



Dr. Bernd Isphording

GERMANS IN JERUSALEM 1830-1914

PASSIA

The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem

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1830 – 1914



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The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem

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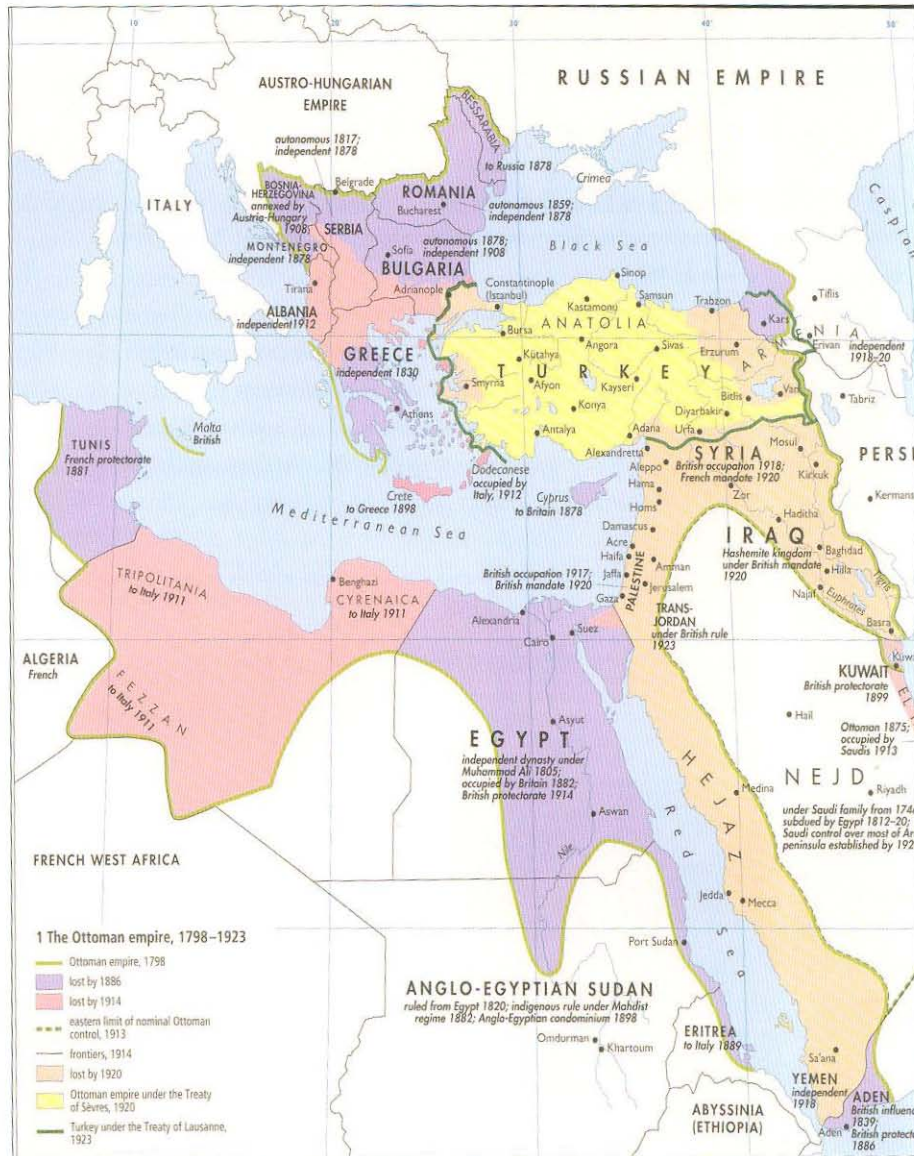
Coat of arms at the Redeemer Church. The eagle was the heraldic symbol of the kingdom of Prussia as well as of the Prussian-dominated German Empire after 1871.

An Ancient Affinity

The desire to travel to Jerusalem is as old as Christianity in Europe; it is not only a city in the Middle East, but a theological metaphor for the coming Kingdom of God. It is not always easy to understand what people had in mind when they thought of Jerusalem, and what they expected to find once they arrived, but pilgrims from the early Middle Ages onwards, from Germany, and elsewhere, tried, and still try, to reach the Holy City and the places where Jesus lived, died, and, according to the Christian scriptures, the scene of his resurrection. The stream of pilgrims over the centuries sometimes ebbed and flowed, according to the political situation, both in their home countries, and in the Middle East itself, alongside the changing trends of ecclesiastical teachings and religious practices. The late Middle Ages, with its adventurous merchants, with its love for relics, resulted in the last rise in pilgrimages to Jerusalem before the Reformation, which would only enjoy a revival in the 19th Century.



Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives (Matson Collection, before 1914).



The Late Ottoman Empire (Map taken from: worldstatesmen.org)

A Feeling of Home

It was a feeling of belonging which drew so many to Palestine. The German Protestant Bishop, Otto Dibelius (1880-1967), spoke of the “Heimatrecht - the right of one’s homeland - that every church has in Jerusalem.” Every site and every stone in the Holy City was connected to an episode of the life and death of Jesus, or from another story told in the Old Testament. Regular lessons from the Bible, and the growing number of travel books published since the early 19th Century, solidified this feeling of connection, which lent to the readiness of people, from all social strata, to donate money to missionary and charitable work in the Holy Land. It also made Palestine the perfect setting for a monarch, or a politician, to strengthen his or her profile at home and abroad.



Otto Dibelius

When the Ottomans relaxed their restrictions against non-Muslims and foreigners in 1839, Europeans of all nations and creeds reacted with eagerness. The seventy years between the early 1840s, and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, coincided with a desperate run for prestigious places in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem. Germans were strongly involved in this frenzy; churches were built, as were hostels for pilgrims, while schools and hospitals were founded. By the beginning of the First World War there were as many as 20 different German religious and charitable institutions throughout Jerusalem.

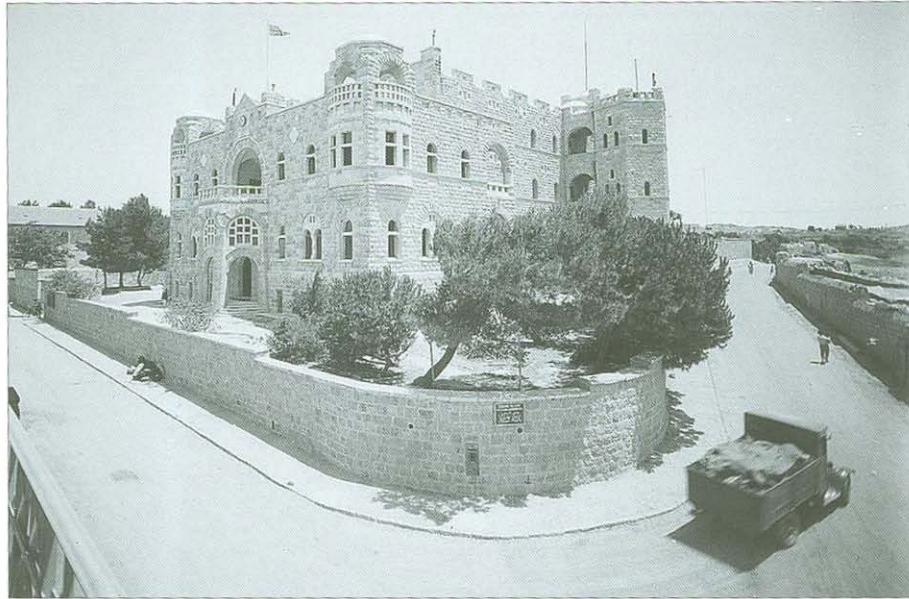
However, as a result of the Axis defeat in 1918, the demise of the Ottoman Empire, and the establishment of the British Mandate, challenging times were to come for Germans in the Holy Land. Missionaries and nurses spent years in internment

camps while their buildings were commandeered by the British Government. The revival of German institutions from the mid-1920s proved a slow process. There was a lack of money, caused by the political and financial turmoil during the time of the Weimar Republic, together with the National Socialists' oppression of churches, and strict restrictions on money sent abroad. The outbreak of the Second World War would again lead to the closing of all German institutions in Palestine. The members of the Temple Society settled for 70 years in Jerusalem, but, with a clear affiliation to the Nazis, had to leave for good when the State of Israel was established.

Other institutions were more fortunate and were able to survive. The two girls' schools of Schmidt's College opposite the Damascus Gate, and Talitha Kumi, now in Beit Jala, remain active. German monks live in the Dormitio-Abbey, and a German Protestant Parish still exists at the Redeemer Church in the Old City. There are always many Germans in the city; pilgrims and tourists, alongside volunteers,



In 1868, a Christian girls' orphanage and school, Talitha Kumi, was built in what is now part of the center of town, by the renowned architect Conrad Schick. All that now remains of the original building is a three-part memorial on King George Street - the original facade including a clock and engraving, a chimney, and part of a window - erected by Jerusalem architect David Kroyanker after the building was destroyed in 1980 to make way for property development. Today, the school is located in Beit Jala.



St. Paul's Hospice near Damascus Gate (Matson Collection, 1920-33). Today the complex also houses Schmidt's Girls College.

teachers, and aid workers, working in hostels, schools, and hospitals. They may stay for a few days, for a few months, or even some years, but they all carry unique images and experiences of the Holy City back home to Germany.

This booklet focuses on one part of the long history of German-Jerusalemite relations; the seventy year period between the founding of the Anglo-Prussian Bishopric and the First World War, the 'golden time of German involvement in Palestine'. To this day, a number of imposing buildings throughout the city stand testament to this era. These include the Hospital of the Empress Auguste Viktoria Stiftung (Augusta Victoria Foundation) on the Mount of Olives, the Redeemer Church near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Dormitio-Abbey on Mount Zion, and the German Colony, the settlement of members of the Temple Society, which gives a district of West Jerusalem its name.



Frederick Wilhelm IV King of Prussia (1840-1861)

Germany in the 19th Century

What might look from the outside as a uniform undertaking of one nation becomes, on closer inspection, a much more diverse reality. Catholics, Protestants, the Templars, the Prussian Royal Family, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II (Emperor William II), and different Jewish groups, all focused on Jerusalem in distinctively different ways. The commitment of all these people, and the way it took shape, can only be understood against the background of the German history of the time. Had the Ottoman reforms, and the subsequent opening of Palestine, have happened a generation earlier, or later, the reaction of Germans to such events would have been quite different and certainly, on a lesser scale.

Following on from the anti-religious sentiments which typified religious and romantic ideals of the Middle Ages, the Age of Enlightenment and the turmoil of the years surrounding the French revolution, the 19th Century saw a revival of the religious and romantic ideals of the Middle Ages. The Prussian King, Frederick Wilhelm IV (1840-1861), re-founded the Order of the Knights of St. John, 40 years after his father had dissolved it, as an aristocratic and charitable Protestant Society, whose Supreme Head, to this day, is a member of the Royal Prussian family of Hohenzollern. This became important in 1869 when part of the Muristan, the former Jerusalem headquarters of the then, one and only, Catholic Order of St. John, became available and the Prussian Crown Prince managed to snatch it before others got the chance.

The 19th Century was also a time of industrialization, bringing social unrest and poverty to large parts of the population. Socialism was one possible solution offered up to solve these problems. Among religious people, there was a wave of interest and support for charitable and missionary work, be it in Germany itself, or the wider world. In Protestantism, this combination of intensified piety and social work led to international collaboration, transcending borders which had hitherto divided the Protestant denominations. For example, contact, cooperation and the sharing of ideas between German Pietists and British Methodists led to the co-founding of a Protestant Bishopric by Britain and Prussia in 1841 in Jerusalem.

The religious revival moved people to devote their lives to the church. Whereas, in other periods of church history, seclusion and prayer had been central to the majority of monks and nuns, it was now social and charitable work in schools and hospitals. This trend to revive missionary and charitable orders to societies can be seen in both the Catholic and Protestant Churches, and explains the vast number of hospitals and schools that were founded in Jerusalem during that time. As founding a 'Verein', a voluntary association, was the typical first step when Germans wanted something to happen, associations founded to support the charitable work in Palestine flourished. The German Holy Land Association, a Catholic society, had, for example, as many as 30,000 members at the turn of the 20th Century and annually collected up to 130,000 Reichsmark in donations to projects in Palestine. These projects were expensive because the hospitals, schools, and hostels were free of charge, at least for the needy.

Germany as a nation was, at that period of time, divided religiously and politically. Roman Catholicism and Protestantism represented the dominant Christian religions. Politically, unlike the centralized states of Britain or France, Germany was a loosely connected federation of independent kingdoms, principalities, and free cities. Prussia and the Austrian Empire were the largest among these States and, since the 18th Century, had been in constant rivalry over leadership. They also saw themselves as protecting powers of the two Christian creeds in Germany: Prussia for the Protestants, and Austria for the Roman Catholics. A war in 1866 underlined Prussia's pre-eminence and led to the formation of a German nation state, eclipsing Austria in 1871, and made the Prussian King head of state as German Emperor.

This political unification of Germany would, over time, fuel an enthusiasm for the nationalistic course amongst Germans of all creeds. However, before this, a major clash occurred between Protestants and Catholics as the Prussian Government tried to break the Catholics' influence in Germany during the so called 'Kulturkampf', or 'cultural struggle'. Starting in 1871, winding down by 1878, and declared ended in 1887, its impact should not be underestimated. All Prussian Catholic Bishops were either deported or imprisoned, as were many of the clergy. Some religious orders stayed banned in Prussia until 1917; among them, the Lazarist Fathers, who ran the German Catholic hospice and schools in Jerusalem.

The Germans in Jerusalem

Catholics

The starting points in Jerusalem for Catholics and Protestants differed remarkably. The Roman Catholics, although a clear minority among the Christians of the Holy City, had maintained their position after the age of the Crusades, officially represented by the Franciscan Friars since 1342. Politically, France was the protector of the Catholics in Palestine, since the French King had formed a coalition with the Ottoman Sultan against the Habsburg monarchies in Germany and Spain in the 16th Century. This structure slowly began to change with the re-establishment of a Latin Bishopric in Jerusalem in 1847, which instigated a lasting quarrel over influence and money between the Franciscans and the Latin Patriarchs. Both were distinctly Italian, but Italy, like Germany, was a nation without a state. As France and the Vatican sided with the Patriarch, the Franciscans turned to the Habsburg Empire of Austria for help. The Austrians responded by opening a consulate in Jerusalem in 1849, and building the Austrian Hospice on the Via Dolorosa for subjects of the Austrian and other German states in 1857.

Despite this Austrian siding against the Patriarch, the supranational character of the Catholic Church brought strong financial support by Catholics to the resurrected Latin Patriarchate in the middle of the 19th Century. It is not surprising that the German benefactors remembered in an inscription in the cathedral church in the Patriarch's compound are mainly identified as Prussians. German Catholics, since the 1830s, had supported missionary and charitable work through the Bavarian 'Ludwigs-Missionsverein', or the 'St. Louis Mission Society', and, since the 1850s, through the 'Holy Sepulcher Society' by sending money to various Catholic and Eastern Catholic Institutions such as the Melkites, regardless of their national affiliation. The growing nationalistic feelings among German Catholics, after German unification, brought a shift of interest in the Catholic public that led to



Early German missionary and charitable work: The Diaconesses' first Hospital and School (Maronite Convent)

the founding of the 'Palestine Society'; it focused on the acquisition of holy places and the building of a German Catholic presence in Palestine. Both societies merged in 1895 creating the 'Deutscher Verein vom Heiligen Land', or the German Holy Land Society, which is still in existence today.

Protestants

In contrast, the Protestants had no existing base in Jerusalem. They were not officially recognised by the Sublime Porte until 1850, but such was the urgency felt to be a presence in Palestine, that Britain and Prussia founded a joint, Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem, as early as 1841, on the initiative of the Prussian King Frederick Wilhelm IV. To support the Anglo-Prussian Bishopric, Prussia opened a consulate in Jerusalem in 1842, second only to the British Consulate. It shows the importance of Jerusalem to the Prussian Foreign Office, that almost all consuls posted in Jerusalem between 1842 and 1914 were specialists on the Middle East, and knowledgeable in the languages and customs of the region.

The Anglo-German co-operation had no real future, as the Anglican Church did not, for example, recognise the ordinations of the German Lutheran Church. The German Pastor complained that he had to hold his services in the jointly built Christ Church near Jaffa Gate during the hot afternoons, while the Anglicans had theirs in the cool mornings. There were also differences in whom to address when preaching. The Sultan had forbidden missionary attempts to convert Muslims, so the Anglican Mission aimed more on converting Jews to Christianity, while the German missionaries, in the footsteps of Martin Luther, wanted to bring the Reformation to the Orthodox Christians, just as Luther had tried to reform the Catholic Church 300 years earlier. The founding of the German Empire in 1871 strengthened the will of the German Lutheran Church, and the Prussian Kings, as German Emperors, began to found distinctive German Protestant institutions in the Holy Land. When the German side declared the joint project with the Anglicans over

in 1886, it had already ceased to be effective. There was still no German Lutheran Bishopric in Jerusalem when the German Lutheran Parish took over the missions in the southern part of the old Anglo-Prussian Bishopric. In 1898, after the building of the Redeemer Church was complete, the German Pastor was awarded the title of 'Propst' (provost), used for regional bishops in some German Protestant churches. Only since 1979 has there been a Lutheran Bishop residing in the Redeemer Church, heading the Arab Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land that developed from the German Protestant missions.

While the German Catholic involvement in Jerusalem was mainly organised by only one organisation, the Verein vom Heiligen Land, the German Protestant endeavours were rather more complex, mirroring the diversity of the Protestant Church in Germany. From the 1840s onwards, there were three main groups of German Protestants active in Jerusalem, all of which had a pietist background and many of them personally connected.

1. The 'Prussian Group' was centred around the Anglo-Prussian Bishopric and the Prussian Consulate in Jerusalem. The group had strong support from the Prussian Royal family, the Protestant Church of Prussia and the revitalized Protestant Order of St. John. It was comprised of the Prussian Hospice and the German Protestant Parish first, as a minor part of the joint Anglo-Prussian Bishopric and then, since 1886, as an autonomous Parish and Missionary Centre.
2. The remainder were part of the strong Pietist Movement in South Western Germany and the German speaking parts of Switzerland. The centre of its missionary activities was the city of Basel. Here, Christian Friedrich Spittler organised different societies following the British example. Since 1825, Spittler worked on a concept of 'pilgrim missionaries', young craftsmen with some training in theology and languages, meant to work and missionize in Palestine and Ethiopia. Putting the concept into reality took some time, but, in 1841, Spittler was able to send the first two pilgrim missionaries to Jerusalem, one of them being Conrad Schick.

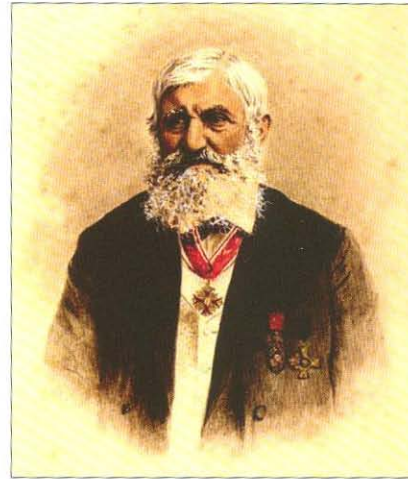


Christ. Fried. Spittler.

Christian Friedrich Spittler

Spittler's concept failed, mostly because there was still no market for the crafts his missionaries were able to offer. A new attempt was started in 1854, now trying to earn the missionaries' living by founding shops. This idea did not work either, but did bring Johann Ludwig Schneller to Jerusalem. He, like Schick before him, found his own way to do missionary work in Jerusalem. Schneller founded a highly successful orphanage and school with a focus on teaching different crafts

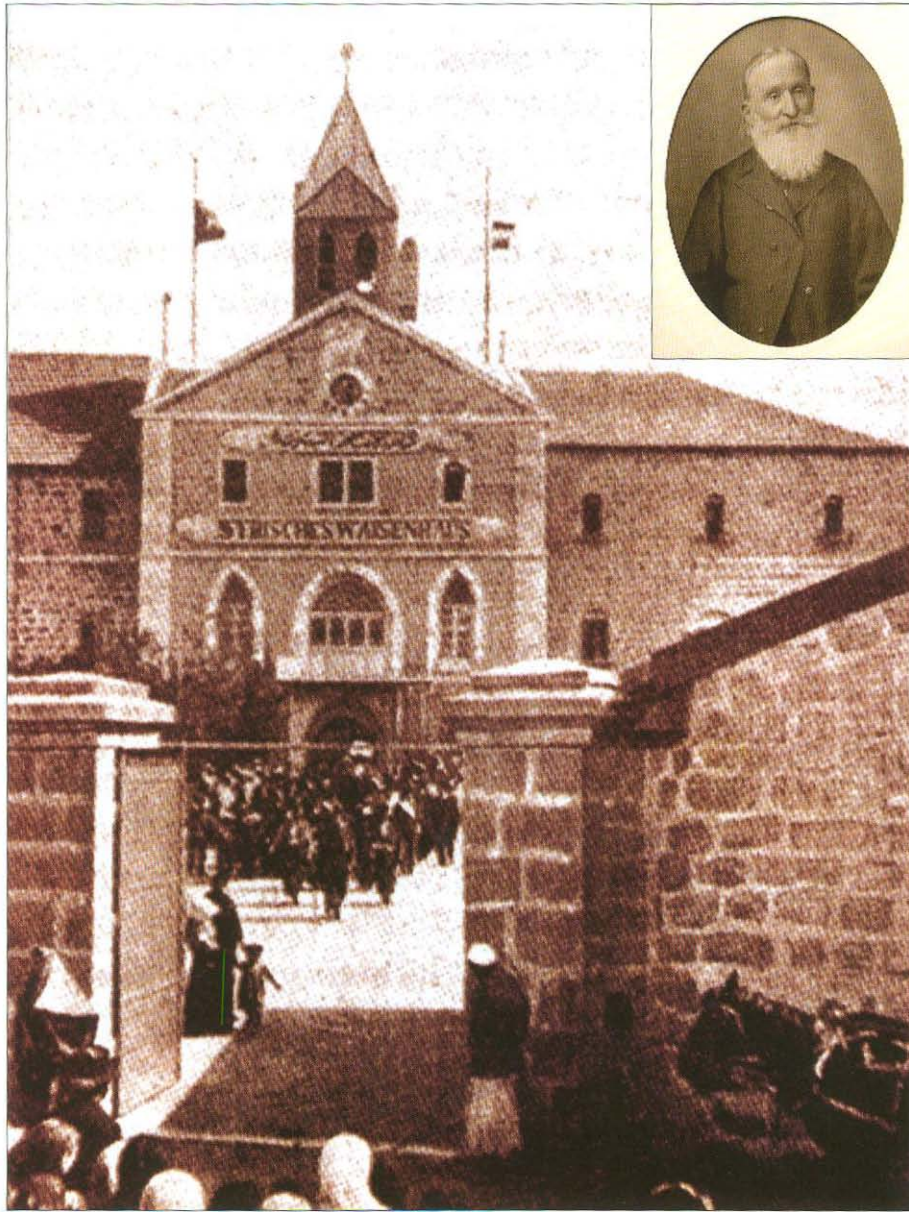
like printing and shoe-making. In contrast, Schick started working for different English or German missionary societies as a teacher, archaeologist, builder of wooden models of Jerusalem, and as an architect.



Conrad Schick



One of Conrad Schick's famous models of Jerusalem.



Johann L. Schneller and his Orphanage (late 19th Century)

3. The Templars, members of the Temple Society, were also deeply rooted in the Pietism of South-Western Germany, but they had split from the Protestant Church due to their rejection of key elements of Church teachings. They differed from other Christians coming to the Holy Land, coming, not as missionaries, teachers, or nurses, but as settlers, 'to gather God's people in Jerusalem'. They started their first settlement in 1869 in Jaffa, followed by others in Haifa and Saron, and, in 1873, the 'German Colony', Rephaim, was built near Jerusalem. By 1914, after founding further settlements in the Galilee, this group of about 2000 Templars formed, by far, the largest group amongst the 5000 strong foreign Christians living in the Holy Land. As settlers, the Templars were distinct from the Catholic and Protestant missionaries, more resembling the Jewish settlers of the early Zionist colonies such as Rishon LeZion or Petah Tikwa. Both Templar and Jewish settlements made similar impressions on travellers and journalists alike; green oases reminiscent of Europe. In addition, both were mistrusted by the Turkish authorities, as both groups retained their European passports, and both enjoyed the protection of their European Consuls in Jerusalem, thus, ensuring them political influence.



The 'Saal' - the Templars' church at the entrance to the German Colony (now Armenian Church)

Missionary Activity

Schools and hospitals are the most important and durable aspects of German involvement in Palestine. But for the missionaries who established and maintained them, and for the thousands of people in Germany who supported them financially, it was more important to bring Christianity back to its homeland: “From its beginnings the Syrian Orphanage aimed at winning the children of the Holy Land for the gospel,” writes the founder’s son Ludwig Schneller. The mistrust among Muslims and Jews against the real motives of caregivers and teachers was, therefore, understandable. But at the orphanage’s 50th anniversary, only about a fifth of the non-Protestant children that had grown up and attended school there had been converted to Protestantism, and only 10 baptisms had been performed. If missionizing was the orphanage’s central aim, it was not very successful.



Schneller's Syrian Orphanage

Jews

A major portion of German citizens and protégés living in Palestine were Jews, mostly hailing from the Polish, Eastern Parts of Prussia. Providing them with legal support was a significant part of the consulate's daily work. It is difficult to say how much influence accrued to Germany in Jerusalem because of this situation. Theodor Herzl, the key figure of early Zionism, saw Jewish settlement in Palestine under a German protectorate as favourable for Germany's position in the Holy Land, and pointed out that "with the Jews a German element of culture would come to the orient... the vast majority of Jews belongs to the German culture."

Mordechai Eliav's selection of documents from the German Consulate in Jerusalem clearly shows a significant number of Jewish committees in Germany aiming to improve the living conditions of Jerusalemite Jews. Due to the supranational character of Judaism, money was collected for both German-Jewish projects, and



Bikur Cholim Hospital



Shaarei Zedek Hospital on Jaffa Street (present-day Israel Broadcasting Authority)



Rothschild Hospital sign

Jewish institutions under the protectorate of the German Consulate. The report of the German Consul for the year 1874 lists among the German charities an 'Israelite hospice', founded in 1857, and an 'Israelite hospital', founded a few years later. The two oldest Jewish hospitals in Jerusalem, the 'Rothschild Hospital' and the 'Bikur Cholim Hospital', only came under German protection after 1870. An additional hospital, "for poor Israelites mainly of German nationality in Jerusalem," came into being between 1893 and 1902, becoming the Shaarei Zedek Hospital.

A second focus of German-Jewish involvement was education. Here, conflicts of interest quickly arose between the German sponsors and the much more conservative Jewish communities in Jerusalem. Supported by the German Consul, Von Tischendorf, the sponsors from Germany wanted to found schools that would teach more than "merely Hebrew and Talmud." These schools were to teach "according to German principles," and with German as one of the languages of instruc-



Von Tischendorf

tion. This led to clashes following the founding of an orphanage and school in Jerusalem by the ‘committee for the institution of Jewish Orphanages in Palestine’, for which the committee had chosen the name ‘Kaiser-Wilhelm-House’. Operating since 1880, the orphanage was boycotted by the Ashkenasim for whom it had been built, but was gratefully accepted by the Sephardic community. In 1881, a rival orphanage was founded by the Ashkenasi community: the Diskin Orphanage. Asked to grant the German Consulate’s patronage to this orphanage, too, the consul declined, because ‘the German Is-

raelite community is not big enough to need two different orphanages, especially if these should be governed using different principles and because achievements can only be reached by acting in unison’. Despite this opposition, the ‘Hilfsvereins der deutschen Juden’ (Relief Society of the German Jews) in 1908 operated in Jerusalem a teachers’ college, a commercial college (the Lämél-School), a girls’ college, a boarding school for girls and three kindergartens. In 1913, a report by the consulate mentions ten ‘foreign’ Jewish schools in Jerusalem, seven of them German. The reason for this report was the so-called ‘language struggle’, meaning the increasing replacement of German by Hebrew as the language of instruction in these schools. The language conflict, the consulate’s reports on Zionism, and the ban on Jewish immigration to Palestine by the Ottoman Government, present a new aspect of the history of Palestine that became more pressing after the First World War.



Façade of the Lämél School, Jerusalem

Wilhelm II - The Kaiser and Jerusalem

Wilhelm II's ascension to the Prussian and German throne in 1888 marked a new phase of German activities in Jerusalem; a phase of activism and visibility, the effects of which, are still evident today. It was Wilhelm's interest in Jerusalem that resulted in the Church of the Redeemer, the Dormitio-Abbey and the Kaiserin Auguste Viktoria Stiftung on the Mount of Olives.

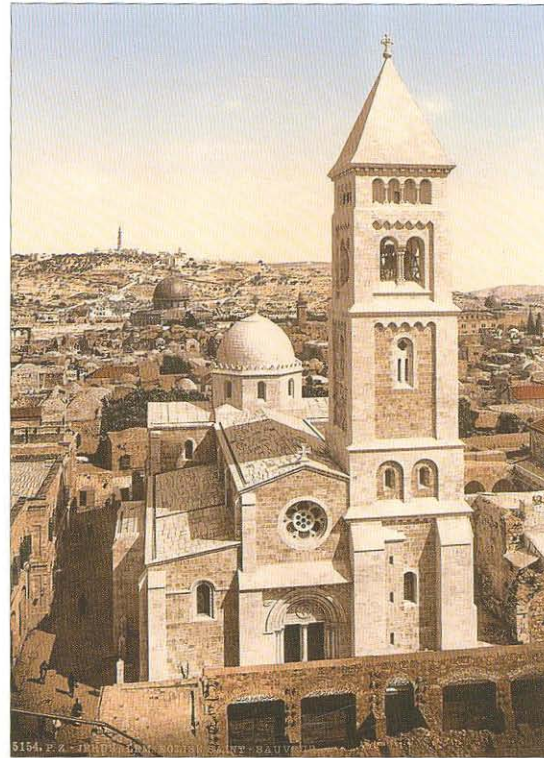
Wilhelm II, a highly erratic and self-centred individual, struggled to master the powers entrusted to him during a time of extreme political challenges. However, his difficulties did not prevent him from leaving his mark on Jerusalem. Wilhelm saw himself as a monarch by the grace of God, and was proud to be a part of the long line of Prussian kings and Christian emperors before him. He believed in the superiority of the Lutheran creed among the Christian churches and had a strong, but conservative, interest in art and architecture, and he loved travelling. All these elements worked together to create the architectural legacy of imperial Germany in Jerusalem.



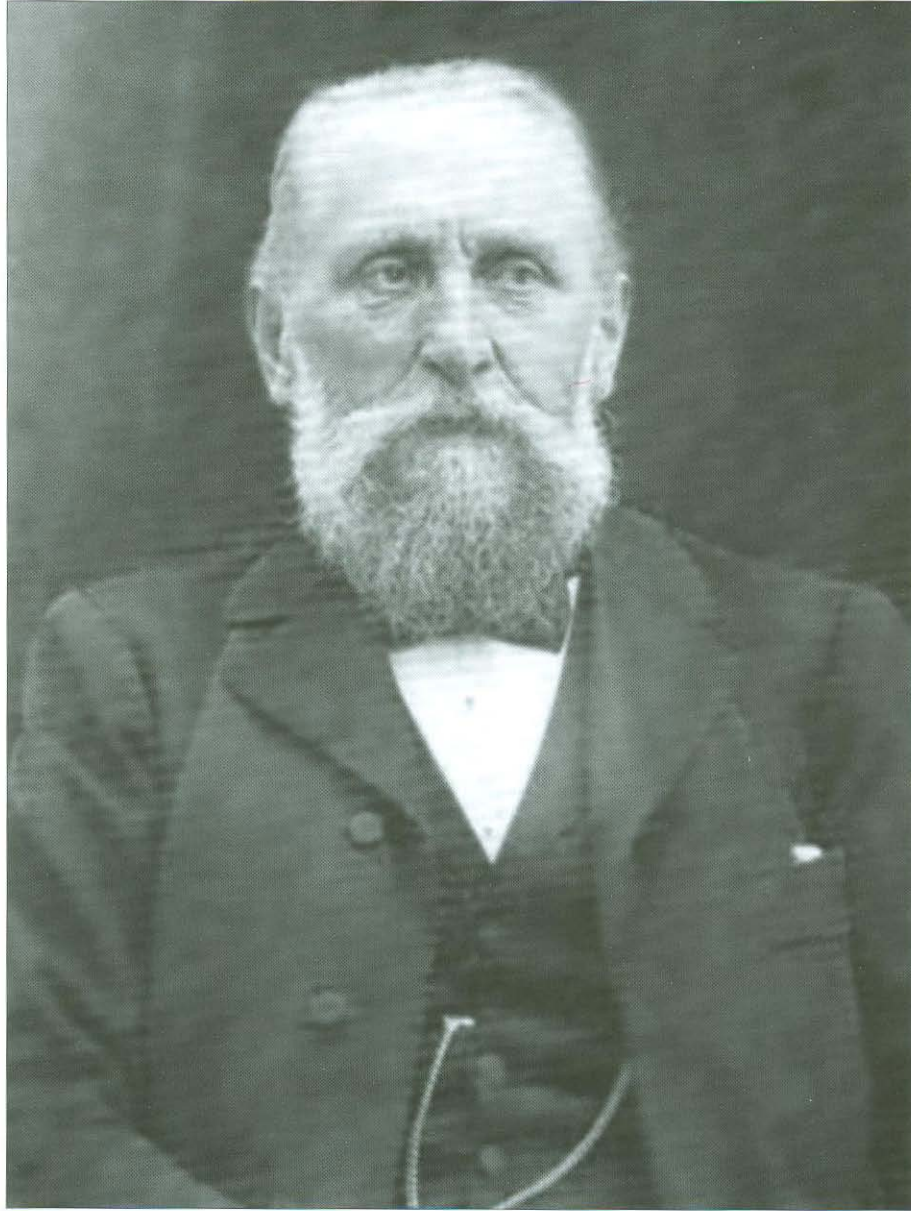
Fredrick William Crown Prince of Prussia (1861-1888) /
Frederick III King of Prussia and German Emperor (1888)

After his grandfather had put an end to the restrictive Anglo-Prussian Bishopric three years earlier, Wilhelm II drove forward the new beginning of German Protestant structures in Jerusalem. In 1889 the 'Jerusalem-Stiftung' (Jerusalem Endowment) was established, using the money previously allocated to the Bishopric. Its first project was to build a German Protestant Church on the Muristan lands which Wilhelm chose to name 'Erlöserkirche' (Church of the Redeemer). The architectural plans had already been drawn up twenty

years earlier and were now revised. "His Majesty the Emperor has drawn the sketch for the bell tower with his own hand," writes the architect of the church, Friedrich Adler, "the same imperial grace and care more than once supportingly intervened" in the planning of the church's interior design and "the bell tower will likely be a long lasting symbol of the Holy City, not only because of its visibility from afar, but because of its serious and squat form." Building commenced in 1893, but the architect's positive expectations were not shared by all: Estelle Blythe, the daughter of the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, calls the Redeemer Church "a remarkably ugly church" and "a lamentable building!"



Redeemer Church, circa 1900.



Friedrich Adler



Dormition-Abbey on Mount Zion

Expectations in the Kaiser's Journey to Palestine

When the building of the Redeemer Church was near completion, the Kaiser made the decision to travel in person to Palestine to take part in its inauguration in 1898. This emphasised his obvious personal interest in this building, and for a German Protestant presence in Jerusalem. The Kaiser's commitment was not without effect on the German Catholics; the founding of the German Empire had fostered their national pride. The waning of the 'Culture Struggle' had reduced their reach in a state dominated by Prussian Protestants. The German Catholics envied the successes of German Protestants and Catholics of other nations, namely the French, in acquiring places rich in tradition in Jerusalem. They wanted to equal them through the acquisition of the site of the Last Supper (Cenacle) on Mount Zion, and the neighbouring site of the Passing of St. Mary (Dormitio), which had, in Byzantine and Crusader times, been part of one big church. There were, however, difficulties with this scenario. Firstly, there existed complex ownership rights of these sites and secondly, the Cenacle's ground floor housed the Muslim shrine of King David's tomb (Nabi Da'ud). Clearly, success could only be accomplished with support at the highest political level. A first attempt to ask for the Kaiser's support had been made in 1890 when Wilhelm was already concerned with the Holy Land with the establishment of the Jerusalem-Stiftung. The negative assessment by the German Consul in Jerusalem, though, led to the rejection of any support for this project.



The Cenacle on Mount Zion

The Kaiser's plan for a journey to Palestine provided new hope to the 'German Holy Land Association' in 1897, but Wilhelm II was only prepared to give them limited support, saying of their petition: 'only if the Mohammedans have absolutely nothing against it, otherwise, on no account!'. As

much as Wilhelm aimed at aiding German and Christian interests in Palestine, he also wanted to strengthen the friendly bonds with the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim world in general. The Holy Land Association accepted the Kaiser's restriction and declared itself ready to pay 100,000 Goldmark for the site of the Dormitio. Wilhelm eventually paid for the Dormitio from his own money, whilst declaring that the Dormitio 'was a personal gift from the Sultan to the German Emperor.'



Logo of the Holy Land Association



The Cenacle is the last standing portion of a Byzantine and Crusader Church ("Hagia Sion") heir to the primitive Apostolic Church. The Last Supper and the Pentecost are remembered in the upper room. Other memories (mainly the Tomb of David) are found on the ground floor. This photo is the main entrance to the Ottoman-era complex.

Germany and the Ottoman Empire - A Special Relationship

The journey of 1898 was not the Kaiser's first state visit to the Ottoman Empire. As early as 1889, during his sister's wedding to the crown prince of Greece in Athens, Wilhelm had paid the Sultan a short visit in Constantinople. These visits emphasise an important precondition of Wilhelm's journey to Palestine; a good relationship existed between the German and the Ottoman Empires in a time when the Ottomans appeared, to most European politicians, as the "sick man on the Bosphorus", and the Turks were generally seen by the European public as the people who massacred fellow Christians in Greece, Lebanon or Armenia.

Since the early 19th Century, Germany was the only European power without colonial, territorial interests in the Middle East. By 1898, France, Austria, Britain and Russia had annexed parts of the Ottoman Empire and, in 1912, Italy would follow suit. This led to Prussian-Turkish cooperation in military and economical affairs since the 1840s. The German government pursued an 'open door' policy in the Middle East, giving every nation the chance for trade and investment. The friendly ties between Berlin and Istanbul boosted trade relations, yet, until the beginning of the First World War, France remained Turkey's most significant business partner. Wilhelm's emphasis of the German partnership with the Ottomans explains in part the Emperor's reluctance to lend the Templars and Zionists the support against the Turkish authorities that they had hoped to gain.



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II

A Journey to Jerusalem

The inauguration of the Redeemer Church in 1898 was planned for October 31, the date on which Protestant Christendom commemorates the start of the Reformation by Martin Luther. Preparations for the German visit, and its coverage by the press, began early; in January 1898, the *London Times* reported that the Sultan would dispatch 10,000 to 15,000 soldiers to Palestine to ensure the safety of the Emperor's journey. In Jerusalem, buildings were renovated, streets cleaned, stray dogs poisoned and suspicious foreigners detained. Italians, in particular, suffered from this measure being regarded as a viable threat following the assassination of the Austrian Empress by an Italian anarchist in September 1898. 'In their hundreds they were accommodated in prison cells', writes the courtier Ernst von Mirbach, who accompanied the imperial couple. The streets were adorned, gates of honour were erected, and a gap was broken into the city walls next to the Jaffa Gate to facilitate the entering of coaches into the old city and remains today, as a lasting remnant of the preparations for the imperial visit to Jerusalem.



Ottoman Soldiers



Ernst von Mirbach



Wilhelm and Auguste Viktoria



Sultan Abdul Hamid II

Wilhelm and his wife, Auguste Viktoria, along with their entourage, travelled by train from Berlin to Venice, where they boarded the imperial yacht 'Hohenzollern' to travel to Istanbul. After a six-day state visit to Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Royal couple continued on to Haifa, and then later to Jerusalem. The Royal party was accompanied by a German entourage of 30 courtiers, 65 servants, and numerous security personnel. Turkish officials and their staff, 600 Turkish soldiers, and 800 mule drivers for the luggage, swelled the travelling party to a total of 2,000 people, together with more than 1,300 horses and mules. Using other routes, more groups of German pilgrims travelled to Jerusalem to be present at the Church's dedication.

The Kaiser in Jerusalem

The weather during October 1898 was unusually hot, reaching temperatures in excess of 40 degrees in the shade, itself a rare commodity in this sun baked terrain. The four day journey, shrouded in clouds of dust was exhausting. The Protestant clergyman and liberal politician Friedrich Naumann summed up the journey thus: “If the readers believe that the first word from Jerusalem should be a very joyful and happy one, they are mistaken. The first word from Jerusalem is: beer, water, nap! Everything else may come later”.



Friedrich Naumann

The Royal visitors had little time for rest, however. The days of their visit to Jerusalem were filled with welcoming speeches, gracious responses, receptions and sightseeing tours. Much to the chagrin of the spectators, the route and time of the Kaiser’s movement through the city were constantly changed, both, for security reasons, and because the Kaiser wanted to avoid the music band that the Sultan had sent to greet his imperial guest everywhere he went. During the week-long stay, the Royal couple tirelessly showed interest in the different institutions run by German missionaries, visiting them and making donations.

The climax of the Kaiser’s visit to Jerusalem occurred on October 31st. In the morning, the Redeemer Church was solemnly dedicated and, in the afternoon of the same day, the Kaiser took possession of the Dormitio property and presented it to the German Catholics “as a new evidence of his care for them as father of the people”. Press reports interpreted the connection between the dedication of the Redeemer Church and the handing over of the Dormitio as symbolic of the Kaiser’s desire to present himself as the ‘Christian Emperor of all Germans’.



Herzl at Mikveh Jisrael

While the German Catholics regarded the Kaiser's visit a success, Theodor Herzl's high hopes melted away. Herzl hoped that he would read in the international papers about a breakthrough for the Zionist cause during this visit to Palestine, but he was to be disappointed. In the days after reaching Jaffa, Herzl and his companions visited some of the new Jewish colonies. At Mikveh Jisrael, Herzl was able to welcome the Kaiser on his way to Jerusalem, although Herzl's companion, Wolffsohn, overcome with excitement, managed only a photograph of the Kaiser's shadow and Herzl's left foot, an experience lamented by Herzl in his diary. A last meeting between the two took place on the afternoon of 2 November at the Kaiser's camping site in Jerusalem. Herzl presented an album with photographs of the Jewish colonies in Palestine to the Kaiser, and was able to introduce his companions. However, the speech Herzl had prepared had been shortened by a

German diplomat, cutting out all the decisive sentences. Already, as he left the audience, Herzl understood that all his endeavours had been in vain and commented to a companion: “he said neither, yes nor no.”

It says much about Wilhelm’s often difficult personality when examining the conversation the Kaiser had on the very next morning with the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, George Blyth, while he was visiting the newly dedicated cathedral of St. George. According to Estelle Blyth’s memoir, the Emperor asked: “Do you believe in a future for the Jews?” and when Blyth’s father answered that he did most certainly, the Kaiser exclaimed energetically: “I don’t agree with you at all! What future can there be for the people who crucified our Lord? There can’t be any future for them!”



The Zionist delegation elegantly dressed for meeting Wilhelm II at his camp on Prophets Street



St. George's Cathedral



Royal party entering Jerusalem passing American Colony building (American Colony Photographers)



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



The Kaiser returning from Redeemer Church through Muristan Street to Jaffa Gate, where the horses and carriages waited (Matson Collection).



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II



Tomb of Saladin from the outside

The Kaiser in Damascus

After seven days, the German Emperor left Jerusalem. Writing about the Kaiser's visit, Ludwig Schneller declared, "the glorious Kaiser days had flown by, and, looking now at the abandoned city one could get the feeling that all the great events, which the world had resounded of, had only been a dream." Schneller and other authors have tried to give the impression that the Royal visit covered just the Holy Land but, in fact, Wilhelm and Viktoria went on to Beirut and Damascus before returning to Europe.

The Europeans of the 19th Century were fascinated by history and, in particular, by the Crusades. The image of an Emperor travelling to Jerusalem on horseback and wearing a golden helmet invoked the impression of a crusader rather than a pilgrim. Such an impression was reinforced by the dedication of the Redeemer Church on the foundation walls of a church built by the Crusader Order of the Hospitallers. This was further reinforced by Wilhelm's visit to the Saladin's tomb, the main destination of his travels through Palestine and Syria.



Tomb of Saladin

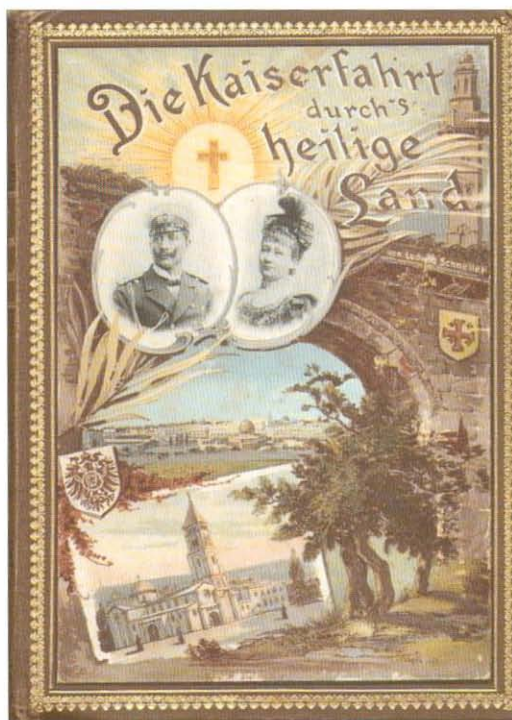
The Kaiser visited Saladin's tomb, donated money for the restoration of the burial chamber, and placed a laurel wreath made from gilded wood before his departure. The Emperor stated that he was "delighted to step onto the very ground where the great Sultan Saladin had dwelt, a great commander and a knight in shining armour" adding his expression of enthusiasm for a country where the "Sultan had so great a number of loyal subjects", and that the "German Emperor will always return the Sultans's friendship with his own friendship." Wilhelm promised that he would always be a loyal friend to the millions of Muslims.

The Journey's Echo in the Press

As we have seen, the German Emperor's journey to Palestine was embedded in a greater concept aimed at strengthening the alliance between Germany and the Ottoman Empire. Yet, the press reports about the journey focussed almost totally on his visit to the Holy Land and, especially, to Jerusalem.

From the earliest announcement of the Kaiser's journey to Palestine, newspapers all over the world reported on its preparations. The Russian and French Press were particularly sceptical, and the visit added to tensions already created among the Colonial Powers, with German territorial gains in China. Fears that Germany might occupy Jaffa or Beirut were mooted in the French newspapers.

During the journey, the Emperor was accompanied by a large group of journalists. Some papers, such as *The Fatherland* and *The London Times*, produced restrained, near official reports, but others mixed the fascination for the Holy Land, and political and religious resentments into their reporting, and produced

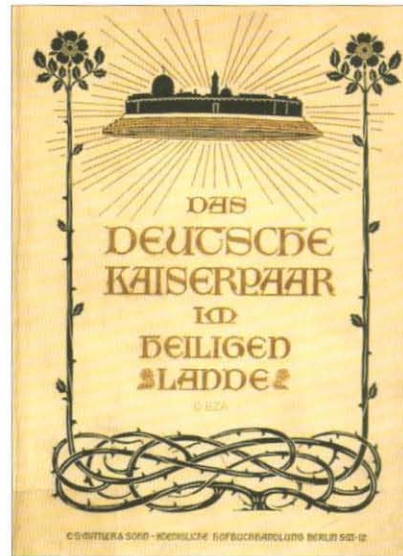


Pastor Ludwig's book "The Emperor's Journey through the Holy Land"

somewhat vicious commentaries. *The American Denver Evening Post* wrote in September 1898:

“Fond of dramatic settings and of glory, the young sovereign, after having tried to play all parts, now poses as the pope of universal Lutheranism. With his love of splendour, William II wishes to impress the plastic imagination of the Orientals, and to convert Jerusalem into a sort of Mecca of Lutheranism.”

The Kaiser's journey was further accompanied by a flood of satires and caricatures, at home and abroad. A satirical poem on the journey to Palestine earned the German author Frank Wedekind half a year in prison for *lèse-majesté*. With his love for changing costumes, in this case his newly created tropical uniform, and, for pompous appearances, Wilhelm was an easy target for ridicule. Together with all the religious connotations of a visit to the Holy Land, his journey was a ‘must’ for anti-clerical and liberal satirical magazines all over Europe.



Book on the Kaiser's journey ("The German Royal Couple in the Holy Land")

In Germany, there still was much excitement about the journey, and quite a market for souvenirs and books about it. Advertisements were published for a subscription to ‘original picture postcards of the imperial journey to Jerusalem’, that were to be posted from all major cities on the Kaiser's travel route. At least six books about the journey were published in Germany in 1898 and 1899. It could be inferred that excitement for the journey remains strong today as, in the last 20 years, a similar number of new books have been published on the matter.



Auguste-Viktoria Stiftung/Hospital and Ascension Church today

1900-1914: The Aftermath of the Kaiser's Journey

Wilhelm's visit to Jerusalem aimed to finalise a project driven forward by three generations of his family and, at the same time, to mark a new era. On the Dormitio site, donated by the Kaiser to the German Catholics, a church and a Benedictine monastery were to be built in the coming years. Two further projects were started in the days of the imperial visit; one of them was a Protestant research institute for biblical studies and, the other, a recreational home for missionaries and guest house for pilgrims. This project was to be built on the Mount of Olives under the patronage of the Kaiser's wife, after whom it was named Kaiserin Auguste Viktoria Stiftung.

The strong presence of impressively proportioned German buildings constructed in the few years between the Kaiser's visit and the outbreak of the First World War, had quite an intimidating effect on other Europeans in Jerusalem. Estelle Blythe writes in her memoir that:

“the Kaiser showed no foolish diffidence in indicating things he wanted, and the Turks were far too polite to refuse such hints. Substantial gifts of land here and there in Palestine were graciously accepted by the Kaiser, and soon large and exceedingly Germanic buildings began to spring up. A German parsonage replaced the Imperial tents upon the Kaiser's camping-ground... A large block grew up opposite the Damascus Gate, called St. Paul's Hospice. Another clumsy-looking church was planted just outside the Zion gate, overlooking the Caenaculum, the well-authenticated scene of the Last Supper... The most remarkable German building at Jerusalem was that of the Stiftung Kaiserin Auguste Victoria... Here grew up that large group of buildings, including hospice, church, and outhouses, which are now called Government House... The Stiftung took a long time in building, and all the while strange stories concerning it were in circulation. The Arabs firmly believed that it was intended as a fortified place, and it certainly commanded the whole countryside and Jerusalem itself.”



Tower of the Ascension Church, Auguste Viktoria compound

The Catholic Holy Land Society did not confine itself to erecting new buildings just on Mount Zion. Its older compound of school and hospice off the Jaffa Road had quickly grown too small, and construction of the monumental St. Paul's Hospice

(Paulushaus), opposite the Damascus Gate, began in 1900. Designed by the same architect as the Dormitio-Abbey, it was planned as two identical wings on both sides of a church. The complex was to house the German Catholic Hospice, a boys' school and a teacher training college. Lack of money slowed down the building process considerably, so that only a shorter version of one of the wings was completed before the First World War ended all building activities. The preliminary completion of this first part of the building in 1908 incited the Görres-Gesellschaft, the German Catholics' Academic Society, to establish an Institute for Middle East-



Pilgrims in front of the St. Paul Hospice, 1910



St. Paul's Hospice opposite Damascus Gate

ern Studies connected to the Paulushaus in 1909. Initially focusing on archaeology, the Institute's main field of research today is the art history of the Holy Land. Its Protestant counterpart, the Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes (German Protestant Institute for Studies of Antiquity of the Holy Land) began in 1903. It concentrated first on the history of everyday life in Palestine and shifted its focus to archaeological research in recent decades.

The building activity of the German churches in Jerusalem reached its final pinnacle in the joint inauguration of the nearly completed Auguste-Viktoria-Hospice, and the church and monastery of the Dormitio in 1910. The ceremony resembled a re-enactment of the Kaiser's presence at the dedication of the Redeemer Church. In 1910, representing the Kaiser and Empress, one of their sons, Prince Eitel Friedrich, and his wife, presided over the festivities. Since 1906, the Prince was the Herrenmeister (Grand Master) of the German branch of the Order of St. John.



Prinz Eitel Friedrich

German Architecture in Jerusalem

The imposing architecture of the Auguste-Viktoria-Hospice, and the other German buildings erected in Jerusalem during Wilhelm's reign, merit comment for their unique architectural style; the so-called Romanesque Revival.

During the late 18th Century, and for most of the 19th, architects played with the architectural styles from previous generations. Neo Classicism, Gothic Revival, Neo Baroque, Romanesque Revival; each could be the possible style of choice for any aspiring architect of the time. Some buildings followed their models in every detail, while others only toyed with elements of the cited style, the latter fashion leading to factories and residences bedecked as castles.



Interior of the Ascension Church on the Auguste Viktoria compound



Christ Church - the main church of the Anglo-Prussian Diocese

Gothic Revival was the predominate choice for church architecture in Jerusalem seen in the Cathedral in the Latin Patriarch's compound, in Christ Church, or St. George's Cathedral. From 1890, Wilhelm II embraced the Romanesque Revival style for churches and public buildings. The Romanesque style was seen as a German national style, while the Gothic style was denounced as being French. This was mere hyperbole; no one nation could lay claim to any particular style; architecture transcended borders. However, the newly established German Empire was greedy for a great past foreshadowing an even greater future. No surprise, then, when the new Empire's architecture mirrored the glories of the Romanesque Period of the 11th and 12th Centuries, the heydays of the old German Empire.

'Rundbogenfenster', windows in the form of round arches, characterize the Romanesque style, and are found in all German buildings in Jerusalem, emphasizing

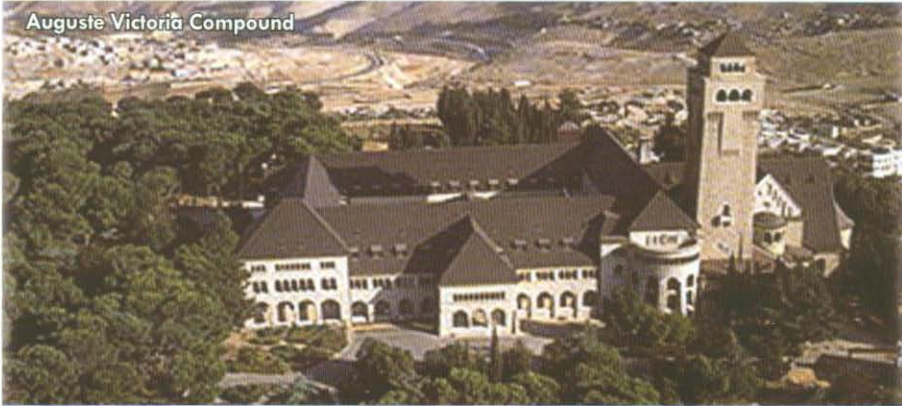
the link between this style and the traditional style of round windows and domes prevalent in Jerusalem, both distant cousins, and heirs, to the Roman architecture of late antiquity.

As a revival style, this architecture borrowed extensively from medieval buildings. Friedrich Adler's Redeemer Church was planned as a copy of its predecessor on the same spot, the Hospitallers' Church of Santa Maria Latina, built circa 1120. For the *Auguste-Viktoria-Stiftung* on the Mount of Olives "the Kaiser's wish had been to build the *Stiftung* in the style of the best Romanesque period of art from the time of the Crusades and the German Hohenstaufen Emperors, and that it should be recognisable as a German building from afar." The castle-like features of the building were taken from the medieval Imperial Palace at Goslar; inspiration for the Church came from St. Michael's Church in Hildesheim, while statues of the Kaiser and his wife, depicting them as the Hospice's founders in medieval attire, are reminiscent of statues of the medieval Emperor Henry II and his wife from Bamberg Cathedral (see pictures next page). The church's bell tower was clearly intended to invoke the image of the keep of a castle, although, its effect on the eye may have been less war-like then than today. Its modern appearance is due to restoration works following heavy damage caused by the earthquake of 1927.



Auguste Viktoria Stiftung,
around 1910

Auguste Victoria Compound



St. Michael's Church, Hildesheim



Imperial Palace at Goslar





Statues of Emperor Henry II and his wife at Bamberg Cathedral, which served as model for the statues of Kaiser Wilhelm and his wife placed at the Auguste Viktoria Building in Jerusalem.



Statues of Kaiser Wilhelm II (left) and his wife Victoria (right) in the yard of the Auguste Viktoria Hospice (today's hospital), depicting them as the hospice's founders.

Heinrich Renard's Church of the Dormitio-Abbey also copies a medieval German church, St. Gereon's in Cologne. Its bell tower takes inspiration from the so-called 'heathen towers' ("Heidentürme") of four churches from the Middle Rhine region near Worms. Their unusual domed roofs reminded art historians of the 19th Century architecture of the Middle East.

These church towers have recently been dated as early 12th Century, only a few years after the capture of Jerusalem during the First Crusade. Evidently, returning Crusaders had chosen to incorporate influences and memories of their journeys to the Middle East into their construction of churches in their homeland. Bringing this style back to Jerusalem 800 years later could be construed as a metaphor for an enduring interest in Jerusalem, in the past and the present.



Building of the Church of the Dormitio on Mt. Zion



Heathen towers ("Heidentürme") of the Protestant Church of Alsheim, the Protestant Church of Guntersblum (formerly St. Victor's Church), the Protestant Church of Dittelsheim, and the St. Paul's Church in Worms (from left to right), all in the German Middle Rhine region.



Basilica and Belltower of the Dormitio Abbey as seen from the tomb of David (Nabi Daoud)



St. Gereon Church, Cologne



Frederick III

'...and how did he like it?'

In conclusion, this look back at the 'golden years' of German involvement in Jerusalem, one question remains, the same question often posed by tourists to Jerusalem about the Kaiser's journey: "... and how did he like it?"

The Kaiser did not like Jerusalem. On the way back to Germany he wrote to his mother:

"What a dismal arid heap of stones Palestine is! The want of shade & water is appalling... Jerusalem is very much spoilt by the large quite modern suburbs which are mostly formed by the numerous Jewish colonies newly erected by Rothschild... The Church of the St. Sepulchre is so filled with lamps, pictures & other paraphernalia of half a dozen of different Christian faiths that it looks like something between a bazaar and a Chinese temple, but certainly not like a Church!"

According to this letter, the only building he liked in Jerusalem, was the new Anglican Cathedral of St. George's, but as he was writing to his British mother, who was visiting his British grandmother, Queen Victoria in Windsor at the time, this may well have been designed to flatter. Damascus, on the other hand filled Wilhelm with enthusiasm.

The Kaiser's impressions of Jerusalem are echoed throughout travel literature. Wilhelm's father, Frederick III, recorded his thoughts on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in his travel diary: "I feel deeply disappointed by all this." The city seemed to him "dirty and stifling." All these impressions were carefully omitted when the diary was first published in 1899. Other travellers, particularly Protestants, balked at finding in the holy places of Jerusalem, all those elements of religious practice that Luther's Reformation had abolished in their home churches. The city, its strange scents and sounds, and the manners and way of life of its inhabitants, were too alien and unfamiliar for the visitors of the 19th Century to feel comfortable.

Theodor Herzl also did not like the city: “When I shall think of thee in the future, Jerusalem, it will not be with pleasure.” Standing on the Mount of Olives, Herzl started daydreaming: “Great moments. What could be made out of this landscape. A city like Rome and the Mount of Olives would present a view like the Gianicolo [a hill in Rome].” This comparison summed up accurately the expectations of Herzl and many of his contemporaries. Europeans at heart, they could only imagine a city so saturated with history and full of holy places as Jerusalem to be like its European counterpart, Rome.

Such reactions are indicative of the high expectations of visitors to Jerusalem, which, when confronted with the reality, lead only to disappointment. Visitors arrived with heads full of the ‘heavenly Jerusalem’, the metaphorical Jerusalem depicted in the religious language of Judaism and Christianity; the reality of the ‘earthly’ city came as a shock. Attempts were made to mitigate the gap between hopes and reality, as in the case of the early editor of the Prussian Crown Prince’s diary, by omitting references to shock and disappointment. Ernst von Mirbach, lecturing on the Kaiser’s visit, spoke thus:

“‘Where is Jerusalem?’ that’s what all of us asked. Now, after having seen everything and having lived through everything, one would like to answer: ‘That Jerusalem, of which you heard since your childhood, the one you dreamt of, the one you longed for to behold, this Jerusalem doesn’t exist anymore; it is in heaven.’”

Peppered with allusions and quotations from the biblical way of speaking of Jerusalem, Friedrich Naumann tried to put his disappointment into words:

“Jerusalem, thou city fair and high, how dear have you become to the soul of our German people! A fairy tale from God’s garden you were to us, a gate to salvation. We knew that our fathers would have loved to die to liberate you. Blessed we called those, who were able to follow the way of passion in silent prayer, that the lamb had walked, who carried the sins of the world in Jerusalem. Who wanted to talk of heaven, talked of the upper Jerusalem. In our fantasy the Jerusalem of this world and of the

next became one blessed city when we sat in German churches and sang to the sound of the organ of the twelve Pearly Gates to the Celestial City... Jerusalem appeared like God's kiss for the waiting mankind. Jerusalem appeared to rise from earth up to heaven like a permanent prayer of the redeemed for the rest of the world that had fallen into darkness. Some of these memories all of us carried in our minds when we made our pilgrimage to Jerusalem, some of us strongly some only slightly. Those of us who carried them strongly on their minds, possibly forgot all the dust and decay and saw with the eye of faith the beauty of Jehova's bride behind the wrinkles and creases of the Jerusalem of today. They walked through the holy city, seeing less of what was around them, because they sang the praise of the Lord below the walls of Zion. On others the city made a totally different impression. They went from one disappointment to the next, as the Kaiser supposedly has said."

It was never an easy task for Jerusalem to cope with the elevated expectations of pilgrims and tourists, and for the latter, it is not easy to grasp the complexity of the city's history and its religious and political significance. This has not changed in the 110 years since the Kaiser's visit. The negative and positive reactions on Jerusalem that Naumann describes are often shared by today's visitors as well. And this is only possible because 'Jerusalem' remains part of German culture. Although most Germans are not as pious as they were a hundred years ago, Jerusalem is still a name evocative of hope and yearning, a dream that incites thousands of people every year to come and see and experience the city of that name.

