

## PREFACE

Without question, my study abroad year at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut between 2005 and 2006 was a formative experience, strongly influencing the subsequent years of my theology studies and interest in fields like the Arabic language. Before I traveled to Lebanon, I knew little about the Christian minority there, and even less about its smallest group, the Protestants. I learned that they had a great influence on the region's educational sector, although their history in the Middle East began only in the nineteenth century. Already in 2006, I became interested in exploring this history more closely.

The following study is part of the project "Transatlantische Vernetzungen von Institutionen des Wissens am Beispiel der Syria Mission des American Board" (The Syrian Mission of the American Board as an Example of Transatlantic Networking Among Institutions of Learning), directed by Dr. Andreas Feldtkeller, Professor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology at the Humboldt University in Berlin, between March 2011 and January 2015. Within the framework of this project, I could make three of the four trips abroad that were necessary to complete my archival research: to Lebanon (March 2013 and March 2014) and Great Britain (June 2014). A grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) supported my research at Harvard University in January and February 2011. Without these sources of financial assistance, my dissertation could not have been completed.

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Figure 1: Map with key sites for the Syria Mission in the Ottoman province of Syria

## INTRODUCTION

“The importance of the Mediterranean, as a medium of access to a considerable portion of the great scene of action ... will be felt by all,” wrote the *Missionary Herald* in 1819.<sup>1</sup> The magazine was published by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), founded in Boston in 1810. The ABCFM was the largest interdenominational (Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reformed) missionary society in North America at that time. Its Palestine Mission was established in 1819, renamed the “Mission to Syria and the Holy Land” nine years later. More than eighty missionaries, sometimes accompanied by wives and female assistants,<sup>2</sup> were sent to the Levant through 1870, when administration of the mission was transferred to the Presbyterian Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The mission field initially extended across the entire Ottoman province of Syria, encompassing the present-day territories of Lebanon, Syria, Israel/Palestine, and Jordan. Its renaming as the “Syria Mission” in 1842 underscored its geographic concentration within the present-day territories of Lebanon and parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. The subject of this study is the American Board’s Syria Mission from the establishment of the Beirut mission station in 1823 until the end of the nineteenth century. The mission was well documented, particularly in the English- and Arabic-speaking world, and it has since been analyzed in numerous studies, from a historical as well as sociocultural perspective. The following monograph draws upon English-language sources that are not accessible within Europe, and also upon relevant Arabic texts that are comprehensible to only a small circle of theologians.

### 1. “THE REST OF THE WORLD NEED[S] CIVILIZING”<sup>3</sup>: BETWEEN CULTURAL ARROGANCE AND LOVE FOR THE FOREIGN

One hundred and fifty years after the first American missionaries were active in Syria, their legacy is ambivalent. This is apparent when one speaks with Protestant or other Christians in Lebanon today, particularly those who are familiar with the history of Protestant missions in the Near East. The missionaries’ educational accomplishments continue to influence present-day Lebanese culture, with far-reaching consequences even outside the Protestant community. At the same time, however,

- 1 *Missionary Herald* 15 (1819), in: *Reports from Ottoman Syria* 1:1. In all subsequent references, the *Missionary Herald* is abbreviated as “MH.” The five-volume *Reports from Ottoman Syria* (eds. Kamal Salibi and Y. Q. Khoury), a reprinted edition of Syria Mission reports that were first published in the MH, is abbreviated as “ROS.”
- 2 Women began to be identified as “missionaries” only at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, women were employed as “female assistants” or “female teachers.”
- 3 Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 239.

it is frequently said that missionaries treated local religious communities with intolerance, regarding themselves as privileged in their relationship with Arab culture.

The Lebanese sociologist SAMIR KHALAF remarks:

While gladly accepting their long exile from home ... evangelists almost always considered themselves as aliens and strangers wherever they went. They resisted, in fact, any effort or temptation to get closer to, or acquire, even the superficial, exotic or outward artifacts of the native culture.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning in 1819, the ABCFM sent consistently well-educated, engaged young men and women to the region. They had to get to know native culture in order to respond to natives' needs, but – as KHALAF demonstrates – they conveyed an image of western superiority and arrogance in their encounters with everything outside of their highly civilized world.<sup>5</sup> Even after decades of foreign mission work in Syria, many missionaries could not overcome classic prejudices against “the Arabs.”<sup>6</sup> Their view of Islam – a religion grounded upon the false revelations of a deceptive prophet – did not change even after many years of contact with Muslims.<sup>7</sup> It was not uncommon for these views to reach Western readers through missionary reports and also travel literature, since the Orient<sup>8</sup> had become an increasingly popular destination for well-educated, middle-class travelers by the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> With few exceptions, many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century foreign missions<sup>10</sup> were defined not only by Pietist Christian thought but also an intolerance of other peoples. These attitudes were not grounded upon notions of racial supremacy,

4 Khalaf, “New England Puritanism,” 61.

5 Ibid.

6 As Deanna Ferree Womack demonstrates in her dissertation, this did not change within the American Syria Mission until the end of the nineteenth century. See “Conversion, Controversy, and Cultural Production,” 161–221.

7 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 34.

8 At the time, “Orient” was understood to include not only the Levant, but also the entire “East” (from a European perspective), extending to China and India. The term is used in this study with these geographic considerations in mind.

9 David D. Grafton demonstrates, however, that enthusiasm for the Orient is much older: “the ‘Orient’ has always carried a sense of fascination of the mysterious unknown: its people, their customs, and their religions.” (See Grafton, *Piety, Politics, and Power*, 2) Christian travelers and missionaries in the Levant frequently sought traces of Biblical times. The idea that the region had hardly changed in eighteen hundred years was widespread: “The manners, customs, and dresses of the people at Beyroot served to remind the Christian of the times of Christ, and led back the imagination through the lapse of eighteen hundred years to the thrilling events which transpired throughout the Holy Land. So few are the improvements made in art and agriculture, that one can easily fancy himself in the middle of the first century ...” Here, Daniel C. Eddy describes the impressions of Sarah Smith, the first wife of missionary Eli Smith. See Eddy, *Heroines of the Missionary Enterprise*, 134.

10 In his essay on the beginnings of the Gossner Mission in the nineteenth century, Klaus Roeber describes the missionaries’ respectful engagement with India’s religions, which fostered intercultural and interreligious dialogue from the start. See Roeber, “Missionare der Gossner Mission,” 339–57. Likewise, the German missionary Detwig von Oertzen, who was stationed in Mahabad with the German Orient Mission from 1905, strove “to break down or even to overcome” the stereotype of “Kurdish thieves” through the study of Kurdish culture and language. See Tamcke, “Gleichzeitig-Ungleichzeitiges Wissen,” 399.

which was a much later phenomenon, but rather upon the basis of “civilization.”<sup>11</sup> Missionaries, scholars, colonialists, historians, and philosophers of the day agreed: “The rest of the world need[s] civilizing.”<sup>12</sup> For the missionaries, Christianity naturally played a leading role; it was “the elixir of the Western civilization . . . Like a tonic, the purer it was the better it worked; and the more one took, the healthier one became.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, native peoples abroad were not merely foreign. In the eyes of missionaries, they were also in dire need of Christianity’s saving message.<sup>14</sup>

Numerous parallels existed between American missionary attitudes towards the indigenous Syrian population and the colonial interests of the Western powers.<sup>15</sup> Their prejudices and assurance of superiority could be identified as cultural imperialist.<sup>16</sup> But the missionaries in the Middle East did not pursue political interests, and in fact renounced these vehemently. Nevertheless, certain cultural imperial premises underlay the entire Syria Mission. Thus, as formulated by SAMIR KHALAF, it is more appropriate to speak of the missionaries’ “cultural arrogance.” A politically motivated acquisition of territories certainly did not apply in this case. Rather than dominating a foreign culture, according to KHALAF, missions sought to morally reorient the population.<sup>17</sup> Their methods could be described as “callously ethnocentric and mindlessly romantic, at times poignantly altruistic and confusedly well-meaning.”<sup>18</sup>

Missionaries and Syrians<sup>19</sup> encountered one another in a social space that MARY LOUISE PRATT calls the “contact zone”: “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power.”<sup>20</sup> Dialogue that takes place in a contact zone may be fruitful, but it is rarely harmonious. Missionaries did not enter this space with the intent of approaching foreigners

11 Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 126. In his article on the intensifying views of nineteenth-century Western Protestants towards evangelizing the world, Andrew Witmer refers to Rebecca Goetz’s thesis that Western attitudes towards non-Christian peoples were later channeled into conceptions of race. See Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore, 2012), cited in Witmer, “Agency, Race, and Christianity,” 896.

12 Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 239.

13 *Ibid.*, 244.

14 Nielssen, *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters*, 10.

15 Homi Bhabha speaks of “fixity” in the discourse of colonialism, referring to the rigid definition of otherness and the “daemoniac repetition” of stereotypes. See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 66. For more on the close relationship between European colonialism and missionary work in Africa and Asia, see Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 91–155.

16 See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*; Hutchinson, *Errand to the World*; and Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*.

17 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 116–17. Similarly, Wanis Semaan describes this as “cultural aggression of a very subtle kind.” See Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 33.

18 T. O. Beidelmann, *Colonial Evangelism* (Bloomington, 1982), cited in Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 117.

19 On the use of “Syrian,” see section 7 in this introduction.

20 Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34; and Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 8. Although “contact zone” has the same meaning as “colonial frontier,” the latter term is comprehensible only from a European perspective. “Contact zone” encompasses different perspectives, including those of non-European participants.

without prejudice, nor did they intend to affirm the equal rights of other peoples or acknowledge that others might be in the position to develop the same abilities and skills as themselves. Concepts like “integration” and “religious coexistence” were far removed from this time. To borrow the words of WANIS SEMAAN: given the coming millennium and the urgency for conversions, there was no time to analyze or reflect on “what was culturally conditioned in their message and what was universally valid and true.”<sup>21</sup> America’s short history was characterized by mostly intolerant relations with its native inhabitants, whose culture was not deemed worthy of preservation.<sup>22</sup> Young Americans’ conviction that they had been specially chosen to establish their young state encouraged their belief that savagery and ignorance prevailed beyond its borders. This could be seen in the American movement of religious awakenings. Missionaries from nineteenth-century New England, in particular, felt called to spread their message.<sup>23</sup>

Like merchants, explorers, and diplomats, missionaries acted as cultural brokers, “who actively or deliberately transfer[red] cultural messages or contents to a different environment.”<sup>24</sup> The term “cultural brokers,” which is increasingly favored by historians of intercultural encounters,<sup>25</sup> fits the missionaries perfectly. Their intent was to transmit important components of their own culture – new interpretations of religion and different kinds of knowledge – to the people of another culture. Their field investigations and memoirs, in turn, informed readers in their home country. Thus, cultural transmission occurred in both directions.

To what degree missionaries in Syria acted in a cultural imperialist or colonialist manner is a frequent question in recent scholarship. In my view, this is a very one-sided approach.<sup>26</sup> This is not to say, however, that cultural imperialism can be disregarded. Building up, and then dominating, the education sector was a typical practice of European countries at this time. In this way, economic influence over another country was gradually established, instead of being compelled within a shorter time-frame through military occupation.<sup>27</sup> Fully aware of the cultural imperialist connotations of missionary activity, the ABCFM rejected insinuations that it represented the United States’ colonial interests from the very beginning. As time passed, greater efforts were made to act less imperially and to focus solely on preaching.<sup>28</sup> The reports,

21 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 2.

22 Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 33. To identify as American in the eighteenth or nineteenth century meant being white and Protestant. Lindner notes that “in 1830, the United States Supreme Court ruled that American citizenship was limited to those of European descent,” thereby legitimizing the exclusion of native inhabitants. *Ibid.*, 38.

23 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 32.

24 Höh, Jaspert, and Oesterle, “Courts, Brokers and Brokerage,” 9.

25 Koschorke, “Weltmission, Globale Kommunikationsstrukturen,” 197.

26 See Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 2: “Had the missionaries been historically and culturally conscious, they would have understood better and would have attempted to understand the histories and the cultures of the societies to which they went . . . . But alas, they were conditioned only of their own culture and not of its conditional nature.”

27 Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 16–17.

28 Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 96. American missionaries even accused their French rivals of encouraging imperial interests in the Levant. See Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 134.

letters, and diaries that missionaries composed in the field, as seen through the eyes of contemporary readers, contain many derogatory descriptions of the native population. The missionaries were unable to interpret their environment through standards other than their own. They saw their own experiences as universal, suitable for guiding their actions in the mission field.<sup>29</sup> With respect to the missionaries' handwritten correspondence, however, the ideological influence of the American Board cannot be underestimated. The length and wording of missionary reports that appeared in the *Missionary Herald* and other publications were altered strategically, as this study will show. Such changes were often motivated by a desire to convince American readers of the ongoing necessity of foreign missions, or to retain generous donors.

It was missionaries who communicated the linguistic, geographic, historical, and cultural definitions of the Near East to Americans. Missionaries had a formative influence on Oriental studies in the United States; for many decades, they were the first and only source of information on foreign cultures.<sup>30</sup> In a sense, they were their country's first diplomats. As "ambassadors for Christ,"<sup>31</sup> as they often called themselves, they not uncommonly discovered a love for the land and people they sought to convert. In some cases, the engagement of American missionaries extended well beyond the scope of their official duties and was not always condoned by the ABCFM. This point is an important condition for the following analysis of cultural dialogue.

Eli Smith (1801–1857), Cornelius Van Dyck (1818–1895), Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883) und John Wortabet (1827–1908) were chosen as subjects of this study because of their impressive biographies, as well as the comparative accessibility of primary and secondary source material about them. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck were distinguished by their extraordinary mastery of the Arabic language, as well as by their engagement for education and their participation in Syrian intellectual circles. Butrus al-Bustani, the renowned Syrian scholar, and John Wortabet – a Syrian of Armenian descent, a foster child of the mission and later a successful theologian and medical doctor – were participants in the circle of Smith, Van Dyck, and their colleagues. Their life stories would have been unthinkable without the influence of the American missionaries. Rather than acting as subordinates, however, Bustani and Wortabet used their expanded cultural horizons to achieve successful careers.

## 2. CONDITIONS FOR TRANSCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The phenomenon of "transculturation" has assumed an increasingly prominent role in recent historical scholarship. The term describes "processes of translation, adaptation, regeneration, and appropriation" that occur – sometimes in harmony,

29 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 3.

30 New knowledge about the Arab world led to the introduction of Oriental studies in numerous universities in Europe and North America. See S. Mangold, "Eine 'weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft' – Die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert, Beiträge zur Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte 11 (Stuttgart: Pallas Athene, 2004) 29–63.

31 MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 235.

sometimes in conflict – when different cultures meet.<sup>32</sup> The complexity of transculturation is readily apparent in the American missionaries' encounter with Syrians in the Ottoman Empire. This intercultural encounter, which led to different situations of dialogue, had diverse motivations. The cultural context of the young Americans, who felt called to their mission in the Middle East, could not be more different from that of nineteenth-century Europeans who came from big cities. The young American missionaries usually came from small towns, and they had been educated at Christian schools. They were pious and highly ambitious. Many of them had earned university degrees, a distinction enjoyed by only two percent of Americans at that time.<sup>33</sup> Christianity assumed special prominence. In the northern United States, the Bible was the basis for instruction in schools, which were still subject to church authority at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

“From our childhood our idea of the Christian religion has been identified with education, social order, and a certain correctness of morals and manners, in other words, with civilization,”<sup>35</sup> stated Rufus Anderson, corresponding secretary of the ABCFM.<sup>36</sup> Learning to read and write was essential for a religious education and the pursuit of one's chosen path.<sup>37</sup> For the Americans, a proper education brought together religious and secular knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Both types of knowledge were incomplete without the other. This philosophy of education accompanied the missionaries on their journey to the Levant, informing the establishment of the first mission school in 1824. In Ottoman Syria, the Americans found a wide hearing. They enjoyed particular success in the field of education because political and social changes smoothed the way. The province of Syria represented, as CHRISTINE LINDNER calls it, a “dynamic environment.”<sup>39</sup>

Building ports and opening markets to transcontinental trade promoted globalization, setting the stage for political and cultural disruptions – not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also in other Asian and African countries.<sup>40</sup> “It is not the Napoleonic invasion nor the Egyptian occupation in itself that brought about the

32 Hock, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, 51.

33 Khalaf, “New England Puritanism and Liberal Education,” 54–55; and Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 181.

34 Government authorities in New England assumed responsibility for education only in 1852. See Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*, 59.

35 Rufus Anderson in 1870, as cited by Khalaf, “New England Puritanism and Liberal Education,” 58.

36 At the beginning of the Syria Mission, Anderson was still assistant corresponding secretary. Through his administrative and organizational talents, he later became the American Board's head corresponding secretary. See Badr, “Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 106–7.

37 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools*, 33. In 1642, the state of Massachusetts passed a law that required families to see that their children and apprentices receive instruction in reading and writing, Christian principles, and the most important laws of the land. See also Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*, 66. The first public schools in Massachusetts, however, were not introduced until 1820. See Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 50.

38 Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 138.

39 *Ibid.*, 105.

40 Conrad, “Enlightenment in Global History,” 999–1027.



racial transformation, but the opening of the way for cultural inflow that counted.”<sup>41</sup> Cultural dialogue occurred because the Americans learned over time that success depended upon respectful behavior. At first, their interest in dialogue derived solely from their Christian convictions. Syrian Christians and Muslims of different confessions,<sup>42</sup> on the other hand, proved very receptive to the new religion’s possibilities. Their motives for engaging in dialogue were often not only religious. Hope for a better future, family disagreements, and opportunities for professional success also played a role. Nonetheless, joining the new Protestant community entailed sacrifices. Syrian society was not yet a well-defined cultural entity. Tradition and a sense of belonging derived from the religion of one’s parents. Protestant converts had to be prepared to overstep previously accepted cultural boundaries for their newfound convictions.

### 3. PAST AND CURRENT RESEARCH

In the 1980s, there was a tendency to criticize and stereotype the history of missions from a postcolonial and gender studies perspective. The past decade has seen a shift towards considering ethnographic texts individually, as well as towards incorporating indigenous sources (DOUMATO, 2002). The intent is to give voice to native collaborators, since their influence on the missions’ achievements was substantial. Evaluating missionary sources is no longer only the domain of mission studies, but has also attracted interest in other fields such as sociology, cultural studies, and geography. Taking the historical and social context of each mission country into consideration is essential for better understanding how missions developed in the past. Mission studies are increasingly undertaken within the framework of intercultural theology.<sup>43</sup> Each discipline has its own set of questions for investigating the actions and consequences of Western missionaries abroad. Missionaries in the field often accomplished pioneering work, not only as theologians, but also as humanists and natural scientists. Mission history today is understood as a part of “secular” cultural history that must incorporate different points of view.<sup>44</sup>

In 2010, an international conference on “Mission History as Global History: Transcultural Appropriation and Transfer of Knowledge by Christian Missionaries in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Africa and Asia” was held in cooperation with the Department for Religious and Mission Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin, and the Berlin Society for Mission History.<sup>45</sup> The conference showed “that questions discussed by other historical disciplines, concerning globalization

41 Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 453.

42 The beginning of chapter I examines which confessional groups were most drawn to the missionaries’ message.

43 Hock, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, especially 21–23.

44 Rzepkowski, “Missionsgeschichte im Wandel der Motivationen,” 270–75.

45 Also in 2010, the University of Zurich organized an international symposium on “Europe in China – China in Europe: Science and Technology as a Vehicle to Intercultural Dialogue.” See Widmer, ed., *Europe in China – China in Europe*.

in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have also been addressed in the historiography of missions in an interesting way.<sup>46</sup>

Missionary institutions of education, according to conference organizers ULRICH VAN DER HEYDEN and ANDREAS FELDTKELLER, were sites (or “contact zones”<sup>47</sup>) where Western educational traditions merged with those of a foreign culture, resulting in the emergence of “something new for both sides.”<sup>48</sup> At these sites, knowledge was both produced and transformed, which is why missionary institutions of education can be viewed as hubs in the emerging globalization of knowledge.<sup>49</sup>

The goal of this study is not to provide an overview of the wide-ranging literature on the ABCFM or the numerous chronologies of the Syria Mission. A key source is *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, which was compiled by KAMAL SALIBI und YUSUF KHOURY in 1995. It is a collection of reports that first appeared in the *Missionary Herald* between 1819 and 1870. Another essential source is RUFUS ANDERSON’S two-volume *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, which presents the Syria Mission within the comparative context of other missions in the Middle East. Another American missionary affiliated with the ABCFM, THOMAS LAURIE, detailed missionaries’ contributions to the natural sciences, the translation of the Bible, geography, history, medicine, and much more in his comprehensive and distinguished *Ely Volume* (1881). Missionaries thus contributed to society’s “regeneration,” as LAURIE describes here:

Our missionaries go abroad to impart all that is good in our Christian civilization to other lands. In diffusing our ideas of the true office of government they secure the rights of the people and kindle a spirit of patriotism where previously it was unknown. ... They carry our free popular education to quicken intellectual life; bring out to view the inherent evil of vice, slavery, and polygamy; elevate men’s ideas of comfort, and so promote industry; they lift up woman from her degradation to her true place in the family; and so work out a nobler destiny for man wherever they go, even in this present life.<sup>50</sup>

The first comprehensive German-language study of the American missions in the Near East was PETER KAWERAU’S *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen* (1958),<sup>51</sup> which depicted the theological and historical origins of North American missions and provided a chronology of events for the Middle Eastern missions of the ABCFM. In the hope of finding “signs of an original and unspoiled Christianity,” the missionaries undertook geographical investigations that influenced American

46 Heyden and Feldtkeller, eds., *Missionsgeschichte als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen*, 11.

47 Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34; Marten, *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters*, 305.

48 Heyden and Feldtkeller, eds., *Missionsgeschichte als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen*, 11.

49 Ibid., 12.

50 Laurie, *The Ely Volume*, 473.

51 In the second volume of his *Allgemeine Evangelische Missionsgeschichte* (1930), Julius Richter laid the foundation for German-language research on missions in the Orient. The American mission, however, is hardly covered in his work. I have also contributed to the German-language scholarship in this field, building upon the work of Richter and Kawerau. The following study was first published in German by the Franz Steiner Verlag in 2016.

studies of the Orient.<sup>52</sup> Similar to Palestinian historian ABDUL LATIF TIBAWI (*American Interests in Syria, 1800–1901*, published in 1966), KAWERAU did not provide a detailed account of the missionaries' cultural and social engagement beyond the goal of their mission. The following study seeks to address this gap, providing illustrative examples. TIBAWI's work depicted the cultural work of the Americans in Syria much more thoroughly than KAWERAU. He wanted to dispel the stereotype that the missionaries helped to revive a long forgotten cultural heritage by publishing classical Arabic literature.<sup>53</sup> TIBAWI distanced himself from GEORGE ANTONIUS's *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (1938), which depicted Western mission work and the Egyptian occupation as a cradle for the "rehabilitation of the Arabic language as a vehicle of thought."<sup>54</sup> ANTONIUS correctly credited American institutions of higher education in Syria for their great contribution to the dissemination of literature and scholarship:

The educational activities of the American Missionaries in that early period, had among many virtues, one outstanding merit; they gave the pride of place to Arabic, and once they had committed themselves to teaching in it, put their shoulders with vigour to the task of providing an adequate literature.<sup>55</sup>

A new trend in the historical research of missions became apparent in the 1960s, led by ABDUL LATIF TIBAWI. Scholars began to turn a critical eye towards the methods used by Americans to train Syrian converts as preachers, and to otherwise carry out their cultural and scholarly work. Americans did not merely impart the Protestant faith; they also presented themselves as culturally superior. The previously mentioned study by TIBAWI from 1966 showed that the ABCFM sought to uphold a hierarchy that made it impossible for newly trained native preachers to work as equals with their American colleagues. USSAMA MAKDISI, a professor at Rice University in Houston, has investigated the activities of American missionaries in the Middle East for many years. In his 2008 book *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*, MAKDISI describes the missionaries' prejudicial stance towards "uncivilized" and "religiously depraved" natives, which was accompanied by an idealized vision of American culture and the "orientalizing"<sup>56</sup> of the Arab world.<sup>57</sup> Soon after the first missionaries arrived, girls and boys were "civilized" in schools according to Western norms and compelled to adopt a for-

52 Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen*, 413–24.

53 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 252–53. There were other printing presses in Syria before the American Mission Press in Beirut. Over the course of the nineteenth century, presses particularly in Cairo and Istanbul established a reputation for printing classical literature. See chapter I, section 1.1.

54 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 40.

55 *Ibid.*, 43.

56 Makdisi uses this term in the sense of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which concerns the centuries-old distortions that have informed the Western world's portrayal of the countries of the Middle East and Asia. A thorough analysis of Orientalism in American literature and society can be found in Malinie Johar Schueller, *U. S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790–1890* (Ann Arbor, 2001); and Heike Schäfer, *America and the Orient*, American Studies – A Monograph Series 130 (Heidelberg, 2006).

57 Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 13.