The Encyclopaedia of Islam CD-Rom Edition
LEIDEN, BRILL, 1999
Individuals EUR341/$375, ISBN 90 04 11040; institutions EUR1135–EUR2269/ $1250–$2500, ISBN 90 04 11318 5

The Encyclopaedia of Islam is justly regarded as a fundamental research tool for all aspects of Islamic studies. As the second edition nears completion, the publication of volumes I–IX, in CD-Rom form, opens up the text in a way that the shelf version never could.

The CD-Rom EF2 comes as two compact disks, one containing the installation software and the other the text of the articles themselves together with the index volumes. The publishers recommend that both disks are installed on the hard drive, though they occupy such an immense amount of space that this will not be an option for many. The alternative is to install CD-Rom One, and then to insert CD-Rom Two in the D drive when using EF2, though this slows down the operation noticeably. Installation is straightforward, even for a computer novice, and the screen version becomes available within minutes.

The CD-Rom EF2 incorporates the text of volumes I–IX, containing entries from A to S (including the addenda and corrigenda), together with the Glossary and Index of Terms, the Index of Proper Names and the Index of Subjects, which have all appeared as separate handbooks. These can each be selected as separate menus, making it possible not only to read article entries from the Encyclopaedia, but also to search for names and terms wherever they appear. Cross-referencing becomes an easy matter, and all the appearances of a topic, concept, item or individual can be collected and main entries supplemented within minutes.

This feature is certainly one of the main advantages of the CD-Rom EF2. The mass of individual scholarship that has gone into the separate entries can here be combined by checking through the references and clicking the hyperlinks as they appear, and all with a convenience and speed that is not possible on the hard version. Furthermore, passages can be copied, and articles can be printed.

For users not familiar with CD-Roms, finding the way around can be slow at first. The booklet that accompanies the disks gives only a minimum of information, and the Help option on the screen reproduces no more than this. A few examples of how to conduct a search might have helped, and would certainly have saved time getting started. But with practice the advantage of the search refinements that are included gradually becomes apparent, as does the ease of consulting references and cross-checking with a mouse rather than the hefty shelf volumes. There is, of course, the requirement of a computer big enough to accommodate both disks, and the expense of the CD-Rom pack. But for individuals who see the need of this monumental work this is a wise investment, and for institutional libraries it is indispensable.

DAVID THOMAS
CSIC, University of Birmingham
**Virtually Islamic: computer-mediated communication and cyber Islamic environments**

**GARY BUNT, 2000**
Cardiff, University of Wales Press
189 pp., pb. £14.99, ISBN 0 7083 1611 5

The Internet has become the ultimate tool for the dissemination of information, misinformation, disinformation and self-statement. Muslims, like any other community, political, religious or otherwise, have fully embraced the medium as illustrated by the myriad of Muslim websites, email lists, newsgroups and chatrooms. *Virtually Islamic* addresses this virtual world of cyber Islam. The material was compiled from surveying the Net itself and email interviews and as Gary Bunt states: ‘It is not the purpose of this book to make specific judgements as to the validity of information offered on the Internet, merely to delineate the Islamic Internet landscape.’ This sets the context in which material in the book is presented.

The book is introduced, in the first chapter, with an overview of the technology, theoretical comments on the medium, observations regarding approaches to Islam and issues concerning identity. Chapter two examines the Qur’ān online, Ḥadīth and issues concerning online music and ḍhikr. The following chapter surveys some sites that illustrate the differing ranges of Sunnī Islam, Shi‘ī Islam and the extensive presence of Ṣūfī Islam. Chapter four examines political Islam, aspects of which are well represented on the Internet, presenting much of the material regionally (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Malaysia, Singapore, Sudan, Saudi Arabia) with a concluding discussion on dissident groups who have utilized the Internet. The fifth chapter outlines the important issues surrounding authority with a discussion of the use of technology in the facilitation of Islamic practice, such as moon calculation software and an examination of a particularly fascinating aspect to Islam online, the question and answer facilities on many Muslim websites that deal with a range of topics from personal problems to detailed discussions on finer points of fiqh. Finally, there is a discussion, in this chapter, on controversial issues concerning da‘wā and interfaith relations. The book concludes with an exploration of the future of cyber Islam, pointing to the inevitable consequences of advances in technology and access.

The book contains full notes and bibliography with online references and a glossary. Most importantly, it is very usefully supported by a website, http://www.virtuallyislamic.com, which is essential in any text dealing with the Internet given the fluctuating nature of the medium.

*Virtually Islamic* is a thorough and useful introduction to an aspect of Islamic culture and civilization which has, to date, been largely overlooked in academic work.

**MUSTAFA DRAPER**
CSIC, University of Birmingham

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**A History of Christian–Muslim Relations**

**HUGH GODDARD, 2000**
Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press
212 pp., pb. £15.95, ISBN 0 7486 1009 X

The author is Reader in Islamic Theology at the University of Nottingham. Christian–
Muslim relations are his main field of research and he has authored a number of books on the subject: Christians and Muslims: from double standards to mutual understanding in 1995, and Muslim Perceptions of Christianity in 1996.

While the previous studies focused on the ideological aspects of Christian–Muslim encounter, this new book provides us with a historical survey beginning with the first years of the Muslim era to end with the present time. In eight chapters, the reader discovers the main stages of that history. After a description of the Christian churches before Islam, their evolution and their thinking (Chapter 1), Goddard describes the advent of Islam (Chapter 2) and the first contacts Muhammad had with Christians. There follows a period called the first age of Christian–Muslim interaction (Chapter 3), including the Christian responses to the coming of Islam and the first Muslim treatment of Christians. Two chapters cover the medieval period, the first dealing with confrontation in the East (Chapter 4) and the second describing the same in the West (Chapter 5). The sixth chapter deals with the changing balance of power which gradually brought about the dominance of European influence through Mission of Imperialism (Chapter 6). Then comes a historical treatment of the last two centuries (Chapter 7), which saw the growth of Western academic study of Islam as well as a gradual change in the way in which both Christians and Muslims regard one another. The last chapter (8) describes the present time, with its discovery of interreligious dialogue and the consequent changes in current theological thinking concerning the ‘religious other’.

Three pages of chronological tables precede the introduction. A good index can be found at the end. At first glance, the reader may be surprised by the apparent lack of bibliography reduced to two pages. In fact, a great number of books are mentioned in the footnotes placed at the end of each chapter. In this way bibliographical data—abundant and up to date—retain their connection with the topics treated.

History may be the main focus of the book, but the author never strays far from his main interest, which is the evolution of the ideas that Christians and Muslims may entertain about one another. Whatever the period treated, the reader needs a good background knowledge of history as regards events, battles, cultural or political changes, etc. This historical ‘context’, while never absent, is often reduced to what is absolutely needed to understand the ideological encounter between the two religions. This, no doubt, was made necessary by the need to keep the book within normal proportions. Taking into account the variety of the episodes described and the number of centuries one sweeps through, the reader, at times, may feel a need for more explanations than are really offered.

At the very beginning of his work, the author explains that he will consistently write the dates according to the two calendars—Christian and Islamic. The principle may be excellent, but the repetition of this complicated way of dating gradually becomes a little tiresome.

This book provides a very interesting study of a little-known subject. Its documentation is excellent and the author offers much food for thought not only to historians but to anybody involved in religious encounter at the present time.

J. M. GAUDEUL
Se Comprendre, France
The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity
GAVIN D’COSTA, 2000
Maryknoll, Orbis
187 + xi pp., pb. $20.00, ISBN 1 57075 303 2

The title of Gavin D’Costa’s latest book brings together two widely discussed themes of contemporary Christian theology. His earlier writing has advanced an increasingly trenchant criticism of the ‘pluralist’ approach to inter-faith encounter promoted by John Hick and others, and at the same time suggested that an explicitly Trinitarian theology could inform the Church in an engagement with other faiths which is both more authentically Christian and more appropriate as a pattern of dialogue.

In the present quite short but very important volume, D’Costa weaves a dense web of arguments to develop both the critical and the constructive aspects of his programme. He first extends his critique of ‘pluralism’ to include approaches proposed by theologians from other faiths as well as Hick and his other Christian colleagues. D’Costa then seeks to show how an explicitly Trinitarian approach can provide a positive basis for inter-religious encounter. Throughout, he writes as one consciously located in and committed to a specific religious tradition: contemporary Roman Catholicism, with its rich stream of reflection and documentation on inter-religious issues, flowing from the Second Vatican Council. Indeed, total honesty about the position from which one is writing, and total fidelity to all that position entails, is for D’Costa an inescapable requirement of any contribution to the debate in our intellectual climate influenced by post-modernism. By contrast, one of the problems he identifies in Hick’s approach is precisely its attempt to locate itself, above or beyond any particular and identifiable faith position, in a ‘meta-theory about the relation between historical religions’ resting on neutral presuppositions.

In the first part of his book, provocatively entitled ‘Whose God, which tradition?’, D’Costa presses home the attack on ‘pluralism’ with devastating force. His method here is two-pronged: on one hand, uncovering and questioning the assumptions which underlie the pluralists’ position, while on the other teasing out the implications of their arguments to expose unexpected contradictions. The former gives him grounds for suggesting that pluralism in fact presupposes commitment to the quasi-religion of ‘liberal modernity’ (here he relies heavily on Alasdair MacIntyre and John Milbank). The latter leads him to turn around Alan Race’s well-known threefold typology of ‘exclusivism—inclusivism—pluralism’ as he offers the following paradoxical formulation: ‘I want to suggest that “pluralism” represents a tradition-specific approach that bears all the same features as exclusivism—except that it is western liberal modernity’s exclusivism.’

Indeed—and this seems to me a significant departure from his earlier work—D’Costa at various points indicates that he sees the other category in Race’s typology, Christian ‘inclusivism’, as also in principle collapsible into a form of exclusivism. He further goes on to outline and criticize examples of ‘pluralist’ thinking from other faiths—Judaism (Dan Cohn-Sherbok), Hinduism (Sir Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan) and Buddhism (the Dalai Lama)—claiming that each in reality is a more or less explicit form of tradition-specific exclusivism. Clearly this implies that, for D’Costa, Race’s threefold schema is no longer serviceable. So, following his critique of the Dalai Lama, he concludes the first part by rather cheekily borrowing from Buddhism the image of a vehicle which can be discarded once its usefulness is past: ‘Since I think that every position is exclusivist, and that the terms pluralism and inclusivism mask this, it will be better for the debate that they be seen as a raft that got us here, and now it is time to jettison the raft.’
From this brief summary, it would be easy to conclude that D’Costa so far has merely engaged in a brilliant *tour de force* whose antipathy to pluralism arises primarily from a wish to safeguard Christian integrity and to expose the hidden assumptions of a supposedly disinterested superiority. However, he is also deeply concerned to provide a positive basis for Christian involvement in inter-faith encounter, and it is this concern which leads to the content of the second part of this book, which bears the comparatively sober title ‘Trinitarian theology and the religions’. Specifically, D’Costa seeks to show that the dialogical goals of ‘tolerance, openness and equality’ espoused by the pluralists are in fact better delivered by a robustly Trinitarian approach. Of course, to substantiate his claim he needs to pay careful attention to the meaning which he will attach to these three rather vague expressions, and this he proceeds to do through a careful analysis of modern magisterial documents of the Roman Catholic Church—in particular, the Vatican Council’s ‘Declaration on Religious Freedom’, *Dignitatis Humanae*. His conclusion is that these three goals can be realistically defined, and subscribed to, in the following terms: ‘taking history seriously’, i.e. recognizing other religions as a site through which the Spirit addresses the church (openness); ‘negative civic religious rights’, i.e. freedom from civic coercion in the practice of one’s religion (tolerance); and honouring the ‘human dignity’ of people of whatever faith (equality).

If this demonstrates the way in which he can develop practical consequences for civil society from his Trinitarian approach, the other chapter in this part is even more remarkable in its implications for the Christian faith community. Here D’Costa addresses the highly contentious question of inter-religious prayer, concluding from the initially unpromising analogy of the marital covenant that ‘praying together’ with people of other faiths, so far from necessarily involving unfaithfulness to the Trinitarian God, may in some situations actually be an expression of ‘seeking fidelity through loving risk’. Daring conclusions of this kind can surely only be reached by those who have carefully thought through the difficult issues involved on the basis of a whole-hearted commitment to the convictions of their own faith community. D’Costa’s book throughout gives evidence of a firm loyalty to contemporary Roman Catholic Christianity, and from that starting-point he is able not only to mount a devastating critique of the pluralist position but also to develop a challenging and fruitful theology for Christians involved in inter-faith encounter.

Given the force of D’Costa’s arguments and their relevance to all Christians, it is rather unfortunate that he does not seem to acknowledge the extent to which members of other ‘eclesial communities’ also legitimately draw on Roman Catholic resources in the area of inter-faith relations. That, at least, was this reviewer’s interpretation of such ecumenical insensitivities as descriptions of the Church of England as the ‘state Anglican church’, or of the Queen as ‘head of the Anglican church’. Readers of this journal may also be disappointed that D’Costa’s references to Islam are so few—although it is interesting that, ‘for the purpose of some clarity’, Muslims are the putative fellow worshippers whom D’Costa proposes as examples in his discussion of inter-religious prayer. Again, because many of the questions D’Costa is addressing are new, he has understandably felt a need to coin new expressions in some discussions (‘auto-interpretation’ vs. ‘hetero-interpretation’ in the accounts given of religions by their adherents and by others; ‘co-intentionality’ as a necessary presupposition of shared prayer, and so on). While this may help to hone the precision of his theological language, it does not always make for smooth reading.

Yet these are minor reservations to register against a magnificent achievement: D’Costa’s critical questioning of pluralism surely cannot be disregarded by any,
Christians or others, involved in the meeting of religions. His development of a Trinitarian basis for encounter with other faiths seems to me to be the most adequate theological bridge so far built to link inter-faith concerns to the core affirmations of Christian faith. I also believe that it offers the most fruitful interpretative framework currently available for Christians to make sense of their inter-faith experiences, in all their stimulating resistance to neat systematization. As D’Costa concludes, ‘We do know that God’s trinity calls Christians to seek to serve and worship this God in sometimes quite unpredictable ways.’

MICHAEL IPGRAVE
Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England

The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity
KEN PARRY, DAVID J. MELLING, DIMITRI BRADY, SIDNEY H. GRIFFITH & JOHN F. HEALEY (Eds), 1999
581 pp., hb. £75.00, ISBN 0 631 18966 1

This dictionary, which the editors suggest should be referred to as DEC, covers the history, thought and liturgy of the churches that conform to the Orthodox and Oriental traditions. It includes almost 700 entries in a manageable volume that provides both a handy basis for study and a readable source for browsing. The entries comprise larger essays on major subjects, each supported by a list of recent literature, and shorter articles on key terms, important figures, etc. The whole is completed by a detailed index that lists items referred to in the entries but which do not appear under their own heading.

Students of Christian–Muslim relations will meet with a certain degree of success in their search for topics related to their subject. While there is, understandably, no entry on Islam as such, the index contains a number of references to various Islamic themes as they touch on Christianity, including the Islamic treatment of religious minorities and the impact of Islam on the Oriental churches. There are also good summary entries on the distinctive form of Arab Christianity and some of the leading figures who first articulated Christian themes in the Arabic-speaking Islamic milieu.

Since many of these references are on the margin of the book’s scope, they are often mentioned only in passing. This is to be expected, but it occasionally results in some over-simplification as, for example, when the reason that some Christians categorized Islam as a Christian heresy is given as ‘the high estimate placed by the Qur’an on Jesus as prophet and on his mother Mary’ (484), a speculative judgement but given as fact. And it leads to the omission of such significant figures as the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I, the energetic leader of the church under the early ‘Abbāsīd dynasty.

These small criticisms do not, however, detract from the value or usefulness of the DEC. Its major success results from the way in which it combines together information about all the churches of the Eastern traditions, and so allows their similarities and differences of thought, practice and history to be discerned. Equally importantly, it makes plain that these traditions have continued to the present, and in some measure have found new vitality in unexpected places. The existence of Eastern Christian dioceses in South America and indigenous Orthodox churches in Alaska and China may surprise readers whose knowledge of the Eastern tradition centres largely on the Patristic period.
This is a work that will be of use and interest to both specialist researchers and student readers, and it should be welcomed onto the shelves of both scholars and librarians.

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In Search of Muhammad
CLINTON BENNETT, 1998
Oxford and New York, Cassell
x + 276 pp., pb. $19.95, ISBN 0 304 70401 6

This work locates Muhammad from the viewpoint of an anthropological theology, which Dr Bennett defines as the neglected interface between theology, history, fieldwork research and religious studies. He is influenced by the current insider–outsider debate in religious studies. (If readers of this review wish to explore that debate, they are directed to Russell McCutcheon’s reader, The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion, Cassell, 1999.) In order to express this ‘insider–outsider polarity’, Bennett researched in libraries, on the World Wide Web and in the field.

His book is in three parts (each of two chapters), with a conclusion and three appendices. Part 1 explores the sources for the Muhammad of history, and offers a critical evaluation of them. Part 2 looks at non-Muslim lives of Muhammad from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries, and then up to the present. Part 3 examines Muhammad’s significance in Muslim life and thought and then offers a chapter on ‘Conversations Islamic’. The conclusion offers signposts ‘Towards a postmodern theology of religions’. Appendix 1 is a useful though somewhat arbitrary list of important Islamic dates (using the Common Era rather than Annum Hegirae) from 570 to 1996. Appendix 2 lists Muhammad’s marriages. Appendix 3 is a draft of the questionnaire the author sent to interviewees. There then follows: references; an index of Qur’anic references; and an index of Hadith references.

This is an ambitious project requiring a wide range of skills, so it is not surprising that the author’s aim exceeds his grasp. I would cite two particular shortcomings. The first results from limitations in Bennett’s data. The second arises from a certain methodological confusion.

Part 3 illustrates these deficiencies. Parts 1 and 2 are confidently and interestingly addressed. However, there are many more modern lives of the Prophet by Muslims than those discussed by the author. Many of them are written in Islamic languages. The author speaks Bengali and reads Arabic, though a scattering of Arabic mistakes illustrates the point he charmingly makes, that his grasp of that language is limited (195). Bennett might have interviewed scholars of other Islamic languages who could have informed him about some of the material that he does not survey.

A number of tributaries flow into the river of methodological confusion, which persists despite Bennett’s attempts to elucidate his methodology on pages 4–6. Certain important terms are not clearly enough defined. There is no adequate definition of ‘postmodern’, for example, despite its importance to his conclusion. Other terms are defined or else assumed in surprisingly unimaginative, even conservative, ways. For example, his approval of a colleague’s dictum that theology happens when dialogians
reflect upon what they have learned from the perspective of their own worldview (9) requires a solid dose of Wilfred Smith, who encouraged us to do theology as an interfaith enterprise. The controversial area of Religious Studies as a specialized field, especially the appropriateness of the role of its scholars’ personal faith, much pursued in works by Donald Wiebe, rates no mention, though that debate is crucial to the value of Bennett’s arguments. An anthropologist himself, the author implicitly distinguishes that discipline from sociology, which view Ninian Smart and others have challenged (11). Again, tighter definitions would help the reader to see where the author is going with his interesting terms. This is especially necessary because Bennett obviously believes that he has something valuably new to offer in the area of methodology.

One flaw is the author’s over-confidence in how inside an insider can be. Certainly, he is endearingly sure of his bicultural credentials as English and Bengali (8). I am less certain of the extent of one’s capacity to penetrate to the heart of the ‘other’. His story of how his Bengali friends and relatives appreciate his interest in Islam (195ff.) may indicate South Asian good manners more than a genuinely positive reception.

The author’s appealing tendency to record his dietary preferences, the names of his teachers, supervisors, friends and colleagues, and other personal matters is somewhat overdone, but charmingly illustrates his assumption that warm personal relationships are important components in positive interreligious dialogue. Quite so, but this point could be strengthened by greater methodological exactitude.

Withal, there is food for thought in this book. I learned much, in disagreement as well as concurrence.

MARTIN FORWARD
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The Advent of the Fatimids: a contemporary Shi‘i witness
WILFERD MADELUNG & PAUL E. WALKER (Trans. & Eds), 2000 London, I. B. Tauris
326 pp., hb. £29.50, ISBN 1 86064 551 8

Offered to the reader as The Advent of the Fatimids, Ibn al-Haytham’s Kitāb al-Munāzgarāt in the Arabic text, the English translation, an elaborate preface, introduction and notes by P. Walker (with the editorial contribution of W. Madelung) is a new and essential source for Fātimid and Islamic historians.

Under an ‘unassuming’ title, the book assumes knowledge of the circumstances of the rise of the Fātimid caliphate in North Africa, and the nature of Ismā’īlī da‘wā in general, hence its appeal and accessibility to mainly specialists. However, the common reader too will find fascinating narratives about the times and people, as well as dialogue about themes that are still debated, such as: the Shari‘a and Shi‘i-Ismā’īlī interpretations of it; Shi‘i zeal, the problem of succession, its roots and justification in early Islamic history; the Imamate, its necessity, legitimacy, proofs, right to, signs of; role of reason and nature of faith; the Seveners and Twelvers, Ḥanafīs, Mālikīs and Shi‘is; nature of God; transmigration and metapsychosis; man-world analogies; sciences; and methods. These are in fact the subjects of the munāzgarāt or discussions between Ibn al-Haytham and the brothers Abū ‘Abdallah and Abū al-‘Abbās, prominent Ismā’īlī da‘īs who played key roles in the establishment of ‘dissentent’ and ‘heretical’ Fātimid rule in the predominantly Sunni North African world for over two and a half centuries (910–969, then to 1171 in Egypt).

Not mentioned by later Fātimid works, therefore until now not consulted, and also
‘camouflaged’ under a ‘bland’ title, *Kitāb al-Munāzarah* is preserved in a sixteenth-century compilation of Ismā‘īli texts known as *Kitāb al-Azhār* by Ḥasan b. Nūḥ al-Barūshī. As Walker explains in his Preface, Abū ‘Abdallāh Ja‘far b. ʾĀḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-ʿAṣwād b. al-Haytham’, a scholar and senior dāʿī from a prominent Shi‘ī family in Qayrawān, must have written this autobiographical work after the year 334/946, around 37 years after the events he relates. The book covers the period from the victory of Ismā‘īl dā‘ī Abū ‘Abdallāh in Rajab 296/March 909 at the head of a Kutāma Berber army, until the arrival of the ʿImām al-Mahdī in Rabī‘ II 297/January 910 in Raqqāda, the provincial capital of the Maghrib. The pivotal theme of the *Munāzarah* is the ‘restoration of true religion, the end of Sunnī repression … the arising of God’s friends’ and heirs to the Prophet’s true umma ‘to a position of power … their proper God-given place’. This is the conceptual stage that Ibn al-Haytham prepares for his protagonists the two ‘brothers’ as he puts it, major Ismā‘īlī dā‘īs Abū al-‘Abbās (who governed the land after the demise of the Aghlabids, from June 909 until the arrival of the Mahdī), and the less erudite Abū ‘Abdallāh (the ‘architect of the Fāṭimid triumph’).

The unwritten yet integral part of the *Munāzarah* is that shortly after the arrival of the Mahdī in Raqqāda, the two brothers were accused of ‘conspiracy’ and ‘disloyalty’ and executed with their closest Kutāma allies in February 298/911. There is completely new material for study in this sharp contradiction between the unfavorable light in which these figures were described in Fāṭimid tradition and the extremely positive account of Ibn al-Haytham, a Fāṭimid scholar of the level of and rival to Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān. Although presented as discussion sessions for a new recruit to the da‘wā, the *Munāzarah* is a comprehensive political–ideological statement of the significance, legitimacy and project of the Fāṭimid caliphate, hence its interest to the common reader too.

In the absence of other sources about Abū al-‘Abbās and Abū ‘Abdallāh and their views, it is difficult to determine the authorship of the various ideas expounded in the book. In the manner of the Platonic dialogues, the *Munāzarah* were probably composed as semi-didactic texts for new recruits as well as ordinary readership. The dialogues are written in a highly sophisticated style by someone who is at home in the tradition of the Greeks yet manages to replace the Greek space/time with a superb Maghribī one. Like the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues, these two ‘great’ men (in turn victims of political circumstances) were the mouthpiece of Ibn al-Haytham, now a revered man of 60 who had little to lose and plenty to say about da‘wā and spoke as judge over matters of the Ismā‘īli house.

SETA DADOYAN
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**Islam Today: a short introduction to the Muslim world**
AKBAR S. AHMED, 1999
London and New York, I. B. Tauris
xv + 253 pp., pb. n.p., ISBN 1 86064 257 8

This book, intended primarily for the Western non-Muslim reader, aims both to set forth the basics of Islam and to disabuse Western readers of stereotypes of Muslims, particularly those images generated by the contemporary mass media. The heart of the book is its final three chapters, focusing respectively on: Islam in modern Turkey, Iran and South Asia; on Muslims as minorities in various locations throughout the world;
and on Islam and the Western media. These chapters are preceded by three background chapters: ‘Raising questions’, ‘What is Islam?’ (which covers the life of the Prophet, the Qur’ān, Sunnīs and Shi‘īs, and Šūfīsm) and ‘The challenge of the past’ (brief summaries of the histories of Muslim Spain, the Ottomans, the Safavids and the Mughals). Islam in Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and China are barely mentioned in Ahmed’s account.

Ahmed writes for a general audience, and *Islam Today* should be accessible to educated lay readers. It is little encumbered by scholarly apparatus, though it includes a helpful glossary and a two-and-a-half-page bibliography. While Ahmed generally writes clearly, in some ways the book seemed to this reviewer more a somewhat disjointed series of vignettes than a sustained argument.

The tone throughout is one of a rather highminded, conservative Muslim apologetic, emphasizing Islam’s valuing of egalitarianism, of ‘balance’ and harmony, of modesty, of family life, etc. This seems appropriate given the Western stereotypes of Muslims that Ahmed aims to subvert. What is less laudable, however, is the quirky, indeed sometimes oversimplified, history, certainly little informed by much recent scholarship.

Ahmed’s synopses of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal dynasties and their more recent successor states are very much about elites and elite artistic production. He is particularly given to commenting on major Turkish, Iranian and South Asian Islamic architectural monuments. There is little sense here of what living in one of these empires might have been like for ordinary people—or for the laborers who built the great mosques, tombs and forts. And Ahmed’s historical summaries are not themselves free of stereotyping, e.g. that the harem of the Topkapi palace in Istanbul is ‘a depressing place’ where ‘hundreds of women lived out their lives in intrigue and boredom, waiting for the ruler’s voice’ (74–5). This is particularly ironic, because the implicit intent of the description is otherwise to correct stereotypes. Things improve in the chapter on Muslims as minorities in the contemporary world. Especially memorable there is the snapshot description Ahmed gives of the small but well integrated Muslim community in Scotland’s Outer Hebrides.

In sum, this book is noteworthy as an example of contemporary Islamic apologetics and as an antidote to Western stereotyping of Muslims and Islam. It is, however, more journalistic pastiche and apologetic assertion than a work of nuanced scholarship. All this said, however, I think it belongs in academic libraries that cover Islam. And, given the paperback edition and relative brevity as well as its presentation of an articulate Muslim sensibility on a number of contentious contemporary issues, *Islam Today* can be recommended for use in Muslim–Christian–Jewish inter-religious study groups.

GLENNY YOCUM
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**Turkish Islam and Europe: Europe and Christianity as reflected in Turkish Muslim discourse and Turkish Muslim life in the diaspora**

Papers of the Istanbul Workshop October 1996 ‘Türkischer Islam und Europa’

**GUENTHER SEUFFERT & JACQUES WAARDENBURG** (Eds), 1999

Türkische Welten, Bd. 6; Beiruter Texte und Studien, Bd.82

Stuttgart, Steiner

352 pp., pb. n.p., ISBN 3 515 07645 X

This timely and carefully structured and edited volume contains the revised versions of
papers given at a European–Turkish workshop at Istanbul in 1996. The papers are written in German, English and French. However, an extended introductory analytical essay in English by Jacques Waardenburg presents the key points of all the papers, with special attention to those written in French and German.

The book has three prominent and interrelated themes. The first is the emergence of new orientations on all sides towards Muslims and Europeans living together and to the possibility of arriving at practical cooperation and dialogue. The second is Turkish Muslim self-understanding and views of Europe, insofar as they are expressed in intellectual terms. The third is ways in which Turkish Muslim life in the diaspora is organized.

Out of the wealth of relevant fresh information and perspectives to be found in practically all contributions I here mention just a few particularly striking ones. The paper by Kadir Canatan presents the religious–political ideas of the contemporary Turkish journalist and scholar of Islam, Ali Bulaç, who for many years now has been one of the most widely and intensively discussed religious writers in Turkey. Canatan explains Bulaç’s efforts to develop a qur’ānically rooted paradigm of an Islamic societal pluralism. Presentations in European languages of such writers as Ali Bulaç and the discussions they engender are of great value since, unfortunately, much original Islamic thinking in Turkey remains little known or simply unknown outside Turkey and the reach of the Turkish language.

Of great interest also are the contributions to the volume that deal with the image of Europe, and especially of Christianity, on the one hand and with the image of Turkey in Europe on the other. The study by Étienne Copeaux, for instance, offers a fine analysis of ‘the blurred image of Christianity’ that prevails in Turkey. The distinction he draws between two types of knowledge of Christianity which go back to two different sources is most helpful. On the one hand, Turkish Muslims draw on the information about Jesus contained in the qur’ānic texts mentioning ʿĪsā. On the other they refer to critical Western scholarship of the Bible and to present-day critical voices in the West on the subject of Christianity. From an analysis of contemporary history schoolbooks in Turkey Copeaux concludes that Turks tend to perceive Christianity as antagonistic to Islam. He distinguishes here two aspects of this: the Turkish Muslim view of the ‘minor otherness’ of Christianity has its source in the Qurʾān—here discussion and tolerance are admitted. In contrast the Turkish Muslim view of the ‘major otherness’ of Christianity has very different sources—it goes back to certain historical events which had a traumatic impact, such as the rebellion against the Ottoman empire, etc. The ‘major’ religious otherness often then stands as a symbol for the national otherness of European nations confronting the Ottoman empire or the Turkish state. Here nation and religion become mixed, nationhood tends to become sacralized and religious and national sensitivities then reinforce each other.

The volume also offers a number of fresh studies of Turkish Muslim organizations. İsmail Kara is able to show how the powerful Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) views the relation between state and religion in Turkey as a subjection of religion to the state, and how it has a very narrow definition of the field of religion. Religion in the thought and practice of the Diyanet is an object of politics and is seen either as a threat to peace in society or as a means of political legitimation. Günther Seufert, in his well-documented study of the Diyanet in Europe (DIÇTİÇB), shows how it functions in the service of a state that incorporates what he calls ‘state nationalism’, that is, an ideology in which the state creates the nation (necessarily a completely homogeneous nation) by which it wants to legitimate itself. Seufert does not hesitate to speak
of ‘lack of insight’ and even ‘deep mistrust’ on the part of DITIB with regard to European societies.

In a further no less enlightening study, Seufert analyses the literature published by the powerful organization Milli Görüş in the years 1995–6. He concludes that whereas Milli Görüş maintains a clear distance between the ideologies of European societies and its own political perspective (which is closely linked with the Turkish Refah/Fazilet Partisi), one detects, at the same time, developments in the religious arguments of authors within Milli Görüş that legitimize action and participation in European societies. According to Seufert this could lead in the end to members of Milli Görüş adopting more secular attitudes concerning values and to their political participation in support of the well-being of a plural European society.

Karakaşoglu-Aydin’s analytical presentation of the Islamic Academy ‘Villa Hahnenburg’ near Cologne and of the ‘Verband Islamischer Kulturzentren’ (VIKZ) helps understanding of why the highest authorities of the VIKZ suddenly decided recently (in summer 2000) to put an end to all the Academy’s audacious dialogical activities and programmes. The effort required to respond creatively to the challenges arising from being exposed to Europe and its manifold open and critical debates can understandably lead to concern for the group’s identity and to consequent calls, hopefully only temporarily, for a retreat into ideological seclusion.

The editors are to be congratulated for a substantial contribution to the debate on Turkish Islam in Europe and on Europe in Turkish Islam.

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Faith, Power and Violence: Muslims and Christians in a plural society, past and present
JOHN J. DONOHUE, SJ & CHRISTIAN W. TROLL, SJ (Eds), 1998
Orientalia Christiana Analecta 258
Rome, Pontificio Istituto Orientale
315 pp., pb. n.p., ISBN 88 7210 322 3

This volume contains the scholarly contributions of the symposium held by an international group of ‘Jesuits working among Muslims’ (JAM) at Tanail, Lebanon, from 9 to 15 April 1996, the fifth in a series of encounters which began in 1983 in Lebanon. The theme of the meeting was ‘Faith, power and violence: Christians and Muslims in past and present plural settings’. It was suggested by the fact that religion during recent times has re-entered the political scene with intensity and in new forms and also by the current widespread phenomenon of violence—‘violence often associated with religious or ethnic identity. What some call terrorism, others legitimate resistance’ (7). Some strains of thought on international relations in the post-communist era (Samuel Huntington) have centred on the model of a clash of civilizations as a scenario for the future. Convinced that mutual understanding may prevent confrontation, the Jesuit meeting attempted to study some of the historical and contemporary aspects of the greatly varying relationship between, on the one hand, beliefs and values held and promoted in faith and, on the other, political power and manifestations of violence. Some contributions to the symposium undertook to look at situations from a historical
or sociological point of view, whilst others undertook to look at some contemporary case-studies in Muslim–Christian encounters. Sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt, North Africa, South and South-East Asia and Europe are all areas which are touched upon.

In a substantial essay Robert Benedict, ‘La formation politique théocratique. Essai de définition’ (9–59) attempts ‘to elaborate the conception of an ideal type of the socio-religiously integrated group which serves and continues to serve as a point of reference in thinking within the civilisation of the Christian and Muslim East. This term stands for a socio-political formation in which civil society and religious institutions are intertwined and integrated to the point that they become the two complementary functions of one and the same complex structure.’ The term ‘theocracy’ frequently is used in order to describe this socio-political formation. This conception of society can be seen in our own time in the cultural area composed of the societies that emerged from the Byzantine Empire and its Slavo-Byzantine successors, on the one hand, and the successor states of the Ottoman Empire on the other (Louis Boissat, ‘Foi, pouvoir et violence: une relucrature de la croisade’, 61–74). The Crusades, charged as they are with a deeply symbolic and prophetic significance, have been interpreted throughout the centuries from various points of reference. Each period has put into relief one particular dimension of this collective undertaking: at one time the élan of faith which brought it about or the miracles which confirmed it, at another time the excesses which it sought to justify or the dreams it generated. Re-reading the Crusades in the light of the conference theme, ‘Faith, power and violence’, was a suggestive exercise with regard to contemporary Muslim–Christian relations and what it might have to say to us today. Martin McDermott, the American Jesuit expert of the Shi‘a tradition based in Beirut, has given us an interesting reading side by side of contemporary liberation theology and Shi‘a activism in ‘Liberation theology and Imam Khomeini’s jihâd: a comparison’ (73–83) and John J. Donohue in his ‘For truth and justice: martyrdom in the three religious traditions’ (85–101), undertakes a theological assessment of the central expression of faith in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Paolo Dall’Oglio undertakes an interesting Christian theological investigation into the concept of jihâd in the lives and thought of three political-mystics in ‘Massignon and gihad in the light of de Foucauld, al-Hallag and Gandhi’ (103–14). In a fine piece of work characteristic of the Coptic Egyptian Jesuit, Samir Khalil Samir looks at apostacy in Islamic law and contemporary thought in ‘Le début du délit d’apostasie dans l’Islam contemporain’ (115–40), which is followed by reflections on the situation in Egypt in Christiana van Nispen tot Sevenaer, ‘La nouvelle loi sur la hisba en Égypte: son sens, son contexte, ses ambiguïtés’ (141–6).

Sub-Saharan Africa is dealt with by Patrick J. Ryan, ‘Gradualist and militant in West Africa: a study of Islam in Ghana’ (147–62) and Henri Coudray, ‘Langue, religion, identité, pouvoir: le contentieux linguistique franco-arabe au Tchad’ (163–205). There are three contributions on Asia: Thomas Michel, ‘Accommodation or confrontation: Indonesian Muslims and politics in the New Order’ (207–22); Christian W. Troll, ‘Divine rule and its establishment on earth: a contemporary South Asian debate’ (223–39); and Desiderio Pinto, ‘Piri-muridi and power’ (241–57). The only contribution on Europe is by Georg Stoll, ‘Muslims in a Western society: self-perception and the question of power and violence: an evaluation of Muslim periodicals in Germany, 1989–1995’ (259–76). The proceedings end with some interesting spiritual–pastoral reflections by the Franco-Algerian Jesuit, Henri Sanson, ‘En Islam aujourd’hui de la cohabitation à la coexistence’ (277–81), who asks whether Christian mission among Muslims is not now passing from a situation of living together where one devoted
oneself to live with others, to situations of co-existence where, whilst living at home, one lives nonetheless for the other.

Overall the volume demonstrates how necessary and fruitful an interdisciplinary approach, combining historical, sociological and theological methods and considerations, can be in the effort to acquire a better understanding of the key questions and themes in the engagement between Christians and Muslims.

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Gottes Staat als Republik: Reflexionen zeitgenössischer Muslim zu Islam, Menschenrechten und Demokratie

GUDRUN KRÄMER, 1999
Baden-Baden, Nomos
362 pp., pb. DEM98.00, ISBN 3 7890 6416 5

At a time when Muslims have now been engaged in a serious internal debate about state, human rights and democracy for several decades, it is a shame that so little has been heard of it in Europe and North America. The issues being discussed here have certainly been debated since early in the nineteenth century but have tended to be associated with secularizing rather than Islamic trends of thought. However, since the 1980s the balance has shifted markedly. Previously, any attempt by a European to enquire as to Muslim views on, for example, human rights would have been liable to be perfunctorily dismissed as attempting to attack and undermine the integrity of Islam. The few who would take the question seriously have now become many. Prof. Krämer is among the few Western scholars who have been following this development for a significant time. She organizes the first part of the book by significant themes: Shari‘a and the foundations of the political order; participation and the limitation of rulership; consultation, pluralism and participation; and human rights. In each of the themes she outlines the main classical positions and shows how and to what extent these have been reviewed, challenged and replaced. In the second part the author concentrates attention on three distinct phases in twentieth-century development, namely the Muslim Brotherhood through till the 1970s, the debate between Sayyid Qutb and his critics (including a discussion of the relationship between Qutb and Mawdūdī) and finally what she calls the ‘new beginnings’ of the period 1970–96, with particular attention to Ali Jarisha.

Forty pages of tightly printed bibliography indicate the breadth of source material the author covers. So although the chapters highlight a few particular thinkers, the discussions cover a much broader range, not only the better-known ones such as Muḥammad Salīm al-Awwa, Fahmī Huwaydī, Rashīd al-Ghanūshī and Yūṣuf al-Qaradāwī, but also the less well known (at least less well known outside the Arab world) names such as Saʿīd Hawwa, Fahmī Jīdān and Rūḍwān al-Sayyid. Not only does Prof. Krämer here show the breadth of the debate and the degree to which it has become a significant part of the contemporary mainstream discourse. She also shows the extent to which it has become internalized. We are no longer dealing with arguments resting on foundations
drawn from outside the Islamic tradition. Increasingly, we are seeing a debate which is finding its sources and rationales in the internal resources of the Islamic tradition. First and foremost, of course, these are Qur’ân and Sunna, but the various thinkers are also discovering precedents in classical and medieval writers. Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple Ibn al-Qaymiyya figure strongly but are shown to have had much more to offer than the narrow agendas of the Wahhâbi tradition suggest. Interesting is the rise to prominence of the North African al-Shâṭiâbî, from roughly the same period as Ibn Taymiyya, and the way in which the idea of the `intentions (maqâṣid)of the Sharî’ah, strongly associated with him, is moving towards centre-stage.

This is an important study both for scholars and, by offering a much more differentiated picture of what is going on today, for public debate. One can only hope that an English translation may soon be available.

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Keeping the Faith: travels with Sudanese Women
LILLIAN CRAIG HARRIS, 1999
Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa
176 pp., pb. £7.00, ISBN 9966 21 485 2

In Joy and in Sorrow: travels amongst Sudanese Christians
LILLIAN CRAIG HARRIS, 1999
Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa
204 pp., pb. £7.00, ISBN 9966 21 484 4

Travellers’ records play an important part in piecing together the history of the Sudan. Lillian Craig Harris offers her two volumes as a contribution towards ‘the raw material of history’. However, these accounts of her experiences amongst Sudanese women and Sudanese Christians offer much more than that. Their vivid portrayal of the situations and suffering she encounters communicate her conviction that there exists the opportunity for Sudanese women and men of good heart to become agents of change.

The encounters Dr Craig Harris records are notable for the privileged access she enjoyed as the wife of the then British Ambassador to the Sudan. They are also noteworthy for the author’s own perceptiveness and the manner in which she is able to relate them to the reader. Her accounts are richly anecdotal and deeply personal as she presents a portrait of the suffering caused by fear, violence, hatred, hunger and disease. The descriptions are evocative of smell, sound and sight. They convey fear and terrible pain. However, there is also room for humour, such as the conundrums arising when a red yearling bull is presented to the Ambassador and his vegetarian wife. Above all, these accounts are deeply humane.

Keeping the Faith tells of Dr Craig Harris’s encounters with Sudanese women, many of whom would normally have been invisible on official occasions. Despite their being accorded second-class status, Craig Harris observes Sudanese women to be ‘the mortar of society’ preventing total social disintegration. She sees the brave face so often maintained, such as in the Nubian women’s charade of happiness as they dance, though with their sadness peeping through as it would in ‘the shuffle of the dancing bear with
a ring in its nose’. In another place she discovers ‘a goldmine of unwanted humanity’ in some discarded women dumped together in a wrecked building. Elsewhere, an abandoned eight-year-old girl lies helpless with her infant sibling: their mother has left them in search of wild food in the bush and not returned.

Interspersed with these encounters are pen portraits of Sudanese women, such as Magda and Azza, Muslims who asked Dr Craig Harris to find Christian women with whom they could talk about peace. She identifies a dawning recognition amongst Sudanese women that if peace is ever to come, ‘women will have to lead or at least contribute powerfully to the struggle for non-violent solutions’. Experience from a Sudanese women’s action group demonstrated the value of interfaith dialogue: not about theology but about human need and personal loss. This sort of dialogue, Dr Craig Harris proposes, will eventually contribute to non-violent social change.

In Joy and in Sorrow presents an often bleak picture of travels amongst Sudanese Christians: the feeling of helplessness created by an all-too-brief visit to a camp for displaced persons: ‘We came, we saw, we are about to leave’; the blank wall at every turn during attempts to investigate human rights abuses; and the complete absence of administrative and educational facilities in ‘liberated areas’. Yet even amidst all this there are glimpses of humanity: like the handless leper women whom Dr Craig Harris clasps by the shoulder to bid farewell, or the dancing which averts violence in the bulldozed ruin of a church.

What seems less helpful in this second volume is the extended preface which, while supposedly providing the uninitiated reader with background to the situation in Sudan, proceeds with a lengthy litany of the problems facing the Sudanese church and society. While many of the points made are pertinent, the reader may find it more helpful to return to these after the later and more accessible narrative.

These two books are published as part of the now sizeable Faith in Sudan series and will be of value to anyone interested in the realities of life in the Sudan during the period 1995–8. Although written from a Christian standpoint, they seek even-handedness concerning different faiths. For example ‘arrogant prayer’ is condemned whether within Islam or Christianity for its abuse of religious ritual to remind others who is in charge or that they are ‘not one of us’. They call instead for compassion for all Sudanese, and action to support the Sudanese in their own efforts for peace and social justice. Dr Craig Harris concludes that the ‘best allies’ for Sudanese Christians on their journey to peace and justice are the Muslims of like mind and good heart who are their fellow-travellers. There is much within these books to provide inspiration on that journey.

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The Moro Rebellion and the Search for Peace: a study on Christian–Muslim relations in the Philippines

HILARIO M. GOMEZ, 2000
Zamboanga City, Silsillah
303 pp., hb. $20.00, ISBN 971 31 0009 3

Tension between Muslims and Christians in the southern Philippines, and particularly in the major island of Mindanao, can be traced back centuries, has been entrenched for
most of the twentieth century and has regularly broken out into open warfare over the last three decades. Of course, this is yet another of those conflicts which cannot simply be laid at the door of religious differences. The causes are complex. They are to be found in the inherited memories of Spanish conquest, of US occupation, constant human movement and economic and social links over the whole of the South-east Asian archipelago, and the migration, sometimes officially planned, of farmers from the central and northern parts of the Philippines into regions of Mindanao which were regarded as underdeveloped, primitive and, above all, economically underexploited. The first explosion of what had essentially been localized conflicts merged, as an independent armed Moro resistance started coordinating responses to an increased central government military crackdown. Agreement in the mid-1970s did not last and the rebellion became part of a wider process of the weakening of central government, as corruption and military brutality grew till the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. Since then resentment has simmered on, occasionally breaking out into renewed armed conflict, while the government has been less than enthusiastic in implementing subsequent autonomy agreements. The fact that neither side has ever been unified has not helped. Struggles for power between factions in Manila have been matched by repeated schisms among the Moro parties and rivalries among the Muslim elite families. However, it is clear that Muslim and Christian religious institutions and leaders cannot declare themselves innocent of contributing to the conflict. At various times they have lent legitimacy to the interests of one party against the other under the banner of religious solidarity. Certain Middle Eastern powers have willingly played this game, as have significant sections of both Protestant and Catholic churches.

In this book, Bishop Gomez makes no attempt to disguise the unpalatable parts of the story. As a Christian cleric he approaches his subject with a degree of hard realism and critical honesty which was not always common among his brethren of the cloth. At the same time, though, he also describes the record of joint Christian–Muslim efforts for reconciliation, efforts in which he has become a leading partner himself, with a note of defiant hope. He records the mistakes and the successes of the churches in coming to terms with both past and present, and the efforts of remarkable individuals and joint projects. There have by now been sufficient such initiatives and processes for the foundations of trust to have been laid and for joint moves towards reconciliation to start. Since the Jakarta accord of 1996, an accord whose fate still lies in the balance, a broadly representative ‘Bishops–Ulama Forum’ has been established which has become active in advising, networking and putting forward proposals designed to give some substance to the process. With its extensive bibliography, this book is both a good introduction to a complex subject and a record of one particular flashpoint in contemporary Muslim–Christian relations.

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In Quest for God and Freedom: Sufi responses to the Russian advance in the North Caucasus

ANNA ZELKINA, 2000
London, Hurst & Company
265 pp., hb. £45.00, ISBN 1 85065 384 4

The first book by Dr Anna Zelkina, based on her PhD dissertation, is dedicated to the
emergence and development of the Şûfî tradition in the north-eastern part of the Caucasus, namely in Chechnya and Dagestan. What makes the study a particularly novel contribution to the academic writing on the Caucasus is the fact that it focuses mainly on the Caucasian perspective towards the Russian expansion and the impact such expansion produced on the religious and political processes in the North Caucasus. The book first introduces the reader to the peoples of the North Caucasus and their social and economic circumstances prior to the Russian conquest and then proceeds to explore the development of Islam and its associated institutions. Followed by a brief outline of Russian military campaigns in the region, the main part of the book is constituted by the history of formation of the Naqshbandiyya belief system in conditions of ghazavat (holy war) against the Russian invasion and the political order it was associated with. This is done by a careful exploration of the history of three prominent Dagestani imâms who led the resistance: Ghazi Muhammad, Hamza Bek and Shamil. The book concludes with the analysis of the religious and political phenomenon of an Islamic state in the Caucasus—Shamil’s Imamate—and the process of its internal decline and political demise.

The main thrust of Dr Zelkina’s argument is to demonstrate that Şûfism in the North Caucasus was greatly shaped by social and political circumstances, by both the indigenous social structures and the history of resistance, and therefore it cannot be properly understood through an exclusively doctrinal perspective. Interplay between religion and politics was crucial in the formation of this Caucasian brand of Şûfism, since ‘having challenged the existing political and social order, the Naqshbandi leaders initiated a series of reforms that overhauled it and introduced an entirely new order based principally on the Sharia and Naqshbandi political principles’ (235). However, as Dr Zelkina explains, evolving circumstances and the gradual success of the Russian conquest called for a different response to the changing spiritual needs of the people, ‘a doctrine by which one could remain a true Muslim without following ghazavat but through asceticism and withdrawal from worldly activities’(230). Such teachings eventually made the Imamate political order largely redundant.

Dr Zelkina’s book is based on thorough and dedicated research, and provides extensive historical evidence to illustrate her argument. While making the book a joy to read for specialists involved with the Caucasus, this inevitably narrows the circle of potential readers. Moreover, while the subtitle refers to the whole of the North Caucasus, the book deals exclusively with Chechnya and Dagestan, and leaves the reader to wonder about the role of Şûfism in the north-western part of the Caucasus.

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The Church Mission Society and World Christianity

KEVIN WARD & BRIAN STANLEY (Eds), 2000
Grand Rapids MI/Richmond UK, Eerdmans/Curzon
382 pp., hb. £40.00, ISBN 0 7007 1208 9

After Eugene Stock’s history of the Church Mission Society (CMS), published at the turn of the century, and Gordon Hewitt’s The Problems of Success, published in the 1970s, this book marks a significant watershed in the history of the CMS and of the
Church to which it claims to belong. There is much painstaking scholarship here and important insights for Christian mission today.

There is also, however, a sense of an opportunity lost. The aim had been to publish a history, or a series of historical perspectives, for the CMS’s bi-centenary which would not be ‘metropolitan and magisterial’, like Stock and Hewitt, but ‘responsive’. It was hoped that such a work (or works) would allow historians, theologians, missiologists and others in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and (more latterly) Eastern Europe to write of the significance of CMS for both ancient and younger churches in their area. The preponderance of Western contributors has dashed this hope. It is astonishing that the editors have not been able to find writers from relatively well-developed situations such as India or China and, while Bishop Kenneth Cragg is always worth reading, there is nothing from Arab theologians such as Naim Ateek. There are only passing references to CMS’s significant engagement with the ancient churches of the Middle East and India. Guli Francis-Dehqani, Lamin Sanneh and John Karanja provide refreshing exceptions. Their contributions give us a glimmer of what a truly responsive history might have been like.

The editors are aware of the Anglican Communion’s understanding of itself as ‘catholic’ and, indeed, several of the contributors discuss the tensions and struggles CMS has had with such an understanding. They appear determined, however, to fit Anglican Mission in general, and CMS in particular, into a scholarly framework of ‘Protestant Missions’. Given the ecclesiology of the churches to which CMS relates, such an enterprise is bound to fail, as it cannot recognize fundamental problems and opportunities created for the CMS in an episcopal and sacramental church. It is left to a Roman Catholic theologian, Paul Knitter, to recognise that the great CMS general secretaries, Max Warren and John Taylor, fit more easily into a ‘catholic scheme’.

Partly because there is not much discussion of CMS relations with the Eastern and Oriental churches, there seems little awareness of different missionary histories. Even those writing about particular areas do not mention basic resources such as Bishop Young’s work on the history of the Church in Persia and Juhanon Mar Thoma’s history of non-Western Christianity in India. Lamin Sanneh and John Karanja both refer to the importance of indigenous evangelists in the spread of the Gospel. Louise Pirouet’s *Black Evangelists: the spread of Christianity in Uganda* is in a footnote but there is no discussion of it! Cross-cultural missionaries like Apolo Kivebulaya and Sundar Singh are barely mentioned. The distinguished band of North Indian theologians who related principally to Islam are entirely absent. This is even more of a pity given the CMS’s commitment to the universality of mission from its earliest days.

Many of the writers recognize the colonial context of much of the CMS’s work. There is also, however, an awareness that in India, New Zealand and other places the CMS either arrived before the colonizers or worked in a situation of tension with them. Sanneh notes the CMS’s commitment, throughout the nineteenth century, to ‘anti-slavery’. This brought the CMS into conflict not only with the slave-traders, European or Arab, but also with aspects of African social organization itself. From the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the transmutation of Darwin’s biological theories into anthropology meant that Europeans began to see themselves more and more as a superior race who needed to keep themselves apart and ‘pure’. Several of the contributors note the effects of such thinking not only on the attitudes of missionaries but also on the policies of the CMS. In spite of all of this, the concluding article is wrong to assert that ‘Anglican ecclesiastical geography still corresponds closely to the boundaries of the former British Empire’. Has the writer heard of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (the Holy
Catholic Church in Japan) or of the rapidly growing province of the Southern Cone or of churches in Mozambique and Angola? The examples can be multiplied.

The editors seem not to be able to distinguish between universal Christian tradition, for example, in terms of order, sacrament and ecclesiastical dress, and the need to inculturate these in terms of the local church’s language, customs and environment. They are right, however, to note how several people’s movements were and are largely independent and spontaneous. They are right also in discerning that authentic inculturation derives its force and vitality from indigenous models and experiences. The Lambeth Quadrilateral (which is not mentioned) was already relating the need for inculturation to the ‘givenness’ of Scripture and Apostolic Tradition. Some discussion of this would have been valuable. In his encyclical Redemptoris Missio, Pope John Paul II has given us an instance of how this can be done. The World Council of Churches’ project on culture, similarly, provides theological resources for such reflection. The historical bias of the work has made such theological reflection difficult. It is, however, urgently necessary.

Graham Kings has given us an important chapter on the meeting of faiths and the contributions of Max Warren and John Taylor in this respect. He mentions Warren’s correspondence with his daughter Pat and son-in-law Roger Hooker, who were working with CMS in Varanasi, North India. They were deeply immersed in Hindu–Christian encounter and dialogue and raised sharp questions for Warren which he attempted to answer in a series of lectures and publications. His ‘theology of attention’ commends an attitude of humility towards God, those of other faiths and in our theologizing. Warren’s approach to people of other faiths was based on the confidence that God’s eternal Word, revealed and incarnate in Jesus Christ, was also the source of all truth, wherever it may be found. He based his views on the great Christological passages in St John’s Gospel and in the Pauline letters such as Ephesians and Colossians. Taylor, on the other hand, bases his approach on the universal work of God’s Holy Spirit in communicating and convincing. Religion then is a people’s ‘tradition of response’ to the work of the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that it is necessarily the right response and certainly not that it is the complete and final response. This can only happen as people recognize in Jesus Christ the fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations. Such a recognition can emerge, however, from inside their tradition as much as through missionary presence and proclamation. Already in The Go-between God and in the General Secretary’s Newsletters, Taylor was beginning to ask how the impact of Christ would change religious traditions as well as individuals. In respect of Hinduism, his question was answered by the eminent Indian scholar of the Mar Thoma Church, M. M. Thomas, in his book The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance.

Jocelyn Murray and Guli Francis-Dehqani contribute valuable perspectives on the role of women in the CMS and their impact on female education and health care. It is interesting to note that the needs of women in Britain and overseas were somewhat similar during the nineteenth century and the pioneering role of women missionaries was in the context of developing opportunities for women at home as well. Murray points out that it was because of this impact of CMS women missionaries that the Church in China was able to ordain women first as deacons and then as priests—in this respect anticipating developments in the rest of the Anglican Communion by several decades.

In his perceptive contribution, Kenneth Cragg has shown how cross-cultural mission is more about receiving than giving, learning than teaching and being evangelized rather than simply evangelizing. In the last resort, a great deal of the CMS’s experience benefited the Church in Britain and is still continuing to do so. The chapter on mission in Britain may be the last chapter in the collection but it is an unfinished one.
This book will be a very rich resource for research into Christian mission over the last 200 years or so. It is also the case, however, that other sources will be needed if a true picture is to be obtained. In the end, the history of the CMS cannot be separated from the histories of the churches within which it worked, the ones it founded and the ones assisting its mission today.

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