

Vatican Diplomacy and Palestine, 1900–1950

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The aim of this article is to shed light on Vatican diplomacy's interaction with events in the first half of the twentieth century to redraw the geopolitical map in the Middle East and especially in Palestine where, after thirty years of British Mandate rule, the state of Israel was proclaimed in 1948. What was the Holy See's reaction to these developments and how did the Vatican's envoys to the region analyze events and try to influence the rapidly changing picture?

In response to these questions it is necessary to bear in mind not just the changes that, in 1929 and 1948, led to a profound alteration of the Vatican's structure in the region, but also, more generally, the organization of the Catholic church in the Holy Land since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The article is thus divided into five parts: the first looks at the consolidation of the Catholic presence from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries; the second examines the reaction of Catholic institutions to the revolutionary transformations after the First World War and the establishment of the British Mandate; the third addresses institutional and political changes that happened in 1929; the fourth looks at changes in Vatican policy during the 1930s; and the fifth deals with the Vatican's reorganization of its presence in Palestine after the Second World War and the first Arab-Israeli war, and how it engaged the political and (especially important from a Catholic standpoint) theological novelty of Jewish sovereignty over the Christian Holy Land or part of it.

Nineteenth-Century Reorganization of the Catholic Presence in the Holy Land

The Holy Land has always held a central place in the Christian collective imagination. From the nineteenth century, cultural and political changes brought a full-blown renaissance of European interest in the Near East, which redefined the paradigm of the Holy Land itself.¹ The “rediscovery” of the Holy Land led to a significant increase in pilgrimages, as these had become less dangerous thanks to the “liberal” attitude of the Egyptian government (whose rule extended over the entire region during the period of Muhammad ‘Ali) and made attractive by the draw of the romantic Orient.² What is certain is that over the course of the nineteenth century, settlement of the Holy Land and the legal status of the holy sites of Christianity in Jerusalem became central elements in the more complex “Eastern Question” as determined by European powers’ desire to extend their influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, supplanting the moribund Ottoman Empire.³

In the Near East, European powers sought excuses to intervene (and thereby increase their power) in the continuous interactions between national-political and religious aspects and, most of all, in the defense of the Christian population subject to the sultan. Thus, British politics in the region gained strength from the Protestant revival during the first half of the nineteenth century and the proto-Zionist sympathies of the more radical evangelical elements. Czarist aims were also realized thanks to the traditional role of Moscow, the “third Rome” of Byzantine tradition, in the protection of the Balkan and Middle Eastern Orthodox communities. In a similar way, France had protected the Latin and Eastern Catholic communities since the sixteenth century.⁴

During the nineteenth century, the Holy See also took the initiative to affirm its role as guide of all the Catholics in the Middle East and to consolidate their presence in Palestine, which was contested by the growing Orthodox and Protestant influence. The most important decision in this context was the restoration – or, rather, the foundation – of the Latin patriarchate in Jerusalem, established in 1847 to counter the influence of an Anglican-Lutheran diocese set up few years prior by Great Britain and Prussia.⁵ The establishment of the patriarchate was not without pain, giving rise to long and bitter arguments with the Custody of the Holy Land: the Franciscan institution founded in the fourteenth century to protect the interests of the Catholics in the holy sites, which had hitherto been the main representative of Latin Catholicism in the region.⁶ Notwithstanding this, the Holy See could, from 1847 on, rely on a bishop who responded directly to it. This was even more useful when, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the presence of European, especially French, religious orders expanded exponentially, giving rise to a multitude of disputes around various initiatives according to deep national rivalries.

To complete the description of the Catholic presence in the Holy Land, which was by then plural and firmly established, we should not omit one last detail: alongside the Latin community, which was concentrated around Jerusalem, there were numerous Eastern Catholic communities, in particular Greek Catholics or Melkites, rooted in the Galilee, and, to a lesser degree, Maronites.⁷

World War I and the New Regional Equilibrium

Until the First World War, despite its extraordinary religious importance, the Holy Land, divided into various administrative units under the Ottoman Empire, had remained a rather remote and sleepy region politically. Proof of this is the fact that the Holy See had no direct representative there, as the Latin patriarch himself was no more than a simple archbishop, albeit with the patriarchal seal, whereas contact with the Ottoman authorities was managed by the Vatican apostolic delegates in Istanbul or Beirut, where the Franciscan Frediano Giannini had become apostolic delegate to Syria in 1905.

The upheavals caused by the First World War – with the return of the Holy City to Christian hands, the Balfour Declaration, the beginning of the British Mandate, and the consequent intensification of Zionist penetration – gave local Catholic authorities some unexpected, significant, and urgent challenges.⁸ At first, the Vatican congregations – in particular the Secretariat of State, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, and the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, which were most involved in decisions regarding the Middle East – decided not to profoundly restructure the region's church officers, believing it could adapt to the new situation by making a few simple adjustments. In keeping with the policy, launched by Benedict XV and made his own by Pius XI, of making the most of local clerics and indigenous episcopates, the Vatican congregations tried to reinforce and better structure the Melkite community, which soon showed its involvement in the nascent Palestinian-Arab nationalist movement, and stop local efforts by Latin institutions to Latinize all the Arab clergy.⁹

This last aspect was particularly important because within the Latin Church, certainly the most cultured and socially dynamic part of Palestinian Catholicism, the old diatribes continued and got worse: as soon as the war ended, the patriarchate-custody dispute exploded anew, while the regular orders, especially the Italian and French, often seemed more sensitive to the “political” concerns of their respective governments rather than to Vatican directives.¹⁰ Relations with the British authorities were complicated from the outset, due to personal misunderstandings caused in large part by the political activism of the Latin patriarch, Luigi Barlassina,¹¹ and by the general fear that the Mandate authorities would favor Protestant proselytizing and the Armenian and Greek Orthodox churches in their anti-Catholicism. Lastly, relations with the Zionist movement were awful, nor could they have been otherwise, as this was perceived by almost the entire Catholic community in Palestine, as well as European clerics, as a threat to the Arab nationalist cause, to the Catholic predomination of the holy sites, and to the maintenance of Christian beliefs and practices in the region, as Barlassina vehemently underlined several times.¹²

If these were the main problems facing the Catholic Church in the Holy Land, it cannot be said that the first measures taken by the Holy See after 1918 did much to solve them. The Vatican congregations oscillated between contradictory positions. The Congregation of Propaganda Fide, led by the influential Dutch cardinal Wilhelm Van Rossum, worked to reinforce the role of the patriarchate, obtaining in 1920 a *modus vivendi* that was favorable to Barlassina and decidedly limited the prerogatives of the custody, a decision which was, however, already being reconsidered by 1923 in a measure providing the opposite.¹³ The

new Congregation for the Eastern Churches, set up by Benedict XV in 1917, attempted to defend the Catholic Eastern rites against the aggressive Latinization policy adopted by the patriarchal clerics and by the majority of the European regular orders, with the notable exception of the French White Fathers of Saint Anne's seminary in Jerusalem, closely tied to the Melkites. The houses of the religious orders, headed by the Franciscans, also tried to defend their positions in Palestine against the centralization policy conducted by the patriarchate following the wishes of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

The rather confused dialectic and the diverse, sometimes contradictory claims reaching the Vatican Secretariat of State contributed to paralyzing for most of the 1920s any decision regarding Catholic institutional arrangements. An initial phase of strengthening Barlassina's position was followed by a diminution in the role of the patriarch, culminating in the nomination of a British deputy, Godric Kean, in 1924. This appointment, in the eyes of the Holy See, should have offered the British government a guarantee of moderation.¹⁴ However, it was immediately clear that this objective had been achieved only in part, as relations between Barlassina and the other Catholic authorities in the region, starting with the apostolic delegate, Giannini, who continued to reside in Beirut, now capital of the French Mandate in the Lebanon, continued to be complicated. For these reasons Giannini's visits to the Holy Land became more sporadic and limited, with the result that Barlassina no longer recognized his authority, putting himself forward as the Vatican's only direct representative in the region.¹⁵

Faced with this situation, which gave rise to misunderstandings and incidents, the Holy See decided to send as apostolic visitor the Irish Franciscan Paschal Robinson, who had served the same function in the region in the early 1920s. The new enquiries by Robinson, which took place between October 1925 and April 1928, were particularly meticulous, concerning in various stages all the elements of the Catholic Church in Palestine, both Eastern and Latin, with a view to harmonize disputes between the various Catholic institutions there and establish more effective links with the Vatican. In the end, Robinson painted a far from flattering picture of the Catholic situation in Palestine. The greatest responsibility was placed at Barlassina's door. He was to blame for bad relations with the Eastern Catholics, thanks to his Latinization campaign, and for the terrible relations with the British government. Nor did the other Catholic institutions escape censure.¹⁶ To remedy the endemic tension between the various Catholic institutions and improve relations with the British, Robinson suggested setting up an apostolic delegation in Jerusalem, allowing the presence there of a direct representative of the Holy See who, free from any pastoral duties, could take upon himself the function of relations with the government while at the same time coordinating the Catholic activities.

The Turning Point of 1929

At first, Robinson suggested creating an autonomous delegation in Jerusalem.¹⁷ He subsequently suggested joining the nascent delegation for Palestine, Cyprus, and Transjordan to the apostolic delegation in Egypt, with a commitment that the delegate

reside part of the year in the Holy Land.¹⁸ This solution would have allowed the Vatican to limit any periods of stasis and avoid excessive humiliation of the patriarchate, whose prestige would suffer from the permanent presence of a Vatican representative in Jerusalem. Nor should it be forgotten that Egypt was also a British protectorate, and therefore it should have been relatively straightforward to harmonize the needs of the Cairo and Jerusalem delegations.

This opinion resolved the Holy See to nominate the apostolic delegate in Egypt, Monsignor Valerio Valeri, who became also responsible for the whole of Palestine, Cyprus, and Transjordan in February 1929. This nomination came at a particularly important time in the history of Mandate Palestine. Just a few months later, massacres following violent riots that broke out over the rights of worship at al-Buraq/the Wailing Wall would lead to an abrupt deterioration of the political situation and endemic violence that would last throughout the 1930s, culminating in the great Arab revolt of 1936–1939.¹⁹

From a Catholic standpoint, too, the events of 1929 can be considered a turning point.²⁰ Valeri had come to the Holy City with a dual mandate. In church circles, he was to improve relations between the patriarchate and the custody, placing limits on the dangerous rivalry between various bodies, and coordinate the Eastern rites, paying special attention to the Maronites in Cyprus and the opaque administrative situation of the Melkite diocese of St. John of Acre.²¹ However, the Secretariat of State insisted that the delegate also play a diplomatic role, dealing with the British and putting an end to the numerous autonomous stands and incautious activism of Barlassina, which was damaging Catholic prestige in the region.²² The events of September 1929 and the consequent deterioration in the political situation added urgency to this second part of Valeri's mission, pushing his role as referee between the various Catholic institutions into second place.

During his years in Jerusalem, before being nominated nuncio to Bucharest in 1933, Valeri helped to bring about a significant change in Vatican policy in the region. One of the first questions addressed by Valeri was pursued with considerable consistency: improving relations with the Mandate government. This relationship, while not as tense as it had been in the early 1920s, had been up and down throughout the latter part of the decade. Valeri's opinions and assessments of Arab nationalism and Zionism were even more significant. From the beginning of his activity, Valeri did not demonstrate the proclivity of many of the Palestine church's bodies for the Arab nationalist movement. Here, too, these inclinations were not as strong as they had been at the beginning of the 1920s, when urban Catholic elites were at the forefront of promoting Muslim-Christian Associations to fight Zionism.²³ Still, toward the end of the decade, not only did the Melkite community and its leader Monsignor Gregorius Hajjar continue to be very close to the nationalist cause, but Barlassina and the majority of the patriarchal clerics also showed their radical opposition to Zionism and their open support for the Arab cause.²⁴ The massacres of 1929 and the growing militancy of the nationalist movement led Valeri to recommend more caution to clerics and bishops, saying they should confine themselves to promoting peace and moderation amongst the parties.²⁵ The growing Islamic character of the Palestinian nationalist movement, which began to show itself more forcefully at the beginning of the 1930s, was not lost on the apostolic delegate. In the second half of the

decade, during the great Arab revolt, this trend intensified, leading to the marginalization of Christians, and especially Catholics, within Palestinian nationalism.²⁶

Valeri also showed a new attitude toward Zionism. From his reports, it is clear that he did not share the anti-Semitic stereotypes that were so widespread among Catholic clerics in the Holy Land and Vatican diplomats. Moreover, he tried to get to know the characters in the Jewish nationalist movement at close quarters, displaying in general a certain equanimity of view and clear sympathy for the more moderate elements, led by the rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Judah Magnes, which were in favor of a federal solution and a bi-national state in Palestine.²⁷ On this point, however, his actions could not lead to any concrete outcome that would affect the Vatican's complex policy. This was essentially for two reasons. First, while he did not share in the blindest anti-Jewish prejudices, he agreed with the premise that Catholic and Zionist objectives in Palestine were fundamentally opposed. Second, within Vatican diplomacy and the Secretariat of State, opposition to Zionism, though not as virulent as in the early 1920s, continued to be deep-rooted, such that only a complete and profound policy rethink – beyond Valeri's remit or intentions – could have called it into question.

The 1930s

Over the 1930s, the picture that began to emerge immediately after the 1929 riots became clearer. The Holy See tried to steer itself as widely as possible away from Arab nationalist initiatives, which had by then taken on a violent and specifically anti-British character and had found growing support from Italian foreign policy.²⁸ From this standpoint, the Secretariat of State and the Vatican representatives in Jerusalem observed with growing distaste the nationalist activism of Hajjar who, albeit in alternating phases, continued his efforts to back the Arab cause. Meanwhile, questions hung over the administrative rectitude of the Melkite prelate, whose diocese was subject of an in-depth investigation headed by the apostolic delegate, Gustavo Testa, in the second half of the 1930s.²⁹

Notwithstanding the Greek-Catholic leadership's low prestige in Rome, the Holy See continued its policy of encouraging Eastern Catholic churches and discouraging the Latinization effort that endured among the patriarchal clerics in Palestine and Transjordan. This pro-Eastern policy was pursued with renewed vigor after Eugene Tisserant became secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches. The growing influence of the French cardinal during the final phase of Pius XI's papacy can be seen in the important decision, taken in 1938, to entrust the supervision of all Catholics in Palestine to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, removing all Latin institutions from the control of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, which had held this responsibility to that point.³⁰

This change clearly showed the Vatican's awareness of the temporary nature of British rule in the region and its preparation for the future. It thus tried to give the Catholic presence in the Middle East a clear Arab character without, however, tilting it too far in the direction of Palestinian nationalism, which, especially in the second half of the 1930s, was showing its more disturbing face. These contradictory needs meant that, in the short

term, the best solution was the continuation of the British Mandate and, in the long term, the hypothesis of internationalization, although in less dogmatic tones than those used by Cardinal Gasparri in the early 1920s. Relations with Mandate authorities had improved notably since the institution of the apostolic delegation and the strict limits imposed on Barlassina's political initiatives. This process, which had begun with Valeri, continued with his successors, Riccardo Bartoloni and Torquato Dini – both of whose careers as delegates were cut short by death – and especially Gustavo Testa, who had a long run in the delegations in Cairo and Jerusalem.³¹ This improvement can be seen in the Holy See's reaction to the July 1937 Peel Plan, in which the British government proposed for the first time officially the partition of Palestine.³² On that occasion, the Secretariat of State tried to limit as far as possible any embarrassment to the British government and to obtain the maintenance under the Mandate of the highest possible number of sanctuaries and other religiously sensitive areas.³³

Catholics feared the idea that the holy sites, or parts thereof, could end up under Arab sovereignty, which sooner or later would have taken on an increasingly Islamic character. However, it was even worse to imagine the holiest Christian sanctuaries and the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth ending up under Jewish control. There was a dual hostility toward the Zionists. More traditional scriptural objections to the reestablishment of Jewish sovereignty in the Holy Land was still very much alive in many Catholic ranks and in Vatican diplomatic circles, and these were joined by more recent fears just as deeply felt. Catholic critics of the Zionist movement frequently referenced the immorality of Zionist claims, the collectivist nature of their agricultural communes (the famous *kibbutzim*), and the more or less explicit sympathy for communism, which, Testa emphasized in a report to the secretary of state, Eugenio Pacelli, in March 1936, risked being spread in Palestine as well.³⁴

Facing the Birth of the State of Israel

Unlike World War I, the Second World War did not directly affect Palestine as a theater of combat. Rather, it can be said that first half of the 1940s was a quieter time for the region than the preceding half-decade, with its open guerrilla warfare, and the following one, with its renewed and decisive clashes between Zionists, Arabs, and the British, which brought the end of the Mandate and the birth of the state of Israel. Despite this, World War II did have some consequences for the region and, from our particular point of view, for the Catholic presence there, making contact with Rome more difficult and forcing the 1942 departure of Testa, who returned to Italy and began a long period of unwelcome diplomatic inactivity.³⁵ At that point, the Holy See was without a direct representative in Palestine, if we exclude the visits of Monsignor Arthur W. Hughes, who operated from his base in Egypt as a sort of *chargé d'affaires* and who, being a British citizen, was able to move more freely during the war. Further, during the war years and those immediately following, some of the main protagonists of political-religious life in the 1920s and 1930s quit the stage for good. In November 1940, Monsignor Hajjar died. His replacement as

the head of the Melkites in Galilee, Georges Hakim, was no less nationalistic, but more flexible, and would in the 1960s become patriarch of the Greek Catholics under the name Maximos V.³⁶ In the autumn of 1947, after a long and contentious patriarchate and with the region plunged into open warfare, Luigi Barlassina passed away.³⁷ During the 1948 war, the Latin patriarchate thus found itself without a firm guide, while internally the endemic maneuvering and counter-maneuvering between clerics of European and Arab origin returned.

This paralysis of Catholic offices in the region on the eve of the United Nations' decisive announcement in November 1947 should neither surprise us nor be taken as a sign of the Vatican's lack of interest in the destiny of the region. Immediately after the Second World War, rather, the Holy See chose deliberately to maintain complete silence on matters related to the Holy Land's political future. Instead, it allowed its views to filter out from time to time through the Catholic press or through the institutions that most closely followed the evolution of events: the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, which remained the only fully functioning Latin Catholic institution in Palestine during the most turbulent phases of the 1946–1947 guerrilla war and the 1948 war, and, most of all, the American Catholic Near East Welfare Association, led by Monsignor Thomas McMahon and inspired by Cardinal Francis Spellman, then at the height of his prestige and influence.³⁸

There is no room here to examine the complex attitude of the Holy See and international Catholicism toward the hypothetical partition of Palestine in the years 1946–1947, nor the reactions following the UN resolution 181 of November 1947. Here it will suffice to remark that this decision, while dividing by statute the Mandate territory into an Arab state and a Jewish one, should not have been too unwelcome to the Vatican since it guaranteed an extensive international zone, including Jerusalem and the immediate surroundings, Bethlehem included. This may not have been the optimum solution, but it did guarantee the Catholic position and the special nature of the Holy Land though the creation of an international enclave that was geographically wide and, most of all, evocative from a symbolic standpoint.³⁹

As we know, things turned out differently and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the first Arab-Israeli war led to the division of Jerusalem between Israel and Transjordan, making internationalization extremely difficult. Even before the formal independence of Israel and the subsequent diplomatic *querelle* about the status of Jerusalem, which saw the Catholic world oppose the Jewish state and, to a lesser degree, Jordan, the Holy See had decided to adapt its representation in the region to the emerging political equilibrium. In February 1948, faced with the now inevitable end of the British Mandate, the apostolic delegation in Jerusalem became fully autonomous and was definitively separated from that in Cairo, which was made an internunciature headed by Hughes. Gustavo Testa returned to the Holy City, ending the period of diplomatic inactivity to which he had been confined for some years.⁴⁰ In keeping with the spirit of caution that then dominated in the Vatican, Testa received initial instructions to make no decisive political moves but to stick instead to “promoting peace and mutual tolerance between the two rival races, without appearing to favor one or the other.”⁴¹

Over the ensuing months, however, with the outbreak of war, the *de facto* division of Jerusalem, incidents causing damage to sacred sites and Catholic institutions, and, more generally, the stiffening in relations between the Holy See and the Israeli government, the apostolic delegate emphasized his reservations about the Jewish state. Like the custodian of the Holy Land and future patriarch, Alberto Gori, Testa showed himself to be highly critical of any possible direct dealings with the Israelis, toward whom other exponents of the Catholic hierarchy in Palestine – from Alberto Vergani, patriarchal deputy in the Galilee, to McMahon and, sometimes, Hakim himself – were more open.⁴² Testa's attitude was certainly determined by the deepening disagreement between the Vatican and Israel regarding the future of Jerusalem and the question of the *corpus separatum*, which culminated in autumn 1949, when the city's status was debated at the UN general assembly, which consequently approved resolution 303 in December 1949.

This strict attitude toward Israel was influenced by the personal convictions of the apostolic delegate, who since the end of the 1930s had shown himself to be particularly critical of the Zionist movement, its programs and progress. From 1949–1950, in any case, it would not be fair to overemphasize Testa's influence on the evolution of the more general Vatican attitude. Between the summer of 1948 and the autumn of 1950, the question of Jerusalem and its internationalization was one of the issues that most alarmed the Vatican Secretariat of State and concerned Catholic public opinion worldwide. In this situation, views within the Catholic world coagulated around various persons and bodies present in Rome – where a majority that was critical of Israel and sympathized with the plight of the Arab refugees was opposed to the attitude of Cardinal Tisserant, more open to dialogue with Israel⁴³ – while the diplomacy and representatives of the Vatican in various countries were directly involved in campaigns in favor of the internationalization of the Holy City, without any real chance of influencing general Vatican policy in the region.⁴⁴

We end with the independence of the apostolic delegation in Palestine, the birth of the state of Israel, and the diplomatic “battle” over the status of Jerusalem. From this point, Vatican Middle East policy entered a new phase, characterized by the need to guarantee the survival of Catholic institutions inside the Jewish state without alienating the uncertain sympathies of the neighboring Arab ones. This was a difficult balance to achieve and experienced many moments of tension and full-on crises until the beginning of the 1990s, when the end of the civil war in Lebanon and the mutual diplomatic recognition of Israel and the Vatican would signal the beginning of a new, though not necessarily less complicated, chapter in the history of the Holy See's Middle Eastern policy.

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Endnotes

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- 13 On these contradictory decisions see Giovannelli, *La Santa Sede*, 89–94; Pieraccini, “Il custodiato,” 67–68.
 - 14 On the reasons of this appointment and on the Vatican-British contacts regarding it see Hachey, ed., *Anglo-Vatican Relations*, 61; Pieraccini, “Il patriarcato,” 591–96.
 - 15 With regard to the contrast between the two prelates, see Pieraccini, “Il patriarcato,” 599–600. On the incident that took place among them in June 1924 see Giannini to Respighi, 30 May 1924; Barlassina to Van Rossum, 18 June 1924, Archive of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (APLJ), B. Propaganda Fide 1921–1929.
 - 16 See the long report by Robinson regarding the situation of the Latin community in Palestine, Secret Vatican Archive, Archive of the Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem and Palestine (ASV, DAGP), B. 3, fasc. 13, ff. 1–31.
 - 17 Robinson to Sincero, 22 November 1926, Archive of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (ACCO), Oriente, Rappresentanza pontificia in Gerusalemme e Palestina, Pos. 930/28, ff. 24–31.
 - 18 Memorandum by Robinson to Pope Pius XI, 6 June 1928, ACCO, Oriente, Rappresentanza pontificia in Gerusalemme e Palestina, Pos. 930/28, ff. 45–48.
 - 19 On Friday, 23 August 1929, an Arab mob made a bloody attack on the Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. During the following days, the disturbances spread throughout Palestine, becoming particularly virulent in Hebron and Safad. These disorders were the culmination of a period of increased tension, caused by rival Jewish and Muslim claims to the Western Wall – a problem for which the British government had been unable to formulate and enforce any solution, remaining stuck with the complicate agreement that had been established by the Ottoman government. On the 1929 troubles, see, for example: Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), 258–273; Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict, 1917–1929* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 217–235; Charles Townshend, “Going to the Wall: The Failure of British Rule in Palestine, 1928–1931,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 30, no. 2 (2002): 25–52.
 - 20 See Paolo Zanini, “The Holy See, Italian Catholics, and Palestine under the British Mandate: Two Turning Points,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 67, no. 4 (2016): 799–818.
 - 21 Note: “Istruzione a Mons. Valeri quale Delegato Ap. della Transgiordania, Palestina e Cipro,” 26 March 1929, ACCO, Oriente, Rappresentanza pontificia in Gerusalemme e Palestina, pos. 930/28, ff. 112–17.
 - 22 Note: “Istruzioni a Mons. Valeri,” 23 February 1929, Historical Archives of the Vatican Secretariat of State, Second Section, (AAEESS), Turkey 4th, Pos. 78 P.O., Fasc. 85, ff. 44–45.
 - 23 On this last issue see Minerbi, *The Vatican and Zionism*, 124–26.
 - 24 On Hajjar and his political stances see Giulio Brunella, “Sulla posizione nazionalistica del vescovo melchita Grigurius al-Hajjar (1875–1940),” *Alifba* 4, nos. 6–7 (1986): 57–78; Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 35–36.
 - 25 Valeri to Gasparri, 18 September 1929, AAEESS, Turkey 4th, Pos. 108 P.O., Fasc. 102, ff. 52–56.
 - 26 On this evolution see Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity*, 158–161; Y. Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929–1939: From Riots to Rebellion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 269–271.
 - 27 Valeri to Gasparri, 29 December 1929, AAEESS, Turkey 4th, Pos. 108 P.O., Fasc. 102, ff. 90–92.
 - 28 On the Italian support to Arab nationalists in the second half of the 1930s, see L. Rostagno, *Terrasanta o Palestina? La diplomazia italiana e il nazionalismo palestinese (1861–1939)* (Rome: Bardi, 1996), 197–262; Nir Arielli, “La politica dell’Italia fascista nei confronti degli arabi palestinesi, 1935–1940,” *Mondo Contemporaneo* 1 (2006): 5–65; Massimiliano Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922–1940* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 87–111.
 - 29 On this enquire, see Fasc. 23 entitled “Situazione finanziaria della Diocesi di S. Giovanni d’Acri, Haifa e Nazareth,” ASV, DAGP, B. 5.
 - 30 On this decision and its meaning see Étienne Fouilloux, “Comment la Congrégation orientale a-t-elle acquis un territoire? Le décret de 1938,” in *Le gouvernement pontifical sous Pie XI: pratiques romaines et gestion de l’universel*, ed. Laura Pettinaroli (Rome: École française de Rome, 2013), 343–357. On Cardinal Tisserant, see Étienne Fouilloux, *Eugène, cardinal Tisserant (1884–1972): une biographie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2011).
 - 31 After Valeri’s appointment as nuncio to Bucharest, Riccardo Bartoloni was nominated apostolic delegate to Egypt and Palestine. He arrived in Jerusalem on 26 July 1933 and only a few months later, on 11 October 1933, he died there at the Italian hospital. Torquato Dini was appointed apostolic delegate to Egypt and Palestine in November 1933. On 26 March 1934, he died suddenly in Cairo, without having visited Jerusalem. Gustavo Testa, appointed on 4 June 1934, was thus the third apostolic delegate to

- Egypt and Palestine nominated in a year.
- 32 On the presentation of the Peel Plan as a real turning point in the history of British Palestine see Itzhak Galnoor, *The Partition of Palestine: Decision Crossroads in the Zionist Movement* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 36; Avi Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists, and Palestine, 1921–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54–56. On the previous projects of partition or federal settlement of Palestine see Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York: Owl Books, 2001), 401; Penny Sinanoglou, “British Plans for the Partition of Palestine, 1929–1938,” *Historical Journal* 52, no. 1 (2009): 131–152.
- 33 On Vatican attitudes towards the Plan see Maria Grazia Enardu, *Palestine in Anglo-Vatican Relations, 1936–1939* (Florence: Clusf, 1980); Andrej Kreutz, *Vatican Policy on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Struggle for the Holy Land* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 63–69; Christian Rossi, *Partition of Palestine and Political Stability: Ottoman Legacy and International Influences (1922–1948)* (Florence: Badia Fiesolana, 2010), 13–15, online at cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/14622/RSCAS_2010_73.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 10 July 2017); Zanini, “Holy See,” 808–814.
- 34 Testa to Pacelli, 27 March 1936, AAEES, Stati Ecclesiastici 4th period, Pos. 474 P.O., Fasc. 482, ff. 6–7.
- 35 See Raymond Cohen, *Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How Rival Christians Came Together to Rescue Their Holiest Shrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 79.
- 36 On this change see Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine. Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 184. On the ambiguous attitudes of Hakim toward Israel during the 1950s, see Uri Bialer, *Cross on the Star of David: The Christian World in Israel’s Foreign Policy, 1948–1967* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 139–143.
- 37 On his death, see the commemorative article: G. d. M., “Il Patriarca Latino di Gerusalemme S. E. Rev. ma. Mons. Luigi Barlassina,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, 2 October 1947.
- 38 On all these aspects see Ferrari, *Vaticano e Israele*, 40–54, 115–123.
- 39 See Ferrari, *Vaticano e Israele*, 53–54, 116; Kreutz, *Vatican Policy*, 93.
- 40 On his reappointment see Testa to Roncalli, 2 April 1948, Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII (FSCIRE), FR, b. 106. More in general on these changes regarding the Vatican representatives in the Middle East see Ferrari, *Vaticano e Israele*, 38.
- 41 Ferrari, *Vaticano e Israele*, 248.
- 42 Ferrari, *Vaticano e Israele*, 71.
- 43 With regard to Tisserant’s attitude towards Israel see Fouilloux, *Eugène*, 444–46.
- 44 On this international Catholic campaign for the internationalization of Jerusalem see: Ferrari, *Vaticano e Israele*, 123–139; Paolo Zanini, “*Aria di crociata*”: *I cattolici italiani di fronte alla nascita dello Stato d’Israele, 1945–1951* (Milan: Unicopli, 2012), 167–225.