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«TO SEE THE SPIRITUAL HOMELAND OF CHRISTIANS»: PILGRIMS' PETITIONS TO THE HOLY LAND AS A SOURCE FOR STUDYING PUBLIC IDEAS OF THE LATE 19TH — EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

The article analyzes the structure and content of petitions for assistance in pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Palestine) of Orthodox Russians for the period from 1882 to 1914, managed in the chancellery of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society. It is noted that the petitions came exclusively from low-income representatives of the city and village, most of whom were women. It is concluded that both the number of petitions and the geography of their authors' placement during the studied period expanded. It is noted that the content of the analyzed sources reflected ideas about the State being personified in members of the royal family, which constituted one of the traditional features of the mentality of ordinary Russians. The motives for pilgrimage stated in the petitions were exclusively vows for illness and recovery, the desire for spiritual renewal. The authors not only ask for help, but also in return use their prayers or actions to compensate for the incurred expenses. The relationship is noted between the beginning of the dissemination in Russia of information about the holy regions of the East by the diocesan departments of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society through the organization of public readings and the development of corresponding directions in the Holy Land in pilgrimage.

Keywords: Holy Land, Palestine, Jerusalem, pilgrimage, pilgrimage petitions, Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, social representations, gender studies

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«УЗРЕТЬ ДУХОВНУЮ РОДИНУ ХРИСТИАН»: ПРОШЕНИЯ ПАЛОМНИЦ В СВЯТУЮ ЗЕМЛЮ КАК ИСТОЧНИК ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЙ КОНЦА XIX — НАЧАЛА XX В.

В статье анализируются структура, содержание прошений о содействии в паломничестве в Святую Землю (Палестину) православных россиян за период с 1882 по 1914 г., направлявшихся в канцелярию Императорского Православного Палестинского общества. Отмечено, что прошения поступали преимущественно от малоимущих представителей города и деревни, большинство из которых составляли женщины. Делается вывод, что как количество прошений, так и география местожительства их авторов в течение рассматриваемого периода расширились. Указано, что в содержании анализируемых источников отразились представления о государстве, персонифицированном в членах царствующей семьи, составлявшие одну из традиционных черт менталитета простых россиян. Мотивами паломничества, заявленными в прошениях, являлись преимущественно обеты по болезни и выздоровлении, стремление к духовному обновлению. Авторы не только просят о помощи, но и взамен предлагают своими молитвами или конкретными действиями компенсировать понесенные расходы. Отмечена взаимосвязь между началом распространения в России сведений о святых местах Востока епархиальными отделами Императорского Православного Палестинского общества путем устройства публичных чтений и ростом числа желающих отправиться в Святую Землю в паломничество.

Ключевые слова: Святая Земля, Палестина, Иерусалим, паломничество, паломнические прошения, Императорское Православное Палестинское общество, общественные представления, гендерные исследования

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Introduction

Palestine is a small corner of the earth that attracts the attention of the entire Christian world. «Holy Land! Two words, but how much it says to the Christian believing heart. After all, this is the land where our Lord Jesus Christ lived, where he taught, performed miracles, where he suffered on the cross for us, rose again and ascended... And how many memories...», an anonymous author wrote on the pages of one of the provincial publications [About Russian..., 1900].

Many Russian people, imbued with a sincere love for the Holy Land, dreamed of seeing it with their own eyes, «making a pious journey and worshiping its shrines», some for consolation, and others «for their own inspiration» [About the Russian..., 1900]. What was seen and heard during the pilgrimage was spread through oral memories and travel notes, which interested more and more Orthodox pilgrims in the reality of traveling to Jerusalem. Thus, they gradually learned among the common people about the roads leading to the East, and those who help to embark on a long trip abroad.

For a long time, the Russian pilgrimage to the Holy Land had almost exclusively a «male face»: «The common people went, the monks went, the nobles went. Kaliki perekhozhye went in squads «to bathe in the Jordan River'» [About Russian..., 1900]. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that women began to be widely involved. Pilgrimage developed and rose on the wave of aspirations and search for spiritual ideals, and also became possible due to the development of communication routes, reducing the risks associated with long-distance travel.

Creation in 1882 of The Orthodox Palestinian Society (in 1889 it received the status of the Imperial Society, hereinafter — the OPS, IOPS) was a decisive step in organizing a mass pilgrimage of Russians to the homeland of Christianity. Gradually, it concentrated in its hands the management or at least coordination of the activities of the institutions involved assisting travel and reception of pilgrims. It also launched an active educational campaign to spread knowledge about the Holy Land, inform about the accessibility, safety and relative cheapness of travel, and with an increase in coordination and cooperation with public entities, it began to encourage pilgrimage to the Christian East. The IOPS's efforts to maintain the Russian presence in Palestine, the construction of a complex of buildings and structures for the reception of Russian pilgrims, and other multifaceted activities demonstrated to Orthodox Christians that they could find a reliable patron in the face of the IOPS in their intention to fulfill their dream of worshiping the «holy places of the Palestinian Land». It was in this socio-religious organization that many worshippers began to see the main intercessor in helping

them visit sacred historical sites. In case of any difficulties, potential pilgrims made various requests in the hope of assistance to the IOPS in general, its leaders or representatives in particular.

Historiography

Based on archival documents and published works, a number of researchers characterize the specifics of organizing Russian pilgrimages to the Holy Land either as a separate topic [See: Baldin, 2013; Bokatov, 2020; Imagining..., 2021; Zhitenev, 2024; Tsys, 2014] or in the context of IOPS activities [See: Zhitenev, 2021]. Its gender aspects, when pilgrimages are considered as a sign of awakening female social and spiritual activity, are touched upon in the works of O. V. Kirichenko [Kirichenko, 2010]. Pilgrimages as a part of traditional folk Orthodox culture, for example, «votive pilgrimages» are reflected in the works of N. V. Alekseeva, who writes about their widespread practice [Alekseeva, 2017: 235]. Among foreign authors, *T. G. Stavrou and P. R. Weisensel* [See: Stavrou and Weisensel, 1985] devoted their monograph to the Russian pilgrimage to the Christian East. [Weisensel, 1985], articles by R. Rubin [See: Rubin, 2007] and S. Merlo [See: Merlo, 2013].

At the same time, M. V. Kail draws attention to the potential possibility of expanding the source base on this issue. He notes that some representatives of the unprivileged strata of Russian society, «most often peasant women», turned for help in organizing their pilgrimage to the highest personages, «the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna (materials were deposited in her office), and at the beginning of the XX century to Elizabeth Feodorovna...» or asked for the assistance of the IOPS [Kail, 2020: 60]. We should agree with the historian's opinion that «Some of these appeals are unique and confessional, and their continuous identification and comprehensive study is one of the significant tasks of modern Russian Palestinian studies» [Kail, 2020: 60].

Sources

This paper is the result of an analysis of pilgrimage petitions received by the IOPS Council from different parts of Russia. These petitions, being a research topic for the first time, provide a rare opportunity to hear the voice of the Russian common people who expressed their intention to make a trip to the Middle East.

It is known that due to the lack of literacy in rural and urban lower classes, for a long time there was no habit of drawing the necessary knowledge from the printed word. Knowledge and experience were passed on through direct examples and imitation, which is why established ideas changed very slowly. As B. N. Mironov noted, «The book and the press made the peasant world open to the influence of the city, high culture, and everything that happened around the world, and prepared the peasants for the transition from traditional to industrial culture» [Mironov, 2000: 295]. Elements and individual features of this transition can be found, among other things, in various kinds of petitions submitted to representatives of the highest authorities or to State institutions. Since requests for assistance in traveling to the Holy Land did not have a specific form and were not regulated at all, they bear the characteristics of the individual applicants, allow them to judge their ideas about the addressee and his capabilities, about the Holy Land, about the principles of relations between the people and the authorities in general. In addition, these documents are of interest for understanding the motives and spiritual significance of the pilgrimage, understanding the conditions associated

with the trip to the holy sites of Jerusalem and the expected benefits. Thus, the petitions of pilgrims for help in organizing their journey to the Holy Land are an important historical source that allows us to better understand the mental attitudes and spiritual needs of the Orthodox population of the Russian Empire. In 1895, responses began to be written on a special printed form, with blank space for a surname and initials of the petitioner, which indicated the widespread use of such requests.

The research is based mainly on the materials of the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (f. 337/2 — RIOPS), where these sources were deposited.

General characteristics of petitions

The first petitions are dated 1882, i. e. they appear almost immediately from the moment of the emergence of the Orthodox Palestinian Society, and the last ones are the time when travel to Palestine ceased due to the outbreak of the First World War. In the office of the IOPS, these petitions were systematized by year.

We conducted a continuous review of several hundred appeals and decisions of the IOPS Council between 1882–1906 and 1914. The following information about applicants could be extracted from the forms: first name, patronymic and surname, place of residence (city, province, county, village); class and professional affiliation (occupation); material capabilities; age (not always).

Complete data from 1882 to 1887 (for five reporting years) show that 21 petitions were received during this period, 11 of them from women (i. e., an average of about two per year). The vast majority of them were residents of St. Petersburg and Moscow. A few petitions came from Moscow, Tver and Vitebsk provinces. The alleged pilgrims were widows, less often young women, middle and lower urban strata (widow of: a staff captain, a priest, a soldier, a doctor of medicine, a healer's assistant, a private of the Pavlovsk regiment, a retired soldier; a daughter of -a second lieutenant). This list also included one request from a sister of mercy who planned to go to Jerusalem «to serve in the local hospital» and a peasant woman from the Vitebsk province. In comparison with male petitions, there was a significant proportion of retired military personnel. Almost all the women were at a mature age for their time, exceeding 50 years of age.

This situation, in our opinion, is explained by the fact that the OPS, as an intercessor for Russian pilgrims in the Holy Land, was still little known outside the capitals. There were no diocesan departments, the origin of which dates back to 1893–1894. Later, it was through them that the majority of the Orthodox population learned about the activities of the OPS.

For comparison, we analyzed complete data from the other five years when IOPS was in its heyday: from 1898 to 1902. During this period, 95 petitions were submitted, of which 44 came from women. The gender structure is dominated by peasant women, who make up 62% of the total number, followed by bourgeois women (15%), noblewomen (5%), 18% of petitions do not contain information about class affiliation. Geographical coverage is rather expansive: applications were received from 18 administrative divisions, including Samara, Voronezh, Tambov, Oryol, Kursk, Saratov, Yaroslavl provinces, and Kuban Region. Only about 9% of petitions were sent from St. Petersburg, which indicates a shift in the activity of IOPS from the capital to the province. It is noteworthy that national suburbs such as Ukraine, Novorossiya and western provinces collectively gave only 9% of petitions, which is comparable to the

share of the capital. Based on the analysis of these data, it is possible to create a socio-cultural «portrait» of the average petitioner at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries: a middle-aged peasant woman, most often a widow or a maiden, who came from the Great Russian provinces, mainly in the Central Chernozem region. Their literacy rate was low or nonexistent, and its financial situation was characterized as poor, while some were orphaned children.

What explains these changes? In the first years after the establishment of the OPS, little was known about its multifaceted work outside the capitals, and the Society itself was still in its infancy. However, after a decade and a half, successful cultural and educational activities began to bring tangible results. The name of the IOPS became well-known, and was perceived as an advocate and helper in the departure of Orthodox Russians to Palestine. This is evidenced by changes in the texts received from petitioners. So, in the address of a peasant woman N. R. Sloeva from the Tver province there were such signature lines: «I pray the Almighty God to inspire you, Your Highness, as the patron saint of Palestine and Israel, to provide me with a way to get to Jerusalem for free with a reduced-price ticket...» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 696. P. 163].

The data of petitioners from 1903–1906 confirm the conclusions we made for the previous period about the trend of increasing activity of peasant women, which indicates the success of the diocesan departments of the IOPS, which operated mainly through rural priests, and raising awareness of the population about the routes leading to Jerusalem. Prominent educational achievements of the Palestinian society, activities aimed at distributing accessible publications for the people («Readings on the Holy Land», «Conversations on the Holy Land»), organizing popular mass Palestinian readings, where they talked about the shrines of the Biblical region and explained the meaning of pilgrimage — all this led to the expansion of the geographical and historical horizons of peasants, urban dwellers, and supported the their desire for spiritual purification and moral improvement, the desire to escape from the boring everyday life.

In 1903–1906, women's petitions accounted for 86% of their total number, reaching 73 [Calculated from: AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 696]. There is a further increase in peasant petitions to 66%. A new group of petitioners — monastery dwellers (nuns and novices) — increased to 10%. Other categories include wives and daughters of the military (4%), Cossacks (3%), middle-class women (5.8%), and another 9% did not mention their class affiliation. Petitions were received from 34 administrative entities (provinces, regions), including the city of Verny, Akmola, Tomsk and Perm provinces, which indicates the further popularization of the idea of pilgrimage to the Holy Land on the outskirts of the Russian Empire [Calculated from: AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 696. P. 127, 146, 149, 170, 220, 273]. However, about half of the petitioners still represented Central Russia. Accordingly, the geography of petitions for 24 years (from 1882 to 1906) significantly expanded, changing in the direction of a number of petitions increase from residents of the Central Chernozem and Volga provinces.

1914 can be considered indicative — the last year in organizing a mass pilgrimage of Russians to Palestine. On the eve of the First World War, the number of appeals to the IOPS Council from those who want to go on a pilgrimage not only remained nondecreasing, but on the contrary, was increasing. The proportion is as follows: 32 petitions from women from 15 administrative divisions and 24 from men. There was a noticeable increase in women's

collective appeals (from 2 to 5 peasant women) about their desire to make a pilgrimage together [Calculated from: AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 698]. Most of these requests were received from Kharkiv, Kursk and Tambov provinces. Many petitioners were literate and wrote the texts themselves.

Structure and content of petitions

Petitions differ in content by class, but more obvious differences are observed in male and female texts. As a result of the comparative analysis, they also have common features. So, in general, the structure of the petition was a unified one containing the following elements: 1. The appeal; 2. The motives of the pilgrimage; 3. The life path of the petitioner or an indication of his religious activity, i. e. arguments are given that prove that the petitioner is worthy of help; 4. The inability to accumulate savings, financial difficulties that do not allow you to make a trip at your own expense; 5. A request for help; 6. A promise to be useful to society in return.

Let's look at these parts in order. Petitions were addressed, as a rule, to members of the royal family or the IOPS: Moscow governor Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, Grand Duke Elizabeth Feodorovna, the Dowager Empress, Most gracious Sovereign «Grand Duchess Maria Feodorovna, «August Monarch» Alexandra Feodorovna [See, for example, AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 127,189, 261, 263, 404, 406–407], secretary of the IPPO V.N. Khitrovo or simply «To the Russian Orthodox Palestinian Society» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 511], to the «office of the Moscow Governor-General» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 531]. There are also appeals addressed to the Minister of Railways, the Minister of War, and even the «Volost Zemstvo chief of the Penza province» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 271, 274, 470]. In their texts, women are often more emotional, especially if they come from urban surroundings. There are such expressions as «I dare to fall at your feet», «I run to your feet and have a great request, I am deeply grieved and ask for your mercy», «Mercy and generosity poured out by Your Heart. Your Highness to your loyal subjects, gave me the courage to fall at your feet «[AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695 P. 42, 76, 282] and so on. One of the most vivid illustration of such texts is the appeal of the Kiev philistine A. M. Kovalevskaya dated November 24, 1894 addressed to the Empress: «August Monarch, Most Gracious Sovereign! Boundless joy seized all the hearts of vast Russia at the news of the marriage of Your Imperial Majesty and the August Monarch to the throne of the Almighty, who received fervent pleas for the health and prosperity of Your Majesty and the August Monarch. After the sad loss of the Father of all Russia, the unforgettable August Parent of Your Majesty's Spouse, all the loyal subjects were saddened by a heavy grief, but suddenly the sun shone it was the joyful news of marriage... «[AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 261]. The expression of loyal feelings was meant as an unavoidable condition, a prerequisite for a positive solution of the issue.

One of the key elements of the text is *the motive of the pilgrimage*. The nature of the information allows concluding that the main one was «a vow made before the Lord for the worship of the Holy Sepulchre» and the holy places of Palestine after the loss of loved ones or after a happy recovery. Rhetorical devices often used in petitions were as follows: «I intend to fulfill my last earthly promise — to worship the Life-giving Holy Sepulchre!»; «I have made a vow before the God to worship the Holy Sepulchre «[AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 10, 16, 287–287 vol.]. Women usually begin their petitions with a description of a «difficult life path», misfortune, tragedy, broken fate. For example, E. R. Sakharova, a peasant woman from

the Kaluga province, wrote the following lines: «I dare to ask you to help me for Christ's sake on the way to Old Jerusalem. I was ill in the eighty-sixth year, but God healed my illness, and I cannot but fulfill my duty in any way» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 10, 16, 236–236.]. Another «loyal widow» reports in a petition from 1886 the following: «Left after the death of my husband, Staff Captain Shpakovsky of the 14th Infantry Regiment Onega, who died in October 1872, with a young daughter without a pension and without any means, I vowed before the God to worship the Holy Sepulchre and visit all the holy places of Palestine and, at the slightest opportunity of material means, go to Jerusalem. With all the desire to make savings from the earnings obtained by the labor of my hands, I could not make anything for twelve years. Meanwhile, the vow given before the Lord weighs me, a true Christian, down «[AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 16–16 vol.]. A resident of the capital, a widow, a noblewoman M. O. Predatinskaya in 1895 also submitted a petition to Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich: «In my old age, during my husband's lifetime and illness, I made a vow to go to Jerusalem... At the present time, in my old age, not being able to fulfill the promise for lack of sufficient funds not only for travel, but also for life, since my husband who died in the service did not earn a pension, I consulted with my confessor, who told me that not to fulfill the vow given to God is a great sin. I ask you to help me fulfill my vow and ... deliver me from a Great sin «[AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 287–287 vol.]. Three peasant women from the Orel province, widows, report that in October 1903 they «made a promise before the Lord to go to Palestine. land, to old Jerusalem to worship the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord and its holy places», but they do not have enough money, «And if we postpone it for another year, to save up, it is a long time and this violates the oath to God. And for the second time to go begging for money the neighboring villages, we are ashamed, besides, the second-time alms are not sufficient and this is a deviation from the time promised by us before God «[AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 696. P. 10].

In the motives of the pilgrimage, as a rule, gender differences are minimal. Usually it is the «will of God», the death of loved ones, illness or a vow made after recovery; the desire for spiritual renewal, «spiritual maturation», purification of the soul by faith and prayer, to find rest for your tormented «sinful soul», «heart desire and spiritual attraction». Many motives are intertwined and all of them are united in one deep desire to pray in the Holy Land, which will become a source of spiritual renewal. An analysis of the argumentation that explains the need for a trip to Jerusalem shows the similarity between Orthodox people of different class groups in this matter.

A common content of *the third part* of petitions drawn up by men is a list of the stages of their military or civil service, indicating awards, military path, and if they there were none, then various services to the state and society. Certificates or other documents confirming personal merits are often attached [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 25, 49, 162, 175; D. 696. P. 54]. If there were none, then, for example, it was pointed out that «during the Russian-Turkish war, I was a donor for Russian wounded and sick» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 203.]. Sometimes other rational arguments were given: I read the IOPS Charter and learned from paragraph 8 that the organization provides assistance; I read from newspapers information about the IOPS's assistance to pilgrims, etc. [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. l. 3, 230–230.; d. 696. P. 204]. One of the petitioners reported that on the basis of paragraph 8 of the

Charter, which provides for assistance to pilgrims, «he most obediently asks to report whether the society can provide an allowance for the travel of the mentioned pilgrims, tickets of the 1st and 2nd classes at a cheaper price... from Odessa to Constantinople and from Constantinople to Palestine» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 7].

Women's motivation is more irrational. The personal merits of the fairer sex could lie almost exclusively in the religious sphere. For example, a peasant woman of the Tobolsk province of the Yalutorovsky district, M.A. Maltseva, reported that «The Daughter of the Most High Creator was deprived of her left leg up to the knee from illness,» but despite this injury, she went to worship the Holy Saints in Kiev, which took her two years walking 10–15 versts a day. In confirmation, a certificate issued on June 16, 1884 by the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra from the Church of the Holy Apostles by the confessor Hieromonk was attached [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 65]. Now the Siberian woman expresses a desire to test herself and «visit the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ, the holy places and saints in Jerusalem» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Op. 1. D. 695. P. 60], believing that the Palestinian society should help this difficult pilgrimage.

A peasant woman, Anna Mitrokhina, a widow, reported: «I have been visiting monasteries for 17 years...» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 263]; a soldier, T.F. Karyavina, a widow: «I have been wandering around the holy monasteries for 35 years now...» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 192]. The widow of Staff Captain A.I. Semenov begins her petition with the following lines: «After the death of my husband, I visited many monasteries in Russia, prayed to the holy saints of God, and all this revived in my heart the desire to visit other significant Holy places, such as ... in Jerusalem» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 67, 194]. Sometimes these merits were justified by the authority of a well-known monk or priest: «with the blessing of the city of Moscow, St. Trinity-Sergius Lavra of Schemonach Barnabas, who lives in the Gethsemane skete and his council, who blessed me to turn to Your Highness and said that he would fulfill my request and help me get to Jerusalem with his blessing» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 483].

Here you can also see a certain logic of the petitioners, reflecting their spiritual world and religious beliefs: after visiting various holy places in Russia, I would like to complete my many years of wandering with a trip to the most important place for any Christian, where the Savior's earthly life took place. Without this, the previous pilgrimages will seem incomplete, unfinished. In the views of Russians, there was a spiritual connection between the «saints of God» of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, the Solovetsky Monastery, the monasteries of Moscow and Pskov, and the shrines of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. They connect the Russian Orthodox culture with the traditions of the homeland of the «divine teacher», with the Holy Land.

Rather an exception is the appeal of novices of the Novgorod Tithe Monastery Anna Nikitishna and Maria Kuzmina, who reported that their intention to visit Jerusalem arose «When we were still in the Turkish War of 1877–1878, in the service of the Society for the Care of Wounded and Sick Soldiers, as nurses at the mobile Novgorod hospital, in the rear of the active army» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 116]. A.Y. Burakova, a peasant woman from the Tomsk province, took credit for donating 20 rubles and 150 yards of canvas to the Red Cross community patronized by Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 696. P. 220].

The next, *fourth* part talks about the inability to accumulate savings, financial difficulties that do not allow you to make a trip at your own expense. The alleged pilgrims were mostly middle-aged women over the age of 50, who, as could be seen from the petitions, experienced a lot of grief, losses, the death of relatives and friends, various material hardships, illnesses, which did not allow them to save up enough material resources to implement their «cherished dream». Sometimes, in order to prove their poverty, depending on their class affiliation, they sent «certificates» from the volost foreman, the petty-bourgeois Administration, the Main Directorate of the Cossack Troops, etc. [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 100, 112, 470].

From the characteristic message of the middle-class woman of the Yaroslavl province A. I. Golubova: «I am 72 years old and in my old age I have no relatives who could help me...» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Op. 1. D. 695. L. 270]. Tambov widowed peasant women of the village of Nikolsky M. S. Pyleva, M. S. Ukolova and F. Salnikova write: «In the past 1888, we were all widows of old age and had no children... by the way, a considerable amount of money is required for each of us to travel there and back, and since we are in a poor state and are not able to make this journey at our own expense, there is also no outside help.» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. l. 99–99 vol. [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 128]; peasant woman Daria Gavrilenko, 57 years old: struck down by a serious illness «that does not allow me to earn my living by the work of my hands» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 128]; peasant woman of the Vologda province M. S. Vyatkina: «I do not have any money for the road», because «I am in a very poor state» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 131]; landless peasant widow of Tambov province E. S. Selezneva, 62 years old: after the death of her husband, she was left without any means of subsistence [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 159].

Men could not only complain about poverty, but also make a calculation of the funds necessary for the pilgrimage. So, in the petition of a retired non-commissioned officer from Vyatka province, it says: «Happy are those people whom the Lord has allowed to worship his Holy Sepulchre, and we have the good idea to go to the holy Land to worship... But from the Guide to the Holy Land, it can be seen that a visit to Jerusalem, with the purchase of candles, records of obedience, contributions to circles and baksheeshs, is not cheap for a pilgrim... In general, for a comfortable one, because to say about the visit to the Holy Land, including moving there and back, an amount of at least 200–300 rubles is necessary, but we, having meager funds, are not able to spend such an amount.» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 221–221].

Then *there was a request for help* «for a good cause». Underneath was a desire to get tickets for free transportation, pilgrimage books or cash benefits. Sometimes it was pointed out that there was money only for part of the journey, for example, to Odessa, or that I would walk to Odessa, but there was no money for a ticket to Jaffa [See, for example: AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 3, 112, 128–129, 105, 131, 454 vol.]. Some women for many years tried to collect «savings from the funds obtained by the labor of their hands» for the road to Jerusalem [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. L. 16], but, as stated in the petition of a peasant woman A. Goncharova, «to my great misfortune, I have saved only 40 rubles, but my years go by and with them the joy in me and the desire to worship the Holy Sepulchre ... The fear of dying without visiting the Holy Places forces me to turn to society with a tearful request: will you help me fulfill my long-standing desire? I can contribute my own 40 rubles, but if God brings me back, I will

have time to save up more and return some money to the society» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 476–477].

Many petitioners, as a rule, do not limit themselves to this. As an additional argument, they express *their intention to be useful* to the IOPS, the reigning house, and Russia as a whole. Such promises come mainly from women: «And upon arrival to the Holy Sepulchre, I will fervently pray for Your Royal Highness, on all our Russian Imperial city to pray I will» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 123]; «The cripple, upon reaching Jerusalem, is obliged to bring sympathy and prayers to the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy saints for longevity of Your Highness and of the entire Reigning House» (the woman of the Tobolsk province A. M. Maltsev) [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 65]; «I will always pray to God for the health and happiness of Your Imperial Highness and your Royal Spouse» (noble M. O. Kishinskaya, Saint Petersburg) [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 287–287]; «to pray at the Holy Sepulchre for the soul of Your August spouse Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 696. P. 123]; «pray to God at Holy City of Jerusalem for the health and prosperity of all the Orthodox Christians of the Russian Empire, the Emperor and the entire Imperial family, and all sinful souls» (peasant Ryazan province. Shapochkina S., bourgeois from Vologda province. E. Parmyonova, peasant Vologda province. G. Parmyonova) [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 251]; «to pray for all Orthodox people, Yes, God let me have a long life in good health and a peaceful cohabitation in this light» (peasant Saratov province. A. F. Fedorov), «I will pray to my benefactors for granting me with this great kindness» (bourgeois, F. Trubach, St. Petersburg) [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 410–410].

It was rare for women, and more often for men, to give promises that were, so to speak, practice-oriented, with a very real, earthly benefit. «I had an urgent desire to go to the Holy City of Jerusalem, to live there, that is, to spend the last days of this mortal life there and, especially, to work for the benefit of society... I ask the Office of the society to provide me with ... monetary assistance, which I guarantee to return to the society if possible!», wrote a peasant woman of the Tambov province, E. I. Katorgina [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 325]. E. Dmitriev, a teacher from Perm Province, pointed out that «For the allowance, I undertake to deliver to the society my travel impressions, as well as a geographical and sacred-historical description of the places that I will visit during the pilgrimage.» The author points out the «beneficial influence» of his journey on the education of the inhabitants, who «should cultivate and mature a pious thought and desire to perform the same feat» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 3]. A retired non-commissioned officer from the Orel province promised to collect donations for the IOPS in the Holy Land [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 407], a retired private from the Tambov Province A. Naberezhnye Chelny-to enter the service of the Jerusalem spiritual mission as a chorister [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 396], a peasant of the Perm province. Dranishnikov — to donate the «sheet music library» in 2 thousand units, including manuscripts from the second half of the XVII century [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 458], and the teacher from Warsaw I. V. Strakhov even assumed, no less than that — «upon return, to be able with God's help to restore the teaching of Jesus Christ... because the Christian doctrine has completely declined, as a result of which society is inclined to complete spiritual and moral decay» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 696. P. 81].

It should be noted that regardless of the addressee, in all cases petitions from different departments were forwarded to the office of the IOPS, where, as a rule, a standard response was always drawn up under the signature of the secretary. The senders were informed that «applications for free travel cannot be granted» or «the Orthodox Palestinian Society does not issue any monetary allowances to those who go to worship the Holy Sepulchre.» In addition, it was explained that the IOPS provides travel from Odessa to Jerusalem and back «for a reduced fee» according to special pilgrimage books «from the main cities of Russia»; assists Orthodox pilgrims visiting the holy places of the East which includes improving their life in the Holy Land through «provision of premises in Jerusalem and Nazareth at a reduced price, food, as well as assistance and patronage during their stay on the holy Land in cases of need» [See, for example: AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 109, 189, 404; D. 696. P. 11]. Full reimbursement of the pilgrims «expenses for whatever reason was not provided for by the Charter or other documents of the IOPS. However, when V.N. Khitrovo was the secretary of the IOPS, the latter was not always limited to standard replies. For example, in his reply to A. F. Fedorova, a middle-class woman named after G. Kamyshin, Saratov province, he added the instruction «To a Russian pilgrim going to worship in Jerusalem», and also explained that «in it you will find all the information you need and, by the way, the address of the Commissioner in Saratov, who sells a pilgrimage travel book to Jerusalem and back in the III class at 54 rubles 50 kopecks. If it is inconvenient for you to get a book in Saratov, due to its remoteness from the city of Kamyshin, then on the way to Odessa you will take a steamship ticket for traveling by sea to Jaffa and back and pay only 25 rubles. «[AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 1. F. 695. P. 415 vol.]. The initiator of the creation and the actual founder of IOPS. V.N. Khitrovo probably sincerely worried about potential pilgrims and tried to provide at least such minimal assistance.

Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that a deep desire combined with a strong belief in the power of the state, personified in the members of the imperial family, forced the Orthodox to seek their help, sincerely hoping that its provision would not be burdensome for the reigning family. Trust in the intercession of the highest authority, whose omnipotence was beyond any doubt, was one of the traditional features of the mentality of ordinary Russians, which, in our opinion, was quite clearly manifested in the petitions under consideration. These hopes were irrational, because they were not supported by any documents, were not based on laws. Direct financial support was never provided, but this did not reduce the flow of requests.

The craving for Jerusalem is also, to some extent, an irrational trait of the Orthodox Russian. It was based on often fantastic ideas. As the correspondents of the Tenishev ethnographic bureau wrote down from the words of Novgorod peasants, «Jerusalem is the middle, or navel of the earth. Beyond Jerusalem, people also live; but these people are often not like us» [Russkie krestyany, 2009: 405]; in Jerusalem, «people have horns on their heads and shine like the prophet Moses, and they dress in white linen robes» [Russkie Krestyany, 2009: 257]. In the texts written by women, we see a manifestation of the traditions of Russian folk culture, which was supposed to be guided by feelings in matters of faith, where true religiosity is drawn not from books, but from oral folk art and practice. However, the semi-fairy-tale images of the Holy Land are gradually becoming a thing of the past. Its geography and the road to Palestine become quite real: specific cities, modes of transport, prices, and routes are mentioned in

the texts of petitions. From a pipe dream, Jerusalem is turning into a completely achievable geographical object.

Petitions show a close connection between faith, hope for state support and the desire for spiritual revival, which was a characteristic feature of the religious consciousness of ordinary Russians at that time. It was correctly noted by a pilgrim to the Holy Land, priest A. Anisimov, «broken in soul from everyday adversity» wanted to «reach the place of my soul's hope, Jerusalem» and find «spiritual consolation for the human heart» [AVPRI. F. 337/2. Inv. 13. F. 357. P. 153; Glas..., 1883: 14], and the journey to the «Holy City» was seen as a necessary part of religious life, a sacrifice to the Lord in fulfillment of the promise given earlier.

The authors of petitions wanted to visit Palestine, but they couldn't do it because of their poverty. They learned from various sources: diocesan statements, stories from parish priests, fellow villagers, and random people about the existence of the IOPS, which helped those who wanted to visit the Holy Land, some Orthodox decided to try their luck. It is also obvious that there was a correlation between the beginning of the dissemination of information about the holy places of the East in Russia by the diocesan departments of the IOPS through the organization of public readings and the growth of those who wanted to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The activity of these departments and, as a result, «familiarizing Russians with the Holy Land and the activities of the Society» under the influence of public readings increased the flow of petitions.

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