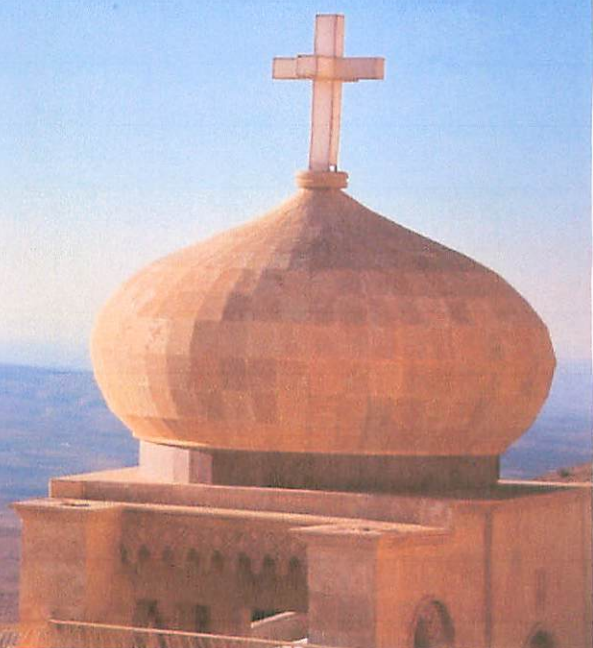


CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST

*THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A
TRADITION?*

1ST NOVEMBER 2014

9.30am - 6pm



Venue: Mathematical Institute
Andrew Wiles Building
Radcliffe Observatory Quarter
Woodstock Road
Oxford, OX2 6GG

Fee for the day (payable by cheque): £20
Includes lunch, tea & coffee
Concessions on application.

**Registration deadline: Friday 24th
October 2014**

To request a registration form please
email Charlotte Redman:

lascasas@bfriars.ox.ac.uk

*Conference hosted by the Las Casas Institute,
Blackfriars Hall, Oxford*

Presentations & Speakers

Welcome - Martin Ganeri, O.P, Vice regent,
Blackfriars Hall, Oxford

**Christianity in the Middle East - an
introduction and Overview** - Anthony
O'Mahony, Heythrop College, University of London

**Christianity in Iraq: present situation and
future challenge** - Professor Herman Teule,
University of Louvain and Director, Institute for
Eastern Christianity

**Coptic Christianity in Egypt today:
reconfiguring power, religion and politics-**
Dr Mariz Tadros, University of Sussex

**Armenian Christianity in the Middle East -
modern history and contemporary
challenges** - Dr Hratch Tchilingirian, Armenian
Studies, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford

**Erasing the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the
Greek Orthodox Christians in Turkey:
Comparative lessons for Middle Eastern
Christianity from the Turkish model of
Religious Cleansing** - Prof Elizabeth
Prodromou, Tufts University, Former
Commissioner and vice-chair US Commission on
International Religious freedom 2004-2012 &
currently US Secretary of State Working Group on
Religion and Foreign Policy



Programme

‘Christianity in the Contemporary Middle East: the Life and Death of a Tradition?’

**1st November 2014, 9.30am-5.30 pm, The Andrew Wiles Building,
Mathematical Institute, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6GG**

**In association with the Las Casas Institute, Blackfriars Hall, and the
Centre for Eastern Christianity, Heythrop College, University of London
and Centre for Christianity and interreligious Dialogue, Heythrop College,
University of London**

9.00 Registration

9.30 - 9.45 *Welcome* - Martin Ganeri, O.P, Vice Regent, Blackfriars Hall, Oxford

9.45-10.30 *Christianity in the Middle East - an Introduction and Overview* – Anthony O’Mahony, Heythrop College, University of London

10.30- 11.30 *The Experience of Christians in Turkey: A Cautionary Case and Comparative Lessons for the Middle East* - Prof Elizabeth Prodromou, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

11.30 - 12.00 Break

12.00 - 13.00 *Armenian Christianity in the Middle East - modern history and contemporary challenges* - Dr Hratch Tchilingirian, Armenian Studies, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.00 *Christianity in Iraq: present situation and future challenge* - Professor Herman Teule, University of Louvain and Director, Institute for Eastern Christianity

15.00-15.30 Break

15.30 -16.30 *Coptic Christianity in Egypt today: reconfiguring power, religion*

and politics - Dr Mariz Tadros, University of Sussex

16.30-16.45 Response Timothy Radcliffe OP, Director of the Las Casas Institute

16.45-17.15 Panel Session with all Speakers

17.30 Drinks Reception - The Aula, Blackfriars Hall, St Giles Street,
OX1 3LY

18.15 Mass Blackfriars

Professor Elizabeth Prodromou, The Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Tufts University.

Abstract

The Experience of Christians in Turkey:

A Cautionary Case and Comparative Lessons for the Middle East

The decline of Christian populations in their ancient lands of origins has been a consistent feature of the political and religious demography of the Middle East since the region was mapped into Westphalian-style states beginning in the early 20th century. Significantly, social science scholarship has mostly ignored the decline of Christianity in the Middle East, until the drastic deterioration in the regional security environment leading to a largescale, comprehensive cleansing of Christians from the region. The belated scholar-practitioner turn to analyze the causes for Christian decline and the endangerment of Christian communities in cases such as Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, has neglected the case of Turkey, despite the longitudinal data pointing to Turkey as a cautionary tale for comparative developments in the region. This paper narrates and analyzes the experience of Christians in Turkey as a case rich with comparative lessons for the sustainability of Christians in the Middle East, focusing on the logics of secular and religious nationalism and the application of state policies, all of which have combined to put Christianity at risk of survival in Turkey.

Hratch Tchilingirian: "Armenian Christianity in the Middle East: modern history and contemporary challenges"

Armenian communities are scattered over the Middle East, mainly in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, UAE, Turkey and Iran. With population estimates at less than 300,000 today, the Armenians are a minority within the wide spectrum of confessional, religious and ethnic non-Muslim communities living in these countries. The presentation will first give a brief historical background about the Armenian presence in the Middle East that dates back to ancient times and then discuss the current situation of Armenian Christianity in the region, the overwhelming majority of which are third and fourth generation descendants of the survivors of the Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. A host of critical internal and external issues face the Armenians and the Christians in the Middle East. Internally, questions of integration, assimilation, preservation and maintenance of community institutions are among the most hotly debated issues. Externally, the existing security situation and on-going conflicts, as well as the escalation of religious fundamentalism in recent years add to the urgency of the current reality on the ground. These processes are exacerbated by declining socio-economic conditions which have caused mass migration of Christians in general and the Armenians in particular.

Suggested reading list:

Hratch Tchilingirian (2014) "The Armenian Apostolic Church" in Lucian Leustean (ed.) *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge.

Hratch Tchilingirian (forthcoming) "Minority within Minorities: Armenian communities in the Middle East between imposed realities and uncertain future" in Erica C.D. Hunter (ed.) *Religious Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa: A Complete Survey of Non-Muslim Communities*. I. B. Tauris

Hratch Tchilingirian (2008) *The Armenian Church. A Brief Introduction*. Burbank, CA. (see *online or download from this link: <http://oxbridgepartners.com/hratch/index.php/publications/monograph>)

Herman Teule (Catholic University Louvain; Radboud University Nijmegen).

Introduction.

1. The ecclesiastical landscape.

Christianity in Iraq is much divided. To understand one's place in the Iraqi society, it is important to know more about one's ecclesiastical or denominational affiliation, which to a certain extent determines one's identity.

Hence a brief survey of the different churches [Assyrian Church of the East (Nestorian) and a recent split-off: the Ancient Church of the East, the Chaldean Church, the Syrian-Orthodox and Syrian Catholic Churches, the Armenian-Orthodox and the Armenian Catholics and the Latins, not to mention the different protestant Churches) and their relationship to the Iraqi State. It is clear that the existence of so many churches for 300.000 faithful (on a total population of 30 million) considerably weakens the position of the Christians.

2. The political landscape.

In order to overcome these traditional divisions, some Christian leaders, especially in Northern Iraq, developed the idea of a new ethnic identity shared by the majority of the Christians. This created however new divisions: are Iraqi Christians, (ethnically) Chaldeans, Assyrians, Syrians?

The discussion about ethnic identity led to the creation of different Christian political parties and the participation of Christian leaders in different Kurdish or federal parties.

The elections of April 2014.

3. The lack of safety in central Iraq and a relative stable situation in the KRG-region explain that some Christian politicians see their future more in Kurdistan than in Central Iraq. Discussion of a number of arguments pro and contra.

4. The idea of being an ethnic minority (along with the Arabs and the Kurds) made some Christian dream of an autonomous province or governorate in the Plain of Nineveh. Different interpretations of what this autonomy should mean and the relationship with the Federal State or the KRG.

5. The reaction of the church leaders to an ethnic self-definition. The position of the Chaldean Patriarch: it is only by assuming an Arab identity that Christians can reach out to the Iraqi Society and develop interaction with their Muslim neighbours. An ethnic self-definition may lead to the creation of an ethnic ghetto.

6. The recent developments: the creation of an Islamic Caliphate, the ethnic cleansing of the Nineveh region. The thousands of IDPs and the call of the Diaspora.

Some recent publications:

Les Assyro-chaldéens, Turnhout: Brepols, 2008 (updated Arabic translation in 2012)

'Christians in Iraq. An analysis of some recent political developments' in *Der Islam* 88.1 (2011), pp. 179-199.

'Les chrétiens d'Irak. Quelle place dans quelle société?' In *Perspectives et Réflexions* 1 (2013), pp. 5-19.

Copts of Egypt: reconfiguring power, religion and politics

Dr Mariz Tadros, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK m.tadros@ids.ac.uk

This study of the Copts of Egypt, the largest religious minority in the Middle East, focuses on their shifting status and positioning against the backdrop of a volatile and tumultuous national and regional context. It problematizes academic studies of minorities that objectivize and homogenise Copts and proposes, as an alternative, an approach premised on "seeing through the multiple lens of Coptic citizens". It argues that this is critical for understanding the political choices and constraints that influence the agency and positioning of Copts in broader politics and society. Some of the key questions that the study engages with include:

- *How have different regime types and ideologies influenced the position of Christians historically and in the present context?*
- *To what extent did Copts participate in the revolts of 2011 and 2013 and why?*
- *Do Christian minorities choose authoritarianism over democracy?*
- *Are Christians' opposition to Islamist regimes premised on fear or lived experience?*
- *What structural-agential factors most influence the positioning of different Coptic constituents and actors?*
- *What are some of the possible scenarios for the future?*

Selected readings by author related to topic:

On contemporary relations between Coptic church-citizens-society-state: **Copts at the Crossroads: The challenges of building an inclusive democracy in contemporary Egypt**, American University in Cairo Press and Oxford University Press of America, 2013

On Islamist governance models and political thought on religious pluralism : **Chapters 5 and 6 of The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt: Democracy redefined or confined?** Routledge Press, UK. 2012

On Copts under the Muslim Brotherhood rule:

Copts under Morsi: defiance in the face of denial, **Middle East Report**, Issue 267, summer edition
<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer267/copts-under-mursi>

Tearing Egypt apart, **Opendemocracy** 31st January 2013
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/mariz-tadros/tearing-egypt-apart>

The cross and the crescent in post-Mubarak Egypt IN **The Journey to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt**, by Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing (eds). Verso, 2012.

On Copts since June 2013:

Egypt' scorched earth, **Opendemocracy**, 18th August, 2013,
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/mariz-tadros/egypt%E2%80%99s-scorched-earth>

The backlash after the demise: The Brothers and the Copts, 12th August, 2013, **Middle East Institute**,
<http://www.mei.edu/content/backlash-after-demise-brothers-and-copts>

Contributors:

Herman Teule, Professor Emeritus Eastern Christianity at the Radboud University Nijmegen and the Catholic University of Louvain, Head of the institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Nijmegen, the Netherlands. He is an international and leading scholar on Eastern Christianity, especially the Syriac tradition.

Teule's research interests, as witnessed by numerous publications, focus on the interaction between Eastern and Oriental Christianity and the world of Islam, especially in the period of the so-called Syriac Renaissance (13th century) for example 'The Transmission of Islamic Culture to the World of Syriac Christianity. Barhebraeus' Translation of Avicenna's Kitab al-Isharat wa l-tanbihat. First soundings, in J. van Ginkel, H. Murre (eds), *Redefining Christian identity. Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Leuven: Peeters, 2005, 167-184; 'Paul of Antioch's Attitude towards the Jews and the Muslims. His letter to the Nations and the Jews', in B. Roggema, M. Poorthuis, P. V (eds.), *The Three Rings. Textual Studies in the Historical Dialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Leuven: Peeters, 2005, 91-110; 'A Theological Treatise by Isho'yahb bar Malkon preserved in the theological compendium asfâr al-asrâr', in: *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, Vol. 58, 2006, pp. 234-252; 'A Christian-Muslim Discussion. The Importance of Bodily and Spiritual Purity. A Chapter from Memro II of Barhebraeus 'Ethicon'' in W. van Bakkum, *Syriac Polemics, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 193-203; 'Christian Spiritual Sources in the Ethicon of Barhebraeus', in: *Journal of eastern Christian Studies* Vol. 60, 2008, pp. 242-264; 'Jacob of Edessa and the West Syrian Canonical Tradition' in B. ter Haar Romeny, *Jacob of Edessa and the Culture of his Day* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 202-222; 'La vie dans le monde: perspectives chrétiennes et influences musulmanes. Une étude de memro II de l'Ethicon de Grégoire Abu l-Faraj Barhebraeus', in: *Parole de l'Orient*, Vol. 33, pp. 115-128.

He closely follows the present-day situation of the Christians in Turkey, Syria and Iraq, reflecting on the ways Christians seek to preserve their presence in their countries of origin and how Western Christians can assist them. He is the author of *Les Assyro-chaldéens, chrétiens de Turquie, d'Irak et d'Iran* (Turnhout, 2008). He published many articles on Christianity in Iraq and the wider Middle East including: 'Middle Eastern Christians and Migration: Some Reflections', *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, Vol. 54, 2002, pp. 1-23., 'Türkei' & Syrien', in: *Kirche und Katholizismus seit 1945: Vol. 7: Naher Osten und Nordafrika*, Ed) Harald Suermann, Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010, pp. 35-52.; pp. 87-104; 'La situation des chrétiens d'Irak à la lumière des résolutions du Synode romain pour le Moyen-Orient', in: *Mélanges de sciences religieuses*, 2011, vol. 68, no 3; 'Christians in Iraq An analysis of some recent political developments', in: *Der Islam*, Volume 88, 2012, pp. 179-198. His study on Christianity in the Middle East in the recently published *Oxford Handbook of Asian Christianity* (2014).

He is a *consultor* to the Vatican for the Congregation for Oriental Churches (Rome); a member of the Austrian foundation Pro Oriente which is dedicated to ecumenical relations between Eastern and Western Christianity.

Hratch Tchilingirian is a faculty member of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford. He is a leading scholar on the modern history and contemporary situation of the Armenian Church. From 2002 to March 2012 he taught and held various positions at the Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, and was co-founder of the Eurasia Research Centre in Cambridge. Dr Tchilingirian has published extensively and lectures on minorities in contemporary Middle East; the Armenian Church; Diaspora; Turkish-Armenian relations; and the Caucasus.

His research interests include sociology of religion, identity politics, diaspora studies, and transnationalism. Publications: "Il catholicos e le sedi gerarchiche della Chiesa Apostolica Armenia: storia, problem e prospettive" in L. Vaccaro & B. L. Zekiyan (eds.), *Storia religiosa dell'Armenia* (Milano: ITL, Centro Ambrosiano, 2010): pp. 189-212; "Modern 'Believers' in an Ancient Church" in: M. Bruneau, I. Hassiotis, M. Hovanessian & C. Mouradian (éds), *Arméniens et Grecs en diaspora: approches comparatives*, Athenes: E.F.A., 2007, pp. 401-508; "In Search of Relevance: Church and Religion in Armenian since Independence", in: B. Balci & R. Motika, (eds.), *Religion et politique dans le Caucase post-Sovietique*. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2007, pp. 277-311; "The Catholicos and the Hierarchical Sees of the Armenian Church" in Anthony O'Mahony, (ed.), *Eastern Christianity. Studies in Modern History, Religion and Politics*. London: Melisende, 2004, 140-159. Forthcoming: "The Armenian Apostolic Church" in: *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, London, Routledge, 2014; "Minority within Minorities: Armenian communities in the Middle East between imposed realities and uncertain future" in Erica C.D. Hunter (ed.) *Religious Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa: A Complete Survey of Non-Muslim Communities*. I. B. Tauris, forthcoming.

Mariz Tadros is a fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, UK where she serves as convenor of the Power and Popular Politics cluster. She is a leading scholar on contemporary Coptic Christianity, religion and politics in Egypt. She is the editor of the recently released book: *Women in Politics* (London, Zed Press, 2014) and the author of two monographs: *Copts at the Crossroads: the challenge of inclusive democracy in Egypt*, American University in Cairo and Oxford University of America Press 2013; *The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt: Democracy redefined or confined?* London, Routledge, 2012.

Her research interests include religion, gender and development, political Islam, democratization and security governance in the Middle East. She has written extensively on Coptic Christians in Egypt for MERIP, Opendemocracy and several journals, for example see: Vicissitudes in the entente between the Coptic Church-State and the State in Egypt (1952–2007)', in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.41, 2009, pp 269-287; The Non-Muslim Other: Gender and Contestation of Hierarchy of Rights, in: *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World*, Vol. 7, 2009, pp. 111–143.

Elizabeth H. Prodromou is Visiting Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution at The Fletcher School for Law & Diplomacy (Tufts University), and Co-Chair of the Eastern Mediterranean and Europe Study Group (Harvard University's CES). She is a leading scholar on the Eastern Orthodox Church and Christianity in modern Turkey especially as it concerns Religious Freedom and church-state relations.

She served a diplomatic appointment as Vice Chair and Commissioner on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (2004-2012), and since 2011, is a member of the U.S. Secretary of State's Religion & Foreign Policy Working Group. Her research deals with issues of religious freedom, democratization, and security threats in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Published widely in scholarly and policy journals and international media, she has been involved in research and advisory work for international and non-governmental organizations on religious freedom rights. She holds a Ph.D. in political science from MIT.

Publications include 'Orthodox Christian Contributions to Freedom: Historical Foundations, Contemporary Problematics', in Allen Hertzke and Timothy Samuel Shah, eds. *Christianity and Freedom: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2015 - in which she analyzes the vital contributions of embattled Eastern Orthodox communities to political freedom and human rights across history and in the present day; 'Debates on Just War, Holy War, and Peace: Orthodox Christian Thought and Byzantine Imperial Attitudes towards War', with Alexandros K. Kyrou, in Perry Hamalis and Valerie Karras, eds., *Orthodox Christian Perspectives on War* (University of Notre Dame Press, submitted, forthcoming 2015; 'Shaking the Comfortable Conceits of 'Otherness': Preliminary Answers from Political Science on How to Study Orthodox Constructions of the West', in George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, eds., *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, Fordham University Press, 2013; 'US Foreign Policy and Global Religious Pluralism', in Thomas Banchoff, ed., *The New Religious Pluralism in World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2008; 'Beyond the Dickensian Paradoxes of Human Rights: Reconceptualizing Proselytism, Rediscovering Evangelism', in Emmanuel Clapsis, ed., *Violence and Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Conversation* (World Council of Churches Press and Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007); 'Turkey Between Secularism and Fundamentalism?: The "Muslimhood Model" and the Greek Orthodox Minority', in: *The Brandywine Review of Faith & International Affairs* (Spring 2005); 'Negotiating Pluralism and Specifying Modernity in Greece: Reading Church-State Relations in the Christodoulos Period', in: *Social Compass: International Review of Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (December 2004).

Martin Ganeri OP, Vice-Regent, Blackfriars Studium, University of Oxford and Director Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue, Heythrop College, University of London. He is a well-known expert of Christian relations with Other Religions. He has published very widely in the subject including: *Indian Thought and Western Theism: The Vedanta of Ramanuja* (Routledge Hindu Studies Series) forthcoming 2015; 'Catholic Magisterium and World Religions', in: *Catholics and Shi'a Dialogue: Ethics in Today's Society*, edited by A. O'Mahony, Wulstan Peterburs OSB & Mohammad Ali Shomali, London, Melisende 2008, pp. 26-43; 'Catholicism and Hinduism', in: D'Costa, G., (ed.) *The Catholic Church and The World Religions*. London: T&T Clark, 2011, pp. 106-140; 'Changing Water into wine: A Thomist model for theological engagement with Non-Christian thought and its relevance for contemporary Christian encounter with Asian religions and cultures', in: *LANDAS Loyola School of Theology*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2010; 'Theology and Non-Western Philosophy. In:

Crisp, O, D'Costa, G, Davies, M, Hampson, P, (eds.) *Theology And Philosophy: Faith and Reason*. London: T&T Clarke, 2010, pp. 202-220; 'Catholic Encounter with Hindus in the Twentieth century: In Search of an Indian Christianity', in: *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 88, 2007, pp. 410-432.

Anthony O'Mahony is Reader in the History of Christianity, Director Centre for Eastern Christianity, Heythrop College, University of London. Recent publications include: 'Coptic Christianity in modern Egypt' & 'Syriac Christianity in the modern Middle East', in: *The Cambridge History of Christianity Eastern Christianity Vol. V.*, Edited by Michael Angold, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006; 'Christianity in Modern Iraq', in: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol. 4, no 2. (2004), pp.121-142; 'The Vatican, Jerusalem, the State of Israel, and Christianity in the Holy Land', in: *IJSCC* Vol. 5, no 2. (2005), pp.123-146; 'Tradition at the heart of Renewal: the Coptic Orthodox Church and monasticism in Modern Egypt', in: *IJSCC*, Vol. 7, no.3, (2007), pp. 164-178; 'Between Rome and Constantinople: the Italian-Albanian Church: a study in Eastern Catholic history and ecclesiology', in *IJSCC*, Vol. 8, no 3. (2008), pp. 232-251; "The Vatican and Europe: Political Theology and Ecclesiology in Papal Statements from Pius XII to Benedict XVI", in: *IJSCC*, Vol. 9, no. 3, 2009, pp. 177-194; 'Les chrétiens palestiniens: Politique, droit et société, 1917-1948', in: *De Balfour à Ben Gourion – La France, L'Europe occidentale et la Palestine, 1917-1948*, Edited by Dominique Trimbur and Ran Aaronsohn, Mélanges Centre de recherche français de Jérusalem, Paris, Éditions Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), 2008; 'The Christian Churches, Shi'a Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations in Modern Iran', in: *Christian Responses to Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations in the Modern World*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2008, pp. 175-188; 'West Asia' in: *Atlas of Global Christianity*, Edinburgh University Press, (2010); "The Vatican, the Catholic Church, Islam and Muslim-Christian relations since Vatican II", in: *The Catholic Church in the Contemporary Middle East: Studies for the Synod for the Middle East*, Edited by A.O'Mahony & John Flannery, London, Melisende, 2010, pp. 291-317; 'The Coptic Orthodox Church in modern Egypt' & 'Between Rome and Antioch: Syrian Catholic Church in the modern Middle East', in: *Eastern Christianity in the modern Middle East*, London, Routledge, 2010; 'Christianity in the Middle East: Modern History and Contemporary Theology and Ecclesiology: An Introduction and Overview', in: *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, Vol. 63, nos. 3-4, 2013, pp. 231-260; with Scott Thomas: 'Postsecularity and the Contending Visions of the European Political Imagination in International Relations' in: "Towards a Postsecular International Politics: New Forms of Community, Identity, and Power", Ed by Luca Mavelli, Fabio Petito, London, Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014; 'Louis Massignon: A Catholic Encounter with Islam and the Middle East', in: "God's Mirror: Renewal and Engagement in French Catholic Intellectual Culture in the Mid-Twentieth Century", Ed by Katherine Davies & Toby Garfitt, Fordham University Press, 2014. 'Eastern Orthodox in the modern Middle East' and 'Eastern Catholicism in the modern Middle East' in Erica C.D. Hunter (ed.) *Religious Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa: A Complete Survey of Non-Muslim Communities*. I. B. Tauris, forthcoming He is a member of various Catholic –Eastern Christian ecumenical endeavours The Catholic-Orthodox Consultation in England and a participant in Pro Oriente (Vienna)

CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

An Overview

The churches of the Middle East can be grouped into five families (Oriental Orthodox; Eastern Orthodox; Oriental & Eastern Catholic; Anglican and Protestant; 'Assyrian' Church of the East) representing c. 30 million Christians - approximately 15 million residing in the Middle East.

Five Church Families:

1. Oriental Orthodox:
 - The Armenian Orthodox Church
 - The Syrian Orthodox Church
 - The Coptic Orthodox Church
 - The Ethiopian Orthodox Church
2. Eastern Orthodox:
 - The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, (with important representation from the Russian Orthodox, the Rumanian Orthodox Church & Georgian Orthodox churches in the Holy Land).
 - The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (based mainly in Lebanon, Syria, with small communities in Turkey, Iraq, and the Gulf region. Including a large North American diaspora).
 - The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria (based mainly in Egypt and Africa)
3. The Catholic family: six Oriental, one Latin:
 - The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (restored in 1847), including the HebrewCatholic ecclesial community.
 - The Greek Catholic Church
 - The Maronite Church
 - The Syrian Catholic Church
 - The Armenian Catholic church
 - The Chaldean church
 - The Coptic Catholic Church
4. The Church of the East, sometimes called 'Assyrian', is one of the most ancient ecclesial expressions of the Christianity in the Middle East.
5. The Evangelical and Anglican-Episcopal family
 - The Anglican and Episcopal Church (in Jerusalem and the Middle East)
 - There are various Protestant, Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches throughout the Middle East, who have emerged from Eastern Christian communities or from converts from Islam to Christianity.

The largest is the family of **Oriental Orthodox Churches**. Each is fully self-governing, though they are in communion with one another.

- The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt,
- The Armenian Apostolic Church living in various middle eastern states, with large communities in Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, in addition to the Armenians of the Republic of Armenia;
- The Syrian Orthodox Church, mainly in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, with small communities in Lebanon and the Holy Land (Israel-Palestine).
- The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (most important presence is the historic community in Jerusalem, although Ethiopian monks and hermits have up until recent times been present in the Egyptian desert monasteries; and further back Syria and Cyprus)

The second family of churches is the **Eastern Orthodox Churches**. They are often referred to as Eastern or Greek Orthodox. They constitute three self-governing churches (Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria), linked by doctrine, liturgy and canon law with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul (formerly Byzantium or Constantinople), and belong, therefore, to that wider family of Orthodox churches in Russia, Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

The third family comprises the **Catholic Churches** of the Middle East. These churches all accept the supreme ecclesiastical authority of the Papacy and the doctrine of the Catholic Church. But only a small percentage of them are Roman, or Latin-Catholic. Most of them can be grouped together as the Eastern-rite Catholic Churches - the word 'rite' denoting their forms of liturgy and canon law which differ from the western Latin rite of the Roman Catholics. The largest of these churches is the Maronite Church in Lebanon.

The fourth family is in terms of independent history, one of the oldest and most self-contained in the Middle Eastern churches: the **Assyrian Church of the East**. Sometimes identified by its historical tradition as the Church of the 'East Syrians' or the Church of Persia. Its Catholic counterpart is the Chaldean Catholic Church. It is mainly found in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

The fifth family comprises the **Anglican, Lutheran and Protestant Churches**, like the Eastern-rite Catholic Churches (possibly excepting the Maronite Church), these churches came into being as a result of missionary activity in the Middle East. Whereas the Eastern-rite Catholic Churches mostly go back several centuries, this family of churches dates in the Middle East from as recently as the 19th century.

These Christian communities represent only a small minority of the total population of the Middle East (about 5-7%), the great majority of who are Sunni or Shiite Muslim; although the situation is different in the State of Israel where the majority of the population is Jewish. The churches vary from one another, historically, doctrinally, and

culturally, and this produces sometimes different views of the Muslim world in which they live (Arab, Turkish, Iranian). Today large numbers of Middle Eastern Christians live outside of the region: North America; South America; Australia and Western Europe.

Christianity in the Middle East: bibliography

General Introductions:

Andrea Pacini (ed): *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998)

Michael Angold (ed): *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume Five – Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006)

John Binns: *An Introduction to the Christian Orthodox Churches* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

For Syriac Christianity tradition in the modern Middle East, in particular for Iraq and Syria see the following two recent publications: Suha Rassam: *Christianity in Iraq* (Leominster: Gracewing 2005);

Further specialist articles can be found in the following volumes based upon the work of the Centre for Eastern Christianity, Heythrop College, University of London:

A.O'Mahony (ed): *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics and Society in the Holy Land* (London: Melisende, 1999).

A.O'Mahony (ed): *The Christian Communities in Jerusalem: Studies in History, Religion and Politics* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2003).

A.O'Mahony (ed): *Eastern Christianity*, London, Melisende, 2004.

A.O'Mahony/Peter Bowe OSB (eds): *Catholics and Interreligious Dialogue: Studies in Theology, Spirituality and Monasticism*, Leominster, Gracewing 2004.

A.O'Mahony (ed): *Christianity in the Middle East*, London, Melisende, 2008.

A.O'Mahony (ed): *Christianity and Jerusalem: Studies in Christian Theology and Politics in the Modern Holy Land* (Leominster: Gracewing 2010).

A.O'Mahony/E.Loosley (eds) *Eastern Christianity in the modern Middle East*, London, Routledge, 2010

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Themes:

1. Who are the Christians in the Middle East
2. Eastern Christianity in the Middle East: situation today and challenges
3. The Importance of Ecumenical Dialogue in the Middle East and its significance for the wider Church.
4. Christian-Muslim & Christian-Jewish relations in the Middle East