

# Jerusalem through Evangelical Eyes: Nineteenth-Century Western Encounters with Palestinian Christianity

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## Abstract

This essay explores Western attitudes to Christianity in Palestine as recorded in the accounts of nineteenth-century travelers, especially British Evangelical Protestants, to Jerusalem. Nineteenth-century Evangelicals shared a hostility towards non-Protestant Christian denominations, an unwavering belief in the Bible as a historically infallible document, and an attitude towards Palestine and the Jewish people that led them towards what is now recognized as Christian Zionism. In Jerusalem, the essay argues, travelers came face-to-face with a “Christian Orient” which lay far beyond their previous conceptions of Christianity. This was exemplified by travelers’ attitude to the event that is held most sacred by Palestinian Christians: the Easter ceremony in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Evangelicals attended the Easter service not as worshippers, but detached observers. Denying completely the sacred importance of the ceremony, they viewed it as a tradition setting the Christians of the Orient apart from themselves, as shown through analysis of their reports of the event. Ultimately, the essay contends, Western travelers’ repeated ideological attacks on the practice of Christianity in Jerusalem served to delegitimize the Palestinian Christian community in Western eyes, informing the outlook of British Mandate officials and the Christian Zionist Evangelicals of today.

## Keywords

British travelers; Christianity; Christian Zionism; Church of the Holy Sepulchre; Evangelical Protestantism; nineteenth century; Orientalism; Orthodox Christianity; Palestinian Christians; Protestantism.

This essay explores Western attitudes to Christianity in Palestine as recorded in the accounts of nineteenth-century travelers, especially British Evangelicals of various denominations, to Jerusalem. In 1906, Charles W. Wilson described “the views of those earnest Christians of all denominations” – in reality, Evangelical Protestants – concerning the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, recognized by most Christians since the fourth century as marking the location of Christ’s crucifixion and tomb. Wilson, a key figure in the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) in the late nineteenth century, was well-placed to observe the attitudes of his own milieu of archaeologists, missionaries, and wealthy tourists who flocked to Palestine in the phenomena of the “Peaceful Crusade.”<sup>1</sup> He noted that, “Educated pilgrims to the Holy City are often sorely perplexed when they visit the ‘holy places’ for the first time. They know that Christ suffered without the gate. They find Golgotha within the walls of a small Oriental city and in close proximity to its thronged bazârs.”<sup>2</sup> Wilson’s observation touched one of Western travelers’ core obsessions: the controversy over the Church of the Holy Sepulchre’s site based on arguments concerning the locations of Jerusalem’s ancient walls outside of which, according to the Bible’s wording, the crucifixion occurred, and their search for the “true” site. This led in the 1890s to the purchase by a group of British Protestants of the site of the Garden Tomb, outside the Old City of Jerusalem’s walls in post-1948 East Jerusalem.

This story has been told in academic research before.<sup>3</sup> Yet here we note Wilson’s articulation of this process as driven not by biblical description or archaeological evidence, but rather Westerners’ inability to reconcile the aesthetics of their faith with the existing Jerusalem. Wilson candidly described Western visitors’ first impressions of Christianity’s most sacred site as “hasty and unfavourable,” leading them to “seek some spot which appeals more directly to the eye and to their preconceived ideas of the character and appearance of Golgotha.”<sup>4</sup> From stained glass and Sunday schools, travelers had a mental image of the crucifixion site as, in the words of a popular English hymn, “a green hill far away.”<sup>5</sup> Finding the church well within late Ottoman Jerusalem, travelers were further disconcerted by “thronged bazârs” evidencing an indigenous society contradicting the idea of Palestine as a blank canvas awaiting the prophesied Jewish Restoration.<sup>6</sup>

This complex of attitudes, critically deconstructed throughout this essay, survives in the outlook of tens of thousands of Evangelical tourist-pilgrims, particularly from North America, who arrive in Palestine/Israel each year. Viewing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as “distasteful, unaesthetic, and sometimes ‘idolatrous,’” they are fed a politicized Christian Zionist narrative by Israeli tour guides, resulting in their view of Palestine’s indigenous Christians, in the words of the veteran Palestinian activist Jean Zaru, as “not among the chosen,” but “rather, one of the cursed.”<sup>7</sup> In examining these beliefs’ emergence, this essay first engages with Edward Said’s articulation of Orientalism, before turning to Jerusalem, and representations of the Easter ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

## “The Central Point and Nucleus of All Biblical Geography”

It is an important part of Said’s thesis in his seminal *Orientalism* that Western discourse on “the Orient” has been largely determined by attitudes toward, specifically, Islam. In “the Near Orient,” Said wrote, “[...] Islam was supposed to define cultural and racial characteristics.”<sup>8</sup> Said explored this theme further in his *Covering Islam*, writing that the discourse of “Islam versus the West [...] is the ground base for a staggeringly fertile set of variations,” with their origins in “what was called ‘the Oriental Renaissance,’ a period in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when French and British scholars discovered ‘the East’ anew.” This “discovery” did not, of course, imply acceptance: Said noted that “Islam has never been welcome in Europe.”<sup>9</sup> Said’s conceptualization of Orientalism is, essentially, the encounter between an Islamic East and secular West. Yet while it would be churlish to deny the overlap between Orientalism and Islamophobia, Said’s formula is somewhat simplified, problematizing an understanding of Orientalist views towards Palestine, what Lorenzo Kamel identifies as “Biblical Orientalism,” shaped as much by encounters with non-Western Christianity as with Islam.<sup>10</sup>

In his critique of Said, Eitan Bar-Yosef argues that “throughout the nineteenth century, English stakes in the Holy Land were shaped by traditions and articulated in ways which cannot be accommodated by Said’s model of Orientalism.” Bar-Yosef identifies this lacuna as arising from Said’s evaluation of “Orientalism as a secular, de-Christianized phenomenon.”<sup>11</sup> While the secular Enlightenment formed the background to modern Orientalism’s emergence, European travelers consistently related to Palestine as the Christian Holy Land.<sup>12</sup> While they were confronted with the region’s government by the Islamic entity of the Ottoman Empire, its inhabitation by an overwhelmingly Muslim population, and Islam’s visible presence almost everywhere from the village shrine to the Dome of the Rock – “one is never out of sight of Mohammedan religion for an hour of travel,” one British traveler complained – they continued to conceptualize it as a Judeo-Christian sacred space, temporarily occupied by Islam.<sup>13</sup> Jás Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés note of the earliest European travel narrative of Palestine, that of the Bordeaux Pilgrim produced in 333 AD, that Palestine was “only meaningful in relation to scripture, and its landmarks acquire their significance by being interpreted in the light of the Biblical text which is the pilgrim’s principal resource”; this sentiment is almost as applicable to Western textual discourse of a millennia-and-a-half later.<sup>14</sup>

This paper largely concentrates on the attitudes of nineteenth-century British Evangelicals, mainly members of the Anglican Church, but also some Nonconformists. They shared a hostility toward non-Protestant Christian denominations, an unwavering belief in the Bible as a historically infallible document, and an attitude towards Palestine and the Jewish people that led them towards what is now recognized as Christian Zionism. It was undoubtedly in Britain, after the Protestant Reformation, that these ideas first emerged.<sup>15</sup> The doctrines spread to North America where they were adopted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by many Evangelical sects

essentially unchanged, notwithstanding the unique resonances of American settler identities with Palestine's biblical history.<sup>16</sup> For example, the *doyen* of biblical archaeologists, Edward Robinson, while an American, could trace both his genetic and his theological lineage back to western England, from which his Puritan ancestors had emigrated in the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup>

In the nineteenth century, interest in Palestine soared, especially in Protestant Britain, as a result of the Evangelical Revival with its literalist reading of the Bible and belief in the Restoration, the gathering of the world's Jews in Palestine.<sup>18</sup> Western travelers viewed Palestine "through the eyes of the Bible," in the words of the prominent Anglican churchman and Palestine Exploration Fund co-founder Arthur Penrhyn Stanley.<sup>19</sup> In response to scientific advances which challenged literalist interpretation of scripture, Evangelicals adopted semi- (or pseudo-) scientific methods to establish the Bible's veracity, cross-referencing the sacred text against the Palestinian landscape.<sup>20</sup> This frequently put Evangelicals at odds with existing Christianity in Palestine, its traditions dating from the Byzantine era, indigenized by the native Palestinian Christian population. These erroneous and embarrassing traditions, Evangelicals considered, needed to be eliminated if the battle against atheism in the West was to be won. The most notable example of this process was the search for an alternative site for Christ's tomb.

There was both change and continuity between earlier European pilgrimage to Palestine and later Evangelical travel. Protestant visitors looked down on their Catholic predecessors from medieval Europe, and their Christian non-Protestant contemporaries, who had journeyed to the Holy Land over centuries for spiritual salvation. Robinson scoffed at the non-Protestant "pilgrimage to Jerusalem," which "instead of being resorted to merely as a means of elevating and purifying the religious feelings, and quickening the flame of devotion, should come to be regarded as having in itself a sanctifying and saving power."<sup>21</sup> Yet for Evangelicals, Jerusalem remained the center of the universe, as it had been the center of the medieval *mappa mundi*. Robinson stated that only from Palestine "has gone forth, to other nations and to modern times, all the true knowledge which exists of God, of his Revelation, of a Future State, and of Man's Redemption through Jesus Christ"; Palestine, compared to which "the splendor and learning and fame of Egypt, Greece, and Rome fade away," is "the central point and nucleus of all Biblical Geography." The area of "Biblical Geography," regions included within the Bible narrative or Christianity's early spread, was largely coterminous with the western Asian Islamic Orient:<sup>22</sup> these included Lebanon "in great part comprised within the original boundaries of the twelve tribes [of Israel]," Sinai "the scene of the wanderings of Israel, as they came up out of Egypt to take possession of the Promised Land," and "outlying regions" from "Northern Syria" to "the rugged country of Armenia," to "the vast plains of Mesopotamia," to Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Turkey, and stretching into Europe through Greece. While in many of these areas Christians formed a small minority, these lands were nevertheless conceived as Christian in essence.

Travelers came face-to-face in this "Christian Orient" with an array of denominations

lying outside the Protestant-Catholic binary defining Europeans' conception of Christianity's history. Like the West's encounter with the Islamic Orient, meeting the Christian Orient also produced strongly negative reactions. Evangelicals struggled to identify the "so-called Christians" of the East, as Scottish missionary John Wilson scathingly wrote, with doctrines and traditions at obvious variance with Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, as coreligionists at all.<sup>23</sup> Nowhere could the Christian Orient be encountered with such force as in Jerusalem, identified by Britain's mid-nineteenth century consul in Jerusalem James Finn, a key figure in Evangelical Christian Zionist efforts, as "the grand central point to which all of the branches of those Eastern and Western churches gravitate."<sup>24</sup>

## **"What We Least Valued": Evangelicals in Jerusalem**

"People often say they are disappointed in Jerusalem [...] they are disappointed, not because Jerusalem is what it is, as because it does not correspond with what they had trained themselves to expect." These words of Charles Biggs, Anglican chaplain in Jerusalem in 1892, accurately encapsulated many Western visitors' reactions. Biggs continued, "They have come to the Holy Land for the sake of the Bible story, and take no account of the subsequent changes, the wars, and sieges, and burnings, and re-buildings."<sup>25</sup> Protestant travelers came to Jerusalem hoping to walk in Christ's footsteps. What they found, however, was a Jerusalem visibly dominated by Islam, with a crowded Jewish quarter far from the romantic impressions of the ancient Israelites, and Christian holy sites monopolized by Orthodox, Catholic, and other non-Protestant denominations. Travelers retreated into what Scottish clergyman Norman Macleod called "a Jerusalem of their own – full of the beautiful, the sacred, the holy, and the good."<sup>26</sup> As Issam Nassar notes, this "historical imagination paves the way toward actual colonization"; from nineteenth-century travelers, to the Zionist movement, to contemporary Christian Zionist tourists, there has been a consistent wish to possess Jerusalem and reshape the city according to colonial and/or religious desire.<sup>27</sup>

Travelers were instinctively hostile to manifestations of Christianity in Jerusalem, even though members of the community often showed travelers around the city as dragomans (from the Arabic *turjaman*, translator) guides. There was a fundamental mismatch between what local Christian dragomans thought visitors should see, and what Protestant travelers wanted to see. John Wilson complained that "our Christian guides cared most for what we least valued, the monkish traditions, which our own reading had previously almost uniformly taught us to discard."<sup>28</sup> Travelers' distaste for sites such as the Via Dolorosa, venerated by non-Protestant pilgrims and Palestinian Christians, led the influential Christian Zionist Laurence Oliphant to dismiss Jerusalem as containing "more sacred shams and impostures than any other city in the world."<sup>29</sup> Encountering Christians worshipping at these locations prompted travelers to express their disdain for and disclaim any suggestion of kinship with non-Western Christians. The novelist Anthony Trollope described in high Orientalist fashion worshippers at

the Tomb of the Virgin Mary just outside the Old City:

It must be remembered that Eastern worshippers are not like the churchgoers of London, or even of Rome or Cologne. They are wild men of various nations and races – Maronites from Lebanon, Roumelians [i.e. Balkan], Candiotas [Cretan], Copts from Upper Egypt, Russians from the Crimea, Armenians and Abyssinians. They savour strongly of Oriental life and of Oriental dirt. [...] They are silent mostly, looking out of their eyes ferociously, as though murder were in their thoughts, and rapine.<sup>30</sup>

These encounters within Jerusalem turned travelers' attentions to rural locations where Westerners could more clearly picture the Bible narrative. "The [Church] of the Holy Sepulchre [...] may be closed against us," wrote Stanley, "but we have still the Mount of Olives and the Sea of Galilee; the sky, the flowers, the trees, the fields, which suggested the Parables; the holy hills, which cannot be removed, but stand fast forever."<sup>31</sup>

Travelers also viewed the villages of the Palestinian *fellahin* as a more "authentic" throwback to biblical days than the established Christian sites, confusing local guides. The parson-naturalist Henry Baker Tristram recorded his Orthodox Christian dragoman's reaction at the village of Baytin, north of Jerusalem: "No holy places here, and no pilgrims ever visit them. I have been dragoman to scores of Russians and Frenchmen, but it is only you English who come here. Perhaps you only care for places where there are no saints, as you do not adore them?" According to Tristram, although he tried to explain the village's importance as somewhere Christians could "feel our nearness to a watchful Providence," his dragoman remained uncomprehending as "there were no saints of the calendar here, and beyond them his veneration could not stretch."<sup>32</sup> In broadening their gaze to encompass the countryside and Palestinian villages, travelers cast a colonial eye over the land, imagined as possessing only a sparse and undeveloped population.

Reversing the Orientalism-as-Islamophobia thesis, travelers sometimes contrasted Islam positively to Palestinian Christianity. Tristram juxtaposed the "childish and ridiculous ceremonies" of "the lowest and most corrupt form of Christianity," to Islam "simple and noble in idea and in form."<sup>33</sup> This extended to travelers' attitudes towards Islam's most prominent symbol in Jerusalem, the Haram al-Sharif compound, which Protestants appreciated for its uncluttered spaciousness in which to reflect upon the Bible. "Would that the Holy Sepulchre and other holy sites had been preserved with the same good taste," lamented Isabel Burton, wife of the infamous Orientalist and British Consul in Damascus Richard Burton.<sup>34</sup>

The remainder of this essay returns to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which received the lion's share of Western criticism. The novelist William Makepeace Thackeray's description of the Church's interior is exemplary:

blaring candles, reeking incense, savage pictures of Scripture story, or portraits of kings who have been benefactors to the various chapels; a

din and clatter of strange people – these weeping, bowing, kissing – those utterly indifferent; and the priests clad in outlandish robes [...] the English stranger looks on the scene, for the first time, with a feeling of scorn, bewilderment, and shame at that grovelling credulity, those strange rites and ceremonies, that almost confessed imposture.

Ultimately, Thackeray claimed, “The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for some time, seems to an Englishman the least sacred spot about Jerusalem.”<sup>35</sup> Faced with the Church’s rich interior adornments which offended Evangelical sensibilities, travelers developed mental fantasies of sweeping the building away. “If this once irregular hillock were indeed Golgotha,” remarked Elizabeth Rundle Charles, a popular writer on Christian topics, “[...] then what a desecration this building is! What one would give to be able to sweep away this heavy roof, and this wretched gold, and these marbles, and look up from this very spot to the sky.”<sup>36</sup>

With these emotive reactions, it is unsurprising that Protestant travelers enthusiastically bought arguments over what Charles Wilson admitted was the “difficult and obscure question” of the “true” sites of Christ’s crucifixion and sepulchre, from the reasoned “Biblical researches” of Robinson to the bizarre theories of the doomed imperial hero Charles George Gordon.<sup>37</sup> Burton made a rare defense of the sepulchre site, sardonically noting “how strange that all Christendom should have been mistaken for 1841 years, and that a handful should arise of late years to show us how wrong we have been.”<sup>38</sup> As a Catholic, however, her voice lay outside the Evangelical mainstream consensus.

Familiar tropes that persist today in Evangelical attitudes and Israeli tour guide discourse, portraying the church as a locus of Oriental chaos rather than spirituality reserved for Protestantism alone, had their origins in high Orientalist discourse. One was the supposedly violent antipathies between different denominations that shared the church, today frequently exploited by Western and Israeli news agencies to cast Christianity’s practice in Palestine in a belittling light.<sup>39</sup> Ada Goodrich Freer, a spiritualist fraud who lived in Jerusalem for several years in the early twentieth century, wrote a sensationalist account of a confrontation (which she did not personally witness) between Orthodox and Franciscan monks outside the church in November 1901. In an “indescribable scene of carnage and bloodshed,” Orthodox monks, supported by Palestinian Christian women, attacked the Franciscans with “clubs [...] daggers, knives, and hatchets,” and were about to set the wounded alight with “burning rags, soaked in petroleum” when Ottoman troops intervened.<sup>40</sup> Freer, or her informants, overstated the scale of this fracas: British newspapers recorded only four to five injured monks.<sup>41</sup> Yet amplifying such incidents allowed travelers to present Palestinian Christianity as part and parcel with a barbarous Orient. This was exemplified by travelers’ attitude to the event that is held most sacred by Palestinian Christians: the Easter ceremony in Jerusalem.

## “The Disgrace of Eastern Christianity”: Witnessing the Holy Fire

Easter witnessed pilgrims from around the Christian Orient congregate in Jerusalem. While Western visitors frequently arrived in the city at the same time, they attended the Easter service on Holy Saturday not as fellow worshippers, but detached observers watching from the church’s upper galleries. Denying completely the sacred importance of the ceremony, they viewed it as one more tradition that set the Christians of the Orient apart from themselves. As Biggs aptly summarized, “Protestant travellers, who would never dream of denying themselves a single half-meal even on Good Friday,” voyeuristically attended to watch a “crowd of enthusiastic pilgrims, who have taken nothing but vegetables for six weeks [that is, fasted for Lent], welcome the symbol of their Savior’s Resurrection,” and subsequently “report to their friends at home on the extravagance they mistake for irreverence.”<sup>42</sup> The most well-known depiction was the Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt’s 1899 painting *The Miracle of the Sacred Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (figure 1), based on sketches made during Easter 1892; typically, Hunt wrote of “the ignorance of the barbaric pilgrims” who formed his subject.<sup>43</sup>

Robinson’s own attack on the location on the church, on the surface drawn from reasoned topographical arguments, partly resulted from his feelings of repulsion towards the Easter service which he witnessed in 1838; as Robinson’s admirer, American biblical archaeologist Frederick Jones Bliss, admitted, Robinson’s reactions were those of “the Puritan, not the scholar.”<sup>44</sup> Represented as total hubris, Easter at the Church stood through synecdoche for the entire Orient. One traveler described the Easter worship as a “continuation of shameless madness and rioting,” while Finn wrote that “the orgies celebrated on the occasion by the pilgrims, may be paralleled in ancient heathendom.”<sup>45</sup> Claude Reignier Conder, another PEF figure associated with the quest for an alternative crucifixion site, described “the Greek [Orthodox] Christians, mostly Syrians by birth” as becoming “worked up into a state of hysterical frenzy which would not allow them to be quiet for a moment.” He claimed that “delicate women and old men fought like furies; long black turbans flew off and uncoiled like snakes on the ground, and what became of the babies I do not know.”<sup>46</sup> Travelers were more likely to feel kinship with the Muslim Ottoman soldiers on the scene, whom Oliphant imagined felt “contempt and disgust which one felt compelled to share” at the “degrading rites and superstitions.”<sup>47</sup> Unsurprisingly, some Protestant travelers spurned the Easter service altogether. Visiting Palestine in 1847, the social commentator Harriet Martineau chose to sit watching “Olivet [the Mount of Olives] and the rising moon” rather than “witness mummeries done in the name of Christianity, compared with which the lowest Fetishism on the banks of an African river would have been inoffensive.” She nevertheless quoted a traveling companion who did attend the worship and likened it to “a holiday in hell.”<sup>48</sup>

Most offensive to Protestants was the claimed miracle of the Holy Fire, by which a flame emerged from the Edicule marking Christ’s tomb. Westerners theorized how

the “miracle” of the flame’s appearance, which Charles Wilson identified as “the disgrace of Eastern Christianity,” might be affected by a disingenuous priesthood only concerned with lining its pockets with pilgrims’ donations.<sup>49</sup> The most dramatic of all descriptions were of the Holy Fire in 1834. According to one Westerner who witnessed the events, English aristocrat Robert Curzon who traversed the Eastern Mediterranean acquiring ancient Christian manuscripts, disaster resulted from the church’s overcrowding.<sup>50</sup> The drama was heightened by the presence of Ibrahim Pasha, governor of Greater Syria during the Egyptian occupation of 1831 to 1840, then engaged in repressing a widespread Palestinian uprising (though this went unmentioned by Curzon). According to Curzon’s bloodcurdling account, once the Holy Fire was distributed with – in Orientalists’ eyes – the customary lack of dignity, smoke from the pilgrims’ candles “obscured everything in the place.” Overpowered by “heat and bad air,” “three unhappy wretches [...] fell from the upper range of galleries, and were dashed to pieces on the heads of the people below,” while “one poor Armenian lady, seventeen years of age, died where she sat, of heat, thirst, and fatigue.” This led to panic. Curzon luridly described his escape over “a great heap of bodies,” and accused Ibrahim’s guards of killing “numbers of fainting wretches” as they cleared the governor’s path, leaving “the walls [...] spattered with blood and brains of men who had been felled, like oxen, with the butt-ends of the soldiers’ muskets.” To Ibrahim’s credit, however, Curzon attributed him with organizing the survivors’ evacuation from the church; three hundred people, according to Curzon, however, were not so lucky, and were crushed to death.

Predictably, Westerners used these events in diatribes against the Holy Fire ceremony. Curzon, who unsuccessfully lobbied Ibrahim Pasha for an exposure of “the blasphemous impositions of the Greek and Armenian patriarchs” in perpetuating “so barefaced a trick [...] in these enlightened times,” utilized his chilling narrative to form a parable of Jerusalem’s fall from its supposedly ancient glory after Christ’s crucifixion. “Since the awful crime which was committed there,” he wrote, “the Lord has poured out the vials of his wrath upon the once chosen city; dire and fearful have been the calamities which have befallen her in terrible succession for eighteen hundred years.” The Easter 1834 events became apocryphal, contributing towards a discourse around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as a site of violence and death. Gordon described the church simply as “the slaughter-house,” while Conder castigated it as a “grim and wicked old building.”<sup>51</sup>

The story of the Easter 1834 disaster continues to be cited by commentators exclusively using Curzon’s and other Western accounts.<sup>52</sup> Reliance on these sources masks the fact that the eyewitnesses may have exaggerated events in line with their antipathies towards non-Western Christianity. Casting some uncertainty over the event, British newspapers reported that anywhere from “several persons” to “nearly 400” lost their lives; without cross-referencing with non-Western sources, the accuracy of these claims cannot be known.<sup>53</sup> Further research on the incident is necessary, though journalists and popular historians will likely continue uncritically recycling European accounts.

## Epilogue

Western travelers' repeated ideological attacks on the practice of Christianity in Jerusalem served to delegitimize the Palestinian Christian community in many Western Evangelicals' eyes. This is especially notable in a pamphlet entitled *The Land of Promise* by Charles Warren, a PEF colleague of Wilson's. Warren's text, four decades before the Balfour Declaration, envisaged a British occupation of Palestine "with the avowed intention of gradually introducing the Jew, pure and simple, who is eventually to occupy and govern this country." Warren anticipated that "the Moslems generally will not be difficult to keep in order"; however, he continued that "with the native Christians I see some difficulty [...] They are at present a difficult people." With thinly veiled euphemisms for militarized colonial control, Warren concluded that "keeping the native Christians within due bounds" and "very tightly in hand" would be necessary for a European occupier.<sup>54</sup>

This attitude toward Palestinian Christians was consistent with the Protestant encounter with Christianity in Jerusalem. Discursively "othering" Christians beyond Europe, Westerners denied any commonality between themselves and those who shared their faith, but whose religious practice differed from the strictures of Evangelical Protestantism. With Christians relegated to an Orient considered altogether subservient to the West, and the goal of the traditional pilgrimage replaced with the colonial desire to reshape Jerusalem and see the Jewish Restoration achieved, Christians could be construed as a nuisance and threat. These attitudes have informed the outlook of the Christian Zionist Evangelicals of today as much as of British colonial officials of the Mandate era, who attempted to sideline the Christian community, which produced leading intellectual figures of the Palestinian national movement.<sup>55</sup> The Orientalist discourse of the nineteenth century continues to cast a malign shadow over indigenous Christian practice in the land and city of Christianity's birth.

*Gabriel Polley completed his PhD in Palestine Studies at the University of Exeter in 2020, focusing on the representation of Palestine in British travel literature, 1840–1914. In 2014–15 Polley worked in Palestine and attended Birzeit University in the West Bank. His research interests center on European colonialism and support for settler-colonial projects in late Ottoman Palestine, extending to the contemporary political ramifications of this period of Palestine's history. He is currently working on a monograph on this topic, to be published in 2022 by I. B. Tauris.*

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