

**Images, Views and Landscapes of the Holy Land.
Catholic and Protestant Travels to Ottoman Palestine
during the 19th Century**

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Abstract

Rich in historical details and artistic illustrations of the Near East and the Holy Land, the selected accounts of journeys and pilgrimages written by European and American Christians (Catholic and Protestant) provide numerous and broad sets of views, landscapes, sketches and scenarios. This article analyses them in order to define and point out the structure and the ratio of organizing and cataloguing these “epic” stories, and their relationship and connection with the socio-political dimension of the time. In particular, this article analyses the concept and the image produced by Christian missionaries and travelers of various affiliations, thus identifying similarities and differences between their visions of the Holy Land and pointing out to what extent they contributed to the creation of an univocal “Christian” image of the Holy Land during the 19th century and/or there were perceptible and significant divergences.

- Introduction

- Holy Landscapes and the “Scramble for Palestine” during the 19th Century

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Introduction

During the victorious advance of Ottoman troops against the Mamluks that led to Istanbul’s conquest of *Bilad al-Sham* in 1516 and Egypt in 1517, Western attitudes and approaches to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant slowly began to show an increasing interest in venturing into, discovering and mapping the region. Although limited in number throughout the first three centuries of Ottoman history, during the 16th century, and later becoming more common in the 17th and 18th centuries, the idea of the Grand Tour progressively drove an increasing amount of people bound for to the southern and eastern parts of the Mediterranean basin to learn about the ‘other’ and themselves, as well as to discover, recover and revive the sites of Biblical history. As a result, during these experiences of travel and encounter the dimension of observation and understanding strongly welded with that of

knowledge of the land being travelled through.¹ Not only pilgrims, but also travelers and, then, from the 19th century on, modern tourist-pilgrims made Ottoman Palestine one of the preferred destinations for a journey increasingly understood as a move from the centre to the periphery,² romantically celebrating this region and the wandering among its places with a combination of fascination with the exotic and religious devotion. A growing number of descriptions of the land and its peoples started to circulate along with commentaries, accounts and memoirs of travels and pilgrimages, turning into integral components of what has been described as a political project of colonially dominating the region.³ This material assemblage favored the interweaving of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant with Western Europe,⁴ and vice versa, and progressively led to incorporating these regions into the modern world system. Therefore, the 19th century books, paintings and photographs of travels and pilgrimages were not just illustrations of this dynamic, but contributed to stylizing and constructing an image of the “Orient” as a product of a politicized discourse based on a self-evident binary opposition between an “us” and a “them,” producing and reproducing a “structure of feeling” that supported, elaborated and consolidated the practice of empire.⁵ But the “Orient” of Western colonial appetite, the land invaded by Napoleon between 1798-1801, was also the Holy Land,⁶ the “divinely prepared tablet whereupon God’s messages to men have been graven in ever-living characters by the Great Publisher of Glad Tidings,” as American missionary William Thompson expressed.⁷ Ottoman Palestine and the Levant were the lands that brought the Bible to life.⁸

The paper aims at reconsidering the relationship and connection between Western travelers and pilgrims, both Protestant and Catholic, and the land of Palestine throughout the 19th century. It seeks to contextualize their encounters with the Holy Land in the wider historical dynamics that characterized this

¹ Uzi Baram, “Images of the Holy Land: The David Roberts Paintings as Artifacts of 1830s Palestine,” *Historical Archaeology*, 41/1 (2007): 107.

² Doron Bar, Kobi Cohen-Hattab, “A New Kind of Pilgrimage: The Modern Tourist Pilgrim of Nineteenth-Century and Early Twentieth-Century Palestine,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 39/2 (2003): 134.

³ According to Kalman, France alone saw sixty-six pilgrimage accounts produced in the 19th century after the publication of Chateaubriand’s work: Fernande Bassan, *Chateaubriand et la Terre Sainte* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1959), 226. See also Julie Kalman, “Going Home to the Holy Land: The Jews of Jerusalem in Nineteenth-Century French Catholic Pilgrimage,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 84/2 (2012): 343.

⁴ Baram, “Images of the Holy Land,” 107.

⁵ Edward W. Said, *Culture and imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 14.

⁶ Daniel Martin Varisco, “Orientalism and Bibliolatry: Framing the Holy Land in 19th Century Protestant Bible Customs Texts,” in *Orientalism Revisited. Art, Land and Voyage*, ed. Ian Netton (London: Routledge, 2012), 186.

⁷ William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book, Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery, of the Holy land* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880), v.

⁸ Varisco, “Orientalism and Bibliolatry,” 186.

period. The purpose is to analyze their connection with this land (namely, Ottoman Palestine and the Christian Holy Land) and the content of and rationale behind the images produced during their experiences of traveling and pilgrimage. Given the great number of travelogues printed during the 19th century and the variety of people that headed to this land, the paper does not focus on specific biographies and memoirs but moves freely amongst different sources, both primary and secondary, with the intention of highlighting the core aspects of this dynamic of encounter, pointing out the reasons for and the significance of producing and reproducing a certain image of this land, the Christian Holy Land, out of its real character of Ottoman province.

Holy Landscapes and the “Scramble for Palestine” during the 19th Century

From the beginning of the 19th century, the interest in traveling throughout and mapping Ottoman Palestine and the Levant mixed with the desire to experience these lands to better interpret and consequently immerse oneself in the Bible, leading to what Prior calls “a scramble for Palestine.”⁹ It was during this period that the image and concept of “the Holy Land *propement dite*,” and not the Ottoman province, definitively consolidated, informed the tone and attitude of the numerous surveys, memoirs and accounts produced by “zealous intruders” who sought to rediscover this land to permanently reunite the East and the West.¹⁰ A “gentle crusade”¹¹ performed by an “artillery of heaven”¹² favoured the emergence of the concept of the Holy Land as a region set apart, simultaneously a *terra incognita* and the well-known Biblical land, “both fetid Oriental wasteland and resplendent biblical garden” as Vogel reveals.¹³ This ideal dominated the intellectual Western imagination of the 19th century, as evidenced by the growing usage of the term Holy Land, which is remarkable in view of the fact that it was not a separate political entity at that time.¹⁴ Nonetheless the land of Palestine was not only a territory of exploration and pilgrimage but also a mission land for both Catholics and Protestants.¹⁵

⁹ Michael Prior, “Holy Places, Unholy Domination: The Scramble for Jerusalem,” *Islamic Studies*, 40/3-4 (2001): 509.

¹⁰ Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: the Western Rediscovery of Palestine Describes the Interactions between Western Explorers, Scholars, Artists, Consuls, Tourists, Antiquarians, Archaeologists, and Missionaries and Palestine*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 15.

¹¹ Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 14.

¹² Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (New York: Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2008), 76.

¹³ Lester I. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 216.

¹⁴ Yehosua Ben-Arieh, “Nineteenth Century Historical Geography of the Holy Land,” *Journal of Historical Geography*, 15/1 (1989): 70.

¹⁵ Paolo Maggiolini, “Studies and Memorabilia from Palestine and Transjordan. The revival of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the re-discovery of the Holy Land during the 19th century,” in *Orientalism Revisited: Art, Land and Voyage*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (London:

Throughout the 19th century, improved access to Ottoman Palestine following the political developments undergone in the region after the military operation of Muhammad ‘Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha within the *Bilad al-Sham* (1831-1841), the promulgation of the *Tanzimat* reforms¹⁶ and the expansion of steamboat voyages across the Mediterranean, facilitated travel for Westerners wishing to wander among the ancient sites of Palestine, their “Holy Land.”¹⁷ Inspired either by the desire to revive old religious institutions or the will to set up new ones, increasing numbers of foreign actors flocked to Jerusalem and Ottoman Palestine developing and giving new significance to the image of this land, the Holy Land as it became known colloquially, styling an iconic representation that came to be deeply bound to these new missionary and religious activities. Ottoman Palestine was involved in a wider, multifaceted dynamic of overlapping between different and often contrasting political, diplomatic and religious interests, known as the *Question d’Orient*, becoming one of the sites of colonial encounter¹⁸ with Jerusalem and the holy places as one of the main theatres of conflict.¹⁹ Ottoman Palestine and Jerusalem found their centrality not because of their geopolitical and economic importance but due to their symbolical and spiritual significance, vividly associated in the mind of Europe with the theme of Christian chivalry and the memory of the Crusades.²⁰

Routledge, 2012), 165.

¹⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3/7 (1972): 245; Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan 1850-1921* (New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9-12; Sükrü M. Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 80.

¹⁷ The data preserved by the Custody of the Holy Land confirm the increase in the number of pilgrims heading to the Holy Land during the 19th century: 1862 (7,118), 1863 (6,956), 1864 (8,513), 1865 (7,770), 1866 (8,289), 1867 (9,203), 1868 (11,340), 1869 (11,414), 1870 (14,090), 1871 (10,933), 1872 (10,753), 1873 (10,225), 1874 (22,795), 1875 (13,800), 1876 (10,112), 1877 (7,213), 1878 (7,448), 1879 (7,706), 1880 (10,500), 1881 (11,169), 1882 (14,108), 1883 (9,502), 1884 (11,873), 1885 (8,851), 1886 (9,217), 1887 (12,692), 1888 (10,904). Archivio Storico Congregazione per l’evangelizzazione dei Popoli o ‘de Propaganda fide’, Scritture Riferite nei congressi, Terra Santa e Cipro, Prospetto Generale della Custodia di Terra Santa dall’anno 1862 al 1889, v. 28, 358-387. See also Lucia Rostagno, “Pellegrini italiani a Gerusalemme in età ottomana,” *Oriente Moderno*, 78/1 (1998): 88. Between 1853 and 1873, 618 French pilgrims visited the Holy Land. See Kalman, “Going Home to the Holy Land,” 352. In 1882, Cook’s Tours took 5,000 people to Ottoman Palestine, mostly British. Regarding the second most numerous pilgrims, the Russians, in the same period over 2,000 pilgrims flocked to this territory. Ruth S. Hummel and Thomas Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred: English Protestant and Russian Orthodox Pilgrims of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 6. In 1889, the first organized American Catholic pilgrimage led 99 faithful to the Holy Land. David Klatzker, “American Catholic Travelers to the Holy Land 1861-1929,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, 74/1 (1988): 63.

¹⁸ Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 7.

¹⁹ Haim Goren, “Sacred, but not Surveyed: Nineteenth-Century Surveys of Palestine,” *Imago Mundi The International Journal for the History of Cartography*, 54/1 (2002): 87-88.

²⁰ Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders*, 12.

Therefore, 19th century Ottoman Palestine arises as the land of multiple and overlapping landscapes which stood out as a “complex lived space (...) generated within historical and spatial dimensions, both real and imagined, immediate and mediated,” according to the notion of “third place” employed by Kahn.²¹ The Ottoman Palestine Holy Land condensates through its multiple landscapes “complex social spaces constructed out of physical places, socially shaped perceptions of the place, and human interactions in relation to this place, all at the same time,” as Long points out.²² According to the notion of “third scope” drawn by Soja,²³ moving beyond simple and sole dualisms between an “us” and a “them,” understanding Ottoman Palestine through its multiple landscapes reveals the intertwined sense of a place where indigenous and colonial aspects become enmeshed over the Ottoman centuries,²⁴ and where history, space and the social order are “dynamic and constantly interactive dimensions of human life.”²⁵

Accordingly, the analyses of travelers’ and pilgrims’ diaries and other publications on the Holy Land make it possible to understand the intersection and interweaving between Ottoman Palestine’s multiple landscapes and the 19th century dynamics of political and social change regarding Ottoman history on one hand, and each country and religious milieu of origin of the travelers, missionaries and pilgrims who wandered among this region, on the other.

To a large extent, the rationale for and meaning of the relationship between freedom to physically wander among the Holy places and their direct political control remained an open question and it gained momentum during the 19th century when England, France, Russia and Germany engaged in political and economic rivalry within Ottoman Palestine and most of Ottoman possessions. By the end of the third decade of the 19th century, the progressive establishments of consuls within Jerusalem²⁶ symbolized this renewed Western political commitment. Moreover, this “scramble for Palestine” also took the form of Western diplomatic support for developing or reviving Christian institutions in Ottoman Palestine and within the Middle East, thereby interweaving Christian missionary efforts with imperialist designs. A new intense and multifaceted concern for the land of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem that undoubtedly was not nourished by religious interest alone.

²¹ Miriam Kahn, “Tahiti Intertwined: Ancestral Land, Tourist Postcard, and Nuclear Test Site,” *American Anthropologist*, 102/1 (2000): 8.

²² Burke O. Long, *Imagining the Holy Land: Maps, Models, and Fantasy Travels* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 5.

²³ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 311-312.

²⁴ Baram, “Images of the Holy Land,” 112.

²⁵ See Soja, *Thirdspace*, 311-312. See also Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 5.

²⁶ The first European power to open a consulate in Jerusalem was Great Britain in 1838. The second was the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1843.

Consequently, the 19th century Holy Land arose as a space contested, materially by Western expanding economic and political influence, and mentally and spiritually by missionaries and pilgrims in search of the Christian wellspring and of a space to “revive” their faith.²⁷

Regarding the religious dimension, along with the development of Uniatism, an ecclesiological movement that sought to re-unite the Christian Churches under the primacy of the Holy See, the revival of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1847) was a significant aspect of this new phase in the encounter between East and West, which in fact went beyond the religious meaning of the enterprise.²⁸ At the same time, the development of Protestant activities in the Near East, sponsored by the evangelical movements that grew in importance within Europe and the United States in the wake of a compelling criticism of the disruptive effects of the Industrial Revolution, and the growing British and German interest in Ottoman Palestine and the Levant favored the creation of the Anglican Bishopric of Jerusalem in 1841.²⁹ Similarly, throughout the 19th century the Russian government promoted the foundation of numerous missionary endeavors and establishments under its direct control, through which Moscow tried to win over local Christian support.³⁰ The first official Russian mission dates back to the years 1841-1842, when the Tsar entrusted to Archimandrite Porfirij (Konstantin Aleksandrovich Uspeskij) the task of gathering information about the condition of the Greek Orthodox community of Palestine, especially regarding the relationship between the Arab and Greek Christian components. Later on, thanks to the result of Porfirij’s mission, the first Russian establishment was permanently founded, incessantly working within Ottoman Palestine until 1917.³¹

The importance and pervasiveness of such activities were well represented by the Ottoman reaction. During the reign of Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909), the Ottoman Empire launched a major initiative aimed at providing a new basis for solidarity among its Islamic subjects, promoting systematic programs of education and its own “missionary” activities to counteract the Western missionary efforts that were considered to be undermining Ottoman legitimacy within the empire and abroad, feeding the Western press with anti-Turkish sentiment.³² At the same time, the redefinition of the administrative status of Jerusalem – recognized as chief town of the *mutasarrifiyya* of Jerusalem (1872) –

²⁷ Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 104.

²⁸ Étienne Fouilloux, “De L’unionisme à l’Oecuménisme,” in *Les enjeux de l’unionisme: dans le sillage de Balamand: catholiques et orthodoxes*, ed. Comité mixte catholique-orthodoxe en France (Paris, Bayard: 2004), 147.

²⁹ Thomas C. Hummel, “The Christian Protestant Presence in the Middle East,” *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies*, 7/2 (2005): 97.

³⁰ See the essay of Simona Merlo published in this issue.

³¹ Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and in Palestine 1843-1917, Church and Politics in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1969), 38.

³² Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1998), 112.

and its link with Istanbul through a telegraph line (1865) confirmed Ottoman interest in protecting this territory from foreign appetites.³³

The ideals and objectives that motivated the development of missionary establishments deeply affected the relationship between travellers, missionaries, pilgrims and the land. Ottoman Palestine, the Christian Holy Land, arose as specific *religio loci* in which to promote the “revival” either of Christianity or of Christian religious institutions, both locally and universally; a secure “refuge” for Christianity, a favorite space to develop Christian “reform” through experiencing an immediate relationship with the roots of Christianity. Accordingly, during the 19th century Western missionaries and travellers delineated a new “moral geography”³⁴ of the Holy Land, a territory celebrated as inherently holy due its Biblical past. However, behind what can be considered one of the many images of the Holy Land developed through history, this specific form of encounter between the “West” and the “East” stood out also because Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries not only contributed to a new “phase” in the century-old sacralisation and semantisation process of the Holy Land, but also because they succeeded in creating and developing new religious communities by converting local Christians, traditionally mainly affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This objective was achieved thanks to their ability to organize a complex network of charitable and education establishments within the land of Ottoman Palestine and Transjordan that enabled them to territorially embed their presence, giving new significance to the image of the Holy Land. Therefore this dynamic contributed to the creation and promotion of “new” Holy Land landscapes, which, in turn, were shaped by this missionary “competition,” both spiritual and physical, to “colonize” and “occupy” the land.

Protestant Pilgrims and Missionaries: Images and Landscapes of the Holy Land

During the 19th century, increasing numbers of American and English citizens of different denominational backgrounds, usually part of the broad Church and the evangelical movement, but also members of some of the dissenting Protestant sects, came into contact with Ottoman Palestine.³⁵ These very diverse people (pilgrims, tourists, missionaries, preachers, settlers, explorers, archaeologists, Bible scholars and diplomats) were generally clergymen or pious

³³ Ibid., 112-113.

³⁴ Amy Derogatis, “Moral Geography: Maps, Missionaries and the American Frontier,” *Journal of Religious History*, 32/1 (2008): 124. See also David N. Livingstone, “Text, Talk and Testimony: Geographical Reflections on Scientific Habits,” *British Journal for the History of Science*, 38/1 (2005): 97.

³⁵ Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 1.

laypeople who shared a sort of infatuation with the Holy Land, therefore participating in the much broader Western cultural fascination for Palestine and the Levant that demonstrates the ubiquity of the 19th century “mania” for the Holy Land.³⁶ Combining the allure of exotic adventure with an ennobling zeal to view and walk within the very land where God had enacted His sacred history,³⁷ they wandered through the Holy Land expressing a common and specific form of devotion, historically and ontologically detached from traditional Orthodox and Catholic involvement with holy sites.³⁸ In fact, their presences and travels were distinctive for the great emphasis given to the relationship between the Old and New Testament sites and texts.³⁹ As stated by Rev. Cuthbertson⁴⁰ in his record of travels published for the Wesleyan Conference in 1885,⁴¹ Ottoman Palestine was “the land chosen by God as Sanctuary” into which most of Protestant pilgrims poured their expectations of both expanding their understanding of scripture and deepening their faith.⁴² Similarly, the encounter with and entry into Jerusalem aroused feelings that were “not easily described. (...) The scenes and events of 4,000 years rushed upon our minds; events in which Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, have felt the deepest interest. This was the place, selected by the Almighty for his dwelling, and here his glory was rendered visible,” as Rev. Fisk recalled.⁴³

Therefore, the land of Palestine was perceived as the vehicle and the medium for providing “dramatic” spiritual and educational encounters with the essential truth of Christianity,⁴⁴ whereas going on pilgrimage, in the words of Rev. Olin in 1844,⁴⁵ was “little less than to be naturalized in the Holy Land. Only then does the Bible become real.”⁴⁶

This intense desire to return to the Orient of the Biblical past was motivated and facilitated by specific political and religious circumstances and dynamics, which naturally influenced and affected perceptions of the Holy Land.

³⁶ Stephanie Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land: American Protestant Pilgrimage to Palestine, 1865–1941* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011), 32.

³⁷ Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 7.

³⁸ Glenn Bowman, “Contemporary Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land,” in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, ed. Anthony O’Mahony (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 159.

³⁹ Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 17.

⁴⁰ James Cuthbertson was English-born. In 1856 he became Wesleyan minister.

⁴¹ James Cuthbertson, *Sacred and Historic Lands: Being a Record of Travels in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece, Constantinople* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1885), 42.

⁴² Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 7.

⁴³ Alvan Bond, *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk, A.M. late missionary to Palestine* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 280.

⁴⁴ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 36.

⁴⁵ In 1844, Rev. Stephen Olin (1797-1851) published “Travels in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land” (New-York, Harper & Brothers). He was an American clergyman and educator who traveled for the sake of his health.

⁴⁶ John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 13.

From a socio-political perspective, as a part of the growing political and commercial empire connecting London to India, Britain's interest in Egypt and Palestine intensified its influence within Ottoman domains, providing effective protection to Protestant travelers, pilgrims and missionaries, both British and American. As noted by Mr. John Carne in 1823,⁴⁷ “the climate” in Ottoman Palestine was “very favorable, and protection would be granted by the [British] Government, on account of the respect in which the British character is held in the Turkish Dominions.”⁴⁸ Therefore, although many of them were mainly drawn to Ottoman Palestine to see the land of the Bible and for inspiration and edification through its territory, British pilgrims and missionaries were naturally influenced by the 19th century British imperial ideal and were members of a society with great self-confidence and self-esteem concerning their physical and spiritual superiority.⁴⁹ Clergy and missionaries went to Ottoman Palestine and the Levant to “convert” their populations and to introduce Western ideas, while pilgrims and travelers headed for this region not only to visit it but also to support this transformative task,⁵⁰ wandering among Holy Places, missions and their British schools, and Biblical-site excavations.⁵¹

Consequently, the Holy Land of Protestant missionaries' and travelers' memoirs and accounts featured landscapes always filtered through their own culture and religion, where “imperialism” and “missions” naturally intertwined.⁵² However, unlike their British companions, American missionaries and pilgrims headed for Ottoman Palestine mostly free from oppressive colonialist designs on this territory, coming from a country without direct territorial ambitions in the area. Consequently, their “battle” and “scramble” for Palestine was mainly figurative and the Holy Land represented a crucial site for constructing American imagination, not its power and empire.⁵³ From the 17th century onwards, the image of the Holy Land had served to consolidate, unify and justify Protestant Americans' territorial claims and only later on did it interweave with the rhetoric of “manifest destiny” and “historic civilizing mission.” Accordingly, Americans were the “chosen people” entitled to their land because it was like the Biblical “Promised Land,” as Shamir points out.⁵⁴ Consequently, this conviction solidly reinforced the

⁴⁷ Mr. John Crane (1789-1844) was a Church minister and formed a Church Missionary Society.

⁴⁸ Thomas Durley, *Lethaby of Moab, A Record of Missionary Adventure, Peril, and Toil*, (London & Edinburgh: Marshall Brothers Ltd., 1910), 99.

⁴⁹ Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵¹ Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders*, 181.

⁵² Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 9.

⁵³ Hilton Obenzinger, “Holy Land Narrative and American Covenant: Levi Parsons, Pliny Fisk and the Palestine Mission,” *Religion & Literature*, 35/2-3 (2003): 246.

⁵⁴ Milette Shamir, “‘Our Jerusalem’: Americans in the Holy Land and Protestant Narratives of

association and overlay between Biblical places and characters, and the “geography and destiny of the New World,” as related by Obenzinger.⁵⁵ However, the trauma of the Civil War (1861-1865) developed this perception and feeling, driving an increasing number of American Protestants to travel to the Holy Land in search of an “external terra firma” on which war wounds could be inspected and healed.⁵⁶ The past and traditional image of the Holy Land evolved, losing its symbolic allure to acquire literalization attributes and a more physical tension that served to reinvigorate the national narrative of “promise” and “election.”⁵⁷

From this standpoint, the contemporary development of Holy Land tourism and scientific explorations were a sort of “activism,” confirming both an infatuation with the Holy Land and growing nationalistic competition.⁵⁸

From a religious perspective, the Holy Land was sought not only because the most sacred texts had been created there, but also as a locus and medium for the continual re-creation and development of new meaning from a theologically satisfying present.⁵⁹ Approaching the Holy Land meant entering a reality understood as unchanged and untouched by time, preserved by God for the faithful. Therefore, a widely shared premillennial sentiment in search of renewing the Church created the image of the Holy Land as the natural actor and signifier for this task.⁶⁰ In particular, the Holy Land was approached to refute those in the West who were challenging the Bible’s divine authority.⁶¹ Interest in its physical geography, as in the case offered by Smith’s works,⁶² clearly voiced the anxiety felt by a certain theological milieu to reconcile the Book with the geology of the land of Palestine.⁶³ Following Robinson’s⁶⁴ teaching regarding Biblical archaeology, the encounter with the Holy Land would provide tangible and empirical evidence of the infallible character of the Bible.⁶⁵ An interesting manifestation of the conviction about the strong

National Entitlement,” *American Quarterly*, 55/1 (2003): 35.

⁵⁵ Obenzinger, “Holy Land Narrative and American Covenant,” 243.

⁵⁶ Shamir, “Our Jerusalem,” 34.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁸ Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 132.

⁵⁹ Varisco, “Orientalism and Bibliolatry,” 191.

⁶⁰ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 4.

⁶¹ Varisco, “Orientalism and Bibliolatry,” 190.

⁶² Sir George Adam Smith (1856-1942) was a Scottish theologian and ministry of the Free Church of Scotland. In 1894, he published “The Historical Geography of the Holy Land,” considered one of the classic handbooks on the subject.

⁶³ Robi Butlin, “George Adam Smith and the Historical Geography of the Holy Land: Contents, Contexts and Connections,” *Journal of Historical Geography*, 14/4 (1988): 394.

⁶⁴ Edward Robinson (1794-1863) was an American Biblical scholar. He is considered the founder of modern Biblical archaeology and the discoverer of several famous Holy Land artifacts, such as the eponymous Robinson’s Arch.

⁶⁵ Brian Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing 1790–1876* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007), 23.

relationship between the “Land” and the “Book” and the role Palestine’s topography played in Christian morals and salvation, was the “Park of Palestine,” called also the Chautauqua Assembly, created by the Methodist Hey Vincent on the shore of Chautauqua Lake in New York State in the 1870s. This particular fictional and miniaturized rendering of the Holy Land physically testified to confidence in “geoscripture,” creating a space where the faithful could see the Bible and its truth through a replica of Palestine’s geography shaped by those who had seen and written about it.⁶⁶

However, especially from the 1880s on, the role of confirming theological beliefs as a static “artistic” rendering developed further, acquiring the connotations of a geographical myth bearing political and millennial expectations.⁶⁷ On the one hand, the Holy Land’s physical size was perceived as being “tiny, minuscule” compared to North America; yet it was a “landscape of psyche (...) expansive and broad,” as stated by Davis.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Protestant efforts in the Holy Land were interpreted as “not to revolutionize this country, but to renovate and make it glorious,” along with the new Zion, quoting Elder Orson Hyde’s words.⁶⁹ At the same time, aside from its role as a stage for theological battles at home and a medium to affirm traditional Protestant piety,⁷⁰ the Holy Land stood out as a “missionary field,” the “interesting land” of Fisk.⁷¹ The 19th century evangelical movement, promoting unity and cooperation among the various Protestant denominations in spite of their doctrinal disputes, decided to go beyond the boundaries within which it had hitherto operated and, inspired by a strong humanitarian sentiment, invited their affiliates to dedicate themselves to independent missionary activities to promote universal education in the light of the Holy Bible.⁷² This Protestant missionary ideal developed from the theological reflection of America’s J. Edwards and the British group of “the Wesleyans.”⁷³ They proposed to reconsider and reform the Calvinist thesis of predestination, thus restoring value to personal responsibility and consequently re-evaluating the importance

⁶⁶ Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 38-39.

⁶⁷ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 36.

⁶⁸ Davis John, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 5.

⁶⁹ Elder Orson Hyde (1805-1878) was a leader of the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and American missionary in the United States, Europe and the Ottoman Empire between 1847-1875. Orson Hyde, *A voice from Jerusalem: or, A sketch of the travels and ministry of Elder Orson Hyde* (Boston: Albert Morgan, 1842), 19. See also Obenzinger, “Holy Land Narrative and American Covenant,” 243.

⁷⁰ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 31.

⁷¹ In “The Holy Land, an Interesting Field of Missionary Enterprise.” This was the sermon that was preached at the Old South Church in Boston, on 31 October 1819, Sabbath evening, just before the departure of the Palestine Mission. Pliny Fisk (1792-1825) may be considered a pioneer of the Near East mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. See also Obenzinger, “Holy Land Narrative and American Covenant,” 247.

⁷² Paul A. Varg, “Motives in Protestant Missions 1890-1917,” *Church History*, 23/1 (1954): 81.

⁷³ Hummel, “The Christian Protestant Presence,” 195.

of conversion and missionary work.⁷⁴ Following this development, numerous missionary activities were promoted within the Ottoman empire, mainly sponsored by the Basel Mission Society, the London Jews Society, the Church Mission Society and, finally, by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.⁷⁵ This form of evangelical modernity expressed the desire of offering to the non-evangelized world the fruits of secular modernity, especially medicine and education, however tempered by spiritual reform and salvation.⁷⁶ Quoting the sermon delivered by Eli Smith⁷⁷ at the Park Street Church in 1832, the missionary purpose of evangelical modernity was not “to study ancient Greece and Palestine” but “to reform and save the degenerated and perishing people who now dwell there.”⁷⁸ Therefore, Ottoman Palestine, the Holy Land of the Bible, arose as the main “mission field,” merged with the firm conviction that Protestantism was the only salvation. A vast mission field that, according to Schaff,⁷⁹ had to be “conquered with spiritual weapons for Christ and Christian civilization.”⁸⁰ Accordingly, this conviction produced a sort of “transformation” and “transfiguration” from the theological to the political dimension and vice versa, where the “purity” of Protestant Christianity became the means to revive this land under cultural and religious perspectives, interweaving with an imperialist allure.⁸¹ On the one hand, focusing on the case of North American Protestants, representations of the land of Palestine and the East aided the formation of a Protestant-based nationalism.⁸² On the other, in the minds of many Protestant missionaries, Jerusalem should have been an outpost of the Reformation within the Middle East, like England had been during the 18th century. Lethaby⁸³ styled this association imagining “how Methodism and the Church of England may in Palestine be what they might have been in England last century; and how Moab, Edom and Arabia may be more distinctively our own.”⁸⁴ Accordingly,

⁷⁴ Ibid., 195.

⁷⁵ Odeh Issa A, *Les Minorités Chrétiennes de Palestine à Travers les Siècles: Etude Historico Juridique et Développement Moderne International* (Jérusalem: Franciscain Printing Press, 1977), 213.

⁷⁶ Ussama Makdisi, “Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity,” *The American Historical Review*, 102/3 (1997): 683.

⁷⁷ Eli Smith (1801-1857) was an American missionary and Orientalist.

⁷⁸ In “Trials of Missionaries: an address delivered in the Park-Street Church, Boston, on the evening of October 24, 1832, to the Rev. Elias Riggs, Rev. William M. Thomson, and Dr. Asa Dodge, about to embark as missionaries to the Mediterranean.” See also Makdisi, “Reclaiming the Land of the Bible,” 686.

⁷⁹ Philip Schaff (1819-1893) was Swiss-born but spent most of his life in the United State. He was a Protestant theologian and Church historian.

⁸⁰ Philip Schaff, *Througb Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine* (New York: American Tract Society, 1878), 391.

⁸¹ Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 34.

⁸² Hilton Obenzinger, “Holy Land Narrative and American Covenant,” 242.

⁸³ William Lethaby was born in Exeter in 1837. He became a lay preacher in the Union Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. He founded a Protestant missionary in Karak between 1885 and 1892.

⁸⁴ Durley, *Lethaby of Moab*, 65.

Lethaby voiced a widespread idea shared by number of key English intellectuals and religious leaders who associated the Holy Land with England and vice-versa.⁸⁵

This wide and complex matrix of overlapping and intertwining socio-political and theological understandings of the relationship between secular and religious domains deeply affected Protestant perception of 19th century Ottoman Palestine and the Levant. Strong in the conviction of the indissoluble bond between the “Land” and the “Book” as styled by Thomson⁸⁶ in 1880, Protestant pilgrims and missionaries did not approach Ottoman Palestine to explore a “terra incognita,” because this was “their” Biblical and Holy Land. In fact, the indissoluble association between the “Land” and the “Book” was already part of their souls and minds, as Anderson⁸⁷ revealed during his travels: “the mind naturally recurs to the impressions of childhood and the Bible as it is I found to be even now the best guide book for all that was to be seen in the place.”⁸⁸ Nevertheless, once there they felt it no longer recognizable in its contemporary Ottoman shape. As described by Tent⁸⁹ in 1857, “I stood in the road, my hand on my horse’s neck, and with my dim eyes sought to trace the outlines of the holy places which I had long before fixed in my mind. (...) The more I gazed, the more I could not see.”⁹⁰ This feeling caused a sort of distancing dynamic which characterized the 19th century Protestant experience in the Holy Land.⁹¹ Integrally part of their spiritual heritage but nevertheless so unfamiliar, the Holy Land became an “idea” to be sought, motivating Protestant wandering among this land to make it speak in the language of their tradition.⁹² Only apparently contradictory, distancing themselves from Ottoman Palestine helped Protestant missionaries and pilgrims to better connect to Biblical places and times, entailing a precise process of acquisition and transformation of the land and its inhabitants. Distancing was possible because the land was considered not “holy” *per se*, but the holiness was the consequence of appropriate thoughts, experiences and approaches to the land. Accordingly, in 1885 Rev. Cuthbertson asserted “I pay little attention to what men designate the value of identical places, for the good reason that no merit

⁸⁵ Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799-1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: English Monographs, 2005), 8.

⁸⁶ William McClure Thomson (1806-1894) was an American Presbyterian clergyman and missionary who traveled in the Holy Land between 1880-1886.

⁸⁷ Edward Clifford Anderson was a young midshipman on the U.S. Constitution, “Old Ironsides,” son of a prominent and wealthy family of Savannah, Georgia. He visited the Holy Land in 1837.

⁸⁸ Stanley W. Hoole, “A Visit to the Holy Land in 1837,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 95/4 (1975): 638.

⁸⁹ William Cowper Prime (1825–1905) was an American journalist, art historian and travel writer.

⁹⁰ William C. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857), 56.

⁹¹ Makdisi, “Reclaiming the Land of the Bible,” 688.

⁹² Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 1.

or moral value can belong to the place per se.”⁹³ And similarly, in 1883 Bell⁹⁴ explained: “it does not matter if, after all, we are not able to localize the scenes of the greatest event (...) It is not the place which is of importance, but the event itself.”⁹⁵ Given the role of the Bible as the primary means of God’s communication according to Protestants, the Holy Land arose as the crucial “revealer,” a channel and a sacrament. The Holy Land was not just a “tableau,” an illustration, but was a “memory” which represented God’s revelation to those who participate in faith.⁹⁶ Accordingly, the relationship between the “Land” and the “Book” elevated the Holy Land to the Fifth Gospel. In fact, “the land of Jesus so harmonizes with the four written Gospels, and so unfolds and enlarges their meaning that it forms around them a Fifth Gospel,” as Otts⁹⁷ explained in 1893.⁹⁸

Moreover, distancing also meant eliminating and removing any superstitions or idolatrous ideas that arose from the hallowed soil of Palestine.⁹⁹ This entailed dismissing traditional Orthodox and Catholic forms of devotion and naturally brought Protestants into Palestine’s out-of-doors. It was, in fact, within this dimension that was possible for them to return to and embrace the “most simple, untraveled reflection of the Bible and its geographical sources,” as Rogers said.¹⁰⁰ It was within “quiet spots, apart from the city” that Protestant pilgrims, travelers and missionaries were able to find Jesus.¹⁰¹ Palestinian landscapes became the locus of Protestant pilgrimages and the out-of-doors became the crucial site for meditation and worship, allowing Protestant pilgrims to experience the same sort of feeling that Fisk recalled at the beginning of the 19th century: “I love to reflect as I walk over the plain of Nazareth, and the hills around it, that our Lord and Savior used to walk over the same ground.”¹⁰² At the same time, this entitled Protestants to embrace the historical-geographical uniqueness of the Holy Land, because geography not only influenced its history, but was also responsible for its having become “holy.”¹⁰³

Performed individually and to a certain extent widely creative in its stance, this

⁹³ Cuthbertson, *Sacred and Historic Lands*, 61.

⁹⁴ Charles Dent Bell (1818-1898) was an Irish-born poet and clergyman.

⁹⁵ Charles D. Bell, *Gleanings from a Tour in Palestine and the East* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1883), 89.

⁹⁶ Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 27.

⁹⁷ John M. P. Otts (1838-1880) was a successful American writer on Scriptural subjects. He was ordained pastor in the Southern Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in 1863.

⁹⁸ John M. P. Otts, *The Fifth Gospel: The Land where Jesus Lived* (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1893), 5.

⁹⁹ Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 127.

¹⁰¹ Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 100.

¹⁰² Bond, *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk*, 342.

¹⁰³ Yossi Ben-Arieh, “Nineteenth Century Historical Geography of the Holy Land,” *Journal of Historical Geography*, 15/1 (1989): 76.

out-of-doors wandering culminated in the codification of a Protestant form of pilgrimage. Thanks also to Thomas Cook's organized pilgrimages which opened Holy Land pilgrimages to middleclass Protestants, throughout the 19th century a predictable pattern and path of pilgrimage was defined, passing through Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, the Dead Sea, Jericho, the Jordan River, Galilee, Nazareth and Mt. Tabor, and a specific Protestant liturgy of pilgrimage was devised with readings of particular scriptural passages, praying special prayers at particular locations and singing appropriate hymns.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, Protestant missionaries and pilgrims, especially the American, focused on building up a rational and readable Palestine out of the concrete Ottoman province,¹⁰⁵ "avoiding the multiple sites inhabited by monks and applying to the local Arab information," as suggested by Robinson.¹⁰⁶ Robinson's experience depicted the 19th century Protestant will to evaluate other sources and fresh observations in order to distinguish between "genuine" and "legendary" Biblical sites, thereby strengthening belief in the Bible's historical reliability.¹⁰⁷

Their avoidance of Catholic and Orthodox shrines expressed their intimate refusal of what was considered primitive and, at the same time, "over-civilized" in terms of ceremony, religious architecture and liturgy.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, it was also their concerted expression of outright refusal of what they considered to be "idolatry" and "materialism," dissociating and distancing themselves from Catholic and Orthodox imagery to follow their personal spiritual way towards and through the Holy Land.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, trust in "the local Arab information" responded perfectly to their specific geographical mythology and imagination of the local population as the "unchanged" depository of Biblical message. The quest for the "historical Bible" brought most of them to establish a near-equation of ancient Jews with contemporary Ottoman Arab Muslims, justifiably because the Orient was a-historical and monolithic and the Bible was the repository of contemporary information about it and vice-versa.¹¹⁰ Descriptions of current inhabitants' practices could convince and prove that life in the Holy Land was to be "trusted as theology."¹¹¹

Nevertheless, while ignoring and distancing themselves from the socio-political, historical and cultural changes occurring in the land of Palestine over

¹⁰⁴ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 39.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁰⁶ Edward G. Robinson, Eli Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mt. Sinai, and Arabia Petrea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838*, Vol III (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1841), 345.

¹⁰⁷ Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 133.

¹⁰⁸ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 17.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹¹⁰ Ivan Kalmar "Arabizing the Bible: Racial Supersessionism in Nineteenth Century Christian Art and Biblical Criticism," in *Orientalism Revisited*, ed. Ian Netton (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 177.

¹¹¹ Varisco, "Orientalism and Bibliolatry," 197.

the centuries, many pilgrims and missionaries oscillated between positions of fascination with a population “original” in its essence and remonstrance and contempt for what they considered savage and backward.¹¹² Accordingly, the 19th century land of Palestine and its inhabitants emerged both as a sort of “baroque in the desert” and as the locus of “evidence” in a trial of faith, as depicted by Shepherd.¹¹³ Within the continuum defined by the different combinations of condemnation with fascination and vice-versa, Protestants referred to the Jews as the symbol and source of the “permanent curse” upon the land of Palestine. Therefore they took a front seat in what can be considered a sort of social cosmogony of the “iniquity,” because “the Messiah came 1800 years ago, and your fathers rejected him, and you persist in their course of unbelief; for though the evidence from your own prophets is clear, abundant, you refuse to believe” as Rev. Fisk explained.¹¹⁴ In another passage, Rev. Fisk recounted that “we felt as though Jerusalem were a place accursed of God, and given to iniquity. The Jews hate the name of Christ, and if you mention it, they will almost gnash upon you with their teeth. The Turks exalt the name of their impious prophet above the name of Jesus, and are pre-eminent for hypocrisy, oppression, and falsehood. The Geeks and Armenians profane the temple of the Lord, and know very little of true Christianity. The Roman Catholics thunder out their excommunication against all, who distribute or receive the Scriptures.”¹¹⁵ At the same time, especially by the 1880s, this approach began to be coupled with another discourse, millennial in its stance. Already in 1842, Elder Orson pointed out that “this land belongs to the Jews; and the present formation thereof shows to me that it is fast working back into the hands of its rightful heirs. God will, in due time, drive out the Canaanites, so that no more a Canaanite shall be found in the land, or in the house of the Lord.”¹¹⁶ Interweaving with a widespread political acceptance of Zionism, 19th century Palestine was increasingly described and promoted as the land that should be “Israel” again, just as it was in the days of the Bible and fulfilling its prophecy.¹¹⁷ From this standpoint, in 1880 Oliphant¹¹⁸ explained that “the restoration of the Jews to Palestine has been so often urged upon sentimental or Scriptural grounds, that now, when it may possibly become the practical and common-sense solution of a great future difficulty, a prejudice against it exists in the minds of those who have always regarded it as a theological chimera, which is not easy to remove.”¹¹⁹

¹¹² Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 13.

¹¹³ Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders*, 72.

¹¹⁴ Bond, *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk*, 197.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹¹⁶ Hyde, *A voice from Jerusalem*, 34.

¹¹⁷ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 15.

¹¹⁸ Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888) was a famous British writer, traveler, mystic millennialist and diplomat. See Philip Henderson, *The Life of Laurence Oliphant* (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1956).

¹¹⁹ Laurence Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead, With Excursions in the Lebanon* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1880), xxxiii. Also quoted in Maggy Hary, “The Holy Land in British eyes: sacred geography and the ‘rediscovery’ of Palestine, 1839-1917,” in

As a result, the people of Palestine served the Protestant process of acquiring and transforming the land, allowing them to make the Holy Land more Protestant and Biblical. As a result, issues related to the contemporary native population, as well as to the shape and conditions of the socio-political system, are generally ignored or touched upon solely for the purpose of reconstructing and depicting Biblical images within a contemporary situation.

By the end of the 19th century, Protestants had already created a complex image of their Holy Land, both spiritual and physical, through precise landscapes and a wide matrix of missionary establishments, tourist and pilgrimage routes, schools and archaeological excavations. The landscapes were created not only by paralleling traditional Catholic and Orthodox shrines (e.g. the alternate Golgotha and General Gordon's Tomb), but also by appropriating Palestine's landscapes so they would become their sacred Biblical spaces.¹²⁰

Catholic Pilgrimages to the Holy Land: Reviving a “New” Moral Order

Devoted to the conviction and ideal that pilgrimage served as “a revitalization of spiritual energies drained by involvement in the labors of secular world,” as Bowman points out,¹²¹ Catholic pilgrimages as well as the physical presence of Catholic religious establishments within the Holy Land paint a history that passes through the centuries. Therefore, unlike the case of Protestants, the 19th century does not represent the codification of a “tradition,” but the revival of ancient “traditions,” the reinvigoration of an interrupted commitment to and concern for the Holy Land. A unusual symbol of such a devotion, in 1893 Pope Leo XIII held the eighth International Eucharistic Congress in Jerusalem, granting the Cross of Honor to anyone making the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.¹²²

Similarly to Protestant pilgrims and missionaries, for Catholics this territory aroused quite the same emotions and feelings, especially regarding its contemporary Ottoman shape. However, these were not just symptoms of bewilderment towards an unrecognizable landscape, but more of a mixed sentiment of compassion and contempt for the contemporary socio-political situation, in particular when perceived as not respecting the Church and its establishments. Contemporary Ottoman Palestine, especially regarding its Muslim dimension, was almost ignored or, at least, relegated to the picturesque.¹²³ In fact, the Ottoman Empire and its Muslim subjects were

Encountering Otherness. Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern European Culture, ed. Guido Abbattista (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2011), 348.

¹²⁰ Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land*, 136.

¹²¹ Bowman, “Contemporary Christian pilgrimage,” 157.

¹²² Klatzker, “American Catholic Travelers,” 60.

¹²³ Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders*, 72.

frequently mentioned only in regard to the Holy Places and Church establishments,¹²⁴ or as repositories of imaginary legends that aroused their interest because of their accordance with Biblical traditions, as exemplified by De Wandelbourg's work.¹²⁵ This imaginary viewpoint was particularly strong when associated with the Bedouins that De Wandelbourg described as living "entirely in the traditions of the past (...) that have not changed by the introduction of European customs,"¹²⁶ with their women that are depositaries of a nature "naïve and wild," part of a community characterized by "piety and fervor."¹²⁷

Unlike Protestants and their Millennialist vision regarding the condition and presence of Jews, most of the Catholic pilgrims and travelers were characterized either by aloofness, ignoring Jewish existence or recounting it just to provide a proper memorial of Jesus' life, or by a more bitter contempt and disdain for this community, reinforcing the grievous accusations of deicide and ritual murder.¹²⁸ Therefore, not accidental in Catholic travelogues was the revival of ignominious accusations and slanders against the Jews, such as the use of Christian blood for baking unleavened bread for Passover. For example, in 1871 Eugene Vetromile¹²⁹ recalled the fallacious case of Father Thomas, a Capuchin, who in 1840 "together with a lay brother, an Arab, were brutally murdered in Damascus by the Jews. (...) The Jews seized them and bled them to death, in order to put their blood, because Christian blood, into their unleavened bread for Passover."¹³⁰

At the same time, this rhetoric of remonstrance was frequently structured by combining a sort of marginalization and underplaying of the Jewish presence within the Holy Land with stress on their "miserable" and "degenerated" condition. In 1857, Father Alessandro Bassi¹³¹ devoted a full chapter of his travelogue (Chapter 10) to the description of Muslims and Jews in Palestine. The author mainly focused on the Muslim presence and Islam, dedicating to

¹²⁴ Haussmann A. De Wandelbourg, *Études Et Souvenirs Sur l'Orient Et Ses Missions: Palestine, Syrie Et Arabie, Visitées Avec Mgr. Valerga, Patriarche De Jérusalem, Vicaire Apostolique D'Alep, Déléгат De Syrie*, Tomes I-II, (Lyon: Berche Et Tralin, 1883), 89, 110.

¹²⁵ The Baron Haussmann de Wandelbourg was a Mitred Abbot, Canon of the Holy Sepulcher, and a French doctor of Theology of the Pontifical University in Rome. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

¹²⁸ Egal Feldman, *Catholics and Jews in Twentieth Century America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 33.

¹²⁹ Eugene Vetromile (1819-1881) was Italian-born. In 1840, he moved to United States where he was ordained a Catholic priest and became a missionary among the Indians.

¹³⁰ Eugene Vetromile, *Travels in Europe, Egypt, Arabia Petraea, Palestine and Syria* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier & co., 1871), 250. See also Moshe Ma'oz, "Changes in the Position of the Jewish Communities of Palestine and Syria in mid-nineteenth century," in *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, ed. Moshe Ma'oz (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1975), 146-150.

¹³¹ Alessandro Bassi was Italian-born. Member of the Friars Minor of St. Francis, he was a theologian of the Apostolic Delegation of Arabia and Egypt.

Jews only three pages out of the ten that comprised the chapter. While the author subjectively delineates the main aspects that characterized Islam and Muslim practices, he almost ignores the Hebrew tradition, reducing their history to the revival of their persecutions and expulsions.¹³² They are part of the “landscape,” but without any accepted “right” and “autonomous” role. The purpose is to reduce them and their conduct to the “irrational” and “obscure,” underlining that their presence in the land of Palestine is almost totally composed of foreigners, as Bassi recalls: “a strange force binds them there: a mysterious attraction dragged them from the most remote districts, not as the Christian pilgrims, to visit going through their ancient homeland, but to settle down, and prepare the grave. In Palestine they are about eight thousand, but all of them are foreigners or descendants of foreigners. You would say that they are forever condemned to witness the fulfillment of the prophecies of Christ who was killed there, and the fierce curses, pronounced by their fathers in the act of killing Him, *His blood be on us, and on our children.*”¹³³

The relationship with local Eastern Christianity, on the contrary, presented a more nuanced allure, between admiration and blame. On the one hand, Orthodoxy came to represent the “inacceptable” in the Holy Land, a voice within the larger group of “heretics,” “schismatics” and “enemies” of Catholicism¹³⁴ that was rhetorically employed to assert the inherent rightness of the Catholic presence in the Holy Land and the Levant. As Vincenzo Vannutelli¹³⁵ explained in 1879, “there is only one issue that the Protestants share with the schismatics of the East: they hate the Roman Church (...) like Herod and Pilate who, despite being enemies to each other, agreed to condemn to death the Divine Redeemer.”¹³⁶ On the other hand, especially after the second half of the 19th century, as a consequence of the development of the Catholic presence within Ottoman Palestine and the Levant and the progress of the Uniatism movement, Orthodoxy was increasingly regarded with interest for its possibility of achieving “the union between the Christians of the Orient and the West (...) the most beautiful day in the history of the Church,” as Vanutelli said.¹³⁷

Therefore, similarly to Protestants, Ottoman Palestine inhabitants were generally subservient to a specific Catholic landscape of the Holy Land, understood and depicted according to both the Bible and Christian history, and to the most recent developments of the Roman Church in Ottoman Palestine

¹³² Alessandro Bassi, *Pellegrinaggio storico e descrittivo di Terrasanta*, Vol I (Torino: Tip. Subalpina di Artero e Cotta, 1857), 115.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹³⁴ Kalman, “Going Home to the Holy Land,” 363.

¹³⁵ Vincenzo Vannutelli (1836-1930) was Italian-born. He spent most of his life in the Vatican Secretariat of State. In 1892, he became Prefect of the economy of Propaganda Fide and held that position for the following ten years.

¹³⁶ Feldman, *Catholics and Jews*, 144.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

and the Levant.

Therefore, the land of Palestine was seen as a sacred and holy territory due to its Biblical history, and it was inspected and checked for “evidence” of the accuracy of the Bible,¹³⁸ according to the conviction that “in order to better understand the Bible, it would be advantageous to study in Palestine, even nowadays (...). In the Old, and in the New Testament there is no description of Jewish customs, as far as they are dissimilar from our own, that cannot find a real validation” as described by Father Alessandro Bassi.¹³⁹ Simultaneously, Ottoman Palestine was understood to be a land that needed to be revived and rescued from neglect,¹⁴⁰ because “no country was more glorious than Palestine, none was more wretched,” as again stated by Bassi.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, according to numerous Catholic pilgrims, travelers and missionaries, Holy Land landscapes went beyond the limits of Biblical revelation connecting sacred and profane history, permeating them with a romantic allure. According to Bassi, this was the land that saw “the greatest men of the centuries, David and the Maccabees, Alexander and the Lagidis, Christ and his Apostles, [and] Godfrey and his crusaders consecrated by the muse of Tasso.”¹⁴² Furthermore, the Holy Land was a site where “every ruin that one finds there recalls some extinguished people: every mountainside repeats the echo of a prophetic poem: each stream recounts a miracle: every valley witnessed scenes of fierce battles, defeats and triumphs.”¹⁴³ Whereas “America is named the *new world* (...) Palestine, Syria and the rest of the Orient may be named the *old world*, since almost nothing is new; on the contrary, everything is ancient,” as Vannutelli wrote in 1879.¹⁴⁴

At the same time, far from being a solely religious phenomenon, the reinvigorated Catholic involvement in the Holy Land was deeply influenced by the political interests of the Great Powers, especially as to French Catholics. More than a simple consequence of or adaptation to a colonial project, French Catholics saw in the Holy Land and the Levant the site in which to pour their concern about their role and position within the 19th century French nation and state. Accordingly, the Holy Land gained the attribute of “refuge” for Europe’s faithful.¹⁴⁵ Differently from what Chateaubriand wrote in 1806, believing himself to be probably “the last Frenchman to leave my country to travel to the Holy Land, with the ideas, the goals, and the sentiments of an old pilgrim,”¹⁴⁶ during the 19th century French Catholic pilgrimages increased and

¹³⁸ Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders*, 71.

¹³⁹ Bassi, *Pellegrinaggio storico e descrittivo di Terrasanta*, XIII.

¹⁴⁰ Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders*, 73.

¹⁴¹ Bassi, *Pellegrinaggio storico e descrittivo di Terrasanta*, X.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, IX.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, X.

¹⁴⁴ Vannutelli, *Uno sguardo alle missioni d'oriente*, 52.

¹⁴⁵ Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 18-19.

¹⁴⁶ François-René de Chateaubriand, *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 75–76.

developed as an expression of attachment to a specific “imagined” notion of Frenchness and as a reaction to the turbulent century that the Church was experiencing within the country.¹⁴⁷ Bewildered by the difficult political circumstances occurring during the first half of the 19th century – which saw continued monarchical successions followed by the Second Republic and then the coup d’état of Napoleon III in 1851 and, finally, the Third Republic in 1870 – pilgrimages represented one of the voices of a wider revival of religious practice and popular piety.¹⁴⁸ Accordingly, pilgrimages to the Holy Land, along with other popular pilgrimages, became a means and signifier for recreating, reinvigorating and protecting the vitality of the Catholic community within contemporary France.¹⁴⁹

A quite similar picture may be drawn from memoirs and accounts written by missionaries, clerics and travelers of Italian origin. During a century that saw the unification of Italy under the Savoy monarchy and the consequent loss of secular power by the Vatican, Italian Catholics tended to be silent about their contemporary country. Italy entered their narrative only in relation to the Church, as Vannutelli said at the end of his account. “Here we are in Italy, this beautiful country at the centre of the Mediterranean, from which the Church radiates throughout the world, and which is severely under the attack of a large number of its degenerated sons.”¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, the “Orient” with the Holy Land at its heart became not only the “archive of world history”¹⁵¹ or a safe place in which to take refuge, but the “stronghold” from which Catholics could “assure the Church a great future not only within these regions (...) but all over the entire world.”¹⁵² Vannutelli made a clear invitation to Catholics to commit themselves to the “Orient,” reacting against “the ambitious aims of human politics” in the name of Catholicism and the Church.¹⁵³

Similarly, during the 19th century and in particular after the Civil War, American Catholics flocked to the Holy Land because of their personal experiences at home. However, the Holy Land was not understood as the “refuge” of American Catholicism, but the site expressing the vitality and progress of the American Catholic community. Sharing with their Protestant compatriots the desire to visit Europe and the Near East and benefiting from progress in means of transportation and the development of mass tourism companies, American Catholic pilgrimages gave voice to and manifested the advancement of the American Catholic Church in North America. Through

Also quoted in Kalman, “Going Home to the Holy Land,” 335.

¹⁴⁷ In 1853, the Society of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul organized the first caravan departing from Marseille; 53 would be the total amount of caravans between 1853 and 1973. *Ibid.*, 335, 352.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 341.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 335.

¹⁵⁰ Vannutelli, *Uno sguardo alle missioni d'oriente*, 181.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 29.

their travels and pilgrimages, they gave a public show of orthodoxy.¹⁵⁴ Essentially inspired by Catholic incarnationism and sacramentalism,¹⁵⁵ American pilgrimages served a conservative function and memoirs and accounts of them aimed at providing American Catholics with the information ignored in Protestant travel books, as Vetromile explained. “Catholics of this country (...) have no books of travel other than those written by Protestant tourists, who frequently misrepresent, perhaps unintentionally, the real custom of Catholic countries, and sneer at the practices, manners, religion, etc., of Catholic nations.”¹⁵⁶

Despite the growing interest in the Holy Land, during the 19th century the number of American Catholic pilgrims to the Holy Land never equaled that of American Protestants. On one hand, the American Catholic Church was still much concerned about the consolidation and development of its presence and structure in the country.¹⁵⁷ The first organization in charge of managing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was in fact created only in 1880, performing the first pilgrimage in 1889.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, up to the second decade of the 20th century American Catholics did not refer specifically to the “Holy Land,” preferring to speak of “Holy Places,” thereby referring to different destinations for pilgrimages around the world, including Rome.¹⁵⁹

Clearly, different interpretations and rhetorical images were employed in voicing this wide and shared sentiment of religious fervor mixed with nostalgia and romantic allure. More secular in his stance, Chateaubriand offers an example of the intertwining and overlapping between the attachment to and pride in France, and the myth of the Crusades and the Kingdom of Jerusalem: “French chevaliers (...) re-established the Kingdom of Jerusalem (...) [and] at the Calvary you can see the sword of Godfrey of Bouillon, which, in its ancient sheath, seems still to guard the Holy Sepulcher.”¹⁶⁰ This particular version of Catholic nationalism, which supported the legitimacy of French interests in the Holy Land and the Levant through the “nationalization” of the Crusades, was followed by the expansion of ecclesiastical institutions and religious orders.¹⁶¹ This second attitude, not completely detached from the former, analyzed and evaluated the interaction between politics and religion from the sole perspective of the Church and Catholicism. In 1851, for example, Mgr. Jacques Mislin¹⁶² decided to introduce his *Les Saint Lieux, Pèlerinage à Jérusalem* by

¹⁵⁴ Klatzker, “American Catholic Travelers,” 65.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 66.

¹⁵⁶ Vetromile, *Travels in Europe, Egypt, Arabia Petraea*, 13.

¹⁵⁷ Klatzker, “American Catholic Travelers,” 74.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 63.

¹⁵⁹ Feldman, *Catholics and Jews*, 31.

¹⁶⁰ de Chateaubriand, *Itinéraire*, 301. In Kalman, “Going Home to the Holy Land,” 348.

¹⁶¹ Kalman, “Going Home to the Holy Land,” 341.

¹⁶² Mgr Jacques Mislin (1807-1878) was born in Alsace. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1830. Member of numerous academic societies, he wrote a number of historical and religious

noticing that during the publication of his work “two events of highest importance happened, which were connected to objects treated [in his book]: the freedom given to the church in the Austrian monarchy, and the claim to the Holy Places made by the Catholic powers.”¹⁶³ Similarly, Bassi intertwined politics and religious dimensions associating his personal defense of the Franciscan Custody and hope for the Holy See’s decision to revive the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1847) with the role of France “once again strongly Christian,”¹⁶⁴ exhorting this country to “finally remember [the Franciscan Custody], and (...) tie again the chain of its traditional protection, begun with Louis the Holy, followed by Francis I, Henry IV, and by Louis XIV and XV, despite their being so different.”¹⁶⁵ Different in tone, but similar in its rationale, in 1883 De Wandelbourg gave voice to a milieu that was deeply attached to the Roman Church. In fact, during the last decades of the 19th century he entered into debate with European Catholic powers when perceiving that their politics were manipulating religious issues to forward their own interests. This was the case of France, which according to De Wandelbourg was choking the “real” French nation, Catholic in its essence, with atheism, secularism and modernism.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, the Holy Land was seen as a “refuge”¹⁶⁷ and “stronghold” thanks to the immanent presence of the Divine and to the successful revival of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (and consequently of the Roman Church) that was more powerful than the transient temporality of secular politics.¹⁶⁸ Accordingly, Catholic descriptions of travels and pilgrimages to the Holy Land and the Levant gave voice to conflicting sentiments. On the one hand, they sympathized with the difficult political position of the Ottoman Empire, under siege by Western powers, in particular seeing the possibility of increasing the role and presence of the Church among these lands and their Eastern Christian inhabitants. On the other, the intuition of a totally different future for the “Orient” left them disoriented in the face of Western power-plays, reinforcing their attachment to the Catholic Church, the only power that “can save these nations, to whatever government they would be subjected,” as stated by Vannutelli.¹⁶⁹

Although not frequently or openly quoted in Catholic memoirs and accounts of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the revival of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem well represented the increasing interest of Roman Catholics and the Holy See in Ottoman Palestine and the Levant during the 19th century. Along

tracts.

¹⁶³ Jacques Mislin, *Les saints lieux, pèlerinage à Jérusalem* (Paris: Besaçon, Typographie d’Outhenin Chalandre Fils, 1851), I.

¹⁶⁴ Bassi, *Pellegrinaggio storico e descrittivo di Terrasanta*, 21.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 26.

¹⁶⁶ Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders*, 184. André Latreille, Jean Remy Palanque, Etienne Delaruelle, René Rémond, *Histoire du catholicisme en France* (Paris: Edition Spes, 1960), 408.

¹⁶⁷ Maggolini, “Studies and Memorabilia from Palestine and Transjordan,” 166.

¹⁶⁸ De Wandelbourg, *Études Et Souvenirs Sur l’Orient Et Ses Missions*, 109.

¹⁶⁹ Vannutelli, *Uno sguardo alle missioni d’oriente*, 29.

with issues concerning the Canonical aspect of the institutional controversy with the Franciscan Custody, the inter-faith dimension and the diplomatic repercussions of the enterprise,¹⁷⁰ the resurgence of the Latin Patriarchate exerted a great influence on the religious geography of Palestine. The revival of this ancient ecclesiastical institution integrated with a wider process of “acquisition” and “re-sacralisation” of the Holy Land, where the sacred dimension was involved with and drew meaning from social and political relationships resulting in a new geography of this land.¹⁷¹ Accordingly, the rediscovery of Palestine, the Holy Land *proprement dite*, became part of the revival process of the Latin Patriarchate, as not only revealed and re-discovered, formed or constructed in its boundaries and geography, but claimed, owned and contested through the development of a wide system of missionary establishments.¹⁷²

In De Wandelbourg’s work this particular dynamic is at the heart of his narration, describing the first pastoral visit of patriarch Mgr. Valerga. Similarly to other Catholic accounts and memoirs, to him the landscape was a stage on which Biblical and past events can be played out, a *religio loci*.¹⁷³ However, his work is distinctive from other forms of scriptural geography because the Holy Land of the present was not only subservient to the holy landscape’s Biblical past,¹⁷⁴ but was also the place where the “revival” of the Latin Patriarchate and the Roman Catholic Church was achieving success. This aspect modified the perception of the territory as unchanging and timeless in favor of a circular dimension of time.¹⁷⁵ Accordingly, the Catholic Holy Land became the site for revitalizing the spirit and remitting sin as well as the locus where the Church revived its role as mediator with God in the land where his redemptive activity was accomplished.

Accordingly, pilgrimage guides, for example the *Guide-indicateur des sanctuaires et lieux historiques de la Terre Sainte* by Liévin de Hamme, were generally less concerned with describing the land and its inhabitants than with providing “the required information for anyone visiting the Nativity and the Calvary, to learn, in a word, how one can accomplish a voyage to the Holy Land (...) [to] draw a more extensive and deeper knowledge of the Places which were the cradle of our religion, and (...) revive one’s faith in and love for Our Holy Jesus Christ.”¹⁷⁶ Liévin de Hamme’s work was eminently a guide for pilgrims that

¹⁷⁰ Paolo Pieraccini, *Il Ristabilimento del Patriarcato Latino di Gerusalemme e la Custodia di Terra Santa, la dialettica istituzionale al tempo del primo patriarca Mons. Giuseppe Valerga (1847-1872)*, (Cairo, Jerusalem: The Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies, 2006), 4.

¹⁷¹ Lily Kong, “Mapping ‘New’ Geographies of Religion: Politics and Poetics in Modernity,” *Progress in Human Geography*, 25/2 (2001): 213.

¹⁷² Maggiolini, “Studies and Memorabilia from Palestine and Transjordan,” 166.

¹⁷³ Edwin J. Aiken, *Scriptural Geography, Portraying the Holy Land*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 99.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁷⁵ Maggiolini, “Studies and Memorabilia from Palestine and Transjordan,” 169.

¹⁷⁶ Liévin de Hamme, *Guide-indicateur des sanctuaires et lieux historiques de la Terre Sainte*, Quatrième

focused on giving useful information about prices, means of transportation and catalogues of “Sanctuaries of first class” and “Sanctuaries of second class,” thereby instructing priests about where and what kinds of celebration were allowed.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, similar aims and sentiments normally embraced and motivated Catholic travelers and pilgrims who wrote accounts and memoirs. Aimed at fulfilling the requests of many Catholic clerics and monks to gain new and useful insights into the ancient and modern East, Biblical archaeology, interpretations of the Holy Texts and the socio-political conditions of the Near East regarding Catholic interests,¹⁷⁸ Catholic memoirs and accounts (such as *Études et Souvenirs de l’Orient* or *Pellegrinaggio storico e descrittivo di Terrasanta*) appear to be an accumulation of literary genres on Palestine. In these works, scriptural-geographical apologetics coalesced with travelers’ and pilgrims’ tales creating a “structure of feeling”¹⁷⁹ between the author and his readers deeply circumscribed within the specific cultural and institutional environment¹⁸⁰ of the Vatican and Catholic Europe. Accordingly, as for example Bassi stated in his introduction, the main objective of these works was to “sketch on purpose, not Palestine properly, but the Christian Sanctuaries which still endure, and to act as a guide to mine countrymen, who will go on pilgrimage.”¹⁸¹

Therefore, these guides, accounts and memoirs, which often contained journal entries, letters, essays and even semi-fictional material, were mainly concerned with describing the religious meaning of the land and frequently were didactic and sentimental in their stance.¹⁸² Moreover, given the fact that most of the Catholic travelers were priests and laymen belonging to the aristocracy or haute bourgeoisie,¹⁸³ their authors were not simply individuals or independent travelers, and were often supported by institutions or governments.¹⁸⁴ Accordingly, although their individual freedom and ability to represent, portray, characterize and depict have to be respected, the “what” and the “how” in their representation of “things” was inevitably circumscribed and socially regulated¹⁸⁵ by their membership and role in the Roman Catholic Church. This remark is not only necessary to the analysis of these sources, but was implicitly embedded by the same authors, often including at the beginning or in the appendix either the official imprimatur, or a statement of pilgrimage that gave

Édition (Jérusalem: Imprimerie des PP. Franciscains, 1897), 2

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 34-36.

¹⁷⁸ De Wandelbourg, *Études Et Souvenirs Sur l’Orient Et Ses Missions*, 2.

¹⁷⁹ Said, *Culture*, 14.

¹⁸⁰ David N. Livingstone, “Oriental Travel, Arabian Kinship, and Ritual Sacrifice: William Robertson Smith and the Fundamental Institutions,” *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, 22/5 (2004): 639.

¹⁸¹ Bassi, *Pellegrinaggio storico e descrittivo di Terrasanta*, XIII.

¹⁸² Klatzker, “American Catholic Travelers,” 66.

¹⁸³ Kalman, “Going Home to the Holy Land,” 352.

¹⁸⁴ Goren, “Sacred, but Not Surveyed,” 87.

¹⁸⁵ Said, *Culture*, 95.

solidity and legitimacy to the work itself and to its sketched landscapes.¹⁸⁶

Similarly to the case of Protestants, the 19th century Holy Land Catholic landscapes looked like a mosaic composed of different intertwined *tesserae* representing the distinct socio-political backgrounds and sensibilities of pilgrims, missionaries and travellers who headed for this land. The resulting Catholic image of this land became the locus helping to internalize the particular Biblical texts relating to the life of Jesus.¹⁸⁷ The notion of holiness was therefore tied more to the internal dimension of each person's own consciousness than to a fixed location.¹⁸⁸ Catholics regarded the holy sites as the means through which to "compose the place;"¹⁸⁹ whereas Catholic pilgrimages developed as a dynamic of confirming and reviving a world already "created" and "existing," not the means of its creation.¹⁹⁰

Conclusions

The very notion of the Holy Land could be understood as the product of a fictionalized history of Biblical events and the continuous transformation of memory and souvenirs through the centuries. As a result, the sacredness of the Holy Land is not just metaphysical, but profoundly of this world, subjected to the progression of history and styled by the paths through which it is experienced, performed and understood. From this standpoint the Holy Land emerges as a place and site of encounter where different manifestations of the sacred may be pursued according to the traditions and culture of the societies travelers and pilgrims belong to. Accordingly, similarly to all holy lands and holy places, this expression of the geographic significance of religion lay at the intersection of sacred and secular forces. The result is that Jerusalem and the Holy Land do not appear to exist as a unique and individual "holy land" and "holy city," but as a "multitude" of "holy lands" and "holy cities,"¹⁹¹ from which it is possible to trace a multiplicity and variety of different and often conflicting local and "universal" practices of appropriation and dynamics of semantization of and through its places.

During the 19th century the combination of the Orientalist interpretation and

¹⁸⁶ The duty of asking for a pontifical license for pilgrimage in the Holy Land to the Sacred Congregation *de propaganda fide* had endured until modern times, although, probably, it had progressively lost compulsoriness. Rostagno, "Pellegrini italiani," 88.

¹⁸⁷ Micael P. Prior, "You Will be my Witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the Ends of the Earth. A Christian Perspective on Jerusalem," in *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics and Society in the Holy Land*, ed. Anthony O'Mahony (London: Melisende, 1999), 120.

¹⁸⁸ Kalman, "Going Home to the Holy Land," 346.

¹⁸⁹ Prior, "You Will be my Witnesses in Jerusalem," 120.

¹⁹⁰ Kalman, "Going Home to the Holy Land," 346.

¹⁹¹ Glenn Bowman, "Christian Ideology and the Image of a Holy Land: The Place of Jerusalem in the Various Christianities," *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, eds. Michael J. Sallnow, John Eade (London: Routledge, 1991), 98.

the missionary programs supported by the Protestant institutions and the Roman Catholic Church produced a specific representation of Ottoman Palestine and Jerusalem with important consequences in terms of power and knowledge. The Holy Land arose as a liminal space into which travellers, pilgrims and missionaries from different countries and religious affiliations poured their expectations and concerns in order to reinforce and develop a sense of communion and comradeship within the different constituencies to which they belonged. At the same time, this space revealed its ability not only to signify and sustain cooperation and solidarity, but also to act as terrain for the formation of competing discourses, where each traveller, pilgrim and missionary could impose personal and “group” significances and meanings, both religious and political.¹⁹²

Unlike the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant pilgrimages were not strictly regulated by a liturgical calendar. Both expressions of Western Christian tradition and sensibility, Catholics and Protestants were different from the Orthodox in their interpretations of the significance of the Holy Land. At the same time, all developed their attachment to the land because of its historical and sacramental significance and value. Accordingly, despite their respective differences and peculiarities, Catholics and Protestants headed for the Holy Land due to its Biblical associations.¹⁹³ The land performed the theological function of renewing and corroborating the authority of the Bible, confuting the attacks and objections raised by historical and scientific criticism. At the same time, the encounter with the land, between history and the Bible and science and Bible, was also interpreted as a necessary experience to deepen the faith rather than to destroy it. Catholics concentrated on the sites, the holy places of the traditions, whereas the Protestants styled their idea of the Holy Land through and within the land itself, which frequently became their “Fifth Gospel.” The Protestants focused on the Holy Land as whole, as the association between the “Land” and the “Book” demonstrates. The Catholics concentrated on the sites and the historical connections between them, the Bible, and the Church’s presence within the Holy Land. Although Catholics expressed a strong affiliation with shrines, both dissociated from the image of the Holy Land as a “massive” icon, as it was for the Orthodox. At the same time, a number of Protestants headed for the Holy Land to recapture the historical Jesus. They preferred to “freely” wander among the Holy Land, to encounter the “unmediated” Christ in its out-of-doors, such as Galilee, shunning the Catholic and Orthodox shrines. On the contrary, Catholics had a great regard for the “sites” associated with the life of Jesus, but were less concerned with the “sites” *per se* than with the significance associated with them.¹⁹⁴ Literalism, regarding the former, and incarnationalism, for the latter,

¹⁹² Ibid., 352.

¹⁹³ Hummel, Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 65.

¹⁹⁴ Michael P. Prior, “Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Yesterday and Today,” *Christians in the Holy Land*, eds. Michael P. Prior, William Taylor (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994), 188.

were therefore the extremes of a continuum that characterized different manifestations of a shared attraction towards the land.

At the same time, both Catholics and Protestants saw in the Holy Land the space in which to deal with a complex set of anxieties and expectations concerning their country of origin and their religious communities. In the development of this process of semantization through the land, both Catholics and Protestants did not only draw new meanings or revive traditional imaginary and forms of devotion regarding the Holy Land to meet their expectations and satisfy their needs. In fact, combining with the ongoing political and diplomatic dynamics within and outside the Ottoman Empire, they contributed to reinforcing the perception of Ottoman Palestine, the Christian Holy Land, as a singular geographical and cultural unity.

Moreover, during the 19th century, this desire to affirm, develop and revive their respective presences and roles through the Holy Land took on a characteristic look. Partially thanks to the development of organized pilgrimage caravans that allowed numerous people of the same origin to simultaneously share the same experience, European and American travellers and pilgrims began a sort of open competition to show and impose their physical presence in Ottoman Palestine, “politically” emphasizing their travels through the Holy Land not just through “religious” markers, but also displaying their national flags and “large banners.”¹⁹⁵ This symptomatic interweave between sacred and profane well represents, probably in an unusual shape, how the 19th century encounter between Europeans and Americans and the Holy Land involved this land, Ottoman Palestine, in the wider history of the process of “accumulation of knowledge.”¹⁹⁶ In this site of colonial encounter, religious and political interests overlapped and intertwined not just as a prelude to and precursor of imperialism, but as the confirmation and consequence of a pre-existing psychological claim to the “land” by the West.

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¹⁹⁵ Klatzker, “American Catholic Travelers,” 64. Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 135.

¹⁹⁶ Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture*, 8.

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