

Book Review

Mordechai Eliav, *Österreich und das Heilige Land. Ausgewählte Konsulat dokumente aus Jerusalem 1849-1917*. Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; 2000, 617 p. (= Fontes Rerum Austriacum, Zweite Abteilung, Diplomataria et acta 91.Bd).

The publication of an anthology of the consular documents of the Empire in Jerusalem is important for several reasons. It rounds out studies on the foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Above all, however, it serves to put the puzzle pieces of European influences in the Middle East and the Holy Land back together again. The publication in Hebrew of part of these sources with a long introduction has already attracted the interest of specialists.¹ This volume, which presents the documents in their original languages (Italian, French and German) will go a long way towards painting a sharper picture of the European presence in the Holy City. In the space of ten years, not less than six foreign consulates opened, starting with England in 1838. It was followed by Prussia (1842), France and Sardinia (1843), United States (1844), Austria (1849), Russia (1858) and Italy (1861). At the same time, the Protestants built a joint Anglo-Prussian bishopric (1842), the Greek Orthodox patriarch moved from Constantinople to Jerusalem in 1845, and a Latin Patriarch returned to Jerusalem in 1847 while for centuries the Franciscans had held the custody of the Holy Places.

After a hefty introduction (pp. 29-93), 204 documents, almost all from the *Haus-Hof und Staatsarchiv* of Vienna are soberly commented upon and preceded by a summary. It is easy to grasp the stakes involved in the opening of a consulate in Jerusalem which towards mid-century would protect upwards of 1500/1800 individuals. At the end of the 19th century, at least five thousand souls were under the protection of Austria-Hungary. We have ringside seats to the almost constant battles waged against France, who claimed that she alone was the protector of the Catholics and the Holy Places, but was unwilling to invest. In contrast, Austria emerges as a nation of builders: we are witness to the founding of large undertakings: the Austrian post office in 1853-- the first Western post office, Rothschild Hospital in 1854, the first Jewish hospital, then Simon von Lumel, the first modern school in Jerusalem in 1856, and finally the Austrian Hospice in 1863. The Consulate needed to position itself as regards its colleagues, at times take certain steps with them, but

¹ Mordechai Eliav. *Under Imperial Austrian Protection. Selected Documents from the Archives of the Austrian Consulate in Jerusalem 1849-1917*. Jerusalem, Yad Ben Zvi, 1985. The two volumes are not identical. New documents dealing with internal Church matters and those concerning Jewish intra-communal problems do not appear in this new publication. See the lengthy analysis by Haim Goren in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte* XXX (2002), pp. 423-433.

at other times was alone in guaranteeing the country's preeminence. Diplomatic ties are always interesting for those who can read between the lines: they shed light on the local long-term residents: Jews, Christians and Moslems and document the increasingly frequent visits of rulers and scholars. The Duke of Brabant, the future King of Belgium, Leopold II, came in August 1855. He was authorized to enter mosques. In 1869, Emperor Franz-Joseph I came for the inauguration of the Suez Canal, and in 1898 the famous visit of Friedrich-Wilhelm II took place. Before distrust of rampant Zionism took root, there were objective and picturesque descriptions of the old *Yeshuv*, old Sephardi families, the *haluka* and the proselytism of some English consuls.

The first Austrian diplomat, Joseph von Pizzamano, arrived on March 1, 1849 in Jerusalem to be Vice Consul (under the auspices of the Consulate General in Beirut). He became Consul in 1852 and then Consul General in 1857. After 1867, no one mentions anything but the *K.u.K. Österreichisch-ungarisches Konsulat*. Bear in mind that the Emperor of Austria was also the King of Jerusalem. Note that an Armenian, Artin Torossian, born in 1852 in Jerusalem was Consulate chancellor between 1896 and 1917. The consulate had dealings with the leading families, and intervened to facilitate archeological digs in Jericho led by Professor Ernst Sellin from 1907 onwards. After the revolution of the Young Turks, and the Austrian annexation of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ottoman Empire protested and there was even a boycott. All in all, this volume sheds a completely new light on the economic, political and cultural situation of the region as a whole.

The appendix contains a prosopography of the 14 consuls in Jerusalem, ambassadors to Constantinople, foreign ministers as well as the list of (Turkish) governors of Jerusalem. The consuls often appear to have been highly competent; they frequently came from the Oriental Academy of Vienna. Their duties must have been overwhelming since two of them died in office, of heart attacks. We now thus possess a reliable edition of the English, German and Austrian documents, as well as an excellent monograph on the relationships with the USA. It would be extremely valuable, relying on work done in the Center in particular by Dominique Trimbur², to launch an identical initiative on the French documents, whose consultation has been greatly facilitated by the warm welcome given to researchers at the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nantes.

Dominique Bourel

² Dominique Trimbur and Ran Aronsohn (eds). *De Bonaparte à Balfour*. Paris, CNRS Editions. See also the excellent Ph.D. thesis by Rina Cohen, *La Palestine et ses populations vues par les consuls de France, 1841-1869*. INALCO, 1999, 3 volumes.