THE GREAT POWERS AND ORTHODOX CHRISTENDOM

THE CRISIS OVER THE EASTERN CHURCH IN THE ERA OF THE CRIMEAN WAR

JACK FAIREY
The Great Powers and Orthodox Christendom
Histories of the Sacred and the Secular 1700–2000

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The Great Powers and Orthodox Christendom

The Crisis over the Eastern Church in the Era of the Crimean War

Jack Fairey
Para Paola, Daniel, Sophia, y
Toda mi familia adorada
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Linguistic Conventions and Abbreviations

Personal names

Modern spelling of an individual’s name in their native or primary language is used, rather than the form most common in diplomatic correspondence: such as Reşid Paşa for Reschid Pascha; Abdülmejid for Abdul Mejid; and Ánthimos rather than Anthimus or Anthime. In cases where an individual is known by several different names, the one that best reflects the public persona of the individual in question is used.

Place names

Modern official place-names are used rather than historic or non-official names: Thessaloniki rather than Selânik, Salonica, Salonique, or Solun; Bitola instead of Manastir; and Istanbul rather than Constantinople, Konstandinoúpolis, or Konstantiniya.

Religious names and geography

An exception to the above rule is the use of Greek titles for Orthodox hierarchs and eparchies rather than their modern or non-Greek equivalents: so, Grigórios of Constantinople not Gregory of Istanbul; Paisios of Filippoúpolis not Paisii of Plovdiv; and the eparchy of Týrnovo not Tarnovo. In the case of Islamic institutions, practices, and objects, Turkish is used except for those Arabic words that have entered general English usage, such as Qur’an, Shari’ah, and fatwa. Similarly, Orthodox terms are given in Greek except when there is already a variant in common English usage, such as eparchy, euchologion, and patriarch.

Dates

Dates are given in the Gregorian calendar unless otherwise noted. Readers should be aware that at least three calendars were commonly used in the Ottoman Empire during this period: the Gregorian, the Julian (among Orthodox Christians), and the Islamic, so three different dates are possible for most documents and events.
Linguistic Conventions and Abbreviations

Romanization

Greek: as per the International Standards Organization (ISO) 843: 1997, Type 2, transcription of Greek characters into Latin characters.

Ottoman Turkish: Modern Turkish orthography, except that final unvoiced consonants are left voiced: Reşid not Reşit, Ahmed not Ahmet, Mehmed not Mehmet.

Bulgarian: as per the Bulgarian Transliteration Act of 2009.

Russian: as per the American Library Association – Library of Congress (ALA-LC).

Armenian: As per the American Library Association – Library of Congress (ALA-LC).

Abbreviations

AGMAE Archivo General del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (Madrid)
AHMAE Archives Historiques du Ministère des Affaires Etrangère (Paris)
AVPRI Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii (Moscow)
BAO Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Istanbul)
BUL Bulwer of Heydon Family Papers (NRO)
CP Correspondance Politique (AHMAE)
FO Foreign Office (PRO)
fo folio
GARF Gosudarstvennyi Archiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Moscow)
HHSA Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv (Vienna)
l, ll list, listy
NRO Norfolk Record Office (Norwich)
PKM Papers of Konstandínos Mousouúros (YV)
RGAVMF Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Archiv Voenno-Morskogo Flota (St Petersburg)
TNA The National Archives (London)
YV Yennádios Vivliothíki (Athens)
Readers should note that I use the terms ‘Orthodox community’ and ‘Orthodox Community’ throughout to mark a subtle but important distinction. The lower-case ‘community’ includes all Orthodox believers in a particular location, whether they are Ottoman subjects or not. Upper-case ‘Community’, on the other hand, refers specifically to the *Rum Millet-i*, both as a formal institution and as the collectivity of all Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire. It is in this sense that a Greek citizen residing in Thessaloniki would have been part of the ‘Orthodox community’ there, and yet not a member of the ‘Orthodox Community’.
1

Reason in Exile: The War for Orthodox Christendom

It seems almost incredible, in this enlightened age, that the quarrels of a few ignorant Latin and Greek monks . . . should have been able to light up the torch of war, and to involve the most powerful nations in the world in a deadly strife; . . . but the fraud on the credulity of mankind is so completely established, that these monks have succeeded in enlisting both Europe and the East under their banners, carrying havoc and destruction in their train, perhaps unparalleled since the Crusades.¹

George Fowler, 1855

The Crimean War was one colossal Comedy of Errors, in which one constantly asks oneself: Qui trompe-t-on ici, which is the dupe? But this comedy cost countless treasures and over a million human lives.²

Friedrich Engels, 1890

Deus vult? The Crusader spring of 1854

In the spring of 1854, a wave of martial religiosity such as Europeans had not seen since the great wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries swept over the continent from Britain to Russia and the Ottoman Empire. ‘It seemed’, recalled one French observer, ‘as though all the religious fervour left in the world had become concentrated on the Eastern Question’.³ The crisis at the centre of this religious ferment began a year earlier. At the beginning of 1853, Tsar Nicholas I had astonished the world by making an abrupt demand that the
Ottoman sultan provide him with binding guarantees that the ancient rights and privileges of the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire would remain unchanged, without exceptions and in perpetuity. This unexpected intrusion into Ottoman religions affairs had taken Sultan Abdülmecid aback, but he reassured ‘his brother’, the tsar, that there were no plans to abrogate any of the privileges of the Orthodox Church. He conspicuously refused to sign any formal engagement to this effect, however. A written guarantee, he objected, would turn concessions that the Ottoman dynasty had made of its own free will into capitulations imposed by a foreign power. The Russian government rejected this answer and had retaliated by withdrawing its entire embassy from Istanbul.

The swells of this diplomatic crisis in the Middle East had surged outwards, affecting all of Europe, as the Russian government used every means at its disposal to secure the binding guarantee of Orthodox rights that it desired. On 2 July 1853, Nicholas I took the momentous step of sending an army across the Prut river that separated Russia’s south-western frontier from the Ottoman dependencies of Moldavia and Wallachia. He assured the rest of Europe that this was to be only a temporary occupation and that the treaties of Adrianople (1829) and St Petersburg (1834) entitled Russia to carry out such an action. As soon as the sultan had come to his senses, Russia would vacate the Danubian Principalities without any prejudice to Ottoman sovereignty over them. These promises convinced neither the Ottomans nor most of the courts of Europe of Nicholas’s peaceful intentions and international tensions quickly escalated. Despite repeated expressions of goodwill from both parties to the dispute, events drifted inexorably over the autumn and winter of 1853 towards what The Times predicted would be ‘a sacred war’ in the East between Nicholas at the head of a militant Orthodox Christendom and an Islamic world led by the Ottoman sultan and caliph.

In St Petersburg, the Russian government made no bones about the religious character and origins of the approaching conflict. Nicholas I loudly insisted upon the piety of his motives and claimed that it was Russia’s legal right, by one reading of the ambiguous terms of the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, to intervene with the Ottoman government on behalf of his co-religionists in the East. Russian newspapers carried declarations of the emperor’s resolve not to shrink from his religious duty when the rights of the Orthodox Church were being trampled upon in the lands of its birth. Holy Russia had no choice but to take up arms in a spirit of piety and charity to protect fellow Christians living
under the Ottoman yoke. ‘Russia has not forgotten God!’ Nicholas thundered in one such manifesto.5 ‘We march’, he declared in another, ‘to the defence of the Orthodox Faith’.6

Most Russians – and the lower classes in particular – greeted these manifestos and Russia’s formal declaration of war on 1 November with what one foreign correspondent described as ‘fanatical enthusiasm’: ‘When the manifesto became publicly known here, numerous Russians were seen to fall on their knees in the open street and pray for blessings on their great Czar, the defender of the Orthodox Faith, the war-like champion of their holy Russia.’7 Another foreign visitor noted that: ‘The Greek cross appears everywhere as the sanctifying symbol of the present war; and on every side we hear the words repeated of “Orthodox Faith”, “Holy Confidence”, “Holy Russia”, etc. Texts from the scriptures have come to be mingled with the jargon of the fashionable saloons.’8 Newspapers and sermons preached from pulpits across the country reminded Russians that the Turks were ‘persecutors of the Christian faith’ and ‘insulters of the Holy Places’.9 Such rhetoric stiffened the resolve of enlisted soldiers and produced a flood of peasant volunteers who, much to the horror of the Russian government, abandoned their fields in order to enlist.10

The Russian upper classes approached the coming war with a greater sense of foreboding, but they too considered the struggle a duty imposed by religion and honour. Conservatives, such as the ‘Old Russian Party’ within the bureaucracy and the Slavophiles in literary circles, went further and embraced the conflict as a God-given opportunity to change Russia itself. Officially, Russian policy aimed merely to safeguard the rights of Orthodoxy in the Near East. Russian nationalists, however, wanted to cast aside the limitations that Russia had imposed upon its own foreign policy since the Napoleonic Wars and to advance manfully towards its rightful place as master of the Mediterranean. Conquest of the Balkans was, they felt, part of a world-historical mission. Mikhail Pogodin, the most important Russian journalist of the period, argued forcefully to both his sovereign and to the reading public that Russia’s moment had come to advance interests that were at one and the same time ‘Russian, Slavic, European, Christian!’:

As Russians, we must seize Constantinople for our own security. As Slavs, we must free millions of our elder kinsmen, coreligionists, enlighteners, and benefactors. As Europeans, we must drive out the Turks. As Orthodox Christians, we must preserve the Eastern Church and return to Hagia Sophia her ecumenical cross.11
Other prominent writers lent their pens to this messianic vision. The Slavophile Alexei Khomiakov thus urged his countrymen to humble their pride, repent, and become fit instruments of God’s work in the coming conflict. In a poem from 1854 entitled simply To Russia, he exhorted Russians to embrace the war as a cleansing fire:

> Arise then, faithful to your mission,
> And rush into the flames of bloody battle!
> Fight with cunning for your brethren,
> Holding aloft the banner of God with a firm hand.
> Smite with the sword – the sword of God!12

The nations of the earth were all waiting for Russia to sally forth as an avenging angel, with ‘love in her soul, thunder in her right hand’, to free the suffering Christians of the Balkans.13

In the Balkan Peninsula itself, many ordinary Orthodox Christians shared this apocalyptic vision of the confrontation between Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and the latter’s Western allies, even as the Serbian, Greek, and Montenegrin governments professed their official neutrality. Greeks noted that exactly 400 years had elapsed since the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. Surely, Providence had chosen this historic anniversary to set a term to the humiliation of Orthodox Christendom. Pamphleteers in the Kingdom of Greece breathlessly predicted a Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of a united Orthodox front against the manifold enemies of Christ – a motley group that one writer identified as ‘Mohammed and the Pope, Luther and Calvin, Voltaire and Copernicus’.14 ‘Despotism is finished’, he predicted, ‘freedom, the Church of Christ and Orthodoxy shall shine forth!’15

Inspired by such hopes, thousands of Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Romanians began as early as the summer of 1853 to ask the Russian government for permission to enlist under the banner of their common faith.16 Greek volunteers in Iaşi, the capital of Moldavia, petitioned the tsar to accept them into his army since, as right-believing Christians, they could no longer ‘remain mere onlookers in this contest for the Faith’.17 The Russian government responded by creating the Nicholas I Legion, composed entirely of Balkan Christian volunteers. Over the next two years, these Orthodox legionnaires would fight against the forces of their own sultan on the Danubian front and in the Crimea.18

Spirits ran especially high in the Kingdom of Greece, where both government and populace entertained unrealistic expectations that
the time had come to transform their tiny state into the nucleus of a resurrected Byzantine Empire. The Greek government sponsored the formation of paramilitary bands and fomented insurrections all along its border with the Ottoman Empire in Thessaly, Epirus, and Macedonia. The captain of one such band told local Christians that Ottoman rule was finished; every able-bodied man must take up arms and go to meet the conquering Russian army. The tsar himself would come
to meet us with all his compatriots bearing laurels in their hands, and the priests will bless us and our banners with the cross. The little Father of Olympus will prepare lambs and fresh water for us, and after having eaten and drunk the following day we will go to chant the liturgy in the church of Hagia Sophia [in Istanbul].

When the French and British ambassadors to Athens tried to convince King Otto of Greece and his queen to disavow these provocations, they were shocked to find the royal couple stubbornly defiant. Otto proved impervious to all their arguments and countered that: ‘I am a Christian! I cannot but sympathize with my people and with the Christians who labour under the yoke of the natural enemies of Christianity, and I would hope that every Christian government and people shared the same sentiments’.

This crusading mood in the Orthodox world was mirrored among Muslims, who responded to the developing crisis with an enthusiasm strongly tinged by religious fervour. Beginning in the fall of 1853, tens of thousands of conscripts and volunteers of every age made their way to the Ottoman capital from every corner of the empire: Arabs from the Middle East, Berbers from North Africa, Türkmen from the Anatolian plateau, Albanian mountaineers from the Balkans, and Circassian refugees impatient to avenge the Russian conquest of their homelands in the northern Caucasus. The constant parade of exotic arrivals made it seem as though the Muslim world had risen as one. Even old men were caught up in the spirit of volunteerism, as grey-bearded elders showed up for duty equipped with antique lances, kettledrums, and flintlocks. The fancy of the public was particularly struck by the arrival from the wilds of Cilicia of a mounted band of Kurds, who had put aside their feud with the Ottoman state to fight under the banner of the Prophet against the Russian infidels. Their aged chieftainess, Kara Fatma Hanum, caused a sensation by riding into Istanbul at the head of her men on an Arab charger, armed and unveiled. As one English reporter reported breathlessly: ‘the Turkish invasion of Europe has been repeated anew’.
European statesmen rightly feared that the jihadist enthusiasm of ‘Turks of the Old School’ would render the search for peace more difficult. From the end of September 1853, volunteers thronged the streets of Istanbul in high spirits, demanding to be led out against the foe. Discontented teachers and students from the religious colleges of the capital leavened this inchoate movement and helped to articulate its complaints. In the lead-up to the festival of *Eid al-Adha* on 10 September 1853, a group of 35–40 members of the religious establishment submitted a formal petition to the Ottoman Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vâlâ*). The petitioners confronted the council with a collection of scriptural references, which they used to recall the sultan and his ministers to their duty of avenging the insults that Russia had heaped upon Islam. The demeanour of the volunteers and their supporters threatened serious unrest should the government not commit itself in short order to a declaration of war. The council of ministers bowed under these pressures and recommended that the sultan open hostilities.

In the official Ottoman proclamation of war on 26 September, however, the government was careful to justify this act on the grounds of political principle rather than faith. It pointed out that the sultan had met all of Russia's *legitimate* requests, that Russia's interpretation of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was incorrect, and that the tsar's demands were an affront ‘to the sovereign rights and independence’ of all the diverse peoples of the empire – Christians and Jews as much as Muslims. The Ottoman government, in other words, emphasized that it was going to war in defense not of Islam but of modern, secular norms of international relations. The sultan’s ministers therefore expressed their hope that other states would look past any sectarian differences and come to the assistance of a neighbour who had been wronged.

While the Ottoman government thus sought to present the war to Europe as a purely political dispute, it used Islam at home and in the rest of the Muslim world to mobilize support. Around the same time as their secular declaration of war, for example, the council of ministers pointedly requested a legal opinion on the righteousness of the conflict from the highest Islamic authority in the empire, the şeyhülislam. The latter, Arif Hikmet Bey Effendi, responded with a *fatwa* declaring it a religious duty (*farz*) incumbent on all Muslims ‘to strive and do battle’ against the unbelieving tsar who ‘violated the borders of the lands of Islam with ruinous intent’. The response of the Islamic world to this appeal was mixed. On the one hand, most rulers from Morocco to Bukhara declared their neutrality, but ordinary Muslims as far away
as the Caucasus, India, and Southeast Asia were clearly sympathetic to the Ottoman cause. \(^{33}\) Reports from Mecca indicated that support was nearly universal among hajj pilgrims, and one Times correspondent warned that ‘religious fanaticism had not risen so high for centuries’ in the Holy Cities. \(^{34}\) Some political rivals such as Abbas Pasha of Egypt even agreed to put aside their differences with the Ottomans in order to present a united front against the Russian threat. The bey of Tunis, only nominally a vassal of the sultan, felt so strongly that he sent an expeditionary force to Istanbul of 4,000 infantry, cavalry, and artillery troops at his own expense. \(^{35}\) Clearly, for most Muslims the conflict with Russia was indeed a struggle \(fī sabīl Allāh\) – in the way of God.

The religious aspect of the conflict aroused considerably cooler reactions in Western Europe, especially at the state level. Indeed, it was the religious aspect of the conflict that Western statesmen most deplored. The Austrian foreign minister, Count Buol, thus issued a statement in the summer of 1853 specifically deploring the manner in which the Russian government had turned its quarrel with the Ottomans into ‘a crusade in favour of the Anatolian Church – a crusade for which there is no assignable motive, as in recent times there have been no instances of the Greek Christians in Turkey being oppressed by the Porte’. \(^{36}\) The British and French allies of the sultan were even more explicit on this point. Queen Victoria was careful to specify in the British declaration of war on 28 March 1854 that her government was not taking up arms for any religious purpose but ‘in defence of an ally whose territory is invaded, and whose dignity and independence are assailed’. The queen further expressed her hope that all combatants would refrain from making faith-based appeals and that time would confound and expose the true motives of those who were abusing Christianity to conceal ‘an aggression undertaken in disregard of its holy precepts, and of its pure and beneficent spirit’. \(^{37}\) In Paris the foreign minister of the day, Drouyn de l’Huys, could barely master his exasperation at the manner in which ‘fanaticism’ had magnified a minor squabble into an international crisis. He lamented in a circular to the French diplomatic corps:

Our epoch, however troubled, had at least been exempt from one of the evils that most afflicted the world in former days – I mean the wars of religion. Now, however, an echo of these disastrous times is made to resound in the ears of the Russian people. There is an affectation of opposing the cross to the crescent, and an appeal is made to fanaticism for that support which cannot be obtained from reason. \(^{38}\)
The sheer fact of the alliance after 28 March between Catholic France, Protestant Britain, and the Ottoman Caliphate seemed to prove that the conflict was not a new incarnation of the age-old struggle between Cross and Crescent. Western statesmen were apprehensive, however, that a war begun for secular motives might still mutate into a religious one. In Britain, for example, conservatives worried that British troops might end up on the wrong side of a war of Christian liberation against Muslim oppression. Were British soldiers really ready, several MPs asked, to fire on fellow Christians who sought only to escape Ottoman tyranny?

Outside the confines of parliament and chancery, Western Christians were more willing than their leaders to embrace the religious dimensions of the coming war. The conflict was thus popular among French Catholics for reasons that went well beyond Napoleonic grudges or raisons d’état. In the words of Bishop Antoine de Salinis of Amiens, Russia was ‘the born enemy of Christian Europe’ and of the values that all Catholics held dear. He therefore directed his clergy to pray for the victory of French arms, as ‘this war is from God’.

In Paris, Archbishop Marie-Dominique-Auguste Sibour called for a crusade against the ‘new barbarism’ emanating from the Orthodox world. He urged French soldiers to adopt the crusading battle cry Deus vult – God wills it – in self-conscious imitation of their countrymen from the eleventh century. Among the French laity, the conservative authors of books with such provocative titles as Russia under the Ban of the Universe and of Catholicism and Catholicism or Barbarism pointed out that even if France was not going to war officially in the name of Catholicism, the interests of France and of global Catholicism in this case were indistinguishable.

In the Middle Ages, as one such writer noted, the Crusaders had pursued religious ends and, in the process, had advanced French political interests. In the present war, those dynamics were reversed but ‘at bottom...the two interests are always united’: ‘Thus the Eastern War is to some extent a holy war, if not in the eyes of diplomats, then in the eyes of the people’.

Even opponents of Napoleon III and of the clerical party in French politics readily accepted that there was something objectionable and dangerous in Russia’s connection with the Christians of the Ottoman Empire. This attitude was rooted in French understandings of Orthodoxy itself as an artificial creation of the Russian state –something akin to a pseudo-religious ‘special section’ of the tsarist autocracy, rather than a proper religion in its own right. Liberals thus had little difficulty agreeing with conservatives that l’Église greco-slave and la Russie sainte were authoritarian institutions antithetical to the most deeply held values
and beliefs of Frenchmen. As one professor at the École préparatoire de Médecine in Tours declared in a piece of doggerel on the outbreak of war:

The tsar of Russia, as both pontiff and king,  
Is the enemy of our Christendom.  
His Orthodoxy is despotism, whereas  
God gave us holy liberty.45

The one voice strikingly absent from this chorus was that of the Papacy itself. In an encyclical issued on 1 August 1854, Pope Pius IX limited himself to calling for prayers that God ‘banish war to the ends of the earth and remove all disagreements from Christian princes, [granting] peace and tranquillity’.46 At first glance, the pope’s reluctance to assume leadership of this new crusade seems strange. The explanation lies in the Vatican’s desire to maintain good relations with Tsar Nicholas, who held in his hands the fate of millions of Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian Catholics. The emperor’s personal hostility towards Catholicism made the need for papal circumspection all the more acute. Nicholas had already outlawed Byzantine-rite Catholicism throughout most of his empire in 1839 and had placed various restrictions and impositions upon Latin-rite Catholicism in Congress Poland.47 Relations between St Petersburg and Rome improved with the signing of an accommodamento between the two in 1847, but there was no telling how the tsar would react should the Papacy openly endorse a war against him. Another consideration for Pius IX was the internal fragility of the Papal States following the upheavals of 1848–49, when the short-lived Roman Republic of Giuseppe Mazzini had briefly caused the papal government to flee into exile. Pius IX thus had no interest in promoting fresh disturbances. For the duration of the Crimean War he would mirror the stance of Austria by maintaining watchful neutrality and calling for peace.48 Jesuit periodicals like Civiltà Cattolica were more candid, however, in expressing a sympathetic view of the conflict that most Catholics assumed was closer to the true feelings of their pontiff.49

Protestants on either side of the Atlantic were more sharply divided than Catholics on the religious significance of the war. Some – particularly in America – questioned the righteousness of any alliance with ‘the Turk’ and expressed concern for the welfare of Ottoman Christians.50 In general, however, the majority of English-speaking Protestants viewed the war as being ‘religious’ in a broader, moral-ethical sense. As the aggrieved party, in other words, it was the sultan
who was truly righteous, while the tsar, by his aggression, was acting the infidel. In such a contest, Providence called the Anglo-Saxon race to bring a higher standard of morality to international affairs by rebuking the Russian bully and defending the weak. In this spirit of manly rectitude, the British Parliament declared an official day of ‘Solemn Fast, Humiliation and Prayer’ on 26 April 1854, during which churches and chapels across the land were packed to overflowing. The archbishop of Canterbury carefully avoided calling this war holy; yet he warmly assured the crowds that there had never been a time ‘when we could more justly and with a safer conscience invoke the blessing of God upon Her Majesty’s arms’.

Other Protestant clergymen sought to assuage the consciences of their compatriots about the coming war. In a sermon upon the embarkation of the Coldstream Guards, for example, the Anglican minister George Croly reassured his countrymen that there was little about Eastern Orthodoxy to excite their sympathy. The Orthodox Church, he declared, had long ago fallen into the extremes of theological error and priestcraft. It ‘had since run a race of superstition, side by side with Rome’. Many preachers characterized Orthodoxy as ‘essentially a persecuting religion’, hostile to the Word of God, to political liberty, and to religious tolerance. In contrast to the Ottoman sultan who allowed missionaries to operate relatively freely in the East, tsarism notoriously opposed the diffusion of the Word of God in Russia. Missionaries even speculated that an Allied victory might open up dazzling new prospects for the dissemination of the Gospel – perhaps the evangelization of the entire Eurasian continent. One Evangelical writer thus exulted to see that:

The car of freedom, drawn by the British lion, is in motion. May it never stop till it has run over and conquered all the nations of the earth! . . . Go on, Britannia, go on! March through the nations in the greatness of thy strength; victory shall go before thee, justice, mercy and truth shall follow after; blow the trumpet of liberty; trample in the dust the tyrant and the oppressor; crush them beneath thy chariot wheels, never more to rise; proclaim deliverance to the people; chase away error, superstition, and ignorance, and in every city and hamlet set up an altar of pure worship to God.

**Debating the ‘Northern sin’: Why the Crimean War?**

Observers both at the time and since have wondered how affairs had reached such a pass: how had Europe become caught up in what the
historian Orlando Figes has recently dubbed its ‘last Crusade’?\(^56\) Alfred Tennyson, having invited a close friend to visit him on the Isle of Wight in January 1854, imagined in an anticipatory poem that their ‘honest talk’ must naturally turn to this very question as they observed British warships slipping in and out of the Solent from his home overlooking the strait:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{We might discuss the Northern sin} \\
\text{Which made a selfish war begin;} \\
\text{Dispute the claims, arrange the chances;} \\
\text{Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:} \\
\text{Or whether war’s avenging rod} \\
\text{Shall lash all Europe into blood}^{57}
\end{align*}
\]

The mystery was all the more vexing for the fact that 40 years of peace had made war between the Great Powers of Europe – let alone between its great religious faiths – seem an apparition from the distant past. As one British journalist lamented shortly after the outbreak of hostilities:

We had begun to flatter ourselves that [wars and plagues] were incident to a phase of civilization which we had outgrown, and would in future be confined to the semi-barbarous East, or the yet untamed West . . . [We] have seen imbroglio after imbroglio, in which war seemed absolutely inevitable, solved by diplomacy instead; revolution after revolution, pregnant with the seeds of universal conflict, terminated either entirely without fighting, or with only a temporary and partial campaign; . . . till an almost universal feeling has grown up that some peaceful way will be found out of every quarrel, some peaceful solution of every dilemma.\(^58\)

It was particularly difficult to understand why, of all the quarrels confronting Europe in 1853, this one alone should have proved insoluble. The public was dimly aware that trouble had been simmering for years in Jerusalem between the Orthodox and Catholic churches over the holiest of Christian shrines, but such squabbles had plagued the Holy Land for centuries without requiring the intervention of Europe. The conflict was all the more perplexing for the fact that the main points of contention in Jerusalem had all been settled by May 1853 and both Russia and France had declared the Holy Places dispute resolved. It was also true that the Ottoman Empire had placed considerable strains on its relations with Austria and Russia, first by granting asylum to the
defeated supporters of the Hungarian Republic in 1849 and then by invading the tiny principality of Montenegro in 1852. But these problems also had been resolved through diplomacy. The sole issue that remained outstanding in 1854 was the Russian government’s demand that the Ottomans promise to preserve the rights of the Orthodox Church unaltered and most Europeans were at a loss to understand why this particular demand required recourse to violence. Russia demanded little more, after all, than the preservation of the status quo and the rights of Christians in the Ottoman Empire – goals that most Europeans could hardly fault.

Speaker after speaker thus rose in the Houses of Commons and Lords over the course of February and March 1854 to demand that the British government clarify why war was necessary and what specific goals it would achieve. The most popular answer, concisely expressed by the Earl of Shaftesbury to the House of Lords, was that Britain and France were acting vigorously in the East to prevent Russia from violating the sovereignty of the Ottoman sultan. The Allies would fight to ‘assert the rights of a weaker State, maintain the independence of nations, and endeavour to assign a limit to the encroachments of a Power that seems bent to darken all that is light, and subjugate all that is free, among the nations of mankind’. So long as the government gave its answer in such broad terms, it received broad approval. Britons had long expected, if not a major war, then some sort of political reckoning with Russia. They had waited in recent years with bated breath to see whether the smouldering embers of 1848–49 would throw up new flames in a confrontation between the great political principles of the age – of peoples against monarchs, of democracy against autocracy, and of liberal France and Britain against the conservative Northern Courts of Russia, Austria, and Prussia. It was therefore easy and satisfying for British and French statesmen to frame the conflict in terms that most of their citizens understood and for which they could muster genuine enthusiasm.

This explanation, however, could not withstand examination. The diplomacy of the crisis had nothing to do with modern political rivalries or ideas. It revolved entirely around the rights of an antique and, to most Westerners, obscure religious institution: the Orthodox Church. So inescapable was this discomfiting fact that when the Foreign Office published a massive collection of documents on the origins of the conflict for the edification of the Houses of Parliament, it entitled the blue book On the Rights and Privileges of the Greek and Latin Churches. One dismayed MP, Henry Drummond, pointed out that the very title gave the lie to any assertion that Russo-Ottoman relations had broken down over the
occupation of the Danubian Principalities. Nor did it appear that the war was about commerce in the East, geopolitics, or any of the other issues the House had spent most of the last several months debating. Drummond asked rhetorically:

Where were those blue books about what was now called the balance of power? Nowhere; . . . The Latin and Greek Churches were the whole subject of the blue books; and they constituted the matter with which the House had now to deal . . . the question of the balance of power was altogether an afterthought which had nothing to do with the real cause of quarrel.60

The uncomfortable truth that the House had to confront, Drummond concluded, was that it was embarking upon a war in pursuit of explicitly religious objects. The other issues associated with the conflict in parliamentary debates and the popular mind were purely adventitious.

The thought of going to war over an issue as arcane as religious privileges scandalized statesmen on both sides of the English Channel.61 It seemed incredible, wrote one member of Napoleon III’s court, ‘that for matters like a key, a lamp, a passage, a dormer window, two nations such as Russia and France, with so many common interests and mutual sympathies, could come to blows and shed torrents of blood. To sensible men such a hypothesis seemed a criminal absurdity’.62 In London, the Marquess of Clanricarde echoed these sentiments: ‘I hope’, he declared in the House of Lords, ‘it is not for the privileges of the Greek and Latin Church we are going to war. I, for one, will not consent to enter into a conflict for such an object’.63

The reasons given for the crisis seemed so absurdly at variance with the spirit of the age that most contemporaries concluded that the unseemly row over religion must be a façade, behind which lurked gross ministerial incompetence and other, darker motivations that would not bear the light of day. Modern historians have tended to agree with this assessment that the official casus belli was not a sufficient cause in and of itself. As David Goldfrank has concluded in the best and most detailed study of the origins of the conflict to date, ‘only an irrational impulse, one sufficiently powerful to override simple considerations of other states’ interest and the balance of Power’ could have led to war under the political circumstances of 1853–54.64 Contemporaries of the war proposed true causes for it that ran from the plausible to the absurd. Informed speculations in The Times about Russian plans to partition the Ottoman Empire thus jostled for attention with the bizarre claims of
an evangelical pamphleteer that the Oxford Movement had instigated the war in order to decimate their opponents within the Anglican Church. Historians down to the present have continued in a similar vein to debate the ultimate causes of the war, with particular discussion on whether economic, social, diplomatic, or strategic factors were most important. There is broad agreement, however, that a combination of causes was at play. The list of causes normally given for the Crimean War is long and invariably includes: 1) economic competition between the Powers in the Near East; 2) the ‘Great Game’ between Britain and Russia for control of the strategic swath of Western and Central Asia between the Turkish Straits and the Himalayas; 3) the spread of Russophobia among the British and French publics; 4) Napoleon III’s search for a foreign adventure to boost his popularity at home; 5) the pride and incompetence of Tsar Nicholas I; and 6), last but not least, a general breakdown in the European Concert system of diplomacy.

The one factor that is generally left unexamined is, oddly enough, the immediate pretext for the crisis in 1853: the struggle over the rights and privileges of the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire. Histories of the war provide little or no information on this aspect of the struggle and explore neither its prehistory nor its long-term consequences. To the extent that historians deal with the Orthodox Church at all, it is to dismiss the debate over its status and rights as an essentially trivial and anachronistic disagreement – the sort of thing that made the Crimean War, in the words of one writer, ‘history’s most unnecessary struggle’ and ‘a medieval conflict fought in a modern age’. Such a view is manifestly incomplete and a new account is needed to restore the conflict over Orthodox rights to its rightful place as a central part of the story. The following section of this chapter will present the dissenting and all-but-forgotten opinion of one contemporary observer in the spring of 1854 who regarded the dispute over the Orthodox Church as neither anachronistic nor a peripheral factor in the dramatic contest then unfolding along the shores of the Black and Baltic seas.

‘The fabric of theocracy’: Marx on the origins of the war

From his place of exile in London, the frustrated Prussian revolutionary Karl Marx was just one of the many journalists and political commentators struggling to understand events in the East. Marx’s first impulse had been to place the blame for the crisis entirely on Nicholas I, the notorious ‘Gendarme of Europe’ whose hands were still bloody from the violent suppression of every liberal uprising in eastern and central
Europe since 1830. In doing so, Marx was merely reflecting conventional wisdom in Britain. Russophobia there had reached fever pitch during the months following the ‘massacre’ of the Ottoman Black Sea fleet at Sinope by Admiral Pavel Nakhimov on 30 November 1853. It was widely agreed that Russia’s annexation over the previous decades of first Poland, then the Crimea, the Caucasus, and the Central Asian steppes had failed to sate that empire’s ravenous appetite for territory. The Russian Bear was roaming abroad for fresh victims and thought it had found a suitable pretext for acquiring control over the Straits leading from the Black Sea to the eastern Mediterranean in its claim that the 10 million-odd Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire needed protection from their own lawful sovereign.

In England, the prospect of seeing Russia established at one entrance to the Mediterranean brought about an unwonted unanimity of opinion among revolutionaries, conservatives, and free traders, all of whom wanted tsardom kept as far as possible from the sea routes to the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. This common concern moved Marx in 1854 to contact the eccentric MP and publicist David Urquhart in hopes of learning more about the East. Whereas Marx knew about the Ottoman Empire only from his wide readings, Urquhart had expert, first-hand knowledge of the East. As a young man with pronounced romantic leanings, Urquhart had volunteered in the 1820s to fight on the side of the Greek insurgents against the Ottoman state, and he had then travelled extensively throughout the Near East on behalf of the British embassy in Istanbul. His positive experiences with the Ottomans had converted the young Scot into one of that empire’s most outspoken Western supporters and a vociferous opponent of Russian expansionism. So embarrassingly partisan did Urquhart become that the Foreign Office finally dismissed him from its service in 1837 after the Russian navy intercepted a schooner that Urquhart had chartered to smuggle arms and supplies to insurgents resisting Russian rule in Circassia. Returning home, Urquhart dedicated the rest of his life to promoting all things Ottoman – including the construction in England of the first ‘Turkish’ steam baths since Roman times. As publisher of the Free Press and Conservative MP for Stafford from 1847 to 1852, Urquhart used whatever influence he could muster to fulminate against Russia and against Lord Palmerston, whom he blamed for his dismissal from the Foreign Service.

Marx began reading Urquhart’s books and articles in March 1853 in order to learn more about the Ottoman Empire. He found these stimulating and was bemused by Urquhart’s insistence that the notoriously Russophobic Palmerston was secretly a paid agent of the tsar. Under
the influence of Urquhart and his own ‘careful study of Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates and the diplomatic Blue Books’, Marx eventually came to embrace this conspiracy theory to the point of publishing new evidence ‘proving’ that a secret agreement had existed between St Petersburg and Whitehall since the times of Peter the Great. If shared enemies attracted the two men to each other, they quickly found upon meeting in early February of 1854 that they disagreed on every other topic. Urquhart was horrified to learn that Marx was a revolutionary, while Marx wrote to Engels that Urquhart was ‘an utter maniac’. The two men mastered their mutual dislike enough to cooperate fitfully over the next decade, with Marx writing anti-Palmerstonian articles for Urquhart’s Free Press and Urquhart providing Marx with first-hand information about the East.

Marx’s research led him to conclude that the recent ‘sacred rows’ in Jerusalem and Istanbul were neither as anachronistic nor as trivial as other commentators made them out. Religion was instead an integral part of the all-too-contemporary struggle between the European Powers for hegemony in the Near East. Marx reminded his readers in an article for the New-York Daily Tribune that ‘like all Oriental states’ the Ottoman Empire was founded upon ‘the most intimate connection, we might almost say, the identity of State and Church, of Politics and Religion. The Koran is the double source of faith and law for that Empire and its rulers’. What was true of the empire as a whole was even more so of its non-Muslim communities. The Ottomans had expanded the temporal authority of the Orthodox clergy over their co-religionists to such a degree that:

the parson of a parish is at the same time the judge, the mayor, the teacher, the executor of testaments, the assessor of taxes, the ubiquitous factotum of civil life, not the servant, but the master of all work. The main reproach to be cast upon the Turks in this regard is not that they have crippled the privileges of the Christian priesthood, but, on the contrary, that under their rule this all-embracing oppressive tutelage, control, and interference of the Church has been permitted to absorb the whole sphere of social existence.

Ottoman Christians thus lived under a twofold ‘fabric of theocracy’, being subjugated in the first place to their Muslim conquerors and secondly to their own clergy.

The unique structure of Ottoman society dictated that Europeans who wished to do business or exercise influence in the East had little choice but to identify with one or more of the different religious communities.
Such identification provided foreigners with a ready-made network of local supporters and access to the considerable temporal and spiritual authority wielded by the clerical elites. To swim against the current by remaining unaffiliated was always an option for non-Muslim foreigners, but meant foregoing the most obvious levers of power and influence available to them. In practice, therefore, most Europeans sought to bolster their influence in the Near East through the vehicle of religion. France, Austria, and Spain had vied with one another for centuries over the right to act as protector of Catholicism in the East, while Russia claimed a similar status with regard to the Orthodox and Armenian churches. Britain and Prussia, having come late to the region, were left to court smaller minorities such as the empire’s few Protestants, Jews, Nestorians, and Druze.

These religious protectorates brought immediate advantages, but they also embroiled the Great Powers in what Marx disparaged as ‘desperate Irish rows’ that regularly broke out between and within the different communities. Ottoman clients expected their European patrons to weigh in and determine the outcome of these disputes in their favour. As much as European representatives resented such demands, they invariably rose to the occasion and expended considerable effort living up to the expectations of their clients. Failure to do so meant not only loss of face and influence, but the eventual defection of local clients to more potent protectors. It was precisely this sort of intervention in support of local clients that had led to the initial dispute in the 1850s between Russia and France over the Holy Places – and would likely continue to cause fresh problems for the foreseeable future.

The outbreak of war had, however, focused international attention on these protectorates and the disadvantages of a socio-political system that discriminated against non-Muslims. The British and French governments, in particular, declared their intention of striking at the root of the current crisis by making their alliance contingent upon the Ottoman government undertaking significant social reforms. In particular, the Ottomans would be forced to place all religious communities on the same legal footing. Civil equality would emancipate Ottoman Christians and sever the Gordian knot that bound up their religious institutions with temporal privilege and political influence.

Marx scoffed at the idea that the Powers could hope to escape their conundrum so easily.

We are told explicitly [Marx observed] that the great end aimed at by the western Powers is to put the Christian religion on a footing of
equal rights with the Mahometan in Turkey. Now, either this means nothing at all, or it means the granting of political and civil rights, both to Mussulmans and Christians, without any reference to either religion, and without considering religion at all. In other words, it means the complete separation of State and Church, of Religion and Politics.79

Marx was no friend of theocracy, but in this case he feared that the aggressive program of secularization proposed by the Allied Powers would work serious mischief on the domestic order of the Ottoman Empire – so serious that he did not believe they could be contemplating such a measure in earnest. What the British and French governments were suggesting, he insisted, was nothing less than ‘abolishing Mahometanism’ in its current form and ‘breaking down the framework of Turkish society [in order to] create a new order of things out of its ruins’. Such emancipation, ‘whether effected by peaceful concession or by violence, [would] degrade Islamism from a political authority to a religious sect, and utterly uproot the old foundations of the Ottoman Empire’.80

In particular, Marx insisted that full religious equality would turn clerical rule among the non-Muslim minorities into a doomed legal anomaly. The secularization of Muslim society would therefore be followed by revolts against clerical regimes that, for all their drawbacks, had kept Christians relatively quiescent for centuries.81 Once the peoples of the Near East had escaped the stupefying tutelage of their clergy, he predicted, they would come under the sway of incendiary political influences ranging from Greek and Serbian nationalism to Russian imperialism. What the French and British were proposing thus ran directly counter to their stated war aims, chief among which was the preservation of the Ottoman state. The risks were too great for the Allies’ talk of separating church and state in the Ottoman Empire to be anything but empty propaganda. Marx concluded by scornfully asking his readers:

Can any one be credulous enough to believe in good earnest, that the timid and reactionary valetudinarians of the present British Government have ever conceived the idea of undertaking such a gigantic task, involving a perfect social revolution, in a country like Turkey? The notion is absurd. They can only entertain it for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of the English people and of Europe.82
As will be demonstrated later in Chapter 6, Marx was entirely mistaken on this point – the British and French governments were indeed intent on carrying out just such a revolution. His assessment of the causes and long-term consequences of this decision was, however, essentially correct. The international debate over the structure of Orthodox Christendom in the Near East had not appeared \textit{ex nihilo} in 1853 nor would it dissipate into irrelevance with the outbreak of war. At the heart of the crisis were questions regarding the place religion was to occupy, both in the domestic socio-political order of the Ottoman Empire and in the system of international relations that the Ottoman Empire was in the process of joining.

**Charting a course**

This book picks up where Marx’s analysis leaves off by attempting to answer two questions regarding the nineteenth-century political history of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The first is a simple question of fact: did European states other than Russia take an active interest in the affairs of Orthodox Christendom in the Near East? The second question is a more qualitative one: what practical effects did such involvement have on Orthodox Christendom and on European states?

It will be argued here that all of the Great Powers took an active interest in Orthodox affairs, and that their rivalries over such involvement would spark an international crisis in the early 1850s. The resulting war in 1853–56 fatally disrupted the status quo that the Congress of Vienna had established in Europe since 1815 and cleared the way for sweeping changes ranging from the emancipation of the Russian peasantry (1861) to the emergence of new national states in Romania (1859), Italy (1861), and Germany (1871).

The same encounter that transformed Europe also transformed Orthodox Christendom. Beginning in the 1830s, European diplomacy encouraged a wider questioning of the place of the Orthodox Church in the East, from the social role of the clergy to the political interests they should serve. Was the patriarchate of Constantinople, for example, to remain an international figure – an Orthodox papacy of sorts – or should its sphere of activity be limited to a single state? Should the Orthodox clergy wield temporal powers or was their authority purely spiritual? And who should the church serve: a temporal ruler, a particular nation, or foreign imperial interests? All governments and political groups involved in the affairs of the Near East took an interest in these questions, and their competing efforts from the 1820s to the 1870s to
reshape the Orthodox Church produced effects that ranged from petty wrangling over liturgics to serious diplomatic disputes. The following chapters will provide an outline narrative of this process, beginning with the origins of the crisis over Ottoman Christendom in the 1820s–30s and tracing its progression through the heightened tensions of the 1840s to its partial resolution with the Crimean War and the promulgation of new reforms in the 1850s.

It will also be argued here that European policies towards the Orthodox Church were part of a broader movement during the nineteenth century towards the secularization of international relations. The same Great Powers, in other words, that sought to restrict the powers of the Orthodox Church in the Near East also sought generally to construct an international order in which religion occupied a distinctly marginal place and ecclesiastical figures and institutions were firmly subordinated to temporal authorities. The history of relations between European states and the Orthodox Church thus deserves to be placed alongside the history of the former’s relationships with the Catholic Church, with Islam, and with any other religion that claimed a place on the international political stage.

The preceding assertions are by no means uncontroversial for historians whether of the nineteenth century, of diplomacy, of the Crimean War, or of the Ottoman Empire. In part, this is because scholars are familiar with the individual components of this story, but have rarely viewed them as interrelated pieces of a single whole. Historians of the Balkans have, for example, written extensively on the struggles over ecclesiastical reform between Greeks and Slavs, clergy and laity, the Ottoman state and its Orthodox subjects. Their focus, however, has been on the internal history of these communities and their relations with the Ottoman state. More specifically, these histories have focused on the role of Orthodoxy in advancing or retarding the development of ethnic nationalism on the one hand and loyalty to the Ottoman state on the other. That the Powers played some role in the internal struggles of the Orthodox Community is acknowledged, but without any corresponding effort to examine the policies of these states towards the Orthodox Church in detail. The larger Ottoman and European political context for events within the Orthodox Community is also rarely examined, an omission that is particularly striking in the case of the Crimean War. A symptom of this is the fact that historians have written monographs on Catholic and Anglican responses to the Crimean War, but not on the responses of those Ottoman Orthodox Christians who were at the centre of it.
Ottoman historians, for their part, have approached the impact of the Tanzimat reforms on the non-Muslim minorities from the perspective of the imperial centre. Like Balkan historians, much of their work has been carried out under the shadow of the inter-communal slaughter that attended the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and is therefore motivated by a desire to understand ‘what went wrong’. Ottoman historians are also broadly agreed with Balkanists that the Tanzimat era marked a fundamental shift in the socio-political role of religion across the empire. Selim Deringil has described this shift as ‘the “cracking of the shell” of the traditional [Ottoman] religious structure’, with religion becoming ever more politically charged and tied to ethnic and – eventually national – identity over the course of the nineteenth century. Ottomanists trace the roots of this politicization to the steady knitting together of the Ottoman and European economies, a development which in turn is supposed to have fuelled the rise of Christian bourgeois elites who proved adept at turning religious and cultural ties with Europe to their economic and political advantage. The Ottoman state further empowered these groups during the 1830s–70s by embracing a discourse of equality and modernization that was supposed to strengthen links between the central government and ordinary subjects. Ussama Makdisi argues that by the 1830s these developments had turned Ottoman religion into the site par excellence of:

a colonial encounter between a self-styled ‘Christian’ West and what it saw as its perennial adversary, an ‘Islamic’ Ottoman Empire. This encounter profoundly altered the meaning of religion in the multi-confessional society of Mount Lebanon because it emphasized sectarian identity as the only viable marker of political reform and the only authentic basis for political claims.

Ottomanists are thus broadly agreed in identifying religion as a critical flashpoint for conflict between Ottoman communities, between the central state and its subjects, and between the empire and its European neighbours. They have also the best understanding of the extent to which Ottoman religion served as a flashpoint for conflict between the European powers. Historians such as Bruce Masters and Ussama Makdisi have shown how Ottoman religious communities and shrines in the Levant served as venues for ‘a cultural war wherein European powers sought proxies’ among their local co-religionists. Moving from the provinces to the capital, Roderic Davison has argued that such competition moved the Great Powers to encourage a thorough reform of the
empire’s religious communities at the end of the Crimean War. Davison even went so far as to declare the Reform Decree of 1856 ‘in many ways the magnum opus of [the British ambassador] Lord Stratford’. Davison did not investigate, however, whether this involvement predated the Crimean War and specifically warned that he would ‘slight’ the details of ‘great-power maneuvering’ in order to focus on the reforms ‘as a domestic problem’. Ottomans hosted Davison’s assertion that European diplomacy played some role in the drafting of religious reforms, while differing over the significance of that role. At one extreme, Kemal Karpat has described the Reform Edict of 1856 as a reform ‘prepared by the English, French and Austrian governments’ and ‘imposed upon the Ottoman government’. Deringil, by contrast, is more typical in his insistence that the Ottoman government bore sole responsibility for its own reforms and that it ‘retained ultimate political agency’ until the end of the Empire. In either case, the history of the ‘cultural war’ carried out by the Powers on Ottoman soil has yet to be written – as has serious investigation into Karpat’s assertion that ‘the Orthodox Church was, in fact, the primary target of the European-inspired millet reform’.

Similarly, while there is an extensive literature on the Eastern Question in European diplomacy, little of it specifically examines the Orthodox Church as a strategic vehicle for imperial competition in the eastern Mediterranean. Diplomatic historians have treated disputes over even such explicitly religious matters as the Holy Places or ecclesiastical privileges in isolation from each other and from the history of the Orthodox Church as a whole. Was, for example, Menshikov’s insistence on a protectorate that included the temporal privileges of the Orthodox clergy a new demand or a long-standing one? An index of the degree to which the Orthodox Church has been ignored is how few histories of the Crimean War or the Eastern Question discuss events within the Orthodox community or even mention individual clergymen by name. The resulting accounts suffer from drawbacks comparable to any history of the Opium Wars that omits the opium trade or a history of the First World War that knows nothing of Bosnian Serbs.

To leave Orthodoxy on the neglected margins of the Eastern Question is also to overlook one of the most outstanding examples of the intimate connections between Ottoman domestic events and the mainstream of European history. This book will attempt to highlight these connections by organizing each chapter loosely around the perspectives of several central figures – diplomats, officials, or clergymen – who served as points of contact between the Ottoman and European worlds.
Chapter 2 thus begins with the early life and career of a key figure in the nineteenth-century history of the Orthodox Church: Patriarch Grigórios VI of Constantinople. The story of his rise through the hierarchy serves to provide an overview of the unique structure and functioning of the Orthodox Church as an Ottoman institution in the mid-1800s, from its highest office down to the parish level. The resulting picture of the patriarchate of Constantinople is completed by a review of the many problems that confronted the church in the 1830s: chronic institutional indebtedness, territorial losses, abuses of power, the first stirrings of nationalism, and the incursions of foreign missionaries. Counterbalancing these problems were the substantial privileges that the clergy enjoyed and the determination of many Orthodox Christians, with Grigórios VI at their head, to revitalize their community.

The third chapter uses the correspondence of ambassador John Ponsonby and other European representatives in the Near East to examine why and how Western governments began to take a new interest in Orthodox affairs during the 1820s–30s. It is argued here that Western fears of an imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of Russian influence in the region gave new significance to the religious protectorates that European states had acquired in previous centuries over the various non-Muslim religious communities. Under the changed conditions of the 1830s, British and French diplomats felt that the advantages Russia enjoyed as a result of its connections with the Orthodox Church could no longer be tolerated. British diplomacy, in particular, encouraged the Ottoman Empire and the new Balkan states to exercise tighter state supervision over the Orthodox Church within their borders so as to prevent the emergence of anything like a transnational Orthodox ‘papacy’ in the eastern Mediterranean. Such policies clashed directly with the efforts of Patriarch Grigórios VI to reassert the authority of his see over the Orthodox churches of Greece and the British-controlled Ionian Islands. The result was a confrontation between the patriarchate and the British government that ended with the removal of Grigórios from power and the establishment of an important precedent in regional affairs. Thereafter, the emerging consensus among Western states was that the authority of Orthodox hierarchs – and that of Constantinople in particular – should be restricted within clear territorial limits.

Chapter 4 reconstructs the attitude of the Ottoman government towards the Orthodox Church through the lens of the career and policies of the great Ottoman statesman Koca Mustafa Reşid Paşa, and, to
a lesser extent, those of his protégés, colleagues, and rivals in Ottoman state service. It briefly reviews the ambitious program of reforms known as the Tanzimat that Reşid helped to launch in the 1840s and discusses the potential implications of those reforms for Ottoman Christians. Reşid personified a new tendency among Ottoman statesmen during the late 1830s–40s to see the difficulties of the Orthodox Church as a political danger requiring state-imposed solutions, rather than as an ethical or administrative problem best left to Ottoman Christians to resolve. In other words, the question of what to do with the Orthodox Church was posed for the first time in Ottoman political discourse, with Reşid and his circle urging a reduction in the powers and autonomy of the clergy as the answer. The British and French embassies wholeheartedly approved of such policies and pressed the Ottoman government to be even more radical. All Ottoman attempts to reform the structure of the Orthodox Community in the 1840s foundered, however, against the entrenched opposition of the Orthodox clergy and the Russian legation. Ottoman ecclesiastical policy thus failed to achieve its objects, but it inadvertently laid the foundations for a serious crisis by convincing the Russian government that Russian influence and the privileges of the Orthodox Church were under sustained attack from the Ottoman government and its British and French supporters.

Chapter 5 demonstrates how Russian anxieties over the Orthodox Church transformed a diplomatic incident into a war. It begins by reviewing the competition that had been brewing for two decades in Palestine among the Catholic, Armenian, and Orthodox churches over control of such sites as the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The French embassy succeeded in wringing a few concessions from the Ottoman government, but such successes also stoked the wrath of the Russian government, which saw these as yet further attempts to undermine the position of Orthodoxy in the East. The chapter focuses in particular on the mission of Prince Alexander Menshikov, the special envoy dispatched by Tsar Nicholas I to Istanbul in 1853 to bring home a victory for Orthodoxy in the Holy Places dispute. In light of the two decades of struggle over the position of the Orthodox Church described in previous chapters, the obsession of the Russian government with explicit guarantees for the rights and privileges of the Orthodox Church becomes both more intelligible and more significant – as does the corresponding refusal of the Ottoman government to give such guarantees. The Russian government came to the conclusion that it was facing a direct challenge to its position in the Near East and that aggressive action was needed to set things right.
The degeneration of the Russo-Ottoman dispute into a rupture of diplomatic relations brought the problem of Orthodox ecclesiastical privilege to the attention of European statesmen and convinced them of the need to impose a resolution.

The sixth chapter looks at relations between the Great Powers and the Orthodox Church during the years of the Crimean War primarily through the reports and activities of the French ambassador to Istanbul, Édouard Thouvenel, and those of his British and Austrian colleagues (Stratford Canning de Redcliffe and Anton Prokesch von Osten). With the Powers at war and the Russian embassy temporarily absent, the British ambassador briefly attempted to take over Russia's traditional role and to pose as the protector of the Orthodox Church. When this experiment failed in 1855, the British embassy joined with its French and Austrian counterparts in insisting upon a thoroughgoing reform of the Orthodox Community. Together, the representatives of the three Powers worked in concert to ensure that the Ottoman government imposed a new, laicized model of communal organization on the non-Muslims of the empire. The culmination of this process came in the spring of 1856 with the Constantinople Conference and the promulgation of the great Reform Edict, a milestone in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Although officially this edict was a free act of the Ottoman government, it was drafted with direct European involvement and went much further than the Ottoman ministry of the day thought wise or feasible. The implementation of these reforms was to put an end to the problem of religious protectorates in the Near East by removing most of the powers of the clergy, undermining the stability and coherence of the religious communities, and formally abolishing the old system of protectorates. The chapter concludes by showing how the Great Powers further sought to prevent the Ottoman government from reneging on its commitment to reform by mentioning the new edict, albeit obliquely, in the articles of the Peace of Paris that ended the Crimean War in 1856.

The concluding chapter uses the second patriarchate of Grigórios VI Fourtouniádis to reflect upon the profound changes that had occurred since his first term on the ecumenical throne. In the aftermath of 1856, the process of drawing up a new constitution for the Orthodox Community proved exceptionally difficult and delays, obstacles, and internal disputes dogged the work. The new regulations that Sultan Abdülaziz promulgated in 1863 did not reflect the interests of the Ottoman government particularly well nor did it bring peace to the Orthodox Community. Instead, Orthodox communal affairs in the late 1850s–60s became ever more
mired in disputes between the clergy, lay notables, and representatives of the non-Greek ethnic groups. Although the reforms did not match the guidelines laid down in the Constantinople Congress, European governments could nevertheless afford to watch sanguinely during the 1860s–70s as the Russian legation struggled to patch over the damage that a decade of war and reform had done to pan-Orthodox solidarity in the Balkans.

This chapter also argues that the history of the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire illustrates an important aspect of the changing relationship between religion and politics everywhere in the nineteenth century. It is commonly accepted that in Western Europe the modern state system had to be built on the ruins of an older, religiously inspired system underpinned by ecclesiastical principalities, papal authority, and the Holy Roman Empire. The expansion of the European state system into the Balkans and Middle East involved a similar process of domestication – this time of the Eastern Orthodox Church and Islam – and the suppression of the temporal powers of the clergy. These developments were not merely brought about by changing attitudes among ordinary people but were the product of deliberate efforts by states and individual statesmen. The Great Powers of Europe, in particular, played a critical role in this process – a role that they were afterwards only too happy to forget.
A Patriarch’s Progress: The Great Church under Grigórios VI

For our heart is sorely afflicted and sawn asunder, after the many efforts that we have not failed to expend since the day of our elevation to this most holy Ecumenical height by the grace of God, to see the insane wickedness of the arch-villain Satan as emboldened as ever. Misbelieving heretics have belligerently fomented an undeclared war against the Orthodox ecumene in recent years, assailing it like a torrent ...

– Encyclical to the Bishops of the Ionian Islands, 1838

A most superior person: the Phanar, 1837

On 13 July 1837, as part of his journeys through the Near East in search of rare Greek manuscripts, the English scholar and adventurer Robert Curzon obtained an audience from the patriarch of Constantinople. His particular object was to obtain permission to tour the monasteries of Mt Athos, but Curzon was also keen to meet a prelate who was simultaneously the highest-ranking figure in the Orthodox Church and the most important non-Muslim official in the Ottoman Empire. As leader of the ‘Nation of the Romans’ (in Turkish, Rum Millet-i; in Greek, Ἐθνὸς τῶν Ῥωμαίων), Patriarch Grigórios VI Fourtouniádis exercised broad temporal authority over almost one-third of the sultan’s subjects, while as a ‘pasha of three horse-tails’ he enjoyed a rank among Ottoman servitors almost on par with the grand vizier himself. Curzon did not wish to meet such an eminent personage without credentials, so he brought along several friends from the British embassy and a letter of recommendation from the archbishop of Canterbury.
When Curzon’s party arrived at the patriarchal headquarters in the Phanar district of Istanbul, he found the monks ‘surprised and perhaps a little alarmed at a visit from so numerous a company of gentlemen belonging to the British Embassy’. They received the visitors politely nevertheless and ushered Curzon into a large reception room, furnished on three sides with a cushioned divan. The patriarch, a handsome man in his late thirties, then made his appearance. Curzon recalled: ‘He was dressed in purple silk robes, like all Greek bishops, and took his seat in the corner of the divan, and said nothing, and stroked his beard as a pasha might have done’.3

Curzon and his company made their bows and salutations, after which a host of priestly servants brought them sweets, coffee, and spring water on a fine silver and crystal service. Long, thin Turkish pipes followed these refreshments. ‘When we had smoked our pipes for awhile, and all the servants had gone away’, Curzon presented his letter of recommendation, which was read aloud to the patriarch, first in English and then in Greek. Cuzon’s host appeared bemused:

‘And who’, quoth the Patriarch of Constantinople, the supreme head and primate of the Greek Church of Asia – ‘who is the Archbishop of Canterbury?’
‘What?’, said I, a little astonished at the question.
‘Who’, said he, ‘is this Archbishop?’
‘Why, the Archbishop of Canterbury.’
‘Archbishop of what?’ said the Patriarch.
‘Canterbury’, said I.
‘Oh’, said the Patriarch. ‘Ah! Yes! And who is he?’

Curzon, mastering his surprise, informed Grigórios that the archbishop of Canterbury was:

the primate and chief of the great reformed Church of England, and a personage of such high degree, that he ranked next to the blood-royal; that from time immemorial the Archbishop of Canterbury was the great dignitary who placed the crown upon the head of our kings – those kings whose power swayed the destinies of Europe and of the world; and that this present Archbishop and Primate had himself placed the crown upon the head of King William IV., and that he would also soon crown our young Queen [Victoria].

The red-bearded figure on the divan remained visibly unimpressed.
‘Well’, replied the Patriarch, ‘but how is that? How can it happen that the head of your Church is only an Archbishop? Whereas I, the Patriarch, command other patriarchs, and under them archbishops, archimandritics, and other dignitaries of the Church? How can these things be? I cannot write an answer to the letter of the Archbishop of – of –….

‘Of Canterbury’, said I.

‘Yes! Of Canterbury; for I do not see how he who is only an archbishop can by any possibility be the head of a Christian hierarchy; …

Grigórios nevertheless declared his willingness to let Curzon visit Athos as a mark of esteem for the British embassy. ‘My business being thus happily concluded with this learned personage’, Curzon recalled wryly, his party finished their pipes and ‘went on our way rejoicing’.

Curzon related this incident to his readers as little more than an amusing anecdote, but it betrayed more than he realized of the tensions that characterized relations between the Orthodox upper clergy and representatives of the West in the early nineteenth century. In Curzon’s account of the interview, for example, the relationship between spiritual and temporal power in the Ottoman Empire is presented in a negative light. Curzon saw no impropriety in investing the archbishop of Canterbury with a certain measure of Britannia’s glory, but he thought the pretentions of the patriarch of Constantinople ridiculous and out of keeping with ‘these enlightened times’.4 To Curzon, as to most Europeans, the extensive powers of the Orthodox clergy violated the divisions that ought to exist between secular and spiritual affairs and provided yet another example of the obscurantism and despotism that infected Orientals. Curzon thus had little difficulty taking at face value the patriarch’s professions of ignorance and assumed that he was, indeed, unaware ‘there were any other denomination of Christians but those of his own church and the Church of Rome’.5

In fact, Grigórios VI was only too aware of Anglicanism and other forms of Protestantism. The year before Curzon’s visit, Grigórios had issued a lengthy encyclical warning his flock against the ‘poisonous’ doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. He warned Orthodox Christians not only against Protestant heresies, but also against all those Westerners who – like Curzon – had been appearing in increasing numbers since the accession of Sultan Mahmud II ‘sometimes as travellers, sometimes as merchants, sometimes as gratuitous physicians, and sometimes as missionaries or teachers. They lay out great sums for insignificant antiquities [like old manuscripts!]; they attend the sick,
and give instruction without pay’. The strangers do all this, Grigórios concluded, ‘with the sole object of insinuating themselves into the good will of the Orthodox and of polluting the faith of our forefathers’. The patriarch had therefore been understandably apprehensive when a large British party arrived at his doorstep bearing a letter from the archbishop of Canterbury. To accept correspondence from a Protestant heresiarch would have been both personally distasteful and potentially compromising, while open rejection might offend the British embassy. Grigórios VI found an elegant solution to his dilemma by feigning ignorance. This had the added advantage of allowing Grigórios to snub his guests’ pretentions gently, while reminding them that he, the ecumenical patriarch and archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome, was no mean personage.

European representatives who visited the East over the succeeding decades would similarly find themselves nonplussed by the Ottoman Empire’s haughty Orthodox clerical elite. Not all these encounters, however, ended as congenially. Instead, the Orthodox Church would become a lightning rod for contention both within the Ottoman Empire and among the Great Powers. A lack of basic information about the Ottoman Orthodox Church in the West often aggravated the situation and that lack has, unfortunately, persisted down to the present. It is therefore necessary to begin our study with an overview of the Ottoman Orthodox Church and the circumstances that led its primate to view a travelling English bibliophile with such mistrust.

Yeóryios Fourtouniádis: Son of the Orthodox Nation

For all his sumptuous robes and titles, His All-Holiness Grigórios VI, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch was no more born to wealth and privilege then the greengrocers and navvies who thronged his cathedral on feast days. Grigórios’s parents, Ángelos and Soultána, were humble commoners from the village of Rumelifeneri on the westernmost tip of Thrace where the Bosporus meets the Black Sea. In the nineteenth century, Rumelifeneri’s sole claim to fame was its location next to the Cyanean Rocks, which, according to Greek legend, had crushed all ships that passed them until the arrival of Jason and the Argonauts. The few tourists who came in search of this Classical past were sorely disappointed, finding nothing, as one French traveller complained, but ‘some trees and vegetation growing on the site of the remains left by the old king [Phineas], whose name is unknown to the poor families who build their shacks nearby’.
In the modesty of his origins, Grigórios was typical of Ottoman bishops in the early nineteenth century. The patriarch who sat upon the throne in the year of Grigórios’s birth, for example, was from a sleepy village in the Arcadian highlands of the Peloponnese and Grigórios’s future synod would be full of men who before their ordination had earned their living as bakers, cooperers, miners, and even prize-fighters. The future patriarch was born into an ascetic environment on 1 March 1798, midway through the seven weeks of Lent when Orthodox Christians adopt a dour regimen of prayer and fasting. The new parents christened their son Yeóryios in honour of St George, the soldier-martyr and patron saint of their local parish. They also passed on the unusual surname of Fourtouniádis (roughly translatable as ‘Tempestuous’). Over his long career, their son would live up to both names, acquiring a reputation as an obstinate man who never shrank from a challenge or opted for discretion when a question of principle was at stake. In the words of one biographer, he was characterized by an unflagging ‘zeal for the Church and austerity in his morals’ as well as ‘an inexcusable rigidity in all his ideas’.

In modern ethnographic terms, the Fourtouniádis were Greeks. In the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century, however, it was the family’s profession of the orthodox Chalcedonian creed rather than their use of the demotic language that made them ‘Greek’ and determined their membership in the Rum (‘Roman’ or ‘Byzantine’) community. Religion determined much more than just the social identity of the young Yeóryios, as being Rum was an exacting fate that measured out the parameters within which members of his family lived and the conditions under which they experienced worldly success or failure. The Ottoman Empire consisted of many diverse peoples, but all understood that the principal components of the state – dynasty, land, military, and political administration – belonged in title and practice to the Muslim Community or Nation (İslam Millet-i). As the representative (khalīfa) of God on earth, the Ottoman sultan exercised – in theory, at least – a monopoly over political power and all land not explicitly set aside for pious purposes (vakıf) or private individuals (mülk). Islamic jurisprudence, based on the Qur’an and the Hadiths, provided the Ottoman Empire with the core of its official legal system, and the religious scholars (ulema) who interpreted and applied its laws. The Ottoman armed forces were similarly seen as a quintessentially Muslim preserve in the early 1800s, with Christians restricted to auxiliary roles as horse-wranglers, wagoners, sailors, and irregular militias.
The Ottoman sultans had the good sense, however, to realize that their non-Muslim subjects could not be expected to obey Islamic religious laws or integrate themselves fully into a state defined by Islam. They were therefore prepared, in keeping with long-standing political traditions in the Middle East, to treat their Christian and Jewish subjects as species of friendly aliens. In exchange for tolerance, the latter were expected to pay a modest head tax (cizye) in lieu of military service and to obey discriminatory regulations that distinguished them from Muslims. They were, for example, not to ride a horse while their Muslim betters walked nor to sit while a Muslim stood. Non-Muslims were not to wear the colour green, nor to defend their honour if slapped or insulted by a Muslim in the street.

Since the Ottoman state saw direct governance of non-Muslims as falling outside its purview, it granted non-Muslim communities a substantial degree of internal autonomy under the supervision of their own religious authorities. Tradition dated this system back to 1453, when the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople marked both the destruction of the Eastern Roman Empire and the emergence of a new accommodation between the former subjects of Byzantium and their conquerors. According to legend, Mehmed the Conqueror had sought among the smouldering ruins of the city for an ally to help him reinvent the old Roman Empire's imperial church. He finally located the renowned theologian Yeóryios Scholários in Edirne among a group of enslaved captives. Mehmed is supposed to have made Scholários a singularly compelling offer: freedom and the opportunity to become patriarch and civil leader (millet-başı) of all Orthodox Christians under Ottoman control. In return, Mehmed expected Scholários to stiffen Orthodox resistance against any rapprochement with the hostile West and to ensure their obedience to the new regime. Towards these ends, Mehmed II granted Scholárias and his successors a series of modest privileges. The original concessions seem to have consisted of guarantees that the Ottoman dynasty would: 1) halt the conversion of churches into mosques; 2) respect the ceremonies of the Orthodox Church; and 3) permit Christians in Istanbul to celebrate Easter unhindered, with the gates of the Phanar district left open day and night for the duration of the feast. The person of the patriarch was also to be exempt from taxation, mistreatment, and arbitrary removal.11

This story of a compact between Mehmed and Scholários, whether true in all its details or not, was to provide a foundational myth and source of legitimacy for the Orthodox Church throughout the Ottoman period.12 Over the following two centuries sultans and
patriarchs further elaborated and expanded their original compact. Just as Muslim religious scholars operated a legal system grounded in the Shariah, so the Orthodox clergy began to regulate the internal affairs of their community according to Byzantine canons and law codes. The geographical extent of the Patriarchate of Constantinople also expanded as the Ottoman Empire grew during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Ottoman conquest of Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Syria, and Egypt brought new Orthodox Christian populations into the Rum Millet-i and under the authority of Constantinople. Before these conquests, the patriarchs of Constantinople had enjoyed a primacy of honour within the Orthodox Church as the archbishops of New Rome, a primacy reflected in the title of ‘ecumenical patriarch’. This honorary primacy fell far short of papal claims to supremacy in the West, however, and extended neither to the administration of other churches nor to theological matters. He was more the nominal president of a spiritual confederacy of regional churches than anything approximating an eastern pope. By the eighteenth century, however, the support of the Ottoman state had transformed this nominal primacy into a much more robust authority and buttressed it with numerous temporal privileges (imtiyazat-i mezhebiye; in Greek pronómia). At the urging of the Phanar, for example, the Ottomans had dissolved all rival patriarchates in the Balkans (Peć, Ohrid, and Tarnovo) and given their eparchies to Constantinople. As a result, by the 1830s the ecumenical throne exercised jurisdiction over roughly 204 eparchies and encompassed the vast majority of the Sultan’s Orthodox subjects.

Five other sister churches survived within the empire and continued to enjoy considerable internal autonomy, but they remained small and relied heavily upon the ability of the Ecumenical Patriarch to intercede for them with the Ottoman authorities. The patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem, for example, amounted to only a score of eparchies each (17 and 14 respectively) in the Levant, and the archbishopric of Cyprus had four. The patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa had so declined that by the 1830s–40s its primate presided over a lonely synod of one bishop. The smallest independent Orthodox jurisdiction, the archbishopric of Mt Sinai, exercised authority only over the monastery of St Catherine’s, the surrounding Sinai Peninsula, and a few far-flung parishes in the British-ruled Bengal Presidency.

In the rest of the Ottoman Empire, the patriarchs of Constantinople presided over an extraordinarily diverse community in which it was difficult to draw clear lines separating millet from faith, and faith from
Map 2.1 Patriarchate of Constantinople in Anatolia, 1830–70
Map 2.2  Patriarchate of Constantinople, 1830–70
The Great Powers and Orthodox Christendom

ethnicity. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Metropolitan Ignátios Bámpalos of Oungro-Vlachía thus described the convergence of religious and political categories that he and his brethren took for granted:

The Hellenes, the Bulgarians, the Vlachs, the Serbs and the Albanians form today Nations, each of which has its own language. All these peoples, however, and any others inhabiting the East, are unified by the faith and by the Church to form one body and nation under the name of Greeks or Romans. Thus the Ottoman Administration, when addressing itself generally to its Christian Orthodox subjects, normally calls them Romans, and the Patriarch it always calls Patriarch of the Romans; only when it has to speak particularly with one of these peoples does it distinguish them by their principal name.\(^\text{16}\)

An ethnic Greek priest, a Bulgarian peasant, and a Palestinian merchant were all equally ‘Rum’ in their faith, nationality, and consciousness. Ottoman Christians therefore saw no contradiction in the fact that the mother tongues spoken by prominent ‘Greek’ notables like Stéfanos Vogorídis or Nikólaos Aristárchis were Bulgarian or Armenian (respectively).

By the early 1800s the Ottoman state had recognized four other non-Muslim ‘nations’ or communities within its borders: those of the Armenians, Rabbinic Jews, Karaite Jews, and Roman Catholics. These communities differed substantially from one another in their composition and organization. The Armenian Nation (Ermeni Millet-i), for example, served as a catchall for the various non-Chalcedonian Christians of the Empire, including Gregorian Armenians, the Copts of Egypt, and the Chaldeans of Iraq. It even subsumed as ‘Armenian’ communities, such as the Nestorians or Chaldeans, whose theological doctrines were diametrically opposed to those of the Armenian Apostolic Church. As a result, the several sub-communities within the Armenian Nation enjoyed considerable internal autonomy. The fact that the Armenian patriarch of Istanbul was not the supreme spiritual leader of all Armenians further undermined his authority. That position was held by the Catholicos of Ėchmiadzin, who had his primatial seat in the Russian Empire at Vagharshabad. Even within the Ottoman Empire, the large Armenian populations of eastern and southern Anatolia had their own autonomous catholicoi residing at Sis (Kozan) and on the island of Aght’amar in the middle of Lake Van.
The Jewish communities of the Empire were even more loosely structured than the Armenian Millet, with the grand rabbi (haham-başı) of Istanbul exercising virtually no authority outside the imperial capital. Instead, the different Jewish communities created their own regional rabbinites to oversee legal and religious affairs. From Thessaloniki, for instance, a local rabbinal triumvirate governed over Jewish communities in the neighbouring provinces of Selânik, Úsküb, and Manastir. Karaite Jews were left alone to such an extent that it is unclear whether they had any millet structure at all.

The last of the millets, that of the Roman Catholics or ‘Franks’, was composed of a loose confederation of scattered communities, such as the Catholics of the former Venetian and Genoese colonies in the Aegean, Melkites in Syria, Maronites in Lebanon, the Mirditë in northern Albania, and Croats in Bosnia. Like the Jews, these Catholic communities possessed no single, proper millet-başı comparable to the Orthodox or Armenian patriarchs of Constantinople. The pope was their sole spiritual head, although in practice he appointed vicars to represent him in the Ottoman Empire; in temporal affairs Catholics looked to local notables and to the French and Austrian embassies to act as their intermediaries with the central government.

**Father Yeóryios: The world of the parish**

The basic social unit of Yeóryios Fourtouniádis’s early life, apart from family and millet, was his local parish (enoria). Little research has been done on the structure and functioning of local Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century, leaving our knowledge of them, as one Ottomanist has complained, ‘surprisingly limited and fragmentary’. It is difficult, for example, to estimate the total number of parishes in the patriarchate of Constantinople or their relative sizes. In 1842, one agent of the British embassy estimated that the city of Thessaloniki had roughly 15,000 Orthodox inhabitants, 12 parish churches, and 27 priests. Ten years later, Ubicini estimated that Istanbul had 54 Orthodox parishes caring for 80,000 souls. Assuming rather arbitrarily that urban parishes were of roughly equal size, this would have meant about 1,250 parishioners per church in Thessaloniki, and 1,600 in Istanbul – figures that compared well with priest-to-parishioner ratios elsewhere in continental Europe. The situation seems to have been even better in the countryside. An Ottoman official touring the district (nahiye) of Volos in Thessaly in 1851, for example, recorded 63 Orthodox churches in 29 towns and villages. In practical
terms, this would have averaged out to roughly 915 people per parish. Churches in close proximity to each other often banded together to form a single parish or community (koinótis), but such arrangements were unique to each locality and varied in size and composition. Indeed, as Ozil has pointed out, not all parishes wished or were able to join such larger communes.22

Rumelifeneri, being a very small village, was fortunate to possess any church at all. This had nearly been lost in 1807 when a Muslim said his prayers inside the church and then demanded its conversion into a mosque.23 The incident was a harrowing trial for the community and required substantial bribes to the chief jurisprudence of the Empire (şeyhülislam) and the grand vizier before it could be settled. The Rumelifeneri Orthodox community’s administrative council (eforía or dimoyerondía) of five or six elected representatives would have handled this crisis, just as it did most other local affairs. As in most parishes across the Balkans, the male family heads met each year (often on the feast day of St George the Great Martyr on 23 April) to elect elders from among the local notables, merchants, and tax-farmers of the community.24 These village elders, known in Turkish as kocabaşlar (in Greek: kotzampáses or dimoyéades; in Bulgarian: chorbadzhi), were responsible for administering the finances of the parish and any schools attached to it. In keeping with these tasks, parish and communal councils were also responsible for most of the various taxes due to church and state, especially those paid in cash.25 The main figure charged with the actual collection of both state and ecclesiastical taxes was the local headman or muhtar, who acted in this dual capacity as an agent of both the Ottoman state and the local Orthodox community.26

The Orthodox parish or ‘white’ clergy, unlike their counterparts in the West, married before taking holy orders and typically had large families. Most parishes provided their priest with a plot of land that he was expected to cultivate in lieu of a regular salary. To supplement this meagre income, priests charged fees for rituals such as marriages, baptisms, house blessings, and memorial services for the dead. In the mid-nineteenth century, for example, the going rate for baptisms ran between one and three piasters, burials between three and five, and weddings usually at least ten.27 As in Russia, the parish clergy of the Ottoman Empire became a semi-hereditary Levitical class who passed on from father to son the knowledge of how to serve at the altar as though it were a trade. Sons of priests generally sought to marry daughters of other priestly families, hoping thereby to inherit a cure of souls either from their fathers or from their fathers-in-law.
In order to be ordained, a prospective priest brought his bishop a letter from the community testifying to his fitness and the desire of parishioners that he be ordained. So long as the candidate’s qualities were satisfactory and the required ordination fee was paid, such requests were normally granted. This was only the first of many payments that the new priest was expected to make to his bishop, and most of the lower clergy were literally indebted to their superiors. It is therefore not surprising that the parish clergy had little sympathy or knowledge of the affairs of the upper and monastic clergy and tended to identify with their parishioners. Priests generally came from the same villages in which they served, shared their parishioners’ woes, and worked alongside them in the fields, leaving little to distinguish them from laymen but their black robes and pectoral crosses. As Ubicini observed on his travels in the early 1850s:

The priests of the villages are wretchedly poor: all their revenues consist in a few trifling fees, of which a portion is to be deducted for the bishop, in a slight assignment out of the communal fund, and in the slender contributions which they receive from peasants as poor as themselves, for performing the ceremony of the ‘Aghiasmos’, or house-blessing, at the beginning of every month. Out of this the priest is obliged to pay the expenses of his ordination and of his cure of souls; to annually pay to his bishop two ducats on the festivals of Easter and the Epiphany, under pain of excommunication; and finally, to redeem himself from the perpetually recurring interdictions which overtake the smallest transgression...²⁸

It was from one such priest in the local parish school that Yeóryios Fourtouniádis would have obtained some rudimentary schooling, learning the Bible and perhaps some arithmetic.²⁹ In July 1809, however, Yeóryios’s parents determined that he should receive a better education than his peers. This meant enrolling him at the nearest school of some quality, that of the Metropolitanate of Dérkoi in Tarabya, another seaside town a little to the south of Rumelifeneri on the Bosporus. Fortunately for Yeóryios, Metropolitan Grigórios of Dérkoi agreed to fund his education. The metropolitan would later boast that he had discerned something special in the lad and had made an exception by allowing him to take diaconal orders in 1815 while still only 14.³⁰ Fourtouniádis thus entered the metropolitan’s personal household as his deacon and private secretary. This success all but guaranteed the young man a promising future, as Metropolitan Grigórios was a key figure in
a wider network of patronage and association. The formation of such personal attachments or intisab was critically important in Ottoman society, and Yeóryios had made an excellent start. As a token of appreciation, Yeóryios was tonsured with the name of his patron – Grigórios.

In every sense, Metropolitan Grigórios would be a formative influence on his young protégé, providing him not only with practical training but a living model of what an Orthodox bishop should be. Metropolitan Grigórios was known as a man of action rather than study or contemplation, being tall and well built, with a commanding presence and a stentorian voice. In the opinion of one contemporary Greek writer, the bishop of Dérkoi’s generosity of spirit, intelligence, and bravery made him seem better suited to leading men into battle than shepherding souls.31 Grigórios’s activism expressed itself most obviously in a readiness to use his own funds for schools, literary subsidies, and bursaries. His activism also expressed itself in a deep dissatisfaction with the condition of Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule. Such discontent seems to have become widespread among clergymen during the preceding decades of Ottoman decline. As one Orthodox bishop confided in 1841 to the liberal economist, Jerome-Adolphe Blanqui, ‘we suffer less for ourselves than for our people, for it is a cruel torment for a shepherd to have to witness the sorrows of his flock without being able to assist them’. The bishop had ended his philippic by picking up Blanqui’s new percussion rifle, sighting it ‘like an old soldier’, and muttering audibly, ‘When prayer is no longer enough, self-defence becomes legitimate’.32

Accusations of treason reappeared throughout the career of Metropolitan Grigórios, beginning shortly after his elevation to the episcopate in 1777 and ending with his execution in 1821.33 At some point following Fourtouniádis’s entrance into his household, for example, Grigórios of Dérkoi became party to the schemes of a revolutionary conspiracy known as the Friendly Society (Filikí Etaireía), a Carbonari-like organization founded in Odessa by expatriate Ottoman Christians in 1814.34 The central aim of the Society was the overthrow of Ottoman rule and the establishment of a revived Byzantine state. Towards these ends, the leaders of the conspiracy planned to coordinate simultaneous uprisings of Christians throughout the Ottoman Empire. These revolts had little chance of military success, but the Society calculated that the resulting slaughter of Christians would force Russia to intervene on their behalf.

There is no evidence that the young deacon, Fr Grígórios Fourtouniádis, joined the Society, but it is difficult to imagine that he could have lived in such close association with a key supporter of the conspiracy without
knowing of its existence. In any case, Grigórios Fourtouniádis was forcibly confronted with his patron’s activities once the Ottoman government caught wind of the conspiracy in the spring of 1821. News that the Society had been discovered forced its leaders to implement their plans prematurely, and on 6 March a ‘Sacred Band’ of volunteers under the leadership of Álexandros Ypsiládis, a major-general in the Russian army and aide-de-camp to the tsar, launched a quixotic invasion of the Danubian Principalities from Russian soil. The regular Ottoman army made short work of the would-be liberators once it caught up with them in June near the Wallachian town of Drăgășani. The rebellion had by then, however, spread to many other parts of the empire and took on particularly serious proportions in the Peloponnese.

The resulting ‘Greek Revolution’ provoked a crisis in relations between the Orthodox Church and the Ottoman state. Patriarch Grigórios V Angelópoulos scrambled to demonstrate the loyalty of the Church by anathematizing the rebels and calling upon all Christians to remain obedient to their sovereign. The obvious collaboration of many clergymen with the rebels, however, undermined these declarations. In southern Greece, Metropolitan Yermanós Gózias of Palaíaí Pátrai had formally launched the revolution with a sermon on the Feast of the Annunciation, in which he proclaimed that the hour had come to cast out the ‘race of iniquitous Turks’.35 Yermanós had administered an oath of alliance to the assembled notables and gave them an embroidered icon of the Dormition of the Mother of God to serve as their war banner.36 In Istanbul, Grigórios of Dérkoi responded to the crisis by proposing that he and the patriarch should depart for the Peloponnese immediately – ostensibly to preach reconciliation, but more likely in order to place himself and the patriarch at the head of the insurrection.37

The Ottoman government held the upper clergy answerable for the treason of their subordinates. Official reprisals began on Easter Sunday, 22 April, with the dismissal of the patriarch. This was followed in short order by his arrest and execution by hanging from the gates of the patriarchate.38 The metropolitan of Dérkoi was also arrested together with several other prominent hierarchs. On 3 June the grand vizier decided to make a public example of the bishops of Dérkoi, Týrorno, Adrianoúpolis, and Thessaloníki.39 Janissaries rowed the four hierarchs in a caïque up the Bosporus, with four stops along the way at specially prepared gibbets in the villages of Arnavutköy and Yeniköy. At each stop, a bishop was executed. The final stop was Tarabya, where Grigórios was executed on the pier before his metropolitan residence.
The 70-year-old hierarch went to his death with exemplary composure,
consoling his companions, blessing his executioner, and slipping the
noose over his own neck with the defiant words: ‘Carry out the com-
mand of your unholy master’. His corpse was left to hang for three
days and nights before being dragged through the streets and cast
into the sea. Christians began almost immediately to commemo-
rate the martyrdom of ‘St Grigórios of Dérkoi’. For the rest of his life,
Fourtouniádis must have had before his mind’s eye this example of how
a true hierarch sacrificed himself for his faith and nation.

Fourtouniádis lay low over the next three years as war and repres-
sion convulsed the empire. The young clergyman’s star began to rise
once again in 1824 under the sponsorship of the new patriarch of
Constantinople, Chrýsanthos I Manoléas. Chrýsanthos had been a secret
member of the Friendly Society too, so it is possible that the friendship
of Grigórios of Dérkoi continued, even after death, to assist the career of
his protégé. As archdeacon to the new patriarch, Fourtouniádis moved
into residence in or near the offices of the patriarchate (patrikhane),
at the old city gates of the Phanar district in Istanbul. Thereafter
Fourtouniádis experienced a meteoric series of promotions, first into
the ranks of the priesthood on 6 October 1825 and then to the position
of protosýnkelsos (patrik vekil-i), becoming Chrýsanthos’s vicar-general,
chancellor, and right-hand man. As such, he served as the director of
a large staff of patriarchal officials, managed the patriarchate’s day-to-
day administrative affairs, and assisted the patriarch with his complex
schedule of ritual observances. Fourtouniádis’s elevation into the upper
clergy was by then a foregone conclusion. On 21 October 1825, he was
consecrated metropolitan bishop of Pelagoneía, with his seat located in
the modern-day city of Bitola in the Republic of Macedonia.

Bishop Grigórios: World of the upper clergy

With this appointment, Grigórios had crossed an important line within
Ottoman society. As much as the peoples of the Ottoman Empire were
divided vertically into confessional nations, they were united horizon-
tally across religious lines into two separate but symbiotic groups. At the
base, the ‘protected flock’ (reâya) of commoners – both Christians and
Muslims – sustained the state through their taxes. Above these were the
members of the elite ‘ruling institution’ (askerî), made up of ‘men of the
sword’ (soldiers), ‘men of the pen’ (bureaucrats), and ‘men of religion’
(religious scholars and clergymen), to whom the sultan delegated a
share of his authority and revenues.
The Orthodox hierarchy displayed all the tell-tale indicators of their full membership in the Ottoman ruling institution: tax-exempt status, exercise of gubernatorial functions, and possession of the most important symbols of Ottoman officialdom. The ecumenical patriarch thus possessed his own bodyguard of janissaries and travelled the waterways of the Bosphorus in a long, sleek, four-oared caique of the sort reserved by law for the highest ranks of the imperial service. Like all Ottoman officials, the upper clergy were also expected to take part in public ceremonies for such events as the welcoming of a new governor, the circumcision of an imperial heir, or the accession of a sultan to the throne.

These privileges and duties were laid out in the individual patents of investiture (berat) by which the Ottoman state licenced its representatives to exercise the powers associated with their position. These berats, whose contents changed little over time, enumerated the rights and responsibilities of a new appointee in detail, as well as the conditions under which he might be censured or removed. The traditional consecration of Grigórios Fourtouniádis through the laying on of hands by three other bishops was therefore only the first step in his becoming metropolitan of Pelagoneia. He was a hierarch in name and spirit only until the Ottoman state had authorized the appointment with a berat listing each of his prerogatives.

Once armed with this licence from the state, Grigórios enjoyed a truly impressive range of powers. In addition to his strictly spiritual duties, he was responsible for the good order of his community, for overseeing the levying of various taxes, and for the operation of an episcopal court that heard all civil cases involving Orthodox Christians as well as some minor criminal offenses. Bishops were the sole non-Muslims to enjoy the right ex officio to sit on the local administrative council (meclis or divan) alongside the governor, members of the ulema, and various other officials. As an agent of the state, Grigórios commanded a permanent detachment of armed Muslim constables (zabtiye) who could impose his will upon refractory Christians. A bishop, on his own authority, could impose sentences of corporal punishment, including imprisonment, exile, and the dreaded fálangas. The latter entailed lashing the victim’s feet to a wooden beam and beating the soles of the feet with cords of sinew or bastinadoes. One officer of the patriarchal court in the early nineteenth century boasted of having administered 400 strokes in a single day by his own hand and without interruption.

Even without state help, hierarchs possessed their own spiritual means of punishment such as the temporary closure of churches and bans of excommunication. The latter sentence rendered its recipient an
outcast in life, and, according to popular belief, a vampire after death. Many Europeans visiting the Ottoman Empire for the first time were duly impressed by the coercive efficacy of these anathemas. ‘A Greek’, noted the British consul on Mytilini in 1852, ‘would rather commit any kind of atrocity than incur the terrors of excommunication’. Grigórios also exercised a strong influence over the everyday life of his flock in Pelagoneía through his unfettered ability to censor publications and to grant or deny the visa papers they needed for travel. It was even within Grigórios’s purview to judge whether an individual was legally sane or not, and to place the latter in protective confinement. Last but by no means least, the upper clergy possessed a loosely defined mandate to oversee the finances, staffing, and operation of the Orthodox community’s schools, hospitals, and other charitable foundations.

Upon arriving in his new see, Grigórios would have installed himself in his eparchial ‘palace’ (konáki), invariably one of the grandest Christian edifices in any Ottoman city. Grigórios would also have hired a small staff of employees, including a protosýnkellos, at least one deacon (who often doubled as a secretary), and several deputies. Special superintendents oversaw the collection of taxes and carried out much of the day-to-day administration of the episcopal court, such as appointing and supervising the local clergy, reviewing requests for marriage or divorce, notarizing documents, and drafting contracts. In exchange for these services, eparchial superintendents usually received a comfortable income and extensive local influence.

As a bishop, Grigórios was licenced to collect revenue from several sources, including annual taxes on each Orthodox household in his eparchy, usufruct of church lands, annual ‘gifts’ from monasteries and clergymen, fees for clerical ordinations, taxes on inheritances, marriages, and divorces, and various customary dues (âdet). The annual income thus acquired varied, depending on the eparchy, from 15,000 to 100,000 piasters or more. Two British consuls in the 1860s claimed to know of hierarchs who made the princely sum of 700,000 piasters – the equivalent of £6,000 – a year. Bishops had to pay significant expenses out of these revenues and many hierarchs made over large sums for philanthropic purposes, sponsoring schools, libraries, and hospitals either in their eparchies or home towns. Even so, episcopal revenues in the nineteenth century were considerable. By comparison, a skilled tradesman during the same period in an urban centre such as Izmir could expect to make around 3,600 piasters annually, while the governor of a medium-sized province such as Bursa might receive around 200,000 a year.
The average episcopal career in the early and mid-nineteenth century consisted of postings to two or three sees over a period of roughly 25 years. Length of tenure varied widely, but most bishops remained in place for roughly nine years before moving to a new eparchy. It should be noted that this was significantly longer than most other Ottoman officials held their posts – a fact which helped to strengthen the influence of bishops over local affairs. In Thessaloniki, for example, there were only six Orthodox bishops between 1821 and 1872, but 33 civil governors.

While all bishops enjoyed elite status, in both theory and practice there were wide divergences between them in income and power. At the lowest rung of the hierarchy were so-called titular bishops, who possessed the title of some long-defunct eparchy but served de facto as auxiliaries for more senior hierarchs. This practice allowed the patriarch of Constantinople to free himself from liturgical responsibilities over the neighbourhoods of Istanbul in favour of more important matters. During the mid-nineteenth century, for example, the bustling neighbourhood of Pera generally came under the care of the titular bishop of Charioúpolis or modern Hayribolu – a small town in eastern Thrace that rarely if ever received a visit from its absentee bishop.

The remaining members of the episcopate were divided into two distinct classes. The 12 most senior metropolitanates of Kaisáreia, Kýzikos, Nikomídeia, Irákleia, Éfesos, Níkaia, Chalkidón, Dérkoi, Thessaloníki, Týrnovo, Adrianoúpolis, and Amáseia enjoyed the right ex officio to sit on the Holy Synod and oversee the affairs of the patriarchate. The remaining, roughly 108, ‘eparchial bishops’ could only attend synod meetings by express invitation – and even then did not enjoy a right to vote. Of the 12 hierarchs with permanent seats on the synod, the first eight formed a special class of electors known as the elders or yérontes (ihtiyarlar) who both counselled the patriarch and acted as a check upon his power. Since at least the eighteenth century these hierarchs had exercised an effective veto over the patriarch’s actions by dividing the great seal of the patriarchate into quarters, three of which they kept in their own hands. As any order emanating from patriarch or synod had to bear the imprint of the entire seal, elders could veto decisions by withholding their segments of the seal.

The elders drew further influence from the fact that they were the only non-titular bishops allowed to reside in Istanbul. By the time of Grigórios’s elevation, all eparchial bishops relied on at least one of these elders to act as their ‘ephor’ (éforos) and represent their interests in the capital. Ephors acted in effect like ecclesiastical bankers, managing
Table 2.1 Composition of the Holy Synod

1) Patriarch of Constantinople

2) Synodal Elders and Their Sees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See</th>
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<td>Kaisáreia</td>
<td>Kayseri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kýzikos</td>
<td>Erdek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nikomídeia</td>
<td>Izmit</td>
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<td>Irákleia</td>
<td>(Tekirdağ)</td>
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<td>Éfesos</td>
<td>(Izmir)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Níkaia</td>
<td>Iznik</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chalkidón</td>
<td>Kadiköy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dérkoi</td>
<td>(Tarabya)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thessaloníki</td>
<td>Thessaloniki</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Auxiliary Members and Their Sees

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Týrnovo</td>
<td>Veliko Tarnovo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adrianópolis</td>
<td>Edirne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amáseia</td>
<td>(Samsun)</td>
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their protégés' financial affairs in the capital and advancing them funds for the purchase of more lucrative appointments. Provincial bishops needed such financial and political support even to retain the see they already possessed, as it might otherwise be sold from under them. Bishops had to purchase such support dearly as ephors charged high rates of interest for their services.55 Most new bishops therefore arrived at their sees heavily indebted – literally and figuratively – to the synodal elders. As one critic described the situation in 1850:

[The synodal elders] have in their hands the administration of the entire Church of the Eastern rite in Turkey, as well as the coffers of the general community of the Christians of that rite and of the communities of those same Christians, habitants of the Ottoman Empire, residing in the provinces; it is they alone who may be Efors, or Agents, of all the other Bishops in the provinces of Turkey belonging to the jurisdiction of the Church of Constantinople; they alone, also, who may establish banks, known as Eforikai Kassai, issue bills of exchange, make agreements, remittances, transfers of money, endorsements, and other similar banking operations with their clients among the
Clergy, the people, the Jews, and foreign merchants from every nation; similarly, they possess the right to declare bankruptcy.56

The resulting system had numerous critics, who accused ‘elderism’ (yerondismós) of corrupting the administration of the Church. The defenders of the elders, on the other hand, argued that they had a stabilizing influence on communal affairs. Whereas the tenure of individual patriarchs was brief, the elders remained in place for decades and gave the patriarchal administration a continuity it otherwise lacked. The longevity of the elders also allowed them to amass political and financial resources that they used to benefit the entire Church.57 Like the broader Ottoman tendency towards political decentralization in the eighteenth century, this system of over-mighty elders was surprisingly resilient for all its iniquitous features.

At the pinnacle of the ecclesiastical hierarchy was the ecumenical patriarch and archbishop of Constantinople. In theory any Orthodox Christian (even a layman) could become patriarch, but by the nineteenth century they were invariably selected from among the ordained bishops. The entire Community took a hand in the selection through a twofold process of election and public acclamation. The electoral process began immediately upon the death, resignation, or removal of a patriarch, after which the interim administrator or locum tenens (topotiritís) requested government permission to convoke an electoral synod. Once all members of the Orthodox upper clergy present in Istanbul had gathered at the Phanar and elected a candidate from among themselves, their choice was presented to the assembled representatives of the lay notables and guilds of Istanbul. The latter would express their opinion with cries of either Áxios (worthy) or Anáxios (unworthy).58 Electoral synods strove for a unanimous decision, but were not above resorting to intimidation or the expulsion of intransigents when a clear plurality could not be achieved.

The chaplain of the British embassy, Robert Walsh, described a fairly typical patriarchal election that he witnessed in 1822:

The hall of election was a large square apartment, with a divan running round it. Here eight bishops and five hundred delegates of the esnafs, or trades, assembled. On the divan were seated the ecclesiastics and the most respectabe of the delegates. The common people occupied the middle of the room; ...In this assembly three candidates were proposed, the archbishop of Thessalonika and the bishops of Syra and Chalcedon. The first of these was the choice of the clergy, but the last was the choice of the people. ...A short and
turbulent debate ensued on the respective merits of the others, when
the people shouted with one voice, ‘Halkedhony Anthemis’, and
having overcome all opposition, Anthemis, bishop of Chalcedon,
was elected by acclamation.59

So long as the Ottoman government did not object to the chosen
candidate, the grand vizier and the minister of foreign affairs would
grant him an audience and present the new patriarch with a berat of
investiture.

A patriarch’s appointment was supposed to be for life so long as he
committed no serious crimes and neither abused his authority nor
offended the sensibilities and traditions of his nation. Reality, however,
fell far short of this ideal. During the two decades of 1821–41, the patri-
archate changed hands ten times. Such brevity of tenure was not unique
to the Orthodox millet, but it was more marked than among other
religious communities. By comparison, the office of the şeyhülislam
changed hands six times during the same period while the Armenian
millet replaced its patriarch only four times.

Once installed, patriarchs enjoyed an authority over their
co-religionists limited only by the elders, the highest Ottoman min-
isters, and the sultan himself. This authority was most obvious over
other members of the Orthodox clergy, whom the patriarch could con-
secrate, appoint, transfer, or remove more or less at will.60 The patriarch
might, for instance, forbid clergy to leave their dioceses or visit Istanbul
without his express permission – thereby restricting their access to the
synod and to the central government. The patriarch alone was compe-
tent to investigate and punish clergymen for transgressions against the
canons of the Church and the laws of the empire. Outside the ecclesi-
astical realm, the patriarch exercised broad judicial authority over the
entire Orthodox Community. He managed the communal accounts of
the millet, regulated and distributed imposts, and acted as chief super-
intendent of the various schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions
of the Community. On Wednesdays and Fridays, he presided in person
over a court that heard appeals and tried all but serious criminal cases,
with only rape, murder, banditry, and treason reserved for the Islamic
courts. In cases involving Christian marriages, divorces, and inherit-
ances, the patriarchal divan was the court of first resort and its judg-
ments were technically beyond appeal – although in practice Christians
could, and did, resort to Muslim courts for alternative rulings.

Substantial economic resources further strengthened the influence
and powers of the patriarch. In the 1850s, the patriarchal income was
conservatively estimated at between 352,000–440,000 piasters (roughly £3,200–4,000). Besides the revenues derived from the Church’s extensive land holdings throughout the empire and donations from the faithful, the patriarch was entitled to make an annual levy on his bishops and on each Orthodox household. In Istanbul and its environs, the patriarch collected fees for the performance of marriages and funerals and a tax of ten per cent on all cases brought before the patriarchal court. Upon the death of any bishop within his jurisdiction, the patriarch was entitled to claim two-thirds of the value of the deceased hierarch’s personal estate. An additional source of income were the hefty sums of money, usually amounting to tens of thousands of piasters, which bishops were expected to offer in exchange for their consecration and promotion within the hierarchy. Through such means, patriarchs could amass personal fortunes running into the millions of piasters.

Grigórios’s new eparchy fell in the middle range of this hierarchy, since Pelagoneía was neither as plum an appointment as a major city like Izmir nor as dismal a prospect as some diocese in the wilds of Bosnia or Albania. Bitola, its chief town, was headquarters to an Ottoman army corps and a regional administrative hub due to its strategic location halfway along the overland route linking Thessaloniki with the Adriatic coast. It was also a growing centre of cotton production and European travellers noted with approval that the town presented a ‘rich and commercial’ appearance. Although Grigórios’s new see possessed satisfactory income and status, it fell on the wrong side of another important divide within the patriarchate: that between Greek-speaking eparchies and those in partibus barbariae. The new bishop would have found upon his arrival that local Christians spoke a mix of Slavic, Albanian, and Aromanian vernaculars – but little Greek. This introduced a certain linguistic distance between the new bishop and his flock, and doubtlessly lowered them in his esteem given the powerful associations between Greek and Orthodox elite culture.

Grigórios’s arrival in Bitola thus fit into what had become a common and increasingly resented pattern throughout much of the Ottoman Empire by the early 1800s: a Greek-speaking bishop wielding authority over a non-Greek-speaking populace. The exact ethnic composition of the hierarchy is difficult to establish, but during the 1840s–50s it seems that only 19 bishops out of a sample group of roughly 144 were unambiguously of non-Greek ethnicity. The rest of the upper hierarchy came overwhelmingly from the traditional centres of Hellenic settlement and literary culture: the Aegean Islands, Istanbul, and the regions of eastern Thrace and western Anatolia that straddled either side of the capital city.
By the mid-1800s, this correlation of ecclesiastical power with Greek ethnicity produced a palpable impatience in non-Greek regions with hierarchs who seemed to treat their sees as simultaneously places of cultural exile and personal enrichment.

A cultural re-awakening among Ottoman Slavs in the mid-nineteenth century deepened this sense of labouring under a ‘double yoke’ of Phanariot bishops and Turkish pashas. In previous centuries when Slavic literary culture languished, it had been easier to present Greek as the natural language of learning and prestige. The economic and political rise of Russia, however, presented Ottoman Slavs with the example of a powerful empire whose princes, merchants, and scholars used a language closely related to their own homely vernaculars. Students and merchants who visited Russia or the new kingdom of Serbia in the 1830s–40s began to demand upon their return home that local churches and schools do much more to promote Slavic languages. In historic Bulgarian eparchies like Tūrnovo in 1838, local Christians began flatly to reject the bishops sent them from Istanbul and to demand Bulgarian archpastors instead. Tensions between Greeks and Slavs had not yet reached the point of open hostilities in Bitola, but there can be little doubt that Grigórios would have preferred the more congenial atmosphere of a Greek-speaking eparchy.

Whatever his personal feelings, Grigórios carried out his duties as despótis (bishop) of Bitola for eight years in exemplary fashion and received favourable notice among influential circles at the Phanar. At the beginning of 1833, for example, Patriarch Konstándios I recalled Grigórios to Istanbul for several months to sit on the patriarchal synod – an unusual mark of esteem for an eparchial bishop. In June 1833, Konstándios transferred Grigórios to the bishopric of Sérrai (Serres), an eparchy much closer to the capital. This transfer would surely have pleased Grigórios. Serres had come down in the world since its glory days in the early 1800s when the great warlord Ismail Bey had made it his capital, but it was still one of the most important towns in the Balkans and possessed many desirable features. Situated 50 miles northeast of Thessaloniki on a fine plain watered by the river Strymonas, Serres was a flourishing centre of cotton and silk production. Like Pelagoneia, the new eparchy was still typically Macedonian in its patchwork of ethnic groups and predominantly Slavic-speaking countryside. Serres itself, however, had a large and well-established Greek community among whom Grigórios would have felt at home. Grigórios might happily have finished his days there, had he not been summoned to greater things.
Upon the threshing-floor of Babylon: Orthodoxy's ominous decade

While Grigórios's personal career flourished over the 1830s, his empire, church, and community all suffered reverses. The sultanate of the formidable but ill-starred Mahmud II (1808–39) represented a nadir for the Ottoman state, and the disasters of his reign were accompanied by a marked decline in the fortunes of the Orthodox Church. The major problems that Grigórios saw affecting the Church may be grouped under three headings: 1) territorial losses; 2) the spread of heretical Western European influences; and 3) internal corruption and abuses. Some consideration of each of these challenges is necessary to understand Grigórios's reception of Curzon in its proper light.

The first problem was occasioned by the Ottoman Empire's loss of control during the 1810s–20s over large swathes of territory from Egypt to Serbia. These losses meant that whereas the ecclesiastical territory of the patriarchate had been more or less coterminous with the Ottoman Empire for centuries, by 1830 roughly 67 of its eparchies – representing 36 per cent of the pre-revolutionary total – lay outside the empire's borders. The Church had suddenly to treat not only with the Ottoman state, but also with new independent governments in Greece and Serbia, a British protectorate on the Ionian Islands, and a Russian protectorate over the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. It was still unclear in 1830 whether these new states would grant the Church the same powers that it enjoyed under the Ottomans.

The loss of control over so many eparchies abroad was compounded by fears about the spread of Western cultural, political, and religious influences at home. As far as the patriarchate and most Orthodox Christians were concerned, Western Christendom had left the One True Church during the early Middle Ages. Over the centuries, Rome's original errors had spawned a monstrous succession of heresies ranging from papal supremacy and Protestantism to Atheism, Jacobinism, and Freemasonry – movements which, despite their opposition to each other, arose from a single, underlying nexus of heretical thought. In the words of a patriarchal encyclical from 1798, Satan long ago perceived that the Frankish nation 'was more capable of wickedness than any other' and therefore made them his chosen vehicle for fomenting 'every species of impiety and ungodliness'. St Athanásios Pários, one of the most eminent theologians of the era, spoke for most Orthodox when he characterized Europe as the Whore of Babylon, 'shameless and licentious, madly encircled by a multitude of atheists, infidels, and wild
demons. ... Her black and withered face exhales horror. Her cavernous mouth is flecked with the froth of vengeance. Her tongue, forked like that of a serpent, hisses blasphemies against God and man’.69

Orthodox Christians found ample proofs of the diabolical orientation of Western culture. It was notorious in the East, for example, that European states had declared war on all things divine. In a recurrent pattern that had reached its acme with the de-Christianizing policies of the French Republic, European governments had dissolved monastic orders, secularized church lands, stripped the clergy of their powers, and arrogated the right to legislate on religious affairs to secular rulers. The writings of those Orthodox intellectuals like Theófilos Kaïris, Dositej Obradović, and Adamándios Korais who promoted cultural Westernization in the Ottoman lands confirmed this pattern as they too were stridently critical of monasticism and called for an end to the tutelage of the Church over culture and society.70

Conservatives feared that these pernicious ideas about church–state relations – which they conflated with Protestantism as ‘Luther-Calvinism’ (Loutherokalvinismós) – were steadily moving eastward. They noted that the importation of Western culture into Russia by Peter the Great in the late 1600s–early 1700s was followed in short order by the abolition of the patriarchate of Moscow in 1721 and the subordination of the Russian Church thereafter to state direction.71 Peter and his successors proceeded to alter every aspect of Russian ecclesiastical life: restricting the number of priests, closing monasteries and convents, expropriating the Church’s lands and wealth, and forcing the clergy to accept a state stipend in lieu of their own resources. As Russia expanded over the next century, it exported these measures to other Orthodox lands such as Georgia, northern Armenia, and Bessarabia when they passed under tsarist control or influence. Russia did not impose Petrine-style ecclesiastical reforms wholesale on Wallachia and Moldavia during its occupation in 1828–34, but it did promulgate a series of laws reducing the temporal powers of the upper clergy in the principalities.72

In the new Kingdom of Greece, the break with Orthodox tradition was particularly violent. The Great Powers had offered the crown of Greece to Bavaria’s Wittelsbach dynasty in 1830, and the new Bavarian Regency in Athens had promptly severed all ties of obedience to the patriarchate of Constantinople. The Regents then proceeded to draw up a Russian-style constitution that placed the church firmly under state control. Henceforward, the titular head of the new Orthodox Church of the Kingdom of Greece would be its temporal ruler – notwithstanding the rather glaring objection that Otto von Wittelsbach was a pious
In place of a regularly constituted synod gathered around its primate, the constitution gave direction of the day-to-day affairs of the Church of Greece to a college of bishops appointed by the crown and a lay proctor similarly appointed. This ecclesiastical college was forbidden to communicate with its clergy or anyone else except through the offices of the state, and no decisions affecting religion were to be enacted without royal approval. The Greek state predictably used its new powers to introduce other radical innovations. It reduced the number of bishops in Greece from 56 to ten, with one bishopric for each of Greece’s new civil provinces. It ordered the closure of all monastic establishments with fewer than six monks and confiscated their property. By the end of 1834, the state had closed and sequestered the lands of 412 Greek monasteries. A few years later, it further reduced the number of monasteries from 148 to 82.

Orthodox conservatives were certain that an even deadlier enemy – the foreign missionary – would appear once secularizing reforms had opened breaches in the defensive glacis of the Church. There were as yet few missionaries in the Near East, but their growing presence provoked hysterical reactions from Ottoman clerical elites out of all proportion to their numbers. Under the millet system, missionaries posed a double threat to both religion and community as conversion entailed a legal shift from one socio-political category to another. Orthodox converts to Islam or Catholicism, for example, took on an entirely new cultural and political identity in the process of ‘turning Turk’ or ‘turning Frank’. Bishop Ignatios Bampalos was thus repeating a truism among Ottoman Christians when he observed ‘all peoples of the East who left their religion also lost their languages and ceased to be nations’. To Orthodox Christians, the Greek-speaking Muslims of Crete were a foreign people, as were the Greek Catholics of the Aegean Isles and southern Italy. An attack on Orthodoxy was, by definition, an attack on Romanity itself.

Conversion also threatened to divide communities and overturn established hierarchies. Catholic missionizing in the Aegean, Syria, Bulgaria, and Anatolia during the eighteenth century, for example, had split parishes and eparchies into violently opposing pro- and anti-Catholic factions. Among Armenians, the split became so serious and irreconcilable that Sultan Mahmud had in 1830 to create a new millet just for Armenian Catholics. As Makdisi has pointed out in his study of American missions in the Levant, the notion that private convictions could take precedence over communal solidarity threatened both the Ottoman state and those elites who defined and legitimized themselves as guardians of the traditional social order. The possibility of commoners
using conversion to defy the orders of their millet authorities was par-
icularly vexing to elites. In repeated petitions to the Ottoman state over
the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Ottoman clergies
stressed that missionaries fostered civil disorder and undermined the very
foundations of the empire. In 1722, the Orthodox and Armenian hier-
archies even banded together to secure an edict from Sultan Ahmed III
that categorically forbade conversion to any religion except Islam. The
edict empowered clergymen to punish anyone attempting to leave their
spiritual jurisdiction with beatings, imprisonment, and execution. Even
so, small-scale conversions continued to occur, demonstrating that for-
eign proselytism was a danger requiring constant vigilance.

The last major problem confronting the Orthodox Community was
a product not of foreigners, but of the Church’s integration into the
Ottoman political system. Over two centuries of economic decline and
territorial contraction, the Ottoman government had become accus-
tomed to making up for the insolvency of the imperial treasury through
a variety of exigencies, from coinage devaluation to the auctioning of
tax-farm licences. Among these measures, the practice of demanding
financial gifts (caize or âdet peşkeşi) for any appointment became uni-
versally observed. Even sultans were expected to mark their accession
(cülusiye) with a liberal distribution of gifts. This practice allowed offi-
cials to obtain money on short notice merely by deposing subordinates
and appointing their replacement.

The decision of the Ottoman state to shift its financial burden down-
wards set a baleful precedent as new officials passed on the costs of their
accession to those beneath them.80 Ottoman officials compounded the
problem by surrounding themselves with a small army of assistants, serv-
ants, and hangers-on who were remunerated poorly or not at all, and
who made up for this by demanding gifts of any petitioner who came to
visit their patron. As one British visitor complained, a visit to any impor-
tant dignitary cost hundreds of piasters, discouraging most petitioners
from ever darkening the doorsteps of government ministers.81

As a member of the Ottoman ruling institution the Orthodox Church
could not stand aloof from this system of venality. Despite official
exemption of the higher clergy from taxation and strict canonical
prohibitions against simony, the patriarch and his bishops had to lay
out large sums of money for gifts and irregular levies to a plethora of
Ottoman officials. On his elevation to the patriarchal see, for example,
each patriarch was expected to make a large appointment gift or peşkeş
to the imperial treasury, as well as a series of smaller gifts to the other
palace notables. When Grigórios VI was elevated to the ecumenical
patriarchate in 1835, for example, he had not only to pay a sizable peşkeş to the sultan, but 147,650 piasters in gifts to everyone from the minister of war (serasker) and the admiral of the fleet (kapudan paşa) to the grand vizier’s secretaries. Once in power, a new patriarch could expect to spend further large sums in the course of his dealings with Ottoman officialdom, especially during the social visits that were de rigueur on major Christian and Muslim feast days such as Easter, St George’s day, and Eid al-Adha.

Patriarchs had little choice but to pass on these expenses by demanding substantial payments from new bishops. Well-connected members of the Community thus explained to a visiting Anglican deacon in 1850 that the patriarch of Constantinople ‘has to expend necessarily as much as 25,000 piasters a month i.e. about 3,000 pounds a year... No man would guess how much must be spent in mere pipes, coffee, and sweetmeats’. The only means of making up this shortfall, they concluded, was for the patriarchate to charge for episcopal appointments. Since costs were usually well beyond the means of new candidates, bishoprics were almost always purchased on credit at usurious rates of interest from the synodal elders or from private lenders. Most bishops arrived in their new eparchies burdened by debts and well aware that they could easily lose their see at any time. If they were not careful, they might end up like Metropolitan Kýrillos of Belgrade, who died in 1827 a year into his appointment with nothing to his name but a strongbox of unpaid bills and three books worth ten piasters. A new bishop’s first order of business was therefore to capitalize on his investment as quickly as possible. The lawful income of an eparchy was often insufficient, so bishops levied additional taxes and fines not granted in their berats.

Endemic corruption and irregularities created serious financial difficulties for the Community, especially since unpaid episcopal debts generally accrued either to his see or directly to the treasury (tameió) of the Orthodox Community. As a result, the treasuries of the Community and of the various patriarchates struggled throughout the nineteenth century with staggering debt-loads. In 1830, the patriarchate of Jerusalem alone owed 18 million piasters and was declared on the verge of bankruptcy despite its extensive land holdings in the Danubian Principalities, Bessarabia, and the Caucasus. Its financial embarrassment was somewhat relieved in 1831 after the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem convinced Sultan Mahmud to authorize a ten-year suspension of interest payments on their debts and the levying of a one-time contribution of one piaster on all Orthodox males. The underlying systemic problems, however, remained unchanged.
The institutionalization of simony also had tragic consequences for relations between clergy and laity and between the upper and lower clergies. The difficulties of obtaining an eparchy and collecting the funds to pay for it tended to weed out pious and compassionate candidates in favour of those with a mercenary turn of mind. The ecclesiastical futures market also meant that unsuitable clergymen won promotion over more popular candidates. As in the rest of the Ottoman administration, the financial needs of the synod encouraged it to tolerate immoral and abusive behaviour, so long as a bishop had powerful patrons and repaid his debts conscientiously. The hierarchy did nevertheless produce some talented and virtuous individuals, of whom Grigórios was an outstanding example, but by the early 1800s many clergymen displayed disciplinary problems that ranged from extortion to open cohabitation with women (referred to euphemistically as ‘nieces’ and ‘house keepers’).91

Successive patriarchs sought to address these problems, but failed to overcome vested interests and the prevailing crises of the empire as a whole. Archbishop Konstándios of Sinai, for example, was elected in 1830 by a group of lay notables on the understanding that he would restore order, share power with the laity, and cooperate with them to create a regular system of clergy salaries.92 The new patriarch was widely admired for his character and learning, but he was no match for the internal opposition to these measures. Konstándios was finally defeated by accusations of financial irregularities, treasonous cooperation with Russia during the war of 1828–29, and of allowing his supporters to plunder the Treasury of the Community.93 Konstándios resigned the throne in 1834 and retired, by all accounts with considerable relief, to the island of Halki.

The abusive features of the millet system would have tried the solidarity of any religious institution, but they presented especially daunting challenges to a community already as diverse and disjointed as that of the Orthodox. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that as the Great Church entered a period of profound malaise in the early 1800s its millet began to fracture, with the deepest fault-lines running along the divides of ethnicity and privilege and between clergy and laity.

**Patriarch Grigórios VI: The ecumenical throne**

The ambitious new bishop of Serrai shared the concerns of other traditionalists over these problems, but Grigórios Fourtouniádis was
also eagerly confident of his own ability to confront them. Grigórios’s opportunity to prove himself came in 1835 when the notables of the community and the synod banded together to drive yet another patriarch, Konståndios II, out of office after only a year on the throne. Konståndios II had shown himself an extremely mediocre and uneducated primate, one of the worst in decades, and his complete inactivity at a time when the Church was so clearly in need of leadership united all factions against him. The Ottoman government, however, had found Konståndios II an unusually agreeable ally and was reluctant to remove him. It therefore resisted calls for new elections until the Russian legation made it clear that the tsar viewed such obstruction as an unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Church.

The synod members singled out the metropolitan of Sérrai for particular consideration. He had the right connections within the hierarchy, had built up a reputation as a zealous and popular administrator, and was reassuringly conservative in his personal views. Grigórios thus managed to combine the zeal and energy of youth with the steadiness, maturity, and conservatism of a much older man – offering the electors the promise of action without radical change. He also had the very considerable advantage of being supported by the Grand Logothete of the Patriarchate, Nikolaos Aristárchis, and by the latter’s brother-in-law, Sotírios Kalliádis, the minister of foreign affairs (postelnic) for the Principality of Wallachia. Through these connections, Grigórios could count on the support of powerful friends that included the Russian legation and a broadly pro-Russian clique within the Ottoman bureaucracy headed by the foreign minister (hariciye nazır-ı), Âkif Paşa. All these factors secured his election as patriarch when the electoral synod convened on 2 September 1835.

From humble beginnings, Grigórios Fourtouniádis had thus arrived at the highest position an Ottoman Christian could achieve, uniting in his hands a branching ecclesiastical hierarchy and a semi-autonomous ‘Roman Nation’. Through these overlapping structures, he commanded the loyalty, respect, and obedience of millions of Christians from the Danube to the Levant. Recent developments had shaken the foundations of Grigórios’s world, but as yet he saw no cause for despair. In 1835, the patriarch could still be forgiven for looking to the future with quiet confidence. It would take more than a party from the British embassy and a letter from the heretical archbishop of Canterbury to impress him.
3
Ponsonby vs the Patriarch: Orthodoxy and European Diplomacy

It is not for territory that the nations fight, but for a protectorate.¹
– Rev. Richard Burgess, *Constantinople and Greek Christianity*, 1855

Applying the axe to the root: Corfu, 1840

On 3 February 1840, General Sir Howard Douglas, Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, drafted a jubilant letter to his colleague, the British ambassador to Istanbul, Viscount John Ponsonby. ‘My Lord’, Douglas began:

I have received with the greatest satisfaction Your Lordship’s letter of the 15th January inclosing a Copy of the Official note which Your Lordship had presented to the Sublime Porte, demanding in the name of Her Majesty’s Government the removal of the Patriarch Grigoriós from his office…²

Douglas’s enthusiasm was heartfelt. He had been complaining about Grigórios VI to the Foreign and Colonial offices for more than a year and insisting that the patriarch’s removal was essential to British interests in the region.

Douglas knew that the success of his campaign would hinge largely on the support of Ambassador Ponsonby, both because of the latter’s position at Istanbul and his influence in Whitehall. As the scion of a particularly prominent Anglo-Irish family, Ponsonby moved in the highest echelons of British society: his father and two brothers were former MPs, another brother was the Anglican bishop of Derry, an uncle was
Lord Chancellor of Ireland, his youngest sister was married to Earl Grey (prime minister at the time of Ponsonby’s appointment to Istanbul in 1832), and another brother-in-law, the Earl of Clarendon, was a future foreign secretary. In addition to such personal connections, Ponsonby was aided not a little by his imposing height and striking physical appearance. In Ponsonby’s youth, he had been considered such a paragon of masculine beauty that his looks were credited with saving his life during a visit to Paris at the height of the French Revolution. When a Jacobin mob had waylaid the young aristocrat and prepared to lynch him from a lamppost, several Parisiennes came to his rescue on the grounds that he was ‘un trop joli garçon pour être pendu’.3 Back home in the early 1820s, Ponsonby caused a similar sensation among the ladies of George IV’s court, reportedly provoking the jealous king to recommend he join the Foreign Service – and remove himself as far as possible from the royal paramour, Lady Conyngham.4 In comparison with such adventures, most of Ponsonby’s official duties in Istanbul bored him. He relished the give-and-take of direct negotiations, however, and doggedly pursued matters that he considered important. By the winter of 1839, he had concluded that Patriarch Grigórios VI of Constantinople was one such matter.

In truth, the British embassy had never liked Grigórios. In 1835, Ponsonby had urged Sultan Mahmud not to depose Grigórios’s predecessor, Patriarch Konstándios II.5 The ambassador had viewed the election thereafter of Grigórios, a clergyman that The Times labelled ‘the Russian candidate’, as the worst possible outcome and another instance of Russia’s growing influence.6 Grigórios thus began his patriarchate under a cloud of British disapproval that never dissipated. In the years following Grigórios’s election, Ponsonby received a steady stream of complaints from British agents about the new patriarch. The most alarming of these came from Howard Douglas, who accused Grigórios of regularly ‘inducing the clergy and Ionian people to deny and resist’ their colonial authorities. Douglas went so far as to declare that he could not maintain order on the Ionian Islands so long as Grigórios, the head of the local church, could defy British authority with impunity from the safety of Istanbul.7 Ponsonby agreed and, with the approval of the Foreign Office, he decided in 1839 to seek Grigórios’s removal. Douglas welcomed this decision and waxed lyrical in his letters to Ponsonby about the salutary effects it would have. The removal of Grigórios by British diplomacy would be nothing less than

the application of the axe to the root, and consequently the blighting of all those intrigues which . . . have been fostered by Russia
till their ramifications have pervaded not only these Islands but all countries owing spiritual allegiance to the Head of the Oriental Church. Great indeed will be the moral as well as the political effect of this measure, . . . inasmuch as it will prove to all who have been intriguing with Constantinople to further the objects that Russia has been endeavouring to bring about by means of religious fanaticism, that their designs have long been known to British Diplomacy and British Administration, that the danger to be apprehended from their success has been foreseen.⁸

Douglas’s language revealed a new, discomfiting reality that confronted Orthodox hierarchs. For centuries, clergymen had travelled and corresponded relatively freely across the political lines that divided the Orthodox Christian world between the Ottoman, Habsburg, Venetian, Russian, and Polish-Lithuanian empires. Patriarchs, in particular, were accustomed to taking an active role in the spiritual affairs of an ecumene that stretched from the Urals to the Adriatic. To give but one example: in the 1650s–60s Makařyūs III ibn al-Za‘īm of Antioch had twice journeyed through the Danubian Principalities and Poland-Lithuania to Russia. At each stop, the Ottoman prelate had been received as an honoured state guest and consulted on weighty questions of Orthodox discipline, ritual, and doctrine.⁹ Increasingly, however, several states – with Britain in the van – objected to this latitude of action and demanded that greater restrictions be placed on the activities of Ottoman clergyman abroad.

Such demands were symptomatic of a growing European involvement in Ottoman affairs generally during the first three decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ As Christine Philliou has argued, one result of Ottoman military decline was a fusion of political horizons as domestic politics opened outward ‘toward the larger frame of European alliances and rivalries’ and foreign powers sought new and more effective inroads into the region.¹¹ The need for foreign support gave Ottomans little choice but to begin conforming to European standards of diplomatic and interstate behaviour. The days were gone when Ottoman sultans could carry out relations with its Christian neighbours in an ad hoc and unilateral manner, imprisoning foreign representatives in times of war and bullying them with condescension in times of peace.¹² By the 1830s, Ottoman statesmen were learning French, studying European diplomatic norms, and setting up new resident embassies abroad.

Integration into the European international order raised fundamental questions about the role of religion (and of religious ecumenes) in the political and diplomatic life of the eastern Mediterranean, especially as
the borders of the Ottoman Empire receded and new Christian states appeared in its wake. The patriarchate, in particular, was a focal point for opposing visions, with Grigórios and Ponsonby embodying two of the most irreconcilable. On the one side, Grigórios championed a reinvigorated traditional order in which the Church retained its lands and temporal powers and would exercise its accustomed monopoly over doctrine, education, family law, and culture. It would do so, moreover, with little regard for political borders. Ponsonby and Douglas, in contrast, took the more Hobbesian view that temporal governments had a duty to police the bounds that kept one state from impinging on another and that kept men of God from interfering in affairs of state. It was high time, they insisted, for the axe of state power to be laid firmly at the root of clerical pretentions in the Near East.

‘Everything has gone to the dogs’: Keeping the Ottoman Empire afloat

Besides such general considerations, however, how had British officials like Ponsonby and Douglas come to perceive the patriarchate of Constantinople as a political threat in the spring of 1840? Their fears were grounded, in part, on the conviction that they were witnessing the dying throes of an empire. European armies had repeatedly vanquished their Ottoman counterparts for more than a century by then, and in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1828–29 a Russian army had marched to within 68 km of Istanbul before the tsar had voluntarily halted the advance and opened negotiations. When Ponsonby arrived to take up his post in 1833, he had found Russian armed forces encamped again on the outskirts of Istanbul – this time in the form of a naval squadron anchored up the Bosporus at Büyükdere. The ships were there at the behest of Sultan Mahmud to protect his capital from Muhammad ‘Ali Paşa, the rebellious viceroy of Egypt, but their presence encouraged Ponsonby’s worst suspicions about Russian intentions. ‘I have always treated as wholly erroneous’, Ponsonby confided to a colleague: ‘the belief entertained by some that Russia could act with what people call moderation in these matters or cease for one moment to aim at the subjugation of Turkey’.

Ponsonby worked determinedly over the next six years to reduce Sultan Mahmud’s reliance on Russian support. These efforts enjoyed considerable success until, in the summer of 1839, Sultan Mahmud courted disaster again by attempting to recapture the provinces he had lost to Muhammad ‘Ali in 1833. The imperial advance into Syria
had barely started when disaster struck. On 30 June, Sultan Mahmud abruptly sickened and died, leaving the throne to his 18-year-old son. For Ponsonby, the succession in itself was no small disaster as he dismissed Prince Abdülmecid as a fool ‘governed by Eunuks [sic], silly girls and his Mother’. News then reached Istanbul of the rout of imperial forces at Nizib on 24 June. Initial reports of the battle were tersely worded, but unmistakable in their import. As one French newspaper informed its readers: ‘a battle took place in the vicinity of Aleppo, and the Turkish army has been destroyed’. Mahmud’s army had fled the field after less than two hours, leaving behind their arms and munitions, 13,000 prisoners, and uncounted dead and wounded. The grand admiral, Ahmed Fevzi, completed the catastrophe by defecting to Muhammad ‘Ali and sailing with the entire imperial fleet to Alexandria.

These events confronted Mahmud’s hapless successor with grim prospects. Russian, Austrian, and British naval squadrons appeared to be all that stood in the way of total Ottoman military collapse. It was widely thought that the sultan would have no choice but to invoke the terms of the 1833 Russo-Ottoman Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi and summon a Russian army once more to Istanbul – this time, perhaps, to stay. Ponsonby foresaw a looming disaster for British policy in the Near East. ‘The crisis has come’, he wrote in despair to his counterpart in Vienna, ‘and with a vengeance. We must do the best we can to meet the evil we could not prevent . . . with Mahmoud everything has gone to the dogs’.

The sight of the Ottoman Empire on the verge of collapse three times within a decade had a sobering effect on states that not long before might have toasted its destruction. There was no great sympathy in European capitals for the Ottomans but considerable apprehension over who would succeed them. Russia, Austria, and Britain would not allow Muhammad ‘Ali to rule over the lands he stood poised to conquer. The viceroy of Egypt was simply too formidable and too sympathetic to France for them to believe that he did not endanger their interests in the region. Nor was a partitioning of the Ottoman lands feasible, as the Powers were expected to fight bitterly among themselves over the division of the spoils. There seemed to be no safe alternative to the Ottomans.

St Petersburg had the strongest reasons for upholding the status quo. By the treaties of Adrianople (1829) and Hünkâr İskelesi (1833) Russia enjoyed free passage of the Turkish Straits, advantageous terms of trade, and formal assurance that in wartime the Ottomans would close the Black Sea to Russia’s enemies. It was hard to imagine that a new regime would grant more favourable terms, and a more vigorous government would try to restrict Russia’s access to the Mediterranean. The tsar was
determined not to permit any other European state to establish itself at the Straits, but he was also reluctant to occupy it himself. Throughout the reign of Nicholas I, the Russian government would therefore adhere to the conclusions of a special committee struck by the Russian Council of State in 1829 that: ‘the advantages of the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire in Europe are superior to its inconveniences’ and that the fall of the Ottoman dynasty ‘would be contrary to the true interests of Russia’.19

For British diplomacy, the Eastern Crisis posed an even starker dilemma. Britain could neither permit a new regime at Istanbul nor allow the continuation of a status quo that strongly favoured Russia. Compelling interests were at stake as British exports to the Ottoman Empire had more than doubled over the previous decade and in 1838 Ponsonby had convinced Sultan Mahmud to sign a commercial convention at Balta Liman that abolished monopolies, set a low uniform duty on all goods for export, and gave British traders full access to Ottoman markets. By 1840, the Ottoman Empire had become the most important foreign market for British goods outside Europe.20 France and Austria similarly profited from the liberal trading policies of the Ottomans and were as anxious as Britain to retain access to the new market. The crisis therefore threatened the interests of all the Great Powers and yet seemed more likely to divide than unite them. Ponsonby spoke for many when he brooded shortly after Mahmud’s death that: ‘I think I see this country given up to Russia and as a consequence a general bloody war over long’.21

In the short term, Ponsonby sought to forestall a Russian occupation by ensuring that a coalition of British, Russian, and Austrian forces – not Russia alone – came to Abdülmecid’s rescue. The defeat of Muhammad ‘Ali was only the first step, however, in a more protracted struggle to save the Ottomans from their own weakness. Ponsonby expected Britain and the other Powers to have to intervene more forcefully and intimately than ever before in the internal life of the Ottoman Empire if it was to be preserved. ‘Our business is to maintain the Turks if we can’, Ponsonby observed to a colleague, even if this meant trespassing upon Ottoman sovereignty: ‘We must pay no attention to what the Turks say but act as we think right . . . All can be done I believe but not by common measures applicable to common cases’.22

First daughters of the Church: European religious protectorates in the East

The second key factor to understanding British and European attitudes towards the Orthodox Church in the early nineteenth century was the
long tradition of using religion to build networks of political and economic patronage in the Near East. Europeans had competed for centuries among themselves for the right to pose as patrons and protectors of the different millets, but the crisis into which the Ottoman Empire had fallen gave this competition fresh urgency and significance. Once the Great Powers had accepted they could neither partition nor colonize the central provinces of the Ottoman Empire, their efforts turned to the acquisition of influence rather than territory. Such influence, in turn, seemed to hinge on building a loyal constituency of local supporters.

The very structure of Ottoman society encouraged Europeans to develop such associations with Ottoman subjects along religious lines and the Ottoman state established a legal basis for doing so through the regime of foreign privileges known as *ahdnames* or capitulations. Since at least the 1450s, Ottoman sultans had sought to promote trade with Venice and Genoa by offering concessions that guaranteed the safe passage of the property and persons of Italian merchants. In 1535, Süleyman I cemented a new anti-Habsburg alliance that he had entered into with François I by extending similar rights to France. French privileges were relatively modest at first and amounted to little more than guarantees that French merchants could carry out their business without interference or oppression from the local authorities. The capitulations did, however, establish that only French consuls could settle civil cases between French subjects and that in criminal or civil cases involving Ottoman subjects no Frenchman could be tried without the presence of a French consul or dragoman.

From simple beginnings, the regime of capitulations grew prodigiously in extent and significance over the next two centuries. The French government increasingly presented its capitulations as irrevocable concessions, rather than as the marks of favour and reciprocal inducements to trade and diplomacy that the sultans had intended. France also sought to expand the scope of its privileges, claiming for every Frenchman rights of extraterritoriality that hitherto only diplomats had enjoyed. The French embassy succeeded in winning most of what it desired as well as special clauses allowing French diplomats to extend these privileges to allied Europeans and to a limited number of Ottoman subjects. Since foreign protection came with reduced tariff duties and virtual immunity from prosecution by local authorities, the fondest wish of any Ottoman merchant by the beginning of the nineteenth century was to become the protégé (*beratlı*) of some European consul or factor.
The French government also specifically sought to extend its protection over religion. The original 1535 capitulations promised that ‘merchants and their agents and servitors, and all other subjects of the king [of France] were never to be molested nor judged’ by Ottoman officials in their observance of the Catholic religion. In 1604, the Ottoman government further promised to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of all Christian ‘religious who reside in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other places under our obedience’. This concession encouraged the French government to begin claiming a protectorate over Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular throughout the Ottoman domains. Such claims were unfounded when they were first made, but by 1730 France could legitimately claim to possess treaty rights allowing it to intercede on the behalf of any Catholic pilgrim, clergyman, church, or endowment, regardless of their nationality. The identification of Catholicism with France was further solidified by the fact that most Catholic missionaries in the East were Frenchmen or belonged to French orders. By 1845, Archbishop Antonio Mussabini of Smyrna could boast that the very words ‘Catholic and French are synonyms in the Levant’.

France’s Protectorat Religieux came with its share of inconveniences. Eastern Catholics routinely summoned the French embassy to intervene on their behalf, both as individuals and as a community. Such interventions were costly and tedious, and had the disadvantage of turning the enemies of Ottoman Catholics into the enemies of France. In the 1820s, for example, the French embassy had to use all its influence to put a stop to the Gregorian Armenian patriarchate’s persecution of Armenian converts to Catholicism. When all attempts at reconciliation failed, in 1831 the French embassy convinced the Ottoman government to create a separate millet for Armenian Catholics. This was the first new millet to be created since the fifteenth century and the first to be created at the instance of a foreign power. Triumph brought no respite for the French embassy, however, as in 1834 the Armenian patriarchate secured an imperial edict punishing all converts to the new Armenian Catholic millet with execution. The weary French ambassador had to take up the Catholic cause all over again.

In practical terms, then, French diplomats considered the religious protectorate a perpetual headache, but one with advantages sufficient to offset the costs. In the rest of the Catholic world, France acquired considerable prestige from its claim to be the ‘eldest daughter of the Church’. Also valuable was the influence that French ambassadors and consular agents acquired among Ottoman Christians. Throughout the East, the protectorate ensured that French representatives encountered
a ready-made network of sympathizers, partners, and informants wherever they went. These connections were all the more valuable in places such as Istanbul and Aleppo where Ottoman Catholics had acquired positions of influence. In Lebanon, for example, when the governorship passed in 1788 to the hands of a Maronite, Emir Bashir Shihāb II, French influence grew apace. A Russian traveller passing through Lebanon in the 1830s reported that the Maronites had come to identify their political and economic interests entirely with those of France. ‘There lies their patrie; there lie their hopes,’ he noted. Preservation of the Protectorat Religieux thus became a shibboleth of French foreign policy in the Near East, upheld by successive governments from the Bourbon Restoration to the Third Republic.

In an attempt to safeguard this special status, the French government jealously sought to prevent other states from acquiring similar capitulations. These efforts were only partially successful, as both Spain and Austria secured rights of intervention on behalf of Catholics, most notably by the treaties as Karlowitz (1699) and Sistova (1791). Both states therefore strenuously contested France’s claim to an exclusive protectorate over Catholicism in the East. In practice, however, Austria’s religious protectorate was limited to the Croats of Bosnia-Hercegovina, the Mirditë of northern Albania, and (to a very limited extent) the Maronites of Lebanon, while Spain exercised its protectorate almost exclusively over Franciscans operating in the Levant. Austria and Spain knew they were impossibly mismatched in any serious contest for influence with France. As one Austrian internuncio lamented in 1867:

Supporting the Catholics in Turkey is not so easy as one might think. We operate with paltry resources and have until recent times had the French embassy, the French clergy and Rome against us. For us, Syria, Jerusalem, even Smyrna are as good as lost. Patriarch and bishops in these regions are against us and work to make all Catholic institutions French. The French have in Syria alone over a hundred schools, capable Lazarists as missionaries, Grey Sisters in all the hospitals . . . In Albania and Bosnia we give a few bishops wretched annual subsidies. I have let 20 churches be built or repaired in these provinces – but the worldly interests of the bishops . . . are usually advanced through the French consulate.

If other European Powers envied the protectorate that France possessed over Catholicism, they feared the protectorate that Russia claimed over Orthodoxy. As the sole remaining Orthodox dynasty, the Romanovs had
long taken for granted that they had a special duty to protect their faith in the lands of its birth. Whereas France, Austria, and Spain could point to specific Ottoman documents acknowledging their rights, however, Russia’s ‘protectorate’ was a matter of conjecture and interpretation. The closest the Ottomans ever came to recognizing Russia’s special guardianship over Orthodoxy was in 1774, when the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was drafted to include two obscurely-worded articles. The first, Article VII, specified that the Ottomans would ‘protect constantly the Christian religion in all its churches’ and that they would allow ‘the Ministers of the Imperial Court of Russia to make representations on behalf of the church that is to be built in Constantinople as well as on behalf of those who will officiate in it’. The second, Article XIV, stated that the Russian government was licenced to construct a ‘Russo-Grecian’ church in Istanbul, which would ‘always be under the protection of the Minister of Russia, exempt from all impositions and secure from attacks’. The Ottomans understood these articles to mean that Russia might make representations on behalf of the specific church that the legation would build for its use in the neighbourhood of Galata; Russia, on the other hand, claimed it was entitled to make representations on behalf of the entire Church to which that house of worship would have belonged (had it ever been built). In support of the latter reading, Russia pointed out that it had reciprocated by recognizing the sultan’s right to a role in the religious life of Muslims in the Crimea as their ‘sovereign caliph’. The other Powers neither accepted nor formally refuted this interpretation, so Russia acted for 70 years as though it possessed a de jure protectorate. Russia further sought to expand its sphere of influence by claiming a special relationship with the 2.5 million-strong Gregorian Armenian community, on the grounds that the spiritual head of the Armenian Church resided on Russian soil at Ėchmiadzin. The legation also courted other non-Chalcedonian Christian sects such as the Jacobite or Syriac Orthodox, Coptic, and Ethiopian churches and offered to make intercessions with the Ottoman government on their behalf.

Russian protection offered many concrete benefits to Ottoman Christians, ranging from financial subventions to tax-exempt status for Ottoman merchant ships sailing under the Russian flag. In return, as the diplomat and writer Konstantin Nikolaevich Leont’ev later recalled, Orthodox solidarity gave Russia a stature in the region that other states could only envy:

Orthodoxy, the belief we hold in common with the Christian population of Turkey, since long ago has given our actions in this country
a firm foothold such as no other power of the heterodox West possesses. All other powers in the Orient act almost exclusively by exercising an external, mechanical pressure, by the use of their military and commercial strength . . . Russia alone, owing to its religious principle, finds herself acting under very different conditions.42

Leont’ev’s assertion was broadly true of the Ottoman laity, although the higher clergy were more ambivalent about their protectors. Like any Rum, the average Orthodox clergyman possessed an instinctive veneration for the tsar and gratefully sought out Russian patronage. Russia’s association with the Petrine ecclesiastical reforms, however, hampered a more complete identification. Traditionalists could not forget that Russia had been the first Orthodox state to introduce the measures they found so objectionable in places like Greece. There were also lingering suspicions that Russia might attempt to subordinate the eastern patriarchates to the St Petersburg synod, just as it had the Orthodox hierarchs of the Caucasus and Bessarabia. Nicholas I’s decision in the early 1850s to expropriate the estates of the Orthodox Church in Georgia and of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine compounded these suspicions, as did repeated Russian offers to collect and forward the revenues due to the churches of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Athos from their properties in Georgia and Bessarabia.43 The aristocratic members of the Russian diplomatic corps, for their part, were accustomed to a compliant clergy at home and they found the independence of the Rum hierarchy galling. The intimate association of many Orthodox hierarchs with Ottoman officialdom especially scandalized Russians on a moral and emotional level, even as they conceded that the clergy had little real choice in the matter.

The Ottoman clergy and the Russian legation in Istanbul were united, however, on central issues, of which the most important in the eyes of the Church was the need to uphold canon law and ecclesiastical independence in the Near East (even if not in Russia). The Russian embassy in Athens thus lobbied for a return of the Church of Greece to the patriarchal fold and demanded Prince Otto’s conversion to Orthodoxy. The legation in Istanbul similarly lent a sympathetic ear to the complaints of the patriarchal clergy within the Ottoman Empire. The rapid replacement of patriarchs and the sordid state of millet affairs particularly offended the Russian government, which blamed these problems squarely on the Ottoman state and its Phanariot servitors. Russia thus marched in lockstep with the upper clergy by calling for stricter observance of ecclesiastical privileges and freedom from secular interference. The fundamental impression given to outsiders during the 1830s–40s
was thus one of monolithic solidarity between Russian and Orthodox interests in the Ottoman Empire.

As Russian influence over the Ottoman Empire grew, this association with Orthodoxy attracted increasingly negative attention in the rest of Europe. There were obvious and disturbing parallels between Russia’s claims to a protectorate over Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire and the manner in which Russian interventions on behalf of the Orthodox Christians of Poland-Lithuania had led to the partition of that state between Russia, Austria, and Prussia in 1772–95.44 In a memorandum from 1840, the first dragoman of the French embassy, Mathurin-Joseph Cor, expressed the concerns of many Westerners when he insisted that the Orthodox Church was essential to Russian plans of ‘introducing her domination into the country she covets little-by-little, profiting from the theocratic power she enjoys and hiding such projects under the mask of a purely religious protection of her coreligionists’. The very pervasiveness of Russian influence down to the parish level made it all the more dangerous: ‘It is Russia that dictates the catechism that is taught to infants, as well as the instructions given by the Patriarch to the Bishops and schools. The upper clergy, the monasteries of Mount Athos, and the influential lay notables are all publicly pensioned by Russia.’ Cor called his government’s attention specifically to the Russian embassy’s interest in safeguarding and extending the temporal powers of the Orthodox clergy noting that Russia ‘lost no opportunity to obtain privileges for the Greeks that are more extensive and better defended than those accorded to any other religious sect in Turkey’.45

The other embassies would be hard pressed to resist Russia if its plans were indeed ‘to subjugate the primitive churches of these countries’, as one British consul insisted in 1844.46 Cor noted ruefully that neither France nor any of the other Powers were in a position ‘to contend with Russia for religious influence’.47 France and Austria had at least the consolation of their formal protectorates, but Britain and Prussia had no natural allies but Ottoman Protestants – a negligible, dispersed, and persecuted minority without any formal millet. The only other available bases upon which the British might build a clientele were similarly inconsiderable groups such as Jews in Palestine or the Druze in Lebanon. Reviewing the situation in 1844, the Austrian internuncio, Baron Bartholomäus von Stürmer, underlined the relative weakness of the French and Austrian protectorates and the even greater disadvantages of Britain and Prussia in Ottoman religious affairs, while Russia dominated the field: ‘All eyes are directed towards her, and there is no Greek church in this country in which the Russian eagle is not to be found in some corner’.48
A salient example of this influence was the fact that Grigórios VI owed his throne in no small part to the support of one of the most prominent friends of the Russian legation in Istanbul: the Grand Logothete of the Patriarchate, Nikólaos Aristárchis Bey. Aristárchis came from a prominent Phanariot family that served as secretaries, translators, and advisors at the Sublime Porte (Bâb-ı Âli), where the grand vizier had his residence and offices. Nikólaos's father, Stavráki, had been the last Christian to hold the exalted post of ‘grand dragoman’ (chief interpreter) before the uprisings of 1821 convinced Mahmud to abolish the office and have its unfortunate occupant poisoned. The Russian legation helped Aristárchis to survive the tumultuous years that followed and in the early 1830s he had returned the favour by helping to broker a series of advantageous treaties between the Ottoman and Russian governments (most notably Hünkâr İskelesi in 1833). He emerged with a reputation as one of Russia’s foremost friends in Ottoman service – or Russia's 'âme damnée' as one Austrian diplomat put it.\[49\] Russian support had helped Aristárchis to concentrate in his hands all official communication between the Ottoman state and two central pillars of Rum society. As kapu kehâya, or court agent of the prince of Wallachia, he had one foot planted in the diplomatic circles of Istanbul; while as ‘grand logothete’, or liaison officer between the Porte and the patriarchate, he had the other firmly in his millet’s internal affairs. In both capacities, he became the centre of an extended network of patronage that both drew on and promoted Russian influence.

Just as Russia struggled for ascendancy over its European rivals in the counsels of the Porte, so Aristárchis had to contend with the patronage networks of other notables who sought to turn Orthodox communal affairs and resources to their own ends. Whereas the grand logothete grounded his influence on connections to the Russian legation, the Wallachian court, and the circle of Âkif Paşa, his archnemesis, Prince Stéfanos Vogorídis Bey of Samos, cultivated an association with the British embassy, the Moldavian court, and the faction in Ottoman politics led by Âkif’s nemesis, the interior minister (umur-ı mülkiye nazırı) Pertev Paşa.\[50\] The Austrian internuncio thus described the convergence of domestic and international rivalries that had resulted by the early 1840s:

Three Greeks have a hand in almost everything that happens in Constantinople: The first of these is Sr Aristarchi who adds to his double role of Logothete . . . and Agent for the Prince of Wallachia that of secret spy for Russia, by whom he is financed; 2nd Mr Etienne Vogoriðis, Prince of Samos, who is devoted to England and serves her
as best he can; 3rd named Messi-Yanni, a Chiote merchant, who is the confidential agent of Riza Pasha and the Minister of Finances [Musa Saffeti]. S. Aristarchi is a scoundrel of the first water whom everyone despises, but he is feared and treated with care out of consideration for Russia...All of these have friends among the clergy ... whom they would like to raise to the dignity of patriarch and with whom they haggle for their price in return. This results in endless machinations, to which the Russians cannot always remain strangers ....

Such a state of affairs was bad enough within the Ottoman Empire; it would be even worse if Russia managed to establish a similar ascendancy over the Orthodox churches of the newly independent states of the Balkans. Britain, France, and Austria therefore deliberately encouraged Greece and Serbia in the 1830s to establish independent churches in the hope that secession would limit Russian influence and prevent the development of a sort of Orthodox Ultramontanism in the region – one emanating from Istanbul, but directed from St Petersburg. The British foreign secretary, Henry Temple, the third Viscount Palmerston, thus directed Ponsonby in 1833 to assist the Greek government in its efforts to secure patriarchal acceptance of Greek autocephaly and ‘to persuade the Porte not to offer any opposition’. Western policies also reflected a fundamental dislike of the powerful clerical regimes that had grown up under Ottoman rule. If the new states were to be successful, Western statesmen agreed, it was critical that they domesticate their own churches first. The British ambassador to Athens, Edward Dawkins, thus observed to Palmerston in 1833 that: ‘the Privileges which Prelates enjoyed by law under the old Establishment were very extensive, and of a nature to interfere at every step with the regular Judicial and Administrative Authorities’. The patriarchate of Constantinople’s financial demands upon the clergy would similarly constitute ‘a drain on the resources of Greece which no enlightened Government could submit to’. The re-establishment of patriarchal authority in Greece would thus lead inevitably to a host of harmful practices and influences. Ecclesiastical subordination to a foreign power, in particular, was ‘inconsistent with the political Independence of Greece, and would be an everlasting obstacle to raising the Clergy from the degraded state into which it has fallen’. Dawkins boasted that he had therefore ensured a proper reorganization of the Orthodox Church in Greece on an independent basis through his influence over the government ministers responsible for ecclesiastical affairs.
The patriarchate abroad: The Ionian Islands

Events on the Ionian Islands during the late 1830s brought into sharp focus the anxieties of British statesmen over both the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the dangers of a Russophile ‘Orthodox International’. The seven islands that composed the Ionian archipelago – Kérkyra (Corfu), Itháki, Lefkáda, Zákynthos, Kefalloniá, Paxoí, and Kýthira – were traditional forward posts of Europe in the East, occupying as they did a strategic position at the junction of the Adriatic and Aegean seas. The people of the islands were overwhelmingly Greek and Orthodox Christian, but they had lived under Venetian rule since the fourteenth century. After Napoleon’s dissolution of the Venetian Republic in 1797, the islands had passed from French to Russian control before the Congress of Vienna finally placed them under British protection in 1815.

The new United States of the Ionian Islands created at Vienna was ostensibly an independent country, possessing its own constitution, senate, and legislative assembly. In practice, however, all real power lay in the hands of a resident high commissioner appointed by the British secretary for colonial affairs. This arrangement pleased no one. The islanders found the new British administration intrusive and would have preferred full independence or unification with the Kingdom of Greece; the British, for their part, felt saddled with a colony that was backward in every sense – economic, political, social, and moral. It was the first time Britons had ruled over an Orthodox population, and they found little good to say about the experience. British writers compared the local Greek islanders to Italians, the Irish, Australian Aborigines, and the Khoikhoi of the Cape Colony – none of these comparisons being intended as flattering. To the British mind, wrote one of the first high commissioners of the islands, ‘the feelings of the people of these countries are equally repugnant and revolting, and it does require a positive experience and knowledge of their character to be able to make up one’s mind to the belief that people exist with principles so degrading and feelings so debased’.56

British writers found various explanations for the moral and material degeneracy of the Ionians including race, history, and natural environment. They invariably concluded, however, that religion was a major contributing factor. The Orthodox Church had a few admirers in England, primarily among High Churchmen keen on renewing ties with ‘the ancient Churches of the East’.58 Such sentiments were foreign, however, to the men who served the crown in the eastern Mediterranean.
As one member of the Oxford Movement lamented in 1840, Britons who went abroad showed little interest in spiritual fellowship with Eastern Christians: ‘We look down upon the ancient foreign churches as too corrupt and superstitious for us to think of uniting with them in divine worship, even where we are not debarred’. For a member of the Irish Ascendancy like Ponsonby or a Scottish Presbyterian like Douglas, the lavish rituals, celibate bishops, and wonder-working saints of Orthodoxy smacked of ‘popery’. Sir James Emerson Tennent, one of the few MPs at the time with both first-hand and scholarly knowledge of the East, was typical in his dismissal of the ‘entire body of the unmarried clergy’ in the East as ‘one connected and classified system of tyranny’. The history of the Byzantine church, he wrote, was ‘one continued and nauseous detail of bigotry, intolerance, puerility, corruption, and debasement’.

Protestants objected not only to what they saw as the many superstitious aspects of Orthodoxy but also to the excessive power – what one Anglican bishop described as the ‘ecclesiastical despotism’ – of the Orthodox clergy over ordinary believers. During a tour of Macedonia in 1839, for example, consul Charles Blunt reported to Ponsonby ‘the first act . . . of a Greek Bishop, after his arrival at his post, is plunder! I believe . . . that I do not advance what can be subject to the slightest taxation as to veracity, when I state that the present System of the Greek Church does far more injury to the Rayjahs, then all the real and supposed oppressions of the Turkish Authorities’. The damning conclusion of another British consul in the 1860s was that Orthodoxy ‘as practiced by its clergy’ was ‘a method by which a parasitic class enriches itself at the expense of public credulity’. The effects of this regime were ruinous and had produced a culture of ‘idleness, ignorance, drunkenness, and an utter absence of morality’.

British prejudices were not helped by the fact that the Orthodox clergy were among the most strident critics of British rule on the Ionian Islands, going so far as to preach – and at times practice – armed insurrection against the new protecting authorities. Church festivals and gatherings not infrequently ended with demonstrations as the clergy led their flock in demanding greater independence and lower taxes. Such experiences led at least one English visitor to conclude that the Ionian clergy ‘are taken from the scum of the population, and are, with few exceptions, illiterate, superstitious, and immoral, and few, if any, acts of private atrocity or rebellion have occurred in the islands, which have not been planned and in part executed by the priests’. A succession of high commissioners who agreed with this assessment sought to bring the local clergy under state control.
The colonial authorities replaced several bishops, exiled the most troublesome priests, and restricted communications with the patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul. The administration also made plans to set up a seminary on the islands that would improve the ‘quality’ and political reliability of the local priesthood. It even sought to co-opt the Ionian bishops by having them excommunicate outlaws and all who harboured them.66

**Restoring the Canons: The challenge of traditionalist reform**

The patriarchate of Constantinople watched the erosion of its authority over the Ionian Islands in disapproving silence, having been warned in no uncertain terms by Ambassador Percy Smythe in 1823 that the patriarch must either ‘relinquish part of his Authority within the Ionian Islands [or] risque its total abolition’.67 In the mid-1830s, this acquiescence began to waver. At first, the Phanar’s defiance was surreptitious – a winking collusion with rebellious clergymen and other Ionians who fell afoul of the colonial administration. With the elevation of Grigórios, however, the patriarchate found a new determination to assert its prerogatives.

This revival reflected not only institutional self-interest but a broader call within Orthodoxy for the restoration of canonical norms and traditions. The numerous anti-clerical satires and libels written in Greek during the early nineteenth century testify to a widespread dissatisfaction among ordinary Rum with their ecclesiastical affairs. Such dissatisfaction, however, did not necessarily mean that most Christians favoured radical structural changes.68 Those critics who did, such as Márkos Filippos Zalónis or Adamándios Koraïs, were strikingly untypical of the average Rum. Zalónis, for instance, was a Western-educated Catholic, who thought submission to Rome would cure most of the ills of the Orthodox community, while Koraïs was a naturalized French citizen who spent virtually his entire adult life abroad.69 More representative of Orthodox opinion were figures like Makários Notarás, Athanásios Pários, Nikódimos the Hagiorite, Grigórios V Angelópoulos, and other members of a revitalization movement known as the *Kollyvádes* who sought to revive traditional forms, practices, and spirituality.70 These traditionalists readily admitted that abuses existed within the Church, but they held such problems to be individual rather than structural in nature. With Metropolitan Ignátios Bámpalos they protested that ‘prelates are but men, and as men they can have certain weaknesses’.71 Just as no one rejects governance, philosophy, and medicine because of the
wickedness of individual kings, philosophers, and doctors, so it would be folly to reject ecclesiastical guidance merely because some bishops behaved badly. What was needed was greater care in the selection of prelates and a change in the consciousness and behaviour of the hierarchy. The Church needed no new statutes or structures, merely enforcement of the Canons it already possessed.

Many of the worst problems of the Church, such as institutionalized simony and the frequent transfer of hierarchs, were indeed flagrant violations of the Canons. To traditionalists, this fact was in itself sufficient to explain the crises confronting the Church. St Nikódimos the Hagiorite warned his readers that the Canons, ‘which mean life when observed, are found to mean death when disregarded’. Just as the physical world possessed natural laws, so too the ‘second and supersensible world’ of the Church was founded on the Holy Canons, without which ‘disorder at once intrudes’. In order to make these Canons more accessible to the lower clergy and laity, Nikódimos compiled the various nomokánones into a single code that might serve as a sort of ecclesiastical constitution. He also annotated each article in the explicit hope that even the ‘simple and unlearned’ might understand them. Its authors entitled the finished work The Rudder (Pidálion), since, they declared in a prefatory verse:

As every ship by its rudder is guided,  
So the whole Church with this book is provided.

In keeping with these ideals, Orthodox hierarchs in the later half of the eighteenth century attempted to curb the worst internal abuses and redistribute political authority within the millet – a series of improvements that Konortas has dubbed ‘the reforms before the Reforms’. The synod had originally created the system of elders, for example, to dilute the dictatorial powers of the patriarch and encourage greater conciliarity. Patriarch Samouïl had voluntarily surrendered the patriarchal great seal in 1763, asking that it be divided into parts and shared among his brethren. In the 1750s, Patriarch Kýrillos V had similarly established a Public Committee (Epitropí tou Koinóu) of guild-leaders and charged them with overseeing the finances of the millet, in an attempt to make the latter more transparent. In the following decade, Patriarch Samouïl even placed parish affairs briefly in the hands of lay committees.

While traditionalists like the new patriarch Grigórios thus desired reform, they resisted any attempt by the Porte, Phanariot notables, or new Balkan states to impose changes. The ideal was for church and state
to become more robustly independent of one another, with patriarch and monarch ruling their separate spheres and working in symphony for the common good. One prominent apologist for the patriarchate argued that just as the state had no business interfering with the workings of law courts, so governments should abstain from meddling in areas that belonged to the Church: dogma and ritual, family law, ecclesiastical property, and administration of the Church’s temporal and spiritual affairs. ‘No one’, declared Fr Konstandínos Oikonómos, ‘has the authority to alter or in any wise reform the established canonical configuration of the Orthodox Catholic Church according to their own fancy – neither government, king, nor any prince, and regardless of whether they be ignorant, foolish, or exceedingly wise’. As a result, traditionalists actually praised Ottoman rule above that of the Greek kingdom inasmuch as the sultan ‘respected the rights of the Eastern Church, and has preserved inviolate and intact Her spiritual authority’, whereas the Greek kingdom had not.

The new patriarch in 1835 shared these traditionalist views and made it a priority to reassert the authority of his Church wherever it was in decline. This meant first and foremost taking a clear stand against worldly intrusions into ecclesiastical affairs. Grigórios VI formally cast down the gauntlet at the beginning of 1836 by declaring that he would accept no outside interference in his appointments to clerical offices. He would resign rather than promote or remove clergymen at the behest of worldly authorities. The Porte did not formally respond to this provocation, but it found a pretext for testing Grigórios’s resolve two weeks later when it slyly requested that he promote Bishop Matthaíos Aristárchis – a brother of the grand logothete – from Sílyvría to the more lucrative see of Dráma. Grigórios refused. A few weeks later the powerful minister of the interior, Pertev Effendi, demanded that Païsios of Ródes be removed on the grounds that he was a Peloponnesian and therefore sympathetic to the new Greek state. These were sensitive charges and Grigórios felt constrained to grant the request. He did so under protest, however, and threatened that he and his synod would resign – and might look abroad for support – should the Porte persist in such demands. Grigórios and the Porte engaged in a test of wills over the rest of 1836. In September, for example, the Porte briefly forced Grigórios to dismiss Nikólaos Aristárchis as grand logothete, and in October it demanded that he restructure the synod to consist of only the patriarch, six bishops, and two lay representatives. Grigórios resisted all these demands, however, and on 26 August he called the Porte’s bluff by tendering his resignation. The Porte retreated, leaving Grigórios the clear victor.
While Grigórios VI sparred with the Porte over 1836, he also launched a vigorous campaign to arrest the spread of Protestant influences. This campaign was intended as the first step in a broader program to reinvigorate Orthodox religious life, addressing what Grigórios complained was ‘a great coldness and indifference toward religion, an ignorance of Christian duties without any desire to know or perform them, sensuality, corruption, luxury, contempt for the commands of God and of the church, a weakening of the clergy’. In February and March 1836, Grigórios established the foundation for his spiritual *Reconquista* by issuing encyclicals ‘admonishing Orthodox people everywhere to flee thoughtless heterodox teachings’. After enumerating the many evils that Protestantism caused ‘in both the spiritual and political worlds’, he called on missionaries active in the Near East ‘to take heed of their actions and to leave the children [of the Orthodox Church] free from their proselytism’. He backed up these pronouncements with the full weight of the Church’s repressive powers. Across the empire, Orthodox authorities persecuted anyone caught associating with missionaries and held public book burnings of all Protestant tracts and bibles they could find.

The following February, Grigórios VI founded a Central Ecclesiastical Committee (*Kentrikí Ekklisiastikí Epitropí*) to reinvigorate the Church and coordinate the anti-missionary campaign. Three individuals formed its core: Metropolitan Samouíl of Mesimvría was to review the general character and training of the clergy; Metropolitan Ioanníkios Lazarídis of Rethýmni was to oversee liturgical matters and censorship of the press; and Fr Efsévios Pánas took charge of education and preaching. All bishops were ordered to form similar ecclesiastical committees in their eparchies, both to popularize the anti-Protestantism campaign and to keep the Central Committee informed on missionary activities. Most provincial eparchies made only half-hearted efforts to obey, but the order was adopted with considerable public enthusiasm in large cities such as Istanbul and İzmir.

The American and British missionaries did not take Grigórios’s proclamations seriously at first, thinking them token gestures meant to satisfy his more bigoted supporters. Such scepticism quickly turned to dismay. From Trabzon, for example, Thomas Johnston reported that the patriarchal encyclical had ‘blasted’ all his work. The mission school’s students had all left, returning only to scatter ripped pages from missionary tracts around the front gate while calling out in sing-song English, ‘Good morning; how do you do?’ From Izmir, Daniel Temple similarly reported that the patriarchal campaign was ‘very seriously affecting our missionary operations for the present, and perhaps
for a considerable time to come. The Greek ecclesiastical committees have succeeded beyond all our anticipations, in closing all our schools, except one'. Missionary work among the Rum became all but impossible for the next two decades.

After such signal success at home, Grigórios turned his attention to the much more difficult task of restoring patriarchal authority over Greece and the Ionian Islands. The moment was propitious in the late 1830s as conservative forces in both countries showed signs of new strength. In Greece, Orthodox conservatives had found a capable and articulate polemicist in the person of Konstantínos Oíkonómos, who produced a steady stream of works attacking the anomalous position of the Church of Greece. The growth of a ‘Russophile party’ in Greek politics in the late 1830s and mounting popular dissatisfaction with Bavarian rule further increased the patriarchate’s appeal. Many Greeks, for example, adopted the anti-Protestant campaign as a badge of Russophile political views. In the Ionian Islands too, many Orthodox embraced Grigórios’s anti-missionary campaign as a means of demonstrating anti-colonial sentiments. Grigórios encouraged this association and gave a powerful indication of his sympathies by making an Ionian exile, Fr Efsévios Pánas, one of his closest advisors. Grigórios further courted trouble by issuing letters and pamphlets in which he scolded the bishops of the Ionian Islands for their passivity before the British administration’s encroachments.

Grigórios was by then convinced that the differences between his Church and the Ionian colonial authorities arose from fundamentally divergent values and goals. The Ionian preacher, Kosmás Flamiátos, spoke for many traditionalists when he warned that England was the ‘first-mover and originator, after the knowing Satan himself’, of a global conspiracy against the Orthodox Church. Wicked Britannia had:

treacherously and secretly involved all the other nations of the West and the East in this conspiracy, all of whom she directs and moves in accordance with the same goals for the . . . overthrow of the entire Church and the general destruction and perdition of all the Orthodox peoples . . . For many years in the Heptanese [Ionian] Islands and then in the Kingdom of Greece during the Regency, England created ecclesiastical schisms and directly legislated that the Church be administered by secular principles, according to the identical system of Lutherocalvinism in England. In these two states, systematically and by law, not just lay and impious men, but the most implacable enemies of God administer and legislate the Church . . .
Irrefutable evidence of Britain’s anti-Orthodox policies – as well as a tempting opportunity to take a stand against them – suddenly fell into Grigórios’s lap in July 1838 in the form of a letter from the high commissioner of the Ionian Islands, Sir Howard Douglas. Douglas had arrived at his new post three years before with plans to overhaul many aspects of the colony’s administration. The centrepiece of his ambitious program of reforms was to be a new civil code, which Douglas had taken a special interest in. Since the new code included innovations that affected marriage and divorce, Douglas decided to vet his changes informally with the patriarchate before submitting the final draft to the Ionian senate.96 For reasons now difficult to fathom, Douglas anticipated no trouble from the Phanar and he confidently predicted that the British embassy would overcome any objections through the dispensing of ‘some secret expenses’.97

Douglas had entirely underestimated the reaction of the patriarchate to his new code. Grigórios was outraged to discover that the colonial state not only proposed to meddle in family law, but that Douglas was abrogating black-letter canon law on several points. The code legalized, for example, the marriage of several categories of relations such as second cousins, step-siblings, and ‘spiritual family’ through adoption and baptism that Orthodox canon law regarded as incestuous. It also made divorce easier to obtain for women who had been abandoned by their husbands or subjected to acts of ‘notorious cruelty’.98 Grigórios privately declared he would sooner die than approve these brazen violations, but for the moment he told Douglas that the code required further study before the synod could rule on it.

When the patriarchate finally did make its opinion known after months of delay, it did so in the most reckless and unequivocal manner. Rather than respond with a private letter to Douglas, Grigórios and his synod issued two strongly worded public encyclicals on 29 October and 13 December 1838 accusing the British government of violating Orthodox customs and canon law. The encyclicals condemned both specific features of the Ionian government’s proposed reforms and roundly declared that the very structure of colonial rule on the Ionian Islands betrayed Britain’s intentions of ‘subjugating spiritual rights to political authorities’ and of replacing Orthodox Christianity with some form of Lutheroc Calvinism.99 It was towards these ends that Methodist schools offered free education and books to Ionian children, that the Ionian government interfered with the right of bishops to ordain priests and deacons, that the Islands’ monasteries had been ‘plundered’, and that the Holy Canons regarding matrimony were threatened with
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abrogation. The encyclical to the Ionian bishops went further and chastised them for their collaboration with the British administration, since ‘those elevated to the archieratical office neither can nor should follow worldly commands’. The letter urged both believers and bishops alike to flee from ‘all modernisms and innovations in religious matters’ and ‘any reform that would alter in the slightest that which is most ancient, revered, and unsullied in our Orthodox Church: the holy Laws and Canons’.

The wording of these encyclicals and their public nature make clear Grigórios’s intention to precipitate a confrontation with the British administration. In March 1839, he made this unmistakable by addressing new letters to the Ionian senate and to the synod of Ionian bishops. In these, the patriarch repeated his earlier condemnations of Douglas’s proposed civil code while adding new criticisms of the colonial administration’s interference in ecclesiastical affairs. He specifically forbade the clergy and laity of the Ionian Islands to send their children to Protestant-run schools or accept British directions in ecclesiastical affairs. Most daringly, he forbade them to obey any British-imposed law that contradicted the Canons. It was true, he admitted, that Christians owed their rulers a debt of obedience, but how much more ought they to fear ‘the terrible and incorruptible Judge on that universal and fearful day of Judgment’? Christians who allowed themselves to be misled and refused correction would suffer excommunication. With these declarations Grigórios had crossed his Rubicon, as he was openly inciting British subjects to civil disobedience.

Putting Orthodox Christendom in its place: Setting limits to ecclesiastical authority

Given the rapidly deteriorating political situation in the Near East in 1839, British diplomacy took Grigórios’s defiant encyclicals very seriously. Ponsonby warned London that the patriarch was little more than a ‘tool’ in the hands of ‘a paid Agent of the Russian Government’ (Aristárchis) and that there was ‘not the least doubt’ that Grigórios’s recent actions were part of a Russian plot to destabilize the East. Ponsonby fretted in particular that the influence of the patriarch over ‘the mass of an ignorant and superstitious population . . . might be exerted with an almost fatal effect in favour of Russia should a crisis come on’. Just days before Mahmud’s death, Ponsonby reiterated his conviction to Palmerston that ‘the actual state of affairs in this Country makes it desirable that the Patriarch should be deposed’ and
replaced by a clergyman more ‘independent of Russia and of purer principles’.  

The worst suspicions of Ponsonby and Douglas seemed to find confirmation in a series of events that unfolded in Greece over the following months. In August 1839, the synod of the Greek Church underwent a dramatic change in composition and, for the first time since its creation, conservative bishops outnumbered those who supported the independence of the Greek Church. It was credibly rumoured in Athens that the Greek government had lost its nerve and was secretly preparing to return to the patriarchal fold. These reports caused Palmerston to write anxious letters to his Austrian and French counterparts about the dangers of allowing Grigórios to become anything approximating an Orthodox pope. Then, at the beginning of January 1840, the Greek police announced they had uncovered evidence of a conspiracy to depose King Otto in favour of an Orthodox prince – who, by definition, could only be a Romanov. It appeared from letters seized by the Greek authorities and shown to the British ambassador in Athens that Grigórios was in direct correspondence with the leaders of this ‘Philorthodox Society’ and that he was, at the very least, a passive accomplice in their plans. The appearance of complicity was all the more damning for the fact that the stated goals of the conspiracy included the restoration of canonical relations between the patriarchate and the Church of Greece. An anonymous report submitted to the Greek government claimed that the goals of the Society included the unification of ‘the entire Eastern Church under one leader or patriarch, on whom would fall the same rights, influence, and authority as those exercised by the Pope of Rome over the clergy of the Western Church’. 

In the eyes of the Foreign Office, the time had clearly come for diplomacy to place limits on the pretentions of the patriarch of Constantinople. Palmerston instructed Ponsonby not only to secure the removal of Grigórios but also to establish in the eyes of the world the true significance and character of his offenses. The question was not, as Grigórios would have it, whether the British government was violating the Orthodox Canons. The central issue was whether sovereign states had a right to regulate their societies without interference from international, non-state actors. The British complaint thus took as its starting point the assumption that both Britain and the Ottoman Empire were part of a larger community of states, each bound to respect the sovereignty of its peers and to act in accordance with certain norms. In particular, the Ottoman government was bound to prevent its subjects and institutions from meddling in the internal affairs of other polities.
This duty was no less pressing for the fact that the offending party was a clergyman. For the British government, as for most European states of the time, political supervision of the clergy was an essential prerequisite for the maintenance of domestic and international stability. Without such oversight, clergymen tended to forget their proper vocation in society – the formation of what Kant called ‘useful citizens, good soldiers and, above all, loyal subjects’. Every state thus had a duty to itself and to its peers to police religion within its own borders and ensure that its clergy did not become a disruptive force abroad. Since the patriarch had abused powers that he enjoyed at the pleasure of the Porte, he deserved summary dismissal and punishment by his temporal superiors.

In accordance with these instructions, Ponsonby paid a visit to Nuri Effendi, the müsteşar or undersecretary for foreign affairs, on 14 May 1839. Ponsonby brought the most recent patriarchal letter with him and announced that, as the Ionian government would not accept the missive, Nuri should return it to its author. He then lodged a strongly worded formal complaint against Grigórios. It was his duty, Ponsonby declared:

to call officially the attention of the [Ottoman government] to the improper and criminal conduct of the Greek Patriarch, who has not scrupled an exertion of the power, which he holds only by the appointment and during the pleasure of the Sublime Porte, to call upon the peaceable and loyal subjects of the Ionian States, under the penalty of excommunication to resist and defy the Laws of their Country, and thereby to contribute to the creation of disorder and discord . . . in a Country which . . . is necessarily the near ally of the Sublime Ottoman Porte. The Undersigned is confident that the justice of the Sublime Porte will not sleep when one of its own subjects has dared to use a power conferred upon him . . . for the purpose of creating discord and confusion in a friendly State under the pretext of Religion . . .

The Porte studiously ignored this rather pointed suggestion. On 13 January 1840, Ponsonby therefore submitted a second formal request to the Ottoman government demanding in plainer language that ‘the Sublime Porte see fit to exercise the incontestable right and authority which belongs to Her to depose the Patriarch Gregorios from the patriarcal dignity [and to] . . . take measures capable of inducing future Patriarchs to respect the rights of independent governments’.
He warned Nuri that the affair was a serious one and might have ‘very regrettable consequences’ for British–Ottoman relations. The British government was even prepared to sever diplomatic relations with Turkey and to create an independent Orthodox Church on the Ionian Islands if satisfaction was not forthcoming.117

Ponsonby’s demand placed Foreign Minister Mustafa Reşid in a very difficult position. By Ottoman law and custom, the leaders of the empire’s different religious communities retained their posts for life so long as they did not break the law or offend the sensibilities of their community. Past sultans had removed and even executed patriarchs, but these interventions had been in response to charges of high treason or a formal petition from the Orthodox community. Grigórios fit neither of these criteria as he had committed no offense under Ottoman law and enjoyed the esteem of his flock.

The understandings of sovereignty and territoriality implicit in Ponsonby’s argument also posed problems.118 Ottoman statesmen had long seen their empire as bounded not by hard, thin lines on a map but by broad transitional zones composed of tributary states, natural barriers, porous marchlands, armistice lines, and nomadic populations.119 A similar disregard for tidy borders reigned in Ottoman religious affairs, the main institutions of which tended to mirror the empire’s expansive claims to political authority. The sultan, in his capacity as caliph, set an example for Grigórios VI by claiming varying degrees of religious authority over Muslims in countries from North Africa to Southeast Asia – areas that were entirely beyond Ottoman political control. Religious entities such as the Armenian Catholicosate of Ėchmiadzin, the Catholic Church, Shi’ite scholars, pilgrims, and religious endowments, and various Sufi orders similarly operated with relative freedom across and in spite of the borders of the empire. It was therefore hard to single out Grigórios for special condemnation.

There were also practical difficulties involved in granting the British request. Patriarch Grigórios had already announced that he preferred death by hanging to allowing the transgression of even the least of the Canons, so little would be accomplished by threatening him. The only avenues of action left to Reşid exposed his government to undesirable consequences. With Ottoman forces still in disarray following the battle of Nizib, the Sublime Porte could ill afford to alienate either of its two most important potential allies. Yet Ponsonby’s demand was certain to do this, as Russia would be offended if Grigórios was removed and Britain would be offended if he was not. Then there was the negative precedent that would be set. How would it look, Reşid objected, if the
Porte arbitrarily dismissed the head of the Orthodox Community merely because Britain had requested it? What could the Porte say should Russia or France come afterwards with complaints about Grigórios’s successor? Where would it all end? In an attempt to extricate himself from this difficult position, Reşid temporized by declaring that he would be happy to remove Grigórios but could not do so for the present without causing serious embarrassment to his government. To Ponsonby’s fury, the Russian ambassador, Apollinarii Petrovich Butenev, and the Austrian internuncio, Baron Bartholomäus von Stürmer, both sided with Reşid and urged moderation. The French ambassador, Charles-Édouard de Pontois, eventually came out in support of Ponsonby, but he did so with obvious reluctance.

At the beginning of February, Reşid Paşa adopted a different tack. He now advised Ponsonby that an official investigative commission headed by Abdülkadir Bey of the Ottoman Council of Justice would submit the patriarch’s conduct to ‘a severe inquiry’. This ad hoc commission would censure Grigórios’s actions while still maintaining an appearance of official impartiality. Ponsonby agreed to the charade with reluctance. A formal inquiry, he complained, was entirely unnecessary. The sultan and his ministers had deposed and even executed patriarchs for centuries without resorting to either trial or inquiry. ‘It is notorious’, Ponsonby fumed to Palmerston, ‘that Patriarchs have been removed on the most frivolous grounds and by the basest intrigues and bribery’. Ponsonby also rejected out of hand Reşid’s assertion that the Porte was trying to respect due process. The patriarch, he insisted, had no legal right to the exercise of his functions. The Porte had bestowed rank and powers upon him; the Porte could take them away. ‘In every Government’, Ponsonby spluttered in exasperation, ‘from the most Despotic Monarchy to the wildest Democracy, the Executive [possesses] the right of absolute unconditional control over those for whose acts the executive [is] responsible’. The patriarch, in other words, was no different from Reşid himself, in that he not only could but should be dismissed at the pleasure of his government.

The inquiry hearings that unfolded at the home of Abdülkadir Bey between 7 and 24 February 1840 proved a fascinating piece of political theatre. They were also arguably the first example of a political show trial in the modern Middle East, inasmuch as the trappings of a legal proceeding were used not to prosecute crime but to defend the Ottoman government in the court of world and public opinion. Reşid admitted to Baron Stürmer that he had designed the inquiry first and foremost to absolve his government of responsibility for the affair. In particular,
he had instructed the commission to find Grigórios at fault on a point ‘not exclusively linked to questions of dogma, so as not to offend his co-religionists, the Russians’.128

The hearings themselves went off as planned. Grigórios was questioned on his various pronouncements and spoke eloquently in his own defense. The central issue of the proceedings was Grigórios’s carefully phrased assertion of his own status as a transnational religious authority, whose pastoral duties to his flock wherever they lived transcended his responsibilities to any earthly government. Grigórios insisted, for example, that he was bound to answer Orthodox Christians living in any state who consulted him on religious questions. In the specific case of the Ionian Islands, he would have been negligent had he not warned Christians that they risked their souls in complying with laws that promoted incest and facilitated divorce.129 While the commissioners and Grigórios debated the finer points of this argument in what all participants knew to be a laboured farce, the British ambassador redoubled his pressures on the Porte by hinting that he was about to demand his passport and quit Istanbul.130 The outcome of the affair was never in doubt, and the sultan deposed Grigórios on 3 March 1840.131

The outcome satisfied no one. As Stürmer noted in his reports, Britain’s victory had alienated all parties in the Ottoman capital:

The Porte is wounded to the quick at being seen to be forced by a foreign Power to give the public such a sign of its weakness, and for having thus established a dangerous precedent for herself. . . ; the synod and the notables of the Greek nation are irritated against Lord Ponsonby for the species of persecution exercised against an ecclesiastic who is generally loved and venerated; the Russians . . . share that sentiment . . . M. de Pontois laughs under his hat and says in the ear of the Turks: ‘Behold how England treats its friends!’132

Nor did Ponsonby find much to gloat about. The entire purpose of his demarche had been to hobble Russian influence over the Orthodox Church and prevent the ecumenical patriarchate from meddling in the affairs of other states. These goals, however, remained elusive, since the Ottoman ad hoc commission had pointedly declined to rule on the principle of whether patriarchs could issue rulings regarding affairs in other lands. The commission’s final report faulted Grigórios for the intemperate and offensive wording of his encyclicals, but abstained ‘from pronouncing any opinion as to the nature of the religious ties that can exist between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the
populations of the Ionian Islands’.\textsuperscript{133} Reşid had sought, moreover, to assuage the feelings of the Russophile party by allowing Aristárchis to engineer the election of another of his ecclesiastical protégés to replace Grigórios on 4 March. The new patriarch, Metropolitan Ánthimos IV Vamvákis of Nikomídeia, was a friend of Grigórios VI and, Ponsonby noted glumly, ‘a man absolutely devoted to Russia’.\textsuperscript{134}

Despite these setbacks, Ponsonby insisted to Palmerston that the importance of the affair had been ‘striking at the commencement, and has increased since’.\textsuperscript{135} The removal of Grigórios set a powerful and dangerous precedent in the delicate relationship among the patriarchate, the Porte, and the European Powers. Russia had long exercised a powerful influence over the patriarchate of Constantinople, but it had always done so indirectly. Never had the sultan raised up or removed a patriarch at the formal request, let alone the insistence, of the Russian legation. Ponsonby’s ultimatum put St Petersburg on notice that other states were ready to contest Russia’s accustomed monopoly over Orthodox affairs in the East.\textsuperscript{136} As British and French involvement in Orthodox affairs increased over the next decade, Russia would feel compelled to respond.
4
‘The Great Game of Improvement’: Reşid Paşa and Reform

In a state of society where the religious principle not only influences but absorbs all others, every political or social revolution must in its origin assume a religious form. It is impossible to introduce changes into manners, institutions, government, without at the same time extending them to religion. Turkey could alone be saved by a different direction of those same influences which threatened her fall.¹


The rose garden of reform: Istanbul, 1839

Early in the morning on Sunday, 3 November 1839, a living tableau of the Ottoman imperial elite assembled outside the Topkapı Palace in the rose bower (güllhane) of a large wooded park. An outdoor auditorium had been erected with a raised dais facing a semi-circular enclosure of pavilions and tents that protected the audience from the elements. Seated on the second story of the imperial kiosk was the new sultan, Abdülmecid I, who despite his youth looked distinguished and solemn in a dress uniform, black cloak, and red fez with tall, diamond-encrusted aigrette.² The first floor of the kiosk was reserved for the representatives of the European diplomatic corps at Istanbul. In the place of honour among them sat the third son of King Louis-Philippe I of France, the Prince de Joinville, who happened to be visiting Istanbul. From the window of Joinville’s section of the kiosk, he looked out upon:

a broad space, surrounded by beautiful umbrella pines and sloping gently down to the sea. Beyond is the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus
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and the pretty village of Kadi-Keuy. This space is full of troops, twelve splendid battalions of the Imperial Guard, Lancers and Artillery. These form a circle, in the centre of which rises a pulpit covered with some yellow stuff, and around it the pashas and the whole body of Ulemas and Mollahs, ...³

Also in attendance were the seven highest generals of the empire, the Orthodox, Gregorian, and Catholic Armenian patriarchs, the grand rabbi, and numerous bankers, notables, and guild-leaders.

Once all had taken their places, the marshal of the palace solemnly produced a new imperial rescript (hatt-ı hümâyûn) and, after touching it respectfully to his lips and forehead, handed it to Mustafa Reşid Paşa to read. ‘All the world’, the foreign minister began in a loud, clear voice to the assembled crowd ‘knows that in the first days of the Ottoman monarchy, the glorious precepts of the Qur’an and the laws of the empire were always honoured. The empire in consequence increased in strength and greatness, and all its subjects, without exception, experienced the highest degree of ease and prosperity’.⁴ Those laws, alas, had fallen into abeyance in later days, turning ‘our former strength and prosperity into weakness and poverty’. The new sultan intended to remedy this situation by creating ‘new institutions’ and restoring ‘the benefits of good administration’. Henceforward, the oppressive system of farming out tax collection to private individuals (iltizam) was to be replaced by a more regular system of assessing and levying taxes. The army was to be strengthened through a more equitable system of conscription. The state was to be governed ‘with the assistance of enlightened opinions’, and the servants of the sultan were free to express these opinions without fear of repercussions. Finally, the sultan proposed to limit his own powers, promising never to deprive his subjects – regardless of the religion to which they belonged – of their life, honour, or property without the due process of law. The minister concluded by inviting his audience to join him in swearing fidelity to the new hatt. The chief jurisprudence of the empire, Şeyhülislam Mustafa Asım Effendi, led the assembly in prayers of thanksgiving, and the meeting ended with repeated cannonades and public acclamations. The edict itself was solemnly deposited in the treasury of the palace, alongside such holy objects as the Mantle of the Prophet.

Joinville relished the spectacle he had witnessed, but he was sceptical as to its practical value. As a Bourbon, he had little regard for anything that smacked of constitutionalism and he regretted to see that the ‘Turkish people’ had caught this ‘disease’. The Ottoman Empire
might still survive, he reflected, but ‘the miserable rag of paper read out this day will certainly not save it’. Many Ottomans, too, were ambivalent about the new decree. Most hailed it as a promising start to the new reign, but it contained passages that gave even supporters pause. How, for example, would new laws and institutions check a decline caused by failure to respect its old ones? Then there was the jarring inclusion in the hatt of several distinctly European-sounding elements. Pious invocations of Islam, justice, and divine guidance sat awkwardly next to appeals to reason and summons to ‘citizens’ of the empire to work together for the common good of their native land and all mankind. The text stated explicitly, moreover, that benefits would apply equally to Christians and Jews. ‘These imperial concessions’, Reşid declared in the sultan’s name, ‘shall extend to all our subjects, of whatever religion or sect they may be; they shall enjoy them without exception’. The edict’s explicit concern with equal treatment did not directly violate the Shariah, but it did stand out in a society that took certain basic legal inequalities for granted.5 ‘Cloaked in an appeal to an idealized past,’ as Bruce Masters has observed, ‘the reigning social hierarchy had been dismantled in one terse sentence’.6 Also remarkable was the fact that whereas previous sultans had marked their accession by professing a general commitment to justice and public welfare, Abdülmecid made explicit promises and backed them up by a solemn oath over the holiest of relics.7 As a basic statement of the principles of equity, legality, and – obliquely – responsible government, the ‘Noble Rescript of Gülhane’ became the cornerstone and rallying point of a broader reform movement known as the ‘Auspicious Reordering’ (Tanzimat-ı Hayriye) that would transform Ottoman society over the next three decades.

The hatt would also be forever associated with the figure on the dais who proclaimed it: Mustafa Reşid Paşa. Reşid cut a rather modest figure that day among the glittering constellation of officials. One Frenchwoman who sat next to him at a consular banquet was disappointed to find the famous statesman short and overweight, ‘with a rather meek face and veiled gaze’. His aquiline nose, thick eyebrows, and large expressive eyes fit contemporary European stereotypes of Semitic physiognomy so neatly that one maladroit French ambassador blurted out upon their first meeting: ‘why, he looks like an old Jew!’8 Beneath an unprepossessing exterior, however, lay exceptional talents and a breadth of vision that had already earned Reşid a reputation as the most accomplished of living Ottoman statesmen. From 1839 until his death in 1858, Reşid would be the torchbearer for the new reforms,
and many of the successes and failures of the Tanzimat would be laid at his door. In the West, Reşid took on exaggerated importance as the supposed nucleus of all that was healthy in the empire and the unofficial head of the ‘liberal’ or ‘Westernizing’ party – it being assumed as a matter of course that any genuine reformism must have its origins in Western rather than Islamic traditions.9

Reşid was born in 1800, the eldest son of an administrator (ruznâmçeci) at the great mosque of Bayezid II, the second largest imperial mosque complex in the capital. Reşid’s father, Mustafa Effendi, had intended his son to become a religious scholar, but he died in 1810 and Reşid came under the guardianship of his brother-in-law, Ispartalı Âli Paşa, a rising star at court. When Âli was appointed governor of southern Greece in 1816, Reşid came along as his secretary (kâtib). Reşid witnessed at first hand the collapse of the Ottoman administration in 1821 and the inability of imperial forces to bring rebel forces in the Peloponnese to heel. After retreating to Istanbul in 1826, he gained admittance to the civil service, where his intelligence, linguistic skills, and talent for poetry earned him a rapid series of promotions. As assistant to the powerful interior minister, Pertev Paşa, Reşid participated in the peace negotiations with Russia (1829) and then Muhammad ‘Ali (1830–32) that finally brought peace to the empire. Reşid acquitted himself with sufficient distinction to earn the title of âmedci. In 1834–36, he was posted to the Ottoman Empire’s politically sensitive new embassies in Paris and London.

Any posting to Europe, let alone such a lengthy one, was unusual for an Ottoman statesman. Reşid therefore became better acquainted than most of his colleagues with its cultures, languages, and diplomatic practices. Many Europeans later assumed that Reşid’s exposure to Western civilization represented the true beginning of the Tanzimat. According to one popular booklet written during the Crimean War, Reşid had been ‘struck with admiration at the working of the [British] constitutional system; and he resolved, on his return home, to use his best efforts to prepare the way for introducing some modification of it into his own country’.10

In fact, Reşid had been exposed to reformist ideas well before his European ‘Grand Tour’. As Mardin and Abu-Manneh have shown, Reşid’s membership in Pertev Paşa’s circle had already introduced him to ‘a continuous stream of reformist policy’ that prominent figures within the Ottoman civil service had espoused since at least the end of the eighteenth century.11 Particularly important had been the Nakşibendi-Müceddidi order, with its emphasis on reform (tecdid),
impartial justice *(adalet)*, and strict observance of the Shariah. Reşid does not seem to have been a Nakşibendi devotee himself but many others at court were, not least the heir apparent Prince Abdülmecid and the future queen mother Bezmiâlem Sultan.\(^{12}\) In addition to these influences, however, Reşid had the unique advantage of having studied alternative political systems up close and heard from the lips of leading statesmen, from Metternich to Palmerston, what they thought of his country and its future.

Another formative influence on Reşid’s life was the sudden fall from grace of his mentor, Pertev Paşa, in September 1837. Pertev had been a talented and dedicated servitor of the throne, but this had not protected him from the dangers of life at court. A rival faction led by Âkif Paşa turned the sultan’s suspicions against Pertev at a moment of weakness (reportedly when Mahmud was drunk) and secured orders for the minister’s exile to Edirne. Once there, Pertev had been strangled with a bowstring at Mahmud’s orders. Shortly thereafter, Reşid was recalled from London to take up the post of foreign minister. Passing through Edirne, he had been horrified to come across the fresh grave of his mentor.\(^ {13}\) The sultan professed genuine remorse, but the arbitrariness of Pertev’s execution shocked Reşid and helped turn him against Mahmud’s brand of enlightened despotism. In a confidential letter to Palmerston in 1839, Reşid complained that the primary source of evil in Ottoman public administration had become the ‘arrogance of the sovereign’, who acted without check and promulgated reforms that were ‘vain tokens’. What was needed was the establishment of ‘that law which governs the European Powers and which the Coran itself prescribes . . . of not killing its own citizens and of not despoiling them of their wealth contrary to justice’.\(^ {14}\)

Over the next two years, Reşid encouraged his sovereign to undertake bolder reforms and cultivate the friendship of the Great Powers.\(^ {15}\) In pursuit of the latter goal, he returned to London and Paris in the autumn of 1838.\(^ {16}\) It was during this sojourn abroad that Reşid received the news of the death of Mahmud and the disaster at Nizib in 1839. Reşid immediately lobbied the British government for support and hurried home to convince his new sovereign of the need to request aid from the entire European Concert rather than from Russia alone. Finding Abdülmecid in dire straits, Reşid began to flesh out a draft decree that he had been working on in London and which he hoped would rally support for the dynasty both at home and abroad. It was this decree that was finally promulgated at Gülhane in a reworked form following consultations with the other ministers, ulema, and the teenaged sultan.\(^ {17}\)
Ottoman perspectives on communal reform

If the need for change was obvious, the nature, direction, and speed of reforms were not. Perhaps nowhere were the uncertainties of the Tanzimat more marked than over the question of the non-Muslim communities. The Porte's first concern, of course, was the problems affecting Muslim society rather than non-Muslims and the ulema appeared to be of more pressing concern than the Orthodox clergy. The şeyhülislam, Mustafa Asım Effendi, and many other senior clerics supported the reforms but there were concerns that conservative and disaffected scholars might cause trouble. Baron Stürmer thus reported on 15 January 1840, that Reşid Paşa’s immediate priority was ‘to win the Ulema to the cause of the new institutions’, a reconciliation all the more difficult to effect as ‘the consolidation [of the reforms] cannot but directly weaken the influence of this powerful body’.18

The Tanzimat could not help, however, but raise questions about the very purpose and structure of the non-Muslim communities. The entire system of clerical privilege was predicated upon the needs of a decentralized and inegalitarian system of rule, whereas the new Hatt-i Şerif indicated movement towards a state that ruled its subjects equally and with a minimum of mediation. Even without the Ottoman state’s new interest in centralization, the condition of the non-Muslim communities called out for attention. The Ottoman foreign ministry, in particular, was receiving a steady stream of complaints from both Orthodox and Armenian Christians about the abuses and festering conflicts that afflicted their millets.19 A political memorandum to the sultan authored by one of Reşid’s protégés, Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa, expressed the conviction of many Tanzimat statesmen that the current system was untenable:

The Empire of Your Majesty contains minorities grouped as religious communities. These form distinct bodies, each with its own loyalty, language, customs, and aspirations. They have developed in a surprising fashion. They have been granted privileges and immunities that have generated difficulties; these need to be resolved. The Government of Your Majesty should permit each community to be responsible for their purely religious affairs that concern them only. But in other matters it is time to subject them to the same laws as other citizens and not allow them separate constitutions. Privileges that these diverse communities enjoy give rise to unequal burdens and responsibilities. This is a great nuisance.20
In keeping with these new priorities, Reşid Paşa began contemplating measures as early as the summer of 1840 to reduce the secular powers of the clergy and replace the existing system of ecclesiastical fees and taxes with a regular salary paid by the state. The French dragoman and a former personal secretary to Reşid, Mathurin-Joseph Cor, reported that:

> There is every reason to believe that the actual state of Christians and their administration will soon be modified. Force of circumstances will make the Turkish Government take measures to introduce the most complete religious liberty before long, such as the adoption of a system of fixed salaries for the members of the clergy and the nomination of lay chiefs for the administration of the temporal affairs of the diverse non-Muslim communities and their relations with the Ottoman Government, etc. etc. . . . This division of the temporal from the spiritual had never before appeared, in theory, a good measure to recommend; but today it is a profitable idea, and this is what makes me think that it will not be long before it is taken in hand.  

Rumours that Reşid was considering such measures were not limited to the capital but also circulated in the provinces. In Thessaloniki, for example, the British consul noted widespread reports that the Porte intended ‘to take under its immediate consideration the state of the Greek Clergy, and that they will henceforth have fixed salaries’. These rumours were taken so seriously that several bishops panicked and raised their fees sharply in order to reap the maximum profit before they lost the ability to do so.

Another indication of Reşid’s intentions was his decision to abolish the post of grand logothete, one of the primary sources of influence for Nikólaos Aristárchis and the Russophile faction within the patriarchate. Since July 1840, Reşid had toyed with several pretexts for removing Aristárchis from Istanbul (including a diplomatic posting to Berlin) but he feared that the canny logothete could not be fooled. The following May he therefore abolished the post of grand logothete outright and deposed Aristárchis’s client, Patriarch Ánthimos IV Vamvákis. In Ánthimos IV’s place, the faction headed by Vogorídis elected one of the outgoing prelate’s most outspoken critics, Metropolitan Ánthimos V Chrysafídis of Kýzikos.

At this point, several considerations seem to have restrained Reşid from further action. The first consideration was the deadweight of accumulated tradition. The millet system, buttressed as it was by Islamic legal principles, ancient precedents, and a corpus of imperial berats
and decrees, still commanded considerable respect. For all its inconveniences, the traditional system also served many useful functions, inasmuch as it relieved the central government of responsibilities that would otherwise devolve onto it such as education, health, and social services. Then there was the fact that, like tax farming, another obnoxious facet of the old regime that reformers found difficult to replace, the millet system was a ready source of cash for a government in constant financial straits. The same statesmen who accused the Orthodox clergy of oppression continued to expect hefty financial gifts from them as a matter of course. In the late 1840s, for example, when the Armenian patriarch, Madt’eos II Ch’owkhajean, paid a visit to the Tanzimat reformer Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa for the feast of Eid al-Adha, he had to dole out more than 1,000 piasters in gifts to various members of the foreign minister’s staff and was berated for not giving more.26

The most appreciated aspect of the millet system was its role in maintaining the religious distinctions among Ottoman subjects. As much as Tanzimat reformers spoke airily about religious equality, the dominant society they belonged to was manifestly unprepared to treat Christians and Jews as equals. Many Ottomans and not a few Europeans therefore warned the Porte against rash measures that would weaken the tenuous ethnic and religious balance of the empire and empower minority populations of dubious loyalty.27 One such anonymous memorandum from 1841 urged the Porte to avoid:

> the establishment of a community of interests among the subject nations. Each one of them must continue to be administered separately, according to its customs. In résumé, it seems to me that there should be uniformity in the principles of government, but diversity in its forms of application. The administrative system of France, then, will never suit the Ottoman Empire. It would be much better to imitate the Emperor of Austria, who reigns over many different peoples and governs each of them according to their own manner.28

Last, but not least, Reşid worried that Sultan Abdülmecid’s enthusiasm for reforms was waning under the influence of Reşid’s conservative rivals. Reşid thus wrote in a confidential message to Prince Metternich in March of 1841 that he feared Abdülmecid would soon abandon altogether the principles so publicly embraced only two years before and return to the tyrannical ways of his father. So pessimistic did Reşid become that he even suggested to Metternich that the Powers should hold an international conference at Istanbul and impose reforms on Abdülmecid.29
Reşid had thus taken no serious steps towards a reform of the millet system when he fell from power in March 1841 and was eventually reposted to the Ottoman embassy in Paris. The new grand vizier, Darendeli-Topal Mehmed Izzet, and his Austrophile foreign minister, Sadık Rifat Mehmed, were both men of more conservative inclinations. Rifat, far from encouraging millet reforms, actively resisted several democratizing initiatives within the Armenian patriarchate to transfer control over the community’s affairs from its traditional elite to an elected council of 27 artisans. Rifat instead engineered a restoration of the old power structure and noted in his report to the sultan that he had done so because the populism of the council disturbed the ‘internal dynamics’ of the millet, weakened the influence of the patriarch, and would be more susceptible to Russian influence.  

European perspectives on communal reform

While the Ottoman government thus left unaddressed the question of what to do with the millets, European statesmen increasingly proposed their own solutions to the problems of Ottoman Christians. Already in September of 1840, for example, Mathurin Cor was recommending that the French government encourage a full-scale reorganization of the Orthodox Community to limit the powers of the Orthodox clergy and clear the way for greater French influence. Cor considered Mustafa Reşid’s tentative plans to be movement in the right direction, but he warned they were insufficient and would fail without active European intervention. ‘In order for the new order of things to be a success for France’, he wrote, ‘she must intervene in the regulation of these questions’. Cor’s call to action was impracticable in the early 1840s at a time when France had fallen low in the consideration of the Porte, but future ministries would act following the revival of French influence under Napoleon III.

In the meantime, the role of principal foreign promoter of communal reforms in the Ottoman Empire fell to Great Britain, especially following the appointment of Lord Stratford Canning de Redcliffe as ambassador in 1841. Canning was no stranger to the affairs of the East, having already served at Istanbul in 1810–12, 1825–29, and briefly in 1832. During each of these appointments, he had earned an unenviable reputation as a most undiplomatic diplomat. Metternich even suspected the Peel administration of having sent Canning back to ‘a post he was ill-made for’ simply to keep him out of Parliament, where ‘the ardour of his character would bring embarrassment to the government’.  
The American secretary of state John Quincy Adams remembered Canning from his time as ambassador to Washington in the 1820s as ‘a proud high-tempered Englishman, of good but not extraordinary parts; stubborn and punctilious, with a disposition to be overbearing’ and declared him to be ‘of all the foreign ministers with whom I have had occasion to treat, the man who has most severely tried my temper’. In Istanbul, the new ambassador made himself all the more obnoxious to his Ottoman hosts by incessantly judging them against his own rigidly Evangelical code of public and private morality.

Canning arrived at his post convinced of the need for his embassy to become more directly involved in Ottoman domestic affairs. Ponsonby had suggested something similar in 1839, but in practice he still preferred to see Abdülmecid’s ministers focus on trade and military reorganization rather than social, administrative, or cultural reforms. Canning was convinced that deeper changes were imperative if the empire was to survive. One member of the embassy staff, Austen Layard, later recalled that Canning made no secret of his belief that ‘unless [the Ottoman] government was thoroughly reformed by the introduction of European institutions, by a fundamental improvement in the administration, which was deplorably corrupt in all its branches, and by the better treatment of the Christians, and by placing them on an equal footing with the Mussulmans, its fall would not be far distant’. Canning therefore threw his support squarely behind the reformist faction in Ottoman politics and set his face against all he considered ‘Old Turks’. Such engagement in Ottoman domestic affairs went well in advance of official British policies or what would have been acceptable to the other Powers, so Canning used confidential agents and secret meetings to maintain what Layard called a ‘constant and intimate communication with Reshid Pasha and his principal followers’.

Under Canning, the embassy also took unusual interest in the religious affairs of Ottoman Christians. In part, the new engagement with millet affairs reflected the growing British presence in the Ottoman Empire more generally. Prior to the 1840s, there had been few points of contact between British officialdom and the Ottoman Orthodox clergy outside Istanbul and the Levant. The burgeoning trade between Britain and the Ottoman Empire, however, created a need for consulates in many cities and towns where previously there had been little or no British presence. The new consuls set out to describe and analyse local conditions, and they frequently found themselves interacting with Ottoman clergymen on a wide range of issues. In their reports, British consuls in Ioannina, Thessaloniki, Bursa, Damascus, Cyprus, Varna,
Kayseri, Volos, and elsewhere began to complain in very strong terms about the behaviour and general character of the local Orthodox bishops. They insisted, moreover, that the abuses of the hierarchy were systemic rather than personal, and that the removal of individual hierarchs should be accompanied by a complete overhaul of the Orthodox Millet. ‘If the Porte is sincere in its intentions towards the Christian Subjects of the Sultan’, one consul recommended in 1843, it ought to ‘take the conduct of the Greek Bishops in general into its most serious consideration, and put some check upon their well known rapacity’.

The British embassy, with the full approval of the Foreign Office, began to act on these reports in the 1840s and to demand that the Porte and the Phanar prosecute the more abusive hierarchs. In 1847, for example, the British embassy requested that the Porte remove the head of the autocephalous Church of Cyprus, Archbishop Ioanníkios II, for being, in the words of the local consul, ‘ignorant in the extreme, depraved, licentious, and void even of the external decency and decorum which is expected from the ministers of religion’. When the Porte demurred, the British chargé d’affaires, Henry Wellesley (the future Lord Cowley), insisted that the Porte should at least appoint a commission to investigate Ioanníkios’s behaviour. Going beyond the criticism of individual hierarchs, in 1849 Canning encouraged the Porte to deal with the problem in a more systematic fashion by creating ‘a more efficient check on the corruption of the Rayah authorities’ and ‘the exemplary punishment of some leading offenders’. Once it became known that the embassy was making such intercessions, British officials began to receive a flood of appeals regarding ecclesiastical abuses in the late 1840s. These complaints came not only from Slavic Christians in the troubled eparchies of Bulgaria and Macedonia but also from ethnic Greeks in Thessaly, the Chalkidiki peninsula, Crete, and elsewhere. By the end of the decade, even members of the Orthodox hierarchy were sending out feelers to the British embassy in hopes that the latter’s new willingness to intervene in Orthodox affairs might be turned to practical advantage.

An indication of the surprisingly broad scope of British interest in Ottoman religious affairs is the sudden concern of British diplomats, from the consular level all the way up to Whitehall, with the liturgical prayers recited in Orthodox and Armenian churches throughout the empire. The British embassy was particularly concerned about litanies in which prayers for the patriarchs and their clergy were followed by intercessions for the Russian imperial family. Canning told a visiting Anglican deacon that he was actively pressing the Porte to suppress any
prayer that mentioned the Romanov dynasty. In June 1850, he also called the attention of the Ottoman government to various passages in widely available Slavonic-language psalters and euchologia (‘book of needs’), which, he insisted, were part of Russian plans to ‘excite in the Christian subjects of the Porte a spirit of disaffection’. Particularly offensive, to his mind, were prayers for God to ‘speedily destroy the infidel and abominable empire of the Hagarenes and transfer it to an Orthodox Sovereign, and lift up the horn of Christendom and subdue our enemies under our feet’.

Canning recognized, however, that it was poor strategy to fight Russian influence prayer-book-by-prayer-book, parish-by-parish, eparchy-by-eparchy. He needed to address the wider context that placed Britain at such an enormous disadvantage in any contest for religious influence in the Near East. Britain still had only two cards to play: it could claim guardianship over the empire’s relatively tiny Protestant and Jewish communities or it could attempt to level the playing field by depriving religion of its political significance. In practice, the British embassy pursued both stratagems simultaneously. On the one hand, Canning showed a solicitous concern for the promotion of Protestantism within the empire; on the other, he sought to sap the foundations of the millets by promoting their laicization and freedom of conscience. Canning’s efforts to create an Ottoman Protestant millet illustrate how he reconciled these two potentially divergent goals. By the mid-1840s, the internal campaign against Protestantism had become acute within the Armenian Millet and on 21 June 1846 Patriarch Madt’eos II Ch’owkhajean issued a blanket anathema against all who displayed heretical tendencies. On 1 July, 40 Protestant Armenian representatives met in Istanbul and, with the encouragement of the British embassy and American missionaries, decided to organize themselves into a new civil-religious community. This embryonic Protestant millet existed in legal limbo for more than a year, but the British government gave it warm support and ensured that the Ottoman government did not suppress it. In November 1850, the sultan finally succumbed to British pressures by granting the Protestants official millet status.

The British embassy intended the new Protestant Community to do more than shelter converts from prosecution. Canning intended it to be an alternative sort of religious community – an anti-millet, as it were. From the very first meeting of the new Community in 1846, its British and American advisors thus recommended a system of presbyteries made up of elders, deacons, and laymen so that ‘discipline . . . belongs not to the clergy alone, but, with them, to the people’. Canning also
ignored Palmerston’s suggestion that the new Community be given a more High Church structure by placing it under the newly created Anglican bishopric of Jerusalem. According to the terms of the constitution that Canning helped draft for the Protestant Community, the clergy were to occupy no positions of power or authority whatsoever. Instead, all civil authority was vested in the hands of a lay administration led by a democratically elected president, known as the vekil or azkabed. Officials of the Community were forbidden to request payment ‘from any individual, for any service whatever’ save reimbursement for unavoidable expenses (such as securing official forms or visas from the state). Canning wrote to Palmerston of his fervent hope that the new millet would serve as a prototype for the other communities of the empire and that:

the example of its members may, with God’s blessing, operate favourably on the relaxed morals of the Greek and Armenian clergy; and, looking to political consequences, a superstructure capable of forming, with proper appliances, a counterpoise to the Graeco-Russian and Gallo-Catholic influences may in time be raised on the foundation now solidly and lastingly, as I conceive, laid down in the Sultan’s dominions.

Canning took for granted that the Russian legation would oppose these and any other efforts to reorganize Ottoman Christian affairs. In fact, Canning’s suspicions did little justice to the moderate character of his counterparts at the Russian legation, Apollinaii Petrovich Butenev and Vladimir Pavlovich Titov, who did their best to keep Anglo-Russian relations on an even keel in the face of Canning’s frequent provocations. The Russian legation was only too aware of the disorder that reigned within the Ottoman millets and Russian reports made frequent reference to the need for reforms. The legation’s goals and approach to reform, however, differed in important and predictable ways from those of the British embassy.

At the heart of the matter, for Russian diplomats, was the future of Orthodoxy in the East. More specifically, the legation feared that internal dissensions and what Titov decried as ‘the profound ignorance and inertia of the clergy’ were sapping the ability of Ottoman Christians to resist foreign missionaries who were better educated, better behaved, and often better protected by their Western patrons. In March of 1841, for example, Konstantin Bazili, the Russian consul in Beirut, complained to Titov that the British consul ‘continues to insinuate himself
more and more into the religious questions of the diverse Christian sects in Syria’.
Western confessions – and with them Western political influence – would continue to make ever deeper inroads in the region so long as the Orthodox Community remained in disarray. ‘I believe it essential’, Bazilli wrote, ‘for our influence as well as for the true interests of this country and especially for those of the Porte, to use all our means to improve the state of the Orthodox clergy, as the combined influence of the Pope and of France is rapidly invading Syria’.
The sudden conversion in 1844 of several hundred Orthodox Christians to Protestantism in Hasbaya, Lebanon gave Russian diplomats a startling example of what might occur on a much larger scale if the rot within the Orthodox Church was not arrested.

The Russian embassy thus agreed with Canning on the need for millet reforms. It did not agree, however, that the best way to do this was to eliminate the privileges of the clergy or to bring millet affairs under direct state and lay control. On the contrary, Russian statesmen viewed the Porte and its lay servitors as the main causes of the degenerate state of the Orthodox clergy. As Nesselrode observed in a memorandum from 1842, the chief calamities afflicting the Eastern Church arose ‘from Muslim rule, and also from 1) the desire of Catholic and Protestant missionaries to disseminate their religious beliefs, and 2) the Greek clergy’s lack of the moral and material means to forestall their pernicious proselytising’. The clergy required greater independence, resources, and moral support if their decline was to be reversed. A Russian memorandum from the 1820s was characteristic in its emphasis on the need to strengthen the independence and powers of the patriarchate:

All of the following will be carefully maintained: the prerogatives of the Greek religion; the privileges bestowed upon patriarchs and bishops in diplomas of confirmation issued by the Sublime Porte on their appointments; and the advantages ceded to various monasteries by fermans.

The same memorandum stressed the importance of maintaining the internal integrity of the Church and stipulated that the right to select and depose patriarchs must ‘always be exercised freely by the [Orthodox] nation; no one must ever interfere in the selection process or coerce candidates’. The Porte ought therefore to issue a decree that ‘no one will be allowed any longer to intrude in any way in the designation of bishops by the church synod, in the ordination of priests, or in the appointment of priests’. Orthodox clergymen must similarly
be immune from prosecution by any but the patriarch and the sultan himself.62

Russian diplomats thus endorsed an approach to reform that dovetailed neatly on most issues with the preferences of the Ottoman upper clergy, with both sharing a common emphasis on canonicity, education, and moral revivalism. The one outstanding point of divergence was the Russian legation’s insistence that the Ottoman patriarchates make more concerted efforts to placate non-Greeks by making greater use of Church Slavonic and Arabic in church services and appointing more Slav and Arab bishops. To the frustration of Butenev and Titov, however, the upper clergy resisted this advice and continued to treat the steady growth of nationalist discontent among Ottoman Slavs in a desultory manner.

Ottoman attempts to reform the Orthodox Community

The continuing unrest among Christians in many parts of Rumelia, but especially in Bulgaria, forcibly recalled the Porte’s attention to the problem of millet reform in the spring of 1843.63 The grand vizier Mehmed Emin Rauf Paşa informed Abdülmecid that he was receiving numerous complaints about Patriarch Yermanós IV and the overall administration of the Orthodox Community. He therefore thought it urgent that the patriarch be removed and steps taken to rectify the disordered state of Orthodox affairs. In a very telling admission, Rauf also emphasized the need for caution so as not to upset the Russian government. Butenev, he noted, had only recently warned that the tsar must be consulted on all questions affecting the Orthodox Church, so Yermanós could not be removed without a very good excuse.64 In the meantime, the grand vizier proposed to introduce reform surreptitiously into the Orthodox Community by creating an ad hoc committee of ‘knowledgeable and trustworthy people’. The Orthodox notable Vogoridis Bey had suggested this scheme to Rauf, proposing that he and several other notables be appointed as procurators (mubassır) to oversee Orthodox affairs on behalf of the state. The grand vizier rejected Vogoridis’s proposal as too precipitous and thought instead that a committee of notables should be charged merely with monitoring the temporal affairs of the patriarchate and acting as unofficial advisors to the government.65 Over time, however, the Porte should build up the committee until it could take over all temporal affairs of the Community. Rauf admitted that this would mean violating the legal privileges of the Church, but such a step had become necessary. Sultan Abdülmecid pencilled his approval of the plan.
Rauf ordered that a large meeting of the Orthodox clergy and laity be convened at the Phanar on 2 April 1843, for the ostensible purpose of reviewing the accounts of the patriarchate. Vogorídis and his allies used this meeting to create a lay committee of 18 notables, who were to assist the synod with the administration of the treasury and other temporal affairs. Once created, however, this body quickly overreached itself. The committee challenged the upper clergy, for example, by insisting on its right to sit with the synod in judgment of bishops charged with abuses. It also struck a permanent committee of four hierarchs and four laymen that was to audit the accounts of each eparchy. Patriarch Yermanós nipped these pretentions in the bud by dissolving both committees within weeks of their creation. The dismissed notables protested and appealed to the Ottoman government for support.

The notables found to their dismay, however, that the Porte had in the meantime changed its policies under the rising influence of Hasan Rıza Paşa, the marshal of the palace and a favourite of the deceased Sultan Mahmud. Rıza was appointed minister of war (serasker) in July 1843 and by August Stürmer was reporting that affairs were ‘entirely dominated by Rıza Pasha’. For the Orthodox Community, the ascendency of Rıza had two concrete effects. The first was that the Porte lost interest in the very measures that it had only just initiated among the Rum. The Ministry of Justice thus ignored the appeals of the notables and endorsed Yermanós’s dissolution of their committees. In October, the government also allowed the patriarchate to revive the office of grand logothete for the first time since 1841. As if to make up for the indignities of the previous two years, the Porte re-appointed Aristárchis and surrounded his investiture with signal honours including a private audience with the sultan and Rıza Paşa at the Topkapı palace and the presentation of diamond-encrusted snuffboxes from Abdülmecid and the queen mother.

The government had by no means, however, forsworn interference in Orthodox affairs nor did it otherwise favour Aristárchis’s Russophile faction. On the contrary, the second major effect of the rise of Rıza Paşa in 1843 was a subtle decline in Russian influence within the Orthodox Community and the rise of a new faction – referred to in Russian embassy reports simply as ‘the opposing party’ – that encouraged the Porte to make deeper forays into patriarchal politics. The central figure in the new faction was Rıza’s banker, ‘Misé’ Iánnis Psycháris, an important Chiote notable and merchant. Among the clergy, Psycháris was allied to a fellow Chiote, the powerful Metropolitan Ioakeím Kokkódis of Ioánnina. Together, Psycháris, Ioakeím, and Rıza launched
a campaign to replace Yermanós over the course of 1844–45. The Russian government viewed these machinations with alarm as it considered Yermanós a friend and the legation repeatedly warned the foreign minister, Rifat Paşa, not to remove him. The position of Yermanós IV became untenable, however, after December 1844 when a protégé of Rıza’s, Mehmed Şekib Paşa, replaced Rifat as foreign minister. In late April 1845, Şekib finally pressured Yermanós IV into submitting his ‘voluntary’ abdication.73

In the patriarchal elections of 18 April 1845, Şekib compounded the appearance of state interference by issuing orders – in clear violation of both tradition and the privileges – that excluded all previous patriarchs and several of the more Russophile elders from being considered. The many supporters of Grigórios VI among the clergy and laity assumed that this unexpected ban was intended specifically to prevent his return to the throne. The electoral synod reluctantly complied with the order and chose a protégé of Vogorídis Bey, Metropolitan Melétios Pángalos of Kýzikos, as its new patriarch. When Melétios died unexpectedly in December 1845 after only eight months on the throne, the Porte again issued an order prohibiting the re-election of any former patriarchs. The Porte further sought to intimidate the electors by sending the dragoman of the Porte, Mehmed Fuad Paşa, to attend the electoral synod as an official observer. The process lost what little legitimacy remained to it when the Porte unexpectedly acclaimed Ánthimos VI Ioannidis Koutalianós winner by default, on the grounds that the other two pre-approved candidates had recused themselves. It later emerged that Ánthimos VI had secured his appointment with an enormous bribe, reportedly of 5 million piasters, to the sultan’s chamberlain, Hamid Bey.

The rapid succession of patriarchs and the extent of state intervention in Orthodox affairs between the fall of Grigórios VI in 1840 and the election of Ánthimos VI in 1845 created serious irritation at the Russian legation. Titov particularly condemned the patriarchal elections of December 1845 for being ‘tumultuous, disorderly, and scandalous’. In each of these elections the majority of the faithful had clamoured for the restoration of Grigórios VI and the Porte had resorted to illegal exclusions, intimidation, intrigues, and bribery rather than permit the election of a pious and popular prelate. Titov recommended that his government protest against these abuses, which would otherwise continue to grow ‘in a manner at once impudent and dangerous’. ‘Amidst such a sad state of affairs,’ he declared to Count Vorontsov-Dashkov, ‘mere exhortations may no longer suffice . . . to persuade the Porte,
that Our August Master has his eyes fixed upon the state of the Church in Turkey, that H[is] M[ajesty] is not indifferent to what is happening, and that if the Divan understands its true interests, it will not seek to take advantage of those elements of disorder which unfortunately exist among the Greek clergy’.82

These reports reached Tsar Nicholas I, who agreed with Titov and directed him to address a confidential – but formal – note of complaint to the Ottoman government expressing the seriousness of the tsar’s displeasure.83 In the resulting letter, dated 6 March 1846, Titov complained at length to the Porte of ‘the abuses that accompany the elections of the Ecumenical Patriarch’ and of ‘the grave inconveniences that result from the frequent changing of the personages invested with that high Ecclesiastical dignity’. These developments, he warned, had severely troubled his imperial master, who could not ‘view such a state of affairs with indifference’.

Guided in this circumstance as much by the benevolent sentiments he holds towards the Sultan, His August friend and ally, as by the duties imposed on Him by the sacred interest of religion, the Emperor charges me with engaging strongly the Ministers of H[is] H[ighness] to undertake means of preventing the repetition in the future of similar irregularities and of such deplorable malversations. The election of the Patriarch must be completely free and the Porte, far from intervening, must avoid indicating any preferences or exclusions, which accord neither with canon law nor with the freedom of action, which constitutes . . . one of the immunities accorded to the Nation and to the clergy. The mode of elections must be regularised not only in order to prevent the machinations, which certain subalterns and unauthorised intriguers take the liberty of hatching for purely selfish reasons, but also in order to preclude all scandal within the bosom of the Synod, where the respect due to the dignity of the Church ought at all times to be scrupulously maintained. 84

The traditional rights and privileges of the Church were, Titov concluded, ‘the essential and invariable precondition’ upon which the loyalty of the sultan’s Orthodox subjects was based and the Porte ignored them to its peril.

To permit these privileges to be violated or evaded is to lend a hand to unequalled irregularities, to wish the degradation of the patriarchal dignity and of that of the clergy, and to attack the dignity
of the Church and of Religion in the person of Her chief and members. The more the Greek clergy is venerated in Turkey, the more that the Ottoman Government will find itself receiving the esteem that is its due, and the more it will be able to count on the solidity of the ties which it is the vocation of the clergy to create and cement between the Sovereign and His people.

Titov had adopted an uncharacteristically menacing tone in this letter, but even so he doubted that it would have the desired effect. The experiences of the previous decade did not encourage optimism, nor did recent personnel changes at the Porte. The mounting evidence of Rıza's maladministration and the insistent lobbying of Canning finally convinced Abdülmecid to remove Rıza from the seraskeriat in July 1845 and to recall Mustafa Reşid from Paris in December. For the Orthodox Community, the return of Reşid Paşa to the foreign ministry meant a shift from the venal and haphazard meddling of Rıza to a more systematic program of reforms. Reşid quickly gave Titov new proofs that his ministry had little sympathy for the robust sort of ecclesiastical independence that the tsar demanded and even fewer qualms about meddling in patriarchal elections.

One of the first matters to cross Reşid's desk in January after his reappointment as foreign minister was a dispute between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Orthodox community of Egypt over who had the power to choose a successor for the recently deceased patriarch of Alexandria, Ierothéos I. The synod in Istanbul had elected one of its own number, Artémios of Kestendilion, to the empty patriarchal see. The Alexandrian community refused to accept Artémios and insisted on its right to elevate a local candidate whom Ierothéos had nominated on his deathbed to succeed him. The Egyptian government weighed in on the side of the Alexandrines and requested that the Porte invalidate the election of Artémios. Reşid was eager to promote good relations with Cairo and announced in January 1846 that the Porte would not confirm Artémios as patriarch of Alexandria. Titov, who had been in the midst of negotiating a compromise between the two sides, was furious and protested that the Porte had no business invalidating a synodal election. Reşid shrugged off Titov's objections: the right of the sultan to confirm or annul any ecclesiastical election was absolute and 'as indisputable as it was unlimited'. In any case, he added, the affair was no concern of Russia's.

Titov's reproaches, far from intimidating Reşid, only convinced the latter of the need to bring the Orthodox Community under more
effective state control. ‘Reshid is not very happy with the Russian Legation’, Baron Stürmer reported in September of 1846, ‘and he regrets the constant influence that the Russians strive to exert over all that concerns the Greek subjects of the Porte and the exercise of their cult’.

Reshid and his circle therefore arrived at a two-pronged plan similar in principle to that recommended by Rauf in 1843: the Porte would gradually purge the upper clergy of abusive and Russophile elements while placing temporal affairs in the hands of lay notables who depended upon the Ottoman government for their wealth and position. The elevation of Reshid to the grand vizierate in September 1846 and of his protégé, Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa, to the foreign ministry allowed them to begin putting these plans into practice.

Reshid and Âli took their first concrete steps on Tuesday, 9 March 1847, while both Titov and Canning were home on leave. The Ottoman ministers summoned Patriarch Ánthimos VI and four of the synodal elders, together with Vogorídis, Aristárchis, Psycháris, and another notable (Lazarákis) to the offices of the Foreign Ministry to receive a new vizieral decree (buyuruldu). The decree began by paying lip service to the inviolability of the privileges of the Orthodox millet, but then noted that Christians throughout the empire continued to complain of the behaviour of their bishops and that the patriarchate appeared unable to correct its own problems. ‘The prolongation of this state of affairs’, Reshid declared, ‘cannot be reconciled in any way with the spirit of equity adopted by the Government of His Majesty, nor with the state and nature of our epoch’. He therefore ordered the patriarchate to convvoke a deliberative council of the hierarchy and lay notables that would advise the Ottoman government on means of reform. That Reshid intended this new council to help implement a broader agenda of millet reform can be seen from the fact that he addressed a similar vizieral decree to the Gregorian Armenian community two months later, on 7 May 1847. The semi-official *Journal de Constantinople* also began to devote considerable space to the question of community reforms. One article announced that the time had come to draw an ‘exact line of demarcation’ between the temporal and spiritual authorities of the non-Muslim communities and to deprive the clergy ‘of any civil powers whatsoever’.

**Patriarchal counter-projects**

The decrees issued to the Orthodox and Armenian millets met with very different receptions. Among the Armenians, Patriarch Madt’eos II
Ch’owkhajean and the bulk of the laity responded with alacrity to the new instructions. One of Reşid’s Armenian protégés, Hakop Grjigyan, took charge of the process and ensured that all went as the government intended. The Armenian Community promptly created a Supreme Civil Council, composed of 20 elected representatives from the guilds and notables of the capital, to direct the millet’s temporal affairs. For good measure, it made Grjigyan director of the new council. All strictly religious matters were left to a Spiritual Council, composed of 14 clergy-men. The two new bodies were functioning within weeks of the vizieral decree.

Among the Orthodox, by comparison, the buyuruldu met with determined resistance. Ánthimos VI did convene a special assembly of the most prominent members of the hierarchy and lay notables at the Phanar several days before Easter on 18 March 1847 to read out the decree. Ánthimos quickly made clear, however, that he opposed lay involvement in the administration of the Community and that his synod would draw up its recommendations without any lay participation. When the notables objected to this clear violation of the buyuruldu, Ánthimos adjourned the meeting. The patriarch then drew up a daring address to the sultan, in which he praised the government for its commitment to the scrupulous preservation of the ancient privileges of the Orthodox Community. The notables, for their part, submitted a formal protest to the Porte and asked it to impose a decisive separation between the millet’s temporal and spiritual affairs. The Porte responded with a second decree instructing the patriarch to cooperate with the laity.

Ánthimos VI delayed summoning the notables to the Phanar until 25 April while he and the other members of the synod drew up their list of recommendations. Most of the notables suspected that they would be presented with a fait accompli and declined even to attend. In the presence of those who did answer the summons, Ánthimos VI unveiled a 15-point project of reforms. Ánthimos began his recommendations with the declaration that, thanks to the benevolence of the sultan, the time had finally come to put an end to the abuses that unlawful participation by the laity had created in patriarchal affairs over many decades! The patriarch and synod would therefore continue to appoint bishops without any lay involvement whatsoever (Art. 1). Every episcopal candidate should, however, meet certain minimum standards, ‘uniting all the qualities necessary to conduct the Christians he administers in the way of health and to inculcate in them the duties of a good subject’ (Art. 1). Specifically, episcopal candidates must be Ottoman citizens, at least
35 years of age, and have never married. They were to be well versed in the Canons (preferably having completed studies at the Great School in Istanbul) and to have lived a life of service. Ánthimos proposed to combat absenteeism by requiring bishops to take up residence in their eparchies within three months of their appointment and to remain there for a minimum of three years (Art. 2). Ties between bishops and their eparchies were to be strengthened by curtailing the appointment of vicars and the transfer of bishops between sees without good cause (Arts 3 and 4).

The patriarch also saw no role for the laity in dealing with episcopal abuses of authority (Arts 5 and 6). Whenever an accusation was made against a bishop, the patriarch was to appoint a commission of three metropolitans who would visit his diocese and investigate all complaints. If they found the bishop guilty, the first task of the commission would be to correct him and bring about reconciliation with his flock. If this proved impossible, he might be removed after patriarch and synod had reviewed the case. Once a bishop had been removed, he was never to hold high ecclesiastical office again. If the visiting commission found the bishop innocent, however, it would punish severely those who had lodged the false complaint.

Ánthimos appealed in his recommendations to the interests of the eparchial bishops by proposing to level all inequalities among the upper clergy, removing, for example, the distinction between synodal elders and the rest of the episcopate. All bishops should be eligible for seats on the synod, and all debates therein settled by a simple majority vote (Art. 8). Membership in the synod was to be fixed at 12, chosen by lot from all eligible bishops, plus any ex-patriarchs who wished to attend. Members of the synod would retain their seats for two years, after which half of them would return to their eparchies and the patriarch and remaining members of the synod would select replacements (Art. 9). Synod members who proved contentious could be voted back to their eparchies permanently. On the issue of simony, Ánthimos proposed to regulate rather than prohibit the trade in eparchies. His plan called for the division of all eparchies into four groups based upon their relative wealth (Art. 11). Eparchies of the first rank would cost their bishop 40,000 piasters, while the remaining three ranks would cost (in descending order) 30,000, 20,000, and 7,000 piasters each.99

Finally, Ánthimos VI and the synod announced the creation of a mixed lay–clerical committee to reform those areas in which the patriarchate was willing to accept lay input, such as the administration of schools, hospitals, poor relief, and the treasury.100 The patriarch created
this commission on 9 May without waiting for the Porte's approval. The new body consisted of four elders (Païsios of Kaisária, Dionysios Vaïramoglou of Irákleia, Neófytos Veglerís of Dérkoi, and Yerásimos Sfakianáakis of Adrianoúpolis) and 10 lay notables, including the grand logothete (Aristárchis), the prince of Samos (Vogorídis), the exarch of Chios (‘Míse’ Iánnis), and the foreign ministers or postelnics of Moldavia (Konstandínos Soútsos) and Wallachia (Sotíriós Kallíádis). This commission met every Friday from 14 May 1847 until the end of the summer without accomplishing anything of note.

Clearly, the patriarchal reform project amounted to a declaration of ecclesiastical independence from both the Orthodox laity and the Ottoman state. It also reflected a healthy dose of self-interest, as Ánthimos’s proposals would have dismantled all the checks put in place since the early 1700s against the dictatorial power of the patriarch. The response of the Porte to such open defiance was astonishingly mild. In a peevish report to the sultan, Reşid fumed that the Orthodox clergy must learn that they could not simply make up their own laws or presume to regulate temporal affairs that ought to be the concern of the central government. Abdülmecid agreed and directed that the proposals be returned to the Phanar with a formal reprimand. Beyond this, however, the government took no disciplinary actions. It neither forced Ánthimos to carry out the specific reforms it desired, nor did it remove or otherwise punish him. Ánthimos had called the Porte’s bluff, and both sides knew it.

While the Ottoman government contemplated its next move, Ánthimos made further efforts to drum up Russian support. In early July, he sent the Russian legation a long memorandum on the grievances of the Church, including a list of specific instances in which the Porte had violated the privileges of the Church or otherwise undermined patriarchal authority. Several of these incidents were trivial, but they established a clear trend and Ánthimos complained that the Porte clearly had its own preconceived plans for reform. The Ottoman government, he warned, was intent on a radical reorganization of the millet and wanted complete control over the appointment and dismissal of hierarchs. The true authors of the Porte’s plans were, he insisted, notables like Vogorídis – ‘intriguers within the Community who are acting under foreign inspiration to bring the dignity of the Patriarchate and of the Clergy in general into disgrace, and by legal means to overthrow all that exists’.
These accusations had their desired effect on Mikhail Mikhailovich Ustinov, the Russian chargé during Titov’s year-long absence between June 1846 and August 1847. Ustinov’s first response to the rejection of the patriarchal reform project was to meet with Âli Paşa and demand to know why the Porte was so intent on restricting the powers of the Orthodox Church, especially when it seemed only too happy to grant concessions to Catholics and Protestants. Âli Paşa ignored the charge of favouritism and responded with deliberate irony that he knew no one was more ready to resist ecclesiastical innovations than the tsar of Russia.106 Ustinov returned to the subject during another interview with Âli a few weeks later. This time, he directly accused the Porte of conspiring to undermine the moral and temporal authority of the patriarch. When Âli asked for concrete examples, Ustinov drew on Ánthimos’s memorandum, citing, for example, the Porte’s reluctance to carry out patriarchal sentences of banishment and imprisonment in the galleys.107 Âli neatly sidestepped Ustinov’s point by countering that the sultan himself had voluntarily given up his ability to mete out arbitrary punishment, therefore ‘it was no disgrace for the Patriarch to acquiesce in rules to which His Imperial Majesty himself submitted’.108

Such flippant exchanges convinced Ustinov that the Porte had not taken Titov’s remonstrations to heart and that it was planning more such interferences. Ustinov was also sure that Britain and France were somehow responsible for the Porte’s meddling. The Western Powers, he insisted in his reports, sought ‘to undermine as much as possible and in all places among the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire their ancient and profound sentiments of devotion towards Russia, in order to replace them with contrary dispositions of hostility and distrust’.109 Ustinov’s accusations were all the more convincing for being based on strong evidence. In 1846, the Russian legation had scored a major intelligence coup by planting a spy within the household of Vogorídis Bey, who had become the main conduit for secret communications between Reşid and the British embassy. Ustinov thereby gained access to all manner of confidential conversations, reports, and letters. In one instance from 1847, for example, Ustinov’s spy listened outside the door of the prince’s study while Lord Cowley told Vogorídis that the Porte must take a firmer line against Russia and that the Ottomans should assist the Circassian insurgents fighting against Russian rule in the Caucasus.110 Ustinov thus had no difficulty believing that the other Powers, with Britain at their head, were actively encouraging the Porte to undermine the position of the Orthodox Church and its connections to Russia.
The British embassy, in the meantime, was no less convinced that Russia was the true source of the Orthodox clergy’s resistance to the Porte’s reform efforts. In his reports to Palmerston, Cowley presented the patriarch’s proposals as an intrigue ‘if not set on foot, at all events, fostered by the Russian Legation, having for its object the entire emancipation of the Greek Clergy from the Porte’. As support, Cowley enclosed a critique of the proposed reforms penned by an unnamed Orthodox notable (probably Vogorídis). The anonymous writer cut to the heart of the matter: the reforms proposed by the patriarchate would make an already independent clergy even more so and produce ‘innumerable difficulties for the Government’. The Ottoman government would lose its ability to influence elections and the Church would ‘end up forming a state within the state’. Palmerston agreed entirely with this assessment and advised Cowley that the Porte ‘will do quite right in keeping the regulation of the Greek Church in its own hands, taking care, as it of course will do, to give no just cause for complaint upon which foreign interference could be founded’.

In the fall of 1847, Reşid and Âli decided to risk a more direct approach. They unilaterally appointed the three most prominent Orthodox laymen – Aristárchis, Vogorídis, and Psycháris – to sit permanently on the synod and represent the laity. They were to take part in all discussions affecting the temporal affairs of their community, but were to leave spiritual matters to the clergy. The synod tolerated this intrusion for a time, but ignored the notables for all practical purposes. On 18 October 1848, the elders finally convoked an assembly of 18 hierarchs and ejected the lay representatives from the synod. The Ottoman government once again accepted this flouting of its authority with surprising patience, although it found a new opportunity for trying to impose its will only a week later. Rumours of corruption had swirled around Ánthimos VI ever since his election in 1845. On 24 October 1848, the clergy and laity finally submitted a formal petition to the Porte complaining of his tyrannical behaviour and requesting an audit of the millet’s financial accounts. Reşid was only too happy to order Ánthimos deposed and placed under house arrest pending a formal investigation. In the elections that followed, the Porte briefly relaxed its prohibition on the re-election of former patriarchs and allowed the selection of Ánthimos IV Vamvákis, who enjoyed the prominent backing of Psycháris’s faction and the tacit endorsement of Vogorídis.

The Community’s request for an investigation into the financial irregularities of Ánthimos VI provided an ideal pretext for initiating reforms. Vogorídis submitted a memorandum to the Porte with a list of measures
that he recommended be written into a new buyuruldu. Prominent
among these recommendations were the usual requests for a mixed
lay–clerical council and salaries for the clergy. Reşid Paşa expressed
ambivalence about yet another confrontation with the clergy. Direct
commands in the form of a buyuruldu, he told the sultan, simply pro-
voked resistance from most of the metropolitans and from the Russians,
who would claim that the privileges of the Community were being
violated. It would be better, he thought, to speak privately to the new
patriarch and convince him to bring the desired measures about.

Despite these reservations, Reşid issued a new ministerial note (tez-
kere) summoning the Community to draw up recommendations on
reform. He made sure, however, that this time laymen dominated the
‘General Committee’ formed on 19 November 1848. Only four elders –
Païsios of Kaisáreia, Ánthimos of Éfesos, Yerásimos Sfakianákos of
Adrianoúpolis, and Neófytoς Vegleríς of Dérkoi – were allowed to sit as
representatives of the clergy. The new committee sought to reassure the
patriarchate by declaring itself ‘in no way fit to deal with matters that
belong exclusively to the patriarchal dignity and to the Holy Synod,
nor does it wish to interfere in the least with the annual revenues of
the holy archierarchs, nor to convert these revenues into set salaries
and allowances’. Ánthimos IV responded by following a time-tested
strategy: he allowed the committee to meet and then dissolved it before
anything concrete was accomplished.

After this failure, interest in reforming the Orthodox Community
flagged as the dramatic events that swept Europe over 1848–49 trans-
fixed the attention of both the Ottoman state and the Orthodox laity.
For the Porte, these were tense years as it accepted Russian military
assistance to put down liberal uprisings in Moldavia and Wallachia.
With Russian armies actively suppressing revolutions on both sides of
the Carpathians in Hungary and in the Danubian Principalities, the
Porte was more than usually reluctant to provoke its dangerous ally.
For the neo-Phanariot notables, the rebellions of the period wiped
out many of the sinecures they had relied upon for their clout within
the Community. The young Romanian liberals who took power in
Bucharest, for example, dismissed Aristárchis from his position as kapu
kehâya of Wallachia. A popular uprising on Samos in 1849 similarly cost
Vogorídis his position as prince of the island. Both men weathered
these storms, but over the short term they had no interest or energy for
new battles over millet reform.

When the Porte finally attempted to restart the reform process
in February 1851, events followed what had become a predictably
ineffective and muddling course. The Ottoman government ordered the Phanar ‘to convoke an assembly’ that would propose ways of ‘regulating their Ecclesiastical and Communal administration in conformity with the precepts of their own religion and the institutions of the Tanzimat’. Patriarch Ánthimos IV Vamvákis obeyed, and helpfully issued an encyclical on 24 April instructing his bishops to take a census of their eparchies so that every Christian household could prepare the way for clerical salaries by helping to pay off the enormous debts of the treasury. The implied threat that ordinary Christians would have to foot the bill for any new reforms caused such a public outcry that the Porte backed down and allowed the commission to be dissolved.

Far from giving ground before state power, by the early 1850s the patriarchate was actually moving onto the offensive again and exporting its vision of proper church–state relations abroad. After long negotiations mediated by the Russian embassy, for example, in 1850 the Kingdom of Greece agreed to restore relations with the Ecumenical See and recognize its supremacy. In return, the Great Church reciprocated with a synodal act (tómos) on 11 July granting Greece ecclesiastical independence. There was more to this re-establishment of the Church of Greece, however, than mere formalities. One of the conditions of the settlement was that the Greek government discard the most offensive features of its Bavarian-inspired ecclesiastical regime and surrender control over religious affairs to a canonically constituted synod. The terms of the tómos even exported to Greece several measures that Ánthimos VI had proposed to the Ottoman government in 1847, such as the stipulation that bishops were to sit on the synod by rotation and that its primate, the Metropolitan of Athens, would preside for life.

By the end of 1851, then, all attempts at reforming the Orthodox Community had ended in abject failure. Lord Cowley, reflecting on the situation, was sympathetic to the Porte’s dilemma. The Tanzimat reformers, he reported, felt keenly ‘the necessity of some reform within the Greek Church’, but they could do nothing against the combined resistance of the Orthodox clergy and the Russian legation. The very magnitude of the problem had defeated the Porte, which knew neither where to begin nor in whom to place its confidence, especially given the clergy’s ‘tendency…to look to foreign aid for support’. Other contemporaries were less forgiving. The French journalist Ubicini, for example, criticized the Ottoman government for failing to carry out its own projects for millet reform. ‘The Porte’, he wrote, was ‘deficient in firmness’ and, abetted by its own corruption, ‘preferred to abstain from the exercise of its rights’. Canning too was increasingly critical of
his Ottoman allies and despaired of ever seeing the social and political improvements that he believed were vital to Ottoman survival.\textsuperscript{131} In a brooding letter to Palmerston on 5 April 1851, he lamented that: ‘The great game of improvement is altogether up for the present’.\textsuperscript{132}

In either case, a decade of irregularities, botched reforms, and political interventions in Orthodox affairs had clearly demonstrated two things: that the Porte wished to curb the independence of the Orthodox Church – and that it was unable to do so without outside assistance. These two conclusions would be crucial to the crises that were about to embroil all of Europe in the affairs of the Orthodox Community.
Every war has its pretext frivolous in appearance – some beautiful Helen – but beneath that its real cause: . . . [behind] the frock coat of Menschikoff and the key to the Holy Places . . . [lay] the predominance of Russia in the East, Pan-Slavism!

– J. Buzon Jr, 1867

A Cossack upon the stage: Paris, 1854

On 11 April 1854, Admiral Prince Aleksandr Sergeevich Menshikov, commander of Russian armed forces in the Crimea, made an unexpected appearance on the Paris stage. He did so not in the flesh, but as a character in a new play entitled Constantinople written by Alphonse Arnault and Louis Judicis for the Théâtre Impérial du Cirque. The honour of being thus immortalized was a dubious one, as Menshikov was portrayed as the villain of the piece and the very personification of the Russian aggression that France had taken up arms to resist. The playwrights chose to begin by dramatizing a particularly notorious incident from Menshikov’s ill-fated trip to Istanbul as a special envoy in 1853. Act 1 opens with the Ottoman divan or council of ministers awaiting the arrival of the Russian ambassador. The (fictional) grand vizier, Hassein Bey, reminds his colleagues that they were met to consider a recent ultimatum from the Russian envoy: the sultan must grant Russia a religious protectorate over his Christian subjects or risk war. The Ottoman ministers could not recognize such a protectorate, since, as the vizier observes, Russia would thereby acquire ‘a veritable priestly monarchy over all the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and
thus deprive the Sultan of thirteen million of his subjects. The Sultan, our august sovereign, cannot accept such a proposition without abdicating’.2

Prince Menshikov at this point makes his dramatic entrance, arriving before the ministers not in the full-dress uniform and decorations demanded by protocol but in travelling clothes, as though on his way to catch a train or out for a morning stroll. The script is careful to specify that Menshikov wears a simple ‘overcoat [paletot] and bowler hat, his dress suggesting a simplicity approaching negligence. He holds a cane in his hand and enters without greeting the ministers or removing his hat’. A Parisian audience would have immediately grasped the magnitude of this sartorial insult.

Although the scene is fictional, much of its details are drawn from actual events. Menshikov and his party had indeed created a furore during their first official visit at the Porte by appearing in civilian undress.3 After a brief interview with the astonished grand vizier, Damad Mehmed Âli, Menshikov had compounded the offense by refusing to meet the foreign minister, Keçecizade Mehmed Fuad. Instead, Menshikov had stridden purposefully past Fuad’s open door and the line of guards drawn up in his honour. When it was politely pointed out that Fuad awaited him, Menshikov brusquely called over his shoulder that he would not meet a minister who had repeatedly broken faith with Russia. Fuad, mortified, resigned his post.4 In Constantinople, the French playwrights distilled the spirit of this encounter into a brief but arrogant address by Menshikov to the sultan’s ministers: they must either conform immediately to the ‘wishes of the emperor in favour of the Greco-Russian Orthodox faith’ or face a Russian occupation of the Danubian Principalities. When the ministers remain unmoved, Menshikov drops all pretence and storms offstage, warning darkly that he will return in two months at the head of a division.

As this dramatization shows, ‘the frock coat of Menshikov’ had already become one of the most momentous faux pas in history, taking its place alongside the slap delivered by the Dey of Algiers to consul Pierre Deval in 1830 and Vincent Benedetti’s importuning of Kaiser Wilhelm I at Ems in 1870. In an age obsessed with social niceties, the calculated snubs and imperious demands of the Russian envoy captured the imagination of a continent and stimulated speculation as to their meaning.5 Those who believed that the intentions of Tsar Nicholas towards the Ottoman Empire were pacific dismissed Menshikov’s actions as an example of his gaucheness. The prince, they added, had been an unfortunate choice for the mission – a bluff military man, more
accustomed to giving and receiving orders than carrying out delicate negotiations. The Saxon ambassador to St Petersburg remembered the prince as ‘a tall stately old gentleman of stiff soldier-like deportment’, best known for his aloofness and acerbic bons mots. Menshikov was also chronically ill by 1853 and eager to retire from government duties. He had accepted the mission with reluctance and privately hoped it would be his last assignment.

Like most Russian noblemen of his generation, Menshikov had taken an active part in the wars against Napoleon and had served in Tsar Alexander’s retinue as a major-general. In 1817 he had been promoted to quartermaster of the general staff. A youthful flirtation with liberal thought brought about his fall from grace in 1824, but with the accession of Nicholas I a year later Menshikov returned to court and quickly became a close advisor of the new tsar. He was exactly the sort of man Nicholas liked around him: a brave, conservative, and loyal soldier, albeit one not particularly accomplished or qualified for the roles he came to fill. By 1853, Nicholas had made Menshikov governor general of a province (Finland) that he never visited and head of the imperial navy despite his lack of naval experience.

The branch of government with which Menshikov had least experience was international diplomacy and what familiarity he had of the East was of the most inauspicious kind. His only foreign posting had been to the court of Shah Fath ‘Ali in 1826, and these negotiations had ended with a Russo-Persian war and Menshikov under house arrest in Tehran. Menshikov also had some acquaintance with the Ottomans, but he was more accustomed to viewing them through field glasses than across a green felt table, having fought in two Russo-Ottoman wars. Each time Menshikov had been wounded, once in the leg at the 1810 siege of Tutrakan and then more seriously at Varna in 1828. He had been standing in a commanding posture surveying the siege works when a cannon ball passed between his legs, leaving permanent souvenirs of its passage. The more indelicate suggested that the loss of a testicle and bits of his inner thighs to Ottoman round shot might have affected Menshikov’s ability to treat with the Porte in a spirit of complete equanimity. The tsar would have been better served by a more accomplished representative such as Count Aleksei Orlov, the diplomat who had earlier negotiated such favourable treaties for Russia at Edirne (1829) and Hünkâr Iskelesi (1833).

The majority of observers, however, feared that Menshikov had communicated the intentions and policies of his master only too well. To many in the West, Menshikov was the very type of le cossaque – the
steppe-dweller, by turns brutal and refined, who concealed an ‘Asian’ passion for dominance beneath a polished European exterior. As one French admirer described him, the prince ‘joined a native coarseness to a remarkable vivacity of wit, personifying completely that singular mix of barbarism and culture which has so long characterized the Russian spirit, moeurs, and politics’. Menshikov, such people argued, had been chosen by Nicholas precisely for his abrasive personality and because he could be trusted to carry out instructions to the letter. Menshikov le Cossaque was, in himself, the tsar’s message. Everything about his passage to Istanbul was calculated to communicate Nicholas’s displeasure and to restore a healthy fear of Russia at the Porte. Before Menshikov’s departure from Odessa, for example, he had staged a review of the Black Sea fleet, mustering 27 warships and 30,000 troops, at the same time Russian units in Bessarabia carried out menacing manoeuvres along the Ottoman border. Menshikov had then embarked for Istanbul on the steam frigate Gromovnik (Thunderer), along with an imposing entourage that included the commanders of the Black Sea fleet, Prince Mikhail Golitsyn and Vladimir Kornilov, and the imperial chancellor’s son, Count Dmitrii von Nesselrode.

Across Europe, many statesmen took these menacing demonstrations to mean that Menshikov had come to accomplish some masterstroke at Istanbul. In particular, it was expected that Russia would try to consolidate and expand its traditional hold over the Orthodox Christian populace. Even staid newspapers such as the Journal des débats announced that the Russian envoy intended to make the tsar ‘protector of the Greek Christian subjects of Turkey, as France has been for centuries of Catholics in the Levant, and that the election of the patriarch of Constantinople is to be made by the faithful alone and confirmed by the emperor of Russia, to the exclusion of the Sultan’. Such a concession was presented as posing a greater threat to Ottoman independence than even the treaty of Hünkâr İskesi.

From St Petersburg to Istanbul and from Whitehall to the Champs-Elysées, by the early 1850s a wide international audience had come to recognize Russia’s special relationship with Orthodox Christendom as a matter that impacted the vital interests of all their states. But how had Orthodox millet affairs made such a momentous leap from Ottoman domestic politics to the world stage? This chapter will explain why Russian anxieties over Orthodox affairs reached their zenith in the early 1850s and how these frustrations transformed a long-running dispute over control of the Holy Places in Palestine into a dangerous international flashpoint.
'Invasions and arrières pensées': Mounting concerns

Between 1848 and 1852 Nicholas I had watched with mounting anxiety as revolutions in France, Prussia, Austria, and the Italian peninsula threatened the order that Russia had helped to establish 30 years previously at the Congress of Vienna. The subsequent rise to power in France of Napoleon Bonaparte’s nephew, Louis Napoleon III, first as president and then in 1852 as emperor, was a particularly ominous development that threatened the return of France as an aggressively expansionist empire. When Tsar Nicholas I and his advisors surveyed the map of Europe, the Ottoman Empire seemed a particularly likely place for France to try to acquire new colonies or foment divisions within the Concert of Europe. Nicholas was also convinced by then that the Ottoman Empire stood on the verge of political disintegration and that the growth of British and French influence over the Porte was hastening its end. In 1849, Abdülmecid gave a concrete demonstration of just how low the influence of the conservative northern courts had sunk when he offered refuge to thousands of Hungarian and Polish revolutionaries fleeing defeat at the hands of Russian and Austrian forces. The Ottoman Empire, supported by Britain and France, resolutely refused to extradite these political refugees even when Russia and Austria threatened war. Tensions ran so high that the Austrian government recalled Stürmer to Vienna in 1850, leaving only a junior chargé, Édouard-Franz von Klezl, in Istanbul until 1855. Nicholas I had grimly begun preparations for a Russian occupation of the Straits, in the expectation that it would soon prove necessary. The prospect of war and an Ottoman collapse heightened Russian fears that the Porte or the other Powers were seeking to undermine the position of the Orthodox Church and to promote other faiths. The strident and increasingly paranoid tone of Russian official thinking on this topic can be seen from a letter by Nesselrode to Titov in 1851:

The day that the Emperor sees the [Orthodox] cult or the Church persecuted or humiliated . . . as a result of the suggestions of outsiders or with political aims in mind that we care not to fathom, His Majesty will not recoil before any consideration or any sacrifice to take up proudly the defence of his co-religionists and to insist upon the maintenance of the immunities which they have enjoyed since time immemorial.

To the chagrin of Russian statesmen, however, the Porte seemed to pay little attention to their repeated and vociferous complaints about
religious matters. Nor, for that matter, did the Russian legation feel that its advice was being taken seriously even at the Phanar. Aleksandr Ozerov, the chargé d'affaires during Titov's long absence in 1852, complained that all factions reproached the new patriarch, Ánthimos IV, for his incapacity, corruption, and failure to arrest the general disorder that marked the affairs of the Church. It particularly galled Ozerov that when he lectured Ánthimos IV on the need to combat the growing missionary presence in the region his words were met only with ‘indifference or vague and sterile assurances’. When Ozerov addressed the Porte on the same topic, he found himself forced to defend the patriarchate from a long list of charges of clerical abuses that the Ottoman ministers cited as the main reason for Orthodox conversion to other sects. The insolence of these officials, Ozerov fumed in his reports, revealed their ‘secret contentment at seeing the Greek clergy caught within a system tainted with abuse and pilloried by public opinion’. Ozerov did his best, under such conditions, to put up ‘a dignified resistance to the invasions and arrières pensées of the Muslim authorities, who devise reforms in order to divide and disgrace the Orthodox clergy’.

The widespread dissatisfaction with Ánthimos IV led to his removal on 10 November 1852 and the elections for his successor provided yet another occasion for acrimony between the Ottoman and Russian governments. The Russian legation was officially neutral, but in private Ozerov strenuously endorsed the candidacy of Grigórios VI Fourtouniádis as the only candidate who ‘by his exemplary life and pious stoicism has earned the veneration of his nation and the special interest of our Sovereign’. By the eve of the elections, Ozerov had convinced the overwhelming majority of electors to cast their votes for Grigórios, with only Vogorídis and his closest allies withholding support.

The Ottoman government had other plans. Although Mustafa Reşid had fallen from power on 3 October 1852, his protégé, Keçecizade Fuad Effendi, remained at the helm of the foreign ministry and wanted to restart the ecclesiastical reform process. In the buyuruldu authorizing new elections, Fuad reminded the patriarchate that several imperial decrees had called for ‘the repression of abuses and the wellbeing of the community’. These decrees, however, had all been ‘without any satisfactory results’:

It is thus the firm Supreme Imperial Will that whichever Patriarch is elected shall come together with a council composed of the Synod of Metropolitans and the notables of the community to discuss and examine these questions with a common accord and without
partiality. The regulations that are to be established shall be drawn up in writing and submitted to the Porte.\textsuperscript{20}

In order to ensure a satisfactory outcome, Fuad and the grand vizier, Damad Mehmed Âli, could not allow the elections to take their natural course. In particular, they had many reasons to oppose the re-election of Grigórios (including an express request from the British embassy) and so were determined to prevent it.\textsuperscript{21} Despite the repeated warnings of the Russian government against such irregular practices, the Porte once again banned the election of all former patriarchs.

When the electoral synod met, it also found itself saddled with an official ‘observer’, Said Effendi, whose presence was patently meant to intimidate them into electing a candidate favoured by Fuad.\textsuperscript{22} This stratagem might have worked, had Aristárchis not risen to the occasion. Realizing that the Porte would not accept Grigórios VI under any circumstances, Aristárchis urged the notables and clergy to shift their support to another of his clients, Yermanós IV, even though the latter was also a former patriarch. Said Effendi was slow to follow the gist of the electors’ discussions in Greek, but once he realized that the electors had settled upon a forbidden candidate, he declared the results invalid. The metropolitans ignored his angry protests and began to append their signatures and seals to the collective petition (\textit{arzu mahzar}) communicating their decision to the Porte. Incensed, Said Effendi stormed over and ripped the petition from the hands of its signatories. An unseemly tussle ensued until Aristárchis finally forced Said to relinquish the document. Said next sought to prevent a quorum by ordering the room cleared. Aristárchis barred the door with his own body and declared that no one could leave until he, as logothete, had dissolved the assembly.\textsuperscript{23}

For the Porte, the incident was an acute embarrassment and Fuad found himself forced to recognize a candidate he had tried to exclude. For the Russian legation, the election was yet another example of the gross ‘chicanery and hostile intentions’ that had come to characterize the dealings of the Porte with the Orthodox Community.\textsuperscript{24} Ozerov found the continued and illegal exclusion of Grigórios particularly galling, since it showed that the wishes of England weighed heavier in the Porte’s consideration than the wellbeing of the Orthodox Community and the desires of Russia combined. To Ozerov, the only redeeming aspect of the entire affair had been Aristárchis’s plucky resistance and the election of a new patriarch who was, in Nesselrode’s words, ‘if not the best, than the least bad of the candidates put forward by the anti-Grigorian clique’.\textsuperscript{25}
'A burning fear': The Holy Places dispute

This background of mounting Russian dissatisfaction gave particular venom to a dispute that had been simmering in Palestine since 1841 over the rights of the Orthodox and Catholic churches at the Christian Holy Places. The Ottomans had a fixed policy for centuries of allowing all Christians to worship at the most holy sites of their faith such as the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Legal ownership of the shrines was a very complex matter, however, as over the centuries the Orthodox, Catholic, Armenian, Coptic, and Syriac churches had managed to acquire competing titles. From the time of the First Crusade to the early sixteenth century, for example, the Holy Sepulchre had been primarily under Catholic control, with the Franciscan Order acting as its custodians. Under the Ottomans, however, the Orthodox and Armenians made dramatic inroads. By the late 1700s, the Orthodox had attained a tenuous ascendancy at the Sepulchre, although the other churches continued to press their own claims. The result, observed one Frenchman in the 1850s, was that ‘There is not a sanctuary, not a chapel, nor perhaps even a single stone of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that has not been the object of some quarrel between the different Christian communions’.26

Muslim governments since the time of the Umayyad Caliphate attempted to reconcile these contradictory claims by overseeing what amounted to a system of liturgical timesharing. Each denomination controlled their own particular sections of the shrines and could only worship outside those zones at set times. Of the three altars in the Calvary chapel, for example, two belonged to the Catholics and one to the Orthodox – except on Good Friday when the Franciscans were permitted to celebrate on the Orthodox altar so long as they did not remove its antimension. This system was troublesome and unstable in practice, as the competing denominations sought to expand their physical and temporal space by standing just over the line into a rival church’s zone or celebrating services longer than the time allotted. Encroachments quickly became normative and the basis for legal claims, so all sides met infringements of the status quo with determined resistance. Sanguinary brawls between Greeks, Latins, and Armenians were particularly common on high holy days when the shrines were full to capacity with pilgrims. In the 1840s alone, there were at least five violent confrontations between Catholics and Orthodox within the walls of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.27

In 1841, Abdülmecid disturbed this delicate balance by giving Patriarch Athanásios V of Jerusalem permission to rebuild the cupola of
the Church of the Holy Sepulchre after earthquakes in 1834 and 1836 had damaged it. For the Orthodox, the permit was a triumph as it allowed them to rebuild the central part of the church in an entirely Byzantine style, using Orthodox architects and labourers to efface many of the physical traces of the building’s Crusader past. It was also treated as proof that the Porte considered the Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem to be the rightful owner of the entire shrine. Repairs were set to begin in the summer of 1842, and were only prevented by the vehement protests of the French ambassador, François-Adolphe Bourqueney. Against the claims put forward by the Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Russian embassy, Bourqueney argued that the Franco-Ottoman treaty of 1740 gave the Catholic Church legal title over most of the Holy Places and that serious repairs could not be undertaken until the question of ownership was settled.

The matter was left in abeyance for much of the 1840s, but the persistence of this unresolved issue contributed to tensions between Orthodox and Catholics in Palestine. The situation was aggravated in 1847 when a party of Catholics assaulted Metropolitan Dionysios of Bethlehem and several other Orthodox clergymen in the grotto of the Church of the Nativity. During the scuffle, a silver star with which Crusaders had marked the spot where Christ had lain in a manger went missing, and the Orthodox demanded the right to replace it. The Franciscan friars denounced this as yet another attempt to erase the Latin presence at the Holy Places and countered with demands for the restoration of a long list of privileges that their Orthodox rivals had usurped over the preceding decades.

The cause of the Franciscan fathers received a wider audience in Europe at the beginning of 1850 with the publication of Eugène Boré’s The Question of the Holy Places. In this polemical work, the future head of the Lazarist Order vigorously argued the merits of the Catholic case and sought to prove that Orthodox claims depended on forged documents. Not content with excoriating the Orthodox clergy, Boré recast this narrowly religious quarrel as a struggle with broader political ramifications. Nothing less than ‘the entire Eastern Question’, he declared, hung upon France’s defense of its protectorate and treaty rights in Palestine. If the Ottomans were to join the ranks of civilized nations, Boré argued, they must demonstrate that they could uphold the right to property, the rule of law, and the terms of bilateral treaties:

Our government cannot ignore or neglect such precious rights, which are the foundation of its Catholic protectorate. For a century
France has closed her eyes to her great interests in the East. She still has outstanding reparations to demand. In taking up the traditional policies of the crusades, the government of the Republic will serve the cause of the Church and increase our preponderance in the world.30

Boré’s memorandum was widely read in France and helped convince first the government of the Second Republic and then Napoleon III that France needed to take a more determined stand on the issue.31 Both governments hoped a victory would gratify Catholic voters at home and increase France’s standing in the Near East. As Cor emphasized in his reports to the French foreign ministry in 1848: ‘To make the Porte go back on a hundred years of usurpations committed by her, purchased by her Greek subjects, and applauded and protected by Russia, would be the sign and seal of a predominant and durable influence over the Ottoman government’.32

After some delay, the French ambassador to Istanbul, General Jacques Aupick, finally made forceful representations at the Porte in May 1850. He demanded the restoration of Catholic control over all shrines held by the Franciscans in 1740, including the Tomb of the Virgin and the sanctuary of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and the right to rebuild the cupola of the Holy Sepulchre. Canning understood the larger significance of Aupick’s démarche and warned Palmerston on 20 May:

A question likely to be attended with much discussion and excitement is on the point of being raised between the conflicting interests of the Latin and Greek churches in this country . . . General Aupick has assured me that the matter in dispute is a mere question of property, and of express treaty stipulation. But it is difficult to separate any such question from political considerations; and a struggle of general influence, especially if Russia, as may be expected, should interfere in behalf of the Greek Church, will probably grow out of the impending discussion.33

In private, Canning confided to a visiting Anglican clergyman that he regretted England had no historic claims of its own to make at the Holy Places.34

The Porte fully appreciated the explosive potential of Aupick’s demand and temporized for several months. In the spring of 1851, Napoleon III decided that Aupick was not pursuing the matter with
sufficient energy. He recalled the general and sent a personal friend, the Marquis Charles-Jean-Marie-Félix de la Valette, to obtain satisfaction. The Ottoman government, facing pressure from France, Austria, Spain, and other Catholic states, finally agreed in July 1851 to accept the Treaty of 1740 as a basis for negotiations and to form a Franco-Ottoman commission to review the situation at the Holy Places. The commission was composed of P.E. Botta, the French consul to Jerusalem, Charles Schefer, the first dragoman of the French embassy, Emin Effendi, the first dragoman of the Porte, and Nikolaos Aristarchis as representative of the Orthodox. The Russian legation objected to the Porte’s decision even to consider La Valette’s demands, and in early September Nicholas wrote personally to Abdülmecid to express his disquiet. This intervention convinced the Porte to dissolve the commission in October and replace it with a new committee made up entirely of Ottoman ministers and members of the ulema. Such sleight of hand did little to reassure either Russia or France.

The keen attention that Ottoman Christians gave this dispute greatly complicated the negotiations. In a far-off provincial town like Ioannina in the foothills of the Pindus mountains, for example, the French consul reported that coffee-house talk was of nothing else and that the Orthodox clergy and the Greek consulate were actively ‘denigrating France and representing her role henceforth in Eastern politics as powerless’. Should the question of the Holy Places end with anything but a clear victory for Catholicism, he warned, France would lose ‘in the opinion of the peoples of the Levant, an esteem that would be detached from us to add the glory of a great triumph to the prestige of the Russian name’. Russia had even more to lose from the affair precisely because it was so widely expected to carry the day, while the Porte was in the worst position of all. Not only did it face conflicting pressures from France and Russia, but the issue polarized both Christian and Muslim public opinion. The normally phlegmatic Vogorídis warned the grand vizier that a pro-Catholic decision might spark an Orthodox Christian uprising. All sensed that the true object of the contest, as British chargé Colonel Rose observed to his own government, was not the keys to the door of the Church of the Nativity but ‘the influence in the East which stands behind that door’.

By the end of January 1852, Fuad as foreign minister and Reşid as vizier had assured France that the Porte would honour the main Catholic claims. As a sign of good faith, the Porte granted several lesser but symbolic concessions immediately. The Catholics were to receive keys to the main doors of the Church of the Nativity, the right to
replace the silver star marking the site of the manger and to officiate once a year in the Tomb of the Virgin Mary. These concessions produced a deep sense of betrayal among Orthodox Christians. Even loyalists like Vogorídis Bey were scandalized that the government was upholding the claims of foreigners over its own subjects. Vogorídis was doubly wounded for having been kept in the dark about the decision, and he complained to his son-in-law in London, the Ottoman ambassador Konstandínos Mousoúros, that the affair had seriously damaged their interests. The Russian legation reacted even more vigorously to news of the agreement by combining with Reşid’s enemies and engineering his dismissal as grand vizier on the night of 25 January. The bare fact of this coup should have been an impressive demonstration of Russia’s continuing influence, but it changed nothing. Reşid’s successor, the octogenarian Mehmed Emin Rauf Paşa, was determined to honour the promises made to the French ambassador and he issued an edict to this effect on 8 February 1852. To complete Russia’s discomfiture, Reşid himself was restored to the grand vizierate within weeks with French and British assistance. For the rest of 1852, France and Russia submitted the Porte to ever more menacing pressures. France demanded that the new ferman be read out publicly in Jerusalem, while Russia insisted that it only be registered quietly in Istanbul; France demanded that the Franciscans receive keys to the Church of the Nativity, while Russia urged the Porte to withhold them. La Valette began to talk wildly of summoning the French fleet to Jaffa and even of occupying Jerusalem with French troops. That this was more than just sabre-rattling was shown in May 1852, when the French government shocked international opinion by sending La Valette back to Istanbul on board the Charlemagne, an 80-gun ship of the line. Not only was this the first steam-powered and screw-driven battleship ever seen in Eastern waters, its presence in the Bosporus during peacetime was a deliberate violation of the Straits Convention of 1841. The succession of threats and counter-threats, half measures and broken promises between 1850 and 1852 raised tensions while the fundamental issues remained intractable. The great fear at the Russian legation was that French intervention at the Holy Places was part of plans to establish a much wider French religious protectorate in the Ottoman Empire. The legation could point to abundant evidence of these suspicions. In 1847, for example, the French consul in Jerusalem had attempted to drag all the participants in the ‘Star Riot’ at Bethlehem – both Orthodox and Catholic – before his consular court to be judged. During a heated exchange in early
November 1851, Titov directly accused Reşid of allowing the French to extend their protection from shrines and foreign clergymen to all Catholic Ottoman subjects. Reşid rejected this accusation emphatically, pointing out that the Porte had consistently warned French consuls that their jurisdiction did not extend either to the Holy Places themselves or to Ottoman subjects.45 It seemed undeniable, however, that French diplomats were attempting to extend their protection over ordinary Ottoman subjects.46

Confronted with what it saw as French pretensions and Ottoman hostility, Russia became increasingly assertive about its own claims over the Orthodox. In late November 1852, for example, Ozerov warned La Valette that Russia enjoyed definite rights of protection over her co-religionists and that she would not stand idly by while the Orthodox Church was attacked. La Valette informed the Ottoman government, which, as the British chargé observed, ‘heard this assertion of Russian protection of the religious interests of ten or eleven millions of [Ottoman] subjects with unmingled dissatisfaction’.47 The chilly reaction of the Porte deepened Ozerov’s conviction that the new men of the Tanzimat were fundamentally hostile to Russia.48 He singled out Fuad, in particular, for opprobrium. Not only did Ozerov hold Fuad responsible for the 1851 ferman favouring French claims and the scandalous patriarchal elections of 1852, but Fuad’s personal sympathies seemed to be anti-Russian and pro-French. The Russian legation took very much to heart, for example, reports that Fuad had declared during a ministerial meeting in November 1851 that the Porte should favour French claims to the Holy Places since thereby the empire could ‘finally be disencumbered of the religious influence wielded by Russia over the Greek populations’.49

The mood at the Russian legation was correspondingly grim by the end of 1852. ‘I maintain a calm outer appearance amongst the machinations that surround me’, Ozerov told his superiors, ‘but deep within my heart lies a burning fear – that, without forceful support, I will no longer be able to carry out faithfully my most important charge, that of defending . . . the rights assured by the magnanimous protection of the Emperor our August Master to His co-religionists in Turkey’. The Russian government, he insisted, should not underestimate the consequences of allowing the recent concessions made by the Porte to stand. ‘From a more elevated perspective’, he admitted, ‘such concerns must seem to revolve around secondary and petty objects’. In reality, such apparently petty defeats had a devastating effect on the morale of ordinary Orthodox believers: ‘To defraud the Orthodox of even one of
their privileges would be to plunge them into affliction and the most complete discouragement. They believe themselves to have been abandoned by the Imperial Government, which they consider their only salvation’.50

The stakes were even higher once the larger context was considered. On the Holy Places, patriarchal elections, foreign proselytism, and many other points, the Porte had repeatedly shown itself ready to follow British and French promptings and intervene in ways that were clearly and deliberately detrimental to the interests of Russia and to Orthodoxy. Ottoman Christians were acutely attuned to the winds of political fortune and Ozerov feared that they would draw conclusions devastating to Russian influence in the region. ‘The Greeks are deeply alarmed’, he reported, ‘as they see clearly that the Porte is bending before the combined activity of two great Embassies’.51 If Russian protection proved ineffective, how long would it be before Ottoman Christians looked elsewhere?

On 11 December 1852, Patriarch Yermanós IV sent an impassioned appeal to the Russian synod that illustrated both the depth of Orthodox dismay and the degree to which Russia’s reputation in the East hung in the balance. Yermanós lamented:

An unexpected calamity has burst upon the Church of the East, plunging the Orthodox people of the Lord into the abyss of despair: it forces us to make recourse, with tears in our eyes, to the fraternal aid of the Most Holy Directing Synod and to implore through it the mercy of the Monarch and Emperor crowned by God. It is in that mercy that the people of the Orthodox East have always found refuge in supreme moments of danger and been saved from their pursuers by the victorious arms of Orthodox Russia . . . In the East, the Papists have snatched from the Orthodox their ancient triumph, while in the West the humiliation of all Orthodoxy is being celebrated . . . It is thus with tears in our eyes that we raise our voice on behalf of the vilified Orthodox Church . . . How long will the Orthodox Church bear the injustices of the Papists? How long will the People of the Lord cry out to the great Emperor and their voice not find answer? How can that invincible Monarch suffer Orthodoxy to be thus cast down and trampled under foot by the Papists?52

The impact of this appeal on the tsar was magnified by reports that the patriarchal synod had intended to address it to him, but that the Porte had forbidden them. Yermanós’s appeal, Ozerov’s reports, and the
muzzling of the synod all helped tip the balance in favour of action. In December, Nicholas began formulating plans to put his country’s Eastern affairs in order during the coming spring.

Developments in Montenegro provided an additional source of tension between Russia and the Porte over the winter of 1852–53. Following the 1851 death of the Orthodox prince-bishop (known as the vladika) of Cetinje Petar II Petrović-Njegoš, his successor, Danilo, broke with tradition by refusing to take holy orders. On 21 March 1852, the senate of tribal leaders officially declared Montenegro no longer a semi-autonomous ecclesiastical principality, but an independent secular state with Danilo as its hereditary prince.53 In a petition to Tsar Nicholas I, the Montenegrin senate justified the decision to secularize by appealing to what they knew had become a truism in Europe:

the union of two such contradictory powers as that of a servant of God and of a sovereign Prince, can hardly be justified, and is repugnant to the ideas of the age and the demands of civilization, especially in a country which so much needs as does ours a wise Government.54

The Porte, knowing full well that secularization also implied a rejection of Ottoman sovereignty, refused to recognize this act. It insisted instead on the maintenance of the post of vladika and the (purely theoretical) subordination of the Montenegrin Church to the Phanar. The Porte was so sensitive on the subject of Montenegro’s ecclesiastical status that it issued a formal protest to the British government after Lord Malmesbury inadvertently referred to Prince Danilo as ‘head of the Greek Church in that country’ (and the tsar as ‘protector of the whole Greek Church’) during debates in the House of Lords on 6 December 1852.55 In a striking evocation of the traditional relationship between the Phanar and the Ottoman state, the Porte pointed to the inclusion of ‘Mavrovoúinion’ (Greek for Montenegro) among the eparchies listed in the patriarchal berats of appointment as proof ‘to the peoples of the entire world’ that Montenegro was an Ottoman possession.56 In fact, the Ecumenical Throne had never exercised any practical control over the bishop of Montenegro, but the Porte maintained its position unwaveringly. When a band of Montenegrins crossed into the sancak of İskodra in November and attacked the fortress of Žabljak Crnojevića, Ottoman forces used this pretext to invade the principality by land and blockade it by sea.

The Austrian and Russian governments both responded to Danilo’s calls for help by demanding an Ottoman withdrawal. Austria, in
particular, feared that the invasion would unleash a flood of refugees from Montenegro into Austrian-held Dalmatia and upset the status quo in the Adriatic. The Ballhausplatz therefore dispatched a special envoy, Field Marshal Count Christian von Leiningen, to Istanbul and charged him with resolving the whole complex of problems that had plagued Austrian–Ottoman relations since 1849. Leiningen was to demand an immediate termination of all hostilities in Montenegro and press Austria’s claims to the Adriatic enclaves of Klek and Sutorina. Austria also wanted Abdülmecid to make amends for his decision in 1849 to harbour and employ Hungarian and Polish political refugees. Finally, Austria wanted settlement of various outstanding commercial problems and guarantees that the Porte would improve conditions for Christians in Bosnia and Hercegovina. The Ballhausplatz was willing to compromise on some of these points, but Leiningen’s central demands regarding Montenegro were non-negotiable and he was authorized to threaten the Porte with war.57

Descent of the Thunderer: Defending the rights of the Church

Over the winter of 1852–53, Nicholas I whipped these troubled waters higher. The tsar had decided to dispatch a special diplomatic mission of his own to Istanbul even before Austria’s appointment of Leiningen. The ostensible goals of this special mission were to support Austria’s position on Montenegro and to bring the affair of the Holy Places to a decisive and satisfactory conclusion. More substantively, the mission was to secure formal Ottoman recognition of Russia’s claims to a religious protectorate and guarantees for the ‘ties that unite the Orthodox populations of the East to Russia and the legitimate solicitude that the Imperial government has always shown to their Church’.58 Nesselrode, reviewing the origins of the mission in a cabinet memorandum on 2 March 1854, complained that the situation in Istanbul had become insufferable for Russia. For years ‘all the acts of the Turkish Government towards us, as towards the Eastern Church in Turkey, have born an evident stamp of hostility’. As proof, he pointed to the Porte’s

direct interference in [the patriarchates’] internal affairs and the violation of their statutes, under the pretext of accomplishing reforms within the ecclesiastical administration; the constant irregularities in the election of the patriarchs; the seeds of divisions deliberately sown in the spiritual relations between the Greek race and the Slavic;
the obstacles of every sort placed in the way of the development of the Bulgarian and Bosnian Churches, of the instruction of the indigenous clergy, and of the religious education of the population; the prohibition, to this effect, of the use of [Church Slavonic in the liturgy]; the prohibition or partial laceration of sacred texts ordered by the Greco-Slavic clergy from Russia for their own use . . . ; a thousand things, in other words, which, taken separately have only a relative importance, but which, taken all together, have proven to us for some years past the well-developed intentions of the Turkish Government to contribute to the increase of other sects, in order to diminish, along with our authority, the number of those whom it envisages to be adherents of Russia.  

Nicholas first asked his minister of state domains, Pavel Kiselëv, to lead a special mission addressing this situation.  

When Kiselëv declined, Nicholas turned to another trusted servitor: Menshikov. Menshikov's first task was to carry a private letter to Abdülmecid calling upon the sultan to honour his empire’s previous engagements towards Russia and the Orthodox hierarchy. In broader terms, Nesselrode instructed Menshikov to conclude ‘a special treaty with the Porte’ that would give ‘more explicit and detailed engagements' regarding Russia's rights and responsibilities towards the Orthodox Church ‘than those which are found mentioned in our anterior treaties and more especially those of Kutzuk-Kanardji’.  

The foreign ministry drew up the actual text of the desired treaty in advance of Menshikov's departure and the tsar approved it. The last four of the seven articles dealt specifically with the problem at the Holy Places, but the first three articles concerned the general condition of the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire. The first article, intended to confirm Russia's contentious interpretation of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarçi, stipulated that

the Orthodox Christian religion will be constantly protected in all its churches, and ... the ministers of the Imperial Court of Russia will, as in the past, have the right to make representations on behalf of the churches of Constantinople and of other places and cities, as also on behalf of the clergy, and that these remonstrances will be received as coming in the name of a neighbouring power and a sincere friend.  

The second article implicitly reproved the Porte for its recent efforts at millet reform by specifying that no future attempts would be made
to abrogate or modify the temporal powers of the Orthodox clergy. The Ottoman state would hold all heirarchs in honour and permit them to fulfil ‘without any impediment throughout their respective jurisdictions the duties of their spiritual responsibilities, with full enjoyment of the immunities and temporal advantages accorded and guaranteed to them by the . . . berats remitted to them at their nomination’.

The third article reiterated Russia’s insistence that the Porte abstain from any involvement in the removal or elevation of hierarchs. The patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem must be

freely elected by their synods, being nominated for life in accordance with the canons and prescriptions of the Church . . . and no destitution or change of patriarch can take place in the future except in those cases foreseen and specified by the berats of investiture, in which it is stated that so long as it is not proven that the patriarch commits vexations against the reaya, or violates the prescriptions of their religion, or is a traitor towards his sovereign, he will remain irremovable in his functions during his life.

These instructions made explicit reference to the egregious example of the November 1852 patriarchal elections, which Menshikov was directed to bring to ‘the serious consideration of the Porte’. He was also to raise a variety of minor points relating to the freedom of the Orthodoxy clergy to manage their own affairs. In particular, there should be no more excising of prayers from Orthodox service books, such as Canning had been urging upon the Porte. Religious texts published in Russia must be allowed free circulation in uncensored form.

The instructions also specified that if the Porte shrank from signing an agreement ‘recognizing and confirming the secular rights and religious immunities of its numerous subjects of the Greek Orthodox rite’ this would be from fear of France. Menshikov was therefore authorized to offer the sultan a new defensive alliance. Should that fail, Menshikov was to sever all relations with the Porte. The Russian government would explore other, more compelling means of obtaining a just settlement of its grievances.

An incident witnessed by the Saxon ambassador, Vitzthum von Eckstaedt, during the winter of 1852–53 indicates something of the tenor of any instructions Nicholas might have given Menshikov in private. During a dinner at the Winter Palace, Nicholas launched into a long and rambling philippic against ‘these Turkish curs’ to the Austrian
A Cossack Takes the Cross  133

ambassador, Count Franz Zichy. According to Vitzthum, Nicholas became a little too warm in his assurances of Russian support in case of an Austro-Ottoman war. The tsar declared categorically that Ottoman rule ‘could not be tolerated any longer in Europe’, and that he was confident the emperor of Austria, whom he loved like a son, would join him in ‘clearing out that scurvy rabble on the Bosporus, and putting an end to the oppression of the poor Christians by those rascally infidels’. Nicholas was more circumspect in his conversation with the British ambassador, Sir Hamilton Seymour, on 9 January, but he still alarmed his guest by ruminating darkly on how the Ottoman Empire ought to be carved up among the Powers in the event of its sudden dissolution. In a phrase the tsar would later regret, he declared to Seymour: ‘We have on our hands a sick man – a gravely sick man. I tell you frankly that it will be a great misfortune should we lose him one of these days, especially before the necessary arrangements were made’. Vitzthum himself believed that Nicholas still wished to avoid war, but Menshikov would no doubt have seen that his sovereign held out little hope for the success for his mission. The Russian general staff, in the meantime, were directed to review their plans for a possible occupation of Istanbul and the Straits, while Menshikov’s departure for Odessa was preceded by orders placing the fourth and fifth corps, stationed near the Ottoman border, on a war footing.

It was against a background of such preparations that Menshikov made his celebrated descent upon Istanbul from Odessa at the end of February 1853. As Nicholas had intended, Menshikov’s first week was a tour de force, beginning with the cheering crowds of Christians that greeted him at the dock and continuing through his dramatic first visit to the Porte and the forced resignation of Fuad. Menshikov launched himself into a flurry of activity and insisted on carrying out all negotiations personally. ‘He writes all himself’, observed the Prussian ambassador, leaving the rest of the legation ‘the most idle diplomats in Pera’. On 8 March, Menshikov had his first audience with Abdülmecid, to whom he delivered the tsar’s letter. On 22 March, he revealed the terms of the convention (sened) Russia desired to the new foreign minister, Rıfat, while keeping them a close secret from the other embassies. Rumours circulated among Ottoman Christians that Menshikov had come not just to restore Orthodox ascendancy at the Holy Places in Palestine but to return the imperial cathedral of Hagia Sophia to Orthodox control. It was whispered that the tsar himself would attend Easter services that year in the reconsecrated cathedral and that a Byzantine priest immured by angels in the walls of Hagia Sophia 400 years before would
miraculously appear to finish the liturgy that the Ottoman conquest had interrupted.72

The British and French ambassadors were still absent, but their chargés d’affaires, Colonel Hugh Rose and Comte Vincent Benedetti, followed Menshikov’s every movement with suspicion.73 Rose dismissed out of hand the Russian legation’s assurances that Menshikov had come only to resolve the problem of the Holy Places. He warned the foreign secretary, John Russell, that ‘Greek persons of high mercantile standing’ told him ‘one of Prince Mentchikoff’s demands will be that the Porte should abstain for the future from taking any part in the selection of the Greek Patriarchs, or the affairs of the Greek Church, and that these matters for the future should be left to the Greek Church and the Emperor of Russia’.74 A few days later, a trusted Greek agent wrote privately to Canning in London, warning him that Menshikov aimed to establish ‘a sort of “protectorat” over the Greek Patriarc [sic] here’.75

The obvious agitation among Abdülmecid’s ministers encouraged the chargés to fear the worst. Reşid Paşa contacted Rose early in March to warn him that although he could not give details, ‘the Russian Government evidently intended to win some important right from Turkey which would destroy her independence, and [Reşid] asked me to request the British Admiral to bring up his squadron to Vourla Bay from Malta’.76 The Porte later decided that Western assistance was not needed, but Rose and Benedetti both decided to summon their nations’ fleets. A French flotilla left Toulon for the eastern Mediterranean in late March, while the British navy put its fleet at Malta on the alert.

In the meantime, both Rose and Benedetti had gotten wind of Menshikov’s 22 March meeting with Sadık Rıfat Paşa. Rıfat concealed the existence of the draft sened from them, but not the essence of what Menshikov was seeking. The British dragoman, Étienne Pisani, reported that Menshikov was calling for a secret treaty to establish an ‘exclusive protectorate’ over the Greeks and Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, reported the dragoman, ‘Although [Menshikov] does not plainly say it, yet he gives to understand that the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople should be entirely independent of the Porte’.77 Menshikov was also demanding particular protection for the Church from the British embassy. As Damad Mehmed Âli told Pisani:

Prince Menchikoff does not at all approve the interference of Foreign Embassies in matters concerning the Patriarchate and [he] highly disapproves Lord Ponsonby’s behaviour in the matter of the dismissal of the Patriarch Gregorius, whom they wish to have reinstated; and
expresses an earnest hope that henceforward the Patriarch should be elected and appointed for life, by the Synod, and without such appointment being subjected as hitherto to the sanction of the Porte. 78

On 4 April, after weeks of such intimations, Benedetti finally got Sadık Rifat to show him the text of the proposed sened, the details of which he immediately forwarded to Paris. Benedetti naturally rejected those articles that contradicted French claims in Palestine, but he was even more alarmed by the scope of Menshikov’s other demands. The religious protectorate claimed by Russia, he warned, would be ‘the first step towards. . . breaking the ties that attach the Eastern Church to the Ottoman government, in order to place it exclusively under the control of St Petersburg’. The Muslim religious establishment, he claimed, were already up in arms over news that Menshikov had secured an imminent and ‘absolute emancipation of the Greek Clergy’. 79

Canning, who had returned to Istanbul on 5 April, gave a similar significance to the sened. 80 ‘The effect of such a Convention’, he wrote the Earl of Clarendon, ‘would infallibly be the surrender to Russian influence, management, and authority, of the Greek Churches and clergy throughout Turkey, and eventually therefore of the whole Greek population’. 81 Such protection amounted, as one Ottoman minister told Canning, to ‘the virtual partition of the Empire’. 82 Even as a matter of principle, he found the demands unacceptable.

What Russia requires of the Porte would bear a strange appearance, if the principle invoked in it were applied to other countries less anomalously situated. What would be thought in Europe, if France or Austria were to demand a guarantee from Great Britain for the protection and good treatment of the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland? What if Her Majesty’s Government were to interfere in a similar way on behalf of the Protestants in France? 83

The Ottoman ambassador in London, Konstandínos Mousouúros, amplified Canning’s objections and reminded Clarendon that the British government had good reason to be thankful for the Porte’s discretionary ability to remove patriarchs. What would happen, he asked rhetorically, if the Porte agreed to make the patriarchs irremovable and then Grigórios VI was re-elected or another patriarch took up his interest in the Ionian Islands? 84

In the short term, the Ottoman government and its Western allies attempted to forestall discussion of these more substantive issues by
settling the problem of the Holy Places first. Canning himself recommended in early April that the Ottoman ministers should keep the lesser question of the Holy Places scrupulously separate from the more dangerous one of Russia’s protectorate over Orthodoxy. Once a resolution to the problem in Palestine had been found, he predicted, the sultan could cut the ground away from Russia’s remaining demands by issuing a unilateral promise to maintain the privileges of the Orthodox Church. The recently arrived French ambassador, Edmond de La Cour, doubted that the issue of a Russian protectorate could be so easily separated from the Holy Places dispute, but he agreed it offered the best chances of defeating Russia’s deeper purposes. With this advice in mind, the Ottoman Imperial Council voted to reject Menshikov’s draft sened on 7 April – although the ministers assured Menshikov privately they would do anything else to assuage the tsar’s concerns short of a bilateral, binding treaty. On 10 April, Menshikov advised the Russian government that he had decided to avoid mention of a convention ‘until all points relating to the question of the Holy Places are settled’. This was only a tactical expedient, however, based on Menshikov’s hope that it would be easier to obtain some sort of binding guarantee (either a convention or an exchange of notes) for the privileges of the Church once Russia had vindicated its rights at the Holy Places. For Menshikov, as for his government, Orthodox rights in Palestine were assumed to be ultimately ‘one and the same’ as the larger problem of Orthodox privileges throughout the empire.

Once an agreement had been reached to treat the Holy Places separately, negotiations proceeded smoothly and almost all outstanding issues regarding Palestine were resolved by the last week of April. On 14 May 1853, the front page of the Journal de Constantinople carried the news that the Holy Places dispute had officially been settled. All parties knew, however, that the real battle lay ahead. Already on 19 April, Menshikov attempted to revive his original draft convention by offering some cosmetic alterations to Rifat Paşa. Menshikov offered to replace the first two articles of the sened, which had provoked the most controversy, with vaguer stipulations that all of the Orthodox clergy’s current immunities and privileges would be preserved and that the Orthodox would share in any new privileges granted in the future to any other non-Muslim community. This alteration convinced neither Rifat nor the British and French ambassadors. The convention still converted the privileges of the clergy, hitherto enjoyed at the good pleasure of the sultan, into legal rights acquired and maintained by the tsar through a binding, bilateral agreement. They therefore dismissed out of hand Menshikov’s attempts to insist, rather disingenuously, that Russia was
demanding nothing more than what the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz gave Austria with regard to the Catholic Church. As both Rifat and Canning pointed out to Menshikov, there was simply no comparison between the modest rights enjoyed by Austria and France over a few thousand foreigners and Russian claims to a right of intervention in the lives of millions of Ottoman subjects.\footnote{Russia’s demands regarding the privileges of the Orthodox clergy were, La Cour declared, ‘without precedent in modern times and of interest equally to all the Powers of Europe’}.\footnote{To make matters worse, Menshikov received much less support than he had expected from his ostensible allies. The Austrian chargé, Édouard-Franz Klezl, had initially used his influence with Rifat to reassure that minister of the harmlessness of the proposed sened. As time went on, however, Austrian statesmen wondered whether this was true and Klezl stood increasingly aloof from Menshikov’s troubles. One Austrian official, for example, worried that Russia would use the sened to make conversion from Orthodoxy to Catholicism practically impossible. What Menshikov demanded, he concluded, threatened a return to the wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was directly contrary to Austria’s ‘religious and political interests’. The Orthodox community in Istanbul also gave Menshikov less support than anticipated. In March, he had been lionized and his every move cheered by admiring crowds. By April, however, public disillusionment was growing. Menshikov had still not restored the status quo ante at the Holy Places and seemed too often to be using Orthodoxy to secure purely Russian advantages from the Porte, such as permission to build a new Russian church in Jerusalem and guarantees of free passage for Russian pilgrims. This rankled, as Greek and Arab Christians did not see themselves merely as placeholders for a larger Orthodox ecumene. Their claim to ownership was grounded not merely in religion, but also ethnicity and descent. There was also growing unease over the scope of Menshikov’s other demands. Intervention in Palestine was one thing; the proposed sened was quite another. Even a Russophile like Aristárchis confided to Rose that he was ‘a far greater man under the Porte, and get more money than I ever should under some Russian General, governor of Constantinople’. The Orthodox hierarchy, for its part, feared that a true Russian protectorate would replace the lax and venal rule of the Porte with the uncertainties of a more efficient and vigorous dictatorship. La Cour thus reported that the clergy appeared to be: most unhappy with Prince Menchikoff for his having obtained too little in the affair of the Holy Places, and far too much as concerns the...
sition of the Greek Church in Turkey. The protectorate that Russia seeks to exercise, and the veto that she wishes to reserve for herself in case of the deposition of a Patriarch of Constantinople, have encountered lively opposition within the Synod itself, which sees no profit in these, but rather a great danger for its independence.99

Menshikov bore some of the blame for this erosion in ecclesiastical support. He had subjected his very first visitor from the patriarchal synod to a long humiliating lecture, which the metropolitan was to pass on to his colleagues, regarding ‘the disorders of the clergy, their ignorance, . . . and the advantage that they cede to the other confessions that know Arabic and exercise their influence through preaching’.100 The Russian foreign ministry later admitted that Menshikov’s reprimands had ‘produced a lively and painful effect’ on the patriarchal clergy, who understandably saw them as a foretaste of what closer Russian supervision might mean.101 The French and British embassies reported that many prominent members of the clergy and laity, ‘far from seconding the efforts of the Russian Ambassador, work against him in secret’.102 The two arch-rivals, Vogorídis and Aristárchis, in particular, worked frantically behind Menshikov’s back to engineer a resolution to the Holy Places conflict, hoping thereby to avoid a crisis and deprive Menshikov of any reason for remaining in Istanbul.103

Orthodox Easter of April 1853 thus passed in an atmosphere very different from what had been expected in February. Far from presiding over victory celebrations in Hagia Sophia, Menshikov spent Holy Week in bed wretched with fever. On the streets of Istanbul, Christians no longer predicted the imminent arrival of victorious Russian armies. Instead, there were hushed rumours that Muslims planned to punish the Rum for the recent troubles by massacring them on Easter Sunday.104

‘Throwing off the mask’: The Russian ultimatum

On 5 May, Menshikov fell back on his final resort, declaring that if the Porte did not agree within five days to a modified version of the sened, he would break off diplomatic relations.105 Rifat, having been reassured of British and French support, gave Menshikov an unambiguously negative response on 10 May. The sultan, Rifat declared, would always maintain the privileges of the Church inviolate, but he could not sign a convention to that effect and so ‘destroy the basis of [the Ottoman Empire’s] sovereign independence’.106 Menshikov wrote back to Rifat on 11 May with an extension of the deadline, telling him that unless
‘an intimate and direct understanding’ was arrived at by 14 May, he would consider his mission terminated.

In the meantime, Menshikov decided that a change of ministers might bring better results. His best chance for an alliance seemed to be with Mustafa Reşid, despite the latter’s long-standing association with Russia’s rivals. Reşid had lost a contest for power in August 1852 with two of the sultan’s brothers-in-law, Mehmed Âli and Ahmed Fethi, and had since languished on the margins of political affairs. Aristárchis used their mutual desperation to engineer an entente between the two unlikely allies: Menshikov would help Reşid secure the post of foreign minister, and Reşid would help Menshikov to restart the negotiations. On 13 May, Menshikov took a steamer to Çırağan for a private audience with the sultan. He warned Abdülmecid that his ministers were leading the country into disaster. The sultan had anticipated Menshikov’s request and informed him that Damad Mehmed Âli had just submitted his resignation. Abdülmecid then appointed Mustafa Nâili, former president of the Council of State, as his new grand vizier and gave Reşid charge of the foreign ministry. Buoyed by this turn of events, Menshikov delayed his departure from Istanbul for another week.

Reşid did his best to convince the other ministers that he could find a compromise that would satisfy Menshikov without sacrificing the sultan’s freedom of action, but without success. A grand council of ministers, governors, and Muslim scholars met on 16–17 May to consider the problem but only three of the 46 members present would endorse Reşid’s suggestions. The most the council would offer was a ferman reaffirming the privileges of the Orthodox Church and granting Russia the right to construct a new church and hospice in Jerusalem. This gesture was worthless to Menshikov, however, as a unilateral edict gave no grounds for appeal or external monitoring.

On 18 May, Menshikov announced the termination of his mission. The Porte, he declared, bore full responsibility for the rupture and the sultan’s refusal to give any meaningful guarantees proved that the Russian government was entirely justified in its ‘serious apprehensions . . . for the security and the maintenance of the ancient rights of the Eastern Church’. Menshikov judged the threat to the Church to be so imminent that he feared the Porte would take advantage of this temporary diplomatic rupture to enact new decrees prejudicial to the temporal rights of the Orthodox Church. ‘Any attack on the status quo of the Eastern Church and its integrity’, he warned, ‘will be considered by the Emperor . . . as an act hostile to Russia and impose on His Majesty the obligation
to take recourse to means that he, in his constant solicitude for the stability of the Ottoman Empire . . . had always hoped to avoid'.

The extent to which this possibility weighed upon Menshikov’s mind can be seen from his reaction to Reşid’s announcement on 20 May that the sultan would issue a ferman to Patriarch Yermanós guaranteeing his ‘spiritual’ privileges and those of the entire Orthodox clergy in perpetuity. Rather than taking comfort from this gesture, Menshikov seized upon Reşid’s use of the phrase ‘immunités spirituelles [imtiyazat-ı ruhaniyel]’, instead of the customary ‘immunités religieuses [imtiyazat-ı mezhebiye/ diniyel]’. This nuance, Menshikov believed, was a deliberate equivocation that betrayed the Porte’s reluctance to guarantee temporal privileges since it fully intended to annul them. Menshikov dashed off the following letter to Reşid on 21 May, hours before embarking on his homeward voyage to Odessa:

At the moment of his quitting Constantinople, the undersigned Ambassador of Russia has learned that the Sublime Porte intends to proclaim a guarantee for the exercise of the spiritual rights with which the Clergy of the Eastern Church are found invested, rendering uncertain the maintenance of the other privileges which it enjoys. Whatever might be the reason for this resolution, the undersigned finds himself obliged to make known to Your Highness, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that such a declaration or any other act which would tend, while maintaining the integrity of the purely spiritual rights of the Eastern Orthodox religion, to invalidate the other rights, privileges, and immunities [emphasis in the original] accorded to the sect and its clergy since the most ancient times and which it still enjoys today, will be considered by the imperial cabinet as an act hostile to Russia and to her religion.

This parting shot electrified the diplomatic corps, which treated the warning as though it were an unwarranted aggression. In the words of Louis Thouvenel, Menshikov had ‘thrown off the mask’ in his final letter and revealed the true character of Russia’s solicitude for the Orthodox Church. Three months later, on 16 August, Austin Layard declared before the British Parliament that the demand proved ‘beyond a doubt or cavil the whole gist of the Emperor’s policy and Menshikov’s mission’: that Russia intended to foster a virtual colony within the Ottoman body politic and the maintenance of the temporal powers of the Orthodox clergy was critical to those plans. Layard claimed to have seen for himself how
the power of the Greek clergy has been gradually curtailed, and the firmans lately issued for the protection of those who might embrace the Reformed faith have taken from them the power of persecution for religion’s sake. The Russian Government has viewed with the greatest alarm and jealousy this interference with the temporal power of the clergy, who are nothing but the tools of Russia; hence the distinction drawn by Prince Menschikoff, and the resolution not to accept anything but the entire concession of both spiritual and temporal privileges, rights, and immunities.117

Canning, Layard’s former superior in Istanbul, was even more categorical. He informed the foreign secretary that the entire purpose of the Menshikov mission had been to safeguard the temporal position and powers of the Church by placing them under direct Russian protection. Canning then tacitly admitted the justice of Menshikov’s complaints by noting that such protection would render communal reforms all but impossible. ‘All prospect of improvement would be lost’, he wrote, ‘privilege and abuse would be bound up together in scandalous perpetuity; or if in the course of time the just complaints of the laity were to prevail, the Russian Embassy, and not the Sultan’s Government, would be the object of their addresses for relief, and also of their gratitude when relieved’.118 As Vorgédis had warned Canning, there was even a danger that Russia would claim a protectorate over the Armenian millet and begin to undo the progress of reforms there.119 Lord Clarendon tended to agree with these accusations. Why else, as he complained to Nesselrode, would Russia wish to revive and maintain a set of out-dated privileges

which, conferring vast secular as well as spiritual power upon the Greek clergy, have, by the process of time and administrative changes, long since become obsolete, but which, being revived by Russia, with the right to enforce them, would enable her to exercise control over fourteen millions of subjects of the Porte, and to render the Sultan a mere vassal of the Emperor.120

The vehemence of this response across Europe to Menshikov’s demand quite confounded the Russian government, which assumed that the correctness of Menshikov’s basic assumptions were evident to anyone who cared to look. Comparison of Résid’s final note with the draft copy he showed Klezli on 19 May reveals that the Ottoman minister had, in fact, originally used the phrase ‘religious immunities’ and that he had
only later changed it to ‘spiritual immunities’ after consultations with the British and French embassies.\(^{121}\) It was also no secret that all three governments wanted the Porte to preserve its ability to impose reforms on the Orthodox Millet.

While Russian diplomacy struggled to present its case to the rest of Europe over the course of May and June, it also continued to press the Porte for satisfaction. The remaining members of the Russian legation delivered a last ultimatum on 17 June before departing Istanbul: Abdülmeclid had eight days to make the necessary concessions or face an invasion of the Danubian Principalities. On 26 June, Tsar Nicholas issued a manifesto announcing the expiry of this final offer. Russia, he declared, had no choice but to occupy the Danubian Principalities. Russian forces were already in place and generals Lüders and Dannenberg led their troops across the Prut river at Leova and Sculeni on 2 and 3 July. The tsar insisted that this was not an act of war, but diplomacy by other means.

Whatever the confusion in Europe over the causes of this impasse, the Porte admitted in an official proclamation on 13 July that: ‘The real cause of the existing dispute with Russia is the desire of that Power to obtain a binding and exclusive engagement from the Porte concerning the religious privileges of the Greek churches and priesthood, which the Porte cannot in justice be expected to give’.\(^ {123}\) As the principal bone of contention, the status and privileges of the Eastern patriarchates suddenly received sustained international attention as the search to satisfy all parties began. The search for compromise produced a flurry of diplomatic notes over the summer and fall of 1853, culminating on 31 July with a joint proposal drafted by the Austrian foreign minister, Count Buol, and representatives of the French and British governments.\(^ {124}\) In essence, the ‘Vienna Note’ called for the Porte to promise that it would ‘remain faithful to the letter and the spirit of the stipulations of the Treaties of Kuchuk-Kainarji and Adrianople relative to the protection of the Christian religion’ and grant the Orthodox a share in any advantages that other Christian sects might gain in the future. Nicholas immediately accepted the Vienna Note, but hopes for a peaceful settlement were dashed on 19 August when the Porte refused to sign until several ambiguous phrases had been clarified. When Nesselrode revealed on 7 September that the Russian government interpreted the Note as a binding commitment guaranteeing Russia’s right of intervention on behalf of Ottoman Christians, the other Powers abandoned it.\(^ {125}\)
Amid these efforts to find a political solution during the summer of 1853, Ottoman impatience over the occupation of the Danubian Principalities grew apace. On 26 September 1853, public anger forced Abdülmecid to declare war. Much sword rattling and posturing ensued, but neither side was eager to join battle while negotiations were still under way. The first two months of the war therefore saw only half-hearted skirmishing along the Danubian frontier between Bulgaria and Wallachia. The tenor of the conflict changed on 30 November when Russian naval forces surprised and annihilated a squadron of Ottoman frigates at the Black Sea port of Sinope. The ‘massacre of Sinope’ stirred genuine outrage both in the Ottoman Empire and in much of Europe. As Russia became increasingly isolated, Tsar Nicholas complained bitterly to Friedrich-Wilhelm IV of Prussia about the failure of the Concert of Europe to rally to his side. ‘Making war not for worldly advantages, nor for conquest, but with only Christian aims’, he lamented, ‘must I be the only one to fight under the Holy Cross and must I see others, calling themselves Christians, all unite with the Crescent to fight Christianity?’ Nicholas’s rhetoric became reality nine months later as Britain and France formally declared war on 28 March 1854. The tsar found himself embarked on the last, loneliest, and most reluctant of Christendom’s crusades.
Mentchikoff came to Constantinople, and asked for the Koran. He looked at the book, marked several passages, and said – ‘Erase these’. The English and French then came, and asked also for the Koran. After reading, they said – ‘Throw this book into the Bosporus’.  

– Saying reported among Ottoman Muslims in 1855–56

Ringing the changes: Pera, 1855

In the closing days of 1855, the Orthodox parish of the Presentation of the Virgin in Pera (modern Beyoğlu) dared to hope that their busy neighbourhood would soon reverberate with a sound not heard in Istanbul for four centuries: the peal of Orthodox church bells. The Ottoman authorities occasionally permitted Catholic and Protestant foreigners to possess bells, but the metallic clamour offended Muslim sensibilities and Orthodox churches were forbidden them. In December, however, the parish of the Presentation of the Virgin had received special permission to install bells. Even more striking was the fact that the community owed this victory to a most unexpected champion: the French ambassador, Édouard-Antoine Thouvenel.

Thouvenel had only been in Istanbul for a few months, but already he was creating a stir. Soft-spoken, charming, and intelligent, Thouvenel had a reputation of making new friends for France in all his previous diplomatic postings to London, Madrid, Brussels, Athens, and Munich. The son of a respectable bourgeois family from Lorraine, he had studied law at Metz before joining the political department of the Ministry of

6
Ambassadors of Peace: Recasting Orthodox Christendom
Foreign Affairs in 1842. He rose rapidly through the ranks to become head of its Political Directorate in 1851. By 1855, he was virtually a second foreign minister and a close advisor to Napoleon III, with whom he shared a commitment to liberal ideals (in foreign policy, at least) and a conviction that those ideals were best realized through *Realpolitik*.²

Thouvenel was one of the few European diplomats of his rank with extended experience of the East. He had spent two years exploring the eastern Mediterranean as a young man and a further five years in Greece as attaché to the French legation to Athens. Thouvenel had therefore immediately grasped the significance of the opportunity that presented itself when a committee from the Presentation of the Virgin approached him. Thouvenel informed his superior, Alexandre Colonna Walewski that:

> As Your Excellency knows, none of the Greek churches in Constantinople possess bells. The inhabitants of Galata [sic] came to me to expose all the grief that this ban caused them and I agreed to make myself the interpreter of their wishes to the Porte. My demarche has been well received and the first tolling of bells in a temple of the Eastern Rite in Constantinople will be due to the intervention of the Ambassador of France.³

The soundscape of one of Istanbul’s most cosmopolitan neighbour- hoods, in other words, was to provide aural testimony to the benefits of French patronage. In practice, the Ottoman authorities managed to delay the implementation of their promise for another three decades, but the bare fact of that promise – and how it was achieved – were significant in themselves.⁴ Only two short years before, Catholic France had been the bogeyman of the Orthodox Community and the villain of the Holy Places dispute. The situation had changed so dramatically in only two short years that some Orthodox Christians had come to see the French embassy as a potential ally. Even the patriarch of Constantinople, Thouvenel noted with satisfaction, had expressed a desire ‘to establish regular relations’. Thouvenel took these overtures as further proof that one of his most important tasks was to parlay France’s recent military successes in the Crimea into new political relationships and a new public image in the East. Thouvenel’s visits to the region as a young man had convinced him that successive French governments were squandering their original advantages in the Near East. Domestic and European affairs had so distracted one ministry after another that French influence in the
Ottoman Empire had shrunk to a shadow of its former prominence. In the words of one writer for the *Revue Orientale*, France had allowed its foreign policy in the East to drift, ‘living from day to day, floating along on the tide of events whose true causes and probable significance it often does not appreciate correctly’.5

For Thouvenel, one of the most egregious examples of such drift was the manner in which France had become identified exclusively with Catholicism. Thouvenel considered this identification erroneous in principle and disastrous in effects. In a long meditation on the subject written in November 1855, Thouvenel insisted that France had once represented its sympathies in the East as ‘more Christian than Catholic’ and that this had allowed its diplomatic representatives in Istanbul to pose as ‘the solicitous and benevolent patrons of all Christian subjects of the Sultan, without consideration of rite’.6 Since the late eighteenth century, however, French governments had erred in allowing themselves to become associated with Catholicism in an exclusive way. This identification had allowed Russia to pose as the sole protector of Orthodoxy and Orthodox Christians had shifted their sympathies ‘from Versailles to St Petersburg’. Thouvenel noted, for example, that whereas French ambassadors had once made a point of calling on Orthodox patriarchs and of ‘receiving them at table’, no such intercourse had been attempted since the days of the Ancien Régime. France’s neglect of ‘her former clients’ in the East left the embassy at a crippling disadvantage in the region and ultimately made the current crisis possible. The rift between France and most of Ottoman Christendom was all the more tragic to Thouvenel as his years in Greece had convinced him the schism between Orthodoxy and Catholicism was groundless. It was not theology, he insisted, but ‘national pride, the interest of the priests, and the ignorance of the masses’ that kept the two churches apart. The war and the absence of the Russian legation presented a golden opportunity to undo these mistakes and regain something of France’s former patronage over all Ottoman Christians, whether Catholic, Armenian, or Orthodox.

A renewed friendship was only the first step in a larger program of changes that Thouvenel thought necessary. Being a confirmed anticlerical at home, he saw no reason to promote ecclesiastical power in the Near East. The theocratic structure of the millets merely perpetuated the empire’s backwardness and gave its enemies a perpetual bridgehead. Clerical power also relied on the perpetuation of that ‘constant political nuisance’: the notion that genuine theological divisions existed between eastern and western Christendom. Thouvenel thus considered
it in the interests of France, the Concert of Europe, and Ottoman Christians themselves that Ottoman society be secularized and the temporal powers of the non-Muslim clergies revoked. ‘The East will only become tranquil, if ever’, Thouvenel observed to Walewski, ‘when religion is no longer mixed with politics by anyone’.

When Thouvenel wrote these recommendations in November 1855, they ought to have struck any reader as a dangerous pipe dream. The repeated efforts of the Ottoman government to institute even the most moderate reforms within the Orthodox Community had all come to naught, while France’s last intervention in Ottoman religious affairs had helped trigger the current conflagration. And yet, a short two months later, Thouvenel and his British and Austrian colleagues would pressure the Porte into committing itself to a sweeping reorganization of Ottoman society. Ottoman statesmen objected strenuously to many of the reforms that their allies demanded of them and warned that change would destabilize the delicate equilibrium between the various subject communities of the empire. In each case, however, the Ottoman ministers capitulated, albeit often with the intention of reneging or modifying these concessions once the crisis had passed. In the short term, however, the Porte’s immediate need for British and French military support trumped all other concerns. The fires of war thus gave Western diplomats an unprecedented opportunity to recast the role of religion itself in the Ottoman Empire. The resulting changes over the next decade would include gradual laicization of the millets and permanent alterations in the relations of Orthodox Christians with the Ottoman state, the Great Powers, and each other.

Lord Stratford’s unorthodox protectorate

The road leading from the Menshikov mission to the restructuring of the millet system was neither direct nor obvious in 1853. On the contrary, the Porte and its allies were at first keen to disprove Russian accusations that the privileges of the Orthodox Church were under attack. At the end of May and the first week of June 1853, Canning and La Cour helped the Porte draft edicts guaranteeing the ‘spiritual privileges’ of each of the non-Muslim communities in perpetuity. Abdülmecid signed the edict addressed to the Orthodox on 6 June, and Reşid Paşa summoned Patriarch Yermanós IV to his villa in Balta Liman to receive it in person. The Orthodox synod and notables played the part expected of them and responded with effusive declarations of gratitude.
'Perceiving the moment to be opportune', Canning took the unprecedented step of paying personal visits to both Yermanós IV and the Armenian patriarch, Hakopos II Serobyan, to congratulate them. Canning assured both primates that Britain would do everything in its power to promote the position of Christians in the Ottoman Empire – although he could not resist scolding the patriarchs for their continued ill-treatment of converts to Protestantism. The Ottoman government learned of Canning’s initiative with displeasure as his intentions were unmistakable: in the absence of the Russian legation, the British embassy was inviting the Orthodox and Armenian clergies into a closer relationship. When Patriarch Yermanós IV reciprocated with a courtesy visit to the embassy in the first week of September, Canning rewarded him with another patronizing lecture on ‘the duties of tolerance, disinterestedness, and loyalty in the exercise of his extensive patronage and jurisdiction’. Despite this, Canning boasted to Clarendon that the visit was an ‘unprecedented’ mark of honour and added: ‘I am tempted to augur well of the prevailing disposition of the Greek Clergy towards us, and, by prudently availing myself of opportunities as they occur, I hope to see it improve still further in time for purposes of general utility’. Such an opportunity arrived when Patriarch Yermanós suddenly sickened and died on 28 September 1853. Despite their recent civilities, Canning did not regret Yermanós’s passing. The patriarch had notoriously summoned Russian aid in 1852 and then refused to speak up either against Menshikov or in favour of the Ottoman government. After war was declared, Yermanós had conspicuously failed to rally his nation to the sultan’s cause. The British government had been urging the Porte to remove Yermanós, so both greeted his death as a providential opportunity to place a more reliable prelate upon the throne. Canning thought he had already found his man in Ánthimos VI Koutalianós. The latter was an odd choice given his removal in 1848 on charges of embezzlement and bribery, but two factors recommended him to Canning. The first was that Britain’s most prominent Orthodox ally, Stéfanos Vogorídis, had supported him in the past (although they had since become estranged). The second was that Ánthimos had privately promised Reşid and Canning to offer ‘his entire devotion to the interests of the [Ottoman] government’ should he be returned to power. More specifically, he promised to cooperate with the Porte in bringing about ecclesiastical reforms. Like Thouvenel, Canning was convinced that ‘there is a great need of improvement throughout the Greek Church’, from the system of appointing bishops and priests to the
collection and administration of revenue. ‘With the view of contributing to the introduction of a salutary reform in these respects’, Canning admitted in a secret dispatch to Clarendon that he had ‘entered privately into communication with the new Patriarch previous to his election, and succeeded in obtaining from him a written obligation to carry out the principles of improvement which I suggested’. Canning therefore informed Clarendon that:

Having ascertained that among the Candidates there was one, and only one, who united with a fair degree of knowledge and experience the qualities of intelligence, energy, and firmness, I recommended him to the favour and support of those who by their commanding influence usually determine the election of a Patriarch.

In private, Canning boasted that he did much more than recommend Ánthimos’s candidature. This is confirmed by Vogorídis’s complaint to his son-in-law that Canning had ‘imposed’ Ánthimos ‘with insistence’ on both the Porte and the notables.

With the results already a forgone conclusion, an electoral congress met at the patriarchate on 6 October and elected Ánthimos VI unanimously. At Canning’s suggestion, the Porte further endorsed the new patriarch by reviving the custom, long fallen into disuse, of having the sultan, foreign minister, grand vizier, and president of the Council of State each receive the patriarch-elect at their residences. Canning congratulated himself and predicted to Clarendon ‘good of no ordinary kind will in time result from the part which I have taken in these events. – Meanwhile they serve to raise the character of Her Majesty’s Embassy, and to sow deep the seeds of an improved connection between the Ottoman Sovereign and his subjects of the Greek religion, desirable at all times, but of special interest at the present juncture’. Canning would not be disappointed. The election of Ánthimos VI inaugurated a brief but unique chapter in the history of the patriarchate, characterized by an unusually close three-way relationship between the Phanar, the British embassy, and the Porte.

Ánthimos promptly produced several public declarations of the Orthodox Community’s loyalty to the sultan and decried the attempts of unnamed ‘foreign powers’ to meddle in the internal affairs of his community. An encyclical to all the eparchies of the throne urged Christians to obey and respect their God-appointed authorities and ‘immediately to denounce in church any who disturb public tranquillity’. Ánthimos made particular efforts to contain unrest among
the Orthodox populace in Thessaly, Epirus, and Chalkidiki, where armed bands from the Kingdom of Greece were fomenting rebellion.\textsuperscript{24} Ánthimos also kept a close watch over the behaviour of his monastic brethren. He removed bishops such as Kýrillos of Stágoi and Ierothéos of Ánkyra, for example, for treason and dispatched representatives to ensure that the monasteries of Mt Athos did not harbour or join the insurgents as they did in 1821.\textsuperscript{25} Canning seized this opportunity to start removing hierarchs that he did not like. He thus instructed one of the embassy's dragomans to visit Ánthimos VI soon after his elevation and press for the removal of Metropolitan Ananías Tamvákis of Lárisa:

Present him my compliments and say that I think it would be well if the Bishop of Larissa were ordered up to Constantinople. H[is] H[oliness] knows of the charges against that Bishop. Shall I apply to the Porte, or can H. H. do it by his own authority? Then ask the Patriarch whether he is satisfied with the present Bishop of Arta [Sofrónios Sotirákis]? Find out, if you can, by whose interest that Bishop was appointed, and whether he belongs to the party of Vogorides or of Aristarchi – in general, whether the Patriarch likes and employs him.\textsuperscript{26}

To Canning's delight, Ánthimos complied. Canning was also pleased to report that Ánthimos was sharing intelligence and 'occasionally sends me informations received from the provinces bordering on Greece'.\textsuperscript{27}

In Istanbul itself, Ánthimos exhorted his flock to give renewed demonstrations of their love for the sultan and his allies. In particular, he demanded an end to the attacks carried out on unsuspecting French soldiers who wandered into Istanbul's backstreets. Ánthimos even took the unprecedented step of submitting the draft text of one such sermon to the British embassy for revision before it was read from the pulpit.\textsuperscript{28} A striking symbol of the new rapprochement occurred on 8 April 1855, when the Western and Orthodox dates for Easter coincided. \textit{The Times} noted that a large contingent from the British embassy and armed forces replaced the customary presence of the Russian legation at the Orthodox paschal liturgy in the Cathedral of St George: 'The great celebration of Easter mass by the Greek patriarch at the Fanar attracted this year a number of English visitors, and the scarlet uniforms of British officers were seen, probably for the first time, by the glare of torches and the flicker of candle tapers in the precincts of the sanctuary'.\textsuperscript{29} The Allies belied this show of Anglo-Orthodox harmony the very next morning by launching their spring offensive against Sevastopol and
shattering the peace of Easter Monday with an unprecedented artillery bombardment.\textsuperscript{30}

The high-water mark of Anglo-patriarchal cooperation came later in the summer, when Canning and Reşid attempted to pressure Ánthimos into formally anathematizing the Church of Russia. Over the years, Western statesmen and commentators from Metternich to Canning had often expressed the opinion – based largely on wishful thinking – that the Ottoman and Russian branches of the Orthodox Church constituted fundamentally distinct churches. It was supposed that only political and financial considerations had prevented the Ottoman patriarchs from excommunicating Russia for its many innovations since the time of Peter the Great. The war made the eastern patriarchs' forbearance appear especially regrettable to Western statesmen, as an anathema would invalidate Russia's claims to a protectorate at a single stroke. It might even produce a permanent rift between the Ottoman Orthodox and their Russian co-religionists. When approached on the issue, however, Ánthimos refused to cooperate and warned that he would rather resign than face the resulting public opprobrium.\textsuperscript{31} Canning and Reşid let the matter drop, but their request revealed just how thoroughly they intended to subordinate religion to political purposes.

Ánthimos VI, for his part, was also pleased with the new relationship. Not only had he obtained his post through British influence, but Canning's patronage forced the Porte to treat him with special consideration. When the Ottoman government refused to honour a patriarchal request that the governor of Mt Athos be removed, for example, Ánthimos VI complained to the British embassy that this undermined his authority.\textsuperscript{32} Clarendon responded in June 1854 by instructing Canning to ensure that the Ottoman authorities upheld the judicial rulings of the patriarchs and thus did not justify Russia's complaints.\textsuperscript{33} In an ironic reversal of roles, Canning found himself acting the part customarily played by Russian envoys: defending the privileges of the Church and demanding that the Porte comply with patriarchal requests. Ánthimos VI even began to address his British benefactor as the 'protector of the Millet and of the Orthodox Church' – a title previously applied only to the Russian ambassador!\textsuperscript{34} These changes did not go unnoticed, and Baron Koller wrote uneasily to Buol in August 1855 that he could not 'pass over in silence' indications that the patriarchate, in the absence of Russian protection, had placed itself 'under that of the Ambassador of England'.\textsuperscript{35}

The greatest benefit Ánthimos obtained from his connection with the British embassy, however, was protection from the accusations of abuse
and corruption that quickly revived against him. That there was substance to these complaints can be seen from the suspiciously large number of eparchies that changed hands during the years of his tenancy (producing a commensurate flow of accession gifts into his private coffers). By 1855, *La Presse* claimed that Ánthimos’s personal fortune had grown to the rather incredible figure of 25 million piasters and that he owned a small commercial fleet. A powerful faction within the synod led by Ioakeím Kokkódis of Kýzikos finally confronted Ánthimos at the end of 1854 over his refusal to consult the elders on the removal and appointment of bishops. The chorus of voices demanding Ánthimos’s dismissal swelled over the next year, but the British embassy never wavered in its support — even as Canning admitted to Clarendon that Ánthimos VI was ‘not free from the suspicion of dealing in ... corrupt practices’. Ánthimos had become, to all intents and purposes, ‘the British patriarch’, and Canning ordered his agents to keep a close watch on any opposition movements.

In August 1855, matters came to a head after a majority of the synod submitted a formal petition to Fuad Paşa requesting the patriarch’s dismissal. When Fuad began to take steps against Ánthimos, the patriarch appealed to the British ambassador as the ‘zealous protector of our Church’. Over the next two months, Canning frantically attempted to maintain Ánthimos in violation of customary law and the will of the Ottoman foreign ministry, the synods of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, and most of the Orthodox elite. Canning resorted to exceptional sophistries in these attempts, arguing, for example, that the locus of authority within the millet lay not with the members of the synod, but with the patriarch himself and the representatives of the guilds (who supported Ánthimos). He even insisted, with breath-taking hypocrisy, that the appointment of a patriarch must be for life except in the most extreme circumstances. On 24 September, Canning took the matter all the way to the grand vizier, warning Âli Paşa in an official memorandum that the removal of Ánthimos would have the effect of ‘encouraging intrigue and recalcitrance, of discontenting the Greek Nation, of incensing the sympathies of Europe, and of rendering precarious an authority, the maintenance of which has always been part of the political system of the Empire’. The Porte remained unconvinced and an order deposing Ánthimos VI was issued on 29 September 1855. Canning took this as a personal insult and for months afterwards he continued to contemplate stratagems for restoring Ánthimos.

The synod, meanwhile, convoked an unusually calm assembly on 1 October 1855 to elect Ánthimos’s successor. Vogorídis showed his
loyalty to Canning by announcing that he had fallen ill and could not attend.\(^49\) With Vogorídis absent, Aristárchis abroad in disgrace, and the Russian legation withdrawn, Fuad was in an unusually strong position. In the past, Vogorídis complained to his son-in-law, Ottoman ministers had sought to control patriarchal elections surreptitiously. In this election, Fuad had ‘shed the mask’ and was openly announcing that the Porte would henceforward select patriarchs as it saw fit.\(^50\) He sent Remzi Effendi, a dragoman of the Porte, to preside over the electoral synod and assist Fuad’s allies, led by Psycháris and Ioakeím Kokkódis. The result was the election on 2 October of Metropolitan Kýrillos Makris of Amáseia over the other two front-running candidates, Yerásimos of Chalkidón and Kallínikos of Thessaloníki.\(^51\) Canning, of course, was highly critical of the new patriarch, but the other embassies also expressed concern. Thouvenel, for example, thought Kýrillos honourable but weak-willed and entirely incapable of leading the Orthodox Church ‘out of the abasement into which she is fallen’.\(^52\)

The British embassy’s experiment with an unofficial protectorate over the Orthodox Church thus came to an unedifying end. Its attending scandal, however, provided a fresh reminder of the disruptive potential of the Orthodox Millet, with its many privileges and problems.\(^53\) Throughout the affair, different factions within the Orthodox Community had invited not only the Porte and the British embassy but also other Powers into their internal affairs. An agent of Metropolitan Dionýsios of Nikomídeia had canvassed Thouvenel for French support in September, and Baron Koller, the Austrian chargé, felt the need to forestall similar invitations by announcing his neutrality.\(^54\) In the provinces, too, European consuls were jockeying with each other to fill the vacuum in Orthodox affairs that the absence of Russia had created.\(^55\) With the memory of the Menshikov mission still fresh in the minds of the entire diplomatic corps, such incidents demonstrated that even in Russia’s absence the unsettled state of millet affairs would tempt one or another of the Powers to profit by it. Even an Evangelical foe of clerical privilege like Canning could fall into the trap.

Such reflections moved Koller three days after the patriarchal elections to submit a long list of complaints against the patriarchate to Buol. Koller ended his report by concluding that any improvement to the condition of Ottoman Christians required a total overhaul of the Orthodox Millet:

The Greek clergy, made brutal by the most complete ignorance and corrupted from top to bottom, must be educated and moralized,
the temporal jurisdiction must not remain with them, and the many millions of Christians belonging to the Greek Church must be protected from the tyranny and avidity which, descending by degrees from the Patriarch to the village curé, weigh down on them like an iron yoke.56

The scandal similarly affected Thouvenel, who concluded his report on the removal of Ánthimos VI by calling Walewski’s attention to the manner in which ‘the organization of schismatic Clergy in the East...has been neglected thus far’. He added: ‘A reform of the temporal power devolved upon the Church since the conquest of Mahomet II would exercise at least as salutary an influence over the condition of the Christian subjects of the S. Porte as those reforms expected among the Turks themselves.’57 Walewski agreed that the entire affair and ‘the highly irregular position of the Greek Patriarch, Anthimos’ made him think

as you do, that there are important reforms that might be introduced within the interior regime of the Eastern Church, as regards its hierarchy’s relationship with the temporal interests of the Christian populations, and the influence [such reforms] might have on the destiny of those populations.58

A looming peace: Negotiating the Four Points

The war that the Orthodox Millet had occasioned soon provided concrete opportunities for its reform. On 8 August 1854, after several false starts, the British, French, and Austrian governments agreed to a common list of demands. They offered Russia peace on the basis of a four-point program drawn up by the Austrian and French foreign ministers, Count Buol-Schauenstein and Édouard Drouyn de l’Huys:

(1) Russia was to renounce any claim to a protectorate over the Danubian Principalities and Serbia. The Concert of Europe would, instead, collectively guarantee the interests of these states.
(2) The Danube was to be a free river, open to navigation and trade by any nation.
(3) The Straits Convention of 1841 was to be revised so as to restrict severely Russia’s naval presence in the Black Sea.
(4) Russia was to give up any pretensions to a protectorate over the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire. The rights of the latter would come under a collective guarantee by the European Powers.
In reality, the Four Points reflected Allied war aims very imperfectly, as France and Britain harboured much more ambitious designs. For pragmatic reasons, however, they agreed to this list of demands as a basis for discussion in hopes that Russia would refuse and bring neutral Austria into the war on the Allied side. The Russian government did indeed react negatively to the Four Points, but Tsar Nicholas I reluctantly accepted them on 29 November 1854 as the basis for peace negotiations. In the talks convened at Vienna on 15 March 1855, Britain was represented by Lord John Russell and Ambassador John Fane, Earl of Westmorland; the Ottoman Empire by Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa; Russia by Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov; France by Drouyn de l'Huys and Ambassador Bourqueney; and Austria by Count Buol and the noted Austrian Orientalist Baron Anton Prokesch von Osten.

The conference settled the first two points after much discussion, agreeing to put an end to the Russian protectorate over the Danubian Principalities and open the Danube to international trade. Talks broke down, however, over the question of demilitarizing the Black Sea and dissolved in June without any discussion of the Ottoman Empire's non-Muslim minorities. The British, Austrian, and French delegates knew that the Russian plenipotentiaries would offer stiffest resistance to the Third Point, but they also expected serious difficulties over the Fourth Point. It was, after all, as one journalist noted, 'the very essence of the question which had led to the outbreak of the war, and upon which it was important, above all others, to come to a distinct understanding'.

The Allies themselves were divided with the Ottoman government objecting to the Fourth Point on the very sensible grounds that a Pan-European protectorate over all Christians was as dangerous to it as a Russian protectorate over the Orthodox. Gorchakov lent credence to these fears by declaring that Russia could accept a collective guarantee so long as it was formally binding on the sultan.

Ottoman unease deepened as their European counterparts used the Fourth Point to press for sweeping changes to the status of non-Muslims. During a pre-conference meeting of the British, French, and Austrian delegations, Baron Prokesch waxed lyrical about his expectation that the Fourth Point would provide 'the germ of a complete change in the state of the Turkish Empire . . . opening to the Christian subjects of the Porte a greater freedom from oppression and vexation than they had ever obtained from Russian protection'. Palmerston put the matter starkly to Mousouros Paşa in August 1855: the Powers had committed themselves to the Fourth Point and the Porte must promulgate the reforms they required. It could make these changes 'spontaneously' or it
could wait for the Powers to impose them through a binding, multilateral treaty. Palmerston had privately decided that Britain would, in fact, write the reforms it desired into any future treaty, but in the meantime he cynically used the spectre of such inclusion to frighten the Porte.66

In the meantime, the sultan’s government had anticipated Palmerston’s demand. During a series of closed meetings in Istanbul on 24 and 26 March of 1855, a gathering of 21 ministers and other officials predicted that peace negotiations would focus attention specifically upon the discriminatory treatment of non-Muslims in the empire. The time had clearly come for the government to do something to mollify public opinion in Europe but it was agreed that concessions must be seen to originate from the sovereign will of the sultan. The two indispensable features of any peace were therefore the abrogation of Russia’s claims to a religious protectorate and a clear statement that the Powers would ‘entrust the reforms desired by Europe for all the Christian subjects (umûm tebe’â-i ‘Îseviyesi) of the Sublime State to the grace of the Sultan’.67 In keeping with these priorities, Âli and Fuad drew up various measures over the course of 1855, including abolition of the head tax (cizye) levied on non-Muslims, a loosening of restrictions on the construction and repair of churches, and an opening up of the Ottoman army to Christian recruits. Several of these reforms were purely cosmetic. The Porte did not seriously intend to conscript Christians, for example, and the cizye promptly reappeared as a special exemption tax (bedel) on non-Muslim adult males in lieu of military service.68 Other changes were more substantive, such as Âli’s decision to expand Reşid’s judicial reforms by creating a unified legal code and a centralized network of confessional courts. The new system was meant to preserve something of the religiously segregated character of the millet courts, while substantially laicizing them as elected judges and secular law codes were to resolve all but explicitly religious and family matters.69

The Porte also made some gestures at reviving the process of millet reform. Reşid promised Canning in early September 1854 ‘the abusive exactions of the Greek Priesthood in the Rayas is [sic] to be abolished and they are to be salaried’.70 In preparation, the Porte drew up a memorandum on the structure and privileges of the ecumenical patriarchate and in July 1854, Ánthimos VI drafted a new project consisting of 21 articles on ecclesiastical reform. Whether the patriarch did so on his own initiative or in response to instructions is unclear.71 Not surprisingly, the new patriarchal reform project borrowed heavily from that submitted in 1847. Ánthimos called once again for a thorough restructuring of the hierarchy to eliminate internal distinctions and
reduce episcopal absenteeism. The authority of the patriarch was to be strengthened, and a new synod created with a rotating two-year period of service (Arts 5, 17, 18, and 19). This time, however, Ánthimos wisely omitted any direct challenge to the Ottoman government, stressing only that the Orthodox laity should have no role in appointing, judging, or removing hierarchs or in any other ecclesiastical business (Arts 4, 10, 11, and 20). Even so, Ánthimos’s proposals fell wide of the mark, as they offered no scheme for regularizing hierarchical incomes and did not appreciably empower the laity.

The Porte’s modest reform efforts failed to keep pace, however, with events in the international arena. By the summer of 1855, the war was going badly for Russia. Tsar Nicholas I had died in February and was buried like a true crusader with a crucifix of tesserae pried from the walls of Hagia Sophia upon his breast. A string of military defeats at the Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman encouraged his heir, Alexander II, to seek an end to the conflict. With the Allied capture on 8 September 1855 of Sevastopol, the homeport of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, the war seemed to be drawing to a close. The French government had no more goals worth pursuing as the old anti-French coalition of Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia was in tatters and the storming of the Malakov Redoubt at Sevastopol, together with other feats of arms, had vindicated French military honour. With the French public clamouring for peace, continuation of the war would bring diminishing returns to Napoleon III. French war-weariness, in turn, made it impossible for the British government to fight on until the decisive victory that Palmerston wanted was won. All eyes shifted from the battlefield to the conference table.

The Constantinople Conference

With peace imminent in the autumn of 1855, Thouvenel proposed formal meetings in Istanbul between the Ottoman foreign minister and the British, French, and Austrian ambassadors. Their primary purpose was to establish a preliminary understanding among the Allies on the Fourth Point in advance of any negotiations to end the war. Thouvenel’s proposal received strong support from his own government and from Austria. Accordingly, both foreign ministries directed their ambassadors in mid-November to begin preparing for formal discussions on the First and the Fourth Points. Canning, true to form, remained aloof from his colleagues on the excuse that he had no instructions to join them.
Thouvenel and Koller were optimistic about their ability to come to an agreement with the Porte. Both reported that Fuad Paşa wanted all matters involving Ottoman Christians settled prior to any peace talks and that he would agree to anything short of formal equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. Confidently, Fuad had told Koller that the Ottoman state knew it would have to restrict the temporal powers of the Christian clergies – even if this meant violating the guarantees that the sultan had issued in 1853 to disprove Russian claims. At the end of November, Thouvenel and Koller suggested to Fuad that the most natural starting point for their discussions would be a review of the reform projects drafted by the Ottoman government. Fuad agreed and promised a memorandum outlining the rights of non-Muslim subjects in 1853 and the reforms enacted since then.

Two developments at the end of 1855 gave fresh impetus to these discussions as Austria prepared formally to join the Allies. On 16 December, the Austrian government dispatched Count Valentin Esterházy to St Petersburg with a peace project drawn up by Buol and Bourqueney. The Austrian offer was in substance an ultimatum and Esterházy warned that he would demand his passport should Russia not agree to the terms. After much hesitation, Alexander accepted on 15 January 1856 and preparations began in earnest for a peace conference. As the text of Austria’s *Projet des Preliminaires* informed Russia that deliberations were already in progress at Istanbul ‘between Austria, France, Great Britain, and the Sublime Porte, with the view of insuring to the Christian subjects of the Sultan their religious and political rights’ it became urgent that this assertion be fulfilled.

A further catalyst was the arrival in Istanbul on 17 December 1855 of Prokesch von Osten, Buol’s main advisor on Eastern affairs, as Austrian internuncio to the Porte. Prokesch arrived with instructions to ensure that the conference began meeting and that it addressed a set list of topics. Buol had shared these instructions in advance with the British, French, and Ottoman foreign ministries, so they served in practice as an unofficial program for the talks. Buol proposed seven ‘essential points to be attended to’ – none of which had anything to do with religious protectorates per se. The first and most important issue was ‘the state of the Churches, especially of the Eastern Church, the reform of which is a need generally felt and of great importance for the Ottoman Empire’. Buol made the character of this ‘reform’ clearer by next calling for independent lay tribunals to replace the traditional judicial powers of the hierarchy and an expanded role for local (and, by extension, lay) figures in the governance of their millets. Buol called also for: (1) the abolition
of the legal axiom that all land in the empire belonged ultimately to the sultan, (2) the concomitant recognition of the rights of both Ottoman citizens and foreigners to own land in the empire, (3) unrestricted access of Christians to positions in the empire’s civil and military hierarchy, and (4) the incorporation of Christians into the Ottoman military. Finally, Prokesch was to ensure that the sultan promulgated the resulting recommendations in the form of an imperial rescript, which the Porte was to communicate to the Powers for their recognition. This last step was key, as it would provide a legal basis for intervention should the Ottomans not keep their commitments.85

Âli and Fuad were ready to engage with all but the last of Buol’s points and each offered to draw up their own individual memoranda on ‘the situation of the Christians of the Ottoman Empire’.86 Their resulting memorandum focused on the progress that had already been made. Fuad noted that his government had eliminated the head tax on non-Muslims, opened the civil service, and removed restrictions on church construction and repairs. The empire was also preparing to incorporate Christians into the army, increase the probative value of Christian testimony, and introduce a unified legal code. The British, French, and Austrian ambassadors received these memoranda with polite expressions, but warned that the projected reforms were still, as Thouvenel told Fuad, ‘insufficient’.87 Whereas Buol had placed ecclesiastical reforms at the top of his list, for example, Fuad made no references to the Orthodox Church, its structure, or clergy.

a) First meeting, 9 January
The first meeting of the conference on the Fourth Point took place amid blustery winter weather on 9 January 1856 at the home of the grand vizier, with Âli, Fuad, Canning, Thouvenel, and Prokesch in attendance.88 They began with a lengthy discussion on general principles, with the ambassadors all assuring Âli and Fuad that the Powers would do nothing to compromise Ottoman sovereignty. They then agreed to meet again on 16 January for a review of the detailed summary that Fuad would provide of the privileges of the sultan’s non-Muslim subjects and the Tanzimat Council’s planned reforms.89 Âli suggested that a prominent Orthodox notable, Prince Aléxandros Kallimáchis, should also attend their discussions as a semi-official representative of Ottoman Christendom. The proposal encountered no objections as Kallimáchis was known to all the participants and respected, having served in the past as Ottoman ambassador to both London and Paris.90
Canning had been a reluctant participant, so he was surprised to find himself enjoying the frank and cooperative exchanges. He reported to Clarendon that the first meeting held out ‘a sanguine hope of our ultimate success in the great twofold work to which our exertions are now more particularly directed [the realization of the First and the Fourth Points]’. Thouvenel too expressed satisfaction and noted that Kallimáchis would help them ‘penetrate the arcana of the Phanar and of the Patriarchate’. This latter consideration was of particular importance to Thouvenel, who added: ‘The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that it is there that the reforms must be made’.

The ambassadors did not broach the question of ecclesiastical reform directly in this first meeting, except to observe to Áli and Fuad that ‘no Christian nation would have conceded to their clergy so much authority over the faithful, outside the bounds of the sanctuary’, as the Ottomans had done. In a memorandum to Clarendon a few days later, Canning emphasized the importance of obliterating all legal distinctions between Muslims and Christians. In addition, he proposed that: ‘Each of the different non-Muslim communities shall be obliged to review its current institutions in an appropriate manner, and to introduce those reforms judged necessary by those in authority’. The purpose of this revision was

above all the adoption of regulations sufficient to remedy abuses of authority, to facilitate the recourse of the poor to justice, to establish set salaries for the clergy in accordance with the order of the hierarchy and with the means of the taxpayers, and, finally, to place the administration of the communal finances under the safe-keeping of a mixed assembly of clergy and laity.

Canning set these as his minimum expectations and hoped to achieve more ‘as we proceed’. Also, since experience had shown that the sultan’s ministers could not be trusted to carry out these reforms, it was indispensable ‘that Europe – I mean the Allies – should retain a virtual superintending action over the enforcement of the Pasha’s reforms whether as to privileges or as to administration, both most necessary’.

Thouvenel’s memorandum to his government on the Fourth Guarantee was even more forthright. ‘The maintenance of the religious privileges of the Christian subjects of the S. Porte has been the origin of the war’, Thouvenel observed, and it was imperative that the Porte prevent further crises by carrying out a thorough reorganization of the Orthodox millet. Even without the recent troubles, millet reform was
desirable as ‘the rapid succession of patriarchs on the ecumenical throne of Constantinople is at the same time a scandal for Christianity and a burden upon the population’. The theoretical irremovability of the patriarchs must therefore become factual. Simony, absenteeism, and the arbitrary powers of the hierarchy all had to be reined in:

[Mandatory] residence of all bishops and metropolitans in their dioceses, except for a number of Prelates summoned in turn and for a limited time to attend the Patriarch, will cut short the intrigues that are raised periodically and that overthrow the chiefs of the Eastern community without cause. The priests of all ranks will no longer be able to purchase their dioceses and cures of souls, as is done today, at the highest price. They will formally be forbidden to collect alms or levy taxes on their own account. Taxes in currency or in kind for the support of each diocese and cure, for the maintenance of the religion and its servants, will be voted by a council of notables, and gathered by collectors nominated ad hoc. A greater share in the temporal administration will be given to the laity.

Ecclesiastical reforms were to be accompanied by other measures, such as a secularized judicial system and the democratization of provincial and municipal government. The new head of the Foreign Ministry’s Political Directorate in Paris, Vincent Benedetti, fully endorsed these goals and agreed that such important reforms could not be left in the hands of clergymen: ‘The members of the synod should not decide too much. They are like the Ulema, and both one and the other are equally to be treated with caution’.

(b) Second meeting, 16 January
Fuad sent his written summary of the rights and privileges of the non-Muslim communities to the three European representatives on 13 January and they met on the morning of 16 January at the French embassy to formulate a joint response. The ambassadors found themselves in complete agreement on most points and decided to adopt Canning’s memorandum to Clarendon on the Fourth Point as the basis for their written response. From Pera, the three representatives proceeded to the grand vizier’s home, where Âli, Fuad, and Kallimáchis awaited them. Thouvenel opened the meeting by reading out Fuad’s memorandum. The participants then engaged in what Canning described as a ‘free exchange of remarks and explanations relative to certain passages’.
Canning reported that the ambassadors found ‘two things particularly striking’ about Fuad’s summary of the privileges: ‘namely, the degree of power attributed to the patriarchs and other dignitaries of the Christian churches, particularly of the Greek, over their respective dependents, and the little provision made for protecting the latter from any abusive exercise of authority’. The Ottoman millets therefore obviously required no new privileges; their existing rights needed merely to be purged of abuses and enforced. Thouvenel, however, was more candid in his report to Walewski about their comments to Fuad and Âli: ‘We have recognized unanimously that even if it is granted that the machine functions badly, one still cannot deny the extent of the rights accorded ab antiquo to the Christians and the almost monstrous exaggeration of the powers given to the Greek Patriarch’:

The honour, fortune, individual liberty, and freedom of conscience of all Christians of the eastern rite depend entirely on the chief of the Church of Constantinople, without any control by the sovereign authority [of the Ottoman state]. He exiles and imprisons whom he pleases, he levies taxes, he nominates and removes Bishops, he uses and abuses the punishment of excommunication, he exercises censorship over books, and he draws up programs of study without anyone being able to oppose him in all these diverse activities which touch upon so many aspects of political and civil life. What is worse, the Ottoman government is constrained to lend its forces to assure the execution of his will.

Thouvenel recalled that ‘each of the paragraphs relating to the organization of the patriarchates was the object of critical observations on the part of one or another’ of the ambassadors. Âli claimed that he would happily adopt a more ambitious program of reforms, were it not for the fact that ‘the Greek clergy would be an invincible obstacle to the reforms demanded by the interests of their community’. The ambassadors refused to accept this excuse and insisted that the Porte must be more ambitious. Thouvenel noted:

We have recognized that this task requires much prudence and much time, but we have nevertheless insisted of a common accord that it was indispensable to undertake it. The setting of fixed salaries for the dignitaries and members of the eastern clergy will assuredly be the most efficient means of reducing the abuses that have been introduced into that unfortunate Church and that have made a common
law of Simony. Changing the mode of the distribution of ecclesiastical posts would give to their titularies the morality and the stability that they lack in the same degree. Pashaliks are no longer sold at the Porte, but dioceses are still auctioned off at the Fanar while the population foot the bill for these sales, which are as frequent as they are scandalous. If Russia . . . could claim a right that was nothing but the conservation of such a regime, the Western Powers, as it seems to us, ought to profit from circumstances by imposing a remedy, with moderation but also with firmness, to this state of things that afflicts Christianity and overwhelms the Greek nation.

‘We have, therefore’, he concluded, ‘most vigorously advised the Grand Vizier to form a commission of clergy and laity worthy of confidence who should, under the presidency of the Patriarch, search out and indicate the means of restoring the religious dignity of the Eastern Church and of laying the foundations for the separation of the spiritual from the temporal’.

(c) Third meeting, 19 January

The ambassadors met again on 18 January and spent several hours reworking Canning’s memorandum into a definitive statement of the reforms they wanted the Porte to carry out. Around midday of 19 January, they agreed on the finished redaction and took it to Âli’s home for their third meeting. They spent the next seven hours in another point-by-point discussion of Canning’s memorandum. The Ottoman ministers objected again that the representatives of the Western Powers were proposing measures that went far beyond what they had agreed to discuss. The ambassadors countered that the international community would accept nothing less. Like Palmerston, they observed that the Porte must choose between an imperial rescript drawn up under European influence and a package of reforms dictated by an international peace conference. Âli and Fuad conceded defeat and agreed to accept all but two of the 21 articles. Agreement remained elusive on the articles dealing with freedom of conscience and foreign ownership of property, but the ambassadors left extremely pleased with the progress they had made.

Each claimed his share of the credit for what had been accomplished. Canning was proud that his memorandum had formed the basis of the ambassadors’ joint statement. Prokesch told Buol with evident satisfaction that: ‘All the points, without exception, which Your Excellency has deigned to recommend in Your instructions have found their place in our
proposals, even that of the very delicate question of the Patriarchate'.

Thouvenel boasted to Benedetti: ‘You will see that my ideas about reform within the non-Muslim communities have succeeded. I have reflected on this for some time, and I remain convinced that the seeds lie there of an effective amelioration in the fate of the Christian populations, more oppressed by their priests than by the Turks’.

The text of the memorandum they had arrived at declared in its second article that the Sublime Porte would guarantee in perpetuity ‘the recognition and maintenance of all the spiritual privileges accorded ab antiquo’ to the non-Muslim communities. The term ‘spiritual’ was used deliberately to exclude the temporal privileges of the clergy – demonstrating yet again the validity of Menshikov’s objections to the use of the adjective. The third article then specified:

Each non-Muslim community will be obliged, within a fixed period, to proceed to an examination of its present immunities and to the introduction of those reforms required by the progress of enlightenment and the times. The powers conceded to the Patriarchs and Bishops of the Christian rites by Sultan Mahomet II and his successors will be brought into harmony with the new position assured to those communities by the generous intentions of His Majesty the Sultan. The principle of the Patriarchs’ nomination for life will be exactly applied. Ecclesiastical fees, of whatever form and nature they might be, shall be suppressed, and replaced by fixed revenues for the Patriarchs and Heads of Communities, and by the allocation of pay and salaries, equitably proportioned by importance and according to the rank and dignity of the priests. No infringement shall be made on the movable or real properties of the various Christian clergies. Nevertheless, the temporal administration of the non-Muslim communities will be placed under the safeguard of an assembly, chosen by each of the said communities from amongst the members of their clergy and laity.

Prokesch made clear in his report that they had drafted the article specifically ‘to deal with the question of the Patriarchate, that is to say, the separation of the spiritual from the temporal’. Prokesch had proposed making this connection more explicit by adding a passage on the need to ‘lift up the Eastern Church from its profound abasement’. In the end, though, the phrase was cut as ‘a concession to the cult of progress’. Prokesch was satisfied, however, that they had laid down the ‘essential points’ review committees must address. It would then ‘fall to the S. Porte, and in particular to the ability of Prince Callimachi, to watch
over the composition of the commissions which will be named so that they correspond to our desires’. Áli and Fuad agreed, he concluded

that the proposed reform of the Patriarchate is one of the conditions sine qua non of the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire. They know that they will always encounter all-out opposition [to these reforms] from Russia, all the more so, inasmuch as [Russia] finds [its] support in the corruption of the high clergy and the ignorance of the people. The Porte therefore understands the benefit of completing this measure before Russia takes part in the deliberations.¹⁰⁷

(d) Fourth meeting, 29 January
During the last week of January Áli and Fuad submitted a provisional draft of the conference’s memorandum on the Fourth Point to the sultan and his Council of State. Not surprisingly, both objected strongly to the proposed rearrangement of non-Muslim affairs. Ottoman dependence on their allies left them, however, with little choice. The council conceded all points except the two that Fuad and Áli had already indicated were violations of black-letter Shariah law: the legalization of apostasy and foreign ownership of real estate. In both cases, the Ottomans offered to satisfy the ambassadors’ demands de facto, but not de jure. The sultan could not formally abrogate these laws, but he would let them lapse in practice.¹⁰⁸

Canning haughtily rejected the proffered compromises. On 25 January, he submitted a private note to Áli in which he insisted that the British, French, and Austrian embassies would accept nothing less than a formal abolition of the death penalty for apostasy from Islam.¹⁰⁹

In fact, Prokesch and Thouvenel had only included the article on apostasy out of deference to Canning, and neither man could understand why the British ambassador would jeopardize everything over it.¹¹⁰ The atmosphere of the fourth meeting of the conference, held at the British embassy on 29 January, was thus less collegial than previous ones and threatened to break up entirely when Canning launched into a tirade on the immorality of Islamic laws on apostasy. Canning’s impertinence towards Áli shocked Prokesch, who reported, ‘the captain of a ship would not have treated any worse a Carib chieftain whom he wished to make renounce cannibalism’.¹¹¹ Thouvenel and Prokesch navigated the negotiations back off the rocks and a late dinner helped to calm tempers somewhat. After much wrangling, the ministers finally agreed to promise that no subject ‘shall be hindered in the exercise of the religion he professes’, while still stopping short of formally legalizing
The Ottoman government approved the amended articles during the first week of February and agreed to pass them into law as quickly as possible. Reviewing events, Prokesch assured Buol that:

The essential points of the reorganization of the Patriarchates on the base of the separation of the temporal from the spiritual, the organization of tribunals, the admission of Christians to state employment, the accessibility of public instruction to all classes without distinction of religion and race, . . . etc. etc. have been definitely adopted, for the most part without modifications. I have never seen more important concessions made with better grace.

Thouvenel similarly felt they had ‘obtained enormous and unexpected concessions on the Fourth Point’. It would be, he boasted, ‘toute une révolution’.

Casting the die: The Reform Decree and the Peace of Paris

With formal peace talks scheduled in Paris for the third week of February, Âli had to rush their agreement on the Fourth Point into law. He submitted the finished proclamation to the three ambassadors, who reviewed it for compliance with their memorandum. The sultan then promulgated it as a hatt-ı hümayun on 18 February 1856.

The formal reading was similar to that of the Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane, with one revealing difference. As in 1839, The Times described an audience composed of ‘white and green turbaned Ulemas and Softas, Greek and Armenian priests, a good many Perotes, here and there a European, and hosts of fez-capped, nondescript gentlemen’. Among those in attendance were the grand vizier Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa, the members of the Council of State and of the Tanzimat, key military leaders, the şeyhülislam, kadıaskers, and the most prominent notables of the different religious communities, including Patriarch Kýrillos VII, three synodal elders, Vogorídis, and Aristárchis. Whereas the audience in 1839 had included most of the diplomatic corps and even French royalty, however, this time Europeans were pointedly not invited. The omission of Westerners was not intended as a snub but was rather to preserve the fiction that the hatt sprang entirely from the free will of the sultan.

The weather had been miserable all winter so the crowd had to make their way through gusting winds and rain to the petition chamber (arz odası) of the Sublime Porte at the Topkapı Palace. As in 1839, private
tragedy overshadowed a watershed moment in Abdülmecid’s reign. Zekiye Sultan, Abdülmecid’s infant daughter by his fifth wife, Gülüştü, had died in the night so the distraught sultan could not attend and his ministers came directly from her funeral. The appointed venue was too small so the soldiers charged with maintaining order struggled to clear a path for the ministers and other dignitaries. Once the long line of carriages had made its way through the crowd and all had taken their places, the chief secretary (*mekrutçu*), Habib Effendi, removed the decree from its red satin cover.

The hatt was read out in an atmosphere of considerable anticipation and anxiety. The majority of the audience had little exact information about the substance of the imperial rescript, but it was said to contain sweeping – possibly destabilizing – reforms. These rumours of radical change were so worrisome that in the second week of February a delegation of ulema had gone to the şeyhülislam, Arif Effendi, and demanded to know what was happening. Was it true, they asked, that the hatt being drafted would grant complete religious freedom to all non-Muslims and that the privileged position of Islam in the empire was about to be overthrown? Arif flatly denied the last point, but otherwise told the delegation members to mind their own business.

As anticipated, the new ‘Reform Decree’ (*Islahat Fermanı*) announced a host of measures, ranging from renewed attempts to abolish tax farming and bring non-Muslims into the Ottoman military to the declaration of freedom of conscience and the appointment of non-Muslims to the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances. The hatt also, of course, decreed a restructuring of the non-Muslim communities. The articles dealing directly with communal reform were lifted word for word from the text of Canning’s memorandum on the Fourth Point:

[Art. 3.] Each Christian or other non-Muslim community will be obliged, within a fixed delay and with the concurrence of its own ad hoc commission, to proceed with My approval, and under the supervision of My Sublime Porte, to an examination of its present immunities and privileges, and to discuss and submit to My Sublime Porte those reforms required by the progress of enlightenment and the times.

[Art. 4.] The powers conceded to the patriarchs and bishops of the Christian rites by Sultan Mahomet II and his successors will be brought into harmony with the new position assured to those communities by Our generous and benevolent intentions. The principle of the Patriarchs’ nomination for life will be exactly applied in
conformity with the tenor of their berat of investiture, following the revision of the election regulations today in effect.

[Art. 5.] The patriarchs, metropolitans (archbishops), delegates, bishops, and also the grand rabbis, will swear an oath upon entering into their functions, according to a formula that will be decided by agreement between the Sublime Porte and the spiritual chiefs of the diverse communities.

[Art. 6.] Ecclesiastical fees, of whatever form and nature they might be, shall be suppressed, and replaced by fixed revenues for the Patriarchs and Heads of Communities, and by the allocation of pay and salaries, equitably proportioned by importance and according to the rank and dignity of the diverse members of the clergy.

[Art. 7.] No infringement shall be made on the movable or real properties of the various Christian clergies. The temporal administration of the Christian and other non-Muslim communities will be placed under the safeguard of a council, chosen by each of the said communities from among the members of its clergy and laity.121

A long silence followed the reading of the hatt, after which Arif Effendi delivered a sermon on the equality of all men before God and led the crowd in prayers for their benevolent sultan.

In the short term, international response to the decree mattered more than its domestic reception. The attention of the grand vizier and the three ambassadors therefore turned to Paris, where the peace conference began meeting on 25 February in the sumptuously appointed salon des ambassadeurs at the Quai d’Orsai. Over the next month, all participants except Russia and the Ottomans were represented by their foreign ministers and ambassadors to Paris: Clarendon and Cowley for Britain, Buol and Count Joseph Alexander Hübnér for Austria, Count Camillo Benso di Cavour and the Marquis Salvatore Pes de Villamarina for Piedmont-Sardinia, and (after 18 March) Otto von Manteuffel and Count Maximilian von Hatzfeldt for Prussia. The grand vizier, Mehmed Emin Âli, insisted on being personally present and was assisted by Mustafa Reşid’s son, Mehmed Cemil. The tsar’s adjutant-general, Aleksei Fëdorovich Orlov, and Filipp Ivanovich Brunnov negotiated on behalf of Russia. Walewski chaired their meetings, and played host with the assistance of Bourqueney and the head of the Political Directorate, Vincent Benedetti.122

Things began well for the Ottoman delegation, with the conference easily agreeing at its second sitting on 28 February to welcome the Ottoman Empire formally into the European state system.123 The
Powers promised henceforward to respect the sultan's independence and to seek third-party mediation in all disputes before resorting to war. Inclusion in the Concert of Europe led naturally, however, to the question of what the Ottoman Empire would do to justify such confidence and, more specifically, what it would do to make foreign interventions on behalf of Ottoman Christendom unnecessary. Ali cited the sultan's repeated commitment to uphold the privileges of his non-Muslim subjects and then presented the new hatt officially to the other Powers for their consideration.

The Russian delegation first broached the problem of what this communication signified by proposing that the conference incorporate the hatt into the general treaty in a manner that linked Ottoman membership in the European Concert with implementation of the new reforms. The Great Powers would thereby take both the Reform Decree and the rights of the non-Muslim communities under joint protection. Count Orlov obviously hoped thereby to salvage something of Nicholas I's original goals. If Russia could not place the communal rights of the Orthodox under its sole protection, at least it might claim to have placed the personal rights of Ottoman Christians under the protection of Europe as a whole. To Ali's frustration, the other plenipotentiaries supported this proposal, only adding the obviously false caveat that 'no prejudice should result . . . to the independence and dignity of the Sultan's Crown'. Ali hedged by claiming that he lacked explicit instructions, but his response to the proposal was wholly negative. During the sitting of 24 March, Walewski attempted to strike a compromise by proposing that the general treaty should record the simple fact of the communication of the hatt. The congress would then recognize its 'high value', but in such a way that the Powers acquired no rights of interference with the sultan's subjects. Ali also rejected this formulation, but the other delegates ignored his objections and adopted it on 25 March.

The Porte was rightly unhappy with this oblique inclusion of the hatt in the final Paris Peace Treaty. Despite Walewski's assurances, the Powers would use the inclusion to justify numerous interventions over the next three decades on behalf of the sultan's Christian subjects. The Russian government, predictably, hailed the settlement as a vindication of all its policies. In a manifesto announcing the conclusion of peace on 31 March 1856, Alexander II congratulated his subjects: 'From now on, the future destiny and the rights of all Christians in the Orient are assured. The Sultan solemnly recognizes them, and in consequence of this act of justice the Ottoman Empire enters into the community
of European states! Russians! Your efforts and your sacrifices were not in vain’. This was putting a brave face on things, but many neutral observers agreed that Russia had come out much better than expected from the negotiations regarding the Fourth Point.

In the Ottoman Empire itself, public responses to the hatt were muted but generally negative. Thouvenel reported that Muslims were resigned to the sacrifices demanded by the new edict, but other observers were not so sanguine. Reşid, for one, fulminated against the hatt to all who would listen. He accused his former apprentices of having lost their heads and allowed the Powers to impose an impracticable and offensive program. In common with modern scholarship, Reşid characterized the hatt as a ‘product of foreign interference’ rather than an organic extension of the Tanzimat reforms – although he was less critical of those articles dealing with millet reform. Ordinary Muslims similarly considered the edict a foreign imposition, from its purpose and content to the timing of its promulgation, and they disparaged it accordingly. A common refrain, recorded by the Ottoman statesman and scholar, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, was that the hatt had disestablished the Qur’an and that: ‘This is a day of weeping and mourning for the people of Islam’. Many noted, in agreement with Adolphus Slade, a British officer serving in the Ottoman navy, that the Russian sened would have left the structures of Ottoman society ‘materially as they were … [Russia] did not ask for non Mohammedan evidence to be admitted in the mekkiemehs (tribunals). It did not ask for rayas to share in posts of dignity and hold commissions in the army. It did not ask for bells to be rung in churches for prayers’. The Ottoman Empire thus seemed to have been forced to accept, as victors, measures more intrusive than those Menshikov’s ultimatum would have entailed.

Reception of the hatt among non-Muslims was warmer, but far from uniformly positive. Cevdet sensed that many Christians mistrusted the new ‘equality’, fearing they would bear all the burdens of citizenship while enjoying few of its benefits. Orthodox Christians also seem to have feared the loss of their more privileged position relative to other non-Muslim groups. Cevdet claims to have heard indignant Orthodox protesting: ‘The government has made us equal with the Jews! We were satisfied with the superiority of Islam!’ The Orthodox clergy were most apprehensive. One anecdote that made the rounds after the proclamation of the hatt was that Metropolitan Dionýsios Katákis of Nikomideia had grumbled as Habib Effendi was returning the imperial edict to its container: ‘God grant it stays there’. Thouvenel reported the comment as an expression of ‘the intimate sentiments of most of the
prelates of the Greek rite’ as well as of those notables who participated ‘in the exactions of the Patriarchate and in the sale of dioceses’.136

Such negative reactions underline the extent to which the Reform Decree of 1856 signalled a high-water mark for European diplomatic involvement in Ottoman internal affairs and, more specifically, in the affairs of the Orthodox Church. It was the Western Powers, not the Porte, that insisted on devoting so much of the hatt to questions of communal and ecclesiastical reform and to the establishment of religious equality. The British, French, and Austrian embassies had also inserted specific measures: a reduction in the clergies’ temporal powers, the introduction of clerical salaries, progressive laicization of communal administrations, and the regularization of ecclesiastical affairs. The Porte had attempted less radical reforms for more than a decade without success and the Ottoman ministers doubted they would be able to do any better in the foreseeable future – especially once the Russian legation returned to Istanbul. Âli and Fuad had warned the ambassadors that such reforms were desirable in theory, but also impracticable and disruptive.

The unique conditions of wartime had allowed Thouvenel and his colleagues to override these objections and insist that they would accept nothing less than sweeping communal reforms. The Porte had tried to satisfy their demands via the hatt of 1856, and the Powers had written the new reforms into a binding international treaty against the express wishes of the Ottoman government. In private, Prokesch von Osten admitted to Buol that he and his colleagues knew very well that they were forcing the Porte to stake all on an enormous gamble. ‘These reforms’, he predicted, ‘will either lead to the reorganization of the empire on principles similar to those of civilized states, or else to the destruction of Muslim power’.137
The Church of Constantinople, which still calls itself the Great Church, presents a sad and curious spectacle. What a contrast between its past grandeur and its current abasement! . . . Soon nothing will be left to it but a neighbourhood in Constantinople.¹

– Fr Ivan Gagarin, 1865

Senior. – Do you think that the temporal power of the Pope can last 50 years?

Thiers. – I do not think that it can last ten years. And with his temporal power he will lose the greater part of his spiritual power. He will sink into a kind of Patriarch of Constantinople.²

– Nassau William Senior and Adolphe Thiers, 1852

A defeated hope: Arnavutköy, 1871

In the summer of 1871, Grigórios VI Fourtouniádis found himself once again vacating the offices of the patriarchate in the Phanar and exchanging the burdens of office for the quiet of his home in the seaside suburb of Arnavutköy. Unlike Grigórios’s first departure from the patriarchal throne in 1840, this time he was leaving by choice and the Porte was reluctant to see him go. In his letter of resignation on 22 June, however, Grigórios gave vent to feelings of distress that far exceeded anything he had experienced three decades before. Grigórios reminded the Porte that when his nation had recalled him to the patriarchal throne in 1867, he had been reluctant to accept ‘the kind and quantity
of torments and difficulties that the patriarchate entails, even in times less troubled than these when every manner of vexed question disturbs the Church of Christ.\(^3\) As a former patriarch, he had sat in on the deliberations of many synods since 1840 and had observed at first hand the alarming degeneration in his community's affairs since the end of the Crimean War.

More than a year after the promulgation of the Reform Decree, the Porte had finally ordered the millets to convocate special ad hoc committees and begin the process of restructuring themselves.\(^4\) A Provisional Council (Prosrínō Symvoúlion) composed of 33 representatives – 15 delegates from the provinces, five bourgeois and guildsmen from Istanbul, five Phanariot notables, and eight bishops – began meeting at the Phanar under the presidency of Kyrillos VII on 3 October 1858.\(^5\) The proceedings of this council were predictably riotous, but the majority of the delegates finally agreed to a set of recommendations that they submitted to the Porte on 18 February 1860.\(^6\) Fully a third of the council – two of the notables (Aristárchis and Psycháris), half of the clergy, and all of the Slavic delegates – dissented, however, and refused to sign the final recommendations. The Porte ignored their objections and passed the recommendations of the majority into law on 27 January 1862 as the General Regulations (in Greek, Yenikoí Kanonismoí; in Turkish, Rum Patrikliği Nizamati). Similar regulations followed in 1863 and 1865 for the Armenian and Jewish millets.

On paper, at least, a great milestone in Ottoman history had been reached – the fulfilment of what Thouvenel, Prokesch, and Canning had unanimously declared ‘the most important clause’ of the Reform Decree of 1856.\(^7\) The new regulations created a lay-dominated Permanent National Mixed Council (Diarkés Ethnikón Miktón Symvoúlion), composed of eight laymen elected by the parishes of Istanbul and four metropolitans appointed by the synod. Together, this Mixed Council oversaw the schools, churches, hospitals, and orphanages of the Orthodox Community and managed all other ‘non-spiritual affairs’.\(^8\) In financial matters, the General Regulations assigned patriarchs an annual income of 500,000 piasters and set ‘subsidies’ of between 12,000 and 100,000 piasters for each of the patriarchate’s 117 hierarchs – amounts only slightly lower than what they would have made licitly under the old dispensation. The patriarchate was to recoup these expenses through a regular levy upon each eparchy, the bishops and notables of which were to divide the burden of the new tax among the Christian populace. In addition to this income, the clergy were permitted to continue collecting fees for services such as marriages and divorces, albeit in accordance
with a standardized price list. Finally, the Regulations significantly curtailed the clergy’s arbitrary powers of arrest, imprisonment, and exile, and restricted the scope of episcopal courts to family law. As an institution, the Orthodox Church would never again exercise the temporal authority it had once enjoyed.

The new millet still corresponded very imperfectly, however, to Western and Ottoman plans to see the Orthodox clergy deprived of power, disciplined, salaried, and reconciled with their sovereign and their flocks. The Orthodox continued to be the millet with the greatest confusion of temporal and spiritual authorities. The patriarch remained the formal head of his community and bishops still sat on all its governing bodies (making up one-third of the National Mixed Council, for example). While the clergy continued to share in the governance of temporal matters, lay representatives made virtually no inroads into the inner workings of the Church. There was to be no lay procurator on the synod and no formal lay participation in its composition or deliberations. This was all in marked contrast to the constitutions of the Armenian, Latin, and Protestant communities, which gave the laity exclusive control over temporal affairs and considerable input on spiritual matters.

The new Regulations also did little to improve ecclesiastical discipline. Canning, Thouvenel, and Prokesch had repeatedly insisted on the need to ensure that only candidates of the highest calibre were elected to the patriarchate and that, once enthroned, they be immune from the vagaries of politics. In practice, however, there was little change in either the quality of patriarchal candidates or the permanency of the latter in office. During the first two decades following the promulgation of the General Regulations, for example, the Porte ordered the removal of four patriarchs and elevated two who had previously been convicted of serious abuses. In the two decades preceding the promulgation of the Regulations, by comparison, the Porte had removed (or forced the resignation of) five patriarchs.

Nor did the Regulations create reliable salaries for the clergy. Instead, it instituted a system of subsidies that immediately proved unworkable. By 1865, only half of the patriarchate’s eparchies had implemented the new financial arrangements and all were in arrears. The amounts set aside in the General Regulations were simultaneously less than the clergy needed and more than the laity would pay. To make matters worse, the Porte declined to enforce the orders emanating from the Phanar that all Christians pay their fair share of the new subsidies. As a result, the patriarchate announced in 1865 that it was receiving
only 15,000–20,000 of the 70,000 piasters it needed every month to function. The patriarch of the day, Sofrónios Meïdantzóglou, declared that neither he, nor the synod, nor the Mixed Council could find any solution to the financial ruin that the Regulations had created. In the short term, the Phanar had to contract loans of over a million piasters to make up the shortfall.

While the Regulations made only half-gestures towards the structural reform of the Community, they did nothing whatsoever to reconcile Orthodox Christians to Ottoman rule or calm spirits in the troubled interior of Rumelia. The Regulations did increase lay participation in the administration of the Orthodox Community and strengthened the influence of the bourgeoisie, but they also left power in the hands of Greek-speaking urban elites. Financiers, merchants, and neo-Phanariot notables dominated both the new National Council and the electoral assembly, while the bulk of the Orthodox population remained unrepresented. The reforms actually inflamed the millet’s internal dissensions by dashing the hopes of moderates that a reorganized administration would address their legitimate grievances.

The failure of the new General Regulations to bridge these divisions encouraged the eruption of an open schism within the Community on 15 April 1860, barely three months after the Provisional Council’s submission of its final recommendations. During Easter services at the Bulgarian church of St Stefan’s in Istanbul, bishops Ilarion Mikhailovski of Makarioúpolis, Païsios Zafirov of Filippoúpolis, Avksenti Cheshmidzhiev of Véles, and Gedeon of Sófia had taken the bold move of omitting Patriarch Kýrillos’s name from the litanies of intercession. A month later on 24 May (the feast day of Sts Cyril and Methodius ‘Enlighteners of the Slavs’), 30 different church communities across Bulgaria followed Bishop Ilarion’s example by omitting the patriarch of Constantinople from their liturgical commemorations. All understood this as a declaration of Bulgarian ecclesiastical independence. ‘The whole Bulgarian community is in a ferment’, reported the Levant Herald, ‘and loudly and forcibly demands … to be placed on a completely separate administrative basis’. The rupture, the Herald noted, had come about as a direct result of the failure of the Provisional Council and of the patriarchate to meet the demands of Bulgarian Christians.

By the summer of 1860, the administration of the Orthodox Community had ground to a standstill. ‘All the affairs of the Church are wasting away’, complained one Greek observer: ‘Never, no never, has the Eastern Church found itself in such a state of paralysis, dissolution, and stagnation, as that to which we are witness today’. One of Istanbul’s
foremost Greek-language newspapers, the pro-reform Vyzándis, declared that anything, even the old system of synodal elders, was preferable to the anarchy and inaction that marked the new, reformed administration.\textsuperscript{18} The judgment of the reforms made half a century later by the ecclesiastical historian Metropolitan Filáretos Vafeídis was already a common refrain in the 1860s:

Passing judgment impartially on the General Regulations and comparing [them] with the former regime and the effects of their application over the last sixty years, we must candidly declare that they have neither preserved our privileges, nor achieved the establishment of the internal organization of the Patriarchates, nor improved the economic situation of the Church, nor restrained the crying abuses. Indeed, hard reality demonstrates to the contrary that since the application of these measures greater disarray and confusion has been created ...\textsuperscript{19}

As a result, the clamour for a wholesale revision of the General Regulations was universal and came equally from Orthodox traditionalists, friends of the Porte, and Greek and Bulgarian nationalists.

Grigórios VI had therefore been understandably reluctant when supporters had put his name forward again in the elections of 1867. He had pointedly refused to lobby the electors on his own behalf and absented himself from their meetings. When the synod and Mixed Council came to congratulate him on his election by a wide margin, he made a further show of reluctance and insisted on setting conditions for his acceptance.\textsuperscript{20} His first act as patriarch-elect was thus to issue a statement that he would only accept if the Porte agreed to issue a berat investing him with \textit{exactly} the same privileges he had enjoyed in 1835. This demand was not a matter of nostalgia or ambition, but a deliberate attempt to reverse the decline. Grigórios put both the lay representatives of the Community and the Porte on notice that he intended a thorough revision of the General Regulations, with the aim of reforming the Church in accordance with its canons, traditions, and privileges rather than in violation of them.\textsuperscript{21}

Upon taking office, however, Grigórios was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problems he encountered. ‘Despite all our diligent care and efforts, night and day’, he complained, difficulties had multiplied and defied every attempt at resolution. Internally, ‘great tumult and uproar’ lacerated the Church, while from without it suffered ‘grievous injuries and infringements upon the ecclesiastical authority
and privileges of this most holy throne’. The Bulgarian movement, in particular, pressed him to create an autonomous Bulgarian vicariate or ‘exarchate’, with ecclesiastical boundaries that would foreshadow the political borders of a future Bulgarian state. The Greek laity was no less insistent that Grigórios deny these demands – or, at least, restrict the Bulgarian exarchate’s territory as much as possible. Greek nationalists accused the dissidents of trying to ‘Bulgarianize’ regions that rightfully belonged to the ‘Greater Greece’ that would rise in the Balkans upon the collapse of Ottoman power there. Greeks thus condemned the patriarch for seeming ready to give away too much; Bulgarians accused him of giving them too little.

In the spring of 1870, Grand Vizier Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa lost patience with the interminable negotiations between the Orthodox Community and the Bulgarian Church movement. The latter was becoming ever larger and more strident in its demands, and Âli feared that the Bulgarians might place themselves under the Russian synod if an acceptable alternative was not provided for them within the Ottoman Empire. He therefore decided to issue a ferman unilaterally creating what the dissidents most desired, their own national church, while stopping short of giving them full status as a separate millet. Instead, the new ecclesiastical body was to remain under the spiritual authority of the patriarchate as an autonomous ‘Bulgarian Exarchate’ (in Bulgarian, Bulgarska Ekzarhiya; in Turkish, Bulgar Eksarhiği). The subordination of this new body to the Phanar was to be purely nominal, however. The new exarchate was to draw up its own organic regulation and ‘entirely remove all direct and indirect interference of the patriarchate in their ecclesiastical affairs and most especially in the selection of the exarch and of bishops’ (Art.3). The imperial ferman gave Bulgarian nationalists most of the eparchies they wanted and further specified that any Orthodox parish might join the exarchate should two-thirds of its members opt to do so. Âli personally drafted the text of the ferman and on 10 March Sultan Abdülaziz signed it into law.

Grigórios vehemently opposed the decision. In two official memoranda on 24 March and 20 April, he drew the attention of the imperial authorities to the fact that, as a secular government, the Porte had no business interfering in a question that was ‘purely ecclesiastical’. The ferman was all the more offensive for the fact that Âli had given the new Bulgarian exarchate a structure and character that violated fundamental principles of Orthodox ecclesiology. As Grigórios explained, the Church of Christ must be one, indivisible and universal, recognizing
neither Jew nor gentile. Since at least the first century AD, early church fathers such as St Ignatius of Antioch had characterized the coming together of all Christians in a given locale around their bishop as a type of the universal Church gathered about Christ. All right-believing Christians inhabiting a city or region should come to the Lord’s Supper as a single eucharistic community without distinction of class, blood, language, gender, or political ideology. Distance necessitated the creation of separate geographical churches, but Christians had never before been divided into racial, ethnic, or ‘special interest’ churches. There was a Church of the Kingdom of Greece but not of Greeks, a patriarchate of Jerusalem but not of Palestinians, a patriarchate of Alexandria but not of Egyptians. The Porte, in erecting an exarchate explicitly for Bulgarians, introduced a principle of ecclesiastical organization – ethnicity – that had nothing to do with either salvation or existing political realities. Such an exarchate would turn Orthodox religious life into a perpetual plebiscite, with competing bishops laying claim to the same see, two priests arguing over a single parish, and two factions struggling for control of the village church in which all local Christians had formerly been baptized and buried.

For an alternative to the Porte’s uncanonical solution, Grigórios fell back upon the ultimate sanction of Orthodox ecclesiology. He ended his March memorandum with a heartfelt request that the government ‘consent to the convocation of an ecumenical council, which alone is competent to issue a decision that would be valid and binding on both parties’. Orthodox Christendom in its entirely – not only the patriarchates of the Ottoman Empire, but representatives from Russia, Austria-Hungary, Romania, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia – should come together in one place and allow the Holy Spirit to manifest itself. Only by such conciliarity could the Church enact comprehensive, just, and canonical solutions to the crises confronting it. Such a council had not met since 787 AD and it was even unclear who had the authority to convene one, but Grigórios felt that the challenges of his day were no less serious than those occasioned in the past by the heresies of Arius and Nestorius.

For all its traditionalism, Grigórios’s solution was also eminently contemporary. Across Europe in the late 1860s, churches were resorting to similar internationalist solutions to a common set of challenges. In the spring of 1868, Grigórios VI had received a letter in which Archbishop Charles Longley of Canterbury informed the primates of the Eastern Churches ‘as brethren in the Lord’ that a conclave of Anglican bishops had taken place at Lambeth Palace the previous September. Along with this letter, Longley sent the Pan-Anglican Encyclical containing the
conference’s decisions in hopes ‘that the Lord grant unto all to have the same mind in all things’. 27 On 15 October, Grigórios received yet more foreign visitors bearing missives, this time from Pope Pius IX. The papal representatives presented Grigórios with an apostolic letter inviting him and ‘all bishops of the Eastern Rite’ to attend an ecumenical council the following year at the Vatican. To thus heal the ‘interminable schism’ between their two churches, Pius wrote, would be ‘the sweetest fruit of blessing…in such an age marked by stark oppositions’. 28 Grigórios politely declined the invitation, noting that doctrinal differences remained too irreconcilable for anything good to come of Orthodox attendance at a Catholic council. In a striking admission, however, he recognized that Old and New Rome confronted similar enemies and therefore needed ‘common love and sympathy’ as never before ‘on account of the many and various dangers and trials that surround the Church of Christ’. 29 When Grigórios thus called for a council of the entire Orthodox Church six months later, he did so with the examples of the Lambeth Conference and the First Vatican Council before his mind.

The success of these other councils aggravated Grigórios’s sense of despair when his own call for a world council of Orthodoxy fell flat: neither the Porte, Russia, the Great Powers, nor even the Phanar’s sister churches abroad would support it. Many objections were raised – the logistical difficulties of a great council, its expense, and political inexpediency – but Grigórios must have suspected that behind these lay the fear that his solution might work. The failure to convene an international council weighed heavily upon Grigórios. He tried to resign in May 1870, but the Porte would not permit it. 30 Over the winter of 1870 he proposed again that a grand council of representatives from the entire Orthodox world meet at the Phanar and seek canonical solutions to the ills of the Church. The Porte refused to consider his proposal and the Russian legation was similarly unsupportive.

The final straw came on 4 April, when the first dragoman of the Russian embassy visited the Phanar to read out the negative response of the Russian synod to Grigórios’s renewed calls for an ecumenical council. 31 As it became clear from the opening paragraphs of the missive that the Russian Church treated the Bulgarian Exarchate as a fait accompli, Grigórios interrupted the dragoman with an impassioned outburst:

But the Church considers the ferman null and void!...It was precisely to put an end to the interference of the Porte in the affairs of the Church – to lift her up from the abasement of so many centuries – that we proposed a meeting of the Ecumenical Council. The religious
and political traditions of Russia made us hope that no obstacles would come from that quarter. Has Russia not persistently raised her voice against the violation of our privileges and against Turkish meddling in spiritual matters?

He lapsed into silence before concluding with a bitter concession: ‘The Porte will triumph… All that remains for me, the humble shepherd, is to retire to private life. I will regret all my life that Russia has let slip this opportunity to raise up the prestige of the Great Church and of Orthodoxy in the East’.32

Several weeks later, the patriarch announced to an assembly of the Community that he was stepping down, ostensibly for reasons of health. In his formal letter of resignation to the Porte, Grigórios was more candid: he could achieve nothing in the face of intransigent Bulgarian and Greek nationalists, a fickle Ottoman state, and an obstructive Russian legation. ‘Wounded and weary at heart’, Grigórios felt all he could do for the battered ship of the Church was to let go of its tiller in hopes that a ‘firmer and more expert hand’ would take it up. He ended with a pointed prayer that the affairs of the Great Church be guided not by men, but by ‘the author and accomplisher of our salvation, Lord Jesus Christ, the only wise, all-powerful, and unfailing governor…the only fit and truly apostolic shepherd and pilot of this spiritual ship’.33

Grigórios VI’s second patriarchate had been a last opportunity for Orthodox conservatives to stave off ecclesiastical fragmentation and bring their Community into the modern world on the Church’s terms, in keeping with its own canons, traditions, and priorities. Grigórios was the hierarch most capable of contesting the marginalized role that had been assigned to the Orthodox Church and of mitigating the damage done to it over the previous three decades. He had a keen understanding of the issues at stake, approached them in a programmatic fashion, and, most importantly, had the personal popularity and moral gravitas to command the support of his flock and the grudging respect of the Porte. His failure was therefore all the more devastating.

Though other patriarchs would carry on the fight to defend the privileges of the Church against the Porte in what became known as ‘the Privileges Question’ (*to Pronomiató Zitima*), by the early 1870s Orthodox conservatives had already lost the internal struggle. It was no longer the Ottoman state and the Great Powers, but Ottoman Christians themselves who would take over the task of remaking their ecumene to reflect the ‘master nouns’ of the century: not God, emperor, and tradition, but nation-state, race, and modernity. Grigórios would be the last
pastor to reign over a flock that encompassed all Orthodox Christians from the Ionian Islands to the Caucasus and from the Danube to the Mediterranean. His successors would see one ethnic group and territory after another hive off to form competing churches. Romania unilaterally declared its ecclesiastical independence in 1864. The Greek Synod acquired the Ionian Islands (1865) and Thessaly (1881) following their annexation to Greece. Serbia demanded autocephaly for the Metropolitanate of Belgrade in 1879, and the next year Austria created an autonomous ‘Church of Bosnia’ for the province it had acquired at Berlin in 1878. A principle that Grigórios had fiercely resisted thus became established as normative: all Orthodox states henceforward possessed a single ecclesiastical administration, dominated by the state and defined by its national borders. Even at home, the Patriarchate suffered further secessions as Aromanians (1905), Albanians (1922),
and Turkophones/Karamanlídes (1922) demanded their own millets and national churches. The ecumenical patriarchate shrank to a bare shadow of its former self.

The two patriarchates of Grigórios VI in 1835–40 and 1867–71 thus serve as convenient bookends in the modern history of Orthodox Christendom, sectioning off a period of dramatic transformation when the Orthodox Community might have gone in very different directions. In the late 1830s, it was still possible to envisage a future in which a united Orthodox Church would play an independent role in shaping the political and cultural life of the region. By the late 1870s, however, the die had been cast for a very different sort of church. Externally, its temporal powers had been curtailed, it had been chased off the international stage, and denied reliable political support; internally, it was torn by schisms, defections, and competing national projects. The process of ecclesiastical ‘Balkanization’ both anticipated and contributed to the internecine strife that would tear Orthodox Christian society apart in the Ottoman lands at the beginning of the twentieth century.

‘Occidentalizing . . . Byzantine society’: Legacies and consequences

To what extent were deliberate policies behind these changes? At the beginning of the Crimean War, Karl Marx had dismissed as ridiculous any suggestion that the Great Powers seriously intended, as one of their war aims, to replace the old system of religious communities and protectorates in the Ottoman Empire with a new sort of society, one in which Ottoman subjects were no longer subjected to a nested hierarchy of overlapping theocracies. The Great Powers were many things, Marx observed drily, but not revolutionaries. It was absurd to think that they would deliberately carry out such a radical restructuring of Ottoman politics. Marx did not personally approve of the millet system, but it seemed obvious to him that the millets constituted a central support of Ottoman rule. They made the daunting task of administering a diverse empire manageable, if neither easy nor equitable. Any attempt to relegate religion abruptly to the sphere of private conscience would, he predicted, utterly uproot the old foundations of the empire and lead in short order to ‘anarchy, intestine [sic] warfare, and a final and speedy overthrow’. Nor could these effects be limited to the non-Muslim communities; Muslim supremacy over the empire and clerical supremacy over the millets were two sides of a single coin. A blow against one theocratic regime necessarily constituted a blow against the other, since ‘if you abolish [non-Muslims’] subjection under the Koran by a civil emancipation, you
cancel at the same time their subjection to the [non-Muslim] clergy, and provoke a revolution in their social, political and religious relations . . . you must occidentialize the entire structure of Byzantine society’.35 Marx ended on an uncharacteristically Metternichean note by concluding that genuine secularization would deliver the coup de grace to the Ottoman Empire. It was a solution that not only confirmed the Turk was ‘labouring under a dangerous malady, but cut the patient’s throat by way of medication’. ‘After that operation the Sultan may possibly be retained as a political fiction upon the throne of his fathers, but the real rulers of the country must be looked for elsewhere.’36 Marx expected that Russia would, paradoxically, be the ultimate beneficiary of secularization, since St Petersburg would finally be able to forge direct relationships with ordinary Christians without having to go through the mediation of the old clerical and Phanariot elites. For this reason, Marx suspected that Russia was not entirely displeased with the Four Points offered by the Powers as the basis for peace negotiations during the Crimean War. They were, he snorted, in reality ‘four Russian points’, and he had no doubt that Russia would accept them as soon as she had vindicated her honour on the field of battle.37 The Fourth Point, in particular, he thought would end up strengthening rather than weakening Russian influence in the East. The tsar would find it painful at first to give up Küçük Kaynarca and his claims to be the protector of Orthodoxy, but his prestige among most Ottoman Christians would be undiminished and he would receive compensation in the form of a new treaty right to act as co-guarantor of the civil rights of all Ottoman Christians. The tsar would have effected ‘the most complete revolution conceivable, and effected it wholly in his interest’.38

The diplomats who had contributed to the drafting of the Hatt-ı Hümayun of 1856 did not share this pessimistic assessment. Marx would have been surprised, however, by how self-conscious and proud they were of playing a revolutionary role in Ottoman religious affairs. Thouvenel, Canning, and Prokesch believed that a remodelling of the millet system was critical both for the continued survival of the Ottoman Empire and for the advancement of their respective states’ interests. In a letter to his superior just days after the promulgation of the Reform Decree in 1856, Thouvenel declared the reform of the Orthodox Community ‘the principal point of the reforms for which we have laid the foundations’. The temporal power of the clergy over Orthodox Christians was:

at the same time a cause of their own debasement and the strongest obstacle to the influence of Western ideas among the populace.
It was a kind of bulwark separating the Christians of the East not only from the Turks, but also from Europe, and delivering them over as an enclosed field to the exclusive action of Russia. Whatever future is reserved for the Ottoman Empire – whether the Turks find the moral energy to remain on top or whether the Christians rise up against them in a more or less distant future – our political interests require the toppling of that barrier. I dare not express too much confidence on this point, your Grace, but I do believe that we have done all we might to prolong the fate of a country whose undivided existence is so essential for the equilibrium of Europe; it is for the nations that inhabit it to make the most of the respite that, thanks to our armies, providence has yet granted it.\textsuperscript{39}

Over the next two decades Thouvenel and the other principle participants in the crises of the 1850s would die, retire, or turn their attention to other affairs, without so much as a backward glance to evaluate the relative success or failure of the policies they had championed. Did secularizing reforms hobble Russian influence over Ottoman Christians as they had intended? Or did reforms increase it? The disastrous series of uprisings among Christians in Crete, Lebanon, Thessaly, Bosnia-Hercegovina, and elsewhere over the course of the 1860s–70s must have discouraged open reflection among diplomats in London and Paris on the success or failure of their past policies towards the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire. Then there was the fact that, officially, such policies did not exist. In Blue Books and official statements, the British, French, and Austrians governments had insisted on their indifference to the outcome of such matters as patriarchal elections or the temporal powers enjoyed by the clergy. To have admitted publicly the true state of affairs – that British ambassadors promoted and opposed particular hierarchs or that a French foreign minister had sought to overthrow the Orthodox clerical regime – would have vindicated Russian claims and raised awkward questions about the legitimacy of such activities. Historians therefore must do what was left largely undone at the time and hazard an evaluation of four decades of European policy on Orthodox affairs in the Ottoman Empire.

At the beginning of the Tanzimat Era in 1839, the Hatt-ı Şerif was a thoroughly Ottoman creation, reflecting primarily domestic interests and priorities. The Ottoman government hoped that the hatt would meet with European approval, but this was very much a secondary concern. What mattered most was its impact at home and on Muslim society. The hatt therefore did not touch on millet affairs, although
Reşid was concerned about the spread of Russian influence and already contemplating means of subordinating the non-Muslim communities more effectively to the Ottoman government. In particular, he wished to see the Orthodox and Armenian clergies salaried and deprived of many of their temporal powers. The Ottoman ruling institution as a whole, however, was divided on the matter and few of Reşid’s colleagues regarded the problem as especially urgent. Ministers such as Rıfat and Damad Mehmed Âli saw the millets as stabilizing institutions and hesitated to initiate dramatic changes in the governance of Ottoman Christians. Even reformists such as Âli and Fuad did not place the task high on their list of priorities.

The first serious attempts at reforming the Orthodox Community thus had to wait until Reşid Paşa achieved a clear ascendancy again during the late 1840s – a situation due at least in part to the active support of the British embassy. Between 1847 and 1852, Reşid and his allies repeatedly prodded the Orthodox clergy to give the laity a larger role in running the Community, reform the worst abuses, and become more responsive to state direction. These efforts were hampered by their very hypocrisy, as the Ottoman government was itself implicated in many of the worst features of the clerical regime – venality, arbitrary use of power, and instability of tenure. In any case, the projects of the Ottoman government all came to naught before the stubborn resistance of the upper clergy and the Russian legation. Preservation of the status quo and Orthodox privileges was a shibboleth of Russian diplomacy, and the Porte feared the consequences of a concerted, frontal attack on them. Ottoman statesmen also became leery of disturbing the status quo and giving the clergy an opportunity to put forward their own, traditionalist-inspired projects for reform that would have increased their independence from the central state. Before 1853, then, Ottoman attempts at reform of the Orthodox Community were modest in aim, timid in execution, and abortive in effect. In those communities where genuine progress occurred, such as among the Gregorian Armenians, the Ottoman state did not so much propel laicizing reforms as endorse and recognize what popular movements had already more or less achieved on their own.

Whereas Ottoman policies on communal reform were ambivalent and piecemeal, the British, French, and Austrian embassies approached the issue with greater urgency, recklessness, and coherence. They urged the Porte and elements within the Orthodox Community to laicize the structure of the millet and restrict the temporal powers of the clergy as thoroughly as possible. A host of factors motivated Western statesmen
on this issue, ranging from simple Russophobia to a desire to ‘level the playing field’ in the Near East by removing the various monopolies, privileges, and disabilities that hampered Western participation in Ottoman markets and political affairs. A distinctive feature of most European critiques of Ottoman society was their conviction that the political prominence of clergymen was in itself retrogressive and problematic. Europeans considered clerical regimes to be unsound in principle and inimical in practice to the interests of all the Powers (except Russia) and to the progress of modernization itself. The British embassy played a particularly critical role in urging upon the Porte and the governments of the newly independent Balkan states the need for placing effective limits on the authority of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Time and again, whenever the Ottoman, Greek, Serbian, or Romanian governments wavered over how to treat the patriarchate or the Orthodox clergy generally, Britain and the other Western Powers invariably encouraged a harder line.

Such a systematic critique represented a significant departure from the views hitherto prevalent in the Near East. Orthodox Christians had long been dissatisfied with many aspects of their communal and ecclesiastical affairs, but they had regarded ecclesiastical corruption as part of a broader societal evil. Abusive bishops were but one manifestation of an Ottoman ruling institution that stood accused of oppressing the ordinary reâya, both Christians and Muslims. Blame for the problems of the Church thus fell on unscrupulous individuals and particular groups (such as the Phanariots) rather than on the structure of the millet per se. Ottoman Christians were often passionately loyal to their princely bishops and in many instances – most famously in Montenegro, Cyprus, and Lebanon – they encouraged prelates to take on greater political responsibilities. For Ottoman Christians, true reform was to be sought not in impious kainotomía (novelty) but in the ananéosis (renewal) of canonical norms and exemplary punishment of any transgressors. European cultural and political influences thus played an important role in inserting into Ottoman politics the notion that the temporal powers of the clergy were, in themselves, inherently bad.

Western, and especially British, diplomats were not content merely to promote a secularizing vision in Ottoman internal debates; they interfered forcefully in Ottoman religious affairs. Over the course of the quarter century between 1840 and 1865, the British embassy publicly demanded the removal of one patriarch (Grigórios VI), applied pressure to bring about the removal of three other patriarchs and one autocephalous
archbishop (Ánthimos IV, Yermanós IV, Ioakeim II, and Ioanníkios II of Cyprus), hand-picked at least one patriarch (Ánthimos VI), and surreptitiously placed its finger on the scales, in one way or another, at every other patriarchal election. The Powers even sought to interfere in the ritual minutiae of religious life in the Ottoman Empire, with the British embassy urging the Porte to censor Orthodox liturgical texts and the French embassy insisting (over Russian and Orthodox objections) that Greek Catholic priests be allowed to dress like their Orthodox rivals and wear Orthodox-looking cylindrical hats (kalýmáfchí).40

Underlying these interventions was a subtle shift in thinking among statesmen about the political uses of religion itself. Increasingly, European diplomats chaffed against the notion that religion must, of necessity, channel political loyalty along confessional lines, pitting Orthodox Russians and ‘Greeks’ (Rum) against Catholic Frenchmen, Muslim Turks, and Protestant Englishman. It was increasingly desirable to project ‘soft power’ universally, across confessional lines as well as along them. It was, as Thouvenel insisted in his reports, entirely self-defeating for Western states to limit their clientele base to tiny minorities while surrendering the most important lever of influence – Orthodox Christendom – to Russia. Hitherto the principle way of attracting the political sympathies of Orthodox Christians had been to convert them to other religions; by the mid-nineteenth century it seemed possible to achieve the same goal by recasting Orthodoxy itself as something that could be ‘pro-Ottoman’, ‘pro-British’, ‘pro-French’, and so on. All of the Powers therefore made efforts to invest Orthodox religious sites, objects, and institutions with their own distinctive political stamp. These efforts, by their nature, turned disputes over minor aspects of religious life into venues for fighting larger imperial contests in the Near East. In response, European and Ottoman statesmen felt a new compulsion both to monitor the internal affairs of Ottoman Christians and to counteract the baleful influences they assumed other states were exercising in manifold, subtle ways under the auspices of religion.

In such a context, it is no coincidence that the perpetual quarrels at the Christian Holy Places in Palestine should have become charged with fresh significance precisely in the 1850s. In practical terms control of the Holy Places was of little consequence to anyone, but European statesmen feared that the issue would serve as a bellwether and potential trigger for what Canning warned would be a more serious ‘struggle for general influence’ in the Near East.41 Their apprehensions seemed justified in the spring of 1853 when Menshikov demanded formal engagements that would recognize Russia’s special relationship with Ottoman
Orthodoxy and erect a permanent breakwater around the temporal rights of the Church. Russia’s intervention at the Holy Places, as La Cour correctly surmised, was ‘nothing but a point of departure for arriving at a much more extended intervention’ in Orthodox affairs. Clarendon, less accurately, feared that Russia sought a guarantee for the privileges and powers of the Orthodox Church in order to reduce Sultan Abdülmecid to ‘a mere vassal of the Emperor’. The exaggerated nature of such accusations reveal the extent to which, by 1853, the Orthodox Church as a socio-political institution – its powers, its limits, its role in both international and regional affairs – had come to be seen as a major problem for European diplomacy. The Menshikov mission also marked a watershed in the history of the Orthodox Community itself, since the sened that Nicholas I demanded would have created a permanent barrier to communal reforms – or at least to any carried out under the direction of the Ottoman state. The course of the Tanzimat reforms – indeed, of Ottoman history – would have been very different had Abdülmecid signed it.

None of this is, of course, to deny that a host of factors contributed to the fraught international environment of the early 1850s, from the vehemence of anti-Russian feeling in Britain and the rise of Napoleon III in France to the miscalculations of a tsar who had become dangerously out of step with contemporary events. War might conceivably have broken out over several issues in 1853, from control of the Straits to Russian and Austrian demands that the Ottomans extradite Lajos Kossuth and his revolutionary companions. The fact remains, however, that no armed conflict did occur over any of these delicate problems. In each case, the Powers managed to find some mutually satisfactory solution. The problem of what to do with Orthodox Christendom and its relationship with Russia, on the other hand, defeated every attempt by the European diplomatic corps to find an acceptable compromise. Over the winter and spring of 1852–53, the Porte confronted no less than three separate issues that threatened to bring on a rupture in relations with one or more of the Powers: the Holy Places dispute, Menshikov’s demand for a sened, and the independence/secularization of Montenegro. In the first two disputes, Orthodoxy played a central role and in the last it was an important aggravating factor.

The larger crisis over Orthodoxy in 1853 also did much to shape the character and distinctive features of the Crimean War. It all but guaranteed, for example, that Russia would go to war on her own, isolated from the northern courts that had traditionally supported her. In a war over Ottoman incursions into Montenegro or Abdülmecid’s harbouring
of the Hungarian refugees, for instance, Russia could have expected the support of Austria and perhaps other European states as well. Nobody except Russia, however, was interested in a war to defend the privileges of the Orthodox Church. The origins of the war also encouraged the Russian government to ignore its isolation and pursue the issue all the more doggedly, given the centrality of Orthodoxy not only to Russian foreign policy but to the ideological foundations of the Romanov dynasty itself. Once the tsar had publicly linked his demands with the future of Orthodoxy in the East, it was all but impossible for him to retreat from them with honour. In the end, peace had to wait for the death of Nicholas I to free the hands of his successor.

The religious dimensions of the crisis in 1853 are also critical to a proper evaluation of Russia’s complaints. Too often, the demands of the Russian government on the Porte have been depicted as excessive and motivated either by paranoia or by aggressive ulterior motives. This line of reasoning assumes that Orthodoxy had no need for Russian protection, since it was not under attack. In fact, the Porte and the Western Powers were interfering in Orthodox religious life and they were doing so with an explicitly anti-Russian agenda. Even from as far a remove as the United States, one contemporary Catholic journalist could see that pious Orthodox Christians were entirely justified in considering the British ambassador to be their ‘worst enemy’, since the latter used his country’s influence ‘to strip their bishops and priests of important civil and political rights which they had held and exercised from the time of the conquest’.45

The international crisis over Orthodox Christendom did not simply dissipate with Menshikov’s departure and the slide towards war. It actually deepened in many ways once the diplomatic impasse had forced Russia’s championship of the Orthodox cause onto the battlefields of the Crimea, the Danube, the Baltic, and the Caucasus. In Istanbul, London, Paris, and Vienna, statesmen realized that the war provided an ideal pretext for amending the problematic political status of the Orthodox Church and denying Russia future opportunities for intervention on its behalf. The Fourth Point was thus carefully worded to deprive Russia of the legal grounds it needed to use the Church as a vehicle of influence, while in Istanbul the British, French, and Austrian ambassadors drew up a program of reforms that was explicitly intended to strip the Church of the very powers that Menshikov had sought to guarantee. Nor did European involvement in millet reform end with the signing of peace in 1856. It would require further pressure by the British, French, Austrian – and eventually Russian – embassies and five
years of agitation by European-supported factions within the Orthodox Community before the ideas of 1856 received final, concrete expression in the General Regulations.

There can be no doubt that the Orthodox Community underwent a very real transformation during the 20 years between the promulgation of the Gülhane Rescript in 1839 and the General Regulations of the 1860s. The upper clergy lost many of their judicial and political powers as well as much of their institutional wealth, and the laity took over leadership of most aspects of communal life. No longer could archpastors exact new taxes, impose physical punishment, or exile on the members of his flock or expect to have the final say in directing the affairs of the Community. The Powers clearly deserve a share of the credit for these successes; by the same token, however, they must shoulder some of the blame for the failings of reform. As other historians have pointed out, the Reform Decree of 1856 contained grave internal contradictions, most notably between its secularizing measures (Art. 3) and its guarantees for the very existence and rights of the religious communities (Art. 2). The hatt was supposed, for example, to have as its principal aim the abolition of the confusion between temporal and spiritual authorities in Ottoman society. Yet, as one contemporary critic observed:

this same act reconfirms the privileges! What a deplorable contradiction! . . . How can the privileges and spiritual immunities of the different Christian and other non-Muslim communities be conserved in a country where there is equality between religions and races? Articles 3, 4, 5, and 6 immediately follow, and attack again all of the privileges and immunities that article 2 is supposed to guarantee!46

The failure of the General Regulations to make clear, moreover, where the rights of the church ended and those of the central state began would lead to recurring bitter controversies between the Phanar and the Porte over the control of education and family law. The resulting ‘Privileges Question’ would flare up in 1879, 1883–84, 1890–91, and again during the early 1900s. It is also regrettable that the Powers did not foresee the need for a more representative provisional council that would have been capable of meeting Bulgarian demands. Finally, by making the terms of the decree so much more radical than either the Ottoman state or the Orthodox Community was prepared for, the ambassadors contributed greatly to the difficulties that Ottoman statesmen encountered in implementing the hatt.
In the final analysis, however, Western interventions in Orthodox affairs were aimed first and foremost at arresting Russian influence, and it was against this goal that the ambassadors would have gauged their ultimate success or failure. In 1856, Thouvenel, Prokesch, and Canning had predicted that their reforms would erect a permanent partition between Russia and Ottoman Christians, while drawing the latter into a closer relationship with the West. At first blush, these expectations seem grossly optimistic. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Russian influence over the majority of Ottoman Christians remained, in many senses, as strong as ever. This was demonstrated, for example, by the outpouring of popular emotion that attended the private pilgrimage of the Romanov Grand Duke Constantine to the Holy Land in 1858. On Mytilini, the local Austrian vice-consul reported with dismay that local Christians had greeted the Russian steamer with rapturous scenes:

the cries, exclamations of delight, and crowds of men, women, and children were truly extraordinary; it was not just intoxication, but a delirium! In the blink of an eye, all the caiques of the port became crammed with men who, leaping for joy, set out at top speed for the Russian vessel. Arriving at the steamer, they gathered around it in silent admiration until one of the more distinguished among their number suddenly stood, made the sign of the cross and raised his hands to the heavens exclaiming, ‘Brothers! Behold our future deliverance!’ to which the others made the sign of the cross and cried out, ‘Amen, Panayia!’ ['All Holy' – referring to the Virgin Mary]

The reforms also provided new pretexts for Russian involvement in Ottoman affairs by aggravating the fears of ordinary Muslims that they were losing control of their own state. The two decades following the promulgation of the Islahat Ferman-ı thus saw outbreaks in Lebanon, Syria, Bosnia, and Bulgaria of the worst inter-communal violence between Muslims and Christians since the Greek Revolution. These upheavals, in turn, justified Russian calls for more forceful European intervention in Ottoman internal affairs. In 1877–78, abortive uprisings in the Balkans moved Russia to declare war once again in defense of its Orthodox brethren (although, notably, not in defense of the Orthodox Church as an institution) and to send armies across the Danube and the Caucasus. It was thus Marx’s projections, not those of Thouvenel and Prokesch, that seemed to have come true in 1878 as Christians in Bulgaria rose up to welcome their Russian liberators and the Ottomans
were forced to recognize the existence of a new, autonomous Bulgarian state. A Western public jaded by the disappointments of the Crimean War and the intervening two decades of ‘horrors’ perpetrated by Muslims against Christians responded to these developments with apathy until the sight of a Russian army on the outskirts of Istanbul once again galvanized Europe into action. Sitting together in Berlin over June and July of 1878, the Powers presided over a partition of most of the Ottoman Empire’s remaining European possessions between Russia, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, and the newly created principality of Bulgaria.

Over the longer term, however, the successes of Western policy towards Orthodox Christendom in the Near East appear more striking, not least for the obstacles they had to overcome. In the 1830s–40s, European statesmen considered Russia’s advantages in the Near East to be unassailable and a Russian absorption of not just Rumelia, but the entire Ottoman Empire seemed inevitable. The existence of a coherent Orthodox ecumene linking Russia with the Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians, and Christian Arabs of the Near East was seen – not least by the Russian government itself – as an essential precondition for that success. The Powers worked hard to disrupt these ties and, in practice, they played a key role in reshaping the Orthodox world to reflect the contours not of an idealized Byzantine past, but of the fragmented nation-states, ethnic communities, and colonial empires of nineteenth-century European modernity.

The impact of Western policy is clearest in the sea change that the crisis years of the 1850s brought about in relations between the Russian embassy and the Phanar. Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire took up arms in 1854 specifically to prevent Russia from cementing and formalizing its ‘special relationship’ with the Ottoman Church, and during the war they did everything possible to create divisions between the two. At first, it seemed as though this had failed. Gorchakov advised the returning Russian ambassador to Istanbul, Butenev, that Russia's formal renunciation of her protectorate was meaningless. In practice, Russia would continue to exercise its accustomed guardianship over the Orthodox Church. It could not be otherwise, Gorchakov added, since Russia's political interests remained as they have always been and as they will never cease to be in the Orient, by the nature of the conditions themselves, tightly linked to those of Orthodoxy. Our adversaries know this perfectly. When they combat the church of the East, as well as when they pretend to
protect it in order to better procure means of fighting it, it is not only from zeal for Catholic and Protestant propaganda, but also and above all with *arrière-pensée* against our influence.\(^\text{48}\)

When Butenev arrived in Istanbul, however, he found that relations between the Russian legation and the Phanar had changed since 1853. He complained that his first interview with Patriarch Kýrillos – delayed for months until 17 December 1856 – had been marked by ‘more ceremony than pastoral cordiality’, whereas a few months earlier the Phanar had thrown its doors wide to receive Thouvenel with every honour.\(^\text{49}\)

To the Russian consular corps, the contrast between the receptions given to Butenev and Thouvenel was yet another instance of the Greek hierarchy’s callow ingratitude towards a Russia that had just bled itself white on their behalf. The chaplain of the Russian legation confided to Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow that he feared ‘a terrible, ugly hatred of the Greek hierarchy infects our young embassy’ since the war.\(^\text{50}\)

Anger at the Ottoman clergy’s ‘betrayal’ of Orthodox interests produced a quiet revolution in Russian policies, characterized by two momentous conclusions: first, that it was no longer possible to treat the Greek hierarchy and the predominantly non-Greek laity as a single constituency, and second, that Russia must take sides with the latter.\(^\text{51}\)

The first secretary of the legation, Evgenii Petrovich Novikov, submitted a particularly revealing memorandum ‘on the religious question in Constantinople’ to Tsar Alexander II in 1858.\(^\text{52}\) Novikov characterized the new rift between the Phanar and the Russian legation as a permanent feature of the new political landscape. ‘The strained relations that exist between us and the Eastern Church have nothing to do with individuals’, he declared, ‘but are rather the product of a divergence of principles’. This being so, it was time for a fundamental change in Russian policy towards the Ottoman clergy. There was no longer any point in ‘gratuitously compromising [Russia’s] influence over the Christian populations’ to benefit a perfidious and unreliable hierarchy. Russia could no longer ‘sacrifice to the cupidity of the Greek bishops millions of Slavs (and Arabs) who, bowed under their spiritual yoke, long for health and seek it only in the support of Russia’. Principle and pragmatism required that Russia side with the Orthodox masses.

As a result, Russian diplomats became suddenly supportive of reforms that their predecessors had gone to war to prevent. To the alarm of the Ottoman government, for example, Butenev’s replacement in December 1858, Prince Aleksei Borisovich Lobanov-Rostovskii, started meeting regularly with Orthodox lay reformers and giving them encouragement.
When the synodal elders tried to disrupt the workings of the Provisional Council during the summer of 1859, Lobanov encouraged the Porte to ignore their protests and exile the offenders back to their eparchies.\textsuperscript{53} After the Provisional Council submitted its final recommendations in 1860, Lobanov urged the Porte to adopt these in their entirety without permitting the clergy to revise them for any conflicts with canon law.\textsuperscript{54}

Russia’s increasingly obvious support for the Bulgarian Church movement placed further strain on relations with the patriarchate over the 1860s, especially as the Phanar and the Exarchate lurched towards a decisive confrontation. Ever since its creation, the Bulgarian Exarchate had – predictably – arranged its affairs with minimal regard for the wishes of the patriarchate. In the spring of 1872, Ánthimos VI had protested against this indiscipline by refusing to consecrate Metropolitan Antim Chalakov of Vidíni as exarch of the new church. On 23 May, at the height of the Feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius the Apostles to the Slavs, Antim retaliated by omitting the commemorative prayers for the patriarch from the liturgy. Instead, Antim read out a formal declaration, announcing to the world that the Bulgarian Exarchate was henceforward independent of all authority save that of the Sultan.\textsuperscript{55}

The question of how the patriarchate should respond to this violation of both the canons and the terms of the 1870 firman was hotly debated for months thereafter in a series of general councils at the Phanar. The Orthodox lay representatives, in particular, were strident in their calls for decisive action to eject the Bulgarians. The four eastern patriarchs and the archbishop of Cyprus were more measured and spoke in favour of reconciliation, but they were unable to appease the anger of the majority. The rupture between Greek and Slavic Orthodox Christendom was formally consecrated on 16 September 1872. A council of the entire Church in the Ottoman lands found the Exarchate guilty not merely of disobedience and schism, but of having introduced a new and distinctly modern heresy: ‘phyletism’ \textit{[fyletismós]}, the reorganization of Christian life along the lines of race or descent.\textsuperscript{56}

Western governments generally welcomed these developments, so long as the Exarchate did not come under direct Russian control.\textsuperscript{57} The Austrian foreign ministry under Gyula Andrássy, for example, considered the schism too fortuitous simply to be left to fate and instructed its internuncio to support the Bulgarians. This was less from genuine sympathy, Andrássy admitted, as in hopes that the quarrel between Slavs and Greeks would blossom into a ‘definite and complete divorce’.\textsuperscript{58} For centuries, he observed, the patriarchate of Constantinople had been the principle vehicle by which Russia had
exercised ‘a predominant influence over the entire Orthodox Church of the East’. Should Orthodoxy in the East become irrevocably divided into two hostile camps, Russia must lose half its influence as it would be forced to support one of the adversaries and ‘by the same token, to alienate the sympathies of the other’. It was therefore manifestly in the interests of not only Austria but also the Porte ‘to break the unity of this Church which, under the patronage of Russia, has until now loomed before [the Porte] as a formidable power’.59

The rise of the Exarchate was thus an unmistakable sign of the political marginalization of the patriarchate of Constantinople, as only the Kingdom of Greece had rallied to its defense. In desperation, the upper clergy cast about for new allies. A vocal faction within the Greek hierarchy led by Bishop Áléxandros Lykoúrgos of Sýros even began to explore the possibility of a formal rapprochement with Anglicanism.60 Patriarch Grigórios himself – the same primate who had once haughtily claimed not to recognize the existence of the archbishop of Canterbury – began in 1871 to write polite letters to the head of the Church of England and express an interest in closer relations.61 When the Prince of Wales survived a brush with typhoid fever in the spring of 1872, his recovery was feted at the Phanar with an enthusiasm that the British ambassador found all the more embarrassing for the obvious desperation that motivated it. The British government received these overtures politely, but avoided any indication that it intended to become the new patron and protector of the Ecumenical Throne.62 The fact that there was no longer any need to do so underlined the success of the Western Powers in effecting, as Thouvenel had hoped, ‘toute une révolution’ in the structures, powers, and orientation of the Ottoman Orthodox clergy. Western diplomats could henceforward stand aside and observe with detachment as Russia struggled to hold together the crumbling façade of Orthodox solidarity.

While European diplomacy thus had a transformative effect upon Orthodox Christendom, we should not conclude that the impact of the encounter was unidirectional or that European diplomacy was in control of events. On the contrary, Ottoman Christians proved uncannily adept at drawing European diplomats into their communal affairs in the service of their particular causes and interests. This was most patent in the case of Ánthimos VI, who over three decades managed to pass himself off as a devoted partisan of Russia, Britain, and the Porte, of both tradition and reform, of compromise with the Bulgarians and of Greek nationalism. In each case, Ánthimos showed exceptional ability at leveraging his pledges of fidelity and service for new opportunities to
return to the ecumenical throne. In 1855, the notoriously corrupt hierarch even convinced Stratford Canning to come to his defense, at considerable cost to the ambassador's personal reputation and influence. In 1852, similarly, Yermanós V and his synod had invoked the intervention of Russia on their own initiative. The hierarchs' appeal helped goad Nicholas I into a course of action that would end in national humiliation for Russia and the greatest disaster of the tsar's long reign. Even the victors of 1856 – Britain, France, and Austria – could not boast of having escaped unscathed from their entanglement in Ottoman religious affairs. By the spring of 1854, ordinary Britons and Frenchmen could be forgiven for thinking that it was they who were the true victims in the encounter with Ottoman Christendom, as they found their states drawn into a terrible conflict on faraway shores over a faith they neither admired nor understood.

‘Hot culture wars’ and ecclesiastical power

As we have seen, Orthodox traditionalists like Grigórios VI had an acute sense of being caught up in historical processes that were larger than the confines of Orthodoxy or the Ottoman Empire alone. They believed, in other words, that the complex amalgam of ideas, attitudes, and practices regarding religion that Grigórios reviled as ‘Loutherokalvinismós’ was undermining all religious ecumenes that entered Europe's cultural and political orbit. Muslim scholars, Jewish rabbis, and Orthodox bishops were all experiencing similar pressures and demands, and their positions both domestically and internationally were being circumscribed in comparable ways (if not always with the same intensity). In our own day, historians of religion and secularization in Europe and the Americas have described the second half of the nineteenth century along somewhat similar lines as an era of widespread Kulturkämpfen, characterized, in the words of Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, by non-lethal but still ‘intense conflict between Catholics [or, more broadly, clerical] and anticlerical forces over the place of religion in a modern polity’. It is less frequently recognized that these domestic struggles over the place of religion within the modern state were preceded and accompanied by a century of ‘hot culture wars’ over the place of religion in the international order between the French Revolution and the 1870s–80s. It was these ‘hot Kulturkämpfen’, most notably in the German lands, the Italian peninsula, and south-eastern Europe, that ensured international politics had become an almost exclusively secular arena by the early 1900s.
In European history, the secularization of international affairs is often attributed to changes unleashed by the Reformation, the Wars of Religion, and the treaties of Westphalia. This process was far from complete by 1648, however, and did not become truly normative until after the French Revolution. On the contrary, ecclesiastical power was an unavoidable fact of international politics well into the late 1700s. Secular governments long after Westphalia had to engage in diplomatic relations with a plethora of ecclesiastical polities, ranging from the Electorate of Mainz to the Knights of St John. In the Holy Roman Empire, most notably, 65 ecclesiastical rulers controlled roughly 14 per cent of the total land area of the empire and perhaps 12 per cent of its population. Adding to the ecclesiastical presence on the international stage was the fact that many secular princes used clergymen to represent their interests abroad. At the peace talks in Utrecht that put an end to the War of the Spanish Succession in 1712, for example, a lay diplomat Johann Karg von Bebenburg represented the interests of the Prince-Bishop of Köln, while Bishop John Robinson of Bristol and Cardinal Melchior de Polignac served as plenipotentiaries for Britain and France.

Revolutionary France played a critical role as the first of the Great Powers to adopt a systematically hostile attitude towards both ecclesiastical states and clerical diplomats. As the French Republic (and later Empire) waxed in power at the end of the eighteenth century, it effectively banished prince-bishops, abbots and grand-masters from the conference rooms of Europe. The process of finally dissolving Western Europe’s ecclesiastical states began in 1791 with the French annexation of papal Avignon and the surrounding Comtat Venaissin. This was followed by a string of aggressions, including the nationalization of church lands in France, the expulsion of the Knights of St John from Malta in 1798, the forced secularization of the ecclesiastical principalities and imperial abbeys of the Holy Roman Empire between 1803 and 1806, and the dissolution of the Teutonic Order in 1809.

While Napoleon initiated many of these depredations, the conservative allies who defeated him shed no tears over the fate of Europe’s worldly churchmen. Too many secular princes had benefited from their disappearance and at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-15, the gathered representatives of the Great Powers pointedly declined to restore the ecclesiastical principalities that had been such a fixture of the Ancien Régime. By 1815, the pope was the sole remaining Western prelate to enjoy full diplomatic status and a voice on the international stage. Many European statesmen regretted even this exception and made no
secret of their disdain for the priest-ridden regime of the Papal States. Domestic considerations led Austria and France to prop up the papal curia for several decades, but in general European diplomacy adopted a position of winking neutrality towards the steady encroachments of Piedmont-Sardinia on the Papacy's lands in central Italy during the 1850s–60s. Thus aided and abetted by the benevolent policies of the Great Powers, Piedmont was allowed to whittle away the papal dominions, taking first Emilia-Romagna (1859) and then the Marche and Umbria (1860) during the wars of Italian Unification. In 1870, King Vittorio Emmanuele invaded and annexed the last papal territories in Latium, reducing Pope Pius IX's temporal domain from all of central Italy to little more than the grounds of the Vatican, St John Lateran, and Castel Gandolfo.69

Already in April of 1861, the liberal Catholic historian Ignaz von Döllinger could present the separation of the spiritual and temporal realms in European politics as an established and natural fact. As he noted in one public lecture: ‘for a hundred years a tendency to secularization has passed through the whole of Europe. The union of spiritual dignities with temporal officialism has, henceforward, no sympathy to reckon on from the nations of Europe. Even the German spiritual principalities...have been destroyed, not merely by revolution, but by public opinion, which saw in them something foreign to the age; unnatural – a ruin of the past...’70 Clearly, popular ideas about the place of religion in society had changed, but it was a typically liberal conceit to suggest that the disappearance of ecclesiastical regimes in Europe was primarily the product of cultural or evolutionary process. In fact, the temporal states of Europe had brought about the secularization of the international order in a deliberate and coercive manner through the application of military and diplomatic means.

As the Concert of Europe expanded to become a truly global network of diplomatic relations and practices over the course of the nineteenth century, it thus did so as a self-consciously secular and state-centric system. Fortunately for European statesmen, in the early to mid-1800s there were relatively few theocratic regimes in the rest of the world with which they needed to treat. One potential parallel to the Catholic Church, for example, was Vajrayana Buddhism, which Europeans saw as possessing an analogy to the Vatican in the Potala and a collection of worldly ‘popes’ in the form of the dalai and panchen lamas of Tibet, the jebtsundampa khutuktus of Mongolia, and zhabdrungs of Bhutan. For most of the nineteenth century, however, there was no pressing need to carry out relations with this remote region and, in any case, the Tibetan
government had opted out of diplomatic relations through its policy of self-imposed isolation. Only after the British and Russian empires began to expand towards each other in Asia during the 1870s–1900s did both governments begin to ponder more seriously what to do about what The Times referred to as ‘Lamaism’, the ‘obstinate ecclesiastical potentates’ of Lhasa, and the potential threat posed by ‘the Buddhist pontiff of Central Asia’. When it appeared to British officials in 1904, for example, that Russia was taking advantage of Chinese weakness to construct a Russo-Buddhist alliance linking together St Petersburg, Russia’s Buryat and Kalmyk subjects, Mongolia, and Tibet, a British expeditionary force invaded Tibet and forced representatives of the Tibetan government to sign a convention that, in effect, converted Tibet briefly into a British protectorate.

Another theocratic regime emerged in the Yucatan Peninsula between 1849–73 in the form of the Mayan state of Chan Santa Cruz, which was ruled by an oracular Speaking Cross and its human representatives. In practice, however, Chan Santa Cruz did not engage with other states except, indirectly, through the British colony of Belize with which it carried on a lucrative exchange of mahogany and other forest products for arms and ammunition. The British government was careful, however, about instructing its envoys to deal only with the flesh-and-blood representatives of the god and to avoid lending any appearance of legitimacy to the Talking Cross itself. On the sole occasion when British representatives did present their credentials to the Talking Cross, it was only because their hosts had physically dragged them into a reluctant audience with the Mayan god.

The only other significant exception to the newly secularized international order was the millenarian movement in south-eastern China between 1851 and 1864 led by the self-proclaimed brother of Jesus Christ, Hóng Xiùquán, and his Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace. Taiping control over most of the hinterland around key Western concessions at Shanghai and Ningbo forced European representatives in China to carry out some sort of diplomacy, but only of a very informal and ambivalent kind. Instead, British, French, and American representatives pointedly refused any formal recognition to the Taipings and all three states cooperated actively with the Qing campaign to suppress the rebellion. Western statesmen had, of course, a host of practical reasons for rejecting the Taiping movement, but the latter’s claims to universal spiritual and political authority were clearly seen as unacceptable. The British ambassador to Beijing thus warned his superiors at the Foreign Office in 1861 that a Taiping victory would reduce China ‘to a mass of
agriculturists governed by a theocracy supported by armies collected from the most barbarous and demoralized part of the population’. Searching for a European analogy, the British consul at Ningbo compared the Taiping ideology to the ‘ravings’ of the theocratic Anabaptists of Münster in the mid-sixteenth century.77

In comparison with such cases, the Ottoman Empire posed challenges to the European system of interstate relations that were both greater in number and harder to accommodate given the size of the empire and its proximity to Europe. In peacetime, European statesmen were generally willing to accept the sultan’s claim to be the caliph of all Sunni Muslims, both as a matter of courtesy and because the sultan (prior to the Pan-Islamist policies of Abdülhamid II) was seen as more likely to support the authority of European states over their Muslim subjects than to challenge them. The British thus appealed to Ottoman religious authority on several occasions in hopes of rendering South Asian Muslims more pliant, beginning with the wars against Tipu Sultan of Mysore in the 1780s–90s and continuing through the Mutiny of 1857.78 Such recognition was strictly formal, however, and there was never any question of allowing the Ottoman sultan any say in how the British, French, Russian, and Dutch governments governed their Muslim subjects.79 When it came to other religious institutions besides the caliphate, however, European states categorically rejected any Ottoman claim to religious or temporal authority beyond the borders of the empire. Even within the Ottoman lands, Western statesmen generally insisted that the empire recast the most theocratic and loosely circumscribed of its institutions – such as the Orthodox Community – to reflect the secularized nature of ‘modern’ relations within and between states.

The impact of the resulting campaign to remake religion in the Ottoman Empire reveals very clearly the transformative potential of Great Power diplomacy and of the modern state system itself on transnational religious institutions in the nineteenth century. Too often, as Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser have pointed out, historians and sociologists have treated debates over the place of religion in politics and society as though these were strictly internal affairs, in the spirit of Jules Ferry’s deux Frances enemies or Antonio Machado’s dos Españas.80 To the extent that secularization is studied as a transnational phenomenon, it tends to be, as Hugh McLeod has noted, as ‘an inevitable consequence of the processes of social development in modern societies’ – particularly social differentiation, industrialization, and the spread of modern science.81 For political prelates like Patriarch Grigórios VI or Pope Pius IX, however, it would have seemed obvious that they
were victims of something more than circumstances, domestic politics, and those mysterious, autonomous processes that the ambassadors at the Constantinople Conference had referred to airily as *le progrès des lumières et du temps*. On the contrary, between 1839 and 1870 both men found themselves repeatedly checked by foreign statesmen (in many cases the *same* statesmen) pursuing deliberately secularizing agendas.

The experiences of these prelates support C.A. Bayly's observation that one of the central features of nineteenth-century history was the progressive and insistent manner in which ‘the European state and Western colonialism began to impose a new pattern of internationalism on the old world order’ – an order that had long consisted of overlapping imperial and religious ecumenes. Incorporation into the new international community of sovereign states affected every aspect of life, imposing ‘its system of more rigidly bound territories, languages, and religious conventions on all international networks’. Among these effects, was the adoption of the axiom that a stable international order hinged upon its member states' ability to render their own complex societies ‘legible’, rational, and therefore responsive to state direction. Such an axiom, in turn, made it the duty of every state to clarify the boundaries that divided states, individuals, and social spheres of responsibility from every other.

The new preoccupation with precisely defined boundaries, both territorial and figurative, meant that religious institutions too had to become ‘legible’ and answerable to temporal governments. Religious institutions continued, of course, to act across state borders and would do so with greater frequency as the century progressed – but always, as it were, with their state-issued passports in hand. Truly autonomous religious figures, the embodiments of what Gramsci dubbed ‘theocratic cosmopolitanism’, found themselves in the same suspect category as stateless and nomadic peoples. Governments increasingly viewed peripatetic religious figures like wandering monks, sufis, and pilgrims as intolerable until their relationship with the state had been rendered unambiguous and non-challenging. As one French colonial administrator recommended regarding the Sufi orders of West Africa, the central priority of any government must be to ‘reduce [religious organizations] to mere associations that are purely local and do not look abroad for their marching orders’.

Once a clergy had been rendered loyal and submissive, new partnerships with the state were not only possible but desirable. Whereas early modern governments in Europe had sought to achieve an exclusive identification with a single confession (producing a Catholic France and
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an Anglican England, for example), already by the end of the eighteenth century exclusive confessionalization was passé: any religion could become a vehicle for state influence. The Russian government was typical in its insistence both on an exclusive relationship with Orthodoxy and its right to turn Judaism, non-Chalcedonian Christianity, and even Islam into auxiliaries of the state and instruments of political influence abroad. The central consideration in each case was not creed, but loyalty and submission to the imperial centre. By the same token, the Russian government allowed no religious organization to function freely within its own borders – whether Orthodox, Catholic, or Muslim – so long as the head of that organization resided beyond the tsar’s reach.\(^87\) It is telling, for example, that while Russian diplomacy vigorously promoted the ecumenical patriarchate’s claims to jurisdiction over the churches of the Balkans, no tsar offered to lead by example and return the Russian Church to its former dependence upon Constantinople. On the contrary, whenever Russia annexed new territories along the Black Sea littoral it promptly transferred local churches from patriarchal control to the Russian synod.\(^88\) Russia’s support for the authority of the Phanar in the Balkans and its resistance to that same authority at home were premised on a single assumption: that transnational religious authorities sapped the sovereignty of temporal states in the interests of whoever, ultimately, controlled them.

It was therefore doubly the duty of temporal states – including the Ottoman Empire – to police religion constantly within their own borders and to prevent clergymen from wielding temporal powers or acting in a disruptive manner abroad. Primates who evaded such supervision and governments that allowed or encouraged them posed real dangers to the international order, either actually or potentially. The problem for all of the Great Powers was, first, that most religious organizations aspired by their very nature to universality and resisted limitations on their sphere of activity. As Lord John Russell reminded his colleagues during parliamentary debates over the restoration of a Catholic diocesan hierarchy in England in 1850: ‘It is of the nature of all ecclesiastical bodies to attempt to trench on temporal matters’.\(^89\) The second problem for the Great Powers was that the converse of Russell’s maxim was just as true: that it was very much in the nature of temporal states to trench on religious matters. Not just Russia, but France, Austria, Spain, and Britain (and later Italy and Germany) clung to their religious protectorates and missions abroad, while seeking to make inroads into those of their rivals.

The crisis over Orthodox Christendom in the mid-nineteenth century arose precisely out of these contradictory impulses concerning the
political uses of religion. On the one hand, all the Great Powers had compelling reasons to use religion as a means of promoting their influence abroad, especially in hotly contested areas such as the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, doing so brought European states into conflict with each other and undermined their own efforts to establish a coherent system of international relations in which religion had been thoroughly domesticated and contained. The statesmen who represented the Ottoman, Russian, British, French, and Austrian governments in the mid-nineteenth century all wavered between these impulses in a manner that encouraged uncertainty, suspicion, and mutual recriminations. Ultimately, the Powers sought to settle their opposing visions of Orthodox Christendom by resorting to ultimatums and then to arms, thereby igniting what would become the most important European conflict of the century between Waterloo and Sarajevo.
Notes

1. **Reason in Exile: The War for Orthodox Christendom**

5. 'Manifesto of the Emperor of Russia', *The Times*, 4 May 1854, p. 9.
6. *Московскiя вѣдомости*, 18 June 1853, p. 1. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.
7. 'Russia', *The Times*, 13 July 1853, p. 5.
10. The state turned most of these would-be volunteers away, especially once it emerged that most were labouring under the delusion that they were to be emancipated from serfdom in exchange for their military service. David Moon, 'Russian Peasant Volunteers at the Beginning of the Crimean War', *Slavic Review* 51, no. 4 (1992): 691–704.


21. It was widely believed, for example, that Russia had demanded the return to Christian control of hundreds of former churches that had been turned into mosques since the conquest of Byzantium. Edward Neale to Stratford Canning, 1st Viscount de Redcliffe, 16 June 1853, TNA, FO 195/373, fo 311; ‘Turkey’, *The Times*, 29 September 1853, p. 8.


33. Azmi Özcan, ‘Attempts to Use the Ottoman Caliphate as the Legitimizer of British Rule in India’, in *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid and Michael Gilsenan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 73; Anthony


39. See speeches by Drummond, Cobden, the Earl Grey, and many others in *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. 130 (1854), pp. 608, 926, 980.


42. [Marie-Dominique-Auguste Sibour], ‘Mandement de Mgr le Archevêque de Paris qui ordonne des prières publiques pour le succès de nos armes en Orient’, *Ami de la religion*, 1 April 1854, pp. 12–15.


44. Veuillot, pp. 7, 201.


49. ‘Il protettorato russo’, *Civilità Cattolica*, IV vol. 3 (1853), p. 482.

50. That this was a real concern for some Britons at least can be seen from the private letter of the Marquess of Dalhousie dated 28 May 1854 to his close friend Sir George Couper: ‘I cannot enter into your doubts as to the ultimate success of the war, by reason of its being entered on in defence of the Turk . . . We are not fighting to sustain the religion of the Prophet; we are fighting to thwart the policy of the Czar’. In *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, ed. John George Alexander Baird (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1920), p. 301.


56. See Figes.


67. Alexis Troubetzkoy, *A Brief History of the Crimean War: The Causes and Consequences of a Medieval Conflict Fought in a Modern Age* (New York: Carroll


84. There has been considerable evolution in the views of historians on the relationship between nationalism and the Orthodox Church. For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was broadly accepted that the Orthodox churches of the Near East were both guardians of their respective nations and enthusiastic supporters of nationalism. After the work of figures such as Kemal Karpat, Paschalis Kitromilides, Victor Roudometoff, Leften Stavrianos, Gale Stokes, and many others, historians now see the Orthodox Church primarily as the promoter of confessional rather than national identities – and thus as an important obstacle to the development of modern nationalism in most of the Near East for many decades. See: Kemal Karpat, ‘Ottoman Relations with the Balkan Nations after 1683’, in Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 2002), pp. 410–20; Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘“Imagined Communities” and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans’, European History Quarterly 21 (1989): 149–94; Victor Roudometof, ‘From Rum Millet to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453–1821’, Journal of Modern Greek Studies 16, No. 1 (1998): 11–48; Leften Stavrianos, The Balkans since 1453 (London: Hurst, 2000); Gale Stokes, ‘Church and Class in Early Balkan Nationalism’, East European Quarterly 12 (1979): 259–70.

85. A fair beginning was made at the end of the nineteenth century by Russian historians looking specifically at Russian policies, but these articles are now outdated and were always insufficient. See: Prince Grigorii Trubetskoi, ‘La politique russe en Orient: le schisme bulgare, 1854–1872’, Revue d’histoire diplomatique 21, no. 1 (1907): 161–18; no. 2 (1907): 394–426; ‘Россия и вселенская патриархия после крымской войны. 1856–1860 гг.’, Вѣстникъ Европы, том. 215, god 37, kniga 2 (1902): 549–92; kniga 3 (1902): 5–51. See the more recent work of Russian historians such as Gerd and Lisovoi. Another important exception is the work of Dimitris Stamatopoulos, who has written the most detailed history to date of the internal affairs of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the nineteenth century. He makes the important departure of utilizing British Foreign Office records and of drawing clear connections between the process of ecclesiastical reform and British attempts to combat Russian influence. Dimitris Stamatopoulos, Μεταρρύθμιση και εκκοσμίκευση (Athens: Alexandréia, 2003).

86. See Olive Anderson, ‘Reactions of Church and Dissent’, and Dante, I Cattolici e la guerra di Crimea. A notable exception to this generalization is Christine Philliou’s Biography of an Empire (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), which dedicates its entire sixth chapter to the conundrum that the Crimean War posed for the Phanariote elite. The work of Kozelsky on specifically Russian Orthodox reactions to the war also merits attention.

87. See, for example: Carter Findley, Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Carter Findley, Ottoman Civil Officialdom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Reşat Kaynar, Mustafa Paşa ve Tanzimat (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1954); and

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91. Masters, p. 152.


93. Davison, Reform, p. 9.


95. Deringil, Conversion and Apostasy, p. 23.


98. David Goldfrank’s work is an outstanding exception and takes seriously the political role of the Orthodox upper clergy.

2. A Patriarch’s Progress: The Great Church under Grigórios VI

1. ‘Πιστική και Σωματική Επιστολή πρὸς τοὺς Αρχιερεῖς τῆς Επτάμηνου.’ Πρακτικά τῆς Αγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας περὶ Βαθμολογίας τῶν Συμοικεσίων... (Constantinople: kata ta Patriarchēía, 1839), pp. 163–4.
2. In 1844, the Ottoman government assessed the total population of the Empire at roughly 35,350,000. Of this total, 10.5 million were believed to be Orthodox. Jean Henri Abdolonyme Ubicini, *Letters on Turkey* (London: John Murray, 1856), p. 22.


7. ‘Γρηγόριος ο ΣΤ’, *Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια* 1 (10 June 1881): 52.


9. ‘Γρηγόριος ο ΣΤ’, *Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια* 1 (10 June 1881): 52.


12. This traditional version of events was challenged first at the beginning of the twentieth century by Nikólaos Eleutheriádis in Τα προνόμια του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου (Smyrna: N.M. Vidore, 1909); then by Benjamin Braude in his ‘Foundation Myths of the Millet System’, in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), vol. 1, pp. 69–88; and most recently by Paraskevas Konortas in ‘From Ta’ife to Millet: Ottoman Terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox Community’, in *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism*, ed. Dimitri Gondicas and Charles Issawi, pp. 169–80.

13. See, for example, Nikolaos Pantazopoulos, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula during the Ottoman Rule* (Amsterdam: Adol M. Hakkert, 1984).

14. For a discussion of the place of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church, see Metropolitan Máximos of Sardes, *The Oecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church* (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1976).

15. Exact figures are difficult to establish, especially as eparchies were periodically suppressed or revived. The number given here is based on a count of the eparchial bishops active between 1821 and 1850 and does not include titular bishops.


19. Ayşe Ozil, *Orthodox Christians in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 22. For some other historical works on Orthodox


21. TNA, FO 352/34, pt B, folder 11.


25. Ozil, pp. 57–8. For a more detailed description of Orthodox communal governments under the Ottomans, also see Augustinos, pp. 40–53.


29. ‘Γρηγόριος ο ΣΤ’, *Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια* 1 (10 June 1881): 52.

30. ‘Γρηγόριος ο ΣΣ’, p. 52.


34. Thomópoulos, pp. 76–8, 85–6.


38. The sign hung by the authorities on Grigórios’s body declared that ‘it is the precise duty of all the Chiefs and Directors of each millet, whichever it may be, to keep watch day and night over the individuals under their direction and to be informed on all their actions and to communicate to the Government all that they come across of evil. . . But this perfidious Patriarch who apparently was loyal, actually knew about the revolt, and encouraged it’. This English translation is taken from a report by Strangford to Castlereagh, cited in Charles Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821–1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 31.


42. See, for example, the public praise for Grigórios of Dérkoi in the eulogy from 1822, given in Konstandinos Krokídas, Βίος και πολιτεία του τιερωμάρτορος Γρηγορίου Πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (Athens: Φ. Καραμπίνος & Κ. Βάφας, 1853), p. 116.

43. ‘Γρηγόριος ο ΣΤ’, Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια 1 (10 June 1881): 52. For information on the post of protosýnkellos, who had his own lower court and divan and whose functions were comparable to an Ottoman mübaṣır, see Sarrís, vol. 2, pp. 445–7.


47. Panev, pp. 20–1.


49. These figures are based on Ubicini, Letters on Turkey, pp. 137–8. However, Panev has suggested that Ubicini’s estimates are too low, and British reports and contemporary criticisms of the hierarchy indicate income levels as high as 200,000 to 400,000 piastres a year for metropolitan bishops in Rumelia. Panev, p. 32. That Ubicini’s figures reflected at least what episcopal incomes ought to have been is supported by the salary amounts established by the General Regulations of 1863, which range from 12,000 to 100,000 piasters. See Γενικοί κανονισμοί (Constantinople: Patriarchikón Typografeión, 1888), pp. 50–4.


51. The city of İzmir, for example, was fortunate in having a succession of philanthropic and civic-minded hierarchs in the mid-nineteenth century. One
of these, Chrýsanthos of Mádytos, founded a Lancastrian school for girls in İzmir in 1835 and a lazaretto the following year, and left all of his money to fund schools. See Christos Solomonídis, Η Εκκλησία της Σμύρνης (Athens: Mavrídís, 1960).

52. Panev, p. 33.


54. For a narrative account of how this came about, see Athanásios Komninós Ypsilánidis, Εκκλησιαστικών και πολιτικών των εἰς δύο δεκα βιβλίων Η',Θ' και Γ' ήτοι τα μετά την Αλωσία (Constantinople: I.A. Vretós, 1870), p. 350.

55. Ubicini, Letters, p. 137.


57. On yerondísmos in general, see Papadopoullos, Studies and Documents, pp. 48–60.

58. Yedeón, Αἱ φάσεις, p. 68.


60. According to Yedeón, the Synod drew up a list of three candidates whenever a see fell vacant and the patriarch selected one as the new bishop. Yedeón, Αἱ φάσεις, p. 70.

61. Calculated at the official exchange rate for the 1840s of 110 piastres to the British pound. Figures from Ubicini, Letters on Turkey, p. 130.


63. Anthimós VI Koutalianós retired with a personal wealth rumoured to amount to 13 million piasters. Journal de Constantinople, 9 November 1848, p. 2.


65. Out of a sample of 110 bishops between 1821–72 whose birthplace is known, 25 per cent came from the Aegean Islands (half of them from either Mytilini or Chios) and 30 per cent came either from Istanbul or eastern Thrace. This pattern becomes even clearer among the highest ranks of the clergy. Of the 14 patriarchs in the same period whose birthplace is known, 11 (78 per cent) were born in Istanbul or eastern Thrace, two came from the Aegean Islands, and only one came from Macedonia.


67. The tendency to lump Catholicism and Protestantism together as part of a common heretical family can be seen in many Orthodox documents, such as the ‘Paternal Exhortation’ of 1798, ascribed to Patriarch Ánthimos of Jerusalem. See the translation by Richard Clogg: ‘The Dhidhaskalia Patriki (1798): An Orthodox Reaction to French Revolutionary Propaganda’, Middle Eastern Studies 5 (1969): 104.

68. From an encyclical by Grigórios V Angelópoulos to the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands, given both in the original and in translation in Copies of Original Letters from the Army of General Bonaparte in Egypt (London: J. Wright, 1799), vol. 2, p. 228.

69. Athanásios Pários, Περί της αληθούς φιλοσοφίας (Ermopoúli: Ο Εθνός, 1866), pp. 50–1.
70. On the reception of the Enlightenment in the Orthodox Near East, see the works of Paschalis Kitromilides, such as ‘Imagined Communities’; and ‘The Enlightenment East and West’. Also Christos Yiannaras, Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη νεωτέρη Ελλάδα (Athens: Ekdoseis Damos, 1992); Emanuel Turczynski, ‘The Role of the Orthodox Church in Adapting and Transforming the Western Enlightenment in Southeastern Europe’, East European Quarterly 9, No. 4 (1975): 415–40; Gale Stokes, ‘Church and Class in Early Balkan Nationalism’; and Victor Roudometof, ‘From Rum Millet to Greek Nation’.


72. Russia’s abolition of the hospodars’ councils (divan domnesc), for example, was effectively a demotion for the metropolitans of Wallachia and Moldavia, as the latter had shared in the administrative and judicial powers of the hospodars along with the highest members of the nobility. Limits were soon placed on the ability of bishops to dispose of their property and income, and mixed lay/clerical committees were created to oversee diocesan contributions to charitable foundations. Hitchins, The Romanians, p. 166. Later laws, such as those passed by Prince Bibescu in Wallachia in 1847, placed even more stringent controls on ecclesiastical finances. For the text of these laws, in French translation, see Georges Bibesco, Règne de Bibesco (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1894), vol. 2, pp. 262–6.


75. Frazee, pp. 120–1, 126.


82. For the list of recipients, see Sarris, vol. 2, p. 473. For an earlier list of such cash gifts given out to various high Ottoman officials, see Athinagóras,
’Μερικά εύγλωττα κονδύλια εκ των πατριαρχικών κωδίκων’, Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια 40 (29 August 1920): 310–12.

83. For a list of the customary gifts made to Ottoman officials at Easter, see Athinagóras, ‘Μερικά εύγλωττα κονδύλια εκ των πατριαρχικών κωδίκων’, Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια 41 (24 October 1920): 394–5.

84. In 1829, for example, it was considered a mark of Patriarch Agathángelos's generosity that he would accept only 40,000 piasters for the lucrative see of Sérrai. Manouíl Yedeón, Πατριαρχικής ιστορίας μνημεία (Athens: Yeóryios Io. Vasileióu, 1922), p. 17.


87. See, for example, the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Neale on conditions in Bulgaria, submitted on 28 March 1858 to James Howard Harris, 3rd Earl of Malmesbury, TNA, FO 78/1359.


89. See Alexandre, comte de Ribeauvier to Karl Robert Graf von Nesselrode, 16 March 1830, in Fr Alexandre Popoff, ed., La Question des Lieux Saints de Jerusalem dans la correspondance diplomatique russe du XIX siècle (St Petersburg: Imprimerie Russo-Française, 1910), pp. 147–9, 154–7.

90. Petr Ivanovich Rikman (de Rückmann) to Nesselrode, 25 January 1831, in Popoff, p. 159.

91. A dramatic example of such indiscipline is provided by the case of Papa Lollio, a priest turned brigand who terrorized the Thracian countryside after his wife dies and the bishop of Iráklia refused to allow him a second marriage. See: Journal de Constantinople, 21 August 1847, p. 2; and MacFarlane (vol. 1, pp. 61–3; vol. 2, p. 310).


94. Stamatopoulos, p. 41.

95. The Times, 31 October 1835, p. 3.


3. Ponsonby vs the Patriarch: Orthodoxy and European Diplomacy


5. The Times, 31 October 1835, p. 3.
8. Douglas to Ponsonby, 3 February 1840, TNA FO 195/105.
10. Philliou, pp. 88–9, 100–1.
16. Ponsonby to Frederick Lamb, 1st Baron Beauvale, 8 July 1839, attached to report no. 347, let. A from Bartholomäus Graf von Stürmer to Klemens Wenzel, Fürst von Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 69, fo 244.
18. Ponsonby to Beauvale, 8 July 1839. See note 16.
21. Ponsonby to Beauvale, 8 July 1839. See note 16.
22. Ponsonby to Beauvale, 8 July 1839. See note 16.
25. Masters, pp. 79, 125.
Notes

28. Speech upon the visit of the Duc du Montpensier to Izmir, 3 September 1845. Reported by Vladimir Pavlovich Titov to Nesselrode, 4/16 September 1845, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 192, l. 35.


33. Stürmer to Metternich, 14 January 1846, HHS, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 95, fo 824.

34. On Spanish claims, see Manuel García, Derechos legales y estado de Tierra Santa (Palma: Felipe Guasp, 1814).


36. Art. 7 of the Treaty, as given in Bibesco, vol. 1, p. 386.


39. In 1844, for example, Konstantin Bazili, the Russian consul at Beirut, justified his interventions in Orthodox communal affairs to the local Ottoman government on the grounds that Russia had the right ‘to protect the Greek Church in the Ottoman dominions’. Aberdeen specifically instructed Consul Hugh Rose in Syria not to challenge this assertion. Bazili to Sâdeddin, 21 September 1844, and George Hamilton-Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen, to Rose, 16 November 1844, both in TNA, FO 424/1.


42. ‘Recollections about Thrace’, in Konstantin Leont’ev, Against the Current (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1969), p. 179. Bazili similarly wrote in an 1843 memorandum of the ‘enormous advantage’ and ‘unique position’ Russia enjoyed thanks to the support of the Orthodox clergy. Kane, p. 84.

43. In April of 1845, for example, the Russian clergyman Porfirii Uspenskii wrote in frustration to Titov, asking what he should say to the complaints of Ottoman hierarchs when, ‘in response to my suggestion of Russia’s pious concern for the state of this or that monastery or patriarchal throne, they answer me with ‘Stop depriving us of our properties and our legal rights’’. In Kane, p. 97.

44. The Sublime Porte possessed its own copy of the apocryphal ‘Testament of Peter the Great’, detailing Russian plans for the domination of Eastern Europe. Ottoman ministers must have been particularly struck by the twelfth article, in which future tsars were advised to pose as the protectors of Orthodoxy abroad: ‘To the measure that this is accomplished, so will we gain friends in the midst of our enemies’. BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım, Dosya 1770, Gömlek 1, Item 98.

45. Mathurin-Joseph Cor to Charles Édouard, comte de Pontois, September 1840, AHMAE, Mémoires et Documens, vol. 56, fo 107.

46. William Young to Stratford Canning de Redcliffe, 8 January 1844, TNA, FO 78/581. Also see Young to Henry Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston,
14 March 1839, TNA, FO 78/368 and Rose to Stratford Canning de Redcliffe, 24 September 1844, TNA, FO 424/1.

47. Cor to de Pontois, September 1840, AHMAE, Mémoires et Documens, vol. 56, fo 108.


50. On Vogorídis's life, see Philliou, Biography of an Empire.

51. Stürmer to Metternich, 3 January 1844, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 90, fo 14.

52. Austrian policy, in comparison, was more nuanced. In 1839, Metternich supported British efforts to prevent a rapprochement between the Phanar and the Church of Greece, but a few years later, he was encouraging such a restoration. Greece, in his view, had not shown itself capable of establishing a truly independent church, so it was better ‘that the Greek bishops answer to the Patriarch of Constantinople, than the Synod of St. Petersburg’. Metternich to Stürmer, 30 April 1844, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 92, fo 101; also Sir John Ralph Milbanke to Palmerston, 23 February 1839, TNA, FO 7/280.

53. Palmerston to Ponsonby, 3 October 1833, TNA, FO 195/109.


55. Dawkins to Palmerston, 21 April 1834, TNA, FO 32/44.


61. Bishop Samuel Gobat to Canning de Redcliffe, 14 April 1855, TNA, FO 352/42A.

62. Charles Blunt to Ponsonby, 21 March 1839, TNA, FO 195/100.

63. St Clair and Brophy, Residence in Bulgaria, p. 96.

64. Gallant, Experiencing Dominion, pp. 185–6.


67. Percy Smythe, 6th Viscount Strangford, to George Canning, 10 February 1823, TNA, FO 78/114.


71. Ignátios of Oungro-Vlachía, p. 74.


73. See, for example, the preface written by Grígorios V Angelópoulos to John Chrysostom’s Οι περί Ιερωσύνης Λόγοι (Venice: Nikólaos Glykeí to ex Ioannínou, 1783) on problems within the Church and their correction.

74. Oikonómós, for example, quoted Canon 19 of the Council of Sardica in full, both to show that episcopal abuses were a long-standing problem in the Orthodox Church and to demonstrate that the early Church dealt with the problem by depriving abusive bishops of their sees and holy orders. Oikonómós, p. 317.


76. The Rudder, p. xlv.

77. Nikódimos the Hagiorite and Agápios Leonárdos, Εἰς δόξαν Πατρός Υιού καὶ Αγίου Πνεύματος του ενός Θεού Πηδάλιον της νοητής νηός ... (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1800), p. xiii.

78. Konórtas, Οθωμανικές θεωρήσεις, p. 134.

79. There was much clerical resistance to the creation of this exclusively lay body, and in 1775 Patriarch Sofrónios II reconstituted the Public Committee as a mixed commission of 16 lay representatives and four bishops. See Konortas, Οθωμανικές θεωρήσεις, p. 134 and Metr. Filáretos Vafeídís, Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία από του Κυρίου ημών Ιησοῦ Χριστού μέχρι των καθ’ημάς χρόνων (Alexandria: Patriarchikí Typografía, 1928), p. 220.


82. The Times, 23 May 1836, p. 5.

83. See The Times for 7 October 1836, p. 1; 10 November 1836, p. 2; also Journal des débats, 2 October 1836, p. 1.

84. ‘Private Correspondence’, The Times, 23 September 1836, p. 3.

85. Ειδοποιήσεις περί συστάσεως Επιτροπής Εκκλησιαστικής τε και Πνευματικής (Constantinople: A. Aryirámmos, 1836), p. 2.

86. Εγκύκλιος εκκλησιαστική και συνοδική επιστολή, παραιτητική προς τους απαντητού Ορδοδόξους, εις αποφυγή των επιπλαξουσών ετεροδιδασκαλιών (Athens, 1837), p. 20.


88. Ειδοποιήσεις περί συστάσεως Επιτροπής Εκκλησιαστικής τε και Πνευματικής, pp. 4–8; Mamóni, p. 183.
89. Augustinos, p. 117.
94. Douglas to Ponsonby, 4 November 1839, TNA, FO 195/105.
96. Douglas to Ponsonby, 6 August 1838, TNA, FO 195/105.
97. Douglas to Ponsonby, 7 July 1838, TNA, FO 195/105.
98. Orthodox canon law prohibits any marriage between persons sharing up to seven degrees of relationship by blood and up to three degrees of relationship by adoption or baptism. See Cummings, *The Rudder*, pp. 977–99.
100. ‘Τη Βουλή των Ιονίων Ηήσων’, 10 December 1838, AOP, KPA XIX, fo 46.
101. ‘Τοις Μητροπολίτοις και Επισκόποις των Ιονίων Νήσων’, November 1838, AOP, KPA XIX, fo 27.
102. ‘Τοις Μητροπολίτοις και Επισκόποις των Ιονίων Νήσων’, fo 32.
103. Douglas to Ponsonby, 3 May 1839, TNA, FO 195/105. For published copies of several of these letters, see Πρακτικά της Αγίας του Χριστού Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας περί βαθμολογίας των Συνοικεσίων, και των αναγομένων ως προς το Ιερόν Μυστήριον του Γάμου (Istanbul: N.p., 1839), pp. 163–88.
104. Πρακτικά ...περί βαθμολογίας των Συνοικεσίων, p. 188.
105. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 19 May 1839, TNA, FO 78/356.
106. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 19 May and 26 June 1839, TNA, FO 78/356, fos 50, 180.
108. Palmerston to Milbanke, 8 February 1839, TNA, FO 7/278.
110. Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons, to Douglas, 7 January 1840, TNA, FO 286/11.
111. See Petropulos, pp. 519–33. The quotation given here is from p. 519.

114. Douglas to Ponsonby, 3 May 1839, TNA, FO 195/105.

115. Ponsonby to Nuri Effendi, 14 May 1839, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım, Dosya 1770, Gömlek 1, item 2.


117. Ponsonby to Étienne Pisani, 13 January 1840, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 167, l. 112.


120. Gaspard Franceschi to Ponsonby, 19 January 1840, copy annexed by Stürmer to his dispatch of 22 January 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa/Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73, fo 3.

121. Stürmer to Metternich, 22 January 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa / Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73.

122. See: Apollinarii Butenev to Karl von Nesselrode, 24 January/5 February 1840, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 167, ll 88–92; Stürmer to Metternich, 5 February 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa / Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73.

123. Stürmer to Metternich, 1 April and 8 April 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 74, fos 22, 71.

124. Reşid to Ponsonby, 1 February 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa / Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73. See also Reşid Paşa to Ponsonby, 7 February 1840, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım, Dosya 1770, Gömlek 1, items 5, 10.

125. Ponsonby to Reşid, 3 February 1840, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım, Dosya 1770, Gömlek 1, item 9.
126. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 27 February 1840, TNA, FO 78/392, fo 190.
127. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 27 February 1840, TNA, FO 78/392.
128. Stürmer to Metternich, 12 February 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa/Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73.
129. Moniteur Ottoman, 14 March 1840, p. 2.
130. Stürmer to Metternich, 12 February 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa/Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73.
131. Reşid to Ponsonby, 3 March 1840, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım, Dosya 1770, Gömlek 1, item 15.
132. Stürmer to Metternich, 4 March 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa/Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73. Also see Butenev to Nesselrode, 21 February / 4 March 1840, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 167, ll 166–70.
133. Moniteur Ottoman, 14 March 1840, p. 3.
134. Stürmer to Metternich, 4 March 1840, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Osteuropa/Levante, Türkei VI, Karton 73; Ponsonby to Palmerston, 7 March 1840, TNA, FO 78/392, fo 236.
135. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 26 February 1840, TNA, FO 78/392. The Times of London agreed. See The Times, 30 March 1840, p. 5.
136. Butenev to Nesselrode, 24 January/5 February 1840, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 167, l. 90.

4. ‘The Great Game of Improvement’: Reşid Paşa and Reform

1. Ubicini, Letters on Turkey, p. 7.
4. See note 2 for a French translation of the hatt.
7. Deringil, Conversion and Apostasy, p. 34.


17. Historians disagree as to how much credit should go to Reşid for the content of the hatt. The dominant view both at the time and since is that he was the principal author. Abu-Manneh, most notably, argues that Abdülmecid and Nakşibendi-inspired reformism were chiefly responsible. Abu-Manneh, pp. 190–3.


19. Sample entries from the Hariciye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi for the late 1840s and early 1850s, for example, include ‘Rum Patriarch’s request for punishment of Non-Muslims in Çorlu engaged in unseemly activities’ (BOA, H.MKT 3389/37/56); ‘Concerning banishment of those attacking the Patriarchate’ (BOA, H.MKT 1344/54/29); ‘Concerning . . . the Bishop of Tirhala’s oppression of the ahali [people, commoners]’ (BOA, H.MKT 3497/38/64); ‘Displeasure of the Christian ahali over replacement of the Metropolitan of Ohrid’ (H.MKT 1695/57/79).


25. Sokolov, p. 275.


27. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 29 March 1841, in Anick, pp. 289–90.


29. For the text of Reşid’s memorandum, see Miroslav Šedivý, ‘Metternich and Mustafa Reshid Pasha’s Fall in 1841’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2012), pp. 277–82.


31. Cor to Pontois, September 1840, AHMAE, Mémoires et Documens, vol. 56, fo 119.
32. Metternich to Stürmer, 26 March 1844, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 92, fo 55v.
36. In a single report from Thessaloniki in 1840, for example, Consul Charles Blunt complained of two separate cases in which the local metropolitan, Meléïtios Pángalos, actively connived with local authorities to cheat his flock and another case in which Metropolitan Iákovos Pangóstas of Kassandrêia extorted 74,000 piasters from the villages of his eparchy to build a new residence for himself. Blunt to Canning, 11 September 1840, TNA, FO 195/176.
37. Blunt to Canning, 2 September 1842, TNA, FO 195/176 (original emphasis).
38. Palmerston specifically instructed Canning to complain to the Porte about the behaviour of the bishops of Tríkala, Dimitriáis, and Grevená in Thessaly and ‘to endeavour unofficially to obtain for these Christians protection against the arbitrary proceedings of their Bishops’. Palmerston to Canning, 13 April 1849, TNA, FO 78/769, fo 26.
40. Cowley to Palmerston, 15 January 1847, TNA, FO 78/677; Kerr to Wellesley, 31 December 1847, TNA, FO 78/715.
41. Canning to the Porte, 10 February 1849, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kismi, Dosya 1869-B, Gömlek 2. This letter is unsigned, but the context, handwriting, and general style of the document reveal Canning as the author. Also see TNA, FO 352/35, folder 8, items 6 and 7 of an untitled list.
42. One of the most notoriously abusive of the synodal elders, Panáretos of Irákleia, for example, appealed to Canning for protection from the ‘unjust persecutions’ that had resulted in his exile from the capital. Panáretos of Irákleia to Canning, 9/21 May 1852, TNA, FO 352/35, folder 7; Canning to Panáretos of Irákleia, 2 June 1852, TNA, FO 352/35, folder 7.
44. For an example, see ‘Τύπος περί του πός πρέπει μα μημονωθούν τα της Αυτοκρατορικής Οικογένειας ουόματα είς τας Ιεράς Ακολουθίας’, Princeton University Library, Constantinople Records of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, C0692, box 3.
46. Journal entry of Deacon William Palmer. 5 June 1850, LPL, MS 2826, Palmer Papers, pp. 94–6. Palmer seems to be paraphrasing from a copy of the Great Euchologion (*Velikii Trebnik*). The latter contains an intercessory service (*moleben*) for ‘the Release of Those under Bondage and Captivity to the Hagarenes, and for the Destruction of These Christ-hating Powers’ as well as a formula by which converts from Islam were to renounce ‘the Impious Wickedness of the Saracens or Turks’. New catechumens were expected to denounce ‘the Qur’an, and all the scriptures and doctrines of the accursed Mohammed, cursing them


51. Cowley to Palmerston, 18 April 1847, TNA, FO 78/680.

52. Constitution and Rules for the Internal Regulation of the Protestant Community of Turkey, chapter 1, articles 1 and 2, and Code of Rules, chapter 4, rule 7, TNA, FO 352/48.

53. Canning to Palmerston, 26 November 1850, TNA, FO 424/1.


55. Stürmer to Metternich, 19 March 1845, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 93, fo 357.


57. Bazili to Titov, 20 August/1 September 1845, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis' 517/1, Delo 192, l. 59.

58. Bazili to Titov, 6/18 March 1841, in Popoff, p. 262.


62. See points 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31. Esquisse d'un projet..., p. 121.

63. For this period of the Bulgarian Church struggle, see Burmov, pp. 1–43; and Vanda Smokhovska-Petrova, Михаил Чайковски-Садък паша и Българското възраждане (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Balgarskata Akademiia na Naukite, 1973).

64. Mehmed Emin Rauf to Abdülmecid I. The document is undated and unsigned, but its provenance and internal evidence suggest the winter of 1842 or spring of 1843. BOA, Mesail-i Mühimmе İrade 916.

65. See Vogorídis's undated memorandum, attached to the grand vizier's report, BOA, Mesaiîl-i Mühimmе İrade 916.


67. Stürmer to Metternich, 30 August 1843, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 89, fo 383.

68. Stürmer to Metternich, 6 September 1843, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 89, fo 413.


71. Stürmer to Metternich, 3 January 1844, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 90, fo 14.
72. Canning to Aberdeen, 25 January 1845, TNA, FO 78/594.
73. Canning to Aberdeen, 17 May 1845, TNA, FO 78/597.
74. Yedeón, Αι φάσεις, p. 59.
76. Buyuruldu to the Patriarchal Synod. 14 Zilhicce 1261, enclosed with Titov to Count Ivan Vorontsov-Dashkov, 4/16 December 1845, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 192, ll 313–15.
77. Titov to Vorontsov-Dashkov, 5 January 1846/24 December 1845, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 192, l. 363.
78. Abdülmecid apparently dismissed his chamberlain upon learning of the affair, confiscated the money, and donated it to the Orthodox hospital in Istanbul. Thouvenel to Walewski, 27 September 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322; Canning to Aberdeen, 17 December 1845, TNA, FO 78/603.
79. Canning to Aberdeen, 17 December 1845, TNA, FO 78/603.
80. Titov to Vorontsov-Dashkov, 4/16 December 1845, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 192, l. 311.
81. Titov to Nesselrode, 12/24 December 1845, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 192, l. 338.
82. Titov to Vorontsov-Dashkov, 24 December 1845/5 January 1846, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 192, l. 363.
83. Titov to Prince Handjery (Tilémachos Chatzéris), 22 February/6 March 1846, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 194, l. 148; Titov to Vorontsov-Dashkov, 24 February/8 March 1846, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 194, l. 147.
84. Titov to Reşid, 22 February/6 March 1846, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 194, ll. 149–51. A copy can also be found in BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kism, Dosya 1786, Gömlek 3.
86. Stürmer to Metternich, 14 January 1846, no. 2,let.D, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 95, fo 923.
87. Stürmer to Metternich, 23 September 1846, no. 38. HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 95, fo 243v.
88. Buyuruldu to the Patriarchate, Metropolitans, and Notables of the Orthodox Community, 20 Rebiyülevvel 1263/8 March 1847, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 3570. The text of the decree (with incorrect Julian date) can also be found in Greek translation in Yedeón, ‘Κανονισμών απότειξι’, p. 218.
89. Journal de Constantinople, 16 March 1847, p. 2; 21 March 1847, p. 1. Ubicini plausibly attributes authorship of this article to Eugène Boré, the future head of the Lazarist Order and a friend of several key Ottoman officials. See Ubicini, Letters on Turkey, p. 179.

92. The patriarch also made a point of not summoning the best-known allies of Psycháris and Vogorídis – Ioakeím Kokkódis of Kýzikos, Iosíf of Nikaia, Dionýsios Katákis of Nikomídeia, Ánthimos of Éfesos, and Paisios of Kaisária – back to Istanbul for the council. AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis 157/1, Delo 3570, ll 17–28; Reşid to Abdülmecid I, 1 May 1847, BOA, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 921.

93. Reşid to Abdülmecid I, 20 March 1847, BOA, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 919.

94. Reşid to Abdülmecid I, 1 May 1847, BOA, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 921.

95. Ubicini, *Letters*, pp. 176–7. Ubicini is the only source to mention this second buyuruldu.

96. *Journal de Constantinople*, 21 April 1847, p. 2; 26 April 1847, p. 2; and 1 May 1847, p. 1.

97. ‘Δέκα και πέντε κεφάλαια, εκτεθέντα υπό του Πατριάρχου Άνθιμου και της συνόδου καθ’ ύψηλον μπουγιουρουλτί, αφορώντα εις την διαρρύθμησιν των εκκλησιαστικών πραγμάτων συνωδά τοις ιέροις κανόσι και τοις ανέκαθεν τω γένει κεχορηγημένοι’, 13/25 April 1847, AOP, KPA XXI, fos 222–7. Summaries of the patriarchal proposal can be found in Filáretos, p. 226; *Journal de Constantinople*, 1 May 1847, p. 1; and Sokolov, pp. 634, 715. An annotated copy of the proposals, translated into French, can be found annexed to Cowley’s confidential report to Palmerston, 15 July 1847, TNA, FO 78/683. Another translation into French is in AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 157/1, Delo 3570, ll 17–28.

98. Given Ánthimos’s explicitly anti-lay agenda in 1847, it seems unlikely that the lay-dominated Provisional National Council would later use it as a ‘prototype’ for their own reforms, as Stamatopoulos asserts. Stamatopoulos, p. 46. Also see *Journal de Constantinople*, 1 May 1847, p. 1.

99. For a list of all eparchies and their classification, see ‘Διαίρεσις των επαρχιών του Οικουμενικού Θρόνου εις τέσσαρες τάξεις’, AOP, KPA XXIII, fo 230.


101. The remaining lay members were Stéfanos and Konstandinos Karatheodori, Ioánnis Mousoúros, Archiyénis Sarándis, Álexandros Fotiádis, and Fáhri Bey. *Journal de Constantinople*, 11 May 1847, p. 2.

102. Reşid to Abdülmecid I, 20 June 1847, BOA, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 922.

103. Cowley to Palmerston, 15 July 1847, TNA, FO 78/683.

104. Reşid to Abdülmecid I, 1 May 1847, BOA, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 921; Reşid to Abdülmecid I, 20 June 1847, BOA, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 922.


106. Cowley to Palmerston, 16 August 1847, TNA, FO 78/684.

107. Stürmer to Metternich, 4 August 1847, no. 35.F, HHSA, Staatenabteilungen: Türkei VI, Karton 97.

108. Cowley to Palmerston, 16 August 1847, TNA, FO 78/684.

109. Mikhail Mikhailovich Ustinov to Nesselrode, 20 January/1 February 1847, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 197, l. 83.

110. Ustinov to Nesselrode, 6/18 January 1847, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 197, l. 31; Ustinov to Nesselrode, 14/26 February 1847, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 197, l. 150.
111. Cowley to Palmerston, 15 July 1847, TNA, FO 78/683.
113. Palmerston to Cowley, 3 August 1847, TNA, FO 78/675.
115. Stamatopoulos, p. 46; Filáretos, p. 227; and Sokolov, pp. 287, 715.
117. ‘Petition [Αρζουχάλι] to the Sultan from the Orthodox Monasteries [Κεσισχάνε] and Synod [Τζεμμαάτ των Μητροπολιτών]’, 12/24 October 1848, BOA, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 928, Sıra 20.
118. Sokolov, p. 716. The Times came to the opposite conclusion: that Ánthimos had ‘lost his place through Russian intrigue’ for having ‘too liberal and reforming a spirit’. The Times, 25 October 1853, p. 8. For an alternative explanation, see: ‘Affaires d’Orient’, La Presse, 16 October 1855, p. 1; and Destrilhes, pp. 250–2.
119. Resjd to Abdülmecid I, 4 Zilhicce 1264/1 November 1848, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 929.
120. Memorandum by Stéfanos Vogorídís, 4 Zilhicce 1264/1 November 1848, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 929.
121. Resjd to Abdülmecid I, 4 Zilhicce 1264/1 November 1848, Mesail-i Mühimme İrade 929.
122. For the tezkere, see: Yedeón, ‘Κανονισμών απόπειραι’, Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια 60 (12–19 October 1919): 238–9.
123. For the text, see: Yedeón, ‘Κανονισμών απόπειραι’, Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια 60, no. 34 (16 November 1919): 271–2.
124. For the key role of Titov in these negotiations, see Yeóryios Metallinós, Ελλαδικού αυτοκέφαλου παραλειπόμενα (Athens: Dómos, 1983), pp. 298–30.
126. Quoted in Pitsipiós, L’Église orientale, vol. 2, pp. 144–5. For the members of the commission, see: Journal de Constantinople, 9 February 1851, p. 2
128. Menshikov’s diary. 1 March/17 February 1853, RGAVMF, Fond 19, Opis’ 7, Delo 135, l. 45. Ozerov also wore an informal black frock coat (rather than a proper dress coat), while Count Dmitrii Nesselrode arrived in a simple

5. A Cossack Takes the Cross: Prince Menshikov’s Crusade

3. Menshikov’s diary. 1 March/17 February 1853, RGAVMF, Fond 19, Opis’ 7, Delo 135, l. 45.
paletot. Francisco de Paula Vidal, *Historia contemporánea del Imperio otomano* (Madrid and Barcelona: Librería Española, 1854), vol. 1, p. 58.
4. Rose to Russell, 7 March 1853, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights...*, p. 97.
13. Lane-Poole, p. 191.
16. Aleksandr Petrovich Ozerov to Lev Grigor’evich Seniavin, 16/4 September 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 571/1, Delo 216, l. 119.
17. Ozerov to Seniavin, 16/4 September 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 571/1, Delo 216, ll. 119–20.
18. Sokolov states that Anthimos IV resigned voluntarily, but this is unlikely. The *Journal de Constantinople* reported that he had been removed by the Porte but gave no reasons. See Sokolov, p. 296; *Journal de Constantinople*, 14 November 1852, p. 1.
19. Ozerov to Seniavin, 16/4 September 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 571/1, Delo 216, l. 119. Also see Emmanouíl Aryiropoulos to Ozerov, 15/3 November 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 571/1, Delo 216, l. 287.
20. Buyuruldu, 29 Moharrem 1269/12 November 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 216, l. 283.
21. Nikólaos Aristárchis to the Russian Legation, November 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 216, l. 348; Stamatopoulos, p. 52; Goldfrank, p. 99.
22. Aryirópoulos to Ozerov, 15/3 November 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 571/1, Delo 216, l. 287.
23. Aristárchis to the Russian Legation, November, 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 216, l. 348.
24. Ozerov to Nesselrode, 16/4 November 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 216, l. 281.
25. Nesselrode to Ozerov, 4 December/22 November 1852, AVPRI, Fond Glavniy Arkhiv V-A2, 1852, Delo 522, l. 837; Ozerov to Nesselrode, 26/14 December 1852, AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 216, l. 427.
27. Popoff, p. 171.
31. In a *Précis historique* on the Holy Places from 1851, Nesselrode described Boré’s brochure as a milestone in the debate since it attracted public attention in France ‘to the state of possession of the Holy Places and to the supposed impieties of the Greeks’. In Andrei Medardovich Zaionchovskii, *Восточная война 1853–1856 гг* (St Petersburg: Ekspeditsiia Izgotovleniia Gosudarstvennykh Bumag, 1908), vol. 1, p. 333. Also see Titov’s comments on Boré’s work in Popoff, p. 355.
34. William Palmer’s journal. June 8, 1850, LPL, MS 2826, p. 124.
35. Édouard-Franz Klezl to Mehmed Emin Áli, 3 February 1851, HHSA, PA XII: Türkeli, Karton 43, fo 51.
40. Rose to Malmesbury, 23 November 1852, TNA, FO 78/895.
41. Vogorídis to Konstandínos Mousóúros, 23 November 1852, in Philliou, p. 162.
43. Nesselrode to Nikolai Kiselëv, 13/1 August 1853, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights . . .*, p. 500.
47. Rose to Malmesbury, 5 December 1852, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights . . .*, p. 50.
57. Goldfrank, pp. 120–3.
58. ‘Notice sur quelques questions spéciales à traiter avec la Porte’, AVPRI, Fond Glavnyi Arkhiv V-A2, 1852, Delo 523, l. 44. Also see Nesselrode to Menshikov, 9 February 1853, in Zaionchovskii, vol. 1, p. 371; Seymour to Russell, 22 February 1853, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights . . . , p. 887.
63. ‘Notice sur quelques questions spéciales à traiter avec la Porte’, AVPRI, Fond Glavnyi Arkhiv V-A2, 1852, Delo 523, l. 45.
64. ‘Notice sur quelques questions spéciales à traiter avec la Porte’, Il 45–6.
69. Menshikov’s diary. 8 March/24 February 1853, RGAVMF, Fond 19, Opis’ 7, Delo 135, l. 45.
70. Menshikov’s diary. 22/10 March 1853, ibid., l. 46.
71. Rose to Clarendon, 18 March 1853, TNA, FO 78/930, fo 242; Edmond de La Cour to the French Foreign Ministry, 23 April 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312.
73. Menshikov’s diary. 3 March/19 February and 12 March/28 February 1853, ibid., l. 45.
74. Rose to Russell, 5 March 1853, TNA, FO 78/930.
75. Daniil Reveláiks to Canning, 10 March 1853, TNA, FO 352/36, folder 6.
76. Rose to Russell, 7 March 1853, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights. . . , p. 93.
78. Louis Thouvenel claimed that Menshikov requested the removal of Patriarch Yermanós IV, presumably in order that Grigórios might take his rightful place. Thouvenel, *Nicolas ler*, p. 107.


80. Canning to Clarendon, 11 April 1853, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights* . . ., p. 146.


82. Comment by Rifat. Pisani, 25 March 1853, TNA, FO 352/36, folder 7; Canning to Clarendon, 9 April 1853, TNA, FO 78/931.

83. Canning to Clarendon, 22 May 1853, TNA, FO 78/932/57.

84. Mousoúros to Rifat, 7 April 1853, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kışım 57/1.

85. Canning to Clarendon, 6 April 1853, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights* . . ., p. 137.

86. La Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 19 April 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312.


89. La Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 19 April 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312.

90. Canning to Clarendon, 20 April 1853, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights* . . ., p. 169.

91. Verbal Note from Menshikov to Sadik Rifat, 19/7 April 1853. Annexed to La Cour’s dispatch of 7 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312.

92. Pisani to Canning, 14 April 1853 and Canning to Clarendon, 20 April 1853, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights* . . ., pp. 165, 169.

93. La Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 7 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312.

94. See Klezl’s reports in HHSAG, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 48.

95. Schroeder, p. 31.


98. Rose to Clarendon, 2 April 1853, TNA, FO 78/931.

99. La Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 3 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312. Also see: Canning to Clarendon, 23 May 1853, in *Correspondence Respecting the Rights* . . ., p. 258; Klezl to Karl Ferdinand Graf von Buol-Schauenstein, 21 April 1853, HHSAG, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 46.

100. Menshikov’s diary. 13/1 March 1853, RGAVMF, Fond 19, Opis’ 7, Delo 135, l. 45v.


102. La Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 3 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312.

103. La Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 3 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312; Philliou, pp. 155–69. For one example, see the projet de note composed by Vogorídis and sent to Mousoúros, 25/13 May 1853, YV, PKM, Fákelos IX, Éngrafos 113.

104. Menshikov’s diary. 24/12 and 29/17 April 1853, RGAVMF, Fond 19, Opis’ 7, Delo 135, ll 50–1.
Notes

105. Menshikov to Rifat, 23 April/5 May 1853. Text given as an enclosure in HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 46, no. 38.B.

106. Rifat to Menshikov, 2 Şaban 1269 [10 May/28 April 1853], annexed to La Cour’s dispatch of 9 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312. Note that the text differs slightly from that given in Zaionchovskii, vol. 1, p. 418.

107. Menshikov to Rifat, 11 May/29 April 1853, annexed to Klezl’s report of 20 May 1853, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 46; also in Zaionchovskii, vol. 1, p. 419.

108. Revelâkis to Dr Samuel MacGuffog, 15 July 1852, TNA, FO 352/35, Folder 5.

109. According to Goldfrank, Reşid and Aristárchis promised Menshikov more than they intended to deliver in hopes that Russia would eventually settle for a unilateral guarantee from the Porte. Goldfrank, pp. 154–5. Also see Moschopoulos, p. 296; Thouvenel, Nicolas Ier et Napoléon III, p. 143. The British and French embassies seem unaware of the secret arrangement between Menshikov and Reşid. La Cour, for example, saw only the hand of Canning behind Reşid’s return to power. La Cour to Foreign Ministry, 13 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 313.

110. Menshikov’s diary. 1 May/19 April 1853, RGAVMF, Fond 19, Opis’ 7, Delo 135, II 51, 53.


112. Slade, p. 90; Goldfrank, pp. 157–8; Cunningham, p. 175.

113. Menshikov to Reşid, 18/6 May 1853, annexed to Klezl’s report of 19 May 1853, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 46.

114. For an autograph copy of the note in which the offending terms are underlined and footnoted by the Russian translator, see AVPRI, Fond Kantseliariia, 1853, Delo 19, II 4287–89. Zaionchovskii, vol. 1, p. 431.


116. Thouvenel, Nicolas Ier, p. 161. De Paula Vidal similarly stressed that this declaration ‘completely revealed the germ contained in previous notes’. De Paula Vidal, Historia contemporánea del Imperio otomano, pp. 72 and 76. La Cour suspected that Menshikov also wanted to lessen the impact of the Porte’s forthcoming edicts on the patriarchs by making it appear as though the sultan was issuing them out of fear of Russia. La Cour to Drouyn de Lhuys, 24 May 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 313.


118. Canning to Clarendon, 22 May 1853, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights. . . . , p. 258.


120. Clarendon to Seymour, 15 June 1853, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights. . . . , p. 288. Also see Clarendon’s statements in the House of Lords on 31 March. The Times, 1 April, 1854, p. 5.


122. Московская ведомости, 18 June 1853, p. 1.

123. Official proclamation by the Porte, 13 July 1853, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights . . . . , p. 467. Also Journal de Constantinople, 4 August 1853, p. 1.
124. A copy of the Vienna Note, along with the modifications later made to it by the Porte, is in Correspondence Respecting the Rights... , pp. 518–19. See Mustafa Reşid’s objections to the Vienna Note in his letter to Mousouros Paşa: 25 August 1853, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kisım, Dosya 1189, Gömlek 1, Item 7. Also see Mousouros Paşa to Reşid Paşa, 26 August 1853, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kisım, Dosya 1188, Gömlek 13, Item 179; Mousouros Paşa to Reşid Paşa, 7 September 1853, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kisım, Dosya 1189, Gömlek 1, Item 106.

125. Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 26 August/7 September 1853, in Correspondence respecting the Rights..., pp. 541–6.


6. Ambassadors of Peace: Recasting Orthodox Christendom

2. Imbert de Saint-Amand, Napoleon III at the Height of his Power (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1900), p. 53.
6. Thouvenel to Walewski, 8 November 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 323.
7. Canning to Clarendon, 30 May 1853, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights... , p. 290; Canning to his wife, Eliza, 29 May 1853, in Lane-Poole, vol. 2, p. 274; De la Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 5 June 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 313, fos 147–8.
12. Canning to Clarendon, 12 September 1853, TNA, FO 78/938.
13. Journal de Constantinople, 29 September 1853, p. 3.
15. Stamatopoulos, p. 53.
16. Canning to Clarendon, 15 October 1853, TNA, FO 78/939. This ‘written obligation’ may be the private letter preserved in the Ottoman archives and dated 2 October (just two days before the patriarchal elections), in which Ánthimos solemnly undertook to serve the sultan and never to permit the influence of foreign powers in the affairs of his community. Ánthimos also promised to ‘employ all my efforts to regulate the incomes of the Patriarch,
of his subalterns, of the Metropolitans and even of the lowest bishop; to regulate the clergy in general, to put their dress and conversation in order, and to prevent any irregular conduct’. 2 October/20 September 1853, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kışım, Dosya 1771, Gömlek 18.


20. *Journal de Constantinople*, 9 October 1853, p. 3.


23. Patriarchal encyclical, 10 October/28 September 1853, AOP, KPA, XXX, fo 1.

24. Sokolov, p. 323.

25. Sokolov, pp. 324, 326.


27. Canning to Clarendon, 1 July 1854, TNA, FO 78/998.

28. Canning to Clarendon, 22 September 1854, TNA, FO 78/1002.

29. ‘Turkey’, *The Times*, 20 April 1855, p. 9.

30. ‘The Siege of Sebastopol’, *The Times*, 23 April 1855, p. 9; Figes, p. 356.


32. Canning to Clarendon, 14 December 1853, TNA, FO 78/941a.


34. Ánthimos VI to Canning, 2 September 1854, AOP, KPA XXX, fo 215.

35. Koller to Buol, 16 August 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.


38. The feud began in November of 1854, when Patriarch Ánthimos VI brought charges of abuse against Metropolitan Ioanníkios of Ioánnina and then deposed him before the case had even gone to trial. It emerged that Parthénios of Vrátsa had paid Ánthimos a substantial sum for Ioanníkios’s see. Ánthimos’s attempt to dispose of Ioánnina in this fashion brought him into conflict with Ioakeím Kokkódis of Kýzikos, who was Ioanníkios’s patron and who regarded the eparchy as his personal fiefdom. See lákovos Pitsipiós, ‘Quelques observations d’un oriental sur la question d’Orient considérée par rapport aux chrétiens habitant l’Empire Ottoman’, November 1855, AHMAE, Memos, vol. 51. Also Stamatopoulos, pp. 50–1.


40. ‘List of Individuals supposed to be hostile to the Patriarch’, TNA, FO 198/7; Percy Smythe to Canning, September 1854, TNA, FO 352/37C, folder 21. Also see intelligence report dated 29 November 1854, TNA, FO 352/40, folder 3.

42. Ánthimos VI to Canning, 7 September 1855, TNA, FO 78/1086; Canning to Clarendon, 13 September 1855, TNA, FO 78/1086; Canning to Pisani, 13 September 1855, TNA, FO 352/41B, folder 8; Pisani to Canning, 13 September 1855, TNA, FO 352/41C, folder 11; Canning to Clarendon, 17 and 20 September 1855, TNA, FO 78/1087; Pisani to Canning, 19 September 1855, TNA, FO 352/41C, folder 11; Thouvenel to Walewski, 27 September 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322.

43. Pisani to Canning, 19 September 1855, TNA, FO 352/41C, folder 11; also see Pisani to Canning, 17 September 1855, TNA, FO 352/41C, folder 11; Canning to Pisani, 20 September 1855, TNA, FO 352/41B, folder 8; Canning to Clarendon, 20 September 1855, TNA, FO 78/1087.

44. Canning to Áli, 24 September 1855, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kism, Dosya 1786, Gömlek 16; Canning to Pisani, 25 September 1855, TNA, FO 352/41B, folder 8; Canning to Áli, 24 September 1855, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kism, Dosya 1786, Gömlek 16; Canning to Clarendon, 30 September 1855, TNA, FO 78/1088.

45. Canning to Áli, 24 September 1855, BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kism, Dosya 1786, Gömlek 16.

46. Buyuruldu, 18 Muharrem 1272, TNA, FO 78/1088. For an alternative explanation of Ánthimos's removal, see Sokolov, p. 334.

47. Canning to Clarendon, 30 September 1855, TNA, FO 78/1088; Koller to Buol, 8 November 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.

48. Pisani to Canning, 2 October 1855, TNA, FO 352/41C, folder 12; Kallífron, p. 151.

49. Stamatopoulos, p. 60; Vogorídis to Melétiios of Didymóteichon, annexed to Canning's report to Clarendon, 4 October 1855, TNA, FO 78/1088.

50. Vogorídis to Mousouúros, 4/22 October 1855, in Stamatopoulos, p. 61.

51. Áli to Abdülmecid I, 2 October 1855, BOA, Irade Hariciye 6219. For Kýrillos’s berat of appointment, see de Testa, vol. 5, pp. 162–70; Canning to Clarendon, 4 October 1855, TNA, FO 78/1088; Thouvenel to Walewski, 1 October 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322.

52. Canning to Clarendon, 4 October 1855, TNA, FO 78/1088; Thouvenel to Walewski, 1 and 4 October 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322. For a slightly more positive assessment, see August von Koller to Buol, 4 October 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.


54. Koller to Buol, 4 October 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55; Thouvenel to Walewski, 27 September 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322.

55. For an example on Mt Athos, see: Mornard to Thouvenel, 31 July 1855, CADN, Salonique, Séries A, Registre 6; Koller to Buol, 16 August and 6 September 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.

56. Koller to Buol, 4 October 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.


58. Walewski to Thouvenel, 9 October 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322, fo 302v.
60. Russell to Clarendon, 15 March 1855, TNA, FO 7/462.
61. See Schroeder, pp. 256–84.
64. John Fane, Earl Westmorland, to Clarendon, 28 December 1854, TNA, FO 881/499, 5; Westmorland to Clarendon, 8 January 1855, TNA, FO 881/499, 5; Gorchakov, 21 July/2 August 1854, GARF, Fond 828, Opis’ 1, Delo 602, l. 39.
65. Paraphrased by Russell to Clarendon, 7 March 1855, TNA, FO 7/462.
68. Édouard Engelhardt, La Turquie et le Tanzimat (Paris: A. Cotillon, 1882), pp. 126–7; Davison, Reform, pp. 45, 94–5; Badem, ‘The Question of the Equality of Non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War’, p. 82.
69. Thouvenel to Walewski, 6 September 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322.
70. Canning to Clarendon, 9 September 1854, TNA, FO 78/1001.
74. Koller to Buol, 13 September 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55; Thouvenel to Walewski, 6 September 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322; Thouvenel to Walewski, 1 October 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 322.
75. Buol to Koller, 1 October 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 58; Koller to Buol, 4 October 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.
76. Walewski to Thouvenel, 20 November 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 323; Koller to Buol, 15 November 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.
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78. Koller to Buol, 15 November 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.
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80. Thouvenel to Walewski, 29 November 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 323.
83. Koller to Buol, 1 November 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.
84. Walewski to Thouvenel, 11 December 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 323; Clarendon to Hamilton Seymour, 14 December 1855, TNA, FO 881/682, 49; Thouvenel to Walewski, 22 and 23 December 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 323; Prokesch to Buol, 27 December 1855, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 55.
86. ‘Mémoire sur la situation des Chrétiens de l'Empire Ottoman (Fuad Pacha)’ and ‘Mémoire d’Aali Pacha sur la question du maintien des privilèges religieux des Chrétiens de l'Empire Ottoman’, forwarded by Thouvenel to Walewski, 23 December 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 323.
87. Thouvenel to Walewski, 23 December 1855, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 323.
88. Prokesch to Buol, 10 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 56.
89. On the 9 January meeting, see Prokesch to Buol, 10 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 56; Canning to Clarendon, 9 January 1856, TNA, FO 424/9, 135; Thouvenel to Walewski, 10 January 1856, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 324.
90. Kallimáchis's appointment appeared like an initiative of the Porte, but Prokesch had in fact suggested it as an expedient to relieve both governments of the embarrassment caused by Kallimáchis's recent nomination as Ottoman ambassador to Vienna. The French representative in Vienna, François-Adolphe Bourqueney, disliked Kallimáchis personally and complained that Kallimáchis would have greater standing in Vienna than he, since Kallimáchis was a full ambassador whereas Bourqueney was only an envoy. Prokesch to Buol, 10 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII, Karton 56.
93. Thouvenel to Walewski, 10 January 1856, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 324.
94. Canning to Clarendon, 14 January 1856, TNA, FO 424/9, 137.
Notes

102. Prokesch to Buol, 24 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 56.
103. Canning to Clarendon, 19 January 1856, TNA, FO 424/9, p. 147.
104. Prokesch to Buol, 24 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 56.
105. Thouvenel to Benedetti, 28 January 1856, in Şeni, p. 27.
106. Prokesch to Buol, 24 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 56; also Canning to Clarendon, 19 January 1856, TNA, FO 424/9, pp. 147–8.
110. Prokesch to Buol, 30 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII.
111. Thouvenel to Walewski, 31 January 1856, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 324, fo 241v; Prokesch to Buol, 30 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 56.
114. Prokesch to Buol, 31 January 1856, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 56.
117. The Times, 4 March 1867, p. 10.
119. The Times, 4 March 1856, p. 10; ‘Affaires d’Orient’, La Presse, 3 March 1856, p. 2.
120. La Presse, 21 February 1856, p. 2.
127. Davison, Reform, pp. 413–14.
131. Mardin, p. 18; Davison, Reform, p. 54.

135. Cevdet, p. 68.

136. Thouvenel to Walewski, 21 February 1856, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 324; Gerardo de Souza to Juan de Zavala y de la Puente, 1st Marquès de Sierra Bullones, 6 March 1856, AGMAE, Correspondencia/ Embajadas y Legaciones, H1773.

137. Prokesch to Buol, 11 February 1856, in Baumgart, Peace of Paris, p. 163.

7. ‘A Complete Revolution’: The Great Church and the Great Powers


3. ‘Γρηγόριος ο ΣΤ’, Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια 1 (10 June 1881): 55.

4. The exact date of Reşid Paşa’s orders for the formation of these councils is uncertain. Kallifron says they were released in August 1858, while de Testa dates them to November 1856 (Rebiyülevvel 1273). Thouvenel announced to Walewski in December 1857 that the Porte had ‘just published’ its instructions and enclosed a clipping from the Presse d’Orient to that effect. Compare Thouvenel to Walewski, 2 December 1857, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 333; de Testa, vol. 5, pp. 170–3; Kallifron, p. 153.


6. For a full account of these meetings, see: Kallifron, pp. 153–74 and Stamatopoulos, pp. 40–90.


8. Γενικοί κανονισμοί, Chapter I, Arts 1, 4; and Chapter II, Arts 1–16.


10. Anastassiadou, p. 117.

11. For the Armenian National Constitution (Armenian, Sahmanadrowt’ıwn; Turkish, Ermeni Patrikliği Nizamati), see Harry Finnis Bloxs Lynch, Armenia (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 448–67. Compare with Constitution and Rules for the Internal Regulation of the Protestant Community of Turkey, 1 January 1857, TNA, FO 352/48, folder 7 (esp. Chapter IV, Art. 5).


22. Lora Aleksandrovna Gerd, Константинополь и Петербург (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), p. 234. Also see a memorandum on the Exarchate written by Sir Henry Elliot, 4 April 1870. TNA, FO 881/3578.

23. The eparchies assigned initially to the exarchate were Drýstra, Tzervenós, Presláva, Týrino, Sóphia, Vrátsa, Lóvets, Vidýni, Nýssa, Nyssáva, Kestendilón, Samakóvion, and Véles, as well as much of the eparchies of Várna and Filippoupolis, the sancak of İslimiye (Sliven), and various adjoining Bulgarian-inhabited towns and villages (Art.10). The text of the ferman is given in full in French translation in Victor Bérard, La Turquie et l’hellénisme contemporain (Paris: F. Alcan, 1897), pp. 181–7.


25. Sir Henry Barron to Clarendon. 29 April 1870. TNA, FO 78/2121.


27. For the text of this letter, see: ‘The Anglican and Greek Churches’, Manchester Guardian, 4 December 1867, p. 4.

28. Pope Pius IX, Arcano divinae providentiae consilio, 8 September 1868.

29. For their interview, see Robert Phillimore, Commentaries upon International Law (London: Butterworths, 1871), vol. 2, pp. 737–44.


31. For the synod’s letter, see: Санкт-Петербургскія вѣдомости, 2 April/21 March 1871, p. 1.


33. ‘Γρηγόριος ο ΣΤ’, Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια 1, (10 June 1881): 55–6.


40. Titov to Nesselrode. 6 October/24 September 1845. AVPRI, Fond 180, Opis’ 517/1, Delo 192, l. 97.

41. Canning to Palmerston, 20 May 1850, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights . . . , p. 1; Palmerston to Constantine Henry Phipps, Marquess Normanby, 21 November 1851, in ibid., p. 25.


43. De La Cour to Drouyn de l’Huys, 19 April 1853, AHMAE, CP, Turquie, vol. 312.

44. Clarendon to Seymour, 15 June 1853, in Correspondence Respecting the Rights . . . , p. 288.


46. Pitsipiós, L’Orient, p. 35. This contradiction has also been noted by Davison, Karpat, and others. See, for example, Davison, Reform, p. 132.

47. Dr Theodor Bargigli to Anton Steindl von Plessenet, 28 June 1858, HHSA, PA XII: Türkei, Karton 64, fo 351v.


49. Butenev to Gorchakov, 29/17 November 1856, in Trubetskoï, ‘Россия и Вселенская Патриархия после Крымской войны’, kniga 2, p. 578; Butenev to Gorchakov, 7/19 December 1856, in Mazhdrokova et al., Tom I, Chast 1, pp. 88–90.


51. Gerd, p. 129.


56. Прaktika της Αγίας και Μεγάλης Συνόδου της εν Κωνσταντινούπολε ...περί του εκκλησιαστικού βουλγαρικού ζητήματος (Constantinople: I.A. Vretós, 1872), pp. 91–2.


59. Andrásy to Ludolf. 28 March 1872. In Документи за българската история, Tom 5, Chast 1, p. 282; also see Henry Elliot to Granville. 26 August 1872. TNA, FO 78/2218.

60. See reports by Ignat’ev of 16/4 and 26/14 April 1870. In Kiril, pp. 318–19, 325.


62. Henry Elliot to Granville. May 1872. TNA, FO 78/2217.


64. The phrase ‘hot culture wars’ is borrowed from: Clark and Kaiser, p. 6.


68. Two arguable exceptions to this rule are the Bishop of Urgell, who continues to be co-prince of Andorra, and the Sovereign Order of the Knights of Malta, which some Catholic states recognize. For the tribulations of the Catholic Church during this period, see: Nigel Aston, Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750–1830 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Beales, Prosperity and Plunder; Peter Wende, Die geistlichen Staaten und ihre Auflösung im Urteil der zeitgenössischen Publizistik (Lübeck: Matthiesen, 1966).

69. For a brief narrative of these events, see John Pollard, Catholicism in Modern Italy (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 23–8. Also see Edward Elton Young Hales, Pio Nono (New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1954), pp. 194–218 and 313–17.


71. The British government did, however, sign a treaty at Sinchula with representatives of both the temporal and religious leaders of Bhutan on 11 November 1865. See Further Papers Relating to Bootan (London: House of Commons, 1866), pp. 94–5.


87. James Zatko, ‘The Organisation of the Catholic Church in Russia, 1772–84’, *Slavonic and East European Review* 43, no. 101 (1965), p. 306. This suspicion of foreign primates did not prevent the Russian state from welcoming certain lower-level foreign clergymen (such as Bavarian Catholic priests or Swiss Protestant ministers) who were considered safe. See Paul Werth, ‘Imperiology


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