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METROPOLITAN FILARET (DROZDOV) AND RUSSIAN CHURCH POLICY IN THE HOLY LAND IN THE 1850S–1860S

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Abstract: The issues raised in the article refer to the problems of Church diplomacy of Russia and other great powers in the Middle East in the 1850–1860's when Russian diplomacy, both secular and church, faced the task of developing new approaches, first of all, in shaping the sphere of Russian interests in the Middle and Far East. Church policy of Russia in the Christian East in the 1850s–1860s is observed through the prism of the position of the Metropolitan of Moscow Filaret (Drozdov, 1782–1867), an outstanding church figure whose position determined the development of Russian church presence abroad not only in the Holy Land, but also in China and North America. The role of Metropolitan Filaret is presented in the forefront of such issues as the development of inter-church relations between the Russian Church with the Patriarchates of the East, the formation of the concept of Russian-Greek, Russian-Arab and Russian-Slavic relations, the interaction and contradictions of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission and the Russian consulate in Jerusalem.

The 1850s and 1860s are one of the most important periods in the history of Russo-Greek relations in the realm of Orthodoxy. They include the first decade after the Crimean War, when Russia ended up involved in a military conflict against Turkey, Great Britain and France. As pretext for the war served the disagreement between Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox over the holy places of Palestine.

Russian policy in the Christian East (that is, in the post-Byzantine areas) was above all ecclesiastical. In the Holy Land, Russia had no other interests but the support of the local Orthodox Churches, in contrast to Great Britain and France, which had first and foremost colonial or economic interests in the Ottoman Empire. The strengthening of the ecclesiastical presence of Russia in the Christian East served as an important factor of political influence.

The Crimean War manifested several miscalculations of the Russian policy in the Christian East. Despite the decisive attitude of the Russian Emperor, Nicolay the First, who said: "I will never agree to the weakening of our significance in the Holy Land and among the Christians of the East" (Rjevuskiy 1913, 851),

the Russian presence in the Holy Land before the Crimean War was only nominal: the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, created in 1847 as a response to the establishment of the Anglo-Prussian Bishopric (1841), was not officially recognized by the Ottoman Porte; the head of the Mission Archimandrite Porfirii (Uspenskii) and his collaborators were in Jerusalem in the form of "common pilgrims." Nor was there the necessary diplomatic support on the part of the Russian government.

After the Crimean War, the course of Russian policy in Syria and Palestine was directed towards the overcoming of shortcoming and omissions of the pre-Crimean period. It was time to form those institutions and establishments, which will characterize the ecclesiastical-diplomatic relations of the local Orthodox Churches in the following decades, and practically to our own time. One could speak of a "paradigm change", which gave rise to the phenomenon called Russian Palestine in the Holy Land.

The terms of the Treaty of Paris (1856) conditioned a new strategy for the re-establishment of Russia's influence in the Orthodox East, and first of all in Jerusalem. According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Alexander M. Gorchakov, after the Crimean War Jerusalem became "the central point not only of the whole East, but also of the West" (Titov 1902, 114). Indeed, by the mid-1850s, thanks to the efforts of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem under the leadership of Samuel Gobat a significant protestant community was created in the Holy Land, practically from scratch.

The activity of English and American missionaries was highly regarded by Russian researchers who noted that despite the comparatively few occasions of conversion to Protestantism, "the cultural predominance among the Arabs until well into the 1860s unconditionally belonged not to the Catholic Missionaries, but to the Protestants" (Krymskiy 1971, 263). In all of Asian Turkey, there were founded American schools and other institutions which served, per the words of Russian experts, as an instrument for the achievement "of mainly propagandistic aims" (Kolubakin 1887, 108; Putyata 1896).

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Giuseppe Valerga, who was recognized as head of the Catholic communities was actively supported by Pope Pius IX and the Emperor of France, Napoleon III (Titov 1902, 38-39). In 1855, such support augmented in the case of Marie-Alfonse Ratisbonne, a zealous missionary, who was a relative of the Rothschilds. Under the leadership of Valerga worked experienced missionaries from various monastic and semi-monastic orders, who, much like the Protestant Missionaries, created a whole network of schools and hospitals in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Bet-Jala, Jaffa, Ramleh, and Rammalah, and also in the whole of Syria (Popov 1890, 743).

Russia did not have any philanthropic institutions in Jerusalem in contrast to the western powers. In connection to this, the head of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, A.M. Gorchakov noted in a report submitted to the emperor: "It is necessary

to acquire a representation in the East, that is, not a political, but a religious one, which cannot be denied either by the Turks, or by the French, who have their patriarchs and bishops in the Holy Land" (Yamilinec 2003, 244). Emperor Alexander II coming to a decision regarding the recommendations of Gorchakov's report, responded: "After everything that Christians of other denominations have been doing, it would be a shame for us to be left behind" (Alexander 1857, 19-20).

The Russian Steamship and Trade Company was founded in 1856, and right afterwards the question was posed of a resumption of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. To make it more weighty, the MoFA considered it necessary "to place at the head of the Jerusalem Mission a bishop instead of an archimandrite." A Philanthropic Committee was established on the initiative of Empress Mariia Aleksandrovna for the material support of the Ecclesiastical Mission and for humanitarian programmes in the Holy Land.

Compensatory mechanisms were thus employed which were supposed to raise the prestige of Russia to a new level. In addition, the MoFA was supposed to act primarily through church channels, which of course presupposed the coordination of the activities with the All-Russian Most Holy Synod.

The connecting knot between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Synod in the sphere of church policy of Russia was Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov), the most authoritative and influential Russian hierarch of the 19th century.

In the church circles of Great Britain and the USA, Metropolitan Filaret was well-known as an individual who stood at the beginning of a new round of Anglican-Orthodox dialog on the union of churches, which had been resumed under the initiative of Anglican theologians. The elevated authoritativeness of Filaret among both church and diplomatic circles, and also among members of the Imperial Family was based on his deep roots in the Byzantine patristic tradition, his internal asceticism, his spiritual purity and the admiration to his person (Smirnova 2015). The views and expert opinions of Metropolitan Filaret practically determined the course of church policy in the second half of the 19th century, not only in Russia, but also in North America, China, and the Far East (Smirnova 2017). But above all, his talent as a church diplomat was fully displayed in the Orthodox East.

One of the most important issues after the Crimean War was the development of a new conception of ecclesiastical policy of Russia in the Ottoman Empire. This was an especially topical question in connection to the acute conflict between the Greek ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Ottoman Empire with their Slavic (Bulgarian and Serbian) and Arab flocks, which expected support and protection from Orthodox Russia. The unity of the Orthodox local churches more than ever was in need of strengthening. The aggravation of the relations between the Greek hierarchy and the Bulgarians and Arabs threatened to lead to their exit from the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch and to the appearance of national churches. Without strong protection they would easily fall prey to proselytism. Under

such conditions, Russia was required to specify its own position with regard to the Ottoman government, to Western diplomacy, to the Greek high clergy (that is, to the Constantinople and Jerusalem patriarchs) and to their multi-national flock (in the first place, Arabs and Slavs).

The Holy Synod was fully aware of the sad conditions affecting the Christian East and the unacceptable activities of the Greek hierarchy, such as simony, attempts to grab all spiritual authority in their own hands, indifference and even cruelty of clergy in regard to their Orthodox Slav and Arab flocks, that is, attitudes that were reciprocated by hatred against the Greek hierarchy.

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the ecclesiastical-political realities, and having a long-term experience of direct contacts with clergy, not only Greek, but also Arab and Slavic, Metropolitan Filaret considered as the main principle of ecclesiastical policy in the East the maintenance of the conciliar unity of the Russian and the Eastern churches. He was convinced that under the conditions of persecution by the Ottomans and the proselytism of the West, "the creation of independent national Churches, Slavic or Arab, would lead to a weakening of the Greek hierarchy and of their flocks, and to the same extent, to a strengthening of their adversaries" (Filaret 1858, 172ob.-173).

In particular, Metropolitan Filaret proposed to establish between the Constantinople Patriarchate and its Bulgarian eparchies the same kind of relations that existed between Constantinople and the Helladic Church, that is, a kind of church autonomy. Filaret considered such a "division without a break" as necessary "for the sake of the honor of the Ecumenical Throne and for the sake of church unity" (Filaret 1886, 199-204). Filaret understood the role of Russia in the solution of internal problems of the Eastern Church as primarily a peacekeeping one (Filaret 1858, 173ob).

Another outstanding church diplomat, Antonin (Kapustin) shared the position of Metropolitan Filaret. In January 1861, he wrote to Filaret from Constantinople: "What is the Eastern Church? An almost perfect separation of its members" (Letters 1900, 473-477). Recognizing that "The Greek Church finds itself in unfavorable conditions" and that in the depths of Orthodoxy there exist "destructive activities of division", Antonin emphasized the necessity of unity with the Greek Eastern Church.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept to a similar position. Convinced that the "Greek clergy, by force of those very same circumstances, has been appointed guardian [or custodian] of Orthodoxy in the East" the MoFA ordered Russian representatives to strengthen this "last connection among Orthodox peoples" (Lisovoy 2000, 60).

The question of the strengthening of church unity was raised at the same time that in the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches of England and the USA there began processed directed at the union of Christian Churches. In such

circumstances, the Russian Church and diplomacy had a difficult diplomatic task, to strengthen church unity of Eastern local churches, without allowing the turn away from Orthodoxy among the Bulgarians, the Serbs and the Arabs, while at the same time not impeding the development of dialog with Western confessions that sought convergence.

Given the political control of the Porte and the unceasing pressure of the diplomats of great powers, the MoFA, developing a strategy for the Russian presence in the Orthodox East, was guided by canonical rules, raised by the Moscow metropolitan, whose main task was the maintenance of conciliar unity of the Russian and the Eastern Church.

With the participation of Filaret and in close cooperation of the All Russian Holy Synod with the MoFA the coordination was made of the activity of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, reestablished in 1857. The selection of the head of the Jerusalem Mission was a matter of particular attention. It is true that initially there was no discussion, since the appointment on this position of a bishop was an exclusively political decision.The MoFA, which believed that "this [= such an appointment] would cause a strong impression not only in Jerusalem, but also in Constantinople" (Lisovoy 2000, 60), acted independently, without consultation with the Most Holy Synod. On this occasion, the MoFA acted following the example of other great powers, which had their own bishops and Patriarchs in the Holy Land, appointments that were allowed exclusively after pressure was exerted by the British and French diplomats. However, the appointment of a Russian bishop would cause an especially painful reaction on the part of Jerusalem Patriarch, Kirillos II, who understood such a step as "disparagement of the dignity of the Orthodox Patriarch" (Filaret 1887, 455).

Foreseeing such a reaction, Metropolitan Filaret did not approve of the appointment of a Russian bishop in Jerusalem. For Filaret, the main policy of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission was to be the formation of relations of trust with the Greek hierarchy as "our natural allies" (Filaret 1858, 171). He called upon the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Bishop Kirill (Naumov) to work on forming contacts with the Jerusalem hierarchy in such a way that "there would not be the smallest amount of distrust among archhierarchs, serving in the one and the same Universal Church" (Filaret 1858, 172ob.-173).

However, when the news reached Filaret of the offense felt by Patriarch Kirillos regarding the fact that they "did not inform him in advance" regarding the appointment in Jerusalem of a Russian archhierarch, he [Filaret] openly defended the Russian bishop.In his reaction Filaret mentioned that in the Moscow eparchy there were a number of patriarchal dependencis called podvor'ia (metochia), where for years there lived Greek hierarchs who had come to Russia in order to collect alms for the patriarchal thrones.

> Is it appropriate that the Jerusalem Patriarch protests again the appointment of a Russian bishop in Jerusalem," wrote Filaret "after he himself has sent an archbishop to Russia? … The difference is only this, that the Bishop of Melitopol' brought to Jerusalem Russian money, and the Archibishop of Favor did not bring to Russia Jerusalem money, but instead exported from Russia around half a million in Russian money, according to contemporary estimates (Filaret 1887, 455-457).

When the conflict arose between the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission and the Russian consul in Jerusalem, the decision was made to recall Biship Kirill to Russia and to appoint an archimandrite at the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission as it was before. Metropolitan Filaret commented that

> it would have been better in the beginning to appoint an archimandrite to head the Mission, and later elevate him to the office of an archhierarch, rather than replace an archhierarch with an archimandrite. The first would be an elevation in power through force, the latter has the form of a demotion (Filaret 1886, 420).

Later, when the issue of the Russian institutions in the Holy Land was being discussed, Metropolitan Filaret did not see any obstacles to assigning their administration to a bishop as the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, but considered it politice in order to keep up appearances "to ask the permission of the Jerusalem Patriarch" (Ibid, 402).

Time proved that analogous conflicts between the church and state leaderships were practically universal, and not only in Russian, but also in European circles. As a rule, the reasons were interdepartmental and interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings. And despite all collisions that developed between the leaders of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission and the consuls in Jerusalem, the MoFA and the Holy Synod were guided by the recommendations of the Moscow Metropolitan. As a result, Filaret was called upon to solve questions, which were affected by a complex variety of factors, personal, psychological, hierarchical, canonical and diplomatic.

Thus, as a result of the confrontation between the head of Russian Ecclesiastical Mission Archimandrite Leonid (Kavelin) and the Russian Consul in Jerusalem Kartsov in 1864–65, the matter ended up becoming a conflict with the Jerusalem Patriarch. The patriarch, on the basis of a denunciation by the Kartsov declared Archimandrite Leonid persona non grata, and prohibited him from performing services in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Metropolitan Filaret demanded a very detailed investigation of the situation in Jerusalem. Filaret did not only manage to prove the innocence of the archimandrite, but he also defended the dignity of the representative of the Russian Church from the wrongful, as Filaret thought, actions of the Patriarch. Archimandrite Leonid was fully rehabilitated and moved to Constantinople (one could even call this

"a promotion"), and per Filaret's recommendation, Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin) was appointed as Philling the office of the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, having been there before for the investigation.

The constant struggle of the heads of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission with the consuls, whose aim was to subsume the Mission to the ordinary church in the consulate, which was headed by a hieromonk or a hegumen (something that would have served the interests of Consul Kartsov and, of course, the Jerusalem Patriarch) led the Ober Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count D.A. Tolstoi to the conviction that for the maintenance of the dignity of the Russian Church, what was needed was the "complete elimination of our Jerusalem Mission" (Filaret 1886, 367).

Still, irrespective of the escalating to the verge of a break relations with the Jerusalem Church, Metropolitan Filaret expressed opposition to the closing of the Mission. He suggested leaving the Mission there "in hopes of better times" under the leadership of Archimandrite Antonin, who "does not face any difficulties either from the consul's side, or from the Patriarch's side" (Filaret 1886, 368). The Moscow hierarch's hopes were fully justified, since in the individual the of Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin), the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem in a period of thirty years enjoyed an irreplaceable leader and a worthy representative of Russian Orthodoxy in the Holy Land.

Filaret's firm position with regard to relations with the Patriarch of Jerusalem Kirillos is particularly indicative in the context of this views on the question of church unity and on his attitudes to the Greeks as "natural allies". To the end of the investigation of the so-called "Archimandrite Leonid Case", the relations of the Russian Synod with the Jerusalem throne were de facto frozen and were resumed only in the last months of Filaret's life in connection to the jubilee of his archhierarchical service.

This episode eloquently proves the great significance that the Moscow Metropolitan assigned to the Russian Church presence in the Holy Land, when all without exception (the Russian diplomacy, the Holy Synod, the Greek Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher at the headed by the Jerusalem Patriarch) were against the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission. Filaret was the only one who firmly insisted on the maintenance of the Mission in Jerusalem (Smirnova 2014).

The subjects discussed here took place in the context of other no less important tasks of the Russian ecclesiastical presence in areas adjacent to the borders of Russia. Filaret was obliged to participate in the solutions of these latter problems at the same time that he was tackling the affairs of the Christian East.

Thus, at the end of the 1850s, Filaret insisted on the necessity of the development of missionary presence in China, an insistence that led to the reform of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing. In 1862–64, Filaret approved the proposal to create a Russian Orthodox Church in San Francisco, where there was an Orthodox community of 800 people.As a result, in 1870, already after Filaret's death,

the Aleutian-Alaskan eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church in North America was created. In this way, in the 1850s – 1860s, when Russian diplomacy, both ecclesiastical and secular, faced the task of the development of new approaches first of all in the formation of the sphere of their own interests in the Near and Far East, the Filaret's position determined the chosen course of action not only in the domestic, but also in the foreign ecclesiastical policy of the Russian Empire (Smirnova 2016).

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