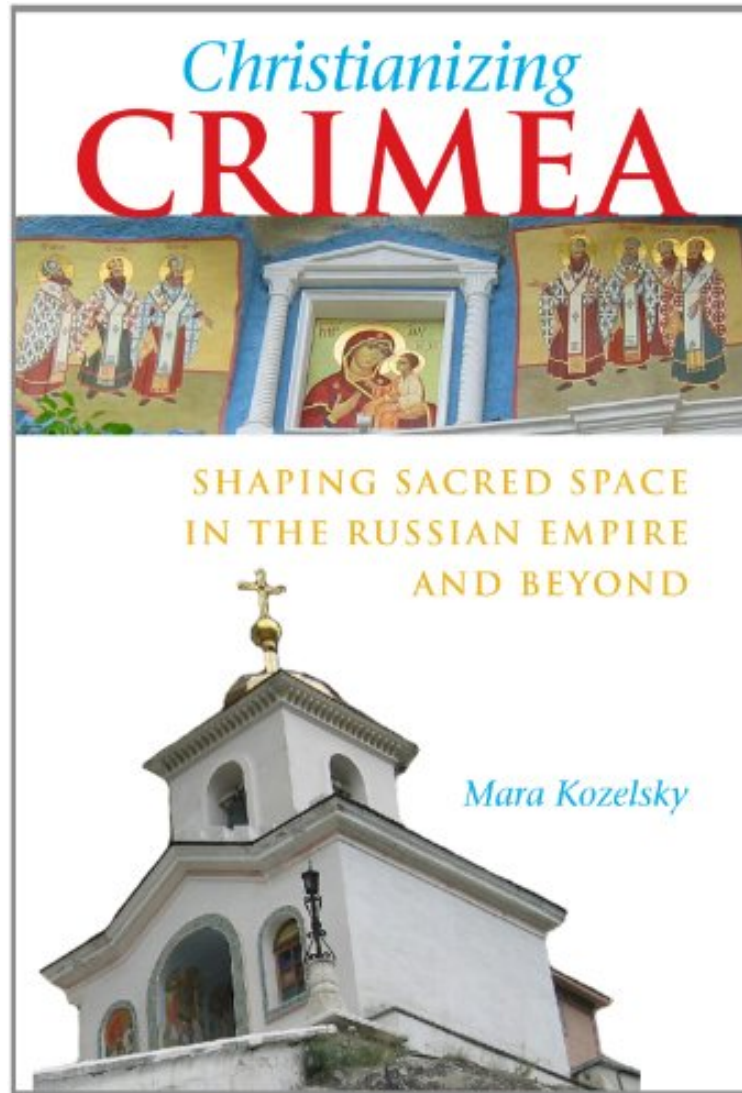


Christianizing Crimea: Shaping Sacred Space in the Russian Empire and Beyond

Mara Kozelsky

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Mara Kozelsky : Christianizing Crimea: Shaping Sacred Space in the Russian Empire and Beyond before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Christianizing Crimea: Shaping Sacred Space in the Russian Empire and Beyond:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Russia and the Russian Athos By PtrIoannis Author Mara Kozelsky, an assistant professor of history at the University of South Alabama (USA), explores the influence of Russian-nationalist print sources concerning Crimea that the Russian Orthodox Church created over the years from 1783, at the

time of the Russian annexation, until the post-Soviet era. However, her emphasis of investigation and analysis is on the era of Czar Nicholas I (1825-1855) [5]. Therefore, print materials authored by several leading figures of 19th-century nationalists inside the Russian Church provided primary sources for this book. In addition, the phenomenon of "Christianizing," as indicated in the title, refers to Russia having founded Orthodox institutions and practices in the Crimea that Russian nationalists considered "synonymous with identity" [5]. "To Christianize" otherwise would have meant conversion to the Christian religion, which is not its use in this book. The author's central premise combines "confessional politics" [10] of the Church with international politics about the so-called Eastern Question. She identifies the Eastern Question as raised in vagaries over how nations with interests in lands held by a crippled Ottoman Empire jockeyed for power to control them. In specific reference to the Crimea, the Eastern Question pertained to international tensions linked to the Crimean War (October 1853-February 1856), Balkan nationalism, tolerance or persecution of religious groups, and exchanges in ethnic populations. The appeal of this book to general and specialized readers is one reason for my enthusiastic recommendation. A second reason is the author's clear writing. There are six chapters and a post-Soviet Epilogue in the book. Extensive footnotes have been arranged as end-notes [197-208], and a bibliography [239-63] includes 15 primary Russian-language sources [transliterated] by Archbishop Innokentii as well as archival sources from GAARK in the Crimea and GAOO (Odessa)--two regional archives, and RGIA [archive repository] and the RNB (St. Petersburg), in addition to more than several-hundred primary texts. Sixteen black-and-white photographs of seldom seen Crimean Orthodox churches, monasteries, and landscapes from holy places appear midway through the book. Four demographic tables provide numeric data concerning new Russian colonies and Crimean populations before and after the Crimean War. There are textual insights that I appreciated learning. These included comparative differences between nationalist aims of the Church and Russian monarchy, emerging views of Russian religious tolerance in the Crimea before and after the Crimean War, and strategic adaptations by Russian Orthodox prelates to Christianizing Tatars. Overall I appreciated how Kozelsky emphasized the importance of 19th-century developments in munitions, transportation and educational travel, evangelization and proselytizing, and social trust across ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in the Crimea. Kozelsky walks a fine line between the denotation of the verb "to Christianize" and her use of the term as an institutional phenomenon of Russian nationalism. For example, she observes that Archbishop Innokentii "...sympathized with the plight of the Eastern Christians" [131] during the Crimean War. She quotes from sermons that Innokentii delivered around the time of the Saturday before Pascha [10 April 1854] bombardment of Odessa [129-33], where he and other priests remained to serve. Kozelsky presents the sermons as testimony to Innokentii's encouragement of the Orthodox faithful to suffer with Jesus Christ during the bombing. In addition, she demonstrates how Innokentii served Russian nationalist interests by circulating the sermons in pamphlets across principal Russian cities, such as Kyiv, St. Petersburg, and Moscow, in order to solicit support for Russian interests in the Crimea. Into every good book, a little rain must fall. The index, which combines names and subjects, is sturdy in politics and signal events for the most part, but illiterate (or indifferent) in ecclesiastical references. Just brushing the surface in my review of the index, lack in ecclesiastical references leaves critical lacunae. For example, the index fails to identify Archbishop Innokentii (Borisov) by either family name (Borisov) or canonical name (Innokentii). Moreover, there are no references to Archbishop or Bishop for Innokentii, which might have presented a typical indexing error had official rank and title preceded canonical name. For example, the indexer noted Bishop Klyment correctly by canonical name followed by "Bishop," even though Klyment played a minor role in text. However, Innokentii's publications provide foundation and structure to the entire book, and readers will miss this entry. Also absent from the index are English titles of Archbishop Innokentii's works that appear prominently in the text [17,19], as well as secondary Russian and English sources that the text employed at least several times [e.g. 37]. Difficult as the omission of subjects "Christian" or "Christianizing" are to reconcile given the title and content of the book, neither subject appears in the index. Other glaring omissions from the index are subjects such as (1) sectarians--a generic term in text concerning non-Orthodox Christians [17], (2) 'Russian' or 'Orthodox' or 'Church' [cf. all references for "Holy Synod"], (3) Lutherans [23,36], (4) Anglicans or Church of England [64], (5) the 'United Kingdom' or 'Great Britain' or 'England' [cf. Chapter 5, "War:" 125-49], (6) Mother of God or Theotokos [73]--to wit, cf. entries in index for Dormition Monastery, (7) Church of Greece as distinct from either "Greece" or "Greeks" [64], (8) millet [68 passim] [NB: the reference to "Dhimmis" [266] without in-text capitalization], (9) Eastern Christians [67,127], and (10) "Russian/New Athos." "Russian or New Athos" is a subject employed in text as central to the enterprise of primary sources [63,73], and should have been cross-referenced with the entry for "Crimean Athos" [266]. Headings for Catholicism [265] and Greek Catholic Church [267] are identified and accurate. However, it is safe to say that this historical text required employing an indexer with demonstrable theological skills to create a robust subject/name index. Do not allow the poor index to make you dismiss this book. Its sterling effects are too many, and place the book as necessary reading for historians, theologians, politicians and anyone with interest in the intersections of major religions in the Balkans, Anatolia/Turkey, Greece, Black Sea-region, and contemporary nations with historical relationships to the Russian Orthodox Church.

In 19th-century Russia, religious culture permeated politics at the highest levels, and Orthodox Christian

groups—including refugees from the Russo-Ottoman wars as well as the church itself—influenced Russian domestic and foreign policy. Likewise, Russian policy with the Ottoman Empire inspired the creation of a holy place in ethnically and religiously diverse Crimea. Looking to the monastic state of Mount Athos in Greece, Orthodox Church authorities in the mid-1800s attempted to create a monastic community in Crimea, which they called “Russian Athos.” The Crimean War catalyzed the Russian Christianization that had begun decades earlier and decimated Crimea’s Muslim population. Wartime propaganda portrayed Crimea as the cradle of Russian Christianity, and by the end of the war, the Black Sea Region acquired a Christian identity. The same interplay of religion, politics, and culture has found new ground in Crimea today as its sacred monuments and ruins lie vulnerable to abuse by nationalist groups sparring over the land. *Christianizing Crimea* is the first English language work to analyze the Christian renewal in Crimea. Drawing on archives in Odessa, Simferopol, and St. Petersburg that to date have remained untapped by Western scholars, Kozelsky provides both a fascinating case study of past and present religious nationalism in Eastern Europe and an examination of the political conflicts and compromises endemic to holy places. She explores the diverse strategies of church expansion, the importance of Byzantine history and the Greek population, the assimilation of local pagan and Tatar traditions into sacred narratives, the crafting of Russian identity through print culture, and Crimea’s re-Christianizing in the post-Soviet era. Kozelsky’s unique approach joins the fields of contemporary history, religion, and archaeology to show how Crimea has been reshaped as a holy place. *Christianizing Crimea* will appeal to both scholars and general readers who are interested in past and current religious and political conflicts.

“A significant study that enhances scholarly understanding of Russian Orthodox nationalism in the nineteenth century ... based on an ambitious set of sources, involving a large published record of primary documents, as well as local and central archives.”—Christine D. Worobec, author of *Possessed: Women, Witches, and Demons in Imperial Russia* “This book will be of great interest to scholars interested in Russia as empire, in the development and dissemination of Russian Orthodox nationalism in the nineteenth century, and in the relationship between religion and empire in imperial Russia.... Since it deals to such an extent with the building of many of the sightseeing destinations of present-day Crimea, I would also recommend it to visitors to Crimea who seek a deeper understanding of the peninsula and its history more generally.” Heather J. Coleman, *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*