

THE MEDITERRANEAN VISIT AND THE BOOK OF THE TRAVELS OF THE RUSSIAN
MONK-TRAVELLER VASILY GRIGOROVICH-BARSKY IN THE FIRST HALF OF 18TH
CENTURY

*RUS RAHİP-GEZGİN VASILİY GRİGOROVIÇ-BARSKİ'NİN 18. YÜZYILIN İLKYARISINDA
AKDENİZ SEYAHATI VE SEYAHATNAMESİ*

ELNUR AĞAYEV*

Abstract: The interest of the Russians in the Mediterranean began with their visits to the Holy Land and to Orthodox centers in the region. This interest and relations continued to gain political dominance in the region, to obtain a share of regional trade, establish a faith partnership with the region, together with the asylum of Russian refugees in the different countries of the region. The Russian reverend-traveller Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, the subject of this research, travelled within the geography of Mediterranean for 23 years due to his interest in the Holy Land and in the Orthodox centers of faith. He travelled to almost all the countries with a Mediterranean coastline and particularly the Eastern Mediterranean, where he visited centres of faith, historical places, and educational institutions. He made observations regarding the social, cultural and political nature of the Mediterranean region which he noted down and he drew 148 pictures of the region. After his demise, his travel notes, drawings and the letters he wrote to his family and friends were compiled and published in 4 volumes. This study investigates the identity of Barsky, the reasons for his Mediterranean visit, his observations and the features of his travel book entitled, Travels of Barsky in the Holy Places of the East.

Keywords: Mediterranean • Monk-Traveller Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky • Holy Lands • Holy Places of East • Travel Book

Öz: Rusların Akdeniz’le ilgileri Kutsal Toprakları ve bölgede bulunan Ortodoks merkezlerini ziyaretleriyle başladı. Sonraki dönemde bu ilgi ve ilişkiler bölgede siyasi etkinlik kazanmak, bölge ticaretinden pay kapmak, bölge ile inanç ortaklığı ve Rus mültecilerin bölgenin değişik ülkelerine sığınmaları şeklinde devam etti. Çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan Rus rahip-gezgin Vasiliy Grigoroviç-Barski, Kutsal Topraklara ve Doğu’daki Ortodoksluğun inanç merkezlerine ilgisinden dolayı 23 yıl Akdeniz coğrafyasında seyahatlerde bulundu. Bu süre boyunca Akdeniz’e, özellikle Doğu Akdeniz’e kıyısı olan nerede ise tüm ülkeleri dolaştı. Bu geziler sırasında Barski, bölgenin inanç merkezlerini, tarihi mekânlarını, eğitim kurumlarını ziyaret etti. Akdeniz bölgesinin sosyal, kültürel ve siyasi yapısıyla ilgili gözlemlerde bulundu. Bu gözlemlerini notlarına aktardı ve aynı zamanda resim çizme yeteneğini de kullanarak bölge ile ilgili 148 resim çizdi. Vefatından sonra gezi notları, çizdiği resimler ve Akdeniz seyahatindeyken ailesine, dostlarına yazdığı mektupları bir araya getirilip 4 cilt kitap halinde yayımlandı. Çalışmada, Barski’nin kimliği, Akdeniz’e yaptığı seyahatinin nedenleri, Akdeniz bölgesinde yaptığı gözlemler, Doğunun Kutsal Yerlerine Ziyaret isimli seyahatnamesinin özellikleri irdelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akdeniz • Rahip-Gezgin Vasiliy Grigoroviç-Barski • Kutsal Topraklar • Doğu’nun Kutsal Mekânları • Seyahatname

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., European University of Lefke Faculty of Arts & Sciences Department of History, Lefke, Northern Cyprus. ☎ 0000-0002-1461-4834 | eagayev@eul.edu.tr

This article is an extended version of the paper presented at the *First International Symposium on Mediterranean World Studies (20-21 October 2016)* organized by Near East University (Northern Cyprus).

Introduction

The interest of Russian in the Mediterranean originated prior to effective political activities in the region during the 18th century. There is also a travel book telling the travel of the Russian monk Danil to the Mediterranean in pilgrimage to the Holy Lands in the 12th century¹. The visits of Russians to Orthodox centres located in the Mediterranean region continued in subsequent centuries².

In addition to religious belief, both political and commercial reasons for the visits of Russian people to the Mediterranean began to occur in the 18th century. One of the targets for Russia as it concentrated on imperial politics in the early 18th century under Peter I was to be powerful in the Mediterranean. The Russian focus on the region was to obtain a share of Mediterranean trade, facilitate the visits of Russian nationals to the Holy Lands and have political power in the region. Having won wars with the Ottomans in the 18th century, at the end of the century the Russian Empire had opened consulates in the Mediterranean³.

The Mediterranean was a shelter for Russian refugees and immigrants at different periods. In considering Cyprus, the third largest island in the region, 1125 people from the Doukhobors, who were in conflict with the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church took shelter in Cyprus between 1898-1899⁴, as well as around 1500 White Russians, who had to leave Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution⁵. There are also many similar examples from other parts of the Mediterranean.

In accord with the examples above, the interest of Russian in the Mediterranean geography was primarily based upon 4 elements: 1. The interest in the Holy Lands in the region and belief partnerships with the Orthodox community; 2. The aim to benefit from the commercial activity in the region; 3. Emigrants taking refuge in the region; 4. The aim to be a part of the regional political structure. Except for the third reason, these remain today determinants in the region for the relations of the Russian Federation with the Mediterranean.

The Russian⁶ Monk-Traveller Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, the subject of this study, visited the region due to his interest in the Holy Lands and Orthodox partnership, for the first reason given above.

¹ For the travel of the Russian Orthodox monk Danil to the Holy Lands, see ВЕНЕВИТИНОВ 1885.

² For Russian travellers who visited the Mediterranean in different centuries and published their notes and travel books, see МЕЛЕТИЙ 1798; ВЕШНЯКОВ 1813; ЛОПАРЕВА 1889; ЛЕОНТОВИЧ 1896.

³ As an example, the consulate opened by Russia in Cyprus, see ÖZKUL 2013; DEMIRYÜREK 2015. For the Mediterranean policy of Russia see THEOPHILUS 2002.

⁴ KING 2003.

⁵ AĞAYEV 2015.

⁶ Although Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky, who was given in this study in relation to his Mediterranean travel and his travel book, was from the region of the Ukraine, he is indicated as a Russian, which requires an explanation. Until the 1917 October Revolution, the regions of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarussia and their citizens were respectively named *Big Russian* (Великая Русь), *Little Russian* (Малая Русь) and White Russian (Белая Русь). After the 1917 Revolution, White Russia became Belarussia (Белоруссия), Big Russia to Russia and Little Russia to Ukraine. Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky was from "Little Russia" or the Ukrainian.

Who was Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky?⁷

Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky was born in the city of Kiev under the Russian Empire on the 1st (12 as in the new calendar) of January 1701. His grandfather Ivan Grigorovich had lived in the town of Bar, which was first a part of Polish Kingdom and then became a part of Podolsk Guberniya Mogilgev district. In the mid-17th century, he had to move to “Little Russia” due to the wars in the region. The father of Vasily, Grigory had moved to the city of Kiev⁸. Vasily had taken the surname of Barsky with reference to the city of his grandfather.

According to Barsky, his father, a merchant, loved “Russian manuscripts and church hymns”. However, he was prejudice towards scientists as “they were hard working with pride, arrogance, popular, jealous etc.” and he wanted his son to be a merchant rather than a scientist. At that point, the mother of Barsky helped in convincing his father of Barsky’s need for education⁹.

Barsky obtained his primary education at home. From 1708, he began taking lessons from the tutors of the Kiev Academy of Theology. Between 1715-1723, he was a student in the Kiev- Mogilian Academy, where some of his school friends later become famous authors and statesmen (S. Todorsky, S. Kulyabko, M. Kozachinsky, etc). Barsky learned logic and philosophy in the Latin class of this school, yet he did not continue his education at the academy after 1723, he gave his health as the reason for this. He left Kiev on 23rd July 1723 with his friend Ustin Lenitsky to take the

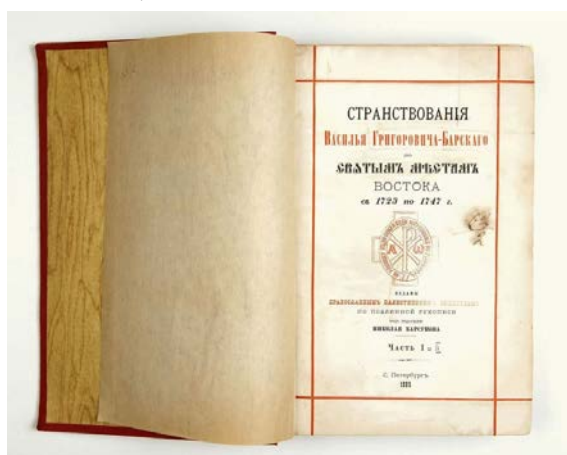


Fig. 1. The first volume of the Travel Book printed in 1885

treatment in Lviv. His father then sent calling for his return. However, Barsky wrote a letter after a short while and asked forgiveness from his father by saying that he would go to Lviv and even further away and that God was with him¹⁰. Barsky enrolled in the Jesuit Academy in Lviv with his friend as uniate. When they were found not to be uniate, they were dismissed from the Academy¹¹. Barsky did not stop but he was not getting used to being a reverend. According to his brother Ivan, Vasily had always since his childhood been interested in science and painting as well as traveling to foreign countries¹².

⁷ The work that comprehensively describes the life and travels of Vasily Grigorovich Barsky are his own travel notes. Barsukov, who published these travel notes as 4 volumes added a comprehensive summary in the introduction to the book describing the life and travels of Barsky, which is important for understanding his life and travels. See the chapter explaining the life of Barsky, the introduction and other chapters of the aforementioned study. See Барский 1885, I-XXXVI. There are some studies related to Barsky: Аскоченский 1854; Барсуков 1885; Гиляревский 1889; Греков 1892.

⁸ Барский 1885, I.

⁹ Барский 1885, II.

¹⁰ Барский 1885, III.

¹¹ Чеснокова 2006, 104-105.

¹² Барский 1885, II.

After Basky and Lenitsky were dismissed from the university in Lviv, they did not have any specific plans but wandering around the world. They found that the Russian monk Stefan Protansky's wife had passed away and he wanted to go to Rome. They said that they wanted to travel with him, which he accepted. Their aim was not specifically to visit Rome but go to Bari and visit the grave of Nikolay Mirlikiyski. They did not have so much money but they trusted in God. Both left Lviv on 23rd April 1724 with Protansky to reach Rome¹³. Thus, the travel of Barsky to the Holy Places of East from this date until 1747, over the course of 23 years, began.

The Travel Book Called Travels of Barsky in the Holy Places of the East

Publication of the Travel Book

The important work of Barsky, who travelled in the Mediterranean for 23 years particularly to the almost all spots in the Eastern Mediterranean, contains his notes from his visits to the holy places in the East, his letters and drawings. The travel notes of Barsky were not published while he was alive. His handwritten notes were kept in his mother's home until 1794 and people who wanted to have copies as it had become so popular in the Ukraine, copied from them by hand. Ruban, the first publisher of the book, noted the importance of this work in the Ukraine: "*There was no place and house without the manuscripts of [Barsky] in Little Russia [Ukraine] and neighbourhood cities. This book, which was a source of financial income for people had been copied in almost every Russian schools as hand-written manuscripts*¹⁴".

However the book was not published due to the death of the publisher or for some other reason regardless of the initiative taken to publish. Finally, the book was first prepared for publication by the publisher B. G. Ruban and G. A. Potyemkin in 1778 and it was published by the Russia Academy of Sciences. The book was then re-published in 1785, 1788, 1793, 1800, and 1819 by the Russia Academy of Sciences¹⁵. Additionally, chapters of the book were published separately in various journals in Russia from 1847¹⁶.

The travel notes of Barsky and 137 selected drawings from 148 drawings, letters and documents were made-ready for publication by N. Barsukov to a certain plan, eliminating the insufficiencies of previous publications in 1884 and was published by *the Russian Empire Palestine Orthodox Society* in 4 volumes between 1885-1887¹⁷. Based on the edition of 1885-1887, the book was then published in facsimile in Moscow between 2004-2005¹⁸. The Cyprus part of Barski's travelogue was published in the third volume of *The Sources of the Cyprus History*, prepared by Alexander D. Grishin¹⁹. Two studies of the Cyprus part of Barsky's travel book have been published²⁰.

¹³ Барский 1885, IV-V.

¹⁴ Бегунов 1988, 228.

¹⁵ Бегунов 1988, 228.

¹⁶ Барский 1885, I, LXV.

¹⁷ Барский 1885-1887.

¹⁸ Барский 2004-2005.

¹⁹ Grishin 1996.

²⁰ See Ağayev 2016; 2019.

Barsky's Travel Spots in the Travel Book

Volume I, (until the end of 1727)

Barsky together with his fellow travellers Lenitsky and Protansky travelled to Košice from the northeast of the Carpathians and then to Pest from the Erlau, where the Orthodox Serbians helped him and he planned to reach Venice via Serbia and Dalmatia. According to Barsky, “good” people recommended him to go to Venice via Vienna, and they followed this recommendation and departed from Pest for Vienna. Barsky noted that when they entered the territories of Germany, the community did not show any hospitality to them, yet he was relieved when they told him that there were no “thieves in their territories”. He reached Vienna on the 1st of June 1724 and he obtained permission from the papal authorities and the ambassador of Venice to enter the country. He reached Venice via Styria and Carinthia, where he saw the sea for the first time.

The day following his arrival, he went to the St. George Church of the Orthodox. He needed Greek but he did not speak the language. He started to learn Greek from the Greek children, who went to the church school and knew the Latin language. He was already competent in Latin. He contacted the teachers and discussed belief with them. After staying two days in Venice, he arrived at Loreto via Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, Pesaro, Fano, Ancona and along the coast of the Adriatic.



Fig. 2. The settlement places in Mediterranean which were visited by Barsky
(<http://www.geographicguide.net/europe/maps-europe/mediterranean.htm>)

They had a crossroad before them: To reach Rome through a shortcut or continue to Bari. He chose to go on to the Bari. They were exhausted moving in hot temperatures. Barsky lost his permission paper on the way. He expressed the situation as “being without hands for a human, a weapon for a soldier, wings for birds, leaves for trees”. He arrived at Bari after 9-days of intense travel. He visited the tomb of St. Christos Nikolay and prayed there with pain in his legs. What he told was that his prayers were answered, there was no pain was left in his legs and he found his permission paper.

Yet he was still not lucky, he became sick and got a fever. Without waiting for his recovery, his friend Lenitsky left for Rome. Barsky was alone in a foreign place, a “sad and sick” person. He could

not communicate with society regardless of his knowledge of Latin, since his Latin was the Latin of literature, which the public did not use. After his recovery, he continued to travel and arrived in Naples. He then left Naples on the road for Rome, where he arrived on the 29th of August 1724. He started sightseeing from his first day; he visited the churches, the historical monuments and made observations about the financial and moral lives of people. He had the chance to experience the hospitality of the Pope and left Rome after 3 weeks with amazement.

He returned to Venice via Florence, Bologna, and Ferrara. He then planned to return to his country via Dalmatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. He wanted to go Zadar by ship and return from there. However, he couldn't find any captain to take him to Zadar for "*the sake of God*". He stayed there until October. Then winter arrived with cold weather and winds. He decided to stay in Venice for the winter where he stayed in the Greek Church. He worshipped there and tried to learn Greek in his free time. The Greeks of the same belief had taken him to the lessons in Church, as they liked him.

By 1725, the summer had arrived in Italy. With the summer, Barsky put away the idea of leaving Italy and decided to visit the holy places of the East. The teachers at the Greek school had a big influence on his decision. Therefore, Barsky was in need of a guide, which he would find through a coincidence. He met with the former pontiff of the Petersburg Tikbin Monastery, Fuvim Gursky. When he found someone with the knowledge of the area, he thought that he could visit the grave of Jesus in Jerusalem. A Serbian Captain Vukola, who worked for a wealthy Venetian with many ships, promised to take them to Corfu. After all their preparations, Barsky and Gursky left Venice in March 1725 for Corfu. They had a very challenging journey. They were hungry. Considering the observations he made on board the ship, Barsky stated: Latin people loved Jewish and Turkish more than us, Orthodoxies.

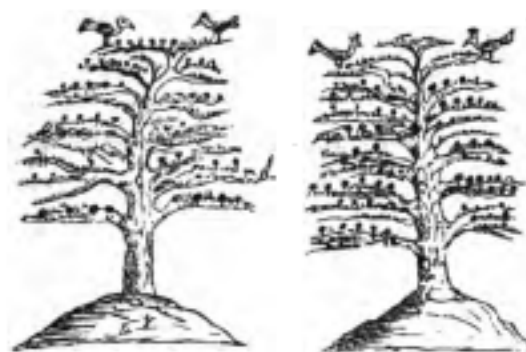


Fig. 3. The picture of tree and bird drawn by Barsky (Барский 1886, 81)

On their arrival in Corfu, Barsky and Gursky loved the city and decided to stay at the church. In early May, they continued their journey "*for the name of Jesus*" and arrived at Chios and Mykonos, which was under the domination of the Turks. As they knew that Turkey was in conflict with Russia, they were scared to come ashore. Yet when they come ashore, they saw that it was not as scary as they had anticipated. When the Turkish officers asked them "*where they came from and we're going*", Barsky answered all those questions on behalf of himself and his friend. After the control of their permission, they were allowed to pass.

When they were in Chios, they discovered that the Jerusalem Patriarch Crisano (patriarch between 1701-1731) was there and they decided to pay him a visit. They asked for help to go to Jerusalem. Their new destination was Mount Athos. Gursky died when they were on Chios and now Barsky was alone. One of the Greek passengers that he travelled with helped him and they even travelled to Thessaloniki.

Barsky visited the churches of Mount Athos on foot and prayed there. He then returned to Solun

(Thessaloniki) on the 1st February 1726 and stayed there until September. Philanthropists helped him and he went to Jaffa by ship at the end of September. Their ship also for a short period visited Rhodes and Cyprus.

Barsky together with other poor people took caravan travel, where they travelled with camels and carts. They were robbed and beaten by the Arabs on the road between Ramla and Jerusalem. Barsky, then finally arrived where he wanted to be, Jerusalem. He worshipped there and stayed for the year 1726. He visited Jordan and the Dead Sea as well as Bethlehem.

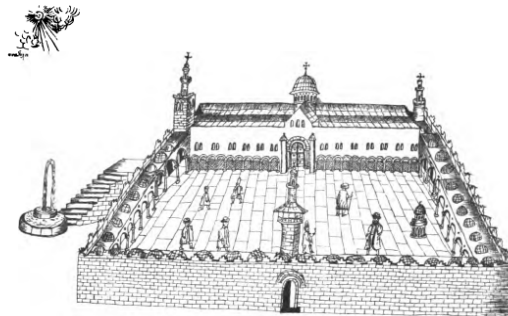


Fig. 4. A mosque in Damascus
(Барский 1886, 236a)

He wanted to visit the Sinai peninsula. On 17th April, he took ship, however, the wind took them to Cyprus. Barsky, who considered this to be the will of God, stayed there at the church and in the city for almost 3 months and then left for Cairo. The Archpriest Aleksandrisky Kosma showed him mercy and allowed him to stay there. Barsky then began to wait for the conditions to mature for Sinai. He visited the churches, made drawings and aimed at improving his Greek. He liked the priests in Cairo and they had good communications. From time to time, they wandered around together in Cairo. The beauty and size of the city made him amazed. He observed the traditions of the community during his visit lasting almost 8 months.

Volume II, (Between 1728-1744, until May)

He spent the Epiphany of 1728 in Cairo, where he attended religious ceremonies. Then he had the chance to visit the Sinai peninsula. After his visit to all the holy places, he left Egypt via Dimyat.

After his visit to Sidon, he then arrived in Damascus, where he met Muslims, Catholics, Uniates, Jewish, and Orthodox. However, the number of Orthodox were few with not so strong beliefs. He could not see the Archpriest after İstanbul. He arrived at Antakya, where he met with Greek merchants from Plovdiv in Bulgaria. According to his own statement, he could not find a church at the old Antakya Patriarch center. Barsky noted that Antakya was like a village in 1728. The Muslims could not stand seeing Christians and they tried to get rid of them from Antakya.

Barsky wanted to go to İstanbul, yet he could not take off for a long journey due to his sickness. He decided then to visit Aleppo, which was closer. He saw a caravan camel trail at Belen and he joined them where they would all go to Aleppo. As he could not find any shelter there, he went to the market place and stayed with a merchant. His sickness delayed his leaving Aleppo. At the same time, the birth of Jesus was approaching, Barsky wanted to leave Aleppo as he thought that there was no Orthodox priest for a religious ceremony. Therefore, he left for Idlib, where the Orthodox lived. He couldn't find any Greek priests there; he had a ceremony with the Christian Arabs.

He welcomed the year of 1729 at St. Georgia Church near to Tripoli. He then continued his journey following his slight recovery and arrived in Jerusalem via Tripoli, Nazareth, and Samara. A gang on his way to Jerusalem had robbed him. They had not only beat him but also taken away his clothes since he did not have any money to give the Muslim Arabs for his protection.

He acted like a holy dervish for God and arrived at the holy place on the 23rd March 1729. After

the Easter, he visited Bethlehem and Jaffa, then Acre. Then he returned to Nazareth on the 15th May. He visited all the historical sites from Galilee to the Jordan. He climbed Mount Carmel and then returned by ship to Tripoli.

He then wanted to go back to Kiev. He visited the places that he did not expect. He wanted to now visit İstanbul, which was on the way to Russia. He decided to stay in Tripoli with the thinking that people desire and God helps.



Fig. 5. The Needle of Cleopatra

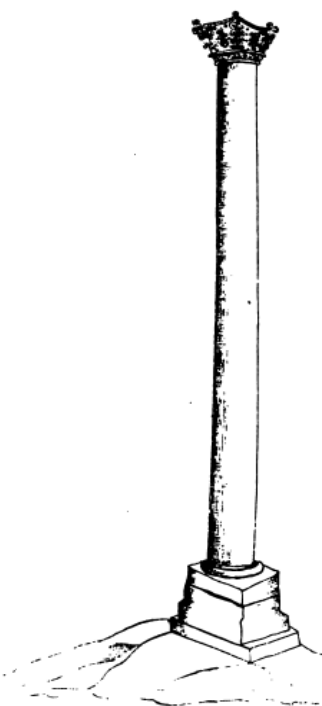


Fig. 6. The Column of Pompey

There was a Greek Orthodox school in this city founded by the Archpriest Sylvester that provided education to deactivate the rivalries of the church of Jesus. Barsky stayed there and continued his studies of the Greek language, which continued with interruptions for 5 years. He then went to Egypt and returned.

In 1731 his teacher sent him to the island of Patmos. He continued his education as well as his worship services and help. He heard that a Russian had provided religious services there prior to him. He returned to Tripoli. He visited the island of Samos on his way back and visited the holy places of Christianity. Also, he climbed the mountain which Pythagoras visited once. He visited the grave of his friend, with whom they climbed the mountain, and he met with the Archpriest Silvester.

There was a plague when he returned to Tripoli. The school was closed and students were forced accordingly to go to Damascus. In Damascus, Barsky met with a merchant called Spandon, who was on his

way to Russia because of his business and he sent a letter by this means to his family explaining the situation.

After Yakov was dismissed from the school due to his Greek propaganda, the school was left with no teacher and Barsky decided to go Patmos to continue his work. However, the priest did not want him to leave. He went to Haran via Jordan, and then returned to Damascus together with the Muslim pilgrims from Mecca. The visitors did not know that there was a Christian among them since Barsky looked like a dervish with his “*poor image and old clothes*”, in brief, a poor, miserable Turkish passenger. When he arrived in Damascus, he entered the Damascus mosque, which the Christians were not allowed to enter. Afterwards, he went to the archpriest.

Barsky got sick in Damascus and returned to Tripoli. Then he went to Cyprus for the second time. When the archpriest discovered he knew Latin, he recruited him for the Greek Orthodox school. In the same year, a big earthquake happened in Cyprus. He left Nicosia and visited on foot the holy places in Cyprus. But Barsky was in hurry to go to Patmos and make Greek research. Barsky stayed on the island from August 1736 and left Patmos after the Ottoman-Russia war started. He stayed there for a long time and in 1738, his friend, the monk of the Polish church in İstanbul visited him. He learned of his father’s loss when he was in Patmos.

In 1740, he discovered the tsarina had opened a Greek School in the Ukraine, whose principal was his friend from the Academy, Sidor Todorsk. In April 1741, he wrote a letter to his friend in Greek and asked to be employed. In May 1742, he got a positive reply, and he was called for a religious duty to the Russian embassy in Istanbul.

On 26th September 1743, Barsky left on a ship to İstanbul and stayed in Ephesus for a month and visited Chios. He arrived in İstanbul at the end of 1743. He divided the money that he earned there into three: he bought himself clothes and books; he sent a part of it to the church in Patmos and saved the small amount left for any possible situations.

Volume III, (May- November 1744)

He welcomed in the year of 1744 in İstanbul. At first, he was under the control of the Janissary but then he was wandering alone. He met with priests and teachers. The ancient Greek buildings amazed him. He observed the lives and traditions of people in the city. He was not happy that the ambassador was keeping him as a reverend.

While he was waiting to go back to Ukraine, he went to Mount Athos and made religious services. The travel book *Travels of Barsky in the Holy Places of the East* ended here in 1744 with his Mount Athos visit.

Volume IV, (Annex, letters, documents, drawings)

For unknown reasons, the notes from the last 3 years of his life are missing. Hence, this period can be interpreted and reconstructed from his letters and drawings. From his letters and drawings, it is understood that during this period he visited, Thessaloniki, Trikala, Arta, Metéora, Patras, Kalavryta, Athens and Crete before he returned to İstanbul in 1746. The ambassador of Russia in İstanbul had changed. The new ambassador A. I. Neplyuyev accused him of being guilty of Graecism and a traitor to national interests. He was afraid of imprisonment and so he left İstanbul to prove his innocence.

In Budapest, on his way back to the Ukraine, he received another letter of invitation to teach Greek at the Greek School in Ukraine. The wish of Barsky was to reach his country in a healthy condition after he became sick in Budapest. On 5th September 1747, he arrived in his country after a 24-year gap. He passed away after a month on 7th October 1747 in Kiev, where he is buried.

Features of the Travel Book

When the features of his travel book are described, the way of note-taking employed by Barsky should also be taken into consideration. Barsky kept his notebook with him during his travel. He noted down his observations, as well as his thoughts on what he heard. Then he expanded his notes and wrote them up. As indicated above, Barsky was interested in drawing since he was a child and he improved his skills over subsequent years. Therefore, it is possible to imagine that in addition to his notebook, he also carried a drawing book with him.

Barsky always aimed at relating his travels in this way: firstly he provides information on the physical structure and religious sites in the area, and identified the location of religious centers particularly the Christian sites, and noted the exterior and interior structure of a monastery; gave information on the priests and the religious services and explained the historical background of the monasteries. For example, he noted the establishment of a church as follows:

“The Queen got sick in the Christianity period. They thought that the mountain air

would be good for her sickness, so they constructed a building. The Queen lived there for winter and summer and there was no cure for her. In her dream, she saw that there was water on the right of the mountain and she would recover if she would bathe there. The Queen went there in the morning and recovered. Therefore they built a monastery there²¹.

While he delivered his observations, Barsky also indicated the attitudes of the Ottoman administration towards the monasteries, priests, society and particularly the non-Muslim communities. He stated brief information concerning Muslim religious sites. There was only one drawing described as a Mosque among all of his drawings.

For instance, he explained Nicosia in the following manner:

“Nicosia is the most important and biggest city of Cyprus. Just like all Cyprus, Turks control here. The Archbishopric and governance are in Nicosia. The city was much beautiful during the Venetian period, which is possible to understand from the historical sites. When God called the Turkish people here via war, they destroyed the houses and beautiful castles that existed before them. Some of them still exist and vary on the basis of their construction features.

... one of the protected sites is Hagia Sophia. Built with beautiful stones, you can see it from the outside of Nicosia. Turks converted it into a mosque and they worship here. No Christian can enter there freely. Therefore I cannot say anything about the interior beauties of the church. But I heard how beautiful the inside is from the Turkish people that get work done.

... Adobe houses on cement foundations are very common here. Very important and wealthy people live here as well as merchants. There are also Turkish, Christian as well as Catholic and Armenian people. There are 9 churches within the city and a lot of Turkish mosques, which were converted from churches. There are French and Armenian churches²².

Another aspect that Barsky was interested in were the products of the region. He also assessed the products and their role in trade. He made observations on economic life, how people earned their lives, products, and cuisine. He also made observations about the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of people.

He described the island of Cyprus:

“The island is big, glorious and rich. There were grape trees. They had wine with good taste and sweet. These wines are generally sent to Venice and other Italian cities. Also, there are many carobs and the merchants sent these to other countries by ship²³.

For example, he described Limassol in the following way:

“The city is small with not so durable buildings and it is weird. There are not so many stone houses. Many houses are from adobe with the earth-sheltered roof. The city is surrounded by mountains and placed on a wide, flat and beautiful valley. There are vine-

²¹ Барский 1886, 245-246.

²² Барский 1885, 397-398.

²³ Барский 1885, 275.

yards around the city and olive, date, grape, pear, lemon, citrus and various other trees, which are not cultivated in our country. There are also vineyards²⁴.

As indicated above, Barsky drew 148 drawings but only 137 of them have survived to today. His drawings match his writings. The drawings of religious centers were reflected as if he was in a much higher location. Barsky did not only draw the religious centers but also trees, birds, cities, ships sailing in the sea. All of these drawings showed that Barsky did not restrict himself to just religious subjects in his drawings.

In addition to his experiences, Barsky did not always benefit from Ukrainian during his travel. He used Ukrainian when he encountered people from Russia and the Ukraine. While the Latin language, which he learned during his education in the Ukraine, was very useful to him. He used this language during his visit to Italy and its surroundings. Although his Latin knowledge was of the Latin of literature unlike the Latin spoken by society, so he had problems; on the other hand his knowledge was somewhat useful for him.

He could not speak Greek. He tried to learn Greek during his travels and succeeded. He understood the significance of the Greek language during his visits to the Orthodox centers in the Greek islands and hence he started to learn. Especially when he visited Cairo and planned his visit to Sinai, he started to learn Greek. He improved his skills in Greek in Beirut at the orthodox Greek Education center and continued this in Patmos. In 1735, with his arrival to Cyprus, his knowledge of Greek was at the level of a teacher. At the end of his travels, he was invited to teach Greek in the Greek education centers located in his own country.

In addition to these languages, Barsky was also competent in Arabic and Turkish, which were at the elementary rather than an advanced level.

Conclusion

There might be different perspectives towards the travel notes of Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky. This book is a significant resource to assess the Middle East and the Mediterranean from Russia and the Russian perspective in terms of belief, architecture, nature, and ethnic identity and language. The publication of this travel book in 1885-1887 by the Empire Palestine Orthodox Society²⁵, an important center in terms of the Middle East policy and Russia Oriental Science in the Russian Empire in the 19th century indicated Russian people understood the importance of the book. The publication of the facsimile of the book between 2004-2005 in Russia shows such awareness is still maintained.

Similar to Russia, this book is also important for the Mediterranean states. This book permits assessments to be made of the religions, architecture, nature, ethnic identity and language structure of the 18th century Mediterranean, providing much data.

This travel book has a separate importance for the Ottoman history researchers, as this book provides the reader with the perspective of “another” travelling in 18th-century Ottoman geography towards the actions, governance, public relations, as well as the perception of non-Muslims for the Ottomans. Both Barsky as well as the society own such a perspective. Of course, there is no such

²⁴ Барский 1885, 273-274.

²⁵ For more information on Middle East policy and the Russia Oriental Science of this society, see Крылов – Сорокина 2007.

claim that the information given is completely true or false. But it is an undeniable fact that there was a different perspective towards the Ottoman.

Of course, the “*enlivening*” activities of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean world should be taken into consideration and assessed accordingly. The impression made by the administration upon “*the other*” should also be taken into consideration. Such concern would be helpful for many researchers in understanding the reasons for many problems in subsequent periods in the context of the non-Muslims.

The work of Barsky is a travel note and travel book. When analyzed correctly, it makes a crucial contribution to research on the 18th-century Mediterranean world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ağayev 2015 E. Ağayev, *Kıbrıs'tan Geçen Beyaz Ruslar*. Lefkoşa 2015.
- Ağayev 2016 E. Ağayev, "Osmanlı Kıbrıs'nda Gezen Bir Rus Rahip-Gezgin: Vasiliy Grigoroviç-Barski". *Osmanlı Döneminde Kıbrıs Uluslararası Sempozyumu*, 9-11 Ekim 2015. İstanbul (2016) 250-264.
- Ağayev 2019 E. Ağayev, "Ottoman Nicosia from the Perspective of the Russian Monk and Traveller V. G. Barsky". Eds. M. Demiryürek, S. B. Smith, M. N. Michael, A. E. Özkul. *Studies on Ottoman Nicosia: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Early British Period*. İstanbul (2019) 219-230.
- Demiryürek 2015 M. Demiryürek, "The Consulate of Russia in Cyprus in the Later 18th and Early 19th Century". XVI. *Türk Tarih Kurumu Kongresi, Ankara 20-24 Eylül 2010. Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler IV/2* (2015) 715-723.
- Grishin 1996 A. D. Grishin, *A Pilgrim's Account of Cyprus: Bars'kyj's Travels in Cyprus (Sources for the History of Cyprus)* 3. Greece and Cyprus Research Center 1996.
- King 2003 C. King, "A Courteous and Well-Conducted Community': The Doukhobors in Cyprus 1898-99". *Annual Review of the Cyprus Research Centre XXIX* (2003) 255-277.
- Özkul 2013 A. E. Özkul, "The Consuls and Their Activities in Cyprus under the Ottoman Administration (1571-1878)". *Turkish Studies-International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 8/2 (2013) 268-269.
- Theophilus 2002 C. P. Theophilus, *Russian-Ottoman Relations in the Levant (The Dashkov Archive)*. Minnesota 2002.
- Аскоченский 1854 В. И. Аскоченский, *В. Григорович-Барский, знаменитый путешественник XVIII в.* Киев 1854.
- Барский 1885 В. Григорович-Барский, *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барскаго по святымъ местамъ Востока съ 1723 по 1747 г.* Издание по подлинной рукописи подъ редакцію Н. Барсукова. - Православный Палестинский Сборник. часть I. С.-Петербургъ 1885.
- Барский 1885-1887 В. Григорович-Барский, *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барскаго по святымъ местамъ Востока съ 1723 по 1747 г.* Издание по подлинной рукописи подъ редакцію Н. Барсукова. - Православный Палестинский Сборник. часть I-IV. С.-Петербургъ 1885-1887.
- Барский 1886 В. Григорович-Барский, *Странствования Василья Григоровича-Барскаго по святымъ местамъ Востока съ 1723 по 1747 г.* Издание по подлинной рукописи подъ редакцію Н. Барсукова. - Православный Палестинский Сборник. часть II. С.-Петербургъ 1886.
- Барский 2004-2005 В. Григорович-Барский, *Странствования по святымъ местамъ Востока. 1723-1727. Часть I-III.* Союз писателей России; Подгот. текста к переизданию В. В. Павленко; Отв. ред. Г. С. Баранкова. М.: Ч. I. - 2004. - 424 с.; Ч. II. - 2005. - 336 с.; Ч. III. - 2005. - 349 с.
- Барсуков 1885 Н. П. Барсуков, *Жизнь и труды В. Г. Барскаго*. С.-Петербургъ 1885.
- Бегунов 1988 Ю. К. Бегунов, "Григорович-Барский Василий". *Словарь русского языка XVIII века.* Институт русской литературы и языка. Ответственный редактор словаря - А. М. Панченко. М. 1988. с. 228.
- Веневитинов 1885 М. А. Веневитинов (ред.), *Житие и хождения Даниила, Русские земли*

- изумена (1106-1107 гг.). Православный Палестинский Сборник, С.-Петербург 1885.*
- Вешняков 1813 И. И. Вешняков, *Путевыя записки во святыи градъ Иерусалимъ и въ окрестности онаго Калужской губернии дворянъ Вешняковыхъ и Мядьинскаго купца Новикова въ 1804 и 1805 годахъ.* Москва 1813.
- Гиляревский 1889 А. К. Гиляревский, *Рус. путешественник по святымъ местам В. Григорович-Барский.* Москва 1889.
- Греков 1892 Ф. К. Греков, *Жизнь и странствования В. Григоровича-Барского.* С.-Петербург 1892.
- Крылов – Сорокина 2007 А. Крылов – Н. Сорокина, *Императорское Православное Палестинское Общество и отечественное востоковедение.* Москва 2007.
- Леонтович 1896 Ф. И. Леонтович, *Хожденье архимандрит Агрефенья обители Пресвятой Богородицы (около 1370 года).* Православный Палестинский Сборник, С.-Петербург 1896. вып. 48. т. 16. вып. 3.
- Лопарева 1889 Х. М. Лопарева (под ред.) *Хождение инока Зосима.* т. VIII, вып. 3, Православный Палестинский Сборник, С.-Петербург 1889.
- Мелетий 1798 Мелетий (иеромонах), *Путешествие в Иерусалим.* С. Петербург 1798.
- Чеснокова 2006 Н. П. Чеснокова, “Григорович-Барский”. *Православная энциклопедия.* Том XIII. Москва 2006.