

Byzantine Catholics and the Middle East

It is quite true that there is something transitory and provisory in the actual situation of the Uniate church, but the goal for which one must work is not the absorption of this church by the Latin church, but the absorption of the Greek church in its entirety by the Greek-Uniate church. Our efforts should not aim at causing some thousands of individuals to embrace the Latin rite, but [rather] at making some seventy million [non-Catholic] Christians enter the Catholic church.¹

Just as Russian hostility prevented Gagarin from promoting church union in his native land, opposition by French Jesuits limited Gagarin's effectiveness in Paris. After publishing two large articles and two book reviews in the 1859 volume of *Études*, only two book reviews by Gagarin appeared during the years 1860 and 1861. He was increasingly estranged from the journal he had so recently founded. The problem was a sharp disagreement between Gagarin and French Jesuits over the direction of *Études*. While Gagarin saw the journal as a tool for achieving union with Orthodoxy, his coeditor, Father Daniel, strove to broaden the journal's focus and to appeal to a wider French audience. After a time, when it had become apparent that these two visions were impossible to reconcile, Father Daniel decided to force Gagarin and the other Russian Jesuits from the journal's editorial board.² The danger that Father Daniel's coup de main might succeed was increased by Gagarin's isolation in the Jesuit order: only a handful of Jesuits, either in the company at large or on the editorial committee of *Études*, was really interested in issues involving Russia or Orthodoxy.

Among those uninterested in Orthodoxy was the French provincial, Michel Fessard, a figure who disdained Gagarin. Fessard thought Gagarin difficult to work with, a man of "irascible character" and "acerbic tongue."³

Even Beckx, in response to Gagarin's decision to undertake a retreat at Liesse in January of 1860, wrote:

Yes, my Father, the Divine Master you love, who has called and added you to his service in the company, has spoken to [your] heart: one recognizes this in the way you acknowledge your defects and especially the resolution that you have to work with all your strength and with the help of divine grace to become a contemplative man [homme intérieur]. Doubtlessly, that is a work for every religious of the company, but this obligation is somewhat more urgent for you, my Father; because, for your very extensive activity to be constantly and entirely directed to God's greater glory, it must be directed by a spirit of faith and by a powerful interior life; and also because God alone can tame the tongue of man.⁴

Because of his French orientation and a personal dislike for Gagarin, Fessard assumed that the best way to deal with the conflict between Daniel and Gagarin was to separate the two. Thus, in autumn 1860, Gagarin was sent to Strasbourg to work in pastoral ministry. He now feared that *Études* was being taken from him. Gagarin wrote to Beckx that he was the "sole Russian against four French." He complained about "secret intrigues" against him. He suggested that l'Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode be suppressed and replaced with a new organization in which Balabin and Martynov would serve as members and not advisors.⁵ Beckx responded to Gagarin that there were no real problems with *Études*. Martynov and Balabin would be able to replace him while he was in Strasbourg. Beckx also advised Gagarin to remain calm. He noted that Gagarin had been heard to say with respect to an opponent, "One must remove that Father!"⁶

However, Gagarin's fears were not allayed. On 12 October 1860, attempting to separate *Études* from the French Jesuits, Gagarin sent another letter to Beckx. He now asked for permission to move l'Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode to Jerusalem. He observed that Jerusalem was the center of the East, the site of pilgrimages from Russia; in Jerusalem, he claimed, there was a possibility to meet and influence Russian monks, priests, even bishops, and to establish contacts with Old Believers. Gagarin also asserted that Russians no longer came to Paris.⁷ Beckx responded that, though he was favorable to an annual visit of two months to Jerusalem, since l'Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode had been established in

Paris, it would remain there barring some very grave development.⁸ This, of course, did not satisfy Gagarin. He left Paris without being on speaking terms with Fessard.⁹

The French Jesuits pressed their attempt to obtain control over *Études*. Some Jesuits complained to Fessard that the *Études* was too soft and compromising, others complained it was not very compromising and, as a result, was colorless and inferior to what Jesuits should produce. Father Fessard charged Father Daniel with drafting a memoir in support of *Études*; however the memoir backfired. Daniel ended his presentation by submitting his resignation. Fathers Mertian and Matignon voiced their support for *Études*. Fessard came to the conclusion that *Études* should continue and advised Beckx of that.¹⁰ Beckx agreed that *Études* would continue to exist and be dedicated to the work begun by Gagarin. On 25 January 1861, Father Mertian wrote to Gagarin in Strasbourg about the decision of Beckx:

The *Études* are not to be separated from l'Oeuvre des S. Cyrille, the Father General wishes that it be attached to you and as you would wish. There will be a collective directorship which will operate by majority vote. Fathers Balabin and Martynov are to be members of this group, but entirely *ad honores*. The voting members will be you, Fathers Matignon, Daniel, Dutau, and me.

Mertian went on to inform Gagarin that the directorship would contain a president, procurer, and librarian. Furthermore, there would be no superior other than the provincial, to whom the president would answer. Neither the president, nor the procurer, nor the librarian could act unilaterally; all decisions required approval of the directorship. Mertian concluded, "Thus, although the two works will not be truly separate, I do not see that they will have anything in common except for you, dear Father, who are a bright ring binding St. Cyrille to the *Études*."¹¹ Although Beckx's decision represented a formal victory for Gagarin, he feared that the peculiar composition of the directorship would reduce to zero his actual control over the journal. Gagarin's letter to Mertian, thanking the latter for his assistance in keeping the *Études* focused on Russian church union, fairly breathes resentment at the French Jesuits:

If one ever decides to write the history of *Études de théologie* and *l'Oeuvre des S. Cyrille* your letter of the 25th will certainly be one of the most curious pages of this history. It exceeds all that I would have

imagined. . . . We thus constitute a chapter: five titular canons, two honorary canons, and you, the oldest member. This is a marvel.¹²

Gagarin wrote to Beckx at the same time, not to thank him for his intervention in the conflict, but to state his fears that the *Études* would lose its original mission.¹³

To understand Gagarin's motive for transferring *l'Oeuvre des SS. Cyril et Méthode* to Jerusalem, we must look back at his 1859 trip to the Middle East. Early in 1859, *l'Oeuvre des Pèleringages* invited Gagarin to serve as chaplain on a pilgrimage to the Middle East. The invitation excited Gagarin, who said it "has hit me like a bomb."¹⁴ He asked Beckx for permission to accept the invitation; the approval was given on 22 January 1859.¹⁵ Gagarin wanted to see the Holy Land for two reasons. First, he saw the trip as a culmination of the Ignatian practice of mental prayer called "composition of place."¹⁶ By this, Gagarin meant that to truly understand the biblical texts, it was necessary to "transport oneself by thought to the place which serves as the setting for the evangelic writings." For Gagarin, it would be much easier to create this mental picture if he could actually see the place imagined. Secondly, he hoped to meet Russian pilgrims in the Holy Land and study the Byzantine rite. He wrote, "A mass of ideas has come to me on this subject. But I must first see what one can do. I should, however, say that Providence seems to be at work and is preparing something by it [his journey]."¹⁷ After leaving Paris in May 1859, Gagarin visited Beirut, Malta, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jordan, Jericho, Naples, Nazareth, Carmel, and many other famous pilgrimage sites. He returned to France on 19 July 1859.

In an article entitled "Trois mois en Orient," Gagarin commented on the status of the Catholic church in the Middle East.¹⁸ He argued that the Byzantine rite of the Catholic church was under attack from two directions. On one flank, the Orthodox church and "the ancient schism of Byzantium" threatened to separate the Byzantine Catholic church from Rome.¹⁹ On the other, Protestantism "works to seduce and corrupt" Byzantine Catholics.²⁰ To deal with this double threat, the Byzantine Catholics needed a strong clergy.

Gagarin believed that the problems confronting Byzantine Catholicism could be resolved by the establishment of better seminaries for the education of clergy and by the unification of all Arabic speakers in one church. According to Gagarin, in spite of differences in nationalities and

beliefs, Middle Easterners were linked by the Arabic language. If one could bring all Arabic speakers together in an Arabic church, one would change the historical direction of the entire region. "Give these men religious unity, as they already have unity of language, and you will immediately create a powerful nationality capable of playing a great role in the world."²¹ Gagarin proposed an Arabic church that would be a Byzantine rite Catholic church. With its creation, the Byzantine rite would again dominate most of the Middle East, just as it had in the past. Meanwhile the Maronite rite would flourish in Lebanon; other rites would be preserved so long as there remained congregations to practice them. Membership in a Byzantine rite would therefore be no obstacle to pan-Arabic unity. "Speaking all the same language, reading all the same books, possessing all the same literature, the same civilization, they would form an intelligent, sparkling, rich and powerful nation."²²

A great Arab church could not exist without a strong clergy, and such a clergy could only be created through proper education. Gagarin argued for the establishment of several different types of schools for the preparation of clergy. He supported the effort by *l'Oeuvre des Écoles d'Orient* to create a network of public and primary schools.²³ This work, which Gagarin called "a true crusade, a peaceful crusade," had already resulted in the creation of primary schools in Beirut, Bikfayya, Zahleh, and Sayda.²⁴

Colleges and seminaries also needed to be established "to prepare a clergy equal to its mission."²⁵ Colleges would be designed for the upper classes of Arabic society, while seminaries would cater to persons from all social backgrounds who wanted to enter the clergy. Gagarin pointed to the Jesuit college and seminary at Gaza as a model.²⁶ He also proposed a new school at Jerusalem "to combat the challenge of German theology."²⁷ He argued, "Two or three able professors would be sent to these places, they would quickly attract numerous disciples. After a few years one would have a center whence true exegesis could radiate throughout the world."²⁸ Though these seminaries would train indigenous Arab-speaking clergy, Gagarin hoped they would "plant some seeds of European civilization" and bring about the conversion of non-Christians and the Orthodox.²⁹

With the accomplishment of these things, the once-divided Arabic peoples would become unified in a single Arab church and become "the nucleus of a great Arabian and Christian nation." It goes without saying that Gagarin understood this church would be Catholic and under the authority of the pope.³⁰

Gagarin's article betrayed his habit of formulating vast programs promising speedy and dramatic results. On the basis of only three months in the Middle East, he had decided that the reform of education among the Byzantine Catholics would bring about the unification of all Arab peoples into a Byzantine rite Catholic church. This would be accomplished by sending "two or three professors" to Jerusalem.

Despite the naiveté of his proposal, Gagarin was supported by Giuseppe Valerga, the Latin rite patriarch of Jerusalem. In a letter to Gagarin of 15 July 1860, Valerga wrote:

I can only encourage you, my Reverend Father, to persevere on the excellent path you have entered so as to effect the reunion of the Eastern church to the Catholic church by taking advantage of the points of contact between the former and the latter. This method appears to have at least the advantage of being the most conformed to the spirit of Christian charity; at the same time, it shows with evidence that the points of contact are infinitely more numerous than the points of dissidence. In religious controversies, one is not necessarily wise to confine oneself to refutation and to propagandizing one's adversary; one must also touch and bring him back to the truth, one must make him see that the distance which separates him [from the truth] is not as great as he may imagine.³¹

Valerga also supported Gagarin's plan to move *l'Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode* to Jerusalem in October 1860, at least on a temporary basis.³²

In December 1860, events occurred which would greatly affect Gagarin's proposals for the Byzantine Catholics. In Constantinople, on 24 December 1860, a group of Bulgarian Orthodox approached Primate Anthony Hassoun of the Armenian Catholics and asked his permission to enter communion with the Roman Catholic church. The Bulgarians agreed to conform to the decisions of the Council of Florence, so long as they could maintain their liturgy, ceremonies, and religious customs. In return for recognizing the pope as "the true successor of Saint Peter and the supreme head of the Roman church," they asked for the creation of a Bulgarian patriarchate. The new patriarch would "conserve the Orthodox faith in its purity as received from the holy apostles and the ecumenical councils." Hassoun responded favorably to the Bulgarian petition. Later that year 120 deputies, two archimandrites, a priest, and a deacon acting in

the name of 2,000 of their compatriots presented their act of union to Mgr. Paolo Brunoni (1807–1875), the apostolic delegate.³³

In January 1861, a Bulgarian delegation headed by Archimandrite Joseph Sokolski arrived in Rome with the Bulgarian petition. Pius IX approved the petition. He promised to respect the maintenance of Bulgarian religious customs. On 8 April 1861, the pope ordained Sokolski as archbishop for Bulgarian Catholics of the Byzantine rite. The Bulgarian church initially included about 60,000 members.

While the Bulgarian initiative was completely unexpected by Gagarin, he saw it as a hopeful sign of impending church union and a symbolic reversal of Nicholas I's violent absorption of the Ruthenian church in 1839:

If the Bulgarian Uniate church succeeds in surviving and organizing not only all the Bulgarians and rallying them, this example will bring along the Serbs, the Moldovans, the Wallachians, all the schismatics of European Turkey. The Greeks will hesitate for a long time, but they will end by equally attaching themselves. The Greek Uniate church in Austria will have a new vigor, a new life; and it is permitted to believe that all the Eastern schismatics outside Russia will accept union. Will this Greek Uniate church, once constructed on such a foundation, not certainly exert a great influence on Russia, torn apart by sects which can only multiply outside of Christianity?³⁴

Gagarin hoped for nothing less than that the Bulgarian union would galvanize the entire Orthodox East to seek union with Rome. He also saw in the Bulgarian desire to place themselves under the "the supreme pastor" a conservative, catholic movement which would be "the sole barrier and sole defense that one could use to prevent the expansion of revolutionary panslavism."³⁵

While the Bulgarian act of union was encouraging, Gagarin should have realized that the Bulgarians sought union with Rome to achieve ecclesiastical independence from Constantinople, i.e., to enhance their ecclesiastical stature through a national patriarchate, not because of agreement with Gagarin's arguments regarding the historical and theological validity of the Roman Catholic church. The Bulgarian act of union was rooted in nationalism, not theology. The Russian church, which was already autocephalous, lacked such motivations.³⁶

On 26 January 1861, Beckx recognized the significance of events in Bulgaria by writing to Cardinal Barnabo of the College of Propaganda. Beckx encouraged Barnabo to contact Gagarin on Roman relations with the Bulgarians, because Gagarin had demonstrated his ability to work on these matters.³⁷

On 9 February 1861, the council of l'Oeuvre des Pèleringages asked Father Fessard to allow Gagarin to accompany an Easter pilgrimage going to Jerusalem. Lavigerie explained that "Father Gagarin totally succeeded in the first trip in winning the esteem and affection of all; the council believes it cannot make a better choice."³⁸ Fessard approved the petition. He wrote Gagarin, asking him to return to Paris to prepare for the pilgrimage. Fessard added, perhaps ironically: "I would like to give you more time for solitude."³⁹

Gagarin and Balabin went to the Holy Land. There he met with Valerga and discussed his projects for the conversion of the Bulgarians, for the conversion of the East, and the union of churches. He wrote:

I think I have a good sense of the situation and I believe that the moment has come to act. One must not proceed under any illusion. The Bulgarians detest the Greeks and have no sympathy for the Russians. This is the root of their Catholicism. What they want is a hierarchy independent of the Phanar [Ecumenical Patriarch]. They are extremely attached to their rite. . . . What they especially want is a patriarch. Pius IX has refused them because they are not sufficiently numerous. The Uniate patriarchs of the East have even smaller flocks. This is the central question. There is much to say in favor of a patriarch. He will attach to him all the Bulgarians and possibly the Serbs. I repeat, one must not wait to find among the Bulgarians another Catholicism than that which I have outlined; but one must not stop at that. The great point is education and especially the formation of a good indigenous clergy.⁴⁰

Recognizing that his ideas regarding Bulgaria and the Byzantine rite were not those of Rome, Gagarin separated his proposals on Bulgaria from his goal of achieving overall church union. He wrote to Beckx, "Suppose that the enterprise in Bulgaria fails, that is no reason for me to abandon this great cause." In fact, Gagarin said that he would prefer to work for the conversion of the entire Orthodox church at one time.⁴¹

As he had suggested earlier, Gagarin saw that the best means of addressing both his goals and the issue of the Bulgarians was through education:

one must give them above all else an instructed, edifying, zealous clergy: that is to say one must build seminaries. My idea is to establish a central seminary for all the churches of the Greek rite; one would not receive there Latins, Maronites, or Armenians, but all those of the Greek rite would be received without distinction—Ruthenians, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Greeks, Arabs . . . I would like this seminary to become a central light which shines on all the Greek Uniate churches and must later [shine] on all the churches enveloped today in the schism.

This seminary would be established in Jerusalem. Gagarin also wanted to establish a college in Jerusalem for students of the Byzantine rite, to publish Russian texts in Jerusalem, and to receive permission to celebrate mass according to the Byzantine rite. Gagarin told Beckx that Valerga was favorable to his project and that he and Balabin wanted to go to Constantinople to talk with Brunoni and Hassoun.⁴² Beckx responded:

The plan to establish in Jerusalem a central seminary for young men of the Greek rite is a good idea, and I am not surprised that this idea has come from you. But its realization offers some difficulties; it would bear careful consideration even supposing these obstacles were lifted, if the place would be well chosen. At the moment such a project cannot be undertaken in view of the decision taken by [the College of] Propaganda to permit only Franciscans to establish in Jerusalem.

Beckx added that Cardinal Barnabo had permitted Gagarin to go to Constantinople.⁴³

On 6 June 1861, Gagarin and Balabin arrived in Constantinople where they met with Brunoni, Hassoun, the French ambassador Boré, Archbishop Sokolski, and some influential Bulgarians. The group resolved to establish a Bulgarian college under the direction of the French Jesuits. Gagarin wrote to Beckx again about the need for an indigenous clergy and about his desire to celebrate mass according to the Byzantine rite under the rubric established by the brief of Benedict XIV, *Allatae sunt*.⁴⁴

Gagarin also sought permission for the Russian Jesuits to be the guiding influence on the Bulgarians:

our nationality does not expose us to any difficulty on the part of the Russian ambassador. The Russian government will struggle against the Bulgarian Uniate church, but will not take any official steps against us personally. One must of course remark that the Lazarists were known to Constantinople as in the Levant in general, under the name of Jesuits; it is to the Jesuits that the conversion of the Bulgarians is generally attributed and it is not likely that the schismatic Bulgarian journals will rage against us more than they do today. Providence seems to have chosen the Bulgarian Uniate church to attach the entire Orthodox church to Rome. This great hope sustains us in the trials that surely await us.⁴⁵

Upon his return to Paris in late June 1861, Gagarin reassured Beckx that his Russianness would not impede work with the Bulgarians: “In my soul and conscience, I am convinced that it is only we Russians who can go at this moment into this country; all the problems that are attributed to our Russianness are figments of the imagination . . . we will open the doors to others, when the others, especially the French, will succeed in nothing.” He added that he wanted to work with Balabin and Martynov on the Bulgarian issue.⁴⁶

While Gagarin was continuing to formulate grandiose projects of reunion, his fellow Jesuit Balabin approached the issue much more cautiously. He wrote, “In his solicitude for the salvation of our brothers of the East, Gagarin has conceived of many projects for the seminary to be established at Jerusalem, in Syria, and we speak often; but these projects seem impractical.”⁴⁷ Balabin’s caution was echoed by other Roman Catholic clergy. In Beckx’s letter to Balabin on 6 July 1861, Beckx instructed Balabin to wait in establishing a college for the Bulgarians. Cardinal Barnabo believed that Balabin and Gagarin had “possibly invested too much confidence in the Bulgarians.”⁴⁸

Suspensions regarding the Bulgarian Catholics had been raised by an unusual event. On 18 June 1861 in Constantinople, Archbishop Sokolski mysteriously disappeared. He was taken to Odessa on a Russian ship and spent the last eighteen years of his life at the Monastery of the Caves at Kiev. It has never been established whether he was kidnapped by the Russian government or went willingly to Ukraine. Despite this setback,

the Bulgarian Catholic church survived, especially thanks to the inspirational Panteleimon Zhelov.

Gagarin responded to Beckx’s urge for caution in a letter of 14 July 1861. Gagarin said he was not disturbed by inimical words, because he had heard them earlier when he converted and became a Jesuit. He argued, “I know perfectly what to believe. If the Bulgarian enterprise succeeds, as I strongly hope, I know that it will bring on more difficulties, more sacrifices, more of the cross than my conversion and my vocation have furnished me.” Gagarin believed that God had appointed him to work for the reunion of churches and that “the Bulgarian enterprise is the door by which I must enter.” In fact, he indicated a growing impatience to begin work with the Bulgarians: “in some weeks, I will attain the age of forty-seven, and it will have been eighteen years since I entered the Company; I have waited for the moment marked by Providence and I believe it has now arrived: the obstacles and opposition do not scare me.”⁴⁹ Gagarin later added, “It is not my fault if I see in the entire Catholic church that only we three [Gagarin, Martynov, and Balabin] form the group called for by the necessary conditions. It is supremely important that at the moment when Russia is open to us, there be a Catholic church of the same rite, fully organized and capable of providing apostles to Russia.”⁵⁰

Let us note where Gagarin placed himself. Not only was his mission so important that he felt called by Providence, but it could only be accomplished by the Russian Jesuits: the other Jesuits would “succeed at nothing.” Again, Gagarin demonstrated, through a variety of proposals, a deep desire to convert his homeland; at the same time, he displayed a trust in his own abilities not completely shared by his superiors, who alone were in positions to approve those proposals.

As part of the means of achieving his goals, Gagarin again asked for permission to establish a journal separate from *Études*. Again, Beckx refused, citing practical difficulties. Beckx wrote, “The good God does not forget you; you know this; He created you to do His work. But is it a journal?”⁵¹

In a letter to Beckx on 20 November 1861, Gagarin again voiced the need to establish a seminary in Bulgaria and asked for permission to move l’Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode to Syria. He argued, “If we do not go to Gaza, the poor Bulgarian children, very numerous, far from their country, will be lost amidst the foreign element.”⁵² He later added that he wanted to establish a seminary in Gaza which would receive some

Bulgarians. He wanted to prepare students in the manner of the Jesuit colleges and use the Bulgarians as apprentices in the work of l’Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode. Furthermore, he wanted to publish texts in Russian and send the texts to Constantinople for distribution in Russia.⁵³ Beckx again responded negatively, saying that there were not enough Bulgarians for a seminary in Gaza and that it would be difficult to move the entire l’Oeuvre.⁵⁴

Beckx’s rejection did not dissuade Gagarin from seeking to move the center of his work to Syria. He wrote again to Beckx that “It would be possible to form a Russian nucleus for aiding pilgrims; in this connection, Syria offers us an advantage that Bulgaria does not present. L’Oeuvre de Saint Cyrille et de Saint Méthode would have at the same time a Russian press, a Bulgarian seminary, Russian pilgrims from Jerusalem, and the hope of forming a small nucleus of Russian converts.” He added, “I fervently believe that God has destined me to engage in the great work of the reunion of churches and that this Bulgarian enterprise is the place one must begin.”⁵⁵ Gagarin noted that he had been approached by a Father Agapius Honcharenko (1832–1916), who wanted to operate a small Russian press in Smyrna or Beirut.⁵⁶ Again Beckx chose not to approve Gagarin’s requests. He wrote, regarding his objections to moving l’Oeuvre to Gaza, “If the question is whether to move [the society] immediately [to Syria], the objections are the precarious position of other Catholic establishments in Syria and the condition of the existing [Jesuit] college. . . . If this is a question for the future, I foresee definite difficulties, but I also see advantages. I have not yet sufficiently weighed the advantages against the disadvantages to be able to decide.”⁵⁷

By December 1861, Balabin was the only Russian Jesuit on the editorial staff of *Études*, though Gagarin still had some input. By 1862, the journal ceased to carry the title *Études . . . publiées par les PP. Charles Daniel et Jean Gagarine*; now it simply said *publiées par des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus*.

Gagarin’s continuing interest in working on the issue of the Byzantine Catholic churches can be seen in his submission to Beckx of a memorandum entitled “Sur l’utilité de l’adoption du rite Grec par quelques pères de la Compagnie.” This document was reprinted with some changes in *Études* as “L’Avenir de l’Église grecque-unie.”⁵⁸

To understand the scope of the issue of the Byzantine Catholicism with which Gagarin was dealing in these texts, the statistics in Table 7.1 below should be considered.⁵⁹

Table 7.1 Catholics of the Byzantine Rite (1865)

Total Number of Byzantine Catholics	4,312,992
Greek Catholics	3,810,447
in Galicia	2,000,000
in Transylvania	900,000
in Hungary	520,447
in Poland	250,000
in Syria	50,000
in Prussia	40,000
in Italy	30,000
in Croatia	20,000
Armenians	200,000
Maronites	150,000
Chaldeans	119,000
under the patriarch	20,000
in Malabar	99,000
Syrians	30,000
Copts	3,445
Abyssinians	100

Gagarin began his discussion of the Byzantine Catholic problem with an historical outline of the development of the Latin and Greek rites. Beginning with Alexander the Great, the Greeks exercised the dominant cultural role in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Thrace. According to Gagarin, the East remained Greek “even after the Romans had conquered it.” Since Gaul, Spain, and Africa knew only the Roman yoke, while the East retained its Greek culture, the Roman Empire contained two languages, two civilizations, “or, as one says today, two nationalities”—the Greek and the Latin.⁶⁰

When apostolic evangelism began, the church did not attempt to change the linguistic and national circumstances prevailing in the Roman Empire; instead the evangelists “cast the seed of the divine word among the Greeks and among the Latins and left it to rise there among the one and among the other without being preoccupied with questions of languages or nationalities.”⁶¹ As a result, the church assimilated into itself the national character of the Roman Empire—its two languages, two cultures, and two liturgies. At this stage, the simultaneous existence of the Greek and Latin rites “did not create any barrier to the unity of faith or to

the unity of the church.”⁶² The two rites were united under the supreme authority of the pope, with whom they were obliged to be in communion and to whom they appealed regarding points of controversy.⁶³

Next Gagarin discussed the current problems in the Byzantine Catholic church. He condemned the lack of unity among the Byzantine Catholics: “Not only are the faithful of this church dispersed among so many different states, among so many different nations and languages, not only are they foreign to one another, but especially they are a minority and in a state of relative inferiority.”⁶⁴ Gagarin saw this inferiority primarily in the Byzantine Catholic clergy which had suffered when its most educated youth had left the church. The Byzantine Catholic clergy “scarcely includes among its children more than the poor and the ignorant . . . in its entirety, it is inferior to the Latin clergy in education, in zeal, in sacerdotal spirit; in a word it is inadequate.”⁶⁵

Gagarin warned against the Latinization of the Byzantine Catholics. He said that any attempt to Latinize the Byzantine Catholics in order to strengthen their links to the Roman church would achieve the diametrically opposite result. He argued, “Some think that a sincere and durable reconciliation will be possible only if the rites, customs, and regulations of the Eastern churches are totally destroyed. It is not surprising that men animated by this spirit do not find among the Easterners favorable dispositions, and, that after some interval, they give way to discouragement.”⁶⁶ As evidence, Gagarin pointed out that the Byzantine Catholic church of Syria had become alarmed by an attempt to introduce the Gregorian calendar.⁶⁷ He also pointed to the situation in Bulgaria, where “union has not made progress as rapidly as one would hope, because here also, the emissaries of the Greek patriarch and the Russian government frighten the people by making them believe, despite the promises of Monseigneur Hassoun, . . . promises guaranteed by a brief of the pope, that the Latin rite will later be imposed on them.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, Gagarin wrote, attempts at Latinization were contrary to Benedict XIV’s brief *Allatae sunt* which condemned that policy.⁶⁹

Later Gagarin discussed the issue of a married clergy.⁷⁰ He feared that a married clergy leads “almost inevitably to formation of a hereditary caste.” He admitted that a married clergy might be necessary for those Christians who wished to select priests from their own village; in such a case a priest would remain tied to a particular community. He wanted to supplement the married clergy with a group of celibates whose responsibility would be evangelizing.⁷¹

To obtain for the Byzantine Catholics an “instructed, pious, zealous clergy,” Gagarin urged the publication of books adapted to the needs of the people; the establishment of hospitals, hospices, associations of aid; and the foundation of schools for both sexes, from primary school to college, as well as seminaries. Each Byzantine Catholic diocese would eventually have its own seminary, but the immediate need was a central seminary “common to the entire Greek-Uniate church, without distinction of nationality, to furnish professors and directors for all the diocesan seminaries.” This would reduce disunity among the Byzantine Catholics. Gagarin also called for the creation of patriarchates for each of the churches of the same rite in Turkey, Syria, Greece, Austria, and Russia. Here he followed the path he had previously blazed for the Bulgarians.⁷²

Since Gagarin did not want the directors of these seminaries to be Latin rite priests and since there were not sufficient numbers of Byzantine rite priests to fulfill the need, he looked to the writings of the Carmelite father Thomas de Jésus (1564–1627) for a solution.⁷³ This approach was to create Byzantine rite “branches” of the various Roman Catholic religious orders—Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Carmelites—without changing their institutions or rules.⁷⁴ By this means, the dual-rite nature of the various religious orders would mirror the dual-rite nature of the Catholic church. The Byzantine rite members of the various orders would remain faithful to their superiors yet conform to the rite of the country in which they served. Religious missionaries would establish novitiates, submit novices to the discipline of the religious life, and form them in a European fashion. Meanwhile, the novices would learn their own rite, language, usages, and national sentiments.⁷⁵ Religious services would be celebrated in Greek, Syrian, Arabic, Slavonic, Armenian, and Latin as appropriate. They would follow the same rules, the same spirit, and create unity among themselves.⁷⁶ Furthermore, these missionaries would recruit among the indigenous people in order to form an indigenous clergy and an indigenous ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁷⁷

Gagarin cited several precedents for this approach. “From the thirteenth or fourteenth century the Dominican Fathers gave the rule of their order to the Armenians, who preserved their rite; only, instead of making these Armenians a branch of the order under the authority of the superior general and the general magistrate, the Dominicans formed a distinct and independent congregation under the name of the United Brothers.”⁷⁸ Gagarin pointed again to Benedict XIV’s brief *Allatae sunt*, which placed the Byzantine college of Rome under the Jesuits. There the Jesuits practiced

the Byzantine rite “so that the students would not remain strangers to the practice of this rite which was and should be their own.”⁷⁹

There were some additional comments on reforming the Byzantine Catholic church which Gagarin added later. He suggested the Byzantine Catholic liturgical texts be purged of the errors and mistakes which had entered them. He insisted that the Byzantine Catholic church retain papal authority.⁸⁰

Unlike previous writings, which implied an immediate solution to the issues of church union, Gagarin now stressed that the reform process would be slow: he compared it to “drops of water eroding rock.”⁸¹ Gagarin still saw a reformed Byzantine Catholic church as key to the reunion of churches, for it would facilitate “absorption” of the Greek Orthodox:

When one sees this church flourish and prosper, observing its venerable rite in all its purity and possessing an instructed, pious, zealous clergy, having nothing to envy in the Latin clergy; when one sees schools open to both sexes, in all conditions, from the nursery, the boarding school and the humble primary school through the colleges, seminaries, faculties; when hospitals, hospices, associations of charity come to the aid of all the poor; when the word of God is proclaimed with force and simplicity from the pulpits, when the texts adopted to the needs of the populations are put in their hands, it is inconceivable that Greek non-Uniates, in considering this spectacle, at the sight of its devotion, its charity, its zeal, its light, will not be brought to recognize that the spirit of God is there.⁸²

Gagarin’s ideas on the Byzantine Catholic churches were not without influence in Vatican circles. Lavigerie supported Gagarin’s views on the problems of Latinization and the need for Latin rite priests to enter into the Eastern rite. He planned to present Gagarin’s ideas as his own in dealings with the pope and the College of Propaganda. He wrote to Gagarin that “I have attracted to our ideas the principal halls of Rome.”⁸³

In January 1862, Pius IX divided the College of Propaganda into two sections. One section, the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, had special members and a secretary devoted to the affairs of the Byzantine church. Lavigerie was named as a councillor in this special section. Unfortunately, his influence was minimal, since the head of this section until 1874 was Cardinal Barnabo, a Latinizer.

On 8 April 1862, Pius IX issued the encyclical *Amantissimus*. This encyclical began by addressing the unity and catholicity of the church with “one spirit, one faith, one hope, one love joined and firmly held together by the same bonds of sacraments, religion and doctrine.” It asserted that the church would “embrace all peoples and nations of the whole world.”⁸⁴ Pius IX then went on to address the Byzantine rite churches. He argued that “a variety of legitimate rites obviously in no way oppose the unity of the Catholic church; rather, indeed, such a diversity greatly enhances the dignity of the church itself.” Pius condemned Latinization.⁸⁵ Finally the pope referred to the establishment of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches and asked for the Byzantine Catholic churches to “send us an accurate report on the status of your dioceses in which you carefully explain whatever pertains to the dioceses themselves that we may attentively provide for the necessities of the faithful residing in them.” In this light, Pius IX suggested aid in the field of religious education, in providing books, in renewal of families.⁸⁶ While this brief in no way accomplished all of Gagarin’s program for the Byzantine Catholic churches, its emphasis on the need for increased education, its opposition to Latinization, and its praise for the Byzantine rite give some indication that the ideas of Gagarin, as presented by Lavigerie, had an impact on the pope.

In addition to feeling concern over the internal problems of the Byzantine rite church, Gagarin felt anxiety over the influence of the Russian government in the Middle East. While the Arabic Orthodox were under the authority of the Greek Orthodox church, the Greek leadership did not know Arabic. This anomaly developed in the seventeenth century when the Arabic Orthodox bishops recognized the authority of the pope: the Orthodox laity, having no bishops, had to quickly select new bishops who were Greek.⁸⁷ By the nineteenth century, the Greek Orthodox hierarchy had become nervous about losing their hold over the Arabic-speaking laity. Their fear increased when the Russian government sent Russian monks and bishops to minister to Orthodox pilgrims in the Middle East. Gagarin argued that the Greek clergy feared a growing incursion of Russian power, particularly since the Russians might intensify the Arabic populations’ desire for an indigenous clergy.⁸⁸ He wondered why the Russian Orthodox clergy had invaded the ecclesiastical territory of the Greek Orthodox since they were of the same communion.⁸⁹

Gagarin’s articles on the Byzantine Catholics and on Russian activity in the Holy Land did not escape the notice of his Orthodox critics. Many of

the same type of arguments which the Orthodox had used in their previous attacks on Gagarin continued to be voiced. Guettée, in his article “Les Églises orientales unies,” attacked Gagarin’s Jesuit heritage, saying, “He [Gagarin] is a Jesuit, an arch enemy of the Orthodox church; this is all that we have need to know to evaluate his diatribes against the Orthodox clergy and his plans to corrupt that which remained good in the Eastern [Catholic] churches which had the misfortune to submit to the yoke of the pope.” Guettée also attacked Gagarin for not discussing dogmatic differences between the Orthodox and Catholic churches such as the *filioque*.⁹⁰ Ieromonakh Iuvenalii’s text, *Neskol’ko slov po povodu stat’i Gagarina*—“*Ruskiia uchrezhdeniia v sviatoi zemle*,” accused Gagarin of ignorance: “It is a pity that the former prince did not acquaint himself before now with the dogmatic faith of the Orthodox, for he has not understood what an invaluable treasure is possessed by members of the Eastern Orthodox church.”⁹¹

Guettée also attacked Gagarin’s proposals concerning the Byzantine Catholic clergy, but not without resorting to blatant misrepresentations of Gagarin’s position. Guettée claimed that Gagarin wanted to abolish all married clergy and that he wanted to abolish the Eastern rite through Latinization—palpably false claims.

Ieromonakh Iuvenalii attacked Gagarin’s claims of Russian clerical invasion of the Holy Land. While the Orthodox hierarchy in the Middle East consisted of Greek speakers, Iuvenalii said that the newer clergy were all Arabic and performed services in Arabic. Furthermore, Iuvenalii described the Russian bishop in Jerusalem not as an invader but as “an honored guest.” He wrote that Gagarin’s apprehension might have been justified before the Russian presence in Jerusalem, but he insisted that the current situation showed the Russians’ respect for the unity of the Greek church. Iuvenalii complained that Gagarin’s accusations were part of a “common Jesuit practice of sowing doubt and discord.”⁹²

During this period in which Gagarin worked on the problems of the Byzantine Catholic churches, his problems with *Études* continued. He attempted several times to get l’Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode transferred to Syria or to Jerusalem. The French Jesuits also continued to work to press for Gagarin’s separation from his creation.⁹³

To escape the conflicts over *Études*, Gagarin returned to the Middle East. In September 1862, he left France for the Jesuit seminary at Gaza, where he began working on 16 October 1862. In a letter to Beckx, Gagarin wrote, “I find myself blessed and content and am satisfied to have escaped from the uproar in Paris, from which I was recently fatigued.”⁹⁴

In Gaza, Gagarin served as a director of studies, professor of dogmatic theology, director of the library, confessor, and an advisor. At the start of his teaching, he had eight students: two Maronites, one Armenian, one Greek Melchite, and four Bulgarians—ages ten, fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. Gagarin taught catechism and Bulgarian grammar.⁹⁵ As for his work with the Bulgarians, he wrote that he wanted “to foster understanding and love of their native language and rite.” “Not knowing the Bulgarian dialect, I study their Bulgarian grammar and explain to them the Bulgarian catechism, in the hope that from their number will develop some sort of Cyril or Methodius who again will enlighten the Russian land that has been submerged in pitch darkness by the Holy Synod and overwhelmed by the lies and deceptive learning of today’s atheistic youth.”⁹⁶ Thus, Gagarin’s work in the Middle East was not an end in itself: he considered it a step toward the conversion of Russia. Even studying the Bulgarian language was a means of achieving this purpose.

In Gaza, Gagarin prepared to work with Arabic Christians. His archives indicate that he had purchased the following in Arabic: a Bible, copies of the Epistles of Paul and Acts of the Apostles, and a copy of the rule of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. He also obtained Arabic/Latin interlinear Gospels, an Arabic/Latin dictionary as well as an Arabic grammar.⁹⁷ It was probably at this time that Gagarin became a full member of the committee of l’Oeuvre des Pèlerinages.

In 1863, Gagarin, Martynov, and Balabin again attempted to publish a Russian journal. Acting under orders from the pope and in hopes of creating a journal that might refute the arguments of *l’Union chrétienne* and that could reach a Russian audience, the three Russian Jesuits founded the *Kirillo-Mefodievskii sbornik*.⁹⁸ The first volume of the journal contained some Ruthenian texts published by Martynov. In its preface, the three Jesuits expressed their rationale for the new journal. They noted that the thousand-year anniversary of Saints Cyril and Methodius was approaching, but that the anniversary would be sad, because the churches founded by the two men were troubled. Besides decrying the schism that had broken the “common faith and love of Rome,” the three Russian Jesuits condemned the “solitude, division, discord, and lack of any unity” among the Slavic churches. They also discussed problems affecting particular Slavic churches. The Bulgarian church was “held down under the heavy dominion of the Byzantine clergy, which was suppressing the church’s ancient liturgy.” The Russian church had lost its ecclesiastical independence to the Holy Synod, was beset by the schism of the Old Believers, and endorsed

religious persecution. The Byzantine Catholic churches were fragmented, possessed poor leadership, and were threatened by Latinization. The Russian Jesuits' mission was to point to the true teachings of Cyril and Methodius, to "walk on the path of the Holy Apostles of the Slavs," to work for unity with Rome and to maintain the Greek rite and liturgical services in Slavonic. They promised the journal would contain "everything which will serve to develop and clarify the foundational thought of the holy evangelists to the Slavs, but principally works of historical and theological content."⁹⁹

In the introduction we see clear evidence of Gagarin's ideas: his antipathy toward Christian disunity, his desire to maintain Byzantine Catholic clergy and customs, and his commitment to promote unity with Rome. Whether he intended this journal to replace *Études* is unknown; in any case the journal published one more volume in 1867, then ceased publication.

Gagarin remained in Syria until August 1864. At that time, Beckx ordered him back to Paris, saying, "I do not see what profit the prolongation of your sojourn in Syria will provide l'Oeuvre des SS. Cyrille et Méthode. You have remained there a sufficient time to become current concerning the many points upon which you desired to be enlightened in these places."¹⁰⁰

After Gagarin left Syria, his interest in Bulgaria diminished. He refocused on his primary goal of church reunion. Giot rightly claims that the refusal of the College of Propaganda to create a Bulgarian college in Constantinople and the support for Latinization by Valerga, Brunoni, and Hassoun prevented the success of Gagarin's proposals for the Bulgarians (or the other Byzantine Catholics).¹⁰¹ Yet Gagarin's advice on the establishment of a Bulgarian patriarchate proved prophetic when, in 1870, the Ottoman government, under Russian influence, established an independent Bulgarian Orthodox exarchate. In the absence of a Byzantine rite patriarch, three-quarters of the Bulgarian Catholics returned to Orthodoxy by the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰²

Another interest for Gagarin at this time was the issue of language differences between the Orthodox and Catholic Slavs. This was a complex problem since language differences reflected the different national and cultural heritages of the two different ethnic groups. As Peter Christoff has argued:

It would have been virtually impossible for anyone to have raised the question of an all-Slav language and literature without getting bogged

down in millennial passions aroused by the division of the Catholic Slavs, who used the Latin alphabet, and the Orthodox Slavs, who used the Cyrillic. In fact the alphabet issue, like the two confessions, Orthodox and Catholic, were daily reminders to the Slavs of the different cultural traditions which had separated them down through the centuries while their ethnic and linguistic similarities persisted and are noticeable to the present day.¹⁰³

In addressing this question of Slavic linguistic unity, Gagarin was following the path previously blazed by P. J. Šafařík, J. Kopitar, and Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872). Šafařík's text *Geschichte der Slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten* related the history and development of Slavic literature. Assuming that all Slavs belonged to one nationality and spoke dialects of one language, Šafařík condemned the use of Latin by Catholic Slavs in place of the Cyrillic that would permit Slavs to learn each other's literature. J. Kopitar in his texts *Grammatik der Slawischen Sprache in Krain und Kärnten und Steyermark* called for the reformation of the Latin alphabet so that it could clearly and simply express Slavic sounds. He also suggested the creation of an all-Slavic literary language composed either entirely of Cyrillic characters or a dual-alphabet system of Cyrillic and reformed Latin.

Ljudevit Gaj, a member of the Illyrian movement and a nationalist, elaborated on the ideas of Kopitar and Šafařík. He called on the Croatians to replace the Latin alphabet with Cyrillic since the latter had more letters and was better suited to Slavic sounds. He also suggested that if all the Slavs were to use Cyrillic, an all-Slavic literary language might develop. Later, Gaj modified his beliefs and supported maintenance of Latin among the Slovenes and Slavonians in order to increase cooperation among them. He believed that a common Slavic literary language would take several thousand years to develop.¹⁰⁴

Gagarin first addressed the issues of the differences between the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets in an unpublished document entitled "Le rite latino-slave et l'alphabet glagolitique."¹⁰⁵ Here he presented a brief historical overview of the development of the Glagolitic alphabet and the Latino-Slav rite.¹⁰⁶ In the document there is little analysis, and it is obvious that the piece was intended to be the introduction to a much larger work. Most of the information in this text reappeared in his later article entitled "L'Alphabet de Saint Cyrille."¹⁰⁷

In this second article, Gagarin observed that, despite their division, Slavs "aspire very ardently toward unity, so much so that they have created

a new word: *panslavism*.” For Gagarin, the strongest barrier to union between Slavs was “neither the political antipathies nor the religious dissidence” but rather “the differences of alphabets and orthography.”¹⁰⁸

Gagarin went on to identify active literary movements in Poland, Russia, Bohemia, and among the Slovaks, Croatians, Serbians, and Bulgarians. However, scholarly works in these vernacular languages were not available to other Slavs without translations: “The Russians, for example, remain completely estranged from the intellectual life of Poland, and the Poles are, in general, little aware of the current of ideas which circulate in Russian society.”¹⁰⁹

Gagarin concluded that, if only all the Slavs had adopted and preserved the alphabet of Saint Cyril, “we would today be in possession of all the advantages which the unity of an alphabet would assure us.”¹¹⁰ Since this was not the case, a new common alphabet needed to be developed. For Gagarin, this alphabet could not be either Greek or Latin, since neither alphabet could approximate the sounds of the Slavic language. He added, “One must necessarily either complete these alphabets with new characters, or render the sounds which have no equivalents by the combinations of letters or by some signs added to letters, such as cedillas, umlauts, etc.”¹¹¹ Furthermore, Gagarin argued, “If this [common Slavic alphabet] is Latin, the Easterners do not want it; if it is derived from the alphabet founded on the Greek by Clement, the people who after all this time know only the Latin alphabet will not consent to learn new characters.”¹¹²

The problems with the Latin and Greek alphabets led Gagarin back to his earlier research on the differences between the Cyrillic and the Glagolitic alphabets.¹¹³ He noted the use of the Cyrillic in the Orthodox churches and the use of Glagolitic in those churches following the Latino-Slav rite and present among the Czechs, Poles, and Dalmatians. For Gagarin, a common Slavic alphabet could be constructed on the Cyrillic and Glagolitic alphabets.

Gagarin commended the approach of Ljudevit Gaj and the approach adopted in some part by the Illyrians and the Czechs. Gagarin did not call for a change in languages, but for a change in orthography. He called for texts originally published in Cyrillic in the East to be republished with Latin characters in the West; texts originally published with Latin characters in the West would be published using Clementine/Glagolitic characters in the East.

Thus, if Poland consented to sacrifice its somewhat antiquated orthography, success would be assured and Poland would gain the advantage [of this change]. Who can calculate the influence that Polish literature and the Polish press might exert on the Czechs, the Moravians, the Slovaks, the Croatians, the Illyrians, the Dalmatians? All these peoples are today almost completely ignorant of Polish thought; the misunderstandings which exist now will disappear the day when the Polish publications become accessible to all the Slavic populations of the West.

There will be a similar growth of understanding among the Eastern Slavs, if they all adopt the Clementine alphabet with which they have been familiar from time immemorial. Of course, to provide a common orthography for the Russians, Serbs, and Bulgarians, some small indispensable modifications will be necessary.

There would now be two alphabets in use among the Slavs; but there would remain one other important thing to do. While preserving the two distinct alphabets, they should be provided a similar orthography, so that each letter from the Glagolitic alphabet will correspond one-to-one with a letter of the Latin alphabet, and there should be no difference except in the form of the characters.¹¹⁴

For Gagarin, adoption of this system would permit the publishing of the poetry of Pushkin in Latin characters for distribution into Poland, Bohemia, and Dalmatia. It would facilitate the distribution in Russia, Bulgaria, and Serbia of works of Mickiewicz in Glagolitic characters. This exchange of literature would foster greater cultural and eventually religious unity among the Slavic peoples.

Gagarin would later expound on his views of the Slavic languages in a letter to Beckx:

There is no Slavic language; the Slavic languages form a group of different languages; in this number there are some I do not want to give the name of *patois*—they have the pretension to be literary languages, but are not in reality and probably will never become such. In effect, they have struggled against obstacles which seem insurmountable. They are dialects spoken by small elites that are known outside these elites by a very small number of individuals; these dialects have no literature or literary language.¹¹⁵

Gagarin believed that these dialects would soon disappear as a result of the advancements made in communication. He argued that among the Eastern Slavs there were only two literary languages—Church Slavonic and Russian. Church Slavonic, or Paleoslovene, he called “a dead language,” yet he insisted it was very important due to its liturgical usage among all Slavs who followed the Greek rite as well as among the Dalmatians who followed the Latino-Slav or Glagolitic rite. It was also the language of the Slavonic version of the Bible.

Gagarin explained that Slavonic had served in Russia as a foundation for the literary language. Russian resembled Church Slavonic as Italian resembled Latin. Since Russian was spoken by almost sixty million people and was the official language of the Russian empire, Gagarin argued that it was understood by all educated Eastern Slavs. It had a considerable literature and a large periodical press. Gagarin predicted that Russian “will quickly become the literary language of all Eastern Slavs, by way of assimilation.” The different Eastern Slavic dialects were “too weak to struggle against this formidable development.”¹¹⁶

Gagarin’s view that the best means of promoting linguistic unity was to adopt common orthographies gradually yielded to a belief that Russian orthography would eventually be adopted by all Eastern Slavs. Since Cyrillic and Glagolitic contained the same number of letters and identical sounds, differing only in letter form, attempting to establish a common orthography was possible. The problem was attempting to adopt a common orthography among all the Slavic dialects. Gagarin attempted to establish a common living orthography based on similarities between two languages used neither in civic or literary life.

Some curious questions arise from Gagarin’s interest in a unified Slavic orthography. Was this not an attempt by Gagarin to accomplish peacefully what he accused the Panslavists of desiring to achieve militarily, that is, to create a Slavic culture unified by language and religion? Whether that unified orthography developed after mutually agreed upon changes in the Eastern and Western Slavic alphabets or through widespread assimilation of Russian by non-Russian Slavs, the objective was similar. Just as Gagarin believed that an Arabic state unified on the basis of language and religion would play an important role in world affairs, so would a unified Slavic state play a much greater role in world affairs than any Slav state could separately.

It is not surprising that Gagarin later changed his views on linguistics to predict the gradual acceptance of Russian, a living Slavic dialect, among

the Eastern Slavs. With Russian, Gagarin already had a base of “sixty million” people and a language understood by “educated” Slavs. Russia’s genuine importance would eventually force non-Russian Slavs to learn it to understand events in Russia as well as to reach a larger audience for their own ideas.

Gagarin’s interest in Pan-Slav nationalism went beyond intellectual inquiry. In 1863, he approved and participated in Bohemian Catholic pilgrimages to Brno in commemoration of the millennial anniversary of the arrival of Cyril and Methodius in Moravia. These celebrations acquired a nationalistic tone because the priests dressed in traditional costumes rather than their usual cassocks. Gagarin hoped that the Brno pilgrims would aid him in his unionist efforts among the Slavs.¹¹⁷ He also familiarized himself with Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer’s (1815–1905) work in support of nationalist movements among the South Slavs. With Strossmayer, Gagarin discussed his ideas of publishing books in Cyrillic.¹¹⁸

Gagarin’s acerbic character, his unwillingness to sacrifice control over *Études*, and his perception of himself as chief spokesperson for the conversion of Russia led to personal conflicts with his fellow Jesuits, and especially with his superiors. Of course, the French Jesuits themselves were far less concerned to affect the conversion of the Eastern Slavs than to bolster the French readership of *Études*. Furthermore, Beckx’s fear of provoking Russian hostility toward the Jesuits further limited the extent to which Gagarin could publicly express his views.

These conflicts led Gagarin to attempt to separate *Études* from the French Jesuits and seek its transfer to various locations around the Middle East. He wanted to regain control of his journal and take advantage of the unexpected event of the Bulgarian union. The time he spent in the Middle East permitted him to look in greater detail at the condition of the Byzantine Catholic churches and to explore them as a possible means for achieving church union. Gagarin’s decision to seek the reform of the Byzantine Catholic churches through education and his call to the Roman Catholic church to protect the distinctiveness of the Byzantine Catholic rite demonstrated that he no longer sought church reunion from the top down as he had in *La Russie sera-t-elle catholique?* Now, instead of anticipating a union initiated by the pope and the tsar, he engaged in missionary activity designed to promote popular support for union. Improving the status of the Byzantine rite clergy would serve as a sign to the Orthodox East that its traditions and its members would be respected through union. The establishment of dual-rite religious orders would make Catholic

missionaries more acceptable to the Orthodox masses. Furthermore, Gagarin's work with Valerga, Beckx, and Lavigerie indicated his greater willingness to seek outside assistance to accomplish his objectives.

Gagarin's proposals for reform essentially came to naught. He faced opposition from those such as Balabin and Beckx who feared that such proposals were too ambitious and incautious to succeed. He also faced opposition from those who disagreed with him and saw Latinization as the best means of improving the Byzantine Catholic clergy.

Gagarin's comments on the Slavonic languages demonstrated his belief that ecclesiastical union might be promoted through cultural unity. Just as Gagarin argued that a unification of the Arabic-speaking peoples into one church would greatly strengthen that culture, so would linguistic unification strengthen the bonds between the Slavic peoples. Though Gagarin later saw that unity coming less from a modification of Slavic orthography and more from cultural assimilation of Russian, obtaining linguistic unity was still the desired end.