

## ABSTRACT

Protestant Missions, Seminaries and the Academic Study of Islam in the United States

by

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“Protestant Missions, Seminaries and the Academic Study of Islam in the United States” presents an institutional history of the influence of Christian missionaries on the development of Islamic Studies as an academic field during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century. The dissertation -- based on extensive archival research in the U.S. and Middle East -- argues that missionaries through their interactions with Muslims provided significant direction to both the theoretical and institutional foundations of Islamic studies in U.S. universities and seminaries, connecting American studies of Islam with European Orientalism, while simultaneously framing the study within their confessional and national horizons. This missionary scholarship, unlike most of that which came before it, valued religion as its primary analytical category and in turn emphasized Islam as a contemporary and globally diverse religion. Additionally, the missionary side of Islamic studies was instrumental in facilitating the participation of women and immigrant scholars, while also limiting the range of their involvement to particular dimensions of that study. Understanding the roots of Islamic Studies in the U.S. is essential to mapping its trajectory to the present, and is also instructive as a historical consideration of the relationship between Muslims and the West.

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