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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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Introduction

On 30 December 1846 the French-speaking Swiss Samuel Gobat (1799-1879) arrived in Jerusalem. This was the start of almost thirty-five years in office as bishop of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem. Gobat's arrival was a turning point in the Protestant mission in Palestine. Five years earlier, in 1841, the Protestant bishopric had been established as a joint enterprise by Prussia and Britain. The guidelines for the future Protestant bishops had specified the missionary aim of the bishopric to be the mission among the Jews. During his short episcopate from 1841-1845 the first Protestant bishop, Michael Solomon Alexander, acted accordingly and directed his energies towards the Jews. He closely cooperated with the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, or the London Jews Society (hereafter LJS). Although several missionary institutions were established during Alexander's term of office, at the end of his episcopate the Protestant community was still very small. When Samuel Gobat succeeded Alexander in 1846 he decided to broaden the missionary scope, and he also directed his energies towards the evangelization of Christians from other churches. During the Gobat years the mission among Christians became the primary object of the bishopric.

In the late 1840s Samuel Gobat invited the Church Missionary Society (hereafter CMS) to help him with his work. It comes as no surprise that Gobat asked for CMS missionaries to be sent to Palestine. He himself had worked for the society for years in Malta and Ethiopia. Although the CMS mission was independent of Gobat, society and bishop closely cooperated throughout Gobat's episcopate. Gobat received financial support and manpower from the CMS, and he in turn was their guide in missionary efforts.¹ The first CMS missionaries arrived in Palestine in 1851. Gobat chaired the conferences of the CMS Local Committee in Palestine and of the CMS missionaries in Palestine, in which mission policies were decided and local missionary matters were discussed. Gobat and the CMS were on the same wavelength in their missionary activities and objective: the CMS missionaries also directed their energies towards Christians from other churches. For this reason, Gobat handed over many schools and mission stations to the CMS at the end of his episcopate. In his annual report for 1877

¹ With the CMS on his side "Gobat secured a powerful ally, and they a staunch supporter". A.L. Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine, 1800-1901. A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise*, Oxford, 1961, 107.

he explains that in doing so he wanted to ensure that the missionary work would be continued on the same foundation after his death.²

The letters and reports written by Gobat and the CMS missionaries to the home front demonstrate that they acted in a common spirit. Their writings contain many manifestations of their Evangelical principles regarding their work in the mission field. Both Gobat and the CMS missionaries had a shared background in the intercontinental Evangelical movement. Evangelicalism strongly influenced their missionary work, expectations, efforts, and the way they perceived the other churches.

The correspondence by Gobat and the CMS missionaries also reflects a strong rivalry with other Christian denominations. The missionaries' accounts are interspersed with criticism of the doctrines and rituals of the other churches in Palestine. This constant censuring of the other churches and the efforts to make converts among their members resulted in conflicts ranging from small wrangles to terrible riots. Gobat and the CMS missionaries experienced hostility from especially the Roman Catholics, whom they believed more fiercely opposed to their work than the Greek Orthodox Christians in Palestine.³ The missionaries' attachment to the intercontinental Evangelical movement, their Evangelical principles, and the rivalry they felt were inextricably bound up with each other.

Research questions

This book concentrates on both the influence of the Evangelical principles on the missionary efforts of Gobat and the CMS missionaries, and the competition they experienced with the other churches. The following questions will be addressed: What was the influence of the Evangelical views of Gobat and the CMS missionaries on their missionary efforts? What were their expectations regarding their mission? Did they have to adjust their expectations to the reality of the mission field? How did their Evangelical principles influence their attitude towards the other denominations in Palestine? What was the relationship between their Evangelicalism and their criticism of the other

² Gobat, Annual Report, Jerusalem, November 1877, in S. Gobat, *Samuel Gobat Evangelischer Bischof in Jerusalem. Sein Leben und Wirken meist nach seinen eigenen Aufzeichnungen* (hereafter *Leben und Wirken*), Basel, 1884, 526.

³ See for instance Gobat to Adolf Sarasin-Forcart, Jerusalem, June 1865, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 452; Frederick Klein to the CMS, Annual Report 1857-1858, Jerusalem, 23 February 1858, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 41/283.

churches? What were the defining elements in the rivalry the CMS missionaries experienced from the other churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church? What was the Roman Catholics' perception of the Protestant presence and the Protestant missionary activities?

The context in which these questions will be examined is first and foremost the European background of Gobat and the CMS missionaries, their shared background in the intercontinental Evangelical movement, and the tensions between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Europe. From this international inner-Christian perspective the missionaries' interaction with Ottoman society, the influence on the missions of the significant social-political changes of the period, and a more in-depth study of the reaction of the local population on the mission work are secondary issues that cannot be satisfactorily discussed on the basis of the sources studied.

The establishment of the Protestant bishopric serves as a kind of footboard into the examination of the research questions. The founding of this see brought the rivalry with the other churches to the surface, as it evoked reactions from the other denominations present in Palestine. Alexander's appointment prompted Russia to send an Archimendrite to Palestine in order to investigate the possibilities to support the Greek Orthodox Church in Palestine.⁴ The establishment of the Protestant bishopric and especially Gobat's appointment contributed to the restoration of the Latin patriarchate in Jerusalem, which had been absent since the end of the Crusades.

Outline

Chapter one provides the historical background to this book. The increasing political interest of the European powers in Palestine is discussed, as well as the renewed religious interest in Palestine as the Holy Land in the early nineteenth century. The chapter also covers the position of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, the European Protectorate of various Christian denominations, the influence of the reforms during the Egyptian occupation of Palestine and the Ottoman reforms on the position of Christians in nineteenth-century Palestine, and the establishment of European consulates in Jerusalem from 1838 onwards. Finally, this chapter highlights Evangelical Protestant

⁴ D. Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine 1843-1914. Church and Politics in the Near East*, Oxford, 1969, 33-34.

interest in the Holy Land, the early Protestant missionary endeavours, and the establishment of a Protestant mission station in Jerusalem in the early 1830s.

The establishment of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem by Britain and Prussia is the main theme of Chapter two. As mentioned earlier, the bishopric forms the entry into the main theme of this book: the influence of the Evangelical principles on the missionary efforts on the part of Gobat and the CMS missionaries, and the rivalry with the other churches. The reasons behind the bishopric's establishment are examined, as well as the attitude towards the other churches reflected in the guidelines for the future bishops. This chapter also covers the agreements between Britain and Prussia, and the reactions of the public in both countries to the project. There were various reasons behind the bishopric plan, ranging from the wish for Protestant ecumenical unity and the desire to improve the position of Protestants in the Holy Land, to the millenarian hope for the restoration of the Jews, as well as political and commercial reasons. As to the attitude of the founders of the bishopric towards the other denominations in Palestine, I hope to demonstrate that anti-Roman Catholic sentiments were already present at the time of the foundation of the see.

Chapter three is about the short episcopate of the first Protestant bishop, Michael Solomon Alexander, and his cooperation with the LJS; it is the prelude to Samuel Gobat's episcopate. How did the Protestant mission develop during Alexander's term of office? What were the relations with the other churches and religious communities? What was the position of the Protestant mission in Jerusalem when Gobat arrived in 1846? This chapter also discusses some conflicts between Alexander and Prussia, in order to shed light on the choice for Gobat when it was Prussia's turn to nominate the new Protestant bishop.

Whereas Alexander only directed his energies towards the mission among the Jews, Gobat made the mission among Christians the bishopric's main object. Chapter four focuses on the staunchly Evangelical Gobat and this change of missionary policy, concentrating on the latter aspect. What were Gobat's ideas on mission? How did the other churches react to his evangelizing activities among their church members? The chapter also discusses Gobat's cooperation with the CMS and his involvement in the foundation of several Prussian institutes, which all shared Gobat's missionary aim. The severe criticism of Gobat's missionary activities among the Greek Orthodox expressed by the Tractarians in Britain is also discussed.

Gobat's change of missionary direction also led to strained relations with the Roman Catholic Church. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics directed their energies towards the Greek Orthodox. In addition, Gobat and the CMS missionaries tried to make converts among Roman Catholic church members. Chapter five is dedicated to the Roman Catholic presence during the Gobat years. What was the influence of the Protestant bishopric, its establishment and its mission on the Roman Catholic presence and mission in Palestine? I hope to show that the establishment of the Protestant bishopric and Gobat's nomination contributed to the restoration of the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem. It also appears that the Protestant mission sometimes contributed to Roman Catholic missionary initiatives. Chapter five also discusses the relations between Gobat and the first Latin patriarch of the restored patriarchate, Joseph Valerga.

Chapters six to eight are mainly based on primary sources that offer new insights into the way in which Gobat and the CMS missionaries tried to disseminate their Evangelical views, and how they saw their missionary efforts and the rivalry with the other churches. These chapters provide a picture of the daily life of the CMS missionaries in Palestine. On the basis of the accounts Gobat and the CMS missionaries sent to the home front, Chapter six concentrates on their expectations regarding making converts, or, in their words, creating 'true Christians'. Were their expectations realistic or did they have to adjust them to the reality of the mission field? What did they mean by 'true Christianity'? To find an answer to these questions, conversion experiences described by Gobat and the CMS missionaries are compared with typically Evangelical conversion stories. I argue that although the missionaries considered the concept of 'true Christianity' very important, the reality of the mission field made them adjust their expectations about conversion. This chapter also deals with the close connection between the concept of 'true Christianity' and the criticism on the part of Gobat and the CMS missionaries of the material support the other denominations offered to their church members. Furthermore, the importance of the Evangelical principles for the Protestant's methods of mission becomes clear.

The subject of Chapter seven is the education offered in the Protestant mission schools. Against the background of three characteristics of Evangelicalism, i.e., biblicism, conversionism and crucicentrism,⁵ the programme of the primary schools run

⁵ These characteristics are formulated by D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, London, New York, 1989, 2-17. Bebbington also adds a fourth: activism.

by Gobat and the CMS will be examined. In what way are these Evangelical characteristics reflected in educational principles? Besides the importance of the Bible in their education, this chapter also shows the great extent to which schooling was bound up with criticism of the doctrines and rituals of the other churches. From the accounts by Gobat and the CMS missionaries we also learn that the presence of Protestant schools was a source of rivalry with the other churches.

Finally, Chapter eight focuses on the clashes between Gobat and the CMS missionaries on the one hand, and the Roman Catholics on the other. What were the characteristic elements of the Protestant anti-Roman Catholic polemics? In order to understand and evaluate the Protestant anti-Catholic polemics and to get a better insight into the way the competition took shape, the characteristics of the Roman Catholic anti-Protestant polemics will also be discussed. This can help us to gain a better understanding of the controversy between both denominations.

While reading through the correspondence left by Gobat and the CMS missionaries one has the impression that their Evangelical ideas and methods remained practically unchanged during Gobat's entire episcopate. Although they sometimes had to adjust their expectations to the reality of the mission field, their Evangelical principles remained the same. The same applies to their criticism of the other churches. As a result, the examples used in this book to illustrate missionary principles and activities sometimes cover quite a long time span.

State of the question

Although scholars in the field of Middle Eastern Missions are familiar with the rivalry between Protestants and the other churches, this has so far hardly been a central issue in the literature about missions in the nineteenth-century Levant. No monograph has been published on this subject yet. There are, however, several articles, such as those by Giuseppe Buffon, Heleen Murre-van den Berg, Thorsten Neubert-Preine, Thomas Stransky and Chantal Verdeil.⁶ On the connection between Evangelicalism and anti-

⁶ G. Buffon, "Les Franciscains en Terre Sainte: de l'Espace au Territoire, entre Opposition et Adaption", H.L. Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands. Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, Studies in Christian Missions 32, Leiden, 2006, 64-91. Buffon also discusses the rivalry in his book *Les Franciscains en Terre Sainte (1869-1889). Religion et Politique, une Recherche Institutionnelle*, Paris, 2005. H.L. Murre-van den Berg, "Simply by giving to them macaroni..." Anti-Roman Catholic Polemics in Early Protestant Missions in the Middle East, 1820-1860", M. Tamcke and M. Marten (eds.), *Christian Witness Between Continuity and New Beginnings. Modern Historical Missions in*

Roman Catholicism in Britain several studies have been published, including those by Robert Klaus, Frank Wallis and John Wolffe.⁷

Yet, there are many publications in which the missions in Palestine play an important part. A number of these have contributed to this book. Among the early historiographies, Julius Richter's publication about the history of Protestant missions in the Near East and Eugene Stock's three volumes about the history of the CMS are classics.⁸ Both wrote from their involvement in the missionary movement; Richter as a scholar of missiology and a member of the Committee of the Berlin Mission for about forty years, and Stock as a layman in service of the CMS. Their publications discuss the Protestant bishopric, Gobat's appointment and the mission of the CMS. Richter mentions the opposition on the part of the Greek Orthodox in Palestine, but only briefly. In his discussion of the CMS Richter only mentions the missionaries, but does not examine their work in the mission field and their views on mission.

the Middle East, Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 39, Berlin, 2006, 63-80; T. Neubert-Preine, "La Querelle du Muristan et la Foundation de l'Église du Rédempteur à Jérusalem", D. Trimbур and R. Aaronsohn (eds.), *De Bonaparte à Balfour. La France, l'Europe occidentale et la Palestine 1799-1917*, CRFJ Mélanges du Centre de recherche de français de Jérusalem, Paris, 2001, 345-360; T. Neubert-Preine, "The Struggle over the Muristan in Jerusalem as an Example of National-Confessional Rivalry in the 19th Century Middle East", Tamcke and Marten (eds.), *Christian Witness*, 133-143; T.F. Stransky, "Origins of Western Christian Missions in Jerusalem and the Holy Land", Y. Ben-Arieh and M. Davis (eds.), *Jerusalem in the Mind of the Western World, 1800-1948*, With Eyes Toward Zion 5, Westport, Connecticut, London, 1997, 137-154; T.F. Stransky, "La Concurrence des Missions Chrétiennes en Terre Sainte, 1840-1850", Trimbур and Aaronsohn (eds.), *De Bonaparte à Balfour*, 197-217; C. Verdeil, "Between Rome and France, Intransigent and Anti-Protestant Jesuits in the Orient: The Beginning of the Jesuits' Mission of Syria, 1831-1864", Tamcke and Marten (eds.), *Christian Witness*, 23-32. Verdeil also discusses the rivalry in her book *Les Jésuites de Syrie (1830-1864). Une Mission auprès des Chrétiens d'Orient au début des Réformes Ottomans*, Lille, 2003, but it is not a central issue in this study. Richard Cohen has edited a book about vision and conflict in the Holy Land, whose first section is dedicated to Christian interests in Palestine. However, none of the papers in this section covers the rivalry between Protestants and Roman Catholics or Protestants and the other Christian denominations; R.I. Cohen (ed.), *Vission and Conflict in the Holy Land*, New York, 1985.

⁷ R.J. Klaus, *The Pope, the Protestants, and the Irish. Papal Aggression and Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Nineteenth Century England*, Modern European History, New York, London, 1987; J. Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860*, Oxford, 1991; J. Wolffe, "Anti-Catholicism and Evangelical Identity in Britain and the United States, 1830-1860", M.A. Noll, D.W. Bebbington, G.A. Rawlyk (eds.), *Evangelicalism. Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, Oxford, 1994, 179-197; F. Wallis, "Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britain. Theory and Discipline", *Journal of Religion and Society* 7, 2005, 1-17.

⁸ J. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions in the Near East*, New York, 1970 (reprint from the 1910 edition); E. Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: its Environment, its Men and its Work* (hereafter *The History of the CMS*), 3 vols., London, 1899-1910.

The most authoritative and pioneering study on Protestant mission in Palestine is that by Abdul Latif Tibawi.⁹ Unlike earlier historiographers of mission, such as Richter and Stock, he was not involved in any missionary movement. Furthermore, he was one of the first scholars writing about Protestant missions in the Middle East from an Arabic background. Based on British and Ottoman sources, Tibawi discusses the political background of the British missionary interests and the close relation between mission and colonialism. Tibawi's book has been a source of inspiration for this study. Among other aspects he examines the establishment of the Protestant bishopric and the episcopates of Alexander and Gobat. He also discusses Gobat's claim of being an educational pioneer, the CMS mission, and several clashes Gobat and the CMS missionaries had with the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics. However, Tibawi does not discuss the specific bones of contention or the influence of the Evangelical principles on the missionary activities of Gobat and the CMS missionaries.

The most recent and thorough monographs about the Protestant bishopric are those by Kurt Schmidt-Clausen and Martin Lückhoff. Both studies are based on extensive archival research.¹⁰ Whereas Schmidt-Clausen focuses specifically on the history of the establishment of the Jerusalem see, Lückhoff also examines its development until the end of the bishopric as a joint enterprise between Britain and Prussia in 1886. For this book, Lückhoff's examination of the Protestant bishopric and Gobat has been important because of his use of German sources. He extensively discusses Gobat's episcopate. Although some attention is given to the cooperation between Gobat and the CMS, he mainly concentrates on the foundation of Prussian Protestant institutions in Palestine. Lückhoff's research shows the involvement of the Prussian and Swiss Evangelical movement in the Prussian Palestine mission and Gobat's close connection with the Evangelical movement.

No monograph has been published on the CMS mission in nineteenth-century Palestine. In recent works on the history of the CMS, such as that by Jocelyn Murray and the book edited by Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley, the Palestine mission is hardly

⁹ A.L. Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine, 1800-1901. A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise*, Oxford, 1961.

¹⁰ K. Schmidt-Clausen, *Vorweggenommene Einheit. Die Gründung des Bistums Jerusalem im Jahre 1841, Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums* 15, Berlin, 1965; M. Lückhoff, *Anglikaner und Protestanten im Heiligen Land. Das gemeinsame Bistum Jerusalem (1841-1886)*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 24, Wiesbaden, 1998.

mentioned at all.¹¹ However, in Nancy Stockdale's work about the role of gender and colonialism in Palestine the Palestine mission does feature prominently.¹² Topics discussed by Stockdale include the mission of British female missionaries in the service of the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East or Female Education Society (hereafter FES) and some 'independent' missionary women. The female missionaries cooperated with Gobat and the CMS mission, and some of them were even married to CMS missionaries. As a result Stockdale's research also gives an impression of the missionary activities and views of Gobat and the CMS missionaries. Stockdale's research focuses on gender and on the close connection between the Anglican mission and colonialism.¹³ She does not discuss the influence of Evangelicalism on the CMS missionaries' efforts and views on mission, and on the rivalry between the Protestants, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Other authors focusing on gender are, for instance, Ellen Fleischmann, Billie Melman and Inger Marie Okkenhaug.¹⁴

The Prussian missionary efforts and the foundation of Prussian institutions in Palestine have been the subject of quite a number of publications, for instance by Alex Carmel, Jacob Eisler together with Norbert Haag and Sabine Holtz, Frank Foerster, Siegfried Hanselmann, Uwe Kaminsky, Roland Löffler and Abdel-Raouf Sinno.¹⁵ During

¹¹ J. Murray, *Proclaim the Good News: A Short History of the Church Missionary Society*, Hodder Christian Paperbacks, London, 1985; K. Ward and B. Stanley (eds.), *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions, Grand Rapids, MI, 2000.

¹² N.L. Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters among English and Palestinian Women, 1800-1948*, Florida, 2007.

¹³ Although my research only marginally touches on gender issues or on the debate about colonialism and the civilizational aspects of mission, it is an important and interesting theme in research on Middle-Eastern missions nowadays.

¹⁴ E. Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education: American Protestant Missionaries, the American Board, and the Girls and Women of Syria (1830-1910)", Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 263-280; B. Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918. Sexuality, Religion and Work*, Ann Arbor, MI, 1995 (paperback edition); I.M. Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure. Anglican Mission, Women and Education in Palestine, 1888-1948*, Studies in Christian Mission 27, Leiden, 2002.

¹⁵ S. Hanselmann, *Deutsche Evangelische Palästina mission. Handbuch ihrer Motive, Geschichte und Ergebnisse*, Erlanger Taschenbücher 14, Erlangen, 1971; A. Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere im Heiligen Land. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Pilgermission und des Wiederaufbaus Palästinas im 19. Jahrhundert*, Theologische Zeitschrift 10, Basel, 1981; F. Foerster, *Mission im Heiligen Land. Der Jerusalems-Verein zu Berlin, 1852-1945*, Gütersloh, 1991; E.J. Eisler, N. Haag and S. Holtz (eds.), *Kultureller Wandel in Palästina im frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Bilddokumentation. Zugleich ein Nachschlagewerk der deutschen Missionseinrichtungen und Siedlungen von ihrer Gründung bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Epfendorf, 2003; R. Löffler, "Die langsame Metamorphose einer Missions- und Bildungseinrichtung zu einem sozialen Dienstleistungsbetrieb. Zur Geschichte des Syrischen Waisenhauses der Familie Schneller in Jerusalem 1860-1945", D. Trimbur, (ed.), *Europäer in der Levante. Zwischen Politik, Wissenschaft und Religion (19.-20.*

the Gobat years other Protestant missionary societies also worked in Palestine, such as the LJS and FES mentioned earlier, as well as several Scottish missions. These societies have been the subject of research reflected in recent books by Yaron Perry, Michael Marten and Nancy Stockdale.¹⁶

Recently, interesting debates have taken place on the interaction between European missionaries and Ottoman society, the influence of the reforms on the Ottoman Empire, its history of social change and modernity, and local agency. In this respect the work of Bruce Masters, studying the Christian and Jewish minorities within the local Ottoman and international missionary contexts, and that of Ussama Makdisi who has described in detail the changes in inter-communal relations in mid-nineteenth century Lebanon, is the most important. More research focusing on the agency of the local population has been done, e.g., Barbara Merguerian's work on the Armenians, Habib Badr's on Beirut, and Heleen Murre-van den Berg's on Urmia (Iran).¹⁷

An important publication in which the Roman Catholic presence in Palestine and the restoration of the Latin patriarchate is examined is Joseph Hajar's book on the European involvement in the Near East.¹⁸ Whereas many publications about the Latin patriarchate, its patriarchs and missions, have often been written from the perspective

Jahrhundert), Pariser Historische Studien 53, München, 2004; R. Löffler, "The Metamorphosis of a Pietistic Missionary and Educational Institution into a Social Services Enterprise: The Case of the Syrian Orphanage (1860-1945)", Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 151-174; U. Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad: The *Orientalarbeit* of the Deaconess Institution Kaiserswerth in the Ottoman Empire", Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 191-209.

¹⁶ Y. Perry, *British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Palestine*, London, Portland, 2003; M. Marten, *Attempting to Bring the Gospel Home. Scottish Missions to Palestine 1839-1917*, International Library of Colonial History 3, London, New York, 2006; Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters*.

¹⁷ B. Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World. The Roots of Sectarianism*, Cambridge, 2001; U. Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism. Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2000; U. Makdisi, "Bringing America Back into the Middle East: A History of the First American Missionary Encounter with the Ottoman Arab World", A. Stoler (ed.), *Imperial Formations*, School for Advanced Research advanced seminar series, Santa Fe, Oxford, 2007, 45-76; B.J. Merguerian, "'Missions in Eden': Shaping an Educational and Social Program for the Armenians in Eastern Turkey (1855-1895)", Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 241-261; H. Badr, "American Protestant Missionary Beginnings in Beirut and Istanbul: Policy, Politics, Practice and Response", Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 211-239; H.L. Murre-van den Berg, "The American Board and the Eastern Churches: The 'Nestorian Mission' (1844-1846)", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 65, 1999, 117-138; H.L. Murre-van den Berg, "Why Protestant Churches? The American Board and the Eastern Churches: Mission among 'Nominal' Christians (1820-70)", P.N. Holtrop and H. McLeod (eds.), *Mission and Missionaries*, Ecclesiastical History Society, Suffolk, 2000, 98-111.

¹⁸ J. Hajar, *L'Europe et les Destinées du Proche-Orient (1815-1848)*, E. Jarry (ed.) Bibliothèque de l'histoire de l'église, Paris, 1970.

of the patriarchate (see for instance Pierre Médébielle and Adolphe Perrin),¹⁹ Hajjar discusses the process of the restoration independently of the Roman Catholic missionary movement. On the basis of archival sources Hajjar examines the reasons for the re-establishment of the patriarchate, the political tensions between France, Rome and Sardinia, and the difficulties with the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. Although Hajjar argues that both the establishment of the Protestant bishopric and Gobat's arrival contributed to the decision to restore the patriarchate, he does not go into the rivalry between Protestants and Roman Catholics. A recent publication about the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in nineteenth-century Palestine is Buffon's book about Franciscans in the Holy Land in the second part of the nineteenth century.²⁰ After briefly discussing the long history of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, Buffon focuses on their international relations and how they succeeded in holding their ground in the face of severe criticism from France and Rome. Buffon does discuss the rivalry between Roman Catholics and Protestants, but this is not the main theme.

Sources

My focus on the day-to-day activities of Gobat and the CMS missionaries, catechists, schoolmasters and others closely cooperating with the CMS²¹ has led me to concentrate my archive research on the following collections:

- Special Collections Department, University Library, Birmingham: Church Missionary Archives, "Original papers" of the "Mediterranean and Palestine Mission 1811-1934".²²
- Manuscript Collections, British Library, London: Rose Papers, Bliss Correspondence, Aberdeen Papers, and Papers of Col. A.J. Fraser.

¹⁹ A. Perrin, *Centenaire du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem, 1847-1947*, Jerusalem, 1947 ; P. Médébielle, *Le Séminaire du Patriarcat Latin de Jérusalem 1852-1952*, Jerusalem, 1952 ; P. Médébielle, *Le Diocèse Patriarcal Latin de Jérusalem*, Jerusalem, 1963.

²⁰ Buffon, *Les Franciscains*.

²¹ The Prussian Christian Fallscheer, for instance, came to Jerusalem as a Chrischona brother, then worked in Nablus as a missionary under Gobat, and after several years was transferred 'in local connection' to the CMS.

²² An overview of the original papers is provided in R.A. Keen, *Catalogue of the Papers of the Missions of the Africa (Group 3) Committee 6: Mediterranean and Palestine Missions 1811-1934*, London, 1981. C M/O 10-72 contain letters, reports, and papers from individual missionaries, catechists and others. Keen, *Catalogue*, 27-72.

- Archbishops of Canterbury Archives and Manuscripts, Lambeth Palace Library, London: Blomfield Papers, Tait Papers, Wordsworth Papers, Papers of the Jerusalem and East Mission Fund.
- Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford: Archives of the Church Ministry among the Jews, Dep. C.M.J. c. 110, Dep. C.M.J. c. 250, Dep. C.M.J. d. 53, Dep. C.M.J. d. 58.

The present study is mainly based on the “Original Papers” in the Church Missionary Archives. The “Original Papers” contain (private) letters, periodical reports (monthly, quarterly and annual), as well as journals and travel accounts. These documents were written to the Home Board Secretary in London by Gobat, the CMS missionaries and others connected to the CMS. These reports – especially the annual accounts – mainly concentrate on the work in the mission field and the missionaries’ encounters with the local population. They inform us about the education in the Protestant mission schools, Bible and prayer meetings, the conflicts with members and clergy of the other churches, and so on. The (private) letters to the secretary of the CMS not only describe the work in the mission field, but also discuss financial affairs, ordinations, inner mission conflicts, people’s illnesses, and the like.

Not only did the periodical reports serve to inform the Home Board about the state of the mission, but they were also directed to the home public, as they were sometimes printed in the CMS publications. Consequently, we have to take into account that the missionaries’ stories were intended not only to inform the home front about the mission’s work, successes and failures, but were also aimed at obtaining support and securing donations from the home public.²³ In addition, the reports may have served to legitimize the missionaries’ decisions in their work, and to explain the lack of converts by describing the difficulties posed by the mission field in Palestine. Being aware of these aims helps to see the missionaries’ descriptions and claims in the correct light.²⁴

²³ Gobat was aware of the importance of vivid descriptions of the missionaries’ work. In a confidential note to the secretary of the CMS about the possible removal of one of the CMS missionaries working in Jerusalem, he tried to prevent the dismissal, stating that the man had done more work than other missionaries had, but that he had “not the gift of describing it in an interesting manner”. Gobat to Venn, Jerusalem, 13 February 1865, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 28/88.

²⁴ In the words of David Arnold and Robert Bickers: “Uncritically viewing the world through the mission prism can be profoundly misleading”. D. Arnold and R.A. Bickers, “Introduction”, R.A. Bickers and R. Seton (eds.), *Missionary Encounters. Sources and Issues*, Richmond, 1996, 3.

The same applies to the correspondence I consulted in the other archives mentioned above. These documents are all different in character: some of them were meant for publications, others were not. They were directed to people who held different offices and written with varying purposes. The papers I consulted in the Manuscript Collection in the British Library mainly consist of letters from Gobat and the CMS missionaries to British political representatives in Beirut and Syria: Hugh Henry Rose, the British Consul General in Beirut, and Colonel Fraser, the British commissioner for Syria.²⁵ Besides informing the British representatives about the missionary activities, Gobat and the CMS missionaries also asked their assistance in several mission affairs. The Archbishops of Canterbury Archives mainly hold correspondence between Gobat and Gobat's chaplain, but also letters by political representatives, such as the correspondence of Consul General Rose with the prelates of the Church of England. These documents, together with the papers of the Jerusalem and East Mission Fund, deal with, for instance, church-related matters, inform us about the missionary work of the bishopric and inner mission conflicts, and discuss Gobat's missionary aim. It seems that this correspondence was mainly private; most of it has not been published.²⁶ The archives of the Church Ministry among the Jews contain letters, leaflets, overviews of the missionary possessions, and the like. The letters were written to the Home Board both by the missionaries in service of the LJS and by Gobat, discussing the mission's work, inner mission conflicts et cetera. Some of the documents were published, also with a view to securing financial support from the home public.

With the exception of a few petitions and statements, the voice of the local people is hardly heard in the archival sources. Furthermore, the documents I consulted were mainly written by male missionaries, which also makes it difficult to provide much information about the female missionaries and their archives.

During the Gobat years the Roman Catholic presence mainly consisted of the Franciscan friars of the Holy Land, Patriarch Valerga and the missionaries in his service, and three French female missionary societies. For the Roman Catholic reaction to the

²⁵ Regarding the correspondence of Rev. Philip Bliss, registrar of Oxford University, and the papers of Lord Aberdeen I have concentrated on the documents concerning the wide protest against Gobat's proselytizing activities among Eastern Christians in 1853; see Chapter 4.

²⁶ Except for the protest against Gobat's proselytizing activities among Eastern Christians in the Wordsworth Papers, and Homan Hunts' criticism of Gobat in the papers of the Jerusalem and East Mission Fund.

Protestants and the Roman Catholic anti-Protestant polemics, I consulted the following archives:

- The Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or *de Propaganda Fide*, Rome: *Scritture riferite nei Congressi*, first series, containing letters that reached the Propaganda Fide from the mission lands.
- General archives of the Order of Friars Minor or *Archivum Generale Ordo Fratrum Minorum*, Rome: *Segretaria Provincie*, enclosing volumes concerning *Terra Sancta*.

The first series of the *Scritture riferite nei Congressi* in the archives of the Propaganda Fide contain letters that reached the congregation from the mission lands. N. Kowalsky and J. Metzler state that although these documents were of secondary importance for the Sacred Congregation, they are “most precious from a historical point of view because they reflect in a certain way the daily life of the missions”.²⁷ I consulted those volumes that contained letters sent from Palestine to the Propaganda Fide during the period under research (1846-1879). Among these documents are letters from various authors, such as Valerga, people working for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the French Consul in Jerusalem, the Franciscan Custody, and the Minister General of the Franciscans in Rome. The volumes concerning *Terra Sancta* in the General Archives of the Order of Friars Minor contain correspondence between the Custody of the Holy Land and the Minister General of the Franciscans in Rome or his representatives. Furthermore, these volumes contain communications between the Minister General in Rome and the Propaganda Fide or representatives of European nations, and letters between the Custodian of the Holy Land and the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. They also include extracts from journals concerning the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.²⁸

The correspondence in both archives – the Propaganda Fide and the Franciscan archives – deals with various subjects, such as mixed marriages, arrangements and conflicts between the Patriarchate and the Franciscan Custody, and statistics. The majority of the documents concern letters not intended for publication. Their first aim seems to have been to inform Rome (the Propaganda Fide and Minister General of the Franciscans) of the (financial) state of the mission and to ask advice on points of canon

²⁷ N. Kowalsky and J. Metzler, *Inventory of the Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or “De Propaganda Fide”*, Studia Urbaniana 18, Rome, 1983, 17, 48-49, 51.

²⁸ For the general archives of the Order of Friars Minor in Rome, see P. Gil Muñoz, *Registro Archivum Generale O.F.M.* 1, Rome, 1887, 361. Cf. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 515-523.

law. Although Kowalsky and Metzler state that the documents in the first series offer a particular perspective on the daily life of the missionaries, the majority of the archival documents concerning the relation between Protestants and Roman Catholics I examined do not provide much detailed information about the day-to-day existence of the Roman Catholic missionaries, whereas the CMS periodical reports do give a detailed description of the CMS missionaries' daily life. The Roman Catholic sources mentioned above are generally different in character from the Protestant documents, but they offer an adequate picture of the Roman Catholic anti-Protestant polemics and so provide insight into the rivalry between both denominations.²⁹

In addition to the Roman Catholic sources mentioned I consulted printed letters and reports in Roman Catholic journals, such as the 'annals' of the *Propagation de la Foi* and its magazine *Catholic Missions*. These printed reports, which regularly paint a vivid picture of the rivalry between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Palestine, were clearly intended to obtain support and donations from the home public.³⁰ Just like the Protestant sources, the Roman Catholic documents have to be examined critically in the light of their authors' intentions.

Names and denominations

In this book the names of the German and French CMS missionaries have been anglicised, as the missionaries themselves signed their letters with anglicised names and they are also given in this form in the *Register of Missionaries (Clerical, Lay, and Female), and Native Clergy, From 1804 to 1904* of the CMS.³¹ Regarding Arab names in the primary sources I have followed the missionaries' transliteration. Place names and names of countries are generally written as they are today, with the exception of quotations from primary sources in which such names are spelled differently.

Gobat and the CMS missionaries were not consistent in their use of the labels 'Eastern Christians', 'Orthodox' and 'Catholics'. By the term 'Eastern Christians', they sometimes seem to refer to the Greek Orthodox only, sometimes to the Greek Orthodox

²⁹ The archives of the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem and of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land might contain more interesting documents about the rivalry between Protestants and Roman Catholics, although the secretary of the Custody has assured me that there are no such documents in the Franciscan archives. Private correspondence between the author and Vincent Ianniello, secretary of the Custody of the Holy Land, summer 2003.

³⁰ For a discussion of the context of such publications, see Chapter 8.

³¹ Birmingham/UL, CMS BV 2500.

together with the Oriental Orthodox, i.e., the Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians and Syrians, and occasionally also to Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics and Maronites. The same applies to the term 'Catholics'. It is not always clear whether the CMS missionaries used it to refer to Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics or Maronites, or all Catholics in general. The term 'Orthodox' generally referred to the Greek Orthodox, but sometimes also to both Greek and Oriental Orthodox. Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics were often also called 'Greeks' and 'Latins', respectively. In this book I have followed the missionaries' terminology when they mention specific denominations. In the case of broader labels I use the specific terms when it is clear what denominations are meant; when the referent is unclear, I have opted for the following division: the terms 'Eastern Christians' (and 'Eastern Churches') and 'Orthodox' both denote Greek Orthodox as well as Oriental Orthodox Christians. The term 'Catholics' refers to the Latin Catholics, Greek Catholics, and the Maronites.