

Martin Tamcke, ed., *Zur Situation der Christen in der Türkei und in Syrien: Exemplarische Einsichten* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013). Pp. 267; €48.00.

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With the recent developments for the situation of Christians in Turkey due to the different policy of Tayyip Erdoğan's government and the war in Syria, the appearance of a new volume focusing on Christians in both countries is to be welcomed. Only a few scholarly works have appeared on the more inclusive stance of the current Turkish government towards its citizens who are non-Muslim or not ethnically Turkish, including the discussion of the notion of *Türkiyeli* ("person from Turkey") as opposed to the traditional *Türk*, and the same is true for the situation of Christians in Syria since the beginning of the revolution. While the present volume does address both issues, as a whole it falls short of the expectations raised by its title. The volume does nevertheless include several interesting papers.

The book is based on papers presented at a summer school in Istanbul, organized by the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, and those from a conference of the Austrian organization Pro Oriente, events held simultaneously in 2010. A smaller part of the volume is the fruit of a conference about Syria at the Evangelische Akademie in Hofgeismar (Germany) in 2012, a year after the start of the Syrian uprisings. The volume is divided into three parts: one about the situation in Turkey, another about interaction between Turkey and Europe, and the last about Syria. While the title and the preface are in German, the majority of the contributions are in English.

Only eight of the seventeen contributions are full-length academic essays, while the rest are short papers, most of which have a political message. The first part, "Zur Situation in der Türkei," includes four contributions by ecclesial figures, all of whom presently reside in Turkey. The Greek Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, addressed the Pro Oriente conference about what he calls the "Byzantine Model" of synthesis in the relationship between church and state, and compares it to later models prevalent in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, stressing the importance of harmony between religion and politics. Three further contributions, by Franz Kangler,

Claudio Monge, and Laki Vingas, discuss the history and current situation of Turkey's Christians, the limitations of religious freedom that current Turkish nationalism imposes, and the situation of Christian and Jewish foundations in Turkey, especially their lack of recognition by the state. These four contributions criticize the situation in Turkey, but are not cynical: the authors show great respect for the country and its people, and they express their hope that Turkey will find a way to grant full religious freedom that will include the recognition of religious organizations. They express the wish for Turkey's inclusion in the European Union and a redefinition of Turkish nationalism.

Two scholarly papers complete the first part. Julia Kutzenberger analyzes how the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk in his book *Istanbul* uses the concept of *hüzün* (normally translated as "melancholy") to describe the alienation felt by the people of Istanbul as a result of the modernization (or Westernization) policy following the fall of the Ottoman Empire. While Kutzenberger is not the first to study this novel, nor the only one who has explored the use of *hüzün* in Pamuk's work, she offers a very accessible and convincing account of the way that Pamuk copes with Istanbul's post-Ottoman position between East and West. Kai Merten, in a very different contribution, tries to answer the question of whether there was a Nestorian millet in the Ottoman Empire by giving a valuable overview of the existing evidence in addition to presenting new material from Ottoman archives. He concludes that the few texts that speak of a Nestorian millet probably use this word in its general meaning of "nation," without its juridical value.

The second part of the book, "Mit Europa in Interaktion," has a similar structure. This part begins with four short contributions, followed by two long academic essays. Martin Tamcke opens this section with an overview of the activities of the German Oriental Mission in the Tur 'Abdin region in Southeastern Turkey. The next two contributions, written by the theologian Markus Meckel, a former member of the German parliament, are speeches held for the memorial of the Armenian genocide, one in the German Bundestag and the other for the Armenian Congregation in Berlin. Meckel is critical of Turkey, but recognizes the steps made in past decades and is optimistic about a full recognition of the Armenian genocide in the future. Of equal importance for him is Germany's responsibility: Germany was aware of the events and engaged in

military collaboration with the Ottoman Empire. Meckel does not mention the Greek and Syriac communities in this respect. Meckel's essays are followed by another short contribution by Tamcke, the printed version of a lecture held for Turkish students at the Pro Oriente conference. After explaining the relationship between state and religion in Germany, Tamcke directly addresses his audience by asking them how they themselves cope with questions of human rights, tolerance, and religious freedom. He even states that Muslims in Turkey are responsible for making a stance for their "Christian brothers." While he expects the same from Germany's Christians concerning Muslims, his words are rather frank, especially after the discussion (and praise) of Germany's system, and it would be interesting to know how his Turkish audience responded.

In the first of the two longer papers, Monika Bosbach discusses the coverage of the 2007 assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in German, Dutch, and French newspapers. While interesting and useful, the author's choice to focus on a limited number of newspaper articles does not allow for a comprehensive view on the event's representation in European media. Daniela-Oana Ioan's contribution "Borders in Literature" concerns Kurban Said's novel *Das Mädchen vom Goldenen Horn* and highlights a number of differences between East and West as portrayed through the experiences of the novel's characters, who are Muslims living in the Europe of the "golden twenties."

The third part, "Syrien," is in fact about Syria and Lebanon. It opens with a very general historical introduction to Christianity in Syria by Martin Tamcke, which offers an overview of the different denominations. This is followed by four longer papers. Erik Mohns discusses the apparent absence of Christians in the Syrian protest movement. In a wonderful way he presents the positions of the clergy, describes how the Syrian government used the minorities against the insurgents after the start of the revolution (by advocating the widespread idea that the government is the best protection against Islamism), and notes the existence of Christians who do participate in the opposition movement. Mohns bases this argument on a great number of recent sources in Arabic and other languages, including several interviews. In the next entry, Najib G. Awad asserts that Arab Protestant and Catholic Christians are sometimes—because of the Western origins of their faith—suspected of having

an identity that is more Western than Arab. He discusses (with disapproval) a book in which the Syrian author 'Adnān 'Uwayyid attacks Western missionaries for having established churches only for the sake of the political and economic goals of the colonial powers. While aspects of Awad's criticism can be challenged, he offers an interesting insight into recent discourse in the Arab world concerning the status of Christians with regard to Arab identity. The next essay, by Katie Tanner, concerns the Joint Christian Committee for Social Service in Lebanon, a Christian organization serving the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, where she worked as a volunteer as part of her fieldwork. The volume is concluded by a profound study of the practice of hymen-repair in Lebanon by Verena E. Kozmann. Based on interviews conducted with seven Lebanese gynaecologists during three months of fieldwork, Kozmann not only discusses the medical operation as it is practiced in Lebanon, but also presents the gynaecologists' perspective on the social and moral questions that play a role in their decision to offer the operation.

With such a variety of topics, it is difficult to assess the volume as a whole. As a report on the summer school in Istanbul and the Pro Oriente conference, the short contributions at the beginning of the first two parts provide a useful impression of the general attitude that must have been prevalent among the participants: a critical view of Turkey's policy towards Christians but great respect for the country, the expectation that the situation will improve, and the wish that Turkey's application for inclusion into the European Union will succeed. But the inclusion of a number of papers that barely touch on this topic, and the choice to include also papers from yet another conference, make the volume largely incoherent. As a result, the book does not answer to the expectations raised by its title. Moreover, several articles could have been further revised—two of them clearly give the impression that they are unrevised master's theses. The strength of the volume lies in the value of several individual papers, especially the ones by Merten, Mohns, and Kozmann.

As is usually the case with Harrassowitz Verlag, in terms of appearance the volume is very well produced and has a simple but elegant layout. The fact that the volume's title is German and not English (despite the dominance of English within the book), as well as the lack of online access to the book, results in a poor

accessibility and visibility of the individual contributions. Because of the lack of coherence between the volume's pieces, it is a legitimate question whether some papers would not better have been published as articles in appropriate journals. The shorter contributions could then have been summarized in separate conference reports.