East, Porfyriy reaches his homeland in 1846. Later in 1847, with the approval of the Tsar, the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem was established with Porphyriy at its head. The Mission organised development of education, spiritual care for pilgrims, hospitals and was involved in many other activities. It also aimed to counter the situation of decreasing numbers of Orthodox Christians mainly among the Arab population (partly due to traditional tensions with the Greeks), but also due to Uniate and Protestant propaganda.

The period saw increasing infighting between Protestants and Roman Catholics and the Orthodox Christians. Despite not being always united in their aims and goals, the Protestants constantly aimed at “converting someone” including the Jews.

visit to Mt. Athos, Egypt and the Holy Land contains valuable information and descriptions of manuscripts and other antiquities.

³¹ Пребывание преосвященного Порфирия Успенского на Св. Земле, in: *Сообщения Императорского Православного Общества*, т. XV, вып. IV, Санкт-Петербург 1905, 281–282.

In 1846, a year before the official establishment of the Russian Mission, Samuel Gobat became a Protestant bishop in Palestine and adopted an especially aggressive stance in converting other Christians to Protestantism (whereas previously the emphasis was on conversion of the Jews).³²

The almost traditional snobbery and contempt of Western missionaries towards the Orthodox Christians can be seen in the following account when Porphyriy convinced Patriarch Kyrillos to meet with the Protestant German missionary. Gil Kyrillos was prepared to engage him in a civil conversation. On this occasion, Porphyriy writes with sadness about this visit of this German “snob”: “18 (March) Thursday. At two o’clock I introduced to the Patriarch Kyrilos this above mentioned Gil. He appeared silent, as a fish: he sat, (Porphyriy uses the Russian expression *почеченился*), smoked some tobacco, said something behind his teeth about having read the writings of John Damascene, and this much only. He did not ask about the situation of the Orthodox Church in Palestine. His Blessedness upon my advice, was prepared to give him the proper understanding about Eparchies, about monasteries, about educational institutes, and about the preaching of the word on the Greek and Arabic language. One can only burst into anger when one realises that these people, who come from afar, instead of asking us about the situation of the Orthodox Church, ask about it any casual bystander and defiant person and then write personal fantasies.”³³

After the Crimean War, a new chapter begins with the Mission. A decree was sent to the Emperor by the minister for foreign affairs. The minister wrote: “It is necessary to designate the contemporary aim of the Mission, before it is sent, so that it could be valuable for the East, because it cannot continue as before [...]. Our goal, our efforts, consist of establishing peace among the various ethnic groups fighting each other in the East, and this is possible especially since the Russians are loved here equally by the Greeks, Arabs of the same faith, not speaking about the Slavs, and even the Latins of other faith and Armenians, Copts, Syrians, Chaldeans, who all happily share the company with them (with Russians), and who avoid Greeks, as their staunch enemies [...]. We have to create peace with those in animosity, and to uphold the Arabs, in order for them not to be enticed by the union by the actions of the Latins.” The document calls for the establishment of an

³² See: Leest, C. van der, *Conversion and Conflict in Palestine, The Missions of the Church Missionary Society and the Protestant Bishop Samuel Gobat*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Universiteit Leiden 2008.

³³ Епископ Порфирий Успенский, *Книга бытия моего. Дневники и автобиографические записки епископа Порфирия Успенского*, т. III, Санкт-Петербург 1896, 252–253.

episcopacy.³⁴ The document also states that the Mission should found hospitals and engage in philanthropic activity in Palestine. On 23rd March 1857 the document was sanctioned by the Emperor and, in this way, the Mission was established again.

Due to various intrigues, the next head of the Mission was not Porphyriy but Kirill Naumov. From Kirill Naumov's day, the Spiritual Mission continue its work, supporting and expanding schools, building schools and other buildings for the Greek Jerusalem Patriarchate. The Greeks were helped by the Russian Mission and money was raised for the Greek Church and other projects.³⁵ Kirill wanted to build a missionary basis with a school in Damascus and bought a house there. However, it was burnt down by fanatical Muslims but (interestingly) the Turks reimbursed the Mission with all expenses.³⁶ The Mission offered comprehensive care for pilgrims and even organised hospital care and a surgical cabinet.³⁷

The period after the Crimean War witnessed ever increasing numbers of pilgrims to Palestine and the Russian Spiritual Mission faced new competition from new emerging Russian societies with interest in the area. The fact that these other societies were also supported by the government or other individuals, clearly shows that the Spiritual Mission or the Church as such was not of primary concern for the State or other segments of state policy. From the other societies and developments, we can mention the establishment of the Palestinian Committee (1859–1864), the

³⁴ See: АРДМ, дело № 1, Копия доклада Министерства Иностранных Дел императору Александру II, cited by Архимандрит Никодим (Ротов). *История Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме*, in: *Богословские Труды Сборник Двадцатый, Сборник посвящен Митрополиту Ленинградскому и Новгородскому Никодиму*, Москва, 1979, 15–83 (here 32). See also: Титов, Ф. И., *Преподобный Кирилл (Наумов), епископ Мелитопольский, бывший настоятель Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме*, Киев 1902, 108, 113.

³⁵ For these activities and donations see: АРДМ, дело № 1013, Переписка с русским консулом в Дамаске по вопросу о различных пожертвованиях Антиохийской Церкви; АРДМ, дело № 1204, Дело о пожертвованиях Антиохийской Церкви; АРДМ, дело № 1205, Дело о посылке митрополиту Тиро-Сидонскому Герасиму архиерейского облачения и митры; cited by Архимандрит Никодим (Ротов). *История Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме*, in: *Богословские Труды Сборник Двадцатый, Сборник посвящен Митрополиту Ленинградскому и Новгородскому Никодиму*, Москва 1979, 32.

³⁶ АРДМ, дело № 1695, Переписка по делу миссийского дома в Дамаске; cited by Архимандрит Никодим (Ротов). *История Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме*, in: *Богословские Труды Сборник Двадцатый, Сборник посвящен Митрополиту Ленинградскому и Новгородскому Никодиму*, Москва 1979, 32.

³⁷ АРДМ, дело № 1215, О хирургических инструментах; cited by Архимандрит Никодим (Ротов). *История Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме*, in: *Богословские Труды Сборник Двадцатый, Сборник посвящен Митрополиту Ленинградскому и Новгородскому Никодиму*, Москва 1979, 32.

Palestinian Commission (1864–1889), and from 1882 the establishment of the influential Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society.

Soon, a conflict of interest emerged and the various rival societies competed among each other, and undoubtedly pilgrim money played a role in the motivation for these conflicts. This included the ongoing tension between the Russian state representatives abroad and the Spiritual Mission. In 1858 the Russian Consulate was established in Jerusalem and also the agency called The Russian Community of (Steam) Shipping and Commerce (Русское Общество Пароходства и Торговли РОПИТ). In St. Peterburg the Palestinian Committee (1859) was established. However, both these organisations (Shipping Group and the Consulate) went against the Spiritual Mission since it was an ecclesial establishment. The situation was even more complex because the head of the Consulate and the Agency of (Steam) Shipping and Commerce was one and the same person Dorgobuzhinov.³⁸

In April 1859, the Grand Prince Constantine Nikolayevich visited Palestine, and at that time, he was the chief of the Palestinian Committee. He clearly indicated that there should be no conflict between the Mission and the Consulate and importantly, more or less gave the Palestinian Committee the responsibility for land acquisition, building, etc.; and in this, the Committee, according to him, would “closely cooperate with the Russian Consulate” in these matters. The Mission was reduced to spiritual care, which is obviously unclear and strange because the work of the Mission was necessarily linked with issues of buildings etc. The other result of the visit of the Grand Prince Constantine Nikolayevich in Jerusalem was the purchase of a large portion of ground towards the west from the Damascus gate close to the Jerusalem walls, that is on the Meydam square.

The Spiritual Mission was completely side tracked from these various activities, and the negative situation was obvious to Kirill Naumov and the representatives of the Church. The Church supported Kirill, when he doubted the reasons for the presence of the The Russian Community of (Steam) Shipping and Commerce in the Holy Land, where there was no commerce or shipping. He asks: “What the Russian Community of (Steam) Shipping and Commerce does or want to do? – Well, it is uncertain what it wants to do. It wants to build a Church, accommodation and a hospital for the pilgrims. But is this not the area of the Spiritual Mission, rather than of The Russian Community of (Steam) Shipping and Commerce. And further, The Russian Community of (Steam) Shipping and Commerce has the money

³⁸ Архимандрит Никодим (Рогов). История Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме in: *Богословские Труды Сборник Двадцатый, Сборник посвящен Митрополиту Ленинградскому и Новгородскому Никодиму*, Москва 1979, 15–83 (here 32).

collected for philanthropic institutions in Jerusalem in its hands and occupies itself, as for the future, to gain as much of this money in its hands as possible.”³⁹ Kirill was later removed from his position on uncertain grounds, the influence of the various non-ecclesial players was obviously strong. He was replaced by Archimandrite Antonin Kapustin who came to Jerusalem on 11th September 1865. From now on, the Mission would be headed by an Archimandrite in order not to provoke the various non-ecclesial Russian institutions and also canonically the Greek Church. Kapustin also saw the negative aspects of the Greek Hierarchy and the other non-ecclesial Russian institutions. Kapustin observes, that “in the Jerusalem period of Kirill, we have suffered without deserving it, not one temptation. We were deceived, laughed at by those, who we faithfully fed and gave drink and held on and carried in our hands.”⁴⁰

Nevertheless, it is possible to state that the competition between the various Russian societies and interests produced some positive results. In this regard, the acquisition of land (Palestinian Committee) was positive. However, it was the establishment of the Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society in 1882, which elevated efforts to a new higher and scholarly ground. The Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society and its activity reached its peak during the period when the secretary of societies was Alexey Afanasievich Dmitrievsky (March 1856 – August 1929) who is of paramount importance in Byzantology and scholarship linked with Palestine and the Near East.⁴¹ A. A. Dmitrievsky became a secretary of the Society in 1906 (1906–1918). Dmitrievsky was interested in Liturgical scholarship, and his study of the Church Slavonic liturgical tradition naturally led him to an increased interest in the Liturgical traditions of the Middle East. He emphasised the necessity of studying and preserving the manuscripts of the Middle East, especially due to the intimate relationship between the Church Slavonic and Middle East liturgical traditions. This was also highlighted in his thesis.⁴² However, it is important to say that

³⁹ *Собрание мнений и отзывов Филарета, митрополита Московского и Коломенского, по делам Православной Церкви на Востоке*, Санкт-Петербург 1886, 378–379.

⁴⁰ *Церковный Вестник*, 1877, № 41, 8; Cited in Архимандрит Никодим (Ротов). *История Русской Духовной Миссии в Иерусалиме*, in: *Богословские Труды Сборник Двадцатый, Сборник посвящен Митрополиту Ленинградскому и Новгородскому Никодиму*, Москва 1979, 39.

⁴¹ Among the many works available regarding Dmitrievsky one can note: Сове, Б. И., *Русский Гоар и его школа*, in: *Богословские труды*, т. IV, Москва 1968, 39–84; Арранц, М., А. А. Дмитриевский: из рукописного наследия, in: *Архивы русских византинистов в Санкт-Петербурге*, ред. И. П. Медведев, Санкт-Петербург 1995, 120–133.

⁴² Дмитриевский, А. А., *Богослужение в Русской Церкви в XVI в., часть I, Службы круга седмичного и годичного и чинопоследования таинств. С приложением греческих текстов*. Казань 1884,

Dmitrievsky also produced many works which began to reach the masses and in turn stimulated increased interest in the Holy Land among the common folk. These have not lost their appeal even today due to the often lost material they include. He wrote articles for the common believers stimulating interest in Palestine and often showing the liturgical mistakes in the Russian Church created by a misunderstanding of the ancient sources, for example in the *Guide for Village Priests* (*Руководство для сельских пастырей*).⁴³ Dmitrievsky travelled to Athos, Palestine, the Sinai and other places. He collaborated with the nascent study of materials in the library of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. An important scholar working in the library there was Papadopoulos Kerameus who would later publish an important work *Description of the Jerusalem Library* (*Описание Иерусалимской библиотеки*).⁴⁴ Dmitrievsky's travels resulted in a number of valuable works which are considered to be sources for many disciplines until today.⁴⁵ He travelled to Palestine again in 1898. In 1895, the first volume of the work, which Dmitrievsky is best known for, was published: *The Description of Liturgical Manuscripts* (*Описание литургических рукописей*).⁴⁶

Dmitrievsky saw many negative aspects of the Russian presence in Palestine. He mentioned that he was planning to publish one of his speeches *Contemporary Russian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* (*Современное русское паломничество в Святую Землю*) as a brochure entitled *Types of Contemporary Russian Pilgrims in the Holy Land* (*Типы современных русских паломников в Святой Земле*) where he would mention the dirtiness and filth of the Russian pilgrimage boats, the demoralisation

XVI, 434, 135, XXIV. See also: Дмитриевский, А. А., Способы определения времени написания рукописей без определенных дат вообще и богослужбных рукописей в частности. Речь перед защитой магистерской диссертации: Богослужение в Русской Церкви в XVI веке, *Православный Собеседник*, 1884, № 1, 90–91.

⁴³ For the liturgical mistakes see: Дмитриевский and his articles, *Христианское чтение*, 1888, № 9–10, 561.

⁴⁴ See: Дмитриевский, А. А., А. И. Пападопуло-Керамевс и его сотрудничество в научных изданиях Палестинского Общества. По личным воспоминаниям и по документальным данным, in: *Сообщения Императорского Православного Палестинского Общества*, т. XXIV, вып. IV, III, Санкт-Петербург 1913, 492–523, 379–380.

⁴⁵ Дмитриевский, А. А., *Путешествие по Востоку и его научные результаты. Отчет о заграничной командировке в 1887–1888 г.с прил.*, Киев 1890, 121.

⁴⁶ Which are preserved in the library of the Orthodox East, vol. 1, Typicons, part 1. Works relating to Patriarchal stipulations and ktitor monastic typicons, Kiev 1895, XX, CXLVII, 912, XX; later published other volumes); See: Дмитриевский, А. А., *Описание литургических рукописей, хранящихся в библиотеках православного Востока*, т. I, Типика: Памятники патриарших уставов и ктигорские монастырские Типиконы, Киев 1895; т. II, Евхологии, Киев 1901; т. III (2-я половина), Типика, Петроград 1917.

and exploitation of Russian pilgrims women by the brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the indifference shown to pilgrims by the Russian Consulate in Jerusalem.⁴⁷ In the period of Dmitrievsky's role as a secretary the Society had eight dependencies (подворий) in Palestine. The state realised the potential of the Society and its works. On 5th July 1912, Nikolay II ratified a law enacted by the Duma about the financing of the Society's schools in Syria (including Lebanon).⁴⁸

For the ideological background of Dmitrievsky and Russian efforts in general, the following speech given by Dmitrievsky on 2nd March 1915 is of a great interest. It was given on the occasion of the declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which declared the idea of annexing Constantinople to Russia in the event of a Russian military victory in the war.⁴⁹ He began his speech by stating that "the fight of Russia and the Entente against the 'Central powers' resembles in many ways the medieval crusades".⁵⁰ This march was prepared by the God-bearing Russian nation, which, in the course of many centuries, peacefully flocked to bow to the Life bearing Tomb of the Lord, and there it cried with tears of emotion, begging the Life giver to be able to see that desired time, when the greatest of Christian sanctuaries – the Tomb of the Lord – will be free from the captivity from the sons of Hagar. And it is the fate of this God carrying nation and Christ loving Tsar, the Emperor Nikolay II, by Providence, together with his valiant companions, to fulfil this high task which was, at some point in time, handled with difficulty by Christian nations of the medieval period."⁵¹

Further, according to Dmitrievsky, the battle of European interests in the Holy Land is something more than just a conflict; is an interreligious and intercivilisational war. The initiative of the Prussian king Friedrich-Wilhelm IV, "who was always unique in his mystical religious disposition", to establish a Protestant bishopric in

⁴⁷ The work, in the academic context, came out as Дмитриевский, А. А., *Современное русское паломничество в Святую Землю*, Труды Киевской Духовной академии, № VI, Киев 1903, 274–319.

⁴⁸ *Полное собрание законов Российской Империи*, серия III, т. XXXII., Санкт-Петербург 1912, 1915, 1117.

⁴⁹ The speech is cited in 'Introductory essay': Лисовой, Н. Н., А. А. Дмитриевский и его труды по истории Русской Палестины, in: *Императорское Православное Палестинское Общество, и его деятельность за истекшую четверть века 1882–1907*, А. А. Дмитриевский, Москва 2008; Абышко, О., *Императорское Православное Палестинское Общество*, Санкт Петербург, 55; Дмитриевский, А. А., *Доклад о необходимости освобождения Иерусалима из-под власти Турции. Автограф и машинопись, 2 марта 1915*, Фонд рукописей Российской национальной библиотеки, ф. 253, оп. I, д. 37, 87 лл.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, л. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, л. 3.

Jerusalem in 1841, was, according to Dmitrievsky, an attempt “to establish a defence system in the Holy Land for future German colonisation which has flowered already with force in our own time”.⁵² According to the author, “the war, which has the freedom of the Bosphorus and Dardanel straits and the gain of Constantinople as its immediate goal in order to placate the Orthodox world, and to exchange the crescent on Saint Sophia with the cross, will undoubtedly also contribute to the freedom of the Holy Land from the hated yoke of the sons of Hagar in the end, which has for such a long period around 400 years, been laid upon it”.⁵³ Further, according to Dmitrievsky, “Russia at the Tomb of the Lord, has the utmost immediate and non-negotiable interests, and its goal is to stand guard at the Tomb of the Lord, with a fierce leg, on the basis of being by law the caretaker, which is lawful and of substance”.⁵⁴ Dmitrievsky further elaborated on the scholarly interests that need to be developed in relation to Palestine. The need to call in scholars, who “would appear in the Holy Land, to work with antiquities in those areas where every inch of land presents a precious shrine, the study of which appears to be of undisputed importance to us Orthodox without any doubt. It is necessary to establish independent archaeological excavations of Orthodox scholars, especially the Orthodox from Russia. Only the God loving Christian Russia, in its strength can open this precious depth, over which our blood and sweat has been spilled”.⁵⁵

The Society published a huge amount of scholarly material, as well as annual reports. To gain an insight on the situation and activities of the Society, we can mention information gathered in one such almanac of the Society dealing with the year 1905.⁵⁶ The almanac shows, for example, which accounts of the Society were regularly monitored. The income of the Society stemmed from membership fees, important collections from *Palm Sunday*, the sale of publications, pilgrims. The Society’s expenditures aimed at running the educational institutions, helping Churches in Palestine, maintaining hospital care.⁵⁷

⁵² Ibidem, л. 7.

⁵³ Ibidem, л. 22.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, л. 16–17.

⁵⁶ Годовое общее собрание Императорского Православного Палестинского Общества 4 декабря 1905 года, in: *Сообщения Императорского Православного Палестинского Общества*, т. XVII, вып. I–IV, ред. И. Соколов, Санкт Петербург 1906, 113–127.

⁵⁷ On 1st March 1903, there were the following remnants: 1) in cash 47 114 roubles, 76 cop.; 2) in untouchable capital 127 304 roubles; 3) turnover capital 289 400 roubles. Altogether 463 818 roubles, 76 cop. For 1st March 1904 the remnants 1) in cash 40 260 roubles, 7 cop.; 2) in

As to some information about the life of the Society in 1904–1905, we hear that the Society had to struggle with members not paying their membership fees. There were concerns about attracting new members. As the report states, the Society's main fundraising activity on *Palm Sunday* has decreased and not produced such a high income as before. The report states that the Society in the end did make ends meet. Donations included those from Her Imperial Highness Princess Elizabet Theodorovna (200 roubles), Her Imperial Highness the Great Princess Alexandra Yosifovna (75 roubles). The Society operated and gained much of its support on the diocesan level on the level of eparchies. The Society continued to organise readings about Palestine in Russia. In the years 1903–1904, these readings were visited by 4 000 000 people.

A certain member priest of the Society S. D. Yachontov, reports about the great success that his lectures for simple peasant folk had in the village in Pronskiy Uyezd. People were interested in the lectures describing Palestine, the pilgrimages, all of which was illustrated by pictures. There was also interest in the various pictures and brochures given out. The Society had sent out 25 360 exemplars of brochures to assist the readings and 962 000 Palestinian papers to be given away with the statement *Voice of the Pastor about the Holy Land*. The average amount of people who studied in the schools of the Society in 1904 was 10 741 people.⁵⁸

In the section *News from the Orthodox East*, we read that, in his speech, the Patriarch Damian thanked the *skevofylax* Euthimius for material support of the school (of the Jerusalem Patriarchate), and also reminded the gathering of the help and support from the sultans Abdul Medzid, Abdul Azis and Abdul Hamid II. The gathering exclaimed “long live” (ζήτω) and sang the hymn Hamidie.⁵⁹

The Annual Report mentioned Roman Catholic and Protestant aggression in order to gain Orthodox religious sites, and the need to gain greater historical and legal knowledge on the part of the Orthodox to counter this.⁶⁰ There was criticism since the school (Patriarchate of Jerusalem School) does not sufficiently teach Arabic, which is of great detriment in the pastoral activity of the Church in Palestine.

untouchable capital 133 904 roubles and 3) turnover capital 217 200 roubles. Altogether 391 364 roubles, 7 cop.; Ibidem, 114.

⁵⁸ There were 5 777 male and 4 964 female students. In the Judean schools there were 495 students; in the Galilean 712 students; in the Beirut ones 934, in the Southern Syrian 3 677, in the Northern Syrian 4 923. The staff including the inspectors consisted of 417 people, 25 of which were Russians, the rest locals.

⁵⁹ Вести из православного Востока, in: *Сообщения Императорского Православного Палестинского Общества*, т. XVII, вып. I–IV, ред. И. Соколов, Санкт-Петербург 1906, 114, 128–157, 132.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 134.

In the years 1904–1905, there were 62 students in the school of the Jerusalem Patriarchate. The Imperial Orthodox Society had to the date 1st June 1905, 24 schools with 1300 students of both sexes. There is frequent complaining that the Protestants are encroaching on the Orthodox facilities stealing students from the Orthodox.⁶¹ It is stated that on one occasion where the Protestant Mission did not have success in establishing a school and stealing students, the Protestants supported feuds among the Christians themselves and even going as far as supporting fanatical Muslims to attack the Christians.⁶²

Conclusions

Our small excursion into the Russian presence in Palestine shows a number of features. Generally, it can be stated that the Russian government, especially in the 19th century, was slow and indecisive in assuming the role of the Protector of Orthodox Christians in the Middle East (in contrast to other European powers). The Tsar and the Russian Government did sanction the establishment of the Russian Spiritual Mission in Palestine as we have seen, but this came relatively late in the 19th century. The fact, that in the second half of the 19th century, there were more societies and organisations from Russia in Palestine and had the support of the Russian Government, clearly demonstrates that there was no particular preference given by the Tsar or the government to the Orthodox Mission. Endless conflicts between the Russian Consulate in Palestine and competition among the Societies, often for pilgrim money, again shows that the Church did not have any special position in the eyes of the government, which, however, did use the Church when opportunity presented itself to enhance Russian policy especially in the Balkans.

On the other hand, the activities of the Russian Spiritual Mission and the Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society clearly show the radically different nature of their activities in contrast to Protestant missions and other Roman Catholic missions. The Russian organisations promoted scholarship and were mainly concerned with upholding the rights of the Greek Patriarchate and Arab Christians while building educational and other facilities.

⁶¹ Ibidem, 142.

⁶² Ibidem, 143.

ABSTRACT

**Some Aspects of Russian Ecclesial and
State Policy in Palestine with Particular Reference
to the Nineteenth Century**

Václav Ježek

The study deals with the Russian presence in Palestine especially during the 19th century. It shows that the Russian government did not prefer the Orthodox Church in its policy in Palestine which demonstrates the important role of the Russian ecclesial and other societies in Palestine and their contribution to scholarship and mainly the survival of Orthodox Christianity in Palestine.

Key words: Palestine, Russia, Russian Spiritual Mission.

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