

Introduction

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In the qada of Karak, confirmation of the authorisation of the annual expenditure of 100000 kuruş for the establishment of two schools with boarding facilities in order to accustom the Arab children to education. Also appointed were the personnel necessary for the correction, teaching of the practice and knowledge of Islam for the nomadic (urban) tribes. For this purpose, a sum of 250 kuruş was allocated. Appointment decreed by order of the Sultan.¹

This decree of the Ottoman Ministry of Education dated 13th February 1899 and covering the territory corresponding to contemporary Jordan poses two issues: that of the education of children and the dissemination of religious norms in a context of reform and reaffirmation of the Ottoman authority over territories considered to be on the margins of the Empire. This project was based on the sending of religious representatives, who were supposed to convey practices and ways of believing considered as orthodox by the state. This decree also strongly echoes, through the methods and vocabulary chosen, the rhetoric and action used by Christian missionaries in the Middle East, thus questioning the Christian specificity of the mission.

The term “mission” refers to the spreading of a series of dogmas or beliefs to a foreign territory or social environment by an individual, institution, or religious group. Mission as an action thus seeks to reform, convert, or attract social groups from “domestic”² or remote territories, depending on the periods or actors involved. The human and social sciences, especially history and later anthropology, have primarily envisioned the mission as a Christian phenomenon.

1 BOA (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi), BEO, 1268/95035, 13 February 1899.

2 Here a domestic mission refers to the rechristianisation efforts of European society beginning in the late sixteenth century: forced conversions and sincerity of conversions in connection with the Jews of Spain and Portugal, and later with the Moriscos; and the conversion of Protestants (wars of religion) via controversy and conviction. These domestic missions have given rise to questions surrounding the homogenization of Christians and centralization up through the late nineteenth century. See Talal Asad and Charles Taylor for the constitution of religion as a separate and autonomous category, as well as Danièle Hervieu-Léger and Régine Azria, *Dictionnaire des faits religieux* (Paris: PUF, 2019).

As far as the modern Middle East is concerned, the study of missions has for a long time focused on the political and diplomatic role of Christian missions as an instrument of imperialist European powers. Other studies have adopted a hagiographic approach of certain missions, generally setting out from missionary archives.³ This volume argues that the history of missions cannot be limited to either of these approaches given the diversity of the local and international actors involved, or the long-term social and cultural mark it left on the region well beyond Christian communities.

In the last ten years, a scientific renewal has emphasized the social impact that the Christian missionary presence has had on communities, both Christian and Muslim, as well as on Middle Eastern societies as a whole.⁴ In trying to include all the forces present (missionaries and “missioned,” auxiliaries and converts) in the analysis, as well as to account for their *agency*, these studies interpret the missionary space as one of negotiation and coproduction of the colonial “encounter”. While doing so, they acknowledge the asymmetrical power relations that characterize the missionary action.⁵ Moreover, history, anthropology, and sociology have studied proselytising phenomena and

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- 3 Heleen Murre van den Berg, *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Studies in Christian Mission 32. Leiden: Brill, 2006); Andrew Porter, *Religion versus empire? British Protestant missionary and overseas expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).
 - 4 Karène Sanchez Summerer and Zananiri, Sary (eds.), *Europeans’ cultural diplomacy and Arab Christianity in Mandate Palestine. Between contention and connection* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020); Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt. Missionary Encounters in an age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Norbert Friedrich, Uwe Kaminsky, Roland Löffler, *The Social Dimensions of the Christian Missions in the Middle East. Historical Studies of the 19th and the 20th centuries* (Franz Steiner: Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 2010); Chantal Verdeil, “Une ‘révolution sociale dans la montagne’: la conversion des alaouites par les jésuites dans les années 1930,” in *L’Islam des marges: missions chrétiennes et espaces périphériques du monde musulman, xvii^e–xx^e siècle*, eds Bernard Heyberger and Rémy Madinier (Paris: EHESS, 2011), 81–105.
 - 5 Julia Hauser, *German religious women in Late Ottoman Beirut. Competing Missions* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven. American Missionaries and the Failed Conversions of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Karène Sanchez, *Politiques, éducation et identités linguistiques; le collège des frères des écoles chrétiennes de Jérusalem (1922–1939)* (Utrecht: LOT 207, 2009); Karène Sanchez Summerer, “Action sanitaire et éducative en Palestine ottomane et mandataire: missionnaires catholiques et anglicans,” in *Missions chrétiennes en terre d’Islam—Moyen-Orient, Afrique du Nord (xvii^e–xx^e siècles)*. *Anthologie de textes missionnaires*, ed. Verdeil C. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 231–282; Annalaura Turiano, *De la pastorale migratoire à la coopération technique (1896–1970)*. *Missionnaires italiens en Egypte. Les salésiens et l’enseignement professionnel*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Aix-Marseille University 2016).

conversions in different contexts,⁶ especially in connection with Protestants and Evangelicals.⁷ These studies explore the missionary model in its diversity, including the various forms it has taken and its attitude toward otherness.

Precisely because Christian missions have often been reduced to a tool of Empire, and because in a similarly instrumental mode colonialism has been broadcast as a global vehicle for major religions—Christianity indeed, but Judaism and Islam as well—, we need to disentangle these apparent isomorphisms. This will be done by discussing the missionary phenomenon, its diversity, and connections in the age of Empire and of imperial transitions. By adopting a *longue durée* approach (from the 19th to the 21st century) this volume aims to insert the missionary phenomenon in a longer history, that questions colonial and imperial time frames. In this sense, moving beyond a historiography that sees in the end of colonization the decline or the radical transformation of missions,⁸ this volume shows how missions navigated imperial transitions. In doing so, it investigates the multiple ways in which missionary methods and preaching continued to shape contemporary Middle Eastern societies.

Secondly, this volume tackles the notion of mission through the analysis of preaching activities across Islam, Judaism, and Christianity since the late nineteenth century. The use of the notion of preaching should be understood in two respects: firstly, in that it allows the notion of mission to be detached from that of proselytism which is often associated with it. In the Middle East, is it not primarily among Christians that missionaries intervene? Secondly, certain forms of preaching, in terms of their organisation, their objectives and the methods used, seem to be similar to mission. How can this perspective be constructed and understood? If the contributions in this volume do not consider any equivalence between the terms mission and preaching, they question the Christian specificity of the former. What forms of preaching—understood here in the Weberian sense, i.e. as opposed to the “cure of souls”⁹—can be assimilated to mission, both external and domestic, and in what context? This work initiates the reflection by setting out from a first observation, namely the asymmetric relations connected to preaching and more specifically to proselytism between the three monotheistic religions. While Judaism refutes its universal vocation, Islam and Christianity have placed it at the heart of their doctrine since the medieval period.

6 Mercedes Garcia-Arenal, *Conversion islamiques: Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001).

7 Fatiha Kaouès and Myriam Laakili, *Prosélytismes: Les nouvelles avant-gardes religieuses* (Paris: CNRS Edition, 2016).

8 Claude Prudhomme, *Missions chrétiennes et colonisation XVIIe–XXe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 2004).

9 Max Weber, *Economy and society* (Bedminster Press, 1968).

Missions take their place within the history of the Catholic and Protestant Reformations, and are firmly anchored in a Christian history. The notion contains a constituent ambiguity, between its stated evangelical inspiration and the actual conditions of its emergence. It refers to the Pentecost described in Chapter 2 of the Acts of the Apostles: *missus* or “sent,” such is the condition of the disciples moved by the Holy Spirit, who speak various languages and use various means to announce the resurrection of Jesus. Missionary traditions have underscored different aspects of the text: the invitation for departure, the appropriation of the languages of others, and the common guidance under the Holy Spirit, reflected in the centralized organization of Catholic missions from the sixteenth century onward; and the anomie and plurality of charismas, inspiring highly autonomous missions in the field across the globe, often on a freelance basis, as has been the case for many Protestant evangelical missions. The duty to conduct missions is also related to wandering and poverty. In this context, missions have two objectives, namely to convert through preaching and through example. Missions are often expressed through preaching, healing the sick, and education, all duties of the Church. Missions embody a spiritual attitude, a return to the self.

On the other hand, missions appeared in a historical context after the temporality of the Acts. Missions were born in sixteenth-century Europe, with its sense of expanding world horizons, increasing religious competition, its relations between Christianity and conquering Islamic powers, and recent internal divisions between Catholics and Protestants. The spirit of missions is expansionist and competitive, but not everywhere to the same extent; Islamic empires are one context in which missionaries acted prudently. For missionaries, Islamic countries have served as a challenge, especially those of the Levant, which were among the earliest locations for missions. The relations established between the missioned and missionaries involved, for the latter, both greater knowledge of the field and the development of sophisticated methods. Interest for these regions was revived in the nineteenth century with the rediscovery of the Holy Land and the deployment of Protestant and Orthodox missions. Starting in the sixteenth century, missions became a fact of life for local churches, especially those upholding an Eastern rite, by working with them or to conquer them. Competition drove them to expand their flock; as a reaction, local churches committed themselves to new endeavours and even missionary work. Church members counted on such competition as a basis upon which to address claims or demands for reforms to religious authorities. However, if the exclusive end of missions is proselytism and conversion, the results were meagre. In the Near East, the number of conversions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was very low, calling into question the proselytising impact

of missions.¹⁰ Was this truly the case? To answer this question, the present volume proposes studying missions in the light of one of its central components, preaching.

Thought of mainly as a Christian phenomenon, and often understood as a form of self-sacrifice, missions have often been rejected outside Christianity (although the notion was transliterated into Hebrew to express the secularized objectives of social action, *HaMisyon*, as discussed in this volume by V. Vilmain and M.C. Rioli). Nevertheless, comparable modes of preaching and “domestic missions”, aiming at revivifying the faith or putting communities of believers back on “the right track” can be observed in the three Abrahamic religions, even though the terms used to describe such phenomena differ, and do not always include the same social realities. For instance, the dynamics of preaching—the driver of “making someone believe”—are often referred to as *daʿwa* or *tabligh* in Islam.

Taking similarities, contact points and competitions as a starting point, this volume intends to reflect on the articulations between mission and preaching. It investigates the objectives assigned to these phenomena, but also and above all the modalities and methods of their implementation from the end of the 19th century to the present day. The Middle East has experienced a large-scale preaching renewal since the late nineteenth century. Seen alternately as a Holy Land, a destination for the first Jewish *aliyot* (journeys to the Promised Land), and a cradle for reformist projects or territories to be reconquered and controlled, the region has been central to the reshaping of preaching practices (missions, late Ottoman religious policies). The notion of reform (*iṣlāḥ*) was at the core of this renewal. It was based on the observation of a deterioration of the Muslim community or state, and the search for remedies, which oscillated between a return to the sources and adaptation to the needs of the time. The aim was to put the ‘umma, the community of believers, back on the right track, to root out its blameworthy innovations (*bidaʿ*), to prevent its deviations from the prophetic norm (*sunna*).¹¹ This religious reform went hand in hand with a set of political, military, and other measures aiming at “re-ordering” the administrative apparatus (*tanzīmāt*).¹²

10 Sébastien Fath, “Prosélytisme,” in *Dictionnaire du fait religieux*, ed. R. Azria and D. Hervieu-Léger (Paris: PUR, 2010).

11 Dyala Hamzah, “Foundations of religious reform (Islah) and Cultural Revival (Nahda),” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Middle East and North African History*, ed. A. Ghazal and J. Hanssen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), DOI:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199672530.013.36.

12 Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1851–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Olivier Bouquet, *Les Pachas du sultan:*

Against this background, missionary and preaching undertakings aimed to reform communities that were perceived as decadent, declining or not orthodox enough. They targeted communities of believers deemed to have moved away from orthodoxy. As a result, missionary/reformist actions tended to define religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy. They claimed to trace the boundaries between the ‘true’ religion and practices and beliefs that were considered deviant. Missionary preaching kept on defining and redefining these borders well beyond the fall of the Ottoman Empire,¹³ one of the central preoccupations being to “clarify” confessional and communal boundaries within the mission territories leading to sectarian dynamics.¹⁴

As young states sought, after the First World War, to define their relation to preaching with the end of the Caliphate, new religious movements appeared, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. As for local churches, they were encouraged by both the Vatican and Protestant societies. While Saudi Arabia was asserting regional hegemony, beginning in the 1940s certain states such as Syria and Iraq emphasized their secularism, while others such as Lebanon endorsed their multi-faith dimension. The 1960s marked a turning point in the chronology of preaching, with the strengthening of charismatic and evangelical tendencies within Christianity, the internal renewal (theological, liturgical, monastic etc.) of the Eastern churches, a well-known example being the Coptic revival in Egypt,¹⁵ as well as the emergence of new agents of preaching within different branches of “political” Islam (N. Bouras and E. Sigillò in this volume). At the same time, the role of religion as the matrix for a national project was affirmed in Israel. Beginning in the early 1980s, the Iranian revolution gave

Essai sur les agents supérieurs de l'État ottoman (1839–1909) (Leuven: Peeters, 2007). Edhem Eldem, *L'Empire ottoman et la Turquie face à l'Occident* (Paris: Fayard, 2018); Marc Aymes, *A Provincial of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the 19th century* (London: Routledge, 2013); Ghislaine Alleaume, “Les voyages d'un paradigme: la réforme et ses usages (Égypte, XIXe–XXe siècles),” *Égypte/Monde arabe*, vol. 2, no. 20 (2019): 19–36.

13 Bernard Heyberger, Rémy Madinier, *L'Islam des marges. Mission chrétienne et espaces périphériques du monde musulman, XVIIe–XXe siècles* (Paris: Karthala, 2011).

14 Géraldine Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque, Les tribus chrétiennes de Madaba, Jordanie, (XIXe–XXe siècle)* (Paris: CNRS édition, 2004).

15 Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: The Challenges of Modernisation and Identity*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); Dina el-Khawaga, *Le Renouveau copte. La communauté comme acteur politique*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Paris: Institut d'études politiques, 1993); Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Brigitte Voile, “Les paradoxes du Renouveau copte dans l'Égypte contemporaine,” in *Chrétiens du monde arabe. Un archipel en terre d'Islam*, ed. B. Heyberger (Paris: Autrement, 2003).

Shiism a new regional impetus. The post-2011 period has been marked by a complex re-composition of political Islam. New preaching practices have also been deployed by evangelical churches or groups of Orthodox Jews, with a growing number of female preachers. The territories under consideration have served as breeding grounds for these models, as well as recipients of imported and adapted models (from Europe, North America, the Gulf, India). New forms of media have been used throughout the period to convey the religious message, contributing to changes in both the form and content of preaching.

Parallels and comparisons have recently been suggested between Christian missionaries and preaching strategies and Muslim *da'wa*. This is notably true of research on late nineteenth-century Ottoman missionaries that questions models of transmission between Christianity and Islam,¹⁶ and works on political Islam that explore its missionary dimension in an effort to explain how it became a world religion.¹⁷ While most studies have stressed that it is not possible to speak of Jewish mission, others have underscored a new “missionary” trend starting in the nineteenth century seeking to convert Jews to a “regenerated and modernized Judaism.”¹⁸ This multidisciplinary volume sets out from these initial points of contact, and uses a connected perspective to consider all the denominations that have practiced—or practice—preaching and religious reform initiatives in the particular form of *missions*. We will explore whether the issues developed by missionary studies have a heuristic value for the churches whose practices have garnered less research attention (Aupiais and du Roy in this volume), as well as in Islam and Judaism.

This book reports on the exchanges and work of the team of the five-year research programme, “Christian Missions and Societies in the Middle East: Organisations, Identities, Heritagization (19th–20st centuries), MisSMO”, including the final conference held in Rome in October 2020. Bringing together

16 Selim Deringil, *The Well protected domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Necati Alkan, “The Ottoman Policy of ‘Correction of Belief(s),’” in *Ottoman Sunnism, New Perspectives*, ed. V. Erginbas, 166–192 (Kent: F. Schull, 2019).

17 Itzhak Weismann and Jamal Malik, *Culture of Da'wa: Preaching in the Modern World* (University of Utah Press, 2020); Matthew J. Kuiper, *Da'wa and Other Religions: Indian Muslims and the Modern Resurgence of Global Islamic Activism* (London: Routledge, 2017); Matthew J. Kuiper, *Da'wa: A Global History of Islamic Missionary Thought and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

18 Vincent Vilmain, “Une mission juive au xxe siècle? L'exemple des politiques de santé sionistes auprès des populations juives autochtones de Palestine à la Belle Epoque,” *Histoire et missions chrétiennes*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2012): 55–80.

some twenty researchers, the chapters take into account the complexity of the social spaces—well beyond Christianity—in which the preaching methods influenced by missionary propaganda were deployed. This volume proposes to decompartmentalize fields of study that have remained sealed off from one another by emphasizing points of contact, entanglements, and interactions. In line with the multidisciplinary approach of the MisSMO project, this volume considers the intersection of disciplines as diverse as history, ethnography, political sciences and theology as a powerful heuristic approach to studying missions and preaching as multilayered and multidimensional phenomena.

In this volume, authors suggest thematic avenues and common threads in order to develop a connected approach to missions and preaching, using multiple case studies ranging from the Late Ottoman Empire to post-2011 Egypt and Tunisia, and encompassing spaces in East and Sub-Saharan Africa connected to the Middle East through preaching and missionary mobilities. Certain chapters invite us to reflect on the circulation of preaching models between religions, faiths and territories. They simultaneously examine confessional competition, and the creation of confessional boundaries and communities of belief, as well as porosity and cross-confessional interactions. This approach allows to put into perspective the “religions in movement”¹⁹ as well as constant entanglements and connections throughout the long twentieth century.

1 Genealogy of Christian Missions in the Near East

Different and often competing actors and models of preaching have been deployed in the Middle East since the sixteenth century. The Jesuits were pioneers, establishing missions in the Ottoman Empire: Istanbul with the Lycée Saint-Benoît in 1576,²⁰ along with Aleppo²¹ and Persia. As in India and China, they developed knowledge regarding the societies where they settled, except that they were not allowed to openly express their observations, for fear that it would provide the Ottoman state with a pretext to deport them for pros-

19 Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Le pèlerin et le converti, la religion en mouvement* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).

20 Yves Danjou, *Histoire du Lycée Saint-Benoît / Saint-Benoît Lisesi tarihi* (Istanbul: Özel Fransız Saint-Benoît Lisesi Yayını, 2008).

21 Claude Libois, *Jésuites au Proche-Orient: Notices bibliographiques* (Beirut: Dar El-Machreq / Université Saint-Joseph, 2004).

elytizing.²² For our purposes, it is important to distinguish between different contexts of missionary work. Unlike other territories governed by the Sultan or the Shah, proselytising among Muslims was clearly forbidden, and the missionary presence was possible only on the condition of accepting this rule. As a result, missionary activity was reoriented and for all practical purposes confined to the Eastern Christian Churches, either to have them conform to the practices of the Catholic Church of Rome when they were linked to it, or to convince the faithful and their hierarchies to unite with Rome.²³ Preaching was nevertheless a conflictual activity, although its stakes shifted.²⁴ This leads to the question of alternatives to direct preaching, with missionaries seeking to preach by example, and especially by action. Catholic missionary institutions used other operational methods to attain what they otherwise could not through theological debate, such as translations and publications, training for the clergy, scientific activity, pedagogical and technical demonstrations of the intellectual advances of Catholic Europe, and welcome in Rome for those parts of Eastern Churches in conflict with their hierarchy.

The obstacles to missions redefined the field of missionary action and lent a changing meaning to preaching in each of these contexts, especially in the return to the sources of Christianity in the confrontation with Eastern Churches. The difficulties encountered during the nineteenth century, with revived missionary endeavors and heightened competition, expanded the forms of missionary action, and thereby the possibilities for approaching the missioned. Preaching took hold in new locations and among new populations: on school benches, at the bedside of patients, among refugees from conflict, and in remote villages, among others.

22 Other Catholic congregations, notably the Lazarist Congregation of the Mission, took over after the Society of Jesus was banned; Pierre Corcket, *Les Lazaristes et les Filles de la Charité au Proche-Orient: 1783–1983* (Achrafieh-Beirut: Maison des Lazaristes, 2004).

23 Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la réforme catholique* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1994).

24 With regard to the Maronite Church and Uniate Churches, the points of contention involved the ordinary, ecclesiastical discipline, and the conformity of liturgy with Catholic dogma. See Anaïs Massot, *Socio-political Changes, Confessionalization and Inter-Confessional Relations in Ottoman Damascus from 1760 to 1860*, PhD diss. EHESS and Leiden University, 2021. With regard to other churches, the polemic was initially with respect to dogma, and by implication to ritual: missionaries revisited the theological controversies from apostolic councils to the mutual excommunications of 1054, using arguments ranging from cool logic, a desire to address misunderstanding, and invocation of the benefits of union among Christians, which was assumed to be possible only with the largest church.

In Protestantism, the development of missionary activities came later, during the second half of the seventeenth century; aside from the establishment of a Genevan Protestant community in Istanbul in the early seventeenth century,²⁵ these missions appear to have respectfully avoided Islamic empires. It was not until the 1820s that they gained a foothold, and not until the 1830s that Protestant missions truly reached a critical mass allowing them to take over, first in Palestine and the mountains of Lebanon, and later across Anatolia as well as in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and as far as Sudan.²⁶ An accelerator of this dynamic was humanitarian emergency, which occurred especially after the Hamidian massacres suffered between 1893 and 1897 by the Armenian populations of Central and Eastern Anatolia. The impetus for this effort came from Germany.²⁷ These missions were intended for preaching and converting, although Protestant missionary movements transformed by ascribing greater importance to the condition of their coreligionists. At the same time, the Russian Empire sent Orthodox in the region, notably in Palestine through the activities of the Imperial Orthodox Society.²⁸ Seeing the interactions that developed as part of these missionary activities as being essentially self-interested—with a view to religious conquest—strips any depth from the interactions that occurred in various contexts, including those that, under the heading of “preaching,” directly affected the beliefs and religious models of spiritual life.

However, different Protestant missions formed over time by moving away from an institutional and centralized model. They adopted a position that

25 Thomas David, “Une autre Genève dans l’Orient’: La congrégation genevoise d’Istanbul au XVIII^e siècle,” in *L’Horloger du sérail. Aux sources du fantasme oriental chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Paul Dumont and Rémy Hildebrand (Paris & Istanbul: Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes et Maisonneuve & Larose, 2006), 39–53.

26 It initially involved missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (commonly known as LJS), and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) in connection with the German deaconesses of Kaiserswerth and the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (or Basel Mission); Murre van den Berg, *New Faith in Ancient Lands*.

27 Under the leadership of Dr. Lepsius or the Deutsche Hülfsbund für Christliches Liebeswerk im Orient (ou Comité de Francfort), and with support from numerous Scandinavian and Baltic missionaries; Axel Meissner, *Martine Rades “Christliche Welt” und Armenien: Bausteine für eine internationale Ethik des Protestantismus* (Münster: LIT Verlage Münster, 2010). The friendship between Kaiser Wilhelm II and Sultan Abdul Hamid II facilitated the intervention of missionaries supported by German Christian churches, who were horrified by the attitude of Ottoman authorities during these massacres.

28 Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine 1843–1914. Church and Politics in the Near East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Elena Astafieva, “La Russie en Terre Sainte: le cas de la Société Impériale Orthodoxe de Palestine (1882–1917),” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 1 (2003): 41–68.

sought autonomy from the ecclesiastical institutions of their country of origin, and sometimes independence from colonial powers.²⁹ The counterpart of this autonomy was often a return to enthusiastic preaching, to the priority given to evangelization, in a manner that sometimes seems to anticipate Pentecostalism. This anomic dynamic of evangelical missions sometimes faced major setbacks, for they were not linked to colonial powers, and were thus easily abandoned by them.³⁰ Nevertheless, they offered an advantage after independence—despite the enduring scandal of their inveterate proselytising among Muslims—which explains their strengthened presence in a context of recurring conflict in the Middle East, as well as the increasing mobilization of confessional realities for political purposes, especially after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003.

While the origins of missionary propaganda are indissociable from the organization of missions, the term assumed autonomy from them, such that in the end the propaganda hardly resembled the preaching of missionaries. The Congregation for the Propagation of the Sacred Faith established by Gregory xv in 1622 had organizational objectives, namely supervising the activity of missions throughout the world. In Persia and the Ottoman Empire, it was concerned more with assigning distinct fields of operation to each missionary organization rather than defining the operational methods and frameworks for preaching. The *Propaganda Fide* understood that the Muslim world, more so than elsewhere, represented a space requiring subtle persuasion methods in order to avoid political problems. Indoctrination—propaganda in the ordinary sense of the word—was possible only in closed contexts, such as seminaries.³¹ Moreover, the black legend of the Propaganda was already giving ground to the caricatured one of Jesuits, who were seen in the Ottoman Empire as a pitiless organization imposing rigorous discipline, and as such a menacing power for the state. In the nineteenth century the Jesuits became the primary trope for demonizing Catholic methods of missionary action, which sought to obtain through intrigue what it could not through preaching.

The contexts of missionary operation and the projected image of their activity have had an impact on their capacity for action. Preaching conditions have

29 Samir Boulos, *European Evangelicals in Egypt (1900–1956): Cultural Entanglements and Missionary spaces* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016).

30 Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal. Christian missionaries and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

31 Étienne Fouilloux, *Eugène, cardinal Tisserant (1884–1972). Une biographie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2011). The limited focus of Catholic missions on Eastern Churches also explains why their supervision was initially transferred in 1862 to a specific section of the *Propaganda Fide*, and in 1917 to another dicastery, the Congregation for the Eastern Churches.

varied tremendously depending on whether missionaries operated alone in the field or faced rivals. In the former case, their primary if not only concern was resistance from the missioned, as was the case for Catholic missions in Persia and the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In the latter case, which characterized the nineteenth century, the stated scope and objective of preaching prompted hostility and alliances. Catholic missionaries thus displayed their vocation of conducting missionary activity exclusively among Christians, leaving Muslims aside and thereby demonstrating their respect for local authority. However, this approach created constant conflict with the faithful and hierarchies of non-Uniate Churches. Protestant missionaries did not demonstrate an objective of evangelizing Muslims, or converting the Christians of other Churches. Their literature emphasized the fact that the “nominal Christians” of Eastern Churches could become true Christians by adopting moral and spiritual principles in keeping with the Gospel from a Protestant point of view, and not by formally converting to Protestantism.³²

Preaching destined for Muslims in the nineteenth century and even during the colonial period—with undeniable proximity between European authorities and the primary missions—was not self-evident. The number of conversions was very low across all Christian denominations, with the only notable counter-example being the Jesuit mission in Syria among the Alawites during the 1920s and 1930s. If Jesuit preaching produced results, it was because it offered the possibility of profound social change and a break from the vertical relations within the community. However, the hostility of persons of note, and the broader dislike that Muslim clerics and nationalists had toward recognizing the apostasy of Muslims—which was seen as an abuse of colonial power—prompted French mandatory authorities to back off by refusing to administratively recognize conversions.³³ In this final example, the preaching mattered less than its social context.

Missionary methods in the nineteenth century grew out of crosscutting mis-siological concerns. They involved contending with the adversary (Catholics for Protestants, and vice versa) by attracting a captive audience, drawing it away from the other side. It was also important to overcome the powerful preconceptions toward frequenting missionary institutions, which were in principal

32 Habib Badr, *Mission to “nominal Christians”: The Policy and Practice of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and its Missionaries towards Eastern Churches which led to the Organization of a Protestant Church in Beirut (1819–1848)* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1992).

33 Verdeil, “Une révolution sociale dans la montagne”.

suspected, on reasonable grounds, of giving priority to proselytising rather than charitable work. This latter objective dictated the forms of missionary activity, for it was in its name that missionaries created the schools whose students attended mass, religious services, and catechism. It was to reach isolated populations that missionaries increased and extended their tours from their central establishments, often with medicine and bibles in hand. It was to offer examples of their vocation and create bonds of affection—and thereby counter the suspicion toward them—that missionary organizations opened dispensaries and hospitals with preaching as a precondition to treatment, or in certain Catholic hospitals the practice of baptism *in articulo mortis*. Missionary women conducted home visits, combining readings from the Gospel with domestic advice, to exert influence over the family cell and to supplement activity in the public sphere. Missions invested heavily in establishing colleges in order to train local clergy and eventually indigenize missions, as well as to co-opt elites and exert a formative influence over the state construction process.

These different operating methods, hospitals and colleges in particular, prompted bitter debates among supporters of missions in the mother country: was this missionary work? Under what conditions was it acceptable to finance them? A series of events between the 1880s and the interwar period led to a broad definition for both Catholic and Protestant missions. In Protestant missionary circles, the Student Volunteer Movement and the guardian figure of John R. Mott gave missions a redefined meaning that was simultaneously maximalist (Mott set the objective of evangelizing the world in one generation) and as pluralistic as possible: all trades and forms of know-how could be related to missions, and everyone, regardless of their competence in preaching in the strict sense of the term, could be a missionary.³⁴ The path was open to those who a few decades later bore witness, based on a shared situation and empathy of Christian inspiration. The movement sought to motivate individuals from various backgrounds to leave, and to gain awareness of the situation of missioned populations, who were perceived with miserabilism.

In Catholicism, the social doctrine of the Church expressed in the *Rerum novarum* encyclical (1891) had an impact beyond the industrialized West: promoting the association of capital-labor surely had little meaning in Islamic empires lacking in capital, but it prompted Catholic missionaries to turn their attention to the social conflicts that were intensifying and nationalizing in

34 C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott, a biography: 1865–1955*, n.p. (World Council of Churches, 1979); Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

certain parts of Ottoman territory, as well as to emphasize the practical ends of their teaching. Two texts addressed specific concerns: *Rerum novarum* and the apostolic letter *Orientalium dignitas* (1894) emphasized the prerogatives of Uniate Eastern Churches with respect to Latin missionaries,³⁵ and served as the foundation for a humanitarian doctrine of the Church of Rome based on paternalism, corporatism, and the principle of subsidiarity. They formally expressed concern for involving Uniate Eastern Churches in its work, rather than intervening above them.

In the early twentieth century, both Catholics and Protestants were equipped with doctrinal tools for planning an expansion of missionary operating methods. They based their religion around the inability to directly pursue proselytising activities, and on the merits of welcoming religious diversity and even external secularization. The most evident manifestation of the latter was the 1909 strike by Muslim and Jewish students at the Syrian Protestant College against the obligation to attend religious services during a constitutional period, which affirmed the principle of religious liberty.³⁶ This broader and less confessional missionary toolkit facilitated investment in the humanitarian activity required by the conflicts and mass crimes that occurred in the region during and after World War I.³⁷ Missionary institutions were divided as to whether it was legitimate and even desirable to keep their proselytising purposes quiet in order to best act in emergencies. Humanitarian activity and assistance with reconstruction and development became integral parts of legitimate missionary aims.

The above clearly suggests that missions had a specifically Christian genealogy drawn from the Gospel. They gave rise to diverse methodological developments depending on the country, thereby presenting approaches to preaching that were likely to inspire non-Christian preachers. Missions drew the interest of non-Christian clerics, especially when they diversified their operating methods and agreed to work toward social and secularized objectives.

35 Paul Fournier, "La Constitution de Léon XIII sur les Églises unies d'Orient," *Revue Générale de droit public*, 1 (1895): 83–110.

36 Anne-Laure Dupont, "Une école missionnaire et étrangère dans la tourmente de la révolution constitutionnelle ottomane. La crise de 1909 au Syrian Protestant College de Beyrouth," *Les Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 75 (2007): 39–57; Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*.

37 Okkenhaug and Sanchez Summerer (eds.), *Christian Missions and Humanitarianism in The Middle East*.

2 Connected and Cross-Cutting Approaches to Missions

Beginning in the nineteenth century the terminology and methods used for propaganda and preaching by states, religious authorities, and associations—both secular, Muslim, and Jewish—grew closer in many respects to missionary patterns and models. This trend took hold in the twentieth century with the emergence of new dynamics, namely the international development of charismatic movements and evangelical Protestantism, just as the Catholic world was seemingly renouncing missions after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Missionary dynamics growing out of and intended for the south appeared just as confessional humanitarianism and the promotion of interreligious dialogue took hold within a Middle East experiencing recurring conflict and *coups d'état*.

Setting out from the reform movement sparked by the *Nahda* (the Awakening) in the late nineteenth century, the preaching methods of states and religious institutions—and groups of believers critical of these entities—continued to evolve and reinvent themselves throughout the twentieth century in both Sunni and Shiite Islam. In the Jewish world, aside from the activity of l'Alliance israélite, which deployed in the Middle East beginning in the late nineteenth century, it was the various *aliyahs* and later the creation of the State of Israel that led to major reconfigurations in practices of belief and methods of preaching. The twentieth century thus saw original forms of—and major transformations to—preaching methods, similar in their methods and aims to Christian missionary movements, thereby inviting reflection on the influence of the missionary model on the other Abrahamic religions, and *vice versa*.

Connected approaches to preaching and missions nevertheless remain scarce. When they do exist, they mostly concern the medieval Mediterranean.³⁸ The religions of the book are most often envisioned in their internal dynamic, or from an interactional perspective through issues relating to interreligious dialogue, co-presence, and shared places of worship.³⁹ Concerning Islam, historical works have proposed an analysis of the reforming designs of the *Nahda*

38 Linda G. Jones and Adrienne Dupont-Hamy (eds.) *Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Preaching in the Mediterranean and Europe and Interfaith Encounters* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019).

39 Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbours. Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Brandeis University Press, 2016); Gaétan du Roy and Séverine Gabry-Thienpont, "Religious dynamics in post-revolutionary Egypt," *Social Compass*, vol. 66, no. 3 (2019): 299–317; Michelle Campos, *Ottoman Brothers. Muslim Christians, and Jews in Early 20th century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

embodied by figures such as M. ‘Abduh and R. Rida.⁴⁰ These intellectuals believed that Christian missions were a true threat, serving simultaneously as a foil and as models to rethink reform activity in the field (newspapers, schools, etc.). This reforming zeal could also be found within Shiite Islam from the late nineteenth century onward.⁴¹ At the time it was the Ottoman state that drew heavily on the missionary model—all while combatting it—to reform and standardize the practices of the Empire’s faithful, especially those in Arab provinces. In order to do so, it dispatched zealous civil servants tasked with preaching, dispensing religious instruction, fostering the construction of places of worship, and promoting the distribution of copies of the Koran (Alkan in this volume).⁴²

For more contemporary periods, the political sciences have offered incisive analyses of preaching phenomena (*da‘wa*) linked to “political” Islam.⁴³ Several studies have focused on *da‘wa* or Islamic preaching, especially in Egypt from a state or institutional perspective,⁴⁴ or with a focus on the Muslim Brotherhood or Salafi groups.⁴⁵ Paying attention to changing contexts and topics, such as the interplay between religion and politics, recent works have investigated the evolution of Islamic missionary thought and practice over the past few centuries.⁴⁶ *Da‘wa* as a missionary phenomenon has also been studied in relation to contemporary Shia Islam, showing how Iran has attempted to spread a religious model of *vilayat al-fiqh* throughout the Middle East since the Islamic revolution (1979).⁴⁷ The establishment of Hezbollah in Lebanon provides a successful example of this strategy.⁴⁸ However, studies examining relations between act-

40 Umar Ryad, *Islamic Reformism and Christianity. A Critical Reading of the Works of Muhammad Rashid Rida and His Associates (1898–1935)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

41 Sabrina Mervin, *Un réformisme chiïte. Ulémas et lettré du Ġabal ‘Amil (actuel Liban-Sud) de la fin de l’Empire ottoman à l’indépendance du Liban* (Paris, Beirut, Damas: Karthala, CERMOC, IFEAD, 2000).

42 Eugene Rogan, “Missionary Rivalries in Ottoman Transjordan at the Turn of the 20th Century,” in Antonin Jaussen. *Sciences sociales occidentales et patrimoine arabe*, ed. Géraldine Chartelard and Mohammed Tarawneh (Amman: CERMOC, 1998), 37–49.

43 Thomas Pierret, *Baas et Islam: La Dynastie Assad face aux oulémas* (Paris: PUF, 2011); Stéphane Lacroix, “Salafisme et contre-révolution en Egypte,” *Vacarme*, vol. 74, no. 1 (2016): 27–33.

44 Gilbert Delanoue, *Moralistes et politiques musulmans dans l’Égypte du XIXe siècle, 1798–1882* (Le Caire: IFAO, 1982); Malika Zeghal, “Réformismes, islamismes et libéralismes religieux,” *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 123 (2008): 17–34.

45 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Itzchak Weismann and Jamal Malik, *Culture of Da‘wa*.

46 Kuiper, *Da‘wa and Other Religions*.

47 Sabrina Mervin, *Les mondes chiïtes et l’Iran* (Paris: Karthala, 2007).

48 Aurélie Daher, *Le Hezbollah: mobilisation et pouvoir* (Paris: PUF, 2014); Erminia Chiara

ors, state institutions, and preaching remain rare, despite the fact that the latter played a fundamental role in organizing *da'wa*, as well as in defining its limits and the policies governing Muslim religious and doctrinal expression.⁴⁹

Concerning Judaism, special attention has been paid to the history of the Jewish communities of Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon, in addition to the role of the *Alliance Israelite* within these groups from the late nineteenth century onward.⁵⁰ Recent studies have analyzed specific kinds of “missions” in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that sought to convert Eastern Jews to a “regenerated and modernized Judaism.”⁵¹ Like other religious worlds, the Jewish one has recently been confronted with a crisis of religious transmission; an increasing number of Jewish groups and institutions see the area as a “land of mission” where “lost” Jews should be “brought back” (*teshuva*), as in the case of the Lubavitch movement.⁵² With the creation of the State of Israel (1948) and the often-forced departure of Jews from the region toward the new state, religious dynamics assumed a central importance beyond the regional scale, as the country gradually claimed to represent Judaism internationally. This led to a new geography of preaching, connected to the development of religious teaching centers. Against this backdrop, some studies have explored how the religious Zionist movement has been actively promoting a dual dynamic of the “Israelization of Judaism”⁵³ and the “Judaization of Israel” since the end of the Six-Day War (Tank-Storper in this volume).

While similarities between Christian and Muslim missions have been noted for the late Ottoman period,⁵⁴ connected approaches to missions in the three monotheist religions remain rare.⁵⁵ This interdisciplinary volume proposes,

Calabrese, *Militer au Hezbollah. Ethnographie d'un engagement dans la banlieue sud de Beyrouth* (Paris, Beirut: Karthala, Ifpo, 2016).

49 Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Richard T. Antoun *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World: A Jordanian Case Study in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

50 Jérôme Bocquet (ed.), *L'enseignement français en Méditerranée. Les missionnaires et l'Alliance israélite universelle* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012); Elizabeth Antébi, *Les missionnaires juifs de la France, 1860–1939* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1999).

51 Vincent Vilmain, “Une mission juive au xxe siècle?”

52 Sébastien Tank-Storper, “Réfléchir les conversions,” *ThéoRèmes* 3 (2012).

53 Toby Greene and Yossi Shain, “The Israelization of British Jewry: Balancing between home and homeland,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2016.

54 Selim Deringil, *The Well protected domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909*; Necati Alkan, “The Ottoman Policy of “Correction of Belief(s)”.

55 Comparative approaches mostly focus on conversions. See Garcia-Arenal, *Conversions islamiques*. Katia Boissevain and Loïc Le Pape, “Les conversions religieuses en Médi-

through the prism of missions and preaching, to dismantle the barriers between the field of studies concerning Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Inspired by relational approaches, it aims to reveal points of contact, exchange, and circulations with the Middle East as a central observatory.

The contributions pave the way for a connected approach to missions and preaching in the twentieth century⁵⁶ through the analysis of singular case studies based on an “evidential paradigm”.⁵⁷ These case studies suggest approaches for decompartmentalizing the study of preaching and missions. The reflection explore practices and methods of preaching and proselytising in the Middle East, in addition to the theoretical, methodological, and/or normative discourses developed by actors in relation to this subject. Considering missions and preaching as multifaceted phenomena, this volume shifts the focus toward overlooked dimensions, paying attention both to models and the materiality of preaching.

3 Rethinking Missions, Preaching, and Their Materiality: Phenomena in Constant Redefinition

The research exploring the materiality of religion is part of a genealogy that dates back to the Durkheimian school.⁵⁸ Already in his *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*,⁵⁹ the sociologist pointed out the centrality of religion and its materiality, in order to identify what connects it to society. Materiality emerged as a factor producing social bonds. While it is no longer necessary to demonstrate that objects bear a particular agency—as genuine social mediators to the point of sometimes being deified⁶⁰—greater attention should be given to the material means used by missions, especially in the case of preaching.

terraneé: dynamiques entre engagements individuels et cadres institutionnels,” *Cahiers d'études du religieux. Recherches interdisciplinaires*, 2014, [online]. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/cerri.1411>; Dionigi Albera and Isabelle Marquette, *Lieux saints partagés* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2015).

56 Jean-Claude Passeron and Jacques Revel, *Penser par cas* (Paris, Edition de l'EHESS, 2005).

57 Carlo Ginzburg, *Les batailles nocturnes. Sorcellerie et rituels agraires en Frioul, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Flammarion, 2019).

58 Anouk Cohen and Cyril Isnart, “Material Religion in France—a Short Genealogy,” *Material Religion. The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2021, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17432200.2021.1873007>.

59 Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 [1912]).

60 Marc Augé, *Le Dieu Objet* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998); Jean Bazin, “Retour aux choses—Dieux,” *Le Temps de la Réflexion*, 7, 1986, 253–227.

In the nineteenth century, it was essentially based on material accounts that ethnographers—and with them missionaries and other Orientalist scholars—documented the methods of belief. Missionaries of all stripes produced knowledge, and learned about everyday life, local practices, and how the populations functioned economically. “Missioning” entailed crucial material considerations. As stated above, since the sixteenth century, missionaries have been individuals who leave, who travel. Taking this trip into considerations raises practical questions: what clothes to wear? What objects to take? Once on site, should churches be built, and if yes in what style? How to adapt materially, and how to “mission”? Exploring the material conditions of missions not only gives entry into preaching and its methods, but also helps question the phenomenon in an effort to explore its polysemy, as well as its various meanings and consequences. This nevertheless remains one of the blind spots of research on missions.

Over the last decade, ritual materiality has undergone a revival of analytical methods, leading to new interpretations.⁶¹ This observation was emphasized in a special issue of the *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* published in 2016, devoted to the power of objects and the “material mediations” represented by “the images, substances, accessories, buildings, and sites associated with their expression in worship.”⁶² The present volume takes its place within this research that makes material aspects central to the study of religion. More precisely, it uses concrete aspects and the daily experience of preaching in the Middle East.

The work by Emma Aubin-Boltanski, which focuses on the Lebanese mystic Catherine Fahmi, offers a good illustration of this renewal. The author proposes an anthropological interpretation of the social and religious phenomena

61 Jean Pierre Albert and Agnieszka Kedzierska-Manzon, “Des Objets-Signes Aux Objets-Sujets,” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 174 (2016): 13–25, DOI:10.4000/assr.27699; Anouk Cohen and Damien Mottier, “Pour une Anthropologie des Matérialités Religieuses,” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 174 (2016): 349–368; Pierre-Olivier Dittmar et al. (eds.) *Techniques & cultures*, 70 (2018), Special issue “Materialiser les désirs;” Capone, S. et al. 2019, *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, 187, Special issue “Des techniques pour croire;” Anouk Cohen, Katerina Kerestetzi and Damien Mottier, *Gradhiva* 26 (2017), Special issue “En croire ses sens;” Katerina Kerestetzi, “The Spirit of a Place: Materiality, Spatiality, and Feeling in Afro-American Religions,” *Journal de la Société Des Américanistes*, vol. 104, no. 1 (2018) DOI:10.4000/jsa.15573; Cyril Isnart and Nathalie Cerezales (eds.), *The Religious Heritage Complex. Legacy, Conservation, and Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

62 Jean-Pierre Albert, Anouk Cohen, Agnieszka Kedzierska-Manzon, Damien Mottier, *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 174 (2016), Special issue “La force des objets—Matières à expériences”.

embodied by this mystic, paying special attention to material aspects. The layout of Catherine's home, which was established as a "home church," and the way in which images and other objects were used for prayer and meetings, constituted a distinct materiality used in ritual situations. Through an ethnographic exploration combining materiality and the details of gestures and practices, the author presents the political and religious role of the Maronite Church, as well as the missions of female mystics alongside highly masculine clerical institutions. It is indeed a question of missions, for in spite of the confessional divisions present in Lebanon, Catherine's salon welcomed a wide range of individuals and represented a space of "*risāla*"—in other words one that is simultaneously "message" and "mission"—in which everything works toward developing unity among Eastern Christians. The details surrounding the location of this mission (arrangement of holy images, use of video, etc.) give material form and visibility to this quest for unity.

The present volume does not limit itself to a materiality embedded in the missionary exercise of its religious and ritual aspects, but also seeks to explore the materiality of how missions function, which is to say how missions, religious presence, and preaching have been implemented. The "material orchestration"⁶³ of proselytising on a daily basis contributes to missions. It sheds light on the sometimes controversial nature of missionary productions and their practices, as in the article by Maria Chiara Rioli, who draws attention to the law passed by the Knesset in 1977 regarding the ban on promising money or other material advantages for missions, in order to thwart their action and limit conversions. This "material orchestration" also illustrates the daily interactions between religious groups and actors connected to financial groups, banks, and NGOs. It shows the development of an economy specific to missions. With this in mind, Ester Sigillò and Armand Aupiais emphasize issues relating to a transnational economy: Sigillò to explore *da'wa* in post-revolutionary Tunisia, and Aupiais to analyse the evangelical churches of Istanbul. Vincent Vilmain presents the logic behind the Alliance's funding of Jewish schools, which generated expectations of return on investment among those who provided the funding. This scenario reveals the process of domination at work when missions have been marked by a developmentalist logic.

While this logic has often been explored when it was foreign to the countries where it was practiced, a number of contributions—especially those by Ester Sigillò and Gaétan du Roy—help understand the importance of the internal social dynamics of the "modernization" process, with particular attention paid

63 Cohen and Mottier, "Pour une Anthropologie des Matérialités Religieuses".

to class relations. The “material orchestration” of missions thus shows that the religious pretext was often surpassed in favor of a genuinely social conversion combining hygienist, progressive, and educational doctrines, as in the case studies by Necati Alkan and Vincent Vilmain. Issues relating to power and domination were once again intertwined, resulting, willy-nilly, in the material methods of missions.

In this era of ubiquitous digital technology, materiality also entails dematerialization. It is no longer necessary to demonstrate that the digital revolution is central to globalization, leading to the direct and immediate circulations of ideas, information, and financial transactions. Is it possible to speak of a globalized economy of missions? In addition to developmentalist logic, it is important to take financial and media logic into consideration as well. Sébastien Tank-Storper explores the particular case of online proselytising via the “Torah Box” website, which promotes *aliyah* and ultra-orthodoxy, while Armand Aupiais studies the control of online missions and images diffused by Istanbul evangelists. Materiality and dematerialization help identify political, relational, and spatial constraints, as well as competition, rivalry, and even violence between missionaries, the missioned, and those who are neither one nor the other, but who live with them.

Examining materiality and dematerialization offers an interpretive framework that can be used only if we consider daily life and its ordinariness. Missionaries are individuals who develop their view of the societies in which they settle over the long term. They become familiar with places and individuals. Their presence in the field necessarily involves immersion in everyday life, in which they work with and transform alterities. This is surely the purpose of their mission and proselytising, as well as their spiritual and individual calling. Considering the material aspects relating to everyday missionary life refers back to human adaptability, the keystone of missions.

An anthropology of everyday life offers a useful orientation for pursuing our understanding of missions and preaching, in that it encourages us to “compare saying and acting.”⁶⁴ This methodological choice emphasizes the subjective experience of missionaries and narrations of self, the intentions and sincerity of converts, and ultimately the intention of acts, in an effort to see how missions managed everyday life. With this in mind, and in the context of expanding material studies, everyday life can be considered an ethnographic pretext, and can especially serve as a full-fledged heuristic approach.

64 Adeline Herrou (ed.), *Une journée dans une vie, une vie dans une journée. Des ascètes et des moines aujourd'hui* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2018), 12.

4 Themes and Chapters

Missions entail a specific way of living in and seeing the world and its boundaries. Borders, conversion, and migrations are at the core of the first section of this volume. Within these geographies arises the question of circuits (urban, educational, institutional), as well as those relating to the networks of solidarity, power, and family that materially or symbolically connect these actors (see Aupiais in this volume). Missionaries develop, either explicitly or implicitly, a religious cartography that establishes a hierarchy for various spaces, from the center to the periphery: places central to the faith; religious and/or political centers; ancient or more recent mission lands, etc. Missionaries consider and organize these spaces differently depending on their priorities. They can choose to concentrate their efforts on new mission lands, where they will be in competition with other denominations, or they can favor spaces where their faith was established in the past but needs to be refounded or reformed (see Trevisan Semi in this volume).

Beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, missions moved past the “North-South” dynamic, with many of them developing along “South-South” lines, and even “South-North” ones. What are the learning itineraries of preachers? To what extent and in what ways did they organize into networks? The three contributions in this section scrutinize the strategies used to promote ideological and cultural circulation, focusing on connections, movements, influences, and relations. The populations targeted by missionary undertakings, such as migrants, also deserve consideration in order to identify the spaces for proselytizing and conversion, as well as the practices of inclusion and exclusion specific to preaching.

Who is the mission addressing in the Near East and North Africa? What boundaries did missionaries identify between denominational groups in their effort to have them evolve? What are the strategies for conversion or reform? Is emphasis placed on force, preaching, or example, in other words “testimony” in the secularized form of charity work? Within these geographies, how should we conceive the influence of centrality and marginality, or that of immaterial periphery, especially given the influence of the Internet and social media? Beyond the role of missionaries themselves, it is the faithful who, through their migration and mobility, define missionary hierarchies or new geographies for preaching (see Tank-Storper in this volume).

Section Two analyzes the profiles of missionaries and their trajectories. In addition to well-known figures from preaching (Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī and Zakaria Botros, to cite just two), these four contributions draw attention to more ordinary actors who are no less representative of the dynamics in play. Presenting

their paths allows for dispelling the traditional clichés associated with them as “disembodied individuals moved by an abstract and unfailing mission,”⁶⁵ or as Western missionaries in the exclusive service of imperialist powers. The contributions also focus on “auxiliaries” or local intermediaries, a blind spot in research on missions. They are nevertheless essential actors in missionary undertakings, as demonstrated by G. Angey with respect to the Gülen movement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Missions are spaces of multiple negotiations. The first stage of these negotiations is the establishment of the mission. How does a foreign cleric (or group of clerics)—conveyors of religious representations and practices—become established in the land of mission? What material difficulties or opportunities do they encounter? Missionaries act as “professionals of negotiation” in their relations with their audiences, authorities, and the religious hierarchy to which they belong. The methods of their presence, in addition to the educational offerings in teaching institutions and social norms relating to gender, are the subject of reinvention in everyday life. Negotiation is produced on both sides of the missionary space. While this space is marked by asymmetrical power relations, the missioned are far from being passive recipients of missionary action. The gendered dimension of missions is also explored. Focus on women reveals specific forms of action, as well as a gendered division of missionary work.⁶⁶ Taking up the contributions of recent research on *murshidāt*, or female Protestant preachers, in addition to female rabbis, this section opens avenues of research on the masculine and feminine within the religious sphere (see Bouras).⁶⁷

While missions have long been studied as an enclave, and even as an isolated space, recent studies emphasize the missionary space as one of dynamic interactions.⁶⁸ In keeping with this, these four chapters shed light on the relations that missions maintained with their target audience, as well as other intermediaries. By connecting both viewpoints and sources, this section examines mutual influence, competition, rivalry, and co-production of alterity (see M.C. Rioli). The influence that missions—Protestant ones in particular—had on the emergence and structuring of Muslim religious movements (such as the

65 Karima Dirèche, *Chrétiens de Kabylie 1879–1954: une action missionnaire dans l'Algérie coloniale* (Paris: Editions Bouchene, 2004).

66 Séverine Gabry-Thienpont and Norig Neveu (eds.), “Missions and the Construction of Gender in the Middle East,” *Social sciences and Missions*, vol. 34, no. 1–2 (2021).

67 Lisa Anteby-Yemini, *Juives et musulmanes. Genre et religion en négociations* (Paris: Karthala, 2014).

68 Hauser, *German religious women in Late Ottoman Beirut*.

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, or Muslim “missionaries” in the Late Ottoman Empire)⁶⁹ has been explored by a few studies. What of Eastern Christian faiths? Looking at connections in the discourses and practices of both Christian and Muslim missionaries, allows to seize the entanglements of preaching, religious and social reform projects (see G. du Roy in this volume).

A final section will revisit missionary strategies between political power(s) and everyday practices. Missions are commonly associated, as discussed at length above, with cultural domination and colonial undertakings. However, missions cannot be observed without considering their deep social imprint on the territories and religious groups involved. Whether it is the act of gathering knowledge, teaching, providing medicine, or presenting discourses on the origins of missioned groups, the missionary presence has continued to spark debate within local communities over the long term. Its legacies, memories, co-construction, and remobilization can subsequently play a crucial role in local forms of belonging, along with the political demands emerging from them. In this sense, missions can contribute to the process of confessionalization and the formation of borders between confessional groups, with normalization often being central to these objectives of preachers and missionaries (see Alpi in this volume).

Missions cannot be dissociated from their relation to politics. Depending on the context, they can be seen as offering support for a political project, as developed by N. Alkan in this volume, or on the contrary they can be put down, resulting in an adjustment of their structures. The history of missions and preaching often implicitly reflects political and intellectual history, as illustrated here in the article by E. Sigillò. Since the Second Vatican Council and the questioning of missions—in addition to the subsequent appearance of the takfirism and jihadist Salafism—states and religious institutions have developed efforts toward inter- and intra-religious rapprochement, whose vocation as a missionary or preaching counter-model calls for exploration.⁷⁰ How were these initiatives put in place? What programs or strategies were developed by states to counter forms of mission or preaching deemed unorthodox and even threatening?

The four contributions in this section use the relation to politics to explore the forms and instruments of missions, which expressed themselves differ-

69 Baron, *The Orphan Scandal*; see Alkan in this volume.

70 Delphine Dussert-Galinat, *Le dialogue interreligieux. Entre discours officiels et initiatives locales* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013); Brigitte Maréchal and Sami Zemni (ed.), *The Dynamics of Sunni-Shia Relationships Doctrine, Transnationalism, Intellectuals and the Media* (London: Hurst & Co., 2013).

ently depending on the time period, space, target population, and objectives they established. The tension between a desire to convert or reform religious practices within the same confession is explored through the notion of domestic missions and the arrival of new actors in the field of religion, especially associations and humanitarian actors (see Vilmain). What media is used on an everyday basis (arts, sciences, education, medicine, humanitarian work)? What forms do missions themselves take (orders, associations, faith-based NGOs, etc.)? What are the effects of these different modes? In the case of NGOs and networks of associations, the articulation of missionary objectives and developmentalist or humanitarian aims calls for further illumination.

Through the above-mentioned case studies, this volume does not venture comparisons as such, but instead seeks to suggest avenues and angles of approach for decompartmentalizing the study of preaching and missions. In this way, it challenges conventional temporalities and believes that consider missions as closely related to colonialism and its end and/or constituting an exclusively Christian phenomenon. It suggests a new chronology of missionary phenomenon and calls for further cross-cutting approaches. Eventually, this volume argues that missions and preaching are good entry points to shed new light on religious dynamics and social transformations in the Middle East while pointing to cross-confessional interactions and the evolution of reformist projects. This allows to challenge portraits of religions and religious communities as monolithic and immutable entities.

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