РЕЦЕНЗИИ

The Russian Empire as a Regulator of the Hajj and Russian Orthodox Pilgrimage

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The work by Eileen Kane on the Russian Empire's experience of regulating the hajj — the Muslim pilgrimage from the Volga region, the Caucasus, and Central Asia to the Middle East — is of interest not only from the perspective of Asian and African studies or the history of religion. It is also, potentially, a comparative study as the author illustrates her observations and conclusions by referring to Russia's policies towards the Christian populations of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. E. Kane advances a debatable thesis that Russia provided unofficial support for the hajj undertaken by its subjects. Whereas the patronage of Russian Orthodox pilgrimage was fully in line with Russia's geopolitical role in the Middle East as well as with the tsarist ideology, open declaration of its interest in an organized hajj was out of the question for the Russian government. The idea of regulating the hajj was consistent with Russia's need to integrate its Muslim subjects into the empire in order to secure the imperial rule. In the Ottoman Empire, adherents of various religions united under one dynasty and entitled to its consular protection can be viewed from the perspective of comparative historical research and the authorities' general idea of imperial unity. In this case, the modes of comparison can be the following: the appropriation by the authorities of the traditions of pilgrimage and the hajj; their modernization; controversies in implementing the policies; consular protection; the subjugation of the clergy to the imperial bureaucracy. The profound differences between the two religious cultures, Christianity and Islam, resulted in the differences between Russia's Muslim and Orthodox presence in the Middle East. In the late 19th century, Orthodox subjects of the tsar upon arriving at the destination of their pilgrimage, were offered the services of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society: they could use the accommodation owned by

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the "Russian Palestine", and were provided with spiritual guidance by the Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical mission in Jerusalem. Muslim subjects of the tsar did not enjoy the same level of official protection.

Keywords: Russian Empire, Islam, pilgrimage, hajj, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Ottoman Empire, Central Asia.

Российская империя как регулятор хаджа и православного паломничества

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Исследование Айлин Кейн «Российский хадж: империя и паломничество в Мекку» (М.: Новое литературное обозрение, 2021. 296 с.; первое издание — Ithaca, Cornell Press, 2015, 256 p.) посвящено российскому имперскому опыту администрирования хаджа — паломничества мусульман из Поволжья, Кавказа, Центральной Азии на Ближний Восток. Книга представляет интерес не только с точки зрения востоковедения или истории религии, в ней содержится потенциал компаративного подхода, так как автор регулярно иллюстрирует свои наблюдения и выводы, обращаясь к анализу русской политики в отношении христиан арабских провинций Османской империи. А. Кейн выдвигает дискуссионный тезис о том, что Россия оказывала негласное покровительство хаджу своих подданных. Если покровительство православному паломничеству полностью соответствовало геополитической роли России на Ближнем Востоке и идеологии царизма, то декларировать свою заинтересованность в правильно устроенном хадже российское правительство не могло, так как это вызвало бы резкую критику со стороны Святейшего Синода. Управление хаджем отвечало потребности государства интегрировать мусульманских подданных и тем самым обезопасить систему имперского правления. Потоки верующих разных конфессий, объединенных властью одной династии и пользующихся ее консульской защитой, в пространстве Османской империи могут быть рассмотрены через призму исторической компаративистики. Модусами сравнения в таком случае могут быть: усвоение властью традиций паломничества и хаджа, их модернизация, противоречия в претворении политики в жизнь, дипломатическая защита, подчинение духовенства бюрократической имперской системе. Из глубоких различий двух религиозных культур — христианства и ислама — следовали и очевидные различия российского мусульманского и православного присутствия на Ближнем Востоке. Православные паломники — подданные царя — могли воспользоваться услугами и консультациями Императорского Православного Палестинского общества, по прибытии к месту паломничества они могли остановиться в постройках, относящихся к «Русской Палестине», им помогала Русская духовная миссия в Иерусалиме. Мусульманские же подданные царя были лишены подобных инструментов официальной защиты.

Ключевые слова: Российская империя, ислам, паломничество, хадж, православие, Османская империя, Центральная Азия.

The book by Eileen Kane[1], professor of history at Connecticut College, opens a new chapter in the history of Russia as a multinational, multi-faith empire. Using the termi-

[1] *Kane E. M.* Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Ithaca, 2015. — The book was awarded Marshal Shulman Book Prize (Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES)). The pages are listed according to the English edition.

nology of imperial and colonial studies, the author discusses the character of the Russian Empire with regard to its ruling the Muslim subjects and regulating pilgrims' mobility. The annual hajj by Muslims pilgrims, most of whom were subjects of Russia, Great Britain and France, to the shrines of Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Istanbul, and other religious centers of the Middle East, became a source of concern for all imperial governments about the political and social implications of a migration performed by hundreds of thousands driven by their religious urge[2]. This concern was amplified by the Orientalist notion of some Islamic regions having been inhabited by savages and robbers who had to be forced to adopt civilized practices[3].

According to E. Kane, the specific character of Russia as a continental empire is defined by the fact that the hajj could not be unequivocally classified as belonging to the realm of either domestic or foreign policy[4]. It was a tool to ensure the loyalty of Muslims, to integrate them into the empire's social structure, and to expand Russia's influence abroad (pp. 35–36). E. Kane insists that creating an infrastructure along the routes to Mecca as well as a network of consulates located in hubs of hajj traffic by the end of the 19th century points to the fact that Russia's imperial project had "transcended Russia's formal imperial borders" (pp. 53–54). Moreover, tsarist officials believed the governments of Persia and the Ottoman Empire to have become weak, which made their lands an arena for rivalry for the leading states of western Europe and thus also for Russia's further expansion (p. 91).

E. Kane rejects "established narratives", which associated the tsarist regime with Islamophobia, and questions the idea of Stanford University professor Robert Crews that Russia sought to isolate its Muslims from foreign Muslims and spiritual leaders[5]. According to E. Kane, by keeping pilgrims under surveillance and by regulating the hajj, Russia strove to bring Muslims more firmly within its orbit even abroad (p. 84); it assumed the role of a sponsor and patron of the hajj[6].

Although the author's main goal is to explore the geography and infrastructure of the hajj in the Russian, Ottoman, Persian, and Indian lands, she does turn to the subject of Russia's presence in the Holy Land as a protector of Orthodoxy and to the government's prioritization of Orthodox Christians over adherents of other religions, the latter being both Russia's subjects (pilgrims) and the sultan's subjects (of the Eastern Orthodox patriarchates). The study itself, as E. Kane writes in the preface, came as a result of an accidental discovery while she was looking for material on Russian Orthodox pilgrims in the archives

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[2] One of the latest books on the hajj: *Low M. Ch.* Imperial Mecca: Ottoman Arabia and the Indian Ocean. New York, 2020. Among the works in Russian concerning the topic, see: *Litvinov V. P.* Islam v tsarskoi Rossii: palomnichestvo musul'man Srednei Azii. Yelets, 2022.

[3] On the parallels between the imperial rule of the Caucasus and that of Algeria, see: *Bobrovnikov V. O.* Russkii Kavkaz i frantsuzskii Alzhir: sluchainoe skhodstvo ili obmen opytom kolonial'nogo stroitel'stva? // Imperium inter pares: rol' transferov v istorii Rossiiskoi imperii (1700–1917). Moscow, 2010. P. 182–209. — The Algerian as well as Ottoman policies of regulating the hajj were investigated by tsarist officials (Kane, p. 87).

[4] In this regard, it is characteristic that the Asiatic Department, established in 1819, and the Asiatic committee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealt both with the Muslim peoples of Russia and the nominally independent ones that had trade relations with it. See: Ocherk istorii Ministerstva inostrannykh del. 1802–1902. St Petersburg, 1902. P. 90.

[5] *Kruz T.* Za proroka i tsaria. Islam i imperiia v Rossii i Tsentral'noi Azii. Moscow, 2020. P. 20.

[6] For criticism of this, see: *Meyer J. H.* [Review of Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca] // The American Historical Review. 2017. No. 122 (3). P. 807.

in Moscow[7] (p. 9). E. Kane is not new to drawing parallels between different religions: her PhD dissertation was devoted to the shrines of Jerusalem, Mecca, and Echmiadzin at the juncture of religion and foreign policy[8].

Russia's patronage of Middle Eastern Orthodoxy followed a deeply rooted tradition. From the 16th century on, the country acquired new territories with Muslim populations, the epitome of this process being the conquering of Central Asia in the second half of the 19th century. Russia "inherited and grappled with a hajj tradition" (p. 6); like other colonial empires[9], it utilized technological progress, especially railroads and steamship lines, to serve its imperial ambitions, thus inevitably transforming the hajj from an elitist ritual into a mass phenomenon. Orthodox pilgrimage was also experiencing the effects of global modernization.

E. Kane points out that the change in the authorities' attitude to Muslims and the hajj stemmed from the change in Russia's geopolitical standing in the 1840s. As a result of involvement in the Eastern Question and interfering into the relations between the sultan and the rebellious pasha of Egypt, Russia found itself even more entangled in Middle Eastern affairs. Tsarist diplomats came to be attentive not only to the needs of the Orthodox population in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, but also to Muslims. Yet it would be a mistake to say, for example, that Konstantin Bazili, consul general in Syria and Palestine, had a plan to take over a property adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in the early 1850s (p. 42), or that Vladimir Titov, ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, wished to make Russia the patron of the hajj (p. 45). The events described by E. Kane took place during France's diplomatic offensive against the Ottomans with the aim of reasserting Catholic influence in the holy lands of Palestine[10]. Russian diplomats were prompt to respond to those threats. K. Bazili suggested that the presence of Russian Muslims in Jerusalem be used to create a semblance of tending to the mosque on the side of the Holy Sepulchre; he believed that it would facilitate the housing of the Russian ecclesiastical mission there[11]. In the following decades Russians succeeded in founding a "Russian place" near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre[12].

E. Kane emphasizes that land routes between Russia, Palestine, and Arabia used by both Muslim and Orthodox pilgrims crossed territories where Russia had no interests and no official representatives (p. 48). Indeed, Russia's economic presence in the sultan's lands was insignificant as Russian diplomacy was primarily busy protecting the interests

[7] This was pointed out earlier by Luc Chantre: *Chantre L.* [Review of Russian Hajj. Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca, by E. Kane] // Revue d'histoire Moderne et Contemporaine. 2017. No. 64 (4). P. 224.

[8] *Kane E. M.* Pilgrims, Holy Places, and the Multi-Confessional Empire: Russian Policy toward the Ottoman Empire under Tsar Nicholas I, 1825–1855. PhD thesis [Princeton], 2005.

[9] The colonial character of the Russian Empire remains debatable. M. Khodarkovskii, in particular, points out that Russia was one of the countries which prioritized the state governance of the newly acquired lands (Spain, France, Germany) rather than encouraged their autonomy in pursuit of its own commercial interests (Great Britain, the Netherlands). See: *Khodarkovskii M. M.* V chem Rossiia "operezhala" Evropu, ili Rossiia kak kolonial'naia imperiia // Politicheskaia kontseptologiia. 2013. No. 2. P. 88–89.

[10] For more details, see: *Anisimov O. V.* Rossiia i Napoleon III: bor'ba za sviatye mesta Palestiny. Moscow, 2014.

[11] K. Bazili' report on harems in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Nov. 27, 1850 // Popoff A. La question des lieux saints de Jérusalem dans la correspondance diplomatique russe du XIX siècle. T. 1. St Pétersbourg, 1910. P. 352.

[12] *Astafieva E.* Found and buy, study and appropriate, build and reconfigure: The three stages in turning the "Coptic domain" in Jerusalem into the Church of Saint Alexander Nevsky (1856–1896) // European Journal of Turkish Studies. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/6195 (accessed: 01.09.2022).

of Greek patriarchs and did not address the establishing of its religious and consular presence in Jerusalem until rather late[13]. Russian interests in Palestine did not become an issue until after the Crimean War when the wish to have a "place" in the Holy Land coincided with the aspiration to intensify the pilgrim traffic with the help of modern transportation and to make it economically adequate[14]. From the late 1850s onwards, the Russian Society for Steam Navigation and Trade (ROPiT) was involved in the task, but the hajj traffic was still falling behind: it was only towards the late 19th century when railroads connecting Central Asia with Russia's Black Sea ports were built, and the traditional hajj routes remained in use for a long time. As for the network of consulates in various provinces of the Ottoman Empire, it is regrettable that a monograph on the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not been written yet.

The book by E. Kane does not consider gender differences among Russian pilgrims: the majority of Muslim pilgrims were male, while most Orthodox pilgrims — female[15]. There is no discussion of the social stratification or the Sunni-Shia division among hajjis. A question could be raised as to whether the imperial government took notice of Islamic branches and whether it had an impact on managing the hajj.

Drawing on a wide range of sources, including those from the archives of Russia (AVPRI, RGIA, IV RAN, etc.), Georgia (SSSA), Turkey (BOA), Ukraine (DAOO), the author is aware of the problems with each genre she worked with. She concludes the hajj is effectively "buried" in the Russian archives as a result of tsarist and Soviet archival practices (p. 15). It is noteworthy that travelogues and written accounts of the hajj, or hajj-namas, scattered across archives and manuscript departments of libraries are much less known to researchers than similar writings of Orthodox pilgrims[16]. The same view is shared by Russian researchers[17]. E. Kane highlights some interesting characteristics of the hajj memoirs she has studied. They must have been written by educated elite Muslims who did not experience many problems during the journey (pp. 91–92). Articles, letters, and advertisement in Turkic-language newspapers as well as hajj memoirs of the late imperial period are of particular value for E. Kane as sources on geography because they present accurate reports of the routes and itineraries. The fact that the archives of Russia's Jeddah consulate went missing, having perhaps been destroyed during World War I (p. 70), was a tragic loss for historians since the volume of hajj traffic in Jeddah was significant. Nevertheless, some of the Jeddah archives' materials have been preserved at AVPRI and are available for scholars doing research on the Russian hajj[18].

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[13] *Vakh K. A.* Aziatskii departament MID i russkie palomniki v Palestine: vzgliad iz Peterburga, Konstantinopolia i Ierusalima // 200 let diplomaticheskoi podderzhke russkogo prisutstviia na Blizhnem Vostoke: istoriia sozdaniia i deiatel'nosti Aziatskogo departamenta MID Rossiiskoi imperii. Moscow, 2019. P. 261–328.

[14] *Lisovoi N. N., Smirnova I. Iu.* Rossiia i Sviataia Zemlia v pervoi polovine XIX veka: tserkovnaia politika na Pravoslavnom Vostoke. Moscow; St Petersburg, 2015. P. 22.

[15] Voobrazhaia Palestinu: Sviataia zemlia i russkaia identichnost' v XIX — nachale XXI v. / M. S. Shapovalov, A. Iu. Bokatov, A. A. Valitov et al. St Petersburg, 2021. P. 56–64.

[16] More than 1,550 such texts were known by the mid-1980s and more have been discovered since then. See: Russian Travelers to the Christian East from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Century / comp. by Th. G. Stavrou and P. R. Weisensel. Columbus, 1985.

[17] *Aleeva A. Kh.* Tatarskaia palomnicheskaia literatura (khadzhname) // Vestnik Bashkirskogo universiteta. 2009. Vol. 14, no. 2. P. 498.

[18] *Naumkin V.* Russian Diplomat at the Consulate of the Russian Empire in Jeddah // Modern and Contemporary History. 2020. No. 5. P. 61–75.

A considerable contribution to Russian hajj policies was made, according to E. Kane, by N. P. Ignat'ev, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople in 1864–1877 (pp. 61–67), whose ecclesiastical and political activities were of great importance for the Christian East. He proposed to limit the flow of hajj traffic by increasing the passport fee and by requiring pilgrims to make a deposit before leaving the country; in reports to the government, he emphasized the struggles of pilgrims who were stranded in Constantinople without money or passports; he put forth the idea of establishing a caravanserai for Russia's Muslim pilgrims (which was never built)[19]. It was thanks to him that the Ministry of Internal Affairs published decrees in 1871–1872 to stop issuing passports to Mecca because of the cholera outbreak in Jeddah. The measure was met with resistance from Russia's governors-general P. K. von Kaufman and P. E. Kotsebu, who supported open access to Arabia. What E. Kane describes as N. P. Ignat'ev's hostile attitude to the hajj can be explained by his concern about Islamist propaganda he witnessed in Istanbul, which was spread by the "Young Ottomans" party and aimed at pilgrims from various Asian countries[20]. The same concern was shared by tsarist officials. In the early 20th century, they claimed that the hajj facilitated the incitement of Islamic fanaticism by pushing Muslims towards "religious and political isolation"[21].

In the late 1880s, the Ministry of Internal Affairs proposed to organize the hajj by adopting the model developed for the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (p. 87). The model implied state funding, the public support of the royal family, and a network of facilities in Palestine with an equivalent of the Russian Compound in Jerusalem for Orthodox pilgrimage. But such a "Russian Mecca" was never built. Muslim pilgrims, who outnumbered Orthodox pilgrims twice[22], were left to their own devices until the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the early days of the reign of Nicholas II decided to "monopolize the hajj" and to streamline the hajj flow to the Black Sea ports. In 1903, "pilgrim passports" were introduced for hajjis, 20 years after the same had been done for their Orthodox counterparts. A brief comparative analysis of the two passports could support E. Kane's idea that Muslim pilgrims were discriminated against in terms of sanitary rules and patterns of behaviour (pp. 94, 144–145). In 1908, P. A. Stolypin appointed Said Gani Saidazimbaev, a Muslim and a representative of Turkestani elite, a hajj director for the empire. Both these experiments of the Russian authorities, i. e., the centralized logistics management and unity of command, ended in a failure.

When discussing the role of the imperial government as the patron of Russian Orthodox pilgrimage, E. Kane mentions a resurgence of scholarly work on the subject at the turn

[19] Among other such ideas put forward by N. P. Ignat'ev were proposals to establish the institution of apocrisiaries, i. e., representatives of the Russian Church in Eastern patriarchates (*Vakh K. A.* Tserkovnoe predstavitel'stvo Rossii na Pravoslavnom Vostoke: apokrisiarii v Konstantinopole ili Russkaia Dukhovnaia Missiia v Ierusalime? (K postanovke voprosa) // Pravoslavnyi palestinskii sbornik. Vyp. 110. Moscow, 2014. P. 21–62) and to found a Russian bank in Constantinople (Pis'ma N. P. Ignat'eva k ottsu iz Konstantinopolia. 1862–1877. Chast' 2 / podg. O. N. Zolotova, O. V. Anisimov. Moscow, 2021. P. 86).

[20] Graf N. P. Ignat'ev i Pravoslavnyi Vostok: dokumenty, perepiska, vospominaniia. T. 1 / izd. podg. K. A. Vakh, O. V. Anisimov. Moscow, 2015.

[21] Poezdki magometan v Mekku i Medinu // RGIA. F. 821. Op. 1. D. 1202. L. 119 ob.

[22] The number of Russian pilgrims varied, ranging from 6,000 to 11,000 people per year. See: Voobrazhaia Palestinu. P. 56. The number of hajjis was officially estimated to be between 18,000 and 25,000 a year: Poezdki magometan v Mekku i Medinu // RGIA. F. 821. Op. 1. D. 1202. L. 117. There are data for Orthodox pilgrims before the Crimean War: about 100 people a year. See: *Iakushev M. M.* Russkoe pravoslavnoe palomnichestvo na Blizhnii Vostok. 1774–1847. Moscow, 2018. P. 223.

of the 21st century (K. A. Vakh, N. N. Lisovoi et al.). She explains it by the government's interest in emphasizing Russia's "historic" ties to the Middle East, in part — by laying claims to valuable tsarist-era land and property in Israel (p. 197). Such an interpretation appears not only to relativize the efforts of Russia's leading scholars in Palestine studies, but also to neglect the significance of the 'archive revolution' of the 1990s as well as the revived academic interest in the role of religion and church in the history of international relations, which emerged when methodology was still dominated by Marxist and atheist principles (V. I. Sheremet, V. N. Vinogradov).

In summary, it must be said that E. Kane's primary conclusion about the nature of imperial Russia's patronage and sponsorship of the hajj can hardly be accepted. The history of tightening and relaxing restrictions on the hajj reflects the controversy of the tsarist policy towards the empire's Muslims. The same fluctuations were also experienced by other religious and ethnic communities in Russia, e. g., Jews or Poles. Of particular interest is the regulation of the hajj at the turn of the 20th century when transportation lines were being developed, hajj traffic sharply increased, and state control was reinforced both centrally and locally. That was when the hajj became a fully-fledged political project. With all the profound differences in the practices between the hajj and Orthodox pilgrimage, their comparative historical study would be of considerable academic significance.

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