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Christians and Their Collective Identities around the Black Sea after 1453

A concise survey of the history of Christianity on the Black Sea littorals covering the early modern age is necessarily compelled to confine itself to the delineation of general trends, illustrated by little more than impressionistic brushstrokes of the varied historical experience involved. To be sure, Orthodox Christians of the main Slavic, Greek, Romanian, and Georgian ethno-linguistic groups constitute the majority of Christian populations throughout the period, followed by Armenian Monophysite communities. However, the sheer diversity of Christian denominations, from Levantine Catholics in Galata to Gagauz, Turkish-speaking Orthodox on the northwestern shore, Russian Old Believers and German Mennonites on the northern or Armenian and Pontic Greek Protestants on the southern one, to name but a few indicative examples, renders any attempt at exhaustiveness futile.

The point of departure for this rough overview is set by the definition of the Black Sea region as a time-specific historical unity following the conceptualizations of Eyüp Özveren[1] and Stefan Troebst[2] as well as the reflections on the historicity of cultural landscapes by Edgar Hösch.[3] The Black Sea world in the centuries following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (1453) is structured on the one hand by the expansion and almost complete success of Ottoman control along the Black Sea shores and then by Russia's challenging of Ottoman domination and the subsequent inter-imperial dualism that Russia's advance effected. Thus, Ottoman order and Russian challenge shaped the context of the Christians' historical experience in the period discussed. On the other hand, the decisive factor generating an "interactive space"[4] is primarily mobility and connectedness. In the context of religious identities, most prominent is the role of pious networks generating symbolic universes and sacred geographies. Finally, smaller or larger Armenian and Greek diaspora communities in most port-cities constituted standard features of the Black Sea's Christian universe.

The focus of this chapter lies, accordingly, on evolving collective identities, loyalties, and symbolic legacies, on the interconnected vicissitudes of Black Sea Christian populations during the early modern age. Religious identities may not have been exclusive, pure and unambiguous; they were as a rule intertwined with ethnic or ethno-confessional, local, and not least social ones, depending on the distinct contexts of peasant

1 Eyüp Özveren, "A Framework for the Study of the Black Sea World, 1789–1915," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 77–113.

2 Stefan Troebst, "The Black Sea as Historical Meso-Region: Concepts in Cultural Studies and the Social Sciences," *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* 2, no. 2 (June 2019): 11–29.

3 Edgar Hösch, "Kulturgrenzen in Südosteuropa," *Südosteuropa* 47, no. 12 (1998): 601–23.

4 Özveren, "Framework," 86.

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or urban, usually multi-religious societies. As elsewhere in the Ottoman world, economic rivalry had, for example, a remarkable part in shaping religious identities.[5] Nevertheless, they were crucial for the formation of "interpretative communities",[6] built around not just sacred texts but also common experiences and narratives. Again, mobility and interaction were crucial for the shaping of images of the self and the other. As for the structure of this contribution, it consists in a combination of spatial and chronological circle tour, moving clockwise from Istanbul (Constantinople) and halting at certain stations along the Black Sea shores.

1 Orthodox Unity and Variety

Paul of Aleppo, the son and secretary of Macarius Ibn al-Za'im, Arab Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (1647–72), whom he accompanied on his journeys from Syria to Muscovy in 1652–59 and 1664–69, recorded his multifarious observations in his journal of his travels, a source of unique value and appeal.[7] From Constantinople, "the Queen of Cities, where everything is to be found,"[8] the Patriarch's sojourn sailed first in January 1653 to Constanţa, to "repose from our fright and terror at the rolling and tossing of the waves." For on the Black Sea "the navigation is extremely difficult; all windings and turnings; and frequently there is very little depth of water; and it is moreover infested by various pirates." At least, its waves "are not ground small by continual agitation but remain still within it; so that we could see the shores on either side":

> On our right-hand was Trebizond, and Sinope, and Castamon, and the Bay of Mingrelia, which is the country of the Georgians. Before our face were the countries Kafa, Nazar and Khan. On our left were Rumelia, Silistria and Barja, on which we had now landed [...].[9]

Paul had a particular eye for the diverse Christian communities he encountered on his way, for their habits and customs, their languages and descendances, their church buildings, and their ritual and sacramental practices. His notes convey both a sense

5 Adnan A. Husain, "Introduction: Approaching Islam and the Religious Cultures of the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean," in *A Faithful Sea: The Religious Cultures of the Mediterranean, 1200–1700*, ed. Adnan A. Husain and Katherine E. Fleming (Oxford: One World, 2007), 1–26.

6 Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 27. Cf. Denise Klein and Stefan Rohdewald, "Religionskulturen – Strukturen, Praktiken, Diskurse," in *Das Osmanische Europa: Methoden und Perspektiven der Frühneuzeitforschung zu Südosteuropa*, ed. Andreas Helmedach et al. (Leipzig: Eudora, 2014), 271–74.

7 Ioanna Feodorov, "Paul of Aleppo," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 10, *Ottoman and Safavid Empires (1600–1700)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chestworth (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 355–69.

8 Francis C. Belfour, *The Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, written by his attendant Archdeacon, Paul of Aleppo, in Arabic* (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1836), 1:55.

9 Belfour, *The Travels*, 1:41.

of the perceived unity of the early modern Orthodox world as well as of the ruptures and fractures that permeated it. Mobility in the form of travels for the collection of alms (*zeteiai*), as that in which Patriarch Macarius was engaged in contributed substantially to the shaping of an Orthodox sacred geography, linked across the knots of monastic centers, renowned shrines, and the veneration of local saints and, martyrs as well as being defined by the shared cultural symbolism of Orthodoxy, by beliefs and practices, and by an ecclesiastical calendar determining the perception of time—elements of a shared "Orthodox mentality."[10] Paul rejoiced when experiencing the dominant position of Orthodox Christianity in the Danubian Principalities, compared to Ottoman territories proper. In Galaţi, his next stop on the way to Moscow, "they rang the brazen bells, according to custom. This was the first time of our hearing them. May God not be startled at the noisy pleasantness of their sounds!"[11] He had no issues with the pluralism of Orthodox religious life. With vivid interest he kept comparing the habits of "our Christian brethren" in the "country of Greece" or the "country of the Cossacks" to those "of our country."[12] In his observations one may perceive the ethnic variety of a common religious identity rather than religion being merely a component of ethnic identities.[13] At the same time, he reproduced widespread ethnic stereotypes, for instance about the vicious Moldavians ("God Almighty has not created upon the face of the earth a more vicious people than the Moldavian; for the men are all of them murderers and robbers"[14]) or, especially, the corrupted and arrogant Greeks:

> Through [...] the vices and deformities of the Greeks at all times, and in all places wherever they are found, we observed they are nowhere at all liked: and this fact we were continually confirming by the evidence of our own eyes. In Moldavia [...] the whole population rose upon them [...]. We did not see the Cossacks bear any love for them; and the Muscovites will not receive them, except through pity, and to give them alms. [...] And all this comes from the multitude of their vices, and the greatness of their crimes. [...] What a degenerate people! And what vile conduct![15]

A "love-hate relationship between Greeks and Russians"[16] was indeed a lasting feature of early modern inter-ethnic relations in the Orthodox world. But "graecophobia,"[17] re-

10 Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "'Balkan Mentality': History, Legend, Imagination," *Nations and Nationalism* 2 (1996): 163–91, esp. 176–77, 180.

11 Belfour, *The Travels*, 1:44.

12 Belfour, 1:10–11, 16–17, 50, and passim.

13 See Raymond Detrez, "Pre-National Identities in the Balkans," in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, vol. 1, *National Ideologies and Language Policies*, ed. Roumen Daskalov and Tchavdar Marinov (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 13–65.

14 Belfour, *The Travels*, 1:62.

15 Belfour, 2:45.

16 Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, "The World of Eastern Orthodoxy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350–1750*, vol. 1, *Peoples and Places*, ed. Hamish Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 647.

17 Konrad Petrovszky, "'Those Violating the Good, Old Customs of Our Land': Forms and Functions of Graecophobia in the Danubian Principalities, 16th–18th Centuries," in *Disliking Others: Loathing, Hostil-*

sentment towards the "Greeks" or people labeled as such due to their social and educational profile—Greek language and culture functioning increasingly as a marker and a means of social ascendancy for Orthodox peoples— characterized the attitudes of both Slavic and Romanian, but also Arab Orthodox throughout the early modern period. It was primarily Greek dominance in the Patriarchal administration and no less important in the monastic networks of the great monasteries with their dependencies (*metochia*) scattered all over the Balkans that triggered this aversion.

2 The "Great Church"

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, the so-called "Great Church" (*Megali Ekklisia*), was recast as an Ottoman institution after 1453. According to the "foundation myths"[18] that prevailed not only in the Greek Orthodox case but also in the Armenian and Jewish ones, Mehmed II the Conqueror recognized non-Muslim ethno-confessional communities under their respective leaders as autonomous entities with broad competences of self-governing, that is, the *millet* system. Since the 1980s, Ottomanist research in particular has persuasively demonstrated on the one hand that this narrative projects back onto the early centuries certain Tanzimat realities, that is, results of the nineteenth-century Ottoman series of reforms which transformed the legal status of non-Muslims. Thus, it obscures a historical process that reached its apogee only as late as the second half of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. On the other hand, this research proved that the Ottoman government treated religious officials such as the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople rather as tax farmers than as *ethnarch*s, that is, as recognized leaders of ethno-confessional communities. This in fact goes a long way to helping us understand the process of the Church's integration in the Ottoman administration, its adaptation to the rotation principle of Ottoman officials, the frequent alterations on the patriarchal throne, and the deplored, but ubiquitous, venality of ecclesiastical offices.

However, the conventions of Ottoman bureaucracy do not necessarily coincide with the self-perception of Orthodox prelates, their notions of legitimacy,[19] their asser-

ity and Distrust in Premodern Ottoman Lands, ed. Hakan T. Karateke et al. (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018), 187–214. Cf. Lidia Cotovanu, "'Chasing away the Greeks': The Prince-State and the Undesired Foreigners (Wallachia and Moldavia between the 16th and 18th Centuries)," in *Across the Danube: Southeastern Europeans and Their Travelling Identities (17th–19th c.)*, ed. Olga Katsiardi-Hering and Maria A. Stassinopoulou (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 215–52.

18 Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society,* ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holms & Meier, 1982), 69–88. Cf. Tom Papademetriou, *Render Unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 19–62.

19 Eleni Gara and Ovidiu Olar, "Confession-Building and Authority: The Great Church and the Ottoman State in the First Half of the Seventeenth century," in *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspec-*

tions of stability and tradition, or the Church's symbolic capital and its bearing on the faithful. As Paul of Aleppo generously added to his fierce remarks:

> Yet, they [the Greeks] have some laudable qualities, as regards their love for the Heads of their Clergy, their Monks and Priests. For though they witness the flagitiousness of their Clergy, and the crimes they commit—and see that their Patriarchs banish some of them, some they behead, and others they drown—yet they shut their eyes to their infamy and love to honour them as befits the sacred character of their office.[20]

The Church's unbroken if not enhanced symbolic capital explains at least as much as its financial functions and obligations its entanglement with powerful lay Orthodox men, the *archon*s, who came to dominate the Church and mediate its relations to the Ottoman government. As early as the first decades after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, notables from Edirne (Adrianople) in Thrace and from Trabzon (Trebizond) in Pontus, who were transferred to Constantinople in the context of the sultan's measures to repopulate his new capital and were themselves involved in Ottoman service in tax farming or state monopolies, competed for control over the Patriarchate.[21] Ports of the western Black Sea coast such as Anchialos (today: Pomorie, Bulgaria), Mesembria (today: Nesebar), and Sozopolis (today: Sozopol) were in many cases their bases, where they acted as custom officers for the Ottoman state. During the sixteenth century they expanded their enterprises to the north, to Wallachia and Moldavia, and managed to control the vital supply of Istanbul's market, the palace, and the army with sheep from the two tributary principalities as well as with furs from Muscovy. The emergence of this lay elite, inextricably linked to the power game in the upper echelons of Ottoman society, had at the same time a decisive impact on the gradual formation of a quasi-stratified Orthodox sub-society with the *archon*s at the top.

Most notorious was Michael Kantakouzinos, the "Devil's son" (Şeytanoğlu), who, claiming descent from the eponymous late Byzantine imperial family, managed to rise to the position of unofficial patron of the empire's Orthodox community in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. From his mansion in Anchialos, he directed his diverse business with the Ottoman court—among other things, providing galleys to the Ottoman navy from Anchialos' shipyard, which he supervised, or Muscovite furs to the Sultanic Palace—promoted and patronized local monasteries,[22] prelates such as the eminent Patriarch Jeremias II the Great (1572–79, 1580–84, 1587–95), a native of Anchialos, and successive princes in the Danubian Principalities, but he also cul-

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tives on the Politics of Piety and Community Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries, ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2022), 164.

20 Belfour, *The Travels*, 2:46.

21 Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "The Great Church in Captivity 1453–1586," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 5, *Eastern Christianity*, ed. Michael Angold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 175–77.

22 Lambros Kamperidis, *The Greek Monasteries of Sozopolis, XIV–XVII Centuries* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1993), Appendix no. 14.

tivated the profile of a learned collector of precious manuscripts. All this, before—symptomatically of the fates of both Muslim and non-Muslim players attached to rival Ottoman power networks—he was hanged on the sultan's orders at the gates of said mansion in 1578. Nonetheless, he succeeded in bequeathing his extraordinary position, his networks, and his influence to his son Andronikos.[23]

In the last third of the seventeenth century, certain shifts within the structure of the *archons*' milieu and, more importantly, a transformation process in the Ottoman elite echelons themselves[24]—the rise of the "men of the pen" ousting the "men of the sword"—enabled the emergence of a new elite or a new configuration of the *archon*s' clans with new families through strategic intermarriage. These were the Phanariotes—from Phanar/Fener, the district where the Ecumenical Patriarchate had resided since 1601.[25] Attached to influential Ottoman grandees such as the Köprülü viziers, they founded households (*hanedan*) on their masters' model,[26] they oversaw and patronized Church politics and Orthodox education and letters, but most prominently—and in this they broke with the former *archon*s' model—they capitalized on linguistic and bureaucratic skills to secure formal positions, reserved for non-Muslims, in the Ottoman administration. For over a century—until the Greek revolution in 1821—they occupied the distinguished posts of grand dragoman of the Porte, dragoman of the fleet, and prince (*hospodar/beg*) of Wallachia and Moldavia.

The Phanariotes' patronage facilitated a process already underway, that of the stabilization, centralization, and integration of the Church in the Ottoman administration that culminated in the late eighteenth century.[27] The strengthening of the Church's position and of Greek dominance upon it in addition to the Phanariot phenomenon, led a prominent representative of both Phanariot society and Modern Greek Enlightenment, Dimitrios Photiades-Katartzis (ca. 1725–1807), to assert in a text he composed in the 1780s or 1790s that the Greeks, although formally "captive" under Ottoman rule, nevertheless formed a "political society" in Aristotelian terms, since they partook in imperial governance and their religious and secular leaders enjoyed the recognition of the sovereign.[28]

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23 Radu G. Păun, "'Well-born of the Polis': The Ottoman Conquest and the Reconstruction of the Greek Orthodox Elites under Ottoman Rule (15th–17th Centuries)," in *Türkenkriege und Adelskultur in Ostmitteleuropa vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Robert Born and Sabine Jagodzinski (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2014), 61–63.

24 Cumhur Bekar, "The Rise of the Köprülü Household: The Transformation of Patronage in the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century," *Turkish Historical Review* 11 (2020): 229–56.

25 Andrei Pippidi, "Phanar, Phanariotes, Phanariotisme," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 13 (1975) : 231–39.

26 Molly Greene, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1453 to 1768: The Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 132–36, 192–212.

27 Greene, *Edinburgh History*, 175–83.

28 Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 150.

Loyalty on behalf of the Christian ecclesiastical and lay elites was a prerequisite for this effective integration. Indeed, the Orthodox Church contributed to the legitimization of Ottoman rule by inscribing it into the providential narrative of salvation. A loyal stance vis-à-vis the infidel ruler was a matter of both pragmatism and benefit, as the expansion of the Church's authority under Ottoman rule—not least in geographic terms—persuasively demonstrated. It was already sanctioned by biblical commands of the Old and New Testaments. At the same time, however, a biblical interpretation was the commonplace conceptualization of Ottoman rule as "captivity" on account of committed sins. One should not assume a contradiction in this discourse as long as one keeps in mind that the Ottoman "Empire of difference"[29] did not aspire to homogenization anyway and did not demand of its non-Muslim subjects an ideological identification with the state. Concepts recently elaborated by Ottomanist scholars such as "tolerated legitimacy"[30] or "simple submission" (*raiyet*)[31] help capture the ambiguities of the Christian subjects' stances. According to testimonies of Greek, Slavic, or Romanian origins, the sultan could at once be the legitimate successor of the Byzantine emperors or a tyrant, if not the Antichrist.[32] The same ambiguity and the same pragmatism conditioned the Christian subjects' flexibility in appealing in cases of civil law to either ecclesiastic or Kadi courts.[33]

Besides, the option of disloyalty, however risky and exceptional, was never out of the question, more so for the churchmen than for the *archon*s.[34] If in the first centuries of Ottoman rule the temptation of subversion concerned almost exclusively pro-Latin prelates, since the seventeenth century the rise of Muscovy as the leading Orthodox power and the renewed Greek influence upon it as well as the sooner or later unavoid-

29 Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 110, 119–23.

30 Hakan T. Karateke, "Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 33–34.

31 Yusuf Ziya Karabıçak, "Between Submission and Fidelity: Ottoman Muslim Elites' Changing Perception of the Greek Orthodox Populations, 1768–1821," *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 1 (2020): 89–111.

32 Radu G. Păun, "The Barbarian Emperor. Empire and Power Hierarchies in the Slavic Orthodox Lands During the Ottoman Era (15th–17th Centuries)," in *Osmanischer Orient und Ostmitteleuropa: Perzeptionen und Interaktionen in den Grenzzonen zwischen dem 16. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Robert Born and Andreas Puth (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 75–106; Kristina Nikolovska, "*Tsar* or *Son of Perdition:* South Slavic Representations of Ottoman Imperial Authority in Church Slavonic Paratextual Accounts (1466–1710)," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 54 (2016): 71–86.

33 Evgenia Kermeli, "The Right to Choice: Ottoman, Ecclesiastical and Communal Justice in Ottoman Greece," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2014), 347–61.

34 Radu G. Păun, "Enemies Within: Networks of Influence and the Military Revolts Against the Ottoman Power (Moldavia and Wallachia, Sixteenth-Seventeenth centuries)," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gabor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 235, n. 78.

able Russian clash with Ottoman interests rendered Russia a challenge and an alternative for the allegiances and expectations of Ottoman Orthodox Christians.[35]

Paul of Aleppo recounts that when he was in Moscow, on Easter Day 1656, Tsar Alexis received a group of Greek merchants, and after distributing to them, in accordance with the custom, red eggs, he asked: "Do you wish and desire, that I should redeem you, and free you from your captivity?" After the positive reply of the Greeks, the tsar is said to have turned to his dignitaries, cried, and sighed:

> My heart is broken for the captivity of these poor men, who are in the hands of the enemies of our religion. At the Day of Judgement, God will call me to account for them, because, having it in my power to release them from their slavery, I neglected their cause […]. There are constantly coming to us Patriarchs, Bishops, Monks and poor to complain of the tyranny of their enslavers […] and I have resolved in my own mind, that, please God, I will expend my troops, my treasury, and my own blood to the last drop, in the endeavor to release them.[36]

Although still far from corresponding to a tangible program of foreign policy, the tsar's emotional exaltation indicated nonetheless the beginning of Russian appropriation of projected images, discourses of legitimation, and ideological offers, after a long period of consciously neglecting or ignoring them. Contrary to past accounts, the emergence of the "Russian expectation"[37] was not the result of a dubious Russian propaganda among Balkan coreligionists; the routes of such notions followed rather the other way around.[38] Moreover, Western perceptions and apprehensions of the tsars' claim to inheritance of the Byzantine throne and of Russia's historical destiny, already before Peter I (the Great), proved no less instrumental in Russia's gradual adaptation to such notions.[39] All that said, the political orientation towards Orthodox Russia rather implied expectations projected upon and invested in the tsar as a providential, messianic redeemer than "russophilism" per se.

In the field of theological contents of the faith, Orthodoxy faced a distinct challenge. It was forced to respond to questions that had arisen out of the fierce confessional debates in Western Christianity and to present authoritative, normative, and repre-

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35 Ekkehard Kraft, *Moskaus griechisches Jahrhundert: Russisch-griechische Beziehungen und metabyzantinischer Einfluß 1619–1694* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995); Vera G. Tchentsova, "The Correspondence of Greek Church Leaders with Russia," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 10, *Ottoman and Safavid Empires (1600–1700)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chestworth (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 485–91; Nikolas Pissis, *Russland in den politischen Vorstellungen der griechischen Kulturwelt 1645–1725* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020).

36 Belfour, *The Travels*, 2:292.

37 Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 121–25. Cf. Iannis Carras, "What to Expect When Expecting: Waiting for the Russians in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *History of European Ideas* 48, no. 8 (2022): 1074–88.

38 Victor Taki, "Limits of Protection: Russia and the Orthodox Coreligionists in the Ottoman Empire," *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 2401 (2015).

39 Pissis, *Russland*, 218–22.

sentative statements that would demarcate Orthodox dogma.[40] The issuing of Orthodox *Confessions of Faith* such as that of the Kyivan metropolitan Petro Mohyla (1596–1647), accepted as binding for Orthodox churches by an ad-hoc Synod in Moldavian Iaşi as well as by the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate (1642/43), was only one of several pertinent developments. In the various local branches of Orthodoxy, the challenge presented itself in different forms.[41] In any case, post-Tridentine Catholicism brought the issue of Church Union back onto the agenda, while trained papal missionaries in the Levant were particularly efficacious in the field of preaching and education. In their effort to counterbalance this challenge, Orthodox churchmen not only adopted Catholic, especially Jesuit, models of education and, to a degree, of theologizing, but occasionally aligned themselves with Protestant opponents of Rome, as illustrated by the spectacular case of the "Calvinist patriarch" of Alexandria and Constantinople Kyrillos Loukaris (1570–1638).[42] These processes formed part not only of European Confessionalization and its "collateral" effects, but probably of a global early modern trend towards the definition of true belief and the imposition of religious uniformity, a trend which in the context of the Ottoman Empire affected all three great monotheistic communities and involved multiple interactions between them.[43]

One could, though, question the actual range of these transformations. To be sure, the Western perception of Eastern Orthodoxy as a distinct confession in a world of confessions had pivotal repercussions for the self-perception of Orthodox believers and for the emergence of widespread discourses of Orthodox unity and cohesion. However, this did not manage to bridge the great diversity and segmentation across the Orthodox world. On the other hand, it appears that confessionalization processes affected chiefly ecclesiastical elites, especially theologically conversant prelates as well as lay theologians in the service of the Church. Parish priests, who in contrast to the hierarchs did not stem from the monastic clergy, were little differentiated from their peasant or urban flock. They were married, the priest's office being usually hereditary, they pursued additional occupations, and they were seldom educated or theologically skil-

40 Mihai-D. Grigore and Florian Kührer-Wielach, eds., *Orthodoxa Confessio? Konfessionsbildung, Konfessionalisierung und ihre Folgen in der östlichen Christenheit Europas* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018); Kostas Sarris et al., eds., *Confessionalization and/as Knowledge Transfer in the Greek Orthodox Church* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2021).

41 See e.g., Ivan Biliarsky and Radu G. Păun, "La version roumaine du Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie (Buzău, 1700) et les combats pour la 'juste foi' à la fin du xviie siècle," *Cahiers du monde russe* 58, no. 3 (2017): 395–434.

42 Gunnar Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat und europäische Politik (1620–1638)* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1968); Ovidiu Olar, *La boutique de Théophile: Les relations du Patriarche de Constantinople Kyrillos Loukaris (1570–1638) avec la Réforme* (Paris: Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes – EHESS, 2019).

43 Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu, eds., *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2022).

led.[44] Although the impact of post-Tridentine Catholic versions of piety on 'popular' or 'lived' Orthodoxy should not be underestimated, a conscious ecclesiastical policy of systematic supervision over parishes, of social disciplining, and of standardizing religious practices, was largely absent. As a rule, popular Orthodoxy appeared desperately "superstitious" to confessionalized Western Christians.

3 Armenian Communities

The case of the Armenian community in Constantinople bears multiple similarities and parallels to that of the Greek Orthodox experience. This was obviously due to the decisive Ottoman framework, but also to lateral entanglements between confessional communities and to their largely competitive and mimetic modes of coexistence.[45] A noteworthy Armenian Gregorian, Monophysite—that is, of non-Chalcedonian, one-(divine)-nature Christology—existed in Constantinople from Byzantine times onwards.[46] Nonetheless, the decisive event for the formation of a Western Armenian culture was the "Great Armenian Flight" from Eastern to Western Anatolia, to Thrace and Constantinople but also as far as Poland-Lithuania (there had been a significant Armenian community in Lviv since the thirteenth century), owing to the series of Ottoman-Safavid wars and to that of Celali revolts at the turn of the seventeenth century.[47] The Armenian Church shared with the Orthodox both the "foundation myths" and the realities of Ottoman suzerainty, with the Armenian Patriarch being recognized as an Ottoman official mainly via his fiscal obligations to the state. The antagonism between the catholicos's see of Etchmiadzin (founded in 1441, under Ottoman control from 1514 on) and the Patriarchate of Constantinople (founded at some point during the 1530s or 1540s) and later between Constantinople and Jerusalem is reminiscent of the less manifest rivalries between Orthodox patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem during the seventeenth century.[48] In both cases, Constantinople prevailed, a fact underlined by the consecration of the patriarchs of Etchmiadzin, Jerusalem, or Alexandria in Constantinople, by the Constantinopolitan patriarchs' mediating position regarding relations with the

44 Chrissidis, "The World of Eastern Orthodoxy," 635.

45 Tijana Krstić, "Can we Speak of 'Confessionalization' Beyond the Reformation? Ottoman Communities, Politics of Piety and Empire-Building in an Early Modern Eurasian Perspective," in Krstić and Terzioğlu *Entangled Confessionalizations,* 29; Polina Ivanona, "Armenians in Urban Order and Disorder in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 4, no. 2 (2017): 239–60.

46 S. Peter Cowe, "The Armenians in the Era of the Crusades 1050–1350," in Angold, *Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 409.

47 Henry R. Shapiro, *The Rise of the Western Armenian Diaspora in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: From Refugee Crisis to Renaissance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

48 S. Peter Cowe, "Church and Diaspora: The Case of the Armenians," in Angold, *Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 439; Kevork B. Bardakjian, "The Rise of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople," in Braude and Lewis, *Christians and Jews*, 89–100.

Ottoman state, but also by the evident stabilization of both churches during the eighteenth century, their more effective integration into the Ottoman administration, and the decrease in the rhythm of the continuous successions to the Constantinopolitan thrones.[49]

Even more striking is the resemblance between Orthodox archons/Phanariotes and Armenian men of power, called *amira*s or *çelebi*s. These Ottoman terms designated Armenian notables who had gathered from various places in Constantinople, were active as tax farmers, money lenders, and providers of the Ottoman court, and were clients of powerful Ottoman dignitaries and participants to their networks, with all the benefits and risk this entailed; they exploited this social capital to exert control over the Armenian Church and acted as patrons of education and printing.[50]

The repercussions of the confessionalization, the need to articulate and circumscribe one's own creed and to react to the intense missionary activity of Jesuit and Capuchin missionaries in Constantinople, were probably more momentous in the Armenian case. The split into different confessional allegiances, recognized in the nineteenth century as distinct Armenian Catholic and Armenian Protestant *millet*s, represented a grim experience, one that Ottoman Orthodoxy was largely spared.[51]

The Armenian community faced similar dilemmas of loyalty. *Amira*s as archons tended to be more tied to Ottoman legitimism than churchmen, who repeatedly dealt in secret negotiations with Rome or France in the seventeenth century.[52] Since 1700, Russia had increasingly acquired the image of a potential liberator of the Armenian people, with all the accompanying expectations and disillusionments. Such expectations and projects—like those of Prince Israel Ori (1658–1711)[53]—were intimately linked to the self-perception of a chosen people—a conviction not at all seldom in early modern Christianity[54]—which in the case of the Greeks rested on the imperial legacy and in that of the Armenians on the singularity of Gregorian Christianity.[55]

4 Cossack Militant Orthodoxy

From Moldavia, Paul of Aleppo together with his father's retinue crossed over the Dniester to the "country of the Cossacks" in June 1654. Although Paul offers a rather

49 Cowe, "Church and Diaspora," 439; Bardakjian, "The Rise," 93–95.

50 Hagop Barsoumian, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class Within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750–1850)," in Braude and Lewis, *Christians and Jews*, 171–84.

51 Cowe, "Church and Diaspora," 431–33, 441, 443–44; Krstić, "Can we Speak," 61–65.

52 Cowe, "Church and Diaspora," 432–33.

53 Ashot Ioannisjan, ed., *Armiano-russkie otnosheniia v pervoi treti XVIII veka*, 2 vols. (Yerevan: Akademiia Nauk Armianskoi SSR, 1964–1967).

54 Alois Mosser, ed., *Gottes auserwählte Völker: Erwählungsvorstellungen und kollektive Selbstfindung in der Geschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001).

55 Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2001), 144.

awkward etymology of the name ("beard-shorn" instead of Turkish "free man"),[56] his appellation of the land was not out of place. Since 1648 the Khmelnytskyi Uprising had rendered large parts of Poland-Lithuania and of today's Ukraine into an autonomous Cossack polity, the Hetmanate. What interests us in the context of this chapter, is especially the Hetmanate's confessional outlook and legitimization. The Cossacks, a phenomenon of the borderland society of the steppe frontier—the no man's land called the "Wild Fields" (Ukrainian: *dyke pole*; Russian: *dikoe pole*)—military communities of all kind of adventurers and especially peasants fleeing serfdom, bearing multiple affinities with the early modern phenomenon of "social bandits" but also that of sea pirates, initially had little to recommend them as warriors for the Orthodox faith.[57] Certainly, both the "Ukrainian" Zaporozhian Cossacks with their headquarters "behind the rapids" on Khortytsia Island on the lower Dnipro, and their "Russian" colleagues, the Don Cossacks, had a long tradition of warfare not only against the Crimean Tatars but also against their Ottoman masters, with Cossack seagoing raiding expeditions befalling Ottoman fortresses as far as the suburbs of Istanbul itself. Although Christian inhabitants of such unfortunate places, such as Greeks in Thrace or Armenians in Caffa, associated only dread and horror with the Cossack name,[58] for interested milieus in Western Christianity, such as the Papal Curia or the Venetian Senate, the audacious Cossacks increasingly appeared to be potential partners and allies in projects of anti-Ottoman leagues and crusades.[59]

But it was only in the wake of the Orthodox renewal in Ruthenian Orthodoxy (that is, the Orthodox communities of Poland-Lithuania)—a momentous movement following the Union of Brest (1596) and associated mainly with the lay brotherhoods and learned Kyivan prelates such as Mohyla—that the Cossacks grew into the image of the armed wing of Orthodoxy. The uprising of 1648 under Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi ultimately transformed Ruthenian Orthodoxy into a militant faith, in contrast to the rather moderate confessional attitudes of the Ruthenian Orthodox clergy. The extreme violence unleashed against Catholic Poles, Jews, and to a lesser extent Armenians, on the grounds of a collation of religious, ethnic, and social identities, signaled a sharp break with religious tolerance and resulted in the creation of a mono-confessional society.[60] Paul of Aleppo was most thrilled:

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56 Belfour, *The Travels*, 1:198.

57 Andreas Kappeler, *Die Kosaken* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2013), 12–20.

58 Spyridon Lambros, "Enthymeseon etoi chronikon enthymeseon sylloge prote," *Neos Hellenomnemon* 7 (1910): 186 (year 1623); Edmond Schütz, "Eine armenische Chronik von Kaffa aus der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 29, no. 2 (1975): 133–86, passim. Cf. Belfour, *The Travels*, 2:425. The Armenian chronicler also shares with Greek Orthodox contemporaries the praise for the righteous sultan Murad IV (1623–40) and the sorrow for the murder of Sultan Osman II (1618–22).

59 Serhii Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 100–3.

60 Plokhy, *Cossacks*, 176–206, 334–44; Liliya Berezhnaya, "Ruthenian Lands and the Early Modern Multiple Borderlands in Europe: Ethno-Confessional Aspect," in *Religion and Conceptual Boundary in Central*

> And what a blessed nation it is! And what a happy country! This is its greatest merit, that it contains no one inhabitant of any other sect whatever, but is pure, and peopled only with the orthodox, the faithful, and the truly religious. How great is its zeal for purity and holiness of spirit! How clear its principles in the truth of Orthodoxy! Blessed be our eyes for what we saw, and our ears for what we heard, and our hearts for the joy and exultation which we experienced![61]

Paul's all but unique acclamation, combined with truly malicious comments on the annihilation of Polish, Armenian, and especially Jewish communities, constitutes perhaps a needed corrective to all-too enthusiastic appraisals of premodern religious coexistence.[62] It was true that the piety of the Ruthenian Orthodox in all its stringency and its ascetism seemed rather exaggerated relative to the Mediterranean taste,[63] an experience Paul would only deepen on his later journey to Moscow. But he was generous on account of what he appreciated as the Ruthenians' purity of faith:

> There is not even a chair for the head of the Clergy [in Rashkiv]. You might see them, from the beginning of the service to the end, standing like rocks, without motion [...]. They never neglect to read the Epistles and Gospels, and the Reader pronounces the Epistles with a modulation much more beautiful than ours in reading the Gospel [...]. As for us, we suffered great pain [in Uman]; so that our very souls were harassed with fatigue and anguish; but, as we mentioned before of them, we observed in all of them a perfect spirit of religion, and abstinence and humility to the utmost.[64]

5 Sacralizing *Novorossiia*

It was only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century that the actual northern littoral of the Black Sea as well as the Crimean Peninsula were claimed as Christian lands. In the wake of her victories over the Ottoman Empire, Catherine II (1762–96) celebrated the conquest of the new territories, labeled "New Russia" and "Tauris," as a regaining of Greek as well as Slavic historical landscapes. For the Russian Church, the religious divergence of the new dioceses (the diocese of Slaviansk and Kherson had already been founded in 1775 and assigned to Greek bishops in the context of ongoing Greek colonization projects) posed a particular challenge. Efforts to come to terms with this challenge coincided with an ongoing (in the second-half of the eighteenth century) broader ecclesiastical campaign to reshape popular Orthodoxy or rather to suppress deviant

and Eastern Europe: Encounters of Faiths, ed. Thomas Bremer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 40–65.

61 Belfour, *The Travels*, 1:191. Cf. also 175, 185.

62 Cf. the enthusiasm of the eighteenth-century Greek monk and poet Kaisarios Dapontes concerning the Orthodox purity of Samos Island in the Aegean Sea: Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "Orthodox Identities in a World of Ottoman Power," in *An Orthodox Commonwealth: Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe* (Aldershot: Variorum Reprints, 2007), Study III, 6.

63 Kraft, *Moskaus griechisches Jahrhundert*, 53–55.

64 Belfour, *The Travels*, 1:164, 166, 186.

"Heterodoxy,"[65] a process that amounted to a belated confessionalization or, as Gregory L. Freeze termed it, a "Re-Christianization" of Russia.[66] Given the weakness of missionary tradition in the Russian Church and the stress Catherine's enlightened religious policy placed on tolerance of recognized faiths and confessions, the prelates' efforts mainly targeted the numerous "sectarians": Old Believers who had moved to the south fleeing state persecution and discrimination before the Russian annexation, Molokans, Skoptsy, and Dukhobors. While up to the first quarter of the nineteenth century a rather lenient, accommodating policy proved effective, achieving tangible results such as the "edinoverie" compromise (similar to the Catholic Unionist pattern) with Old Believer communities, under Nicholas I a return to more aggressive persecuting and proselytizing measures took place.[67]

Since Lora Gerd's chapter in this volume covers the subsequent developments of the nineteenth century, a brief remark on Crimea is in order here: The Christianization of the peninsula, a project of paramount symbolic significance for the Russian Empire, was initially rather a matter of sacralizing the landscape with the foundation of churches and monasteries, of reducing the visibility of other faiths, than of Christianizing the Muslim population. However, in the course of the nineteenth century, the combination of the Muslim Crimean Tatars' continuous migration to the Ottoman Empire with the reverse movement of, among other groups, Orthodox Bulgarians to Crimea, resulted in an additional Orthodox reshaping of the peninsula in demographic terms.[68]

6 The Georgian Dominions

In the wake of the Russian expansion towards the Black Sea and Caucasia, Georgian Christianity was institutionally incorporated into the Russian Church. The Georgian experience constitutes a further example of the collation of confessional and ethnic identities, since Orthodoxy functioned here as a distinctive marker especially vis-à-vis the Armenian Christian culture. Once again, Georgian Orthodoxy experienced in the early modern period similar challenges to those the other Christian communities around the

65 "Russian Orthodoxy was actual Russian Heterodoxy, with kaleidoscopic variations in local customs, superstitions and religious practices." Gregory L. Freeze, "Russian Orthodoxy: Church, People and Politics in Imperial Russia," in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2, *Imperial Russia, 1689–1917*, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 296.

66 Gregory L. Freeze, "The Re-Christianization of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion," *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* 7 (1990): 101–36. Cf. Aleksandr S. Lavrov, *Koldovstvo i religiia v Rossii, 1700–1740 gg.* (Moscow: Drevlekhranilishche, 2000).

67 Mara Kozelsky, "A Borderland-Mission: The Orthodox Church in the Black Sea Region," *Russian History* 40 (2013): 111–32; Gregory Bruess, "Sacred Spaces and Imperial Boundaries on Catherine II's Southern Frontier," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 62 (2020): 296–314.

68 Mara Kozelsky, *Christianizing Crimea: Shaping Sacred Space in the Russian Empire and Beyond* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

Black Sea had to face. For example, Islamic sovereignty, a divided and contested one between Safavids and Ottomans, presented Georgian kingdoms and principalities with dilemmas comparable to those in the Ottoman tributaries Moldavia and Wallachia. Catholic missionary activity in the seventeenth century, backed by French diplomacy, made notable achievements, numerous representatives of the Georgian princely or ecclesiastical elites flirting with Catholicism or openly converting. Georgians' relations to the wider Orthodox world of the Ottoman Empire were at periods particularly intense, for instance with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem under patriarchs Theophanes III (1608–44) and Dositheos II (1669–1707). Anthim the Iberian, a Georgian prelate who, with Dositheos's support, ascended to the metropolitan sees of Râmnic (1705–8) and Wallachia (1708–15), played a leading role in Orthodox printing in both Georgia and Wallachia from 1691 on, issuing books for the Orthodox flock in Romanian, Church Slavonic, Greek, Georgian, and Arabic.

Loyalty to the Islamic ruler was no less a requirement than in the Greek and Armenian cases. Some Georgian princes and kings, such as David X (1569–88) of Kartli, even converted to Islam. Nonetheless, from the late sixteenth century on a series of projects and negotiations unfolded, attempts by the Georgian nobility to win the aid of Christian monarchs such as Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV of France, or Alexis Mikhailovich and Peter I of Russia against Ottoman or Persian rule.[69] During the eighteenth century, a period of material growth as elsewhere in the Black Sea world, the "Russian expectation" was particularly virulent. In the Georgian case, successive emotional roller coasters between excitement, disillusionment, and distress were particularly pronounced, since especially during the 1770s and 1780s, in the context of Catherine II's Ottoman wars, Russian tactics of inciting support from Georgian allies and instantly forsaking them appeared extremely cynical. This experience grew even larger in the first decades of the nineteenth century, when after the annexation of the Georgian lands and contrary to former promises and guarantees the autocephaly of the Georgian Church was abolished, annexed to the Russian Church, and subjected to severe Russification policies.[70]

7 Pontic Realities

On its way back to Syria in the winter 1658/59 the Patriarchal retinue sailed from Izmail along the western coast of the Black Sea, halting at Varna and Sozopolis and then along

69 Stephen H. Rapp Jr., "Georgian Christianity," in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, ed. Ken Parry (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2007), 149–51; Nana Kharebava and Christoph U. Werner, "Persisch-russische Verzahnungen," in *Transottomanica – Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken: Perspektiven und Forschungsstand*, ed. Stefan Rohdewald, Stephan Conermann, and Albrecht Fuess (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 231–44.

70 Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 46–68.

the southern coast (the "coast of Caramania") from Heraclea (Karadeniz Ereğli) to Pontic Sinope. Paul of Aleppo again had an odd etymology to offer: "The meaning of using the word Ponto is, because all the coasts of the Black Sea (and we ourselves remarked this circumstance) are round and concave."[71] It was shortly before Christmas and Paul was anxious about brumal conditions: "During this whole winter season, every year, the merchants and travelers perform the journey in caïcks from Constantinople to Trebizond and the frontier of Georgia, regarding it as the most favorable time for the voyage".[72] He was finally relieved that God "granted us [the chief blessing] that we passed the Black Sea before winter came on."[73] In Sinope Paul was impressed by the tranquility of the Christians' circumstances:

> The life of the Christians in this place is spent in perfect ease, happiness, and security [...] the Priests there are like magistrates and governors. The people generally are fond of possessing slave girls, and Mamelooks or male slaves. The place contains upward of a thousand Christian families; and in each family are five or six captive men and women, or more.[74]

They were even "morning and evening [striking] the wooden bells in their churches, there being no Turkish houses among them." In Oinoe (today: Ünye), a further port east of Sinope, Paul admired the "reverence and religiousness" of the local Christians, the "submissiveness and humility towards our Lord the Patriarch, such as we had never yet beheld in our time." He was, however, irritated by their and their priests' lack of mastery of the Greek language: "These persons knew none but the Turkish language."[75]

Indeed, the Pontic coastland, virtually isolated from the Anatolian interior by the Pontic Alps, was in several regards a world of its own. Anthony Bryer, the most distinguished historian of the Pontos, noticed the "peculiar localism" of the region's inhabitants, which seemed to transcend religious allegiances and even conversions.[76] While around 1520 Greek Orthodox still constituted the vast majority of the population (ca. 215,000 or 85 percent), the last Ottoman census of 1910 counted 350,000 but out of a total population of 1.3 million, the result of mass Muslim migration (mostly Turkomans and Laz) rather than large-scale conversion.[77] Pontic Greeks seem to have maintained their faith and also—contrary to Paul's experience in Oinoe—their Greek dialect more determinedly than those of inner Anatolia. As Bryer remarked: "In the

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71 Belfour, *The Travels*, 2:424. On the Black Sea appellation, he remarked: "This sea has been marked with the name of Black, because all its deeds are black." Belfour, 425.

72 Belfour, 2:425.

73 Belfour, 2:427.

74 Belfour, 2:428.

75 Belfour, 2:435–36.

76 Anthony Bryer, "The Pontic Greeks before Diaspora," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 4, no. 4 (1991): 319.

77 Anthony Bryer, "The *Tourkokratia* in the Pontos: Some Problems and Preliminary Conclusions," in *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (Aldershot: Variorum Reprints, 1980), 38–39; Anthony Bryer, "The Pontic Revival and the New Greece," in *The Empire of Trebizond*, 173.

Pontos, by contrast, the language outlasted the faith in some areas and the faith outlasted the harac classification in others."[78] A sense of the ambivalence of ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities might be recovered by what a Pontic Turkish inhabitant of Santa, a formerly Christian village, told Bryer in 1969: "This is Roman (Rum) country; they spoke Christian here."[79]

This ambiguity was due not only to loose administrative control but also to the high degree of what past research used to call "syncretism" and modern scholars "transreligiosity" or "hybridity," the fluidity and the ambiguity of religious and confessional allegiances. Popular religion was shaped in Pontos by shared places of worship, such as the Sumela monastery.[80] Most Muslims were Alevites anyway, while the Armenian Hemşinli practiced similar forms of hybrid religious rites.[81] Instances of "Crypto-Christianity," the concealing of the true, inner Christian faith under an external, official Muslim one, seems to have been rather a result of the nineteenth-century Tanzimat reforms, which threatened convenient inherited ambiguities.[82] Source evidence is scarce, but it is probable that a provisional decrease of Ottoman tolerance, associated with the rise of the Kadizadeli movement, the Islamic zealot resurgence of the seventeenth century, had repercussions on Pontic Christianity (mass conversions, the appearance of neo-martyrs), as it had on Armenians, Greek Orthodox, and especially Jews in Constantinople itself.[83] Relations of the great Pontic monasteries such as Sumela and Vazelon with Russia go back to the seventeenth century, but the emergence of the "Russian expectation" among Pontic Greeks is evidenced for the late eighteenth and especially the nineteenth-century. In the wake of Russian-Ottoman wars, especially that of 1828/29, great numbers of Pontic Greeks emigrated to the now Russian ports on the northern and eastern shores: Odesa, Yalta, Mariupol, and Batum.[84]

The history of Christianity around the Black Sea in the late nineteenth and the twentieth century is a story of nationalization of Church institutions, of sacralization of national communities, of suppression of religious practices, but also of ethnic cleansing and mass violence. This is a story that is told in fragments in other chapters of this handbook.

78 Bryer, "Pontic Revival," 174.

79 Bryer, "The Pontic Greeks," 321.

80 Bryer, "Tourkokratia," 48; Bryer, "Pontic Revival," 174.

81 Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Pontus: The Trebizond-Black Sea Comminities* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2009).

82 Yorgos Tzedopoulos, "Public Secrets: Crypto-Christianity in the Pontos," *Bulletin of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies* 16 (2009): 165–210. See the chapter "Russian Imperial Church Policy in the Black Sea Region (1856–1914)" by Lora Gerd in this volume.

83 Bryer, "Tourkokratia," 41–42. See Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

84 Bryer, "Pontic Revival," 179–82.