

**BUTRUS AL-BUSTANI
AND THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES**

Towards a Harmony of Understanding
of the Advent of the *Naḥḍah*

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1 Introduction

At the broadest level, the focus of this paper is the advent of the *Naḥḍah*, the Arab intellectual renaissance. I wish to illuminate aspects of the advent of the Arab *Naḥḍah* by way of analysis of the interaction of the American Protestant missionaries with one of the leading Syrian Arab intellectuals of the mid-nineteenth century, Buṭrus al-Bustânî. From this concentrated analysis, broader conclusions will be drawn about the early *Naḥḍah* in addition to American missionaries' contribution to the interface of Syria with modernity.

Bustânî is the analytical focus here for several reasons: first, he was the most influential secular Syrian intellectual of his time who espoused, for that time, liberal ideas. Of Bustânî, Henry Jessup, a leading American missionary in Syria for a span of fifty three years, notes, 'He was the most learned, industrious, and successful as well as the most influential man of modern Syria'.² Second, of the various liberal Arab intellectuals of the mid-nineteen century, Bustânî was unquestionably the most intimately connected with the American Protestant missionary apparatus; evidence to this fact will be presented later. Thus, the life and ideas of Bustânî provide us with the best opportunity to understand this interac-

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² Henry Harris Jessup, *Fifty-three years in Syria* Vol. 2 (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), p. 483.

tion between the protestant missionaries and the advent of the *Naḥḍah*. Third, despite the fact that there are presently no extant translations of Bustânî's works into English, the analytical groundwork regarding his life and ideas has been, at least, *minimally* laid.³ This first wave of scholarship on Bustânî opens the door for moving past initial surveys of al-Bustani's ideas to more conjectural treatment of his ideas in relationship to other phenomena, such as the western missionary movement. In this paper, therefore, I seek conceptual harmony between the liberal ideas of Bustânî and the ideas and ideology of the western missionaries in Syria. My argument is that Bustânî *must* be understood vis-à-vis his extended relationship with the missionary apparatus.

2 Relationship between missionaries and the *Naḥḍah*

My hypothesis, correlating the missionary apparatus with Bustânî and his ideas, is not so easily accepted. The actual nature of this relationship between the American missionaries and the *Naḥḍah* is hotly disputed. The first western scholar that attempted to define this relationship was George Antonius. In his work *The Arab Awakening* he portrayed the western missionaries as direct instigators of the *Naḥḍah*. This is evident from the first sentence of his book: 'The story of the Arab national movement opens in Syria in 1847, with the foundation in Beirut of a modest literary society under American patronage.'⁴ On the other extreme lies Abdul Latif Tibawi who has sought to deconstruct Antonius's view by way of arguing that the missionaries and their programs, such as their schools, their printing presses, and their distribution of books in the

³ 'Minimally' is purposefully emphasized. As stated, to my knowledge, none of Bustânî's works, including books, speeches, and articles, have been translated into English. Scholarship in English on Bustânî is limited to mere mentions at worst to chapters or subchapters, or scholarly articles at best. Most of the existing substantial treatments of Bustânî in English are referenced in my notes. There are no book length biographies of Bustani, or analyses of his ideas, in English. The most recent in Arabic is Yūsuf Q. Khūrī, *Rajul sābiq li-‘aşrihi: al-mu‘allim Buṭrus al-Bustānī, 1819-1883* (Bayrūt: Bisān, 1995).

⁴ George Antonius, *The Arab awakening; the Story of the Arab National Movement* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1965), p. 13. Other blatant ascriptions of responsibility of the missionaries to the initiation of the *Naḥḍah* can be found in chapter three, 'The Start: 1847-1968', pp. 35-60.

region were ultimately religious, rather than *Naḥḍāwī*, in nature, no matter what their appearance.⁵

Furthermore, he argues that these missionaries failed to bring anything substantially new: 'Exit therefore the claim of any foreign missionary agency having discovered or 'rediscovered' the Arabic literary heritage.'⁶ Albert Hourani remains ambiguous in his seminal work, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, as to the influence of the missionaries, noting that they 'created or strengthened'⁷ the Arab *Naḥḍāwī* intellectuals. Hourani ascribes most credit for the advent of the *Naḥḍah* to the Arab Christian intellectuals: 'It was from such families – [Nasif al-]Yaziji, [Faris al-]Shidyaq, [Butrus al-]Bustani – that there came, in the early nineteenth century, the founders of the literary renaissance of the Arabs.'⁸ Lastly, Fruma Zachs argues that the impact of the missionaries was not necessarily related to the rise of Arab nationalism; rather the missionaries were influential in the formation of a Syrian identity. In this way, she seeks a middle point between the extremes of Antonius and Tibawi in arguing that both the missionary apparatus and the Arab Christians should be analyzed together in an effort to completely understand the earlier years of the *Naḥḍah*:

Hence, the relationships between the American missionaries and the Christian-Arab intellectuals was not a dichotomy between actor and acted upon but rather a complex matrix of interactions, cross cultural exchanges wherein both sides were active. The encounter between these missionaries and the Christian-Arab intellectuals should be treated dialectically, emphasizing the dynamic role not only of the missionaries, but also of that of the Christian Arabs. The missionaries were another catalyst contributing the process of building this Syrian identity. Yet, the final touch was to be that of the local Christian-Arab intellectuals.⁹

⁵ Abdul Latif Tibawi, 'Some Misconceptions about the *Naḥḍah*', in *Middle East Forum* 47, No. 3-4 (Autumn and Winter 1971), pp. 15-22.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁹ Fruma Zachs, *The making of a Syrian Identity: Intellectuals and Merchants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 154.

Zachs's position is my point of departure in this present analysis. Closely related to this debate as to importance of the missionaries and the Arab Christians *vis-à-vis* the *Naḥḍah* is that of when the *Naḥḍah* began. The idea is that isolating the beginning of the *Naḥḍah* will bring into focus the significant players within the movement. Scholars, once again, have diverging viewpoints on this; for instance, Zachs notes briefly that Bustânî's famous 1859 lecture *Khuṭbah fî Ādāb al-‘Arab* (A Lecture on the Culture of the Arabs) marks the beginning of the *Naḥḍah*.¹⁰ For Antonius, the beginning was the 1847 formation of *al-Jam‘iyyah al-Sūriyyah li-Iktisāb al-‘Ulūm wal-Funūn* (The Syrian Society for the Acquisition of the Sciences and the Arts).¹¹ Without unnecessarily entering into this debate, it is sufficient for this analysis to note that both the missionaries and Arab liberal intellectuals such as al-Bustânî were influential in the earlier years of the *Naḥḍah*.

3 Role of Butrus al-Bustani

Butrus al-Bustânî was born into a Maronite family in 1819. He graduated from the most impressive school in Syria at the time,¹² the monastic seminary of ‘Ayn Waraqaḥ, where he studied liberal arts, Arabic, Syriac, Latin, Italian, and religion. Shortly thereafter (‘about the year 1840’¹³), he moved to Beirut, converted to Protestantism, began working at the Protestant Seminary, and fortuitously met Eli Smith, one of the pioneers of the American Presbyterian Mission in Syria (the order of these events is unclear).

Another pioneering Presbyterian missionary, Henry Jessup, notes that upon converting, ‘He entered the house of Dr. Eli Smith for protection. For two years he was a prisoner, not venturing outside the gates lest he be shot by spies of the Maronite patriarch.’¹⁴ Thus, as will be important

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 146.

¹¹ Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 13.

¹² Butrus Abu-Manneh, ‘The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus Al-Bustani’, in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11, No. 3 (May 1980), p. 289.

¹³ Jessup, *Fifty-three years*, Vol. 2, pp. 483-484.

¹⁴ Ibid.

in the analysis below, Bustânî was personally acquainted with the hard realities of confessional solidarity from the very moment of his conversion to Protestantism. For the next 22 years he, along with other influential converts such as Aḥmad Faris al-Shidyâq, Mikhâ'îl Mishâqah, and Nâsif al-Yâziji worked intimately with the American Protestant missionary apparatus in Syria, mostly in Beirut. From 1848 to 1857, along with al-Yâziji, Bustânî aided Eli Smith, his close friend and patron, in translating the Bible into Arabic. After the death in 1857 of Smith, Bustânî seems to have distanced himself from the American missionary apparatus at least in terms of official vocation; the degree of this distance is debatable and will be addressed below.

In terms of his activity and intellectualism, Bustânî's life may be broken up into two parts. In the first of these, he was intensely engaged with the missionary apparatus. He was, as one missionary put it, 'an energetic and promising young man, who is zealous for the truth, so far as he understands it, apt to learn and apt to teach'.¹⁵ He helped Smith in translating the Bible into Arabic; he led morning and evening prayers;¹⁶ he taught in the missionary schools;¹⁷ he went on evangelical outings with the missionaries;¹⁸ and he served with them, as when he helped them serve bread during the 1860 crises in Beirut.¹⁹ Apparently, Bustânî was being trained to become a full time minister of the gospel, an end which was never realized.²⁰

Two events were to mark the transition between the first and second phases of Bustânî's life: the death of Eli Smith and the sectarian violence of 1860 in Syria.

After the death of Smith, Bustânî ceased working on the Bible translation project, opening the door for the most intellectually prolific years of his life, from 1857 through the end of his life in 1883. As an example,

¹⁵ Kamal Salibi and Yusuf K. Khoury (eds), *The Missionary Herald; Reports from Ottoman Syria, 1819-1870* Vol. 3 (London: NABU Publications, 1995), p. 392.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 411.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 335.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 391.

²⁰ The decision to not appoint Bustânî as a minister of the gospel apparently deeply affected him, along with his patron, Eli Smith. For a succinct discussion of this, see Abdul Latif Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria, 1800-1901; A Study of Educational, Literary, and Religious Work* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 131-133.

in just two years, he produced the following works: he edited the three parts of Ṭannūs ibn Yūsuf Shidyāq's, *Akhbār al-A'yān fī Jabal Lubnān* (1859), as well as *Dīwān al-Mutanabbi* (1860); other works of his were *Khuṭbah fī Ādāb al-'Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* (1859), *Nubdhat Tawārikh min Dīwān ash-Shaikh Nīṣīf al-Yāziji* (1859), *Qiṣṣat As'ad al-Shidyāq: munāẓarah wa-ḥiwār multahib ḥawla ḥurrīyat al-ḍamīr* (1860), and *Kitābah ilā an-Nisā' fī Bilād ash-Sharq* (1860). From September 1860 through April of 1861, in response to the sectarian violence of 1860 in Syria, he published eleven very patriotic broad-sheets, or bulletins, which he called *waṭaniyyāt*. These broad sheets, entitled *Nafīr Sūriyyah* (Trumpet of Syria), were Bustānī's personal admonitions of the 'sons of the nation' (*abnā' al-waṭan*) for peace, unity, inter-confessional solidarity, and human rights. *Nafīr Sūriyyah* is addressed more fully below.²¹

Bustānī's two most monumental works were also representative of his passion for a revival of the Arabic language: in 1869 he finished the massive *Muḥīt al-Muḥīt: qāmūs muṭawwal lil-lughah al-'Arabīyah*, a complete Arabic dictionary along with *Quṭr al-muḥīt: qamus lughawī muyassar*, an abridged dictionary. The Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II took notice of the importance of this dictionary and 'upon receiving copies of his dictionary, sent him a present of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling and a decoration of third class of the *Medjidiyah*'.²² Other literary accomplishments were the founding of a landmark new journal, *al-Jinān* (1870-1883), and a newspaper, *al-Janna*. According to Jessup, he also, 'published works on bookkeeping, Arabic grammar, and translated into Arabic the Pilgrim's Progress, D'Aubigné's Reformation, Edward's History of Redemption, and Robinson Crusoe'.²³

Beginning in 1875, through to his death, on May 1, 1883, he devoted his time and energy to constructing what might be considered his second great literary work after *Muḥīt al-Muḥīt*, namely, *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif*, an encyclopedia comprising the most modern knowledge and a display of the most eloquent Arabic. Originally planned as twelve volumes, he had

²¹ Due to limitations in access to original sources, such as Bustānī's newspapers, this paper has focused mainly on his earlier works. That said, Bustānī's later works do not seem to come into contradiction with his earlier works; rather, he is able to remove himself more from inter-confessional conflict, specifically that waged in 1860, and develop his thoughts further by means of his newspaper and journal.

²² Jessup, *Fifty-three years*, vol. 2, p. 484.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 485.

finished six volumes before his death. Four more were completed by his sons. He was found at his death, according to Jessup, 'pen in hand, surrounded by his books and manuscripts'.²⁴

4 Bustani and Syrian patriotism

Bustânî is most often associated with Syrian patriotism, or what some have called, 'Arab proto-nationalism'.²⁵ In the broadest terms, Bustânî called for the end of religious solidarity ('*usbah dīniyyah*) and the unification of the people in patriotic solidarity ('*usbah waṭaniyyah*) under the banner of 'Syria'. This should not be confused with revolutionary statism; for Bustânî's patriotism did not find conflict with his concomitant Ottomanism. This was, it seems, for at least two reasons: first, his belief in the 'power of union'²⁶ undergirded even his attitude toward the Ottoman state, especially during the Tanzimat reforms.²⁷ 'Therefore, it is the duty of each eastern[er] to say that I like to preserve the present [political] situation and avoid all causes of split (*inshiqāq*) in order to remain [a member] of a great nation called the Ottoman nation ('*umma*), which even though composed of many racial groups (*ajnās*) is one in [common] interests.'²⁸ Furthermore, as Abu-Manneh argues effectively in his work, 'Bustani's vision was of Ottomanism as the progenitor of Syrian patriotism'.²⁹ Unifying patriotic solidarity by way of a cultural, literary, and language revival was, therefore, the answer to the problem of Arab decay (*inhiṭāt*). Only in this way can the people achieve substantial peace and progress.

Bustânî's notion of patriotism is best understood in the context in which his ideas developed; namely, a Beirut that was concomitantly rid-

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ For instance, see Fruma Zachs, 'Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria? Revisiting the American Presbyterian Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century Levant', in *Die Welt des Islams* 41, No. 2 (July 2001), pp. 145-173.

²⁶ Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism', p. 298.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Al-Jinān*, 5 (1874), p. 111 as quoted in Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism', p. 298.

²⁹ Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism', p. 296.

den with sectarianism and budding as an Ottoman provincial capital³⁰ which, ultimately and most graphically, manifested itself in the violence of 1860. The violence of 1860 was fundamentally sectarian, mostly pitting the Maronites against the Druze. Though, this was not a religious war; rather, as Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher notes, ‘One thing should be clear: we have here an outbreak of social, socio-economic, socio-psychological and political conflict but not of a religious war.’³¹ Another scholar framed this inter-communal violence as part of the process of ascendancy of Beirut *vis-à-vis* ‘the mountain’.³² In fact, it is true that Beirut found itself at the political and social center of the 1860 conflicts.³³ The violence of 1860 apparently had an emphatic influence on the ideas of Bustânî; in essence, confessional violence, which came to its peak in 1860, led Bustânî to realize that inter-confessional unity was not only the path to peace and deliverance³⁴ from those ‘worst evils’³⁵ of sectarianism and fanaticism, but also the requisite for the progress of the people. In other words, Bustânî sought to redirect the loyalty of the people from confessional communalism towards patriotic solidarity under the nation.

It should be noted that these ideas are significantly more developed than the perspective of the American Presbyterian missionary. While the missionaries were fascinated by the notion of ‘Syria’, it was mostly territorial – a fascination of the Biblical land of ‘Syria’. The missionaries saw themselves as bringing the ideology that was an *ultimate* unifier,

³⁰ Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siccle Beirut: the Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford historical monographs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

³¹ Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families in Politics, Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Berliner Islamstudien, Bd. 2, Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1985), p. 100, noted within footnote 11 of Zachs, ‘Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria?’ p. 150. On the 1860 conflict, also see Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

³² Fawaz, ‘The City and the Mountain: Beirut’s Political Radius in the Nineteenth Century as Revealed in the Crisis of 1860’, pp. 489-495.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 492-494.

³⁴ I am using this word, ‘deliverance’, very purposely. Bustânî’s use of deliverance terminology, such as his references to Satan, is very interesting and deserves more Western scholarly analysis.

³⁵ Abu-Manneh, ‘The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism’, p. 288.

namely, the Christian gospel.³⁶ A letter from the Protestant Mission in Beirut to America, dated March 20, 1848, succinctly states this sentiment:

And with our hopes founded upon the sure promises of God, we preach the gospel to high and low, if perchance we may bring the people around us to repentance and true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.... We are, indeed, of different sects, Greeks, Greek Catholics, Latins, Maronites and Armenians; but we have abandoned all animosities and jealousies existing between these sects, wishing them no more to be mentioned among us, inasmuch as we have become members of one body in Christ. For in him nothing of the kind exists; he having abolished the whole, and required that all believers in him should be one in faith and love.³⁷

The gospel therefore surpasses territorial or ethnic affiliation as it opens the door for a supernatural solidarity. While Bustânî subscribed to the same theology, it is likely that he recognized that practical unity might be more effectively achieved under a more parochial ideology than the gospel; indeed, Bustânî was aware of the extremely slow growth of the mission. His call, therefore, was for solidarity of the people under the banner, not of God, but of the nation and cultural identity. In an editorial in *al-Jinān*, 1870, he states, 'We must adopt one nationality. It is that which prevailed in our fatherland after all the others and of which we adopted its language and customs – that is Arabic nationality.'³⁸

At the height of the violence, in September 1860, Bustânî put forward his first pamphlet within the *Nafīr Sūriyyah* series. His opening words speak volumes about the intentions of Bustânî: *Yā abnā' al-waṭan* (Oh, sons of the nation). Hence, his pamphlets are fundamentally pleas to the Syrian Arabs, his Arab brothers, to cease sectarian violence in favor of unity under a common love of the nation, or fatherland (*ḥubb al-waṭan*). His appeal is humanistic in one sense: in his first pamphlet he cries out, 'You (*antum*) drink one water, and you breath one air, and the language that you speak is one. Your land on which you walk and your welfare,

³⁶ 'For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.' (Romans 10:12)

³⁷ Salibi and Khoury, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 4, p. 51.

³⁸ *Al-Jinān*, 1 (1870), p. 674, as quoted in Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism,' p. 293.

your customs are one.’³⁹ Bustânî refers to himself as *muḥibb lil-waṭan* (one whose love is towards the nation, or more succinctly, patriot). In another more profoundly *Naḥḍâwî* sense, he argues that sectarianism has yielded nothing for society except decay (*inhîṭât*):

How often have we heard you (*antum*) talking about this ruinous event (*khirbah*), the third of its kind in a span of less than twenty years? You have tried civil war time after time. You have weighed its pros and cons. But what have you gained? Have any of you become a king, an advisor (*mushîr*), or a minister (*wazîr*)? Have you risen in status and position? Have you increased your reputation or wealth? What has been the consequence of violence? Widowhood, orphanhood, and poverty? Degradation (*safrilah*), earthly and spiritual destruction, and humiliation? Belittlement of native sons in the eyes of rational men (*‘uqalā’*) and foreigners? . . .

Now then, isn't it more suitable to your welfare that you exchange your blind prejudice - which is nothing but a kind name for excessive self-love - with love for the nation and interconfessional friendship (*mawadda*)? The success of the country (*najāḥ al-bilād*) is achieved only through concord and unity. With them, you can vex reviled Satan, extend the carpet of valor (*bisāṭ al-murū'a*), remember past harmony (*ulfa*).⁴⁰

This note on of cultural decay is very similar to the missionaries' view, namely, that Syria was a dark land in the mire of stagnation. Ussama Makdisi recounts one missionary declaring, 'Alas, how dark are these beautiful mountains'.⁴¹

³⁹ Al- Bustânî, *Nafîr Sûriyyah*, Issue I, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁰ *Nafîr Sûriyyah*, Issue V, pp. 27-28, as translated by Stephen Paul Shechi, 'Inscribing the Arab Self: Buṭrus al-Bustânî and Paradigms of Subjective Reform', in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27, No. 1 (May, 2000), pp 7-24.

⁴¹ Benton to Azariah Benton, June 8, 1855, Box 11, Folder 2, William A. Benton Papers, Department of Special Collections, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, noted in Ussama Makdisi, 'Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity', in *The American Historical Review* 102, No. 3 (June, 1997), p. 687.

5 Decay and solutions

Missionary leader Henry Jessup's comments are illuminating of the missionaries' earlier notions of Syria:

Intellectually, the land was utter stagnation. With the exception of the Koran and its literature among the Moslems, and the ecclesiastical books among the Oriental Christians, there were no books.... But it was in general true that there were in the land neither books, readers nor schools, as such.... The Oriental mind seemed asleep. If the 'rest cure' which obliges the patient to lie prostrate for weeks in a state of mental vacuity and physical relaxation, often renews the mind and body, then the Syrian race, by their rest cure of ages, should have reached the acme of mental and physical preparation for a new era of vigor and growth.⁴²

This intellectual decay was also, unsurprisingly, coupled by spiritual stagnation: 'As far as words are concerned they have religion enough. But they need to be taught the need of spiritual regeneration, and the reality of personal religious experience.'⁴³ The missionaries argued that 'stagnation' in Syria was a product of both intellectual and spiritual darkness. Thus, their desire was to bring spiritual awakening that would revive all aspects of society and bring about a 'New Phoenicia, a new Syria', that is 'better cultivated, better governed, with a wider diffusion of Christian truth, a noble sphere for women, happier homes for the people, and that [*sic.*] contentment which grow out of faith in God and man'.⁴⁴ According to the missionaries, part of the cause of this spiritual darkness was disunity. As already stated, Bustânî argued that disunity was the *main* cause of cultural stagnation. While his argument that decay permeates the land is clear in his work, what remains largely unknown is his view of religion, namely Islâm, in the land. I have found very little in terms of Bustânî's view of culture *vis-à-vis* religion other than the fact that he occasionally references the words and deeds of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁴⁵

⁴² Jessup, *Fifty-three years*, Vol. 1, p. 27.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Jessup, *Fifty-three years*, Vol. 2, p. 597.

⁴⁵ For instance, see *Nafḥ Sūriyya*, Issue VIII, p. 42.

In general, Bustânî's position in regards to society was secular: religion, while inherently good, breeds religious solidarity ('*usbah dîniyyah*) and decay when mixed with politics.⁴⁶ The secularism of Bustânî is a marker of the advent of the *Naḥḍah*. While Bustânî's religious views warrant another study altogether, it is sufficient to note the virtual harmony between the missionaries' and his views of stagnation.

Bustânî accused his people of their cultural decay. His self-criticism is a hallmark of the early years of the *Naḥḍah*. In fact, in reference to *Nafîr Sûriyyah*, Stephen Paul Sheehi states that Bustânî, 'can be credited as one of the earliest intellectuals who embarked on a coherent self-analysis of Syrian Arab culture and society'.⁴⁷ One of the most blatant statements of self blame in *Nafîr Sûriyyah* is in the ninth pamphlet: 'We only looked at one side of the entire problem and, with that, we chose the iniquitous side of the present problem...'⁴⁸ It is evident that the focus of the blame for the violence in 1860 fell on the Arabs, not on foreigners, the Ottomans, and so on. Bustânî associates all of the 'sons of the nation' with responsibility for poor situation in Syria; but at one point in *Nafîr Sûriyyah* he specifically targets his blame on the intelligentsia and the upper class: 'I am convinced that the blame, the loss, and the responsibility for such and such deeds fall, in the end, on the intelligentsia (*al-'uqalā'*) and the wealthy (*aṣḥāb al-'arḍ wa al-māl*) from among the sons of the nation.'⁴⁹

This self-critique must be understood in light of the sectarian violence of 1860 and in relation to the broader Arab encounter with the West. Bustânî was personally 'shamed' and 'disgraced' at the cultural decay (*inḥitāt*) of the Arabs as manifested most visibly by the violence of his countrymen: 'Much of what we have seen is that the love of the nation bows his gaze down to the earth. [He is embarrassed] particularly in these days as foreigners have opened an investigation of the causes of the violence. [We bow our heads] not out of cowardice nor fear, but out of

⁴⁶ Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism', p. 296. Specifically, Abu-Manneh refers to an editorial in *Al-Jinān* in 1870 entitled, 'Ruḥ al-'Asr' (The Spirit of the Age), wherein Bustânî speaks to the problem of religious solidarity when mixed with politics.

⁴⁷ Sheehi, 'Inscribing the Arab Self', p. 9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Issue IX, p. 51.

shame and disgrace.⁵⁰ Interestingly, as seen from this brief quote, Bustânî's shame and disgrace at the violence arrive concomitant with 'the foreigners' (*al-ajānib*), which we can ascribe as the Westerner. Similar to other earlier *Naḥḍāwī* reformers, such as Rifa'a Badawī Rafī' al-Taḥṭāwī (1801-1873) and Khayr al-Dīn Pasha (c. 1820-1890) who spent their formative years in the West, specifically, France, Bustânî spent his formative years under the heavy influence and tutelage of the West, via the western missionaries. He was well aware of the sentiments in the West towards the Ottoman Empire generally, and towards Syria more specifically. This caused, as Sheehi notes, a level of 'anxiety caused by the simultaneous recognition of the West's advancement, on the one hand, and their ill-intention and political opportunism, on the other hand.'⁵¹ Also, we may only merely speculate as to the nature of the many conversations, undoubtedly on topics comparing America and Syria, between Bustânî and his close friends in the missionary apparatus. In the end, we may say that the American missionaries were indirectly involved in producing and/or promoting al-Bustani's self-criticism which paved the way for the second and third *Naḥḍah*.

Bustânî not only submitted criticisms, he also proposed solutions. He called for the rise of patriotic solidarity by means of the flourishing of Arabic culture, specifically, literary Arabic (*al-fuṣṣḥah*). In fact, it was partly this passion for the language of the Arabs that led Bustânî, later in his life in 1876, to criticize the missionary schools, with which he had worked so closely, for teaching their own language and culture. He felt that they were teaching the Syrian pupils 'nothing about their own'.⁵² It should be noted that this is a peculiar criticism towards the missionaries and their schools; for their schools did practice, at intervals, teaching in Arabic, even if the form of education was, at points, only religious.⁵³ Additionally, we cannot say conclusively that Bustânî is critical here of the inherent purpose and intention of the schools; for he continued to co-

⁵⁰ Ibid., Issue VIII, p. 41, translated by Sheehi, 'Inscribing the Arab Self', p. 21.

⁵¹ Sheehi, 'Inscribing the Arab Self', p. 21. Sheehi also notes that 'shame is peppered throughout the text'. p. 21.

⁵² *Al-Jinān*, 7 (1876), p. 594, as translated by Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism', p. 290.

⁵³ As an example, the Syrian Protestant College was run in Arabic for a number of years. Also, prayers and Bible study were held in Arabic. See Jessup, *Fifty-three years*, Vol. 1, p. 167.

operate with the missionary educational institutions. It seems that he was critical of what these schools did *not* teach, rather than what they did. Additionally, it was actually the missionaries who took a renewed interest, thanks to their Biblical appreciation for the territory, in Syria as a quasi entity in itself.⁵⁴ Bustânî's famous lecture '*Khutbah fî Ādāb al-'Arabiyyah*' (1859) is the most concentrated of his works on the topic of reviving Arabic culture and language.⁵⁵

This lecture also illuminates the deep influence that the missionaries, specifically Bustânî's close friend Eli Smith, had on Bustânî's thinking, as has been shown by Zachs. Zachs shows that many of his famous ideas in his 1859 lecture were essentially predated in Smith's 1842 lecture within *al-Jam'iyah al-Sūriyyah li-Iktisāb al-'Ulūm wal-Funūn*; these ideas include the necessity of unity for the achievement of scientific progress, the nature of Arabic culture as a link between early sciences and modern sciences, and the revival of Arabic language and culture. Though, as Zachs concedes, Bustânî's ideology was far further developed and appropriate for his time than Smith's.⁵⁶

Language revival was for Bustânî the anti-corollary of sectarianism and the very foundation of the people's identity: 'Syria must not become a Babel of languages . . . as it is a Babel of religions and sects.'⁵⁷ What is less emphatic in al-Bustani's position on language is a call to preserve authenticity. I have found only one point where he seems to address the question of authenticity. This was in his encyclopedia (*Muḥīt al-Muḥīt*) under his entry for *Ishtiqaq* (derivation). In that entry, he spends considerable effort elucidating the difference between *ishtiqaq* and *ṣarf* (turning away). Both, he notes, are ways in which language changes, but *ṣarf* is more emphatic than *ishtiqaq* in terms of how much the structure of a

⁵⁴ Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*.

⁵⁵ As noted already, it is for Bustânî's boldness and innovation of thought in *Khutbah* that some, such as Fruma Zachs (see note 10), have noted that this speech marks the beginning of the *Naḥḍah*. This conclusion, though, seems all too simplistic to faithfully reflect the advent of the *Naḥḍah* – it was, in fact, a phenomenon in which, like all phenomena, is best understood without rigid constraints. That said, the importance of Bustânî's *Khutbah* is apparent in that it would garner such bold conclusions such as Zachs'.

⁵⁶ Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, pp. 145-147.

⁵⁷ *Nafīr Sūriyyah*, Issue X, quoted in and translated by Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism', p. 291.

word changes.⁵⁸ In any case, the transformation of language to meet the needs of the modern period was touted by Bustânî as a major means unto the reformation of the Arab people.

Bustânî's view of the nature of the East-West encounter is also revealing as to his intellectual relationship with the missionaries. In *Nafir Sūriyyah*, he portrays the 'sons of the nation' as a crucial link between the East and the West: 'The sons of the nations are convinced that they are not alone in the world, but rather they are a link in the sequence of the great world. This link is not [located] on the edges of the sequence, but rather, in the middle of it, before it, and at its political center and they are very important.'⁵⁹

The connection between Bustânî's argument of the identity of the Syrian Arabs and his call for a new kind of patriotism is obvious in this passage. Additionally interesting in his choice of diction is that he *himself* served as a 'link' between East and West; as an Arabic specialist in the American mission and a public evangelical Christian, he was one of the most tangible connections between the western missionaries and the native Syrians. Interestingly, this is not the only case of Bustânî's daily reality manifesting his ideology: in keeping with his campaign for inter-confessional solidarity, his school, *al-Waṭaniyyah*, was not inherently linked to any denomination. It contained Protestant, Greek, Maronite, Greek Catholic, Druze, and Muslim students.⁶⁰ Moreover, this notion of a link, or bridge, with the rest of the world was more emphatic for the city of Beirut in particular.⁶¹

Bustânî also posits that the Syrian Arabs are not only a crucial link in the grand 'sequence', but they are caught in an ontological struggle with the West in terms of identity formation.⁶² Upon the permanent arrival of the western Christian missionaries, the Arab Christians themselves were also involved in a struggle regarding identity formation. In her book on the origins and development of a 'Syrian' identity, Zachs argues that the Arab Christians were inevitably linked, at various degrees, with the

⁵⁸ Buṭrus al-Bustânî, *Muḥīt al-Muḥīt* (1869) s.v. 'Ishtiqāq'.

⁵⁹ *Nafir Sūriyya*, Issue IX, p. 51.

⁶⁰ Salibi and Khoury, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 5, p. 91.

⁶¹ Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, pp. 67, 69.

⁶² Using *Nafir Sūriyyah* as his object of analysis, Sheehi develops most fully this ontological struggle, what he called a 'inescapable Hegelian, master-slave, struggle with the West' See Sheehi, 'Inscribing the Arab Self', pp. 22, 24.

Western missionaries. While they welcomed their co-religionists, they realized that association with western Protestants would mean greater distance with their people. Thus, in the end, ‘they saw themselves first and foremost as Arabs and only then as Westerners or even as Christians. In this sense, they preferred to become “proud Arabs” and not “imperfect Europeans”.’⁶³

As for Western ideas and reforms, the Arab Christians, with Bustânî as their unofficial statesmen, rejected any blind or superficial imitation of the West.⁶⁴ In *Nafir Sūriyyah*, he states, ‘As long as [those who superficially adopt the trappings of the Western civilization] mislead themselves and accept false dirhams with true dinar, they are patching used clothes with new rags.’⁶⁵ Instead of imitation, Bustânî and his Arab compatriots desired to ‘reflect the culture and civilization of the East, evolving *vis-à-vis* the West’.⁶⁶ As a manifestation of this struggle, the Levantine Muslims were resistant to reforms that even appeared connected to European intervention.⁶⁷ This crucial positioning of the Syrian Arabs *vis-à-vis* the West also illuminates the reason behind Bustânî’s shame at his own people’s violent sectarianism. It is, in fact, their sectarianism that opens the door to ‘harmful’ Western intervention.⁶⁸ Curiously, while Bustânî was an associate of the western missionary apparatus, his aforementioned Ottomanism also served to provide a buffer against further western expansion. We may understand these apparent ideological contradictions by placing Bustânî within the context of his relationship with the missionaries.

⁶³ Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, p. .

⁶⁴ Sheehi, ‘Inscribing the Arab Self’, p. 20.

⁶⁵ *Nafir Sūriyyah*, Issue XI, p. 67, translated by Sheehi, ‘Inscribing the Arab Self’, p. 20.

⁶⁶ Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, p. 71.

⁶⁷ Sabri Hafez, ‘The Infrastructure of Cultural Transition’, in *The Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse* (London: Saqi Books, 1993), p. 46.

⁶⁸ ‘The transgression of boundaries of humanity and justice [by] the sons of the nation made necessary the intervention of a foreign hand in their country’s affairs... We are firm in the conviction that intervention by a foreign hand in the politics of whatever nation... is harmful to the country even though it may provide some temporary benefit.’ Translated by Sheehi, ‘Inscribing the Arab Self’, p. 9.

6 Always the evangelical educator

Some scholars have argued that Bustânî finally recognized the ‘colonial’ ambitions of the western missionary apparatus and therefore he significantly distanced, or even ‘disengaged’, himself from the apparatus after Eli Smith died.⁶⁹ This is a major overstatement for two reasons: first, unlike in other parts of the developing world, such as India, the American Protestant missionaries were not connected to state funded colonial campaigns.⁷⁰ Second, while he did cease helping Eli Smith translate the Bible, he never *significantly* distanced himself from the missionary apparatus in the aforementioned second part of his life. The evidence for my claim is as follows. These scholars point to the fact that Bustânî founded his own preparatory school, *al-Madrasah al-Waṭaniyyah*, where Arabic and Syrian patriotism were taught. But, in fact, English, French, and Turkish were also taught.⁷¹ Additionally, the Bible was read at morning and evening prayers,⁷² which signals that *al-Waṭaniyyah* was not an expression of Bustânî leaving the faith. The school must have had, in fact, an influence on the pupils; the 1864 Annual Report of the Presbyterian missionaries to their sending board in America notes the ‘interesting feature’ of the Beirut Protestant church, namely, that about thirty boys (out of about one hundred) from *al-Waṭaniyyah* were regularly attending the congregation.⁷³

While Bustânî did not receive funding for this school from the missionaries,⁷⁴ this school was a filter into the Syrian Protestant College, which was started and administered chiefly by the American missionaries.⁷⁵ Bustânî also remained in leadership of the Beirut Protestant community. American missionary Jessup recalls Bustânî’s sustained, close involvement with the Evangelical Christians: ‘He was one of the original members of the Beirut church, and an elder for thirty-five years [from

⁶⁹ For claims such as these, see Sheehi, ‘Inscribing the Arab Self’, and Abu-Manneh, ‘The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism’, p. 291.

⁷⁰ For different views on the exact connection between the missionaries and American expansionism, see Makdisi, ‘Reclaiming the Land of the Bible’, p. 681, footnote 4.

⁷¹ Salibi and Khoury, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 5, pp. 91-92.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 91.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, p. 154.

1848 until his death]. He was also for twenty years president of the Native Evangelical Society. For years he aided in the preaching and in the Sunday-school, and was looked to for addresses on all important occasions. In 1882, he preached twice.⁷⁶ Giving insight into the al-Bustani's personal life, Jessup notes that the Bustânî home was 'known as a model Christian home'.⁷⁷ It is, therefore, unapparent that Bustânî significantly disengaged from the missionary apparatus after the death of Eli Smith.

Associated with this question of Bustânî's distancing himself from the missionaries is the claim that the missionaries, though claiming to adhere to a supernatural unifying force, were actually merely another sect. Unlike the last claim, this notion has merit and analysis thereof provides insight into his campaign for interconfessional solidarity *vis-à-vis* his relationship with the missionaries. Butrus Abu-Manneh makes the sharpest of these claims in arguing that the 'missionaries sharpened this lack of homogeneity among those communities and within them'. This led, argues Abu-Manneh, Bustânî to 'disengage himself from missionary work' and devote the rest of his life to promoting unity.⁷⁸ While I have already shown that Abu-Manneh's argument that Bustânî 'disengaged himself' from the missionaries is overstated, his more important claim, that it was in fact the sectarianism of the missionaries that eventually led Bustânî to dedicate his life to campaigning for interconfessional solidarity, deserves analysis.

While superficial manifestations of sectarianism are to be expected with the arrival and growth of a new religious denomination, it does seem, even from the reports of the missionaries themselves, that the missionary apparatus was 'a new sect within a sectarian society'.⁷⁹ In their reporting, they speak of 'the Protestants', who are 'a small and hated minority'.⁸⁰ In at least one instance, they actually refer to themselves as 'an evangelical sect'.⁸¹ Sectarian conflict was also manifested between the missionary apparatus and other sects, such as the Maronites.⁸² Thus,

⁷⁶ Jessup, *Fifty-three years*, Vol. 2, p. 485.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Abu-Manneh, 'The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism', p. 291.

⁷⁹ Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, p. 309.

⁸⁰ Salibi and Khoury, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 5, p. 95.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 50.

⁸² For example, in one instance, there occurred an impromptu public 'discussion' between one leading Protestant and a Maronite Bishop who was, in fact, a relative of Bustânî. A

the claim that Bustânî witnessed the sectarian tendencies of the Protestants which subsequently influenced him to become a herald for inter-confessional solidarity holds merit.

But there were other influences on Bustânî in regards to the formation of his belief in the 'power of union' and, thus, his campaign for national unity. One of these influences ironically originated among the missionary leaders themselves in partnership with the native Evangelical Christians; this was, namely, the formation in 1842 and proceedings of *al-Jam'iyyah al-Sūriyyah li-Iktisāb al-'Ulūm wal-Funūn* (The Syrian Society for the Acquisition of the Sciences and the Arts). Among the founders were missionary leaders Cornelius Van Dyck and Eli Smith and native literati Bustânî and al-Yâziji. This was strictly a literary society, with clear intentions to remain free of religious controversy.⁸³ Over its five year span, they collected books and manuscripts in both Arabic and English and presented papers to each other with the aim of broadening each other's knowledge.⁸⁴

Bustânî subsequently published a book with eighteen of the lectures from meetings of the society and called it *'Amāl al-Jam'iyyah al-Sūriyyah* (Works of the Syrian Society). A sample of lecture titles included in the book are, 'On the Pleasures of Knowledge and its Benefits', by Cornelius Van Dyck, 'The Origins of Natural Laws' and 'About the Flora', by Salim Nawfal, and 'The City of Beirut' and 'About Women's Education', by Bustânî. One of the more poignant and germane quotes from the series of lectures was from John Wortabet. In a lecture on educational development within Syria in the nineteenth century, he said, 'We have slept enough, if the dawn rises now, let us rise and awake with it. We have missed much and have much to accomplish before we achieve our goal and I wish I had a trumpet to startle this country [*bilād*], to awake its dweller.'⁸⁵ *Naḥḍâwî* characteristics are all too obvious in this quote and in this literary society.

public 'rumpus' was the result of this open air 'discussion'. Salibi and Khoury, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 4, p. 293.

⁸³ Zachs, 'Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria?', p. 160.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ John Wortabet, 'The Extant and Causes of Development of Education in Syria', *'Amāl al-Jam'iyyah al-Sūriyyah*, 1852, quoted in Zachs, 'Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria?', pp. 166-167.

The influence of this society on Bustânî was great. He continued this literary society tradition. As an example, in 1867, he was involved with the teachers at his school, *al-Waṭaniyyah*, in the formation of *al-Jam‘iyyah al-‘ilmiyyah al-Sūriyyah* (The Syrian Scientific Society). This literary society, almost a replica of the 1842 Society, except with a much wider base of influence,⁸⁶ was fundamentally interconfessional in design and committed to the advancement of knowledge.⁸⁷

7 Mission work in Syria was not sectarian

In regards to this research, the story of these literary societies tempers any propositions that the activities of the American missionaries and the native Protestants like Bustânî were strictly sectarian. While intimately aware of the inevitable sectarianism associated with the coming of a new religious denomination, Bustânî in partnership with the missionaries, observed, participated in, and promoted activities which engaged fully in line with his campaign for interconfessional solidarity. Moreover, these societies reveal that he was not only influenced in terms of ideas by the American missionaries, but he also influenced the missionary apparatus itself.

Bustânî’s view of women gives evidence to the necessity of understanding Bustânî in light of the American missionaries and their thought. One of the main contributions of the American missionaries to the region was their promotion of education for girls. The missionaries regularly reported back to their American governing board on their progress in promoting female education – indicating the interest of their board in female education. The missionaries started and sustained schools for females which were successful and influential. It was the school established by Eli Smith that was the first to have a building for girls.⁸⁸ In one case, a mission report mentioned that a female school had ‘suc-

⁸⁶ Hanssen notes, ‘Most of the members were Beirutis in their early twenties, but its network spanned from Istanbul to Damascus and Cairo.’ See Hanssen, *Fin de Siecle Beirut*, p. 169.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 39.

ceeded beyond all expectation'.⁸⁹ By 1860, nearly one fifth of their approximately 1000 school pupils were females.⁹⁰ By 1876, there were 819 girls in schools under the direction of the Syrian Presbyterian mission.⁹¹

Bustânî bore the mark of the missionaries' influence: his wife, who was a pupil of the wife of Eli Smith, was one of the few women in Syria who could read.⁹² He also spoke ardently for women's rights:

Let us have strong hope that the sons of our nation will consider human decency (*al-ādāb*), and its subdivisions, wherein comes the truth. And let us hope that they delight to see [human decency] spread wide not only for men, but also for women, and that they regard the women as the mothers of the nations and civilizing them (*tamaddunhunna*) as the greatest blessing. This blessing is conditional on the civilizing (*tamaddun*) of the countries (*al-bilād*) and the success of the people, just as the lack of civilizing them [the women] is one of the greatest curses on the nation (*al-waṭan*). Up to this point, they [the sons of the nation] do not view their sisters as a part of the nation in regards to orientation (*al-mathhab*) and sexuality, rather in regards only to merit, preference, and 'national sisterhood' (*al-ikhwah al-waṭaniyyah*).⁹³

Once again, we see Bustânî calling out to his people to liberate women, what he calls 'civilizing'. He desires that his countrymen honor women in light of their humanity and also their participation in the formation of the nation. In fact, to disregard women would be the greatest of curses on the progress of the nation. In this way, Bustânî connects his vision for Syrian patriotism with his progressive view on human rights. He argued this same theme in another lecture, 'About Women's Education', during the meeting of *al-Jam'iyyah al-Sūriyyah li-Iktisāb al-'Ulūm wal-Funūn*.⁹⁴

It is in the light of the issue of education that we gain insight into the question of the relationship between the American missionaries and modernity in Syria. Did the missionaries 'bring' modernity? While that question is really the topic of another study altogether, we can say that

⁸⁹ Salibi and Khoury, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 5, p. 92.

⁹⁰ Hafez, 'The Infrastructure of Cultural Transition', p. 53, and Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 42.

⁹¹ Jessup, *Fifty-three years*, Vol. 2, Appendix VI, p. 814.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 485.

⁹³ *Nafīr Sūriyya*, Issue IX, p. 50.

⁹⁴ Zachs, 'Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria?', p. 166.

the missionaries significantly contributed to the early spread of modern education. They did this in a variety of ways: first, in cooperation with the native Protestants, such as Bustânî, they wrote textbooks for their schools. Second, they spread their liberal ideology of education which was in favor of female education, as evidenced by the influence of their ideology on Bustânî. Third, they incorporated in education their vision of an Arabic revival.

Ussama Makdisi essentially disregards the notion that the missionaries were simply, ‘purveyors of modern medicine and print technology to natives who had neither’; instead, Makdisi argues that the missionaries brought ‘evangelical modernity’, which was a ‘far more fragile process of staking out claims of cultural and historical belonging to the biblical land’.⁹⁵ Makdisi’s argument, though, does not conflict with my argument that education is one way that the missionaries contributed to the interface of the region with modernity. In fact, what Makdisi calls ‘evangelical modernity’ was actually spread largely *by way of* informal and formal education, along with informal and formal intellectual gatherings, such as *al-Jam‘iyyah al-Sūriyyah li-Iktisāb al-‘Ulūm wal-Funūn*. What is important, which is brought out in Makdisi’s work, is that the missionaries’ chief contribution to modernity in the region was in the realm of ideas. The most emphatically influential of these ideas was the concept of Syria as a territory which had lost its biblical splendor due to cultural stagnation. It was, in fact, this very idea that Bustânî picked up and reinterpreted into a new ideology of Syrian patriotism.

It is said that in the 1840s Bustânî converted to Protestantism and in the 1850s he converted to Ottomanism.⁹⁶ It is better said that in the 1850s he *developed*, partly *out of* his relationship with the Protestants, his ideologies of Syrian patriotism, Ottomanism, and his passions for cultural revival and liberal reform. In other words, my research has shown that Bustânî did not convert away from Protestantism towards a more secular, intellectual agenda after the death of Eli Smith. In fact, his relationship with the missionary apparatus informed many aspects of his ideology. If the influence of the American mission is, therefore, indispensable in the thought of Bustânî, we hence return to the question of the exact relationship of the American missionaries with the Arab

⁹⁵ Makdisi, ‘Reclaiming the Land of the Bible’, p. 681.

⁹⁶ Abu-Manneh, ‘The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism’, p. 89.

Nahḍah. While Bustânî manifests the climax of the missionaries' intellectual influence, he was merely one reformer in a broader, nascent liberal movement. Therefore, until more research brings to light evidence of equivalent missionary influence on Syrian intellectuals, we remain constrained mostly to Bustânî in our understanding of the impact of exchange between the friendship, culture and intellectualism of the missionaries with the native Syrian intellectuals; an exchange which was, as the former president of the American University in Beirut once remarked, 'one of the most influential movements during an important period of history'.⁹⁷

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⁹⁷ Bayard Dodge, 'American Educational and Missionary Efforts in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 401, America and the Middle East, May, 1972), p. 22.

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