



Elena ASTAFIEVA

*Stay at Collegium de Lyon :
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BIOGRAPHY :

Elena Astafieva received her MA in History from the Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU, Moscow), and her PhD in History and Sciences of Religion from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE-Sorbonne, Paris). She specializes in 19th-century Russian History with a focus on the role of religion in the Russian Empire. Her dissertation "L'Empire russe et le monde catholique: entre les représentations et les pratiques, 1772-1905" examines the attempts of the monarchy to regulate national and denominational problems in the country. This dissertation will soon be published as a book entitled *Entre le Tsar et le Pape: l'Empire russe et le monde catholique, 1772-1905*. As a Postdoctoral Fellow at EHESS and at the European and Harriman Institutes of Columbia University, she has started working on "The Russian presence in Palestine, 1840s-1920s." This project studies the interactions among Russian diplomacy, science, and Orthodoxy in this area, as well as Russia's influence in the Eastern Mediterranean – in particular on the local population. In April 2009, she organized at Columbia University an international conference on *Great Powers in the Holy Land: From Napoleon to the Balfour Declaration*.

Since 2007, Elena has presented a seminar at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes entitled "Intellectuals in the Russian World, 19th-20th Centuries".

In addition, she has been collaborating with two research groups in France: the Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités (GSRL, EPHE-CNRS), and the Centre d'études des mondes russe, caucasien et centre-européen (CERCEC, EHESS-CNRS). At the Collegium of Lyons, Elena Astafieva will continue her research on these topics.

Research project at Collegium de Lyon :

La présence de la Russie orthodoxe dans l'Orient chrétien : Aspects religieux, politiques et sociaux (1847 - 1917).

The purpose of my research is to study different modalities of Russian presence in the Middle East during the 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly in Palestine-Syria, which was on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire, while simultaneously being the spiritual center of three major world religions. More precisely, the aim is to explore the activities of the institutions - diplomatic, religious, charitable, cultural, etc. - through which Russia exercised an influence in this region.

Three major questions will be investigated in order to:

- clarify Russia's goals in these Ottoman territories, which were areas of intense competition among the European Great Powers and among all the major Christian denominations;

- study the strategic means used by Russia to exercise its influence in Palestine-Syria - in particular within the local population;

- understand the process of construction of the Empire itself beyond its borders through a combination of diplomatic, religious, scientific practices put in place in Palestine-Syria by Russian agents.