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THE RUSSIANS ON ATHOS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PROPHET ELIJAH SKETE

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the relations between Greek and Russian Athonites. The two coexisted without friction from the eleventh century to the first half of the nineteenth. Entreated by the destitute Greek brethren to save St Panteleimon from closure, the Russians installed themselves in that monastery in 1839, from which date until the eve of the First World War Russians flocked to Athos in increasing numbers. Soon there were more Russians there than any other nationality. As the Russian contingent grew, its relationship worsened with the Greeks. This thesis examines the causes of this deterioration against the background of the Eastern Question, the growth of the Kingdom of Greece, the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate, the Balkan Wars, and the World War. A concatenation of events heightened ethnic tension on Mount Athos and produced a series of crises during the controversial installation of the first Russian abbot at St Panteleimon and in subsequent years. The 1917 October Revolution truncated ties with Russia, and Russian Athos rapidly declined.

The second half of the thesis examines the Prophet Elijah Skete, with which the modern story of the Russians on Athos begins and is concluded. The Skete's founder, St Paisiy, started the first substantial settlement in recent times of Russians on Athos. His community was self-sufficient and lived in poverty. As Russian Athonites became richer and more numerous his way of life was forgotten, but was revived of necessity after 1917. Although on the eve of the World War it was rich and populous, the skete deviated less than the other Russian houses from its founder's ideals. This was partly because the skete's Small Russian brotherhood was on the periphery of the Greek-Russian quarrel, and also thanks to the enlightened leadership of some of its priors.

Most of what has been written about the Russians on Athos has been from either a Greek or Russian point of view. This thesis attempts to take both sides into account and draw objective conclusions. It also breaks new ground because it is based on unpublished archive material, much of which has survived only on the author's microfilm.

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PREFACE

I did not embark on this thesis as a student of history, for I am a linguist by profession. I wished to use my knowledge of Greek and Russian to give me an insight into two greatly differing and eventually conflicting cultures. Mount Athos provided a unique opportunity because here alone Russians and Greeks have lived in close proximity for centuries.

When I first visited the Russian monastery on Mount Athos I was intrigued by its vastness, its state of disrepair and the enigma of its past. Who were the Russian Athonites and what was their role on the Holy Mountain? I started discovering some clues when I visited the Prophet Elijah Skete. By the time I was fully engaged on my research the last representatives of the Russians were expelled from the skete and I felt a sense of urgency in completing my thesis. Much has been written about the Russians on Athos, but it has been largely biased or uninformed. I hope that my contribution compensates by offering an objective view.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My father inspired me to write this thesis. He died in 1992, the year of the expulsion from the Prophet Elijah Skete. He was a specialist historian and taught me a lot about research. I dedicate this thesis to his memory.

My chief mentor and other great source of inspiration has been Fr Ioannikiy, the one-time skete librarian. Without his patience, advice and constant encouragement I would never have found a specific topic for my research, let alone completed it. I am also much indebted to my wife: I could not have tackled the difficult passages in the Greek texts without her help, and I am grateful for her understanding of the sacrifices I have had to make in our family life in order to complete my thesis. Bishop Kallistos has also inspired me and given me invaluable help. I would have been lost without his wonderful collection of source-material.

I would like to thank my sister for her proof reading and perceptive comments. My mother has read some of my thesis and encouraged me. Bishop Ambrose of the Monastery of SS Kyprianos and Ioustini also read my proofs and advised me, and I thank him for his hospitality. My wife's uncle, Professor K. Athanasopoulos, has been an unfailing source of encouragement, and has provided me with many useful contacts. My wife's family has also constantly supported me and has many times been very hospitable to me during my field trips. Special mention must go to my brother-in-law, Priest schema-monk Silouanos of the St Dionysios monastery of Mt Olympus. I spent a three enlightening weeks with him on the Holy Mountain and have many times stayed in his monastery where I have witnessed the cœnobitic life as it should be.

Finally, my thanks go to Professor S.K. Pavlowitch, my supervisor. He has been most encouraging, always read my scripts promptly and has provided me with a useful objective overview. I have learnt a lot from his insights into the general historical background.

PART I: THE RUSSIANS ON ATHOS

Chapter 1: Introduction

(i)

Mount Athos Today and the Aims of this Thesis

Mount Athos, also known as the Holy Mountain, is a semi-autonomous part of Greece. It occupies the north-easternmost prong of the Khalkidiki peninsula. Its shoreline, harbours and land border with mainland Greece are closed to females, and entry to males is restricted. The entire territory of Athos is divided between twenty Christian Orthodox monasteries. They are *stavropegic*, a privileged status conferred on them by the spiritual head of the Holy Mountain, the Œcumenical Patriarch; they are also *kyriarchic*, which means that their abbots are independent of episcopal jurisdiction except for that of the Patriarch; and since all twenty have had chrysoboulla from crowned patrons—initially Byzantine emperors and then rulers of Serbia, Bulgaria and the Danubian Principalities—they have the royal title of *vasiliki* or Imperial.

All the Twenty Monasteries are cœnobitic: the brethren of each Monastery give total obedience to the abbot, who is appointed for life; and all monastic property and duties are shared. Formerly many of the Twenty were idiorrhythmic: they were loose-knit communities of semi-independent monks who earned their keep and lived according to their wealth. By the eighteenth century, idiorrhythm was becoming the norm on Mount Athos, even though all the Twenty Monasteries had Cœnobitic Rules from their founders, often with curses on those who dared to violate them. The last monastery of the Twenty to be idiorrhythmic was Pantokratoros; it became a cœnobium in 1992 by order of Patriarch Bartholomew.

All property on Athos belongs to or is leased from the Twenty. They also possess *metochia* or dependencies outside Athos. On their Athonite land the Twenty house various organisations which are dependent on them yet outside their monastic walls. The smallest of these are *isikhastiria*, which are remote huts or caves for anchorites living on their own. Then there are *kathismata*. These are huts for individual monks and are situated close to the monastery. These monks are enrolled in the monastery's *monakhologhion*, or register of brethren, and are therefore part of the monastery's brotherhood, but lead a largely eremitic life. *Kalyves* are slightly larger huts for individual monks, sometimes on a tiny plot of land. *Kellia* house between two and twelve monks and contain a chapel. The largest dependent organisations are sketes, of which there are twelve. These are traditionally an idiorrhythmic collection of *kellia*, known as a *lavra*, built round a central church. As we shall see, the Russian and Romanian sketes were small cœnobitic but nevertheless dependent monasteries. Until the 1930s

there used to be itinerant Athonites who had no fixed abode, known as *kaviotes*.[1]

Each of the Twenty Monasteries has a representative in the *Iera Koinotis*, the Athonite ruling council which sits in Karyes, the capital of Athos. The Greek government is represented by a civil governor, who is answerable to the Greek Foreign Ministry. One of his functions is to administer the police and telecommunications of the peninsula.

In three of the monasteries services are conducted in Slavonic: in Hilandar, which is traditionally Serbian, Zograf, which is Bulgarian, and in the Russian monastery of St Panteleimon.[2] The language of the other seventeen is Greek and nearly all their brethren are Greeks. The Twenty are in a strict hierarchical order. The first and oldest monastery is the Great Lavra, founded in 963. The other monasteries in order of seniority are: Vatopedi, Iviron, Hilandar, Dionysiou, Koutloumousiou, Pantokratoros, Xiropotamou, Zograf, Dokhiariou, Karakallou, Philotheou, Simonopetra, Aghiou Pavlou, Stavronikita, Xenophontos, Grigoriou, Esphigmenou, St Panteleimon and Konstamonitou. Although the Russian monastery was until recently much the largest, it is only nineteenth on the ladder.

There are two Russian sketes: the St Andrew Skete, known as the Serai, belonging to Vatopedi; and the Prophet Elijah Skete belonging to Pantokratoros. The last of the Serai Russians left in the mid-sixties.[3] The Prophet Elijah Skete was in Russian hands until its brethren were expelled from the Holy Mountain in 1992, and it is now run by monks

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[1] For definitions of *isikhastirion*, *kathisma*, *kalivi*, *kellion* and *skiti* see Dorotheos Monakhos Vatopedinos, *To Aghio Oros, Miisi stin Istoria tou kai ti zoi tou, B'* (Katerini: Tertios, 1985), pp. 5-81. Between the World Wars there were more categories of Athonite Houses: see *Sentences arbitrales rendues par les membres neutres de la Commission Mixte en vertu de l'article 32 de la Convention signée à Ankara le 10 juin 1930 et relatives aux cas de certains moines et monastères du Mont Athos ayant demandé l'admission au bénéfice des articles 9 et 29 de la même Convention* (Ankara: Tsitouris, 1930), pp. 57-59. It is important to note that my definitions of Athonite houses and organisations are a simplification. For instance, over the centuries many *kalyves* had chapels added to them; and idiorrhythmic lavra-style sketes are made up not only of *kellia* but of various other smaller houses.

[2] Also known as the *Rossikon* in Greek or *Rusik* in Russian, terms roughly equivalent to 'Russian Monastery'.

[3] There was a three-day fire in 1958, destroying a large part of its buildings. When the last of the skete's Russians died, Priest-monk Sergiy moved in. He was one of the first monks from the Soviet Union to live in St Panteleimon. However, he soon left, and gave the keys and seal back to Vatopedi. Thus, at the crucial moment, the Russians were unable to repopulate the Serai. The extant skete residential buildings now house the Athoniada pre-seminary school and some monks from Vatopedi.

from Xenophontos.[4] Before the First World War most of the *kellia* and smaller dwellings were Russian. Now nearly all are Greek.

The Holy Mountain has traditionally been home to all Christian peoples. From the time of its first monastic inhabitants, it was raided and occupied by numerous nationalities, many of which settled there. In the sixth century Macedonia was invaded by Slavs. In the next hundred years Mount Athos was home to refugees from the Islamic wars in Palestine, Egypt and north Africa. Newly baptised Vlachs settled on the Holy Mountain a hundred years later. In 830, 862 and from 866 till 870, it was raided by Saracens. St Athanasius of the Holy Mountain, founder of the Lavra, was spiritual father to Greeks, Armenians and Georgians. In 980 St Euthemius founded Iviron, the Georgian monastery.[5] By then, the Holy Mountain was internationally famous, even in the Latin West; it was home to Romans and Calabrians, and there is evidence that a monastery was founded by monks from Amalfi before 980.

Except for six years, from 1913 till 1919, when it was theoretically an international protectorate administered by Greece, Mount Athos has belonged to the Byzantine Empire (963-1430), the Ottoman Empire (1430-1912), and to Greece (1912-1913 and 1919 to the present day). During the Byzantine period the Holy Mountain was annexed, from 1204, by King Boniface of Montferrat, appropriated by the Emperor of Nicea in 1246, reattached to the Byzantine Empire in 1261, made part of the Kingdom of Serbia by Stefan Dušan towards the end of the first half of the fourteenth century, and finally annexed by John Cantacuzene in 1350.[6]

As we have seen, the Twenty Monasteries are Greek and Slav. The sketes and kellia are inhabited by Greeks, Russians, Bulgarians, Serbs and Romanians. Many of the Athonite houses now have monks and novices from western countries as well, especially the United States, France and Germany. Yet, despite its multi-national history and cosmopolitan makeup, Mount Athos has always been predominantly Greek, and so has at least half of the Athonite population, except on two occasions: for a short period before its subjugation by the Ottomans in the fifteenth century, Serbia was the dominant Christian force

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[4] A week after the expulsion some monks from the Xenophontos Skete of the Annunciation took the Prophet Elijah Skete over. They had been on Athos for less than a year, having left Kavala at the request of the bishop of their diocese. When Pantokratoros became cœnobitic its former brotherhood left and was replaced by monks from Xenophontos Monastery.

[5] Nearly all of its brethren are now Greek. The last of the Georgians died in the 1950s.

[6] Antonopoulos, N., 'La Condition internationale du Mont Athos', *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos* (Chevetogne, 1962), pp. 381-386.

in the Balkans and many of the Athonite monasteries were in Serbian hands; and from the latter half of the nineteenth century until after the First World War there were more Russians on Athos than any other ethnic group.

Thus, originally a monastic centre for all of Christendom, the Holy Mountain has been a meeting place for monks of the Eastern Orthodox world since the eleventh century. Owing to its geographical position, Athos has been, above all, a microcosm of the Balkan Christian peoples; and the Russians, always in the minority until the latter half of the last century, were, so to speak, outsiders. The Greeks have traditionally enjoyed the status of hosts. As such, they are proud of the international makeup of Mount Athos. The contemporary Athonite historian Monk Dorotheos Vatopedinos, proudly quotes Pope Innocent III: '[The Holy Mountain's] fame "attracts people from the utmost ends of the earth."'[7] The eighteenth century ascetic, St Nikodemus the Hagiorite, said that his monastic forbears on Athos 'came from and were born in different countries; and many of them know not their own country, nor where they were born: but all now have a common fatherland—this Holy Mountain of Athos.'[8] In reality, inter-ethnic relations on the peninsula have rarely been as harmonious as the saint's idealistic concept would suggest. This is mainly because of the fraught relationship between what were until recently the two main Athonite groups, the Greeks and the Russians.

In this thesis I aim to examine the Greeks' dual attitude to the Russians. Why did their love of the Russians turn to jealous resentment, and why did the Russians in their turn start considering the Greeks their opponents? Was either side justified in its ill feelings for the other? It will be necessary to take, as it were, three camera angles. The first will be a general shot: I shall examine Greek-Russian relations in Europe against the background of the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Next I shall deal specifically with Athonite history, which from the nineteenth century centred around the Greek-Russian disputes. Finally, a close-up shot will be taken of the Prophet Elijah Skete, its complete history and day-to-day running at its apogee. I shall be examining how well the skete fits into the more general historical scheme.

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[7] Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit. A', p. 159. This quotation is unusual because the Roman Church is traditionally shunned by Athonites.

[8] Daniil Ier. and Nektarios Mon., *Akolouthia ton osion kai theoforon pateron imon tou en to Aghio Orei*, 'Logos Enkomastiakos' (Aghion Oros, 1941), p. 71.

(ii)
Bibliographical Review

Embarking on this thesis has been singularly difficult because little substantial historical work in English has been devoted to post-eighteenth century Athos, let alone to Greek-Russian relations on Athos. The great majority of my sources is therefore in Greek and Russian. Fr Doens, a member of the Catholic monastery of Chevetogne, made a commendable effort to interest the world of scholarship in the Holy Mountain by publishing the first comprehensive Greek and non-Greek Athonite bibliography. He also edited a great collection of articles in celebration of the Holy Mountain's millennium in 1963 entitled *Le Millénaire du Mont-Athos*. These are some of the most informative historical writings on Athos available to the reader who cannot decipher Greek or Russian (half of the collective work is in Greek). Another serious treatment in English of recent Athonite history is to be found in Amand de Mendieta's *The Garden of the Panaghia*, a scholarly work but limited in scope.[9] Apart from this, most of what has been written specifically about modern Athonite history in English is a few travelogues or socio-religious studies, which are of limited historical value.

The failure of English language historians to deal adequately with Mount Athos is hard to justify. Thanks to its strategic position one hundred kilometres from the Dardanelles, the Holy Mountain has played a vital role in Near Eastern history. Until 1912 Athos was part of the Ottoman Empire; and given the ethnic mix of the Athonite population, a knowledge of Athonite history provides a useful insight into the complexities of the Eastern Question and into the situation in the Balkans today. Yet none of the histories on the Eastern Question in English gives Athos more than a passing reference. Thomas Meininger's study of the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate is a valuable work in English that deals in detail specifically with Orthodox church history in the nineteenth century Balkans; yet it makes no mention of Mount Athos, even though the Exarchate was an issue that was inextricably bound with Athonite events.[10] Perhaps the attitude of English language historians to Mount Athos can be exemplified by Hugh Seton-Watson's

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[9] Amand de Mendieta, E., *Mount Athos. The Garden of the Panaghia* (Berlin & Amsterdam, 1972). Much invaluable scholarly work, running to many volumes, has been undertaken in the publication of the *Acta* of the Twenty and of the Protaton, by Le Petit and others. This source material, of course, deals mainly with the Byzantine period, but is too important for historians of Athos to pass over in silence.

[10] Meininger, T.A., *Ignatiev and the Establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate, 1864-1872* (University of Wisconsin: Logmark, 1970).

eschewing matters pertaining to the Russian church. He writes in his preface to *The Russian Empire*: 'The history of the Church and of religious ideas remains virtually untouched. This is a field of immense importance, of which with deep regret I confess my ignorance, while expressing the hope that pioneers will soon appear.'[11] Historians writing in English have probably avoided Mount Athos for the same reasons. This thesis attempts to fill in the gaps left by English historians of the Eastern Question, and impartially to analyse the Greek and Russian accounts of the events on the Holy Mountain.

An even greater difficulty I have encountered has been the obfuscation and passion surrounding my subject. On the whole, the Greek Athonites and civil authorities have not welcomed me. Once I was questioned by a plain-clothes policeman outside the Rossikon; he wanted to know what I was doing in the monastery for so long (three weeks). On another occasion I was invited by one of the Greek monasteries to do some research, but on the morning of my departure for Greece I received a letter from the abbot suggesting that there was nothing of interest for me to see. I went to the monastery, nevertheless, only to be told by the librarian that a Greek academic was already researching my theme, and they would rather I did not interfere. Before one of my last visits I had to go to the Civil Governor's office in the University of Salonica to get special last-minute permission to visit the Holy Mountain. There I met the Elder Theoclitos, the then Protepistatis (senior Athonite representative). When I told him that I was researching into the Russian monastery, he said that there was no such thing as a 'Russian' monastery: St Panteleimon was a Greek monastery that had been bought by the Russians 'with their gold and roubles'. The Russians of St Panteleimon have been no less contradictory and unhelpful. Despite their warm hospitality, I was not encouraged to use their library: in my three-week stay I was able to borrow one volume, was not allowed to browse and could not be trusted to read in the library unsupervised. None of the brethren I spoke to had much idea of the history of their monastery and did not seem keen to discuss it.

Had I not come across Fr. Ioannikiy, the librarian of the Prophet Elijah Skete, my thesis would not have got off the ground. For my yearly visits to the skete he would have ready for me all the manuscripts and printed materials that might be of use. As nothing old, especially from Russia, can be exported from the Holy Mountain, I took thirty-six microfilms of the skete archive. Just before my annual trip

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[11] Seton-Watson, H., *The Russian Empire 1801-1917* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press 1967), Preface, p. ix.

to the skete in 1992 Fr. Ioannikiy and the other brethren were arrested and expelled from Mount Athos. Naturally, the skete library has since become inaccessible—I believe there was an armed guard at its doors for several days after the expulsion. Nobody knows what has become of the archive; perhaps my microfilms, on which I base the second part of my thesis, are all that is left.

The books in print that I draw on are in Greek, and they are, as we shall see, extremely one-sided. The Russian texts, no less biased, present a diametrically opposite view, but they have been exceedingly hard to acquire. The British Library, for instance, has only some of them, and I have spent ten years making photocopies mainly of volumes belonging to individuals.

Most Greek historians of Athos are in agreement about the Russians. They both revere their northern guests and revile them. Monk Dorotheos' view of the Russians is typically Greek. In one chapter he enthuses over their 'courtesy, aristocratic demeanour, unfeigned spirituality', and numerous small contributions to Athonite life such as camellias and the addition of Russian vocabulary to Athonite jargon.[12] The chapter is concluded with an icon-like drawing depicting two monks with haloes embracing each other, presumably symbolising the Christ-like love binding Orthodox Slavs with Hellenes. A mere two chapters further on the tone completely changes: Monk Dorotheos accuses the Russians of suddenly falling prey to 'Pan-Slavism'; as a result his once peace-loving Slav brothers turn into rapacious colonialists who, at a certain point half-way through the nineteenth century, decide to invade the Holy Mountain and take it over.

Monk Dorotheos' view of the Russians is more moderate than that of many other Greeks. He is said to have taken the trouble to learn Russian in order to treat adequately with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His Russian bibliography is impressive. It lists Barskiy, Moshin, Pavlovskiy and Dmitrievskiy, and he discusses intelligently a section of Dmitrievskiy's *Russkie Na Afone*, which is not available in Greek translation.[13] Yet the sentimental effusions of chapter XXIII are characteristic of one with a superficial knowledge of the Russians and their language.[14]

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[12] Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., Part II of A', Chapter XXIII. It seems strange that the Russians introduced camellias, but they are a plant from the mountainous Sino-Russian border.

[13] Ibid., B', pp. 194-197, and p. 196, footnote 24.

[14] He gives as an example of the Russian contributions to Athonite jargon such 'slang' as: σκουσένιγιε [= искушение] and μπάτουσκα [=батюшка], ibid., op. cit., p. 161.

The only Greek historian, to my knowledge, with a thorough command of Russian is A-E Tachiaos of Salonica University. His writings are not clouded by sentiment or Hellenic nationalism, but, as we shall see, when he deals with the Greek-Russian dispute of the last century, he avoids going into his subject in depth and leaves his account unfinished.[15]

The most detailed and important work on Mount Athos in any language was written by Gerasimos Smyrnakis. He was abbot of Esphigmenou Monastery from 1906 to 1908. His first edition of *To Aghion Oros* appeared in 1903, and he was therefore an eye-witness of many of the events examined in this thesis.[16] His work is a vast compendium of personal observations and narrative based on countless manuscripts, statistics and other source materials. Naturally, *To Aghion Oros* is the main reference work of most subsequent Greek historians of Athos. However, as an eyewitness of the later stages of the Greek-Russian quarrels, Smyrnakis did not have the disinterest essential for a scholar; what he wrote about Russians on the Holy Mountain is unashamedly nationalist and unfair. Moreover, he was not a professional historian, and had no knowledge of Russian. As we shall see, his narrative is often disorganised and hard to follow, and some of his statistics are contradictory and illogical. That the work of such a bitter Russophobe should be universally relied on by subsequent Greek historians does not speak well of Greek scholarship and partially explains the uniformity of their view of the Russians.

Another eye-witness of the events at the close of the era of Greek-Russian tension was Meletios Metaxakis. He was responsible for the introduction of the new calendar to the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria, became Œcumenical Patriarch in 1922, and retired to the Holy Mountain fifteen months later. In 1913, while Metropolitan of Kition in Cyprus, he published a study on Mount Athos and Russian policy in the Near East entitled *To Aghion Oros kai i rosiki politiki en anatoli*.[17] It is well argued and clear, but highly tendentious, and his main source of reference is Smyrnakis.

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15 Tachiaos, A.-E., 'Controverses entre Grecs et Russes à l'Athos', *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos* (Chevetogne, 1962), pp. 160-179. The former Governor of Athos, Professor C. Papoulidis, has written studies on the Russian Athonite heresy of the Name, as well as on the Russian Archaeological Society in Constantinople, and is said also to have used Russian source materials in the original.

16 Smyrnakis, Gerasimos, *To Aghion Oros* (Aghion Oros: Panselinos, reprint edition, 1988).

17 Metaxakis, Meletios, *To Aghion Oros kai i rosiki politiki en anatoli* (Athens: P.D. Sakellariou, 1913).

The most anti-Russian work is *Aghion Oros kai Slavoi* by Nikiphoros Mylonakos, a retired policeman who presumably served in Karyes but had no academic or any other qualifications to write about Athos. His work came out in 1960, three years before the Holy Mountain's millennium celebrations, and was intended as a warning to fellow Greeks about the danger of allowing more Slavs to come to Athos. One of his main sources is Metaxakis, but he has none of his intelligence and polish. Mylonakos is interesting only as an example of extreme Hellenic nationalism and sentimentality.[18]

One of the most recent Athonite histories is P.K. Khristou's *To Aghion Oros, Athoniki politeia—istoria tekhni zoi*, which came out in 1987.[19] It is an attractively presented general guide to Athos. Although he quotes few sources and is occasionally inaccurate, Khristou's text is scholarly and informative. His arguments are persuasive but largely biased against the Russians.

No work of the detail or depth comparable to that of Smyrnakis has been written on Mount Athos in Russian—or in any other language—this century. The Russian works fall into two categories. The first belongs to those who lived on Athos and were present during the earlier events of the last century. Of these the most famous is Vasiliy Grigirovich Barskiy Plaka-Al'ba, an itinerant monk who visited Athos in 1724-5 and 1744 during an extended pilgrimage of the East. His diary contains accurate plans and sketches of the many monasteries and sketes he visited, as well as comments and statistics he noted during his travels; it has been of great value to all nationalities of historians, architects and archæologists of Athos.

Parfeniy Aggeev and Seraphim Svyatogorets were the most prominent Russian Athonite writers in the early nineteenth century. Aggeev, like Barskiy, was an itinerant monk. He came from an Old Believers' settlement in Bessarabia, walked on foot across the Carpathians and settled on Athos where he participated in the Russians' final move into St Panteleimon Monastery in 1839. Priest-monk Seraphim Svyatogorets arrived on Athos in 1843. He became rapidly famous in Russia for his letters about Athos, which attracted a huge readership and acted as an incentive for pilgrims to stop off at the peninsula on their way from Odessa to Palestine. He stayed no more than two years at any time on the Holy Mountain because he had to return to Russia to arrange for the

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[18] For instance, he describes the peninsula's rugged geophysical contrasts and concludes with fervent pride: 'behold the outstanding characteristics of this part of our Fatherland'—*idou ta vasika diakritika tou tmimatos tis patridos mas*—Mylonakos, N., *Aghion Oros kai Slavoi* (Athens: Eisagoghi, 1960), p 7.

[19] Khristou, P.K., *To Aghion Oros, Athoniki politeia—istoria tekhni zoi* (Athens: Epopteia), 1987.

publication of his letters; he came back to Athos in 1851, perhaps with the intention of staying, but left for good in the general exodus of Russians in 1853 when war broke out between Russia and Turkey. Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow criticised his style for being too journalistic; indeed, although Seraphim's account is an interesting description of life in the late 1840s on Athos, it is sentimental, pious and bland, and he was really only a visitor to the Holy Mountain.

The reminiscences and essays on Athos and the Balkans of Konstantin Leontyev, the novelist, journalist and diplomat, provide a well argued and surprisingly independent view. He was Consul at Salonica from the late 1860s. In 1871 he was personally involved in a dispute about the succession of the abbot in the Prophet Elijah Skete. His views on Athos, the Greeks and the Bulgarian schism are, for a Russian politician and diplomat of the time, remarkably pro-Greek. None of the Russian writers I have just described were particularly biased in favour of their compatriots or Russia, but they wrote about Athos at an earlier, less troubled time. Phyletic bias would never have occurred to them: indeed, they were, if anything, complimentary and full of respect for the Greeks.

In the second category of Russian authors belong those who were involved in Athos from the latter half of the nineteenth century and who did not look on the Greeks favourably. A.N. Muravyev was a man of letters and amateur historian who came to Athos and in 1849 helped the Serai, at the time a large Kellion, to become a skete. The Serai was very much a nationalist, Great Russian house, not intended for Ukrainians and other Small Russians. In his *Pis'ma s vostoka* Muravyev displayed a dangerously sentimental pride for his home country reminiscent of that of Mylonakos.[20]

The most important Russian writer was A.A. Dmitrievskiy, a professor from the Kiev Dukhovnaya Akademia and professional historian. His *Russkie na Afone* is the most detailed account in Russian of the events that took place between the 1830s and the 1890s. His style is vigorous, clear and entertaining. On the other hand, although during his researches for this book he was a frequent visitor to the Holy Mountain and stayed for long periods at St Panteleimon, he could not match the experience or insight of an Athonite monk. Moreover, Dmitrievskiy admits himself that he was not allowed to see all the relevant manuscripts, because when he was writing *Russkie na Afone* the St Panteleimon archives were in disorder and under lock and key. He had, therefore, to make do with those manuscripts

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20 Muravyev, A.N., *Pis'ma s vostoka* (St Petersburg, 1851).

which happened at the time to be in the hands of individuals willing to help him.[21]

For all his professionalism, Dmitrievskiy, too, is far from an impartial historian. He accuses the author of one of his printed sources, I.F. Krasnovskiy,[22] of being one-sided and making serious mistakes, but, as we shall see, his own account is unfair and full of glaring omissions. In his introduction, Dmitrievskiy warns against histories that rely on 'personal observation and impressions, which, as such, are always subjective, one-sided and incomplete'; and, he goes on to point out, historians should not trust the oral evidence of witnesses and contemporaries. He had recourse to the latter only when written evidence was not available. He claims that *Russkie na Afone* is based on a judicious mixture of personal observation, hearsay and documents. This is not the impression given by chapters VI - VIII.

A.A. Pavlovskiy also made an important contribution as an Athonite historian. In 1897 he espoused the cause of the Russian Athonite *kelliots* and published a number of guides and pamphlets for Russian pilgrims. He was attached to the Salonica Consulate and became the permanent Russian diplomatic representative on the Holy Mountain during World War I. His main skills lay in journalism and organisation. He published two numbers of a journal for the Russian Athonite community in 1914 entitled *Afonskie Izvestiya* but abandoned the undertaking, presumably owing to the start of the war. He is invaluable as an historical source because of the great quantity of letters he wrote, and because he was a controversial figure devoted to his work, which for him was a sacred cause. Like Dmitrievskiy, he felt that the Greeks were his opponents, but he was not a scholar and wrote poor Russian which at times verged on the dyslexic.

Fr Anatoliy Prosfirin is one of the latest Russian historians of Athos. He is best known for his exhaustive Russian bibliography of Athos published in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* in 1975. He also published a general history of the Russians on Athos entitled 'Russkie na Afone' which appeared in three instalments in the same journal, in 1974; it is superficial and tendentious.[23]

I also draw on articles and monographs. One of the most curious is *The Holy Mount Athos and the Slavs* published in

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[21] Dmitrievskiy, A.A., *Russikie na Afone, ocherk zhizni i deyatel'nosti igumena russkago Panteleymonovskago monastyrya svyschenno-arkhimandrita Makariya (Sushkina)* (St Petersburg, 1895), p.5.

[22] Ibid., p. 6. Krasnovskiy's work, entitled *Makariy Afonskiy, igumen i svyaschenno-arkhimandrit sv. Panteleimona monastyrya*, is the fourth printed source of *Russkie na Afone* (Moscow: Universitetskaya Tipografiya, 1889).

[23] Prosfirin, Protoierey A., 'Afon in russkaya tserkov', *Zhurnal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*, 1974, Nos 3, 4, 5.

English and Greek by Vasiliy Vaschenko at the request of the Prophet Elijah Skete.[24] He was an émigré Russian, who wrote under the deliberately misleading Greek-sounding pseudonym of N. Panajoti in reply to Mylonakos' *Aghion Oros kai Slavoi*. He deals systematically with Mylonakos' illogicalities and lacunae, but the poverty of his English and the dubious anonymity of the drably presented edition detract from his argument. Vaschenko also published a monograph in Russian entitled *Svyatoimennyi Afon*—'Athos of the Holy Name'—a year before, in 1962, under his real name. This is a brief, general history of Athos and the Slavs aimed at the pious pilgrim; it ends with a description of the Prophet Elijah Skete and a plea to help its ageing brotherhood. A more literate and thus impressive pamphlet was published in French by Professor Alexandre Soloviev in Belgrade, 1933, entitled *Histoire du monastère russe au Mont-Athos*. Soloviev was also answering Greek opponents and set out to disprove their claim that the Russians never had a monastery on Athos but had usurped St Panteleimon from the Greeks in the previous century.

Finally, I base my thesis on documentary evidence. This is not only the eye witness accounts already mentioned, such as Parfeniy Aggeev's memoirs, or my microfilms of the Prophet Elijah Skete; it is also international treaties from 1877 onwards, pre-revolutionary guide books for Russian pilgrims on Athos, and decisions by the Iera Koinotis of the Holy Mountain. Unfortunately, such source material has not been available for every period in my history. Where I rely heavily on the biased and at times suspect accounts of Dmitrievskiy and Smyrnakis, notwithstanding my objective sifting and analysis, my account is naturally thinner than when I draw on archival and documentary material.

As we have seen, Tachiaos is one of the few Greek historians who knows Russian well. Smyrnakis quotes an eighteenth century chronicler clearly confused about the Slavs in general: St Paisiy Velichkovskiy, who was a Small Russian, is referred to as 'Papa Paisios the Serb'.[25] Until the eighteenth century the Serbs on Athos were sometimes called *Rasoi* or *Rashi*, and they may have been confused with the *Rossoi* (the Russians). After all, Slavs in general, even other Balkan peoples, were foreigners to the Greeks; and the Greeks, like other xenophobes, tended to lump all foreigners together.

Greek historians had difficulty in dealing with Russian names. P.K. Khristou and Monk Dorotheos seem unsure about whether to transliterate them into Greek or Latin script.

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[24] Panajoti, N., *The Holy Mount Athos and the Slavs* (Bern, 1963).

[25] Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 591. The source he quotes is one of the Simonopetra chronicles—*En khronographiki kodiki*.

Those names that are transliterated into Greek seem to have caused particular problems. For instance, Smyrnakis and Meletios Metaxakis render unintelligible the name of the Russian Consul at Monastir, who was N. Yakubovskiy (Якубовский), by calling him Ιακουβότσκωφ[26] or Ιακουβότσκαβο(ς)[27]

(iii)

Greek-Russian Relations: A General Historical Overview

It is hardly surprising that such linguistic and ethnographic ignorance should be matched by a lack of understanding of Russia as a state and how she functioned. Indeed, the Greek historians seem so parochial and naive that their conception of European history outside Greece, and of historical phenomena in general, is alarmingly misguided. They seem to think that, like the Kingdom of Greece, the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century was run as a small democracy or constitutional monarchy with a parliament which co-operated closely with the national Church.[28]

Pan-Slavism was also misunderstood by Greek historians. Monk Dorotheos, Metaxakis and Khristou do not attempt to define it. As we have seen, Monk Dorotheos believed that it incited the Russians to take over the Holy Mountain. The three historians implicitly equate Pan-Slavism with a nationalism that contradicted the traditional, harmonious Pan Orthodoxy of Athos. In fact, Pan-Slavism never existed there.

Pan-Slavism was no more than a concept interpreted variously by different groups of Slavs.[29] In Russia it was an outlook espoused by Slavophils, who had formerly campaigned for liberal reforms such as the emancipation of the serfs and preached against what they saw as the evil influence of the West. However, as Seton-Watson puts it:

> Pan-Slavism was essentially a creation of the intelligentsias of the small Slav peoples in the first half of the nineteenth century. Russia was a great empire, which could stand on its own feet, but the small peoples

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[26] Metaxakis, op. cit., p. 86.

[27] Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 218.

[28] King Otto of Greece was forced to grant a constitution in 1844.

[29] According to one bizarre theory, it was invented by Catholic propagandists before the eighteenth century as a bogey to alarm the enemies of Orthodoxy; and when the Russians started settling on Athos in the nineteenth century the 'Papists' tried to convince the Greeks that the Russians were Pan-Slav colonisers. This theory may have originated from Italian diplomatic manœuvres in the run-up to the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate, when the Uniats were trying to make inroads in the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria. Theodoropoulos, T.S., 'The Orthodox have never been "Panslavists"', *Christianiki*, 9 July 1992.

> needed the feeling that they belonged to a great and powerful family of nations, in order to sustain them in the struggle against more powerful opponents. From the point of view of the small nations, Pan-Slavism was a programme based on the brotherhood of equal Slav nations, including Catholics and Protestants as well as Orthodox. The Russian Pan-Slavs saw things differently. They believed that the smaller Slav peoples should accept the Russians as leaders, and doubted the loyalty of those who were not Orthodox.[30]

There were in Russia Pan-Slavists who were also nationalists, such as the sociologist and publicist N.Y. Danilevskiy and General R.A. Fadeyev, but they were influential only in unofficial circles of Russian intellectuals and among certain diplomats.[31]

Pan-Slavism was at its height in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s when it had widespread popular support. As we shall see, it strongly influenced Alexander II to abandon his pacific stance towards Turkey in favour of the Balkan Slavs in the run-up to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Another person influenced by Pan-Slavism was N.P. Ignatiev, the Russian Ambassador to the Porte. He played a key role in the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate and tried to create Great Bulgaria with the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878. In his retirement he became an executive member of the Slavonic Benevolent Committee, the principal Pan-Slav organisation in Russia. Ignatiev, as we shall see, also did much to help the Russian Athonites. He is one of the main reasons why the Greeks accuse the Russians of being Pan-Slavists on Athos.

The Russians had very little to do with the other Slavs of Mount Athos. For instance, as Ignatiev discovered for himself 1874, there were no Russian monks in Zograf; Archimandrite Neofit explained to him that the Bulgarians feared the Russians might expel them from their monastery.[32] Even the Bulgarian Exarchate had no direct bearing on Athos, although the same Neofit was also one of its metropolitans: Zograf was always loyal to the Patriarch. Russia sympathised with the Slavs of Bosnia and Herzegovina; next she actively supported first the Serbs, whom they abandoned shortly before 1877, then the Bulgarians. But this was in the Near East in general, and not on Mount Athos.

The main reason for tension between Greeks and Russians was the overcrowding of the Holy Mountain. We have seen how Greek historians have objected to the influx of Russians; when the Russian population was at its height there were over ten thousand monks on the peninsula, probably more than

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30 Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 448.

31 There were also vigorous opponenents of Pan-Slavism in diplomatic circles, such as Shuvalov and Saburov.

32 Smyrnakis, op. cit., pp 560-561, and Khristou, op. cit., p. 295. When Neofit had explained why there were no Russians in Zograf, Ignatiev exclaimed: 'Thank God that at least there are no Greeks here!'

at any time in its history. Mount Athos was rapidly ceasing to be a haven of peace and contemplation. Before the latter half of the nineteenth century the Russians coexisted with the Greeks as well as any other ethnic group on Athos, for there were never many Russians on Athos and the Greeks had been in the majority. When the Russian Athonite population dramatically increased the Greeks for the first time in centuries found themselves in the minority. They have not forgiven the Russians for outnumbering them, even after the October Revolution when ties between Russia and Athos were severed and Russian numbers shrank to their previous levels. The Greeks so resented being challenged in an area they considered theirs by right that they thought the Russians were attempting to oust them from the Holy Mountain. After the formation of their independent state in 1829 the Greeks were anxious to annex Macedonia, in the east of which is Mount Athos. Part of Macedonia was wrested from the Turks in 1912 and Mount Athos was liberated by the Greeks on St Dimitrios' day after the Bulgarians had been beaten in the race for Salonica. Thus the overwhelming Russian presence on Athos was seen as a threat to a proud fledgling nation that had been contending with her Balkan Slav rivals for the prize of Macedonia. Moreover, the Œcumenical Patriarch of Constantinople is Greek; and the Greeks consider themselves to be, like the Patriarch, *primi inter pares* on Mount Athos.

The tables in Figure 3 illustrate the rise and fall of the Russian Athonite population.

Successive Greek governments in this century, from that in the reign of King Constantine I to those of the Colonels, of the Pasok party and of the Centre-Right, have feared the possibility of uncontrolled numbers of Russians again flooding onto Mount Athos. Whilst the Soviet Union existed the authorities wanted to prevent the Holy Mountain from being infiltrated by agents of an atheist state. This was no less the case during Papandreou's first term as prime minister, even though he threatened to expel the Americans from their bases in Greece and seemed to be leaning towards the socialist East. After the demise of the USSR, restrictions on Russians going to the Holy Mountain have been no less severe: this time the fear is that Russians and Ukrainians might seek to escape poverty at home by taking Athonite vows and thus become a burden to the state, for since 1926 all Athonites have automatically become Greek citizens.[33]

Naturally, such official policy, however understandable, is not the only reason for this continuing

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[33] The Greek state has not found it easy to cope with the recent influx of Albanian refugees or of Russified Greeks from the former Soviet Union.

Russophobia, which cannot be explained by any single historical or psychological factor. The attitude of the Greeks to the Russian Athonites can only be understood if we look at a combination of fortuitously simultaneous events that occurred both on the Holy Mountain and in Europe as a whole from the beginning of the last century until the First World War.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Russia was undergoing a crisis in Europe: the threatened collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of an independent Greece, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria challenged Russia and forced her constantly to review her relations with the other Powers and the Orthodox Balkan peoples; and Russia's defeat in the Crimean war affected the way the Turks, the Balkan peoples—particularly the Greeks—and the Powers treated her.

Before the sudden influx of Russians onto Mount Athos in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Greeks revered them. It was the Russians who encouraged and perhaps inspired the Greeks in their first rebellions against the Turks in the eighteenth century. By the end of that century Russia's prestige among the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans was at its height. Although her victory was not as decisive as she would have liked, she had again defeated Turkey and the terms of the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji, 1774, favoured the victorious party. Russia was granted the right to build an Orthodox church in Constantinople and to make representations on behalf of this church and 'those who serve it'. Meanwhile, Catherine II's grandson Constantine was being prepared to rule over Constantinople as its first Christian Orthodox 'governor' since the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

Nothing came of Catherine's dream, but the Greeks continued to esteem the Russians. By the beginning of the next century the new city of Odessa had become a centre of the influential, educated Greek merchants who inhabited the Black Sea coast and a hotbed of anti-Ottoman insurgence. It was here that the Philiki Hetairia was formed. In general, Greek revolutionaries were being funded and educated by Russia. Ypsilantis and Capodistrias, both leading Greek insurgents, were important members of Alexander I's entourage.

During the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829) Russia supported the Greeks more than the other Powers did. It was she, in Article X of the Treaty of Adrianople (14 September 1829), that insisted that the Porte comply with the conditions laid down by the Powers on Poros in 1828 that Greece become an autonomous state.

Already, however, Greeks were becoming disillusioned with Russia. In March 1821 Alexander Ypsilantis crossed the Pruth into Moldavia with a small expeditionary force composed mainly of Greek students. He failed to gain the support of the Romanian peasants and of Tudor Vladimirescu, who was also engaged in a rebellion at the time. Worst of all, Alexander I withdrew his support of Ypsilantis when he heard of the invasion, and authorised the Turks to send in their army. Ypsilantis was routed on 7 June at the Battle of Dragatsani and fled to Austria where he was eventually imprisoned. Shortly afterwards the Philiki Hetairia was dissolved.

In the latter part of his reign Alexander I was becoming less willing to help the Greeks against the Turks because he was anxious to preserve the peace and stability of Europe, and for this he felt that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire should no further be eroded; and support for insurgents went against his legitimist principles. There now seemed to be no unified, effective policy in Russia towards the Greeks. In July 1821 Ambassador Count G.A. Stroganov demanded of the Porte 'a change of system' vis-à-vis the Greeks; when he received no reply he left Constantinople and Russia was no longer represented there. As if to counterbalance this strong stance, the Russian consuls Pini and Pisani were recalled from Bucharest and Iassy for excessive pro-Hellenism. In 1822 Capodistrias resigned from the Russian Foreign Ministry and settled in Vienna in protest against Russian inaction.

Until Alexander's death in 1825 Russia was to use diplomatic means only to deal with the Turks, and she was anxious not to act without the support of the other Powers. Thus, when Alexander met Francis II of Austria at Czernowitz in 1823 he promised that the Russian diplomatic representative who was to return to Constantinople would do nothing about the Greek question without consulting all of Russia's allies.

Alexander's cautious approach disappointed the Greeks. They disliked Russia's proposal that three autonomous Greek principalities be set up like those of Moldavia and Wallachia. The Greeks and the Turks refused to accept it, thus undermining the St Petersburg Conference of June 1824 at which it had been intended to settle the Greek question.

But Russia needed to act. In February 1825 Ibrahim Pasha landed in the Morea. Russia felt that the Powers were deliberately procrastinating; in fact, they too were incapable of making a concerted decision. On 18 August Count K.R. Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, stated in a circular that Russia would henceforward follow her own views, in her own interests, and without consultation.

Nicholas I, who succeeded Alexander in December, was unwilling to sacrifice Russia's interests for the sake of a dream of international co-operation.

However, two years passed before decisive action was taken, and once again Russia did not act on her own. On 20 October 1827 the joint naval forces of Britain, France and Russia destroyed the Turkish and Egyptian fleets in the Battle of Navarino. Russia eventually declared war by herself on the Turks in April 1828. She was driven to this not on account of the Greeks, but mainly because her passage through the Straits was blocked, in defiance of the Convention of Akkerman signed with the Sultan on 7 October 1826.[34]

It is important to stress that Russia did not have a clear-cut, unified policy towards the Balkans, or, indeed, towards Europe and the Powers. When the second Cretan rebellion broke out in the summer of 1866 Athens appealed to the Powers for help, and counted particularly on Russian support. Count N.P. Ignatiev, who had been appointed Minister in Constantinople in 1864, was alone in urging for pro-Greek action; it was generally felt in Russia that an aggressive foreign policy was now an unaffordable luxury, owing to the poor state of the Russian economy, internal discontent, and the atmosphere of instability caused by the attempted assassination of Alexander II in April 1866. The Imperial Chancellor, Prince A.M. Gorchakov, was unwilling to take action over Crete unless Russia was supported by another Power. So, once again, Greece was let down by her once-powerful Orthodox champion.

Russia's prestige among the Balkan peoples, especially among the Greeks, was severely tarnished by defeat in the Crimean War. The origins of the war, though not directly its cause, were the dispute between Russia and France over the Holy Land. As the dispute was essentially a religious one, Greek historians of Athos have considered it a significant factor in Athonite history. Viewed from a general perspective, the Holy Places dispute was about not only the clash between the Latins and the Orthodox, but also the motives of Nicholas I, Louis Philippe and Napoleon III. The Turks, who had originally signed the Capitulations with the French in 1740 favouring the Latins, found themselves being bullied and cajoled by the French and the Russians a hundred years later. By the 1830s the great majority of pilgrims in the Holy Land were Orthodox. In 1841 Nicholas gave his approval to the renovation of two Russian monasteries for the use of Russian pilgrims to the Holy Land, and in 1843

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[34] For a study of how Russia became increasingly preoccupied with the Straits, see Jelavich, C., *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1958), Ch I. See also Meininger, op. cit., passim.

Professor Porfiriy Uspenskiy, later Bishop of Chigirinsk, was sent by Nesselrode to study the situation there. The French demanded the right to help repair the Holy Sepulchre Church and established a consulate at Jerusalem in 1843. In 1847 Joseph Valega was appointed as the first Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Nicholas I saw campaigning for the Holy Places as a means of gaining instant popular support. He was also deeply opposed to the French monarch, a Bonaparte and revolutionary romantic. Conservative by nature, Nicholas was anxious to preserve the *status quo* in the Holy Land and concede no advantage to the French. For his part, before he became Emperor in 1852, Louis Napoleon also needed popular support, to consolidate his position as Prince-President of France, and the best way was to stir up the sympathy of his pious subjects in a dispute in which Catholicism and national pride were being challenged.

The Porte played its usual game of compromise and delay: it seemed to yield to French pressure and make generous concessions to the Latins, but in February 1852 issued a *firman* rendering these concessions invalid. In May the French put further pressure on the Turks by obliging the Sultan to allow the French man of war *Charlemagne* to pass through the Straights. The Turks then conceded to one of the main French demands and handed them the keys to the Holy Sepulchre Church. This effectively put an end to the Russian challenge in the Holy Land. At the end of 1852 the position of Basili, the Russian consul in Jerusalem, became untenable and he was recalled.

Greek Athonite historians see a sinister significance in the results of the Holy Land dispute. According to Meletius Metaxakis, the Russians made up for their disappointment in the Holy Land by directing their attention to Mount Athos. They, claimed Metaxakis, had tried not only to combat the Latins in the Holy Land, but to promote the cause of Russian Orthodoxy above that of the other Eastern churches; they had found that the Greeks, Copts and Armenians, as well as the Latins, were too well established and independent to be susceptible to their pressure: the community of Mount Athos, on the other hand, was mainly Greek and divided by factional squabbles, and so was much easier to penetrate.

Metaxakis' theory that Russia abruptly turned her predatory attention to Mount Athos from 1852 is a naive historical simplification because Russia in the nineteenth century did not have a clear-cut policy towards Athos. Even her attitude to Europe was hard to define, for all she clearly and consistently wanted was to secure the Straights

and, since 1856, to unblock them by reversing the punitive conditions imposed on her in the Treaty of Paris.

This lack of unity and policy in Russia was due to the relationship between the tsar and his ministers. Russia had ministers, generals and diplomats that ran the country as servants of the tsar, but she did not have a 'government' as the Greeks understand it; the autocrat ruled and his courtiers were powerful only if they had his attention and favour. The history of Russia in the nineteenth century was thus partially influenced by individuals, such as Czartoryski and Arakcheyev, who for a time had the ear of the tsar and understood his whims. Naturally, Russian ministers, diplomats and generals vied with each other for his attention and formed antagonistic cliques. We have seen the importance of Ypsilantis and Capodistrias in Alexander's Court: foreigners who had served the tsar since the time of Peter I, especially Germans and Austrians, were often resented by their Russian colleagues. N.P. Ignatiev is an example of how internal rivalry weakened Russia's international position. He acted on his own as Ambassador in Constantinople, and his work there was dismissed as harmful intrigues by the cautious Gorchakov, who steadfastly opposed him in St Petersburg. One of the reasons that Ignatiev's achievements at the Treaty of San Stefano proved hollow and were easily reversed in the Treaty of Berlin was his lack of support from within Russia. Thus, Metaxakis' claim that Ignatiev, Uspenskiy and Naumov were representative of official opinion or of the 'government' shows a lack of understanding of the political reality in Russia.[35] Monk Dorotheos, too, is misguided in his accusations when he talks of 'certain Russian monks hired by the Russian government';[36] or when he writes: 'Athonite pilgrims setting off by sea from Odessa with the sole desire of becoming monks on Athos were certainly not aware of how much their country's policy would use them as statistics so as to stress their numerical superiority at the appropriate moment. This was the policy, therefore, that was responsible for the installation of military bases on Athos and [...] influenced the Russian monks in their unseemly behaviour.'[37]

Nor could the Russian Church be justifiably accused of encouraging the colonisation of Athos or of pursuing a policy harmful to Greek interests. Metropolitan Philaret Drozdov was against the Russian kelliots and the large amounts of money they were receiving. There was a general unease among the Russian Church hierarchy over the huge sums collected by the end of the last century during Athonite

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35 Metaxakis, op. cit., p. 60.

36 Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., p. 422.

37 Ibid, p. 183-184.

alms-gathering missions in Russia, and measures were being taken to control these. The Moscow Synod gave Ignatiev no support or advice during his eight-year involvement in the negotiations over the Bulgarian Church; despite repeated pleas for help from the diplomat, Moscow remained silent or gave out non-committal messages until the last moment, in April 1871. Moreover, it was a Russian church commission that investigated the disturbances on Athos caused by the Heresy of the Name, and subsequently recommended the deportation of the troublemakers.

If, then, there was no such thing as an official Russian policy towards Athos, just as the Holy Places dispute was no more than a personal campaign of Nicholas I; and if the Moscow Synod was, if anything, disapproving of Russian Athonites—what caused the dramatic influx of Russians, which did indeed coincide with the end of the Crimean War?

The remarkable feature of the increase in Russian numbers is its suddenness. In fact, Russians had begun to arrive in greater numbers on Athos before the 1830s, but it was not until they were established in the Russian Monastery in 1839 that they came in droves. This flow of humanity was checked only temporarily by the Crimean War. Athos became instantly popular in Russia thanks to the publications of Seraphim Svyatogorets, other writers such as Prince A. Shikhmatov-Shirinskiy, and to numerous leaflets written by Russian Athonites, printed and distributed almost free in Russia. Public attention in Russia was also turning to Athonite alms-gathering missions, which had long met with modest success, but were drawing the attention of huge, generous crowds by the middle of the century.

In the 1840s going on long pilgrimages through Russia and on to the Holy Land was fashionable. Pilgrims would go by ship from Odessa. The Russian Society of Steam Shipping and Trade was founded in the mid-nineteenth century partly to cope with the increasing numbers of pilgrims. Many of them decided to stay permanently on the Holy Mountain, and the Russian Athonite population swelled. Some came from well-to-do merchant families, such as that of the first Russian abbot of St Panteleimon, Archimandrite Makariy, a member of the millionaire Sushkin family of Tula. Ieronim Solomentsev, the first father-confessor of the St Panteleimon Russians, was also from wealthy merchant family.

The more the pilgrims arrived, the richer Russian Athos became. Although Greek Athonites benefited from this, they remained for the most part poor, and soon became envious of their wealthy brethren.[38] Such material disparity aggravated

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[38] Iviron and Vatopedi, however, were immensely wealthy idiorrhythmic houses in the nineteenth century, and their representatives, or

the already simmering disappointment of the Greeks due to the changing, uncertain role of Russia in Europe that I have described above.

It should be especially borne in mind that particularly the educated Greeks were a proud people, and felt vulnerable and sensitive at a time when they were struggling to gain status as a newly-formed sovereign state. They believed they had been deprived of their own, independent country since the fifteenth century and they vigorously opposed any challenge to what they considered to be the integrity of their territory. The Greeks felt that the Church and the Holy Mountain belonged to them. It was the Church that inspired and led the 1821 Revolution: the spirit of independence had long been nurtured in secret schools run by the Church; the revolutionary Greek flag heralding the start of the revolt in the Peleponnese was displayed by a leader of the Church, Archbishop Germanos; and Gregory V was hanged in Constantinople in the same year by the Turks in revenge for the uprising.

In order to understand more fully what effect the dramatic increase the numbers of Russians had on Mount Athos, and how it came about, it is necessary to consider the events of Athonite history leading up to the mid-nineteenth century.

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antiprosopoi, had considerable private means. Most of the wealth of these two houses came from their dependencies in the Danubian Prinicipalities, Bessarabia, the Caucasus and mainland Russia. As will be explained in detail later on in this thesis, in the latter half of the century they lost their dependencies in Bessarabia and the Principalities and were thus deprived of a large part of their income. Zograf also lost extensive dependencies in the same areas. This is perhaps another reason why there were no Russians in this monastery.

PART I: THE RUSSIANS ON ATHOS
Chapter 2: The Beginning to 1841

(i)
From the Beginning to the Nineteenth Century

There has been much debate about the origins of Russian monasticism on Athos. The view held traditionally by Russians is that the first Rusik, or Russian monastery on Athos, dates back to the beginning of the eleventh century. It is called Bogoroditsa Xylourgou and is situated on the north-eastern side of the peninsula, between Vatopedi and Pantokratoros. Xylourgou is thought to have been founded at approximately the same time as, or even shortly before, St Anthony Pecherskiy's return from Mount Athos to Kiev, where he founded the Kievo-Pecherskaya Lavra. The principal church of Xylourgou is dedicated to the Dormition, as is that of the Pecherskaya Lavra. The earliest mention of Xylourgou is to be found in the Russian Primary Chronicle, in 1016.[1] The monastery and its brethren are referred to three times in the eleventh century, in *Actes de Panteleimon*.[2] In the first reference, a Kellion was sold to 'Theodul,[3] abbot of Bogoroditsa Xylourgou' in 1030; in the other two, 1048 and 1071, the monastery is spoken of as already well established. On 14 December 1142, an official act was drawn up by the Protaton entrusting the monastery to Monk Khristofor. The act contains an inventory of the monastery's treasures, among which are forty-nine itemised 'Russian books'—*vivlia rousika*.

A view commonly held by some Greeks, especially since the last century, is that the monastery had never belonged to the Russians. A. Soloviev lists the books mentioned in the 1142 inventory and concludes: 'All the books of the monastery were Russian and were intended for a numerous brotherhood. This is proof enough that Xylourgou had been inhabited by Russians since its foundation in about 1030. If the monastery had been founded by Greeks, some Greek books would have been preserved in it, bearing in mind the respect the Russians usually held for Greek ecclesiastical books.'[4]

The reasons given by the Russians' opponents to explain why the monastery is known as *Ton Ros* or *Rossikon* are somewhat fanciful. Mylonakos, for instance, claims that the Rossikon had always been called Russian because pious Greek

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1 Prosvirin, op. cit., No 3, p. 11.

2 *Akty russkago na Svyatom Afone monastyrya svyatago velikomuchenika i tselitelya Panteleimona* (Kievo-Pecherskaya Lavra, 1873, and Moscow, 1883). The *Akty* are eighty-six deeds and chronicle passages edited and published by the Russian monk Azariya of St Panteleimon, in order to prove that his monastery belonged to the Russians. See also Prosvirin, op. cit., No 3, p. 13.

3 'Khristodul', according to Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 661.

4 Soloviev, A., *Histoire du monastère russe au Mont-Athos* (Belgrade: Slavija, 1933), p. 6.

Athonite monks insist on sticking to traditional names; and that the name does not denote whom the monastery belonged to, as in the case of Iviron, which is only nominally *Iberian* because the last of the Georgians lived in it in the fourteenth century [sic].[5] Soloviev conclusively dismisses two other theories. According to a report written in 1926 by Professors Alivisatos, Petrakakos *et al.*, who were commissioned by the Greek government to help draw up new statutes for Mount Athos, the monastery was known as *Ton Ros* or *Rossikon* because at some unspecified date in the past it was inhabited by Slavs from a Dalmatian town referred to as Rosa; and in 1874, in the anti-Russian journal *I Thraki* published in Constantinople, certain scholars wrote that *rossikon* or *roussikon* is based on the surname of the monastery's unknown founder, who came from Salonica.[6] The arguments about *Ros* and its derivatives are reminiscent of the so-called Normanist Controversy about the *Rus'*, the Varangian settlers mentioned at the beginning of the Russian Primary Chronicle.[7]

On 15 August 1169, Abbot Lavrentiy, twice referred to as *Kathegoumenos tis tou Xylourgou monis itoi ton Rouson*, asked Ioannis the then Protos and the twenty-seven assembled abbots to give him a new monastery because his brethren were too many for Xylourgou.[8] He was granted in perpetuity the ruined and deserted monastery of 'The Thessalonian',—*Thessalonikeos*, or, in Russian, *Salonikiytsa*,—dedicated to St. Panteleimon. Thus, the Russian monastic community at the time was numerous and increasing. The Russians were also well off, because, in order to keep Xylourgou in their possession, they waived a debt of thirty gold pieces that the Protaton owed to them.[9]

It is clear that by the latter half of the twelfth century there was an important group of Slav monks on Athos referred to as *rousoi* or Russians, and that there was probably a monastery belonging to them—hence the genitive plural τῶν Ρούσων or Ρώσων. However, historians disagree about earlier times. The current Greek view is summarised by Khristou as follows.[10] In 1051, according to Nestor's *Zhitie Prepodobnago Antoniya Pecherskago*, St Antoniy founded the

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5 Mylonakos, op. *cit.*, p. 78-79.

6 Soloviev, op. cit., p. 2 and footnote 3, p. 4.

7 According to the tradionalist Soviet anti-Normanists, who dismiss the Primary Chronicle version as a myth, the Rus' were native Slavs, not Varangian outsiders. See Fennell, J.L.I.F., *A History of the Russian Church to 1448* (London: Longman), 1995, pp. 3-5.

8 Ibid. p. 7.

9 '*trente hyperpères d'or*,' ibid., p. 8. The *Protaton* was at the time the governing body of the Holy Mountain under the senior Athonite monk, known as the *Protos*.

10 Khristou, op. cit., pp. 103-106.

Pecherskaya Lavra in Kiev having returned from Athos. While on the Holy Mountain he had been to many monasteries and lived in one of them. The Russians believe that the monastery he stayed in was the one referred to in a document belonging to the Great Lavra of Athos, signed by a certain *Gerasimos igoumenos monis tou Ros*. However, this monastery could not have been the original Rusik because it was not referred to as such by Nestor, and St Antoniy would not have learned Greek had he stayed in a Slav monastery. Moreover, it is widely believed on the Holy Mountain that St Antoniy stayed in Esphigmenou, whose abbot, the Elder Theoklitos, gave him the blessing to return to Kiev. It is unlikely that there was a Russian monastery on Athos so soon after the Christianisation of Rus'. τού Ρῶς /ρούς, which is a genitive singular, refers to an individual, probably a Russified Greek 'Varangian' from the Crimea, of whom there were many in Byzantium. The Monastery *tou Ros* was Hellenophone in 1016. Gerasimos' signature in 1016 and of one of his successors, who also called himself *igoumenos monis tou Ros*, were both in Greek. The monastery's location is unknown and it is not thought to have been Xylourgou. The latter, too, was not originally Russian. The *vivlia rousika* referred to in 1142 were a general title given to Slavonic books that the Greek monks who were making the inventory could not decipher. In fact, there is no mention of Russians living in Xylourgou until 1169, when its brotherhood is referred to for the first time as Russians—*Xylourgou, moni ton Rouson*. In that year they were allowed to move to St Panteleimon or the *Moni Thessalonikoeos*. Khristou concludes that there were therefore three monasteries originally connected with *rous* or *ros*. It was only in the thirteenth century that the Russians were consistently referred to in the plural. Thus although Russians might have been on Athos at the beginning of the eleventh century, their numbers were insignificant, and none of the three monasteries was originally 'Russian'.

For all his scholarly detachment, Khristou's argument is tainted by patriotic bias and is therefore as suspect as the arguments about the origins of the Rus' settlers put forward by the Soviet anti-Normanists. Just as early Kievan history is based on speculation and deduction due to a lack of documentary evidence, so facts about the early Russian settlers on Athos can only be guessed at. There undoubtedly were Russians on Athos from the eleventh century, but it is impossible to say how many, or whether they did or did not have their own monasteries. Nobody has disputed that Bogoroditsa Xylourgou and the Old Rusik both belong to St Panteleimon Monastery, which is known as the Rossikon. That the Russians were referred to in the plural only from the thirteenth century has little significance. The Greeks, as I

have said, have had a foggy understanding of the Slavs. Could they always tell the difference between the Russians, Bulgarians and Serbs? As we have seen, the *Rasoi* or *Rashi*, as the Serbs were referred to, could be easily confused with *Rosoi or Rousoi*.

The next phase of the Russian Athonites' history is one of fluctuating fortunes. There is no evidence that they attained, until the nineteenth century, the level of prosperity that they had enjoyed in the twelth. Interpreting what happened in the intervening period is largely guess-work, owing to the paucity and unreliability of written records. For instance, it is generally believed that links with Russia were severed after the fall of Kiev and during the Mongol period. The official history of St Panteleimon Monastery characteristically glosses over the two centuries: 'Although St Savva's stay in the monastery was brief, it was not without benefit, for it had the blessing of both Savva himself, and of his descendants, the Serbian kings, who thenceforth and for the next two centuries, on perceiving the utter poverty of the monastery, which had been completely abandoned by Rus', became its founders and benefactors, and supported the holy house until such time as the Russian tsars were able as before to look after it.'[11]

There are also curiously conflicting fragments of evidence. The recently expelled librarian of the Prophet Elijah Skete, Monk Ioannikiy, observes:

> There is reason to believe that in 1561 there were in the Russian monastery: an abbot, 15 priests, 7 deacons and a total of 170 brethren [...]. However, when the tsar's emissary, Ivan Meshenikov, was sent to the East in 1582 to hand out alms to monks, he came back to Moscow with a deed signed by Pachomius, the Protos of the Holy Mountain, testifying that 'the monastery of St Panteleimon has been already empty for ten years following the death of Matfey the builder, and there is no one to give the money to intended for him.'[12]

How and why, in the twenty-one years between 1561 and 1582, 170 Russian monks disappeared or simply deserted is a mystery, if not a somewhat improbable one. Perhaps tsarist emissaries had come with large sums of money that induced them to leave the hardships of Athos for home. To quote a phrase Ioannikiy uses more than once in the early section of his article, 'History is silent about this'.

The general pattern of the monastery's fortunes from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries is one of hardship and decline. It seems that the Russians were unable to

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[11] Unfortunately, I have not been able to lay my hands on the St Panteleimon official history, a booklet published at the beginning of this century. My quotation comes from Ioannikiy, Priest-monk, *K Tysyacheletiyu russkikh na Afone*, an unpublished typescript, p. 12. See also his footnotes 15 and 23.

[12] Ibid., op. cit., p. 28.

survive long without help from outside. We have seen how they were aided by their Serbian royal patrons. Indeed, all Athonite monasteries depended on outside patronage, which was originally provided by the Byzantine emperors, and Serbian and Bulgarian kings, and later by the Danubian Gospodars. The Turks, as we have seen, imposed the *harach*. This head-tax was hard to bear and would not have been met without the help of royal patronage, which was also always at hand to restore buildings damaged by natural disasters such as fire. The Russians, who were far from home, were in a more vulnerable position than other Athonites; they had to gather alms, and the indigenous population was too poor and probably unsympathetic to help; so the Russians frequently came home to collect the riches they needed, and the tsars were usually the most generous givers.

The earliest record of alms-gathering in the Moscow court is in 1497, when Abbot Paisiy and three elders appeared before Ivan III, who gave them gifts for St Panteleimon and other Athonite monasteries. Throughout the sixteenth century, Russian Athonites begged in this way for money. In 1555 Ivan IV was told that St Panteleimon was 'very much in debt'.[13] Again, in 1626, Archimandrite Filaret from St Panteleimon came to Mikhail Fyodorovich with a document signed by Patriarch Cyril I of Constantinople testifying that the monastery was seriously in debt. Its woeful financial situation was due to the hardships suffered from living far from home under Ottoman rule, raids from pirates, having to pay a new government levy and the costly upkeep of the monastery's buildings. The tsar, on the Patriarch's recommendation, arranged alms-gathering missions in Russia every four years.[14] There was a rare glimmer of hope in 1709, when a priest-monk, Ippolit Vishenskiy, visiting Mount Athos from the monastery of SS Boris and Gleb in Chernigov, reported that the Russian monastery was thriving, and that just outside it lived only Russians, and not Greeks. However, for the rest of the eighteenth century Russian fortunes were again at a low ebb. This was due to the decline of the Ottoman empire and higher taxes it imposed on the Athonite community; the Russo-Turkish wars, which rendered uncomfortable the existence of Russian monks under the Athonite *kaimakam*, the Ottoman civil governor; and Peter I's reforms aimed at secularising Russia.[15] Under Empress Anna (1730 - 1740) royal alms were stopped; instead, a new department was created in the Holy Synod called the *Palestinskie Shtaty*, which allocated a mere 3,000 roubles a year to all Orthodox churches in the East.

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13 Ibid. p. 27 and footnote 54.

14 Ibid. p. 30.

15 Ibid. p. 36

It is hardly surprising that when Vasiliy Grigorovich-Barskiy-Plaka-Al'bov visited the monastery, he found the Russians in a sorry state. When he first came, in 1725-1726, the monastery was half-ruined, and had only two Russian and two Bulgarian monks living in it. After his second visit, in 1744, he reported that the monastery had fallen into Greek hands by 1735; it was now idiorrhythmic and the buildings were dilapidated. In 1765, owing to a scandalous fracas on Easter day between Greek and Slav monks which ended in bloodshed and the destruction of the already dilapidated buildings by arson, the monks moved out of the monastery buildings.[16] They settled into a new site by the sea, next to an abandoned *monidrion*,[17] which the retired Bishop of Ierissos had built in 1676 around a church dedicated to the Resurrection. Curiously enough, just as the old monastery, which was officially called *Thessalonikeos*, was always known as Russian, or *Rossikon*, so was the new one by the sea, even though no Russians were initially living in it.

In 1795 the Russian monastery had a quarrel with neighbouring Xenophontos over boundaries. The costly process impoverished both houses and was settled in September 1802, by Patriarch Kallinikos V. By now, the Athonite governing body was ready to strike the Rossikon off the list of the twenty monasteries and sell its property to the other nineteen in order to pay off the accumulated debts. Patriarch Kallinikos, however, refused to allow the dissolution.[18] In August 1803, he decreed that the monastery be reorganised as a cœnobium and appointed as the monastery's abbot the Elder Savvas, who had been living in a Kellion appropriated by Xenophontos[19] and had recently retired to Constantinople. Help also came from the Kallimakhides, the wealthy Phanariot family of Wallachian Princes. As far back as the sixteenth century Grigorios Ioannou Kallimakhis had donated a convent in Constantinople

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16 According to Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 662, the Slavs in question were Serbs. See pp. 662 and 663 for a detailed description of the move from the *Staryi Rusik*, the quarrel with Xenophontos and the intervention by the Patriarch.

17 The *monidria* (a type of small monastery) had ceased to exist as a separate class of Athonite house by the eighteenth century. They became either Imperial Stavropegic Monasteries (the Twenty), or kellia, such Milopotamo and are, of course, dependencies of the Twenty.

18 See Ioannikiy, op. cit., p. 51: some on Mount Athos felt that the Russians, who had just defeated the Turks, were owed a debt of gratitude.

19 The kellion rightfully belonged to the Rossikon, but was seized and never returned by Xenophontos, because its impoverished Russian neighbour was in too much disarray to defend itself. Although Xenophontos was itself affected by the quarrel, it benefited from Russian alms in the first decade of the nineteenth century: it was able to build a large new central church where numerous rich Russian gifts are on display.

to the Rossikon, and successive generations of the Kallimakhides, until the nineteenth century, had added their signature to Grigorios' original deed (known as a *chrysobullo*). This gift, of course, had not been enough to secure the monastery's financial stability, and it was not until September 1806, that the Rossikon was finally put on its feet. Prince Skarlat Kallimakhis, who had been miraculously cured by St Panteleimon, generously donated money and a new central church was built. Between 1816 and 1819 rebuilding continued apace; it was funded by the sale of the Domna monastery in Moldavia raising 200,000 grosia. The new monastery of St Panteleimon had been erected some fifty metres away from the old Monidrion of the Resurrection. Although Patriarch Kallinikos' singillion described the monastery as 'certified as the cœnobitic monastery of the Kallimakhides… formerly and no longer called the Rossikon', it continued on Mount Athos to be known as the Rossikon.[20]

In 1821, the year of the Greek uprising and the execution of Patriarch Gregory V, Skarlat Kallimakhis was beheaded by the Turks. Abbot Savvas died in the same year and many of the brethren left the monastery; indeed, much of the Athonite population went to the mainland or hid until after 1830, for fear of reprisals at the hands of the Turks who were garrisoned on the peninsula. The next abbot was priest-monk Gerasimos from the village of Kioup-Kioí, near Drama. He was elected on 18 February 1832, and his election was ratified eleven months later by Patriarch Constantine I.[21]

(ii)
St Paisiy and the Modern Era

In the eighteenth century there were three nominally Russian sketes. In the nineteenth century Xylourgou had no Russians living in it, and when Seraphim Svyatogorets visited it in 1847 he found only Bulgarians there.[22] The Chornyi Vir skete was situated between Hilandar and Zograf. It was founded in 1747 and was originally inhabited by Cossacks from Zaporozhye who had come to Athos because the Unia had made life difficult for them on the West-Bank Ukraine. Empress Elizabeth gave a generous personal

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20 *Avthentikon koinovion ton Kallimakhidon […] katargoumenis tis tou Rosikou prosigorias.* Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., A', p. 419. See B', p. 195, footnote 16, on the generations of three Kallimakhides.

21 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 663.

22 The last of its inhabitants died or left Xylourgou some time this century. In the mid-1980s a Russian monk settled there. Barskiy says there was between Stavronikita and Pantokratoros a skete inhabited by Slavs. Although he did not go there himself, he was obviously referring to Xylourgou.

benefaction, thanks to which the buildings were completed in 1754. By the nineteenth century the skete was in Bulgarian hands, but from 1821 to 1830 the skete was deserted, as was most of the Holy Mountain. When Seraphim Svyatogorets visited it in 1847 he found five Bulgarians living there. He ascribed its unpopularity to the poisoned air.[23] In fact, Chornyiy Vir was probably abandoned for good within the next ten years.

The Skete of the Prophet Elijah, however, not only survived, but was at the heart of the revival of Russian monasticism on Mount Athos. In 1746, St Paisiy Velichkovskiy came to the Holy Mountain. He had been tonsured *rasophor* in the Pecherskaya Lavra of Kiev whence he came on foot via Wallachia.[24] While walking northwards from the Great Lavra he fell seriously ill and was cured by some monks in Pantokratoros Skete, near which he then settled in the Kapari *Kalyva* as a hermit, having searched in vain for a spiritual father. In 1750 he was visited by his former mentor, the Elder Vasiliy, who tonsured him with the small *schema* and after a while returned to Wallachia. Three months after Vasiliy's departure he was joined by another Wallachian, Monk Vissarion, who begged to be his disciple. St Paisiy refused and the two lived for some time sharing everything and submitting in spiritual obedience to each other. The two monks were soon joined by others from the Danubian Principalities and the Ukraine. Eventually St Paisiy reluctantly agreed to be their spiritual leader. The brotherhood had to move into the larger Kellion of SS Constantine and Helen, belonging to Pantokratoros Monastery. When he had twelve disciples, in 1757, he was granted a charter, or *omologon*, from Pantokratoros Monastery, to make another of its dependencies, the Prophet Elijah Kellion, into a skete.[25] In under five years he was in charge of a brotherhood sixty-strong. He had originally planned for a community of no more than sixteen monks, but he was unable to turn people away. Eventually he was asked by the Iera Koinotis to move to the debt-ridden monastery of Simonopetra, on the other side of the peninsula. He arrived there with thirty-five brethren on 15 April 1762. Unfortunately, Turkish creditors were clamouring for the 50,000 lei owing to them; St Paisiy was unable to cope and

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23 Svyatogorets, Serafim, *Pis'ma Svyatogortsa o svyatoy Afonskoy gore* (Moscow: I. Efimov, 1895), p. 340-346.

24 *Rasofors* are tonsured novices who are allowed to wear the basic monastic habit. A fully-fledged monk is tonsured with the small or great *schema*.

25 See Tachiaos, A-E., *O Paisios Velitskofski kai i Askhitikophilologiki skholi tou* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1964), p.36. Tachiaos argues that the skete began its existence in 1761.

left the Holy Mountain the next year for Moldavia, whence he never returned.[26]

In the eighteen years he spent on Mount Athos St Paisiy became famous. His renown spread all over the Holy Mountain, where he had spiritual children of many nationalities. He was even confessor to Patriarch Seraphim I, who was living in retirement in Pantokratoros Monastery. Word about him spread to other countries, particularly to the Danubian Principalities, the Ukraine and Russia.[27] His personal qualities transcended ethnic barriers. Few Slavs had such good relations with Greek Athonites. The year after he left the Greeks were extremely well disposed to the Russians because of him: the *Koinotis* offered to pay the *harach* that had been imposed on the skete by the civil authorities and apologised to the skete for the inconvenience that might have been caused. In the 1798 *omologon* Pantokratoros granted the Prophet Elijah Skete 'substantial rights and privileges' in recognition for the 'considerable benefit and help' received by the Monastery from its 'blessed and most venerable founder and father the Elder Paisios'; yet, somewhat less than a century later the Monastery and its skete were embroiled in bitter quarrels and most of these privileges were taken away. Paisiy himself knew that harmonious international relations was a gift others did not have, for when he gave the Rule to Abbot George of Cherniça he told him to accept only Romanians into the brotherhood in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

St Paisiy's ability to attract pilgrims from abroad is remarkable because in the mid-eighteenth century the Orthodox Church was undergoing a crisis. The Athonite community was having to cope with the increased *harach*. Some monasteries, such as Simonopetra and St Panteleimon, as we have seen above, were becoming depopulated and bankrupt; others were reverting to idiorrhythm and being abandoned by their senior monks, who were absent on alms-gathering missions. In post-Petrine Russia, which had tenuous links with the Holy Mountain, monasticism was hardly thriving.

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[26] *The Life and Deeds of Our Blessed Father and Elder Paisiy*, by Monk Mytrofan, folios 76-87; *The Life and Deeds of Our Blessed Father and Elder Paisiy*, the Neamets Edition, 1838, folios 16-29. Both texts are printed in Tachiaos, A-E., *The revival of Byzantine Mysticism Among the Slavs and Romanians in the XVIIIth Century* (University of Thessaloniki, 1986). St Paisiy and his brotherhood lived in and administrated monasteries in both Danubian Principalities.

According to the *Russkiy Obschezhitel'nyi skit svyatago Proroka Ilii na Svyatoy Afonskoy Gore* (Odessa: Tipografiya eparkhial'nogo doma, 1913), pp. 33-34, St Paisiy stayed at Simonopetra for three months, after which time he returned to the skete before leaving the Holy Mountain for good.

[27] Mytrofan, op. cit., folio 85; Neamets Edition, op. cit., folio 23.

Perhaps the Orthodox world was yearning for such a luminary as St Paisiy.

In his first years on the Holy Mountain St Paisiy searched everywhere for patristic texts on the spiritual life in the original Greek, but nobody knew of their whereabouts. Greek Athonites were so ignorant that they were not only incapable of reading them but many had never heard of them. He eventually found some of the texts he was looking for in a remote kellion, had them copied, translated them, used them as his spiritual guide and taught from them. A little over a decade after St Paisiy left Athos, a general Greek Orthodox revival of patristic traditions, the Philokalia and cœnobitic monasticism at the end of the eighteenth century were started on the Holy Mountain by SS Nikodemus the Hagiorite and Macarius of Corinth.[28] This revival combated a new trend of relaxed idiorrhythmic rules which seemed to be gaining the upper hand. The three saints were influential at the same time that feelings of revolutionary independence were stirring in all Greeks. Turkish oppression seemed at its worst; but just as in the Peleponnese, Church schools were opening and the Athoniada was founded.[29] It is remarkable that St Paisiy, a Slav, should be associated in this way with the resurgence of the Greek national Church.

One of his most interesting facets, as far as this history is concerned, is St Paisiy's poverty and humility. The Russians and their community on Mount Athos after the mid-nineteenth century were immensely wealthy and powerful, and did everything on a gigantic scale. When St Paisiy set off for the Holy Mountain 'all he had for the journey was twenty *paras*'.[30] His biographer, Monk Mytrophan, stresses his modest life-style. Although much of what Mytrophan writes consists of hagiographic cliché, there is enough concrete and factual detail for the reader to have an accurate picture of the saint. 'He ate once every two days, and then merely a few crusts of dry bread. His poverty was extreme, for he had no garment save one ancient cloak: he could not practise handiwork, lest it should take time away from the holy offices. His bed was a bare board.'[31] St Paisiy had intended to live a life of seclusion and silence on the Holy

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[28] St Makarius met St Nikodemus on the Holy Mountain in 1777, after which date they collaborated on the Phylokalia. See Kallistos (Ware), Bishop of Diokleia, 'The Sprituality of the Philokalia', an offprint from *Sobornost*, 13:1, 1991, pp. 10 et seq.

[29] It should be noted, however, that St Nikodemus was against Greek independence, which he feared would expose Orthodoxy to the evil influences of the West: 'God has set up the Turkish power to protect us from the apostasy of the West.'

[30] Mytrophan, op. cit., folio 75.

[31] Ibid., folio 78.

Mountain, doing obedience to a spiritual father because he was too humble to consider becoming a mentor himself. Eventually he reluctantly acceded to the entreaties of his brother monk Vissarion and started accepting disciples. He was determined that their number be as small as possible, but, as we have seen, was unable to have his way. Again, this is in stark contrast to the Russians a hundred years later who were determined at all costs to increase their numbers as much as possible.

Perhaps the most important factor that drew people to him was his insistence on strict cœnobitic rule. All the brethren of a cœnobium live in poverty and obedience, working, eating and worshipping together. 'He once again restored cœnobitic monasticism which had become obsolete.'[32] Idiorrhythm in the Athonite monasteries seemed to lead to material destitution. When it ceased to be cœnobitic, St Panteleimon became depopulated and bankrupt. Simonopetra had become idiorrhythmic in 1620, from which time it was increasingly plagued by debts.[33] Cœnobitic monasteries have long been considered to be spiritually superior. Idiorrhythm was disapproved of by such fathers of the Church as SS Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Theodore the Studite, and, more recently, from the sixteenth century onwards, the Hagiorites Maxim Grek, Pachomiy the Serb and Dionysios the Hermit.[34]

The three guiding principles of St Paisiy's cœnobium were work, obedience and prayer. During the day the brethren had to build their own cells. They subsisted on the meagre income by selling wooden spoons which they carved. Night was devoted to prayer, and St Paisiy, who slept no more than three hours, would copy books and study while the others rested. St Paisiy's community may have been extremely poor, but it was a self-sufficient unit. His skete had barely enough land on Mount Athos, donated by Pantokratoros, to grow its own food and provide its own firewood. Dependencies outside the Holy Mountain were, of course, out of the question. This was in contrast with what was to happen in the next century, when Russians were eager to acquire large properties, tried to buy parts of Mount Athos, and engaged in lucrative trade and banking.

A life of poverty and humility was perforce one of discipline and order.

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32 Ibid, folio 85; see also Ioannikiy, op. cit., p. 36-37.

33 Patrinelis, C., 'Turkish Domination', *Simonopetra* (Athens: E.T.B.A., 1991), p. 24.

34 Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., B΄, p. 36. 'Idiorrhythm', in the technical sense, is found in Athonite texts from the fourteenth century. When used by earlier fathers it meant simply following one's own whims and choices, without proper discipline. See Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v.

> When the many brethren of the Holy Mountain and those who had newly arrived [...] saw the good order of the reading and singing in church, the cœnobitic obedience and silent toil, the piety, peace and love among the brethren who were humbly obedient to their blessed elder, [...] they wished to join in such a life.[35]

A striking example of St Paisiy's insistence on discipline is to be found in a description of life in one of his Romanian monasteries: a novice and his father-confessor were punished because the latter allowed his charge to comport himself during a walk without due humility and monastic decorum.[36]

Above all, St Paisiy insisted on prayer. Life in a cœnobium is divided between work and prayer; only a very small part of the twenty-four-hour cycle is free for rest and refreshment. Apart from scrupulously observing the liturgical canons, he was one of the greatest exponents of his day of hesychasm, a way of life centred on the Jesus Prayer that monks said privately, mainly in their cells, with the aid of a prayer rope.[37] Hesychasm was an Athonite tradition which had flourished on the Holy Mountain in the fourteenth century but had now largely fallen out of use. C. Patrinelis calls him the 'reviver of the hesychast movement'.[38]

What also attracted St Paisiy's following outside his monastery was his brilliance as a scholar and linguist. He was the first and only Athonite to institute services sung antiphonally in both Romanian and Slavonic.[39] Moreover, he and his pupils translated a prodigious amount of Greek Patristic texts into Slavonic, a task that was continued in St Panteleimon in the next century. St Paisiy's knowledge of their language enabled Greeks to come to him for confession and instruction as spiritual children. Monk Dorotheos says he had 'countless disciples'.[40] Pupils of St Paisiy would go to their home countries or elsewhere on Mount Athos, spread his fame or themselves take on spiritual children, to whom they would pass on the wisdom of the great elder. One of the reasons, for instance, that Parfeniy Aggeev came to Mount Athos is that he was for a while under the instruction of Priest-monk Ioann, a Ukrainian recluse, who had lived in one of St Paisiy's Moldavian monasteries.

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35 Mytrofan, op. cit., folios 83-84.

36 Aggeev, Inok Parfeniy, *Skazanie o stranstvii i puteshestvii po Rossii, Moldavii i Turtsii i Svyatoy Zemle* (Moscow: 1900), Part II, Section 13, p. 20-23.

37 The words of this prayer are: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.'

38 Patrinelis, op. cit., p. 24. It is only fair to observe that the Russians of the next century also practised hesychasm; and for the most part their houses were run in strict observance of cœnobitic rule.

39 Mytrofan, op. cit., folio 83; cf Neamets, op. cit., folio 23.

40 Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., p.167.

St Paisiy's sixteen years on Mount Athos appear to have been a time of unusual harmony between the different Athonite nationalities. The scandalous events in the Old Russian monastery on Easter Day 1765, when Greeks and 'Serbs' shed each others' blood and the buildings were set alight, show that ethnic tensions between Greeks and Slavs must have long existed.

Barskiy says that there were Greeks only in the Rossikon in 1735 because they did 'not in any way allow the Russians or Bulgarians or Serbs to live in it'. As a result, he found Russian monks 'wandering hither and thither about the hills, living by manual labour, eating scraps and being despised by all.' He was sorry for them, 'for foxes have holes and birds their nests, but the Russians have nowhere to lay their heads.' However, he recognised that the Russians—and he included himself in this criticism—'lacked constancy because they used frequently to wander about, and were impatient and lazy.' Perhaps the reason that the Greeks refused to have the Russians in the monastery is that, Barskiy continues, the latter not only were unable to pay the Ottoman tax, but were 'unwilling to work on the monastery's land, nor to plough the fields, nor dig the vineyards, nor gather the olives. For in Russia, where all labour is carried out by dedicated Christians, the monks live in great ease and comfort.'[41]

It would be an over-simplification, due to lack of evidence, to assume that the 1765 quarrel happened because St Paisiy had left the Holy Mountain two years before, and that during his time on Mount Athos there were no ethnic quarrels, for there have been disagreements among all Athonites, regardless of their country of origin, throughout history. When the Holy Mountain was mainly in Serbian hands in the reign of Stefan Dušan there were acrimonious disputes between Greeks and Serbs. Prosfirin claims that the earliest recorded incident between them occurred in 1048, when the abbot of Xylourgou was compensated for the vandalism of the monastery's jetty. As Prosfirin's aim is to defend the Russian cause on Mount Athos, we have to take with a pinch of salt his remark that this was 'the first anti-Russian incident on Athos.'[42] Priest-monk Ioannikiy quotes a more interesting example. When Arseniy Sukhanov, who returned to Patriarch Nikon of Moscow in 1654, was on Mount Athos gathering Greek liturgical texts for the Russian church, he was told of a scandal which was to be typical of the clashes in later years between the Old Believers and Reformers in

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41 Barskiy, pp. 296, 300; quoted by Ioannikiy, op. cit., p. 38. It should be noted that many Greek Athonite houses hired servants by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

42 Prosfirin, op. cit., No 1, p. 14.

Russia. The Greek Athonites had been objecting to inaccuracies in the Slavonic texts and were proposing to burn them, but the Russians wept and refused to allow this. The Greeks, according to a certain elder Amfilokiy, proposed to burn the stubborn Muscovite monks along with their books.[43]

All that can be said for certain is that the potential for ethnic discord has always existed on Mount Athos. Monks are, of course, humans and prey to temptations; they cannot be expected to live in Christian peace and harmony in a small space for over a thousand years, particularly when different nationalities rub shoulders in physically and mentally demanding conditions. However, as an historian I have to focus on the exceptional—on clashes and disunity; I pass over the majority of Athonites who have spent most of the time getting on with the business of being monks in prayer, toil and self-denial.

The Russians have always felt particularly homesick there, both because of the hardships of the ascetic life and the foreignness of the place. Stefan Svyatogorets illustrates this with his famous description of a Greek Athonite's vision. The latter saw in a dream the heavenly hosts led by the Mother of God. In the most exalted ranks were Russians, followed by Bulgarians and Serbs, and among the very last were Greeks. She explained to the monk that the Russians had the place of honour in heaven because on Mount Athos they lived far from their native land and thus suffered greater hardships than other Athonites.[44]

As we have seen in the quotation from Barskiy, the Greeks must have considered their northern brothers too 'soft' for the rigours of monasticism. Because of their homesickness, perhaps, the Russians seemed preoccupied with their stomachs more than befits ascetics. They found Greek food very foreign. One of the reasons that Ieronim Solomentsev was unwilling to be ordained a priest in 1840 and become the Russians' father-confessor in St Panteleimon was that he could not stomach this food, which he felt was bad for him.[45] Svyatogorets reports that at one time the Russian brethren found their leguminous diet hard to bear: 'they greatly complained and were upset about the beans'—*chrezvychajno zhalovalis' i skorbeli na bob i fasol'*. Ieronim was persuaded to have a word with the abbot, 'and

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[43] Ioannikiy, p. 34 and footnote 64. Unfortunately, Ioannikiy's example is dubious: his source is an anonymous Russian Athonite monk writing in the 1895 number of *Dushepoleznyiy Sobesednik*, the St Panteleimon journal for pilgrims and pious Russians.

[44] Svyatogorets, op. cit., p. 204, I, Letter XVII.

[45] Kovalevskiy, A., 'Ieroskhimonakh Ieronim', *Dushepoleznoe Chtenie*, 1887, p. 432.

the imminent change from our indigestible diet to light, nourishing Russian cooking comforted us and was frequently talked about among the brethren'.[46] During their tours of Mount Athos, and even when they ascended the mountain itself, Svyatogorets and his fellow pilgrims lugged a samovar around with them because they could not bear to be without their beloved Russian tea. When, in 1846, he fell ill, he secretly ate Russian *kisel'*, a kind of jelly, knowing that the Greek doctor and the abbot would have forbidden him such a foreign indulgence.

The main reason for the Russians' homesickness has been their sense of isolation due to their ignorance of the Greek language. Until the mid-nineteenth century, when a special Greek school was set up on Mount Athos, only the cleverest and most educated Russians could communicate with their Greek counterparts. Parfeniy Aggeev describes a memorable speech made by a Greek deacon: 'As he said these things the Greeks all stood and looked upon him, and many wept; but the Russians hardly understood a thing.'[47] A.N. Muravyev was an unashamed patriot but his inability to hide his joy whenever he heard Russian spoken or sung during his visit to Mount Athos in 1849 was typical of all Russians there. He wept when in the Church of St Mitrophan he heard the 'harmonious singing of the choirs, just as in Holy Rus''.[48] Moreover, he was dismayed to hear the Serbs and Bulgarians singing like the Greeks with nasal intonation, 'which so ruined the beauty of the Slavonic language that the very words became unintelligible.'[49]

Russians and Greeks belong to one church; they have had no differences of dogma, nor since the reforms of Patriarch Nikon are there significant liturgical variations. None the less, the Russians, particularly in the nineteenth century, seemed superficially to be out of place on Mount Athos. Not only did they not adhere to traditional Byzantine chant and sang in western harmony, but their iconography was becoming italianate and three-dimensional. Svyatogorets was against the modern trend in Russian sacred painting,[50] and Muravyev heard complaints that the icons painted in Russia were inappropriately secular—*kotorye oni nakhodyat netserkovnymi*.[51]

Tachiaos summarises the distinguishing features of the Russians in 'Controverses entre Grecs et Russes à l'Athos'. He observes that the Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians

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46 Svyatogorets, op. cit., 460-461.

47 Aggeev, op. cit., Part II, section 112.

48 Muravyev, op. cit., p. 267.

49 Ibid., p. 255.

50 Svyatogorets op. cit., Part II, Letter 4, p. 260 *et seq.*

51 Muravyev, op. cit., p. 166.

had more-or-less the same lifestyles and customs because they 'kept in common the traditions and mentality of the Byzantine East'. He does not explain that they kept them in common because, as natives of the Balkans, they were strongly affected by the Ottoman Empire, and shared a common peasant lifestyle and mentality. The eastern way of life was naturally germane to them. Moreover, Russia had not only been independent of the Ottoman Empire but had frequently defeated it.[52]

The Russian Athonites were proud of being subjects of a victorious Orthodox Emperor: Aggeev, in hagiographic style, reports the eulogy delivered by the St Panteleimon monastery itself, on the return of the Russians in 1840: 'I, the Russian monastery, have within me the sons of the glorious and flourishing Russian Fatherland, and still have as a patron and defender of all the Holy Eastern Church the Most Pious Russian Emperor.'[53] Naturally, the Russians felt the need to display their national pride. Svyatogorets describes with relish the arrival from Russia of a new bell at the Rossikon weighing over 32 *puds*.[54] The Greeks had never seen such a great bell and were lost in child-like admiration: 'the poor Greeks, they're nothing but children'—*bednye greki — eto suschiya deti*.[55]

The most visible concrete sign of the Russians' sense of national uniqueness on Mount Athos is their architecture. From the latter half of the last century they started to build on a grand scale. Their architecture with its ornamentation, brightly-coloured cupolas and monumentalism contrasted with the austerity of the traditional Athonite buildings. Mylonakos compares the new St Panteleimon buildings to those of a 'seaside resort';[56] and even the comparatively restrained Monk Dorotheos writes of the erection of 'monstrous buildings' which 'like a flood clashed with the classical Hagiorite architecture'.[57] It is interesting to note that now there is no immediate prospect of the Russians' constructing new buildings on Mount Athos, the Greeks no longer feel threatened and have meticulously restored the ornate Kellion of St Nicholas-Belozerka with the brilliant gold-spangled roof of its main tower.

At the beginning of the last century ethnic quarrels amounted, as they had always done, to no more than the

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52 Tachiaos, op. cit., p. 170.

53 Aggeev, op. cit., Part II, Section 116, p. 150.

54 = more than 600 lbs.

55 Svyatogorets, op. cit., p. 129. Today the monastery's great bass bell is the largest in Greece and is one of St Panteleimon's main tourist attractions.

56 Mylonakos p. 77.

57 Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., A΄, p. 184.

occasional, isolated incident. Indeed, Greek-Russian tension was no worse than the local squabbles of various Athonite factions, and between the different Slavs, particularly the Great Russians and Small Russians, as can be seen from the return of the Russians to St Panteleimon in 1840 and the events leading up to it.

When Gerasimos was enthroned abbot of St Panteleimon and monks started returning to Mount Athos, the Russian monastery was again destitute and there were, of course, no Russians in it. There were three reasons for this destitution. Firstly, the whole of Mount Athos had to recover from the exodus of monks because of the 1821 uprising, and from the ill effects of the Turkish occupation of the monasteries and the inevitable reprisals against the Greeks. Secondly, St Panteleimon Monastery had engaged in another costly dispute about territory, this time with the Lavra; territorial quarrels were to be common all over Mount Athos during much of the nineteenth century. Although Patriarch Kallinikos V settled the matter, in April 1820, in the Rusik's favour, its financial crisis was aggravated. Finally, the monastery's wealthy and powerful patron, Skarlat Kallimakhis, had been executed in the following year.

Abbot Gerasimos and his adviser, Deacon Venediktos, decided to try and persuade the Russians to come back in order to alleviate the financial crisis. Parfeniy Aggeev says that the St Panteleimon debt amounted to 'twenty thousand'. Thus, Gerasimos and Venediktos persuaded the brethren that as they had no help from anyone and were unable to pay, no other course of action was open: they had to welcome 'the ancient inhabitants of this house'.[58]

By fortunate coincidence there arrived from Russia on Mount Athos on 9 June 1835 Priest-monk Anikita. He had formerly been Prince Shikhmatov-Shirinskiy, a minor poet. Most importantly, he had influential contacts in St Petersburg. As soon as he arrived he made for the Prophet Elijah Skete, which was the only place on Mount Athos at the time that Russians gravitated towards. From there he went on a tour of the Holy Mountain with fifteen Russian monks and stopped at St Panteleimon.[59] The brethren of the Rossikon begged him to stay. He remained a little under a month, grew to like and respect the Greeks, and then returned to the skete to gather more brethren for the new Russian brotherhood. He sent out an appeal all over the Holy Mountain and had soon gathered some twenty-five volunteers. They were a motley group, according to Parfeniy Aggeev,

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58 Aggeev, op. cit., p. 216-217; presumably he means 20,000 *grosia*.

59 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 82.

comprising mostly of Small Russians. Many of them were 'untrustworthy'—*mnogo neblagonadyozhnykh*—and among them was Prokopiy, the Small Russian father-confessor. On 2 July Anikita with two other priest-monks put on their vestments and led the party on foot all the way to St Panteleimon, on the other side of the peninsula. At the centre of the procession was the icon of St Mitrofan of Voronezh, whom Anikita particularly revered. While they passed through Karyes a Greek merchant laughed at them but the skins in which he kept his oil suddenly burst and he ran out to beg forgiveness on his knees in front of the icon. Anikita and his followers were solemnly received at the monastery and given the chapel of St John the Forerunner for Slavonic services. Aggeev reports that on hearing of the monastery's debts and lost dependencies Anikita reassured the Greek brethren: 'I shall make this house wealthy. For I have acquaintances and friends in St Petersburg; the Emperor himself knows me fairly well.'[60]

Shortly afterwards Anikita met the renowned Russian Athonite spiritual father, the Elder Arseniy.[61] Anikita and Arseniy went on a visit to Jerusalem in the same year. Before leaving, Anikita gave the Russians in St Panteleimon 3,000 leva to build a chapel to St Mitrofan and entrusted the brethren to Prokopiy. Immediately he left, the Russians started menacing the Greeks because, 'the monastery is ours, it is Russian, and our leader is a prince.'[62] The Greeks complained to the abbot that they could not live with the Russians and did not want their wealth; 'It is better that we eat rusks, drink water and be on our own.'

On his way back to the Holy Mountain Anikita stopped in Athens, where he was appointed by the Moscow Holy Synod to the post of Chaplain to the Russian Legation. He and his two companions hastened back to the Holy Mountain. On his arrival at St Panteleimon, on 9 May 1836, Anikita found such discord that the building of the new chapel had not even begun. Venediktos tearfully asked the Russians to leave, and Anikita did so, taking with him only the icon of St Mitrofan and leaving behind the money, Russian service books and ecclesiastical items he had brought with him from Russia. He went on foot back to the skete, stopping at the Old Rossikon where he served a memorial service for the dead. Then he dismissed his brethren and severely scolded Prokopiy.[63] He gave the icon to Pavel, the skete's father-confessor,

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60 Aggeev, *op. cit.*, pp. 82, 151 and 220.

61 He was a diciple of St Paisiy Velichkovskiy's Russian and Moldavian disciples. Anikita left for the Holy Land with him, having served forty liturgies at the Prophet Elijah Skete.

62 Ibid. p. 220.

63 Ibid. p. 222.

arranged for 4,000 leva to be collected from Odessa for a chapel to St Mitrofan in the skete, and left for Athens.[64] There he refused to eat honey, confining himself to a diet of bread and water; and there he stayed until his death, on 7 June 1837.[65] He had been appointed abbot of the Prophet Elijah Skete earlier that year, but only his mortal remains came back to the Holy Mountain, in 1839, where they are kept to this day in the skete's chapel of St Mitrofan.

The failure of Anikita's mission to reinstate Russians in St Panteleimon and assure its material well-being was due not merely to the Russians' overbearing tactlessness during his absence. Dmitrievskiy implies that the Greeks were to blame. He considers Parfeniy Aggeev's account unfairly biased and quotes one V. Davydov, a Russian lay pilgrim, who found that the Russians in St Panteleimon at the time were suffering many hardships and were not allowed to have services in Slavonic.[66] It is true that Aggeev admired the Greeks. He repeatedly writes that the Greeks were more experienced in cœnobitic monasticism and that the Russians had to learn from their saintly example. He says of himself: 'I would look at them and was amazed and would often be moved to tears, thanking my Lord God the Heavenly King for making me worthy of seeing these angels in the flesh'.[67]

Davydov was a temporary visitor who lacked the experience and insight of a genuine Athonite monk. Davydov was bound to sympathise with his fellow countrymen and was unlikely to hear or understand the Greeks' point of view. He was right about the services, however: the Greeks had their own church and were expecting Anikita's St Mitrofan chapel to be built; they were not to be blamed for the Russians' failing to keep to their side of the agreement. Aggeev's *Skazanie O Stranstvii*, on the other hand, is not only a remarkably detailed eye-witness account of life on Mount Athos and the events of 1839 and 1840, but it is balanced and fair, even though it contains lengthy tracts based on hagiographic and scriptural quotation and is often highly emotional. His admiration for other Athonites did not extend merely to the Greeks. He supported anyone whom he thought to be in the right, regardless of nationality. Although he

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64 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 85.

65 Aggeev, op. cit., p. 222. The fact that he stopped eating honey-*ne stal est' myodu, tol'ko khleb i vodu*-may seem bizarre. Honey and jam are considered luxuries for monks and are usually offered to guests, but there are no indications in the canons that honey should not be eaten as a penance or during a fast. John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey. Anikita probably wanted to be stricter with himself in the world, hence his act of ascetic self-denial.

66 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., 84.

67 Aggeev, op. cit., Part II, section 142, p. 193.

himself was a Bessarabian Small Russian, he had far more sympathy for the Great Russians on Mount Athos.

According to Aggeev, Anikita failed first because he did not consult Elder Arseniy, the senior Russian Athonite spiritual father. Not only should monks always consult their elders, but Anikita was new to the Holy Mountain and did not know what kind of people he was dealing with. Arseniy would have warned him about the troublemakers that went with him from the skete to the monastery in 1835.[68] Aggeev blamed the Russians, but felt that the problem could have been solved by expelling the worst trouble-makers. Secondly, the Greeks of St Panteleimon were incited to quarrel by Greeks from elsewhere on the Holy Mountain, who wanted the Rossikon's land and feared that the Russians by having a prince in their midst would be emboldened to make territorial claims themselves.[69]

Anikita's departure caused a stir. The neighbouring Greek Athonites, still afraid of losing land, now accused those of St Panteleimon of instigating the quarrel that resulted in his expulsion. Naturally, Gerasimos, Venediktos and their brethren felt beleaguered and started once again to hope that Russians would join them—only this time, the invitation was extended not to Small Russians, but 'pure' Great Russians.[70] Aggeev emphasises that all the time Gerasimos had understood what was going on, was against the expulsion, but was not heeded. It was Venediktos who felt the greatest guilt. He afterwards confessed to the Greek brethren, referring to Gerasimos, 'You were hesitantly opposing the Russians: he alone stood firmly for them; but I did not heed him.'[71] Venediktos was a hundred years old; he had been told in a vision that he would not die until the Russians returned, and it would be the Russians who would bury him.

There was another setback for the Russian Athonite community in 1837. The Prophet Elijah Skete was stricken with the plague—*morovaya bolezn'*. The abbot, Priest-monk Parfeniy, and most of the brethren died. The natural choice for the post of abbot was now the father-confessor, Schema monk-priest Pavel, who was a Great Russian and to whom Anikita had left the icon of St Mitrofan. Unfortunately, the surviving Great Russian and Small Russian monks in the skete started quarrelling bitterly. In the next four years no fewer than six people were elected abbot, including, as we have seen, Anikita himself. Pavel was deposed and reinstated three times. Eventually, Pavel and the other Great Russians

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68 Ibid., p. 151.

69 Ibid. p. 222.

70 Ibid. p. 152.

71 Ibid. p. 145.

were forced to leave the skete and settled in kellia and hermitages around Karyes. Parfeniy Aggeev believes that one of the causes of the quarrel was that the Small Russians had been incited by certain Greek monks who bore the Great Russians a grudge, owing to another incident that happened, by chance, also in 1837. A certain Abbot Evgeniy arrived on Mount Athos from Astrakhan' bearing riches. With the tactlessness typical of the Russians he declared his intention to buy an impoverished Greek monastery and russify it. He consulted nobody and humiliated the Greeks he dealt with. In so doing he gave the Great Russians a bad name. He left empty-handed but sowed the seeds of genuine discord and bitterness between the Greeks and the Russians.[72]

The Greeks of St Panteleimon, meanwhile, saw Pavel's expulsion as a godsend. They pleaded with him and his followers to join the monastery. He was reluctant, but acceded once Arseniy had given his blessing.[73] On 21 November 1839, on the day of the Presentation to the Temple of the Mother of God, the Russians were solemnly received for the second and last time at the gates of St Panteleimon. Parfeniy Aggeev, who had arrived on Mount Athos earlier in the same year, was most probably present, as were most of the Russian Athonites, together with 'Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Moldavians'.[74] He describes the event with his characteristic blend of sharply observed detail, pious quotation and emotion. He comments with unwitting foresight: 'Never had there been such joy in the Russian monastery; yes, and perhaps there never will be.'[75] Everyone wept copiously;[76] Venediktos said that he could now die in peace, recited the *nunc dimittis* and died forty days later.

The Russians were given two chapels, as well as a separate, five-storey building to live in, on the third floor of which they were to have their own central church.[77] Pavel was assigned the cell next to the St Mitrofan chapel. The festivities were concluded with a speech of exhortation and instruction by Gerasimos to the Russians. He warned that the Greeks were a volatile and choleric people—*vspyl'chivy i kruty kharakterom;* but that the Russians were to follow the Greeks' example of cœnobitic rule. All monastic duties

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72 Aggeev, Ibid. p. 224.

73 Ibid., p. 136-139.

74 Ibid. p. 140; Parfeniy Aggeev says only Small Russians mourned that day; he does not say anything about the Greeks who were against the Great Russians because of the Abbot Evgeniy incident, nor about the Georgians.

75 Ibid. p. 142.

76 Parfeniy Aggeev was very emotional, but Orthodox monks frequently weep and consider that the gift of tears is divine.

77 Ibid. p. 158.

were to be done by Greeks and Russians together, confession was to be daily and Communion would be taken weekly.[78]

The reinstatement of the Russians at St Panteleimon in 1839 concludes a chapter of Athonite history in which they played no more than a peripheral role. Although outside Mount Athos Russia had repeatedly defeated the Ottoman Empire and was a force to be reckoned with in the Aegean and the Balkans, she had been having little say in the affairs of the Holy Mountain as a whole. The upheavals at the skete, Anikita's trials, and the squabbles over land were of a purely local nature; they were problems typical on Mount Athos, ones which were soon resolved and paled into insignificance alongside such upheavals as the *Kollyvades* dispute.[79] Above all, nothing had yet upset the traditional ethnic balance of the Athonite population.

The seeds of the harmful ethnic discord to follow, however, were sown. Although Gerasimos insisted that Russians and Greeks perform their monastic duties together, the former were assigned separate living quarters and separate places of worship. The monastery was thus already physically divided. Gerasimos was also undermining his own authority by appointing Pavel as father-confessor and *de facto* leader of the Russians. Above all, the Russians were vastly more wealthy than their impoverished brethren. Venediktos said,

> If the Russians will live forever here, just as our house is now poor and bare and trampled on by all other Athonite houses, so will it be wealthy, in good order and adorned, and it will be renowned both all over the Holy Mountain and throughout the world: for the Russians come from a prosperous land, glorious and wealthy Russia [...]'[80]

In the short term, the Russians' wealth saved the monastery from debt and decay. But riches and the monastic life do not go together; and when the well-off live in close proximity with the poor, envy, greed and pride are bound to flourish.

On 29 July 1840, two days after the feast of St Panteleimon, Pavel fell ill. He died on 2 August. He was succeeded as father-confessor to the Russians by Priest-monk Ieronim Solomentsev. Ieronim was reluctant to accept his new post and had to be persuaded by the insistence of the Elder Arseniy. Previously, Ieronim had been living as an

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78 Ibid. p. 154-155.

79 This dispute split Athonite society. St Paisiy Velichkovskiy was on the side of the Kollyvades or traditionalists—those who sought to uphold the canons and observe liturgical rules strictly. The Kollyvades were committed to reviving hesychasm and returning to the teachings of such fathers as SS Symeon the New Theologian, Gregory of Sinai and Gregory Palamas. Contrary to the normal practice of the time, the Kollyvades advocated frequent communion. They aroused strong opposition but their standpoint was eventually endorsed by the patriarch. See Kallistos, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

80 Ibid. p. 154.

unordained monk by the name of Ioannikiy in a Kellion not far from Stavronikita monastery with a couple of disciples, one of whom was Parfeniy Aggeev. Ieronim was from a wealthy merchant family; although he had been comparatively well-off in his Kellion, he had been living the life of a humble anchorite devoted to hesychasm. He arrived with his disciples at St Panteleimon on 20 October 1840; Metropolitan Grigorios of Adrianopole ordained him deacon on 18 November and priest on 21 November 1840.[81]

Ieronim was able and shrewd. In the beginning he worked well with the abbot and used tact and discretion to smooth over any differences. His authority over those in his charge was unquestioned and his example admired. His greatest gift as a leader was his determination and unbreakable will. There is an interesting glimpse of this in a eulogistic description of his life that appeared in *Dushepoleznyya Chteniya*. As a young man still in Russia he once fell prey to unchaste thoughts and spent an entire night in a garden praying until he rid himself of them.[82]

Ieronim soon used his determination to bring about drastic changes in the monastery. He saw that St Panteleimon needed a secure financial future, and this would be possible only if ties were strengthened with Russia. Somebody would need to go on an alms-gathering mission there in order both to bring in much-needed money and to attract public attention, and perhaps benefaction, to the monastery. He realised that he would have to stay in the monastery, but that Parfeniy Aggeev, who was himself exceptionally articulate, able and determined, was the obvious man to lead such a mission. Ieronim was skilfully ruthless in handling the reluctant Aggeev.

Parfeniy Aggeev was tonsured with the great *schema* by Ieronim in the fifth week of Lent, 1841.[83] This meant that he had become a hermit within the monastery; his hesychastic rule of cell prayer was extremely strict and he was rarely to leave the monastery. As early as Lazarus Saturday, however, Ieronim told him about the proposed mission. Parfeniy resisted, but eventually had to comply. He left the Holy Mountain the week after Easter.[84]

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81 Ibid. p. 154. That Ieronim was wealthy can seen from the amount of food and personal property he had to sell or give away when he moved.

82 Kovalevskiy, op. cit., p. 418.

83 Aggeev, op. cit., Part II, p. 228. The great *schema* is conferred on senior monks who take especially strict ascetic vows. Only great schema monks are able to tonsure with the great schema.

84 When Parfeniy was first on the Holy Mountain he was a spiritual child of the Elder Arseniy, who told him that he would have to return to Russia. While Parfeniy was away on Ieronim's mission, the elder died and nobody was subsequently able to release Parfeniy from his obedience. Parfeniy's first mission, on which he went to the Holy Land and then on

His was probably the first of many such missions sent by Ieronim. They eventually succeeded in making the monastery famous and rich. From now on pilgrims from Russia came to Mount Athos in increasing numbers and many of them joined the monastery.

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to Siberia, was a disaster and he nearly died, but he had to set off again when he recovered. In the late 1860s he made a final, brief pilgrimage to Athos, but by now he had become abbot of a monastery in Russia.

PART I: THE RUSSIANS ON ATHOS

Chapter 3

The Crisis: 1839–1875

(i)

The Build-up to the Crises of the 1870s

The Greeks of St Panteleimon begged the Russians to return and hailed them as saviours in 1839. Circumstances and events, however, conspired to make what should have been a new age of prosperous and harmonious coexistence into a damaging and long-lasting period of discord. The most striking feature of the story of the Greek-Russian rift is coincidence. We have seen how Russian numbers increased rapidly at a time when the Greeks were at their most sensitive and vulnerable; how the material poverty of most of the Greeks on Athos was highlighted by newly-arrived Russian wealth, which gave rise to bitterness and envy; and how Russia's role in Europe was misunderstood and the Greeks felt let down. But the seeds of discord had been sown in St Panteleimon itself, while it was still struggling financially and before anyone could suspect that the Russians would cease to be a minority: the Russians were given separate living quarters and their own church, and Abbot Gerasimos had unwittingly undermined his own authority by appointing somebody else as spiritual father and confessor to the Russians. From the beginning, therefore, the Russians were set apart from the Greeks and St Panteleimon ceased to be a single, unified community under one abbot.

A number of misunderstandings in St Panteleimon followed, and they led to unfortunate incidents, and the rift widened. At the same time, St Panteleimon became involved in disputes elsewhere on Athos, and these made matters worse. No doubt, had it not been for parallel events outside Athos, the Greek-Russian Athonite quarrels might have been resolved of their own accord; but as the nineteenth century drew to a close the Holy Mountain ceased to be mediævally parochial, because what was happening on it was being increasingly influenced by European politics.

A.-E. Tachiaos attempts to analyse the dispute in his article 'Controverses entre Grecs et Russes à l'Athos'. Unfortunately, it is too short to do the subject justice, and he skates over a number of problems. He chooses 1839 as his point of departure, presumably because hitherto, he claims, 'Greeks and Slavs lived together on the Holy Mountain in perfect harmony'.[1] His most sweeping and confusing generalisation, which he proceeds to contradict, is that from Pavel's arrival at St Panteleimon 'the life of the Greek-Russian community continued almost without a hitch

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1 Tachiaos, op. cit., p. 159.

until 1870.'[2] This is the date he chooses as his *terminus ad quem;* for, he says, 1870 was the year when the quarrel had gained such a momentum that its development became predictable. As we shall see, all that was predictable in 1870 was that the Greeks and Russians would not easily be reconciled, but events were constantly taking an unexpected turn. Just as Tachiaos starts to describe some of the more interesting and serious elements of the quarrel, he abruptly ends his article. He concludes lamely that he hopes there will be a renaissance of Russian monasticism on Mount Athos, 'unclouded by nationalist tendencies'.[3]

His main failing is his reliance on limited sources. The bulk of his quotations and examples come from Anikita's diaries, Parfeniy Aggeev's *Skazanie o stranstvii* and Serafim Svyatogorets' letters. We have seen how useful these works are for the period up to 1841, but none of them goes beyond the 1850s. Moreover, Tachiaos attaches too much importance to Svyatogorets, whose eulogy of the Russian monastery Tachiaos describes as 'the finest evidence of the degree of perfection that relations between Greek and Russian monks had reached.'[4]

It should be remembered that Priest-monk Serafim Svyatogorets visited the Holy Mountain for a period of no more than five years, and stayed there a maximum of two years at any one time. This was hardly enough time for him to get to know Athonite life properly. Moreover, as we have seen with Parfeniy Aggeev, a great schema-monk should leave his monastery only if absolutely necessary.[5] Indeed, the letters of Svyatogorets are curiously worldly for those of a monk. They display the mentality of a travelling foreigner and contrast strongly with the writings of Parfeniy Aggeev, who was an ascetic to the core. When Svyatogorets and his fellow Russian pilgrims first toured the Holy Mountain, lugging their samovar with them, he was accused by one of the party of behaving in a manner unbefitting an Athonite monk: Svyatogorets stroked a stray dog; this shocked a zealous lay pilgrim, who rounded on him. Not only did Svyatogorets not command the respect due to a monk from a pious layman on this occasion, but he was unaware of a canon forbidding monks to touch unclean animals.[6]

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2 Ibid., p. 166.

3 Ibid., p. 179.

4 Ibid., p. 169.

5 Svyatogorets took the great Schema on 23 March 1844, five months after first arriving on Athos.

6 I have heard this canon has been ascribed to St Basil the Great, but I have been unable to find a precise reference. According to the canon, a monk who happens to pat a dog or a cat may be deprived of *antidoron* (bread distributed at the end of the liturgy) for three days. Svyatogorets, op. cit., pp. 132-132. Many cats on the Holy Mountain,

Tachiaos would have done better to consider the writings of Svyatogorets merely as a phenomenon: they were one of the reasons why the Russians started arriving on Athos in droves in the latter half of the nineteenth century. As an historical source *Pis'ma svyatogortsa o sv. Afonskoy gore* are of limited value. His letters are an elegantly written mixture of travelogue, pious legend and anecdote. Their tone is enthusiastic and naive. Occasionally, they offer the reader an interesting insight into day-to-day life on the Holy Mountain, as when he describes his first Lent, Holy Week and Easter there, or discusses the food; but modesty and reticence prevent him from writing any more than platitudes about the important people he knew. All we really learn from his letters about Ieronim and Gerasimos, for example, is that they were good and highly respected. However, Svyatogorets was of great importance because his writings were the first to be published on behalf of St Panteleimon Monastery in Russian, and they attracted the attention of a huge readership in Russia. Two editions were printed of the first part of his letters in 1850, the first year of publication, and numerous editions appeared of the posthumous collection. There were six editions of his *Afonskiy Paterik*, from 1860 until the end of the century. When he went to Moscow and St Petersburg in 1849 to visit his publishers and promote his work, he was greeted everywhere as a celebrity.

The main Greek text Tachiaos bases his article on is Gerasimos Smyrnakis, who does not share Tachiaos' view that the Greeks and Russians coexisted without a hitch until 1870. Smyrnakis saw this period in St Panteleimon's history as full of discord and bitterness. The only scandalous event reported by Smyrnakis that Tachiaos mentions is the Sevastyanov episode, which we shall discuss below. Evidently, Tachiaos was being diplomatic. The 1960s, when Mylonakos wrote his diatribe and Tachiaos' article appeared in *Le Millénaire du Mont-Athos*, was a time of strong anti-Slav feeling on Athos. Tachiaos might have intended his article as a conciliatory gesture to the Russians. Moreover, he was probably one of those in Salonica who was trying to persuade the authorities to allow a new group of monks from the Soviet Union to join St Panteleimon.

Smyrnakis was not a witness of the events at the beginning of the dispute, since he was born in 1862 and came to the Holy Mountain shortly before 1888. Moreover, *To Aghion Oros* cannot be considered as wholly reliable because Smyrnakis wrote too emotionally for an impartial recorder of facts. He had hardly a good word to say for the Russians:

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however, are fed and sheltered by the monks, presumably to keep rhodents at bay

perhaps Tachiaos had him in mind when he wrote that the historical facts were distorted by both sides because of their hatred of each other.[7] Nor is Smyrnakis' account of the dispute logically laid out and clear: it is mainly narrative and continues for some 30,000 words without a break. He attempts to deal with events chronologically, but the more complex they become the less clear is his story; and he frequently has to dart back and forth from one subject to another, sometimes repeating himself and breaking the chronological flow. In a characteristically confusing passage Smyrnakis quotes the text of an eleven-article statement issued by Abbot Gerasimos in July 1869, but omits article seven.[8] None the less, Smyrnakis' documentary evidence speaks for itself.

On the surface, A.A. Dmitrievskiy's *Russkie na Afone* is far more impressive: it is coherent, entertaining and persuasive. As we have seen, however, Dmitrievskiy was denied access to some important source materials, and he was no less partial than Smyrnakis. Dmitrievskiy's account is unfair and full of glaring omissions. For instance, his account of the developing quarrel between Russians and Greeks in St Panteleimon is amusingly vivid, and it reads more like spicy narrative than scholarship. The Greeks are depicted as volatile, treacherous rabble-rousers whose aim is to expel the Russians or make their life too miserable for them to stay in the Rossikon. He imagines what the Greeks say at their secret meetings:

> "*Aman*, our monastery has had it! The abbot is a schismatic, Deacon Ilarion is a schismatic and the Russians are schismatic!" screamed the enraged voices of the dissatisfied participators at this meeting.[9]

However entertaining and likely such a meeting may have been, poking cheap fun at the Greeks greatly detracts from the credibility of Dmitrievskiy's account.

Smyrnakis, for all his lack of professionalism and antipathy for the Russians, is more believable because he draws more on primary source material. On the other hand, there are details missed by him and mentioned by Dmitrievskiy. We will therefore consider Smyrnakis and Dmitrievskiy's accounts side by side, and sift fact from bias, in order to find out where they contradict each other, where they agree, and at what point the version of one is more plausible or detailed than the other.

Smyrnakis chooses not to describe the events leading up to Pavel's return in detail. He merely states that in 1838

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[7] 'Les données de cette histoire sont falsifiées de la façon la plus invraisemblable, et les deux partis opposés concourent à la déformation de la réalité historique.' Tachiaos, op. cit., p. 159.

[8] Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 215; for a discussion of the 'eleven' articles, see below.

[9] Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 179.

[*sic*] Pavel and two of his friends were in the 'Greek monastery of St Panteleimon, which was chosen by the Russians'.[10] Dmitrievskiy, on the other hand, gives a detailed and relatively dispassionate account based mainly on Anikita's diaries and Parfeniy Aggeev. Neither the Russians nor the Greeks were under threat or making a bid for supremacy at the time.

As we have seen, Parfeniy Aggeev voiced no criticism of Ieronim, because he was Ieronim's subordinate; but the manner in which Parfeniy Aggeev was dispatched to Russia is suggestive of Ieronim's unemotional resolve and sense of expediency. Dmitrievskiy does not mention this incident, but shares Svyatogorets' view that Ieronim was able, astute and good. According to Smyrnakis, Ieronim was completely unknown while he was still living in his kellion and came, unwillingly at first, to St Panteleimon both for the love of his fellow countrymen and in order to help relieve the monastery's debts of 240,000 *grosia*. Parfeniy Aggeev explains that Ieronim was rich, but he does not imply that Ieronim's motive for coming to the monastery was to help out financially; on the contrary, he says that Ieronim gave away all his possessions before leaving his kellion. Ieronim simply had to obey the Elder Arseniy's orders, to which Parfeniy Aggeev would not have dreamt of ascribing mercenary motives. Smyrnakis' inference is tendentious; it smacks of envy of the Russians' wealth.

Dmitrievskiy does not mention the sum of 240,000 *grosia*, but carefully describes Ieronim's attempts to raise funds. We read that, as soon as he was ordained a priest and had assumed the role of father-confessor, Ieronim realised that money needed to be raised for a new Russian church, as the St Mitrofan chapel was now too small. Dmitrievskiy chose to overlook Parfeniy Aggeev's departure in 1841 either in order not to mar his favourable portrayal of Ieronim or because, as we have seen, Aggeev's alms-gathering mission ended in failure. Dmitrievskiy says that the first alms-gathering mission to Russia was undertaken by monks Ioil', Nifont and Sil'vestr on 1 October 1849. They collected over 4,000 roubles in cash and gold.[11] In 1850 more money came in, thanks to the first publication of Svyatogorets' letters. At the same time, Svyatogorets managed to persuade G. Chernov and I.I. Stakheev, wealthy merchants from Svyatogorets' native Vyatskaya Province, to donate enough money to build in St Panteleimon the new Russian principal church of the Protecting Veil. It was completed on 10 January 1853.

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10 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 214. He gives a brief history of the Rossikon from the beginning of its existence, in Part IV, pp 658-679.

11 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 94, fn. 3.

Smyrnakis' version is different. He says that an alms-gathering mission in 1850 marked the beginning of the quarrel between the Greeks and the Russians. He claims that the original conditions of coexistence laid down for Ieronim in 1840 were contravened. Ieronim had agreed that the Russians would not exceed thirty-five in number and that they would submit in all things to Abbot Gerasimos according to the Rule.[12] However, Gerasimos was not told about the mission, and the Russians kept the lion's share of the collected money, in order to fulfil their 'darkly secretive and wily purposes'.

Smyrnakis does not explain why or how the Russians kept Gerasimos in the dark while giving the Greeks a share of the money, however small. Why does Dmitrievskiy say that the mission set off a year earlier? What may have happened was that Gerasimos knew nothing about the mission in October 1849, but that it came back in 1850. In other words, Ieronim acted on his own initiative, without consulting the abbot. It is also possible that the Russians were trying to keep the mission secret, were discovered and found themselves obliged to part with some of the money.

Dmitrievskiy writes:

> Fr. Ieronim tried to share out equally all donations which came in from Russia; and, in order to dispose the Greeks favourably towards the Russians, he even tried to give the Greeks the best things and the Russians the worst, except where donations were specifically intended for the Russian central church or the Russian brethren.[13]

It is curious that the two historians should write such contrasting versions here. Despite Smyrnakis' emotional language, the Greeks were clearly being wronged: why else would Ieronim find it necessary to dispose them favourably to the Russians and give his own brethren 'the worst things'? After all, according to Dmitrievskiy, there had been hitherto no misunderstandings in the monastery and the two nationalities had been existing harmoniously.

On 3 November 1851, there arrived at St Panteleimon a pilgrim who was to play a key role in subsequent events. Mikhail Ivanovich Sushkin was from an old and well-to-do merchant family based in Tula. Two months previously, in Odessa, on his way to the Holy Mountain, he had met Svyatogorets, who had sent word to St Panteleimon of the imminent arrival of the distinguished young visitor. Sushkin was well bred and a potentially useful benefactor. He was warmly received, but almost immediately fell gravely ill. He was tonsured with the great schema, with the name of Makariy, and staged a miraculous recovery. He then set about

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12 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 214; there were 80 Greeks at the monastery at the time.

13 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 96.

asking his family for donations. On 4 May 1852, in one of his begging letters to his parents, he wrote: 'there are already many Russians here and the monastery has debts of 60,000 roubles.' In response the Sushkins sent gifts for the church and money. On 11 October 1852, Makariy's parents paid for the chapel of the Athonite Saints in the monastery sick house. Other gifts came from them, notably an annual covenant of 500 roubles from Makariy's father.

The Crimean War marked a lean period for the monastery. Many of the Russian brethren, fearing reprisals from the Turks, thought of escaping to Russia, but most were persuaded to stay. Trade was affected by sudden inflation and the flow of donations temporarily ceased. As soon as the war ended, links were restored with the motherland and money once again came into the monastery.

On 3 June 1856, Makariy was ordained priest and shortly after appointed as deputy father-confessor to the Russians—*vtoroy dukhovnik*. Dmitrievskiy explains such an unusually quick promotion in one so young and inexperienced thus: Ieronim was still prey to bouts of sickness; he was unable to cope alone with the burden of confessing all the Russian brethren, who now numbered more than eighty; above all, he and Makariy enjoyed a father-son relationship. Dmitrievskiy unwittingly gives another, no less important reason. Quoting K. Leontyev, he refers to Makariy as someone 'whose father and brothers are millionaires'.[14] Both Makariy and Ieronim were well connected, came from and understood the Russian merchant *milieu*, and had good financial sense. They made a formidable team: Makariy had energy and enthusiasm, and Ieronim was the wise head on young shoulders. Moreover, the burgeoning Russian community needed presentable, well-spoken people at the helm. Good public relations attracted benefaction. By contrast, the pilgrims who would shortly be flocking to Mount Athos from Russia, and many of whom stayed on permanently to become monks, were mostly simple, uneducated people, and created a poor impression on some Greeks and even Russians. 'This made many people refer to Russian Athos as *the peasant kingdom*.'[15]

Until Chapter VII of *Russkie na Afone* Dmitrievskiy's tone is restrained and reasonable. Once he starts writing about what he calls 'the battle'—*bor'ba*—his bellicosity matches that of Smyrnakis. According to Dmitrievskiy, the trouble started after the arrival of Ieronim, in 1840. The Greeks started to consider the Russians as 'newcomers' and 'servants'—*Greki smotreli na russkikh, kak na prishletsov, svoikh rabov*. 'In return for shabby accommodation and very

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14 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., 123.

15 Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., A', p. 184; see also note 2, B', p. 146.

poor food'—*za plokhoi priyut i krajne skudnyi stol*—the Russians 'had to work for the monastery and undergo all manner of privations'. Owing to the paucity of their numbers and the catastrophic financial state of the monastery, however, the Russians were 'obliged to make do for the time being with their humble position'.[16]

Dmitrievskiy's comments and the attitude of the Russians, if his interpretation is correct, are unreasonable. Of course, there was some excuse if the Greeks really did humiliate the Russians, but Dmitrievskiy provides no evidence of this. Proving things as nebulous as haughtiness or insulting words is impossible, and he does not quote any specific instance; and he implies, rather than states, that the Greeks were given easier tasks and lived better than the Russians. That the Greeks ate better is unlikely, because in a cœnobitic monastery all have the same food. Indeed, what he writes about the food and accommodation does not ring true. The monastery, he admits in the same paragraph, was very poor: how, then, could the newcomers expect to live well? Athonites are supposed to be ascetics, but we have seen how fussy the Russians, particularly Svyatogorets and Ieronim himself, were about what they ate. Perhaps their reputation for laziness that Barskiy mentioned was justified, for why should they object to working for the monastery? In a cœnobium monks do not work 'in return for' food and accommodation, anyway; that is the spirit of an idiorrhythmic house: they work and put up with hardship for the sake of obedience to their elders and of attaining spiritual perfection.

In fact, Dmitrievskiy must have felt that the Russians were superior to the Greeks, who initially did not appreciate their true worth. In 1845 Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich, a son of Nicholas I, came to St Panteleimon during a tour of the Holy Mountain. 'His visit raised the prestige of the Russians in the eyes of the Greek Athonites, and the Russian Athonites themselves from that moment started to consider themselves as the members or representatives of the great Russian nation.'[17] The practical consequence of the visit, according to Dmitrievskiy, was that the Russian public first took notice of the monastery and started to give generously to it. Smyrnakis also records the visit, but says nothing about prestige or nationalism. He says Konstantin Nikolaevich, second son of Tsar Nicholas II [*sic*], visited first St Panteleimon, then Xenophontos, Zograf, Esfigmenou, the Prophet Elijah Skete, Karyes and

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16 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 157.

17 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., ibid.

Xiropotamou. He comments cryptically that the royal tour had 'on the whole a very Slav character'.[18]

In 1858 and 1863 two even more successful alms-gathering missions took place. Now the Russians in St Panteleimon, according to Dmitrievskiy, were in a materially superior position, and even the most inveterate of their opponents could not fail to see that they owed the well-being of their monastery to the Russians.[19] None the less, hostility between the two factions became open in 1858. Dmitrievskiy reports that Russian steamships were now allowed to anchor directly opposite the monastery and a Turkish customs hut was erected on the St Panteleimon quay in order to facilitate the landing of the increasing numbers of pilgrims.[20] Some of the St Panteleimon Greeks objected to this and demanded that the Turkish flag be taken down. Their request was not granted, so Priest-monk Nifon, a Greek, with some helpers sabotaged the mooring-buoy. They were not punished and the incident was passed over so as not to aggravate the situation. The saboteurs were not satisfied; a picture of a dagger and pistol was daubed on the cell doors of Abbot Gerasimos and his deputy, Deacon Ilarion. In 1863 Nifon and twenty-five Greek brethren left the monastery.[21]

Smyrnakis gives a more laconic report of the incident. He says that in 1863 seven Greek priest-monks and eighteen Greek monks left the monastery, owing to Russian 'high-handedness'.[22] However, he says that after July 1869, some other Greek brethren were given money and obliged to leave because of anti-Greek intrigues and Russian 'terrorism'.[23] According to Dmitrievskiy, there were no more incidents from 1863 until 1870.

The fact that Smyrnakis says twenty-five brethren were expelled in 1863, whereas Dmitrievskiy mentions twenty-six, is not serious: clearly, they were referring to the same incident, and the discrepancy is insignificant. But who was to blame, and what about the later, post-1869 case of Russian provocation, unreported by Dmitrievskiy? Here the Greek version seems the most dubious. Smyrnakis is uncharacteristically vague: he does not state specifically what happened in the later incident, nor how many were involved, nor does he name those who were expelled. Terrorism is a very serious allegation, and what Nifon and his followers did, in the context of a monastery, borders on terrorism.

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18 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 191.

19 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 160.

20 Ibid., p. 158.

21 Ibid., p. 159.

22 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 215.

23 Ibid., p. 216.

A more interesting question is why the protesters chose to mark the doors of Gerasimos and Ilarion. Smyrnakis condemns Ilarion unequivocally, calling him 'the most wicked of demons'; for, he claims, in about 1850 Deacon Ilarion, Gerasimos' right-hand man, started helping the Russians. Dmitrievskiy describes Ilarion as 'the most learned and humane deputy of Gerasimos'. He gives a brief biography of Ilarion which he concludes thus: 'he was honoured and loved by both the Russian and Greek brethren […] he was by conviction an ardent Russophile.'[24] In the front of the 1895 edition of *Russkie na Afone* Ilarion and Gerasimos are the only Greeks whose portraits appear among those of Makariy, Ieronim and their colleagues. Svyatogorets describes Ilarion, as early as 1844, as an 'intelligent, courteous companion' of the Russians, but one who had not yet mastered the language.[25]

The case of Abbot Gerasimos is less clear-cut. All the Russian accounts of him are complimentary. Parfeniy Aggeev describes him as a tireless, yet gentle spiritual father.[26] Svyatogorets wrote, in 1842, that the harmony and unity between the two nationalities were due to his placatory influence. Curiously enough, Svyatogorets describes him as a Bulgarian, and this is how some of the brethren of St Panteleimon still think of him today. As we have written, however, Gerasimos came from a village near Drama, in Thrace; and Greek historians are in no doubt that he was a Greek.[27] Gerasimos probably spoke Greek and a kind of Slavonic dialect akin to Bulgarian, for he could clearly communicate directly with the Russian brethren. This would explain why some of the Greeks daubed his door along with Ilarion's: their ignorance of Slavonic must have led them to believe that their abbot was conspiring behind their backs with their rivals. Apart from this graffiti, however, there is no indication that Gerasimos had lost any respect or popularity among the Greeks.

As we shall see, Smyrnakis contends that Ieronim and Makariy took advantage of his old age and infirmity, and increasingly ignored his authority; and we have already

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24 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 95.

25 Svyatogorets, op. cit., p. 162.

26 Aggeev, op. cit., Part IV, pp. 260-261.

27 Perhaps he was neither Greek nor Bulgarian, but Macedonian. Who the Macedonians were is hard to define. They lived on territory divided in the Balkan Wars between Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. The question of the nationality of the Macedonians is being hotly disputed by the Greeks and Slavs today. The former vigorously assert that Macedonia has been Greek for 3,000 years since the time of Alexander the Great. But what are the criteria of 'nationality'—language, blood, culture, territory, or what? Participation in this debate is beyond the scope of this thesis.

shown that, in the opinion of Smyrnakis, the alms-gathering mission of 1849-1850 took place behind the abbot's back. Dmitrievskiy is at pains to point out that Gerasimos and Ieronim worked together as a team from the beginning: 'The elder, Abbot Gerasimos […] tried in every way to work with Fr Ieronim.'[28] Tachiaos provides a clue that something might have been amiss. In 1867 Grand Duke Aleksey Aleksandrovich, son of Alexander II, visited the monastery. Tachiaos remarks that Gerasimos played a minor role in the celebrations and does not appear in one of the commemorative photographs.[29] Gerasimos may have been too old and infirm to preside over the occasion, for he was to die seven years later after an illness, aged, according to Dmitrievskiy, one hundred and three. It is also possible that Ieronim and Makariy decided that this event concerned the Russians only, and excluded the abbot. Dmitrievskiy's remarks indicate that the latter possibility is more likely. He believed that both royal visits had an almost messianic significance: not only 'ordinary mortals'—*ne tol'ko obychnye smertnye*—remembered the Russians on Mount Athos, but the great sovereign of a mighty power whose representative was his son; for this reason, the Russians on Athos could no longer be abused—*tretirovat' ikh nel'zya*—because they would henceforth always find for themselves mighty defenders.[30]

Smyrnakis was not in favour of the second royal visit. He says that Aleksey Aleksandrovich laid the foundation stone of the central church of the Russian skete of St Andrew. Smyrnakis describes this church disapprovingly as 'unparalleled in size and ornate grandeur on the Holy Mountain'. The ceremony took place in the presence of the members of the Holy *Koinotis*, 'who were amazed at the deliberate violation of Athonite protocol', but said nothing through respect for the visitor's exalted rank.[31]

There were two other visits 'of a Slav nature' that took place between those of the grand dukes. In 1848 the Russian consul at Constantinople, V.P. Titov, came to the Holy Mountain. He was accompanied by A.N. Muravyev, an historian of the Eastern Orthodox Church, who succeeded, in 1849, in raising the status of the Serai, formerly a large kellion, to that of a skete. According to Smyrnakis, Aleksey Aleksandrovich's laying of the foundation stone served to 'make permanent' the skete's new status. From 27 to 29 July 1866, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople and negotiator at the Treaty of San Stefano, Count N.P. Ignatiev, visited St Panteleimon. He, according to

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28 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., pp. 95-96.
29 Tachiaos, op. cit., pp. 177-8.
30 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 160.
31 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 208.

Dmitrievskiy, 'saw for himself the manifestly bad attitude the Greeks had towards the Russians', and so decided to do what he could to defend the Russians on Athos.[32]

So far, there is little to choose between Smyrnakis and Dmitrievskiy's versions: both are a mixture of tendentiousness and fact, and both have certain omissions. From the 1860s, however, Dmitrievskiy misses out far more than his Greek counterpart. For example, he says nothing of the scandalous intervention of the Russians in the affairs of Koutloumousiou. In 1860, P.I. Sevastyanov, an archaeologist living at the St Andrew Skete, took 'decisive measures to Russify Koutloumousiou Monastery'.[33] Using his money and influence he spent three years attempting to install as abbot the 'Russophile' Priest-monk Amphilokhios, who had previously lived in St Panteleimon. Representatives in Karyes from the Great Lavra and Vatopedi were bribed; under the pretext that Koutloumousiou was in trouble, they and the civil authorities broke down the doors with crowbars and forcibly expelled Abbot Ioasaf and his two helpers, Priest-monk Meletios, who was Abbot-designate, and Monk Khariton. On 11 September 1860, Amphilokios was installed. However, as Meletios had once lived in the Ionian Islands, he appealed to the British, under whose protectorate the islands were at the time. Diplomatic pressure was brought to bear. In November 1860, Khousni Pasha, an Ottoman official, came to Karyes to restore order, and Ioasaf and his two helpers were reinstated. As we have said, Tachiaos mentions this incident only in passing.[34] It would be interesting to read the Russian version of this inglorious episode.

In 1857, according to Dmitrievskiy, the Russians in St Panteleimon made a plea that the reading in the refectory on Wednesdays and Fridays be in Slavonic and that the meals on those days be blessed by a Russian priest. Abbot Gerasimos 'and the sensible section of the Greek brethren' acceded because they bore in mind 'the ceaseless efforts of the Russians to ensure the welfare of the monastery'.[35] Many Greeks boycotted the meals which had readings in Russian. In 1866, however, it was decreed that Greek readings alternate with Russian on a daily basis. Moreover, a new rule was to replace the one the Russians had agreed to in 1840. The Greeks now proposed that:

1 the Russians never exceed in number a quarter of that of the Greek brethren;

2 the abbot should always be a Greek;

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32 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 160.

33 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 194.

34 Tachiaos, op. cit., p. 178.

35 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

3 and the Greeks should always 'be in the ascendancy' in the monastery—*chtoby … zanimali gospodstvuyuschee polozhenie*.

The Russians rejected these new conditions.

Smyrnakis does not mention the original Russian request of 1857. He states that in July 1869, Gerasimos wrote down 'eleven' decrees, to which eighteen Greek and Russian brethren were signatories.[36]

1 For the sake of harmonious coexistence pleasing to God the Greeks shall celebrate their Patronal feast of St Panteleimon, and the Russians both the feast of the Protecting Veil and that of St Mitrofan of Voronezh.

2 That the cœnobium be undivided, the Greek and Russian brethren *must be equal in number*.[37]

3 The services in the Greek central church must be in Greek, and in Slavonic in the Russian church, unless the Russian church is visited by Greeks, on which occasion the services should be in Greek.

4 Whenever official Russian visitors are in the Greek central church, the services must be in Russian; similarly, the services must be in Greek if Greek official visitors are in the Russian church.

5 The refectory readings should be in Greek on one day and in Russian on the next; but on the Twelve Great Feasts, the feasts of the Mother of God and the Patronal feasts, the readings for the morning meal should be in Greek, and for the evening meal in Russian. On the feasts of the Protecting Veil and St Mitrofan, however, the morning reading shall be in Russian, and the Greek reading shall be in the evening, except when the language of the reading is specially adapted for visitors of one or other nationality. The blessing in the refectory must be given by the abbot; in his absence, the blessing shall be given in the language of the reading.

6 *The election of the abbot is carried out by the elder and senior brethren with no regard to nationality, provided that he who is elected be worthy of governing.*

7 [Smyrnakis misses this article out.]

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36 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 215.

37 These are Smyrnakis' italics: he is quoting from the original text.

8 Just as the Greek Abbot has advisers and deputies, so the Russians, on account of the language, must have a father-confessor.
9 All brethren, whether they be Greek, Russian, Bulgarian or Vlach, should have equal tasks, be they in the dependencies, vineyards, olive groves, gardens or boats.
10 Two Russian and two Greek helpers are to be appointed as aides to the abbot, as is a council of elders under the chairmanship of the abbot.
11 [This last item has no number in Smyrnakis' text]. If one of the two principal nationalities be quarrelsome, let that group be expelled from the monastery and its dependent territories.

These 'eleven' articles of 1869 had nothing in common with the new three-part rule that Dmitrievskiy said was put to the Russians and rejected. The three stipulations of this rule seem to be diametrically opposed to the 1869 articles, as can be seen if we compare stipulation one with article two, stipulation two with article six, and stipulation three with articles two, nine and ten. Were the 1869 articles issued as a result of pressure from the Russians, who had just rejected the rule with its three stipulations? This is possible, since Dmitrievskiy is vague about the date: he implies that this rule was put to the Russians after 1866, when the new reading rota had been established. Moreover, the Greek monks, who, according to Smyrnakis, left the monastery having been bribed, might have been reacting to what they considered to be the unreasonable pressure and lobbying brought to bear by the Russians in order to get a better agreement. In other words, Smyrnakis chooses not to mention the post-1866 rule, which can be interpreted as unfair to the Russians, but prefers instead to concentrate on the manifestly egalitarian 1869 conditions; and Dmitrievskiy says nothing about the latter, lest he show up the Russians in a churlish light.

An examination of Dmitrievskiy's wording is revealing.

> This first demand of the Russians [to have alternating Russian and Greek refectory readings and church singing], and the effort they put into its realisation, showed to both sides most clearly that a coexistence, bound by love, of monks belonging to two different nations is hardly possible unless the conditions of this coexistence be regulated and unless the rights of both nationalities be defined. The Greeks took the initiative in this matter: they proposed to the Russians that they draw up a "rule" [*ustav*] for coexistence. The Russians, although they were surprised with such a proposal from the Greeks, for these conditions had already been roughly worked out as early as 1840 when they entered St Panteleimon, none the less agreed to it. But when the "rule", which had been worked out by the Greeks, was put to the Russian

brethren, then "the innermost motives of the hearts of many were revealed."[38]

The phrase 'a coexistence, bound by love, of monks belonging to two different nations' is reminiscent of the first article—'harmonious coexistence pleasing to God'—and of the second, which speaks of 'the two nationalities'. Secondly, the 1869 articles are much more a clear definition of the rights of each side and of the conditions of their coexistence than the three-part rule. The former is a carefully formulated, almost legalistic charter of equal rights; the latter merely puts the Russians in their place and says nothing of harmonious coexistence. Finally, the 1869 articles incorporate the question of the language of the refectory readings and church singing, a question that had been discussed and campaigned for since 1857. Thus the articles are a natural conclusion to the previous twelve years of debate and seem to be alluded to by Dmitrievskiy; but the conditions of the 'rule' are an illogical conclusion to the previous years, even though, Dmitrievskiy claims, some of the Greeks boycotted the Russian refectory readings. Moreover, the quotation in the paragraph above is, for Dmitrievskiy, uncharacteristically verbose and vague, particularly the last sentence. He was, therefore, either writing untruthfully, or he had not been shown all the evidence by the St Panteleimon Russians, who did not allow him to see some of the relevant manuscripts.

The quarrel at last boiled over in 1870, when Gerasimos' successor was chosen. Two years previously the former Bishop of Poltava, Aleksandr, was on a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain and conferred the rank of archimandrite on Makariy Sushkin. 'Abbot Gerasimos,' writes Dmitrievskiy, 'now a very old man, wishing in the event of his death to prepare a worthy successor to the abbot's throne of the St Panteleimon Monastery, selected Fr. Makariy as a man outstanding amongst the brethren for his intelligence and wholly exemplary monastic life.' Makariy was a modest man; he 'for a long time firmly refused' the high honour, because he realised it would upset the peace in the monastery; but his protestations were not heeded, and on 15 October 1870, he was 'declared the "chosen successor" to the Elder Gerasimos'. Dmitrievskiy is at pains to make clear that Makariy was chosen personally by Gerasimos himself, and that Makariy knew that the choice would cause trouble.[39]

Smyrnakis gives no specific date for the announcement of Gerasimos' successor. He writes that at a synaxis presided by Gerasimos it was the Russians who marked out

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38 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 158.

39 Ibid., pp. 161-162.

Makariy as the future abbot, on the suggestion of the 'wretched' Ilarion.[40]

Dmitrievskiy points out that the appointment of Makariy was not in itself important, but that it proved to be a disastrous exacerbation of the growing discord between the two nationalities. Moreover, he writes that a number of external incidents and circumstances worsened the quarrel by drawing the attention of the whole of Athos and of people outside the Holy Mountain to the tribulations of the St Panteleimon Monastery. Four of these circumstances were local, Athonite quarrels; they were 'entirely coincidental and insignificant, and at any other time would have passed unnoticed'.

On 5 September 1871, the prior of the Prophet Elijah Skete, Paisiy II died.[41] In his will he stated that he did not consider any member of the Skete worthy to succeed him, so the next prior should not be one of its brethren. A power struggle ensued. The majority faction, ignoring Paisiy's wishes, campaigned for the appointment of Priest-monk Andrey, one of the skete brethren. The minority, lead by Priest-monk Innokentiy, who had been Paisiy's steward, wanted to abide by the prior's will. Pantokratoros, the skete's governing monastery, did not support the majority; there was a storm of protest, and K. Leontyev, the then Russian consul in Salonica, had to intervene to have an outsider, Priest-monk Gervasiy, appointed.[42] However, Gervasiy resigned after a year and retired to St Panteleimon, where he took the great schema and died. Andrey renewed his campaign, enlisted the support of Pantokratoros,[43] and was abbot from 1872 until 1879. M.R. Gladkov, who was the skete's agent in Odessa, wrote to Ieronim and Makariy in a bid to oust Andrey, but the St Panteleimon elders refused to interfere in the internal matters of one of the Twenty Monasteries.

Ieronim and Makariy acted with discretion and tact, and, if anything, should have won friends among Greek Athonites. That they gained enemies instead can be understood from the correspondence, quoted by Dmitrievskiy, of Gladkov with Ieronim and Makariy. Gladkov makes serious allegations, which reflect badly not only on Andrey but on

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40 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 216.

41 For a detailed history of the skete, and an explanation of the difference between abbot and prior on Mount Athos, see Part II of this thesis.

42 For Leontyev's own account, see Leontyev, K. N., *Vostok, Rossiya i slavyanstvo* (Moscow: Sobranie sochineniy, 5 vols, 1885), Vol. I, pp. 55-57. He was consul ceneral at Salonica until some time before 1873, when he was succeeded briefly by N. Yakubovskiy, who died in 1874. Yakubovskiy had previously been consul at Monastir.

43 The Prophet Elijah Skete's Governing Monastery.

all Russian Athonites. Gladkov claimed that Andrey enlisted the support of Pantokratoros by bribing them with 500 Turkish Lira and the promise of another 100 Lira per annum. Gladkov accused Andrey and his followers of 'having no idea what a monk is without Christian faith'. Gladkov went on to allege that 'by various dishonest means and by using the skete's money, [they] became the masters and plunderers of the skete in order to satisfy their devilish ambition'. He threatened that if no help came from St Panteleimon, he would 'be forced to tell the Russian government and the Holy Synod about all the squabbles and about everything that happens to the alms that poor widows and orphans send to Athos'. He would also be obliged to 'reveal the written pledges of money made to Athonite monks in Russia'; if he did so, 'then it would be bad for everyone'.[44]

Dmitrievskiy makes his dislike for Gladkov clear. He says that Gladkov 'had, over fourteen years, become accustomed to interfere in the skete's affairs', and comments, before quoting the accusations: 'if we are to believe the letter of Mr Gladkov'.[45] Unfortunately, there is no way of checking whether Dmitrievskiy's scepticism is founded, and there is no evidence that Gladkov carried out his threat of exposure; but if there is any truth in Gladkov's allegations, then the Greeks all over Athos would understandably feel badly towards the Russians. Yet again, the Russians were using their wealth to get their way, and the Greeks were reminded of their own poverty and increasing impotence. This is not to say that the Greeks would have refrained from using money to get their way if they had the means: throughout the Levant the *baksheesh*, known euphemistically on Athos as *evloghia* (blessing), was, as Robert Curzon discovered when making his fine collection of Athonite manuscripts, 'the silver key' that would open any door.'[46]

Another aggravating incident, in Dmitrievskiy's view, that coincided with Makariy's appointment, was the special honour conferred on Theodorit, prior of the other Russian skete, that of St Andrew, known as the Serai. Patriarch Anthim had once lived in the Serai and decided to confer on Theodorit, as a mark of special favour, the title of *Igoumenos*, which was hitherto reserved for the abbots of the Twenty Monasteries. The Patriarch also gave Theodorit an archimandrite's pectoral cross and *mandyas* (gown). Although Theodorit had already been made an archimandrite by Vatopedi, the skete's governing monastery, he was now also

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44 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 247.

45 Ibid., pp. 242 and 244.

46 Curzon, Robert, *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* (London: 1916), passim.

archimandrite by patriarchal decree, an honour reserved for the abbots of the Twenty Monasteries alone. Moreover, the Serai, a Russian skete, became *stavropegic*, or specially favoured by the Patriarch, whilst still being dependent on a *stavropegic* monastery. This honour not only made the Serai more important than the Prophet Elijah Skete, but singled out the Serai from the other, Greek, sketes. Again, the Greeks had cause for jealousy.

The two other local, Athonite incidents that Dmitrievskiy considered adversely affected Greek-Russian relations in the 1870s concerned two of the Greek Monasteries.[47] The abbot of Aghiou Pavlou, formerly one of the St Panteleimon Greek brethren, spent most of his time in his Constantinople dependency and elsewhere outside Athos. The monks of Aghiou Pavlou, who were hot-headed Cefalonians, suspected him of squandering the monastery's wealth and neglecting his pastoral duties. Vatopedi, Iviron, Zograf, together with Ieronim and Makariy, supported the aggrieved monks, but the side of the abbot was taken by the Patriarch and the poorer Athonite monasteries. At the same time, there was a row at the death of the old abbot of Xenophontos, the monastery next to St Panteleimon. The choice of his successor was controversial: once again it was a Greek from St Panteleimon.

Smyrnakis mentions only the *stavropegic* honour conferred on the Serai. Had he heard of Gladkov's accusations, he would no doubt have used them to fuel his anti-Russian invective. Although he reports the incidents in the two Greek monasteries elsewhere, he does not connect them with the Greek-Russian quarrel; Dmitrievskiy is unable to justify the importance he attaches to them.

(ii)
The Bulgarian Exarchate

So far, we have dealt with purely Athonite events. Before the latter half of the nineteenth century the outside world was important to both the Greek and Russian Athonite communities mainly because their survival depended on trade, visits by pilgrims and other visitors, and on benefaction. By the 1870s European politics were becoming ever more important on Athos. Russia was playing an increasingly dominant role in the Near East. The Bulgarian people were struggling to gain independence; the Danubian Principalities were unified under Prince Cuza from 1859 and were enjoying greater independence; the Kingdom of Greece was pressing for union with Crete and for expansion northwards into Thessaly and Macedonia; and the Ottoman Empire was under pressure

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[47] Ibid., p. 161.

both from Austria, Russia and from its own Christian subjects. Now that the Balkans were taking centre stage in European politics, events on Mount Athos were attracting international attention.

The creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate was the first major international event in the nineteenth century to influence the Holy Mountain directly, although there is no evidence that any of the Athonite Slavs took an active part in it. The creation of the Exarchate was important to Mount Athos for the following reasons: the Bulgarian Church emancipated itself from the Œcumenical Patriarchate, and this was seen as both uncanonical and a gesture of defiance to Greek ecclesiastical supremacy; the Greeks were quarrelling with the Slavs, as they were doing with the Russians on Athos; and the Bulgarians achieved their separate status in 1870, just when Makariy was appointed successor to Gerasimos, and the other incidents indirectly involving the Russians and described above took place on Athos. The Greeks, as we have seen, were highly sensitive and vulnerable at this time; it is hardly surprising that they considered the events on the Holy Mountain and outside to be part of a great anti-Hellenic, Pan-Slavist plot.

The incidents which led up to the formation of the Exarchate are discussed by both Smyrnakis and Dmitrievskiy. Their versions do not contradict each other but concentrate on different events. Dmitrievskiy provides the more laconic and general report. In a single paragraph, most of which is devoted to anti-Greek comments, he describes the movement towards Bulgarian ecclesiastical independence. He states that by 1859 the Bulgarian bishops and the Constantinople Patriarchate were at odds with each other, owing to the reorganisation of the latter. On 16 September 1872, the Patriarch declared the Bulgarians schismatic and asked the Moscow Synod to sign a letter condemning the Bulgarians. While the Synod did not openly side with its Slav brothers, it refused to sign the letter. This single decision of the Synod

> was enough to offend the pride of the Greeks, who had for many years been having far from ecclesiastical quarrels with the Bulgarians, and to arouse hatred towards the Russians in general. There then arose voices in the East clamouring that the Russians were schismatic, but the representatives of the Eastern Church refrained from such a rash step. However, from that time on Eastern society and the press spoke of the complete unity between the Russians and Bulgarians, and even considered the two nationalities as one and the same. Russia was thus accused of *Pan-Slavism*, the essence and meaning of which nobody clearly understands[...].[48]

Smyrnakis begins with the Patriarch's declaration of the schism in 1872. He describes the meeting of the

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48 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 166.

Patriarch's Council held in Constantinople from 12 to 16 September 1872.[49] It was presided over by Patriarch Anthim VI, and attended by the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, two former œcumenical patriarchs, the Archbishop of Cyprus, twenty-five metropolitans and two Athonite representatives. The meeting condemned and disavowed the ethnic divisions and jealousy brewing in the bosom of the Great Church;[50] and it declared the instigators of these divisions to be schismatic. Six Bulgarian metropolitans and their followers were singled out. The two 'Bulgarian' monasteries on Mount Athos, Zograf and Hilandar, were perturbed by the declaration but remained loyal to the Patriarchate.[51]

According to Smyrnakis, the Bulgarian question came to international attention when pro-Bulgarian articles, which were bitterly against the Patriarch of Constantinople, appeared in the *Russkiy Vestnik* and were avidly accepted by the Russian public. Patriarch Gregory VI (1867-1871) suggested that an autonomous Bulgarian Exarchate be set up under the ægis of the Patriarchate. This was rejected by the Bulgarian bishops, who wanted their own exarch in Constantinople. In 1870 the Sultan issued a *firman* authorising a Bulgarian archbishopric in Constantinople, but the Patriarch objected that his patriarchal authority as *millet bashi* was being compromised. Gregory VI then resigned and was succeed by Anthim VI.

Curiously enough, Smyrnakis praises the role played by the Moscow Synod here. It was lead by Metropolitan Filaret Drozdov (1782-1867), whom he calls 'the bright star of the Russian Church'. According to Smyrnakis, the Moscow Synod said that the Constantinople Patriarch was head of all the Church, and disobedience to him was tantamount to schismatic behaviour; thus, the Bulgarians had no right to go against the Patriarch since they were subject to him.[52]

Neither Smyrnakis nor Dmitrievskiy do justice to the question of the independence of the Bulgarian Church. We must provide an outline of the events leading up to the schism in 1872, for they explain the extent of Russia's involvement and why the Greeks outside Athos were increasingly at odds with the Slavs.

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[49] Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 211.

[50] The Great Church is the Œcumenical Orthodox Church presided over by the Patriarch of Constantinople.

[51] Hilandar was at the time only nominally Serbian, as most of its brotherhood was Bulgarian.

[52] Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 213. As with most of what Smyrnakis writes about the Russians, he supplies no documentary evidence or reference. However, it is likely that Metropolitan Filaret did support the Œcumenical Patriarchate.

Originally there was only one Orthodox *millet* in the Ottoman Empire: Greeks, Bulgarians and other Balkan Orthodox Christians were in the same group and had common civil rights under their head and representative at the Porte, the Patriarch of Constantinople. The early enlighteners of the Bulgarians were either Greeks or clerics who were faithful to Greek traditions and culture; the first Bulgarian schools were regarded as an addition rather than an alternative to Greek schools. However, Bulgarian cultural identity was preserved, thanks particularly to Bulgarian monastic libraries. Moreover, by the latter half of the nineteenth century most Bulgarian peasants and city tradesmen enjoyed a degree of prosperity and local autonomy. The well-being of the majority of the Bulgarians was an essential pre-requisite of Bulgarian renaissance.

At the same time that Bulgarian nationalism was asserting itself the Church was being increasingly Hellenized. In 1767 the archbishopric of Ohrid had come under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Greek bishops were assigned to mainly Bulgarian-speaking dioceses. Many of these bishops were guilty of financial corruption, and by the 1820s Bulgarians were complaining of having to pay more in Church dues than in state taxes. By the late 1840s protests were voiced all over Bulgaria. Now the complaints were no longer against Greek bishops who were corrupt, but against bishops who were Greek.[53] In 1849 the Sultan allowed the Bulgarians to have their own church in Constantinople, St Stephen's.

Support for the Bulgarians came from the Turks. In 1839 a *Hat-i-Sherif* was issued promising equal rights for all Ottoman subjects; it was reaffirmed in 1843 and 1845. In 1848 the Porte gave the Bulgarian community of Constantinople permission to build its own church in the Fenar. The church of St Stefan was consecrated a year later; it was financed entirely by the Bulgarians, who were now able to have their own services in Slavonic next to the Patriarch's cathedral but without having to ask for his permission.

In the next decade city guilds in the empire began splitting into Greek and Bulgarian factions. 1856 was the year of the *Hat-i-Humayun* proclaiming equal rights for Moslems and Christians, and stipulating not only that Orthodox bishops receive a fixed salary but that their special tax be abolished. In 1856 a petition was sent to the Sultan demanding a separate church for his six-and-a-half million Bulgarian subjects. On Easter Sunday, 1860, Bishop Ilarion Makropolsky conducted a liturgy in St Stefan's. As a

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53 Crampton, R.J., *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 15.

gesture of defiance, he commemorated not the Patriarch, as was customary, but all Orthodox bishops and the Sultan. For this Bishop Ilarion was excommunicated.

The response of Russia to these upheavals was at first uncertain, and after her humiliation in the Crimean War the Bulgarians could no longer look to her as their champion. Dragan Tsankov, the Bulgarian journalist, argued that it would be better to seek protection from the Catholic Powers than from Russia. Threatened by the Uniats and under pressure from the Porte to institute reforms in the Bulgarians' favour, the Patriarch convened a Church Council in 1859. By 1867 another five Councils were held; all ended in deadlock, owing to the intransigence of both the Greeks and the Bulgarians. Initially, the Porte encouraged this split, for it felt that as long as the Orthodox quarrelled among themselves they would not be a threat, and that Russia would be in a weak position. However, events in the 1860s convinced both the Turks and the Russians that the Bulgarian Question would have to be resolved: the Ottoman Empire was being raided by bands of armed Bulgarian bandits; Michael Obrenovic, Prince of Serbia, campaigned for a Balkan alliance against the Turks; in 1866 the Cretan Uprising took place; and the wars waged by Bismarck from 1866 were unsettling the whole of Europe.

In February 1870 the Porte issued a *firman*. An exarch was appointed as head of the Bulgarian *millet*. Fifteen out of the seventy-five Bulgarian dioceses, North of the Balkan range, were to belong to the Exarchate; any other diocese would be free to join, provided that its members voted in favour by a two-thirds majority. The Patriarch responded in 1872 by declaring the Exarchate schismatic, and his excommunication remained in force until 1945.

Were the Greeks right to feel aggrieved by all these events and how far were the Russians involved? At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Bulgarians were indeed being unfairly treated by the Greeks. Parfeniy Aggeev, who was a moderate Hellenophile, remarked during his travels in the 1830s:

> The poor Bulgarians do not only have to bear a heavy burden because of the Turks, but have to suffer no less from the Greeks. For in those cities where there are Greek archbishops the Bulgarians are permitted neither to sing, nor to read, nor to teach their children in Slavonic.[54]

The nearer the Bulgarians came to achieving their goal, however, the clearer it became that they were not primarily interested in the emancipation of their Church. Their aim was political rather than ecclesiastical. A circular letter in 1851 from the Bucharest Bulgarian National Committee declared: 'Without a national Church there is no

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54 Aggeev, op. cit., Part II, section 41.

salvation.'[55] But twenty years later a Bulgarian politician was to comment: 'Freedom does not need an exarch; it needs a *karadzhata*.'[56]

It would be natural to conclude that Russia did everything to help the Bulgarians realise their secular aspirations. After all, it was Ignatiev who masterminded the treaty of San Stefano and set up Great Bulgaria in 1878. But how far was he in favour of a separate Bulgarian church and was he representative of Russian opinion?

As we have already explained, a Russian government as Metaxakis understood it did not exist. Although Ignatiev was the Imperial Ambassador in Constantinople, he worked on his own and largely without the support of the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Moscow Synod. The latter, as we have seen, failed to communicate with him until 1871. As soon as he arrived in Constantinople, in 1864, he took advantage of the slow communications with St Petersburg and the indecisiveness of its ministers by acting on his own initiative. Towards the end of the decade the Foreign Minister, Prince A.M. Gorchakov, was against him and he had lost the support of General D.A. Milyutin at the War Ministry. Gorchakov, Milyutin and the Minister of Finance, M.K. Reutern, were conservative in their outlook; they worked for Russia's economic recovery and domestic reform, and wanted conciliation with the Powers. They disapproved of Ignatiev's attempts to bully the Porte, break the Western coalition and combat France's dominant position in Constantinople.

Ignatiev could not afford to be an independent agent forever, for such independence would sooner or later mean impotence. At the beginning of 1866 Ignatiev was concentrating on a three-point plan: dismembering the clauses of the Treaty of Paris detrimental to Russia; gaining control of the Straights, and co-ordinating a Balkan alliance under the ægis of Russia. He was frustrated at the slow implementation of the plan. The rapid conclusion of the six-week war between Prussia and Austria that year increased his sense of urgency because he felt that the spread of German nationalism had to be countered. Now was the moment to denounce the Treaty of Paris and favour Balkan national uprisings. In the summer St Petersburg was silent. On October 16 Ignatiev urged Gorchakov to act: following the Cretan rebellion the Balkan peoples were rising

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[55] Crampton, R.J., *Bulgaria, 1878-1918* (London: East European Monographs No 138, 1983), p. 15.

[56] A *karadzhata* was a leader of an armed band of patriots. The quotation is ascribed to Lyuben Karavelov, one of the activists of the radical political group known as the Youngs. MacDermott, M., *A History of Bulgaria* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), p. 168.

spontaneously; Greece and Serbia were about to form an alliance; owing to their other commitments, the Western Powers would be unable to intervene, and if Russia took steps now the Ottoman Empire would collapse. Gorchakov favoured the European Concert and did not reply.

For all his aggressive political activity, Ignatiev was conservative in matters pertaining to the Church. He tried for as long as possible to stick to the policy outlined by Metropolitan Filaret: the authority and integrity of the Œcumenical Patriarch should be maintained and St Petersburg ought not interfere in the affairs of the Great Church. The combination of his political adventurism and religious conservatism is neatly summed up in a memorandum he wrote in 1874:

> My principal preoccupation [...] has always been to procure for the Bulgarians, without breaking with the Greeks, a national form, while defending them from the efforts of Catholic and Protestant propaganda, and thus conserving them to Orthodoxy and to our influence.[57]

He was not content to let the Church conduct its own affairs, however. By skilful negotiation and lobbying it was he who engineered the election of Patriarch Gregory VI in 1867 and that of Patriarch Anthim in 1871, for he knew that both would be susceptible to his influence. Throughout the dispute he tried to reconcile the Bulgarians with the Greeks and to have all decisions taken with the blessing of the Patriarchate. He would have succeeded had he not to contend with extremists on both sides and the interference of the Porte.

After Russia failed to support Greece in the Cretan rebellion and was seen to side with the Western Powers instead, the Greeks decided that for the time being co-operation with the Turks was 'less dangerous for expansion of the Greek spirit than Slavism'.[58] An Anti-Slav Committee was formed in Athens in 1869 and Ignatiev temporarily put the Bulgarians' interests first. He was impatient with the vacillation of the Porte and put pressure on Ali Pasha to act. Were it not for this pressure the *firman* of 1870 might not have been issued.

Once the Exarchate had been proclaimed Ignatiev directed his attention at preventing a schism. In September 1871 Gregory VI sent a circular letter to the heads of the Orthodox Churches asking whether they agreed to attend an Council in order to debate the Bulgarian Exarchate and presumably excommunicate it. Having hesitated and sent equivocal responses, the Moscow Synod finally replied in April 1871 that it did not agree. Gregory was deeply disappointed and said that he 'would regret all [his] life

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57 Meininger, op. cit., p. 28.

58 Ibid., p. 118.

that Russia had let escape the chance to raise up the prestige of the Great Church and of Orthodoxy in the East.'[59] A few weeks later he resigned.

At Ignatiev's request, a Bulgarian delegation, which included Bishop Ilarion Makropolsky, called on the newly-appointed Patriarch Anthim. The opponents embraced and reconciliation with the Great Church seemed possible again. 'After eleven years of complete separation,' wrote Ignatiev, 'the ice is broken.'[60] However, the greatest obstacle, that of the territory the Exarchate was to occupy, was still to be surmounted. Ignatiev knew that the *firman*'s two-thirds majority clause, referred to by Gregory VI as 'the apple of discord' between the Greeks and Bulgarians, was at the heart of the problem. Anthim immediately started negotiating with the Bulgarians. He demanded that the two-thirds majority clause be dropped and that the Exarchate be in fixed boundaries. Neither the Moderates nor Extremists on the Bulgarian side agreed. They wanted the territory of the Exarchate to cover three-quarters of Macedonia; this would include thirty-five dioceses, including all those that would be gained if the two-thirds majority clause were acted on. In response Anthim agreed to grant only eleven dioceses to the Bulgarians, instead of the original fifteen of the *firman*. Ignatiev now became chief negotiator, eventually coaxed out of Anthim twenty-three dioceses and managed to keep the two sides talking. But the Extremists, lead by Chomakov and Slaveikov, could not wait. They persuaded Bishops Panaret Plovdivsky, Ilarion Lovechsky and Ilarion Makropolsky to join their cabal and act. On the night of 17 January 1872 (old-style 5 January) they rudely woke Anthim and demanded permission for the three bishops to celebrate the Theophany liturgy in St Stefan's the next day. Anthim refused and said that Ilarion Makropolsky was still excommunicated. The three bishops ignored the Patriarch's interdiction and defiantly celebrated the Theophany service in St Stefan's. All negotiations were forthwith annulled; the schism was now a matter of course.

The conclusions to be drawn from the Bulgarian Question are clear. Ignatiev was an independent, unsupported agent. He worked tirelessly for church unity. His main concern was that the Patriarch's authority should not be undermined and he tried to ensure that all decisions were initiated, or at least agreed to by the Patriarch. Gregory VI accused the Moscow Synod, not Ignatiev, of damaging the prestige of Great Church. Ignatiev cannot be blamed for the Moscow Synod's eventual refusal to attend the Patriarch's Council,

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59 Ibid., p. 159.

60 Ibid., p. 165.

for throughout the dispute Moscow remained aloof and uncommunicative—perhaps things would have been different had Metropolitan Filaret been still alive. Although Ignatiev was a Machiavellian and engineered the election of two patriarchs, he was not able control them like a puppet-master: even the deaf octogenarian Anthim showed a degree of independence and a sense of priority in his negotiations about the number of dioceses. The only time Ignatiev ignored Greek interests was from 1869 to 1870. Although the *firman* was seen as secular interference in the affairs of the Church, Patriarch Anthim initially accepted it, otherwise he would not have continued talking with the Bulgarians.

Unfortunately, Ignatiev was unable to control the Bulgarians. It is they who should be blamed for the schism. This view was eloquently expressed by Konstantin Leontyev, who initially supported the Bulgarians rather that the Greeks. As we have seen, he was personally involved in Mount Athos, thus was well informed in and cared deeply for the affairs of the Orthodox Church in the Balkans. As Consul in Monastir, and then in Salonica, he was sufficiently removed from Constantinople to have an impartial view of events at the heart of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, his opinions were remarkably unbiased for a Russian.

A year after the Schism had been pronounced he wrote an article in the *Russkiy vestnik* in reply to the bitter accusations of the Greek press: 'It is sad for you [Greeks] that Thrace and Macedonia are slipping out of your grasp […]. I can understand that. But in what way are the Russians to blame that in Thrace and Macedonia live people who do not wish to be Greeks?' He then said that both the Greeks and the Bulgarians were guilty of 'introducing ethnic matters into church affairs'; but that the phyletic preoccupations of the Bulgarians were defensive because they were trying to define the boundaries of the Bulgarian 'tribe' [*plemya*], whereas those of the Greeks were aggressive for seeking to go 'beyond the boundaries of Hellenism'.[61] Leontyev eventually realised that he was wrong. Some ten years later, he commented: 'I was mistaken: the Greeks are in the right. I soon saw my error, and it was very crass.'[62] He condemned the Theophany liturgy, and described Slaveikov and Chomakov as sly demagogues, 'leaders of extreme Bulgarianism'—*vozhdi krajnego bolgarizma*—who stirred up the ignorant Bulgarian populace and eventually deceived them.[63]

Leontyev did not say that the Greeks were innocent in this dispute. He believed that they caused trouble not only in Constantinople but also on Athos. Shortly after the

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61 Leontyev, op. cit., p. 11.

62 Ibid., footnote, p. 27.

63 Ibid., pp. 50, 114, 115.

Theophany service of 1872 there began what he termed as 'the Greek persecution of Russian Athonites'. *Neologos*, a Greek language newspaper published in Constantinople, described the succession of the abbots in Aghiou Pavlou and Xenophontos and the granting of *stavropegic* status to the Serai. There followed a journalistic polemic in Constantinople. The three Athonite events would have gone unnoticed, commented Leontyev, 'were it not once again for the influence of fanatic and childishly paranoiac *secular* Hellenism'. One newspaper accused the Greek Athonites of Pan-Slavism for living on Russian alms and for yielding to the influence of Ieronim and Makariy; another accused Patriarch Anthim of Pan-Slavism for making the Serai *stavropegic*.

These articles were detrimental, commented Leontyev, because they involved the Church in ethnic quarrels. He considered that the Greeks then mounted a campaign in the press to frighten the Turks with the spectre of a Pan-Slavist alliance between Russia and the Bulgarians.[64]

The most harmful writing, in his view, appeared in *Le Phare du Bosphore*. A series of articles appeared in it about the Russians on Athos. Two of them Leontyev dismissed for being largely generalisation and rhetoric, but a third he answered in detail.[65] The article accused the Russians of colonising Athos since 1818. As a result, St Panteleimon had become exclusively Russian. Leontyev pointed out that out of five hundred brethren one hundred and fifty were Greek, as were the Abbot and the St Panteleimon representative in Karyes. The article went on to claim that the Russians had taken over the Bulgarian monastery of Zograf. Leontyev replied that there was little in common between the Zograf Bulgarians and the Russians, who were closer, if anything, to the Greek Athonites. He also refuted the accusations of the article that the Abbot of Zograf travelled all over Macedonia stirring up the population against the Œcumenical Patriarch. Next, the article described inaccurately and misleadingly the recent events in the Prophet Elijah Skete and the Serai, and the relationships between Xenophontos and St Panteleimon. Finally, the Russians were accused of opening printing presses in St Panteleimon and the Serai, and of compiling secret arsenals on Athos. These last two accusations were vigorously denied by Leontyev. He said that the Russians may have written on Athos, but that all their printing was done in Russia. He believed that the other accusation was due to a misunderstanding of the word *arsanas*, which on Athos means a fortified tower often

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64 Ibid., p. 44.

65 Ibid., pp. 59-64.

situated on the sea shore. The Serai, which is land-locked, had put in a request to one of the Governing Monasteries to build its own *arsanas*. The article ended by calling for the 'pure and simple expulsion' of the Russians from Athos.

In the two articles he wrote for *Russkiy Vestnik* in 1873 Leontyev stressed that politics and secular interests were extremely harmful to the Church. He regretted that Mount Athos should also be affected: 'the nationalist fanaticism of Greek politics is trying to penetrate even this peaceful and remote haven of *pure* Orthodoxy.'[66] Greek and Bulgarian ascetics on the Holy Mountain, he observed, were very alike; for Bulgarian ascetics belonged to an older generation when there was no ethnic division in the single Orthodox *Rum Millet*. It was a purely political question that made the two peoples enemies.[67]

(iii)
The Reveniki Affair

In the summer of 1872, a couple of months before the Patriarch declared the Bulgarians schismatic, another quarrel broke out, once again because of politics and ethnic divisions. Close to the Athonite border with the mainland, about thirteen hours' from Karyes, next to the village of Reveniki in Khalkidiki, there was a church which housed a wonder-working icon of the Dormition. An elderly Russian nun came to live next to the church, and she was soon joined by two other nuns from Russia. According to Leontyev, the three nuns were supported and fed by the impoverished villagers. Peace was shattered when a Westernised citizen of Greece by the name of Panayotakis arrived and objected to the presence of the Russians. The village was divided into two factions: one comprised of Panayotakis and the local headmen, the other of people like Sotiris, who was traditionally dressed in indigenous peasant costume and was glad that the icon and the church should be tended by the pious foreigners. Leontyev himself happened to be passing through Reveniki and he was asked to intercede on behalf of Sotiris and the nuns to the consul in Salonica, N. Yakubovskiy.

Leontyev concluded that in 'all similar cases' the voices only of people like Panayotakis and the headmen are heard. Unfortunately, Leontyev's argument is undermined by generalisation and emotional language. Like Dmitrievskiy, he spices up his narrative with imagined direct speech. He uses hyperbole, colourful epithets and dramatic contrast: the 'European' Panayotakis and the 'greedy'—*alchnye*—headmen are the villains pitted against the 'heroic' Sotiris, the

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66 Ibid., p. 31.

67 Ibid., p. 37.

'simple' villagers and the 'good' local priest; dark hovels are compared with massive stone edifices; even the traditional *fustanella* Sotiris wears is described as 'enormous'—*ogromnaya*. Moreover, the innocence of the ethnic Sotiris is questionable: he was bound to take the side of the nuns because he was a Russian consular servant, who 'remembered that he owed his bread to Russia'.[68]

Four years later the Reveniki quarrel was not only unresolved but involved the Holy Mountain. Now Smyrnakis takes up the story. According to him, a devout Russian nun went to the village with nine others, who were very rich. Abbot Makariy and some of his Russian brethen would regularly arrive by boat directly from St Panteleimon to visit the nuns, bearing gifts for the villagers and 'promises of good things for the future'. Soon, their 'infernal aims' were exposed. A trap had been laid: the Russians wanted to build a nunnery and destroy the village, and they were willing to buy the land at a high price. The villagers, perceiving the danger, expelled all nine nuns but let the original one stay. Undeterred, the Russians persuaded Monk Agathangelos of Xiropotamou Monastery to go to the village, ask permission to live next to the wonder-working icon and look after it. This 'good and innocent man' was a native of Reveniki and gained the villagers' good will. Immediately, Russian monks started visiting him. They brought gold, laid the foundations for new buildings and generously distributed food to the hungry villagers. The villagers were not fooled and complained to Meletios of Ierissos, their local bishop. Agathangelos confessed all and was sent back to the Holy Mountain. Smyrnakis concludes characteristically that no further proselytization of the village succeeded and the area 'is now free of Slav influence'.[69] However, the Serai sent some nine thousand Turkish lira to the village of Aghios Nikolaos in Sythonia in order to build huge buildings and later convert the area into a Russian 'military base'.[70] The villagers enlisted the help of bankers and Turkish officials, kept the money and the Russians had to go away empty-handed.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the events that happened in the two villages of Khalkidiki. Firstly, they happened at a time when the Greeks were particularly sensitive and inclined to be against the Slavs in general. Although the villages were mainly Greek, they were situated in and some of their inhabitants and neighbours may have been Slavs. Smyrnakis, for instance, says that Monk

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68 Ibid., pp. 38-42.

69 Smyrnakis, op. cit. pp. 227-228.

70 Sythonia is the second peninsula of Khalkidiki, next to that of the Holy Mountain.

Agathangelos was of Bulgarian parentage. The Greeks were obviously worried about the loyalties of the people of Khalkidiki. That is why a political agitator like Panayotakis appeared in the remote village of Reveniki, with which he cannot have had much in common.

As usual, we have to ask who was to blame. Were the Russians guilty of imperialist expansion? Leontyev's account is biased, as we have seen, and it relates only to the summer of 1872. What would he have written in hindsight after 1876? The account of Smyrnakis is just as biased, but Dmitrievskiy makes no mention of the events: did Dmitrievskiy choose to pass over an episode that would have reflected unfavourably on the Russians?

Not all the Russians can have had ulterior motives. The original nun was allowed to stay, and was still there when Smyrnakis was writing, shortly before 1903. She, then, was merely an example of a pious Russian pilgrim. The accusation that the monks of the St Andrew Skete wanted to convert Aghios Nikolaos into a Russian military base is far-fetched and unsubstantiated. One of the first mentions of Russia's military aims in connection with Athos, as we have seen, was made in *Le Phare du Bosphore*. To this day rumours have been perpetuated among the Greeks that some of the Russian Athonites, particularly those of the Serai, were secretly officers of the Imperial Army, and that the cellars of the Russian houses on Athos concealed stores of weapons.[71]

Once again, the Russians had behaved tactlessly. They came to destitute places and aroused envy and bitterness with their money. The people of Aghios Nikolaos, on the other hand, behaved dishonestly and greedily by keeping the nine thousand lira. But what were the Russians trying to do outside Athos? It is most likely that they were simply attempting to acquire dependencies close to the Holy Mountain. The Serai particularly needed these because it had no land of its own on Athos itself. After all, the monasteries of Vatopedi and Iviron, among others, had at various times vast dependencies in the Danubian Principalities, Bessarabia, the Caucasus and mainland Russia itself. Moreover, St Panteleimon, which was at the time quite poor, had by the middle of the century a dependency in Kalamaria outside Salonica. No doubt, if the Russians had tried to acquire land in Khalkidiki some twenty years before the 1870s nobody would have objected.

The subject of Greek Athonite dependencies outside the Holy Mountain was another sore point with Smyrnakis. He considered matters bad enough when the Russians were dispossessed on Athos and relied mainly on imported wealth;

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71 See, for example, Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., p. 185.

but in the space of a little over a decade most of the lucrative foreign dependencies of the great Greek houses were lost, and at the same time the Constantinople Patriarchate was deprived of much of its income from abroad. Smyrnakis believed that everything was adding up to a concerted Russian plot against the Greek church.

(iv)

The Confiscation of Foreign Dependencies

A year after the Bulgarian schism Smyrnakis claims that reprisals were secretly carried out by the 'Russian government […] against the hierarchy of the Eastern Church' in order to 'protect the Bulgarian ecclesiastical rebellion'. He explains that in 1817 a law was passed in Russia guaranteeing the integrity of property belonging to private owners in Bessarabia.[72] In 1819, 1829 and 1858 Generals Rosen, Yermolov and Baryatinskiy proposed that the Bessarabian and Caucasian dependencies which had hitherto belonged to Athos and the Holy Land should be transferred to the 'State Treasury'.[73] The Tsar refused to interfere with what belonged to the Patriarch; Metropolitan Filaret said that such tampering would be tantamount to sacrilege, and until 1873 these dependencies remained intact. But a law reversing the 1817 edict was proposed by the Foreign Ministry and ratified by the Tsar on 9 March that year: from 1873 to 1876 property belonging to Athonite dependencies in Bessarabia and Georgia was confiscated, owing to certain 'so-called irregularities and mismanagement'—*ton dithen ginomenon ataxion*—of these lands. Thus 'Prince Cuza's rapacious intentions' were 'vindicated'—*dikaiosasis tas arpaktikas diatheseis tou en Roumania pringkipos Kouza*.

For the next five hundred words or so Smyrnakis explains in confusing detail the economic consequences for Athos of this move. On 21 May 1876, only $^{2}/_{5}$ of the income from the Greek-run dependencies in Bessarabia and Georgia went to Mount Athos and the Holy Land; $^{2}/_{5}$ went to the Moscow Synod and the Russian Education Ministry, and were spent on charity and education within the Russian Empire; and $^{1}/_{5}$ was set aside to defray the unseen costs of running these dependencies. But, in 1893, only $^{2}/_{5}$ of the income from the dependencies went to the Œcumenical Patriarchate,

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[72] Bessarabia, which had been part of the Principality of Moldavia, was acquired from the Ottoman Empire by Russia after the Treaty of Bucharest, 1812. Part of Southern Bessarabia was ceded to the Principality of Moldavia after the Treaty of Paris in 1856, but was repossessed by Russia in 1878.

[73] Smyrnakis refers to this as *dimosion tameion*. For the whole episode about the loss of dedicated lands in Bessarabia and Georgia, see Smyrnakis, op. cit., pp. 212-214.

whereas $^{4}/_{5}$ [*sic*] was spent on Jerusalem, Sinai and Antioch.[74] He is clearly not at home with statistics or even simple arithmetic. He gives a break-down, in millions and hundreds of thousands of roubles, of how on 1 March 1893 the 'Russian government' spent the income from the dependencies in Bessarabia. He says that these figures are taken from 'a table', but does not specify which table.

What is interesting about Smyrnakis' account is not so much his Byzantine mathematics as the assumptions he makes. Firstly, he sees the confiscation of dependencies in Bessarabia and Georgia as a direct result of the excommunication of the Bulgarians. He does not qualify this; his readers are invited to infer that the original pious principles of Alexander I and Metropolitan Filaret were swept aside in a wave of Pan-Slavist sympathy for Russia's Bulgarian brothers. Smyrnakis says that Alexander I had told Yermolov in 1819 that he had no right to interfere with the property of the Patriarch. But in 1873 Alexander II was on the throne. Perhaps Metropolitan Filaret might still have objected, but he had died six years before, in 1867.

Smyrnakis implies that the mismanagement of the dependencies was a feeble and mendacious excuse for their confiscation. But what proof is there that the dependencies had not been confiscated because of mismanagement or that their stewards were not guilty of embezzlement? This is precisely what had been going on in the Danubian Principalities, where by the end of the eighteenth century the 'dedicated' monasteries had fallen into disrepair, money was being siphoned off to Mount Athos and the Greek clergy in charge of them were dishonestly exporting valuables.[75] It is not unreasonable to conclude that in Bessarabia and the Caucasus the $^{2}/_{5}$ of the recuperated income earmarked for education and charity was at least partly channelled into improving the education and welfare of the people of Bessarabia and Georgia: owing to mismanagement and corruption in these areas, the local population would have been living in poverty and their education would have been neglected. What clearly enraged Smyrnakis and other Greek

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74 Smyrnakis must mean that only $^{1}/_{5}$ went to the Patriarchate.

75 Bobango, A.J., *The Emergence of the Romanian National State* (New York: East European Quarterly, 1979), pp. 142-143. He defines the term commonly used by historians of Romania thus: 'A "dedicated" monastery was one placed under the protection of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, or Alexandria by its founding prince or nobleman. A second arrangement was to have the surplus revenues of the monastery willed to such great establishments as Mount Athos. This was done to place the Romanian institutions, with their churches, wealth, lands and retainers, under a higher spiritual authority, thus protecting them from internal political vicissitudes and confiscations, or from bad financial mismanagement.'

Athonites was the fact that most of the money was eventually sent to Jerusalem and Antioch, and that by 1893 the Œcumenical Patriarchate had lost another $^1/_5$ of its income from Bessarabia and Georgia.[76]

Smyrnakis believes that Cuza, with his 'rapacious intentions', was guilty of predatory, almost impetuous greed at the expense of the Greek church. In fact the prince was circumspect, and if anything, generous towards the Greeks. The law secularising the dedicated monasteries in Romania was his only reforming measure to be universally approved of by his subjects. Cuza showed some concern for the peasants and agrarian reform. His legal training in Paris in the 1830s had instilled in him a sense of justice and impartiality. As early as 1842, for instance, when he was president of the Covorlui Judiciate, he heard a petition of free peasants against a boyar who had dispossessed them. Breaking with the tradition, according to which landlords were always favoured in such cases, he ordered to see the original charters and upheld the peasants' complaint. In 1863, also, when Cuza was dealing with the dedicated monasteries, he demanded to see the original charters. The Greek stewards failed to produce the documents despite repeated requests and thus forfeited the generous compensation offered by Romania to the patriarchates and Mount Athos for the loss of their dependencies.

Finally, the suggestion that anything other than coincidence linked the confiscation of lands by Russia in 1873 with that in Romania ten years earlier is fanciful. The Romanians did not particularly like the Russians: they were tired of being periodically invaded by the Russian army since the eighteenth century, particularly in 1834 when the Principalities were both under Russian military rule and being used by that Power as a buffer against the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the Règlements Organiques of the 1830s were supervised by General P.D. Kiselev; they were damaging and unpopular with the peasants, who associated them with him, despite his liberalism and good intentions. By 1873 Romania had for a decade been a separate state glad to be independent of both Russia and Turkey. How, then, could the 1873 confiscation 'vindicate' Cuza? Furthermore, Russia had always defended the dedicated monasteries in Romania. Until 1829 all monasteries in the principalities had been exempt from tax, but from time to time had contributed compensatory

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[76] It is important to bear in mind that partly as a result of the loss of its dedicated lands, particularly in Romania, the Patriarchate of Constantinople was impoverished by the last two decades of the nineteenth century (as were those of Antioch and Jerusalem). See Khrisostomos Kalaitzi, *To Metokhion tou Oikoumenikou Patriarkheiou en Moskha «O Aghios Serghios» kai oi Igoumenoi avtou* (Katerini: Tertios, 1991), passim.

loans to the state.[77] From 1829 to 1834, under the Russian protectorate, however, the dedicated monasteries were exempt even from these loans, and before Kiselev's departure it was agreed that they should continue to be exempt for at least the next ten years. Needless to say, when Cuza sought the Powers' approval for the proposed secularisation bill, Russia was one of the principal procrastinators.[78]

The secularisation of the dedicated monasteries in Romania was inevitable for economic reasons. In order to carry out much-needed modernising reforms Cuza asked twenty-two million lei of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1862, but times were hard and only a fifth of this sum could be raised. As income from more than one quarter of the land of the two principalities was accounted for by the dedicated monasteries, which, as we have seen, were being negligently and dishonestly managed, Cuza had no choice. The hated Greek clergy left Romania in disgrace. Compensation had been there for the taking, but was refused.

Dmitrievskiy's account of the confiscation of Athonite dependencies in Bessarabia and the Caucasus is more entertaining and vivid, but no less unprofessional. He begins by stating: 'At the time, the Russian government, in view of various malpractices and disturbances that it had discovered in the management of these lands and forests, found leaving this property any longer in the hands of the Athonite monks inconvenient, and decided to take over its management.' Athonite monasteries were compensated with $^{3}/_{5}$ of the lost revenue, and charitable education in the affected areas was funded. None the less, the loss was taken badly on the Holy Mountain. Vatopedi, Zograf, Xiropotamou and Aghiou Pavlou had large Bessarabian dependencies. The exiled Athonite representatives, headed by Ananias, 'the well-known rich *epitropos* from Vatopedi', came back to the Holy Mountain in a fury. Once again, Dmitrievskiy makes an imagined quotation: '"I would be the first," added the merciless Ananias, "to give a million *piastri* in order to make life for the Russians most uncomfortable—*khoroshen'ko potesnit'*—, and, if possible, remove them from Athos."' Unlike Smyrnakis, Dmitrievskiy does not equate the Bulgarian

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77 Bobango, op. cit., p. 144.

78 To be fair, Smyrnakis was not the only one to believe that Cuza acted in concert with the Russians. In 1866 Ion Bratianu, one of Cuza's political opponents, published in Paris a series of widely-circulated brochures in an attempt to link the prince with Pan-Slavism and brand him 'at least a Russophile if not a conscious agent of Russian expansion'. See Michelson, P.E., *Conflict and Crisis–Romanian Political Development, 1861-1871* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1987), p. 95; also Jelavich, Barbara, *The History of the Balkans*, Vol. I, pp. 290-294, and Anderson, M.S., *The Eastern Question* (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 152-154.

schism with the appropriation of dedicated Athonite property, except to say that they occurred at the same time. He emphasises that these and all the other circumstances he describes happened, purely by coincidence, at the same time and conspired to make Makariy's take-over all the more difficult.[79]

(v)

The Georgian Question

Yet another coincidence involving St Panteleimon at that time increased the tension between Greeks and Russians on Athos. At the beginning of the century, in 1801, the Kingdom of Georgia had been annexed to the Russian Empire. The Georgian royal family had been devout and caring benefactors of Iviron Monastery, which could always rely on them for support in times of need. When the Russians took over, however, the monastery was neglected, for the tsars, its new *ktitores* (founders), were preoccupied with a succession of wars in Europe and the Caucasus. As a result, the 'wily and calculating'—*khitrye i raschetlivye*—Greeks living in the monastery increased in number, gradually squeezed out the ageing Georgian brethren, and turned Iviron into an idiorrhythmic house for the first time since its foundation in the tenth century. This is how A. Natroev, the principal Russian language historian of Iviron, explains the origins of the Georgian Athonite Question.[80] Dmitrievskiy has nothing to say on the subject, but Smyrnakis puts forward the Greek point of view.

Iviron, along with other monasteries on Athos and in the Holy Land, possessed vast Caucasian properties which had been administered by Greek archimandrites from the beginning of the nineteenth century. These representatives caused resentment among the Caucasian peasantry and were accused of dishonest, greedy practices. In 1819 the Georgian Exarch Theophilact asked the Governor of the Caucasus to take over the running of the dependencies and send away the hated archimandrites. For the next fifty years the tsar, his ministers and the Moscow Synod doggedly refused to alter the *status quo* or interfere in the affairs of the Orthodox patriarchates. Meanwhile, Russian diplomats in the Near East and certain of the Caucasian gentry pressed for punitive action to be taken against the archimandrites. No doubt influenced by Cuza's sequestration of dedicated monasteries in Moldavia and Wallachia, the archimandrites started selling large areas of valuable forest; they seemed to want

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79 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., pp. 167-168.

80 Natroev, A., *Iverskiy Monastyr' na Afone na odnom iz vystupov Khalkidonskago poluostrova* (Tiflis: Tipografiya 'Trud', 1909), pp. 354-355.

to get cash before it was too late, and the Caucasian dependencies were rapidly diminishing as a result.[81] Eventually, the tsar was forced to act. Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem, a protégé of Russian diplomats, was deposed by his rebellious Greek clergy; the Œcumenical Patriarch responded by locking and sealing Cyril's Constantinople dependency; and Ignatiev demanded the sequestration of the Caucasian property belonging to Jerusalem, fearing that its income would fall into the hands of the rebellious clergy. On 27 March 1873 an imperial decree (ukaz) was issued: all dedicated lands in Bessarabia and the Caucasus belonging to the Monasteries of Athos and the Holy Land were to be administered by Russian civil servants; the Greek archimandrites were censured for having mismanaged the property; and a part of the income from it was to defray the costs of its administration. The decree was not efficiently acted on, and the tsar, his ministers and synod still felt uneasy about tampering with the affairs of other Orthodox churches. In 1882 a Greek, Archimandrite Gerasimos, was once again asked to administer the Iviron Caucasian dependency.[82]

Unfortunately, the Georgian Question was gravely complicated by events on the Holy Mountain itself. In 1861 there came to Athos a pilgrim who was on his way back from Palestine to Russia. He was a Georgian veteran of the Caucasian campaigns named Vakhtang Barklai. According to both Natroev and Smyrnakis, he visited the *Kathisma* of the Prophet Elijah belonging to Iviron and found there four Georgian monks, among the last of the Iberians who used to live in the monastery.[83] Barklai wanted to stay and help his beleaguered compatriots, but they asked him to leave because the monastery had forbidden them to admit anyone else into their brotherhood. He then sought the advice of Ieronim who told him to go home, become tonsured and raise money for the Georgian cause on Athos.

Smyrnakis laconically states that Barklai followed the Russian's counsel and managed to raise 30,000 roubles. Natroev, who naturally gives a biased account in favour of the Georgians and makes Barklai out to be a national hero, unwittingly paints a far from complimentary portrait of the former soldier. Barklai appears to have been a cunning opportunist similar to Anatoliy Bulatovich[84] except that he was semi-literate and had a poor command of Russian. Bishop Gavriil of Mingrelia and Kutaisi readily made him into a Priest-monk and issued him with letters of credence enabling him to embark on an alms-gathering mission. The newly-

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81 Ibid., pp. 342-343.

82 Ibid., 339-350.

83 Ibid., Chapter XV, p. 50 et seq., and Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 474.

84 See Chapter 5 of this thesis.

ordained Fr Venedict added to the generous benefactions he rapidly managed to collect by a series of successful real estate deals in the Caucasus carried out on his behalf by 'cousins' of his. All that speaks in favour of this Mafioso character is that he gave up all his own capital to make up the 35,000 roubles he gathered.[85]

Having returned to Athos Venedict Barklai acted quickly. He and three of the Georgians he had met in 1861 bought from Iviron the ruined Kellion of St John the Theologian, a former *monidrion* also dating back to the tenth century. The deed of purchase (*omologon*) issued by the monastery stipulated that only Venedict, who was designated Elder, and the three other monks could form the new brotherhood; and that on their death Iviron would dispose of the kellion as it saw fit.[86] However, the four Georgians were soon joined by some forty others. Venedict wanted his kellion to be recognised as a skete, asked to have the new members of his brotherhood officially enrolled in the *monakhologion*, and started erecting fine new buildings. All this the Iviron Greeks refused, and took him to court in March 1884. They were alarmed by the 'suspicious characters' that they believed were forming a 'seditious cell' behind their backs.[87] Venedict, on the other hand, felt he was being physically besieged, for he was getting no material help from the monastery, which was doing all it could to hinder his building projects. As a compensation, Archimandrite Gerasimos was ordered to divert a part of the income from the Iviron Caucasian dependency to the Kellion of St John the Theologian.

The struggle between Iviron and the Georgians now became bitter. Venedict claimed that he represented all Georgian Athonites, that they had been expelled from the monastery belonging to them by rights, and he gave himself the title of Abbot. He also demanded that the monastery become a cœnobium again. The Chapel of the miracle-working icon of the Portaitissa, where services had been conducted by the Georgians, was now closed to them. Only Natroev goes on to report that no bricks were allowed to be made on the monastery grounds and approach roads to the kellion were rendered impassable. The St Panteleimon Russians provided the building materials, which they managed somehow to deliver. The Greeks continued their sabotage by pulling down parts of the new buildings, and digging up the vegetable gardens, paths and approach roads. Finally, a telegram from the Russian Foreign Ministry goaded the hitherto neutral

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85 Not 30,000 as Smyrnakis states. Natroev, op. cit., pp. pp. 359-361.

86 Smyrnakis, op. cit., 474.

87 Ibid., p. 236.

Ottoman authorities into action: Iviron was made to desist from its bullying or else a Turkish battalion would be summoned to protect the Georgians.

The Georgian Question was never solved on Athos. Venedict completed the buildings, but his populous community was not officially recognised as a skete. Nor were the Georgians allowed back into Iviron, which they continued to claim as their own. It can be seen that neither side in the dispute acquitted itself with honour, and the involvement of St Panteleimon can only have made matters worse for the Russian Athonites at a crucial time in their history. Although there was not the slightest chance of Iviron being ceded to the Georgians after the First World War, the Greeks went on feeling bitter. Even an historian as disinterested as Tachiaos has a strongly nationalist view of the question. According to him, after 'a lapse of a few centuries' some Georgian monks suddenly arrived on the Holy Mountain and laid claims to Iviron.[88] Understandably, the Greeks saw this as another manifestation of Russian Imperial expansion. Tachiaos claims that the Georgian Question would have been forgotten, had not he chanced on some manuscripts related to it in 1959. The claims of Venedict 'found fervent supporters among the Russian monks of St Panteleimon'; they also met with the approval of the Russian diplomatic authorities in Constantinople and Salonica, and eventually with that of the Foreign Ministry in St Petersburg. The dispute ceased to be merely Athonite but assumed international proportions because it fitted in with the expansionist plans of the Russian Empire in the near East. Tachiaos goes on to say that Russian diplomatic pressure was brought to bear in support of the Georgians: income from dedicated lands in Bessarabia and the Caucasus was made unavailable and the Iviron brethren were hindered from visiting their 'large and lucrative' dependency in Moscow. Thus the Greeks could claim that history was repeating itself. Just as the Russians were about to oust the Greeks from the 'Russian' Monastery, so the Georgians, who came from the Russian Empire, were laying seemingly spurious claims to Iviron. And the brotherhood of the Kellion of St John the Theologian was growing so rapidly that it would soon 'exceed the quota allowed in the agreement signed', like that of the two Russian sketes.[89]

It must have been easy for the Greeks to swallow the somewhat simplistic version of Tachiaos; the Russians, in particular those of St Panteleimon, are made out to have a

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[88] This, of course, contradicts Natroev, who says that were Georgians in Iviron until the end of the eighteenth century.

[89] Tachiaos, A.-E., *To Georganikon zitima (1868-1916)* (Tessaloniki: 1962), and *Anekdota ellinika kai rossika engrapha peri tou georganikou zitimatos*, (Thessaloniki: 1972), passim.

lot to answer for and it is difficult to deny that they were guilty of imperialist expansion on Athos. Although it is true that Iviron did at one time belong to the Iberians, the 'unannounced' arrival of the Georgians and their sudden claim to the Monastery, after 'a lapse of a few centuries' and at a most delicate time in the Greek-Russian quarrel, are hard to justify. However, Tachiaos does not jump to the naive conclusion of Monk Dorotheos, Metaxakis or Smyrnakis that the 'Russian government' was implicated; he merely says the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was involved, and 'eminent Russian diplomats such as Lobanov-Rostovskiy, Giers, Zinovyev, Novikov, Nelidov, Charykov and others have at times interfered in the Georgian Question'. As we have seen, Tachiaos knows Russian well and is for a Greek historian unusually unbiased against the Russians. However, in his assessment of the Georgian Question he is clearly against them and uses arguments which are reminiscent of those of his more vociferous anti-Russian compatriots.

(vi)
The Installation of Abbot Makariy

Neither Dmitrievskiy nor Smyrnakis reports on any incident occurring in St Panteleimon for three years after the election of Makariy, but the former says that the Greek press in Constantinople led a concerted anti-Russian campaign during this time. He also mentions that in 1873 Gerasimos fell gravely ill.[90]

The next stage of the quarrel began in 1874, when the Russians in St Panteleimon started asserting themselves. According to Smyrnakis, there were, on 15 January, more than four hundred Russians and fewer than two hundred Greeks. All the monastic duties were run by the Russians. The 'vile Ilarion' had such power over Gerasimos that he was able to make senior appointments according to his whim. Thus, the secretary in the Greek office became Priest-monk Nathanail, a Greek-speaking Russian. Owing to increasing dissent, Ieronim suggested that the Greek and Russian communities be formally separated. At the same time, the Old Rossikon had been rebuilt with a huge central church, ostensibly so that the more abstinent brethren of both communities could live more ascetic lives there; but in fact, the old monastery was converted into what Smyrnakis describes disapprovingly as a 'populous lavra'.[91]

The Greeks counterattacked. They managed to replace Nathanail with a Greek secretary. They also installed a four-man Greek ruling body because Gerasimos was now too old

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[90] Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., pp. 173-176.
[91] Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 216.

to hold office unaided. The Russians opposed this and insisted that the 'patriotic' Greek father-confessor Savvas be expelled from the monastery. The Greeks, however, insisted on running the monastery and organising monastic duties. They also demanded that the Russians hand over for seven months all the chrysoboula, manuscripts and official documents that they had seized. Their demand was refused.

Dmitrievskiy's report of what took place in January is fuller and more sensational than the Greek version. He says that amid mounting unrest in the monastery the Greeks held a crisis meeting; during it, the Elder Savvas, whom he describes as the father-confessor of Dionysiou, raised his voice against the Russians. It was proposed to burn down St Panteleimon, but this was rejected because, argued Savvas, such rash plans would make the Greeks play into the hands of their adversaries. At the same time, the Greek representative of St Panteleimon, Priest-monk Evgenios, in front of the *Koinotis*, 'in the most insolent fashion uttered appalling slander against the Russians'. Then the Greek steward (*oikonomos*) forbade novices to work for the Russians.[92]

The Russians appealed to Deacon Ilarion, who listened to them sympathetically and was ready to dismiss the Greek steward. The Greeks also appealed to him: '"We are all at your feet. There is no one apart from you; we do not want to have anything to do with Ieronim or Makariy."' Ilarion felt under such pressure that he was obliged to move into the Russian quarters for fear of reprisals from the Greeks.[93]

On 9 January, the Greeks sabotaged the water tank, which the Russians had to board up so as to stem its leak. Feeling increasingly threatened, the Russians mounted a guard outside their living quarters. The Greeks then demanded that Fr. Nathanail be replaced as secretary by Monks Evgenios, Anastasios and Eleftherios, who threatened 'to chop the hated secretary into pieces, should their demand not be met'. In order to avoid further conflict, Ieronim dismissed Nathanail on 15 January. Not satisfied with this, the Greeks demanded that Ilarion return to the Greek quarters. This was refused and the Greeks asked him to hand over the monastery seal. On 17 January, Ieronim, Makariy and Ilarion were no longer commemorated in Greek litanies and priests who would fail to comply were threatened with being banned from taking services.

There is little to choose between the two versions; indeed, examining them both is like piecing through a case of domestic litigation, or trying to judge fairly between

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92 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 179.

93 Ibid., p. 180.

two quarrelling children. Dmitrievskiy's account contains more dates and names; it also mentions more specific events, such as the water tank sabotage. Moreover, he says the row about the monastery documents and chrysoboulla, which the Russians refused to hand over, happened only on 20 February, when Makariy felt it politic to leave for Constantinople until the storm would blow over.[94] On the other hand, the account of the meeting, at which Savvas spoke and at which it was proposed to burn down the monastery, is so far-fetched that it must have been based on hearsay. For his part, Smyrnakis is unable to explain the relevance of the Old Rossikon, or why the building of 'a populous lavra' was a threat. He mentions Ieronim's request that the Russians and Greeks be formally separated, but does not specify when this happened. The division obviously had taken place, because Dmitrievskiy talks of Ilarion's moving to the Russian quarters. Indeed, Dmitrievskiy implies that Ieronim made a formal request for the division after 17 January. Smyrnakis also describes the expulsion of Savvas, whom Dmitrievskiy clearly mistakes for someone else. Both historians agree about the expulsion of Nathanail, however, and about the crucial role Ilarion was playing.

Clearly, Ilarion was a prize worth fighting over: the Greeks, according to Dmitrievskiy, begged him to stay with them, and then demanded that he move from the Russian quarters; Smyrnakis accuses him both of treachery and of being sufficiently powerful to make appointments according to whim. The fact that Ilarion had in his possession the monastery seal shows that he was acting in place of the abbot; in the monastery no major decisions could be taken, or important documents signed without the seal. This raises the question as to what part Gerasimos was playing in all this.

The first mention Dmitrievskiy makes of him is when Ieronim made his request about the separation of the two communities. The decision was of such importance that it could not be ratified by someone temporarily in power, such as Ilarion or a member of the self-appointed Greek oligarchy. Thus, none other than Gerasimos was approached.

> Fr. Gerasimos agreed to this request, but the Greeks did not want to hear about any division or satisfaction for the Russians, as, "the land belonging to the monastery," so they said, "is the heritage of the Greek nation".[95]

It is easy to infer from Dmitrievskiy's account that once again there was no solidarity between the Greeks and their abbot. Dmitrievskiy does not pursue this point, but the reader cannot but recollect that the doors of Ilarion and of

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94 Ibid., p. 181.

95 Ibid., p. 180.

none other than Gerasimos were bedaubed with the pistol and dagger; that in 1873 Gerasimos fell gravely ill; and that Makariy was appointed because of the extreme old age of Gerasimos. Had the Greeks indeed lost faith in their abbot? Hitherto even Smyrnakis implies that they had, for why else did they install the four-man ruling body?

Clearly, Dmitrievskiy meant that Gerasimos was by now no more than a figurehead who was no longer capable of making his own decisions.

> On 28 January, Abbot Gerasimos decided to appoint *sympraktores*, or three personal aides, who were to examine the grounds on which the division of the two communities was to be carried out. When Fr. Ieronim learnt that these *sympraktores* would, amongst other things, manage the monastery's property, he announced clearly and decisively: "So long as I live I will not allow this property to be managed by other people: the purse is in my hands, and I can do as I wish——*koshelek v moikh rukakh -- takzhe i volya.*"[96]

It is possible that these three aides were the four-man oligarchy Smyrnakis had mentioned. The really important point is, however, that for once Smyrnakis and Dmitrievskiy are in agreement. Unwittingly, Dmitrievskiy condemns the Russians. Ieronim's words prove that firstly he had no respect for Gerasimos because opposition to the triumvirate amounted to opposition to him who had appointed them. Secondly, Ieronim made use of money in order to have his own way. The spirit of brotherly love, humility and obedience, and the promises made to Gerasimos and the Greeks who had welcomed the Russians so warmly not much more than thirty years before—all had been forgotten. Ieronim's tireless attempts to attract wealth to the monastery had at last paid off: he confronted the Greeks as a merchant, rather than as a Christian and ascetic; the St Panteleimon Greeks had always been very poor, and now salt was being rubbed into their wounds.

From now on Smyrnakis' account differs radically from that of Dmitrievskiy. 'On 22 May, 1874,' writes Smyrnakis,

> the body of the Russian Consul General at Salonica Yakubovskiy was brought without warning to St Panteleimon in an Austrian steamship specially chartered for this purpose. The body was accompanied by the Russian consul of Monastir. However, the abbot strongly objected, saying that all the fathers of the monastery who die in St Panteleimon are buried outside its walls, and that the arrangements, provisions, privileges and traditions of the Church of this land cannot be altered. Therefore, a layman could not be buried within the monastic walls. The Russian consul had the effrontery to reply: "I take my permission from Ieronim and the Russians." The Consul gave orders for a grave to be dug in the north side of the sanctuary of the church of St Mitrofan, and for a guard to be mounted, which was empowered to strike any Greek who might hinder the burial. The abbot then appealed to the Holy *Koinotis* and the Turkish *kaimakam*. The latter arrived at the monastery with Ilarion, the dean of Zograf; both advised Gerasimos to yield and

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[96] Ibid., p. 181.

> allow the burial to take place within the monastery. However, the abbot refused. They then went to the Russians and told them of his decision. The Russians replied that they intended to bury the consul in their own land and had no intention of listening to anyone, be they the *Koinotis* or the Patriarch. Then the Russians buried the body unimpeded.[97]

Although Smyrnakis, like Dmitrievskiy, resorts to the dubious quotation of direct speech, and his narrative is somewhat sensational and emotional, he has a strong case against the Russians: they went against the abbot's will, and allowed nationalist, political interests to impinge on the sanctity of monastic regulations. Dmitrievskiy says nothing of the burial. He must have known it happened because the tombstone or some record of the burial is presumably there for all to see. Perhaps this was too inglorious an episode to write about.[98]

Smyrnakis goes on to quote a number of letters Gerasimos wrote at the time. They clearly show that the Russians were deliberately disobeying their Abbot. On 25 February 1874, he wrote to the Holy *Koinotis* about the Russians' seizure of the monastery's chrysoboulla and documents, and their refusal to hand them over. He concluded: 'I submit to the Holy *Koinotis* that this withholding [of the documents] is tantamount to the highhanded seizure of my monastery.' On 21 August Gerasimos wrote in a far more desperate vein to the Patriarch:

> The Russians have exploited the sanctity of the monastery. They have disposed of the monastery's property, taken away its treasures and abused its emblems. They have seized the donations of benefactors for themselves. Such behaviour is contrary in every way to righteous conduct and to the monastic life. The Russians have lavished money on themselves, giving nought but insult, abuse and injury to the Greek brethren. In one of our dependent lands they sold 400 sheep without my permission; they also sell flour daily to their friends; indeed, they take all our money and food without our permission. They consider the Greeks as subservient. Every day they accept into the monastery as many Russians as they can without my permission. A few days ago, they started to build new kitchens and a refectory in the upper part of the monastery, in order to be able to eat separately from the Greeks. For this reason, I have said, and I repeat, the Russian brethren have no other

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97 Smyrnakis, p. 218. Smyrnakis found transliterating names Russian difficult, as we have already seen. He calls Yakubovskiy Ιακουβότσκαβο here.

98 Leontyev, however, mentions a curiously similar episode in one of the articles he wrote in the *Russkiy Vestnik* in 1873. For some reason not referring to himself by name, he says that the Greeks were annoyed by the simultaneous visits of the Russian Consuls of Monastir and Salonica to the Holy Mountain. *Neologos* accused the two diplomats of carrying out a subversive plot together. Leontyev says he was not on the Holy Mountain on official business or at the same time as Yakubovskiy. He concludes that 'no Greek civilian can believe that a Russian civil servant can live anywhere [in the Near East] without being on a mission for his government.' Leontyev, op. cit., p. 54.

> design than to break the cœnobitic rule and trample on all the institutions of monastic life...[99]

In all the letters Smyrnakis quotes, the Russians are accused of acting against the abbot's will and acting in a manner unbefitting to monks living in a cœnobium.

The letters that Smyrnakis quotes have to be judged in their proper context. Perhaps Gerasimos did not write them, but was made merely to sign them. Forcing a very old and infirm man to do this cannot have been difficult. Passions and selfish interests were by now so inflamed in St Panteleimon that either side might have resorted to dishonest means in order to achieve its ends. Moreover, the account of what now happened is based mainly on the venomous narrative of Smyrnakis; the Russian point of view is inadequately represented owing to a lack of source-material.

Smyrnakis claims that on 9 May 1875 Gerasimos wrote his last letter, which was to the St Panteleimon Greek brethren in Constantinople. It concludes:

> Our great Mother Church has not yet sent any tribulation to our disobedient Russian children because she has hitherto been expecting their repentance. As she has done nothing so far to make them repent, we entreat her to put our own tribulations to an end. We do not want a Russian abbot to be appointed, for we know only too well how much they love us... If this matter is postponed, we shall be both spiritually and morally harmed. Thus, with hot tears we beg you, as well as the Patriarch, the Synod and the National Assembly to make haste to solve our problem before my death, for my extreme old age and my body broken by suffering remind me daily that my death is very near.

He died the next day.[100]

Why were the Russians allowed to behave with such flagrant disregard for their abbot and for their cœnobitic vows? Why had the Mother Church and the Holy *Koinotis* done nothing to stop them? According to Dmitrievskiy, the latter body was, initially at least, unsympathetic towards the Russians. In February 1874, the Greeks sent a petition to Karyes with a hundred signatures demanding that the Russians return the chrysobulla and official monastery documents.[101] This petition may be the same as the first letter of Gerasimos that we have quoted above. On 28 February the Russians agreed to hand them over, provided they be kept in a fireproof chest in the library or vestry, and that one key be held by the Russians and one by the Greeks. The Greeks failed to keep to their side of the agreement. In reply to a protest from the Russians the *Koinotis* sent a six-man commission to St Panteleimon on 21 March. They left empty-handed, as nothing could be achieved on the eve of Easter. So, on 23 April, a nine-man commission arrived at the

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99 Smyrnakis, op. cit., pp. 216-219.

100 Ibid. 221.

101 Dmitrievskiy p. 182.

monastery. The Russians considered themselves unfairly done by. On 14 May, the commission drew up a new set of regulations to replace the 1866 rule. Amongst other things it was proposed that : St Panteleimon was and always would be Greek; the abbot should be a Greek Ottoman subject; the Russian brethren must always be one third fewer than the Greeks; there must be a common bank in the monastery and the Greeks must have access to Russian wealth; and the Russians may have a separate father-confessor, but strictly for spiritual matters. On 16 May, the Russians rejected the new regulations and the commission left for Karyes.

Dmitrievskiy says that the Russians had considerably more success in Constantinople. Makariy went there on 15 March and applied for help to Ignatiev, the Ambassador. In May, the St Panteleimon Russians sent a delegation to Constantinople, where Makariy led it to the Patriarch. At the same time, a Greek delegation arrived, but had no success. Patriarch Joachim II did not agree with the new regulations proposed by the commission. He said that as not all heads of the Athonite houses were Ottoman subjects, the abbot of St Panteleimon need not be, either. He concluded: 'the Russians cannot be denied a monastery on Athos'.[102] In fact, the Patriarch had other matters to attend to, but thanks to Ignatiev, the Russian Athonite cause was saved. As a result, by patriarchal decree, Makariy was declared abbot of both the Greeks and Russians in St Panteleimon. Although there were numerous protests, countermoves and even two ballots in the monastery, Makariy's abbacy and therefore the complete and guaranteed ascendancy of the Russians in St Panteleimon were now inevitable. On 6 September 1875, the last of the Greek protesters left the monastery; Makariy returned on 24 September and was enthroned two days later.

In the view of Smyrnakis, Joachim II espoused the side of the Russians because he was bribed by them.[103] When, in August 1875, 180 Greek Athonites protested to the *Kaimakam* about the patriarchal exarchs, who were using military force against those objecting to the changes in St Panteleimon, he could only say: '"What can I do, holy fathers? The Patriarch-*effendi* has betrayed you—*O Patrik Efendis sas eprodoken*".[104] On Athos itself, however, the battle was not so straightforward. The Russians found an ally in Neilos, the retired Metropolitan of Pentapoleos. He 'arrogantly' took the Theophany service in 1875, although Gerasimos had begged him not to co-celebrate with the Russians but leave the monastery. The bishop was a frequent visitor, however, and the Russians behaved 'with especial impertinence' when

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102 Ibid., p. 187.

103 Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 218.

104 Ibid., p. 223.

he did.[105] Finally, the Russians were always supported by the two other Slav monasteries; Simonopetra was pro-Russian, probably because of St Paisiy Velichkovskiy and of the financial help its brethren had been given in Russia; and Aghiou Pavlou was also an ally because of royal Russian patronage and alms-missions in Russia. By August 1875, fourteen of the Twenty Monasteries were still with the St Panteleimon Greeks. After four weeks of concerted pressure by the Patriarchal Exarchate, however, all but Grigoriou, Konstamonitou and Esphigmenou capitulated.[106] It is not without significance that Gerasimos Smyrnakis became abbot of a monastery that remained opposed to the Russians to the end.

Smyrnakis adds a bitterly contemptuous postscript. The Russians offered Monk Sophonios, the Esphigmenou representative at the *Koinotis*, 1,000 Turkish lira for a document 'that would have furthered their interests'. Sophonios refused, knowing he risked the displeasure of his abbot, Archimandrite Lukas, who was in Russia at the time on an alms-gathering mission. Lukas himself returned from Russia and was held responsible by Joachim II for Esphigmenou's attitude during the Russian quarrel. He managed to appease the Patriarch with a gift of 200 lira.[107]

Although all but three of the twenty monasteries sent representatives to Makariy's enthronement, and thereby endorsed the victory of the Russians, the pride of most Greek Athonites was deeply wounded. South of the Arta-Volos Line was the newly formed independent Kingdom of Greece, which was shortly to gain most of Thessaly and Epirus, and start making serious claims on Macedonia. Yet on Athos, in a traditionally Greek enclave of the Ottoman Empire, the Greeks had been humiliated by a people who had once been in a minority but now looked like dominating every aspect of Athonite life.

By now the overbearing attitude of the Russians and the bitterness of the Greeks had seriously disrupted the ascetic calm of the Holy Mountain. The conflict had reached such a peak that monastic decorum and humility seem to have been forgotten. However, what was life like for the ordinary Athonite monk, even in St Panteleimon? It must have been distracting and unpleasant, but he had no choice than to get on with his duties and prayer. After 16 September 1875 a large number—perhaps the majority—of Greek brethren at St Panteleimon decided to stay on.[108] For them ethnic squabbles

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105 Ibid., p. 219.

106 Ibid., pp. 222-224.

107 Ibid., p. 227.

108 In 1850, as we have seen, Smyrnakis says that there were 80 Greeks in St Panteleimon (p. 214). On p. 216 he says there were 'fewer than 200

were irrelevant because they were engaged in the private struggle for spiritual salvation.

Gerasimos died on 10 May 1875. Had he still been at the height of his physical and mental powers over the last ten years of his life, much of the strife in his monastery may have been avoided. The welfare of a cœnobium depends on strong and enlightened leadership, particularly when the brethren are an ethnic and social mixture. As Svyatogorets commented in 1844, when Gerasimos was in his sixties and relatively youthful: 'Can you imagine what qualities are needed to give a brotherhood of mixed nationality, character and background a single goal in life's journey, to pacify it and humble its will […]? Our abbot is the embodiment of these qualities.'[109] It remained to be seen whether Makariy and Ieronim would be able to live up to such high standards, now that peace was restored.

Greeks in the monastery' in 1874, and Leontyev wrote in 1873 that there were 150. In other words, Greek numbers had increased almost twofold by the height of the quarrel.

[109] Svyatogorets, op. cit., p. 161.

PART I: THE RUSSIANS ON ATHOS

Chapter 4

The Golden Years and After: 1875–1908

Archimandrite Makariy reigned as abbot of St Panteleimon from his enthronement in 1875 until he died on 19 July 1888. During these thirteen years the event that seems to have affected him most was the death of Ieronim on 14 November 1885. Dmitrievskiy comments that this was a heavy blow for Makariy who was devoted to Ieronim 'like a loving and obedient son'. As a result, the abbot 'became noticeably pinched and decrepit.'[1]

In August of 1887 there were two serious fires, one gutting most of the Central Church of the Protecting Veil and the other destroying a large part of the monastery's Athonite dependency of Kromitsa. Another fire gutted the building that housed hired labourers and farm hands, and storms destroyed some of the monastery's boats. Although unpleasant and gravely inconvenient, fires and storms are part of Athonite life: Simonopetra, for instance, was much more severely burnt in 1891 and a century later, and, as we have seen, a three-day fire in 1958 devastated the St Andrew Skete.

Overall, Makariy's abbacy was a time of harmony and prosperity for the monastery. There are no reports of quarrels between its different ethnic groups, nor did any discontented Greeks leave. This means not only that things had inevitably quietened down since the disturbances of 1870-1875, but that he possessed those exceptional qualities of enlightened leadership that distinguished St Paisiy Velichkovskiy and Gerasimos in his prime.

The thirteen years after 1875 were the golden age of Russian monasticism on Mount Athos, thanks to Ieronim, Makariy and their helpers. Not only was the Rossikon harmonious but the two elders worked tirelessly to unite the other Russian Athonite houses and appease them with the Greeks. We have seen the important role played by Ieronim and Makariy in the power struggle over Abbot Paisiy II's successor in the Prophet Elijah Skete, for instance. Ieronim and Makariy also helped to quell a rebellion by some members of the St Andrew Skete who wanted to oust Abbot Theodorit. In this dispute Ieronim and Makariy worked with Vatopedi, the skete's Governing Monastery. Leontyev and Dmitrievskiy are at pains to describe the hospitality, generosity of spirit and diplomatic tact of the two elders. So much did Makariy try to present other people's point of view that some Russians who met him even believed that he was 'all the time with the Greeks and for the Greeks'.[2] Only after the deaths of Ieronim and Makariy was their worth fully

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1 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 346.

2 Leontyev, op. cit., p. 56.

appreciated. Dmitrievskiy wrote in the 1890s that although they had succeeded in completely uniting all the Russian Athonites, there was now to be observed a 'new coldness and even [...] strain in the relationship between St Panteleimon and the [Russian] sketes'. Such rivalries would have been impossible before 1888.[3]

Money played an ambiguous role during Makariy's abbacy and throughout the nineteenth century. He and Ieronim knew its worth, for they were from well-to-do merchant families. Had the Russians been poor the Greeks would probably not have felt bitter and jealous; perhaps the Russians would not have dared to lay hold of what they thought was theirs by right, nor would they have expanded on Athos in a way that the Greeks found so threatening. On the other hand, the Russians were invited back to the impoverished Rossikon at the beginning of the century mainly because they had roubles. However pious the feelings and intentions Venedictos may have had when he uttered the *nunc dimittis*, what he really meant by the dreamed-of salvation from the Russians was the money they would bring to save the brotherhood from destitution. It was money that was at the root of the strife from 1870 to 1875; and it was money that ensured the stability and success of Makariy's reign until his death.

St Panteleimon's material security was assured thanks to a series of immensely successful alms-gathering missions carried out by Priest-monk Arseniy Minin between 1863 and 1867. He took with him to Russia the remains of St Panteleimon and other relics belonging to the monastery. These attracted enormous crowds who gave generously amidst scenes of religious fervour.[4] There were enthusiastic reports

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[3] Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., pp. 268-269.

The most glowing tribute I have of Ieronim is in a letter I received in 1993 from Fr Ioannikiy, the one-time librarian of the Prophet Elijah Skete: 'I think Fr Ieronim was a very holy and gifted spiritual father—all the evidence, including the remarkable spiritual school of [the] Rossikon which produced Silouan and others points to this; he is the one who formed that school. He was a Russian patriot, yes, and was also the target of great slander and abuse by the Greeks who had axes of their own to grind. But note how many Greeks did remain in [the] Rossikon—and what distinguished them from those who rebelled and left? Perhaps it was the level of spiritual and monastic development which left them free of the ethnic and political missions that [had] moved the others to abandon their monastic home?'

[4] Dmitrievskiy ascribes the success of the mission and the religious fervour it inspired to the fact that Arseniy arrived shortly after the serfs had been liberated. This view should be taken with a pinch of salt. The Emancipation was officially proclaimed in 1861, but abolishing serfdom was a long process that had begun at the start of the century and was to continue after the proclamation. Furthermore, Dmitrievskiy makes his point in a piously patriotic and sentimental manner: 'The arrival in Russia of Fr Arseniy with the holy Athonite relics happily coincided with a time of wonderful religious enthusiasm and of national

in the Russian press, notably in the *Moskovskie Vedomosti* and *Syn Otechestva* journals. Even *Severnaya Pochta*, the organ of the Ministry of the Interior, wrote favourably about Arseniy's missions: these were signs that at last the Russian Athonites would enjoy official approval from St Petersburg.

Some of the most successful missions were in the Vitebsk and Mogilev Provinces, part of White Russia. Their inhabitants were a mixture of mainly Orthodox Christians and some Roman Catholics. 'Nearly all the of the sparse Catholic community of Mogilev Province made fervent pilgrimages to the relics,' wrote a reporter of the *Severnaya Pochta*. When word got round people from the neighbouring provinces of Smolensk, Chernigov and Minsk came to venerate the relics. Churches were usually too small to accommodate the crowds and special services were held in the open. Some twenty thousand people gathered at one of these services in Gomel'. During the forty-day mission in Mogilev Province the Athonites gave away more than a hundred thousand icons, crosses and booklets.[5]

As well as tour Russia with the relics, Arseniy and his followers wrote numerous books, pamphlets and magazines. Originally they were printed in St Panteleimon, but as the venture became more successful and demand increased, the press had to be closed down. It was easier to contend with Russian censorship alone, and publishing in Russia was cheaper and more practicable. The most important periodical was the monthly *Dushepoleznyi Sobesednik*. It was very popular and the first of its kind; soon the Trinity-St Sergius Monastery started its own journal on similar lines. Everything Arseniy published was avidly read by a huge readership. Most of it was written simply and colourfully, and was either given away or sold very cheaply, so that it was accessible to and obtainable by virtually any Russian who could read.

This literature was first of all about the relics, various miracles and legends of Athos. Eventually social issues were addressed. By the 1890s there was a regular section in *Dushepoleznyi Sobesednik* on topics such as the dangers of tobacco and drunkenness, and these articles were also printed as separate pamphlets. There was even a series of articles against Tolstoy and against sectarianism.

St Panteleimon, therefore, became a centre of enlightenment as well as one of the main forces of spiritual

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awareness among the Russian people. These feelings were engendered by the magnanimous act of mercy to his subjects on behalf of the deceased Tsar and Liberator [...].' Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 307.

5 Ibid., pp. 307-310. Dmitrievskiy quotes an article that appeared in August 1866 in the *Severnaya Pochta*.

revival in Russia. Once the monastery's material future was assured Makariy saw to it that regular donations of money were sent to the church schools and seminaries in the Caucasus and in the Moscow, St Petersburg and Kherson Provinces. Thus Makariy was recognised as a Christian educator. A few months before his death he was decorated with the Order of St Anne for his 'services to the moral and spiritual enlightenment of the Russian people.'[6]

Were it not for pious individuals, mainly from the lower and middle strata of Russian society, the Russian community would never have established itself on Athos. They supported Athos in two ways. Firstly, they gave generously, and not only to Athonites of their own nationality. In increasing numbers Russian women, who could not of course visit the Holy Mountain, as well as men, were sending money to Athos or depositing it in Athonite bank accounts. Although mainly the Russian community benefited from this generosity, even the richer Greek houses found some compensation from it for the income they had lost in their confiscated dedicated lands. It was Russian private donations that resurrected Simonopetra in 1891, for instance. Financial support, however, even when it takes the form of long-term covenants, does not guarantee material stability for long. Institutions, however rich, are always in need of more money, whether to renovate existing property or expand. Although the Russian houses soon became wealthy and invested their money carefully or put it away safely in Russian banks, they were ever asking for more donations.

The second and most important way the Russian people supported Athos was by visiting it. Those who travelled to Mont Athos were, as Leontyev observed, 'merchants, retired army officers, civil servants, soldiers and peasants.'[7] Their numbers grew relentlessly. The Russian community alone benefited, for much of Greek Athos was ignored by the Russian pilgrim. He tended to visit the Russian houses first, and of the other places on Athos, mainly Karyes, the peak of Athos, Iviron, Dokhiariou, Vatopedi and the Lavra; and only sometimes the two other Slav monasteries, and those Greek monasteries close to the Russian settlements. By the beginning of the twentieth century between twenty and twenty-five thousand Russians would go on pilgrimages to the East every year.[8] They travelled mostly from Odessa on ships

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6 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 333.

7 Leontyev, op. cit., p. 71.

8 I take all my statistics and other data concerning pilgrimage to Mount Athos from Pavlovskiy, A.A., *Illyustrirovannyi Putevoditel' po svyatym mestam vostoka* (St Petersburg: 1913) , passim. This was passed for publication by the state censor in 1903, hence the prices I quote in this part of my thesis were valid for that year only.

Pavlovskiy also gives popular recommended Russian pilgrim routes

of the Russian Society of Steam-shipping and Trade. On their way to or from Palestine most of the Russian male pilgrims disembarked at Mount Athos. There they were allowed to stay for as long as they wanted, although two months was the recommended minimum period to see all the sights.[9]

The impact of such large numbers of visitors on Athos was great. Today more pilgrims come to the Holy Mountain. In the peak summer season they arrive twice daily by boat from Ouranoupolis alone, but even Greek citizens are not normally allowed to stay for more than four days. At the beginning of the century only three pilgrim ships a week anchored off Dafne;[10] but as many as three hundred-and-fifty would disembark at a time, and such a number would noticeably swell the crowds of visitors who were there already. At least the pilgrims today are obliged to leave early.

What was life like for the ordinary Russian pilgrim? Pilgrimages are by nature hard, and all Russian visitors had to travel a great distance. First they had to reach Odessa.[11] The distance from St Petersburg was over two thousand kilometres. Many undertook this first stage of the journey on foot because they could not afford a third class rail ticket or because they were *stranniki*, or wandering beggar-pilgrims. From Odessa lay a thirty-six hour voyage by sea to Constantinople, where pilgrims usually stopped for a couple of nights. Athos was a further twelve hours away.

Before the Russian pilgrim could leave Russia, however, he had to contend with the bureaucracy of two empires renowned for their inefficiency: he had to obtain a special pilgrim's passport and a Turkish visa. The former was the hardest to get. First he had to present his identity papers, called *pasport na zhitel'stvo*, to the authorities. Which office he went to depended on which of the five social categories he belonged to: the clergy and civil servants, distinguished citizens (*pochotnye grazhdane*—the intelligentsia, gentry and aristocracy) and merchants, the

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on Athos, ibid., pp. 64-69.

[9] Pavlovskiy, ibid., p. 238.

[10] This was only in the summer, when approximately once a week there stopped at Dafne, the Athonite port, a ship going from or to Palestine. According to Pavlovskiy, *Putevoditel' po sv. gore Afonskoy: Privet s Afona v Pamyat' 300-letiya Doma Romanovykh*, p. 96, in 1911 (the book was passed by the Censor in 1911 but published two years later) there were only two ships a month from Odessa to Athos. They stopped for twenty-four hours at Constantinople. The peak time for pilgrims arriving on Athos was just after Easter. See also MF 4 AAP AI-2 p.9, where there is a report of a group of 350 Russian pilgrims disembarking at Dafne; and Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., A', p. 155. Useful statistical data about pilgrims to Mount Athos today are to be found in Gothóni, R., *Paradise Within Reach* (Helsinki University Press, 1993), pp. 120-122.

[11] This was the principal port for pilgrims travelling to the Orient. Other points of departure were Sevastopol', Kishinev, Kerch', Batum and Tiflis.

bourgeoisie (*meschanstvo*), and the peasants. Often the identity papers were not in order. Foreign travel was not permitted to: those who owed money; who had a criminal record; minors who did not have written, certified permission from both parents to undertake the pilgrimage; men eighteen years old and over and of an age to do military service but without the necessary certificate of exemption; and those over twenty-one years without a certificate of military service or of exemption from service. If, on the other hand the papers were in order, they had to be presented to the local police in exchange for a Certificate of Departure—*svidetel'stvo na vyezd za granitsu*. This was an ingeniously complicated document designed to prevent impoverished pilgrims, who could not afford a rail ticket, from stopping for long periods on their way. The journey from the pilgrim's home to his destination in Russia had to be completed within a certain amount of time according to the distance covered, at a rate of fifty versts a day.[12] Thus a pilgrim travelling from St Petersburg to Odessa via Moscow Bryansk and Kiev, a journey of 2,140 versts, would have forty-three days to arrive at his destination. On the forty-third day he would have to present his Certificate of Departure to the Odessa local police, who, in turn, would issue him with a special Pilgrim's Passport. Now at last he could go to the Turkish Consulate for a visa for Constantinople and the Holy Mountain.

The other bureaucratic difficulties the pilgrim had to contend with was currency exchange rates. Russian roubles were in the form of gold coins, silver coins, small denomination coins and bank notes. The Turkish-Russian exchange rate varied from place to place in Turkey, but both on Athos and in Constantinople gold roubles and bank notes attracted the best rate. Pilgrims were advised to change their silver roubles and loose change into gold or bank notes before leaving Odessa. The principal currency of Turkey was the lira. This was a gold coin and was not used for ordinary purchases; it had to be exchanged for piastri, medzhids and chereks. The lira-piastri exchange rate also varied by as much as 112 piastri to the lira in one place and 140 in another. On Mount Athos there were 120 piastri to the lira;[13] a medzhid was worth $22^1/_2$ piastri, and a cherek 5 piastri. Gold had a higher value on Athos than in Constantinople. There were more piastri to the lira on Athos

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12 A verst is 1.06 km.

13 This was the rate in 1903. A decade later, according to *Privet s Afona v Pamyat' 300-letiya Doma Romanovykh*, p. 110, there were 104 piastri to the lira; 1 rouble was now worth $11^1/_2$ piastri.

but the Russian rouble in gold was worth more piastri in Constantinople.[14]

Most of the Russian pilgrims were poor. The *stranniki* depended on charity and often arrived in Odessa penniless. This put the Athonite dependencies that housed them in a difficult position: money had to be provided for the pilgrims' documents and sea passage, and they had to be given food for the rest of their journey. Although the Athonite dependencies were generous and traditionally paid for those who had no money, by the beginning of the twentieth century there were so many pilgrims that meeting the costs of the impecunious became impossible. All pilgrims going to Athos were advised to bring with them between at least fifty and seventy-five roubles.

Robbery and cheating were additional hazards facing the pilgrim. In Odessa there were bands of dishonest cab drivers and porters, and people offering enticingly cheap but dubious accommodation. As the ship anchored a distance away from the quay, he had to be ferried to and from the ship with his luggage and had to know the going rate. In Constantinople and particularly in the small, crowded customs hut at Dafne pick pocketing was rife. While on board ship and during his stay on Athos or in Odessa the pilgrim was strongly advised to hand in his money and valuables for safe keeping until he left. Prices on Mount Athos were one-and-a-half dearer than in Constantinople, and the hawkers who boarded the ship at each port sold their wares at extortionate rates. At every port of call Turkish customs levied exorbitant duties in the Ottoman Empire on all luggage that was taken ashore. Those who went ashore during the twelve-hour stop at Constantinople were therefore advised to leave their belongings on board.

The journey by sea was uncomfortable for the majority, who could not afford cabins and berths. A first-class return ticket cost 67 roubles 75 kopeks. Third class cost only 14 roubles 80 kopeks, but the accommodation provided was very basic: passengers slept on special boards or rows of bare two-tier bunks under an awning on deck or in the hold. No food was provided for any class of passenger on the boat bound for Athos, but hot water for tea could be obtained at

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[14] I have not been able to find out whether a Russian exchanging roubles received lira or piastri at the bank. It is probable that for the small amounts the average pilgrim would exchange—ie, about fifty roubles at the most—he would receive piastri. On Athos a lira was worth 8 roubles 60 kopeks or 160 kopeks. In 1913 1 piaster = 8 kopeks (0.08 rouble), according to *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 59; in 1915 the exchange rate was just under 9 roubles to 1 lira, according to MF 1 Sobor 2 16iii1915. In 1915 a labourer was paid 1/2 lira and given overalls to look after the vines, presumably for a season after the first buds appeared, according to MF 1 Sobor 3 16iii1915.

certain times of the day. Those who suffered from sea sickness were advised to buy smelling salts for 5 kopeks before they left Odessa. Passengers taken ill at sea had to present themselves to the ship's surgeon at fixed times in the morning, afternoon and early evening. There is no information available about the ship's latrines; if they existed, they must have been appalling. No washing facilities were available on board; pilgrims were advised to get thoroughly washed before leaving Odessa, since it was not possible to go to the bath-house (*banya*) outside Russia.

How did Russian pilgrims cope with such an arduous and complicated journey? The few who had the money could at least travel in relative comfort by rail and ship. In first and second class accommodation proper berths with bed linen were provided, and there were stewards in attendance. Wealthy passengers could stop in Constantinople in grand hotels like the Pera Palace, London, Bristol and Continental, and enjoy a luxurious respite. The great majority of Russian pilgrims, however, would never complete or even undertake the journey without help. The well-off traveller tended to be literate and worldly-wise, but the illiterate or semi-literate peasants could not have coped on their own. For this reason the Athonite houses offered the pilgrim every assistance.

St Panteleimon and the two sketes had enormous hostels in their dependencies in Odessa and Constantinople. The St Panteleimon dependency in Constantinople, for example, could house a maximum of eight hundred pilgrims in the peak season. Its dependency in Odessa housed up to five hundred pilgrims, was manned by eighty brethren and had a church large enough to accommodate a congregation of three thousand. By the beginning of the century the Brotherhood of Russian Athonite Kellia also had a dependency in Constantinople which could house pilgrims and there was a separate hostel for visiting monks and clergy. All pilgrims staying in the dependencies, just as on the Holy Mountain itself, were housed and fed free of charge. Those who could afford it were expected to make a voluntary donation of money. The sleeping quarters were sparse but clean and varied according to the class of pilgrim. Peasants and simple folk slept in dormitories; those of gentler birth were allocated rooms with between one and four beds.

As soon as the pilgrim arrived at Odessa he had to decide which dependency he would go to, and he usually remained 'loyal' throughout his pilgrimage to the Athonite House he chose in Odessa. The three Houses had their buildings in the square opposite the station, and their representatives came to shepherd their guests to their particular dependencies. The monks would then take charge of

all the pilgrim's paper work, and by the departure of the next ship he would have all the necessary documents and tickets. Thus his stay at the dependency would be free of trouble; it would be an opportunity to rest and go to the monastic services in the dependency church. He would also be accompanied by one of the brethren to the ship, so that he would not have to worry about finding porters, transport from the shore and paying the correct prices.

As soon as he arrived at Constantinople his ship was met by a flotilla of boats belonging to the dependencies. The representatives of each dependency would shout out the name of the House he represented and the pilgrim was once again shepherded to the hostel. This, too, was a haven of monastic calm and peace. Moreover, the brethren of the dependency would lay on tours of the city, help with money changing and customs, and ensure that their guests were safely transferred to the ship bound for Athos. Finally, at Dafne the pilgrims would once again be met and helped. Once they had passed through customs[15] those who were going to St Panteleimon would be taken there by special boat, as the monastery was only an hour's trip to the north-west. Since the Constantinople ship arrived in the evening, pilgrims bound for the sketes and kellia would stay the night in accommodation rented by these houses in Dafne;[16] but the ship from Palestine arrived in the morning and all Russian pilgrims disembarking from it could proceed straight to their destination.

Just as it had been slow to support the Russian Athonite community, Russian officialdom did nothing to help the Russian pilgrim who went to Athos. He was helped by the individual Athonite houses which almost vied with each other to attract guests. On the other hand, pilgrims bound for Palestine were given official assistance. They were looked after by the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (*Imperatorskoe Pravoslavnoe Palestinskoe Obschestvo*), which offered the same accommodation and services in Odessa and

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15 By the latter half of the nineteenth century the Turks had built a customs hut for Russian pilgrims on the quayside of St Panteleimon. Soon, however, the offices of the Russian Society of Steam-shipping and Trade and of the Russian Post opened in Dafne and the packets anchored there rather than off the monastery. Turkish Customs was also transferred there for the sake of convenience.

16 See MF 4 AAP AI-1 pp. 3, 9. Most of the buildings at Dafne belonged to Xiropotamou and Simonopetra. The latter, as we saw in the last chapter, refused to satisfy all the demands of the Russians over its Dafne property. One of the largest buildings at Dafne was rented by the Papayannis Trade Company, which represented the Russian Society of Steam-shipping and Trade and the Russian Post Office. Papayannis sub-let part of the house to the Brotherhood of Russian Kellia, who used it to house pilgrims arriving from Constantinople.

Constantinople as the Athonite houses.[17] The Russian Athonites had developed such an efficient organisation to receive and assist pilgrims that no official support was needed.

Everything was done to welcome pilgrims, and there was no sign that their numbers would diminish. Few Russian Athonites at the time were likely to realise the dangers of this. Many pilgrims meant greater and stronger Russian houses, increased trade and wealth. Even the impecunious peasant was good for trade, for nearly everyone bought something on the Holy Mountain and exchanged money. The more people joined the brethren of the Russian houses, the more benefaction they attracted. Russian peasants also formed a huge, free labour force at a time when all the Russian houses were engaged in major building projects. Most pilgrims who thought of becoming novices would spend a preliminary period doing manual work for the Russian community.

By 1868 there was enough money to pay off the last of St Panteleimon's debts, repair its buildings and start refurbishing its dependencies. Renovation first began on the Old Rossikon.[18] A block of monks' cells was built and the foundations were laid for a large new central church. However, the Old Rossikon project had to be abandoned until the 1890s, owing to the 1870-1875 quarrel and to the death of one of its main benefactors, S.N. Koshkin. The monastery's two other Athonite dependencies, Kromitsa and Nea Thivaida, were also developed. These had been deserted areas inhabited by anchorites, and the latter was a refuge for Russians who had been made to leave Greek Athonite property. Cœnobitic communities, similar to sketes, with a capacity of two hundred monks each were built in both dependencies. Makariy had a special affection for Kromitsa, which was known as 'The Master's Place'—*Batyushkino Mesto*. Olive and citrus groves were planted in it, as well as extensive vineyards.[19] Finally, work took place on the monastery's lands in Kalamaria outside Salonica and Sikia in Halkidiki. These two areas supplied the monastery with hay, eggs and cheese.

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[17] The Society was originally known as the Palestinskiye Shtaty, which, as we have seen in Chapter 2, was created as a department of the Moscow Synod by Empress Anne to help Orthodoxy in the East.

[18] Also known as 'The Rossikon on the Mountain', *Nagornyi Rusik*, it is one-and-a-half hour's brisk walk up-hill from St Panteleimon. It was abandoned in 1765 after the scandalous fracas on Easter day. As we have seen, its renovation was disapproved of by Smyrnakis, who referred to it as 'a populous lavra': Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 216.

[19] These vineyards are today leased from the Rossikon to Tsantali, the wine producers.

During this period of building and refurbishment the incidents in Reveniki and Aghios Nikolaos took place. As we have seen, some Greeks were opposed to what they saw as Pan-Slav claims to Macedonia and were trying to ensure the loyalty to the Patriarchate of parishes open to Exarchist influences. Athens had sent agitators in support of the Hellenic cause to Macedonia: these were the people, along with the Russians' opponents on Athos and the hostile press in Constantinople, who mistrusted and resented any Russian Athonite attempts to expand into Khalkidiki and elsewhere in Macedonia. Ieronim and Makariy acted merely in the interests of St Panteleimon; they seemed unconcerned about Macedonian rivalries: as Dmitrievskiy explains, 'they tried to set up new dependencies and open up new sources of income for their monastery in order permanently to ensure its poverty-free existence.'[20]

As well as expand into the regions surrounding the Holy Mountain, Ieronim and Makariy wanted to establish better contacts with Russia. As we have seen, the monastery and the Russian community in general owed their material well-being almost entirely to pious Russian individuals. Officially Russia had little to do with Athos. Although the sons of Nicholas I and Alexander II came to Athos, theirs were essentially private visits: Grand Duke Aleksey Aleksandrovich, for instance, did nothing more official than lay the foundation stone of the Serai's central church in 1868; the Imperial Family had not given money to the Russian Athonite community.[21] Russian diplomats in the Near East were generally well disposed, but they represented by no means all of Russian officialdom. Ignatiev did 'see for himself' the difficulties confronting the St Panteleimon Russians, and helped as best he could; but he was, of course, acting on his own initiative in Constantinople and had opponents in St Petersburg. Indeed, it would be fair to say that initially official bodies in Russia actively disapproved of Russian Athos.

The Moscow Synod, particularly Metropolitan Filaret, was markedly unenthusiastic. He was the chief religious Censor (all religious works had to be approved by the Synod) and, as we have seen, he criticised Svyatogorets' *Letters* for being written in what he considered was too journalistic a manner. He also debarred from publication the first draft of one of Arseniy Minin's books, about the True Cross. To

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[20] Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 275.

[21] Nicholas I's son gave St Panteleimon a Gospel book and other ecclesiastical items. For a summary of the royal visits to the Rossikon, including a visit by King Victor Emmanuel of Italy in 1900, see *Putevoditel' po sv. Afonskoy Gore i ukazatel' eya svyatykh i prochikh dostopamyatnostey* (Moscow and St Pannteleimon, 1903), p. 35.

start with, the only support the Russian Church lent its Athonite flock was in the form of private visits by bishops, such as Alexandr of Poltava, who often went to St Panteleimon. Moreover, the Synod hindered Athonites in a number of bureaucratic ways: official papers for alms missions were hard to obtain, the movement of Athonites to and from Russia were restricted, and Russians who were tonsured or ordained on Athos were not automatically recognised as monks or clergy in Russia.[22]

Not all the Russian press or individuals supported their Athonite compatriots, either. Writing as late as the 1890s, Dmitrievskiy seemed to be trying to win over a perhaps sceptical readership: 'Yet again, we would like the Russian people to see Athos in its true light […], not through the prism of contemporary prejudice against monasticism, or from a blinkered point of view.'[23] He had in mind people like M. Remizov who thought that the 'Russian *muzhik* was sending his last kopek to Athos and was being exploited.'[24]

In view of the lack of support from certain quarters in their own country, why did so many Russians go to Athos, which was very far away, completely alien and largely unfriendly? As one Constantinople Greek newspaper wrote, 'Who are [these Russians] and what do they seek in this Hellenic abode? Can there really be in Russia few steppes where they might save their souls in monasteries?'[25] The simple answer is one of piety, as befits those who devote their life to religion. The Holy Mountain is the most important centre of monasticism in the Orthodox Church; it is said to have been chosen and blessed by the Mother of God and is referred to as her garden—*to perivoli tis Panaghias*.[26] In 1834, when Ieronim was still a layman in Russia, he was persuaded to go to Athos by a certain Vasiliy Fastov, who said: 'In Russia you will not find such a place which is closed to the female sex; such a place, unique in the Orthodox Church, is to be found on the Holy Mountain of Athos alone.'[27] The remoteness of the Holy Mountain was

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22 On his first, unsuccessful alms-mission in Russia Parfeniy Aggeev was arrested and put in prison for not having any papers on him. It was a long time before his ecclesiastical rank was recognised and he was released.

23 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 318.

24 Ibid., p. 294. Dmitrievskiy was here quoting from *Russkaya Mysl'* in 1892.

25 *I Thraki*, April 1877, quoted by Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 208.

26 For an account of the legend, see Svyatogorets, op. cit., Part I, letter 4, pp. 19-21.

27 He and some friends of his had been wandering from monastery to monastery in search of a suitable place to be monks. See Appendix II, Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 420.

appealing because monks wish to remove themselves from the world; that is why many monasteries throughout Christendom are built on inaccessible peaks or in deserts. The Russians who came to live on Athos were all pilgrims; and the essence of a pilgrimage is a long and hard journey. Finally, it is human nature to fight in the face of resistance, particularly for a religious cause. Some of the Old Believers, for instance, had been prepared to die because they refused to have Nikon's reforms imposed on them. Similarly, the more the Greeks and Russians' opponents at home tried to discourage them, the more stubbornly determined the Russian Athonites became.

There were, of course, compensations. Mount Athos has a healthy climate, is ruggedly beautiful, plentifully supplied with water and largely fertile. These were the conditions that the special delegation from St Panteleimon in 1878 were instructed to look for in their search for a suitable site in Georgia for the Monastery of St Simon the Canaanite.[28]

Another important reason why the Russians chose Athos despite all odds was the popular idea of Christian heroism. Once the pioneers of the nineteenth century had established themselves, word got round. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were for Russia a period of discovery and travel. Just as the explorers and conquerors of the Caucasus and Siberia were admired, so the Russian Athonites fired the public imagination. This is not to say that they were admired as colonists. Anikita, Ieronim and Makariy were easy to look up to and follow because of their gentle birth, many contacts, courage and determination. They and their followers were considered saintly heroes at a time when there was a monastic and spiritual revival in Russia, and when the the Optina and Sarovskaya Pustyni were becoming increasingly influential.

Makariy must have known that however much popular backing he enjoyed, life would be easier if he had official support from his own country. This he might never have obtained were it not for the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Before it St Panteleimon had no dependency in St Petersburg, only a chapel in Moscow and a small property in Odessa. In 1874 a site was found by the Russians of St Panteleimon for what was to be their largest dependency, the Monastery of Simon the Canaanite near Pitsunda in Georgia. In 1874 the Russian Athonites realised that they might need somewhere to escape: the first press campaign against them in Constantinople was at its height; the Greeks were clamouring for their expulsion from Athos; and the Turks were considering rehousing the Russians in the Monastery of

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[28] Quoted by Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., pp. 276-281.

Panaghia Soumella in Trebizond. When the war was becoming inevitable the Turks spoke of sending them to Trebizond. The foundations of the Monastery of Simon the Canaanite were laid to house up to six thousand Russian Athonites. Building was halted once the war had started, but from February 1878 it was completed in a mere eleven months. The next year the Tsar signed an Ukaz sanctioning the new monastery and promising the Russian Athonites the autonomy they had longed for: the new monastery was largely exempt of Russian tax; the members of St Panteleimon and its dependencies were accountable only nominally to the Moscow Synod; Russian Athonites were much freer to acquire dependent property in Russia; and fewer restrictions were placed on their movements within, to and from Russia. At last, Russian Athos was officially recognised. Soon the St Panteleimon dependencies in Odessa and Moscow were enlarged and a foothold was gained in the capital. The other Russian Athonite houses also acquired new property in Russia more easily from now on.

The Russo-Turkish War and the settlement of Russians on Athos were both popular phenomena. In both cases the people had the initiative and officials—the Tsar, ministers and the Church—acquiesced late in the day. Popular Pan-Slav sympathy in Russia and the Balkan Slavs, whom Bismarck referred to wearily as 'the sheep-stealers', dictated events in the Near East in the 1870s. Alexander III was to comment in retrospect: 'Our misfortune in 1876 and 1877 was that we went with the peoples instead of with the governments.'[29] Nevertheless, historians of the Eastern Question concentrate on the manœvres and changing alignments of the Great Powers.

The build up to the war was a time of intense but largely futile diplomatic activity. Until the summer of 1875 the situation in the near East was relatively stable. Russia and Austria were the Powers most immediately concerned in the Balkans. Although the relationship between them had been cool for the past two decades, they did not act against each other. Bismarck wanted friendly relations with Russia and did not wish to antagonise Austria; the result of his efforts was the Triple Alliance concluded in 1873 between the German Kaiser and the other two Emperors. This was a gentleman's agreement in which nothing specific was written down. The preoccupation of Russia was to reverse the clauses harmful to her of the Treaty of Paris. She had managed to have the Straights reopened to her by an agreement ratified at the London Conference in January 1871. All that remained to be done was to win back Southern Bessarabia.

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[29] Taylor, A.J.P., *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1914*, p. 252.

Bulgarians revolted and the Turks responded by massacring them. In June Montenegro and Serbia declared war on the Turks. Andrássy once more attempted a diplomatic solution and in July signed the Reichstadt Agreement with Gorchakov. They decided that in principle neither Power would intervene in the Balkan conflicts. At this point public opinion played the trump card and Russia had to go to war with Turkey, contrary to the Agreement.

There had been a wave of popular support for Serbia in Russia: some three million roubles were raised for the Serbians and Montenegrins; prayers were said in Russian churches for their victory; and against the Tsar's will, retired General Chernyaev went to Belgrade to assume command of the Serbian army. Aksakov was to comment: 'All that has happened in Russia this summer is an unheard-of phenomenon in the history of any country: public opinion has conducted a war apart from the government and without any state organisation in a foreign state.'[30]

Alexander II could not afford to ignore public sentiment. As A.J.P. Taylor observes,

> Though the tsars were despots, they were always sensitive to the limited public opinion within their empire. Constitutional governments can weather unpopularity; autocrats dread it, and this is particularly so when they feel at their back the sanction of political assassination. Even Nicholas I had been driven on by Russian opinion at the time of the Crimean War; Alexander II, himself a weaker man, was in no position to stand out against Pan-Slav sentiment.[31]

That autumn Alexander was in the Crimea, surrounded by relatives and Pan-Slav advisers, far away from the restraining European atmosphere of St Petersburg. During his journey back to the capital he made a sensational speech when he stopped in Moscow on 11 November. He declared that he could no longer endure the humiliation of Turkish misrule over Slav Christians.

In the next four months there followed a flurry of diplomatic activity, but war was now unavoidable. Russia managed to ensure that she would be unopposed by the other Powers, and Ignatiev was sent to Berlin, Vienna, Paris and London for last-minute talks. On 24 April 1877 Russia formally declared war on Turkey.

Alexander's dramatic transformation wrought by his uncanny sensitivity to the swell of Russian feeling not only made the war inevitable despite all the diplomatic machinations among the Powers but promised the material security of Russian Athos for the foreseeable future. It is not mere coincidence that the confiscation of the dedicated lands in Georgia, described in our last chapter, happened at

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30 Anderson, op. cit., p. 186.

31 Taylor, op. cit., p. 229.

the same time; it began in 1876, when war with Turkey was imminent, and ended in 1879, which was the year of the Ukaz. The Greeks must have felt that insult was being added to injury. Not only were valuable properties taken away from the Great Church, but the Russian Athonites were being granted a huge dependency in Georgia itself. Moreover, the new Monastery of St Simon the Canaanite was immediately used as a missionary centre. This fitted in conveniently with the decision to divert two-fifths of the income from the Great Church's confiscated property into education and missionary work. As early as September of 1880 a two-storey building in the monastery was opened to house twenty Abkhazian orphans; nine years later it was noted that 'thanks to the monastery many Abkhazians were being received into Orthodoxy, theft and brigandry had ceased in the region and the local inhabitants were willing to take on work in the monastery and to have their children educated in its school.'[32]

The Tsar now supported the Russian Athonites more openly. In September 1888 Alexander III accompanied by the Imperial Family laid the foundation stone of the new central church in the Monastery of St Simon. This was the most public act of imperial favour to date.

That the war marked the upturn in the fortunes of the Russian Athonite community was due in no small measure to the defeat of the Turks. Had Russia lost, the Russians might eventually have been expelled from Athos, or the Turks might have made their life on the Holy Mountain intolerable.

From the summer of 1876, while Serbia and Montenegro were at war with Turkey, the flow of pilgrims from Russia was reduced to a trickle. The last pilgrim ship left in October that year and the Russian Athonites' contact with their motherland was now only through their diplomatic representatives in the Near East. The Salonica Consul, T.P. Yuzerovich, urged Makariy to instruct his flock to leave Turkey. Makariy wanted to stay because he was reluctant to abandon the Rossikon, which he had only just fought so hard for. He knew that flight would not only seem cowardly but would be an opportunity for his enemies never to let the Russians back. He did, however, give his blessing to any of the brethren who feared for their lives to leave. Very few did. Makariy and those who stayed took a risk. On March 30 1877 diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkey were broken. Yuzerovich left Salonica and the Russian Athonites' interests were looked after by the French Consul Mallet, who was assisted by his Russian-speaking secretary Kraevskiy.

The Russian Athonites were anxious but came to no harm all that summer. The war had been going well for their

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32 *Novoe Vremya*, 1889, quoted by Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 289.

compatriots until the Siege of Plevna, which started in mid-July 1877. At the end of August the fortunes of the belligerents changed. On 29 August Prince Charles of Romania joined forces with the Russians in what was to be the third attempt to lift the siege. Meanwhile, the Abkhazians, Chechens and Degastanis were being incited to rebellion by the Turks who had landed in May on the Black Sea coast.[33] The rebellions were crushed at the end of August and the Turks evacuated the area. On 11 September the attack on Plevna took place. It ended in disaster. So long as Osman Pasha held out, Russian victory in the war seemed in doubt.

On the evening of 13 September the steward and brethren of the St Panteleimon dependency in Salonica were arrested. Despite Mallet's protestations they were deported to Constantinople. The steward and brethren of the Constantinople dependency were also locked up, but for a shorter period. Dmitrievskiy believes that what befell the St Panteleimon monks of Salonica was due to the malicious rumours spread by Abbot Prokopios of Xiropotamou. During a visit to that city he had been alleging that Makariy was a tsarist agent who was hiding arms on Athos and corresponding with the Slavonic Benevolent Committee. The suspicions of the Pasha of Salonica were aroused, and being a Circassian, he was naturally inclined to be hostile to the Russians.[34] We believe, with the benefit of historical hindsight, that the resultant Turkish bullying was due just as much to the progress of the war in the Caucasus and Balkan Mountains. In mid-November the monks from Salonica were released; and by now the Turkish army was even more exhausted than the Russian. Osman Pasha was completely isolated. He made a final desperate attempt to break through Russian lines and surrendered on 10 December. From then on the Russians advanced rapidly and were able to dictate peace terms the next month.

The Russians of St Panteleimon, too, feared for their safety during the war. At the outbreak of hostilities in 1877 another press campaign was mounted in Constantinople against Russian Athonites. This time they were accused of Pan-Slav agitation in Macedonia; they were threatening the stability of the Ottoman Empire, and the Bulgarians had been incited by them to revolt. Even *The Times* carried similar

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[33] Abkhazia was, of course, the area of the Caucasus where the incompleted Monastery of Simon the Canaanite was situated.

[34] Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 221. The Moscow Slavonic Benevolent Committee was founded in 1858. Its purpose was to support religious activities of the Slavs under Ottoman rule and to educate students from Slav lands in Moscow. It was funded both by private benefaction and the Ministry of Education. The Circassians were sympathetic with the other Caucasian peoples who had been incited to rebellion against Russia by the Turks. Circassia had been part of the Ottoman Empire until 1829.

stories. Questions were asked in the Ottoman parliament. It was decided to send an investigating exarch from the Patriarch accompanied by an Ottoman official. They arrived at St Panteleimon in a Turkish warship on 16 September.

The guests were received with every courtesy and left having found nothing. On 26 September another warship bearing an exarch and a Turkish official arrived. This time the Ottoman representative was the brother of the Circassian Pasha of Salonica, the Mustasha (Deputy Governor of the Villayet). He behaved very politely and was taken on an extensive tour of the monastery. None of the bishops or officials found anything incriminating during their investigations. *I Thraki*, one of the most anti-Russian newspapers, reported that 'no weapons were found in the monastery other than ecclesiastical books […]; no ammunition other than beans, cabbage, courgettes and olives.'[35]

It is possible that Makariy did not show the visitors everything. During an official guided tour it would have been easy to not open certain doors or to avoid certain cellars, particularly in buildings as vast as those of St Panteleimon. However, the Pasha's men had just ransacked the Salonica dependency and they had not found anything, either. If there were incriminating evidence, surely some of it would have been among the sacks of mail held up during the war in the dependency. Furthermore, why was the Mustasha so polite, in contrast to his brother? Perhaps the latter had been bribed, or had become convinced that the Russians had nothing to hide and told the Mustasha to pay a visit just to keep the Russians guessing. Whatever the reason, the results of the investigations carried out in St Panteleimon and its dependency strongly disproved the by now traditional slander of the Greeks. For all their faults the Russian Athonites were no more than monks.

An excellent and witty summary of these Greek misconceptions is provided by Athlestan Riley, an English visitor to the Holy Mountain in the 1880s. He gives a tongue-in-cheek account of Russian Athonite intrigues as related to him by 'a well-known professor of the University of Athens'.[36] Referring presumably to Ieronim, Riley writes: 'The real mainspring of all these Russian plots is said to be not the abbot Macarius, but a certain ghostly man (πνευματικός) who lives in great retirement at Russico.' The Serai and St Panteleimon are described as hotbeds of subversion: 'Many are the tales told of lights seen at night on the mountain moving between these two communities, the evidence of secret communications carried on under the cover

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35 *I Thraki*, 1877. Quoted by Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 219.

36 Riley, A., *Athos, the Mountain of Monks* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, pp. 241—250).

of darkness.' Scarcely able to conceal his scepticism, he continues: 'but that munitions of war are being stored up at Russico, as has been asserted, is very improbable, and I saw nothing to confirm the statement.' In the next chapter Riley describes his stay at the Russian monastery. He and his companion are struck by the neatness, order and piety of the Russians. The services carry on seemingly without a break all night. 'Contrary to the usual rather slovenly performance of the complicated Oriental rites, everything was done in the most exact manner, smoothly and with dignity.' During the vigil they saw a merchant 'of immense wealth' dressed as a pauper and praying with ceaseless fervour. 'Long before we left, the perspiration was dropping from his forehead on to the floor.' The Englishmen were impressed by this pilgrim 'who, mindful of that Scripture which warns the rich of the difficulty of their salvation, had made this pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain, there to pray, to fast, and to do alms for the good of his soul.'[37]

What the Greeks saw as Russian empire building and Pan-Slavism on the Holy Mountain began as a seemingly spontaneous popular movement. From the latter half of the 1870s ministries in St Petersburg, the Moscow Synod and the tsar started putting their weight behind St Panteleimon and were less indifferent about the rest of the Russian Athonite community. In 1900 the main church of the Serai was consecrated. This was as grand a ceremony as the laying of its foundation stone in 1867. Not only was the church the largest in the Balkans after the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia, but for the first time the Russian Church was well represented. The former Œcumenical Patriarch Serafim III took the services, assisted by Archbishop Arseniy of Volokolamsk, Rector of the Moscow Spiritual Academy, and two priest-monks of the Trinity-St Sergius Lavra. Also present were two professors of the Academy and fifteen seminary students.[38]

It was only later on in the twentieth century, however, that official Russian intervention on Athos, so long dreaded by the Greeks, became a reality. Until then all the Russians could be accused of was unbridled zeal and tactlessness.

The two decades following Makariy's death, 1888–1908, marked a period of comparative stability in the relations between the two main ethnic groups on the Holy Mountain. As we have seen, the Rossikon had in the *Koinotis* its friends as well as opponents. The richer houses, such as Vatopedi and Iviron, felt aggrieved with the Russians because of their confiscated dependencies; Smyrnakis was no doubt

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37 Ibid., pp. 154-155.

38 Smyrnakis, op. cit., pp. 269-270

expressing a view widely held on Athos when he implicitly blamed Russia for both the Romanian expropriations and those in Georgia and Bessarabia. However, nearly all of the Monasteries had to some degree benefited materially from Russia, whether in the form of alms missions, benefactions, income or gifts of ecclesiastical items.

Simonopetra was of all the Greek monasteries probably the most favourably disposed to the Russians. It supported the Rossikon during the 1870-1875 crisis. In return Ieronim and Makariy interceded on Abbot Neophytos' behalf to enable him to collect alms in Russia for his impoverished monastery. Until 1879 the Moscow Synod had been increasingly unwilling to grant Athonites permission to gather alms in Russia, and Greeks who did not have contacts in Russia found obtaining the necessary papers particularly difficult. Neophytos would be absent for so long in Russia (once he was away for two years' running), and would come back with so many gifts, that he was envied and accused of siding with the Russians for mercenary reasons. It was thanks to Russian alms that the substantial costs were met for the rebuilding of Simonopetra after its disastrous fire of 1891.

Unfortunately, the Russians decided to get something in return for this help:

> in the early 20th century we find a building at Dafne [the main port of Athos] belonging to Simonopetra being used as a post office and agency for the Russian shipping line and as a *konaki* [apartment] of the Russian *skete* of St Andrew. The Russian monks paid a sizeable sum in rent for this facility. However, the Russian demands went still further, and they exerted pressure on Simonopetra to concede to them a coastal site near the Monastery where they could build a boatyard for [St Panteleimon]. In the end this demand was not satisfied.[39]

It would be hard to imagine Ieronim and Makariy putting a valuable friendship at risk by making such tactless demands.

Two other of the Twenty Monasteries, both also very poor, had clashes with the Russians. By the end of the 1880s Stavronikita had debts amounting to 12,000 Turkish lira. Like St Panteleimon at the beginning of the century, it was in need of miraculous benefaction to save it from extinction; both Smyrnakis and Dmitrievskiy relate what happened.[40] According to the former, the Greek Government contributed 814 lira in 1888 and the same sum a year later; but of the 1,628 lira 500 were stolen 'by well-known thieves'. In 1889 the Rossikon's representative at Karyes, Fr Nathanail, had gathered enough money to write off the entire debt. He was backed by the senior monks of Stavronikita, intended to buy the monastery and become its abbot. This was the second attempt of non-Greeks to take

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[39] See the chapters by C. Patrinelis and Tachiaos, pp. 26-27 in *Simonopetra Mount Athos*. See also Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 192 fn 1.

[40] Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 616; Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 384.

over the monastery, for the Romanians had previously tried to buy it and other areas on Athos for 30,000 lira. In 1890 Nathanail died and 'all Russian hopes expired'. At this point Archimandrite Theophilos of Vatopedi came to the rescue; he managed the monastery's finances skilfully, negotiated with the creditors and by 1902 the debt had been reduced to 250 lira. Smyrnakis concludes mysteriously by saying that what he writes about Nathanail 'is well known all over the Holy Mountain because 12,000 lira were found in a corner [of the deceased Nathanail's] icon stand'—*para tina gonian tou proskinitariou*.[41]

Dmitrievskiy praises Archimandrite Theophilos for bringing the matter to a satisfactory conclusion but expresses dismay at the story about Nathanail.

> And can we really ignore the strong impression created on the Greek monks by the sensational rumour spread abroad at the death of our gifted representative Nathanail? He, with his natural ability and tact, is alleged to have prepared everything to buy Stavronikita [...] and was supposedly hoping himself to become its abbot. The upset and alarm are understandable. Once Stavronikita would be in the power of a *Russian* abbot, the Russian community would increase by yet another house.

Smyrnakis' version relies on too much on hearsay and raises a number of questions. Who were the 'well-known thieves'? When did the Romanians try to acquire property on Athos, and what else other than Stavronikita did they want? Above all, what kind of proof is the money left in the icon stand? Smyrnakis does not say when the money was found, by whom or what became of it. Why, for instance, was the money not used to write off the debt? Dmitrievskiy is right to be incredulous: that the right-hand man of Makariy should suddenly, on the death of his abbot, have abandoned his duties, forgotten his loyalties to St Panteleimon and brought disgrace on those he represented by acting in a mercenary and unscrupulous manner seems hardly likely. Yet even the wildest rumours have a grain of truth in them. Perhaps Nathanail's close contacts with the senior monks of Stavronikita aroused the suspicions of those Greeks who were looking for the slightest excuse to blame the Russians.

The other monastery to clash with the Russians was Esphigmenou. It should have been as friendly as Simonopetra. St Anthony Pecherskiy was probably tonsured in Esphigmenou; the cave he was said to have lived in for a time as an anchorite was close to the monastery and venerated by Russian pilgrims. Yet, as we have seen, Esphigmenou did not back the Russians in the dispute over Makariy's appointment as abbot. In 1890 the monastery was badly in need of money

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[41] The *proskinitarion*, or icon stand, was in Nathanail's cell. This stand would consist of a lectern in front of icons. At such a stand a monk says his cell prayers at night.

and sold for 800 lira its Kellion of SS Cosmas and Damian to one Neofit, a Russian monk who had been living in the Kellion of St Nicholas Belozerka. He wanted to turn his new kellion into a skete, but was refused permission in the *Koinotis* and abandoned his venture in 1897. Such are the bald facts as related by Dmitrievskiy and Smyrnakis.[42]

The latter, who, as we have seen, himself eventually became the monastery's abbot, has a lot more to say. According to him, Neofit stole the monastery's seal on 18 August 1890 so as to legitimise his request for the kell*ion* of SS Cosmo and Damian to become a skete. He also paid 'a mere' forty lira per annum to the monastery for his new skete, which he agreed, as stipulated in the *omologon* (charter with the monastery), would have no more than forty monks. In 1893 the *Koinotis* ruled that Neofit had no right after all to turn his kell*ion* into a skete. Neofit then demanded back 4,500 lira given by him hitherto in gifts to Esphigmenou. On 15 November the *Koinotis* ordered him to pay a 2,000 lira fine as well as 1,200 lira in legal expenses, and to hand back the Greek and Russian seals in his possession. The case was next taken to the Patriarchate, for Esphigmenou claimed that the original 800 lira pledged by Neofit for the purchase of the kell*ion* was never paid. The monastery's plea was turned down by one vote in the Patriarchal Synod, but in 1897 all the Russians were expelled from the kell*ion*.

What Smyrnakis writes about his own monastery is more credible than the Stavronikita story. His account of the Neofit scandal is largely factual, even though he concludes with characteristic fervour that Esphigmenou is now forever Greek and well rid of pernicious Russian influence.

The incidents involving Simonopetra, Stavronikita and Esphigmenou were nothing like as grave as those of the 1870-1875 quarrel in St Panteleimon. None the less, some important conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, although the air had been cleared in 1875, the bitterness and resentment of the Russophobe Greeks went on simmering and was ready to boil over at the slightest opportunity. Secondly, the Russians were not content with what they had obtained. Either they were greedy or their numbers had swollen to such a degree that they were obliged to get more property on the Holy Mountain. Whatever the reason, space was limited and Russian expansion would have to be checked or they would eventually squeeze everybody else out.

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[42] Dmitrievskiy, op. cit. pp. 381 and 383. Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 655. He relates the story in greater detail on pp. 243-244.

PART I: THE RUSSIANS ON ATHOS

Chapter 5
The Decline: 1908–1914

At the beginning of the twentieth century the peace of the Holy Mountain was seriously under threat. A new age of revolution had dawned in Europe and upheavals were shortly to rock the Athonite comummunity. Space was at a premium. It was felt that there were too many territorial squabbles and that too many alterations had taken place. Some order had to be imposed. The life of the Athonite community and the laws governing it therefore underwent a fundamental change: its internal laws and regulations, which few had clearly understood because they were so numerous and complicated, were for the first time in history summarised in a single set of Canons. It was compiled at the behest of the controversial Patriarch Joachim II in 1877. It was he that, in the words of the Ottoman Kaimakam in 1875, had 'betrayed' the Greeks and ratified the election of Makariy as abbot of St Panteleimon. The Greeks resented Joachim for being Ignatiev's puppet and acceding to the Russians' requests.[1] In the opinion of Smyrnakis, Joachim II wanted somehow to make up for this by producing the new Canons.[2]

They emphatically stated the Twenty Monasteries' rights and privileges, which were based on: the ancient, unwritten customs of Athos dating back to the third century A.D.; the Canon Law of the Eastern Orthodox Church; Roman and Byzantine law, and the *Novella* of the Byzantine emperors, particularly of Justinian; the Chrysoboula of the monasteries; and the various ancient charters of regulations, known as *typica*, of the monasteries and of the Athonite community as a whole.[3]

Joachim's effort was laudable because his Canons attempted to clarify much that was uncertain and nebulously traditional. They also clearly delineated the patriarch's relationship with Athos by reaffirming that he was the supreme civil and ecclesiastical arbiter of the Holy Mountain.[4] They were published in 1877, granted a *firman* by the Porte, but never officially adopted on Mount Athos. The Athonites resented what they considered an encroachment on their independence and

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1 Khristou, op. cit., p. 305, refers to him as as as 'ever-yielding'— *pandote endotikos*.

2 Smyrnakis, op. cit., 305.

3 *Sentences arbitrales*, op. cit., p. 48.

4 From the tenth to the fourteenth centuries the Athonite monasteries were under the ægis of the emperor. In 1312 Emperor Andronicos II Paleologos subordinated the Protos to the Œcumenical Patriarch. Since then neither the Byzantine nor the Ottoman state ever challenged the patriarch's authority, but Athos frequently proclaimed its independence by defying him.

considered the patriarch meddlesome.[5] Nevertheless, the Canons hardly differed from those ratified by Joachim III on 15 February 1912, which in turn formed the basis of the Charter of Mount Athos promulgated in 1926 and enshrined a year later in the Greek Constitution.[6]

The main thrust of the Canons, emphasised particularly in Articles I, XLVII, L and LII, is that the entire territory of the Holy Mountain is divided between the Twenty, which are in an unalterable hierarchical order. The Twenty have sovereign, inalienable and unalterable rights to their property. The Canons of Joachim II and Joachim III also defined how the Athonite 'parliament' worked by giving a detailed description of practice current at the time. The government of the Holy Mountain is the responsibility of the *Iera Koinotis*. This is a body composed of the Twenty *antiprosopoi*, or representatives, who meet as a matter of course in Karyes twice a week, and on any other occasion, as necessary, for extraordinary business. Day-to-day executive decisions and authorisation of documents is carried out by the *Epistasia*, a four-man body elected for a year by rotation from the twenty representatives. The President of the *Epistasia*, or *Protepistatis*, is always the representative of one of the five senior monasteries. The highest executive body is that of the Twenty Abbots. On certain occasions there is a Double *Synaxis* of the abbots and the representatives. The decisions of all the meetings in Karyes at which the abbots are present are secret. The Ottoman Kaimakam (and after 1912, the Greek Civil Governor) had a say in the internal running of the Holy Mountain only in political and criminal situations. He always collaborated with the Holy *Koinotis*, whose meetings he would attend from time to time, as necessary.[7]

Greek Athos owes Joachim II a debt of gratitude because he effectively put a stop to the Russian challenge. Without his Canons there would have been no clear idea of the *status quo*, and the rights and privileges of the Twenty might have been eroded. Not only were the Russians not consulted about the new Canons, but they appear to have had only a vague idea about them. In Appendix I of *Russkie na Afone* Dmitrievskiy prints what he thinks are the new Canons.

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[5] Not only did they find his concessions to the Russians hard to forgive, but they were quarrelling with him about his dismissal of Archimandrite Neilos, appointed by the *Koinotis* to investigate the question of confiscated dedicated lands in Romania and Bessarabia.

[6] Joachim III's Canons were essentially an elaboration of those of his predecessor: they contained 266 articles, as opposed to the original 153.

[7] *Sentences arbitrales*, op. cit., pp. 56 et seq. This document gives a brief and slightly misleading account of the government of Athos. For an exact definition, see the appropriate terms in Monk Dorotheos' glossary, op. cit., B' 5-89.

Dmitrievskiy's version is merely based on Joachim II's Canons. Dmitrievskiy writes:

> We have not been able to obtain the Greek original of the Canons printed here, despite all our efforts and searches even in the Protaton at Karyes. For this reason we have not been able to correct the translation of two or three somewhat obscure passages.[8]

Dmitrievskiy's text must have been a summary used by St Panteleimon, for he cites only 38 articles, whereas Joachim II's Canons contained 153. That it was badly translated perhaps indicates that the St Panteleimon *antiprosopos* did not understand them or that the *dragoman* (translator) did a bad job and the Rossikon's brethren were as a result ill-informed. It is curious, too, that Dmitrievskiy, who is normally precise, says that the Canons were 'for some reason' not accepted on Mount Athos, and does not name their author, nor specify when they were published.

Whereas Joachim II's Canons were not accepted on the Holy Mountain, the *status quo* that the Athonites were newly made aware of was zealously defended. The Serai was made into a skete in 1849; this would have been impossible forty years later, as we have seen with the hapless Neofit, the Russian monk who tried unsuccessfully to upgrade his new kellion. Although there was nothing in the Canons to forbid the creation of another skete after 1877, the integrity and independence of the Twenty had to be preserved at all costs, so any major alteration on Athos was impossible. In 1879 Patriarch Joachim III forbade Pantocratoros to allow the Kellion of St Basil to become a skete. The monastery was at the time engaged in a dispute with the Prophet Elijah Skete and as a result was probably ill disposed to the Russians in its territory, but it was not yet aware of the importance of preserving the *status quo*.[9]

The little the Russians understood of the *status quo* did not suit them and they tried hard to alter it to their advantage. As they had seen in 1875, no decisions were possible without a majority vote in the *Koinotis*. The Russians had only one of the twenty votes. They could usually rely on the votes of Hilandar and Zograf, and of their faithful allies such as Simonopetra. But to obtain a majority vote meant that the Russians had to resort to a good deal of lobbying—and perhaps paying some discreet bribes; and the result was never certain. If by some means the number of their representatives in the *Koinotis* could be increased their life would be made easier.

Attempts were therefore made to convert the two Russian sketes into fully fledged *kyriarchic* monasteries. It is not clear whose plan this first was, but Ignatiev tried to

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8 Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., pp. 397-398.

9 Petit, L. *Actes de Pantocrator* (Amsterdam, 1964), pp. 59-60.

implement it. He realised that the Greek Athonites would never agree, nor would the Patriarchal Synod, even if the patriarch was a puppet of his. So he resorted to political means by mentioning the Russian Athonites in the Treaty of San Stefano. Clause XXII of the Treaty reads thus: 'The Athonite monks of Russian origin will keep their property and privileges, and in the three monasteries belonging to them, and in their dependencies, they will continue to enjoy those rights and prerogatives guaranteed also to the other spiritual foundations and monasteries of Mount Athos.'[10] By having the words 'the three monasteries belonging to them' written into the Clause Ignatiev was presenting the world with a *fait accompli*. He knew that the *Koinotis* and Patriarchate would be powerless to object. He probably also hoped that the other Powers, which were of course not Orthodox, would not object to such a detail, but he was wrong.

When he negotiated the treaty Russia had won somewhat of a Pyrrhic victory; her army was exhausted, she still had no Black Sea fleet to speak of and her economy was incapable of financing any more fighting. Britain was aware of this and was eager to prevent Russia from gaining too powerful a position on the Bosphorus. Nor had the Ottoman Empire collapsed. Ignatiev himself was in a weak position: whereas he had been at the apex of his power in April 1877, he was now isolated again and a spent political force. He had been kept out of the way in St Petersburg during the war. He had not been consulted over the Budapest Conventions (15 January 1877), concluded mainly by Gorchakov and Andrássy before the war. Ignatiev learnt of the Conventions just before arriving in San Stefano in February 1878. It was agreed in Article III of the Budapest Conventions that a large and compact Slav state was not to be established, but he chose to ignore this and created Great Bulgaria. He was made to pay for this by his opponents in St Petersburg and had to go to Vienna in the hope of securing the continued

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[10] 'Les moines du Mont Athos d'origine russe seront maintenus dans leurs possessions et avantages antérieurs et continueront à jouir, dans les trois couvents qui leur appartiennent, et dans les dépendances de ces derniers, des mêmes droits et prérogatives que ceux qui sont assurés aux autres établissements religieux et couvents du Mont Athos.' The translation is my own. Another translation is to be found in a collection of nineteenth centruy European treaties by Oakes, Sir A., *The Great European Treaties of the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 388.

neutrality of Austria and of isolating Britain. Andrássy merely drew his attention to the contravened Budapest Conventions.

Meanwhile, Ignatiev's main political enemy, Shuvalov, was in London. He hated the Pan-Slavism of San Stefano which he called 'the greatest act of folly that we could have committed'.[11] He negotiated with the Marquis of Salisbury, the British Foreign Secretary, and the result was the secret Anglo-Russian agreement of 30 May whereby most of Great Bulgaria was to be given up. During his London visit Shuvalov must have discussed with Salisbury the implications of the San Stefano Twenty-second Article. The treaty signed at the close of the Congress of Berlin on 13 July 1878 was a serious blow to the aspirations of Ignatiev and the Russian Athonites. Two of its signatories were Salisbury and Shuvalov. Its Sixty-second Article is vaguely reminiscent of Article XXII of San Stefano, but otherwise annuls it completely. Article LXII concludes: 'The monks of Mount Athos, of whatever country they may be natives, shall be maintained in their former possessions and advantages, and shall enjoy, without any exception, complete equality of rights and prerogatives.'[12] In other words, the *status quo* was to be maintained on the Holy Mountain.

The Russian sketes were keen to become independent monasteries for their own, internal reasons. Life under their Governing monasteries was not easy. Neither skete had its own *arsanas* (jetty), and the landing as well as transport to and from the sketes of all goods had to be paid for. The larger the sketes grew the more money they had to pay their monasteries. The size of the sketes' brotherhoods was not allowed to exceed that stipulated in their *monakhologhia* and *omologa*, which both sketes found impossible to stick to: at the beginning of the twentieth century both sketes had more than twice as many monks living on the Holy Mountain than inscribed in the *monakhologhia*. The governing monasteries also interfered in the sketes' internal affairs. For instance, after Makariy and Ieronim had helped to re-establish Theodorit in the Serai, Vatopedi interfered so much that it ended up trying to institute the idiorrhythmic regime traditional in most sketes. Theodorit tended his resignation because his authority had been undermined. Finally, the Prophet Elijah Skete was engaged in a long-running dispute with its monastery about a triangle of forest and the granting of permission to make new

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[11] Taylor, op. cit., p. 249.

[12] 'Les moines du mont Athos, quel que soit leur pays d'origine, seront maintenus dans leurs possessions et avantages antérieurs et jouiront, sans exception, d'une entière égalité de droits et prérogatives.' See Oakes, op. cit., p. 359.

buildings. The matter was concluded by patriarchal decree in 1892 but relations with Pantokratoros remained strained.

So, by 1908, the Russian Athonite community seemed for the time being powerless to influence the running of Athos and its voice in the *Koinotis* was negligible. Yet in every other sense the Russian Athonites were supreme, and they were uncomfortably numerous for the increasingly cornered, diminishing Greek majority. But was not strength in numbers, wealth and the potential backing of a Great Power illusory in a monastic world? Perhaps they were becoming spiritually weak. There were disturbing signs of unruliness, greed, and nationalism supplanting humility and piety.

The stage was set for the greatest change in the history of Athos. In 1912, after almost five hundred years under Turkish suzerainty, the Holy Mountain was liberated by Greek forces; at last the old regime of a great, albeit latterly crumbling empire was substituted for that of a small, unsure kingdom that had existed for less than a century. Such a change-over hardly promised stability. The beginning of the twentieth century was a time of unprecedented upheaval. In Russia the centuries-old order was being overthrown: the 1905 Revolution was followed by the transition from autocracy to constitutional monarchy. The Balkans in general were dangerously unstable: they were the scene of two wars fought by six countries in the space of twelve months, of the start of the First World War and of the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Greek flag was hoisted on Athonite territory on 15 November 1912. The ensuing defeat of the Turks in the First Balkan War restored Greek morale that had been shattered in the 1897 debacle.[13] On 18 October Greece, together with her Balkan allies, declared war on Turkey, ten days after Montenegro had done so. In three weeks the allies made extensive territorial gains at the expense of their enemy. Never before had Greece been so successful against her old enemy. Her victories were of course largely due to favourable circumstances: the recent defeat of Turkey at the hands of the Italians in Lybia; the general weakening of Turkey because of the Young Turks' rebellion; the fact that the Ottoman army was greatly outnumbered by the allies, and because the two interested Powers, Austria and Russia, offered only token resistance to the war. None the less, Greece had reason to congratulate herself. For the first time she had achieved significant victories against Turkey without the help of any of the Powers; indeed, the Balkan states had won their spurs and proved that at least as a confederation of allies they were a force to be reckoned

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[13] Dakin, D, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1993), passim.

victories against Turkey without the help of any of the Powers; indeed, the Balkan states had won their spurs and proved that at least as a confederation of allies they were a force to be reckoned with. Above all, the victories of the First Balkan War were due to Greek naval supremacy.

The liberation occasioned an emotional outpouring of national pride on Athos. Greece had beaten Bulgaria in the Race for Salonica by a few hours on St Dimitrius' Day, 8 November (26 October, according to the Old Calendar) 1912. At noon on Friday 15 November the Greek Destroyer *Thyella* anchored off Dafne. Sixty-seven marines and officers landed and hoisted the Greek flag. One-and-a half hours later two other destroyers, the *Ierax* and the *Panthir*, and the Battleship *Averof* appeared. Vice-Admiral P. Koundouriotis, 'who was moved by the occasion and wore on his breast his Cross of Jerusalem, with which he never parted, immediately telephoned the Holy *Koinotis* at Karyes to demand that the Turks and Kaimakam Ali Talaat Bey Mounalazde lay down their weapons.'[14] The Admiral then commanded Lieutenant T. Kourmoulis, Chief Officer of the *Thyella*, to assume temporary governorship of the Holy Mountain.

The liberating forces entered Karyes in triumph at ten in the evening. Every belfry rang; the road was strewn with laurel branches and was lined by thousands of rejoicing Athonites. The flags of the Balkan nations were waved in the crowds and were fluttering from the buildings.[15] The liberators were crowned with laurel wreaths and were met by the *Koinotis* headed by Priest-monk Grigentios of Iviron. Lieutenant Kourmoulis read out the Admiral's declaration that Mount Athos had been conquered from the Turks in the name of King George. There followed wild rejoicing. Guns were fired all night, civilians threw down their fezzes and people hailed each other with the Paschal greeting—*Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!* Meanwhile, the Kaimakam and his force of fifty soldiers peacefully surrendered. The next day eight hundred Greek artillery, cavalry and infantry landed at Dafne.[16]

Although the bells of the Serai rang jubilantly with the rest, and the Paschal greeting was also heard in Slavonic, the liberation 'cast gloom over the Slav monks'.[17] Two meetings or *synaxes* of the Twenty representatives were held in the *Koinotis*

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14 Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., 156.

15 According to Dorotheos Monakhos, only the Greek flag (*i Galanolevki*) flew.

16 According to Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., p. 157, only 750 landed, 'on the afternoon of the same day'. I base my account here on Dmitrievskiy's version because he was probably an eyewitness.

17 MF 5 AAD p. 11.

Despite its triumph and rapturous reception, the Greek military was in a very precarious position on Mount Athos. That it achieved the docile surrender of fifty Turkish troops with only sixty-seven men was not a great achievement: the Turkish garrison must have known that resistance would be suicidal, and their army was being defeated elsewhere in the Balkans; the whole peninsula seemed to them to be on the side of the Greeks; the Greek forces were backed up by a strong naval presence, and, as it turned out, were strengthened by substantial reinforcements. But it was soon clear that the Greeks were not wholly in control.

The eighth paragraph of the Admiral's declaration read out by Lieutenant Kourmoulis in Karyes strictly forbade all Athonites and other civilians to carry firearms. Yet, in direct contravention of this, shots were fired all that night by the revellers. Although the same article ended in an appeal to everyone to hand in their weapons,[19] this was clearly also ignored, as shall be seen from the next incident.

On 26 November seventy Bulgarian troops landed on the Holy Mountain, ostensibly on a pilgrimage. They entrenched themselves in Zograf and Hilandar, and declared that they needed to protect Bulgarian interests and property on Athos.[20] They stayed for seven months, until the eve of the Second Balkan War, in which Greece and her Balkan allies fought against Bulgaria. The presence of potentially inimical troops on Athos was naturally intolerable to the Greek garrison and the peninsula threatened to turn into a battle ground. On the eve of the declaration of war with Bulgaria, 6-7 July, an ultimatum was issued to the occupiers of the two Slav monasteries to leave by the next day. They immediately barricaded themselves in and the monasteries were besieged. The Greek troops were joined by hundreds of excited, armed kelliots. Twelve hours later the Bulgarians gave themselves up and were deported to Piraeus.

Disaster was averted by decisive action and a quick resolution. Circumstances were favourable to the Greek soldiers. Like that of the Turkish garrison in 1912, the situation of the Bulgarians was hopeless, for they were greatly outnumbered and the rowdy kelliots made them feel that most of the peninsula was up in arms against them. The role played by Zograf was also crucial. On the one hand, it remained patriarchist, even though one of the Exarchate's

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[19] MF 5 AAD p. 3.

[20] According to Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., p. 159, there were only 50 Bulgarian troops. He also says they went to Xylourgou and St Panteleimon. Khristou, op. cit., p. 311, says that the Bulgarian flag was hoisted in Zograf.

situation of the Bulgarians was hopeless, for they were greatly outnumbered and the rowdy kelliots made them feel that most of the peninsula was up in arms against them. The role played by Zograf was also crucial. On the one hand, it remained patriarchist, even though one of the Exarchate's metropolitans stayed there. Moreover, Zograf signed all the statements drawn up by the *Koinotis* of patriotic loyalty to Greece and her King.[21] On the other hand, the Greek Athonites could still not forgive the Bulgarians for the schism. In September 1913 the *Koinotis* explained in a memorandum to the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey and the ambassadors attending the London Conference that the Holy Mountain could have no political links with Bulgaria:

> the schism also does not permit us Orthodox to enter into relations or have contact with the Bulgarian schismatics, on pain of incurring severe ecclesiastical penalties: we would be cursed or excommunicated, and this we in no way desire because we wish to remain Orthodox.[22]

Now that Athos was virtually secure for the Greeks, they should, perhaps, have shown greater benevolence to the Russians. In a speech delivered in St Panteleimon in November 1912, Lieutenant D. Xanthopoulos thanked the Russian nation for saving Greece in 1897. The Turks would have decisively beaten the Greeks in Thessaly and taken back from them the lands they had lost in 1881 had not Nicholas II intervened in 1897 in King George's favour. Xanthopoulos' kind words for the Russians contrasted with the growing resentment of Greek Athonites.

In 1906 the Russian Kellion of the Ascension received permission from Philotheou, its governing monastery, to install a bell weighing twenty *puds*. Soon the monastery decided it was not fitting that a kellion should have so large a bell, which they took for themselves, and gave the Russians one weighing a mere five *puds* in exchange. In about 1914 one of the kellion's brethren brought a thirty-*pud* bell, but the Greek customs officials complained to Karyes, and permission was not given for it to leave Dafne. The Kellion of the Exaltation of the Cross, belonging to Karakallou Monastery, had similar difficulties over a hundred-*pud* bell; in this case, however, not only did Karyes not give permission for the bell to clear customs, but the Russians had to pay three hundred roubles in

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[21] *To Ieron Psiphisma tou Aghiou Orous Atho kai ta Synaphi tis Iera Koinotitos* (Thessaloniki, 1913), passim.

[22] *Réfutation du mémoire soumis par les moines russes kelliotes à la Conférence des Ambassadeurs de Londres et contenant des propositions anticanoniques et subversives de toute notre constitution*, (Karyes [?], 1913), p. 6. See also Metaxakis, op. cit., Appendix 2, pp. 191-208.

duty.[23] Envy had by now hardened the Greeks; their child-like wonder at the arrival of the St Panteleimon bell, reported so affectionately by Svyatogorets, would have been impossible in the early twentieth century.

After the demise of Ottoman rule on Athos the Russians must have sorely missed the former Turkish civil officials, who were at least polite and impartial. The Greek customs officers went out of their way to be rude.

> Recently they have been exceptionally demanding with Russian pilgrims and visiting monks, and everyone is complaining. The head of one of the Russian kellia heard at Dafne that the customs officers were calling the pilgrims pigs. They treat [the pilgrims] disgracefully. They seize their things, shout and swear.'[24]

The Papayannis brothers, who ran the post office and Russian Steamship and Trade Company, were Russified Greeks. In 1914 I.L. Papayannis, who 'had earned the trust of the Russian monks', was replaced by a Greek called Stamatis.[25]

The Russians were treated in an unmannerly fashion by Greek monks as well. Aghiou Pavlou Monastery seemed to bear a special grudge against Russia. In the beginning of the eighteenth century Skete Lakkou, dedicated to St Dimitrius of Salonica, was founded on its land thanks to a grant from the Empress Elizabeth. In 1914 sixty-four of its inhabitants were from Bessarabia and nineteen were Romanians. The skete received an annual grant of seventy napoleons from Romania and three thousand roubles from Russia. The latter sum went straight into the monastery's coffers and none of the Bessarabians knew when or how they lost the use of their grant. At some time in the twentieth century the monastery also forbade the members of the skete to elect its *dikaeos* and *epitropoi* from among the Bessarabians.[26] The Romanians were allowed to fly their flag but the monastery did not allow the Russian flag to be hoisted. Furthermore, the monastery started to threaten the Bessarabians with expulsion. Unfortunately, the Bessarabians themselves were far from blameless. In 1910 Monk Nikolai, one of the skete's former priors, went to Russia for two-and-a-half years. In his absence his kellion was dishonestly sold by a disciple of his,

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23 MF 4 AAP AI-1 p. 6. A *pud* is 16·38 kg.

24 Ibid., p. 9.

25 Ibid., p. 9.

26 Ibid., p. 6. Lakkou was one of the nine idiorrhythmic sketes. The prior of an idiorrhythmic skete is elected annually or biennially. He runs and represents the skete with the aid of his two *epitropoi*, who are elected at the same time as he is.

A napoleon is a gold coin similar to the Turkish lira. Out of the seventy-napoleon grant the skete paid thirty lira to the monastery every year. All sketes pay a yearly fee to their governing monasteries.

Nikolai returned he demanded his kellion back or eight thousand Lira as compensation, even though his property was worth only a tenth of that sum. Matters came to a head when the Bessarabians sent their representatives to the monastery to complain.

> The monastery did not want to receive the committee, among whom was Fr Nikolai. In a fit of rage the monastery's guest master stuck him on the ear. As a result Fr Nikolai is complaining of deafness.[27]

As usual, money was the root of the ill-feeling. The Russians knew that the Greeks were trying to milk them of every kopek. Dmitrievskiy observed that the Greeks needed only to behave well for a short while 'and a shower of gold would pour into the pockets of the hungry [Greeks] from [our] embassy and consulate.'[28] Monk Theofan was expelled from his *kalyva* by Stavronikita for refusing to donate towards the cost of equipping the Greek Navy. He was probably too poor to give anything, but the kellion of the Holy Trinity belonging to the same monastery was not. They refused to give fifteen lira for the navy, so Stavronikita said they would no longer give permission for the kellion to import food.[29]

The inhabitants of the sketes, kellia and other properties had constantly to ask permission of the Governing monastery: this had to be granted for all building and repairs, the buying and selling of property, the transport through the monastery's land of food and materials, the cultivation and other uses of the monastery's land, and the acceptance of novices and the tonsuring of monks. This permission, known as *adeia* or *evloghia*, was usually granted for a fee. There seemed to be no fixed rates and the Greek monasteries evidently considered the *adeia* as a profitable source of income from their wealthy dependants. The Russians had no choice but to pay. As only the monasteries owned land on the Holy Mountain and their dependants were given very small plots of land to cultivate, the Russians had to import most of their food. Thus if they did not pay the monasteries the *adeia* they would starve. The Prophet Elijah Skete was typical of a Russian dependent house that had to pay a fortune to survive. From its founding in 1757 to 1917 it had to pay in *adeia* 100,000 roubles, most of which was demanded in the last hundred years because until the first decades of the nineteenth century the monastery asked for very little money of the skete.[30]

Jealousy and disparity of wealth had long poisoned Athonite relations, and the impoverished Greeks felt

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27 MF 4 AAP A2-1 p. 1.
28 MF 5 AAD P. 11.
29 MF 4 AAP AI-1 pp. 7, 10.
30 According to Pavlovskiy's filled-in questionnaire, MF 2 Docs Questionnaire 18iii1917.

decades of the nineteenth century the monastery asked for very little money of the skete.[30]

Jealousy and disparity of wealth had long poisoned Athonite relations, and the impoverished Greeks felt inferior to the Russians. Greece was a small, young and impecunious nation that had not ceased waging war since its formation. The two Balkan Wars, occurring as they did within two years of each other and immediately after fifteen years of continual guerrilla war with the Turks and Bulgarians in Macedonia, were ruinous, even though Greece made sweeping gains. The Greek and Russian Athonites supported materially and were fiercely patriotic about their respective countries. But the former had little money to give, and had to rely on the small subsidies the Greek state could afford to hand out.

Today measures have been taken to restrict the numbers of pilgrims on the Holy Mountain: Greeks and foreigners alike are discouraged from staying more than four days and permission is given to very few non-Greeks to set foot on the peninsula each day. There were no such restrictions a century ago. History has taught the authorities today that too many people, particularly laymen, destroy the peace for which Athos is famous.

The population of the Holy Mountain in the first decade of the twentieth century, as we have seen, was just under ten thousand monks. This was greater than at any time in Athonite history. The figure does not account for laymen—pilgrims, officials, tradesmen and hired workers; nor does it account for those on the margin of Athonite society, the *siromakhi* and other wandering mendicants. Monk Dorotheos calls them *kaviotes* and defines them as unattached *rasophors* or laymen in monk's clothing.[31] They lived some of the time in huts, known as *kavia*, but generally had no fixed abode, went from place to place doing odd jobs and received charitable donations of food and money.

The three Russian houses, particularly the monastery, were famous for the help they gave the *siromakhi*. On Thursdays, Sundays and feast days up to seven hundred would gather at the gates of St Panteleimon to receive small change and bread which was distributed from great wooden bowls.[32] The St Panteleimon

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30 According to Pavlovskiy's filled-in questionnaire, MF 2 Docs Questionnaire 18iii1917.

31 Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., B', p. 37. *Siromakh* is a Russian Athonite term. Greeks use the term *kaviotis*, and Russian guidebooks of the time spoke of *kavioty ili siromakhi*.

32 MF 6 Ivanov p. 20. See also Monk Dorotheos, op. cit. A', p. 423: what he writes about the Rossikon in the latter half of the nineteenth century is uncomplimentary, but he admits that 'despite the hirelings who wanted to

described the *siromakhi* as blessed non-possessors akin to the *stranniki* in Russia.[33] At the beginning of the century, however, there was a significant criminal element among them. A Russian visitor wrote: 'The *siromakhi* and wandering monks sometimes behave themselves in such a way that the St Panteleimon brethren did not advise us to go without a guide far from the monastery into the woods where we might come across these monks.'[34] Pavlovskiy spoke of the need to defend the Athonite houses from bands of brigands that committed robbery with violence. [35] In 1908 Priest-schemamonk Moisey, the founder of the Kellion of St Ignatius the Godbearer, was murdered on Athos by bandits.[36]

The *siromakhi* continued to behave so disreputably in the following decades that they were banned from the Holy Mountain by official decree of the *Koinotis* on 16 April 1931. It is impossible to say where they came from. They were not inscribed in any *monakhologion;* Turkish bureaucracy was too inefficient to control or keep an official record of them; and when Greece liberated Athos in 1912, the civil authorities could not impose sufficient order to prevent them from roaming unchecked. The same Russian visitor quoted above, writing at the time of the Macedonian Wars, observed that among the nomadic population of Athos were 'chetniks, political exiles, and warring Greek and Macedonian Slavs'.[37] Pavlovskiy, who was of course biased, describes the *siromakhi* as tiresome beggars who had to be tolerated on Athos and were 'of mainly Greek nationality'.[38]

It is possible that the *siromakhi* were mostly from Russia because the Russians were numerically predominant and a large part of the Russian community was made up of simple folk. Monk Dorotheos says that the majority of Russian Athonites were both 'bumpkins with no inkling of spirituality' and 'convicts'. He points out that between 1868 and 1911 the Patriarchate, the Moscow Synod and the

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33 Ibid., pp. 15-16.

34 *V strane svyaschennykh vospominaniy*, quoted by Ivanov, op. cit., p. 21.

35 MF 4 AAP Bratsvo p. 16.

36 Pavlovskiy, A.A., *Privet so sv. gory Afona v Pamyat' 300-letiya tsarstvovaniya Doma Romanovykh*, p. 122.

37 MF 6 Ivanov p. 21. He is again quoting from *V strane svyaschennykh vospominaniy*, edited by the Bishop Arseniy, who later became Archbishop of Novgorod and Lagoda.

38 Pavlovskiy, *Privet*, p. 74. In this book he puts the *siromakhi* into the fifth and final category of the Athonite monks he attempts to classify, the fourth category designating those he describes as *kalivity*. However, on pp. 61-62 of his *Putevoditel'*, which was written a decade earlier, he writes: 'The *Kalivoty*, who belong to the fourth category of the inhabitants of Athos, are simply *siromakhi*, or poor monks […] Theirs is a very hard type of asceticism based on a life of poverty according to Christ's commandments'. He says nothing about their nationality here.

Russian Ministry of the Interior expressed their concern about these undesirables in official statements and attempts at preventative legislation.[39]

It is also possible that the majority of the accredited Russian Athonites were uneducated or even barely literate. Although the Russian peasantry was famed for its piety, its ignorance and gullibility was a dangerous and powerful tool in the hands of demagogues. Lenin was to exploit it in Russia; on the Holy Mountaina small-scale Russian revolution took place.

In 1907 Schema-monk Ilarion of the Monastery of St Simon the Canaanite published *Na gorakh Kavkaza*. This is a theological treatise largely in the form of a dialogue between two monks. Its fourth chapter propounds the theory that the name of God is the Lord Himself and that God Himself cannot be separated from His all-holy name. This started a theological controversy on the Holy Mountain. Those who supported the theory were generally considered by the Greeks and most other Orthodox as heretics, and known as the Glorifiers of the Name.

The Heresy of the Name is probably the best-documented aspect of Russian Athonite history. As far as this thesis is concerned, the important aspect of the events that were sparked off on Athos is their scandalous nature.[40] The Heresy fuelled debate for many years among Russian philosophers and theologians such as Bulgakov, Berdyaev, Florenskiy and Muretov, who felt that the miscreants were badly treated.[41] One Russian commentator concludes: 'All this history of the Athonite troubles none the less indicates that the Russian monks of the

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[39] Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., A' p. 184.

[40] The heresy gave rise to sensationalist stories in the Russian press and far-fetched rumours were rife. For instance, No 89 of the *Moskovskiy Listok* contained an interview with some of the monks of St Panteleimon that were involved. 'By making themselves out to be innocent they entirely falsified the facts and invented certain things that never happened in the monastery.' (MF 4 AAP AI-1 p. 10.)

[41] Patriarch Joachim condemned the Glorifiers as heretical, but objected strongly to the use of violence against them by the Russian navy. See A Monk of the Eastern Church (Gillet, Fr Lev), *The Jesus Prayer*, 2nd edition, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987, pp. 83-86.

Holy Mountain were interested in spiritual problems.'[42] However, many of the Russian Glorifiers of the name on Athos were simple and barely literate; they could not have understood the complexities of a theological debate, let alone read about one. They were stirred up by demagogues.

The principal rabble rouser was Antoniy Bulatovich. He came to the Serai also in 1907, after a shady career as an army officer. He was of gentle birth and had a modicum of education. A dilettante scholar like A.N. Muravyev, he fancied himself as a theologian, but his real talents lay in journalism and publicity. Almost as soon as he arrived he started writing for the skete journal, *Russkiy Inok*. This activity was seditious and met with the disapproval of his prior, Archimandrite Ieronim. He was told off and sent to Ethiopia to buy candles for the skete. Almost a year later, in January 1912, he came back empty-handed. He was again reprimanded and told not to stir up the brethren. As a result, he left the skete and went to live with the Elder Parfeniy in the Kellion of the Annunciation. Parfeniy was also a shady character and the two continued their sedition. They worked through Monk David in the Serai and Monk Iriney in St Panteleimon. In the absence of Archimandrite Ieronim, who was away on the skete's business, Monk David installed himself as prior of the skete. Ieronim returned and ousted the usurper, but on 9 January 1913 Bulatovich took the skete by storm. The Archimandrite was holding a meeting with the Serai elders when Bulatovich

> suddenly burst in, ordered his men to follow and requested that the prior hand over command of his own free will. This was refused, so Antoniy Bulatovich jumped up on the table and with shouts of "Hurrah!" started inciting his men to chase away the prior and his defenders [...]. On [Bulatovich's] orders Archimandrite Ieronim was marched outside the main gates and told to get lost. Some [monks] were beaten up and two were thrown from the balcony. The cells of the loyal elders were entered, and chests and cupboards were smashed. There were disgraceful scenes. Within a few days as many as fifty people were thrown out.[43]

Next four senior representatives of Vatopedi, the skete's governing monastery, arrived. They asked that order be restored, and read out Patriarch Joachim III's encyclical, which condemned the Glorifiers of the Name as heretics. Elections were then held in the skete and on 11 January Monk David was restored as prior by 303 votes to Ieronim's 70. On the same day four representatives, headed by Bulatovich, were sent to inform Vatopedi of the result. The monastery refused to accept it, and gave Bulatovich a letter to the skete explaining

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42 Smolitsch, I., 'Le Mont Athos et la Russie', p. 318.

43 *Russkoe Slovo*, 20 June, 1914, quoted in MF 4 AAP AI-2 p. 7.

their decision and denouncing the new doctrine as heretical. On 12 January a delegation was turned away from the *Koinotis*, so a detachment of the Greek gendarmerie surrounded the skete.

By now Russian diplomatic circles were worried. Serbin, the Salonica Consul's secretary, was sent to the skete. He was received ceremoniously by David and Bulatovich, who wore his campaign medals. Serbin told them of Consul Belyaev and Ambassador Giers' disquiet. On 2 February a letter from the *Koinotis* was delivered by the Civil Governor's gendarmes to the skete. Ten days later, unsupported by the Russian Kelliots, the Prophet Elijah Skete, the *Koinotis*, the Patriarch and Russian diplomats, the heretics sent Bulatovich to Russia through Salonica in order to plead their cause. On 26 February a member of the Russian Foreign Ministry arrived to talk to the heretics. There followed a dramatic visit by Archimandrite Arseniy, the representative of the Moscow Synod. He arrived at the skete on 8 April, was 'converted' to the heresy within twenty-four hours and died there of a stroke on 18 May, as if felled by divine retribution.

St Petersburg and the Moscow Synod, probably urged on by the Russian kelliots and the Prophet Elijah Skete, decided it was time to act, lest the Greeks use the occasion to expel the Russians. The Synod wrote lengthily but kindly to the heretics explaining their error and imploring them to repent. The letter was ignored. The heretics entrenched themselves in St Panteleimon, despite narrowly losing a vote of confidence at a general meeting of the monastery's brethren. On 13 June the Russian Battleship *Char* anchored off the St Panteleimon quay, followed shortly by the *Likhachev* and *Kherson* off Dafne. A three-man Synodal commission headed by Archbishop Nikon Rozhdestvenskiy landed from the Gunship *Donets*. Russian troops now besieged the Serai and at its gates the archbishop read the letter from the Synod. From 9 to 17 July 833 Russian monks were arrested; 621 were deported to Russia on the *Kherson* and 212 on the *Likhachev*. At the end of the operation all Russian troops and the remaining warships promptly left.

As in 1912, potential military chaos was narrowly averted. What could have been a serious international incident, perhaps even a disastrous armed conflict, was surgically and efficiently concluded by concerted Russian action. This was the only occasion in Athonite history that Russian officialdom—the Synod, a ministry, the armed forces and diplomats—was sufficiently organised to intervene directly in Athonite affairs. Bulatovich and his followers behaved like military mutineers and their appalling deeds were utterly contrary to the codes of monastic conduct. Yet,

threatening to take its own punitive measures, Greek Athonites and Greek historians in general have seemed remarkably unaffected.

The expulsion of almost a thousand Russians must have come as a brief but welcome relief to the overcrowded peninsula. Moreover, whatever Bulatovich's motives, the scandal was caused not by politics, but by a theological debate, which was anyway insignificant in comparison with the *Kollyvades* dispute. Above all, the Greeks were hardly threatened. In July 1914 Mount Athos was potentially a powder keg: Greece had just started fighting Bulgaria in Thrace in the Second Balkan War, and when the Russian forces arrived there was on the peninsula a garrison of nearly nine hundred Greek troops on full alert. The story might have been different had the Russian military not acted with speed and efficiency, or left immediately.

That Greek rule on Athos started with a series of close shaves is indicative of how uncertain a hold the new authorities had on the peninsula. Joachim III's Canons were accepted by the Athonite community in 1912 but were not ratified by the Greek state because of the ill-defined political status of the Holy Mountain. As a result, several Patriarchal and state commissions, including the future Archbishop of Athens and Œcumenical Patriarch, Meletios Metaxakis, arrived on Athos to draw up what was eventually to become the Charter of Mount Athos. The Russians were desperately worried by these commissions. The two sketes complained to the Russian Minister in Athens, E.P. Demidov:

> The fact that the new laws are being worked out with such scrupulous secrecy and that not a single representative either of the Russian or the Bulgarian or the Serbian Monasteries is privy to this project——although the Serbian Monastery is one of the senior members of the *Koinotis*—— shows that the interests of the Greek population will not be trampled on [...] so we beg you not to allow these laws, which have been worked out by the Greeks alone, to be put into practice.[44]

As the Russians were in the dark there were certain things they misconstrued. For instance, *Afonskiya Izvestiya* reported in 1914:

> According to the *typika* of the Holy Mountain, an Athonite representative is to act as a permanent link [in Constantinople] between the *Koinotis* and the Patriarchate. Now the *Koinotis* has decided to abolish this post for good and keep on only its representative in Salonica. In so doing the Athonite *Koinotis* has, as it were, broken the last link connecting the Athonite community with its spiritual head. On the other hand, by keeping on the Salonica representative [they] prove that they are leaning more towards the

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44 MF 2 Docs Petition 15x1918.

> Church of Greece. We believe that this thoughtless step will result in [...] the patriarch sending his own representative to Athos [...]'[45]

A year earlier Dmitrievskiy wrote of what he thought was a serious break with the patriarch:

> We would like to keep to the *status quo* with regard to the spiritual dependence of the monasteries of the Holy Mountain on the Œcumenical Patriarch. Diminishing the rights of the patriarch to the Holy Mountain cannot be seriously justified. [...] If the Athonite monasteries submit to the ecclesiastical authority of the Metropolitan of Athens and his Synod, and if the Russians likewise submit to that of the Moscow Synod, the rights of the Patriarch of Constantinople will be seized and he shall be undeservingly insulted [...]'[46]

Dmitrievskiy's erroneous understanding of the situation has been perpetuated among certain Russians. Writing in 1974, Anatoliy Prosfirin observed: '[in 1913] a delegation of Greek Athonites arrived in Athens demanding to unite the peninsula of Athos to the Greek Kingdom, and also to transfer the Holy Mountain from the jurisdiction of the Œcumenical Patriarch to that of the Synod of the Greek Church.'[47] Pavlovskiy's assessment of the relationship of the patriarch with the Holy Mountain is more accurate because it does not jump to conclusions:

> The measures taken by the Œcumenical Patriarch can sometimes be strongly resisted both by the *Koinotis* and the Greek monasteries, and this is a mystery to us Russians. Of course, this happens only when the Constantinople Patriarchate attempts to encroach on the ancient Athonite privileges.[48]

The Athonite community had no intention of severing ties with the Œcumenical Patriarch. It is true that Joachim II's interference was resented, but the rejection of his Canons was a symbolic gesture of defiance. The Twenty and the Athonite parliament have always guarded their autonomy jealously and have periodically fired warning shots at those who have threatened to interfere. Joachim III closed the rift created by his predecessor by making some important concessions. For example, he allowed the Twenty to elect their own abbot without patriarchal approval, and he recognised the autonomy of the *Koinotis*.[49] This does not explain, however, why the Russians believed that Athos was preparing to submit to the Metropolitan of Athens. In October 1913 a senior five-man delegation from the *Koinotis* headed by the *Protepistatis* Klimis of Hilandar went to Athens. There they paid their respects to King

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45 MF 4 AAP AI-2 *p.* 4.

46 MF 5 AAD p. 7.

47 Prosfirin, op. cit., *Zhournal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*,IV, 1974, p. 14.

48 Pavlovskiy, *Privet*, p. 77.

49 Khristou, op. cit., p. 281.

Constantine, met Prime Minister Venizelos and were received by Metropolitan Theoclitos. The latter was very hospitable and took the delegation on a sight-seeing tour. During their visit the Athonites handed their three distinguished hosts copies of the patriotic letters, minutes of the recent *Synaxes* held in Karyes, and the Vote of Loyalty to Greece and her King taken by the *Koinotis* earlier that month. Paragraph 8 of the Vote implores the Œcumenical Patriarch to protect the Holy Mountain. The signature of the St Panteleimon representative was significantly absent from the Vote and the minutes of one of the *synaxes*. The King noticed this and asked in whose name these documents were.[50]

The Russians, therefore, did not know what was happening. The problem would not have been so acute if more of them had had a better knowledge of the Greek language. Only the St Panteleimon *antiprosopos* and the abbot would have been fully informed of the decisions of the *Koinotis*, but they may have voiced their protest by being absent from the *synaxes* whose minuted documents they did not sign. Communications between St Panteleimon and the other Russian houses might not anyway have been very good.

On the eve of the First World War the Russians and the Greeks on Athos were polarised. There was no contact between either side. The Greeks had the trump cards: they had the overwhelming majority in the *Koinotis;* the Patriarch was once again on their side, and the two worked together behind their opponents' backs. The Russians had in their favour strength of numbers, wealth, the backing of their diplomats and increasing official recognition from St Petersburg. But if these assets were to be used effectively, they needed to organise themselves on Mount Athos: once Russian Athonites acted as an ordered body, not only would Russian officialdom be able to help more effectively, but the troublesome Athonite regulations would be circumvented.

The Russian kelliots were the first to recognise the need to be united. They had to protect themselves because they were scattered in some ninety dwellings all over the peninsula and had little status in the Athonite community. In the first half of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, the only Russian centre on the Holy Mountain was the Prophet Elijah Skete. There were also Russians in kellia and *kalyves*, such as those around Karyes occupied by Pavel and his disciples before he went to the Rossikon. Many of the eremitical dwellings inhabited by Russians were very ancient, some dating back to the twelfth century. When the Russians came to inhabit them most of them were deserted ruins. Just as Russians were entreated to come to St Panteleimon and save it from destitution, so the Greeks

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50 *To Ieron Psiphisma*, pp. 6-10, 13-17, 25-26.

willingly handed over to them their eremitical dwellings in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The new tenants of the kellia and *kalyves* lived peacefully at first. However, as they grew more numerous, the Greeks became unfriendly towards them.

> The unfairness from which the monks of the kelliot and eremitical dwellings suffered, the unjustified hostility of every kind of the Governing Monasteries, the illegal levies imposed by the monasteries on every suitable and unsuitable occasion [...], and in particular the impossibility of getting a fair trial in the *Epistasia* or *Koinotis* [...]—— all this made the existence of the kelliot houses extremely difficult and almost unbearable.[51]

In the 1870s the Russian kelliots attempted to band together in order better to resist the pressure from their governing monasteries. However, many kellia put their own interests first to the detriment of others; so 'this attempt did not succeed because the kelliot elders at the time did not understand the benefit of union and mutual support.'[52]

Towards the end of the century A.A. Pavlovskiy came to the Holy Mountain.[53] He understood that Athos was the ideal place for his talents to flourish, and doubtless with his help, the kelliots made a second but this time successful attempt to unite. On 14 May 1896, a patriotic occasion because it was Nicholas II's second wedding anniversary, the Brotherhood of Russian Kelliot Houses was founded. Pavlovskiy became briefly internationally famous by editing the Russian kelliots' Memorandum, which was presented at the London Conference of Ambassadors on 12 May 1912. In November of that year he was appointed as the first and only permanent Russian diplomatic representative on Athos.

The Brotherhood, inspired by the well-intentioned but worldly Pavlovskiy, was dangerously nationalist and political. Among its patrons were the Director of the Russian Archæological Institute in Constantinople F.I. Uspenskiy and I.A. Zinovyev, the former Ambassador at Constantinople. Pavlovskiy describes them both as 'very dear to all those who sympathise with the success of Russian influence in the Near East,' and explains that for this reason 'their names will one day be written in gold in the pages of the history not only of the Brotherhood but of

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51 MF AAP 4 Bratstvo p. 4.

52 Ibid., p. 4; Also Pavlovskiy, *Privet*, p. 102.

53 The precise date of his first visit to Athos is not certain. In the three works I quote he speaks of the number of years he has been acquainted with the Holy Mountain. For instance, in the introduction (p. 4) to *Privet*, which was published in 1913, he writes of his fifteen-year acquaintance with Athos. I have been unable to find out about his background or qualifications. According to Papoulidis, he was a professor (*kathigitis*) who visited the Russian Archæological Institute in 1901: K.K. Papoulidis, *To Rosiko Arkhaiologhiko Instituto Konstantinopoleos* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1987), p. 125.

sympathise with the success of Russian influence in the Near East,' and explains that for this reason 'their names will one day be written in gold in the pages of the history not only of the Brotherhood but of Russia'.[54] The Brotherhood's Memorandum to the London Conference of Ambassadors greatly offended the members of the *Koinotis*. They responded by presenting the delegates of the Conference with the *Réfutation du mémoire soumis par les moines russes kelliotes*, in which Pavlovskiy is described as 'a man who has no idea about the ecclesiastic laws governing all our Orthodox churches'.[55]

In 1913 Pavlovskiy also published *Privet so sv. gory Afona*. Its appearance marked the three-hundredth anniversary of the Romanov dynasty, and was thus another expression of the Brotherhood's patriotic fervour. *Privet so sv. gory Afona*, ostensibly a guide for pilgrims to Athos, is in fact a pamphlet promoting the Brotherhood's cause. He produced another pamphlet at about the same time; it was akin to a manifesto and described the Brotherhood's history, goals and finances. According to Dmitrievskiy, the pamphlet was full of deliberate inaccuracies and falsification, and was aimed at a gullible readership ignorant of the history of Athos. Nevertheless, he conceded that 'the Russian kelliots gained sympathy [...] both in government circles and among certain members of the State Duma.'[56] Pavlovskiy knew the value of the written word. While on Athos, he was constantly writing letters to all the Russian houses and urging them to reply and keep in touch.[57] He also tried his hand at journalism for the sake of the Brotherhood. He published on its behalf a monthly journal called *Monastyr'*. It survived only two years, owing to insufficient funds and because not enough people contributed articles to it. He then published *Afonskiya Izvestiya*, which we have quoted above; it was a monthly digest of Athonite news, and was mainly about the kelliots. Only two numbers appeared, in June and July 1914, and Pavlovskiy's flirtation with newsprint was ended by the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1903 the Brotherhood opened a special Russian Athonite seminary in Constantinople. It was to rival the Greek Athoniada, about which Pavlovskiy was contemptuous, but it closed in 1907 because of a lack of funds. Perhaps the Brotherhood was being too ambitious in its projects. Some of

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54 MF AAP 4 Bratstvo p. 9.

55 'un mémoire rédigé par un homme n'ayant aucune idée de la législation ecclésiastique régissant toutes nos églises orthodoxes', *Réfutation*, p. 3.

56 MF 5 AAD p. 20.

57 There was in the Prophet Elijah Skete Archives before 1992 a number of characteristic letters from him.

that the Russian kelliots became so powerful at the end of the last century. The small, impoverished kellia, which they had taken over and which were originally intended to house two or three hermits soon became large and flourishing cœnobia of up to a hundred brethren. Unlike the three main Russian houses, which depended on outside benefaction, the expanding kellia were funded and renovated almost entirely by their inhabitants. Of course, the Russian people also contributed to the kellia, on behalf of whom there were alms-gathering missions in Russia; but the kellia did not appear to be in as much permanent need of money as the two sketes and St Panteleimon, even though they existed on tiny plots of land, had to import all their own food and possessed no comparable dependencies outside Athos.

The personal wealth of many of the Russian kelliots explains their singularly secular mentality. Many of them came to the Holy Mountain with no ecclesiastical background; they seemed bent on making larger buildings and 'conquering' new territory. Pavlovskiy, who was himself essentially worldly, seemed just the right man for them. What really seemed to matter for him was the material well-being of the Russian kelliots and the physical appearance of their property. Apparently unaware of monastic ascetic values, he derided the Greek kelliots:

> [the Greek kellia] are the opposite [to ours]. These kellia are ruined; other than the inhabitants of Athos nobody has heard of them. [The Greek kelliots] do not care to increase the size of their kellia or to adorn them——*ne zabotyatsa ob ikh uvelichenii i blagolepii*——despite the often centuries-old age of their habitations. Only the Russian kelliots care about the expansion and beautifying of their dwellings.[58]

Unfortunately, the behaviour of some of the Russian kelliots was not merely worldly but unseemly. They spent most of their time in Salonica and Constantinople, living off the wealth they had accumulated on Athos. Often their scandalous behaviour drew public attention. One such kelliot was a certain Theodosiy who had a notorious affair with Tatyana, a Cossack woman from Astrakhan'.[59]

It is hardly surprising that, although by no means all were wordly or bad, many Russian kelliots were essentially unsuited to life on Athos and did much to destroy fragile relations with the Greeks. St Panteleimon clearly disapproved of the *kelliots*. Whereas the Rossikon's signature was, as we have seen, absent from the Loyal Vote and *Synaxis* minutes of October 1912, the St Panteleimon representative did not hesitate to sign the *Réfutation* of the kelliots' Memorandum.

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[58] Pavlovskiy, *Privet*, p. 111.

[59] MF 5 AAD p. 11.

relations with the Greeks. St Panteleimon clearly disapproved of the *kelliots*. Whereas the Rossikon's signature was, as we have seen, absent from the Loyal Vote and *Synaxis* minutes of October 1912, the St Panteleimon representative did not hesitate to sign the *Réfutation* of the kelliots' Memorandum.

In order to make life easier for their growing numbers the kelliots attempted to bend what they understood of the laws and customs of Athos to suit themselves. According to Athonite practice, the kellia were inhabited by one elder, or *geron*, and his two disciples. Joachim III's Canons stated that a kellion should not have more than six inhabitants. In its section on the different types of monastic dwelling the St Panteleimon guide to Athos implicitly assumes that a kellion houses a small group of ascetics, usually three in number.[60] As we have seen, however, some Russian kellia were small cœnobia of brethren a hundred-strong. The smallest of the twenty-six kellia described in *Privet so sv. gory Afona* had twenty brethren; the largest were at least as big as many of the governing monasteries. By exceeding the customary limit of brethren the Russian kelliots did not break any laws, for Joachim III's Canons were not ratified by any state. The kelliots also cleverly exploited the vagueness of the regulations governing buying and inheriting kellia. In order to acquire a kellion the buyer signed an *omologon*, or charter of agreement with the governing monastery. This document stated among other things the buying price and who was to live in the property being bought. The price of the kellion varied according to the property in question, and the new tenants were obliged not only to keep the building and land in good repair but to improve it. The *geron*, or senior kelliot, could confer the right of ownership of the property to his disciples, according to the conditions worked out in the *omologon*. At the death of the *geron* his successor had to renew the *omologon* and pay one third of the original price of the kellion to the monastery, but technically the *geron* and his two disciples could be enrolled as owners of the property. In addition the kelliots had to pay the annual state levy (the *harach* before 1912) to the monastery's tax collector. If the original owners of the property wished to acquire new disciples, they could do so without the permission of the monastery, but these newcomers had no rights of inheritance. If, however, the original owners wanted to sell their kellion to new owners, they could do so at a price of their own choosing, provided they informed the monastery and paid it one

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[60] Pavlovskiy, *Putevoditel'*, pp. 21-22.

tenth of the new price.[61] *Evloghia*, or paid permission, had to be obtained for the use of the monastery's timber for building. However, no permission was required for the cultivation of the kellion's land or for the improvement of the kellion itself; the kelliots merely had to keep the monastery informed of what they intended to do.

The regulations explained above are vague because they do not stipulate details of the *omologon*; those were decided between the monastery and the kelliots, and varied from monastery to monastery and kellion to kellion. Although the fee representing one third of the original price implies that there are three tenants per kellion, the regulations do not in fact put a limit to the numbers inhabiting a kellion. Finally, the regulations contain sufficiently large loopholes to permit the kelliots to hand down their property and to build as they wish. Pavlovskiy explains how the situation was exploited:

> The acquisition of kellia and their subsequent handing down to others has been sanctified by centuries-old Athonite customs, since it represents a considerable source of income for the monasteries. These customs started to change somewhat after the Russians had settled in many of the kellia. Once the Russians acquired a kellion, they made it the property not of one person, but for ever that of all the brethren. [...] When the *geron* dies, the eldest kelliot after him becomes the *geron*, the second disciple becomes his deputy, another is inscribed in the place of the third disciple, and so on. In this way, the kellion, although it is the property of only one person, nevertheless gradually passes from the command of one *geron* to the next and in the end remains in Russian hands.[62]

What the St Panteleimon guide to Athos says about the kelliots, their relationship with their governing monasteries and their rights to property on Athos is absolutely in accord with Joachim II's Canons and those of his successor; and the kelliots were deliberately contravening them. While not breaking Joachim II's Canons or any other regulations, the kelliots went entirely against the spirit and principles governing Athonite life. According to the St Panteleimon guide, 'the kellia on Athos generally belong to the monasteries and directly depend on them [...] [and as] they entirely depend on the monasteries they have no independence or assured existence whatsoever.'[63] Article CXXIX of Joachim III's Canons states that all sketes, kellia, *kalyves*, *kathismata* and other dependencies on Athos, with all their attached lands, vineyards and gardens are the inalienable property of the Twenty. Article LIII of Joachim II's Canons affirm that the Twenty's dependent

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[61] As we have seen, Aghiou Pavlou was paid 10% of the sale price of Monk Nikolai's kellion.

[62] Pavlovskiy, *Privet*, p. 111.

[63] Pavlovskiy, *Putevoditel'*, pp. 21, 23.

possessions outside Athos are also their inalienable property. According to Article CXIX of Joachim III's Canons, 'all sketes, kellia, hermitages and their income form part of the property of the monasteries, whose rights to this property cannot be taken away from them or disputed. The taking away or cessation of these rights cannot be authorised.' The next Article says: 'Nobody, for any reason, can sell, give away or take away the property of an Athonite monastery or its dependencies […]'[64]

The kellia had originally never been intended as anything more than small, semi-eremitical dwellings for those wishing to live a more solitary and ascetic life than was possible in a monastery. The Holy Mountain offered a wide choice of different ways of monastic life. The larger kellia grew into small cœnobitic monasteries. They accommodated the great numbers of Russians wishing to join the Athonite community who found no room in the two sketes and the Rossikon; but at same time they were altering the nature of Athos. Moreover, they were contravening Article CXVIII of Joachim II's Canon, which states that as everything is shared in a cœnobium, no cœnobitic monk possesses anything privately.[65]

The Russian kelliots wanted to be as independent as possible from the irksome authority of the Governing Monasteries, the *Koinotis* and the Patriarch. All disputes on the Holy Mountain were settled first by the Twenty Monasteries and then the *Koinotis*. In civil and criminal cases, as we have seen, the civil governor worked with the *Koinotis*. The Patriarch represented the highest body of judicial appeal. The kelliots, however, recognised only the authority of the Russian Consuls and ultimately of the Ambassador in Constantinople. *Afonskiya Izvestiya* describes several cases of litigation between kelliots that were settled by Russian diplomatic representatives. The journal also reports a case settled by Russian diplomats because the kelliots concerned ignored their governing monastery and the *omologon* they had signed with it. The disputed will of the deceased *geron* of the Kellion of the Exaltation of the Cross was settled by the Embassy, which based its judgement on the *omologon*. The plaintiffs accepted the judgement only because it came from the Embassy; they would have saved themselves much trouble had they acted in accordance with Athonite practice and referred to the *omologon* in the first place.[66]

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64 *Sentences arbitrales*, p. 76.
65 Ibid., p. 62.
66 MF 4 AAP AI-1 p. 2.

Another way the kelliots believed they could be freer from the constraining authority of the Greeks was for the larger kellia to become sketes. We have seen how Neofit tried to convert into a skete the kellion he bought from Esphigmenou. There must have been numerous other such cases from the latter part of the nineteenth century. Realising that they could not achieve their ends legitimately on Athos, the kelliots used Ignatiev's San Stefano tactics and proposed in their Memorandum to the Ambassadors' Conference that their kellia be made sketes. Nothing came of this, either.

There is evidence that the frustrated Pavlovskiy was planning to go a step further by inciting the whole of the Russian Athonite community to become independent of the Greeks. The *Koinotis* and the general running of Athos are attacked in the second number of *Afonskiya Izvestiya*.[67] The writer complains that the *Koinotis* was planning to levy a two per cent. 'municipal tax', which would be enforced by the Greek government. 'Unfortunately, […] this is in full contravention of the founding principles of Athonite life, and the acceptance of it by the Greek monasteries once again proves how little they value their infamous *status quo*.' The article next protests about the new ruling of the *Koinotis* that no members of the sketes, kellia and other dependent dwellings should be able to leave the Holy Mountain without the permission of their governing monasteries. Finally, the writer, as we have already seen, makes the erroneous assumption that the *Koinotis* was drifting away from the Patriarchate. He concludes that one of the possible solutions was for the Russian monks to break all ties with the *Koinotis—russkoe monashestvo perestanet schitatsya s Kinotom*.

In June 1914, the same month in which the first number of *Afonskiya Izvestiya* appeared, Pavlovskiy tried to galvanise all of Russian Athos into action. He circulated a declaration round the three principal Russian houses and the Brotherhood. The declaration was an expression of discontent about the state of affairs on Mount Athos. The sketes therefore requested to be made into monasteries and the larger kellia into sketes. The declaration concluded: 'In the eventuality that the *Koinotis* should gain control of the spiritual and secular running of Athos, we the Russian monastic community request, given our relatively large numerical size, to be allowed an equal vote in the *Koinotis*, or to separate ourselves from it completely.'[68]

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[67] Under the heading Raznya ivestiya i novosti (Various Items of News), ibid p. 3.

[68] MF 2 Docs Declaration Under Oath 16vi1914.

It is signed by the prior and brethren of the Serai and by the elders of thirty-four of the leading kellia. It is in the name also of the Rossikon and the Prophet Elijah Skete. The signature of the former's prior is missing; that of the skete's prior was added later because he was absent when the declaration was sent to Ambassador N.P. Giers.

Pavlovskiy's declaration was his last attempt to alter the situation on Athos in favour of the Russians, and it nearly succeeded. It did not because the First World War was to start in two months; Russian diplomats had more important problems to deal with than the Holy Mountain, and the Russian houses would soon be devoting their energies to dispatching recruits to the army, sending aid to their country and acquiring increasingly scarce supplies. Pavlovskiy, who was by now in the diplomatic service and understood how official circles functioned, knew that time was scarce and concerted action essential if official bodies were to be persuaded to help. The lack of the St Panteleimon signature at the end of the declaration must have been a setback.[69]

Once Pavlovskiy was installed as the permanent Russian diplomatic representative on the Holy Mountain he devoted his energies to all the Russian community. He maintained his close links with the Brotherhood but he knew that he would not have achieved much by championing their cause alone. The Memorandum had failed. Moreover, the Brotherhood was not officially recognised in Russia, just as St Panteleimon was initially shunned. The kelliots' bad behaviour was known in Russia, and Pavlovskiy tried to dispel public misgivings about them:

> In many social circles a false impression has been created about the kelliot elders that they are supposedly deceivers who pursue their own interests. Such views have been formed because of an ignorance of Athos, and a habit of basing statements on rumours.[70]

Perhaps the founding of the Brotherhood and the publication of *Privet so sv. gory Afona* were expressions of patriotic loyalty in order to attract imperial patronage and inspire Russia with confidence. In 1911 it was decided to send a special carved icon to the Emperor and Empress on the occasion of the three-hundredth anniversary of the Romanov Dynasty. No imperial patronage, let alone attention, was accorded, and the icon

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[69] The Declaration opens with the words: 'Declaration: 16 June 1914. We the undersigned abbots of the Russian Monastery of St Panteleimon [… etc]'. It ends: 'This declaration, on behalf of all the Russian monks, is certified by their signatures and the seals of the monastery, the sketes and the Brotherhood.' There is no St Panteleimon seal or signature of its Abbot.

[70] *Privet*, p. 112.

remained on the Holy Mountain.[71] Pavlovskiy proudly named the patrons of the Brotherhood, who were all diplomats and people connected with the Near East; there is a significant absence of senior Russian churchmen from his list.[72]

Just before the First World War Russian diplomats made a last serious attempt to gain control of the Holy Mountain. Apart from the military intervention to remove the heretics, this was the only occasion in history that the entire diplomatic mission in conjunction with the Foreign Ministry worked in concert to interfere in Athonite affairs. It seemed that at last Russia had woken up to the strategic importance of the peninsula.

In November 1912 Greece claimed *de facto* sovereignty to the Holy Mountain by installing her troops on it and by hoisting the Greek flag there. All that needed to be done was for her sovereignty to be ratified by international agreement. At the conclusion of the First Balkan War the Treaty of London was signed between the Balkan Allies and Turkey on 30 May 1913. It was agreed that Turkey would concede all her European territories west of the Midia-Enos Line except the area that was to become Albania. However, in Article V of the Treaty there was a special clause about all the former Ottoman islands in the Ægean and Mount Athos, whose fate was to be decided on by Germany, Austria, France, Britain, Italy and Russia.[73] The decision was postponed; from June to August 1913 the Second Balkan War was fought and the Treaty of London was never ratified. Article XV the Treaty of Athens signed between Greece and Turkey on 14 November 1913, stated that Turkey and Greece were expressly bound 'to maintain, insofar as they are concerned, the dispositions of the Treaty of London, including

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[71] On p. 107 of *Privet* there is a photograph of the icon. In the text lent to me someone has written in ink at the foot of the page, in pre-revolutionary script: **Осталась на Аѳонѣ**—'It [feminine, agreeing with **икона**] has remained on Athos.'

[72] Ibid., pp. 9 and 17. Pavlovskiy says that Metropolitan Michael of Belgrade had once been sympathetic to the Brotherhood and that it sent an icon to Bishop Nazariy of Nizhniy Novgorod and Arzamas. The latter, a mere bishop, was a very junior member of the Church.

[73] *Sentences arbitrales*, p. 92: 'Sa Majesté l'Empereur des Ottomans et Leurs Majestés les Souverains alliés déclarent confier à Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne, à Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Autriche, Roi de Bohême, etc. et Roi Apostolique de Hongrie, à M. le Président de la République Française, à Sa Majesté le Roi de la Grande Bretagne et de l'Irlande et des Territoires Britanniques au-delà des Mers, Empereur des Indes, à Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie et à Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes le Russies, le soin de statuer sur le sort de toutes les îles ottomanes de la Mer Égée, l'Île de Crète exceptée, et de la péninsule du Mont Athos.'

the stipulations of Article V of the said Treaty.'[74] Thus the fate of Mount Athos was still to be decided by the six Powers.

Russia was the only Power to take an active interest in the Holy Mountain. Her representative negotiated about the Holy Mountain at the Conference of Ambassadors that was opened in London under the chairmanship of the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey in August 1913. The Conference was attended by the Great Powers, and Greece was not represented. The Russian Ambassador proposed that Mount Athos become an international, neutral protectorate administered by those countries with an interest in the peninsula, namely Britain, Egypt, Austria, the Balkan Christian states and Turkey. He also proposed the two Russian sketes become monasteries on a par with the Twenty. It was then that the Brotherhood of the Russian Kelliot Houses presented their Memorandum. In it they asked that Mount Athos become an international neutral protectorate administered by the Balkan Christian states under the ægis of Russia.[75] The *Koinotis*, as we have seen, responded with their *Réfutation*. It is hard to say what the reaction of the other five ambassadors was to the lobbying of the Orthodox Christian factions; the memorandum cannot have helped the Russian ambassador's cause. No formal, clear decision was reached about Article V of the Treaty of London. However, on 11 August 1913 the ambassadors in London signed a Protocol. As such, it was merely a statement and did not have the legal weight of a treaty. The Protocol stated:

> The question of the international situation of Mount Athos has not been entirely settled by the meeting. Nevertheless, an agreement has been reached [...]: Mount Athos is to have an independent, neutral autonomy.'[76]

Taking advantage of the vague terms of the Protocol and of the Greeks' ignorance of what had been decided, Russia opened bi-partite negotiations with the Greek government in Constantinople. In the same month, August 1913, Greece had no choice but to agree to the proposal, which was one of the Memorandum's requests, that Mount Athos should have an autonomous regime under the protection of the Orthodox

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74 Ibid., p. 93: 'maintenir, en ce qui les concerne, les dispositions du Traité de Londres, y compris les stipulations de l'article 5 dudit Traité.'

75 Ibid., p. 95.

76 Ibid., p. 96: 'La question de la situation internationale du Mont Athos n'a pas été réglée entièrement par la réunion. Toutefois, un accord a été établi sur les points suivants: le Mont Athos aurait ['aura', according to Antonopoulos, op. cit., p. 392] une autonomie indépendante et neutre [...].' There follow stipulations about the powers of the *Koinotis* to administer the peninsula with a police force and lightly-armed naval vessels at its disposal.

states.[77] Venizelos made an announcement to this effect in Parliament.[78] Despite her occupying troops, Greece's sovereign status on the Holy Mountain was uncertain and for this reason she was unable to ratify Joachim III's Canons.[79] In October 1913 the *Epistasia* and the Twenty Abbots and Representatives wrote letters of dismay and protest to the Patriarch, Venizelos, the Ambassadors' Conference, the Foreign Ministries of the Orthodox states and King Constantine I.[80]

Russia increased the pressure on Greece by demanding that she withdraw her troops from Athos and negotiate over the Athonite boundaries. The Greeks gave vague assurances that they would comply. Russia pressed for a formal agreement and negotiations between Ambassador Giers and a Greek diplomatic representative started in Constantinople in May 1914.

Giers proposed a nine-point plan.[81] As a consolation to the Greeks he proposed that: Mount Athos be placed under the spiritual supremacy of the Œcumenical Patriarch; civil authority be temporarily exercised by a commissioner appointed by Greece from the Greek Foreign Ministry with a body of gendarmes under his command; and a fixed tax be maintained on the Holy Mountain to defray the administrative costs incurred by the Greek state. These concessions were a worthless sop. The Patriarch was supreme spiritual head already and the Russians had never objected to that; and he might be open to diplomatic pressure, as Ignatiev once demonstrated. The administrative tax was the same as in the last years of Ottoman rule. Finally, the post of Commissioner was only to be a temporary appointment. Giers also suggested that a civil and criminal judicial system be set up on Athos under the Civil Commissioner; Athonites were to be able to appeal to their respective consular tribunals in Constantinople. This new system, already adopted by the kelliots, entirely bypassed the *Koinotis*, which hitherto had been functioning as a judicial body of appeal under the Patriarch.

In the Russians' favour Giers asked for the following: no measure of a general nature was to be taken on Athos by the Greek government without the prior consent of Russia; Greece was to recognise Russia's right to protect her subjects and her religious establishments on Athos; Greece was to recognise the

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77 Antonopoulos, op. cit., p. 393.

78 According to Dmitrievskiy, op. cit., p. 22. He does not specify the date.

79 Khristou, op. cit., p. 281.

80 *To ieron psiphisma,* pp. 18-24. The signatures of the double *Synaxis* are not listed, but it is unlikely that St Panteleimon was a signatory.

81 Antonopoulos, op. cit., pp. 393-394.

appointment of a Russian civil servant who would, while on Athos, enjoy the rights and prerogatives enjoyed by the diplomatic representatives of the Great Powers in the Levant; this functionary would share the civil administration conjointly with the Greek commissioner in all questions of a general nature and in those matters concerning the monks and establishments of Russia; he was also to see to it that the gendarmerie should be composed of as many Russian subjects as Greek; all monks on Athos were to keep their original nationality and were to be allowed to fly the flag of their respective countries from any buildings inhabited by them—be they monasteries, sketes, kellia, or *kalyves*—and from any of their sea-going vessels. Finally, Giers proposed that the two Russian sketes become monasteries.

These were cunning requests. The international status of Mount Athos was not specifically insisted on; instead, a dual Greek-Russian administration, with Russia as the senior partner, was being suggested. In fact, Giers was harking back to the San Stefano, whose twenty-second article was aimed specifically at defending Russian rights on Athos. For this reason, Greece was eager to reinstate the conditions the Treaty of Berlin, which defended the ancient rights and privileges of all nationalities on Athos, not only those of the Russians. The Peace Treaty of Lausanne, 24 July 1923, which on this point reinforced the Treaty of Sèvres, stated: 'Greece undertakes to recognise the traditional rights and liberties enjoyed by the non-Greek communities of Mount Athos according to the dispositions of Article LXII of the Treaty of Berlin.'[82]

The Greek-Russian negotiations were cut short by the outbreak of the First World War. After the October Revolution of 1917 there was no further prospect of renewing them. Greece's sovereignty over Mount Athos was eventually internationally recognised. She had *de jure* sovereignty when she was apportioned Salonica and Khalkidiki in the Treaty of Bucharest, 10 August 1913. However, because Article XV of the Treaty of Athens bound Greece to stick to the stipulations of the fifth Article of the Treaty of London, Greece did not have *de facto* sovereignty of the peninsula. But the Treaty of London Article had in mind the concert of the six Powers before the First World War. With the fall of the Habsburg Empire and Tsarist Russia the Fifth Article was no longer relevant. France, Italy and Britain signed the Treaty of Sèvres with

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[82] *Sentences Arbitrales*, p. 67: 'La Grèce s'engage à reconnaître les droits traditionnels et les libertés dont jouissent les communautés monastiques non grecques du Mont Athos d'après les dispositions de l'article 62 du Traité de Berlin du 13 juillet 1878.'

Greece and so implicitly recognised Greece's *de jure* and *de facto* sovereignty over Mount Athos. Thus the members of the non-Greek communities on Mount Athos were internationally considered as subjects of Greece, whom, as minorities, she undertook to protect.

The years between the outbreak of the First World War and the demise of the tsarist regime marked a painful and confusing decline for Russian Athos. In the early stages of the War Boris Serafimov, the Ambassador's secretary in Constantinople, was increasingly busy, but had not forgotten the Russian Athonites, who were his special responsibility. On 31 January 1915 he wrote to the prior of the Prophet Elijah Skete to reassure him that 'the present trials in no way force me to forget the matter which I have started on Athos and which, God willing, I shall take up afresh as soon as an opportunity presents itself.'[83] He then told both sketes that before they became independent monasteries they would have to buy their land from Vatopedi and Pantokratoros. This idea of financial compensation to the governing monasteries was not a new one. Dmitrievskiy discussed it in 1912.[84] He argued that the sketes would also have to buy additional land to make up for the inadequacy of what they already had, and that consequently the entire territory of the Holy Mountain would have to be re-distributed. Such a plan was wholly impractical and it is fortunate that it remained theoretical.

The Russians did not give up hope immediately. They imagined that at end of the Great War their country would take vigorous measures to solve the Athonite question. Priest-monk Makariy and Monk Kliment of the Serai were sent to Petrograd, and they were shortly joined by Monk Panteleimon of the Prophet Elijah Skete. They asked the Foreign Ministry to help bring about the promotion of the sketes to full monastic status. Nothing came of their mission: by now Nicholas II had abdicated, and the Provisional Government was to fall in six months.[85]

There was one last glimmer of hope for the Russian Athonites. At the beginning of the World War Prime Minister Venizelos was anxious to commit Greek troops alongside those of the *Entente*, but King Constantine advocated neutrality. Venizelos insisted on honouring what he understood to be Greece's promise to come to the aid of Serbia, according to his interpretation of a treaty signed by the two countries in 1913.

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83 MF 2 Docs Hand-written Letter 31i1915.

84 MF 5 AAD pp. 17-18.

85 MF 2 Docs Telegrams and Letter April and May 1917.

Bulgaria, who was aligned with the Central Powers, attacked Serbia in September 1915. Venizelos invited Britain and France to send an expeditionary force to Salonica in support of the Serbs; but the king eventually opposed this move and the gulf between the monarch and his prime minister was irreconcilable. In October 1915 the Salonica front was established by British and French troops, although the king insisted that Greece remain neutral. In the late summer of 1916 Venizelos marched into Salonica to a rapturous welcome and there he established a rival government with its own army.[86] Greece was now split by the 'National Schism'. Although the *Koinotis* pledged its allegiance to the Venizelos camp, the political status of the Holy Mountain was again uncertain and its Greek population must have felt vulnerable. To make matters worse for the Greek Athonites, in January 1917 a detachment of Franco-Russian troops arrived on the Holy Mountain.

The detachment stayed until June. In this time 'Russian influence on Athos became significantly stronger.'[87] The military arrested a number of monks to enforce order and confiscated illegal weapons. The dependent Russian houses were free once again to circumvent their unco-operative governing monasteries. For instance, in April the Prophet Elijah Skete sent 8,000 drachmas via the Russian commander to Salonica to buy provisions, and in June they asked him for written permission to fish from their launch at night.[88] As soon as the soldiers left

> the situation of the Russian Athonites sharply worsened [...] the little that was done for the benefit of the Russians——all was subject to distorted criticism; the Russians were regarded with a predatory eye—— *volchepodobnomu vzglyadu na russkikh*——and in the end the [Greek] government intervened in the Athonite question without waiting for the end of the War with the intention of utterly humiliating, if not destroying, the Russian population here.

Once the Greeks were sure that Russia was powerless, owing to the Revolution, they 'became emboldened.' Giers' nine conditions were reversed. The *Koinotis* were given full administrative autonomy over Athos. A new police arrived on the Holy Mountain at their request. A swingeing head-tax was

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86 See Clogg, R., *A Concise history of Greece* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 86-91.

87 MF 2 Docs Telegram to the Prophet Elijah Skete 4vi1917. It was sent by the skete representative in Salonica. In it he referred to the 'five-month' stay of the detachment, which must have arrived in January. The skete sent a letter to the commander of the detachment on 17 June. The detachment must have left shortly afterwards because Venizelos returned to Athens on 14 June and the Russian soldiers would have been needed elsewhere.

88 MF 3 Vyh 11 24iv1917 and 36 17vi1917.

imposed on the Russians and a new levy was placed on all provisions imported by them onto Athos.[89]

In addition to the increased pressure from the Greeks, the Russians had to put up with the hardships of war. In October 1914, after Turkey had entered the war as an ally of Germany and Austria, the dependencies of St Panteleimon and the Serai were seized in Constantinople. They were not given back by Turkey until 1931, by which time they were of little use.[90] Russian Athonites joined up, either as medical personnel, volunteers, conscripts or chaplains. In March 1917, for instance seventy-two members of the Prophet Elijah Skete had gone to various fronts, never to return; at the time the skete brethren numbered 179, as compared with over three hundred before the start of the war.[91] Worst of all, contacts with Russia were suddenly and irrevocably broken by the Bolshevik Revolution and the ensuing Civil War. No more visitors arrived from Russia, and no more novices joined the houses. The great deposits of money in the banks of Odessa and elsewhere in Russia became unavailable.

So ended the overwhelming Russian presence on Athos that had started in the eighteenth century. Money, politics, overcrowding and nationalism had obscured St Paisiy's principles of humility, poverty and self-sufficiency. The Russians who came to Athos in the nineteenth century did so with pious intentions, and without the connivance or even approval of official Russian bodies. The Athonite Peninsula was not coveted by Russia as a strategic outpost near the Dardanelles; it, and the rest of Khalkidiki and Salonica, was not even included in the Great Bulgaria of San Stefano. Only from 1912 did Russia start interfering in Athonite affairs, but even then she did so only on the behalf of her monks, not for any strategic or military purposes.

How right were the Greeks to react as they did? Greece was certainly insulted when Russia tried to deny her sovereignty in 1912, and Russian diplomacy used guile and bullying to get its way in negotiations. Had there been no Bolshevik Revolution the Russians would probably have got their way: they would eventually have installed their own civil commissioner on Athos, the Sketes would have become monasteries, the larger kellia might have acquired skete status, and the rights and privileges of the Twenty would have been irrevocably damaged.

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89 MF 2 Docs Notice to Russian Salonica Consulate 19xi1918.

90 *Sentences arbitrales*, passim; MF 2 Docs Inventory and Declaration to Consulate 22xi1914 and 18iii1915.

91 MF 4 AAP Pavlovskiy's Filled-in Questionnaire iii1917

The Greeks clearly wanted to extract their pound of flesh from the Russians. Their rough handling of the Russians, whom they regarded as a contemptible but lucrative source of money, is as unchristian as anything the Russians were guilty of. Moreover, the new Greek civil rule on Athos, because of the close ties between the *Koinotis* and the state, threatened one day to become pervasive and harmful to the traditional Athonite monastic autonomy. The Ottomans, though not Christian, by and large kept a respectful distance from the internal affairs of the Holy Mountain, and were impartial.

The bloody conflicts in the Balkans were a dangerous catalyst to the ethnic rivalries on Athos. The Greeks, owing to the struggle for Macedonia, had come to hate the Bulgarians as much as they did the Turks. In Greek eyes the Bulgarians were inextricably bound to the Russians because of Pan-Slavism, which resulted in the creation of Great Bulgaria, the schism and, they believed, the annexation of Eastern Roumelia. In other words, the Russians were as bad as the Bulgarians.

Greek hatred of the Bulgarians was at its bitterest in the first decade of the twentieth century, before the Balkan Wars, when the struggle for Macedonia was a guerrilla conflict. Ever since, the Greeks have regarded the Bulgarians as cruel, treacherous brutes. This is the message of history text books for schools in Greece from primary level upwards, and it has been immortalised in Penelope Delta's immensely popular novel, *Sta mystika tou Valtou*.[92]

The Hellenic patriotism instilled in Macedonia is neatly summed up in an old poem that every Macedonian Greek knows by heart and that has been adapted to music as a popular song. Its first two verses run thus:

'I am proud to be Greek;
I know my origins,
And my Greek soul
Lives always free.

The scabies of Panslavism
Does not infect the Macedonians,
Nor does it remove them
From Hellenism.'[93]

Inspired by a similar patriotic sentiment, the *Koinotis* wrote in its *Réfutation* of the Kelliots' Memorandum that the international neutrality of the Holy Mountain was unthinkable. Such a political status meant that Athos, which had been

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[92] Delta, P.S., *Sta mystika tou Valtou* (Athens: Estias, 30th edition, 1991). For the background to the guerilla war in Macedonia, see Dakin, op. cit., passim.

[93] Είμαι Έλλην το καυχώμαι
Ξέρω την καταγωγή μου
Και η Ελληνική ψυχή μου
Ελεύθερα πάντα ζεί.

Του Πανσλαβισμού η ψώρα
Μακεδόνας δεν μολύνει,
Ούτε τούς απομακρύνει
Από τον Ελληνισμό.

conquered by and therefore rightly belonged to the King of the Hellenes, would have to be shared with the Slav barbarians. 'Liberty,' proclaims the *Réfutation*,

> is a Hellenic creation and, together with Greek learning, has powerfully contributed to civilisation and the appeasement of the whole of Humanity. If, therefore, in this period, savage and barbaric peoples should enjoy this boon under the Hellenic flag, are we, the monks of Mount Athos to be subjugated under the sceptre of a less liberal, less progressive and less civilising race? Never!![94]

Russian nationalism on Athos was expressed in terms no less extreme. The kelliots were not the only ones to be fervently patriotic. In April and May 1917, shortly after Nicholas II had abdicated, both sketes sent telegrams to express their loyal greetings to the Provisional Government.[95] The Serai was particularly nationalistic; the opening of its own official history speaks of the Great Russian nation as of a people chosen by God.[96]

The most extreme expression of nationalism is to be found in Ivanov, whose monograph is quoted earlier in this chapter. Much of what he says is so exaggerated and inaccurate that it cannot be taken seriously. However, there is always an element of sense in even far-fetched views. Ivanov had an axe to grind. He considered that all the ills in Russia, and ultimately on Mount Athos were caused by masons, Catholics and Jews, who fomented revolutions. The Heresy of the Name was made possible because the Greeks had not established civil order on the Holy Mountain, and the expelled rebels went back to Russia to cause further trouble.[97] The other things he said about the Greeks are less laughable but more offensive. He believed that the Phanariot Greeks had 'managed to worm their way—*uspeli vteret'sya*—into positions of power' in the Ottoman Empire by relentless suppression of the Slavs. These Phanariots were narrow-minded pedants whose teaching promoted ignorance. Ivanov comes to the conclusion that

> the bullying of the Phanariot clergy has been preserved to this day only on the Holy Mountain where it is supported by the submission of Athos to the

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94 *Réfutation* p. 26: 'La liberté est [...] un produit hellénique, et combinée avec les lettres grecques, elle a contribué puissamment à la civilisation et à l'adoucissement des mœurs de l'Humanité entière. Si donc, dans ce temps-ci, des peuples sauvages et barbares jouissent de ce bienfait sous le drapeau hellénique, nous, les moines du Mont-Athos, serons-nous asservis au sceptre d'une race moins libérale, moins progressive et moins civilisatrice? Jamais!!'

95 MF 2 Docs Telegrams in Russian and French April and May 1917.

96 Unfortunately, I have not been able to trace a copy of this text. I saw one in the Prophet Elijah Skete before the expulsion, in 1992.

97 MF 6 Ivanov, pp. 1-6.

> ecclesiastic power of the Œcumenical Patriarch——although in fact there is no canonical foundation to such a submission.[98]

Ivanov then comes to conclusions which are disturbing because some are correct and others misguided, and on the whole they reflect what many Russian Athonites believed.

> The Greeks with their intolerance, haughtiness and political fanaticism have aims which have nothing to do with the spiritual, meditative life of Athonite monasticism. The Greek monks are preoccupied with political passions and aim to gain mastery over the Slavs, Romanians and, above all, Russians, who have by their own efforts built magnificent churches to God and populous monastic dwellings for those seeking peace and a prayerful, meditative life [...] The historic ties of Russian monks with Athos are utterly devoid of politics. [...] The supremacy of the Greek monasteries on Athos has no canonical basis, nor is it a result of the seizure of the peninsula by the Greek Kingdom. Athos never has belonged to Hellas.[99]

It is important to bear in mind that the Russians on or connected with Athos were so numerous and varied that none of their opinions was wholly representative of what they all thought. As a socio-ethnic group they were as multifarious as their country was great. St Panteleimon Monastery did not approve of the kelliots; Dmitrievskiy opposed Pavlovskiy; Ivanov suggested that the supremacy of the patriarch on Athos was uncanonical, whereas Dmitrievskiy and Pavlovskiy believed that maintaining the patriarch's position was essential. The monks of St Panteleimon and the Serai were Great Russians; those of the Prophet Elijah Skete were Small Russians. Many of the kelliots lacked the theological and ecclesiastical training characteristic of the brethren of the three main Russian houses. The Greeks were also ethnically varied, and there were rivalries on Athos between monks from the different islands and parts of the mainland. But compared with the Russians they were a homogenous group; they thought alike and the Kingdom of Greece, despite its split in the First World War, was compact compared with Russia. The real tragedy of Athos in 1917 is that the Greeks and Russians had little in common and did not understand each other.

In late 1914 Prior Ioann of the Prophet Elijah Skete, or someone close to him, wrote that Russia was a peace-loving country that entered the Great War because she had a divine mission to protect the Slavs, in particular her 'little sister Serbia', from destruction by the Germans. Furthermore, Russia was destined to 'free the ancient Christian treasures in Constantinople and the Holy Land from the Godless Mohammedan Turks. This is the great and glorious task to be accomplished

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98 Ibid., p. 8. Compare with fn. 4 of this chapter.

99 Ibid., pp. 14-15.

by holy Rus' in the World War that has just started!'[100] Is this an example of Pan-Slav sentiments that threatened the Greeks? After all, they depict Russia as champion of the Slavs. The hopes about Constantinople would have also been offensive, as Greece was hoping to claim that city as her rightful heritage. However, Serbia was on good terms with Greece, so there could have been little harm in Russia's protection of Serbia. In fact, the author was merely voicing the general feelings of all Russians who loved their country and were cut off from it in uncertain times. What he said specifically about Russia's divine role was the private dream of an individual. It is fortunate that the text was not published and misinterpreted by Greeks.

What the Russians did on Athos may have been misguided and contrary to the spirit of monasticism, but it was natural. Money and power obscured St Paisiy Velichkovskiy's ideals, and the Holy Mountain became a prize to be fought over. The Greeks were just as guilty of fighting for this prize. Any other ethnic group, given the opportunities of the Greeks and Russians, would have done the same. In the 1870s the Romanian Skete of St John the Forerunner made a bid to free itself from the Lavra, to which it belonged, and become an independent monastery. Prince Charles intervened on the skete's behalf, but the bid ended in failure. P.K. Khristou says that it is one of history's injustices that the Rumanians never managed to acquire a monastery on the Holy Mountain.[101] Had Romania been a great Power like Russia, he would not have had such charitable sentiments.

In 1918 the Russians felt they were being persecuted on Mount Athos. Their hardships made them remember, for the first time in almost a century, forgotten Athonite values. 'All these troubles,' complained a monk writing on behalf of the two sketes, 'are making Athos a kind of political hotbed of national enmity where one nationality is pitted against another: it ought be a peaceful haven of Orthodox Monasticism, a haven which should truly embrace all brothers in Christ.'[102]

It should not be forgotten that we have been concentrating on political, worldly and therefore sensational events. What of those Greek and Russian monks—perhaps the majority—who, just as they did in St Panteleimon in the 1870s, got on with their

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100 MF 2 Docs Hand-written Sermon ?1914.

101 Khristou, op. cit., p. 305.

102 MF 2 Docs Confidential letter of the two sketes to the Abbot of St Panteleimon 1918.

daily monastic business, ignoring as best they could the intrusion of the outside world into their ascetic lives?

PART II: THE PROPHET ELIJAH SKETE

Chapter 6: From St Paisiy to Archimandrite Ioann 1763-1914

The story of the Russians on Athos begins and ends with the Prophet Elijah Skete. St Paisiy was both the skete's founding member and the unwitting initiator of the seemingly inexorable Russian colonisation of the Holy Mountain. By the beginning of the present century, when the Russian community was at its height, his monastic ideals were in danger of being forgotten. After 1917 they were once again aspired to, and nowhere more so than in his own skete, which had been less ethnically and politically controversial than the other Russian houses. It had had its share of upheaval and uncertainty, and increasing Greek-Russian tension everywhere contributed to its worsening relations with its governing monastery; but the skete's history is essentially local and Athonite.

When St Paisiy left in 1763 only a handful of monks remained.[1] The history of the skete over the next forty-two years is not well documented. Until at least the first decade of the nineteenth century it is thought to have been inhabited by Black Sea Cossacks.[2] St Paisiy's successor was Archimandrite Varlaam. He dug the well which now stands between the skete gates and the central church.[3] The next prior was Hadzhi Athanasiy, formerly a secretary at the Russian Embassy in Constantinople.[4] Archimandrite Toviya and Priest-monk Iezikiil were also important figures in the skete's early history.[5]

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1 According to the *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit svyatago proroka Ilii na svyatoy Afonskoy gore*, which was the official skete history written for pilgrims, the monks that remained were mainly Russian—*preimuschesvenno russkie*. p. 35.

2 Ibid., p. 37. A manuscript book in the vestry listing benefactors, inscriptions on three ecclesiastical gifts and in the old central church, finished in 1806, all show that the brethren at the time were Black Sea Cossacks.

3 The central church of a skete is known as the *kyriako*, a derivative of *kyriaki*, meaning Sunday, hence the *kyriako* is used for worship on Sundays and festivals. The skete brethren referred to the church as the *sobor*, which is a confusing Russian word meaning large church—lit. where people gather. The central church of a monastery is the *katholiko*. There is no equivalent distinction in Russian between the central church of a skete and a monastery.

4 The prior of a skete is known as the *dikaios*. As with *kyriako*, I have chosen to use the English equivalent rather than the transliterated Greek term.

5 The 1798 Charter, MF 2 Docs 1798 Charter Copy[?] post-1798. In its introduction and Article 1, it states: '…the deceased Archimandrites Varlaam and Toviya and […] Priest-monk Iezikiil. […] The Prior Khadzhi Athanasiy […] was […] the disciple of the deceased Archimandrite, Kyrios Varlaam, the second founder of the skete.' The *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 38, says that it is not clear whether Toviya and Iezikiil were priors.

During Hadzhi Athanasiy's reign, on 22 July 1798, a new charter (*omologon*) was issued by Pantokratoros, the skete's governing monastery. The charter describes Athanasiy thus:

> He ... laboured a great deal, and acquired various chattels and other objects, as specified in the list. And, according to his promise, he visited the Lord's tomb and Sinai. Upon his return we appointed him prior of the Prophet Elijah skete so that he, a virtuous and practical man,——*muzh dobrodetel'nyi i praktichnyi*,——might be both leader and guardian of the skete's brethren.[6]

It can be seen that in Pantokratoros he was held in high regard. Going on a pilgrimage, or hadj, to the Holy Land was still, at the end of the eighteenth century, considered an admirable feat. What is unusual, however, is not so much his admired spiritual qualities as his material value to the monastery. The skete was extremely poor and needed strong, practical leadership. The monastery itself was probably poor. It could not do without the modest yearly dues of fifty piastri the skete paid it, as was customary on the Holy Mountain. Besides, the monastery's land was being well tended; a thriving spiritual community was good for morale and raised the monastery's prestige in the Athonite community. The charter speaks of the skete as having

> expanded under the beneficial influence of the fathers of the Russian people and language. Among the first of these is the most blessed and respected father and elder Kyrios Paisiy, and after him to the present day our Sacred Monastery has received no small benefit and help from successive priors.[7]

St Paisiy's original charter was either replaced or lost.[8] It is thought that the 1798 charter offered the skete greater privileges than before. Athanasiy was given permission to re-build the central church and dilapidated cells, and to build new cells 'in whatever place he should see fit', provided only that he first seek the monastery's blessing.[9] Moreover, the skete received as a gift from the monastery a triangle of about 540 acres of wooded land surrounding the former's buildings.[10] This

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6 1798 Charter, ibid., Article 1. The wording is not clear on chronology, perhaps because the version on my microfilm is a Russian copy and presumably an incompetent translation of a text originally in Greek: 'thus, after his [Varlaam's] death he [Athanasiy] was prior for ten years.' This implies that the charter was issued after Athanasiy's reign, and possibly after his death. But Article 2, like 3, speaks of him as the reigning prior: 'If he can do so, Prior Athanasiy has the permission of our Holy Monastery [...] to renew the old church...'

7 Ibid., introduction.

8 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p 38: 'a new charter in place of the old one which had been lost—*staroy zateryannoy*.'

9 1798 Charter, Article 2.

10 MF 2 Docs 2 Maps 1798: these show two maps of the land given to the skete. The inscription over the second map reads: 'The wooded area owned by the Prophet Elijah Skete before 1839 totalling up to 200 *desyatiny*.' A *desyatina* is about 2.7 acres. In an appeal, entitled *Ob'yavlenie* (MF 2 Docs

was unusually generous of Pantokratoros: by that time Athonite sketes possessed no land of their own, as all the territory of the Holy Mountain belonged exclusively to the Twenty.

As a result of Hadzhi Athanasiy's enlightened leadership and the friendly relationship with the monastery, the skete's numbers quickly rose. Soon there was not sufficient room inside the skete to house all the brethren. Only the clergy and senior monks lived within the main buildings; the rest inhabited nearby huts in isolated groups of two or three. They lived off their handiwork, with which they occupied themselves during the week, and came to the refectory and the central church only on Sundays and feast days. Thus, for the only time in its history, the Prophet Elijah Skete, alone among all Russian Athonite houses, was a *lavra* on traditional Greek Athonite lines, like the great Greek Athonite sketes; its central church was, as in Greek sketes, used principally on the Lord's Day and feast days. While those who sold their wares were materially more-or-less independent, albeit poor, the inhabitants of the skete itself depended on benefaction from the Black Sea fleet and on the income from the skete's Danube fisheries. The skete had ceased to be entirely self-sufficient as it had been in St Paisiy's day, and it was to live off its own resources once again only after 1917.

On Athanasiy's death Priest-monk Gerasim took over, and he in turn was succeeded by Priest-monk Parfeniy. No dates are available, but when the Turks took revenge on the Orthodox millet for the Greek uprising in 1821, Parfeniy, along with Gerasimos of St Panteleimon and most other Athonites, left the Holy Mountain. He went to Russia via Trieste with Monks Savva and Damian, and took with him a portion of the True Cross, vestments, ecclesiastical treasures, books and other skete valuables. It was not long before the remaining brethren also fled.

For about eight years Parfeniy stayed at the Lebyazhskiy Nikolaevskiy Monastery on the Black Sea. At some point he went to St Petersburg and offered the Cross and relics to Alexander I, who refused them. The tsar told him that they belonged to he skete whither he ought to return. Parfeniy returned Athos with a handful of monks in 1830, once peace had been made between Russia and Turkey. He went first to Pantokratoros, where he found eight of the skete brethren who had recently arrived from Moldavia. They then set off for the skete, but it was in such

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Declaration undated 1915 [?]), however, the wooded area is described as being 300 *desyatiny* or 750 acres in size. This document was probably written in 1915. A report entitled *Doklad* (see below), MF 2 Docs Report 1918, also claims that the original plot of land was 300 *desyatiny*.

ruins and so overgrown that it was difficult to recognise or even locate.

The skete's fortunes plummeted: all had to be re-built from scratch; as a result, 'the rules of monastic life were carelessly observed and each was more anxious for his bodily welfare than for that of his soul.'[11] A confusing period of instability ensued and historical accounts of it are vague. The brethren were no longer Cossacks from the Black Sea but a mixture of Cossacks from the Zaporozhye region, who were Ottoman subjects, and Russians, Ukrainians and Moldavians from the Danube—a group of people that proved wilful and undisciplined. A pilgrim returning from the Holy Land died in the skete of the plague—*morovaya bolezn'*. Twenty of the brethren also died of it, and in 1836, so did Parfeniy. Divine retribution was believed to have struck, for the plague affected no other place on the Holy Mountain.[12] An all-night vigil service was celebrated during which a piece of the True Cross from Xiropotamou was venerated and holy water was sprinkled everywhere; the plague ceased; but the skete's problems merely increased.

The only light in this dark and troubled time was Anikita Schikhmatov-Shirinskiy's arrival in April 1835. Parfeniy gave him his own cell, in which St Paisiy had once lived. The skete was Anikita's base until he left for Palestine three months later. The next year, after his disappointing return to St Panteleimon, he came back to the skete on 11 May with his beloved icon of St Mitrofan. He was received at the gates with honour by the prior and senior brethren. Anikita stayed at the skete to serve forty liturgies so as to fulfil a vow he had made at the Lord's tomb in Jerusalem. On 3 August he laid the foundation of St Mitrofan's chapel, which today is on the south side of the central church. He entrusted Schema-monk Pankratiy with money donated in Russia sufficient to complete the building. After he had unwillingly left for Athens Anikita was elected prior. The brethren longed for his return, for chaos reigned at the skete. From 1837 to 1841 no fewer than six other priors were elected and they hastily resigned. Among these, Priors Arseniy and Seraphim, as well as Anikita himself, came from outside the skete.[13] All six left the skete on retirement.

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11 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 40.

12 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit* is not clear on dates. On p. 43 the plague is said to have struck the next year, or the next summer,—*na drugoe leto*—, that is, in 1837; but two pages before the date given is 1836.

13 *Actes de Pantokrator*, p. 57, '1839, 26 août. Règlement…', Article 5. See also *Vypis' Aktov*, the skete's Russian translation, MF 2 Docs Copy of 1839 Charter, 25viii1839: 'When it will be necessary to change the prior,

Perhaps Anikita would have been the best of the priors elected at this time, but he never returned to Athos: he was released from his duties in Athens by the Moscow Synod but died before he set out on his way back north, on 7 July 1837. In 1840 his bones were brought to the skete by Vissarion and Varsonoufiy, co-founders of the Serai. The bones were first immured in the sanctuary of the St Mitrofan Chapel and then put into a casket so that they could be more easily venerated.

The troubled time of the seven priors was one of internal strife. Pavel succeeded Parfeniy but ceded his place to the outsider Arseniy. Both Pavel and Arseniy were Great Russians. Arseniy's election displeased the Small Russian brethren, who forced him to retire and reinstated Pavel. The chief trouble maker among the Small Russians was Monk Savva, who strove to expel the numerous Great Russian brethren from the skete. Would Anikita, himself a Great Russian, have commanded sufficient respect to stop this ethnic discord? And would he have been approved of by Pantokratoros? What is certain is that he was elected as a last resort: the sensible majority in the skete were desperate for order to be restored.

The skete's relationship with its ruling monastery deteriorated. At some time on or before 1839 the 1798 charter was lost. Taking advantage of the uncertainty that must have arisen, the monastery confiscated the 540-acre triangle of forest, leaving the skete a plot of less than thirty acres.[14] In addition, Pantokratoros took away a *Chrysoboulla* and a *Syggilion*, and the Sultan's *firman*, which exempted the skete from paying the *harach* and other Ottoman taxes.[15] By 1839 the skete and its monastery had taken each other to court. To make up for the loss of the 1798 Charter, a mutually agreed Declaration was drawn up on 28 August 1839 and ratified in

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the skete fathers must elect one of the Council of their brethren.' I do not have on microfilm the 1798 Charter, nor St Paisiy's Rule. In the latter the saint stipulates that the prior (or abbot) must be elected from the brethren who had their spiritual development in the skete (or monastery) and was obedient to the former head of the house in accordance with its rule. If, however, there be no suitable candidate from among the brethren, the saint allows that a virtuous outsider be chosen for the office.

14 MF 2 Docs Paper 27xi1918, billed as a *Doklad* addressed to the Russian Mission in Athens: 'When the monastery found out about the loss [of the charter] it seized the opportunity of taking away all our plot of land, leaving instead of the original 300 *desyatiny* some eight.' See footnote 11 above: the original gift was in fact of 200 *desyatiny*.

15 A year after St Paisiy left for Simonopetra and thence for the Danubian Principalities, the skete had to pay the *harach* (Ottoman head tax). This was an administrative oversight and the *Koinotis* sent written assurance that this mistake would not be repeated. The Community's letter was in the skete archive, but is not, alas, on my microfilm.

Karyes by the Twenty Monasteries.[16] This Declaration came after much litigation between the monastery and its skete: 'there followed many and various negotiations on which both parties with pleasure agreed, but again, for unimportant reasons, both parties were incited to quarrels and thus destroyed their agreements….'[17] Evidently, the Declaration was merely a substitute for new charter, for the two parties must have been quarrelling too much to agree to a proper charter.

It was, of course, wrong of the monastery to renege on its original gift. However, Pantokratoros was understandably displeased, for the skete brethren were clearly behaving disreputably. The succession of priors meant that the skete lacked firm, effective leadership and was too difficult or even unpleasant to run. Indeed, Article 7 of the 1839 Declaration states:

> The prior ruling the skete is obliged to watch over the behaviour of his brethren so as to stamp out rapidly dunkenness, quarrels, fights and other such irreverent conduct, which has hitherto been happening both within and outside the skete. This he must do lest the monastic image be defiled and ceaseless temptations be brought to bear.[18]

After 1839 the skete's relationships with its monastery never improved. Eventually Pantokratoros was influenced by outside politics. Writing in 1918, Prior Ioann assessed his skete's history thus:

> the various political storms sweeping over Athos [...] were reflected not only in the skete but in all the Russian monastic community, which was not populous at the time. These storms provoked the monastery to interfere and put pressure on us in various ways.

General N.P. Ignatiev, Ioann believed, knew about the behaviour of Pantokratoros and it was partly to compensate the Prophet Elijah Skete that the diplomat wrote the controversial Clause XXII of the San Stefano Treaty. However, 'this served to increase the interference and bullying on the part of Pantokratoros Monastery, with which the skete was even forced to go to court…' As a result of the confiscation, the latter 'found itself in an almost serf-like position in relation to its ruling monastery.' This unsatisfactory situation continued until 1892 when, 'at last, thanks to the help of the [Russian] Embassy, [the skete] received a new charter.'[19]

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16 'Règlement intervenu entre le monastère du Pantokratoros et la skite du prophète Élie pour fixer leurs rapports réciproques' is the title Le Petit gives it in *Actes de Pantokrator*, pp. 56-59. See also MF 2 Docs Copy of 1839 Charter, 25viii1839.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., Article 7.

19 MF 2 Docs Paper 27xi1918.

The 1892 Charter contained twenty-two articles. It was signed by Patriarch Neophyte and his Synod, who represented the ultimate court of appeal in the Orthodox Church; the Declaration of 1839 had been ratified merely by the *Koinotis*. The 1892 Charter was drawn up almost a century after the one granted to Athanasiy, and was more detailed than either preceding charter because there was less trust between the two houses, whose disputes at the end of the nineteenth century were at their most bitter. Since 1880, the quarrel had been particularly acrimonious.[20]

According to the new charter, Pantokratoros gave to the skete three gifts: a water mill (Article Twenty-one), and two thousand firewood logs per annum (Article Eighteen). Most importantly, the document states: 'The Monastery, through the love it has for the skete, makes a gift to it, for its own use, of a triangle of land situated opposite the stables and below the skete's vineyard.'[21] The size of the gift is not specified, but the Declaration did not even mention the gift. The Charter reiterates the Declaration's stipulation that the prior be elected from the skete's brethren and not from outsiders.[22]

Half a century after 1839 the skete was considerably larger and more prosperous. Whereas the Greeks who drew up the Declaration and Athanasiy's charter were, if anything, eager that the skete expand because it was at times in danger of closing down for want of brethren, Pantokratoros in the 1890s was eager to restrict the skete's numbers.[23] Article Six of the 1892 Charter solemnly declares: 'The number of the fathers abiding in the skete is eternally fixed at one hundred and thirty (130) and twenty (20) novices; this number the skete must never and for no excuse exceed.' In order to ensure this the prior was obliged to enter into the Monks' Register, which was in duplicate, the name of each of his brethren.[24]

Most other articles of the Charter contain restrictions on the skete's freedom and measures against its expansion. Article Ten designates what building work the skete is allowed to carry out. The latter had permission to complete five projects, but Article Thirteen forbade it to build or alter any other building.[25] Furthermore, the skete enjoyed the right 'freely to

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20 *Actes de Pantokrator*, p.61, lines 17-19.

21 Ibid., p. 65, Article 15.

22 Ibid., p. 63, Article 2.

23 Ibid., *Déclaration*, p. 58, Article VI: 'the skete is free to take on as many fathers as wish to settle in it.'

24 Ibid., p. 64. The Monks' Register is known as the *monakhologhio(n)*.

25 Ibid., pp. 64-65. See also Article Twenty-one, p. 66.

repair all existing buildings', but had to avoid 'all extravagance in so doing.'[26] Finally, the annual dues to the monastery were increased from the 1,500 piastri of 1839 to 130 lira.[27] This increase might have been due to inflation, but the skete also had to pay an annual tax of 20 lira for the *Koinotis* and state.

The skete felt it was being exploited and confined. The gifts were not appreciated and it longed for the freedom and respect it had enjoyed a century earlier. In 1910 A.A. Dmitrievskiy came across a copy of the 1798 Charter in a library in Kiev. This lucky find was never put to any practical use and the skete continued to complain of its feudal servility.[28]

Despite the apparent deterioration in its fortunes from some time before 1839, the skete survived the troubled times of the seven priors and increased in wealth and numbers until it posed a threat to Pantokratoros, which it outgrew. As we have seen, the skete always flourished under enlightened leadership, as was the case with St Paisiy and Athanasiy. In 1841 Monk Iliya, the seventh prior in three years, begged to be allowed to resign after a few months in office: he was too humble for the job and wanted to lead the life of a recluse. In despair he and the brethren gathered in the central church where, having served an all-night vigil, they drew Apostolic lots, like the members of the first Christian Church. The name they happened on was that of Priest Schema-monk Paisiy. He and a fellow Bessarabian were sharing a *kellion* of the Greek Kapsokalyva Skete belonging the Great Lavra. Before he founded the Prophet Elijah Skete, St Paisiy had lived a similar life when he followed the Middle or Royal Way of monasticism by submitting as an equal to Monk Vissarion, his brother in Christ.[29] Like his saintly predecessor, Paisiy II had intended to lead an ascetic life on the Holy Mountain. He was twice invited to the skete, but he refused to stay because he did not want to relinquish his solitude. 'Moreover, he did not like the skete because of the untidiness and disorder that he noticed in it, and also because he found the brethren thoroughly strange with their excessively

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26 Ibid., Article 14, p. 65.

27 1,500 piastri were approximately 12.5 lira: see Chapter 3. The Serai eventually paid 35 lira in annual dues to its governing monastery—half of what the Prophet Elijah Skete had to pay.

28 MF 2 Docs Paper 27xi1918. Perhaps Dmitrievskiy found merely a translation of the charter, in which case Pantokratoros would not have recognised its validity. I have never seen a copy; among all the archive on microfilm his find is mentioned only here, in this Paper, entitled *Doklad*.

29 Tachiaos, A-E, *The Revival of Byzantine Monasticism*, p. 101 and 197.

simple and rough manners.'[30] He was eventually won over by a stern letter from Prior Nikifor of Xylourgou, who was renowned for his austerity.

Once Paisiy was enthroned he wasted no time in restoring proper discipline. He also effected urgent repairs and embarked on a capital building plan. The leaks in the central church roof were sealed, new windows and a ceiling were installed in the refectory, a new central court yard was built and the main buildings round the church were enlarged. St Mitrofan's chapel was at last consecrated in 1842. In the next year fifteen kellia were added between the Chapels of St Mitrofan and the Annunciation, which were thus joined as a single block under one roof. In a little over a year new confidence and purpose was breathed into the skete and novices started joining in increasing numbers. This renaissance exactly coincided with that of St Panteleimon. On 17 July 1845 Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich spent a night at the skete, having visited the Rossikon. A plaque was inscribed by Paisiy II to commemorate the occasion. In words curiously reminiscent of those used by Dmitrievskiy to describe the imperial visit to St Panteleimon, the skete chronicler wrote: 'From that time on the humble skete which few knew about gained great fame and became respected by all, both on Athos and particularly in Russia.'[31]

Paisiy embarked on an energetic building programme. In seven years all the old cells had been refurbished, a new refectory, bakery, offices and several new blocks of cells were added. All the vineyards and vegetable gardens were re-dug and expanded. He was not, however, a worldly builder like some of the Russian kelliots, whose only ambitions seemed to be material and expansionist. *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit* abounds with stories of his humility, charity and hard work.[32]

Like Makariy in the Rossikon, he was the most tireless of all the labourers around him. He readily joined in back-breaking tasks while continuing to practise his own craft, sewing vestments. Of course, *Russkiy obschezhiltel'nyi skit* was the 'official' skete history and was aimed at the simple, pious pilgrim. Its stories of Paisiy's goodness are no more than anecdotes with a touch of hagiography, but they contain details sufficiently individualistic and mundane to transcend legendary stereotype.

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30 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p.53.

31 Ibid., p. 59. Compare Dmitrievskiy, A.A., *Russkie na Afone*, p. 157, and Chapter 2 of this thesis.

32 Ibid., pp. 61-64.

Dmitrievskiy's account of Makariy is more elegant and less naive, but at the same time unconvincing. He describes the abbot's day in detail, stressing how busy it was because of the amount of time devoted to divine office, receiving visitors and running the huge monastery. When, however, general monastic duties had to be carried out, Archimandrite Makariy, described elsewhere as being frail and of gentle birth, rolled up his sleeves:

> when a shipment of wheat arrived [...] Fr Makariy would take off his cassock,——*snimal svoyu ryasku*,——descend into the ship's hold and scoop out the grain with his hands into sacks, while the brethren, encouraged by the abbot's example, quickly dragged these sacks to the great store rooms of the monastery. At such work, in the stifling heat and under the burning sun, he would remain sometimes for at least half a day. Often the brethren would see their abbot with sacks or bundles of hay on his back. He was the first to set out for the grape harvest, leading the way for his loving spiritual flock.[33]

The author of the skete history was more realistically aware that Paisiy could not do everything at once:

> As he had helpers to take the services, Father Paisiy [...] worked in the vegetable garden digging and planting greens, carried stone for the garden walls [...], and even frequently helped the cook to peel onions, potatoes and beetroot. He did all the jobs necessary for the kitchen, chopping wood and carrying water like the humblest novice.[34]

Both Paisiy and Makariy, as well as the latter's adviser Ieronim, were renowned throughout the Hagiorite community for their generous and systematic alms-giving.

It is not difficult to judge the attitude of Pantokratoros to Paisiy and to the skete during his reign. True, the skete was expanding rapidly, was constantly asking for permission to build and refurbish, and was probably making increasing demands for land. Moreover, in 1867 Grand Duke Aleksei, son of Alexander II, paid the skete a visit. He stayed long enough only to take tea with Paisiy, but even such an innocuously short visit may have worried some of the Greeks. On the other hand, although nothing had been resolved since the Declaration, there is no evidence of any further quarrels, and the new charter was drawn up twenty-one years after his death. On 3 August 1868 Pantokratoros conferred the rank of archimandrite on Paisiy. The glowing citation spoke of the monastery's gratitude for his enlightened leadership and of its pleasure at the skete's renaissance:

> he [Paisiy], leading the said skete for twenty-eight years, has not only remained fully in accord with our Holy Governing Monastery, but in the course of so long a period he has once again raised the skete up, enlarged it

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33 A.A. Dmitrievskiy, *Russikie na Afone*, p. 343.

34 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p.61.

and beautified it——in a word, he has morally and spiritually resurrected it.[35]

Clearly, he and the Greeks understood each other. He was not a Russian or even a Ukrainian; as a Bessarabian he had an outlook and mentality in common with the Balkan peasantry that made up the bulk of the traditional Athonite community.

In 1871, after a brief illness, Paisiy died painfully of what seems to have been stomach cancer. So ended the third and longest golden age of the skete. The thirty years of his reign are remarkable because they are reminiscent of Makariy and Ieronim's reign in St Panteleimon. Ieronim arrived at the Rossikon one year before Paisiy at the skete; the latter died a long time before the St Panteleimon elders, but both the skete and the monastery enjoyed a long period of great leadership, material expansion and high morale. Paisiy frequently went to Ieronim and Makariy for advice. One of the skete's benefactors at the time was Mikhail Denisovich Sushkin, a relative of Makariy. There the similarities and links end: as we have seen, Ieronim and Makariy's time was one of strife and bitterness between Greeks and Russians; the differences between the skete and its monastery were all but patched up.

Another Time of Troubles followed Paisiy's death. His successor, Gervasiy, lasted barely a year, left for St Panteleimon where he died, and was replaced by Andrey after a power struggle, which is described in chapter three of this thesis. It is probable that relations between the skete and its monastery now rapidly worsened. Had the skete continued to be a credit to Pantokratoros the differences between the two may have remained negligible and their coexistence would have served as a rare example of ethnic harmony on the Holy Mountain.

After seven years Andrey also left the skete, for a secluded kellion where he stayed until his death. In his time as prior he built a two-storey stone building outside the main gates for new monks and labourers. On 7 September 1879 Priest-schemamonk Toviya was chosen. He had been a monk in a Ukrainian monastery before spending ten years in the Kavsokalyvia Skete of Mount Athos. Like Paisiy II he accepted the office of prior reluctantly. He added another stone two-storey building outside the gates. The climax of his reign came in 1881 when the skete was graced with two more imperial visits. A yacht bearing Grand Duchess Aleksandra Petrovna anchored off St Panteleimon. Toviya at the head of a delegation from the skete visited her on board and asked if she would found a new central church for the skete. Rear-Admiral Dmitriy Gorchakov acted as

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[35] Ibid., P. 65.

her representative and laid an inscribed foundation stone on the site of the altar on 22 June. On 16 August Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich spent one night in the skete on his way from St Panteleimon. Three years later, owing to ill health, Toviya retired to the Ukrainian monastery he had originally come from, and there he died.

The skete brethren had no hesitation in electing Priest-monk Gavriil as the next prior.[36] After a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he had arrived on Athos, which he explored before choosing to settle in the skete. He was a novice for a year and tonsured a monk in 1869. Seven years later he was ordained priest and put in charge of the skete's ship that made yearly journeys to Russia for supplies. War with Turkey confined him to the Black Sea towns of Tagan Rog and Rostov-on-the Don until 1878. He was then made treasurer at the skete's Constantinople dependency, which he eventually ran.

Gavriil was known as The Builder—*Stroitel'*—and regarded as one of the skete's more illustrious leaders. However, his reign was not blessed with harmonious relations with Pantokratoros. The two imperial visits in 1881 were not well regarded; the Greeks were now alarmed by the increasing Russian numbers on Athos and a bitter legal dispute with Pantokratoros ensued. It was resolved by the charter issued eleven years later, after vigorous intervention by the Russian ambassador in Constantinople. In 1891 Gavriil was made archimandrite by patriarchal decree, not at the behest of the monastery. It was only thanks to patriarchal support that the building of the new central church, founded and commenced a decade before, could at last proceed.

The Builder was a good man devoted to the skete. He was noted for his kindness to all the brethren, as well as for his energy. He was buried in the Odessa dependency; his remains were discovered at a later date to be incorrupt, were placed in a reliquiary and are said to have performed miracles.[37] Unfortunately, his sobriquet would indicate that he was regarded as somewhat of a materialist akin to the heads of the larger

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[36] Ibid., p. 78. The date of his election is given here as 1887. Who was in charge in 1885, when Toviya left, is not specified.

[37] The story of Gavriil's relics is related in *Orthodox America*, XIV No8 (132), p.11. His kindness is illustrated by a manuscript, which used to be in the skete library but is unfortunately not on microfilm. It was written by a monk Viktor, who worked in the book bindery. In Lent one year he was unable to take Holy Communion because he was suffering from stomach cramps. Prior Gavriil was concerned and visited him in his cell. There were by now well over a hundred brethren in the skete, and the building project was in full swing; none the less, the prior found time to commiserate with a simple monk.

Russian kellia that were burgeoning in the 'nineties. If he had been perceived as having the spiritual qualities of Paisiy II, his plans for expansion might have been welcomed; and the imperial visits might have been overlooked, as had been that of Grand Duchess Aleksandra Petrovna.

Gavriil realised that money was desperately needed to fund his projects, so at the end of 1893 he headed an alms-gathering mission to Russia bearing the skete's icon of the Mlekopiatel'nitsa Virgin and a part of the foot of St Andrew the Apostle. Nicholas II, as we have seen, enthusiastically supported Russian Athos. He and the Moscow Synod opened all doors to the delegation. The mission met with unqualified success. It gathered money more quickly and efficiently than Arseniy's missions had done for the Rossikon, because the latter had operated at an earlier, less propitious time and had prepared the ground.

Between 1894 and 1898 a new residential building was added. At the same time a new central church was completed at the skete's Odessa dependency. An efficient new irrigation system was laid down in the skete itself and two vast cisterns that served as reservoirs were installed. Now the skete was able to subsist on its own greens all the year round. Pantokratoros turned down requests that what had been built of the central church in Paisiy II's reign and subsequently cracked by an earthquake be incorporated into the new building. So, in 1899, the new central church was started from scratch. After a liturgy and memorial service in the presence of the former Patriarch Joachim III, a marble slab containing holy relics was lifted from the altar and transferred to the North Block great hall, which has since served as one of the skete's principal chapels. It took a year to prepare the foundation of the central church. On 15 June 1900 the officials that were to be present at the consecration of the central church of the Serai came to the Prophet Elijah Skete, along with senior representatives of Pantokratoros, for the blessing of the foundation. In 1901 the cellars of the central church were finished.

Archimandrite Gavriil did not live to see his great church completed. Its awkward hillside site necessitated painstaking excavation, and the transportation of its huge granite and marble blocks was so difficult that work had to be slow. By 1901, exhausted particularly by his trips to Russia, he was a sick man. He ordered a temporary halt to the building and declared that he could now die in peace. He left Athos on a tour of the Russian dependencies on 28 June 1901 and died in the dependency of Novo Nikolayevskaya Stanitsa on 18 November.

Priest-monk Maksim had already been designated as successor, a post he did not hesitate to accept. He had gone to Russia on the alms-gathering mission in 1893 and had been the skete's treasurer. In the spring of 1902 he was made archimandrite by Pantokratoros.

The new prior got to work with energy and purpose. A new hospital was completed in 1905, but his first priority was to finish the central church. In 1907 there was a final surge of activity, for it would soon be twenty years since the beginning of its construction. Money was again lacking and the transportation of building materials continued to be slow and hazardous.[38] Especial care was taken to make the structure earthquake-proof. At last, one month behind schedule, the central church was consecrated on 20 July 1914. The skete's material needs seemed as inexhaustible as ever. Writing in 1913, the author of *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit* appealed to his readers: 'it cannot be concealed, now that the building of the principal church has been completed, that the skete does not yet possess entirely adequate buildings and funds, both of which it desperately needs.'[39]

That the central church was not merely built, but turned out to be a magnificent and sumptuous structure was due, as usual, to the remarkable generosity of pious benefactors. From the ground to the roof it is three tiers high. The roof and the seven cupolas, which are soberly Byzantine rather than onion-shaped Russian or garishly coloured, are clad in iron. Like the central churches of the Serai and the Old Rossikon, its most striking features are its robust stonework, and its great height emphasised by symmetry and simple straight lines. The greatest Greek Athonite churches when viewed from the outside are insignificant and small in comparison. Inside one has the impression of a vast, airy cathedral. The walls are white and unfrescoed; pillars stretch towards a distant white ceiling; and the gold, three-tiered iconostasis costing 17,000 roubles adds to the impression of hugeness and light. Traditional Greek monastic churches are dark inside.

No new building was ever again undertaken in the skete. The consecration of the central church took place before the final touches were completed, for the walls were surely meant to be covered in the italianate frescoes fashionable at the time. How fortunate that they were not! In August 1914 the Great War started and soon Russian Athos, cut off from the motherland, was to die of old age.

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38 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, pp. 88-89.

39 Ibid., p. 90.

The architecture of the nearly-completed skete is as paradoxical as the skete's history. The buildings form a symmetrical and harmonious complex. What would the humble St Paisiy have thought of their sumptuous vastness? They dwarf Greek Athonite structures, especially Pantokratoros, which seems to cower at their feet; but they also blend in beautifully with the surroundings because they are made mainly of local materials and are not ostentatiously 'Russian'. These are certainly not those monstrous 'seaside resort' structures that 'like a flood clash with the classical Hagiorite architecture'.[40] The skete, like its buildings, was an intrinsic part of Athos, more so than the other Russian houses, which never achieved complete integration.

On 26 June 1914, Archimandrite Maksim announced his retirement. As in the case of his predecessor, the burden of office took its toll on his health: financial worries, building work and poor relations with Pantokratoros put extra pressure on him. Unlike Gavriil, however, he stayed in the skete from his retirement until his death, in 1919. He had chosen his successor, who was unanimously approved of by the skete's electoral body: it was Priest-monk Ioann. Born in 1874 in the Astrakhan' District, Ioann was of Cossack origin. He entered the skete in 1893, was ordained Priest-monk in 1903, was in charge of the skete's Odessa dependency from 1909 until 1912 and then spent more than a year furnishing the church in the skete's house in Moscow.[41] He was enthroned as prior on 30 June, 1914, and as archimandrite on 18 July. Thus for the only time in its history the skete housed two archimandrites.

The skete was now at its apogee. For the first time in fifteen years it was free of scaffolding and most of the builders had gone, and over thirty years of planning and uncertainty had at last borne fruit. The number of brethren had reached its peak at just under four hundred.[42] The future seemed

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40 See chapter I of this thesis.

41 Referred to in the account books as *dom v Moskve* rather than *moskovskoe podvorye*, this was the skete's third largest dependency in terms of income and expenditure, although it is always listed last in the account books.

42 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 14; this was the figure at the date of publication, in 1913, and probably included minors, workers and lay brothers. The number had increased by a hundred in six years, for in A.A. Pavlovsky's *Putevoditel* (p. 12), which was printed in 1907, the figure is given as approximately 300 brethren. According to MF 1 Sobor 1,2,3,4 16iii1917, on the eve of the October Revolution, there were only 178 living in the skete; 139 of the brethren were abroad in the dependencies or in the armed forces.

to promise limitless expansion and, as we have seen, the skete was becoming involved in the general Greek-Russian conflict by pressing for elevation to full monastic status. Although money was always lacking, the account books were in a healthy state. The four main dependencies were running smoothly, fulfilling one of their principal functions of directing increasing numbers of pilgrims to the skete.

Everything was about to change drastically and irreversibly. This revolution is best put into context if we first examine how the skete was run in its heyday, and what its day-to-day life was like when Ioann took over from Maksim.

Chapter 7: The Skete at its Apogee in 1914

Although Archimandrite Maksim retired because his health was deteriorating owing to the pressures of raising money, completing the building projects and coping with the increasing hostility of the monastery, he was probably more easy-going than his successor. Maksim was an autocratic prior: in principle he ruled in consultation with his twelve elected elders, according to the stipulations of the charter, but the meetings he held with his council were poorly minuted and undemocratic.[1] Only the records of the meetings held between 1904 and 1908 are extant, and they may well have been the only ones written in his reign. These minutes show little evidence of democratic consultation; they are merely Maksim's thoughts and directives recorded in the first person. Ioann, on the other hand, took all his decisions in concert, and occasionally held a referendum. His council meetings were scrupulously minuted from September 1914 to the end of 1924, after which year records were either lost or nobody was available to keep them. He was also hardworking, persistent and painstaking.

It is not clear what illness the old archimandrite was suffering from. Just before he officially announced his retirement he returned from hospital in Salonica.[2] It is unlikely that he did any work from then on, although the five years that he spent in retirement, as we shall see, were ones of great hardship for the skete. A year before his death in 1919, he asked for a 'kind of porter's vestibule to be built'—*ustroystv[o] v vide protareyki*—next to his accommodation. Whatever this was, the skete at the time could ill afford to indulge such whims, but the council decided to comply 'as far as resources allow[ed]'—*po mere vozmozhnosti*.[3]

Earlier in the same year he made a request that was harder to satisfy: 'It was decided never to pay interest on the money Archimandrite Maksim […] deposited in our treasury, but to allow him to withdraw amounts as necessary.'[4] That he wanted his money back was proof of his no longer being an active member of the community. The skete was strictly cœnobitic and all possessions were shared. However, it is not surprising that every effort was made to comply with his wishes. He had, after all, been its elected prior, and was probably much respected and loved. Above all, as in other successful monastic organisations, life in the skete was a

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1 All cœnobia are run by the abbot or prior in conjunction with his council of elders, known as the *Synaxis* or *Sobor*.

2 MF 4 AAP AI-2 p. 4.

3 MF 1 Sobor 106 13viii1918. It is not clear what exactly a *protareyka* is. I have taken it to be a corruption or misspelling of *portareyka*, which is the porter's area.

4 Ibid., 60 27iii1918.

wonderful mixture of easy-going tolerance and strict observance of the rules.

St Panteleimon Monastery and the St Andrew Skete, which were of course also cœnobitic, each had their own, written set of rules. These were essentially the Rule which was elaborated by St Theodore the Studite (759-826) and which has always been observed by Athonite cœnobia. The Prophet Elijah Skete, which in 1914 was half the size of the Serai and a quarter that of St Panteleimon, was informally run; it probably did not have a written set of rules but more-or-less adhered to the Rule of St Panteleimon Monastery. An examination of the St Panteleimon Rule gives some indication of the general principles governing life in the Prophet Elijah Skete.[5]

The first regulation of the Rule is that a cœnobium is to be governed by a single abbot (prior) to whom the entire community is subservient.[6]

The Rule lists thirteen duties that define the function and authority of the abbot (prior). Most of these are a legalistic statement of the obvious; they merely underline the abbot's supreme authority. Four of his duties are not so obvious, however:

1) the abbot (prior) 'must be, according to the rules laid down by the Holy Fathers, the spiritual father and elder to all';

3) he must make sure that all in his charge, especially the intelligent and educated brethren, know the Psalter by heart, so that none be idle;

12) he must oversee the accounts and not entrust inordinately large sums of money to the Treasurer;

13) he must oversee the duty rotas of serving priests and refectory readers.

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5 The Rule (*ustav* or *typiko*) of the St Panteleimon Monastery was written by Patriarchal decree in 1875, the year of Archimandrite Makariy's enthronement and re-edited in Church Slavonic in 1905. For a detailed examination of the Studite Rule in the Greek cœnobia, see Khristou and Dorotheos Monakhos, op. cit., passim. The Prophet Elijah Skete also followed St Paisiy's Rule, which is also based on the Studite Rule.

6 *Ustav sv. Panteleimonovskago monastyrya na Afone* (Odessa [?], 1905), pt. I, ch. 1; pt. II, ch. 1. Article 2) of the 1892 Charter elaborates: 'The Holy Skete is internally run and generally organised as a cœnobium, in accordance with the statutes of cœnobitic sketes, and, naturally, has as its supreme leader a single person who bears the title of *Dikaios* and must be one of the recognised brethren of the skete [...] He should excel in wisdom and goodness, be of generally peaceable character, and possess the necessary spiritual experience to guide the flock of his spiritual children to the pasture of salvation.' In Russian the skete's prior was always referred to as *igoumen*, or the abbot, rather than *nastoyatel'*, which more accurately renders *dikaios*. Stictly speaking, only a *kyriarchic* monastery has as its head an *igoumenos*.

The prior of the skete was at the top of a complex hierarchical pyramid. Directly below him was the Council of Twelve Senior Monks, who were chosen by the entire electoral body of tonsured monks every three years, on 20 August, eleven days before the ecclesiastical New Year. The first council was elected in 1899, in the last two years of Archimandrite Gavriil's reign.[7]

The council's duties are also listed in the Rule, and can be summarised as follows:

- the council is responsible for the allocation of general duties, and for the designation of officers to posts of responsibility;
- it decides about which novices and tonsured monks to accept into the community and which to refuse;
- it oversees the general financial management of the community;
- it is responsible for ensuring discipline and enforcing punishment.

The Rule states that the council is an administrative aid and advisory body to the prior, functioning 'as a kind of sacred *duma*'.[8] In fact, the role of the skete's council was determined by the personality of the prior and by the current requirements. Thus, before 1899, Prior Gavriil and his predecessors probably saw no need for a council, for the skete was small enough to be run on more informal lines by a single man. There are no extant records of council meetings before the time of Prior Maksim, who, as we have seen, used his council merely as a sounding-board for his proposals.

Of utmost importance to the smooth running of the skete's administration was the maintenance of hierarchical order, irrespective of how powerful or subservient to the prior the council was. This hierarchy was determined by ecclesiastical rank and what work each member was assigned. Who got promoted on the ecclesiastical ladder was not, strictly, a council matter, and only once in the extant minutes was a tonsuring decided by the council.[9] According to the Rule, the prior has freedom of choice in 'minor matters [...], such as [...] tonsuring [...] and deciding who should be ordained'.[10] In fact, tonsuring was a decision of the father-confessor and the prior, who performed the ceremony; and ordination to the diaconate and priesthood was performed by a

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7 MF 1 Sobor Opening 20viii1914: this council election was billed as the sixth triennial election of the Twelve Council Elders.

8 *Kak by nekaya svyschennaya duma*—an historically apt name, since the Russian State Duma was established in the year of the Church Slavonic edition of the *Ustav*, 1905.

9 MF 1 Sobor 8 2x1917.

10 *Ustav*, Pt. II, ch. 2.

bishop, but, again, was the prior's and father-confessor's decision.

There were two types of hierarchy in the skete. The first was ecclesiastical, and was determined by tonsuring and ordination. At the bottom of the ladder were the

- Novices

Many pilgrims, some of whom were children, stayed at the skete doing unpaid work. After a trial period some went home, while others hoped to become novices. The Rule states that both the abbot (prior) and council decide on whether or not to accept laymen into the noviciate. In fact, both Priors Maksim and Ioann discussed this with the council, who voted on acceptance or rejection of each candidate. There was a great number of people hoping eventually to become novices living in the skete. It was the prior, however, in conjunction with the father-confessors, but without consultation with the council, who usually decided on whether to tonsure novices. According to the Rule, each novice gave up all his possessions upon entry into the community and would be given them all back, should he decide to leave or was not accepted for tonsure. When he handed them in he would sign a declaration of his acceptance of the cœnobitic principles:

> I, the undersigned, ... hereby declare to the Holy Cœnobitic Prophet Elijah Skete that, since I have been accepted into the brotherhood of this community as a novice on my personal and most insistent request, I wish to live and work not for any material gain but for the sake of God alone; and that all the tasks assigned to me I shall carry out without demur, most zealously, honestly and in good faith while surrendering my will entirely to the Father Prior and the brethren. Moreover, I promise to conduct myself discreetly, humbly, soberly and, in general, in a manner becoming the monastic calling.
>
> If, according to my will and request, I am worthy of tonsure, then the more do I bind myself to fulfil all the above with great zeal and irreproachably: but should I not carry out the aforementioned duties, then the Father Prior, after he has chastised me according to the Holy Canons and has seen that I have still not reformed, may expel me from the Skete for good, even though I will have lived in it for the most lengthy period, for which I shall lay no claim, nor seek material reward, because I have no legal right so to do.
>
> To this I append my personal signature.[11]

Novices wore black overalls similar to a short black cassock, and a black hat. All monastic clothing in cœnobia, as specified in the Rule, was of black woollen yarn.[12]

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11 MF 2 Novice's Vows.

12 This is in fact a half-length cassock, known as a *podryasnik*, and worn by tonsured monks under the full-length cassock, the *ryasa*, or *raso(n)*. For a detailed account of the apparel and vows taken by the different ecclesiastical ranks in a monastery see Robinson, N.F., *Monasticism in the Orthodox Churches*, passim. The Russian for the yarn

- Ryasofor Monks
  All novices had to pass a statutory three-year period of probation,[13] after which they took their preliminary vows of obedience to the prior, who tonsured them. They were then allowed to wear the full cassock, the monastic belt, hat and cowl.[14] As a symbol of rebirth and renewed baptism the prior gave them a new name, usually beginning with the same letter as their old lay-name. *Ryasofory* spent another trial period, which varied in length according to the individual, before full tonsure.
- Fully-Tonsured Monks[15]
  These were monks who were no longer on probation and had taken their final vows. Fully tonsured monks were eligible for clerical ordination, could become council members, hold senior posts and were part of the skete's electoral body.
- Great Schemamonks
  Mainly in Russian monastic communities, monks who had been fully tonsured a number of years could, if deemed worthy, take new and very strict vows. They were tonsured afresh and again given a new name. They had to fast more rigorously, rarely left the monastery and followed a more demanding programme of private prayer. In addition to the garb of the fully-tonsured monk, they wore a kind of stole called the great *schema*.[16]
- Monk-Deacons
  These were fully-tonsured monks who were ordained into the lowest titled clerical rank.
- Schimamonk-Deacons
- Priest-monks
  A priest had initially to be a deacon for at least one year. Since no liturgy could be served without a priest, and no lower rank could administer the Sacraments, his responsibility was great. As we have seen, the prior drew up and ran a rota of priests on duty. Each of the skete's churches and chapels was assigned a priest for a seven-day period, during which he had to take all the

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out of which the cassocks were made is *sheyak*, see *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 21. The richer monks of idiorrhythmic houses wore expensive materials, such as silk.

13 *tryekhletniy iskus*, *Ustav* Pt. I, ch. 9.

14 *Rasopforos* (in Russian *ryasofor*), meaning *raso*-bearer.

15 Known in Russian as *mantiynye monakhi*; in other words, monks who wore the *mantiya*, a type of pleated gown. In fact, Athonite monks do not wear this unless they are sextons serving in church or celebrant priests. Russian Athonite monks are tonsured into the lesser *schema* at this stage.

16 On Athos different houses have different customs regarding the *schema*, regardless of nationality, although the Russians have always been more conservative about the great *schema*. Some houses tonsure to the great *schema* immediately; others tonsure to the small *schema* first, and then to the great after the monk has a number of years' seniority.

services, and he had to be available for any non-liturgical services as well.[17]

- Priest-Schemamonks
- Archimandrite

This was an honorary ecclesiastical title, which in the skete was conferred on the prior usually by the monastery.

The second hierarchical ladder was determined by the jobs assigned to each member of the skete, for everyone in a cœnobium is assigned work.[18] Naturally, this varied according to the skill and responsibility involved. This system of secular rank was independent of ecclesiastical hierarchy and was determined by the prior in consultation with the council. The members of the council itself were a representative ecclesiastical cross-section of the electoral body of fully-tonsured monks. Thus, the council elected in 1914 consisted of two schemamonk-priests, four monk-priests, and the rest of ordinary monks. However, there was a discernible pecking-order within it. The most important member of the skete after the prior was his deputy.[19] The council minutes for 26 September, 1914, read: 'When the prior is absent from the skete who should be in charge? It was decided that Fr Luka should be, and if he, too, is absent, Fr Innokentiy the Dean should be.' Schemamonk-priest Luka's name appears first in the roll of elected council members in 1914. He was also principal father-confessor to the skete.[20]

The Rule lists in order of importance four senior, non-ordained posts after that of deputy-prior, designated for those 'of advanced years and humble disposition, leading exemplary lives of humility and piety': 1 Father-Confessor, 2 Treasurer, 3 Warden of the Vestry, and 4 Dean.

As we have already seen, the skete was smaller and more informal than St Panteleimon Monastery, for which the Rule was written. It is clear from the minutes of the skete's

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17 On Sundays and most feast days there would be two Liturgies—early and late—in the central church and larger chapels, which had more than one sanctuary. As one priest is not permitted to serve more than one Liturgy a day, a second priest would have to be on duty to serve the early one.

18 The Russian for work assigned to members of a cœnomium is *poslushanie*, which means 'obedience'; the Greek is *diakonia*, or 'service'. There is a similar difference in the Greek and Russian for 'novice': the Greek term, *dokimos* is generic for anyone who 'tries' or 'attempts' a new trade, such as an apprentice; *poslushnik* refers only to a monastic novice and literally means 'one who is obedient'.

19 *Ustav*, Pt. II, ch. 3.

20 *Dukhovnik*, or *pneumatikos*, which means 'spiritual father'. In fact, there is a fine distinction between father-confessor and spiritual father: the former was a priest and could administer the sacrament of confession, whereas the latter could be a simple monk. Particularly on Mt Athos, what counts is age, experience and holiness. The true Athonite spiritual leaders and directors of conscience are the Elders—the *startsy*, or *gerontes*.

council meetings that the secular order prescribed in the Rule was not rigidly adhered to. In the skete, father-confessor and dean were the two most senior positions after deputy-prior, and as in the case of Priest-schemamonk Luka, one man could occupy all three positions at once.

The father-confessor was usually a senior priest, who directed the consciences of his spiritual children and administered the Sacrament of Confession. In some cœnobia the prior himself was the Confessor, as Paisiy Velichkovskiy had been, in accordance with the first of the prior's duties prescribed by the Rule. However, if the number of brethren is great, the Rule explains, the prior is unable to hear everyone's confession and can be aided by a father-confessor, who is empowered to forgive 'all but mortal sins.' In 1914 the principal father-confessor probably confessed the prior himself and was assisted by the Confessor to the Brethren.[21] Next, there were confessors in external departments, such as the hospital, alms-house and the dependencies.

The deans (*blagochinnye*) were a sort of monastic prefects; like the confessors, there were deans both for the brotherhood inside the skete and for its external departments. The dean's duty was to enforce discipline.[22] He ensured that church and refectory were attended punctually and in proper dress, and that behaviour in both was becoming: there was to be no talking at mealtimes, and reverent, prayerful concentration had to be maintained during services, during which sitting was to be permitted only at the few designated times. He also made sure that no one was idle, drank or ate secretly, read unsuitable or unauthorised literature, or spoke without permission to guests.

The dean was aided by two sets of junior officers, for whom he was directly responsible: the liturgical supervisors (*ustavschiki*) and the sextons (*ekliziarkhi*).[23] The former were responsible for the proper running of the services and had to see that nothing was omitted; they were the senior of the two posts. The sextons acted as acolytes to the clergy, and were in charge of icon lamps, candles, incense and bell-ringing.[24] They had to ensure that all flames were extinguished after services, a sensible precaution against the frequent fires that have always plagued Mt Athos, and, as leaner times were to prove after 1914, an essential economy. Partly to prevent theft, they also had to lock the church when all had left it.

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21 *Bratskiy Dukhovnik* , the Senior Confessor to the brethren; the *Bratskiy Blagochinnyi* was also the Senior Dean.

22 *Ustav*, Pt. II, ch. 7.

23 The standard Russian for sexton is *ponomar'*, but Russian Athonites used many terms based on Greek—*ekklisiarkhis*.

24 Also, on Mt Athos, the striking of, among other things, the *simantro(n)*. ,a beam of wood used instead of or as well as a bell.

The posts with the greatest responsibility and seniority in the Skete were administrative, and were given to educated monks possessing specialised clerical, trading or linguistic skills. The most important officer with such skills in the skete was the steward.[25] He was responsible for the overall financial and mercantile administration. The stewards of the dependencies were equally important because they were ambassadors for the skete abroad and were responsible directly to the prior. The steward of the skete's ship belonged to a special category. Usually a specialised seaman, he was captain of the skete's 214-tonne brig, *Afon*, with a full complement of crew. He was entrusted with about 2,000 roubles per annum to run his ship and was responsible for the transport of valuable cargo between Russia, Turkey, Egypt and Mt Athos.

Directly below the steward, and answerable to him, was the Treasurer (*kaznachey*). In St Panteleimon, for which the Rule was written, the treasurer was a senior officer in charge of the considerable riches of a great monastery. The skete treasurer, however, was relatively junior and was not responsible for much. His main task was handling the petty cash, receiving donations and, above all, keeping the accounts for the skete and the dependencies. At the end of the year the books were signed by him and the prior. We have already seen that one man could be both father-confessor and dean; the same was possible for the posts of steward and treasurer.

In 1914, the skete was fortunate enough to have its own interpreter. This was normally a civilian who could interpret and translate in Turkish, Russian and Greek. In 1904 the skete sent Monk Sergiy the secretary to Constantinople to study Turkish and Greek. He came back so fluent in the latter that he became known as Fr Sergiy the Greek.[26] After 1912 Turkish was of little use on the Holy Mountain, and his job was to accompany the prior whenever summoned by Pantokratoros Monastery and to deal with Greeks and Greek texts.

The other skilled administrative and office jobs were secretary to the prior and council, office clerk and librarian. The latter was the least demanding, but, according to the Rule, important: not only did he have in his charge rare manuscripts and a comprehensive collection of Patristic works in Greek and Russian, but his role was as vital as the cook's or the cellarer's, for he administered literature for the spiritual nourishment of the brethren who could read.[27] Naturally, the library of the Prophet Elijah skete was tiny

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25 The *ekonom* or *ikonom*, another borrowing from the Greek *oikonomos*.

26 MF 1 Sobor 78 24viii1904. He might, of course, have been a Russified Greek, of whom there were many in the Russian Empire.

27 *Ustav*, Pt. II, ch. 9.

compared with that of the St Panteleimon Monastery or of the Serai, and the Athonite Cossacks were doubtless less literate and sophisticated than their Great Russian counterparts. If the minutes of the council meetings are representative of the skete's level of literacy, then books must have been too difficult to read for many of the brethren.[28]

One of the most important of the non-manual, non-administrative 'white collar' jobs was that of medical superintendent. In 1914 this post was held by Monk Nazariy, a troublesome character. The vestry—*riznichnaya*—seemed also to attract demanding people. In 1904 Monk Flavian was in charge of it, a job in the same category as that of the medical superintendent. The skete's vestry was naturally far smaller than that in the St Panteleimon Monastery and not as important. Flavian had long been complaining about his inadequate, cramped place of work, but the council agreed merely to refurbish the old quarters, in spite of the fact that Russian Athonite vestments were renowned for their exquisite embroidery and fine, costly materials, and needed the best possible storage. Sixteen years later there was concern when the vestry superintendent of the time, Schema-monk Georgiy decided to leave one day without telling anyone; an extensive search had to be carried out and an inventory drawn up to ascertain whether any church treasures were missing.[29] Finally, there were the singers, who lived a privileged life: they enjoyed extra rations of spirits, tea and refreshments, lived in a separate building outside the main gate and might have been exempt from other duties.

In the Rule the cook (*povar*) is described as the most important of the 'lesser brethren', for in serving daily bread to the brethren 'he serves Christ Himself'.[30] He had to ensure that the food he prepared was 'wholesome and tasty', and in accordance with the fasting and festive calendar. Directly below him was the refectory steward, who had to lay the table, clear up and assist the dean in ensuring that all were present and accounted for, and that all ate in decorous silence.

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28 The 1906 entry of Sobor is a fine example of illiteracy; it is full of grammatical and orthographical howlers, and is virtually illegible. Clearly, with the departure of Fr Sergiy the Greek to Constantinople, there was no-one in the skete sufficiently able to keep the minutes; probably the unfortunate scribe in 1906 was so incompetent that he had to be given another duty. However, in a letter to me postmarked October 1995, Fr Ioannikiy writes: 'the records of the books loaned out from the library and the contents of the library itself indicate [that the skete brethren] followed [the] instruction [of St Paisiy to base their life on active hesychastic prayer], as well as the instruction of Abbot Maksim on the order of patristic books to be read by beginners.'

29 MF 1 Sobor 50 10v1904 and 10 22iv1920.

30 *Ustav*, Pt. II, ch. 14.

Special ecclesiastical importance was ascribed to the baker of liturgical loaves and the general baker.[31] The former had to be highly versed in his trade and use only the best ingredients, in particular 'clean, fresh wheat flour'. The general baker took part in a small ceremony. He had to say a special prayer and add holy water to the dough. After it had been kneaded the priest on duty would come with a censer and bless the bread.

The cellarer—*dokhiar*—kept an eye on household goods and provisions, was directly responsible to the steward and co-operated on an equal footing with the bakers and cook. The cellarer had to be particularly trustworthy because of the large amount of alcoholic drink he had in his care.

Since the skete functioned as an industrial unit, the remaining work-force was divided into skilled and semi-skilled trade units. Each was a hierarchical entity, with its chief craftsman, who had to be obeyed if it was to function properly. Naturally, the skilled trades demanded training and expertise, but all jobs, whether highly specialised or unskilled, were equally important. Although there was a hierarchy of responsibility and ability, from the scholars and master craftsmen to the unskilled labourers, each member of the community fulfilled a vital role. It was, rather, a hierarchy of equally important tasks: not only did the skete's material well-being depend on a harmonious and productive work-force, but the ascetic life in a cœnobium could be assured only if every man was occupied all the time. Work was as spiritually important as prayer. The Rule emphasises this principle by repeating that the lesser tasks in particular should be carried out as if Christ Himself was being served.[32]

The unskilled jobs were particularly important in the skete's day-to-day running, as they were in any Athonite community, and had special Athonite names. There were three types of watchmen: those at the main gate, the *portarí*, who received visitors and directed them to the appropriate place; the *budil'schiki*, who had to wake the brethren for cell prayer and summon the sextons to ring the bells; and the orchard, vineyard and garden watchmen. The *kubshchik* manned the tea urn, particularly after the nocturnal offices. The monk in charge of the clothes-store was known as the *rukhol'nyi*. The *svenik* swept and tidied the churches and was responsible to the sextons. The post with the greatest responsibility was occupied by the *fondarichnyi* or guest-

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[31] Op. cit., Pt. II, Chs 19 and 20. The baker was known as the *Prosfornyi*, and the liturgical loaves he baked were known as *prosfory*.

[32] For example, in *Ustav*, Pt. II, Ch. 14.

master, who looked after guests, especially pilgrims, and ran the guest-house.[33]

The particularly demanding physical jobs were in the cooperage and the garden. Here the monastic work-force was supplemented by hired labourers. These were Balkan peasants, mainly North Epirot Albanians, Greeks, and Bulgarians. While the new central church was being built there were more labourers from outside than at any other time. Until 1914, according to the account books, there were coopers, saddlers, tailors and cobblers permanently on the payroll from outside; gardeners and general labourers were hired seasonally. No doubt the skete could have afforded to hire its entire labour force, but this would have undermined the cœnobitic principle of work for all the brethren. In idiorrhythmic houses, on the other hand, most manual work was done by hired labour. In the 1920s Hilandar was to hire the skete brethren to bring in the grain harvest; and as late as 1934 the Great Lavra employed up to eighty lay servants.[34]

Those brethren that had to work outside the confines of the skete and were unable to attend meals in the refectory were allocated special food packets by the council, which varied according to the type of job. The council consulted the fasting and festive calendar, and rewarded the more demanding jobs, such as in the cooperage, with greater rations of wine and raki. Usually, the per capita ration for those doing heavy labour was 1 *oko* (approx. 1 litre) of wine per day in addition to 1/2 *oko* of raki per week.

Finally, there were the so-called general tasks—*obschiya poslushaniya*—which all the brethren performed together, when necessary, from the head of the house to the most junior novice. These tasks were usually seasonal; they involved cleaning and preparing for great feasts, peeling vegetables, harvesting, helping in the kitchens as did Paisiy II, and carrying supplies.

Prayer was, of course, more important than work. Where possible, the two were combined. We have seen how the baker's work incorporated prayer. Those brethren who were unable to attend a service because of their jobs would, if possible, recite the office while working. As some meals came directly after services, the kitchen and refectory staff would work in silence while one or two of the brethren recited the appropriate prayers.

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[33] Some of these terms, similar to *ekliziarkh* (see above), are Russian Athonite slang, which is based on Greek. For instance, *rukhol'nyi* is a derivation of *roukha*, meaning clothes; fondarichnyi is a corruption of *arkhondariki(on)*, the guest reception quarters.

[34] According to Fr. Ioannikiy. An example of Hilandar hiring labour from the skete is to be found in MF 1 Sobor 52 6vii1920.

As a rule, work was done in the day and the night was reserved for prayer. The average monastic twenty-four-hour cycle would begin at about three in the morning with the midnight office, matins, hours and liturgy, which would end some four hours later.[35] Then there would be work until mid-morning, followed by a meal and more work until mid-afternoon. At about four p.m. the bells would ring for the ninth hour and vespers; then, on non-fasting days, there would be a second meal followed by compline and the *akathist*. Finally, there would be a short period of work for any jobs that had to be completed, or reading and rest. Most would be in their cells for the night by seven or eight o'clock, depending on the season. On feast days and Sunday vigils the evening service would begin at 9 p.m. and go on till dawn. There would be a festive meal straight after and little or no work.

The brethren had not much time for sleep. Church services were supplemented by private cell prayer, which would begin about an hour before the midnight office. It consisted of the Jesus Prayer, recited once for each of the 100 knots in the prayer rope. According to the Rule, the Schemamonks said 12 prayer ropes with a bow from the waist after each prayer (i.e., 1,200 bows), and one prayer rope with a prostration to the ground for each knot; all tonsured monks said six prayer ropes with 550 bows from the waist and 50 prostrations; and novices said three prayer ropes with 33 prostrations.[36]

The gruelling regime of work and prayer was reinforced by a strict control of diet. Almost half the year was given over to fasting: in most weeks of the year, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; certain one-day fasts, such as the Beheading of St John the Baptist, 29 August; Lent and Holy Week (50 days), the Christmas Fast (40 days), the Dormition Fast (14 days) and the SS. Peter and Paul Fast (approximately 2-3 weeks). On very strict fast-days, such as the one-day fasts, the first week of Lent, Holy week, Christmas Eve and the first day of the Dormition Fast, nothing would be eaten or drunk except for tiny amounts of liturgical loaves and holy water. On strict fasting days only uncooked food was eaten, and on ordinary fasting days olive oil, cheese, eggs and wine were not permitted. Meat was never eaten, unlike in

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35 At sunset on Mt Athos the clocks are set at twelve.

36 *Ustav*, Pt. I, Ch. 5, Section III, entitled *Keleynyi Kanon*. In this case the *Kanon* is the statutory prayers. The prayer rope—*chotka* or *komposkoini*—is similar to a rosary. (In correct Russian *chotka* can be only in the plural, i.e., *chotki*.) The words of the Jesus Prayer are *Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*. This would be supplemented by the prayer to the Mother of God: *Most holy Mother of God, save me.*, or varied, as explained in the next chapter.

some idiorrhythmic houses, whose number probably included Pantokratoros.[37]

Meals themselves were a religious ritual which is observed in Greek Orthodox cœnobia to this day.[38] The brethren file into the refectory in orderly procession and each stands by his allotted place, according to seniority. The presiding monk (usually the abbot or prior) says a prayer, the food is blessed, and all sit down, except for the reader, who reads from his lectern a Patristic text, hagiography or an exegesis on the Gospel, while the brethren and their guests eat in silence. The presiding monk rings a bell about five minutes after the beginning of the meal and the water (and when it is permitted, wine) is blessed; no one drinks before this bell. When the presiding monk finishes the meal he again rings the bell. The reader interrupts his reading, comes down from the lectern, makes a reverence before the prior or presiding monk, and receives a piece of bread from his hand, which he kisses. The remnants of the food are then blessed and all file out silently and in an orderly fashion before the reader, cook and refectory stewards, who stand bowing from the waist by the door next to the senior priest on duty whose right hand is raised in benediction. This ritual is still practised in most of the Athonite monasteries, including St Panteleimon's, and in many non-Athonite Greek cœnobia. On Sundays and feast days in the latter there is an additional ceremony devoted to the Mother of God, called the *Chin o Panaghii*. As soon as the Liturgy is over the Abbot, robed in his episcopal mantle, blesses the *Panaghia* loaf, which is then solemnly borne to the refectory. During the meal the refectory steward, accompanied by a deacon with a censer, offers the loaf to each of the diners, who makes the sign of the cross, takes a pinch of the bread and is censed. On special feast days, or when a there is a memorial service, *kolyva* is also offered to all the diners.

Whereas the ritual of meals in the skeţe was the same as it is in Greek cœnobia to this day, the Russian Athonites served their food differently. In Greek monasteries the refectory staff apportion equal amounts of food at each laid place before the diners file in; thus all diners have the same amount of food. The Russians, however, helped themselves

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[37] Robert Byron, Athlestan Riley and R.H. Brewster, who visited the Holy Mountain from 1880 to the 1930s all stayed mainly in Greek idiorrhythmic monasteries and were given meat to eat. Their meals were often shared by their hosts. See Byron, Robert, *The Station* (London: John Lehmann, 1949); Brewster, R.H., *6,000 Beards of Athos* (London, 1935); Riley, Athlestan, *Athos, or the Mountain of the Monks* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1887).

[38] In Greek Athonite monasteries the entrance to the refectory is directly opposite that of the church, as if to emphasise the ecclesiastical significance of meals. See Khristou, op. cit., 'Diaita', pp. 348-349.

to the main course, usually soup, from tureens placed in the middle of the tables. This is what happens at St Panteleimon today. As we have seen with Svyatogorets and Ieronim, the Russians did not like Greek food; Greek monks eat bean and lentil soup—*fasolada* and *fakes*—but not buckwheat gruel or borsht.

Naturally, an elaborate programme of prayer, ritual fasting and work relied on strict discipline. The system of punishment and enforcement of regulations was also complex.

It is hardly surprising that such a demanding way of life governed by a rigorous set of rules proved too much for some. The Rule provided for those who stepped out of line: not only were there officers, such as the deans, who were constantly on the lookout for infringements, but there was a clearly-defined set of punitive measures to enforce the law. Archimandrite Ioann and his council had a tricky task because the Cossacks were noted for their unruly, freedom-loving ways. Even the skete's 'official' history, the *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit* mentions, albeit in passing, their 'ingrained bad habits and wilfulness'.[39]

The prior and council were particularly careful that the regulations governing prayer should be enforced. They were constantly supervising and controlling what went on in church, mindful of the smallest details. Thus, we read in the minutes: 'When there is a Doxology the litany should be read by the serving deacon';[40] and, 'It was decided that when all our brethren have taken Communion the fourth prayer of thanks, frequently omitted, be read upon receipt of the Holy Gifts.'[41] Another minute illustrates clearly how the dean enforced ecclesiastical discipline controlled by the prior and council, and how the prior was the supreme arbiter of behaviour:

> It was decided that Monk Gervasiy the Dean should instil into our brethren that they should not leave church without good reason during the services or linger in the courtyard indulging in idle talk. He must also see that brethren do not sleep during vigils and matins. If anyone does not obey the above demands ... he [the Dean] should report to the prior who will inflict the appropriate punishment on the transgressor.'[42]

Most minor disciplinary cases were dealt with directly by the prior; the exceptions were discussed in council, often because the wrongdoer had quarrelled with the prior. The choice of punitive measures was limited. The miscreant could be summoned, questioned and lectured, either by the prior alone, or he would have to appear in front of the prior and

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39 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p 69. See also Dmitrievsky, A.A., *Russkie na Afone*, Ch X, in which the skete Cossacks are described as having 'a penchant for wilfulness and even disorderliness'.

40 MF 1 Sobor 9 2x1917.

41 Ibid., 20 29i1918.

42 Ibid., 22 29i1918.

council: 'Fr Ilian was summoned before the council in order to explain his trip to Odessa.'[43]

Practical measures were possible. In 1904 there was a spate of attempted escapes from the skete by *ryasofory* and fully-tonsured monks who put in seemingly innocent requests for permission to be allowed out to Odessa or Constantinople to see the doctor.[44] These were almost invariably turned down. There were several other cases since then of the Cossacks' *wanderlust* and desire for greater freedom. Hilandar was a favourite destination for those disaffected with the strictures of cœnobitic life; it was both Slav and idiorrhythmic, which meant that its members could earn their own money and live independently in the security of a monastery. Again, the only antidote was to refuse all requests to leave and to close the gates to those who had left without permission but had subsequently had a change of heart.

Of course, different practical measures were needed according to the transgression being dealt with:

> The council discussed Monk-Deacon Afanasiy's failings during services. It was decided that he should be banned from drinking spirits for a year and from serving in church for half a year.[45]

Perhaps the most frequently used practical measure was reallocating accommodation: 'It was decided to transfer Monk Ioann, formerly the guest-house cook, from his old cell into another, and to compel him to attend all church services without fail.'[46] This was a wise decision because the guest-house was outside the main gates and Monk Ioann needed closer supervision. Only the most trustworthy brethren could be relied on to lead cœnobitic lives outside the main gates. Monk Finees, who lived in the skete's house in Karyes, is a case in point:

> [...] it was proposed to Monk Finees that his old cell [in the Karyes house] be cleaned out and that he be transferred to a cell allotted to him by the council at the Main Gate. He is to sign a statement that he agrees to attend church, do his work and go to refectory, and, like all the brethren, that he will comply with the will of those in authority, above all of the prior. Moreover, he should agree to hand over to the treasury the money he has earned mending watches, for he has no right to take on work without the prior's permission. All this he refused: "I'll not go to the Main Gate," he said, "and I've no intention to sign a statement; it's

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43 Ibid., 4 14x1914.

44 Ibid., 26 15iii1904; 35, 38, 39 5iv; 40 20iv; 43 3v; 48 10v; 55 28v; 59 7vi; 60, 61 15vi; 70 28vi; 80 9ix. These are instances reported in the 1904 minutes alone, when various requests for leave of absence in Russia were either not granted or given under strict conditions. 83-16 vi, however, reports that Monk Savin the sailor, who was anyway constantly travelling abroad in one of the skete's vessels, was given permission to go home in order to settle his financial affairs.

45 Ibid., 10 2x1917.

46 Ibid., 21 29i1918.

better for me to leave for the wilderness." And he appeared in front of the council merely to ask forgiveness and take his leave.[47]

The most commonly-administered punishment was additional prayer-ropes. These could be added to the private cell prayer and were referred to as 'canonical prayer ropes' (*chotka za kanon*): 'For personally insulting the Fr Prior, Fr Vikentiy was given a canonical prayer rope at the council meeting.'[48] More serious offences were given one or more prayer ropes to be said publicly in the refectory: 'For wilful insolence Monk Gavriil has been made to stand in the refectory and say a prayer rope during dinner.'[49]

The next punitive measure in the Rule was demotion for an officer or clerical worker to hard labour. The most spectacular case of this in the skete was when Fr Gervasiy, a member of the council and the senior dean, probably as a result of a drinking spree, was stripped of his rank and had to do a spell in the gardens.[50]

The fifth measure proposed by the Rule is imprisonment in the so-called 'Humility Cell' on bread, jam and water.[51] The culprit would have to learn an improving text by heart, such as a psalm. In 1904, Archimandrite Maksim and his council considered having such a room but came to no decision.[52] Significantly enough, this was primarily to be a room for sobering up: in that year particularly, drunkenness was an acute problem. We read in the 1904 minutes of the same month that Monk Vladimir swore at the prior, was violent and threw stones at people; this was hardly surprising, as he was at the time the cellarer and had unlimited access to alcohol.[53] Monk Ioasaf was caught being drunken and disorderly, and was banned from drinking raki.[54] These incidents were in March alone; two months later there was a major drink scandal.[55] Three monks were caught, two were severely punished and the worst offender, Monk Parfeniy, was forbidden raki after his expulsion from the skete had been revoked.

As a result of this incident the following measures were taken:

1 no more written permission to be issued for raki;

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47 Ibid., 135 17x1918.

48 Ibid., 2 20viii1914.

49 Ibid., 39 24xi1917.

50 Ibid., 2 4i1922.

51 See *Ustav*, Pt. 1, Ch. 13 on punishments. The Russian for 'humility cell' is *smirennaya kelliya*.

52 MF 1 Sobor 27 15iii1904.

53 Ibid., 11 23ii1904.

54 Ibid., 12 23ii1904.

55 Ibid., 59, 60, 61, 62 15vi1904.

2 no raki was to be given to brethren washing laundry at the spring;
3 only one glass of raki would be permitted in the cellar at certain times;
4 singers were to be forbidden raki during rehearsals; instead one glass of wine per singer would be permitted on certain days, excluding fasts;
5 no raki was to be issued to brethren celebrating namedays.

The annual budget for alcohol was so large that drink-related incidents were hardly surprising. Despite the obvious dangers, the allowance of alcoholic drink for those working outside, and especially doing hard labour, was remarkably generous. Even in the later war years when times were hard the allowance for coopers and tree-fellers was half a litre of wine per day and half a litre of raki per week.

The worst offences were dealt with by expulsion. This was not always a satisfactory answer, however, as the troublesome Monk Finees' case shows:

> [...] he, on the other hand, was made to say two prayer ropes; he did not agree, for he felt justified in hitting him. Moreover, he does not wish to recognise the authority of any member of council and was thoroughly rude. It was decided that if he does not repent, then let him leave for the four corners of the earth, and as he is not to be given a food packet for those living outside he keeps coming for permission to eat in the refectory. No decision has been arrived at, for he has not recognised his guilt.[56]

The examples of disciplinary measures and misdemeanours, and of the rigours of cœnobitic life, can give a misleading picture of the skete. It was not a joyless prison; its members were there because they had freely chosen the ascetic life, and many had gone through great hardship to escape the world to the peace of Mt Athos. The cases of disobedience and drunkenness mentioned above were the exceptions in an otherwise highly successful and harmonious community. Nor were its authorities merciless in punishment and tyrannical: time and again the prior and council took clement and lenient decisions. Monk Finees was never expelled, Monk Parfeniy was let off expulsion[57] and the disgraced former senior dean Gervasiy was reelected to the following council.[58]

Archimandrite Ioann was fortunate enough to inherit the most harmonious of the three main Russian Athonite houses. The St Panteleimon Monastery and St Andrew Skete had not recovered from the Heresy of the Name of Jesus and were significantly depleted as a result of the enforced

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[56] Ibid., 2 28viii1914.

[57] Ibid., 75 29vii1904; instead, he was made to say a prayer rope with prostrations to the ground each day in the refectory for a week.

[58] In 1923, but not at the election after that, in 1924, by which time he may have died or was perhaps too infirm.

deportation to Russia of the rebels. That the shameful man-handling of the prior and elders at the hands of Anatoliy Bulatovich should have happened in the Prophet Elijah Skete was inconceivable. In 1914 the Prophet Elijah Skete was a tolerant, happy community. Here Christian charity triumphed over human weakness. This explains why it never ceased to be a centre of prayer and peace even though it was becoming materially increasingly well off.

The skete's wealth did not come from fixed assets. It possessed no land on Athos of its own, of course, except for the disputed triangle of forest, which was too small to be of importance. In comparison, St Panteleimon, being one of the Twenty, had commercially exploitable forest and extensive vineyards in Krumitsa, and Hilandar had valuable Athonite corn fields, on which the skete's brethren were to work as hired labourers in the difficult decade to come. The skete had accommodation—a *kunak*—for its representative in Karyes and rented rooms in Dafne. The skete itself stood on land belonging to Pantokratoros. The skete was encircled by a small area of terraced vineyards, vegetable gardens, orchards and a citrus grove, all etched into the steep wooded hillside.[59] Permission had been given to build a water mill and a warehouse at the Pantokratoros jetty, but encroachment on any other of the monastery's land was forbidden.[60]

The most valuable produce from this meagre estate was raki and wine. The skete's communion wine was well known. Its 'grapes cropped heavily, but not yearly', and had 'a distinctly strong flavour.'[61]

The skete did not posses any agricultural land outside Mt Athos, either. It had four main dependencies: in Odessa, Constantinople, Tagan-Rog and Novo Nikolaevskaya Stanitsa.[62] In addition, it possessed a house in Moscow. A few acres of land and a house on the Azov sea had been bequeathed, but these were commercially unimportant.[63] A house in Nakichevan', in the Caucasus, also belonged to the skete. The Novo Nikolaevskaya dependency, which once had its own mill, was used as a depot for grain bought for the skete.[64]

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59 The citrus grove was planted in 1904; see MF 1 Sobor 3 23ii1914.

60 Charter *of 1892*, Article 13.

61 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 14.

62 Tagan-Rog is on the Azov Sea, in the Rostovskaya Oblast'; it is one of the Russian Steamship and Trade ports of call. A *stanitsa* is a Cossack township or large village.

63 Three *desyatiny* (about 8 acres) of land on the shore of the Azov Sea were bequeathed by three merchants. It was proposed to turn this property into a fish farm, but nothing more is mentioned about the project. See MF 1 Sobor 5 23ii1914.

64 The steward was Monk Timon, who seemed unhappy about his posting and badgered Archimandrite Maksim with frequent letters. Eventually, on the former's advice, the windmill was sold (see MF 1 Sobor 2 2vi1905)

Administering such a large organisation was costly. Where did the money come from?

Although the real estate occupied by the Odessa, Constantinople and Moscow dependencies was doubtless very valuable, none of the skete's fixed assets brought in any visible earnings to speak of. Nearly everything that the skete and its dependencies used and consumed—from food to construction materials—had to be bought and imported. The only natural resource the skete (as opposed to its dependencies) had in abundance was water. Prior Varlaam's well had been providing drinking water from a spring since it was dug at the end of the eighteenth century, and ten cisterns stored rain water for other uses. As we have seen, the skete also had an annual free allowance of 2,000 firewood logs from Pantokratoros Monastery. Although there is no mention of this in any extant records, the skete, like many Athonite houses, was probably self-sufficient in honey and beeswax for candles.

Food was a major drain on income and was always the first item of expenditure on the skete's account sheets. The skete alone had to feed on average just under four hundred brethren daily and twice that amount on Sundays and feast days when it was visited by itinerant *kaviotes* and pilgrims. The average yearly expenditure for the skete on food from 1909 to 1914 was 7,000 roubles;[65] the amount per month fluctuated, depending on fasts and feast days and on whether imports were being made in bulk for storage. The Odessa dependency spent twice as much, presumably because it had to cater for more visitors, many of whom did not eventually visit the skete or stayed in the skete only briefly. The other dependencies spent less on food than the skete.

The diet of Athonite monks is mainly vegetarian. Fish, which is eaten only on feast days, was imported salted from Russia, and some was caught locally for the skete.[66] In 1914 the skete kept piglets, not for its own consumption; they disposed of the swill from the kitchens, were fattened and eventually sold to the idiorrhythmic houses and outside Mt Athos.[67]

The skete's main food imports were wheat, maize and barley. These were bought in Novo Nikolaevskaya Stanitsa,

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because of repeated threats by unidentified arsonists and the high cost of insurance. Until the windmill was sold, the Novonikolaevskaya dependency was more important than that in Moscow, which was merely a flat.

65 According to the skete's account books for 1909-1914. The extant accounts are from 1903 to 1915.

66 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p 21.

67 About 800 roubles per year was earned from selling livestock; more was spent on its upkeep, but it included mules, horses and oxen, which were, of course, not destined for market.

Tagan-Rog, Odessa and Alexandria, and shipped directly to the skete in its own brig. Other imported provisions frequently mentioned in the skete's records were cabbage, which is part of a Russian's staple diet, chick-peas, peas, beans, potatoes and rice. Salt, sugar and tea were bought in bulk in Russia. No female animal or fowl is allowed to be kept on Mt Athos, so eggs had to be imported for Easter, while fresh milk, which could not have been transported great distances or kept for any length of time, never came to the skete. Curiously enough, cheese is not mentioned in any of the extant records, either.

Barley and hay had to be imported for the skete's mules, horses and oxen. Another essential import was oil. Although the skete had its own oil press, it had to import the bulk of its olives. Olives and olive oil are an essential part of the Athonite diet. Crude olive oil was stored in vats until it separated: the top layer, which was the thinnest, was skimmed off, allowed to stand and was used as lamp oil; the middle layer was used for culinary purposes on non-fasting days, and the dregs were mixed with ashes and crushed olive stones to make soap.[68] On fasting days corn, sunflower and other seed oil were used for cooking.

An extraordinary amount was spent on wine and spirits. That the skete could have produced enough from its own grapes would have been surprising, but slightly more was spent on alcohol per year than on food. In 1914, for instance, 5,800 roubles went on food, as opposed to 7,429 on alcoholic drink.

Building materials had been another important drain on income, but once major construction work was completed, the figures diminished significantly:[69]

Year	*Roubles spent on building materials*
1909	7,936
1910	4,051
1911	503
1912	2,173
1913	438
1914	591

The most expensive imported labour force was also connected with the central church. These were the smiths, joiners, stonemasons and marble workers, who cost on average 7,500 roubles per annum from 1909 to 1913; hired general labourers and seasonal workers, on the other hand, cost on average 2,000 roubles per annum, coopers and saddlers 1,500, and tailors and cobblers 1,100.

Of the other imported articles, the average costs over these five years was as follows:

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[68] Loch, Sydney, *Athos: the Holy Mountain*, p. 11.

[69] All the accounts statistics are taken from MF 2 Docs Accounts Ledgers 1909–1912.

household goods	3,500 roubles
clothing & footwear	700 roubles

As for fuel, the cost depended on the weather, numbers of guests and surplus left over from bulk buys, but clearly, the allowance of 2,000 logs from Pantokratoros was insufficient at any time in the five-year period, except, perhaps, in 1911. Thus, figures for this period were:

1909	3,000 roubles
1910	4,000 roubles
1911	nothing
1912	516 roubles
1913	1,087 roubles
lighting materials (lamp-oil and kerosene for spirit lamps): average for 1909–1913	700 roubles

A comparatively small amount of money was given away to charity. The skete, along with the other Russian Athonite houses, subsidised the Russian St Dimitriy hospital in Salonica. The skete's contribution was about 170 roubles per annum. It also subsidised religious education in the Kherson diocese to the tune of 200 roubles a year, and a further 400 roubles was paid in alms to *kaviotes* and needy pilgrims.

Most of the skete's money was spent to meet clerical and administrative costs. It paid yearly dues to Pantokratoros and the governing body in Karyes totalling 150 Turkish lira, which worked out to about 1,300 roubles p.a. The other costs from 1909 to 1914 were:

postage and office materials	450 r.p.a.
customs duties from 1911	700 r.p.a.
'debt'[70]	200 r.p.a.
postal orders	2,000 r.p.a.
buying foreign currency	10,000 r.p.a.
cash withdrawals from savings	15,000 r.p.a.
cash transfers to Constantinople until 1911	7,000 r.p.a.
cash transfers to Odessa from 1912[71]	7,500 r.p.a.

It can be seen that the largest items of expenditure involved financial transactions and banking. The account sheets for annual income clearly indicate that the skete,

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[70] It is not clear what this 'debt' was; the most likely explanation is that this comparatively small amount of money went to pay for those poor people who had a *pantakouzi* document—an official letter bearing the collective seal of the twenty monasteries entitling the bearer to ask for charitable donations all over Athos.

[71] These cash transfers were counterbalanced by similar sums received from Constantinople and Odessa. Why cash ceased to be transferred to Constantinople in 1911 is not clear. Perhaps, a year before Athos was claimed by the Greeks, the skete lost confidence in the Ottoman Empire as a safe place for investment.

together with its dependencies, was a wealthy banking and trading organisation. The average total annual turnover of the skete from 1909 to 1914 was in the region of half a million roubles, and the surplus at the end of the year was between 26,000 and 30,000 roubles.

The skete itself had three main sources of income. It sold icons and other ecclesiastical items, groceries and household objects to the local Athonite communities and pilgrims; these sales brought in approximately 12,000 r.p.a. About 19,000 r.p.a. were invested or deposited for safekeeping in gold and various currencies by the local Athonites. Finally, a substantial amount came from donations and benefactions. From 1909 to 1914 the amounts were:

money sent to the treasurer	1,500 r.p.a.
money sent to the abbot	8,000 r.p.a.
alms-gathering missions in Russia	2,000 r.p.a.
postal donations	30,000 r.p.a.
donations deposited with the Salonica Consulate	5,000 r.p.a.

The Odessa dependency acted as the centre of the skete's commercial and banking operations. The annual income of the Odessa dependency from 1909 to 1914 averaged just under a quarter of a million roubles, which was 100,000 roubles more than that of the skete itself. The Odessa dependency's shop brought in 63,000 r.p.a., and the dependency received some 37,000 r.p.a. in direct and postal donations.[72] Most important of all, the dependency acted as a central investment bank to the skete and the other dependencies, earning about 25,000 r.p.a. in percentage returns on its deposits in Russian banks.

Despite its great wealth and its adroit economic policies, the skete was, of course, a monastic community, not a bank. Paradoxically, it was piety and asceticism that brought in the money.

The skete and its dependencies were built and sustained by the generosity of pious Russian individuals. Archimandrite Ioann expressed his gratitude to these people publicly in his homily after the consecration of the central church: 'Remember, Lord, in Thy kingdom the souls of all those good Russians [...], for this temple has been built on the hard-earned money donated by the great Russian people, who zealously love the beauty of Thy house.'[73]

At no time did the skete and its dependencies receive official subsidies, or any sort of aid from companies or

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[72] Like the skete itself, each dependency had its own shop which sold candles, icons, liturgical loaves and other ecclesiastical items, as well as books and pamphlets to pilgrims.

[73] *Osvyaschenie sobornago khrama*, Odessa, 1914.

royalty. Whatever jealous Greeks might have said, the royalty paid low-key, private visits, and gave no recorded gifts in money or kind, except for the foundation stone for the central church.

The main benefactors were rich merchants and their families. N.V. Lepeshkin[74] bought a silver-gilt riza encrusted with precious stones for the icon of the Bogoroditsa Mlekopitatel'nitsa[75] and, in 1857, provided the funds to build a home for aged monks with two chapels. A copy of the Tikhvinskaya Bozhya Mater'[76] was given by M.A. Vyushkin, the sanctuary screen for the St Mitrofan Chapel was from M.D. Sushkin,[77] and a candelabra, which is worth 800 roubles, and is the only one in the main church, was donated by M.T. Voronin. The principal benefactors of this century were Black Sea and Don Cossack families. The Kavurs, Kulikovs, Sizlovs, Minayevs, Vorobeychiks, Chertkovs and Gryzlovs regularly sent donations of 100-150 roubles.[78] Some, such as the Kulikovs, had sent several thousand roubles by 1914.

The procedure for leaving bequests and receiving them was complex. Small sums were given directly to the skete and its dependencies. Money was handed personally to one of the brethren, or put in the collection plate during a service, or left in the money box by the relics. Larger sums were sent by post. The most convenient way to do this was to buy postal orders specially printed for the skete. It was also possible to send money packets through the post. Those that were designated for Mt Athos were cleared in the Odessa dependency and sent by special delivery through the Russian Steam-shipping and Trade Company. Money left in wills had to be certified by the executors in the local court and was then held in the District Division of the Palestine Society or by the Economic Directorate of the Holy Synod. When the skete needed to draw on a benefaction it had to write to the appropriate organisation stating the amount needed. Finally, money could be sent to the Russian Consulate in Salonica or the Russian Embassy in Constantinople.

As is universally practised in Orthodox monasteries, benefactors' names, together with those of their families, were recorded in a register, known as a *sinodik*, and

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74 *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit* pp 19, 89.

75 This copy is the most venerated icon of the skete; it became wonder-working during an alms-gathering mission in Russia (*Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 19) and was in the church of the Odessa dependency when the Revolution broke out; it is there to this day.

76 The most venerated icon still in the skete; gushed myrrh in 1871.

77 Probably a relative of Abbot Makariy Sushkin of St Panteleimon Monastery.

78 Their names frequently appear in MF 3 Vyh and Vhod, and are recorded in the skete's files on its benefactors.

commemorated in prayers.[79] One of the skete chapels was used for the constant reading of the Psalter interspersed with prayers and commemoration for benefactors.[80]

The skete and its Athonite neighbours were commercially dependent on each other. Monks from the ruling monasteries, particularly Pantokratoros, as well as anchorites and *kaviotes*, left various sums of gold and other currencies in the skete. These were either deposited for safe-keeping or invested for a percentage return. The great stone church and new residential blocks, the constant maritime traffic and flow of tradesmen to the skete must have inspired confidence in its investors, much as the monumental architecture of banks in cities is meant to inspire confidence today. The material wealth and splendour of the skete was a symbol of the security and might of the Russian Empire, in which, in turn, it invested its own capital. For this reason Pantokratoros and the Greeks in general, who were hardly on friendly terms with the Russians, banked with the skete.

The skete also played a more homely, social role as local general grocery store and meeting place. The

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[79] The official leaflet (MF 2 Docs Sinodik) for those wishing to give money to the skete in Russia and have their names commemorated specifies the following:

For the commemoration of the skete's benefactors there are *sinodiki* in which their names are inscribed for eternal commemoration at the *proskomediya* before a Liturgy and during continuous reading of the Psalter, both for their health and salvation and as a requiem for the deceased.

The order of commemoration

for one name:

			Roubles
I	*Eternal commemoration at the Proskomediya*		
	1)	Daily	30
	2)	On Saturdays	10
II	*Temporary commemoration at the Proskomediya*:		
	1)	For one year	5
	2)	For two months	1
III		*Forty-day commemoration for the deceased during Proskomediya and litanies*:	
	1)	Liturgies and other Divine Services	3
	2)	At the Vigil and Liturgy	1
	3)	During a Liturgy and Memorial Service, with candles and wake and with commemoration of up to 12 names of deceased persons.	
IV		*Special Commemoration during reading of the Psalter*:	
	1)	Eternal	30
	2)	For one year	5
	3)	For two months	1

[80] *Russkiy obschezhitel'nyi skit*, p. 21.

surrounding area, known as Kapsala, was home to numerous kelliots and anchorites. Some of the kellia, particularly that of St Savva the Blessed, were well off, but all would need to stock up with supplies. There were three trading centres in the area: Karyes, the St Andrew Skete and the Prophet Elijah Skete. The latter two were naturally preferred by the Russians, but the Prophet Elijah Skete was probably the most popular of the all three: the St Andrew Skete had a reputation for aloofness and was said to discriminate in favour of Great Russians; the Cossacks were more straightforward and easier to get on with.

The penniless *kaviotes* and anchorites would trade in their own crafted fare, such as wooden spoons, crosses and prayer-ropes, in return for the goods they needed; and these handmade items would in turn be sold for money in the shop. Among the most sought-after items for sale were liturgical loaves (*prosfory*), candles, icons and other ecclesiastical ware. Pilgrims were, of course, important customers.

For those pauper monks who had nothing to trade with, rusks were offered daily at the main gate, and a few kopeks were handed out as alms on certain occasions. There was an alms-house and hospital for the destitute inhabitants of the Athonite wilderness and for any local monk who needed medical attention or was on the point of death. Sundays and feast days were a kind of lifeline to many who had been fasting on their own and depended on the square meal and human company offered by the skete before facing the rigours of the wilderness again. Indeed, many a *kaviotis* must have glimpsed with envy at the ordered life of the well-run community within the skete's walls, and a number of them left the wilderness to join the brotherhood. Just how well-run things were was about to be put to the severest test.

PART II: THE PROPHET ELIJAH SKETE

Chapter 8: Greatness in Decline From 1914

The Great War, as we have seen, was at first believed to be an opportunity for Russia to show her strength in the Balkans. Optimism was perhaps at its highest from January to June of 1917 when the Franco-Russian detachment was on Athos, a mere four months before the Revolution. Eventually news of the martyrdom of Athonite monks and fellow Christians at the hands of Bolsheviks trickled in. All the Russian Athonite houses must have received heart-rending letters that somehow found their way to the Holy Mountain. At least thirty reached the skete; some of them were copies of originals that had evidently been passed round the Russian community. The following two cases are typical of what was described in these letters and reports: Priest-monk Nikolai of the Prophet Elijah Skete, 53, shot at the Tagan-Rog Dependency on 13 September 1921 when the dependency was being confiscated by the authorities; Priest-monk Evgeniy, 53, elder of the Kellion of the Life-giving Spring, chopped to pieces on 1 August 1930 on the banks of the Dnestr for attempting to flee to Athos via Romania.[1]

Never since its foundation did the skete find itself in such material straits as it did after 1917. At lean times in its past there were comparatively few brethren to feed and they were free to leave the Holy Mountain. Now there were some 180 confined to the skete, whose Greek neighbours were far from sympathetic. Its well-tended gardens provided no grain and few vital supplies were to be obtained elsewhere, for Greece and its neighbours had also to suffer the hardships and shortages of war. The St Panteleimon Russians had their own extensive lands on Athos and on the mainland, but like their fellow countrymen all over Athos, they found their material decline and isolation painful.

God, it was generally believed, had punished the Russians for their pride, and amends had to be made. In the 1920s St Silouan of the Rossikon was the most prominent of a small group of hesychasts who had started a great spiritual revival: his teaching and life inspired and were recorded by his disciple, Fr Sophroniy, who founded the Monastery of St John the Forerunner in Essex, now an internationally famous centre of Orthodoxy. Foreign visitors to the Holy Mountain between the two world wars were impressed by the dignified suffering of the Russians. One of the most unexpected tributes was paid by R.H. Brewster. He visited Athos through what seems to have been idle curiosity about 'what one may call the intimate family life of the 6,000 Holy Beards

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[1] I saw these letters in the skete archive in 1991 and intended to return on a future date to photograph them. As with all the archive, nothing has been accessible after the expulsion. Much may have been destroyed, removed or thrown away. The two examples I quote are taken from Ioannikiy, *K Tysyacheletiyu russkikh na Afone*, pp 79 and 80.

(concerning which strange reports were leaking out)'.[2] He spent most of the time there visiting Greek monks in the company of a young Athenian debauchee, and the picture Brewster paints of Athonite life is flippant and offensive. However, he is mercifully brief and uninsulting about the Russians, whom he describes as mysterious, forbidding and 'incredibly tragic'.

A contemporary of Brewster's, R.M. Dawkins, wrote revealingly:

> Now the much dreaded Russians are miserably poor; the condition of the skete of St. Elias, when we rested for a few hours there one day in 1933, was obviously piteous. But all the efficient buildings and the big church were spotlessly clean. We went in and were kindly welcomed and put to rest in one of their rooms. When we came down, I remarked on the neatness of everything and the flower-beds in the court. "Ah," said the monk to me, "Russia was Russia in those days." They were even then recovering from another trouble. Torrential rains had fallen shortly before, and carried away the walls of their gardens, and even filled the court with mud and silt. The monks were working hard to repair the damage, and the court had been cleared and was indeed as neat and tidy as possible, whitewashed and gay with flowers. There is always on Athos a great contrast between the careful, well-kept look of the Russian houses and the slightly ramshackle air that is never quite absent from a place where the Greeks have made themselves really at home. But the monks of St. Elias are getting old; there are now only eighty-three of them, and half of these cannot work any more. The future is very dark.[3]

Dawkins glimpsed in the skete at a community that was humbled in its present adversity, yet uncomplaining, hardworking and hospitable. His admiration is similar to what Athlestan Riley felt when he visited the Russian Monastery almost forty years before.

It was precisely when the going became almost unbearably hard that the Prophet Elijah Skete came into its own, and once again returned to the ideals preached by its founder of poverty, hard work and humility. The skete must have had its own twentieth-century saints, but like those of the countless martyrs of Soviet Russia, their deeds were not specifically recorded. Suffice it to say that Archimandrite Ioann showed remarkable staying power: he reigned for forty years, longer than any other prior. He and his flock had no choice, no escape; they got on with the business of being monks uncomplainingly until they died. Archimandrite Ioann's leadership was put to the severest test from the October Revolution to the mid-1920s, by which time the skete, along with most of Russian Athos, was coming to terms with its new way of life.

The difficulties faced by members of the skete and the other Russian houses were accentuated by the anguish felt

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[2] Brewster, R.H., Op. cit., p. 12. The quotation is from Ethel Smyth's pretentious preface.

[3] Dawkins, R.M., *The Monks of Athos*, pp. 140-141.

for their strife-torn fatherland. This feeling was summed up in a letter written on behalf of St Panteleimon and the two sketes in 1924: 'Our Benefactress, the great land of Russia, has been smashed to pieces, the Russian Orthodox Church has been crucified, and we Russian Athonite monks suffer from this greatly.'[4] On the eve of the Revolution Abbot Misail of the Rossikon wrote to Ioann suggesting that 23-26 October be set aside as special prayer days for Russia. Ioann readily agreed. On the first four of the days a fast was to be observed and on the evening of the 25th there would be an all-night vigil followed by a special liturgy, doxology and church procession.[5] In March of the next year Ioann and his council of skete elders decided that the usual words of the prayer rope canon after the liturgy, *Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, help thy servants*, be amended to *Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, save our Fatherland and have mercy on it*. This was to be said 'to grant victory to our forces over their enemies' because of 'the changes undergone in the military and political circumstances of our Fatherland.' A similar measure was taken in April 1922.[6]

Prayer was the only practicable way of helping the fatherland, which was inaccessible. No regular steamships from anywhere had called on Athos by 1919, presumably since the beginning of the war, and there had been no post from Russia since the end of 1916.[7] The practical consequences of this were grave for the skete because most of its capital had been deposited in Odessa bank accounts. On three occasions in 1917 Odessa was cabled with a request that 30,000 roubles be transferred to the skete, but in vain. There was also no reply to a request in March 1919 for 50,000 roubles from the Romanov Credit Fund to be transferred to Athos.[8] Some letters did get through, although the timing of their arrival was highly unpredictable. There was a very large post in April 1920 and this included money from benefactors.[9] The last mention of links with Russia in the archive is dated 6 March 1922; it offers a curious and disturbing glimpse of church-state collaboration in the USSR: 'It was decided to confirm the members of the Soviet Council—*Sovetskago sobora*—in our Odessa dependency, who have been chosen by the Steward, Priest-monk Iona, as his helpers.'[10] Naturally, no people from Odessa or elsewhere in

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4 MF 2 Docs Letter to Bishop James Henry Darlington 13iii1924.

5 Ibid., Letter from Rossikon 5x1917, and Reply from Skete, 16x1917.

6 MF 1 Sobor 43 11iii1918, and 26 7iv1922.

7 MF 1 Sobor 19 20iv1919. See also MF 2 Docs Letter to Pavel Artem'evich ?Demidov ?ix1917.

8 MF 1 Sobor 3 2iii1917, 3 19iii1917, 3 3viii1917 and 10 16iii1919.

9 Ibid., 30 14iii1920.

10 Ibid., 20 6iii1922. This 'Soviet Council' probably comprised of Renovationists, a faction formed after the Revolution to oppose and reform the established Orthodox Church in Russia. They seized all

Russia were able to get through to the skete. This meant that no new novices arrived since the beginning of the war. In fact, except for a Monk Mitrofan in December 1916, nobody was accepted into the skete brotherhood even from elsewhere on Athos.[11]

The skete was heading towards financial disaster. Even in its prosperous days, as we have seen, it was always in need of money. After 1917 the skete found itself in debt to its Athonite investors and unable to pay even its yearly dues to Pantokratoros. The 150 lira it owed the monastery and in taxes were due in September of each year. As early as 1914 Prior Ioann and his interpreter went to Pantokratoros to ask whether payment could be postponed to the end of the war.[12] His request was turned down and steps had to be taken to raise the required sum. In November 1914 50 lira were borrowed from Abbot Theoklitos and 25 lira from Monk Kallistos, both of Pantokratoros; and a month later a further 100 lira were borrowed from the Prophet Elijah Kellion 'in order to pay for labour and the monastery.'[13] The skete was now taking out loans from local individuals rather than banking their money.

Eventually Pantokratoros realised that its skete was in financial difficulties and decided to exploit the situation. In March 1920 one of the monastery elders, *Epitropos* Chrisostomos, demanded back the 100 lira he had invested in the skete, not at the usual rate of 23 drachmae per lira, but at 35 to the lira. His request was granted.[14] However, the monastery now decided to ask for its yearly dues of 150 lira at the exorbitant rate of 38 drachmae to the lira. Ioann had to go in person to beg them to accept the old rate of 23 drachmae. It is not clear whether he was successful, for the same matter was discussed two years running, in 1920 and 1921, apparently without being resolved.[15]

Naturally, relations between skete and monastery were as bad as ever. Pantokratoros felt the pinch, as did everyone else, but there was something mean in its belt-tightening, as if revenge was being taken on its once-rich and mighty underlings. In 1921 Pantokratoros decided to levy 20 lepta per load of dung gathered in the woods by the skete's loggers; previously this had been free and the skete

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Athonite property in Odessa in the 1920s. The movement disbanded after 1945.

[11] Ibid., 3 8xii1916.

[12] Ibid 1 26ix1914.

[13] Ibid., 2, 3 14xii1914.

[14] Ibid., 26 4iii1920.

[15] Ibid., 83 29ix1920 and 47 27ix1921; but cf 105 22xi1920: Priest-monk Athanasios was paid back his investment with interest in two installments—at 23 dr./lira in 1920 and at 38 dr. the next year. Evidently, the skete decided to pay the new rate to individuals, but not to the monastery.

was forced to go without it. Two months later the monastery announced that as times were hard and the skete brethren had diminished, the annual allowance of 2,000 firewood logs was to be halved.[16] It is hardly surprising that the skete was resentful. That is why it appended its signature to the petition sent on behalf of the three principal Russian houses in March 1919 to the Paris Peace Conference and hoped that the Russian Athonite Sketes be promoted to full monastic status.

Not only was the Prophet Elijah Skete cut off from Russia, but it soon lost all its dependencies. The rooms in Dafne and Karyes had to be abandoned, in June and October 1918. Before the Revolution, however, there had been plans for expansion. At the end of 1914 it was decided not to sell the Novo Nikolaevskaya property, despite increasing debts, but caution forbade the purchase of a house in the Kaluga district a month later.[17] From March 1915 to January 1917 the prior and his council authorised repairs to the Nakichevan' house and the installation of electricity in the Odessa and Tagan-Rog dependencies because money was being provided locally for all three projects.[18] The eventual seizure of the Russian dependencies by the Soviet authorities was inevitable.

The requisition of all Russian Athonite property in Constantinople came as a shock. This happened soon after the outbreak of World War I, when the Turks sided with the Germans. News of the loss was confirmed when one of the skete representatives, Monk Nikon, arrived on Athos from Constantinople. The Russian Athonite community embarked on a vigorous campaign to reclaim their possessions. The Prophet Elijah Skete stood to lose an estate valued at 20,995 roubles 50 kopeks.[19] Some of the Russian Kelliots were still trying to reclaim their property from the Turks in 1930,[20] but at the end of December 1917 the skete realised it was about to get back its dependency, which was officially handed over on 16 November 1918, shortly after the signing of the Armistice. Accordingly, Priest-monk Pakhomiy was sent out to Constantinople with 1,000 roubles and 2,000 drachmae to get it running again.[21] Now that there were no pilgrims from Russia it is hard to understand why the skete continued to maintain so large a property in Turkey. The only practical use of this dependency seems to have been as a base for purchasing supplies for the skete.[22] The dependency

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16 Ibid., 48 28ix1921 and 56 22x1921.
17 Ibid., 2 17i1915.
18 Ibid, 1 16ii1915, 2 18ii1915 and 1 27i1917.
19 MF 2 Docs Inventory 22x1914.
20 *Sentences arbitrales*, passim.
21 MF 1 Sobor 145 29xii1918.
22 Ibid.,145 6xii1918.

soon became a vital community centre for thousands of Russian émigrés and refugees in the aftermath of the collapse of the White Army Southern Front at the end of the Russian Civil War. Pakhomiy's was a lonely and thankless job. He begged to be relieved of his office and be allowed to return to Athos, but this was refused until 1922, when he was replaced by Priest-monk Iuvenaliy.[23]

As we have seen from Dawkins' account, the general hardships the skete had to put up with were aggravated by the inevitable inconveniences and disasters of daily life. The least of these was an annoying dispute in 1914 with Korchag Novitskiy, an artist who sold the skete a batch of what was discovered to be defective lithographs: he threatened to sue because he was not being paid the price originally agreed on.[24] In 1917 natural disasters struck. There was a fire in Salonica so serious that at the beginning of September the Russian Consulate was unable to devote any attention to the needs of the Russian Athonite community, which was suddenly threatened with famine.

In this, the year before the end of the war, there was a critical shortage of grain. On A.A. Pavlovskiy's initiative, the two sketes, St Panteleimon and the brotherhood of Russian Kelliots had formed a taskforce called the United Provisions Commission—*Ob'edinennaya prodovol'stvennaya komissiya*—to tackle problems of food supply. At one of their first meetings, on 8 September 1917, they discussed the implications of the poor wheat harvest: less than half the usual six-monthly quota of wheat was in the Rossikon's granary, even though the Krumitsa harvest had just been gathered. One of the monastery's ships had sunk with a month's supply for 1,100 people. The situation was exacerbated by Serbia and Britain who requisitioned grain in the Balkans for the allied troops. Furthermore, the Greeks refused to sell grain to the Russians either on Athos or in Khalkidiki.[25]

A month later there was another shipwreck with catastrophic consequences for all four Russian Athonite organisations.[26] On 27 October 1917 representatives of the sketes and the brotherhood arrived at the St Panteleimon quay to off-load 107 tonnes of various provisions that had been brought on one of the Rossikon's ships from Alexandria for all four organisations. Owing to bad weather, the

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[23] Ibid., 46 23ix1921 and 35 20viii1922.

[24] 3 2iv1915 and 3 9vii1915.

[25] MF 2 Docs Declaration from Supply Commission to Russian Salonica Consul P.A. Lobachev 16ix1917. This document also mentions the Salonica fire.

[26] I.e., the two sketes, the Russian Monastery and the Brotherhood. Ibid., Declaration Under Oath, Letter, Declaration 31x–2xi1917; and MF 1 Sobor [?!]30 24xi1917, 41 5xii1917.

operation was postponed and the ship sought shelter to the lee of the nearby island of Amouliani. St Panteleimon did not offer hospitality to the representatives, who had to spend the night outside the monastery's gates. The next day was a Saturday; as the Sunday all-night vigil had to be prepared for, the abbot sent word that the visiting brethren were not welcome on the Rossikon's property. That night a storm struck, the ship hit a rock, and only a few sacks of the precious cargo could be rescued. Unfortunately, the cargo had been insured only as far as Salonica. The brethren of the sketes and kellia complained of the monastery's 'criminal negligence', but there was of course no redress. In the event, there was no famine and it can be assumed that, chastened by what had happened, St Panteleimon acted less selfishly in the future.

Circumstances brought out the strength of character, endurance and resourcefulness inherent in the skete brethren. Ioann and his council instituted a series of carefully graduated rations. Essential foodstuffs were not stinted on. For instance, five tonnes of salt were bought in October 1915 and 3.6 tonnes in March 1921.[27] It was, of course used primarily for preserving, hence the great quantities. Luxuries such as olive oil, alcohol, sugar, tea, fuel for lighting and fuel to heat the tea-urn were progressively cut back. The Cossacks, as we have seen, were particularly fond of drink, and must have found doing without their wine and raki particularly hard. In April 1915 it was decided to restrict the number of liturgies served on days that the brethren took communion, so as to economise on wine.[28] Soon wine was no longer served in the refectory except on the Twelve great Feasts, and eventually it was cut from the refectory altogether. Those who did hard labour, however, were more fortunate. In August 1916, despite the shortages, the prior personally ordered the distillation of raki and wine, 'for one or two cups are not for getting drunk, but healthy for those doing hard work.'[29] These 'cups'

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[27] Ibid.,2 5x1915, and 17 20iii1921.

[28] Ibid., 6 10i1920. Wine was used not only for consecration but for the *teplota* of wine adulterated with hot water taken by each communicant after Eucharist.

[29] Ibid., 2 30viii1917.

must have been exceptionally large, for in May 1919 brethren working in the vegetable gardens had their wine rationed to half a litre a day each. Even a year later raki was still being issued to the loggers.[30]

The more the skete deprived itself of what it considered to be luxuries the more generous it became to others. We have seen that before the war comparatively little money was given to charity. When things became difficult measures were taken to ensure that the other needy folk were catered for as possible. In April 1916 arrangements were made to transfer 3,000 roubles through the Archbishop of Odessa to help the wounded.[31] In February 1920 the skete received a letter requesting accommodation for 1,000 wounded Russians. The prior and his council came to the following decision, which illustrates the difficulties involved:

> we replied [...] that of the said wounded we can house 30 people. We can at a pinch provide beds, but completely bare ones, for we have neither mattresses, sheets, pillows, linen, nor any medication. There is no point in mentioning victuals, for we are in desperate need not only of the most essential foodstuffs, but even of our daily crust of bread [...][32]

The most impressive effort to cater for the *kaviotes* was a communal effort arranged by A.A. Pavlovskiy. In September 1917 he arranged for all the itinerant Russian monks to be registered. Four hundred and eighty-eight were enrolled and a loan of 7,700 drachmae was raised from the Russian Consulate at Salonica. The skete undertook to feed 60 *kaviotes* for 965 drachmae, which it promised to pay back over five years. None of the organisations found the loan sufficient, but each got on with the job uncomplainingly.[33] This was Pavlovskiy's finest hour. Writing in November 1918, he noted with satisfaction that the operation had been 'brilliantly carried out'.[34]

It seems that the hard times were a leveller and chastener of everyone. Pavlovskiy himself ceased to be interested in international politics on behalf of the brotherhood and devoted himself to the good of the whole Russian Athonite community. With uncanny foresight, just two months before the wreck off Amouliani, he decried what he saw as the selfishness of some of the better-off Russians, especially of the members of St Panteleimon: 'all our Russian houses live in their own little world, looking only to their own interests and ignoring the point of view of others. *I'm all right, Jack* is their attitude.'[35] In

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30 Ibid., 23 22iii1919, and 48 13vi1920..

31 Ibid., 1 21v1917.

32 Ibid., 19 22ii1919.

33 MF 2 Docs Various Letters from Pavlovskiy to sketes and Brotherhood ix–x1917.

34 Ibid., Letter from Pavlovskiy 18xi1918.

35 Ibid., Paper by Pavlovskiy 3viii1917.

September he tried to persuade the four organisations to join forces and be known as the Unified Community of Russian Monks—*Ob'edinenie russkogo monashestva*. Prior Ioann was particularly against this, and Pavlovskiy himself soon realised that all energies should be devoted to ensuring the success of the United Provisions Commission.

Pavlovskiy never ceased working; he kept sending the cautious Ioann reminders, requests and forms to be filled in.[36] In a characteristically illegible scrawl Pavlovskiy wrote urgently to Ioann: 'I hope that your skete whilst awaiting better things does not end up in an even worse situation while the others are being active.'[37] By September 1917 he had settled in the Serai, but felt that he was a burden to its brethren and sent a sharply worded plea to the Prophet Elijah Skete, and no doubt to the other Russian houses, for a few drachmae to cover his secretarial needs and pay for kerosene, which, he vouched, he did not drink.[38] Ioann did not trust him. On 29 April Pavlovskiy wrote to the prior asking him whether it was true that Pantokratoros was putting unfair pressure on the skete; Ioann replied with uncharacteristic untruthfulness that on the contrary the monastery had been acting most 'humanely' and that he had no complaints against them.[39] In the end, Ioann's seemingly excessive caution, proved wise and prescient.

The skete started selling articles it no longer needed. Between 1918 and 1924 it sold, mainly to Pantokratoros: a number of mules and a horse; ecclesiastical articles such as crosses, chalices, embroidered rugs, and vestments; a steam flour mill which fetched 15,000 drachmae, 5,000 less than the original asking price; various logs and planks; rails, sheet iron and other metal scrap. He also wanted to sell the skete's brig, but he put the matter to a referendum on 31 February 1916.[40] The ship was kept and proved an invaluable earner over the next eight years: it was lucratively hired out with the skete's crew to Pantokratoros and other, mainly east-coast Athonites for numerous deliveries of cargo from mainland Greece, the islands and Alexandria. From 1919 the able-bodied brethren were also regularly hired out in groups of about ten to help with the harvests: from March to May

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[36] In January 1922 the Brotherhood of Russian Kellia asked the Serbian Patriarch permission to carry out an alms-gathering mission in Serbia. Unusually, Pavlovskiy's name is not mentioned, and it does not appear in any documents of the archive written after that date.

[37] MF 2 Docs Hand-written Letter from Pavlovskiy ?1918.

[38] Ibid., Letters from Pavlovskiy ix1917.

[39] Ibid., Hand-written copy of skete's prior to Pavlovskiy 4v1919.

[40] MF 1 Sobor 1 31iii1916.

they went to the Hilandar hayfields; in September they helped on Thassos to pick olives, and went to the walnut groves of Karakallou. The following minutes of the elders' council illustrate how the skete went about earning its keep:

> 6 July 1919. Item 51. In response to the request of Kelliot Fr Venyamin of the St Nicholas Kellion, we decided to release ten of our brethren to gather walnuts around his kellion for three or four days in return for 4 drachmae per person per day as well as meals. We also agreed to transport these nuts on our mules to the Pantokratoros jetty at the rate of 6 drachmae per mule per trip, plus meals at his expense. We also agreed to deliver these nuts to Kavala on our cutter for a fee of 300 drachmae.[41]

In one respect, finding provisions as time went by became easier, because there were ever fewer mouths to feed. In the course of the war some two hundred and twenty of the brethren left for the front or Russia, never to return. Of crucial importance was the number of able-bodied men left in the skete, and the best indication of this is the number of voting members recorded at each council election. These plenary meetings were traditionally held, as we have seen, in August every three years. The first electoral meeting in Ioann's reign took place on 20 August 1914, just after war had been declared. The next was convened on 20 August 1917, but had to reconvene two days later because arguments broke out about electoral procedure. In neither year was the number of voters mentioned. The third electoral meeting took place on 20 August 1920; 'approximately 90 of the brethren were present.'[42] The minutes from now on become significantly sparser. At the fourth meeting, in 1923, there were 84 voters. Finally, on January of the next—and last—year of extant records, the election meeting was held in the presence of only 64 brethren. Nine years later Dawkins spoke of 83 members in the skete, of whom only half were still capable of work.

By 1924, the year our story comes to an end, most of the brethren had no doubt resigned themselves to death in hardship and infirmity. They had appealed to the Serbs, Americans, and even the Bulgarians and British for help, but they knew that the occasional charitable donation would bring only temporary relief. After all, they were realising their true calling as monks, which is preparation for the life to come. As the British travellers saw in the 1930s, the skete fathers and other Russian Athonites did so with amazing dignity and fortitude. Meanwhile, the day-to-day existence in the skete with its squabbles, reconciliations, indiscipline and reproval continued as ever. Many of the examples quoted in the previous chapter to illustrate the running of the skete at its apogee are taken from minutes

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41 Ibid., 51 6vii1919.

42 Ibid., Opening Paragraph 20viii1920.

running of the skete at its apogee are taken from minutes recorded after 1917. The penultimate minute in the extant archive, dated 28 December 1924 was reassuringly mundane: 'Item 32. Monk Leontiy was reprimanded for his lack of sobriety in the laundry room.'

On the same day the council debated whether to accept the new calendar that was being 'enforced by the patriarch'.[43] The prior and elders decided not to accept it. Deacon-monk Nikolai, who had been a skete elder since 1920, took over as prior in 1954. He was convinced that the Patriarchate was wrong to keep the new calendar, and passed on his disaffection with Constantinople to his successor in 1975, Archimandrite Seraphim, who had come from the United States. After the Second World War the Russian Athonite community declined rapidly. The old generation died off entirely; only the members of the prophet Elijah Skete and St Panteleimon were replaced—by tonsured monks from abroad. In the skete the Russian tradition was kept alive by an exiguous brotherhood.

Between the two World Wars Russia was radiant. This was the red glow of sunset, and of martyrdom.

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43 Ibid., 27 28xii1924.

CONCLUSION

For almost nine hundred years until 1840, no records that we know of have indicated that there were many more than two hundred Russians on Athos at any one time. Then, in the space of barely over seventy years, the Russian population shot up to five thousand. Its growth showed no sign of diminishing until the eve of the First World War. The population of the Greek Athonites, on the other hand, remained constant at about four thousand, but for once, at the beginning of the twentieth century, they found themselves in the minority. Ironically, just when the Holy Mountain was at last liberated by Greece, it seemed that the Russians would take over.

There is no single explanation for the meteoric rise of the Russian population. Ieronim and Makariy managed to attract wealth and new recruits in the long term to St Panteleimon, whereas Anikita failed, because they were in the right place at the right time. A concatenation of coincidences conspired to attract Russian pilgrims in their droves, just as it precipitated crises in ethnic relations on Athos. Nothing that happened in the seventy years of growth was due to a single government or individuals. Tolstoy had a similar understanding of historical events in *War and Peace*: the French were initially successful and then repulsed from Russia not because of Napoleon or even Kutuzov but because circumstances conspired to influence popular will.

What is clear about the Russians on Athos is that they never intended to seize power and territory in a political sense: even the most worldly, uncouth kelliot built his great stone edifices with pious if misguided intentions. Nor have stories about military skulduggery and espionage been proved, yet such slander, fuelled by bitterness, has been perpetuated among the Greeks, long after the Russians have ceased to pose a threat.

The situation on Athos on the eve of the First World War was disastrous. The Holy Mountain was the scene of ethnic hatred, greed, jealousy and even violence; it was becoming overcrowded; monastic humility and other-worldliness were being forgotten: all this was a far cry from the hesychastic revival of the eighteenth century. But once again, the will of the individual on Athos was proved to be powerless. God's will prevailed: the Russians were humbled, made destitute and brought back to their senses. Once again they lived according to St Paisiy's precepts of poverty and self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, the Greeks learned little from this and chose not to forget past humiliations.

Figure 1

ATHOS AND THE NEAR EAST

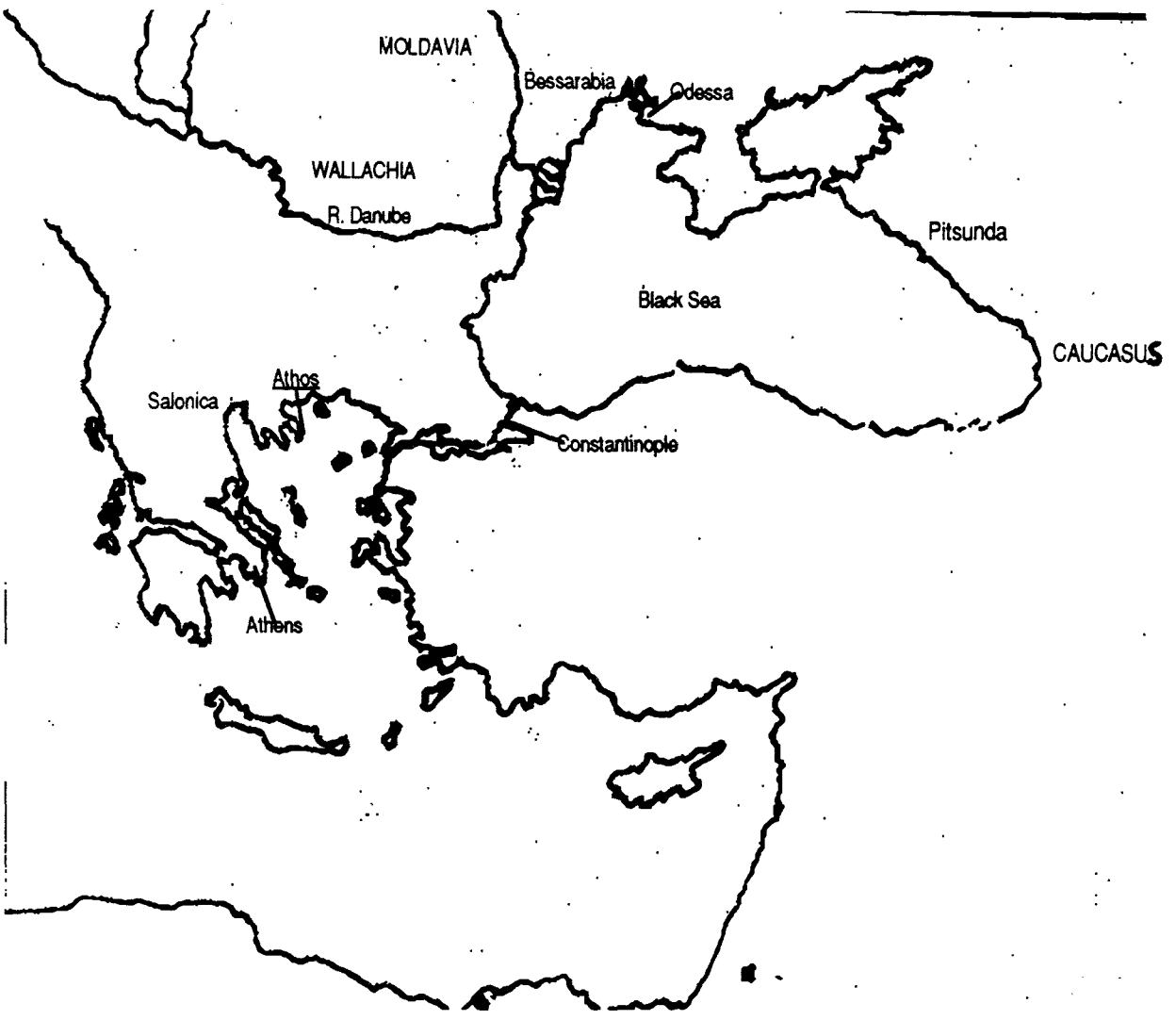
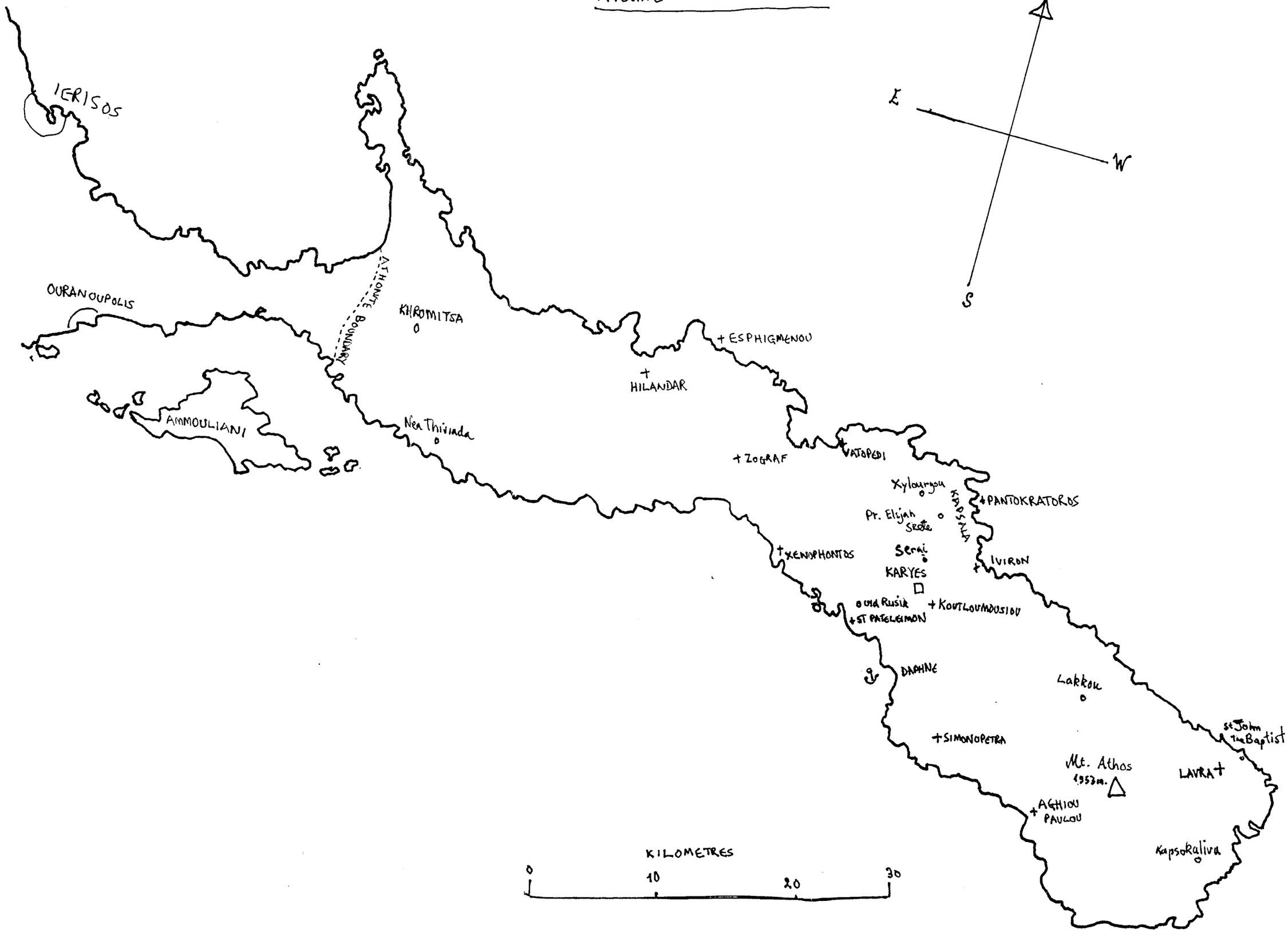


FIGURE 2:

Mount Athos Peninsula



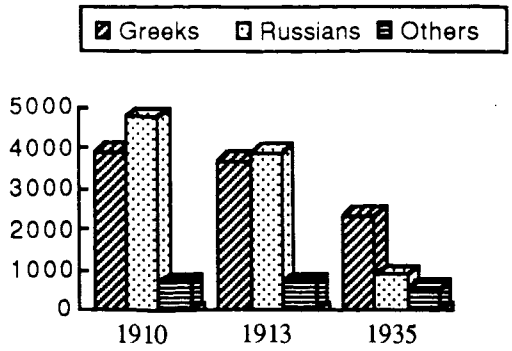
All the figures I quote until 1913 are based on the official Ottoman head-count based on the *harach* or poll tax. The figures are probably lower than the real totals because tax evasion was widespread. Moreover, from the latter part of the nineteenth century there were considerably more Russians in sketes and *kellia* than the official polls indicated. Each of the Twenty had an official roll or *monakhologion* of monks and novices belonging to its dependent houses on Athos. At the beginning of the twentieth century, for example, the Prophet Elijah skete had 150 monks and novices officially enrolled as living on the Holy Mountain, but the real number was twice as much; the Serai had eight hundred to a thousand brethren, some eight times more than the figure on its monakhologion.

The third of the categories, 'Others', comprises mainly Bulgarians, Serbs and Romanians.

1845-1850 figures are based on a census carried out in 1845-1846 (Smyrnakis, op. cit. pp. 332 and 333). The total population given in the census is 1,408. My total is an approximation because the figures given in the census are for each of the twenty monasteries, rather than for national groups. For the purpose of this exercise I have assumed that all the Bulgarians and Serbs living on Mount Athos at the time were in Zograf and Hilandar, and I have no information on Romanians and Georgians. The number of Russians that I give may be generous because the census reports that there were only 45 monks in St Panteleimon and 15 in its sketes and *kellia.* Of the 45 the majority were Greek, for it is unlikely that the Russians would have been anywhere near the maximum permitted total of 35 so soon after 1839, when they returned for the last time.

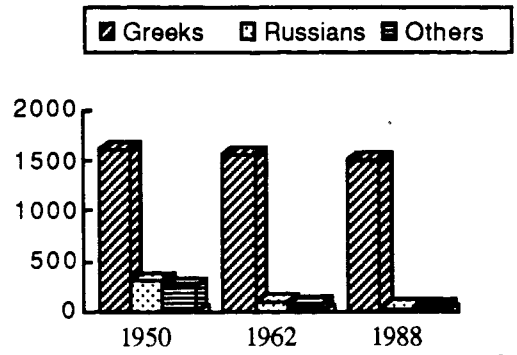
The 1885 figures are taken from Smyrnakis, op. cit., p. 332. The 150% increase of Greeks since 1850 may be due to the expansion and growing confidence of the Kingdom of Greece. Moreover, the period straight after the Crimean War was one of stability and calm on Mount Athos.

The 1903 figures appear in the appendix (no page number) of Smyrnakis, op. cit., which was first published in the same year. More Bulgarians and Romanians than before were coming to the Holy Mountain as they struggled for independence in the 1860s and 1870s.



The 1910 figures are given by P.K. Khristou, op. cit., (pp. 307 and 321) but they are dubious. Although Khristou claims they are from the Turkish census,——*tourkiki apografi*——, he gives a significant increase in the number of Bulgarians which does not tally with Smyrnakis' figures. Khristou does not explain the large number of Romanians, either. Smyrnakis is more reliable because his evidence is very much more circumstantial. Moreover, on page 307, Khristou says there were 3,800 Russians in 1910, but on page 321 the number given for the same year is 3,900.

According to Khristou the Russian numbers dropped by more than half. There was a drop in Russian numbers owing to the forcible expulsion in July 1913 on Russian warships of troublemakers associated with the Heresy of the name. However, according to I. Smolitsch (*Le Mont-Athos et la Russie*, 'Le Millénaire du Mont-Athos', p. 312), only 621 Russians were deported. Of course, other Russians could have left in sympathy, but not as many as Khristou supposes.



The figures for 1913, 1935 and 1950 are taken from Mylonakos, op. cit. Although this is a biased work, the statistics seem sound. Mylonakos quotes exactly the same figures as Smyrnakis for 1885 and 1903. The 1962 and 1988 figures are taken from the former librarian of the Prophet Elijah Skete Priest-monk Ioannikiy's *K Tysyacheletiyu russkikh na Afone*, an unpublished typescript (pp. 88-89). Since 1988 the number of monks in Greek monasteries, and therefore considered as part of the Greek contingent, has been steadily growing.

Figure 4

Map of Prophet Elijah Skete
One of the MF 2 Docs 1789 Maps

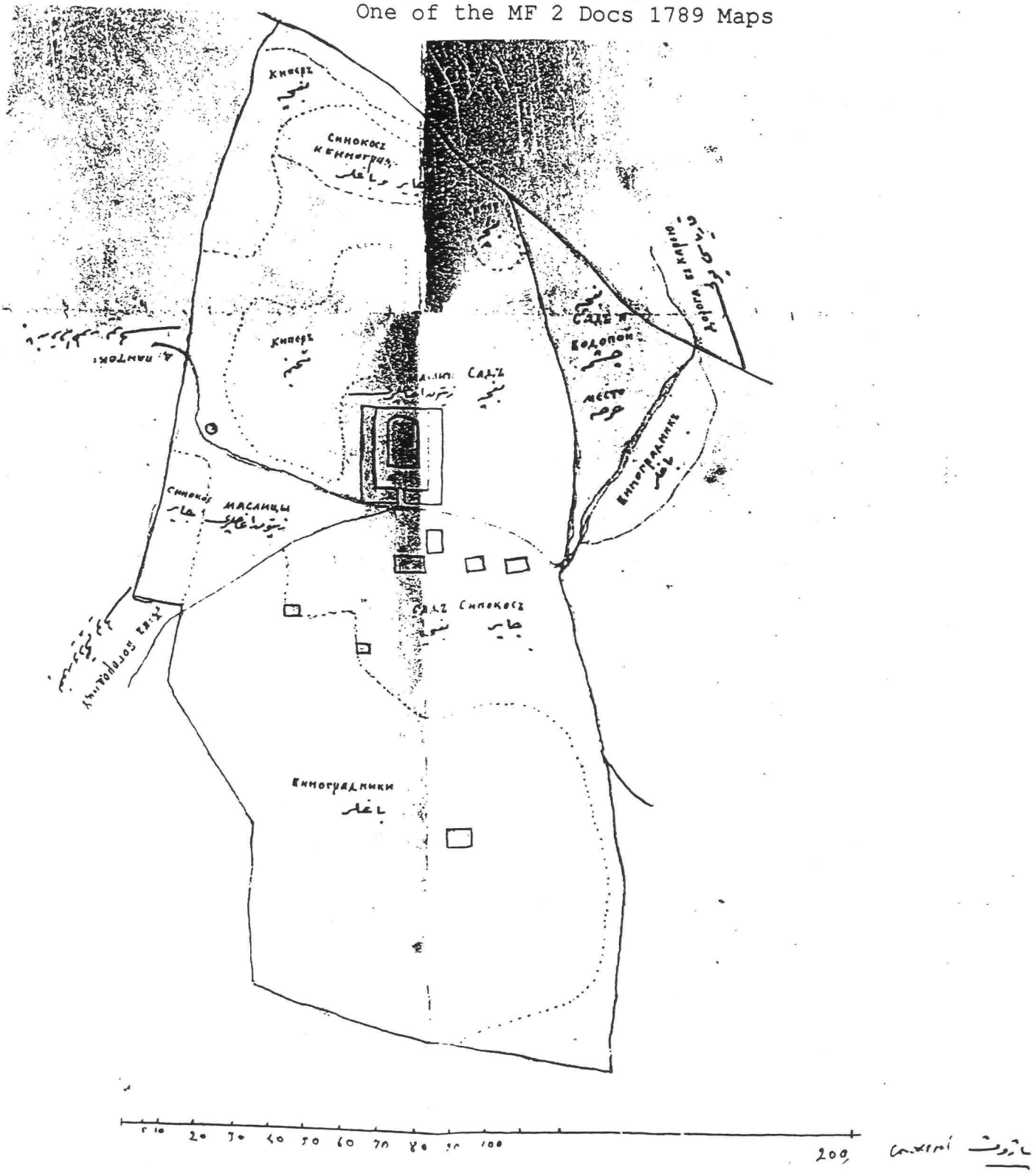


Figure 5

Hand-written letter from A.A. Pavlovskiy to Prior Ioann

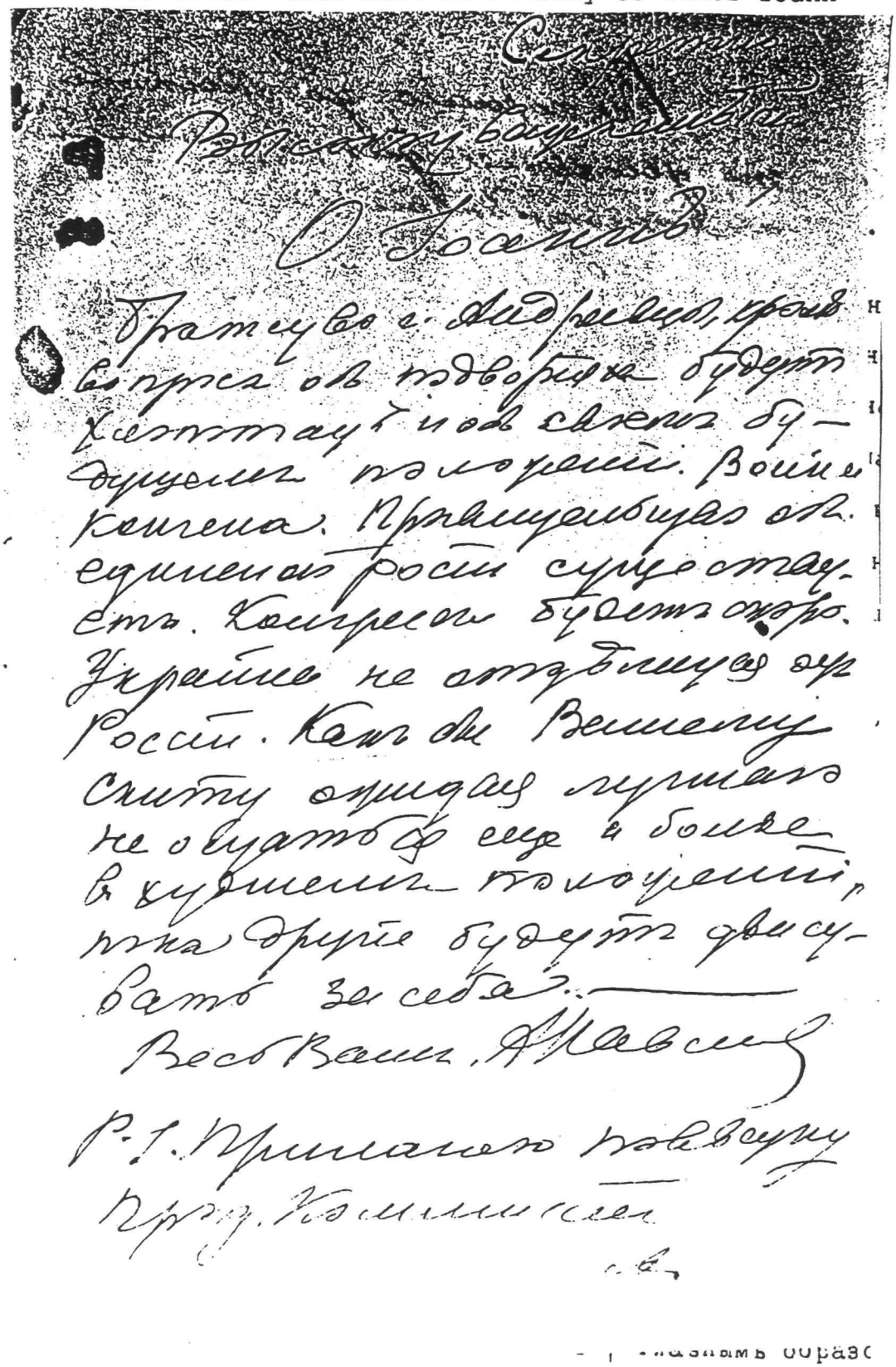


Figure 6

MF 1 Sobor viii1914: the beginning of the minutes of the first Elders' Council Meeting in Prior Ioann's reign

1914 года 20го Августа. 6й соборъ.

При Архимандритѣ Іоаннѣ и двѣнадцати соборныхъ старцевъ, которыя поставлены отъ братіи напри года: Имена же ихъ: Іеросимонахи: Лука, Іосифъ, іеромонахи Ѳеологъ, Пахомій, Иннокентій, Гавріилій. Монахи Пантелеимонъ, Эллпидифоръ, Іеронъ Мануилъ Сераѳіонъ Сергій и Досифей. Сіи рѣшаютъ вопросы въ духовномъ засѣданіи Русскаго Св. Пророка Иліи на Аѳонѣ

20го Августа 1914г.

1) О вывозѣ запасныхъ солдатъ: былъ посланъ схимон. О. Пантелеимонъ въ Русикъ освѣдомится:

Отвѣтъ и рѣшеніе: послать запасныхъ солдатъ чрезъ Балканы. Артель цикомъ назначили мон. Досифея соборнымъ старцемъ, а его мѣсто въ присутствіи заменилъ м. Сергій.

I

MICROFILMS

All references to my microfilms are prefixed MF. I divide the MF into six groups:

1 *Sobor*. These are the minutes of the council of the skete's prior and his elders. A quotation from this section is classified thus: MF prefix|Group|Name|Minute Number|Date. For example——MF 1 Sobor 3 19viii1915.

2 *Docs*. These are various letters written to and from the prior and include documents relevant to the skete's dispute with Pantokratoros Monastery. A quotation from this section is classified thus: MF prefix|Group|Name|Type of document|Date, when available. For example——MF 2 Docs Telegram 8vi1917

3 *Vhod-Vyh*. These are records of letters written to (*Vhod*) or from (*Vyh*) the skete. A quotation from this section is classified thus: MF prefix|Group|Name(*Vhod* or *Vyh*)Number of letter|Date. For example——MF 3 Vyh 21 29i1914

4 *AAP*. This refers to three works written or edited by A.A. Pavlovskiy: the two numbers of Journal *Afonskie Izvestiya* (referred to as AI-1 and AI-2) and his monograph on the Brotherhood of Russian Kellia (referred to as *Bratstvo*). A quotation from this section is classified thus: MF prefix|Group|Name|Page number. For example——MF 4 AAP AI-2 p. 6. To my knowledge, the only extant copies of both publications are on my microfilms.

5 *AAD*. This refers a monograph by A.A. Dmirievskiy entitiled *Afon i ego novoe politicheskoe mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie*, an offprint from *Soobscheniya Imperatorskago Palestinskago Ibschestva*, 1913, Vol. XXIV, 2nd Edition, pp. 226 et seq. The copy I used was, of course, microfilmed in the skete library. A quotation from this section is classified thus: MF prefix|Group|Name|Page number. For Example——MF 5 AAD p. 10

6 *Ivanov*. This refers to an article by I. Ivanov entitled *Polozhenie russkago monashestva na svyatoy Afonskoy gore posle balkanskoy voyny*, a monograph of unknown origin. The only extant copy that I know of is on my microfilm, taken in the skete library. A quotation from this section is classified thus: MF prefix|Group|Name|Page number. For example——MF 6 Ivanov p. 3.

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