

2005

The Holy Places: A Russian Travel Perspective

Theophilus C. Prousis

University of North Florida, tprousis@unf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis_facpub



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Prousis, Theophilus C., "The Holy Places: A Russian Travel Perspective" (2005). *History Faculty Publications*. 28.

https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ahis_facpub/28

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at UNF Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UNF Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [Digital Projects](#).

© 2005 All Rights Reserved

THE HOLY PLACES: A RUSSIAN TRAVEL PERSPECTIVE

Theophilus C. Prousis

The renowned sacred sites of Jerusalem attracted the curiosity and devotion of countless Russian travelers over the centuries, and many of these pilgrims recorded their impressions and observations of the holy places.¹ This article presents selected passages from the virtually neglected travel account penned by Russian writer and diplomat Dmitrii V. Dashkov (1784–1839), who visited Palestine in 1820. His work provides eyewitness information and telling detail on a variety of topics, including the exact location of the most important shrines in Christianity and the renewed discord among Christian denominations over worship and custodial rights at these consecrated, and contested, sites.

An enlightened state official, Dashkov served a six-year term as diplomatic adviser and secretary at the Russian Embassy in Istanbul from 1817 to 1822. Ambassador Grigorii A. Stroganov (1770–

1 For an introduction to the extensive Russian travel writing on Palestine and the wider Near East, see Theofanis G. Stavrou and Peter R. Weisensel, *Russian Travelers to the Christian East from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1986). On Imperial Russia's interests and activities in Ottoman Palestine, see Theofanis G. Stavrou, *Russian Interests in Palestine: A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1963); Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); and Stephen K. Batalden and Michael D. Palma, "Orthodox Pilgrimage and Russian Landholding in Jerusalem: The British Colonial Record," in Stephen K. Batalden, ed., *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 251–63. For recent Russian scholarship, see N. N. Lisovoi, ed., *Rossiiia v Sviatoi Zemle. Dokumenty i materialy*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2000); I. A. Vorob'eva, *Russkie missii v Sviatoi zemle v 1847–1917 godakh* (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN, 2001); and B. F. Iamilinets, *Rossiiia i Palestina. Ocherki politicheskikh i kul'turno-religioznykh otnoshenii (XIX–nachalo XX veka)* (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN, 2003).

1857) assigned Dashkov to inspect consulates in the Levant as part of the embassy's effort to upgrade the conduct and competence of a poorly trained Russian consular staff.² The expedition entailed a stop in Palestine, where, as part of his itinerary, inspector Dashkov investigated the present situation of the age-old and seemingly intractable "monks' quarrel," the dispute between Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and other Christian denominations over the right to control holy places in Jerusalem, most notably the Church of the Resurrection, also known as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, built over the Tomb of Christ.³ Dashkov's unpublished correspondence with Stroganov and Levantine consuls deals in great detail with the inspection of mismanaged consulates, while his published accounts of the excursion, appearing in the leading literary almanac *Northern Flowers*, describe the sacred landscapes of Mount Athos and Palestine.⁴

2 On Dashkov's inspection of consulates, as well as his sundry writings and memoranda on Near Eastern affairs, see Theophilus C. Prousis, *Russian-Ottoman Relations in the Levant: The Dashkov Archive, Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs, no. 10* (Minneapolis, MN: Modern Greek Studies Program, University of Minnesota, 2002), largely based on Dashkov's personal *fond* in the Russian State Historical Archive, St Petersburg.

3 On the holy places' dispute, see T. V. Nosenko, "Konflikt vokrug Sviatykh mest v Ierusalime i politika Rossii (konets XVIII–XIX vv.)," in Lisovoi, ed., *Rossia v Sviatoi Zemle. Dokumenty i materialy*, 2: 613–25; Amos Elon, *Jerusalem: Battlegrounds of Memory* (New York: Kodansha America, Inc., 1995); Thomas A. Idinopulos, *Jerusalem: A History of the Holiest City as Seen Through the Struggles of Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1994); and Francis E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). On the Church of the Resurrection and its various sanctuaries, also see Charles Couasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

4 Dashkov published the following pieces in *Severnnye tsvety* (Northern Flowers): "Afonskaia gora. Otryvok iz putesthestviia po Gretsii v 1820 godu," (1825): 119–61, with descriptions of the monasteries on Mount Athos, the fount of Orthodox spirituality; "Izvestiia o grecheskikh i latinskikh rukopisiakh v seral'skoi biblioteke," (1825): 162–65, and "Eshche neskol'ko slov o seral'skoi biblioteke," (1826): 283–96, on Latin and Greek manuscripts in the Topkapi Library, Istanbul; and "Russkie poklonniki v Ierusalime. Otryvok iz putesthestviia po Gretsii i Palestine v 1820

For three weeks, in August and September 1820, Dashkov toured the fabled sites in and around Jerusalem, including Mount Zion, Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and the Mount of Olives. With keen perception and erudition, his chronicle evokes some of the sights, sounds, and struggles of Christianity's most contested battlegrounds of memory. Dashkov combines vignettes of the natural setting with geographic, topographical, and historical particulars on the prominent landmarks. Citing Old and New Testaments, Vergil and Petrarch, Tasso and Milton, Gibbon and Chateaubriand, as well as previous Russian pilgrims, the work displays a sharp eye for detail, an aesthetic sensibility, and vivid descriptive power. The account echoes conventional images and prevalent biases in European travel writing on the Ottoman Empire during the period of imperial decline and the breakdown of once effective ruling institutions. Dashkov paints a negative picture of the "oriental other" and "the sick man of Europe," accenting episodes of oppression, extortion, and related abuses of power by regional administrative officials, in this case the chief authorities in Ottoman Syria and Palestine, the pashas of Damascus and Acre.⁵

Dashkov visited the holy places at a time of renewed tension between rival religious communities. By the early nineteenth century the Ottoman government had awarded preferential worship

godu," (1826): 214–83, reprinted as a supplement to *Russkii arkhiv* (1881): 203–69.

- 5 For the perceptions of European travelers on the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Allan Cunningham, "The Sick Man and the British Physician," in Allan Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 72–107. Also useful on European attitudes towards Muslims in general and Ottoman Turks in particular are Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966); and Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995). Dashkov's account of Palestine forms part of the larger story of Europe's renewed fascination for Jerusalem and the holy places in the nineteenth century. See Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1979); and Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (London: William Collins Sons and Co., 1987).

and guardianship privileges to the two principal antagonists, the Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox, but the latter had assumed the lion's share of control of the Church of the Resurrection. When a fire in 1808 damaged the shrine's wooden dome, Franciscan monks and Greek church officials competed to win Ottoman permission for the right to repair the structure. This concession proved pivotal in view of an unwritten rule governing, and indeed exacerbating, the dispute over the holy places: the Sublime Porte recognized as "owner" of a particular sanctuary the religious community that gained the sultan's favor to restore, wash, or sweep that sacred spot. Though the Greeks' status as caretaker of the Holy Sepulcher improved as a result of their restoration of the church over Christ's Tomb, Roman Catholics and Armenian Christians continued to press their claims for worship and upkeep rights, not only in the church but at other sites.

The official Russian position in the dispute, evinced in diplomatic directives from the Foreign Ministry to Stroganov, called for the feuding sects to resolve the struggle through negotiation, coexistence, and reconciliation.⁶ Newly acquired custodial privileges for Orthodox Christians at the Lord's Tomb, according to a memorandum (December 1818) from tsarist Foreign Minister Ioannis A. Kapodistrias to the envoy, in no way excluded worship rights for other Christians. Indeed, the foreign minister wrote, "the gifts of divine mercy, manifesting themselves in the virtue of true piety, will hardly dry up if they extend to all believers" who gather in the same church to venerate the exact same site. Christian harmony required that Catholic and Orthodox faithful share fully and equally the right to conduct worship services, and under no cir-

6 Alexandre Popoff, *La question des lieux saints de Jérusalem dans la correspondance diplomatique Russe du XIX siècle. 1 partie (1800–1850)* (St. Petersburg: Imprimerie Russo-Française, 1910), 1–146. *Ministerstvo inostrannykh del SSSR, Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX v.: Dokumenty Rossiiskogo ministerstva inostrannykh del*, 16 vols. (Moscow: Nauka, 1960–95) (hereafter cited as *VPR*), 9 (1974): 187–90, which appears in English translation in Theophilus C. Prousis, "Russia's Position Toward Ottoman Orthodox Christians: An 1816 Instruction from the Foreign Ministry," *SVTQ* 46:4 (2002): 331–46.

cumstances should any denomination seek to exert exclusive control over the Holy Sepulcher, a notion that was misguided as well as “incompatible with the spirit of peace and meekness that must permeate all Christians.”⁷ The instruction went on to assert that Armenian Christians should be treated fairly so that they would no longer have grounds for complaint or try to usurp the prerogatives of other believers. Finally, Russia’s envoy had to use all means of persuasion and influence to win support from Greek Orthodox hierarchs for the anticipated settlement of this conflict over Christianity’s central shrine.

While Dashkov’s evocative narrative on the hallowed sites echoes Russia’s official stance, he harshly criticizes the feud over worship and custodial rights. Deep-seated resentment, malice, and bitterness, shared by all sides in this internecine squabble, offer little hope of forbearance or reconciliation between Latins, Greeks, and other competing denominations. According to Dashkov, “a spirit of meekness and love has rarely” governed relations among sects that endeavor to exercise sole control over places “where the blood of the Savior was shed for everyone.” Ironically, as he notes, strife over the sacred sites occurs within the general context of Islam’s tolerance of Christianity and Judaism. In view of the Sublime Porte’s treaty pledge to allow travelers from Russia unrestricted passage to visit the holy places, Dashkov provides specific information on Russian pilgrims—their itinerary, expenses, accommodation, and worship at different sites.⁸ In his official cor-

7 *VPR* 10 (1976): 598–602, 829–30, 833–34.

8 The landmark Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774), following the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74, granted Russia important trade, diplomatic, and religious rights in the Ottoman Empire, including freedom of passage for Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem. Article Eight stipulated that “no . . . contribution, duty, or other tax shall be exacted from those pilgrims and travelers by any one whomsoever, either at Jerusalem or elsewhere, or on the road. . . . During their sojourn in the Ottoman Empire, they shall not suffer the least wrong or injury; but, on the contrary, shall be under the strictest protection of the laws.” An English translation of the treaty appears in Jacob C. Hurewitz, ed., *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record. Volume 1: European Expansion, 1535–1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale

respondence with Ambassador Stroganov, Dashkov offers further detail on the current status of the shrines, the contending claims of Catholic and Orthodox Christians, and the situation of the patriarchate of Jerusalem.⁹

In preparing these selected passages for publication, I have relied on the Dashkov travelogue included in a recently published anthology of nineteenth-century Russian travel literature on the holy lands.¹⁰ I have endeavored to render the narrative into clear and idiomatic English without modifying its essential spirit or meaning. Though in a few spots I have made slight changes in Dashkov's sentence structure, syntax, and punctuation, to make the composition more readable, I have generally remained faithful to the particulars of the author's style, including his use of exclamation marks. Any material in parenthesis is part of Dashkov's original text; I have added brackets for my own emendations, translations of foreign terms, and brief explications. I have retained Dashkov's notes, either summarizing or translating his comments, and have added some notes of my own for supplemental information and relevant sources on certain topics.

All dates are in the Old Style Julian calendar, which in the nineteenth century lagged twelve days behind the New Style Gregorian calendar. Clarification is needed on Dashkov's usage of the term "Turks." Frequently, he is referring to Ottoman Muslims, both Turks and Arabs; yet in some cases he differentiates between the two groups, as when he mentions Arab Muslims of Jerusalem or bedouin Arab tribes of Palestine. More confusion reigns when he cites "Greeks," "Greek religion," or "Greek church." The official Ottoman designation for Orthodox Christian subjects, *Millet-i*

University Press, 2nd ed., 1975), 92–101.

9 Popoff, *La question des lieux saints de Jérusalem dans la correspondance diplomatique Russe*, 112–35, 140–45.

10 K. Urguzova et al., eds., *Sviatye mesta vblizi i izdali: Putevye zametki russkikh pisatelei v poloviny XIX veka* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, RAN and Shkola-Press, 1995), 17–36, 289–300. This noteworthy anthology, with explanatory notes and a helpful introduction, contains passages from the Near Eastern travels of Osip I. Senkovskii, Andrei N. Murav'ev, Avraam S. Norov, and Petr A. Viazemskii.

Rum, or Greek *millet*, encompassed all Orthodox believers in the sultan's domain, including Serbs, Romanians, Bulgars, Vlachs, Albanians, Arabs, as well as Greeks.¹¹ Since Greeks or Hellenized Orthodox often controlled the patriarchates, coffers, and administrative offices of the church's ecclesiastical hierarchy until the latter part of the nineteenth century, it was quite common for travelers and scholars to use "Greek faith" or "Greek church" to signify the Eastern Orthodox church in Ottoman-ruled lands. Thus, for Dashkov, "Greek religion" and "Greek church" are usually synonymous with the Eastern Orthodox faith and church in the Ottoman Empire, while "Greeks" often refers to Ottoman Orthodox Christians. To complicate matters, in addition to "Greeks," Dashkov identifies various other Eastern Orthodox sects or churches—Syrians, Georgians, Abyssinians, Maronites, Copts, Armenians—with competing claims to the holy places.



Dmitrii V. Dashkov, "Russkie poklonniki v Ierusalem. Otryvok iz puteshestviia po Gretsii i Palestine v 1820 godu" ("Russian Pilgrims in Jerusalem. An Excerpt from a Journey to Greece and Palestine in 1820")

... It is impossible to imagine anything more desolate than the environs of Jerusalem: mountains, precipices, ravines without greenery, nearly treeless, everywhere blanketed with round stones; it appeared as if a shower of stones had fallen from the sky upon this ungodly land. Around midday, exhausted by the intense heat, we ascended a height and saw before us a line of crenelated walls and towers, surrounded by neither settlements nor scattered huts and looking as though they were stirring slightly in the middle of the desert. Upon first glance at these ancient ramparts—the city of David,

11 Richard Clogg, "The Greek *Millet* in the Ottoman Empire," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), 1: 185–202.

Herod, and Godfrey of Bouillon—thousands of recollections, each more vivid than the other, each more holy than the other, press against the heart.¹² Let cold-hearted minds deride the raptures of worshipers! Here, at the foot of Zion, everyone is a Christian, everyone a believer, who has but retained an ardent heart and a love for the majestic!

Greek monks, notified in advance from Jaffa, met us at the western gate (Bab al-Khalil), welcomed us on behalf of the second episcopal deputy, Procopius (the chief deputy, the archbishop of Arabian Petra, was visiting his diocese at that time), and took us to the monastic house set aside for [pilgrims], located near the patriarchate and the Church of the Resurrection [Church of the Holy Sepulcher].¹³ They provided us with the greatest possible aid and comfort in this hospitable sanctuary, and in absolute freedom we devoted ourselves to worshiping sacred places and to seeing every noteworthy site in and around the city.

I will not begin to relate what erudite and perceptive travelers have already described countless times, about which so many have argued and continue to argue, expounding differently the tales of the ancients. Every pace in the new [city of] Jerusalem is measured; but the extent of the old city is still subject to question, and the whereabouts of some spots, mentioned in the Old Testament and the Gospels, have not been satisfactorily determined. We know that the new city encompasses only a portion of the former [city], destroyed by Titus in 71 AD [sic]. Flavius Josephus . . . asserts that

12 David, the second king of Israel and Judah after Saul, captured the fortress of Zion and supposedly wrote the Psalms. Herod the Great was king of Judea (37–34 BC) during the time of Jesus, while his son Herod Antipas ruled Galilee from 4 BC to 39 AD. Godfrey of Bouillon, leader of the First Crusade, conquered Jerusalem in 1099 and became the first Latin ruler of the Holy City and defender of the Lord's Tomb.

13 Petra, an early center of Christianity today located in Jordan, is renowned for its picturesque ancient tombs carved in the pink rock. Known to Roman Catholics as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and to Eastern Orthodox as the Church of the Resurrection, this central shrine of Christianity contains a cavernous complex of chapels, altars, and passageways commemorating the places of Jesus's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. See Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*; and Peters, *Jerusalem*, 133–37, 203–6, 311–14, 437–42, 566–67, 572–79.

the circumference of the walls comprised thirty-three stadia [somewhat more than 6.5 miles]; today it measures, according to the testimony of Maundrell, only 4,630 standard paces, or around three versts.¹⁴ Some critics, trying to reconcile on-site observations with the text of the Jewish historian, reduce the dimensions of his stadia; others simply accuse him of inaccuracy and exaggeration—though experience has proven that one should never be so quick to criticize ancient writers and that the most recent exact surveys have often corroborated their information, which had seemed like fables to us. The inquisitive can get an idea about the debates, which form the basis of various scholarly opinions on the location of Mount Zion, Golgotha, and related sites, having read the essay by d’Anville ... and the article by Ritter. ...¹⁵ Chateaubriand accepts the authority of the former in everything.¹⁶ Eschewing pointless repetitions, I shall offer Russian readers some personal observations on the cur-

14 Dashkov refers to two of the most reliable sources on the topography and circumference of Jerusalem: *The Jewish War* by Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (37–100 AD), and *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, at Easter, AD 1697* (1703) by Henry Maundrell (1665–1701), chaplain of the Aleppo factory of the English Levant Company. For more on these works, see Peters, *Jerusalem*, 42–43, 67–72, 77–89, 516–24. A standard pace, covered by a step or a stride, extends an estimated three feet, in contrast to the Roman or geometric pace, which measures about five feet. One verst is the equivalent of about 3,500 feet.

15 Dashkov cites the scholarly writings of French geographer and cartographer Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d’Anville (1697–1782) (*Dissertation sur l’étendue de l’ancienne Jérusalem et de son temple*, 1747) and of German geographer Karl Ritter (1779–1859) (*Einleitung zur allgemeinen vergleichenden Geographie*, 1817–18).

16 Though he cites the names of various travelers and scholars who wrote about the holy sites of Jerusalem, Dashkov clearly regarded the romanticized account, *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* (1811), by François René Chateaubriand (1768–1848), as one of the most valuable and perceptive travelogues he had read. Dashkov made numerous references to this hugely successful work, which appeared in twelve editions from 1811 to 1814. Ironically, Chateaubriand visited Jerusalem for only four days during his two-week tour of Palestine in 1806; yet his vivid but disparaging remarks on the region’s barren landscape, poverty, misery, and lawlessness, as well as his bias against Muslims, echoed in the travel literature of countless European tourists and pilgrims, including Dashkov. For more on Chateaubriand’s highly subjective account of the Holy City, see Said, *Orientalism*, 169–79; Peters, *Jerusalem*, 545–46, 560–64, 578–83; and Elon, *Jerusalem*, 131–34.

rent state of the major places of worship and on the life of our compatriots [Russian pilgrims] in Jerusalem.

The foremost sacred place for Christians, the Lord's Tomb, is located within the walls of the vast Church of the Resurrection, founded by St Helen around 326. In vain were doubts raised about the authenticity of this monument: a great many compelling proofs attest that Christians, in the course of the first three centuries [of the faith], preserved accurate knowledge about the site of the Savior's suffering and burial. [The early Christians], in the words of Gibbon, "marked the scene of every memorable event, in accordance with indisputable legend". . . .¹⁷ A fire in October 1807 [September 1808] destroyed nearly half the church. The tomb remained unharmed, but the cedar dome of the church, engulfed in flame, fell on the stone cast aside [by an angel] at the resurrection and smashed it to bits; the Greek *Kafolikon* [*grecheskii Kafolikon*, or Greek chapel] and the adjoining side-altars burned down. Western Europe, which once shed rivers of blood for the possession of this sanctuary, looked indifferently upon its ruins. Some of the Greeks, in servitude and oppression, collected nearly seven million *lev*¹⁸ (more than 4.5 million rubles), purchased the Porte's permission

17 Instead of identifying the source of this statement by the acclaimed English historian Edward Gibbon (1737–94), Dashkov directs his readers to the writings of d'Anville and Chateaubriand for particulars on the holy places.

18 Dashkov's use of *lev* (lion) refers to an Ottoman coin in Palestine called *esedi* (with the lion) or *esedi gurus*. The Levant did not have a common or standardized system of currency for business transactions in the early nineteenth century; Ottoman gold and silver coins circulated along with money from Austria, Spain, Venice, France, Holland, and Britain. For more on the confusing array of Levantine currencies, see Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey, 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 326–29; and Sevket Pamuk's essay ("Evolution of the Ottoman Monetary System, 1326–1914") in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 947–80. After much diplomatic and financial negotiation, the Sublime Porte eventually authorized Greek Christians to restore the Church of the Resurrection, supposedly after the payment of a bribe of nearly 2.5 million rubles, almost twice the cost of the rebuilding itself. On the fire of 1808 and the reconstruction of the church, see Elon, *Jerusalem*, 69–70; and Idinopulos, *Jerusalem*, 190.

for the price of gold, and restored the entire edifice on its former foundations, under the supervision of a mere kalfa, or self-taught apprentice. Old men, children, and women toiled with zeal, and many to this day take comfort in the memory that they hauled earth during the construction of the church. These offerings, along with other favorable circumstances, gained for our coreligionists the right to celebrate the divine liturgy at the Holy Sepulcher, a right confirmed by the *hatti-sherif* (edict) of Sultan Mahmud II [r. 1808–39], but still disputed by the Catholics.

On entering the church, a worshiper with indignation sees a Turkish guard greedily sizing up the arrivals for collecting a fixed tax. His superior, as a sign of respect, often walks in front of them all the way to the altar, points to the holy sites with a *chibouk* [tobacco pipe with long stem], or disperses the throngs of people with a lash! ... About forty steps from the doors, in the middle of a majestic rotunda, a baldachin (*kuvuklii*) [an edicule or canopied altar] of yellowish marble rises over the Tomb of Christ and faces eastward; inside [the baldachin] one at first comes across the chapel of the angel and then the narrow grotto where, according to ancient tradition, the body [of Christ] was placed on a large stone, on the very mound that is today covered by a marble slab and illuminated. Thirty-six icon-lamps, from the cupola opening above, glimmer over [the marble slab] day and night. On this immortal sacrificial altar the bread and wine are prepared for the sacrament; at the start of the liturgy the vessels are brought to the side-chapel, where part of the stone cast aside by the angel serves as an altar. The walls of the baldachin, outside and inside, are adorned with fabrics—the occasion for many quarrels between the various denominations!

At every step in this church, a believer finds traces of the magnificent act of redemption. Here, Christ was shackled and bound to the pillar;¹⁹ here, he appeared after the resurrection to Mary Magdalene and (if one is to believe legend) to the grieving Holy Mother;

19 Dashkov provides this information in a footnote: “A fragment of the pillar is kept in the Franciscan monks’ chapel, behind an iron grille, in such a way so that worshipers are not able to kiss [the relic] but can only touch it with the tip of a walking-stick.

here, his cross was discovered. There, the stone of unction, on which his body was anointed with fragrances and wrapped in a shroud; the chapels of the mocking, of the division of the raiments, of the good thief, of centurion Longinus;²⁰ [and] the tombs of Joseph [of Arimathea] and Nicodemus. Overhead, at Golgotha, two small altars signify where Christ was nailed to the cross and where he was crucified. Below, the descent to the cave, where Empress Helen found the cross, excavating the blocked up foot of the hill....In vain did Emperor Hadrian [r. 117–38 AD], during the time of persecution, try to appropriate these sites for idolatry, erecting a statue of Venus at Golgotha and a statue of Jupiter over the Lord's Tomb. These idols, instead of consigning the sacred objects of worship to oblivion, preserved their remembrance all the more, until the arrival in Jerusalem of the pious empress who secured the sign of the Christian faith on the ruins of paganism.

Compact houses and a building that belongs to the Greek monastery press upon the outer walls of the church. The church previously had two entrances: one, on the northern side, has been walled up, leaving only the entry through the southern gates, known as the holy doors. The Turks [who have been designated] to keep the keys are permitted to unlock the doors only in the presence of the *mütevelli* (tax agent or overseer), appointed by the pasha of Acre, and of the dragomans [interpreters] for the Greek, Catholic, and Armenian religious communities. Residents of the city and worshipers of all denominations then proceed to make the rounds of the various chapels without any restriction, but they are not allowed to conduct services at shrines that belong to other faiths. Some [pilgrims], obtaining permission from the religious authorities, stay for a time inside the church with alternating monks and

The Catholics, in explaining this much resented precaution, claim that the Greeks have repeatedly tried to steal this sacred object. The Greek clergy, for their part, accuse [the Catholics] of similar attempts, and even they shelter, behind a grille under an altar, part of the pillar which soldiers [used] to bind and scourge the Savior. . . .”

20 These side-chapels commemorate episodes and events associated with the crucifixion.

priests [who serve as guides]. [The pilgrims who stay] together with [the clergy] receive food through small openings in the doors and in the vault over the main Greek altar.

And we, too, spent several days, for me unforgettable, in this holy solitude. All of the surroundings awakened ineffable feelings in my soul. Often, in the dead of night, when monks accustomed to this spectacle slept peacefully in cells, I stood leaning against the pedestal of a column in the middle of the spacious church. Cupolas, galleries, and the entire Greek *Kafolikon*, all the way to the altar, were shrouded in darkness; but the sacred monuments appeared as though enveloped by rows of inextinguishable icon-lamps and resembled shining oases in a dark thicket. My imagination resurrected the ancient past: the sufferings of the Righteous One; the source of life, emanating from here, when the inscribed tablets of Moses [Mosaic law] gave way to the New Testament; the triumph of the Crusaders, genuflecting before the magnificent tomb delivered by their swords; and the crowning of the hero-leader with a diadem of thorn. I looked at the grave of Godfrey, and Tasso's inspired canto rang in my ear!²¹ ... Toward morning these reveries were cut short by the ringing of a church bell in the wooden belfry; priests and deacons, with burning censers in their hands, flickered by like shadows; chants from the gathered worshipers harmonized with the sound of organs; and praise to God rose up in different languages, with different rites, but in a single church. ...

All the places of worship [in the Church of the Resurrection] are divided among the Greeks, the Catholics, and the [Monophysite] Armenians. The Copts have only one altar, affixed to the

21 Dashkov alludes to Tasso's sixteenth-century epic *Jerusalem Delivered*, which exalted the heroic feats of Godfrey of Bouillon, leader of the First Crusade. As for the controversy regarding the Greeks' alleged destruction of Crusader crypts in the Church of the Resurrection during the shrine's reconstruction after the 1808 fire, Dashkov weighs in: "The Greeks are mistakenly accused of damaging the tombs over the graves of Godfrey and his brother [and heir] Baldwin, erected in the period of Latin rule. Fire destroyed these monuments; but their sites are marked by brick mounds, and the Catholics themselves have always had the authority to restore the old tombs and inscriptions."

baldachin, while the Syrians (Nestorians), the Georgians, the Abyssinians, and the Maronites ... have been removed by force from the church, or have voluntarily conceded their rights to other [religious] communities.²² Each [denomination] adorns its property as it desires; but in those areas jointly controlled by two sects, the number of icons and icon-lamps has been set once and for all with the consent of the Turks. The sequence of services and rites has likewise been determined at great length by special regulations—and ever since then an immediate cause for discord among Jerusalem's Christians has ceased to exist. Mutual vexations still linger in hearts, and gold brought for the decoration of the church is still squandered in Acre, Damascus, and Tsargrad in order to harm rivals. At least the heads of the clergy, not passing up a chance to accuse each other of daily insults, try not to let monks take part in public and sordid quarrels, which formerly happened at the Holy Sepulcher, to the sorrow of coreligionists.

[This] malice originates in the deep-rooted resentment of each denomination toward another and in the desire to exert exclusive control over the places where the blood of the Savior was shed for everyone. Ever since the division of the Roman church from the church in Constantinople, a spirit of meekness and love has rarely governed their relations. In the eyes of the Crusaders, the Greeks were almost worse than the worshipers of Mohammad; in the eyes of the Greeks, the Catholics did not have the right to be called Christian.²³ The spite inherited by [Catholics and Greeks] has not subsided even today, particularly in numerous seaside towns and

22 For more on the varied Christian sects of Ottoman Jerusalem, and on Ottoman rule in Palestine, see the essays in volume 2 of Braude and Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*.

23 According to Dashkov's note: "When present-day Greeks speak about Christians, they always mean themselves or Russians; Catholics are called Latins, Franks, or simply Westerners (*oi Dytikoi*). ..." Dashkov gleaned additional material on sectarian disputes over the holy places from the travelogue by English chaplain Maundrell (see above, n14), who voiced amazement at the intensity of these squabbles. Peters, *Jerusalem*, 516–24, with excerpts from Maundrell, one of Dashkov's sources on Jerusalem.

on islands, subject to the Porte, where some of the inhabitants have embraced Roman [Catholic] doctrines. A Catholic who converts to Orthodoxy is subjected to a second baptism by the Greeks. On the other hand, a Catholic who has married an Orthodox woman must be divorced from her: this is what European clergy, born in the land of enlightenment and tolerance, preached in Smyrna in 1817! "Of such wrath are the gods?"²⁴

As for the Holy Sepulcher, both sides base their claims on official documents of various caliphs and sultans, from Umar [caliph, 634–44] to Mahmud II. The Greeks want equality, but the Catholics—dominance, contending that this sacred ground is their property and that its custody belongs solely to them. Until the renovation of the great church (*i megali ekklesia*, as they [the Greeks] call the Church of the Resurrection), the Catholics did not permit the Orthodox to conduct services at the baldachin and, even after the *hatti-sherif* issued in 1815, attempted to retrieve their lost advantages by utilizing the influence of their envoys at the Porte. A shortage of money and a dispute that broke out with the Armenians over the Church of the Nativity [in Bethlehem] compelled them to leave the Greeks in peace and to comply with the given situation. By virtue of this [arrangement], the Greeks and the Catholics take turns washing and sweeping the baldachin and the stone of unction; they have an equal number of icons, icon-lamps, and candlesticks and an equal right to decorate the walls with coverings. The Armenians are deprived of most of these privileges—they have only an icon above the doors and several icon-lamps. In all religious rites they occupy third place.

The four-cornered stone columns, encircling the baldachin, and the upper and lower galleries are also apportioned among the denominations. The southern part of Golgotha belongs to the Catholics, while the Greeks have obtained from the Georgians the northern portion, where the cross stood. As for the site of its discov-

24 Dashkov's text cites the Latin phrase from Vergil's *Aeneid* (1.11): "Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?" The line refers to battles among the gods and to the gods' treatment of Aeneas during and after the Trojan War.

ery, the grotto itself, narrow and permeated with dampness, it is still in dispute among [the religious sects]. [The Catholics] do not allow the other denominations to place icon-lamps here, while [the Greeks] complain about the deliberate damage of marble slabs set [in the grotto] by the Orthodox faithful.²⁵

But, censuring justifiably these feuds, we maintain that the mode of eastern [Ottoman] judicial proceedings contributes a great deal to their continuation. The verdicts of *kadis* [Muslim judges] are based almost always on the testimonies of witnesses, especially of Muslims; and that is why each litigant tries to win over to his side the church guards and Jerusalem's notables.²⁶ To convince them that a law is beyond question, custom and long standing are essential; in the eyes of the Turks, both are more important than lifeless official documents. For example (according to their notions), the baldachin is controlled by the religious community that sweeps and decorates it; knowing this, each sect is afraid to yield to a rival and resists adamantly the smallest change. Moreover, the pashas, *mütesellims* [deputy governors], and *kadis* constantly nourish hostility among the Christians for their own interests. Protecting certain [denominations] today, tomorrow they promise others staunch intercession and rejoice in the rise of complaints and denunciations. In 1819, the pasha of Damascus, the chief authority over Jerusalem, allowed the Armenians, for sixty thou-

25 Dashkov chose to omit many details about the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, asserting that these facts, while indispensable for anyone who wanted an exact picture of the shrine, "would be tedious and obscure" in his narrative. He anticipated, however, that his readers' curiosity would "soon be satisfied with the publication of the exquisite and complete plan of the great church, made on site by academician Vorob'ev." The painter Maksim N. Vorob'ev (1787–1855), appointed professor at Russia's Academy of Fine Arts in 1823, accompanied Dashkov on his trip to Jerusalem. Dashkov extolled the artistic talents of his travel companion, reporting that Vorob'ev's drawings would include particulars on the main religious denominations in the church, their icons and icon-lamps, and related matters.

26 "Notables" refers to the leading and most influential families in Ottoman Jerusalem. For more on these local elites, not just in Jerusalem but in other parts of the Ottoman Levant, see Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 46–50, 62–64, 101–7.

sand *lev*, to cut a doorway near their altar in the Bethlehem church, to the great annoyance of the Catholics; and the latter were offered a chance, for a lower price, to rescind the granted permission. They did not pay [the pasha] the requested fee—and so the door remained open. During the next year, setting up camp outside the walls of the city with a caravan headed for Mecca, he exacted from the Armenians another thirty thousand *lev* and for a second time proposed to the Catholics the very same conditions. . . . If it is true that laws and governments shape the morality of people everywhere, then an impartial observer must look to the spirit of Turkish rule to find fault for the vices he condemns.

It is hard to calculate the cost to Jerusalem's Christians for the sham tolerance of the Porte and for the indulgence of local authorities. Based on information we gathered, the Greeks spent around fifty thousand *lev* on presents in the course of only one month, August 1820. We can add to this [sum] the basic expenses for church building, for the [Jerusalem] patriarchate, and for similar purposes—and we affirm that rumors of secret monastic riches, supposedly increasing every year through lavish offerings, are just as mythical as the tale of Abulkazem's inexhaustible treasury in Arabian stories.²⁷ On the contrary, at the time of our visit, the monks of all the religious communities were reduced to extremity. The Catholics, seldom encountering Latin pilgrims and receiving very meager assistance from Rome, unexpectedly lost [income from] the large estates in Spain seized by the *cortes* [representative assemblies]. The Greeks barely could pay their debts and support themselves with the revenues from lands and monasteries, outside Pales-

27 According to Dashkov, at least one recent travelogue on Greece repeated the unfounded and unconfirmed story that the Greek monastery near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher contained an undisclosed amount of wealth in a secret treasury, coveted by sultans, who had yet to discover its exact whereabouts. Based on his own investigations, Dashkov adamantly refuted these rumors, declaring that the monastery's treasury consisted only of pilgrims' offerings and other church revenues. "In the monastery's sacristy we saw silver chandeliers, crucifixes, Gospels, and gold-embroidered vestments, for the most part the work of Russian craftsmanship; but many of the sacristies on Mount Athos surpass [this collection] in wealth."

tine, that belong to the Holy Sepulcher and with the offerings from Orthodox worshippers. Even the Armenians, the wealthiest of all Eastern Christians, were nearly ruined after the misfortune which befell their coreligionist *sarafs* (bankers) in Constantinople in 1819, some of whom were executed while others were sentenced to captivity by edict of the sultan.

Let us return to our report. Several ruins to the southeast of the great church mark the road of suffering (*via dolorosa*),²⁸ along which the Savior trod from the Pretorium to Golgotha. Citing testimony from the holy fathers and other writers, one finds there the houses of Pilate and of the pious woman Veronica, the dwelling of the evil rich man, the place where the Holy Mother met her Son carrying the cross, [and] the gates of judgment which sentenced criminals to death outside the city walls. But ancient legends are incomplete regarding [the Way of the Cross]; they need to be augmented by tales from *mirhadjis* (guides) and by the imagination of worshippers. We thus mention the houses of high priests Annas and Caiaphas, of SS Joachim and Anne, the prison of Apostle Peter, and so on. Time, Jerusalem's many periods of captivity, and the oppressive Muslim yoke have erased nearly all traces of these secondary monuments of Christianity.

On the site where, according to general opinion, Apostle James was sentenced to death, a magnificent cloister stands, owned in turn by the Georgians, the Greeks, and the Armenians. The last [of these religious communities] (so they say) seized it by force during the patriarchate of Paisios. Today [the cloister] is under the authority of a separate Armenian patriarch, who is subject neither to the [catholicus-patriarch] of Echmiadzin nor to the [patriarch] of Constantinople.²⁹ Only through offerings have the Greeks been

28 The Way of the Cross traced the path or last steps of Jesus across Jerusalem, from his trial by Pontius Pilate to his execution, burial, and resurrection. See Peters, *Jerusalem*, 155–56, 501–3.

29 When Paisios, patriarch of Jerusalem from 1646 to 1660, visited Moscow in 1649, the Armenian clergy succeeded in obtaining the sultan's permission to acquire the cloister. The "separate Armenian patriarch" refers to the bishop of the Armenian

able to retain possession of their major monastery, which is all the more important to them because of its proximity to the Church of the Resurrection. The episcopal deputies reside here, welcoming pilgrims during the initial days of arrival: scattered about [the monastic complex] are small churches and cells, in no particular order, amid open vestibules and passageways; and nearby stand granaries for the sustenance of the many monks and Orthodox Arabs.³⁰

The Franciscan Order controls the Catholic convent of the Franks. Its abbot, officially recognized as the guardian of the Holy Sepulcher [on behalf of the Catholics], is usually replaced every three years.³¹

... The southern part of Mount Zion, formerly within the walls, today is located outside the city. The Last Supper took place there; the tombs of David and Solomon are also there, in a mosque where the Turks do not allow believers of different faiths. On the same hill one can find the cemetery for Jerusalem's Christians of all denominations (pilgrims are buried in Potter's Field), while at the foot of the slope, spouting from stone, flows the pool of Siloam, evoked by the poet of *Paradise Lost* when summoning the celestial Muse:

... if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God. ...³²

The Valley of Jehoshaphat, covered in ruins, separates the Mount

community in Jerusalem, whose title was raised to patriarch by the middle of the eighteenth century. The town of Echmiadzin, capital of the ancient Christian kingdom of Armenia, continued to serve as the center of the Armenian church and the place of residence of the catholicus-patriarch.

30 Dashkov writes that in addition to the monastic house attached to the Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Greeks owned several other monasteries and nunneries in the Holy City. The most noteworthy, he recounts, were "John the Baptist, for the beauty of its church and entire structure; St. Nicholas, which has a school for Arabs; [and] St. George, with a hospital and an alms-house for elderly men."

31 In 1342, Pope Clement VI designated the Franciscan Order the official caretaker of the holy places for Roman Catholics. On the Franciscans in the Holy City, see Peters, *Jerusalem*, 369–70, 498–501, 506–9, 556–61, 580–84; and Idinopulos, *Jerusalem*, 186–89.

32 Dashkov's text includes these English lines from John Milton.

of Olives, shaded in places with olive trees, from Zion and Moriah. A turbid stream, supposedly the brook of Kedron, flows in the middle of the valley during rainy season; but it dries up altogether in summer and fall. The masterly pen of Chateaubriand vividly depicted this thicket where, according to the prophet Joel, the entire human race will be assembled at some point for judgment:

The stones in the cemetery of the Jews are piled up, like a heap of fragments, at the base of the settlement of Siloam; it is difficult to distinguish the huts themselves from the graves that surround them. Three ancient monuments tower above this field of destruction, the tombs of Zechariah, Jehoshaphat, and Absalom. Before one's eyes lies sad Jerusalem, over which the slightest smoke is not visible [and] from which not a sound is heard; gazing at the desolation of the mountains, where no living creature stirs, and at all those graves in disorder, broken, smashed to bits, ajar, one can imagine that the sound of a trumpet has already resounded, calling to judgment, and that the dead are ready to rise from the valley.³³

The site of the Lord's ascension is thought to be on the middle summit of the Mount of Olives. The remains of a splendid church, erected in the time of Constantine [*d.* 337], have been turned into a mosque. [This prompts] the observation that from time immemorial Muslims have appropriated for themselves all the heights around the city. They believe that during the final days of the world, the wild [warrior tribes] Gog and Magog will besiege the prophet Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and occupy the adjacent mountains; from [the summits] they will fling shafts that strike the heads of the impudent, staining them with blood.

Returning from [the Mount of Olives] to the gates of Gethsemane and descending the valley all the way to the brook of Kedron, worshipers with zeal visit the Tomb of the Holy Mother located in a grotto. The Orthodox and the Armenians celebrate the liturgy at this shrine; the Catholics do not have this right. When

33 Dashkov does not provide a citation for this Chateaubriand passage. I have translated Dashkov's Russian rendition of Chateaubriand's evocative vignette.

the enmity among Christians of the East ceases, the first pledge of mutual tolerance and peace will be their equal participation in a service at this sacred place, revered by all the sects. ...

A detailed account of Jerusalem's famous sites can be found in every travelogue, from the fourth century ... to the present.³⁴ All the information is similar, and recent travelers repeat what was said before, most likely unintentionally. Relying on them, let me add a few words about the location of the Savior's birth, respected even by the Muslims.

The road to Bethlehem lies due south past Mount Zion and the Greek Monastery of Elijah the Prophet. In the valleys one comes across sown fields and vineyards; traces of age-old industriousness are visible on the stony hills, notched with terraces for the planting of vines and fig trees.

The large [Church of the Nativity] in Bethlehem, built in a cruciform shape, was once quite splendid; four rows of marble pillars of rare beauty still stand intact at the altar. [The church] belongs to the Greeks and the Armenians. Latin monks in vain request a portion of it for themselves. ... Along the sides of the main sanctuary, two staircases lead to the Holy Nativity; there, on the eastern wall, marked by a silver star, where the Christ Child was born, an altar is placed for the Orthodox and the Armenians to celebrate the mass. The manger stood nearby, in a spacious hollow, where today one finds a Catholic altar. The entire grotto is lined with precious

34 Dashkov's narrative cites the earliest extant travelogue on the holy places, the account by the Pilgrim from Bordeaux who visited Palestine in the year 333, *Itinerarium a Burdigala Hierusalem*. Dashkov's footnote makes reference to the Greek-language *Proskynitarion*, published in Vienna in 1787, on prayer rituals and places of worship in Jerusalem, and to previous Russian travel writing on the holy places. "Of the works by Russian pilgrims, worthy of attention are the descriptions of Vasilii Barskii, who worshiped at the Holy Sepulcher in 1726 and 1729; of *ieromonakh* [monk] Meletii, 1793–94; and of the serf of Count Sheremetev, Kir Bronnikov, 1820–21, noteworthy because of the author's rank and because of the dangers he was exposed to on his return voyage to the fatherland, at the start of the Greek war." For bibliographical material on the travelogues of Barskii, Meletii, and Bronnikov, see Stavrou and Weisensel, *Russian Travelers to the Christian East*, 70–73, 129–30, 171.

marble and illuminated by icon-lamps, with each denomination having its own fixed number.

Bethlehem's Arabs have partially converted to the Christian faith; but this has not mollified their harsh customs. They make a good bit of money, fashioning from bone and mother-of-pearl the rosaries and crosses bought by devout visitors.

In general, the arrival of worshipers in Jerusalem coincides with the harvest season for local inhabitants. Only this [the coming of pilgrims] animates a land, for a long time now not flowing with milk and honey, where agriculture has declined and there is no industry, where the population has fallen victim to robbery and to all sorts of violence, where, eventually, according to the words of Chateaubriand, "each village dies off annually hut by hut and family by family, and soon only a cemetery marks the site of a previous settlement."³⁵

The Greeks and the Armenians visit the holy places more than [other denominations]. The zeal of the former is worthy of special amazement; having preserved their existence as a nation, the faith has been a major consolation for them in servitude. They have gathered from everywhere, without distinction of gender and age; fathers of families have brought to Palestine the fruit of many years' hard work, leaving children in need; old men, fortified by desire (like the aged worshiper in the beautiful sonnet by Petrarch: "An old man white as snow set out on the road"³⁶), dragged themselves along on crutches to the tomb of the being, whose presence they hoped to receive in heaven. Many, having kept their vow, dedicated the rest of [their] life to religious worship in church. The number of Orthodox pilgrims, before 1821, sometimes reached about three thousand—among them were around two hundred Russians.

Our embassy [in Istanbul] has done its utmost to afford the greatest possible assistance and protection to our compatriots in

35 Dashkov does not give a citation here. I have translated Dashkov's Russian rendition of Chateaubriand's commentary.

36 Dashkov's text quotes the Italian line from the Petrarch sonnet: "Movesi'l vecchiar el canute e bianco."

Ottoman lands. [Russian pilgrims] usually sailed from Odessa in late August and on arriving in Constantinople stayed [in a specially designated spot] out of doors, where they were not subjected to the plague or to insults from the Turkish mob; the poor received monetary help. The envoy notified the patriarch of the Holy City [Jerusalem] about their accommodation, free of charge, on a ship that departed every year in early September with worshipers; besides passports [the envoy] gave them *firmans* (edicts of the sultan), exempting Russian subjects from any tax during the journey and at the Church [of the Resurrection], where other Christians have to pay around twenty-four *lev* [apiece] for entry. In Jaffa, [Russian pilgrims] were received as guests in the Greek *metochion* [monastic residence, cloister, or living quarters] and were satisfied with everything, provided customarily at the monastery's expense: for this [hospitality] they left the abbot a small donation.

Many trekked on foot from [Jaffa], while the wealthy and the infirm could rent saddle-horses for a low price.³⁷ On reaching Jerusalem, they spent the first few days at the patriarchate and gave contributions to the church treasury, however much they wanted; but those who desired to enter the names of their relatives in a remembrance book for eternal prayer for the dead paid fifty *lev* or more for each [name], depending on their means. They then selected for themselves cells in various cloisters for the entire winter. Rent and food, the most moderate, cost from one hundred fifty to two hundred *lev*.

In anticipation of Lent, pilgrims visited the closest places of worship, in Bethlehem, Bethany, Nazareth, and other towns. Some even traveled to Mount Sinai, via Gaza and Suez.

The throng of people in Jerusalem grows with the approach of Easter. Armenians and Asiatic Greeks gather in droves from Karamania, Syria, and Egypt; Georgians are also with them. The entire city comes to life, especially on Holy Saturday, when the holy

37 Dashkov specified distances in a footnote: "From Jaffa to Jerusalem it [the distance] is thought to be around sixty *verst*s (twelve hours [by horse]). From Jerusalem to Jericho not more than twenty *verst*s, and from Jericho to the Jordan River about fifteen *verst*s.

fire makes its appearance.³⁸ After the holy days, the *mütesellim* and a detachment of troops accompany the worshipers to Jericho and the Jordan River; and shortly afterwards they return to their native land via the route they came. Passage from Jaffa to Constantinople, on a good ship and with necessary provisions, costs around a hundred *lev*.

Adding to this estimate another one hundred eighty or two hundred *lev* for offerings to various monasteries and churches during the entire stay in Palestine, for the rental of horses, and for other small items, we calculate that the basic expenses for our pilgrims did not exceed five hundred rubles. But many of them arrived without any money whatsoever and had to attend to monks or seek alms near the gates of the patriarchate, where they never are refused food. For alms to help these needy pilgrims, and also for their supervision, [the embassy] has dispatched to Jaffa a special official with the rank of vice-consul. . . . The events of 1821 have impeded this endeavor [to assist pilgrims] and made the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher difficult for Russians.³⁹

38 In a lengthy footnote on the miraculous appearance of the holy fire over the tomb of Christ, Dashkov refers readers to the works of Russian pilgrims and travelers who had witnessed this sacred event. Drawing on their experiences and observations, he then offers his own summary: "With the *mütesellim* [deputy governor] and the Armenian clergy in attendance, all the candles and icon-lamps in the church are extinguished—except for those in the Catholic section. The Greek hierarch enters the *kuvuklii* [baldachin or edicule] alone and with a cotton wick gathers the light that, resembling beads of sweat, arises on the marble slab of the Holy Sepulcher. Others relate that it appears in the form of a bright nonflammable flame and that one can place it by hand in a vessel without getting burned. *Ieromonakh* Meletii writes that the light shines on the lid of the tomb like small scattered beads of color that turn red when they run together. The Catholics are not at all willing to believe this phenomenon. Be that as it may, the [Greek] hierarch carries the burning tapers from the grotto to the chapel of the angel and places them in two small openings: one [of them] for the Armenians, the other for the Orthodox, from whom the fire overflows the church like a river (according to Meletii), to the accompaniment of loud exclamations: "There is no faith, but the Christian faith!" For more on the holy fire, see Elon, *Jerusalem*, 70–71, 209–13; and Peters, *Jerusalem*, 261–67, 523–24, 571–78.

39 The outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821 strained Russian-Ottoman diplomatic relations, disrupted Russia's trade in the Black Sea and the Levant,

... The permanent residents of Jerusalem are thought to number around thirteen thousand, the vast majority of them Arab Muslims;⁴⁰ among them, however, are some Christians. These persons, on the whole, are quite poor and live on alms from Greek and Catholic monasteries.

Turks control all of the town administration. We noted above that the pasha of Damascus has jurisdiction over Jerusalem; but the duty from pilgrims for access to the Holy Sepulcher belongs to the pasha of Acre and is collected by his *mütevelli*.⁴¹ This unusual arrangement is highly unfavorable for European monks, since it exposes them to a double burden and damages the intercession of consuls residing in Acre and Jaffa. The *mütesellim* is appointed from Damascus, and the *mullah* (supreme judge) directly from Constantinople; the latter enjoys great respect.

... While visiting the monasteries of Palestine, we did not forget to examine their libraries—although the lack of success of our investigations on Mount Athos left us with little hope [that we would find anything] here. The patriarchate [library] contains some manuscripts: but all are prayer-books, Lives of the Fathers, and works of the church fathers. Official documents, relating to the customs of the Greeks, were sent to Constantinople a long time ago; other records we saw are interesting only because they supplement the sad picture of abuses endured by Jerusalem's Christians.

On 14 September, the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, we ven-

and greatly reduced the numbers of Russian pilgrims making the journey to Palestine during the 1820s.

40 Dashkov claims in his note that it was impossible to verify the accuracy of this population estimate, because "in all of Turkey there are neither birth records nor a poll-tax census." Peters, *Jerusalem*, 564–65, and Kamil J. Asali, "Jerusalem under the Ottomans, 1516–1831 AD," in Kamil J. Asali, ed., *Jerusalem in History: 3000 BC to the Present Day* (London: Kegan Paul International, rev. ed., 1997), 220, cite a population figure of twelve thousand for Jerusalem in 1806. Thus, Dashkov's approximation of thirteen thousand in 1820 may very well be accurate.

41 Dashkov explains in a note: "We were told that the pasha of Acre receives these revenues in his capacity as guardian of the central mosque in the town of Ramleh, which is under his direct authority, and that the land near the Church of the Resurrection belongs to [the mosque]."

erated the Lord's Tomb and all the sacred objects in the great church for the last time. The archbishop of Gethsemane celebrated the liturgy at Golgotha; later a ceremonial procession began from the Greek *Kafolikon* to the grotto of St Helen. The church hierarch held upright a silver Crucifix that contained part of the Life-giving cross; behind him the procession carried banners, crosses, icons; [and] the congregation covered the steps of the staircases with green branches and flowers. During the service the [archbishop] thrice raised the symbol of salvation at the very place of its discovery.

On the same day, we bid farewell to the gracious episcopal deputies and, hiring escorts from the *mütesellim* for the journey to Acre, left the Holy City. ...