



## Holy Land Photographs and Their Worlds

### *Francis Bedford and the 'Tour in the East'*

Linda Wheatley-Irving

*Photographic pictures made by Mr. Francis Bedford during the Tour in the East in which, by command, he accompanied H. R. H. the Prince of Wales (London: Day & Son, 1863). Title page for portfolio number 2, "The Holy Land and Syria." The classical site of Baalbek in Lebanon is depicted in the photograph. Reproduced with kind permission of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.*

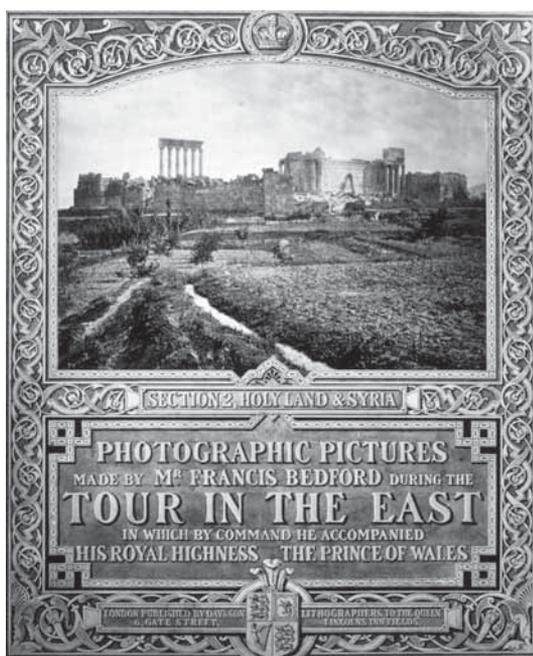
What does the Holy Land look like? Recording the material appearance of the Holy Land was not always a matter of interest for Christians. Students of the art and architecture of the Early Byzantine period lament the fact that virtually all early Holy Land pilgrimage accounts and other documents have so little to say about the actual appearances of landscapes and monuments, monuments which often no longer exist, or remain but in a considerably altered form. The pilgrims were engaged in a different type of seeing, however.<sup>1</sup> Students of the Victorian period are 'luckier' – if that is the right word to describe standing in the midst of a flood. Travel made easier by the steamship, the explosive growth of popular publishing, and the acclaim granted to individuals whose travels caught the public imagination are a few of the factors that promoted the luxuriant growth of a Victorian literature of travel, almost all of it illustrated to some degree.<sup>2</sup> The fact that so much of this literature concerned the Holy Land/Palestine and the rest of the Levant, especially Egypt, is due to the additional

interest supplied by the region's geopolitical location and the religious issues that were being hotly debated in Victorian Britain and the continent.<sup>3</sup>

In the academic database *Nineteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*, a keyword search using 'Palestine' or 'Holy Land' – the terms were used almost interchangeably in the Victorian period – and 'travel\*' will yield over two hundred titles and editions in English for the period from 1830 to 1870.<sup>4</sup> By 1857, an irritated reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, London's foremost independent literary journal, would opine:

*We ought to know where Pisgah is. Many travellers have told us: – but unfortunately, the authorities do not concur. With the multiplicity of criticisms is engendered the multiplicity of opinions, – unhappily, also, the multiplicity of maps. The geography of the Exodus is written and re-written, and everyone ventures to differ from everyone else. Such a topic is naturally debated with heat and zeal. The March of the Ten Thousand has given a cry to learned factions; scholars dispute over Athenian topography; there are even fierce partisans of Grecian sites; but few wars of books are comparable with that which is for ever waged over the ground of holy history. From the footsteps of Moses to the foundations of the Temple all is vague, yet all is fascinating, and trains of tourists perpetually explore the territory, seldom meeting except to confute, change hands, and still confute. Prof. Robinson is the patriarch of the nation that wanders, pencil in hand, questioning Arabs, straining at palaeography, and ascertaining specific gravities in Syria... ”<sup>5</sup>*

Nevertheless, there were works on the Holy Land that were recognized as landmarks of British publishing in their day. The engraver W. H. Bartlett published the three-volume octavo-sized, *Syria, the Holy Land, Asia Minor &c.* in 1837-1838, illustrated with numerous engravings and woodcuts; it was followed by a number of other works. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D. D., (later, Dean of Westminster Cathedral) published in 1856, *Sinai and Palestine in Connection with Their History*, based on his travels in the region; the work went through numerous editions. However, Stanley's work could not really compare to that of the American Edward Robinson, D.D., LL.D., who wrote *Biblical Researches in Palestine: Based on Travels in the Year 1832*, which also went through numerous editions. The Scots artist David Roberts created one of the art-publishing sensations of the mid-Victorian period with his massive series of folio-sized illustrations entitled, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, based on his own watercolour sketches done 'on the spot'. First published by subscription between 1842 and 1849, they were reproduced and coloured (in some editions) by a master lithographer, resulting in one of the most expensive publications of the nineteenth century. Starting with the two-volume set *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described*, first issued by subscription in 1857, Francis



*Photographic pictures made by Mr. Francis Bedford during the Tour in the East in which, by command, he accompanied H. R. H. the Prince of Wales* (London: Day & Son, 1863). Title page for portfolio number 2, “The Holy Land and Syria.” The classical site of Baalbek in Lebanon is depicted in the photograph. Reproduced with kind permission of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Frith’s photographic publications on Egypt, Palestine and the rest of the Levant were produced in a variety of formats and launched Frith’s stellar second career as a photographer and photographic publisher. It is misleading to make too dramatic a distinction here between works that were mainly text and works where the illustrations were most important. Although the two types were produced in different ways, many of the published collections of illustrations were accompanied by pages of printed “descriptive letterpress,” as it was called; illustrations and text could be bound together for purchasers when a large volume that had been published in instalments was complete. Add in the transfer from gallery exhibit to album or illustrated book (whose text would cite many of the popular travel and research works of the day), the journal reviews of both exhibit and publication, and the result is: images surrounded by words.

The works mentioned above were recognized as landmarks because of their extensiveness and quality of description, be it literary, visual, or both. Their acclaim was borne out for some by the numerous editions that had to be produced to satisfy demand. Reproductions of the work done in the Holy Land and Levant by Bartlett, Roberts and Frith can still be purchased today. The photographs taken by Francis Bedford on the occasion of the Prince of Wales’ “Tour in the East” in 1862, exhibited in London that year and published starting in 1863 and again in 1866, represent a landmark of a different sort.<sup>6</sup> The scarcity of the 1866 and especially the 1863 publications indicates that they did not enjoy the sort of acclaim that was granted to the other landmark publications mentioned above. Instead, the noteworthiness of these photographs lies in the circumstances under which they were taken, and the way in which they were exhibited and the critical acclaim that the exhibition received. Not surprisingly, a considerable amount was written on the tour itself, and on the photographs. In a discussion of two of the photographs, I suggest some of the meanings that could have been granted to them in their time.

## Precedents

All parts of Bedford's Holy Land and Levantine itinerary had already been well-trod by British travellers, authors, artists and photographers by 1862. Among British photographers, we may count the large corpus assembled by the Rev. George Wilson Bridges from 1846 to 1852 using waxed paper negatives; the extensive expeditions of Francis Frith from 1856 to 1860, the Cramb brothers in 1860, and James Graham (exhibited in 1862).<sup>7</sup> They were preceded by the French photographer Maxim du Camp, whose photographs of Egypt and the Holy Land, taken between 1849 and 1851, were exhibited in London and subsequently published there by the rising young art dealer Ernest Gambart, starting in 1853.<sup>8</sup> The aforementioned British photographers exhibited photographs of the Holy Land and especially Egypt in the large annual exhibitions held by various photographic societies throughout Britain.<sup>9</sup> Most of them also published their photographs by subscription in instalments, accompanied by 'descriptive letterpress', as David Roberts had also done with his lithographs, resulting in a photographically-illustrated book when the series was complete. Francis Frith had also issued his photographs as glass-plate stereographs (an immensely popular and inexpensive format in the nineteenth century), accompanied by descriptive books or booklets.

Thus, there were numerous published examples of Holy Land images, whether reproduced by engraving, woodcut, lithography, or photography, and the fact that they could appear quite similar would become on occasion a cause of bitter feelings, vented in the press. In 1859, five years after the death of the author and engraver W. H. Bartlett, his publisher George H. Virtue took issue with the American missionary J. T. Barclay, M.D., and his work *The City of the Great King; or, Jerusalem as It Was, as It Is, and as It Is to Be*, published in Philadelphia in 1858. The work had just received a lengthy and favourable review in the pages of the *Athenaeum*, to which Virtue responded in a letter to the editors. Among other complaints, Virtue claimed that a number of Barclay's engravings described as having been made "from a photograph" were actually copies of Bartlett's own engravings. Accusations and vitriolic responses were published in the *Athenaeum* in 1859, without the issue ever being fully resolved, it seems.<sup>10</sup> The publication in 1864 by former city engineer of Jerusalem Ermete Pierotti of *Jerusalem Explored* in two thick volumes led to a legendary tiff between the author and the famous musicologist and biblical scholar George Grove, who at the time was collaborating on a dictionary of the Bible. Grove's differences with Pierotti probably rested on a personal foundation: Pierotti was a foreigner, his views supported the traditional locations of the holy sites (a topic of fierce debate in Great Britain at the time), and he had British allies that differed from Grove's. In a feud carried out largely in the pages of the London *Times*, Grove accused Pierotti of massive plagiarism of maps, plans and illustrations, including the unacknowledged use of photographs by James Graham and James Robertson as sources for lithographic illustrations. It

should be noted that Pierotti's illustrations were not reproduced by photozincography or photolithography, both young technologies then; rather they were made by artists using lithographic crayons to produce a rendition of a photograph – faster than burin engraving, but still a lengthy and expensive process when done to the standards of art reproduction, as opposed to that of weekly magazines. Pierotti's response was that he had only worked from photographs that he had purchased, either from Graham or Robertson, or from Mendel J. Diness, a lesser-known photographer. Grove's argument in this point seems to have been that the copyright rested with the photographers for any subsequent reproduction of their works in any form – a point of law which in fact had only been resolved two years earlier, in 1862. Until at least the early 1860s in Britain, it was even an occasional practice of individuals and photographic firms to exhibit photographs in the annual major exhibitions without revealing the name of the photographer who sold or gave them the photograph.<sup>11</sup> The moral that Dror Wahrmann drew from his description of this sad business was that the work of Graham, Robertson and Diness in Jerusalem was often indistinguishable – as Pierotti's supporters had pointed out, since the men had worked together – and it was due to market issues in London that photographic practices in Jerusalem had become so problematic.<sup>12</sup> If the above uproars reveal a certain repetitiveness in Holy Land illustration, a few sentences from the review of Pierotti's work in the *Athenaeum* (which predated the dispute) indicates the extent to which Jerusalem and the Holy Land had been covered by illustrators by 1864. Regarding the plates, the anonymous reviewer wrote:

*For a man who has no other books on Jerusalem they will be useful enough; for they present a reader with many of the most popular and orthodox sites. ... But a student who cares about either the present aspects or the historical antiquities of Jerusalem already knows these places from Catherwood, Roberts, Bartlett, Werner, Graham, and their fellow labourers, just as well as he knows a photograph of the Coliseum or the Ducal Palace. They have all been figured, and well figured, long ago.*<sup>13</sup>

Naturally, one could ask how innovative Bedford's photographs were, especially compared to those of his predecessor in Egypt and the Holy Land, Francis Frith. Without having had access to all of Bedford's Levantine corpus, I find it difficult to remark upon the qualitative aspects of his work overall, or to judge the extent to which his photographs resembled the images of his predecessors. However, with regard to one of Bedford's photographs from the site of Philae in Egypt, the reviewer of the exhibit for the *British Journal of Photography* noted that it had been taken from almost the same location as one of Frith's, and remarked that they were "both excellent, but the sentiment and expression [was] entirely different in the two renderings."<sup>14</sup> Apart from being taken in virtually the same location, the images have almost identical framing, and only differ in tone – an effect that could have been easily produced in the darkroom.

## Circumstances

Francis Bedford was born in London in 1819, the son of an architect.<sup>15</sup> He had already gained critical attention as a lithographer for the innovative firm of Day and Son, holders of the royal warrant for lithography. Still in their employ, he took up photography in 1853, and shortly thereafter received the first of a number of royal commissions for photographs. One such commission, on a grand scale, had him accompany the young Albert, Prince of Wales, and his entourage on a lengthy tour from England through Europe to Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece in 1862.<sup>16</sup> Although he was widely acknowledged to be one of England's best landscape photographers, that he was sent to the Levant by royal command was seen as controversial in some circles. It is possibly related to the fact that his employer at the time, the company Day and Son, held the royal warrant for lithography and subsequently marketed his photographs. Also, his family connections with the Royal Navy may have stood him in good stead in this instance. The other members of the tour consisted of high-ranking military officers, some private individuals, and the Rev. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (mentioned above), a 'Broad Church' Anglican who had avoided becoming too deeply entangled in the religious controversies of 1860. Almost certainly, the trip was undertaken partly to rehabilitate the tarnished image of the young Prince of Wales, 'Bertie the bounder', who, not yet 21 years of age, had run afoul of public opinion and, more importantly, that of his parents when it emerged in 1861 that he had spent the night with an actress. Given his later personal history, any effect was, at most, temporary.

Detailed reports of the royal progress through the Levant were filed in the pages of the weekly *Illustrated London News*, accompanied by illustrations based on sketches done by various artists, at least one of whom was part of the prince's entourage.<sup>17</sup> In these illustrations, Egyptian locations predominated – there were no illustrations from Palestine. This absence is somewhat ironic, given that the singular 'coup' of the tour, described at great length in the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News*, was to gain admission to the Great Mosque in Hebron, including the area containing the tombs of the patriarchs – the latest success in the Anglo-European game of penetrating the sacred spaces of the Middle East.<sup>18</sup>

Bedford himself was depicted in the 10 May edition of the *Illustrated London News*, standing behind his camera, which is pointed toward one of the ruins on the Egyptian island of Philae, and consulting with the Prince, who is always at this time depicted as clean-shaven. This illustration seems to have been the inspiration for the cartoon that appeared in *Punch* magazine just over three weeks later; it had been preceded by a satirical poem, "The Prince and the Pyramid," in March. In the cartoon, a photographer is posed in front of the Sphinx, whose clean-shaven, sideways-glancing features make it hard to avoid the feeling that the prince was being surreptitiously represented.<sup>19</sup>

## Photographs

The Prince of Wales and his entourage returned to London on 14 June. By at least 23 July, 172 of the 200 photographs that Bedford had taken throughout the trip were on display at the German Gallery in London.<sup>20</sup> It is most likely that they were developed as 10 by 12 inch albumen prints, the format in which they would be first published.<sup>21</sup> The exhibit of Bedford's photographs at the German Gallery received a number of warm reviews. Giving their review its own elaborate headline, the *British Journal of Photography* hailed it as "perhaps the most important photographic exhibition that has hitherto been placed before the public," noting that not since the exhibit of Roger Fenton's photographs of the Crimean War in 1855 had the works of a single photographer been the subject of an entire exhibition, and further, that Francis Frith's photographs had never been exhibited publicly as a series.<sup>22</sup> The *Art Journal* praised the exhibit as "the most interesting series of photographs that has ever been brought before the public."<sup>23</sup> By at least mid-August, the exhibition was accompanied by a descriptive booklet.<sup>24</sup> The exhibit also served to introduce the sale of the photographs in a folio series available by subscription from the publisher, Day and Son. The series was slated to appear in instalments of three prints,<sup>25</sup> each mounted on a heavy sheet of paper that was larger than a sheet from a modern issue of the *New York Times*. If one were to assume a rate of one instalment per month, the series would have taken at least four years to complete. It is not clear whether the series was accompanied by descriptive letterpress. The photographs were also available individually. Later, 48 of the photographs would be issued in a smaller (quarto) format along with their descriptions in a self-contained and relatively inexpensive book that appeared in 1866.

The German Gallery was housed at 168 New Bond Street in Mayfair, London's exclusive shopping district. In 1852 it had become the business address of the renowned publisher of Victorian children's books, Joseph Cundall. Cundall was himself a photographer and publisher of photographs, and called this aspect of his business the "Photographic Institution", listed at the same address. In June 1853, the address also hosted the first exhibition of the works of modern German artists in Great Britain (hence the moniker). It was perhaps at that time, or not long afterward, that the gallery space passed into the control of the art dealer Ernest Gambart, and became known as the German Gallery.<sup>26</sup> In 1860, the German Gallery had created a sensation when it had a different exhibit inspired by the Holy Land, a single-painting show of Pre-Raphaelite painter William Holman Hunt's oil, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*. When Gambart purchased the painting and its reproduction rights, the figure set a record for the works of living British artists. As Bedford's exhibit opened, the painting was again on display at the gallery, although for a separate admission fee.<sup>27</sup> That year, the German Gallery was not the only forum in London for images of the Holy Land. At the 1862 International Exhibition in London, 43 photographs taken by the Cramb Brothers, Francis Frith and James Graham were on display – primarily of

Jerusalem – out of a total of 1,107 photographs exhibited. These photographers were nowhere near as fortunate as Bedford in the location of their gallery space. It was in the upper story of one of the exhibition buildings, far removed from the Fine Art Courts, in a space that was badly lit and, on top of everything, had a leaking roof.<sup>28</sup>

The catalogue reveals that of Bedford's 172 photographs that were on exhibit in 1862 and subsequently published in the folio edition, 46 (numbers 49-94) were from the Holy Land proper. Of these, 17 were taken in Jerusalem; a cluster of six were from the Mount Hermon area; three each were from the Monastery of Mar Saba, Nablus, and Banias; two each were from Hebron, Bethlehem and 'Samaria'; while the remainder were single images from Jaffa, Beth-Horon, Al-Jib ('Gibeon'), Bethany, Tiberias, Khan Minyeh ('Capernaum'), and Safed. As for the photos not from the Holy Land, the first forty-eight were from Egypt, while numbers 104-124 were from Lebanon and numbers 95-103 were from Damascus. The remainder were from Istanbul ('Constantinople'), Athens and other locations in the Mediterranean. Based on the descriptions of the 1863 catalogue, architectural subjects prevailed in the Egypt section and in Lebanon, Syria, Istanbul and the Aegean, whereas landscape and townscape images predominated in the Holy Land proper. A handful of the photographs were portraits; of these, surprisingly few were of the royal party.

The 48 photographs that appeared in the 1866 quarto volume consisted of ten images from Egypt; 25 from the Holy Land; one from Damascus; four from Lebanon (three of Baalbek); one of the island of Patmos; three of Istanbul; and four of Athens. The first photograph in the book was a group portrait taken in front of the pyramids at Giza, while the remaining nine images from Egypt were of architecture. The 25 images from the Holy Land can be further subdivided: of the 11 images from Jerusalem, seven are of architectural features (three images are from the Haram al-Sharif) and four are of landscape; whereas in the remaining 14 images, six are landscapes, five are townscapes, and one image is of an object (a Samaritan Pentateuch scroll). The book's appearance by at least late 1866 suggests that it was issued as the folio series neared completion; in fact, it was expressly described as a cheaper alternative.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Holy *Land*, Not the Holy Land Churches**

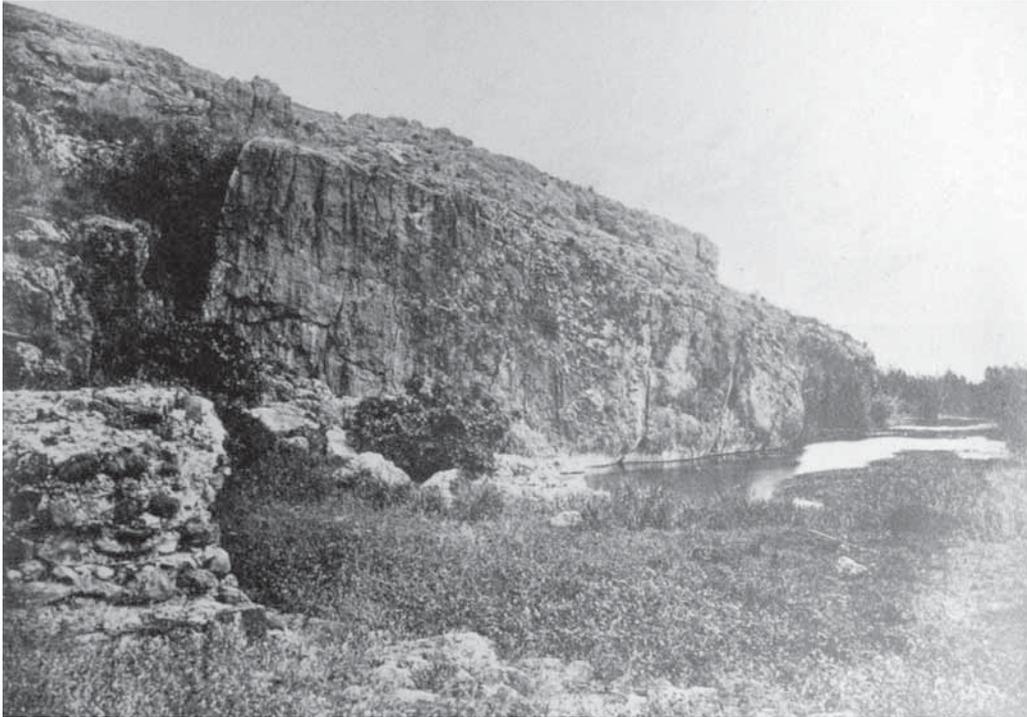
Although uncommon, enough of Bedford's photographs from Egypt and the Holy Land have been reproduced by historians of photography that one can view and appreciate them today on a purely formal or technical level.<sup>30</sup> However, this probably would not have been an option for the Victorian viewer.<sup>31</sup> One could safely assume that all contemporary middle and upper class Victorian viewers of Bedford's photographs from the "Tour in the East" would share in common a sound knowledge of the Bible narratives and some appreciation of the religious debates of the time;

certainly some of them would have followed with interest the detailed reports of the tour that had appeared in the pages of London's *Times* and the *Illustrated London News* (discussed earlier). In an article headlined on the front page of an issue of the latter, they would read of the author's hopes for the effect that the tour, which had just concluded, would have upon the prince:

*...would it be possible for an ingenuous mind, just awaking to the responsibilities of life, and growing conscious of the lofty part he was anxiously expected by millions to play, to traverse this Holy Land, and sojourn upon its most desolate but historical sites as a traveller, without being brought into close and not unpleasing proximity to the religious lessons with which they were associated, or without getting to feel something of the solid foundations upon which rest the great truths which more than anything else have formed the character, coloured the hopes, fears, aspirations, and tone of thought and feeling of the great nation he is destined to govern?*<sup>32</sup>

The strong representation of landscape and townscape views to the detriment of architecture in the Holy Land sections of the 1862 exhibition and folio edition and the 1866 quarto volume may have been due to Bedford's predilections as a photographer, or to a distaste for the native Christian communities. These forms of representation, however, also could have been inserted easily into various programmes of biblical hermeneutics, which themselves were aligned with a broad spectrum of Enlightenment and Romantic thought regarding the use of the imagination as a tool for historical understanding. A combination of a distaste for the traditional Holy Land churches and a belief in the efficacy of Holy Land landscapes and townscapes is found in the writing of the otherwise unknown "W. M. Thompson", the author of the text for the 1866 quarto volume and presumably also the 1863 catalogue.<sup>33</sup> His introductory chapter to the 1866 volume contains a lengthy segment where photography is praised over drawings and watercolours, namely those of David Roberts, as providing "actual, positive truth" and "rigid accuracy, even though lacking grace and almost comeliness."<sup>34</sup> These qualities are to be preferred in subjects "closely connected with the historical facts of our holy religion, and above all in those subjects which are for ever identified with the life, travels, ministry, and death of our Lord." But, under the influence of this truth and accuracy, the viewer will want to turn away from the traditional holy sites with their churches and shrines:

*...by how much more disgustfully we avert our eyes and our steps from all these false and worthless so-called 'Holy places,' by so much the more keenly do we appreciate, and with more profound reverence gaze on those natural features of the country, ... all in their main features and broad characteristics the same now as when our Lord walked amongst them and drew from them instruction, exhortation, or reproof.*<sup>35</sup>



W. M. Thompson, *The Holy Land, Egypt, Constantinople, Athens...photographed by Francis Bedford for H. R. H. Prince of Wales during his Tour in the East* (London: Day & Son, c1866). Plate 32, page 68, “Khan Minyeh—the reputed site of Capernaum.” This image is equivalent to *Photographic pictures* (1863), photograph number 83. Reproduced with kind permission of the United Library, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois.

Thompson’s denigration of the traditional holy sites with their ancient churches and ties to Catholicism or Russian Orthodoxy (and by extension, to France and Russia) was a commonplace in nineteenth-century British and American Protestant thought.<sup>36</sup> However, in this instance, the denigration may not have been simply related to British imperialist concerns over their country’s lack of representation and ‘clout’ in the Holy Land,<sup>37</sup> but also to on-going conflicts within the established church of England itself. One of the most concise expressions of these conflicts was the publication in 1860 of *Essays and Reviews*, a composite work by seven clergy of the liberal, ‘Broad’ Anglican church; a work which, according to one of its critics, threatened “to shake the foundations’ of the Church of England by its repudiation of biblical inspiration, prophecy, validity of the atonement, and the eternal damnation of the reprobate.”<sup>38</sup> The essay by Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, took up the topic of biblical hermeneutics, or interpretation.<sup>39</sup> Hermeneutics of the classical authors and the Bible had been the subject of a considerable amount of research in Germany in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Jowett aligned himself with this work, especially that of F. E. D. Schleiermacher, who “argued that the

interpretation of the Bible must be placed within the general rules and principles for interpretation applied to all texts.”<sup>40</sup> Separating the work of biblical interpretation from the work of applying the Bible to one’s own life, Jowett set out three major interpretive principles: the recovery of the original meaning of the given book of the Bible is fundamental; the interpretation of that particular book or literary genre of the Bible should be based on the content of that book or genre alone (and not of others, either within the Bible or outside of it); and finally, that the Bible “should be read like any other book.”<sup>41</sup>

A crucial aid in carrying out Jowett’s first principle in recovering the original meaning of the Bible is the development in the interpreter of an ability “to transfer himself to another age; to imagine that he is a disciple of Christ or Paul; to disengage himself from all that follows. The history of Christendom is nothing to him; but only the scene at Galilee or Jerusalem, the handful of believers who gathered themselves together at Ephesus, or Corinth, or Rome.”<sup>42</sup> The intellectual pedigree behind this approach, often referred to as ‘historical sympathy’ or ‘historicism’, can follow any number of eighteenth or early nineteenth-century continental lines, while in Great Britain the philosopher and historian David Hume was its most prominent advocate.<sup>43</sup> Edward Said briefly mentioned the role of historical sympathy in the formation of Orientalism, while Douglas Nickel saw in Francis Frith’s descriptions for *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described* the influence of historical sympathy as refracted through the thought of the art historian John Ruskin.<sup>44</sup> Although Jowett was referring to the way in which the *text* of scripture should be approached when his principle “to recover the original [meaning]” was followed, it is an approach that could easily incorporate the *visual* appreciation of the Holy Land itself, as will be seen below.

Jowett’s directive to “read the Bible like any other book” made him temporarily infamous in some circles before it became standard practice by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup> His advice to the reader “to transfer himself to another age; to imagine that he is a disciple of Christ or Paul,” which resembled the recommendations of Ignatius of Loyola in *Spiritual Exercises*, is one of the positive parts of his set of new hermeneutical parameters. It is just as important to understand some of the things that Jowett’s approach *rejected* in advance of the positive programme. It rejected centuries of previous biblical interpretation, in which the assumed structural and theological unity of the Bible as a single book authored by God not only guaranteed that divine inspiration was uniformly distributed throughout all of Scripture, but also allowed any part of the Bible to be interpreted in light of any other part – an approach referred to as interpretation according to ‘the analogy of faith’. In a similar vein, it also rejected the lengthy tradition of mystical and allegorical modes of interpretation, as well as interpretations used to ground in the Bible various dogmatic positions that arose much later in time.<sup>46</sup> Such a rejection of the Church of England’s established

canons of biblical interpretation was more than a matter of private preference – anyone who wished to enter or remain in British academic or Anglican Church life in an official capacity had to subscribe in writing to the Church’s doctrine, as summarized in the “Thirty-Nine Articles”.

Thus, Jowett’s promotion of the development of ‘historical sympathy’ for the figures of the Bible in their own time both resembled some earlier forms of pious meditation that would have been known to many in the Anglican tradition, and was an established part of earlier intellectual traditions. More radical was the notion that his overall approach should *replace* traditional biblical hermeneutics, excluding the ‘analogy of faith’ by a (re)historicized Bible. On the face of it then, and quite apart from Britain’s lack of historical ties to the traditional Christian communities in the Holy Land, such an approach would seem to leave little room for anything other than a purely academic appreciation for the Church in its various manifestations in previous centuries *anywhere*. However, this was not necessarily the case – Charles John Ellicott, a scholar and cleric on the ‘High Church’ side, would include in his riposte to Jowett, first published in London in 1861, his own appeal to the cultivation of historical sympathy as part of his hermeneutical principle to “Illustrate, wherever possible, by reference to history, topography, and antiquities.”<sup>47</sup> Ellicott stated:

*To modern travellers in Palestine the student of Scripture is under obligations which as yet have not by any means been fully recognized. By the aid of their narrative we can sometimes almost place ourselves in the position of the first beholders, and see the whole scene of mystery or mercy disclose itself before our eyes. ....How the narrative gains in freshness and interest; how much nearer we seem brought to the past! Till we made use of this form of illustration, the events of the Gospel history...are almost regarded as if they had taken place in heaven...*<sup>48</sup>

As opposed to Jowett however, Ellicott specifically included interpretation by the “analogy of faith” in his canons, thereby preserving both Church of England hermeneutical traditions and, by extension, the Church’s authority.<sup>49</sup>

## **A Portrait in a Landscape**

Mid-century Victorian Holy Land photographs could look very much alike, and none of them looked like David Roberts’ brilliant, sun-drenched lithographs – Francis Bedford and W. M. Thompson were perfectly aware of this fact. But one photograph taken by Bedford in the Holy Land could not have had any precedents in principle, and that was a portrait of the Prince of Wales and his entourage at lunch under an immense fig tree by the spring “Ain-et-Tîn” at Khan Minyeh, believed then to be the



*Photographic pictures made by Mr. Francis Bedford during the Tour in the East in which, by command, he accompanied H. R. H. the Prince of Wales (London: Day & Son, 1863). Photograph number 84, “Group at Ain-et-Tin.” The Prince of Wales and his entourage are depicted. Reproduced with kind permission of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.*

site of the New Testament’s Capernaum (number 84 of the 1863 catalogue)<sup>50</sup>. This rather unflattering portrait of the Prince of Wales and his entourage – the review of the exhibition in the *Illustrated London News* admitted as much – was produced and circulated at a time when individuals who wanted to publicize their travels to the Middle East would typically have themselves depicted in studio portraits attired in traditional Middle Eastern clothing.<sup>51</sup> To account for this portrait’s production as well as subsequent exhibition and publication, it is not enough to suppose that the tour was so rigorous that it precluded formal portraiture. Although the court was still officially in mourning over the death of the Prince Consort in late 1861, the Prince of Wales and his entourage were entertained any number of times while in the Middle East, and it would have been vastly easier for Bedford to take one of his wet-plate photographs indoors or in a courtyard, rather than outside in the heat and blowing dust. Rather, I think that the portrait’s justification can be seen in the photograph that preceded it in the exhibition catalogue, and in the lengthy text for the entry. Photograph number 83 is entitled “Khan Minyeh: the reputed site of Capernaum”. The photograph shows a rocky outcropping in the background which, joined by a quiet stream, trails off into the distance. Just off-centre in the image is a small dark cluster of foliage – it is the fig tree, mentioned above. The catalogue’s author wrote:

*Capernaum was the selected abode of our Lord during nearly the whole of His eventful public life...where He most showed forth His power and goodness in the miracles He wrought; where He delivered most of His discourses, and spoke most of His parables, and offered most of His prayers; where He held constant intercourse with His disciples; where His every-day life was witnessed by all...Underneath this fig-tree is seated the group of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales and his suite as in No. 84.*<sup>52</sup>

In other words, this wild and empty-looking place with its immense tree from a species mentioned in the Bible was a holy place. The expectation expressed by the author from the *Illustrated London News* – that in a place where “the very atmosphere might be felt to breathe the poetry of Holy Writ, and mountain and river, plain and lake, sea and sky, to mirror back the images it employs to set forth the sublimest truths of the Christian faith,” the prince could not help but be “brought into close and not unpleasing proximity to the religious lessons with which they were associated”<sup>53</sup> – seems to be embodied in these two images and their descriptions.

As is known, the photographs from the “Tour in the East” circulated in various forms and contexts at different times. The 1866 quarto volume had a much smaller selection of photographs from the tour. In a visually dramatic but rather indistinct portrait that was the first photograph in the book, the prince and his retinue were depicted in front of the pyramids of Giza, mounted on camels. The group portrait under the fig tree was missing, but No. 83, the landscape image of Khan Minyeh, was included. Large parts of the description from the catalogue are repeated in the book’s description, but material taken from a neighbouring description in the catalogue is included, along with new material, and the presence of the royal party (who could barely be seen anyway) is not mentioned. The reader is reminded that Capernaum was cursed by Jesus in the Bible, and informed that “So utter a destruction has descended on the impenitent city and on its very ruins even, that there is not an absolute certainty that the desolate and deserted spot, with its few traces of ruins, its thorns and brushwood and rank vegetation, is really the site of Capernaum...”<sup>54</sup> Victorians appreciated ruins on a number of levels, and a whole strand of ecclesiastical thought was devoted to the notion that the ancient architectural ruins seen in the Holy Land embodied evidence that various biblical prophecies had indeed come true.<sup>55</sup> Placing the young heir to the throne of England in a context described in such terms, however, was most likely not something that could be countenanced.

The *Athenaeum* had one of the last words on the publication of the “Tour in the East.” In the column entitled, “Our Weekly Gossip,” regarding the 1866 publication, a reviewer wrote, “Under the odd title of ‘The Holy Land, Egypt, Constantinople, Athens, &c. &c.,’ Messrs. Day & Co. have issued a volume of Mr. Bedford’s photographs, illustrating the Eastern journey of the Prince of Wales. Mr. W. M.

Thompson supplies a foolish commentary on the pictures, forty-eight in number. Of course, these photographs are selected from the series already published.”<sup>56</sup>

Even if they are now rare, Francis Bedford’s “Tour in the East” photographs have a special status in the history of British photography—the occasion of the tour itself and the nature of their exhibition guarantee it. However, like many Victorian photographs, they could be strongly inflected by the words that surrounded them.

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 105-6.

<sup>2</sup> A number of Victorian-era subjects are treated in the essays in Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, eds., *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003) and in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of mid-Victorian religious controversies in the context of the impact they had upon one British photographer working in the Holy Land and the Levant, see Douglas R. Nickel, *Francis Frith in Egypt and Palestine: A Victorian Photographer Abroad* (Princeton NJ : Princeton University Press, 2004), 97-135. A deeper investigation of the issues and the controversy aroused by the publication in 1860 of *Essays and Reviews* (discussed in Nickel, *Francis Frith*, 98, 106-7), a work by several influential Anglican clerics, can be found in the introductory essay of Victor Shea and William Whitla, “From clerical culture to secularized Anglicanism: positioning *Essays and Reviews* in Victorian social transformation,” in Shea and Whitla, eds., *Essays and Reviews : The 1860 Text and Its Reading* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 4-126. Nickel also gives a nuanced treatment of the motivations and behaviours of travellers such as Frith in the context of the Middle East geopolitics of the day in pages 149-169.

<sup>4</sup> I will simply note here that a similar search, using ‘Egypt’ instead, yielded over 800 titles and editions for the same period.

<sup>5</sup> Anonymous review of *The Tent and the Khan: A Journey to Sinai and Palestine*, by Robert Walter Stewart, D. D., in the *Athenaeum* (July 4, 1857), 846-847.

<sup>6</sup> The following descriptions are taken from Helmut Gernsheim, *Incunabula of British Photographic Literature: A bibliography of British photographic literature 1839-75 and British books illustrated with original photographs* (London and Berkeley: Scolar Press, 1984): Portfolio (Gernsheim No. 187): *Photographic pictures made by Mr. Francis Bedford during the Tour in the East in which, by command, he accompanied H.R.H. the Prince of Wales* (London: Day & Son, 1863). “Three portfolios, 47 x 60 cm, comprising altogether 172 albumen prints. 25 x 30 cm [= 10 x 12 in]. Price 43 guineas. No. 1 *Egypt*, 48 photographs, 12 guineas. No. 2 *The Holy Land and Syria*, 76 photographs, 19 guineas. No. 3 *Constantinople, the Mediterranean & Athens*, 48 photographs, 12 guineas.”

The catalogue record for the copy once held by the British Library, but destroyed during World War II, lists four volumes. It is possible that the fourth volume was a set of notes. Gillian Grant records holdings of the series at the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, and at Victoria and Albert Museum and the headquarters of the Palestine Exploration Fund, both in London; see Gillian Grant, *Middle Eastern Photographic Collections in the United Kingdom* (Durham: Middle East Libraries Committee, 1989), 190-2, 142-3, 121-2. Book (Gernsheim No. 366): *The Holy Land, Egypt, Constantinople, Athens...photographed by Francis Bedford for H.R.H. Prince of Wales*

during his tour in the East (London : Day & Son, ca. 1866). Cr4to [royal quarto, page size 12.5 x 10 in]. “A series of 48 photographs, 10.5 x 12.5 cm, by Francis Bedford, with descriptive text by W. M. Thompson.”

Twelve of the photographs also appeared in Mrs. Mentor Mott, *The Stones of Palestine: Notes of a Ramble through the Holy Land* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1865). 4to, print size 7.5 x 9.5 cm (Gernsheim No. 292 gives the author’s surname incorrectly).

Some of Bedford’s photographs from the 1866 volume can be viewed by searching under “Bedford, Francis” at the website for the British Library’s project, *Catalogue of Photographically Illustrated Books*, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/photographyinbooks/>.

<sup>7</sup> Valuable illustrated reference works include Gernsheim, *Incunabula*; Nissan N. Perez, *Focus East: Early Photography in the Near East (1839-1885)* (New York: Abrams, 1988), Kathleen Stewart Howe, “Revealing the Holy Land: Nineteenth-Century Photographs of Palestine,” in *Revealing the Holy Land: The Photographic Exploration of Palestine* (Santa Barbara, California: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1997), 16-46, and Elias Sanbar, *Les Palestiniens: La photographie d’une terre et de son peuple de 1839 à nos jours* (Paris: Hazan, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Maxime du Camp, *Egypt, Nubia, Palestine and Syria. Photographic pictures collected during the years 1849, 1850 and 1851* (London: Gambart & Co, 1853- ), reviewed in the *Athenaeum* (27 August, 1853), 1017.

<sup>9</sup> Roger Taylor, *Photographs exhibited in Britain, 1839-1865: a compendium of photographers and their works* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives = Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Bibliothèque et archives, 2002).

The catalogue exists in a searchable form at the independent website, [www.peib.org.uk](http://www.peib.org.uk)

<sup>10</sup> The anonymous review of Barclay, *The City of the Great King*, appeared in the *Athenaeum* of 26 February, 1859, 282-283. Virtue’s first letter appeared in the *Athenaeum* of 19 March, 1859, p. 391. Barclay responded at length in the issue of 4 June (pp. 748-749), countered by Virtue in the issue of 18 June (p.812). The matter does not appear to have been raised again in the pages of the *Athenaeum*.

<sup>11</sup> Bill Jay, “What’s in a name? Problems of attribution in Victorian Photography”, in *Bill Jay on photography*, <http://www.billjayonphotography.com/What’s%20in%20a%20Name.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Dror Wahrman, Carney Gavin, Nitza Rosovsky, *Capturing the Holy Land: M.J. Diness and the beginnings of photography in Jerusalem* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Semitic Museum, c1993), 17-35, and John James Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem: the Palestine Exploration Fund and British interests in the Holy Land* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 63-4. <sup>13</sup> *Athenaeum* (13 February, 1864), 222.

<sup>14</sup> *British Journal of Photography* (hereby abbreviated as *BJP*) (1 August, 1862), 288. The two images in question are Frith, *Egypt and Palestine*, Vol. I, Pl. 19, “ ‘Pharaoh’s Bed,’ Island of Philae,” and Bedford, *Tour in the East* (1862), Pl. 20, “The Hypaethral Temple, commonly called Pharaoh’s Bed, and Small Chapel” = (1866), Pl. 7. <sup>15</sup> Roger Taylor, “Bedford, Francis (1816–1894),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64199>

<sup>16</sup> Bill Jay, “Royal Command: Francis Bedford’s photographs of the educational tour of the Middle East by the Prince of Wales, 1862,” in *Bill Jay on photography*, <http://www.billjayonphotography.com/Royal%20Command-%20Francis%20Bedford.pdf>

Jay suggests that it was probably the first time a royal tour was accompanied by a professional photographer: “Bedford and Bertie: The historical context for an otherwise indecipherable cartoon in *Punch*,” in *Bill Jay on photography*, <http://www.billjayonphotography.com/BedfordandBertie.pdf,2>. Bill Jay of Arizona State University (emeritus) is the preeminent historian of Francis Bedford, but much of his work remains unpublished.

<sup>17</sup> The Prince’s departure from England was reported in the *Illustrated London News* (hereby abbreviated *ILN*) (8 Feb., 1862), 141; (15 Feb., 1862), 164. He was accompanied by a number of military officers, a medic, some private individuals, and Rev. Dr. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley. At the time, the court was still in mourning over the death of the Prince Consort. Illustrations of the tour can be found in the following issues of the *ILN*: (29 Mar.), 311; (5 April), 343-350; (12 April),

370-371; (19 April), 390; (10 May), 466-467; (17 May), 497-499; (14 June), 603. With the exception of the 14 June illustration of the Prince arriving in Beirut, all other illustrations are of Egypt.

The report of his return to England on 14 June appeared in the *ILN* (21 June), 623-624; 628.

<sup>18</sup> The only report in the *ILN* of the Prince's stay in the Holy Land appears in the issue of 3 May, 1862, p. 448, describing his arrival and activities in April. The column repeats the description of the visit to the Great Mosque of Hebron that had originally appeared in the *London Times*, 26 April, 1982.

<sup>19</sup> *ILN* (10 May, 1862), 466 (illustration), 488 (description); *Punch* (7 June, 1862), 230; (29 March), 123. For a discussion of the *Punch* cartoon, see Bill Jay, "Bedford and Bertie."

<sup>20</sup> The first and last advertisements that I have been able to find for the exhibition are in *Athenaeum* (26 July, 1862), 113, and *ILN* (27 Dec., 1862), 698, respectively.

<sup>21</sup> See above, n. 6.

<sup>22</sup> *BJP* (1 August, 1862), 288.

<sup>23</sup> *Art Journal* (1 October, 1862), 211. Other reviews of the exhibition include *ILN* (26 July, 1862), 99 (with own headline); *Parthenon* (23 August, 1862), 534 (with own headline). The failure of the *Athenaeum* to review the exhibition can only be seen as a deliberate slight, although not directed toward Bedford himself.

<sup>24</sup> The appearance of a catalogue was noted in the review in the *Parthenon* (23 Aug., 1862), 534. Cambridge University Library holds *Mr. F. Bedford's Photographic Pictures taken during the Tour in the East, in which, by Command, he accompanied his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales* (London : Day & Son, Lithographers to the Queen, at the German Gallery, 168, New Bond Street, 1863). 8 to 51 pages. I thank the library's Imaging Services for swiftly providing me with a photocopy of their holding. I feel it is likely that the 1863 catalogue, which must have been provided for the folio edition, was identical to the catalogue that was belatedly issued in 1862 for the exhibition.

<sup>25</sup> *Art Journal* (1 April, 1863), 83.

<sup>26</sup> Ruari McLean, *Joseph Cundall, a Victorian Publisher: Notes on his Life and a Check-List of his Books* (Pinner : Private Libraries Association, 1976); Jeremy Maas, *Gambart: Prince of the*

*Victorian Art World* (London : Barrie & Jenkins, 1975). Cundall moved from the premises in 1868, and the gallery space passed into the hands of the French art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel. In December 1870, he held the first exhibition in Britain of the French painters who later became known as "impressionists." Today, the address houses a Bulgari jewelry store.

<sup>27</sup> Maas, *Gambart*, 157.

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, *Photographs exhibited in Britain*, www.peib.org.uk ; "Some Notes on Photographic Exhibitions in Britain 1839-1865" in *Photographs exhibited in Britain*, 26 (book) / [11] (internet).

<sup>29</sup> Bedford and Thompson, *The Holy Land, Egypt* (1866), 6.

<sup>30</sup> Kathleen Stewart Howe, *Excursions along the Nile: The Photographic Discovery of Ancient Egypt* (Santa Barbara CA : Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1994), Plates 58-62, pp. 105-109; Howe, *Revealing the Holy Land*, 115-118; 129.

<sup>31</sup> Douglas Nickel, *Francis Frith*, 126.

<sup>32</sup> "Return of the Prince of Wales from the Holy Land," *ILN* (21 June, 1862), 624.

<sup>33</sup> A reviewer of the 1866 publication refers to the author as "Mr. W. M. Thomson"; *Athenaeum* (22 Dec., 1866), 842. This individual cannot be linked with William McClure Thomson, D. D., American missionary and author of *The Land and the Book* (whose first British edition was in 1859), nor with his British contemporary William Thomson, Archbishop of York – neither man would have remained anonymous as the author of the exhibition catalogue or in responding to criticism of it in the pages of the *Parthenon* in 1862, nor would they have omitted their degrees and titles after their names on the title page of the 1866 publication.

<sup>34</sup> Joel Snyder traces the separation of the photograph from the other depictive arts and its characterization as something that belonged to "the realm of the factual, the material, the physically real" in Snyder, "Territorial Photography," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 180-182.

<sup>35</sup> *The Holy Land, Egypt* (etc.; 1866), 5.

<sup>36</sup> Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem*, 18-20.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-45.

<sup>38</sup> *Essays and Reviews* (London : John W. Parker and Son, West Strand, 1860). Shea and Whitla,

“From clerical culture,” 5.

<sup>39</sup> Benjamin Jowett, “On the interpretation of Scripture” in *Essays and Reviews*, 330-433.

<sup>40</sup> Shea and Whitla, “From clerical culture,” 111.

<sup>41</sup> Jowett, “On the interpretation of Scripture”, 337-338; Shea and Whitla, “From clerical culture”, 114-117.

<sup>42</sup> Jowett, “On the interpretation of Scripture”, 338; 378.

<sup>43</sup> James Farr, “Hume, hermeneutics, and history: a “sympathetic” account,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 17 No. 3 (Oct., 1978), 285-310, esp. 299-304.

<sup>44</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979; 1994), 118. Douglas Nickel, *Francis Frith*, 126. It is clear from the excerpt that Nickel includes from Frith’s autobiography of 1884 that Frith is sympathetic to a number of the Essayists’ positions. Nickel, *Francis Frith*, 127 and 212 n. 38.

<sup>45</sup> Shea and Whitla, 107, 122.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 109; 9.

<sup>47</sup> Charles John Ellicott, “Scripture and its interpretation,” in William Thomson, editor, *Aids to faith; a series of theological essays* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1863), 493.

<sup>48</sup> Charles John Ellicott, “Scripture and its interpretation,” 495.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 509; Shea and Whitla, “From clerical culture,” 8-9.

<sup>50</sup> Catalogue No. 84, “Group at Ain-et-Tîn.” According to the prince’s personal diary of the tour, the photograph was taken at noon on 21 April, as cited in Bill Jay, “Royal Command,” 7.

<sup>51</sup> “Photographs of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales’ Eastern Tour,” *ILN* (26 July, 1862), 99. Douglas R. Nickel, “Self-portrait in Eastern costume,” in *Francis Frith*, 149-170.

<sup>52</sup> *Mr. F. Bedford’s Photographic Pictures* (see above, n. 24), 33.

<sup>53</sup> “Return of the Prince of Wales from the East” *ILN* (21 June, 1862), 624.

<sup>54</sup> Bedford and Thompson, *The Holy Land, Egypt* (1866), 69.

<sup>55</sup> For example, this sentiment can also be found in the descriptive letterpress of the Introduction by Rev. George Croly, in David Roberts, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia*, as reproduced in W. D. Davies *et al.*, *Jerusalem and the Holy Land rediscovered*, 95; also in a work of Rev. J. L. Porter (author of Murray’s *Handbook for travellers in Syria and Palestine*, 1858), entitled *The giant cities of Bashan and Syria’s holy places* (London : Nelson & Son, 1865). A reviewer for the *Athenaeum* wrote: “...the text has the character of contributions to one of the cheap religious periodicals. Mr. Porter’s new book may be described as a popular summary of some parts of his former writings. His more immediate object is to show that Scripture prophecy has been fulfilled in a great many of the holy places, and that the desolations threatened by Joel, Isaiah, and other prophets have been literally fulfilled” *Athenaeum* (25 March, 1862), 421.

<sup>56</sup> *Athenaeum* (22 Dec., 1866), 842.