

**A Contact Threesome:
Americans, Arabs, and Imperialists**

by

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A Contact Threesome: Americans, Arabs, and Imperialists

In 1927, Henry Emerson Fosdick, a harsh critic of militarism and empire, advocate of scientific Christianity, and minister to New York's wealthiest citizens traveled to Palestine to see his faith's birthplace. On this trip, he visited Jerusalem, the site of Jesus's death and resurrection. But when he went to commemorate the Passion, he rejected the crowded Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which sat on the traditional site of Golgotha, the hill where the Romans executed and entombed the Son of Man. Instead, he suggested that pilgrims visit the “Garden Tomb” of Charles “Chinese” Gordon, a British general slain at Khartoum by the Mahdi's anti-colonial uprising, because he found it peaceful and reverent.¹ Thus, to find a holy site that fit his spiritual sensibilities, Fosdick substituted a British imperial martyr for Christ himself. Just as Christian doctrine holds that Jesus's body was marked by the spears of the Roman soldiers who occupied his homeland, Fosdick's travel narrative bears wounds from its author's contact with the British empire and its discourses.

In 1856, Henry Harris Jessup (1832-1910), scion of an old New England family, Yale graduate, and Presbyterian minister, crossed the wide Atlantic to spread Protestant Christianity to the people of Ottoman Syria, where he lived and preached for more than half a century. Seventy-three years later, another Protestant minister, Henry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969) visited the Levant in order to make far-briefer trip to the Holy Land. Both were ecumenical Protestants whose faith comfortably co-existed with science. Both enjoyed connections to America's elite and the patronage of millionaires. And despite those ties, both experienced marginality in the Middle East, and depended on Europeans who, though empire, wielded much more power there, to help them access the Levant. Both men needed their physical protection and interpretive assistance. In the pages that follow, I will perform a close reading of Jessup's 1910 missionary narrative *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* and Fosdick's 1927 travelogue

¹ Harry Emerson Fosdick. *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*. New York: MacMillan, 1927. p. 249

A Pilgrimage to Palestine. I argue that these accounts were marked by their authors' dependence upon the European empires, and that when we analyze how Americans interacted with non-Western places beyond their sphere of influence, we must consider their interactions with European imperialists and other powerful expatriates who lived there as well as their encounters with the “natives.”

To do so, I'm going to need to break with the way that scholars in the humanities in general, and historians of the relationship between the US and the Middle East in particular, talk about contact. Most simply narrate meetings between Americans and the Other.² In some cases, scholars explain all of Americans' narratives of their encounters as total products of the discourses they brought from home. In the worst cases, they dehistoricize those discourses and treat them as parts of an essentialized American identity.³ These writers usually are trying to critique American exceptionalism, but instead they perpetuate it. Even writers who avoid this trap often ignore the context that made interactions between Americans and their Others possible. Some post-spatial turn scholars have tried to contextualize encounters by locating them in spaces like Mary Louise Pratt's “contact zone” where interaction can occur.⁴ However, they usually focus exclusively on “hetero” interactions within those zones-- that is, those between the visitor and the “Other.”

But American travelers visited physical places inhabited by people who they identified with--

² A sampling of the works I am talking about here: Ussama Makdisi. *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008; Thomas Kidd. *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Cultures and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009; Stephanie Stidham Rogers. *Inventing the Holy Land: American Protestant Pilgrimage to Palestine, 1865-1941*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011; “William McClure Thompson's The Land and the Book: Pilgrimage and Mission in Palestine” by Helene Murre-van den Berg, “American Protestant Missionary Beginnings in Beirut and Istanbul: Policy, Politics, Practice, and Response” by Habib Badr, “Evangelization or Education: American Protestant Missionaries, the American Board, and the Girls and Women of Syria” by Ellen Fleischman, and “Muslim Response to Missionary Activities in Egypt with Special Reference to the Al-Azhar High Corps of 'Ulama” by Umar Ryad, all in H. L. Murre-van Den Berg [ed]. *New Faith in Ancient Lands*. Leiden: Brill, 2006; J.J. Brumberg. “Zenas and Girlless Villages: The Ethnology of American Evangelical Women, 1870-1910.” *The Journal of American History* 69, no. 2. 1982. pp. 347-371.

³ For U.S.-Middle East relations, Thomas Kidd is an especially bad example. Other people produce international versions of this sort of “export narrative.” See, for example, Michael Adas. *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.

⁴ This analytic is from Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge, 1992. pp. 7-9

like European imperialists-- as well as Others. The power relationships within those place, including those between the imperialists and the Other, shaped Americans' experiences. I want to “queer” Pratt's contact zone and examine how “homo” interactions-- between the visitor and people they identified with-- mediated the experience of contact. Americans' experiences in areas dominated by European empires were a product of imperial threesomes, and the “homo” third party in the encounter shaped the narratives that these experiences generated. I suggest that we depart from the binary models which cut across almost all humanities writing about contact, and talk about triangular encounters instead. In the pages that follow, I will discuss the Levant's geopolitical landscape, Jessup and Fosdick's backgrounds, and four ways that triangulation shaped their experiences of the the region.

Throughout the 19th century, the Levant nominally fell under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire, but the once-mighty Sublime Porte's power was fading, and the territory carried a messy patchwork of overlapping sovereignties. The central government struggled to control the military governors, or pashas, who ruled Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt, and Tripolitania, who possessed considerable autonomy. In turn, the pashas struggled with local nobles, like the Shehab Emirs of Lebanon, who had to negotiate with powerful local groups like the region's Druze tribes to maintain their rule.⁵

At the same time Britain and France wielded immense local influence through alliances with local elites and a series of agreements known as the Capitulations. Their citizens enjoyed extraterritoriality, their consuls could boss local officials about, and they dispatched gunboats and soldiers to intervene in internecine conflicts.⁶ In 1860, the two countries led an intervention to stop a religious war in Ottoman Syria, and afterward, France occupied the region.⁷ The two countries claimed

⁵ Donald Quataert. *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1022*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. pp. 100-110

⁶ Ibid, pp. 79-80

⁷ Leila Tarazi Fawaz. *An Occasion For War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. pp.109-111.

joint control over Egypt, where they collected customs duties and operated local administrations. Later, Britain turned this outlying province of the Ottoman Empire into a de facto colony.⁸ Hence, the two European powers both possessed a measure of imperial control in the region.

The Sublime Porte tried to resist the Europeans' imposition on its sovereignty claw back its authority over its Arabic-speaking provinces. In the “Auspicious Incident” of 1826, Sultan Mahmud II disbanded the Janissary corps and established a modern-style army.⁹ Then, in 1836, he inaugurated the Tanzimat reform, a program of legislation intended to build a modern Ottoman bureaucracy and an “Ottoman” national identity.¹⁰ In 1898, another independence-seeking Sultan, Abdulhamid II, tried to break away from Britain and France by aligning his country with their great geopolitical rival, Germany. The Germans agreed to help finance the construction of a railroad from Istanbul to Baghdad, in exchange for the valuable right to pump oil along its length. This alliance allowed the Ottoman Empire to claw back authority from Britain and France for some time.¹¹ The Empire came even closer to effective independence with the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which transformed the Ottoman Empire into a constitutional monarchy and sped its transformation into a modern-day nation-state.¹²

The Ottoman Empire's efforts to wrest control of the Levant back from Britain and France ended with total failure during the First World War. The British military officer and Orientalist T.E. Lawrence and the family of the Sharif of Mecca coordinated an Arab Revolt in the Levant and Mesopotamia, which, along with British expeditions to Iraq and Palestine, destroyed the Ottoman Empire south of Anatolia. The secret Sykes-Picot agreement of 1917 accorded Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq to Britain and Syria and Lebanon to France. The Treaty of Versailles formalized this arrangement by

⁸ Quataert, p. 60.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 63-64

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 67-70

¹¹ Sean McMeekin. *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010. pp. 1-16

¹² Quataert, p. 65.

making these regions League of Nations mandates under British and French authority.¹³ Then, the two European powers, like the Ottomans before them, extended a piecemeal authority over the region with the cooperation of local elites. Both Jessup and Fosdick visited a Levant under the rule of a patchwork of semi-sovereign polities where European empires projected power.

Both men also encountered a European imperial intellectual geography superimposed upon the Ottoman Empire's complex political landscape. American travelers in the Levant made sense of their visits using both personal experience and an enormous corpus of texts created by European imperialists, journalists, and scholars. Britain and France each brought a panoply of archaeologists, philologists, ethnographers, and missionaries to the Ottoman Empire alongside its bands of soldiers, spies, and diplomats.¹⁴ As Edward Said powerfully argued in *Orientalism*, the body of knowledge that these British and French interpreters created about the Middle East served and was served by their countries' imperial projects.¹⁵ Hence, American visitors like Jessup and Fosdick interacted with imperial bodies of knowledge as well as empires themselves when they visited the Levant.

Henry Harris Jessup spent most of the 19th century's second half working under the auspices of the American Board for the Commission of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) as missionary to the Ottoman Villayat, or province, of Syria, where he chose to go after having a personal revelation in 1852.¹⁶ He lived in the coastal cities of Tarablus (Tripoli) and Beirut, which now lie in Lebanon. In his homeland, Jessup was socially powerful and well-connected. He was a graduate of Yale and member of a white, wealthy Northeastern family. His father chaired the Republican national committee that nominated Lincoln for the presidency in 1860.¹⁷ On a fund-raising trip in the United States, he visited the New

¹³ David Fromkin. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Owl, 1989., pp. 266-268

¹⁴ Edward Said. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978. pp. 76-85

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 14-15

¹⁶ Henry Harris Jessup. *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 1]. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910. p. 16

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 16

York millionaire William E. Dodge Jr.¹⁸ At another point, a young Theodore Roosevelt and his father visited Jessup in Beirut.¹⁹ Jessup and had close connections to America's Northeastern elites.

Although family ties attached him to American high society, Jessup most tightly identified with the Americans who came before him or worked with him at the ABCFM's Syria Mission. He dedicated most of his memoir's third chapter to hagiographic microbiographies of the “saints” who came before him.²⁰ The ABCFM dispatched first American missionaries to Ottoman Syria, Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk, in 1820. In Jerusalem and Beirut, they distributed Bibles, engaged in heated theological disputes with Lebanon's Maronite Catholic clergy, and converted a single man, 'Asad Shidyaaq, who perished in a local bishop's prison.²¹ Despite this inauspicious start, the Syrian mission grew, and its missionaries took on more elaborate tasks. Dr. Eli King supervised a Protestant Arabic Bible translation project conducted by Butrus al-Bistani, a literary scholar and Protestant convert.²² In the fifty-four years after Jessup's arrival, the mission's activities continued to expand. By 1908, it operated a seminary, a Syrian Protestant College, an Arabic press for printing Bibles and propaganda, several Protestant churches, and many highly popular boys' and girls' schools, which taught classes in English, French, and religion.²³ In addition to ministering to Syrians, the ABCFM's missionaries produced representations of Islam, Arabs, and the Middle East for English-speaking audiences. Jessup himself penned multiple anti-Islamic pamphlets for American and British public consumption.²⁴ He also traveled to Britain and the United States to talk about his experiences in Syria, raise funds, and recruit more missionaries.

These activities gave Jessup and his fellow missionaries a measure of power over Middle Eastern subjects. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault asserted that surveillance and routine, or

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 341

¹⁹ Henry Harris Jessup. *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 2]. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910 pp. 407-408.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 31

²¹ Badr in Muree-van den Berg, pp. 212-215, Makdisi, pp. 10-12

²² Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol. 1] p. 70

²³ Ibid, pp. 45, 96, 222, 274

²⁴ Kidd, pp. 48-51

“normalization” both constitute important forms of power.²⁵ The schools that Jessup and his fellows created were disciplinary institutions in the Foucauldian sense. They directed the “docile bodies” of schoolchildren, who typically enrolled in order to gain language skills that would be unavailable at local madrassas, through Protestant Christian religious rituals, Bible reading, English speaking, and wearing western-style clothes. They also produced educated Syrians who spoke Western languages and understood Western customs and epistemologies. I'll use a term from James Scott's *Seeing Like a State* and assert that these disciplined Arabs were “legible” to Jessup and his fellow missionaries.²⁶ The legible Syrians helped to render more of Syria legible to the missionaries by providing them with local knowledge or by becoming schoolteachers or ministers themselves. Thus, the schools' disciplinary power helped the missionaries' other activities. Jessup and his fellows wielded another form of Foucauldian power, *pouvoir/savoir*, through their representational activities. This power/knowledge production enterprise was tiny in comparison to the vast imperial knowledge production apparatus of the British and French empires, but it still inscribed a power relationship between American missionaries and Syrian Arabs.

However, the missionaries' power had sharp limits. As the imprisonment of Asad Shidyaq shows, they and their converts faced hostility and violence from local religious authorities. On occasion, they became targets for bandits, con-artists, and criminals.²⁷ They also faced harassment from Ottoman officials, who resisted their production of texts which might discursively undermine the Ottoman Empire's already tenuous sovereignty. Jessup claimed that once, an Ottoman official forbade him to export a book because it contained a map which depicted the subdivisions of the empire in different colors, which the official deemed a misrepresentation of what he considered a unitary state.²⁸

²⁵ Michel Foucault. trans. Alan Sheridan. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York, Vintage: 1975, trans. 1977, repr. 1995. p. 184.

²⁶ James Scott. *Seeing Like A State*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. p. 2

²⁷ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol. 1] p. 48

²⁸ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol. 2] pp. 540-541

Hence, governmental officials could and did work to limit the missionaries' power to represent. The missionaries' American social connections and power did not protect them from harassment and put sharp limits on the practices which they used to generate power.

The American mission faced internal vulnerabilities as well as external hazards. It had only a handful of members during its first few decades. Its funding from the United States was also precarious, particularly during the American Civil War.²⁹ The local Protestant communities it fostered were weak. Jessup frequently declared that missionary churches and schools needed to become self-sustaining, and singled out Korea's, which had succeeded in that regard, for special praise. However his need to return to that point strongly suggests that his mission's institutions never achieved financial independence.³⁰ And, although the ABCFM mission's efforts expanded enormously between 1820 and 1908, its quest to convert the Ottoman Empire made only negligible progress. At the dawn of the 20th century, Jessup cited a figure of 7,000 Protestants in the entire Ottoman Empire.³¹ Even this modes figure is probably inflated. Evidently, many Syrians were eager for their children to English, but not for them to switch faiths. Hence, Protestants never became a major local community in Syria. Jessup, his fellow American Protestant missionaries, and their converts occupied a marginal and perilous position in the Ottoman Empire.

The vulnerable ABCFM agents in Syria only received limited help from their home government. America had no military presence in the Levant before the Second World War, and its diplomatic clout there was minimal. The American consul in Beirut had could not even help the American Protestant missionaries move books through customs.³² The American minister to the Ottoman Empire, who did not even carry an ambassadorial rank for much of the 19th century, was scarcely more helpful. When

²⁹ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol. 1] p. 70 166

³⁰ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 2] p. 631-633, p. 755

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 641

³² *Ibid*, p. 505

Jessup appealed to him to obtain special protections for American missionaries, the minister claimed that he did not have the access to the high officials who could fulfill the request.³³ Hence, even Jessup's ties to America's financial and governmental elite could not obtain state protection for his efforts.

Jessup and his fellow missionaries thus turned to the protection of the British Empire. Jessup's account records a number of occasions upon which British diplomats and soldiers offered his mission a helping hand. Fisk and Parsons acquired the first Arabic Bibles that they distributed in Palestine Syria from British missionaries working in Malta.³⁴ The British consul in Syria asked the local Ottoman officials to let Fisk and King pass freely, and their successors would turn time and time again to later British consuls for protection from violence and redress for stolen property.³⁵ Later, they resolved their customs problem by moving books through the British mail.³⁶ The American missionaries also looked to British donors for financial support, and visited London and Liverpool on fundraising expeditions.³⁷ Hence, the Levant's political landscape made the ABCFM mission in Syria dependent on the British. This dependence, and the consequent close relationship between the American missionaries and the British, shaped Jessup's text.

Our other protagonist, Harry Emerson Fosdick was a brief sojourner in the Levant rather than a resident there. Like Jessup, he came from the Northeast, graduated from a prestigious divinity school (Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan), and possessed close ties to America's Northeastern political and financial elite.³⁸ Although he was ordained as a Baptist, he obtained a special dispensation to preach at New York City's wealthy First Presbyterian church, whose congregation included future

³³ Ibid, p. 740

³⁴ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol. 1]. p. 20

³⁵ Ibid, p. 48

³⁶ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 2]. p. 505

³⁷ Ibid, pp. 494-495

³⁸ Robert Moats Miller. *Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. p. 41

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.³⁹ His next post was at Park Avenue Baptist Church, which was attended by John Rockefeller Jr. America's wealthiest man.⁴⁰

Fosdick was also a national celebrity. With an incendiary 1922 sermon entitled “Shall the Fundamentalists win?” he argued that the Bible was a human document which recorded encounters with the divine rather than the literal word of God. This pitted Fosdick and his supporters (who became known as “modernists”) against supporters of Biblical literalism (“fundamentalists”), in a conflict which continues to this day.⁴¹ Rockefeller's publicist Ivy Lee nationally distributed the text of “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” under the title “The New Knowledge and the Christian Faith.”⁴² In subsequent years, Fosdick made nationwide radio broadcasts and published twenty-two books.⁴³ In 1930, he appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. He became an icon for a youthful, vigorous, energetic style of Christian piety. One of his devotees, an enormously successful advertising executive named Bruce Barton, wrote the smash-hit popular religious books *A Young Man's Jesus* and *The Man Nobody Knows*, which recast Jesus as a vigorous youthful carpenter and savvy businessman and advertiser who cleverly packaged his message in parables. In other writings, Barton cast Fosdick as a modern-day version of the Christ he imagined, a man who combined strident piety with energy and physical vigor.⁴⁴ So, although Fosdick had not reached the zenith of his fame when he wrote *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, he already had a national audience and stood as a leading representative of a scientific, modernist, and physically energetic Christianity. He went to Palestine for his own spiritual enlightenment, but his travel narrative had broader goals. He hoped to inform his readers of the present state of biblical lands, share his spiritual experiences with his wide flock, and use the terrain and people

³⁹ Ibid, p. 93, p. 131

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 160

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 114-115

⁴² Ibid, p. 117

⁴³ Ibid, p. 385. I counted the number of books listed in the frontispiece of *A Pilgrimage to Palestine* to find that figure.

⁴⁴ Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization” in *The Culture of Consumption*. New York: Pantheon, 1983. pp. 4-5.

of Palestine to promote his preferred interpretation of the Bible.

Fosdick traveled to the Holy Land with a strong vision of Christianity's history and its future, but his image of the Middle East was influenced by a wide variety of other interlocutors. Jessup's formidable social connections and rhetorical skills made him influential at home, but they could not render the Levant transparent to him. Unlike Jessup, whose account drew authority from his fifty-three years of ministry in Syria, Fosdick only had a few months' worth of experiences of the Holy Land. Furthermore, he did not speak Palestine's languages, which sharply limited his interactions with the region's Arab inhabitants. Fosdick never explicitly mentioned his linguistic limitations, but several episodes from his narrative make them quite clear. On one occasion, Fosdick visited an Eastern Orthodox monastery, and found that he was only able to communicate with two of the monks there, both of whom had previously lived in America.⁴⁵ On another occasion, he demonstrated his lack of linguistic acumen with several striking misconceptions about everyday Arabic usage. In one passage, he used the appearance of the word "Allah" in a number of Arabic colloquial expressions to argue that Arabs saw miracles everywhere.⁴⁶ Anybody familiar with how these Arabic expressions are actually used in context would know that they do not suggest that the speaker believes that an event is a miracle any more than an English speaker's shout of "Thank God!" in response to good news indicates that she believes her good fortune is a consequence of divine intervention.⁴⁷ Clearly, Fosdick's language skills curtailed his ability to interact with and understand the Holy Land.

So, Fosdick had to use knowledge that he gleaned from other sources to make sense of his experiences. His hosts almost certainly provided interpretation and commentary. Fosdick's narrative is sadly silent about his translators, although we know that he must have had them, because he recorded

⁴⁵ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, pp. 251-252

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136

⁴⁷ I know this from my personal experience studying Arabic and using it in conversation with native speakers

interactions with Bedouin Arabs and practitioner of Samaritan Judaism, who he identified as non-English speakers. He offered only a little more about his hosts. He did mention “The American Colony in Jerusalem,” a group which had grown up around the ABCFM mission there. He also described a meal he shaved with several well-educated British Zionists living in Jerusalem.⁴⁸ His other hosts were probably also English-speakers. Because Palestine was a British mandate in 1927, they probably included British colonialists, British or American Zionists, or American missionaries dependent on the British colonial project in the same fashion that Henry Jessup did. Hence, Fosdick's hosts and interpreters offered him an Empire-tinted perspective on Palestine and its inhabitants.

Fosdick drew on textual sources as well as local interpreters. He provided a bibliography which reveals some of his sources on the history of Palestine as well as contemporary Arab life. Among those are the British historian and military adventurer T.E. Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert*, the British missionary John Mott's *The Moslem World of To-Day*, the Oxford Laudian Professor of Arabic D.S. Margoliouth's *Mohammad and the Rise of Islam*, and the Irish archaeologist R.A. Steward MacAlistair's *A History of Civilization in Palestine*.⁴⁹ All of these authors lived in the British Empire and worked in the scholarly tradition of Orientalism that Edward Said identified in his book of the same name. Hence, Fosdick relied upon the British Empire's knowledge-gathering mechanisms to make sense of his experiences overseas. Like Jessup, he wrote about both Levantines and Europeans in ways that reflected his relationship with European imperialism in the Middle East. And, because of that continuity, their accounts both show that their encounters with Levantines were affected by their simultaneous contact with Europeans. In the pages that follow, I will explore four types of discursive triangulation that appear in both texts: the instantiation of Orientalism through discourses of science and technology, the fusion of Orientalism with Protestant religious rhetoric, the reproduction of British

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. ix, p. 162

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 295

discourses about Arab warriors, and the direct discussion of European power over Levantine populations.

Both Jessup and Fosdick used science and technology to articulate their relationship with Levantine “Others.” Their use of these discourses reflected both their particular, spiritually-motivated interest in the natural world and their adoption of European Orientalism. The first point of this contact triangle was the American minister, who believed that his scientific knowledge gave him epistemic sovereignty. The second was the essentialized Arab who he abjected as unscientific, atemporal Other. The third was European empire, whose Orientalist construction of the Arab as backward, atemporal, and unscientific helped the American to create scientific distance and ignore ways that Arab engagement with science and technology problematized that act of distancing.

Both Fosdick and Jessup used science to articulate their hermaneutic power over the Levant's landscape. Jessup was an avid geologist and paleontologist, and he punctuated his memoir with asides about his scientific expeditions to the Lebanon mountains.⁵⁰ To Jessup, these rock hunts were not idle diversions, but valuable aids to his mission and expressions of his spiritual identity. He “would cordially recommend to every young man going out as a missionary to study some branch of natural science... as a means of recreation, mental invigoration, relief from the routine of regular duties, and a means of gaining enlarged ideas of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, who created alike the Book of Nature and the Book of Revelation.”⁵¹ The missionary, mentally and spiritually invigorated by his scientific exploits, gained the ability to speak about the Other in an ethnographic register: “The geological structure of Lebanon has had much to do in determining the history and diversifying the habits of its inhabitants... So also the character of the warlike Druses... seems to have been made more independent by the frowning deep cut defiles and tortuous passages which form their home... In these

⁵⁰ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 1]. pp. 123-128

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 128

narrow, deep, crooked gorges, a few men can stand against hundreds, and their frequent success in cutting to pieces bodies of Turkish troops have added to their untamed ferocity.”⁵² Here, Jessup made sweeping environmentally determinist arguments of a sort which he never applied to Europeans or Americans, and thus discursively remade Arabs as not-quite-human creatures who, like Descartes's animals, responded to environmental stimuli like automata. He further underlined this animalization of tribal Arabs by describing them as “untamed.” Hence, science served as both a pillar of Jessup's identity and a tool which allowed him to distance himself from Lebanon's rural Arab populations, who, because they lacked science's transformative interpretive power, became mute playthings of their environment.

Fosdick even more explicitly used the sciences to articulate both his distance from Levantines and his own hermeneutic privilege. Like Jessup, he linked science with his own spirituality. As a Protestant modernist, he believed that Christians should craft interpretations of scripture compatible with the discoveries of archaeologists, historians, and natural scientists. Hence, he rejected most of Palestine's traditional holy sites, which were venerated by the Eastern Christians who lived there, as fraudulent. He used the sciences to structure his own alternative pilgrimage. After declaring that “nothing in Palestine under a roof is much worth seeing and nothing in Palestine out of doors is not worth seeing” Fosdick embarked on an environmental history of the Bible, which he integrated with his pilgrimage narrative. He used Palestine's location between Asia and Africa to argue that it would naturally attract invaders.⁵³ He used descriptions of Mount Sinai to argue that the ancient Hebrews might perceive a journey to its summit as a trip into the heavens.⁵⁴ He also used then-recent archaeological discoveries to put the Moabites and Philistines in historical context.⁵⁵ Like Jessup, who

⁵² Ibid, 124

⁵³ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, p. 32

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 53-54

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 86-88

appealed to “Nature's Book” as a source of divine knowledge, Fosdick treated Palestine's landscape as a “Fifth Gospel.”⁵⁶ By doing so, he articulated his identity as a thoroughly “modern” person who, unlike Palestine's native inhabitants, had a true claim to articulate the land's history.

Both authors used technology as well as science to assert their superiority to Levantines. Jessup boasted extensively about his mission's Arabic printing press and typeset, which he considered the finest in the entire world.⁵⁷ He also claimed the superiority of American mechanical arts by complaining that he could not find artisans as skilled as those from his own country to serve as instructors at his mission's trade school. With these statements, he declared both his mission's technological superiority and the backwardness of the people he ministered to. Fosdick also used technology to determine people's modernity. He described Palestine as a land where the past collided with the present and illustrated the point by contrasting a group of Bedouin Arabs entering Bethlehem on camel-back and the town's mayor, a Christian, American-educated Arab who drove a motor-car.⁵⁸ Through this juxtaposition, Fosdick articulated temporality through technology and thus argued that rural and poor Palestinians were trapped in the past. Fosdick even used technological difference to suggest that Palestinian Arabs were equivalent to Biblical Hebrews throughout his entire text. In one particularly telling incident, he visited a Bedouin tribe in Sinai, and described the feast they presented him with as “right out of the Book of Numbers.” This comparison does not suggest only backwardness, but also total ahistoricity-- thousands of years without change.

Jessup and Fosdick's rhetorical invocations of science and technology “othered” most of the Levant's inhabitants, who did not fully share their body of knowledge or material culture, by placing them outside the stream of historical progress. Both of their narratives imagined Levantine Arabs as

⁵⁶ An expression which I borrow from Rogers, p. 32

⁵⁷ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 1] p. 55. Printing in Arabic does constitute a significant technical challenge, as most letters connect to other letters, and each letter appears differently in initial, medial, and final positions.

⁵⁸ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, p. 29

atemporal objects of natural processes rather than historical subjects. This detemporalization is a key component of orientalist imperial discourse, as Edward Said argues in *Orientalism*.⁵⁹ Hence, Jessup and Fosdick's rhetorical uses of science and technology invoked and reproduced key European imperialist narratives about "Eastern" peoples. It also sharply limited the ways that they used science and technology to taxonomize people. Both men ignored science and technology as a measures of human progress when that measure would not support Arab atemporality. In a comment on a dispute between Reverend McLachlan, a missionary, and Reverend Jenanyan, a Levantine convert to Protestantism educated in American missionary schools, over the administration of the missionary-founded and American-funded St. Paul's Institute in Tarsus, Jessup wrote "Eastern ideas differ from ours. When Eastern men, with funds raised from Orientals, manage Oriental institutions and enterprises, they generally succeed. But the East cannot understand the West in the matter of managing Western funds."⁶⁰ Even though Jenanyan had an American education, and thus, the exact same sort of access to scientific knowledge as McLachlan, he remained an inscrutable oriental-- in Homi Bhabha's words, "almost the same, but not white." Science could not make him an equal. Similarly, Fosdick disregarded observations of Arab modernity like the car-owning mayor of Bethlehem and made sweeping, raced pronouncements about Arab backwardness. In a section near the end of the book, in which he expressed concern about Zionism because he believed that Jews migrating from Europe were, as a race, productive and industrious and would outproduce the Arabs, who he considered slower-moving and less advanced.⁶¹ For both of these men, machines measured man only as far as that measurement remained in accord with the discourses of European empires. Jessup and Fosdick's encounters with European writings about the Other directed and limited their efforts to interpret the

⁵⁹ Said, p. 5

⁶⁰ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 2], p. 535

⁶¹ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, pp. 292-293

Levant and its people through science and technology.

Another discursive triangulation took place between Jessup and Fosdick's Protestant understanding of valid religious practice, Euro-Orientalist conceptions of “Oriental” backwardness, and Muslims and “Eastern” Christians.⁶² Both writers ultimately equated a highly secularized version of Protestantism with Orientalism. For both of them, “Eastern” religious practices were signs of the ignorance, backwardness, and atemporality of “Eastern” peoples. Both men focused on the “ignorance” of the practitioners of “Eastern” religions. They saw that “ignorance” instantiated in what they considered improper religious relationships with material objects, which they labeled as idolatrous, and improper religiously-mediated social relationships, which they labeled superstitious. For both men, the latter class of practices included the former. Both labels implicitly marked “Eastern” religious practitioners as irrational and atemporal. The aspects of “Eastern” faiths which they criticized were also often practices of domestic religious “Others” for both men. In Jessup's case, those Others were Roman Catholic, and for Fosdick, they were American fundamentalist Protestants. By marrying domestic religious discourses to Orientalism, they attacked both of their “Others” by linking them.

Jessup offered his first indictment of Eastern religions in his description of the life of Pliny Fisk, who he described as assailing “a Gibraltar of ignorance and superstition” in Syria.⁶³ Throughout memoir's first volume, he heaped scorn on the practitioners of Eastern Christianity. After listing six specific “Eastern” Christian sects, he argued that a missionary could classify them as “one in their need of reformation, one in their being an obstacle to the Christianization of the Mohammedan world.” This was because “They all hold the doctrines of transubstantiation, of baptismal regeneration, priestly absolution, Mariolatry and saint worship, image and picture worship, auricular confession, and prayers

⁶² As these men used it, this label includes Maronite Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, Nestorians, Assyrian rite Christians, and basically any other non-Protestant Christian sect living in the Middle East.

⁶³ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 1], p. 29.

for the dead.”⁶⁴ The Syrian Evangelical church which Jessup's mission set up in opposition to these practices was, in his view, a “powerful, intelligent, well-educated and upright element in the population,” which was “a living rebuke to ignorance, superstition, and ecclesiastical assumption.” He defined Eastern Christian religious practices as the antithesis of education and knowledge, and thus, classified Eastern Christians as backward, ignorant, and irrational.

Jessup also used the tropes of superstition and idolatry to place Islam alongside Eastern Christianity as an “ignorant” faith. On the supposed discovery of one of Muhammad's shoes in Diyarbakir, he explicitly equated the two religious groups, commenting “It is generally supposed that Mohammedans are above the superstitious relic worship of the Greeks and Latins, but those who live among them know very well that they sanction some of the most foolish, superstitious practices and revere sacred places and footprints and tombs with what is akin to idolatrous homage.”⁶⁵ Again, he equated materially-oriented religious practice with superstition and folly. Sunni Muslims did not have a sacral priesthood, but Jessup found other sacred, “superstitious” social structures that he could attack: the *hadith* tradition of knowledge transmission about Muhammad and Islamic gender roles. His critique of the former equated Catholic and Islamic practices: “And yet modern Islam is moulded by the Hadeeth more than by the Koran, and a thousand customs and superstitions, passing as sound in doctrine in the Muslim world, rest entirely on Hadeeth, just as the unscriptural papal doctrines of Mariolatry, Immaculate Conception, Transubstantiation, Papal Infallibility, etc. rest entirely on Romish tradition.”⁶⁶ By observing that a sacred tradition relied on a human chain of transmission, Jessup identified Islamic scripture as “superstitious” because it crossed the same sort of material/spiritual boundaries that Catholic claims did. His assault on Islamic gender roles did not invoke Catholicism,

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 81. We should note that all of these except icon veneration are also Roman Catholic practices

⁶⁵ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 2], p. 425

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 698

but it displayed an analogous critique of sacralized social relationships. After noting a Koranic sanction for beating a disobedient wife, Jessup made this judgment about the place of woman in the Islamic world: “They have degraded woman and then scourge her for being degraded. They have kept her in ignorance, and then beat her for being ignorant.”⁶⁷ Hence, he argued that when Islam strictly structured familial relationships, it prevented the transmission of useful female knowledge and instead fostered the reproduction of ignorance. Jessup classed Islam as a faith opposed to knowledge, alongside Roman Catholicism and Eastern Christianity.

Fosdick offered a more nuanced perspective on “Eastern” religious practices. He did not assert that Islamic worship needed to coincide with ignorance. In fact, he praised the Dome of the Rock as the “most worshipful” religious building in Jerusalem-- “chaste and lovely, its mosaics mellowed by time, its proportions filling the eye with satisfaction, its atmosphere subdued and reverential, its memories unparalleled.”⁶⁸ But when he encountered “Eastern” religious practices which did not meet his personal standards for appropriate worship, he condemned them with the same tropes that Jessup did. In his survey of Jerusalem's holy sites, he declared that “the so-called Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which covers the traditional site of Golgotha and the empty tomb, is the scene of such sectarian bitterness, riot, and mummery that one is thankful to believe the location false.”⁶⁹ Hence, he dismissed ritualistic worship as empty, fraudulent pageantry. He also had contempt for the monks of St. Catherine's monastery, who “still try to keep up the old traditions, sustaining the long and ponderous rituals of the church, and showing with pride and apparent faith the relics of the site.” He dismissed the sacred objects they showed him as “mementos of what Dr. Robinson called 'mistaken piety,' 'credulous superstition,' and 'pious fraud.’”⁷⁰ Fosdick also invoked the rhetoric of superstition to discuss Islamic

⁶⁷ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 1], p. 28

⁶⁸ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, p. 118

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 19-20

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 60

practices. Here, he lapsed into an idiom that I call the “Victorian racist singular,” and ascribed superstitious traits to “the Arab,” who stood for his entire people: “The Arab, therefore, today as always, lives and moves and has his being among superhuman powers of which he stands in fear or on which he relies. Nothing is too difficult for him to believe; miracles are every-day occurrences.”⁷¹ Fosdick, like Jessup, used differences in religious practices to substantiate Orientalist discourses about a broader Arab backwardness. And, as with Jessup's, his critique of “superstition” touched domestic Others as well as Arabs. In “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” he identified his own religious position in opposition to superstition. He argued that modernism was an effort to integrate the “new knowledge” produced by science with their faith for the sake of “spiritual and intellectual integrity.”⁷² So, he identified his opponents, the fundamentalists, with hostility to the “new knowledge,” and hence with backwardness and superstition, which he also attached to Eastern faiths.

So, Jessup and Fosdick, religion could only be aligned with real knowledge instead of superstition or ignorance if it was unmediated by humans, without ritual, and vacant from material objects-- that is, sterilized and removed from the world. Otherwise, its practitioners remained backward people. For them, this held true in the US just as it did in the Levant. They linked a discourse which they readily engaged in at home to attack different sorts of others-- Roman Catholics for Jessup, Fundamentalists for Fosdick-- and wedded it to Orientalism, so they could more effectively critique the religious practices of both Levantines and Americans who they disliked. For these two men, triangulation made a modified version of Gil Anidjar's critique of secularism true: “Secularism is Orientalism. And Orientalism is [Protestant] Christianity.”⁷³

Jessup and Fosdick engaged with Orientalist discourses by romanticizing Arabs as well as

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 136

⁷² Harry Emerson Fosdick. “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” delivered in New York, 1927.

⁷³ Gil Anidjar. “Secularism.” *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 1, 2006. pp.52-77. p. 66

disparaging them. Both men participated in discursive “threesomes” with British soldier-cum-orientalists and tribes of “warlike” Arabs. The first occurred in the summer of 1860, when rising tensions and small-scale violence between Syria's Druze and Maronite Christian communities erupted into bloody warfare when the Kisrawani and Zahalani Maronites revolted against Sa'id Jumblatt, a Druze nobleman.⁷⁴ Jumblatt and his allies quickly gained the upper hand, and throughout the summer of 1860, attacked Maronite communities throughout Lebanon. Jessup wrote at length about these events, which he referred to as the “Massacre Summer.” The conflict disrupted his mission, destroyed several of the communities it sought to convert, and forced he and his fellow missionaries to flee to Beirut.⁷⁵ In his account of the war, he wrote at length about the Druze, who he offered a multifaceted characterization. On one, unsurprising, hand, Jessup depicted them as violent barbarians. In a description of a massacre at the former Maronite stronghold of Deir al-Qamr, he gave them bestial qualities: “Over went the Druses 'like bloodhounds into a sheepfold,' and began to hew in pieces the helpless men between the walls.”⁷⁶ Jessup also claimed that Bushir Bey Abu Nakad, a Druze leader, said that he “would lay the foundations of his house with Christian skulls.”⁷⁷

But even though Lebanon's Druze tribes were killing Christians, Jessup did not reduce them to monsters. Read his description of Sitt Naify, a Druze noblewoman and military leader: “a woman of great intellectual power, sternness, and duplicity, yet none could surpass her in apparent courtesy or hospitality.”⁷⁸ Jessup viewed the Druze as sneaky and violent, but also “courteous, hospitable, industrious, temperate, and brave.”⁷⁹ Even his description of the conflict praises their “perfect

⁷⁴ Fawaz, pp. 10-13, pp. 47-50 The Druze faith is a highly secretive and intensely heterodox offshoot of Shi'a Islam whose adherents are allowed to conceal their beliefs. The Maronites are a group of Eastern Christians who affiliated themselves to the Latin church during the Crusader period. In 1860, both groups lived in what we now call Lebanon and Syria.

⁷⁵ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 1], p. 186

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 187

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 194

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 178

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 157

discipline” in battle and their care not to harm women.⁸⁰ Jessup invoked the same characterization in the person of Ali Bey, a dying Druze nobleman who called the missionary to his deathbed to hear the New Testament. In this (probably exaggerated) episode, Ali Bey “listened like one hungering and thirsting” to Jessup's gospel reading, and asked “Is there pardon for a great sinner like me?” When Jessup returned in the morning to the sight of Ali Bey's funeral procession, he expressed his sureness that Reverend Calhoun, a missionary who knew the sheik well, “welcomed to glory this aged man of blood and war, ransomed through their common savior Jesus Christ.”⁸¹ Jessup credited the Druze with violence and savagery but also nobility and susceptibility to salvation.

These views were shaped by Jessup's interactions with Colonel Charles Henry Churchill, a British officer who lived in Lebanon for close to twenty years, sat in on Druze war councils, married a Maronite noblewoman, and once served as the British consul in Beirut.⁸² Jessup was already acquainted with Churchill when, during the Massacre Summer, he consulted with the British officer before fleeing Tarablus. Then, he wanted to ask the well-connected soldier for advice and information about the belligerents. Churchill continued to interpret the Druze for Jessup well after the conflict was over. The missionary proclaimed the Colonel's book *The Druzes and the Maronites* “the only correct published account of the struggle of 1860 and its political causes and results,” and cited it throughout his account of “The Massacre Summer.”⁸³ He borrowed Churchill's language and ideas to describe the war's horrors. The tale of Abu Nakad's hankering for Maronite skulls comes straight from Churchill's account, as do the lines comparing the Druzes to bloodhounds.⁸⁴ Jessup's account also reflects Churchill's characterization of the Druze. Consider Churchill's description of the Druze leader Sa'id

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 170-171

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 103

⁸² Ibid, p. 174

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 174-175

⁸⁴ Charles Henry Churchill. *The Druzes and the Maronites Under the Turkish Rule from 1840 to 1860*. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1862. p. 107, p. 197

Jumblatt: “Young and energetic, the Bey had already, during the late war, given proofs of bravery, and displayed the lurkings of a sanguinary ferocity,— qualities which strongly recommended him to the daring and savage nature of the Druzes.”⁸⁵ Jessup's portrayal is clearly drawn from the Colonel's. Churchill used his political power, close connections with the Druze, and deep knowledge of Lebanon's politics to help Jessup navigate a complex and frightening moment, and the missionary's narrative reflects the thoughts of the man who helped him to interpret it.

This discursive threesome did not just reproduce an individual British soldier-orientalist's thoughts. Churchill and Jessup's depictions of the Druze reflected a then-emerging British imperial discourse about “martial races” like the Sikhs of Punjab or the Gorkhas of Nepal, which was set in official policy in India following the Indian mutiny of 1857. According to British imperial officials, these peoples possessed enormous courage, virtue, and skill in battle, but without European intervention, lacked the capacity to direct those traits productively.⁸⁶ Thus, while a member of a martial race could appear in British imperial narratives as a brave soldier or a noble and worthy friend, he could also be a violent barbarian if he was not tempered by tight British discipline. This discourses emerged from close cooperation between British operatives and brown soldiers, much like Churchill's own intimate involvement with the Druze. Like British officers in India, Churchill cultivated powerful local allies who could help him advance an imperial project. (Indeed, Churchill published *The Druzes and the Maronites* to argue for more British intervention in the Ottoman Empire.)⁸⁷ Because Jessup's contact with the Druze was mediated by Churchill, his narrative of them retold a narrative that British imperialists were producing throughout the Empire.

Harry Emerson Fosdick also used the Druze to retell a version of this narrative. Although he did

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 180

⁸⁶ Heather Streets. *Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004. pp. 1-4, p. 73

⁸⁷ Charles Henry Churchill, p. 8

not encounter the Druze on his trip, he referenced them to enhance the romantic image of a different “warrior” tribe-- a group of Bedouin Arabs living in the Sinai whom he visited with the assistance of an American woman in Jerusalem who was an “adopted member” of their tribe. His description of these Arabs echoes the romanticized image of the warrior Arab that appears in both Jessup's narrative and his own sources. Fosdick stated that when he arrived in the Bedouins' camp, their acting leader “met us on his splendid steed; and from the time he put his horse at the disposal of the women, to carry them across a flooded stream into the camp, to the time he rode out in state to bid us godspeed, firing his pistols as he came, he was the ideal Arab host.” After describing the tribe's tents, its ownership of slaves, and the feast it set before him, the American found more warrior romance in the ways that the Bedouins entertained him. After the tribe's sheik performed “love songs, foray songs, and last of all, a ballad about the Druses,” “the whole tribe danced for us and the night ended with the mad, tumultuous sword dance, led by a woman with a gleaming blade, and fitted to stir up the fighting spirit of the men to such a raid as long centuries past had been launched from this very spot on Jericho.” All in all, Fosdick considered the Bedouins “a strange mix of Cain and Abel”-- exemplars of both violence and courtesy.⁸⁸

Fosdick's “ideal Arab” was a passionate man, a horseback-riding warrior equally comfortable with the scimitar and pistol, a slaveholder, a relic of a lost past, and an exceedingly gracious and generous host. This depiction reflects Fosdick's relationship with another British soldier-orientalist source. His words echo the language of T.E. Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert*, a condensed version of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* which Fosdick cited in his bibliography. In that volume, Lawrence essentialized and romanticized the Arabs who he helped to organize against the Ottoman Empire during the first World War. He depicted them as tough, noble warriors from a bygone age who had inflexible,

⁸⁸ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*. pp. 75-76

black-and-white minds and a staunch loyalty to abstract ideas. He believed that this limited their capacity for generation: “They were a limited, narrow-minded people, whose inert intellects lay fallow in incurious resignation... they could almost be said to have no art... Nor did they have great industries: they had no organizations of mind or body.”⁸⁹ This gave the Arab “a delight in pain, a cruelty which was more to him than goods.” But this nature, which suited Arabs to warfare and violence, also made them great and determined fighters for noble causes: “Arabs could be swung on an idea as on a cord; for the unpledged allegiance of their minds made them obedient servants. None of them would escape its bond until success had come, and with it responsibility and duty and engagements.”⁹⁰ Fosdick did not offer as much metaphysical speculation about the Arab subjects of his narrative, but he recognized a similar atavism, obedience to obligations, and capacity for violence in them. His textual trysts with Lawrence's work and Orientalist writings mediated his encounters with Arabs, and this *menage a trois* ultimately reproduced the British imperial discourse of the martial race.

Fosdick also imitated Lawrence, by making the Arab warriors he encountered the objects of a homoerotic gaze. When he stopped at a spring high on a crag in “the wilderness of En-Gedi,” he encountered a young Palestinian man who he immediately compared to King David. This was “a handsome, strapping, youthful Arab armed to the teeth.” Moved by this encounter, Fosdick declared that he “shall never think of David the fugitive again without reseeing that picturesque and sturdy Arab Youth who came in from the wilderness and laid aside his arms to drink and bathe with us in the fountain of En-Gedi.”⁹¹ In this vignette, Fosdick made a young, well-armed Arab man David with his imagination, and implicitly made himself Jonathan by fixing them with a homoerotic gaze, using their exotic and atemporal status to slip slightly outside the confines of early 20th century propriety. In this,

⁸⁹ T. E. Lawrence. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Oxford: Private edition, 1922. Location 226 (Kindle Edition).

⁹⁰ Ibid, Location 290.

⁹¹ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, pp. 103-105

he follows Lawrence, who described intimate relations between the men who campaigned with him with barely concealed longing: “Our youths began indifferently to slake one another's few needs in their own clean bodies-- a cold convenience that, by comparison [to paying disease-ridden prostitutes], seemed sexless and even pure. Later, some began to justify this sterile process, and swore that friends quivering together in the yielding sand with intimate hot limbs in supreme embrace, found hidden in the darkness a sensual coefficient of the mental passion which was welding our souls and spirits in one flaming effort.”⁹² Here, the discursive threesome between American traveler, British soldier, and Arab warrior takes on an additional frisson. Lawrence, by providing Fosdick's discursive introduction to warrior Arabs, opened the American's way to illicit, and sexualized his contact with Arab men.

Jessup and Fosdick discussed European empires directly as well as incorporating and referencing their discourses. Again, this interaction has a triangular form. The American observers, one vertex of the triangle, commented on the relationships between Europeans and Arabs, the other two vertices. Of course, the Americans' relationships with the other parties affected their narrative. Jessup depended deeply on the British Empire and its agents. In his narrative, he praised them and highlighted ways that he offered them material support. He suggested that Western visitors who wanted to make a safe journey to the Arabian Peninsula should approach from the east and south, which the British dominated from Oman and Aden, because “where the spirit of British rule prevails, there is liberty.”⁹³ He also praised Britain's colonial administration in Egypt, which he described as “just and successful.”⁹⁴ His mission's schools materially supported the latter effort by training the “bright, intelligent young Syrians, well up in English, and with a sound moral training” that the British wanted to help administer local affairs. Jessup claimed that “that class largely goes to Egypt.”⁹⁵

⁹² Lawrence, Location 100.

⁹³ Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* [vol 2], p. 645

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 658

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 589

In addition to praising Britain's colonial enterprises and emphasizing his material role in supporting them, Jessup used his narrative to highlight his ties with British missionaries. He attended a “conference of [Protestant] Christian workers” in Brummana, Mount Lebanon, with missionaries from five countries and eleven denominations. The largest national group attending, by a significant margin, were the British, who had 76 representatives to the Americans' 57. Jessup found collaboration with British representatives positive, finding the conference “a blessing and a means of spiritual uplift to all.”⁹⁶ On another occasion, he “rejoice[d] in the cooperation of the managers and teachers of the British Syrian mission, the Moslem and Druze Girls' Schools of Miss Jessie Taylor, the Church of Scotland mission of Doctor Mackie... and the British and American Friends' Society in Brummana and Ramallah.”⁹⁷ Jessup worked to maintain the image of a common Anglo-American Protestant quest to spread the faith in Syria. He declared that “Sectarian discord has no right to enter missionary ground... Mohammedans and heathens care nothing and understand little of our peculiar differences and are alienated and repelled by them.” He even rejected the introduction of his own denomination's name into Arabic, preferring that all Protestant churches, whether they fell under Anglican episcopal direction or Presbyterian-style self-government, be called “enjeeliyeen, or Gospel Evangelical.”⁹⁸ Jessup claimed to support this identification because it made spreading the faith simpler and easier, but he like also wanted to cement his common cause with British Protestants and give them strong reasons to continue protecting and supporting him. Jessup did not take his solidarity with Britain for granted, and actively fought what he viewed as threats to the Empire's “evangelical” religious integrity, and thus, to its solidarity with his personal mission. One such challenge was Anglo-Catholicism, a shift within the Church of England toward more ritualistic worship, which began with the Oxford Movement of the

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp. 651-652

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 475

⁹⁸ Ibid, pp. 474-475

1830s. Jessup confronted Anglo-Catholicism head-on when the Church of England appointed G.P. Popham Blyth, a high-church Anglican, to the Bishopric of Jerusalem. The bishop immediately alienated the American Presbyterian missionaries by stating that like Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox Christians, they needed to ask for a special dispensation before taking communion at a service where he officiated. This declaration implicitly broke the united front between the Anglicans and other Protestants working within the Ottoman Empire. Jessup responded by proclaiming high church Anglicans enemies of true Christianity in the Near East. He stated that “It is a special delight of these high Anglicans to hobnob with the Greek monks, bishops, and priests and do all in their power to antagonize the Syrian evangelical churches. Any attempt on the part of Maronites, Catholics, or Greeks to break away from the Mariolatry and picture worship of their old churches and from the grinding tyranny of their priests, as our fathers did in the time of the Reformation, will be frowned upon by the Anglican clergy and every possible means will be used to drive them back into spiritual bondage.”⁹⁹ Jessup thus tried to delegitimize Anglican officials who threatened his collaboration with the Church of England by combining secularism, Protestantism, and Orientalism, and thus declaring them neither real Westerners nor real Protestants. Another religious threat that Jessup reacted to was William (later Abdullah) Quilliam, a Liverpoolian merchant who converted to Islam while visiting Morocco, who founded Britain's first mosque and Islamic newspaper. Jessup wrote a letter to the new-made Muslim, which mocked him for having no real understanding of how to practice Islam and suggested the “right” way to go about it (learning Arabic from a learned Muslim, reading the Qur'an, building a proper mosque with a proper minaret, having the call to prayer shouted in Arabic, veiling his daughters, etc).¹⁰⁰ Of course, Jessup's real intent was to ridicule Quilliam and uphold Britain's religious order, thus cementing his own ties with the Empire.

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 573-574

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 577-579

Jessup's discursive identification with the British Empire boosterism was not merely a product of a cultural identification with his fellow Anglo-Saxons, but a reflection of the exigencies of his mission and the politics of his region. The way that Jessup wrote about Germany, Britain's greatest geopolitical rival, after the Germans displaced the British as the most influential power in the Ottoman Empire, confirms this. When Kaiser Wilhelm II visited Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Damascus in 1898, the American mission's press issued a biography of Martin Luther and an Arabic translation of Luther's theses in honor of the Lutheran emperor's visit. He praised the Emperor's piety, remarking "Religiously, his simple gospel sermon in the German church in Jerusalem was a truly missionary work. It was copied into all the Arabic journals and read all over the land. In his outspoken, evangelical sentiments, he witnessed for the great truths for which Martin Luther contended."¹⁰¹ This praiseworthy prince represented Jessup's great hope for the future: "And who knows but that the emperor has come to his throne for some great and good end in this empire?... We do not put our trust in princes, but our God and King can use them as His own servants to accomplish His will on Earth."¹⁰² Jessup showed caution about the Kaiser, but also demonstrated his willingness to embrace and support any ruler who could help to protect and promote his mission. Jessup's material relationships with European empires shaped the way he perceived them.

Fosdick offered a more ambivalent view of European power in the Levant. On one hand, he deplored the long history of violence that Europeans had committed against Arabs. He had particularly harsh words for the Crusades. He described their ultimate result as a "selfish, jealous, murderous orgy," the aftermath of the 1099 conquest of Jerusalem as a "promiscuous massacre," and their place in history as "one of the most appalling portions of humanity's record."¹⁰³ He also argued that for the Muslims of

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 653-654

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 663

¹⁰³ Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*. pp. 254-256

the Levant, the crusades and their bloody violence symbolized the nature of Christianity. Here, he briefly abandoned orientalism to suggest that just as Christians conceptualized Muslims as violent warriors, Muslims viewed Christians as bloodthirsty militarists. Fosdick argued that this militarism was not just a memory. It was represented in his time by “French guns bombarding Damascus and British airplanes menacing Arab villages.”¹⁰⁴ These are not Fosdick's only negative remarks about the European colonization of the Levant. He placed Horatio Allenby, the British general who captured Jerusalem during the First World War, alongside Napoleon in a long list of violent conquerors who had swept over Palestine.¹⁰⁵ He also singled out the French administration of Syria with one of the harshest critiques a Christian man could offer:

“Syria under French rule is a sad sight; no more disastrous travesty of a mandate from the League of Nations can easily be imagined. Especially in Caesarea Philippi, where our Lord explained to his disciples the necessity of his Cross, it was tragic to see “Christians” still trying to extend “Christendom” by fire and sword.”¹⁰⁶

But although Fosdick articulated harsh critiques of both French and British empire, he also offered a few favorable references to British rule. He bewailed Palestine's environmental devastation and infertility, which he ascribed to Ottoman mismanagement, but expressed hope that the British and the Zionists who they invited to the Holy Land would make the land flourish again.¹⁰⁷ When he speculated about the future of Jewish migration to Israel, he argued that moderate Zionism under British direction and supervision would offer the mandate both peace and prosperity.¹⁰⁸ And, most tellingly, as I mentioned above he suggested that visitors to Jerusalem skip the Church of the Holy

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 258-259

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 32

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 213

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 9

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 293

Sepulchre and go instead to the “Garden Tomb” of the British general Charles “Chinese” Gordon.¹⁰⁹ After spending years serving the British military mission to China by leading the Ever Victorious Army in its struggle to quash the Taiping Rebellion, Gordon led a British army against the Mahdi, a Sudanese rebel who claimed the mantle of Sunni Islam's apocalyptic redeemer and took up the sword against his land's British overlords. The expedition suffered a crushing defeat. The Battle of Khartoum drove back the expedition and took Gordon's life.¹¹⁰ The Mahdi's revolt was only crushed by a second expedition which cut down the rebels with Maxim guns at Omdurman.¹¹¹ In British popular discourse, Gordon became a martyr for the cause of British colonial empire.¹¹² By suggesting that visitors seeking Christ's tomb visit Gordon's, Fosdick identified Gordon with Christ. Hence, he implicitly identified Christ's redemption of the world with the British “civilizing mission” which Rudyard Kipling eloquently summarized in “The White Man's Burden.” Because Gordon's gravesite was “peaceful and reverent,” it provided a space for Fosdick's spiritual practice which the traditional Church of the Holy Sepulchre could not. The minister could only access Palestine spiritually because of the British Empire. That dependence rendered him silent about Gordon's imperial role, beautifully illustrating the way that the Empire shaped Fosdick's views even though he rejected its militaristic rule.

The ways that Henry Jessup and Harry Fosdick's narratives engage with European empires and the bodies of knowledge that they produced show us that their visits to the Middle East were characterized by triangular rather than binary contact. The reasons why they needed imperial interpretive assistance were hardly unique to them. Hence, we should seek triangulation and investigate its consequences in every American encounter with others' imperial spaces. Paul Kramer's work on the American administration in the Phillipines's inheritance of imperial racial categories from Spain and

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 249

¹¹⁰ Winston Churchill. *The River War*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1902. pp. 45-60

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 279

¹¹² This perception is reflected in Winston Churchill's book. The future prime minister described him as “a type without comparison in modern times and few likenesses in history.” p. 14

Mark Bradley's discussion American travelers' adoption of French colonial language in Vietnam are important steps forward in this direction. We can also use triangulation to analyze encounters not involving Americans. We should use the concept to investigate merchant and missionary encounters, the lives of diasporic populations, and inter-imperial competition across time, space, and culture.

We must also remember triangulation when we examine the long afterlives of Americans' journeys into imperial spaces. When America's imperial reach expanded, its officials carried knowledge that they gained through triangular encounters into their new positions of power. Sometimes, this inheritance was direct. The ABCFM mission in Beirut's Syrian Protestant College became the American University in Beirut, which taught many servants of the American security apparatus Arabic language skills. Harry Emerson Fosdick joined the American Friends of the Middle East, a CIA front organization led by Kermit Roosevelt. Other parts of this inheritance were more diffuse. Americans consumed imperial knowledge passed to them through school books and stereotypes. But through the analytic of the triangular encounter (or imperial threesome), we can historicize the great American inheritance of Orientalism described by Edward Said in his book of the same name and nail the jelly of discursive transmission to the wall of temporality.

Finally, we need to examine how discourses transmitted through triangulation affected American imperial practice during the era of the European empires. For example, in *The Rough Riders*, Theodore Roosevelt, who, as a boy, met Henry Jessup in Syria, described American Indians much the missionary described the Druze. For him, the Apaches, who, in the late 19th century, were only just falling under American control, were “terrible Indians of the waterless Southwest mountains-- the most bloodthirsty and wild of all the red men in America, and the most formidable in their own dreadful style of warfare.”¹¹³ But those who served with him, like “Pollock, a full-blooded Pawnee” were exceptionally

¹¹³ Theodore Roosevelt. *The Rough Riders*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902 pp. 32-33

courageous and noble soldiers. According to Roosevelt, Pollock was “one of the gamest fighters and best soldiers in the regiment.”¹¹⁴ He imagined American Indians as people predisposed to both brute violence and warlike nobility. Charles Churchill and T.E. Lawrence spoke much the same way about the Arabs who fought alongside them. In the writings of Roosevelt, one of the greatest ideologues of American Empire, we find the echoes of British Imperial discourses. Americans were not exceptional imperialists, but carriers of a venerable tradition, which they learned from its previous master and adapted to their own ideas and historical circumstances. Like Fosdick, who hated empire but found spiritual solace at an arch-imperialist's tomb, they depended on Europeans to make much of the world accessible, legible, and fulfilling. We must remember that these encounters touched, changed, and shaped them.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 28-29

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