

Jerusalem  
January 11. 1905.

No. 1

Sir,

With reference to my telegram of the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, I have the honour to report that a disturbance, between Greek Priests and Franciscan monks, occurred in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem very early in the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, whilst the Greek Patriarch and Clergy were celebrating their Christmas service. In the affray which took place two Franciscans—

Walter Townley Esq<sup>r</sup>  
His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires  
Constantinople

1905  
Jan 28  
Jerusalem  
H. J. Dickson  
Beypouria

Nov 29

800 more Greek letters in Aleppo

It does not seem worth while to telegraph home all these movements of small detachments. It will be sufficient to send a summary once a week  
M. J. P.  
6/10

an Italian and a German by nationality—  
were wounded, the former somewhat  
seriously. The Governor of Jerusalem  
and the Acting French Consul-  
General hurried out to Bethlehem  
as soon as possible, and their presence  
had the effect of calming the  
excitement and restoring order. The  
Greek religious service which had  
been interrupted was, thereupon, continued.

The cause of the disturbance  
is the old standing claim of the Greeks,  
on which I commented in my Despatches  
No. 1 of January 9 1897, and No. 4 of  
January

7  
January 16, 1898, to pass through the  
Latin door of the Grotto of the Nativity  
more than once during the Christmas  
festival. The Latins contend that they  
can only exercise this right once, and  
since 1898, when the last dispute occurred,  
have always hoped that their contention  
would be confirmed through French  
diplomatic intervention. The question,  
however, has remained undecided,  
and they accordingly determined this  
year to maintain their rights by  
forcible resistance. When the Greeks  
attempted to pass a second time  
through

through the north door, claimed by the Latins, some of the Franciscan monks endeavoured to prevent their doing so, and one of the Greek deacons, in the scuffle which ensued, struck the Italian monk above mentioned on the head with the Censer which he was carrying, inflicting a somewhat severe wound. Another monk, the German referred to, was also injured in the fray. The religious service was suspended, and in the meanwhile the Mutessarif and Acting French Consul

Consul General, who had been telegraphed for, arrived on the scene and succeeded in calming the excitement. Monsieur Wiet, the Acting French Consul General, then agreed to allow the Greeks to pass through the door a second time. He, however, formally protested to the Mutessarif against the innovation, adding that, in the interests of tranquillity only the right was conceded, but that it must not be taken as a precedent.

The Italian and German  
Consuls

Consuls have demanded the trial  
and punishment of the assailants  
of the two monks, their respective  
subjects, in accordance with law;  
but until the question respecting  
the right of the Greeks to pass  
through the North door of the  
Grotto, more than once during  
their religious service, is  
settled at Constantinople, the  
risk of further disturbances in

the

9  
the future will not be removed.

I have the honour to be,  
With the highest respect,

Sir,  
Your most obedient  
Humble Servant.

John Wickham