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Conversion and conflict in Palestine : the missions of the Church Missionary Society and the protestant bishop Samuel Gobat

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Rivalry and riots between Protestants and Roman Catholics

Introduction

The previous chapters have shown that Protestant missionary activities were not easily accepted by the other churches. Relations with especially the Roman Catholic Church soon became strained. The CMS missionaries' letters suggest that many conflicts developed, ranging from small skirmishes to violent riots. As can be expected, these reports are hardly neutral, full as they are of anti-Roman Catholic rhetoric. Although neither Catholic nor Protestant sources are likely to provide us with the details concerning these interdenominational clashes, a study of these sources may help us to analyse the main themes in the Protestant-Catholic rivalry.

Considering the prominence of this rivalry as a theme in missionary sources, studies of these polemics have so far been surprisingly scarce.¹ This chapter seeks to examine the characteristic elements of the Protestant anti-Catholic polemics in the CMS missionaries' reports.² However, in order to understand and evaluate the anti-Catholic polemics, it is also worthwhile to contrast these with the corresponding Roman Catholic anti-Protestant writings. This will help us to gain a better insight into not only the actual bones of contention between the two parties, but also the defining elements and functioning of the interdenominational rivalry itself. After an analysis of a riot in Nazareth in 1852, which may illustrate the anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant polemics as well as the kind of issues at stake, several characteristics of these will be discussed.

¹ See also the introduction to this book.

² As the missionaries considered the opposition from the Catholics to be fiercer and more of a hindrance in their missionary work than the resistance from the Greek Orthodox, this chapter will focus on the Protestant *anti-Catholic* rhetoric. Gobat, for instance, stated that although the Greek Orthodox also caused conflicts with the Protestants the clashes with the Protestants were mainly caused by Roman Catholics. Gobat to Sarafin-Forcat, Jerusalem, June 1865, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 452.

The Nazareth riot of 1852: anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant polemics

In 1868, John Zeller, a member of the CMS Nazareth mission, listed “principal grievances of the Protestants at Nazareth and its neighbourhood”. It was part of a “petition for more effectual protection of Protestants” addressed to the Committee of the CMS and contained various kinds of complaints about the other denominations, especially the Roman and Greek Catholics, and in some cases also about the Ottoman authorities.³

Zeller started his list with the description of a riot between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Nazareth in 1852, the year in which “the persecution on the part of the Latins” had really begun.⁴ By having his list of grievances start in the early 1850s, Zeller hooked into a time of critical importance in the relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Europe. Whether or not this focus was intentional is not clear, but by referring to this period he must have aroused memories in the home public in Britain of several events that led to strained relations between both denominations. One of them was the restoration of a Roman Catholic hierarchy by Pope Pius IX in 1850-1851, the so-called ‘papal aggression’.⁵ The restoration resulted in a great ‘No-Popery’ outburst among Protestants in Britain. Many organizations were established in order to resist the ‘papal enemy’, such as the Scottish Reformation Society (December 1850) and the Protestant Alliance (June 1851).⁶ Furthermore, many anti-Catholic pamphlets, books and

³ Zeller, “Principal grievances of the Protestants at Nazareth and the neighbourhood since 1852”, added to the “Petition for more effectual protection of Protestants”, discussed at a conference of CMS missionaries in Palestine held at Jerusalem under the presidency of Gobat on 28 October 1868, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1. Zeller also mentioned the Nazareth riot and other ‘grievances’ in several letters to Colonel Fraser, the British commissioner for Syria, in the early 1860s. Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, April 1861-June 1862, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912, ff. 243-252 and 44913A, Add. 44913A, ff. 30-34, 113-114, 154-157, 161-163, 168-173.

⁴ It seems that on the Protestant side the Nazareth riot is only described in retrospect. Zeller to Fraser, “Persecution of the Protestants in Nazareth by the Heads of the Greek and Latin Communities in connivance with the Moslim authorities of that place”, Nazareth, 30 April 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912, ff. 243-252.

⁵ The Catholic hierarchy was also restored elsewhere. In the Netherlands this happened in 1853, and in reaction to this the Protestant “April Movement” was founded. W. Janse and G.N.M. Vis (eds.), *Staf en Storm. Het herstel van de bisschopelijke hiërarchie in Nederland in 1853: actie en reactie*, Hilversum, 2002. Catalysts of anti-Catholicism in Britain were the arrival of Roman Catholic Irish immigrants; the anti-Maynooth campaign in 1852, which was about state subsidy for a Roman Catholic seminary in Maynooth (Ireland); and the emergence of pre-millenarian eschatological views, in which the Pope was considered the anti-Christ. Cf. Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism”, 192. For Maynooth, see Wallis, “Anti-Catholicism”, 8-9.

⁶ Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper was an enthusiastic participant in anti-Catholic societies, such as the Protestant Alliance. Wallis, “Anti-Catholicism”, 4-7; Klaus, *The Pope*, 214-215, 245-246.

articles were published, and sermons against 'popery' were delivered.⁷ The British government responded to the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy by introducing the Ecclesiastical Titles Act in 1851, which forbade Roman Catholics to assume an Episcopal territorial title within Britain.⁸

Other events also contributed to the anti-Roman Catholic climate in Europe. For instance, the Syllabus of Errors of Pius IX (*Syllabus Errorum*), issued on 8 December 1864, resulted in the intensification of anti-Catholicism. As to Protestantism, the Syllabus denied that this was another form of the same true Christian religion, equally pleasing to God as the Catholic Church.⁹ The 'triumph' of ultramontanist after the declaration of papal infallibility at the Vatican Council in 1870 did not help either. All in all, the enmity between Protestants and Roman Catholics was not restricted to the Middle East.

The Nazareth riot took place only two years after a small Protestant congregation had begun to form. As the majority of its members had separated from the Roman Catholic Church, from the start the atmosphere between both denominations was tense.¹⁰ However, according to Gobat, these Protestants had relied on a *firman* proclaimed by the Sublime Porte granting protection to Protestants "especially against the opposition of the clergy of the churches from which they have separated". Apparently, relations between the denominations worsened, as only a few months after their separation the Protestant families sent Gobat a petition asking him to help them "to the enjoyment of the protection which the Sublime Porte has promised". In reaction, Gobat

⁷ An example of "a Sermon on 'Papal Aggression', 1850" is printed in E.R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England*, Historical Problems: Studies and Documents 1, London, 1968, 167-175.

⁸ Cf. Klaus, *The Pope*, 331-332. Colin Barr considers the German term *Kulturkampf*, which he defines as a clash that must involve (a serious prospect of) state action, appropriate for the Ecclesiastical Titles Act. Although anti-Catholicism did not stop after 1850-1852, in Barr's view there was no sign of a *Kulturkampf* in England. The Act was "the last piece of explicitly anti-Catholic legislation to pass through Parliament". He states that Britain seemed to have been fundamentally different from other European countries on this point. C. Barr, "An Irish Dimension to a British Kulturkampf?", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56/3, 2005, 475-476, 495.

⁹ This part of the syllabus was first published in the Encyclical *Noscitis*, 8 December 1849. The Syllabus was controversial in Roman Catholic circles, as it was directed against all expressions of modern culture; it condemned notions such as freedom of religion and denounced progress, liberalism and modern civilisation.

¹⁰ According to Gobat, a number of families had seceded from their churches in the early 1850s. They had started to read the Bible and as a result were tyrannized and persecuted by the clergy of their former churches. "A certain Girgis El-Garoob" was chosen as head of the community. Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 15 January 1851, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 232-233, London/BL. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 319-320, 338. For information about the foundation of the Protestant community in Nazareth, see also Chapter 4.

asked Consul General Rose to procure an order in which the *firman* was brought to the notice of the Nazareth authorities.¹¹ Their request did not seem to have prevented the continuation of the rivalry, which eventually led to the 1852 riot. This disturbance, in which according to Zeller only Latins took part, is mentioned in both Protestant and Roman Catholic sources.

According to Consul Finn, who described the riot several years later, apparently to illustrate his diplomatic commitment, one Sunday a popular Franciscan preacher, "Fra Angelo", preached against the Protestants. "He stamped and tore his hair, vociferating that 'The Protestants, the cursed Protestants, had dared to come even here, even here! in the city of Jesus Christ himself and his holy Mother!'" He ended his sermon by excommunicating certain individuals and putting their names on the church door.¹² From Zeller's account we learn that Roman Catholics "who had joined the Protestants were publicly excommunicated and partly laid under the ban of the Pope, and all Latins were most strictly forbidden to have any intercourse with missionaries or with Protestants".¹³

According to Finn, Fra Angelo's sermon and the excommunications caused a group of Roman Catholics to assemble in the streets of Nazareth and start rioting. They began to demolish the Protestant school during school hours.¹⁴ Led by a Michael Gebran, "a badly reputed creature", according to Zeller, they "beat and wounded several Protestants, attacked the house of the missionaries, demolished the door, and threw stones at them". One of the Protestants received serious head injuries.¹⁵ At the same time, Zeller

¹¹ Gobat did not mention what kind of protection these Protestants expected from the authorities. Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 15 January 1851, London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 232-233. Although in his letter to Rose Gobat mentioned this *firman* as proclaimed about two or three weeks earlier, he probably meant two or three months earlier. In that case, he would be referring to the *firman* of (November) 1850, which declared that the other communities should in no way interfere with any of the Protestant secular or religious affairs. For this *firman*, see Chapter 4.

¹² Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 150-151.

¹³ Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 30 April 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912, ff. 243-252. With the distinction between 'public excommunication' and 'partly laid under the ban of the Pope', Zeller probably means the difference between major (in this case a public one) and minor excommunication, i.e., the prohibition of receiving the sacraments. For excommunication, see the next section.

¹⁴ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 150-151. Zeller does not mention Fra Angelo and his sermon. He does say that the Latins were "instigated by the Franciscan monks"; according to Zeller, the principal agitator of the riot was a Louis Haleel, the head of the Latin congregation, who was also the dragoman of the Franciscan convent. Zeller, "Principal grievances", Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1; Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 30 April 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912, ff. 243-252.

¹⁵ A Mr. Schwartz. From Finn's account it follows that he was the Protestant schoolmaster. Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 151.

continues, many Bibles and other books distributed by the Protestant missionaries were “publicly burnt in the courtyard of the Franciscan convent” in front of their church. Zeller blamed the Ottoman authorities for doing nothing to stop the riot.¹⁶

After the Protestants had informed Finn of what had happened and had asked him for protection, he went to Nazareth. When he entered the town “children of the Latins” yelled at him and even threw some stones at him from a distance. Next day, he found stones from the wall of the school in the street where the assault had taken place. Finn collected statements from witnesses and sent these to the Pasha of Acre, in order to have the case judged. Furthermore, he pointed out to the Ottoman governor that “violence was not to be allowed” and impressed on the mind of the people that “inquiry would surely follow upon any outrage”.¹⁷ According to Zeller, Michael Gebran was punished and the governor was fired. Thanks to Finn’s efforts the Latins were intimidated for a while. However, they found another way to ‘persecute’ the Protestants: they bribed the Ottoman authorities not to take action whenever there was an instance of Catholics oppressing Protestants.¹⁸

Back in Jerusalem, Finn visited Patriarch Valerga to discuss the events. Valerga condemned the “resort of public tumult and personal injury”, but, as was to be expected, did not disapprove of expelling church members who disobeyed the regulations of the Roman Catholic Church, claiming that “every human association has a right to expel members who infringe its known regulations”.¹⁹

In a letter to the *Propagation de la Foi*, dated 20 January 1853, Valerga also gave an account of the Nazareth riot. According to him, the riot had not been instigated by the Roman Catholics, but was actually caused by the fact that the Protestants had taken advantage of the misery of the inhabitants of Nazareth. The Protestants had attracted dissatisfied believers with the help of the former dragoman of the Latin convent. He had been fired by the Franciscans “for many good reasons” and wanted to take revenge

¹⁶ Zeller, “Principal grievances”, 1868, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1; Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 30 April 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912, ff. 243-252. According to Finn, Fra Angelo had been watching the events from round the corner. Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 151.

¹⁷ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 152.

¹⁸ Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 30 April 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912, ff. 243-252.

¹⁹ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 152-153. When Finn replied that the “posting of excommunicated names upon the church-door was a needless measure after the fact of extrusion was accomplished”, Valerga answered that the scandal had not been very great as the church door was inside the courtyard, which was not a place of public access.

on the friars. The dragoman's intrigues had caused a division within the flock, and the provocations and insults to the Catholics had led to turbulent scenes.²⁰ According to a Roman Catholic leaflet entitled *Nazareth autrefois et aujourd'hui*, as a result of the fight the "poor English" were lying almost dead in the streets.²¹ Valerga visited the town for ten days, a time he used to restore peace and to make those who had gone to the Protestants return to the Mother Church. Valerga boasted that when he left Nazareth only two people were still associated with the Protestants. A year later the patriarch stated that these last two had also returned to the Catholic fold, but only after they had accepted and performed a public penance "to repair the scandal" they had caused. At that time no Latins had religious relations with Protestant ministers. Valerga added, however, that the presence of the Protestant mission would always form a danger for those who were dissatisfied and weak in their faith.²²

Apart from saying that the echo of the scenes had even reached Constantinople, Valerga does not mention any measures taken by the Ottoman authorities to resolve the conflict. According to *Nazareth autrefois et aujourd'hui*, however, Britain interfered in the conflict in favour of the Protestants: 600 soldiers were sent, and thirty "poor Nazarenes" were imprisoned for a couple of months. They were eventually freed by the help of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and the French Consul. The booklet states that the English had taken advantage of the situation, as they obtained the right to establish schools and Protestant missions throughout Galilee as satisfaction for the injury inflicted on the English during the riot. By emphasizing the Protestants' vigorous efforts to make the Catholic religion disappear, the text spurred on the Catholics to imitate their zeal.²³ Although Finn says nothing about the number of soldiers, he does refer to orders from Constantinople stating that a police force would be placed in Nazareth to assure tranquillity and to "arrest and punish the persons who have dared to commit the outrage".²⁴

Both Protestant and Catholic descriptions of the riot contain characteristic elements of the way they portrayed one another. In Roman Catholic sources the

²⁰ Valerga, Jerusalem, 20 January 1853, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 25, 1853, 253.

²¹ The book names the former Latin dragoman as Giries-el-Jacoub. Although the description of the outrage is similar to Valerga's and Zeller's accounts, the booklet dates the riot in 1859 instead of 1852. *Nazareth autrefois et aujourd'hui, avec une notice sur l'Orphelinat de Jésus Adolescent*, Nice, 1908, 25.

²² *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 25, 1853, 253.

²³ *Nazareth autrefois et aujourd'hui*, 25-27.

²⁴ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 153, 158.

Protestants are often described as having many financial resources at their disposal, being extremely active in their missionary efforts, and taking advantage of the misery of the Catholic poor. Protestant sources first mention book burnings and excommunications, recalling the Reformation in sixteenth-century Europe.²⁵ Secondly, the Roman Catholics are generally described as ignorant people with wicked and impious values and behaviour. As we have seen earlier, Protestant writings breathe the missionaries' feelings of moral superiority throughout. Thirdly, the Protestants criticise the Ottoman authorities for failing to support them in their conflicts with the other denominations. They portray themselves as the underdog. These three aspects will be discussed in the following sections.

Excommunications and book burnings

Like Zeller, CMS missionaries from various other towns and villages in Palestine also reported book burnings and excommunications due to contacts between Christians of other denominations and the Protestant missionaries. Reading their letters one cannot escape the impression that the missionaries wanted to symbolically compare the Protestants in nineteenth-century Palestine to the Protestants in sixteenth-century Europe, who fought for their faith in spite of all opposition.²⁶

While the events the missionaries refer to might have had an impact on the community, excommunication seemed to be a regular measure taken by Catholic and Orthodox clergy to prevent their church members from associating with the Protestant missionaries. According to the CMS missionaries, Roman Catholic clerics in Palestine easily and frequently excommunicated their church members for even the smallest misconduct: people could be excommunicated for sending their children to Protestant schools,²⁷ visiting Protestant church services or Bible classes, and the like. According to Frederick Klein, the Roman Catholics in Nazareth "used the authority committed to them by St. Peter" and "thundered down their 'small' and 'great' excommunication" on all those who became Protestant, who sent their children to a Protestant school, or who

²⁵ It is interesting that in the description of the Nazareth riot Zeller mentions the book burning, while Finn does not.

²⁶ This corresponds to the Protestants' characteristic topics of discussion and conversation, which had been the traditional subjects of debate between Roman Catholics and Protestants since the Reformation.

²⁷ See Chapter 7.

even talked to a Protestant.²⁸ By ‘small’ and ‘great’ excommunication, Klein refers to minor excommunication, which implied exclusion from receiving the sacraments, and major excommunication, that is, complete exclusion from the community of the faithful. Although the excommunicated still remained Christians, due to the permanent character of baptism, they were regarded as strangers to the church. It was the most serious penalty the church had at its disposal.

The missionaries’ accounts of Roman Catholic clergy burning Bibles and other books distributed by the Protestant missionaries contributed to the Reformation metaphor.²⁹ Klein writes that in 1855, to “crown the whole of their impious efforts” the Latin missionaries “sent by the Holy Father the Pope” had called upon “their spiritual children” to hand over all Protestant books in their possession. After that a “fire was kindled in the court of the Convent and a number of Bibles, New Testaments and other books were committed to flames”. However, Klein also states that some people remained firm, such as a former Roman Catholic, now belonging to the Protestant congregation. In reaction to the Bible burning this man told Klein: “They [the Latins] have burned the Word of God [...] Servants of the devil!” On Klein’s question whether he, as a former Latin, had handed over his Bible, the man replied that “he had indeed been asked to deliver up his Bible but that he would rather have his throat cut off than deliver his Bible into the hands of the priests”. According to this man, many Roman Catholics were greatly dissatisfied with the conduct of their clergy. Klein is convinced that it would “certainly open the eyes of many and lead them to see the perverseness of such spiritual guides who *dare* to destroy the Word of God”. He adds that there were many other examples of “poor ignorant men’s and children’s standing up in defence of the Word of God which the priests had condemned to be committed to the flames”.³⁰

By means of these stories the CMS missionaries wanted to demonstrate the difficulties encountered by the Protestant mission in their endeavours to make converts. Furthermore, such reports also reflect a typical feature of Protestant anti-Catholic

²⁸ Klein to Venn, Annual Letter, Nazareth, 11 February 1855, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 41/282.

²⁹ The majority of the missionaries’ accounts of book burnings are about Roman Catholics who burned Bibles and Protestant books. Only rarely are Greek Orthodox mentioned in relation to book burnings.

³⁰ Klein to Venn, Annual Letter, Nazareth, 11 February 1855, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 41/282. Among the stories of book burnings are reports from Gobat and one Assad Saleem; for instance, Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 15 February 1848, London/BL, RP 27, Add. 42798, ff. 209-214 and Assad Saleem, Jerusalem, 25 May 1871, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 8/83B.

rhetoric: the authors intended to expose the Roman Catholics' wicked behaviour, at the same time implying the Protestant missionaries' moral superiority.

Corruption and fights: Protestants emphasizing Roman Catholic wickedness

In the CMS missionaries' accounts of Roman Catholics putting up fights and Roman Catholic corruption, the missionaries not only wanted to show the difficulty of their work, they also intended to demonstrate Roman Catholic depravity, illustrating this by describing the way in which the Latins collected taxes from Protestants and how they bribed their church members and the Ottoman authorities.

The missionaries working in Nazareth primarily complained about the arbitrary way in which the taxes were collected from the Protestants. In their view, the Roman Catholics together with the Greek Orthodox used it as a particular means of oppression.³¹ Zeller pointed out that the privileges the Protestants had received through the *firman* of 1850 were never actually carried out.³² The Protestants were not acknowledged as an independent body. As a result they "were forced to pay their taxes to the Heads of the Greek and Latin communities", which levied higher taxes from the Protestants "in the most arbitrary manner".³³ The missionaries' stories portrayed the Catholics as oppressive persecutors of Protestants. When, for instance, a member of the Protestant congregation, a former Roman Catholic, wanted to pay his taxes to the Protestant congregation instead of to his former church, he was beaten up by a Latin. Although present at the scene, the son of the governor did nothing, because neither son nor father knew the meaning of justice, according to James Huber.³⁴

³¹ In 1861, Zeller observed that whereas the Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox were usually enemies, "now Greeks and Latins at Nazareth (as once Herod and Pilate) have become friends and joined one another in the persecution of the Protestants here". Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 30 April 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912 ff. 243-252.

³² For this *firman*, see Chapter 4; for a translation of the *firman*, see Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 156-158.

³³ Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 30 April 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44912 ff. 243-252. A month later Zeller moaned about the levying of taxes by the heads of the Catholics in Shefa Amer. They assessed the taxes in the "most arbitrary and unjust manner and demanded their immediate payment from the Protestants". When they objected to the injustice "they were treated as rebels" who refused to pay taxes. No help was forthcoming from the Ottoman authorities, so Zeller. Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 24 June 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 30-34.

³⁴ Huber to the CMS, "Report of the quarter ending September 1856", Nazareth, 22 September 1856, C M/O 34/73. Cf. Huber to Chapman, "Journal extracts for the Quarter ending September 30th 1858", Nazareth, 9 October 1858, C M/O 34/74. Both: Birmingham/UL.

The CMS missionaries also pointed to the corruption of Roman Catholics. They wanted the home public to believe bribery was a common method by which Catholics oppressed Protestants. They used bribery not only to persuade people not to read the Bible or have relations with the Protestants,³⁵ but also to get the Ottoman authorities on their side. Kawar criticised the Franciscan monks in Nazareth for giving presents to the Turkish authorities. Every time a new governor or judge arrived, they paid him an official visit with much display of power “as if they were Consuls of European powers” and discussed politics. When the officials returned the visit, the monks showed “all possible politeness” promising them all assistance. The monks demonstrated the extent of their power, stressing that all European Roman Catholic powers protected them and their convent, and that the letters of their Prior carried great weight. Soon after the visit the monks sent fine wine and food to the officials’ houses, and presents such as a watch, carpet or a spyglass to the judge, as he generally did not drink any spirits. As a result the convent had a strong influence with the Ottoman authorities, and in conflicts between Protestants and Latins the “present” judge always sided with the latter, according to Kawar. When the government wanted to punish Latins for offending members of other churches the convent exercised its power: in such cases, the prior would visit the governor to tell him that it was an affair of the convent.³⁶

The missionaries intended to convince the home public of the Latins’ immorality by frequent accounts of Catholics beating up Protestants. By stressing the opposition they met, the missionaries again wanted to demonstrate the difficulty of their work and, naturally, to raise more money for the mission. In these accounts the Roman Catholics were portrayed as wicked, ignorant and under the influence of their clergy. The CMS sources are full of stories about Protestants suddenly attacked by Latins, most of the

³⁵ When Valerga heard that a Protestant missionary had visited the sheik of Beit Jala, the patriarch was said to have offered the sheik money and presents in order to make him forbid the missionary to visit him again and for delivering to Valerga all Protestant books in his possession. When the sheik refused to do so, he did not receive a present from the convent as in other years. Muller to the CMS, Annual Report, Bethlehem, 31 December 1859, C M/O 54/4.

³⁶ “Translation of the Revd. Michael Kawar’s report of the quarter ending June 30th 1873”, part 1, Nazareth, 13 Juli 1873, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 40/3. The Protestants also accused the Greek Orthodox clergy of corruption. According to Gobat, in 1848 the Greek Orthodox patriarch had bribed the Turkish authorities to arrest one of his Scripture readers to prevent the latter from visiting towns and reading the Bible to the people. Gobat to Tait, Jerusalem, 17 July 1873, London/LPL, 195, ff. 280-282.

time for no apparent reason.³⁷ One of the missionaries, for instance, tells about his Roman Catholic landlord being beaten by his priest for having taken the missionary into his house. In spite of that, the landlord and his wife kept coming to see the missionary and reading the Bible with him.³⁸

Frequently, the sincerity of the person beaten up was emphasized. Thomas Mifsud, for instance, a shoemaker in Jaffa, was attacked and severely beaten by a Latin for no apparent reason at all. As a result “for nearly a whole month he could not work”. According to Krusé, Mifsud had not done anything wrong. Krusé refers to the “moral and respectable life” the shoemaker was leading, his regular attendance of the Protestant services, and his “always steady” conduct.³⁹ This and similar stories were clearly aimed at showing the contrast between the righteous, faithful and innocent Protestants and the ignorant, erroneous and wicked Catholics.

Although it is difficult to know to what extent the accounts of fights and bribery reflect reality, it is obvious that besides a feeling of moral superiority the CMS missionaries also cherished a feeling of being the underdog: the small Protestant community against the grand Roman Catholic Church.

Protestant criticism of the Ottoman authorities

The Protestant missionaries criticised the Ottoman authorities for failing to protect them in their conflicts with other denominations, for siding with the other churches, and for being susceptible to their influence, violence and bribery. They regularly turned

³⁷ An event that had quite an impact was the story of the Protestant Chalil Rosa from Shefa Amer. While sitting at the door of his house he was purposely pushed against the wall of his house. When he reproached his attacker, Rosa was beaten with sticks and stones by a number of Greek Catholics. The situation got completely out of hand, led to several trials, and finally to British intervention. In the end Colonel Fraser stationed a substantial number of soldiers at Shefa Amer. According to Zeller, Rosa never obtained compensation. Zeller, “Persecution of the Protestants at Shef-Amer near Nazareth”, 1863, C M/O 72/28B; “Petition for more effectual protection of Protestants”, 1868, C M/O 2/1. Both: Birmingham/UL. Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 22 May 1862, 25 May 1862, 29 May 1862, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 154-155, ff. 156-157 and 161-163; “Rapport de Seraphim Boutajji de Chef Amer en date du 24 mai”, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 159-160; Zeller to Fraser, Shefa Amer, 13 June 1862, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 168-173; Hanna al-Madawir, “Report of outrage at Shefa Amer”, 13 June 1862, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 174-175; Mansur Muisa, “Report of outrage at Shefa Amer”, 13 June 1862, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 176-177; Chalil Rosa, “Report of outrage at Shefa Amer”, 13 June 1862, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 178-179. All: London/BL.

³⁸ Muller to the CMS, Annual Report, Bethlehem, 31 December 1859, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 54/4.

³⁹ Krusé to the Secretaries of the CMS, “Journal of the Jaffa Station for the month of August”, Jaffa, 4 September 1855, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 45/169.

to the British representatives and the CMS for more effectual protection. To emphasize their need for support, they pointed to the protection the Roman Catholics received from the French, and the Orthodox from Russia.

Annoyed with the French support of the Latins, the CMS missionaries did not hesitate to draw attention to the influence of the French representatives on the Ottoman authorities. According to Krusé, hardly anything could be done for the Protestants in Jaffa when the French consul interfered in their conflicts with the Roman Catholics. The Ottoman governor was “afraid to do anything against the will of the French Consul” and everyone who had the consul’s who enjoyed the consul’s favour could do whatever he pleased without fear.⁴⁰ In some cases the missionaries blamed the other denominations for the lack of Ottoman support. When after an incident in Nazareth Zeller concluded that all his “enemies, Latins and Greeks together with Sheick Ameen” [i.e. the judge] tried to drive him out of Nazareth, he added that he did not think the Muslims and the Ottoman authorities were themselves strongly opposed to the Protestants. They were just “unceasingly instigated by Greek and Latin Ecclesiastics together with their influential adherents and protectors”. As a result the Protestant missionary efforts met with insurmountable difficulties.⁴¹

Yet the missionaries did blame the Ottoman authorities for not executing the *firman* of 1850 in favour of the Protestants and the reform edict *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856.⁴² In their eyes neither of these edicts were properly carried out. In 1868 the frustration led to the abovementioned petition addressed to the Committee of the CMS “regarding the political condition of the native Protestant congregations under our care”. The petition was signed by Zeller (Nazareth), Klein (Jerusalem), Paddon (Nazareth) and Sandreczki (Jerusalem). They begged the CMS to help them “by taking such steps as may be calculated to secure to these congregations a fuller recognition of the rights and privileges granted to them by special *Firmans* of the Sublime Porte”.⁴³ Besides pointing to the imperial orders and edict by which the Protestants were

⁴⁰ Krusé to the Secretaries of the CMS, “Journal of the Jaffa Station for the month of August”, Jaffa, 4 September 1855, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 45/169.

⁴¹ Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 20 February 1862, London/BL, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 113-114.

⁴² For the *Hatt-ı Hümayun*, see Chapter 1.

⁴³ “Petition for more effectual protection of Protestants”, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1. As mentioned earlier, Zeller’s list of “principal grievances” was part of this petition.

protected and recognized as a separate congregation, the petition also reflected the missionaries' feeling of not being taken seriously.

One reason for writing the petition concerned the Protestant representation in town councils.⁴⁴ Formerly the Protestants had had the "privilege of having regular members in the *medjlesses* [town councils]". In 1865, in accordance with imperial *firmans*, new regulations were drawn up, which prescribed that town councils of smaller towns should consist of three Muslims and three Christians or non-Muslims, to be recruited from the three denominations with the largest number of adherents.⁴⁵ In all towns the Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics outnumbered the Protestants, except for Nablus. Consequently the Protestants were excluded from all other town councils and were also deprived of participation in the elections. "Although orders were given, that the Protestants might have a temporary and unpaid representative [in the town council] in case the affairs of one of their number were discussed", the missionaries considered such a temporary representative completely inadequate. Moreover, the local authorities failed to support the Protestant member. As a result Muslims, Latins and Greeks imposed "their share of taxation" upon the Protestants. Complaints from Protestants, which they had to bring before the same tribunal, were often treated with "extreme unfairness". To the missionaries this proved that the Protestants were ignored in every way and considered a despised and uninfluential community.⁴⁶ They appealed to the *firman* of 1850 to stress that the separate Protestant representation was formally acknowledged; they considered it as "their principal guarantee against persecution".⁴⁷ The missionaries also referred to the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* to emphasize that all creeds were equal and that protection and religious liberty should be guaranteed to every creed irrespective of its number of adherents.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ The majority of complaints about the Protestants position in the town councils originated from Nazareth.

⁴⁵ It is not clear to what imperial order or decision the missionaries refer.

⁴⁶ "Petition for more effectual protection of Protestants", 1868, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1.

⁴⁷ They also refer to certain instructions of similar purport issued by the Sultan to Yacoob Pasha of Jerusalem in 1852.

⁴⁸ "Petition for more effectual protection of Protestants", 1868, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1. Six years after the petition was drawn up the Protestant representative in the town council of Nazareth, Michael Kavar, still complained about his own position in the council. The Latins and Greeks repeatedly tried to persuade the government that he was not a "legal spiritual member of the town council", so Kavar. "Translation of the Report of the Revd. Michael Kavar of the Quarter ending March 31st 1874", Nazareth, 31 March 1874, C M/O 40/4; "Translation of the Revd. Michael Kavar's letter", Nazareth, 30 November 1874, C M/O 40/7. According to Boutaji the Greek Catholics in Shefa Amer also "endeavoured very much" to prevent the government of

A second reason for setting up the petition concerned that part of the *firman* of 1850 which proclaimed that the Protestants should have “every facility and every needful assistance” in “all their affairs, such as procuring cemeteries and places of worship”; other communities should not interfere with any of the Protestants’ religious or secular affairs, so that the Protestants might “be free to exercise the usages of their faith”.⁴⁹ Notwithstanding this declaration, the missionaries took the view that especially the Protestant congregation in Nazareth had been “very imperfectly protected in the exercise of these privileges and in their public property as schools, places of worship and cemeteries”.⁵⁰ Besides Nazareth, complaints about obtaining burial ground also reached the CMS from other towns. John Robert Longley Hall from the Jaffa mission complained that when the Protestants tried to buy burial ground in Lydda after a long time of petitioning, the Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox made it impossible for them to purchase land. They were finally able to persuade some Muslims to sell them land.⁵¹

The petition reveals not only the missionaries’ conviction that life and work of the Protestants in general and the missionaries in particular would improve if the regulations of the 1850-*firman* and the reform edict were observed, but together with the missionaries’ correspondence it also seems to reflect the tendency to believe that the Protestant community would increase if the Protestants were free to exercise their faith without the other denominations interfering in their affairs. This may imply that the missionaries assumed that the members of the other denominations would become Protestants if their clergy did not hinder them. For instance, a Greek Catholic, whom Huber met in Kafr Kana, wanted to become a Protestant, but gave up this intention

Acre from permitting the Protestants to put a member in the town council. This attempt, however, did not succeed. Boutaji, Annual Letter, Shefa Amer, 26 November 1874, C M/O 16/16. All: Birmingham/UL.

⁴⁹ *Firman* as cited in the petition. “Petition for more effectual protection of Protestants”, 1868, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1. Cf. Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 157.

⁵⁰ “Petition for more effectual protection of Protestants”, 1868, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1. According to Zeller, the Protestants desire for burial grounds must “bring them into collision with Greeks and Latins”. In a letter to Colonel Fraser, he asked the colonel to use his influence in order to secure burial grounds for the Protestant communities in Nazareth, Reneh, and Kafr Kana. Zeller to Fraser, Nazareth, 24 June 1861, London/BL, FP, Add. 44913A, ff. 30-34.

⁵¹ Hall to Fenn, Annual Letter, Jaffa, November 1877, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 31/37. However, one year later the schoolmaster of Lydda wrote that the dragoman of the Greek patriarch from Jerusalem, together with the superintendent priest of Ramle and servants, raged through the cemetery and demolished the plants, claiming the land to be theirs. Damishky to the CMS, Lydda, 1 November 1879, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 22/5.

when his bishop punished him for his decision by giving him a beating.⁵² The CMS missionaries in Palestine were not the only ones to cherish such feelings towards the Ottomans. The missionaries of the ABCFM in Lebanon also blamed the Ottoman authorities for their lack of converts because they did not recognize the Protestants as a separate community. Ussama Makdisi sees a likely basis for their disillusionment in the fact that from the beginning they “refused to abandon their unshakeable conviction that an individual with the freedom to choose [...] would inevitably choose to be a Protestant”.⁵³ It seems that Gobat and the CMS missionaries blamed the other churches together with the Ottomans for the lack of missionary successes, rather than taking the blame upon themselves. Although the other denominations were sometimes held responsible for the lack of protection from the Ottoman authorities’, in general the CMS missionaries criticised the Ottomans for not being strong enough to resist the Catholics’ influence and bribery.

The Protestant criticism of the Ottoman authorities also shows the ease with which Gobat and the CMS missionaries expected the Ottoman authorities to observe the reforms, if necessary under European pressure.⁵⁴ Consequently, when it was found that the reform edicts were not executed properly and the other churches did interfere in the affairs of the Protestants, British and Prussian representatives were in turn thought to be free to interfere in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

Rivalry between Protestants and the Sisters of Nazareth

In Nazareth and Shefa Amer the rivalry between the CMS missionaries and the Roman Catholics also contained a gender element. As soon as the Latin Sisters of Nazareth, partly in reaction to the Protestant establishment in the city, settled in Nazareth in 1855 the rivalry between both missionary societies started and concentrated on a struggle for

⁵² Huber to Chapman, “Journal extracts for the Quarter ending September 30th 1858”, Nazareth, 9 October 1858, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 34/74.

⁵³ According to Makdisi, the missionaries could not or did not want to comprehend a living multi-religious society and recorded only a segregated society. They believed that the only way in which Muslims, Jews and Christians interacted was by violence. Makdisi, “Bringing America Back into the Middle East”, 58-59.

⁵⁴ We have seen the same attitude when in 1856 Gobat placed a bell in Nablus and rang it, referring to the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* (see Chapter 1). This incident demonstrates not only Gobat’s lack of sensitivity towards the society he lived in, but also his self-confidence, relying on the support of Great Britain and Prussia.

the “neglected females”.⁵⁵ As early as 1856, Huber complained that the “French ‘Sisters of mercy’” had established a large girls’ school “by means of giving presents of every description”.⁵⁶ More than a hundred girls were taught in the Roman Catholic school soon after its establishment,⁵⁷ whereas the Protestant educational efforts for girls did not seem to have been well-established at the time. In 1856 Huber mentioned that his wife instructed thirteen girls at home. However, two years later Mrs. Huber died.⁵⁸ When in 1859 Hannah Zeller arrived in Nazareth, she wrote that soon after her arrival some girls had asked her for instruction so that she now kept a small day-school of about eight girls.⁵⁹ In 1863 she asked the FES for an agent to assist in the missionary work among women, a request that was granted. In 1864 the FES missionary Mrs. Hobbs took over the education of the girls in Nazareth, and the school now began to have a settled character. In 1867 the FES opened an orphanage for girls.⁶⁰ Two years earlier, in 1865, John Zeller had appealed to the FES to found such an institution, referring to people’s poverty and to the Sisters of Nazareth. Zeller stressed that an orphanage might counteract the “baneful influence of Popery, and the active efforts of the Popish sisters”, which he considered a great hindrance to the Protestant work.⁶¹

As to the Sisters of Nazareth, the CMS missionaries’ anxiety was twofold: they worried about the sisters’ influence on the pupils in the Roman Catholic girls’ school, as they considered the girls’ education very important in relation to their future task as mothers. Furthermore, the Protestants were concerned about the lack of Protestant marriageable girls, and accordingly about the mixed marriages between Protestant men and Catholic women. In their eyes these wives were “one of the greatest obstacles

⁵⁵ Klein to Venn, Annual Letter, Nazareth, 11 February 1855, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 41/282; Dequevauviller to the Propaganda Fide, Rome, 27 January 1854, Rome/ASCPF, SCTC, 21, 635-636. For the Sisters of Nazareth, see also Chapter 5.

⁵⁶ Huber, “Report of the quarter ending September 1856. To the Committee of the Church Missionary Society London”, Nazareth, 22 September 1856, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 34/73.

⁵⁷ According to Duvignau 120 girls were enrolled in the school of the Sisters of Nazareth when it was opened. Duvignau, *Vincent Bracco*, 202.

⁵⁸ Huber, “Report of the quarter ending September 1856”, Nazareth, 22 September 1856, C M/O 34/73. Muller to Chapman, Annual Report, Nazareth, 31 December 1858, C M/O 54/3. Both Birmingham/UL.

⁵⁹ Letter from Hannah Zeller, Nazareth, 26 November 1859, quoted in the unpublished version of Stockdale’s dissertation *Gender and Colonialism in Palestine 1800-1948. Encounters Among English Arab and Jewish Women* (University of California Santa Barbara, 2000).

⁶⁰ Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters*, 138, 213. See also N. Stockdale, “An Imperialist Failure: English Missionary Women and Palestinian Girls in Nazareth, 1864-1899”, Tamcke and Marten (eds.), *Christian Witness*, 216.

⁶¹ Annual Report #32, 1866 [re: 1865], *Female Education Society 1853-1872 Annual Reports*, 31, quoted in the unpublished version of Stockdale’s dissertation *Gender and Colonialism in Palestine*.

against a firmer establishment of our [the Protestant] congregations and a more consistent life of our converts". They kept their Protestant husbands from establishing a "truly Christian home" and made their lives miserable, as the women stuck to their former priests and superstitions "on account of their ignorance".⁶²

What Zeller, and other CMS missionaries with him, meant by a "truly Christian home" and the position of women in it, becomes clear in Zeller's sermon at the consecration service of the FES orphanage in Nazareth. In his address Zeller entered into the reasons for an orphanage, stating that it was not the man but the woman who builds or ruins a house. If the woman was "bad, all the diligence and wisdom of the man will not prevent his ruin". Nobody liked to enter a house with a "filthy housewife in it", but he continued that "a wise woman is an honour to her house, and a light for them, brings innumerable blessings upon those around her, – yea, leads them towards eternal life".⁶³

Nancy Stockdale considers this part of the sermon an "assertion that Victorian values of domesticity were the touchstone of both material and otherworldly successes",⁶⁴ but I would prefer to speak of 'Evangelical values of domesticity', remembering that Zeller and his co-missionaries and their wives had their background in the *Erweckungsbewegung* in Switzerland and Germany.⁶⁵ With their different nationalities, the CMS missionaries were first and foremost formed by their Evangelical background, not by Victorian values. In his sermon Zeller painted a picture of 'Evangelical motherhood',⁶⁶ clearly referring to Proverbs 31 about the 'virtuous wife', who "watches over the ways of her household [...] and fears the Lord".⁶⁷ Women were considered the

⁶² Zeller to Fenn, Annual Letter, Nazareth, December 1872, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 72/277. The missionaries regularly complained that if the women belonged to another denomination (or religion) they prevented their husbands from converting to Protestantism, did not want to live with their husbands when they were converted, or did not want to follow their Protestant husbands. For instance: Krusé to the Secretaries of the CMS, "Journal of the Jaffa Station, first quarter 1858", Jaffa, 22 April 1858, C M/O 45/175; Muller to the CMS, Annual Report, Bethlehem, 31 December 1859, C M/O 54/4. Both: Birmingham/UL; Cooper to the LJS, "Appeal, from a resident in Jerusalem on behalf of the School of Industry for Jewesses", Jerusalem, 1 September 1850, Oxford/BL, Dep. C.M.J. d.58/14.

⁶³ Annual Report quoted in Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters*, 151-152.

⁶⁴ Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters*, 152.

⁶⁵ The Nazareth missionaries Zeller and Huber both came from Würtemberg. They had entered the Basle Mission, just like the former Nazareth missionary Klein. Huber's wife, Julia Huber-Berger, came from Prussia.

⁶⁶ Heleen Murre-van den Berg introduces the term 'Evangelical motherhood' in her article on nineteenth-century Protestant missions and Middle-Eastern women, see H.L. Murre-van den Berg, "Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Middle-Eastern Women: An Overview", I.M. Okkenhaug, *Gender, Religion and Change*, Oxford, New York, 2005, 106

⁶⁷ Proverbs 31: 27, 30.

driving force behind the Christian family.⁶⁸ As to the orphanages' aim, Zeller went on to say that it had to teach the girls the love of Christ, which "makes obedient, and humble, and modest [...] faithful, and true, and pure, and holy". If the love of Christ filled the girl's hearts, their (future) houses would "be built upon a rock".⁶⁹ Because of the importance of the education of the girls and their future task as 'virtuous wives' in their 'truly Christian homes', the efforts of the Sisters of Nazareth were an abomination to the Protestant missionaries.

Seraphim Boutaji, who worked for the CMS in Shefa Amer, expressed his great anxiety about marriages between Protestant men and Catholic women. He thought that the Latin nuns had a stronghold on the minds of Catholic women.⁷⁰ These women were subject to "the deceits of the nuns", who used all means to keep the women from going to Protestant services and even looking at Protestant missionaries.⁷¹ This view was confirmed by Zeller, according to whom, as a result of the demoralising influence of the Latin nuns, the Protestant men in Shefa Amer had to lock their wives in their houses, because otherwise they would run off with the children.⁷²

Boutaji worried about the shortage of Protestant girls. Because of this, young Protestant "lads" would be "obliged to take girls from the Catholics" and would be "exposed to many troubles and temptations". Referring to original sin, he continued that these men were no stronger than "their father Adam, who could not withstand the temptations of Eve" and might therefore be drawn away from the Protestant congregation because of their wives.⁷³ To illustrate his anxiety, Boutaji mentioned a Protestant adolescent betrothed to a Catholic woman. Although this young man wanted

⁶⁸ Murre-van den Berg, "Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions", 106.

⁶⁹ Sermon by Zeller quoted in Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters*, 152. For the mission to Arab women, female missionaries in Palestine and gender issues, see Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters*; Stockdale, "English Women"; Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*; Melman, *Women's Orients*. For an overview, see Murre-van den Berg, "Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions", 103-122.

⁷⁰ By 'Catholic' Boutaji probably meant Greek Catholic, as the Christians in Shefa Amer chiefly consisted of Greek Catholics, see Zeller, "Persecution of the Protestants at Shef-Amer near Nazareth", 1863, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 72/28B.

⁷¹ Boutaji to the CMS, Annual Letter, Shefa Amer, 26 November 1874 (probably a translation of the Arabic), Birmingham/UL, C M/O 16/16.

⁷² As some of the girls also went to the Protestant school, according to Zeller the "French nuns went round into all houses threatening the women, and thus preventing their coming". Zeller, "Extracts from Journals", Nazareth, August 1867, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 72/265.

⁷³ "Translation of the Report of Serafim Boutagi, for the quarter ending, March 31st 1873. Shefamer", Shefa Amer, 31 March 1873, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 16/13.

to marry in the Protestant Church, his fiancée was unwilling to do so. Consequently, he was “obliged” to marry in the Catholic Church. Before the wedding the man promised Boutaji that although he was getting married in the Catholic Church he would attend the Protestant church services every Sunday from then on. However, the man did not return to the Protestants, which made Boutaji conclude that “the love for his wife was greater than the love for truth”. Boutaji took every opportunity to talk to the man and prayed for him, but was uncertain whether he would ever return.⁷⁴

Boutaji’s preoccupation with the bad influence of the Roman Catholic sisters and mixed marriages was probably nourished by the fact that there was no Protestant girls’ school in Shefa Amer at the time (the early 1870s), whereas the Sisters of Nazareth had already settled in the town in 1864. Boutaji saw a solution to the problem of mixed marriages in the establishment of a Protestant girls’ school, “governed by a good, pious female teacher”, who would be able “to preach the Gospel to the women” too.⁷⁵ The foundation of such a school would free the women and girls “from the heavy yoke of the nuns” and the number of marriageable Protestant girls would increase.⁷⁶

The rivalry between the CMS missionaries and the Sisters of Nazareth is more or less confirmed by a serial in a Catholic journal dedicated to the Sisters’ mission.⁷⁷ According to this journal, the mission of the Sisters of Nazareth in Shefa Amer had been very promising from the start. However, the Protestants, referred to as “the devil”, were working in Shefa Amer as well. They had substantial financial resources at their disposal and had exceptional talents for proselytising. When the sisters arrived, holes had already been picked in the status of the Catholic religion. Therefore, the sisters immediately started to direct their energies towards the “heresy” committed by some Catholic women; they tried to bring them under their influence. As a result, these women

⁷⁴ Boutaji feared that through their wives the Protestant men would come under the influence of the Roman Catholic priests. “Translation of the Report of Serafim Boutagi, for the quarter ending, March 31st 1873. Shefamer”, Shefa Amer, 31 March 1873, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 16/13. Boutaji was also concerned about the upbringing of the children from mixed marriages. He gave the example of a Protestant man whose Catholic wife never showed up when a child was baptized. According to Boutaji, she was not the only one, as almost all Catholic women of Shefa Amer were much the same. “Extracts of the journal of the Rev. Serafim Boutagi Quarter ending June 30th 1872”, Shefa Amer, 30 June 1872, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 16/11.

⁷⁵ Boutaji, Annual Letter, Shefa Amer, 26 November 1874, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 16/16.

⁷⁶ “Extracts of the journal of the Rev. Serafim Boutagi Quarter ending June 30th 1872”, Shefa Amer, 30 June 1872, C M/O 16/11; “Translation of the Report of Serafim Boutagi, for the quarter ending March 31st 1873. Shefamer”, Shefa Amer, 31 March 1873, C M/O 16/13. Both: Birmingham/UL.

⁷⁷ “Feuilleton. L’Institut de Nazareth en Orient”, *Les Missions Catholiques. Bulletin hebdomadaire illustré de l’œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi* 5, Lyon, 1873, 242-344.

learned to prefer the “satisfaction of their conscience to all material advantages”. The Protestant minister, annoyed about the “females’ apostasy”, accused the men of weakness and giving in to their wives too easily, and invited them to bring their spouses to the Sunday sermon. Although some Catholic women agreed and accompanied their husbands to the Protestant services, the majority went to the convent looking for encouragement, comfort and also refuge, fearing their husbands would be outraged.⁷⁸ As to mixed marriages, the serial does not provide us with further information. Unlike the Protestant documents, the Roman Catholic documents examined do not express concerns about mixed marriages. Discussions of such marriages seem to focus on canonical questions only.⁷⁹ I will continue with the Roman Catholic anti-Protestant polemics in the next section.

A “peaceful crusade”: Roman Catholic anti-Protestant polemics

The Roman Catholic archival sources seem to contain fewer descriptions of the rivalry between Protestants and Catholics than the Protestant sources. As many Catholic documents are about the struggle with the Greek Orthodox about the Holy Places or about intra-Catholic rivalry, one would be inclined to think that the Roman Catholics in Palestine were less preoccupied with the Protestants than the other way around. Nevertheless, although a relatively small number of writings are dedicated to the Protestants, the Franciscans and the people connected to the Latin patriarchate did express worries about the Protestant presence and missionary efforts ever since the establishment of the Protestant bishopric.⁸⁰ At the end of the 1860s and in the early 1870s, Catholic sources show an increase of anti-Protestant polemics; this applies especially to the documents written by French Catholics, which are full of anti-Protestantism. This comes as no surprise as relations between Roman Catholic France and Protestant Prussia had been strained since the late 1860s, which led to the war in 1870. At the

⁷⁸ “Feuilleton. L’Institut de Nazareth en Orient”, 279-282. To illustrate the success of the Latin mission success, an example was given about a Catholic woman, who went to her father’s house rather than going to the Protestant church service. While at her father’s house, she sent word to her husband that she would not come home, unless he guaranteed her free exercise of her own religion. “Feuilleton. L’Institut de Nazareth en Orient”, 280-281.

⁷⁹ For instance Bracco to Barnabo, Jerusalem, 12 March 1870, 573-574; Valerga to Barnabo, Jerusalem, 7 January 1872, 749-750; Valerga to Barnabo, Jerusalem, 4 August 1872, 804-805. All: Rome/ASCPF, SCTS, 24.

⁸⁰ See also Chapter 5.

same time, the hostility in Prussia against Catholicism was fierce as a result of the *Kulturkampf*, i.e. the ‘war’ against Catholicism led by Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898).⁸¹ These documents give us a fair idea of the Roman Catholic anti-Protestant polemics.

Someone who frequently took up the pen against the Protestants was the Frenchman Louis Poyet (d.1893). His writings are valuable illustrations of the anti-Protestant polemics, as the same arguments are also found in other French Roman Catholic documents and journals at the time. Poyet had been connected with the Latin patriarchate since the early 1850s. He worked as a teacher at the patriarchal seminary and became the patriarch’s Protonotary Apostolical in 1880. His articles about the position of Catholicism in Palestine were published in a Roman Catholic journal, *Les Missions Catholiques* of the *Propagation de la Foi*.⁸² Besides the political and religious tension between France and Prussia, Poyet’s anti-Protestant rhetoric cannot be separated from other events and developments at the time: the rivalry between the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem,⁸³ and the anti-Protestantism and increasing nationalism in France.⁸⁴

Although Poyet regularly described the Muslims and Greek Orthodox as ‘enemies’ of the Roman Catholic Church in Palestine, he was mainly preoccupied with the “invasion of Protestants” and the presence and activities of Protestantism “with its thousands of sects” in Palestine.⁸⁵ The whole tenor of the anti-Protestant utterances in the Roman Catholic documents about the Nazareth riot appears in Poyet’s writings: the

⁸¹ See for instance M.B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism. Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany, Ann Arbor, 2004, MI, 240-291. According to Buffon the Franco-Prussian war, together with the struggle about the Holy Places in Bethlehem between Catholics and Orthodox, had contributed to the decrease of French power in the Middle East, Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 76.

⁸² Even when the journal only mentions a correspondent in Jerusalem (in the vicinity of the patriarchate) as author of the account, this correspondent turns out to be Poyet: part of the text overlaps with letters he wrote to the Propaganda Fide. For Poyet, see Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 166-167.

⁸³ For the relation between France and the Custody of the Holy Land, see Buffon, *Les Franciscains*.

⁸⁴ This led to French criticism of the Franciscan Custody and of the fact that most patriarchal offices were taken by Italian priests. Cf. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*; Buffon, “Les Franciscains”, 65-91.

⁸⁵ The Muslims had put an “iron yoke” on the Christians in the Holy Land for centuries and the Greek Orthodox had taken the Catholic sanctuaries. Poyet, “Mémoire sur la Terre Sainte, Octobre 1872”, Rome, 20 October 1872, SCTS 24, 827; Poyet to Franchi, Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide, Jerusalem, 2 September 1874, SCTS 24, 1263-1264; Poyet to Barnabo, Jerusalem, 22 July 1868, SCTS 24, 308-309. All: Rome/ASCPF. In SCTS 24, 308-309, the Armenians rather than Muslims are mentioned as the antagonists of the Catholics, in a text stating that Greek Orthodox, Armenians and Protestants were completely united in their opposition to Catholicism.

increase of the Protestant missionary establishments, the huge amount of Protestant financial resources, and their abuse of the Catholics' poverty.

The enormous increase of Protestant institutions in Palestine was one of Poyet's main concerns. The Holy Land was overrun with Protestants, who were extremely rich as a result of donations from biblical and Evangelical societies.⁸⁶ Several times he listed all Protestant, especially Prussian, establishments in Jerusalem and added that it would take too long to record all Protestant institutions in the towns and villages outside Jerusalem.⁸⁷ Poyet added arguments for his anxiety by citing a French "noble pilgrim", who, pained by the sight of so many Prussian institutions in Jerusalem alone, wondered whether he was "in Jerusalem or in Prussia".⁸⁸ The pilgrim stated that the Protestants in Jerusalem had more or less imitated the Catholics, as they had a bishop, minister-missionaries, clergy and deaconesses, and were the protectors of travellers and the sick.⁸⁹

Besides the Prussian Protestant institutions, Poyet also paid attention to British Protestant missionary efforts, but stressed that Prussia was usurping Britain's supremacy in the Holy Land. Poyet added that "Prussia reigned in Jerusalem through the power of Bismarck", thus referring to the anti-Roman Catholic climate under Bismarck at the time.⁹⁰ This seems to have been a common feeling in Roman Catholic circles. The Custodian of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, for instance, also uttered the

⁸⁶ Poyet, "Mémoire sur la Terre Sainte", Rome, 20 October 1872, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS, 24, 827.

⁸⁷ Such as hospitals, orphanages, agricultural colonies, and schools "in all Christian villages" all founded to persuade Catholics to embrace Protestantism. Poyet, "Mémoire sur la Terre Sainte, Octobre 1872", Rome, 20 October 1872, SCTS 24, 828-829; Poyet to Franchi, Jerusalem, 2 September 1874, SCTS 24, 1263-1264. Both: Rome/ASCPF. *Les Missions Catholiques*, bulletin hebdomadaire illustré de l'oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi 16.

⁸⁸ This pilgrim had visited Jerusalem in 1869. Poyet mentions him both in a letter to the Propaganda Fide and in an article for *Les Missions Catholiques*. Poyet, "Mémoire", Rome, 20 October 1872, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 825-833; *Les Missions Catholiques* 16, 1874, 54.

⁸⁹ Poyet, "Mémoire", Rome, 20 October 1872, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 828. Poyet's story about the 'noble pilgrim' had earlier been published in *Le Monde*, 10 January 1870, quoted by Buffon. According to Buffon this article was written by a certain Barrier, presented in *Le Monde* as 'a French pilgrim'. In the article Buffon discusses the rising French nationalism. Although the pilgrim was preoccupied with the growing (Prussian) Protestantism and the (Prussian) Jewish efforts, he was also worried about the inefficiency of the Catholics, the majority of whom still were Italian. Buffon places the article in the context of a "French crusade against the German Protestants and Jews", Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 54-59. Poyet's version of this text does not mention the Jews at all.

⁹⁰ *Les Missions Catholiques* 16, 1874, 54.

fear that the Franciscans began to feel the anti-Catholic influence of Bismarck in Palestine.⁹¹

Poyet was also concerned with the moral corruption of Catholic children in the Protestant schools, especially in their orphanages. The majority of children in these orphanages were born from Christian families, “Greek Orthodox [...] and even Greek Uniates and Latins”. The Protestants exploited the poverty of the children’s parents by promising them a decent education for free, on condition that they left their children in the care of the orphanage for five years. The parents, “blinded by these beautiful promises”, voluntarily agreed. However, if they wanted to take their children out of the orphanage within five years, they had to pay an enormous amount of money, which these poor people could not afford. Five years in a Protestant orphanage was enough to “infect these young children with the Protestant *virus*”; the Protestants could encourage “a lively repulsion of the Papists” and the cult of the Virgin Mary in the children.⁹²

Claude Girard, an advocate from Grenoble and founder of the journal *La Terre Sainte et les Églises orientales*, who had visited the Holy Land several times as a pilgrim, shared Poyet’s anxiety. Girard also stated that the Protestant schools perverted Catholic children, and that their parents had sold them to the Protestants out of poverty. His worries were part of his criticism of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, who had made “a tomb from the cradle of religion”. They had neither protected the Holy Land from Protestantism, nor protected the Holy Places from the Greek Orthodox. Girard also blamed the Franciscans for Italianizing the Middle East.⁹³

⁹¹ He expressed this view as a result of a “suspicious” visit of the Prussian Consul. Letter to Giovanni Simeoni, secretary of the Propaganda Fide, Rome, 2 March 1874, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 1160.

⁹² They had to pay one French franc for each day their children had been in the orphanage, according to Poyet, “Mémoire”, Rome, 20 October 1872, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 829. Fliedner, the man behind the Kaiserswerth mission, also mentions that parents sometimes signed a contract with the deaconesses concerning the time they would leave their children in the deaconesses’ institute. Although he states that some parents nevertheless took their children away within five years, he does not mention that in that case they had to pay a fine. Fliedner, *Reizen in het Heilige Land*, 302. Stockdale mentions that parents who entrusted their children to the FES orphanage in Nazareth were made to sign a contract indicating that they could only remove their daughters “by payment of a cash indemnity until the girls reached a certain age”. Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters*, 137-139.

⁹³ “Les ouvrages et Colonies contre les Franciscains de Terre Sainte”, 1865, Extracts in the Franciscan archives, Rome/AGOFM, TS 2, SK/596, 46-55. In a letter to the Propaganda Fide, the Minister General of the Franciscans in Rome responded to Girard’s criticism. Bernardino de Portogruaro to Barnabo, March 1870, Rome/AGOFM, TS 2, SK/596, 56-69. Cf. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 50 (for Claude Girard); Buffon, G., “Les Franciscains”, 65-91.

Poyet considered a “peaceful crusade of prayers and good works” a perfect solution for the Protestant threat.⁹⁴ Catholicism should unite all forces in order to oppose the invasion of the “Protestant sects” by with soldiers of charity and prayer.⁹⁵ With the expression “peaceful crusade” and his view of a ‘Protestant invasion’, Poyet concurred with a common view held by Roman Catholics in France at the time: the use of military metaphors was common at the time.⁹⁶ The idea that Palestine was flooded with Protestants, together with events involving the Greek Orthodox in Bethlehem, had put the Catholics in a wretched and dangerous position. Poyet and other Roman Catholics considered the so-called ‘peaceful crusade’ the solution for the problem of how to strengthen Catholicism in the Holy Land. An unknown author wrote to the Propaganda Fide that it was “the moment to battle, to fight, and for fighting one needs soldiers”.⁹⁷ Whereas Ussama Makdisi refers to a “gentle crusade”, “in a sense that most travellers imagined themselves to be involved in a historic clash between Christian progress and Islamic despotism”, Poyet and kindred spirits translated the expression of a “peaceful crusade” mainly into ‘a crusade against Protestantism’.⁹⁸

In order to resist the Protestants and create a ‘peaceful crusade’, Poyet was convinced that the Holy See should open the gates of Jerusalem to all religious congregations willing to settle in Palestine. Because the Franciscans had been the only Catholic

⁹⁴ Poyet to the Propaganda Fide, Rome, 22 October 1872, SCTS 24, 835; Poyet, *Mémoire*, Rome, 20 October 1872, SCTS 24, 830-833. Both: Rome/ASCPF. *Les Missions Catholiques* 16, 54 and 17, 318.

⁹⁵ Poyet, “*Mémoire*”, Rome, 20 October 1872, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 830.

⁹⁶ Chantal Verdeil discusses the view of a ‘peaceful’ crusade within the frame of her research about the Jesuits in nineteenth-century Syria. Verdeil, *Les Jésuites de Syrie (1830-1864)*, 205-207; Verdeil, “Between Rome and France”, Tamcke and Marten (eds.), *Christian Witness*, 29-30. Cf. Heyberger and Verdeil, “Spirituality and Scholarship”, 35-39.

⁹⁷ Unknown author to the Propaganda Fide, Jerusalem, 8 June 1873, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 1015-1016. Girard also asked for a ‘peaceful crusade’. Bernardino de Portogruaro to Barnabo, March 1870, Rome/AGOFM, TS 2, SK/596, 56-69.

⁹⁸ Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 16. Of course the expression ‘Crusades’ implies the idea of a battle between Christianity and Islam. In the writings of Poyet and fellow Catholics, however, the view of a peaceful crusade first and foremost served the Roman Catholic, especially French, interests, as opposed to Protestantism. Verdeil also states that the ‘peaceful crusade’ was “less directed against Muslims than it was directed towards Catholics: it was felt necessary to consolidate Churches threatened by Protestantism” [...] from the second half of the 16th century the Catholic Church worried more about the expansion of Protestantism than of Islam”. Verdeil, “Between Rome and France”, 30. According to Alexander Schölch the idea of the continuation of the crusade by other means was spread among both Catholics and Protestants. However, as far as I know the term ‘peaceful crusade’ is not used by the CMS missionaries. A. Schölch, *Palästina im Umbruch, 1856-1882. Untersuchungen zur wirtschaftlichen und sozio-politischen Entwicklung*, Berliner Islamstudien 4, Stuttgart, 1986, 64-68.

presence in Palestine for such a long time, Protestantism had been able to grow.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Poyet asked the Holy See to restore the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Holy Land. He wondered whether the time had come to reinstate the Latin patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople. To enforce the benefits of such a reinstatement he referred to the success of the restoration of the papal hierarchy in Britain and the Netherlands.¹⁰⁰

Poyet's negative view of the state of Catholicism in Palestine was not shared by the Latin Patriarch Vincent Bracco. In reaction to Poyet's writings Bracco modified Poyet's view, emphasizing that Poyet had not taken into account all Catholic establishments outside Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Bracco admitted that in some aspects the Catholics occupied an inferior position compared to the Orthodox, with their institutions supported by Russia, and the Protestants, with their numerous philanthropic institutions. He shared Poyet's view that the Catholics should be able to compete with their "rivals". He foresaw serious disadvantages, however, if the gates were opened to all Catholic religious congregations, as this might be harmful for the position of indigenous clergy. Moreover, some orders desired to settle in Palestine, seeing it as a place of devotion, rather than for the missionary cause. They might be an obstacle instead of a help.¹⁰¹

Bracco's reaction should be seen in the light of the relationship between both men and their national backgrounds. From Poyet's correspondence it appears that he was critical about the Latin patriarch as Bracco only loved his books and his study, was often ill, and was cool in his relations with people.¹⁰² Furthermore, in French circles there was criticism of the fact that the majority of offices within the patriarchate were still filled by Italians. In reaction to the proposal of an Italian priest for the office of Vicar

⁹⁹ Poyet, "Mémoire", Rome, 20 October 1872, SCTS 24, 825-833; Poyet to the Propaganda Fide, Rome, 22 October 1872, SCTS 24, 835; Poyet to Franchi, Jerusalem, 2 September 1874, SCTS 24, 1263-1264; All: Rome/ASCPF. Others, such as Girard, also appealed for an opening of the gates to other religious societies; "Les ouvrages", 1865, Rome/AGOFM, TS, 2, SK/596, 46-55. Poyet's demand to open Jerusalem's gates implied criticism of the Franciscans and the patriarchate. In one of his letters he stated that during all those years the Franciscans had done "nothing or almost nothing" to resist the Protestants. Poyet to Franchi, Jerusalem, 2 September 1874, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 1263.

¹⁰⁰ Poyet, "Mémoire", Rome, 20 October 1872, SCTS 24, 825-833; Poyet to Franchi, Jerusalem, 2 September 1874, SCTS 24, 1263-1264. Both: Rome/ASCPF. In his letters of 1874 Poyet also mentioned a third way to create a 'peaceful crusade', i.e., increasing the number of pilgrims and pilgrimages to the Holy Land. This means was especially directed towards the Greek Orthodox Church and its grand number of pilgrims and pilgrimages.

¹⁰¹ "Bracco sulla memoria presentata al S.C. da Mr. Poyet", 10 July 1873, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 1028-1029.

¹⁰² Poyet to Franchi, Jerusalem, 3 September 1874, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 1263-1264.

General of the patriarchate, the French Consul, for instance, complained about the exclusion of French priests from prominent offices within the patriarchate.¹⁰³

Concluding remarks

Both Protestants and Roman Catholics availed themselves of polemics to blacken each other. Naturally, both denominations tried to persuade the home front to donate more resources for the mission. The Protestant missionaries also wanted to explain the lack of missionary successes. The Protestants' anti-Catholic polemics served to explain the difficulties they met. By putting the blame on the Catholics and the Ottoman authorities, they implicitly claimed that much more members of other churches would probably become Protestants if they were not prevented by their clergy.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestants had to fight for a position among the other religions and denominations in Palestine. The Protestant anti-Catholic writings indicate that the CMS missionaries cherished a feeling of being the underdog: the small, sincere Protestant community in battle with the giant Roman Catholic Church. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the missionaries often stressed their (Evangelical) Protestant identity and religious beliefs in describing numerous conversations emphasizing the theological 'errors' of the other denominations.

Although the number of Roman Catholic writings dedicated to the Protestants is smaller than the other way around, these do reflect a serious concern with the Protestant missionary work: the Protestants' huge resources, their exploitation of Catholics' poverty, and the increase of the Protestant missionary institutions. The Roman Catholic anti-Protestant polemics were hardly, if at all, concerned with Roman Catholic identity or Protestant theological beliefs. This might be because the Roman Catholic Church had been an established church in Palestine for centuries. As the Roman Catholics in Palestine struggled with internal division, the anti-Protestant polemics, especially among French authors, also served to convince the Propaganda Fide that it should permit other societies to settle in Palestine. This would end the monopoly of the Custody and the Latin patriarchate in the Holy Land.

¹⁰³ He did, however, admit that there were hardly any capable French priests and suggested that Poyet should fulfil the office, albeit only temporarily: he knew Poyet's character was difficult. French Consul to the ambassador of France in Rome, Corcelles, 3 February(?) 1874, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS 24, 1277.