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## **The Study of Western Missions in the Middle East (1820-1920): An Annotated Bibliography**

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# **The Social Dimension of Christian Missions in the Middle East**

Historical Studies of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

Edited by Norbert Friedrich /  
Uwe Kaminsky / Roland Löffler



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# THE STUDY OF WESTERN MISSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST (1820–1920): AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Heleen Murre-van den Berg*

Nothing illuminates the puzzles of modernity as effectively  
as cross-cultural studies of colonial encounters.<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

The study of Christian missions in the Middle East has proved a fruitful and exciting field of research: whether it is ongoing tensions between the rival faiths of Islam and Christianity, Christianity's uneasy relationship with Judaism, the influence of modernity on so-called traditional societies, the intrigues of colonialism, or the Christian fascination with the *Holy Land*: for any of these and many other reasons. The last fifteen years in particular have seen a significant increase in publications, and although this may be attributed partly to the rising number of academic publications in general, it also suggests that the themes connected to this field have lost nothing of their interest to modern scholarship.

In the first half of this paper, I present a brief discussion of major publications on this subject, a list of which forms the second part of this article.<sup>2</sup> In my discussion and list, I have included monographs and (conference) volumes dedicated to the study of the history of missions in the Middle East, focusing on the research of the last fifty years. In addition, some volumes partly devoted to this theme are included as well as a small selection of single articles that cover themes not found in other studies and provide bibliographical references otherwise absent. Editions of primary sources have not been included.<sup>3</sup>

1 From Dipesh Chakrabarty's praise of a study of Dutch missionary encounters in Indonesia: Webb Keane, *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*, Berkeley, 2007.

2 I thank those who contributed to the recent volumes edited by M. Tamcke and M. Marten (2006) and myself (2006), as well as the participants to the conference to which the present volume testifies. These colleagues have greatly enhanced my understanding of the developments in the field and in that way contributed to this article. Inevitably, I have overlooked some important publications and I hope the authors will accept my apologies.

3 Sources for Roman Catholic missions have been edited in connection to the history of orders and congregations, compare, e.g. G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Franceseano*, Quaracchi, 1906ff. On the Protestant side, one might mention K. Salibi/Y. Khoury (eds.), *The Missionary Herald. Reports from Northern Iraq, 1833–1870*, Amman–Beirut, 1997.

History as the defining methodology for the study of this period has been taken in as broad an interpretation as possible, reflecting the various backgrounds of scholars interested in this field. Methodological and thematic influences vary from the fields of anthropology, sociology, religious studies, theology, history of literature and literary criticism to geography and biblical studies.<sup>4</sup> The “Middle East,” with all the ambiguities that this term implies, is taken in this article as covering most of the Ottoman Empire of the mid-nineteenth century (including Egypt but not Greece and the Balkans), as well as the Persian Empire.

This paper is limited to studies that concern missions between 1820 and 1920: earlier Roman Catholic missions to the region constitute an independent field that deserves separate treatment, as do the missions of the twentieth century. For this reason neither of these periods have been included.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, Russian Orthodox missions, of major importance in nineteenth-century Middle East, are referred to only in so far as major studies in English or French have come to my attention. In general, the focus is on American, British and German missions, with more attention to Protestant than to Roman Catholic missions.<sup>6</sup> One should note that only studies in English, French and German have been included, which leaves the contribution of those historians in the Middle East who write in Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish or Persian, unaccounted for.<sup>7</sup> The overview is organized chronologically and subdivided into four, increasingly short, periods, the boundaries of which more or less coincide with certain thematic trends: 1870–1960, 1961–1985, 1986–

- 4 For a general introduction to the writing of mission history and its pre-nineteenth-century roots, see Moritz and Ustorf in Van der Heyden (1996), as well as H.G. Frohnes/H.-W. Genzichen/G. Kretschmar (eds.), *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, München, 1974–1978 vol. 1, ix–xc, and J. A.B. Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the 19th and 20th Centuries: a Missiological Encyclopedia*, Frankfurt/Main, 1995. These three publications consider mission history in its relationship to what is often called “Church” history (rather than “History of Christianity”), in addition to which Jongeneel presents a basic bibliography on general mission history in Protestant and Roman Catholic circles. On mission history in relation to Middle Eastern studies, see Sharkey, 2005. On the recent bibliography of mission studies, including limited numbers of references to Middle Eastern missions, see N.E. Thomas, *International Mission Bibliography, 1960–2000*, Lanham, 2003.
- 5 For two major overview works on the earlier periods of Roman Catholic missions, including many further references, compare J. Richard, *La papauté et les mission d’orient au moyen age (XIIIe–XVe siècles)*, Rome, 2<sup>e</sup> 1998; B. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche Orient au temps de la réforme catholique*, Rome, 1994. The missions of the Mandate period are sometimes taken into account in studies that address the late nineteenth-century. This period fully warrants the separate treatment that seems to be rapidly developing in the last few years. Missions of the second half of the twentieth century have so far hardly attracted scholarly attention.
- 6 This one-sidedness is partly due to my own background in research on nineteenth-century Protestant missions, but also to the different tracks Roman Catholic historiography took: on the one side a focus on the history of congregations and orders, on the other establishment and further development of the Roman Catholic Church abroad. In both cases, *mission history* as a separate field of study is less likely to develop.
- 7 For an introduction to studies of missions by Arabic-writing Muslims, see Sharkey, 2005. Many of these Arabic authors see close connections between Western colonialism and Western missions, and polemically focus on the negative aspects of missions on Islamic societies.

1995, and 1996–2006. The bibliography follows this chronological order, listing authors alphabetically per year.<sup>8</sup>

### EARLY BEGINNINGS OF MISSIONARY HISTORIOGRAPHY (1870–1960)

Research on Middle Eastern missions seems to have started in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The works of both Jowett (1825) and Smith & Dwight (1833) carry the catchword *Missionary Researches* in their titles. However, as in the eighteenth-century *Lettres Edifiantes* of the Jesuits, the reflection offered in these works was not so much on missions as on the subjects and circumstances of missions, thus resembling ethnography, history, and geography rather than mission studies. What could be called proper mission history started in the second half of the nineteenth century, when Rufus Anderson, mission administrator of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions<sup>9</sup> started to collect and retell the story of the missions of the preceding fifty years (Anderson 1872), basing himself on the reports of the missionaries in the fields. His example was followed by many others, and the overviews by Stock (1899) of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Speer (1901) of the American Presbyterian Missions, Gidney (1908) of the London Jews Society, Röbbelen (1909) of American and German Lutheran work, and Strong (1910) of the American Board. Despite their explicit organizational and denominational agendas, these reports are useful introductions to the activities of these organizations in the Middle East. In the post-war years, studies into single missionary organizations remained popular, leading, among others, to another overview of Presbyterian mission work (Brown 1936), much of it in the Middle East, and of that of the Reformed Churches in America in Arabia (Mason 1926).

Another effort at gaining insight in the larger trends of missionary activities of the nineteenth century is reflected in the genre of *missionary atlases* that were produced for the German-speaking world, by Catholic and Protestant authors. Although none of these atlases are devoted solely to missions in the Middle East, they are important in presenting overviews of the geographical extension of mission work, including the early work of Grundemann in 1867 and the work of all Protestant organizations together and the locations of Roman Catholic mission stations. Many Catholic atlases were also produced e.g., by Werner in 1885 and Streit in 1906.

In this same period, the Catholic missions began to find their own historiographers, of which Michel (1896) provides the first overview of missions in the Middle East, taking into account the variety of orders and congregations that worked in the Middle East, a work later expanded by Lübeck (1917) and Arens (1920). Also the single orders and congregations working in the Middle East began to be described in detail, a process in which the *Revue d'histoire des mis-*

<sup>8</sup> The original draft of this overview was written early 2007; a few major publications that were published since have been included.

<sup>9</sup> This is usually abbreviated to ABCFM or American Board

sions from 1924 onwards played a crucial role. This journal published the important overview by Chatelet (1933–1939) of the Lazarist mission in Persia.

The first decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of the first chairs of missiology, and historical mission studies were part of the range of topics that were taken on. The German scholar Julius Richter, who occupied the chair of missiology at Berlin University, was one of the first to be truly interested in the Middle Eastern developments. His interest was born out of his expectation of the imminent downfall of Islam coupled with a genuine interest in Anglo-Saxon as well as European missions. His work resulted in two overviews, published in 1910 and 1930, in which for the first time, all Protestant endeavors in the Middle East were brought together.

It was the American scholar Kenneth Scott Latourette who first attempted to present an integral picture of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox missionary work. His seven-volume work on the *expansion* of Christianity, from the earliest period to the contemporary period, documents what in his opinion was the unstoppable growth and expansion of Christianity, taking into account both organized and 'spontaneous' forms of numerical growth. The sections devoted to the Middle East are a starting point for further research, not only because Latourette's organisation and presentation of the various missionary projects, but because, more than those preceding him, he was able to place these missions within political and economic contexts. Both Richter and Latourette, however, were largely dependent on the published overviews produced by the missionaries themselves, which not only tend to gloss over differences and conflicts within the missions, but also have little regard for the view points of local recipients of the missions.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT MISSIONARY HISTORIOGRAPHY (1961–1985)

In the 1960s, a number of major studies on missions were published that radically differ from earlier works. Latter works were usually written by former missionaries and missionary administrators who were directly or indirectly involved in the missionary movement. Although some works continued this earlier tradition, like Schmidt-Clausen's study in 1965 and Hanselmann's in 1971, which detailed German and British activities in the Holy Land, many works of this period took a different approach. Scholars with rather different backgrounds began to join the ranks of the student missionaries, and it is in this period that close connections existed between missions and the colonial venture.

The groundbreaking studies of Tibawi on British (1961) and American (1966) mission work in Palestine and Syria are the most well known and widely used examples of this trend. Tibawi was the first to make extensive use of not only missionary archival sources but also of those of a political nature. The latter included those of the British Foreign Office and the relevant parts of Ottoman archives. In the same period, he emerged as a strong critic of English Orientalism, especially

in its representations of Islam.<sup>10</sup> His work on the missionary enterprises in Syria and Palestine, however is still very much part of traditional historical scholarship, with its strong emphasis on methodological objectivity and institutional interests.

Another author who made use of similar archival materials is Joseph, whose work described the variety of mission work among the Assyrian community in Northwestern Iran (1961, 2000) and pays much attention to the larger political context. Joseph's second book (1983), on the Syrian Orthodox communities (the *Jacobites*) of Turkey and Syria, again focused on the political aspects of the religious encounter. Similar themes appear in Stavrou's (1963) and Hopwood's (1969) monographs on Russian interests in Syria and Palestine and, slightly later, Hajjar's work on European, especially French involvement in the Middle East (1970, 1979).

Towards the end of this period, Carmel (1981) and Sinno (1982) published on the German religious activities in Palestine. In many of these volumes, the educational work of the missionaries is analysed in much detail, not only because the sources usually provide ample information on schools and students, but also because the educational efforts of the missionaries implicitly or explicitly are seen as important venues for cultural and political influence. In this period, Israeli historians like Carmel began to recognize the importance of Christian missionary efforts for understanding the fundamental changes that occurred in nineteenth-century Palestine.

The study of the American missions in the Middle East perhaps shows the greatest variety in perspectives. Kawerau (1958) focuses on the religious encounter between the missionaries and Eastern Christians through education and printing programs, themes taken up later by Lindsay (1965), Khoury (1966), Hanna (1979), Stone (1984) and Coakley (1985). Finnie (1967) and Grabill (1971), perhaps, saw the importance of earlier American missions by trying to understand the American cultural and religious awareness of the Middle East perhaps stimulated by similar developments in their own times. In addition, the 1960s and 1970s saw a growing interest in the American Board as a missionary organization, and many studies pay some attention to the specific issues of the Middle East, such as those done by Phillips (1969) and Perry (1974).

Progress in research was made with the study of missions as part of the emerging or transforming Middle Eastern Churches (Lyko 1964, Chopourian 1972, Waterfield 1973), an approach that, in the early part of the 20th century, had been pioneered by Arpee (1909). Less attention was paid to the study of missions directed at Muslims, the only known scholarly undertaking was that by Vander Werff (1977). This work, while pioneering, cannot be taken as an entirely scholastic work since it was written with a personal missionary bias.

<sup>10</sup> A.L. Tibawi, "English-speaking Orientalists," *Islamic Quarterly* 8, 1-4, 1964, 25-45, 73-88.

## NEW DEBATES (1986–1995)

In the 1980s and early 1990s, a number of thematic approaches were introduced that until today have dominated the debates on Christian missions in the Middle East. To some extent, these were influenced by scholarly discussions that followed the publication of Said's *Orientalism* in 1979, but somewhat surprisingly the impact of post-colonial studies was slow to emerge. Two important themes that emerged in these years were, first, a growing interest in the missionary contribution to the history of Palestine/Israel, and, second, that of the wider religious pre-occupations of Germans, British and Americans with the *Holy Land* that motivated mission work as well as travel (whether seen as pilgrimage or as tourism) and colonial interests.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Israeli scholars Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Alex Carmel laid the foundation for a series of publications by Israeli and German scholars that used missionary sources, archives as well as physical remains such as buildings, to study the history of nineteenth-century Palestine. Other important publications were Ben-Arieh (1986), the volume edited by Kark (1989), and the study into the *Jerusalem-Verein* by Foerster (1991). These historians thereby also explicitly intended to correct traditionalist Jewish historiography that narrowly focused on Jewish settlements in this early period.

A similar venture was initiated in the field of American-Holy Land studies by Moshe Davis, with his series *With Eyes toward Zion*, of which the first volume was published in 1977. Further volumes were edited together with Ben-Arieh (II: 1986, III: 1991, IV: 1995) and many of these include articles relevant for mission studies. The theme of American *geopieté* was further developed by Vogel (1993) and Greenberg (1994).

Another important theme is that of the religious encounter between the missionaries and the Middle Eastern populations. A few important works on this are the unpublished Ph.D.-thesis of Badr (1992) on the American missions in Beirut, Coakley's monograph (1992) on the Anglican mission among the Assyrians, and numerous articles by Tamcke (among others: 1993, 1994, 1995) on the Lutheran missions in Persia and the Caucasus. All of these pay detailed attention to the discussions that arose from the encounter between various types of Protestant missionaries with local orthodox Christians. From a local perspective there is Raheb's (1990) description of the emergence of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Jordan, whereas Cracknell's study (1995) discusses the contributions of missionaries to the Western debates on inter-religious dialogue.

This decade also saw the emergence of themes that would grow to fruition within the next decade. The first of these is the study of the tension between conversionist and civil aspects of the missions, especially those of the American Board. The general outlines of the debate were set by Hutchison (1987), whereas Merguerian (1990, 1992) applied the theme to the Armenian missions in Anatolia.

The beginnings of gender-based analyses of mission history can also be traced to this decade, one of the earliest being Hill (1985) on American missionary women, whereas the theme of women and missions was put on the agenda by the

volume edited by Bowie, Kirkwood and Ardener (1993). None of the contributions to that volume cover missions in the Middle East, but Merguerian (1990) testifies that the subject had been taken up in the study of Middle-Eastern missions. Melman's work (1992) focused on British women in the Middle East and explicitly connected a gendered analysis with the *Orientalism*-debate.

#### THE YEARS 1996–2006

The last decade has again seen a significant rise in numbers of publications, because of an increasing number of collective volumes devoted to themes connected to missions in the Middle East. This increase perhaps can be attributed to a new awareness of the importance of Middle-Eastern and Christian-Muslim affairs after September 11th 2001, but also coincides with mounting numbers of academic publications in general. Most of these recent volumes were borne out of academic conferences, of which at least ten were focused almost completely on aspects of the missions in the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> These conference volumes suggest the subject has grown into a mature field and the number of interactions between the scholars in the field has greatly increased. More importantly, they show that researchers from different scholarly traditions increasingly make use of each other's work and insights. Now, more than in previous periods, American, European and Middle Eastern traditions of scholarship are combined, as are Protestant and Roman-Catholic traditions – the nineteenth-century confessional and East-West distinctions having been matched for too long by separate twentieth-century scholarly traditions.

Despite the wide variety in topics that are discussed, the editors of these volumes and the authors of the articles share the conviction that the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century missionary activities are important topics of study for many reasons. According to these scholars, its relevance far transcends the objectives of the older mission studies that found its readers mostly among those with interest in Christian missions.<sup>12</sup>

The first of these reasons is that present-day discussions on the issue of modernity in the Middle East cannot ignore the missionary contribution. To what extent missions, and especially missionary educators, contributed to the introduction and translation of Middle Eastern modernity is a theme found in many publications from the last ten years. A strong example of this is the discussions about the missionary contribution to the changes in gender relations, one of the most exciting fields of the last years that also contributed significantly to gender studies in the Middle East in general. Important publications are those of Porterfield (1997), Abu-Lughod (1998), the collective issue of *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*

11 Ben-Arieh 1997, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 1998, Coakley 1998, Aaronsohn 2001, Nothnagle 2001, Doumato 2002, Feldtkeller 2003, Trimbur 2004, Tamcke 2006, Mur-re-van den Berg 2006

12 On research in this period, compare also the overview in Sharkey, 2005, 53ff.; she reaches similar conclusions, especially in connection to the themes of modernity and imperial entanglements of missions.

(1998), Felgentreff on the Kaiserswerth deaconesses (1998), Doumato's work on women's religion in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf (2000), and Stockdale's on the missionary encounter in Palestine (2007). Other important works include the collective issue of *Islam and Christian-Muslims Relations* (Doumato 2002), Okkenhaug on the contribution of Anglican missionary women on education in Palestine (2002), and a number of articles on wide variety of topics concerning Anglican, Roman-Catholic, and German and American Protestant mission work for and by women (Francis-Dehqani in Ward 2000, Langlois in Aaronsohn 2001, Eisler and Felgentreff in Nothnagle 2001, Murre-van den Berg 2005, Fleischmann in Murre-van den Berg 2006, and Jansen and Stockdale in Tamcke 2006).

In many of these gender-oriented studies, discussions of the social, medical and educational institutions occupy a key role. Work on these subjects has been considerably refined since the early works of Tibawi, in a range of articles by Neubert-Preine (Nothnagle 2001, Goren 2003), Löffler (Trimbur 2004, Murre-van den Berg 2006), Bourmaud, Kaminsky and Merguerian (Murre-van den Berg 2006), and Kark (Tamcke 2006), as well as in recent monographs such as those by Verdeil (2006, cf. also Verdeil 2001) on the Jesuit missions in Syria, and by Marten (2006) on the Scottish Presbyterian missions in Palestine.

The study of missionary initiatives in the field of printing and publishing has also developed with works by Fiey (1993), Coakley (1998), and Murre-van den Berg (1999). Notably, the discussion of these themes is no longer a one-way description of the introduction of *evangelical modernity*, and takes into account complex relationships between missionaries, governments and local agents in the appropriation and transformation of aspects of the missionary message of modernity (Makdisi 1997 and 2008).

Secondly, recent scholarship agrees that it is crucial to take the missionary presence into account when analyzing the political developments in the nineteenth-century Middle East. Many recent publications therefore pay attention to political entanglement of the missions, like the monographs by Lückhoff (1998, cf. also Ben-Arieh 1997) on the Anglo-Prussian bishopric in Jerusalem and by Buffon (2005) on the Franciscans in the Holy Land, with their international connections and longstanding presence in the Middle East. Kieser's (2000, 2002) and Doumato's (2002) work on the interplay of international politics, missionary modernity, rising nationalism and ethnic tensions and genocide in the Ottoman Empire (on this subject see also early works by Feigel 1989 and Abu Ghazaleh 1990, as well as Joseph 1961/2000, and Makdisi 2008), ties in with recent developments in the field of Ottoman studies, especially those on the Christian minorities.<sup>13</sup> Many articles have been published on related topics; compare the contributions in the volume edited by Aaronsohn and Trimbur (2001) on Europe (especially France) and Palestine, the Festschrift for Alex Carmel (Perry 2001), Goren's volume (2003) on German relations with the Middle East, Carmel and Eisler's documentation of Wilhelm II's trip to Palestine (1999). Trimbur's later volume (2004) fo-

13 See the work by U. Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, Berkeley-London-Los Angeles, 2000 and B. Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab world. The Roots of Sectarianism*, Cambridge, 2001.

cuses on *Europeans in the Levant between politics, science and religion* and Teule's special issue of *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* focuses on migration of Eastern Christians (2002). In all these publications, the analysis has surpassed simple colonial or post-colonial schemes: researchers stress the intricate relationships between colonial powers, missionaries, local elites and imperial elites in Istanbul. Whether or not the missions were an essential part of the nineteenth-century Western advance (this differs from country to country and mission to mission), understanding the missionary contribution is important to understanding the imperial dynamics.

Rivalry between missionary organizations, within Roman Catholic or Protestant circles, as well as between Roman Catholic and Protestant missions, was often connected to political and national interests, as much as to the targeting of the same possible converts and the same possible donors. So far, no monograph has been published on this, but this somewhat sensitive topic in an age of ecumenical efforts surfaces in a number of articles, such as those by Neubert-Preine and Stransky (Aaronsohn 2001), Buffon (Murre-van den Berg 2006), and Marten, Murre-van den Berg, Neubert-Preine, Van der Leest and Verdeil (Tamcke 2006).

A third aspect of the missionary endeavor that has wider ramifications is that of the underlying religious concepts that motivated the missionaries. Although the theme appears to be slightly less present now than in the earlier period, scholars have put forward many new interesting and challenging analyses of the prevailing forms of *geopieté*. These are of interest not only because they work to understand missionary thought and practice, but also because these ideas are similar (albeit more pronounced and explicated) to those of colonial advocates and administrators. Davis' 1996 work focuses primarily on art, and while it is not explicitly concerned with missionaries, it is the only book-length study in this decade that describes the American landscape of belief. The last volume of the series *With Eyes toward Zion* (Ben-Arieh 1997) includes many interesting topics, varying from the Holy Land in popular Brazilian Culture (Igel) to a study of the differences between French and British photography (Nir). The *Jerusalemsehnsucht* of Protestant German missionaries and settlers is given ample attention in the volume by Nothnagle, Abromeit and Foerster (2001, see especially the articles by Foerster on F.A. Straus), as well as in the one edited by Feldtkeller and Nothnagle (2003). The *Bilddokumentation* initiated by Eisler (2003) richly illustrates many aspects of the German missions in the Holy Land. Very often, *geopieté*, especially when concerning pilgrimage, is not far from political ramifications and the articles by Haidler-Wilson on the Austrian involvement in the Middle East (Trimbur 2004), Goren on German Catholic activities (Ben-Arieh 1997), as well as those by Astafieva (Trimbur 2004) and Kane (Tamcke 2006) on the Russian interplay between pilgrimage, mission and politics make this abundantly clear. Roman Catholic *geopieté* in its historical context, focusing on the situation in Syria, is further described by Heyberger and Verdeil (Murre-van den Berg 2006).

Whether motivated by millennialist expectations (Ariel and Kark 1996, Geldbach and Kochav in Ben-Arieh 1997, Perry 2003), by forms of biblical literalism that attached special significance to the geography and history of the Holy Land

and the wider Middle East (Murre-van den Berg 2006), or by traditions of devotion of the holy places (Heyberger and Verdeil, and Buffon in Murre-van den Berg 2006), the religious *plus* of the Holy Land over and above other mission fields (Merguerian in Murre-van den Berg 2006) formed an essential part of the motivation of the missionaries in the Middle East. This becomes even more important when one realizes that this missionary spirituality not only influenced their own practices, but also informed and transformed those of many others (Marten 2006), in the Middle East as well as at home.

Perhaps this drive towards themes relevant to the larger academic world has also caused some of the more traditional missiological themes to be somewhat neglected. Scholarly studies focusing on the conversionist aspects of missions to the people of the Middle East are scarce and consist of a few articles here and there, especially in connection to missions among Muslims; see Tamcke (1996, 1998), various articles in the volume edited by Doumato (2002), and by Sharkey (2005) and Ryad (Murre-van den Berg 2006) on the reactions of Muslims to these missions. The wider field of inter-religious dialogue connects with the historical studies of missions in the works of Cragg on CMS missions among Muslims (Ward 2000), O'Mahony on Muslim-Christian relations (O'Mahony 2004), and by George (Tamcke 2006) on William Temple Gairdner. A missionary perspective is rarely brought into the study of the formation of new Protestant and Uniate churches, but articles by Löffler and Raheb (Feldtkeller 2003), Badr and O'Mahony (Murre-van den Berg 2006) and Jansen (Tamcke 2006) indicate that it is a fruitful area for further research.

## CONCLUSIONS

In little over a hundred years of scholarship, the study of missions in the Middle East has expanded and developed more fully. In the early days, the study of missions was intimately connected with the development of a number of related fields: ethnology, linguistics, biblical scholarship, archeology and history of the Middle East. In the first half of the twentieth century, the focus was increasingly more on missions proper, and scholars appear to have written for an internal Christian and missionary-oriented readership. In the second half of the twentieth century, this began to change, primarily because those working in historical and literary fields, and later in the fields of anthropology and sociology, began to discover the rich possibilities of missionary sources, at a time when theologians and historians of Christianity shunned the subject. Today, scholars from a variety of scholarly traditions, from within and outside the missionary traditions, increasingly work together in a quest to understand the intricacies of the colonial encounter that took place in the Middle East and in which missionaries played a crucial role.

The study of the missionary encounter in the Middle East has long been characterized by the triangle formed by the three interconnected themes of *modernity*, *colonial politics* and *geopiety*, be it by other names in other times. From the earli-

est publications, starting with Anderson (1872), mission was described as a modernizing project, even if various authors, including Anderson himself, were wary of many aspects of missionary modernization. So too, the political ramifications of missions in the non-Western world were described early on, usually (but not always), with more enthusiasm than by today's scholars. The special position of the Holy Land was an obvious factor in these missions, supplying extra funds and extra attention from the home audiences, and needs not be repeated: those writing the missions in the Middle East have always been very much aware of it. As suggested elsewhere (Gilley 2005), these three themes can be considered the defining characteristics of missions in the Middle East. Not surprisingly, these surface time and again in scholarly studies.

However, as indicated above, there are also some themes that precisely because of the special characteristics of Middle Eastern missions, were popular in the early days but have recently disappeared largely out of sight. This is especially true for one theme that was important in the early phases of the writing of the history of missions: the reactions of the local populations to the message of religious change, reactions that varied from conversions and the formation of new communities to active opposition. It is likely the small numbers of converts led scholars to neglect this subject, thereby overlooking the possibility to find more less tangible influences than schools and hospitals. In this respect the study of the missions in the Middle East differs considerably from that on missions in other parts of the world where the emergence of new local Christian communities is one of the major visible results of the missionary impact and has elicited corresponding research efforts.

Most of the volumes that were published in the last ten years implicitly or explicitly have had comparative aims. The editors have juxtaposed contributions on missions in most regions of the Middle East by a variety of Roman Catholic, Protestant and, to a limited amount, Russian Orthodox groups, and cover a period that varies from the early or mid-nineteenth century into the Mandate period. Insightful as many of these articles and volumes are (and very much part and parcel of present-day scholarly mores), they also show the limits of this type of scholarly work. On the one hand, it seems impossible to organize genuine comparative studies in this way: the collective efforts in conference volumes contribute to a certain level of comparability and cross-reference in the field, but they have not been able to reach a sufficiently high level of integration of the various topics on the table, especially not when the goal is to include Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox missions.<sup>14</sup> The considerable numbers of scholars in the field and their increasing contacts gives hope that such integrative and comparative studies may not be long from appearing as a result of collective or single-handed efforts. On the other hand, the series of collective volumes also makes one appreciate the few studies that were published by individual authors (often in connection to Ph.D. research) on a single, coherent topic. These studies have visibly benefited from the larger

14 Recent overviews in the larger works by Hock, 2005 and Moffett, 2005, although useful as introductions, lack sufficient insight in the pertinent issues that have dominated research on missions in the Middle East in order to be counted as integrative studies on this subject.

context supplied by the collective volumes and in this they differ fundamentally from the earlier denominational histories. Far from being an outdated form of research, such in-depth studies of a particular mission in its particular context over a longer period of time, contributes essential elements to further understanding of the larger field.

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