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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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The Roman Catholic presence during the Gobat years

Introduction

With the establishment of the Anglo-Prussian bishopric one more Christian denomination was added to the religious landscape in Palestine. Both the foundation of the Protestant bishopric and its missionary efforts affected the Roman Catholic Church there, especially during Gobat's episcopate, when the mission of the bishopric and the CMS was directed towards Christians of other denominations. These activities led to strained relations with the Roman Catholics, as both were fishing in the same pond; both directed their energies towards the Eastern Christians. What is more, the Protestant missionaries also tried to make converts among the members of the Roman Catholic Church itself, which intensified the rivalry between both churches.

Letters from the missionaries who worked for Gobat are filled with stories about their clashes with Catholics. Their reports will be discussed in the next chapters. The subject of this chapter is the Roman Catholic institutions and congregations in Palestine, concentrating on Joseph Valerga's patriarchate (1847-1872). Furthermore, the influence of the establishment of the Protestant bishopric and its mission on the Roman Catholic presence in Palestine at the time will be examined.

Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land

At the time when the Protestant Bishop Michael Solomon Alexander arrived in Jerusalem, the Franciscan friars were the main representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Palestine.¹ Already during the Crusades (1095-1291) the Franciscans had

¹ For information about the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, see for instance Buffon, *Les Franciscains*; Buffon, "Les Franciscains", 65-91; Marcellino da Civezza (convent name of Pietro Ranise), *Histoire Universelle des Missions Franciscaines 3: Asie et Afrique*, Paris, 1898; G. Golubovich, *Serie Cronologica dei Reverendissimi Superiori di Terra Santa [...]; con due Appendice di documenti e firmani Arabi inediti, e d'un sunto storico de' conventi, santuari ed istituti di beneficenza dipendenti da Terra Santa*, Jerusalem, 1898. For

gained a foothold in Palestine.² In 1333 the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land was officially recognised by a treaty concluded by the sovereigns of Naples, Robert of Anjou (1277-1343) and Sancha of Majorca (1285-1345), with the Mamluk Sultan in Cairo.³ In 1342, Pope Clement VI (1291-1352) issued the papal bulls *Gratias agimus* and *Nuper carissimae* from Avignon. With these bulls the Pope granted the *placet* of ecclesiastical authority to the Franciscans in the Holy Land.⁴ *Gratias agimus* is generally considered to be the text by which the Franciscans were designated as permanent custodians of the Holy Places; it was the foundation of the ‘Custodia Terrae Sanctae’, or Custody of the Holy Land.⁵ The bull contained regulations for the new ecclesiastical-religious organisation, and put the friars, who might come from all the provinces of the order, under the jurisdiction of the “superior (guardian) of Mount Zion in Jerusalem”.⁶

Alongside the Franciscans, the Carmelites, i.e., the ‘Order of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel’, also boasted a long-standing presence in Palestine. The order had been founded on Mount Carmel during the Crusades, but had left after these campaigns, to return in 1631. The Carmelites were in charge of the Latin parish of Haifa. In the early nineteenth century there were no other Roman Catholic orders or congregations in Palestine.⁷

In nineteenth-century Palestine the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land consisted of friars of various nationalities. Although the majority of the friars were Italian or Spanish, others came from countries such as France, Germany, Poland and America. Some of the friars were local Arabs.⁸ The Custodian of the Holy Land, or Custos Terrae

the earlier centuries of the Franciscan presence in Palestine, see for instance P.L. Lemmens, *Die Franziskaner im Hl. Lande 1: Die Franziskaner auf dem Sion (1336-1551)*, Franziskanische Studien 4, Münster, 1916.

² In 1095 the first Crusade was proclaimed by Pope Urban II (1035-1099) at the Council of Clermont, and in 1099 Jerusalem was captured by the Crusaders. Godfrey of Bouillon was appointed the first Latin ruler of Jerusalem. In 1187 the Crusaders lost Jerusalem to Saladin, and in 1291 lost their last foothold on the mainland, Acre.

³ The Franciscans received the Cenacle site on Mount Zion, and in exchange the Pope was to revoke the trade embargo against Egypt. Stransky, “Origins”, 139. Cf. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 13; J.P. Valognes, *Vie et Mort des Chrétiens d’Orient. Des Origins à nos Jours*, Paris, 1994, 503-504.

⁴ Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 13; Custodia di Terra Santa, *La Presenza Franciscana in Terra Santa*, Jerusalem, 2003, 10. For the bull *Gratias agimus*, see *La Presenza*, 5.

⁵ See for instance J. Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens Uniates du Proche-Orient*, Paris, 1962, 273; Stransky, “Origins”, 139.

⁶ Custodia di Terra Santa, *La Presenza*, 5, 10.

⁷ Médebielle, *Le Diocèse*, 66.

⁸ P. Ladislaus, *Das heilige Land und seine katholischen Bewohner in kirchlicher und sozialer Beziehung*, 1879, Münster, 1879, 6.

Sanctae, was the head of the Franciscans; regulations required him to be Italian,⁹ and the Vicar to be French; it was the latter's task to replace the Custodian during his absence and to maintain relations with the French consuls. The fiscal-procurator, in charge of finances, had to be Spanish, since the majority of alms collected for the Custody came from countries which were dependent on the Crown of Spain. Besides the vicar and the fiscal-procurator, the council or *discretorium* of the Custos consisted of four other friars of Italian, French, Spanish and German nationality, respectively. The Custodian could not take any decision without consulting the *discretorium* first.¹⁰

The Custody maintained relations with various European courts by means of the so-called Commissariats of the Holy Land. The function of these national commissariats was to arouse European interest in the Holy Land and encourage financial contributions for the Holy Places.¹¹ Stimulated by papal bulls, collects for the Holy Places were held in several countries at least once a year.¹² The money was handed over to the bishops who gave it to the Commissariats of the Holy Land. Via these Commissariats the money reached Jerusalem, where it was collected by the Procurator and divided among the sanctuaries and convents, in line with the different needs decided by the Custody's *discretorium*. The expenses of the Custody were controlled by the Propaganda Fide.¹³ With the financial support from Europe, the Franciscan friars were able to maintain the sanctuaries in the Holy Land.

The care of the Holy Places also entailed the care of the pilgrims who visited them. The Franciscans provided travellers with free accommodation. Special hospices, called *Case Nove*, were opened by the Custody. According to Consul Finn, the pilgrims in Jerusalem were entitled to free lodging for a whole month. In the other hospices in the country this period was limited to three days. Finn added, however, that European travellers usually gave "donations on their departure, equal to the amount of a fair

⁹ The Custodian was nominated by the Minister General of the Franciscans and his council in Rome and confirmed by the Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 15.

¹⁰ This was part of the regulations laid down by Pope Benedict XIV (1675-1758) concerning the functioning of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 15.

¹¹ France, Spain, Austria and Venice were the most important countries. The commissariats could also put pressure on the governments to gain their support in controversies, especially those with the Orthodox, about the Holy Places. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 14. To this day, the commissariats still aim at stimulating interest in the Holy Land.

¹² Marcellino da Civezza, *Histoire*, 85. These funds were collected especially round Easter (the "Good Friday collection").

¹³ *Ibid.*

hotel-bill, and some very much more”.¹⁴ Bernhard Neumann, former doctor in the Jewish hospital “Mayer Rothschild” in Jerusalem, wrote the same and added that admittance to the *Casa Nova* in Jerusalem was very liberal. Travellers from all kinds of religions and denominations were welcome, and if necessary received medical help from the convent doctor.¹⁵

In addition to the tasks connected with the care of the Holy Places, the friars also felt responsible for the poor, whom they provided with food and clothing as well as free housing.¹⁶ The Franciscan Marie-Léon stated that in Jerusalem “almost all Catholics lodged at the expense of the mission”. He added that the practice of offering such material support to the parishioners aroused criticism from travellers and writers. He defended the Custody, mentioning that it wanted to reduce the number of people receiving free lodging, but that the Latin patriarch, Joseph Valerga, was opposed to this idea. Valerga was ordered by the Propaganda Fide to continue providing such support.¹⁷

In addition to hosting pilgrims and supporting the poor, the Franciscans also offered some medical help,¹⁸ took in orphans in their orphanages and taught the youth in their schools. Furthermore, a printing press was set up in Jerusalem. In October 1845, the vicar of the Custody mentioned the necessity of the establishment of a printing press with Arabic and Latin typefaces. Having a printing press would enable the Franciscans to publish books in Arabic for the Roman Catholic education. These books could then prevent the damage caused by non-Catholic books, which were distributed for free

¹⁴ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 42.

¹⁵ B. Neumann, *Die Heilige Stadt und deren Bewohner in ihren naturhistorischen, culturgeschichtlichen [sic], sozialen und medicinischen Verhältnissen*, Hamburg, 1877, 300.

¹⁶ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 42; Ladislaus, *Das Heilige Land*, 6.

¹⁷ Marie-Léon, *La Custodie Franciscaine de Terre-Sainte. Rapport rédigé par le R.P. Marie-Léon Patrem, Missionnaire Apostolique, Discret français de Terre-Sainte et lu a l'assemblée générale des Oeuvres Catholique, le 16 mai 1879*, Paris, 1879, 50. Much later, the Dutch Franciscan E. van Kroonenburg mentions similar criticism of the Franciscans. He discusses several accusations found in a Roman Catholic paper regarding the Franciscans practice of offering “houses, bread and soup” to the poor parishioners in Jerusalem. According to Van Kroonenburg this criticism only demonstrated the excellent care taken by the Custody of people it considered to be in need. He did, however, think it too much to say that the pastor offered soup, since the “native people” never eat soup; Van Kroonenburg thought the description of a pastor offering pea soup to the poor a typically Dutch touch. E. van Kroonenburg, *De Missie-Custodie van het H. Land*, Weert, 1928, 20-21.

¹⁸ According to Marie-Léon, in some towns, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Jaffa, the Franciscans offered medical care for free and were available not only to Catholic people, but to people from other religious backgrounds too, *La Custodie*, 54-55. Already in 1352, the Franciscans erected their first hospital in Palestine, according to *The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land Yesterday and Today. Vatican Missionary Exposition (1925)*, Rome, 1925, 29.

by the Protestants in large numbers. In the vicar's opinion these books led to immense hate of the Catholic religion.¹⁹ In July 1846 a printing press arrived in Jerusalem. The Archbishop of Vienna, Vincent Eduard Milde (1777-1853), arranged for Franciscans from Jerusalem to be trained as printers and bookbinders in Vienna.²⁰

During the nineteenth century, the Franciscan friars were present in more than fifteen towns and villages near the Holy Places in Palestine, such as Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jaffa, and Ramle.²¹ As mentioned earlier, the Franciscans had fought with the Greek Orthodox over the Holy Places for centuries. In these polemics both were supported by European nations: the Greek Orthodox by the Russians, and the Roman Catholics by France. Before the treaties or 'capitulations' between France and the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century onwards, by which France had taken the role of protector of Catholicism in the Empire upon itself, the Franciscans usually asked the Italian representatives for help.²² However, also after the capitulations the friars still preferred the support of Italy and Spain.²³ According to Finn, during the years of its existence (1843-1849) the Franciscans preferred the Sardinian Consulate to the French. Afterwards, with the establishment of the Austrian and Spanish consulates, the monks frequented these rather than the French. Finn added, however, that it would not be reasonable if the convents forgot the "long-continued favours" they had received from France. They had been "under the greatest obligations to that power".²⁴

For centuries the Custodian of the Holy Land was the highest Latin authority in Palestine. He actually fulfilled duties the Latin patriarch had executed during the

¹⁹ Giuseppe Maria Rodal to Moseitzh, Jerusalem, 22 October 1845, Rome/AGOFM, TS, 5, SK/599, 7.

²⁰ On 27 January 1847 the Franciscan Printing Press printed its first page. Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem. The Old City*, 230. From 1846-1852, Sebastian Frötschner was in charge of the printing press. B. Haider, "Zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit. Kirch und Staat in Österreich (-Ungarn) und das Heilige Land 1843/49-1917", B.A. Böhler (ed.), *Mit Szepter und Pilgerstab. Österreichische Präsenz im Heiligen Land seit den Tagen Kaiser Franz Josephs*, Vienna, 2000, 60. For an overview of books printed by the Franciscan Printing Press between 1862 and 1884, see *Prospetto generale della custodia di terra Santa dall'anno 1862-1889*, Jerusalem, 1889.

²¹ For an impression of the Franciscan presence in nineteenth-century Palestine, see Appendix II.

²² Soetens, *Le Congrès*, 208. For the capitulations between France and the Ottoman Empire, see also Chapter 1.

²³ Stransky, "Origins", 148. As mentioned above, the majority of the Franciscan friars were Italian and Spanish.

²⁴ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 62-63. For the relations between the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and Austria, see: Haider "Zwischen Anspruch", 55-74; B. Haider, "Das Generalkommissariat des heiligen Landes in Wien – eine Wiederentdeckung des 19. Jahrhunderts", Trimbauer (ed.), *Europäer in der Levante*, 123-159.

Crusades.²⁵ However, during the nineteenth century the position of the Custody and the Custodian was to change.

First discussions about the restoration of the Latin patriarchate

In 1847, the special position of the Franciscan Custody in Palestine ended when the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem was re-established. Discussions about restoring the patriarchate had already started in the early 1840s. A major reason to put this on the agenda was the establishment of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem by the Church of England and the Evangelical Church of Prussia, a reason which became even more pressing after its first bishop, Alexander, arrived in Jerusalem. When the Protestant bishopric was founded the whole Catholic world was up in arms.²⁶ Its foundation gave an immense impulse to the missionary activities of both the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Church.²⁷

It is not surprising that the Roman Catholics saw the foundation of the Protestant bishopric as a provocative act against Roman Catholicism. As we have seen, from the start the Protestant bishopric represented anti-Roman Catholic sentiments; the "Statement of Proceedings" accused the Church of Rome of "labouring to pervert the members of the Eastern Churches" and bringing them "under the dominion of the Pope".²⁸

The arrival of the first Protestant bishop soon led to reactions from the Roman Catholic side. In January 1842, the French ambassador in Rome, Count Latour-Maubourg,

²⁵ Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 14.

²⁶ Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens*, 275; Médebielle, *Le Diocese*, 28. According to Duvignau, in reaction to the establishment of the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem many petitions reached Rome. Duvignau provides no information about their contents. P. Duvignau, *Une Vie au Service de l'Église. S.B. Mgr. Joseph Valerga, Patriarch Latin de Jérusalem, 1813-1872* (hereafter *Joseph Valerga*), Jerusalem, 1972, 58. As mentioned before, Finn was amused by the "silly exaggerations" of Roman Catholic journals. Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 138.

²⁷ Friedrich Heyer speaks of an "avalanche" of European activities, which started with the establishment of the Anglo-Prussian bishopric in Jerusalem; as a result of the foundation of the Protestant bishopric every denomination, every Christian nation, wanted to have a representation in the Holy City. F. Heyer, *2000 Jahre Kirchengeschichte des Heiligen Landes. Märtyrer, Mönche, Kirchenväter, Kreuzfahrer, Patriarchen, Ausgräber und Pilger*, M. Tamcke (ed.), Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 11, Hamburg, 2000, 249. Cf. Haider, "Zwischen Anspruch", 59; B. Haider, "'Austria in urbe sancta Jerusalem sit ultima!' Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Europäisierung der Welt", F. Glatz (ed), *Europäische und nationale Interessen, Begegnungen* Schriftenreihe des Europa Institutes Budapest 16, Budapest, 2002, 72.

²⁸ Hechler, *The Jerusalem Bishopric*, 108.

mentioned in a report that Rome [i.e., the Pope and his Curia] dreamt of the establishment of a Catholic prelacy in Jerusalem to counterbalance the “disastrous effects” of a Protestant bishop in Jerusalem.²⁹ At the proposal of Cardinal Giacomo Filippo Fransoni (1775-1856), prefect of the Propaganda Fide, a general meeting of the Propaganda Fide held on 28 February 1842 was dedicated to the study of the eventual “erection of the apostolic vicariate of Jerusalem”. The Holy See was to take into consideration the project’s advantages for the Roman Catholic faith. Furthermore, such a prelacy would impede the development of heresy and schism, which more and more menaced Catholicism.³⁰

However, the decision to re-establish the Latin patriarchate was postponed indefinitely: on the one hand, Rome feared that such a decision might stimulate England and Prussia to press the Sultan for official recognition of the Anglican bishop, so that it might enforce rather than weaken the position of the Protestants in Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Minister General of the Franciscans objected to the plan, as he feared losing the autonomous position of the Franciscan Custody.³¹

Although no decision was made regarding the establishment of the Latin patriarchate, the French government in Paris decided to send a French consul to Jerusalem. In Rome, the Propaganda Fide officials were very pleased with this decision and one of them, Monsignor Cadolini, even suggested suitable candidates for the position. The French government, however, did not choose any of these, but appointed Gabriel de Lantivy.³² The consul’s responsibility was both religious and political in character. He had to protect the Catholic religion, its adherents and the institutions dependent on it. He also had to extend “the action and effects of a patronage of which

²⁹ Latour-Maubourg, 8 January 1842, cited in Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 484.

³⁰ Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 484-485; Stransky, “Origins”, 148; Stransky, “La Concurrence”, 211.

³¹ Soetens, *Le Congrès*, 247-248; Stransky, “Origins”, 148; Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 485.

³² Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 485; Stransky, “Origins”, 148.

France will always take the glory as much as possible”.³³ Moreover, the consul would be able to keep an eye on the actions of the Protestant bishop in Jerusalem.³⁴

Like the Franciscans, the French government, with François Pierre Guillaume Guizot (1787-1874), himself a Protestant, as its Minister of Foreign Affairs, was opposed to the restoration of the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem. Guizot considered the plan unnecessary, as the Custodian of the Holy Land was already invested with the rights and jurisdiction of the Episcopal dignity. According to Guizot, the inevitable conflicts between the Franciscans and the new Latin prelate would be a further embarrassment to the French consul, who was already busy keeping peace among the Franciscan friars themselves. Such conflicts would be a cause for joy and would provide an extra “weapon” for the enemies of Catholicism. Besides this, Guizot feared that the Roman Catholic prelate might turn out an adversary rather than a supporter of French (religious) protection. He might be an Austrian or Sardinian and prefer the ‘protection’ of these countries.³⁵

The new French consul in Jerusalem was also opposed to the restoration project. In a report, Lantivy analysed the establishment of a “Latin bishopric” in Jerusalem.³⁶ He discussed the positive and negative sides of the project. As advantages Lantivy mentioned, among other things, that the “Catholic bishop” might help the Greek and Armenian Christians to abandon the yoke of their convents. As disadvantages he presented possible causes of rivalry between the Franciscan custodian and the Latin prelate. Like Guizot he wondered what would happen if the Latin prelate was Austrian or Sardinian and would try to withdraw the Catholics and the Catholic institutions from the French religious protectorate. The consul proposed a way in which all advantages could be gained without having the disadvantages of the re-establishment of the patriarchate: sending French missionary organizations to Palestine. These societies

³³ The letter also stipulates that the establishment of a French Consulate in Jerusalem would show the dedication of the French government to the Catholic interests in the Levant before the Holy See. Guizot to Reneval, the successor of Latour-Maubourg as French ambassador in Rome, cited in Stransky, “Origins”, 148 and Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 489. According to Finn, the French consul “became the visible representative and embodiment of the French protectorate of Christianity”. Finn, *Stirring* 1, 76.

³⁴ “Chancellerie de l’Ordre de Jérusalem en France” to the Custodian of the Holy Land. This letter was probably written soon after the establishment of the French consulate in Jerusalem, Rome/AGOFM, TS, 2, SK/596, 161.

³⁵ Guizot to Latour-Maubourg, 15 June 1844, cited in Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 491-492.

³⁶ Report, dd. 29 August 1843 or 1844. It is not clear whether Hajjar dates the report to 1843 or 1844. Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 493; Stransky, “Origins”, 148.

would be controlled by the French consulate in Jerusalem and would be under French protection. They could be a counterforce to the Anglican missionary activities, whose successes Lantivy had discussed in an earlier report. The consul concluded by saying that he was utterly opposed to the establishment of a Roman Catholic Episcopal See in Jerusalem.³⁷

The re-establishment of the Latin patriarchate

For some years the restoration of a Latin prelacy remained low on the agenda of the Propaganda Fide. However, in 1846, a few months after Pius IX (1792-1878) had become Pope, the project was discussed again. Since the first plans for a Latin prelacy in 1842 there had been some changes concerning the Orthodox and Protestants in Palestine, which most probably contributed to the fact that a Latin prelacy was again subject of discussion.³⁸ As to the Orthodox, Russia had sent an Archimandrite, Porfiri Uspenski, to Palestine in 1843 in order to investigate the best methods by which Russia could support the Orthodox Church in Palestine. Uspenski had to collect information about the “real demands” of the Eastern clergy and the “aims, successes and spirit of the Catholics, Armenians and Protestants”.³⁹ In Uspenski’s report about his stay in Jerusalem and his excursions to other towns he summarized the problems of the Orthodox Church, such as the poor status of the Greek clergy and the work of non-Orthodox missionaries. He considered the greatest danger to come from the French, who protected the Uniates. Furthermore, the Anglicans with their new bishop were to be feared. Uspenski recommended a permanent representation in Jerusalem.⁴⁰ In 1847, a Russian Palestine mission was eventually established.⁴¹ Furthermore, on the Orthodox side

³⁷ Hajjar, *L’Europe*, 492-496; Stransky, “Origins”, 148.

³⁸ According to a pilgrim’s memoir, the Holy See had re-established the Latin patriarchate mainly to resist the invasion of the Russian Schismatics and the Protestants. “Mémoire confidentiel adressé à N:N:S:S: les Évêques de France, par un Prêtre pèlerin de Terre-Sainte, au sujet du rétablissement de la quête du Vendredi saint”, dated ca. 1859, Rome /AGOFM, TS, 8, SK/602, 43-46.

³⁹ Hopwood, *The Russian Presence*, 34, 36. Russia’s decision to send an Archimandrite was triggered by the appointment of the Protestant bishop Alexander. Hopwood, *The Russian Presence*, 33.

⁴⁰ Hopwood, *The Russian Presence*, 39-40.

⁴¹ E. Astafieva, “Imaginäre und wirkliche Präsenz Russlands im Nahen Osten in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts”, Trimbur (ed.), *Europäer in der Levante*, 174. Elena Astafieva states that the establishment of a Protestant bishopric and the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate might have accelerated Russia’s initiative to establish a Palestine mission, but not caused it; a view that, according to Astafieva, is common in French

Athanasios, the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem, was succeeded by Cyril II after his death in 1845. Unlike his predecessors, who had resided in Constantinople, Cyril II decided to have his residence in Jerusalem.⁴²

Of the changes in the religious climate in Palestine, it is especially Gobat's appointment that is frequently mentioned as having given a major impulse to the restoration project of the Latin patriarchate.⁴³ In a general assembly of the Propaganda Fide on 25 January 1847 the institution of a Latin bishop or patriarch of Jerusalem was discussed. Before this meeting, a petition from an Italian painter, Constantino Giusti, on the subject had caught the attention of the Pope and the cardinals of the Propaganda Fide, and was explicitly mentioned during the discussion. In his petition, Giusti, who had travelled in the Middle East for several years, voiced the Franciscans' desire for a Latin bishop in Jerusalem.⁴⁴

The report of the Propaganda's assembly of 25 January shows that the creation of a Latin prelacy in Jerusalem was considered to serve the prestige of Catholicism and the needs of the mission in Palestine. A "bishop" near the Holy Places, where there were "schismatics and many heretics", and "recently" even Anglicans, would be of crucial importance.⁴⁵ Twelve days later, on 6 February 1847, the Secretary of the Propaganda informed the Minister General of the Franciscans in Rome, Luigi di Loreto, about the project. Loreto's reaction was not very encouraging. He took the view that the plan

historiography. Astafieva, "Imaginäre", 171. For Russia's (missionary) presence in Palestine and the relation between Russia and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, see also Hopwood, *The Russian Presence*; D. Hopwood, "Die russische Präsenz in Palästina-religiöse Motive, politische Ambitionen", Y. Perry and E. Petry (eds.), *Das Erwachen Palästinas im 19. Jahrhundert. Alex Carmel zum 70. Geburtstag*, E.W. Stegemann (ed.), Judentum und Christentum 9, Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, 2001, 47-52; E.M. Kane, "Pilgrims, Piety and Politics: The Founding of the First Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem", Tamcke and Marten (eds.), *Christian Witness*, 177-197.

⁴² Hopwood, *The Russian Presence*, 42. Cyril II was Patriarch from 1845 until 1872.

⁴³ See for instance Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens*, 278; Médebielle, *Le Diocese*, 28; Kroonenburg, *De Missie-Custodie*, 33. In the assembly of the Propaganda Fide about the restoration of a Latin prelacy the new Protestant bishop is indeed mentioned in the context of the general wish for a Latin prelacy. L. Lemmens, *Acta S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide pro Terra Santa 2, 1721-1847*, G. Golubovich (ed.), Biblioteca bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese, Firenze, 1922, 117.

⁴⁴ In 1831 Giusti had travelled in the Middle East together with the Greek Catholic Patriarch Maximus Mazlum and the first Jesuits of the new mission in Syria. After that he travelled through the Orient and placed himself in service of the Catholics, especially in Palestine. Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 499. For the text of Giusti's petition, see Lemmens, *Acta*, 119-121.

⁴⁵ Lemmens, *Acta*, 117; Stransky, "The Origins", 148; Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 499.

conflicted with the privileged position of the Custody of the Holy Land. The new project would jeopardize the institution of the Custody itself.⁴⁶

In the meantime, at the instigation of a Neapolitan priest who lived in Constantinople, the Ottoman Sultan took up the idea to establish direct relations with the Holy See.⁴⁷ He asked his ambassador in Vienna to inform Pope Pius IX about his plan, which the ambassador did in an audience on 20 February 1847: the Sultan would allow an apostolic representative in Constantinople, under the authority of the Propaganda Fide. The new prelate could then play the role of delegate of the Holy See in favour of the Uniate Churches in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁸ The Sultan's promise might have stimulated the final decision of the Propaganda regarding the Latin patriarchate.

On 3 May 1847, Cardinal Acton (1803-1847) presented a report about the nomination of a "bishop" in Jerusalem, in which the objections of the Minister General of the Franciscans were discussed and rebutted. The report contained 37 questions about the structure and organization of the new prelacy, for instance about the candidate, whether the Order of the Holy Sepulchre would be under the authority of the new prelate or not,⁴⁹ etcetera. Following these questions, Acton added that in case the new prelate did not have to be a Franciscan the missionary Joseph (Guiseppe) Valerga would be an excellent candidate. Acton regarded Valerga's competence highly: his righteousness, missionary zeal, his many intellectual capacities, such as his knowledge of Oriental languages, and his understanding of the mission in the Orient. Acton also proposed some Franciscan candidates, in case the new prelate was required to be a Franciscan, but no one seemed to have all the qualities Valerga possessed.⁵⁰ In a Papal audience, on 16 May 1847, the cardinals of the Propaganda Fide, represented by one of its officials, Jean-Baptiste Palma, advised Pius IX to grant the new prelate the title of 'Latin patriarch'. Furthermore, Joseph Valerga was recommended for the office.

⁴⁶ Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens*, 278; Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 500. For the text of the letter to Loreto and Loreto's reaction to it, see Lemmens, *Acta*, 121-124.

⁴⁷ Soetens, *Le Congrès*, 250. Soetens does not mention the name of the Neapolitan priest, or give any information about the priest's relationship with the Ottoman Sultan.

⁴⁸ The apostolic delegate "would represent the Pope as the spiritual head of the Catholics, not as the secular head of a foreign state". Soetens, *Le Congrès*, 250; Stransky, "The Origins", 149.

⁴⁹ The Custodian of the Holy Land possessed the right of making 'knights of the Holy Sepulchre'.

⁵⁰ Lemmens, *Acta*, 124-130; Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 500. It seems that national-political arguments did not play a part in Acton's choice of Valerga.

Pius IX approved of both proposals and nominated Valerga as Latin patriarch of Jerusalem.⁵¹

In the second week of July 1847, final decisions were taken about the jurisdiction of the patriarch. His authority should not extend to the personal and religious life of the Franciscans, who were to remain under the authority of the Custodian. The exact relationship between the patriarch and the Custody would be defined later, as would the financial aspects regarding the Holy Places.⁵² On 23 July 1847, the papal bull *Nulla celebrior* was issued; with this publication, the restoration of the Latin patriarchate was a fact. In the bull, Pius IX ordered that the patriarchate should consist of the same regions that were under the authority of the Custodian of the Holy Land.⁵³ Since the bull had been issued Valerga could be officially nominated and consecrated.

Patriarch Valerga and the French reaction to his nomination

Joseph Valerga was born on 9 April 1813 in Loano (Liguria) as the son of Joseph Valerga and Jacinthe Ferrando. After finishing school, Joseph entered the seminary, and after that continued his studies at La Sapienza University in Rome, where he studied theology and law and received his doctor's degree in both. Valerga also studied Oriental languages, such as Arabic and Hebrew. On 17 December 1836 he was ordained priest. He started to work for the Propaganda Fide, for which, among other tasks, he translated Greek, Latin and Arabic documents.⁵⁴ When in 1841 the apostolic delegate in Lebanon, Monsignor Vilardell, asked the Propaganda Fide for a secretary, Valerga was sent out.⁵⁵

Valerga started to work for Vilardell; he studied the records of the apostolic delegate of Syria and Mesopotamia, explored the region, and tried to learn the spoken

⁵¹ Lemmens, *Acta*, 131; Hajjar, *Les Chrétiens*, 279; Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 501. With the title 'Patriarch', the new prelate would be treated the same by the Ottoman authorities as the other Patriarchs of the Uniate Churches. Soetens, *Le Congrès*, 250-251.

⁵² The Patriarch would govern the Catholic missions and all its parishes, including the churches run by the Carmelites of Haifa and Mount Carmel. Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 503. On 10 December 1848, the Propaganda Fide drew up an instruction, containing the detailed regulations concerning the relations between the Patriarch and the Custody. Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 77. For the "Instructio Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide", see Lemmens, *Acta*, 136-138.

⁵³ *Nulla celebrior*, Rome, 23 July 1847 [printed], Rome/AGOFM, TS, 11, SK/605, 212-215. For an Italian translation, see A. Possetto, *Il Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme (1848-1938)*, Milano, 1938, 25-29.

⁵⁴ A. Perrin, *Centenaire du Patriarcat Latin de Jerusalem, 1847-1947*, Jerusalem, 1947?, 6; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 1-20.

⁵⁵ Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 21.

languages of the people. According to his biographer, Valerga had already had one deception before he arrived in Lebanon: after many years of studying and translating Arabic, he had not reckoned with the huge difference between written literary Arabic and the spoken language. When, after some time, fatigue prevented Vilardell from visiting his delegate and his apostolic Vicariat of Aleppo, he ordered Valerga to go. For this purpose Vilardell appointed Valerga Vicar General (*vicaire général*). During his journey Valerga was moved by the situation in which he found the Catholics, which he considered to be deplorable. In December 1841, he told the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide that he would be willing to work among the Christians in Mosul. Valerga's proposal was accepted and from then on he worked as a missionary in Mesopotamia.⁵⁶

As we have seen, on 3 May 1847, Cardinal Acton presented Valerga as a suitable candidate for the office of patriarch (or bishop, since the title of the new prelate had not been decided at the time). On 12 June 1847, the Propaganda Fide sent Valerga a letter requesting him to come to Rome as soon as possible, because the Propaganda had to discuss important affairs with him in the name of the Holy See.⁵⁷ In Rome the Pope informed Valerga of the restoration of the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem and the decision to nominate him for the office of patriarch. On 4 October 1847, the Pope officially 'preconized', or recommended, Joseph Valerga to the consistory. The result of this consultation was largely favourable,⁵⁸ and six days later, on 10 October 1847, Valerga was consecrated by Pius IX in the chapel of the Quirinal in Rome.⁵⁹

With the consecration of Valerga, Pius IX and the Propaganda Fide had opted for a Sardinian patriarch. With the French objections to the patriarch project in mind, it is not surprising that the French government opposed Valerga's candidature. One week before Valerga's preconization, the French Ambassador in Rome, Pellegrino Rossi (1787-1848), had a meeting with Pius IX. In this meeting Rossi underlined the French objections against a Sardinian patriarch, one of these being the "intrigues of the Sardinians in the Orient" against France. Pius IX, however, assured him that although

⁵⁶ Perrin, *Centenaire*, 6; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 22-27.

⁵⁷ Perrin, *Centenaire*, 6; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 40.

⁵⁸ About the voting for Valerga as Patriarch Pierre Duvignau relates that when the Pope discovered a few black balls among the many white ones, he placed his skullcap on the black balls, saying: "You can see it, they are all white". Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 72.

⁵⁹ Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 70-74.

Valerga was a Sardinian he could be considered Roman because of his education, habits, and domicile. The Pope also confirmed that the Propaganda Fide had been unanimous in its choice of Valerga. He promised that if the French government had concrete and justified complaints about (Catholic) clergy in the Orient in their relations with the French representatives, the government only had to inform him and he would intervene.⁶⁰ Before Valerga left for Palestine, he had assured Rossi that he intended to live in harmony with the French consuls in the Orient. Furthermore, the Minister General of the Franciscans also promised his formal cooperation. Consequently, at the time Valerga embarked for Palestine it seemed that the French government and its representatives had every reason to be optimistic about the future cooperation with both the Latin patriarch and the Custody of the Holy Land.⁶¹

On 15 January 1848 Valerga arrived in Jaffa. From there he travelled with an escort to Ramle, where he stayed with the Franciscans in accordance with pilgrimage tradition. On the next day he travelled from Ramle to Ain Karim to the convent of St. John's. That evening he received the certificate of 'Knight of the Holy Sepulchre' in the name of the Custodian of the Holy Land. With this symbolic gesture, the right to create knights of the Holy Sepulchre was taken from the hands of the Custodian; from then on it was one of the prerogatives of the Latin patriarch.⁶² On 17 January 1848 Valerga entered Jerusalem. He was accompanied by the Custodian, the Custodian's council and many other Franciscans, the French and Sardinian consuls, a deputation from the Turkish authority, and many Latins. When the patriarch came within view of the city, shouts of joy and musket shots were heard. According to Finn, it was "superfluous to mention that these demonstrations were not assisted by the Christians of any other communion".⁶³

A few days after Valerga's arrival in Jerusalem, the French consul, Joseph Helouis Jorelle wrote an enthusiastic letter to the Procurator General of the Franciscans in Rome. After mentioning the patriarch's safe arrival and solemn entrance in Jerusalem,

⁶⁰ Report by Rossi, in Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 508.

⁶¹ Hajjar, *L'Europe*, 510-511.

⁶² Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 78-81.

⁶³ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 46-47; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 81; Raffaele M^o Bettoni to Franciscan curia in Rome, Jerusalem, 19 January(?) 1848, Rome/AGOFM, TS, 5, SK/599, 306. Finn also wrote that especially for this occasion the Sardinian consul wore a new uniform of brilliant scarlet instead of his usual gear. He was informed that on this occasion the consul regarded himself not so much as consul but as 'Envoy of the King of Jerusalem', a title claimed by the King of Sardinia. Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 47-48.

he stated that the good reputation that had preceded the patriarch was well-founded. Jorelle was convinced that the Holy Land would follow a completely new avenue now that it had a patriarch, a new “Custodial Vicar”, at its head, who was young in age but old in experience.⁶⁴

The Franciscans, though, were not overly enthusiastic about the restoration of the patriarchate. During Valerga’s patriarchate relations between the patriarchate and the Custody were strained and full of conflicts, partly about jurisdictions, but especially concerning financial matters, as the patriarch was financially dependent on the Custody. During the first years of the patriarchate the Custody relied on Austria in these disputes, whereas Valerga felt supported by France. In order to end the rivalry Rome issued a decree on 9 September 1851 intended to define the respective jurisdictions of the two institutions.⁶⁵ According to Finn, however, the efforts from Rome to end the conflicts were fruitless, as “even when some amount of reconciliation was effected, the smart of past wounds would yet remain”.⁶⁶

Bishop Gobat’s first reaction to Valerga

Unlike the French Consul the Protestant bishop was not very optimistic about future relationships with the Latin patriarch. A few weeks after Valerga had arrived in Jerusalem, Gobat wrote to Colonel Rose that he did not see how he could enter into any friendly relations with the patriarch. Gobat wanted to be “on good terms with all parties, as far as consistent with the profession of Protestant Truth, on the one hand, and of the position I hold as the representative of the Church of England, on the other”. However, he considered the arrival of the Latin patriarch a turning point in the relations between Protestants and Roman Catholics, as since that time Roman Catholic anti-Protestantism had started “again”. Until then, Gobat stated, he never had “the least relation, nor indeed any difficulty” with the (Roman Catholic) monks and priests in

⁶⁴ Consul of France to Antonio Maria de Rignano, Jerusalem, 27 January 1848, Rome/AGOFM, TS, 5, SK/599, 304-305.

⁶⁵ It was not until 1923 that all canonical questions were solved. The appointment of the Franciscan Louis Piavi as Patriarch in 1889, however, eased the tension between Custody and Patriarchate. Heyer, *2000 Jahre*, 253-254; Haider, “Zwischen Anspruch”, 65-66; Haider, “Das Generalkommissariat”, 142-144.

⁶⁶ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 51.

Jerusalem. The situation had changed when Valerga arrived in Jerusalem. According to Gobat, already on the very day of his arrival Valerga

not only preached publicly, though not very bitterly, against the Protestants, but on that same day and the following, he also spoke against the Protestants in his house to those who visited him; and tried to dissuade the members of his Church from serving in Protestant houses.⁶⁷

As a result a servant of Gobat's had decided to leave his service. For Gobat this was reason enough to lose all desire of meeting the new patriarch, until he "should see and hear more of his doings". However, by that time the Roman Catholic priests had begun to preach against the Protestants. One of them, for instance, had from the pulpit rebuked all Roman Catholics "for purchasing or keeping Bibles and other Protestant books in their houses". The priest exhorted his audience to deliver these books to him so that he could burn them. Under such circumstances Gobat considered it beyond his power "to take the initiative towards a friendly intercourse" unless conditions outside his control put him "into the way of doing it".⁶⁸

In Gobat's annual letter for 1848, which he wrote about eight months later, he was still pessimistic about his relations with the Latin patriarch. His tone, however, seems to be more conciliatory. He wrote that there was a gap between him and the patriarch that neither Valerga nor he had created. Neither of them had reason to complain about hostility, except that Valerga had warned his people against the Protestants. Gobat added that the patriarch thought this to be his duty, and had not been very bitter.⁶⁹ Consul Finn wrote that the Latin patriarch and the Protestant bishop "made no advances towards each other; but they met sometimes at public celebrations in the British Consulate, and joined in conversation when this was commenced by other persons". The consul himself always continued on "friendly personal terms" with the patriarch, with whom he could converse about topics of European politics or "Oriental learning".⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Gobat to Rose, Jerusalem, 15 February 1848, London/BL, RP, 27, Add. 42798, ff. 209-214.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Gobat, Annual Letter, 30 October 1848, in Gobat, *Leben und Wirken*, 295.

⁷⁰ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 49-50. Unfortunately, I have not found any document reflecting Valerga's opinion about the Protestant bishop.

Roman Catholic missionary efforts during the Valerga years

During the Valerga years, the Catholic missionary efforts increased considerably: a seminary was opened to train young men for the priesthood, about ten mission stations were established, and the Roman Catholic mission was reinforced by three missionary societies from France.⁷¹ When Valerga arrived in Palestine, his first concern was to form a secular clergy. He considered it to be necessary for the mission and therefore decided to found a seminary to educate priests. At the end of 1851 Valerga obtained from the Custody a house adjoining his patriarchal residence in Jerusalem, and at the end of 1852 the seminary was opened. In a letter dated January 1853, the patriarch wrote that the seminary consisted of 16 students, all “born in this Patriarchate”. Three boys came from Jerusalem, three from Bethlehem, two from Nazareth, one from Haifa, two from Jaffa, and five from Cyprus. Valerga was convinced that in the future these young men would be of great value “for the religion in Palestine”. Because they were Arabs, they would be able to found new missions more easily. They could deal directly with the local inhabitants, with whom they would have natural and frequent contact. According to Valerga, it was also a benefit to have “native” defenders of the rights of the Catholics in the Ottoman authorities.⁷²

An overview of seminary students ordained between 1852 and 1952 shows that, in line with Valerga’s intention, during his patriarchate the majority of the seminarians came from Palestine (especially from Jerusalem and Nazareth) and other parts of the Middle East. Only few students came from Europe.⁷³ The number of seminarians generally ranged from 20 to 25. For five years the patriarchal seminary was located in Jerusalem; in September 1857 it was transferred to Beit Jala, a village near Bethlehem. Its dedication followed two months later.⁷⁴

The curriculum at the seminary consisted of subjects such as Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, church history, and the Holy Scriptures. In the

⁷¹ For an impression of the mission of the Latin Patriarchate during the Valerga years and the first years of the patriarchate of his successor Vincent Bracco, see appendix III.

⁷² Valerga to the members of the Central Board (Conseils centraux) of the *Propagation de la Foi*, Jerusalem, 20 January 1853, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi. Recueil Périodique des lettres des évêques et des missionnaires des missions des deux mondes, et de tous les documents relatifs aux missions et à l’œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi* 25, Lyon, 1853, 267. Cf. Médebielle, *Le Séminaire*, 8, 12.

⁷³ From the start of the twentieth century, however, many seminarians (about half of them) came from Europe, especially from Italy. Médebielle, *Le Séminaire*, 67-70.

⁷⁴ Médebielle, *Le Séminaire*, 16-18.

Bulletin de l'Oeuvre des Pèlerinages en Terre-Sainte the seminary was called an excellent institution. As an example the author mentioned its public examinations, especially that of 1857. According to him, all persons present, both Catholics and “dissidents”, had been astonished at the remarkable level of proficiency of the students.⁷⁵ This was confirmed by the Protestant minister of Christ Church in Jerusalem, Henry Crawford. He had been present at one of these examinations, which were periodically held at the patriarch’s house and to which “English travellers and others” were often invited. Crawford thought that the purpose of inviting these others was to show the superiority of the Roman Catholic over the Protestant schools. He had been there together with some Jewish proselytes of the Protestant mission. The examination was conducted in Latin; it “consisted chiefly of mathematical problems, and the foundation of syllogisms” after Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. According to Crawford, one of the proselytes was completely misled by this examination: although he had not understood a word of it, he was so impressed that he believed the school to be “some smooth and easy road to fortune and to fame”. This made the proselyte criticize the Protestant mission and Bishop Gobat, because they did not provide a similar education for the Jews.⁷⁶

Before the seminary was transferred to Beit Jala, the patriarchate had already established a Roman Catholic mission in the village. It was the first patriarchal mission station Valerga founded. Shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem in 1848, some Latin inhabitants of the village, whose population was mainly Greek Orthodox, asked Valerga to found a mission there.⁷⁷ However, this did not happen until five years later, in 1853, because no missionary was available before then. On 25 October of that year the first pastor of the mission arrived in the person of Jean Morétain (1816-1883). During his first year in Beit Jala, there was fierce opposition against the Latin mission from the Greek Orthodox, who were even said to have threatened to kill Morétain.⁷⁸ Valerga

⁷⁵ The people present at the examination came from different European countries, such as Britain, Prussia, Russia and France. Claubry, *État*, 9-10.

⁷⁶ Crawford, “The Diocesan Schools at Jerusalem; to the editor of the Record”, November 18? (presumably around 1856), Oxford/BL, Dep. C.M.J. c. 110.

⁷⁷ Médebielle, *Le Patriarcat*, 39; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 144. However, according to Finn, all Christian inhabitants of Beit Jala were Greek Orthodox, as the Latin inhabitants had emigrated into Bethlehem. Nevertheless, these still possessed lands in Beit Jala. Finn adds that on this basis Valerga projected and carried out a plan “for recovering [...] a paramount position at Beit Jala for the Latin Church”. Finn, *Stirring* 1, 360-361.

⁷⁸ Perrin, *Centenaire*, 37; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 144.

decided to go there in order to help Morétain. However, the resistance against the patriarch and his missionary continued. If Finn is to be believed, bullets were even fired at Valerga's windows and at the windows of his chaplain and secretary to frighten them away.⁷⁹ The French consul in Jerusalem, Paul Emile Botta (1802-1870), a close friend of Valerga's, decided to go to Beit Jala and take the patriarch and his retinue to Jaffa as a sign of protest against the passivity of the Ottoman authorities.⁸⁰ As a result the case even made the European press. Finally, in the summer of 1854, a *firman* was obtained which permitted the establishment of the Latin mission and the building of a church in Beit Jala, and which put an end to the fighting.⁸¹

From the second half of the 1840s, the arrival of Roman Catholic missionary institutions in Palestine which went hand in hand with the restoration of the Latin patriarchate also gave renewed impetus to the Roman Catholic mission. At the start of the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic mission in general had almost collapsed. Among the reasons for this breakdown were the religious paralysis as a result of the French revolution, and Napoleon's endeavours to establish a French Church, which would be independent from Rome. Moreover, during Napoleon's occupation of Rome in 1808, the property and archives of the Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide in Rome, the "central organ" for the Roman Catholic missionary activity, were transferred to France. With the end of Napoleon's regime in 1815 the Catholic world began to change. In 1817 the Propaganda Fide resumed its activities and the revival of missionary activities became a major concern of the Vatican. Many new religious communities and missionary societies were established, focussing on foreign missions.⁸² During Valerga's patriarchate the Roman Catholic mission in Palestine was reinforced by three women's institutions from France, which all cooperated with the Latin patriarchate: *Saint-Joseph de l'Apparition, Religieuses* (or *Dames*) *de Nazareth* and *Notre-Dame de Sion*.

⁷⁹ Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 362.

⁸⁰ Botta and Valerga were friends ever since they had met in Mosul when Valerga was a missionary and Botta was stationed there as Consul for France. Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 30-32. Botta was also a famous archaeologist. Soon after his arrival in Mosul in 1842 he started excavations in Kuyunjik and Khorsabad, where the palace of Sargon II was discovered. This was the start of the large systematic excavations in Iraq (the Ottoman Mesopotamia). Botta also published a study on cuneiform writing.

⁸¹ Perrin, *Centenaire*, 37-38; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 146-151. The Latin Church of Beit Jala was consecrated on 18 April 1858. Finn, *Stirring Times* 1, 362; Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 154.

⁸² Kowalsky and Metzler, *Inventory of the Historical Archives*, 16; Stransky, "Origins", 138-139.

Saint-Joseph de l'Apparition, or the Sisters of Saint-Joseph, founded by Émilie de Vialar (1795-1856) in 1832, was the first Roman Catholic congregation to establish a mission in Palestine. The sisters were asked to work in Palestine, and arrived in Jerusalem on 14 August 1848.⁸³ In December of that year the sisters and the Custody of the Holy Land came to an agreement about the schools in Jerusalem and Jaffa, which was confirmed by patriarch Valerga and Mother Émilie Julien from the Sisters of St. Joseph. The agreement covered several points, including the following: "Terra Santa" would pay 2,000 French francs a year for four sisters, and was to provide them with a home, furniture for this house and school, and candleholders and the like for the sisters' chapel; "Terra Santa" also had to furnish drinking water, school desks, pens, paper, needles and thread, etc.; the friars, too, were required to give them supplies, such as oil, butter and soap. The sisters in turn were obliged to teach the girls the catechism, teach them to read Arabic, Italian and French, knitting and the like, in order to make the girls into "good Christians" and "faithful" mothers.⁸⁴ The Sisters of St. Joseph opened a girls' school in Jerusalem in 1848. They also worked in the hospital, which was opened in 1851. Their activities were not restricted to Jerusalem, and they started to work in other towns and villages as well, such as Jaffa (1849), Bethlehem (1853), Ramle and Ramallah (both in 1872/1873).⁸⁵

A few years after the Sisters of Saint-Joseph had come to Palestine, the *Dames de Nazareth*, or Sisters of Nazareth, founded by Élisabeth Rollat in 1820-1822, set foot in the Holy Land. Their institution had been stimulated by the Protestant missionary

⁸³ Both Valerga and the Franciscans (or its Custodian) are mentioned as having asked the Sisters of Saint-Joseph to work in Palestine. The opinion that Valerga had called in the sisters is, for instance, supported by Médebielle, *Le Patriarcat*, 42. Buffon, however, cites a letter from Serafino Milano, Custodian of the Holy Land from 1863-1873, in which he states that he had called upon the Sisters of Saint-Joseph concerning girls schools. Buffon, *Les Franciscains*, 61. This view is supported by Ladislaus, *Das Heilige Land*, 8 and Marie-Léon, *La Custodie*, 52. Most probably, the truth is somewhere in the middle: Valerga had called the sisters to Palestine and the Custodian had expressed his willingness to defray the expenses. This view is shared by Claubry, *État*, 12 and Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 101.

⁸⁴ "Accordo fatto tra le religiose di San Giuseppe dell' Apparizione per le Scuole di Gerusalemme e di Giaffa, con la Terra Santa", Jerusalem, 20 December 1848, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS, 24, 267. This agreement is part of a letter from Emilie Julien, Marseille, 1 April 1868. In the same year Julien wrote to Barnabo, prefect of the Propaganda Fide, that the mission in Palestine was very hard for the sisters, because of the discord between the Custody and the Patriarchate. The problem was, she wrote, that the Patriarch was the sisters'spiritual leader, but fell under the secular jurisdiction of the Custody. Emilie Julien to Barnabo, Marseille, 17 November 1868, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS, 24, 343-345.

⁸⁵ Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 193-200; C. Langlois, "Les Congrégations Françaises en Terre Sainte au XIX^e Siècle", Trimbur and Aaronsohn (eds.), *De Bonaparte à Balfour*, 228-229.

activities. On 27 January 1854 the chancellor of the Latin patriarchate, Théophile Dequevauviller (1811-1864), wrote a letter to the Prefect of the Propaganda, in which he requested attention for the project of establishing some nuns in Nazareth. Dequevauviller considered this not only useful and necessary, but also urgent, as the Protestants tried to found a permanent mission in Nazareth. According to the chancellor, the Protestants took advantage of the “ignorance and the poverty of the inhabitants”. The establishment was to have a twofold aim: the Christian education of the “little compatriots of the Holy Virgin”, who had been very neglected, and the care for the sick at their homes. The sisters were also expected to have a beneficial effect on the hearts of the Muslims and the dissidents. In the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* Valerga had expressed the wish for a house of nuns in Nazareth.⁸⁶ According to Dequevauviller, the patriarch’s wish was granted when the *Dames de Nazareth* had promised to come to Palestine. The chancellor asked the Propaganda for money to found an establishment for the nuns.⁸⁷ In January 1855, Mother Charbelet and three other nuns settled in Nazareth. In October they opened a school and a year later they founded a small orphanage. They also looked after the sick and poor. The *Dames de Nazareth* soon spread their wings and started to work in other towns, such as Haifa (1858) and Shefa Amer (1864).⁸⁸ As we will see, their presence in Nazareth and Shefa Amer would cause fierce rivalry between Protestants and Roman Catholics.⁸⁹

The third women’s society, *Notre-Dame de Sion*, or Our Lady of Sion, founded by Théodore Ratisbonne (1802-1884) in 1843, started its activities in Palestine in 1856. The brother of its founder, Alphonse Ratisbonne (1814-1884), went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1855. He decided to stay in Jerusalem and to start a settlement of Our Lady of Sion in Palestine, a plan for which he received the support of Valerga. In 1856 Alphonse arranged a house to accommodate the sisters. Here they started their educational work, awaiting the new premises to be built at the Ecce Homo Arch, then

⁸⁶ Dequevauviller must refer to a letter from Valerga dd. 20 January 1853, published in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 25, 1853, 254. In this letter Valerga expressed his wish for a house for nuns dedicated to the Christian education of small Latin, Greek Catholic, Maronite and Greek Orthodox girls. Two sisters might also care for the sick at home.

⁸⁷ From the moment the sisters worked in Nazareth, they would be able to support themselves. Dequevauviller to Frasoni, Rome, 27 January 1854, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS, 21, 635-636.

⁸⁸ Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 201-202; Langlois, “Les Congrégations”, 230.

⁸⁹ See Chapter 8.

situated in the middle of ruins. The move took place on 21 January 1862. The sisters also worked in an orphanage in Ain Karim founded by Alphonse in the 1860s.⁹⁰

Valerga was patriarch for almost twenty-five years. On 2 December 1872, his suffragan bishop, Vincent Bracco, sent a telegram to the Propaganda Fide saying that the patriarch had died “sacredly” that day.⁹¹ Valerga was succeeded by Bracco as Latin patriarch of Jerusalem.⁹² He carried on the work of his predecessor. During Bracco’s patriarchate new missions were established and the number of Roman Catholic congregations settling in Palestine grew. Unlike the congregations that arrived in Palestine during the Valerga years, which were all women’s societies, these new institutions were both men’s and women’s groups.⁹³

Concluding remarks

Since the arrival of Gobat in 1846, the Roman Catholic mission had increased substantially, partly in reaction to the Protestant presence and mission. The establishment of the Protestant bishopric and the arrival of its first bishop was one of the reasons why the subject of a Latin patriarchate was put on the agenda of the Propaganda

⁹⁰ Duvignau, *Joseph Valerga*, 202-206; Langlois, “Les Congrégations”, 231-233.

⁹¹ Bracco to Barnabo, Jerusalem, 3 December 1872, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS, 24, 851. A funeral oration for Valerga was read in the chapel of the “Civita Vecchia” on 19 February 1873, Rome/ASCPF, SCTS, 24, 918-930. For Bracco, see: Giacomo da Castelmadama, *Éloge Funèbre prononcé par le Révérendissime Père Jacques de Castelmadama, Custode de Terre Sainte, Jour des Funérailles de Monseigneur Bracco, Patriarche de Jérusalem, traduit par un Père Franciscain de Terre Sainte*, Jerusalem, 1889; Perrin, *Centenaire*, 14-19; Médebielle, *Le Séminaire*, 19-21; P. Duvignau, *Une Vie pour Dieu et les Âmes. S.B. Mgr. Vincent Bracco Patriarche Latin de Jérusalem, 1835-1889*, Jerusalem, 1981 (hereafter *Vincent Bracco*).

⁹² Bracco was born in Torrazza on 14 September 1835 (Liguria). In October 1854, he entered the seminary in *Genoa* and on 18 June 1859 he was consecrated priest. On 26 May 1860, Bracco arrived in Jerusalem. Valerga nominated him Professor of Philosophy at the seminary in Beit Jala. Two years later, he was appointed rector of the seminary. In May 1866 Bracco was consecrated as Valerga’s suffragan bishop. Besides this he continued his work at the seminary. He died on 19 June 1889.

⁹³ During Bracco’s patriarchate (1873-1889), thirteen Roman Catholic missionary societies settled in Palestine. As reasons for this increase of (especially French) missionary institutions Langlois gives the “late” florescence of male missionary societies in France, which coincided with the awakening of pilgrimages to the Holy Land and renewed interest in the Holy Places. Furthermore, the disappearance of the Papal State in 1870 was compensated for, by, among other things, an interest on the part of Roman Catholics in the roots of Catholicism. Langlois, “Les Congrégations”, 223, 234-235. Between 1873 and 1879 (the last years of Gobat’s episcopate) five of these new Roman Catholic congregations also arrived in Palestine: in 1873 the Carmelites (female), in 1874 *Notre Dame de Sion* (male), in 1876 the *Frères des Écoles chrétiennes* (male), in 1878 the *Pères blancs mission. d’Afrique* (male), in 1879 *Betharram* (male) and in the same year the Brothers of Saint John of God (male). Langlois, “Les Congrégations”, 223.

Fide. The postponement of the project was also influenced by the fear that it might stimulate Britain and Prussia to press the Sultan for official recognition of the Protestant bishop. Gobat's appointment was an impetus to the actual restoration of the Latin patriarchate. The settlement of Roman Catholic institutions and congregations in Palestine was sometimes stimulated by the Protestant missionary efforts, as was the case with the Franciscan Printing Press and the Sisters of Nazareth. The Protestants in turn considered the restoration of the Latin patriarchate in 1847 a turning point in the relationship between both denominations. According to Gobat, the anti-Protestantism had started again after Valerga's arrival in Jerusalem. In the following chapters the rivalry between the Protestants and Catholics will be further discussed.

