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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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Citation

Leest, C. van der. (2008, June 18). *Conversion and conflict in Palestine : the missions of the Church Missionary Society and the protestant bishop Samuel Gobat*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/12957>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Samuel Gobat: A change of direction

Introduction

In 1846 Bishop Alexander was succeeded by Samuel Gobat. Under Gobat's leadership the bishopric's aim changed from 'mission among the Jewish people' to 'mission among Christians'. This change is reflected in Gobat's cooperation with missionary societies other than the LJS, especially with the CMS for which he had worked for years. His episcopate also saw the establishment of several Prussian institutions.

As the majority of the next chapters will be devoted to the missionary activities of Gobat in cooperation with the CMS, this chapter paves the way by sketching Gobat's personal background, his missionary policy, his cooperation with the CMS, and his involvement in the foundation of some Prussian institutes.¹

¹ During the last years of his life Gobat started to write an autobiography, but died before he could finish it. As a result this autobiography is in two parts: the first, pp. 3-267, was written by Gobat himself in English in Jerusalem (1864-1873) and was translated into German by his daughter. The second part, pp. 268-550, was edited by his family on the basis of the bishop's (annual) letters. See Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*. The book contains a foreword by Christian Friedrich Spittler, one of the prominent figures in the revival of South Germany and the missionary movement. There is also an English version of Gobat's autobiography: *Samuel Gobat, Bishop of Jerusalem, His Life and Work. A Bibliographical Sketch Drawn Chiefly From His Own Journals*, New York, London, 1884 (2nd edition 1885). This was a translation from the German edition by Sarah M.S. Clarke, with a preface by Lord Ashley. Stunt mentions a French translation of the autobiography: *Samuel Gobat, missionnaire en Abyssinie et évêque à Jérusalem. sa vie et son oeuvre*, translated by A. Rollier, Basel, 1885. I have only seen the German version. T. Schölly wrote a new edition of Gobat's biography, meant for a wider circle: T. Schölly, *Samuel Gobat, evangelischer Bischof in Jerusalem. Ein Lebensbild*, Basel, 1900. Authors who discuss Gobat are: A.L. Tibawi, A. Carmel, S.M. Jack, M. Lückhoff, and T.C.F. Stunt. Tibawi, *British Interests*; Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere*; S.M. Jack, "No Heavenly Jerusalem: The Anglican Bishopric, 1841-83", *The Journal of Religious History* 19/2, 1995, 181-203; Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*. Lückhoff sheds some light on Frederick William's reasons for nominating Gobat as bishop, see Lückhoff, *Anglikaner und Protestanten*.

Samuel Gobat: from Basler Mission student to CMS missionary

According to the “Statement of Proceedings”, in 1845 it was Prussia’s turn to nominate the next bishop after Bishop’s Alexander’s death. On Bunsen’s advice, King Frederick William IV nominated Samuel Gobat, a French-speaking Swiss, born on 26 January 1799 in Crémines, Jura. Gobat came from a devout family. In his autobiography he describes how in his earliest youth he loved to read the Bible. However, at the age of nine he began to have serious doubts about parts of it. He started to question the divinity of Christ, and doubted if the Bible really was the Word of God. From then on he gradually slipped away from God. Although he still went to church with his parents from time to time, he did not then consider himself to be a religious person.²

At the age of nineteen, however, Gobat experienced an overwhelming conversion in line with the conversion stories common in Evangelical circles. One Sunday he had danced the whole afternoon, but before going out again in the evening to play cards he felt God’s presence. He took out his Bible, something he had not done for years. When he opened it, however, he did not have the courage to read because he considered himself unworthy in the eyes of God. He retired to his room, where he remained in spiritual suffering the whole night, praying, telling God that he was a lost sinner, and crying for most of the time. Finally, he promised God that he would remain faithful to Him, and suddenly felt that the burden of his sins had been taken away. He was in a state of euphoria and felt the loving presence of Jesus securing him remission of sins and reconciliation with God. Gobat later considered these nocturnal hours after his conversion experience the happiest and most blissful hours of his life.³

In 1821, a few years after his conversion, Gobat entered the Basel Mission Institute to be trained as a missionary,⁴ where he stayed for more than two years. Besides

² Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 3-9, 12. Due to a lack of other sources the sketch of Gobat’s early life had to be based on his autobiography.

³ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 12-14. Gobat’s conversion story contains all the typical elements of Evangelical conversion narratives: reading the Bible, the awareness of being a sinner, praying, and, finally, its culmination in the feeling that all sins are forgiven in the process of ‘justification’ based on Christ’s atoning death. For Evangelical conversion and conversion stories, see Chapter 6.

⁴ The *Basler Mission* was founded on 25 September 1815 on the initiative of the Secretary of the *Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft*, Christian Heinrich Spittler. It was established after the foundation of various British missionary societies. The Basel Mission’s first intention was to train missionaries who would be sent overseas by other missionary societies and would work for these. However, very soon it started to develop projects of its own. P. Jenkins, *A Short History of the Basel Mission*, Texts and Documents 10, Basel, 1989, 4-5; K.

English, he learned Latin, Greek and Hebrew and was educated in other subjects, such as church history, dogmatics, and exercise in preaching and catechising.⁵ In 1823 he went to Geneva for health reasons.⁶ In November 1824 he moved to Paris in order to study Arabic under Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838), a well-known Orientalist at the time. During his stay in Paris he began to feel that he should link his preaching of the Gospel to the restoration of the Jews. Together with Professor Rostan he decided to direct his attention to the Jews living in Paris.⁷ Once a week Rostan and Gobat tried to assemble as many Jews as possible in order to lead them to Christ by means of the Old Testament.⁸ Furthermore, Gobat started on a thorough study of the Koran during his Parisian years, as he wanted to build up a comprehensive knowledge of the Islam. Through reading the Koran he began to feel sorry for all Muslims, as he considered their holy book to be a combination of nonsense, indelicacy, immorality, perversion of the truth, and blasphemy.⁹

After Gobat returned from Paris to Basel at the end of 1824, the Board of the *Basler Missionsgesellschaft* sent him to Britain in 1825 to work for the CMS. Just like the Basel Mission, the CMS had also been established under the influence of the religious revival in Europe. The Basel Mission was accustomed to send its missionaries to Britain to join the CMS, because, in Gobat's own words, the CMS had more money than it had people, whereas with the Basel Mission the opposite was the case.¹⁰ The readiness of the Basel Mission students to go such distant places as Ethiopia (in which they differed from the CMS students), was a reason for the CMS to be pleased with them.¹¹

Rennstich, "Mission-Geschichte der protestantischen Mission in Deutschland", U. Gäbler (ed.), *Der Pietismus im neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhundert*, Geschichte der Pietismus 3, Göttingen, 2000, 308-310.

⁵ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 45-46.

⁶ According to Stunt, in Geneva Gobat became "happily involved with the more radical participants in the life of the Genevan *réveil*". Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, 82-83.

⁷ Most probably this was the French Reverend J.C. Rostan, who had opened a Baptist church in Paris in the early 1830s. See W.A.M. Gammell, *A History of American Baptist Missions in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America*, Boston, 1849, 265-266.

⁸ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 54, 59-63.

⁹ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 64.

¹⁰ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 77-78. J. Pinnington is quoting Theophilus Blumhardt when he states that the cooperation which developed between the CMS and the Basler Mission was "very much that between the 'children of God in England' and the 'holy seed' on the Continent". J. Pinnington, "Church Principles in the Early Years of the Church Missionary Society: the Problem of the 'German' Missionaries", *The Journal of Theological Studies*, new series 20, Oxford, 1969, 525.

¹¹ Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, 132. In a letter to Christian Gottlieb Blumhardt (1779-1838), Gobat states that he considered the English students too anxious to get married. He even feared that some of them

As a result of the cooperation between the Basel Mission and the CMS, many CMS missionaries came from the continent, especially from Germany and Switzerland. Before the CMS sent them overseas the majority of the continental missionaries were trained in the Church Missionary College in Islington for a couple of months. The students were not only instructed in Latin and Greek, but also in the languages of the mission field, such as Arabic. Furthermore, they received education in subjects such as divinity, logic and mathematics.¹² Gobat also followed this route. Before he left for Church Missionary College he received Lutheran orders on 25 February 1825.¹³ He stayed in the Church Missionary College in Islington for a few months and studied more Hebrew and Arabic while also learning Ethiopian. In his autobiography, Gobat tells us that he went through an inner change during his stay in Britain. Until then his inner life had been very emotional, his mood alternating between the strong feelings of being a sinner on the one hand and feelings of happiness because of Christ's love (which he did not think he deserved) on the other. He was constantly aware of his condition before God. During his stay in Britain, his emotional life became more even-tempered.¹⁴

Late in 1825 Gobat was sent to Ethiopia.¹⁵ He first travelled to Cairo via Malta and Alexandria.¹⁶ Not counting a journey through Palestine, Gobat and his CMS colleague Christian Kugler (d. 1830) remained in Egypt for three years.¹⁷ On 20 October 1829, they finally went to Ethiopia, where they travelled and worked for another three years.¹⁸ Early in 1833, Gobat returned alone to London via Cairo and Basel, because

considered marriage, rather than missionary work, to be their first objective. Gobat to Blumhardt, 8 June 1825, in Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, 132. Stunt comments on Gobat's statement that the Basel authorities were actually very critical of their missionaries getting married too early. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, 133.

¹² Stock, *The History of the CMS* 1, 266. See also Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, 125.

¹³ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 78. For the relation between the CMS and the Basel Mission and the difficulties caused by the different confessional backgrounds of the societies, see Pinnington, "Church Principles", 523-532.

¹⁴ From then on he was only rarely subject to "extreme sorrow or excessive joy". Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 84-85. Gobat's inner change might indicate that he had started to move away from the more sentimental and devotional Pietism of the Continental awakening movement under the influence of his experiences in Britain, Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, 131-132.

¹⁵ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 84; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 86.

¹⁶ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 88-100.

¹⁷ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 99. For their journey through Palestine, see Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 100-112. During his journey through Palestine Gobat became very sad at the sight of the devastation of the Holy Land. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 112.

¹⁸ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 123-187; Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere*, 61.

Kugler had died in Ethiopia.¹⁹ Gobat wrote a journal about his time in Ethiopia,²⁰ in which he wanted to paint a clear picture of the traditions and religious views of the “Abyssinians”.²¹ As we will see, this journal was to be one of the motives to nominate Gobat for the Jerusalem bishopric, but would also cause opposition to his appointment.

On 23 May 1834, Gobat married Maria Zeller (1813-1879), a daughter of Christian Heinrich Zeller (1779-1860), one of the prominent personalities of the *Erweckungsbewegung* in Switzerland.²² They left for Egypt that summer in order to eventually return to Ethiopia. This journey, however, turned into a disastrous expedition. Gobat became very ill with cholera and they had to break their journey in the Ethiopian city of Adowa, where they stayed for twenty months. In September 1836 Gobat was taken back to Cairo; in 1837, Gobat and his family returned to Switzerland in order to regain their health.²³

In the end, it took Gobat over a year to recover from his illness. In 1839 the CMS sent him to Malta to work on the revision of the Arabic translation of the Bible, and to help editing the missionary literature that was printed by the CMS Malta Press, about which more below.²⁴ When the CMS Station at Malta was closed he returned to Switzerland where he stayed for two years. In August 1845, Gobat was ordained an Anglican deacon by Blomfield, the Bishop of London. After that, he returned to Malta because the mission station was being revived again by a committee of clergy and laity in London under the chairmanship of Lord Ashley. This committee entrusted Gobat with the foundation and administration of a Protestant College, which opened on 3 February 1846. His work in Malta would not last long: Gobat received a letter from Frederick William IV in which the King asked him to become the next bishop of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem.²⁵

¹⁹ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 187; Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere*, 61.

²⁰ S. Gobat, *Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia*, London, 1834.

²¹ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 133.

²² In 1820, shortly after Gobat's arrival in Basel, he visited Zeller's house, where he met Maria Zeller, then six years old, for the first time. He and Zeller became friends. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 30. About his choice to marry Maria and the wedding, see Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 191-195, 199. About Maria Gobat's time in Ethiopia and Jerusalem, see C.F. Hayward, *Missionary Heroines*, London and Glasgow, 1927, chapters 1-4; E.R. Pitman, *Lady Missionaries in Foreign Lands*, London, 1889, 82-123.

²³ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 199-125; Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere*, 62.

²⁴ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 244; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 86; Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere*, 62.

²⁵ Smith, *The Protestant Bishopric*, 174; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 86-87; Carmel, *Christen als Pioniere*, 62-63.

Prussia's choice of a new bishop

At the time of Alexander's death conflicts had arisen with the Prussian consuls Wildenbruch and Schultz.²⁶ From the start, Frederick William IV had had other ideas about the Protestant bishopric's aim than was laid down in the "Statement of Proceedings". The conflicts made apparent that the Prussians had different views on the bishopric's object and restrictions, and on various other subjects. One of these, for instance, concerned the bishop's attitude towards Greek Orthodox converts. The fact that it was Prussia's turn to choose a bishop made it possible to select someone who would think and act in line with Prussian ideas. The only possible obstacle to Prussia's choice might be the Archbishop of Canterbury, since it had been stipulated in the "Statement" that he had an absolute veto in the nomination of a new bishop, whether proposed by Britain or by Prussia.

When it was Frederick William's turn to nominate a new bishop, Bunsen advised him about possible candidates. Bunsen had three persons in mind: the LJS missionary John Nicolayson, who had already been working for the LJS in Jerusalem for years; John Lieder (d. 1865), CMS missionary in Cairo; and Carl Isenberg (1806-1864), who worked for the CMS in Ethiopia. All three knew Arabic, had been ordained as Anglican priests, and were used to the climate. Bunsen opted for Nicolayson. The fact that he was already working in the area of the bishopric made him a very suitable candidate for the office.²⁷

Although the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley, had no objections to the candidature of Nicolayson, there was some opposition in Prussia. Frederick William IV had decided that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should approve the proposed candidature. However, the Ministry did not agree with Bunsen's suggestion. Nicolayson had supported Alexander when Prussia criticised the bishop's rule. In addition, reports submitted to the Ministry by Wildenbruch and Schultz did not support Bunsen's recommendation.²⁸ So, Nicolayson was rejected as a suitable candidate and a new one had to be found. Bunsen came up with a new list of three candidates to put before Frederick William IV. Besides Lieder and Isenberg, a new name appeared: that of Samuel Gobat. Gobat had been suggested to Bunsen by the secretary of the CMS, Dandeson Coates, who described Gobat as a natural bishop. Bunsen's own impression of Gobat was very

²⁶ For the Prussian consul's criticism of Alexander, see Chapter 3.

²⁷ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 148-149.

²⁸ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 149; Chapter 3

positive. He liked the fact that Gobat was an out-and-out German Evangelical.²⁹ Furthermore, Bunsen thought Gobat might counterbalance the Church of England's orientation towards the mission among the Jews. In this respect he would meet Prussian expectations.³⁰ Bunsen eventually proposed Gobat and Isenberg to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who believed Gobat to be the best choice. The archbishop thought that Gobat's *Journal of a Three Years in Residence in Abyssinia* showed his talent for winning people over. Finally, Frederick William IV nominated Gobat as the second Protestant bishop in Jerusalem.³¹

The conflicts between Prussia and Alexander, together with the Prussian objection to Bunsen's proposal of Nicolayson as a candidate, indicated that Prussia wanted a different policy. With the choice for Samuel Gobat a change of direction for the bishopric seemed possible: from mission to the Jews to a more open attitude towards the mission among members of other denominations as well.

On 7 March 1846 Bunsen wrote a letter to Samuel Gobat in which he offered him the office of bishop of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem by command of King Frederick William IV. He first explained that it fell to the King to nominate a successor for Alexander as "Bishop of the Anglican Church at Jerusalem", and then explained why the King had selected Gobat. After listing various requirements for the new bishop, Bunsen stated that in Gobat Frederick William IV had found all these "necessary or desirable circumstances eminently united". One of the requirements was that the new bishop must have received Anglican orders, which Gobat had. It was also highly desirable that the bishop was acquainted with the "language and manners of the country" in which he was to reside. Furthermore, if the bishop was not an Englishman, he had to be able to preach in English, and if he was English, he had to know enough German to be able to superintend the German community in Jerusalem.³²

Bunsen also stressed the importance for the King of Gobat's Evangelical background, mentioning that "His Majesty" considered him

²⁹ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 149-150.

³⁰ Bunsen to Frederick William IV, 6 February 1846, in Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 150. Referring to the same letter, Lückhoff states that Bunsen based the idea of Gobat as a counterbalance to the Mission among the Jews on Gobat's knowledge of "Oriental relations" (*orientalischen Verhältnisse*). It is not clear what is meant by "Oriental relations". Bunsen may be referring to Gobat's time as a CMS missionary in Ethiopia, during which he directed his energies towards Christians.

³¹ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 150-151. Apparently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to Gobat's nomination.

³² Hechler, *The Jerusalem Bishopric*, Documents, 130-131.

intimately connected with the Church of the Gospel among all German nations by the course of your theological studies, and by the truly Evangelical spirit in which you have taught the Word of God and announced the faith in Christ amongst different nations of Africa and of Asia.³³

In line with his own Evangelical views, Frederick William hoped that Gobat would see this offer as a “providential call” and accept it. Bunsen concluded by saying that it was “absolutely necessary that the See should be filled as soon as possible”, one reason being that the building of the Protestant church had already started, fully sanctioned by the Porte.³⁴

Gobat received Bunsen’s letter on 15 March 1846. Gobat writes in his autobiography that while reading the first part of the letter it fell out of his hand, and he shouted: “No, never ever!”³⁵ The next day he described his initial feelings in a letter to Bunsen. He had felt that he was unprepared to occupy the office and wanted to refuse. However, “suspecting” his own feelings, he then entrusted himself to God:

I cast myself down before the Head of the Church, and I trust, I could say, with a sincere heart, not my, but Thy will be done, and since I have begun to weigh the reasons on both sides, I find that, on the one hand, the more I examine myself, the more I feel disposed to say, “Lord, send whom thou wilt send.” But on the other hand, I cannot but see weighty reasons in favour of my relying on the Lord, and accepting the office.³⁶

Gobat accepted the nomination with the proviso that the Committee which had appointed him to the Protestant College at Malta should give its wholehearted approval. He said he would immediately send a letter to its Chairman, Lord Ashley, and did not expect any difficulties with the principal of the Malta College.³⁷

Within a short time Gobat received letters from CMS secretary Dandeson Coates and from Lord Ashley, both urging him to accept the office. It was a position to which Lord Ashley believed Gobat had been called by God himself. By now Gobat himself was also convinced that God called him to Jerusalem. On 26 March 1846 he asked Bunsen to inform Frederick William IV that “I humbly accept the important office of a Bishop of

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ The church building project was to be accompanied by the building of a college, a hospice, and the Episcopal residence. Hechler, *The Jerusalem Bishopric*, Documents, 132. For the building of Christ Church, see Chapter 2.

³⁵ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 255.

³⁶ Gobat to Bunsen, Malta, 16 March 1846, in Smith, *The Protestant Bishopric*, 164.

³⁷ Smith, *The Protestant Bishopric*, 164-165; Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 256.

the Anglican Church at Jerusalem, to which his Majesty has graciously been pleased to nominate me".³⁸ The appointment of Gobat as second bishop of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem could now be officially announced.³⁹ Soon after accepting Frederick William's offer Gobat left for Britain, and arrived in London on 1 June 1846.

Opposition to Gobat's appointment in Britain

Gobat's appointment aroused protest from various sides in Britain. Soon after his arrival in London, Blomfield presented him with a letter addressed to Archbishop Howley, protesting against Gobat's consecration as bishop of the Church of England. The protest was based on Gobat's journal about his time as a CMS missionary in Ethiopia, the same journal which earlier had convinced Howley that he should support Gobat's nomination. Gobat ascribed the protest to "influential people". By these influential people he probably meant the Tractarians, because a note in Bunsen's memoir made at that time speaks of "Puseyites", who accused Gobat of "heresy on account of the work on Egypt".⁴⁰ The protest was directed particularly against Gobat's view on rebirth through baptism as he had discussed it with the 'Abyssinians', i.e., members and clergy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It stated that whereas the "vitality of the Christian religion is concerned in a right faith in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and in our incorporation into His mystical Body by baptism", Gobat's faith was "doubtful" on this point.⁴¹

Blomfield asked Gobat to react to the protest, which he gladly did. However, Gobat did have some difficulty with the issue of rebirth through baptism. He believed that people were only regenerated at the moment they had a conscious conversion experience, whereas the Anglican Book of Common Prayer stated that baptism was the

³⁸ Gobat to Bunsen, Malta, 26 March 1846, in Smith, *The Protestant Bishopric*, 165; Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 256-257.

³⁹ For instance in the *Jewish Intelligencer*, the periodical of the LJS. On 17 April 1846, Bunsen wrote to the LJS that "the *nomination* (not the *appointment*) by H.M. the King of Prussia of the Revd. S. Gobat as Bishop of Jerusalem may be safely announced in the *Jewish Intelligencer*. Mr. Gobats' definitive answer having arrived on *Monday*". Bunsen to the LJS, 17 April 1846, Oxford/BL, Dep. CMJ d. 53/1.

⁴⁰ The 'Puseyites' criticised Bunsen for having been instrumental in Gobat's appointment as Protestant bishop in Jerusalem, 14 November 1846, see Bunsen, *A Memoir* 2, 118; Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 257.

⁴¹ "Protest at his [Gobat's] appointment", 1846, London/LPL, WP, MS. 2143, ff. 223-224.

moment of somebody's rebirth.⁴² Gobat feared that the Bishop of London and he differed considerably on this matter, but when he asked Blomfield about his view on baptism the latter answered that he understood it as a change of status, i.e., a transition from a state of non-conversion to a state of conversion. Through baptism the baptised person was introduced in the visible Church of Christ. Gobat found to his relief that he could not object to Blomfield's explanation. Although Gobat thought he might have pushed the discussion with Blomfield somewhat more, it seems that he considered Blomfield's answer conclusive, because he did not discuss the subject any further.⁴³

In his answer to the protest Gobat explained his views on the matter of baptism, and other issues which he thought insignificant. He also explained his attitude towards the Ethiopian Church. It had not been his aim to turn it into a branch of the Church of England, but he had only intended to make the Ethiopian Christians aware of the necessity of church reform. The Bishop of London was content with Gobat's response and a few days later told him that on the whole the critics were pleased with his answers.⁴⁴

According to Gobat's biographers, the LJS missionary Joseph Wolff, who seemed to have cherished hopes of himself becoming Protestant bishop in Jerusalem, also protested against Gobat's nomination. He complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury about Gobat's behaviour and moral character during his stay in Ethiopia. After he had examined Wolff's accusations, the archbishop rejected the objections.⁴⁵

Another protest against Gobat's appointment came from Parliament. After the House of Lords had agreed to the appointment, the House of Commons opposed it because Gobat did not live in England, nor did he own property in England – two

⁴² For this reason Evangelicals were sometimes accused of rejecting the doctrine of the Prayer Book. They came up with various answers to this problem. Some stated that an infant's baptism symbolizes the hope of the child's regeneration in the future. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 9. In the order for baptism in The Book of Common Prayer the child is declared regenerated at the end. (In Article 27 of the 39 Articles, baptism is mentioned a "sign of Regeneration or new Birth"). Cf. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 9-10.

⁴³ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 257-258.

⁴⁴ Gobat's autobiography does not give information about how exactly he answered the protest regarding his position on the issue of rebirth through baptism. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 257-259; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 153-154. When Gobat was Protestant bishop in Jerusalem he was very concerned with the 'Abyssinian' community in the city. In 1850 the King of Ethiopia and some influential priests asked him to become the protector of the 'Abyssinians' and their convent in Jerusalem; they wanted to place their property in Gobat's hands. Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 13 November 1850, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 229-231. Cf. Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 29 January 1851, RP, Add. 42798, ff. 234-239. Both: London/BL.

⁴⁵ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 346; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 154.

conditions necessary for his consecration as bishop of the Anglican Church. Thanks to Palmerston's mediation the objection to Gobat's appointment was withdrawn. Palmerston referred to the "Jerusalem Bishopric Act" of 1841, which allowed the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to consecrate foreigners as bishops in foreign countries with a license from the Queen.⁴⁶ Consequently, with the consent of Queen Victoria, Gobat could be consecrated.

First, Gobat had to be ordained an Anglican priest. A general ordination was planned in St. Paul's Cathedral, which was, however, cancelled for fear that the opposition would disturb the ceremony.⁴⁷ Instead of the general ordination, Gobat was ordained priest in a private ceremony in Fulham Palace. On Sunday morning, 5 July 1846, Archbishop Howley, assisted by the Bishops of London, Lichfield and Calcutta, consecrated him at Lambeth Palace as bishop of the Church of England and Ireland in Jerusalem.⁴⁸ Gobat then went to Prussia, where he met Frederick William IV and the minister of Religious Affairs, Eichhorn. The Prussian King and Eichhorn felt confirmed in their feeling that with Gobat they had made the right choice.⁴⁹ Gobat met the Prussian wishes when he stressed to be willing to ordain Prussian clergy soon after his arrival in Jerusalem. Furthermore, he said that he was prepared to use the liturgy devised by Bunsen.⁵⁰

Change of the missionary aim of the bishopric

After his visit to Berlin, Gobat travelled to Malta to meet his family, who had stayed there during the time Gobat had spent in Europe. In the middle of December 1846 Gobat and his family left for Palestine. On their arrival at Jaffa they were welcomed by Reverend Nicolayson. On 28 December 1846 they went to Ramle and from there travelled to Jerusalem. When the Gobats were about two miles from the city they found the consuls of Britain and Prussia, Finn and Schultz, waiting for them, together with a

⁴⁶ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 154-155. For the Jerusalem Bishopric Act, see Chapter 2.

⁴⁷ The opposition was said to have instructed a lawyer to attend the ceremony and to voice a formal protest against Gobat's ordination. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 259; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 88.

⁴⁸ The Bishop of Calcutta preached on Isaiah 62, 1: "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth". Smith, *The Protestant Bishopric*, 166; Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 259.

⁴⁹ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 155.

⁵⁰ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 155-156.

number of men and women on horses. On 30 December 1846 Gobat and his family entered Jerusalem, the start of a thirty-three-year career as bishop of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem.⁵¹

Unlike his predecessor, Gobat did not have a Letter Commendatory to show to the other patriarchs in Jerusalem. He nevertheless decided to visit the Orthodox and Armenian patriarchs. Like Alexander, Gobat neglected the representatives of the Latin Church, as he thought the ecclesiastical dignity of the Custody's head was not sufficient to justify first advances by the Anglican bishop. Furthermore, they had not demonstrated any courtesy either to Bishop Alexander or to himself.⁵²

In his missionary work Gobat soon ran into difficulties concerning the conversion of the Jews. Jews who converted to Christianity lost their jobs and became the target of the mockery and disdain of their families and friends. This was a problem, as the majority was very poor and would become dependent on alms.⁵³ From Gobat's annual letter for 1848 it appears that he tried to 'solve' this difficulty by changing the mission's policy regarding the conversion of Jewish people. He now formulated the condition that all Jews who were serious about their conversion and wanted to be baptised should be willing to learn a trade, if they were able to work.⁵⁴ As a true Evangelical, Gobat linked to baptisms a "true conversion of the heart"; people's readiness to learn a craft would be proof of their sincerity. Furthermore, it was a pragmatic solution, making Jewish converts self-supporting and less dependent on alms. For this reason Gobat was glad that the House of Industry was reopened after a period of closure.⁵⁵

Because of his stance on the issue of Jewish converts, Gobat was reproached more than once in LJS circles with having no heart for the Jews because he did not share the millenarian "poetical hopes", as he himself called it, for a rapid conversion of the people of Israel. He dissociated himself from all efforts especially directed at the Jews without proclaiming the Gospel to them. He did not agree with the underlying idea that the

⁵¹ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 261-264.

⁵² Tibawi, *British Interests*, 89.

⁵³ Gobat considered it the duty of the mission to take care of Jewish converts. However, he feared the consequences if the prayers for the conversion of many Jews came true, as the mission did not have the means to take care of them. Gobat therefore pushed the home public to donate money. First annual letter by Gobat, 9 November 1847, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 286-289.

⁵⁴ Consequently, if people were able to work but did not want to earn part of their living, Gobat refused to baptise them. Annual Letter of Gobat, 20 October 1848, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 296-297.

⁵⁵ Gobat, Annual Letter, 20 October 1848, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 296-297; Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 349 (note from Gobat's biographers). For the House of Industry, see Chapter 2.

return of the Jews in Palestine, their establishment, and the restoration of the temple would happen *before* they would recognize Jesus as their Messiah.⁵⁶

It comes as no surprise that the cooperation between the bishopric and the LJS was not as close during the Gobat years as it was during his predecessor's episcopate, in which the mission of the LJS and the bishopric seemed to be united. As the memorandum in favour of the LJS church in Jerusalem in 1845 made clear, the mission to the Jews was important to many people in Britain.⁵⁷ Consequently, Gobat's attitude towards the LJS and its mission to the Jews, together with the fact that he did not share the millenarian expectations of many regarding the restoration of the Jews in Palestine, evoked much criticism from LJS members and supporters in Britain.

Gobat's distancing himself from the mission among the Jews was linked to his focus on other Christians. Although the "Statement of Proceedings" prohibited the Protestant bishop from interfering in the affairs of Christian denominations, Gobat's autobiography and his (annual) letters demonstrate that his missionary activities were mainly directed towards these denominations. He believed that it was not God's will to restrict the mission to Jews only. With an appeal to the apostle Paul he said that he considered it his duty to direct his energies not only towards the Jews, but also towards the Greeks, Barbarians, 'Papists', Armenians, the Turks etcetera. Moreover, he realised that the conversion of the Jews was not the real mission object of his Prussian patrons.⁵⁸ This extension of the focus of the bishopric is already reflected in Gobat's (first) annual report for 1847. From this account it appears that Gobat had appointed three Bible readers, who were required to read the Bible to people from various religious and denominational backgrounds. One of them was a Greek Catholic who had not yet formally separated from his church, but, according to Gobat, knew and loved the 'truth'. The other was a former Roman Catholic, and the third a converted Jew trained in Hebrew College. They read the Bible not only to Jewish people, but also to Muslims and Christians of various denominations.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 348-349; W. Holsten, "Israel und Palästina im Missionsdenken des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Evangelische Theologie* 14, 1954, 215.

⁵⁷ For the memorandum, see Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 265-266.

⁵⁹ Gobat, Annual Letter, 9 November 1847, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 291. Gobat received the necessary money for his missionary activities from contributions and donations from different sources in Prussia and Britain, but also from Switzerland and other countries. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 107.

In Gobat's eyes the churches of the other Christian denominations in Palestine were stuck deeply into the mire of misconceptions. On this point he did not distinguish between the Orthodox and the Catholics. In his view they were both guilty of the same number of "errors" despite their theoretical differences. Protestant missionaries had to fight not only the "errors", but also the "ignorance" of priests and laity of all denominations.⁶⁰

Gobat's missionary orientation towards both Catholics and Orthodox is also reflected in the letters by the CMS missionaries. When in 1851 the CMS decided to start a Palestine mission at Gobat's request, a missionary conference was held in Jerusalem under Gobat's chairmanship. There it was decided that the mission would concentrate on the Eastern Churches. The mission to the Jews was not discussed, and regarding the mission among Muslims the conference concluded that such an undertaking was impossible and might jeopardize the status of the mission in the Ottoman Empire.⁶¹

In a letter to Bunsen Gobat clearly explains his view on evangelisation: it was every Christian's duty, especially of every bishop and clergyman, to confess the truth of the Gospel openly and freely and to warn "his brothers, also of other denominations" of ways that led to destruction. He continues that the aim should not be to make people leave their churches and enter the Protestant community, but to lead them to Jesus Christ. After finding the truth people could stay in their own church to confess their faith in Jesus there. However, at the same time Gobat stated that when persons were expelled from their own churches because of their love for Jesus and thereupon asked to enter the Protestant community, he did not see how he could refuse their admission. Refusal would be like rejecting the Lord himself.⁶²

Both Gobat's statement that he wished for reform of the other churches, and his stories about the actual making of Protestant converts are regularly found in his letters. They show Gobat's awareness of the fact that missionary activities among Christians of

⁶⁰ Gobat, Annual Letter, 20 October 1848, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 301. The various Catholic churches were considered to be as full of errors as the Roman Catholic Church. As William Parry wrote: "Maronites, Greek Catholics, Armenian Catholics, and Chaldeans, are all under Roman bondage and they all despise us as Protestants". William Parry, Alresford Rectory (near Calchester), 15 February 1876, London/LPL, TP, 221, ff. 174-175. I am not sure who this William Parry is; he might have been the William Parry who was chaplain in Syria from 1869 to 1874. For Gobat and the CMS missionaries' idea of "errors", see Chapters 6-8.

⁶¹ *Proceedings of the CMS (1851-1852)*, 66-67, in Tibawi, *British Interests*, 105.

⁶² Gobat added that he did not understand why he was not allowed to make converts among the Roman Catholics, considering the fact that they publicly made converts among the Protestants. Gobat to Bunsen, 4 March 1848, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 293-295.

other denominations in order to reform them implied the possible secession of converts from their former churches. Until the end of his episcopate Gobat stressed that he did not aim at winning converts away from the other churches. In practice, however, Gobat and the CMS missionaries with whom he cooperated worked for conversions to the Evangelical type of Protestantism rather than the reformation of the other churches from within. In his annual letter for 1853 Gobat admitted that from the start he had expected “all members of the Greek and Latin Churches” who had started to read the Bible and wanted to live in accordance with it, to feel obliged to leave their churches.⁶³ This statement, and the fact that various Protestant communities came into being during Gobat’s episcopate, together with his criticism of the other churches, all indicate that he actually aimed at making converts rather than reforming those churches.

By stating that he had to accept people who had been expelled from their own churches, Gobat acted contrary to the “Statement of Proceedings”. Although the “Statement” declared that the bishopric might contribute to the cleansing of the Eastern Churches from their ‘errors’ and its bishop was allowed to assist these churches in educational work if so desired, the Protestant bishop was not allowed to make any converts. Gobat’s letters demonstrate that he was well aware of these “restrictions which laid on the Angl. [sic] Bishop in Jerusalem, with respect to the Eastern Churches”.⁶⁴ He repeatedly complained about these ‘restrictions’ and asked permission to admit members of other churches to the Protestant community if he considered it necessary. In a letter to the General Secretary of the CMS, Henry Venn (1796-1873) for instance, dated 9 January 1850, Gobat wrote that he

must be allowed to have the Gospel preached to members of all churches and whenever any one, or many, see, at the light of the Gospel, the errors and corruption of their respective churches and their conscience compels them to leave such churches, I must be allowed, to receive them into our Church and furnished with the means of building them up in our most holy faith.

If he was not permitted to do so, Gobat said he would be put into “an intolerable dilemma, whether I must either transgress the laws of men or the law of God, or withdraw”. Gobat added that he was “not yet in such dilemma, though very near it”.⁶⁵

⁶³ Gobat, Annual Letter, 14 November 1853, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 363.

⁶⁴ Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 15 January 1851, London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 232-233.

⁶⁵ Gobat to Venn, Jerusalem, 9 January 1850, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 28/69.

Considering the conflict between Bishop Alexander and the Prussian consuls about the Protestant community in Hasbayya, we must conclude that Gobat's attitude regarding the admittance of Christians of other denominations into the Protestant Church must have been in line with Prussian hopes. Whereas Alexander declared himself bound by the "Statement of Proceedings" as to accepting Eastern Christians in the Protestant Church, Gobat did accept Christians from other denominations into the Protestant church.⁶⁶

In his change of policy Bishop Gobat might have felt supported by a *fatwa* of the Mufti of Beirut, mentioned in his annual letter of 1847, which declared that the members of the various Christian communities were free to switch from one church to another. The Jewish and Druse subjects of the Porte were allowed to become Christians.⁶⁷ Another measure benefiting Gobat's policy was a *firman* proclaimed by the Ottoman Government in 1850, which legalised the conversion of Christian subjects of the Porte to Protestantism. From now on converts were allowed to set up new religious communities. The document stated that Protestants were free to "exercise the usages of their faith in security" and that none of the other communities were permitted to interfere with "any of their affairs, secular or religious".⁶⁸

Thus, almost from the start of Gobat's episcopate there was a change of policy regarding missionary aims. Although Gobat, like Alexander, continued to cooperate with the LJS, the mission to the Jews no longer had priority. As we will see in the following chapters, during the Gobat years the mission among Christians from other churches remained the principal aim of the bishop and the CMS missionaries.

⁶⁶ Gobat's attitude towards Christians of other denominations was not the only issue in which he met Prussian wishes. He wanted, for instance, to permit German Evangelical ordained clergy who had not been ordained by him in Jerusalem to conduct a service in Christ Church (then still under construction). With this measure Gobat was hoping for an "Evangelical Ecclesiastical Alliance on Mount Zion" between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church of Prussia. Gobat, Annual Letter, 30 October 1848, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 295; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 159-160.

⁶⁷ According to Gobat, the *fatwa* was declared in reaction to the persecution of a young Jewish convert, because of his confession of Christ, and the conversion of a Druse in Beirut. Gobat, Annual Letter, 9 November 1847, Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 290.

⁶⁸ For the text of the *firman*, see Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 156-158. Cf. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 104. It is difficult to say to what extent the *firman* influenced potential converts from other Christian denominations to Protestantism before 1850, i.e., during the Alexander years and the first years of Gobat's episcopate. Alexander's primary aim had been to convert Jewish people to Protestantism and, as we will see, until the early 1850s Gobat was still not officially allowed to make converts among Christians of other denominations.

Change of mission scene: the CMS and German institutions

Gobat's change of mission policy was also reflected in the collaboration between the bishopric and missionary societies and institutions other than the LJS. As we will see in the last three chapters, during his entire episcopate Gobat closely cooperated with the CMS, the organization for which he had worked for decades. The CMS had been established in April 1799, adopting as its first resolution that it was "a duty highly incumbent upon every Christian to endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen". In a second resolution it was decided that as the missions of the "Society for Propagating the Gospel" and the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" were directed towards (the British Plantations in) America and the West Indies, there was a need in the Church of England for a mission aimed at the "Continent of Africa, or the other parts of the heathen world". This was the objective for which the society was founded.⁶⁹

In 1815 the CMS founded a 'Mediterranean Mission', with Malta as its centre, since the Committee regarded Malta as a "convenient base for extending operations in all directions".⁷⁰ The aim was to revive the Eastern Churches. It was believed that this revival would have an effect on the Muslims, who had to be evangelised by the Eastern Christians.⁷¹ On Malta the society installed a printing press, which was sent from Britain in 1822. After some delays due to ill trained printers and defective fonts, the society started printing in Arabic in 1825. As we saw earlier, Gobat had also worked for the CMS printing press on Malta.⁷² In 1842 the CMS printing press was closed, as

⁶⁹ At first the official name of the society was going to be "The Society for Missions to Africa and the East". In actual practice, however, it was often called "The Missions Society" or "The Society for Missions". Gradually the word "Church" was added, but not until 1812 did the society formally adopt the title "The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East". Stock, *The History of the CMS* 1, 68-71.

⁷⁰ Stock, *The History of the CMS* 1, 219.

⁷¹ Stock, *The History of the CMS* 1, 222. Cf. Murray, *Proclaim the Good News*, 135; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 105. However, "it was not until the mid-1870s that the deeper involvement of the CMS in mission to Muslims really began", Murray, *Proclaim the Good News*, 136.

⁷² The press printed Bible extracts, religious tracts, elementary textbooks for beginning readers, text books on grammar, English language, and books on arithmetic, history, astronomy, art, geography and zoology. In 1835 an Arabic atlas was also published. D. Glass and G. Roper, "Arabic Book and Newspaper Printing in the Arab World.", E. Hanebutt-Benz, D. Glass, G. Roper (eds.), *Middle Eastern languages and the Print Revolution. A Cross-Cultural Encounter* (English and German), Westhofen, 2002, 187-190. The history of the CMS printing press is linked to the history of the ABCFM in this area. See also G. Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM, 1822-1841", J.F. Coakley, *Printing in the Mission Field*, Harvard Library Bulletin 9/1, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998, 50-63.

expectations had not been fulfilled. However, the reason officially given was lack of money.⁷³

When only a few years after his arrival in Jerusalem Gobat invited the CMS to help him with his work, a promising field was opened for the mission society. Reverend John Bowen, the future bishop of Sierra Leone, had earlier offered himself to the CMS for a visiting mission to any part of the world at his own expense; the society accepted his offer and sent him on an “extensive mission of inquiry to the East”. From 1849 onwards Bowen travelled for more than two and a half years. The lay missionary Charles Sandreczki (d. 1892), who was familiar with several Oriental languages, was appointed to accompany him. Bowen’s journals stated that the Eastern Christians desired better instruction than the clergy of their own churches were able to provide.⁷⁴

Bowen’s inquiries, which confirmed Gobat’s reports to the CMS, resulted in the decision of the CMS Committee to open a Palestine mission. In 1851, two missionaries were sent to Palestine: Frederick Augustus Klein and Charles Sandreczki.⁷⁵ Klein became head of this mission, which had Jerusalem as its headquarters. Like Gobat, he had studied at the Basel Seminary and had been educated at the Church Missionary College in Islington. Before he left for Palestine, he was ordained Deacon in the Church of England.⁷⁶ Sandreczki was appointed lay secretary of the CMS Mediterranean Mission.⁷⁷ During the following years the CMS sent more missionaries to Palestine, such as William Krusé (1799-1885), who started working in Palestine in 1853, and John Zeller, who left for Palestine in July 1855. Like Klein and Gobat, they had both studied at the Basel Seminary and subsequently at the Church Missionary College. Zeller married Gobat’s daughter Hannah Maria Sophia four years after his arrival in Palestine, in 1859. Her sister Blandina Marianne Gobat also married a CMS missionary, Theodore Frederick Wolters, in 1874.⁷⁸ As mentioned earlier, the CMS missionaries closely cooperated with Gobat, although their mission was independent of the bishop, directing its efforts towards Christians of other denominations.

⁷³ Tibawi, *British Interests*, 104.

⁷⁴ Stock, *The History of the CMS* 2, 142-143; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 105.

⁷⁵ Stock, *The History of the CMS* 2, 143; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 106.

⁷⁶ Klein was to work in Palestine for 26 years. *Register of Missionaries*. Cf. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 106.

⁷⁷ Sandreczki was originally a Roman Catholic who was converted to Protestantism “by study of the Scriptures”. He was to remain in Jerusalem for about 20 years. *Register of Missionaries*.

⁷⁸ *Register of Missionaries*. Zeller might have been related to Gobat’s wife, Maria Gobat-Zeller. However, I have not found any information about this.

The instructions Klein received from the CMS reflect the society's aim. The instructions stated that over the past ten years it had become clear that the Eastern ecclesiastical authorities did not want any assistance from the Protestants.⁷⁹ Nevertheless some Eastern Christians had meanwhile become serious 'enquirers', so that the CMS felt it their duty to 'help' them.⁸⁰ The instructions concluded: "Act upon the Evangelical and Protestant principles by which the Society has been distinguished in all its operations. In maintaining them you will have the full countenance and support of the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, and may in all things look to him for counsel and direction in your work".⁸¹

Until Gobat's death in 1879, the bishop and the CMS remained close collaborators, especially in the educational field. Gobat presided over the meetings of the 'Local Committee of the CMS's Mission in Palestine' and of the 'Conferences of CMS missionaries in Palestine'. During these conferences mission policy was decided and local missionary matters were discussed, such as the training of local agents, self-support of local congregations, Bible classes, children's education, and the like.⁸²

Gobat cooperated not only with the CMS in Palestine, but was also closely connected with the missionary movement in Germany and Switzerland, for instance with his former colleagues of the Basel Mission. During Gobat's episcopate a large number of German institutions were founded in Palestine, such as the *Brüderhaus* of the Basel Pilgrims Mission of St. Chrischona, the settlement of the Deaconesses of Kaiserswerth in Jerusalem, the Syrian Orphanage, the *Jerusalemsverein*, the *Preussische Hospiz* (later called the *Johanniter-Hospiz*), and the Marienstift children's hospital.⁸³ In the following paragraphs some Prussian institutions will be briefly discussed. This will provide a broader view on the missionary activities among Christians during Gobat's

⁷⁹ The "Statement of Proceedings" declared that the Protestant bishop could only assist these churches if they wanted him to do so.

⁸⁰ Tibawi, *British Interests*, 106.

⁸¹ Instructions quoted in Tibawi, *British Interests*, 107.

⁸² The CMS Local Committee in Palestine consisted of the European missionaries in Palestine. Their meetings were held at intervals varying from a month to a year. The conferences of CMS missionaries in Palestine were attended by CMS missionaries from all parts of the Palestine mission. In October 1868 it was decided that these conferences would be held twice a year, rotating between Jerusalem, Nazareth and, if so agreed, Nablus. Keen, *Catalogue*, 15; "Minutes of a Conference of the Missionaries of the CMS in Palestine held at Jerusalem under the Presidency of the Bishop, on the 28th day of October 1868", Birmingham/UL, C M/O 2/1.

⁸³ For a survey of the Prussian institutions that (still) existed in the early twentieth century and information about their establishment and development, see Eisler, Haag and Holtz (eds.), *Kultureller Wandel in Palästina*.

episcopate, and also demonstrate that suggestions for the establishment of Prussian institutions in Palestine found a willing ear with Gobat. As we will see, with his appointment the first steps were taken towards an independent Prussian Palestine mission, in accordance with Frederick William IV's plan.

The first initiative for an independent Prussian Palestine Mission was the establishment of the *Brüderhaus*, or Brother House, of the *Basler Pilgermission* St. Chrischona in Jerusalem. Its initiator was Christian Friedrich Spittler (1782-1867), secretary of the *Christentumsgesellschaft* in Basel. In 1828 he had founded the Pilgrim Mission, which since 1840 had been located in St. Chrischona near Basel. With the Pilgrim Mission, Spittler wanted to send young men abroad, craftsmen rather than missionaries, who through their own faith and way of living might spread (Protestant) Christianity.⁸⁴

As early as 1834 Spittler had discussed the idea of a Brother House in Jerusalem with Gobat. He stated that some initiative was needed from Jerusalem to spread the "light of the Gospel" through the Orient. Gobat supported Spittler's Palestine plan. However, the Brother House was not established in Jerusalem until Gobat's appointment, one of the reasons being the political situation in the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁵ With Gobat's appointment Spittler's plan began to move forward again, and on 6 September 1846 two Chrischona brothers, Ferdinand Palmer (1811-1879?) and Conrad Schick (1822-1901), started their journey to Jerusalem where they arrived on 30 October of that year. In 1848 two more Chrischona brothers settled in Jerusalem. The brothers were sent as craftsmen, with the intention that they should be an example of how Christians lived, prayed and worked together.⁸⁶ Spittler's "indirect mission", as he himself called it, was aimed at all people who were not 'Christians' or Evangelical Christians, which meant that it included both Muslims and Jews, as well as (Roman) Catholics and Eastern Christians.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 165-166; E. Staehelin, *Die Christentumsgesellschaft in der Zeit von der Erweckung bis zur Gegenwart. Texte aus Briefen, Protokollen und Publikationen*, Theologische Zeitschrift 4, Basel, 1974, 13, 19-21.

⁸⁵ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 168-169.

⁸⁶ Staehelin, *Die Christentumsgesellschaft*, 21; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 171-172.

⁸⁷ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 167. According to Holsten, Spittler did not focus so much on Israel in connection with the restoration of the Jews, but rather on Palestine as the well-spring of Christianity. Holsten, "Israel", 217.

At the end of the 1840s the Brother House fell into decline because of financial difficulties, a lack of knowledge of local conditions, and Spittler's high demands. In 1854, however, Spittler tried to give the project a new impulse.⁸⁸ In consultation with Gobat and with the help of the brothers of the *Pilgermission* of St. Chrischona he re-established the mission to Ethiopia, which had been ended by the CMS in 1843. The Brother House in Jerusalem became the mission's base. After finishing their education at St. Chrischona, all brothers who were sent to Ethiopia were required first to go to the Brother House in Jerusalem, where they would be prepared for their mission, for instance through training in the necessary languages.⁸⁹ In the autumn of 1854 six Chrischona brothers were sent to Jerusalem, accompanying Johann Ludwig Schneller (1820-1896) and his wife. Schneller, who had worked as a teacher at St. Chrischona for seven years, was to be in charge of the Brother House in Jerusalem.⁹⁰

In October 1858, after the mission in Ethiopia had started, Spittler proposed a plan to Gobat to establish a link between Jerusalem and Ethiopia. He wanted to set up twelve mission stations between Jerusalem and Ethiopia, named after the twelve Apostles of Christ: the *Apostelstrasse*. Spittler wanted the brothers who would be sent to these stations to combine manual labour with 'spiritual' work (praying and preaching). In reaction Gobat told Spittler to start with four stations at most. As it happened, during the 1860s only six stations were established and in the early 1870s the *Apostelstrasse* came to an end.⁹¹

Another German institution in Jerusalem founded during the first years of Gobat's episcopate was the institution of the Deaconesses of Kaiserswerth. The man behind the Kaiserswerth mission was Theodor Fliedner (1800-1864), a pastor in Kaiserswerth from 1822 until 1849 and founder of the institution of the Deaconesses in Kaiserswerth (Düsseldorf). When in 1846, at Bunsen's request, Fliedner accompanied four deaconesses to London,⁹² he met Gobat, who was waiting for his ordination as bishop in Bunsen's house. During this meeting Gobat expressed a wish to be able to use the

⁸⁸ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 173-174; Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem. The Old City*, 258-259.

⁸⁹ Staehelin, *Die Christentumsgesellschaft*, 21.

⁹⁰ Staehelin, *Die Christentumsgesellschaft*, 22; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 176.

⁹¹ In 1860 the first station, St. Mark, was founded in Cairo and one year later a station was established in Alexandria, St. Matthew. Staehelin, *Die Christentumsgesellschaft*, 23, 607-608; J. Veenhof, "Die Apostelstrasse", *Kerkhistorische Bijdragen* 7, Leiden, 1978, 354-361; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 183-189; Eisler, *Kultureller Wandel in Palästina*, 82. Spittler died on 8 December 1867.

⁹² Bunsen was the Prussian envoy in London at the time. Staehelin, *Die Christentumsgesellschaft*, 59.

deaconesses' help in his work in Jerusalem. Four years later Fliedner reminded the bishop of their conversation. Gobat asked for two deaconesses to help with the medical work in Jerusalem. He wanted the sisters to take care of the sick, and to teach in his school in Jerusalem during the hours they would not be required in the hospital. Fliedner discussed Gobat's proposal with Frederick William IV, who suggested sending four deaconesses instead of two. Two would take care of the sick, they would work for Gobat and would be paid by him. The other two deaconesses would teach in the school and take care of a hospice for Protestant pilgrims; they would be paid out of the Prussian *Kollekten-Fonds*.⁹³

On 17 March 1851, Fliedner and the four deaconesses left Kaiserswerth, and arrived in Jerusalem one month later.⁹⁴ The deaconesses settled in "the house of Young", the former British Consul in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion. The house contained a small hospital, with a modest pharmacy, which was consecrated on 4 May 1851. A hospice was opened in July 1851.⁹⁵ The hospital was not restricted to one confession or denomination, but it was open to Muslims, Jews, and Christians of all denominations. This policy had been an explicit demand on the part of Frederick William IV.⁹⁶ The King's request not to restrict the hospital to the Jews also corresponded to Fliedner's views. Rather than converting Muslims, Fliedner wanted to 'reform' the local Christian churches.⁹⁷

Shortly after their arrival, the deaconesses also started their educational work. They taught in Gobat's Diocesan School, too, where they alternated with the English teachers. In 1856 the deaconesses' school became independent. In the meantime it had become clear that more room was needed for the patients, and in 1860 a new hospital was built as an extension to the deaconesses' house. Only this extension was used as

⁹³ T. Fliedner, *Reizen in het Heilige Land naar Smyrna, Beiroet, Konstantinopel, Alexandrië en Kairo, in de jaren 1851, 1856 en 1857* (translated into Dutch by T. Looman), Christelijke Huis-Bibliotheek 8, Amsterdam, 1860, 1-3; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 192-193.

⁹⁴ For their journey to Jerusalem, see Fliedner, *Reizen*, 4-89.

⁹⁵ Fliedner, *Reizen*, 186-189, 301; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 194-195, 198. Both Edward Macgowan from the LJS hospital in Jerusalem and Simon Fränkel (1806-1880), the Jewish doctor in Jerusalem, offered to help the sisters in their medical work. After having consulted Gobat, Fliedner chose Macgowan, because of his knowledge of the local diseases and his (Protestant) religion. Fliedner, *Reizen*, 189.

⁹⁶ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 198.

⁹⁷ According to Kaminsky, Fliedner wanted to evangelise through an "inner mission" abroad. On this concept, see Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad", 194. Kaminsky says that Fliedner was strongly anti-Catholic, an attitude reinforced by his political antipathy to France. Ibid.

hospital, and the rest of the old house now served as a school children's home.⁹⁸ In 1868 the deaconesses' educational activities were moved to a separate building outside Jerusalem, named "Talitha Kumi". In January of that year nine deaconesses settled in the building, together with 89 girls. Over the following years the number of girls increased 100 to 110 girls on average.⁹⁹ Although the number of girls had increased the sisters struggled with one problem: many girls were taken out of the school before their education was finished, in order to be given in marriage. Attempts to let parents sign a contract in which they promised to let their children stay in school for several years were useless as the children were taken from the school anyway.¹⁰⁰

A third Prussian institution in Jerusalem was the Syrian Orphanage. In 1860, in reaction to the civil war in Lebanon at the time, Spittler set out to establish an orphanage in Jerusalem for Syrian children who had become orphans because of the war, of which Johann Ludwig Schneller was to be in charge. In October 1860 Schneller went to Beirut, together with the Prussian Consul in Jerusalem, Georg Rosen (1820-1891).¹⁰¹ He returned with nine boys. On 11 November 1860 the 'Syrian orphanage' was consecrated.¹⁰²

The program of the orphanage was *ora et labora*, pray and work. Its aim was to raise the children to be good members of the Church of Jesus Christ.¹⁰³ In the institute education was combined with manual labour in order to prepare the children for a life

⁹⁸ For this reason the deaconesses' house had also been extended with two rooms in 1852. Frederick William IV had put up much of the money necessary for this project. Flidner, *Reizen*, 300-301. Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 200, 204-205; Sinno, *Deutsche Interessen*, 88-89.

⁹⁹ After 35 years the total number of girls educated by the deaconesses was 523. The majority of them, 306 girls, came from Greek Orthodox families; 6 girls came from Catholic families; 92 girls were Protestants (18 German and 74 Arabic); 55 of them were Muslims; 19 Jews; 13 Armenians; 8 Copts; and 3 Ethiopians. Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 209.

¹⁰⁰ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 203, 206-207; Flidner, *Reizen*, 302; Hanselmann, *Deutsche Evangelische Palästina mission*, 70. For information about the deaconesses' institution in Jerusalem see also: Sinno, *Deutsche Interessen*, 81-107 and R. Felgentreff, *Das Diakoniewerk Kaiserswerth 1836-1998. Von der Diakonissenanstalt zum Diakoniewerk – ein Überblick*, Kaiserswerther Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kultur am Niederrhein 2, Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth, 1998.

¹⁰¹ Sinno, *Deutsche Interessen*, 57; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 234; Löffler, "Die langsame Metamorphose", 83; L. Schneller, *Vader Schneller, een Patriarch der Evangelische Zending in het Heilige Land. Met een levensschets van zijn echtgenote Magdalene Schneller* (translated into Dutch by R. Freudenberg), Rotterdam, 1908, 76-79.

¹⁰² Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 234. It was difficult for Schneller to take children with him for his orphanage; the members of the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Maronite churches did not want to send the children to a Protestant institution. Schneller, *Vader Schneller*, 80-81; Hanselmann, *Deutsche Evangelische Palästina mission*, 85. Cf. Löffler, "Die langsame Metamorphose", 83.

¹⁰³ Sinno, *Deutsche Interessen*, 58; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 234-235.

as a craftsman. To this end various workshops were founded during the first years of the Syrian orphanage, such as a bakery, a shoemaker's workshop and a tailor's shop.¹⁰⁴ The orphanage appeared to be successful. Already in the first year of its existence the number of boys increased to 41. From 1872 it also took in girls. Except for classes in needlework and domestic science, the girls took their lessons together with the boys, as Schneller did not want to give them a one-sided traditional education.¹⁰⁵ Over the years the Syrian orphanage developed into an extensive institute in Jerusalem. After sixteen years, by 1876, it had raised 210 boys and 8 girls. A majority, 173, were Christians, of whom 87 were Orthodox, 29 Catholics, 29 Maronites, 19 Protestants, and 9 Copts.¹⁰⁶

With the establishment of various Prussian Protestant institutes during the Gobat years, the foundation was laid for an independent Prussian Palestine mission. Just like Gobat, these institutes did not restrict their missionary efforts to the Jews, but mainly directed their energies towards Christians of other denominations. As a result of the missionary activities of the Prussian institutes and the CMS in cooperation with Gobat, the Protestant mission increased significantly during the Gobat years. As we will see, this expansion led to serious rivalry with the Roman Catholics in Palestine. In the polemics between Protestants and Roman Catholics the existence of Prussian missionary institutions played a distinct role.¹⁰⁷

Effects of Gobat's change of policy

Already during the first years of his episcopate Gobat's change of missionary policy had several effects, which will be discussed in this section. First, Protestant missionary work led to people leaving their churches and to the establishment of Protestant communities, which resulted in conflicts with the other denominations in Palestine. Secondly, the bishop's missionary efforts among Eastern Christians and the fact that some of them left their churches and formed Protestant communities led to conflicts with the

¹⁰⁴ Sinno, *Deutsche Interessen*, 59-60. The education in the Syrian orphanage was modelled after the educational institute run by Gobat's father in law, Christian Heinrich Zeller, in Beuggen. For Zeller's institute see also Chapter 7. For the influence of Zeller's educational ideas on the Syrian Orphanage, see Löffler, "Die langsame Metamorphose", 84-85; Hanselmann, *Deutsche Evangelische Palästina mission*, 49-52.

¹⁰⁵ Sinno, *Deutsche Interessen*, 59-60; Hanselmann, *Deutsche Evangelische Palästina mission*, 87.

¹⁰⁶ 113 of these came from Palestine and 72 from Syria and Lebanon. The others came from Egypt, Armenia and Africa. For their religious background see Sinno, *Deutsche Interessen*, 61.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter 8.

Tractarians in Britain. Over the years, their criticism increased and in the early 1850s led to much protest against Gobat's proselytising activities. Gobat also clashed with British people living in Jerusalem; two of such conflicts will be the subject of this section.

As to the formation of the first Protestant communities, Gobat frequently stated that he did not want to make converts among Christians of other denominations. His first annual reports, however, already describe members of other churches being converted to Protestantism, people willing to leave their churches, and Protestant communities coming into being. In Nablus in 1848, for instance, several men declared that they had decided to leave the Greek Church after they had read the Bible. They wanted to set up a Protestant congregation. Gobat told them that he was willing to help them in searching for the "Evangelical truth", but that he did not want them to secede from their church. In a petition twelve family heads assured the bishop that they would follow his advice and remain connected to the Greek Church, but they asked the bishop's help regarding Bible education for their children. Gobat then bought a school house in Nablus and appointed a teacher; he also received a promise from the Pasha and the Governor of Nablus to protect the school. In September 1848 the school opened with 21 boys. Its opening evoked much hostility among the Greek Orthodox clergy. The Sunday after the school was opened all people who sent their children there were excommunicated in the name of the Greek Orthodox patriarch.¹⁰⁸

Similar tidings about people who wanted to leave their church reached Gobat from Nazareth in the early 1850s. In a letter dated 30 July 1850 Gobat informed Frederick William IV about Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church members in Nazareth who experienced difficulties with their clergy. Their diligent reading of the Bible made them see the "errors" of their churches. They rejected these "errors", especially the

¹⁰⁸ Gobat, Annual Letter, 20 October 1848, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 298-300; Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 13 September 1848, London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 223-224. Gobat to Mrs. Holmes, Jerusalem, 29 June 1848, Oxford/BL, Dep. CMJ c.250/1. For the education in the Protestant school in Nablus, see Chapter 7. With regard to Gobat's relations with the patriarchs of the various denominations, in his first years in office he mentions that he had a friendly relationship with the Armenian patriarch, the Syrian Bishop, and "even the Greek Catholic Patriarch". Gobat describes his first meeting with the Greek Catholic Patriarch Maximus as very warm. The Greek Orthodox patriarch and his clergy kept away from him. Although the Greek Orthodox patriarch provided part of the costs of the school in Salt in 1849, there was no real contact between him and Gobat. The same may be said of the relations between Gobat and the Latin patriarch, of which more in the following chapter. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 290, 295, 309; Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 5 June 1847; Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 11 October 1848, both: London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 199-200 and ff. 225-226.

worshipping of images and the invoking of saints. In reaction, the clergy was obstructive, forbidding their flocks to read the Bible; when they knew of people who did read it, they made them kiss an image, invoke Mary or a saint, or promise not to read the Bible anymore. When those who refused to do so were excommunicated, they asked Gobat for help. In his letter to the Prussian King Gobat wondered what he could do. On the one hand he was not allowed to make converts from the other churches. On the other hand he did want to teach these people the 'truth'. Gobat therefore stated that he would admit only those into the Protestant Church who had been excluded from their churches because of their desire to know the truth of the Gospel.¹⁰⁹ After a year, in 1851, it appeared that several heads of families in Nazareth, chiefly from the Roman Catholic Church, had indeed left their church because of the tyranny and persecution inflicted on them by their clergy for reading the Bible. They had "declared themselves *Protestant* Christian in public" and before the judge, and had begun to form themselves into a Protestant community.¹¹⁰

In the letter to the Prussian King mentioned above, dated 30 July 1850, Gobat also boasted that the year before he had daily received petitions and deputies from all over Palestine with requests for his supervision and for teachers to be sent. As Gobat was not allowed to do so, he told people to read the Bible, to stay in their churches, and try to reform them.¹¹¹ In practice, however, various Protestant communities came into existence during the Gobat years. Already in the late 1840s and during the 1850s Gobat's and the CMS missionaries' letters mention Protestant church services, Bible meetings and educational activities and the like in various towns and villages not only in Nazareth and Nablus, but also in Jaffa, Ramallah and, of course, in Jerusalem.

According to Tibawi, Gobat's "assault was directed mainly against the Greek Orthodox Church. The majority of pupils came from members of this Church, and almost all the converts were made from that community".¹¹² Although it is true that the Protestant missionary 'successes' for a large part took place among the Greek Orthodox,

¹⁰⁹ Gobat to Frederick William IV, 30 July 1850, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 319-320.

¹¹⁰ Gobat, Annual Letter, 30 October 1851, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 338; Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 15 January 1851, London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 232-233. In his annual letter Gobat mentions twenty heads of family, in his letter to Rose thirteen. This would mean that Gobat is either exaggerating the number in his annual letter, as these were often published for the home public, or that within nine months six more heads of families had separated from their church. For Nazareth, see also Chapters 6-8.

¹¹¹ Gobat to Frederick William IV, 30 July 1850, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 319.

¹¹² Tibawi, *British Interests*, 111.

it must be stressed that the missionary activities on the part of Gobat and the CMS missionaries were not aimed mainly at this group, but were also directed towards the Catholics. Moreover, from descriptions of the conflicts between Protestants and Roman Catholics by both sides it appears that the Roman Catholics not only reacted to the fact that both they and the Protestants directed their mission efforts to the Greek Orthodox church members. They were also afraid to lose their *own* church members to the Protestants.¹¹³

Gobat's proselytising efforts among Christians were closely watched not only by the British Consul General in Beirut, Hugh Henry Rose, but also by church leaders such as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. They repeatedly warned Gobat regarding his missionary activities among Christians of other churches. In reaction to Gobat's establishment of the school in Nablus in 1848, Colonel Rose instructed the British Consul James Finn to read to Gobat the instructions the former British Consul had received from the Foreign Office in May 1842. This dispatch forbade Alexander to interfere in the "religious concerns either of the Mohamedan, or of the Christian Subjects of the Porte; and not to attempt to make Proselytes to the Church of England from either of those classes".¹¹⁴ Gobat, however, responded to the instructions by saying that he kept a neutral position. He declared that he had not accepted Christians from other denominations who wanted to place themselves under his jurisdiction, but that he could not refuse giving Bible instruction to people who were under no ecclesiastical control.¹¹⁵ In a letter to Rose Gobat stated that with respect to his attempts to make proselytes he "perfectly agreed with the Dispatch" of May 1842, although he thought that a Christian could not live in a world "without in some way or other interfering with the religious concerns of his neighbours".¹¹⁶

From the early 1850s onwards, many complaints about Gobat's proselytising activities among the Eastern Churches were heard in Britain. In April 1850 Blomfield informed Gobat's chaplain, Douglas Veitch, of a conversation he had had with Rose. He told Veitch about Rose's fear that if Gobat encouraged "in any way members of the Greek Church to join the Anglican, a flame will be fanned, if not kindled by the Russian

¹¹³ See Chapter 8.

¹¹⁴ Aberdeen to Young, 3 May 1842, in Hyamson, *The British Consulate* 1, 46; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 96. See also Chapter 2.

¹¹⁵ Tibawi, *British Interests*, 96.

¹¹⁶ Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 9 August 1848, London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 217-220.

agency [i.e., the Greek Orthodox protecting power]; and the consequence may be a civil war". As a new mission area Rose proposed the mission to the Druses in Lebanon, a proposal with which Blomfield was inclined to agree. After he had repeated "one of the fundamental articles of the foundation of the Jerusalem Bishopric", which directed the bishop not to interfere with the Eastern Churches, Blomfield asked Veitch to inform Gobat of his scheme for a mission among the Druses.¹¹⁷

The proposal from Blomfield and Rose did not keep Gobat from his mission among Christians. As a result, criticism of Gobat increased. Again the Tractarians, who had also opposed the establishment of the bishopric and who had been among the protesters against Gobat's appointment in 1846, strongly objected to the bishop's policy. Contrary to Rose, whose fear was political in character, the Tractarians' opposition was of a religious nature. As we saw earlier, one of the arguments of the Tractarians against the foundation of the bishopric was that in their view Christianity was already represented in the Middle East by the Greek Orthodox Church,¹¹⁸ which they considered a sister church of the Anglican Church.¹¹⁹

When the Greek Orthodox people in Nablus had started to read the Bible and had asked for Gobat's help, Gobat asked the new Archbishop of Canterbury, John Bird Sumner (1780-1862),¹²⁰ for advice about the restriction on interfering in the affairs of the other churches. As a result, on 16 October 1850, the archbishop and Bunsen wrote an official declaration concerning the relations between the bishop and the other churches in Jerusalem, especially with the Greek Orthodox Church. With this declaration Gobat actually received 'freedom of action'. Although Gobat was still expected not to take a hostile position towards the Greek Church, the declaration also stated that there was no justification for prohibiting the bishop from helping and supporting Greek Orthodox Christians that were unsatisfied with their own church, and sought a

¹¹⁷ Blomfield to Veitch, London, 27 April 1850, London/LPL, BP, 49, ff. 287-290. In a letter to Rose, Gobat wrote that he had indeed begun "one mission among the Druses with a view of establishing schools for that people". Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 11 September 1850, London/BL, 27, Add. 42798, ff.227-228.

¹¹⁸ See Chapter 2.

¹¹⁹ Within the Church of England many saw the Anglican, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches as three branches of the one holy church of Christ. Although many Anglicans could not reconcile themselves with the papacy as it was at the time, they did cherish the ideal of a unity with the ancient Greek Orthodox Church. Gobat's biographers believed the situation of the Eastern Christians to be at odds with the positive idea the Tractarians had of the Greek Orthodox Church. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 350-352; Tibawi, *British Interests*, 113; Jack, "No Heavenly Jerusalem", 188.

¹²⁰ Sumner had succeeded Howley as Archbishop of Canterbury after the latter's death in 1848.

Scriptural community of faith, and had the impression that the Anglican Church was such a community in doctrine and constitution. This declaration by Sumner and Bunsen was, however, not made public in Britain and Prussia.¹²¹ A few months later Gobat wrote to Colonel Rose that the restrictions laid on the Protestant bishop in Jerusalem regarding the Eastern Churches had been “authoritatively removed. But this is to be kept in strict confidence until a [case] of emergency arise[s]”.¹²²

Meanwhile criticism of Gobat in Britain increased, especially as a result of his annual report of 30 October 1851, the report he had written about the people in Nazareth who had declared themselves Protestants. He also mentioned conflicts with the Greek Orthodox monks and the bishop in Nablus regarding the Protestant school and the attendance of Greek Orthodox children.¹²³ To give their objections solid ground, Gobat’s critics cited both the “Statement of Proceedings” and the Letter Commendatory Gobat’s predecessor Alexander had brought with him when he arrived in Jerusalem.¹²⁴

Gobat’s missionary activities were also under discussion in various British journals. In December 1851, Gobat confided to Henry Venn that he was “at a loss to account for the opposition of the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Evening Journal* against the Evangelisation of the fallen Churches of this country. The parties cannot be ignorant of the crying evils of the Greek Church and her want of a thorough Reformation”. He blamed his critics for favouring “error and wickedness” and in this way displaying “hatred against the Gospel Truth” – something the bishop found hard to accept.¹²⁵

In September 1853 the criticism of Gobat culminated in a “Protest against proselytism attempted by Gobat”. The process of drawing it up was directed by Reverend John Mason Neale (1818-1866), the warden of Sackville College, who thought

¹²¹ More on this and on the declaration by Sumner and Bunsen, see Tibawi, *British Interests*, 101-104. Cf. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 353-354; Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 226-227.

¹²² Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 15 January 1851, London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 232-233.

¹²³ Annual Letter from Gobat, Jerusalem, 30 October 1851, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 330-339.

¹²⁴ One of the documents in the correspondence of Reverend Philip Bliss, Doctor of Civil Law, registrar of Oxford University, contains the passage from Alexander’s Letter Commendatory about the relations between the Protestant Bishop and the other churches in Jerusalem, and extracts from Gobat’s annual report of 30 October 1851. In the letter all passages which contain the bishop’s criticism of the Eastern Churches have been underlined. London/BL, BC, 13, Add. 34579, ff. 446.

¹²⁵ Gobat to Venn, Jerusalem, 31 December 1851, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 28/71.

he “never before had anything that seemed” to him “so important as this”.¹²⁶ The protest, which was written in English and Greek, was addressed to the patriarchs and Synods of the Orthodox Church.¹²⁷ It declared that Gobat entirely neglected the commands of the late Metropolitan [i.e., Howley] with regard to the Orthodox Eastern Churches. By doing so the bishop transgressed the injunctions which limited his authority. Gobat was harassing these churches by receiving proselytes from them and congregating them into “certain schismatical congregations”. The protest objected to “all such acts done or now doing by that Bishop, as proceeding from himself alone, and receiving no sanction from our Church”. More than 1,000 members and clergy of the Anglican Church signed the protest. Among those were Tractarian leaders, such as Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882), whom Neale had also involved in the process of drawing it up.¹²⁸

In reaction to the protest the Committee of the Jerusalem Diocesan Fund came with a declaration in October 1853, which stated their trust in Gobat in six points. Among other things, the document stated that Gobat’s dealings had the “full sanction of the late, and present Metropolitan” [i.e., Howley and Sumner]. It also stated that the subscribers of the protest had attempted “to affix a meaning” to the Letter Commendatory written by the late Metropolitan for the late Bishop Alexander which it could not “properly bear”. According to the Committee, this letter should be interpreted in relation to the “Statement of Proceedings”. The “Statement” said that the immediate object of the bishopric was the mission to the Jews and the care for European Protestant congregations. However, one of the results of friendly relations with the Eastern churches was “preparing the way for their purification, in some cases for serious errors”. The declaration stated that Gobat had always acted in a “mild, conciliatory spirit towards the prelates, as well as the people, of the Oriental Churches”.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ For the story of the actual writing of the protest, see Neale’s letters edited by his daughter: M.S. Lawson, *Letters of John Mason Neale*, London, 1910, 221-223.

¹²⁷ The letter was addressed to the Archbishop of Constantinople, the Patriarch of Alexandria, the Patriarch of Antioch, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Synod of all the Russias, and the Synod of the Kingdom of Greece. “Protest against proselytism attempted by Gobat”, 1853, London/BL, BC, 13, Add. 34579, ff. 409. Cf. Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 355-358.

¹²⁸ “Protest against proselytism attempted by Gobat”, 1853, London/BL, BC, 13, Add. 34579, ff. 409; Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 355-358; Lawson, *Letters*, 221-223.

¹²⁹ The Committee of the Jerusalem Diocesan Fund consisted of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry Venn, Christian Bunsen, the Earl of Shaftesbury (chairman), Douglas Veitch (secretary) and others. Declaration of

On 1 November 1853 the Archbishops of Canterbury, York, Armagh, and Dublin also issued a public declaration in favour of Gobat, stating that the “Protest against proselytism” in no way derived from the United Church of England and Ireland, or “from persons authorized by that Church to pronounce decisions”. The archbishops took this step because they wanted to “guard against the danger which might arise to our own Church from the example of the irregular and unauthorized proceedings of the memorialists”. Furthermore, they sympathized with Gobat “in his arduous position” and felt assured that his conduct would be guided by “sound judgement and discretion”.¹³⁰ However, despite the backing Gobat received from important Anglican church leaders, Neale continued to collect signatures for the protest against Gobat’s proselytising. According to Neale the declaration of the archbishops had even caused several people to sign his protest.¹³¹ The collection of signatures was to continue for months.¹³²

Given the shared missionary aim of Gobat and the CMS missionaries it comes as no surprise that those who opposed Gobat’s missionary efforts among the Eastern Christians also criticised the missionary actions of the CMS in Palestine. Only a few months after Klein and Sandreczki had arrived in Jerusalem in 1851 the society was attacked for “its intended aggression on the ancient Churches of the East”.¹³³ A memorandum was sent to Blomfield who passed it to Henry Venn. In the memorandum the question was raised why the CMS directed its energies towards the Greek Orthodox instead of the ‘heathen’. Furthermore, it reminded the readers of pledges made at the time of the establishment of the Protestant bishopric not to undertake any actions, such as proselytizing, regarding members of the Eastern Churches. According to the memorandum this pledge had been disregarded. Venn answered by stating that the CMS wanted to reform the Eastern Churches in order to enable them to evangelize among the ‘heathen’ and Muslims. With regard to the second accusation Venn replied that the

the Committee of the Jerusalem Diocesan Fund, 11 October 1853, London/BL, AP, 214, Add. 43252, ff. 135-136. Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 228.

¹³⁰ Hechler, *The Jerusalem Bishopric*, 134-135.

¹³¹ Neale in his diary, 19 November 1853, in Lawson, *Letters*, 222.

¹³² On 1 March 1854, for instance, *The Guardian* published a list containing many names of subscribers of the protest against Gobat. “Supplement to the Record, no. 2,851”, 17 August 1854, Oxford/BL, Dep. CMJ d. 53/1-10.

¹³³ Stock, *The History of the CMS* 2, 143.

CMS had not been a participant in the agreement between Prussia and Britain. Therefore, the pledge did not apply to the CMS.¹³⁴

The opposition to Gobat was not restricted to Britain. In Jerusalem there was also criticism of his missionary policy. One of the main sources of conflict in Jerusalem was the tension between Gobat and the British Consul James Finn. Finn had started his work in Jerusalem in the spring of 1846. He was the son-in-law of Alexander McCaul, who had been a candidate for the office of Protestant bishop in Jerusalem in 1841. Finn was a member of the Committee of the LJS and had dedicated himself to the restoration of the Jews in Palestine. He did not restrict his work to politics, but was also very involved with the mission. In the first years of Finn's consulate, he and Gobat seemed to be on good terms. However, only a few years after Finn's arrival disagreements between both men started to crop up.¹³⁵ Among other things, Finn condemned Gobat's allowing German Evangelical clergymen to celebrate a different liturgy than the Anglican in Jerusalem.¹³⁶ Another major problem for Finn was Gobat's attitude towards the Jews.¹³⁷

The climax of the tension between them, however, was the "Rosenthal case", a political rather than a religious issue. This was the result of Finn's appointment of Simeon Rosenthal as acting consul during his (Finn's) absence in the autumn of 1857. Rosenthal was the first convert of the LJS in Jerusalem and had formerly worked for the society, but had been dismissed on suspicion of embezzlement. In 1857 Rosenthal, now a hotel keeper, also worked as a Dragoman of the English consulate in Jerusalem. When Finn decided to let Rosenthal act as his deputy, Gobat protested, together with the LJS-men Edward Macgowan, Edward Atkinson and William Bailey.¹³⁸ They stated that Rosenthal, who lived as a Prussian citizen in Jerusalem, did not "possess the confidence of British residents in Jerusalem" and was "under foreign protection". Furthermore, they claimed he was "incapable of discharging the obligations of an honourable and responsible post in a manner creditable to the British flag".¹³⁹

An open quarrel followed in which Finn put Gobat under town arrest and Rosenthal was imprisoned by the Prussian Consul Rosen, whom Gobat had asked for

¹³⁴ Tibawi, *British Interests*, 111-112. Cf. Stock, *The History of the CMS* 2, 143-144.

¹³⁵ Jack, "No Heavenly Jerusalem", 189-190, 192.

¹³⁶ Cf. Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 220-222.

¹³⁷ Jack, "No Heavenly Jerusalem", 192-193.

¹³⁸ Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 223; Jack, "No Heavenly Jerusalem", 198-199.

¹³⁹ "The original Protest which caused proceedings against the Bishop", Jerusalem, 16 October 1857, Oxford/BL, Dep. C.M.J. c.110.

help. The English Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Malmesbury (1807-1889), ordered Finn to lift Gobat's arrest. He also asked the Prussian Consul to release Rosenthal. Malmesbury assured the Prussian envoy in London, who had requested Finn's return from Jerusalem, to restore the bishop's dignity. Although Malmesbury did not recall Finn to Britain he did request the consul to avoid further collision with Gobat in the future.¹⁴⁰

Finn was not the only one in Jerusalem to criticise Gobat. One of the other critics was William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), a well-known painter who lived in Jerusalem from 1854-1855. Hunt published a protest against the marriage between Hannah Hadoub, a former Roman Catholic whom Gobat had admitted into the Anglican Church, and the fourteen-year old Sophia Nicola. The painter objected to this marriage because Hadoub was said to have prostituted his former wife. In the end, however, Gobat decided to allow the marriage, because the accusation was not proven. In order to avoid possible scandals the bishop ordered that Hannah Hadoub and Sophia Nicola should marry in Nazareth instead of Christ Church in Jerusalem.¹⁴¹

The commotion about Gobat's missionary aim and efforts in Britain, together with the conflicts in Jerusalem, must have had an effect not only on the mission's morale but also on donations to the bishopric.¹⁴² Nevertheless, Gobat did not give in and continued with his missionary activities among Christians of other churches all through his episcopate. A reason for this might have been that he was supported by various important people, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

¹⁴⁰ Finn was consul in Jerusalem until 1863. Lückhoff, *Anglikaner*, 224-225. Cf. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 134ff; A. Blumberg, *A view from Jerusalem, 1849-1858. The Consular Diary of James and Elizabeth Anne Finn*, London, Toronto, 1980, 283-290. For this and other conflicts between Finn and Gobat, see Jack, "No Heavenly Jerusalem". The conflict was also fought in the media in England. According to Jack, the national press was opposed to Gobat. Jack, "No Heavenly Jerusalem", 199.

¹⁴¹ For this and more information: "Correspondence and papers concerning objections to a marriage between Hannah Hadoub, stonemason, and Sophia Nicola, including letters from and evidence transcribed by William Holman Hunt, the artist, 1855", London/LPL, JEMF, MS. 2338, ff. 46-115. Cf. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 117-118. Another document used against Gobat was a pamphlet written by James Graham, *Jerusalem: Its Missions, Schools, Convents etc. under Bishop Gobat*, London, 1858. Cf. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 119-120.

¹⁴² Tibawi mentions a letter from Gobat in which the bishop states that the income was diminished, largely because of the influence of the critics. Tibawi, *British Interests*, 121.

Concluding remarks

Gobat was Protestant bishop in Jerusalem for thirty-three years. In February 1878, Gobat raised the subject of his resignation in a letter to the CMS, as he felt he could no longer fulfil “all the duties of the office” because of his age.¹⁴³ In the same year, the CMS received a petition from the ‘Protestant Episcopal church in Palestine’ in both Arabic and English, in which the church members expressed their difficulties with Gobat’s possible resignation. They uttered their grief “both individually and as a body” at being deprived of their “Tender Father” and added that they had always found the bishop one of their greatest blessings.¹⁴⁴ However, before any formal decision could be taken, Gobat died on 11 May 1879 at the age of eighty. His wife Maria was to follow him three months later, on 1 August 1879.¹⁴⁵

During the Gobat years the Protestant mission in Palestine had expanded enormously. Only a few years after Gobat’s arrival in Jerusalem new Protestant communities were already being formed. An important reason for the growth of the Protestant mission was Gobat’s change of policy regarding the extent of the mission. No longer was the Protestant mission aimed at making converts only among Jewish people; the chief object now was the mission among Christians of other denominations. Gobat thought both Catholic and Orthodox Churches were in decline and full of ‘errors’. He therefore directed his attention to these denominations. The CMS, together with various Prussian institutions, shared the bishop’s missionary aim. Although Gobat often emphasized that he wanted to cleanse the Eastern churches, his letters and autobiography suggest that he actually focussed on making converts to (Evangelical) Protestantism and forming Protestant communities, rather than reforming the Eastern Churches.

From the start, Gobat’s change of the aim of the Protestant mission met with opposition. It was especially the Tractarians in Britain who strongly objected to the bishop’s missionary efforts among the Eastern Christians. Already at the time of his nomination as Protestant bishop in Jerusalem Gobat had had difficulties with the same

¹⁴³ Gobat to the CMS, Jerusalem, 8 February 1878, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 28/110; Gobat to Tait, Jerusalem, 21 November 1877, London/BL, TP, 234, ff. 280-283.

¹⁴⁴ “Protestant episcopal church in Palestine: against retirement of bishop of Jerusalem”, 1878, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 9/16.

¹⁴⁵ Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 528-530, 539. About a week after Gobat’s death, the Protestant Episcopal community in Palestine suggested to the CMS that Gobat’s son, Samuel, should succeed the late bishop. “Protestant Episcopal community in Palestine; for election of S.A. Gobat to inherit his father Samuel Gobat’s place as bishop” (Arabic and English), 1879, Birmingham/UL, C M/O 9/18.

group about his Evangelical ideas. Gobat's missionary course also caused strained relations with the Orthodox and Roman Catholic clergy. Gobat's change of missionary scope would even be one of the reasons to actually re-establish the Latin patriarchate in Jerusalem, as we will see in the following chapter.

