

School of Political Science	School of Humanities
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	Leiden University



HELLENIC REPUBLIC



ARISTOTLE
UNIVERSITY OF
THESSALONIKI

International Conference

**European cultural diplomacy and Eastern Christianity in Syria and Palestine
A connected history in Late Ottoman times and the British Mandate.**

14-15 May 2020

Room 3, AUTh Research Committee

Project funded by



The *CrossRoads* Conference in Thessaloniki aims to define and analyse how cultural diplomacy was deployed by the European powers in the interwar Palestine and Syria. It questions how these policies impacted the cultural identification of indigenous Christians in a comparison with their fellow Palestinian and Syrian compatriots. This conference will focus on attempts at ideological and political domination by multiple actors, each with a diversity of diplomatic and cultural ends. It will examine these contestations as they were reflected in the religious and social landscape and analyse the variety of the Christian-Arab agendas towards such policies, paying special attention to the Eastern Orthodox and the Melkite communities.

The conference will focus on the late Ottoman and Mandate periods for two reasons. Firstly, it marks the gradual establishment of modern structures of social operation, such as the challenges to religious authority and elites or the formation of Arab nationalism. Secondly, it is the transition period from imperial to colonial rule, for which cultural diplomacy and religion played an instrumental role in legitimising new political regimes. The Eastern Orthodox and the Melkite communities in Palestine and Syria were placed at the heart of these developments, expressing the quest for national and religious emancipation, while also keeping close links with diplomatic actors, colonial institutions, and foreign religious agents. Within this framework, we welcome contribution on the following general research topics:

- The activation of diplomatic cultural and religious institutions to develop structures that exerted influence over the indigenous Orthodox and Melkite populations,
- The Greek and Russian networks from within e.g. the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, the Imperial Orthodox Society, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre,
- Greek and Russian Cultural diplomacy in Syria and Palestine. The stance of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem vis à vis their activation,
- Other networks from outside Palestine and Syria e.g. Patriarchate of Constantinople,
- Local political authorities (i.e. the Sublime Porte, the British Mandate in Palestine, the French Administration in Syria), as well as other external power players with special interest on the field,
- The development of the Melkite Church within late Ottoman times and the French Mandate,

- The relationship between the Melkite Church and the Holy See and/or Roman Catholic State Powers (e.g. France),
- The political behaviour of Melkites and Greek Orthodox with the emergence of Arab Nationalism.

Abstract (400 words max.), 5 key words, short CV (300 words max.) should be sent to kpapastathis@polsci.auth.gr before the 15 October 2019.

Individual papers should be 30 minutes in length and each will be followed by 20 minutes for questions and discussion. We encourage the presentation of main question, as papers will read before, in order to comment them during the conference.

Key Dates

15 October 2019	400 words abstract 5 keywords 300 words cv
15 November 2019	Answer from the <i>CrossRoads</i> committee
15 April 2020	Draft chapters due, to be shared among participants
14-15 May 2020	Conference
1 September 2020	Final chapters due
Spring 2021	Release of the publication