

## “New Jerusalem” in Seventeenth-Century Russia

### The Image of a New Orthodox Holy Land

*La « Nouvelle Jérusalem » au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle en Russie : l'image d'une nouvelle Terre sainte orthodoxe.*

**Kevin M. Kain**

---



**Electronic version**

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/10099>

DOI: [10.4000/monderusse.10099](https://doi.org/10.4000/monderusse.10099)

ISSN: 1777-5388

**Publisher**

Éditions de l'EHESS

**Printed version**

Date of publication: 1 July 2017

Number of pages: 371-394

ISBN: 978-2-7132-2697-7

ISSN: 1252-6576

**Electronic reference**

Kevin M. Kain, ““New Jerusalem” in Seventeenth-Century Russia”, *Cahiers du monde russe* [Online], 58/3 | 2017, Online since 01 July 2019, connection on 06 January 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/10099> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/monderusse.10099>

---

KEVIN M. KAIN

## “NEW JERUSALEM” IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA

### The Image of a New Orthodox Holy Land<sup>1</sup>

Russia's image as new Holy Land acquired a solid Biblical orientation during the mid-seventeenth century. This was due in large part to Patriarch Nikon's development of the New Jerusalem concept via the creation of new sacred spaces in and around the Iverskii, Krestnyi and Voskresenskii Monasteries, which he founded in close cooperation with Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich's during the early 1650s. Voskresenskii Monastery, which the tsar deemed "New Jerusalem," featured replicas of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and other sites in Palestine, and stands as the most complex manifestation of the New Jerusalem idea ever. Yet the monastery became the source of "scandal" and charges leading to Nikon's condemnation by the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria in 1666. Despite the Greeks' judgement, Aleksei Mikhailovich's heirs soon resurrected and completed the project, and the Romanov dynasty continued to patronize it for centuries. What can these dramatic shifts in thinking about New Jerusalem Monastery tell us about Russia's self-image as a new Holy Land and its cultural-political relations with the Orthodox East under Ottoman control? I aim to answer this question by tracing and analyzing the creation and reception of Nikon's New Jerusalem Monastery from its inception through 1666. This approach builds upon and extends the recent explosion of scholarship on the New Jerusalem concept in general and Nikon's monastery in particular by identifying the "Byzantine" paradigms guiding the patriarch's visualization of Salvation history at Voskresenskii and by demonstrating the extent

---

1. I am indebted to David Goldfrank for his generous attention to this project and the larger study of Nikon's monasteries of which it is a part. I am likewise grateful to Paul Bushkovitch, Nikos Chrissidis, the anonymous reviewers and editor for their guidance in sharpening my work. Daniel Rowland, Nancy Kollman and Michael Flier offered constructive comments on the version of this essay that I presented at the ASEES meeting in 2015. I also thank Mikhail Levintov and Stefan Hall for their critical readings of the essay.

to which the construction of and responses to the replication of the Holy Land in Russia were shaped by Greek hierarchs in Moscow.

This essay considers just one aspect of the complex and influential figure of Patriarch Nikon (1652-1666), namely his conception of Voskresenskii Monastery and its role in his promoting a “new Orthodox Holy Land” in Russia under a “New Constantine” and “New Helen” and how this was totally misconstrued in contexts of the “Nikon Case” and the 1666 proceedings against him. It does not endeavor to address Nikon’s ideology as a whole, the nature of the patriarch’s relationship with the other clergy, the boyars, the tsar, or religious dissidents, or explain why he retreated to Voskresenskii in 1658. Rather it aims to contribute to the current literature by exploring and fleshing out the conception of New Jerusalem Monastery as “image” or “icon” of the historical New Jerusalem created by the first Christian emperor and his mother in the fourth century.

The attention to the conception of Muscovy as “New Israel”/“New Jerusalem” is one of the most crucial shifts in thinking about Muscovy emerging from new cultural studies of Russian Orthodoxy, including the “New Muscovite Cultural History” pioneered by Daniel Rowland<sup>2</sup> and “Hierotopia” conceived by Alexei Lidov.<sup>3</sup> The new approaches demonstrate that the “New Israel”/“New Jerusalem” ideas were inspired by images of Old and New Testament Palestine, and the heavenly city of *Revelation* and embedded in a diversity of verbal texts, visual imagery and rituals. This thinking, which intensified after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, identified Muscovy as a new Holy Land, the Russian people as a “chosen one” and the Russian tsar as heir to Biblical rulers. The concept is now recognized as a primary mode of Muscovite cultural consciousness and self-representation and as a link with the broader Christian culture. It is complemented by studies of Greek hierarchs’ and monastics’ roles in the creation and exercise of Muscovite scenarios

---

2. Daniel Rowland, “Moscow—The Third Rome or New Israel?,” *The Russian Review*, 55, 4 (1996): 591-614; idem, “Biblical Military Imagery in the Political Culture of Early Modern Russia: The Blessed Host of the Heavenly Tsar,” in Michael Flier and Daniel Rowland, eds., *Medieval Russian Culture*, 2, 182-212; Michael Flier, “Court Ceremony in an Age of Reform. Patriarch Nikon and the Palm Sunday Ritual,” in Samuel H. Baron and Nancy Shields Kollmann, eds., *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1997), 73-95, and Valerie Kivelson, et. al., “Introduction,” in Valerie Kivelson, et. al., eds., *The New Muscovite History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Daniel B. Rowland* (Bloomington: Slavica, 2009), 5-6. See also Isolde Thyret, “The Katapetasma of 1555 and the Image of the Orthodox Ruler in the Early Reign of Ivan IV,” in Kivelson, et. al., eds., *The New Muscovite History*, 43-62. The significance of the cultural approach was profoundly announced in Samuel H. Baron and Nancy Shields Kollmann, “Introduction,” in Baron and Kollmann, eds., *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russia and Ukraine*, 1-16. See also Isaiah Gruber, *Orthodox Russia in Crisis: Church and Nation in the Time of Troubles* (DeKalb, IL.: Northern Illinois University Press 2012), especially 23-50.

3. See especially, Алексей Лидов, ред., *Новые Иерусалимы. Иеротопия и иконография сакральных пространств* [Alexei Lidov, ed., *New Jerusalem. Hierotopia and the iconography of sacred spaces*] (M.: Indrik, 2006); idem, ред., *Иеротопия: исследование сакральных пространств* [Hierotopia: Research on Sacred Spaces] (M.: Radunitsa, 2004); Andrei Batalov and Alexei Lidov, eds., *Jerusalem in Russian Culture* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas Publisher, 2005).

of belief and power.<sup>4</sup> Many of these lines of investigation intersect within the study of Nikon's New Jerusalem Monastery.

Extending the rich tradition of describing the monastery, the recent scholarship explores the potential liturgical and "theoretical" thinking behind Nikon's representation of the Holy Land evident in the patriarch's "Replies" to the polemics of Boyar Streshnev and Paisius Ligarides (1665).<sup>5</sup> As a result of these new studies, the idea that

4. The study of Russian relations with other Eastern Orthodox peoples was pioneered by Николай Каптерев, *Сношения иерусалимских патриархов с русским правительством* [Nikolai Karterev, Relations between the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and the Russian Government] [*Православный палестинский сборник*, т. XV, вып. 1] (SPb.: Tipografia V. Kirschbauma, 1895); idem, *Характер отношений России к Православному Востоку в XVI и XVII столетиях* [The character of Russia's attitudes towards the Orthodox East in the XVI and XVII centuries] 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1914; reprint The Hague: Mouton, 1968). Noteworthy recent studies include Лев Лебедев, *Москва патриаршая* [Lev Lebedev, The Moscow Patriarchate] (M.: Veche, 1995), 192-284; Вера Ченцова, *Икона Иверской Богоматери (Очерки истории отношений греческой церкви с Россией в середине XVII в. По документам РГАДА* [Vera Tchentsova, The icon of the Iveron Mother of God. Historical sketches of the relations between the Greek Church and the Russians in the middle of the XVII century according to the documents in RGADA] (M.: Indrik, 2010), 9-15, 54-86, 116-176, 190-263 and 281-293; idem, "Héritage de Constantinople ou héritage de Trébizonde? Quelques cas de translation d'objets sacrés à Moscou au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in Olivier Delouis, Anne Couderc and Petre Guran, eds, *Héritages de Byzance en Europe du Sud-Est à l'époque moderne et contemporaine* (Athens: École française d'Athènes, 2013), 79-97 (*Mondes méditerranéens et balkanique*, 4); Борис Фонкич, *Чудотворные реликвии христианского Востока в Москве в середине XVII в.: Икона Иверской Богоматери* [Boris Fonkich, Miraculous sketches of the relations between the Christian East in Moscow in the middle of the XVII century: The icon of the Iveron Mother of God] (M.: Indrik, 2004), idem, *Греческие рукописи и документы в России в XIV-начале XVIII в.* [Greek manuscripts and documents in Russia in the XIV-early XVIII Centuries] (M.: Indrik, 2003), idem, *Греческо-русские культурные связи в XV-XVII вв. Греческие рукописи в России* [Greek-Russian cultural contacts in the XV-XVII centuries. Greek manuscripts in Russia] (M.: Nauka, 1977); Наталия Чеснокова, *Христианский Восток и Россия: Политическое культурное взаимодействие в середине XVII века* [Natalia Chesnokova, The Christian East and Russia: mutual political cultural connections in the middle of the XVII Century] (M.: Indrik, 2011); Алексей Лидов, ред., *Христианские реликвии в Московском Кремле* [Alexei Lidov, ed., Christian relics in the Moscow Kremlin] (M.: Radunitsa, 2000); Irina Sterligova, "Jerusalem as Liturgical Vessel in Rus," in Batalov and Lidov, *Jerusalem in Russian Culture*, 61-63.

5. The most important description is Архимандрит Леонид (Кавелин) *Историческое описание ставропигиального Воскресенского, Новый Иерусалим именуемого, монастыря* [Arkhimandrit Leonid (Kavelin), Historical description of Resurrection, New Jerusalem Monastery] (M., 1876). The recent scholarship includes Lev Lebedev, "New Jerusalem in the Life of His Holiness Patriarch Nikon," in *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 8/9 (1981), 68-77, idem, "Богословие Русской земли как образ обетованной земли (на некоторых примерах архитектурно-строительных композиций XII-XVII веков) [Theology of Russia as an image of the promised land (based on several examples of architectural-buildings compositions in the XI-XVII centuries)]" in *Тысячелетие крещения Руси: международная церковно-историческая конференция, Киев 21-28 июля 1986 г. Материалы* [Millennium of the baptism of Rus'; International church-historical conference. Kiev 21-28 July 1986. Materials] 2 vols., ed. Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Halych, (M.: izd. Patriarshii, 1988-89), 153-172, and idem, *Москва Патриаршая*, 287-332; Галина Зеленская, *Святини Нового Иерусалима* [Galina Zelenskaia, Holy New Jerusalem] (M.: Severnyi palomnik, 2003); eadem, "Новый Иерусалим под Москвой. Аспекты замысла и новые открытия [New Jerusalem in the Moscow Region. Aspects of Conception and New Discoveries]" in Лидов, ред., *Новые Иерусалимы*, 745-773; and eadem, *Патриарх Nikon зодчий святой Руси* [Patriarch Nikon as architect of Holy Russia] (M.: Palomnik, 2011); Anastasia Keshman, "An Emblem of Sacred Space: The Representation of Jerusalem in the Form of the Holy Sepulcher" in Лидов ред., *Новые Иерусалимы*, 257-270. See also Уильям В. Шмидт, *Патриарх Nikon. Труды*

Nikon conceived the monastery as an “image” or “icon” of the historical Jerusalem and/or the heavenly New Jerusalem is widely accepted.<sup>6</sup> Lev Lebedev’s seminal analysis connects Nikon’s “Replies” with fresh interpretations of the Eucharist introduced in the *Skrizhal’* (1656) and parallel representations of New Jerusalem in *Revelation*.<sup>7</sup> Lidov’s influential work considers the monastery a “spatial icon” and locates it within the larger Christian tradition of replicating the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the new investigations posit disconnects between Nikon’s intended representation of the monastery as a New Jerusalem and its reception by other Orthodox of his day.<sup>9</sup> According to one scholar, Nikon’s replicas of sites in the Holy Land “shocked many members of contemporary society who regarded this as something sacrilegious.”<sup>10</sup> Another scholar recently claimed that the entire “idea of Russia as New Israel” was “discredited by criticisms of Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery that were made in the contexts of apocalyptic rumors about Nikon as the Antichrist and about the imminent appearance of the Antichrist in 1666.”<sup>11</sup> In what follows, I reconsider Nikon’s image of the Holy Land and its reception by his contemporaries by situating Voskresenskii Monastery in the contexts of patriarch’s

[Vil’iam V. Shmidt, Patriarch Nikon. Works] (M.: Izdatel’stvo Moskovskogo univ., 2004), especially 621-627; B.B. Лепяхин, “Иконное зодчество патриарха Никона [V.V. Lepakhin, Iconographic architecture of Patriarch Nikon]” in A. Авдеев, ред., *Никоновский сборник* [A.G. Avdeev, ed., Nikonian Collection] (M.: Izd-vo PSTGU, 2006), 17-54; Irina Buseva-Davydova, “On the Conception of Patriarch Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery,” in Batalov and Lidov, eds., *Jerusalem in Russian Culture*, 207-220; William Palmer, *The Patriarch and the Tsar*, 6 vols. (London: Trubner 1871-76), 1, 1-615 (hereafter Nikon, *Replies*).

6. See, for example, Rowland, “Moscow—The Third Rome or New Israel?,” 609-612; Лебедев, *Москва Патриаршая*, 140-144; Алексей Лидов, “Новые Иерусалимы. Перенесение Святых земель как порождающая матрица христианской культуры [New Jerusalem. Transferring the Holy Lands as the generative matrix of Christian culture]” in Лидов, ред., *Новые Иерусалимы*, 9; Зеленская, *Святые Нового Иерусалима*, 23-25, 34; Шмидт, Патриарх Никон. Труды, 622-626; Лепяхин, “Иконное зодчество патриарха Никона,” *passim* and Keshman, “An Emblem of Sacred Space,” 257-258.

7. Лебедев, *Москва Патриаршая*, especially 63-88, 136-155, 287-332. Lebedev is followed by Lepakhin, “Ikonichnoe zochestvo patriarkha Nikona,” 18-21; Шмидт, *Патриарх Никон. Труды*, 625-626; 120-121; Наталья Воробьева, *Личность и воззрения патриарха Никона в отечественной историографии* [Nataliia Vorob’eva, The personality and views of Patriarch Nikon in the historiography of the fatherland] (Omsk: Izdatel’stvo АНО VPO, 2007), 305-306.

8. Лидов, “Новые Иерусалимы. Перенесение Святых земель как порождающая матрица христианской культуры,” 8-10; idem, “Introduction,” in Batalov and Lidov, eds., *Jerusalem in Russian Culture*, 1. See also Зеленская, “Новый Иерусалим под Москвой,” 745; Keshman, “An Emblem of Sacred Space,” 257.

9. Лебедев, *Москва Патриаршая*, 145.

10. Buseva-Davydova, “On the Conception of Patriarch Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery,” 213; Rowland, “Moscow—The Third Rome or New Israel?,” 612; and Flier, “Court Ceremony in an Age of Reform,” 88, also consider Ligarides’s polemics against the monastery, albeit not in the same vein.

11. Maureen Perrie, “Moscow in 1666: New Jerusalem, Third Rome, Third Apostasy,” in *Quaestio Rossica*, no. 3 (2014): 75-85, here 83. See also Buseva-Davydova, “On the Conception of Patriarch Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery,” 210-211; and Ольга Чумичева, *Соловецкое восстание 1667-1676 гг.* [Olga Chumicheva, Solovetskii rebellion of 1667-1676] (M.: OGI, 2009), 56-57.

monastery-building program, the concurrent reform of Russian church texts and rituals, the "Nikon Case" and the so-called "apocalyptic mood" of the mid-1660s.<sup>12</sup>

My previous investigations of Nikon's Iverskii and Krestnyi Monasteries showed that they were parts of a larger program designed to (re)establish Russia's claimed inheritance of the Byzantine legacy and fulfill its potential as New Jerusalem, while simultaneously enhancing the patriarch's and the tsar's images as well as legitimacy in the Muscovite state and the world beyond.<sup>13</sup> Drawing upon and extending the traditions formulated by his predecessors, especially the ideologues of Ivan IV's reign,<sup>14</sup> Nikon refocused the contemporary "international" political-religious discourse which recognized Aleksei Mikhailovich as the "New Constantine" in the hope that he would "liberate" and/or unify the Orthodox East,<sup>15</sup> by turning the tsar's attention inwards toward the creation of new holy spaces at Iverskii and Krestnyi. By connecting Aleksei's image as "New Constantine" with the founding and rich endowment of new Russian monasteries modeled after cloisters allegedly established by the first Christian emperor on Mount Athos, Nikon introduced a powerful new component to the Muscovite dynastic mythology.

This study demonstrates that the scenarios surrounding the establishment of Iverskii and Krestnyi overlapped and set the stage for the creation of Voskresenskii Monastery. I locate the immediate origins of Nikon's New Jerusalem program in the discourse of Paisius of Jerusalem (1645-1660) and Arsenii Sukhanov's "Proskinitarii,"<sup>16</sup> both of which supplied *podobnye* [similar] images of Holy Land and upheld Constantine and his mother Helen as models of churchwardenship. Viewed from these positions the creation of New Jerusalem at Voskresenskii appears not only as the replication of prototypes in the Holy Land, but also as the Romanovs'

12. В.Н. Перетц, *Слухи и толки о патриархе Никоне в литературной обработке писателей XVII-XVIII вв.* [V.N. Peretts, Rumors and tales about Patriarch Nikon in literary interpretations of writers in the XVII-XVIII centuries] (SPb.: Akademiia Nauk, 1900), 124-130, was the first to locate the association of Nikon's New Jerusalem Monastery with the Antichrist in the context of what he called the eschatological or apocalyptic "mood" of the mid-seventeenth century Muscovy.

13. Kevin M. Kain, "Before New Jerusalem: Patriarch Nikon's Iverskii and Krestnyi Monasteries," *Russian History*, 39 (2012): 112-170.

14. See, for example, Наталия Чеснокова, "Идея византийского наследия в России середины XVII века [Nataliia Chesnokova, The idea of the Byzantine heritage in Russia in the mid-17th century]" in *Христианский Восток и Россия*, especially 159-162, 167, 169-171, 178-180, and Thyret, "The Katapetasma of 1555," 62, who concluded that "the myth of the pious tsar and his spiritual kinship with Constantine the Great, which informed the iconography of the *katapetasma* of 1555, however continued to influence Muscovite political thinking in the later sixteenth century and found its most elaborate expression in the following century during the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich."

15. For examples of earlier Greek patriarchs' associations of Russian rulers with Constantine, see Каптерев, *Сношение иерусалимских патриархов с русским правительством*, 8-9, 18, 58-59, 89-90, and Сергей М. Каштанов, *Россия и греческий мир в XVI веке* [Sergei M. Kashtanov, ed., Russia and the Greek world in the 16th c.] (M.: Nauka, 2004), 1, 177, 182, 237, 274, 341, 353.

16. Sukhanov's work is published as *Проскinitарии Арсения Сухахова*, [Arsenii Sukhanov's *proskinitarii*] ed. Nikolai I. Ivanovskii, (SPb.: Tipographiia V. Kirshbauma, 1889) (Hereafter Арсений, "Проскinitарий").

reenactment of the original construction of the historical New Jerusalem, during Constantine's reign.<sup>17</sup> This new perspective sheds light on the sacralization of the monarchy in the mid-seventeenth century and reveals for the first time the central place of royal women in the conception, development, and ultimate realization of the New Jerusalem idea at the monastery.<sup>18</sup>

Nikon's writing and actions concerning the development and defense of the New Jerusalem Monastery show that he consistently turned to the authority of the Decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea 787), which restored icons after first phase of the iconoclast controversy (726-787), and of its reconfirmation by the Council of Constantinople (843) and their annual commemoration through the *Synodicon* during the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Lent.<sup>19</sup> This feast is a celebration of "the victory of the icon and of the ultimate triumph of the dogma of divine incarnation."<sup>20</sup> The holiday's message is summed up in the *kontakion* [hymn] proclaiming "we confirm and profess our salvation in words and images."<sup>21</sup> Thus, the feast's purpose shares striking parallels with the emphasis in the *Skrizhal'* on the visualization of Salvation history. The *Synodicon* pronounces eternal remembrance for confessors of Orthodoxy and anathemas against heretical iconoclasts. Its commemorations hail

those who believe and substantiate their words with writings and their deeds with representations [as well as those] knowing and teaching that in like manner also by the venerable icons the eyes of them that behold them are sanctified, and that the mind is by them lifted up to the knowledge of God; as also by the divine

---

17. Andrei Batalov and Alexei Lidov, "The Holy Sepulcher in Boris Gudunov's Jerusalem Project," in Batalov and Lidov, eds., *Jerusalem and Russian Culture*, 184-185, explained that Gudunov's plan to create a copy of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Moscow Kremlin most likely followed Constantine's example.

18. Rowland, "Moscow—The Third Rome or New Israel?," 592-593, argued that the Russia's self-image as New Israel "generated internal support for the regime."

19. *The Seventh General Council. The Second of Nicaea held A.D. 787 in which the Worship of Images was Established*, John Mendham trans. (London: William Edward Painter, 1850). On the iconoclast controversy, the Council of 787 and the restoration of Orthodoxy in 843 through the *Synodicon of Orthodoxy*, see Leonid Uspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, trans. Anthony Gythiel and Elizabeth Meyendorff, 2 vols. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1992), 1, 119-150; Joan M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 30-43, 46-50 and 62-65. Евгений В. Петухов, *Очерк из литературной истории Синодика* [Evgenii V. Petukhov, Sketches from the literary history of the Synodicon], (SPb.: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1895), 61, explained that the *Synodicon* appeared in manuscript translation in Muscovy in the early fifteenth century and that the Slavonic text was first printed in Moscow in 1589, but not again until Nikon's tenure in 1656 in *Триодъ Постная* (M, 1656). Both texts are published by Petukhov, 10-32 and 76-77 respectively. See also Jean Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire," *Travaux et mémoires*, 2, 1967, 1-316; and В.В. Дергачев, "Вселенский синодик в древней и средневековой России [V.V. Dergachev, The universal Synodicon in ancient and medieval Russia]," *Древняя Русь* [Ancient Rus] no 3 (2001): 17-29. Modern scholars recognized the *kontakion* and *Synodicon* as premier sources for understanding the meaning and content of icons. See especially Uspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, 1: 151-167.

20. Uspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, 1: 151.

21. Quoted in *Ibid.*

temples and by sacred vessels and by other things... in representations while it is to Him, God and the Lord, that they give adoration and worship.<sup>22</sup>

In short, the *Synodicon* not only equated representations in church architecture with painted icons, but also recognized those who created churches in the image of prototypes, i.e., Church of the Holy Sepulcher, as worthy of "everlasting remembrance." Therefore, the text appears as a source of authority that can explain and justify Nikon's notion of New Jerusalem Monastery as icon of the Holy Land and his promotion of the Romanovs' "sacred" deed of creating an image of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in imitation of the Byzantine ruler saints. Attention to Nikon's repeated employment of the *Synodicon* likewise provides new understanding of New Jerusalem Monastery's reception in the 1660s. I contend that both the patriarch's supporters and detractors in the Orthodox hierarchy understood his adoption of the Byzantine teachings and employed them to advance their own positions on the monastery. Furthermore, I hypothesize that *Synodicon*-based thinking led to the monastery's being associated with the coming of the Antichrist.

### Prototypes and paradigms: Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem

The ideas and motivations ultimately manifest in the founding of Voskresenskii Monastery may be traced to Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem's visit to Moscow, January 27 - July 10, 1649. During his efforts to collect "alms for Christ's Tomb," the patriarch cultivated the Romanovs' interest in the Holy Land with notions of their inheritance of the Byzantine legacy and their related obligations as "church wardens" to patronize and protect the Holy Land.<sup>23</sup> To these ends, Paisius repeatedly tied the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and other sites for which he sought the ruling family's support, with their original creation by Constantine and Helen and recognized the tsar and his wife, Mariia Il'inichna, as "New Constantine" and "New Helen."<sup>24</sup> The patriarch summarized his thinking on March 2, concatenating Aleksei with the Byzantine ruler in terms of the commemoration of the Salvation history:

let your great charity for these holy places continue for here is our salvation and here the prophets professed the incarnation of Christ our Lord who was born in Bethlehem and baptized in the River Jordan and ascended to heaven on the Mount of Olives...and [was] resurrected and it will be here that the second coming will happen.... Remember great Tsar Constantine and his mother Helen

---

22. *Synodicon*, in Петухов, *Очерк из литературной истории Синодика*, 19-20. See also Дергачев, "Вселенский синодик в древней и средневековой России," 18.

23. Каптерев, *Сношения иерусалимских патриархов с русским правительством*, 116-186. While Patriarch Paisius elaborated on this thinking it was not new. Jerusalem patriarchs employed the practice selectively since the mid-sixteenth century. See, for example, *ibid.*, 9, 18 and 57 and Каштанов, *Россия и греческий мир в XVI веке*, 1, 177.

24. Каптерев, *Сношения иерусалимских патриархов с русским правительством*, 137-138, 143, 149, 150-151.



who created the Holy Sepulcher and Holy Bethlehem and all the monasteries and now, during your great tsarsdom, do liberate the Holy Sepulcher and the Church of Christ as you will be remembered as a new Constantine.<sup>25</sup>

Paisius paid special attention to Mariia, comparing her generosity to St. Helen's original patronage of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.<sup>26</sup> In one telling writ the patriarch declared:

Thanks to your great charity there appeared a new churchwardeness for the Church of the Life-Giving Sepulcher... show the signs of great piety similar to the God-espousing Tsarina St. Helen... When you gifted the great Jerusalem Church with your whole heart and soul for which you will be rewarded with heavenly due and the earthy fruits of your womb [son Dmitrii Alekseevich] will ascend the throne of the great God-espousing Tsar Constantine to the rejoicing of your heart as St. Helen rejoiced.<sup>27</sup>

Through such calculated paeans, the Jerusalem Patriarch linked Mariia's patronage of the Holy Sepulcher in imitation of Helen with the Romanovs' dynastic succession to the first Christian emperor and the Byzantine legacy.

While in Moscow, Paisius also recognized Nikon, then archimandrite of Novospasskii Monastery, as an ally in securing the Romanovs' patronage and promoted his attachment to the Holy Land and his meteoric rise through the hierarchy towards the patriarchal chair. Although just archimandrite, Nikon had proven successful in helping Mount Athos monks gain concessions from Aleksei Mikhailovich and in encouraging the tsar's and tsarina's tight association with Iveron Monastery (allegedly founded by Constantine) via the transfer of an exact copy of the miracle working icon, the Iveron Hodigitria.<sup>28</sup> It seems that Paisius hoped to obtain the same results in regards to the Holy Land when he gave Nikon "a model of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher"<sup>29</sup> recommended the archimandrite become Metropolitan of Novgorod and, with the tsar's blessing, consecrated him

---

25. *Ibid.*, 143.

26. *Ibid.*, 143-144 and 150-151. The family, led by Mariia, gave the patriarch a rich collection church plates and icons for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher; see *ibid.*, 143, 154.

27. *Ibid.*, 150-151. Tsarevich Dmitri Alekseevich lived less than a year (October 22, 1648 - October 6, 1649).

28. Kain, "Before New Jerusalem," 122-128. Ченцова, *Икона Иверской Богоматери*, 171-175, shows that the documents sent to Nikon and Aleksei Mikhailovich with the icon were a part of a larger Greek program to gain the tsar's support against the Turks and promote the creation of a unified Orthodox empire.

29. Nikon, *Replies*, 81. On the model see, Галина М. Зеленская, "Модель храма Гроба Господня в Иерусалиме [Galina M. Zelenskaia, Model of the church of Christ's grave in Jerusalem]," in Е.М. Юхименко, ред., *Патриарх Никон. Облачения, личные вещи, автографы, вклады, портреты* [Е.М. Iukhimenko, ed., Patriarch Nikon. Vestments, Personal Things, Autographs, Treasures, Portraits] (M.: GIM, 2002), 32-34.

on March 11, 1649.<sup>30</sup> As patriarch, Nikon followed Paisius’ method and successfully propagated the Romanovs’ interests in the Church of the Holy Sepulture, but redirected it towards the replication of that prototype at Voskresenskii Monastery. In the meanwhile, Paisius told the Russians that their church practices did not agree with the ones in Jerusalem and the tsar sent Arsenii Sukhanov there to “describe the holy places and Greek church *chiny* [ritual practices].”<sup>31</sup> The result was Sukhanov’s “Proskinitarii” (1653).

“Proskinitarii” is recognized as a premier source of inspiration for Nikon’s and Aleksei Mikhailovich’s conception of the Holy Land and their efforts to replicate it and the Orthodox rituals followed there.<sup>32</sup> However, in addition to describing the holy places as they existed in the seventeenth century, Sukhanov continually recounted the construction of the historical New Jerusalem in Constantine’s reign. This was especially the case in regards to the “Church of Christ’s Resurrection... the creation of pious and Christ-loving great Tsar Constantine, the first Christian tsar and his mother pious empress Helen.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, the author’s account reinforced Patriarch Paisius’ emphasis on the female role in the original New Jerusalem project.

Sukhanov framed the founding of the Church in terms of Helen’s legendary discovery of the True Cross:

Helen came to Jerusalem and knelt by the tomb of Christ and found there the Life-Giving Cross of Christ beneath Mt. Golgotha... and she decided to found on this place a church... And the tomb of Christ as well as Golgotha where the life giving Cross stood were included within the church... And the empress Helen also decided to create the Church of Christ according to the model of the tomb of King David’s son, Absalom, and this grave still exists outside the city of Jerusalem near Mt. Eleon.<sup>34</sup>

Linking the empress’s and her son’s deeds with the inception of New Jerusalem, Sukhanov concluded that

---

30. Каптерев, *Сношения иерусалимских патриархов с русским правительством*, 140, and Павел Строев, ред., *Выходы государей царей и великих князей Михаила Федоровича, Алексея Михайловича, Федора Алексеевича, Всероссийских сочинцев (с1632 до 1682)* [Pavel Stroev, ed., *Appearances of Lord Tsars and Great Princes Mikhail Fedorovich, Aleksei Mikhailovich, Fedor Alekseevich, great sovereigns of all Russia (from 1632 to 1682)*] (M.: Tip. A. Semena, 1844), 201.

31. The quote is Arsenii’s. See Арсений, “Проскinitарий,” 301.

32. Зеленская, *Святѣни Нового Иерусалима*, 15-18, 24-25; Нина А. Кочеляева, “Проскinitарий Арсения Суханова в контексте строительной деятельности патриарха Никона [Nina A. Kocheliaeva, Arsenii Sukhanov’s Proskinitarii in the Context of Patriarch Nikon’s Building Activities],” in Галина М. Зеленская, ред., *Никоновские чтения в музее «Новый Иерусалим». Сборник статей*, вып. 2 [Galina M. Zelenskaia, ed., *Nikonian readings in the museum “New Jerusalem.” A collection of essays*], (M.: Leto, 2005), 55-88. On the reforms of rituals see Flier, “Court Ceremony in the Age of Reform,” and Vassa Larin, *The Byzantine Hierarchal Divine Liturgy in Arsenij Suxanov’s Prokinitarij. Text, Translation and Analysis of the Entrance Rites* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2010).

33. Арсений, “Проскinitарий,” 141.

34. *Ibid.*, 127.

on Golgotha... pious empress Helen, according to the advice of her son, the first Christian Emperor Constantine... erected a glorious church of outstanding beauty, in other words, new Zion and this church stands up to our day and holy tradition calls the church the mother of all churches, the house of the Lord.<sup>35</sup>

With these specifications Sukhanov established the centrality of the prototype-image relationship in Helen's construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the inception of the historical New Jerusalem. No less importantly, he identified the Church as a prototype in its own right, central to the commemoration of Salvation history.

While favorably impressed by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Sukhanov was appalled by the condition of other sites created by Constantine and Helen. When visiting the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, founded by the empress, he was asked to petition Aleksei Mikhailovich for a donation for repairs. Sukhanov responded: "When the tsar learns that you have turned the church into a horse stall, I trust he will not pay for it."<sup>36</sup> Patriarch Paisius learned of Sukhanov's critiques and the negative impact they could have on the Romanovs' future generosity in imitation of Helen and attempted to short circuit them with renewed appeals to Mariia Il'inichna's churchwardenship. Before Sukhanov's departure from Jerusalem, the patriarch wrote directly to Mariia denouncing the Russian emissary's report as "lies" and the author as a "new Judas." Banking on the gifts the tsarina made during his visit in 1649, Paisius declared: "You became a second holy new Helen, who beautifies the most holy altar of the mother churches."<sup>37</sup> The urgency of Paisius' response and his continued efforts to bolster Mariia Il'inichna's image as "New Helen" expose the tsarina's central place in the New Jerusalem scenario and her substantial influence as a church patroness in her own right. As illustrated below, Nikon built upon this image, and, perhaps, the doubts cast by Sukhanov's report, eventually steering them toward the founding and adornment of the Russian New Jerusalem Monastery.

### The *Skrizhal'*: Liturgical prototypes

Nikon's introduction of the *Skrizhal'* in 1656 was essential to developing conceptions of New Jerusalem in mid-seventeenth century Russia.<sup>38</sup> The *Skrizhal'* was an encyclopedia of Orthodoxy which defined the functions and meaning of church rites and rituals, liturgical utensils and vestments, and church architecture. It was based

---

35. Ibid., 125. Nikon later paraphrased and included this passage his Golgotha imagery in the form a prayer attributed to Helen. See below.

36. Арсений, "Просквинитарий," 57. See also Larin, *The Byzantine Hierarchal Divine Liturgy*, 67.

37. Каптерев, *Сношения иерусалимских патриархов с русским правительством*, 173-174.

38. *Скрижаль* (М.: Pechatnyi Dvor, 1656).

in large part on a compendium of liturgical exegesis by Nicholas Kabasilas, Symeon of Thessalonica and Germanus of Constantinople which Greek hieromonk John Nathaniel published in 1574.<sup>39</sup> Nikon received that book from Paisius, Patriarch of Constantinople in 1653, and had Arsenii the Greek translate into Slavonic in 1655.<sup>40</sup> The Russian Patriarch added a number of new commentaries to Nathaniel's work, the most well-known of which explained and mandated the implementation of the *troe-perstie* [three-finger] blessing later rejected by dissenting Old Believers.<sup>41</sup> Michael Flier clarified that the inclusion of Kabasilas's interpretation in Nikon's *Skrizhal'* "underscored the sacramental character of the liturgy over the strictly symbolic" and presented the ritual as "a symbolic representation of the history of the Incarnation."<sup>42</sup> This way of thinking, which defined the character of the Russian liturgy in the late seventeenth century, was specified through Germanus's teaching which revealed church altars as a commemorative microcosm of the Holy Land where the Salvation history took place and identified the *prestol* (*trapeza*) [Communion table] as representing Bethlehem and the *zhertvennik* (*predlozhenie*) [Prothesis table] as Jerusalem, Golgotha and "Christ's tomb."<sup>43</sup> Nikon stressed the teachings on the visualization of the sacred mysteries in the "Introduction to the Reader" which he published in the *Skrizhal'* and it became a central theme of his writing and iconography.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the patriarch later inscribed the idea into the rotunda of New Jerusalem's Church of the Resurrection in a text titled "Tale about Church Mysteries."<sup>45</sup>

The *Skrizhal'* made an immediate impact when Nikon employed it, together with Sukhanov's "Proskinitarii," in the reform of the Moscow Palm Sunday Ritual in 1656. Flier determined that the revised ritual appeared as an icon and, in a sense, replicated the Eucharistic rite.<sup>46</sup> Inspired by the *Skrizhal'*, the reform lessened "the theophonic character of the ritual" and its previous eschatological dimension "but in compensation, each beholder is all the more directly inspired by the sacramental spectacle of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, a greater likeness, prefiguring his own sacrifice and resurrection and the redemptive promise of the New Jerusalem."<sup>47</sup> Flier's conclusion that in the revised ceremony "text complements image"<sup>48</sup> reveals

---

39. Paul Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual & Reformation* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991), 61; Flier, "Court Ceremony in the Age of Reform," 81-83.

40. A Russian church council sanctioned the publication of the *Скрижаль* in Spring 1656; see *Ibid.*

41. *Скрижаль*, 739-742, included commentary on and pictorial images of the self-blessing and clerical blessing and explained that both rituals visualized the word.

42. Flier, "Court Ceremony in the Age of Reform," 82, 91, n. 4.

43. See especially *Скрижаль*, 329-333, 233-236, and 310-317, respectively; see also Лебедев, *Москва Патриаршая*, 140, 312-314.

44. *Скрижаль*, 3-5.

45. Published in Зеленская, *Святини Нового Иерусалима*, 109-112.

46. Flier, "Court Ceremony in the Age of Reform," 80-83, 89-90.

47. *Ibid.*, 90.

48. *Ibid.*, 90.

salient parallels with the ideals celebrated by the *Synodicon*: “We confirm and profess our salvation in words and images.” Given the publication of the *Synodicon* in the new Moscow *Triod Postnaia* of 1656, the two appear to be directly related.<sup>49</sup> Nikon unquestionably associated the ceremony’s visual imagery with the authority of the *Synodicon* on Orthodox Sunday 1662, when, as seen below, he employed the latter in defense of the ritual’s iconography.

### Founding New Jerusalem Monastery

On June 3, 1656, ten days before Aleksei Mikhailovich granted him permission to build Krestnyi Monastery, the patriarch purchased the site of Voskresenskii Monastery. A clue to the location’s future is found in the deed signed by Boyar Roman Boborykin which explained that the land contained “the village of Voskresenskoe (Voskresenskii) formerly the village of Savatovo.”<sup>50</sup> While it is unknown who renamed the village, Aleksei Mikhailovich set a clear precedent when, during the founding of Iverskii Monastery, he renamed Lake Valdai “Holy Lake” and the village of Valdai “*Bogorodetsk*” [City of Mother of God], copying Emperor Constantine’s legendary example of renaming Mount Athos “Holy Mount” and the City of Apollos “Ieres” [Sanctified].<sup>51</sup> Progress on the new foundation moved quickly with Nikon visiting frequently, joined sometimes by the tsar’s household, and Aleksei Mikhailovich granting new territories.<sup>52</sup> When the wooden Church of the Resurrection was completed in October 1657, the tsar, clearly imitating Constantine’s naming of the Jerusalem prototype, as well as his own precedents at Iverskii, deemed it “New Jerusalem.”<sup>53</sup> Nikon explained,

---

49. *Synodicon*, in Петухов, *Очерк из литературной истории Синодика*, 13, 19-20, 77, and Дергачев, “Вселенский синодик в древней и средневековой России,” 28-29.

50. The deed is translated in Kevin Kain and Katia Levintova, tr. and ed., *From Peasant to Patriarch. Account of the Birth, Upbringing, and Life of His Holiness Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia* (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), 130.

51. Никон, *Рай мысленный* [Nikon, Mental Paradise] (Iverskii Monastery, 1658), 29-33; Kain, “Before New Jerusalem,” 186, 196.

52. Леонид, *Историческое описание*, 512; Светлана К. Севастьянова, *Материалы к Летописи жизни и литературной деятельности патриарха Никона* [Svetlana K. Sevast’ianova, Materials for “The Chronicles of Patriarch Nikon’s life and literary activities”] (SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), 152-154.

53. The account in *Velikie minei chetii* explained that Constantine “ordered that a church be built over the Life-Giving Sepulcher, and on Holy Mount Golgotha, and over the manger at Bethlehem... Constantine the Great oversaw the completion of the New Jerusalem, for that was the name of what he erected and adorned,” *Великие минеи четьи, собранные всероссийским митрополитом Макарием. Сентябрь, Дни 1-13* [The great menology, compiled by all Russian Metropolitan Makarii. September 1-13] (M.: Tip. Imp. Akademii nauk, 1668), col. 505-706, 707. On the importance of this source in the development of the New Jerusalem idea, see Rowland, “Moscow—The Third Rome or New Israel?,” 602-603. See also, А.Г. Авдеев, “Кто и когда назвал Воскресенский монастырь Новым Иерусалимом” [A.G. Avdeev, Who named Resurrection monastery New Jerusalem and when] in. А.Г. Авдеев, *Никоновский сборник* [A.G. Avdeev, ed., Nikonian Collection] (M.: Pravoslavnyi

at the consecration ... of the first church of Christ's Resurrection ... Tsar and Grand Prince Aleksei Mikhailovich . . . was ... present with all his syneclete and it pleased him ... to call it by the name New Jerusalem, and in his imperial letters so to write and style it with his own hand for more confirmation.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, Aleksei Mikhailovich affirmed the attribution connecting the church with the Palestinian original and himself with Constantine in a letter to Nikon on October 20.<sup>55</sup> Six months later, on April 27, 1658, construction began on the masonry Church of the Resurrection "in the image" of Constantine's and Helen's original creation.<sup>56</sup> In the meanwhile, Nikon formulated a new iconography for the monastery which synthesized the images of churchwardenship Paisius of Jerusalem introduced to gain the Romanovs' patronage and the stories about the creation of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher related in Sukhanov's "Proskinitarii."

### The Golgotha imagery and the Helenian prototype

The Golgotha imagery Nikon created in 1658 advanced the successful discourse he articulated during the founding of Krestnyi Monastery through the combination of his Kii Cross imagery and his 1656 *Gramota o Krestnom monastyre*.<sup>57</sup> According to the earliest known description, the imagery consisted of "two large icons to supplement [a] large cypress cross; on one are Tsar Constantine, great Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and great lord holy Patriarch Nikon, on the second piece of wood are Tsaritsa Helen, Tsaritsa Mariia Il'inichna and the pious Prince Aleksei Alekseevich."<sup>58</sup> The new iconography expanded and refocused the associations the patriarch previously established between himself, the Romanovs, Constantine and Helen and his monastery-building program to include more fully Mariia Il'inichna and to introduce the tsar's son and heir Aleksei Alekseevich, into the picture.

---

Sviato-Tikhonovskii gumanitarnyi universitet, 2006), 87-98; Зеленская, "Новый Иерусалим под Москвой," 753-754.

54. Nikon, *Replies*, 64.

55. Леонид, *Историческое описание*, 6-7.

56. Зеленская, *Святыни Нового Иерусалима*, 103.

57. I analyzed the Kii Cross imagery and *Gramota o Krestnom monastyre* in "Before New Jerusalem," 57-67. References to the scholarship on the Kii Cross imagery are found therein, 68-69.

58. "Переписанная книга домово́й казны Патриарха Никона [Copy of the book of Patriarch Nikon's household treasury]" in *Vestnik obschestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete Vestnik obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete* [Herald of the Society of Russian History and Antiquities at Moscow University] kn. 15 (M., 1852), reprint Александр И. Цепков, изд., *Источники истории. Сочинение Григория Скибинского. Переписная книга домово́й казны Патриарха Никона* [Aleksandr I. Tsepkov, ed. Sources of history. The works of Grigorii Skibinskii. Copy of the book of Patriarch Nikon's household treasury] (Riazan: Aleksandriia, 2009), 459. See also Леонид, *Историческое описание*, 194-195. For an analysis of the Golgotha Imagery see Зеленская, *Святыни Нового Иерусалима*, 35-36, 296-300; Kevin Kain, "Patriarch Nikon's Image in Russian History and Culture" (PhD diss., Kalamazoo, 2004), 48-53.

Nikon grew the image of Mariia as “New Helen,” originally cultivated during Paisius of Jerusalem’s efforts to gain her churchwardenship, by representing the tsaritsa as having fulfilled her Byzantine predecessor’s dual roles as a divinely ordained imperial mother and creator-patroness. The empowering representation of Mariia together with Helen and Aleksei Alekseevich concerned a matter of great contemporary significance as the tsarina’s capacity to produce a male heir had fallen in serious doubt. Almost immediately after Paisius told Mariia that she would be “rewarded” for her charity by seeing the “earthly fruits of your womb [ascend] the throne of the great God-espousing Tsar Constantine to the rejoicing of your heart as St. Helen rejoiced,” her first son, Dmitrii, died (October 6, 1649). Aleksei Alekseevich’s birth, five long years later, on February 5, 1654, may have been viewed as divine intervention and as replicating Helen’s “miraculous” conception of Constantine.<sup>59</sup>

The patriarch concisely related Helen’s being blessed with her son and her legendary discovery of the True Cross and building the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as presented in Sukhanov’s “Proskinitariia” through a supplication to Cross attributed to the Empress.<sup>60</sup> In the image, Helen holds a scroll reading:

Oh honorable Cross of Christ, I recognized the heavenly light during the conception of my son Constantine, and I raised you with my own hands from the womb of the earth at the advice of my son Constantine, and I erected in your honor a holy church [of the Holy Sepulcher].<sup>61</sup>

This string of events, attested to by Helen herself, represents an ideal paradigm which Nikon upheld for Mariia II’ inichna to replicate. Given the visual representation of the royal women with heir to the throne and the text of Helen’s prayer, it follows that since Mariia, like her Byzantine predecessor, “miraculously” conceived a son, she ought to reenact the saint’s founding of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher by supporting Nikon’s replication of that prototype at New Jerusalem Monastery.<sup>62</sup> In sum, the imagery established the monastery as a dynastic endeavor with imperial significance dependent upon female patronage performed in the image of St. Helen’s churchwardenship. Thus, Nikon’s New Jerusalem scenario sacralized the female Russian monarch. The patriarch cast same way of thinking in the “large

---

59. See Isolde Thyrét, *Between God and Tsar. Religious Symbolism and the Royal Women of Muscovite Russia* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 67-69. Thyrét explained here that, in Nikon’s iconography, “the theme of miraculous conception in conjunction with the Byzantine empress reflects the Muscovite perception that the wives and mothers of Orthodox rulers had a special propensity to function as receptacle of the divine.”

60. See Арсений, “Проскinitарий,” 141 and above.

61. Архимандрит Амфилохий “Выписка из подробной описи имущества Воскресенского Новоиерусалимского монастыря [Akhimandrite Amfilokhii, Excerpts from the detailed descriptions of the possessions of Resurrection New Jerusalem Monastery],” *Известия Императорского археологического общества* [News of the Imperial Archeological Society] 4 (1863): col. 50.

62. This logic follows Nikon’s thought in *Грамота о Крестом Монастыре* [Decree about Krestnyi Monastery] (M: 1656), 59-51. See Kain, “Before New Jerusalem,” 224-225.

bell" he commissioned which featured images of Christ's Resurrection and himself and the Romanovs together as the founders of the new monastery.<sup>63</sup>

The letter Nikon sent to Aleksei Mikhailovich in the summer of 1658, announcing the creation of the bell and reporting on the construction of the masonry Church of the Resurrection, sheds invaluable light on the patriarch's conception of the church and its relationship to the tsar.<sup>64</sup> After describing the bell's iconography Nikon, clearly referencing the decree of the Council of Nicea and the *Synodicon*, reminded the tsar that "holy church law commands us" that holy images of all kinds "direct the mind of those who see them presently to the prototype." The patriarch explained that, thanks to Aleksei's donations, the building of "the church in the image of the holy Life-giving Resurrection and all the Lord's mysteries" was underway, but lacked stone and bricks. Finally, Nikon told the tsar that if he supplied the necessary building materials, "God will glorify you and write your holy name in the book of the living as he did Constantine the Great, founder of the Church of the Holy Resurrection." In other words, the patriarch upheld the Byzantine doctrine on the prototype-image relationship, identified the church at New Jerusalem Monastery as an image of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and clarified how the tsar, imitating Constantine, could help create it and gain salvation. This line of thought clearly adheres to the *Synodicon* and would likely have been recognized by Aleksei whose formal education included memorization of the Holy Week *Triodion*.<sup>65</sup>

Despite their ideal images in the iconography of New Jerusalem, the patriarch and the tsar soon fell out, with Nikon leaving Moscow and devoting himself primarily to the construction of his monasteries.<sup>66</sup> On February 17, 1660, a Church Council declared the patriarchal chair vacant and called for election of a new patriarch. In Nikon's absence, Pitirim, Metropolitan of Krutitsa, played the patriarch's role in the Moscow Palm Sunday Ritual representing Christ. Nikon responded during the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on February 16, 1662, when, according to the traditional pronunciation of commemorations and condemnations, he publically anathematized Pitirim for what he perceived as the metropolitan's transgressions, including the iconoclastic corruption of the Palm Sunday Ritual. The patriarch likewise anathematized Boyar Simeon Streshnev for allegedly mocking the three-finger clerical blessing mandated by the *Skrizhal'*.<sup>67</sup> This calcu-

63. On the bell, see Зеленская, *Святые Нового Иерусалима*, 79-83.

64. The letter is published in Светлана К. Севастьянова, *Эпистолярное наследие патриарха Никона. Переписка с современниками. Исследование и тексты* [Svetlana K. Sevast'ianova, *Patriarch Nikon's epistolary heritage. Correspondence with contemporaries. Research and texts*] (M.: Indrik, 2007), 383-384.

65. Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual & Reformation*, 94.

66. The circumstances of this break are, of course, well beyond the scope of this paper.

67. Palmer, *The Patriarch and the Tsar*, 4, 344-367 and Nikon, *Replies*, 168. See the text of the *Synodicon* in the Moscow *Triod Postnaia* (1656) in Петухов, *Очерк из литературной истории Синодика*, 76-77. On the pronunciation of anathemas in accordance with the *Synodicon* in earlier Russian history, see Дергачев, "Вселенский синодик в древней и средневековой России," 18-19, 27-28. It is particularly noteworthy that, according to an account in the *Скрижаль*, 12, on February 24, 1656, during the traditional pronunciation



lated employment of the *Synodicon* reconfirms its central place in Nikon's thought and actions concerning the visualization of the New Jerusalem idea and provides contexts essential for our comprehending more fully the subsequent responses to his New Jerusalem Monastery.

### New Jerusalem Monastery ridiculed

The New Jerusalem-based charges which Boyar Streshnev and Paisius Ligarides included in their polemics against Nikon on August 15, 1662 played significance roles in shaping later responses to the monastery and Nikon's image in general.<sup>68</sup> Yet, the attacks have been accepted at face value.<sup>69</sup> Reassessment of the source reveals that the monastery-focused accusations are reactions to Nikon's anathematizing of Metropolitan Pitirim and Streshnev on the Sunday of Orthodox six months earlier. As Ligarides put it, "an anathema is like lightning, a curse is a double edged sword... If it be hurled with justice it blasts the guilty, but if undeservedly, it returns upon him who pronounced it."<sup>70</sup> Fighting fire with fire, the Greek turned the authority of the *Synodicon* against Nikon and his New Jerusalem Monastery with its "church in the image of the Holy Life-giving Resurrection and all the Lord's mysteries," attacking the legitimacy of the foundation's name and iconography in terms of the prototype-image relationship. This strategy is immediately evidenced in Streshnev's prompts. In the first he pondered: "Nikon is now building a monastery and he has named it 'The New Jerusalem.' Is it well to dishonor the name of the Holy City?"<sup>71</sup> Referencing the *Skrižhal'* in the second he asked "Does not St. Germanus say that the prothesis figures Bethlehem, and the holy throne Christ's Sepulcher?"<sup>72</sup>

Ligarides's arguments not only traced Streshnev's leads in asserting that Nikon dishonored the Jerusalem prototype, but went further by introducing for the first time the sensational claims that Nikon was Judaizing and that his New Jerusalem

---

of anathemas on the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, visiting Patriarch Makarios of Antioch and other foreign hierarchs confirmed the *trioperty* [three-finger] blessing and condemned all who persisted in the two fingered one. See also Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual & Reformation*, 61, 77.

68. On Ligarides, see Harry T. Hionides, *Paisius Ligarides* (New York: Twain Publishers, 1972); Wolfram von Scheliha, "Paisios (Pantaleon, auch: Panteleimon) Ligarides" *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (Nordhausen, 2013), 34, cols. 1057-1070; Charalampos K. Papastathis, "Païsius Ligaridis et la formation des relations entre l'Église et l'État en Russie au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Cyrrilomethodianum* 2 (1972-1973): 77-85, and Ihor Ševčenko, "A New Greek Source for the Nikon Affair: Sixty-One Answers Given by Paisios Ligarides to Tsar Aleksej Mixailovič," *Palaeoslavica*, 7 (1999): 65-83.

69. See, for example, Buseva-Davydova, "On the Conception of Patriarch Nikon's New Jerusalem Monastery," 209-215.

70. Nikon, *Replies*, xxxi.

71. *Ibid.*, xxix.

72. *Ibid.*, xxix; *Скрижаль*, 329-336, 310-317.

could signal the coming of the Antichrist in Russia. Answering the initial query, Ligarides declared:

O indignity! O extraordinary novelty! Not a new house, forsooth, but "The New Jerusalem"! I hear too, O Nikon that thou art writing about that new Messiah whom the Jews expect, and whom they may hope to see come from a new Jerusalem. At a guess, then, there should be with you in thy New Jerusalem some mother of Antichrist?<sup>73</sup>

In response to Streshnev's follow-up, the Greek affirmed the *Skrizhal'*, but contested Nikon's adherence to it and the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils claiming:

Nikon's New Jerusalem is not a mere copy as from a pattern, but it is the very prototypical New Jerusalem itself and all other ecclesiastical institutions are antiquated ... there exist no longer the New Jerusalem, nor the mother of churches, nor the chair of James the Lord's brother (Patriarch of Jerusalem).<sup>74</sup>

The allegations that Nikon "dishonored" and even eliminated the prototypical Jerusalem demonstrate that Streshnev and Ligarides understood Nikon's method of combining the authority of the Nicea Council and the *Skrizhal'* and co-opted it for their own ends. The Greek's focus on the monastery's iconography appears to be tailored for domestic consumption. When read in the context of the previous reply, the idea that New Jerusalem Monastery became the sole Jerusalem, reinforces the notion that the Antichrist could appear in Muscovy. While convoluted, the charge that Nikon abused the image-prototype relationship was meant, as was later manifest in the judgements of the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, to incite the Greek hierarchy with the idea that Nikon aimed to usurp the authority of the Jerusalem Patriarch.<sup>75</sup>

Ligarides's assaults were soon copied by Bishop Aleksandr of Viatka, whom Georg Michels identified as a "founder of Old Belief."<sup>76</sup> The bishop's missive to Aleksei Mikhailovich in December 1662 mirrors the structure and content of the Greek's work, displaying the "same mean irony and the same ridicule with which Ligarides regarded Nikon," suggesting that he had access to the polemic.<sup>77</sup> Aleksandr's emboldened attack charged that "Nikon was so stupid as to call his monastery New Jerusalem which truly confused the names of cities." "Where, pious tsar," he asked, "did Nikon find the impertinence to call his dwelling New Jerusalem?... No

---

73. Nikon, *Replies*, xxviii.

74. *Ibid.*, xxviii-xxix.

75. See below.

76. Georg Michels, *At War with the Church* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 91.

77. The letter is quoted extensively in Николай Гиббенет, *Историческое исследование дела патриарха Никона* [Nikolai Gibbenet, Historical research on the case of Patriarch Nikon], 2 pts (SPb.: Tipografiia Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1882-1884), 2: 18-27.

one among the church fathers or the pious tsars dared to call a dwelling or city Jerusalem, except the accursed heretic Montanus.”<sup>78</sup> Following Ligarides further, the bishop associated the monastery with the coming of Antichrist in Russia by referencing Nikon’s supposed Judaizing. While the impact of Aleksandr’s letter upon the tsar is unknown, it is obvious in the work of Old Believer authors writing in the 1670s, including Deacon Fedor Ivanov who was a member of Aleksandr’s circle.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, it now appears that even Archpriest Avvakum Petrov’s invective in one place copied Ligarides.<sup>80</sup> These clear linkages demonstrate that the Old Believer critiques of Nikon’s New Jerusalem originated with this Greek, not within organic Russian millennialist thinking.

### Nikon’s Replies

Nikon’s retorts to Ligarides and Streshnev represent the patriarch’s most developed verbal statements on the conception of Voskresenskii Monastery as an icon of the historical New Jerusalem created by Constantine and Helen. Yet, they are not usually considered beyond the challenges posed by Ligarides, and Nikon is seen as simply “resorting to the theory of the image and the prototype” to defend himself.<sup>81</sup> However, when read in the broader contexts outlined above, the patriarch’s reasoning appears as the latest development in a program of thought which clearly linked the authority of Seventh Ecumenical Council, the *Synodicon* and the *Skrizhal’*.<sup>82</sup>

Nikon’s responses to Ligarides summarized the divergent responses to the new monastery to that point. On the one hand, Nikon defended his position clarifying that “I cast no reproach on the old New Jerusalem if I call the Voskresenskii Monastery

---

78. Гиббенет, *Историческое исследование дела патриарха Никона*, 2, 25. The so-called prophet Montanus founded Montanism or the Cataphrygain heresy in Asia Minor during the second century. Montanism held that the Paraclete, promised by Jesus in St. John’s Gospel, was manifest in the world through Montanus and his closest followers. Montanus reckoned that the Second Coming was imminent and prophesized that the heavenly Jerusalem of the *Revelation* would descend on earth in Phrygia in his day.

79. Michels, *At War with the Church*, 90. I offer comparative analysis of Aleksandr’s and Fedor’s writing in “Deacon Feodor Ivanov as a Follower of Iosif Volotskii or *The Enlightener* and ‘The Wolf and Predator . . . Nikon’,” in David Goldfrank, et. al., eds., *Iosif Volotskii and Eastern Christianity: Essays across Seventeen Centuries* (Washington: New Academia, 2017), 291-238.

80. Avvakum copied Ligarides precisely in ridiculing New Jerusalem Monastery as Zion and asserting that the gates to hell opened there, in a 1665 letter to *igumen* Feoktist, see *Памятники литературы Древней Руси: XVII век* [Monuments of literature of Ancient Russia: The XVII century], kn. 1 (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1988), 547. For Ligarides’s polemic and Nikon’s response see Nikon, *Replies*, xxix, 81.

81. Buseva-Davydova, “On the Conception of Patriarch Nikon’s New Jerusalem Monastery,” 212. See also Лебедев, *Москва патриаршая*, 15, and his adherents including Vorob’eva.

82. Воробьева, *Личность и воззрения патриарха Никона в отечественной историографии*, 158-161, identified the New Testament references in Nikon’s *Replies*, but did not recognize the *Synodicon*’s place in the patriarch’s arguments.

New Jerusalem," because that the title began with the tsar and it "pleased him the Great Lord, to call it by the name of 'New Jerusalem'."<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, the patriarch condemned Ligarides because, "to the scandal of the people," he misinterpreted Scripture with the assertion that Antichrist could be in Russia at the monastery and discounted that notion at length.<sup>84</sup> After rhetorically asking "does he sin then, if anyone to the glory of the Lord, out of love, builds a temple in the name of his holy resurrection, after the likeness of the Church of the Resurrection which is in Jerusalem?,"<sup>85</sup> Nikon reclaimed control over the *Synodicon* by transcribing its preamble and list of commemorations, including the passage focused on spiritual renewal:

The "substitute" of Christ are those who have been redeemed by his death and have believed in him through the word of preaching and through the primary representations by which the great work of economy is made known to them that are delivered ... Whence also the imitation of his sufferings spreads to his apostles ... all who believe and preach, that is proclaim, the gospel by words in letters and other things in delineations and use these methods to one and the same good end.<sup>86</sup>

By reprising the well-known canon from the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy Nikon reiterated not only the teaching that the creation of icons honors the prototype, but also that the same logic held true for church architecture.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the quotation turned the apocalyptic-based charge connecting the monastery with the Antichrist on its head by reasserting the redemptive promise of New Jerusalem, represented by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. In concluding, Nikon made another unmistakable return to the authority of the Seventh Ecumenical Council's teaching on the prototype-image relationship, recalling:

It was the opinion of Basil the Great, that "by sacred images the mind should be elevated to the prototype." What sin can it be, if anyone takes a copy of any holy thing from its prototype? ... Or if in like manner, one makes a representation or copy of any of the holy churches or other sacred things built or made to the glory of God? Or ... after the likeness of Jerusalem itself for a representation of that ever-to-be-remembered Jerusalem in which the Savior suffered for us.<sup>88</sup>

---

83. Nikon, *Replies*, 63-64.

84. *Ibid.*, 64-74. Thus, Nikon acknowledged that some Russians associated his monastery with the Antichrist and thought the idea originated with Ligarides. Воробьева, *Личность и воззрения патриарха Никона в отечественной историографии*, 392-393, cites the Biblical passages.

85. Nikon, *Replies*, 75. The idea that the monastery represented the "likeness," but not the "nature" of the prototype, follows *The Seventh General Council*, "The Definition of the Holy and Great Ecumenical Council," 196-197, 439-440.

86. Nikon, *Replies*, 75-76; *Synodicon* in Петухов, *Очерк из литературной истории Синодика*, 17-20.

87. Palmer, *The Patriarch and the Tsar*, 4: 345 n. 8.

88. Nikon, *Replies*, 77. See *The Seventh General Council*, "The Definition of the Holy and Great Ecumenical Council," 196-197, 199, 218, 207, 363, 403, 439-440.

In responding to the second set of charges Nikon fused the teachings of St. Basil and St. Germanus.<sup>89</sup> Correcting and extending Streshnev's references, he paraphrased the *Skrizhal's* commentaries on the liturgy as a commemoration of Salvation history.<sup>90</sup> Refuting the claim that his New Jerusalem Monastery antiquated Jerusalem and its patriarch, Nikon articulated arguably his most concise statement about the monastery:

to the glory of Christ our God a church is being built after the pattern of the holy church of the Resurrection which the pious empress Helen built, a model of which was brought to us by our brother the most holy Paisius of blessed memory, patriarch of the holy city of Jerusalem, God having sent him hither beforehand for this.<sup>91</sup>

Therefore, neither Jerusalem nor the Holy Sepulcher vanished, "but only a model made from them."<sup>92</sup> Finally, the patriarch reviewed the Seventh Ecumenical Council's teaching on the conceptions of "image by nature" and "image in likeness," confirming that his monastery adhered to the later.<sup>93</sup> Thus, Nikon refuted the charges against the monastery with the same references to the image-prototype relationship that he cited when he first identified the Church of the Resurrection as an image of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Christ's mysteries to Aleksei Mikhailovich in 1658.<sup>94</sup>

### Orthodox hierarchs' responses to New Jerusalem

The available evidence suggests that Nikon's *Replies* to Ligarides muted "official" criticisms of New Jerusalem Monastery until the patriarch raised the issue in winter 1665. Writing to Aleksei Mikhailovich on January 14, Nikon agreed to the election of a new Moscow patriarch and proposed the conditions of his future existence, explaining that he aimed to live "in the monasteries of my own foundation that is either in this of Christ's Holy Resurrection of the New Jerusalem, in Iverskii or Krestnyi" and to seek reconfirmation of the monasteries' property rights. In return, he promised he would "observe the order and rule of the Holy Eastern Church of the New Zion; that is of the Church of the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ in Jerusalem," "maintain love and unity with the

---

89. Воробьева, *Личность и воззрения патриарха Никона в отечественной историографии*, 161-162, charts Nikon's references to the Old and New Testaments.

90. Nikon, *Replies*, 78-79, referencing *Скрижаль*, for example, 233-236, 310-317, 329-333.

91. Nikon, *Replies*, 81.

92. *Ibid.*, 81.

93. *Ibid.*, 88. See *The Seventh General Council*, 65-66, 169, 201 319, 364, 450, 499.

94. See above.

ecumenical patriarchs," and to refer to himself as "the humble Nikon, by the mercy of God, Patriarch."<sup>95</sup>

The response to Nikon's proposition evoked from a church Council in early February 1666 makes it possible to gauge the Russian hierarchy's attitudes toward New Jerusalem Monastery and its image in larger Russian society. In both cases, the council identified the monastery's being called "New Jerusalem," not its iconography, as an issue to be dealt with. The council's decision explained that:

the Monastery of Christ's Resurrection is not to be styled by word or in writing "New Jerusalem," but rather, "the Monastery of Christ's Resurrection built after the pattern of the Church at Jerusalem," or "the new Monastery of Christ's Resurrection in the image of the Jerusalem Church." ... The people of the Russian nation are very much scandalized, being ignorant, by this name "New Jerusalem," especially in these last days, upon which the end of the world have come. And in connection with this scandal, there is very much obloquy against the most holy Patriarch Nikon. ... And for both of these reasons it is not fitting to write or name that Monastery of Christ's Resurrection, "New Jerusalem."<sup>96</sup>

In this way, the Russian hierarchs officially recognized for the first time the otherwise undocumented "popular" responses to the name "New Jerusalem" which, following Ligarides and Bishop Aleksandr's instigations, coupled the monastery and the patriarch with the advent of the Antichrist. In response, the council unequivocally sought to stem the attacks against Nikon and his replica of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Rejecting the sensational accusations, the Council confirmed that Nikon's project, in accordance with the Byzantine teachings, honored its prototype and clarified the notion by decreeing two new titles that explicitly explained the concept.<sup>97</sup> Read in the context of the *Synodicon*, the hierarchy's deeming Nikon "the most holy patriarch" suggests that they not only supported him but found him worthy of commemorative praise. This atmosphere shifted drastically later the same year, when the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria reversed the Russians' opinions at Nikon's trial. The published records of Nikon's trial in December 1666 reveal that the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria made New Jerusalem-related charges the cornerstone of their case against the Russian Patriarch by repeatedly

---

95. This missive is published in Н.И. Субботин, *Дело патриарха Никона* [N.I. Subbotin, The case of Patriarch Nikon] (M.: Типография В. Grachev i ko, 1862), 204-216; Palmer, *The Patriarch and the Tsar*, 4, 588-599. See also Лебедев, *Москва Патриаршая*, 145.

96. Субботин, *Дело патриарха Никона*, 216-217; Palmer, *The Patriarch and the Tsar*, 4, 624.

97. Both names reflect Nikon's explanation that "a church is being built after the pattern of the holy church of the Resurrection which the pious empress Helen built." See Nikon, *Replies*, 81, and above. The name change may be also read as an attempt to insulate the tsar from association with the apocalyptic rumors. This finding is in agreement with Vera Tchentsova, "L'eschatologie byzantine dans la pensée historique à la cour d'Alexis Romanov: Paisios Ligaridès, Nicolas le Spathaire et Francesco Barozzi," in Pierre Gonneau and Ecatherina Rai, eds., *Écrire et réécrire l'histoire russe d'Ivan le Terrible à Vasilij Ključevskij (1547-1917)*, (P.: Institut d'études slaves, 2013), 41-5, 1 who argued that Aleksei Mikhailovich's retinue was not moved by apocalyptic thought.

alleging that he “signed” and “consecrated himself Patriarch of New Jerusalem.”<sup>98</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that the Greeks listed these charges, together with the notion that Nikon dishonored the Holy Land, in their final verdict against Nikon on December 12, 1666, concluding that Nikon was:

building new monasteries and giving them unbecoming titles and the vain names New Jerusalem, Golgotha, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jordan and Galilee, making jest of divine things and dealing irreverently with holy things; calling himself Patriarch of the New Jerusalem.<sup>99</sup>

The New Jerusalem charges were sharpened in reports of Nikon’s condemnation sent to Patriarchs Nectarius of Jerusalem (1660-1669) and Dionisius of Constantinople (1662-1665).<sup>100</sup> Indeed, in their message to Nectarius the Greeks contended that “Nikon’s pride was so excessively swollen that he consecrated himself Patriarch of New Jerusalem. For he named the monastery which he was founding New Jerusalem, with all its environs, naming these the Holy Sepulcher, Golgotha, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jordan.”<sup>101</sup>

While traditionally accepted as the final judgement on Nikon and his New Jerusalem, the Greek patriarchs’ verdicts were soundly rejected in both Russia and, eventually, Jerusalem. In fact, later Romanovs not only embraced the monastery, but also accepted Nikon’s program by preforming churchwardenship of the foundation in imitation of Constantine and Helen.<sup>102</sup> Tsar Fedor Alekseevich (1676-1682), Aleksei Mikhailovich’s third son by Mariia, turned to Voskresenskii Monastery during his struggle to solidify his inheritance of the Muscovite throne and the Constantinian legacy. “Inspired by ...Greek Tsar Constantine,” Fedor resumed construction of the monastery which he called “New Jerusalem” and arranged for Nikon’s return from exile in the hope that the former patriarch could complete its replica of the Holy Sepulture.<sup>103</sup> The patronage of Elizabeth I (1741-1761) and Catherine II (1762-1796) clearly emulated St. Helen’s churchwardenship of the original New Jerusalem. Elizabeth officially renamed the monastery “New Jerusalem,” donated 30,000 rubles to beautify it and employed Italian architect B. Rastrelli to construct a new rotunda for the Church of the Resurrection. Catherine followed, beautifying the Monastery’s Golgotha Church and constructing a “holy manger”

---

98. Гиббенет, *Историческое исследование дела патриарха Никона*, 2, 352, and no. 12, 1061, no. 13, 1072, no. 16, 1087; Palmer, *The Patriarch and the Tsar*, 3, 430.

99. Гиббенет, *Историческое исследование дела патриарха Никона*, 2, no. 15, 1093-1097; *Археологическая Комиссия. Дело о патриархе Никоне* [Archeographical Commission, The case concerning Patriarch Nikon] (SPb.: Pechatano po opredeleniiu Arkheograficheskoi kommissii, 1897), no. 123, 447.

100. *Дело о патриархе Никоне*, no. 72, 306; no. 73, 308. It was apparently not known that Parthenius IV was restored as Patriarch of Constantinople by the end of 1665.

101. *Дело о патриархе Никоне*, no. 72, 306.

102. Kain “Patriarch Nikon’s Image in Russian History and Culture,” 58-61.

103. Kain and Levintova, *From Peasant to Patriarch*, 89-93, 172, 163.

and "Bethlehem" Church there.<sup>104</sup> Rather than being insulted or threatened by the idea of the Russian patriarch's replication of the Holy of Holies, Dositheos II, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1669-1707), later concluded that Nikon "made a picture of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and as best as he could, he built a monastery and named it Jerusalem; which was not improper."<sup>105</sup>

## Conclusions

Viewed in connection with the founding of Iverskii and Krestnyi Monasteries, the efforts to create an icon of the Holy Land at Voskresenskii Monastery appear not only as the replication prototypes in Palestine, but also as the Romanovs' reenactment of Sts. Constantine's and Helen's creation of the original (historical) New Jerusalem. Nikon successfully adopted Paisius of Jerusalem's efforts to groom the tsar, his wife and their heirs as wardens of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and redirected them toward the creation of a new Orthodox Holy Land in Russia. Through the Golgotha imagery, Nikon established New Jerusalem Monastery as a dynastic endeavor with imperial significance dependent upon female patronage performed in the image of St. Helen's churchwardenship of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Nikon's conception of New Jerusalem and the Romanovs' images as "New Constantine" and "New Helen" were inseparable and mutually reinforcing. The project promoted the sacralization of both the male and female monarchs. The *Synodicon* of Orthodoxy enabled Nikon to connect, explain and justify his notion of New Jerusalem Monastery as icon of the Holy Land and his promotion of the Romanov's "sacred" deed of creating an image of the Church of the Holy Sepulture in imitation of the Byzantine ruler saints.

Ligarides's and Streshnev's polemics against the monastery show that they understood the patriarch's adoption of the *Synodicon* and turned it against him by concatenating it with the specter of the Antichrist. These apocalyptic intrigues backfired when they were rejected by the Russian Council in spring 1666, but embraced by Old Believers. Ligarides's and Bishop Aleksandr's responses to the monastery directly link the Greek's machinations and later Old Believer's associations of the monastery with the Antichrist and Nikon with Judaizing. The irony of the Old Believers' acceptance of the foreign charges falls in line with Georg Michel's conclusion that "the fact that ... Bishop Aleksandr became founder of a

---

104. See Зеленская, *Святини Нового Иерусалима*, 47-50, 235-236, 356.

105. Ιστορία περί των εν Ιεροσολύμοις πατριαρχευσάντων, διηρημένη εν δώδεκα βιβλίοις. Άλλως καλουμένη Δωδεκάβιβλος Δοσιθέου. [History regarding the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, divided into Twelve Books. Also known as The Twelve Books of Dositheos], Bucharest, 1715 (Reprint Thessaloniki 1983), 6, 234-235. Yet, apparently referencing "popular" responses to the monastery recognized by the Russian council in February 1666 and/or subsequent Old Believer accusations, Dositheos added that Nikon sinned in "that he did this to an innocent nation and by little he was giving them pretence for a scandal, to believe that this was Jerusalem." I thank Nikolas Pissis for this reference. The translations are his.



movement that subsequently equated Nikon with the Antichrist remains one of the greatest paradoxes in the history of Russian religion.”<sup>106</sup>

The relationship between the Greek provocateur and the disaffected Russian bishop and their influences on later Old Believer require further study. At this point, however, it is reasonable to suggest that while Ligarides’s impact on creating an apocalyptic mood around Nikon’s New Jerusalem and the *Skrizhal’*-based reforms with which it was inherently connected have been underrated, the Old Believers’ originality in this one respect has been overstated.

The conclusions presented here complicate the idea that Nikon’s replica of the Holy Land “shocked” contemporaries as “sacrilegious.” On the one hand, this investigation found only one documented critique of the monastery’s iconography, namely Ligarides’s. On the other hand, it showed that the February 1666 Council confirmed the canonicity of Nikon’s project and that it honored the holy sites in Jerusalem and, therefore, attempted to clarify this notion for the “ignorant” Russian people with new names that literarily spelled out the relationship between the monastery and its prototype. While significant for the Russian Orthodox self-image as a new Holy Land, the iconography of the Monastery appeared as a mere pretext for the Greek hierarchs who judged Nikon. Records of Nikon’s trial show that the Russian patriarch was ultimately condemned on the charge that he encroached upon the Patriarch of Jerusalem. This verdict concerned the power and legitimacy of the Greek hierarchy and reflected the fear that Nikon, being favored as the head of the church in the premier Orthodox state, hoped to extend his authority at the expense of other Orthodox patriarchs on the account of their compromised positions under Ottoman rule. This finding fits with scholarship which contends that in the Greeks’ imagined order of an Orthodox *oikoumene* under the secular primacy of the Russian tsar and the spiritual leadership of the Eastern prelates, there was no place for an equal and influential Russian Church.<sup>107</sup>

*Humanities*

*University of Wisconsin-Green Bay*

*kaink@uwgb.edu*

---

106. Michels, *At War with the Church*, 89.

107. See, for example, Helmut Neubauer, *Car und Selbstherrscher. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Autokratie in Rußland* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1964), 105. This idea and reference was brought to my attention by Nikolas Pissis.